School Safety Assessments

Lessons Learned
School Safety Assessments

Since 2002, the Kentucky Center for School Safety has conducted:

- 635 Safety Assessments
- in 152 Districts

Barren County High School
Why is attention to safety important?
Attention to safety . . .

- Frees up money that would otherwise be spent on worker compensation claims
- Frees up money that would otherwise be spent on lawsuits
- Increases instructional time
- Increases test scores
Safety Assessments

Safety assessments are viewed positively by the courts as a proactive way to address safety issues.
What have we learned?
Commendations

Most students report having a “trusted adult” at school.
Commendations

On our surveys, these are the typical percentages of students reporting having a trusted adult:

- Elementary (K-5): >90%
- Middle School: ~85%
- High School: ~75%
Commendations

Generally, students and staff members feel comfortable reporting safety issues.
Commendations

Staff and students report that they understand the school rules and the consequences for breaking them.
Commendations

There is a trend toward school-wide behavior management systems such as KyCID, PBIS, CHAMPS. Data is collected and examined.
Commendations

Schools are generally clean and well-maintained. There is a sense of pride about the schools we visit.

Jody Richards Elementary, Warren County
Commendations

There is a trend toward establishing school safety committees.
Commendations

While bullying and harassment remain a concern, schools have made significant efforts to address this problem.
Areas of Concern
Areas of Concern

Traffic – especially around elementary schools, but high schools also have problems with students driving to school
Areas of Concern

Surveillance Equipment

• Not monitored consistently
• Equipment is outdated (analog vs. digital; storage capability)
• Blind spots in the school and around the exterior doors
KRS 160.705 – Surveillance Video

(2) School officials shall take precautions to protect and preserve all education records, including records generated and stored in the education technology system. School officials shall:

(a) Retain for a minimum period of one (1) week a master copy of any digital, video, or audio recordings of school activities without editing, altering, or destroying any portion of the recordings, although secondary copies of the master copy may be edited; and

(b) Retain for a minimum of one (1) month in an appropriate format, a master copy of any digital, video, or audio recordings of activities that include, or allegedly include, *injury to students or school employees without editing, altering, or destroying any portion of the recordings.*

(3) Recordings of school activities shall be subject to privacy and confidentiality requirements as provided in this chapter.
Areas of Concern

Schools are not designed or retro-fitted to address safety/security issues.

Horse Branch Elementary
Ohio County

Paul Laurence Dunbar
Fayette County
Areas of Concern

Emergency Management Plans
- Outdated
- Not reviewed annually
- Not presented to staff members each year
Areas of Concern

There is a perception of drug and alcohol use as well as continuing problems with tobacco use.
Areas of Concern

Consistency by the school staff in:

- Supervision
- Rule enforcement
  - Cell Phones
  - Dress Code
  - Tardies
  - Certain students

Consistency is far better than rare moments of greatness.
Areas of Concern

Staff Identification Badges
• The district or school doesn’t use them
• Not worn by staff members/district employees
• Worn in “odd” places that make them difficult to see
Areas of Concern

Reasons to Use Staff Identification Badges

• Allows first responders to quickly identify employees at the school
• Helps visitors and students needing assistance to identify staff members
• Confers authority to approach adults in the building – especially visitors without badges
Areas of Concern

Cell Phones

• Inconsistent enforcement of rules by staff
• Lack of effective school board policies
Areas of Concern

Emergency Drills

• Not practiced in accordance with Board of Education policies

• When conducted, they are not taken seriously or done well
Areas of Concern

**Access Control**

- Exterior doors, including the front door, are unlocked
- Exterior doors are propped open
- Exterior doors won’t shut properly
- Classroom doors are unlocked and open during instructional time.
Areas of Concern

Access Control
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Visitor Procedures

• Visitors are not interviewed before they enter the building
• Visitors are not asked to show identification
• Visitors do not sign the log book – completely
• Visitors are not issued identification badges
• Visitors do not wear identification badges (or they carry them)
• Visitors do not sign out before leaving
Areas of Concern

Reasons for Visitor Log Books and Badges

• The log book will be used in an emergency to determine the visitors who are in the building
• Badges allow quick identification of visitors by first responders in an emergency
• The staff knows that adults wearing a badge have followed the proper procedures and have permission to be in the building
Areas of Concern

Supervision

What problems do you think we observe (and hear about) with supervision?
Last, but not least . . .

- Change is sometimes difficult and not easily implemented.
- Changes should be planned carefully.
- Every effort should be made to inform all stakeholders well in advance of any change in procedure. They should know:
  - Why the change is being made
  - What they will do differently
  - When the new procedures will start
  - How they can provide feedback before implementation
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