

# **CALHOUN COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD**

**WILSON T. MCCLELLAN, Superintendent**

20859 Central Avenue East, G-20  
BLOUNTSTOWN, FLORIDA 32424

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## **Safety and Security Best Practices**

Of the Safe Passage Act  
2002 Self-Assessment Final Report

**GOAL A:** The school district ensures that its safety and security program has clear directions and is effective at meeting its intended purpose in a cost-effective manner.

**1. BEST PRACTICE:** The district has established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the safety program.

**FINDINGS:** Calhoun County School District is currently involved in strategic planning to develop a vision, goals, objectives, strategies, and action plans for all areas of our public schools.

The Director of Health and Safety, the School Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent meet annually to assess the performance and cost effectiveness of the safety program based upon school, district, regional, and state data related to those programs. Outside contracting and privatization are considered as alternatives if found to be cost-effective. The school district has contracts and/or agreements with Calhoun County Health Department, Washington County Health Department, Calhoun County Sheriff's Office, Division of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Children and Families and local Police.

Each school is required to assess safety and to report status and progress annually in an advertised public hearing. Data is monitored and submitted for the state SESIR Report. The district receives reviews of safety and security programs from the local Health Department, OSHA, Panhandle Area Education Consortium, and the Calhoun County School Board. Priorities are established, responsibilities are assigned, and timelines developed to address those needs. The district monitors the progress of each action plan.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** We recommend that safety and security continue to be addressed in the district strategic plans and School Improvement Plans. School, district, regional consortium, state and federal assessments should continue to be utilized and progress be reported in announced public hearings. All local agencies should continue to seek greater cooperation for effective use of human and physical resources.

**FISCAL IMPACT AND TIMELINE:** There will be no expected additional costs to the district. This process is an ongoing cycle.

**2. BEST PRACTICE:** The district regularly reviews the organizational structure and staffing levels of the safety and security program and minimizes layers and processes.

**FINDINGS:** The School Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and Director of Health and Safety meet annually to review the safety and security program to minimize administrative layers and processes and to assure that the program is being administered effectively and in a cost-efficient manner.

**GOAL B:** The school district has comprehensive plans and procedures to ensure the safety and security of students and employees.

**1. BEST PRACTICE:** The district has implemented a school safety plan that includes district-wide emergency and safety procedures and identifies those responsible for them.

**FINDINGS:** Each school in the district has written school improvement plans that include school safety goals and procedures. The district has also implemented a comprehensive school safety plan that establishes emergency and safety procedures for employees and students to follow. Interagency agreements are in place with local emergency agencies and officials to ensure immediate assistance from those agencies.

**2. BEST PRACTICE:** The district has developed a checklist for each educational facility that provides step-by-step emergency procedures.

**FINDINGS:** A checklist (The Crisis Management Plan) is available in every classroom in the district.

The emergency situations included in the plan are: Chemical Spill, Toxic Spill, Gas Leak, Disruptions, Fights, Riots, Fire, Gun, Hurricane, Kidnapping, Hostage, Medical Emergency, Injury, Suicide Attempt, Tornado/Severe Weather, Weapons, Unauthorized Person on Campus, Evacuation Plan, Bomb Threat and other emergency procedures.

The district has a procedure in place for contacting all schools simultaneously in the event of a district-wide emergency by use of E-mail and by phone.

An emergency crisis team is not currently functioning.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** We recommend that a District Emergency Crisis Team be established and be made available to schools to provide support and guidance in dealing with an emergency.

**FISCAL IMPACT AND TIMELINE:** There will no expected additional cost to the district as existing personnel will be utilized. This team will be organized and become functional during the 2002-2003 school year.

**3. BEST PRACTICE:** The district develops and maintains its school safety plan and emergency response procedures with stakeholder input.

**FINDINGS:** Stakeholders were given the opportunity for input into the Crisis Management Plan in a public forum during the approval process. They were not involved in the planning and development process, however. All district employees have received a copy of the plan and are required to have a functional knowledge of it. Although this plan is very thorough and takes into account most conceivable emergencies at the time of its development, a number of new possibilities related to terrorism have arisen that need to be included in an updated plan.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** We recommend that the Crisis Management Plan be reviewed annually and updated when needed with input from a group of stakeholders from each community and school.

**FISCAL IMPACT AND TIMELINE:** This group will complete their work by the end of the 2002-2003 school year. The cost is projected to be \$1,000.

**4. BEST PRACTICE:** The district provides emergency response agencies with floor plans and blueprints as appropriate.

**FINDINGS:** Floor plans of each educational facility in the district have been provided to the local law enforcement agencies and fire departments. The district has blueprints or drawings readily available for review during an emergency.

**5. BEST PRACTICE:** The district and each school regularly practice emergency responses based on potential hazards at each site.

**FINDINGS:** The school district has developed and implemented procedures for emergency drills in accordance with state law. Signed documentation for the 10 annually required drills is on file in the Principal's office of each school. Annual assessments are used to identify potential hazards for each facility.

**6. BEST PRACTICE:** The district's Master Plan for In-Service Training identifies district and school personnel who need safety training and provides an appropriate level of safety training for all personnel.

**FINDINGS:** The district provides safety in-service training for employees but some of it is not currently included in the Master Plan. This training includes First Aide, CPR, Bloodborne Pathogens, Conflict Resolution, school bus safety, food safety, hazardous chemicals, etc. Staff training is determined by responsibilities of a job position and professional development plan. Training is provided by the state, educational consortium, district and other agencies.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** We recommend that the district amend the Master Plan for In-Service to include the identification of the minimum safety training required for all staff members, as well as the staff that require specialized training and incorporate these components into the plan.

**FISCAL IMPACT AND TIMELINE:** This will be accomplished during the 2002-2003 school year at a minimal cost to the school district.

**GOAL C:** The school district has developed a clearly written code of student conduct and communicated with students and parents.

1. **BEST PRACTICE:** The district and each school have established disciplinary policies and a code of student conduct that are well-defined.

**FINDINGS:** At the time of initial registration, students are required to disclose their prior record of expulsions, arrests resulting in charges and Juvenile Justice actions. The district enforces a zero tolerance policy for crime, substance abuse and victimization. Policies are in place that deal with relocation of students who victimize others, anti-harassment, anti-violence, and locker searches. The Calhoun County School Board is in compliance with relevant laws and regulations regarding discipline policies including the code of student conduct.

2. **BEST PRACTICE:** The district revises its code of conduct and informs all stakeholders as to the final product.

**FINDINGS:** School and district administrators review the code of student conduct annually and make recommendations to the School Board based upon input from stakeholders and changes in law and regulations. It is clearly written and does not contain technical terminology. At the beginning of each school year, the code of student conduct is given to every student enrolled in the district with the requirement that the student and parent read and sign a confirmation statement. The code of student conduct is reviewed each year in a public forum with teachers, parents and students participating.

**GOAL D:** The school district identifies, minimizes, and protects others from disruptive and/or violent student behavior.

1. **BEST PRACTICE:** Each school has a system in place to identify the early warning signs of student violence.

**FINDINGS:** Plans are currently under way for the district to provide the appropriate staff development and additional information related to early warning signs of violence for the appropriate educators during the 2002-2003 school year.

The district provides availability of appropriate psychological counseling for students who exhibit early warning signs of violence and has procedures in place to maintain legal confidentiality of information regarding these students.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** We recommend that the district proceed with plans to provide staff development and additional information through the regional consortium regarding the identification of the early signs of student violence to the appropriate educators.

**FISCAL IMPACT AND TIMELINE:** There should be no additional cost to the district. These plans should be completed during the 2002-2003 school year.

**2. BEST PRACTICE:** The district identifies and implements parent and community outreach strategies to promote safety in the home and community.

**FINDINGS:** The district has developed a cooperative agreement with the Department of Juvenile Justice dealing with zero tolerance for crime and victimization while working with local law enforcement agencies in addressing other safety and security issues. The district also works through agencies such as the Juvenile Justice Advisory Council, Emergency Management, the Children's Coalition, the Fire and Police Departments and others. Instruction is provided in bicycle, swimming pool and domestic fire safety. Information regarding the necessary school-entry health examinations and immunizations for all students is provided via the news media, memos and newsletters sent home to parents.

**3. BEST PRACTICE:** The district conducts hazards analysis to determine the potential safety and security issues facing each school.

**FINDINGS:** Each school has a safety committee which meets to identify possible safety and security hazards and make recommendations for corrective action. The educational consortium, OSHA, the Fire Marshall, the local Health Department, and other agencies analyze the school environment and report potential hazards. Duties and timelines are assigned to address each identified need.

**4. BEST PRACTICE:** Based on the needs identified in the school hazards analysis, the district implements appropriate violence and drug prevention programs for each school.

**FINDINGS:** The district has successfully implemented an approved Safe and Drug Free School Plan. The plan is reviewed and updated annually. The district uses background checks to screen new employees. The district works cooperatively with agencies representing the DOE, PAEC, Juvenile Justice, the Judicial System, FDLE and local law enforcement in the development implementation and maintenance of its safety programs. The district has contracted with CARE (Chemical Addiction Recovery Effort) to provide drug prevention education at specific grade levels. This program is evaluated annually and results are submitted to the district office. "Health Promotion Wave" and "Life Skills Training" promote healthy, non-violent decision making. Results are analyzed for program changes.

**5. BEST PRACTICE:** The district has crime watch and school safety hotlines available in all schools.

**FINDINGS:** None of the district schools have a crime watch or school safety hotline.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** We recommend the district implement a School Safety Hotline.

**FISCAL IMPACT AND TIMELINE:** The hotline should be implemented during the 2002-2003 school year at a minimal cost to the district.

**6. BEST PRACTICE:** The school board adopts curricula and programs aimed at protecting students, teachers, bus operators, administrators, and school personnel.

**FINDINGS:** While not school board approved, district schools use programs such as Life Skills Training and Health Promotion Wave that are research based and available to the schools as sources of violence prevention and safety-related programs.

**GOAL E: Educational facilities and equipment are safe and in good working condition.**

**1. BEST PRACTICE:** The district conducts an annual review of all relevant health and safety issues for each educational facility.

**FINDINGS:** In accordance with Florida law and regulations, Principals report safety and discipline data to DOE. Required fire safety inspections, UBC reviews, casualty safety reviews, etc. are conducted annually and are contracted through the Panhandle Area Educational Consortium. Safety deficiencies are placed at the top of a prioritized maintenance list and work orders are issued to be addressed as soon as possible.

**2. BEST PRACTICE:** The district designs educational facilities and sites to enhance security and reduce vandalism through the use of the “safe school design” principles.

**FINDINGS:** Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles are used in the maintenance, renovation and construction of educational facilities in district schools. The District Facilities Director and other school district administrators confer with local school administrators on all issues involving the safety and security of the educational facility. The “safe school design” principles are then incorporated into the planning and construction of the facility. Final plans are then submitted to the DOE for approval. All renovation and construction plans are approved by DOE before work begins.

3. **BEST PRACTICE:** The district has procedures that govern access to each educational facility and its students and access is limited to authorized students and visitors.

**FINDINGS:** The entrance to each educational facility in Calhoun County is clearly marked with signs and procedures for visitors to follow upon entering the facility. Each facility also has a policy and procedure for the release of students to parents, etc. Buildings are secured when unoccupied

4. **BEST PRACTICE:** The district ensures that playgrounds are properly constructed, maintained, and supervised so as to reduce the risk of injury.

**FINDINGS:** All playground equipment is inspected for safety and integrity upon the completion of construction and annually thereafter. Principals monitor for proper playground supervision and confirm that they are well supervised by trained personnel during student use.

5. **BEST PRACTICE:** Each educational facility has appropriate equipment to protect the safety and security of property and records.

**FINDINGS:** Most schools are partially fenced and all areas are secured as practicably feasible.

6. **BEST PRACTICE:** The district provides appropriate equipment and information to prevent injuries to students and others.

**FINDINGS:** There is a school nurse available to each school in the district. All necessary first aid supplies are procured and available as needed. School nurses and assistants are certified to dispense medication. Multiple certified personnel are trained in CPR and first aid in each school with names posted in a prominent position. MSDS sheets are available at each school site. Students and school personnel are trained in the appropriate safety procedures for dealing with dangerous tools, equipment, and chemicals. The necessary types of protective equipment (gloves, goggles, masks, etc.) are also supplied to minimize the number of injuries to students and others.

7. **BEST PRACTICE:** The district follows environmental and food safety health practices and regulations.

**FINDINGS:** All full-time, part-time, and substitute food service employees must receive certification by the certified district food service safety instructor. All food service facilities are inspected regularly by the Calhoun County Health Department. Also, appropriate personnel have received information and materials pertaining to their safety-related duties. Copies of regulations of the Calhoun County Health Department are kept on site. All state and federal requirements are met. Written emergency procedures and plans are distributed to each cafeteria for each employee to read. New air ductwork is being installed in BES to improve the air quality.

**GOAL F: The district takes steps to ensure the safety and security of students and staff during transportation.**

**1. BEST PRACTICE:** The district has procedures to create safe and orderly process for students arriving at or leaving each school campus.

**FINDINGS:** All bus drivers undergo school bus safety training annually. All school bus service driveways are inspected by DOT. All schools have procedures to ensure the safety of children arriving and leaving school, including walking students, bus students, and parent-pick-up students. Teacher/monitors are assigned to enforce safety rules and prevent unsafe situations during bus loading and student pick-up times. Law enforcement officers are utilized in critical areas. Each school issues a bus loading schedule with specific instructions for orderly loading. Two schools need additional paved driveways for separate student loading into buses and cars. Campus entrance and exit sidewalks need repair for the safety of the walking students.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** We recommend paving new drives into Blountstown Elementary School and Blountstown Middle School to allow separate pick-up zones and repairing broken walkways for pedestrian safety.

**FISCAL IMPACT AND TIMELINE:** Driveways and sidewalks should cost \$60,000-100,000. Driveways should be completed by the end of the 2003-2004 school year.

**2. BEST PRACTICES:** The district has implemented policies, procedures, and practices that ensure the safety of transported students

**FINDINGS:** All new school buses purchased by the Calhoun County School Board have the appropriate and required safety restraints. The Director of Transportation designates school bus routes only after conferring with bus drivers, parents, and other interested parties as to potential hazards and by conducting reviews of the maps and stops. All persons transporting students are properly licensed, trained, and qualified. Documentation is on file in the Calhoun County School Board Transportation Office.

School principals report that all students being transported receive instructions in safe riding practices and rules of conduct. This is done at the beginning of each school year. All drivers are given a Calhoun County Bus Drivers Handbook which clearly states the steps drivers are to take and the steps that district staff will take in response to transportation accidents or other emergencies.

**3. BEST PRACTICE:** School buses including buses operated by schools, charter schools, and contractors are inspected and maintained in accordance with state laws and Department of Education rules.

**FINDINGS:** All school bus operators perform pre-trip inspections of school buses and make sure that deficiencies are corrected before buses are used to transport

students. The inspection forms are on file in the transportation office. Also, school bus inspections are performed every twenty days by trained and certified technicians. Inspection forms are on file in the transportation office. These procedures are all monitored by DOT. Buses are only returned to service to transport students when all safety and mechanical systems meet the requirements of the Florida School Bus Inspection Manual.