

School Preparedness Now

Safer Schools For a Better Tomorrow *Initiative*

The goal is to increase district-level preparedness to improve continuity of learning for PreK-12 schools and minimize impact of school-related disruptions and emergencies.

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We're on the Web!
See us at:

www.state.nj.us/education/schools/security/task/

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School Preparedness Now is a newsletter that provides New Jersey school districts with relevant, up-to-date, and practical information on safety & preparedness for schools and local communities.

For more information contact the K-12 School Security Task Force at ssbt@doe.state.nj.us.

NJ In the News: NJ SAFE Task Force

[National Preparedness Month](#) is here, and schools are doing their part to enhance their community's capacity to prepare and respond to terrorism and disasters. Schools are hiring additional security staff, adding cameras, and training teachers, students, and parents. The school community is learning how to reduce the likelihood of senseless acts of violence like the Sandy Hook Elementary

School shooting on December 14, 2012.

Recognizing a need to address the causes of such violence, Governor Chris Christie issued Executive Order Number 124 on January 17, 2013. The Executive Order formally created the New Jersey **SAFE Task Force on Gun Protection, Addiction, Mental Health and Families, and Education Safety** (NJ SAFE Task Force).

Many of the recommendations cited in the report are also a part of the programmatic component of the initiative entitled, *Safer Schools for a Better Tomorrow*, announced by the K-12 School Security Task Force announced on April 20, 2012.

The entire report can be viewed online at: <http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases13/NJSAFE-REPORT-04.10.13-WEB.pdf>

Hot Topics: NJ 2-1-1

Connecting community members to the resources they need in a timely manner is key to improving lives. That is why New Jersey has launched **2-1-1, a national model, free to users, that helps find solutions to personal needs.**

What is 2-1-1?

A place to turn when you need to find state or local health and human service resources to address urgent needs or everyday concerns –

Free; Confidential; Multi-lingual; TTY accessible; Available 24/7.

An easy-to-remember telephone number that connects callers to resource specialists who are ready to guide callers to available resources that will do the most good.

A website that provides easy access to our resource database and focused resource pages that provide essential facts, contact numbers and web links so individuals have the tools they need to find answers.

A service that reliably tracks expressed needs and regularly provides government leaders with data that enables them to address emerging social trends in real time.

2-1-1 and the School Community!

2-1-1 can help communities navigate successfully on a host of issues that can assist staff, students, and parents be more successful at school.

(cont'd page 2).

Hot Topics (...cont'd)

“There is a sense of security in knowing we have a plan for crisis intervention. Knowing what to do and when to do it, keeps crisis from becoming chaos

2-1-1- has resources available on:

Basic Human Needs Resource: food banks, clothing closets, shelters.

Emergency Alerts: You can find emergency alert information in the event of a statewide emergency such as a hurricane.

Reporting Suspicious Activity: You may report suspicious activity or behavior to trained law enforcement professionals on this confidential tip line.

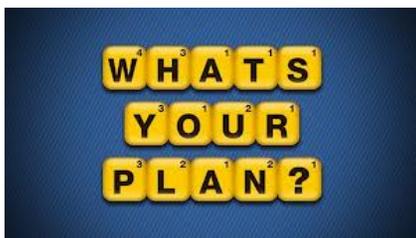
Support for Children, Youth and Families: childcare, after school programs, Kids Care (health insurance programs), family resource centers, summer camps and recreation programs, mentoring, tutoring, protective services.

Physical and Mental Health Resources: health insurance programs, crisis intervention services, support groups, counseling.



To learn more about 2-1-1 and its resources visit <http://www.nj211.org/>.

Promising Practices: What's in My Plan?



Food for Thought:

Better to have a plan you don't need, than to need a plan you don't have.

Developing a comprehensive safety plan for a school district is no easy feat. However there are many good resources and information to help plan and develop policies and procedures that mitigate, prepare, respond, and recover from unplanned incidents – emergencies.

1. Things to Know by every *New Jersey* school administrator before starting and/or updating the district plan:

- Districts must include at least 91 required core items as per administrative code (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-5.1);

- Districts must engage stakeholders;

- Districts must train staff;

- Districts must practice the 4 required drills (N.J.S.A. 18:41-1).

2. Things to Consider by every school administrator:

- Choosing a Planning Team: The Right Mix (*“Planning” is not a one man show*).

- To Consult or Not? Be sure consultants understand state law requirements.

3. Things to Have

including valuable resources that every school administrator should take advantage of:

- [Keys to Effective Safety & Security Plans](#)

- [REMS Guide for Developing High Quality School Emergency Operations Plans](#).

The NJ Department of Education, in partnership with the NJ Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, is developing a model template to serve as a blueprint for district safety plans. The template is anticipated by the summer of 2014.

A Special Message from State Coordinator Anthony Bland on School Preparedness in NJ

On behalf of the K-12 School Security Task Force, which was established in 2006 to further enhance the safety and security of New Jersey's public and nonpublic schools, I would like to begin by wishing you the best of success for this upcoming school year. Therefore, as many school districts around the State open, it is my responsibility to remind you that September is National Preparedness Month. In less than a year, we have seen emergencies that range from Hurricane Sandy to less than 60 days later the tragic school shooting incident that took place in Newtown, Connecticut at the Sandy Hook Elementary School.

Hurricane Sandy reminded us to assess our potential for floods, review our plans for continuity of education, consider where we store equipment such as computers and assess our communication plan with all key stakeholders to minimize disruption to learning in all schools.

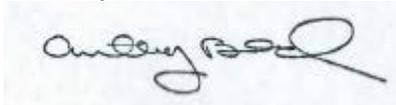
The Sandy Hook Elementary School Tragedy reminded us to assess if staff and students are taking school security drills seriously, review if our protocols need to be updated or modified with first responders, confirm if our safety/emergency plan matches our practices, assess if all schools in our district have the ability to respond with equity, and determine our ability to return schools back to normalcy post an emergency.

Sadly, both incidents alert us to the fact that **we must** communicate our plan, make sure everyone knows their roles and responsibilities, prepare for the unknown, and yes prepare for post-vention (*i.e. systematic crisis intervention, support, and assistance for those affected by a sudden crisis*).

As of April 2012, the State has embarked on a new statewide school preparedness initiative entitled, Safer Schools for a Better Tomorrow. You can find out more about this initiative and planning resources at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/schools/security/task/>. In addition, the NJ Department of Education has resources, tools, and promising practices in emergency response and crisis planning available at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/schools/security/>.

Before I close, I want to reiterate that the mission of the K-12 School Security Task Force is to further enhance the safety and security of New Jersey's schools and districts. Moving forward, I remind us to always be prepared. **Be prepared** by planning for any crisis, **be prepared** to respond to one, and **be prepared** to successfully recover from one. Most importantly, we all must **be prepared** to learn lessons whether they are from a textbook, tablet, or an emergency.

Sincerely,



Anthony Bland
Office of School Preparedness and Emergency Planning
NJ Department of Education

"Getting Teachers Back to Teaching...

..And Students Back to Learning"



Lt. Patrick Kissane, President of the New Jersey Association of School Resource Officers (NJASRO), presents an award at the 2013 NJASRO Symposium on School Safety in Atlantic City, NJ to NJ DOE's Office of School Preparedness and Emergency Planning, for the department's dedication and commitment to New Jersey's schools' and children's safety.

Significant Incidents that Make an Impact on NJ School Policies

Sep 2012 – May 2013

Bomb Threats in NJ

There were 61 bomb threats reported during the 2012-2013 school year. The estimated cost of these bomb threats is \$2,139,312. The impact of these threats to the school and emergency responder communities has resulted in a **Zero Tolerance** message from County Prosecutors across the state.



School Safety on Election Days

While schools have a long history of serving as polling places on election days, safety concerns are on the rise with the unlimited risks schools face, including high number of “strangers” on campus, open doors, limited staff supervision. Districts are updating school policies to address such concerns.

AT-A-GLANCE: Standard Response Protocols (i love u guys Foundation)

The “[i love u guys Foundation](#)” defines the Standard Response Protocols (SRP) as a uniform classroom response to an incident at school. SRPs were developed by the foundation as a resource for schools to use to create a uniform classroom response to an incident. Using the SRP are an effective and valuable way to respond and communicate in simple, responsible, and plain language. Particularly for states that do not already have a progressive school security drill law like New Jersey, the SRP are a useful program. However, **please note**, fully adopting the SRP program without **critical** modifications will not keep New Jersey’s schools compliant with the [state’s drill law mandate](#). Still counties should assess and strategize the effective practices of having standardized protocols county wide.

TIP: Districts may modify local MOAs to create uniform policies that are consistent with state mandates for schools and take into account local response procedures between school administrators and law enforcement.

Did You Know? NJ Facts

13* – The number of Hurricanes that have affected New Jersey in the past decade.

**Does not include extreme weather categorized as tropical storms.*

3rd – The week in October all New Jersey school district safety plans are to be updated in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-5.1. **This week is also School Violence Awareness.**

15 – Schools must conduct 1 security drill within the 1st 15 days; conduct 1 fire drill within the 1st 10 days.

91 – The number of required items and assessments that public school districts and charter schools must meet in their Safety and Security Plan by state administrative code.

1 – The number of states in the U.S. that require monthly security drills – You guessed right! **New Jersey.**



Academic success cannot be achieved if students do not have a safe learning environment. Research has proven students who are fearful do not learn well.

For this reason, New Jersey is one of the most aggressive states when it comes to protecting our nation’s most vulnerable population – **OUR CHILDREN**. New Jersey is serious about providing a top-notch education for all children, all communities *regardless of zip code*.

Prepárate Ahora: ¿Como Se Dice?

During summer 2011, NJ DOE hosted an 8 week course for state stakeholders on **Spanish as a Second Language** as part of the Planning for the Next Pandemic grant received to look at ways continuity of education could occur during emergencies. New Jersey recognizes the importance of linguistic and cultural competence in planning and implementing resources, as well as communicating and delivering messages across various mediums. In response to this growing need to better communicate across diverse populations, NJ is targeting key stakeholders that are integral during emergency planning, including state officials, law enforcement, administrators, and education personnel to enhance our state's linguistic competency. In this spirit, this newsletter will feature a Spanish Language Vocabulary Section.

Alerta

--Alert

Cierre la Puerta

--Lock the door

Entrenamiento

--Training

Número de Emergencia

--Emergency (Phone) No.

Atención

--Attention (Listen)

Comandante Incidente

--Incident Commander

Luces Apagadas

--Lights Off

Peligro

--Danger

Auxilio

--Help

Comunicación

--Communication

Memoria Muscular

--Muscle Memory

Respuesta Estándar

--Standard Response

Your District in the Spotlight: **New Brunswick Public Schools**

New Jersey schools are taking drilling seriously. Our schools are elevating their drills from simply a response stance (e.g. lockdown, evacuate) to scenario-based exercises that ultimately test the school districts' plans, procedures, and trainings. New Brunswick School District conducted a **full scale exercise** at the high school in June 2013. The exercise was coordinated between the district, local police, and city representatives.

Here's what happened:

- **A planning team** developed 2 active shooter scenarios
- **No advanced notification** to local police of participation in exercise
 - Police teams were made up of officers that have different responsibilities within the city and would not normally work together
 - Each team was accompanied by a "SWAT" officer that guides procedures
- Each scenario was **exercised multiple times** by different teams of law enforcement
- All the responses were videotaped by high school students
- Drill duration: 45 minutes (School was in lockdown the entire time)
- Immediate **debrief** post drill

Take Aways

1. Coordinated Response
2. "Game Day" Practice
3. Staff & Student Awareness
4. Video – Training Resource
5. Immediate Corrective Actions
6. Communicate there is no defined time for a lockdown

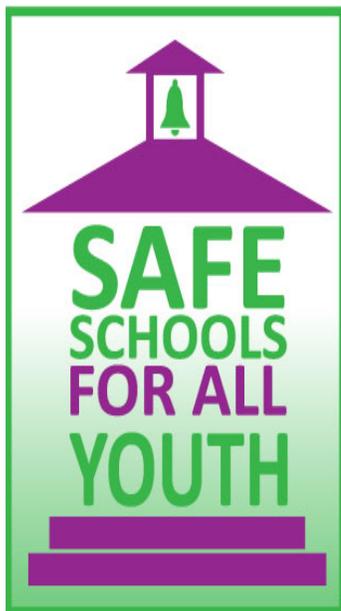


NEW BRUNSWICK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

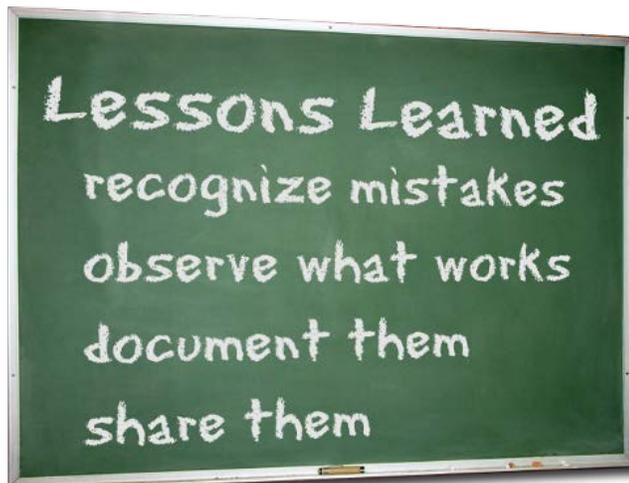
We applaud New Brunswick Public Schools for being a part of the state's M.O.S.S. Project and for their commitment to school safety and preparedness through coordination and collaboration with local and state partners!

NEXT ISSUE

Highlights



- ✓ **Sharing Promising Drill Practices from NJ Schools**
- ✓ **Remembering the Sandy Hook Tragedy – 1 Year Later**
- ✓ **Next Steps of *Safer Schools for a Better Tomorrow* Initiative**



Want to be featured in our next issue? Have a topic you want us to address?

Send us comments, promising practices, featured school districts, or an incident you have dealt with to:

ssbt@doe.state.nj.us

About ... The K-12 School Security Task Force

Established in 2006, the mission of the K-12 School Security Task Force is to further enhance the safety and security of New Jersey's public and nonpublic school students and, to the extent possible, develop standard benchmarks for education and law enforcement officials to help maintain consistency in school security protocols across a wide variety of safety and security challenges.

