SHARING IDEAS & RESOURCES
to Keep Our Nation’s Schools Safe!

VOLUME II
INTRODUCTION

By now you have read the headlines, watched the videos and heard the stories. Shootings and violent incidents are occurring in schools and communities across the country. While people compile, assess, verify and/or dispute statistics, the drumbeat of violence escalates and media reports show shocking details. Against this backdrop, it is easy to conclude that “Somebody needs to do something.”

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center (NLECTC) want you to know that many people are doing many positive things to address the problems. We want you to know who they are and what they are doing.

Like the news media, we are sharing stories. But our stories have better outcomes. We are chronicling the success stories amid all the bad news. We are bringing you the technologies and strategies that have worked for real people across the country to prepare, respond and recover when violence occurs. These stories come straight from those who are making schools safer—the law enforcement officers and other first responders, school administrators, students and community members who can tell you what worked for them. The good news is we’ve got enough success stories to fill two published volumes and to continually update www.schoolsafetyinfo.org, NLECTC’s website dedicated to school safety news, information and technology. That’s a lot of good news to offset the bad.

In this second edition of Sharing Ideas & Resources to Keep Our Nation’s School Safe!, you will read about school safety-related programs from federal agencies such as the FBI and the U.S. Department of Education; efforts at the state level; and cooperative efforts in local communities. New projects and ideas range from smartphone apps to shared camera systems, training classes to online videos, direct radio connections to devices that secure doors.

NIJ and NLECTC are proud to provide the resources you need to gather information to keep your communities safe. While we neither finance nor endorse specific products, we introduce you to people who have successfully used new tools to address growing problems. And, we encourage you to investigate and decide what is right for you and what has a place in your school setting.
While it is true that incidents are occurring with alarming frequency, it is also true that first responders, school staff, students, parents and community leaders are stepping up to the plate to work together to combat violence and provide safe and healthy learning environments.

Continue to use NIJ, NLECTC and SchoolSafetyInfo.org as resources in your local efforts to combat violence and enhance school safety. We will keep reporting the good news that the good guys are generating through the innovative use of technology.

Keep Safe,

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SchoolSafetyInfo.org received a 2014 Communicator Award of Distinction and a 2014 APEX Grand Award.
CHAPTER 1

CRASE TRAINING HELPS SCHOOLS FILL THE GAPS IN SCHOOL SAFETY PLANS

By Becky Lewis
February 2014

Even above the noise of the day’s first lunch period, the sound of gunshots near the school’s office can be heard in the cafeteria. As the loudspeakers call a lockdown and classroom doors slam shut all over the building, the teachers on lunch duty quickly open the room’s emergency exits and send the students racing outside. Some may remember to gather at the designated meeting spot two blocks away, others may continue to run home, or go to another location in the neighborhood.
Regardless of where they run, all of them will reach safety, because their faculty and administrators took Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events (CRASE) training offered by their local law enforcement agency, and incorporated the principles of that training into the school’s safety plan.

In 2013, Texas State University added a third component (along with active shooter and medical assistance) to its training package for law enforcement officers. The CRASE module, offered free of charge through grant funding from the Bureau of Justice Assistance (a component of the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice), builds on the Avoid, Deny, Defend (ADD) strategy developed through Texas State’s Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) Program in 2004. The one-day classroom-based training teaches law enforcement officers how to present strategies and guidance for surviving an active shooter event; this train-the-trainer course addresses topics to include the history and prevalence of active shooter events, the role of professional guardians, civilian response options, medical issues and drills.

“When it comes to dealing with active shooter incidents, the focus has been on increasing the speed of the law enforcement response. However, even when officers reach the scene quickly, casualties have still been high, which shows the importance of training civilians to do what they can to delay the shooter and prevent casualties,” says Dr. Pete Blair, an associate professor of criminal justice at the university and one of the course’s developers. “The basis of the training is that while lockdown is a good option, it’s not the only thing administrators need to consider.”

In order of preference, the ADD strategy says to first run away and get out of the building (Avoid); if that is not possible, close and lock doors and put up barricades (Deny); and finally, if the shooter enters your space, fight back (Defend.)

Blair says CRASE does not teach specific hand-to-hand combat strategies, and it emphasizes that various state and local jurisdictions vary in their policies on fighting back, particularly when it comes to involving older high school students: “We do talk about positioning yourself in the room. Traditional advice during a lockdown is to stand as far away from the door as possible, but this leaves you vulnerable. We recommend that teachers position themselves near the door so they can engage the shooter, and to remember not to fight fair. This is not about who’s the toughest kid on the playground, this is about who gets to go home that day.”

Before beginning to teach law enforcement officers how to take the ADD approach back to their communities, staff from Texas State University took the training to some local school districts as part of course development. They then began providing on-site training at law enforcement agencies in Texas, and are
expanding nationwide in 2014. Any agency interested in participating in the training only needs to provide a classroom that will hold up to 50 students, who will then be able to spread their knowledge throughout local school districts.

“It’s really designed to fill the gaps that exist around the standard lockdown response. Administrators find lockdown attractive because it includes accountability, but a responsibility for accountability doesn’t override the need to keep students safe. At Sandy Hook, they had planned as well as they possibly could, and they were still finding children scattered around the neighborhood a couple of hours later, because they had the chance to run away from the school, and they did,” Blair says. “This training will help administrators learn to plan for multiple eventualities.”

You can find also find articles about Level I and Level II ALERRT training classes (“Meeting an Active Threat Head-On” and “After the Shooting Stops,”) on the SchoolSafetyInfo.org website. For more information on the program as a whole, visit http://alerrt.org or contact Communications Director Diana Hendricks at (512) 245-1744, email hendricks@alerrt.com
In addition to its ongoing training programs, the School Safety Advocacy Council (SSAC) increased its emphasis on school safety assessments in 2013, helping schools focus on strengths, not weaknesses.

According to SSAC President Sean Burke, the organization performed approximately 70 assessments during the course of the year, ranging from the largest school district in the country (Los Angeles Unified) to one-room schoolhouses. They join dozens of other schools that have used SSAC for school safety assessments in the past 15 years.
“Unlike some for-profit businesses, we don’t play the ‘Gotcha Game.’ They really focus on the negatives and that does a school no good. We come in and do a thorough assessment using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design [CPTED] principles. We review all their policies and their emergency plans, and we give the school a comprehensive report,” Burke says. “We highlight the things a school is doing right in addition to the things that need improvement. For the areas that need improvement, we give them several options, and if possible, they’re either low-cost or free. We know that budgets are tight.”

For example, one school in Illinois asked for an assessment after getting an estimate of $130,000 to secure its front door; SSAC came up with a solution that secured the door just as well for $2,000. SSAC uses the services of a professional and does charge schools enough to cover expenses, but still far less than they would pay a for-profit business.

In addition to the assessments, SSAC has increased its assistance to schools performing one-to-one technology rollouts of devices such as iPads and laptops during 2013: “There are so many aspects of safety that schools don’t even consider. We work with them to make sure they consider ‘digital citizenship’ related to proper use of technology, and mobile device management that will track stolen devices and even wipe them clean from a central location. They also need a plan on how to safely store the devices during school vacations,” Burke says, adding that he believes SSAC is the only organization in the country providing this type of service.

Another service provided by SSAC involves putting the organization on retainer to provide a specified number of hours of training annually to a school district, covering subjects such as emergency management, overall school safety and teacher concerns about being safe in the classroom. SSAC, which has trained more than 100,000 law enforcement officers and education professionals in the United States and abroad, also offers other specialized services and trainings on a regular basis:

**Trainings**

- Basic School Resource Officer Certification.
- Advanced School Resource Officer Certification.
- School Safety Leadership & Supervision.
• School Law & Liability.
• Understanding the Threat of Terrorism to Our Schools.
• Gangs 101: “What Every Educator Must Know.”
• PTA & Parent Education Programs.
• Conducting School Safety Surveys -Train the Trainer.
• Media Relations for the School Administrator.
• Customized In-Service Training Programs.

**Specialized Anti-Bullying Training**

• Bullycide in America.
• Bullying: “What Schools Need to Know.”
• Cyber & Electronic Bullying.
• School Bullying: “What Is Your Liability.”
• Customized PTA/Parent Trainings.
Professional Services

- School Safety Assessments.
- School Bullying Climate Assessment.
- Tabletop Crisis Scenarios.
- Full Emergency Drills.
- Emergency Policy/Procedure Development.
- School Safety & Bullying Expert Witness.
- Testimony & Legal Services.

In addition to providing training, SSAC holds two national conferences each year, one of them the largest conference on bullying in the United States (held every February). The agenda for the other 2014 event, set for July 28-August 1 in Orlando, focused on emergency management. Presentations included one by representatives of the Washoe County School District Police on the shooting at Sparks Middle School on Oct. 23, 2013; another by subject-matter expert Don Alwes on the use of tactical teams; and one by Burke on sensible ideas for school safety.

“Common sense, low-cost ways to keep your school safe is one of our focuses right now. Also, a unique thing about SSAC is that all of the instructors we employ are subject-matter experts who remain active in the field. That’s what sets us apart,” Burke says. “There are training programs out there that just focus on school staff, and trainings that just focus on law enforcement, but we bring together the community, the schools and local law enforcement to address school safety and bullying. We see school safety as a community-wide responsibility.”

For more information, visit http://www.schoolsafety911.org/index.html; phone (888) 485-2440; or email admin@schoolsafety911.org.
School resource officers (SROs) are more than just police officers assigned full time to a school: They are the immediate first responders to any incidents that happen on campus.

“The SRO is always the immediate first responder to any and all incidents that happen on campus,” says Kevin Quinn, president of the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO). “That’s a very critical aspect of the job. There’s no response time, because we’re already here. In the time it would take somebody in the office to pick up a phone, call 911 and tell a dispatcher, who would then relay that
information to an officer who isn’t familiar with the campus, I would have already walked down the hall and been on the scene.”

SROs play two other key roles in addition to covering their beats at the school. They visit classrooms and make presentations on school safety, traffic laws, general law and crime prevention; and they confer with students, parents and family members on legal problems and crime prevention.

NASRO, founded in 1991, provides training and other resources to help SROs perform all of those roles better. With more than 3,000 members around the world, the association offers basic and advanced training for SROs and managers, as well as specialized training in legal issues affecting school safety. Quinn says that in 2013, the number of requests for training doubled compared to 2012, with 2,000 officers receiving training in 2013.

“Right before the tragedy at Sandy Hook, we had launched a major revision to our advanced curriculum, and we rewrote the basic one in summer 2014,” says Quinn. Officers who have already taken the basic course would not necessarily benefit from repeating the revised session, but those who took advanced training several years ago might consider participating in the new iteration.

“The previous version of the training often focused on the first-hand knowledge of a particular instructor, but the new version features an intense curriculum written by nationally recognized subject-matter experts,” Quinn says. “We added a lot of new and updated information on technology, put in new information on legal issues, threat assessment and incident command, and implemented an entirely new block on social media.”

That new social media block focuses on remaining aware and up to date on the constantly evolving applications students use to communicate with each other while hiding that communication from parents and teachers. In addition to the new training, a social media block has been added to the agenda of presentations at the annual NASRO conference, and members can also learn about social media and other developing trends in the field through the association’s quarterly *Journal of School Safety*. And members and non-members alike can download the 2012 report *To Protect and Educate: The School Resource Officer and the Prevention of Violence in Schools* from the NASRO website. This report focuses on explaining the role that SROs play in supporting educational objectives while helping to keep schools safer, all as part of a team approach involving collaboration among law enforcement and school administration.

“Our executive director, Mo Canady, spends a lot of time trying to get the school safety message out to the different states and in Washington, D.C. The
COPS [Community Oriented Policing Services] Office funded a number of jurisdictions to hire SROs in 2013, and every officer funded under that grant will receive NASRO training paid for by the COPS Office,” Quinn says. “This guarantees that all of those officers receive proper training.” (The COPS Office awarded approximately $127 million in 266 grants as part of the FY 2013 COPS Hiring Program, with priority given to jurisdictions planning to hire SROs.)

“I wish the Sandy Hook shooting never happened and very few people knew that we existed,” says Quinn, who wrote an opinion piece for CNN as part of a special series on school safety that ran in mid-January 2013 (http://schoolsofthoughtblogs.cnn.com/2013/01/17/my-view-more-school-resource-officers-more-safe-school-communities/?hpt=hp_bn1). “Since it did happen, we want SROs and law enforcement agencies everywhere to know what we are all about and that we’re here to help.”

For more information on NASRO, its trainings and its annual conference, visit the NASRO website at http://www.nasro.org or call (888) 316–2776.
The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) offers extensive resources related to handling active shooter incidents on its website, resources from within the FBI itself and from a number of other federal and partner agencies. The Active Shooter/Mass Casualty Incidents page notes that “[t]he successful prevention of these active shooter incidents lies with a wide range of public and private entities all working together.” And the Bureau doesn’t merely dispense that as advice, it implements it as practice with co-authored products such as guides to developing emergency operations plans and ongoing assistance, on request, to college and university threat assessment teams.
The FBI; the U.S. Departments of Education (ED), Homeland Security, and Health and Human Services (HHS); the U.S. Department of Justice’s Community Oriented Policing Services Office; and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) teamed up to create Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans and Guide for Developing High-Quality Emergency Operations Plans for Institutions of Higher Education, both released in 2013. Special Agent Christopher Combs, Section Chief of the Strategic Information & Operations Center at FBI Headquarters, describes the content of the guides as “all-hazard planning at the macro level. They help schools make plans to deal with any crisis.”

The combined input from the various agencies helped ensure that the guides reach their target audience of school administrators instead of ending up with a law enforcement or emergency management agency or health care agency focus. Representatives from the different federal agencies provided different portions of the content, then reviewed and refined each other’s work.

“I think the whole plan is great. FEMA, Education, everyone did a nice job with their sections. The FBI and Education working together on an important issue like this led to a great partnership. We learned a lot from them and I hope they learned something from us as well,” Combs said.

One section for which the FBI provided content focuses on handling an active shooter situation. Combs says it advocates the “Run Hide Fight” approach, which represents a switch in strategy for secondary and elementary schools and has caused some confusion.

“This strategy is aimed at the adults in a school, not at elementary school children. The first best thing to do is always to run. If you can’t run away, then hide,” Combs says. “Locking the doors, covering the windows, we support all of that, but if a shooter gets into the closet where you’re hiding with the children, you have to decide what to do. We’ve seen evidence that fighting is the best option.”

For example, he said, occupants of one classroom at Virginia Tech fought at the door to keep the shooter from coming in. Although those individuals who blocked the door were shot, the percentage of individuals in that room who were shot was much less than in the other classrooms: “That activity saved lives. It’s not a pretty plan but nothing in this scenario is pretty. Fighting back is your best last option.”
The whole issue of whether to fight back might be avoided by prevention, and Combs says that the guide for institutions of higher education places a great deal of emphasis on threat assessment teams. Made up of members from various disciplines such as campus police, the dean’s office, health care services and so on, the team members meet to talk about individuals whose behavior has caused concern. Through this type of assessment, patterns can emerge, sometimes indicating that a student’s problems have been noticed by professors, security and others.

“This came out of the Virginia Tech after action report, when it came out that several people had noticed the shooter had issues, but no one connected the dots,” he says. “It’s really about getting help for troubled individuals. The vast majority of the time it can be handled within the school, but occasionally they call us or another outside law enforcement agency because they’re really concerned.”

If an institution requests FBI assistance, agents work with local and campus law enforcement to do an analysis and make recommendations, with a goal of putting all available resources toward stopping something before it happens. Combs says that the FBI did 150 consultations on people of concern in 2013, adding that figure does not mean the FBI stopped 150 active shooter incidents, but the Bureau did help troubled individuals receive assistance.

One resource that both schools and law enforcement can use to ensure that information that might help troubled individuals is shared appropriately is handouts on Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPPA) regulations. The handouts, developed with ED and HHS, are available as PDFs on the FBI website, and provide easy-to-read summaries that clarify what schools can and cannot report under these confidentiality laws.

“We did an initial print run and quickly ran out of stock, the demand was so great,” Combs says. “We are trying to find funding to print more, but we encourage agencies to print out copies to meet their needs.”

Visit the FBI’s Active Shooter/Mass Casualty Incidents page at http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cirg/active-shooter-and-mass-casualty-incidents
If a problem persists at the same level for nearly 10 years, it may not be getting any worse, but it’s also not getting any better. Without a change in approach, the status quo might go on indefinitely.

When it comes to preventing bullying in our nation’s schools, the U.S. Department of Education and its Office of Safe and Healthy Students is taking steps toward ensuring that status quo comes to an end.

In partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the U.S. Department of Education released a
School Discipline Guidance Package in January 2014 aimed at helping states, districts and schools develop practices and strategies to enhance school climate, and ensure that those policies and practices comply with federal law. In addition to a “Dear Colleague” letter from Education Secretary Arne Duncan, the package includes A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline, Directory of Federal School Climate and Discipline Resources and Compendium of School Discipline Laws and Regulations, and can be downloaded from http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/index.html.

According to David Esquith, director of ED’s Office of Safe and Healthy Students, the most recent data issued jointly by the Departments of Education and Justice indicate that the number of students ages 12-18 who reported being bullied at school has not changed significantly since 2005: “Despite the fact that schools have been implementing an array of anti-bullying programs for a number of years and states have passed anti-bullying laws, our most recent data suggest that we’re not making significant progress in preventing bullying. As a result, we are encouraging a holistic approach to disruptive behaviors like bullying. Our new School Climate Transformation Grants will support school districts and state educational agencies in their efforts to improve school climate and enhance social and emotional competencies. Students who are better able to regulate their own emotions and behaviors, empathize with others, and respect their peers and teachers are less likely to bully.”

“While our first priority must be protecting students who are victims of bullying, efforts to prevent bullying using a punishment-based approach have not proven effective to date in reducing the incidence of bullying. The trend to criminalize some behaviors that occur in school can complicate our efforts to promote a positive school climate, respect and kindness,” Esquith says.

And he believes that well-trained school resource officers (SROs) can contribute significantly to a positive approach to improving the school climate. Esquith spoke on that role and on school safety in general at the National Association of School Resource Officers conference in July 2014. Esquith says that adult mentors whom students can trust play a key role in improving students’ abilities to respect themselves and others, and SROs can prove extremely valuable in establishing those types of relationships.

This new approach and the new discipline guidance package are only two of a number of projects and programs related to school safety, security and discipline in which the Office of Safe and Healthy Students plays a role. These include
several grant programs aimed at reducing violence and bullying; a multi-government agency project to develop Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans (http://rems.ed.gov/docs/REMS_K-12_Guide_508.pdf) and Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans for Institutions of Higher Education (http://rems.ed.gov/docs/REMS_IHE_Guide_508.pdf); and promoting the Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS.org), a program of ED’s Office of Special Education Programs. PBIS promotes the idea that all teachers, students and staff are involved in all settings to clearly articulate, and give instruction on, expected behaviors.

“A number of SROs in schools where they use the PBIS framework feel very positively about it. An SRO can definitely be an important staff member when it comes to implementing the PBIS framework,” Esquith says.

David Esquith has been the director of the Office of Safe and Healthy Students, an agency formerly known as the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, since Jan. 30, 2012. The office reports to the assistant secretary for the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. For more information, visit http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/oshs/index.html?exp=2
The facts laid out in the Incident Command Post Briefing sound grim indeed: senior boy with a weapon and an unknown amount of ammunition, a teacher and 20 students held hostage in a second-floor classroom. Although the first responders and SWAT team members have some knowledge of the interior based on an active shooter drill held three months earlier, they don’t have to rely on their memories alone. Large-format maps provided by the New Hampshire Department of Safety, complete with floor plans and color-coding, fill in the details.
“Following the events at Sandy Hook Elementary, Gov. Maggie Hassan met with senior staff and asked us what we could do to be proactive about school safety,” says Sean Goodwin, GIS administrator for the Department of Safety’s Division of Emergency Services. “Our agency operates with the philosophy that when the emergency or disaster occurs, you need to already have the data. So, we implemented a project to put printed images of all schools in the state into large-format maps and get them into law enforcement hands. We set a goal, we established a vision, we put everything into motion and we delivered it on time.”

Delivering on time meant that by the end of 2013, each of the state’s 207 local law enforcement agencies, as well as all regional SWAT teams, had a map set for every school in their jurisdiction. The project rolled out in stages, first for the state’s 78 public high schools, then the 83 middle schools and finally the 315 elementary schools. The Department of Safety will include the state’s 197 private schools in the project as well. During 2014, the project will continue by providing each jurisdiction with electronic PDF files for all schools in their jurisdiction, which could then be accessed via email, smartphone and tablet, as well as shared with local fire departments and EMS.

Using in-house data and equipment, the Department of Safety met with local law enforcement to design a geographic data and production model applicable to every jurisdiction in New Hampshire and thus provide a tangible resource for first responders to use in school emergencies, Goodwin says. Map sets cost approximately $45 each to prepare, and include:

- Incident Command view (1 inch = 200 feet), a facility-centered orientation that provides location awareness and labels for surrounding roads.
- Campus View (1 inch = 100 feet), identifying campus-specific features (areas for staging, evacuation, traffic and access control, search and rescue) by using an approximate 1-acre reference grid.
- Tactical View (1 inch = 25 feet), with selected building areas labeled.
- Tactical Interior, similar to Tactical View with the addition of black-and-white floor plans, access points and other site-specific features. (This view is available only if the school system superintendent provided floor plans to the Department of Safety).

“One of the challenges going forward will be getting other people involved to ensure that the data is updated. We’ll need a big push to ensure that any changes in the buildings, in the floor plans, are provided to us,” Goodwin says. The
aerial imagery behind the project came from a data collection project conducted jointly by the state Departments of Safety and Transportation in 2010. An update to that project is scheduled to take place in 2015.

“We’ll update the Tactical Interior maps more frequently if a school wants to add more information. We can do a ground data collection and update their maps for them,” Goodwin says. “We knew we could provide everybody with a baseline level, and for those that want to invest and add to it, we’ll go forward. We do recognize that everybody may not have the resources to dedicate to it.”

Whether or not those local school system resources provided input for a Tactical Interior View, the response from the state’s law enforcement agencies has been positive: “It gives them a tool they’ve never had before. The maps are detailed and large enough to spread across a table – or the hood of a car!”

For more information on the New Hampshire Department of Safety’s mapping project, contact Sean Goodwin at sgoodwin@e911.nh.gov.
The principal’s voice comes over the loudspeakers: “This is a lockdown. This is a lockdown.” The students crowding the bleachers for the annual homecoming pep rally stare at each other, confused. A lockdown? But they’re outdoors. Do they return to the school building? Run for the nearby woods? Get under the bleachers?

Fortunately for the safety of those students and their teachers, the lockdown was only a drill. A drill that showed a weakness in the school’s safety plan, and a need to address their confusion and make changes.
“Lives may someday depend on everyone’s knowing what they need to do in the event of an emergency. If you have a plan, if you train to the plan and drill to the plan, you will see things that need to be tweaked. That’s the key to making certain it’s relevant and not just a checkmark you make on a list,” says Dr. Victoria Calder, director of the Texas School Safety Center at Texas State University (TxSSC). “We encourage schools to drill at times other than when students are sitting in their homerooms and they can take attendance. We’re also aware, and we respect, that schools have a job to do, and that is to educate students. We don’t want to burden them with something time-consuming and tedious that distracts them from that.”

TxSSC, launched shortly after the school shooting at Columbine in 1999, serves as the state’s central location for the dissemination of safety and security information, including research, training and technical assistance for K-12 schools and junior colleges. The largest center of its type in the nation, TxSSC receives funding through a direct appropriation through Texas State University and also through grants.

“At the terrible tragedy at Sandy Hook, we were contacted by several other states that wanted to know how we’re organized and what the Center does,” Calder says. “We’re ready and willing to answer any questions other states want to ask. We’ve gotten phone calls about using our materials and we want other states to know that all of the materials on our website are available for their use.”

The Center, located at Texas State University in San Marcos, recently redesigned and reorganized their website (http://txssc.txstate.edu/), adding more information and, at the same time, creating a cleaner look and presentation of training materials in context. Calder says because Texas includes approximately 1,025 school districts, TxSSC looks to provide universal materials and services that local districts can adapt to meet their own needs. The Center also offers a number of regional training programs throughout the state and trains on school safety at numerous statewide conferences geared toward educators, first responders and stakeholders.

In addition to being adaptable to local needs, Calder says all TxSSC materials must be “new, true and interesting;” that is, they need to be current, stem from a valid source and contain information that schools need and want to know.

“Everything we produce is based on a multi-hazard approach. We deal with all three types of hazards: natural hazards such as wildfires, floods, tornadoes or hurricanes; technological hazards such as the fertilizer plant explosion in West, pipeline explosions, train derailments and school bus accidents; and human
hazards such as violence and bullying,” she says. That approach is evident in the wide range of publications, programs and tools available on the website, which address areas such as drug, tobacco and alcohol use; bullying; school emergency management; and digital safety. “Before You Text,” a free online course, can be, and is, accessed by youth around the country.

“They don’t understand that once you put something on the web, it’s there for all time. It can affect whether you get into college, it can affect your future job prospects. Many educators, including those in other states, are using all or part of the course in the classroom as well,” Calder says. “Also, Texas judges have the discretion to require youth to successfully complete the course in lieu of a much stiffer legal penalty.”

Another tool frequently used outside the state is “When Seconds Count,” a 20-minute video on dealing with an active shooter situation that can be viewed at http://vimeo.com/14621179. Officers from other states, and even other countries, have attended the annual Texas School-Based Law Enforcement (TxBLE) Conference. In 2013, Calder says more than 650 individuals, mainly from Texas but also from other states, participated in training on the unique challenges experienced by law enforcement officers that work with students. And the Center’s development of a youth preparedness summer camp that includes Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training, community-specific emergency action planning and leadership development has been hailed as a model and won a national award from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
“Maybe that’s how some of these other states knew to reach out to us, because of our connection with FEMA and our contributions to national publications. Or maybe it’s just word of mouth,” Calder says. “But whatever the reason, when it comes to school safety, we are here to help.”

For more information, contact Dr. Victoria Calder at (512) 245-8082, email vc16@txstate.edu.
The forms come into the school’s Tipline portal on a steady basis, two one day, three the next. Similar in content, but different enough to tell they come from different children. They all report the same problem: bullying. Bullying in the third grade. No wrongdoer is named, but the tips provide enough information to let administrators know there’s a problem they need to address. A problem that could have gone unnoticed without the help of the Kentucky Center for School Safety’s STOP! tipline.
Implemented as a pilot project in late 2013, the free tipline service will continue rolling out to schools across the state throughout 2014. The Kentucky Center for School Safety (KCSS) provides STOP! (Safety Tipline, Online Prevention) through a portal on its website that serves as a central “post office,” with tips going directly to designated individuals at participating schools. KCSS received no additional funding nor hired any additional staff to use in implementing the project.

“We are not going to be the Cyber Tipline Police. We’re just the conduit,” says Karen McCuiston, director of the KCSS Resource Center. “We’ve been working on this for several years, because schools wanted to implement something like this but they had no funding for it. If they funded this, they would have to cut something else. We already pay a small hosting fee to run the website, and we worked hard to find a way to make STOP! work through that portal.”

KCSS originally considered creating a database, but decided against it due to concerns about hacking. Additional concerns about confidentiality led to the development of forms that send the information straight to designated individuals at the school. (Some school districts are also working on partnerships with their local 911 dispatch to implement 24/7 monitoring.) McCuiston emphasizes this is a tipline, not a suicide hotline nor a replacement for 911.

“I love that our children have grown up with ‘cyber in their pocket,’ but they’ve gotten to the point where they don’t know how to communicate face to face. Since that’s how they are, we have to meet them there. Some schools have tip boxes in the cafeteria or the library, but we know that kids like to use their phones, their tablets, their computers. Now they can leave tips 24/7 and they don’t have to worry about whether someone will recognize their handwriting or try to figure out what to say to a counselor,” she says. “We feel this could be game-changing. They can tell about their problem or try to help someone else.”

Although the tipline can be accessed through the KCSS website (http://www.ky.css.org/stop/index.php), which leads to links for each participating school district, the main entry to the portal occurs through a replication of the STOP! logo on each school district’s website. McCuiston says a lot of effort went into making the portal easy to navigate, with separate forms for tips on bullying, violence and other issues; these forms include both drop-down menus and free form text fields. Although built mainly for the use of students at all grade levels, school staff and the community at large also can access STOP! through a school district website. KCSS also provides a number of supplemental resources to participating schools, including both black-and-white and color versions of a brochure,
posters, a PowerPoint presentation, a video, a routing list and more. Feedback from the seven pilot project districts – which range from larger districts with multiple high schools to one of the smallest districts in the state, from an affluent district to one where nearly all of the students receive free lunch – helped fine-tune STOP! prior to its more general release. No school district can come online without first going through training, and McCuiston says KCSS has a waiting list of schools that want to take the training and start using STOP!

“We’re excited that we’re giving schools one more piece of a comprehensive school safety program, but it is just one small piece. If you put this up and think that’s all it takes, you are missing the mark so widely,” says McCuiston, who had just started a position as Public Relations/Grant Writer with the McCracken County School District when the Heath High School shooting took place in 1997. A young man there killed three students and injured five others.

“We did have a lot of people tell us that you’re just asking for problems,” she says, adding that KCSS carefully vetted STOP! through its lawyers before launching the project. “At the end of the day, I just keep seeing a child who couldn’t report something. If this makes one child feel that somebody did something to help them, we’ve succeeded. We feel it can be revolutionary if kids use it. Maybe some of them will be able to say that it really made a difference.”

For more information on the project, contact Karen McCuiston at (270) 809-5091 or email kmccuiston@murraystate.edu.
The call goes out from dispatch: Armed intruder at “ABC Elementary School.” Nearby officers quickly move toward the school, accessing the view from security cameras on their mobile devices, calling up floor plans and scanning the school's layout while in route. Thanks to this instant access, they don’t have to go in blind; instead, they come prepared with vital information.

While school system administrators and the Baltimore County Police hope the above scenario never happens in their area, thanks to the One View System installed in the county’s elementary schools prior to the
start of the 2013-2014 school year, officers would indeed be able to access camera feeds and floor plans should such an incident occur. At the same time, administrators at both county police headquarters and the school administration offices would also be able to access the same information in real time.

In the immediate aftermath of the tragedy in Newtown, Conn., on Dec. 14, 2012, and also following up on a shooting at Baltimore County’s Perry Hall High School on Aug. 27, 2012, the school system and the police department began making short- and long-term plans to improve school safety in early 2013. The county’s middle and high schools already had older, analog camera systems in place; however, the county’s 105 elementary schools and four special schools had no video capabilities at all, thus the decision to start One View installation at that level.

“After Sandy Hook, we kept hearing ‘What are you doing for the elementary schools?’ ” says Dale Rauenzahn, executive director of the Baltimore County Public Schools Department of School Safety and Security. “Conventional policy from the past might have dictated starting at the secondary school level, but Sandy Hook changed all that. Right now, we have multiple camera views in each school located in public access areas, with the potential to upgrade to additional cameras, depending on a school’s size and floor plan.”

And plans do call for updating the middle and high school camera systems to a digital format compatible with integration into the One View system. In the meantime, although the school system cannot provide access to those cameras to the police department, it can burn surveillance footage needed for investigations to DVD for sharing with local law enforcement.

Baltimore County called on several sources to fund the new video hardware, but another key piece of the school system’s strategy carried no additional cost: maintaining and nurturing the ongoing strong relationship between the school system and the police department. The department’s school resource officer (SRO) program began in 1998 with officers at Pikesville and Franklin high schools, and has since grown to 63 full-time officers assigned to secondary schools, in addition to a sergeant and a captain. (Those totals make the Baltimore County SRO division larger than 80 percent of all local police departments in the United States.) Also, Rauenzahn meets with Baltimore County Police Chief Jim Johnson and School Superintendent Dallas Dance on a quarterly basis, further strengthening the relationship between police and schools.

“That strong relationship plays a key role in why this works. There’s ongoing trust, and the county and the IT department are on board with us,” he says. “We
made the signal available and let them set it up in the way that works best for them. We went live within the schools on the first day of school, and then the police department established its access in March.”

And that access is “definitely state of the art,” according to Corporal John Wachter of the department’s Public Information Office. “Baltimore County likes to leverage technology to better the safety of its citizens, and this is a good example of that. This program is all about the safety of our kids, in fact the safety of everyone in the school system, from students, to teachers, to staff, and to visitors. It’s all about their safety.” Click here for interview with Corporal Wachter.

In the first two months of use, safety issues uncovered by One View have been minor, mostly relating to parents who picked up children without following sign-out procedures, or children intent on wandering off on their own. However, Corporal Wachter says that should a truly dangerous situation arise, the fact that an officer can quickly pull up information on a particular school could prove invaluable.

Officers also have access to the results of a spring 2013 tactical assessment, wherein 12 officers from the department’s community outreach section performed a comprehensive safety walkthrough of all of the county’s 168 schools. Rauenzahn says that each school’s principal, SRO (if applicable) and chief custodian will do follow-up reviews on an annual basis.
“It really is a combination of many things that keep our kids safe. Officers check in with the elementary schools on a daily basis. We have buzzer systems in addition to the cameras, all of our teachers are trained according to their school’s individual plan,” he says. “And the community has really accepted this program and supported it wholeheartedly. Parents are telling us at community meetings and in other public venues how supportive they feel. They understand that all of our cameras are there to protect the public and their children.”

That view of support prevails at all of the county’s elementary schools, including Cromwell Elementary School, where Principal Darlene Morrison definitely realizes the value of the One View system at her facility: Click here to an interview with Ms. Morrison. “The secretary and I can see who is coming in and out of the building. That gives us a great advantage. ”

For more information on Baltimore County’s use of the One View System, contact Executive Director of School Safety and Security Dale Rauenzahn at (410) 887-4300, email drauenzahn@bcps.org, or Corporal John Wachter at jbwachter@baltimorecountymd.gov, phone (410) 887-2210.
In the past four years, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s campaign slogan “If You See Something, Say Something,” has become part of our national vocabulary. In San Antonio’s Edgewood Independent School District (EISD), that slogan could also be re-interpreted as if you’re concerned about any activity around a school, “Take A Stand.”

Launched at a community meeting in February 2014, “Take A Stand” is a curriculum that spans all EISD students, from kindergarten through 12th grade, as well as their parents and other community members. And a key part of that effort is a new school safety app
called Edgewood Alert, available on the EISD website and via the Apple Store and Google Play.

EISD Public Relations Officer Rolando Martinez says that students, faculty, staff and community members all can access Edgewood Alert’s pulldown menus to report concerns about bullying, drugs, personal crises, threats and more. Edgewood Alert is confidential, although not anonymous: the school district will not publicize the names of those who submit tips, but a user needs an email address to make a report. Whenever someone reaches out via the website, notifications go to the school’s counselors and to Chief Kenneth Jacobs of the EISD Police Department for followup. (Due its internal development, the school district incurred no additional expenses in putting Edgewood Alert into place.)

“We had a big kickoff for the curriculum and the app that included a community meeting and a push on our website. The school’s counselors continue to promote Edgewood Alert, and it’s been heavily used already,” Martinez says. “Of course Edgewood is about education, but first and foremost is the safety of everyone who comes to our schools. This is just a continuation of the ongoing safety and security measures we’ve implemented in the past two years.”

Those other improvements include:

- Increasing the number of security cameras in the district’s 20 schools (12,000 students and 1,800 employees) from 40 to 300. These include parking lot cameras that record license plate information.
- “Entry buzzers” at every school; visitors must present photo ID.
- Unannounced canine searches for contraband at middle and high schools.
- Photo IDs for students and staff and a “swipe card” entry system; student IDs also can be scanned to determine if students are in their assigned area.
- Additional officers and patrols for the EISD Police Department. Under Chief Jacobs, the department includes two school resource officers (SROs) at each high school, one at each middle school and at the alternative learning and fine arts academies, and approximately 12 patrol officers who monitor school zones to ensure pedestrian safety, respond to alarms at EISD buildings and randomly check all district facilities. Patrol officers also investigate traffic accidents occurring on district property and assist other law enforcement agencies in the investigation of crimes on EISD property, as necessary.

“By increasing our manpower and patrol coverage, we can more effectively cover all of our schools and facilities,” Jacobs says. “We’re able to respond faster and we’ve shortened our response times because of that.

“We’re constantly looking for training, free or otherwise, that would help us with crisis intervention or with an active shooter situation,” he adds. “If that type of situation ever does arrive, we would be the ones making the initial contact and dealing with it. If a situation ever does come up, I want my officers to have the knowledge and training to handle it in a timely manner and put an end to it as quickly as we can.”

For more information on Take a Stand and the Edgewood Alert, contact Rolando Martinez at roland.martinez@eisd.net.
Go ahead, sir, you’re talking to EMS now.

We’ve got a girl, here, a first-grader, and she’s turned her ankle. She can’t stand on it, but there’s no sign of a bad break or blood or anything. Can I move her? Carry her inside? It’s hot, and she’s on blacktop.

Sure, go ahead and carry her inside. Tell us where you’re taking her so we can come straight to you.

We’ll be waiting in the infirmary.

I’m not familiar with the layout of that school, can you tell me which entrance to use? How to find the infirmary?
First responders to the Chardon (Ohio) School District in situations like the hypothetical one described above, or more serious events, can have similar conversations with school personnel as part of a project with SchoolSAFE Communications, a Web-enabled two-way radio-based product that allows 911 dispatchers to establish a radio bridge between school radio systems and public safety radio systems. In early March, approximately 250 school staff received, and began training on, these radio units. The system replaces “walkie talkies” with limited capability that involved relaying messages from one place to another within the school, and did not allow for direct communication with public safety agencies. Chardon School District Superintendent Michael Hanlon says the project significantly expedites communication and could potentially put resources in place much more quickly.

“We allocated radios to our incident control and operations people, to our principals, to our custodians and to our school resource officers. These are folks who are available and move around the buildings. We also placed them with teachers in strategically identified classrooms to create a logical perimeter around each of our six school buildings. They’re located near exits and down main hallways, and they create a communications net,” Hanlon says.

Personnel use a primary channel on a regular basis for day-to-day school operations; a secondary channel comes into play in the event of an emergency incident. Hanlon says he has a link on his desktop and school administrators can use it to create bridges between buildings if, for example, students need to be shifted from one building to another due to an incident that wouldn’t involve public safety, such as a broken water pipe.

“We went through two training sessions, starting with operability training because our staff just doesn’t spend a lot of time on radios. We also had joint interoperability training with our public safety resource agencies,” Hanlon says. “We used a scenario that included an intruder in the building, a lockdown drill and use of the bridge. Every time we run a drill like that in the future, we will become more effectively ready to respond if an emergency situation occurs.”

Geauga County Sheriff Dan McClelland echoes Hanlon’s position, saying: “I think any time you can enhance communications, you greatly improve the opportunity to coordinate response. That’s exactly what this project will do for us.”

Hanlon says that the Chardon School District has always had an excellent relationship with the community’s first responders, planning, drilling and taking a proactive approach, and using the radio system will serve to make that relationship even stronger.
“Every school district in the country is looking for ways to improve safety, security and incident response. Implementing this technology seemed like the next logical step for us in promoting safety and security on our campuses,” Hanlon says.

The need to keep improving incident response is something the district knows about firsthand. On Feb. 27, 2012, Thomas Lane, a Chardon student, entered the school cafeteria at approximately 7:30 a.m. and fired 10 rounds from a .22 handgun; three students ultimately died and three others who were wounded survived, one of them permanently paralyzed.

“The cellular phone system infrastructure became overloaded with the amount of calls being placed by 1,100 students, staff and faculty, and that slowed down the updates we received,” McClelland says. “We were able to apprehend the suspect in spite of the information lag, but if this system had been in place then, communication would have been better. With the school system using these radios for day-to-day communications, it will just be second nature for school staff to use the radios if they need to talk to us.”

Chardon Police Chief Tim McKenna agrees on the importance of day-to-day use of the system and the school district’s ability to communicate directly with public safety during minor incidents: “It’s another tool in our tool belt. There are a number of school safety initiatives taking place in Ohio and around the country. I think we were probably approached to try this system out because of the 2012 shooting, and in light of that event, I wanted to make sure that everyone was in favor of it and involved in the planning and implementation.”
Numerous schools in the western part of the United States already have implemented use of the radios, and the provider’s desire to launch a project that encompassed an entire school district east of the Mississippi led to Chardon’s being approached. Representatives of the school district and a number of public safety agencies came together to work out the details of the project, prior to launching it in the six public schools and two nearby private school campuses. All of those agencies participated in the initial training drill as well.

*To learn more about planning, implementation and the SchoolSAFE Communications project as a whole, contact Chardon School District Superintendent Dr. Michael Hanlon at (440) 285-4052.*
CHAPTER 12

DIRECT LINE TO EMERGENCY DISPATCH

By Becky Lewis
February 2014

After several days of inclement weather that curtailed outdoor recess, the children racing around the playground seem supercharged with energy from all the sunshine. Then a shriek cuts through the bright scene: “Help, help, he’s having a seizure!” As the playground aide races toward the cries, she makes one click on her portable radio, and immediately alerts emergency dispatch to respond to the school.

The Northmont School District in Englewood, Ohio, has many uses for the 260 portable radios in use throughout the school system, and in January 2014, the district implemented a new one: For a mere $350 in programming costs, staff acquired a direct line to emergency dispatch via an unused frequency offered by the Englewood Police Department.
“We had a frequency we had been using primarily as a backup, so we held a meeting with the district’s support people and offered to let the schools use it,” says Sgt. Mike Lang, coordinator of daytime operations and communications for the police department that serves this Dayton suburb. “Our elementary school resource officer (Corey Follick) was looking for ways to improve our response to the schools, and I suggested that we give them access to this frequency. It was kind of a no-brainer, because it uses a tool they already had in their hands and felt comfortable in using.”

Jenny Wood, public information officer for the 5,400-student Northmont School District, explains that the school system uses the radios to communicate day-to-day information within buildings. Teachers, administrators, playground supervisors and others all carry the portables and use them for intraschool communication: “From what I understand not many school districts have this kind of direct link to law enforcement. We’re excited about it, and at the same time, we hope we never have to use it in an active shooter situation. However, just knowing we have it gives us peace of mind.”

The programming that brought about that peace of mind took place during the 2013-2014 winter break for the district’s six elementary schools, middle school and high school. Training on the use of the “new” frequency complemented an extensive active shooter drill. Wood says the drill involved the entire staff, from teachers to bus drivers to food service personnel, and that participants rotated roles, giving individuals the opportunity to play a student, a teacher, an observer and so on.

“We wanted them to get an idea of what law enforcement response would be like in the event of an active shooter. We wanted them to hear gunshots and screaming, to hit all of their senses. You can practice 10 times with ‘This is a lockdown,’ and going through the steps, but when you hear gunshots, your reaction and the way you feel is very different,” Wood says. “We do regular fire drills and tornado drills, and we figured if we do that, we should be doing this also.”

Lang says his department has planned some beginning drills and plans to add use of the radios in the active shooter drills in the future: “If they become accustomed to using them in drills and in routine situations, then if they need to use them in situations that aren’t routine, it just becomes a natural process. They’re already used to having the radios, and having the channel available just adds another strength to the mix. If they need to use it in an emergency, all they have to do is click over to the correct channel and notify the communications center.”

Once notified, the communications center has the ability to dispatch the fire department and EMS as well as the police department, if needed, and communications center staff can patch the school’s radios directly into the law enforcement channel, setting up a direct connection between police and someone on the scene.

“Having someone on the inside who is in direct communication with the first responders, with the command post, that makes it a great tool,” Lang says.

For more information on the partnership between the Englewood Police Department and the Northmont School District, contact Sgt. Mike Lang at Lang@englewood.oh.us or Jenny Wood at jwood@northmontschools.net.
“Code Red. West Vine Street School. Police are on their way.”

As the message goes out across the school’s public address system and alert lights begin to flash, simultaneous dispatches go out to the local police department, to fire and rescue, and to a neighboring law enforcement agency for mutual aid. Fire doors close and lock throughout the school building, confining the intruder to a small space. An officer in the department’s command center activates access to the school’s surveillance cameras, ready to direct the first responders who are already pulling into the parking lot to the spot where they are needed.
“Our estimation is it cuts our response time down by one to two minutes,” Stonington (Conn.) Police Chief Darren Stewart says of the Code Red button pilot program launched at West Vine earlier in 2013. “Every second that goes by is another opportunity for an intruder, and every second we can shave off our response moves up the time when the police arrive and his focus shifts away from the students to the officers.”

Stonington, a town of 18,000 full-time residents located near the Rhode Island line, has six public and two private schools totaling approximately 3,000 students. A task force selected the West Vine school for the pilot project for two reasons: it is near a highway and also is a fairly small school (235 students). The group began meeting just weeks after the incident at Sandy Hook Elementary in December 2012, and it included Police Capt. Jerry Desmond, Board of Police Commissioners and School Department support staff, and representatives of the school system (such as Superintendent of Public Schools Van Riley, Headmaster Stephen Bennhoff of Pine Point School and Principal Doris Messina of St. Michael School). The members’ review of existing school safety measures and brainstorming new ideas led to the project to adapt burglar and fire alarm technology, with help from Assistant Chief Kevin Burns of the Pawcatuck Fire Department, into the Code Red button. The devices, one per classroom, use a protective plastic cover to prevent accidental alerts, and the community’s public safety agencies worked together to develop response protocols that include how to handle apparent false alarms.

“We took existing technology and adapted it to fit school safety. I really must say that the committee was incredible in determining what would work and what would not work. This didn’t come from me, it came from them, and they did an outstanding job putting this together,” Stewart says.

In addition, Stonington’s police officers drop in to visit at all of the local schools on a regular basis; all schools have a radio tuned to local dispatch in their offices; and their card reader systems give automatic 24/7 access to law enforcement officers.

“Schools can reach us immediately by hitting the microphone on the radio, and the other schools in the district also can hear the call and decide whether to go to Code Yellow and implement precautionary measures. This allows the schools to work as a team and not be in the dark about something happening nearby,” Stewart says. “It doesn’t take away calling 911, it’s just another means of communication.”

In addition to the safeguards already in place, plans for the future include adding the Code Red button system to one school each year until all of the town’s
schools have the system (pending funding availability; the system cost approximately $10,000 to install). The Stonington Police Department also is looking into the possibility of establishing police substations in local schools, where officers could spend some time during the school day filing reports and making telephone calls, and the school system has independently installed protective film on some windows.

“What we have is a partnership with our schools. Several times during the school year, I sit down with the superintendent, the headmaster and the principal for a status meeting. I give them a lot of credit for being in tune with everything that’s going on in the world,” Stewart says. “We share a goal of making our community as safe as possible for the kids, the teachers and the schools, and we hope we never have to use any of these safeguards.”

For more information on Stonington’s Code Red button and overall school safety program, contact Chief Darren Stewart at (860) 599-7501 or email DStewart@Stonington-ct.gov.
The words crackle over the loudspeaker: “Attention. We have a lockdown situation. Repeat, we have a lockdown situation.” Just as they have in drills, the students quickly move to the rear of the classroom. The teacher follows, but not before she lifts a horseshoe-shaped object from its bracket next to the classroom door and drops it into place, securing the door more surely than any dead bolt can do.

Created by a local entrepreneur, first to secure his daughter’s dorm room and then marketed to Michigan schools in the aftermath of the Sandy Hook Elementary tragedy, the horseshoe-shaped rebar slides into two pre-drilled holes and secures the door against brute force attacks, ensuring that a threatening individual will either move on, or frustrate himself by
continuing to try to break down the door until law enforcement arrives. Some 12 school districts in Michigan have installed the device since September 2013, including Horizon Elementary School in Holt, a Lansing bedroom community of 23,000 residents located in Ingham County.

“To me, this is the simplest device I’ve ever seen, but the ramifications are huge,” says Ingham County Sheriff Gene Wriggelsworth. “It gives parents and teachers peace of mind. No one is going to get through that door without beating on it for a long time with something like a sledgehammer. I’m not saying it would be impossible, but it could take something like 10 to 15 minutes, which would buy time for the first responders to get there and mitigate the situation.”

To come up with the funding to purchase devices for all doors in the school building, the school and the sheriff’s office came up with an “Adopt A Door” program, asking concerned citizens and civic groups to donate funding. Wriggelsworth hopes that campaign can become an example for other schools in his jurisdiction.

“My wife and I personally adopted two doors. We said ‘We’ve got two grandkids in the building, we’re in,’ ” he says.

Inventor Rob Couturier of nearby Williamston came up with the “prototype” device several years ago when his daughter, after being assaulted during a Thanksgiving Day run at her local high school track, became afraid to stay in an unlocked dorm room at the University of Michigan. His original intent was only to provide a safe environment for his daughter while she attended college, but within days of the Newtown shootings, she called him and said: “Dad, this would help schools. They need it.”

“It looks pretty simple, but a ton of work and a ton of research went into developing it,” Couturier says, explaining that he consulted with local law enforcement and fire inspectors and worked on refining the concept, right down to achieving the right weight and balance to be handled quickly and easily in a stressful situation. He put the device on the market in May 2013 and thus far has installed the device only in Michigan schools, but has traveled to Ohio for discussions with schools there, and is working on plans for expansion.

“I personally don’t care about the money. I only want to make enough money to keep people working on making more of them. My drive comes from thinking about the safety of the faculty and the students,” Couturier says. “I am so moved when I walk into a school and the teachers and staff thank me for creating this.”

To learn more about this device, contact Rob Couturier at (517) 202-4602 or email robcouturier@msn.com.
HERO911 AND SCHOOL GUARD WORK TOGETHER FOR SAFER SCHOOLS

By Becky Lewis
January 2013

The question being asked by the app is at once simple and terrifying: Confirm armed intruder? With one stab of a finger indicating yes, a 911 call goes out and a burst message goes to all the other smartphones carried by teachers in the school.

And to the smartphones of every participating law enforcement officer within a 10-mile radius, whether on duty or off.

The app in question is School Guard, a for-fee service that works in conjunction with the Hero911 app (free to law enforcement.) The school district in Columbia,
Ill., began serving as the test site for School Guard on Jan. 14, 2014, with the app fully operational in all four of its schools by the end of February. The app also includes an option to call for help in the event of another type of emergency, such as a medical emergency in a classroom; an option for an administrator to send an emergency-related message to all teachers; and the capability to upload a school’s security plan.

“When I attend school safety conferences, I feel we are ahead of the curve because we already have many things in place such as tools to facilitate a quick lockdown and buzzer systems at school entrances, and we are in the process of installing shatterproof film on the glass. We have been conducting active shooter and hostage drills with the students and staff in our schools since the 2005-2006 school year, years before the Illinois state legislature required them,” says Assistant Superintendent of Schools Dr. Beth Horner. “If there is ever an opportunity to increase safety for our students and staff, we take it, so when the SchoolGuard developers asked us to be the test site, we were really excited.”

Because two of the app’s four developers have children in the Columbia schools, it seemed a natural fit as a test site. A St. Louis bedroom community of approximately 10,000 residents, the school district enrolls some 2,000 students in pre-K through 12th grade, and has a strong working relationship with the Columbia Police Department and Chief Joe Edwards.

“In today’s world, if a police department doesn’t work with the local schools to do active shooter training, the department isn’t serving the community as well as it should,” Edwards says. “I think working with school districts should be one of the highest priorities around the country right now.”

As part of working with the school district, Edwards has ensured that Hero911 will be downloaded to all of the new smartphones his officers receive. On the day of the January 14 demo, Edwards looked at his own smartphone and saw that it indicated 56 officer members of the Hero911 network could be found within a 10-mile radius of the school, and “knowing that we have only two working cars on the street at any time, it’s good to know we would have an immediate response from that many officers in the event that an active shooter event takes place.”

Getting the word out quickly to that number of officers is the goal that technical expert Nate McVicker had in mind when he came up with the idea in spring 2013. McVicker and three other partners, another technical expert and two retired officers, worked together to refine the idea and make it a reality.

“We brainstormed and realized that there is no other app that notifies officers directly on their smartphones,” says one of those partners, Col. Michael Snyders.
(ret.) of the Illinois State Police. “The more we talked to people about this need, the more we became excited that we could fill a niche and save seconds in response time. We’re trying not to overplay the concept that seconds count, but it’s true. With the app, all officers in the area – on and off duty, retired and active – will find out sooner and be able to respond quickly. We’re trying to dramatically increase the pool of officers who may be in a position to neutralize the threat quickly.”

The Hero911 app launched in November 2013 and after the first month, some 4,000 officers had signed on, approximately half in Illinois and the rest scattered around the country. To download the app, an individual must visit the Apple ITunes store (https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/hero911/id724001857?ls=1&mt=8) or Google Play (https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.guard911.heronetwork), and after downloading, fill out a registration form that goes to a vetting team to ensure the individual meets qualifications before the app is activated. Officers receive notification of approval with 48 hours.

To learn more about the SchoolGuard demo project, contact Dr. Beth Horner at horner.beth@columbia4.org.
Glancing in the rearview mirror, she catches sight of her 12-year-old daughter, earbuds in place, head down, smartphone beeping as texts fly out and are answered. She smiles to herself and turns back to the road, unaware the exchange is not with one of her daughter’s classmates, but with a 18-year-old boy intent on persuading much younger girls to “sext” with him.

However, after dropping her daughter at a friend’s for the evening and going on to a free cyber-safety seminar at her daughter’s school, she will gain access to a free tool that will help her find out – in time – how wrong she was.
Launched in March 2014 and sponsored by a multi-corporation foundation, the KidsSafe campaign uses off-duty and retired police officers to present free cyber-safety seminars for parents. Parents who attend these trainings receive free access to My Mobile Watchdog, a monitoring application designed to target cyber bullying and harassment, sexting and sextortion. My Mobile Watchdog allows parents to establish a list of approved callers, and sends an alert to parents if an unknown party attempts to contact a child. It also allows parents to view their child’s location and monitor text messages and phone calls. The Android-based application stores forensic information in a certified data center in the Cloud from which parents can download reports and potentially share them with school administrators and law enforcement.

“Parents can set up rules such as ‘no texts after 9 p.m.’ They can allow or disallow any app, the camera or access to the web, and they can set up filters if they do allow Internet usage. It gives parents a broad range of tools,” says Bob Lotter, CEO of the company that produces MyMobileWatchdog. The company produces a similar tool called Radar, which is free to sworn law enforcement officers on request and has resulted in hundreds of child predators being arrested and convicted over the past 10-plus years.

“We are trying to get parents to use technology to stem the tide. Education alone is not enough: we can’t just bring them to a meeting and teach them about the danger without also giving them the technology to effectively manage what their kids are being exposed to,” he says.

In order to provide free technology to parents, the developer began seeking out corporate funding partners and experienced Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) investigators, as well as developing affiliations with school districts. The program originally launched in California; Jefferson County, Colo.; and the Chicago suburb of Naperville. KidsSafe will work with any interested law enforcement agency to provide localized training, and train-the-trainer instruction offered through the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) will also help spread KidsSafe more widely across the country.


“I think it will be a fantastic union of all three parties. It’s just what SROs need, because many of them don’t understand what Internet crimes entail,” Wistocki
says. “We’ll be teaching them to investigate computer crimes and to empower the parents to work with them.”

Wistocki, who has worked in cybercrime investigations since 1997, says the field has evolved from going on AOL in the early years with a fake persona to dealing with the present-day bewildering abundance of technology.

“First it was instant messages on the computer, now predators contact children over their phones,” Wistocki says. “I’ve been using Radar since 2005. Prior to adopting it, I had to take screen shots of a ‘conversation with a bad guy.’ The tool carves the entire conversation into a neat report. The amount of time it saves and the strength of the admissible evidence it provides is incredible.”

MyMobileWatchdog also can provide an incredible amount of information to parents – if they can be persuaded to use it. Wistocki says there are times that law enforcement plans a big event, and only a few parents show up: “The reason they give for not showing up is ‘my kid would never do that.’ What they really mean is ‘I hope my kid would never do that.’ They don’t realize that predators are not only 40-year-old creepy guys anymore. They may be 18, 16, 14. I’ve had children as young as eighth grade collecting images of child pornography and threatening other kids.”

Wistocki says he has found that working together with school administrators to attach the training to an already scheduled event results in a higher attendance, helping him achieve his “calling to teach parents. Within 30 days of every parent presentation I do, a parent calls me and says he’s found something. I’ve had them call me as quickly as three hours later – at 1 in the morning! It only works on Androids and Blackberrys, and parents are turning in their iPhones and switching to Android so they can monitor their kids.
“The parents who take the training tell other parents, and they want to attend training and get the tool too,” he adds. “That way, the nets get bigger and wider, and we catch more predators and save more kids.”

Saving more kids is Lotter’s goal as well, as he says he encourages other providers of similar technologies to also provide free product to parents: “I’m not doing this to promote my product. I’m doing it to promote child safety.”

Law enforcement agencies interested in presenting KidsSafe training in their local schools may visit www.MyMobileWatchdog.com for information on how to qualify for subsidized training.
Recycling has taken on a whole new meaning in Salem, N.H.: It could save lives as well as resources.

Not long after the incident at Sandy Hook Elementary School in December 2012, the police department in Salem (pop. 28,776) began replacing its radios, and Officer Matt Norcross, the department's roving school resource officer for the town's six elementary schools, came up with a suggestion for repurposing the old units: “There was a lot of talk in the media and locally about schools installing panic buttons, but some panic buttons have to go a relay at an alarm company and that adds time to our response. In the event of a
situation like what happened at Sandy Hook, someone who truly wants to get in doesn’t wait for someone to open the door, they smash their way in. Response time is critical.”

To speed up response time, Norcross suggested placing one of the older radios in each school, with every function disabled except the panic button that connects a user directly to 911 dispatch. The radios are located in each principal’s office and authorized users are instructed to hit the button only in the event of a life-threatening emergency. Each radio is programmed with the name of the originating school, which will show on the dispatch screen and on terminals in the department’s cruisers, so they immediately know the location of the emergency.

“If there’s an accident on school grounds, or a parent yelling in the lobby, they know to call 911, because if this button is activated, it will immediately initiate an all-out response. The individual who pushed it will be able to have a brief conversation with the dispatcher and describe the emergency, but our procedures also instruct them to keep the channel clear for police use as much as possible,” Norcross says. “I think for us that ability to gather information is key. It’s not just a static alarm.”

Salem PD placed one radio in each of the town’s six elementary schools, and two in the high school and middle school due to the buildings’ size. The SROs – Norcross and two other officers assigned specifically to the middle school and high school – regularly test the radios and ensure that office staff who have access are well-versed in the written procedures for use. Although schools can only call out on the panic button frequency, they can hear other frequencies.

“If they hear sirens go by their school, they can listen to see if something is going on that they need to be aware of. We do alert them about incidents in the neighborhood, but this is a fallback for them,” Norcross says.

He has shared the idea at several events, including the Massachusetts Juvenile Police Officers Association annual school safety conference in early 2014. There, its simplicity drew attention from Michelle Gay, one of the founders of Safe and Sound: A Sandy Hook Initiative (http://www.safeandsoundschools.org/our-team-safe-and-sound-schools/), who began promoting it on the organization’s website.

“We want all agencies and school districts to hear about what we’re doing here in Salem,” Norcross says. “We were fortunate in that we were in the process of replacing our radios, so the idea cost us nothing. There would be an expense involved for an agency that is not in the same situation, but we believe there’s no way to initiate a response faster. And in today’s world, every second counts.”

For more information on Salem’s “panic button” radio project, contact Officer Matt Norcross at MNorcross@sau57.org.
The chimes and the warning voice on the intercom tell her that the library will close in five minutes. Gathering up her books and telling herself that if she doesn’t know the material by now, she never will, she heads for the door and the long cross-campus walk to her room. But before she heads out into the late evening darkness, she pulls out her smartphone, activates the LiveSafe security app offered by campus police and accesses the SafeWalk function. Through a real-time safety map and in-app messaging system, SafeWalk enables her to designate friends and family members to watch her as she walks home, so while she may walk by herself, she doesn’t walk alone.
Free to users in both Android and iOS versions, the app developed from the desire of co-founder Kristina Anderson to make college campuses safer places to live and study. Anderson, who survived three bullet wounds suffered during the 2007 Virginia Tech shooting, returned to the university to finish her degree and in the process, realized that campus safety remained a nationwide issue: “Instead of our tragedy remaining an isolated incident, more violence continues to happen on campuses, in the form of sexual assaults, bullying and shootings. In 80 percent of school shootings, one or two people had information that might have prevented the incident if someone had intervened.”

Anderson went on to launch the Koshka Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving campus safety, and continues to work to raise awareness on the importance of school safety and violence prevention by sharing her story with audiences nationwide. The app, the brainchild of entrepreneur Shy Pahlevani, is a separate venture that grew from a desire to expand the potential of a traditional “text a tip” service to include two-way communication, the ability to send pictures and video, receive crime reports and more.

“The app embodies the vision and movement that students are facing now on college campuses. LiveSafe is helping them navigate ways to keep themselves safer, more informed and aware by facilitating communication with police departments,” Anderson says.

One campus police department that partners with its constituents is Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), where VCU Police Chief John Venuti replaced the university’s former text-tip program with the app. Adopting the app has allowed VCU to increase its community policing efforts, a huge plus for a school its size (more than 32,000 students, faculty and staff on campus).

“It’s much more user-friendly and we’ve found the students really like the product. You hardly ever see them without their phones in their hands, and when they submit something, they expect a response. A lot of times we just say something like ‘thank you for contacting us, we’re dispatching a unit,’ and they appreciate the two-way dialog,” Venuti says. “For this demographic, calling 911 is not something they do on a regular basis. We have a lot of dialog with students and we’re constantly trying to understand how they think. We encourage them to let us know if they see something, because we can’t address things we don’t know about.”

VCU became the first institution to launch use of the app at the start of the 2013-2014 academic year, and had nearly 5,000 registered users by the end of the second semester. The police department receives around 10 tips from the app every day, which go to a console in the communications center. An incoming tip generates an audible alert, and 24/7, the dispatch staff provides an
immediate, appropriate response. In addition to the one-on-one, two-way communication the app offers, it also can push messages to users in targeted areas, allowing police to, for example, alert only specific users about nearby towing.

“We get tips about suspicious people, about unauthorized vehicles parked in handicapped spots, and just a lot of questions about whether something should be happening,” Venuti says. “Recently we had a report of an individual engaging in lewd behavior in a vehicle, and we were able to quickly resolve that situation. We received tips about a power outage in an area near campus, and based on those tips, deployed extra officers until power was restored.”

VCU has also taken advantage of the robust analytics the app offers to determine which outreach strategies have effectively increased the number of users, and also to determine reporting patterns. Some 60 percent of reports received by VCU come in anonymously, and many involve disturbances, suspicious activity, assault and harassment. Venuti says that in addition to providing the useful analytics, the app’s developers are very responsive to feedback: “As with any new technology, the good stuff evolves every day. The stuff that is new today is outdated tomorrow, and this app is really focused on evaluation based on user demand and feedback.”

With 90 sworn officers and more than 200 security personnel, VCU has the largest university police department in Virginia. To learn more about the university’s use of the LiveSafe app, contact Public Information Officer Corey Byers at (804) 828-3907, email byersc@vcu.edu
CHAPTER 19

CAMPUS VIDEO SHOWS “THE WAYS OUT” OF AN ACTIVE THREAT SITUATION

By Becky Lewis
March 2014

In baseball, there are three outs in an inning. According to a video produced by the University of Wisconsin-Madison Police Department, in an active threat situation, there are five.

“Preventing Mass Casualty Shooting in a Campus Setting,” originally produced in 2008 and updated in 2013, emphasizes five strategies students, faculty and staff should remember if they ever find themselves faced with an active threat:
• Get Out.
• Call Out.
• Hide Out.
• Keep Out.
• Take Out.

Chief Susan Riseling explains the strategies grew out of post-event analysis of the 2007 Virginia Tech shooting, which indicated far lower rates of casualties in classrooms where students took some kind of action rather than simply staying in place and waiting for help to arrive. The department coupled that analysis with a look at the reactions of the passengers on United Airlines Flight 93 on Sept. 11, 2001, and developed the strategies outlined in the video.

“We start with ‘Escape.’ Evacuate if you can, that’s the first and most important thing to do. Summon help, call 911, and then don’t call/tweet/text a whole bunch of other people and fill up the circuits,” Chief Riseling says. “If you can’t get out, then hide anywhere you can conceal yourself. If getting into a closet won’t, or doesn’t, work, then prevent entry by blocking the door with whatever is nearby, even if it’s only a notebook. A pile of tables and chairs could slow a person down enough for law enforcement to get there in time.”

The fifth and final message is that if all else fails, fight back: “After Columbine, the nation’s schools started running drills where they taught elementary school students to turn out the lights, huddle in a corner and listen to the teacher, and hope that danger passes by. When they reached high school and college, all they’d been taught was to be quiet and listen to the teacher. We want them to understand that they’re now able to think and take action for themselves.”

The strategies outlined in the video came to national attention through several avenues after the Aurora theater shooting, Chief Riseling says, and since that time she has given numerous presentations across the country on strategies for dealing with active threats. Several universities have produced their own videos modeled on “Preventing Mass Casualty Shooting in a Campus Setting,” while others have asked for a copy of the University of Wisconsin-Madison video. For those who ask, Riseling says, the department will provide a copy and charge only reproduction costs: “There are other videos out there made by for-profit companies, but that’s not for us. As long as it helps, that’s all I care about.”

The university uses the video as part of an hour-long training program that first and foremost emphasizes prevention through being alert to warning signs. Showing the video is the last step in the training. (Both the original seven-minute version and the five-minute update were shot on and around the 936-acre Madison campus, where Riseling and her staff of 70 sworn officers,
54 security officers and 25 administrative personnel have responsibility for 66,000 students, faculty and staff.

“The university has lots of strategies for getting troubled individuals off a path that can lead to violence. Lots of work goes on in that area every day in hope that our students never have to use the strategies from the video,” Chief Riseling says.

Chief Riseling has led the University of Wisconsin-Madison Police Department since 1991. She is a nationally recognized subject-matter expert in date and acquaintance rape, crowd management and active shooter prevention. For more information or to request a copy of the video, email uwpolice@mhub.uwpd.wisc.edu. Requests will be vetted; the video is available to police departments, universities and school districts.
CH.19: CAMPUS VIDEO SHOWS “THE WAYS OUT” OF AN ACTIVE THREAT SITUATION • 67
Safety drills, they’ve become just another part of the school routine. Follow the teacher’s directions, leave the classroom quickly and safely, and head for a designated meeting place outside. But disaster doesn’t always strike during classtime. It can strike during an assembly, a pep rally, the big soccer game. What then?

At Wisconsin’s Menomonee Falls High School, spectators will know what to do then too, thanks to a planning tool implemented during the 2013-2014 school year.
Developed through the National Center for Spectator Sports Safety and Security (NCS4) at the University of Southern Mississippi, SportEvac is a low-cost planning and drilling tool that creates site-specific 3-D simulations of sporting venues to assist schools with developing evacuation plans and creating drills that implement those plans. The high school in Menomonee Falls, a village of more than 35,000 people that is part of the greater Milwaukee area, is the first secondary school in the United States to use the software. (A number of colleges and universities already use it.) The school has plans in place for the 3,500-seat football stadium, the 1,200-seat soccer stadium, and the 1,600-seat gymnasium, and plans for the remainder of the school’s sporting venues and the auditorium will be in place by the start of the 2014-2015 academic year. Discussions about implementing the tool in the district’s middle school and four elementary schools are ongoing.

“SportEvac takes our Autocad drawings and creates 3-D models. It looks at exits, accessibility and traffic patterns. When we run a drill, it times how long it takes to evacuate,” says Menomonee Falls Athletic Director Ryan Anderson. “I travelled to Mississippi for program training, and the developers worked with my team and showed us how to add features and to refine the plans as necessary. We’ll use it to run drills on an ongoing basis, and every event worker has to sign off that they’ve watched our training video on how to evacuate.”

At a recent all-school assembly, in honor of the volleyball team’s winning the state championship, Menomonee Falls ran a drill. It took less than two minutes to evacuate 1,600 persons from the gym, Anderson says, although he expects it would take somewhat longer at a sporting event where the spectators included parents and other non-students who will have to take their cues from event workers.

“Whenever the school does an evacuation drill, we notify the fire department, and the chief was certainly surprised we were doing an evacuation from the gym because we’d never done one before. He was also surprised by how smoothly it went,” Anderson says. The athletic director works closely with the fire department and with Menomonee Falls’ school resource officer when planning the drills, and he will make a full report on the tool’s effectiveness at this summer’s annual planning meeting that includes the school leadership team, the school district superintendent, the fire chief and the Menomonee Falls police chief. This same group tasked him with coming up with an evacuation plan a year ago.

“I had just finished my first year as athletic director, and at this meeting, we were discussing evacuations and the group asked me to come up with a formal plan for sporting events. At the same time, I was involved in leadership training where all the participants were challenged to come up with a way to save the school district $15,000,” Anderson says. (For example, a soft savings for potential injury can exceed more than $100,000 per person injured.) “I talked to the
other schools in our athletic conference and found that not one of them had a written plan for sporting events. I researched our options and learned about this simulation model, and I was just floored to find out we were the first high school in the country to use it.”

Because of its status as the inaugural high school to use the tool, the district has been selected by NCS4 for the National High School Sport Safety and Security Facility of Merit Award, “when I report back to the planning group this summer on what I did, I think they will be pleased.”

Although the service is not free, the cost is relatively low, and Menomonee Falls is using beverage vendor proceeds that traditionally have gone to the athletic programs to finance the project: “This purchase will serve the school well for a long time.”

For more information on Menomonee Falls High School’s use of SportEvac, contact Ryan Anderson at AndeRya@sdmfschools.org.
Visit http://www.schoolsafetyinfo.org for access to up-to-date publication and website resources. New success stories similar to the ones in this publication are added on an ongoing basis. To suggest a success story topic, contact Senior Writer Becky Lewis at rebecca.l.lewis@lmco.com

To join in online discussions about school safety with other professionals in the field, send an email to asknlectc@justlink.org and ask to become a member of JUST-Link, an online community for public safety professionals.

Free school safety resources can be downloaded from http://srtbrc.org/2012/12/free-school-safety-resources/, the website of the NLECTC System’s Small, Rural, Tribal and Border Regional Center.