CRISIS MANAGEMENT

The Board of Education is committed to providing a safe environment in district buildings and on district grounds. At the same time, it recognizes that a public school district cannot entirely eliminate the risk of physical harm to its students and employees. The degree to which sites can be made safer depends to a significant extent on the efforts to reduce violence and increase tolerance that are made within the families of our students and employees, and within our society as a whole. As a public school district, we must focus on the elements that we have control over while recognizing the many factors which contribute to societal violence over which we have limited influence.

The Board of Education acknowledges the necessity of preparing a school response framework to adequately prepare school personnel, students, parents and the community to respond appropriately to a crisis that involves the school community. Crisis situations that could impact the school community may or may not occur on school property and include, but are not limited to, suicide, death, acts of violence, trauma, natural disaster and accident.

Consequently, the Board of Education provides the following directions to the Superintendent and her/his staff as they determine what steps should be taken in preventing and managing school related crisis events and enhancing the existing safety programs of the district. The primary goal of these activities must be to reduce the risk of physical harm to persons present on APS sites, while operating with available resources.

In deciding where our site safety efforts will be focused, security measures that have the greatest potential for enhancing site safety should have priority. The resources available to address safety needs will depend upon the competing needs of the organization, especially the need to devote most of our resources directly to the education of our students.

A key component of any effective school safety program is fostering a climate of tolerance, mutual respect and non-violence among both students and staff.

All of our sites already have effective safety programs in place; consequently, we should continue to assess existing safety measures before implementing changes. Regular reviews of practices, common standards, and mutual cooperation and assistance between and among sites is expected.

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As a public institution, we must balance the need for safety with the responsibility to make our facilities and services available to our community.

A spirit of cooperation and collaboration within and among the district, other governmental agencies and the community is important to our mission, including enhancing the safety of our students and staff.

To reduce the disruptive effects of a crisis, ensure student and staff safety, and minimize property damage, the Superintendent or designated staff member is directed to maintain a School Safety, Readiness and Incident Management Plan (safety plan) for all schools and sites in conjunction with community partners. She/he will involve appropriate district and site leadership to ensure that the plan follows best practices. The plan must comply with the National Incident Management System (NIMS). APS achieved NIMS compliance on July 1, 2010. To the extent possible, the safety plan, and emergency communications, will take place in coordination with any statewide or local emergency operation plans already in place. The safety plan incorporates the requirements of state law. Staff, students and community members will participate in training as appropriate to ensure the effective implementation of the safety plans.

LEGAL REFS.:   C.R.S. 13-21-108.1 (3) (requirements for persons rendering emergency
                          assistance through the use of automated external defibrillators)
                          C.R.S. 25-53-102 (automated external defibrillators requirements must be
                          referenced in safety, readiness and incident management plan)
                          C.R.S. 22-1-126 (Safe2Tell Program)
                          C.R.S. 22-32-109.1 (1)(b.5) (definition of "community partners")
                          C.R.S. 22-32-109.1 (4) (school response framework is required part of
                          safe schools plan)
                          C.R.S. 24-33.5-1213.4 (school all-hazard emergency planning and
                          response)

CROSS REFS.:   JLCE, First Aid and Emergency Care

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Crisis management plans should include:

1. Building Emergency Plans
    a. Every school building will have an emergency operating plan for evacuations and lockdowns or lockouts to address potential crises, which will include fire, tornado, chemical spill, bomb threat and other acts of violence.

    b. Specify clearly the actions of administrators, teachers and other school employees in the plan.

2. Student Participation
    a. Student involvement is essential in solving and preventing violent acts on school campuses and should begin at earliest grades.

    b. Programs that provide opportunities for the students to take control of their environment and motivate through positive peer influence are encouraged to promote school safety.

    c. Peer mediation is recommended at the middle and high school levels.

    d. Students shall be encouraged to report to a responsible adult whenever they know or suspect that a threat of violence involving a school exists.

3. Parent Participation
    a. Encourage parents to participate as volunteers for school functions.

    b. Provide general information to parents on the safety procedures of the school and other crime prevention awareness topics.

4. Partnership Between the School and Local Law Enforcement
    a. Law enforcement and school officials shall work together to enhance the safety of the school environment.

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    b. The partnership should begin at the highest levels of the community, working to lead the way in dispelling misconceptions and promoting cooperation.

5.   Crime Prevention Through Safety Inspections
    a. Develop an annual school building inspection to address the removal of hazards and vandalism and any other barriers to safety and supervision.

    b. On an annual basis, members of the Safety and Security along with invited guests which may include police, fire and Office of Emergency Management will visit each site for a security review. Results of that review will be shared with the staff members so corrective action can be taken.

    c. Provide up-to-date, detailed diagram of the school to emergency personnel, especially law enforcement.

    d. Provide up-to-date evacuation and lockdown and lockout plans from school sites to police, fire and office of emergency management.

6.   Drug and Alcohol Prevention Programs
    a. A safe school is a drug and alcohol free school.

    b. Take all measures necessary to keep drugs and alcohol off the campus.

    c. A close relationship with law enforcement is essential in keeping the drugs and alcohol away from students.

    d. Encourage business and residents to report any unusual activity around the school area to the school administration or school security.

    e. Utilize the programs available for drug and alcohol prevention.

7.   School Crime Reporting and Tracking Mechanism
    a. Report, track and monitor any crime committed on school campuses to determine the need for additional security.

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8. School Security
    a. Supervision of the students and the campus as a whole is an essential component to ensuring a safe school.

    b. Each school will have visitor screening procedures in place.

    c. A closed campus is recommended for elementary and middle schools to limit access to those who might endanger the safety of students.

    d. A school will restrict public access to the building to ensure safety.

    e. Security at any special event or after-school activity should remain consistent with school day procedures.

    f. Have effective technology in place to facilitate communications. These may include radios, security cameras and cell phones as needed for staff.

    g. Involve students in school security to the greatest degree possible. Consideration should be given to involving students in scheduling a campus security council.

    h. District employees will wear their District issued photo identification while on District property or attending District events. High school and middle school students are required to have school issued photo identification with them while on District property or attending District events. Regular volunteers will wear their photo identification while volunteering at APS. All other guests to the building will follow sign-in procedures and wear visitor badges.

9. Incident Response Team (IRT)
    a. The IRT is responsible for training and educating District employees on emergency response and procedures.

    b. The IRT is responsible for creating the Emergency Procedures Guidebook.

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    c. The IRT is responsible for annual security reviews at each District site.

10.   Training for School Personnel
    a. Annual in-service training will take place twice a year and as needed on topics such as assessing the at-risk student, conflict resolution, harassment policies and intervention, implementing the safety and crisis management plans, and regular practices of lockdown, lockout and evacuation procedures.