EAB

Safety and Incident Communications Toolkit

Ideas and Tools for Improving
District Safety Communications

Resource in Brief

Use this toolkit to identify opportunities to improve your district's safety and incident communications.

The toolkit is structured to help districts build a safety communications strategy with cross-functional expertise, communicate safety measures and updates across multiple channels, and embed updates about school safety initiatives into ongoing district communications.

3 Ways to Use This Toolkit

• Audit existing practices used to communicate information about school district safety and security

• Identify new opportunities to improve your safety communications processes

• Prepare templates and resources to expedite communications around district safety and security

District Leadership Forum

District Leadership Forum

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Executive Summary

Safety and Incident Communications Toolkit

Successful Safety Communication Critical to Building and Maintaining Trust

Incidents can come in many forms and happen at any time, but districts should not only communicate about safety during or in the aftermath of a crisis event. In the wake of school shootings and other incidents of violence that have occurred across the country, district administrators increasingly face questions from concerned parents, students, members of the media, and local government officials about school safety. While districts usually have individuals and teams in place to develop safety and security protocol (e.g., prevention programs, infrastructure, emergency drills, response procedures), they often do not effectively communicate districtwide preparedness to build trust and credibility within the school community.

This toolkit is designed to support administrators in taking a proactive approach to safety and incident communications. The first section explores strategies for keeping the school community well-informed on an ongoing basis about safety initiatives, accomplishments, and procedures across the district. Understanding that, despite precautions, incidents of varying severity are still likely to occur, the sections that follow are intended to help communications teams develop a robust set of protocols and templates to prepare for and facilitate incident communications that are timely, accurate, and effective.

Guiding Framework for Improving Safety and Incident Communications

1

Hardwire Safety Communications in District Operations

2

Build an Incident Response Team

3

Develop an Incident Communications Plan

4

Assemble Library of Resources to Facilitate Rapid Response

How to Use This Toolkit

There are many strategies districts should implement to increase effective communication around school safety and in response to various incidents. Although districts may already be implementing some of these ideas, our goal with this toolkit is to provide a wide variety of ideas and accompanying tools to help districts successfully strengthen safety and incident communications. This toolkit is designed for districts to customize their own strategy and resources based on their capacity and needs.

Section 1

Hardwiring Safety Communications

Goal

Identify ways to incorporate school safety topics into the district's ongoing communications efforts.

Intended User

District administrators, communications director or expert, principals

Overview

This section helps users identify ways to incorporate safety updates, initiatives, and accomplishments into regular communication with students, staff, parents, and the community.

Regular communication about safety ensures stakeholders know that safety is a top priority for the district and are aware of important safety programs and procedures.

The ideas and recommendations in this section will help district communications leaders:

1 Make the district website a safety information "hub"

2 Effectively push out school safety updates and accomplishments on social media

3 Actively partner with local media on safety updates and initiatives

4 Prepare staff and students to share information appropriately should an incident occur

1 | Make District Website a Safety Information "Hub"

The district website is a critical resource in ongoing, two-way safety communications with staff, parents, students, and the community. The district should build a webpage that includes important information and updates and also provides a space to submit safety-related questions, comments, and concerns. Administrators can then easily direct users to the page or push out included content through social media, print media, e-mail newsletters, or flyers.
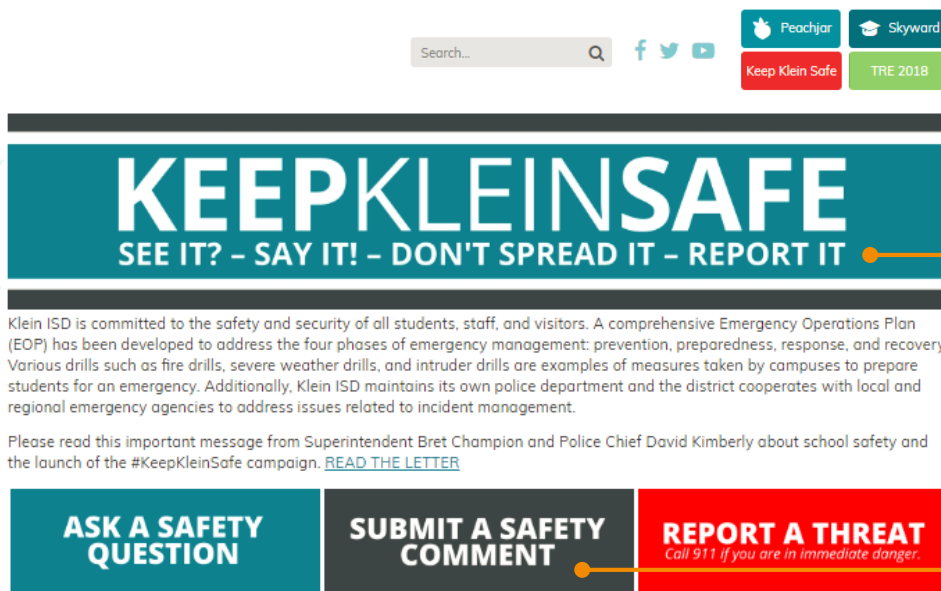
A **link to the safety page** appears in red at the top of every page across the district website, ensuring the page is accessible and stands out to site visitors

The web page is **branded with the motto** "See It—Say It— Don't Spread It—Report It," modeled from the Department of Homeland Security

This motto reinforces the desired response to safety concerns and encourages stakeholders to take action

"Call to action" buttons allow stakeholders to easily and anonymously submit questions, comments, and concerns related to safety

The Chief of Police personally responds to all safety questions

The web page serves as a **centralized "hub" for key safety information**, with space dedicated to:

- Responses to FAQs (e.g., from social media, town halls, parent meetings)

- Highlighted safety programs and procedures

- Links to emergency contacts and supplementary resources

Sources: Klein Independent School District Website; EAB interviews and Analysis.

2 | Engage Regularly on Social Media

Highlighting Prevention/Preparation Efforts

Hebbville Elementary School @HebbvilleES · Jun 21
Hebbville staff participating in the 23rd Annual Safe Schools Conference! This year's theme is Making Connections: Safety & Climate in 21st Century Schools. #safeschools #Teambcps #teamhebbville pic.twitter.com/SmKhPRL1Mo

↩   ⇄ 2   ♡ 7
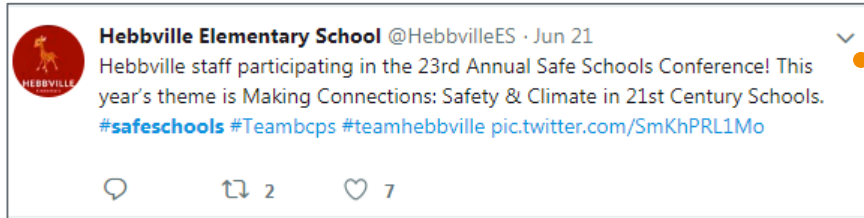
Don't wait for an incident to occur to communicate with stakeholders about school safety

Use new initiatives, upcoming events, or regular trainings and drills as an opportunity to celebrate prevention efforts and educate stakeholders on safety procedures and protocols

Alissa Parker @Alissa_Parker_ · Jun 20
#SchoolSafety during Emergencies: What Parents Need to Know. bit.ly/2ljnwsP #Parenting

↩   ⇄ 6   ♡ 10
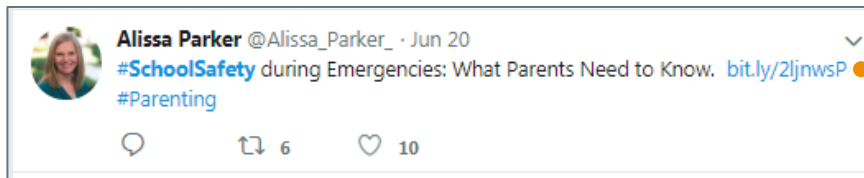
Engage parents by encouraging them to sign up for the district emergency notification system or by linking directly to important information and resources

Dr. Allison Bradley @abrad_edu · 11h
Today's training on active school shooters with students, teachers, school leaders, fire rescue, police & many community stakeholders was helpful & powerful. #schoolsafety #bobcat strong 👦💪 @bocaratonhs @southPbcsd @BocaPolice 🚑🚒🚓🚌❤️🙏

Use 1-2 "hashtags" to index posts by topic and join ongoing conversations around school safety

Include images to bring preventive programs, partnerships, and trainings to life for the broader community

↩ 1   ⇄ 1   ♡ 10

Sources: Twitter; EAB Interviews and Analysis.

eab.com

Engage Regularly on Social Media

Acknowledging Rumors or Incidents

Build trust and credibility with stakeholders by addressing safety rumors and concerns openly (e.g., through a public letter, interview, or press release). Social media updates can quickly push out accurate information alleviating the need to respond to many different comments individually.

Aledo Independent School District
October 26, 2017 ·

Important Safety Update: Thursday, Oct. 26, 2017

Aledo ISD Parents,

The district received a phone call concerning a possible threat from an individual not associated with Aledo ISD this afternoon. For the safety and security of our students and staff all district campuses and facilities went into lockdown while the Aledo ISD Police Department investigated the credibility of the threat.

When the district received an all clear from the Aledo ISD Police Department at approximately 2:25 p.m. this afternoon, the lockdown was lifted and all campus and facilities resumed normal operations.

The safety and security of all Aledo ISD students and staff is our top priority.

Aledo ISD Communications

ALEDO.SCHOOLFUSION.US
Aledo Independent School District
Aledo Independent School District : Website

👍 Like   💬 Comment   ➡ Share

23   Oldest ▾

34 Shares   10 Comments

Brittany Yancey Dwinell Thank you for being so proactive and putting all campuses on lockdown to keep our kids safe. We appreciate you!

Acknowledge the incident as quickly as possible to prevent stakeholders from searching for sources of information other than the district or perpetuating misinformation

Provide a **brief description** of known information about the threat or incident

Outline **steps being taken** by the district to address the concern

Route stakeholders to the best **source for additional updates**

Provide **direct links** to those sources whenever possible

Provide the **resolution or outcome** when it becomes available

Okaloosa County School District
February 16 ·

This is a school safety update from the Okaloosa County School District.

There have been inquiries concerning a threatening post on Snapchat made yesterday in South Florida. The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office patrol division and investigations section have thoroughly looked into this matter throughout the evening.. The post poses no threat to our school district and the suspect is in custody.

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office will post additional information regarding this matter on their Facebook page . We want to thank the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office for their continuous efforts as they promote and insure the safety of our students. Student safety is our top priority.

👍 Like   💬 Comment   ➡ Share

16   Oldest ▾

Sources: Aledo Independent School District Facebook; Okaloosa County School District Facebook; EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Engage Regularly on Social Media

Preempting Fears and Concerns

Whenever possible, anticipate how current events or changes in district policy/procedures might cause fear or the spread of misinformation, and proactively communicate facts and resources to district stakeholders.

When addressing a safety concern, **highlighting any ways the district is partnering with local police** or other emergency service providers can build district credibility and ease stakeholder fears or concerns.

Clover School District
April 12, 2013 ·

School Safety Update:
Do not be alarmed if you have seen an increased law enforcement presence in our around our campuses this week. Deputies from the York County Sheriff's Office are increasing their presence in and around Clover School District campuses within their jurisdiction (Bethany, Bethel, Crowders Creek, and Griggs Road) that are not already staff with a School Resource Officer (Clover Middle, Clover High, and Oakridge Middle). Their presence is welcomed and appreciated. This partnership will continue to ensure that we, as a community and as a district, are doing what we can to ensure our children are safe. The Town of Clover, SC Police Department routinely visits the three schools in its jurisdiction (Kinard, Larne, and Blue Eagle Academy).

👍 Like   💬 Comment   ↪ Share

👍 53

2 Shares   12 Comments

View 1 more comment

Summer Wilson That's great!!
5y · Like

Sheila Sayers wonderful!!!

Highlight change in practice that parents or the broader community may perceive as cause for concern.

Indicate why the change occurred and how it advances the district's goals and commitments to school safety

Use the opportunity to educate stakeholders about typical safety practices and link to relevant/additional resources (if applicable)

3 | Partner With Local Media

Local media may pick up on stories, initiatives, and accomplishments that the district highlights on social media, but **communications staff should also proactively share safety news with media outlets.** Ongoing collaboration between district communications staff and local media ensures media outlets do not only cover safety efforts in times of crisis.

Sharing news can take the form of newspaper or radio interviews, short bogs or content pieces, or invitations to reporters to attend major safety events (e.g., launch of a new program, town hall) through a media advisory (see sample on p. 11).

Community-wide conversation series on school safety hosted in partnership with local news station

Superintendent participates in an interview with a local news station to address fears in the community about school safety and preparedness

Sources: Twitter; School District of Palm Beach County Facebook; EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Partner With Local Media

Sample Media Advisory

Camden City School District
201 N. Front Street
Camden, New Jersey 08102
856-966-2000 ext. 38706

Paymon Rouhanifard
Superintendent

MEDIA ADVISORY

Rouhanifard to launch Great Schools Kickoff with new initiatives on safety

Camden Superintendent will join Mayor Dana Redd and Chief of Police Scott Thomson to announce new initiatives for safe and well-run schools in 2014-15 school year

August 20, 2014--Office of the Superintendent, Camden, NJ – Superintendent Paymon Rouhanifard Thursday morning will join Camden Mayor Dana Redd and Camden County Police Chief Scott Thomson to announce new measures to ensure Camden students are safe on their journeys to school, and that they arrive ready to learn in secure, motivating school environments. The measures include community involvement and high-tech solutions.

The updates come six months after the officials publicly revealed the District's 5-point safety plan to improve classroom productivity and improve students' safety in and around their schools. The safety plan is cited in the *Camden Commitment* under Promise 1: Safe Students, Safe Schools.

The announcement will take place on Thursday, August 21, at 10:00 a.m. at Camden High School, 1700 Park Boulevard.

The 2014-15 school year begins for all students on Tuesday, September 2.

For additional information, contact Maita Soukup from the Camden City School District Office of Communications at: msoukup@camden.k12.nj.us or 856-375-4737.

What is the event about?

Describe the purpose of the event and indicate why it warrants media coverage

Be sure to include **who** will be at the event, especially if a "newsmaker" (e.g., mayor, governor, major charity or business) is attending

Why is the event occurring?

Briefly connect the event to the boarder context of district initiatives, accomplishments, and priorities

When and where is the event?

Indicate the date and time of the event, giving 5-7 days of advance notice

Who is the main point of contact?

Indicate best point of contact for any follow up

4 | Prevent the Spread of Misinformation

Instructions: *Text messaging can lead to the spread of misinformation during school emergencies and this misinformation can hinder the ability of district leaders, parents, and members of the media to understand the situation at hand.*

Use emergency drills[1] as an opportunity to educate students about the appropriate use of cell phones during crises. This will help students understand the impact of their communications during an incident and provide guidance on how best to give their parents essential and accurate information.

School and district leaders can not fully control students' use of cell phones during an incident. But some districts prepare and distribute a list of general text messages to guide student communications with their parents during an incident.

The following are sample messages districts can provide to guide student communications during a crisis. Update these samples as needed or as information allows when an incident occurs via short, fact-based statements provided to teachers and staff to share with students.

> "The school is going into lockdown. Go to the district website for information."

> "Expect a call through the district's robo call system with information on where to pick me up."

> "We evacuated the school due to a [**insert event**], and I am safe. Please pick me up at [**insert location**]. There is more information on the district website homepage.

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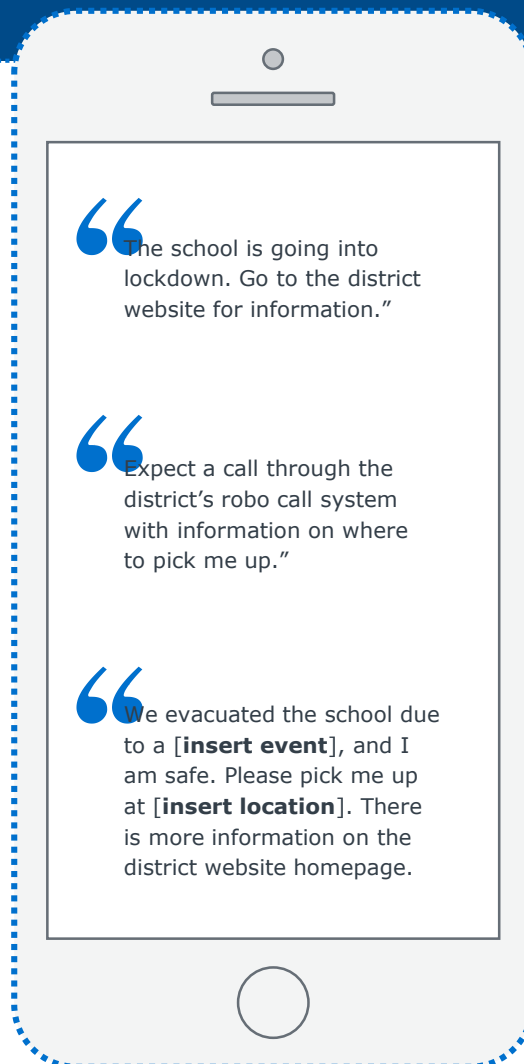
1) Such as evacuation, lockdown, shelter-in-place, bomb threat, or active shooter drills.

Sources: "Incident Communications Planning and Implementation Guide," Fagen Friedman & Fulfrost LLP, 2013, 3-4; EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Building an Incident Response Team

Goal

Develop a cross-functional incident response team to lead district incident communications strategy

Intended User

Superintendent or designee

Overview

When an incident occurs, the goal is to respond with accurate, consistent messaging from all parts of the school district. An effective and coordinated response requires collaboration from many different departments with knowledge of district operations, assets, and needs.

With a growing number of incidents of concern receiving national attention, many districts have created incident response teams to engage in ongoing collaboration, planning, and professional development around incident communications protocol.

This section helps district leaders create an incident response team to develop the district's incident communications strategy.

1 | Recruit A Cross-Functional Team

Instructions: Use the tool below to assess resources and plan for incident response team recruitment.

Teams typically include members of the district office, representatives of school-based incident teams, and external consultants from the community. **Depending on the size of your district, you may include anywhere from 10 to 20 members.**

The composition of incident response teams may vary, but administrators should keep three factors in mind when building a comprehensive team: *(1) understanding of district operations, (2) internal and external communications needs, and (3) subject matter expertise.*

Category	Description	Potential Participants
District-level leaders and specialists 5-10 participants	Leaders from the central district office can provide insight into district strategy, while directors of operational units can provide critical subject matter expertise needed to effectively respond to a safety concern or incident. If leaders of certain functional units cannot participate in incident response planning on a regular basis, be sure to include key stakeholders in incident communication strategy sessions (e.g., legal, IT) on an as-needed basis.	❑ Superintendent or designee ❑ Communications director ❑ IT director ❑ Legal team representative ❑ Head of school police/security ❑ Director of student services ❑ Director of human resources ❑ After school program coordinator ❑ Director of family engagement
School-based team representatives 2-5 participants	Each school site should have an incident response team to engage in regular planning and training around incident communications. Invite members from school-based teams to participate in district-level planning sessions to ensure consistency and coordination in strategy. **School-level teams are typically smaller, including at least:** the principal, a certified staff member, a classified staff member, and a parent.	❑ Principal ❑ Assistant principal ❑ Support staff (e.g., school secretary) ❑ Teacher ❑ Counselor ❑ Social worker ❑ Nurse ❑ School psychologist ❑ Parents ❑ Students
External consultants from the community 4+ participants, as needed	Community partners do not need to be ongoing participants in incident response team planning sessions, but should be brought in regularly to learn about and provide feedback on district incident response protocol. Local partners can also fill gaps in district expertise or services.	❑ Director of local mental health clinic ❑ Local media representatives ❑ Local police chief ❑ Local fire chief

Sources: "Media and Community Crisis Communication Planning Template," NMA and Windmeyer Communications Inc., 2010; EAB Interviews and Analysis.

2 | Plan Team Meeting Schedule and Content

Instructions: *Incident response teams typically meet every one to two months and engage in ongoing learning and development around incident communications strategy. Below is a sample of activities that an incident response team may focus on throughout the course of a typical year to develop and hone the district's incident communication strategy.*

Use this as a guide to brainstorm incident response team meeting agendas. Be sure to incorporate topics, activities, and outside partners that directly advance district safety communications goals.

Working Sessions

Create incident communications plan, delegate roles and responsibilities for plan completion

Attend a conference, workshop, or webinar to inform district strategy or develop team skills[1]

Plan calendar of events, social media posts, media press releases related to new or ongoing school safety initiatives

Conduct after-action review following an incident to assess execution of communications strategy and make necessary adjustments (see pp. 16-17)

Collaboration

Invite local police to review incident response/communications protocol, ensure common language around crisis identification and first response

Train school sites on incident communication protocol, ensure common language around incident verification (see p. 31), review protocol for informing staff, students, parents

Host media representative to review communications protocol (e.g., fit with media deadlines; typical content needs; expectations for interviewing students, parents, staff)

Hold student or parent focus group on safety communication policies and procedures to understand their perspective and allow them to take leadership roles in safety

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Prominent sources for school safety and incident communications guidance and materials surfaced through our research include:

- The National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA)
- State or regional school public relations associations (e.g., WSPRA)
- The Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
- The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)

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1) Professional development could include activities such as attending: the Safe Schools Conference, events with a regional public relations association, a social media workshop, or media/spokesperson training

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

eab.com

3 | Conduct After-Action Reviews

Instructions: Use the sample questions below to guide post-incident debriefing sessions for the district's incident response team.

Following an emergency situation, the incident response team should meet to review what worked well and how the district's incident communication strategy can be improved. **The debrief session should occur as soon as possible but typically no later than three to five days after an incident.**

Meetings should always remain positive to solicit optimal and candid information, and should never grade the success or failure of particular employees. At the conclusion of the meeting, determine timeline and persons responsible for follow-up action.

A. Questions to Consider

1. What did we intend to do in the event of an incident?

2. Did we accomplish our goals?

3. What went well? Why?

4. What can be improved? How?

5. Was internal and external communication successful? Why or why not?

6. Do we need to modify any policies or procedures?

Conduct After-Action Reviews (cont.)

B. Follow-up Action Planning

Follow-Up Action	Owner	Timeline
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

eab.com

Developing an Incident Communications Plan

Goal

Establish an incident communications plan to prepare for timely and effective dissemination of information to district stakeholders should an incident of concern[1] occur.

Overview

This section guides district leaders through several steps, from identifying key communications leads, to setting an incident communications strategy, to tracking and executing steps for improving incident communications. Sample templates and best practices are included throughout the section.

Note: This section consists of a "communications audit" with prompts to help users assess and prioritize key elements of an incident communications plan.

The section then includes tools to support the development of those prompts.

Intended User

District administrator, communications director or expert, crisis response team

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1) Incidents may include, but are not limited to, a small disturbance or fight, natural disaster, use of a weapon, intruder on campus, nearby threat in the community

1 | Complete Incident Communications Plan Audit

Instructions: *This audit is designed to help you evaluate your district's current level of preparedness for effective incident communications and identify which supporting tools to use.*

Rate your current capabilities for each prompt with a simple "yes/no" answer. If your answer is "no," refer to the gray boxes to determine the tools that could be most helpful to your district.

Prompt	Yes	No	If no:
1. District has developed a comprehensive Incident Communications Plan (ICP)			• Plan to complete all six tools that follow to serve as the basis for your incident communications plan • Tools can be completed in sequential order and are most effective when completed by a cross-functional team (see Section 2, pp. 13-17)
2. ICP details incident communications functional leads, expected responsibilities, and up-to-date contact information			• See Tool 2 (p. 20) on Identifying Incident Communications Leads
3. District has effective, multi-channel notification protocol to facilitate timely internal and external safety communications			• See Tool 3 (pp. 21-25) on Establishing Incident Communications Channels
4. Internal and external notification protocols are detailed in ICP and have been shared with staff, parents, and students			• See Tool 3 (pp. 21-25) on Establishing Incident Communications Channels
5. District has outlined all stakeholders that must be notified immediately in the event of an incident (e.g., communications leads, school sites, school board, police chief, health services) and a clear chain of command for ensuring contacts are notified			• See Tool 4 (p. 26) on Building a Rapid Response Telephone Tree
6. ICP includes a comprehensive list of local and regional media outlets and emergency service providers with up-to-date contact information			• See Tool 5 (p. 27) on Maintaining a Contact Resource Page
7. ICP provides detailed guidelines and protocol regarding communication with the media across the district			• See Tool 6 (p. 28) on Outlining Media Engagement Protocol
8. ICP includes detailed procedures for regular plan updates			• See Tool 7 (p. 29) on Incident Communications Plan Review

2 | Identify Incident Communication Leads

Instructions: *The incident communications plan should outline all individuals who hold key roles in incident communications. The plan should detail clear responsibilities so designated individuals can quickly discern the steps they need to take during an incident.*

Use the template below as a guide to designate individuals to lead critical incident communications functions. At minimum, districts should aim to designate one primary contact and one alternate (or "backup") for each functional area. Based on your district's size and capacity, you may wish to designate additional support staff to aid each communications lead in plan execution.

Role/Responsibilities	Primary Designee	Alternate Designee
Incident Communications Team Lead • Is often an administrator or designee • Convenes scheduled and emergency team meetings • Oversees incident communications strategy • Ensures resources are available to team members for assigned duties	**Name:** **Work Phone:** **Cell Phone:** **Alternate Phone:**	**Name:** **Work Phone:** **Cell Phone:** **Alternate Phone:**
District Spokesperson • Contacts the media • Prepares official statements and plan for regular updates to the media • Maintains contact with police, first responders, hospital representatives to keep information current • Handles all media requests for information, with support of team lead • Indicates location for media "command center"	**Name:** **Work Phone:** **Cell Phone:** **Alternate Phone:**	**Name:** **Work Phone:** **Cell Phone:** **Alternate Phone:**
Information—Communications Coordinator • Screens incoming calls, maintains a log of telephone calls related to the incident event (see p. 36) • Monitors all relevant media coverage of incident • Helps prioritize media requests for information • Monitors all district social media platforms for questions or misinformation • Strategizes content for FAQ document with support of team lead	**Name:** **Work Phone:** **Cell Phone:** **Alternate Phone:**	**Name:** **Work Phone:** **Cell Phone:** **Alternate Phone:**
Staff Notification Coordinator • Prepares short, fact based statements to share with staff about the incident and provides updates when available • Establishes a plan to rapidly disseminate relevant information to all staff during regular school hours • Coordinates and initiates telephone tree[1] when school is not in session	**Name:** **Work Phone:** **Cell Phone:** **Alternate Phone:**	**Name:** **Work Phone:** **Cell Phone:** **Alternate Phone:**

1) Based on the severity of the incident and your district's resources and policies, a telephone tree many be replaced or accompanied by other modes of communication such as text messages or e-mails

Sources: "Media and Community Crisis Communication Planning Template," NMA and Windmeyer Communications Inc., 2010; EAB Interviews and Analysis.

3 | Establish Effective Communication Channels

Incident Communication Channel Audit

Capsule Description

Most districts use a variety of methods to communicate with stakeholders. But some methods are better than others for certain types of critical incidents, typically based on the severity of the event and the intended audience. The following tools provide guidance to help district leaders determine how and when to use specific communication channels (e.g., email, social media) in the event of a threat, incident, or safety concern.

Implementation Steps

- **Step 1: Review Typical Incident Communications Methods**

  Review the typical incident communications methods outlined on the following page to understand all of the potential channels the district can deploy to communicate in the event of an incident.

- **Step 2: Complete Incident Communication Channel Audit**

  Use the incident communication channel audit that follows to assess the methods already available or in use throughout the district.

  – Take time to identify any methods the district should add or improve to advance specific district goals around safety communications (e.g., speed of response, audience/reach).

- **Step 3: Detail Protocol Based on Current Capabilities**

  Fill in the final matrix with the district's intended modes of incident communication and expected response times (especially in the event of a high impact incident). Use the information in the matrix to educate internal and external stakeholders on how to expect communication if various incidents occur[1], and solicit feedback on any concerns or suggestions.

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1) Matrix can be shared on district website, in parent meetings such as back to school nights, or briefly during staff professional development sessions

Establish Effective Communication Channels (cont.)

Step 1: Review Typical Incident Communications Methods

Internal and External Communications Methods

Fastest

Text message

- Encourage parents to sign up for text notifications during back-to-school days, in parent newsletters, and on the district website
- Be aware of your character count (160 characters max)
- Link directly to additional information
- Prepare internal staff who will receive inquiries as a result of the message (see p. 35)

Push notification from district mobile application

"Robo" All-call system

- Consider maintaining cell phone records of parents and staff to route "robo" calls directly to stakeholders more quickly
- Use a familiar trusted voice
- Aim for 30-60 seconds for entire message
- Note when to expect further communication
- Prepare internal staff who will receive inquiries as a result of the message

Intercom/ PA system

Social media updates

- If you use social media regularly, use it during an incident
- Update frequently throughout the duration of the incident, even if there is no new information to share
- Link directly to additional resources
- Be aware that your audience is more than just parents (i.e., includes students, media, community)
- Monitor social media channels for misinformation or concerns
  - Do not respond to each individual message over social media
  - Strategize appropriate action (e.g., private message, phone call, link to resources, public statement) based on the constituent and comment made

E-mail

Media statements
(e.g., radio, TV)

Most districts add color coded banners to the district homepage to highlight time-sensitive updates. Consider developing a "dark site" web page to activate only when an incident occurs.

A dark site should look similar to the district homepage for brand consistency—it can either replace the main page temporarily or be accessed through a link from the homepage.

A dark site web page might include:

District website

- Fact sheets specifically for incident use
- District information, history, statistics, safety record
- Placeholder for incident specific messages or updates
- References to other web sites that provide additional information

Letters

Letters only need to be updated with select details as incidents occur. Maintain a library of sample letters for the most likely scenarios to ease and expedite response (see Appendix, pp. 41-47).

Slowest

In-person meetings
(e.g., town hall, staff meeting, safety summit)

Invite local law enforcement to public-facing safety events, especially following an incident in the district or community. Presence and participation of trusted community figures provides reassurance and reinforces district decisions during incident response and aftermath.

Sources: Kaufman, R, "Crisis Communications in the Age of Social Media," Campus Safety Magazine, 2017; Kenneth S. Trump, "The Post-Crisis Crisis: Managing Parent and Media Communications," *School Administrator* 69, no. 4 (2012): 39-42; EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Establish Effective Communication Channels (cont.)

Step 2: Complete Incident Communication Channel Audit

Communication Method	Already in Use	Audience (e.g., students, staff, parents, public)	Plan to Use or Improve	Notes on next steps
Text messaging				
Push notifications from district app				
Robo calls				
PA system				
Social media updates				

Source: EAB interviews and Analysis.

eab.com

Establish Effective Communication Channels (cont.)

Step 2: Complete Incident Communication Channel Audit

Communication Method	Already in Use	Audience (e.g., students, staff, parents, public)	Plan to Use or Improve	Notes on next steps
E-mail				
Media statements				
District website				
Mailed letters				
In person meetings				

Source: EAB interviews and Analysis.

eab.com

Establish Effective Communication Channels (cont.)

Step 3: Detail Protocol Based on Current Capabilities

Incident Impact Level	Notification Method	Expected Response Time
Low Impact Incident: Poses no or minimal risk to district safety. There are no disruptions to regular school activities, and the incident is an isolated one that does not impact more than one student (e.g., small disturbance or fight) **Sample response:** Posted message on district website; letter sent home and/or e-mailed	1. 2. 3.	
Moderate Impact Incident: Poses a moderate risk to the school. Results in some disruption to school activities such as a change of schedule or cancellation of some activities (e.g., gas leak or a threat to the school) **Sample response:** Text message; posted message on district website and social media; letter sent home and/or e-mailed	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	
High Impact Incident: Poses a significant and immediate risk to the safety of students. Results in a significant disruption to school activities, change of schedule, evacuation, cancellation of activities and impacts many students (e.g., intruder in school or the use of a weapon) **Sample Response:** Phone message; text message; posted message on district website and social media; press release; letter sent home and/or e-mailed	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	

Source: Chichester School District; EAB Interviews and Analysis.

4 | Build a Rapid Response Telephone Tree

Instructions: *In addition to identifying incident communications functional leads (see p. 20), an incident communications plan should outline all organizations and individuals that must be contacted immediately in the event of an incident. This should include internal stakeholders and experts (e.g., school board, communications leads) as well as emergency service providers (e.g., police and fire chiefs, health services).*

A telephone tree helps clearly delineate key contacts and the person responsible for ensuring each contact is notified. Once an incident is verified, a building administrator or designee should set the telephone phone tree in motion to disseminate accurate information as quickly as possible.

Use the sample telephone tree below to strategize the incident response chain for your district.
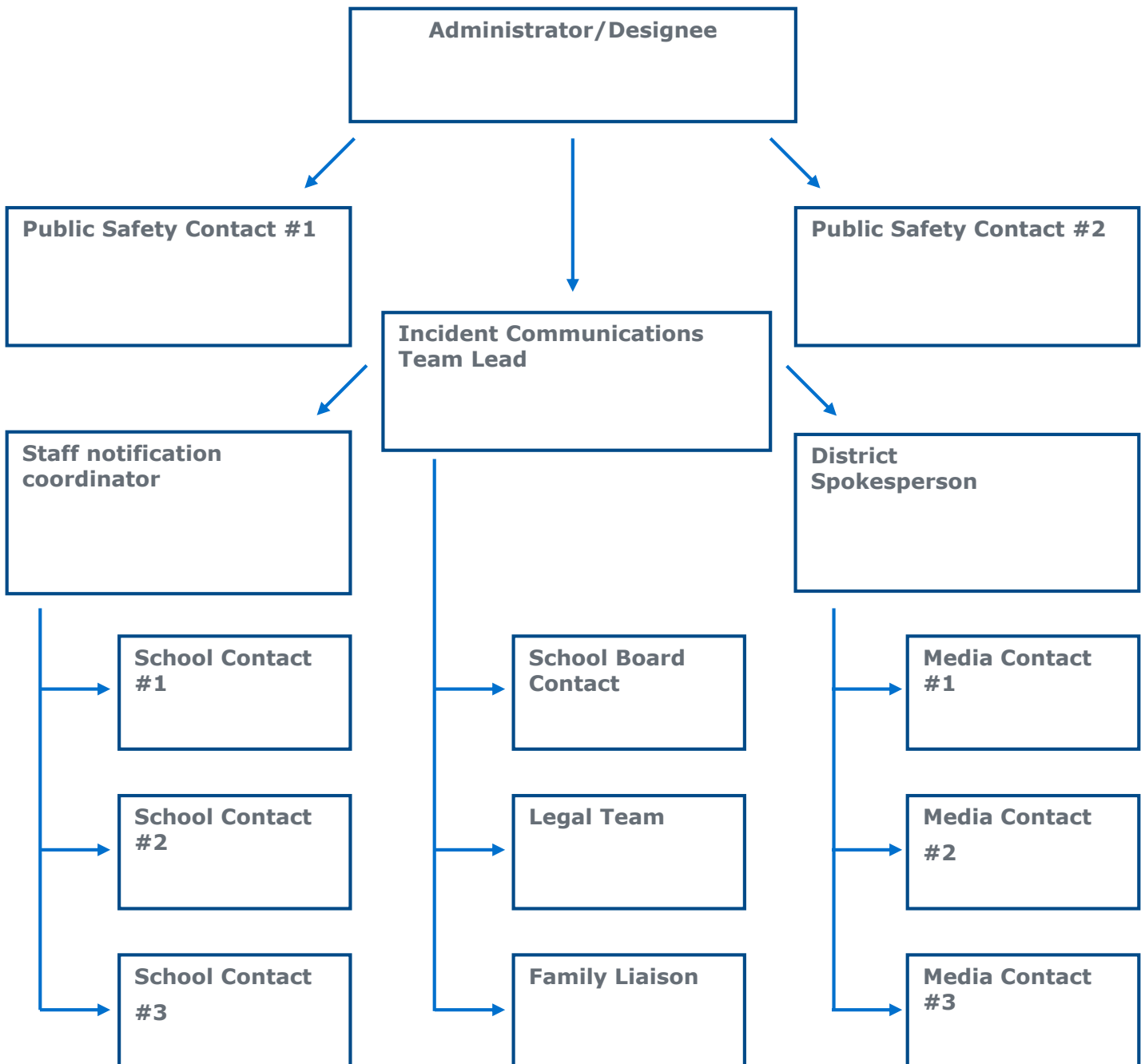
5 | Maintain an Emergency Contact Resource Page

Instructions: *Maintain an up-to-date list of contacts and telephone numbers in the district's incident communications plan for those who need to be contacted immediately in the event of an incident.*

Include a complete list of local and regional media outlets (e.g., newspapers, television, radio) that cover the district. Communications leaders should identify media contacts as part of incident response preparation, especially for local news sources who will prioritize breaking news and maintain coverage of an incident longer than regional or national news outlets.

While the plan will not include a comprehensive list of student, staff, and parent contact information, use this time to develop procedures for keeping administrative records (e.g., HR, SIS[1]) updated.

Sample Local/Regional Contact Resource Page

School board contact:

Name

Phone

Local **police department** contact:

Name

Phone

Local **fire department** contact:

Name

Phone

Local **emergency health service** contact:

Name

Phone

Local **television station** contact:

Name

Phone

Local **radio station** contact:

Name

Phone

Local **newspaper reporter** contact:

Name

Phone

Local **newspaper editor** contact:

Name

Phone

Regional **newspaper reporter** contact:

Name

Phone

Regional **television station** contact:

Name

Phone

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1) Human resources (HR) and student information system (SIS).

Sources: "911! A Manual for Schools and the Media During a Campus Crisis," California School Boards Association, 2001; EAB Interviews and Analysis.

6 | Outline Media Engagement Protocol

Media Response Protocol Checklist and Sample

Instructions: *The district's incident communications plan should clearly detail policies and procedures around communication with the media in the event of an incident to ensure the district's message to the public is thoughtful, accurate, and unified.*

Use the checklist and sample below to devise a media protocol for inclusion in the district's incident communications plan.

A. Media Engagement Policy/Protocol Checklist

District protocol for engagement with the media should include the following procedures and guidelines:

☐ Who is allowed to talk to the media

☐ What the district suggests individuals say if approached by the media

☐ An emphasis that employees should not talk with the media without explicit district consent

☐ Who employees should refer the media to for answers

☐ Actions the district may take if the media policy is not followed

B. Sample Media Engagement Protocol

❖ **No one at the school level other than principals** speak with media unless offering pre-scripted responses provided by the school/district.

❖ **Principal communications with media must be approved** by [district spokesperson] in advance of any media interviews. If media contacts a principal for a comment, they should provide pre-scripted responses to ensure the organization has one unified message to the public.

❖ **All media inquiries received should be shared with [district spokesperson]** as soon as possible upon receipt. In addition, [district spokesperson] should receive copies of all emails from reporters.

❖ **[District spokesperson] will respond to all media inquiries** as quickly as possible, and always within 24 hours. Quick and responsive input allows the district to guide the conversation.

❖ **Never respond with "no comment"** or deflect blame without having all facts regarding a particular situation. Immediately upon notification of an incident, [district spokesperson] will develop key message points that should be referenced in all subsequent media interviews.

❖ **Key message points will be disseminated** to all staff and designated spokespersons. It is important that all district personnel follow the approved key message points to ensure consistency and a cohesive voice.

❖ **[District spokesperson] will provide updates** to [incident communications lead, superintendent] following all "approved" comments and responses to media.

Sources: New Beginnings Schools; EAB Interviews and Analysis.

7 | Review Incident Communications Plan Regularly

Instructions: *The incident response team should review the incident communications plan one to two times per year to check that:*

- *Contact information lists are current*
- *New initiatives or identified risks are assessed and included*
- *Changes to incident communications policies, practices, or procedures are up-to-date*

In the communications plan, detail the plan audit process (e.g., how often, when, by whom) and use the table below to track revisions and changes made.

Plan Revision Date	Name of Reviser	Approved By	Changes Made/Notes

Source: EAB interviews and Analysis.

Assembling a Library of Resources to Facilitate Rapid Response

Goal

Support the communications team in timely, accurate, and effective incident communications.

Intended User

District administrators, communications director or expert, incident communications leads

Overview

Use the tools provided in this section to guide communications leads in preparing for and executing internal and external communications when an incident occurs affecting the district.

The tools included can be used to guide crisis communication planning and to support rapid collateral generation once an incident occurs.

1 | Incident Verification Checklist

Instructions: *Immediately following report of an incident, district leaders should establish an on-site lead and a district office lead (e.g., administrator, incident communications team lead) to verify the facts of the incident as quickly as possible.*

The chart below outlines typical responsibilities of on-site and district office incident leads. Use the sample checklist that follows as a guide to the information that should be verified as quickly as possible following an incident. This information will serve as the basis for all incident communications.

On-Site Lead	District Office Lead
Establish initial contact with emergency services	Set up a phone line that must stay open, give to on-site lead
Assist in establishing a command center for emergency services	Gather and verify facts
Set up parent-student reunion site and staff the site	Secure a translator, if necessary
Notify district lead of parent-student reunion location information	Assist in preparation of talking points document or official statement
Inform media of student/minor privacy obligations	Coordinate dissemination of information to stakeholders
Defer to lead agencies (e.g., police) as source of information on the event	Ensure all incoming calls/ inquiries are being recorded

Sample Incident Verification Checklist

The incident response team and incident communications lead should aim to verify the following information about the incident as quickly as possible:

☐ What the nature of the incident is

☐ What the impact on students, staff, school facilities, and the community is

☐ If authorities were contacted

☐ If/which emergency services are on site

☐ Whether the media has been in contact/is on site

Sources: "Incident Communications Planning and Implementation Guide," Fagen Friedman & Fulfrost LLP, 2013, 3-4; EAB Interviews and Analysis.

2 | Message Map Templates

Instructions: *A message map provides an organized, prioritized repository of the information currently available to convey and support the messages to staff, parents, and the public. Message maps structure information essential for responding to internal and external concerns, and can serve as the basis for communications that are accurate, timely, concise, and consistent.*

Review the sample message maps below and use the accompanying template that follows to plan responses to common scenarios and concerns. Update as needed should an incident occur.

A. Sample Message Maps

Scenario: Rumor/threat of violence   **Stakeholder:** Parents   **Concern:** What should I know about the threat?

Key Message 1:	Key Message 2:	Key Message 3:
Safety is the top priority	*Law enforcement is responding appropriately*	*Actions you should take*

Support Point 1.1:	Support Point 2.1:	Support Point 3.1:
We immediately notified authorities	*Authorities are investigating the rumor/threat*	*Stay home; don't go to your child's school*

Support Point 1.2:	Support Point 2.2:	Support Point 3.2:
We have systems in place for this kind of situation (e.g., school resource officers, response plans)	*Law enforcement officers are coordinating with [school] to investigate*	*Turn to reliable sources for additional information [name some sources]*

Support Point 1.3:	Support Point 2.3:	Support Point 3.3:
We are providing additional police and counseling support to [school] as needed	*We will share more information as it becomes available*	*Help stop the spread of unverified rumors*

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Message Map Templates

Scenario: Active shooter incident

Stakeholder: General public

Concern: What should I know about the incident?

Key Message 1:	Key Message 2:	Key Message 3:
If you are not at the site, please stay away	*Staging areas near the site*	*Status of shooter/ victims (if known)*

Support Point 1.1:	Support Point 2.1:	Support Point 3.1:
The location is on lockdown; you will not be allowed on site to check on your loved one	*Families concerned about their loved ones may gather at [nearby location]*	*If authorized, indicate whether or not there are victims; avoid specifics if the situation is still fluid*

Support Point 1.2:	Support Point 2.2:	Support Point 3.2:
Law enforcement is responding	*Media may set up at [location]*	*If authorized, indicate whether shooter is still active/in custody*

Support Point 1.3:	Support Point 2.3:	Support Point 3.3:
The site is an active crime scene; we cannot provide details at this time but will do so as soon as possible	*The staging locations are set up for your protection and safety; please follow instructions*	*More information will be released as soon as it becomes available*

Message Map Templates

B. Fillable Message Map Template

Scenario:

Stakeholder:

Concern:

Key Message 1:	Key Message 2:	Key Message 3:

Support Point 1.1:	Support Point 2.1:	Support Point 3.1:

Support Point 1.2:	Support Point 2.2:	Support Point 3.2:

Support Point 1.3:	Support Point 2.3:	Support Point 3.3:

Source: EAB interviews and Analysis.

3 | Talking Points Document

Instructions: *Frontline communications staff need a list of talking points to share as they encounter the media, provide social media updates, and field incoming phone calls.*

Create a talking points document that translates available updates into standardized talking points for consumption and sharing. While this document can take many forms (e.g., email, bulleted list), this tool provides guidance on how to gather and organize the necessary information.

Review the guidelines below to develop a talking points document that supports the communications team and other frontline staff in executing effective and consistent incident communications.

[Insert institution logo here]

[District] Incident Talking Points Document

Available Information/Updates [*Consider the prompts below for each item*]:

Template Prompts	Details
Who	Who is impacted by the incident? Who is in charge of the response effort? Who else is involved? Who is assisting students, families?
What	What happened? What caused the incident? What is the district doing or what action will be taken? What authorities have been notified? What have staff/families already been told? What has the district been trained to do in a situation like this?
When	When did this happen? When was the district notified? When were the authorities notified? When will updates be provided?
Where	Relevant locations (on or off campus) for: • Students • Staff • Families • Media
How	How will this be communicated to the wider district community? Exactly what will happen in concise sentences. For example: • Email sent to school building administrators • Automated phone call home to parents • Meeting with local media How many casualties/injuries? How serious are the injuries? How was the incident discovered, by whom and when?
Why	Why is the district taking this action? (phrased in language targeted to the intended audience) Why should the intended audience care about this action?

Source: EAB interviews and Analysis.

4 | Incident Inquiry Log

Instructions: *As soon as an incident is verified, keep a log of all inquiries related to the incident and any action taken by the district. Documenting incoming questions, comments, and concerns will allow the district to tailor public messaging to meet stakeholder needs and ensure stakeholders are adequately supported during and in the aftermath of the incident.*

The template below can also be adapted to log inquires made online, on social media, or in the news.

Caller:

❑ **Media**   ❑ **Employee**   ❑ **Parent**   ❑ **Public**   ❑ **Board Member**

Date: **Time of Call:**

Inquiry:

Person Taking Call: **Return Phone Number:**

Reply Made By:

Date: **Time:**

Reply:

5 | District Information Kit

Instructions: *District information kits provide basic information that can be quickly disseminated to the media, first responders, and the public in times of a crisis. This kit might include layouts of school buildings, general district information (e.g., number of students, number of teachers), and information about district leaders.*

Use the following template as a starting point to build a district information kit. The information below can be supplemented with building layouts or highlights of district resources and achievements.

Basic Information	
District name:	
District website:	
Area served by district:	
Number of schools within district:	
Number of students:	
Number of teachers and staff:	
Brief history of the district:	

Personnel Information	
Superintendent name:	
Superintendent background:	
Safety personnel name:	
Safety personnel background:	

District Information Kit (cont.)

Facility Information (repeated as necessary)	
School #1 name and address:	
School square footage:	
Main school facilities:	

Facility Information	
School #2 name and address:	
School square footage:	
Main school facilities:	

Facility Information	
School #3 name and address:	
School square footage:	
Main school facilities:	

6 | Media Engagement Templates

Sample Holding Statement

Instructions: *Sometimes a statement must be made to the public about an incident before full details can be known. A holding statement prevents the media and/or community from searching for sources of information other than the district and perpetuating speculative stories about the incident.*

The goal of a holding statement is to provide the public with an initial, short statement that outlines the basic known facts about the incident. It also lets the public know the district is actively dealing with the situation and will provide updates as they are available.

Use the template below as a guide for the type of information that a district can quickly provide to the community in the event of an incident.

[Insert institution logo here]

Incident at [District Name]

The following statement was issued today [**Date**] by [**Name of Person, Title**]:

At approximately [**time**] there was what is currently being investigated as a [**brief description of incident**] at [**school name**]. We understand the concerns, fears, and questions you may have about this incident, and we are actively working to determine [**damage, injuries, cause, etc.**].

At this time we have confirmed that [**general information that is *for certain*. Delete this sentence if no *confirmed* information is available**]. The safety and well-being of our students, staff, and community are our first priority.

As more information is available we will be providing updates through [**web site address, social media platform, etc.**] and regular media briefings. We appreciate your patience and cooperation.

Note for media: Media briefings will be held at [**Location**] at [**Time: specific time or time interval (i.e., every hour on the hour)**].

Media Engagement Templates

Public Statement Template

Instructions: *Use the template below as a guide to issuing a full public statement following an incident that warrants acknowledgement to the wider district community (e.g., press release, statement on district website).*

Contact Name:

Contact Phone Number:

Contact Email Address:

City: **Date:**

Headline

One sentence (7-10 words) that describes the major point of the release

Message of Empathy/Caring (when appropriate)

Acknowledges impact to victims, students, staff, families

Main Paragraph

Quickly answers the who, what, where, when, and why of the story

What is going on:

Where is this taking place:

When did the incident occur:

Who is affected:

Why is this important:

Follow up

Action being taken, when to expect more information and where to find it

Sources: "Media and Community Crisis Communication Planning Template,"
NMA and Windmeyer Communications Inc., 2010; EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Library of Incident Communications Letters

Goal

Support communication with district stakeholders following an incident of concern.

Intended User

District administrators, school administrators, communications director or support staff

Overview

Maintaining a library of template letters can aid district and school staff in communicating quickly and effectively in the aftermath of various incidents.

Use the samples that follow to craft messages around concerning events that commonly impact school communities.

The templates provided are geared toward communication with parents/guardians, but districts should build upon these samples to create a comprehensive library of communications that address a number of scenarios and stakeholders.

Crisis Event that Occurred Outside of the District

[Insert institution logo here]

Dear [**Parent(s)/Caretaker(s)**],

Like you, we were shocked by the recent tragedy that took place at [**name of School**]. Our thoughts are with [**name of school**] and those who lost loved ones in the [**incident**].

Keeping your children safe while at school is our district's top priority. We take all possible precautions to help ensure that our campuses are safe and secure. However, we all know that unplanned events can occur. **The intent of this message is to help you understand all that we do to keep our students safe and to enlist your help in our work**. In the following paragraphs, you will learn about our system of safety measures:

- Partnerships with local resources…

- Visitor registry and identification pages…

- Police presence…

- Emergency Response and Communications Plans…

- Safety drills…

- Reporting procedures for parents, teachers, and students…

- Mental health services…

We encourage you to reach out with any questions or concerns regarding these safety measures. **We also ask that you encourage your children to speak to an adult if he or she hears troublesome rumors or threats**. Below are some resources that can help you in discussing violence with your children:

- "School Shootings and Other Traumatic Events: How To Talk To Students." National Education Association.
- "Talking to Children About Tragedies & Other News Events." healthychildren.org.

We are committed to working together with our students, parents, and staff members to protect the safety and welfare of our students.

Sincerely,

[**Superintendent/Principal X**]

Death of a Staff Member

[Insert institution logo here]

Dear [**Parent(s)/Caretaker(s)**]:

Our school community is deeply saddened to learn of the death of [**name**]. [**name**] was an outstanding [**teacher, staff member**] who cared very deeply about the success and wellbeing of each and every one of [**his/her**] students. We will all miss [**him/her**] very much and will spend many difficult moments grieving [**his/her**] loss.

To support our students during this difficult time, we have arranged to have counselors available during the school day to assist students and faculty with the questions and grief which accompany such a difficult situation. Experiencing, witnessing, or even hearing of a traumatic incident such as this may affect a child or adult in a variety of ways so it is very important that students and teachers be given ample opportunities to ask questions and to talk about their reactions. For some students a death of someone they know may remind them of other losses in their lives. For others, this may be their first encounter with death.

When reacting to a traumatic incident, students may display behaviors such as:
• Cling closely to adults
• Ask a lot of questions
• Appear agitated and angry
• Appear sad and withdrawn
• Have difficulty sleeping
• Experience stomach aches and/or headaches

We suggest that you make an extra effort to listen to your child during this time. It is important that you deal honestly and directly with any questions that he or she may have. Referring to death as passing away may result in confusion and it is appropriate that you use the word "death" in your discussions. Should you have difficulty approaching this issue or if you would like additional information about talking to your child about death, we have material available at school. Below are some other suggestions that parents may find useful in helping their child:
• Be a good listener. Listen carefully for any misconceptions your child may have.
• Provide physical closeness. Spend extra time with your child. Talk and offer reassurance.
• Encourage your child to ask questions and to discuss their feelings.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school if we can be of additional assistance to you and/or your child during this difficult time.

Sincerely,

[**Superintendent/Principal X**]

Student Death by Suicide

[Insert institution logo here]

Dear [**Parent(s)/Caretaker(s)**]:

The death of a child is a terribly sad and tragic event, and the sudden death of our student [**name**] has touched both students and faculty here at [**school**]. Based on the information provided to us by the medical examiner and the family, [**name**] died by suicide on [**date**].

Funeral arrangements have been made and Mr. and Mrs. [**name**] request that students [**attend/do not attend**]. The funeral arrangements are as follows: [**provide applicable details**]. In addition, donations may be sent in care of [**provide applicable details**].

Since the news of the death, the school has implemented a crisis response plan to help students and staff respond to this unfortunate event. In conjunction with colleagues from [**community agencies**], the school [**has provided/continues to provide**] professionally staffed support stations available to all students. In addition, students will continue to meet with staff from our counseling and social work departments.

In the days and weeks ahead, students may have questions and concerns related to the death and are going to require your support at home and our continued support here at school as they work through their feelings and grief. Although we cannot predict how any child may react, we can be sensitive and aware, both at home and at school, of the common reactions experienced by grieving adolescents.

If you feel your child is having difficulty and may benefit from additional support, please feel free to contact [**name**], the Crisis Team Leader, your child's guidance counselor, or myself so the school can be aware of the needs of your child.

We are also supported by local mental health professionals and can provide you with referrals as needed. In addition, if you are interested in attending a parent/caretaker meeting, please contact [**name**] at [**phone**] for further information.

As the school community continues to cope with the loss of [**name**], we invite your participation in the healing process. Please feel free to contact the school at any time with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

[**Superintendent/Principal X**]

Student Death by Accident, Illness

[*Insert institution logo here*]

Dear [**Parent(s)/Caretaker(s)**]:

It is with deep regret that we inform you about a recent loss to our school community. On [**date**], [**name**], a [**grade**] student [**brief facts about the death**].[1] This loss is unimaginable to all of us and we extend our heartfelt sympathy to the family and friends of [**family name**].

We want to let you know that we are working with [**if applicable, provide outside resource**] to provide our community with support and resources to help all of us during this difficult time. More information will follow regarding times and dates for support for parents and staff.

Tomorrow, we will begin talking with our students about [**name's**] passing. The purpose of these meetings will be to support the students, answer any questions they may have, and find ways to help them begin processing and healing.

In the days and weeks ahead, students may have questions and concerns relating to the death and are going to require your support at home and our continued support here at school. Students will have varied reactions to the death of a peer. Any reaction is normal in the grief process and can range from withdrawal, to crying and anger. I encourage you to openly discuss with your child their reactions and feelings regarding the death of [**name**].

[**If applicable**]: The funeral will be held at [**location**] at [**time**] and parents are encouraged to attend the funeral with their child.

If you feel your child is having difficulty and may benefit from additional support, please feel free to contact the school counseling office at [**phone number**] or myself so the school can be aware of the needs of your child.

Sincerely,

[**Superintendent/Principal X**]

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1) Examples of information to provide: was killed in an automobile accident; died after a long illness; died suddenly due to injury, illness.

Sources: "Sample Notifications for Parents Following a Death by Suicide," Mental Health Recovery Services of Careen & Clinton Counties; EAB Interviews and Analysis.

eab.com

Reported Threat to District/School

[Insert institution logo here]

Dear [**Parent(s)/Caretaker(s)**]:

As you know, the safety and welfare of students and staff are our highest priorities. I am writing to provide you with information and to assure you that our staff continues to take every step to ensure the safety of your student.

Today a [**student, adult**] reported seeing or thought [**he/she**] saw a weapon on campus. School administration officials immediately called the [**City/Town**] Police department and the school implemented a lockdown whereby all students remained in their classrooms. A thorough search of the campus was conducted and [**detail, enter results**].

It is reassuring to know that the [**student, adult**] promptly reported the incident to school staff. This action reinforces the importance of students and members of the entire school community reporting a concern as soon as they become aware of a potentially dangerous situation.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call the school at [**phone number**].

Sincerely,

[**Superintendent/Principal X**]

Bus Accident

[Insert institution logo here]

Dear [**Parent(s)/Caretaker(s)**]:

This morning there was an accident involving [**school bus #**] and an automobile. There were known injuries to the passengers of the car. The children from the bus involved in the accident were taken to the library by the guidance counselors and administration.

The children were asked if they were injured in any way and their parents were then contacted. Your child, because of being on [**bus #**] may show delayed reaction to the accident.

Please be alert over the next several days to symptoms of delayed reaction, including:
- A desire to be alone, unusually quiet
- Loss of appetite
- Problems with sleeping, nightmares
- Difficulty with concentration
- Crying
- Angry outburst, short temper
- Headaches, upset stomach
- Depressed feelings, sadness

Your child may also exhibit some physical complaints. If so, please contact [**principal's name**] to fill out an accident report. The school will offer support services for students needing help dealing with the accident. We will also provide counseling services to parents in helping their children to cope.

Please don't hesitate to call if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

[**Superintendent X**]