

Standard III Case Study
Superintendent
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“Creating a Safe School Environment”

As the Assistant Superintendent in charge of Buildings and Grounds in your district you have been increasingly concerned by the number of accidents and safety issues that have been occurring in the past few years. There have been several incidents involving suspected drug dealers accessing the school grounds during the school day without detection, property damage to the school, assaults on students and routine accidents. Once, an estranged father accessed the school property with a weapon to demand custody of his son.

In the past these incidents would have been viewed as isolated, but with the increasing presence of gangs in your mostly urban community and the Columbine High School incident still fresh in your mind, you see a disturbing trend that you want your school to be ready for.

In conversations with the superintendent, you have seen enough concern and promise of support that you know that now is the time to act. After attending a conference on “Crime Prevention through Environmental Design” you decide to have each school conduct a site evaluation to determine potential problems. You felt that the conference information was good but that many of the indicators of potential problems did not apply to your school (for instance they spent a great deal of time on white supremacy groups and “skin heads”, which are not present in your community) so you have decided to meet with a group of school representatives to establish criteria for the site evaluation.

The first part of the site evaluation will be built upon archival data concerning the frequency and severity (1-5) of safety and other incidents in specified areas of the school. The thought is that knowing where problems were occurring and the nature of those problems will give information that can lead to the expeditious solution of the problems. The second part of the site evaluation is to determine the extent that the schools are controlling issues in three general areas: Surveillance, Access Control, and Territoriality and then assign a risk factor rating (1-5)

- Surveillance refers to supervision and obstacles (walls, corners, dead spaces) in the school that prevent proper control.
- Access Control refers to the ability of students and non-students to gain entry to the school grounds and traffic control as well as the presence, or lack of presence of instruments that regulate access (alarms, key control, etc)
- Territoriality is the control of areas by a school as well as other groups. If a section of the school (bathroom for instance) is controlled by a gang or a specified segment of the school population than that is a problem. The school should reinforce a sense of school/student ownership so that inappropriate behavior in those areas can be challenged and eradicated. Ownership of off-campus areas, especially, those abutting the school are also important. Either the school or the community must “lay claim” to these areas or they

could be used to induce fear or in the worst case to harbor a sniper (such as the case in the Jonesboro incident).

The last assignment for the group is to come up with a “laundry list” of measures (lighting, fences, metal detectors, etc.) that might be used to overcome suspected problems. Your meeting is about to begin. Good luck.

First consider these questions:

1. What areas of a school should be on the list for the frequency and severity assessment? Are the areas pretty much the same for all buildings or should there be an Elem.– M.S.–H.S. distinction?
2. What criteria do you rate the severity of safety problem? Monetary value? Human value? Legal Value?
3. How will you define Surveillance criteria? How many should you have and how will you have them judged?
4. How will you define Access Control criteria? How many should you have and how will you have them judged?
5. How will you define Territoriality criteria? How many should you have and how will you have them judged?
6. What kinds of tools are available for educators to “fortify” their buildings?
7. How do you think the community will respond to these efforts? Should the community be expected to participate and even take some initiative themselves in this endeavor?

Now, develop a prototype assessment instrument for the superintendent including:

- A Frequency and Severity Instrument of safety with the criteria for a 1-5 designation of severity.
- A Surveillance-Access-Territoriality Control Instrument with the criteria for a 1-5 designation for a risk factor for each area in each building.
- A list of suitable control measures that the school might utilize in case of deficiencies in safety measures.

ISLLC Standards:

Primary standard:

Standard three: **A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.**

Secondary Standard:

Standard six: **A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.**

Standard four skills, dispositions and performances:

Skills:

- operational procedures at the school and district level
- principles and issues relating to school safety and security
- principles and issues relating to school facilities and use of space

Dispositions:

- making management decisions to enhance learning and teaching
- accepting responsibility
- high-quality standards, expectations, and performances
- a safe environment

Performances:

- operational procedures are designed and managed to maximize opportunities for successful learning.
- operational plans and procedures to achieve the vision and goals of the school are in place
- the school plant, equipment, and support systems operate safely, efficiently, and effectively
- a safe, clean, and aesthetically pleasing school environment is created and maintained

Critical Needs Areas Addressed:

- #4 Increasing parental involvement in the education of their children.
- #5 Providing information, which will assist public school administrators and teachers in understanding the process of site-based decision making.

Notes to Instructor:

1. This case study is one that can be used to determine students' entry level skills in school security. Students are being asked to identify locations within a school setting that potentially can be problem areas. They then have to select criteria to judge the severity of potential problems so prioritization can take place.
2. The activity could take as little as 60 minutes if you desire only a rough draft or brainstorming product, otherwise a one week to two week period should be allowed to gather research or conduct surveys.

Extended learnings:

1. Have students conduct a full security audit of their school setting. Have them use their instrumentation and then give feed back to school officials.
2. Invite a security specialist to class to give input for and analysis of the students' instrumentation.

URLs:

1. ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management – A comprehensive site on School Safety issues. Housed at the University of Oregon
<http://eric.uoregon.edu>
2. Successlink – Includes a “best practices” section which addresses programs that might assist in this case. <http://www.successlink.org/>
3. Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior – University of Oregon -
<http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~ivdb/index.html>
4. International CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design – Good source for audits. <http://www.cpted.net>
5. National Alliance for Safe Schools <http://www.safeschools.org>

Topics that students should be able to use or address:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis Response • Services provided to schools by related agencies • Good Faith Reporting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Relations • Diversity • School Safety • Preventative Measures: Security | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Skills • Negligence • Target hardening • Zero Tolerance |
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Performance Criteria	1	2	3
Principles and issues relating to school facilities and use of space	There are no relationship made between building space and facility management, community relations and security/safety issues.	Recommendations concerning facility management are made but the relationship to security/safety issues is casual.	A distinct relationship is drawn between management of facilities and security/safety issues. The guidelines make specific recommendations about how facilities can be supervised properly to prevent or deter crime.
Principles and issues relating to school safety and security			
A safe, clean, and aesthetically pleasing school environment is created			
Potential problems and opportunities are identified	Problem solving skills are not evident. The products react only to the specifications not to larger issues.	The products reflect some larger issues such as community values or legal responsibilities.	Products reflect deep analysis with recommendations going beyond the school into the community and beyond to larger social contexts.
Potential Problems and Opportunities are identified			

Responsibility is shared to maximize ownership and accountability	Products place the responsibility for school safety solely on the principal or administrative team.	Products place the responsibility on school personnel as a shared duty.	Products recognize that school safety and security is a community effort involving all stakeholders.
Principles and issues relating to school safety and security	There is no reference to equipment maintenance or surveillance techniques in any product.	Reference is made to surveillance equipment/techniques but there is no clear distinction between problems and techniques/equipment recommended. Community issues only superficially addressed.	Reference is made to surveillance equipment and techniques with a clear connection between problems identified and recommended surveillance equipment and techniques. Community issues are included on recommendations.
Operational procedures at the school and district level	Products do not clearly give direction to the operationalization of safety standards.	Products provide some direction for the operationalization of safety standards.	Products clearly provide direction for the operationalization of safety standards. Processes and procedures are clear and rationales for actions are provided. Community is involved.
Dispositions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making management decisions to enhance learning and teaching • accepting responsibility • high-quality standards, expectations, and performances • a safe environment 	Sees safety issues as external problem to be dealt with. Blames community or students for problems. Has low expectation for success of programs.	Sees the school as a part of the problem and accepts responsibility and works to create an effective program with high expectations for success.	Sees the problem as a community issue in which the school is an integral part. Works for high quality programs with the expectation of positively affecting the community in which they exist.

