

# **Ticonderoga Central School District**

## **DISTRICT – WIDE SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN**

**Project SAVE (Safe Schools Against Violence in Education)**

**Commissioner’s Regulation 155.17**

### **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 incidents and 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. The District-wide School Safety Plan provides the framework for the Building-level Emergency Response Plan.

Districts stand at risk from a wide variety of acts of violence, natural, and manmade disasters. To address these threats, the State of New York has enacted the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) law. Project SAVE is a comprehensive planning effort that addresses mitigation/prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery with respect to a variety of emergencies in each school district and its schools.

The Ticonderoga Central School District, supports the SAVE Legislation and intends to facilitate the 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 District-wide School Safety Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner’s Regulation 155.17. At the direction of the Board of Education, the School Superintendent appointed a District-wide Health & Safety Team and charged it with the development and maintenance of the District-wide School Safety Plan.

#### **B. Identification of School Teams**

The District has created a District-wide School Safety Team who will receive input from but not limited to, representatives of the: Superintendent of Schools, Director of Operations and Maintenance, School Business Official, Secretary to the Superintendent, Director of Food Services, Director of Transportation, Building Principal(s), Local Law Enforcement, Teacher(s), Parent(s), Student(s), Local Emergency Responder(s).

#### **C. Concept of Operations**

- The District-wide School Safety Plan is directly linked to the individual Building-level Emergency Response Plans for each school building. Protocols reflected in the District-wide School Safety Plan guides the development and implementation of individual Building-level Emergency Action Guides.
- In the event of an emergency or violent incident, the initial response to all emergencies at an individual school is by the Building Crisis Team.
- Upon the activation of the School Emergency Response Team, the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee is notified and, where appropriate, local emergency officials are also notified.
- Efforts may be supplemented by County and State resources through existing protocols.

#### D. Plan review and public comment

- This plan is reviewed and maintained by the District and reviewed on an annual basis.
- Pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17 (e) (3), this plan was available for public comment 30 days prior to its adoption. The district-wide and building-level plans were originally adopted in 2001-2002, by the School Board after one public hearing that provided for the participation of school personnel, parents, students and any other interested parties. The plan was formally adopted by the Board of Education.
- While linked to the District-wide School Safety Plan, the Building-level Emergency Response Plans is confidential and shall not be subject to disclosure under Article 6 of the Public Officers Law or any other provision of law, in accordance with Education Law Section 2801-a. The District and the Board of Education review the Building-level Emergency Action Guides yearly.
- The District-wide School Safety Plan is posted on the district's website as requested by the New York State Education Department.

**NOTE:** Building-level Emergency Response Plans are supplied to both local and State Police within 30 days of adoption.

The District has many Board of Education (BOE) policies that support school safety, including but not limited to:

- Bomb Threats,
- Code of Conduct,
- Student Conduct and Discipline,
- Emergency Planning,
- Firearms in Schools/Gun Free Schools,
- Project SAVE,
- Internet Content Filtering/Safety,
- Security/Safety,

## **Section II: General Emergency Mitigation, Prevention and Response Planning**

The District emergency preparedness includes mitigation and prevention to decrease the likelihood of an emergency and to reduce losses or damage should one occur. Mitigation involves the identification risks and vulnerabilities, an assessment of resources and facilities, identification of stakeholders including knowledgeable and collaborative emergency responders and mental health resources, and the communication process. Preparedness includes ensuring policies and protocols are in place as well as the readiness and knowledge to respond. This involves clarifying team

member roles, having the incident command system (ICS) in place, continuous training on ICS and the plan procedures, and conducting exercises and drills.

Response occurs when the plan is activated and involves the action to contain and resolve a crisis. The ICS plan in place is activated as needed to promote effective decision-making. Consistent communication is maintained with staff, students, family and media, actions are documented and after-action briefings are conducted. Emergency response planning has proceeded with the assistance of the Champlain Valley Educational Services BOCES Risk Management Service and coordinated at the District level by the Superintendent. Development of the plan has included involvement of the local police, fire and rescue squad personnel. The District emergency response plan and the building plans linked to this plan use the incident command system. Staff has been identified at each building to assume roles in the incident command structure in the event of an emergency. Assignments, roles and procedures are adjusted on the basis of the exercises. The plan is further adjusted annually using exercises to test potential for emergency response. District and building plans include:

A. Identification of sites of potential emergency, including:

- Detailed plans for each school building;
- The location of potential command and evacuation sites; primary and secondary for each site;
- The kinds of action to be taken in the event of emergency, and
- The potential internal or external hazards or emergency situations.

B. Plans for taking the following actions in response to an emergency where appropriate, including but not limited to:

- School cancellation
- Early dismissal
- Evacuation (before, during and after school hours, including security during evacuation and evacuation routes)
- Lockdown/Lockout
- Sheltering sites (internal and external)

Emergencies include, but are not limited to:

|                         |                       |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Threats of Violence     | Intruder              |
| Hostage/Kidnapping      | Explosive/Bomb Threat |
| Natural/Weather Related | Hazardous Material    |
| Civil Disturbance       | Biological            |
| School Bus Accident     | Radiological          |
| Gas Leak                | Epidemic              |

Others as determined by the Building-level School Safety Team

C. The identification of District resources which may be available for use during an emergency, including the identification of personnel and other resources.

D. Description of procedures to coordinate the use of school District resources and manpower during emergencies, including:

- Identification of the officials authorized to make decisions, and
- Identification of the staff members assigned to provide assistance during emergencies

E. Procedures for annual multi-hazard school training for staff and students, including the strategies for implementing training related to multi-hazards. These are conducted through a series of staff and student orientation exercises at the beginning of each school year and several times during each year.

F. Procedures for the review and conduct of drills and other exercises to test components of the emergency response plan, including the use of tabletop exercises and drills, in coordination with local and county emergency responders and preparedness officials.

### **Section III: Responding to Threats and Acts of Violence**

Both building and District emergency response plans use the incident command system to identify and respond to anticipated or unanticipated threats or acts of violence. Plan appendices include the following:

A. Policies and procedures for responding to implied or direct threats of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school.

B. Policies and procedures for responding to acts of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school, including consideration of zero-tolerance policies for school violence.

C. Policies and procedures for contacting appropriate law enforcement officials in the event of a violent incident. The appropriate procedure will always use the 911 emergency call system.

D. Identification of appropriate responses to emergencies, including protocols for responding to:

- Bomb threats
- Hostage takings
- Intrusions
- Kidnappings

E. 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.

### **Section IV: Communication with Others**

Community based emergency response services (police, fire and rescue squad) participate in the development, tabletop review and review of respective building plans. Copies of each written plan are made available to emergency services.

A. A 911 protocol is used in every instance to request emergency assistance.

B. Written copies of the plans will be forwarded to county and town officials explaining the role that emergency response agencies have played in the development of the plan and seeking advice, suggestions or other feedback. This includes the discussion about the county officials responsible for implementation of Article 2-B of the Executive Law.

C. If a disaster occurs that impacts the District, all internal communications will run through the District office whose staff will activate building and District level emergency response teams as necessary. The District office will inform all educational agencies within the school district of such a disaster.

D. Maintenance of relevant information included in the confidential Building-level Plans and for each educational agency\* located in the school district, include information on:

- School population
- Number of staff
- Transportation needs
- Business and home telephone numbers of key officials of each such educational agency

\* **Educational agencies means** public and nonpublic elementary and secondary schools, public and private nursery schools, approved private schools for the education of students with disabilities as defined in section 200.1(d) of this Title, and public and private schools for the education of preschool children with disabilities.

## **Section V: Prevention and Intervention Strategies**

The District strives to provide and enhance emergency and violence prevention and intervention strategies. Such strategies include improving communications among students and between students and staff, reporting of potentially violent incidents and establishing reporting mechanisms for school violence.

A. The school climate is viewed as an important part of school safety. The Dignity for All Students Act supports an environment free of harassment and discrimination. The District provides training around bullying prevention through curriculum integration. The District supports intervention and defines Disciplinary Consequences/Remediation. If appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken by the administration in accordance with the District's Code of Conduct, as applicable. If the behavior rises to the level of criminal activity, law enforcement will be contacted.

B. Policies and procedures related to school building security, including, where appropriate, the use of school safety officers and or/security devices or procedures.

C. Policies and 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

D. Appropriate prevention and intervention strategies and strategies for improving communication among students and between students and staff and reporting of potentially violent incidents, such as the establishment of:

- Anti-Bullying Programs
- Youth-run programs
- Conflict resolution

- Others based on district need

E. Description of duties, hiring and screening process, and required training other school safety personnel are maintained in the District Office.

## **Section VI: Recovery**

Recovery addresses the help needed for all involved to heal and to restore the school community to “normal” operations. The District supports the school buildings by deploying District resources that support the Emergency Response Teams and the Post-Incident Response Teams in the affected school(s).

Recovery plans include mental health/emotional recovery, academic, physical and business recovery, and can continue long after the actual emergency. The District has social worker and counselor resources and support systems. The District has the ability to coordinate with school, local, 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 Buildings**

Each Building-level Emergency Response Plan provides resources for supporting the Emergency Response Teams and Post-Incident Response Teams. The District’s Incident Command System (ICS) identifies back-ups to relieve team members. This provides team members the opportunity to rotate personnel, to fill in if assigned personnel are unavailable and to debrief in a supportive environment.

The District realizes that some emergencies may overwhelm an individual school’s ability to manage an extreme crisis. If/when a Building-level Emergency Response Team or Post-Incident Response Team is faced with an emergency such as threats of violence or actual violent incidents, the District-wide Emergency Response Team will assist as follows:

- Acting as a sounding board for the building principal/supervisor regarding the implied or direct threats and/or violent acts.
- Assisting in determining the level of threat and appropriate response.
- If safe to do so, sending a District-wide team member to support the Building-level Team(s).
- 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.
- Assisting with offering a backup Post-Incident Response Team (i.e., another school team and/or an outside group) if needed.
- Offering debriefing sessions as needed working in conjunction with local, 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 an individual school’s ability to manage an extreme crisis; the District-wide Emergency Response Team will assist as follows:

- If safe to do so, sending a District-wide team member to each affected school/building as a liaison between the school/building and the District Office.
- Activating the District-wide Post-Incident response Team. The District and schools have school counselors, school psychologists, school nurse, and social workers that have local connections to:
  - Neighboring school districts
  - Essex County Department of Mental Health and
  - Essex County Mental Health service providers
- 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 and Communications Office.

The District supports the recovery phase and reevaluates current multi-hazard and violence prevention practices and school safety activities.

## **Section VII: NEW YORK SECURE AMMUNITION AND FIREARMS ENFORCEMENT ACT (NYSAFE): IMPACT ON SCHOOL DISTRICT BUILDING AID**

The District will provide all facilities with security features sufficient to protect the occupants in case of an intruder and/or unauthorized visitors.

The 2013 NYSAFE Act enhances NYS Education Law for eligible expenses incurred beginning in the 2012-2013 school year and through the 2014-2015 school year. The purpose of this is to allow a school District to purchase and install security systems and devices separate from traditional capital construction projects and in student-occupied buildings in order to receive enhanced building aid for the purchase of approved security cameras and other SED-approved security devices such as electronic security systems and hardened doors.