



Is My District Prepared?

8 Questions for Superintendents and School Boards

1

Does our district have an up-to-date Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)? Do our schools' EOPs align with that plan? If so, do we have a record of when the plan was last updated and staff trained on the implementation of the plan?

Preparedness starts with having a well-thought-out, up-to-date EOP. Ongoing engagement of stakeholders in evaluating and implementing the plan is key.

2

Does our district have a safety team that meets regularly to discuss school safety issues and review the district EOP? Do we have the same expectation for safety teams at the building level?

Set an example for your buildings by establishing a district safety team that meets regularly to evaluate the plan and review district safety concerns. Communicate the expectation to building-level leadership that they should have a safety team in place as well.

3

Are we meeting or exceeding state, and district-mandated drills to test emergency procedures?

As they say, practice makes perfect. Emergency drills not only provide the opportunity to test and improve procedures, but also lessen anxiety in the event of an actual emergency.

4

When was the last time our district reviewed school safety and security policies and procedures? Are there changes that need to be made to reflect best practices?

Policy review and development is at the core of school governance. It is your responsibility to review your policies, implement requirements, and share pertinent information with students, staff and parents.

5

Has each school building in the district developed and practiced implementation of a reunification plan? How is the plan communicated to parents so they understand the process?

Emergency response efforts succeed or fail based on the effectiveness of communication. Parents need to understand the process in the event of an emergency.

6

Do all district staff, including substitutes, understand individual roles and responsibilities related to the EOP?

Do you have processes in place to ensure everyone understands EOP responsibilities? What if a substitute is filling in and has a critical role in the implementation of the EOP in a drill or emergency situation?

7

How will we effectively communicate with the parents and community in a crisis situation?

Internal and external communications are essential during a crisis. The "what-if" scenarios are endless, but planning carefully and having a variety of communication tools at your disposal will be invaluable. Social media, text messaging, auto dialers and mobile applications need to be considered as possible resources. There are many ways to communicate; stakeholders just need to know where to find the information.

8

What are we doing to engage the whole community in creating a positive culture of safety in our system?

District leadership is in the position to set the tone for a safe and supportive school culture. Communicating clearly that school safety is a whole-community responsibility is important. Engaging the whole community in this invaluable work gives you more hands, feet, heads, eyes, ears and hearts to ensure you are providing the students and staff in your care the safe and secure learning environment they deserve.

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