

School Emergency Management: An Overview



Readiness and Emergency Management for
Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance (TA) Center
Office of Safe and Healthy Students (OSHS)
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
(OESE)
U.S. Department of Education (ED)



Summary of Webinar

- Welcome and Introductions
- Introduction of REMS TA Center
- Introduction of Presenter Arthur Cummins
- Webinar Presentation
- Q & A Session
- Wrap Up & Resources



What is a School Emergency Management Plan?

- A critical step to securing and protecting our schools
- A key tool to handle emergencies
- Addresses safety needs of all students, staff, and visitors
- Addresses both natural and man-made events that can disrupt teaching and learning
- Addresses events on the way to school, during school, and during after school activities



Why do we need a School Emergency Management Plan?

- To reduce the opportunity for disruptive events to occur and lessen consequences if they do
- To comply with State and local laws and regulations
- To build confidence of public in operation of schools



Key Elements of a School Emergency Management Plan

- Framed by the Four Phases of School Emergency Management
- Uses an all-hazards approach
- Based on a vulnerability assessment
- Integrates students and staff with disabilities and other access and functional needs
- Developed with community partners
- Incorporates NIMS and ICS
- Practiced consistently, reviewed, revised



The Four Phases of School Emergency Management



What is the Prevention/Mitigation Phase?

- Prevention is the action schools and districts take to decrease the likelihood that an event or emergency will occur
- Mitigation actions are steps that eliminate or reduce the loss of life or property damage for events that cannot be prevented (e.g., natural disasters)
- Many hazards have both components



The Prevention/Mitigation Phase

- Designed to assess and address
 - Safety and integrity of facilities
 - Security
 - Culture and climate of schools
- Uses an all-hazards approach
- Builds on what schools are already doing
- Reliant on community partnerships and leadership
- Is an ongoing process
- Directly linked to the other three phases



Key Elements of Prevention and Mitigation Phase

- Conducting school vulnerability assessments
- Anchoring outdoor, heavy indoor equipment
- Installing building access control measures
- Controlling access to hazardous areas
- Establishing programs to improve school culture and climate
- Establishing policies promoting safety and security
- Using the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)



Preventing Violence: School Culture and Climate

Positive culture & climate=Less likelihood of violence



- Supports violence prevention
- Requires a long-term strategy
- Is program-based (anti-bullying, etc.)



What is the Preparedness Phase?

The Preparedness phase is designed to facilitate a rapid, coordinated and effective response in an emergency.

The school community is strengthened by coordinating with community partners on:

- Developing an emergency plan, policies and protocols
- Communicating roles and responsibilities
- Adopting NIMS and ICS
- Conducting training, exercises, and drills



NIMS and ICS

The National Incident Management System (NIMS)

- Used by all first responders
- Creates a common operating picture and mutual goals
- Puts forth the Incident Command System (ICS)

The Incident Command System (ICS)

- Uses a single management system
- Facilitates effective response



Key Elements of Preparedness Phase

- Integrate ICS
- Define Response phase protocols and procedures
- Address the needs of persons with disabilities and other access and functional needs
- Develop communications procedures and templates
- Develop accountability and reunification procedures
- Practice tabletops, drills, and exercises



Persons with Disabilities and Other Access and Functional Needs

Include district special needs experts on your planning team to address:

- Visual and hearing
- Mobility
- Cognitive
- Attentional
- Emotional
- Medical; and
- Communication needs



Drills and Exercises

- Drills: Define frequency, responsibilities and procedures
- Tabletops: Informal gathering of partners to orally review and practice the plan
- Full-Scale Exercises: Require extensive planning, conducted with community partners, simulates a specific scenario



What is the Response Phase?

- When emergency management plans are activated to effectively contain and resolve an emergency
- Plans developed during the Prevention/Mitigation and Preparedness Phases are utilized during the Response Phase
 - Activate the plan (lockdown, evacuation, shelter-in-place)
 - Work with community partners (NIMS, ICS)
 - Use accountability & reunification plan
 - Utilize communications plan



Key Elements of Response Phase

- Activate the plan and the ICS
- Work with first responders and other community partners
- Assess the problem and determine response
- Deploy resources and make informed decisions
- Account for students, faculty, and staff
- Reunify parents/guardians with students
- Initiate transition to the Recovery Phase
- Conduct an after-action assessment



Recovery Phase

- Designed to assist students, staff, and their families in the healing process and to restore educational operations in schools.
- Has four primary components:
 1. Physical/structural recovery
 2. Business/fiscal recovery
 3. Academic recovery
 4. Psychological/emotional recovery



Physical, Structural, & Fiscal Recovery

Some elements of physical, structural, & fiscal recovery include:

- Assessment and repair of facilities
- Possible need for alternative sites or buildings due to extensive damage
- Business and fiscal recovery (e.g., payroll, succession planning)
- Registration and record management systems



Academic, Psychological/Emotional Recovery

- Academic recovery is key to restoring the teaching and learning environment
- Academic recovery is closely linked to the other aspects of recovery
- Psychological/emotional recovery promotes coping, supports resiliency for students and staff
- Establish a system for identifying and monitoring children and staff who may need additional support or interventions



In Summary: Steps for Developing an Emergency Management Plan

- Step 1: Collect existing resources and assemble team with community partners
- Step 2: Conduct assessments
- Step 3: Identify gaps and weaknesses
- Step 4: Assemble plan



In Summary: Steps for Developing an Emergency Management Plan

- Step 5: Incorporate vulnerability data
- Step 6: Conduct trainings and exercises
- Step 7: Revise plan based on outcomes of trainings and exercises
- Step 8: Communicate plan as appropriate
- Step 9: Establish accountability measures



Action Steps: The Four Phases

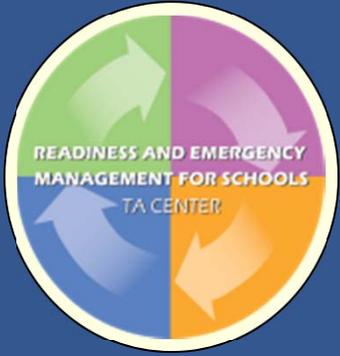
- Prevention-Mitigation (assess, plan, partner)
- Preparedness(integrate, define, practice)
- Response (activate, communicate, transition)
- Recovery (assess, restore, counsel)



Action Steps: What You Can Do

- Identify key personnel for developing your school and district's plan
- Review your plan to ensure it includes the key elements and considerations
- Ensure all community partnerships are in place, and parents, students, staff know their responsibilities
- Assess and prioritize hazards and risks
- Plan an exercise or drill
- Review, revise, and update your plan

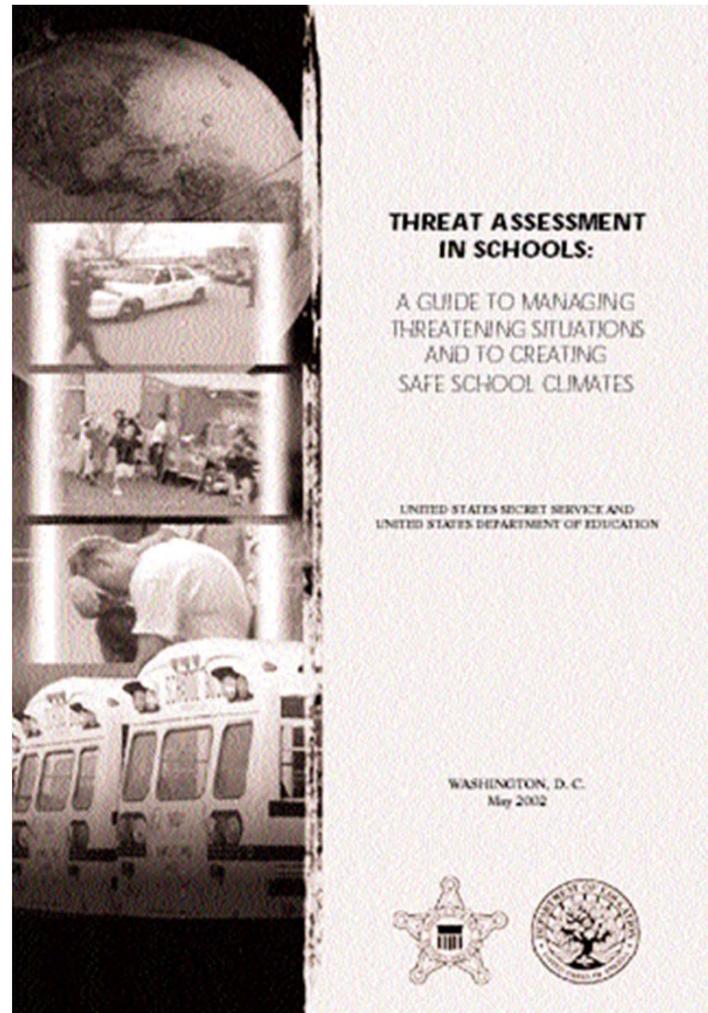




Threat Assessment in Schools: Basics and Benchmarks



Threat Assessment in Schools



Essential Elements of an Effective School Threat Assessment Program

1. Authority to conduct an assessment
2. Capacity to conduct inquiries and investigations
3. Integrated systems relationships



Six Principles of Threat Assessment



1. Targeted violence is the end result of an understandable, and oftentimes discernible, process of thinking and behavior.



2. Targeted violence stems from an interaction between the individual, the situation, the setting, and the target.



3. An investigative, skeptical, inquisitive mindset is critical to successful threat assessment.



4. Effective threat assessment is based upon facts, rather than characteristics or traits.



5. It is guided by an “integrated systems approach.”



6. The central question in a threat assessment inquiry is whether a student *poses* a threat, not whether a student *made* a threat.



The Threat Assessment Inquiry

1. What drew attention?
2. Student information
3. Attack-related behaviors
4. Motives
5. Target selection



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Sources of Information for Inquiry

1. School records
2. School interviews
3. Parent/guardian interviews
4. Interviews with student of concern
5. Interview with potential target



Key Question 1

- What are the student's motives and goals?



Key Question 2

- Have there been any communications suggesting ideas or intent to attack?
 - Posts to social media
 - Class poems/papers



Key Question 3

- Has the student shown inappropriate interest in any of the following?
 - School attacks or attackers
 - Weapons (including recent acquisition of any)
 - Incidents of mass violence (e.g., terrorism, workplace violence)



Key Question 4

- Has the student engaged in attack-related behaviors?



Key Question 5

- Does the student have the *capacity* to carry out an act of targeted violence?



Key Question 6

- Is the student experiencing hopelessness, desperation, and/or despair?



Key Question 7

- Does the student have a trusting relationship with at least one responsible adult?



Key Question 8

- Does the student see violence as an acceptable—or desirable—or the only—way to solve problems?



Key Question 9

- Are the student's conversation and story consistent with his or her actions?



Key Question 10

- Are other people concerned about the student's potential for violence?



Key Question 11

- What circumstances might affect the likelihood of an attack?



Using Social Media

- Awareness
- Reporting
- Investigation

facebook

twitter

YouTube



Using Social Media: Awareness

- Monitoring social media
 - General awareness
 - Open profiles
 - Tweets, posts, and videos



Using Social Media: Reporting

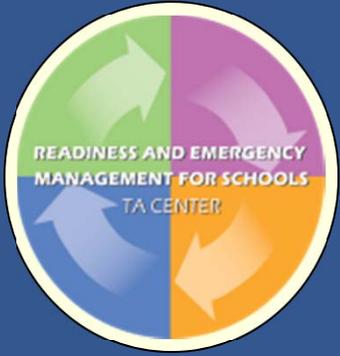
- Create tip line (calls, texts)
- Ensure caller/texter anonymity
- Assign number to report in case need to follow up
- Collaborate with local law enforcement



Using Social Media: Investigation

- Identify suspects and accomplices
- Track messages to understand planning
- Track posts to investigate signs





Final Implications



Schools should ensure a climate in which students feel comfortable sharing information they have regarding a potentially threatening situation with a responsible adult.



Teachers, administrators,
and other faculty should be
trained on how to properly
respond to students who
provide them with
information about a
threatening or disturbing
situation, as well as how to
deal with actual threats.



Safe School Initiative Reports

- Final Report and Findings: Implications for Prevention of School Attacks in the United States
 - <http://rems.ed.gov/docs/FinalReportandFindingsofSafeSchoolInitiative.pdf>
- Threat Assessment in Schools: A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and to Creating Safe School Climates
 - <http://rems.ed.gov/docs/ThreatAssessmentinSchools.pdf>
- Prior Knowledge of Potential School-Based Violence: Information Students Learn May Prevent a Targeted Attack (Bystander Study)
 - http://rems.ed.gov/docs/DOE_BystanderStudy.pdf



REMS TA Center Resources

- Campus Attacks: Targeted Violence Affecting Institutions of Higher Education
 - http://rems.ed.gov/docs/CampusAttacks_201004.pdf
- Implementing Behavioral Threat Assessment on Campus
 - http://rems.ed.gov/docs/VT_ThreatAssessment09.pdf
- Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities
 - <http://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/crisisplanning.pdf>
- Action Guide for Emergency Management at Institutions of Higher Education
 - http://rems.ed.gov/docs/REMS_ActionGuide.pdf
- Guide to School Vulnerability Assessments
 - http://rems.ed.gov/docs/REMS_ActionGuide.pdf
- Tips for Helping Students Recovering from Traumatic Events
 - <http://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/recovering/index.html>



For More Information

- U.S. Department of Education

- <http://www.ed.gov/>

- U.S. Secret Service NTAC

- <http://www.secretservice.gov/ntac.shtml>

- Readiness and Emergency Management in Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance (TA) Center

- <http://rems.ed.gov/>

- CDC's School Assisted Violent Death Study

- <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/schoolviolence/SAVD.html>



The REMS TA Center

For additional information, resources, training, and technical assistance, please contact the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance (TA) Center:

Phone: (855) 781-7367 (REMS)

Email: remstacenter@seiservices.com

Website: <http://rems.ed.gov>

