School Safety Task Force

Recommendations and Resources

Local Partnerships are Vital in Managing School-based Critical Incidents

June 2013

MIKE DEWINE
★ OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL ★

Dear Ohioans,

Early in the morning on February 27, 2012, in Chardon, Ohio, six high school students were shot in their cafeteria by a fellow student. Three of these young teens died from their injuries. Ten months later in Connecticut, the son of a school employee shot and killed his mother and continued his violent rampage at the Sandy Hook Elementary School, tragically killing six teachers and 20 young children, before killing himself. On May 20, 2013, a category EF-5 tornado ravaged Moore, Okla., smashing homes, neighborhoods, and the Plaza Towers Elementary School, leaving a 1.3-mile wide path of destruction and taking 24 lives, including those of seven children at the elementary school.

Tragically, these terrible human events and natural disasters are realities for which our schools and communities must be prepared. In an effort to add value to school safety conversations going on at the local and state levels, my office formed a School Safety Task Force in December 2012. The task force has met regularly over several months to address needs related to school safety plans and operations, training and local partnerships to manage school emergencies, and the impact of mental health issues on school safety. Numerous recommendations on these school safety topics are provided within this School Safety Task Force report.

The report also includes a recommended School Safety/Emergency Operations Plan, which each school should customize to meet that school's unique circumstances and resources.   The plan includes an Incident Response Template so that emergency first responders will have quick and ready access to critical information during their immediate response to a school emergency. And, the plan offers current best practices and checklists to guide schools in their planning and development of policies and procedures for responding to school emergencies.

Every school must have a sound and sustainable Safety/Emergency Operations Plan. Sustainability hinges on building relationships among school officials and staff, teachers, parents, law enforcement, fire and emergency services, and other community partners. Mental health awareness — with a focus on preventing school violence, suicide, bullying, and other incidents that impact school safety — is essential to every school's safety/emergency operations plan.

Community partners in safety must regularly come together and communicate with each other. They must build relationships, plan, train, and review and revise their school safety/emergency operations plan. Working together fosters collaborations that provide for a safer school community. By providing tools and information that encourage and empower our schools and communities in the face of violence or other emergencies affecting our children, we help our schools and their safety partners successfully manage man-made or natural hazards.

I thank the Ohio Department of Education, the Ohio School Boards Association, the Buckeye Association of School Administrators, The Ohio Association of School Business Officials, and the Ohio School Resource Officers Association, which partnered with my office in this endeavor. In addition, I sincerely appreciate and acknowledge the dedicated efforts of every member of our School Safety Task Force who contributed their time and knowledge in the creation of this report. Thank you.

Very respectfully yours,

Mike DeWine
Ohio Attorney General

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I want to personally thank each and every one of the School Safety Task Force members for volunteering hours of their time and providing knowledge to compile this report. Each member provided insight that enabled us to address school safety plans and operations, training, and local partnerships to manage school emergencies and consider the impact of mental health issues on school safety. Again, thank you!

Special Acknowledgements

Ohio Emergency Management Agency, Phillip Johnson, Portia Pulsifer
Ohio School Facilities Commission, Steve Lutz
State Fire Marshal's Office, Larry Flowers
University of Findlay, Laura Hoehne, Randy Van Dyne, Jeffrey McGuire, Scott Lowry

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Introduction

In March 2007, the Ohio General Assembly amended Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.536, requiring all public, private, charter, and vocational schools, as well as preschools with kindergartens, to file with the Ohio Attorney General comprehensive school safety plans and floor plans for each school building.

The Ohio legislature and public realized a need to ensure that schools develop plans with appropriate protocols to respond to serious threats and potential hazards, including — for example — severe weather, flooding, active shooter or hostage situations, fires, explosions, and bomb threats. Schools were directed to involve law enforcement and safety officials, parents, teachers, and nonteaching staff to assist in development of these plans and to permit law enforcement access to their buildings for training purposes. Schools also were directed to update their plans at least once every three years and more often if a major modification to a building requires changes to procedures outlined in a safety plan.

Once these safety and floor plans are filed with the Attorney General, they are uploaded to the Ohio Law Enforcement Gateway (OHLEG) and can be electronically accessed by law enforcement in the event of an emergency.

On February 27, 2012, and pursuant to Ohio law, safety and floor plans for more than 4,000 schools should have been available to law enforcement on OHLEG. On that day, however, more than 2,500 schools were not in compliance with the requirements of state law. A total of 725 schools had never filed safety and floor plans at all, and 1,813 schools had failed to update their plans within the previous three years. Also on that day, six students were shot in the Chardon High School cafeteria. Three of the students died.

After the terrible loss of life at Chardon, many have engaged in efforts to improve school safety and achieve greater compliance with Ohio law. One goal has been to ensure every school is current in filing complete and well-developed safety and floor plans.

In December 2012, after a tragic shooting that cost 26 lives at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut, Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine formed a School Safety Task Force to make recommendations on school safety and assist our schools in the development of their safety and floor plans.

Attorney General DeWine partnered with the Ohio Department of Education, the Ohio School Boards Association, the Buckeye Association of School Administrators, the Ohio Association of School Business Officials, and the Ohio School Resource Officers Association in forming the School Safety Task Force.

Members of the Task Force include municipal and township police and county sheriff representatives; fire and emergency officials; school administrators, teachers and school district leaders; the Cleveland, Cincinnati and Columbus Catholic Dioceses; Ohio Board of Regents; Ohio Department of Homeland Security; Ohio Department of Mental Health; Ohio

Department of Developmental Disabilities; Ohio Emergency Management Agency; mental health professionals; and staff of the Ohio Attorney General's Office.

The School Safety Task Force met regularly over several months and formed three subcommittees that worked to address needs related to (1) school safety plans and operations; (2) training and local partnerships to manage school-based critical incidents; and (3) mental health issues that impact school safety. The Task Force recognized that long-term success in minimizing risks to school safety hinges on addressing crises' causes, which often are related to mental illness or emotional disorders.

Throughout the meetings, School Safety Task Force members expressed a sense of urgency to affect the culture of how the necessary partners in school safety view their roles and responsibilities in an emergency. Members agreed that local control, organization, and resources are key. Many at the local level already are working diligently to develop active relationships among safety partners, including law enforcement, fire, emergency services, school officials and staff, teachers, parents, and other community stakeholders such as mental health, social service, clergy, hospitals, and other health professionals.

Building relationships among these safety partners and community engagement must be championed. These partners in safety must regularly come together and communicate with each other. They must plan, train, review, and revise school safety plans, working together on a continuous basis. Only by working in this manner can we succeed in changing the culture of how crises are handled.

By providing tools and information that encourage and empower our schools and communities in the face of either man-made or natural hazards affecting our children, we help our schools and their safety partners work together to prepare, respond, and recover from school-based emergencies.

Executive Summary

This report of the School Safety Task Force provides numerous recommendations and resources on general school safety topics, safety plans, and training. It emphasizes the importance of being proactive rather than reactive in responding to today's threats and recognizes that school safety must be addressed at the local level with appropriate outside assistance.

Included is a recommended safety plan that offers best practices and instructions on what to do in the event of a variety of school emergencies. The safety plan includes an Incident Response Plan template to provide critical information to emergency responders during their immediate response to an incident. Such information, located in the first few pages of the school safety plan, includes key contacts, type of communication system/platform, and location of floor plans and other key documents. The safety plan also includes a model floor plan and checklist. The floor plan includes clear markings so that rooms, utilities, exits/entrances, windows, alarms, cameras, and other key information can be identified.

This report includes many recommendations and resources related to mental health and school safety, recognizing the need to (1) assess and identify threats before they manifest, particularly with respect to issues of mental illness; (2) raise awareness; and (3) build on existing community mental health and other local and state resources to create more seamless operations through sharing information, services, funding streams, and resources.

Finally, this report also includes several recommendations for legislative changes. These appear in Appendix A.

General

As a country, we often focus on school shootings and youth violence as the only potential dangers schools face. However, the range and scope of the various hazards facing a school community are quite broad. People can pose hazards, such as a shooting, an assault, an act of vandalism, or an intruder or terrorist entering a school with violent intent. School violence perpetrators can be strangers to the school, but also can be students, faculty, staff, or parents. Such incidents may result from domestic violence spillover. Schools and their surrounding communities also are exposed to a variety of natural hazards, such as floods, earthquakes, and fires. Hazards also can originate outside the school from incidents in the surrounding area, such as a bus accident or chemical spill on a nearby highway.

Although the basic response to each type of hazard will have a common foundation, the response to an earthquake, for example, will be different from the response to dangers posed by a hazardous chemical spill or an active shooter. Schools should always be looking for resources within the community that can assist in managing an incident.

Recommendations

(1) Planning and Preparation: Schools and safety partners should meet to discuss what might happen during an emergency. Potential challenges and proposed solutions must be explored together. An understanding of each safety partner's role and responsibilities eliminates confusing and conflicting directives through the life cycle of an emergency. This provides for a single set of objectives, collaborative strategies, free flow of information, and better use of resources with less duplication of efforts.

(2) Regular Safety Checks and Safety Committee: Schools should conduct regular physical safety checks or audits of buildings, all school premises, and buses as well as policy and procedure audits with appropriate safety partners. Such partners may include fire, police, and transportation officials and building inspectors. These partners should form a safety or security committee that meets regularly to conduct and review these audits.

(3) Correction of Deficiencies and Code Compliance: Schools should review and correct deficiencies within 10 days, or as soon as possible, after discovery. Correcting deficiencies may include acquiring equipment and replenishing emergency supplies on a regular basis. Schools should consider code compliance, as applicable to their buildings, in their review and corrective actions. The Ohio Building Code (Ohio Administrative Code 4101:1), http://com.ohio.gov/dico/BBS.aspx, and Ohio Fire Code (Ohio Administrative Code 1301:7), http://www.com.ohio.gov/fire/, should be consulted as, for example, the Ohio Building Code is applicable to newly constructed buildings or buildings undergoing substantial renovation. Local building and fire officials should be contacted to assist with review and correction of deficiencies.

(4) <u>Threat Assessment:</u> Schools should form threat assessment teams. Successful threat assessment requires working with all partners and obtaining buy-in of staff, including lay persons and professionals, to obtain different perspectives. It is important to have those who work in or around the school buildings and surrounding areas on a daily basis share their knowledge. Schools need to consider past incidents, existing resources, and the physical and other factors of the surrounding neighborhoods and other areas. Schools should consider who uses the school buildings or other facilities, access control, lighting and landscaping, and other environmental design features important to safety. For more detail on how to form an assessment team and perform security assessments, see http://www.learningservices.us/roundtable/Webinar_SecurityAssessments.pdf

(5) <u>Communication of Behavior and Referrals:</u> School should establish a reliable communication system through which reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior can be assessed by appropriate school, mental health, police, and other safety partners and so referrals can be made for assistance. Parents, students, staff, and other safety partners should be informed of the reporting system and results of how complaints are handled.

(6) <u>Using Technology for Reporting of Tips:</u> Schools should utilize technology for reporting tips 24/7. Examples include:

- See Something/Say Something, a program of the Ohio Department of Homeland Security, 877-OHS-INTEL (647-4683)
- See-Hear-Report, an anonymous tip program, www.smscrimetips.com
- Smartphone application available through Internet at http://aacopdspeakout.myapp.name
- Tips through your local Crime Stoppers organizations (for example, in Central Ohio, http://stopcrime.org/?page_id=14, or in Cuyahoga County, https://www.tipsubmit.com/WebTips.aspx?AgencyID=657)
- A help line program used by about 100 schools in Ohio, www.schoolhelpline.com

(7) <u>Communication during an Emergency:</u> School and safety partners should put in place communication systems that allow for clear and complete flow of information and reporting during an emergency. Systems should allow for nonverbal communication and redundancy.

(8) <u>Media:</u> Schools and safety responders should have a coordinated response for dealing with the media and the public for the sharing of information.

(9) <u>Public Service Announcements:</u> Schools and safety partners should develop public service announcements/campaigns to promote local participation in addressing school safety and mental health issues, including cyber bullying and suicide.

(10) <u>Crisis Intervention:</u> Schools should create crisis intervention teams and develop strategies to prevent or respond to school violence and emergencies. A more seamless school-law enforcement partnership within schools and the community supports a proactive approach to prevention, intervention, and mitigation of school emergencies.

(11) <u>Incident Management System:</u> Schools and safety partners should develop partnerships to permit a shared understanding of priorities, roles, responsibilities, and available resources so all can act as one under a unified incident management or command structure in the event of an emergency. Successful incident management requires preparation, planning, and practice.

(12) <u>Sharing Best Practices:</u> As best practices are developed, they should be shared through the Ohio Department of Homeland Security's Communication Information Management System (CIMS): http://ext.dps.state.oh.us/CIMS/. Submission of such practices should be reviewed by appropriate department officials and under an established quality protocol.

(13) <u>Community Survey:</u> Schools are encouraged to conduct a survey or hold community meetings to gauge community perspectives on school safety concerns, needs, resources, and solutions.

(14) <u>Establish LEEP Program:</u> Schools should consider establishing a law enforcement educational presence (LEEP) program through which officers on patrol or in special units can work part time out of satellite offices located in school buildings. If LEEP is not an option, schools may want to arrange walk-throughs by local law enforcement at various times of the day. This promotes the development of relationships with administrators, teachers, and students and familiarizes law enforcement with school facilities, https://www.schoolsafety911.org/index.html

(15) <u>Legal Questions:</u> Schools should consult with appropriate legal counsel to discuss and incorporate solutions to questions or issues that may arise in the handling of a school - based emergency.

Additional Resources

- *University of Findlay, Crisis Management for School Based Incidents*. Awareness and Management courses bringing schools, law enforcement, other emergency responders, and community stakeholders together to cover topics related to comprehensive crisis management. www.findlayallhazards.com

- *Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services*, http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/default.asp?Item=1588

- *3 Bold Steps for School Community Change: A Toolkit for Community Leaders.* Provides guidance on how to build a broad partnership, create a goal-driven plan, and ensure success. http://toolkit.promoteprevent.org/

- *A Guide to School Vulnerability Assessments,* U.S. Department of Education, http://rems.ed.gov/docs/VA_Report_2008.pdf.

- *Threat Assessments in Schools: A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and to Creating Safe School Climates*, http://secretservice.gov/ntac/ssi_guide.pdf

- *Crisis Intervention Teams*: CIT community coordinators can be found through the Ohio Criminal Justice Coordinating Center of Excellence. Contact: Ruth Simera, Center Coordinator, rsimera@neomed.edu or 330-325-6670. http://www.neomed.edu/cjccoe/. The center also can provide information on a program serving Gallia and Meigs counties that uses a collaborative approach to CIT training and development among stakeholders from many systems, including school districts, and a Portage County school-based CIT-Education Collaboration training.

- *National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities.* NCEF provides a checklist that combines school facility assessment measures into one online source for assessing the safety and security of school buildings and grounds. *http://ncef.org/safeschools/index.cfm.*

- *Texas School Safety Center* website contains numerous links to NIMS training and other safety and security information, including FERPA and HIPAA, emergency plans and audit templates, tabletop exercises, guidelines, research, and resources. *http://www.txssc.txstate.edu*

- *Ohio Department of Education Learning Supports.* Provides numerous links to resources for local school districts, families, and communities to ensure the safety of their school children. There are links for school safety plan guides, a safety and security self -assessment form, a safe school audit, practical information on crisis planning, links for helping youth recover from traumatic events, and additional resources for parents. http://www.education.ohio.gov/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=5&ContentID=137736&Content=138329. Contact: Jill Jackson, Safe and Support Consultant, jill.jackson@education.ohio.gov, 614-466-9540.

- *Safe and Secure Schools — 27 Strategies for Prevention and Intervention*. Reference book with recommendations to help administrators prevent or minimize a potential crisis, facilitate an appropriate response, and aid in recovery. http://www.corwin.com/books/Book232353

- *Jane's* *School Safety Handbook*. Reference book with critical information on planning and response, provides a quick guide for those involved in school safety planning, preparedness, mitigation/prevention, response, and recovery. http://www.amazon.com/Janes-School-Safety-Handbook-Mike/dp/0710626584

Safety/Emergency Operations Plans

Every school is required to have school safety plans and floor plans and to file those plans with the Attorney General. School officials must work with local emergency responders, law enforcement, and safety officials to develop protocols that provide clear directions on what to do and who is responsible for taking action in an emergency. Law enforcement, safety officials, and other safety partners should certify that they have participated in discussions and reviewed the plans. School staff, teachers, substitute teachers, parents, and students also need to understand school emergency response and safety plans.

Local fire departments must work with schools on fire prevention and potential hazardous material situations. Emergency medical services must work with schools to address medical triage and first-aid training. Emergency management agencies must coordinate with schools regarding incident command and coordination. If there are other community stakeholders who would be impacted by a school crisis, they too should be part of the crisis planning and preparedness efforts.

Safety plans must be regularly updated to account for new safety partners, to reflect important changes in information, and to incorporate best practices. The safety and floor plans and other important documents and information must be readily available at a secure place at the school in the event of an emergency.

Forming relationships and working together creates trust and allows all partners to discuss strategies to avoid duplication of efforts, ensure better use of resources, and talk to one another in the same language. This in turn improves the internal and external flow of information.

By coming together to plan, safety partners can identify challenges that may arise. Depending on the type of incident, such collaborations also help partners know their local resources and capabilities and be able to develop solutions to those challenges.

Working together fosters collaborations that provide for a safer school community.

Recommendations

(1) Development, sign-off, and updating of plan: Ohio law requires every school to have a Safety/Emergency Operations Plan and a floor plan for each building. Schools should work with law enforcement and safety officials to develop protocols and include key information to establish clear directions in the event of an emergency. Plans must be regularly updated to account for changes in safety personnel and other important information and to incorporate best practices. Safety partners should sign the plan to show they have reviewed and participated in development of the plan.

(2) Everyone knows the plan: Schools should ensure that teachers, substitute teachers, janitors, cafeteria workers, other staff, and volunteers are familiar with and have a good understanding of the safety plan.

(3) Involvement in the plan: Schools should involve parents, staff, students, and other local community partners in safety plan operations. RC 3313.536 states, "In developing the plan for each building, the board or governing authority shall involve community law enforcement and safety officials, parents of students who are assigned to the building, and teachers and nonteaching employees who are assigned to the building." Schools should work with law enforcement and others to communicate with parents about what is being done to keep their children safe and provide a means of communicating directly by phone or e-mail in the event of an emergency. Schools should involve parents in a safety walk-through, drill, or training event.

(4) Refresh and review: Schools should conduct safety refreshers with staff and make opportunities to review different parts of the school safety plan, perhaps during the last 10 minutes of regularly scheduled staff meetings.

(5) Upload of plans to OHLEG: Schools should be able to upload their safety plans and building floor plans to the Ohio Law Enforcement Gateway (OHLEG) through their secured online sign-on site at the Ohio Department of Education. [*Note*: This recommendation is currently being implemented by the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Attorney General's Office.]

(6) Audits: Schools should establish audit requirements and audit their safety plans and actions to ensure compliance. Regular vulnerability assessments of school facilities and operations should be conducted with participation and sign-off from all safety partners. See audit toolkit at www.oag.state.tx.us/ag_publicatoins/pdfs/safetytoolkit.pdf

(7) Incident Action Plan: Schools and safety partners should work together to develop an incident action plan (IAP), which provides key information and directions for handling an emergency. The IAP must be regularly updated to account for new safety partners and changing information and to incorporate best practices.

(8) Availability of plans on site: Schools should have a hard and electronic copy of their school safety plan, floor plans, and Incident Action Plan readily available to share with safety partners at a safe command post on site. Also important to have at the command post are master keys, flashlights and batteries, lists and rosters of staff and students, school pictures, radio, cell phone, page, pens, paper, and a whistle or bullhorn.

Additional Resources

- *Ohio Emergency Management Training*, http://ema.ohio.gov/Training.aspx

- *Ohio Department of Education Learning Supports*. Provides numerous links to resources for school safety plan guides, creating and updating school emergency plans, a safety and security self -assessment form, a safe school audit, and practical information on crisis planning. http://www.education.ohio.gov/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=5&ContentID=137736&Content=138329. You also may contact Jill Jackson, Safe and Support Consultant, jill.jackson@education.ohio.gov or 614-466-9540.

- *Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools, Technical Assistance Center (TAC).* The TAC supports schools, school districts, and institutions of higher education in school emergency management, including the development and implementation of comprehensive all-hazards emergency management plans. *http://rems.ed.gov/*

- *Texas School Safety Center* website contains numerous links to NIMS training and other safety and security information, including FERPA and HIPAA, emergency plans and audit templates, tabletop exercises, guidelines, research, and resources*. http://www.txssc.txstate.edu*

- *Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Training (IS-100.SCA: Introduction to the Incident Command System for Schools)*. http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/IS100sca.asp

- *Components of Comprehensive School District Emergency Management Plans*. Checklist to evaluate plans by U.S. Department of Education/Emergency Response and Crisis Management Technical Center. www.ercm.org

- *ATF Bomb Threat Checklist*. http://wwwldoe.in.gov/sites/default/files/safety/caller-checklist.pdf

- *National Counterterrorism Center,* Bomb Threat Evacuation Distances. http://www.nct.gov/site/technical/bomt_threat.html

- *Student School Safety Audit: Safety in Our Schools*, Illinois State Board of Education. A resource for use by a student audit team and containing perception surveys for students about safety conditions in the school. http://www.isbe.net/sos/htmls/safe_at_school.htm

- *School Safety Audit Checklist*. A resource for school personnel based on the work of Virginia State Education Department as modified by the New York State Police. http://bit.ly/oXBpsG

Training

Because many challenges face our schools and communities, building partnerships with safety partners and engaging the community is vital to preparing for, responding to, and recovering from an incident. Schools, emergency responders, local emergency management, and community stakeholders must train and practice management of school-based crises.

Although it is not possible to predict every need for every type of school incident, the ability to respond effectively in a crisis situation is improved when the roles and responsibilities of all partners are understood. It is important to know who will lead the response, who will assist, and how logistical, resource, and internal and external communication issues will be addressed.

When schools and their staffs, students, law enforcement, safety officials, emergency responders, and other community stakeholders come together to train and practice response protocols, each develops a better understanding of the others' capabilities, roles, and responsibilities. Each will know what resources are available, not just in responding to an incident but to prevent and/or deal with recovery from a school-based incident.

Safety partners must work together on planning and training exercises, especially as these relate to vulnerability, threat assessments, and security protocols. Regular vulnerability assessments of school facilities and operations should be conducted with participation of local emergency responders. This assessment should be supported by a comprehensive emergency operations plan and should include all school buildings, property, and assets.

By forming relationships and partnerships with and among all community stakeholders and by participating in planning and preparedness training events and exercises, schools will be better prepared to respond to and recover from a school-based incident.

The key to building vital partnerships — in which each partner understands roles, responsibilities, and resources — is preparation, planning, and training together!

Recommendations

(1) Regular and varied training with partners: Schools should conduct regular safety drills and review school safety plans with safety forces. Drills should be live and involve staff, students, parents and community. Drills should occur at various times of the day to allow staff and students to practice during change of classes, lunch periods, and other school events. Current law requires all public schools to conduct at least one safety drill before December 1 of each school year.

(2) Tabletop exercises: Schools and law enforcement and safety partners should conduct regular tabletop exercises. Discussions should include predictable challenges and solutions to those challenges. See http://texasschoolsafetycenter.com/tools/emergency-management-toolkit/role-of-districts/training-drills-exercises/exercising. Another useful tool for planning and addressing common predictable challenges and solutions can be found at http://cityofmentor.com/live/fire/public-education/.

(3) Safety partners train together: Schools and local safety partners should explore options for training together, such as through the Attorney General's Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy (OPOTA) courses How to be Aware, Prepare, and be a First Responder in a Crisis (http://www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/Media/Videos/School-Shootings-How-to-be-Aware-Prepare-and-be-a) and De-escalating Mental Health Crises (http://66.194.251.233/agcourses/DeEscalatingMentalHealthCrises/player.html). These trainings should be conducted with safety partners during teacher in-service days or at other convenient times. When safety partners train together and practice their response to an emergency, they come to understand each other's priorities, share best practices, create relationships, and build on their resources, all of which is vital to prevention, mitigation, and recovery.

(4) First-aid trauma kits and training: Schools should create a first aid-trauma kit and provide the kits to school personnel. The kit may include such items as gauze, tape, gloves, bandages, and other materials that are inexpensive and can be used to render basic aid to the injured or ill prior to the arrival of emergency first responders. School personnel should be trained on trauma first-aid care.

(5) Training on HIPAA, FERPA and other laws: Training should be provided to schools and safety partners on HIPAA and FERPA, as well as other laws, responsibilities, and authority to act relating to school safety topics such as discipline, weapons, bomb threats, drugs (use and selling), bullying (including cyber bullying), and search and seizure of property. See Joint Guidance on Application of FERP and HIPAA to Student Health Records, http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/doc/ferpa-hipaa-guidance.pdf, and Balancing Student Privacy and School Safety, http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/brochures/postsec.html.

(6) NIMS training and funding: All safety partners should make every effort to be in compliance with federal and/or state requirements, including NIMS training, to leverage the ability to obtain funding and other resources for school safety purposes.

(7) Crisis Intervention Teams: Schools should engage with law enforcement, other emergency responders, mental health and community services, and judicial personnel in local training on crisis intervention and participation in such teams.

Additional Resources

- *University of Findlay, Crisis Management for School Based Incidents.* Awareness and Management courses bringing schools, law enforcement, other emergency responders, as well as other community stakeholders together to cover topics related to comprehensive crisis management. www.findlayallhazards.com

- *Wright State University National Center for Medical Readiness, Calamityville, Lifesaving 101: Beyond First Aid — Trauma Care.* www.medicalreadiness.org . (Click on the Calamityville link.) The university has mobile training teams that can travel to school or ESC locations to provide training.

- *"It Can Happen Here"* a 2010 video produced by the Weapons and Protective Systems Technology Center for Excellence. Documentary focusing on Columbine and Platte Canyon school shootings in Colorado, shootings at the West Nickle Mines Amish School and others, examining lessons learned and solutions, as well as websites, reference materials, and contact for assistance with writing and implementing school safety plans. http://www.justnet.org/school_safety.html

- *Resources for Coping with School Shootings. Offers* guidance and tips on how to cope with crisis and trauma. http://sshs.promoteprevent.org/resources-coping-school-shootings

- *Active Shooter Preparedness Web Site, Department of Homeland Security*, http://www.dhs.gov/active-shooter-preparedness

- *Crisis Intervention Teams.* CIT community coordinators can be found through the Ohio Criminal Justice Coordinating Center of Excellence. Contact: Ruth Simera, Center Coordinator, rsimera@neomed.edu or 330-325-6670. http://www.neomed.edu/cjccoe/ The center also can provide information on Gallia/ Meigs County program which uses a collaborative approach to CIT training and development among stakeholders from many systems, including school districts, and Portage County school-based CIT-Education Collaboration training.

- *Texas School Safety Center website.* Contains numerous links to NIMS training and other safety and security information, including FERPA and HIPAA, emergency plans and audit templates, tabletop exercises, guidelines, research and resources. http://www.txssc.txstate.edu

- *Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Training (IS-100.SCA: Introduction to the Incident Command System for Schools).* http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/IS100sca.asp

- *Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Training* (E361: Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools).
  http://training.fema.gov/EMICourses/crsdetail.asp?cid=E361&ctype=R

- *Bomb Threat Response: An Interactive Planning Tool*. The Bomb Threat CD-ROM is a free interactive tool for schools that includes staff training presentations and implementation resources. www.threatplan.org

Mental Health

Community relationships are crucial to providing aid and assistance in the aftermath of school-based incidents, especially those involving violence, serious injury, or loss of life.

Developing partnerships with local health and mental health providers, clergy, grief counselors, and other resources for support in the delivery of goods or services during and after an incident are important matters to be discussed and included in safety planning and training. These relationships and services are critical to recovery and rebuilding after an incident.

Moreover, these partnerships are equally important to a proactive, rather than reactive, response to today's threats to our children's safety. Mental health awareness in the school community is essential to a school's safety plan. Prevention is key. Protocols to identify, intervene, and refer students at risk for emotional or mental disorders need to be included in the plan. Schools, working with local social services and other safety partners in the community, can make good physical and mental health an accepted, integral part of a successful wellness program.

Long-term success in minimizing risks and increasing the odds of preventing or surviving many types of emergencies derives from addressing the causes of these threats, such as mental illness and emotional disorders.

Recommendations

(1) Raising Mental Health Awareness: Mental health awareness in the school community is an essential component to a school's safety plan, and a school should raise awareness by promoting, educating, identifying, and responding to mental health as a community. Schools are encouraged to participate in programs that help students and parents develop skills in problem-solving, conflict resolution, and positive communication. See, for example, Health Curriculum Analysis Tool (HECAT). www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/hecat

(2) Promote Mental Health Awareness: A school should start by reaching out to engage the entire school community — students, staff, parents, law enforcement, mental health professionals, clergy, and community leaders — to begin discussion about how to raise mental health awareness in their community.

(3) Systems of care relationships and resources: Schools and local community partners should develop systems of care and build on these resources, creating relationships and liaisons aimed at intervention and prevention. Superintendents should form relationships with County Family and Children First Directors and seek their assistance on resources the schools can utilize when developing student individual educational plans. See

www.RedTreehouse.org (a resource for families and professionals to promote the well-being of children and young adults).

(4) <u>Educate the School Community through Wellness programs/ Joint Training:</u> Schools should make good physical and mental health an accepted integral part of a school's wellness plan. Schools should participate in wellness programs such as Red Flags or another similar program and include local social services and criminal justice law enforcement and judicial partners in joint training.

(5) <u>Crisis Intervention:</u> Schools should invite local law enforcement officers involved in a crisis intervention team (CIT) to talk with teachers, staff, parents and students. Schools should participate in programs with police and learn about local mental health resources. They should work with their community's CIT coordinators, who can be found through the Ohio Criminal Justice Coordinating Center of Excellence. Contact: Ruth Simera, Center Coordinator, rsimera@neomed.edu or 330-325-6670.

(6) <u>Identifying Mental Health Issues and Prevention Principles:</u> As with any illness, early diagnosis and treatment of mental illness in children improves the prognosis, reduces the financial cost, and decreases the burden of the disease. Mental health directly impacts school climate, students' ability to learn, and teachers' ability to teach. Schools should adopt the following prevention principles:

- Since teachers interact with large groups of children on a daily basis, and with thousands over the course of their careers, they are in a unique position to recognize children who are struggling with possible mental conditions. When they know what to look for, they can be highly successful in identifying children with mental health needs.
- Early intervention can save a child's life, both literally and figuratively.
- Promotion of good mental health is an essential part of a school district's infrastructure, not just one more added program crowded into an already overloaded curriculum.

(7) <u>Prevention Programs:</u> Schools should have a protocol for identifying, referring, and accommodating students at risk for mental disorders. These should include:

- Instruction on common mental disorders in children incorporated into teacher preparation, in-services, new teacher orientation, and continuing education requirements
- Development of social and emotional intelligence and resiliency skills woven into routine teaching practices and, as soon as appropriate, education in basic mental health as part of every school's curriculum.

(8) <u>Responding to Mental Health Issues as a Community:</u> The trauma associated with a tragic event at school, such as a school shooting or student suicide, affects the entire school community. Schools should work with their local community partners to develop strategies for addressing funding issues (such as paying for mental health services and a protocol for donations), a referral system, and a resource guide to meet the needs of the community during and after a traumatic event. See for example, "School Based Checklist for Critical Incidents: Mental Health Response," developed by the Geauga County Board of Mental Health and Recovery Services located in the Appendix B of this report.

(9) <u>Learning Centers:</u> School communities should consider creating "learning centers" such as the network of 34 community learning centers within Cincinnati Public Schools, http://www.cps-k12.org/community/clc. These schools have full-service health clinics, mental health counselors, tutoring programs, and after-school programs with services available to students and their families. Cincinnati's system is self-sustaining with funding partners such as United Way and partner with the YMCA and a local Central Clinic to operate programs. The health centers are funded by the users.

(10) <u>Volunteer counselors:</u> Schools and community partners should seek to establish links with volunteer counselors for families that need mental health care but cannot afford to pay. See, for example, Mental Health America of Franklin County, http://www.mhafc.org/.

(11) <u>Private partner relationships and resources:</u> Schools and community partners should build relationships with private entities that share the same goal of prevention, intervention, and care for children and young adults at risk and work to leverage use of resources for these common causes. See, for example, Speak-Up!, an organization that has traveled to more than 250 schools to reach many youth, parents, and educators with a program that promotes a safe, non-threatening environment to share concerns. Committees of student ambassadors work with the Speak-Up! Team to promote strong and positive leadership. http://www.speakup.org/

(12) <u>School Responder programs:</u> Schools should consider participation in the School Responder Program, supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. It provides research-based tools to make the juvenile justice system more efficient. The program trains teachers, bus drivers, cafeteria staff, janitors, and other school personnel to recognize the signs of a child suffering from mental health issues and places a mental health responder in the school to link the child to appropriate services. Two successful programs are operating in Jackson and Summit counties. See www.modelsforchange.net/publications/435/SchoolBased_Diversion__Strategic_Innovations_from_the_Mental_HealthJuvenile_Justice_Action_Network.pdf.

(13) <u>Identify partners in your community at local, county, and state levels to assist in raising mental health awareness:</u> Each school and community may have different mental health needs and varying resources. However, all schools have access to educational services centers; local alcohol, drug, and mental health boards; and local emergency management offices that are able to partner with the school to assist in addressing mental health issues. Below is a general list of contacts that can assist you in identifying partners in your community.

- The Ohio Department of Mental Health, www.mentalhealth.ohio.gov/, maintains a list of provider agencies throughout the state. Click on your county or enter your ZIP code.

- Ohio Emergency Management Agency, www.ema.ohio.gov/, maintains a list of the 88 emergency management agencies. Click to locate your county and EMA director.

- The Ohio Attorney General's Crime Victim Services Section, 800-582-2877 or www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/Victims, for assistance to identify state and local resources to aid in recovery.

- Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation. Community coalitions provide the opportunity and structure for allied groups to pursue coordinated strategies to educate and increase public awareness that suicide is a public health problem. Coalitions are committed to reducing stigma, which helps increase people's ability to seek help and ultimately prevent the loss of life. http://www.ohiospf.org/content.php?pageurl=county_coalitions

Additional Resources

Many prevention programs are readily available in Ohio. For your convenience, the following list (in no particular order) includes a quick synopsis of many programs and sources of additional information.

- *Department of Education Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools,* http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osdfs

- *Ohio Department of Education Learning Supports.* Provides numerous links to resources for local school districts, families, and communities to ensure the safety of schoolchildren. There are links for helping youth recover from traumatic events and additional resources for parents. http://www.education.ohio.gov/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=5&ContentID=137736&Content=138329. You also may contact Jill Jackson, Safe and Supportive Consultant, jill.jackson@education.ohio.gov., 614-466-9540.

- *Red Treehouse. A* collaborative effort of Ohio Family and Children First and Ronald McDonald House of Cleveland Inc. www.RedTreehouse.org

- *Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, Case Western Reserve University.* Providing further links to research and information on mental illness and substance abuse, intervention for children and families. http://msass.case.edu/research/centers.html

- *Begun Center for Violence Prevention, Research and Education.* http://begun.case.edu/

- *Ohio Department of Mental Health*. Directory of services by county. http://mentalhealth.ohio.gov/

- *The DRM Regional Resource Directory: Ohio.* Contains an extensive list of links to nonprofit organizations and governmental agencies serving people with disabilities in Ohio. www.disabilityresources.org/OHIO.html

- *Red Flag*s. Teacher training, parent education, and a three- to five-period unit for middle-school students to provide a basic understanding of mental health and mental illness. This universal instruction and early intervention program allows parents, students, and/or teachers to work through the school's mental health protocol to access available local mental health resources. Red Flags is flexible, user-friendly, fits the curriculum, and is used throughout Ohio and many other places across the nation. Developed under the auspices of the Ohio Department of Mental Health in 1998, it is available for little to no cost to all Ohio middle schools through Mental Health America of Summit County. 330-923-0688 or www.redflags.org

- *Mental Health First Aid*. Developed in Australia in 2001, it recently was adapted for the United States by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The youth component is a relatively new teacher training program based on the adult model (2011). http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/youth-mental-health-first-aid

- *PATHS.* The PATHS (Providing Alternative THinking Strategies) Curriculum is a program for educators and counselors designed to facilitate the development of self-control, emotional awareness, and interpersonal problem-solving skills. The curriculum consists of an instructional manual, six volumes of lessons, pictures and photographs, and additional materials. A research book also is available. The PATHS Curriculum is designed for use with elementary school-aged children. The purposes of the PATHS Curriculum are to enhance the social competence and social understanding of children and to facilitate educational processes in the classroom. http://www.prevention.psu.edu/projects/paths.html

- *Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Education Collaboration.* All school staff members interact with students, parents, and community members at some point throughout the day and have the potential to be faced with crisis situations. Recent events illustrate that mental health/mental illness awareness and crisis training for those in school settings has become even more crucial. It is vital that school staff members have the tools to prevent or minimize the need for police intervention and assistance. Adapted from Portage County CIT for Law Enforcement Officers (based on the Memphis Model), the CIT Education Collaboration program provides information on a variety of mental health issues, teaches school personnel to feel comfortable communicating with a person with mental health needs, demonstrates ways to respond to mental health crises through the use of role plays and de-escalation techniques, and promotes collaboration with community agencies/resources. For more information, contact Carrie Suvada at suvadas@embarqmail.com.

- *PREPaRE Crisis Curriculum*. This curriculum has been developed by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) as part of its decade-long leadership in providing evidence-based resources and consultation related to school crisis prevention and response. It is the only comprehensive, nationally available curriculum developed by, and for, school-based mental health professionals. PREPaRE training is ideal for schools committed to improving and strengthening their school crisis prevention, preparedness, emergency response, and recovery capacities. http://www.nasponline.org/prepare/index.aspx

- *Parents and Teachers as Allies.* The National Alliance on Mental Illness created "Parents and Teachers as Allies" to help families and school professionals identify the key warning signs of early-onset mental illnesses in children and adolescents in our schools. It focuses on the specific, age-related symptoms of mental illnesses in youngsters. The publication is intended to provide an educational tool for advancing mutual understanding and communication between families and school professionals. http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=Child_and_Adolescent_Action_Center&template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=21435

- *SOS Signs of Suicide.* SOS Signs of Suicide is a two-day secondary school-based intervention that includes screening and education. Students are screened for depression and suicide risk and referred for professional help as indicated. Students also view a video that teaches them to recognize signs of depression and suicide in others. They are taught that the appropriate response to these signs is to acknowledge them, let the person know you care, and tell a responsible adult (either with the person or on that person's behalf). Students also participate in guided classroom discussions about suicide and depression. The intervention attempts to prevent suicide attempts, increase knowledge about suicide and depression, develop desirable attitudes toward suicide and depression, and increase help-seeking behavior. http://www.mentalhealthscreening.org/programs/youth-prevention-programs/sos/

- *National Registry of Evidenced-Based Programs and Practices.* Template of questions to ask when considering a program. http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/pdfs/Questions_To_Ask_Developers.pdf

- *Helping People Find Strength Following Disaster,* Health Resources and Service Grant #1URMC00055. A resource for recovery through the Ohio Department of Mental Health. http://www.mh.state.oh.us

- *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program.* Designed to improve peer relations and provide for safe and positive learning environment by reducing and preventing bullying problems. http://www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/bullying_prevention_program.page

- *Let None Learn in Fear.* A compilation of columns on school safety. http://www.safehavensinternational.org/resources/let-none-learn-in-fear/

- *Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE).* A private, nonprofit organization working to decrease the potential for violence in our schools and communities by promoting student involvement, education, and service opportunities. www.nationalsave.org

- *National Child Traumatic Stress Network.* Established to improve access to care, treatment, and services for traumatized children and adolescents exposed to traumatic events. NCTSN developed Psychological First Aid, an evidence-based intervention program, in collaboration with the National Center on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. http://www.nctsn.org/

- *Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress.* Addresses a wide scope of trauma, including the consequences of combat, terrorism, natural and human-made disasters, and public health threats. The resource guide has information on how to deal with different types of trauma. http://www.cstsonline.org/

- *American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.* Provides specific information on mental health disorders and help for families faced with a child who may have a mental health disability. http://www.aacap.org/

- *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.* Publishes studies on the effects and identification of trauma-related disabilities and provides information on early identification of possible trauma-based symptoms. http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/traumaticincident/

Conclusion

The focus of the School Safety Task Force's efforts has been to efficiently and effectively add value to the conversations going on at the local level, where many are diligently working to develop active relationships among safety partners. The School Safety Task Force aims to supplement these conversations and facilitate relationship-building by providing information and resources relating to school safety and floor plans, recommendations relating to mental health, and proposed legislative changes set forth in this report. By providing empowering resources to our schools and communities in the face of potential hazards affecting our children, we seek to help them work together to prepare for, respond to, and recover from a school-based incident.

See Appendix C for the Attorney General's Quick Reference Checklist for Schools.

Disclaimer

Reference to any non-state resource, including non-state websites linked to a resource, does not constitute an endorsement by the State of Ohio or the Ohio Attorney General's Office. The Ohio Attorney General's Office is not responsible for the contents of any websites or links from such websites, other than those identified as created by the Office of the Attorney General. Views expressed on such websites do not necessarily represent the views of the Ohio Attorney General or the State of Ohio. The Ohio Attorney General's Office and the State of Ohio do not guarantee or warrant any information, services, or products advertised or offered on non-state websites.

Appendix A

Legislative Recommendations

(1) <u>Mental Health Records</u>. Review privacy and mental health laws and make any needed revisions to allow the sharing of information among safety partners, including juvenile or adult medical and/or criminal or civil commitment records. [Note: Senate Bill 7 requires a court to report to local law enforcement for entry in the NCIC (National Crime Information Center) file if the person is found Not Guilty By Reason of Insanity, Incompetent to Stand Trial or convicted of a violent offense where a mental health evaluation is part of the sentencing. SB 7 was signed by the Governor on June 4th, 2013 and will be effective August 4th, 2013. In addition, the Ohio Department of Mental Health and sheriffs are actively working on issues related to sharing information on civil commitments.]

(2) <u>Immunity</u>. Provide any needed protections to schools, their employees, and other safety first responder and medical partners with regard to liability for good faith efforts in sharing information for safety purposes.

(3) <u>Sharing of Resources</u>. Review laws and make changes to allow the sharing of services and resources regarding health and mental health (suicide prevention, psychiatric outpatient services, etc.) among Ohio Department of Health, Ohio Department of Education, Ohio Department of Mental Health, and Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

(4) <u>Funding.</u> Provide funding for School Resource Officers and specify training requirements; funding for building construction and upgrades for secure facilities; and funding for school counselors and providers for better access to mental health services.

(5) <u>Reporting of Data</u>. Require schools and law enforcement to report data collected on threat assessments and the handling of emergencies to a central state repository.

 (6) <u>Modify HIPAA</u>. Work with federal legislators to modify HIPAA to get data to the firearm registry regarding mentally ill individuals.

(7) <u>School Statues and Regulations</u>. Review regulations that may have unintended consequences related to school violence when children are removed from the school environment. In that review, it is important to recognize that certain regulations, such as those related to weapons in school and other types of serious breaches of conduct, may impact school funding and involve legal ramifications. Revisions made to keep children in the school setting must provide increased resources to address the needs of these children while maintaining the learning environment and safety of all students and staff. Local participation and decision-making must be included in any review or revision of such regulations.

(8) <u>Consolidation of services</u>. Consolidate school and campus safety and security into one single state office, preschool through college.

(9) <u>School Safety Plans</u>. Require that local safety partners (school officials, police, and safety officials, etc.) sign safety plans to show that they have been consulted on those plans. Current law requires that community law enforcement and safety officials, parents of students assigned to a building, and teachers and nonteaching employees assigned to a building, be consulted in the development of the plan for each building.

(10) <u>Safety Drills</u>. Require schools to perform more than the one live safety drill per school year.   Current law allows schools to use one of the 10 fire drills required by law for a safety drill. Consideration should be given to the need for local officials to work together to determine the details and types of drills that should be performed based on their physical school environment and unique nature of hazards faced [rail road crossings, chemical plants/spills, flooding, etc.].

(11<u>) Guidance counselors</u>. Provisions should be made to assist schools in their efforts to have a better ratio of students per guidance counselor and/or specific counselors to address social and emotional issues.

Appendix B

Geauga County Board of Mental Health and Recovery Services
School Based Checklist for Critical Incidents
Mental Health Response

A. Within One Hour After Conclusion of Incident, or Notification of Incident (During School Hours):

> Assumes all children and staff are safe and accounted for at this time. Notification of parents should begin immediately. If children are to be removed from site or school is to close, mental health professionals on site should assist in notification and linking between parents/guardians and their children.

1. Have Mental Health Crisis Teams been notified? Will there be an adequate number of mental health professionals available for the immediate response to the crisis? Will volunteers with mental health backgrounds be utilized for counseling? How will they be vetted? Is this an incident that requires grief counseling, trauma counseling, or both? Will therapy dogs be utilized?

> Trauma symptoms and counseling may be differentiated from issues of grief and loss. Counselors in trauma, and trauma informed care should be made available to children, staff, and others that experienced a traumatic event first hand.

2. Where will counseling be made available (physical location)? Are there adequate provisions for privacy? Who will triage children and adults in immediate need of mental health services? Are arrangements available for meals and drinks if there is a long-term need for counselors?

3. Which counselors will be assigned to help the victims and/or their family members? Have mental health professionals been sent to hospitals if victims have been taken there? Will there be home visits to victims and/or family members?

B. Within 24 Hours After the Conclusion of an Incident, or Notification of an Incident:

1. Has a mental health strategy team been created and have they met to address immediate and ongoing mental health recovery strategies? Who is on the team? Who is excluded?

2. How will services available to the public be advertised? What hours will mental health professionals be available? Who will be responsible for the scheduling of these professionals?

3. Have you scheduled and held a debriefing for first responders, teachers, and staff? Do they have access to a crisis line number and has it been advertised?

4. What materials will be handed out regarding the incident and how victims and/or family members may respond to the events they have experienced? Have you scheduled a training for parents about what to expect from their children who have experienced a traumatic event, or loss in the days and weeks to come?

> All materials should be vetted for accuracy and consistency. Nationally developed, evidence based materials on trauma and grief are readily available at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's website: http://www.samhsa.gov/trauma/

C. Within 48 Hours After the Conclusion of an Incident, or Notification of an Incident:

1. Have teachers and staff been trained in how to address what has happened and what to expect in their classrooms?

2. Have criteria been established and implemented for mental health professionals volunteering on site?

3. Are there materials developed or identified and distributed that provide the community with a consistent and clear message about what to expect regarding mental health issues and behaviors that may be related to the incident?

> Serious discussions should take place regarding the potential for increases in dangerous behaviors after a traumatic event or the unexpected loss of a classmate/teacher/staff member. Increases in drinking, auto accidents, suicide attempts, and other behaviors can often follow these events.

4. If there has been a death, have mental health professionals been sent to funerals or memorial services to provide grief counseling if necessary?

5. Has there been a criteria established for the referral of children and adults seen

6. Has the recovery strategy team continued to meet?

D. Within One Week After the Conclusion of an Incident, or Notification of an Incident:

1. Has individual and group therapy commenced for individuals needing further mental health care?

2. Depending on the severity of the event, have mental health professionals been permanently assigned to the school system? Are they available to all grade levels and teaching staff?

> Family members of traumatized individuals may attend a different school but still need mental health services. Teachers may be affected if the incident involves another staff member or a student they had at an earlier time. Staff and students in other schools are likely to have some mental health issues even though they were not directly affected.

3. Is information being distributed and available on line to parents, students, and staff on risk assessment?

E. Within One Month After the Conclusion of an Incident, or Notification of an Incident:

1. Have assessment for students identified as being at-risk begun? Have drug and alcohol screening and preventative programs been initiated?

2. Have referrals been made for students and staff needing intensive mental health services like psychiatric medication?

3. Has strategy team identified how referral mechanisms for students and staff needing care in the future will be implemented and tested?

4. Have identification programs like *Youth Mental Health First Aid [or some other similar program]* been implemented into the school system?

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Appendix C

Attorney General's School Safety Task Force Quick Reference Checklist for Schools

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

❑ Develop incident response team comprised of a variety of community stakeholders, including school members (e.g., administrators, teachers, school nurses, and counselors) and safety partners (e.g., local law enforcement, fire, EMS, and mental health partners).

    ❑ Determine each partner's role and responsibilities in an emergency.

    ❑ Determine how partners will communicate and report during an emergency.

    ❑ Coordinate communication with parents, media, and public during an emergency.

    ❑ Working with safety partners, develop school safety plan, and ensure everyone in school community has a good understanding of the plan. (School safety partners should sign the plan to show they have reviewed and participated in its development.)

    ❑ Develop Incident Action Plan (IAP), which provides key information and directions for handling emergency.

    ❑ Identify safe command post where school safety plan, floor plans, IAP, and other important documents, items, and information will be located.

❑ Timely file and update the school safety plan and floor plans with local law enforcement and fire department.

❑ Timely file and update school safety plan and school floor plans with the Ohio Attorney General's Office and/or upload them to the Ohio Law Enforcement Gateway (OHLEG).

❑ Conduct regular safety checks/audits with appropriate safety partners, including of buildings, school premises, school transportation, and policies and procedures (including school safety plan and IAP).

    ❑ Work with local building and fire officials to review and timely correct any deficiencies or instances of code noncompliance.

❑ Form threat assessment team and perform regular threat assessments with appropriate safety partners.

❏ Establish reliable communication system for reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior to be assessed and referred for assistance by appropriate school members, mental health professionals, and safety partners.

❏ Explore technology-assisted tip reporting options such as safety hotlines, text-a-tip programs, and smartphone apps.

❏ With safety partners, develop PSA campaigns to promote local participation in addressing school safety and mental health issues.

❏ Work with safety partners to communicate with parents about safety measures at school, and inform parents how the school and safety partners will communicate with them in event of emergency.

❏ Regularly review/share best practices through the Ohio Department of Homeland Security's Communication Information Management System.

❏ Gauge community perspectives on school safety concerns, resources, and solutions through survey or community meetings.

❏ Consider establishing a law enforcement educational presence (LEEP) program and/or arrange walkthroughs by local law enforcement at various times of day.

❏ Consult with legal counsel to discuss and incorporate solutions to questions or issues that may arise in the handling of a school-based emergency.

TRAINING

❏ Conduct regular live safety drills involving staff, students, safety partners, parents, and community.

❏ With safety partners, conduct regular tabletop exercises, including discussion of challenges and solutions to those challenges.

❏ Explore further options for training together with safety partners such as through the Ohio Attorney General/OPOTA Active Shooter training or De-Escalation of Mental Health Incident.

❏ Create and provide to school personnel a basic first aid trauma kit for use before the arrival of emergency first responders, and train school personnel on trauma first aid care.

❑ Train with safety partners on relevant privacy laws such as HIPAA (personal health information) and FERPA (education records), as well as the laws establishing the school's and law enforcement's responsibility and authority to act relating to a variety of school safety topics (e.g., discipline, weapons, threats, drugs, bullying, search and seizure, etc.)

❑ Ensure compliance with federal and state requirements, including NIMS training, to leverage ability to obtain money and other resources for school safety purposes.

MENTAL HEALTH

❑ With safety partners and local community partners, develop system of care, creating relationships and liaisons with public and private entities aimed at common goals of prevention, intervention, and care.

❑ Promote mental health awareness by developing relationships with health and mental health providers (including volunteer counselors for families who cannot afford counseling), clergy, grief counselors, and community leaders.

❑ Engage school community and safety partners in joint trainings and mental health seminars, including wellness programs such as Red Flags.

❑ Invite crisis-trained safety partners to speak with school community about mental health awareness issues, including local mental health resources.

❑ Incorporate mental health education for both students and staff into school wellness plans and into the school curriculum.

❑ Develop protocol for identifying and assisting students with mental health needs to receive appropriate care and/or succeed in school with appropriate accommodations.

  ❑ Ensure teachers are equipped to identify, refer, and accommodate students with possible mental illnesses.

  ❑ Incorporate resiliency and emotional intelligence skills into everyday curriculum.

❑ Work with safety partners to develop appropriate resources to meet the needs of a community during and after a traumatic event.

❑ Consider creating learning centers (i.e., schools with full-service health clinics, mental health counselors, tutoring programs, and after-school programs with services available to students and their families).

❑ Consider participation in the School Responder Program. It is one of the Models for Change supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, which provides research-based tools to make the juvenile justice system more effective.

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