New Hampshire

School Safety Preparedness Task Force

2018 Report

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To His Excellency Governor Christopher T. Sununu:

On behalf of the School Safety Preparedness Task Force, I am pleased to present you with our report.

This report is the culmination of the Task Force's efforts to meet your charge to find agreed upon recommendations on making New Hampshire's schools the safest in the nation. During the last 90 days, the Task Force and associated working groups spent more than 1,000 hours researching and discussing the most pressing issues involving school safety and security, including conducting a comprehensive review of state, local, federal, and private research and after action reports; seeking and evaluating public comment and suggestions; visiting schools and meeting with school administrators, staff, students, and parents; meeting with local fire, police and first responders; holding discussions with school resource officers from across the State; meeting with vendors; and reviewing pertinent law and regulations.

In the report, we have identified 59 agreed upon recommendations. We hope the recommendations contained in this report will assist you in prioritizing safety preparedness initiatives.

Thank you for the opportunity to advise you on these critical issues.

Sincerely,

Perry E. Plummer, Director
New Hampshire Department of Safety,
Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management

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> **"If we can't put our kids on a school bus and truly believe that they're going to be safe, then nothing else matters."**

– Governor Christopher T. Sununu,
State of the State Address, February 15, 2018

Introduction

This report provides agreed upon recommendations to New Hampshire's state and local leaders, school administrators and staff, students, parents, and first responders, on making New Hampshire's schools the safest they can be while fostering growth and an atmosphere that is conducive to the educational, emotional, and physical well-being of staff and students.

This report was drafted by the School Safety Preparedness Task Force established by Governor Christopher T. Sununu in March of 2018.

The Task Force is composed of 16 members who represent stakeholders at the state and local level; police, fire, and first responders; mental health professionals; safety and security professionals; and school administrators, staff, students, and parents.

The Task Force was charged with the consultation of subject matter experts and members of the public to find areas of agreement regarding steps that move the State forward in improving the safety of New Hampshire's students while maintaining and improving the core purpose of educational institutions. Though there are many important issues that touch on the safety of New Hampshire's school children, the Task Force was created to consider issues primarily identified with active shooter incidents.

The overarching goal of the Task Force was to: (1) Provide practical, actionable recommendations from areas of agreement among Task Force members to New Hampshire state and local leaders, school administrators and staff, students, parents, and first responders, on making New Hampshire's schools the safest in the nation, while (2) complementing and furthering the primary mission of New Hampshire's schools by fostering an atmosphere that is conducive to the educational, emotional and physical well-being and growth of staff and students.

Executive Summary

Though significant steps have been taken by the State of New Hampshire during the past few years to ensure the safety and security of New Hampshire's school children, further improvements are recommended. The Task Force was given 90 days to evaluate and recommend agreed upon, actionable additional steps that New Hampshire can take to ensure New Hampshire's schools are the safest in the nation. The Task Force narrowed its focus to issues primarily identified with active shooter incidents. As such, the Task Force presents recommendations organized into seven topic areas that task force members determined were most critical and would provide the most benefit to increasing the safety and security of New Hampshire's schools while facilitating a schools primary educative mission. The topics are: legislation, mental health, planning, training, exercises, communications, and facilities.

It is the assailant who is responsible for choosing to commit an act of violence. The recommendations in this report are meant to empower school staff and students by creating a culture that promotes and supports mental health, and is prepared to respond if someone chooses to commit an act of violence against them. It is important that the recommendations in this report are supported by school administrators, staff, and students and instituted in a culture that puts safety first to include supporting features that have been instituted to protect staff and students against an active shooter.

It is important to recognize that while there is no identified profile for an active shooter in schools, certain characteristics are common. The Task Force approached the topic with the following understandings regarding active shooters in schools: prior to most active shooter incidents at schools someone typically knew about the attack, the assailant engaged in behavior that caused concern in others without directly threatening the school, the assailant considered or attempted suicide, the assailant had difficulty coping with personal loss or failure, and the assailant was likely bullied.

The mental health recommendations focus on

Remember,
time is of the essence.

- The average active-shooter incident is **_over in 5 minutes_**.[175]
- During an active shooter event, a child's chance of **_survival is measured in seconds_**.
- Every time-saving device, even those that increase response times by mere seconds, must be given full consideration.

creating a culture in schools that adheres to safety protocols, that is free of the stigmatization of mental health challenges, and reduces or prevents harm or violence of all kinds. Additional recommendations include providing help for those experiencing a mental health challenge, assessing possible threats posed by individuals or groups exhibiting warning signs or pre-incident indicators, and expanding community and not-for-profit mental health services.

The planning recommendations include continuing the voluntary school security assessments and reassessments, developing predetermined responses to emergencies and active-shooter incidents, developing specialized plans for non-school events that use the school facilities, and developing go-kits for all school staff.

The training and exercises recommendations focus on providing training for all school staff to recognize warning signs and pre-incident indicators and the appropriate steps to take once the behavior is recognized including providing help for a student experiencing a mental health crisis. All school staff should also receive incident command system trainings, and training on planning and responding to emergencies like an active shooter in the school. Additionally, first responders are recommended to receive warm zone training. Warm zone training consists of training first responders to enter an area of the scene that has been cleared by law enforcement but not necessarily secured and then provide first aid, stabilize victims, and possibly extract victims. Finally, school resource officers should receive specialized training and the feasibility of a school marshal program should be examined.

The communications recommendations focus on increasing the ability of school staff to communicate with individuals within the school and with groups outside the school and vice versa. In addition to ensuring that communications within the school and to outside parties is possible, recommendations also focus on decreasing the amount of time it takes to communicate and on increasing the quantity of critical information that is transferred when communicating without increasing the amount of time required to communicate.

Facilities upgrades focus on controlling access to the school, identifying the people in the school, and slowing the progress of an assailant while help arrives. It is important to note that creating a more secure school has benefits beyond the physical safety of staff and students. Research shows that students have a fundamental need to feel safe in school and they derive that feeling, in part, by feeling physically protected from threats.[1] In this way, a mental health benefit is derived from increasing school security.

A SNAPSHOT OF NEW HAMPSHIRE'S SCHOOLS

Number of Public Schools:
491

Public School Students:
182,425

Teachers:
14,770

Pupil Teacher Ratio:
12.35

National Average Pupil Teacher Ratio:
15.97

Data provided by the New Hampshire Department of Education

A New Hampshire Homeland Security and Emergency Management staff member facilitates an emergency exercise at a school in New Hampshire.

HOMELAND SECURITY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT'S SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM AND THE PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

There have been more than 300 school shootings since the Sandy Hook school shooting in 2012. While no other State has done more to ensure the safety and security of school kids, New Hampshire must continue to improve school safety and security.

New Hampshire Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) established a School Readiness Program in 2013. The program provides subject matter experts who conduct in-person assessments of the security at participating K-12 non-boarding schools. Assessments are voluntary, available to all schools, include public and private schools, and identify potential gaps in school security with a focus on access control, early detection and notification, and emergency alerting. Approximately 75 percent of all schools in New Hampshire have been assessed.

Governor Sununu allocated nearly $30 million in the Public Schools Infrastructure Fund to facilitate infrastructure and security upgrades at schools, including making upgrades to close school security gaps identified during school assessments. As of May 2, 2018, 90 school administrative units that provide oversight for more than 400 schools submitted a total of 665 applications. Almost 380 grants totaling $18.5 million have been approved by the Governor and Council. Eighty percent of schools are expected to receive infrastructure upgrades. Approval processes are ongoing.

Task Force Structure and Methodology

The Task Force is composed of 16 members who represent stakeholders at the state and local level, including police, fire, and first responders; mental health professionals; safety and security professionals; and school administrators, staff, students, and parents.

To ensure the Task Force considered a broad range of issues and based recommendations on the latest pertinent knowledge, technology, and techniques, the Task Force consulted with four working groups comprised of more than 100 subject matter experts focused in the areas of emergency response, mental health, innovation and technology, and education. The Task Force also consulted with school resource officers from across the State at the 2018 Annual School Resource Officer Conference held by New Hampshire Homeland Security and Emergency Management. The Task Force also requested information from product vendors to ensure it was well informed regarding the latest in available technologies. Additionally, the Task Force pored over hundreds of documents and databases, including reports and data provided by federal, state and private entities, academic studies, after action reports, and news and magazine articles.

Governor Christopher T. Sununu gave the Task Force 90 days to seek out areas of agreement among task force members from which to make actionable school safety recommendations for New Hampshire schools. Efforts to provide recommendations on issues where little agreement was found was beyond the purview of the Task Force, including recommendations regarding gun control, and gun-free zones.

As the Task Force considered the issues and possible recommendations for New Hampshire's schools, it was mindful that a school's primary

"Governor Sununu gave the Task Force 90 days to find actionable recommendations from areas of agreement among Task Force members. The Task Force realizes that the debate on gun control and similar sweeping legislative changes continues both nationally and statewide with little common ground between opposing groups and because of that, we determined these were not areas of agreement that could be reached in 90 days. Further debate will not immediately increase the safety of our school children, nor will it meet Governor Sununu's directive for recommendations from areas of agreement within 90 days. The safety of our schools is too important to get bogged down."

- Perry Plummer,
Task Force Chair,
Director of New Hampshire Homeland Security and Emergency Management

mission can be generally stated as fostering an atmosphere that is conducive to the educational, emotional, and physical well-being and growth of staff and students. As such, the Task Force focused on recommendations that would maintain or further that general mission while making New Hampshire's schools the safest in the nation.

The Task Force recognized the disparity in resources throughout our State and that the North Country and western part of the State may suffer from longer response times and fewer resources. As an action plan is developed, these disparities should be taken into account.

Disrupting the Pathway to Violence

Attack

Breach

Reunification Recovery Response

Preparation

Research

Hardening Schools

Ideation

Grievance

Behavioral Intervention Teams

School Culture

Adapted from the Department of Justice's *Making Prevention a Reality* Report.
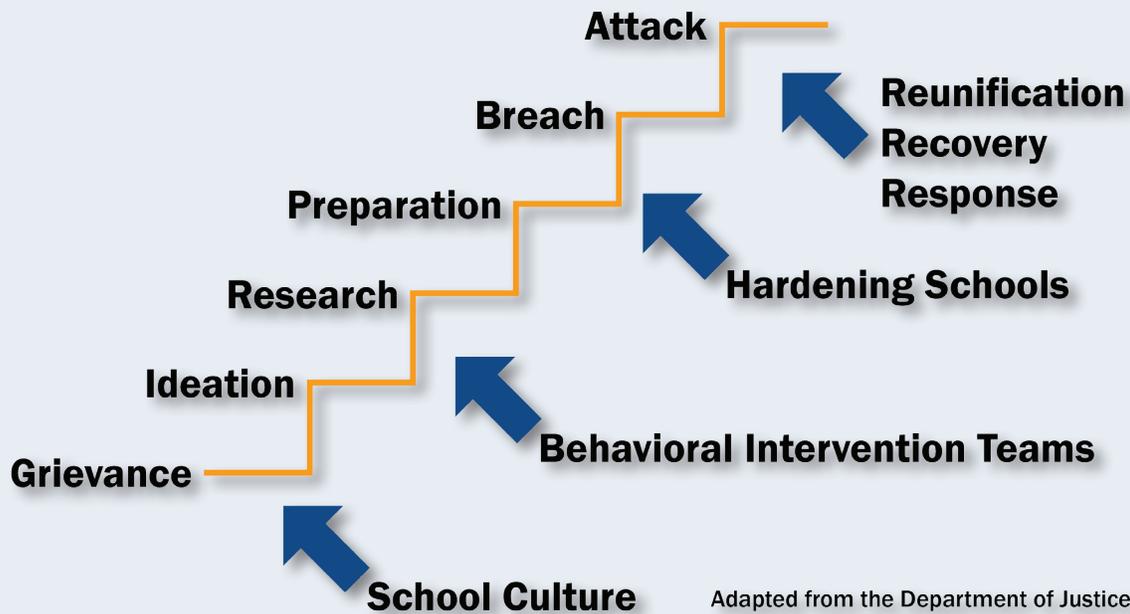
The approach of the Task Force in providing recommendations can be conceptualized as a means of disrupting the mental and physical processes that turn the thoughts of a would-be assailant into action.

A well-known model of this process is the *Pathway to Violence*.[176] The steps along the pathway to violence are: grievance, ideation, research and planning, preparation, breach, and attack. In reality, a would-be assailant can enter the pathway at any point and move through various steps of the pathway with significant speed. However, school active shooters generally do not act spontaneously, rather they move through a series of steps that turn thoughts into deeds.

The Task Force recommendations are meant to work as a means of disrupting the pathway, including changing the school culture and instituting social and emotional learning to undermine the causes that start someone down the path to violence, training staff and students to spot warning signs and facilitate the provision of mental health services to the would-be assailant, and hardening the school to stop the assailant prior to causing injury or death.

Legal Review

This section provides summaries of pertinent statutes either directly or indirectly related to the safety and security of New Hampshire's schools.

RSA 189:64 – School Emergency Response Plans

Every school, public or private, must have a site-specific school emergency response plan based on the Incident Command System (ICS) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS). Each school is required to include two emergency response drills as part of their fire evacuation drill quota. Plans should follow an ***all-hazards*** approach by addressing all potential hazards including natural and human threats (e.g., fire, earthquake, active threat, and acts of violence). A drill should be conducted in the first year after the completion of the plan. With approval from the school board, each school should submit a floor plan of the school to New Hampshire Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

All-hazards: an efficient approach to planning that addresses hazards likely to occur in a particular area, or hazards that could cause injury, property damage, business disruption, or environmental impact.

The plans should be coordinated with local emergency response plans and with local first responders. Schools must review plans annually and submit updates or notification that an update was not needed to the Department of Education by September 1 of each year. The director of Homeland Security and Emergency Management must assist schools in creating and implementing plans. Additionally, the director must assist schools in training to execute a plan.

RSA 189:68 – Student Privacy

Information that identifies students or family members shall not be kept in the statewide longitudinal data system by the Department of Education, including names; addresses; contact information; financial information; medical, dental, or criminal records; employment records; social security information for the child or family members; sexual activity or behaviors; or religious or ethical practices, beliefs, or affiliation of the student or family.

Schools cannot use identification devices that use radio frequency identification or similar technology to identify the student, transmit information about the student, or provide the location of a student without the approval of the school board, a public hearing, and written consent from the parent or legal guardian.

Schools are not allowed to use surveillance software (e.g., observing, capturing images, listening, or recording) on school supplied computers or devices without the approval of the school board, a public hearing, and written consent from the parent or legal guardian. An exception is provided if the device is about to be, or has been stolen.

Schools are not allowed to record classrooms for the purpose of teacher evaluations without the approval of the school board, a public hearing, and written consent from the parent or legal guardian for each student. An exception is provided when the audio or video recording is for use by a child with a disability, recordings for student instructional purposes, and recordings for teacher interns or student teachers after written notification to the parents of each student.

Section 193-D:2 Safe School Zones

The State Board of Education shall adopt rules relative to safe school zones for public school students and employees regarding disciplinary procedures and due process procedures for the suspension and expulsion of students in general; the expulsion of students who bring a firearm to a school without written authorization from the superintendent or a designee; the discipline of students with special needs; and the reporting of acts of theft, destruction, or violence.

RSA 158:31 Unlawful Use of Explosives

Local police and fire chiefs shall investigate

the cause of explosions and report explosions of suspicious, illegal, or unknown origin to the colonel of the State Police. Criminal threats involving an explosive device, radiological or nuclear material, or any chemical or biological agent shall be reported to the colonel of the State Police.

Staff from NH Homeland Security and Emergency Management observe and evaluate as elementary students file onto a bus during a school safety exercise evacuation drill.

Each day in New Hampshire, 173,000 students are transported to and from schools by 2,700 busses.

Nationally from 2007 to 2016, there were 1,147 school transportation accidents and seven school bus passengers were killed annually in crashes.[177]

In addition to the typical safety responsibilities on campus, schools are also responsible for students while they are traveling on school busses. Whether it be for transportation to and from school, or traveling on a field trip, the school is ultimately responsible for the safety and well-being of its students.

Though school bus safety is beyond the prescribed scope of the Task Force, it is important to recognize the necessity of implemented and exercised safety plans for school transportation. The Task Force identified the importance of school coordination with transportation companies and recommends that school bus drivers, monitors, and students participate in exercises and evacuation drills frequently.

Legislation

In some instances, seeking new or modifying current legislation is the appropriate course of action to improve the safety and security of New Hampshire's schools. Though national gun legislation and gun-free school zone legislation have been proposed as potential final solutions to school threats during debates in both state and national public forums, the Task Force maintains there is no single solution to improving the safety of New Hampshire's schools.

National gun laws, gun-free school zones, "red flag" legislation, and background checks are hotly debated with few areas of agreement between interested groups. While national gun laws will certainly have an impact on New Hampshire, national issues are well beyond the mandate of the Task Force and best had at the national level. Similarly, gun-free school zones are another highly politicized issue. Legislation on the issue was considered by the New Hampshire Legislature this year, and was defeated suggesting there is not sufficient agreement on the matter statewide.

Another hotly debated topic is "red flag" legislation. Currently, if an individual who has not been arrested is thought by their family or law enforcement officers to be a risk to themselves or others, court adjudication or arrest is required to seize the individual's firearms. The advantage of "red flag" legislation is that it can stop someone from harming themselves or others impulsively. Gun violence, especially suicide, can often be an impulsive act and suicide survivors have testified that suicidal individuals spend less than 10 minutes deliberating prior to acting on suicidal feelings.[2]

Examples of "red flag" legislation include extreme risk protection orders. Extreme risk protection orders would allow law enforcement to temporarily remove firearms from the possession of individuals who may be a risk to themselves or others pending a hearing to be held within 14 to 21 days of removal of the firearms. Currently, eight states have instituted "red flag" laws: California, Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, Maryland, Oregon, Vermont, and Washington.[3] Instituting extreme risk protection orders or a similar measure would require a change in state law.

Similarly, changes to the background check system for the purchase of firearms in New Hampshire would require altering state law. Recently, sales restrictions and background checks for firearm purchases have been proposed and adopted by other states and even some corporations. Enhancing background checks and synchronizing New Hampshire's mental health reporting with federal partners have previously been considered by the legislature, but legislation has not been enacted.

The Task Force considered the issues of "red flag" legislation and background checks and determined that study groups should be formed to examine these issues further. Study groups can give these issues the appropriate time and attention they deserve to properly determine if changes in these areas are right for New Hampshire.

The Task Force also considered a legislative change to the number of mandatory drills conducted at schools. If an armed assailant enters a school, it is of utmost importance that New Hampshire's students and school staff are exceptionally well prepared. While schools regularly practice evacuations during mandated fire drills, the same level of preparedness is not mandated for an incident involving an assailant in a school. As such, the Task Force and the State Fire Marshal's Office is recommending alterations to the State Fire Code and to RSA 189:64 such that schools can replace 4 of the 10 required emergency egress drills (i.e., fire drills) with all-hazards drills.

Lastly, in RSA 189:64, schools are asked to submit floor plans to Homeland Security and Emergency Management, if approved by the school board. The Task Force recommends that the submittal of floor plans becomes mandatory to facilitate the building of a complete floor-plan database. This database should be distributed to first responder organizations in a school's jurisdiction and to regional tactical teams. This would improve the situational awareness of first responders and allow them to more quickly and efficiently move through a building when attempting to engage an assailant or treat those in need of medical care.

Legislative Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Convene a study group to

determine if the implementation of extreme risk protection orders is right for New Hampshire.

Recommendation 2: Convene a study group to examine New Hampshire background checks for the purchase of firearms to determine if changes are needed.

Recommendation 3: Replace 4 of the 10 required emergency egress drills (fire drills) with all-hazards drills, at least one of which should test emergency response to an armed assailant.
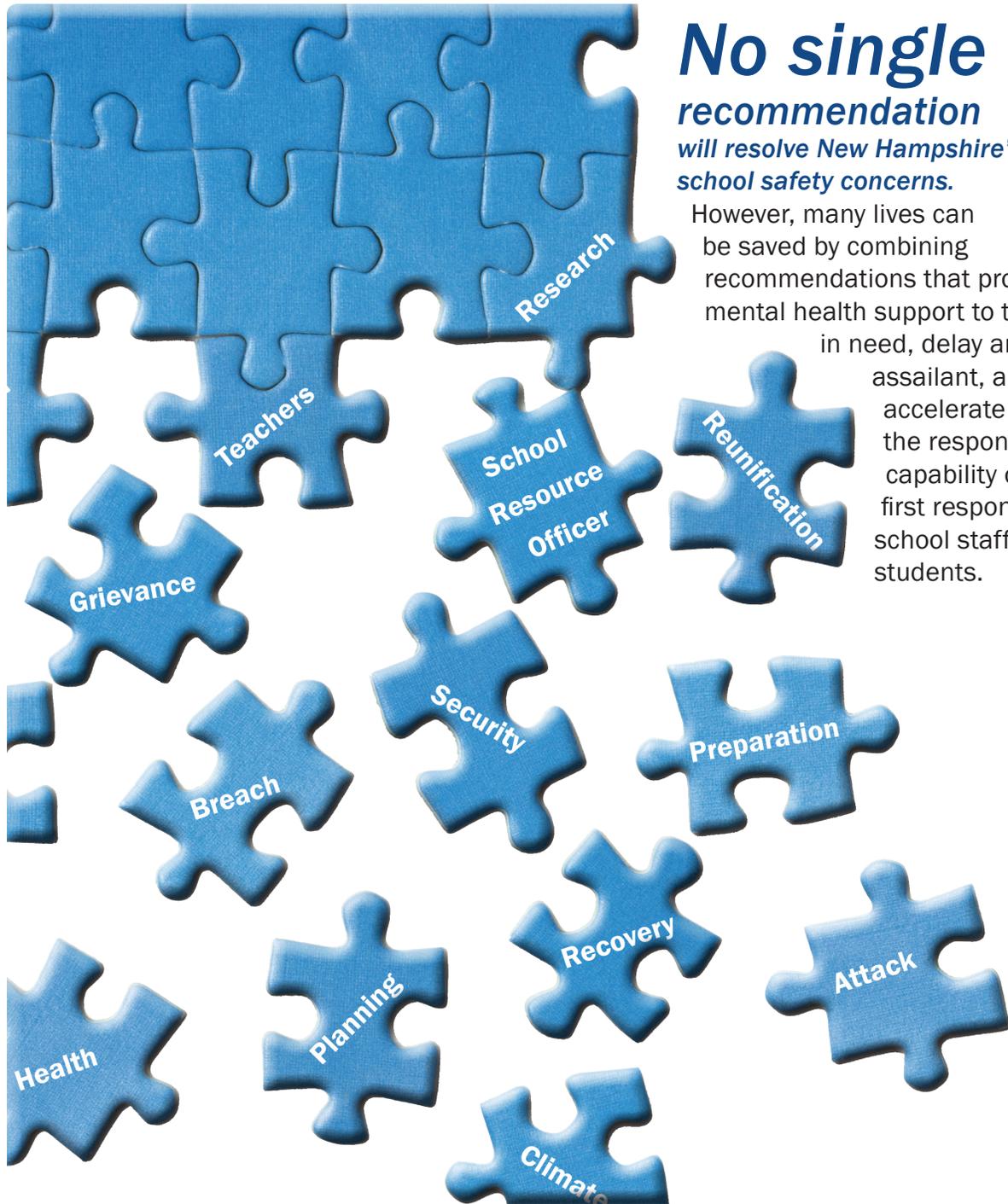
No single recommendation *will resolve New Hampshire's school safety concerns.* However, many lives can be saved by combining recommendations that provide mental health support to those in need, delay an assailant, and accelerate the response capability of first responders, school staff, and students.

Research

Teachers

School Resource Officer

Reunification

Grievance

Security

Breach

Preparation

Recovery

Attack

Health

Planning

Climate

Mental Health

A school's culture is the set of norms that defines the behavior inside a school, and largely determines what is considered socially acceptable behavior between classmates, and between staff and students.[4] Culture is significantly important to the social, emotional, and academic success of students and staff and is linked to multiple student behavioral, academic, health and social-emotional outcomes.[5] Specifically, school culture is a significant predictor of dropout rates, absenteeism and truancy, suspension, drug use, and violent, aggressive behavior.[6]

A positive school culture is closely associated with prosocial motivation, academic motivation, self-esteem, conflict resolution, and altruistic behavior.[7] A positive school culture has also been linked to reducing incidences of bullying, which is frequently associated with an assailant's decision to engage in a violent act. Additionally, research suggests that students who feel safe in schools perform better than peers who do not feel safe.[8] A 2010 study correlates a student's perceived sense of security with an 18 percent increase in student score performance.[9]

In most active shooter incidents at schools, the assailant was known to the school population, chose the school for a specific reason, planned the attack, and engaged in behavior that caused concern in others.[10] As such, it is crucially important that school staff, students and parents know how to recognize warning signs and pre-incident indicators, and who to report them to such that the individual gets much needed help and the school population is protected.

Social and Emotional Learning

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is a critical part of establishing a culture of mental health in schools. SEL is a process that facilitates acquiring and applying the knowledge, attitude and skills needed to effectively manage emotions.[11] Additionally, SEL facilitates the setting and achievement of positive goals, feeling and showing empathy, having healthy relationships, and making good decisions.[12] Research indicates that SEL has the potential to positively impact school climate and to promote academic, social and emotional benefits.[13] Students who receive SEL instruction have demonstrated improved academic performance, attitudes, and behaviors.[14] Additionally, students receiving SEL instruction are shown to exhibit a decrease in negative behaviors, and emotional distress.[15] Furthermore, SEL instruction has been linked to academic achievement scores that are 11 percentile points higher on average when compared with students who are not instructed in SEL.[16] Additional benefits of SEL instruction have been shown to include increased motivation to learn, a stronger commitment to school, increased time spent on school work, improved classroom behavior, and

School shooters have no clear profile.

However, prevalent characteristics include:

1) prior to the attack, someone knew about it, 2) the assailant engaged in behavior that concerned others, but did not directly threaten the school, 3) the assailant considered or attempted suicide, 4) the assailant had difficulty coping with personal loss or failure, and 5) the assailant was likely bullied.[178]

CHARACTERISTICS OF ACTIVE SHOOTERS IN SCHOOLS

According to the FBI, there were 21 active-shooters in schools between 2008 and 2018. Those shooters exhibited the following characteristics:

Connected to School:

No 14%
Yes 86%
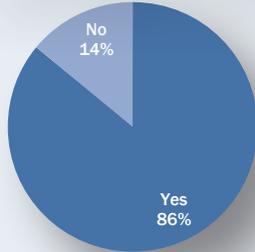
History of being bullied:

Unknown 24%
Yes 28%
No 48%

A current student:

No 43%
Yes 57%

Known to police:

Unknown 5%
Yes 33%
No 62%

Known to staff:

Unknown 5%
No 19%
Yes 76%
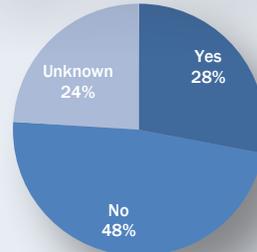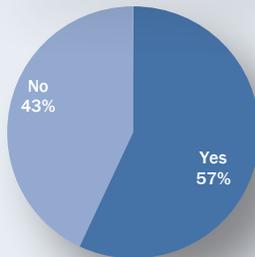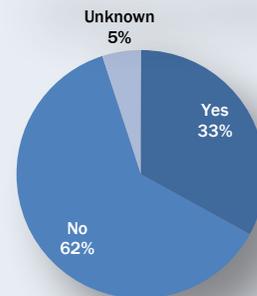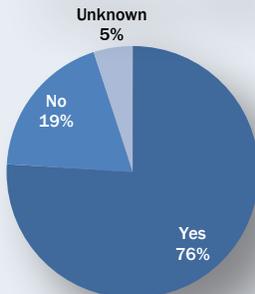
In school legitimately:

No 32%
Yes 68%
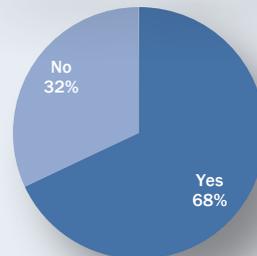
Known history of mental illness:

Unknown 14%
Yes 38%
No 48%
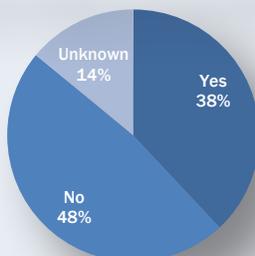
Data compiled by the New Hampshire Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management

a decrease in disruptive behavior, noncompliance, delinquency, and requests for discipline. Students who receive SEL instruction show a decrease in depression, anxiety, stress, and social withdrawal.[17] Also, SEL decreases the likelihood of being wait listed for public housing, receiving public assistance, having involvement with police before adulthood, and spending time in a detention facility.[18]

Studies indicate that students exposed to SEL in school continue to outperform peers up to 18 years later on a variety of indicators, including positive social behaviors and attitudes, empathy and teamwork skills, academics, less emotional distress, and fewer drug use problems.[19] A cost-benefit analysis of six SEL programs across several indicators shows an 11 to 1 return on investment.[20]

The Task Force researched various SEL frameworks, such as the *Choose Love Enrichment Program™*, and found the most successful of these frameworks to contain academic, social, and emotional benefits for students.

Stigma

A school's culture determines whether school staff and students attach a stigma to students with mental health challenges.[21] Adolescents who suffer

> **"*As a first responder, I recognize that prevention is the biggest piece to this puzzle. The greatest opportunity to stop a school shooter is through healthy school cultures and providing mental health services to those in need.*"**
>
> – Allan Clark, Chief,
> Sugar Hill Fire Department

with an untreated mental health challenge are placed in a difficult and precarious situation. Left untreated, a child with a mental health challenge is more likely to earn a lower GPA, drop out of school, or be unemployed when compared with peers who do not suffer from a similar untreated challenge.[22] Reducing stigma can help encourage those who need help to reach out for assistance, resulting in a potential benefit to the student and the community.[23]

There are many steps that can be taken to reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness. Importantly, many of these suggestions can be implemented in an age-appropriate manner for younger students, and prior to the onset of mental health concerns for many students. Mental health could be included more comprehensively in health education. Schools could develop strategies for clear and frequent communication about mental health, treatment, resources for support, and how everyone in the school community can be involved in enhancing resilience. Also, schools could serve as conduits to other community resources, connecting individuals and families to the resources, agencies, or organizations that can more effectively meet their needs.

Offering school-based anti-stigma activities can present an opportunity to evolve the understanding of mental illness and improve the overall attitudes towards individuals that live with the mental illness.[24] Furthermore, schools can include mental health strategies in curriculum initiatives.[25] Educating students, school staff and parents about mental health can enhance knowledge and change attitudes.[26] Adapting the school curriculum to meet mental health promotion can also embed mental health as a component of health activities which could decrease the overall stigma associated with mental disorders.[27] Schools could also include assignments directed at guided conversation.

One example is from Newfound Regional High School which partnered with Bristol Public library for a reading assignment of *What Made Maddie Run,* a book written about a young woman's struggle with mental illness and her resulting suicide. Following completion of the book, students and community members were invited to participate in a community discussion that included a facilitated panel consisting of members from local community mental health agencies, primary care providers, pediatricians,

Adolescents who suffer with an untreated mental health challenge are placed in a difficult and precarious situation. Left untreated, a child with a mental health challenge is more likely to earn a lower GPA, drop out of school, or be unemployed when compared with peers who do not suffer from a similar untreated challenge. Reducing stigma can help encourage those who need help to reach out for assistance.

the National Alliance on Mental Illness, and peer support. The resulting discussion was informative and powerful, allowing a difficult topic to be de-stigmatized and examined with support and honesty. Available resources in the community were provided and future events will likely be planned to continue the discussion on mental health.

Other ways to reduce stigma include developing and producing media campaigns (e.g., public service announcements on radio and television, social media messages, web-based messages, posters, flyers, and brochures) that encourage student involvement and increase awareness throughout the community. These campaigns should include instruction about spotting warning signs and pre-incident indicators, and what resources are available for someone in crisis, such as national hotlines, mental health services, etc. Information regarding mental health and associated services could also be posted to a school's web site. Additionally, the Department of Education could reach out to families of students to

> *"...[Destigmatize] mental illness and mental health treatment. Educate and train parents, teachers, and students to recognize warning signs and known indicators of violence and mental illness and to alert those who can provide for safety and treatment."*
>
> – After Action Report, Virginia Tech

encourage help-seeking behaviors, destigmatize and normalize the discussion and treatment of mental health issues, and increase mental health awareness.

Protocols and Assessments

A school's culture is also tied to the likelihood that a student or teacher will notice and appropriately assist students who exhibit warning signs and pre-incident indicators. Currently, a clear profile of individuals who perpetrate crimes against school communities does not exist.[28] However, prior to most active shooter incidents at schools someone knew about the attack, the assailant engaged in behavior that caused concern in others without directly threatening the school, the assailant considered or attempted suicide, the assailant had difficulty coping with personal loss or failure, and the assailant was likely bullied.[29] This lack of a clear profile makes prevention efforts more difficult and increases the value of awareness and communication.[30] However, school shootings are not typically impulsive acts suggesting that an opportunity exists to detect and report warning signs, provide help to the individual, and conduct a threat assessment such that an active shooter incident at a school could be prevented.[31]

As there is no profile of a school shooter, all members of the school community, parents, school staff, and students, should be taught to recognize early warning signs and pre-incident indicators.[32] All school personnel, including school resource officers and contracted employees such as coaches, drivers, and cafeteria staff, should be trained in a reporting protocol that enhances and clarifies expectations for what to do if a concern emerges. When a concern is reported, a clear protocol should be in place to guide staff in how to help the individual and assess what other steps may be necessary to ensure safety.

One method currently available in New Hampshire that facilitates addressing mental health issues as they arise is Mental Health First Aid (MHFA). MHFA is a means of identifying, understanding and responding to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders. Mental Health First Aid is similar to CPR in that it can be administered by a bystander to assist an individual until the individual can receive professional medical attention. MHFA training provides the skills needed to reach out and provide initial help and support to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem or experiencing a crisis.

1 in 5 children *in the United States* will experience a *mental disorder* in a given year, which negatively impacts their ability to do well in school, at home, and in their communities.[179]

Sample Threat Assessment

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

Threat Assessment Policy & Procedures

Appendix #704

I. Threat Assessment Information Flow & Action Flowchart

| Anyone with information that causes concern, fear, or suggests an **imminent** potential threat or act of violence should contact **UNCSA Police** **immediately**.

If the nature of the threat or situation is extreme and unfolding at a rapid rate the case goes directly to TAT. | → | **Immediate police response**
Notify Chief of Police (Chair of TAT) | → | **Intervention and/or consequences** |

THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAM (TAT)

- Limited membership
- Ability to meet in timely fashion
- Decision making group
- Specific threat assessment scope
- Police investigation shared with team
- Info. sharing outside team restricted
- Assess threat as low, medium, high
- Recommend/determine intervention or consequences

Monitor and follow-up as needed

UNCSA Police

Central repository for all completed TAT

If the situation is deemed serious in the pre-screen, the case is referred to the TAT.

If time allows, a concern about a student or employee is pre-screened prior to going to the Threat Assessment Team. If the situation is deemed valid, the case is referred to the TAT.

If the totality of the information provided does not warrant a more thorough or immediate review by the TAT, the prescreening entity can dispose of the case.

| **High School Mitigation Team**

Student related pre-screening, if time allows | **College Mitigation Team**

Student related pre-screening, if time allows | **Public Safety and/or Human Resources Review**

Faculty, staff, general situation, community pre-screening, if time allows |

- Case closed with no intervention or assistance required, or
- Some type(s) of intervention or assistance is needed other than threat assessment. For example, a student may not be a threat, but might benefit from counseling. The UNCSA Case Manager will work with the student to facilitate assistance needed.

Efforts have been initiated across the State to build a cadre of trainers, which has increased the statewide capacity to provide MHFA in schools. MHFA training should be available to all members of school communities, including high school students, personnel, school resource officers, and contracted employees (e.g., coaches, cafeteria staff, facilities staff, and bus drivers). School communities can build upon the MHFA model to develop peer support teams or other resources to support students, which ultimately impacts the overall culture of the school community.

It is important that education personnel, healthcare providers, and law enforcement officers know and understand the applicable laws pertaining to mental health confidentiality. Confusion regarding these laws can cause a chilling effect on information sharing; therefore, a codified understanding will help facilitate a smoother transfer of appropriate information.[33]

Caring for the individual student is only part of the needed response. A threat assessment should also be conducted to ensure the physical safety of the individual and the students and staff. Threat assessment is a structure which seeks to analyze an individual prior to a potentially violent act.

Through a threat assessment process, schools can create an atmosphere of respect and security, build capacity for violence reduction, and boost

> **"Information sharing is key; participants repeatedly identified the need for communication strategies that build bridges between education and mental health systems."**
>
> – After Action Report, Virginia Tech

emotional support for all members of the school community.[34] Schools can develop a threat assessment task force at the community or district level that engages the local public health network, including an intervention and reporting protocol that evaluates students quickly and efficiently and provides a plan to help appropriately return students to school, if they have been removed. An effective type of threat assessment is the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT). BITs consist of a multi-disciplinary group that meets regularly to support and track a target group (e.g., students, employees, faculty, staff) using an established protocol.[35] A team watches for warning signs or pre-incident indicators in reported individual or group behavior that is disruptive, problematic, or concerning.[36] If warning signs or pre-incident indicators are detected, the team investigates further, conducts a threat assessment, and determines what type and level of support, intervention, warning or notification is needed.[37] The team then deploys the recommended resources and coordinates follow-up meetings.[38]

A 2011 survey of school safety in Virginia found that threat assessment guidelines decreased weapons-related problems and school suspensions.[39] Additionally, these schools had fewer incidents of bullying and more positive perception of the school's culture.[40] Also members of the school community were more willing to reach out for help and to report threats.[41]

Behavioral intervention teams facilitate the discovery of mental illness or the risk of mental

The National Association of School Psychologists recommends a ratio of no more than 1,000 students per school psychologist, and no more than 500 to 700 students per school psychologist when more comprehensive and preventive services are being provided. The latest data available from the National Association of School Psychologists, collected in 2009, indicates that New Hampshire has the eighth lowest ratio of students to psychologists with one school psychologist per 948 students.

illness at an early stage. If the individual with the mental illness is left untreated, symptoms may increase drastically which could become more serious and potentially life threatening.[42] Therefore, educators, along with other school personnel, need to possess the ability to recognize behavioral or emotional changes that could correlate with a mental illness.[43] Providing proper training in relation to youth and their mental health can enhance and better equip educational staff to protect and promote the mental health of adolescents.[44]

In order for a threat assessment process to be successful, it is important that a school establish appropriate policies to ensure and maintain the privacy of students' information and protect their rights. While there is concern that these students may commit a crime in the future, these students have not yet done anything wrong. Importantly, for

every perpetrator of violent crimes who has a history of mental illness, there are hundreds of individuals who have similar profiles who do not become violent.[45]

Suicide

From 2011-2016, suicide was the second leading cause of death for youth and young adults ages 10 to 24 in New Hampshire.[46] A report released by the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC) in June of 2018 shows a dramatic increase in suicide rates across the United States since 1999.[47] The report indicates a 48 percent increase in New Hampshire's suicide rate, indicating that New Hampshire is one of three states experiencing the greatest increase.[48]

A suicide death can have a profound and lasting impact on a school and school community and may lead to an increase in suicidal thoughts, behaviors,

and suicide deaths among individuals who have significant risk factors and were impacted by the previous suicide. Students are not alone in their risk for suicide, and the suicide death of a teacher, school administrator, coach or other individual in the school community may present considerable challenges for maintaining a safe and productive learning environment and for the mental health and well-being of students, staff and other members of the school community.

Providing ongoing suicide prevention training for schools increases the likelihood of prevention and early intervention with someone at risk. Having an outreach program to educate the administration, staff, and students to help remove the stigma of seeking help and to provide education about available resources available will encourage those in need of help to seek it. Having response plans and protocols in place will ensure that schools are able to assist an at-risk individual with getting appropriate and timely professional help and follow-up care. Having plans and protocols in place for responding to a suicide death will result in the school's ability to implement a timely and trauma-informed response if a suicide death occurs. These strategies are consistent with the underlying principles of the State of New Hampshire Suicide Prevention Plan which includes: "Suicide prevention must become a part of all of our ongoing work and become embedded throughout our communities including our schools, health care systems, and corrections at all levels."[49]

Alternatives to Suspension and Expulsion

Research indicates that removal of students from schools can cause increased behavioral problems, diminish academic achievement, and increase dropout rates.[50] Reducing expulsions and suspensions can have the potential to improve overall school culture and produce better student outcomes.[51] Choosing alternatives to suspension and expulsion, when safe to do so, may better keep students engaged, connected, and in school. Additionally, it keeps students connected with research-based mental health assessments and services.

One means of keeping students in school and
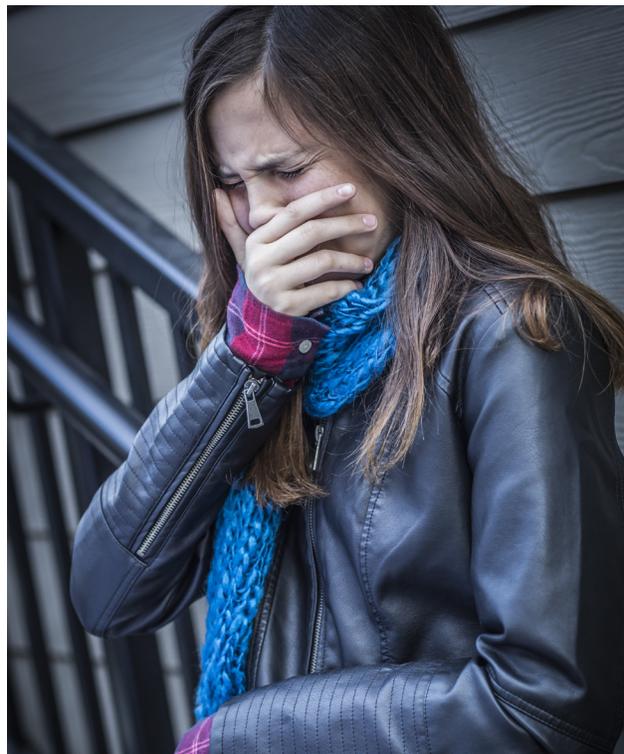
From 2011 to 2016 suicide was the second leading cause of death for youth and young adults ages 10 to 24 in New Hampshire.[180]

close to needed services is through a Multi-Tiered System of Support for Behavioral Health (MTSS-B). The MTSS-B framework consists of a schoolwide system of evidence-based behavioral practices for all students, a targeted system of practices for youth who need additional support, and a tertiary system of intensive and individualized interventions for students with the greatest behavioral needs. An MTSS-B system operates with universally understood schoolwide behavioral expectations, research- and data-based decisions, organized and shared leadership, and support for personnel through embedded professional development, and purposefully planned implementation cycles with continuous evaluation for improvement of outcomes. The MTSS-B framework promotes a positive, proactive approach to screening at risk students and connecting them to services before behaviors become so severe they can no longer stay in school. The MTSS-B is implemented in more than 20,000 schools nationally and requires schools to have local teams and safety procedures in place. The MTSS-B requires schools to implement evidence-based

mental health and wellness services and requires resources for trainers and technical assistant experts that support staff throughout implementation and sustainment of the model. The system also supports identification of strategies for collaborating with partners.

The MTSS-B framework includes Positive Behavioral Intervention Strategies (PBIS) intended to improve prosocial behaviors, effective emotion regulation, and resilience.[52] The complimentary frameworks are noncurricular prevention strategies that aim at changing the school culture to establish a set of positively stated schoolwide expectations.[53]

Increasing the Availability of Mental Health Services

Beyond the goal of improving school culture is the reality that the demand for mental health services is greater than the supply.[54] Funding is one root cause of this issue. The New Hampshire community mental health system has been level funded for 12 years and is not adequately funded to support the identified needs of the State. Additionally, New Hampshire community mental health center staff salaries may be as much as $25,000 less when compared with similarly credentialed colleagues and salaries have not aligned with standard inflation rates during the last several years.[55] In consequence, students face long wait times or the complete inability to access services.[56] In contrast, students have expressed a desire for walk-in student centers, 24-hour crisis hotlines, individual counseling services, and referrals to off-campus services.

In 2009, the New Hampshire Department of Health & Human Services acknowledged that the consequences of New Hampshire's failing mental health care system negatively impacts local law enforcement, hospital emergency rooms, the court system, county jails, and individuals and families.[57]

Inadequate funding for the mental health system does not currently support co-location of mental health services in schools. If a community mental health center has the capacity to provide staff to schools within their catchment area, the allocation of time is limited and often results in wait times that are equivalent to community based services.

The National Association of School

Psychologists recommends a ratio of no more than 1,000 students per school psychologist, in general, and no more than 500 to 700 students per school psychologist when more comprehensive and preventive services are being provided.[58] The latest data available from the National Association of School Psychologists, collected in 2009, indicates that New Hampshire has one school psychologist per 948 students, ranking eighth in the nation for lowest ratio of students per school psychologist.[59]

There needs to be an acknowledgment of the large level of unmet needs and the importance of appropriately training mental health professionals to deliver services to children and adolescents.[60] Increased training can lead to increased services and an increase in the amount of appointments available to those who suffer from a mental health condition.

Research recommends providing more incentives to encourage people to enter the mental health workforce. Academic assistance and financial incentives can assist in further encouragement to

> **"*[Educators, mental health experts, law enforcement and state and local officials from across the country] voiced concerns about the availability of resources to provide timely and appropriate treatment and services and an insufficient number of skilled mental health workers, which result in waiting lists for services.*"**
>
> – After Action Report, Virginia Tech

individuals, particularly students, in order to create a more positive atmosphere that encourages university students and practitioners to join the medical health community. Incentives to address the maldistribution of the mental health workforce can also lower the turnover rate for the community mental health center workforce.[61] Medicare incentives may also attract practitioners to areas that are underserved.[62]

Better use of telemedicine and information technology can reduce turnover rates further. In mental health services, telecommunications have been used for more than 40 years.[63] These services have been used successfully as an instrument for treatment and providing counseling services in areas with high levels of patient and physician satisfaction.[64] These services can also be used to increase training and educational programs for mental health professionals. Recognition of the important role the mental health workforce represents can lead to lowering the workforce turnover rate.

It is important that individuals come together to raise the awareness of mental health in academic institutions and work together to identify, develop, and implement best practices and techniques.[65] The identified best practices and techniques can be used

to meet demand and create a culture that focuses on intervention and prevention.[66] Achieving best practices in access and scheduling appointments begins with an understanding of capacity, supply, and demand.[67] This can begin with an evaluation of each current process to determine the capacity or capabilities for all activities. With an evaluation process, it can be determined if there is available capacity throughout most systems.[68]

Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) provide targeted resources and services to those who cannot afford them. CMHCs provide publicly funded mental health services to individuals and families who meet certain criteria for services and have specialized programs for older adults, children, and families. Services provided by CMHCs include individual and group therapy, assessment and evaluation case management, community based rehabilitation services, psychiatric services, 24-hour emergency services, and community disaster mental health support.[69]

Currently, the State of New Hampshire has CMHCs located in 10 regions.[70] They are private not-for-profit agencies that have contracted with the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human

> **"The magnitude of this incident, especially given the age and number of victims, certainly had an impact on all responding personnel. The agency must ensure that responding personnel are receiving proper mental health services prior to an event and long after… strive to minimize the potential adverse effects of crime scene exposure and all law enforcement personnel should be mindful to avoid unnecessary exposure to trauma. Crime scene access should be given only to individuals with a legitimate law enforcement need, regardless of rank."**

– After Action Report, Newtown, Connecticut

Services, Division of Behavioral Health, to provide publicly funded mental health services to individuals and families who meet certain criteria for services.[71] However, these programs need additional resources to meet the demand for services.

Another available tool is the New Hampshire Public Health Networks (PHNs). PHNs are a regional group of stakeholders, including local health departments and health officers, health care providers, social service agencies, schools, fire, police, emergency medical services, media and advocacy groups, behavioral health, and leaders in the business, government, and faith communities, who work collaboratively to address complex public health issues in their region and statewide.

Each community in New Hampshire has the capacity to connect with the 13 statewide Public Health Networks (PHNs). The New Hampshire PHNs work to enhance targeted efforts toward community health, including school health and safety. PHNs are a natural point of connection between community resources as they have access to information and subject matter experts.

The PHNs maintain a calendar of scheduled meetings and events that increase local capacity for supporting the greater well-being of individuals and communities, to include schools. PHN meetings are a natural forum of multidisciplinary partners to discuss strategies and monitor progress of efforts directed at school preparedness, safety, and well-being.

Mental Health Recommendations

Recommendation 4: Improve school culture by expanding social and emotional learning programs in schools at all levels statewide.

Recommendation 5: Develop an age-appropriate school outreach program that educates staff and students on reducing the stigma of mental illness and what to do when someone is in crisis.

Recommendation 6: Increase and promote

Mental Health First Aid to school staff, students, and families to provide the school community with the resources to effectively manage a mental health incident.

Recommendation 7: Develop a threat assessment task force at the community or district level that engages the local public health network, including an intervention and reporting protocol that evaluates students quickly and efficiently and provides a plan to help appropriately return students to school.

Recommendation 8: Increase and promote evidence-based best practice suicide prevention training in schools to provide school staff with the knowledge and skills to recognize individuals at risk, and connect that individual with help. All schools should have specific protocols in place for responding to an individual who is suicidal and for responding to a suicide death in a manner which reduces risk and promotes healing for students and the school community.

Recommendation 9: Expand programs that focus on creating a positive school climate and atmosphere with structured support for students, such as the Multi-Tiered System for Support and Behavioral Health (MTSS-B) or Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS).

Recommendation 10: Increase existing available mental health resources (e.g., Community Mental Health Centers, or by engaging Public Health Networks) to increase the capacity of services and decrease wait times.

Recommendation 11: Following a critical school incident, school administrators should consult with the New Hampshire Disaster Behavioral Health Coordinator to ensure an appropriate and trauma-informed post incident response.

Planning

Planning is the act of conducting a systematic process to develop an executable strategic, operational, and community-based approach to meet defined objectives.[72] Careful planning is the best way to ensure schools are a safe place to learn.[73] The Task Force identified the following critical planning areas in school safety: school assessments and reassessments; reunification planning; schools as polling places; predetermined responses; emergency go-kits; and technology.

Each school day, the safety of 206,779 elementary and secondary school students is entrusted to school officials in New Hampshire's public and private schools.[74] As such, each school has an emergency operations plan designed to keep students and staff safe in the event of an emergency. School emergency operations plans provide administrators,

> **"While it may be tempting to buy a pre-existing 'canned' response plan, one size does not fit all. The best plans grow out of the needs and capabilities of a specific site. A few tips, however, may help put crisis response planning into perspective and divide the planning process into manageable steps."**
>
> -After Action Report,
> Red Lake High School,
> Minnesota

school staff, and first responders with the pertinent information needed in a time of crisis.[75] A school emergency operations plan contains the base plan, a hazard vulnerability analysis, functional annexes (i.e., an additional section after the plan), hazard specific annexes, a reunification plan, job aids, a resource list, and checklists.[76] To effectively execute an emergency operations plan, each school should exercise the plan regularly to be better prepared and more efficiently respond to an incident thus lessening the impact on life and property. Please refer to the Training Section for more information on training and exercising for school security.

The Department of Safety, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) provides schools with a free emergency operations plan template to use in developing their facility-specific emergency operations plans. HSEM assists and supports school districts in conducting and training for the development, implementation, and review of an emergency response plan.

School Assessments and Reassessments

Research shows that schools should participate in an initial assessment and a reassessment every three years, or if a significant change has occurred prior to the three year timeline. To that end, the New Hampshire Department of Safety, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) School Readiness Program offers a free voluntary physical security assessment of kindergarten through grade 12 public and private non-boarding schools in New Hampshire. The assessments and reassessments are conducted by subject matter experts. The experts look at the physical building(s) and grounds and make observations and recommendations based on three physical security capabilities: surveillance, access control, and emergency alerting.[77] As of May 2018, approximately 90 percent of all public K-12 schools and approximately 75 percent of all public and private K-12 non-boarding schools in New Hampshire had completed an assessment through HSEM's School Readiness Program. Assessing and reassessing school safety is an important part of preparedness because it ensures security recommendations

provided to the school were implemented correctly. It also allows other changes to the facility to be discussed with subject matter experts and assessed for impacts to school safety and security.[78] As the School Readiness Program has matured since its inception four years ago, 57 of those schools have participated in a reassessment.[79]

In addition to assessments and reassessments conducted by the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) School Readiness Program, schools can also conduct their own self-assessments. School administrators who feel an assessment or reassessment is not warranted (e.g., administrators lack time, or changes to the school facility have not occurred since the initial assessment) should conduct a self-assessment. Though a self-assessment is not a replacement for an in-person assessment conducted by subject matter experts, it can help in keeping schools safe and prepared until one is completed. HSEM provides New Hampshire schools with a self-assessment checklist.

An important but frequently overlooked piece of school assessments and reassessments is the evaluation of staging areas. A staging area is a physical location used to hold additional resources or to organize task forces and strike teams as necessary. School assessments and reassessments should include the evaluation of staging areas. When first responders receive notification of an armed assailant incident, the response can be overwhelming. Many responders will self-deploy, meaning they were not directly contacted to respond, but do so anyway. Many times, off-duty personnel will respond as well. This can create unintended confusion and potentially dangerous issues at the scene. The incident commander may not know who or what they have for available resources thus increasing the difficulty of incident management.[80] The risk of an accidental shooting of an innocent person or law enforcement officer increases as well.[81]

Reunification Planning

When students are evacuated and cannot return to school, reunification with parents or guardians is a top priority.[82] Reunification is a system that accounts for every student and ensures that all students are

> **" *Regardless of how well you plan, you will not have properly planned if you neglect the 'recovery' phase of crisis response. Recovery encompasses far more than providing physical and psychological first-aid. It also marks the beginning of the next round of planning.* "**
>
> -After Action Report, Red Lake High School, Minnesota

released to an authorized adult.[83] Reunification takes place during the response phase of an emergency (i.e., emergency management occurs in four phases: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery) and requires careful planning and exercising.

A reunification plan is typically a functional annex of a basic school emergency operations plan. While a reunification annex is not required in the State of New Hampshire, it is highly recommended by the Department of Safety, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management that each school have a reunification plan and exercise the plan regularly.[84]

Each school should develop a reunification plan as part of its required emergency operations plan and ensure that those student reunification and release procedures are provided to parents at the beginning of each school year when reviewing school safety procedures. The procedures should also be included in the student handbook distributed at the beginning of the school year. Additionally, schools should designate a trained individual specifically for the

purpose of carrying out a reunification plan in the event that it is activated.[85]

Depending on the incident, there should be a designation of two specific and separate areas for reunification: an area for parents reuniting with children who have been accounted for, and an area for parents who are attempting to reunite with children who have not yet been accounted for.[86] Individuals must be provided to answer questions, provide transparency, and to assist families in a manner that alleviates confusion.[87] An important piece of a reunification plan is the delivery of accurate information to parents and guardians in an organized and efficient manner. To streamline the delivery of information, a radio station, predesignated alerting system, or hotline with adequate capacity can be used. Behavioral health services should also be made available to students, staff, and parents. Please refer to the Mental Health section for more information on behavioral health services.

Schools as Polling Places

Currently, 111 schools in New Hampshire are used as polling places for elections.[88] This is an important consideration for school planning. Voters, as members of the general public, would not typically conduct activities in a school building. However, voters are welcomed into schools on voting days and are not scrutinized in the same way they would be on a normal school day. Additionally, some voters may bring firearms onto school property, exercising their constitutional right to bear arms.

Schools should develop a detailed plan that focuses on keeping students safe while people who have not been vetted are in the school. A collaborative approach with local election agencies and law enforcement could prove effective. Schools can consider closing for the day, or requesting a police officer to be in the school for that day. When a school building is used for election purposes, the safety and security of students and staff should be ensured with extreme caution.[89]

Predetermined Response

A predetermined response is a set of recommended actions based on a specific event. For example, predetermined responses (i.e., run-cards) are used by most fire services in the country to deploy trucks, engines, tankers, or any other fire resource. Having a run-card eliminates the need to spend time calculating what is needed on scene. When an alarm sounds, the firefighter on watch

> *"The incident command post at the firehouse was not configured to allow for a separate area for the parents of unaccounted for children apart from parents reuniting with their children. Although there were indications that the unaccounted for children were deceased, troopers were not at liberty to disclose that information. The process of positively identifying which children were deceased was very difficult to manage and should be considered when formulating future action plans."*

-After Action Report, Newtown, Connecticut

> *"Pre-incident planning is critical for active shooter or other mass casualty incidents. Police departments of all sizes must plan in advance for a large-scale critical incident response, including pre-planned mutual aid agreements and mutual assistance. Such planning should include identifying high risk target areas, building diagrams, appropriate staging areas and command post locations, establishing joint command with local police agencies, fire, and EMS, as well as compiling internal contact telephone numbers and testing communications procedures.*"

-After Action Report, Newtown, Connecticut

refers to the appropriate predetermined response to determine which resources should be deployed.[90] In school planning, a predetermined response for law enforcement can provide an increased level of situational awareness, a faster response, address anticipated problems (e.g. solving jurisdictional limitations, staging for law enforcement, etc.), and ensure a more efficient deployment of resources. During an active shooter event, lives are measured in seconds and any time-saving measures should be given full consideration.

Creating a standardized predetermined statewide school safety protocol or template would help communities develop their own predetermined responses.[91] A predetermined response for law enforcement responding to school emergencies has been implemented in various locations in the United States. Predetermining a school response is similar to predetermining large events elsewhere (e.g., convention centers and stadiums). Predetermined response plans should be updated at least every three years or when significant changes to the facility, staff or policy occur.

Similarly, a building preplan provides critical building-specific information to first responders arriving at a scene. The building preplan information can be made available in a variety of ways, including at the building, through electronic transmission, or through a dispatcher. The information provided allows first responders to quickly and efficiently determine the best way to meet operational objectives. A building preplan could include information like the facility's floor plan, details about the buildings numbering system, the construction of walls and windows (e.g., which windows are coated with security window film), the type of door locks, the location and operating instructions of the public address system, and the location of utility shut offs. A building preplan provides information that is essential to decreasing the time required for first responders to meet operational objectives, like entering the building, treating victims, or neutralizing a threat. During an active shooter event when lives are measured in seconds, a building preplan can save lives.

In addition to developing individualized predetermined response plans and building preplans, schools should provide information to the State for the institution of a statewide floor-plan database that is stored in an accessible manner. This database
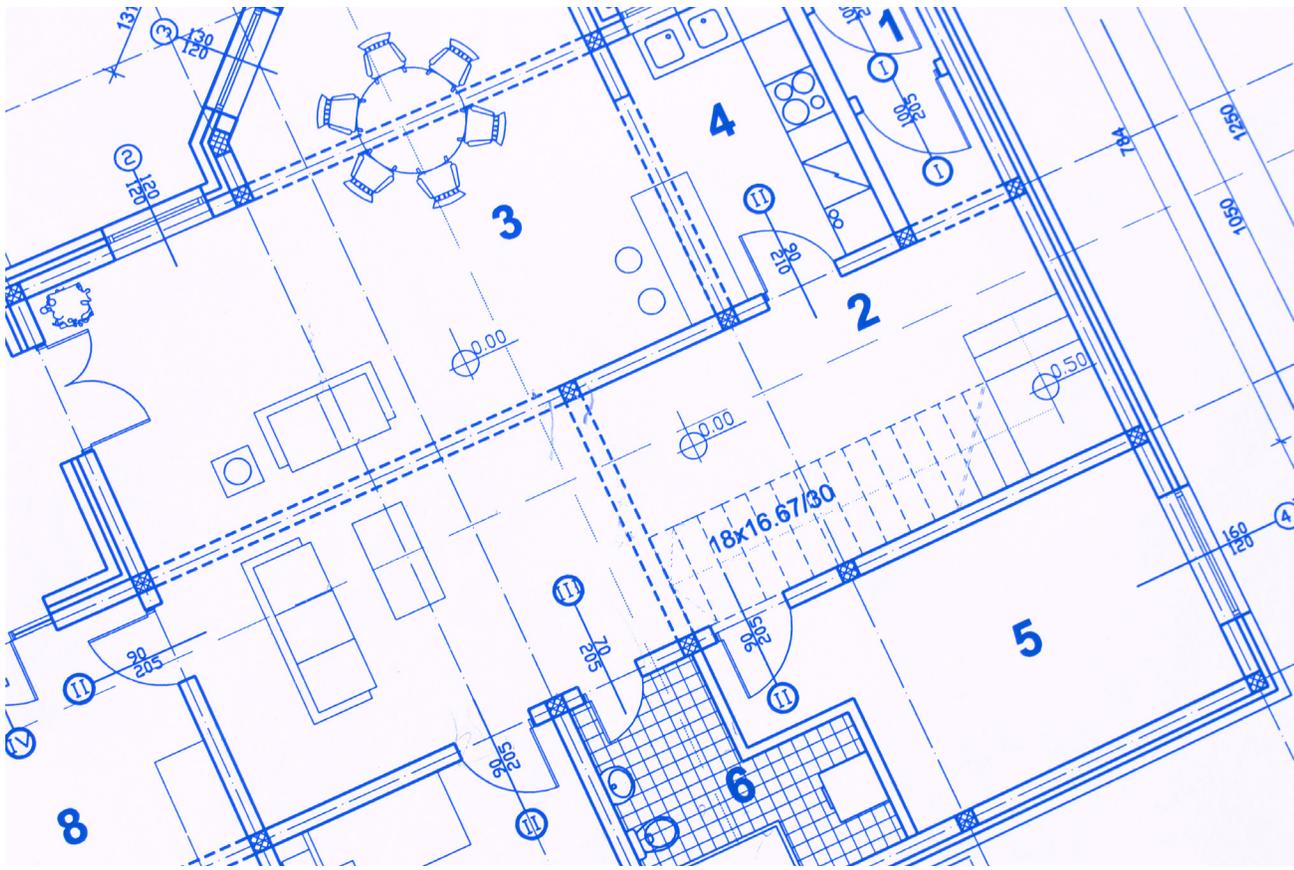
In addition to developing individualized predetermined response plans and building preplans, schools should provide information to the state for the institution of a statewide floor-plan database that is stored in an accessible manner. This database should be distributed to first responder organizations in a school's jurisdiction and to regional tactical teams.

should be distributed to first responder organizations in a school's jurisdiction and to regional tactical teams. This would benefit first responders by establishing a centralized location to provide situational awareness.[92]

Fire and emergency medical services (EMS) are trained to stage (i.e., gather at a designated location called a staging area and maintain a level of readiness to quickly respond when called to the scene) or standby until law enforcement secure the scene and deem it safe for fire and EMS to enter and treat patients. Lessons learned from mass casualty events such as school shootings have shown the importance of getting help to victims as soon as possible to increase their chances of survival.[93] This creates a challenge for first responders. An integrated and coordinated response across responder disciplines is essential to simultaneously accomplish the goals

of providing medical services to injured staff and students while the threat is being neutralized.[94]

It is important that first responders consider preplanning for additional locations besides schools.[95] Local and state responders should ensure they know the best travel routes to get to all high-profile locations within their area. This information should not only be known, but also be readily available to dispatchers or first responders stepping into a role as part of the response team.[96]

In addition to a building preplan, schools should consider installing a secure lock box in a safe location away from the building, such as near the driveway entrance. A secure lock box allows the school to store entrance keys, access cards, and critical documents (e.g., blueprints, floor plans, pre-fire plans, evacuation procedures, shut off valve locations, disclosures of hazardous materials, etc.).

Installing the lock box in a safe location away from the school building is important for when the building is locked down or otherwise inaccessible.

Another important piece of hastening a response is an efficient emergency dispatch center. Dispatchers are expected to give and receive information that is critical to response in a timely manner, and therefore should be involved in the development of predetermined responses. While it is crucial that fire, police, and EMS are on the same page during an incident, dispatchers are the ones providing information and direction and should be involved in the development of a predetermined response.

Emergency Go-Kits

During an incident at a school, it can be difficult for staff to gather the things that may be necessary to preserve life and avoid injury. An emergency go-kit is a bag or container that is filled with the things you would need to ensure your safety and the safety of those around you during an emergency. An emergency go-kit is prepared ahead of time and stocked with emergency supplies, including food, water, first-aid materials, and vital records.

Each school should develop go-kits for classrooms, common areas, and offices. Additionally,

> "*There was a delay in establishing a staging area for responding personnel and failure of responding personnel to remain in the area of the command post to receive assignments as the needs arose. Once the active shooting ceased, resources arriving on the scene were not immediately directed to a staging location to wait which resulted in some personnel improperly self- directing their activities.*"
>
> -After Action Report, Newtown, Connecticut

> "*I applaud the recommendation of the committee to develop a predetermined response protocol for law enforcement. Having the experience of being involved with responding to a number of large scale critical incidents, like Greenland and Brentwood, demonstrated to me the need for such a protocol. In my opinion, successful development and implementation of this protocol will greatly enhance the safety of our schools and communities.*"
>
> - James Sullivan, Hampton Police Chief, Retired

each administrator should have a go-kit. Classrooms, common area, and office go-kits are meant to be used by staff, while the administrator go-kits include necessary information and materials to manage the emergency. Having an emergency go-kit during an incident will assist staff and administrators in locating and providing relevant information to responders and ensure the appropriate response actions are taken.

Each school and classroom can have different needs, however typical go-kits are: stored in backpacks or duffle bags and placed in readily accessible and secure locations; equipped with supplies that address the needs of the specific school with considerations for the school's population, climate, facilitates, and resources and; stocked with a first-aid kit, emergency procedures, and student attendance rosters.[97] Additional material may include: aerial photos of the campus, maps of the school and surrounding areas; an emergency resource list; and a list of evaluation sites. It is important that go-kits are assessed and inventoried regularly to ensure they are appropriately stocked and up-to-date. Go-kits should be updated as needed, but no less than quarterly. In some cases, it is best to train and exercise with these go-kits to ensure they are stocked.

Technology

Ensuring readiness is a core value in school safety preparedness. It is important that all safety technology is tested on a regular basis to ensure readiness and appropriate working order. Failing equipment in the time of an emergency can increase stress and dampen response capabilities which can lead to an increased number of fatalities, injuries, and further damage to property. All technology planned for use during an incident should be tested for readiness at least quarterly, including conducting software updates. Checklists help document that the technology has been used or tested within the required timeframe. Any physical technology that is not working properly or any software that is not up-to-date should be repaired or updated immediately.

Members of the Technology & Innovative Security Working Group identified three primary categories during their discussions: external security,

internal security, and emergency communication. The Working Group asked for voluntary input from vendors who believe they have a tool, solution or recommendation that fits one of these categories. The vendors provided an in-person presentation, prepared a pre-recorded video presentation and provided written documentation for review by the Task Force. The Working Group recognized the value of gunshot detection technology and anonymous reporting systems, and recommends further research into the feasibility of these technologies in New Hampshire schools.

Planning Recommendations

Recommendation 12: All school plans submitted under RSA 189:64 shall be reviewed by the State every three years based on current best practices. A feedback report shall be forwarded to the school for voluntary changes.

Recommendation 13: Continue with the current, voluntary New Hampshire Homeland Security and Emergency Management school assessment process. Provide reassessments at least every three years or when significant changes to the facility, staff, or policy occur.

Recommendation 14: Reevaluate the Homeland Security and Emergency Management school assessment process every three years to ensure assessors use the latest standards, knowledge, and techniques.

Recommendation 15: Develop, implement, communicate, and exercise a reunification plan that clearly establishes where and how students will be reunited with their families.

Recommendation 16: Develop a detailed plan that focuses on keeping students safe when local elections are held in the school building, understanding that individuals will be present on school property who have not been vetted.

Recommendation 17: Develop a predetermined response to active shooter incidents for first

responders and dispatchers to reduce response times by increasing efficiency, coordination, and addressing anticipated problems.

Recommendation 18: Develop a building specific response plan for active shooter incidents for first responders to reduce response times by increasing efficiency, coordination, and addressing anticipated problems.

Recommendation 19: Current blueprints (i.e., floor plans) must be submitted to local law enforcement and the Department of Safety in hardcopy or a commonly used digital format. After the initial submission, updates will be provided in a timely manner when changes are made to a building.

Recommendation 20: Schools should consider installing a secure lock box in a safe location away from the building, such as near the driveway entrance that allows the school to store entrance keys, access cards, and critical documents (e.g., blueprints, floor plans, pre-fire plans, evacuation procedures, shut off valve locations, disclosures of hazardous materials, etc.).

Recommendation 21: Develop an inventory list for emergency go-kits that schools should create, keep in classrooms, examine and update quarterly such that each teacher will be prepared to evacuate.

Recommendation 22: Ensure that school safety and communications technologies have maintenance and upgrade plans and all technologies not used frequently are tested quarterly.

Recommendation 23: Develop a working group comprised of school leaders to share best practices in school safety and establish mentor relationships between schools.

Training

Training is an important aspect of any preparedness and response program. Educators and first responders need specialized training to help respond to crises at schools. All stakeholders should train on a regular basis and include one another in their trainings when possible. This will help to foster better relationships and a better understanding of each other's roles, responsibilities, and expectations.[98] Increased training will also ensure a coordinated and seamless response in the event of an incident at a school and can help decrease injury, and preserve life and property during an incident. All school staff, including part-time and full-time staff, contracted staff, and coaches should participate in necessary trainings.

During an emergency, seconds count and teachers, staff, and students must be able to react quickly and correctly. If roles and responsibilities are not understood, responding to a crisis can be difficult or impossible. Most schools in New Hampshire have current and updated emergency operations plans. If staff are not familiar or do not understand the plan and their role within the plan, the effectiveness of the plan is greatly diminished. Having an emergency operations plan without interfacing it in everyday operations and making it a part of regular training can create a false sense of security within the school culture.[99]

To ensure response to a crisis in a school is handled properly, all school staff should regularly train on proper response protocols. Training should include the roles and responsibilities during a crisis and understanding of the school's emergency operations plan. An emergency operations plan is only as good as the ability of students, faculty, and staff to execute it. Therefore, informing students of their expected role during a crisis and training them to perform that role is also essential to success.[100] When possible, first responders should also participate in training. Not only will they have the opportunity to become familiar with the schools plan, but it also provides an opportunity for these entities to practice their response. Training should also focus on prevention and large scale events with crowds. The training should include crowd control, verbal de-escalation techniques, and procedures for

handling fights and riots.[101] The more frequently a school's emergency operations plan is trained on its contents, the more effective their response and the less severe the incident's impact on life and property will be. Conducting training on a regular basis helps to identify strengths and weaknesses in the plan and the response of the school. In turn, changes and adaptations should be made to the plan to improve protocols.[102]

Incident Command System

During an incident, educators, and school staff are faced with the reality of becoming first responders. It is critically important for teachers and staff to know how to respond appropriately. Understanding how law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS) will respond is also important and can greatly increase the chances of a successful outcome to an incident. As acting first responders, school staff must use a unified and coordinated effort. The Incident Command System (ICS) creates a unified approach to response and management of an incident. ICS uses a standardized language and unifies command under an incident commander. Using the ICS approach will mirror first responders' management and response to an incident which allows for a seamless, coordinated effort of all involved. Courses in ICS include *IS-100. SCa - Introduction to Incident Command System for Schools; IS-700.a - National Incident Management System (NIMS), An Introduction; IS-800.c – National Response Framework, An Introduction; IS-907 – Active Shooter: What You Can Do; IS-362.A – Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools; and IS-360 – Preparing for Mass Casualty Incidents: A Guide for Schools, Higher Education, and Houses of Worship.*[103]

Teachers and staff should obtain the appropriate level of training on the Incident Command System (ICS). These online courses are free through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Emergency Management Institute. School staff and administrators should be aware of different levels of training and take those that correlate with the amount of interaction they have with first responders. School staff who will be in a leadership role will need training on pre-planned emergency response actions

so they know what the first responders will be doing upon arrival—it would allow them to understand how the first responders will be responding with their own pre-planned response.

EMS in the Warm Zone

Research shows that communities should prioritize warm zone training for fire, EMS, and law enforcement. The provision of proper warm zone training and equipment can greatly reduce fatalities, injuries, and property damage while increasing victim survival. The goal of warm zone training is to provide needed medical attention to critically wounded individuals in areas that have been preliminarily cleared by law enforcement and while law enforcement continues to secure the remainder of the scene. The warm zone refers to the area of an incident where an indirect threat is present as opposed to the hot zone where there is a direct threat (e.g. an armed assailant), or the cold zone where there is little to no threat (e.g. staging and triage area). A warm zone has been cleared by law enforcement, but not secured.[104] Given the proximity of the warm zone to the incident, many victims are often still present in the warm zone.

The goal of warm zone operations is to quickly get to victims, give immediate first aid, stabilize, and extract the victims from the area to a safer location. Fire and EMS personnel are able to do this through the Rescue Task Force concept which allows response into the warm zone with protective gear and the cover of law enforcement.[105] The success of this concept depends upon all responding entities working together to ensure a seamless and safe response. Training and exercising regularly on these concepts is imperative for first responders.

School Resource Officers

A school resource officer is a uniformed, armed and sworn law enforcement officer assigned to school duties.[106] During an active shooter incident or other events requiring a response from law enforcement, schools that have a school resource officer on campus have an advantage over schools without because an armed resource is already at the scene.

Not only does having a school resource officer on-site decrease response times in an emergency, it

> "*Your crisis response plan is really only as good as the training that goes with it. So, practice it and offer training to those who will carry it out. Training not only helps ensure an improved response from personnel, but it also gives them a chance to contribute input. Ask responders what additional training they feel they need. Training with external partners, such as the local fire and police departments and emergency medical services, is also important. It allows participants to uncover areas of concern, realize resource needs, point out strengths, and better coordinate inter-agency efforts.*"

-After Action Report, Red Lake High School, Minnesota

can also serve as a deterrent before an emergency escalates.[107] The value of deterrence and visibility of the officer in preventing a school tragedy cannot be calculated. The National Association of school resource officers recommends deployment at the very minimum of one school resource officer in every school.[108] Emphasis must be given to the importance of a school resource officer serving in the school(s) to which they are assigned, and not performing other duties that remove them frequently from the school environment. A suitable replacement should be available when the school resource officer is unavailable or required to be out of the school.

Strong partnerships between school resource officers and the school community they serve are important. Lasting partnerships start with the school resource officer and their skills. A properly trained school resource officer is much more than an armed guard. All school resource officers should receive specialized training in addition to their law enforcement training. Specialized training concepts should focus on school based law enforcement, ethics, understanding youth trends, threat response and prevention, school safety and emergency operations plans, mentoring and counseling, and diversity and special needs, etc.[109] School resource officers should also train on their response to an active shooter event in a school. Training should focus on responding directly to and confronting threats.[110]

School Marshal Program

Similar to a school resource officer, a school marshal is an armed individual approved by the school and local police department but is not a sworn law enforcement officer. The potential benefits to school marshals are similar to those described above for school resource officers. A school marshal could provide a visible deterrent to a potential active shooter and, should an incident occur, take action against an active threat. An armed marshal is potentially a less expensive option and may be an appropriate choice for schools and school districts with limited resources. However, because a school marshal is neither a school resource officer nor a professional security contractor, an additional burden may be placed on a school or school district in ensuring that the individual is trained to operate with a weapon in a school environment. Schools should work with local law enforcement to ensure that any individual carrying a weapon on school property is properly vetted and trained. School marshals should be integrated into the emergency and response plans.[111]

> *"Numerous Connecticut State Police first responders to Newtown indicated that the previous [mandatory training specific to active shooter incidents] they received provided an increased level of confidence. Future training would be beneficial to personnel, and should encompass additional response dynamics to include evacuation protocols, treatment of the injured, establishing perimeter zones, incident command and scene management, and setting up initial scene security."*
>
> - After Action Report, Newtown, Connecticut

In addition to school staff and role players participating in exercises, it is also important to recognize the participation of school resource officers. School resource officers should exercise their roles in the school's base emergency operations plan and active shooter functional annex on a regular basis to ensure they have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities during an event.
Photo courtesy of Jeff Hastings at Frame of Mind Photography, www.frameofmindphoto.com.

Training Recommendations

Recommendation 24: All school staff and students, including part-time staff, full-time staff, contracted staff and services, coaches, bus drivers, and volunteers should receive training to recognize: 1) behavioral warning signs and pre-incident indicators, and 2) the appropriate steps to evaluate the behavior, provide services, and alert appropriate stakeholders. School staff should receive the training during workshop days.

Recommendation 25: All school staff and students, including part-time staff, full-time staff, contracted staff and coaches should receive crisis training that is age appropriate for the students and addresses the mental, emotional, and physiological responses they will experience during the onset of a crisis and how to respond to those experiences in a manner that increases their chance of survival.

Recommendation 26: All staff and students should receive training on a school's emergency operations plan on a regular basis to ensure staff and students have a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities. Changes and adaptations to the plan should be made as gaps and weaknesses are identified.

Recommendation 27: School staff should receive a level of Incident Command System training appropriate for their level of interaction with first responders during an event (e.g., teachers may take only IS-100.SCA, Introduction to the Incident Command System for Schools, while administrators would take IS-100.SCA and IS-362.A, Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools, etc.).

Recommendation 28: School staff who will perform in a leadership role during an incident should be trained in the predetermined emergency response actions so they know what steps first responders will be taking upon notification of the incident and how to best coordinate efforts with those first responders as they arrive on scene.

Recommendation 29: Develop a training program for current and future school administrators to receive training in school emergency management and participate in practical exercises. New school administrators should receive this training prior to assuming their new role.

Recommendation 30: Increase warm zone EMS training for first responders, including fire, EMS, and law enforcement to enhance the ability of all responding entities to work together, ensuring a seamless and safe response.

Recommendation 31: Where resources allow, each school should have a school resource officer that does not perform other non-school related duties and for which a suitable replacement is available when the school resource officer is unavailable or required to be out of the school.

Recommendation 32: Develop and implement specialized training for school resource officers in addition to their law enforcement training. Training should focus on unique school issues and its population demographic as well as response to active shooter events.

Recommendation 33: Establish a study group to examine the feasibility and/or implementation of a School Marshal Program.

Exercises

Exercising is an important aspect of any preparedness and response program. Exercising a school emergency operations plan on a regular basis ensures staff and students have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities during an incident. Educators and first responders that participate in exercises help to foster better relationships and a better understanding of each other's roles, responsibilities, and expectations.[112] School emergency operations plans should have an active shooter annex that details specifics on how to react should an active shooter event take place. This annex should be exercised in addition to the base plan. All school staff, including part-time and full-time staff, contracted staff, and coaches should participate in exercising.

In addition to school staff and students participating in exercises, it is also important to recognize the participation of school resource officers. School resource officers should exercise their roles in the school's base emergency operations plan and active shooter annex on a regular basis to ensure they have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities during an event.

Active Shooter

Per the New Hampshire Life Safety Code, Saf-C 6008:05,[113] at least one emergency egress and relocation drill, otherwise known as a fire drill, shall be conducted every month the facility is in session, including during summer school. For most schools in the State, this means approximately ten emergency egress and relocation drills. This law also states that no more than two of the required emergency egress and relocation drills may be eliminated and replaced by drills that test emergency response to hazards such as earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, bomb threats, and domestic terrorism. New Hampshire RSA 189:64[114] states that two of the required fire evacuation drills are to be used to practice other response actions, like an active shooter incident. The State Fire Marshal recommends that that four of the required ten drills are to be used as all-hazards drills, which would increase a school's preparedness and response capabilities.

Exercise Recommendations

Recommendation 34: Each school should exercise its emergency operations plan on a regular basis to ensure staff and students have a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities. Changes and adaptations to the plan should be made as gaps and weaknesses are identified.

Recommendation 35: Each school should exercise its active shooter functional annex on a regular basis to ensure staff and students have a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities. Changes and adaptations to the plan should be made as gaps and weaknesses are identified.

Recommendation 36: School resource officers should exercise their roles in the school's active shooter functional annex on a regular basis to ensure they have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities during an event. If used, school marshals should also conduct these exercises. Changes and adaptations to the plan should be made as gaps and weaknesses are identified.

Communications

Communication is the transfer of information between two groups and is essential to managing an incident, using resources efficiently, and reducing injuries and fatalities. Among educators, there is virtually unanimous agreement (96%) that reliable, effective, and ever-present communication is critical when dealing with emergencies.[115]

Communications can be classified as one-way or two-way communication. In a school, one-way communication between the school administration and the general school populace occurs through methods such as fire alarms or an intercom system. One-way communication can also occur between the school and second parties, such as parents or police stations, through alerts, like reverse 911, or panic buttons. One-way communication can also originate from members of the community and be shared with school officials to address known, but obscure, security threats. Two-way communication can occur within the school (e.g., between school officials, or school staff and students), or between the school and a second party (e.g., the police, or a parent). Two-way communication with school administrators can also originate outside of the school (e.g., a warning from a parent, or police).

Internal School Communications

During an active-shooter event in a school, the ability to share timely information between school staff, school administrators, and first responders can literally be a matter of life and death. School staff who are able to effectively transmit information during an incident can provide critical pieces of information, such as the location of the assailant and the nature of the event to a school resource officer, to first responders, and to other school staff.

There are several different modes of two-way communication that can be utilized in schools. The primary form of communication within schools varies greatly: 55 percent use the Internet and e-mail, 13 percent primarily use cell phones, 12 percent use landlines, 10 percent mainly use two-way radios, and 6 percent utilize an overhead paging system as their primary mode of communication.

There are many different methods of two-way, in-school communications available to schools and it is generally agreed by research and educators that communication is important and should be improved.[116] When considering which method of communication a particular school should adopt, they should consider, privacy, portability, volume, maximum number of participants, coverage limitations (e.g., limited cell coverage in the North Country), and cost. Of critical importance is whether the chosen two-way, in-school communication can be used safely during an incident (e.g., the capability to function silently).[117]

> "*In the early stages of the event, command selected an encrypted radio channel not available to the University of Texas Police Department communications center. Coordination between the University of Texas Police Department and the Austin Police Department improved as radio channels were patched as a solution.*"
>
> – After Action Report, University of Texas

Connecting with First Responders

During an active shooter event, lives can be counted in seconds.[118] With half of all active shooter events ending within 5 minutes, the importance of speed cannot be overstated. Conversely, on average, it takes 10 minutes for first responders to arrive.[119] Upon arrival, first responders may have a lack of information about the scene and what resources are needed, further delaying the onset of response operations.

Regardless of which communications solution schools decide upon, it is important that they ensure their communication system will be interoperable with first responders' systems. Many past incidents have received a large response but once on the scene the different communications equipment from all the different organizations was not able to work across platforms. Interoperability must be a central consideration in any communications upgrade.[120]

Establishing a direct line between the school and local first responders or emergency dispatch is one method of improving the speed of communications. Almost 60 percent of educators want to talk directly to first responders heading to a scene.[121]

Moreover, schools should consider reviewing policies to explicitly grant staff permission to directly contact 9-1-1.[122] Uncertainty among school staff regarding who has the authority to call 9-1-1 and what information should be shared can further delay onset of the response. In addition to these permissions, schools are encouraged to work with E911 to ensure that school phones provide location data.

In order for E911 to automatically receive useful location data, a unique code for each phone (i.e., a Direct Inward Dial number) must be set up and the location of the phone needs to be recorded in an E911 database. This can be done easily for each phone, but if a phone is moved from its current location, the new location needs to be updated so that the location information in the 9-1-1 database remains current. The other possibility is that a school can establish unique codes for each phone jack. This way, the location information is provided by the location of the phone jack rather than the phone and phones can be moved without needing to update information in the 9-1-1 database. While requiring less maintenance, the latter option is more

Lives are measured in seconds, during an incident. *Direct Inward Dial* can provide *life-saving information* to first responders and allow them to immediately move to the incident and engage the assailant or render assistance.

Small School: *saves 30-60 seconds.*

Larger school with multiple floors: *saves 5-10 minutes.*

Schools with multiple buildings: *saves 15-30 minutes.*

expensive. If resources permit, new construction should seek to establish unique codes attached to each phone jack.

Regardless of the size of the school, this location information has benefits. In a small school, this information would on average save 30-60 seconds. In a larger school with multiple floors, this information could save 5-10 minutes. In schools spread across multiple buildings, the time savings could be 15-30 minutes. When lives are measured in seconds, this information can be lifesaving by providing a method that allows first responders to immediately move to the incident and minimizes the need for first responders to go room to room, floor to floor, building to building to engage with the perpetrator or render assistance.

Alarms

Fire alarms have played an important role in improving school safety. Fire alarms are able to quickly and effectively notify every person in the school that an emergency is occurring and that an evacuation should commence. Research suggests that most schools do not have a similar alarm for use during an active-shooter event that notifies the school to initiate a lockdown rather than an evacuation.[123] A multifunctional alarm system,

one alarm for evacuations and one for lockdowns, will more quickly notify the school what response activity they should be engaged in. Executing a lockdown when the school should have evacuated, or vice versa, could put many lives in peril.

Notification

When seconds count, a panic button may be an effective method of quickly alerting first responders of an emergency. Panic buttons are a notification system to summon assistance to a location. Panic buttons can be effective because they allow individuals to circumvent normal reporting procedures that may slow down the notification process.[124] Panic buttons have also been adopted in schools by several states including New York, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania.[125] Panic buttons should be further researched to determine if this would be an effective solution for New Hampshire.[126]

Notification systems are similar to panic buttons but can have a variety of notable advantages. One example of a notification system is the COPsync911 program implemented by Londonderry. COPsync911 is an app installed on every classroom computer and can be installed on other devices too. Once COPsync911 is activated, it will send an alert notifying emergency dispatch and the nearest five COPsync911 police officers in 15 seconds unless canceled, or the delay is overridden. The alerts themselves contain information, including the school name, physical address, floor plan, and classroom number from where the threat originated.

The advantage of COPsync911 over the existing panic buttons was that those panic buttons could take 30 to 90 seconds to contact police.

In addition to first responders, it is important to also reach out to parents, other schools, and other district stakeholders because they will be affected by the incident even if they are not part of the immediate response.[127] Various systems including Code Red and Reverse 911 exist to perform these functions and their role should be further examined. FEMA also maintains the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) which could potentially be used during an active shooter event.

Public Information Officer

The public information officer (PIO) is responsible for facilitating the necessary steps to provide the right information to the right people at the right time. During an incident, the public information officer supports the response and recovery by managing incident messaging in a way that carries out the intent of the incident commander, but allows the incident commander to focus on the incident rather than managing the media.

The importance of managing the message cannot be overstated. Proper message management is the only way to get the correct information out to the public, to portray competent management of the incident, and to quell rumors.

Proper message management is achieved by assigning a properly trained public information officer to the task of message management and by

> **"Advanced scheduling of press briefings encouraged media to remain in the staging area, as there were no second briefings if one was missed. PIO provided these updates to the press approximately every 90 minutes, frequently enough to ensure that they remained the primary source of information about the incident."**
>
> – After Action Report, Newtown, Connecticut

Increasing interactions between students, staff, and police in a casual environment (e.g., eating lunch together) has the potential to build trust and more open communication between parties.

supporting the public information officer with a small number of staff to manage media monitoring, message creation and media interactions. Additionally, the public information officer can assist with managing two information lines, one for the media and one for the general public, including information regarding resources specifically for parents. The lines can provide recorded messages if sufficient staff is not available.

If a public information officer is not familiar with the community within which the incident has occurred, a member of a responding agency that is familiar with the community should be assigned to assist the PIO with determining locations for a media staging area, access to necessary office equipment and space, and other concerns.

Outreach and Tip Lines

Obtaining information from students can be one of the more difficult challenges to keeping schools safe.[128] Research shows that informal contact between students, staff, and police should be increased. Increasing interactions between students, staff, and police in a casual environment (e.g., eating lunch together) has the potential to build trust and more open communication between parties. Police specialize in a variety of fields that are relevant to everyday life in schools, including gangs, drugs, bullying, cyber safety, and school violence. Stronger partnerships between schools, law enforcement, and even parents can be beneficial for entire communities.[129] The State Police should institute these practices in towns where they are responsible for law enforcement operations.

Additionally, schools can establish a mentor program, where every teacher, specialist and administrator is responsible to meet with a small group of students on a weekly basis to discuss how the students' week is going and any other issues the students want to talk about. The focus of the mentor

> *"Students may know of someone in need or someone who has made a threat, but frequently they do not share that information with individuals who can take appropriate action."*

– After Action Report, Virginia Tech

> *"From the time they are young, children are taught by other children—and even adults—that they should not tattle. . . . school officials and other adults [should] instill in young people, from an early age, that providing authorities with information that might avert trouble or save lives is not tattling. Instead, it is simply the right thing to do."*

-After Action Report, Red Lake High School, Minnesota

program would be middle school and high school students. The students should have the same mentor during their entire time at the school to help the students form a consistent bond with an adult figure and to promote trust.

Schools could also benefit from a pro-information sharing campaign akin to the *See Something, Say Something*™ campaign. Getting students to be more open about what they know and to share the information with school officials will require a cultural change and a public outreach campaign could help achieve that end.

Another way to facilitate the opportunity for threats to reach school administrators is through a tip line. There is anecdotal evidence suggesting that tip lines may be helpful but, no research exists regarding safety outcomes.[130] Several other states have launched tip lines in order to provide a systematic way for students to provide information to school and law enforcement officials.[131] Tip lines can function over different media such as the internet, a toll-free number, or a mobile app. Tip lines can also include a diverse range of reports, including threats, bullying, acts of violence, and suicide.[132]

When establishing a tip line, it is important to ensure that tips are received by trained dispatchers and are routed appropriately. Having a large education campaign and working to reduce the threshold for notifying adults of concerning behavior is another

Nationally, **47 percent of educators** cite **insufficient funds** as a barrier to upgrading K-12 communications.[181]

Nationally, **only 15 percent of schools** receive **state or local funding** for communications.[182]

important element. Tip lines have successfully resulted in several interventions into bullying, child abuse, suicides, and drug use. They have also led to the discovery of weapons on campuses.[133]

While tip lines can be a good way to gain situational awareness, there has also been some concern that false tips will be made.[134] Lastly, when not prohibited to do so by privacy or other laws, law enforcement and intelligence gathering entities should share non-classified information regarding current threats with schools.

Part of the difficulty for schools seeking to improve their safety preparedness is finding accurate and reliable information. To alleviate the concerns regarding the obstacles to finding the right information, the State could create an online one-stop shop for school safety resources. This centralized web location would increase the flow of information and lower the barriers to schools and other parties trying to find the best school safety preparedness information.

Communications Recommendations

Recommendation 37: Increase communication capabilities and the interoperability of communication systems to convey information during an emergency to first responders both inside and outside the school. This includes cell phone coverage boosters, radio repeaters, and radio frequency standardization.

Recommendation 38: Ensure all phones are clearly labeled with 9-1-1, or 9-1-1 preceded by the appropriate prefix to dial out to ensure that anyone will be able to reach E911 quickly and efficiently.

Recommendation 39: Grant school staff members explicit authority to contact 9-1-1 directly to ensure that E911 is contacted with speed and efficiency.

Recommendation 40: Ensure classroom phone lines are set up with a unique code (i.e., Direct Inward Dial) and that these codes are recorded in a database shared with E911 so that

when a 9-1-1 call is placed, the E911 emergency medical dispatcher will be able to tell exactly which room in the school the call is coming from.

Recommendation 41: When schools replace, upgrade, or install fire alarms, they should consider the potential of having multifunctional alarms (e.g., separate fire and lockdown alarms) to clearly and quickly inform building occupants of how to take action.

Recommendation 42: Install or issue panic buttons or other communication technology to directly notify first responders of an incident.

Recommendation 43: Establish a system to alert parents, staff, and non-first responders during an emergency to quickly and efficiently notify them of current incident and safety information.

Recommendation 44: Continue with the current Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) to assist public schools and local law enforcement agencies with funding for emergency notification software that will improve and enhance school safety.

Recommendation 45: Have local law enforcement increase their visibility at schools (e.g., complete reports and other paperwork on school grounds, eat lunch with students in the cafeteria, etc.) to increase informal interactions and trust with the students.

Recommendation 46: Launch an age appropriate *See Something, Say Something*™ style campaign in schools to inform students about warning signs and pre-incident indicators, and the need to report them to appropriate adults, as well as helping students feel comfortable when alerting appropriate adults.

Recommendation 47: Establish a confidential or anonymous tip line to increase information sharing from students.

Recommendation 48: The New Hampshire

Information Analysis Center (IAC) should develop a school safety and security bulletin that provides schools with the latest safety and security related information. Additionally, the Information Analysis Center should develop and maintain a distribution list for the bulletin.

Recommendation 49: Establish and maintain a complete and centralized school safety preparedness online resource center to make it easier for schools and interested parties to access relevant information.

Facilities

Protecting and strengthening the safety of school facilities is a challenging, but worthwhile endeavor. Vulnerabilities can be present due to several factors, such as the age of construction, number of access points, and varying degrees of security measures, all of which can leave schools exposed to threats.[135] School facility security enhancements play a key role in the safety and security of staff and students, and can facilitate better overall mental health and performance as research indicates that students have a fundamental need to feel safe in school.[136] Further, students with a perceived sense of safety perform better than peers who do not feel safe.[137]

School security enhancements focus on denying access to a potential intruder, ensuring the intruder does not have unrestricted access to the building, and slowing an intruder so students and staff can respond while help arrives. Access control, surveillance capabilities, identification badges, door and window hardware, and numbering systems are essential measures that can reduce the risks associated with an emergency or active-shooter incident. Existing school buildings can be retrofitted to recommended safety standards. New construction should be designed from the beginning in accordance with new safety recommendations.

Entry Points

Schools with multiple entrances open throughout the school day lack the ability to control who enters the building. For example, in the Aztec High School shooting, the assailant was not a student at the school, but was able to access the school without being stopped or questioned. It is important for schools to have control of who is allowed to enter the building and to do so manageably.[138]

Schools should have a single point of entry and exit that is well marked and consistently monitored. All other entrances and exits should be locked to deny entry from the outside. Students and staff should have a clear understanding to not open any other doors for unidentified individuals. All visitors should be vetted through the front office once allowed into the building. A single point of entry allows the school staff to monitor visitors manageably.

Front entrances to school campuses are particularly problematic and can leave a school vulnerable to potential perpetrators even when staff are monitoring. The front entrance can also be the location of the first encounter for conflict. If a perpetrator gains access to the main campus through the first point of entry, staff and students may not have time to react to a lockdown effectively while first responders are being dispatched.[139]

Vestibules or double door systems at a school's main entrance can greatly enhance the security and monitoring capabilities of visitors entering the campus. The vestibule allows properly vetted visitors to enter the school without gaining access to the main campus and allows staff to control access by screening visitors to the campus. This area should be fortified with protective construction material to ensure reception staff are protected from the perpetrator. Visitors should be able to conduct most of their business from the secure vestibule without ever needing to enter the campus (e.g., drop off student belongings). The vestibule acts as a second line of defense which will help delay entry to the building by a perpetrator, allowing students and staff time to react appropriately to a lockdown.[140] Schools should also have contingency plans to allow for smooth entry to the building during special events. Contingency plans should be established by administration (e.g., staff to monitor additional entries and exits).[141] Also, careful consideration should be made to ensure the capability of rapid re-entry for staff and students if a reverse evacuation is needed.[142]

Additionally, fencing around playgrounds and other areas can assist with identifying the primary entry point intended for all visitors and staff. This limits access to non-primary entrances. Fencing creates a defined space which makes unauthorized intrusion more noticeable and can act as a deterrent for potential perpetrators.[143]

Window and Door Hardware

Windows throughout a school campus can be compromised allowing for unauthorized entry into a school. In the Sandy Hook school shooting, the assailant shot out the glass windows next to the main entrance in order to gain access to the school.[144]

Windows must be protected against forced entry

without sacrificing visibility.[145] Bullet resistant glass, window glazing, and security window laminate can reinforce windows and glass to prevent or slow down an intruder, while maintaining regular surveillance ability. Window glazing and laminates will not stop a projectile from penetrating the glass, but will stop the glass from shattering. This allows time for staff to be alerted of the threat and to alert others to react appropriately.[146] Routinely inspecting windows and hardware and repairing issues quickly can also decrease the likelihood of an unauthorized intrusion.[147] Also, hollow core doors and exposed

Numbering systems for doors, windows, and buildings decrease the amount of time it takes emergency workers to respond to an incident. During an emergency, time is precious and saved seconds can result in saving a life.

hardware can pose additional security issues. Hinges can have pins that are removable which allows for tampering and can result in unauthorized entry into a building.[148] Exterior doors that are not main points of entry should not have opening hardware accessible from the outside. The door hinges should not be exposed to the outside or they should have tamper-resistant protective hinge coverings. Also, doors should be equipped with commercial grade automatic closing hardware and have pick resistant locks. Solid core doors offer much higher protection from forced entry and projectiles. Solid core doors with small windows or reinforced glass make access difficult or impossible, even if the window is compromised.[149]

Door and Window Numbering Systems

Numbering systems for doors, windows, and buildings decrease the amount of time it takes emergency workers to respond to an incident. During an emergency, time is precious and saved seconds can result in saving a life.[150] Schools frequently have dozens of doors and hundreds of windows, and could even have multiple buildings.[151] It may be necessary for responders to gain access through a door or window that is closest to the incident rather than a main entrance. An implemented numbering system can alleviate confusion and allow first responders to reach the scene in less time.

Research recommends door, window, and building numbering so students, school staff, administrators, and first responders quickly orient themselves during an emergency. Some schools use standard specifications, such as numbering for doors and exits, gas, electric, water and alarm shut-offs, and parking.[152] The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) encourages school administrators and stakeholders in emergency response to explore how particular classroom and building characteristics (i.e., windows and doors) impact possible lockdown courses of action.

The New Hampshire Department of Safety, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM), in cooperation with the New Hampshire Fire and Police Chiefs Association, City of Manchester Police Department, New Hampshire Department of Education, and the New Hampshire

> **" *To control access and limit intrusion, visitors should be guided to a single control point and required to pass through to administration reception areas when entering or leaving the school. The combination of a main entry with a carefully located and constantly staffed administrative area can enhance the supervision of school entries, stairs, and hallways all without the need for an additional assigned monitor.* "**
>
> -United States Department of Homeland Security[183]

Fire Marshal's Office, published a School Door and Window Labeling Recommendations pamphlet, available on the New Hampshire Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) Resource Center.[153] HSEM provides recommendations on sizing, sequencing, and positioning of numbers and letters on interior and exterior doors, windows, and the sides of buildings. Guidance is also provided on non-access doors, mobile classrooms, and courtyards.

Surveillance

Limited surveillance technology can leave a school vulnerable to criminal activity. Without surveillance technology, staff cannot screen visitors without having direct contact with individuals, making it difficult to supervise high-traffic or limited-visibility areas. Limited supervision can also create opportunities for criminal activity or violence to occur. Without surveillance equipment, school staff are not able to observe or understand dangerous incidents that are unfolding without putting themselves in harm's way. The lack of information can also limit the effectiveness of a police response. After an incident, identification, and apprehension of an assailant can be very difficult.[154]

Installing exterior and interior surveillance cameras can enhance monitoring capabilities in high-traffic areas, poor-visibility areas, and as a first line of vetting for entry into the building. Video intercoms allow administrative staff to screen an individual prior to entry into the building which can eliminate the ability of a potentially dangerous individual to enter the building.[155] In addition to detecting potential criminal activity, cameras can also act as a deterrent for criminal activity and can aid in identification and apprehension, post-incident. In the event of a hostile incident in a school, staff will have the capability to quickly assess the situation and continue to monitor events as they unfold. They can provide responders with real-time information, aiding in the response and intervention efforts.[156] Additionally, recordings can be archived to help school administrators identify students who initiate fights or display other problem behaviors, warning signs, or pre-incident indicators.[157]

In addition to surveillance cameras, some schools have begun incorporating facial- and weapon-recognition software to their systems. This technology allows for identification of violent offenders, gang members, sexual predators, and prohibited objects like weapons. Technology is also available to allow law enforcement to monitor school surveillance cameras prior to entering the building, allowing law enforcement to view real-time information for an unfolding incident.

Critics may argue that surveillance equipment is only effective if there is someone to monitor

Without surveillance equipment, school staff are not able to observe or understand dangerous incidents that are unfolding without putting themselves in harm's way. The lack of information can also limit the effectiveness of a police response.

at all times. It is true that cameras must be used properly and monitored to provide the full benefit. However, the mere presence of cameras can serve as a deterrent to a would-be assailant. Additionally, the camera feeds could be monitored by local police too. The bottom line to achieving the full benefit of any safety feature is that they must be used correctly, properly maintained, and supported by the culture in the school. School safety is undermined when the culture does not fully support a feature or approach.

Access to Schools

Access control is essential to school safety and security, and must include both physical security measures and suitable procedural control measures such as policies and guidelines. Schools and districts should have comprehensive discussions specific to policies on building access. Even if a school has the most secure hardware and technology, those

tools are rendered useless if the school is lacking an effective policy and even more so if that policy is not enforced.

The Sandy Hook Advisory Commission recommended that all exterior doors in K-12 schools be equipped such that a full perimeter lockdown could be implemented.[158] However, ensuring lockdown hardware is installed is of little use if the culture in the school allows for windows and doors to remain unlocked and unsupervised.[159] A significant part of this policy and procedural change will require a cultural shift for the staff, students, and visitors. As such, training should be provided to students and staff to emphasize the importance of following the school's safety policies and procedures.

Facility best practices include securing custodial entrances and delivery doors at all times, training students and staff not to open doors to strangers, other students, or even adults they may know, and

educating parents about access control strategies and the importance of following the rules. Facility staff should keep a log of deliveries to include the name of the vendor company, name of the delivery person, license plate of the vehicle, date and time of arrival and departure, and associated information.[160]

Doors vulnerable to unauthorized use by students and staff are made more secure by installing door alarms, delayed opening devices, sensors, or cameras.[161] Policies should include that doors be checked regularly throughout the school day to ensure they are secure.

Prior active shooters in schools have typically used main entrances and windows to gain access. However, schools should consider installing a barrier system to prevent vehicles from crashing into areas outside of the building where students may congregate. Installing fencing around playgrounds and bollards in front of exposed doors are examples of protections. By incorporating environmental design, the placement of trees, shrubs, or planters can also be used to restrict or limit access to certain areas, especially by vehicles. There are many ways of installing these barriers that are visually appealing such as those installed in front of department stores and many government buildings. Examples include planters, concrete benches or other aesthetically pleasing physical barriers.

Access to Classrooms

Physical and even visual access to classrooms can put the staff and students at risk. During the Virginia Tech shooting, students were attacked in their classrooms. The doors to the classrooms were not locked and the classroom doors continued to

Issuing staff access cards for keyless entry is a way to monitor, track, and control access to the building. This also allows for easier re-entry by authorized personnel into the building if a reverse evacuation is needed. These cards are difficult to duplicate and can be easily deactivated in the event one is lost, stolen or the staff member is no longer employed.

remain open after the assailant started shooting. The assailant returned to these classrooms for a second round of shooting.[162] During the Sandy Hook shooting, two unlocked classrooms were entered. Keys for one classroom door were found nearby indicating the teacher may not have had time to lock the door.[163] Sometimes in hostile events, specific victims are targeted; having visual access to classroom interiors creates additional vulnerabilities to a targeted victim as well as the bystanders.[164]

As we learned from the Columbine High School shooting, the shooters did not gain access to locked classrooms.[165] A best practice is to have all classroom doors locked. Unfortunately, this may not always be a realistic approach for day-to-day operations. Ensuring school staff can quickly lock classroom doors from the inside without using a physical key is another security measure that does not interfere with learning.[166]

Classroom doors should be solid core to prevent projectiles from penetrating the door and injuring students and staff. Shades, films, or other devices that block the interior of the room from view can impede a would-be perpetrator from seeing victims or locating specific victims in a classroom.[167]

Identification Badges

A key piece of identifying people in the school is the implementation of a credentialing or identification badge system.[168] Identification badges can be a relatively inexpensive solution to easily identify non-authorized persons from authorized persons. Schools should develop a system requiring all staff to have standardized identifying cards clearly visible on their person at all times while they are in the school building.[169]

Not only can an unwelcomed or unknown visitor create a feeling of insecurity and vulnerability, it adds to the chaos in times of crisis. Visible identification badges are an effective way to easily identify staff and approved visitors. During an emergency, it is important to have a simple and consistent method of determining authorized and unauthorized persons. Simple and non-technical identification badges can easily be used to identify a person, or they can be used in connection with a computerized access control system. Standard information on the card should include the holder's name, role or position, a recent passport-type photograph, the school name or school district, and the school year. A color-coding system can be used to more easily identify valid and current badges, and for the purpose of identifying the roll of an individual (e.g., whether they are a teacher, visitor, administrator, or student, etc.). Badges should be reissued each year.

Issuing staff access cards for keyless entry is a way to monitor, track, and control access to the building. This also allows for easier re-entry by authorized personnel into the building if a reverse evacuation is needed. These cards are difficult to duplicate and can be easily deactivated in the event one is lost, stolen or the staff member is no longer employed.[170] Additionally, staff access to the building through physical keys can pose a security risk in that physical keys can be difficult to track and can be easily duplicated.[171]

Research finds and recommends that all students, staff, and visitors have identification badges that are clearly visible at all times while in the building. Also, the student identification badges can be utilized for the purpose of identification to board school buses.[172] Additionally, schools should consider using a badge on a colored, break-away lanyard to be displayed around the neck of a visitor, rather than a sticker which can fall off, be inconsistently applied, or damage clothing.[173]

Best practices regarding the use of identification badges includes the requirement that identification badges be worn at all times, implementing notification procedures for lost or stolen badges, recognizing the importance of escorting visitors, developing training for personnel in wearing and identifying badges, implementing a visitor management system, and retaining an identification badge record. Identification badges can be combined with a computerized system that tracks building entry and exiting. The system could also check visitors against sex offender and law enforcement databases.[174] Also, some systems allow for time sensitive badges to expire thus preventing reuse or future unauthorized access.

Facilities Recommendations

Recommendation 50: **Develop clear best practice guidelines for school safety that should be included in all new construction to ensure newly built schools have all the necessary safety and security features.**

Recommendation 51: **For times other than the beginning and end of the school day when the vast majority of students are entering or exiting the school building(s), establish a single point of entry into the school with a security vestibule, meaning a vestibule with two sets of doors that is used to prevent further access into the school building(s) without staff approval.**

Recommendation 52: **Install a perimeter fence around the school facility or utilize environmental design to prevent unauthorized access to school grounds and to deter criminal activity.**

Recommendation 53: **All exterior windows that could be used to gain easy access, including those in doors, should use ballistic glass or security window film. Additionally, all interior windows, including those in doors where students or staff may shelter should use ballistic glass or security window film.**

Recommendation 54: **Secure all interior doors with a Columbine lock such that the door can be locked from both sides and unlocked from inside without a key, tool, or special knowledge.**

Recommendation 55: **Implement a visible door and window numbering system that allows students, teachers, administrators, and first responders to effectively comprehend maps and become easily acclimated to the school buildings.**

Recommendation 56: **Enhance monitoring capabilities and deter potential assailants by installing surveillance cameras. Cameras should be monitored during school hours and other activities at the facility.**

Recommendation 57: **Consider replacing issued keys with door access cards issued to all staff to monitor, track, and control access to the school building.**

Recommendation 58: **Consider issuing identification badges to all staff annually with discernable differences from year to year. Additionally, issue identification badges to all authorized visitors and establish and enforce policies that badges remain visible in order to identify individuals in the school building.**

Recommendation 59: **Any future facility changes or upgrades should be promptly shared with local law enforcement and fire departments prior to implementation so they maintain situational awareness and can make any necessary changes to their plans.**

Recommendations Summary

Legislative

Recommendation 1: Convene a study group to determine if the implementation of extreme risk protection orders is right for New Hampshire.

Recommendation 2: Convene a study group to examine New Hampshire background checks for the purchase of firearms to determine if changes are needed.

Recommendation 3: Replace 4 of the 10 required emergency egress drills (fire drills) with all-hazards drills, at least one of which should test emergency response to an armed assailant.

Mental Health

Recommendation 4: Improve school culture by expanding social and emotional learning programs in schools at all levels statewide.

Recommendation 5: Develop an age-appropriate school outreach program that educates staff and students on reducing the stigma of mental illness and what to do when someone is in crisis.

Recommendation 6: Increase and promote Mental Health First Aid to school staff, students, and families to provide the school community with the resources to effectively manage a mental health incident.

Recommendation 7: Develop a threat assessment task force at the community or district level that engages the local public health network, including an intervention and reporting protocol that evaluates students quickly and efficiently and provides a plan to help appropriately return students to school.

Recommendation 8: Increase and promote evidence-based best practice suicide prevention

training in schools to provide school staff with the knowledge and skills to recognize individuals at risk, and connect that individual with help. All schools should have specific protocols in place for responding to an individual who is suicidal and for responding to a suicide death in a manner which reduces risk and promotes healing for students and the school community.

Recommendation 9: Expand programs that focus on creating a positive school climate and atmosphere with structured support for students, such as the Multi-Tiered System for Support and Behavioral Health (MTSS-B) or Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS).

Recommendation 10: Increase existing available mental health resources (e.g., Community Mental Health Centers, or by engaging Public Health Networks) to increase the capacity of services and decrease wait times.

Recommendation 11: Following a critical school incident, school administrators should consult with the New Hampshire Disaster Behavioral Health Coordinator to ensure an appropriate and trauma-informed post incident response.

Planning

Recommendation 12: All school plans submitted under RSA 189:64 shall be reviewed by the State every three years based on current best practices. A feedback report shall be forwarded to the school for voluntary changes.

Recommendation 13: Continue with the current, voluntary New Hampshire Homeland Security and Emergency Management school assessment process. Provide reassessments at least every three years or when significant changes to the facility, staff, or policy occur.

Recommendation 14: Reevaluate the Homeland Security and Emergency Management school assessment process every three years

to ensure assessors use the latest standards, knowledge, and techniques.

Recommendation 15: Develop, implement, communicate, and exercise a reunification plan that clearly establishes where and how students will be reunited with their families.

Recommendation 16: Develop a detailed plan that focuses on keeping students safe when local elections are held in the school building, understanding that individuals will be present on school property who have not been vetted.

Recommendation 17: Develop a predetermined response to active shooter incidents for first responders and dispatchers to reduce response times by increasing efficiency, coordination, and addressing anticipated problems.

Recommendation 18: Develop a building specific response plan for active shooter incidents for first responders to reduce response times by increasing efficiency, coordination, and addressing anticipated problems.

Recommendation 19: Current blueprints (i.e., floor plans) must be submitted to local law enforcement and the Department of Safety in hardcopy or a commonly used digital format. After the initial submission, updates will be provided in a timely manner when changes are made to a building.

Recommendation 20: Schools should consider installing a secure lock box in a safe location away from the building, such as near the driveway entrance that allows the school to store entrance keys, access cards, and critical documents (e.g., blueprints, floor plans, pre-fire plans, evacuation procedures, shut off valve locations, disclosures of hazardous materials, etc.).

Recommendation 21: Develop an inventory list for emergency go-kits that schools should create, keep in classrooms, examine and update quarterly such that each teacher will be prepared to evacuate.

Recommendation 22: Ensure that school safety and communications technologies have maintenance and upgrade plans and all technologies not used frequently are tested quarterly.

Recommendation 23: Develop a working group comprised of school leaders to share best practices in school safety and establish mentor relationships between schools.

Training

Recommendation 24: All school staff and students, including part-time staff, full-time staff, contracted staff and services, coaches, bus drivers, and volunteers should receive training to recognize: 1) behavioral warning signs and pre-incident indicators, and 2) the appropriate steps to evaluate the behavior, provide services, and alert appropriate stakeholders. School staff should receive the training during workshop days.

Recommendation 25: All school staff and students, including part-time staff, full-time staff, contracted staff and coaches should receive crisis training that is age appropriate for the students and addresses the mental, emotional, and physiological responses they will experience during the onset of a crisis and how to respond to those experiences in a manner that increases their chance of survival.

Recommendation 26: All staff and students should receive training on a school's emergency operations plan on a regular basis to ensure staff and students have a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities. Changes and adaptations to the plan should be made as gaps and weaknesses are identified.

Recommendation 27: School staff should receive a level of Incident Command System training appropriate for their level of interaction with first responders during an event (e.g.,

teachers may take only IS-100.SCA, Introduction to the Incident Command System for Schools, while administrators would take IS-100.SCA and IS-362.A, Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools, etc.).

Recommendation 28: School staff who will perform in a leadership role during an incident should be trained in the predetermined emergency response actions so they know what steps first responders will be taking upon notification of the incident and how to best coordinate efforts with those first responders as they arrive on scene.

Recommendation 29: Develop a training program for current and future school administrators to receive training in school emergency management and participate in practical exercises. New school administrators should receive this training prior to assuming their new role.

Recommendation 30: Increase warm zone EMS training for first responders, including fire, EMS, and law enforcement to enhance the ability of all responding entities to work together, ensuring a seamless and safe response.

Recommendation 31: Where resources allow, each school should have a school resource officer that does not perform other non-school related duties and for which a suitable replacement is available when the school resource officer is unavailable or required to be out of the school.

Recommendation 32: Develop and implement specialized training for school resource officers in addition to their law enforcement training. Training should focus on unique school issues and its population demographic as well as response to active shooter events.

Recommendation 33: Establish a study group to examine the feasibility and/or implementation of a School Marshal Program.

Exercises

Recommendation 34: Each school should exercise its emergency operations plan on a regular basis to ensure staff and students have a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities. Changes and adaptations to the plan should be made as gaps and weaknesses are identified.

Recommendation 35: Each school should exercise its active shooter functional annex on a regular basis to ensure staff and students have a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities. Changes and adaptations to the plan should be made as gaps and weaknesses are identified.

Recommendation 36: School resource officers should exercise their roles in the school's active shooter functional annex on a regular basis to ensure they have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities during an event. If used, school marshals should also conduct these exercises. Changes and adaptations to the plan should be made as gaps and weaknesses are identified.

Communication

Recommendation 37: Increase communication capabilities and the interoperability of communication systems to convey information during an emergency to first responders both inside and outside the school. This includes cell phone coverage boosters, radio repeaters, and radio frequency standardization.

Recommendation 38: Ensure all phones are clearly labeled with 9-1-1, or 9-1-1 preceded by the appropriate prefix to dial out to ensure that anyone will be able to reach E911 quickly and efficiently.

Recommendation 39: Grant school staff members explicit authority to contact 9-1-1 directly to ensure that E911 is contacted with speed and efficiency.

Recommendation 40: Ensure classroom phone lines are set up with a unique code (i.e., Direct Inward Dial) and that these codes are recorded in a database shared with E911 so that when a 9-1-1 call is placed, the E911 emergency medical dispatcher will be able to tell exactly which room in the school the call is coming from.

Recommendation 41: When schools replace, upgrade, or install fire alarms, they should consider the potential of having multifunctional alarms (e.g., separate fire and lockdown alarms) to clearly and quickly inform building occupants of how to take action.

Recommendation 42: Install or issue panic buttons or other communication technology to directly notify first responders of an incident.

Recommendation 43: Establish a system to alert parents, staff, and non-first responders during an emergency to quickly and efficiently notify them of current incident and safety information.

Recommendation 44: Continue with the current Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) to assist public schools and local law enforcement agencies with funding for emergency notification software that will improve and enhance school safety.

Recommendation 45: Have local law enforcement increase their visibility at schools (e.g., complete reports and other paperwork on school grounds, eat lunch with students in the cafeteria, etc.) to increase informal interactions and trust with the students.

Recommendation 46: Launch an age appropriate See Something, Say Something™ style campaign in schools to inform students about warning signs and pre-incident indicators, and the need to report them to appropriate adults, as well as helping students feel comfortable when alerting appropriate adults.

Recommendation 47: Establish a confidential or anonymous tip line to increase information sharing from students.

Recommendation 48: The New Hampshire Information Analysis Center (IAC) should develop a school safety and security bulletin that provides schools with the latest safety and security related information. Additionally, the Information Analysis Center should develop and maintain a distribution list for the bulletin.

Recommendation 49: Establish and maintain a complete and centralized school safety preparedness online resource center to make it easier for schools and interested parties to access relevant information.

Facilities Upgrades

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Appendix A

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Appendix B

Pertinent Statutes

189:64 Emergency Response Plans.
I. Within 2 years of the effective date of this section, every public and nonpublic school shall develop a site-specific school emergency response plan which is based on and conforms to the Incident Command System and the National Incident Management System and submit such plan to the department of education by September 1 of each year. The plan should be documented at the time of school approval review. The plan shall provide that at least 2 of the currently required number of fire evacuation drills shall be emergency response drills. The plan shall address hazards including but not limited to acts of violence, threats, earthquakes, floods, tornadoes, structural fire, wildfire, internal and external hazardous materials releases, medical emergencies, and any other hazard deemed necessary by school officials and local emergency authorities. The first emergency response drill shall be conducted within one year of the completion of the plan. If the school has a building schematic floor plan diagram, the school may, with the approval of the local school board, submit the diagram to the division of homeland security and emergency management, department of safety, in a commonly used digital format. Submission of the diagram will enable the State to better prepare, respond, and mitigate potentially dangerous conditions should the need arise.

II. The plan shall be coordinated with local emergency authorities and with the emergency operations plan in the municipality in which the school is located. Each school shall review its plan at least annually and update the plan, as necessary, and shall submit the updated plan to the department of education by September 1. If after review, the plan is unchanged, the school shall notify the department by September 1 that the plan is unchanged. The director of homeland security and emergency management, department of safety shall assist school districts in conducting training for and providing support to school districts in the development, implementation, and review of an emergency response plan, as may be needed.

189:68 Student Privacy.
I. The department shall not collect or maintain the following data in the SLDS:

(a) Name of the student's parents or other family members.

(b) Address of the student or student's family.

(c) Student email or other electronic address.

(d) Student or family telephone number.

(e) Student or parent credit card account number, insurance account number, or financial services account number.

(f) Juvenile delinquency records.

(g) Criminal records.

(h) Medical and dental insurance information.

(i) Student birth information, other than birth date and town of birth.

(j) Student social security number.

(k) Student biometric information.

(l) Student postsecondary workforce information including the employer's name, and the name of a college attended outside of New Hampshire.

(m) Height and weight.

(n) Body mass index (BMI).

(o) Political affiliations or beliefs of student or parents.

(p) Family income, excluding free and reduced lunch program eligibility as determined by Food Nutrition Services of the United States Department of Agriculture.

(q) Mother's maiden name.

(r) Parent's social security number.

(s) Mental and psychological problems of the student or the student's family.

(t) Sex behavior or attitudes.

(u) Indication of a student pregnancy.

(v) Religious or ethical practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student's parents.

II. No school shall require a student to use an identification device that uses radio frequency identification, or similar technology, to identify the student, transmit information regarding the student, or monitor or track the student without approval of the school board, after a public hearing, and without the written consent of a parent of legal guardian of an affected student which may be withheld without consequence.

III. No school shall install remote surveillance

software on a school supplied computing device provided to a student without the approval of the school board, after a public hearing and without the written consent of a parent, foster parent, or legal guardian of the affected student which may be withheld without consequence. In this paragraph, "surveillance" means observing, capturing images, listening, or recording and shall not include locating equipment when there is reason to believe the equipment is about to be or has been stolen or damaged.

IV. No school shall record in any way a school classroom for the purpose of teacher evaluations without school board approval after a public hearing, and without written consent of the teacher and the parent or legal guardian of each affected student.

V. (a) Nothing in this section shall preclude the use of audio or video recordings for use with or by a child with a disability, or by such child's teacher or service provider when the child's individualized education program or accommodation plan includes audio or video recording as part of the child's special education, related services, assistive technology service, or methodology, so long as such audio or video recordings are made, used, and maintained in accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. section 1232g, and applicable state law.

(b) Nothing in this section shall preclude the use of audio or video recordings for student instructional purposes.

(c) Nothing in this section shall preclude the use of audio or video recordings for use in the instruction of teacher interns or student teachers after written notification to the parent or legal guardian of each affected student as to the purpose of, and privacy policy for, the recordings.

193-D:2 State Board Rulemaking Authority; Public School District Policies.

I. The state board of education shall adopt rules relative to safe school zones, under RSA 541-A, for public school pupils and public school employees regarding:

(a) Disciplinary proceedings, including procedures assuring due process.

(b)(1) Standards and procedures for suspension and expulsion of pupils, including procedures assuring due process.

(2) Standards and procedures which shall require expulsion of a pupil for knowingly possessing a firearm in a safe school zone without written authorization from the superintendent or designee.

(c) Procedures pertaining to discipline of pupils with special needs, including procedures assuring due process.

(d) Procedures for reporting acts of theft, destruction, or violence under RSA 193-D:4.

II. Nothing in this chapter shall prohibit local school boards from adopting and implementing policies relative to pupil conduct and disciplinary procedures.

158:31 Duties of Certain Officials.

I. Heads of police and fire departments in cities and towns shall investigate the cause and circumstances of every explosion in their respective jurisdictions by which property has been destroyed or damaged, especially to ascertain whether it was caused by carelessness or design. They shall begin such investigation forthwith after such explosion, and if it appears to the official making such investigation that the explosion is of suspicious origin or is the result of a violation of law, or if the department head is unable to determine the cause, he or she shall immediately notify the director of the division of state police.

II. For the purposes of statistical reporting and intelligence information gathering, criminal threats which are conveyed by any means of communication and which involve the potential use of any explosive device, radiological or nuclear material, or any chemical or biological agent, military or otherwise, or any combination of such agents or materials, shall be reported to the director of the division of state police.