



## Experts discuss student security at conference in Las Vegas

*By Camalot Todd (contact)*

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Stephen Sroka, a professor of medicine at Case Western Reserve University, spoke at the National Student Safety and Security Conference and Workshop on Wednesday in Las Vegas about school violence.

The nationwide violence — from the February school shooting in Parkland, Fla., to the thousands of reported bullying incidents in the Clark County School District — is being studied by educators and public safety officials as they search for ways to decrease the attacks.

Sroka stressed during the conference at Circus Circus that schools need to be prepared for acts of school violence through repeated safety drills and by offering teachers basic medical training. He said that training campus police officers to de-escalate conflicts with students, especially those who come from different races and socioeconomic backgrounds, is vital.

The conference is much-needed: Since the 1999 school shooting at Columbine High School in Colorado, approximately 219,000 students have experienced gun violence at school, according to the Washington Post.

Troy Eid, who served in the administration of Colorado Gov. Bill Owens and headed an independent review of Jefferson County, where Columbine is located, shared his insights into how school safety has changed since 1999.

Eid emphasized four changes in how schools handle shootings: police engaging quickly with the shooter, close communication between law enforcement agencies, a command post for first responders, and schools developing an early-threat and warning dedication system.

It took officials 47 minutes to enter Columbine after the shooting was reported. That was 34 minutes after the shooters killed 12 students and themselves.

“Every minute counts,” Eid said.

The Columbine shooters had multiple red flags for violence reported against them to different agencies. But because authorities didn’t communicate, prevention wasn’t possible, Eid said.

About 380 educators, public officials, and law enforcement representatives attended the event. No one from the Clark County School District attended, a district official said.