

School Security and Safety Plan Standards

Version 1.0

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Recognizing the need for an “all hazards” emergency preparedness and response capability for schools, Connecticut state government is expanding its role as a partner in ensuring the safety, security, and emergency preparedness of the state’s local educational facilities. Every day, every school in the state faces potential threats. The purpose of the following School Security and Safety Plan Standards and the accompanying School Security and Safety Plan Template is to help schools and the surrounding communities meet these all-hazards threats.

Long a source of school construction funding and emergency management assistance, state government is now working with local partners for a more comprehensive and uniform consideration of school security measures at the local level. Individually, Connecticut’s 165 school districts are limited in what they can plan and achieve in moving toward the goal of improved statewide school security. Connecticut state government, however, with the commitment of its Chief Executive and Legislative Leadership clearly aligned, can effectively work with municipalities and their school districts to develop, disseminate, and implement new tools for use in improving school safety. This assistance includes working collaboratively on planning, training, and exercises designed to enhance school emergency preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation.

The state’s role in this process does not end with funding and in providing resources and expertise needed to improve school security. It also extends to mobilizing all affected parties in recognizing the importance of this undertaking and to encourage collaboration, coordination, and integration of efforts.

Finally, the state’s commitment to providing a warm, welcoming and nurturing educational environment in local schools is unchanged. Despite the urgency of achieving school security goals, state and local partners recognize the need to preserve an educational environment that maintains an open, welcoming, and supportive place for teaching and learning.

Since the tragedy in Newtown, Connecticut state government has undertaken a number of initiatives to improve security in local schools. Among these efforts is Public Act 13-3, *An Act Concerning Gun Violence Prevention and Children’s Safety*. The following Standards were developed in accordance with Section 86 of the Act by a state/local working group convened by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection/Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, in consultation with the Department of Education.

Those individuals charged with the development of local all-hazards school security and safety plans should review the *Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans*, released in June 2013 by a consortium of federal agencies including the US Department of Education and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). In addition, we have provided a template for an all-hazards approach to emergencies at public schools to address these Standards, including those identified in Public Act 13-3, Section 86:

1. Involvement of local officials, including the chief executive officer (CEO) of the municipality, the superintendent of schools, law enforcement, fire, public health, emergency management, and emergency medical services, in the development of school security and safety plans.

2. An organizational command structure based on the National Incident Management System (NIMS), including the Incident Command System (ICS), and a description of the responsibilities of the different parts of the command structure. NIMS includes the establishment of common nomenclature, and the municipalities shall work together through their Connecticut Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) Regional Emergency Planning Teams to implement the standard language and definitions found in the attached template plan. Basic NIMS training for school employees includes ICS 100 SCA, which can be taken online at <http://training.fema.gov>.

3. A requirement that a school security and safety committee be established at each school. This committee can be combined with an existing school committee provided that the following requirements are met.

Each local and regional board of education annually establishes a school security and safety committee at each school within its jurisdiction. The Committee is responsible for assisting in the development of the school security and safety plan for the school and administering the plan. The Committee members shall include a local police officer, local first responder, teacher and administrator from the school, a mental health professional, a parent or guardian of a student at the school, and may include any other person the board of education deems necessary, such as a custodian or property manager, local emergency management director, local public health director, information technology manager, transportation coordinator, and school nurse. The school security and safety committee should also invite subject matter experts to participate as needed, including, for example, the local public works director, high school student council president, and/or food service director.

4. Annually, each local and regional board of education shall review, update as necessary, and submit a school security and safety plan for each school under its jurisdiction to the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP), based on the standards listed here and further provided in the attached template, and any updated template, as well as on the results of the assessment described in Number 9, below.

5. The school security and safety plans shall be made an annex to the municipality's Local Emergency Operations Plan, filed annually with DESPP/DEMHS under Connecticut General Statutes Section 28-7.

6. Procedures for managing various types of emergencies, including crisis management procedures.

7. A requirement that local law enforcement and other local public safety officials (including the local emergency management director, fire marshal, building inspector, and emergency medical services representative) evaluate, score, and provide feedback on fire drills and crisis response

drills. The board of education shall annually submit a report to the DEMHS Regional Coordinator by July 1st of each year regarding types, frequency, and feedback related to the fire drills and crisis response drills. This report will provide an opportunity for the development of best practices and lessons learned.

8. A requirement that each local and regional board of education conduct a security and vulnerability assessment for each school under the jurisdiction of such board every two years and develop a plan as described in Number 4 above, based on the assessment.

9. A requirement that the safe school climate committee for each school collect and evaluate information relating to instances of disturbing or threatening behavior that may not meet the definition of bullying, and report such information, as necessary, to the district safe school climate coordinator and the school security and safety committee described in Number 3, above (See Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-222k).

10. A requirement that the school security and safety plan for each school provide an orientation on the plan to each school employee at the school, and provide violence prevention training in a manner described in the plan. This training should be conducted in cooperation with the school safety and security committee, including local law enforcement, fire, emergency management, and emergency medical services. This will give the school community and municipal officials an understanding of the need for unified planning, preparedness, and response.

11. A requirement that each school construct a reference kit available for first responders, which includes: several copies of laminated easy-to-read floor plans; master keys to interior and exterior door locks; and other items determined as needed, after consultation with school officials, local law enforcement authority having jurisdiction, emergency management director, and first responders.

12. A requirement that each school security and safety plan follow the format of the All-Hazards School Security and Safety Plan Template, as released and revised by the Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security of the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, in consultation with the Department of Education, including the use of standard terminology. The purpose is to have each school plan achieve the objectives outlined in the Plan Template.