Rule 10 External Safety Audit Report

School District: Randolph Public Schools  
Date: February 23, 2018  
Safety audit conducted by: Ken Navratil

I met with the Randolph school administration and all members of Randolph’s Safety and Security Committee on Friday, February 23, 2018 to review the Randolph School District’s Safety and Security Plan. I was very impressed that the entire safety and security committee met with me. Several members of this committee had recently attended a Nebraska Department of Education presentation on “Threat Assessment Teams” that was helpful to our discussion. It is obvious that the Randolph Public School District wants to have an effective security plan for their students and staff.

The Nebraska Department of Education is requesting all public schools in Nebraska to write their safety and security plans following the federal recommendations in the ‘Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans.’ These recommendations are found at http://rems.ed.gov under ‘Emergency Operation Plans (EOP) for K-12 schools.

Supporting information to help write the safety and security plan can be found at the Nebraska Department of Education website www.education.ne.gov/safety. Resources include:

- Nebraska Safety and Security Standards
- Nebraska Safety and Security Standards Technical Assistance Guide
- Practical Information on Crisis Planning

One of the first steps in safety planning that the Nebraska Department of Education recommends is to adopt the Standard Response Protocol (SRP) found at http://iloveyouguys.org. This protocol establishes a common vocabulary for students and school personnel. Terms such as “Lockout,” “Lockdown,” “Shelter,” and “Evacuation” have specific meaning and are used frequently in conducting drills. It will be important for all staff and students to be familiar with this protocol and it will be important to drill and practice often.

The next step is to review the membership on the safety and security committee. This committee should be separate from the Labor committee, Crisis Team, and Threat Assessment Team. The safety and security committee should include representatives of the local police department, local fire department, and local rescue unit. Parents and students should also be included. The safety and security committee is required to meet at least once a year; however, they should plan to meet multiple times throughout the school year.

When creating a safety and security committee, the school district may want to consider including a disability specialist, who can provide guidance on how to meet students’ physical
and emotional needs. The “Individuals with Disabilities in Emergency Preparedness” legislation requires public entities to include people with disabilities in their emergency preparedness efforts. Emergency plans should also include provisions for students with limited English proficiency.

(Teachers should be encouraged to discuss emergency procedures with parents as part of an I.E.P. meeting or other review to ensure parental input. Invite local responders to establish a relationship with individual students with disabilities and their teachers. Ask them to conduct special sessions explaining how to support students and staff members with disabilities during an emergency.)

It is advantageous to have members of the custodial and maintenance staff on your safety and security committee. In many cases, members of the maintenance and custodial teams become particularly essential personnel during an emergency. Knowledge of mechanical and HVAC systems, alarms and access systems, as well as familiarity with the building layout and acquiring needed equipment or supplies can be critical. Another consideration for membership on the safety and security committee is a member of the Information- Technology staff. An IT member is often essential to effective communications and accessing records during an emergency. At a minimum, IT staff should remain on-call in any emergency as needs dictate.

As you re-write the Randolph School District’s Safety and Security Plan, you should include items such as:

- A list of the Safety and Security Committee members and their contact information
- A list of Emergency Responders and their contact information
- A list of community resources and contact information
- A map of the school building(s) -- building floor plan
- A list of identified hazards and developed safety plans for each hazard -- community involvement in the planning.

Some of the common hazards identified by other school districts that you may want to include in your plan are:

- Lockout Procedures
- Lockdown Procedures
- Fire Emergency
- Severe Weather -- Tornado
- Bomb Threat Procedures
- Gas Leak Procedures
- Chemical Spill/Toxic Fumes Procedures – shelter inside the school building
- Chemical Spill/Toxic Fumes Procedures – evacuate to designated area(s)
- Evacuation Plans – multiple sites
- Reunification Plan(s) from multiple sites
- Other hazards specific to your school district
In your situation, the elementary building is separate from the junior-senior high school (approximately six blocks) and the Industrial Arts building is separate from the junior-senior high school building (across the street). You will have to consider separate safety and security plans for each building. Your safety plans should also include plans for physical education classes when they are outside, marching band practice at the practice football field, and other similar situations.

One of the first things a safety and security committee should do is discuss and identify the potential hazards in their school district and prioritize the dangers from each. The committee should also identify the resources within the school district that would be an aid in each emergency. When each hazard has been identified, a safety and security plan should be developed for each. Part of the safety and security plan for each hazard should include these four elements:

1. What do we want to do?
2. Who is responsible for doing it?
3. How do we communicate with each other?
4. What is the procedure if someone is missing/injured?

Effective planning for emergencies requires that the whole community is represented and involved in the process. This is in accordance with recommendations from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that, “The most realistic and complete plans are prepared by a diverse planning team, including representatives from the jurisdiction’s departments and agencies, civic leaders, businesses, and organizations who are able to contribute critical perspectives and/or have a role in executing the plan.”

Effective and efficient COMMUNICATION during an emergency cannot be stressed enough. A page listing the members of the safety and security committee and their contact information should be included. A page listing ‘Emergency Contacts’ and community resources and contact information should also be included. Some additional ideas to help facilitate communication in an emergency would be:

- A mechanism for emergency communication could be established between the school district and town emergency responders (ex. Preprogrammed cell phones with group page capability, group e-mail through internet, or another type of mass notification system.
- Quick Access mobile app could be loaded on all employee’s cell phones in order to provide quick, current contact information and protocols.
- Schools could have an Emergency Go-Bag readily available for immediate evacuation. Part if this would include personnel directory, student directory, daily attendance list, student emergency contact information, etc.

After the safety and security committee has identified and prioritized the potential hazards in your district, and developed safety protocols for each hazard, it is important for the school safety plans to be periodically tested. Your safety and security committee should determine if the goals of the safety plan can be achieved. Safety drills and exercises are an essential part of that testing process. It is recommended that schools determine the most appropriate training and drills for their students and staff. A combination of drills could be conducted at
the same time. After each drill, the safety and security committee should review the results of the drill and adjust as needed.

The safety and security committee should consider formulating a protocol for reuniting students and parents following an emergency. One critical aspect of crisis response is accountable reunification of students with their parents or guardians in the event a controlled release is necessary. Site-specific considerations will impact how these practices can be integrated into school and district safety plans. The reunification may occur at the school site or a designated reunification site. The protocols should be practiced at both sites. The first drills may only involve students and school personnel. However, at some point, you may want to conduct a full reunification drill with parents involved in the drill (probably conducted at the end of a school day.)

It is also important for the committee to review their safety and security plans annually. The intent of the annual review is to determine if conditions under which the original plans, policies, and procedures were established still in fact exist or have conditions changed to an extent that the plan needs to reflect adjustments to meet those changes.

Another recommended activity for Nebraska school systems is to assess your school climate/culture. Each school system should assess positive relationships between students and students. Each school system should assess positive relationships between students and employees. Each school system should assess positive relationships between employees and employees. The national school climate standards are available at http://www.schoolclimate.org/climate/standards/php and a recommended site for data collection instruments is ‘School Wide Information Systems’ (SWIS).

In your plan, you may want to add your ‘Safe Pupil Transportation Plan’ required in Rule 91 (required to be included in a school’s safety and security plan).

To summarize, I recommend the following steps for your safety and security committee:

- Train staff and students in the Standard Response Protocol “I Love You Guys.”
- Re-write your safety and security plan to be a separate manual from all other committees and school guidelines.
- Consider the appropriate membership for your safety and security committee.
- List all committee members and contact information.
- List all community resources and contact information.
- Identify the potential hazards in your school district.
- Prioritize the dangers and likelihood of each hazard occurring in your school district.
- Develop a safety plan for each prioritized potential hazard. Involve your community resources in developing your plans.
- Develop a reunification plan for each evacuation site.
- Communicate your safety plans to the appropriate audiences.
- Practice and drill – adjust and modify as needed.
- Review the “Nebraska Safety and Security Standards” and implement the guidelines.
I want to thank everyone for the hospitality that was extended to me during my visit. I look forward to next year’s visit.

Ken Navratil