



**Recommendations of the  
Illinois Terrorism Task Force  
School Safety Working Group**

**\*Updated March 2020**

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August 7, 2019

The Honorable JB Pritzker  
Governor  
State of Illinois

Dear Governor Pritzker,

As Homeland Security Advisor, school safety is one of my top priorities. It is my privilege to present you with the updated school safety recommendations from the School Safety Working Group (SSWG) of the Illinois Terrorism Task Force (ITTF). This group was formed by the ITTF in the days following the school shootings in Parkland, Florida, in February of 2018 and has continued to refine and add to the initial recommendations.

The School Safety Working Group includes state and local law enforcement professionals, representatives from statewide education associations, including the Illinois Education Association, the fire service, emergency management and mental health professionals. The current membership list is included in the back of this document. Thanks to your leadership and the leadership of the public safety and education leaders in your administration, many of these recommendations are now being implemented.

Providing a safe and healthy climate for learning is the core mission for the School Safety Working Group. The SSWG chose to focus on identifying issues and coming up with practical recommendations ranging from the hardening of facilities to the hiring of school resource officers and mental health professionals to the establishment of Behavioral Threat Assessment and Intervention teams at the local school district level. There is no single solution to school safety, but we believe that these recommendations – along with a strong commitment to providing adequate mental health resources in our schools – can go a long way toward creating and preserving a safe and healthy learning environment for our students, teachers and staff.

Respectfully,



Alicia Tate-Nadeau  
Homeland Security Advisor  
Acting Director, Illinois Emergency Management Agency

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# ITTF School Safety Working Group Recommendations

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# ITTF SCHOOL SAFETY WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

## BEHAVIORAL THREAT ASSESSMENT

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### **Recommendation #1 – Behavioral Threat Assessment Teams**

That all school districts consider as a best practice the formation of Behavioral Threat Assessment Teams that include mental health professionals, law enforcement professionals and other disciplines as necessary that have been trained in behavioral threat assessment (free statewide training is available through the Illinois School and Campus Safety Program administered by Western Illinois University).

Also, the formation of regional Behavioral Threat Assessment Teams to serve as resources for schools that do not have their own teams. The regional teams would include mental health professionals, law enforcement professionals and other disciplines as necessary that have been trained in behavioral threat assessment.

The purpose of these teams would be to provide assistance to schools that do not have complete resources for a Behavioral Threat Assessment Team of its own. The teams would respond only at the request of the local school district.

The goal of the behavioral threat assessment process would be to work with local school officials to help identify behaviors, intervene and provide help to students before they turn to violence. In situations where a threat of violence has been made or is imminent, school officials should immediately contact local law enforcement for assistance in determining if the threat is credible and/or police intervention.

## **UPDATE March 2020**

Changed name to Behavioral Threat Assessment and Intervention Teams to reflect not only the objective of identifying students (or staff) who have exhibited behaviors indicative of potential problems, but also the primary goal of getting help for those who might need some form of mental health assistance.

HB 1561 was signed into law in August 2019 and is Public Act 101-0455. It requires all K-12 public schools to form Behavioral Threat Assessment and Intervention Teams. Through Western Illinois University, the State of Illinois is providing behavioral threat assessment training.

The formation of six regional Behavioral Threat Assessment and Intervention Teams using the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools (IARSS) statewide map plus a team for Cook County. These teams would, at a minimum, include mental health professionals, a representative from the Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System (ILEAS), a safety education officer from Illinois State Police and a representative from a Regional Office of Education. All members of regional teams must complete the training courses offered by the School Campus Safety Office at Western Illinois University.

*\*All sharing of information must be done in accordance with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)/Illinois School Student Records Act (ISSRA).*

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## **Recommendation #2 – Behavioral Threat Assessment School Policy**

As a best practice, have schools incorporate information into their student handbook explaining that students and parents are urged to participate in behavioral threat assessment and intervention programs if the Behavioral Threat Assessment Team believes that intervention is necessary to prevent a student from harming themselves or others. Below is sample policy language some school districts are having parents and students sign:

*The (INSERT NAME OF DISTRICT) School District is committed to developing and maintaining safe and secure working environments for all students and staff. A proactive approach to high risk and threat-related behavior of students is critical for the provision of safe and secure learning, teaching and working environments. It is important for all parties to engage in the School Behavioral Threat Assessment process. However, if for some reason there is a reluctance to participate in the process by the threat maker(s) or parent/guardian(s), the threat assessment process will continue in order to ensure a safe and caring learning environment for all.*

### Recommendation #3 – Information Sharing Between Schools and Law Enforcement

As a best practice, school districts and local law enforcement agencies are encouraged to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other agreement to share pertinent information to ensure law enforcement is aware of “clear and present danger” threats and school officials are aware of law enforcement information that is necessary to protect the health and safety of the student in question or other individuals.

“Clear and present danger” is defined, in part, in (430 ILCS 65/Section 1.1) Firearm Owners Identification Card Act as a person who *“demonstrates threatening physical or verbal behavior, such as violent, suicidal, or assaultive threats, actions, or other behavior, as determined by a physician, clinical psychologist, qualified examiner, school administrator, or law enforcement official.”*

*\*All sharing of information must be done in accordance with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)/Illinois School Student Records Act (ISSRA).*

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### Recommendation #4 – Information Sharing Between Schools

#### Part A

Research<sup>1</sup> indicates a transition to a new school may create anxiety among students and pose greater school safety risks. Illinois school code requires that a school district forward a transferring student’s school records to the transferee school district (105 ILCS 5/2-3.13a(a)) and utilize the ISBE Student Transfer Form\*. Whereas this form only states whether the student’s medical records are up-to-date and whether or not the student is “in good standing,” certain information about the student may be missing that would provide opportunities to assist in the adjustment period and promote student success.

As a best practice, the receiving school district is encouraged to, upon receiving notice of an incoming student enrolled in its district, make contact with the transferring district to:

1. Ensure the transferring district provided all student record documents to the receiving district, consistent with the Illinois School Student Records Act (ISSRA) and its implementing regulations. This includes student discipline records.
2. Inquire about any potential behavioral threat concerns about the student for which the receiving district may be able to proactively provide support. These concerns may include direct knowledge of the transferring student in regards to social and emotional issues that rose to the level of engagement of an official screener or risk assessment performed by the district. Depending on the specific situation, legal limitations (i.e., FERPA) may exist on what student information is permissible to share.

Note: *All districts are mandated to report to Illinois State Police any situation in which a “clear and present danger” to self and others is suspected. For immediate police action, school administrators should contact local law enforcement or call 911.*

\*ISBE Student Transfer Form may be found at [https://www.isbe.net/documents/33-78\\_student\\_transfer.pdf](https://www.isbe.net/documents/33-78_student_transfer.pdf)



<sup>1</sup> Humphrey, N. & Ainscow, M. (2006). *Eur J Psychol Educ* 21, 319. doi:10.1007/BF03173419

## Part B

Currently all school districts are mandated to report to Illinois State Police any situation in which a clear and present danger to self and/or others is suspected. It is recommended that a statutory amendment be made to the *Firearm Concealed Carry Act*, specifically, the sections referred to as the School Administrator Reporting of Mental Health Clear and Present Danger Determinations Law (430 ILCS 66/100-110), to also require that this information be shared with transferee school districts. Sharing of student records between districts is allowed under ISSRA (Illinois Student School Records Act) 105 ILCS 10/6(a)(6) if an exception is "specifically required by State or federal law."

Below is the language from 430 ILCS 66/100-110 in its proposed, revised form (red, underlined italics indicate added language).

(430 ILCS 66/105)

Sec. 105. Duty of school administrator. It is the duty of the principal of a public elementary or secondary school, or his or her designee, and the chief administrative officer of a private elementary or secondary school or a public or private community college, college, or university, or his or her designee, to report to the Department of State Police when a student is determined to pose a clear and present danger to himself, herself, or to others, within 24 hours of the determination as provided in Section 6-103.3 of the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Code. *If applicable, the school administrator shall also report such a concern to a transferee school district if the student has been placed or is in process of being placed outside the district during the time the concern is raised.* "Clear and present danger" has the meaning as provided in paragraph (2) of the definition of "clear and present danger" in Section 1.1 of the Firearm Owners Identification Card Act. (Source: P.A. 98-63, eff. 7-9-13.)

### **UPDATE October 2018**

Add language to the sheet of "good standing" for students transferring schools to reflect pending or previous (within the past three years) suspensions or expulsions and any successful interventions that might need to be continued at the new school.

*\*All sharing of information must be done in accordance with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)/Illinois School Student Records Act (ISSRA).*

## **Recommendation #5 – Student Reporting of Threats**

Recognizing that in almost every case involving a mass school shooting there was someone, usually a fellow student, who had some advance warning or reason to believe that violence was a possibility, a program be developed to encourage students to report information regarding potential threats.

In order to effectively market the program to teenagers, create a focus group or groups of Illinois high school students to determine a) why they are reluctant to inform school officials or law enforcement about possible threats, b) what could be done to encourage student participation, and c) the most effective way(s) for students to be able to report threats.

Over the past six years, the Chicago Public School (CPS) system has moved toward a more restorative approach with students. CPS has a program in which they attempt to provide every student with a trusted adult, someone the student can go to with concerns without fear of retaliation. The CPS Office of School Safety and Security (OSSS) has moved toward a proactive mindset where security staff are trained to no longer just focus on enforcement, but rather shift to support students and identify situations before they turn into serious incidents.

By using school-wide strategies such as restorative practices, de-escalation and relationship building, CPS has seen a 76 percent reduction in misconducts that resulted in out-of-school suspensions and a 50 percent reduction in misconducts that resulted in the school having to contact Chicago Police.

## Recommendation #6 – Student School Safety Tip Line

Research a centralized digital anonymous tip line for school threats. A state-level digital line would be more cost effective than each school district or county setting up its own line and also would be more efficient in terms of the capabilities to monitor the tips. Research user-friendly methods of reporting tips and the most efficient ways to monitor the tips and disseminate information to local law enforcement.

**UPDATE March 2020**

### Safe2Help Illinois

**Timeline:** A pilot program involving approximately 20 school districts from around the state will be implemented in April 2020. The full rollout of the initiative will occur at the start of the new school year in August 2020.

**Funding:** Safe2Help Illinois will be funded by a combination of federal grant dollars and state funding. Governor Pritzker in his Budget Address of February 19, 2020, said, "...I have proposed state funding to supplement the federal grants and develop curriculum to change the culture of stigma and silence around mental health. Students, parents, teachers, friends, will be able to call in with real concerns about a child's wellbeing — possibly even about their survival. And a professional can check in on them. Here in Illinois, our tip line will be called Safe2Help Illinois, a confidential reporting program intended to be available via text, phone call, app, and social media platforms."

The behind-the-scenes home for the program will be State Police, but the public face of the program when it comes to education, training and marketing is ISBE.

**Legislation:** Legislation to establish Safe2Help Illinois as a confidential program has been filed. Senator Elgie Sims is the sponsor of Senate Bill 3683, and Representative Emanuel Chris Welch is the sponsor of House Bill 5278.

**Personnel:** Illinois State Police has hired four specially trained school safety analysts to run a 24 x 7 help line in the Statewide Terrorism and Intelligence Center. ISP is in the process of hiring additional analysts.

**Software:** As of February 2020, the state was in the final stages of procuring software to handle the tips received. Once the tip is vetted, the system will send the information back to local school officials and local law enforcement. The job of the Safe2Help analysts then becomes following up with local officials to make certain the tip is being acted upon and to see if local officials need any assistance from the state.

**Training/Education:** The training and education portion of the program is critical to the program's long-term success. Training for elementary school students will focus on things like having a trusted adult, a "Be Kind" campaign to combat bullying, and the difference between "tattling" and "telling." In middle school and junior high, suicide prevention and internet safety will be added to the curriculum. In high school, training will focus on Safe2Help and why it is so important for students to step forward to get help for fellow students who may be talking or posting about suicide, bullying or school attacks.

**Marketing:** The marketing will focus mainly on students. We plan to use social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and others to reach out to students with messages attempting to get them to come forward with information to help protect their fellow students – and to get help for students who may be talking or posting about harming themselves or others.

## HARDENING OF FACILITIES

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### Recommendation #7 – Priority List for Hardening of School Facilities

#### TARGET HARDENING RECOMMENDATIONS

The School Safety Working Group recommends the list below as options for consideration when hardening school facilities. The list is organized in layers, beginning with the more basic measures. It is generally recommended to implement the lower layer measures before the upper layers are implemented. However, each facility will have different circumstances, and decisions should ultimately be based on judgment and an effective cost/benefit analysis. All recommendations marked with an (\*) are policy and/or procedural. The policy/procedural recommendations are generally low to no cost to implement and have a strong impact on overall safety and security. In developing a physical security plan, designing redundancy and overlapping features is a recommended best practice.

#### First Layer:

**All exterior doors** – effective, properly functioning locks; no propping policy\*, no tailgating policy\*, door assignment policy\*, service areas (i.e. docks, kitchens, etc.

**All exterior windows** – intact glazing and frame, functioning locks, window lock policy\*

**Main door** – video/audio intercom, remote buzzer door strike

**Signage** – all exterior doors (inside and out) and windows identified with room number. Other signage: no trespassing, all visitors to main entrance, this area under surveillance, etc.

**Enhance natural surveillance** – clear vegetation and obstructions; identify nuisance areas; identify hostile surveillance areas, washrooms, parking lots; reporting suspicious indications policy\*; adjust programming\*; etc.

**Visitor control** – formal visitor policy\*, IDs and proper ID (all adults) policy\*, proper challenge policy\*, empower employees to make emergency notifications

**Cell phone policy\*** – students and staff

**Parking control** – policy\* for staff, visitors and parent drop off/pickup

#### Second Layer:

**Secure vestibule** – harden the vestibule area, as well as the approach to the vestibule, including the doors and glazing

**Interior door locks** – uniform, interior door locking system that is compliant with applicable codes, install peephole viewers, interior door lock policy\*

**Public address system** – effective, full coverage public address system

**Two-way radios** – all staff, including recess monitors and PE teachers. Consider public safety access to the system

**Text/SMS based notifications** – Reverse 911, text message group, etc.

### Third Layer

**Exterior access control** – fencing, gates, etc. that secure the perimeter and channel visitors

**Enhanced public address** – two-way intercom stations in each classroom, as well as strategic locations throughout the building interior and appropriate exterior (blue light). For multi-facility locations, an enterprise PA system (IP or other). Ability to alert active threat.

**Expanded two-way radio capacity** – expanded issuance, Bi-Directional Amplification (BDA) system, repeater system, ability to communicate with first responders, etc.

**CCTV** – strategic camera placement (based on professional guidance), IP camera system, capability of first responders to remotely access system, monitoring policy\*, retention policy\*

**Lighting** – effective lighting at entrances, nuisance areas, and gathering points. LED-based fixtures provide best light and cost savings.

### Fourth Layer

**Blast/impact resistant material** – glazing film, door frames, etc.

**Security personnel** – school resource officer (SRO), security officer, etc.

**Access control system** – Door control system with integrated intrusion detection, door status notification, etc. Convergence with CCTV and other systems

### Fifth Layer

**Magnetometer Screening** – establish an effective metal detector screening program\* and implement screening.

**Note:** The options selected and implemented should reflect the specific security profile needs of the facility. Generally, a lower grade level school facility should concentrate on hardening the exterior access to prevent active threat intruders from entering. Higher grade level school facilities should concentrate on dealing with internal threats (e.g., a student who brings a gun into the school). In these cases, having active intervention options, such as a school resource officer, can be more effective.

#### **UPDATE October 2018**

No change to the recommendation, but much discussion among the School Safety Working Group members regarding the viability of blue pull stations for situations calling for law enforcement response as well as flashing red/blue lights in areas of schools where alarms may not be heard.

### **Recommendation #8 – Regional Site Assessment Teams**

As a best practice, local law enforcement, fire service and emergency management agencies collaborate to provide site security assessment teams to serve as resources for their local schools. Also, that the Illinois School and Campus Safety Program at Western Illinois University develop a site assessment training program for local first responders and school officials.

The ITTF/State of Illinois should also create regional school security site assessment teams composed of law enforcement, fire service, and emergency management professionals to be a resource for schools that lack the resources to complete their own site security assessments. The site assessment team members would be required to complete the site assessment training program.

#### **UPDATE March 2020**

A pilot was conducted in September 2019 with Williamson and Johnson counties in Southern Illinois to introduce a new site assessment training program through Western Illinois University. The site assessment training program is scheduled to be rolled out statewide in spring 2020.

### **Recommendation #9 – Amending School Facilities Sales Tax Law to Expand Use**

That the County School Facility Sales Tax law be amended to allow use of the funds for physical security enhancements and to pay for School Resource Officers and/or School Security Officers if the school boards in the county choose to include that use in a referendum. Also, for those 49 counties that already have the school facilities sales tax, allow for an expanded use referendum if the school boards choose to put that question before voters.

The working group also recommends that the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Regional Offices of Education (ROEs) provide a list to school officials of approved security measures for which health/life safety tax levy funds can be used.

#### **UPDATE March 2020**

HB 1561 was signed into law in August 2019 and is Public Act 101-0455. It includes the ability to use funds from the County School Facilities Sales Tax (51 Illinois counties have this tax) and/or Health Life Safety Tax Levy (applies to all school districts) for schools to hire school resource officers and/or mental health professionals.

During the course of the Working Group's discussions, it became apparent that the presence of mental health professionals in schools is critically important. The revised recommendation would allow school districts to use the funds to hire school resource officers and/or mental health professionals.



## RESPONSE PROTOCOLS IN SCHOOLS

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### **Recommendation #10 – Core Principles of Quality Active Violence Response Program**

As a best practice, the Working Group recommends that schools adopt and implement a Quality Active Violence Response Program that incorporates, at a minimum, the following concepts:

- ❖ **Development of high quality emergency plans**
  - Resources include U.S. Department of Education Guidelines and county, city or state emergency management agencies.
  - Plans should be developed collaboratively with school officials, local law enforcement, fire service, emergency management and other disciplines as necessary.
- ❖ **Survival mindset / mental preparation**
- ❖ **Recognizing student potential violence behavioral cues / reporting mechanisms**
  - The Illinois Campus Safety Program at Western Illinois University offers several training programs, including programs regarding Behavioral Threat Assessment.
- ❖ **Common characteristics of an active violence situation**
- ❖ **Enhanced Run/Hide/Fight option-based response model**
  - Run/Hide/Fight is not a linear list of options. Options must continually be reassessed during an active shooter situation.
  - Teachers and staff need to be given skills training regarding the Run option, the Hide option and the Fight option and then be empowered to make the best decision they can to protect their students at any given moment during an active shooter situation.
- ❖ **Legal environment overview**
  - Statutory requirements such as the state’s requirement for schools to conduct four emergency drills per year, including an active shooter drill.
  - The right to defend oneself or others
  - Tort Immunity Act
- ❖ **Policy considerations**
- ❖ **Trauma management concepts**
- ❖ **Conduct of scenario-based practice drills**

It is recommended that all school staff members participate in the training program at least once per academic year and that all students receive, at a minimum, skills training in specific response options (e.g., Run/Hide/Fight). Generally, initial training should be held at the earliest possible point in the academic year.

### **Recommendation #11 – Active Shooter Drills in Schools**

The School Safety Working Group endorses Senate Bill 3593, proposed legislation requiring teacher and student participation in an active shooter drill with local law enforcement within the first 90 days of the beginning of a new school year. As a best practice, the working group also recommends that schools consider holding more than one active shooter drill per year involving participation by law enforcement, teachers and students.

#### **UPDATE March 2020**

Senate Bill 2350 was signed into law, meaning that all schools in Illinois will have to conduct an active shooter drill – with students present – within the first 90 days of each new school year. The law includes the ability for school administrators and/or counselors to get waivers for those students they believe would be traumatized by participation. The law does not prescribe the nature of student involvement, and the Working Group recommended that such involvement be age appropriate.

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### **Recommendation #12 – Fire Alarm Protocols**

Direct the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM), in collaboration with *local* fire service, law enforcement, and school officials (including the applicable Regional Office of Education (ROE) and Intermediate Service Center (ISC)) to review current emergency egress protocols in each school’s emergency and crisis response plan as required by Section 25 of the Illinois School Safety Drill Act (105 ILCS 128/25) and the Joint Rules of the Office of the State Fire Marshal and the Illinois State Board of Education: School Emergency and Crisis Response Plans (29 Ill. Code 1500). Adopt the opinions and recommendations expressed by the OSFM in its March 14, 2018, email memorandum to the Illinois fire service captioned “Life Safety and Security Options Related to Fire Alarm Activation in Illinois Public and Private Schools” which, subject to the presence of an approved fire sprinkler system, includes the opinion that a fire alarm three minute evacuation delay is sufficient to allow for: 1) the investigation of possible smoke/fire within a school; 2) an investigation to determine an acceptable means of egress; and 3) identification of suspicious subjects or signs of targeted violence.

Text of OSFM e-mail memorandum:

*From: Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM)*

*Date: March 14, 2018*

*Subject: **Life Safety and Security Options Related to Fire Alarm Activation in Illinois Public and Private Schools***

*Use of building fire protection and fire safety systems as an accessory to targeted violence events, whether it be in a school or other occupancy, has previously been identified as an issue that schools and first responders in Illinois need to address. In some hostile or active shooter events activation of*

*the building's fire alarm system has been used as a means to move occupants into the corridor or an interior open area or out of the building. Even with this history OSFM discourages any deactivation, tampering, or modification of fire alarm systems and associated supervised life-safety and egress systems, except as permitted by the codes used by public and private schools in Illinois. Further we recommend strict compliance with any required references to NFPA 72, National Fire Alarm Code. OSFM strongly recommends that law enforcement be dispatched along with fire department to fire alarms or reports of fire at public and private schools.*

*The purpose of this memorandum is to provide uniform guidance for occupants within a school building. Many tools are available to schools to develop a cooperative relationship between life safety and security in a school building. The following topics discuss options available to school facilities.*

### **Annual Required Crisis Planning Pursuant to 105 ILCS 128/25**

*Because the response time and capabilities of local first responders can vary greatly, approval for delayed evacuation or other approaches to intruder security should be made on a case-by-case basis dependent upon the specific fire protection and construction features of local school buildings. For this reason, the OSFM strongly encourages school districts, as part of the required annual Crisis Planning process, to work with their local first responders in developing response to activated fire alarm systems. Additionally, there needs to be cross-training and cooperation between law enforcement, EMS, fire department personnel, and school staff (including substitute teachers). It is also recommended that the assigned Regional Office of Education (ROE) or Intermediate Service Center (ISC) approve any plans.*

### **Fire Drills**

*Fire drills should be conducted as recommended by the School Safety Drill Act with frequency thresholds maintained. Special accommodations may be allowed where concerns exist for malicious activation of fire alarms. We recommend scheduling fire drills and sharing the schedule in advance with staff and authorized persons. Employing sufficient personnel to monitor the drill, similarly to other outdoor events as part of normal school operation, is also recommended.*

### **Delayed Evacuation**

*In coordination with local first responders and the ROE or ISC, and as a part of the required annual Crisis Planning, school districts may choose to use a delayed egress approach taking into consideration the guidelines listed below:*

- 1. Fire alarm will sound as normal.*
- 2. Evacuation is delayed up to an amount agreed upon by the stakeholders. OSFM feels a three-minute delay is sufficient to allow for investigation for smoke and/or fire as well investigation of means of egress on the interior and exterior for signs of suspicious subjects or signs of targeted violence.*
- 3. School staff should be assigned and well-trained in proper investigative processes, whether searching for smoke or fire, or suspicious circumstances (persons, objects, or packages). Staff can be assigned to check the fire alarm control panel or annunciator panel to determine location of activated device and radio to a custodian or another staff member to investigate, while other staff members or school security can investigate for suspicious circumstances.*

4. *Some form of communication with the rest of the school population should be available to initiate evacuation or announce the all-clear and no evacuation is required. This system must be heard throughout the school building. Therefore, the school should have a functional communications system including radios and PA systems.*
5. *Teachers and students remain in their classrooms until instructed otherwise, using locking hardware that is code compliant, see accompanying document related to locking here:  
<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/sfm/SFMDocuments/Documents/SecurityLockingSystems.pdf>*
6. *A direct connect to the local fire department and law enforcement should be provided so at minimum, during the delayed investigation time, fire and law enforcement are responding to the school building.*
7. *If it is determined that a security risk exists, the school should follow the protocol it has developed in its Crisis Planning document.*

### **Options for Eliminating Pull Stations in School Buildings**

*The International Fire Code (2015), Section 907.2.3 for public schools and NFPA 101, Life Safety Code (2000), Section 15.3.4.2.3 for private schools permit the removal of pull stations (except for one pull station at a central location) from educational occupancies under certain circumstances. As long as compliance with Section 907.2.3 (public schools) and Section 15.3.4.2.3 (private schools) is provided, it may be beneficial to remove pull stations from the school building. It should be noted, they must be removed and not just disconnected.*

#### **UPDATE October 2018**

The Working Group's recommendation is that local school officials work closely with local fire and police to determine the most effective protocols. If the protocols change to allow for up to a three-minute delay for situational awareness, teachers and staff must be trained in those responsibilities. The Working Group also recommended that if a change is made to the fire alarm protocols, school officials should consider making one of the three state-mandated fire drills a hybrid fire/intruder scenario to practice and test the new protocols.

### **Recommendation #13 – Trauma Management Training for Schools**

As a best practice, the Working Group recommends that schools adopt and implement a trauma management program with training for school officials, staff, teachers and students (where appropriate). This training may consist of, at a minimum, basic programs, such as the “Stop the Bleed” program (<https://www.bleedingcontrol.org/>) to control massive hemorrhage, and may include more advanced training such as American Red Cross/American Heart association CPR/AED/First Aid, Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) or Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) certification, where resources permit.

Schools should consult with, and take advantage of, free or low-cost training programs offered through local hospitals, fire protection districts, and other organizations, such as the Illinois Medical Emergency Response Team (IMERT).

#### **UPDATE March 2020**

Utilizing the Regional Offices of Education and the Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System, the State of Illinois has distributed more than 7,000 bleeding control kits to public and private K-12 schools in the state. A 12-minute training video on Stop the Bleed is online as well. Five additional kits per attendance center are being distributed when at least five people in those buildings have completed the 90-minute American College of Surgeons’ hands-on training.

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#### **ADDED OCTOBER 2018**

### **Recommendation #14 – School Safety Information Sharing Program**

That all school administrators, individuals in charge of making safety decisions for schools and campuses, and sworn police officers involved in school and campus safety participate in the Statewide Terrorism and Intelligence Center’s School Safety Information Sharing Program. The program identifies the information needs of school and campus safety officials and ensures timely and wide dissemination of actionable intelligence. The program’s goal is to facilitate information sharing from local, state and federal agencies with every school and campus in the state of Illinois. Individuals should email the STIC School Safety Information Sharing Program at [isp.schoolsafety@illinois.gov](mailto:isp.schoolsafety@illinois.gov) for information on joining.

**ADDED October 2019**

**Recommendation #15 – Handle With Care Initiative**

That school districts and local law enforcement agencies enter into an information sharing agreement whereby law enforcement officers responding to any incident where children are present would gather the names, grades and schools that the children attend. School officials then would receive that information via phone call, email or text that lists only the children's names, grades, schools and the message "Handle With Care." The program costs nothing to implement and does not violate any privacy laws according to Attorneys General in various states that have implemented the program. The goal of the program is simply to make school administrators, teachers, staff, counselors and others aware that something possibly traumatic has occurred recently in that child's life so he or she can be handled with care and given appropriate help if needed. The following information is from the West Virginia Handle With Care website (<http://www.handlewithcarewv.org/handle-with-care.php>) :

*A recent national survey of the incidence and prevalence of children's exposure to violence and trauma revealed that 60% of American children have been exposed to violence, crime or abuse. Forty percent were direct victims of two or more violent acts. Prolonged exposure to violence and trauma can seriously undermine children's ability to focus, behave appropriately, and learn. It often leads to school failure, truancy, suspension or expulsion, dropping out, or involvement in the juvenile justice system. Model Handle With Care ("HWC") programs promote safe and supportive homes, schools and communities that protect children, and help traumatized children heal and thrive. HWC promotes school-community partnerships aimed at ensuring that children who are exposed to trauma in their home, school or community receive appropriate interventions to help them achieve academically at their highest levels despite whatever traumatic circumstances they may have endured. The ultimate goal of HWC is to help students to succeed in school. Regardless of the source of trauma, the common thread for effective intervention is the school or child care agency. Research now shows that trauma can undermine children's ability to learn, form relationships, and function appropriately in the classroom. HWC programs support children exposed to trauma and violence through improved communication and collaboration between law enforcement, schools/child care agencies and mental health providers, and connects families, schools and communities to mental health services.*

**LAW ENFORCEMENT:**

*"Handle With Care" provides the school or child care agency with a "heads up" when a child has been identified at the scene of a traumatic event. It could be a meth lab explosion, a domestic violence situation, a shooting in the neighborhood, witnessing a malicious wounding, a drug raid at the home, etc. Police are trained to identify children at the scene, find out where they go to school or daycare and send the school/agency a confidential email or fax that simply says . . . "Handle Johnny with care." That's it. No other details.*

*In addition to providing notice, officers also build positive relationships with students by interacting on a regular basis. They visit classrooms, stop by for lunch, and simply chat with students to help promote positive relationships and perceptions of officers.*

## **SCHOOLS:**

*Teachers have been trained on the impact of trauma on learning and are incorporating many interventions to mitigate the negative impact of trauma for identified students, including: sending students to the clinic to rest (when a HWC has been received and the child is having trouble staying awake or focusing); re-teaching lessons; postponing testing; small group counseling by school counselors; and referrals to counseling, social service or advocacy programs. The school has also implemented many school-wide interventions to help create a trauma sensitive school (Greeters; pairing students with an adult mentor in the school; utilization of a therapy dog; and "thumbs up/thumbs down" to indicate if a student is having a good day or a bad day).*

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**ADDED February 2020**

### **Recommendation #16 – Common Terminology for School Emergencies**

A common and consistent lexicon of terminologies should be used statewide by educational institutions and emergency service providers who respond to incidents involving them; those terminologies should be in plain language, without the use of acronyms or specialized words and phrases that are not widely understood by the general public.

## NEW ITEMS UNDER DISCUSSION

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- **Extracurricular Events:** The Fire Code calls for a “crowd manager” for every 250 attendees at events that exceed 1,000. This guideline does not currently apply to Illinois public school events. However, the School Safety Working Group may wish to make this a recommendation for school officials.
- **School Bus Safety:** We are reviewing the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and other group’s recommendations with the goal of potentially adding training for school bus drivers in cooperation with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Office of the Secretary of State.
- **Establishing a one-stop online repository of best practices and information**



## School Safety Working Group Members

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Mike Chamness – Chair, Illinois Terrorism Task Force

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Dr. Seth Chapman – Assistant Superintendent, St. Charles School District

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John Mack – Illinois State Police

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Chief Matt Perez, Illinois State Fire Marshal, Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal

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