> *WE MUST WORK TOGETHER TODAY TO SECURE A SAFER TOMORROW FOR EVERY SCHOOL, EVERY CHILD, EVERY DAY.*
>
> *— Michele Gay, Co-founder of Safe and Sound Schools, Mother of Josephine Grace, killed December 14, 2012 at Sandy Hook School*

# TOGETHER FOR TOMORROW

WHITEPAPER ON SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY DEVELOPED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH MORE THAN 130 POLICE CHIEFS AND MEMBERS OF THE TEXAS SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY COUNCIL

*PBK and the Texas School Safety & Security Council are to be commended for leading the way in developing best practices in school safety. This white paper should be read by all who care about the education of our children and this comprehensive plan answers the question that is often asked about who is responsible for school safety. It is clear that although you should have experts in school safety at the table, it is everyone's responsibility to make sure each child and staff member is safe. The inclusion of SB 11 is a step in the right direction as it was handcrafted by Texas educators and safety experts from around this great state.*

**Dr. Greg Smith**
*Clear Creek ISD Superintendent and 2019-2020 TASA President*



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# WHERE WE ARE **TODAY**

*The current state of safety and security in our nation*

It could happen anywhere, any time or to anyone.

When the school day begins parents walk in with their children, teachers may get a high five from students entering the classroom and students expect to learn new subjects and enjoy time with their friends. Everyone settles in for another day at school but then an unknown visitor enters the facility. History has proven everything can change in a single moment.

School administrators and teachers live in a world where they go to school each day often wondering if they are safe.

Since the tragedy of Columbine High School more than 20 years ago, 301 people have been killed and 461 have been injured in school shootings, according to Newsweek.[1]

Implicit in the premise of our educational system is the belief, and trust, our schools will be safe havens where our children's learning and academic, social and emotional growth develops.

It is difficult to imagine a more basic drive than the instinct to keep your child, or any child, safe; particularly in a school environment. Moreover, our schools exist as places of learning but only within the basic expectation that our schools will, fundamentally, be safe.

Educators, school administrators and counselors agree if a child is hungry at school, learning is unlikely to take place. Equally true is the theory if a child is scared for their safety or has a fear of violence, then learning is likely not occurring.

It would be myopic to assume any message on school safety focuses primarily on "active shooter" events; environmental threats represent a far greater threat to mass displacement, injury or death than any human threat we've experienced to date.

The intent of this article is to:

- Identify a proficient authority on safety and security in schools
- Provide clarity and eliminate the "Tower of Babel" confusion about school safety to cut through the noise and identify common sense safety and security best practices
- Provide a concise framework for engagement to improve school safety and security

## THE NATIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC OF EDUCATION

The 2018 US census concludes about 329.62 million people live in the U.S. A breakdown within that number indicates the following about our school age population:

About 56.6 million students will attend elementary, middle and high schools across the U.S.

- Public schools account for 50.8 million of these students and the other 5.8 million students will attend private or parochial schools.
- About 19.9 million students are expected to attend US colleges and universities in the Fall of 2019.
- There are about 3.7 million teachers, administrators, counselors and related school staff starting in the Fall 2019.[2]

This "education" demographic exceeds 80 million people and represents 25 percent of our entire population.

We went straight to the officials who have been on the frontline during these events, from school district police chiefs, school safety specialists, public law enforcement agencies and first responders. With each tragedy, we've learned, and are committed to continuing to improve school safety.

This article is for those millions of students and teachers. Our mission is to protect them by providing you with more resources and options to better inform and prepare you for any event.

*Stockdick Middle School (Katy ISD)*
*Photo by Luis Ayala*

## REACTIONS TO SCHOOL PROTOCOLS ON **TWITTER**

My son's first day of Kindergarten included an active shooter lockdown drill this morning.

He's five years old and that is what he will always remember from his first day of elementary school.

Yesterday, I volunteered in my mom's classroom for the first day of school.

When I walked in, she was giving a talk to her room full of kids about what to do if an active shooter enters the building.

I never ONCE heard that talk when I was 9 years old.

My heart just.... broke.

Replying to

My nephew's wife, an elementary school teacher, started school this week. She spent last week in mandatory training on how to treat gunshot wounds in her classroom. Meanwhile, my brother's grandson spent his first day of kindergarten on active shooter drills.

I can't believe how many back to school tweets are talking about active shooter drills being a huge part of the first day of school. Poor kids...poor teachers... it makes me actually physically hurt

# FUTURE UNDER **FIRE**

*The rise of school violence in the 21st century*

*North Richland Middle School (Birdville ISD) Photo by Wade Griffith*

*Source: Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS)[3]*

The threat of school violence has permeated the educational experience causing students and educators to live each day with the unsettling apprehension, that the next tragedy could be in their own school.

Events that should have no place in the minds of today's young students, instead fundamentally shape their reality, making active shooter drills, metal detectors and social media surveillance as much a part of their educational experience as math, science and reading.

While the threat of school violence is not a new one - the first known school violence fatalities in the U.S. date back to 1764, and the deadliest U.S. school tragedy was in 1927 - incidents of school violence have occurred at an alarmingly faster rate since the 1970s, each decade seeing an increase from the last.[4,5]

More recently, 2018 brought the highest number of gun violence incidents in schools in a single year with a total of 110, including the tragic attacks in Parkland, Florida and Santa Fe, Texas.[5]

Only 20 years forward from the tragedy of Columbine High School, the number of school shootings in the 21st century has already surpassed the number that took place in the entire 20th century by nearly 20 percent.[3]

## NEVER HERE: THE PARADOX OF COMPLACENCY

Most adults remember where they were on April 20, 1999, seeing the breaking news of the Columbine High School shooting in Littleton, Colorado, and overwhelmed by the emotions that followed.

Today's school age students were not even alive at the time. High school seniors were between 5 and 6 years old in 2007, when the Virginia Tech attack occurred. Many first and second graders were born in 2012, when 27 people were killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School. After two decades of one mass casualty after another, much of the shock has worn off.

While school violence has become a defining phenomenon of the early 21st century, there exists a seemingly contradictory denial of threats at the personal level. At times it seems as if we go through the motions doing just enough to remain comfortable with our level of preparedness, hoping these horrific events only happen "somewhere else."

A prevalent "it can't happen here" mindset eliminates the sense of urgency. The uncertainty and ambiguity surrounding the cause and indicators of potential threats only adds to the challenge of anticipating and preventing them. Educational leaders end up in a "Catch-22" situation where well-intended safety and security measures may not provide the desired coverage or counteract one another.

Both staff and students can be effective at circumventing, intentionally or unintentionally, the rules. After all, how many exterior doors in and around the activity areas of a high school have we seen propped open after hours with a small wooden doorstop or a rubber walk-off mat?

The safety topic is extremely broad, but we've narrowed it down to three main components:

- Physical environment
- Practices / Protocols
- People

No community wants schools that, ***physically***, look or feel like maximum security institutions; no school district wants to impose unreasonably restrictive ***practices / protocols*** for staff or students; and perhaps most definitely, no community or school district wants to create intolerable inconvenience or disruptions to ***people*** (staff, students and parents), who participate in the common experience of education in the U.S.

When we, as a society and country, were confronted with the coordinated attacks of September 11, 2001, resulting in the loss of 2,996 lives, travel was changed forever.[6] Our metrics for "tolerable inconvenience" changed dramatically and we adapted to new rules, procedures and human interactions we had never been accustomed to previously – for the sake of greater safety both real and perceived.

In response to the May 2018 Santa Fe ISD shootings, Governor Abbott's initial School and Firearm Safety Action Plan had a significant focus on preventing threats in advance. This included a large menu of recommendations to address:

- Provision of mental health evaluations that identify students at risk of harming others and provide them the help they need
- Increasing mental health first aid training
- Providing schools with behavioral threat assessment programs
- Better utilization and expansion of on-campus counseling resources
- Expansion of campus Crime Stoppers programs
- Application of digital technology to prevent attacks
- Deployment of more (law enforcement) fusion centers to monitor social media for threats
- Improvement of the mental health crisis response infrastructure

- A desire to increase the safety of charter schools
- A proposal to removal from the classroom students who threaten teachers[7]

We believe part of the discussion on school safety and security requires evaluation of what level of "tolerable inconvenience" is acceptable to provide us with the enhanced safety we need.

## THE NATURE OF THREATS

Threats are, and always will be, continuously evolving. To make sense of threats, it's useful to understand the difference between threats and vulnerabilities. An example of this can be illustrated as follows.

> We are extremely **vulnerable** to a large "meteor impact" that would (potentially) cause devastating damage.

However, other than early detection, and mass communication / evacuation to reduce or avoid human loss, there are no proven defenses or mitigations that would prevent this kind of event from occurring.

> Despite the extreme **vulnerability** to the "meteor impact" it does not represent the kind of **threat** that individuals or organizations would likely spend resources (human or financial capital) to prevent.

It is more likely resources will be applied to threats that are more likely / probable to happen and have reasonably practical deterrents stopping the event from occurring or mitigating the damage it would cause.

Our mechanisms to mitigate threats are at best a reactive proposition based on historical events and the kinds of events that can reasonably be forecasted.

## THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM

The root of the problem? Some combination of a dozen possibilities - or perhaps none at all.

The majority of perpetrators (more than 95 percent) of school violence are males and in most cases, adolescents who are students or former students of the school. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), a number of factors, both intrinsic and extrinsic, such as abuse and neglect, trauma, residential instability, drug use, depression, victimization and exposure to violence in the home or community may influence a young person's likelihood to perpetrate violence.
In addition to individual risk factors, the effects of societal phenomena are also constantly examined and debated; gun control, media violence, war, cyberbullying and a laundry list of other possible influences are considered factors that may contribute to violence.

The CDC also notes that no one factor, in isolation, leads to the development of youth violence, and the presence of risks does not always mean a young person will experience violence.[3]

## GOOD INTENTIONS ARE NOT GOOD ENOUGH

We have a historical precedent that dramatically shaped another aspect of building safety allowing us to speculate about what the future holds for addressing school violence.

> ***We need a way to slow down active shooters to buy time for first responders. The best thing teachers and staff can do is know the safest place to go where they can secure themselves and their students.***
>
> **Chief Alan Bragg**
> *Executive Director, Texas School Safety and Security Council, PBK*

Five historic fires in the U.S. produced the fire codes we know today. These separate events caused such loss of life and such economic destruction that the rules we accept as customary and necessary (unobstructed exits, fire alarms, fire sprinklers, notification procedures, fireproofing, training / drills, fire responder protocols, etc.) were developed.

> 1871 Great Chicago Fire; approximately 300 killed
> 1903 Iroquois Theater Fire (Chicago); 602 killed
> 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Fire (New York); 147 killed
> 1930 Ohio State Penitentiary Fire; 320 killed
> 1942 Cocoanut Grove Nightclub Fire (Boston); 492 killed, 200 injured[8]

It remains to be seen whether, as a society, we have reached the "tipping point" or "inflection point" where public outrage and sentiment over school violence causes elected officials to legislate laws and enact codes to prescribe safety and security provisions.
We know this is already occurring and it will gain momentum over time. A brief analysis of Texas Senate Bill #11, passed in the most recent legislative session, quickly eliminates any question on that matter. Note one of the first passages contained in this bill that speaks directly to this topic:

> *AN ACT*
> *relating to policies, procedures, and measures for school safety and mental health promotion in public schools and the creation of the Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium.*
> *BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:*
> *SECTION 1. Subchapter C, Chapter 7, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 7.061 to read as follows:*
> *Sec. 7.061. FACILITIES STANDARDS.*
> *(a) In this section, "instructional facility" has the meaning assigned by Section 46.001.*
> *(b) The commissioner shall adopt or amend rules as necessary to ensure that building standards for instructional facilities and other school district and open-enrollment charter school facilities provide a secure and safe environment. In adopting or amending rules under this section, the commissioner shall include the use of best practices for:*
> *(1) the design and construction of new facilities; and*
> *(1) the improvement, renovation, and retrofitting of existing facilities.*
> *(2) Not later than September 1 of each even-numbered year, the commissioner shall review all rules adopted or amended under this section and amend the rules as necessary to ensure that building standards for school district and open-enrollment charter school facilities continue to provide a secure and safe environment.*[9]

It is not known what best practices will be adopted or amended by the commissioner, but this is tangible evidence that a standard will be established where none existed previously.

To effect deeper change in the way we create safer schools, we believe there will need to be fundamental shifts not just in sentiment but also what we are committed to doing. There will have to be a transformation in attitudes and a change in public or institutional complacency will need to take place. The degree of "tolerable inconvenience" may need to change to allow more robust protocols and practices to be embedded.

We believe it will likely take a combination of grassroots public support, local government initiatives and statewide legislation to transform intentions into action. We, and the TSSSC, have strong opinions about the best practices necessary to make schools safer and will advocate to have these considered.

Good intentions can't continue to be good enough.

## A GLIMPSE INTO YOUTH VIOLENCE

**YOUTH VIOLENCE IS HIGHLY PREVALENT.**
The prevalence of youth violence negatively impacts communities. Homicides, bullying, gang activity and other threats of violence contribute to an atmosphere of fear.

**THE HEALTH AND ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF YOUTH VIOLENCE ARE SUBSTANTIAL.**
Fear, trauma and injury negatively impact the physical, mental and social health of communities.

**YOUTH VIOLENCE STARTS EARLY IN THE LIFESPAN.**
Aggression in children can be spurred on by factors such as child abuse and neglect, violence in the home, drug prevalence and more.

**YOUTH VIOLENCE IS ASSOCIATED WITH SEVERAL RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS.**
Internal and external factors can both contribute to a child exhibiting violent behavior. Factors such as an individuals characteristics, experiences and circumstances can play a role.

**YOUTH VIOLENCE IS CONNECTED TO OTHER FORMS OF VIOLENCE.**
Violence threatens mental well-being and can lead to chronic stress and anxiety.

**95%+**
***OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE PERPETRATORS ARE MALES***

**10-24**
***AGE RANGE OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE INFLUENCED BY YOUTH VIOLENCE***

*Source: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*[2]

# THE DIFFERENCE

*The Texas School Safety and Security Council*

With hundreds, if not thousands, of studies, recommendations, procedures and products, available for school safety and security, how can school trustees and administrators find clarity and make sense of it all?

Much like the individual and environmental factors that lead to violence, no one safety measure, in isolation, is guaranteed to prevent or and mitigate an attack. When safety measures are not cohesive or encompassing, there's no way to ensure a school is safe.

So, where should we find practical advice on this critically important subject?

Leading efforts for spreading awareness and impacting change from within are organizations like Safe and Sound Schools. Founded by two mothers of Sandy Hook victims, Safe and Sound Schools provides resources, training and research to parents, students and educators nationwide. Their State of School Safety 2019 report provides the education community with research on perceptions of school safety and recommendations for improving communication and collaboration between stakeholders.

Crime Stoppers, a partner of Safe and Sound Schools, works to protect students by identifying abuse, bullying, terror threats and other risk factors and facilitating programs that intercede to prevent threats and criminal activity.

When a crisis occurs, having standard response and reunification protocols are crucial. The "I Love U Guys" Foundation is recognized as the leader in establishing recommendations on these for educators.

At a legislative level, Texas Senate Bill #11 provides a host of requirements for school safety and security, including developing programs for student mental health promotion and intervention, implementing several emergency drills, as well as emergency operations plans and preparing for regular school safety audits.[9]

## THE TEXAS SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY COUNCIL

PBK believes all these entities, collectively, should work collaboratively to anticipate, prepare for and mitigate threats.

The question remains: Who do we trust? Who are the experts? And how do we best start the conversation?

In 2018, PBK, stemming from a desire to serve public and private education with relevant content / advice and thought leadership, built a consortium of the best qualified, and most expert, advisors and practitioners in the field of school safety and security. From this vision and desire to serve, PBK developed the Texas School Safety and Security Council (TSSSC).

The inherent "super qualification" of this council is that these primary experts, and most-knowledgeable professionals, already exist among us. They are school chiefs of police and police departments, school resource officers and related agencies and the school safety directors and coordinators we already trust to help make our schools safer.

More than 130 Texas school district police chiefs, associated public law enforcement agencies and first responders are founding members and the council is still growing.

Safety and security best practices do not exist independent of the numerous school safety thought leaders and organizations whose research and recommendations have shaped the policies and procedures educators implement nationwide. Rather, the TSSSC approaches school safety and security uniquely, with a holistic lens, drawing from the experiences of those who live and breathe school law enforcement and administration each day.

The TSSSC exists not to contradict or dispute other thought leaders, but rather to bridge gaps, using expert knowledge and experience to understand the reality of protecting the millions of children enrolled in schools across the U.S.

Since its inception, the TSSSC has met numerous times to discuss best practices for school safety and security. In June 2018, the TSSSC held the first of almost a dozen regular meetings to discuss best practices for school safety and security due to the rapidly changing nature of policy, practice and implementation for school safety. The council also hosted roundtable discussions with principals and administrators across Texas to address how school safety and security is managed on campuses.

Under the guidance and leadership of Retired Chief of Police Alan Bragg, a 45-year veteran of law enforcement, the members of the TSSSC have worked for more than a year to propose and build safety and security best practices.

*Top photo*
*Oct. 12, 2018 inaugural Dallas TSSSC founding members meeting*

*Bottom photo*
*June 27, 2019 meeting with Houston administrators and principals*

### HISTORY OF THE TSSSC

**June 25, 2018 - Austin**
TSSSC leaders present Best Practices at UT TASA Conference

**June 13, 2018 - Houston**
Inaugural meeting of TSSSC founding members

**August 6, 2018 - Houston**
TSSSC Design Charrette

**October 12, 2018 - Dallas**
First meeting of Dallas TSSSC founding members

**November 9, 2018 - Dallas**
TSSSC hosts School Safety and Security Symposium

**November 7, 2018 - Houston**
Houston TSSSC member meeting

**January 29, 2019 - Austin**
TSSSC leaders and FBISD present Best Practices at TASA Midwinter Conference

**March 26, 2019 - Dallas**
TSSSC and SFISD host Safety and Security Symposium at Region 10

**March 29, 2019 - Houston**
TSSSC leaders present at Region 4 ESC National Summit on School Safety

**April 2, 2019 - Houston**
TSSSC members meet to review additional best practices

**April 9, 2019 - Dallas**
Dallas TSSSC members meet to review additional best practices

**April 11, 2019 - Leander**
TSSSC leaders present at FGSC Lunch and Learn

**April 30, 2019 - Dallas**
TSSSC leaders present at Region 10 ESC "Safety 1st" Conference

**May 8, 2019 - San Marcos**
Central Texas TSSSC founding members meeting

**June 10-11, 2019 - Houston**
TSSSC leaders present at Region 4 ESC School Safety Summit

**June 20, 2019 - Austin**
TSSSC leaders present on best practices to "PBK U"

**June 30, 2019 - Austin**
Administrators and principals meeting

**June 27, 2019 - Dallas**
Administrators and principals meeting

**June 27, 2019 - Houston**
Administrators and principals meeting

# THE
# BEST PRACTICES

*Best practices developed by over 130 school chiefs of police, school administrators and architects*

The TSSSC founding members evaluated current safety and security practices and concluded that the following **Best Practices** are essential topics for the discussion.

These best practices fall into three main categories – environment, law enforcement and administrative.

With no intention to be prescriptive, the following consolidated best practice recommendations are endorsed by the TSSSC. Although the council understood and acknowledged that each school district's needs and circumstances are unique, every topic is highly recommended by the council as a necessary component to provide the best foundation for a district to assess safety and security.

Threats are evolving and will continue to do so; which requires that school safety and security practices be an inherently evolving continuum. These recommendations are updated periodically to reflect the rapidly changing nature of policy, practice and implementation for school safety.

**1. Officer Presence** – No single attribute of safety and security provides greater reassurance to staff, students and visitors than on-site officer presence. Additionally, no other implementation provides more rapid response and intervention for emergency situations. It is suggested that law enforcement officer(s) be on-site daily based on average of one (1) officer per 1,000 students, or more, on most campuses. Consider all forms of law enforcement partnership (embedded independent school district (ISD) police departments (PD), contracted school resource officer (SRO) services, interlocal agreements / memorandum's of understanding (MOU) for service).

**2. Site Emergency Call Stations** - Provide strategically located, solar powered exterior emergency call stations with automated 24x7 alert capabilities to police / fire (first responders). Call stations should be located at after-hours entry points, parking lots, athletic fields and portable classrooms. Cameras should be provided at call stations and angled to record anyone who uses the call station. Elementary schools should have a call station at the playground, middle schools should have two to three (2 – 3) call stations, and high schools should have at least five (5) call stations.

**3. Site Fencing** - Provide continuous perimeter site fencing consisting of 8' tall vertical slat wrought-iron fencing (except visitor/staff and student parking areas). Perimeter fencing should be implemented and adjusted according to the environment and community around the school.

**4. Natural Surveillance (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design - CPTED)**

A. Design drives to increase pedestrian and bicycle traffic and use passing vehicular traffic as a surveillance asset.
B. Place windows overlooking sidewalks and parking lots and leave window shades open.
C. Create landscape designs that provide surveillance, especially in proximity to designated points of entry and opportunistic points of entry. Curved streets can provide multiple view points as well as make the escape route difficult to follow.
D. Use the least sight-limiting fence appropriate for the situation.
E. Use transparent weather vestibules at building entrances.
F. When creating lighting design, avoid poorly placed lights that create blind- spots for potential observers and miss critical areas. Ensure potential problem areas are well lit: pathways, stairs, entrances/exits, parking areas, ATMs, phone kiosks, mailboxes, bus stops, children's play areas, recreation areas, pools, laundry rooms, storage areas, dumpster and recycling areas, etc.
G. Avoid too-bright security lighting that creates blinding glare and/or deep shadows, hindering the view for potential observers. Eyes adapt to night lighting and have trouble adjusting to severe lighting disparities. Using lower intensity lights often requires more fixtures.

## SITE COMPONENTS **KEY**

- **CALL STATIONS (2)**
- **CAMERA SYSTEMS (8)**
- **SITE FENCING (3)**
- **FRONT DOOR ACCESS**
- **NATURAL SURVEILLANCE (4)**
- **DOOR & DRIVE IDENTIFICATION (10)**
- **NATURAL ACCESS CONTROL (5)**
- **PORTABLES (11)**

**PERIMETER OF SCHOOL BUILDING: TERRITORIAL REINFORCEMENT (6), MAINTENANCE & MANAGEMENT (7)**

*Top left photo*
*Police officers discuss school safety on campuses in a series of roundtable discussions that take place multiple times a year. Photo by Paul Chung.*

*Bottom left photo*
*PBK Managing Partner Ian Powell leads a design charrette with police officers in August 2018. Photo by Paul Chung.*

*Right photo*
*School administrators participated in a roundtable discussion concerning school safety on their campuses. Photo by Paul Chung.*

H. Place lighting along pathways and other pedestrian-use areas at proper heights for lighting the faces of the people in the space (and to identify the faces of potential attackers).
I. Natural surveillance measures can be complemented by mechanical and organizational measures. For example, closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras can be added in areas where window surveillance is unavailable.

**5. Natural Access Control (CPTED)**
A. Use a single, clearly identifiable, point of entry for vision.
B. Incorporate maze entrance in public restrooms.
C. Use structures to divert persons to reception areas.
D. Use low, thorny bushes beneath ground level windows. Use rambling or climbing thorny plants next to fences to discourage intrusion.
E. Eliminate design features that provide access to roofs or upper levels.
F. Use a locking gate between front and back entrances.

**6. Territorial Reinforcement (CPTED)**
A. Maintain premises and landscaping such that it communicates an alert and active presence occupying the space.
B. Provide trees; research results indicate that, contrary to traditional views within the law enforcement community, outdoor residential spaces with more trees are seen as significantly more attractive, safer, and more likely to be used than similar spaces without trees.
C. Restrict private activities to defined private areas.
D. Display security system signage at access points.
E. Avoid chain link fencing and razor-wire fence topping, as it communicates the absence of a physical presence and a reduced risk of being detected.
F. Scheduling activities in common areas increases proper use, attracts more people and increases the perception that these areas are controlled.
G. Provide motion sensor lights at all entry points.
H. Territorial reinforcement measures make the normal user feel safe and make the potential offender aware of a substantial risk of apprehension or scrutiny.

**7. Maintenance and Management (CPTED)**
A. Maintenance is an expression of ownership of property. Deterioration indicates less control by the intended users of a site and indicate a greater tolerance of disorder. Having a positive image in the community shows a sense of pride and self-worth that no one can take away from the owner of the property.
B. Activity support increases the use of a built environment for safe activities with the intent of increasing the risk of detection of criminal and undesirable activities. Natural surveillance by the intended users is casual and there is no specific plan for people to watch out for criminal activity. By placing signs such as caution children playing and signs for certain activities in the area, the citizens of that area will be more involved in what is happening around them.

**8. Security Cameras** - Provide high definition 360-degree digital security cameras with 24-hour recording at all entries, major corridors and exterior of campus with video storage on and off site for minimum of six (6) months; compatible with after-hours burglar / fire alarm system. Cameras should be located in parking lots and mounted on light poles and pointed at the building to record who enters and leaves the school.

**9. Entry Video Camera / Intercom Systems** - Provide main entrance door video camera/intercom system to authenticate guests and to grant access into secure vestibule.

**10. Drive and Door Identification** - Campus access drives and exterior building doors allowing school access should be labeled alphanumerically to identify both the specific drive/door and the side of the school on which they are located. A great "low cost / no cost" solution that improves accurate response of first responders.

**11. Portable / Modular Classrooms** - Create a plan to secure portable classrooms; treat portable classrooms as an extension of the permanent facility. Pre-plan site locations fence portable classroom compound, control access to portable compound, and embed all associated communication/ notification and emergency functions. Consider hardened wall systems and safe rooms within portable compound.

**12. Secure Vestibules** - At "primary" entries, provide secure vestibules capable of resisting an unauthorized intruder until access

## BUILDING COMPONENTS **KEY**

- **SECURITY VESTIBULE (12)**
- **ACCESS CONTROL (14)**
- **COMMAND/CONTROL ROOM (21)**
- **LOCK DOWN/PANIC CONTROLS (15)**
- **INDICATOR LOCKS (17)**
- **IBC/IFC 1008.1.4.4 (19)**
- **COMMUNITY ROOMS (20)**



is granted or until law enforcement/security arrives. Consider providing one to two (1 – 2) primary/secure vestibule entrances at elementary schools, two to three (2 – 3) primary / secure vestibule entrances at middle or junior high schools, and four to six (4 – 6) primary / secure vestibule entrances at high schools

**13. Hardened Glazing** - It is important to understand the difference between ballistic glazing and forced entry resistant glazing. True ballistic glazing, in various thicknesses and levels, provides bullet resistance. Forced entry resistant glazing does not prevent bullets from penetrating but does not shatter or fall out of the frame it's in. Hardened glazing, forced entry resistant glazing using impact/ ballistic resistant film, is recommended for installation at main entries, at exterior glass adjacent main entries, and on all glass inside secure vestibules. Should also be considered for all interior classroom window systems and for door vision panels.

**14. Access Control** - Access control/proximity card reader access for exterior / designated doors (may include student ID cards if provided by district/campus and coded for school days / school hours only).

**15. Lock-Down / Panic Buttons** - Administrative / faculty accessible "lock-down/panic" buttons, enclosed in plastic case with local alarm, are recommended. These should be programmed with unique alert tone to prevent confusion with other emergency alert tones (like fire alarm).

**16. Safe Rooms** - Provide a defined number of hardened "safe rooms" and classrooms, with reinforced secure door hardware, strategically located to be used during a crisis (equipped with digital radio, phone and barricade ability during an active shooter incident).

**17. Indicator Locks** - Provide "indicator style" locks with classroom security function (lockable from the inside) at all classrooms.

**18. Sensing Technology** - Provide sensing technology at secure vestibules. Sensing technology can include metal detectors, weapons detection systems and gunshot detection systems. Sensing technology is a helpful security tool and should be manned by vetted personnel when the school is open / in session and for any before-school and / or after-school activities. All primary / secure vestibule entrances that are open throughout the day, should have sensing technology and be staffed appropriately.

**19. Access Controlled Egress Doors** - Evaluate applicability of IBC / IFC 1008.1.4.4 access controlled egress doors with the local authority having jurisdiction (fire marshal). If allowed by the fire marshal, doors would be labeled as "Emergency Exit" doors so that they can remain locked during the day and be alarmed for egress purpose while maintaining compliance with IBC / IFC regulation 1008.1.4.4.

**20. Community/Conference Room** - Provide a "community" / conference room adjacent vestibule for temporary holding and evaluation, of agitated or disruptive individuals or perceived human threats. Access should be limited to/from the secure vestibule only.

**21. Secure Command/Control Room** - Provide a secure command / control room in administrative suite with direct exterior access for first responders.

**22. Integrated and Interoperable Communication Systems** - Provide integrated and interoperable communication systems using multiple technologies. This should include integration solutions that effectively share radio, voice, video and data; mass-communication / notifications systems; and hand-held digital radio systems for internal campus use.

**23. Emergency Operations Plan** - Create a comprehensive and integrated emergency operations plan (EOP) and administrative practices manual (APM).

**24. Training and Drills** - Provide training and drills to make necessary reactions more immediate.

**25. Clear Backpacks** – If clear backpacks are allowed by school district policy, consider using clear backpacks only and consider implementing bullet resistant inserts.

**26. Social Media Monitoring Software** - Use social media monitoring software that monitors online student activity for keywords.

**27. Tourniquets** - Equip security personnel with readily accessible tourniquets, carried on their person. Require training for security, administration and classroom personnel to ensure that each is equipped and trained to stop a bleeding emergency before professional help arrives.

**28. Gunshot Detection Technology** – Consider an integrated microphone and camera system using software to verify specific acoustical signatures of gunshots and triangulation to pinpoint location of gunfire

**29. Facial Recognition Software** - Consider an integrated software and camera system to identify individuals and confirm authorized persons versus unknown persons. Cameras match images with student / staff photos and identify possible intruders

**30. Student Reunification Method (SRM)** - Utilizing software, smart phone technology and student records to reunite students and parents. The SRM Toolkit "Texas Edition" was created in conjunction with The "I Love U Guys" Foundation with the intent of incorporating Texas specific guidance and mandates into reunification processes and materials – "One critical aspect of crisis response is accountable reunification of students with their parents or guardians in the event a controlled release is necessary. The Standard Reunification Method provides school and district

**Crime Stoppers of Houston has been in the schools, talking to students, since 1997. What we have discovered that without question, students are the first line of intelligence. By tapping into what they know, we are able to learn of potential threats through conversations they are having, statements they are posting or plans they are making. We absolutely stand by the work of PBK and the comprehensive overview this whitepaper offers to all those interested in true school safety.**

**Rania Mankarious, MA, JD**
*CEO, Crime Stoppers of Houston*

safety teams proven methods for planning, practicing and achieving a successful reunification. Keep in mind though, this is an evolving process. While there is a smattering of science in these methods, there is certainly more art. Site-specific considerations will impact how these practices can be integrated into school and district safety plans. Successful planning and implementation will also demand partnerships with all responding agencies participating in a crisis response."

**31. Cyber Security** – Establish clear protocols and defenses to cyber threats. Cyberattacks can take many forms including:

A. Advanced Persistent Threats
B. Phishing
C. Trojans
D. Botnets
E. Ransomware
F. Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS)
G. Wiper Attacks
H. Intellectual Property Theft
I. Theft of Money
J. Data Manipulation
K. Data Destruction
L. Spyware/Malware
M. Man in the Middle (MITM)
N. Drive-By Downloads
O. Malvertising
P. Rogue Software
Q. Unpatched Software

Cyber Security defenses and mitigation strategies are broad and include:

A. Use anti-virus software
B. Don't open e-mails or attachments from unknown sources. Be suspicious of any e-mail attachments that are unexpected, even if they come from a known source.
C. Protect your computer from Internet intruders
D. Regularly download security updates and patches for operating systems and other software
E. Use hard-to-guess passwords. Mix upper case, lower case, numbers and other characters not easily found in the dictionary. Make sure your password is at least eight characters long.
F. Back-up your computer data on disks or CDs regularly
G. Don't share access to your computer with strangers. Learn about file-sharing risks.
H. Disconnect devices from the Internet when not in use
I. Check your security on a regular basis
J. Make sure all employees know what to do if a computer or system is believed to be infected or corrupted
K. Use Behavioral Monitoring Software – Look for out-of-norm behaviors, like moving or copying thousands of files
L. "Need-To-Know/Access" Parameters - Permissions, Access Rights
M. Geo-Locking - Lock-out the known "Bad Actor" Countries
N. IP-Locking - Lock-out the known "Bad Actor" URL's / Entities
O. Filter Out Specific File Types from Email
P. Block Internet Proxies
Q. Disable Launching Executable Files at the Desktop
R. Continuing Education / Training

**32. Cyber Bullying Prevention** - Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behavior. The most common places where cyberbullying occurs are:

A. Social Media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter
B. SMS (Short Message Service) also known as Text Message sent through devices
C. Instant Message (via devices, email provider services, apps and social media messaging features)
D. Email

## ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES

A major part of TSSSC and PBK's investigation into what constitutes practical best practices required a deeper dive into the specific practices and protocols administrators implement when different kinds of incidents occur at schools.

It was quickly clear that a more intensive exploration about this topic was needed to learn from school principals and administrators about their safety plans. Specifically, we wanted to understand the complexity of what school administrators face, identify where common circumstances exist and identify outlier conditions that require non-conventional plans.

*PBK and the TSSSC held a roundtable discussion with school administrators about school safety on their campuses. Photo by Paul Chung.*

During the summer of 2019, the TSSSC and PBK hosted discovery and fact-finding sessions in Houston, Dallas and Austin. More than 45 school principals and administrators participated in tabletop exercises and forums to provide useful perspectives on their plans. Although there were many common threads to the kinds of plans we heard, their action plans were not universal because individual school / campus circumstances vary so greatly. But the need for this planning is universal and absolutely critical.

Generally, the thought planning of administrative practices involves the assessment of topics including, but not limited to, the following:

- What immediate actions do principal and campus administrative staff take to address the situation?
- What secondary conditions, lateral to the event, have been anticipated so those who respond have a plan in advance of the event?
- What if something unanticipated happens? What fallback plans, or redundancies, exist to successfully respond?
- What resources external to the district are mobilized to address the event?
- Who is responsible for public communications?
- What mass communication plan exists to update the community regarding any event?
- If a partial or complete campus was involved, what coordinated plan is in place for an orderly school resumption?
- What resources are available to assist teachers, administrators, counselors and parents / caregivers with students (or staff) who are experiencing trauma, grief, confusion or fear after an event?

What we also found was that sharing this information between principals from different schools and districts uncovered some commonalities and "ah-ha" moments about new or unusual circumstances. Consider the following actual situations:

A. An intermediate school campus is bordered by a railway line and a street / rail line crossing at an adjacent corner of the school. Planning questions impacting administrative practices for the campus included:

- What happens if a derailment occurs and a chemical or hazardous material spill is involved?
- What happens when a rail line breakdown occurs during school arrival or dismissal and blocks traffic at the intersection?

B. An elementary school is located near a chemical plant and a chemical containment tank failure causes a release of hazardous material and caustic gases. Administrators had to consider:

- What lines of communication exist with the chemical plant operator and first responders to quickly understand the nature of the material spill and threats involved?
- What specialized responders (hazmat teams) are required to contain, neutralize and remove spilled materials?

C. A high school campus is impacted by a massive storm event involving extreme rainfall and high winds. The school remains unaffected but all surrounding streets and access to the campus are flooded and completely impassable.

- What if buses and parents can't access the school?
- What if students or staff can't leave campus due to flooded streets?

Another specific case study involved an investigation into how "panic buttons" were implemented on a high school campus;

specifically, what automatic and follow-on responses would be initiated by pushing a panic button? In this example, the following practices were identified:

- Panic buttons were provided in seven locations on the campus, in both private offices and open, public areas of the school.
- Both administrators and the general student population have access to the panic buttons.
- The panic buttons have clear plastic covers creating a local audible signal that a panic button has been accessed.
- When the panic button is pushed the following events occur immediately:

  1. A unique emergency tone, different from the fire alarm, is broadcast across the school campus. Staff and students are trained to understand the kind of threat associated with the tone.
  2. Alarm strobes begin signaling a visual notification over the campus.
  3. Exterior doors are locked preventing entrance to the school.
  4. The district police department receives an immediate notification that the school is in alarm.
  5. Upon hearing / seeing the unique tone and visual strobes, teachers are instructed to close and lock classroom doors, shelter students within a visually remote corner of classroom, using desks and chairs as barricades and defensive shields.
  6. The principal, and other designated administrative staff, initiate "next step" response procedures to assess / evaluate the nature of the threat and take other actions as appropriate.

Another conclusion from these discussions involved the topic of reunification drills and exercises.

Some administrators acknowledged they have a "fear of failure" related to conducting reunification exercises. Their concern centered on whether these exercises would be perceived (by the school board or the community) as perfectly coordinated and without flaw. They expressed misgivings that anything less than perfectly scripted outcomes would negatively impact confidence in the district's preparedness.

At the other end of this discussion spectrum, several campus administrators offered the comment that a live reunification exercise was not just critically important, but should start with the expectation that the exercise will be "messy." They advocated these exercises should identify the hard-to-see gaps or weaknesses of the plan and lead to improvement.

Representatives for one education service center also confirmed their experience, in which a reunification exercise involved multiple agencies for coordinated response. In this case, responsibilities for planning and implementation of the reunification plan were distributed not only within the school district, but across multiple responding agencies. And, most importantly, the build up to the exercise and public communication about the exercise was framed with a clear expectation the exercise would be used as a learning tool to create improvement in their planning.

The TSSSC supports the K-12 Standard Response Protocol (developed in collaboration between the Texas School Safety Center and the "I Love U Guys" Foundation). As a tool to usefully frame the creation of a safety plan and administrative practices, the Standard Response Protocol provides consistent, clear, shared language and actions among all students, staff and first responders, that can be applied in any emergency. And, the K-12 Standard Response Protocol Toolkit offers guidance and resources for incorporating the Standard Response Protocol into a school safety plan, for critical incident response within individual schools in a school district. The intent of this toolkit is to provide basic guidance with respect for local conditions and authorities. The Texas edition incorporates Texas specific guidance and mandates into these processes and materials.

PBK and the TSSSC will issue a follow up publication to showcase the perspectives provided by these school principals and administrators. By intention, these efforts to identify and bring forward useful administrative practice conclusions will be focused on providing an information resource for all involved to build their own safety plans.

*Lemm Elementary School (Klein ISD) Photo by Luis Ayala*

# FUTURE WITHOUT **FEAR**

*Take a stand for safety and security in schools*

We've illustrated details about the number of school shootings and about the increases in this type of violence but there's no simple explanation why they keep happening. What we do know is something needs to change.

Before, students only had to worry about what they were learning or who they would play with at school. Now, they jump when they hear a fire alarm, or may experience extreme anxiety if a school performs a lockdown drill. If they see a school shooting on the news, they shouldn't be worried about a shooter showing up at their school. There's no reason, they should live in fear they'll make it home each day to see their parents. Unfortunately, this is our reality today.

To many of our readers, you may remember a time when school shootings were not as frequent. There are 172 documented school shootings in the 1900s and 148 since 2000. Less than 20 years into the 21st century and the number of school shootings is only 24 less than the entire 20th century.[3]

Our schools are fundamentally safe, in fact, safer than many other places we might think of. "Schools are not, in fact, more common targets for mass shootings than other public venues," Lara Sorokanich said.[10]

But statistical measures cannot assuage the loss of any student; even one student lost to violence in schools is unacceptable.

When we watch the news and see a shooting, we can no longer think "that could never happen here." We've seen it happen across the nation. As we enter a new decade, we need to have a keen awareness of the challenges schools face and never let our guard down to keep students and teachers safer.

We cannot change the past, but we can change our future and for the better. It's time to take a stand.

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# FOUNDING TSSSC LEADERSHIP

**CHIEF ALAN BRAGG**
***CHIEF OF POLICE, RETIRED***
***EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,***
***TEXAS SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY COUNCIL, PBK***

Chief Bragg is a seasoned, 45-year veteran law official with significant experience in evaluating and developing prevention programs for targeted violence including: violence directed at school campuses and / or school officials, school-based violence, stalking, workplace violence and terrorism. He has served as chief of police for many educational institutions and been featured in peer-reviewed publications and presentations across the country. Chief Bragg is a graduate of the FBI National Academy and holds a Master Peace Officer Certification and Police Instructor's license from the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement.

As a specialized security consultant, Chief Bragg actively engages both school administration and community representatives in the evaluation, analysis and planning of violence prevention programs. He is instrumental in translating findings into operational safety and security guidelines, programs and threat-deterrent protocols for PBK projects.

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**IAN POWELL**
***MANAGING PARTNER, PBK***

Ian's entire professional career has been focused on the design and planning of educational environments. Championing the topic of school safety is both a professional responsibility as well as personal obligation. In the past two decades, Ian has presented on school safety and security at national, regional and state conferences to education organizations including the National School Boards Association, the American Association of School Administrators, the Texas Association of School Administrators and the Texas Association of School Boards. Since May 2018, Ian has led discussions on the improvement of safety in Texas schools at more than 30 forums with school chiefs of police and command staff, school security specialists, facility directors and school campus and district level administrative staff.

He has extensive experience in long-range master planning, facility condition assessments, programming / pre-planning and design and construction administration for hundreds of projects. Ian's work spans a diverse array of project types including all configurations of primary and secondary learning facilities, higher education buildings and campuses, ancillary and support facilities, CTE and vocational curriculum centers and athletic and recreational facilities. Ian serves in a leadership capacity on the boards of both professional and educational associations and presents on education topics regionally and nationally.

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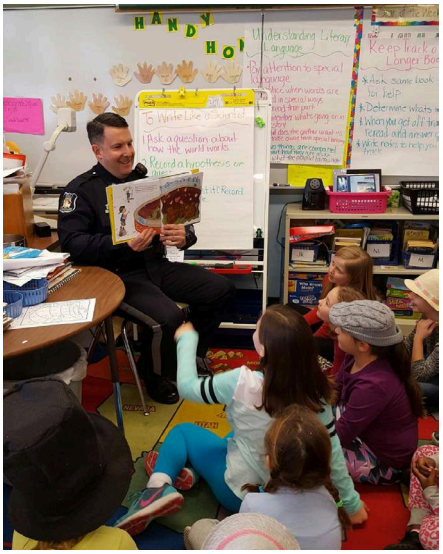

> *As a chief of police for one of the largest districts in the state of Texas, I believe this is a great foundation and piece of work to facilitate the conversations about what is the best fit for new construction and renovation projects for schools.*
>
> *— Klein ISD Police Chief David Kimberly and 2019-2020 president, Texas School District Police Chiefs Association*

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