School Site Assessments: Taking A Proactive Liability Management Approach

Intro Slide:

This presentation was utilized for the 2018 Georgia School Safety Conference held in Columbus, GA in late June. The opinions and information expressed by the presenter is not the gospel and participants should coordinate with their local first responders regarding the implementation of emergency planning initiatives and building adjustments relative to safety, security and emergency preparedness. All schools are unique and different and fine-tuning for available local funding, resources and personnel should be considered.

The presenter will discuss low-cost and limited time investments that can contribute to a better safety and security culture in a school facility.

Topics

- Review the importance of "all hazards" assessments
- Highlight school facilities data
- Discuss an ideal safe school
- Discuss CPTED and Broken Window Theory
- Review common problem areas identified by assessments
- Conduct a visual school site tour to highlight focus areas
- Highlight important resources

Topics Slide:

The main focus of the presentation is to discuss building enhancements and some policy changes that may contribute to an overall improved safety culture. This process does heavily depend on the support of leadership and the collaboration of local public safety and public health officials.

Topics include:

Review the importance of "all hazards" assessments

Highlight school facilities data

Discuss an ideal safe school

Discuss CPTED and Broken Window Theory

Review common problem areas identified by assessments

Conduct a visual school site tour to highlight focus areas

Highlight important resources

School Safety Components

- Policies (state/federal regulations, BOE policies, school policies)

- Procedures (emergency protocols, drills/exercises, physical plant)

- Programs (bullying prevention programs, peer mediation)

- Physical design (identification of inherent safety issues as well as physical access control)

- Partnerships (first responders, mental/public health, neighborhood)

- Training (lockdown, shelter-in-place, evacuation, etc.)

School Safety Components Slide:

A comprehensive review of every district and school's important safety components are necessary to fully invest the appropriate personnel and resources in an efficient manner. Although each of these bulleted points are very important, the focus of this presentation is on the physical design and environmental factors associated with a safe school. The presenter is very aware that budgets and time are limited, so many ideas and concepts identified in this presentation are presented with those factors in mind. Each school and school district are different and some concepts may or may not work well. Collaboration should always occur with local fire, law enforcement, emergency management, 911 center and public health.

"All-Hazards Approach"

Five Preparedness Missions

- Prevention
- Protection
- Mitigation
- Response
- Recovery

Before, During and After

GUIDE FOR DEVELOPING HIGH-QUALITY SCHOOL EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLANS

FEMA

READINESS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT FOR SCHOOLS
REMS
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

PREVENT
PROTECT
MITIGATE
RESPOND
RECOVER

"All-Hazards Approach" Slide:

The US Department of Education with other federal partners created guides for developing high quality EOPs for K-12 schools, higher education institutions and houses of worship. This guidance was released in 2013 under the "Now is the Time" initiative to reduce gun violence. More information may be found at www.rems.ed.gov. Be sure to notice the new "Protection" mission and the context of before, during and after each emergency.

Why Safe Schools Matter

- Unsafe facility conditions may lead to potential injury and illness of occupants and visitors.

- Negative perceptions of safety affect learning outcomes, behavior, achievement, and school climate.

- Unsafe aspects of facilities have a negative impact on students' health, sense of security, and cooperation.

- Safety issues could have negative legal and economic outcomes.

- Historically, site weaknesses have made it easier for violence to occur and harder to intervene quickly.

Why Safe Schools Matter Slide:

-Tripping hazards, mold in your building, unsafe design contributes to problems/issues (small hallway with a pinch point – more fights in this area)
-A safe school environment fosters better academic achievement – for some, the school may be their safe haven area, b/c home or the neighborhood is bad
-Could get sued for not being proactive or responsive to being safe or remedying identified problems and issues relative to safety
-If we have a poor visitor management policy or procedures, it is more likely that an intruder could get in the building
-This is not an exhaustive list.

Why Safe Schools Matter – Recent Data

- *Perceptions* of school safety may have a greater impact on student success than *actual* safety

- Bullying may be the most influential determinant of whether a student feels safe at school

- Third-graders who reported that they were frequently victimized scored lower in reading, mathematics, and science than their peers

- 91% of parents who homeschool cite a concern about the environment of the school as an important reason for homeschooling (25% parents-most important)

*Student perceptions of safety fact sheet – REMS Technical Assistance Center

Why Safe Schools Matter –Recent Data Slide:

-This information is from a recent publication from the US Dept. of Education's REMS TA Center on Student Perceptions of Safety Fact Sheet.
-Per this new data, perceptions of school safety may have a greater impact on student success than actual safety – doesn't matter if you school has no reported incidents of crime, etc. – if the students perceive it to be unsafe, then this may have a greater impact on their learning.
-Bullying is obviously a huge issue for schools, particularly in the middle school environment. According to recent studies, it may not surprise you that bullying may be the most important determinant of whether a student feels safe at school
-Further study results indicate that 3rd grade students who were frequently victimized scored lower than peers in several subjects (see slide for details)
-Home School Study – 91% of parents who homeschool cite a concern about the school environment relative to safety as a reason for homeschooling (25% indicate safety is the primary reason).

School Facilities Data

- Number of Schools in the U.S.

    - 98,271 – Public elementary and secondary schools (2013-2014)

    - 2,379 – Public schools serving 1,723,909 students (Georgia only)

    - 1,468 – Newly opened schools reported (nationwide)

    - 1,737 – Schools closed (nationwide)

Source: U.S. Department of Education – National Center for Education Statistics

School Facilities Data Slide:

What does this tell you? The majority of our nation's schools are not newly constructed. Most schools are older buildings. This presentation will focus on affordable modifications and policies schools can implement to improve the physical design of a building and better enhance school safety. As a result, we are likely thinking about cost effective approaches to remedy safety and security related issues, or possibly incorporating more safety and security items in renovation projects to our facilities. Additionally, some of the information mentioned could be included in possible future renovation projects as appropriate.

School Facilities Data Continued

Number of Schools with Portable (temporary) Buildings:

-31% of schools have portables (Nationwide 2012-2013)

-36% of schools in the Southeast have portables (2012-2013)

-51% in the West and only 11% in the Northeast

Age/Renovation of Existing School Buildings:

-In 2013, the average age of the main instructional building(s) was 44 years

-Schools reporting a major renovation since initial construction – 16 years

Source: U.S. Department of Education – National Center for Education Statistics

School Facilities Data (Continued) Slide:

Certainly portable buildings (learning cottages) pose challenges – most are not temporary buildings. They are typically positioned on campus for long periods.
Ask the group how many of their schools have portable buildings on their campus – what is most challenging? Please see the picture tour slide addressing mobile unit
Safety precautions included later in the presentation.

Also, as the slide indicates, most of our nation's school facilities are older facilities and have not seen a new renovation project in several years.

Discussion – Design an Ideal Safe School

What are the most important characteristics?

Money is no object.

Consider common problems as well as worst-case scenarios.

Discussion – Design an Ideal Safe School Slide:
Interactive Activity
Let's take a moment to discuss your ideal safe school. If money and politics were no object, what would you like to see?
What do you currently see in some of your facilities that you do not like and would like to change?
Think about things you have thought of in the past that you wish you had or was incorporated into your building features.
How do you propose to remediate issues?

Elements of Strong Safety-Related Design

Schools should be designed, built and remodeled to be:

- More effective learning environments

- More valued and perceived as relevant by the users and community

- Environments that foster positive culture and climate

- Easily monitored

- Easily secured

- Feel Safe

Elements of Strong Safety-Related Design Slide:

-Site design can make a huge difference in controlling who has access to a site, and the extent to which one can see what's going on inside and outside of the campus. It is also something tangible a school district can do to show it is addressing safety concerns.
• Most school buildings were not constructed with many current safety features. Most school officials can address many issues with either low-cost efforts and new policies (depending on the specifics of each issue). Example – some of our older schools had the school office in the central part of the building which creates challenges now for visitor management.
Of course, these items are high bar items, but we our districts have budget limitations, personnel limitations, space issues and other problems that we must be flexible and work around.

Architect's Point of View

Five key school safety components that architects keep in mind when designing a school:

- Location – Is the school in a safe place - traffic, crime and health hazards

- Access Control – Will it be easy to control access to the school and grounds?

- Supervision/Surveillance – Can staff easily observe both inside and outside?

- Americans with Disabilities Act standards – Accessibility

- Flow Control – Are doors/passageways of sufficient size to prevent crowding?

Architect's Point of View Slide:

These are basic components that architects who design school building usually address at the conceptual phase of building design.
- **Location**–Is the school located in a safe place in terms of traffic, crime, and health hazards?
- **Access control**–Will it be easy to control access to the school and school grounds?
- **Supervision and surveillance**–Can school staff readily observe what is happening both inside and outside the school?
- *Americans with Disabilities Act* **standards**–Are the school and school grounds accessible to disabled and special needs students?
- **Flow control**–Are doors and passageways in and around the school of sufficient size to prevent crowding and consequent misbehavior?

Other Safe Design Considerations

- Structural design for natural disasters
- Ingress/egress factors (entrances and exits)
- Protective gear and equipment
- Emergency response
- Safe rooms
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

Other Safe Design Considerations Slide:

-What do you always see in new schools? Glass, glass, and more glass. As you know, this will not provide sufficient barriers during an active shooter event. Even for a more likely Severe weather event, the presence of a lot of skylights and glass walls does not provide for much protection. However, we all know that natural light does provide for a better learning environment.

-How entrances and exits are designed are very important. Interior, security vestibules that guide visitors to the office instead of providing direct access to the interior of the school are recommended. Entrances and exits that can be easily monitored are ideal too. No loitering areas if you want people to move.

-Schools that provide easy access for our local first responders should be considered. Building labeling and interior wayfinding are important. Clear fire and emergency lanes, easy to locate fire hydrants and locked, but accessible utility areas are important.

-FEMA recommends safe rooms for schools that are in tornado prone areas. Some funding may be available in certain states.

-CPTED is an extremely important concept when considering a safe school (more on this in the next slides)

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

- Natural Surveillance – Visibility of others and visibility by others (See and Be Seen)
- Access Control – Known entrances/exits
- Territoriality – Shows ownership
- Maintenance – unmaintained areas may invite criminal behavior

CPTED Slide:

CPTED is a multi-disciplinary approach to deterring criminal behavior through environmental design. CPTED strategies rely upon the ability to influence offender decisions that precede criminal acts.

- Natural Surveillance – People are less like to be violent or take part in illegal activity (or school policy violations) if they know that they can be seen – keep areas well lit, increase presence in high traffic areas, and eliminate hiding places
- Access Control – Who gets in and who goes out – Guide people to areas that you want them to go to and areas where you don't. Well marked entrances and exits which guide visitors to the central office first.
- Territoriality – (Territorial Reinforcement) – This is my area and that is your area – Clearly define your school boundaries with fencing, landscaping and signs. Well marked areas direct the flow of traffic and discourage non-school related traffic from passing on school grounds (vehicular and pedestrian) – If everything is well-marked and clear boundaries are set then a person who is conducting illegal activity on school grounds will have no excuse (well, I did not see any signs or I did not know this was school property)

Proper Maintenance – fix broken buildings – Keep buildings properly maintained by quickly removing graffiti and trash, fix broken windows, and keep school hallways clear and clean landscaping. Signs of disorder attract disorderly behavior that may turn into violent acts. Sticky doors (picture on slide) need to be repaired quickly to prevent unauthorized access.

Broken Window Theory

- Trash not picked up
- Overgrown trees/bushes
- Broken windows/other items
- Graffiti present
- Careless attitude toward property may contribute to crime and disorder

Broken Window Theory Slide:

The broken window theory indicates that if areas, including school grounds, are left unattended with trash not picked up, grass not cut, graffiti present and with broken windows and other items that are not repaired that the community will not respect the area and crime will flourish. Because the community does not think that anyone cares about the unkempt area, there are more opportunities for vandalism, truancy and school (and criminal) violations to occur.
Asheville, NC school where students were loitering during the day, old desks, bushes were not trimmed, trash overflowing, grass not cut, no surveillance – cleaned up area and put in CCTV and eradicated the problem
-Skunk shot story about stairwell at gym not being used but kids loitering, doing other things – wild animal repellant by Australian company – horrible smell

Team Assessment Approach

- Site administrator(s)
- District representative
- Local fire department
- School resource officer
- Other law enforcement
- Crime prevention specialist
- Local Emergency manager
- State representative (GEMA, DOE)
- Parent representative
- 911 Center representative

Team Assessment Approach Slide:

Assessments should be mutually agreed upon by the principal, appropriate central administration officials and first responders before using in the schools.
• Extensive assessments win points for thoroughness, but if they are too cumbersome staff will be less likely to use them. Find the right balance.
•Don't approach with a "gotcha" mentality – not adversarial
• Involving the entire staff helps build capacity in the safety and security of the building. Institutionalize process. Teachers need to be aware of what hazards they should be monitoring and assist principals by providing immediate feedback and reporting unsafe conditions in their areas in the building. Simply put many sets of eyes are better than just one set of eyes.

Conduct Assessments on All Facilities

Schools/Instructional Campuses
Administration
Transportation
Warehouse
Maintenance
Stadiums
Natatorium/Aquatics Centers
Special Event Centers

*Ideally should conduct annually due to facility, personnel and threat/hazard changes

Conduct Assessments on All Facilities Slide:

Include all the district's buildings – transportation, warehouses, maintenance facilities, pools, athletic areas, etc.
In fact, a good resource for improving emergency plans and procedures for athletic facilities is NCS4 (see link on Resource slide).
All of the district's facilities should be reviewed b/c all employees should be considered and involved in creating the safety culture.
Mention school bus facility site survey form available

What Does a Complete Assessment Involve?

- Surveys of teachers, staff and students (culture/climate assessment)
- Interviews with office staff, nurse, counselor, SRO and a few teachers
- Intruder assessment (unscheduled but with appropriate notifications - optional)
- Entrance conference with assessment team
- Walk-through (during normal operations and students present)
- Document review (EOP, conduct code, climate surveys, etc.)
- After dark lighting review
- Written report – encapsulates positive points and recommendations

What Does a Complete Assessment Involve Slide:

Again, this presentation is mainly highlighting the site tour and assessment section of the entire assessment process. In order to do a comprehensive assessment for strategic planning consider surveys, review of emergency plans/procedures, and other items specifically mentioned on the slide and below.
-Culture and climate assessments are important to find out what your teachers, staff and students feel about safety, security and emergency preparedness. Themes may emerge where you may wish to invest more resources/equipment/supervision.
-Specific and targeted interviews will help fine tune issues as well as what the school does well.
-Intruder assessment (optional) – Some assessments involve sending a person to attempt to access the school without going through the proper procedures for checking in. This is completed to see where the "intruder" can gain access and how long it takes for a school staff member to question the "intruder." Personally, I am not an advocate for this type of penetration test as I feel that it creates a potential adversarial role between the school administrator and the assessment team. The news media has done this in the past in some cities.
-Initial entrance conference with the school assessment team and the site administrator to discuss roles, responsibilities, concerns, issues and the process.
-Walk-through – typically conducted in a team fashion utilizing a checklist or a specific note-taker. Texas School Safety Center has a good example.
-Review of current EOPs, past site assessments, culture and climate surveys, and specific

policies regarding safety, security and EP)

-A lighting survey should be conducted in the dark to see where lights are out or where additional lighting may be needed.

-Written report – positive points of what the school does well and recommendations for improvement (prioritized)

Initial Discussion with Assessment Team

- Not pass or fail

- Written report will be provided with prioritized items

- Utilize time to foster good working relationships between school and public safety officials

- Process will assist with overall emergency planning efforts

- Assessment may identify training, resource and equipment needs

- Create a culture of safety, security and emergency preparedness

- Find a balance on being thorough versus overwhelming site administrator

Initial Discussion with Assessment Team Slide:

Some site administrators may be nervous regarding this process b/c they are basically giving access to important information to "outsiders." Additionally, some things that are on paper as a procedure may not translate in to real life practice. It is a good idea to either make sure that what actually happens reflects policy/procedures or you need to revise your procedures.
I always like to make them feel at ease and let them know that this is a proactive process and not a punitive process so the fire marshal is not issuing citations, etc.
This is building relationships and creating more of a culture of emergency preparedness in the facility and among the staff

Initial Questions for Site Meeting

- What does your school do best regarding safety, security and emergency preparedness?

- What are the most pressing safety needs in your school?

- What safety-related topics are the most important for staff training/development?

- What are the biggest barriers to improving the safety culture in the school?

- Have you ever conducted a safety assessment before? Access to recommendations?

- Do you have any other comments regarding safety, security or emergency preparedness?

Initial Questions for Site Meeting Slide:

Sample questions for the site administrator during the initial interview session at a facility. Can be modified and this is not an exhaustive list.
Let the administrator brag on what he/she thinks the school does best for safety, security and emergency preparedness – don't let it all be negative. Here to help and to capture what you do well.
Provide them an open-ended question regarding what other comments do you have because they may have information that does not fit the other questions.
This is not pass or fail but merely an opportunity to highlight best practices and improve. Again, you may hear someone state that this is policy but we find it easier to…. Be sure to advise them if something were to happen and litigation was involved not having your actual procedures follow your policy could cause some very real problems.

Common Problems Identified by Assessments

- Too many entrances/exits that are not secured
- Hidden areas
- Poor indoor/outdoor lighting
- Broken or damaged doors/windows
- Emergency lighting not functional
- Trip hazards
- Inconsistent visitor management procedures
- Vehicular traffic patterns/inadequate signage

Common Problems Identified by Assessments Slide:

School must have multiple exterior exits based on fire codes, however all exterior doors should remain locked at all times with the exception of the main entrance, which is to be monitored by staff members in some form or fashion
• Some school designs have inadvertently created hidden areas, such as areas under stairwells and side hallway exits. These are usually low-traffic zones and do require special supervision—because these tend to be gathering areas for students who may not have the best behavioral intentions.
• Poor lighting diminishes the effectiveness of visible supervision.
• Broken doors or windows are both safety and security risks and should be repaired immediately—not to do so would increase the risk of liability.
• Covered classroom windows inhibits principals and first responders from assessing a possible emergency situation in a classroom.
• Emergency lighting can often present various issues, such as back-up batteries that have discharged etc. Monthly testing is necessary
• School equipped with emergency back-up generators need to be serviced on a regular basis and tested monthly.
•Everyone in the school should keep an eye out for burned-out exit lights and

report this problem immediately to the principal and the campus foreman.

• Be aware of stair treads that are broken or loose.

• Be aware of cracks or breaks in sidewalks.

• Look for unsafe traffic patterns in the morning arrival and afternoon dismissal of students. School bus loading should be separate from privately owned vehicular activity.

Unique Problems Identified by Assessments

- Many schools in the South utilize boilers or propane tanks for heating

- In many older schools, the Principal's office may not be located near the school's main entrance

- When some schools were built, there were no buildings around the campus; years later, major development has occurred increasing traffic

- Some schools are built on the same site (high, middle, elementary)

Unique Problems Identified by Assessments Slide:

Propane tanks may be older, leaking, vandalism, risk of explosion
Modern office designs situate the main office near the front entrance to steer visitors to pass through the front office
Initially, some buildings were constructed in sparsely populated areas that now may have seen major growth – unauthorized visitors, traffic and other concerns
Multiple schools on one site creates traffic issues and during a crisis typically puts all schools in crisis – may be more economical to purchase land and place all three there – traffic issues

Sample from 2014 Idaho Safety and Survey Report

- 71 of 74 Unauthorized entry was achieved through other doors-not main ent.

- Unauthorized entrance was achieved via multiple methods in about 85% (Averaged 9:43 minutes of unescorted, "roam" time)

- 28 Schools required wearing a picture ID for staff (less than 50% compliance by staff)

- 5 of 74 schools have some type of anonymous reporting system

- 30 schools have an AED on site, 7 of those have written policies, and 9 have documented training of staff. 14 of the 30 schools have a procedure to monitor expiration dates of AED equipment.

- Electrical panels were unlocked in the majority of schools and custodial closets were unlocked in 20 schools.

Sample from 2014 Idaho Safety and Security Report Slide:

I am including these statistics from an Idaho report for comparative purposes. Idaho has since created its own School Safety Center in 2016 as a result of some of this data.
The state of Idaho conducted 74 on site school assessments utilizing the Texas School Safety Center's assessment tool.
Some of the information on this slide was pulled from the summary of the site assessment results from the 2014 visits.
Review the data and think about how your school would perform if posed with a similar assessment and questions.
Many of our GA schools would likely produce somewhat similar results.

Signage and Territoriality

Signage and Territoriality Slide:

The next several slides will cover various focus areas outside and inside your school to consider during the site tour. Some pictures highlight good practices and others document poor safety and/or security practices.

Let's start our school tour as if we were driving on to school grounds. Do signs tell me where to go to access the main office? Can I easily locate visitor parking? Are unauthorized areas marked or indicated by signage?

Notice the marked crosswalk areas with good road signage. Also, the picture on the right provides a visitor with directional areas to highlight where certain areas the visitor might need to locate. The fence on the first picture also demonstrates where unauthorized areas are located but remains decorative too.

Visitor Parking/Reserved Parking Areas

Visitor Parking/Reserved Parking Areas Slide:

Are their sufficient visitor parking spaces that are in good sight line from the main office complex?

Administrators – Do you promise that you will not get mad at me?

Best spaces, probably should be marked for visitors instead of reserved for administration to allow for a better view from the office of a visitor's approach

Target identifiers – if I am mad at the Principal – I now know what his/her car looks like because the parking space is marked "Reserved for Principal or AP"

Advises if administrators or others are out of the building if I want to do something nefarious – well, the AP, Principal and Counselor are not here b/c their cars are not in their assigned spaces – but wait the Teacher of the Year is here

-May still have reserved spaces somewhere nearby; however, possibly they are marked with "Reserved 24/7" or number the spaces instead of using titles and positions.

Use of Bollards

Use of Bollards Slide:

-National Retail Association notes that there are on average 3 to 4 vehicle strikes to businesses and building in the U.S. per day.

-As a side note, there has been an increased use of vehicles to strike pedestrians in crowded areas overseas as a method of terrorism – more accidents in the U.S., not terrorism-related but should be noted

-Schools have many vehicles, buses and delivery vehicles coming and going throughout the day with a lot of pedestrian traffic mixed in.

-Consider areas on your campus (main entrance) or other areas where accidents could happen with vehicles and pedestrians. Parking areas that face the building/entrance or long drives that allow for more speed in a pedestrian focused area where someone could accidentally drive forward instead of reverse or have a medical condition should be assessed with public safety

-The state of Florida has made it mandatory to have bollards in front of all daycare facilities due to the fact their state had several accidental building strikes by vehicles. Also, Texas had an incident at a daycare involving a vehicle strike in late 2017.

School Entrance and Lobby Area

School Entrance and Lobby Area Slide:

What do you like about the entrance picture on the left?
 -CCTV in use
-Signage about CCTV
-Good building labeling and numbering
-Outdoor PA speaker
-Not a lot of signage blocking line of sight in doorway – could use a visitor report to office sign
-Exposed glass without wire mesh but may have some type of protective sheeting – optional based on level of threat
-door hinges on inside
-Knox box possibly on right for FD/PD access during off hours
-bushes trimmed and planters have low growing plants that do not interfere with sight line
-Neat and tidy – respect/clean

Picture on right-
 - Funnels visitors to the office area for visitor management
-CCTV present in corner
-Emergency lighting
-Slide window in office complex so can lock office door
-Object on the floor might be a door prop...not sure

Visitor Management

- Security Vestibule
- ID Check/Sign In
- Issued an ID Badge
- CCTV
- Clear Sight Lines
- Security Culture – all staff
- Signage

Visitor Management Slide:

Include cafeteria workers, maintenance, custodians, staff, office workers – make them a part of your plan – invisible people but a great force multiplier
Fake Coke guy in a school – had a uniform shirt and asked in the front office for a key and went around stealing change until someone caught him
Appropriate visitor management should incorporate a visitor being signed in by a staff member who checks a picture ID. The visitor is then given an
official lanyard (different color than school staff and breakaway capability) with a visitor badge with name/date/time,etc. The visitor then returns the
Lanyard and badge at the end of his/her visit and signs out. Good for tracking purposes if have an emergency evacuation.
-Automated visitor management systems are the best way to go and they typically scan databases for sex offenders and can add in local warrants, barring
Notices or individuals without custody of kids.

Administrative Area/Offices

Administrative Areas/Offices Slide:

In order to make sure that situations that could be confrontational are contained, it is a good idea to consider the following prevention measures in the office complex area.
Remove sharp and heavy objects
Meet in conference room
Don't box yourself in – have an escape route
Mirror behind desk may allow angry students, parents or staff to see how bad they look when they are angry and could cause them to calm down some
Soft music in background lowers bad tempers
NOAA weather radio
Camera system access
Back-up intercom system access
Fish tank or water feature for calming noise
Break-away lanyards
Locking computer at all times
Story – one office where I almost went to sleep

Hallways

Hallways Slide:

Bland hallway on the right (needs student artwork, school spirit – territoriality)
Utilize artwork, murals and other possible school mascot-related items for territoriality (CPTED concept) for school spirit/ownership
Directional signage is recommended (For example – cafeteria and an arrow or Rooms 100-130 with a directional arrow)
Visibility into the classroom – Not recommended to cover doors from a supervision standpoint
Clearance – 6-feet
Lock all electrical panels and other controls
Make sure that student artwork and other items do not present a fire hazard
Severe weather safety areas identified (may be best areas of refuge but away from end exterior doors – consult with local emergency manager)
No equipment storage in hallways
Remove teacher names and go with a numbering system where numbers are highly visible
Better numbering/highly visible system
Fire Exit signs need to functional
Emergency lighting needs to be tested and operational

Keep Unoccupied Areas Locked

- Labs
- Computer rooms
- Workrooms
- Conference areas
- Custodial Closets
- Auditoriums
- Storage areas
- Roof access

Keep Unoccupied Areas Locked:

Unoccupied labs, computer rooms, teacher workrooms, custodial closets, gyms, auditoriums, etc. should always be kept locked when not in use during the day.
This prevents theft, misuse of the area, truancy, and other criminal acts from occurring in these areas. It is simply a good prevention measure; however, it may
create an inconvenience for teachers and other staff who may have to carry a key to these areas.

Custodial and Storage Areas

Custodial and Storage Areas Slide:

Custodial and storage areas should always remain locked during the day.
What is being stored there? Sharp items, chemicals, fuel, potential weapons, etc.
Not a storage area
Be sure to keep doors unobstructed
Make sure that fire panels and other areas unobstructed
Watch for falling hazards and chemicals that should not be stored together

Secure Unused Lockers

Secure Unused Lockers Slide:

Often, some of our school lockers are left unassigned. These lockers should always be locked in some manner.
Unlocked lockers may be used by students as contraband storage areas or areas to store weapons.
Custodians generally don't clean them if they are not used.

Solution - Keep them on the unused locker (locked) until the locker is assigned or secure a bank of lockers

Teacher Work Areas/Break Rooms

Teacher Work Areas/Break Rooms Slide:

Teacher work areas and break rooms should remained locked at all times but available to teachers and staff via key usage.

There are often items such as birthday cake knives, chemicals, refrigerator, school directories, etc. that we may not want students to have access to.

May not want students to have a directory that may have cell or home numbers of teachers in it.

Also, some teachers may leave personal items in the workroom area that should not be accessible to students.

Ex-lax in the teacher's lunch in the refrigerator b/c the door was unlocked and the teacher had his lunch labeled.

Science Classrooms

Science Classrooms Slide:

Science labs and classrooms present many exposure points for problems and response issues. However, if a prevention stance is taken by school staff, many issues can be remedied before an emergency or issue emerges.

Examples include:

MSDS for chemicals and inventory

Disposal procedures

Identification of emergency shut-off for gas, etc.

Good emergency procedures and training

Locked and appropriate cabinets for chemicals

Proper labeling and storage

Lock classroom when not in use

Check eyewash and shower stations

Fire extinguisher and first aid kit accessibility – training on how to use these items

Cafeteria and Loading Dock Slide:

The assessment team should focus on reducing the ability for unauthorized personnel to enter the facility via the cafeteria loading dock door.

The picture on the left demonstrates a window in the door to see visitors/vendors/delivery personnel, access control, door buzzer, CCTV and a clean/orderly area.

The picture on the right shows knives in a school cafeteria kitchen that should be better secured and out of reach and sight of students.

Access control – one of the easiest and most utilized ways to get in a school is through the loading dock door

Secure all knives and sharp objects out of sight and behind locked doors (pic on the right) – Keep away and out of sight of students

CCTV should be positioned in the cafeteria feeding and line area (Ex.food fights, theft) and on the loading dock areas

Communication – should be able to hear all alarms and PA announcements despite the loud noise in a cafeteria

Emergency procedures – when does an emergency event typically occur – arrival, lunch and dismissal – inconvenient times

Peep holes in loading dock doors, scheduled deliveries, secure coolers so no one can get locked inside

Use this cafeteria workers as a force multiplier to look out for things – invisible people

Story about knives and getting the cafeteria workers to assist

Restrooms
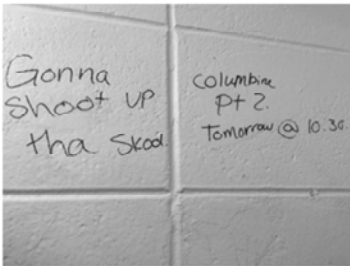
Restrooms Slide:

Bathrooms are often areas, if left unsupervised, where bullying, fights, drug use, etc. may occur.
Check paper towel holders (may have hand dryers) for temporary stashing of weapons and contraband
Storage under multiple trash can bags
Stashing in the ceiling
Unrepaired areas – broken window theory – be sure to remove graffiti quickly and to repair broken pipes and unclog toilets
Maze entry helps with supervision (auditory) from outside
Supervision issues
Locking issues
Graffiti and notes on the wall – often, bomb threats are written on bathroom walls – typically low level threats but good to discover them quickly – get all staff to report
Smoke detectors

Vocational Training Areas

Vocational Training Areas Slide:

Vocational Training Areas such as wood, metal, agriculture and automotive shops create challenges for emergency preparedness and safety.
Story of kid with a hall pass – pipe wrench – not a good idea
A few prevention items include:
Inventory and lock all tools on a regular basis
Clean and organize area frequently to prevent accidents
Be observant as to what students are making – dangerous items
Safely store scrap metals
Test and maintain safety equipment
Clean ventilation and dust collection equipment
Communication – if working and using equipment can all announcements be heard or is there a flashing light for PA
Identify safe sheltering and barricade options for emergencies

Non-Structural Mitigation

Non-Structural Mitigation Slide:

Non-structural mitigation is defined as any measure not involving physical construction that uses knowledge, practice or agreement to reduce risks and impacts, in particular through policies and laws, public awareness raising, training and education.
The picture on the left is an example of "This was my best bad idea."
Be careful stacking heavy items high in rooms. Likely, there is a better and safer arrangement for these computers and hard drives. Need racks for computer equipment. Fire issues?
Classrooms – in many situations teachers do not have enough storage areas and may store heavy items up high which could fall on students. The picture on the right depicts where heavier items are stored directly above where kids access their jackets and book bags. Heavier items should be stored in a closet or on the floor to prevent possible injuries.

Outdoor Lighting

Outdoor Lighting Slide:

If time is available a lighting survey at night should be conducted to identify areas which may need additional lighting, where LED lights might be better and to identify lights that are out. A procedure needs to be in place to report outages as well as to quickly replace/repair broken lights. Also, areas may be identified where trees and shrubs block out the light pattern and should be trimmed.
-Schools should number their light poles in order to provide personnel who report outages to provide a specific location/number on the pole. A good reporting procedure should be in place in the event that school staff, students and/or parents report an outage so that the outage is repaired quickly.

Propped Doors

Propped Doors Slide:

Create a culture of safety and security by eliminating all door props. This requires all staff in a school to participate and monitor.

Door propping by staff and students defeats entire security system and procedures where you attempt to funnel all visitors to the front door to be vetted.

Some door prop items can also be easily used as weapons, items of vandalism, etc.

Repair all "sticky" doors as soon as possible to better secure your school. "Sticky" doors are exterior doors that may be sticking or in need of repair and frequently do not close/secure properly.

Playground/Athletic Fields/Outdoor Areas Slide:

Playground safety inspections and certifications are available through various
organizations. Each school may wish to have a certified playground inspector
or have a contractor identified to perform inspections of all playground equipment.
A few recommendations are as follows:
Two-way communication – particularly for emergencies and as a back-up teachers can use
personal cell phones (office has list)-Substitutes too
Emergency procedures for a reverse evacuation or sheltering at another location not
inside the building, possibly off site
Ability to hear all call PA announcements
The picture on the right shows barriers that are intended to prevent vehicles from
accidentally entering the playground since the playground is adjacent to a roadway.
Access to nearby school exterior doors for quick entry
Weather safety and active monitoring by school staff and teachers who are located
outside.
Look for wild animals (coyotes, dogs, bears, etc.) Also, be aware of poisonous snakes, etc.
Maintain service/repair records of playground equipment
Evaluate the condition and measure the depth of protective surfacing materials
Appropriate signage should be available and in good condition – "Playground closed after
school hours"
Inspect all equipment for protrusions, entanglement and entrapment hazards
Inspect fences, etc.

Prevention – Conduct a Morning Sweep Slide:

It is a good prevention idea to assign a school staff member (and a back-up) with the responsibility to check around the school prior to the arrival of students each day.
This process may involve making sure that the playground is free of dangerous or adult items (beer bottles, needles, etc.). Also, it could involve checking for graffiti or broken Windows, downed limbs or trees and making sure things are reported quickly to make the area safe for student use. This an excellent proactive measure to implement to take care of problems before they become real issues or emergencies.

Building Exterior Signage Slide:

Exterior signage, labeling of buildings and mobile units really helps visitors and first responders locate areas faster.
Consult with your local public safety officials on specific numbering/labeling nomenclature and their preferences.
May assist with calls for service on alarm calls, etc.
Exterior room numbers provides law enforcement with a potential tactical advantage and helps with alarm calls for service, etc.

Trees and Shrubs Slide:

Remember we discussed CPTED techniques earlier in the presentation. These pictures demonstrate where appropriate CPTED techniques may be implemented to improve supervision.

Pic on left – detention pond is landscaped with trees and shrubs to hide it but does it create blind spots and areas where criminal/bad behavior may occur? Maybe not at an elementary school b/c a fence is behind the shrubs, but a high/middle school could be a different issue.

Untrimmed shrubs – hiding of contraband or an individual

Trees and bushes growing on a fence pulls the fence down and blocks supervision.

Check behind fences and shrub areas in your high school parking lots to see what students are discarding. You might find some interesting items.

Be sure that individuals do not have access to your rooftops and other areas via trees growing too close to your buildings.

Fulton county story about standing on HVAC units and using trees to access the roof and then access interior courtyard then stealing computer equip. and projectors

Utility Area Hazards

Utility Area Hazards Slide:

Most of our schools have some electrical boxes, gas/propane storage tanks, gas line shut-offs, and other critical utility tanks or areas that likely should be fenced off from students and staff. Also, roof access and hatches should be restricted and secured against access. It is important that these areas be known to school facilities/maintenance staff (with shut off procedures) as well as known to local first responders.

Mobile Units

Mobile Units Slide:

Mobile units or learning cottages often create safety challenges. Listed below are a few considerations that may help improve safety and security.

Pic on the left – eliminate door props and keep doors locked at all times.

Pic on the right – Do not park close to the unit for possible fire hazard, blocking of exits and every unit should be skirted to prevent hiding and storage of contraband.

Clear sight lines

Good labeling and numbering

Signage that indicates all visitors must report to the office

Skirting around the bottom

No parking too close

Parking and Traffic Patterns

Parking and Traffic Patterns Slide:

Hopefully, parking lot and through put is considered and discussed with public safety input in the pre-construction phase.
Work with law enforcement, traffic engineering, etc.
Pull more cars off the main road into your lots to prevent congestion
Separate buses and car pool drivers
No cars driving through the bus loading and unloading area or where any students are crossing in large numbers
Utilize good signage and curb markings
No parking near exits or too close to the building (see left photo)
Create maps and handouts to distribute at the beginning of the year and if anything changes (email and physically handout)

Barricade Devices – Active Threat Situations

Barricade Devices – Active Threat Situations Slide:

Despite what you may hear in the news and from "experts" lockdown is still the recommended practice for events that warrant this action (intruder, large fight, problem outside or active shooter, etc.). There are many devices that have entered the market lately, some developed by school and/or SROs, to help quickly secure a door to prevent the entry of a potential threat.

Please discuss your local vulnerability assessment with you fire, police, EMA, EMS and others prior to purchasing these types of barricade devices. Do your research and make sure that you are spending your district's money wisely for a situation that is very rare. You may be wasting your money when you consider how unlikely an active shooter situation is in the total scheme of things. **Also, most of these devices are in conflict with life safety and fire codes, may endanger students by preventing escape and stop law enforcement officers from entering the classroom. Some of these devices could be used against the teacher to lock them out too (a more likely scenario in many schools).** See a recent Campus Safety Magazine article in March 2018 that discusses this issue.

Other considerations:

Consult fire marshal as these devices are typically in conflict with fire codes pertaining to egress

Is the expense justifiable for the amount of times that you will deploy the device

How often will you train on the device – will substitutes even know how to use it

What will need to be replaced, upgraded or future costs

Who can install – can it be used to lock the teacher or others out

Pic on right – active crisis tool or anchor - $175 x 50 classrooms – nearly $9,000
The Sleeve - $65
Bearricade – $59
Ulockit - $65
Barracuda - $99
Barricade Box - $49
Bolo Stick - $59
123 Lockdown Latch $
JustinKase -

Options-Based Training and Improvised Barricades

- Run/Hide/Fight
- Avoid/Deny/Defend
- ALICE
- Flee/Fortify/Fight
- Check with local LEA and be consistent

*Lockdown is still a good response but have other options for hallways, cafeteria, gym, outside, etc.

Options Based-Training and Improvised Barricades:

-Options based responses to an active threat are more common responses for the school community. Unless you are in the hallway, cafeteria, in a restroom/other area outside classroom, or outside
Initiating a lockdown and sheltering behind a locked or barricaded classroom door is still the best response. If you are in one of the other areas, running away from the threat may be your best option or barricading in a nearby room. Fighting is only a prescribed option for teachers and administrators in schools (not intended for students) as a last resort per DHS/US Dept of Ed. Exiting out a classroom window/secondary door if the shooter is attempting to enter the classroom is another option, as the situation warrants. Every situation is different.
-There are several options based training programs. Likely, the DHS Run/Hide/Fight is the most popular as demonstrated by noticing the amount of views for their training video. Work with your local law enforcement agency and other district schools to be consistent in whatever program you embrace.
-some of the items shown in the pictures above are improvised barricade devices only used during an actual active threat event. These pictures are shown to demonstrate options some schools have employed using improvised barricade items. The presenter does not endorse any particular method other than doing what works best in your environment with available resources and based on your emergency situation.

Do Your Teachers and Staff Wear IDs?

- More professional

- Easy to I.D. school staff for visitors and first responders

- Helps with vetting process – if not wearing a staff I.D.

- Train teachers, staff and students to all be a part of the vetting process and report

Do Your Teachers and Staff Wear IDs Slide:

Picture identification cards may be combined with access control features for other uses. It is always a good idea to require all staff to wear their picture IDs on a break-away lanyard, possibly with school colors, etc. This helps first responders identify school staff more easily during emergency situations, it helps staff to look more professional, and it aids in identifying individuals who have not checked in at the office (not wearing an ID or visitor badge). Many schools have IDs but are not consistent in enforcing the staff to wear them.

Emergency Equipment Checks Slide:

There are a lot of emergency and safety-related equipment to check and maintain in each school. School staff should be assigned to monitor, check, inventory and update all equipment.
Show Bleed kit sample for AED cabinets – UGA implemented bleeding control kits in all AED cabinets in August 2016.
Emergency kits – updated, inventoried?
Fire extinguishers – checked and serviced
Bleeding control kits – In support of the national Stop the Bleed initiative, some schools are obtaining kits for life threatening bleeding that contain tourniquets, emergency trauma dressings, gauze, trauma shears and other items.
Emergency evacuation chairs – checked, trained, practiced
Carbon monoxide detectors
School radios – tested in all areas, batteries checked or replaced for memory issues
First aid kits – expired items checked and restocked
AEDs – need medical oversight and need to check/replace batteries and pads, and have trained personnel
Check and make sure that you have trained personnel – CPR/AED - certifications do expire, so make sure that an adequate number recertify
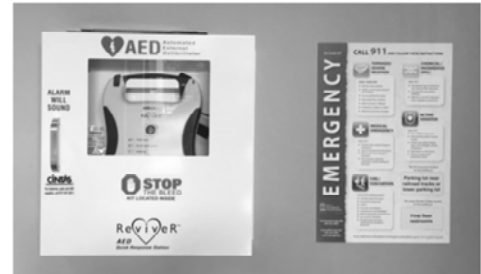NOAA Weather radio – make sure that you are receiving the weekly tests/alerts – battery back-up
Check school PA systems in August prior to starting school – if you have a construction

project in the summer – often, lines may be cut that may cause some areas not to work.

AEDs and Bleeding Control Kits Slide:

-The School Response Program – A Stop the Bleed Initiative is designed to enable school teachers, nurses, and staff how to render immediate, potentially life-saving medical aid to injured students or co-workers while awaiting the arrival of professional responders.

-A grant awarded to the Georgia Trauma Foundation has made it possible to provide 12 bleeding control kits to each public school in the state of Georgia. Each kit contains 2 pair of gloves, 1 CAT Tourniquet, 2 Compressed Gauze, 1 Emergency Trauma Dressing, pair of trauma shears, roll of tape and a trauma pad. The goal is to train 10 school staff members per school upon installation of the kits in each school.

-Many bleeding control kits are being co-located either inside or adjacent to existing AEDs in schools. Remember, AED pads expire every two years and must be replaced. AED unit batteries generally last 4 to 5 years before replacement is needed. Keeping a small paper record inside the cabinet may be advisable for continuity purposes to allow others who assume the replacement responsibility to know when the last pads/batteries were replaced and when the next scheduled replacement is due.

-Remind all school staff where the locations of medical equipment is within the building, particularly if any of the equipment is mobile.

-Bleeding control kits could be placed in the Nurses office, the front office, AED cabinets, gym, shop class, etc. Practice tourniquets (blue in color) should be purchased in order for trained staff to stay in practice with the use of tourniquets.

-9-year old saved in Forsyth County by a recently trained nurse in bleeding control

techniques after she had a compound arm fracture with an arterial bleed, resulting from a fall from the playground equipment.

Individuals with Special Needs/Mobility Issues

Individuals with Special Needs/Mobility Issues Slide:

Assisting individuals with disabilities, mobility issues and functional needs is important during an emergency. What is more important is preparing staff and the individuals prior to an emergency for these types of situations. Coordination with the local fire department is a must.

Areas of refuge identified– Fire dept. coordinated

Rooms on the ground floor or first floor would be the most ideal in multi-story buildings. Or, are evacuation chairs available with assistants to help

Test equipment and procedures?

Stair lifts – do they work, do you test them, will students use them?

Buses ready to assist with evacuations

Special in-room evacuation or SIP kits with things that teachers and students may need if the evacuate to another location or if they have to shelter in a room for an extended period of time

School Resource Officer

- Roles/responsibilities clearly defined and agreed upon
- Office location
- Training
- Communication (internal/external)
- Social media assistance
- Part of threat assessment team
- Substitution plan
- Integrate into school family

School Resource Officer Slide:

Does the school have a School Resource Officer or share one between schools.
In setting up your SRO program, be sure to have some type of MOU and make sure that all roles, responsibilities and expectations are clearly defined.
The officer should have an office in the school in an area where he/she can quickly access all points in a school for a response.
The officer should be allowed to attend professional conferences and other training to stay current on best practices.
The officer should have instant communication with school officials (school radio) but yet still have communication with dispatch too.
Will the officer be assisting the school with social media monitoring? How does a response work?
Will the officer be a part of the threat assessment team? They should be in most circumstances.
Can the officer conduct some type of law-related education or other class to be more integrated in to the school environment?
The officer should be involved in faculty and staff meetings.

Drills and Exercises Slide:

Georgia has certain drill requirements for conducting and reporting fire drills, severe weather sheltering drills and lockdown drills.

Students and staff may become accustomed to the same type of drills, so consider varying the drills and making them more realistic (but safe too).

Other considerations include:

Evaluated by public safety?

Realistic?

Unannounced – advise at beginning of the year and then always announce at the start as "This is only a drill" – send letter home to parents after
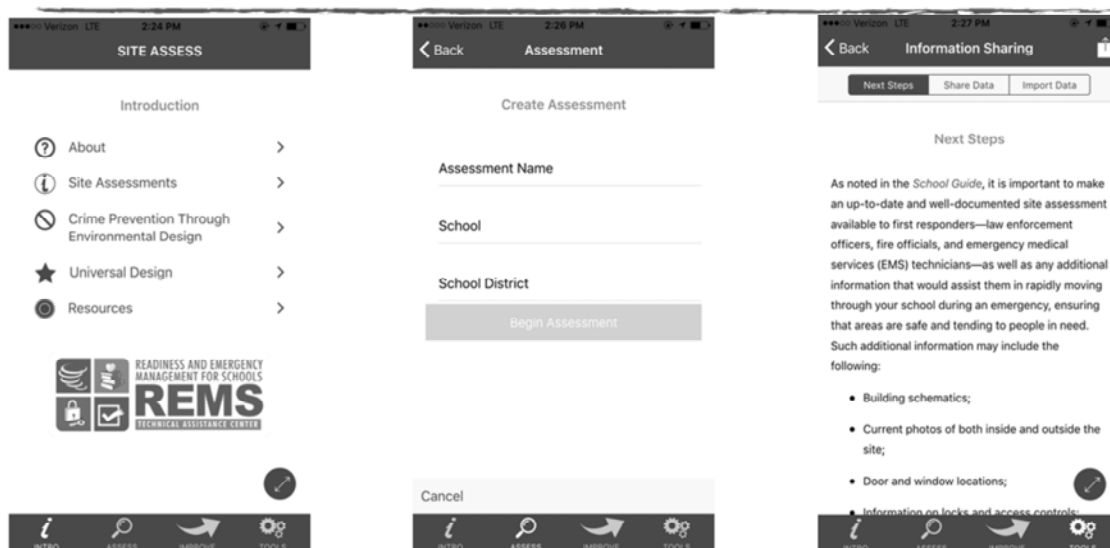
Always have an after action process to improve after each drill

Examples – Shelter in place, severe weather sheltering, lockdown, evacuation, etc. – Adhere to Georgia's law

Vary drills – block exits, ask teachers to initiate drills – what they would do

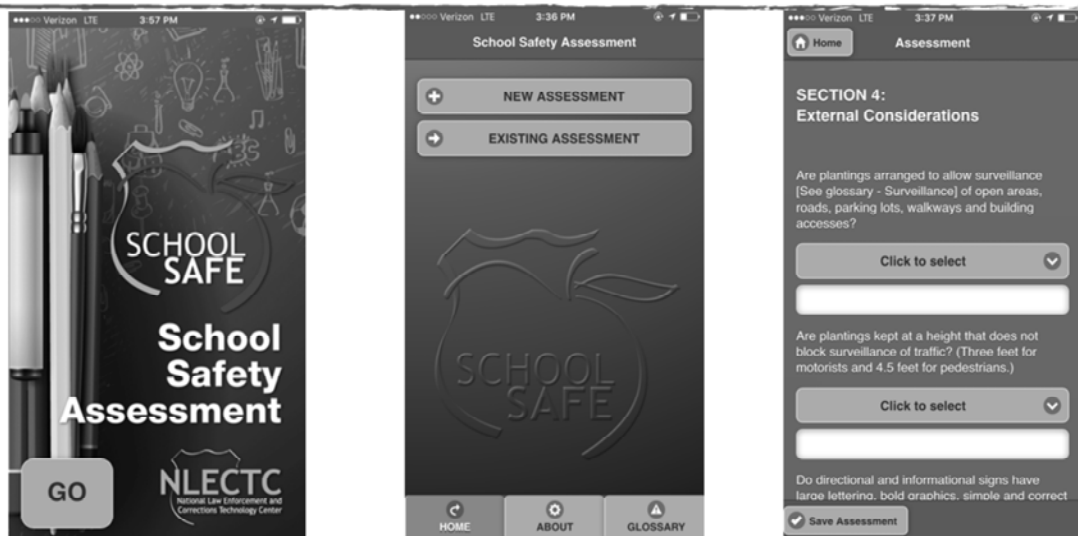Free Security/Safety Assessment App for Schools
https://rems.ed.gov/SITEASSESS.aspx

Free Security/Safety Assessment App for Schools – U.S. Department of Education's REMS TA Center
https://rems.ed.gov/SITEASSESS.aspx

-This is a free app provided by the US Department of Education's Readiness in Emergency Management in Schools Technical Assistance Center (REMS TA Center). This tool allows school and school district personnel to walk around a school building and grounds and examine their safety, security, accessibility, and emergency preparedness. SITE ASSESS generates a customized to-do list that may be used in the short term and long term to address facility improvements, prompts teams to share pertinent information with first responders, and contains relevant resources on several education facility and safety topics (as taken from the REMS TA Center website).

Free Security/Safety Assessment App for Schools

Log on to - https://www.justnet.org/SchoolSafe/index.html

Free Security/Safety Assessment App for Schools

NIJ offers a free school safety assessment app that you can request by providing your school or agency (LEOs) email. Use the web address on the slide to request the app from the National Institute of Justice. It is free to SROs and school administrators, but you must follow the instructions to request the app found on the web page.

Resources/Training Opportunities

- Guide for Developing High-Quality Emergency Operations Plans – http://rems.ed.gov/

- National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities – www.ncef.org/

- American Clearinghouse on Educational Facilities – www.acefacilities.org

- Georgia Department of Education - www.gadoe.org/

- Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency – www.gema.ga.gov/

- National Center for Spectator Sports Safety and Security (NCS4) – Best Practices Guides – www.ncs4.com

- NIJ Justice Technology Information Center – www.schoolsafetyinfo.org

Resources/Training Opportunities Slide:

A few resources are listed on this slide that may be helpful. Remember, Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency School Safety Coordinators can assist with site assessments.

Don't Reinvent the Wheel...

- All hazards approach – not just active threat
- Culture of safety and security with trusted adults and good supervision
- Training in emergency procedures for all staff
- Threat assessment team with protocols
- Single point of entry
- Classroom doors that can be locked

Don't Reinvent the Wheel Slide:

In 2018, the U.S. has experienced several school shootings with multiple deaths and injuries. Although these events are very tragic and cause fear among many school communities, it is a good idea to assess what you currently have in place and are you truly doing the basic things to maintain safety and security. Prior to spending lots of money on more cameras, small baseball bats in each classroom (PA), bullet resistant small whiteboards ($300 each), bullet resistant glass and other security items, please be sure you are doing the basic safety, security and emergency preparedness items included on this slide first. If you are not, you may be well-advised to focus on these items prior to initiating safety enhancements.

-nothing is 100% foolproof when it comes to prevention. Remember, mass shootings in schools are rare events. There were nearly 100 tornadoes in GA in 2017 and GA typically averages 25 or so a year.
-Think about all hazards that could impact your school, not just an active shooter. Active shooter events are rare events but they are high impact. Medical emergencies, small fires, evacuations, power outages and other emergency events are much more likely to occur. Appropriate planning, training and exercises should occur.
-A culture of safety and security for the entire school is extremely important. For example, if propped doors are a common occurrence; however, if students and school employees educate one another as to why door propping is a safety issue and continue to work to prevent it from happening, then a good safety culture is evident. Cameras and other

bought devices are great; however, they cannot beat human intervention with good supervision in all areas of the school and good relationships with students who will then be more apt to report suspicious or threatening behavior to adults.

-Training on emergency procedures should occur frequently, particularly for new staff and substitutes. Be sure to include all staff such as cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, paraprofessionals, etc.

-All schools should have a threat assessment team with established protocols. Typically, this is a multi-disciplinary team (administrator, counselor, mental health professional, SRO/other law enforcement member, etc.) who assess reported threats and behaviors to find the best resources for a student.

-A single point of entry in to the school should always be the situation. Multiple entry points without some sort of access control creates difficulty in monitoring and knowing who is entering your building.

-All classroom doors should be able to be locked in the event of a lockdown. Many schools are encouraging teachers to keep their classrooms locked during the day while they are teaching. While this may be inconvenient for late students or bathroom breaks, it does provide for better security. Barricade devices are often against fire codes and consultation should occur with local law enforcement and fire officials if schools are purchasing barricade devices.

Thanks for all you Do!

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Emergency Preparedness is Everyone's Responsibility!

Instructor contact information – please contact me if I can be of assistance.
Information current as of June 2018