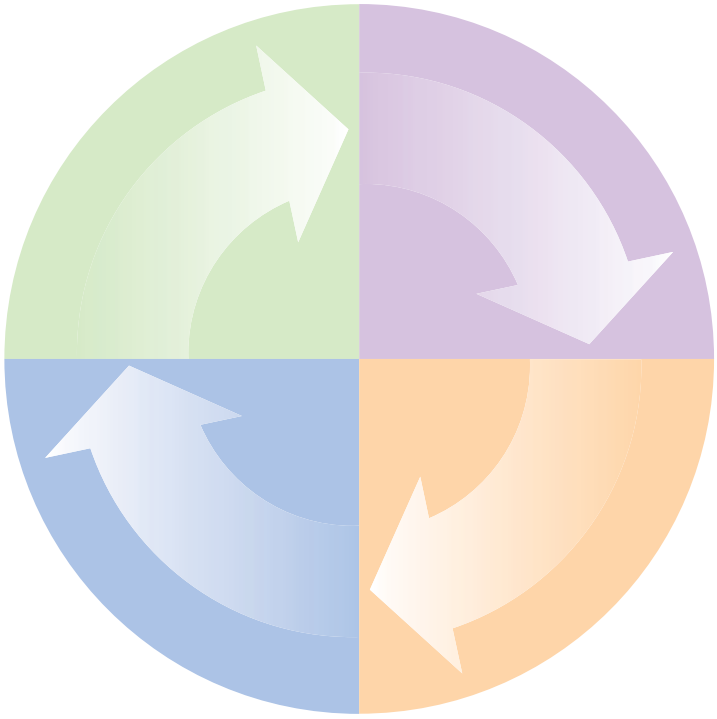
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Guide to School Vulnerability Assessments

KEY PRINCIPLES FOR SAFE SCHOOLS

A Guide to School Vulnerability Assessments

KEY PRINCIPLES FOR SAFE SCHOOLS



U.S. Department of Education
Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools

2008

This report was produced under U.S. Department of Education Contract No. ED-04-CO-0091 with EMT Associates, Inc., and Macro International Inc. Tara Hill served as the contracting officer's technical representative. Sara Strizzi served as the project manager.

U.S. Department of Education

Margaret Spellings
Secretary

Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools

Deborah A. Price
Assistant Deputy Secretary

William Modzeleski
Associate Assistant Deputy Secretary

This report is available on the Department's Web site at www.ed.gov/emergencyplan.

On request, this publication is available in alternate formats, such as Braille, large print, or computer diskette. For more information, please contact the Department's Alternate Format Center at 202-260-0852 or 202-260-0818.

CONTENTS

List of Figures and Tables iv

Acknowledgments v

Chapter 1: Introduction 1
- An Important Note on Research
- What Is a Vulnerability Assessment?
- Why the Need for Conducting Vulnerability Assessments?
- Key Elements of a Vulnerability Assessment

Chapter 2: Vulnerability Assessment Teams 9
- Who Should Be Involved?
- Meetings and Assessments

Chapter 3: Examples of Hazards and Risks 13
- Biological
- Community
- Climate and Culture
- Natural
- Physical Environment
- Technological
- Terrorism
- Crime and Violence

Chapter 4: Selecting a Vulnerability Assessment Tool 19
- Key Issues for Consideration

Chapter 5: Assessing Vulnerabilities 21

Chapter 6: Reporting and Prioritizing Vulnerabilities 25

Chapter 7: Additional Considerations in Vulnerability Assessments 29
- School Population
- School Location
- Community Resources

Chapter 8: Review, Revise, and Reassess 33

Chapter 9: Closer Looks 35

References 39

Appendix A: Additional Resources 43
- Hazard Links and Assessment Tools
- FEMA Resources
- Integrating People with Disabilities
- Cultural Diversity
- School Types and Locations

Appendix B: Vulnerability Assessment Focus Group Participants 51

Appendix C: State Policy Requirements for K–12 School Safety and Security Assessments 57

Appendix D: Assessment Example 61

FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1: Vulnerability Assessment Process 3

Table 1: Risk Index Worksheet 27

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Bronwyn Roberts of EMT Associates provided contract management; Lucinda Austin and Carol Freeman of Macro International provided research coordination and writing support.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools

Sara Strizzi
Management and Program Analyst

Michelle Sinkgraven
Management and Program Analyst

Tara Hill
Management and Program Analyst

Yvonne Bartoli
Senior Policy Advisor

Amy Banks
Management and Program Analyst

External Reviewer Acknowledgments

Gina Kahn
Risk Prevention Services Coordinator
Hampden-Wilbraham (Mass.) Regional School District

Don Mercer
Director, Risk Management and Security
Prince William County (Va.) Public Schools

Mark Harvey
Senior Policy Advisor
Federal Protective Service

Gregory Thomas
Director, National Center for School Preparedness and Planning
Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Crises affect schools across the country every day. While natural hazards such as tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, and earthquakes may be thought of more commonly as emergencies, schools are also at risk from other hazards such as school violence, infectious disease, and terrorist threats. Through the vulnerability assessment process, schools can take steps to prevent, mitigate, and lessen the potential impact of these risks by developing customized district and school emergency management plans in collaboration with community partners. Vulnerability assessments are integral to, rather than separate from, the ongoing emergency management activities of school districts and schools.

Vulnerability assessment is the ongoing process for identifying and prioritizing risks to the individual schools and school districts. It also includes designing a system of accountability with measurable activities and timelines to address risks. As schools continue to plan and prepare for critical events that could have severe consequences, identifying the appropriate vulnerability assessment tool(s) is an important step for helping schools to understand what they are at risk from and just how seriously they could be affected. Schools need to use appropriate tools to capture the relevant data needed to inform the development and maintenance of customized plans.

This guide is intended to be a companion piece to *Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities*, originally published by the U.S. Department of Education in 2003 as a guide for schools and districts to prepare for a variety of crises. This guide emphasizes a valuable part of emergency management planning—ongoing vulnerability assessment—and is intended to assist schools with the implementation of an effective vulnerability assessment process, to include choosing an appropriate vulnerability assessment tool.

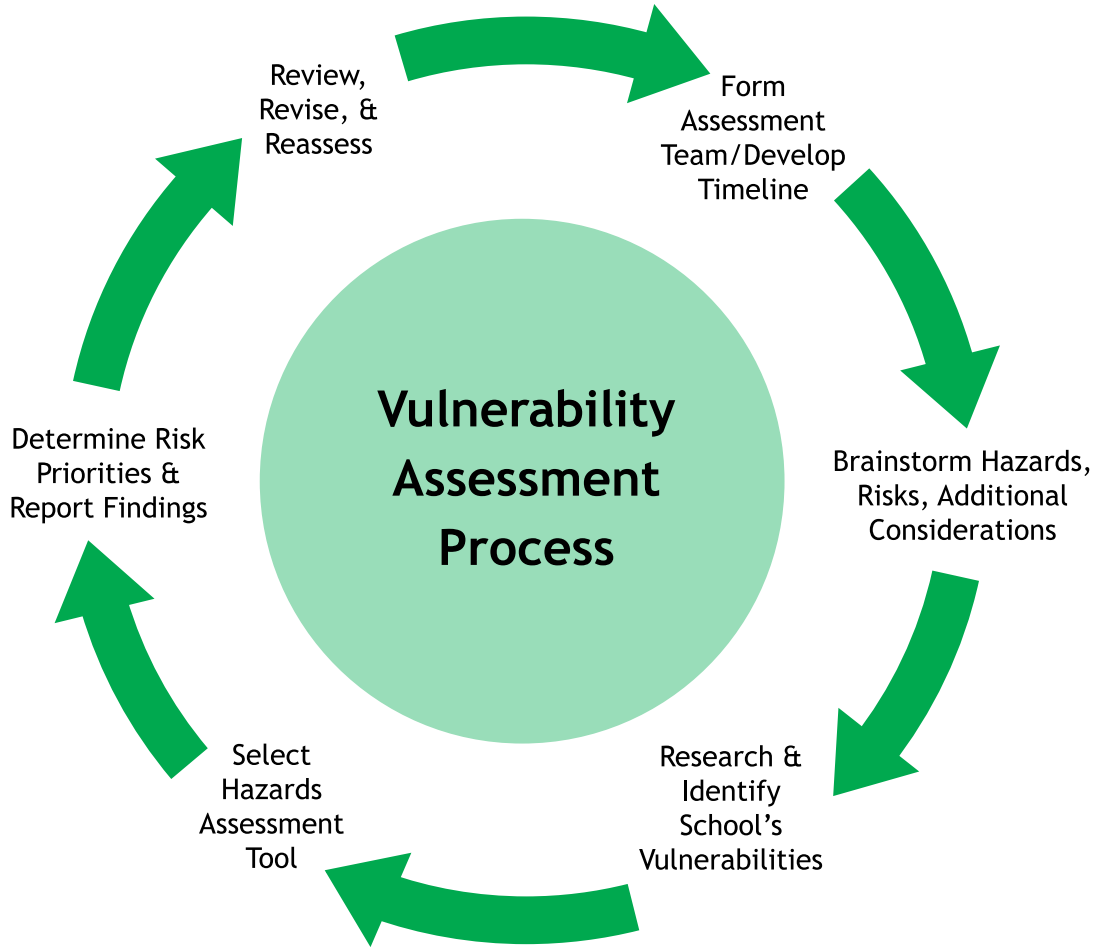
Vulnerability assessment tools may vary from one school site to another, depending on variables such as: location, environment, size, and structure, and even student population and school culture. For example, schools may be located in urban or rural environments, may have limited or greater resources, or may have specific populations with their own unique needs. As a result, vulnerability assessments must be customized on an individual district and school basis, taking all of these factors into consideration.

This guide is not intended to be prescriptive or to give step-by-step instructions for conducting assessments, rather it is intended to describe the key elements to be considered when selecting an assessment tool appropriate for school environments and provide guidance for conducting an assessment that will inform school emergency management activities.

ACTION CHECKLIST

- ☑ Consider forming a vulnerability assessment team composed of varied district, school, and community members that could help to identify hazards and who might be involved in responding to an emergency.
- ☑ Develop a timeline for ongoing regular assessments.
- ☑ Brainstorm potential hazards that could impact school districts, schools, communities, and geographic locations, such as, biological (e.g., diseases), community, physical environment, natural, technological, terrorism, and violence hazards.
- ☑ Identify other considerations that impact school and district vulnerability, including school populations, locations, and resources.
- ☑ Select an assessment tool to evaluate school vulnerabilities.
- ☑ Determine the district and school's individual risk to hazards through data review, research into past incidents, surveying community and student populations, and using the assessment tool to identify vulnerabilities as well as areas for improvement.
- ☑ Compile information gained from the vulnerability assessment and determine risk priorities.
- ☑ Report findings of vulnerability assessment to inform and update the Prevention-Mitigation phase of emergency management planning.
- ☑ Create a prioritized action plan based on the findings of the vulnerability assessment, including a system of accountability for implementation of any recommendations.
- ☑ Review, revise, and reassess the assessment process (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Vulnerability Assessment Process



AN IMPORTANT NOTE ON RESEARCH

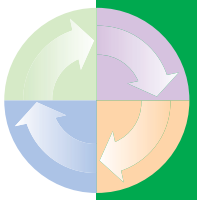
As with overall school emergency management planning, we lack extensive data and conclusive evidence on best practices for school vulnerability assessments. However, experience shows that there are certain key prevention and mitigation strategies important for all schools to consider. In addition, when conducting a vulnerability assessment, schools are encouraged to focus on a holistic approach, that is to consider all possible hazards and identify the greatest risks and priorities. Much of the information in this guide draws from what is known about vulnerability assessments in many settings, as well as what is known specifically about the unique characteristics of districts and schools.

In October 2006, the Department of Education conducted focus groups with safe school planning and preparedness coordinators, policy makers, scholars, and other specialists in the field (see Appendix B) to gather their thoughts and insights on vulnerability assessments. This guide incorporates recommendations from this panel as well as other specialists in the field.

WHAT IS A VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT?

Vulnerability assessment is the ongoing process through which school districts and schools identify and evaluate potential risks and areas of weakness that could have adverse consequences for schools and school systems. Vulnerability assessments are an important and vital part of school emergency management planning. This guide focuses specifically on vulnerability assessments as an all-hazards assessment for examining risks, needs, and threats. A vulnerability assessment focuses on a particular school's susceptibility to specific threats or hazards and how those weaknesses or threats might be mitigated through emergency management. Vulnerability assessments should be used to inform all four of the interconnected phases of emergency management (Prevention-Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery) but will serve as an especially significant component of the prevention-mitigation phase of emergency management to help determine which areas should be priorities of focus.

Many other terms are used in relation to assessment such as needs assessments, threat assessments, risk analysis, safety and security audits, hazards assessments, and facilities assessments. Each one of these terms can have its own meaning, depending on the context in which it is used. Some of these types of assessments—such as *safety and security audits* and *facilities assessments*—focus only on specific aspects or areas of vulnerability.



Examples of specific types of assessments include:

- *Needs assessment*, (often used interchangeably with vulnerability assessment) commonly refers to an assessment done to identify gaps or areas needing improvement and to determine unmet needs, but not necessarily all vulnerabilities or potential threats. In a research article on creating safe schools, Pollack and Sundermann[1] stated, "A needs assessment will point out the nature and extent of problems, identify existing efforts and activities, and help establish the school's priorities."
- *Hazards assessments* focus on general hazards and determining which hazards a school might be prone to, for example, proximity to natural or man-made elements.
- *Threat assessments* also focus on hazards that could potentially threaten the school but have generally been used in assessing students or outsiders who may pose a threat to other students or themselves within the school through means of violence. The 2002 publication of *Threat Assessment in Schools: A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and to Creating Safe School Climates* by the Secret Service and the Department of Education discusses threat assessments in relation to school violence and school safety.
- *Consequence assessments* aim to assess potential consequences that schools might face as a result of a hazard or risk. Consequences are any negative outcomes or effects on schools that may occur in the event of an emergency.
- *Risk analysis* usually focuses on the calculation of specific risk levels to determine how vulnerable schools would be to specific threats or what specific consequences schools could face in the event of crisis and how severe these consequences might be. Generally a risk analysis is conducted after specific hazards and threats are identified.

This guide to vulnerability assessment encompasses all of these areas of assessment and uses vulnerability assessment as a comprehensive term, including assessments of hazards, threats, consequences, and risk analysis, as well as needs that result from these assessments. This definition of vulnerability assessments is designed to coordinate with best practices adopted by the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS') National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP) as a model for identifying, understanding, and strategically managing potential risks and threats. Since 2006, the Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools has been involved in critical infrastructure protection for education facilities in relation to DHS' NIPP. The NIPP focuses on assessing risks and identifies risk as a function of consequence, vulnerability, and threat. These are discussed in the following text box.

[1] Pollack, I., and Sundermann, C. (2001). "Creating safe schools: A comprehensive approach. " *Juvenile Justice, 8* (1), 13–20 Retrieved January 21, 2003, from www.ncjrs.org/html/ojjdp/jjjournal_2001_6/jj2.html.

The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS') National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP) is designed to provide a coordinated approach to establish national priorities, goals and requirements for the protection of critical infrastructure. This is done to help ensure the effective application of federal funding and resources to reduce vulnerability, deter threats and minimize consequences of attacks and other incidents. The NIPP is based on a risk-management framework, which establishes the process for combining consequence, vulnerability, and threat information to produce an assessment of risk that informs protection activities.

DHS' NIPP focuses on assessing risks. In the context of homeland security, the NIPP identifies risk as a function of consequence, vulnerability, and threat. Each of these are defined by the NIPP as follows:

THREAT: "The likelihood that a particular asset, system, or network will suffer an attack or an incident. In the context of risk from terrorist attack, the estimate of this is based on the analysis of the intent and the capability of an adversary. In the context of natural disaster or accident, the likelihood is based on the probability of occurrence."

VULNERABILITY: "The likelihood that a characteristic of, or flaw in, an asset, system, or network's design, location, security posture, process, or operation renders it susceptible to destruction, incapacitation, or exploitation by terrorist or other intentional acts, mechanical failures, and natural hazards."

CONSEQUENCE: "The negative effects on public health and safety, the economy, public confidence in institutions, and the functioning of government, both direct and indirect, that can be expected if an asset, system, or network is damaged, destroyed, or disrupted by a terrorist attack, natural disaster, or other incident." [U.S. Department of Homeland Security, National Infrastructure Protection Plan, (NIPP), 2006, p. 35.]

(For more information, the NIPP is available online at: http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/NIPP_Plan.pdf.)

Typically, schools refer to risk assessments in the school community as vulnerability assessments. For schools, vulnerability assessments should provide a comprehensive profile of the variety of hazards facing a particular entity. Therefore, vulnerability assessments are not separate from, but rather a key component of, school emergency management.

The three elements of the DHS model can be applied to schools as follows:

1—Assessing risk: Identifying the hazards that could potentially affect a school or that make a school more susceptible to hazards and how likely it is that each hazard could occur. For schools, this could include a variety of natural (e.g., hurricane, earthquake, wildfire, flood, tornado) or man-made (e.g., chemical spill, active shooter, arson, etc.) hazards.

2—Assessing vulnerabilities: Determining the characteristics of the school that are susceptible to hazards. Such assessments identify areas of weakness that could result in a variety of undesirable consequences for the school and the community. For schools, this could include elements of a school's structure, procedures, equipment, systems, grounds, surroundings, etc.

3—Assessing consequence: Measuring the range of loss or damage that could occur from the impact of an incident. For schools, this could include, but not be limited to, the disruption of the social and physical learning environment—whether short or long term—and subsequent psychological impact on the school community, the community at large, public confidence and morale, and potential economic impacts.

This application of the three DHS elements is just one example of considerations when choosing an assessment for schools.

WHY THE NEED FOR CONDUCTING VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENTS?

As listed in the *Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities*, vulnerability assessments are an integral part of the prevention-mitigation phase of emergency management. Before taking action and actually conducting emergency management activities, schools must know for which hazards they are most likely at risk. Through assessing vulnerabilities, schools can work with partners to identify, correct, and prevent problems as well as foster advance communication with populations that would be involved in a crisis situation such as students, school personnel, first responders, and other community partners. School assessments should not happen in isolation, but instead should occur in the context of community assessments and in coordination with community partners, which can build a communitywide commitment to safer schools.

Assessments are connected to all phases of emergency management and can help to build customized planning. Specifically, vulnerability assessments can help schools identify and prioritize what actions they should take to mitigate or prevent potential hazards that might impact the school. Vulnerability assessments can also assist with other phases of emergency planning by helping schools to better understand

How Assessments Promote Safety

Example 1

An elementary school in a large Midwestern city[a] experienced the need for a chemical hazards response when a school staff member learned from a former teacher that mercury had been spilled in a classroom seven years ago but was never reported. The current teacher then reported the incident. Upon inspection, elevated levels of mercury were found in the classroom and corrective actions were taken. Vulnerability assessments can assist in situations such as these when consistent surveys of school personnel and students along with assessment of chemical management can help to identify problem areas in a timely manner.

Example 2

After an assessment of schools in Seattle that had been impacted by earthquakes,[b] nonstructural hazards were identified that contributed to earthquake damage and school risk. As part of Seattle Project Impact, initiated by FEMA, these lessons learned were incorporated to make changes in non-structural elements within schools. These non-structural hazards included issues such as restraints for heavy objects such as bookshelves or desktop equipment. By using the checklists developed for schools from these lessons learned, schools can assess their own risks and identify nonstructural hazards that could impact a school during the event of an earthquake and can decrease the resulting risk to health and safety of the school population.

[a] U.S. Department of Education, Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance Center. (2007). *Incorporating Chemical Hazards into an Emergency Management Plan, 2(4).*

[b] Seattle Public Schools (2000). *School Facilities Manual Nonstructural Protection Guide: Safer Schools Earthquake Hazards Nonstructural, Lessons Learned Seattle School District*. Accessed at: http://emilms.fema.gov/is362_Schools/assets/NonStructuralGuide.pdf.

school and community populations and their needs as well as the actual school structure, grounds, and surrounding community, allowing schools to take specific actions based on the needs and vulnerabilities identified.

KEY ELEMENTS OF A VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT

Although schools and school districts maintain different approaches to vulnerability assessments, there are certain elements that can help to make a vulnerability assessment stronger. These include:

- Utilizing a team assessment approach to bring a variety of perspectives to the assessment process
- Ensuring that schools consider all potential hazards that might affect the school and surrounding community—including areas in which students have to travel to and from school
- Understanding and inventorying not only vulnerabilities but also the existing resources and capabilities available to prevent or mitigate the impact of a vulnerability
- Conducting a walk-through of school grounds and facilities, surveying the school population and community about potential hazards, and looking at existing crime and school incidence data
- Reporting on the findings identified in the assessment, developing corrective actions and accountabilities, and using the findings to inform and update emergency management plans

More information about these key elements is highlighted throughout the following sections of this document.

A team approach provides a variety of perspectives from individuals who can best assess the day-to-day hazards that could affect schools.

CHAPTER 2: VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT TEAMS

Vulnerability assessment teams are an important part of creating a unified and comprehensive effort for assessing risks and hazards. Teams can be used to establish goals and objectives for assessment, develop a timeline for assessments, assign roles and responsibilities for next steps, monitor progress on action items, and update and revise assessments as needed. A team approach provides districts and schools with a variety of perspectives from the individuals who recognize and can best assess the day-to-day hazards and risks that could affect schools.

ACTION CHECKLIST

- ☑ Identify individuals who are knowledgeable about different areas of the district, school and the surrounding community.
- ☑ Identify individuals from district, school and partner agencies who are knowledgeable about school hazards and emergency management.
- ☑ Form a vulnerability assessment team from among a variety of these individuals.
- ☑ Create clear goals and develop a plan for the team.
- ☑ Develop a timeline for consistent team meetings and follow-up assessments.

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?

Vulnerability assessment teams may be formed at the school district level, the school level, or a combination of both. There are potential advantages to each of these arrangements. If teams are formed at the district level, a standardized vulnerability assessment process can be created that can then be tailored to assess individual schools. Coordination of the vulnerability assessment process at a district level can help schools to avoid duplication of efforts and save time and resources. District coordination will also typically convey an organizational framework of support that will make the process more meaningful and more likely to be sustained over time. If assessments teams are formed at the district level, however, caution should be taken to ensure that individual schools still have input into or leadership of the assessment process at their own locations. Forming an assessment team at the school level gives schools more individual control over their own assessment process and may allow

assessments to be tailored more on an individual school basis. If assessment teams are formed at the school level, however, schools should make sure that they complying with any district level policies or procedures and communicating their findings back to the district level.

Involve a wide variety of individuals in the assessment process. Create vulnerability assessment teams composed of varied district, school, and community members with expertise in a variety of related fields. Teams should consist of members of the community that could help to identify hazards and might be involved in a crisis response if a hazard or disaster were to occur. Vulnerability assessment teams should provide multiple perspectives based on a wide variety of experiences, which can foster better identification of the wide range of hazards potentially affecting a school and its students, staff, and visitors. Once a team has been established, consider soliciting input from individuals who might have knowledge of specific areas affecting the school such as:

- School building and grounds staff
- Residents of the surrounding neighborhood
- Residents of the larger community
- Students
- Parents of students
- Public safety officials

Regardless of the individuals chosen for vulnerability assessment teams, keep the lines of communication open with as many groups who represent or can support diverse aspects of the school and community as possible.

Administrators such as principals or district representatives can serve as leaders in vulnerability assessment efforts and facilitate formation of teams by selecting and coordinating or supporting team members. Administrators may have influence over policy that could affect vulnerabilities and can help to secure funds for assessments and changes to be implemented as a result of the assessment that might otherwise be hard to procure.

School personnel such as general and special educators, school resource officers, security officers, administrators, school nurses, clerical and reception staff, paraprofessionals, guidance counselors, coaches, cafeteria and facilities staff, and bus drivers can provide valuable input into the daily occurrences within schools. While all of these individuals may not be members of the vulnerability assessment team, ensuring that a variety of school personnel are involved and have input can provide a more comprehensive assessment approach. If these individuals are not part of the team, team members should reach out to them for their insight into specific

vulnerabilities, for example:

- School resource officers or school security officers should also be involved in the assessment process as they have firsthand knowledge of many of the school's vulnerabilities as well as experience in responding to incidents.
- Teachers may be able to attest more to hazards and vulnerabilities among students and in the classroom.
- Facilities personnel can recognize structural and property hazards and dangers and can also gauge the prevalence of risk indicators such as graffiti, vandalism, or carelessly disposed alcohol beverage containers.
- Counselors may be more familiar with emotional and mental health challenges within specific student populations.
- Bus drivers will be more familiar with hazards students face along school routes.
- School nurses may be more familiar with biological or health issues and challenges.
- Teachers within specific areas may be able to contribute differently to assessments: special education teachers would be able to provide information on how hazards might impact students with special needs or disabilities, while science teachers may know more about identifying chemical hazards in their labs or classrooms.

Involve members of the community outside of the school. Teams should also include key community partners such as law enforcement officials, local government officials, the local first responders, and public and mental health practitioners. Emergency management professionals such as law enforcement officers, fire department professionals, and emergency medical services personnel have experience responding to crises and can help to identify hazards that might occur at the school or in the community around the school and explain how those hazards might impact the school. Building inspectors can help to identify structural or building grounds hazards and violations of building codes, and fire personnel can help to identify potential fire hazards as well as violations of fire codes. Other local officials such as public health officials, transportation officials, or public utility officials may also help in identifying and assessing vulnerability to hazards. Schools

Assessing Community Hazards

Capistrano Unified School District

As mentioned here, schools should work with members of the local community to assess community hazards. The Capistrano Unified School District (USD) in San Juan Capistrano, Calif., worked with the community in their hazard assessment and planning. Because the San Onofre Nuclear Power Plant was located in the community, the Capistrano USD specifically involved the plant in assessing risks related to that facility that could have an impact on schools in the district.

may wish to include members of the community that represent other potential hazards such as utilities, manufacturing plants, nuclear facilities, and military installations. Additionally, local emergency management planning councils regularly assess these elements for community planning and may be able to offer input.

Consider involving students and family members in the vulnerability assessment process. Depending on the maturity of the student population, student leaders can be a valuable resource in identifying hazards to the campus, specific student needs, and concerns from a unique student perspective. Parents and family members can also provide input regarding challenges that students may encounter en route to school, in school, and specific areas of concern that students discuss at home. Additionally, family members that are involved with the school, including school volunteers or Parent-Teacher Association leaders, could prove to be valuable resources.

Instead of having students and family members serve as vulnerability assessment team members, schools and districts may wish to survey these individuals as part of the assessment process or consult with selected students and parents throughout the assessment process.

MEETINGS AND ASSESSMENTS

All team members must be involved in assessment planning, execution, and follow-up to ensure that the process is comprehensive and results in system improvement. Assessments are not a one-time event and should be conducted on an ongoing basis. Individuals involved in the assessment program should work together to establish intervals and timelines for ensuring that assessments are conducted according to a schedule agreed upon by the school or district. Any changes such as landscaping, building additions, renovations, or actual emergency events may require additional assessments in between the regularly scheduled overall assessments. Vulnerability assessment teams should determine the frequency and schedule of assessments and meetings, including expectations for participants.

CHAPTER 3: EXAMPLES OF HAZARDS AND RISKS

ACTION CHECKLIST

- ☑ Learn about the types of hazards that could impact your school.
- ☑ Research hazard occurrences in your area or in similar areas.
- ☑ Incorporate appropriate hazards into vulnerability assessment planning.

There are many different categories of hazards that could potentially affect schools. Vulnerability assessments should take into consideration all hazards and threats that could potentially affect the school and its students and staff instead of limiting assessments to only specific categories of hazards and threats.

In reviewing potential hazards, there are several hazards that could potentially impact nearly all schools, regardless of location or student population. The following conceptualization of hazards is not completely comprehensive, but instead is designed to help schools and districts understand the types of specific hazards and risks that could affect schools and to demonstrate the scope and breadth of hazards and risks to be considered when selecting vulnerability assessments. These hazards are listed alphabetically and not in any order of priority. Some hazards may not clearly fall into one category or another and may seem to overlap into several categories. As FEMA[2] notes, also, often one hazard can lead to other hazards. For example, a hazardous spill could have multiple outcomes such as a fire, explosion, or release of toxic fumes into the environment.

Lessons Learned from September 11

In a report on the lessons learned from September 11,[a] authors highlighted that children learn better when they feel safe. They stress that a proactive all hazards assessment that leads to mitigation of threats can help to build this safe environment for students.

Authors also stressed the importance of communication, education, and involvement of many different school and community populations.

Lessons learned specifically include the following:

- The need for coordination and communication among school leaders, staff, parents, and even students about emergency preparedness.
- The importance of communication with the community, such as the local police department.

[a] Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University. (December 2004). *Uncommon Sense, Uncommon Courage: How the New York City School System, its teachers, leadership, and students responded to the terror of September 11.* Available online at: www.ncdp.mailman.columbia.edu/files/9_11reportASSESSMENT.pdf

[2] Emergency Management Institute, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). (2007). *IS-362 multi-hazard emergency planning for schools*. Emmitsburg, Md.: FEMA. Available online at: http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is362.asp.

BIOLOGICAL

Biological hazards that could affect schools include:

- **Infectious diseases** such as pandemic influenza, XDR tuberculosis, methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA)[3], or meningitis infections
- **Contaminated food problems** including salmonella, botulism, and E. coli

Additionally, the Department of Homeland Security has urged schools to consider how existing biological or medical conditions such as allergies, diabetes, or asthma could affect students in the event of an emergency. For example, because of the stressful situation, students with asthma may have greater difficulty breathing and may need access to medications or inhalers during a shelter-in-place situation. Similarly, students with diabetes may need access to insulin or snacks during a shelter-in-place situation.

COMMUNITY

There are many threats associated with the physical community surrounding a school.

Certain hazards in the community may have an impact or an effect on school's emergency management capacity:

- There are many different categories of hazards that could potentially affect schools. Vulnerability assessments should take into consideration all hazards and threats that could potentially affect the school and its students and staff instead of limiting assessments to only specific categories of hazards and threats.
- Various nearby infrastructures such as a chemical or nuclear power plant that could pose a potential hazard to the school community in the event of an accidental release of toxins or explosions
- Military installations or other government facilities that could be hazardous in times of conflict or times of heightened alert
- Nearby dams or reservoirs that could fail or be targeted for attack
- Rivers or nearby water sources that could create flooding
- Hazardous waste sites and underground pipelines for gas, oil, or electricity
- Railroads lines and highways that are used to transport dangerous cargo
- Nearby sites of mass transportation such as airports, railroads, ports, rail transits, major highways, and bus stations that could impact schools and also be impacted during an emergency

[3] Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) is a form of Staphylococcus aureus ("staph"), a common bacterium that has developed resistance to several forms of antibiotics.

- Potentially dangerous gathering sites such as abandoned buildings or mines
- Bus or automobile accidents
- Community venues such as arenas or stadiums which attract large groups

CLIMATE AND CULTURE

The climate and culture of the school can contribute to or actually cause hazards within schools. Many schools and districts already collect data on information related to school climate and culture that can be obtained and assessed as part of the vulnerability assessment. Issues of climate and culture both in the school and in the community that could influence hazards include:

- Drug usage and trafficking
- Crime both minor and serious
- Sexual misconduct
- Hostile environments (i.e., an environment in which groups of individuals feel unsafe or threatened, such as in racial or religious discrimination)
- Students, personnel, or intruders who may pose a danger to others
- Bullying and other actions often considered not serious such as truancy

NATURAL

Natural hazards refer to what is commonly labeled as natural disasters as well as types of severe weather. Examples of types of natural hazards to consider in vulnerability assessment planning include:

- Earthquakes
- Tornadoes
- Lightning
- Severe wind
- Hurricanes
- Floods
- Wildfires
- Extreme temperatures (hot or cold)
- Landslides and mudslides
- Tsunamis
- Volcanoes
- Winter precipitation
- Wild animals

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Many hazards or risks within the physical school environment could seriously impact schools—including structural, maintenance, and grounds hazards.

- **Structural hazards** refer to actual structural issues within the building such as weak roofs or trusses, building susceptibility to high winds or floods, unreinforced masonry, and unsecured or unsafe doors and windows.
- **Maintenance hazards** could include unstable bookshelves, exposed wiring, wet floors, unsafe practices in science labs or with chemical elements, exposure to asbestos, unsecured appliances and vending machines, heating and ventilation systems, blocked exits, and general fire hazards.
- **Grounds hazards** can include issues such as unsafe landscaping; inadequate exterior lighting; poorly maintained playground equipment, sidewalks, stairs, handrails, or asphalt; exposed electrical wires or gas lines; exposed nails; unsecured storage structures; access to roofs from nearby structures or trees; and proximity of any hazard to bus, automobile or pedestrian traffic.

Physical Environment Hazards

In 2006, a North Carolina school was destroyed by a fire that occurred during the school day and began in a reportedly empty chemistry classroom.[a] Officials stated that because the school was built in the mid-1970s, sprinklers were not required at the time and the school did not have these in place. Also, the schools' attic design allowed the fire to spread rapidly into the rafters, causing steel beams to heat and pull away from the wall. Emergency officials stated that sprinklers can help to hold off flames until emergency personnel arrive, and agreed in this case that sprinklers would have made a difference, saying the fire might well have been contained to one room.[b]

[a]Townsend, E., Fernandez, J., and Killian, J. (November, 2006). Fire destroys Eastern Guilford High School. *Greensboro News and Record.*
[b]Hardin, J. (November, 2006.) Sprinklers might have saved Eastern. *Greensboro News and Record.*

TECHNOLOGICAL

Technological issues cover any issues with technology in schools. Unsecured computer networks can lead to outsiders gaining access to private documents or information about students and can also lead to contact from outside intruders such as predators who may wish to target students. Technological issues can include:

- Cyber bullying
- Internet predators
- Securing files and systems from cyber attacks or compromise and intrusion
- Electrical fires
- Power outages, including the impacts of disruptions on any technology-based emergency communication resources
- Inappropriate use of computers, e.g., to access gambling and pornographic sites, etc.

TERRORISM

Incidents such as Sept. 11, 2001, and the Beslan, Russia school hostage crisis in September 2004, have demonstrated that communities and schools are potentially targets for terrorists, and schools must be prepared to deal with terrorist threats regardless of where they occur (i.e., school or community). Terrorist threats may include incidents such as:

- Explosions
- Kidnappings or hostage taking
- Bioterrorism or biological warfare threats
- Chemical threats
- Nuclear blasts
- Radiological threats that could be dispersed through a bomb or radiological dispersion device (RDD) or "dirty bomb"

While bomb threats and other terrorist threats are indeed a relevant concern for schools, districts and schools may also be indirectly impacted by events that occur in the community or surrounding area. Bioterrorism threats include bacteria, viruses, and toxins that could be released into the air. Chemical threats could be in the form of toxic vapors, aerosols, liquids, or solids. Nuclear events and RDDs would similarly involve some sort of bomb or explosion. In the event of terrorist threats such as these, schools may need to evaluate how prepared they would be to evacuate or shelter-in-place based on the type and proximity of the threat.

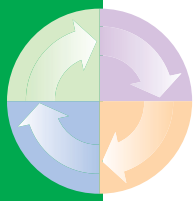
CRIME AND VIOLENCE

Threats of violence within or impacting schools could include issues such as:

- Weapons in schools
- Fights
- Active shooters
- Gang violence
- Intruders

As mentioned earlier with community and school climates, factors such as crime rates in the area, frequency of child abuse and domestic violence, prevalence of access to weapons, known gang activity, and drug use in the community and school may contribute more to acts of violence. Threat assessment teams, comprised of educators, law enforcement and mental health personnel can help schools prevent acts of violence by evaluating an individual's behaviors and communications to determine if they pose a risk.

For more resources on specific types of hazards and tools to assist in assessment of these hazards, visit pages 45–48 of the appendixes.



Districts and schools should seek to find a **comprehensive vulnerability assessment tool that will meet the needs of specific schools.**

CHAPTER 4: SELECTING A VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT TOOL

ACTION CHECKLIST

- ☑ Determine what assessment tools already exist within your school or school district.
- ☑ Identify strong assessment tools from other nearby schools and districts similar to your own.
- ☑ Choose an assessment tool that covers all potential hazards that may affect your school.

Districts or schools should choose the best vulnerability assessment tool possible for their districts and individual schools. When selecting an assessment tool, districts or schools should seek to find a comprehensive tool that will meet the needs of specific schools. Specifically, good assessment tools should:

- Be school-specific
- Assess all potential hazards
- Identify specific school facilities and areas for assessment
- Be clear and easy-to-follow
- Allow schools to assess risks associated with applicable hazards
- Include rubrics for rating hazards, not simply subjective yes or no questions or scales
- Address the four phases of emergency management for schools[4]
- Be centered within a process of ongoing assessment, review and improvement

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Select an existing vulnerability assessment tool that can be used to assess applicable risks and vulnerabilities. Teams may choose to create their own vulnerability assessment tools, but with so many tools already created, time and energy can be saved by selecting an existing tool that meets the district and school's needs.

Develop a list of facilities and properties for assessment. These may include special areas of focus within a typical school such as cafeterias, laboratories, portable or temporary classrooms, stadiums, playgrounds, and parking lots. Also, most

[4] U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, *Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities*, Washington, D.C., 2003.

districts have other areas occupied by staff only that should also be considered such as district offices, administrative buildings, storage facilities, and bus or transportation depots.

Conduct research to determine which hazards could pose a risk to the school. The selected tool should cover the hazards identified as potentially affecting the school and should include rubrics for assessment as opposed to dichotomous (yes or no) questions. Rubrics should assess how severely hazards appear and should allow space for comment that could be helpful in reporting findings.

CHAPTER 5: ASSESSING VULNERABILITIES

ACTION CHECKLIST

- ☑ Survey school and community populations about hazards.
- ☑ Conduct a walkthrough of school grounds and facilities to assess hazards.
- ☑ Review incident data in the school and community.
- ☑ Work with local emergency management personnel and community members to assess greater community risks.
- ☑ Review previous vulnerability assessments of the school building and grounds.
- ☑ Review school emergency management plans.

After forming a broad team of school and community partners, identifying relevant hazards, and choosing an appropriate assessment tool, districts and schools should conduct a thorough vulnerability assessment to assess schools' specific vulnerabilities and needs. During the assessment process and when using the assessment tools the vulnerability assessment team should:

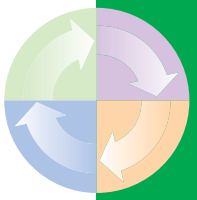
- Brainstorm with the assessment team what easily identifiable risks are.
- Research natural disaster occurrences, local crime rates, and other factors. The team could also review local media coverage, public databases, and other community information, which may contain vulnerability assessments for the greater community. For example, if the team includes a law enforcement partner, there may be an opportunity to assess local crime data and crime history as it relates to the safety and security of the campus.
- Review discipline data including mapping of infractions by time of day or building location to reveal any "hot spots."
- Incorporate results and evaluations of any exercises, drills, or actual events.
- Use online tools such as those mentioned in the Additional Resources section to help determine risks (such as the FEMA Hazard Mapping Tool and flood risk assessment).
- Conduct a walk-through of all school grounds and facilities, applying principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (page 48), to look for, and identify, potential hazards. Consider human, structural (facilities, classrooms, etc.), landscaping, technological, as well as culture and

climate aspects while surveying. Take photos or video of existing conditions when possible and consider the use of student photographers.

- Look for potential hazards at out-of-school events, including outdoor events, afterschool activities, and communitywide building access opportunities such as adult education or election polling.
- Survey regular bus routes for potential hazards.
- Evaluate and, if necessary, update current school policy regarding safety and security in the school, as well as relevant memoranda of understanding with community partners.
- Survey students, school staff, families, and community members on issues such as perceived safety, school climate, bullying, gang violence, community risks, illegal drug sale or use, and other issues. While members of the vulnerability assessment team maybe knowledgeable on a variety of areas, they still may not be aware of all the factors within the school and outside community that could be important in assessment.
- Establish priorities. A significant number of vulnerabilities will likely be identified, some of which could be addressed almost immediately, and others because of their complexity or cost could take considerable time to address. The team should carefully examine identified vulnerabilities and develop a strategy for addressing them (See Chapter 6).

Although every school is different and will have its own unique needs and areas of assessment, there are some key elements that all schools should take into consideration when conducting a vulnerability assessment. These areas include:

- Reviewing and comparing previous assessment results which will allow schools and districts to see trends over time
- Control of access and egress to buildings including bus, automobile and pedestrian traffic patterns
- Identification of "all persons" in the building—including contractors, food service workers, and itinerant staff
- Safe interior and exterior facilities
- Safe landscaping—including noting areas in which intruders may hide or more easily access critical resources such as phone or electricity (see page 48)
- Visibility in both the interior and exterior of buildings, as well as surrounding landscape
- Identification of an established incident command system ensuring that key roles and responsibilities are filled and that key participants regularly practice incident management operations, as well as showing the chain of command
- Identification of evacuation routes and predetermined evacuation locations as well as alternate locations



- Identification of shelter-in-place locations and tornado-safe zones
- Communication systems including inter-school, intra-school, home-school emergency notification, first-responder interoperability, alarms, and surveillance equipment
- Inventory of emergency supplies and go-kits for each setting (i.e., classroom, facilities, central office)
- Threat assessment team and process
- Staff and student knowledge of emergency procedures, including a review of training plans to assess potential gaps and assessment of effectiveness of trainings through surveys or drill or incident evaluation data
- Supervision of students and grounds
- Accessibility and security for areas containing hazardous materials storage
- Updated Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) supporting transportation, off-site evacuation, emergency supplies, and facilities' recovery
- Updated MOUs supporting response protocols for emergency first responders
- Updated MOUs supporting emotional or psychological recovery
- Agreed upon plan by district and unions providing for continuation of operations and financial recovery

CHAPTER 6: REPORTING AND PRIORITIZING VULNERABILITIES

ACTION CHECKLIST

- ☑ Identify vulnerabilities which pose the greatest risk to your school.
- ☑ Complete a thorough report of all parts of the assessment.
- ☑ Provide recommendations on how to use the assessment results to make corrections and to inform and update emergency management plans.

After conducting the vulnerability assessment, compile and report results of vulnerabilities to all hazards assessed. Vulnerability assessment teams should identify areas in which the school may be vulnerable and need improvement. Findings can help to inform all four phases of emergency management, especially the prevention-mitigation phase. Formal reporting creates a process of accountability that increases the likelihood of improvement. If vulnerabilities are not reported formally, then the emergency management planning will not reflect real needs and conditions, and the efforts of the vulnerability assessment may become wasted. Post-assessment reports may be most effective if they include photos or videos of hazards to be addressed and develop practical and usable solutions to hazards, including intermediate accommodations that are needed until the concern can be fully remedied. Post assessment reports should include the vulnerabilities that were identified from the school and grounds walk-through, surveying of school populations, and community and hazards research. Reports may also

Creating a Post-Assessment Report

When creating a post-assessment report, pictures can help to clearly highlight hazards and areas needing improvement. In the Kentucky Center for School Safety's Sample Assessment Report, KCSS gives samples of how to include photos and a description of the hazard so these hazards can be adequately addressed in the prevention-mitigation phase. Listed below are some examples taken from the KCSS report. For the entire sample document, please see page 69.

Excerpt from KCSS Sample Report:

Recommendation. 6-08: Locker room—A low voltage unapproved extension cord was draped across the walkway inside the locker room creating a trip and fall hazard. Remove the extension cord, abating this risk.

continued on next page

include information about hazards that have already been appropriately addressed but may warrant reassessment in future vulnerability assessments. Team members should have input in the reporting phase to ensure that all identified vulnerabilities are addressed. Reports do not have to be written by vulnerability assessment team members and may instead be written by someone outside of the team; however, team members should be included in the process to ensure that their perspectives and valuable input is considered.

Reports should not focus entirely on improvements that need to be made. For comprehensive reporting, schools should also include information on successful hazard prevention or mitigation efforts that the school has implemented, as well as resources that increase the school, district, and community's ability to prevent or mitigate crisis. Recording hazards even if the school or district is addressing them well can provide insight into any trends that suggest movement in a more positive direction to help schools keep track of progress and show positive changes from year to year. Schools and districts should also report on strengths in addition to vulnerabilities, and when possible, inventory their assets so school populations and community partners are familiar with how to adequately utilize school assets in the event an emergency occurs. For examples of types of successes a school or district might report on, please view the "Commendations" section of the sample report on pages 65-67 in the appendixes.

continued from previous page

Recommendation. 6-09: Custodial Closet and Boiler Room—Two custodial closets were unlocked within the school, which could allow students to gain access during operating hours. All custodial closets should be kept locked and secure at all times when not in direct use by authorized staff. Also ensure that all chemicals are kept labeled and clearly identified in accordance with OSHA's hazardous communication safety standard. Maintain a three-foot clearance space away from all electrical and mechanical units inside the boiler room to allow for a safe access during an emergency. All extra propane tanks must be stored outside the building in locked cage 10-feet away from any ignition source. Remove all old wooden ladders inside the boiler room and replace them with a type IA fiberglass ladder rated for commercial use.

Use a risk matrix to determine which hazards and vulnerabilities would have the greatest consequences for each school. Because schools and districts do not have unlimited resources, priorities for addressing vulnerabilities should be established. A risk matrix or risk index (see Table 1) is one way for schools to assess potential hazards and determine priorities for the school to focus on based on the severity or consequence of the risk. Schools or districts can use risk indexes to determine how likely an event would be to impact them, on what scale it would impact them, how severe it would be, and how much advance warning they might have. Based on these

Table 1: Risk Index Worksheet

Instructions: Use the worksheet below when analyzing the potential risk presented by each hazard you identify at your school.

Hazard	Frequency	Magnitude	Warning	Severity	Risk Priority
	4 Highly likely 3 Likely 2 Possible 1 Unlikely	4 Catastrophic 3 Critical 2 Limited 1 Negligible	4 Minimal 3 6-12 hours 2 12-24 hours 1 24+ hours	4 Catastrophic 3 Critical 2 Limited 1 Negligible	☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low
	4 Highly likely 3 Likely 2 Possible 1 Unlikely	4 Catastrophic 3 Critical 2 Limited 1 Negligible	4 Minimal 3 6-12 hours 2 12-24 hours 1 24+ hours	4 Catastrophic 3 Critical 2 Limited 1 Negligible	☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low
	4 Highly likely 3 Likely 2 Possible 1 Unlikely	4 Catastrophic 3 Critical 2 Limited 1 Negligible	4 Minimal 3 6-12 hours 2 12-24 hours 1 24+ hours	4 Catastrophic 3 Critical 2 Limited 1 Negligible	☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low
	4 Highly likely 3 Likely 2 Possible 1 Unlikely	4 Catastrophic 3 Critical 2 Limited 1 Negligible	4 Minimal 3 6-12 hours 2 12-24 hours 1 24+ hours	4 Catastrophic 3 Critical 2 Limited 1 Negligible	☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low
	4 Highly likely 3 Likely 2 Possible 1 Unlikely	4 Catastrophic 3 Critical 2 Limited 1 Negligible	4 Minimal 3 6-12 hours 2 12-24 hours 1 24+ hours	4 Catastrophic 3 Critical 2 Limited 1 Negligible	☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low
	4 Highly likely 3 Likely 2 Possible 1 Unlikely	4 Catastrophic 3 Critical 2 Limited 1 Negligible	4 Minimal 3 6-12 hours 2 12-24 hours 1 24+ hours	4 Catastrophic 3 Critical 2 Limited 1 Negligible	☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low
	4 Highly likely 3 Likely 2 Possible 1 Unlikely	4 Catastrophic 3 Critical 2 Limited 1 Negligible	4 Minimal 3 6-12 hours 2 12-24 hours 1 24+ hours	4 Catastrophic 3 Critical 2 Limited 1 Negligible	☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low
	4 Highly likely 3 Likely 2 Possible 1 Unlikely	4 Catastrophic 3 Critical 2 Limited 1 Negligible	4 Minimal 3 6-12 hours 2 12-24 hours 1 24+ hours	4 Catastrophic 3 Critical 2 Limited 1 Negligible	☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low
	4 Highly likely 3 Likely 2 Possible 1 Unlikely	4 Catastrophic 3 Critical 2 Limited 1 Negligible	4 Minimal 3 6-12 hours 2 12-24 hours 1 24+ hours	4 Catastrophic 3 Critical 2 Limited 1 Negligible	☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low

Note: All hazards with a risk rating of High or Medium should be considered in your school's Emergency Operations Plan.

Sample of a Risk Index Worksheet taken from FEMA's online training program, *IS-362 Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools*. See Appendix A, pages 48–49.

areas, schools can determine which hazards should be higher or lower priority in addressing. To link to a blank Risk Index Worksheet that schools can use in assessing risk, please see page 49.

Develop a written plan for addressing identified hazards and vulnerabilities. Once possible hazards and vulnerabilities have been identified, schools should continue to work with community partners to begin developing written plans that outline the steps the district will take to address these hazards. The plans should

identify those persons responsible and a timeline for completing the work. For those elements that require longer-term capital planning, it may be necessary to develop immediate procedural modifications that may not fully remove the hazard but will reduce its impact. For example, assessment of internal communications resources may reveal that an area of a building is not in range of the public address system and emergency announcements will not be heard. While replacement of the PA system may not be immediately possible, awareness of this deficiency and a contingency plan for notification will be needed in any zones that are out of its range.

CHAPTER 7: ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS IN VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENTS

ACTION CHECKLIST

- ☑ Consider other factors about your school and area that may affect your school during an emergency situation.
- ☑ Identify students and staff who may have special needs during emergencies.
- ☑ Identify how to best address student and staff's specific needs.

Each school will have special considerations that may impact its level of vulnerability to specific hazards. These other factors will be important when completing a document such as the Risk Index mentioned in Chapter 6, because they may determine how severely a hazard impacts a school and may increase the risk priority for certain hazards.

SCHOOL POPULATIONS

When conducting a vulnerability assessment, take into account the unique populations of students, staff, and community members that would be involved in a hazard or crisis. Thinking about populations that could be impacted by a disaster can help to identify vulnerabilities or risks that may apply only to specific populations and may assist in the emergency management planning process.

- **Get to know students and their specific needs.** Each school has students of different ages and developmental levels. Elementary school children have different knowledge and understanding than middle school children, and assessments must take this into consideration. Within the same school, students may also be at different developmental levels. Kindergarteners will likely respond differently to hazards than will fifth-graders.
- **Consider students, staff, and visitors with disabilities in vulnerability and hazards assessments.** People with disabilities may encompass a wide variety of individuals including those with physical (i.e., vision, hearing, mobility), cognitive (i.e., autism), and social or emotional disabilities. Schools should consider how hazards and response protocols might affect students and school community members with disabilities. For example, does the school need to do something to make the central shelter-in-place location accessible to

students in wheelchairs or more accommodating to those who have medical needs? Are there ways to alert individuals with hearing impairments during an emergency? Students with cognitive disabilities, such as autism, may require special accommodations in a shelter-in-place situation. In addition, any visitor, faculty, or staff with disabilities may require additional assistance in the event of an emergency. Special education teachers can be a valuable resource in assessing needs of students and staff, and strategies for providing assistance in the event of an emergency. For specific resources that can be used to learn more about working with students with disabilities, visit page 49.

- **Consider diversity in student populations.** Cultural factors that may affect the population and create challenges in emergency management include: language barriers and diverse cultural norms and ideals. For example, information must be clear and concise, alleviating opportunities for misunderstanding through a cultural lens. Information disseminated to students and parents also needs to match the languages present in the community.

Considering Diversity

An example from terrorist events of Sept. 11, 2001, shows how diversity can impact assessment and response. As Ada Dolch, former principal of the High School of Public Service in New York City, explains,[a] cultural factors affected how schools responded to students during and after the impact. Dolch states, "The counseling services were fantastic for those students who could use them…. Counseling is not wholly applicable to my kids…. My kids are black, Hispanic, Chinese—they don't come from a culture of using counseling…." Cultural factors should be considered in all services provided including counseling, such as in this example, but also in response and preparedness for emergencies.

[a]Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University. (December 2004). *Uncommon Sense, Uncommon Courage: How the New York City School System, its teachers, leadership, and students responded to the terror of September 11.* Available online at: http://www.ncdp.mailman.columbia.edu/files/9_11reportASSESSMENT.pdf.

- **Consider the frequency and use of substitutes or transient staff.** Individuals who are not employed on a full-time basis by the school may often be overlooked in emergency management planning. Schools should consider how they will communicate emergency management plans to these individuals and how they may be impacted in the event of an emergency.

SCHOOL LOCATION

A school's location can have a large impact on available resources as well as the types of hazards or threats the school might face. Assessment teams should consider whether the school is located in a rural, suburban, or urban area. Each location presents unique challenges and hazards for schools. Rural schools are an integral part of their communities and often their biggest hurdle is believing that an emergency could take place at their school.[5] Rural schools also face unique challenges such as

[5] Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance Center, U.S. Department of Education. (2007). *ERCM Express: Emergency management in nontraditional school settings.* Washington, D.C.: Author. Available online at: http://rems.ed.gov/views/documents/NontraditionalSchoolSettings.pdf.

limited resources shared across large geographical areas. Additionally, gang activity has been increasing in more rural areas and now needs to be taken into account. Urban schools also have unique challenges, as they often have fewer school resources but greater community resources. Furthermore, urban schools may face greater threats from terrorist attacks, outside intruders, and drug- and crime-related problems. Additionally, schools and districts should consider their location relative to potential threats or hazards in the community, such as those listed earlier in the community hazards section (pp. 14–15, i.e., nearby sites of mass transit, factories that produce potentially hazardous material, etc.). For specific resources on school type and location, visit page 50.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Limited resources within a community can also impact the outcome and recovery from crises. Consider what resources will be available in the event of a crisis, not just within the school or school district, but also within the community:

- **Consider availability of local first responders and response times for assistance.** In the event that emergency services are needed, it is important for schools to understand how long the school may have to wait for assistance to arrive. Schools and districts must also work with first responders before an event to ensure that clear lines of responsibility are established for particular events. Additionally, schools and districts should have formal or informal memorandums of understanding (MOUs) in place to ensure they know what services first responders will provide and when they will provide these services. Schools shouldn't automatically assume that first responders will be available to assist.
- **Think about what hazard management resources are available in the community.** Working with school staff and community partners, schools should identify other community resources that may assist in an emergency. For example, is there a local community emergency response team that could assist in the event of a major disaster? Schools should identify any community- or area-wide vulnerability assessments that may already exist and take these assessments into consideration.
- **Consider how long a school could manage an event independently if help is not immediately available.** Large-scale emergency incidents may impact areas much wider than a particular school or school district and may impact local emergency services or strain their resources. As a result, assessments should consider the amount of time for which the school might need to be prepared to independently manage an emergency. Schools should assess the resources they would have in such an event and potential vulnerabilities that should be addressed.

An assessment will only be effective if it is an ongoing part of emergency management planning activities.

CHAPTER 8: REVIEW, REVISE, AND REASSESS

ACTION CHECKLIST

- ☑ Regularly review and update the vulnerability assessment tool, as needed.
- ☑ Reassess school vulnerabilities regularly and upon major changes to school facilities or community.
- ☑ Meet regularly as a vulnerability assessment team to reassess.
- ☑ Review results from assessments to inform the prevention-mitigation planning phase of emergency preparedness.

As the last stage in this cyclical assessment process, evaluate the assessment process and tool and revise it as necessary for future assessments. An assessment will only be effective if it is an ongoing part of the districts' emergency management planning activities. Vulnerability assessment team members should decide on the frequency of conducting assessments and realize that assessment is an ongoing process. To ensure that regular assessments take place, vulnerability assessments and processes can be codified within administrative or district policies and procedures. Team members also need to keep in mind updating the assessment process on a regular basis (annually, biannually, etc.) and whenever there are major changes to facilities, grounds, or in the community. Teams should use information from the prevention-mitigation planning phase as outlined in *Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities* to inform future areas for assessment.

CHAPTER 9: CLOSER LOOKS

Schools differ greatly on what they will need to assess within their school site and community. In this section are examples of schools, safe school centers, and emergency management offices that have created their own varied vulnerability assessments. These examples are meant merely for illustrative purposes. While plans from these schools and centers may serve as useful models, each school has its own unique needs and should choose tools that can effectively meet those needs as defined by the vulnerability assessment team.

Kentucky Center for School Safety, *School Safety Assessment Report:*
http://kycss07.tempdomainname.com/clear/assessment.htm.

The Kentucky Center for School Safety, the Kentucky Department of Education, and the Kentucky School Boards Association established an assessment process to provide safe school assessments to schools in the state of Kentucky. Schools can request to have an assessment conducted in which an external assessment team collaborates with principals, school staff, students, and parents. Schools are then provided with several documents, including a School Safety Assessment Report. The assessment report includes an overall summary of commendations, areas of concern, and next steps. The report also highlights survey results of school and community populations, a post-walkthrough assessment complete with pictures of hazards, and board and law violations over a period of three years for the school. To view excerpts of the post-assessment report, please see page 69.

Maine Emergency Management Agency's *Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment for Schools Workbook:*
http://www.maine.gov/tools/whatsnew/attach.php?id=23685&an=3.

The state of Maine developed a workbook to be used by schools for hazard identification and risk assessment. The workbook includes a listing of potential hazards in multiple areas. For each hazard the workbook asks:

- Could this hazard affect the school?
- What is the likelihood of the event occurring at or in the immediate vicinity of this school?
- Could school property be damaged if this event occurred?
- Could any person be killed or injured if this event occurred?

As their workbook directs, if schools answer "yes" for either of the last two questions, the hazard must be included in the school's vulnerability assessment and emergency operations plan.

Missouri Public Schools, *Safe Facilities Guide:*
http://dese.mo.gov/divadm/govern/school_facilities_guide/safety.pdf.

Missouri Public Schools developed a guide to safe facilities that includes checklists for:

- Building interior
- Building exterior
- Specific building areas
- General and specialized classrooms
- Outdoor recreation and playground areas
- Emergency care and preparedness

The *Safe Facilities Guide* also includes sample forms as well as a list of resources that could be helpful in assessment.

National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities (NCEF), Assessment Guides:
http://www.ncef.org/pubs/mitigating_hazards.pdf.

Under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, NCEF worked to combine existing safety assessment tools from a variety of school districts to create more comprehensive assessment tools. NCEF created a document describing a process for assessing school buildings and grounds and creating and implementing a hazard mitigation plan. In addition, NCEF lists 25 assessment checklists for school areas such as:

- School grounds
- Building access
- Classrooms
- Common areas
- Interior corridors
- Communication, alarm, and surveillance systems
- Shelter-in-place locations

Student Advisory Council, Illinois State Board of Education, *Student School Safety Audit*: http://www.isbe.net/sos/pdf/school_safety_audit.pdf.

The Student Advisory Council in the state of Illinois created specific instruments that could be used to survey student populations about potential hazards and vulnerabilities as part of the assessment process. This document does not include an actual walk-through assessment example but instead highlights how to survey the student population as part of the overall assessment process.

The audit includes instruments to assess students' perceptions of:

- Current safety conditions
- Safety problems
- Safety programs and interventions in place
- Recommendations for improvement
- Student perceptions of the causes of school violence nationwide

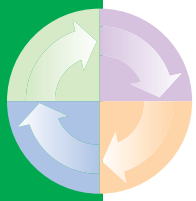
Texas School Safety Center, Campus Safety and Security Audit Toolkit and Report Template:
http://www.txssc.txstate.edu/txssc/downloads/TxSSC/Audit/Campus Safety and Security Audit Toolkit 2008.pdf.

The Texas School Safety Center developed a safety and security assessment that focuses primarily on the following areas:

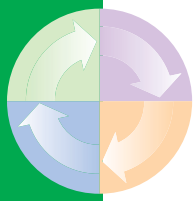
- Safety and security of site and building exterior
- Access control
- Safety and security of building interior
- Type and extent of monitoring and surveillance
- Communication and information security
- Development of emergency operations plans (including all hazards)
- School climate and culture (including development and enforcement of policies)

The toolkit provides walk-through sheets for the above areas for schools to assess potential factors that could lead to other hazards.
http://www.txssc.txstate.edu/txssc/downloads/TxSSC/Audit/Safety and Security Audit Report Template.pdf.

The Texas School Safety Center has provided a template for reporting on the results of safety and security audits. This model report provides an outline for schools and districts to use in their own reporting, including specific documents schools may wish to include in reporting, specific areas of assessment, survey results from students and others, as well as commendations and recommendations.



REFERENCES



REFERENCES

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Emergency Management Institute. (2007). IS-362 *multi-hazard emergency planning for schools*. Emmitsburg, Md.: FEMA. Available online at: http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is362.asp.

Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, New York, N.Y. (December 2004). *Uncommon Sense, Uncommon Courage: How the New York City School System, its teachers, leadership, and students responded to the terror of September 11.* Available online at: http://www.ncdp.mailman.columbia.edu/files/9_11reportASSESSMENT.pdf.

Pollack, I., and Sundermann, C. (2001). "Creating safe schools: A comprehensive approach." *Juvenile Justice, 8*(1), 13–20. Retrieved Jan. 21, 2003, from www.ncjrs.org/html/ojjdp/jjjournal_2001_6/jj2.html.

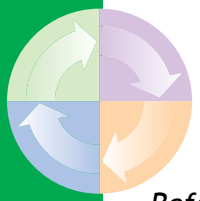
Seattle Public Schools. (2000). *School facilities manual nonstructural protection guide: Safer schools earthquake hazards nonstructural, Lessons learned Seattle School District.* Available online at: http://emilms.fema.gov/is362_Schools/assets/NonStructuralGuide.pdf.

U.S. Department of Education, Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance Center. (2007). ERCM *Express: Emergency management in nontraditional school settings.* Washington, D.C.: Author. Available online at: http://rems.ed.gov/views/documents/NontraditionalSchoolSettings.pdf.

U.S. Department of Education, Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance Center. (2007). *Lessons learned from school crises and emergencies: Incorporating chemical hazards into an emergency management plan,* 2(4). Available online at: http://rems.ed.gov/views/documents/LL_Vol2Issue4.pdf.

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools. (2007). Practical *information on crisis planning: A guide for schools and communities.* Washington, D.C.: Author. Available online at: http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/crisisplanning.pdf.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2003). *Developing cultural competence in disaster mental health programs: Guiding principles and recommendations.* Washington, D.C.: Author. Available online at: http://download.ncadi.samhsa.gov/ken/pdf/SMA03-3828/CulturalCompetence_FINALwithcovers.pdf.



References (continued)

U.S. Department of Homeland Security. (2006). *National infrastructure protection plan.* Washington, D.C.: Author. Available online at: http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/NIPP_Plan.pdf.

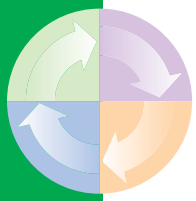
U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education. (2002). *Threat assessment in schools: A guide to managing threatening situations and to creating safe school climates.* Washington D.C.: Author. Available online at: http://ercm.ed.gov/views/documents/ThreatAssessmentinSchools.pdf.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education. (2004). *The final report and findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the prevention of school attacks in the United States.* Washington, D.C.: Author. Available online at: http://ercm.ed.gov/views/documents/FinalReportandFindingsofSafeSchoolInitiative.pdf.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (2007). *Preparedness and security: Conducting a vulnerability assessment—Best management practices for colleges and universities.* Washington, D.C.: Author. Available online at: http://www.epa.gov/region1/assistance/univ/pdfs/bmps/UnivofWashVulnerabilityAssessment1-8-07.pdf.

APPENDIX A

Additional Resources



APPENDIX A

Additional Resources

Contained in this appendix are links to Web tools and publications that schools can use in creating vulnerability assessment teams, identifying hazards and risks, selecting vulnerability assessment tools, and conducting an assessment.

HAZARDS LINKS AND ASSESSMENT TOOLS

School Violence and Safety

U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education (July 2004)—*The Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the Prevention of School Attacks in the United States*:
http://rems.ed.gov/views/documents/FinalReportandFindingsofSafeSchoolInitiative.pdf.

U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education (July 2004)—*Threat Assessment in Schools: A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and to Creating Safe School Climates*: http://rems.ed.gov/views/documents/ThreatAssessmentinSchools.pdf.

Federal Bureau of Investigation—*The School Shooter: A Threat Assessment Perspective* (cited September 2008): http://www.fbi.gov/publications/school/school2.pdf.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (Septemeber 2002)—*Safe and Secure: Guides to Creating Safer Schools*: http://www.safetyzone.org/safe_secure.html.

National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities (2008)—*Safe School Checklist*:
http://www.edfacilities.org/checklist/index.cfm.

National Association of School Psychologists (2004)—Factsheet, *Threat Assessment at Schools: A Primer for Educators*:
http://www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis_safety/threatassess.pdf.

National Association of School Psychologists (October 2005)—Factsheet, *Threat Assessment: An Essential Component of a Comprehensive Safe School Program*:
http://www.nasponline.org/resources/principals/nassp_threat.pdf.

Kentucky Center for School Safety—Factsheet, *Cyber-bullying: The Silent Tormentor* (cited September 2008):
http://kycss07.tempdomainname.com/pdfs&docs/hotpdfs/CyberBullying-1.pdf.

National Crime Prevention Council (October 2003)—*School Safety and Security Toolkit: A Guide for Parents Schools and Communities*: http://www.ncpc.org/cms/cms-upload/ncpc/File/BSSToolkit_Complete.pdf.

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, Southeast Comprehensive Assistance Center (June 2000)—*School Safety Assessment Protocol*: http://www.sedl.org/secac/pdfs/safetyassessment.pdf.

Terrorist Hazards

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Emergency Preparedness and Response Division—*Bioterrorism*: http://www.bt.cdc.gov/bioterrorism.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Emergency Preparedness and Response Division—*Chemical Emergencies*: http://www.bt.cdc.gov/chemical.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Emergency Preparedness and Response Division—*Radiation Emergencies*: http://www.bt.cdc.gov/radiation.

Institute for BioSecurity, St. Louis University School of Public Health: http://www.bioterrorism.slu.edu/bt.htm.

Columbia University School of Public Health's Center for Disaster Preparedness (October 2004)—Report, *Uncommon Sense, Uncommon Courage: How the New York City School System, its teachers, leadership, and students responded to the terror of September 11*: http://www.ncdp.mailman.columbia.edu/files/9_11reportASSESSMENT.pdf.

Biological Hazards

Department of Education's Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance Center—*Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Site* (cited September 2008): http://rems.ed.gov/index.cfm?event=PandemicPreparedns4Schools.

For up-to-date and real-time information about pandemic influenza hazards and school planning resources, the Department of Health and Human Services maintains the Web site: www.pandemicflu.gov. Specific school planning information can be found at http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/school/index.html.

Columbia University School of Public Health's Center for Disaster Preparedness (April 2007)—*The New York City Principals Pandemic Flu Survey: Are Schools Prepared?*:
http://www.ncdp.mailman.columbia.edu/files/panflu.pdf.

The Food Safe Schools Action Guide (2006)—*Food Safe School Needs Assessment and Planning Guide*: http://www.foodsafeschools.org/assessment.php.

Natural Hazards

National Earthquake Information Center and World Data Center for Seismology: http://earthquake.usgs.gov/regional.

Natural Hazards Research and Applications Information Center: http://www.colorado.edu/hazards.

The National Weather Service Web site contains information about potential weather hazards: http://www.nws.noaa.gov.

National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Storm Prediction Center: http://www.spc.noaa.gov.

National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) maintains weather information as well as NOAA Weather Radio which gives pre- and post-event information for all hazards. Most hazard information pertains to weather, but information is also reported for natural disasters, environmental hazards such as chemical spills, and public safety hazards including AMBER alerts or 911 system telephone outages: http://www.noaa.gov.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Emergency Preparedness and Response Division—Natural Disasters and Severe Weather:
http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/index.asp.

FEMA Hazard Mapping Tool: https://hazards.fema.gov.

Flood Smart Flood Risk Assessment Tool: http://www.floodsmart.gov.

Physical Hazards

Environmental Protection Agency's School Chemical Cleanout Campaign (cited September 2008): http://www.epa.gov/sc3.

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice (August 1996)—Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED): http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/crimepre.pdf.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Injury Center (June 2008)—Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED): http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/CPTED.htm.

FEMA RESOURCES

FEMA offers online training tools to assist school administrators and first responders in emergency management and planning. At the following link FEMA's online training program, *IS-362 Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools* (cited September 2008), can be accessed: http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is362.asp.

Lesson 3 of this course, Recruiting Your Planning Team, covers how to select and recruit members for planning and vulnerability assessment teams. The following link from this site provides a survey that school officials can use to assess skills of individuals they may desire to have on their planning and assessment teams: http://emilms.fema.gov/is362_Schools/assets/StaffSkillsSurvey.pdf.

Lesson 4 of this course, Assessing Your Hazards, focuses on vulnerability and hazards assessments, specifically identifying specific types of hazards, addressing hazards, and determining risk from hazards. The following worksheets are found within Lesson 4:

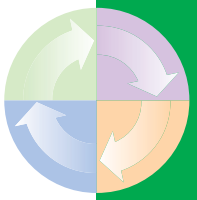
Hazard Identification Checklist:
http://emilms.fema.gov/is362_Schools/assets/MPS0104180.pdf.

School Grounds Hazard Assessment:
http://emilms.fema.gov/is362_Schools/assets/MPS0104190.pdf.

Classroom Hazard Assessment:
http://emilms.fema.gov/is362_Schools/assets/MPS0104200b.pdf.

Building Hazards Assessment Checklist:
http://emilms.fema.gov/is362_Schools/assets/MPS0104200a.pdf.

Evacuation Routes Assessment Checklist:
http://emilms.fema.gov/is362_Schools/assets/MPS0104210.pdf.



Additional Resources (continued)

Neighborhood and Community Assessment Checklist:
http://emilms.fema.gov/is362_Schools/assets/MPS0104220.pdf.

Hazard (Risk) Analysis Worksheet:
http://emilms.fema.gov/is362_Schools/assets/MPS0104240.pdf.

Additionally, FEMA has a *Get Disaster Information* Web site where users can access information about disasters that have occurred within their communities previously as well as find out specific information about individual hazards. To access the site, visit: http://www.fema.gov/hazard/index.shtm.

INTEGRATING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

In 2005, the National Organization on Disability Emergency Management Initiative released the *Guide on the Special Needs of People with Disabilities for Emergency Managers, Planners, and Responders*. This guide covers information about disabilities and people with disabilities in relation to emergency management and discusses strategies for working with and involving people with disabilities. To access a PDF copy of the guide, visit the following link:
http://www.nod.org/resources/PDFs/epiguide2005.pdf.

The U.S. Department of Education's Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance (TA) Center maintains a series of guides and publications to inform schools of specific areas of crisis planning and assessment. A 2006 REMS Express Newsletter covers integrating students with special needs and disabilities into planning and assessments:
http://rems.ed.gov/views/documents/Disability_NewsletterV2I1.pdf.

The U.S. Department of Education's REMS TA Center also provides a link to a presentation by Chris Dayian, senior project director at the Safe Schools Center, Los Angeles County Office of Education on "Working with Students with Disabilities in a Disaster" (2006):
http://rems.ed.gov/views/documents/Working_W_Students_DisabilitiesInDisaster.ppt.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

As noted earlier in the guide, schools should take into account cultural diversity including language barriers and other considerations when assessing vulnerabilities. The National Association School Psychologists (NASP) has a comprehensive listing of cultural factors to consider published on their Web site in a document, *Cultural*

Perspectives on Trauma and Critical Response (cited September 2008). To access this resource, visit the following link:
http://www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis_safety/neat_cultural.aspx.

NASP also has released a guide to *Culturally Competent Crisis Response Resources* (2004) that schools can use to think about cultural considerations that could affect different crisis situations. To access the guide visit:
http://www.nasponline.org/resources/culturalcompetence/cc_crisisresources.pdf.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has also released a guide to *Developing Cultural Competence in Disaster Mental Health Programs* (2003). While most of this guide is geared toward mental health, large sections discuss specifically cultural challenges in disaster planning efforts and considerations that should be made when assessing vulnerabilities to crises. The guide can be found at the following link:
http://download.ncadi.samhsa.gov/ken/pdf/SMA03-3828/CulturalCompetence_FINALwithcovers.pdf.

SCHOOL TYPES AND LOCATIONS

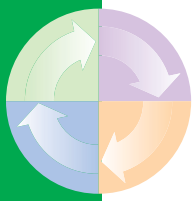
As noted earlier, the school type and location should weigh heavily in the selection of vulnerability assessment tools. Each school has its own unique challenges based a variety of these factors.

A 2007 REMS Express Newsletter from the U.S. Department of Education covers concerns for nontraditional school settings, including rural populations:
http://rems.ed.gov/views/documents/NontraditionalSchoolSettings.pdf.

A second 2007 REMS Express Newsletter from the U.S. Department of Education covers challenges for nonpublic schools:
http://rems.ed.gov/views/documents/ERMgmtOppts_Challngs4N_PS.pdf.

APPENDIX B

Vulnerability Assessment Focus Group Participants



Appendix B

Vulnerability Assessment Focus Group Participants

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools
Vulnerability Assessment Focus Group
HOST: NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE FOR EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES
LOCATION: NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF BUILDING SCIENCES
Oct. 5, 2006

Jon Akers
Executive Director
Kentucky Center for School Safety
Eastern Kentucky University

Lorraine Husum Allen
Senior Educational Program Director
Office of Safe and Healthy Schools
Florida Department of Education

Amy Banks
Management and Program Analyst
Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools
U.S. Department of Education

Yvonne Bartoli
Senior Policy Advisor
Center for School Preparedness
Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools
U.S. Department of Education

William Brenner
Director
National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities
National Institute of Building Sciences

Del Elliott
Distinguished Professor Emeritus
Research Professor and Director
Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence
Institute of Behavioral Science
University of Colorado at Boulder

Michael Garcia
Security Specialist
Preparedness Directorate
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Mark Harvey
Senior Policy Advisor
Federal Protective Service

Mike Herrmann
Director
Tennessee School Safety Center

Calvin Hodnett
Policy Analyst
Training and Technical Assistance Division
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice

Alex James
Director
Office of School Facilities
South Carolina State Department of Education

William Lassiter
Manager
Center for the Prevention of School Violence
Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Jim McLain
Security Coordinator
Fairfax County (Va.) Public Schools

Don Mercer
Director
Risk Management and Security
Prince William County (Va.) Public Schools

William Modzeleski
Associate Assistant Deputy Secretary
Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools
U.S. Department of Education

Participants (continued)

Jo Schweikhard Moss
Crisis Management Coordinator
Austin Independent School District
Texas School Safety Consortium Police

Jim Neidig
Security Specialist
Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC)

Ted Pearson
Director
Charlotte-Mecklenburg School (N.C.) Law Enforcement

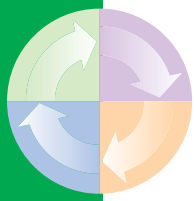
Richard Ponti
Director, Office of Safe Schools and Risk Management
Virginia Beach City (Va.) Public Schools

Tod Schneider
Safe Schools Consultant

Michelle Sinkgraven
Management and Program Analyst
Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools
U.S. Department of Education

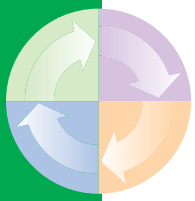
Sara Strizzi
Management and Program Analyst
Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools
U.S. Department of Education

Gregory Thomas
Director
Program for School Preparedness and Planning
National Center for Disaster Preparedness
Mailman School of Public Health
Columbia University



APPENDIX C

State Policy Requirements for K–12 School Safety and Security Assessments



APPENDIX C

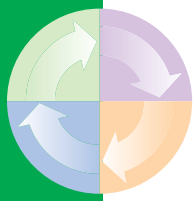
State Policy Requirements for K–12 School Safety and Security Assessments

The following data on school vulnerability assessment requirements results from a state-by-state review of legislation, statutes, and administrative code, as well a review of applicable agency resolutions and orders. States identified by an "X" in the "Required" column have legislation requiring some type of school assessment or audit, such as a school safety audit or a vulnerability or needs assessment. Other states that do not require these assessments may have policies that encourage assessment or provide resources for schools and districts to conduct assessments.

State	Required
Alabama	
Alaska	
Arizona	
Arkansas	
California	X
Colorado	
Connecticut	
Delaware	X
District of Columbia	
Florida	X
Georgia	
Hawaii	X
Idaho	X*
Illinois	X
Indiana	X
Iowa	X
Kansas	
Kentucky	X
Louisiana	
Maine	X
Maryland	
Massachusetts	
Michigan	
Minnesota	
Mississippi	
Missouri	

State	Required
Montana	
Nebraska	
Nevada	
New Hampshire	
New Jersey	X
New Mexico	
New York	X
North Carolina	
North Dakota	
Ohio	X
Oklahoma	X
Oregon	
Pennsylvania	
Rhode Island	
South Carolina	
South Dakota	
Tennessee	
Texas	X
Utah	X
Vermont	
Virginia	X
Washington	X*
West Virginia	X
Wisconsin	
Wyoming	

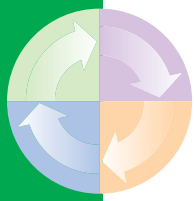
** Through a statewide initiative, these states conduct their own assessments.*



APPENDIX D

Assessment Example

In the following appendix is an example of a post-assessment report not currently found online. For other examples of tools and reports that can be accessed online, please view the Closer Looks section on page 35.

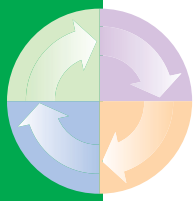


VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT REPORT EXAMPLE

Kentucky Center For School Safety

*Excerpts From Safe School Assessment Sample Report**

*This report is one example of how a larger district or third party may assist in the vulnerability assessment process and reporting. The following is an excerpt from the report and does not include survey and other hazard data. Additional topics in the report include: results of the physical plant assessment, review of the school's safety data for a two-year period of time, review of community risk factors for the county in which the school is located, results of surveys and interviews of school populations, listing of the commendations, areas of mutual concern and considerations, and next steps and questions. To view a complete copy of the assessment report, please contact the Kentucky Center for School Safety: http://www.kysafeschools.org/.



KENTUCKY CENTER FOR SCHOOL SAFETY

KENTUCKY CENTER FOR SCHOOL SAFETY ASSESSMENT REPORT

For SAMPLE County High School

Disclaimer:

This assessment represents a one-day snapshot of SAMPLE County High School that may or may not be the total depiction of what occurs daily. The team based its findings on the data provided and individual observations made during this one-day time frame. Please be mindful that this assessment **is not binding** but is merely an independent review to assist school officials in their quest to examine practices and procedures in an attempt to better serve their student population. It is therefore incumbent upon school district officials and school staff to consider the team's report and determine what they believe is legitimate and critical to address when considering school safety management issues.

Process:

This report is based on the following information:

1. Review of the 2004, 2005 and 2006 Safe Schools Data Reports (discipline reports) for the school
2. Review of the Student Code of Conduct
3. The school's emergency response/management plan
4. Observed supervision practices and procedures during lunch supervision and class changes
5. A physical plant walk-through
6. Results of a safe schools survey for students, staff and parents
7. Interviews with students, staff and parents
8. Review of Student Handbook
9. Recent insurance and worker's compensation claims

NOTE: References to the survey, located in the body of the assessment report that follows, are in italics and can be found under the subsection of this document entitled "Safe School Survey Results".

Commendations:

1. The Assistant Principal did an exceptional job of coordinating our visit and facilitating the assessment team. The team was extremely impressed with his knowledge of the school's history and his willingness to discuss steps that had been taken by the staff to maximize the safety of the school thus far.

2. All staff and students interviewed indicated that they had practiced most emergency drills and that they knew what to do in the event of all of the emergencies for which they had practiced. (The exception was the lock-down drill which is listed under Mutual Area of Concern # 11.)
3. All staff members interviewed stated that they had several avenues open to them to discuss safety problems. Those avenues included the principal and assistant principal.
4. The vast majority of the students and staff indicated having a feeling of safety while at SAMPLE County High School. *(This was not completely corroborated by the students on the perceptual survey as 13.3% responded that they have a fear of victimization while at school. (Table 1, p.6)*
5. The vast majority of the students interviewed indicated that they have at least one adult at school to whom they would turn if they had a problem while at school. One teacher even stated, "Safety is about the relationships we have with students. The trust factor is better than an x-ray machine." *(It is, however, worth noting that the perceptual survey results showed that 23.6% of the students indicated NOT feeling comfortable speaking with any adult at the school about a problem. (Table 8, p.12)*
6. There is a full-time nurse available for the students at the school. This is extremely commendable as few schools in the state have access to a full-time nurse at all times when school is in session.
7. The principals, staff, parents and students interviewed (as well as encountered) by the team were extremely cooperative and cordial to the assessment team throughout the assessment day.
8. The Assessment Team learned that there is a Safety Committee which meets monthly at the school to receive any safety concern that anyone in the school might have. These concerns are then discussed with and acted upon by the principals.
9. Most staff members encountered by the team were wearing staff identification tags. This is a best practice in school safety. We strongly encourage the administration to ensure total compliance among the staff with this practice, as it greatly enhances the efficiency of first responders during an emergency.
10. SAMPLE County High has a bullying/harassment complaint form as well as a well-defined district/school policy against such behaviors. *However, according to student survey respondents, at least 25% of the students are unaware of it. (p.15)*
11. In the past, all arriving students had to congregate in the commons area which, reportedly, led to student conflicts and other misbehaviors due to the crowdedness of the area. Recently, however, the principals have

opened up the top of the gymnasium's concourse thereby splitting the number of students to two locations before school begins. This appears to be a step toward mitigating the problem although (according to interviewees) there does not yet seem to be adequate supervision provided in these areas. (See Mutual Area of Concern #9 below.)

12. The school has a Safe Schools Tips Line – 866-TIPLINE. This number is posted boldly throughout the school.
13. The assessment team observed many adults in the hallways during class changes. One student interviewed responded, "Everywhere you turn, there is a teacher."
14. The Freshmen Academy, which is located on the second floor near the library where the team conducted interviews, seemed to be very well organized. It was extremely quiet throughout the assessment day and the halls were virtually vacant during class times.
15. The team did NOT observe any graffiti. *This was contradictory to the survey results where 18.3% of students and 23.5% of teachers indicated having seen graffiti at least 3 times this school year. (Table 5, p.9)*
16. SAMPLE County High School is a very attractive and (seemingly) well-maintained facility located on a beautiful campus.

Areas of mutual concern and Considerations (issues that were brought to visiting team members' attention by either surveys or personal interviews)
Based on surveys that were completed by: 51 staff members, 13 parents and 518 students
Based on interviews with approximately: 19 staff members, 8 parents and 88 students

1. **Smoking and the use of Smokeless Tobacco in the Restrooms** – Staff and students indicated that the smoking of cigarettes and using of "dip" does take place in the restrooms on a regular basis. According to many student interviewees, the majority of it occurs during class when students feign emergencies to leave class and go to the restrooms. Some of it also reportedly occurs during the lunch periods when there is little adult presence inside and around the restrooms.

   Considerations:

   - Although staff members are assigned to supervise the student restrooms, smoking is by far one of the more frustrating school violations indicated by staff. Some staff members indicated that there are not enough female teachers assigned to cover the girls' restrooms. Others say that they rarely go inside the restrooms, but rather only stand outside the restroom doors.

- Consider convening a focus group of classified and certified staff, students, SBDM members and parents to discuss this issue. Keep in mind that tobacco use is not only a school board issue, but a community one as well. It is also a state law and a health and safety (fire) issue.
- At issue is lack of effective supervision and not enough staff to accommodate the supervision demand. Topics to be discussed might include (but not limited to): how to supervise all girls' restrooms when there are not enough female teachers available, creating sign-out sheets for students who wish to use the restroom during class time with time of departure and return being noted, continuing to limit the number of restrooms available during class and lunch times, more stringent disciplinary consequences for offenders, smoking cessation classes, parent volunteers, community awareness and support of efforts to keep smoking out of the school.
- Consider requiring that teachers supervising the restrooms rotate from standing on the outside of the restrooms to periodically going inside of them. This will help to keep student smokers off-guard, as several of them said, "They never come all of the way into the restrooms."
- Once a plan is devised, consider requiring 100% support from teachers, classified staff (who could help with supervision as well), students and parents in implementing and sustaining any new policies that might evolve from this focus group and be approved by the Council.

2. **School Resource Officer** - Staff, parents and students stated that they would like to have a SRO at the high school. (The team was told by staff members that there is a possibility that the school may be getting a deputy sheriff part-time before the end of this school year. The team's understanding was that this officer will be paid for by the local government.) The Kentucky Center for School Safety strongly supports the School Resource Officer program. Our data on SRO's across the state support that their presence in schools is an asset that enhances the perception of many schools' overall safety levels.

   <u>Considerations:</u>
   - If the county does not fund a law enforcement officer for the school (as promised) seek funding through the local Board of Education or a COPS grant.

- Consider using STI data to show the central administration and School Board members how incidents of misbehavior and lawlessness could be reduced if there were a fulltime SRO on campus.
- Consider (if feasible) having students to speak with the Board about the safety benefits of having a SRO by citing specific incidents that occurred which could have been offset by an SRO presence.

3. **Drug Usage** – All groups interviewed stated that there is a drug problem at SAMPLE County High School. Students reported that marijuana, prescription and over-the counter pills and alcohol seem to have the greatest presence on campus. *This was supported by the perceptual survey results where Table 7, p. 11 revealed that each group of respondents indicated that drug use was one of the most serious safety problems at the school. Additionally, in Table 5, p.6, 8.5% of the students responding indicated that someone had offered to sell or give them illegal drugs while on campus.*

   Considerations:
   - Student drug and alcohol abuse plagues schools across the country. It is an issue for the entire community; therefore, the entire community should be involved in any strategies that address drug and alcohol abuse.
   - Consider convening a standing committee with school personnel, students, parents, law enforcement officials, child serving agencies and legal staff to begin dialogue to assess this problem and to begin to take cooperative steps to address it.
   - Consider seeking staff development on recognizing the signs and symptoms of drug use; and/or give staff a checklist and a way to refer students that they suspect need attention.
   - KCSS and KSBA can make further suggestions of including other state agencies that focus primarily on drug and alcohol abuse in the schools. The governor's office has begun initiatives to help address this for the long term and possible assistance may be available from that office as well.

4. **Bullying** - Staff and students reported that there is wide-spread bullying on campus, particularly among freshmen. As stated under Commendation 10, the efforts made by the administration thus far are laudable; however, they must be continued and expanded. *It is also worth noting that Table*

3, p.7 of the perceptual survey indicates that there is a perception among 23.2% of the students that there is NOT a process in place for students to report harassment or bullying. Thus, it is evident that this widely-held student perception warrants that greater efforts be made to make certain that all students are aware of the school's policy on bullying and harassment.

Considerations:

- Consider meeting with all grade levels to discuss the bullying/harassment problem and to make them aware of the process to report such behavior. (All eyes in the school are needed to adequately stem this problem.)
- Consider posting the no-tolerance policy for bullying and the process for reporting it throughout the school and its campus. One teacher suggested a school-wide initiative, including posters in the hallways listing conflict-resolution steps.
- Consider ensuring that all parents are made aware that no bullying will be tolerated at the school through mailings and meeting with parent groups, such as PTSA and SBDM Council.
- Consider researching conflict-resolution training for students. Peer mediation is also used effectively in many schools.
- Consider having the staff review the data gathered from the surveys and interviews in this report (on bullying and harassment) in an effort to increase their awareness of the problem.
- It may be desirable for the Council to address bullying, specifically when reviewing the school's policies and procedures.
- KCSS can provide professional development in this area at no cost to the school, if the staff should desire such training.

5. **Emergency Plans Not Shared With Parents** - Each parent interviewed was unaware as to how they should go about appropriately collecting their child from the school should there be a crisis during the school day. *The survey indicated that 23.1% of the parents were unaware of the school's emergency protocol. (Table 8 p.12)*

Considerations:

- Consider communicating the parent-notification plan (that would be activated when (and if) an emergency should occur requiring that students be moved to an off-campus/alternate safe site) with all parents.

- The school should spell out clearly what will be the appropriate protocol for the parent to follow in order to gain custody of their child during an emergency.
- It is recommended that parents not be given the location of the alternate site in advance simply due to the fact that the mobilization of students could be greatly hampered if parents tried to intervene when the evacuation is taking place. They should only be informed that there is a plan and the media outlets to consult for information.
- This notification process should include using the electronic news media (television and radio). Special attention should be given to families that have special needs (disabled parents or families that do not have transportation).
- Consider including a simple description of emergency plans and the role of the parents in an emergency in the code of conduct book that is issued to all students. Also, use the school's webpage to publicize this process
- Consider consulting with the phone company to set up the phone system so that one office line is not a "roll over" line, thus keeping it open for use during emergencies.

6. **Inconsistent Enforcement of the Student Dress Code** – Many staff members and students reported that the dress code is enforced by some staff members, but not all. One teacher stated, "I think I am the only one who enforces it in my department."

Considerations:

- Having any policy on the books that is inconsistently enforced can sometimes undermine the effectiveness of the overall discipline policy.
- Consider holding a meeting with the staff to discuss the current student dress code and any other rule that the staff agrees is inconsistently enforced by them. If, as a staff you deem it necessary, consider revising the dress code, for example, to make it consistent with the staff's real expectations for student attire.
- Once, as a staff, you have come to some agreement, monitor closely staff's enforcement of the dress code. Strive to make all staff members aware that, after this general meeting, it will be necessary for the principals to address individual teachers if they are observed to be out of compliance on the consistent enforcement of the dress code.

- Your biggest selling point is that you already have an excellent overall discipline policy; however, occasional tweaks, adjustments and reminders are necessary to keep it strong.
- Consider establishing a principal's advisory group (composed of students) to review the dress code and consequences for violations. Incorporate their input into the policy.

7. **Sign-In Procedure** – Parents and staff members interviewed expressed concern that the sign-in procedure always appeared to be very loose. One parent stated, "No one ever asks me to sign in. That really concerns me." A school secretary indicated that unless she was standing at a particular spot in the office she could neither see a visitor enter nor the direction in which he/she was going.

   Considerations:

   - Consider following "best practice" procedures by having all visitors to sign in and be given a visitor's pass. Ensure that all visitor passes are completely filled out before allowing the visitor to leave the office.
   - One staff member should be responsible for insuring that all visitors follow the sign-in procedure and enter the building only after proper identification and authorization have been given.
   - Consider installing a buzzer system at the front entrance, which would require someone in the office to electronically admit each visitor after ascertaining their identity and destination.
   - Consider training all staff members to question visitors observed in the building without the proper passes and to direct (or preferably escort) them back to the office to be properly processed.

8. **Theft** - Staff, students and parents interviewed frequently cited theft of student items from the gymnasium locker rooms as a problem. *This finding was corroborated by the results of the survey in this area where 30.4% of the students who feared victimization at school felt that it would occur in the gymnasium and 15.6 of the students reported having had something stolen from them. (Table 5.)* Many students stated that the locker room doors are left unlocked during class which allows students to sneak back into the area and steal.

   Considerations:

   - The most effective methods for reducing thefts in a school setting is: 1) to ensure that areas where students leave their belongings are

locked and; 2) to increase the awareness of students and staff that there are people among them at school who will steal from them.

- Ideally, in a school's gymnasium, there are lockers with locks available for students taking Physical Education to lock up their possessions. However, many high school gyms do not have enough lockers available to be able to do this. Many times, basketball, soccer, football, volleyball, softball, baseball players (depending upon the season) will occupy the lockers they do have, leaving students taking P.E. to have to leave their possessions on the benches/floor, etc. while they go outside or into the gym to have class. P.E. teachers, then, will frequently leave the locker room unlocked so that students can go back and forth into it to use the restrooms. This is how locker rooms often become areas with high theft rates. The same practice will often occur with athletes when they practice in the afternoons or on weekends; i.e., fellow students and teammates will steal from them while they are off playing their sport.
- Consider communicating to your teachers and coaches to keep the locker room locked during class and, when a student has to re-enter for any reason, to ensure that an adult permits the student back into it and is supervised. (We realize this is difficult.)
- Consider making a concerted effort to impress upon students the importance of leaving valuables at home. Another method is to overtly demonstrate an awareness of the problem and to get the staff and total student body involved. This will always help to deter would-be thieves when they know there has been a heightened awareness to thefts.

9. **Inadequate Supervision of Students In Commons Area and Gymnasium Before School**—There is a perception among some students and staff interviewed that there is not enough supervision in the two areas where students are held before the first period of classes begin each morning. According to many students, there are only two adults assigned to supervise each area and sometimes only one adult is present in each location. One student stated, "That's why the Commons Area is where we take care of business" (i.e. argue, fight, etc.)

Considerations:

- Generally, if students perceive that there is inadequate supervision in an area at school, there usually is since many of them are more

aware of what is going on than the adults in charge at that location. Therefore, consider heeding this information and providing additional supervision in both locations in the mornings.

- Ideally, there should be a 30:1 student to adult ratio in these areas; however, a more realistic one would be 50:1 where the adults are "actively" supervising (i.e. circulating among and speaking with students, yet remaining alert).

10. **Administrator Supervising Cafeteria During Lunch** – According to both principals, as well as teachers interviewed, the administrators are solely responsible for supervising the cafeteria at lunch. On November 21, 2006, the team observed the Assistant Principal on active supervision in the cafeteria. The only other adults in the cafeteria were teachers who were eating.

Considerations:

- It is always nice when a principal/asst. principal can be available to supervise an area widely used by students since students are usually more apt to act appropriately when they see an adult present who has the authority to deliver immediate consequences for a rule infraction. Unfortunately, however, because of the nature of the principal/asst. principals' jobs, they can rarely be counted upon to be at the same place at the same time every day of the week, which is why it is critical to have other "assigned" supervision for areas such as the cafeteria. Otherwise, the school runs the risk of having NO supervision in the area frequently.
- Consider working the master schedule (at least for next school year, if not sooner) to include periods for lunch/cafeteria supervision among the staff members – both certified and classified. We contend that the principals' supervision duties, such as in the cafeteria at lunch, should be only supplementary rather than primary. While teachers, for example, are occasionally called away while supervising, it is always much less than for an administrator. Administrators are constantly being called away to respond to other areas of trouble, to classrooms, to unexpected meetings with parents, to phone calls, etc., etc., etc.
- What is most important is to have the cafeteria covered consistently throughout the lunch periods and the most efficient, effective way to do it is to "assign" other staff to that primary duty, but to have the principals be at those locations also, whenever possible.

11. **Need For A Lockdown Drill** – According to interviews, there has not been a lockdown drill held at the school this school year thus far.

Considerations:

- All public schools in Kentucky are **required** by law (158.164) to practice at least one lockdown drill per school year. The law is written as follows:

158.164 Building lockdown procedure -- Practice.

(1) As used in this section, "building lockdown" means to restrict the mobility of building occupants to maintain their safety and care.

(2) Each local board of education shall require the school council or, if none exists, the principal in each public school building in its jurisdiction to establish procedures to perform a building lockdown, including protective measures to be taken during and immediately following the lockdown.

(3) Students, parents, guardians, certified staff, and classified staff shall be informed annually of building lockdown procedures.

(4) A building lockdown practice shall be held at least once during each school year.

Effective: July 12, 2006

12. **School Bus Behavior** – Based on the responses of student interviewees as well as survey respondents, it is apparent that negative behaviors occur at unacceptable levels on some school buses. One student summarized the overwhelming sentiment of student bus riders by saying, "It is wild and out of control on the school bus." *These findings are supported by the student survey results (Table 10, page 14)- Prevalence of Problem Behaviors on the Bus; Disrespectful 70.4, Rowdy students 63.3%, Throwing objects 64.8% and Teasing and name-calling 63.0%.*

Considerations:

- Further exploration by the school and district administration is needed on the school bus issue. If after further review it is determined to be a legitimate concern, professional development for transportation staff should be considered. Bus discipline accompanied by de-escalation techniques by transportation staff can have a significant effect upon students and their demeanor upon arriving at the school site. The Kentucky Center for School Safety staff is available to provide such training (at no cost) if the district feels this is a significant issue.

- Consider reviewing the school bus rules with the students and remind them of the expectations for them to exhibit appropriate behavior while riding the bus. Remind students that **riding the school bus is a privilege and not a right**. Repeated misbehavior should result in students being removed from the bus for short periods of time or longer.

Next Steps:

1. It is recommended that this report be shared in its entirety with the SAMPLE County High School staff and discussed in a faculty meeting.
2. It is also recommended that the SBDM Council as well as appropriate district staff have access to this report.
3. It is recommended that once the faculty and staff have reviewed the report, pressing issues should be identified, prioritized and an appropriate action plan be implemented. The team leader for your assessment can be made available to assist you with this process upon request.
4. If the leadership of the district and/or the school wishes to have any follow-up assistance, please feel free to contact the Kentucky Center for School Safety for the appropriateness of such efforts. These efforts in the majority of instances can be provided at no cost to the school or district.

260 Democrat Drive
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601
1-800-372-2962 · FAX: (502) 695-5451
KSBA Web site: www.ksba.org

Date: <DATE>

To: Superintendent, SAMPLE County Board Of Education

From: Mr. Jeremy D. Baird, KSBA Insurance Programs, Loss Prevention Specialist

Re: Safety Assessment - SAMPLE County High School

On the above date, I visited SAMPLE County High School, with accompanying associates from the Kentucky Center for School Safety, Kentucky Department of Education, and the Kentucky School Board Association to conduct a Safe Schools Assessment. This assessment was performed at the request of the board to determine the level of safety and security felt throughout the school. My responsibilities during the assessment consisted of reviewing the overall physical plant, facility safety – OSHA, student supervision, bus traffic and transportation, and emergency management practices.

SAMPLE County High School was constructed in 1990 and is a mirror image of North SAMPLE County High School. The school has not had a major renovation or additions since its inception. The building was very well maintained. The building currently has 16 color and black and white cameras that monitor the school with a digital storage system currently in place with a 5-day storage capacity. The school has a safety committee in house that meets monthly to review any safety concerns within the building. Students appeared to be well supervised during class changes and before school began, with students being divided into multiple staging locations before the first class began. All in all, there were only minimal recommendations noted as shown below.

SAMPLE County High School
Rec. 6-01: Security Cameras
Currently, 4 out of the 16 security cameras are not working and the digital storage system is not recording making the system ineffective. Repair or upgrade

the storage system, and replace the damaged cameras to have full coverage of the facility. Consider installing additional cameras throughout the parking lot and at all entrance points to the school.

Rec. 6-02: Front Entrance

The front entrance currently has no clear line of sight to the front office, which allows visitors to easily access the building and the adjacent stairwell without being supervised or acknowledged. Consider installing a full glass door, as well as additional windows, in the front office. Also consider installing a buzzer system or some equivalent device that will allow the front entrance to remain locked until someone in the front office staff has acknowledged the visitor. Buzzer systems and card readers have become very cost efficient and an effective means of preventing an unauthorized visitor from getting into the building.

Rec. 6-03: Exit Lights

A number of exit lights were out inside the front office and front hallways. Replace all exit lights and inspect all emergency lighting on a monthly basis.

Rec. 6-04: Kitchen

A door bell or buzzer system should be installed on the back door of the kitchen to help identify visitors making deliveries through this entrance. Ensure that the back door stays locked during all hours of building occupancy. Train cafeteria staff on all fire suppression and fire extinguisher systems within the kitchen and have them inspected on an annual basis.

Rec. 6-05: Parking Lot

The fire lane in the front parking lot was blocked during most of the day, which would have restricted 1st aid responders from gaining access to the parking lot if they had been necessary. Train all visitors and staff to keep the fire lane clear and unobstructed during all school hours. Adjust the timer on the parking lot lights to ensure that they are coming on 30 minutes before sunset and going off 30 minutes after sunrise.

Rec. 6-06: Morning Supervision

Before school began, students were divided between the gym, commons area,

cafeteria, and hallways with only 2-4 visible supervisors. During interviews, students were quoted saying "this is where they take care of business". Considering this, increase supervision throughout this space and increase the effort to contain and control the students before school begins.

Rec. 6-07: Exit Doors

A number of exit doors were hard to open or the push bar would stick preventing the door from unlocking after being opened. Adjust all door hardware, ensuring that all doors open in one smooth swift motion and shut completely on their own after every use. Keep all exits in the gym and hallway clear and unobstructed from egress during the event of an emergency evacuation. Number all emergency exits starting at the front entrance moving around the building in a clockwise motion to aid school administrators and emergency responders when assisting in an emergency within the school. An exit door inside the cafeteria was propped open after lunch, which would allow any unauthorized visitor to enter the building at will. All exit doors must be kept shut and locked during the school day, forcing visitors through the front entrance.

Rec. 6-08: Lockeroom

A low voltage unapproved extension cord was draped across the walkway inside the lockeroom creating a trip and fall hazard. Remove the extension cord abating this risk.

Rec. 6-09: Custodial Closet/Boiler Room

Two custodial closets were unlocked within the school, which could allow students to gain access during operating hours. All custodial closets should be kept locked and secure at all times when not in direct use by authorized staff. Also ensure that all chemicals are kept labeled and clearly identified in accordance with OSHA's hazardous communication safety standard. Maintain a 3-foot clearance space away from all electrical and mechanical units inside the boiler room to allow for a safe access during an emergency. All extra propane tanks must be stored outside the building in locked cage 10-feet away from any ignition source. Remove all old

wooden ladders inside the boiler room and replace them with a type IA fiberglass ladder rated for commercial use.

Rec. 6-10: Agriculture Class

Install a protective guard over the rip saw to prevent a foreign object from coming into contact with the saw blade during use. Install a spring on the saw forcing it to return to its starting position after every use. Adjust the grinder guards on all grinders to ¼ inch from the work rest and 1/8 inch from the abrasive wheel. Lock out the drill press until the electrical cord can be replaced due to exposed electrical wiring on the cord. Lock out all other equipment not being used or out of order until they can be removed or repaired. Install a lock on the paint booth room and keep this room locked at all times when not in direct use by authorized staff.

All in all, there were only minor recommendations noted, and I must say that the school was found in remarkable condition for its size and age. By addressing the above mentioned recommendations, conducting routine in-house inspections, providing annual safety training, investigating all accidents, and by continually utilizing a school safety committee; SAMPLE County High School will continue to mitigate all risk exposures and liabilities over the 2006/2007 school year. If there are any questions concerning this report or future services the Kentucky School Boards Association can offer, please contact me at <phone> or email at <email>.

Sincerely,

Jeremy D. Baird
Loss Prevention Specialist
KSBA Insurance Programs

NoChild LeftBehind

The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

www.ed.gov