

## Introduction

Emergencies and violent incidents in school districts are critical issues that must be addressed in an expeditious and effective manner. Districts are required to develop a District-wide School Safety Plan designed to prevent or minimize the effects of serious violent incident, declared state disaster emergency involving a communicable disease or local public health emergency declaration and other emergencies and to facilitate the coordination of the district with local and county resources in the event of such incidents or emergencies. The district-wide plan is responsive to the needs of all schools within the district and is consistent with the more detailed emergency response plans required at the school building level. Districts are at risk of a wide variety of acts of violence, natural, and technological disasters. To address these threats, the State of New York has enacted the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) law. This component of Project SAVE is a comprehensive planning effort that addresses risk reduction/prevention, response, and recovery with respect to a variety of emergencies in the school district and its schools.

School safety is the job of the entire school community. This effort requires leadership and coordination by school administration, and involvement and participation from all sectors of the school community. New York State school districts are required to develop a district-wide school safety plan to help school officials identify and respond to potential emergencies. Planning, conducting drills and participating in exercises with law enforcement, fire, emergency officials and other members of the school community ensures a comprehensive, unified approach to emergency response planning. The Menands Union Free School District-Wide Safety Plan was developed by the Menands School District Safety Team with guidance from the New York State Police.

The Menands Union Free School District supports the SAVE Legislation, and intends to engage in a planning process. The Superintendent of Schools encourages and advocates on-going district-wide cooperation and support of Project SAVE.

## **Section I: General Considerations and Planning Guidelines**

### **A. Purpose**

The Menands Union Free District-wide School Safety Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17. At the direction of the Menands Union Free School District Board of Education, the Superintendent of Menands Union Free School District appointed a District-wide School Safety Team and charged it with the development and maintenance of the District-wide School Safety Plan.

### **B. Identification of Chief Emergency Officer**

The Menands Union Free District designates the School Superintendent as the district's chief emergency officer whose duties shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Coordination of the communication between school staff, law enforcement, and other first responders;
2. Lead the efforts of the district-wide school safety team in the completion and yearly update by September 1st, of the district-wide school safety plan and the coordination of the districtwide plan with the building-level emergency response plans;
3. Ensure staff understanding of the district-wide school safety plan;
4. Ensure the completion and yearly update by September 1st, of building-level emergency response plans for each school building;
5. Assist in the selection of security-related technology and development of policies for the use of such technology;
6. Coordinate appropriate safety, security, and emergency training for district and school staff, including required training in the emergency response plan yearly by September 15th; and
7. Ensure the conduct of required evacuation and lock-down drills in all district buildings as required by Education Law section 807.
8. Ensure the development of protocols for responding to a declared state disaster emergency involving a communicable disease that are substantially consistent with the provisions of section 27-c of the Labor Law.

### **C. Identification of School Teams**

The Menands Union Free School District has appointed a District-wide School Safety Team consisting of, but not limited to, representatives of the School Board, teachers, administrators; school safety personnel; and, other school personnel. The members of the team and their positions or affiliations are as follows:

- A representative of the School Board
- Superintendent
- Teacher
- Maintenance Supervisor
- School Principal
- School Secretary

## **D. Concept of Operations**

The concept of the Emergency Response Plan is to execute effective and timely decisions and actions that prevent harm, protect lives and property, mitigate damages, restore order and aid recovery. The District Safety Team, various agencies and services are involved in responding to incidents, including emergency responders from law enforcement, fire, emergency medical services, mental health and other community organizations.

- The district-wide school safety plan is directly linked to the individual building-level emergency response plan to the school. Protocols reflected in the district-wide school safety plan guide the development and implementation of individual building-level emergency response plan.

## **E. Plan Review and Public Comment**

- Pursuant to Commissioner’s Regulation, Section 155.17 (e) (3), this plan will be made available for public comment at least 30 days prior to its adoption. The district-wide plan may be adopted by the School Board only after at least one public hearing that provides for the participation of school personnel, parents, students and any other interested parties. The plan must be formally adopted by the Board of Education.
- While linked to the district-wide safety plan, the building level emergency response plans shall be confidential and shall not be subject to disclosure under Article 6 of the Public Officers Law or any other provisions of law, in accordance with Education Law Section 2801-a.
- Full copies of the District-wide School Safety Plan and any amendments will be submitted to the New York State Education Department within 30 days of adoption. The building level emergency response plans are supplied to the local police departments and the Albany County Operations of Emergency Management.

## **Section II: Risk Reduction/Prevention and Intervention**

### **A. Prevention/Intervention Strategies**

#### ***Program Initiatives***

- Collaborative agreements with state and local law enforcement officials designed to ensure that school safety and security personnel are adequately trained including being trained to de-escalate potentially violent situations.
- Non-violent conflict resolution training programs
- Peer mediation strategies
- Youth-run programs overseen by school staff
- Creating a forum or designating a mentor for students concerned with bullying or violence

### ***Training, Drills, and Exercises***

- The Menands Union Free School District understands the importance of training, drills, and exercises in being prepared to deal with an incident. Annual training is provided to ensure that school personnel and responders are aware of their responsibilities under the District Wide Emergency Response Plan.
- The district has policies and procedures for annual multi-hazard school safety training for staff and students, including the strategies for implementing training related to multi-hazards. All staff will undergo annual training by September 15 thereafter on the building-level emergency response plan which includes components on violence prevention and mental health. New employees hired after the start of the school year receive this training within 30 days of hire or as part of the district’s existing new hire training program, whichever is sooner. The district certifies that this training is completed during the October NYSED BEDS data collection.
- During each school year, twelve required drills will be completed to prepare students to be able to respond appropriately in the event of a sudden emergency. Currently, four are required to be lock-down drills and eight are required evacuations. Eight drills will be completed by December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year.
- School district staff act as hall monitors and meet state certification requirements

### ***Implementation of School Security***

- The district has developed policies and procedures related to school building security, including, where appropriate: visitor sign-in and badge procedures, employee badges, security procedures (locked doors).

### ***Vital Educational Agency Information***

- The district also maintains the following information about each educational agency located in the confidential, Building-level Emergency Response Plan:
  - School Population
  - Number of staff
  - Transportation needs
  - Business and personal telephone numbers of key officials of pertinent educational agencies.

## **B. Early Detection of Potentially Violent Behaviors**

The Menands Union Free School District has implemented procedures for the dissemination of informative materials regarding the early detection of potentially violent behaviors, including, but not limited to: the identification of family, community and environmental factors to teachers, administrators, parents and other persons in parental relation to students of the school district or board, students and other persons deemed appropriate to receive such information. The district has and continues to participate in programs such as: small group/individual counseling, *Suicide threat*

*assessment, child abuse and prevention workshops, programs designed to inform staff on how to identify potentially violent behaviors and other risk factors.* The district additionally employs a school psychologist, counselor, special education staff and a school health nurse who are instrumental in assisting the district in identifying early warning signs in students, early intervention/prevention strategies and the development of violence prevention instruction for staff.

### **C. Hazard Identification**

The Building Level Emergency response plan identifies hazards of environmental, health, safety and security for the students and faculty of the school. The plan contains resources and mitigation measures to decrease risk and provide appropriate response.

## Section III: Response

### A. Notification and Activation (Internal and External Communications)

- The Menands Union Free School District is fortunate to have substantial ties to the community of Menands and Albany County. If there were to be an emergency within our facility, that facility would call 911 for emergency assistance. If involvement is needed from other local government agencies, then the Superintendent or designee would act as that contact person. Additional procedures for communications can be found in the Building-level Emergency Response Plan including local emergency contacts and phone numbers, and the NYS/BOCES Communication Flow Chart. These contacts provide guidance for obtaining assistance during emergencies from emergency services organizations and local government. The following examples are the types of arrangements that could be used by the district:
  - Superintendent (IC-Incident Commander or backup IC) in an emergency would contact the county dispatch center for fire, EMS, or police by calling 911.
  - Superintendent (IC or backup IC) contacts the highest-ranking local government official for notification and/or assistance.
- If there is a disaster within the district that has the potential to impact other educational agencies within the district boundaries, the Chief Emergency Officer (Superintendent) activates a phone tree to inform all necessary parties. The phone tree is located in the Building-level Emergency Response Plan:
- The district uses a communication alert via electronic notification to contact parents, guardians or persons in parental relation to the students in the event of a violent incident or an early dismissal. The district has an audit process to contact parents and guardians not utilizing the communication alert system.

### B. Situational Responses

#### ***Multi-Hazard Response***

The district has developed multi-hazard response guides. These guidelines are located in the building-level emergency response plans and are in ICS (Incident Command System) format. Plans for taking the following actions in response to an emergency where appropriate are, including but not limited to:

- Initial Actions
- Command Post Location (Primary and Secondary)
- Shelter in Place:

- Severe Weather
- Bomb Threat
- HazMat Incident
- Hold in Place: Limits student/staff movement while dealing with short-term emergencies
  - Minor facility incidents
  - Medical Emergencies
- Evacuation: Used to evacuate students/staff from the school
  - Before, during and after school hours, including security during evacuation and evacuation routes
- Lockout: Used to secure school buildings and grounds during incidents that pose an imminent concern outside of the school
- Lockdown: Used to secure school buildings and grounds during incidents that pose an immediate threat of violence in or around the school
- School Cancellation
- Early Dismissal

***Emergencies may include, but are not limited to:***

Air Pollution	Epidemic	Medical Emergency
Anthrax/Biological	Explosion	Natural Gas Leak
Aviation Crash	Fire Alarm Activation	Radiological
Bldg. Structural Failure	Flood	Roof Leak/Failure
Bomb Threat	Heating System Failure	School Bus Accident
Civil Disturbance	Hostage Situation	Severe Weather Emergency
Crimes Against People	Intruder Situation	Threats of Violence
Earthquake	Loss of Building	Water Emergency
Elec. System Failure	Loss of Buses	
Energy Supply Loss	Mass Casualty	

***Responses to Acts of Violence:***

The school district refer to their Crisis Intervention Plans via the post-incident response team and the Multi-Hazard Emergency Response Guides located in the building-level emergency response plans. These are reviewed by the district-wide school safety team to ensure content and consistency throughout the district. These policies and procedures are for responding to implied or direct threats of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors

to the school, including threats by students against themselves, which includes suicide. The following types of procedures are addressed in the plan:

- The use of staff trained in de-escalation or other strategies to diffuse the situation. Training is offered through Therapeutic Crisis Intervention and Suicide Preventions.
- Informing the Superintendent or designee of implied or direct threats.
- Determining the level of threat with the Superintendent and building-level emergency response team members.
- Contacting appropriate law enforcement agency, if necessary.
- Monitoring the situation, adjusting the district's responses as appropriate to include possible implementation of the building-level emergency response team.
- Communication with parent/guardian. When a student implies or specifically threatens self-inflicted violence including suicide, the school's administrator(s) or designated staff member directly contacts the respective parents/guardians.

The Multi-Hazard Emergency Response Guides in the building-level emergency response plans provide guidance on the district's policies and procedures for responding to direct acts of violence (i.e., Crimes Against Persons, Hostage Taking, Intruder and Kidnapping) by students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school, including consideration of zero-tolerance policies for school violence. The following types of procedures are addressed in the plan:

- Inform the Superintendent/designee
- Determine the level of threat with the superintendent/designee and the building-level emergency response team.
- If the situation warrants, isolate the immediate area.
- Monitor the situation; adjust the level of response as appropriate; if necessary, initiate lockdown, evacuation, sheltering and/or early dismissal procedures as needed, if needed.
- Contact appropriate law enforcement agency

NOTE: The "Code of Conduct" describes policies and procedures for responding to acts of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school.

The following protocols for appropriate responses to emergencies are provided as examples of responses to bomb threats, hostage takings, intrusions and kidnappings:

- Identification of decision-makers.
- Plans to safeguard students and staff.
- Procedures to provide transportation, if necessary.
- Procedures to notify parents.

- Procedures to notify the media.
- Debriefing procedures with the Crisis team where appropriate.

The district has established policies and procedures to contact parents, guardians or persons in parental relation to the students in the event of a violent incident or an early dismissal. In the Menands Union Free School District, the following communication methods are taken:

- For small-scale incidents, school personnel directly call the parents/guardians of all students directly impacted by any acts of violence. All other parents/guardians receive an informational letter. The Crisis Intervention Team is activated and available, if needed. If needed, as needed, meetings are scheduled in a timely manner for further discussion.
- For any major incident, the district works with the media along with our School News Notifier, District Web Site, Social Media, emails, and using the school notification system, to relay pertinent school-related information (i.e., how and where can parents be reunited with children, etc.) It is unfortunate, but important to remember that major emergencies can quickly tie up phone lines with incoming and outgoing calls and roads can be quickly blocked by the traffic of emergency vehicles, concerned parents and community members. School personnel directly call the parents/guardians of all students directly impacted by any acts of violence. All other parents/guardians receive an informational letter. Meetings are scheduled in a timely manner, if needed. If needed, further discussion to include the Crisis Intervention Team.

## **Section IV: Recovery**

Recovery addresses the help needed for all involved to heal and to restore the school community to “normal” operations. The District Plan supports the school building plan by deploying district resources that support the school’s building-level emergency response team and the post-incident response team.

Recovery plans include mental health/emotional recovery, academic, physical and business recovery, and can continue long after the actual emergency. The District has a school counselor and a school psychologist and support systems. The District has the ability to coordinate with school, local, Albany County and State disaster mental health services. The District’s role with mental health services includes looking at the school culture and climate, providing student access to services and following threat assessment procedures

### **A. District Support for the Menands Union Free School District**

The Building-level Emergency Response Plans provide resources for supporting the building-level emergency response team and post-incident response team. The district’s Incident Command System (ICS) identifies back-ups to act in place of team members in cases of absences.

The district realizes that some emergencies may overwhelm an individual school’s ability to

manage an extreme crisis. If/when the school is faced with an emergency such as threats of violence or actual violent incidents, the district-wide school safety team assists as follows:

- Acting as a sounding board regarding the implied or direct threats and/or violent acts.
- Assisting in determining the level of threat and appropriate response.
- Monitoring the situation and adjusting the district's response as appropriate.
- Assisting with parent/guardian, faculty/staff, and media communication.
- Assisting with coordinating building and grounds security in conjunction with local and State Police.
- Offering debriefing sessions as needed working in conjunction with local, Albany County and/or State emergency responders.

#### **B. Disaster Mental Health Services**

If/when a building-level emergency response team or post-incident response team is faced with an emergency that may overwhelm the school's ability to manage an extreme crisis, the district-wide school safety team assists as follows:

- Activating the district-wide post-incident response team. The district has a school psychologist, one counselor and one school nurse who have local connections to:
  - Neighboring school districts
  - Albany County Department of Mental Health
- Offering district support and looking for continued feedback from those directly impacted during the incident, with projected plans to assist if needed during heightened stressful times such as a re-occurrence of a similar event and anniversaries of the original event.
- Assisting with parent/guardian, student, and faculty/staff debriefing and/or post-incident crisis intervention. The debriefing is also used in part to evaluate the district's plan for possible revisions. If needed, assisting in contacting additional outside mental health resources such as the National Organization for Victim Assistance (1-800-try-nova; [www.try-nova.org](http://www.try-nova.org) ).
- Assisting the schools with written statements going out to faculty/staff, parents/guardians, press releases and media requests through the district's Public Information Officer.

***Appendix A:***

***List and contact for the school buildings covered in the district-wide safety plan***

<u>BUILDING</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>CONTACT/TITLE</u>	<u>PHONE</u>
<b>Menands School K-8</b>	19 Wards Ln, Menands, NY 12204	Jennifer Cannavo/Principal	518-465-4561 ext 119