Will Properly Designed and Implemented Crisis Response Plans Serve a Proactive Role in Obtaining a Safe School Environment?

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by

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BIOGRAPHY

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Tony L. Jones has more than 14 years of experience in SWAT operations and nuclear weapons security plus 25 years of concurrent military police/security experience. Much of Jones's experience has been in training and management positions. These positions include Shift Commander, Communications Captain, Shift Field Captain, Response Team Leader, SRT Commander, Sniper Leader, Sniper Commander, Firearms Instructor, SRT Training Officer, Senior Tactical Advisor, Security/Tactical Consultant, Regional Training Director, Training Operations Manager, Private Security School Commander, Private Security Instructor, Assistant Security Chief, and Special Deputy.

Mr. Jones served in the Army, Army National Guard, Air National Guard, Air Force and Army Reserve a total of 25 years. His military service includes positions as a Fire Team Leader, Squad Leader, Assistant Platoon Sergeant, Military Police Supervisor, Security Police Supervisor, Security Police Liaison, Air Base Ground Defense Instructor, Small Arms Instructor, SWAT/ERT Instructor, Training Coordinator, and an Operations Training and Readiness Specialist. A Desert Storm Veteran, he achieved the rank of Master Sergeant and is a member of the Air National Guard Senior NCO Corps.

Mr. Jones is the founder of a tactical/security consulting company called Heightened Vigilance. To date, Tony has provided tactical/security consulting, product evaluations, and tactical/firearms/leadership training to a variety of private and government agencies.

Mr. Jones is a published author and has written seven published books titled *Booby-Trap Identification and Response For Law Enforcement Officers*; *Effective Response To School Violence: A Guide for Educators and Law Enforcement Personnel*; *A Guide to Chemical Agent use in Police Work*; *Specialty Police Munitions*; *SWAT Leadership and Tactical Planning*; *SWAT Sniper: Deployment and Control* and *Tactical Communications for SWAT Teams*.

Tony has also written more than 145 articles for the following publications; American Survival Guide, The Backup, Calibre Press, Command, Law Enforcement Technology, Law and Order, The Call Out, The Chief of Police, The Chillicothe Gazette, The Firearms Instructor, The Informed Source, Police, The Police Marksman, PoliceOne, Police and Security News, OPSEC News, The Police Shield, The Police Supervisor, Southern Lawman, SWAT, The Tactical Edge, The Thin Blue Edge, The Tri-State Sportsman, Weapons & Tactics. Tony has also written more than 150 analysis/research papers and lesson plans focusing on SWAT/law enforcement/security/leadership/management tasks.

Mr. Jones graduated (Magna Cum Laude) from AMU with a Master's degree in Management, (Cum Laude) from OU with a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice, (Magna Cum Laude) from SSCC with an Associate degree in Business Management and (Magna Cum Laude) from AFCC with an Associate degree in Industrial Security.

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I. INTRODUCTION

There are a great number of proactive measures being developed and implemented to make the introduction of weapons into a school building as difficult as possible. Many of the valuable proactive measures include: training teachers to identify troubled youths; counseling programs; students signing contracts to stop violence; students wearing ribbons to pledge support in stopping violence; installation of closed circuit television surveillance systems (CCTV), alarm systems, metal detectors and explosive device screeners, and the hiring of a police presence. Crisis response planning is integral to enhancing any school security effort.

Indeed, the best planning effort starts with prevention and awareness. However, school administrators cannot count on these measures to completely prevent school violence unless security measures approach the level of a correctional system. Consider the fact that firearms even find their way into correctional facilities. Further, school violence occurs in a unique context in every school and every situation making the adoption of any one proactive program impossible. Moreover, school communities can do everything recommended and still experience violence. "There is no single answer, no simple solution and no guarantees.

To reiterate, many proactive measures are sound; however, many school systems can do more to enhance school security. Any safety/security program is incomplete if an effective crisis response plan is not developed to deal with violence prevention program failure. Proactive measure failure has been demonstrated by the recent school shooting in Georgia. To refresh the reader's memory, the school in Georgia had installed a new CCTV system and had hired a police

presence. Neither of these concepts prevented the student (perpetrator) from entering the school with a firearm or stopped this individual from initiating his shooting spree.

Indeed, many proactive solutions can be effective; however, one of the most important proactive solutions concerns the development of a crisis response procedure. This plan is designed to provide school communities with reliable and practical information about what can be done to assist first responders in handling a school violence crisis. Focal points of concern include intervening during a crisis and responding in the aftermath of tragedy. A crisis response plan offers the most efficient path to effective rapid response operations assisting special response police forces, fire department personnel, medical aid personnel and ancillary support personnel in saving the lives of hostages, students, teachers, support personnel, visitors, ancillary responders, police officers and perpetrators. Additionally, these plans should reduce collateral damage typically generated by high threat operations. Further, response plans should also generate a detailed analysis valuable for formulating effective contingency plans. Finally, response programs will prove exceptionally valuable the more crisis situations change and the more chaotic the situation becomes.

One of the most common mistakes personnel make, when developing crisis response programs, is attempting to make a plan without sufficient information. Make no mistake, existing or projected natural emergency plans are not designed to accomplish this essential mission. Many school administrators believe existing or "tweaked" natural emergency plans are adequate response measures when firearms denial programs fail. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The main point of the crisis response plan revolves around the principle of "Saving lives when all

other proactive means have failed." Crisis response plans should focus on the elements of rapid entry and containment, area control and the resecuring of the effected area. Remember, time equates to lives--the longer the perpetrators remain active, the higher the likelihood that additional people will be killed.

What parents want, and what the country demands is a solid plan to enhance school security. Crisis response plans must be site specific and designed to streamline the planning efforts of all emergency responders, heightening personnel survivability and mission success by reducing time-on-target mechanics prior to mission initiation. Indeed, time equals lives--the longer it takes law enforcement officials/emergency responders to act, the higher the likelihood will be that additional people will be killed. Furthermore, the incalculable costs of death, facility destruction, disruption of classes, negative public perception, civil/criminal law suits and the resulting embarrassment of these acts easily exceed the time and cost of any crisis response plan development.

II. STUDENTS PLANNING AN ATTACK

There may be some attendees who believe students commit acts of violence with little thought or preparation. However, this does not appear to be the case with many of the more violent incidents recently witnessed. A good example of students planning an attack is illustrated in the incident of four teenage boys plotting to conduct a Columbine-style shooting rampage at South High School located in Cleveland, Ohio. The plot was discovered when a student tipped off school officials that the teens planned to open fire on October 29, 1999, the day of the school's homecoming dance and football game. The police found two maps depicting predetermined

shooting positions for each shooter and a list of possible students to recruit for the planned massacre. The students were subsequently arrested and pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit aggravated murder and/or inducing panic. Prosecutors stated that while the threat was real, the students were still in the planning process when they were arrested. Prosecutors further stated that the students planned to open fire first in the school's office and gym. Then, the students planned to attack the school's two cafeterias and wait in the courtyard for police to arrive. Finally, prosecutors stated that the teens planned to commit suicide like the perpetrators did during the massacre at Columbine High School.

As demonstrated above, once a student or students have targeted a school for attack, an extensive planning phase may be set into motion. Granted, sophistication of an attack and the planning phase for the attack will vary in detail. However, the mechanics of an attack will likely focus on the following areas to some degree: target selection, tactics, operation style, and the completion of a plan of attack.

1. Thwarting the Attack

To best thwart students planning a violent attack, it is imperative that school systems and law enforcement officials develop a partnership. Launching and strengthening police/school partnerships which also include civic leaders, parents, and students can positively support school violence prevention actions, spur interest in additional preventative measures, and reduce crime, victimization and fear. The best reason for working together is the sharing of responsibility for the safety of the school and the community it serves. Schools and communities interact; one

cannot be safe unless the other is safe. Further, school officials can find out what help law enforcement can offer and law enforcement officers can better understand school processes and problems. Emergency procedures can also be agreed upon in advance. Finally, the partnership will often generate mutual goals, bolster more power to persuade others to change and/or to get involved, and provide greater information sources for solutions.

The key partners in this endeavor are the senior school officials and senior law enforcement officials. The match should be one-to-one, the focus should be on the school and the surrounding neighborhood, and the partners should have decision-making authority even though it is realized that most policies cannot be enacted unilaterally. Senior officials should work together to establish agreements and understandings about policies and procedures; develop both preventative and problem-solving strategies; keep each other informed of activities and issues that touch on security and safety; encourage close communications between supervising agencies, and periodically review progress.

Finally, to begin the partnership officials should set up a short initial appointment to talk about school safety and security issues; review actions that require policy changes; discuss issues or problems with respect to the school facility; identify additional community partners; review elements of collaboration among the cooperating agencies; draw up memorandum of understanding (MOU) covering identified key issues; agree on a regular communication schedule and what data will be shared, and get the partnership moving by initiating some early action steps.

III. SECURITY SURVEYS

Unfortunately, many schools operate with little regard to security matters. Usually some security problem must surface before any action is taken to address security matters. The old philosophy arises "it is cheaper and easier to be reactive in lieu of proactive." Of course, security experts realize the fallacy of this concept: compromised safety; damage or destruction of property; disruption or destruction of the schools operation; personnel injury; loss of life, and negative public perception often outweigh any current monetary savings.

Quite often, only token security measures "window dressing" is used in order to give the public the perception that students, school staff and school property in question is secure, (dedicated adversaries will not be fooled by token security measures). In addition to "window dressing," more serious breeches in security arise when novices are placed in charge of security forces and/or other security related operations. Novices may be assigned security management duties through politics and personal favors because many people believe that anyone can be a security officer. This belief is erroneous and leads to poor quality security forces, procedures and protection.

To avoid "window dressing," any school facility concerned with security must complete a security survey. A security survey is designed to identify, by means of an on-site inspection, all requirements associated with the application of physical security personnel and equipment to counter one or more substantiated or perceived threats. Additional reasons to complete a security survey include: regulatory requirements; insurance requirements; activation of a new site or

facility; significant changes in a schools operation or layout; planned site upgrades; increased threat level, or in response to a school violence crisis or attempted school violence crisis or other security incident.

When a security survey is desired, a security survey process must be placed into motion. This process consists of gathering data necessary to conduct a thorough analysis of the physical and operational environment in which the security system must operate and the threat postulated against it. Considerations include the full range of events potentially confronting the site or assets to be protected, the consequences of loss or compromise, and what equipment, personnel and techniques would be necessary to deter or prevent such events. The scope and complexity of the security survey is flexible and determined on a case-by-case basis.

Factors influencing the scope of the survey include: the size, mission, and complexity of the school; size and complexity of desired security systems, and the desired end results. To obtain specific end results, broad recommendations may be required; for example, site design changes, security expansion and upgrades, or the complete replacement of existing security systems. Remember, the desired end results must be decided upon and understood prior to commencement of the security survey.

For each specific school site, a security survey should contain the following: a description of the site to be protected to include any unique operational factors; description and evaluation of any existing security devices; description of any vulnerabilities; details of new protection recommendations; necessary upgrades or structural modifications; estimate of design and

construction costs, and an evaluation of security force capabilities.

In conclusion, security surveys should be written in a professional and responsible manner in order to: assist in motivating the recipient to take action to minimize security risks; provide an approach or plan that the recipient can use as a frame-work for taking action; validate or change the opinion of the recipient with regard to the level of threat potential within the surveyed environment; establish a channel of communications between involved parties to include law enforcement agencies and school administrations; and finally, provide the recipient with a benchmark or measuring device by which evaluation of the steps taken in attempting to secure the environment can be measured.

IV. RESPONSE PLANNING

1. Response Plan Purpose

The response effort the author has developed is quite different from what many school organizations call response plans. The author's response plan focuses on the preparation and compiling of elements of essential information which should be used by police response forces when a school violence crisis occurs. This information is designed to enable police responders to quickly and efficiently develop an entry plan which will streamline response time frames and save lives. The author believes traditional response plans generated by educational entities actually focuses on intervention efforts not true response. The author's concept is part of a trilogy-- identification, intervention and response. There is no doubt school administrators are adept at

identification and intervention processes; however, the author believes many school organizations are deficient in the area of true response. The author's response plan focuses on proactive information gathering and response mechanics intended to be employed when identification and intervention efforts have failed and a school crisis is in progress.

Further, the author believes that a response document must be site specific and adjusted accordingly. The end product should contain observed structural and procedural weaknesses and strengths. Applicable recommendations for the enhancement of existing or additional internal defense systems, physical protection devices (hard and soft) and protective forces should be included in applicable attachments. Indeed, a response document can be used as a significant part of a security survey as vulnerabilities or root causes are identified and earmarked for correction.

A response document is developed by compiling elements of essential information concerning a target school and the surrounding area into a workable format. An effective response document will neutralize or at a minimum decrease security concerns. A condensed oral response briefing should also be prepared and practiced for streamlined presentations.

2. Response Planning

Response planning is a very tedious process. School administrators may hear comments from school personnel stating that planning is non-essential or useless because no plan ever works as envisioned. These views are voiced by individuals who are inadequately trained in response planning, misunderstand the value of planning, or have never seen or experienced a "wing it" style

response go sour. It is guaranteed that even an incomplete weak response plan is better than no plan at all.

Response planning is not just a leadership task, it requires subordinate participation as well. One person should not plan an entire response document by himself, if he tries, the chances of failure are high due to time constraints, information overload, and limited thinking. One man considering an operation will be limited to his personal mind set and experience, but when a whole team of personnel participates the options are increased manyfold. Through team involvement, the plan takes on the identity of a team plan instead of "the plan."

3. Response Planning Mechanics

To begin planning, the school facility must be analyzed, therefore all elements of essential information available must be collected and collated into a workable format. To accomplish this task, a primary question must be answered:

What is the response documents purpose? The response documents purpose is to serve as a centrally located document containing elements of significant information designed to be used in support of an overall mission intended to counter a school violence situation. A response document is designed to address many complex contingencies by capturing, fusing and disseminating information to operational entities. Finally, the response planning effort will represent a significant value in school/law enforcement partnerships; help decide upon and develop action steps for anti-school violence policies, procedures, and programs; and help

develop strategies for involving law enforcement, school officials, teachers, staff, students, parents, and community leaders in efforts to prevent school violence.

Another question frequently asked concerns the storage of the response document; **Where should the response document be located?** The response document should be removed from the direct area of concern or what would be called during a real world event (the target site). The response document should be stored in a central location such as the leading law enforcement entities headquarters. Of course, if desired, copies may be stored in a variety of places such as the school itself, EOC's, rally points, etc. However, these documents should be considered as very sensitive and protected by applying operations security (OPSEC) techniques.

4. The Response Mission

Our criminal justice system is fundamentally reactive. Indeed, little happens until a crime has occurred by then it is too late for identification, intervention and effective response strategies. The school violence response planning system discussed in this block of instruction is designed to be proactive in lieu of reactive thereby reducing the death, injury and destruction generated by a school violence crisis event. Furthermore, this system is an effective tool for assisting police officers and other types of first responders to heighten their effectiveness and performance during these types of crisis. In short, the school violence response planning mission is to "save lives." Once this goal is reached, the very important role of the criminal justice system can move forward (apprehending and punishing perpetrators).

5. The Response Planning Committee

There is a critical need to form a relationship between school administrations and police personnel before any planning or training can be performed. This relationship needs to result in the development of a school violence crisis response team. This team not only plans what to do when violence strikes, but it also ensures that staff and students know how to react during a crisis. This team may also be the personnel chosen to set up and operate an Emergency Operations Center (EOC). This school violence crisis response team should work with police crisis response planners in order to shape and tailor a plan specifically designed to fit the needs of each individual school (each school district, police department and community is unique). Of course, many aspects of a generic planning process will be applicable to all school systems. The idea is not to "reinvent the wheel" but to use applicable planning aspects, "tweak" some aspects, and develop unique aspects when required.

Each team needs to trust and share what their needs are with each other in order to develop an effective response plan. The following planning positions are only suggestions and may or may not be staffed. Additionally, one position may be staffed by more than one person. Further, one person may conduct the activities of one or more other positions as required. Each position should have a job description which includes a job title, reporting line, job function, specific duties and responsibilities, and the qualifications required to staff the position.

A school administrator may have a staff or the administrator may represent the entire school violence response planning committee. The size of the staff needed to carry out school violence

response planning will depend upon: the size of the school facility; the financial resources available; the school's past history, present threat level, and projected threats of potentially violent situations. How well the school administrator manages the school violence crisis response planning committee depends in part on whether minimum staffing needs are met. Part of the job of a school administrator is to estimate what the staffing needs are or will be, and then plan to obtain that level of staffing. In some instances, especially when school systems lack financial resources, a volunteer school violence response planning committee may be developed.

School violence response planning committee positions include the following titles; chief planning officer, administrative support, chief of school security (law enforcement or school resource officer), logistics officer, facility architects and engineers, school medical representative, school legal representative, school media/liaison spokesman, environmental safety and health officer, and other elements unique to the school system, as required.

6. School Violence Response Plan Format and Contents

What should the ROPES document include and what format should the information be assimilated into? Actually, completing the plan occurs in a variety of steps. While there are no hard and fast rules pertaining to plan development, the basic plan is usually written first. From the basic plan annexes and appendices may also be developed. The basic plan should be treated as the umbrella document that draws together all other parts of the plan. Its primary audience is the chief executive, planning entities, and police personnel.

A school violence crisis plan should be developed using the following suggested format: introduction to the basic plan; statement of purpose; situations and assumptions; organization and assignment of responsibilities; concept of operations; administration and logistics; plan development and maintenance; authorities and references, and the definition of terms. Annexes to the basic plan, appendices, and standard operating procedures and other procedures should be developed and inserted as needed.

A plan begins with a series of statements that serve as the introduction to the basic plan. These include: the promulgation statement, foreword, table of contents, instructions, and change record. The promulgation statement is signed by a chief executive to give the plan authority. Next, a forward is written that describes the planning process, abstracts the contents in an executive summary, and states the goals of the plan. A table of contents should now be developed which lists the total contents to include any annexes or appendices. Another statement concerns instructions explaining the plans use, the intended audience, and the purposes of its sections and distribution. Finally, a change of record is developed depicting the dates, locations and specific verbiage of any revisions.

After the introduction to the basic plan has been completed, it is time to develop a statement of purpose. For example, the purpose of the plan is to provide the school community with an effective and efficient school crisis response operation which when applied will provide the levels of protection for life and property and recovery assistance which are acceptable to the school system and citizens of the community.

The next section focuses on situations and assumptions. The types of school violence situations which may occur in the school system are described here. The planner must be realistic and develop valid assumptions. The plan of operation for meeting these situations will be based upon the assumptions made in this section. To complete the picture of the situation and assumptions of the plan, a review focusing on the security survey and other proactive measures should be included.

The next step requires planners to establish an organizational structure and assign responsibilities. This is a key section of the plan and will normally be lengthy. It should specifically define the roles of school officials in the planning structure. The organizational structure should also include individuals staffing local government and community positions who may be called upon to provide resources. Certain officials are given specific assignments and lines of authority are identified between the planning positions and emergency responders.

The organizational structure should be as similar as possible to that which is used for day-to-day operations. For example, a school nurse should be assigned as a school medical representative instead of a logistics officer. However, the organizational structure should allow for the expansion and extension of duties as situations dictate. To the greatest extent possible, personnel should continue to work with the supervisor and associates that they normally work with on a regular basis. This familiarity will often streamline the start-up process by avoiding the need of getting to know new people, establishing territories, dealing with different work ethics and so forth.

Another important section of the plan is titled administration and logistics. This section should address management of resources, general support requirements, and availability of services and support for all phases of a school violence crisis situation. The plan should establish policy for obtaining and using facilities, material, services, and any other required resources.

Next, plan development and maintenance should be addressed. This portion is normally addressed after completion of the school violence response plan and includes provisions for review, modification, acceptance, and approval by the head of the effected school system. Of particular importance is the continuous review required to update the plan to reflect improvements needed as a result of experiences in dealing with school violence and changing situations and assumptions.

Any authorities and references which were used in plan development should be stated at the end of the document. Authorities and references may include: statutes, executive orders, regulations, formal agreements, general planning guidance, plans of other agencies, plans of other levels of government, and the like.

Another section that is valuable concerns the definition of terms. This would include definitions of terms which are not commonly known as well as those used in the plan which could cause confusion if misinterpreted. The terms one chooses to define will depend upon the uniqueness of the school community and the audience addressed.

Annexes may be included in order to describe operations for a particular function. Annexes

should define a function and show how activities of various participants in the functional organization are coordinated. Annexes are typically action oriented, and are written for, and preferably by, the person responsible for controlling resources available to accomplish the objectives of the function in a school violence crisis. Annexes may include such functions as direction and control; warning systems; communications; public information; evacuation procedures; law enforcement interaction; fire department interaction; resources management, and the like. Of course, the annexes listed are not meant to be all inclusive. The selection and definition of functions to be covered in annexes varies from school system to school system depending on such factors as the size, organization, and specific needs of each school. Finally, annexes should be formatted in the same manner as the basic plan. To reiterate, there are nine parts to the basic plan and annexes: (1) Introduction, (2) Statement of purpose, (3) Situations and assumptions, (4) Organization and assignment of responsibilities, (5) Concept of operations, (6) Administration and logistics, (7) Development and maintenance, (8) Authorities and references and (9) Definition of terms.

Finally, the plan should end with an appendices. An appendix contains details, methods, and technical information that are unique to each specific school violence hazard identified as being likely to pose a threat in a particular school. Appendices may also be attached to functional annexes and should have sections corresponding to those in the annex for which supplementary hazard specific information is required.

Crisis action planning staffs may also include standard operating procedures and other attachments which are deemed necessary to support and provide directions to school violence

response personnel. These documents may be attached to any part of the plans elements where they are most readily accessible and most likely to be needed. These attachments may include checklists, charts, maps, standard operating procedures, available resources, call-up lists, and contact lists, etc. Like the basic plan, attachments are living documents. They are changed and revised as required. Indeed, attachments will probably be the most frequently modified part of the plan. School violence response planner should design the plan in this manner allowing for the removal and insertion of changes and new pages.

7. School Violence Response Plan Information

Of course, as has been previously discussed, school violence response plans are specific and unique to each school system. However, each school violence response plan must gather information: valuable in defining a specific schools assets; defining a school's threats; defining a school's weaknesses; defining a school's strengths, and characterizing a school's environment. All school violence response plan information should contain at a minimum the following generic information:

1. **Description of the building(s)**
2. **Activity conducted in each building**
3. **Priority of each building**
4. **Sensitivity of each building**
5. **Physical and environmental conditions**
6. **School personnel responsible for each building**
7. **Operational considerations**

8. Supporting Utilities

9. Visual representation of campus structures

10. Internal and external security systems

11. Evaluation of lighting systems

12. Fence Lines

13. Survey of parking facilities

14. Evaluation of site security forces

15. Survey of communication systems

16. Survey of existing vulnerability countermeasures

17. Survey of perimeter terrain

18. Employee Information

19. Student Information

20. Current and potential threat data

21. Copies of all relevant security, safety, and fire regulations

22. Environmental, safety and health considerations

23. Evaluation of school system interface with local governments and population to include communication methods and points of contact.

24. Attachment of proactive measures and their result

25. Supporting policies

26. Attachment of any past security/safety surveys

27. Attachment of any crisis procedure checklists

28. Emergency Notification List

29. Aftermath Check List

8. Response Procedure Completion

The elements of essential information gathered by the different team members should be evaluated, compared, and ultimately compiled into one master response document. When complete, the leading school administrator should review the response document in order to ascertain effectiveness. An effective response document should be evaluated for workable format, completeness, and feasibility. The response document should then be filed in a known central location complete with facility keys. **Note:** The response document may be useless when only one person knows the location or has sole access to the document.

The leading school administrator is also responsible for critiquing the end product, rendering assistance during information gathering efforts, and answering questions concerning the end product. The goal is to keep the information flow focused, efficient, and effective. Ultimately, the crisis response planning procedure should serve as a process for securing immediate external support from law enforcement officials and other relevant community agencies. All provisions and procedures will also require monitoring and review by the core developers and the lead administrator.

9. Characteristics of a good plan

A plan must be based on facts or at the least, valid assumptions. If assumptions must be made, they should be checked out to make sure they are as close as possible to the actual situation. The plan must also provide an organizational structure and should clearly define the

relationship between the various functions and fix the responsibility of who is to do what. To strengthen organizational structure, people should be assigned functions which are close to their day-to-day operations and existing work groups should be kept intact as much as possible.

Cumbersome words and long sentences should be avoided so the plan will not be misunderstood. Additionally, the various elements of the plan must be coordinated and fit together. Finally, a completed plan must be reviewed and revised as necessary. Indeed, there may not be agreement from everyone on every point. Thus, the CPO may have to serve as a negotiator between departments. If no agreement can be reached, the CPO will have to recommend a final course of action and present the plan to managing entities as required.

In conclusion, a plan is considered good if it provides for an organizational structure and offers a definite course of action to meet a school violence crisis. Finally, for any school violence crisis response plan to be effective it must be evaluated for validity. Validity may be measured by testing methods designed to see if the plan will actually work. The most effective way to test a plan, is by simulating a real school violence crisis in order to exercise responsible personnel and applicable procedures.

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion, for some schools violence may be a minor issue; for others, it may be a daily presence. Though the most extreme forms of violence are rare, the threat of all kinds of violence can keep students away from school, prevent them from going to after-school events, and leave

them in fear every day. Thus, educational entities can no longer afford the false assumption that "nothing has ever happened here and nothing ever will." Nor can school administrators simply rely on any existing or projected security/safety systems to completely prevent the introduction of a weapon into the school environment.

Crisis response plans designed to dovetail into external agency mission concepts is a mandatory life saving concept. Crisis response plans represent a vital part of the school safety trilogy (identification, intervention and response). Indeed, the development of a crisis response program will demonstrate to community organizations and individual citizens that school personnel and law enforcement entities are aware of security concerns and are proactively involved in addressing these issues. Finally, students, educators, parents, law enforcement entities, and community members, often feel secure as a result of a well-conceived plan.

The End

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