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## Protecting Our Schools

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**By Dr. Linda Lemasters, Director**  
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Providing adequate explanations of safety and crisis plans; watching for and responding to signs of stress, fear, or anxiety; reminding students that trustworthy people are in charge; and, reviewing processes and procedures to use in the event of an emergency are only a few of the ways we can assist in providing a feeling of safety and security for students.

Protecting our nation's children in a time of global unrest is of utmost importance to parents, educators, and the community. Schools at all levels should be vigilant and remain ready with comprehensive emergency operations and crisis management plans.

Reviewing steps to take should a threat come to light, resolving issues of information sharing, meeting with crisis management teams, considering when to involve law enforcement, and holding a review with all responders are actions that will further emergency preparedness and assist in creating safe school climates.

- First and foremost, this planning is not only for K-12, but is also paramount for pre-schools through higher education.
- Second, let's review whether or not the plans are up-to-date and current.
- Third, administrators should make sure that the person(s) responsible for crisis management and school security has (have) all of the plans and information at the ready.
- The fourth step is the training and re-training of all staff and employees.



Finally, students need to be involved. This is a sensitive issue, as we do not want to create fear in our students; rather, we need to ensure that, by including students in the planning, we will assist in allaying their fears. When conducting this step, it is important to remember that children and students of different ages respond differently—often by actions rather than words. Careful observation is necessary.

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