WS1 Handout 6:
School Building Vulnerability Assessment

Name of school_____ School district _____
Person(s) completing checklist_____ Date checklist completed _____

Purpose of this assessment
- To assess for potential hazards within and outside of a school building
- To review the strengths and weaknesses of a building's physical and psychological safety procedures
- To review emergency communication procedures in a school building

Instructions
This assessment should be conducted building-wide at least biannually: once at the beginning of the school year and once after any areas of concern have been addressed. Use the data from this assessment to determine what areas of strength and what areas of improvement your building has in terms of safety. It may be helpful to have at least two people work together to complete this form. This form should not be completed in isolation. Before filling out this form, the person(s) completing the assessment should conduct an internal and external building walkthrough to physically observe different areas of the building. Take this form with you when conducting your walkthrough so you can take notes during the process. You may also need to interview building administration and other staff to obtain additional data (such as building intervention programs and custodial cleaning schedule).

Materials needed to conduct the assessment
1. Clipboard
2. Pen
3. Highlighter
4. School Building Vulnerability Assessment handout
5. Blank paper
6. School disciplinary procedures
7. Camera and/or camcorder for documentation
8. School or district safety and crisis plans

I. Multihazard Building Survey

Please check risk level for each column: Frequency, Magnitude, Warning Time, Severity, and Risk Priority.
- *Frequency.* What is the probability that this type of hazard will occur in your building? If the hazard does occur, how frequently does it occur?
- *Magnitude.* If this hazard was to occur, what type of damage (physical and psychological) would it cause to your building?
- *Warning time.* If this hazard could possibly occur in your building, how much time would you have to prepare?
- *Severity.* How would this negatively affect critical functions of your building?
- *Risk priority.* Determine the risk of this type of hazard occurring in your community. Is there a high, medium, or low risk of this hazard occurring?

Type of Hazard	Frequency					Magnitude					Warning Time					Severity					Risk Priority		
	Highly Likely	Likely	Possible	Unlikely		Catastrophic	Critical	Limited	Negligible		Minimal	6–12 Hours	12–24 Hours	24+ Hours		Catastrophic	Critical	Limited	Negligible		High	Medium	Low
NATURAL																							
Earthquake																							
Flooding (flash flood, river, or tidal)																							
Tornado																							
Wildfire																							
Winter storm																							
HUMAN CAUSED																							
Chemical/hazardous materials																							
Dam failure																							
Fire																							
Nuclear facility incident																							
Power outage																							
Water system failure																							
Accidents (transportation)																							
Medical emergency																							
Mass contamination																							
Apparent suicide																							
Bomb threat																							
Civil disorder																							
Death on campus																							
Explosion																							
Hostage situation																							
Intruder																							
Kidnapping/abduction																							
Report of weapon																							
Sexual assault																							
Terrorism																							
Weapons assault																							

II. Assessment Areas Within a School

First, check Yes, No, or N/A for each assessment area. Second, for any areas that apply to your school, prioritize whether the concern needs to be addressed immediately, soon, or in the future. For example, if your students and faculty do not share bathrooms, you would also check if this is an "area to be addressed immediately, soon, or in the future". Check each box if your school meets that specific criteria. If a box is not checked, more than likely this area needs to be addressed within your school's crisis preparedness plan. Evaluate the assessment data with your building-level team to improve your building's level of crisis preparedness.

Bathrooms

Assessment Area	Yes	No	N/A	Area to Be Addressed Immediately	Area to Be Addressed Soon	Area to Be Addressed in the Future
Students and faculty share bathrooms.						
Students are permitted to use the bathroom with other students without an adult being present inside or immediately outside of the bathroom.						
Bathrooms are equipped with antibacterial soap and towels or dryers.						
A notice is placed in bathrooms reminding students and staff to wash their hands before returning to class or work.						
Bathrooms are in working order, clean, and adequately stocked with supplies (toilet paper, towels, etc.).						
Bathrooms do not have entrance doors or doors are propped open.						
Coat hooks are removed from the back of the bathroom door.						
Bathrooms are monitored while classes are in session.						
All graffiti is removed from the bathroom walls and stalls immediately.						
Positive school messages are posted on the bathroom walls.						

Additional comments _____

_____

_____

_____

Behavioral Interventions

Assessment Area	Yes	No	N/A	Area to Be Addressed Immediately	Area to Be Addressed Soon	Area to Be Addressed in the Future
School-wide student behavioral data are reviewed at least monthly.						
The data from reviewing behavioral referrals are used to determine universal behavioral interventions.						
Behavioral data are used to determine if specific students require targeted and intensive behavioral intervention.						
When reviewing student progress, both academic and behavioral data are reviewed.						
Mental health services are available to students in the school.						
Students who may need targeted or intensive interventions also receive a functional behavioral assessment before receiving the intervention.						
A bullying prevention program is implemented with fidelity in the school.						
Social networking sites are monitored to assess for cyberbullying.						
A suicide prevention program is implemented with fidelity in the school.						
A gang prevention program is implemented with fidelity in the school.						
Interventions to increase school attendance are implemented with fidelity in the school.						

Additional comments _____

_____

_____

_____

Building Access and Personal Identification

Assessment Area	Yes	No	N/A	Area to Be Addressed Immediately	Area to Be Addressed Soon	Area to Be Addressed in the Future
Main office is immediately accessible from the main entrance.						
Access in and out of building is monitored from a central location in the building.						
The main entrance has double entryway doors.						
There is only one visitor access point to enter the building and staff monitors it.						
Staff members enter the building using a proximity or magnetic card reader that unlocks the door.						
All entrances and exits have been identified and labeled on a blueprint or building map.						
There is a sign that is visible to building visitors stating where the front entrance to the building is.						
All guests to the school are notified (in person or by a sign) that they need to proceed to the main office immediately upon arrival to the school.						
Guests and parents sign in and out.						
Visitors' identification is verified through a criminal database before being allowed to enter the building.						
All visitors wear visitor badges and have the date and time of day written on the badge when the visitor signs in.						
Main office staff regularly check and follow up with the sign-in/sign-out sheet.						
The visitor sign-in/sign-out book is taken out of the building when the building evacuates.						
Main office staff see the front entrance of the school from their desks.						
School staff wear staff identification badges.						

Assessment Area	Yes	No	N/A	Area to Be Addressed Immediately	Area to Be Addressed Soon	Area to Be Addressed in the Future
Students wear student identification badges.						
Exterior doors are kept closed and locked.						
Any unlocked doors are monitored throughout the day (i.e., main entrance).						
Interior classroom, office, and maintenance doors are kept locked when not in use.						
Doors to the mobile classroom units can be locked from the outside.						
Students in mobiles are able to quickly and safely move in to the main building if necessary.						
Cameras are located in key areas throughout the building.						
Cameras are monitored during school hours.						
Cameras are monitored after school hours.						
Video from cameras is recorded. For how long:_____						
Metal detectors are located at key entrances in the buildings.						
X-ray machines are located at key entrances in the building.						

Additional comments _____

_____

_____

_____

Commons and Cafeteria Area

Assessment Area	Yes	No	N/A	Area to Be Addressed Immediately	Area to Be Addressed Soon	Area to Be Addressed in the Future
Entrances/exits from the commons and cafeteria are monitored.						
People either inside or outside of the building can look into the common area.						
Students are able to line up to receive their food without interfering with people in the seating area.						
There is adequate (sufficient and safely constructed) seating for all students.						
Adults supervise in the commons and cafeteria throughout the day. Adult:student ratio_____.						
Balcony or upper hallway opens above the commons/cafeteria area.						
Food preparation areas are restricted to food service personnel only.						
Food service staff members greet and are friendly to students receiving food.						
Food samples for each meal are stored for at least 1 week.						
Positive school messages and murals are on cafeteria and common area walls.						
Staff eat lunch in the cafeteria with students.						
Cafeteria and common areas are kept clean and trash is emptied frequently.						

Additional comments _____

_____

_____

_____

Collaboration

Assessment Area	Yes	No	N/A	Area to Be Addressed Immediately	Area to Be Addressed Soon	Area to Be Addressed in the Future
School administrators know the names of local emergency responders (i.e., fire marshal).						
School administrators can contact local emergency responders through other means than calling 911.						
The school works with local agencies when making student referrals for outside assistance.						
School worked with local emergency agencies when revising school crisis plans.						
A memorandum of understanding (MOU) has been established between the school and local emergency response agencies.						
A list of outside mental health agencies provides counseling services and is updated at least biannually.						
Training is provided across local agencies and schools for providing emergency response.						
The National Incident Management System (NIMS) is implemented during the crisis response.						

Additional comments _____

_____

_____

_____

Communication and Emergency Notification

Assessment Area	Yes	No	N/A	Area to Be Addressed Immediately	Area to Be Addressed Soon	Area to Be Addressed in the Future
A building-wide internal communication system is in place that all areas in the building can hear (i.e., intercom).						
Key building personnel use two-way radios to communicate.						
The school has an external communication system outside of the building (i.e., speakers that are connected to the internal system).						
Two bullhorns are located in the building.						
The building uses an emergency notification system to quickly notify parents of an emergency (i.e., phone emergency notification system).						
Positive messages are sent home to parents about their student and building activities on a regular basis.						
If school has temporary classrooms in mobiles, the school has a system to notify them of a crisis and account for student safety.						
Parents are oriented on who in the building can provide specific types of assistance to their student if needed.						

Additional comments _____

_____

_____

_____

Conduct

Assessment Area	Yes	No	N/A	Area to Be Addressed Immediately	Area to Be Addressed Soon	Area to Be Addressed in the Future
The school has a conduct code that is understood by and communicated to all staff and students.						
Students sign a statement each school year to affirm that they are familiar with the conduct code and are willing to comply.						
The school code of conduct is reviewed and revised each school year.						
Positive behavior support initiatives are addressed within the code of conduct.						
Bullying prevention initiatives are addressed within the code of conduct.						
All staff are trained on verbal deescalation techniques.						
All staff regularly use verbal deescalation techniques.						
A peer monitoring system is used (i.e., peer conflict mediation).						
Students can report negative activities within the school with an anonymous tips or comment box.						
Staff are trained on safe physical restraint techniques.						
Staff use only safe physical restraint techniques only as a last resort.						
A dress code is consistently enforced.						
School rules and behavior guidelines are posted in public areas (classrooms, hallways, commons, library, gym, cafeteria, etc.).						
Adults (teachers, parents, or staff) are present during passing periods.						
School administrators have the authority to perform unannounced searches of student lockers.						

Assessment Area	Yes	No	N/A	Area to Be Addressed Immediately	Area to Be Addressed Soon	Area to Be Addressed in the Future
Disciplinary consequences are linked with behavioral interventions when appropriate.						
Disciplinary data are reported to the building-level team.						
Disciplinary data are used to evaluate intervention effectiveness at the universal, targeted, and intensive levels of intervention.						

Additional comments _____
_____
_____
_____

Hallways

Assessment Area	Yes	No	N/A	Area to Be Addressed Immediately	Area to Be Addressed Soon	Area to Be Addressed in the Future
Positive school messages and murals are located on hallway walls.						
Upper floors look down on lower floors. Issues that arise: _____ _____ _____ _____						
School staff help monitor all hallways before school starts.						
School staff help monitor all hallways during passing periods.						
School staff help monitor all hallways immediately after school.						
Data are collected to determine how many tardy students are in the hallways after the late bell rings.						
If more than 20% of students are still in the hallways after the late bell, universal interventions on tardiness are implemented.						

Assessment Area	Yes	No	N/A	Area to Be Addressed Immediately	Area to Be Addressed Soon	Area to Be Addressed in the Future
Lighting is adequate in all hallways.						
Lockers are stacked (i.e., upper and lower). Issues that arise: _____ _____						
Lockers are in plain view of all adult supervisors.						
All students are assigned to a locker in the same area where other students in their grade are assigned.						
All students are given school-issued locks for lockers.						
No visual barriers block a clear line of sight down the hallways (i.e., pillars).						
Students and staff with special mobility needs are assigned classes on the first floor of a building.						
Individual crisis plans are in place for students and staff with mobility needs who are not on the first floor of a building.						
Students are required to carry a pass in plain view when in the hallways while class is in session.						
Stairways are wide enough for two students to pass (going opposite directions) with arms outstretched.						
Railings continue from top to bottom of the staircase on both sides.						
An elevator is available for students or faculty in need.						

Additional comments _____

_____

_____

_____

Parking Lot

Assessment Area	Yes	No	N/A	Area to Be Addressed Immediately	Area to Be Addressed Soon	Area to Be Addressed in the Future
Parking areas are designated for students and teachers.						
Teachers are required to have a parking permit displayed in their car to park on school grounds.						
Students are required to have a parking permit displayed in their car to park on school grounds.						
Cars in the parking lot are routinely checked to see if the appropriate permit is displayed.						
Students have to check out through an attendant if they leave the parking lot during the school day.						
If students are permitted to leave campus during the lunch hour, there is a way to account for their return.						
Cars are not permitted to park directly in front of the school's main entrance.						
The lot has a designated bus lane and bus parking area.						
The lot has designated visitor parking.						
Visitor parking is visible from the main entrance of the building.						
Reserved parking spaces are labeled "Reserved" and do not identify the person parking in the space.						

Additional comments _____

_____

_____

_____

Playground and Athletic Fields

Assessment Area	Yes	No	N/A	Area to Be Addressed Immediately	Area to Be Addressed Soon	Area to Be Addressed in the Future
The perimeter of the playground area is designated by a fence or other structural barrier.						
Students are required to stay within the boundaries of the playground area during recess, lunch, and PE class.						
The playground is monitored. Adult:student ratio _____.						
All playground areas are visible to staff members who are monitoring playground activities.						
Staff have a means of communicating to students while outside (i.e., whistle or bullhorn).						
Playground equipment (i.e., monkey bars, slides, basketball hoops, soccer posts) is free of jagged edges, broken parts, and pointed corners.						
Playground equipment is positioned with a soft surface below.						
Staff maintain appropriate line of sight while monitoring student activities.						
Staff carry a two-way radio to communicate with the front office.						
Playground behavioral expectations are taught to students.						
Students and staff are taught how to conduct a reverse evacuation from the playground and athletic field back into the building.						

Additional comments _____

_____

_____

_____

III. Emergency Alert Systems

Please review your building's emergency notification system(s). Does the school have a system for quickly notifying staff and students (when appropriate) of impending danger in each of the following types of emergencies? Are staff and students (when appropriate) familiar with these alert systems and do they practice procedures related to each of these emergencies? Do these notification systems work to notify staff and students in the mobile units (if applicable)? Are backup notification systems available in the building (i.e., intercoms, two-way radios, telephones, lights, bell, or buzzer systems)? Identify the backup notification systems used. Please write either yes or no, indicating whether the type of notification is present in your building, and list the types of notification systems, as appropriate.

Type of Emergency	Notification System Present	Staff Notification	Student Notification	Mobile Unit Notification	Describe the Type of Notification System(s)	Backup Notification System	Describe the Type of Notification System(s)	Staff Training	Student Training
	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N		Y/N		Y/N	Y/N
Bomb threat									
Chemical spill									
Civil unrest (e.g., student protest, food fight, sit-in)									
Death or serious injury on campus									
Earthquake									
Family reunification									
Fire									
Food contagion									
Infectious disease									
Intruders									
Media event									
Power outage									
Suicide risk									
Severe storm									
Threat of violence to student and/or staff									
Tornado									

IV. Overall Assessment of Building Safety

Given your findings throughout the assessment process, rate your overall perception of the school building's safety.

1	2	3	4	5
Dangerous		Medium Risk		Very Safe

V. Recommendations and Overall Comments

_____

_____

_____

_____

Resources

Illinois State Board of Education (n.d.). *School Emergency and Crisis Response Plan*. Retrieved July 8, 2010, from http://www.isbe.net/safety/guide.htm

Laird, R., & McElroy, S. (2010). *School safety and physical design*. REMS Grantee Final Meeting; Boston, MA. Retrieved from http://rems.ed.gov/docs/Training_FY09REMS_BOMA_SchoolSafety.pdf.

Note. Adapted from S. Skalski, 2006, *School building vulnerability assessment. Unpublished research assignment.* Department of School Psychology, University of Colorado, Denver, Colorado. Adapted with permission of the instructor.