# BEST PRACTICES FOR K-12 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

A Guide for K-12 Education Emergency Managers

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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# INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic landscape of K-12 education, ensuring the safety and well-being of students and staff is paramount. Newly hired or newly assigned K-12 emergency managers play a pivotal role in orchestrating comprehensive Emergency Management (EM) programs. This document explores the necessity of effective EM program development, implementation, and overall management by those tasked with EM responsibilities for K-12 schools or school districts. Adoption of these principles by publicly-funded charter school systems, individual private schools or other K-12 institutions is also encouraged, as threats and hazards faced by these organizations are not unique to K-12 public education settings.

Additionally, this guidance document is not intended to provide every level of detail necessary to implement an effective K-12 EM program. For example, most K-12 school systems (whether publicly or privately funded) operate with limited budgets and resources generally driven by average daily student enrollment figures. In these instances, the K-12 emergency manager may also serve as the school district superintendent, as a campus principal, or another role. By offering a view of the basic concepts, topics, and overall objectives typically addressed by EM practitioners at the city and county levels, anyone assigned the responsibility of K-12 EM duties will have an opportunity to individualize their K-12 EM program to the level of staffing, funding, and resources available.

For the purpose of this document, the term "K-12 emergency manager" can be equally applied to safety, security, and EM professionals with EM responsibilities in the K-12 setting, regardless of title (e.g., EM coordinator, director of safety, district safety and security manager, etc.)

The term "school/district" will refer to any campus, private school, charter school, and/or K-12 school district. When specifically noted, "school" refers to any school site or campus/building. When specifically noted, "district" refers to the central office or district office.

Unless otherwise noted, the term "administrator" refers to both school and district leadership, such as superintendents, assistant superintendents, directors, principals, assistant (vice) principals, etc.

## The Five Phases of EM in K-12 Settings

The five phases of EM - Preparedness, Prevention, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery - must be specifically tailored to the unique challenges, hazards, threats, and obstacles faced in the K-12 environment. This process begins with an evaluation of a school district for hazards using the lens of a risk summary or hazard assessment approach to inform overarching program administration, planning related to collaboration with internal and external stakeholders, the development of an Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP), and the need for continuous monitoring and refinement of program goals and objectives through a defined after-action methodology.

## Preparedness:

Preparedness in K-12 EM involves establishing the foundation for effective response and recovery. This includes creating threat and hazard summaries, drafting emergency plans, conducting drills, and providing training to staff and students. For example, routine emergency drills to test planning and readiness ensure that students and staff are well-versed in emergency procedures, fostering a culture of preparedness.

## Prevention:

Prevention focuses on reducing the likelihood of emergencies by identifying and addressing potential threats and hazards. For K-12 settings, this may involve implementing safety measures and policies. This may also include the application of a layered security approach, installation of security cameras, implementing access control measures, and conducting behavioral threat assessments that contribute to the prevention of incidents.

## Mitigation:

Mitigation aims to minimize the impact of emergencies that are unavoidable. In K-12 settings, this may involve structural enhancements, environmental modifications, and community engagement efforts. As an example, the retrofitting of buildings (or initial design standards) to withstand severe weather, earthquakes, and flooding or subsidence in hazard-prone areas can reduce potential impacts and therefore reduce risks to life safety.

## Response:

Response involves executing emergency plans when an incident occurs to ensure life safety, property preservation, and a rapid transition to incident recovery through measures directed toward incident stabilization. In K-12 settings, maintaining situational awareness, standardization of incident management processes, ensuring timely alerting and communication procedures, and coordination with internal and external stakeholders can make the difference. Effective response strategies are directly related to preparedness phase measures and the variability between capacity and capability.

## Recovery:

Recovery, both short term and long term, focuses on restoring the learning environment and supporting the well-being of students and staff following an emergency, and ensuring continuity of essential district business functions. This phase includes activation of continuity of operations plans, implementation of mental health counseling services, infrastructure repairs and restoration, and community rebuilding efforts.

# Presidential Policy Directive 8 (PPD-8)

The Presidential Policy Directive 8 (PPD-8) describes the Nation's approach to national preparedness. It is the catalyst for the National Preparedness System and National Preparedness Goal.

## The National Preparedness System (NPS)

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), "The National Preparedness System (NPS) is the mechanism the Nation uses to build, sustain, and deliver the core capabilities to meet the NPG and meet the goal of a secure and resilient Nation. The NPS helps define, the process communities can use to reach identified preparedness goals. The NPS includes a series of five national planning frameworks, one for each mission area."  K-12 emergency managers should be familiar with the basic premises of these frameworks.

## The National Preparedness Goal (NPG)

According to FEMA "The National Preparedness Goal (NPG) is the cornerstone for the implementation of PPD-8. The Nation's core capabilities are identified across five mission areas: Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery. The NPG identifies the desired achievements and the goals that have been set."

The goal is succinct:

*"A secure and resilient nation with the capabilities required across the whole community to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from the threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk."*

These risks include events such as natural disasters, disease pandemics, chemical spills and other man-made hazards, and terrorist and cyber-attacks.

# Five Mission Areas

The National Preparedness Goal describes five mission areas: prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery. K-12 emergency managers should have a general knowledge of the five mission areas as follows:

**Prevention:** Prevent, avoid, or stop an imminent, threatened, or actual act of terrorism.

**Protection:** Protect our citizens, residents, visitors, and assets against the greatest threats and hazards in a manner that allows our interests, aspirations, and way of life to thrive.

**Mitigation:** Reduce the loss of life and property by lessening the impact of future disasters.

**Response:** Respond quickly to save lives, protect property and the environment, and meet basic human needs in the aftermath of a catastrophic incident.

**Recovery:** Recover through a focus on the timely restoration, strengthening, and revitalization of infrastructure, housing, and a sustainable economy, as well as the health, social, cultural, historic, and environmental fabric of communities affected by a catastrophic incident.

## Core Capabilities

Under the five mission areas the National Preparedness Goal identifies 32 activities, called core capabilities, that address the greatest risks to the nation.

According to FEMA, "Each of these core capabilities is tied to a capability target. These targets recognize that everyone needs the flexibility to determine how they apply their resources, based on the threats that are most relevant to them and their communities."

Understanding and focusing on strengthening core capabilities will help K-12 EM concentrate planning, training, and drills/exercises to improve skill sets, acquire necessary equipment, and develop effective procedures/policies that are necessary to respond and recover from those emergencies the school/district is most likely to experience.

See *Resources and References Annex* for more information on core capabilities.

## Evaluating Hazards through Risk Assessment

A crucial component of K-12 EM is conducting a comprehensive risk assessment and a summary of existing district plans, if any. This involves identifying potential threats and hazards unique to the school/district geography, assessing likelihood and potential impact of threats and hazards, and developing strategies to prevent or mitigate risk. Hazards in K-12 settings may include natural disasters, technological incidents, human-caused events, and public health crises.

See *Resources and References Annex* for more information on conducting Risk Assessments.

## EM Program Administration

Effectively administering an EM program in a K-12 setting involves several key considerations, including:

- The establishment of clear policies and procedures to ensure a standardized approach to EM across all schools within a district or all classrooms within a school.
- Adequate resource allocation, including funding, personnel, and technology, to facilitate successful implementation of EM initiatives.
- Ongoing training and education for staff, students, parents and external stakeholders to enhance the overall preparedness of the school community.
- Establishing robust communication protocols designed to assist with timely and accurate information dissemination during emergencies, along with coordinated development of incident objectives by school/district leadership.
- Initial and continuing collaboration with internal and external stakeholders to ensure the viability of the K-12 EM program. This will entail collaboration between and among school/district administrators, teachers, support staff, and students. Partnerships with municipal emergency service agencies, city and county emergency managers, public health agencies, community organizations, and parents results in a comprehensive, inclusive approach to EM.

## IPP Development

Developing an IPP ensures ongoing preparedness and response capabilities and assists with capacity aspects. Frequent training sessions for staff, students, parents and external stakeholders on emergency procedures and protocols contribute to a culture of preparedness. Emergency drills and exercises, such as tabletop drills (discussion-based) or functional or full-scale simulations (operations-based), allows for the testing and refinement of emergency plans and procedures.

## Monitoring and Refinement:

Continuous monitoring and refinement are essential for maintaining the effectiveness of K-12 EM programs. Evaluating the outcomes of training, exercises and previous incidents through debriefings and after-action reports helps identify areas for improvement and informs future preparedness initiatives. The following measures can help inform EM program enhancements:

- Data Analysis: Analyzing data from incidents, drills, and exercises provides insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the EM program.
- Feedback Mechanisms: Establishing feedback mechanisms from staff, students, and stakeholders allows for continuous improvement based on real-world experiences.
- Adaptability: The EM program should be adaptable to evolving threats, changes in the school environment, and lessons learned from past incidents.

The role of K-12 emergency managers is pivotal in safeguarding the well-being of staff, students, parents, and external stakeholders. By prioritizing safety and preparedness, K-12 emergency managers contribute significantly to the overall resilience of the school community in the face of diverse hazards and threats.

# SUMMARY OF PRIORITIES

## District Evaluation and Overview Issues

Any school district's organizational structure is designed to ensure efficient response to day-to-day operational requirements, but not necessarily emergency operations. The key roles within the organizational structure do not always include a formalized EM Team or Emergency Operations Team, and in many cases standardized procedures have not been developed or trained to. At the campus level, where most K-12 emergencies begin, principals, other site administrators, and support staff play a crucial role in executing EM plans. The Incident Command System (ICS), as a primary component of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) called for under Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5), streamlines and standardizes the approach to incident management and overcomes the lack of resource coordination common when utilizing day-to-day organizational structures to manage complex incident operations.

Each school/district will feature unique hazards and risks common to the geography where the institution is situated. Completing a thorough hazard summary will allow for adequate planning toward the variety of risks the school/district might face. These hazards may include natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, and wildfires; human-caused events like intruders or violence; public health emergencies like pandemics or outbreaks; and technological hazards such as power outages, utility failures, or hazardous material releases. Plotting these risks and hazards, and then calculating the frequency and potential life safety impact of each, will inform emergency planning and allow for effective procedural development.

## Resources, Capacity, and Capability

Personnel resources form the backbone of each school/district's emergency response capability. This includes trained personnel at all levels equipped to ensure coordinated response and recovery operations, including appropriate management of supplies, equipment, and other resources to include facilities.

The availability of personnel resources directly influences capacity and capability in managing emergencies. Properly trained staff significantly enhances response capabilities and smooth the transition to short term and long-term recovery. However, capacity limitations in personnel and other resources negatively affect capabilities associated with the scale and speed of response. To mitigate the risk of personnel limitations, cross-training initiatives can be implemented to ensure a redundant, coordinated response and recovery operation.

## EM Program Launch and Administration

Launching a K-12 school/district EM program involves a systematic approach. It begins with the comprehensive risk assessment described above to identify potential hazards, followed by the creation and implementation of standardized, tailored emergency response plans. These plans are communicated to all stakeholders, and necessary training is provided to ensure readiness. Finally, once key personnel at the district and campus levels have received adequate training to established procedures, an exercise program can be developed to leverage no-fault settings to identify gaps and single point-of-failure interdependencies.

The ongoing administration of an EM program involves regular review and updates to emergency plans. These updates are based on insights gained from drills, real incidents, and changes in potential threats - as collected in debriefings and after-action reports. Additionally, a centralized repository should be implemented and maintained for storing emergency response documentation and contact information for key personnel.

## Personnel, Training, and Exercises

Training is a fundamental aspect of EM programs. Regular staff training sessions for school/district personnel ensures awareness and adherence to standardized emergency response protocols. Furthermore, both discussion-based and operations-based scenario exercises simulate real emergency situations, providing practical experience personnel assigned as key stakeholders.

In parallel, conducting regular emergency drills ensures the development of muscle memory and familiarity with potential outcomes and contingencies. The effectiveness of drills is evaluated through debriefings and after-action reports and debriefings as primary feedback mechanisms, enabling us to continuously improve our response strategies.

## Monitoring and Refining EM Program Priorities

Continuous monitoring and data collection will be crucial for evaluating the effectiveness of the EM program. This involves regular assessments and routine improvement planning based upon the most recent updates to legal mandates and best practices.

The refinement process of any EM program includes utilizing collected data and feedback in an objective manner. Lessons learned from real incidents are incorporated into the procedural revisions, ensuring overarching strategies within the program remain adaptive and responsive to evolving needs. Engaging internal and external stakeholders in this refinement process ensures alignment with the community's requirements and promotes inclusivity in our emergency preparedness efforts.

# PRIORITY #1
# DISTRICT EVALUATION AND OVERVIEW

## Priority in Detail

This priority entails the initial familiarization of your new district/jurisdiction such as meeting the essential departments that your role will communicate, collaborate, and coordinate with before, during, and after emergencies.

The focus of this first priority is to establish your operational foundation which includes departmental familiarization and the establishment of your district/jurisdiction's incident command structure.

## Recommendation 1.1: Familiarize with district personnel overseeing key essential functions.

These personnel oversee the departments within your school/district that are essential to day-to-day operations and should be included in all phases of EM operations: preparedness, prevention, mitigation, response, and recovery. Examples of these departments are the following, but not limited to:

- Facilities and maintenance.
- Life/safety systems.
- Communications and systems.
- Information technology.
- Transportation.
- Special needs.
- Food services.
- Health services.
- Before/after school programs.
- Athletics.
- Fiscal services.
- Student services.

## Recommendation 1.2: Establish Incident Command System (ICS) structure for emergencies/disaster response.

The ICS structure is crucial for managing emergencies, including those that may occur in a school/district setting. The ICS provides a standardized and flexible framework for organizing, managing, and coordinating emergency response efforts. Here are some key reasons why the ICS structure is important for school-based emergencies:

## Clear Chain of Command

ICS establishes a clear chain of command, which helps ensure that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. In a school/district emergency, having a structured hierarchy ensures that decisions are made efficiently and that everyone knows their specific roles.

## Coordination and Communication

ICS emphasizes effective communication and coordination among different response agencies and individuals. In a school/district setting, this is critical to ensure that information flows smoothly among staff, administrators, emergency responders, and other relevant parties.

## Scalability and Flexibility

ICS is scalable and can be adapted to emergencies of various sizes and complexities. Whether it is a minor incident or a major crisis, the ICS structure can be expanded or contracted to meet the needs of the situation. This adaptability is important in schools/districts, where emergencies can range from small incidents to larger-scale events.

## Resource Management

ICS provides a systematic approach to managing resources, including personnel, equipment, and supplies. In a school/district emergency, efficient resource management is essential to ensure that the right resources are deployed to the right place at the right time.

## Unified Command

ICS promotes the concept of a unified command, where multiple agencies work together under a single command structure. In school/district emergencies, this is crucial as it brings together school/district administrators, law enforcement, fire, emergency medical services, and other relevant entities to collaborate effectively.

## Training and Familiarity

Many emergency responders, including those in schools/districts, are trained in ICS principles. This common training fosters a level of familiarity and interoperability among different agencies and individuals involved in emergency response.

## Accountability and Documentation

ICS includes mechanisms for accountability and documentation. This is important for schools/districts to track decisions made, actions taken, and resources deployed during an emergency. It also aids in post-incident analysis and improvement of emergency response plans.

## Safety of Students and Staff

Ultimately, the primary goal of the ICS structure in school/district emergencies is to enhance the safety of students, staff, and others on the school premises. By providing a structured and organized approach to EM, ICS helps ensure a more effective and coordinated response.

When creating your school/district's ICS structure, consider the following:

- Assign roles.
- Request completion of recommended training (i.e., IS-100 and IS-700) by assigned positions.
- Schedule training.
- Implement standardization, scheduling, and monitoring of emergency drills.
- Develop tabletop exercise scenarios for district and campus administrators.

## Recommendation 1.3: Interaction with local emergency management and public safety stakeholders.

The collaboration between schools/districts and public safety/local EM is essential for creating a comprehensive and effective EM framework. This partnership enhances preparedness, response, and recovery efforts, ultimately contributing to the safety and resilience of the entire community.

When meeting and collaborating with local EM and public safety partners, consider the following:

- Schedule and allow public safety personnel to conduct safety/security/emergency prep walks at your facilities.
- Meet with hospital EM and discuss how communication will flow in the event of a small- and large-scale incident where students are transported.
- Attend local EM meetings (local emergency planning committees, disaster councils, etc.)
- Ask these personnel to serve on your emergency planning team.
- Ask these personnel to observe, serve as evaluators, or serve as role players in any school/district emergency drills and exercises.

# PRIORITY #2
# RESOURCES

## Personnel, Supplies, Equipment, and Facilities

Incident resources refer to the personnel, equipment, and facilities that are dedicated to managing and responding to incidents or emergencies. These resources are essential for ensuring an effective and coordinated response to various situations, such as natural disasters, accidents, or other emergencies. Incident resources can include emergency responders, firefighters, law enforcement, medical personnel, specialized equipment, communication tools, and any other assets needed to address and mitigate the impact of an incident.

## Personnel

The greatest resource, and one of the greatest liabilities for any K-12 emergency manager is the human resource. Building relationships while understanding the school/district culture, the political landscape, and the hidden rules of an organization is key in creating an effective EM program. All the equipment and supplies purchased by the school/district will be used ineffectively and inefficiently without a trained team of individuals who have an EM mindset.

Trained personnel provide the basis for any effective incident response. Within a K-12 school/district, personnel can be categorized as central office administrators and school administrators.

District administration personnel are assigned to those departments focused on specific disciplines that can be utilized to support campuses or district facilities before, during or after an emergency. District departments with critical functions during incident response operations typically include those departments centered upon security, EM, transportation, maintenance, special education, guidance and counseling, risk management, and other district operations functions. District administrators overseeing teaching and learning functions also provide unique deployable resource capabilities and serve to provide leadership input to school administrators overseeing emergency operations as the initial incident commander. The degree to which a school district utilizes these leadership personnel for emergency operations can be variable and is typically based upon district size, scope, and available funding.

School administrators are leadership positions which may include the principal, assistant (vice) principal, or designee who may be assigned to an emergency operations team.

Organizing these personnel into distinct teams at the school and district levels will allow each to provide oversight of non-personnel resources needed to achieve incident stabilization. For example, district administrators may be best organized into a district emergency operations team configuration, with the superintendent serving as the agency administrator responsible for overall direction taken by the team to support a school-based emergency.

School personnel should be organized into school emergency response teams focused on creating incident objectives designed to ensure life safety and property preservation at the incident scene as the incident progresses toward stabilization. The school emergency response team is led by the principal or designee but utilizing a deployable liaison from the district emergency operations team to serve as a conduit for incident information and requests for additional personnel, supplies, or equipment can be a best practice approach to the coordination of the response operation until incident stabilization can be achieved.

Other district office personnel, who serve in a deployable role but are not necessarily participating in an incident leadership role, can be organized into deployable strike teams by function or professional discipline.

## Supplies and Equipment

Supplies for emergency operations, training and exercise functions, like personnel resources, are variable based upon school/district funding. Well-resourced school/districts may have standardized alerting systems at each school, or may be able to create deployable radio go-kits for parent reunification operations and classroom traumatic bleeding injury response kits for each classroom. Other schools/districts may not have the maintenance and operations budget necessary for these solutions, but may have access to grant funding through state or federal entities. As hazards and risks vary for each school/district, this document is not able to anticipate the unique needs of each school/district EM program, but recommends any supplies and equipment purchases to be focused on the categories of emergency preparedness and/or communication and coordination functions.

## Recommendation 2.1: Introductory Meetings.

For District Personnel: Use the "30 in 3" rule to get to know key players in the school/district. Get 30 minutes within the first three weeks of starting at a school/district with each key player

- Key players may be the list from the departments included in Priority #1, Recommendation 1.1, but include others. During the meetings with the initial list, ask the employee if there are others in their department (or other departments) whom they would recommend.
- If possible, only schedule the meeting with the individual for 30 minutes, but do not put the meetings back-to-back. Leave a half-hour buffer in between meetings, in case a particular meeting goes long.
- Also initiate the "30 in 3" when a new player joins the school/district.

For School Personnel:  Work to meet with members of each school leadership position within the first 3 - 6 months depending on the size of the district. Set up a meeting with the administrator, if time allows, schedule a half-hour to one-hour meeting. Also ask if it is possible to get a tour of the school. This can be led by the principal, an office staff, or a custodian. The meeting and tour will allow you to identify needs at each site, as well as serve the purposes listed below.

These meetings will allow you to:

- Provide a resume, background, and objectives for at least three to six months. The individual may be able to provide you with information that will help you achieve your objectives or may provide insight into other priorities that need to be accomplished.

- Get to know the individual(s), identify some of their strengths and weaknesses. They may have skills that you need/want to know about. Although you may provide them with a copy of your resume and a short introduction, make the meeting more about them. Let them share their expertise and past EM training, ask them questions about what they do, and let them brag. Most likely if there are no other scheduling conflicts the meeting will go past the 30 minutes, especially if the person enjoys talking about what they do. Of course, always check with them on their time constraints and ask them if it is okay to extend the meeting.
- Assess the political and social landscape of the district. Assessing the political and social landscape of the district will help leverage assets to achieve your objectives. Understanding who holds authority and who is part of alliances that have been formed in the school/district, will help you better navigate potential pitfalls and leverage opportunities.
  - Pay attention to who "holds authority" in the organization. Holding authority does not necessarily mean the person holds a high rank in the organization but means that when they talk or make a decision, people listen and trust them.
  - Pay attention to connections others have in the school/district. If the individual name drops, make a mental note. Make mental notes of who eats lunch together, hangs out together after hours, etc.
- Use the opportunity to encourage training or involvement in teams. After you have allowed them to talk about themselves, you can end the meeting by stating that you think they would be a great asset to the mission and encourage them to take training that you have already prioritized for them or ask them to join a team.

Once you have met with these individuals, you will have a better idea of who you may want to serve on your multidisciplinary EM/safety and security team. Follow the recommendations listed in this paper for Priority 5, Recommendation #5.1.

## Recommendation 2.2: Conduct assessments to implement planning, training, and exercising/drilling.

It is imperative for K-12 emergency managers to understand the school/district's risks, capabilities and resources. Conducting assessments on each of these components will better help to plan and determine necessary training and develop drills and exercises that will test the school/district's ability to respond and recover from incidents.

## Risk Assessments

Conduct a risk assessment looking at threats, hazards, and vulnerabilities, including both climate/culture and places/environment at all facilities. Use a structured and best-practice risk assessment model, such as Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) to identify your threat, hazards, and vulnerabilities.

When looking at physical structures of facilities be sure to examine:

- Type of construction (susceptibility of damage due to earthquakes, tornados, bombs, etc.).
- Type of structure (modular building, high-rise/multi-story, etc.).
- Security Procedures.
- Visitor management.
- Lighting.
- Fencing.
- Barriers/bollards.
- Graffiti removal and vandalism repair.
- Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED).
- Classroom/grounds maintenance.
- Clean and safe restrooms.
- Storing and inventorying valuable property and emergency supplies.
- Door locked policy and adherence to the policy.

## School Site Specific Risk Assessments

While conducting risk assessments at schools be sure to examine the following data:

- Past incidents at or around the school (inclement weather, floods, dam inundation, tornados, etc.).
- Hazards around the campus, such as chemical plants, train tracks, gas/oil transmission lines, airports, flood zones, dam inundation zones, etc.
- Hazards on campus, such as chemicals, heavy objects, long unsupported roof spans, etc.
- Office referrals: How many? Times of day? From whom? Specific students/groups?
- Average Daily Attendance, truancy, teacher attendance, suspensions, expulsions.
- Law enforcement reports/law enforcement calls for service at site.
- Insurance claims.
- Child Protective Service reports.
- Surrounding community crime data.
- Parent/student surveys.

Also look at programs and procedures on campus that provide school safety/security, such as:

- Campus Community Emergency Response Team program
- Emergency drills and exercises.
- Student ambassador programs.
- After-school programs.
- Attendance improvement strategies.
- Character and citizen development.
- Counseling/mental health.
- Family involvement.
- Clear standards for behavior and consequences.
- Bullying prevention.

By examining this data, you can help schools identify some of their needs and areas for prioritization. For example, if a school has a high number of referrals for bullying, but has not established an evidenced-based program on bullying, this might be a goal for the next year. This may also speak to the type of culture that has been built at the school, where bullying is permitted and not addressed adequately through interventions or disciplinary actions.

# Resource Assessments

## Equipment and Supplies

As previously mentioned, resources for each K-12 school system are variable based upon the size of the school system, enrollment, funding sources and budgeting parameters. This section is intended to offer a high-level overview of resource categories, not a comprehensive list of resources that must be acquired at program onset.

- Inventory equipment and supplies on a regular basis, so you know what you have at your disposal should a disaster occur.
- Prioritize purchasing based on assessment.
- Based on your needs, verify if the district/school has equipment and supplies that will help with the following:
    - Sheltering.
    - Feeding.
    - Search and rescue.
    - Reunification.
    - First aid.
    - Keeping students occupied during an incident.
    - Sanitation.

## People - Learn about the employees

- Ask staff about any skills or experience they have that will be useful in different emergencies, for example:
    - Law enforcement/military.
    - Medical/first aid experience.
    - Mechanical/maintenance.
    - Wilderness survival.
    - Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training.
    - Structural engineering.
    - Mental health/counseling.

## Facilities

- What facilities do you have that can either be an asset or a hazard?
- How can you best utilize your facilities during a disaster?
- What facilities/rooms can be used to secure people/property?

## Plans

- What plans do you have for different types of emergencies and necessary responses?
- Have you drilled/exercised those plans?
- What plans do you need to develop to make your district safer and more prepared for an emergency?

## Capability Assessments

In the risk assessment process, you will identify the threats, hazards, and vulnerabilities the district needs to prioritize for planning. You will also need to identify what capabilities the district needs to respond and recover from these incidents. Conduct an assessment to determine how many of your staff can perform the necessary capabilities and if they have the required resources (supplies and equipment). Where you find gaps, next identify what needs to be done to improve the district's capabilities, such as training, drilling, and exercising or purchasing supplies/equipment.

Districts may want to examine the following types of capabilities:
- Evacuation (internal and external).
- Lockdown.
- Barricading.
- Shelter-in-place.
- Reunification.
- Mass care and shelter.
- Calling a lock-down from a classroom.
- Feeding.
- Communications.
- Retrieving and setting up emergency equipment.

FEMA Core Capabilities - https://www.fema.gov/core-capabilities

## Recommendation 2.3: Vendors and selecting resources.

### Vendors

Vendors can consume a large portion of your time. Both new and veteran K-12 emergency managers can spend countless hours listening to vendors promise solutions for every obstacle faced by the school/district. A piece of cautionary advice, especially for new emergency managers: Do not jump into vendor conversations until the school/district has conducted assessments and prioritized action steps for improvement.

A few recommendations in dealing with vendors:

- Do not prioritize communicating (answering emails, taking calls, etc.) with vendors until you need them.
- Be specific in your communication: "The school/district does not have the need for your product at this time, and will reach out if we do" or "Please send me a spec sheet on product X. I will review it and get back to you if I need anything further or if we choose to proceed with this project."
- Give them a timeline for anything that you want them to provide and hold them accountable.
- Be polite, but firm. You want them to feel like you appreciate them, without them consuming your time. You may need them in the future.

## Selecting Resources

It is critical for solutions to work during an emergency, and in EM the solutions are various and sundry, especially in the areas of technical and software driven platforms. Every vendor will promise their solution is the best and will work near flawlessly. It is incumbent on the school/district to ensure that the solution chosen is the best fit, within budget, and interoperable with other necessary functions already used by the organization.

Before purchasing any services, supplies, or equipment, discuss your needs with your purchasing/procurement department, risk management, and information technology (IT). The school/district, local government (city, county, parish) and/or state may have specific policies regarding purchases. There may also be bidding/purchasing processes that provide for discounted items or expedited purchases which can save time and funds.

Especially when selecting big ticket items (either in price or scope/influence for the school/district) gather a team of subject matter experts (purchasing/procurement, IT, risk management, practitioners of the product, etc.) and engage in a process such as the six-step decision making model presented by Dr. Thomas Harvey and Dr. Sharon Corkrum in The Practical Decision Maker:

- **Mind-set:** This initial step involves cultivating the right mental attitude for the whole team. It is about being open-minded, curious, and willing to explore alternatives. A positive mind-set encourages creativity, adaptability, and a solution-oriented approach. It is also about understanding the problem in the context of the organization. During the planning stages, one individual making a command decision (especially if it is a person of higher rank in the institution) may stifle discussion that can bring potential problems, safety, security, and interoperability issues to light for a specific solution.
- **Problem Definition:** Define the problem or challenge the school/district is trying to solve. It is crucial to articulate the issue clearly and comprehensively. Effective problem definition sets the stage for focused decision-making. The problem can be placed in a specific category such as a new venture, shortfall, improvement, or an opportunity and further defined from there.
- **Solution Criteria:** Establish the criteria that the solution must meet. These criteria act as benchmarks for evaluating potential options. Criteria may include feasibility, interoperability, cost-effectiveness, ethical considerations, and alignment with organizational goals. Criteria can be placed in a hierarchy of priority such as "needs, wants, nice to haves."

- **Possible Solutions:** Brainstorm and generate a range of potential solutions that meet the criteria. Creativity and diversity of thought are essential. Considering multiple avenues ensures that various angles and possibilities are explored. Invite vendors who have products/services that meet the designated criteria to present (10-45 minutes each) to the team. Provide the vendor with the team's criteria and ask them to address how they meet each in their presentation. Contact other school districts through IAEM K-12 Education Caucus to see if they have experience with the same vendors/products to help narrow down choices.
- **Solution Choices:** Evaluate the possible solutions against the established criteria. Weigh the pros and cons of each option. The goal is to identify the most promising solutions that align with objectives.
- **Implementation:** Implementation involves putting the chosen solution into action. It includes planning, resource allocation, and execution. Effective implementation requires clear communication, monitoring progress, and adapting as needed.

# PRIORITY #3
# EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM LAUNCH AND ADMINISTRATION

## Priority in Detail

Once you've properly assessed the current state of your emergency management (EM) program and met with the required school/district and jurisdiction personnel, it is essential to form your planning team to build out your district's emergency operations plan (EOP). When completed, the EOP will become the guiding document in the administration of your program.

It is important to remember that depending on how your school/district, local, regional and/or state EM program is structured, you may not need an EOP for each site, school or district office. In some states, it may be appropriate to have a district-based EOP as an overarching document, which includes the schools functioning as Incident Command Posts, while the district serves as the function of the Emergency Operations Center. In this case, you may have Emergency Response Plans, Security Plans, or Comprehensive School Safety Plans that are site specific and may include some of the components of the EOP. Understanding your inherited EM program structure or conducting assessments will better help you determine the types of plans you need and how to develop them.

Secondly, you will also need to have a firm understanding of your budget, specifically, your staffing and operational needs. For K-12 school/districts, this will depend greatly on the school/district's budget for your department, including any state/federal grants that will fund full-time equivalent (FTE) roles and your projects, either on a limited or recurring basis. Internal stakeholders that may serve as an extension of your team can include maintenance and operations, data and compliance, IT, student services, and other departments that you determine will have a significant role in the administration of your program. As far as operational needs, listing out key expenses (e.g., professional development, technology, equipment, etc.) will be beneficial as you create your first 90 days and so on.

This leads to the last recommendation: developing a system to monitor program implementation. Doing so will help you track your progress towards meeting various milestones as you launch your program and identify long-term initiatives to address in your first year and in subsequent years.

The following recommendations will help guide you in the development of your EOP, evaluate your needs to build out a short- and long-term staffing model, and outline how you can regularly assess the state of your program.

## Recommendation 3.1: Emergency Operations Plan Development.

The EOP can be broken down into three sections: the Basic Plan, Functional Annexes, and Hazard-Specific Annexes. There are a variety of resources that can be used as a template or guide for creating your plan. Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS), Texas School Safety Center, Ohio School Safety Center and many others have solid templates that can provide the basic content for you to build a comprehensive plan.

The Basic Plan section of your EOP allows you to introduce the purpose and scope of the plan, which is where you will restate your district's commitment to emergency preparedness, outline the district's hazard summary, identify key contacts and chain of command, describe the ICS roles and responsibilities, and narrate how the district will implement all four phases of EM in order to prepare faculty and students to respond effectively to emergency situations.

The Functional Annexes section highlights various functions such as student and family reunification, facility shut-down procedures, continuity of operations, and crisis communications. Each annex should clearly convey the purpose and scope, situations and assumptions, concept of operations, and roles and assignments. Once these details are included, the actions and elements that are unique to that function should be specified. Upon drafting each annex, the responsible departments should be consulted to provide input and feedback on the continued development and maintenance of their respective section and its components.

The Hazard-Specific Annexes will focus primarily on the hazards identified in your district hazard summary included in your Basic Plan section. For each hazard type, you will provide an overview of the hazard, purpose and scope, historical data of the hazard's local occurrences, key definitions, and response actions.

## Recommendation 3.2: Budget and Staffing.

In K-12 school districts, it is important to have a solid understanding of your budget to ensure that not only are you being a proper steward of district funds, but that you are also directing the use of those funds based on your short- and long-term priorities.

As highlighted in Priority 1, there are several resources that your department will need to consider allocating funds to in order to ensure you are able to meet your goals. This includes, but is not limited to, the following line items:

- General/miscellaneous supplies.
- Equipment (e.g., staff laptops/desktops).
- Software licenses (e.g., Adobe Pro, Zoom, web-based EM applications).
- Professional development.
- Travel, lodging, and subsistence.
- Contracted services.
- Staffing.
- Staff gifts/rewards.
- Miscellaneous expenses.

You should meet your direct supervisor to review existing program expenses and discuss future financial needs of your program. Your district's finance team can also serve as a dedicated resource for training on your district's chosen budget planning tool, as well as, providing you with historical spending information that will help you create a data-driven budget and spending plan. It is important to build a solid rapport with your finance department, specifically, the leaders of the procurement and grants teams, as they will be essential in helping identify state grants applicable to your program, as well as help you translate the guidelines, requirements, and time constraints, if any, of those grants. This is vital in ensuring that your program is not only compliant with state mandates, but that your district continues to receive grant funds that are critical for the long-term success of your program.

Expounding on the staffing line item, it is important to determine the current staffing model for your program. Depending on your district size and type (e.g., public school vs. charter school, etc.), your staffing model may look different due to your district's funding. Your school district may have the budget to fund one FTE role, which may be your director/manager role. Other districts may be better funded, allowing for the opportunity to slowly build out the department over time. Another element to consider is that your department may also be responsible for the administration of your district's behavioral threat assessment (BTA) program. In this case, you will want to evaluate the need for hiring individuals within that expertise area, as it is a different function than traditional EM but is inherently a preventative measure to identify and support students who pose a threat to a school.

An example staffing model, along with a brief high-level description of each role, is provided below as a framework to use when evaluating the staffing model for your department.

| Department | Designation | Number of Staff Required | People Manager | Number of Hours Required |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| EM / Safety and Security | Director of EM / Safety and Security | 1 | Yes | 40 |
| | EM Coordinator | 1 | Yes | 40 |
| | EM Specialist | 1-2 | No | 40 |
| | Systems Analyst | 1 | No | 40 |
| | BTA Administrator*** | 1-2 | No | 40 |

***Note: *pending which district department owns the BTA program*

- **Director of EM:** develops the vision for and provides strategic oversight of the district's EM program in an effort to promote a safe and secure environment for all students and staff. Manage and coach appropriate departmental staff, collaborate with cross-functional departmental teams, lead the district's safety and security committee, and liaise with various external stakeholders and board members toward meeting this goal.

- **EM Coordinator:** works closely with the Director of EM, responsible for creating and maintaining a safe and secure environment for students, staff, and visitors within the school premises and ensures the effective implementation of emergency preparedness policies, procedures, and programs.
- **EM Specialist:** under the direction of the Director of EM, coordinates emergency preparedness procedures to ensure that all district staff is trained and prepared to respond in case of an emergency.
- **Security Systems Analyst:** ensures the maintenance, support, and installation of all safety technology is completed on-time and in accordance with district specifications.
- **BTA Administrator:** supports the mentorship, counseling, and implementation of behavior intervention strategies to promote the overall well-being and growth of students.

It is important to establish metrics and strategic systems to measure progress, efficacy, and overall program success.

First, you will want to develop your 90-day plan that includes SMART goals. SMART is an acronym for **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound**. If it helps, give each 30-day period a theme, or focus, that you can center your goals around. Once you identify the theme for each 30-day period, you can develop SMART goals that will help you monitor your progress for that period.

For example, the theme for your first 30 days can be *"Observe and Learn"*. Now that you have a theme, you can list the SMART goals you want to achieve during that period. This can include, but is not limited to, the following:

## Goals:
- Conduct listening tours with school administrators and observe safety routines by Day 14 (for larger districts, adjust as needed) to obtain feedback on successes and concerns of the district's EM program.
- Evaluate and discuss findings of current safety and security performance metrics such as drill logs completed and security audit results with supervisor by Day 17.
- Meet with the district superintendent and key cross-functional leaders by Day 24 to align departmental and district priorities.
- Define key performance indicators and identify progress monitoring tools that will be used to drive program improvements and address deficiencies by Day 30.

## Key Metrics:
- Top three immediate priorities identified.
- 100% completion of listening tours and executive meetings completed.
- Roadmap draft for Day 91-180 submitted to supervisor for review.

Implementing these recommendations will go a long way toward launching and administering an effective K-12 EM program. Building relationships with your cross-functional leaders will help establish trust and encourage collaboration when you need support to move complex projects forward. Understanding your budget will help you properly fund short- and long-term priorities, including building out a sustainable staffing model to support these efforts. Creating an EOP based on state/federal best practices will give you a guide that will help you gauge the current state of your program and justify the work that needs to occur to enhance your district's program.

## Recommendation 3.3: State and local requirements.

While the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and FEMA tend to drive EM in the United States, state and local governments may also provide specific mandates for schools/districts. Mandates may dictate the types of plans, drills/exercises, policies, equipment/supplies, or programs used by K-12 education. It is critical that K-12 emergency managers are familiar with these mandates.

Some states have education-based departments/units that are specific to safety, security and EM. These departments can assist K-12 emergency managers in understanding any requirements pertinent to them. View state departments here.

In addition to reaching out to the state, emergency managers may want to reach out to local resources which can help with 1) understanding any local requirements and 2) networking. Consider the following resources:

- Local emergency planning committees.
- City and county/parish EM departments.
- DHS/Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) Protective Security Advisors (PSAs).
- Local Fusion Center.
- Local InfraGard Chapter.

# PRIORITY #4
# TRAINING AND EXERCISES

## Priority in Detail

Ensuring your district understands the ICS structure as well as an overall understanding of how EM plays a role in K-12 is essential. School-based personnel are often assigned ICS roles with little ICS training, background in EM, or time to complete classroom-based ICS training and participate in preparedness planning. However at least a basic knowledge in these areas will assist in supporting a successful response to any emergency on or off a school campus.

All district and school-based personnel should complete basic ICS training and role-specific training as well as participate in EOP or facility-specific plan development district, and community engagement meetings. Both the district-level personnel and school-based personnel should have training in ICS based on their position. Once position and training minimums have been established, ensure all assigned personnel have registered for a FEMA student identification number (SID). Many of the listed courses can be completed independently online through the FEMA Emergency Management Institute; a list of all independent study courses can be found at: FEMA Independent Study Courses.

## Recommendation 4.1: Incident Command System Training

| Course | Policy Group | Incident Managers | Command Staff | General Staff | Support Staff |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| IS-100.c | | X | X | X | X |
| IS-200.c | | X | X | | |
| IS-700.b | X | X | X | X | X |
| IS-800.c | | X | X | | |
| IS-362.a | | X | X | X | |
| IS-191 | | X | X | | |
| IS-2200 | | X | X | | |
| IS-908 | X | | | | |
| G-191 | | X | | | |
| G-300 | | X | X | | |
| G-400 | | X | X | | |
| G/V-402 | X | | | | |
| G/V-2300 | | X | | | |

*NIMS ICS Training Matrix
IS = Independent Study Online Course
G = Classroom Course
V = Online Course

## Potential Assignments

| District Leadership (Policy Group) | Command Staff | General Staff |
|---|---|---|
| • Board of Trustees<br>• Superintendent<br>• Associate Superintendents | • Assistant Superintendents<br>• District Directors<br>• Police Officers (Campus and Patrol) | • Athletics Staff and Coaches<br>• Campus Administrators<br>• Counselors<br>• Facility Emergency Coordinators<br>• Information Technology<br>• Maintenance<br>• Nurses/Health Services<br>• Psychologists<br>• Psychiatrists<br>• School Emergency Coordinators<br>• Teachers<br>• Transportation |
| **Incident Managers**<br>• PD Command Staff<br>• Emergency Management<br>  • Director<br>  • Coordinator<br>  • Specialists | **Support Staff**<br>• Bus Drivers<br>• Custodians<br>• Food Services<br>• Paraprofessionals<br>• Substitute Teachers<br>• Volunteers | |

## Course Descriptions:

ICS-100 Introduction to the Incident Command System: This independent study course introduces ICS and provides the foundation for higher level ICS training. It describes the history, features and principles, and organizational structure of the system. This course also explains the relationship between ICS and NIMS.

ICS-200 ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents: This independent study course is designed to enable personnel to operate efficiently during an incident or event within the ICS. ICS-200 provides training and resources for personnel who are likely to assume a supervisory position within the ICS.

IS-700 NIMS, an Introduction: This independent study course introduces the NIMS concept. NIMS provides a consistent nationwide template to enable all government, private-sector, and nongovernmental organizations to work together during domestic incidents.

IS-800 National Response Framework (NRF), an Introduction: The course introduces participants to the concepts and principles of the NRF.

IS-2200 Basic Emergency Operations Center Functions: The Basic Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Functions course is designed to introduce the role, design, and function of the EOC and the supportive relationship as a NIMS Command and Coordination component of the Multi-Agency Coordination System.

IS-362.a Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools: This course covers basic information about developing, implementing, and maintaining a school EOP. The goal of this course is to provide students with an understanding of the importance of schools having an EOP and basic information on how an EOP is developed, exercised, and maintained. The topics addressed in this course include:

- Understanding incident management.
- Forming the planning team.
- Understanding the situation.
- Developing a school EOP.
- Incorporating the ICS principles and roles in the school EOP.
- Training, exercising, and maintaining the school EOP.

IS-908 Emergency Management for Senior Officials: The purpose of this course is to introduce senior officials to the important role they play in EM. The responsibility for preparing for, responding to, and recovering from incidents, both natural and manmade, begins at the local level – with individuals and public officials in the county, city, or town affected by the incident. This course presents:

- Simple steps officials can take to become acquainted with their EM role, authorities, and team members.
- Video presentations sharing lessons learned from officials of the City of Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana.

## State and Local Mandates

It is critical for K-12 emergency managers to understand your state and local training mandates, in addition to those outlined by FEMA. Identify training specific to your role at the state and local level by:

- Visiting state and local EM department training websites.
- Network with state and local emergency managers.
- Attend local emergency planning committee meetings.

## Additional Training:

For the following courses, please contact your state Office of Emergency Management (OEM) for details on dates, location, and course delivery specifics. State or Regional students may require approval from the State Training Officer (STO) in order to be enrolled in these courses. If you are unsure of whether you need this approval please contact your STO.

Find the STO POC for your state

*G-300 Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents:* ICS-300 provides training and resources for personnel who require advanced knowledge and application of the ICS. This course expands upon information covered in the ICS-100 and ICS-200 courses.

*G-400 Advanced ICS:* This course provides training and resources for personnel who require advanced application of ICS. This course expands upon information covered in ICS-100 through ICS-300.

*G-191 Incident Command System/Emergency Operations Center Interface:* This course reviews ICS and EOC responsibilities and functions and depends heavily on exercises and group discussions to formulate the interface. The course provides an opportunity for participants to begin developing an interface between an Incident Management Team and EOC personnel.

*G-402: Incident Command System Overview for Senior Officials (Executives, Elected, & Appointed), ICS 402:* This course provides executives and senior officials (including elected officials, city/county managers, agency administrators, etc.) an orientation to the Incident Command System (ICS).

*G-2300 Intermediate Emergency Operations Center Functions:* This course is designed to:

- Examine the role, design, and function of the EOC and their supportive relationship as a NIMS Command and Coordination component of a Multi-Agency Coordination System.
- Provide training about staffing, organization, information, systems, communications, and equipment needs at the EOC, such as activating and deactivating, operations, as well as training and exercising.
- Focus on the role of an EOC as one of four NIMS Command and Coordination functional groups.

Administration oversight and engagement is required to ensure requirements are established and met. Engagement should focus on how knowledge retained can be incorporated into plan development and future use. A schedule should be established to include initial training completion, refreshers, and during changes in personnel. It should not be assumed that a transition of this "extra requirement" takes place at the individual level between an outgoing employee and new employee.

## Recommendation 4.2: Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP).

Upon completion of recommended training based on personnel roles, various exercises should be conducted. Using the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) doctrine allows for training to be flexible, scalable, and adaptable to any district.

| Exercise Type | | Description |
|---|---|---|
| **Discussion Based** | **Seminar** | Provides presentation of new or current plans, resources, strategies, concepts, procedures or tactics. |
| | **Seminar Workshop** | Achieves specific goal or builds upon a policy or guideline (e.g., exercise objectives, standards, policies, plans). |
| | **Tabletop Exercise (TTX)** | Validates plans and procedures and provides experience for participants by using a scenario to drive discussions. |
| | **Game** | Explores decision-making and examines consequences of those decisions. Infrequently used. |
| **Operations Based** | **Drill** | Focuses on a single operation or function of an agency or several agencies. Maximizes on-the-job training benefits. |
| | **Functional Exercise** | Evaluates plans, functions, capabilities, and staff of Incident Command, Unified Command, intelligence centers, or other multiagency coordination centers. (e.g., EOC, incident command posts, etc.). This type of exercise does NOT incorporate "boots-on-the-ground" activities. |
| | **Full Scale Exercise (FSE)** | Same as the functional exercise, but with actual deployment of field personnel; includes mobilization of operational and support resources, conduct of operations and integrated elements of exercise play. |

Exercise design is the process of designing, developing, conducting, evaluating, and reporting on a single exercise. Each exercise progresses through the five phases of the exercise cycle: Foundation, Design and Development, Conduct, Evaluation, and the After-Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP). Scenarios can be developed to look at vulnerabilities within the geographical area. This can include severe weather, hazardous materials, or active assailants. The development and facilitation of these exercises should be through the EM office but can also be contracted if desired. The table that follows provides an overview of the exercise cycle.

Through the use of HSEEP, your district can develop, execute, and evaluate exercises that address the readiness priorities to include: risk and capability assessments, findings, identified vulnerabilities from previous events, and external requirements. These priorities guide the overall exercise program and the design and development of each exercise.

These priorities guide the identification of exercise objectives and align them to capabilities for evaluation during the exercise. Exercise evaluations should document strengths, areas for improvement, capability performance, and corrective actions in an AAR/IP. Through improvement planning, districts should make corrective actions needed to improve plans, build and sustain capabilities, and maintain readiness.

| Exercise Cycle | |
|---|---|
| **Foundation (Phase 1)** | The exercise cycle starts with the foundation. In this phase, the exercise planning team is established and begins reviewing plans, post exercise assessments and lessons learned from past exercises or actual contingency operations. |
| **Design & Development (Phase 2)** | Next, the exercise planning team, including subject matter experts from participating entities, designs and develops the exercise. This phase is the largest part of the exercise cycle in terms of workload. |
| **Conduct (Phase 3)** | Plans, policies, doctrine, and capabilities are tested when the exercise is conducted. Participants improve their understanding of response/contingency plans, ICS and coordination mechanisms, partner capabilities, limitations, etc. |
| **Evaluation (Phase 4)** | After the exercise is conducted, observations captured during exercise play are developed into a written evaluation that identifies strengths and areas for improvement. |
| **After Action Report / Improvement Plan (Phase 5)** | The AAR/IP contains specific recommendations for improvement identified from the evaluation, player hotwash, and participant feedback forms. |

## Standard Response Protocols

As an extension of training and as a means of procedural improvement planning, campus emergency drills are a critical component to the development of response and recovery muscle memory among K-12 faculty and staff. The first step in this process is to implement standardized EM procedures that can be practiced ensuring alignment with state regulations. In the absence of state regulations or mandates regarding standardized K-12 response procedures, K-12 emergency managers are encouraged to adopt the Standard Response Protocol (SRP), an all-hazard approach to K-12 EM operations.

The SRP is based on the response to any given situation not on individual scenarios. Like the ICS, SRP demands a specific vocabulary but also allows for flexibility. District personnel assigned and trained in SRP functions will assume appropriate ICS-based command functions and remain in charge of the incident until it is resolved - or until a transfer of command is completed with arriving first responder personnel who have legal authority to assume command.

If adopted, the campus or facility administrator (i.e., initial campus Incident Commander) will be responsible for activating the campus emergency operations plan and initializing standardized response actions found within the SRP:

**SECURE** – The Secure directive occurs when an indirect hazard exists outside of the building. Secure utilizes the physical facility to act as protection. School business continues as usual inside the building during a Secure directive as soon as staff and students are brought in from outside and perimeter doors are secured. Visitors are not allowed to enter or exit the facility during Secure. Enhanced situational awareness is required once a Secure condition has been activated.

**LOCKDOWN** – The Lockdown directive occurs when there is a direct threat or hazard inside the building. Lockdown uses interior security features to protect staff and students. Individual classroom doors are secured, classroom occupants remain silent/out of sight and lights are turned off. Depending upon the nature and proximity of the threat, barricading of doors or self-evacuation may occur. NOTE: Students and staff who are outdoors at the onset of a Lockdown emergency will move to areas of safety in the surrounding neighborhood and then notify 9-1-1 of their student headcount and current location.

**EVACUATE** – The Evacuate directive occurs when students and staff must leave the building. Students and staff are calmly transitioned to predetermined evacuation assembly points. For hazards other than fire, the type of hazard and special instructions are announced.

**SHELTER** – The Shelter action occurs when the need for personal protection is necessary, to include spontaneous incidents such as a release of hazardous materials or sudden onset of severe weather. The types of Shelter actions will vary by hazard, and may include:

- Shelter for severe weather (transition to predesignated shelter areas).
- Shelter for hazardous materials release (close doors, request HVAC system shutoff, prepare for campus or neighborhood evacuation if directed to do so by the local fire department).

**HOLD** – The Hold directive is issued to quickly clear all hallways. Students and staff remain in their classroom or current area until cleared to resume normal operations. A Hold may be called during a medical emergency, an urgent maintenance issue or any situation requiring cleared hallways.

While several states mandate adoption of SRP and emergency drills to practice SRP protective measures, others do not. The choice to adopt SRP by K-12 emergency managers can be a meaningful step toward ensuring continuity of procedures and terminologies when faculty and staff turnover occurs.

Emergency drill type and frequency also varies by state. If your state's regulations regarding K-12 emergency drills are silent, or if state regulations are ambiguous, consider implementation of SRP and SRP-related emergency drills to allow for improved capacity and capability when responding to and recovering from a school-related emergency.

# PRIORITY #5
# MONITORING AND REFINING EM PROGRAM PRIORITIES

## Priority in Detail

Monitoring and refining a K-12 EM program is a critical ongoing process to ensure its effectiveness and adaptability. Regular evaluation allows educational institutions to identify areas for improvement, address evolving threats, and enhance overall preparedness.

## Recommendation 5.1: Multidisciplinary safety and security team and calendar quarterly meetings.

A district safety and security team provides central coordination of safety efforts and assists with drills and exercises, school safety and security audits, policy development, and training. The committee is made up of school district and community partners that collaboratively provide recommendations to the district's board of trustees and district administrators. The purpose of this committee is specifically related to ensuring the safety and well-being of the students and staff within the district. Each district has their own committee so that they can provide feedback specific to the needs of their district.
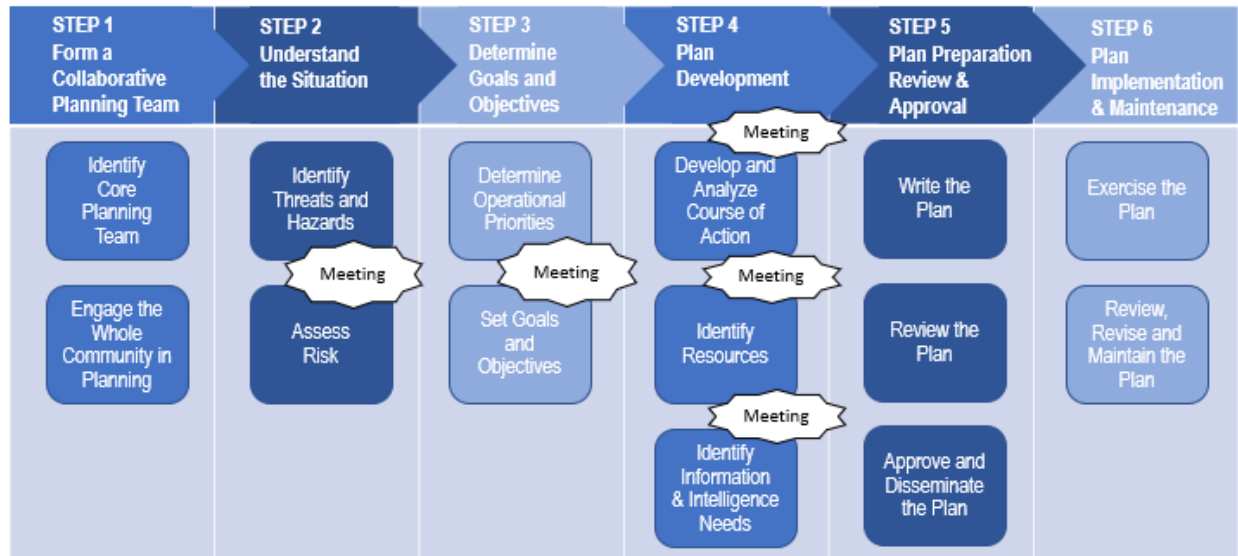
## Safety and Security Team Responsibilities (not limited to):

- Participate in the development and implementation of the district's emergency plans by ensuring they are consistent with the district's EOP and reflect the specific campus, facility, or support service needs that exist.
- Provide, periodically to the board of trustees and district administration, recommendations to update the district's EOP according to the identified best practices.

## Recommendation 5.2: Evaluate existing district multihazard Emergency Operations Plan.

Evaluating an existing multihazard emergency operations plan is a crucial process to ensure its effectiveness in responding to a variety of emergencies.

There are many ways to produce and evaluate an EOP. The planning process that follows is flexible and allows communities to adapt it to varying characteristics and situations. While not ideal, if time is a constraint, steps can be minimized or skipped to accelerate the process. Small communities can follow just the steps that are appropriate to their size, known risks, and available planning resources. The table that follows depicts steps in the planning process. At each step in the planning process, jurisdictions should consider the impact of the decisions made on training, exercises, equipment, and other requirements.

| STEP 1 Form a Collaborative Planning Team | STEP 2 Understand the Situation | STEP 3 Determine Goals and Objectives | STEP 4 Plan Development | STEP 5 Plan Preparation Review & Approval | STEP 6 Plan Implementation & Maintenance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Identify Core Planning Team | Identify Threats and Hazards | Determine Operational Priorities | Develop and Analyze Course of Action | Write the Plan | Exercise the Plan |
| Engage the Whole Community in Planning | Assess Risk | Set Goals and Objectives | Identify Resources | Review the Plan | Review, Revise and Maintain the Plan |
|  |  |  | Identify Information & Intelligence Needs | Approve and Disseminate the Plan |  |

U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency. Developing and Maintaining Emergency Operations Plans: Comprehensive Preparedness Guide 101, Version 2.0. Washington, DC: Author, November 2010. Available at http://www.fema.gov/pdf/about/divisions/npd/CPG_101_V2.pdf.

## Recommendation 5.3: Collaborate and coordinate with local K-12 emergency managers.

Organize regular meetings or workshops with surrounding K-12 emergency managers in your region to discuss common challenges, share best practices, and address any issues related to EM. This fosters a sense of community and mutual support.

# CONCLUSION

This document effectively outlines the critical components of a comprehensive EM program for K-12 settings. Utilizing the five-phase approach (preparedness, prevention, mitigation, response, and recovery) will provide a basis for a comprehensive understanding by audiences with no prior experience or background in EM. Tailoring the program to meet the specific needs of each school district will be critical and will allow for planning and training related to hazards and risks associated with the specific school district geography.

Here are some key takeaways and additional recommendations:

- Invest in a thorough risk assessment: This is the foundation for all emergency planning efforts and should be updated regularly to reflect changes in the school environment and emerging threats.
- Prioritize a culture of preparedness: Regular training, drills, and exercises are essential for preparing students, staff, and the entire school community to respond effectively in emergencies.
- Foster strong collaboration: Build meaningful partnerships with internal stakeholders (school personnel, parents) and external agencies (first responders, public health) to ensure coordinated response and recovery efforts.
- Embrace continuous improvement: Regularly evaluate, monitor, and refine the EM program based on data, feedback, and lessons learned from incidents and exercises.

By implementing these recommendations and adhering to the principles outlined in this document, K-12 emergency managers can significantly enhance the safety and well-being of their school communities. Remember, preparedness is key to mitigating the impact of emergencies and ensuring a swift and effective response.

# GETTING INVOLVED IN
# IAEM K-12 EDUCATION CAUCUS

All members of IAEM are eligible to be members of the K-12 Education Caucus. IAEM-USA members interested in participating in this caucus should email the caucus staff liaison and tell them how you can contribute to or learn from this committee's important work. See IAEM K-12 Education Caucus website for staff liaison contact information.

To be eligible to hold office in the caucus and participate in the selection process for caucus officers, you must be a member of the IAEM-USA Council and be an EM practitioner for a K-12 school district or equivalent. Email the committee leadership and explain what you can bring to the table or what knowledge you can acquire from this committee's important work. IAEM members may easily retrieve the committee leadership email addresses through the online membership directory.

# REFERENCES AND RESOURCES ANNEX

FEMA National Incident Management System (NIMS)

Mission Areas and Core Capabilities

State School Safety Centers (List provided by Kentucky Center for School Safety)

## National Frameworks

FEMA National Response Framework

FEMA National Recovery Framework

FEMA National Mitigation Framework

FEMA National Protection Framework

FEMA National Prevention Framework

FEMA National Preparedness Goal

## Emergency Assistance

Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief & Emergency Assistance Act (As amended), 42 U.S.C. 5121

## Federal Policy

Homeland Security Presidential Directive. HSPD-5, Management of Domestic Incidents

Homeland Security Presidential Policy Directive / PPD-8

## Non-Profit Resources

I Love U Guys Standard Response Protocol

# TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

FEMA's Emergency Management Institute

State Fusion Centers

InfraGard National and State InfraGard Chapters

Texas Children's Hospital Organizational Resilience Department

## National Domestic Preparedness Consortium Members

National Domestic Preparedness Consortium Website

Center for Domestic Preparedness (CDP)

National Nuclear Security Administration/CTOS-Center for Radiological/Nuclear Training (NNSA/CTOS)

National Center for Biomedical Research and Training, Louisiana State University (NCBRT)

National Disaster Preparedness Training Center, University of Hawaii (NDPTC)

The Energetic Materials Research and Testing Center, New Mexico Tech (EMRTC)

Security and Emergency Response Training Center (SERTC)

National Emergency Response and Recovery Training (NERRTC), Texas A&M Engineering Extension Services (TEEX)