
Preface

Today's school administrators are under enormous pressures to boost academic performance, maintain safe and orderly schools, and address many societal issues crossing their schoolhouse doors each day.

School administrators are increasingly faced with tighter budgets. Time is the only thing scarcer than money in many school districts. Educators need practical, cost-effective school safety strategies from credible sources without a lot of theory and fluff.

Proactive School Security and Emergency Preparedness Planning is designed to meet the needs of today's school leaders. Within it, readers will find straightforward information on school security and emergency preparedness. The book first looks at threats to school security and the politics surrounding it, and then moves right into the nuts-and-bolts strategies for preventing violence and preparing for crises.

A number of best practices in school safety have remained constant since my first two books were published in 1998 and 2000. Yet this book is timely in refocusing on the fundamentals and in advancing conversations on current hot topics and future threats to safe and secure schools. School safety planning is an ongoing process, not a one-time event, and this book builds significantly upon the knowledge base covered in my first two books.

Proactive School Security and Emergency Preparedness Planning introduces new, dedicated full chapters on managing the current national hysteria around bullying, preparing schools for terrorism, managing school safety on tight budgets, parents and school safety, and managing media and parent communications in the postcrisis stage of school emergency planning. These five new chapters offer practical, commonsense frameworks and steps school leaders can take to proactively manage and respond to highly visible, emotional, and political aspects of school safety leadership in today's security-sensitive school community. The guidance in these chapters will help school leaders navigate complex school safety issues while operating under unprecedented budget constraints.

Educators and safety officials will also benefit from new subchapter sections on hot topics that have emerged over the years since my first books. Administration building and board meeting security, after-hours school security; athletic and large event security; cell phones; Election Day security; elementary school security; Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and school privacy exceptions; Tasers and school police; training staff on school security and emergency preparedness; transportation security; diversifying emergency drills; tabletop exercises; and financial and continuity of operations plans are among the new and expanded subchapters. Readers who found my earlier publications helpful in covering a wide range of school security issues will find more best practices and issues to consider with the addition of these new topics.

School safety continues to be an evolving field, and keeping up with new information on school safety is as important as following the latest research in academic achievement. Updates on topics in this book will be added to my website at www.schoolsecurity.org. For timely and breaking updates on current trends, hot topics, free resources, news, opinion, and interactive dialogue on the latest developments in the school safety field, visit my blog at www.schoolsecurityblog.com and sign up for daily e-mail alerts.