Emergency Management Considerations for Students and Staff With Disabilities

1. **Provide an overview and discussion of the range of special needs**

2. **Illustrate how to incorporate special needs populations into emergency management planning efforts**

3. **Provide strategies for communicating with community partners and first responders about the district's special needs populations**

4. **Develop an action plan for implementation after the training**

- 54 million people in the United States have a disability—one in five Americans.[a]

- 50% of people with disabilities who are employed say no plans have been made for their evacuation from the workplace.[a]

- Approximately 6 million students with disabilities ages 6 to 21 are served in schools throughout the United States.[b]

a National Organization on Disability's Emergency Preparedness Initiative & U.S. Department of Education

b *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (*IDEA*) data collected annually by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs in accordance with Sec. 618 of *IDEA*; see www.ideadata.org/arc_toc8.asp#partbCC

U.S. Department of Education ~ Office of Safe and Healthy Students

- **Some student disabilities include:**

  – Autism (223,395 students);

  – Hearing impairment or blindness (1,413 students);

  – Traumatic brain injury (23,867 students).

- **25% of students with disabilities spend 40-79% of their day in regular classrooms**

- **Only 2.5% of students with disabilities are served in special schools**

- **All districts have staff with disabilities that must be considered as well**

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act data collected annually by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs in accordance with Sec. 618 of *IDEA*; http://www.ideadata.org/arc_toc8.asp#partbCC

- **All students with disabilities are entitled to a free and appropriate public education.**

- **The vast majority of these students are served in regular education.**

- **All districts have students with disabilities being served in general education classrooms, as well as special schools, centers, and classrooms; however, special centers are becoming increasingly rare. Instead students are "mainstreaming."**

The executive order and federal law that relate most specifically to emergency management are:

1. E.O. 13347, *Individuals with Disabilities in Emergency Preparedness*—which adds to existing legislation for students with disabilities, and specifically requires public entities to include people with disabilities in their emergency preparedness efforts.

2. Section 504, *Rehabilitation, Comprehensive Services, and Developmental Disabilities Act of 1978*, "Nondiscrimination Under Federal Grants and Programs"—stresses that "no otherwise qualified individual with a disability shall, solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. This would include emergency management programs and activities."[a]

[a] http://www.section508.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=Content&ID=15

FEMA has defined "Special Needs Populations" as:

Populations whose members may have additional needs before, during, and after an incident in functional areas, including but not limited to: maintaining independence, communication, transportation, supervision, and medical care.

Individuals may include those who:

- Have disabilities;
- Live in institutionalized settings;
- Are elderly;
- Are children;
- Are from diverse cultures;
- Have limited English proficiency or are non-English speaking; or
- Are transportation disadvantaged.

Source: http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nrf/glossary.htm

The *Americans with Disabilities Act* (*ADA*) has defined an "individual with a disability" as a person who:

a) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities;

b) has a record of such an impairment; or

c) is regarded as having such an impairment.

NOTE: Temporary injuries (e.g., broken leg) or language barriers (e.g., English language learners) are not considered disabilities. However schools should still consider how persons with temporary disabilities will be accommodated during an emergency.

- **Sensory (e.g., deaf/hard of hearing, blind/visually impaired, etc.)**

- **Mental (e.g., mental illness, obsessive compulsive disorder, etc.)**

- **Cognitive/Developmental (e.g., autism, severe mental retardation, etc.)**

- **Speech/Language (e.g., aphasia, etc.)**

- **Physical (e.g., asthma, paraplegia, etc.)**

- **Mild to severe**

- **Apparent or not obvious**

- **Short- or long-term**

- **Singular or multiple**

What are some of the challenges encountered in planning for students or staff with disabilities?

Potential Responses Include:

- **Understanding the different disabilities and approaches for planning.**

- **Identifying persons with disabilities.**

- **Implementing the plan during an emergency.**

- Deal with people first; their disabilities second.

- Persons with disabilities are people just like everyone else, but may need unique emergency management accommodations.

- Do not assume that persons with disabilities all share the same emergency management needs.

- Be sure to involve the students with disabilities or their representatives in all planning activities.

- Ask students with disabilities what assistance they need and do not just assume what they will need in the event of an emergency.

- Discuss emergency considerations for the student during the IEP process or 504 conferences.

- Invite parents/caregivers to participate in drills.

There are multiple action steps that schools can take under each of the four phases of emergency management **(Prevention-Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery)** to accommodate the unique needs of students and staff with disabilities.

How does your school decide what *kind* and *level* of support each disabled person needs?

Suggested Responses Include:

- **Identify the number of students and staff with disabilities and determine the potential emergency situations that could occur.**

- **Once identified, conduct a needs assessment using the results in conjunction with an all-hazards matrix.**

- **Based on the types of disabilities present and the potential hazards, determine what actions would be required during an emergency.**

Prevention-Mitigation Actions

During this phase, schools must:

1. Conduct needs assessments;

2. Evaluate ADA compliance;

3. Conduct regular site inspections; and

4. Assess supplies and equipment.

Prevention-Mitigation Action 1:

Conduct a Needs Assessment

- Identify all students and staff with disabilities

- Capture information and define needs

  - Conduct an individual assessment of the needs of each student and staff with disabilities

  - Use an all-hazards matrix to determine specific vulnerabilities of students and staff with disabilities

  - Develop an inclusive evacuation plan for students and staff with disabilities

- Store information in one central location

Conduct a Needs Assessment (Cont'd.)

- **The assessment explores the types of assistance that may be needed before, during and after a disaster/traumatic event.**

- **The plan should be based on the lowest level of functioning.**

- **An assessment highlights issues and a response as to how the school should deal with the issues is developed; for example:**

  - Does the student require special medicines (refrigerated, injected, schedules, etc.)? If so, procedures need to be put in place for that student.

  - Does the staff member require unique signage or alarms? If so, the appropriate supplies need to be purchased and put into place.

Refer to Handout: *The Assessment Process* developed by the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance Center based on the American Red Cross, Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities, http://rems.ed.gov/views/documents/Training_CHIL07_StudentsStaffDisabilities_Handout.pdf

Conduct a Needs Assessment (Cont'd.)

There are nine broad areas to guide the assessment-needs process for people with disabilities: [a]

- Personal health needs
- Getting around (wheelchairs)
- Transportation (specialized car/van)
- Electricity dependence
- Evacuation difficulty (e.g., 2nd floor)
- Building exits
- Service animals
- Communication
- Disaster debris

[a] Based on the American Red Cross, *Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities;* http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/disability.pdf

Prevention-Mitigation Action 2:

Evaluate ADA Compliance

To ensure ADA compliance, schools should check for:

- Sufficient door width

- Leveling of floors

- Electrical backups

- Signage—universal symbols

- Toileting facilities—privacy issues

- Emergency notification system—appropriate for the disability

Prevention-Mitigation Action 3:

Conduct Regular Site Inspections

- Repair/modify pathways with access to assembly areas, evacuation routes, etc.

- Regularly check to ensure that all fire and safety codes are being met:

  – Hallways are clear and open.

  – Doors are not blocked.

  – Safe refuge areas are not compromised by campus activities or construction.

Prevention-Mitigation Action 4:

Assess Supplies and Equipment

- Review existing alert systems occasionally to ensure that the school has the most appropriate and relevant system available to meet the school's needs

- Test the system during drills and exercises

- Establish a policy in the emergency management plan for the building engineer to periodically test the system regularly

- Ensure essential supplies and equipment are on-site (e.g., evacuation chairs for schools without elevators)

Preparedness Actions

1. Identify and involve community partners (including disability community)
2. Account for health and medical considerations
3. Establish plan for each student and staff addressing each individual's needs, including service animals
4. Prepare "Go-Kits" specific to the needs of persons with disabilities
5. Become familiar with available and appropriate communication methods
6. Create policies regarding volunteers
7. Provide training to students, teachers, and community members
8. Practice response procedures

Preparedness Action 1:

Identify and Involve Community Partners

- Identify partners (e.g., first responders, disability community, mental and public health, etc.) about the districts' populations with disabilities

- Communicate with and train the first responders

- Invite first responders and community members to the school to acquaint the students and staff with disabilities on a personal basis and develop a rapport

- Involve partners in drills, tabletops, and exercises

Identify and Involve Community Partners (Cont'd.)

- Schools should seek out representatives from the disability community to assist in planning.

- Why? Representatives can:
  - Provide input on the personal safety assessment;
  - Review all policies and procedures;
  - Serve as trainers to other community partners;
  - Achieve buy-in and community support; and
  - Connect schools with the supplies needed to support disabled students.

- There should be outreach efforts to the members of the disabled community to create social relationships and a feeling of inclusion.

Identify and Involve Community Partners (Cont'd.)

Three potential sources where schools can find representatives from the disability community:

1. Government
   – Department of Health/Mental Health Services
   – Local Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator

2. Institutions
   – Representatives from home-based care industry
   – Residential health-care facilities

3. Advocacy Groups
   – Local independent living center
   – Local groups serving specific/general populations with disabilities

Preparedness Action 2:

Account for Health & Medical Considerations:

Equipment and Supplies

- Schools should ensure that, through prior planning and practice, staff and first responders are trained to work with specialized equipment PRIOR to the emergency.

- Establish procedures for managing, maintaining, and operating specialized medical equipment and supplies.

- Maintenance and operations of these devices requires specialized training, which should be accomplished before an emergency.

Account for Health & Medical Considerations: Equipment and Supplies (Cont'd.)

Specialized equipment and supplies could include:

- Evacuation chairs
- Transfer-height cots
- Communication boards
- Reverse 911 notification systems
- Breathing apparatus with oxygen

- Feeding tubes
- Wheelchairs (manual and electric)
- Gurneys
- Walkers
- Respirators

Connection to the Four Phases of Emergency Management (Cont'd.)

Account for Health & Medical Considerations:

Medications

Establish procedures for handling medications during an emergency with the following considerations:

- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)
- Security–keep in a locked, secure location
- Supply–have a three to five day supply; also have medications for those students and staff requiring medications during nonschool hours
- Physician's orders–keep on hand, stating how the medications are to be given
- Mobility–check to see that medications have not been used
- Storage–make sure the medications are in a waterproof storage container
- Access–limit to one teacher or nurse and a backup

Preparedness Action 3:

Establish Individual Emergency Plans

Individual plans for persons with disabilities should address:

- Specific accommodations in the event of an evacuation, shelter-in-place, or lockdown
- Special dietary needs
- Medical needs
- Equipment and supply needs
- Language needs
- Reunification with family
- Transportation needs

Preparedness Action 3:

Establish Individual Emergency Plans, Cont'd.

- Potential school staff to involve in this process:
  - Teacher
  - School Nurse
  - IEP Counselor
  - Transportation Provider

Preparedness Action 4:

Prepare Go-Kits

- Go-Kits are portable and should contain a stockpile of essential emergency supplies.

- They often come in the form of backpacks or buckets that can be easily carried out of a school in case of an emergency.

- They are stored in a secure, readily accessible location so that they can be retrieved when an emergency requires evacuation.

- Go-Kits contain essential items that are required for survival by students and staff. The number of items should be kept to an absolute minimum.

Prepare Go-Kits (Cont'd.)

- Each Go-Kit must be prepared specifically to the needs of the student or staff member with a disability; unique supplies may include:

  – Tailored feeding utensils, manual can opener, special food, medical tubing, blender, etc.;

  – Extra hearing aid batteries;

  – Special toileting and hygiene equipment;

  – Games, activities, books; and

  – A 72-hour supply of food for service animals (when applicable).

- Go-Kits should be periodically checked and inventoried to ensure contents are in operable order.

Preparedness Action 5:

Become Familiar With Communication Methods

- Relevant school staff and first responders must be trained in communicating with students and staff with disabilities and understand the available and appropriate communication vehicles; including, but not limited to:

  - Oral language
  - American Sign Language
  - Tactile sign
  - Limited vision / communication
  - Picture books

  - Braille
  - Paper and pencil
  - Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)
  - Computer-assisted communication
  - Electronic text messaging

38

Preparedness Action 6:

Plan for Working With Service Animals

- Plan for the animal to be evacuated with its owner.

- Food and water should be taken into consideration for service animals in the event of a lockdown, shelter-in-place, or evacuation.

- Tips for dealing with service animals:

  - Do not pet or offer food to any service animal without the permission of the owner.

  - Understand that when the animal is wearing a harness, it is on duty.

  - Hold the animal's leash and not the harness if asked to provide assistance.

Preparedness Action 7:

Create Policies for Volunteers

- Volunteers need to be recruited BEFORE a disaster so they can learn the skills needed to work with students and staff with disabilities.

- Train volunteers how to use:

  – Specialized equipment that is a necessity to the person with the disability; and

  – Specialized skills, such as sign language or fingerspelling.

- Plans should outline a credentialing process for volunteers.

What procedures do you have in place for training students or staff with disabilities?

One example:

- One participant from the fiscal year 2007 REMS Cohort stated that they had several autistic children at one school site so the kids were trained to put on headphones which muffled the sounds of an emergency alarm, lessening their disorientation. The staff were able then to follow normal response procedures for evacuation.

Preparedness Action 8:

Provide Training

- Schools should offer tailored training on topics, such as:
  - Education about the prominent disability(ies) within a school;
  - Working with service animals;
  - Operating unique equipment and supplies; and
  - Appropriate response techniques.
- Training should be provided to:
  - Teachers and staff;
  - Students;
  - Volunteers; and
  - Community partners and first responders.

Preparedness Action 9:

Practice Response Procedures

- Schools should practice the three types of response (evacuation, lockdown, and shelter-in-place) to ensure that:

  – All populations, including students and staff with disabilities, are planned for adequately; and

  – First responders are familiar with the unique needs of persons with disabilities.

- Schools should invite local first responders, public and mental health partners, parents, and representatives from the disabled community.

- Schools should use post-drill evaluations and after-action reports to refine the school's plan.

Practice Response Procedures (Cont'd.)

- **Evacuation** is used when locations outside the school are safer than inside the school.

- The four elements of evacuation: [a]

  1. Notification - What is the emergency?

  2. Getting out - Where is the way out?

  3. How to get out - Does someone need to be helped?

  4. Assistance - What type of assistance might be needed?

[a] National Fire Protection Association, *Emergency Evacuation Planning Guide for People with Disabilities,* June 2007, p. 9.

Evacuation Considerations for Persons With Disabilities

1. Notification [a]

- Deaf/hard of hearing persons may not be able to hear alarms or voice announcements.

  – Consider National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards.

- Students and staff with cognitive disabilities may have decreased ability to process/understand information/situation.

  – Consider developing picture book of drill procedures and practice emergency procedures ahead of time.

[a] National Fire Protection Association, *Emergency Evacuation Planning Guide for People with Disabilities,* June 2007, p. 9.

Evacuation Considerations for Persons With Disabilities

2. Getting Out [a]

- Knowing the way out of the building is important—however, the ability/inability of the disabled to navigate if unassisted needs to be determined for each student with mobility limitations.

- Students and staff with visual disabilities must know the useable exit path from the building (or to a predetermined refuge)—generally, despite tactile signs, those with visual impairments will need assistance; this needs to be noted in individual evacuation plans.

- Students with cognitive disabilities should be tested on finding and using exits.

[a] National Fire Protection Association, *Emergency Evacuation Planning Guide for People with Disabilities,* June 2007, p. 9.

What other elements need to be considered when planning evacuation plans for those with disabilities?

U.S. Department of Education ~ Office of Safe and Healthy Students

Potential responses include:

- Pre-designated safe refuge locations on the floors where students can await rescue.

- Training the search and rescue team to assist students with mobility challenges.

- Other considerations include teachers, principal or buddy assigned to assist person with disability.

- Operations Section/Assembly Team accounts for each individual, Search and Rescue Team looks for specific students in specific rooms, First Aid Team uses list to treat students appropriately.

Evacuation Considerations for Persons With Disabilities

3. How to Get Out [a]

- Plans should address alternative routes, devices, or assistance procedures for students and staff with mobility impairments.

4. Assistance [a]

- Emergency plans should highlight appropriate assistance procedures.

[a] National Fire Protection Association, *Emergency Evacuation Planning Guide for People with Disabilities,* June 2007, p. 9.

Practice Response Procedures (Cont'd.)

- **Lockdown** is used when there is an immediate threat of violence in or immediately around the school.

- **Considerations for students and staff with disabilities:**

  – Classroom size should allow for all students to move away from windows and door (if necessary).

  – Staff should be able to assist moving students with mobility impairments to the interior of the classroom.

Practice Response Procedures (Cont'd.)

- **Shelter-in-Place** is used when students and staff must remain indoors during a period of time for an inclement weather, chemical, biological, radiological, or terrorist threat.

- **Considerations for students and staff with disabilities:**
  - Access to toilets
  - Medications available
  - Food and necessary feeding equipment accessible
  - Service animal accommodations
  - Appropriate activities on-hand to keep students occupied
  - Staff to student ratio appropriate for extended time in classroom

Response Actions

During a response, schools should:

1. Activate the school's emergency management plan;

2. Activate communication plan;

3. Work with first responders;

4. Account for students and staff;

5. Utilize Go-Kits; and

6. Implement the parent reunification plan.

Response Action 1:

Activate the Emergency Management Plan

- When an incident occurs, the school must put the emergency management plan and the individual plans for students and staff with disabilities into action.

- Thorough prevention-mitigation and preparedness planning will result in a more effective and efficient response that ensures all students and staff are cared for appropriately.

Response Action 2:

Activate the Communication Plan

- Utilize communication systems (according to need) to alert all students and staff to the crisis:

    – Visual aids;

    – Sign language;

    – Large print; and

    – Alarm system.

Response Action 3:

Implement Plan for Parent/Guardian Reunification

- Re-locate students to a safe area.

- Use school personnel who have met and know students and parents by face and name (e.g., a school secretary).

- Have a documentation procedure in place that includes time, date, and signature. Have a camera to photograph the student and the person(s) who pick them up.

- Have procedures in place for students released to nonparents (e.g., drivers of the car pools to which the students belong).

- Inform parents periodically (at least yearly) of the school's established release procedures and involve parent organizations in dissemination of this information.

Recovery Actions

To support recovery, schools should:

1. Ensure accessible and appropriate temporary shelter is identified in the plan and Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) are made with the temporary facility(s);

2. Plan for utility disruption;

3. Involve representatives of the disability community in post-action reviews;

4. Plan with neighboring schools on sharing habitable structures;

5. Design a split schedule in the event only part of the school is operational or the school will share facilities with a neighboring school; and

6. Attempt to keep to previously scheduled activities if at all possible (e.g., graduation).

Disability Scenario

U.S. Department of Education ~ Office of Safe and Healthy Students

Location: Americas, a small town of about 58,000.

Setting: Americas High School, which occupies a 40-acre site, including a football stadium, baseball stadium, track, two soccer fields, and several outdoor maintenance buildings. The surrounding area is primarily residential to the north and south, with some commercial property to the west and east.

Layout: Americas High School is a two-story, 240,000 square foot structure with no basements, built in 2005.

Profile of student body: Enrollment of 1,400 students, grades 9–12.

Special populations: Several students and staff have disabilities:

- Science Teacher A and T use wheelchairs
- Student B is hearing impaired
- Student C is mildly developmentally delayed
- Students D, E, and F are asthma sufferers

Level of Emergency Preparedness:

- Americas School District has an emergency management plan, and each school—including Americas High School—has its own plan.

- Americas High School's plan includes Individual Emergency Plans for each individual with a disability (here, persons A, B, C, D, E, F, and T).

- Both school and district emergency plans include agreements with first responders (fire, EMS) and community partners (mental health, public health, etc.).

- **Time**: 10:45 a.m.

- **Scenario**: It's a sunny Thursday, a school-wide, 15-minute recess has just begun, and students have filled the indoor hallways of the school, getting belongings in and out of their lockers, and engaging in conversations with friends. Two students suddenly break into a fistfight in the second-floor science wing hallway. Before the fight can be stopped, one student pulls out a pepper spray device and sprays the other student. He then runs down the hall with his finger still employing the device. The students in the crowded hallway all begin coughing. Science Teacher A wheels out of a nearby classroom after hearing the commotion and sees the student running off with the spray device in his hand, and all the students in the hallway behind him coughing.

What should Science Teacher A do next?

The big priority here is student and staff safety – doing the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Here are some possible responses:

- **REPORT** - Notify the office or 911 that there has been a Hazardous Materials Release <u>inside the building</u>. Tell them exactly what happened so that response time can be narrowed – we don't want a haz-mat team to waste time trying to figure out what happened and where.

- **EVACUATE** - Students and staff to a safe refuge area. This will only be a temporary respite because the HVAC system in the school will circulate the air throughout the building. Moving everyone into a safe refuge area (or room) until the HVAC can be shut off will limit exposure.

- **ISOLATE THE AREA AND DENY ENTRY** to anyone else. Limit the people impacted by this event.

- **IDENTIFY THE STUDENT WHO RELEASED THE HAZARDOUS MATERIAL** - This is a crime and it will help to identify what, exactly, was released and who did it.

- **Time**: 10:48 a.m.

- **Scenario**: Science Teacher A (who is wheelchair bound), not knowing what the student was spraying, but guessing that it is what is causing the students to cough, pulls a nearby fire alarm to evacuate the building. Science Teacher A is unsure whether Teacher T (who is also wheelchair bound) is in her classroom and whether she was affected by the spray. Science Teacher A is also unsure whether any of the affected students include Student D and Student E, who suffer from asthma, and who have science the next period. Most of the students who are coughing start leaving the building.

What should Science Teacher A do next?

Possible Responses Include:

- **Report –** What is it? Where is it? How big is the release? Who is impacted?

- **Move –** Both teachers have an evacuation challenge. Move to a save refuge area where they can wait for rescue safely.

- **Communicate –** with the Search and Rescue team. Classroom and cell phones will still work, so do they know who is on the team that is being sent to rescue them? They can communicate their location and condition. Other options schools use include signs on doors that say someone is inside, flags, etc.

- **Time**: 10:49 a.m.

- **Scenario**: Science Teacher A uses his classroom phone to call the school's principal—the Incident Commander (IC)—and explains that there is no fire, but that a student sprayed a substance in the science wing and that students are coughing.

What should the Incident Commander and the people assigned to the ICS team do? Define the role of each. What actions should the ICS team take to ensure individuals A, B, C, D, E, F, and T's needs are met?

Possible Responses Include:

- **Incident Commander (IC)** – The IC is responsible for setting the objectives for the entire emergency management team. The objectives must be *measurable*, *obtainable,* and *time-referenced*. For example: "In the next 15 minutes we need to evacuate the buildings and account for all students and staff." It is the responsibility of the rest of the general staff to implement these objectives.

- **Operations** – Directs the First Aid team to set up the first aid station and the Search and Rescue Team(s) to begin to clear all buildings. If Operations gets the message from Science Teacher A about what happened, then Search and Rescue can be directed to the one building or floor with the problem. Operations will also be responsible for the Assembly Area and student accounting.

Possible Responses Include:

- **Planning and Intelligence** – Begins to report on the possible results of the haz-mat release (non-fatal irritant) and anticipate future needs such as additional support needed and challenges, (e.g., Do we need to set up feeding stations? Is there a weather issue?)

- **Logistics** - Supports the needs of operation with supplies.

- **Finance and Administration** – Deals with the finance issue and other items such as staff attendance/overtime and such things as injury reports.

Possible Responses Include:

- **Science Teacher A is paraplegic, and is wheelchair bound** – This person poses an evacuation challenge, so the Search and Rescue Team needs to know where he is and how to get him out of the building. Because he teaches on the second floor the plan needs to incorporate how that person will be evacuated when there is no access to an elevator. The same can be said of Teacher T.

- **Student B is hearing impaired** – This person also poses an evacuation challenge, but only because they may not have heard the alert. This person has the ability to move so the plan must include who will be responsible to make sure that they are notified. Some districts use a "buddy" system. It would be the responsibility of the Assembly Area to make sure that they exited the building; if not, Search and Rescue needs to be notified.

Possible Responses Include:

- **Student C is mildly developmentally delayed** – Once again these people have the ability, but need the assistance to know what to do. The initial responsibility would fall to the teacher or "buddy"; if they were not in the assembly area with the other kids, the Search and Rescue team needs to go get them.

- **Students D, E, and F are asthma sufferers** – These people have medical challenges. They should be able to evacuate, but the First Aid Team will need to know how to assist them. Are their medications with them or does the nurse bring them to the first aid station?

Other Considerations:

What plans should already be in place to address the needs of these individuals?

- **Not all schools are *ADA* compliant. Check the status of your school.**

- **Consider how to ameliorate controversial elements of the plan.**

- **There is limited funding to address populations with disabilities.**

- **Professional assistance from disability organizations in rural districts may be limited.**

- **Information sharing and confidentiality are key issues to address (see *HIPAA* and *FERPA* guidelines*).***

Action Plan:

Brainstorm the gaps or weaknesses of your school's emergency management plan in regards to addressing the unique needs of students and staff with disabilities.

- **What are the different types of disabilities and potential hazards that your plan needs to address?**

- **Does your plan currently address those with disabilities based on today's presentation?**

- **What gaps exists in your plan?**

- **What changes/additions would you make to the all-hazards plan to adequately serve these individuals?**

1. Prepare an inventory of your students with disabilities by grade, location, and type of disability

2. Involve the broader disability community, including students, in all planning and implementation procedures

3. Prepare individualized safety assessment plans for each of your students with disabilities, focusing on:

    - Transportation needs;

    - Specialized equipment; and

    - Health supplies and requirements.

4. Prepare individual Go-Kits

5. Develop training programs for first responders and partners on meeting needs of students and staff with disabilities

6. Conduct drills, tabletops, and other exercises

American Red Cross

- **Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and other Special Needs, FEMA 476**
  http://www.redcross.org/images/pdfs/preparedness/A4497.pdf

Americans with Disabilities Act

- **ADA Guide for Local Governments: Making Community Emergency Preparedness and Response Programs Accessible to People with Disabilities**
  http://www.ada.gov/emergencyprep.htm

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

- **Individuals with Special Needs: Preparation and Planning**
  http://www.fema.gov/plan/prepare/specialplans.shtm

- **U.S. Fire Administration: Fire Risks for the Blind or Visually Impaired, December, 1999**
  http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa-205.pdf

- **U.S. Fire Administration: Fire Risks for the Deaf or Hard of Hearing, December, 1999**
  http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa-202-508.pdf

- **U.S. Fire Administration: Fire Risks for the Mobility Impaired, December, 1999**
  http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa-204-508.pdf

Interagency Coordinating Council on Emergency Preparedness and Individuals with Disabilities

- **Disabilities Preparedness Resource Center**
  http://www.disabilitypreparedness.gov/

National Council on Disability

- **Saving Lives: Including People with Disabilities in Emergency Planning, April 2005**
  http://www.ncd.gov/newsroom/publications/2005/saving_lives.htm

National Organization on Disability (NOD)

- **The NOD's Emergency Preparedness Initiative**
  http://www.nod.org/emergency

- **Interactive Map of Disability and Emergency Preparedness Resources**
  http://www.nod.org/EPIResources/interactive_map.html

U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Ready.Gov

- http://www.ready.gov/america/getakit/disabled.html

- http://www.ready.gov/america/_downloads/disabilities.pdf

U.S. Department of Education

- **Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services' National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR)**

  - Emergency Management Research and People With Disabilities: A Resource Guide, April, 2008
    http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/guide-emergency-management-pwd.pdf

- **Office of Safe and Healthy Student's Readiness and Emergency Management for School's Technical Assistance Center**

  - REMSExpress Newsletter: Integrating Students with Special Needs and Disabilities into Emergency Response and Crisis Planning
    http://ercm.ed.gov/views/documents/Disability_NewsletterV2I1.pdf

  - Emergency Planning for Students with Disabilities and Special Needs Webinar
    http://ercm.ed.gov/index.cfm?event=webinars_archives

Thank you to the following persons for their role as lead authors of this presentation:

- **Chris Dayian**, Project Director, Safe Schools Center, Los Angeles County Office of Education (Downey, Calif.); and
- **Terri Wiseman**, Business Manager, the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind (St. Augustine).

Special thanks to the following person for providing review and comment to these materials:

- **Meloyde Batten-Mickens**, Executive Director of Facilities/Public Safety, Gallaudet University (Washington, D.C.);
- **Tom Gunnell**, former Chief Operations Officer, Cincinnati Public School District (Ohio);
- **Bonnie Gracer**, U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services; and
- **Bob Spears**, Director of Emergency Services, Los Angeles (Calif.) Unified School District.

U.S. Department of Education ~ Office of Safe and Healthy Students

REMS TA Center

(866) 540-7367 (REMS)

http://rems.ed.gov

info@remstacenter.org