



Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton-Otsego BOCES District Wide School Safety Plan

PROJECT SAVE (Safe Schools Against Violence in Education)

Introduction

Emergencies and violent incidents in schools are critical issues that must be addressed in an efficient and thoughtful manner. Districts and BOCES are required to develop a District Wide School Safety Plan. The plan is designed to prevent or minimize the effects of serious violent incidents and emergencies, as well as facilitating the coordination of the district/BOCES with local, county, and state resources.

The District Wide Plan is responsive to the needs of all schools/buildings within the district/BOCES and is consistent with the more detailed Emergency Response Plans required at the building level. Districts/BOCES are at risk of a wide variety of acts of violence, natural, and technological disasters. To address these threats, the State of New York has enacted the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) law. This component of Project SAVE is a comprehensive planning effort that addresses risk reduction/prevention, response, and recovery with respect to a variety of emergencies in the BOCES and at its schools.

Section I: General Considerations & Planning Guidelines

A. Purpose

The Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton-Otsego (HFHO) BOCES District Wide School Safety Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17. At the direction of the HFHO BOCES Board of Education, the District Superintendent appointed a BOCES-Wide School Safety Team and charged it with the development and maintenance of the District Wide School Safety Plan.

B. Identification of School Teams

New York Stated Education Law requires that districts and BOCES identify a number of safety teams, with specific responsibilities.

The HFHO BOCES has a BOCES-Wide School Safety Team consisting of, but not limited to, representatives of the Board, Students, Teachers, Administrators, parent organizations; school safety personnel; and, other school personnel. The BOCES-wide School Safety Team is responsible for the development, review, and update of the District Wide School Safety Plan. The members of the team and their positions/affiliations are as follows:

| Member Name | Title |
|--------------------|---|
| Patrick Corrigan | Principal, Pathways Academy |
| Kathy Fox | Director of Technical Education |
| Patricia Frank | Supervisor of Special Education |
| Zane Mahar | Principal of Technical Education |
| Adam Hutchinson | Coordinator of Safety Services |
| Tim Johnston | Supervisor of Special Education |
| Mary Kline | Dir. Of Adult, Early Childhood & Outreach Ed. |
| Roberta Matthews | Director of Special Education & Alternative Education |

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PROJECT SAVE (Safe Schools Against Violence in Education)

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|-------------------|--|
| Dan Parker | Director of Facilities |
| James Picolla | Asst. Superintendent for Administrative Services |
| Jodie Rodriguez | Asst. Superintendent for Business Services |
| James Schmid* | BOCES Board of Education Member |
| Sandra Sherwood | District Superintendent |
| Linda Tharp | BOCES Board of Education Member |
| Patricia Wilson | Supervisor of Special Education |
| *Alternate Member | |

Other identified teams include the Emergency Response, Post-Incidence Response Teams, and each building has an identified Threat Assessment Team. The Emergency Response Team will provide the initial response in all emergencies as defined in this plan. Members of the Post-Incident Response team, following an emergency, will take response actions in order to return students to learning and sense of normalcy as quickly as appropriate. Threat Assessment Teams are responsible for identifying, evaluating, and addressing threats or potential threats to school safety.

C. Chief Emergency Officer

HFHO BOCES' Board of Education has designated a Chief Emergency Officer (CEO). The CEO is an HFHO BOCES employee and is responsible for coordinating communication between Staff and law enforcement and first responders and for ensuring Staff understanding of the district-level safety plan. The CEO shall also be responsible for ensuring completion and yearly update of building-level Emergency Response Plan(s) and that all Safety Plans are submitted to New York State in a timely manner, as required by law.

D. Concept of Operations

The District Wide School Safety Plan shall be directly linked to each building's individual Emergency Response Plan. This District Wide School Safety Plan will guide the development and implementation of each building level Emergency Response Plan.

In the event of an emergency or violent incident, the initial response to all emergencies at an individual building will be by the School Emergency Response Team. Upon the activation of the School Emergency Response Team, the District Superintendent or his/her designee will be notified and, where appropriate, local first responders will also be notified. Emergency response actions, including crisis response, may be supplemented by involving regional resources through established protocols.

E. Plan Review & Public Comment

This plan shall be reviewed and maintained by the BOCES-Wide School Safety Team and reviewed on an annual basis on or before July 1st of each year. Pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17 (e)(3), this plan will be made available for public

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Updated: 8/16/2018, 8/08/2019, XX/XX/2020

PROJECT SAVE (Safe Schools Against Violence in Education)

comment 30 days prior to its adoption. The plan must be formally adopted by the BOCES' Board of Education.

While linked to the District Wide School Safety Plan, Building Level Emergency Response Plans shall be 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 (Building Level Emergency Response Plans are not subject to FOIL). Full copies of the District Wide School Safety Plan and any amendments will be submitted to the New York State Education Department within 30 days of adoption. Building Level Emergency Response Plans will be supplied to both local and State Police within 30 days of adoption.

Section II: Risk Reduction/Prevention & Intervention

A. Prevention/Intervention Strategies

Initiatives that improve the culture and climate in our schools and improve communication at all levels can substantially enhance the ability to prevent negative events from happening. HFHO BOCES has implemented initiatives that serve both as prevention and risk reduction strategies.

Program Initiatives

HFHO BOCES utilizes programs and activities that improve the school climate and communication throughout the school community, and that encourage the reporting of potentially dangerous, suspicious or violent behavior. The following is a partial list of such initiatives:

- Behavior Intervention Planning
- Crisis Prevention Institute Training
- Devereux Student Strengths Assessment
- Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports
- Rapid Responder
- School Intervention Partnership Program
- TIM Academy Training

HFHO BOCES encourages all divisions to develop strategies that support a positive and safe learning environment for Students, such as community involvement, mentoring programs, and schedule adjustment to minimize potential for conflicts or altercations.

Training, Drills, & Exercises

HFHO BOCES will ensure that each division conducts drills and exercises to test the components of their building level plans. Tabletop exercises conducted in coordination, if possible, with local and county level first responders and preparedness officials will be used when live drills are impractical or not sufficient to meet training goals.

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PROJECT SAVE (Safe Schools Against Violence in Education)

As per regulation, four Lockdown drills and eight Evacuation drills will be conducted each school year. Additional drills may be conducted for select response protocols including: Shelter-in-Place, Hold-In-Place, and Lockout.

Staff Development

Staff training conducted annually, and within 30 days of hiring, through the HFHO BOCES Safety Service Staff and HFHO BOCES' Public School Works online training system; including topics such as:

- Dignity for All Students Act Refresher
- Emergency Procedures Overview
- Mental Health Awareness
- Right to Know
- Sexual Harassment Prevention Awareness
- Violence Prevention

Implementation of School Security

All Staff is expected to be vigilant regarding threats against Students and Staff (i.e. bullying/harassment) and immediately report to their respective principal or supervisor any information they have received or observed regarding anything that could be *reasonably* expected to impact the safety and security of anyone in the school community.

Additional Security Implementations include:

- All HFHO BOCES employees are issued photo ID badges that are to be displayed at all times while on HFHO BOCES property to assist visitors, Students, and Staff in identifying employees as well as potential intruders.
- Each division/building will implement a standard procedure of limiting access to their building to the fewest exterior doors as possible.
- A digital video surveillance system is in service at HFHO BOCES to assist in monitoring, deterring and recording activity in high use areas.
- A fob system is in place for access to the buildings from exterior doors.
- Each division/building has a Visitor Policy in place to record non-Staff members who are present in each building. If an unannounced visitor is observed in the hallways without proper identification, Staff may approach and inquire as to a subject's business or contact the main office.
- A fire detection alarm that is linked to a central monitoring station is in service at all HFHO BOCES facilities. These alarms and fire response procedures are tested regularly and consistently with NYS Education Department regulations.
- HFHO BOCES is negotiating a contract with the Herkimer County Sheriff's Department to have a School Resource Officer stationed at its Remington Educational Complex in the 2020-2021 School Year.

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Updated: 8/16/2018, 8/08/2019, XX/XX/2020

PROJECT SAVE (Safe Schools Against Violence in Education)

Vital Educational Agency Information

HFHO BOCES maintains information for each division/building in a central location, including: school population, number of Staff, transportation needs, and the business and home numbers of key officials.

B. Early Detection of Potentially Violent Behaviors

HFHO BOCES recognizes the importance of early recognition and intervention into conflicts and potentially violent or threatening behaviors (including suicide). Certain emotional and behavioral signs, when viewed in context, can signal a troubled Student. Staff is trained to recognize the signs that can be used to signal a Student who may need help. The more signs that a Student exhibits the more likely it is that he/she may need intervention. Early warning signs could include, but are not limited to:

- Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks
- Sudden overwhelming fear for no reason
- Involvement in many fights or desire to badly hurt others
- Severe out-of-control behavior that can hurt oneself or others
- Not eating, throwing up, or severe, visible, weight loss
- Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities
- Extreme difficulty concentrating or staying still that puts the Student in physical danger or causes problems in the classroom
- Use of drugs or alcohol
- Severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships
- Drastic changes in the Student's behavior or personality
- Preoccupation with illness, death, or catastrophic events

Students, parents, guardians, and/or persons in parental relation to the Student, and Staff are encouraged to share information regarding any Student conflicts, threats, or troubling behaviors with the appropriate school Administrator so that an investigation can commence in a timely fashion, if deemed necessary.

This communication may extend beyond HFHO BOCES personnel to include law enforcement, mental health professionals, etc., when deemed appropriate and with existing legal parameters.

C. Hazard Identification

The list of sites of potential emergencies include: WEB Complex and site, Remington Educational Complex, Central Administrative Offices, buses, off-site field trips, and sites adjacent to BOCES properties. Each individual Student-occupied site has assessed their own site for unique hazards and has documented them in their respective Building Level plans.

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Section III: Response

A. Notification & Activation

Incident Commanders are authorized to and will initiate contact with the appropriate first responders in the event of an emergency or violent incident. If appropriate the Incident Commander will call 911. In a crisis situation involving a violent incident, any member of BOCES' Staff should call 911 and notify the Incident Commander, as soon as safely possible.

The methods used for notifications of an emergency or an act of violence include the following possible forms of communication: Emergency Services, telephone, email, HFHO BOCES Website, PA system, local media, and others as appropriate or necessary.

The plans may specify that in the event of an emergency, or impending emergency, HFHO BOCES will notify Students' home districts as means of contacting parents, guardians, and/or persons in parental relation to the Student, rather than HFHO BOCES contacting them directly.

B. Situational Responses

Multi-Hazard Response

In the event of a catastrophic emergency (fire, building collapse, etc.) the evacuation of the building and the preservation of life is the only consideration. It is anticipated that specific procedures outlined in this plan, particularly as they relate to notifications, line of authority, etc. may be violated in cases involving catastrophic emergencies.

HFHO BOCES' buildings each have a Building Level Emergency Response Plan, which include specific procedures for a variety of emergencies. However, there are many variables that could impact the manner in which the Building Level Emergency Response Team responds to a particular occurrence. Given these variables, it is impractical to attempt to anticipate the steps needed for a response to every conceivable scenario. Responses focus on a few critical decisions that need to be made in every emergency to prevent injury and loss of life.

In the event that a situation poses a significant enough risk that evacuation of the building and remaining on school grounds is determined to not be adequate, Students and Staff will be evacuated to a pre-determined off-site location and reunification may not take place at a HFHO BOCES or home district site.

Responses to Acts of Violence: Implied or Direct Threats

HFHO BOCES has policies and procedures in place for responding to implied or direct threats of violence from Students, Teachers, other school personnel, as well visitors to HFHO BOCES' facilities (this includes threats against themselves and suicide); including a range of disciplinary action to be used when responding to such

PROJECT SAVE (Safe Schools Against Violence in Education)

threats or acts. The following steps may be taken in the event of an implied or direct threat of violence:

- Use of Staff trained in de-escalation techniques.
- Building Principal informed of implied or direct threat
- Level of threat determined with input from District Superintendent/Designee.
- If necessary, law enforcement will be contacted.
- Monitor situation, adjust response if necessary, and possibly include Emergency Response Team.

Acts of Violence/Crises

HFHO BOCES policies and procedures for responding to acts of violence/crises involving Students, Teachers, other Staff, and visitors to HFHO BOCES' facilities will be included in the Building-Level Emergency Response Plans. The following steps may be taken in the event of an act of violence or crisis:

- Inform Building Principal, appropriate Administrator, and/or Incident Commander.
- Determine level of threat with Superintendent/Designee.
- Isolate immediate area and evacuate, if appropriate and the situation warrants.
- Initiate appropriate Emergency Response and contact first responders, if necessary.
- Monitor situation, adjust response if necessary, initiate early dismissal, sheltering, or evacuation, if appropriate.

Response Protocols

HFHO BOCES selection of appropriate responses to emergencies, including potentially responding to situations like bomb threats, hostage taking, intrusions, kidnappings, power supply disruption, and severe weather may be included in the Building Level Emergency Response Plans. The following protocols are provided as possible examples:

- Identification of decision-makers
- Plans to safeguard Students and Staff
- Procedures to provide transportation, if necessary
- Procedures to notify parents, guardians, and/or persons in parental relation to the Student, and the media
- Debriefing procedures

Arrangements for Obtaining Emergency Assistance from Local Government

Arrangements for obtaining assistance during emergencies from first responders and local governmental agencies include contacting 911 immediately. Additional support can be obtained by contacting Herkimer County Sheriff, the NYS Police, local Police and Fire Departments, and Herkimer County Emergency Services.

Additionally, HFHO BOCES has arranged for emergency responder access to locked buildings and grounds during emergencies.

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Updated: 8/16/2018, 8/08/2019, XX/XX/2020

PROJECT SAVE (Safe Schools Against Violence in Education)

Procedures for Obtaining Advice & Assistance from Local Government Officials *See Above*

Resources Available for Use in an Emergency

HFHO BOCES resources that may be available during an emergency include all of our facilities at the WEB Complex and Remington and other vehicles and heavy equipment.

Procedures to Coordinate the Use of Resources & Manpower during Emergencies

HFHO BOCES will use the Incident Command System to coordinate the use of resources and manpower during emergencies.

Protective Action Options

Plans for taking the following actions in response to an emergency where appropriate will be including in each building's Emergency Response Plan: school cancellations, early dismissal, evacuation, shelter-in-place, hold-in-place, lockout, and lockdown.

Section IV: Recovery

A. District Support for Buildings

After an incident, the appropriate Emergency Response Team will initiate the Crisis Plan. Necessary resources will be deployed in order to support the Emergency Response and Post-Incident Teams.

B. Disaster Mental Health Services

Specific mental health services needed will be addressed by the appropriate Emergency Response Team as outlined in the Crisis Plan.