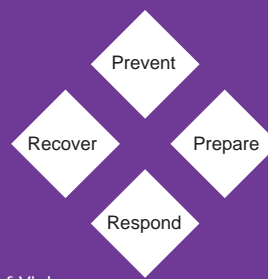


Colorado Safe Schools

A joint publication of the Colorado School Safety Resource Center and the CU-Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence
Colorado Department of Public Safety and the University of Colorado-Boulder



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Preparedness: Ready For Challenges

*The US Department of Education's Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance Center has identified a four-phase plan for school safety: **Prevention/Mitigation; Preparedness; Response and Recovery.** In the last issue (November 2009), we highlighted the Prevention Phase. This issue will focus on recommendations for **Preparedness Planning** and helpful tools available from the Colorado School Safety Resource Center (CSSRC).*

1. Interagency Multi-Hazard Plans. While schools bear the primary responsibility for developing applicable emergency management plans, they also have the duty to formulate a collective plan that creates an appropriate climate, explicit structure and clear procedures for effective multiagency partnerships. Your community emergency responders are ready and willing to assist districts in this collaboration. Creating memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with your local law enforcement, fire safety, EMS and community mental health agencies are important steps in this collaboration. The CSSRC has sample MOUs available for your review.

An important part of your multi-hazard plans will be documenting floor maps, site plans and key operational locations for an emergency. The state of Colorado is using the Automated Critical Assets Management System (ACAMS) to catalogue critical infrastructure and key resources in the state. Schools are to be included and your local emergency responders may be able to assist districts with uploading this information into ACAMS. For more information please go to www.dhs.gov/acams or contact any member of the Rubicon team (Office of Preparedness and Security) at 1-877-509-2422.

2. Train District and School Emergency Teams. Selecting district and school safety teams as well as crisis response teams for the district and each school are critical aspects of preparedness. Even smaller districts can assign the necessary roles with alternates to school personnel that will fulfill their school safety needs with the flexibility for change as needed. Colorado SB 08-181 recommends that all those either planning for school crisis or serving in an Incident Command System (ICS) role on a crisis team be trained in the FEMA courses of IS-362 and/or IS-100.SCa. Both courses are offered online, free of charge from FEMA at <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS>

3. Develop District & School Site-Based Comprehensive School Safety Plans using ICS. As part of the emergency management plan development process, schools and school districts need to establish an Incident Command System (ICS). This system is the response framework used by local, state and federal emergency response groups under the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and assures a safe and efficient response to crisis. The Colorado School Safety Resource Center has created a template to guide your plan creation based on best practices from districts across the state and the country using ICS.

4. Develop Effective Communications Plans. Interoperability of communication among school officials and with responding agencies are vital aspects of preparedness. Districts that have accomplished this are willing to share their experiences with other districts. Districts need to also develop effective communication not only with first responders but with parents and the media. After an event, parent/student reunification is one of the greatest challenges faced by school officials. While there are many aspects to consider in the establishment of possible reunification sites, other challenges to be addressed include: traffic flow patterns at the site; use of another school and the potential impact on multiple school environments simultaneously; identification of parents; record keeping of students and release information; as well as prior notification to parents as to how the reunification process will be accomplished.

5. Annual Inventory of Stored Emergency Equipment and Supplies. Another responsibility of schools under SB 08-181 the "NIMS legislation" is to inventory emergency equipment and supplies annually. This includes radios, go-kits for administrators, nurses and classroom teachers as well as supplies on hand in each building for an extended shelter-in-place event.

6. Schedule regular team meetings and drills to practice the plan. Plans need to be tested by developing training activities and conducting emergency exercises to support and improve emergency planning. Testing a plan first in an emergency situation is never a good idea. Tabletop exercises, drills, functional as well as full-scale exercises can all be planned with your community emergency responders. All exercises and real life events need to be followed up with After Action Reports as a means of documentation and a method for making improvements.

When completed, district/school **Preparedness Planning** information needs to be shared with all school staff, parents and students. The CSSRC as well as your local first responders are all here to assist you in maintaining our safe schools through emergency preparedness.

Preparedness resources and tools available at
<http://safeschools.state.co.us/Resources2.html>

Pilot Sites Updates

The Colorado School Safety Resource Center recently had site visits at **Lewis Palmer, Montezuma - Cortez and Durango School Districts**. All three sites have been busy concluding their electronic school mapping projects and moving forward with the Prevention/Mitigation and Preparedness phases of their safety efforts. As pilot sites for the Center, the schools have been developing policies, procedures and tools to share with others across the state.

Lewis Palmer School District "tested" their crisis preparedness with a November tabletop drill. They report a great collaborative effort for this work and are happy to share their scenario with any other interested schools. They also have a template for their classroom "flip charts" which can be shared electronically.

Montezuma - Cortez School District has been working closely with their community emergency responders and a representative from the district sits on their new county Emergency Management Advisory Committee. They are willing to share their Bylaws for the committee with any other community working on collaboration. They are close to completion of a new MOU for the district with their emergency responders.

Durango 9-R School District is not only a CSSRC pilot site but they are concluding their work this spring for their eighteen months US Department of Education Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) grant. The district is willing to share a copy of their REMS application. The school district has been working closely with their local and regional stakeholders and has completed their MOU which they are also willing to share.

Both **Montezuma - Cortez and Durango** have secured interoperability equipment for their schools and can share their expertise about this process.

If you have questions for our pilot sites, please contact Christine Harms, CSSRC Outreach Consultant (Christine.Harms@cdps.state.co.us or Tel: 303-239-4534).

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303-492-1032 or 1-866-SAFE790
safeschools@colorado.edu
www.colorado.edu/cspv/safeschools

Do you know how many of your students feel safe at school?

**For answers:
Schedule a free climate survey today!**

Safe Communities~Safe Schools offers an online student survey that your school can use to measure:

- *Student sense of safety*
- *Levels of behaviors such as bullying, violence, and substance use.*

The survey is completed online and is completely anonymous for students. A confidential results report is provided to each school, and comparisons to state and national data are provided where available.

These data are intended to help guide a school's efforts to create a positive school climate and reduce or prevent violence and other problem behavior.

Contact CSPV to discuss your options and to schedule a school climate assessment.
All technical assistance is provided free of charge to Colorado schools.

Call us at 303-492-1032 or 1-866-SAFE790
Email us at SafeSchools@colorado.edu

**To view latest school safety
grant opportunities and additional
resources**

please visit
Colorado School Safety Resource Center
Website

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**Colorado Safe Schools
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Please sign up to receive this newsletter by email to help us conserve paper and continue to keep you updated on school safety issues and resources in Colorado.

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