



INTRODUCTION

Everyone in CT continues to be affected by the murder of twenty children and six staff members at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown on 12/14/12. Those who are responsible for the safety and security of CT's children while they are attending public schools, however, were affected in a deeply personal manner. So, any instance in which any of those children and the staff members who care for them are killed or harmed is motivation for action. Accordingly, the members of the CT Association of Boards of Education (CABE), the CT Association of Schools (CAS), the CT Association of School Business Officials (CASBO) and the CT Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) began shortly after the shootings in Newtown asking for guidance and direction for their efforts to make the public schools as safe and secure as possible for children and staff.

The four organizations along with the CT State Department of Education (CSDE), therefore, organized a Security Symposium which took place on 1/7/13 at Aqua Turf in Southington. At this event, national experts on school security and safety shared their accumulated wisdom with approximately 850 Symposium participants. What they had to say represented the best thinking in this country on the topic. We, consequently, would like to share what we learned at the Symposium.

Our thoughts are divided into the following categories.

- The best way to develop and implement school safety and security strategies and procedures.
- Specific strategies that will enhance school safety and security
- The provision of school resource officers at school sites.

School Safety and Security Policies and Procedures

Boards of education, as does the Newtown Board of Education, have policies and procedures in place dealing with various aspects of school security. The recent tragedy in Newtown has caused every district to reexamine those policies and procedures, and to obtain additional community input. This has become a priority not just in Connecticut but throughout the country. In fact, this weekend at the National School Boards Association Leadership Conference, there are multiple sessions addressing school security. The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education is in the process of revising our existing model policies. Our policy expert has identified 60 policies that relate to school security issues. Among those policies that we recommend for adoption by boards of education are crisis response, student safety, emergency preparedness, drills, safe schools, and possession of firearms on school property. Existing model policies, for example, already require the use of multiple types of drills-lockdown, evacuation, and shelter in place- as

well as requiring that principals keep a record of those drills and the time required to implement the emergency procedures.

Based on the recent School Security Symposium, we will be focusing on more involvement with local responders, implementation of an incident command center, and addressing all four phases of crisis management, from prevention through recovery. Our policies will recommend regular audits of response, communication with parents and staff training.

As my colleague, Attorney Shamus O'Meara, a national expert in school safety issues, stresses it is an "all hazards" approach that is most effective. Chemical exposures in a science lab, hurricanes, tornados and floods, to violent attacks from individuals within or outside the school, must all be anticipated. Attached to our written testimony is a sample checklist to guide school districts on the development of comprehensive emergency management plans.

The input of community members, as well as an audit of building structures, will necessitate that the policies and procedures vary from district to district— and perhaps from building to building. Any state requirements therefore, must allow for local flexibility. In addition, as districts seek independent audits of their school security, it would be helpful to have a list of providers who have been vetted by the state to ensure that districts are receiving the best possible advice.

The need for additional resources to enhance school security will also vary from district to district. Recognizing the significant budget constraints the state faces, it is also important to recognize that those same constraints exist at the local level. We urge you to make some additional resources available to help districts address these issues.

School Safety and Security Strategies

These are school security measures that are currently in place.

Most schools in Connecticut have written plans in place that address procedures for evacuation, when it is not safe to stay in the building, and for lockdown, when it is safer to stay inside the building. These plans involve school staff and administration working closely with State and local police, fire and health department personnel, and municipal officials, to prepare comprehensive plans that are responsive to the specific school district and its community. Plans are reviewed and updated periodically and involve practice drills throughout the school year. Such plans are crucial for any school safety measures' success.

Please note that the focuses of such plans understandably are directed to the time school is in session. It is equally important that plans also address activities outside the building—recess, athletics etc. as well as activities before and after the school day—extra-curricular, community use and day care to name a few.

In addition, many schools require that doors be locked throughout the school day and use cameras with a buzz-in-system that allows entry through the main door into the school. The school office personnel usually administer these systems. Other practices may include:

- doors with magnetic locks that automatically lock after a person enters
- entry systems that limit access to the office only
- metal detectors
- panic buttons that quickly communicate to the local or State police departments about an incident at the school
- up-graded cameras and communication equipment that are tied directly to law enforcement offices.

The use of reinforced bullet-proof glass or removing glass doors has also been discussed. Still others have advocated fences and guard stations be incorporated into every school campus.

It is vital to remember that schools are not prisons. School safety is critical. However, schools are still special places that must remain a welcoming and nurturing environment in which to learn, socialize and participate in a myriad of academic, athletic and social activities. We cannot turn them into fortresses.

Therefore, we recommend a reasonable, thoughtful and common sense approach to school security. It is essential to remember that schools cannot do this alone and “one size does not fit all”. General guidelines that provide overall direction, yet support wide parameters to allow the community stakeholders to implement changes at the local level, are most advisable.

These general guidelines include:

- Every district should have policies in place that require individual school and building safety plans, as well as district wide safety plans. Such plans should be developed in conjunction with community partnerships with first responders, local law enforcement officials, fire and health department personnel and appropriate municipal agencies.
- Such plan should address the need for civil preparedness to deal with all hazards involving a school.
- Such plans should include drills that are practiced on a regular basis.
- Such plans should be reviewed annually and include periodic evaluations and analyses by all stakeholders to determine their effectiveness.
- Every district should communicate to parents and community members about such plans to the greatest extent possible.
- All school employees should receive regular training about the plan and other emergency protocols.

It is also imperative that any changes that come from these efforts be fully funded and sustainable, and that such funding does not come at the expense of reductions in other educational areas.

In summary, we advocate a reasoned, flexible and properly funded approach that allows the local schools and communities to work together to improve school safety.

School Resource Officers

There has been much discussion about armed guards at schools. We want to be very clear that we strongly oppose any strategy that involves arming school staff. If there is a need for armed guards, we recommend strongly that they be School Resource Officers (SROs)

SROs are law enforcement professionals trained to educate, counsel and protect our school communities. They are not merely armed guards as they serve as friends, advisers and even educators within school environments. SRO programs are collaborative efforts by police agencies, educators, students, parents and communities. The presence of SROs in schools has become an integral component of our collective duty to protect children on our school campuses. Since the inception of SRO programs, school crime is down, school associated deaths, victimizations, and theft are down as well as juvenile arrests have decreased by 50% during the expansion of SRO programs.

SROs' law enforcement knowledge and skills combined with specific training about culture, programs and issues in the educational setting give them a unique ability to protect the campus and community while supporting the mission of a school.

We urge members of the sub-committee to speak with the SROs who are presently working in CT school for further information about this program.

Conclusion

We hope that what we have shared with you will be the basis for any action that is recommended to the State Legislature and/or relevant state and local agencies. We also hope that as a result of acquiring the information that we have shared, there will be motivation to establish at the state level policies and procedures that provide maximum support for the efforts that are already underway in every community to enhance school safety and security. Some of those efforts are described in the appendix to this testimony.

What this matter comes down to is this. The leadership for enhancing school safety and security is already being provided at the local level in every community in CT. State action, therefore, needs to support those efforts by virtue of statute, policy and funding. The extremes of insufficient state direction and funding on the one hand and overly prescriptive state statutes and policies on the other have to be avoided at all cost.

We have it in our power to seize the urgency of the present moment to make the already safe environment that exists in every public school in CT even safer for children and staff.

Officials in each of the state's communities are seizing this moment. We urge the state government to join them in this effort.

Joseph J. Cirasuolo
Joseph J. Cirasuolo
Executive Director
CAPSS

David Lenihan
David Lenihan
Legislative Liaison
CASBO

Patrice McCarthy
Patrice McCarthy, Esq.
Deputy Director & General Counsel
CABE

Karissa Niehoff
Karissa Niehoff
Executive Director
CAS

Appendix

See attachments

ELEMENTARY RESPONSES

My recommendations:

1) Most important - **THERE MUST BE MORE THAN ONE ADMINISTRATOR IN EVERY SCHOOL (PRINCIPAL/ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL - OR AT THE LEAST PRINCIPAL/HEAD TEACHER)** so that when the principal is out, there is someone else in charge in the school. Also, in case of an emergency you have more than one person in charge - and more than one person in case something happens to one of them. Plus it helps to have someone else to talk with. In this day and age, no matter the size (or age of the students) of the school it is crazy to think that you have only one administrator in the school. I have over 400 students - and it is just me!

2) **Do not turn our schools into prisons (bars, etc.).**

3) **Do not make administrators/teachers carry guns.**

4) **State needs to define and fund for every school mandated safety measures - the minimum requirements for school safety.** Then, if districts want to go above and beyond they can. But, the state needs to jump in and mandate & fund equitably for ALL CHILDREN in ALL Schools - what it takes to make schools safe for our kids.

5) A security officer would be a nice to have - for a number of reasons. But, we should at least have Youth Officers working with all schools and be able to get an officer to the school when we need one! If I call in Bristol for example from 2:30 - 3:30 during a shift change, it is difficult at best to get someone quickly to the school. We have had to do this when we have custody issues and DCF issues.

Physical Plant:

1) **Cameras connected to Police Department/Security for monitoring at all times.**

2) **Panic buzzers - like they have in banks installed around the school** (like emergency fire boxes) so people can pull or press them in an emergency.

3) Outside doors are locked and buzzer-camera-speaker system to let people in

4) Bullet proof windows installed in all schools - Bristol just built two new schools with huge windows, and in the new Greene-Hills School for example, there is no place for students to hide (no curtains, etc.) if someone was outside shooting into the school.

5) Deadbolts in classrooms that can easily be closed with a twist of the button, and that open as soon as someone inside tries to open the door. (We have these at Ivy Drive in our adult bathrooms, so I know it can be done easily). There must be an over-ride key (just like for our bathrooms) so if student(s) is in the room, adults can get in.

6) Windows next to door handles need to be moved, so that there is no easy way to shoot/break the glass and then open the door. (In my school for example, the lock won't stop someone because all they have to do is break the glass and turn the door knob to get inside.

7) Secure key system - I would like to see something like either a fob to open doors - or some kind of touch/coded entry to classrooms and fobs for outside. Not sure what is available, but there must be something more high-tech we could do.

8) We have fire doors that close and section off parts of our school in case of a fire - we should be able to do something like that with doors when an intruder is in the school.

9) Communication system that is easy to use and has an intercom that can go in and outside, into all rooms. We do not have a bell system - but we should at least have a couple of different bells that we could ring that mean stay outside someone is inside, lock-down, intruder inside, etc. We always have to say on the intercom our message which only tells the intruder what we are doing. Also, there must be a communication system that does not use phones - but can get us to police and central office in case of emergency. Also an emergency system to communicate with parents. We use Blackboard connect in Bristol.

school/district crisis plans,

1) We have a manual that was developed several years ago - and is being looked at again with a safety task force in Bristol.

2) The crisis plan **MUST** be system-wide and coordinated with all of the safety officials and first responders in the city/county/state (e.g., fire, police, hospital, city hall)

3) **Must have a back-up plan.**

4) **The plan must be FLEXIBLE because every situation is different.**

5) There must be an escape plan - where do you go if you have to evacuate the school? What do you do if there is no building close for students/staff to use as a safe haven?

6) Must be a central communication number where staff can call and know that this is where/how we can communicate with each other - through a central person monitoring calls (emergency center). For example if students/staff leave school ground and take refuge in a neighbor's house, they need to have a way to let someone know where they are.

7) **MUST have training for ALL school employees! (especially substitutes** - every district should have mandated training before substitutes can work in that district - or at least a general training/certificate for all substitutes).

and mental health issues within the realm of school personnel who address those issues.

1) **Every School MUST have a school psychologist and a social worker/counselor/family resource worker** to help families get connected to services and work with children and their families.

2) After school programs/extended day programs (like the one we used to use at Wheeler Clinic in Bristol). We need more resources like this as we have many students/families that need help. We need resources to help students/families/neighborhoods get the help the need.

3) Violence prevention programs (like Second Steps) as a mandated part of the curriculum.

4) Parenting classes and parent support

5) More behavior intervention programs for students so that schools have help and support for students with behavioral disabilities (not just the severe behaviors) but even those students who are quiet and withdrawn that go unnoticed until they burst because no one noticed.

6) More help from DCF - I know they are overwhelmed - but we need more people who can help families/neighborhoods in need.

7) **Teachers and Administrators need training in conflict management/resolution (to help defuse situations) and self-defense! (If for no other reason than as a confident builder).**

That is a lot. I have bolded the ones that I think are **top priority and MUST BE MANDATED and FUNDED by the state!**

I am sure that you will include concerns about treatment for students with mental health issues. One angle that I have been discussing with friends of education is that many students with mental health issues really do not qualify for special education. If a student has certain conditions that do not clearly affect his/her ability to perform academically and s/he does not require specialized instruction, then special education is not provided. School social workers and psychologists generally deal with those students whose issues affect school work. Therefore, what is most important for some students with mental health issues is community and family services. I find that in northeastern Connecticut, there are very few community-based services for families and there are few referrals that school-based mental health professionals can make.

I realize that community based services are not within the realm of school personnel as stated in your request, but continual cuts to community providers of health and human services seriously affect our schools. I hope that our legislators will consider the need to maintain and increase community services. It seems to be an important component of the comprehensive analysis of school security issues.

In reviewing the House and Senate Bills introduced so far, I see proposed legislation for mental health screenings and mental health insurance. While I certainly support

these, I am more concerned about the availability of state funding for agencies that are able to deal with families and offer services for mental health, chemical abuse, and prevention. These services are difficult to access in the rural parts of our state where the lack of public transportation is also an issue.

I think that whatever plans are being developed that staffing is kept in mind. At the elementary level, there is usually 1 building principal. The NIMS document list several roles for staff members, with 1 building principal and sometimes itinerant support staff split between buildings it is difficult to divide up the roles and have a cohesive document. The approach has to be reasonable for buildings with 1 administrator; he or she can't be everywhere or do everything.

Although many points will be addressed, one critical one will be the need for financial support for physical plant updates. Most buildings built in the 50's and 60's simply didn't have "security" anywhere on the architect's list of design needs/intents, and to retrofit these ("our") older buildings with such things as offices that have sight-lines to the building entrances will be costly and slow - would love to see the State at least aware of that.

After school hours can be difficult with no secretary in the office. Building security can be compromised at this time especially when the principal has obligations elsewhere in or out of the building. Substitutes also a worry as they are not specifically trained for all buildings and school security. Outside recess- another challenge as well as even building volunteers...

We do not want armed camps.

We want the security without the repression.

Access from outside: protection there is sufficient. Every classroom door locked is not necessary.

While events that transpired at Sandy Hook are unimaginably tragic, I don't see the need to change our schools in any significant way. In my opinion, it was a very random act by a very ill person. The statistical chances of it happening again are about zero.

I feel like the strong public reactions to this isolated event are resulting in measures that perpetuate parental hysteria and sensationalistic media coverage. They have nothing to do with the true business of schools (teaching and learning). They also don't make schools safer places. For instance, my district (and many others) is looking into installing a buzzer system. Sandy Hook also had a buzzer system but it didn't prevent the shootings. I recently read that in China, school-shootings are virtually unknown, but school-stabbings have occurred. My point is that if someone wants to come in and do bad things,

he/she will likely succeed - by breaking through a window, open-firing in a playground, stabbing people with a smuggled knife, or whatever. I think it's unwise for us to spend our lives worrying about unlikely events that are beyond our control by trying to transform our schools into bunkers. It creates a climate of anxiety while doing nothing to truly make our schools any safer.

I think it's important to practice lock-down drills, which we have always done, and to have speedy police response to any crisis, which has always occurred.

As an aside, I think everyone's safety will be greatly improved if President Obama is successful in implementing stricter gun laws.

- lack of resources to provide specific safety measures such as a police presence at our schools, bullet proof glass, new entry mechanisms, etc.
- lack of support/resources for families/children with mental illness
- stricter gun control with a ban on automatic weapons, extensive background checks and wait periods

I urge the CT legislature to not make me a sheriff. Although I am a Vietnam Era Veteran, I have no desire to enter the OK Corral and partake in a shootout. I will do everything in my power to protect the children I serve. I would give my life before taking the life of another who may be a former student. Let's do everything in our power to install both active and passive security enhancements. We need help with the mental health issue. I think the schools (adults and other students) are very good at identifying students who may be at risk. An issue to be addressed is, what do we do with those that have been identified?

Since all districts have various measures and financial capabilities, I think it would be very unfair to once again enact legislation that would come with no funding. Of course, that being said, requiring districts to have an emergency plan seems like common sense--I'm just not convinced that belongs in some form of legislation.

Do not arm principals or staff

Do not require armed police at every school

Do provide funding to assist districts in providing:

- alarm systems with immediate contact to police in case of lock-down (emergency button)
- changes in the physical plant to limit access to the school building (ex. Relocation of entry doors, changing of locks on doors to allow locking from inside..)
- work with state police to review emergency plans within each school district
- support each school's work to have a full time school psychologist and a full time social worker

All public school districts and local police are required to use the same communication methods to alert private schools of local emergency information

All private and public schools are required to have a security system that prohibits free entry into buildings

All private and public schools should be allocated equitable state funds for security personnel

All private and public elementary schools should be allocated funding to provide equitable guidance counseling services, implement research-based programs such as SRBI, RTI and SSP's to address the whole child

All private and public schools should be required to have all personnel trained via FEMA course Incident Command System for Schools (free)

All private and public schools should have an emergency plan as well as site specific lock down procedures

All private and public schools are mandated to meet with local police to update security policies, to review safety measures

All private and public schools are mandated to have local police/fire to be on the premises twice a year to observe the conducting of lock down and fire emergency drills

National and state gun control laws need to be reviewed to reduce/limit gun ownership for sport, personal protection.

My own thoughts would include:

1. No one needs access to assault weapons other than military and law enforcement
2. The physical building, having funding to upgrade secure entrances, to provide the means to upgrade security especially when buildings house adult ed, parent trainings, and other community services--it is more the funding for personnel and the funds to insure procedures can be reinforced and people held accountable
3. Lastly, we need to look at preschool for all and mental health services that are family-friendly, with timely intakes, and accountability for both families and providers. We often find families reticent to seek services or failure to follow through with any consistency, which significantly impacts a child's access to learning as well as the development of socially-responsible coping skills. We also see a great deal of movement of therapists which frustrates families as they work to establish relationships with the service providers.

Updated & new facilities and state incentives for towns to do this...so many schools were built in the 60's-70's ... a whole different world in terms of security, but also in terms of teaching and learning. An investment in school infrastructure is needed to address both security and learning.

I have just watched the inauguration of President Obama and with the many references made to Newtown and the senseless loss of life, there is so much we need to do.

I work in an older school with many security issues that need to be addressed but due to financial limitations in our small town, the facility most likely won't change. We are looking at again a 0% budget for the 4th year in the row and we need either federal or state funds to make changes to create a safer environment for my students and staff. For example, our doors are

locked when students are in the building but before and after school they are open.

-If there was a way to purchase a key fob entry system, this would allow for the doors to be locked at all times.

-Our office is not located near the front of the building. A building plan to move the office to the front would be costly however improve the security.

So, my greatest concern is the physical plant of my building and any support from the state would be appreciated.

There are plans to review our district/school crisis plans, however consistency of expectations in all of the state schools with guidance from the legislature "Super Committee" would ensure all schools are prepared to handle any crisis that may occur in our schools. My faculty, staff and most of all my parents are confident in all we do to keep our school safe however especially since the tragedy in Newtown we recognize there is more we must do and all constituents want to know that we are continually reviewing and improving our procedures.

I only worry that fear will be at the basis of new legislation and that will only impede us more. We do have safe schools, but we need to work on gun control and mental health issues. That is the biggest concern I have. In schools we need to focus on what works like developing good character and creating family friendly schools. It's hard to legislate that but it can be supported with funds for national organizations like the Character Education Partnership and other local organizations that support Character Education.

Education for parents and professional development for teachers on mental health issues and resources for where to get help for children/students. I definitely think SSP are going to be a great help

1. Obviously, **funding** for any state required solutions will be imperative. We're already wrestling with existing unfunded mandates (Common Core, Teacher evaluation, etc)
2. **One size does not fit all!** Please do not mandate any solutions (i.e. officers in schools) for all schools in CT. Give schools and communities choices. What fits in Bristol or West Hartford may not fit in Marlborough or Colchester.
3. We continue to seek **support for clinical services** (i.e. school social workers and psychologists) who provide services to non-mandated students (i.e. not with IEPs), while Mental health services must be a priority for our students, beginning at the elementary level. Additional social workers and school psychologists should be funded for our state. Nearly everything else will fall in place if we take care of our children at the earliest signs of mental health concerns.

Currently, if we look to have a pediatric psychiatrist eval done, it could take 6 months to a year to get an appointment. How sad for the child and family! (I hope you get a chance

to say this statistic.) Would a legislator want their child to wait up to a year for an appointment? This is the reality. pressure from town leaders seek to reduce overall school budgets.

At this point there are some concerns specific to my school that my Governance Council will manage. However, one over arching issue is the one specific to the teacher to student ratio. In Waterbury, it is contracted for Principals to assign no more than one teacher per 125 students for recess and duties. As the administrator I know that causes significant issues in regards to safety. Legislation must not allow any agreement to permit this type of deliberate disregard for the safety and welfare of our children. We must be diligent when entering negotiations to not leave our kids out of the conversation while adults are busy making plans. Remember the children in Waterbury when you are speaking. They might be having recess. Let us keep our fingers crossed until this year is over and the new teacher contract does not allow this to continue. Our Legislatures can be certain it never happens again. Ratio of students. Thanking for your consideration to give voice to this issue. I understand, my Governance Board will be following up on it in the near future.

I think we have to be very careful about legislation that is too specific and too costly to towns. Something about every window has to be bullet proof would be a huge cost without enough benefit. Unfortunately what happened probably would not have been stopped by most of the suggestions I have heard. Resource Officers or guards opening doors are staff intensive and may not have any better results than our buzz in system. Then what happens as kids get off busses or are at recess, at bus stops, etc. we are trying for a town wide committee, so more people are involved. I wish the phone companies would make sure all schools had caller ID. Hopefully staff won't have to be armed. You probably know our new super, Pat Ciccone. She has a very common sense approach. Not finding money by cutting kids emotional needs and family services is also important. This is not probably helpful but I worry about how specific they make legislation that ties our hands.

I am hesitant to make any recommendations for legislation as this often leads to unfunded or unrealistic mandates on districts. While I'm sure the legislation is passed with the best intentions, there are often unintended consequences that burden our districts and schools in ways that make already challenging work even more challenging. In Middletown some of our schools have not been renovated in quite a while so our entry security systems are dated. However, a mandate requiring all of these to be retrofitted would put undue financial stress that could result in the loss of other resources that more directly impact teaching and learning. If the state would allocate grants for districts in need of upgrades to security systems that would be helpful. We have fairly strong security and safety plans and in recent weeks have been working with our police departments and SWAT teams to tighten them and build relationships. This has been very helpful.

In terms of mental health issues this is of greater concern. We currently have an iCare grant with the Connecticut Health Foundation. This is an early mental health and intervention initiative

that takes a community based approach to providing in school and wrap around supports. Schools do not have the funding nor should it be the sole responsibility of the school to provide mental health supports. Much of the work that needs to be done must be family based. The issues that are often involved are much wider in scope than is under the purview of the school. Some community based mental health providers are very good at communication and coordination of services and work with the schools, others are very difficult to engage and there are not enough community supports. The medical provider community is also frequently very disconnected and uninformed about schools and educational legislation. For example we will often attempt to have a medical provider work with a family to engage mental health supports for a child we know is at risk. We provide school based supports and services but know that the mental health needs extend beyond the scope of school based need. The physician will very often tell the parent to ask for a PPT or 504 meeting without any communication with the school or understanding of the processes they are recommending. There really needs to be state wide focus on the quality and quantity of community based mental health for children. School based clinics created in collaboration with community based providers would be best.

although everyone is currently focused on assailants coming into schools there are a couple of areas I believe we need to include in the conversation. One is school climate. Providing a climate where students and families feel connected and welcome is essential to minimizing violence in schools. Although this is an area we continue to expand and reflect on, I have found the Responsive Classroom and Restorative Practices strategies and overarching philosophies to be helpful. I also believe that many of the perpetrators of violent acts are people that have long endured mental health issues. Unfortunately, I believe there are many children that have not been provided the mental health support they need to live productive, happy lives. To address these issues we have started a school based health program at my school which includes a clinical social worker from Yale. This has helped a great deal, but in my opinion, it is not enough. This year we have added a Psychiatrist from Yale Child Study to the equation which has added more support. Unfortunately, there are still some cases where parents refuse help and children remain compromised or violent. I don't want to suspend students. I want to help them. However, requiring parental permission for social-work and counseling support does tie our hands. I guess I am saying that mental health services need to start at an early age if they are going to have the biggest impact. Children need availability to quality mental health and schools should be allowed to require them for school related issues.

I'm only asking that the state and country know that principals want a safe environment that at the same time is inviting to students, staff and parents/guardians. Whatever the outcome please ask them to help us with the cost. Personally I don't understand assault weapons and their purpose.

I don't certainly presume to speak for anyone but myself, but it would be nice if Legislators remembered that the greatest tool we have to combat school violence and mental health issues are the positive and meaningful relationships between students, teachers, administrators and parents, as well as schools and communities. Anything that allows us as leaders to develop and promote these relationships in meaningful ways (freed from nonsense) would be helpful. There is a line that we must find between our schools being locked-down against the possibilities and

still being welcoming centers for our communities. It's important to remember that just because something is possible, doesn't make it probable, and that our schools remain safe for students.

MIDDLE LEVEL RESPONSES

I am a supervisor of a therapeutic day program. This program is for students with severe emotional, mental health issues, in grades K through 12. My feeling would be that schools, as they prepare to make their schools fortresses, that they not forget the mental health needs of their students and their families.

Years ago, there was an initiative with DCF and ____ that installed "care coordinators" in 5 identified schools. These workers assisted families with getting the needed mental health services that their children desperately needed. It was not just a school social worker, but someone who could bridge the gap between home and school, who would be an impartial voice, both sides would respect. Unfortunately, that initiative went away, and the coordinators were taken out of the schools and sent back to the community where they function.

I bring this up because families need these services. When the school tells a parent about their child's "problems", there is often a reluctance to believe. They may refuse the suggestion of medication or a psychiatric evaluation.

Education forums, workshops for parents, and school personnel to understand exactly what is mental illness. we aren't speaking about just the acting out student, but rather the quiet, brooding student in the background who has minimal friends and delusional thoughts.

Hope I'm not too late...feel as if I have been doing this all my life..sad to say

here are my thoughts:

- all doors locked with access only if security personnel at door(s) or a swipe card type of system for staff entry
- Buzzer and intercom system that is monitored by security so all visitors can be spoken to and id checked if necessary prior to entry
- upgrade training for security if security is not actually police officers
- I am NOT opposed to having the security personnel armed if trained
- study entrance ways for protective glass/screening or something that would limit or slow down any perpetrator
- I have always felt that an SRO and the SRO program is important in all schools and I still do... although this is more of an educational approach to security, the SRO does build relationships and changes climate of a school building and this is where we need to star.. a firm believer in SRO programs
- consider locks on all classroom and office doors that stay in locked positions at all time and can be locked from both inside and outside the classroom
- panic buttons near security entrances as well as in key office spot for immediate message hooked to police dept...should this button also sound an in school alarm to teachers and staff??? should it be connected to automatic locking of fire doors??????

I am hopeful that we will come to some sensible and realistic solution for all our schools. After the situation in Newtown, our resolve to provide a safe learning environment for our students has to be even stronger. Though we have had a positive reaction on the part of parents to tighten security in our schools, we may not continue to have that level of cooperation, and I fear that with time, we will return to a level of complacency that none of us can afford!

I think the CT Legislature should know the following:

1. Safety is our absolute first priority for all of us. We preach it to our staff and students every year - at every assembly and meeting. Education must come second. Learning cannot occur in an unsafe environment.

2. SROs are an invaluable asset to our schools - from elementary to high schools. We must work in partnership with our law enforcement officers and our local and state governments to find ways to fund their presence in our schools 180 days a year.

3. Money is preventing us from providing some security measures that would help students, staff, and parents feel more safe;

SRO's in all schools

Identifying ID for all staff and students

Swipe cards for all employees to be able to enter the building

Panic button installation

Buzzers for buildings (which do not have them)

Realistically we all know that if someone wants to do something horrific, it will happen, but some of these measures may lessen the number of victims and provide a feeling of safety for all in our schools. No longer can we believe that "it won't happen here".

My only recommendation is that whatever legislation anyone decides on, is that it comes with the money to fund it.

I believe schools know what to do, but often do not have funds to divert from one area to cameras, or buzzers, etc or resource officers.

Municipalities also do not have funds although legislation allowed for use of LOCIP funds.

While I'm sure you

already have many thoughtful comments and ideas, the few things that continues to stand out to me is that while security is an absolutely necessity we cannot let fear turn our schools into fortresses. We must find ways to balance security, academic, and communal needs. I hope the conversation will include 1) allowing schools to continue to be the welcoming centers of learning that allow parents and the community to be active partners; and 2) the need for the real improvement in mental health services for children and their families.

Recommendations made at the state level should address the varying needs of each school district. A minimum requirement for all schools regarding plant safety should be developed. Acknowledging that funding may prohibit some communities from realizing these standards- the

LOB may need to allocate funds to assist communities.

More significant to the daily workings of our schools is the lack of quality mental health programs for children and families-both access to programs and the school purview to recommend families to these services. Recommendations to investigate better "wrap around" services for the school and community would be beneficial to the discussion.

One area that we struggle with in, is staffing for guidance, social workers, and school psychologist. These are areas that often face budget cuts when economic times are tough (always). I think it would be easier for schools to staff these positions if mandates were in place for schools to have a specific number of related resource staff to provide counseling services to children.

Obviously, each district has different needs. Perhaps a formula could be created, such as depending on the number of DCF referrals per capita in your town or county, a school must have 1 counselor for every 200 children. If an area has less DCF referrals that number may rise to 1:400 students. These are arbitrary numbers and the DCF referral may be the wrong metric to make a mandate realistic.

I work in Killingly and Windham County has significant mental health issues and our children need support, including needs beyond the school day. I am fairly confident our area has the highest number of reported abuse cases against children in the entire state.

If the legislators can pass mandates for behavioral analysis to be involved with IEPs for children with Autism, I think mandates can be made to support children with mental health issues. However, the idea I mentioned is intended to be preventive support to assist children when symptoms appear, not when diagnosis are made.

If any mandates are made, I hope it is at least connected to services directly connected to students. Steering funding away from programs for children to ideas such as security officers in buildings is a mistake. Our school, of nearly 800 students, doesn't even have a remedial math program. I am not sure if the non-educational stakeholders completely understand to current state of funding for education in many school districts.

I attended the school safety meeting at the Aqua Turf on January 7th and although there was a great deal of good information - a lot of this comes down to money. I have looked at our school, our main entrance, the windows, and talked to several people about possible options to upgrade safety precautions; however, the bottom line is money. What can this "Super Committee" do for us financially? I would like to upgrade our lobby area to be able to better see/screen those coming into our school.

Assistance for schools to secure district SRO s would be great.

They are valuable staff members and can help our students in many ways in addition to supplementing security.

Consider immediate state funding to force all incoming traffic to after enter through the school's main office

The debate about gun control is not a school issue. It has gone on forever and it will continue forever.

Building safety... from locked doors, visitor identification, School Resource Officers... needs to be identified by school community and addressed. Nothing should be overlooked for ALL to understand that everyone is safe. But I believe that if a person really wants to enter a building he/she will...

I think it is definitely time that education takes the lead in addressing mental health issues. For too long we as educators have allowed parents and communities not to address this issue straight-on. The amount of suicides, school horror, and community trauma have increased dramatically. We need to help community members address depression, aggression, etc. Unfortunately, parents are not even aware they need help! We need to "put it on the table" and make sure public and private counseling assistance is available.

I have a couple of thoughts. First, research shows that a resource officer at every school is a deterrent. Violent gun acts occur in suburbia not in the schools that have officers such as inner cities. Years ago President Clinton offered grants for police departments to pay for school officers. This should be a priority.

There could also be secondary benefits to the presence of a youth officer such as reducing drugs in schools.

Also, mental illness needs to be a priority. There are parents who are in denial or refuse to allow psychiatric testing or they pull their kids out of school; can there be consideration given to mandatory testing and treatment for students who exhibit violent tendencies (behaviors)?

More mental health professionals in the homes to help parents parent
SRO in all schools

Everyone should have access to a room with doors that knock from the inside
Students with mental health issues, violent or acting out should be subject to random searches, and their homes should be as well

Parents of students with diagnosed serious emotional disabilities should be mandated to take parenting classes

My biggest concern is the lack of programs for students who, like Adam Lanza, are intellectually sound (sometimes gifted) but troubled socially and emotionally. These students are often denied special education services due to a perceived lack of educational impact (i.e. good test scores &

grades). Even if they qualify for special ed, my one school psychologist is not equipped to deal with students with more significant maladjustment disorders that frequently go undiagnosed - either due to lack of resources or the inability for parents to accept what the school describes as seriously troubling. As horrific as it is, the Sandy Hook shooter was a product of the Newtown School system as much, if not more in terms of years, than those he killed. And yet, no one can blame the school system...because as all of us in public education in CT know, we have nothing to offer kids like that - kids like that who seem to present to us more and more.

So I'm not sure what we need in terms of legislation as I don't necessarily think more laws are the best response to such an unimaginable event. But what we don't need are more unfunded mandates from the state of CT - now regarding safety. The reality is that in my school, most doors are so old that the locks don't work and replacing the locks is not an answer since the doors themselves need to be replaced. But with such previous mandates as SSPs, Climate laws, Common Core, teacher eval and SBAC on the way, it is unlikely that I will receive any funding to make my school safer, regardless of what legislation is passed if it comes without funding.

HIGH SCHOOL RESPONSES

- Mental health services must be generously funded
- Gun control measures must be put into place
- Increasing armed security/police in schools will not increase school safety
- We need to work to build a culture of non-violence

My thoughts are more about the missing mental health piece/requirement to obtain a weapon. As far as schools go, we complete the metal detector piece when the person is in the building. That needs to change.

It is certainly a complex issue and a compelling task when one reflects on the needs surrounding school safety, given the differences between schools/districts, not to mention the public's perceptions and understandings of such.

It is my belief that schools must be pro-active and build their own school climate whereby they can guarantee each student in the building has at least one adult whom they trust and who knows as much as possible about that student's life...on and off campus. Of the five characteristics of all school shooters, only one of those is out of the purview of educators..."access to guns." All of the rest can be supported and addressed in the school.

I have a very competent Student Assistance Team, exceptional counseling department and Student Support Services so I am fortunate and I do not know how any legislation could impact that in schools....again, it is about staff and climate in the building.

I do believe that if each school has one SRO, then that not only provides some immediate intervention (depending on the circumstance, ie. Shooter could simply pull out a gun in the classroom, rather than begin on the outside of the school), but also fosters community relationships. An SRO should be a part of all of the school's function, most importantly, helping to educate students and staff. An SRO can keep schools abreast of any community news and can help when the school practices various safety drills.

The one upgrade that makes the most sense and we don't even have here is a "panic button". I also think it is important that we recommend that they do not create more unfunded mandates. While schools should have plans the reality is that plans cannot anticipate all the different possibilities of what might happen. I have not read or heard anything that indicates that a specific plan would have helped in Newtown. I suggest being careful not create more mandates that put more responsibility on schools and principals but don't really make us any safer.

- We need our schools to remain as schools not become prisons.

- Safety plans need to be developed in conjunction with school administrators not by legislators and law enforcement who only see one part of the issue.

- As long as we have first floor classrooms with windows our children will never be safe. If this is to change districts would hope for state or federal funding not more unfunded mandates.

- Nothing is more precious than the safety of our children. To insure this there needs to be clear, consistent, and specific training for all school administrators and teachers in crisis response and management.

I think that Public Act No. 09-131, back in 2009, was a step in the right direction. The mandated 7 fire drills and 3 emergency drills still seems to be geared a bit too much to fire emergency's which are rare. I do think that new buildings or renovated buildings could use more emergency "lock-down" pull stations...right next to fire pull stations.

And I hope that you could put in a word for more gun control measures. There should be more back-ground checks for guns and more restrictions on assault rifles and large magazine clips.

We need the financial ability to hire more health care professionals, specifically school social workers and school psychologists. This is a multi-layered issue but mental health identification, treatment and follow-up are important facets of trying to understand and deal with these issues.

I have two suggestions.

1. Provide a security and safety checklist for all use to use. I know there are several on-line, however, having one universal list would make all familiar with what to look for in our buildings.
2. Increase security cameras throughout common areas in schools. Making sure there is a live feed to local police would help first responders upon entering the building.

physical plant of the school: it would be difficult for the legislature to place mandates on the physical plant of a school due to the financial state of school budgets. Perhaps the legislature could assist in getting funding so districts could apply for school facility grants for building upgrades, such as installing Sally ports or window films or tinting, etc. They could make mandates for NEW school construction, including bullet proof glass at entryways and Sally ports, etc.

school/district crisis plans: the legislature could mandate certain requirements for school security plans including:

1. minimum standards
2. that they are written and reviewed with local police and fire departments
3. that they are reviewed and revised, as needed, every few years. I know many sat on shelves for years and were not dusted off until December 15.

mental health issues within the realm of school personnel who address those issues: secondary schools, including middle and high schools, usually have support staff, including school psychologists and school social workers, on staff; however, with recent budget

cuts in many districts, these professionals have been cut on the elementary level. Perhaps the legislature can assist with ensuring that these services are available within the school day for ALL children.

All Schools need a collaborative safety check with town officials.

All schools need to update emergency policies.

Drills need to be 'knee jerk' reactions of all teachers and students.

Obama's gun control recommendations should be enacted ...we need to contact our CT reps to enforce this.

Mental health programs need greater emphasis in our school curriculums...The CT State Department Student Success Plans Grade 6-12, Positive Climate and Yale University Ruler Approach Professional Development are steps in the right direction.

This is quite a hot button topic made even more difficult by the age of many of our schools. They were built during a time when safety was not a factor in building design.

But I will express a few ideas to the major topics:

physical plant:

- schools need one main entrance with a secure check in point
- guard house at the beginning of a driveway to screen visitors and ask for identification
- "panic button" in several key locations that triggers a silent alarm to the police (much like banks)
- doors with secure locking mechanisms
- windows with shades/blinds that are working and easily closed

crisis plans:

- a must have for all types of crises (weather, intruders, etc.)
- mandatory drills of different types of codes (lock downs, fire, evacuations, etc.)
- cooperation between and rehearsals with local emergency first responders

mental health:

- increased funding for school-based mental health services

I do not believe in armed guards or volunteer security.

I do believe in the SRO program for school districts.

1. Rehearse emergency drills often and with fidelity so that chaos is minimized during and after a disasters. Involve local first responders during ALL drills.
2. Construction of new schools should take into account transparency for first responders.
3. Post disaster mental health counseling should be sustainable over long periods of time following such disaster.

Please stress to the legislators that we don't need more legislation directing the operations of schools. Although well-meaning, these one-size-fits-all proscriptions rarely achieve their intended goals. What we need is adequate state funding for all school systems to address their individual security needs without cutting funding for teaching, coupled with greater state support for mental health services before potential patients get to the crisis point.

Regarding legislation, sensible gun control legislation that values the safety of communities and children at least as much as it does the property rights of gun enthusiasts would be a great start.

In a school such as ours which was built only five years ago and houses almost 1,900 students, it is impossible to guarantee anyone's safety without completely altering the daily lives of all who use the facility (students, teachers, parents). Our efforts are very focused on developing and maintaining an environment in which students know that they are known by many adults and feel safe and confident in making strong relationships with adults. We know every student. We know if there is a change in demeanor or outward appearance and probe to be sure this is not something more than just teenagers attempting to find out who they are. We have developed an environment where there is little to no bullying behavior. Gay students, odd looking (out of the norm) students, shy students, etc. are accepted. We can't guarantee that everyone will be happy since often the unhappiness comes from outside the school and in the family.

What I have described could not have been achieved without the support personnel in place. I have four assistant principals each with a paraprofessional assistant. The mundane tasks such as class cutting and absences are handled by the para leaving the assistant principal to observe classes and get to know every student in the class assigned to her/him over the four years they are together. There are 10 guidance counselors each with just under 190 students each over four grades. We have 3 social workers and 2 psychologists (another one is in the budget we are proposing). If we get a third, we will have one counselor, one para, one nurse, one psychologist, and one social worker per grade. Each will remain with that grade from grade nine through graduation.

There is absolutely nothing I can do to prevent a determined, deranged person from entering my school with a machine gun. There are simply too many ways to get into the building. An armed guard with offer NO protection. I

put all of my cards on the table that knowing every student is the best protection from home grown terrorism. It is far less likely in our school that a lonely, disenfranchised, angry young male student will seek to take revenge by causing havoc in the building. This method of protection, of course, costs money. It would be impossible to know each student to the degree we do with fewer support staff.

My suggestion would be district-assigned SROs:

1. To provide regular input regarding a school's safety procedures and policies.
2. To help train staff and students on the bigger picture of "school safety."
3. To support a school culture of "if you see something, say something." (a key point from the Emergency Symposium, which was excellent , by the way....)
4. To ensure the most expedited response time to emergency as possible. (i.e. dedicate at least one Trooper within a reasonable radius to the schools.)

SROs are more cost-effective than grants for metal detectors and steel security structures on doors and windows.

In a district where funds are not only limited but in jeopardy to make payroll due to the struggles of the town of Winchester, I am in a conundrum .

Our issue for safety is simply financial.

- no SRO
- no money for more cameras

I think every school needs to be required with state help to have a SRO present

I think schools need to link with hospital and trained mental health professionals. For example, when we have concerns about violent or mental health statements and require students to be seen by a mental health expert before re- entry we are too often at the mercy of a dr who is not a mental health professional or emergency rooms that simply sign students off.

We have paid for psych evals at hospitals etc

I know we have all spent much time in recent weeks looking at our plans and protocols. I think the focus on the physical plant is key and I am glad that is one of the areas that will be discussed. We can develop plans for crisis but my largest concern, and one I can not readily "fix" is absolutely regarding the physical plant. My first point is regarding communication. Time is of the essence and being able to communicate to staff and students is very difficult in my building and my guess is many others with older systems. Around that: I would put two requests at the top. 1. police style radios - enough in each district for admin, custodian, secretaries, nurse

and key personnel. Many districts do have these but several do not and they are pretty expensive to fund. These radios will have a dedicated band for school, one for district and one for the town. This is also key in districts with one admin in each building. 2. an intercom system that allows a PA broadcast from each classroom and in common areas. For example, my system only has one phone in the main office (which is in the wide open) to make a public broadcast. If someone is not standing in the office at the time (or of greater concern, the intruder is in the office or in the foyer) there is no way to signal a needed response. We also have no intercom system in the Commons and auditorium. Again, cost is a factor for individual districts. 3. I know in newer buildings with an up-to-date fob system, it is possible for one person to lock every door quickly with a key code. This would also be very helpful - especially in a building (again like mine) where there are several keys needed to lock classroom / office doors. 4. This is not so much a physical plant concern but important all the same. Some requirement of having a "next in charge" person on duty when the admin is out of the building. Again, even more important in schools with only one administrator. There are some possible union issues with this, compensation to go along with that, but I think it can be worked out.

To implement the above would allow me to feel far more confident in the ability to protect the students and staff in my building. I feel we have strong response protocols but without being able to communicate and respond quickly, we are at a disadvantage regardless of the plans we have in place.



HELPFULHINTS

FOR SCHOOL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

VOL. 2, ISSUE 2, 2007

COMPONENTS OF COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL AND SCHOOL DISTRICT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANS

Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools

This short, **Web-based course** is part of **FEMA's Independent Study Program**, a component of its **Emergency Management Institute**. **The one-day class specifically addresses hazard assessment, plan development, emergency management operations and the roles and responsibilities of school crisis team members. School-based professionals with emergency management responsibilities, as well as individuals with an interest in school preparedness, are encouraged to take the course.**

Additional information is accessible at <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is362.asp>.

To ensure the safety of students, faculty and staff, schools and school districts nationwide should create comprehensive, multi-hazard management plans that focus on the four phases of emergency management—prevention-mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. This plan is a school and school district's most powerful tool for dealing with crises, ensuring the security of the school community and addressing the safety needs of all students, staff and visitors, including those with disabilities and special needs. To begin the process of developing and maintaining an emergency management plan, a district crisis response team should be assembled that includes a variety of professionals with expertise in emergency management (e.g., police, fire and emergency services personnel), and include community partners (e.g., public and mental health professionals) and school-based staff (e.g., facilities and

cafeteria managers, nurses, disability specialists, counselors, teachers and administrators). The district teams should work closely with school-based crisis response teams to develop districtwide and building-specific emergency management plans. Partner agreements, or memoranda of understanding, should also be created by the school and school district crisis response teams to clearly delineate team members' and community partners' roles and responsibilities.

The following checklist, Components of School and School District Emergency Management Plans, can assist schools and school districts in developing a new emergency management plan or refreshing their current one. To use the checklist, individuals should consider the extent to which the school or school district's emergency management plan does each of the activities listed and check the appropriate box.

The contents of this document are not prescriptive best practices for every school or school district, but rather suggestions to consider in a school or district's emergency management efforts.

Components (continued)

COMPONENTS OF SCHOOL AND SCHOOL DISTRICT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANS				
COMPONENT	Extent of Development			
	Fully In Place	Partially In Place	Not Yet In Place	Estimated Date To Be In Place
Assesses school culture and climate.				
Lists mitigation activities.				
Prioritizes ongoing risks that cannot be mitigated.				
Other				
Preparedness				
Institutionalizes the NIMS' ICS and assigns roles and responsibilities to individuals.				
Outlines crisis teams' and community partners' duties as detailed in the memoranda of understanding.				
Incorporates pre-negotiated contracts for services that may be needed in case of an emergency (e.g., transportation, construction work, food, etc.).				
Outlines steps for transferring command from school administrators to the incident commander as the crisis unfolds.				
Provides criteria for response (e.g., evacuation, lock-down or shelter-in-place).				
Lists emergency supplies and go-kit components tailored to the:				
■ Classroom				
■ Main office				
■ Cafeteria				
■ Gymnasium				
■ Other nonclassroom locations				
Lists available emergency medical supplies.				
Lists available emergency sanitation supplies.				

Continued on next page.

COMPONENTS OF SCHOOL AND SCHOOL DISTRICT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANS

COMPONENT	Extent of Development			
	Fully In Place	Partially In Place	Not Yet In Place	Estimated Date To Be In Place
General				
Establishes school and school district crisis response teams based on the National Incident Management System's (NIMS), Incident Command System (ICS). (For more information on the NIMS, visit http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/index.shtm .)				
Demonstrates meaningful collaboration with community partners (e.g., local public health, mental health, public safety, local government, law enforcement and emergency services personnel) and establishes memoranda of understanding among team members and partners.				
Outlines an all-hazards approach to emergency management planning.				
Documents school board approval of the plan.				
Shows alignment and integration with federal, state, community and district emergency management plans (e.g., supports the implementation of NIMS).				
Specifies accommodations and modifications for people with disabilities and special needs.				
Provides a time line for maintaining and updating plan components.				
Prevention-Mitigation				
Provides or is based on an assessment protocol that outlines: an assessment schedule; the persons responsible for conducting the assessments; the corrective actions to take place; or the support programs to be installed.				
Assesses physical and environmental risks (e.g., regional, buildings).				
Assesses the social and emotional well-being of students, faculty and staff.				

Continued on next page.

Components (continued)

COMPONENTS OF SCHOOL AND SCHOOL DISTRICT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANS				
COMPONENT	Extent of Development			
	Fully In Place	Partially In Place	Not Yet In Place	Estimated Date To Be In Place
Provides information about the school's facilities (e.g., maps, floor plans and location of utility cutoffs).				
Details individual communications plans during an emergency with: ■ Faculty and staff ■ Students ■ District administrators ■ First responders ■ Parents or guardians ■ Media				
Lists schoolwide and classroom-specific communication devices and how to use them in different emergencies.				
Incorporates plans for communicating emergency management procedures to parents and guardians.				
Ensures communication equipment interoperability with those of first responders.				
Provides guidance on family reunification plans and procedures.				
Specifies transportation and traffic procedures during and after a crisis.				
Outlines training to be provided to crisis response teams, faculty, staff, students and parents.				
Outlines a schedule of drills and exercises.				
Details maintenance and enhancement activities for the continual revision of the school emergency management plan.				
Response				
Outlines the process for activating the ICS.				

Continued on next page.

Components (continued)

COMPONENTS OF SCHOOL AND SCHOOL DISTRICT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANS				
COMPONENT	Extent of Development			
	Fully In Place	Partially In Place	Not Yet In Place	Estimated Date To Be In Place
Assigns a public information officer (PIO) to communicate with the media and the public during an emergency.				
Assigns an incident commander to manage the Command function of the ICS.				
Assigns crisis response team members to manage the four other functions of the ICS: Logistics, Operations, Planning, and Finance-Administration.				
Assigns a member of the crisis response team to take detailed notes on practice drills, specific events and actions taken during an emergency.				
Incorporates structure for conducting after-action debriefings.				
Outlines procedures for revising the plan based on lessons learned.				
Recovery				
Provides a damage-assessment protocol for physical assets.				
Outlines procedures and strategies for physical and structural recovery.				
Outlines financial and logistical protocols and resources for recovery.				
Establishes procedures for making decisions about school closures.				
Incorporates a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP).				
Provides criteria for reopening schools.				
Provides protocols for activating memoranda of understanding with mental health agencies.				
Identifies types of support (e.g., extracurricula activities and mental health interventions) for students and staff exhibiting symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder.				

Continued on next page.

Components (continued)

COMPONENTS OF SCHOOL AND SCHOOL DISTRICT
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANS

COMPONENT	Extent of Development			
	Fully In Place	Partially In Place	Not Yet In Place	Estimated Date To Be In Place
Offers strategies for providing follow up and ongoing mental-emotional recovery interventions.				
Addresses parental or guardian consent for mental health services for students.				
Incorporates sample templates (e.g., a letter notifying parents or guardians of a student's death) to notify members of the school community about crisis events.				
Provides guidelines for standing and temporary memorials, and the observance of anniversaries.				
Provides the PIO with protocols and templates for ongoing communication with the media, parents or guardians and the local community.				
Provides guidelines for screening potential volunteers.				
Provides guidelines for accepting donations.				



The Emergency Response and Crisis Management (ERCM) Technical Assistance (TA) Center was established in October 2004 by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS). The center supports schools and school districts in developing and implementing comprehensive emergency and crisis response plans by providing technical assistance via trainings, publications and individualized responses to requests. *Helpful Hints* provides a quick overview of school emergency preparedness topics that are frequently the subject of inquiries. For additional information about the National Incident Management System (NIMS) or any other emergency management-related topic, visit the ERCM TA Center at <http://www.ercm.org> or call 1-888-991-3726.

For information about the Emergency Response and Crisis Management grant program, contact Tara Hill (tara.hill@ed.gov), Michelle Sringroven (michelle.sringroven@ed.gov) or Sara Strzel (sara.strzel@ed.gov).

This publication was funded by the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools at the U.S. Department of Education under contract number GS23F8062H with Caliber Associates, Inc. The contracting officer's representative was Tara Hill. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Education, nor does the mention of trade names, commercial products or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. government. This publication also contains hyperlinks and URLs for information created and maintained by private organizations. This information is provided for the reader's convenience. The U.S. Department of Education is not responsible for controlling or guaranteeing the accuracy, relevance, timeliness or completeness of this outside information. Further, the inclusion of information or a hyperlink or URL does not reflect the importance of the organization, nor is it intended to endorse any views expressed, or products or services offered. All hyperlinks and URLs were accessed on Jan. 4, 2007.