Safe Schools Review

Presented by:
Safe Schools Task Force

SAFE SCHOOLS
IT'S UP TO US

BUNCOMBE COUNTY SCHOOLS
ELEVATING YOUNG MINDS

OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF
Safe Schools Task Force

**BUNCOMBE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

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**BUNCOMBE COUNTY SCHOOLS**

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DAVID THOMPSON, DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES,

PAULA GARLAND, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Duties of the Safe Schools Task Force

- Evaluate the existing Buncombe County Schools safe schools policies and procedures.
- Examine “best practices” of other school districts.
- Review existing resources within the school district and sheriff’s office.
- Consider any additional resources or recommendations that would improve our current plans.
Community Experts

Dr. Tony Baldwin, Supt. Buncombe County Schools
Van Duncan, Sheriff of Buncombe County
Ned Fowler, EMS Coordinator, Mission Hospital
Tammy Shook, Program Administrator, DHHS
Dr. Lori Brown, Expert in Violent Writing
Dr. Monty Fuchs, Technology Director
Dave Mahoney, Sheriff of Transylvania County
Lt. Greg Stroup, Transylvania County Sheriff’s Office
Buncombe County SROs
John Barbour, President BC PAPA, principal
Jerry Vehaun, BC Emergency Management Director
Angie Ledford, Planner, EMS
Lt. Randy Sorrells, Sheriff’s Office, Public Information Officer
Brooke Hazlett, Director of Communications, BC Sheriff’s Office
Kara Keller, Chief of Police, A-B Technical Community College
J.R. Shelton, Asst. Police Chief, A-B Technical Community College
Steve Padgett, Chief of Police, Black Mountain
Anna Austin, NCAE president
What the National Experts Say

To be effective in preventing crises, safe schools plans should:

- Take a balanced approach to include
  - Physical safety
  - Educational practices
  - Programs to support social, emotional, and behavior needs of students
Experts Say

- Communication is critical
  - Communication about students/adults with troubling behavior
  - Trained threat assessment teams
  - Change the culture about “tattling” to focus on “reporting”
  - Efficient and user-friendly channels of communication
Experts Say

- Connectedness: what binds us together as community
  - Students need to feel that they are a part of school and that others care for them.
  - Community involvement and activities that promote welfare of others.
  - Efforts to build positive connections to marginalized students, showing concern, and fostering avenues of meaningful involvement.
Experts Say

• Support is critical for effective prevention
  ○ Mental health supports
  ○ Social Supports
  ○ Evidence-based conflict resolution strategies
  ○ Evidence-based bullying prevention programs
  ○ Three-tiered behavior system: Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ekyuUajAdWQ

Approximately 3000 Total Responses
Phone/On-Line Survey: March, 2013

Question 1

Support for increased Counselors and Social Workers

- Very Important: 78.6% (4653)
- Somewhat Important: 18.1% (1074)
- Not Important: 3.2% (193)
Phone/On-Line Survey: March, 2013

Question 2

Support for Increasing Law Enforcement Presence in Elementary Schools

63.9%

Very Important

26.9%

Somewhat Important

9.3%

Not Important
Phone/On-Line Survey: March 2013

Question 3

School Buildings Have Adequate Safety Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#1 Adequate Safety Features in Place</th>
<th>39.5%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#2 Need to Improve Safety Features</td>
<td>60.5%</td>
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</table>

2257

3459
Support for Maintaining Schools as Gun-free Zones

Question 4

Phone/On-Line Survey: March 2013

Should be Gun-Free Zones

- 58.4% (3335)

Should Not Be Gun-Free Zones

- 32.4% (1848)

Not Sure About Guns in Schools

- 9.1% (520)
Phone/On-Line Survey: March 2013

Question 5

Schools Create Climate that Encourages Respect And Discourages Bullying

- Does a Good Job Preventing Bullying (57.8%)
- Could do More to Prevent Bullying (34.4%)
- Could do a Lot More to Prevent Bullying (7.7%)
Phone/On-Line Survey: March 2013

Question 6

Schools Have A Timely and Adequate Response To Reports of Bullying

- Does a Good Job Responding to Bullying: 47.1% (2660)
- Could Do a Better Job Responding To Bullying: 40.6% (2291)
- Need a Much Stronger Response to Bullying: 12.2% (685)
Buncombe County Safe Schools Plan and Incident Command System

- Four areas of planning:
  - Prevention and Mitigation
  - Preparedness
  - Response
  - Recovery
Priority 1

**ENHANCE BUNCOMBE COUNTY SCHOOLS’ SAFE POLICIES, PROCEDURES, PHYSICAL SECURITY, AND DISTRICT SUPPORT FUNCTION.**
Recommendations

- Entry systems at elementary schools, intermediate schools, and Community High School.

This recommendation will give each school a sense of control of who enters the building through the main entrance.

The contract for these systems have been awarded and the installation is in progress.
Recommendations

- Establish a yearly budget for the Safe Schools office.

This budget will allow for training opportunities and equipment upgrades.
Recommendations

- To establish a position to work in the Safe Schools office—“Safe Schools Field Coordinator.”

This person will be utilized to assist with training school staffs, attend crisis team meetings, conduct site assessments and work with outside agencies on school safety projects. Along with the Director of Safe Schools the Field Coordinator will be a point of contact to all our schools with school safety concerns.
Recommendations

- To establish “Shared Communication Technologies” with other agencies such as Sheriff’s Office, EMS (BC Emergency Management Center), Mission Hospital, Woodfin Police Department, Weaverville Police Department, AB Tech Campus Police, NC Highway Patrol, local Fire Departments and Black Mountain Police Department.

This recommendation will allow direct communication with these agencies in the event of an emergency at one of our schools. This recommendation is in progress as many of these agencies are changing to a different type of radio communication system.
Recommendations

- To install cameras at all elementary schools, intermediate schools and add cameras at the middle and high schools.

This recommendation is designed to enhance interior and exterior security of our schools. Cameras have become a widely used tool by school administrators while conducting investigations that threaten school safety.
Recommendations

- To help facilitate an Annual Safe Schools Assessment Retreat.

This retreat should include school leadership, law enforcement, representatives from other agencies and the community college.

The retreat can serve as an annual training session on school safety. Moreover, each year it will bring key players together to have meaningful conversations on the topic of school safety in Buncombe County.
Recommendations

- Crisis Response Teams home visits aided by law enforcement.

The recommendation suggests that school based crisis teams make home visits in an effort to establish a relationship with students and parents that may be experiencing challenges in the school and in the community. The insight potential of such a visit can be invaluable.
Recommendations

- To install complete camera sets on all yellow buses (262) throughout the county.

This recommendation is designed to enhance security for all buses to reduce bullying and stop arm violations. Currently we have 2 digital systems and some VCR style cameras. We have one camera on all but 10 buses and 72 buses with old VCR units. Goal would be to completely outfit all buses with a digital system that has a 4 camera set on each bus.
Recommendations

- To install live GPS on all yellow buses (262).

This recommendation is designed to enhance cost saving, operational efficiency, and safety. Drivers will be able to sign in and out on the bus thus saving time. Administration can answer parent concerns on the spot while on the phone with less investigation time. This system would provide immediate feedback on bus location in the event of an accident, hostile actions, or tracking buses during a school evacuation.
Recommendations

- Implement volunteer transportation safety assistants program.

The recommendation would allow schools to have law enforcement periodically ride along on a bus route as a presence to support the driver and school on correct ridership behaviors and general safety. This would allow the schools to use approved school system and/or Sheriff’s Office volunteers. The frequency of use would be at the discretion of each school.
Recommendations

- Develop new safety policies and provide training for staff.

NC currently does not have a standoff distance law for parents or strangers approaching the bus. Some states have a 10 to 15 foot standoff distance policy. (Ref. Alabama Shooting)

Buncombe County Schools Transportation would develop this as a policy and implement through new driver training and summer in-service training. In-service would include actual scenario based training.
INCREASE LAW ENFORCEMENT PRESENCE AND ADDITIONAL SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS.
School Resource Officer Job Description

- Three roles define the functionality of SROs in the school:
  - Law enforcement officer;
  - Informal counselor;
  - Law related instructor.
- SROs must create and maintain a close relationship with principals.
- SROs must work closely with parents, students, and members of the community.
- All SRO’s work within our guiding principles of Service, Accountability, Integrity, Professionalism, and Dignity.
Recommendations

- Seven additional School Resource Officers
  - One for each of the six Elementary School districts.
  - Add School Resource Officer at Community High School.
  - Enhance response times/greater visibility in Elementary Schools.
  - Build positive relationships with students and community.
  - Will allow all Middle and High School SROs to remain on campuses.
Increase Security Guard Presence

- Add an additional unarmed security guard to each high school campus.
Strategies for Buncombe County Sheriff’s Office

- Increase officer involvement in elementary schools.
- Allow Sheriff’s Personnel to take their kids to school in county vehicles. This would increase visibility before and after school hours.
- Sheriff’s Elementary School Reading Program
  - Anti-bullying books
- Adopt-A-School Program
  - Members of other divisions within the Sheriff’s Office will adopt a school and periodically participate in school activities.
Technology Resources

Camera Access

- SRO Laptops
- Sheriff’s Response Team Command Post
- Sheriff’s Office Communication Center

Improved Communications

- Incident mapping system
- Mass texting

Equipment

- Equip every SRO with hand-held metal detectors
Training Recommendations for SROs

- Incorporate SRO specific training into the Sheriff’s Office Field Training Officer Program.
- All SROs certified in Critical Incident Training.
- Active shooter training to include school personnel.
- Utilize Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).
Priority 3

INCREASE FOCUS ON PREVENTATIVE MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES
• Increasing mental health needs are negatively impacting academic achievement and behavior in schools.

• In every mass shooting there were two keys to prevention:
  ○ The presence of a severe mental illness
  ○ An intense interpersonal conflict that the person could not resolve or tolerate
Recommendation: Implement a research-based anti-bullying curriculum in grades K-8

Bullying is a national and local issue that leads to social isolation and anger and is often a common precursor to school violence. Implementing a research-based program with measurable outcomes will reduce the incidents of bullying resulting in improved, safer school climates.
Recommendation: Enhance middle school mental health supports and alternatives

Buncombe County has no middle school alternative settings for students with mental health needs. With collaboration from community providers, an in-school alternative program would be developed to provide mental health support to students, teachers, and parents.
Middle School Alternative

- Collaborate with Western Highlands on service definition
- Collaborate with pilot school staff to define target population, services need, staff needed to implement, logistics, and support.
- Develop agreement with mental health providers
- Training and implementation
- Regular review of program and data outcomes

- Cost: Potentially no or very low cost for pilot
Recommendation: Enhance PBIS implementation and integration with Response to Instruction.

All Buncombe County Schools will implement Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports by 2015 with integration of Response to Instruction starting in 2013. District and school-based coaching is necessary to ensure fidelity and sustainability for maximum effectiveness.
Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports
Response to Instruction

- Investigate district coaching resources with existing personnel.
- Develop district RtI implementation plan that integrates with PBIS.
- Train internal school teams.
- Identify resources for RtI coordinator.
- Develop implementation schedule for RtI.
- Continue implementation schedule for PBIS.
Recommendation: Increase counselor and social worker positions and supports

School counselors and social workers provide mental health supports and increase the connectedness of children and families to school.

ASCA recommended counselor student ratio: 1:250
Current BCS counselor/student Ratio: 1:356
NASW recommended social worker/student ratio: 1:250
BCS current social worker/student ratio 1:1342

Access to mental health services for ALL children requires availability of school counselors and social workers. If students feel safe, establish meaningful relationships, and have support to resolve conflicts.
Recommendation: Implement behavior outreach to support students with mental health needs

- Investigate potential mental health funding to support cost sharing of positions.
- Develop specific job description, training needs, supervision, etc.
- Investigate funding sources, including grants, for non-certified full or part-time positions.
- Provide training and supports.
Recommendation: Implement research-based suicide prevention/intervention strategies

Numerous students demonstrate self-injurious behavior, suicidal thoughts and attempts due to social demands, unresolved conflict, and family distress. With this initiative school staff would build awareness and proven strategies for preventing and intervening to protect student mental and physical safety.
Suicide Prevention

- Develop district implementation plan.
- Utilize DPI suicide prevention model to train internal trainers in state model.
- Provide training to all counselors/social workers.
- Implement and evaluate.
Recommendation: Provide trauma specific training to Crisis Recovery Teams

Crisis Recovery Teams provide response when students experience death, loss, or other trauma.

Many safety and discipline issues are precipitated by early or current trauma experiences.

Creating trauma-informed practices in schools provides protective factors to mitigate the impact of student’s trauma experiences. Establishing internal trainers in trauma-informed practice utilized by other community agencies allows BCS to support and sustain these practices.
PRIORITY 4

COLLABORATION: SYNERGY AND SAVINGS
A. Sharing information across agencies allows for ... 

- More efficient work for common goals/outcomes for both agencies and clients/stakeholders.
- Minimizes misunderstandings, delays in action, and confusion.
- Innovative teaming practices that build strong inter/intra agency relationships.
The Rationale of Collaboration:

B. Sharing personnel across agencies promotes...

- Stronger programs, initiatives, outcomes.
- Lower personnel costs.
- Ability to recruit part-time experienced professionals who function among agencies.
- Positive relationships through the understanding of how various agencies work.
C. Collaboration makes synergy possible...

- The most knowledgeable persons work together to solve problems efficiently.
- Reduces duplicated efforts by multiple agencies.
- Allows for better use of funding when agencies share systems, equipment, training, and other resources.
Collaboration Recommendations

- Develop a county-wide Threat / Risk Assessment Team with participation from each agency.
- Develop a cross-agency team between Dept. of Health and Human Services and the Sheriff’s Office to review abuse/neglect cases.
- Develop a Safe Schools Collaborative- Meets monthly to address issues of mutual interest and plan a yearly Safe Schools Community Forum/Conference.
Recommendations

- Continued dialogue between Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and BC Schools to streamline strategies for seamless communication, shared clients, and joint projects.
- Establish regional collaborative efforts.
- Establish the practice of interviewing a “Safe Schools Stakeholder” at each monthly Safe Schools Collaborative meeting.
There are three reasons why safe schools and security plans fail:

“It will never happen here.”
“We can’t afford it.”
“We just don’t have time to do all that.”

Jack Martin, President of The Martin Group and retired Chief of School Police, Indianapolis Public Schools