ABSTRACT OF CAPSTONE

Larry B. Maynard

The Graduate School

Morehead State University

April 17, 2017

SCHOOL SAFETY PREPAREDNESS: A CASE STUDY
OF THREE SCHOOL DISTRICTS

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Abstract of capstone

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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the
College of Education
At Morehead State University

By

Larry B. Maynard

Proctorville, Ohio

Committee Chair: Dr. Michael W. Kessinger, Assistant Professor

Morehead, Kentucky

April 17, 2017

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SCHOOL SAFETY PREPAREDNESS: A CASE STUDY
OF THREE SCHOOL DISTRICTS

This case study sought to provide guidelines for factors influencing the staffing levels, the incorporation of principles of management within schools, communications, training and exercises, and the needs of children in emergency-situations. This study highlights the delivery of cohesive emergency management and safety programs. The study reports on and evaluates safety plans and procedures from one school district in Kentucky, one in Ohio, and one in West Virginia. Specific areas examined were evacuation, surveillance, law enforcement, and lock down/out procedures. The study also looked at bullying, texting, and whether faculty rights to carry a firearm on school property.

KEYWORDS: emergency preparedness, school environment, safety training, educational facilities, school violence

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OF THREE SCHOOL DISTRICTS

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DEDICATION

This capstone project is dedicated to Mom and Dad for instilling in me the importance of higher education.

Proverbs 21:31
The horse is prepared against the day of battle: But safety is of the **LORD.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Chapter One

Introduction

All educational environments are susceptible to threats of violence, environmental hazards, and weather-related disasters that interfere with the instructional activities. Schools across the United States have implemented a variety of measures preventing or coping with crises (Adamson & Peacock, 2007). Although some schools have strong safety procedures, most schools do not have the necessary crisis management procedures in place due to a lack of safety resources. Resources such as community responders, crisis managers, law enforcement officers, and training are needed to provide a timely response in the event of an emergency.

Most school leaders just do not promote management training related to safety measures within the school environment, thus raising the school's vulnerability levels in relation to an unforeseen emergency (Trump, 2011). In the 21st century, it has been vital for schools to develop and integrate an all-hazards approach to address emergency issues in order to protect students and employees. This all-hazards approach accounts for people-caused crises, natural disasters, and various technological hazards.

Parents, together with the community, harbor various expectations of school officials about keeping students safe. The community and parents expect school officials to provide a safe environment (Brock, 2011). The community and parents expect that the school administration will have incorporated crisis management measures to deal with all kinds of threats and emergencies. Furthermore, the school

community expects the administration to have the necessary resources in place to deal with challenges to student safety.

Creating safe learning environment is normally part of a school's mission statement (Harris, 2011). Such an environment is reinforced through the integration of zero-tolerance policies (e.g., bullying) and the training for school personnel pertaining to their ability to respond in emergencies (Bethesda, Cowen, Vaillancourt, Rossen, & Pollitt, 2013). A safe learning environment is reinforced by established procedures, high expectation of all students, and equal and fair treatment of students by everyone.

The educator is identified as the educational parent to the students and tasked with meeting the learning and safety needs of the student. However, in most school violence scenarios, the educator lacks the necessary training for proper planning, prevention, and response processes to assure that the school is kept safe from various threats, hazards, and disasters (Bartlett & John, 2002). It becomes necessary to not only provide a safe learning environment, but also to be prepared in the case of a potentially violent situation.

The academic success of students depends on a safe school environment. Johnson (2011) stated, "The school environment is frequently measured by schools to gauge the students', teachers', and parents' satisfaction with the school. However, perhaps more important than satisfaction, the school environment also influences students' academic success" (p. 331). Johnson also remarked, "Research has

suggested a role for the school environment in the prevention of dropout, delinquency, drug and alcohol use, and violence" (p. 331).

Leading school safety officials have identified recent school disasters where rampage violence has occurred as one of the major threats to schools in the 21st century (Trump, 2011). In a survey conducted in the United States, the majority indicated that there was a dire need for state educational agencies to be involved in providing emergency management training and resources toward enhancing school violence protection and response measures within the school system (Trump).

"Incidents of targeted school violence occurred in 37 communities across the country between 1974 and May 2000" (Fein, Vossekuil, Pollack, Borum, Modzeleski, & Reddy, 2004, p. 3). Due to these disasters, most schools have developed school safety plans. Most schools have gone to great lengths to assure student, faculty, staff, and administration that safety precautions have been established to ward off or alleviate violent attacks. "Tragedies, such as school shootings, and the assault on Gabrielle Giffords share features that are define them as acts of rampage violence" (Harris, 2012, p. 1054).

Recent school attacks carried out by students have shaken the image of schools as safe and secure environments. The many publicized school shootings have created uncertainty about the safety and security of schools. Thus parents fear now that an attack might occur in any school, in any community. Safety is an overwhelming concern to everyone involved in the educational community.

Problem Statement

      In recent years safety has been placed on the radar screen as one of the most important topics in education. Therefore school safety plans are facing greater scrutiny.

Figure 1: Components of School Safety

      For overall school safety to be assured, areas of safety must be established, which includes policies, procedures, design, and training (see Figure 1). Policies must be developed and followed, and schools must have a safety design that adheres to state and federal code. For example, establishing adequate staffing levels and proper training should be identified in the drafting of a safety plan. Insufficient staffing levels can lead to areas not being properly monitored, and lack of training lead to confusion in time of a crisis. Administrators and community responders must practice proper procedures if responses to threats are to be rapid and timely.

Parents and guardians must know where they can expect their child to be while a disaster is in progress and in its immediate aftermath. Ineffective safety designs must be changed, adapted, or re-routed to meet all state and federal safety codes. These areas mesh into a successful school safety program. An effective school safety plan should involve law enforcement and first responders, effective communication as well as procedures that are known by all school personnel such as lockout and lockdown procedures, and ways of informing parents as to where their child will be during and after the act of violence.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this capstone study was to investigate components of school safety within a single school district in each of three states: Kentucky, Ohio, and West Virginia. The case study was conducted through:

1)   the examination of the safety plans of the selected school districts to identify both deficiencies and areas of effectiveness;

2)   an examination of the statements by the district's superintendent or designee regarding their school safety plan; and

3)   the examination of the level of school safety protection of the elementary, middle, and high schools by surveying faculty, administrators, counselors, and the protective resource officer from each selected school district.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study may benefit school personnel, community members, or researchers as they examine school safety plans. Practice and planning will help school safety teams and community first responders to develop better cohesion in the fabric of their school's responses to a disaster. Researchers in later years might identify areas in which school districts can improve their safety program. This study might enable others to identify potential deficiencies in their safety plans, as well as suggest ways to strengthen the preparedness of administrators, teachers, and first responders.

The thrust of the study was that all schools should have safety plans in place that are designed to cope with all acts of bullying, rampage violence, and natural disasters. Schools should periodically examine their existing safety plans and make appropriate adjustments to minimize the damage from acts of violence. In addition safety plans must encompass preparedness for specific natural disasters such as fire, floods, tornadoes, and earthquakes.

Background to the Study

School safety plans, to be effective, must consider many different areas. Areas examined in this study include previous school disasters, bullying, adequate staffing to monitor the school, and natural disasters. Each act of violence has its own causation and impact and school responses to these acts of violence. This study looked at both the challenges of natural and human-caused negative events, and a variety of responses by school and staff and first responders.

Schools and violence. The 1927 Bath, Michigan school disaster had an impact upon a whole community. Andrew Kehoe, a 55-year-old school board treasurer, was angered by tax increases that caused his farm to go into foreclosure. He had previously lost a 1926 township clerk election and due to the foreclosure, he planned an act of revenge.

Kehoe planted explosives discreetly underneath the Bath Township School. Between May 16 and 18, Kehoe murdered his wife, who had been stricken with tuberculosis. On May 18 at 8:45 am, he blew up his homestead. Simultaneously, by using a timed-detonator, he blew up the school and killed 38 elementary school children and six adults, and injured an additional 58 individuals. As rescuers began working at the school, Kehoe drove up, stopped, and detonated his truck killing himself, the superintendent, and several others nearby while injuring more bystanders. Figures 2 and 3 provide the reader with the sense of the damage inflicted upon the school.

Figure 2: Picture of the Bath Michigan Township School.

Figure 3: After the attack.

Table 1 provides a summary of other school disasters that have been

recorded in history. The incidences of violence appear to be occurring more often in

recent years.

Table 1

Historical School Disasters within the United States

Location and Date	Outcome
Bath, MI May 18, 1927	By far the worst school massacre in U.S. history took place in Bath, Michigan. There, an angry school board member named Andrew Kehoe blew up the town's school, killing 38 children, 7 adults including him and wounding at least 58 others. Most of the victims were kindergarten through sixth grade students. A secondary explosion killed Kehoe and the school superintendent.
Austin, TX August 1, 1966	From the observation deck of a University of Texas tower, Charles Whitman killed 16 and wounded 31 in a shooting rampage that lasted for 96 minutes.
Stockton, CA January 1, 1989	Five children were killed and 30 others wounded in a massacre at Cleveland Elementary. As is typical, the gunman killed himself.
Iowa City, IA November 1, 1991	A Chinese graduate student, upset at being passed over for academic honors, killed five University of Iowa employees before turning the gun on himself.
San Diego, CA April 15, 1995	A 36 year-old graduate engineering student killed three professors while defending his thesis before the faculty committee.
Jonesboro, AR March 24, 1998	A pair of boys, aged 11 and 13, shot 15 people. A teacher and four students died.
Littleton, CO April 20, 1999	In what is known as the Columbine Massacre, 13 students were killed and 22 wounded by two gunmen, who were students.
Red Lake, MN March 21, 2005	A 16 year-old killed his grandfather and a friend, and then went to his school to kill seven others. The massacre ended when he turned the gun on himself.
Nickel Mines, PA October 2, 2006	A gunman shot 11 Amish girls in a one-room schoolhouse, killing six.

Table 1

Historical School Disasters within the United States
(continued)

Location and Date	Outcome
Blacksburg, VA April 16, 2007	A student gunman, a South Korean national, killed 33 in the dorms and a nearby classroom building. He then killed himself.
Newtown, CT December 14, 2012	Twenty students and six adults were killed in America's second worst school disaster.
Hazard, KY January 15, 2013	Three were dead at Hazard Community College.
Moore, Oklahoma May 20, 2013	A tornado collapsed Briarwood Elementary School & Plaza Towers Elementary School where seven died.
Santa Monica, CA June 7, 2013	Six died, including the shooter, and four others were injured at Santa Monica College.
Marysville, WA October 24, 2014	Two were dead, including the shooter and four were wounded at Marysville-Pilchuck High School.
Roseburg, OR October 1, 2015	Ten were killed, including the shooter who shot himself at Umpqua Community College, Roseburg, Oregon.

("Epic disasters", 2013)

The Bath Township event placed school safety on the radar screen as an area

of concern. After the University of Texas shooting in 1966, community responders

were placed onsite to respond quickly and efficiently in the case of a school disaster.

The Stockton, California incident in 1989, a drive-by shooting, emphasized the

importance of direct communication between the school community and first

responders. Safety officials became aware that disasters could happen within their

schools when a frustrated student turned a weapon on teachers and classmates. In

1990 Congress passed the Guns-Free-School-Zone Act (GFSZA), which prohibits

any non-authorized person from possessing a firearm within 1,000 feet of a school's grounds.

There have been significantly, more school shootings since 2003 (Institute of Educational Services, 2016). In recent years, violence has increased with disasters at K-12 schools like Columbine (1999) and Sandy Hook (2012) as well as major university settings such as Virginia Polytechnic Institute (2007). The Columbine school disaster was carried out by two students and resulted in 13 individuals being killed and the wounding of 22 other persons. The aftermath of Columbine led to which resulted in a closer look at bullying and the psychological mindsets of students. As recently as 2014, a freshman student at Pilchuck High School shot five students in the school's cafeteria, killing one student and then shooting himself (CNN, 2015).

The second worst school disaster in the United States occurred in Newtown, Connecticut, the scene where 20 students and six adults were killed. Other recent school shootings such as Santa Monica College California, Marysville Washington, and Roseburg Oregon resulted in six, two, and 10 individuals being killed respectively. In each of those situations, the shooter took his life. A regional school crisis in 2013 was at the Hazard Community College (Kentucky) where three individuals were killed.

The increase of school violence has led to new ways of violence acts. Schools should be prepared through their school safety plans to be prepared for any type of disaster be it man made or any natural disaster that might occur. Administrators,

faculty, school personnel, and community responders must know what to do when any disaster occurs for a school safety plan to be successful.

Bullying. School bullying and violence has been a concern for many years. The School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey collects data on bullying by asking students ages 12–18 if they had been bullied at school during the school year and the percentage of students who reported being bullied at school during the school year decreased from 28 percent in 2005 to 21 percent in 2015. (Institute of Educational Sciences, 2016, p. 1)

The Child Trends Databank (2014) reported that anywhere from 22% to 28% of students age 12 through 18 reported being bullied at school for both 2008 and 2011. "A 2013 survey found that only 39% of students who were bullied at school had notified a teacher or another adult at school about the incident(s), suggesting that most bullying goes unreported" (Child Trends Databank, 2014, p. 1).

The increasing availability of technology in schools has complicated the bullying picture. It seems virtually all students now have a cell phone and access to social media. Hinduja and Patchin (2007) found that with an increasing number of youth utilizing social media, there has been a corresponding increase in the occurrence of cyberbullying. Another study (Stover, 2006) found that bullies are moving away from acts on the school playground and toward using technology to torment their victims. Bullying and cyberbullying can be a prelude to incidents of physical violence.

Staffing. In recent years, school consolidation has been an economic strategy

in most states. Bartlett and John (2002) discovered evidence that as the enrollment of

a school increased, the need for additional safety resources within the school system

went up. Heightened safety needs in consolidated schools has been met through

cross-training of teachers within school systems and through collaborative

relationships between local police and EMS services, public and mental health

bodies, policy makers, and parents. This collaboration is appropriate because school

safety and preparedness is a community issue that requires the knowledge and

wisdom of cost-efficient solutions by the entire community (Bethesda et al., 2013).

However, economic downturns have impacted the federal and state

government's ability to adequately fund school safety. Safety staff and programs

have been reduced as policy makers have placed emphasis on core services such as

statewide accountability and student services. District leadership allocate resources

to meet ongoing financial obligations rather than build up school safety programs

(Johnson, Lindstrom, & Gielav, 2011). With the reduction of funding many districts

look cut personnel costs. School staffing levels are normally determined by student

enrollment. The additional funding needed to provide personnel for safety concerns

is often not met. The downsizing of staff has contributed to the placing of school

safety and preparedness responsibilities upon the teachers rather than upon safety

professionals (Adamson & Peacock, 2007).

Many schools can afford only a single counselor. One counselor likely does

not have the ability to handle the day to day needs of all students including abuse,

home issues, mental issues, and career advising. Counselors also may not be aware

of bullying problems involving students. The staff must communicate bullying

problems to the counselor in an urgent manner.

The proper staffing level of counselors to students is a component of the

overall safety plan. Table 2 shares the 2011 elementary student to counselor ratio

from the states in the tri-state area.

Table 2

Elementary Student to Counselor Ratio (as of 2011)

School Setting	Ratio
Recommended Ratio	250:1
US Average	457:1
Kentucky	459:1
Ohio	499:1
West Virginia	387:1

Source: American Counseling Association, (2011).

School safety plans. The increase reports of school bullying, the availability

to the internet in schools, and the recent acts of violence show the need for school

safety plans to be carefully examined for flaws by administrators, staff, and

community responders. Bullying and cyberbullying, incidents of school violence,

and acts of premeditated aggression are each a concern for today's safety planner. As

school safety plans are being revised, school personnel must consider current and

future situations in and around school property. Planning becomes an exercise in

imagining what might happens in days to come.

Several components of school safety plans must be considered to minimize or possibly prevent acts of violence. Those components include the proper training of school employees, communication with responders, adequate staffing, and written policies and procedures known by all stakeholders.

To implement a successful school safety design, safety designers must examine acts of violence from in the past. Those events had various motivating factors, were executed in different ways, and had a variety of outcomes. Safety designers, to restate, must also consider what could happen in the future. This might entail looking at the history of disasters around the country. Earthquakes, floods, tornadoes, fire, and nuclear disasters along with human-caused violent episodes must be considered when developing a school safety plan.

When a school disaster happens, many administrators and community members wonder why such and so happened? They next typically ask, "What could have prevented this disaster from happening or what could have minimized the damages?"

Local Context

The school districts that participated in this capstone were from Kentucky, Ohio, and West Virginia; one district from each state. Looking at the three districts within one study afforded perceptions into the state of school safety in this tri-state area.

Kentucky. The Lawrence County School District consisted of six schools in 2013-14. There was a single high school serving students in grades 9 through 12; a

middle school serving students in grades 6 through 8; two elementary schools each

serving students in Preschool through grade 8; one upper elementary serving students

in grades 2 through 5; and one lower elementary serving students in Preschool

through grade 1. The school district served approximately 2,525 students and

employed approximately 167 classroom teachers (National Center for Education

Statistics, 2014).

Table 3

Lawrence County School District, KY Total Student Enrollment and Full-Time
Teachers by School, 2013-2014

School	Enrollment	Teachers (FTE)
Blaine Elementary (P-8)	234	19.33
Fallsburg Elementary (P-8)	377	25.00
Louisa West Elementary (P-1)	388	25.00
Louisa East Elementary (2-5)	532	30.00
Louisa Middle School (6-8)	383	23.33
Lawrence County High School (9-12)	611	44.34

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, (2014).

Ohio. The Chesapeake Union Exempted Village had three schools serving a

total enrollment in 2013-14 of 1,376 students (National Center for Education

Statistics, 2014). The school system employed approximately 75 classroom teachers.

An elementary school served students in P-4, one middle school served students in

grades 5-8, and one high school served students in grades 9 through 12.

Table 4

Chesapeake Union Exempted Village, OH (2013-2014) Total Student Enrollment and Full-Time Teachers by School, 2013-2014

School	Enrollment	Teachers (FTE)
Chesapeake Elementary (P-4)	578	27.50
Chesapeake Middle (5-8)	459	27.00
Chesapeake High School (9-12)	339	19.33

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, (2014).

Table 5

Mason County Schools, WV (2013-2014) Total Student Enrollment and Full-Time Teachers by School, 2013-2014

School	Enrollment	Teachers (FTE)
Ashton Elementary (K-6)	406	27.50
Beale Elementary (K-6)	309	25.00
Hannan Jr. High (7-8)*	135	11.00
Hannan High School (9-12)*	160	12.00
Leon Elementary (P-6)	154	10.50
New Haven Elementary (K-6)	491	35.00
Pt. Pleasant Intermediate (3-6)	361	20.50
Pt. Pleasant Primary (K-2)	425	25.00
Pt. Pleasant Jr/Sr High School (7-12)	1,180	64.50
Roosevelt Elementary (K-6)	296	17.50
Wahama Jr/Sr High School (7-12)	395	27.75
Mason County Career Center (PK-12)		17.00

* Students are served within a single building
Source: National Center for Education Statistics, (2014).

West Virginia. The Mason County Schools in Point Pleasant had a total of

11 schools serving the county in 2013-14 with a total enrollment of 4,312 students.

The school system employed approximately 298 full-time teachers (National Center

for Education Statistics, 2014).

Guiding Questions

The capstone explored the following five questions:

1)   What are the strengths and weaknesses in the existing school safety

        plan?

2)   Were there any changes in safety policies and preparedness?

3)   What were the perceptions of the protection resource officers (PRO),

        faculty, and administrators regarding the current safety plan?

4)   What is the current school safety condition?

5)   What barriers might impede the implementation of the school safety

        plans?

 Summary

Threats of school violence include fights, bullying, shootings, and other

violent events are plaguing schools that have an impact upon teaching our children.

Federal and state safety regulations and school safety plans are typically reviewed

after every major act of violence by school personnel and by the community. There

appears to be a greater emphasis being placed on school districts to have a

coordinated school safety plan.

In recent years, many changes have shaped school safety plans. Bullying and

cyberbullying education have taken place in schools as well as awareness of safety

procedures. The presence of law enforcement, installation of surveillance cameras,

and the question of whether school personnel should be authorized to carry a firearm have been topics of discussion. The recognition and communication of all school staff regarding potential acts of violence must not be overlooked in schools. The need for additional personnel cannot be overlooked when developing a strong school safety plan.

Natural disasters must not be overlooked when developing a successful school safety plan. All schools should have in their plan for flooding, tornadoes, earthquakes, and for a nuclear disaster. The recent surge of rampage violence has drawn the focus to implementing successful communication and evacuation. There must be planning and practice for natural disasters in a successful school safety plan.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

This capstone investigated components of school safety within three school districts, one in Kentucky; one in Ohio; and one in West Virginia. The case study was conducted through:

1)   An examination of safety plans of selected school districts to pinpoint both deficiencies and areas of effectiveness in existing school safety plans.

2)   An examination of statements each district's superintendent or designee regarding their school safety plan.

3)   An examination of the level of school safety protection in elementary, middle, and high schools by surveying faculty, administrators, counselors, and protective resource officers.

This chapter discusses research that relates to school safety. It looks at integration of principles of emergency management, historical policy and procedural changes, safety policies and procedures, and safety legislation and regulations. In the final section, it focuses on bullying and cyberbullying as a precursor to school violence.

Integrating Principles of Emergency Management in Schools

Analysts have insisted schools need to be integrated within their community's security plans (Trump, 2011). School safety plans must include communication and training with first responders to prepare for disasters. It is vital for schools to

implement, communicate, and coordinate such safety plans with community first responders to increase chances for decisive and effective action to prevent or ameliorate the effects of negative incidents.

Emergency management. Schools are as segments of society and share in the kinds of calamities that occur elsewhere in society (Reeves et al., 2011). Schools safety plans that include areas such as crisis planning and training, prevention, response, communication, lockdown and lockout codes, evacuation, emergency contacts, monitoring, cameras, law enforcement, and community response time. Emergency management is a part of any school safety plan and addresses natural disasters, man-made disasters, and nuclear disasters.

Schools, ideally, incorporate the principles of emergency management within their developed emergency operations plan. The eight principles of emergency management outlined by Blanchard et al. (2007) are: 1) comprehensive; 2) progressive; 3) risk-driven; 4) integrated; 5) collaborative; 6) coordinated; 7) flexible; and 8) professional. These eight principles need to be accounted for to help schools identify deficiencies in their safety plan.

Comprehensive. Being comprehensive is the first principle of emergency management (Blanchard et al., 2007). In safety planning, schools should consider hazards, stakeholders, and may have happened in prior disasters. Comprehensive means a plan covers all aspects of emergency management. It is important that each potential disaster be considered by the school administrators, faculty, and first

responders (Blanchard et al.). Excellent organization is essential for the school safety plan to be successful.

The various phases of emergency management must be examined individually. It is important for schools to have effective school safety plans to connect the four phases of emergency management. The four phases of emergency management, as outlined by FEMA (2017), are: 1) mitigation, 2) preparedness, 3) response and 4) recovery. Emergency management is cyclical in nature, as one phase flows into the next (FEMA, 2017). This cyclical approach ensures that not only does one phase flow into the next phase, but in some instances, one or more phases may be concurrent.

Mitigation. The mitigation or prevention phase incorporates continuous activities that seek to reduce and consequently eliminate long-term risks of personal injury or loss of life, property damage and harm to the environment. The mitigation phase should be operational long before any disaster occurs (FEMA, 2017). Periodic training and practice are key to protecting schools from potential threats. A successful school safety plan thus minimizes prospective injuries and loss of life.

Preparedness. The preparedness or planning phase integrates several actions geared toward improving speed and coordination in the event of an emergency (FEMA, 2017). This phase includes the development of an action plan based on a variety of potential emergencies. The preparedness or planning phase also includes exercises and training, as well as communication and public awareness activities regarding emergency management.

Response. In the response phase schools react to disasters with a sense of urgency. Several activities combine to save lives, minimize the extent of damage, and protect the environment. Communication with first responders and their readiness is essential during this phase. Administration, such as the school superintendent, establishes and directs a communication center that coordinates first responders, staff, students, transportation, and the media during a time of crisis. The response phase is vital to minimizing loss of life. The response phase depends on how well the school safety plan has been constructed and implemented (FEMA, 2017).

Recovery. Finally, the recovery phase takes over when the threats posed to life and property have passed. During the recovery phase, all students, parents, faculty, community, and community responders know that school operations have resumed and communication has been restored. The recovery includes securing financial assistance to help pay for repairs (FEMA, 2017).

Progressive. The second principle incorporated into emergency planning according to Blanchard et al. (2007) involves being progressive. "Emergency managers anticipate future disasters and take preventive and preparatory measures to build disaster resistant and disaster resilient communities" (Blanchard et al., 2007, p. 5). Possible scenarios should be developed based on three main aspects of emergencies, grouped as 1) people-caused disasters, 2) natural disasters, and 3) technological hazards (Bethesda et al., 2013). People-caused violence includes shootings, bombings, poisonings, and other acts of terror. Natural disasters include fire, flood, snow, and tornado activity, and technological hazards include chemical

spills and explosions. By taking preventive and preparatory measures, emergency

management foresees potential acts of violence and prepares schools and

communities to cope with them (Blanchard et al.).

  Risk-driven. "Emergency managers use sound risk-management principles

(hazard identification, risk analysis, and impact analysis) in assigning priorities and

resources" (Blanchard et al, 2007, p. 6). The term risk-driven means to identify and

prioritize risks, select and apply techniques to minimize risks, and evaluate the degree

of risk reduction in school safety plans. To optimize disaster, schools must have a

reliable answer for every conceivable problem and high trust in their emergency

management plan.

  Integrated. The integration principle of emergency management means

schools are ready to "ensure unity of effort among all levels of government and all

elements of a community" (Blanchard et al., 2007, p. 6). School safety plans and

emergency management plans must incorporate all local, state, and federal guidelines.

An effective school safety plan is one that is well known, practiced, and

communicated throughout the school community

  Collaborative. The fifth principle of emergency management requires the

schools to use a collaborative method in which they "create and sustain broad and

sincere relationships among individuals and organizations to encourage trust,

advocate a team atmosphere, build consensus, and facilitate communication"

(Blanchard et al., 2007, p. 7). It is important for everyone to have a stake in the

school emergency management plan. Faculty, administration, community responders,

and law enforcement, all must match up to the ideals the emergency management

plan lays down. Any weak link may cause the plan to fail in execution.

Coordinated. In this principle, the emergency managers "synchronize the

activities of all relevant stakeholders to achieve a common purpose" (Blanchard et al.,

2007, p. 8). For a school safety plan to succeed it needs to be communicated

effectively to with all school personnel and other key participants. Well prepared

stakeholders are more likely to work together as a strong team.

Flexible. The seventh principle of emergency management is activated when

"emergency managers use creative and innovative approaches in solving disaster

challenges" (Blanchard et al., 2007, p. 8). New trends and ideas must be considered

in the development of the emergency management plan to make it better (Blanchard

et al.). No event can be predicted, nor can what will occur during a disaster. "The

emergency manager must be flexible enough to suggest variations in tactics or

procedures and adapt quickly to a rapidly changing and frequently unclear situation"

(Blanchard, et al., p. 8).

Professional. Being professional implies that "emergency managers value a

science, and knowledge, based approach rooted in education, training, experience,

ethical practice, public stewardship and continuous improvement" (Blanchard et al.

2007, p. 9). Emergency managers must have the competence and confidence in using

technology to communicate with students, staff, and community in time of disaster.

Emergency management is continuously striving to keep up to date with safety

related issues and ideas to improve their school safety plan.

Schools should check to see if their existing safety plan exhibits and practices all eight principles. Schools should attempt to address most hazards within their emergency management plans. Some schools do a better job of incorporating safety plans than other school's due to their safety audits (Trump, 2010). Education, communication, and training with all school personnel develops and gives the school safety plan cohesion.

School safety planning. President and CEO of the ESP Solutions Group, Glenn Ligon posed the question, "How do you prepare your district or school for the unexpected?" (Schaffhauser, 2013, p. 11). As Dwight D. Eisenhower famously declared, "Plans are worthless, but planning is everything" (Schaffhauer, 2013, p. 11).

Ligon along with another expert in planning, Lo of the Tech Soup Global, considered seven practices when organizations are in the planning stage of developing and implementing policies and procedures (Schaffhauser, 2013). These practices were: 1) reconsider how you define a disaster; 2) disaster planning is a project; 3) setting priorities requires all hands; 4) go for plan redundancy; 5) be ready to check in with staff; 6) get your communications strategy sorted out; and 7) put your faith in communication on the technology web (Schaffhauser).

The seven practices of effective planning envision studying the different types of disasters and charting a plan for each and making use of technology to minimize damage and loss of life. As presented by Shaffhauser (2013), Ligon and Lo indicated in disaster planning the need for quality training with technology and having everyone ready to respond when a disaster strikes. They pointed to the importance

that everyone be involved and know his or her specific role in response to disaster.

Ligon and Lo indicated the need for spot drills or checks to see if all are prepared and

if effective communication through technology can be implemented.

Lastly, Ligon and Lo emphasized that everyone should believe in technology

and have confidence in email communication (Shaffhauser, 2013). Not with standing

power failures power, retirement of key technology communicators, and either

hacking of technology or the onset of natural disasters, all schools should be

technologically prepared to communicate during a crisis.

Historical Policy and Procedural Changes

Usually after each historical act of violence, administrators examine school

safety plans and adjustments are made. For example, after the Santa Monica College

shooting, "On August 7, 2013, exactly two months after the killing spree, the Los

Angeles Community College District Board of trustees adopted a resolution banning

firearms on its nine campuses" (Knolle, 2013, p. 1). After the Santa Monica

shooting, additional safeguards were introduced. "Part of these changes include a

half- million-dollar phone system that doubles as a public-address system" (Moss,

2013, p.1). Phones were installed in every room with the ability to send warning

announcements. After later incidents have occurred, more revisions to safety

procedures were made.

Columbine, Colorado. After incidents of violence, schools began to explore

complete school safety plans. In the years following the Columbine High School

disaster, there were first law suits (Kass & Marek, 2005). Then, adjustments were

made springing focus criticism of law enforcement – especially of the sheriff at that time, who was alleged to have made several errors. Research conducted by the state of Colorado following Columbine pointed to the need for better developed, organized, and easily executed school safety plans. Some schools changed their safety procedures nine times since the 1999 Columbine disaster (Criminal Justice Degrees Guide, 2017).

"Schools have significantly increased their security measures since the 1999 Columbine massacre" (Criminal Justice Degrees Guide, 2017, para. 1). Schools are now more aware that disasters can happen and they are prepared to implement their school safety plan when disasters occur. In addition, "schools have taken new measures to increase communication among students, teachers, and faculty about violence, weapons, bullying and other threats" (Criminal Justice Degrees Guide, 2017, para. 2). Effective communication between school administrators and faculty is imperative in every phase, prior to, during and after a disaster.

Another change following Columbine was that "schools have truly put their foot down on student threats and bullying by enforcing zero-tolerance policies that punish any violation of a rule, regardless of ignorance, accidents or other circumstances" (Criminal Justice Degrees Guide, 2017, para. 3). Reporting of bullying and cyberbullying has been improved by certain school districts. Bullying and cyberbullying education has been added to almost every curriculum. Any person guilty of threats of bullying or cyberbullying in schools or away from schools can face stiff penalties.

The fourth change is increased awareness. "Schools and communities as a whole have been increasingly aware of the warning signs associated with troubled students and school attacks since Columbine" (Criminal Justice Degrees Guide, 2017, para. 4). Counselors have become more aware in recognizing potential problem students.

"The school environment has undergone several changes since Columbine, and students have had to say goodbye to some of their beloved privileges in the process" (Criminal Justice Degrees Guide, 2017, para. 5). Risks are minimized due to limiting student movement and communication. Organization and practice of the school safety plan led the students to be informed of "what to do?" when a disaster happened.

Another change to procedures was that "schools have become more prepared for school shootings by implementing lockdown drills similar to fire and natural disaster drills" (Criminal Justice Degrees Guide, 2017, para. 6). Schools have safety committees that are coordinated by school administrators in time of danger. Administrators practice the use of school lock down codes making sure everyone in a school is aware of the codes and instructed on what to do and where to go in time of crisis.

"After the Columbine shooting schools have developed anti-bullying and anti-violence initiatives to prevent bullying and provide support to victims of bullying" (Criminal Justice Degrees Guide, 2017, para.7). Schools now train students and faculty in bullying awareness and have developed appropriate policies to address

bullying and cyberbullying. To help bullied students, counseling services are made

available. "Mental health counseling has become a norm in many U.S. schools,

especially after Columbine" (Criminal Justice Degrees Guide, 2017, para. 8).

Students, parents, and faculty have more preventive counseling opportunities than in

the past. Mental health counseling is frequently offered to the student doing the

bullying to make him or her aware of their aggression and encourage restraint.

"In an effort to ease parents' worries and let them know their child's

whereabouts, most schools have allowed students to have cell phones on campus"

(Criminal Justice Degrees Guide, 2017, para. 9). The cell phone allows immediate

communication with parents and school systems in time of crisis.

In the aftermath of rampage violence in Colorado and Connecticut, many

safety changes have been instituted. "One of the notable trends: a sharp departure in

states' reactions to the aftermath of the 1999 shootings at Columbine High School in

Jefferson County, Colo., when schools hired thousands of law-enforcement officers to

patrol schools" (Shah & Ujifusa, 2013, p. 21).

Virginia Tech shooting. It was learned from the Virginia Tech shootings that

a mentally ill student could easily obtain a gun to do harm against a person in a

school building or on school grounds. It was realized that the mentally ill should not

have free access to a weapon and that they needed to receive mental health treatment

as ordered. "After the Virginia Legislature became more aware with HB 499, which

required those who are ordered to receive treatment for mental health issues to

receive treatment" (Gray, 2008, para 25). After the Virginia Tech shooting in 2007,

"35% (of schools) said they had increased their institution wide budgets for 2007-2008 for safety and security as a direct result of Virginia Tech" (Lederman, 2008, p. 1).

In January 2008, President George W. Bush signed into effect the first major federal gun measure called the Brady Bill (Hong, 2012). The bill prohibited the purchase of guns by people the state had declared by a court to be mentally handicapped (Hong, 2012).

Sandy Hook shooting. "After Sandy Hook, Newtown, Conn., school boards all over the country have focused attention on how they might prevent such a tragedy at their own schools" (O'Meara, 2013, p. 33). Schools began locking doors during the school day, installing metal detectors, tracking visitors, and police officers began visiting schools on a regular basis (Chen, 2016). "Around half the schools in the state have also undergone safety assessments by Kentucky for School Safety located at Eastern Kentucky University" (Chen, p. 1).

Firearms in schools. The argument has continued for firearms to be allowed in schools. Some states are allowing teachers to keep firearms in schools. "The same argument was used nearly 20 years ago, when guns were allowed in Utah schools" (Oda, 2015, para. 1). "This time around, after the shootings in Newtown, Connecticut, several states are advancing legislation that would put guns in teachers' hands" (Shah & Ujifusa, 2013, p. 21). There have been some school boards that have voted to allow teachers and administrators to have a firearm at school. In Texas, the

superintendent of Harrold School District, David Thweatt, stated, "we have allowed

teachers and staff to carry a concealed weapon since 2007, and our insurance rates

have not increased due to that" (Oda, p. 1). In Ohio, the Sydney City Schools have

trained 30 staff to carry guns (Oda), and since 2013 in the Rock Hill Local (Ohio)

school district the district has allowed its administrators to have a firearm at school.

A big question for many schools and communities is whether to allow teachers and/or

administrators the right to carry or possess a firearm while on school property. Can

having school personnel be armed really provide a safe learning environment for

learning, or does it add to safety concerns.

School safety evacuation program. After the Columbine disaster, an

elementary principal and her husband, a law enforcement officer in the Dallas/Ft.

Worth area established the ALICE training program (Crane & Crane, 2014). The

term ALICE is an acronym for Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate, and

was designed to improve school safety practices. An important component of the

ALICE training was for occupants to evacuate the building quickly, which was

procedurally different than simply locking the school down. In 2014, ALICE was

implemented in Cabell County Schools in Huntington, West Virginia. During an

ALICE exercise, surveillance cameras allow school staff to see where the intruder is

in the building. Administrators, through loud speaker announcements, order classes

in other parts of the building to evacuate.

As stated on the ALICE website, only 2% of violent intruder events have been

by more than one person (Crane & Crane, 2014). Other noteworthy ALICE training

statistics included: a) the average law enforcement response time is five minutes to

60 minutes (rural); b) 93% of shooters planned the shooting; c) 95% of shooters had

attended the school; d) 60% of shooters kill themselves at the scene; and e) an

average of four active shooter scenarios occur per month in the United States (Crane

& Crane).

   Surveillance cameras. Kass and Marek (2005) noted that one interesting

safety improvement was a facility change where surveillance cameras were installed

to monitor the hallways and entryways. For example, in Wayne Township, a roughly

15,000-student district on the 'west-side' of Indianapolis, school officials installed

closed-circuit cameras at every school and created a voice mail system where students

could anonymously report other students who were threatening violence (Kass and

Marek). This trend has continued for many schools. In many building projects,

schools are including the necessary cabling so cameras can be installed in key

locations. Today, schools have listed surveillance cameras in their school safety plan

as a necessary tool for monitoring events in the building.

Tri-State Safety Legislation and Regulations

   A common thread throughout Kentucky, Ohio, and West Virginia continues to

be the desire to have a safe environment for learning along with keeping students and

staff safe. In each state, legislation and regulations have been enacted that affects

school safety.

   Kentucky. Kentucky, like other states, enacted legislation to enhance

communication with first responders in their school safety plans.

The Kentucky General Assembly passed Senate Bill 8, and HB 354, which

changes Kentucky's current emergency management plan law (KRS 158.163),

[and it] took effect on June 25, 2013. The bills expand the existing law by

requiring schools and districts to include community first responders in their

emergency plans, and presented an opportunity for review and refinement of

current emergency and safety practices through continuous improvement.

(Kentucky Center for School Safety, p. 3)

The law had several provisions that were required of school district when

constructing their emergency plan. Specifically, the law required schools and

districts to do the following:

1.   Adopt an emergency plan to include procedures to be followed in case

of fire, severe weather, or earthquake, or if building lockdown in KRS

(Kentucky Revised Statue) 158.164 is required; the principal shall

discuss the emergency plan with all staff prior to the first instructional

day of each school year and shall document the time and date of any

discussion.

2.   Provide, after adoption, the emergency plan, along with a complete

diagram of the facility, to appropriate first responders.

3.   Establish primary and secondary evacuation routes for all rooms located

within the school and post the routes in each room by any doorway used

for evacuation.

4. Identify severe weather safe zones to be reviewed by the local fire marshal or fire chief and post the location of safe zones in each room of the school.

5. Conduct, at a minimum, emergency response drills to include one (1) severe weather drill, one (1) earthquake drill and one (1) lockdown drill within the first thirty (30) instructional days of each school year and again during the month of January.

6. Develop and adhere to practices to control the access to each building, including requiring that all visitors report to the front office of the building and provide valid identification, state the purpose of the visit; and provide a visitor's badge to be visibly displayed on a visitor's outer garment.

7. Recommend that all classroom doors be locked during instruction, if the door can be locked from the outside and open from the inside without a key.

8. Require local boards to review crime and disaster prevention designs when constructing or renovating a school building.

9. Send superintendent verification to the Kentucky Department of Education by November 1 of each school year that all schools within the district are following the requirements of the law. (Kentucky Center for School Safety, 2015, p. 4)

The Commonwealth of Kentucky has taken great strides to curtail bullying. On July 15, 2016, the Kentucky legislature amended KRS 158.148 to clarify the definition of *bullying* (Kentucky Center for School Safety, 2016). "Bullying means any unwanted verbal, physical, or social behavior, among students that involves a real or perceived power imbalance and is repeated or has the potential to be repeated" (Kentucky Center for School Safety, 2016, p. 1). One Kentucky law, KRS 158.156, allows parents to report allegations directly to the county attorney, state police, or law enforcement agency when school officials do not report bullying. In addition, KRS 158.150 references bullying and gives all schools the right to remove students who bully.

Ohio. The need for school safety prompted the Ohio Department of Higher Education and the Ohio Department of Education to form the Center for P-20 Safety and Security in 2013 (Safer Schools in Ohio, 2015). The mission of the Center is to provide guidance to Ohio schools to enhance their strategies for safety, security, and emergency plan development. All Ohio schools can use the website to enhance their school safety plan and emergency planning in time of crisis.

"The goal is to engage youth, families, schools and community stakeholders in building the local and statewide capacity to mitigate behavioral health problems in youth from preschool through the 12th grade" (Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services, 2017, para 1). The Safer Schools in Ohio website provides a vital link between school safety legislation and school safety plans. The website has a school safety tip line, a list of school fire and safety drills, a listing for current

school safety plans, a list of what administrators need to know about school safety

plans as related to Ohio School safety regulations, and a school safety grant writing

program. The website's purpose was also to provide as a central depository the safety

plans of school districts to the various communities. The website allows students to

discreetly report drugs and bullying occurrences. It is a vital link in the

implementation of the school safety plan between students, faculty, administration,

and community first responders.

In January 2015, a revised Ohio safety statue went into effect (Safer Schools

in Ohio, 2015c). The status, 3313.536 addressed the requirements of various entities

regarding the development of a school safety plan.

> Ohio Revised Code 3313.536 (HB 422) requires the board of education of
>
> each city, exempted village, and local school district and the governing
>
> authority of each chartered nonpublic school to file a comprehensive school
>
> safety plan and floor plan for each building under the board's or governing
>
> authority's control. (DeWine, 2015, p. 1)

Ohio's school administrators need to comply with the new statute to remain

in good standing. All safety plans are reviewed yearly and require each administrator

to include a comprehensive emergency management plan (Safer Schools in Ohio,

2015a). The emergency management plan consists of four parts: 1) a safety plan, 2) a

floor plan, 3) an emergency contact information sheet, and 4) a site plan (Safer

Schools in Ohio, 2015a). The plan is also considered to be a comprehensive all-

hazards plan by the state (Safer Schools in Ohio, 2015). For schools that fail to

submit or maintain an approved safety plan, the law imposes specific penalties (Safer

Schools in Ohio, 2015). For example, a school administrator could lose his license in

the event a school safety plan is not submitted or kept up-to-date.

     West Virginia. Many states, such as West Virginia, have examined their

existing laws and revised their state's safety codes after the wave of school shootings.

In 2013, West Virginia's higher education officials considered a campus safety rule

that established policies and procedures that addressed four-year colleges and

universities' planning and response to natural disasters, shootings, and other

emergencies.

     The West Virginia legislature on January 4, 2014 adopted and implemented

Series 54 Campus Safety Procedures, which included the entire campus safety rule

changes (West Virginia State Legislature, 2014). The rule required all colleges and

universities to have a campus emergency plan in place by June 30 of each year, to

review the plan annually, and to submit a copy to the chancellor for approval. The

responsibility of each university and college is to post a public version of its final

emergency plan on its website. In addition, at least one drill on campus emergency is

required at all institutions each year to include, faculty, staff, students and state and

local emergency responders.

     The West Virginia Board of Education's Policy 4373 adopted measures that

promoted expected behaviors in safe and supported schools. The West Virginia

Board of Education recognizes the need for students, teachers, administrators, and

other school personnel to have a safe and supportive educational environment" (WV

Department of Education, 2015, p. 1). The West Virginia Board of Education

implemented an It-Does-Matter program and anti-bullying rules. West Virginia's

code 18-2-C prohibits "harassment, intimidation, or bullying on school premises" and

West Virginia code 18A-5-1C "ensures the student… to be treated with courtesy and

respect" (WV Code, 2017, p. 1).

Bullying

Tusinski (2008) identified bullying as a phenomenon of repeated negative

actions carried out by one or more students. "These behaviors can be carried out

physically, verbally, or psychologically" (Tusinski, 2008, p. 10). In all schools, there

seems to be an increase of bullying and/or cyberbullying. "After decades of neglect,

bullying has become widely recognized as an important and pervasive problem in

American schools" (Furlong & Jimerson, 2006, p. 191). A positive school climate

can mitigate bullying (American Institute for Research, 2016). It is essential

therefore for schools to provide bullying education to the entire school community.

Tusinski (2008) has suggested that educators should regard bullying as a

category of aggression all its own. The same report indicated that bullying behaviors

were noted more frequently over time than any other forms of general offensive

behavior, and even insisted that bullying could lead to acts of stalking or aggravated

stalking (Tusinski).

"In the aftermath of the 1999 shootings and in response to a bullying related

suicide, the state of Georgia became the first state to pass bullying legislation, which

required schools to implement character education programs that explicitly addressed

bullying prevention" (Stuart-Cassel et al., 2011, p. 11). All states now have laws

concerning bullying and since the year 2000, more than 160 new state bullying laws

have been passed or existing laws revised (National Center on Safe Supporting

Learning Environments, 2016).

In addition, some school districts have established an anonymous bullying tip

hotline. For example, in Colorado after the Columbine shootings, significant change

occurred related to the anonymous reporting of potential safety fears. In response to

the Columbine shooting the state of Colorado established the Safe2Tell anonymous,

24/7 reporting system for receiving and forwarding threats of violence, bullying and

other concerns (Payne & Elliott, 2011).

Reports of bullying, if unaddressed, can lead to violent school incidents. In

2013, one Nevada student may have acted because of actions of his middle school

peers. A friend of the shooter reported that she saw him being physically pushed by

other students. However, no disciplinary action was taken. It was believed that the

taunting and bullying of the student unchecked led to him wounding two students and

killing a teacher (Golgowski, 2013).

Researchers on the reasoning of bullying stated that instead of responding to

bullying or undesired behaviors and applying sanctions, "A proposed alternative

approach is to inquire into the motivation of the children who bully and identify the

desires that bullying seeks to satisfy" (Rigby, 2012, p. 339). Another study focused

on steps needed to create a safe school climate as a safeguard against bullying

(Freiburg, 2013). Creation of a safe environment requires that parents and teachers

need to get involved in discussions, and the school community must push for bullying education. Freiberg (2013) claims "too many schools foster toxic climates that allow, and in some cases, promote, the unethical treatment of others" (Freiberg, p. 45). A key point is that bullies, through counseling, be led to apologize for their actions, come to an understanding of bullying, value people's boundaries, and become accountable.

One research study had 24 teachers and administrators examine their ability to recognize and speak-out about bullying (Kaclik, 2011). The study provided recommendations to help students shape a culturally sensitive culture. Additionally, Spade's (2007) dissertation focused on the relationship of bullying and self-esteem. Spade took 197 students in grades 3 to 5 in northwestern Ohio and surveyed them. "The results of the survey revealed one-half the students had not been bullied, 15% of the students had been bullied several times a week, and 8.2% claimed bullying had gone on for several years" (Spade, 2007, p. 60). By the fifth grade, the bullied students had a decrease of self-esteem. There is a distinct correlation between bullying and self-esteem.

Cyberbullying

Many people seem to be unaware of the different forms cyberbullying can take.

Sending mean messages or threats to a person's e-mail account cell phone; b) Spreading rumors online or through texts; c) Posting harmful or threatening messages to break into their account and send damaging messages; d)

Pretending to be someone else online to hurt another person; e) Taking

unflattering pictures of a person and spreading them through cell phones or

the Internet; f) Sexting, or circulating sexually suggestive pictures or

messages about a person. (Bullying statistics, 2013, p. 1)

On-line harassment or threats is also cyberbullying and it is on the rise.

"Descriptive survey data showed that 37.8% of students had experienced

cyberbullying, 56% observed cyberbullying, and that eighth-grade students

experienced a higher incident rate of cyberbullying 42.1%" (Pilkey, 2011, p. 45).

Cyberbullying statistics obtained from the I-SAFE Foundation report that:

- Over half of all adolescents and teens have been bullied online, and

  about the same number have engaged in cyberbullying

- More than 1 in 3 young people have experienced cyber threats online

- Over 25 percent of adolescents and teens have been bullied repeatedly

  through their cell phones or the Intranet

- Well over half of all young people do not tell their parents when cyber

  bullying occurs. (Bullying statistics, 2013, para. 6)

State Responses. Bullying and cyberbullying education are now being

addressed within all schools in Kentucky, Ohio, and West Virginia. Lawmakers

recognize that bullying is prevalent at school and at home for students. The state of

New York recently passed a Senate Bill with the hopes of reducing the occurrence of

cyberbullying. "This comprehensive measure includes within the definitions of

bullying and cyberbullying verbal and non-verbal actions, whether on or off school property, which create a risk of substantial disruption of the school environment" (New York State Senate, 2012, p. 1). There were stiff penalties for those that violated the law. In addition, school administrators could also face stiff consequences for failing to enforce regulations and policies regarding bullying and cyberbullying.

Kentucky. Kentucky's law KRS 158.148 has the Commonwealth's definition of bullying. "Bullying' means unwanted verbal, physical, or social behavior among students that involves a real or perceived power imbalance and is repeated or has the potential to be repeated" (Kentucky Department of Education, 2017, p. 1). The act of bullying could occur on school premises, in school transportation, or at a sponsored event. If any case bullying disrupts the educational process.

With the increasing awareness of bullying in the schools, Kentucky adopted October as Safety Awareness Month and adopted the week of October 19th through the 24th as Bullying Awareness Week in 2015. The Kentucky Center for School Safety had a theme in 2016, "I Want to Be a Superhero," which builds student's self-esteem, while working toward an environment free of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, and conflict. The campaign highlights the word *super* as strong, understanding, powerful, encouraging, and respect, for qualities necessary to be a *superhero.* East Carter Middle School in Grayson, Kentucky implemented the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program during the school year of 2015-2016 to reduce bullying. The program's goals are to reduce and prevent bullying problems among school

children and to improve peer relations at school (Olweus Bullying Prevention

Program, 2017).

As a source of information for school personnel, the Kentucky Association of

School Administrators' (KASA) *Safety Focus 5* offers many bullying resources to

schools to aid schools to create a bully-free environment (KASA, 2014). The *Safety

Focus 5* is a monthly publication regarding bullying in schools in the Commonwealth

of Kentucky (KASA).

Ohio. Ohio Code 3313.666 (A) states, "harassment, intimidation, or bullying

means any intentional written, verbal, or physical act that a student has exhibited

toward another particular student more than once and when the behavior both: 1)

causes mental or physical harm to the student and 2) is sufficiently severe, persistent,

or pervasive" (Ohio Administrative Code; HB 116 revised, 2017, p. 1).

The Ohio legislature, like that of many other states, has made readjustments to

its state code regarding bullying. Three laws that cover bullying in the state of Ohio

are:

> "Ohio Revised Code Annotated **§**3301.22. Model Harassment prevention
>
> policy
>
> Ohio Revised Code Annotated **§**3313.666. District policy prohibiting
>
> harassment
>
> Ohio Revised Code Annotated **§**3313.667. District bullying prevention
>
> initiative" (Stop Bullying.gov, 2017, p. 1).

The state of Ohio's legislature and the Ohio Department of Education recognizes the

need for bullying education for everyone in each district's school safety plan.

 West Virginia. To have an effective learning environment, education on

bullying and cyberbullying must continue. West Virginia Code 18-2C-1 thru – 6

covers harassment, intimidation, and bullying. The West Virginia 18-2C-2 code

defines bullying as "harassment, intimidation, or bullying or any intentional gesture,

or any intentional electronic, written, verbal, or physical act, communication,

transmission or threat" (WV Code, 2016, chapter 18). To report incidents of bullying

in Mason County, the county has a page on their website regarding bullying and

cyberbullying. The webpage notes that threats or a rumor of threats can be reported

by calling the administration directly or the West Virginia State Police (Mason

County Board of Education, 2017). Mason County Board of Education encourages

(a) positive behavior interventions and support programs; (b) school counseling

services; (c) an assigned Prevention Resource Officer (PRO) in each of the secondary

schools; and (d) safe school plans and preparedness training (Mason County Board of

Education, 2017).

 West Virginia, like many other states, has taken great strides to minimize

bullying through education and its legislature has passed bills regarding bullying and

cyberbullying.

  West Virginia requires that each county school board establish an anti-

  bullying policy for its schools. Each policy must contain several components.

  Among the necessary components are: 1) a definition of harassment,

intimidation, and bullying, and a statement prohibiting such behavior; 2)

Procedures for reporting, documenting, and responding to bullying incidents;

3) Procedures for protecting victims and people who report bullying and, 4) a

disciplinary procedure for students who bully (Steiner, 2016).

Summary

School violence and disasters can be curtailed with adequate staffing, training,

management, and proper legislation. Tragedies like the incidents at Tucson and at

Virginia Tech. remind us of the importance of having policies and standard practices

in place on campuses to ensure the physical safety of students in the event of an

emergency and to aid in preventing such terrible tragedies from occurring in the

future. (U.S. Health & Human Services, 2011, p. 1)

This review of literature has included a discussion of safety procedures,

policies, training, design, and bullying/cyberbullying. After many of the incidents of

violence, communities become aware of the need to make changes to their school

safety plans. Schools implemented changes after the Columbine disaster to help

strengthen the school's ability to keep students safe. Having enough staff to both

meet the educational needs of students, and monitor the school environment continues

to be a struggle in today's economic times. School must have the resources to ensure

the school is a haven; and that outsiders cannot just walk into the school and go

wherever they want. School buildings need the capacity to lockout from intruders.

All school personnel should know policies and procedures in the event of an

emergency.

Bullying and cyberbullying has been on the radar screen of all state legislatures and education against both is mandatory in most school districts. Most importantly, bullying and cyberbullying negatively affects the self-esteem of students. "In most cases, other young persons-friends, school mates, and/or siblings knew about the attacker's idea or plan for a possible attack on the school before that attack occurred" (Fein et al., 2004, p. 19).

After working in four West Virginia counties, it can be stated that several school districts allow a discreet reporting of bullying and cyberbullying to the district. Kass and Marek (2005) affirmed the need for anonymity in safety improvements. "Many experts believe a key is simply providing students an anonymous outlet to report potential incidents" (Kass & Marek, p. 29). "Such an outlet could reduce potential occurrences of bullying to more severe incidents of violence" (Kass & Marek, p. 29).

Chapter Three

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to investigate components of school safety within three contiguous school districts, one each in Kentucky, Ohio, and West Virginia. The investigation of the school safety study was conducted through:

1) The examination of the safety plans of the schools participating in the capstone to identify deficiencies and also areas of effectiveness.

2) An examination of the statements made by the district's superintendent or designee regarding their school safety plan.

3) The examination of the level of school safety protection of the schools by surveying administrators, counselors, and protective resource officer from the various school districts.

The following guiding questions were the focus of this capstone study:

1) What are the strengths and weaknesses in the existing school safety plan?

2) Were there any changes in safety policies and procedures?

3) What were the perceptions of the PRO, faculty, and administrators regarding the current safety standards?

4) What was the current school safety condition?

5) What barriers exist to impede the implementation of the school safety plan?

This section of the capstone describes the research design used in the investigation. This is followed with a discussion of the instrumentation and data collection procedures. Finally, the procedures and data analysis methods used to develop responses to the guiding questions.

Research Design

The study used a mixed method approach with both qualitative and quantitative methods. To allow for the triangulation of data, three modes of primary data collection were used. Due to the nature of the topic, a mixed method approach seemed to be most appropriate rather than using a solely quantitative or qualitative approach.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

Data for the research study involved responses from a survey and an interview with district level administrators regarding existing school safety plans. In addition, a review of the safety plans for the districts was conducted. The following sections provide a more detailed presentation of the three data collection methods.

Survey. Instrument used in the quantitative phase of the project was a survey with Likert scales. The quantitative Likert type survey used a five-point scale with 1 for Strongly Disagree, 2 for Disagree, 3 for Undecided, 4 for Agree, and 5 for Strongly Agree.

The survey was field tested at Beale Elementary and Buffalo High School in West Virginia. After speaking with the principals of these schools in February 2015, a link to the survey created using Google Forms was emailed to the principals with a

request to forward the survey link to the school staff. Results were examined and five

additional questions were added to better address the guiding questions of the

capstone.

The final School Safety Survey (see Appendix A) focused on five topics.

These included: the parameters of safety concerns, (Table 6), adequate staffing

(Table 7), safety awareness and procedures (Table 8), safety policies (Table 9), and

armed personnel (Table 10) with the specific survey items provided.

Table 6

Concerns for Safety

Survey Items
5. Gang related concerns
6. Students care about school safety
7. Teachers care about school safety
8. Administrators care about school safety
11. Safe environment for learning

Table 7

Adequate Staffing

Survey Items
9. Need for more counselors
10. Adequate staffing to monitor
25. Staffing adequate to monitor school in time of crisis

Table 8

Safety Awareness and Procedures

Survey Items
12. Fire drills conducted
13. Lockdown codes used when an emergency occurs
14. Cafeteria lockdown capabilities
15. Want to know if gunman was in the school
16. Library door has locking capabilities
20. Surveillance cameras in use
21. Screening procedures for visitors
29. Knowledge of how to evaluate

Table 9

Safety Policies

Survey Items
17. Employees trained in school safety
18. School communicates with first responders
19. School has proper safety policies and procedures
27. Crisis management team at school
28. Offers bullying / cyberbullying training
30. Training between school and community responders

Table 10

Armed Personnel

Survey Items
22. Teachers armed with gun
23. Administrators armed with gun

Review of safety plans. A review of the school safety plans was conducted following a rubric developed by the researcher. Interviews held with the district administrator (superintendent or his designee) also involved a discussion of the various components of school safety plan.

The rubric used to examine each of the school safety plans analyzed the school districts' areas of strength or weakness to specific school safety areas (see Appendix B). The areas included in the rubric were crisis response planning team, crisis response team, prevention, and response. Also, in the rubric were areas related to man-made disasters, natural disasters, school violence, and medical emergencies of either a death of student or staff member. Other areas included in the rubric were emergency contacts, evacuation, and communication.

Interviews. The interviews with the district administrators included a discussion related to the safeguards that were missing or not enforced in previous disasters. A discussion of historical disasters and the changes made to the safety plan occurring from these acts was carried on with each of the district administrators. The discussion generated insight into the changes to policies and procedures over the years. During the interview, the researcher also asked questions regarding the existing school safety plans and implementation of relative components of the plans.

The interview questions also sought to identify the existing plan's strengths and weaknesses. The district administrators were asked 1) if the district personnel were emergency ready to respond; 2) if the historical disasters influenced safeguards;

and 3) if they had attempted to identify any barriers that may exist in the district's existing safety plans. The 10 interview questions are listed in Appendix C.

Procedures. The selection of the schools provided an opportunity to gain a perspective regarding school safety in a county setting in Kentucky, an exempted village school system in Ohio, and a rural setting in West Virginia at the elementary, middle, and secondary levels. The districts selected were conveniently located in relationship to each other and the researcher personally knew the district administrators prior to launching the study.

To gain access to the research site, the researcher first contacted the district's superintendent to explain the purpose of the study and to obtain informed consent to participate. Once consent was granted, a copy of the district's safety plan was requested and a time was set for an interview later to discuss not only elements of the safety plan, but also to ask other questions related to school safety.

Survey. School surveys were conducted in the selected Kentucky, Ohio, and West Virginia school districts with three high schools, three middle schools, and three elementary schools in April of 2015 (see Table 11) and were completed in May of 2015. Survey responses were gathered on the School Safety Survey from administrators, teachers, service personnel, aides, speech pathologists, and the PRO's. Each school district administrator suggested a name of a school PRO.   These were contacted by the researcher via email and provided with a link to the survey questions. The survey link was sent to participating districts' superintendent email account with a request to forward the email to the faculty at the schools.

The responses of administrators, faculty, service personnel, and PROs to the survey questions were obtained using Google Forms. The results of the surveys were summarized and organized by safety constructs related to concerns for safety, adequate staffing, safety awareness and procedures, safety policies, and armed personnel. Many survey questions were entrenched in answering school safety and preparedness, and were connected to guiding questions 3 through 5.

Table 11

Participating Schools (as of 2015 school year)

	Students	Teacher
Lawrence County, Kentucky		
Lawrence County East Elementary	694	41
Lawrence County Middle	428	21
Lawrence County High School	564	29.5
Superintendent Dr. Robbie Fletcher (designee Vernon Hall)		
Chesapeake, Ohio		
Chesapeake, Ohio Elementary	339	23
Chesapeake Middle	428	27
Chesapeake High School	413	27
Superintendent Jerry McConnell		
Mason County West Virginia		
Ashton Elementary	420	27
Hannan Jr. High School	160	12
Hannan High School, West Virginia	135	12
Superintendent Jack Cullen.		

Safety plans. The purpose for the examination of the three school districts' safety plans was to find areas of effectiveness and deficiencies. The safety plans were requested from each school district and received. All districts provided their most current plan except for West Virginia. After the initial request, the district contacted Homeland Security. The Mason County's official stated they could not provide the 2014-2015 school safety plans due to sensitivity. Instead, the Mason County school plan for the 2012-2013 school year was provided and used.

Interviews. Once the safety plans were examined, a date for the interview was finalized with each district's administrator. The interviews took place in March and April of 2015 with each superintendent or designee. The interview of Mason County superintendent was on March 19, 2015 and the Chesapeake Ohio superintendent was interviewed on April 7, 2015. Lawrence County Kentucky's Human Resource Officer was interviewed on April 9, 2015. Responses to the 10 interview questions were audio recorded at the permission of the district administrator. The responses allowed the study to identify strengths and weaknesses within each district's school safety plan.

The contents of the safety plans were discussed with each district's superintendent or designee and included the district's procedures in case of a crisis and whether it met the individual state's safety codes. Disaster preparedness areas considered in the rubric were man-made, natural disasters, school violence, and district's transportation, medical emergency such as the death of a student or staff, and nuclear preparedness. Areas examined in the rubric included crisis response,

planning, prevention, communication, lock/lockout, evacuation, and emergency contacts.

Data Analysis

The study used qualitative data collected through the interviews of the district administrator, and both qualitative and quantitative data from survey questions collected from faculty, administrators, school personnel, and a PRO from each district. The study sought to explore the opinions, views, and perceptions of school superintendents or designee from interviews related to existing safety plans.

District safety plan. The three district school safety plans were examined to see if they met all areas of the rubric. In addition, the school safety plan was explored to determine whether the district included topics of man-made disasters, natural disasters, school violence, and school transportation, medical emergency such as the death of a student or staff member, and nuclear preparedness. Guiding questions 2 and 5 were answered by examining the school safety plans. It was noted that all three school safety plans followed state and federal regulations. Homeland Security policies were followed in all safety plans reviewed.

Interviews. In the interviews, the superintendents or designee discussed how school safety plans had changed with recent school disasters. The responses to 10 interview questions by the superintendent or designee were examined by transcribing the interview responses and analyzing patterns.

Survey. Once the survey responses were collected, responses were summarized by percentages by response level and the percentages were examined to

determine the overall perception of the respondents on areas of school safety. The

area themes were safety concerns, adequate staffing, safety awareness and practices,

safety policies, and armed personnel.

Summary

The purpose of this capstone was to investigate school safety in the tri-state

area. Three districts submitted their safety plans for review and interviews were

conducted with the district administrator, and faculty, staff, and PROs were surveyed.

The data obtained provided an opportunity to identify existing barriers along with

specific strengths of their school safety plans. The findings of the data along with

interpretations are presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4

Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the district safety plans, survey responses from the responding individuals, and interview comments from the respective district administrators. Each part is discussed and evaluated.

District Safety Plans

A rubric was developed to determine if the plans met the following areas of safety preparedness (proactive conditions): crisis response planning, crisis response team, prevention, response, communication, lockdown and/or lockout codes, evacuation, and emergency contacts. The areas of the rubric in disaster preparedness (reactive situations) included man-made or natural disasters, school violence, school transportation in the case of an emergency, medical emergency or death of a student or staff, and nuclear preparedness.

The three school districts provided both individual and district school safety plans. Lawrence County, Kentucky and Chesapeake, Ohio provided 2014-2015 safety plans for review. The 2012-2013 safety plans were presented and reviewed for the Mason County Schools in West Virginia. Mason County officials provided a copy of the West Virginia Schools Crisis Prevention and Response Plan. The individual emergency disaster plan for Ashton Elementary and the emergency management plan for Hannan Jr/Sr High School were provided.

Kentucky. Louisa East Elementary provided its school safety plan. The designee indicated that Louisa Middle and Lawrence County High School used the same plan for expected actions and procedures in the event of a crisis situation. The superintendent oversees the command center from the superintendent's office and communicates as needed to the local 911 Center. Safety and public information officials along with liaison to outside agencies were identified within the plan.

The superintendent has access to a crisis planning team, student checkout procedures committee, and a school facility team that handles environmental issues such as chemical leaks or tornadic activity. First-aid and CPR teams had been previously established and trained by various agencies in Lawrence County. Crisis intervention and response committees handle areas related to food and water issues, and sanitation logistics in emergency situations. Areas compared to the rubric and listed in the Kentucky plan were severe weather, earthquakes, suicide, trespass/intruder, weapons, fire drills, bomb threats, and crowd control.

Ohio. The Chesapeake school safety plan listed shelter in place sites and stated it had lockdown/lockout codes, but they were not listed. The plan stipulated that emergency packets were to be provided to parents for communications during an emergency. In the school safety plan were procedures for fire and bomb threats as well as medical and weather-related emergencies. In addition, the school safety plan included necessary procedures in the case of threats against school personnel. An emergency action plan checklist with first-aid, communication, and evacuation routes and procedures were included in the plan.

The Chesapeake School District provided its emergency evacuation plan that outlined seven emergency procedures schools were expected to follow. Those procedures included the following actions:

- Action 1 - Information will be immediately communicated to the board office.

- Action 2 - The board office will then become the emergency command center.

- Action 3 - Lawrence County Ohio 911 will be immediately contacted.

- Action 4 - All building principals and the transportation director will be contacted for immediate action.

- Action 5 - All news agencies will be contacted as needed.

- Action 6 - The district administrative team will respond appropriately.

- Action 7 - The board office will follow up and review.

  (Chesapeake, Ohio, 2015)

West Virginia. Ashton Elementary School in Mason County listed a crisis team and eight committees in the case of a disaster. The administrator-led control centers oversee other proactive committees such as the supervisory committee, which follows a hierarchy in case the superintendent is not able to fulfill his or her duties. Another proactive committee comprises the building wing supervisors who report directly to the superintendent. A reactive committee that responds after the disaster is the fire control team. The fire control team meets initially with the first responders in

time of crisis. Other reactive committees are the first-aid team, which coordinates

first-aid, triage, and CPR, and the food committee, which coordinates logistics of

food to students, personnel, and faculty. The communications team is both a

proactive and reactive committee that is responsible for communications before,

during, and after the disaster. The transportation committee, which oversees the

moving of everyone in the school to a safe environment, is another reactive

committee.

The Ashton Elementary plan has three parts: lockdown, fire evacuation drill,

and shelter-in-place. Lockdown is training for the faculty to secure their area from

intruders when an intercom code is given. Fire evacuation drills were practiced

monthly and a shelter-in-place warning is available that could be used to warn about

possible chemical leaks on the exterior of the school or tornadic weather directed at

the school. ALICE training was planned for the 2015-2016 school year. In the

rubric, the state of West Virginia and its counties have nuclear disaster preparedness

included as part of their safety plan. This was not a requirement for Kentucky or

Ohio schools.

When reviewing the safety audit from 2007, the audit presented deficiencies

for Hannan Jr/Sr High School:

- Classrooms doors do not lock from the inside; thus, teachers must go
  into the hallway to lock doors during a lockdown, a considerable
  security concern.

- There is no dedicated outside telephone line or backup power for the school's PA system. (Hannan Jr/Sr High School, 2007)

The Mason County safety audit provided for Ashton Elementary identified several more deficiencies compared to Hannan Jr/Sr High School:

- Currently has minimum closed-circuit television of alarm system in place. No entry control devices have been installed.

- Entries are monitored to the extent possible; however, effective monitoring is not possible.

- Classroom doors do not lock from the inside.

- Locking mechanisms on exterior doors are not adequate.

- Windows are not reinforced.

- No duress devices in each classroom (including telephone system to reach 911) or backup power system for the building.

  (Hannan Jr/Sr High School, 2007).

The rubric areas listed in the three state district safety plans were crisis planning, crisis team, prevention, response, communication, lockdown/lockout, evacuation, and emergency contact. In West Virginia's school safety plan, safety areas included man-made disasters, natural disasters, school violence, emergency school transportation, and medical emergency/death of student or staff member.

Summary of safety plans review. In comparing the response plans, several strengths and weaknesses emerged. Strengths of the existing safety plans were the

areas of improved surveillance cameras, community response training with State Police, and website listings in West Virginia to report bullying and cyberbullying. The three state plans gave evidence of many proactive committees to curtail safety issues and listed many reactive committees to handle a safety crisis within their district. All three school districts safety plans met their state safety standards. A review of each of the school safety plans indicated there was not enough staff to properly monitor the entire school. Even with the addition of some surveillance cameras, some areas could not be monitored within existing school safety plans in Kentucky. In addition, the school safety plans in Kentucky, Ohio, and West Virginia do not require a law enforcement officer in each school. Lastly, the Kentucky school safety plan listed crowd control as a topic, which was not listed in the Ohio and West Virginia plans. Crowd control at extracurricular activities is a topic often overlooked within the school safety plans.

School Safety Survey

Demographics. There were 94 individuals invited to respond to the survey with nine declining. Thus, 85 completed the survey for a response rate of 90.43%. Table 12 provides a summary of the responses from the three school districts by description of the respondents. Lawrence County had the greatest participation rate at 45.88%. The Chesapeake schools had 25 individuals responding to the school safety survey for a participation rate of 29.41%. Mason County schools had 21 individuals respond for a participation rate of 24.71%. Overall, 69 or 81.18% of the respondents

to the survey were teachers. Only two Protective Resource Officers completed the

survey.

Table 13 provides a summary of the respondents at the elementary, middle,

and high school levels. The high school response rate, which included the two

Protective Resource Officers, was highest at 48 of 85 or 56.47%. The middle school

had 12 responses for 14.12%, and there were 25 responses at the elementary level or

29.41%.

Table 12

Demographics of Respondents

	Admin	Teachers	Classified Resp.	PRO	Total	Rate (%)
Lawrence County KY						
Louisa East Elem	1	6	1		8	9.42
Middle School	1	6			7	8.24
High School	2	19	2	1	24	28.24
	4	31	3	1	39	45.88
Chesapeake OH						
Elementary	1	6			7	8.24
Middle		1			1	1.18
High School	2	15			17	28.24
	3	22	0	0	25	29.41
Mason County WV						
Ashton Elem	1	9			10	11.77
Hannan Jr High		3	1		4	4.71
Hannan HS	1	4	1	1	7	9.42
	2	16	2	1	21	24.71
Total	9	69	5	2	85	

Table 13

Responses to Survey by School Level

School Level		N	%
Elementary School		25	29.41%
Middle School		12	14.12%
High School**		48	56.47%
	Total	85	

** 2 Preventive Resource Officers were included in high school faculty totals

Survey results. The following section provides a discussion of the survey results as organized by the constructs related to the concerns for safety, adequate staff of the schools, safety awareness and procedures conducted within the school setting, policies related to school safety, and whether school administrators and/or teachers should be armed. The respondents selected from a 5-point Likert scale from S*trongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (5). Both percent of the total responses along with the mean and standard deviation of the weighted response were calculated.

Concerns for safety. Five Likert scale items related to the respondents' perception of concerns for safety (Table 14). Overall, the students (M = 3.55), faculty (M = 3.68), and administrators (M = 4.15) showed they cared about school safety. In addition, about 66% of the respondents indicated their school environment was safe for learning. Approximately 91% indicated that there was a lack of concern regarding gang-related activities in their schools. Gangs were not a concern for the respondents as indicated by the overall mean of 1.55.

Table 14

Concerns for Safety

	SD	D	N	A	SA	M (SD)
5. Gang related concerns	56 (65.88%)	18 (26.08%)	6 (7.06%)	3 (3.53%)	2 (2.35%)	1.55 (0.94)
6. Students care about school safety	1 (1.18%)	9 (10.59%)	32 (37.65%)	28 (32.94%)	15 (17.65%)	3.55 (0.94)
7. Teachers care about school safety	3 (3.53%)	12 (14.12%)	19 (22.35%)	26 (30.59%)	25 (29.41%)	3.68 (1.14)
8. Administrators care about school safety	3 (3.53%)	3 (3.53%)	10 (11.77%)	31 (36.47%)	38 (44.71%)	4.15 (1.00)
11. Safe environment for learning	1 (1.18%)	3 (3.53%)	25 (29.41%)	37 (43.53%)	19 (22.35%)	3.82 (0.86)

Adequate staffing. Table 15 provides the responses to the topic of staffing. It was the opinion of the respondents (53.94%) that there was a need for additional counselors, for scheduling, college information, or violence recognition, with approximately 20% indicating no additional need for counselors. Approximately 41% of the respondents do not believe there was enough staffing to monitor students during the school day, but only about 28% indicated that there was not enough staff to monitor the school in the time of a crisis. In a similar pattern, about 34% of the respondents indicated that there was adequate staff to monitor the school in the time of a crisis whereas only 31% of the respondents indicated that adequate staffing existed for day-to-day monitoring of the school environment. This was an expected result, as most individuals who responded had never experienced a school crisis of any kind.

Table 15

Adequate Staffing

	SD	D	N	A	SA	M (SD)
9. Need for more counselors	7 (8.24%)	10 (11.77%)	23 (27.06%)	26 (30.59%)	19 (22.35%)	3.47 (1.19)
10. Adequate staffing to monitor	16 (18.82%)	19 (22.35%)	24 (28.24%)	20 (23.53%)	6 (7.06%)	2.98 (1.20)
25. Staffing adequate to monitor school in time of crisis	11 (12.94%)	13 (15.29%)	31 (36.47%)	20 (23.53%)	10 (11.77%)	3.06 (1.17)

Safety awareness and procedures. Many schools have added safety

precautions to their facilities. Cameras, additional door locks, lockdown procedures,

and various drill practices are now common in many of the schools. Table 16

contains the responses to the survey items related to safety awareness and procedures

practiced within the school environment.

Fire drills were regularly conducted (M = 4.97) and schools were generally

thought of as a safe environment for learning. In all schools, there are routine drills

not only for fire, but also for intruders to the building and for potential weather-

related disasters. In the tri-state area, there are weather conditions that might result in

storm-related conditions. In recent years, there have been damaging storms that

required schools to identify safe areas for students and staff to occupy during severe

weather conditions. Many schools also practice school evaluation procedures, as

indicated by 68% of the respondents.

More than 85% stated that lockdown codes were established for use during an emergency. A majority responded that their cafeteria and library had locking capabilities. Cameras existed in the schools (78%) to monitor the daily activities in and outside the school building. A key component for school safety is the flow of visitors to the school through a central entry point. About 56% of the respondents indicated that there was a screening procedure for school visitors. In most cases, this involved the visitor to sign-in at the main office and to identify the reason to be in the school.

Table 16

Safety Awareness and Procedures

	SD	D	N	A	SA	M (SD)
12. Fire drills conducted	1 (1.88%)	3 (3.53%)	5 (5.88%)	12 (14.12%)	64 (75.29%)	4.57 (0.85)
13. Lockdown codes used when an emergency occurs	5 (5.88%)	6 (7.06%)	4 (4.71%)	16 (18.82%)	54 (63.53%)	4.27 (1.19)
14. Cafeteria lockdown capabilities	11 (12.94%)	4 (4.71%)	21 (24.71%)	22 (25.88%)	27 (31.77%)	3.59 (1.32)
15. Want to know if gunman was in the school	0 (0.00%)	5 (5.88%)	12 (14.12%)	23 (27.06%)	45 (52.94%)	4.15 (0.94)
16. Library door has locking capabilities	5 (5.88%)	4 (4.71%)	9 (10.59%)	23 (27.06%)	44 (51.77%)	4.14 (1.15)
20. Surveillance cameras in use	7 (8.24%)	4 (4.71%)	7 (8.24%)	27 (31.77%)	40 (47.06%)	4.05 (1.22)
21. Screening procedures for visitors	9 (10.59%)	10 (11.77%)	18 (21.18%)	31 (36.47%)	17 (20.00%)	3.44 (1.23)
29. Knowledge of how to evaluate	3 (3.53%)	10 (11.77%)	14 (16.47%)	27 (31.77%)	31 (36.47%)	3.86 (1.14)

Safety policies. Table 17 contains the six items asked of the participants

related to school safety policies. Eighty percent of the respondents indicated that the

school, in their opinion, had proper safety policies and procedures. Only 3.53%

disagreed or strongly disagreed that the policies and procedures were adequate.

Approximately 54% of the respondents indicated that they had received training in

relationship to school safety, which is essential for a safe school environment.

Regarding the item related to the school communicating with first responders, over

57% of the respondents agreed with this statement. Fewer than 38% of the respondents knew there was a crisis management team in their school. In addition, only 47% indicated that training took place between the school and first responders.

In today's schools, bullying and cyberbullying is increasing. This is an area that needs more training, not only for school personnel but also for students. As reported in the news, there have been several situations where groups of students have harassed a student that resulted in either violence or suicide. Slightly over 54% of the respondents indicated that training was provided related to bullying and cyberbullying. Schools must do a better job educating about bullying and cyberbullying. Reporters of bullying and cyberbullying must feel safe when reporting such acts. Bullying and cyberbullying left unchecked can escalate to even greater acts of violence.

Table 17

Safety Policies

	SD	D	N	A	SA	M (SD)
17. Employees trained in school safety	5 (5.88%)	13 (15.29%)	21 (24.71%)	22 (25.88%)	24 (28.24%)	3.59 (1.21)
18. School communicates with first responders	4 (4.71%)	6 (7.06%)	26 (30.59%)	25 (29.41%)	24 (28.24%)	3.69 (1.10)
19. School has proper safety policies and procedures	1 (1.18%)	2 (2.35%)	14 (16.47%)	34 (40.00%)	34 (40.00%)	4.15 (0.86)
27. Crisis management team at school	14 (16.47%)	15 (17.65%)	24 (28.24%)	13 (15.29%)	19 (22.35%)	3.06 (1.37)
28. Offers bullying / cyberbullying training	10 (11.77%)	8 (9.41%)	21 (24.71%)	21 (24.71%)	25 (29.41%)	3.51 (1.32)
30. Training between school and community responders	20 (23.53%)	10 (11.77%)	15 (17.65%)	20 (23.53%)	20 (23.53%)	3.12 (1.49)

Armed personnel. Fewer than half of the respondents indicated that they would be in favor of teachers being armed (47.06%), 34.1% opposed, and 18.82% being neutral (Table 18). The respondents to the survey were more in favor of administrators having a gun at school with 63.53% reporting they agreed or strongly agreed, while 23.3% not being in favor of the idea. Table 19 has the responses from the survey regarding the availability of law enforcement on campus. Of those responding, 94.12% indicated that there were no law enforcement individuals on campus, while 5.88% indicated that law enforcement was available on campus.

Table 18

Armed Personnel

	SD	D	N	A	SA	M (SD)
22. Teachers armed with gun	16 (18.82%)	13 (15.29%)	16 (18.82%)	14 (16.47%)	26 (30.59%)	3.22 (1.47)
23. Administrators armed with gun	12 (14.21%)	8 (15.29%)	11 (12.94%)	23 (27.06%)	31 (36.41%)	3.63 (1.41)

Table 19

Law Enforcement on Campus (N = 85)

Yes	5 (5.88%)
No	80 (94.12%)

Areas of concern. The total number of surveys returned was 85 out of 113 possible respondents to the survey. Item 4 of the survey allowed the respondents to write their main concern as related to school safety, beyond what they had indicated on the Likert type items. Item 4 received a total of 79 responses. Twenty-one or 24.71% survey respondents had no response to Item 4 (main concerns of safety plan) of the survey while sixty-four or 75.29 % survey respondents listed some response. The respondents had many concerns, and their comments for this prompt were organized into four general categories: physical environment, organizational and communication, cultural and environmental, and interpersonal issues.

Physical environment. Fifteen of the 79 concerns (18.99%) were categorized as related to the physical environment. Responses indicated the lack of adequate safeguards being available to help secure the ground and school facility. With respect to the physical building, there was either inadequate door locking mechanisms or an

inoperable key card machine, and the lack of metal detectors at main door entrances.

Due to everyone knowing everyone else, there were times when "people walking into

the building are not challenged by the staff." As one respondent noted, "sometimes

there are parents who come into the school and walk down to their child's classroom

without stopping by the office first to identify themselves."

Additional concerns noted that there was improper monitoring of the school

building and grounds. Some comments noted there was "poor lighting in the parking

lots" and the inability to "lock my room door from the inside." Related to the outside

environment, respondents indicated that there was a lack of fencing around the entire

playground as being a concern. "Our playground does not have a fence all the way

around it. The school is connected to the adult learning center so the adults are

always watching and interacting with students on the playground. Some of these

adults do not have the right to talk to the students. Also, random strangers can just

walk into the playground area." One respondent noted that they had a concern about

"evacuating the building safely" while another indicated that "students (are) opening

side doors and letting strangers in the building."

Organizational and communication. The second concerns fell into the

category of organizational and communication issues. To Item 4, 12 of the 79

responses or 15.19% were with organization and communication. Many respondents

noted, "Lack of or no law enforcement on campus." Comments were made about the

lack of male elementary teachers and more than one respondent felt proper evacuation

procedures were ignored. One respondent felt student issues were not addressed in a timely manner

Cultural and environmental. The third area of responses was categorized as related to cultural and environmental concerns. In the cultural and environmental category to Item 4, there were 7 responses out of a possible 79 for 8.86%. Many respondents indicated the increase in bullying, violence, and drugs getting into schools. A respondent mentioned that, "Students carrying an undetected weapon was a major concern." Another survey respondent mentioned potential shootings as a major concern. One survey respondent asked the question, "Why were there no metal detectors at the entrances?" A respondent stated, "Parents enter and go directly to classrooms, rather than stopping and signing in the office."

The topic of bullying and cyberbullying has received increase emphasis in recent years. The bullying and cyberbullying have led to violence as reported in the news. The quick recognition of bullying and cyberbullying seems to aid in pacifying the behavior. The behavior, if left unattended, seems to multiply into rampage and violence. In the survey to Item 4, four respondents out of sixty-four or 6.25% listed bullying as a concern.

Intrapersonal. The fourth topic of concern was the extent to which participants felt safe at school. Many felt safe and expressed answers such as "Yes, I feel safe" or "I have no safety concerns." Approximately 7.06% (6 out of 85) of the respondents answered, "There is none; N/A; Nothing; none, and I do not know of any." Thirty-five out of the 85 respondents did not comment at all on Item 26 for

41.18%. These types of responses seemed to show that some believed that their

school safety plan was on track and they had no concerns. Three out of 77, or 3.90%

fell into this category. In addition, many respondents stated that their school safety

followed state guidelines and that they felt safe in their school's safety plan. Forty-

five (45) of the 79 responses fell into this category, or 56.96%.

      Identified barriers to school safety. Item 26 of the School Safety Survey

asked the respondent "What barriers at my school prevent overall safety?" There

were 48 respondents to Item 26 and they provided 77 barriers to school safety. Two

or 2.60% of the individuals completing the survey either did not provide a response or

indicated "None" to Item 26. Identified barriers were again separated into areas of

physical environment, organization and communication, cultural and environmental,

and intrapersonal.

      Physical environment. Forty-one responses of the 77 barriers (53.25%)

provided fell into the physical environment category. Responses to the survey

mentioned the design of the school as a barrier for monitoring the school

environment. As one high school respondent stated, "The hallways are rounded. You

can't see down the length of the hallway as it is circular." Six respondents listed

doors that locked only from the outside as a potential safety barrier. To lock the door

a teacher would have to open the door and then use a key to lock the door. This

would add to the time to make the classroom a secured room in the case of an

emergency. The total addressing door complaints was an Ohio Administrator, two

Kentucky Instructional aides, two West Virginia senior students over 18 years old,

and a West Virginia High School teacher.   Respondents also mentioned the need for

law enforcement on campus, surveillance cameras, metal detectors, and breakable

glass windows.

Barriers identified on the survey mentioned lockdown during school recess,

playground gates not locked, and the use of a pass card by faculty to enter the school

(which most West Virginia counties use). A respondent also mentioned the lack of

supervision on the playground where an intruder could abduct a student. Another

respondent's concern was that a missing student might not be immediately

recognized, while another respondent wrote about having unauthorized people on the

playground.

Organizational and communication. Twenty-one responses out of 77

barriers, or 27.27% were categorized as organizational and related to communication.

Respondents to item 26 provided different barriers such as "inadequate staffing to

properly monitor", while another respondent stated, "the proximity to law

enforcement." One respondent listed "inadequate staffing at class changes", and

another listed as a barrier, "excessive number of students roaming hallways during

class." Other barriers mentioned by the respondents were, "limited staff training" and

"proper reaction time from first responders." "Proper supervision in the hallways

before school, during school and during class changes, and after school is vital to a

successful school safety plan." Six survey respondents indicated the lack of a

resource officer on school property as a problem.

There were several organizational and communication concerns. As for the survey respondents, four respondents out of the 77 said there were not enough personnel to monitor properly the school adequately. Three respondents listed the lack of law enforcement on campus as a concern. One respondent mentioned the lack of male teachers, which seemed to be a disciplinarian problem. Superintendents and designees commonly referred to not having enough money to meet the demands of the yearly budget for the school system. They each pointed to a lack of funding to be applied toward their specific school safety plan.

Cultural and environmental. Approximately 16% (12 out of 77) of the responses to Item 26 fell in the category related to cultural and environmental aspects of school safety. A respondent stated, "We are in a rural setting" thus, it was noted as a barrier because of a long response time before community responders get to the school. Another respondent noted that the students were always texting and chatting, but some schools do not have cell phone service. One survey respondent mentioned the name of "Chew-bubs" as a possible slang gang name. The "lackadaisical attitude" toward safety seemed to be the concern of another respondent. One response was that "the code that ends lockdown is known by all, so if a student wanted to make us believe the lockdown was over, he or she would be capable of that."

Intrapersonal. There was very little indication of intrapersonal barriers. Only three out of 77, or 3.90% fell into this category. Overall, respondents believed that proper safety policies and procedures were in place at their respective schools.

Respondents stated that their schools conducted bullying and/or cyberbullying training.

      Summary of school safety surveys. The survey responses to the existing school safety plans indicated several areas of concern and need for improvement. The school safety survey information provided key points such as adequate staffing, safety awareness and procedures, safety policies, armed personnel, and law enforcement on campus. Respondents felt a need to be protected while at school. Approximately 63% of the respondents felt that administrators had the right to carry a firearm at school along with approximately 94% that indicated there was no resource officer on school premises.

      The respondents to the survey mentioned expanding secure entrance procedures. They desired more staff to monitor the entire school and requested more resource officers be present always. The respondents also mentioned as issues of concern the lack of adequate supervision on the playground during recess and crowd control measures at extracurricular games after school.

      The school safety survey presented results of school personnel in general, the schools overall have a safe environment for learning. There was confidence in the number of fire drills and that strong lockdown codes were used. The results provided evidence that employees felt trained with the school safety plan and there was cohesion with the school safety plan with first responders. Most survey participants indicated that bullying and cyberbullying awareness was part of their educational curriculum.

In years to come, improvements to school safety plans could ensure a safer school environment. Most schools felt comfortable with their existing school safety plan, while others desired more funding for school counselors, better surveillance cameras, and more staff members to improve overall monitoring.

Interviews with District Administration

Lawrence County, Kentucky. The interview with Lawrence County School District representative occurred on April 9, 2015. The Louisa East Elementary safety plan (2014-2015) was provided for review for the district. The district administrator explained that the school safety plan for each school was annually reviewed. During the beginning year orientation, administrators provided copies and reviewed the plan with faculty and staff. For the school year 2015-2016, a new plan would be implemented to replace the existing plan. The district administrator pointed out that costs seemed to be a problem when making major safety changes.

The administrator said one of the district's strengths was lockdown procedures and the active shooter training conducted in coordination with the Kentucky State Police. He alluded to the district's practice of having doors locked always. A noted weakness was "that to streamline their existing safety plan, more financial resources must be provided for changes to occur." He noted a continuing effort to educate students, teachers, faculty, and parents to bullying awareness. The district administrator felt "there must be a collaborative effort" for the school safety plan to be strengthened and improved.

Lawrence County's safety plans used Louisa East Elementary as a district guide for emergency planning. The Lawrence County safety areas were led by the Superintendent's committees that included a public information official to provide news to the public; a liaison official, who communicates between first responders and the perpetrators; a planning/intelligence committee which is proactive in nature; a situation analysis team which functions as an event is occurring; a student accounting committee responsible for the where and how of the student/ school personnel member; and a release committee that is responsible for the coordination of a safety press release to parents.

Lawrence County listed several areas of the school safety plan, including a facility and environmental team responsible for the mapping and direction of evacuations as well as leading the school to safety during an environmental problem. First-aid teams are responsible for medical support as well as providing response support. They have a crisis intervention committee and a response team. There is also a team responsible for the distribution of food and water after a disaster.

Communications and supplies, which are critical in an emergency, are based upon the readiness of first responders and committees organized prior to a disaster. In a time of crisis, effective communication can eliminate problems for school districts regarding first responders, students, parents, and community. A documentation and administration committee assists after the disaster and a finance committee, oversees the cost of rehabilitating a school facility.

The county has an Incident Command System (ICS) or Emergency Response Team that communicates with the Superintendent at the district office. The designee listed the Superintendent at the district office as the representative of the Lawrence County Emergency Operations Center. The Emergency Response Team has a pre-selected alternate to lead in case the Superintendent is unavailable in time of crisis.

The Superintendent's designee was asked in the interview, "What changes were made due to recent historical disasters?" The representative stated, "Work began after the Sandy Hook tragedy, and this week we have implemented buzzer and monitoring systems in each of our six district schools. The installation of these systems allowed us to lock the entrance way for all school buildings" (Hall, 2015). Like what was being done in Chesapeake and Mason Counties, Hall mentioned that school doors were locked during the school day, which had been changed from the previous open-door policy, and lockdown drills were now a common practice. The designee mentioned that bullying and cyberbullying training was conducted through the Kentucky Center for School Safety.

Chesapeake, Ohio. The interview on April 7, 2015 took place at the Chesapeake Board of Education. The superintendent stated he used the first two days of in-service of each school year to cover the various safety plans with the district employees. He noted that the district had updated all card keys, with no community card keys distributed to "outsiders." The district had updated new surveillance cameras throughout all its schools. The superintendent mentioned the topic of lockboxes "in that they were to be built and implemented in the entrances of each of

the schools for first community responders, such as police and firefighters."
Administrators reviewed the Chesapeake school safety plan each year.

The superintendent noted that finances were the main concern to providing all that was needed to address safety concerns for the district. He said the district adhered to all legislative safety laws and incorporated them into their school safety plan. The superintendent stated that the district practiced bullying education and the staff managed accurate bullying records with a checklist maintained by teachers and administrators. The superintendent added, "Proper communication is the key to handling issues such as bullying and texting." A local Lawrence County deputy, according to the superintendent, is one of the first individuals contacted in a case of an emergency within the district.

The superintendent was clear in the interview that he was the head of emergency control at the Chesapeake board office when an emergency happens. When asked about concerns in the school safety plan, he referred to a custodian who had recently been reprimanded for leaving the back entranceway open while cleaning during an evening shift. The superintendent expressed parent concerns of the school not having metal detectors and the rising number of student bullying cases, at school, or cyberbullying away from school. One of his top concerns was the inability of first responders to have access to the complete school building. The superintendent indicated that he would like to have a lockbox of keys for first responders to allow them to have quick access to all areas of the school.

He stated proper lock-down procedures were a common practice in the district. "Lockdown" was originally used in southern California during the 1970'ies to address gang-related shootings. The Chesapeake district had received the ALICE training, which involves the use of proper evacuation techniques at the time of an incident.

Mason County, West Virginia. On March 18, 2015, the Mason County School Superintendent was interviewed. The Superintendent stated that the safety committee informed the employees each year of the school safety plan. The transportation and maintenance directors led respective committees in the areas of transporting students in time of crisis and designating a common collection point for students. The new crisis plan "is covered with all principals" and "provides protective training infrastructure" (Cullen, 2015).

The area of utmost concern was "to provide shatterproof [bulletproof] glass to all schools, money permitting" (Cullen, 2015). He noted that all recent acts of violence could have been prevented or minimized if the schools had protective glass in their entranceways.

The Superintendent expressed a desire to install an entrance ID reader system. He stated, "Mason County's School Evacuation Plan was to be [continuously] renewed on the belief that it lacked deficiencies."

The question of "Are there any barriers of safety to the district safety plan?" was asked by the interviewer and the school superintendent responded that "not having enough money to provide a protective resource officer on each school campus

all of the time is one of our major barriers." The superintendent indicated, "some of our district's safety strengths are surveillance cameras, filmed glass, and new doors." He mentioned positive feedback by the community to Mason County's overall school safety. "Mason County School's website which included topics such as bullying, intimidation, harassment, sexting, and information on reporting such topics had been worthwhile to the county." He mentioned their school's full-time psychologist and an overall awareness to total school safety. The interim superintendent noted that canine units were available and used for both narcotics as well as the search for nicotine.

The West Virginia superintendent mentioned his first line of defense when a disaster occurred. He pointed to the active shooter (SWAT) team and Pleasant Valley Hospital located in Point Pleasant in his overall school safety plan. He assured the interviewer that all new and renovated buildings were constantly reviewed and added to their critical crisis plan.

Summary of interviews. The interviews with the three administrators revealed that missing safeguards had been implemented into school safety plans after recent disasters. Some of the safeguard barriers that need to be implemented include the use of metal detectors, gang violence response, extra training for teachers, and police/security patrols on school campuses. The district administrators pointed out that there had been an increase recently of their schools using surveillance cameras in gyms, hallways, and doorways to help monitor. The administrators and designee indicated that their schools used codes for lockdown and evacuation for their students in case of an intruder, practicing with community responders.

Summary

This study sought to examine the level of school safety preparedness through the identification of the existing barriers to school safety. The school safety plans, the responses to the survey, and the interviews with the district administrators produced interesting findings related to school safety in three different school districts.

The investigation of the Lawrence County Kentucky school safety plan and interview responses contained evidence of strengths in crowd control, surveillance cameras, and community response training. The Lawrence County school district was in the process of implementing a new school safety plan for the 2015-2016 school year.

The examination of the Chesapeake, Ohio school safety plan and interviews showed evidence of a comprehensive emergency evacuation plan. The school superintendent mentioned the schools had no metal detectors. The superintendent pointed to an increase in bullying and cyberbullying, and inadequate accessibility for community responders as issues he would like addressed within the district.

The investigation of the Mason County, West Virginia school safety plan, and interviews, produced evidence of a website for reporting cases of bullying and cyberbullying, and the plan included a section addressing nuclear disasters. The Mason County, West Virginia superintendent mentioned in his interview "that the county schools had limited staff numbers to properly monitor the entire school and there were limited resource officers for the schools."

The survey, interviews, and review of the safety plans brought to light many positive assets to school safety within each school district. Areas of the rubric which were met were: a) crisis planning, b) crisis teams (committees), c) prevention, d) response, e) lockdown and lockout codes, f) communication, g) evacuation, and h) emergency contacts. Each school plan consisted of disaster preparedness for natural disasters, man-made, school violence, school transportation, and medical emergencies (including death). The schools met fire drill requirements, earthquake and tornadic preparedness, and flooding evacuation planning. The survey, interviews, and reviews also showed evidence that the three school districts met school safety rubric criteria.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, Actions, and Implications

Summary of Results and Findings

The purpose of the capstone study was to investigate components of school safety within individual districts in Kentucky, Ohio, and West Virginia. The investigation included interviews with superintendents or designees, reviews of existing safety plans, and survey responses from administrators, faculty, and school personnel. The importance of the study may be beneficial in years to come as others examine school safety plans for strengths and deficiencies.

Each superintendent or designee indicated that reduced funding provided to schools has led to a decrease in the resources for safety and emergency preparedness. The administrators spoke of a lack of adequate financial resources that has required the schools to prioritize the needs in relation to school safety. The lack of funding for components of the school safety plans will likely not generate cohesive safety plans but rather result in barriers and deficiencies.

The guiding questions were answered using the interviews with the district administrators, review of the school safety plans, and through the survey responses. The answers to the five guiding questions shed light on the condition of existing school safety plans and presented areas where they could be improved.

Guiding Questions

Five guiding questions provided a focus for this capstone. The information learned through the examination of the various school safety plans, the interviews

conducted with the three district administrators, and the responses to the School

Safety Survey enabled the researcher to develop responses to the five questions.

Guiding question 1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current

safety plan and procedures of the schools involved in the study?

The superintendents listed many strengths and weaknesses in their interviews

of their school safety plan. Strengths included the installation of surveillance cameras,

use of school resource officers, active shooting drills, crowd control, community

response training, and nuclear disaster coverage. The Chesapeake, Ohio district had a

comprehensive emergency evacuation plan.

Weaknesses found in the school safety plan were: possible communication

problems with for first responders, not enough staff to properly monitor the school,

no school resource officer, and no metal detectors. Procedurally, they wanted ALICE

training to involve every school. Again, the implementation of a new school safety

plan in Lawrence County, Kentucky, was to occur in 2015-2016 school year. The

district would have to review all training and procedures to keep an effective school

safety plan.

Guiding question 2. What changes in the safety policies and procedures

were made because of the disasters that occur at schools?

The Kentucky designee said the school safety plan was going to be replaced

the following year. He mentioned a firm had developed their existing school safety

plan but it was going to be revamped for the year 2015-2016. He also stated,

"additional surveillance cameras had been installed recently."

The Ohio superintendent noted he had requested "lockboxes" so community responders would have access to the entire school. The Chesapeake, Ohio superintendent felt time was critical to isolate intruders and thus minimize harm and destruction.

Respondents to the survey indicated that one school safety plan included the ALICE evacuation procedures after recent disasters. Schools had used coordinated community responses in their practices of disasters and violence events. After these changes, some respondents stated they felt confident with their existing safety plan.

 The West Virginia superintendent stated, "After the Jonesboro, Arkansas incident, the intruders knew where the student evacuation areas were located." He mentioned that evacuation drills "had to be adjusted" to allow for flexibility in where students would assemble. The administrator requested different glass in the entranceways to facilitate first responders entering more rapidly.

Guiding question 3. What are the perceptions of faculty and administrators regarding current safety standards in place at their school?

An abundance of feedback from the respondents on the survey was obtained regarding current school safety plan standards. Many expressed confidences with their existing plan. Emergent themes from the data collected were safety concerns such as inadequate staffing, relaxed safety policies, and lack of armed personnel. Survey responses indicated the need for more counselors, a law enforcement presence during school hours and during extracurricular events, adequate staffing for monitoring hallways and the school building during the school day, and a need to

practice the safety procedures with first responders. Some respondents even

expressed a desire for administrators and teachers to be armed.

The superintendents in Ohio and West Virginia were content with their

existing school safety plan, but each was looking for ways to improve it. They had

stated they had attended seminars and conferences on new developments in safety

planning. They had a desire to always improve school safety planning. The

superintendents and designee all agreed plans not being communicated with

stakeholders nor practiced seemed to hinder effectiveness.

Guiding question 4. What is the current school safety condition and

preparedness of schools involved in the study?

The schools in each of the three school districts are prepared for all types of

disasters. They are prepared for bullying, cyberbullying, and rampage violence as

well as natural disasters such as earthquakes, fire, flooding, and tornadoes. The West

Virginia district's safety plan included a section for a nuclear disaster. A rubric was

used to examine if the three districts in each of the three states were prepared for

disasters. All three school districts, although having acceptable school safety plans,

understand they must update their school safety plans on a yearly basis to be prepared

for any type of disaster.

Each district administrator gave positive feedback with the safety condition

and preparedness of each school district. They listed school websites, ALICE

evacuation programs, and active shooter training programs as new developments to

enhance their existing school safety plan. Overall, the superintendents and designees were comfortable with their school safety plan.

Bullying and cyberbullying education existed in all three states. The Mason County, West Virginia, superintendent noted that they had on their website an area for reporting bullying and cyberbullying that was discreet. All the administrators cited the importance of bullying and cyberbullying education and the inclusion of it in their curriculum.

The Ohio and West Virginia school safety plans were prepared and being implemented, while the Kentucky school district was in the process of rewriting their school safety plan. The Chesapeake, Ohio superintendent said, "I feel comfortable with our school safety plan." However, he also pointed out the need for additional funding for his district. The Mason County West Virginia superintendent indicated that a change in the glass in the entrances as a possible way of delaying possible intruders. The overall responses to the survey indicated a confidence with existing plans. After reviewing each existing plan and procedures with the rubric, it was determined that each school district met all criteria.

Guiding question 5. What barriers or problems exist that impact the safety of students, faculty, and administrators at the schools involved in the study?

The district administrators felt that for the school safety plan to become even stronger, specific areas should be addressed within the plan. They each mentioned funding for resource officers. The Chesapeake, Ohio, superintendent desired lockboxes with all door cards or keys. Each administrator expressed the desire for

more education with students and faculty regarding bullying / cyberbullying. The administrators stated the evacuation plan must be kept current and not become outdated. The superintendent designee from Kentucky mentioned additional surveillance cameras might help to address monitoring needs. All administrators expressed concern for adequate funding for their district to meet all their school safety plan's requirements.

The responses to the survey indicated two barriers. The respondents of the survey mentioned a need for more resource officers at their school, while another request was for the need to hire more counselors.

The survey respondents indicated their existing school safety plan was effective and most had tremendous confidence in their plan. On the other hand weaknesses and barriers in existing plans were indicated throughout the study. Law enforcement, number of staff to properly monitor school, and the request for administrators and teachers having a right to a firearm were all consistent throughout the survey responses. It was noted by respondents that the continuing of bullying education should continue for all schools.

Interpretations

Overall, after examining the five guiding questions the three state school districts had a strong foundation for their school safety plan to be successful. They would need to keep teaching bullying and cyberbullying education along with continuous evolution of their plan for keeping the school safe. Two school systems needed to make only small adjustments to the overall school safety plans that seemed

to be moderately successful while the Lawrence County school district were in the process of revising their school safety plan. When reviewing the three district plans, all the areas of the rubric were met. The state of West Virginia included the coverage of nuclear disaster within its safety plan while Ohio and Kentucky did not have this included. Kentucky was the lone state of the three to cover crowd control.

School safety plans have greatly improved in recent years. In years to come, there will be changes that will consistently be made to assure better school safety. Across the nation and the world, some type of terrorism is being invented and calculated and school safety must keep pace with the range of possible disasters. Schools must be ready to respond to any type of disaster. Emergency planning and training are essential to emergency management.

Implications

During the completion of the study, various disasters occurred in our nation. Although schools in Kentucky, Ohio, and West Virginia are generally safe, there is a need for leaders of education for the future to examine their schools' safety plan. Areas not included in each of the school safety plans examined indicated the need for plans to include nuclear and crowd control. The ALICE evacuation approach, which incorporates first responders and the community, is an area that must be considered as part of an educational school safety program.

Future school safety plans will be effective only if the plans are practiced and everyone understands what to do in time of crisis. As such, safety training for schools by the entire faculty and staff should have continuous not just occasional

implementation. Continuous assessment of school safety plans minimizes hazards or harm.

Lack of adequate funding for school safety seemed to be a major concern of the superintendents or designees regarding to the implementation of their successful school safety plan. The people must insist on adequate funding for schools to have proper monitoring of the school environment and the possibilities of employing resource officers to be on campus.

The future school safety plans would possibly include permanent resource officer presence on campus, doors that can be locked from both sides, and additional staff to monitor the school building. Future safety planning must continue to meet all the state and federal requirements to ensure schools are safe.

Limitations

A potential weakness to the capstone was that there was not enough diversity within the three school districts. An ideal survey would have a metropolitan school district, a city school district, and a rural district to examine data from interviews, safety plans, and survey responses.

After e-mails and phone calls to one PRO, the person still failed to respond to the survey. A larger number of participants to the school safety survey would have generated a more complete understanding of the study. In an ideal investigative study, it would have been advantageous to witness a trial lockdown and evacuation procedure from each school district in three states.

Delimitations

A school safety investigation ideally would incorporate school districts within different states that were of various sizes. Differences from rural settings, small towns, and large metropolitan areas would convey overcoming safety barriers for their school safety plan. The schools that were selected were from similar demographics regions, which may not show the full scope of school safety plans from each state. The three state investigations, although unique, may have been a restriction. The study showed evidence of school safety problems from different states but different results would possibly exist if the diversification of the selection area were changed. Another avenue that could have taken place by the investigation would be to use schools from the same state.

Different guiding questions and different survey questions would have generated other areas of interest with regards to the school safety plan. The duration of the study could have possibly yielded different results. The extra time would show strengths and weaknesses in the implementation and training of the new Lawrence County Kentucky school safety plan.

Assumptions

It was assumed that the respondents to the survey provided responses with honesty and understood all questions used in the survey. The assumption was made that all respondents perceptions of school safety was understood and non-bias. Another assumption stipulated that the survey was appropriate to obtain the respondents' true beliefs regarding school safety. The assumption was made that the

district administrators offered responses to interview questions without prejudice or bias and were upfront about all areas of their school safety plan.

Recommendations

After reviewing the three school safety plans, interviews of the superintendents or designees, and survey responses, it is my belief that if funding was available through state and federal grants, more resource officers could be present at all schools. The need of resource officers would help in the direction of students with natural disasters as well as intruder type disasters. The topic of administrators and faculty having weapons needs more study to determine if armed school personnel would lead to safer school environments. The staffing issue of monitoring properly all schools must be addressed if school safety is to flourish.

The superintendents and designees presented an idea for how school facilities could be safer. They indicated the installation of shatterproof glass in the entrances could delay an intruder. They stated that delaying perpetrator entry to schools would allow responders to arrive to minimize the disaster. The installation of shatterproof glass would benefit schools.

Funding should be allocated from federal and state budgets for the improvement of existing safety plans. Money could be budgeted by superintendents to enhance the school safety plan. Communication and practice of existing evacuation plans with first responders is a factor on the overall outcome of school safety planning. After practicing for an intruder, feedback from staff and community responders must be examined and shared for the safety plans to be effective. Staff

should communicate and teach evacuation procedures with the students, safety committees, and first responders. A regular exercise of practicing evacuation drills would generate positive outcomes for schools in the time of a crisis.

Bullying and cyberbullying education must be provided to all students and faculty. The availability of a bullying reporting system that is discreet might reassure students, parents, and faculty that reporting instances of bullying would not lead to repercussions. The faculty must become proactively involved in the recognition of potential violent behavior. Bullying in the school setting has become an issue that faculty and staff must address when observed.

Administrators must become aware of all safety drills for all natural and man-made disasters. Schools must continually adhere to flooding evacuation, fire, tornadoes, and earthquake preparedness to be prepared for crisis other than man-made disasters. Education and communication between staff and students is paramount for a safety plan to be successful in protecting everyone in the school.

Future Actions

Future studies related to school safety might focus on comparing elementary or high schools because their school safety needs may be different at given levels. Follow-up studies in the future could investigate the ever-changing technology and potential safety hazards. New acts of violence may suggest remedy ideas such as drones or thermal imaging. A closer examination into metropolitan city school safety plans vs. rural safety plans may render even greater hurdles to overcome in school safety.

Communication is a key with all school safety plans. Results indicated that not everyone knew of the school crisis team or even if the school had a safety plan. It is imperative for everyone to know what to do when an act of violence happens or a disaster occurs.

Future safety plans may consider metal detectors at main doorways along with backpack searches, increased locker checks for controlled substances and firearms, and electronic locking doors that require either a keycard or touchpad code to enter build. It is my belief that science and technology may play a critical role in school safety in the future. New acts of violence or increase occurrence of disasters could require a greater focus on planning needs for our schools.

Reflections

If bullying and cyberbullying are a precursor to school violence, then more studies need to look at how school districts can diminish bullying. School safety personnel will take on greater roles and be more proactive than reactive in the future.

The last 50 years has brought on great change within society, culture, and schools. It is important for school safety planning to adapt to the ever-changing ways an intruder can strike against school personnel and students. Safety preparedness should be ongoing to meet the demands of overall school safety. Schools and their safety planning should never overlook natural disasters and be prepared for earthquakes, tornadic activity, and possible nuclear disasters.   The past 20 years of violence at school campuses only solidifies the idea that more can and likely will be done for overall school safety.

Conclusion

The rising cases of violence together with natural disasters have rendered it necessary for schools to adopt safety preparedness measures within the school systems. These measures are paramount as they seek to maintain the safety of the students within the school environment from any form of emergencies. The integration of a safety and emergency plan within the school system provides benefits to the school, students, and the staff members. These benefits include periodical assessment of the existent policies, plans, procedures, training and equipment to ensure they meet the stipulated conditions thus able to meet the arising emergency demands. All school safety plans should be prepared for man-made disasters as well natural disasters such as earthquakes, fire, flood, and tornadoes.

In addition, an emergency preparedness policy seeks to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the staff, students and the community, which enhances the development of partnerships between different stakeholders and coordination and communication in the event of emergencies. This heightens the identification of resource gaps, which leads to the identification of areas of improvement.

The bullying and cyberbullying education in the curriculum must continue to minimize acts of bullying and cyberbullying. Adequate funding from the state and federal government should be provided to insure all school districts can implement and support their school safety plan and procedures.

Increased safety for all school stakeholders demonstrates the value of school safety programs. Such improved outcomes necessitate the incorporation of safety

plans within the school system to ensure the safety of the students, staff, and the

entire community.

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Appendices

Appendix A

School Safety Survey

Consent Form:

      The purpose of this research project is to acquire school safety information. This research is being conducted by a doctoral student at Morehead State University, Kentucky. You are invited to participate in this survey. Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in this research, you may withdraw at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or you withdraw from participating at any time, you will not be penalized.

      The procedure involves filling an online survey that will take five to ten minutes. Your responses will be kept confidential and we do not collect identifying information such as your name, address, email address, or IP address. The survey questions will be about school safety.

      -Electronic consent- Please select your choice below.

      -Clicking on the "agree" button below indicates that

      * You have read the above information.

      * You voluntarily agree to participate.

1. If you do not wish to participate in the research study, please decline participation by clicking on the "disagree" button.

O Agree

O Disagree

2. My school is in this state?

- Kentucky

- Ohio

- West Virginia

3. I am an:

- Administrator

- Teacher

- Other

4. I am at what level?

- elementary faculty
- middle school faculty
- high school faculty
- county administrator
- community member
- guidance counselor
- librarian
- central office administrator
- Other

Possible responses are: 1- Strongly Disagree; 2- Disagree;

3- Undecided; 4- Agree; 5- Strongly Agree.

School Safety Survey

5.

4)   My main concern of school safety is:

_____

_____

5)   Disruptive, gang related students are a concern for my school's faculty
and staff.   5 4 3 2 1

6)   My school's students care about school safety.   5 4 3 2 1

7)   Overall, school safety is a concern of the teachers in my school.

5 4 3 2 1

8)   The administrators of the school are concerned about school safety.

5 4 3 2 1

9)   My school needs more certified counselors to communicate more
effectively with students about potential safety problems.

5 4 3 2 1

10)   There is adequate staffing at my school for proper monitoring.

        5 4 3 2 1

11)   Overall, my school is a safe environment for learning.   5 4 3 2 1

12)   Fire drills are regularly conducted at my school.   5 4 3 2 1

13)   When an emergency occurs at my school, lockdown codes are used.

        5 4 3 2 1

14)   The cafeteria has locking capabilities at my school.   5 4 3 2 1

15)   If a gunman would be in my school, I would know what to do.

        5 4 3 2 1

16)   The library/media room has locking capabilities at my school.

        5 4 3 2 1

17)   All employees including faculty, maintenance, transportation,
        custodian, and food service personnel have been trained in school
        safety.   5 4 3 2 1

18)   In practicing for a crisis, my school communicates between school and
        first responders: (EMS and law enforcement)   5 4 3 2 1

19)   The school has proper safety policies and procedures in the case of
        emergency.   5 4 3 2 1

20)   Surveillance cameras are used at my school.   5 4 3 2 1

21)   Proper screening procedures are implemented for all visitors at my
        school.   5 4 3 2 1

22)   I feel teachers have the right to be armed with a gun.   5 4 3 2 1

23)   I feel administrators have the right to be armed with a gun.

        5 4 3 2 1

24)   My school has security personnel on campus.   Yes or No.

25)   The staffing level at my school is adequate to monitor the school
        should a safety crisis occur.   5 4 3 2 1

26)   What barriers at my school prevent overall safety?

        _____

27) There is a crisis management team at my school.   5 4 3 2 1

28) My school conducts or has conducted student education on bullying

and cyber bullying (texting).   5 4 3 2 1

29) If a major emergency (such as a shooting) would occur at my school, I

would know what to do.   5 4 3 2 1

30) There has been training at my school with community members (such

as EMS and police) in case of a major emergency.   5 4 3 2 1

Appendix B

Safety Plan Rubric

A rubric was used to determine if the three state schools had implemented and practiced these areas were:

A)   Crisis response planning

B)   Crisis response team

C)   Prevention

D)   Response

E)   Communication

F)   Lockdown/lockout codes

G)   Evacuation

H)   Emergency contact

I)   Prepared for man-made disasters

J)   Prepared for natural disasters

K)   Proper monitoring

L)   Surveillance Cameras

M)   (PRO) law enforcement on campus

N)   Community response time.

Each school superintendent or designee provided feedback for these areas in the interviews.

Rubric

Area	Meet Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectation
Crisis response planning	Ohio, WV, and KY	
Crisis response team	Ohio, WV, and KY	
Prevention	Ohio, WV, and KY	
Response	Ohio, WV, and KY	
Communication	Ohio, WV, and KY	
Lockdown/Lockout codes	Ohio, WV, and KY	
Evacuation	Ohio. WV and KY	
Emergency Contacts	Ohio, WV, and KY	

Disaster Preparedness

Man-made	Ohio, WV, and KY	
Natural disasters	Ohio, WV, and KY	
School violence	Ohio, WV, and KY	
School transportation	Ohio, WV, and KY	
Medical emergency or death of student or staff	Ohio, WV, and Ky.	
Nuclear	WV	Ohio, Ky. (unknown)

Additional topics:

Have Educational Safety Dept:	KY, *Ohio	WV

*Ohio has as recent as 2015 created an Educational Safety Department

Appendix C

Interview Questions for School Superintendents

1. How are employees informed about the school safety plan?

2. What areas of your school safety plan might be areas of concern that would need to be refined, changed, added, or deleted?

3. How often are the school safety plans reviewed and updated because of situations like new buildings being built or remodeled?

4. In regards to your district's school safety policies and procedures, have there been any changes that were made as a result of disasters that occurred in schools? Were there any safeguards that were missing or not strongly enforced?

5. What barriers or problems that exist in the current safety plan?

6. What are some of the strengths and weaknesses about your district's safety plan?

7. How are faculty and administration addressing those types of situations related to bullying?

8. What kind of awareness is the school district doing for parents and what kind of awareness are you doing for teachers in terms of identifying bullying in schools?

9. How confident are you regarding your district's safety plan and is the district prepared along with community responders to handle a disaster?

10. Do you have a person or people that serve as a school contact?

VITA

LARRY B. MAYNARD

EDUCATION

December, 1981   Bachelor of Science
                      West Virginia Institute of Technology
                      Montgomery, West Virginia

May, 1994   Master of Science
                      Marshall University
                      Huntington, West Virginia

Pending   Doctor of Education
                      Morehead State University
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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

2015 – 2017   Teacher
                      Cabell County Schools
                      Huntington, West Virginia

2008 - 2015   Teacher / Coach
                      Mason County Schools
                      Pt. Pleasant, West Virginia

 2003 - 2008   Teacher / Coach
                      Mingo County Schools
                      Williamson, West Virginia

HONORS

2004   Teacher of the Year
                      Williamson, High School
                      Williamson, West Virginia