

Detroit area schools tackle gaps in security The Associated Press State & Local
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The arrest of a Macomb County high school student last month on charges that he was plotting to carry out violent threats against his classmates has increased attention on school security across the Detroit area.

Schools are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to upgrade security by buying video monitoring systems and alarms, and hiring security guards to patrol hallways.

Districts are also conducting role-playing exercises in which school officials plot ways to respond to threats. And schools are taking part in lockdown and evacuation drills.

More than 15 Detroit area districts have already had or plan to have lockdown drills this fall, The Detroit News reported in a Monday story.

The practice isn't just hypothetical. Since school opened this fall, three suburban districts already have been rocked by potential or real violence.

Police arrested a Clinton Township teenager on Sept. 16 after police say they caught him plotting an attack on Chippewa Valley High School. And in Southfield, Kennedy Elementary School was locked down Sept. 20 after a custodian discovered what looked like a grenade, but turned out to be harmless.

On Sept. 27, a Romeo High School student was stabbed in a hallway before class. Police charged an ex-boyfriend who authorities said walked into the school with an 8-inch kitchen knife.

Such incidents - combined with the recent school siege in Russia - have districts thinking about how to protect students in emergencies.

Some districts are hiring private security firms to probe their buildings for potential problems and conduct exercises and drills.

One of those firms, Clawson-based **Patriot Services Corp.**, has contracts with 28 school districts in southeast Michigan, company President Stephen Potter said.

Information from: The Detroit News, <http://www.detnews.com>

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