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Candidate for Degree of Doctor of Education

School leaders are challenged daily to provide the safest environment possible for their students, faculty, and staff. School shootings are on the rise, causing a need to prepare our schools for an active shooter event. This exploratory study examines school leaders’ perceptions of conducting active shooter drills in their schools.

The researcher surveyed 228 parochial and public school leaders across six Louisiana school districts. Of the 228 school leaders surveyed, 93 school leaders responded. Of the 93 respondents, 60 were parochial school leaders and 33 were public school leaders.

The overall results of the survey were disaggregated according to the comparison variable for each research question. Although most school leaders indicated having a crisis plan document in place that includes a plan for an active shooter event, most also indicated feeling only moderately or slightly prepared to
conduct an active shooter drill at their school. A predominant concern among school leaders was the anxiety that active shooter drills may cause students, parents, and staff. School leaders indicated using various components of training to conduct the drills, with a favorable component being law enforcement involvement. The insights gained from school leaders’ perceptions of conducting active shooter drills could be utilized to support the need for future active shooter training programs in schools as well as the need to have active shooter drills monitored by outside agencies to ensure they are implemented.