

# District-wide School Safety Plan

## *Commissioner's Regulation 155.17*

### **Introduction**

Emergencies and violent incidents in school districts are critical issues that must be addressed in an expeditious and effective manner. Districts are required to develop a District-wide School Safety Plan designed to prevent or minimize the effects of serious violent incidents and emergencies and to facilitate the coordination of the district with local and county resources in the event of such incidents or emergencies.

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

Gouverneur Central School District continues to support this integral component of the SAVE Legislation through the regular review and updating of its contents. The Superintendent of Schools encourages and advocates this ongoing district-wide cooperation and support of Project SAVE.

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## Section I: General Considerations and Planning Guidelines

### A. Purpose

Gouverneur Central School District-wide School Safety Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17. At the direction of the Board of Education, the Superintendent created and appointed a District-wide School Safety Team and charged it with the development and maintenance of the District-wide School Safety Plan.

### B. Identification of Safety Teams

As referenced in the previous section, Gouverneur Central School District has appointed a Safety Team consisting of, but not limited to, representatives of administrators, school safety personnel, law enforcement, and other personnel. The members of the team and their positions or affiliations are as follows:

Members Name	Title
Lauren F. French	District Superintendent
Donna Runner	Assistant Superintendent for Instruction
Harold Simmons	Director of Facilities
Carol LaSala	Director of Financial Affairs
Cory Wood	High School Principal
Steve Coffin	Middle School Principal
Victoria Day	Elementary Principal
Robyn Knowlton	Director of Special Education
Mike Tyler	State Police Law Enforcement
Laurina Greenhill	Village Police Law Enforcement
James Delity	Board of Education Member
Lisa McGregor	Board of Education Member
Nick Ormasen	Board of Education Member

### C. Concept of Operations

- General protocols reflected in the District-wide School Safety Plan guide the development and implementation of the Building Safety Plans. The District-wide Safety Plan sets forth the general procedures and protocols to be adhered to at each division and serve as the standard operating procedures.
- In developing the district-wide plan, key internal and external stakeholders were involved in order to garner the best local operational knowledge and the best emergency management and safety expertise in creating and revising the plan. Gouverneur Central School District is an integral part of the community and, as such, it is important that community stakeholders are involved and understand the role of the school district and its relationship to the safety of the community at large.
- In the event of an emergency or violent incident, the initial response to all emergencies at an individual division will be by the Building Emergency Response Team.

- Upon activation of the Building Emergency Response Team, the Superintendent of Schools or his designee will be notified and, where appropriate, local emergency officials will also be notified. Efforts may be supplemented by county and state resources through existing protocols.

#### **D. Plan Review and Public Comment**

- Pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation, Section 155.17 (e)(3), this plan will be made available for public comment at least 30 days prior to its adoption. The district-wide plan may be adopted by the School Board only after at least one public hearing that provides for the participation of school personnel, parents, students and any other interested parties. The plan must be formally adopted by the Board.
- Full copies of the District-wide School Safety Plan and any amendments will be submitted to the New York State Education Department within 30 days of adoption. In addition, the Building Safety Plans will be sent to the New York State Police, St. Lawrence County Sheriff's Office and the Canton Police Department.
- This plan will be reviewed periodically during the year and will be maintained by the District-wide Safety Team. The required annual review will be completed on or before July 1 of each year after its adoption by the Board.

### **Section II: Risk Reduction/Prevention and Intervention**

#### **A. Prevention/Intervention Strategies**

Initiatives that improve the culture and climate in our schools and improve communication at all levels can substantially enhance our ability to truly prevent any negative event from occurring. Prevention would always be preferred over risk reduction. However, not all such events will be prevented despite our best efforts. Therefore, we must formulate plans to intervene and reduce risk by minimizing the impact of any negative event.

This section will identify specific prevention and risk reduction strategies that have been implemented within Gouverneur Central School District. Many of these components serve as both prevention and risk reduction tools.

#### **Program Initiatives**

Gouverneur Central School District recognizes the importance of programs and activities that improve the school climate and communication throughout the school community and that encourages the reporting of potentially dangerous, suspicious or violent behavior. Such efforts serve to improve the security, safety and quality of life for all those in the Gouverneur Central School District community.

The District encourages all divisions to develop strategies that support a positive safe learning environment for students, such as community involvement in the schools, mentoring programs, or adjusting scheduling to minimize potential for conflicts or altercations.

## ***Training, Drills, and Exercises***

Gouverneur Central School District will ensure that each division conducts drills and exercises to test the components of their respective building-level plan. The use of tabletop exercises to accomplish this task in coordination with local and county emergency response and preparedness officials may be considered when live drills are impractical or not sufficient to meet training goals. Specific drills and training will be conducted for selected response protocols including: Shelter-In-Place; Hold-In-Place, Evacuation, Lockout, and Lockdown. In addition, Early Dismissal drills will not occur more than 15 minutes earlier than normal dismissal time. Transportation and communication procedures will be included in the test, and parents and guardians will be notified in writing at least one week prior to such drill. The emergency back-up generators and lighting are also tested annually and all systems verified functional without electricity.

## ***Implementation of School Security***

### **Routine Precautions by all staff**

All staff is expected to immediately report to their respective principal any information they have received or observations they have made regarding anything that could possibly impact the safety and security of anyone within the school community.

Note: Staff should always err on the side of safety and share such information each and every time. No detail is too small or inconsequential as individual staff may not be aware of all circumstances surrounding a particular student or concern.

### **Limited Access**

Each division is tasked with implementing this policy while tailoring it to the specific needs of their program. Generally, this means that the fewest exterior doors necessary to maintain normal business will remain unlocked during portions of the regular school day. Those doors that may need to remain unlocked during a portion of the school/business day should be monitored in some fashion. All entrances are to be secured shortly after the start of the instructional/business day.

Once secured for the instructional/business day, the divisions may utilize an audio and/or video electronic, visitor access control system at their primary entrances that provides a means for school staff to remotely screen and approve visitors prior to actually granting them access into the building.

The divisions also utilize a keyless entry / electronic access control system allowing specific access (designated days/times, buildings and entrances) to authorized personnel by presenting a programmed proximity identification card to a reading device at those entrances. This system also automatically unlocks and locks specific entrances to accommodate normal arrival, dismissal and after school activity.

### **Staff Photo Identification Badges**

All Gouverneur Central School District employees are issued photo identification badges that are to be **displayed at all times** while on District property to assist visitors, students and staff in identifying employees as well as possible intruders.

## **Visitor policy**

Should an unannounced visitor appear at a classroom, office or be observed in the hallways without proper identification (visitor pass), staff may approach and inquire as to a subject's business or contact their school's main office immediately.

## **Student Sign-Out Procedures**

Gouverneur Central School District is diligent in ensuring that only those persons authorized to sign-out students are allowed to do so. Staff may also require a photo ID if the requesting party is unknown to them and may contact a parent or guardian for confirmation when deemed appropriate.

## **Video Surveillance**

A digital video surveillance system is in service at Gouverneur Central School District to assist in monitoring, deterring and recording activity in high use areas, as well as areas of chronic concern or perceived vulnerability.

## **Fire Alarm**

A fire detection alarm that is linked to a central monitoring station is in service at St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES. These alarms and fire response procedures are tested regularly and consistent with New York State Education Department regulations.

## **Random Drug Sniffing Canine Search**

Gouverneur Central School District may occasionally conduct canine searches throughout the school year.

## ***Vital Educational Agency Information***

The District maintains general information located at St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES, including information on: school population, number of staff, transportation needs, and the business and home telephone numbers of key officials.

### **B. Early Detection of Potentially Violent Behaviors**

Gouverneur Central School District recognizes the importance of early recognition and intervention into conflicts and potentially violent or threatening behaviors. As such, Gouverneur will ensure that appropriate school violence prevention and intervention training will be incorporated into all phases of staff professional development.

Informative materials regarding the early detection of potentially violent behaviors shall be made available to the school community through various means that may include brochures, newsletters, and the district website.

Students, parents, and all staff are encouraged to share information regarding any student conflicts, threats or troubling behaviors with the appropriate school administrator so that an investigation can commence in a timely fashion if deemed necessary.

This communication may extend beyond Gouverneur Central School District personnel to include members of the District's Safety Team, Law Enforcement, Mental Health Professionals, etc., when deemed appropriate and within existing legal parameters.

### **C. Hazard Identification**

The list of sites of potential emergencies include: Main building, playground areas, properties adjacent to the building, buses, off-site field trips, and the commercial areas adjacent to school property. Each individual Building Health and Safety Team has assessed their own division for any unique hazards and has documented them on their respective Building Safety Plans.

### **D. Construction and Capital Project Safety**

Each division under the direction of the Assistant Superintendent for and the Director of Facilities will take steps to ensure the safety and security of the students and staff during periods of construction. This requirement may include conducting background checks on workers, maintaining sufficient and appropriate emergency egress routes, and notifying building occupants of any changes.

The District Safety Committee, or a subcommittee thereof, may be involved in monitoring safety during construction projects as needed. The Committee may include the Director of Facilities, Health & Safety Office, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, Principals, architect, construction manager, and contractors.

The Committee will hold additional meetings as needed to review issues and address complaints related to health and safety resulting from the construction project.

## **Section III: Response**

### **A. Notification and Activation (Internal and External Communications)**

Incident Commanders are authorized to and will initiate contact with the appropriate law enforcement officials in the event of a violent incident. Gouverneur Central maintains a list of local law enforcement agencies, and the designation of the individual who is authorized to contact the law enforcement agencies.

The methods used for notifications of a disaster or an act of violence include the following possible forms of communication: St. Lawrence County Emergency Services, telephone, e-mail, portable radio system, NOAA weather radio, Gouverneur Central School District website, intercom or PA system, local media, and others as appropriate or necessary.

The plans may specify that in the event of an emergency, or impending emergency Gouverneur Central will notify all principals/designees within the complex to take the appropriate action.

Gouverneur Central School District may utilize the resources of the St. Lawrence County Emergency 911 Center to contact parents, guardians or persons in parental relation to the students in the event of a violent incident or an early dismissal. Gouverneur Central School District may also use local media in some instances or post information on the District website.

## B. Situational Responses

### ***Multi-Hazard Response***

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

There are many variables that could impact the manner in which the Building Emergency Response Team responds to a particular occurrence. These variables could include: time of day, weather, age of students, and location of students, anticipated response time of emergency responders, availability of support personnel, and availability of transportation. Specific emergency situations are identified and standard response procedures are detailed in the Building-level Emergency Response Plans; however, given the aforementioned variables, it is impractical to try and map out the specific steps to take for every conceivable scenario. It is more practical to focus on just a few critical decisions that need to be made in every emergency pursuant to our primary goal of preventing injury and loss of life.

The Superintendent is designated as the person in charge – the **Incident Commander** – during the initial response to any emergency at Gouverneur Central. The Superintendent will provide leadership, organize activities and disseminate information with the assistance of the Building Emergency Response Team and the District Emergency Response Team, if needed. If the Superintendent is unavailable or not on site, the **Designated Alternate** will act in their absence with the same authority and responsibility.

In most instances where this level of school response is warranted, Gouverneur Central School District will be seeking assistance from outside emergency responders in resolving the situation. As such, the immediate objective is generally to **contain and manage** the incident until the emergency responders arrive on scene.

Procedures for obtaining advice and assistance from local government officials including the county or city officials responsible for implementation of Article 2-B of the Executive Law. By contacting St. Lawrence County 9-1-1, the system for coordinating the delivery of assistance from both the county and local agencies will be activated.

Each Building-level Emergency Response Plan includes procedures and actions that will be implemented in the event of the occurrence of a hazardous event. Such plans are not available to the public, nor are they to be included in the District-level Safety Plan.

### ***Responses to Acts of Violence: Implied or Direct Threats***

Gouverneur Central School District policies and procedures for responding to implied or direct threats of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school will be included in the Building-level Safety Plans. The following types of procedure(s) may be used by Gouverneur Central:

- ◆ Use of staff trained in de-escalation or other strategies to diffuse the situation.
- ◆ Inform Building Principal of implied or direct threat.



- ◆ Determine level of threat with Superintendent/Designee.
- ◆ Contact appropriate law enforcement agency, if necessary.
- ◆ Monitor situation, adjust response as appropriate, and include the possible use of the Emergency Response Team.

### ***Acts of Violence***

Gouverneur Central School District policies and procedures for responding to acts of violence by students, teachers, other personnel and visitors to Gouverneur Central School District will be included in the Building-level Safety Plans. The following types of procedure(s) could be used by Gouverneur:

- ◆ Determine level of threat with Superintendent/Designee.
- ◆ If the situation warrants, isolate the immediate area and evacuate if appropriate.
- ◆ Inform Building Principal/Assistant Superintendent(s)/ Superintendent
- ◆ If necessary, initiate lockdown procedure, and contact appropriate law enforcement agency.
- ◆ Monitor situation; adjust response as appropriate; if necessary, initiate early dismissal, sheltering or evacuation procedures.

### ***Response Protocols***

Gouverneur Central School District selection of appropriate responses to emergencies, including protocols for responding to bomb threats, hostage takings, intrusions and kidnappings will be included in the Building-level Safety Plans. The following possible protocols are provided as examples:

- ◆ Identification of decision-makers
- ◆ Plans to safeguard students and staff
- ◆ Procedures to provide transportation, if necessary
- ◆ Procedures to notify parents
- ◆ Procedures to notify media
- ◆ Debriefing procedures

### ***Arrangements for Obtaining Emergency Assistance from Local Government***

Arrangements for obtaining assistance during emergencies from emergency services organizations and local government agencies include contacting 9-1-1 immediately. Additional support can be obtained by contacting the Sheriff, Village Police Department Chief, the Gouverneur Fire Department Chief, the Gouverneur Village and Town Supervisors, and St. Lawrence County Emergency Services.

### ***Procedures for Obtaining Advice and Assistance from Local Government Officials***

- ◆ See above

### ***Resources Available for Use in an Emergency***

Gouverneur Central School District resources which may be available during an emergency include all of our facilities at the campus and other vehicles and trucks. We can also contact the Village and Town Highway Department for access to heavy equipment and other resources.

## ***Procedures to Coordinate the Use of Resources and Manpower during Emergencies***

Gouverneur Central School District will use the Incident Command System to coordinate the use of resources and manpower during emergencies.

### ***Protective Action Options***

Plans for taking the following actions in response to an emergency where appropriate will be included in Building-level Emergency Response Plans: school cancellation, early dismissal, evacuation, shelter in place, hold in place, lockout, and lockdown.

## **Section IV: Recovery**

### **A. District Support for Buildings**

After an incident, the Crisis Plan will be initiated by the appropriate level emergency response team. Necessary resources will be deployed in order to support the Emergency Response Teams and post-incident responders.

### **B. Disaster Mental Health Services**

Mental health services needed will be addressed by the appropriate emergency response team using the Crisis Plan.