Conducting School Emergency Management Plan Exercises

Katharine Piaskowy
Director of Public School Safety
Why Exercise the plan?

• To test the Functional Content Areas of the Emergency Operations Plans
  • To test the emergency preparedness of the District/School
• To avoid misunderstandings of roles and responsibilities
• For better coordination among the teams
• To create Muscle Memory
• To train the administration, teachers, staff and students on the proper emergency response actions
• Identify training and exercises that will assist Districts/Schools in closing the gaps identified in previous After Action Reports (AARs)
• Reduce duplication of effort and overextension of resources
The information on the emergency management test pursuant to division (E)(1) of section 3313.536 of the Revised Code shall be submitted on standardized forms developed and made available by the department of education.

1. Administrators shall prepare and conduct at least one annual emergency management test as defined in division (A)(2) of section 3313.536 of the Revised Code. Emergency management tests must meet the following requirements:
   a. Be a scheduled event; no actual emergency shall constitute a test, even if an after action report is produced.
   b. The type of test shall be a tabletop, functional, or full-scale, each type being used once every three years.
   c. The test shall include at least one hazard from the hazard analysis, as required in Section A 1 of this rule.
   d. The test shall include at least one functional content area.
   e. The test should include at least one representative from law enforcement, fire, EMA, EMS, and/or behavioral health.

2. Student participation in the emergency management test is not mandatory. Emergency management tests with student inclusion shall be at the discretion of the building administrator. Administrators should consider what benefit student inclusion in the emergency management test may have on the student population in preparation for an emergency and to enhance the safety of students in the building. Schools should obtain parental consent if students are to be included in the emergency management test. Schools should also consider age appropriate participation, guidance, and training in preparation for participation in the test.

3. Administrators shall submit an after action report to the Ohio department of education no later than 30 days after the exercise documenting the following:
   i. Date/time/weather/length/ of exercise;
   ii. Identify discussion/operations based exercise;
   iii. Scenario utilized;
   iv. Hazard(s) utilized; Safety Data Sheets, as appropriate, shall be provided;
   v. Functional content area(s) utilized;
   vi. Identify at least three strengths and at least three improvement areas of the Plan discovered as a result of the emergency management test.
• When is the deadline to complete an exercise?
The exercise must be reported annually by December 31st of every year.

• Are Community Partners required to participate?
District/School officials are not required, but encouraged, to include first responders and community partners in the exercise.

• Are students required to participate?
No, students are not required to participate in the annual exercise.

• Can real world events count as the annual exercise?
No, districts/schools still need to conduct a planned exercise.
Training and Exercise Strategy
Exercise Complexity

**BUILDING-BLOCK APPROACH**

- Uses a cycle of increasingly complex exercises
- Builds on lessons learned from previous training and exercises
Table Top Exercise

- A verbal walkthrough or discussion of response procedures
- Designed to evaluate plans and resolve questions of coordination and roles
  - Normally used to evaluate coordination, review plan elements or prepare for a larger exercise
- No equipment is used during the exercise
- No actual movement of persons or resources during this exercise
Table Top Exercise: Functional Content

• Drop, Cover, and Hold
• Emergency Communication
• Evacuation

• Family Reunification
• Lockdown
• Medical Response
• Mental Health Services
• Rapid Evacuation
• Reverse Evacuation
• Shelter-in-Place
• Recovery
• Continuity of Operations (COOP)
Table Top Exercise: Suggested Activities

• Hazardous Materials Spill
• Emergency Communication to stakeholders and community partners
• Recovery operations after an event to include Mental Health Services and damage assessments
• Continuity of Operations during power outage
• Severe Weather/Close School
• Lockdown due to external threat
Functional Exercises

- A hands-on or physical demonstration of functional or operational capabilities

- School Incident Command could be activated for this type of exercise in order to show how the command structure manages the function or operation

- Minimal simulation of physical activities should occur during exercise play

- Movement is deliberate and focuses on 1-2 functional content areas
Functional Exercise: Functional Content

- Drop, Cover and Hold
- Emergency Communications
- Evacuation
- Family Reunification
- Lockdown
- Reverse Evacuation
- Shelter-in-Place
Functional Exercise: Suggested Activities

- Utilization of Mass Notification System, if applicable, for Evacuation or Reunification
- Shelter in Place for Severe Weather
- Internal Communications for a Lockdown or Reverse Evacuation
- External Communication System Test to request Mutual Aid from other School Districts
- Family Reunification after an event on-campus or off-site
- Evacuation of a school building/bus
Full Scale Exercises

- A hands-on or physical test that evaluates the overall district/school emergency management program
- One exercise in the 3-year cycle must be a full scale exercise
- Requires the mobilization of personnel and equipment. There is movement of players and resources
- An Incident Command Post is activated and used to coordinate response functions
- An actual event could not be used for exercise credit
Full Scale Exercises: Functional Content

- Drop, Cover, and Hold
- Emergency Communication
- Evacuation
- Family Reunification
- Lockdown
- Medical Response
- Mental Health Services
- Rapid Evacuation
- Reverse Evacuation
- Shelter-in-Place
Full Scale Exercises: Suggested Activities

- Utilization of Mass Notification System
- Creation and submittal of “TEST” or “DRILL” press release to a Media Distribution List
- Internal communications
- Bus Accident during pick-up or drop-off during school hours
- Mass casualty event during athletics or after school activity
Who to invite?

- County Emergency Management Agency
- Regional State of Ohio Emergency Management Agency
- Law Enforcement
  - Local Jurisdiction
  - County Sheriff
  - Ohio State Highway Patrol
- Fire Department
- Local Hospitals/Medical Centers
- Local Public Health
- County Engineer’s Office
- Local Public Works
- Locally Elected Officials
- Red Cross/NGOs
- Volunteer Organizations
- Private Partners
- District Administration
- School Administration
- Front Office Staff
- Finance Department/Treasurer
- Human Resources
- Public Relations
- Food Service
- Transportation
- IT/Technology
- Nurse/Medical
- Maintenance/Facilities
- Teachers
- Board of Education
- Student Council/Student Leadership
- Parents/Parent Organization
- Other School Districts
Strengths

**STRENGTH 1:** Local School District and Local Schools have an effective internal notification/communication procedures during events. Strong Public Information group within the District.

**STRENGTH 2:** The District and Schools have a strong Emergency Operations Plans in place and are actively working to share the Plans and to exercise the plan components.

**STRENGTH 3:** Strong working relationship with Local and County First Responders and community partners.
Areas of Improvement

**AREA 1:** Need to continue to leverage partnerships in Local and County for preparing and planning for events.

**ANALYSIS:** There were planning gaps identified that can be addressed by including first responders and community partners in plan updates and annual exercises.

**AREA 2:** Reunification plans and procedures were identified as an area that schools and the District wanted to work to improve.

**ANALYSIS:** Schools/District identified their reunification plans as an area they did not feel very comfortable in their roles/responsibilities.

**AREA 3:** A planning gap was identified with those District/School employees who are not site based or are new to the District to communicate with them on events happening. Also identified the need to have a communication plan that included 24-hour or off hour contact information.

**ANALYSIS:** Discussion identified the need to update communication platforms to address planning gaps with rotating or new employees as well as having current contact information for District/School command.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue/Area of Improvement</th>
<th>Corrective Action</th>
<th>Capability Element</th>
<th>Primary Responsible Organization</th>
<th>Organization POC</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continue to leverage partnerships in Local and Butler County for preparing and planning for events.</td>
<td>Continue to include community partners in safety meetings</td>
<td>Organization Planning</td>
<td>Local School District</td>
<td>District/School Representative</td>
<td>April 2017</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work on Reunification plans and procedures for Local Schools</td>
<td>Include community partners in any school training and exercises</td>
<td>Planning Training Exercise</td>
<td>Local School District; County Educational Service Center</td>
<td>District/School Representative; Katharine Piaskowy</td>
<td>April 2017</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Include training for planning</td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Local School District; County Educational Service Center</td>
<td>District/School Representative; Katharine Piaskowy</td>
<td>January 2018</td>
<td>December 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Include reunification in exercises</td>
<td>Exercise</td>
<td>Local School District; County Educational Service Center</td>
<td>District/School Representative; Katharine Piaskowy</td>
<td>January 2018</td>
<td>December 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications with rotating or new employees; update current contact information</td>
<td>Evaluate current communication annex</td>
<td>Planning Equipment</td>
<td>Local School District; Local Schools</td>
<td>District/School Representative; Building Principals</td>
<td>April 2017</td>
<td>December 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions?

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(513) 896-2343
PLANNING, PREVENTION, RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Ensuring your children are safe while attending school is a top-priority at each district. That is why the Butler County Educational service Center (BCESC) works tirelessly to make sure we minimize any hazard that can disrupt the learning process. At BCESC, not only do we work to make our districts’ environments secure, but we also recognize the importance of actively engaging and informing parents and kids in making our schools safer. Through working together, we can uncover any issues and then focus on addressing each and every one.

“Part of the Butler County ESC mission is to provide exemplary services to students and families, which is exactly what the Public School Safety Department does for the school districts. Not only do member districts attend safety meetings, but they also receive tailored policies and procedures that will help them develop a strong emergency management program.”

—Katharine Piaskowy, Director of Public School Safety

The BCESC is taking an active step in engaging with administrations, staff, students, parents, and community partners to develop a comprehensive emergency management program.

Member districts receive tailored training and safety plans. The BCESC Public School Safety Team will:

- Work through your All-Hazards Emergency Operations Plan;
- Offer an extensive training program that focuses on schools and school-based incidents;
- Prepare an extensive exercise cycle;
- Work as a liaison with state and local agencies, local municipalities, county officials, and partner school districts; and,
- Act as your lobbyist to ODE.

At BCESC, we commit ourselves to creating a culture of safety and security for our schools in Butler County and southwest Ohio.

For more information, contact Katharine Piaskowy, Director of Public School Safety, at (513) 896-2343 or piaskowyk@bcesc.org.

Contact us for more information about Butler County Educational Service Center programs and services: 400 North Erie Blvd., Suite A • Hamilton, OH 45011 • (513) 887-3710 • www.bcesc.org
QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE TO A SCHOOL TABLETOP EXERCISE

DEFINITION: A verbal walk through or discussion of response procedures (ORC 3313.536 & OAC 3301-5-01).

NUMBER OF FUNCTIONAL CONTENT AREAS: Recommend a minimum of three; Recommend a maximum of five.

SUGGESTED FUNCTIONAL CONTENT: For a discussion based exercise, all functional content areas would be suitable, including post-response content areas.

- Drop, Cover and Hold
- Emergency Communication
- Evacuation
- Family Reunification
- Lockdown
- Medical Response
- Mental Health Services
- Rapid Evacuation
- Reverse Evacuation
- Shelter-in-Place
- Recovery
- Continuity of Operations (COOP)

PLANNING TIME FRAME: At least three (3) months of planning

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:
- Hazardous Materials Spill
- Emergency Communication to stakeholders and community partners
- Recovery operations after an event to include Mental Health Services and damage assessments
- Continuity of Operations during power outage
- Severe Weather/Close School
- Lockdown due to external threat

NOTES:
- Designed to evaluate plans and resolve questions of coordination and roles.
- Normally used to provide District Administration, School Administration, Staff and Teachers the opportunity to evaluate staff coordination, review plan elements, or prepare for a larger exercise.
- No equipment is used during this exercise.
- No actual movement of persons or resources during this exercise.

For more information, contact Katharine Piaskowy, Director of Public School Safety, at (513) 896-2343 or piaskowyk@bcesc.org.
QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE TO A SCHOOL FUNCTIONAL EXERCISE

DEFINITION: A hands-on or physical demonstration of functional or operational capabilities (ORC 3313.536 & OAC 3301-5-01).

NUMBER OF FUNCTIONAL CONTENT AREAS: Recommend a minimum of two; Recommend a maximum of five.

SUGGESTED FUNCTIONAL CONTENT: While all functional content areas would be suitable for this exercise, the following are recommended complimentary pairings:

- Drop, Cover and Hold
- Emergency Communication
- Evacuation
- Family Reunification
- Lockdown
- Reverse Evacuation
- Shelter-in-Place

PLANNING TIME FRAME: Recommend 3-6 months of planning. However, the Functional Exercise may be combined with current school required drills/safety drills.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

- Utilization of Mass Notification System, if applicable, for Evacuation or Reunification
- Shelter in Place for Severe Weather
- Internal Communications for a Lockdown or Reverse Evacuation
- External Communication System Test to request Mutual Aid from other School Districts
- Family Reunification after an event on-campus or off-site
- Evacuation of a school building/bus

NOTES:

- School Incident Command could be activated for this type of exercise in order to show how the command structure manages the function or operation.
- Minimal simulation of physical activities should occur during exercise play.

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QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE TO A LEPC
FULL SALE EXERCISE

DEFINITION: A hands-on or physical test that evaluates the overall district/school emergency management program (ORC 3313.536 & OAC 3301-5-01).

NUMBER OF FUNCTIONAL CONTENT AREAS: Recommend six or more.

SUGGESTED FUNCTIONAL CONTENT:

- Drop, Cover and Hold
- Emergency Communication
- Evacuation
- Family Reunification
- Lockdown
- Medical Response
- Mental Health Services
- Rapid Evacuation
- Reverse Evacuation
- Shelter-in-Place
- Recovery

PLANNING TIME FRAME: As this is complex in scope and nature, 12 – 18 months is recommended to include all relevant community partners.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

- Utilization of Mass Notification System
- Creation and submittal of “TEST” or “DRILL” press release to a Media Distribution List
- Internal communications
- Bus Accident during pick-up or drop-off during school hours
- Mass casualty event during athletics or after school activity

NOTES:

- One exercise in the 3-year cycle must be a full scale exercise.
- Requires the mobilization of personnel and equipment. There is movement of players and resources.
- An Incident Command Post is activated and used to coordinate response functions.
- An actual event could not be used for exercise credit.

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