

Preparedness

Emergency Management for Schools

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Julie Collins
Florida Department of Education

Willie Freeman
Newark (NJ) Public Schools

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools
400 Maryland Avenue, SW / Washington, DC 20202

Overview of Session

- Define the Preparedness phase
- Identify key components of Preparedness
- Discuss emergency procedures and emergency plans
- Review Incident Command System
- Review coordination and communication
- Discuss training and exercises
- Practice a tabletop activity



Key Messages

- The Preparedness phase includes coordinating effective plans with community partners
- Plans must address all hazards
- Identifying roles and responsibilities in advance is critical--Incident Command System
- Developing communication plans in advance—consider staff, parent/guardian, and media needs
- Training all staff and students on emergency plans and procedures
- Using exercises to identify gaps and weaknesses in plans and to reinforce training



Phases of Emergency Management



What is the Preparedness Phase?

- The Preparedness phase is designed to prepare the school community for potential emergencies by coordinating with community partners through the development of policies and protocols, incident command systems, training, and exercises
- The Preparedness phase links to the phases of emergency management
 - Prevention-Mitigation
 - Response
 - Recovery

GOAL: Facilitate a rapid, coordinated, and effective response in the event of an emergency



Preparedness: Key Components

- Identifying needs and goals
- Establishing crisis policies, procedures, and plans
- Developing emergency management structure (Incident Command System)
- Identifying roles and responsibilities, including lines of authority and emergency priorities
- Coordinating communication
- Training
- Conducting exercises



Emergency Management Plan Development

- Incorporate data from vulnerability assessment conducted during Prevention-Mitigation phase
- Identify gaps and weaknesses in current plans
- Incorporate all four phases into emergency plans
- Involve community stakeholders (fire, law enforcement, public health, mental health, local government, etc.)
- Coordinate emergency plans with state and local plans



Emergency Management Plan Development

- Elements to be addressed in an emergency management plan:
 - Crisis response policies and procedures
 - Command and control
 - Communication plans
 - Parent reunification plans
 - Emergency equipment (i.e., "Go-Kits," first aid supplies)



Emergency Management Plan Development

- Plans should address all hazards
- Plans need to include emergency procedures:
 - Lockdown: Use when there is an immediate threat of violence in, or immediately around, the school
 - Evacuation: Use when locations outside of the school are safer than inside the school
 - Shelter-in-place: Use when students and staff must remain indoors for a period of time for events such as chemical, biological, and radiological incidents or terrorist attack
- Emergency procedures need to incorporate procedures for individuals with special needs
- Identify and acquire emergency supplies or "Go-Kits"



Sample Go-Kit List: Administration

- Clipboard with lists of:
 - Students
 - Students with special needs and description of needs (i.e. medical issues, prescription medicines, dietary needs), marked confidential
 - School personnel
 - School emergency procedures
 - Incident Commander checklist
- Whistle and hat for leadership identification
- Flashlight (shake model)
- Utility turnoff procedures
- Emergency communication device
- First aid kit with instructions



Sample Go-Kit List: Classroom

- Clipboard with lists of:
 - Classroom students
 - Students with special needs and description of needs (i.e. medical issues, prescription medicines, dietary needs), marked confidential
 - School emergency procedures
 - "Buddy Teachers"
- Whistle and hat for teacher identification
- First aid kit with instructions
- Student activities (such as playing cards, checkers, inflatable ball)



Command and Coordination

- Pre-incident planning with community partners:
 - Develop memorandum of understanding (MOUs) or mutual aid agreements with community partners
 - Coordinate with state and local emergency management agencies
 - Share information with first responders:
 - School District/School Incident Command System (ICS) Teams and key contacts
 - School District/School emergency management plans and procedures
 - Building floor plans
 - Evacuation locations and routes
 - Information about community hazards



Command and Coordination

- Business Continuity Planning
 - Succession planning
 - Record retention and safe-keeping
 - Pre-negotiated contracts



Incident Command System

- Incident Command System (ICS) is a management system designed to enable effective and efficient domestic incident management by integrating a combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures and communications operating within a common organizational structure.
- ICS is organized around five functional areas:
 1. Command,
 2. Operations,
 3. Planning,
 4. Logistics, and
 5. Finance/Administration.



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
LAW ENFORCEMENT
FIRE DEPARTMENTS
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES



ICS



SCHOOLS



ICS: Background

- Developed over 30 years ago in the aftermath of catastrophic wildfires in California
- Numerous agencies responded to the fires with little coordination or communication
- As a result, Congress directed the U.S. Forest Service to improve the effectiveness of interagency coordination
- By mid-1970s, the U.S. Forest Service and several California agencies developed and field tested the Incident Command System
- By 1981, ICS used widely in Southern California in response to fire and non-fire incidents
- In March 2004, ICS was included as a mandate in the National Incident Management System



ICS: Principles

- Emergencies require certain tasks or functions to be performed
- Nature of the incident determines level of activation and response
- Expandable and collapsible
- One incident commander:
 - May vary for different types of incidents
 - May change during incident response
 - Incident command responsibility should be determined in advance
- Clear, pre-determined reporting lines
- Span of supervisory control does not exceed 3-7 subordinates
- Uses common terminology



ICS: Common Terminology

- Ability to communicate in a crisis is essential
- ICS requires use of common terminology including standard titles for facilities and positions
- ICS uses plain English, not codes
- Examples:
 - *Uncommon Terminology*
"Response Branch, this is HazMat1. We are 10-24"
 - *Common Terminology*
"Response Branch, this is HazMat1. We have completed our assignment"
 - *Uncommon Terminology*
"Teachers and students, this is a Code Yellow"
 - *Common Terminology*
"Teachers and students, this is a lock-down"



ICS Common Terminology

- Incident Command Post (ICP) is where the Incident Commander (IC) oversees all incident operations. Only one ICP is created (regardless of whether there is a single or unified structure).
- Staging Areas are temporary locations at an incident where personnel and resources await tactical assignments. Resources (human and otherwise) in this area are always readily available.
- A Base is where logistical operations are coordinated. This may be part of the command post. Resources at the Base are out-of-service.
- All “resources” must check into the Base or Staging Area.

Incident Command Post



On a map, the ICP location appears as a green and white square.

Staging Area



On a map, the Staging Area appears as a circle with an S in it.

Base



On a map, the Base appears as a circle with an B in it.

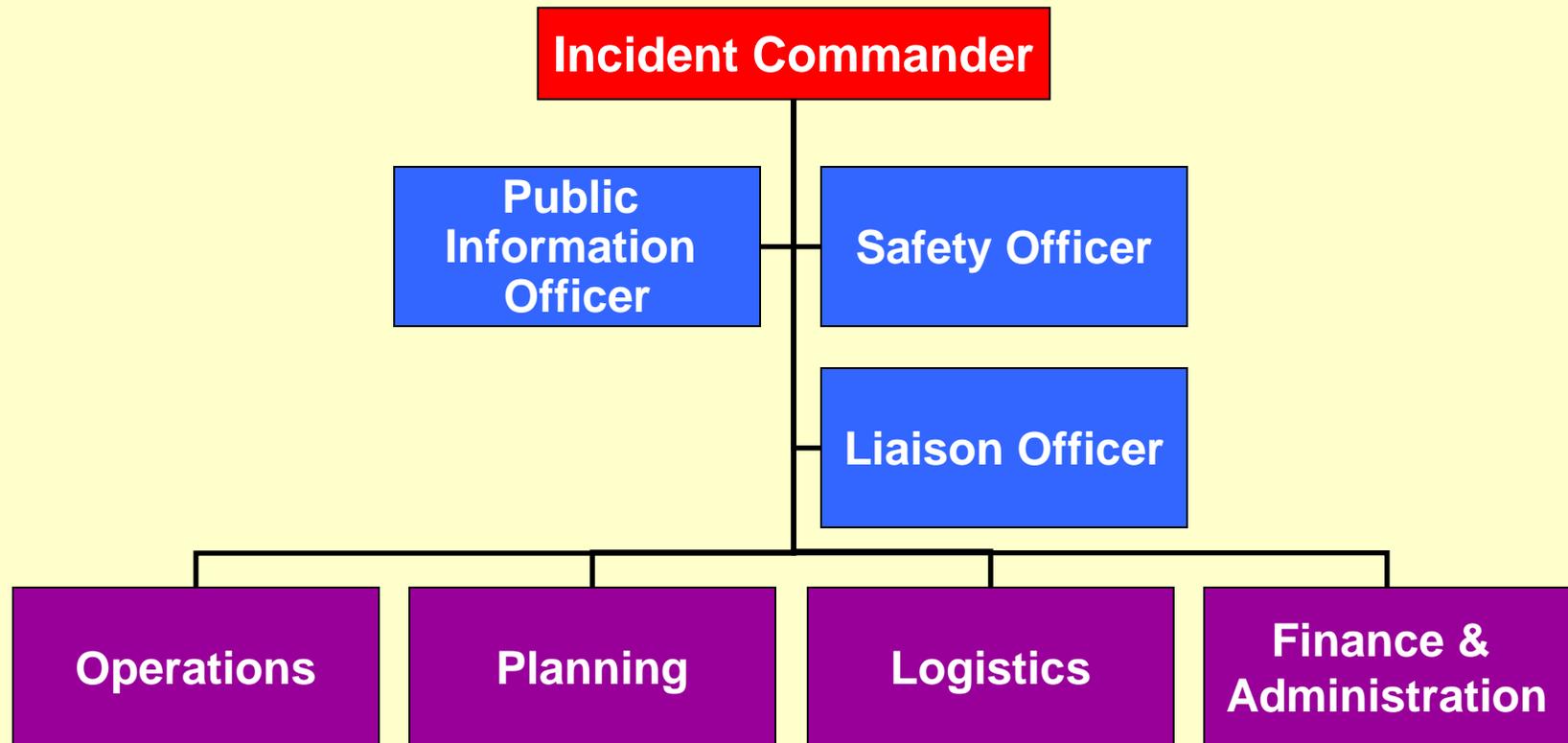


ICS: Roles

- Incident Commander
- Incident Command Staff:
 - Public Information Officer (PIO)
 - Safety Officer
 - Liaison Officer
 - School Liaison
- General Staff:
 - Operations Section
 - Planning Section
 - Logistics Section
 - Finance/Administration Section



ICS: Roles



ICS: Scenario

A student reports to a teacher that he witnessed another student carrying a weapon.



ICS: Activation

At the moment the student reports the issue, the teacher is the Incident Commander.

Teacher = Incident Commander

The teacher reports the incident to the principal. The principal determines the nature of the emergency and decides to activate the Incident Command System. He or she becomes the Incident Commander.

Principal = Incident Commander



ICS: Scalability

The principal places the school in lockdown and calls 911 and the district office. The police arrive on the scene and the officer in charge takes over as the Incident Commander. The principal assists the police response.

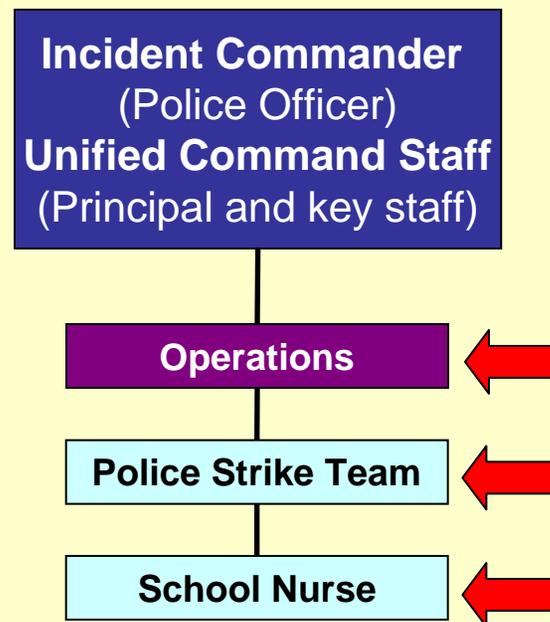
Police Officer = Incident Commander

Principal = Unified Command Staff



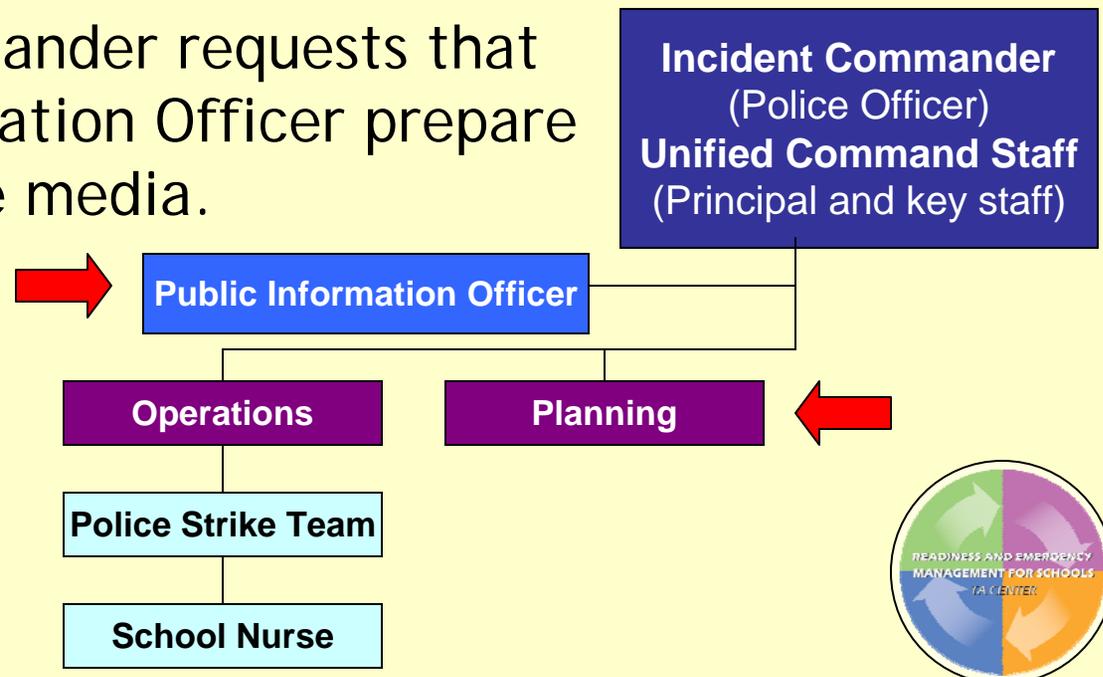
ICS: Scalability

- The Incident Commander designates another police officer as the Operations Section Chief, who in turn assembles a strike team to locate the student with the weapon.
- While the school is in lockdown, a student suffers an asthma attack. The teacher must render aid until the school nurse can assist.



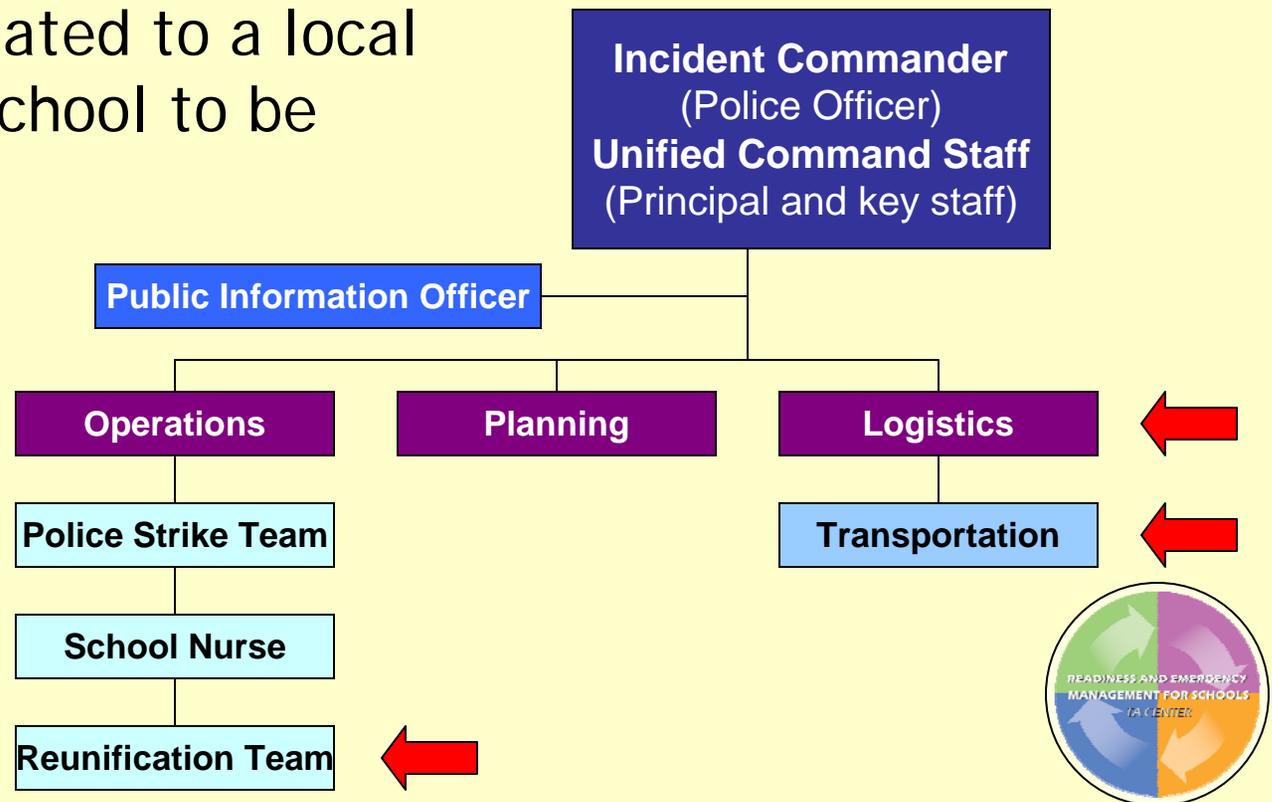
ICS: Scalability

- Since the duration of the incident may be prolonged, the Incident Commander activates the assistant principal as Planning Section Chief to plan for possible scenarios with regard to student care and long-term needs.
- The Incident Commander requests that the school's Information Officer prepare a statement for the media.



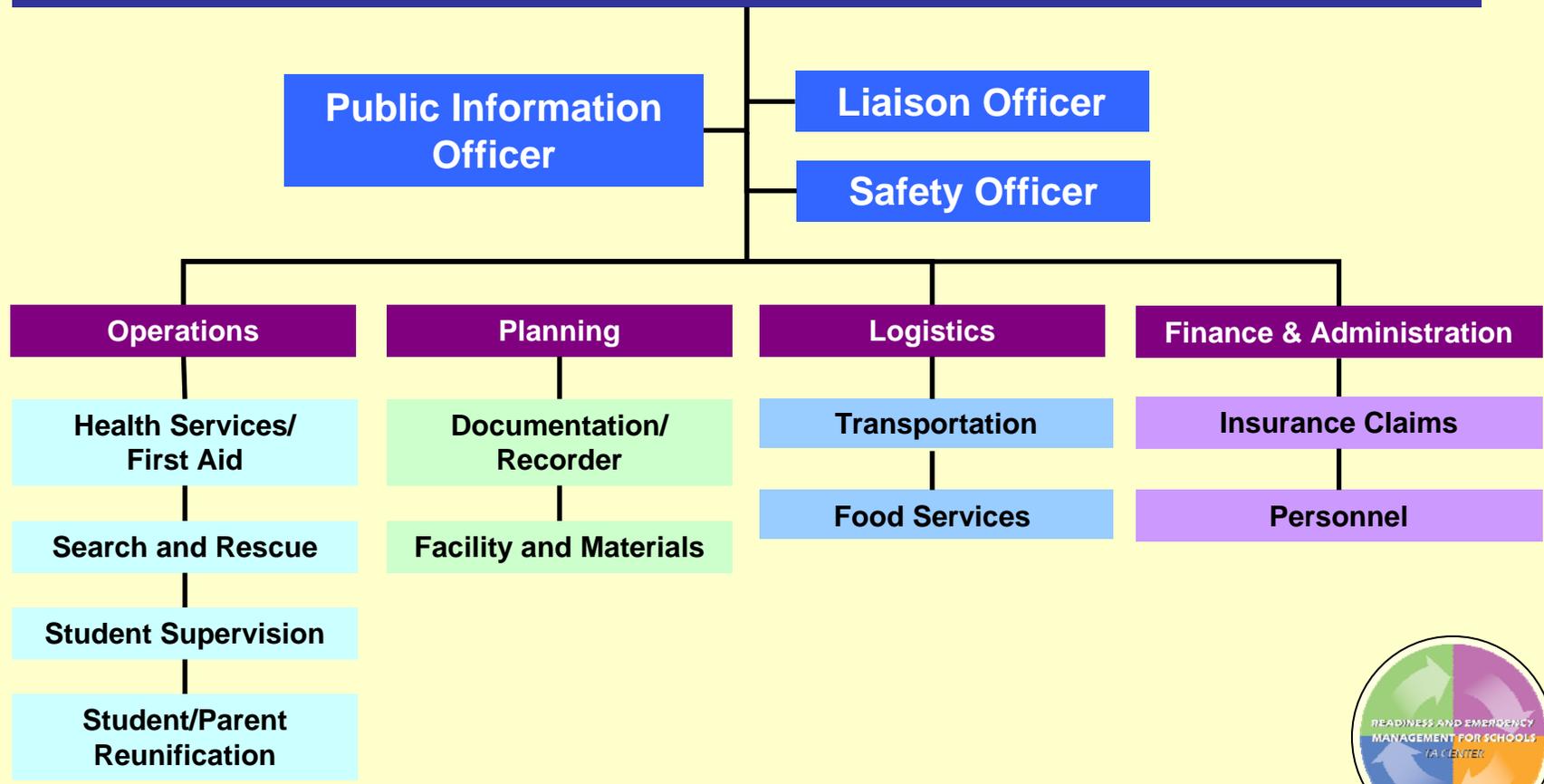
ICS: Scalability

- The police investigate the incident and arrest the student. The school is closed for the day to complete the investigation. Parents are notified that students will be evacuated to a local elementary school to be picked up.

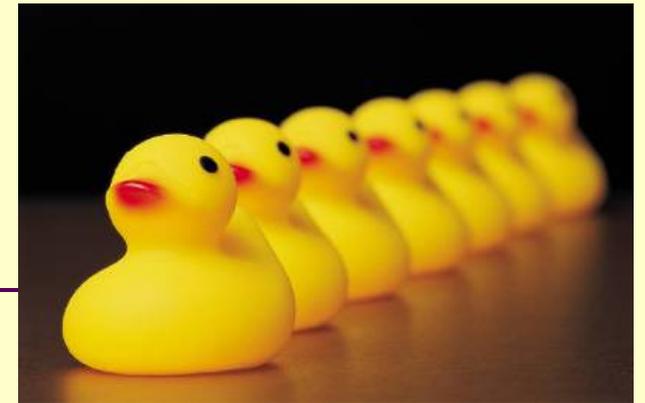


Sample School Based ICS

Incident Commander and Incident Command Team



Establishing an ICS



- Assess staff skills
- Create lines of succession/backups for all key positions
- Identify key roles to be carried out
- Identify staff for ICS Team to address each key function
- Coordinate with community partners to identify roles and lines of responsibility in the event of an emergency



Communication Considerations

- Public information is critical to emergency management
- It is critical to establish protocols for communicating timely and consistent information to the public during emergencies
- Develop communication protocols in advance:
 - Develop agreements with community agencies about the release of information and designation of the PIO
 - Develop template letters that can be used in a crisis
 - Communication considerations should include parents/guardians, school staff, and the media



Communication Considerations: Parents

- Provide information on emergency response procedures
 - Reunification procedures:
 - Clearly articulate parent expectations (i.e., bring photo id, students released to parent/guardian or other pre-authorized emergency contact, etc.)
 - Translate information as necessary
 - Emergency notification systems:
 - Identify media partners
 - School webpage
 - Automatic phone/email notification
 - Incorporate redundancy
- Update parent and emergency contact information periodically
- Emphasize importance of family preparedness



Communication Considerations: School Staff

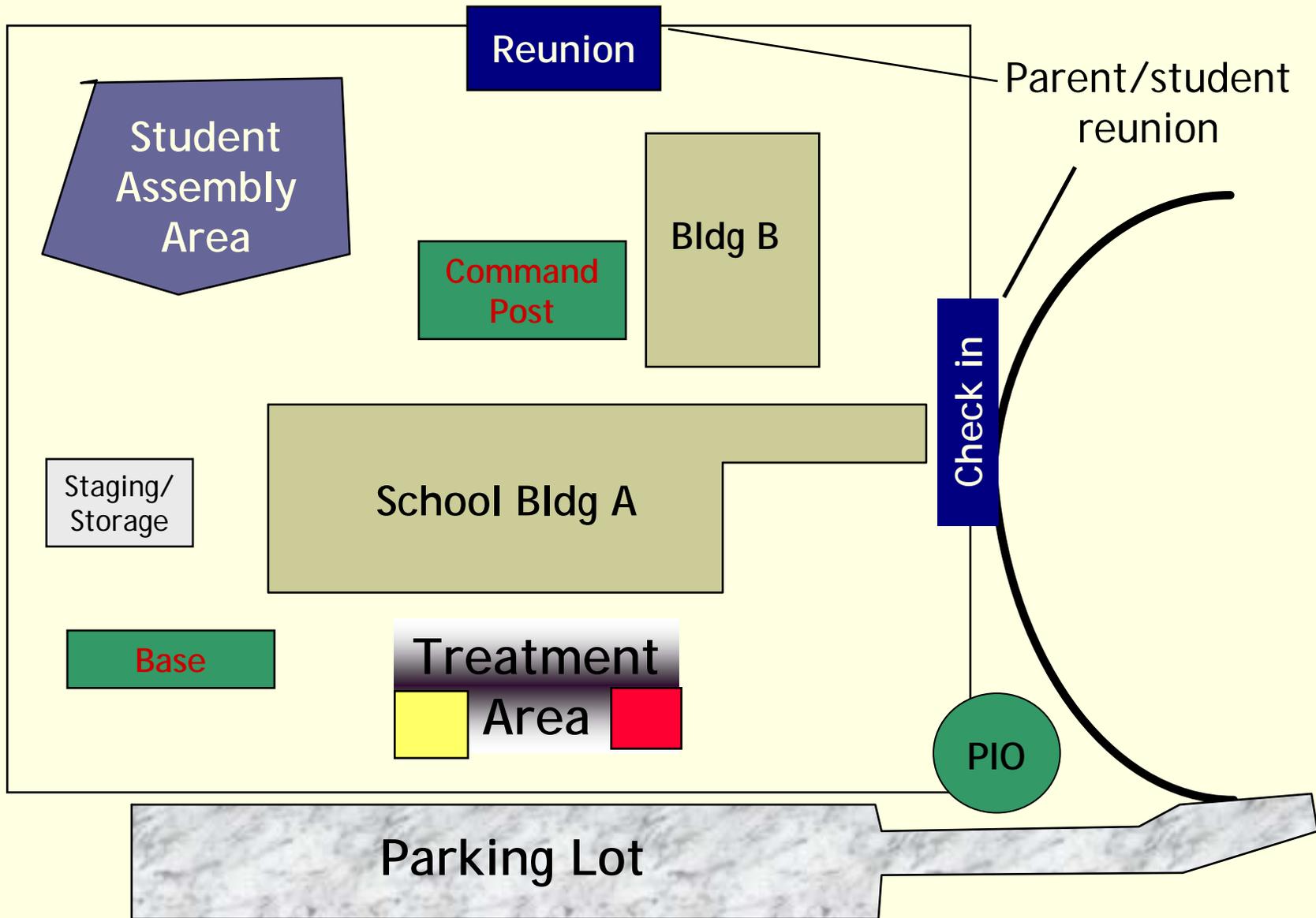
- Use plain language to communicate during an emergency
- Establish system to verify information before responding
- Develop a system for staff and student accountability:
 - Need for up-to-date class rosters and student emergency information:
 - Information on medical conditions
 - Custody issues
 - Have a plan to identify students who are not accounted for
- Develop a plan and training for substitutes
- Develop a plan for building visitors
- Develop a communication plan for lock-down situations
- Consider emergency plans for after-school activities (i.e., sporting events, dances, graduations, etc.)



Communication Considerations: Media

- Assign a trained Public Information Officer to handle media inquiries
- Identify media staging areas
- Establish policies and procedures for dealing with media requests/inquiries
- Coordinate media releases with community partners:
 - Ensure that messages are consistent
 - Ensure that information released is consistent with state and Federal privacy laws (i.e., FERPA)
- Limit media exposure to students





Sample Site Layout

Training and Exercises

- Training and exercises, such as drills and tabletop exercises, are invaluable tools for preparing staff and testing emergency management plans
- Training and exercises should reinforce concepts in the school/school district emergency management plan
- Training should be conducted regularly



Training for District & School Staff

- Train **all** staff on emergency response procedures
- Provide additional training to school personnel based upon their role in an emergency response:
 - Incident command team
 - School emergency response team
 - Front office staff
 - Teachers
 - Substitutes
 - Nurses
 - Bus drivers
 - Facility managers/maintenance staff
 - Other non-instructional staff (food service workers, front office staff/secretaries, volunteers)
- Consider training with community partners
- Deliver training at faculty meetings and in-service sessions or through the web or email messages

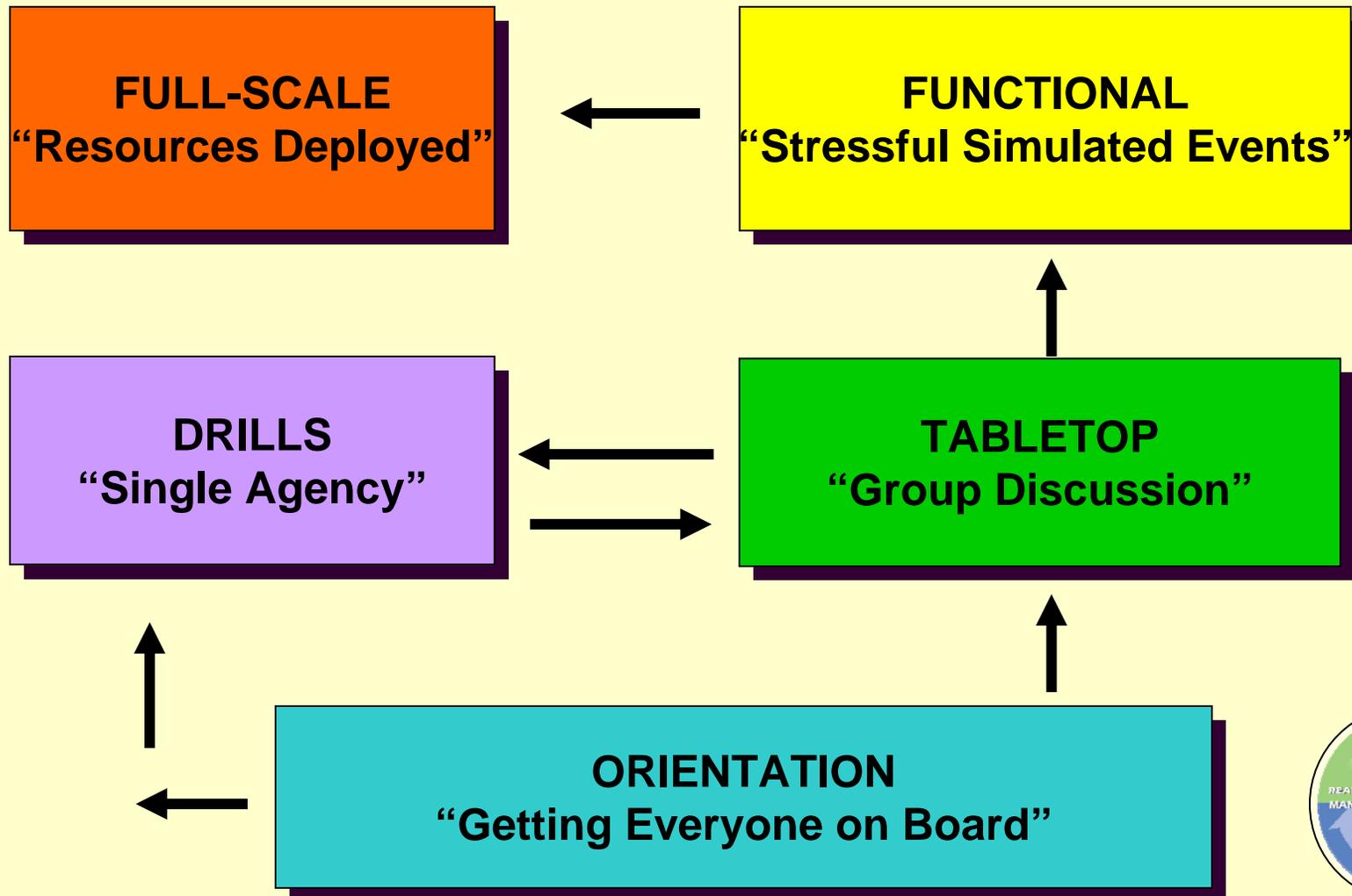


Exercises

- Types of Exercises:
 - Orientation Meetings
 - Drills
 - Tabletops
 - Functional Exercises (i.e., exercise on portion of response, such as communication, evacuation, etc.)
 - Full-scale Exercises
- After Action Reviews (debriefs) are critical after exercises.



Types of Exercises



Conducting Drills

- Practice a variety of different scenarios based upon risks in the school and community
- Practice a variety of different response procedures, such as lockdown, shelter-in-place, evacuation
- Communicate information about drills in advance
- Evaluate and document results/lessons learned in an after-action report
- Include community partners
- Drill under different conditions



Resources

- TA Center, "Emergency Exercises" newsletter
http://rems.ed.gov/views/documents/HH_EmergencyExeMarch20th.pdf
- FEMA's "The Comprehensive Exercise Curriculum"
www.training.fema.gov/emiweb
- The Virginia Educator's Guide for Planning and Conducting School Emergency Drills
www.dcjs.org/vcss/documents/educatorsGuideForDrills.pdf



Preparedness Summary

- Coordinate with community partners to build effective plans
- Address all hazards in plan
- Identify roles and responsibilities in advance--Incident Command System
- Develop communication plans in advance; consider needs of school staff, parents/guardians, alternative languages, and media
- Train all staff and students on emergency plans and procedures
- Use exercises as effective ways to identify gaps and weaknesses in plans and to reinforce training that has been provided

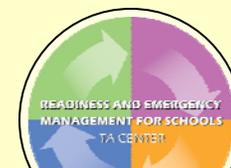


Tabletop Activity



Location

- Brentwood High School (fictitious)
- Brentwood City population - 125,000
- No *active* Local Emergency Planning Council (LEPC)
- Brentwood High - 1,200 students
- School lost their 2 SROs last year due to funding issues and police dept staff reallocations.
- Mid-April, weather mild



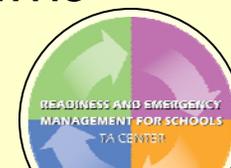
Scenario

- Sometime shortly after lunch a visitor who had just parked in the school parking lot and was walking to the school heard a gunshot - then shortly after, heard another.
- As he ran to the school, he witnessed a popular student slumped over the wheel of her car, apparently dead, with a single gunshot wound to the head. The visitor recognized the popular student/athlete, knew her name, but did not know her personally.
- The traumatized visitor ran to the school office and reported a possible murder/suicide.



Additional Context

- The “danger zone” appears to be limited to the school parking lot.
- No other witnesses appear to be present. No additional injuries are reported.
- The student was *not* known to have a history of mental illness.
- The student has one younger brother who attends school in the district.
- Two students committed suicide two years ago and the school/district was scrutinized/criticized for their “lack of response” and because of the high levels of reported bullying at the school. Both of the victims had repeatedly been bullied.



Problem Statement

- A student has either been murdered or committed suicide on school grounds.
- Q: How to we ensure the safety of other students / staff and prepare for the community response? What immediate actions should the school take?
- Small group discussions.



What Actions Have Been Taken?

- The office staff called 911 and alerted the Assistant Principal (the principal was out of town, traveling with the basketball team to the state tournament).
- The Assistant Principal made the decision to place the school in lockdown.
- She made the call over the intercom announcing the school was going into lockdown and asked for teachers to check their email for further notification.



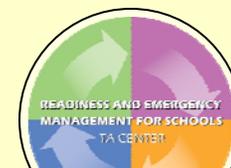
Messages

- 911 dispatch informs school that EMS should arrive on scene w/in 10 minutes
- City police are en route.



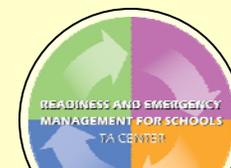
Additional Questions

- Was the decision to go into lockdown a good one?
- Should someone go out onto the scene?
- Why email?
- What information should the office convey to teachers?
- What information should the teachers convey to students?



Additional Information

- 10 minutes into lockdown and after receiving update email from office, one of the English teachers messages back saying she is concerned about a female student (different from the one in the parking lot) who did not show up for class. The incident in the parking lot reminds the teacher of the suicides two years ago. The teacher reports that the student of concern had been depressed, likely had access to weapons and was possibly suicidal.
- The 2nd female student *had* been in classes during the a.m.
- Police have been on scene for 5 minutes.



Additional Questions

- Does this information impact your current response actions in any way?
- What communications need to be occurring within the school, to the district?
- What ICS functions are being employed?
- Who would be performing these functions?
- Does lockdown complicate ICS roles?



Message

- 15 minutes after lockdown was initiated, a gunshot is heard near the location of the school auditorium stage. One of the nearby classroom teachers picks up the phone and frantically calls this information into the office.
- What now?
- What is going through the minds of the teachers, of the students?
- Discussion



Message

- Upon police investigation of the auditorium, the second female student (the one mentioned earlier by the English teacher) is found behind the stage, dead, of an apparent self inflicted gunshot wound.



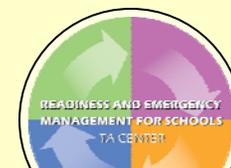
Additional Questions

- How does this second death change your response procedures?
- How long will you remain in lockdown and who will cancel it?
- What will you do for the rest of the day?
- Tomorrow?
- How will you handle media that is now on scene outside the school?



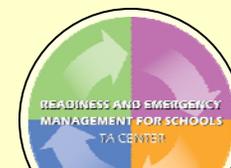
Additional Questions

- How are you utilizing ICS?
- How will it change over time?
- How will you respond to parents?



Final Questions

- What if these events were a double suicide versus a murder-suicide?
- What will be your mid-long term mental health recovery plans?
- How should we plan for the anniversary?



THANK YOU!!!

For More Information Contact:

Willie Freeman:

wfreeman@nps.k12.nj.us

Julie Collins:

Julie.Collins@fldoe.org

REMS TA Center: 1-866-540-7367 (REMS)

info@remstacenter.org

