



## **SCHOOL SAFETY PROCEDURES**

The Illinois Association of School Boards has a comprehensive school policy on school safety that is included as part of the PRESS policy service. The IASB has been very involved with the safety issue for a number of years, including: authoring legislation regarding the School Safety Drill Act; participating as a member of the Illinois School Security and Standards Task Force and the Illinois Terrorism Task Force; and sponsoring School Safety Seminars at the annual conference.

School safety procedures, best practices, and recommendations are a part of numerous documents in the IASB offices. Below is a quick guide on the issue of school safety with excerpts taken from school district policy, the School Security and Standards Task Force report, and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) “Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans”. The entire DHS/FEMA Guide is embedded in the PRESS Policy Service and is part of the School Security and Standards Task Force Report, which can be found on page 150 [here](#). School districts are encouraged to review the DHS/FEMA Guide to make sure their safety procedures meet these recommendations.

### **Emergency Plans and Training**

- The superintendent appoints a District Safety Coordinator to manage the district’s safety and security efforts and members of a Safety Team for each school. The teams develop and implement a comprehensive safety and crisis plan that addresses: prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery.
- At least annually, a safety review meeting must be conducted with district safety personnel to review each school building’s emergency and crisis response plans, protocols, and procedures and each building’s compliance with the school safety drill programs. Local responders must be invited to attend.
- School safety drills must be scheduled annually, with at least: three school evacuation drills (i.e. fire, bomb threats); one school bus evacuation drill; one severe weather drill; and one law enforcement drill (i.e. active shooter).
- Some of the materials included in the emergency operation plans should include:
  - Evacuation protocol
  - Safety drill documents
  - Maps, blueprints, and layouts of buildings
  - A protocol to ensure a secure list of people present in the building at all times
  - A protocol for student supervision in the event of an emergency
  - Student reunification plans in case of emergency
  - Communications protocol, headquarters, and point person in case of emergency to keep parents, community members, and first responders informed
  - Post-event/recovery protocols to provide information to community, counseling for students and staff, etc.
- School districts should continually review and enforce the implementation of the provisions of the School Safety Drill Act, provide regular and consistent training and preparation along with the participation of local responders, include at least one annual table-top safety exercise with local responders, consider 2-3 full-scale safety exercises per year, and implement periodic security vulnerability assessments.

## Securing School Buildings and Grounds

- Consider the expanded principals of "[Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design](#)". "Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design", which incorporates FEMA recommendations with respect to open space, parking, landscaping, and assurance of clear sight lines.
- Provide clear sight lines for observing physical movement on the school campus/site
- Assure that the school entry/reception desk is positioned to allow natural surveillance of all approaching visitors, students, and staff.
- Apply a glass polycarbonate laminated bullet proof glazing to all entry way windows and doors.
- Avoid dense shrubbery and solid walls/features around the school that would create a place for an intruder to hide.
- Surface parking lots should be designed and placed to keep vehicles away from school buildings.
- Provide clear site lines inside to better observe student movements through the school.
- Entry access should be managed and controlled inside by school personnel; all secondary entries should be locked down during the course of the day.
- All classroom and occupied education spaces should have doors that swing out into circulation.
- For classroom doors, only locksets that can be secured from the interior of the classroom without requiring the teacher to open the door should be utilized.
- The exterior school property edges should be discernable so it becomes obvious to someone approaching they are on school property.
- Communication devices (phones, radios, etc.) should be acquired and regularly evaluated within each school building to ensure teachers and administrators can easily communicate with police and first responders during an incident.
- Two knox boxes (small safe that holds building keys for use by local responders) should be provided at the main entrance and secondary entry point – one for the fire department and the second for police.
- A school security reference plan should be prepared and submitted to the Illinois State Board of Education for inclusion in the school floor plans folder administered by the Illinois State Police Statewide Terrorism and Intelligence Center (STIC) and local law enforcement.
- Consider purchasing a software package which downloads school building floor plans that are shared with local responders and contains communications applications for school staff and communication with local responders.