



Emergency Management for Schools

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Jade Anthony

Center for School Preparedness
U.S. Department of Education
Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools
550 12th Street, SW / Washington, DC 20202

Agenda

- Why Emergency Management Plans Are Critical
- What Do We Know About the Status of School Emergency Management Efforts?
- What We Want Schools To Do
- Some Lessons Learned
- Available Resources



Why should a school have an emergency management plan?



Stuff Happens!

- And we either plan to deal with it when it happens and thereby help minimize its consequences, or we let it take control and steer us in directions we may not want to go!



Stuff Happens!

- Every day!
- Along a continuum!
- In almost every district!
- To a variety of different populations (e.g., students, faculty)!
- When least expected!



Recent Events

- **August 21, 2008:** A 15-year old student is shot and killed during a dispute at a Knoxville, Tennessee high school.
- **February 25, 2008:** An Air Force enlisted member held his two children hostage before shooting and killing them in military housing adjacent to an elementary school.
- **February 14, 2008:** A gunman enters Cole Hall at Northern Illinois University, kills eight students and wounds 18 more.
- **May 5, 2007:** Greensburg, Kansas: Tornado destroys town, killing approximately 8 persons.
- **May 2007:** Montgomery County, MD, Fire and Rescue workers were called to a school after a student brought a broken thermometer to school.
- **April 16, 2007:** Shooter kills 32 students at Virginia Tech.
- **April 2007:** Numerous schools and colleges in Virginia and Maryland received bomb threats and threats of attacks similar to the one at Virginia Tech.



Other Events

- **March 2007:** A 14-year old Shikellamy School District [PA] student admitted in court that she threatened to kill students and teachers.
- **March 2007:** A 15-year old Timber Creek HS [FL] baseball player went into cardiac arrest during a game, persons at the game started CPR and an Automatic External Defibrillator was brought in. Because of quick action he recovered.
- **March 2007:** A student trying to reconcile with his girl friend in a school parking lot [Clare, MI] pulled a gun from his backpack and shot his girlfriend 4 times. He then committed suicide. It was the second suicide in the rural community in a month.
- **Feb 2007:** The El Paso ES in Derby, Kansas had to go into lock down while police with guns drawn apprehended a suspect across the street from the school. The police did not notify the school of their actions.
- **Jan 2007:** An 84-year old woman drove her car through a cafeteria wall killing an 8-year old student and injuring two others. [Shiloh, Illinois]
- **August 2006:** A 27-year old who recently broke up with his girlfriend, a teacher at Essex ES [VT], he shot two other teachers when he could not find her. One of the teachers died.



Why Have an Emergency Management Plan?

Basic Statistics:

There is ample opportunity for incidents of all sorts to occur.

53 million students X 180 school days =
about 9.5 billion student school days



Why Have an Emergency Management Plan?

- 4.2 million youth have asthma attacks (some in schools)
- 4 million children and adolescents are injured at school
- 628,200 incidents of violent crime in school (2005)
- Estimated 200,000 playground injuries each year
- 136,500 incidents of serious violent crime (2005)
- 1,471 suicides (age 15-18) in community (2004-2005)
- 51,000 students hurt on school buses (2001-2003)
- 36,000 chemical exposures in schools (2003)
- 21 students homicide victims in school, and 1,534 in community (2004-2005)



What do we know about the status of school emergency management efforts?



“Everybody is doing some things, but not everyone is doing the right things”



Government Accountability Office Report, GAO-07-609 (June 2007)

GAO Key Findings:

- Ninety-five percent of districts have emergency management plans
- Content of plans varies significantly
- Most plans do not include plans for extended closures
- Plans have little involvement of community partners
- Ten percent of districts have never updated plans



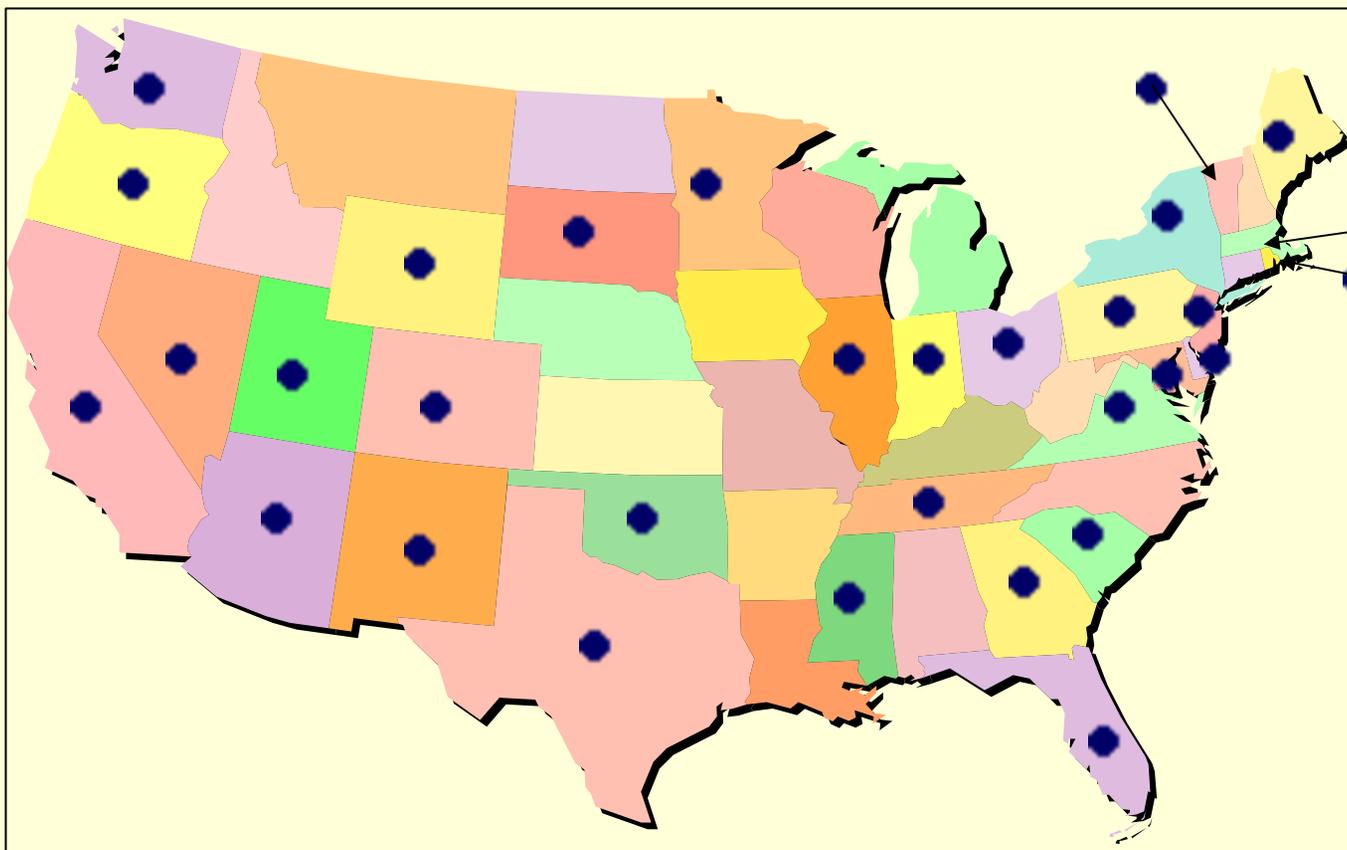
Government Accountability Office Report, GAO-07-609 (June 2007)

GAO Key Findings (cont'd.):

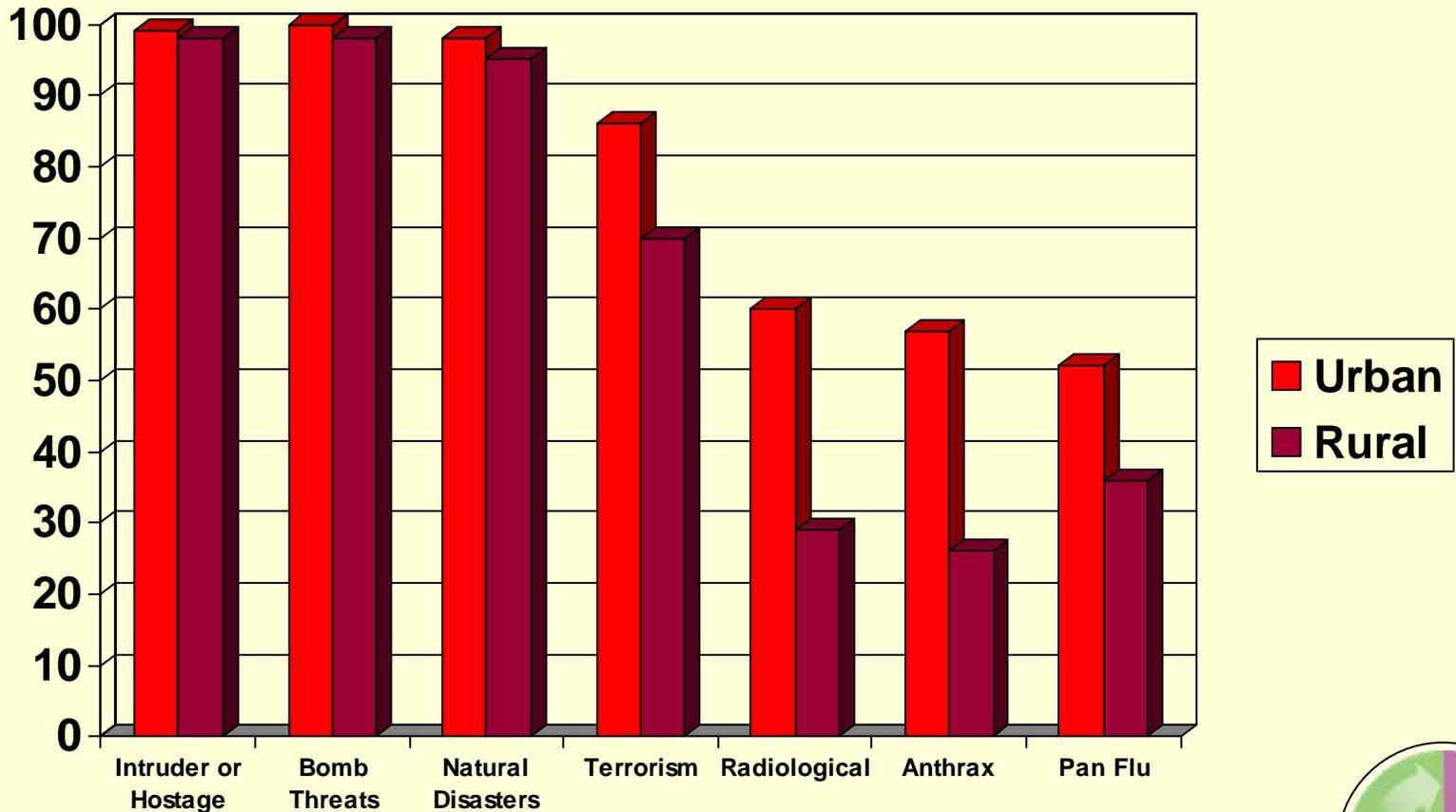
- One quarter of districts have never practiced the plan or trained with first responders
- Sixty-two percent of districts cite lack of expertise, training, and equipment as a challenge
- Plans for students with disabilities vary considerably
- Over one quarter of districts report difficulty communicating with parents



States with Laws or Policies Requiring Schools to Have Emergency Management Plans



Percentages of Urban/Rural District Emergency Management Plans that Include Specific Incidents



Source: GAO-07-609



What do we want schools and school districts to do?



What Do We Want Schools and School Districts To Do?

1. Have an emergency management plan that addresses the four phases of emergency management



What Do We Want Schools and School Districts To Do?

2. Have an emergency management plan that takes an “all-hazards” approach.

High Base Rate Incidents	Low Base Rate Incidents
Low Impact	High Impact
Bullying	Intruders
Minor Accidents	Weapons / Guns
Fighting (without injury)	Assault with Injury
Automobile Related Issues	Homicides
Drug Possession	Chemical Accidents



Have A School Emergency Management Plan That:

3. Is developed collaboratively with community partners.
4. Is based upon sound data, information, and assessment (i.e., risk, vulnerability, consequence).
5. Is practiced on a regular basis.
6. Includes an Incident Command System (ICS) structure coordinated with first responders, which aligns with the National Incident Management System (NIMS).



Have A School Emergency Management Plan That (Cont'd.):

7. Addresses students and staff with disabilities.
8. Is tailored to conditions of individual schools and offices.
9. Addresses “Emerging Issues” such as Staph Infections (or MRSA).
10. Includes a plan for extended school closures and continuity of operations.
11. Is continually reviewed and updated.



Key Lessons Learned

1. Not everything is costly!

- Work with community partners and local emergency managers to:
 - Assess vulnerabilities
 - Improve efficiency by collaborating / sharing [building plans, communication needs] with community partners
 - Expand services to schools, such as drills and exercises
- Use existing data sources to assess risk.
- Take advantage of what is on credible Web sites



Key Lessons Learned (Cont'd.)

2. **If something could go wrong, it will; anticipate and plan for:**
 - Key staff not being present at time of emergency.
 - Communications equipment not working.
 - Evacuation site not being available, or not suitable on day it is needed.
 - Multiple events to happen concurrently.



Key Lessons Learned (Cont'd.)

3. **Everyone has value. Do not exclude anyone in the overall process.**

- Do not forget the school secretary, custodian, teachers aides, office workers, nurses, parents, students, and food service workers.

4. **Stuff happens in places other than school buildings.**

- Do not forget buses, offices, alternative schools and school sponsored trips and events.

5. **Keep it as simple [but comprehensive] as possible!**

- Flip charts are not comprehensive emergency plans, they are only part of a plan. Have plans for lockdown, evacuation, and shelter-in-place.



Key Lessons Learned (Cont'd.)

6. Every school has resources that can be used to assist in the development / refinement / improvement of their emergency plan.

- Photo club to take photos of schools for first responders.
- Drama club to assist in drills.
- Nurses / SROs that are trained in first aid.
- Computer expertise to assist in designing procedures for tracking students, communicating with parents.
- Connections with parents and parent groups.



Key Lessons Learned (Cont'd.)

7. **Provide key players with detailed information about the plan and about the schools.**

8. **It takes a village to develop an effective emergency management plan. If you go it alone you will fail! Every school needs to coordinate with:**
 - All first responders
 - Health and Mental Health Officials
 - Other Non-public schools



Key Lessons Learned (Cont'd.)

9. **Review – Revise – Review on a regular basis.**
10. **In order to be effective, plans have to be practiced with community partners.**
11. **Get support of leadership.**



Available Resources for Schools

- Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Grant Program
 - Since FY 2003, \$163M has been awarded to 603 school districts
 - Provides funding to schools to improve and enhance emergency management plans
 - Requires written support from community partners and coordination with state/local plans
 - FY 2009 Competition
- REMS Technical Assistance Center (<http://rems.ed.gov>)
 - Publications
 - Newsletters
 - Lessons Learned
 - Helpful Hints
 - Webinars



Contact Information

Jade Anthony

US Department of Education

Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools

550 12th Street SW

Washington, DC 20202

Phone: (202) 245-6264

Email: jade.anthony@ed.gov

