TASK FORCE ON SCHOOL SAFETY February 5, 2015

Public Safety Academy - Boardroom

Task Force Members:

~~Richard Evans~~, Craig Roberts, ~~Senator Betsy Johnson~~, ~~Representative Jeff Barker~~, ~~Eriks Gabliks~~, Dave Novotney, ~~Danni Ledezma, Heidi Moawad~~, Geoff Spalding, ~~Ted Kunze~~, Craig Roberts, Susan Graves, Peggy Holstedt, Matt Utterback, Reed Schwalbach, Mindy McCartt

Guests:

Elisa Crebs, Tom Worthy, Mitch Kruska, Todd Anderson, John Van Dreal, Dave Okada, Chris Dorn

Meeting Notes:

1. Welcome- Craig Roberts
    - Officially opened the meeting
    - Introductions
    - Did not have a quorum to approve November meeting minutes

2. RFI Update- Tom Worthy and Mitch Kruska
    - Subcommittee did 5 site visits to get a better understanding of regional needs Salem, Seaside, Pendleton, Bend and Roseburg meetings
    - See Needs Analysis document (pages 5-8)
    - Common ask was: standardized safety plans, ease of use, common language, role-based security, manage data updates at the local level and manage technology updates seamlessly.
    - Features and Benefits was developed
    - What's next:
        i. Finalized Needs Analysis, Matrix, and RFI.
        ii. Post in ORPIN.
        iii. Contract will create and present a comparison report to this task force at the April meeting.

3. Task Force Focus – Craig Roberts

- Peggy gave an update on the PACE, SDAO and the lines from life presentation.
- PACE and Dwight from Lines for life to meet with the people from Colorado's Safe to tell.
- Update will happen at the March meeting. Lisa from PACE will come and give an update to this group on the meeting with Colorado.
- Heidi forwarded information on Michigan's "okay to say tip line" Elisa gave an update
    i. In Michigan they have 3 State Police FTE for a 24-hour tip line.
    ii. It was launched in September 2014.
    iii. Michigan Legislator's granted 3.5 million and is ran the program through the Attorney general's office.
    iv. State Police distributes/delegates to the district.
    v. We still are unaware of the tip lines usage of this tip line or the tracking on the calls.
    vi. This tip line is offered online, by phone and texting.
    vii. The Attorney general has marketing, posters and training available to the schools for free.
    viii. The Cyber initiatives was also used to piggy back on to and to push this through quickly.
- Peggy will be sending out information on the safe schools tip line information to this group. It can be also found on the PACE website.
- More dates for the John Michael I Love you Guys presentation will be sent out as well.
- Peggy can only tell us how many people have been trained on I Love you guys, but we do not know how many schools are using it.
- Update on Common Terms: Todd Anderson
    i. See handout
    ii. The group came to the consensus about the terms but not the definitions. Group also agreed on using the Do the Drill handout.
    iii. (Claire McGrew –Do the Drill- OSFM)

iv. Greatest amount of debate around definitions (Lockout) might need additional assistance by legal counsel to ensure we are not walking into any liability.
v. Task force needs to do some more work on the resources (I Love you guy, etc.)
vi. Need to build a larger focus group to better define the terms
vii. OSFM offered to get there group with our group to assist with defining the terms
viii. We will need to vote on the terms at the March meeting.
ix. In the meantime, the subcommittee to get together a list of who should sit on the committee to help with the definitions.

4. Threat Assessment- John Van Dreal and Lt. Dave Okada
   - See PowerPoint (pages 9-14)
   - Threat assessment website: http://www.studentthreatassessment.org
   - Book: Assessing Student Threats: A handbook for implementing the Salem-Keizer system, Rowman and Littlefield can be found on the amazon website
   - Comprehensive training: Willamette University October 13-15, 2015
     i. Youth and adult threat assessment
     ii. Campus security
     iii. Domestic Violence
     iv. Protocols, templates, process guides
     v. Implementation of system
   - The protocol is the expert (It is the utility that works)
   - This model is based on the Secret Service.
   - To ensure positive outcome the community support between schools, law enforcement, mental health and others is essential.
   - Estimated timeline: Hit a radar at 8 am and have the ability to reach the team by that afternoon. (Schools, Mental Health and Law Enforcement)
   - How to measure: You cannot really measure what never happens, but you can measure the supported that the schools and community feel.
   - Both FERPA and HIPPA have a emanate safety clause.

- Every year there has been at least one case that has been targeted violence stopped.
- The US Department of Ed and Law Enforcement really deem this model as Best Practices.
- Time commitment is not great, but the training is crucial.
- Association of Threat Assessment Professionals- Conference in Anaheim, CA- non profit

5. Climate Prevention and Emergency Response- Mitch Kruska
    - Mitch is going to have his staff come to the next task force meeting and give a presentation on what the Department of Education's position.
    - The areas that will be discussed are what the Department is working (bullying, cyber bullying, exclusion policies and how we do it differently (best practices and implementation)),
    - What the Department of Education requires from schools around polices and school safety

6. Next Steps
    - Have Claire McGrew come to the next meeting to discuss the Do the Drill document and future of it.
    - Tip line update-
    - Massachusetts task force document discussion- (pages 15-50)
    - Mitch presentation
    - Vote on Terminology, Resources, Tip-line
    - Identify a group to be created to assist with defining the terms
    - Reed is going to coordinate with Peggy to review some of the bills that are coming up in front of this legislative year

HB 4087 Task Force on School Safety

Needs Analysis

Executive Summary

This document describes the features and benefits identified by local school safety personnel for the utility of a web-accessible statewide database for school floor plans and related facilities information as ordered by HB 4087. The findings established a list of 31 features needed to support the four responses that schools have to emergencies: "seal everyone in the school, seal everyone out of the school, evacuate the area, and provide emergency shelter."

Needs Analysis Methodology

State police and education staff met with local schools superintendents, their designees, and emergency responders ("customers") from Portland, Salem, Seaside, Astoria, Pendleton, Bend, and Roseburg during January 2015. In five two-hour sessions, customers identified benefits they expected, and features that would be needed. State presenters described HB 4087 walked through a draft list of features to start discussion. The following table lists validated features proposed or approved by the regional representatives.

Feature	Benefit to Customer
System solution with school details enables any emergency responder in any building-level or community-level emergency to get your facility's details	Saves time for fire, medical, and police responders searching for entrances, exits, shut-off valves, and other key information--as fast as the web can deliver it
Web access via multiple electronic methods	Common access to common information, not dependent on one particular platform. Reduces response time in emergency. Enables information sharing among emergency responders
Visual information, such as maps, floor plans, diagrams, and plans about your facility can be stored by you and retrieved by emergency responders and others	Helps emergency responders assess the magnitude of damage, plan the tactical response, interpret the scene at the school, and navigate to people needing help

Feature	Benefit to Customer
Visual information about your facility can be stored and retrieved by emergency responders or other authorized users	Shows the actual spaces and clearances for your facility. Helps you and others direct evacuations or moves, clarifies live descriptions of where problems or aid can be found
Standard and easily understood naming conventions define the data	Enables you to retrieve information by a tag
Indexing enables ability to assign tags for data retrieval according to emergency respondent's specific need and location	Enables you to assign a tag for information that you need in real-time, enables sorting by another attribute than file type or document name
Visual information about your facility can be stored and retrieved by emergency responders and others	Supports rapid understanding of facility navigation and possibility of using a picture as a common tactical planning aid
Database contains all school safety plans based upon with standardized data as defined by a template	Ensures all safety plans are navigable and understandable by anyone that uses the system solution
Database contains all school safety plans	Ensures that all safety plans and protocols for a given school facility can be found online in one place
Database contains all the options for approved school safety plans	Schools that do not have plans and protocols in place can choose a pre-approved plan for facility-wide emergency plans
The system solution shall contain all the templates for school safety plans	You can find and use the template for the safety plans you need to file
High availability, redundancy, and disaster recovery	Even if some components or communication paths are down due to weather or other conditions, web-enabled access makes it unlikely that all paths will go down at once
Off-the-shelf system or enhancement to existing systems, or application development to assure a standard platform configured for school safety needs	Standard application programming interfaces to web services simplify setup and configuration
Standard training is available right out of the box and options are also available	Minimal training time; training doesn't require additional expense by the school and can be done on-the-job
User interface will help novice users and enable shortcuts as novices become expert users	Easy-to-use system doesn't require training before use. Novices can get routine updates done without books and classes and discover only those features they're authorized to use
Role-based security	Only people with need-to-know can access specific information. Solution accommodates whatever structure government takes in a given locality and supports multiple roles. Absorbs routine, frequently needed, or critical data, enabling school safety staff to focus on problems requiring personal attention and discretionary judgment
The system solution shall include data-driven triggers when a plan reaches its expiration date	You'll get notifications when a plan is about to expire
Affordable	*Handled in introduction: local schools are not expected to pay for this as an unfunded mandate.*
Ability to manage updates to the system solution	Technical updates for maintenance can be scheduled well in advance
Ability to manage updates to the data in the system solution	Facility updates—new construction and other changes—can be made when you want them. A statewide content management system enables consistency in the data and opportunity to review rate of change in the data, enabling a statewide profiling of school safety efforts
User-configurable options	You can see the information you are most likely to need
Ability to shut down all or part of the system	If compromised, you don't have to shut down all of the system, only the affected sections
Ability to block access by a specific device	If a user's device is lost or stolen, it cannot be used to access the system as a trusted device—part of a multi-layered security model
Solution can be adopted in stages or all-at-once	Enables progressive buildout as users are ready and funds are available

Feature	Benefit to Customer
Solution supports communications outreach to external stakeholders	Media messages and parent outreach help control panic, focus attention, and constrain irresponsible reporting and social media-driven dynamics
Solution enables possibility of reduced insurance premium from PACE	Efforts to reduce risk to life and property with enhanced safety enable reassessment of risk and less stress on school budgets
Local autonomy balanced by domain consistency	Local people remain in charge of their schools, and have opportunities to learn, review, and adopt each other's best practices as they see fit.
Subject-matter experts in school safety can share information without having to personally tell or train others	Reduces or eliminates single point of failure for data, especially in understaffed areas or rural districts
Supports more variety, comprehensiveness, consistency, and usage of safety training and drills	Enables support and accountability for schools that do not have all four types of emergency response drills in place. Reinforces protocol consistency, so transfers and substitute teachers and other staff have a common operating knowledge of what to do in an emergency
Enables hardcopy or download of information to mobile devices	Enables immediate personal access of information for emergency responder if it appears that communications connections may be lost
Solution accommodates school safety-related data for all possible emergencies, not just one or two	Solution provides data for decision support throughout the life cycle of the emergency

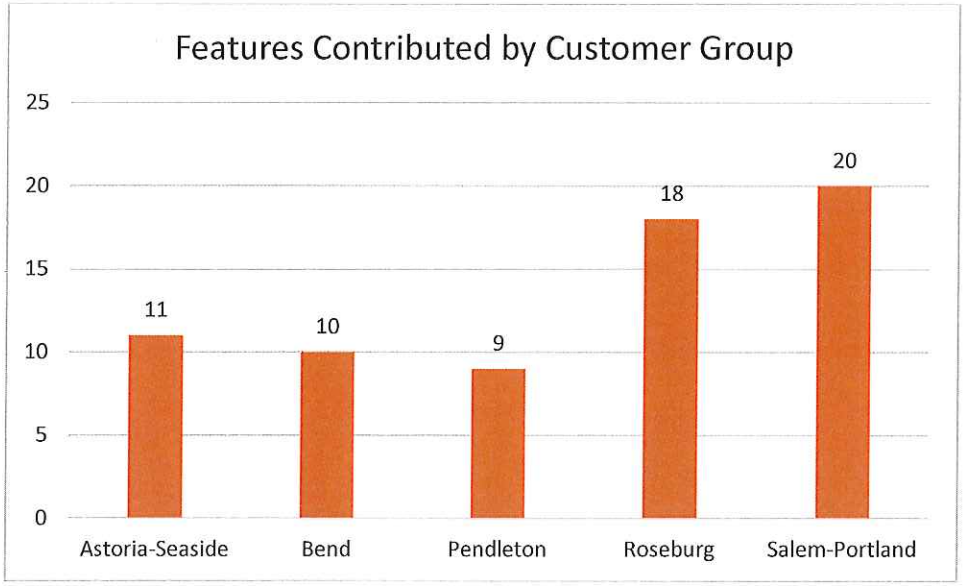
Top-of-Mind: the Six Most Obvious Needs

The following features were universally top-of-mind, meaning that at least four of five meetings introduced them or discussed them. This behavior shows these elements are top-of-mind, although it does not suggest priority or significance as much as "obviousness."

- Standard and easily understood naming conventions define the data
- Standard training is available right out of the box and [training] options are also available
- Database contains all the options for approved school safety plans
- Role-based security
- Ability to manage updates to the system solution (technical infrastructure)
- Ability to manage updates to the data in the system solution (local content updates)

Customer-Driven Data: Customer Contributions are a Significant Percentage of the Features List

Customer influence on the feature list reflected population density, with the most features being introduced or commented on by the densest regional populations. The following chart shows the number of features explicitly proposed or discussed as a priority by each regional group. While there is significant overlap, it cannot be said that the two largest groups include all the features discussed by the smaller groups.



For this reason, we do not conclude that the number of features can be reduced. No one wanted to drop any feature, because the associated benefits were meaningful to the customers. Needs were different enough among the regions that the group of 31 features identified in this document appear to be comprehensive without being redundant.

AN INTRODUCTION TO A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM FOR THREAT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS

John Van Dreal, School Psychologist Salem-Keizer Schools
vandreal_john@salkeiz.k12.or.us
Dave Okada, Lt. Salem Police Department
dokada@cityofsalem.net

Website
http://www.studentthreatassessment.org

The presentation will:

- Briefly review basic concepts regarding youth aggression within the schools.
- Note the research pertaining to extreme aggression (called violence) in the schools.
- Review an established system (since 2000) for assessing potential school violence and decreasing its impact.
- Provide a case example of a potentially violent situation that was managed through this system.

Assessing Student Threats: A Handbook for Implementing the Salem-Keizer System
Edited by John Van Dreal
(VanDreal, Swinehart, Speckmier, Elliott, Rainwater, Okada, Spady, Mendoza, Byrd)

Rowman and Littlefield
(800) 462-6420.
email orders@rowman.com.
website http://www.rowmanlittlefield.com/

COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING
Willamette University
Oct. 13-15, 2015

- Youth and adult threat assessment
- Campus security
- Domestic violence
- Protocols, templates, process guides
- Implementation of system

Website
http://www.willamette.edu/events/tat/

SCHOOL CLIMATE

1. Assess the emotional climate. Promote listening and paying attention.
2. Adopt a strong, but caring position against the "code of silence."
3. Implement systems to prevent and intervene in bullying.
4. Involve all members of the school community in creating a safe and respectful school culture.
5. Foster and develop trusting relationships between each student and at least one adult at school.
6. Create mechanisms for sustaining a safe school climate (such as a system that assesses and manages potential violence.)

5

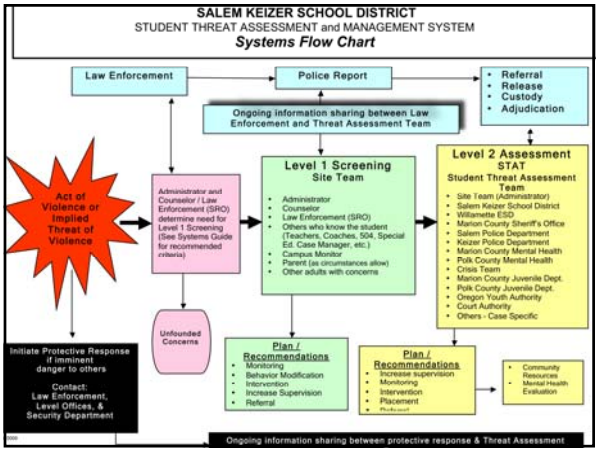
JUSTIFICATIONS

1. Concerns regarding violence and school safety.
2. Response to Oregon House Bill 3444 and Senate Bill 344 (now ORS 339.250).
3. Zero-Tolerance Policy and expulsion. Reactive measures.
4. Psychological Safety.

6

Who are the members of our Team?

- Salem-Keizer School District
- Willamette Educational Service District
- Marion County Sheriff's Office
- Salem Police Department
- Keizer Police Department
- Marion County District Attorney's Office
- Marion and Polk County Health Departments
- Oregon Youth Authority
- Marion and Polk County Juvenile Departments
- Chemeketa Community College
- Dallas Police Department
- Willamette Univiersity



AGGRESSION CONTINUUM
(from Eric M. Johnson, PhD.)

Bombing
Shooting
Raping
Beating
Stabbing
Strangulation
(Violent Aggression: serious or lethal injury)
Sexual coercion
Fighting
Hitting with objects
Throwing objects
Slugging
Kicking
Scratching
Biting
Slapping
Pushing
(Aggression Behavior: low to moderate injury)

WHAT IS THREAT ASSESSMENT?

As defined by the Secret Service (*Threat Assessment in Schools* pg. 29): "The primary purpose of a threat assessment is to prevent targeted violence. The threat assessment process is centered upon analysis of the facts and evidence of behavior in a given situation. The appraisal of risk in a threat assessment focuses on actions, communications, and specific circumstances that might suggest that an individual intends to mount an attack and is engaged in planning or preparing for that event."

In other words, it is the assessment of the "unique" interaction and dynamics between the perpetrator, the target and the situation they share. The question is "does the student 'pose' a threat," not "did the student 'make' a threat."

We do not do:
- Predictive Profiling.
- Enhanced Professional Judgment
- Artificial Intuition
- Future Predictions
- Labels

TARGETED AND REACTIVE VIOLENCE

- REACTIVE / AFFECTIVE
  violence or aggression?
- TARGETED / PREDATORY
  violence or aggression?

Targeted Violence Type (process)

Implementation

Preparation

Planning

Ideation

Advantages of a Threat Assessment System

- Shared ownership, shared responsibility. Decreased liability.
- Multi-discipline, multi-agency.
- Expeditious but methodical.
- Community collaboration and ownership.
- Identification of risk in clear terms.
- Interventions and supervision strategies that fit the situation and accurately address risk.
- Promotes observation and supervision.
- Increases both the physical safety of a community and the psychological sense of safety.

Organizing a system

- Need, justification and authorization.
- Community ownership, commitment, and responsibility.
- Policy and procedures necessary for functioning. (Legal counsel)
- Organize resources, design system and refine.
- Training, implementation, more training.
- Maintenance of program, trouble-shooting and ongoing training.

94% of administrators stated that:

- STAT effectively identified potentially dangerous students and situations.
- STAT had positive effects on school safety.
- STAT provided important information necessary for support, discipline, and placement decisions.
- STAT fulfills a valuable role in schools.

In the same survey, 90% of administrators reported that STAT increased efficient coordination with law enforcement and mental health.

Updated FERPA Regulations
January 2009

The new regulations impose a "rational basis" test on a school's decisions to disclose information in emergency situations. "The Department [of Education] will not substitute its judgment for that of the agency or institution if, based on the information available at the time ... there is a rational basis for the agency's or institution's determination that a health or safety emergency exists."

Leroy Rooker says:

(Director of the US. Department of Education's Family Policy Compliance Office)

- "We wanted to strike that balance between privacy and safety and certainly emphasize that safety on a campus is paramount. As long as you can articulate what that emergency was, we're not going to be in the business of second-guessing you on that."
- Still, according to the new rules, administrators must document what emergency circumstances prompted their decision to disclose information.

Oregon statute or administrative rules that promote shared information regarding health and safety risk:

- **ORS 336.187 A and B allow discussion and protective reporting.**
- **ORS 339.312 suggests safe schools alliance between schools, Juv. Justice and law enforcement.**
- **OAR 581-021-0380 outlines health and safety emergencies that obligate discussion and reporting.**

Massachusetts Task Force Report on

School Safety and Security

PRESENTED TO:

Governor Deval L. Patrick

JULY 2014

PREVENT | PREPARE | RESPOND | RECOVER

Co-Chairs

Secretary of Public Safety Andrea J. Cabral
Secretary of Education Matthew H. Malone
Secretary of Health and Human Services John W. Polanowicz

Task Force Membership

Lieutenant Colonel Edward Amodeo, Massachusetts State Police

Kathy Betts, Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary for Children Youth and Families

Senator Sonia Chang-Díaz, Senate Chair Joint Committee on Education

Dr. Mary Czajkowski, Barnstable Public Schools Superintendent, *Representative of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents*

Senator Sal DiDomenico, *Designee of the Massachusetts Senate President*

Jean Fay, Amherst Public Schools paraprofessional, *Representative of the Massachusetts Teachers Association*

Thomas Gatzunis, Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Public Safety

Anne Gilligan, Safe and Healthy Schools Coordinator, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Chief Russell Jenkins, Braintree Police Department, *Representative of the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association*

Jack McCarthy, Executive Director of the Massachusetts School Building Authority

John MacDonald, Crisis Liaison/School Social Worker, Boston Public Schools

Representative Hank Naughton, Jr., House Chair Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security

David Nguyen, Everett High School student

Representative Alice Peisch, House Chair Joint Committee on Education

Kurt Schwartz, Undersecretary, Homeland Security and Emergency Management, Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

Lieutenant Scott Sencabaugh, Wilmington Police Department, NEMLEC STARS Commander, Designee of the Senate Minority Leader

Representative Theodore C. Speliotis, *Designee of the Massachusetts Speaker of the House*

Christopher Sutton, Kiley Middle School Principal, Springfield

Michael Thomas, Brockton Public Schools Deputy Superintendent of Operations

Senator James Timilty, Senate Chair Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security

Christine Viens, West Springfield Public Schools, Director of Health Services for the West Springfield Public Schools

Sergeant Timothy Whelan, (Massachusetts State Police, Retired) *Designee of the House Minority Leader.*

Special Advisors and Contributors

Dr. Larry Berkowitz, Riverside Trauma Center

Superintendent Melinda Boone, Worcester Public Schools

Officer Edward Burman, Ashland Police

Trooper James Carmichael, Massachusetts State Police

State Fire Marshall Stephen Coan

Superintendent Patrick Collins, Assabet Valley Regional School District

Peter Dolan, Assistant Principal, Linden STEAM Academy, Malden

David Finney, AIA LEED Boston Society of Architects/ Design Partnership of Cambridge Inc.

Sergeant Richard Gawron, Massachusetts State Police

Lieutenant Robert Haughey, Franklin County Sheriff's Office

Michael Kass, Massachusetts Region 3 EMS director

Dr. Robert D. Macy, International Trauma Center

Officer Nicholas Pasquarosa, Jr., Yarmouth Police Department

Superintendent Judith A. Scannell, Methuen Public Schools

Chief Joseph Solomon, Methuen Police

Tina Stanislaski, AIA LEED, Boston Society of Architects/ HMFH Architects Inc.

Detective Chip Yeaton, Canton Police

Meeting Location Hosts

Amherst-Pelham Regional School District
Arlington Public Schools
Boston Teachers Union Hall
Brockton High School
Canton Public Schools
Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District
Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency
Methuen Public Schools
WGBH
Worcester Public Schools

* *

Claudia Henderson, Chief of Staff
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Executive Office of Education

Report Writer: Sara Stoutland

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

July 2014

To the Citizens of the Commonwealth,

In January of this year, Governor Deval Patrick signed Executive Order 548 establishing a Cross-Secretariat Task Force on School Safety and Security, with the Secretaries of the Executive Offices of Education, Health and Human Services, and Public Safety as co-chairs. The Task Force held meetings in locations throughout the Commonwealth and heard from teachers, superintendents, parents, students, law enforcement and experts from a variety of fields who presented their research and discussed best practices. This type of strategic cross-collaboration forced us to work outside silos. In many ways, this report is emblematic of the collaboration we expect to see happening at the municipal level as local communities work to strengthen school safety and security.

We recognize that school safety decisions must be made at the local level and that resources vary from district to district. This report is not intended to be an exhaustive list of practices and policies, but rather guidance on steps that you can take to ensure your school is positioned to prevent, prepare and respond to, as well as recover from an emergency. In the pages that follow you will find a framework of options designed to help inform and strengthen those decisions. Our recommendations are meant to set the stage for what is possible and to spark conversation and collaboration. It should go without saying, none of this is possible overnight and as a Commonwealth we will need time to fully achieve the goals we present here.

Massachusetts leads the nation in student achievement, but we also know that children who do not feel safe at school suffer academically. It is incumbent upon us as adults to provide those safe learning environments within our schools so that our teachers can focus on closing achievement gaps and increasing opportunities. We say this throughout the report and re-iterate it here: Partnership – within school leadership, with parents, first responders, municipal officials, community service providers and law enforcement – is the key.

Massachusetts is a great place to raise and educate a family. We are all committed to ensuring that all of our students attend a school that is safe, welcoming and nurturing. Thank you for being our partner in that work.

Andrea J. Cabral Secretary of Public Safety	Matthew H. Malone Secretary of Education	John W. Polanowicz Secretary of Health and Human Services

Dear fellow students:

As the student representative who was appointed to Governor Patrick's School Safety and Security Task Force I wanted to share with you what I learned through this process. We worked on ways to help schools, teachers, staff and students prevent, prepare, respond and recover from school safety issues. One of the most important things I learned is that students can and should be active participants in making sure our schools are safe and secure. Our teachers are there to educate us, but they are also available to help us stay safe. There are teachers at all of our schools who care about students and want to have a positive relationship with them. You should feel encouraged to tell a teacher if you're having trouble at home, school or somewhere else. We don't need to deal with tough things on our own. Find someone you respect and trust. There is an adult that you can talk to no matter how tough things seem. When it comes to school safety, teachers and students can work together to create a safe and positive environment for everyone.

Sincerely,

David Q. Nguyen
Everett High School
Everett, Massachusetts

Table of Contents | School Safety and Security Task Force

INTRODUCTION

Overview of Report 2
Key Definitions: Hazards, Threats, Incident 3
The Emergency Management Cycle 3
The Law: Massachusetts Statutes and Mandates 4

SECTION 1: District Leaders - Collaboration, Communication, Guidance

Work as a Team for the Town 5
Collaboration on the Ground 5
Emergency Management Planning Structures 6
Communication and Planning 7
Common Procedures Tailored to Fit a Particular School 7
Safety Assessments 8
STARS: A Regional Collaboration 8
The Importance of Effective School Resource Officers 9

SECTION 2: Prevent

A Positive School Climate: Building the Foundation for a Safe and Supportive School 11
Building and Grounds and CPTED 12
Security Measures 13
Fire Safety 14
Assessing Threats and Threatening Behavior 14

SECTION 3: Prepare

Assigning Roles and Responsibilities 16
Whole School Protocols
Evacuation, Shelter-in-place, Lockdown, and Student Release 16
Don't Miss the Bus: School Bus Safety Protocols 17
Tool kits: Gathering Essential Emergency Response Resources 17
Orientation and Training: Everyone Participates 18
Who does "everyone" mean? 18
Drill the Plans 19
Sample of Training Script for a Lockdown for Early Elementary Teachers 20

SECTION 4: Respond

Respond: Something is Happening Now! 21

SECTION 5: Recover

Physical and Psychological Recovery 23
How Students May React Differently to the Same Incident 24
Police and School Communication: Helping Students Recover from Trauma 25
Psychological First Aid for Schools 26
Physical Facilities and Infrastructure: Don't Forget the Building 25
External Communications 25

SECTION 6: Considerations / Recommendations

Building-level / District-level / State-level 27

REFERENCES 30

"No child will be able to succeed academically if they don't first feel safe in school. No teacher will be able to teach at their best if they aren't confident there's a plan in place to ensure their school is well prepared for an emergency." – Governor Deval Patrick, Jan. 16, 2014

Careful Planning is the Best Way to Ensure Schools are Safe Places to Learn

This report offers recommendations to Massachusetts school leaders, including public districts, charter schools, independent schools and parochial schools, on making schools safe without compromising educational goals. It was drafted by the School Safety and Security Task Force established by Governor Patrick in January 2014. This Task Force was charged with developing a framework to enhance school safety and security through synthesizing current wisdom and best practices from a range of disciplines. (Task Force members are listed on the inside cover.) Physical and psychological safety are both prerequisites for learning. The report seeks to identify strategies that:

1 Reduce the risk of and improve the response to threats and hazards of all sorts.

2 Enhance a school's capacity to help students learn during regular school days.

This report is meant as a ready guide for approaching policies and practices to ensure students both feel safe and are safe in K-12 schools. Even though we are always in the midst of the emergency management cycle, we invite readers to take a moment to step back and learn about school emergency management from leading experts in education, law enforcement, fire, emergency medical, emergency management and trauma recovery services.

Overview of Report

The Emergency Management Cycle (EMC) serves as the framework for this report. In section one, the focus is on district-level leadership, particularly the Emergency Management Team. **Section One** highlights the importance of this team collaborating among themselves and communicating with all other stakeholders. In particular, the Emergency Management Team provides its schools with directives for common safety protocols along with guidance on how to tailor these protocols to a particular school's needs.

In the following sections, the report takes up each of the components of the Emergency Management Cycle (below) and considers key issues and some best practices in each of them. **Section Two** looks at preventing hazards and threats, including: the importance of a positive school climate, design and maintenance of school buildings, security measures, and fire safety.

Section Three considers how to prepare for potential incidents at schools to ensure effective emergency response to any incident. It emphasizes the critical nature of setting up a school's incident management structure as well as understanding those used by first responders. Next in this section, four essential whole school protocols are described: Evacuation, Shelter-in-Place, Lockdown, and Student Release. The importance of training in and exercising of these protocols is discussed. **Section Four** looks at key issues in responding to an incident, with a focus on the role of school staff.

In **Section Five**, key issues in preparing for recovery and recovering are reviewed. These are physical and psychological safety, physical facilities, and external communication. Finally, in Section Six, the task force offers recommendations for improving school emergency management at the building-, district- and state-level.

Key Definitions for this Report

HAZARDS:
Situations involving risk of harm to people or property. Hazards include naturally, technologically, or human-caused incidents.

THREATS:
A sub-set of hazards. Refers to the risk of an incident occurring where a person(s) intentionally causes harm to self or others. For example, physical attacks with or without a weapon, violent intruder, terrorism, bomb threat.

INCIDENT:
An occurrence of a hazard or threat. Other terms often used include 'event,' 'crisis,' 'emergency.'

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR:
Every city and town in the Commonwealth has an appointed Emergency Management Director who is responsible for coordinating the community's efforts to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from incidents of all sorts. The Emergency Management Director works with local police, fire, emergency medical services, public health, building officials and other municipal leaders as well as members of the private and non-profit sectors to build an effective emergency management program.

FIRST RESPONDERS:
Personnel who first arrive at the scene of an incident and take action to save lives, protect property and meet basic human needs. This includes law enforcement, fire, emergency medical, emergency management and public health personnel.

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS (SRO):
The SRO is a commissioned law enforcement officer who is specially trained to work within a school community to prevent and respond to unlawful behavior, including disorderly or violent acts. An SRO's roles include educator, informal counselor and law enforcement officer. (see p. 9 for more information on SRO's)

The Emergency Management Cycle: Prevent, Prepare, Respond, and Recover

The Emergency Management Cycle is a framework to plan for all aspects of emergency management. It is the framework mandated by the federal government and used most often by emergency responders.

The **PREVENT** phase aims to avoid the occurrence of incidents or lessen the harm done by unavoidable incidents. Often this phase is called prevention and mitigation. Prevention refers to actions aimed at stopping incidents from occurring, while mitigation refers to actions aimed at reducing the harm done by unavoidable incidents. For example, a monitored main entrance with all other external doors locked is a prevention strategy to keep intruders out. Reinforced concrete is a mitigation strategy to reduce harm from earthquakes. (Page 11)

The **PREPARE** phase is the process of preparing for incidents. Effective preparedness requires planning for worst-case scenarios. It involves a continuous cycle of planning, practicing, and evaluating actions aimed at effective response to an incident. Its goal is to minimize psychological and physical harm as incidents occur. Training and drills are a critical part of preparedness. Note that the preparation and prevention phases occur at the same time and are on-going. (Page 15)

The **RESPOND** phase includes the steps taken to minimize harm to people and property during a particular incident. Its focus is on the short-term, direct effects of an incident and requires tight coordination and rapid action among all participants. This includes executing the emergency plans developed and practiced in the Prepare phase. (Page 21)

The **RECOVER** phase is concerned with restoring the learning and teaching environment after an incident. It is the process of mending the physical and psychological health of school community members, as well as restoring its physical facilities to re-establish a positive learning environment. Its aim is to develop and implement plans to ensure school services and facilities are restored. In addition, recovery includes evaluating the incident and the response to it in order to revise and improve Safety Plans. (Page 25)

The Law: School Safety and Massachusetts State Laws

Below are three laws directed specifically at school safety. Note there are not yet any laws addressing shelter-in-place, lockdown, or family reunification plans. Future legislative deliberations should be encouraged to consider streamlining requirements into one comprehensive law.

I. Multi-Hazard Evacuation Plans for Schools

(Section 363 of Chapter 159 of the Acts of 2000). This law requires that the superintendent of each school district meet with the fire and police chiefs to formulate a school specific, "multi-hazard evacuation plan" for each school under the superintendent's supervision. The multi-hazard evacuation plan must include fire and hazardous storms or disasters, as well as shootings, bomb threats, or terrorist activities. The evacuation plan must be designed specifically for each building and include: 1) a crisis response team; 2) a designated manager of an incident, as well as substitutes; 3) a communication plan; and 4) protocols for safe and effective evacuations.

II. Medical Emergency Response Plan for Schools

(Chapter 77 of the Acts of 2012). All public elementary, middle, secondary, and charter schools are required to develop a Medical Emergency Response plan. The purpose of the plan is to: 1) reduce the incidence of life-threatening emergencies and 2) promote efficient responses to such emergencies. Though the district may have an overall plan and protocols, each school must have its own Medical Emergency Response plan with details specific to its location and education program. The plan must be developed in consultation with the school nurse, school athletic team physicians, coaches, trainers, and the local emergency medical services agency. The school is required to practice a response sequence at the beginning of each school year and periodically throughout the year.

III. Anti-bullying Efforts in Schools

(Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010). This law requires all schools in the Commonwealth (public, charter, private, parochial, special education day or residential school, collaborative school) to develop and implement a plan to address bullying prevention and intervention in their school. The plan must have clear procedures for promptly responding to and investigating reports of bullying or retaliation and clear procedures for restoring a target's sense of safety. In addition, each district or school shall provide age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention to all students, through the implementation of an evidence-based curriculum. The plan must be updated at least every other year.

Collaboration and Coordination are Key to Effective Emergency Management in Schools.

Members of the school district's **Emergency Management Team** are responsible for the safety of schools in their municipality. They drive the schools' emergency management cycle. It is up to these leaders to ensure all schools in their district receive on-going support from each of their respective departments. Only then can schools competently prevent, prepare, respond, and recover from hazards and threats.

Work as a Team

To enhance their ability to work together effectively, Emergency Management Team members may choose to spend time building trust among themselves. To foster meaningful collaboration and a "team" mentality, these key municipal leaders need to understand and respect each other's responsibilities and expertise. These leaders should become familiar with the current frameworks, vocabulary, and organizational structure in each of their fields. With this knowledge, they can more productively differentiate and define their roles and responsibilities for improving safety and security in their schools.

The District Emergency Management Team:

- ☑ School Superintendent
- ☑ Emergency Management Director
- ☑ Chief of Police
- ☑ Fire Chief/Emergency Medical
- ☑ Town Manager/Mayor

Members of the Emergency Management Team Working Collaboratively:

- Communicate regularly with stake-holders and community members about all aspects of school emergency management.
- Provide guidance and directives regarding building-level emergency management to school, police, fire, and emergency medical personnel.

Emergency Management, in schools and beyond, is a continuous concern requiring on-going action at all levels. The district-level Emergency Management Team serves as role models for the School Crisis Response teams who must cooperate and coordinate at the building-level to ensure a school and its students are safe. **To be an engaged, collaborative working group of leaders, the Emergency Management Team should meet at least once a month.**

A Collaborating Community: One Thing Leads to Another

The make-up of an Emergency Management Team, as well as how it collaborates, varies from town to town and can be influenced by a variety of factors. For example, in one medium-sized district on the Cape, collaboration around School Emergency Management has been shaped by the consolidation of the town's human resource and financial functions. The school superintendent and town manager meet weekly with their shared financial and human resource staff. This administrative arrangement has fueled communication at all levels in the town, including school emergency management.

This town's district Emergency Management team is made up of the School Superintendent, the Town Maanager who serves as the town's Emergency Management Director, the Police Chief and the Fire Chief representing the five fire districts serving the school district. As the town manager, school superintendent and other town officials work on the capital improvement budget, the police chief is included in discussions of school building capital improvements that enhance school safety (e.g., door buzzers, locking doors).

In addition, these regularly scheduled administrative meetings enable ease of communication during emergency management exercises. For example, the State and Federal Emergency Management agencies ran a tabletop drill for an active school shooter incident with the district's Emergency Management Team. During the exercise, everyone was supportive of the chain of command. While it took place in a school, they understood the police were in charge and others were in a supportive role. The department of public works had to be ready to secure a perimeter. The schools needed to account for all students and staff Working closely together for this team was nothing new. Whether it was to save lives and property or plan a budget, town leaders regularly collaborated to meet common goals.

A Community Collaborates: Just Get Serious.

Another district's story of active collaboration began a couple of years before the tragic school shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut. This suburban district took a look at its own school emergency preparedness and found it wanting. They did not have up-to-date policies and procedures; personnel were not trained or equipped to execute the policies and practices that were in place; and finally, police, fire, and educators were not on the same page about the district's emergency management preparedness. In response, the school committee voted to mandate emergency management policies. To improve upon its emergency preparedness capacity, the district's Emergency Management Team was re-configured to include a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including representatives from the health department, public works and mayor's office. The district designated an assistant principal with expertise in emergency management to spearhead the development and implementation of up-to-date policies and protocols. It requires schools to drill emergency protocols several times a year. Perhaps most importantly, the newly formed Emergency Management Team, which meets once a month.

These two school districts illustrate the variation in the make-up of district Emergency Management Teams across the state. In addition, they reveal that while town structures may help collaboration, the success of collaboration depends upon the determination of the town leaders.

Emergency Management Planning Structure

DISTRICT-LEVEL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TEAM

Oversees all aspects of a school district's emergency management process. Provides directives for the district's building-level School Safety Plans, including district-wide policies and procedures, as well as guidance on tailoring a plan to meet a school's particular circumstances. **The team often consists of the superintendent of school, police chief, fire chief, emergency management director, and mayor/town manager.** Larger districts with a separate Emergency Medical Services (EMS) department have the EMS director as a member. In towns with more than one fire or police district, the chiefs of those districts must cooperate to ensure the school district receives adequate leadership in that area.

SCHOOL-LEVEL CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM

Responds to any incident impacting the school and, for effective communication, with first responders during any incident. It also takes responsibility for developing and reviewing the school's Safety Plan. Members include the school principal, assistant principal, teachers, school resource officer, nurse, school behavioral health professional, and maintenance staff. The team plans, executes, and reviews drills. All team members are trained in the basics of the Incident Command System (ICS) to increase their capacity to work with first responders. Each Crisis Response Team has a management structure to designate the roles of each member, including the person in command. Successive alternates are identified for each role.

A SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN

Details the procedures and protocols to prevent, prepare, respond, and recover from potential hazards and threats to a school. The plan is tailored to meet its school's particular situation, while drawing on its district's Emergency Management guidelines.

"People are always saying, 'I didn't think it could happen here.' But you have to think, 'It could happen in our town.'"

– Tom Lynch, Barnstable Town Manager

Communication and Planning

Emergency Management Team members are responsible for creating two-way communication with stakeholders at the district-level. It is their job to keep the community up-to-date on school emergency management issues and to solicit community members' views on current hazards and threats, as well as how to address them. Especially as they develop directives and guidance for building-level issues, the Emergency Management team would do well to gather information from many different quarters, including the school committee, principals, parents, and teachers, as well as other school staff, such as School Resources Officers (SRO), guidance, mental health, nursing, athletics, maintenance, food service, and transportation. Team members will want to solicit input from first responders, public health agency staff, youth violence prevention leaders, clergy and local business leaders from their local communities as well. In addition, to gain expertise in specialized areas, they may seek advice from outside experts on topics such as trauma recovery, threat assessment, Crime Prevention through Environmental Design, or accommodations for people with disabilities.

At the building-level, the school's Crisis Response team will want to work with the district's Emergency Management team, as well as stakeholders in their school community. They would do well to reach out to: classroom, special education, and subject specialist teachers; guidance, nursing, secretarial, maintenance, food service and transportation staff; parents and students; and neighborhood leaders. Including such a broad range of school community members allows for a more solid and comprehensive School Safety Plan and results in more buy-in as the school runs drills and exercises—or responds to incidents.

"Prescribe a common process, not a common solution."

— Jack McCarthy, Executive Director of the Massachusetts School Building Authority

Common Procedures Tailored to Fit a Particular School

A school district neither needs nor wants to "re-invent the wheel" when it comes to emergency management and School Safety Plans. There are many proven emergency policies and practices widely used by emergency responders and adapted for school use, such as the Emergency Management Cycle (Page 3) or the whole school protocols, such as evacuation or lockdown. Prescribing commonly used policies and protocols not only improves in-district coordination, it also means out-of-district first responders and counseling staff will be familiar with the school's protocols and hence, be more effective.

While adopting proven and commonly used frameworks and procedures is key, if they are to be effective on the ground, they must be tailored to a school's particular circumstances. The district-level Emergency Management team provides guidance to its schools' Crisis Response teams on how to:

1. **Modify procedures for the age and characteristics of the student population.**

   Protocols or training may differ between elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools. For example, the protocol for accounting for students during an incident is more complex at a high school, especially one with an open campus, than at an elementary school.

2. **Accommodate students and staff with disabilities or other special considerations.**

   A district may want to institute an "emergency plan" discussion at students' IEP (Individual Education Plan) meetings.

3. **Adapt common procedures to fit the specifications of the school's building and grounds.**

   For example, see page 13, for Crime Prevention through Environmental Design.

Safety Assessment

In reviewing Emergency Management plans, teams may want to conduct safety assessments in order to better determine a school's current safety vulnerabilities and strengths. These findings then inform the development of a school's Safety Plan. To do this, the Emergency Management team or school Crisis Response team should follow these procedures:

- Identify potential hazards or threats to the school.
- Evaluate the current level of:
  - Risk posed by these identified hazards or threats.
  - Community perceptions of risk posed by these hazards or threats.
- Consider available resources for addressing hazards and threats.
- Decide how to prioritize which hazards or threats the Safety Plan will focus on.

A school will want to identify its building's vulnerabilities and strengths in terms of safety. For example, a vulnerability may be that a school is a twenty-minute drive from emergency medical services. A strength may be that there are several staff trained as first responders. In some cases, a school or district may want to retain a school safety expert on a particular matter – such as an antiquated heating system, emergency communication systems, or suicide prevention – to help them develop plans to address a particularly acute vulnerability.

Prioritizing hazards and threats in school safety plans is often a difficult task. The decisions can rarely be based solely on hard evidence. There is no set formula for how to balance attention on low probability/high impact incidents (e.g., a school shooting) and high probability/low impact incidents (e.g., a child injured on the playground). Moreover, the objective risk of an incident may not always be the overriding concern. At times, a community may be intensely concerned about a very low probability incident and little concerned about a more likely hazard. It is important to take psychological safety seriously. **People not only need to be safe, they need to feel safe, as well.** A district's Emergency Management Team will want to carefully consider the best available information rather than merely relying on current media attention, public opinion, or personal opinion. The goal is to base recommendations on careful consideration of objective risks, perceptions of risk, and available resources.

STARS: A Regional Collaboration

STARS (School Threat Assessment and Response System) of the NEMLEC (Northeastern Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council) is a regional collaboration focused on enhancing school safety and security. STARS is a specialized law enforcement unit that works with local police chiefs (who are NEMLEC member), school superintendents and fire chiefs to support the school districts' emergency management efforts involving threats. STARS is organized around teams made up of highly trained personnel. Team members include representatives from police, school, and fire departments as well an expert in mental health. The STARS teams assist local district to:

- Develop, implement, practice and evaluate school safety plans
- Identify threats and/or causes of violence,
- Create solutions and strategies to address causes of violence.

In addition, the STARS team will respond to calls from a district for assistance during crises or critical incidents. As appropriate, the team may access specialized equipment such as portable metal detectors and x-ray machines, explosives detection canines, or other incident command equipment. Finally, the STARS provides technical experts who work with local leaders to help restore a sense of normalcy to a school community so education may continue.

"Our schools should be a safe haven for students to learn and teachers to teach. This requires a commitment from all school and community stakeholders."

— Dr. Mary A. Czajkowski,
Barnstable Superintendent of Schools

The Importance of Effective School Resource Officers

A School Resource Officer can play a key role in keeping a school both physically and psychologically safe through balancing the three roles of educator, informal counselor, and law enforcement officer. Due to their key roles in school safety, SRO's should have experience as a patrol officer and be properly selected and trained for work in schools at the secondary level. The selection process works best when shared by the superintendent and police chief.

Traits of an Effective School Resource Officer:

1. Truly enjoys working with students and has a deep commitment to helping them. Applies crisis intervention training and skills to help students in crisis.
2. Builds positive relationships with students, staff, and parents both to support students individually and to strengthen cooperation between the school community and the town's police department.
3. Supports students while following through on her/his law enforcement duties. Always treats students and parents with respect and is ready to take as much time as needed to listen and explain patiently to students and parents the reasons for his/her actions. Knows about options beyond arrest and follows through on them when appropriate and safe.
4. Becomes an integral part of the school staff, especially as an active member of the school's Crisis Response Team. Shares knowledge of first responder procedures and protocols.
5. Has a proven ability to work hard, be dependable, and possess high integrity with minimal supervision. The SRO displayed these traits while serving as a patrol officer.

While SROs are less likely to be placed in elementary schools, young students still need to develop positive attitudes toward and relationships with law enforcement officers. Some towns address this need through an "adopt-a-school" program, where each elementary school is assigned a police officer who visits the school weekly and presents safety programs a few times a year. In addition, patrol officers can do regular "walk throughs" at schools.

Photo courtesy of the Governor's Office

School Resource Officers play several important roles: education, counseling, and law enforcement.

"Every single student needs to feel there is some adult in the school to whom they can go for help."

- Matthew Malone, Secretary of Education

Preventing hazards and threats is the ultimate goal of any emergency management system. Making sustainable progress to prevent incidents requires multi-faceted strategies and cross-agency cooperation to enhance:

- Positive school climates
- The design and maintenance of buildings and grounds
- Security measures
- Fire Safety

A Positive School Climate: Building the Foundation for Safe and Supportive Schools

School climate is the foundation upon which schools build their instructional program and their school emergency management system. At the core of safe and supportive schools are relationships of respect and connection between adults and students. A positive school climate increases the chances of students succeeding academically and decreases the chances of them suffering harm from threats or hazards.

There are many models for building and maintaining a positive school climate. These models include the following components:

1. A sharp focus on the cultivation of trusting, respectful, and caring relationships among students, staff and parents. School staff members regularly engage in two-way communications with students and parents. The goal is a "connected community."

2. An orderly and predictable environment that also encourages critical and creative thought.
3. Social curriculum to teach social and emotional skills, including healthy relationships (such as teen dating and violence), conflict resolution, and bullying prevention, as well as self-management and responsible decision-making. For example, playground monitors teach conflict resolution at recess.
4. A positive discipline policy that is consistently and fairly applied with a focus on teaching appropriate behavior rather than punishment.

"When it comes to school safety, teachers and students need to respect each other and work together to create a safe and positive environment."

- David Nguyen, Everett High School Student

5. A system to identify, refer, and support any student who is struggling academically, behaviorally, or socially in school. For example, in middle and high schools, efforts are made so students, staff, and parents are aware of the signs of suicide and know how to refer someone to get help.
6. The above principles are practiced throughout the building during the entire school day.
7. Appropriate facilities and physical surroundings aligned with the above practices.

Design and Maintenance of the Buildings and Grounds

The layout and structure of a school's buildings and grounds greatly influences its capacity to prevent or lessen the impact of threats or hazards. The four principles of "Crime Prevention through Environmental Design" (CPTED) are a framework for considering these issues (see p. 13).

When considering how buildings and grounds enhance school safety, it is necessary to look at all areas of the school at all times of day. For example, how the school's "natural access" set-up works during high traffic times of day (e.g., drop off and pick-up), as well as low traffic (e.g., early morning, late night, and weekends), or how to handle territorial reinforcement during days with high visitor traffic such as polling days.

A Positive School Climate has the Potential to Impact All Phases of the Emergency Management Cycle:

PREVENT:

Students who are connected to school staff and each other may be less prone to engage in harmful behaviors (bullying, harassment, and substance abuse) and more likely to report threatening behavior to a caring adult, allowing school staff to defuse situations before they escalate.

PREPARE:

A school with a predictable and orderly environment is better able to run efficient, organized drills. When students routinely practice orderly and respectful behavior in hallways, students naturally move in an orderly fashion during drills.

RESPOND:

A school that systematically teaches social and emotional skills enables students to better manage their emotions (for example, staying calm) during an incident.

RECOVER:

A school with a deep commitment to providing an orderly, predictable environment, as well as social and emotional support is well placed to help all school community members recover physically and emotionally after an incident.

"What's important is not if a security plan is tight or loose, but whether it is practiced."

- Thomas Gatzunis, Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety

Security Measures: An Ounce of Prevention

No matter how carefully designed a school is to ensure safety, the school is not safe unless the school community uses its safety features as they are intended every day. The following are basic security measures that the task force recommends all schools seriously consider:

Limit access to one main monitored entrance. One of the most important security measures a school can take to prevent intruders or other unwanted visitors is to have only one main entrance where people may enter and which is monitored at all times (with all other outside doors locked). Modified entry plans should be in place for times when there are a large number of visitors, for example, election days or assemblies. While this limited access could be seen as a necessary evil, it can also be serve as a way for a school to consistently connect with students, parent, and visitors. A friendly face or even voice upon entrance is critical for a welcoming community.

The "one door access" strategies only work if staff and students do not let anyone into any other entrances. A known, clear, and workable policy is needed to enforce this. For example, staff can be told to routinely give directions to the main office that guide visitors around the outside of the building. If a staff member determines it is not safe for the visitor to do this (e.g., it's pouring rain and the visitor walks with a cane), they escort the person to the main office. Students are told to never let anyone in, including staff, students or parents. Staff and parents are repeatedly reminded of this, to avoid putting students in confusing situations.

Visible visitor name badges are another measure to increase security while welcoming visitors. Visitor badges allow staff to immediately identify a visitor. Staff can be told to greet all visitors in a friendly fashion and, if possible, to ask them if they need any help. Even frequent visitors (e.g., parent volunteers) are expected to wear visitor badges to set an example.

Ensuring teachers can lock classroom doors from the inside without using a key is another simple security measure that does not interfere with learning. The ability to lock a door quickly and easily during an incident may prevent potential intruders from entering.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

Natural Surveillance – "See and be seen." Arranging physical features to maximize visibility. If people know they can be seen, they are less likely to engage in disorderly, violent, or illegal activity. If they do, others will see them and be able to de-escalate the situation or call for help.

Natural Access Control – "Who gets in and who gets out." Guiding people to areas where you want them to go and out of areas where you don't. For example, having well-marked entrances and exits, guiding visitors to the central office first.

Territorial Reinforcement – "This is our space." Clearly defining the school ground boundaries. Through fencing, landscaping, and signs, it is clear to anyone where the school yard begins. Well-signed roads and paths direct the flow of vehicle and foot traffic to discourage non-school-related traffic from passing through school grounds.

Proper Maintenance – "Fix broken windows." Taking care to ensure building services function properly and safely. For example, removing litter and graffiti promptly; fixing broken windows or doors; keeping hallways clear of junk; caring for landscaping. It is well known that "signs of disorder" attract disorderly behavior that may turn into violent acts.

Reducing opportunities for student disorderly behavior. To reduce student violence, the school can determine where and when disorderly behavior occurs the most, for example, in congested areas or when students have unstructured time (e.g., lunch, just before or after school). Routines or schedules can be switched to decrease congestion (e.g., stagger class schedules, encourage students to take different routes through the building), or staff can be assigned to monitor these areas. For isolated areas, especially those that seem to attract students, video surveillance can be used.

It is worth repeating that security measures only have value if all community members consistently follow them every day.

Fire Safety

There are several strategies for educating students and school about fire safety.

The S.A.F.E (Student Awareness of Fire Education) program is a school and home fire prevention strategy funded by Massachusetts Department of Fire Services. This Pre-K-12 program provides small grants to local fire departments. Firefighters directly deliver age appropriate lessons on fire and life safety to students. "Stop, drop, and roll," and "the importance of practicing escape routes" are examples of concepts taught. In addition to teaching safety strategies, they build student trust in local first responders. They also encourage cooperation between schools and the fire department at the building-level, as firefighters work closely with classroom teachers and health educators.

Juvenile fire setters are another concern for schools and fire departments. One third of school fires are intentionally set. It is particularly important that young students who set fires are identified and taught the dangers of fires; local fire department often have programs specifically for this purpose. For some youth, setting fires is merely curiosity and information on fire safety prevents further actions. For others, setting fires may be a kind of cry for help or indicative of mental health issues. Students whose fire-setting may be a symptom of deeper troubles should be referred to school or outside counseling for evaluation and support.

Since kitchen fires are the leading cause of fires in schools, it may be wise for the district-level Emergency Management Team to provide directives for effective building-level cooperation between schools and firefighters to regularly assess school kitchens for safety vulnerabilities and train kitchen staff.

Assessing Threats and Threatening Behavior

Threat assessment needs to be done carefully by experts. When threat assessment is not done competently, it may cause more harm than good. In particular, a systematic effort to identify potentially violent students should not begin until a school has a robust system for referring students to appropriate professional help. Below are components of an effective strategy to identify and help students who may pose a threat of harm to others or themselves.

- A Threat Assessment Team is made up of trained school-based staff (including principals, guidance, mental health professionals and security), police, and fire personnel, as well as social service agencies, and, if appropriate, clergy.
- Training specific to threat assessment for all Threat Assessment Team members. General mental health, law enforcement, or fire professionals are not necessarily trained in school-based threat assessment. In addition, the Threat Assessment Team would do well to have contact with a trauma expert who can conduct specialized clinical risk assessments when appropriate. Note that this risk assessment is not the same as an emergency psychiatric evaluation.
- A specific process for screening and referring students reported for threatening or violent behavior, consistent with the school or district system for helping all struggling students.
- Specific procedures to handle bomb threats, including procedures for deciding the appropriate level of response given the relatively common occurrence of bomb threats.
- Protocols to encourage staff, students, and parents to report threatening or worrisome behavior. The school community can be made aware that school shooters have almost always told someone in the community of their plans. Reporting threatening or worrisome behavior allows for proper interventions to prevent school violence and help struggling students.
- Providing an anonymous hotline to report threatening behavior. Reports from the hotline are treated with same care as any other report.
- A procedure to track reports of threats and worrisome behaviors over time.

"You need to have a bench. Alternates who can jump in as needed and follow the incident command system during an incident. This means training a broad range of school and district staff in the National Incident Management System."

- Officer Nicholas Pasquarosa, Jr. Yarmouth Police Department

Have a plan. Practice your plan. Improve your plan.

Rapid, coordinated, and effective actions that minimize harm during an incident is the goal of response. If harm is to be minimized, protocols must run smoothly the first time. For an effective response, before incidents occur, emergency procedures need to be developed through several cycles of plan, practice, and review. This cycle is the prepare phase. It's about getting ready to respond.

Based on the district-level Emergency Management Team's directives and a school's particular situation, the School Crisis Response Team develops detailed response policies for:

1. **Assigning roles and responsibilities during an incident**
2. **Whole school protocols including:**

   Evacuation — Lockdown
   Shelter-in-place — Student Release/Family Reunification

3. **Procedures for specific types of incidents**

For each of these, a school Crisis Response team will modify the district's directives based on the age of its student population and provide accommodations for students or staff with disabilities or other considerations. In addition, a school will ensure that all staff and students are trained and practiced in the protocols. Finally, a school would do well to put together tool kits that staff can use when responding to a variety of incidents.

Assigning Roles and Responsibilities During an Incident

As an incident occurs, all school staff members need to know their roles and responsibilities as well as those of first responders. For rapid response, well before an incident, every school will have its own management structure for responding to any incident. The Crisis Response team will set up a management structure that designates a manager or commander of an incident, as well as alternates for that manager. The school-based incident manager works closely with first responders to ensure they can carry out their emergency response. In addition, the management structure sets up other roles, designees, and alternates (for example, the staff member in charge of accounting for students or the staff member in charge of checking shut-off valves). Clearly defined roles and order of succession is critical in emergency management. There is no time for a "who should do what, when" discussion during an incident. For example, when a bomb threat occurs, no matter who is in the building or the time of day, it needs be clear who is in charge and decides whether to evacuate the building. Discussion or hesitation can have serious and harmful consequences.

The Incident Command System (ICS) is the system used by emergency responders to manage incidents.. The ICS provides a structure for decision-making and resource allocation as an incident unfolds, no matter who is available to respond. In order to effectively communicate with first responders, all members of the School's Crisis Response team need to become conversant with the Incident Command System. (The federal government has no cost on-line training in the Incident Command Structure). Some districts may choose to use the Incident Command System as their management structure for responding to incidents.

Whole School Protocols

A robust School Safety Plan spells out clearly how a school will carry out evacuation, shelter-in-place, lockdown, and family reunification protocols. In particular, codes are not used and technical language is avoided to reduce confusion.

Whatever the protocol, the school must have a way to track every student and staff member throughout any incident. The school Crisis Response team would do well to set up a system to take frequent attendance of all students, staff, and visitors. This includes students and staff on field or off-campus trips.

In addition, each school should have a system for school staff to communicate with each other as well as first responders during an incident. The school cannot always depend on the school's public address or internal phone system. Schools may want to consider ways to use smart phone technology, including voice, text, and video streaming, to accomplish this.

EVACUATION is used when the building can no longer be safely occupied, for example, in case of fire, gas leak, or other hazardous material incidents occurring in the building, structural failures, suspicious packages, or bomb threats. All students, staff, and visitors leave the building through the nearest and safest route to designated gathering areas.

SHELTER-IN-PLACE (sometimes referred to as Reverse Evacuation) provides refuge for occupants within the school building during an incident. It is used when it is safer inside the building than outside; for example, in weather emergencies, medical emergencies, violence, or other criminal activities outside the building. Depending on the incident, all exterior doors and windows are locked (in case of a violent person in the neighborhood) or all ventilation drawing air from outside is shut down (in case of an air borne chemical spill). Shelter-in-Place may be also be used to simply stop movement in the building (in case of a one student medical emergency). In addition, students and staff may be directed to designated safe areas chosen for the specific incident; for example: gymnasiums, hallways, auditoriums, or classrooms.

LOCKDOWN provides protection for student and staff when weapon-related violence is in progress or imminent in the building. It is designed to place barriers between the building occupants and assailant(s). When lockdown is called, all students and staff stay in or go to the nearest room. All classroom and office doors are locked. Students and staff sit in their room's designated safe area (away from windows and doors). Lights, monitors, and projection equipment are turned off. Strategies are used to keep students calm and quiet. For example, younger students may draw, while older ones may read.

Depending on the situation, there are several ways to enhance a lockdown to empower individuals to take common sense actions critical to their safety. These may include: 1) barricading the door using available furniture and other objects; 2) distracting or countering the assailant, and 3) self-evacuation. These actions are often based on the response strategies of Alert – Lockdown – Inform – Counter – Evacuate (A.L.I.C.E.); Run – Hide – Fight (U.S. Homeland Security), or Evacuate – Hide – Take Action (New York City Police Department). Any enhanced lockdown requires proper training and practice for all staff and students and educating parents on its benefits.

STUDENT RELEASE OR FAMILY RE-UNIFICATION is when students are picked up directly by a parent or designated guardian after an incident. It is a system that accounts accurately for the release of every student and ensures no student is released to an un-authorized adult. Parents and guardians will need to be informed of the designated pick-up site for that day. Finally, avoiding exposing students to more physical or psychological harm is critical. For example, neither students nor parents should walk by the medical staging area during the reunification process.

For each of the previous protocols, directives should be provided on how each procedure will change if it is activated during different times of day, including start or end of school day, lunch, recess, all school assemblies, before or after the regular school day, and evenings. There also will be protocols for handling students participating in off-campus events or trips of any sort. Finally, a solid safety plan takes into account particular vulnerabilities of a school's buildings or grounds, for example, isolated exits or areas that tend to be icy and unsafe during winter months.

Don't Miss the Bus: School Bus Safety

When students are on school buses, whether they are traveling to or from school or out on field trips, the school is responsible for these students. Schools need to have plans in place for how to handle bus accidents or buses off campus with students when an incident occurs at the school. For effective response, the school needs to coordinate with the transportation company to ensure that bus drivers and monitors regularly participate in training and drills. For example, bus drivers can be trained on such topics as evacuating young passengers or using an epi-pen. Student bus riders need to receive instruction and practice in bus evacuations a few times each year. In addition, the Crisis Response Team would do well to include in its emergency management structure the designated staff members (and alternates) who travel to meet a bus off campus or who meet students as a bus arrives at the school during or after an incident.

Procedures for Specific Types of Incidents

In addition, whole school protocols must be used to respond to many different types of incidents. To be prepared to respond effectively to the various array of potential incidents, a school should have specific procedures for types of incidents. In Massachusetts, this should include, missing student(s), medical emergencies, earthquake, tornado, flooding, hurricane, lighting fire, bomb threat, active shooter or intruders.

"Thankfully, schools do not respond daily to crises, but this should not prevent them from planning and training for them."

— Lt. Scott Sencabaugh, Wilmington Police

Tool Kits: Gathering Essential Emergency Response Resources

In order to implement the above protocols effectively, school leaders need to create "response tool kits" or gather, organize, and distribute necessary equipment and supplies for responding to any incident. These tool kits will be customized for staff depending on their responsibilities during an incident. In addition, police, fire, and emergency medical department will receive certain items, for example a map of the building or the master schedule. Most critical of all, the tool kits must be known, distributed, and accessible to staff who will use them during an incident.

Critical items for tool kits include the following:

A CLASSROOM "GO KIT"

The go-kit is a self-contained backpack or 5 gallon bucket with emergency supplies. It should be clearly labeled, maintained, and placed in each classroom in a readily accessible and secure location. The kit may contain such items as first aid supplies, list of emergency procedures with emergency contact numbers, student medical information (marked confidential), snacks, water, and identifying vest or cap. The 5 gallon bucket can be used as a "portable potty" and stocked with toiletry supplies.

"FLIP CHART"

A flip chart is specifically modified for each school and includes all its emergency procedures. It is placed in an easily accessible place in every classroom and office.

MAP OF THE SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

So everyone can understand the map accurately, it uses standard specifications, such as numbering for doors and exits, gas, electric, water and alarm shut-offs, and parking.

METHOD FOR ACCOUNTING FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF

During an incident attendance is taken regularly. An attendance taker only considers the persons currently in the room with him/her accounted for. Emergency responders treat an incident very differently if people are missing.

WEEKLY MASTER SCHEDULE

Using standard specification, the schedule includes all students and staff. It identifies students and staff needing accommodations. There is an accompanying document enumerating the particular accommodation for each identified student or staff member.

Orientation and Training: Everyone Participates

Once safety protocols are developed, the next step is to orientate the whole school community and relevant first responders to these protocols and then practice them. Orientating the school community involves:

STAFF: Presentations on school safety during regular staff meetings. Those who are absent, including part-time or substitute staff, receive written material and a staff contact to whom they can direct questions.

STAFF WITH SPECIAL DUTIES: Counseling and nursing staff are trained in "psychological first aid for schools" or trauma recovery. Teachers with students who need special accommodations receive training in those modified procedures. Food service, maintenance, and administrative staff receive training on their roles during incidents.

STUDENTS: Brief, age-appropriate explanations and discussions on the how and why of safety protocols during regular class time. Those with disabilities or other considerations receive further explanations allowing plenty of time for questions.

PARENTS: Letters or e-mails explaining the procedures and the reason for them. Parents of students with disabilities or other special circumstances receive individual communications regarding these accommodations. For new protocols, a meeting or training for parents may be appropriate.

"Adequate training of all school staff, particularly support staff, is vital to the success of any school safety plan."

—Jean Fay, Amherst Public Schools Paraprofessional

WHO DOES "EVERYONE" MEAN?

DISTRICT-LEVEL

- School Committee members
- School Superintendent
- Central District Administrators and Staff

SCHOOL STAFF

- Principal, Vice Principal
- Front Office: Administrative Assistants
- Teachers, Classroom, Special Needs, Subject Specialists
- Paraprofessionals or Teachers' Aides
- Counseling
- Nursing
- Food Service
- Maintenance/Custodians
- Information Technology
- Transportation/Bus Drivers and Monitors
- Athletic Coaches
- After-School Club Advisors
- Part-Time Staff
- Substitutes
- Interns
- Volunteers

EMERGENCY RESPONDERS

- Police/Law Enforcement
- Emergency Manager
- Fire/Emergency Medical
- Trauma Specialist

STUDENTS

PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Drill the Plans

After orientation to the Safety Plan, practicing protocols is the next step. Practice drills develop stronger relationships between schools and emergency responders, greater consistency in actions, and more efficient use of resources during an actual incident. Common types of practice exercises include table top exercises, drills, and full-scale exercise (see below).

Whole school drills are a large and critical part of preparing to respond to incidents. Procedures that are drilled regularly include: evacuation at least four times a year by law; shelter-in-place; lockdown; and family re-unification. These drills allow participants to be safer and feel safer. During a properly run drill, students and staff have the opportunity to practice their particular roles during a potential incident. They increase their knowledge and skills in how to respond to emergencies. As a result, they may gain confidence in dealing with a dangerous situation and may feel safer after a drill.

"People remember what they have practiced."

— Stephen Coan, State Fire Marshall

All of these benefits are possible if a drill is properly planned and carried out. the following are key principles for planning and carrying out an effective drill:

- Building-level cooperation between schools, police, fire, emergency management, and emergency medical services, including planning, carrying out, and evaluating the drill. A drill tests the capacity of all agencies, not just schools.
- Prepare everyone for the drill and expect everyone in the building to participate fully and as seriously as if it was a real emergency. In particular, teachers may work with students on the autism spectrum or with sensory issues to teach and practice ways to keep calm and quiet in times of stress.
- While all must follow directions during the drill, remind staff that during an actual incident, they may need to think on their feet.
- De-brief after the drill with students at all levels in age-appropriate ways to further increase their skills in responding to emergencies. Discuss the different ways students responded to the drill. (Did they feel scared? Did their heart pound? Did they want to laugh and be silly?) Discuss appropriate responses and what they can learn about managing stress from their reactions.
- Once the drill is over, evaluate to improve. Collect information from a wide range of participants. Encourage input by emphasizing that mistakes or inconsistencies are learning opportunities to improve future incident response.

DRILL AGAIN!

Sample of a Training Script for a Lockdown for Early Elementary Teachers

Say to the students in a calm voice, "The principal has announced a lockdown." Walk over and lock classroom doors and turn off lights. Then say, "Look at me. Please stay where you are. Do not talk. Follow directions. Remember a lockdown is when we are all quiet and sit together in the meeting area. When I tell you to, I want you to walk over to the meeting area. Leave everything at your desk or area as it is. Do not get something from another part of room. Walk on your feet and do not talk. Please move quietly over to the meeting area."

Once children are settled in an area, close all windows and shades. Quietly say to the students, "We have heard a loud noise. We do not know what the noise was. The principal, police and fire officers are all working hard to learn what the noise was and to keep us safe. The way you can help them is to keep your body quiet, keep your thoughts in your head, listen and follow directions."

Rapid. Coordinated. Effective.

Responding is the heart of the emergency management system. It is when the emergency happens. Decisions are made quickly. These decisions are not just about which procedures and protocols to activate, but how to adapt them on the spot to fit the "not yet entirely known" incident. Most of the work behind making good decisions is done during the Prepare phase. And most often, the first responders, whose profession is to respond to emergencies, are on the scene and managing the incident. The success of a response to an incident requires the immediate integration of school staff and first responders. Their communications and actions must be coordinated. The following are key strategies for school staff to keep in mind while an incident unfolds:

School Leaders:

- Trust each other. Coordinate. Cooperate.
- Make informed decisions. Actions taken need to correspond with the type and intensity of the incident.
- Communicate accurate and appropriate information without causing alarm. Remind staff and students to stay calm.
- Minimize students' exposure to the incident. Without deceiving students, share minimal information about deaths, injuries, and damage. Keep unaffected students away from scene of the incident and medical staging area.
- Document actions taken during the incident. This provides a record of how the plan was implemented. This information is essential to evaluate and improve the plan, as well as to document the appropriateness of the response.

Staff and Other Adults:

- Stay calm.
- Trust Leadership.
- Follow the plan.
- Remember the drills!
- Protect students. Think on your feet. Adapt procedures when necessary.
- Remind students of effective responses to emergencies: "Keep calm. Follow directions."
- Keep students calm and minimize their exposure to the incidents. Provide students with straightforward factual information. Do not speculate.

Triage of Needs

During, and in the immediate aftermath of an incident, the "triage of needs" is followed to ensure everyone's safety. The first concern is physical safety—providing emergency medical care, adequate shelter, and sustenance (e.g., food and drink). After meeting these physical needs, it is possible to help students feel safer and reduce their fear and anxiety. An example of an immediate aftermath intervention model is **Psychological First Aid for Schools.** (See page 26)

Communicating to Those Outside

During this intense period, schools and emergency management leaders must also be ready to communicate in a rapid, coordinated and effective manner with the parents, media, and community. Parents will be desperate to know if their children are safe. The media will be looking for an exciting story. The local community will be concerned if the danger is coming their way. It is essential these parties receive timely, accurate information to dispel rumors and panic.

Turning a potential school tragedy into a minor incident is often in our control. But to do so requires thorough planning, preparation, and practice at the district- and building-level between schools, police, fire, and other first responders.

Helping students recover physically and psychologically from an incident is a critical task.

The goal of recovery is to restore a safe and healthy learning environment in a school. In order to prepare for recovery as well as take steps to recover after an actual incident, it is useful to understand some basic principles and procedures of recovery.

There are three main areas of concern:

1. **Physical and psychological safety of students and staff**
2. **Repair and restoration of physical facilities and infrastructure**
3. **Regular internal and external communication**

As a school community recovers from an incident, school staff will need to understand their students' various reactions to the crisis so they can help students focus once again on academic learning.

Physical and Psychological Safety

Helping students and staff recover physically and, especially, psychologically from an incident is a critical task requiring at least as much skill and training as restoring the building and infrastructure. True support for people healing from trauma involves the understanding of some basic principles of trauma recovery.

Trauma intervention is an area of expertise. The strategies for helping children heal from trauma may not be the same as helping students cope with other emotional issues. Not all mental health professionals are trained to treat trauma patients. When it is done poorly, crisis intervention may do more harm than good. It may increase crisis exposure, generate self-fulfilling prophecies, or reduce perceptions of independent problem solving.

Given the above, districts will want to seriously consider establishing a working relationship with a trauma recovery center or with individual trauma experts before they are in the middle of a major incident. The trauma center can train school staff and provide consulting for smaller incidents and on-site staff for more serious incidents.

RESTORE A SAFE AND HEALTHY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN A SCHOOL

How students may react differently to the same incident

Students will experience the incident differently depending on their age, physical and emotional challenges or past experience:

AGE

Children of different ages will experience an incident differently in part because they are in different developmental stages. A teen may be more upset about a bomb scare than young children because of the adolescent ability to understand the significance of a terrorist attack. Conversely, young children may be more frightened by an incident because of their inability to grasp risk. A lightning storm may be more traumatic for a young child than an older one.

PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL CHALLENGES.

A student in a wheelchair who is quickly, but scarily carried down stairs may have a different interpretation of an incident than others who merely walked down the stairs. A child with sensory issues may have an internal experience of an incident that is different from others.

PAST EXPERIENCE

A student whose family has known people killed in bombings is likely to have a different emotional reaction to a bomb threat than one who has minimal exposure to terrorism. Students who have suffered emotional or physical abuse may also react differently than other children.

As a school community recovers from an incident, school staff will need to understand their students' various reactions to the crisis so they can help students focus once again on academic learning.

Physical Facilities and Infrastructure: Don't Forget the Building

In their recovery plan for the immediate aftermath, schools would do well to have specific procedures, as well as a designee, to inspect the building and grounds for imminent dangers during the immediate aftermath. Some first responders have to focus on the building to ensure physical safety. They will need to inspect the physical facilities for any imminent dangers and, if found, respond to them. For example, it must be determined which parts of the building can still be used and which must be vacated until repair is done. Maintenance staff may need to receive training in how to participate in such an inspection. Practicing this quick audit of essential functions could be integrated into drills of whole school protocols.

For the core of recovery, many schools and districts develop a **Continuity of Operations Procedure (COOP)** as a way to get the building and its infrastructure up and working at least at a basic level. During the long haul of recovery, as schools rebuild facilities and infrastructure for the long term, they would do well to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their buildings and infrastructure in light of a particular incident. For example, they will want to look at how the damage to the building may have been less severe if it had a different design. Or they may look at how a violent incident may have had different results if the entryway had followed the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design. (See p. 13.)

Police and School Communication: Helping Students Recover from Trauma

One district, for example, has a system for recognizing and addressing the trauma students may experience after witnessing violence. When local police are aware of a student witnessing violence in their home or neighborhood, the police contact the district's guidance department director before school begins the next day. The guidance director in turn contacts the principal at the student's school. The school is then able to provide the student with the support s/he needs for a successful day at school.

EVALUATE THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF BUILDINGS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

External Communications

Since there will be many urgent demands on leaders at this time, preparing for how communications with parents, the media, and public will be handled is essential.

Setting up a process to funnel communication through a single appointed spokesperson (often called the Information Officer) will reduce the possibility of conflicting messages going out. The school may want to develop examples of letters to parents or press releases for the media that can be readily modified to fit the current situation. This will increase the likelihood of parents and the public receiving clear, consistent, and accurate information. It also will prevent the process of external communications from interfering with the pressing need to protect lives and property.

As times passes after the incident, schools and districts will want to evaluate and reinvigorate their effort to keep students, families, and the media informed about what support services are available from the school, district, and local community organizations. In addition, the school and district will do well to continue efforts to regularly communicate with parents and the community about their emergency management procedures.

Psychological First Aid for Schools: Key Principles

1. Establish a positive connection with students, staff, or parents in crisis in a non-intrusive, caring manner.
2. Calm and orient those who are emotionally overwhelmed.
3. Help individuals identify their immediate needs and offer practical assistance, rather than asking them to describe the incident.
4. Encourage individuals to take an active role in their recovery by recognizing their efforts to cope and supporting positive coping strategies. (Don't do everything for them.)
5. Link those in need of further assistance to school and community resources.

"A sense of normalcy requires quickly establishing a routine after a major incident."

— Secretary John W. Polanowicz, Secretary of Health and Human Services

This report of the Massachusetts Task Force on School Safety and Security is meant to be a model framework for community leaders, first responders, and school district staff. Through the course of the Task Force's work the following recommendations rose to the top of what should be the focus of any future deliberations on school safety and security in the Commonwealth. It should be noted, these recommendations are meant to set the stage for what is possible and to spark conversation and collaboration. Time will be needed to do this work well and correctly. Finally, it is important these recommendations not be confused with mandates.

State-level

1. The Executive Offices of Public Safety, Education, and Health and Human Services should be allocated funding to establish a state-level School Safety Technical Assistance Team. Its charge would be to provide assistance to school districts, at their request, on all aspects of school safety and emergency management. The team would include experts from the education, law enforcement, fire, medical emergency, emergency management, behavioral health, and trauma sectors.

2. To increase school districts' capacity to prevent and respond to threats, funding should be appropriated to replicate the North Eastern Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council (NEMLEC) School Threat Assessment and Response System (STARS) regionally throughout the Commonwealth. See page 8.

3. Funding should be allocated for active shooter trainings and/or tabletop exercises, for all first responders at the recruit and in-service levels. Live trainings should take place in school settings (when students are not present) at the request of police. Currently, funding is appropriated on a grant to the Massachusetts State Police. A more sustainable source of funding should be established. See page 16.

4. A separate and discrete funding source should be provided to the Massachusetts School Building Authority earmarked for the sole purpose of allowing schools to enhance safety and security at their buildings. Funds would be provided to retrofit buildings with security features (such as well lighted outdoor areas, monitored entry ways, metal doors, classroom door locks, etc.) See page 13.

5. The state Operational Services Division (OSD) should consider establishing an enterprise or bulk purchasing system by which school districts can acquire services and systems that would enhance school security.

6. Funding should be allocated for the Governor's Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet to create an easily accessible directory of services available to schools. The directory should provide information and tools to schools that will ensure they are able to access screening, diagnosis and treatment for students with behavioral health needs and know what treatment is available through the public and private health care system. See pages 12 & 24.

7. Funds should be appropriated to the Commonwealth's Fusion Center Infrastructure Protection Program to allow it to conduct school assessments, to provide train-the-trainer assessment programs for local public safety and school personnel, and to store information on every school in the Commonwealth (including contact information, school maps, photos, etc) in its critical infrastructure database. The database would be accessible only to law enforcement and first responders. See pages 8 & 18.

District-level

1. Consideration should be given to the addition of a line item in school district budgets focused solely on matters related to school safety and security. The importance of the line item should be shared broadly and extensively with the school committee and the community at large.

2. Each municipality should establish a district-level emergency management team, comprised of the municipality's mayor/town manager or their designee, superintendent of schools, police chief, fire chief, and the emergency management director as well as other public safety officers. Where appropriate (such as in the rural parts of Berkshire and Franklin counties where there is no local police presence) the Massachusetts State Police should be asked to participate. Once established, the group should meet to discuss school emergency management preparation and related issues at least monthly. See pages 5 - 7.

3. At the secondary level, every school in the Commonwealth should have a School Resource Officer (SRO), who is appointed jointly by the superintendent of Schools and the chief of police or, where appropriate, (such as in the rural parts of Berkshire and Franklin counties where there is no local police presence) the Massachusetts State Police with the support from the county Sheriff's office. At the elementary level, all schools should have an appropriate program that provides both police presence and public safety education, such as an adopt-a-school program. Smaller districts may consider sharing law enforcement resources or personnel. The state should appropriate funds for this purpose. See page 9.

4. At least one school psychologist should be employed on staff for every 700 students, in accordance with guidance from the National Association of School Psychologists. The state should appropriate funds for this purpose. See page 12.

5. Protocols should be established to address the social, emotional, and behavioral health needs of all students through the use of internal resources and referrals to external providers. See page 12.

6. A protocol should be developed to identify and intervene with students struggling socially and/or emotionally. Schools should use threat, danger and/or early warning systems based on research to develop a robust system for referring students to appropriate professional help. See pages 12 & 14.

7. Relationships should be developed with community based agencies that provide wrap-around and trauma recovery services to students in need. See pages 23 & 24.

8. A consolidated set of procedures should be developed for schools in a district that incorporate all necessary whole school protocols: evacuation, shelter-in-place, lockdown, family reunification, etc. One plan, rather than several separate plans, will ensure efficiency and the elimination of redundancy. See page 16.

9. An anonymous threat reporting mechanism allowing citizens (and especially marketed to students) to anonymously report threats of school violence should be developed or acquired. The service could be modeled after Brockton's Text-a-tip or speakup.com, a free on-line service. See page 14.

10. On a regular basis, districts should direct schools to practice gathering at a primary rallying point to be used in the event of an emergency. Further, a secondary rallying point should be identified and shared with students and staff. A family reunification plan should be developed and communicated with parents and staff. Neighboring communities should be encouraged to develop mutual aid agreements to loan each other school buses or to make space available in schools during incidents requiring off-site evacuations. See page 16.

11. Preparedness training should be provided for all staff. The district should consider which faculty and staff members need specialized training. In particular, the training of school support staff (food service and maintenance staff, substitute and part-time staff) should be prioritized. These staff may not always be aware of the latest safety protocols and procedures established by the school or district. See page 8.

12. Any school staff member who is designated to be an incident commander should be trained in accordance with protocols of the National Incident Management System (NIMS). Those designated should be empowered to make decisions during an emergency situation. Districts are encouraged to utilize a model of distributive leadership that allows for a broad spectrum of school staff to serve in this role. See page 16.

13. Emergency preparedness training for school bus drivers should be included as a requirement of any school transportation contract agreement. See page 17.

14. Communications devices and systems (hardware and software) should be acquired and regularly evaluated within each school building to ensure teachers and school administrators can easily communicate with police and first responders during an incident. There should be a focus on the interoperability between a school's communication system and the police and first responders' communication system.

15. An assessment of classroom doors should be conducted regularly. All classroom doors in a school should open out (as opposed to open in to a classroom) and have the ability to be locked from inside the classroom, without the use of a key. This will enable the adult in charge to lock a door without leaving the classroom. The installation of doors and locks should be in accordance with all relevant local and state fire codes. See page 13.

16. Carbon monoxide detectors, where otherwise not required by law, should be installed in all schools to ensure safe and healthy learning environments for all students.

Building-level

1. A school crisis response team should be established, comprised of the school principal, assistant principal, teachers, school resource officer, nurse, school behavioral health professional, and maintenance staff. At the principal's discretion a student should be added to the team if appropriate (perhaps a student government leader). The team should have regular contact with local police, fire and emergency medical officers, the local emergency management director and the district central office. The team should meet regularly to assess and enhance school safety policies and protocols based on current best practices. All team members should be familiar with the Incident Command System (ICS). See page 6.

2. Only one main entrance should be utilized for all members of the public who enter the building throughout the day and all entry points should be locked at all times of day. Additionally, a screening process should be developed for all visitors who enter a building. All non-employee visitors should be escorted to and from their destination in the school. Plans should be in place for events with large numbers of visitors such as election days or public performances. These protocols should be consistently enforced for all who enter school buildings at all times. See page 13.

3. An incident commander, along with designated alternates, should be identified and trained in accordance with the protocols of the National Incident Management System (NIMS). See recommendation number 12 under district-level recommendations. The incident commander should be charged with managing a schools response to an incident. The incident commander will be prepared to effectively and immediately integrate school actions with first responders. See page 16.

4. Every classroom and office in a school should have an easily accessible, well-equipped "go-kit." The kit should include such items as a flip chart of all the school's emergency procedures and contact information, map of the building, medical supplies, and attendance/missing person log. See page 17.

5. All school safety procedures and protocols should be developed with the safety of all students in mind. Developmentally appropriate plans should be in place recognizing younger children process information much differently than adolescents. School safety plans should also be developed with accommodations for English language learners and all students with disabilities. See page 7.

6. Schools should ensure students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) have an individual safety plan with any necessary accommodations, aligned with the School Safety Plan that is developed for the safety of all students. These procedures should be discussed during the regular IEP meetings with parents and educators. See page 7.

Careful planning is the best way to ensure schools are safe places to learn.

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Executive Office of Education
Secretary Matthew H. Malone

Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Secretary John W. Polanowicz

Executive Office of Public Safety
Secretary Andrea J. Cabral

Prevent | Prepare | Respond | Recover