

June 18, 2002

John W. Sanders, Ed. D, Superintendent, and
Members of the School Board of Lee County, Florida

Pursuant to the Safe Passage Act, enacted in 2001, each school district shall conduct an annual self-assessment of safety and security using the adopted best practices. Based on the self-assessment findings, recommendations are being proposed to the school board. Action plans are included to identify targets and strategies to improve school safety. Within 30 days of the School Board's meeting the superintendent is required to provide the report to the Commissioner of Education identifying the result of the self-assessment.

**SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY
BEST PRACTICES**

for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2002.

SCOPE

A self-assessment of the school safety and security best practices was conducted. These best practices are annually reviewed by OPPAGA and the Partnership for School Safety and Security to make recommendations for adding, deleting, or revising those practices. The Internal Audit Department examined the self-assessment and documentation for compliance with the adopted Best Practices. In accordance with the Safe Passage Act (Section 229.8348, Florida Statute) the Operational Support Services division has developed a report of findings, recommendations and action plan for presentation to the Superintendent. The Superintendent is recommending the following for adoption by the School Board.

COMMENTS

The review of the self-assessment found that the District complied with the provisions of the Safe Passage Act. The report format will list each Safety and Security Goal and will have findings, recommendations and action plans for each Best Practice. See the comments contained under “Findings, Recommendations and Action Plans.”

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLAN

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

Best Practice #1: The district has established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the safety and security program.

FINDING GOAL A, BEST PRACTICE #1

The Program Administrator for Safety and the Director for Student Services review discipline and safety reports on an annual basis. Comparisons of the Florida School Indicators Report show favorable results with the state district reports.

RECOMMENDATION GOAL A, BEST PRACTICE #1

Implement Departmental Deployment Plans as suggested by the Florida Sterling Quality initiative in the areas of safety and security.

ACTION PLAN GOAL A, BEST PRACTICE #1

With the integration of quality, the District has emphasized the importance of accountability mechanisms. Departmental Deployment Plans will list specific goals, targets, and strategies to improve performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the safety and security programs.

Best Practice #2: The district regularly reviews the organizational structure and staffing levels of the safety and security program and minimizes administrative layers and processes.

FINDING GOAL A, BEST PRACTICE #2

The district is in compliance with this Best Practice. Organizationally the Safety Department reports to an Assistant Superintendent with a direct line to the Superintendent if necessary. During the budgeting process, staffing levels are reviewed with an emphasis on adequate staff to respond to all the district's safety issues with a minimum of delay. The District annually compares the staffing levels of the Safety Department with our identified comparable counties.

RECOMMENDATION GOAL A, BEST PRACTICE #2

Continue current practice and develop Departmental Deployment Plans as suggested by Florida Sterling Quality Initiative.

ACTION PLAN GOAL A, BEST PRACTICE #2

Cross train all personnel in traffic and site safety. Redesign the District Safety Office to allow the safety specialists to be more involved in emergency management planning and training. With the trained staff there will be an enhanced ability to train the district employees in areas such as Defensive Driving, Slip, Trip and Fall Prevention and more. The outcome will be a safer school District with reduced Workman's Compensation claims.

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

Best Practice #1: The district has implemented a school safety plan that includes district-wide emergency and safety procedures and identifies those responsible for them.

FINDING GOAL B, BEST PRACTICE #1

The District is in compliance with this goal. Each school has a safety plan and a site-specific emergency response plan. The individual plans are coordinated within district and shared with local emergency agencies. Each school has formed a school safety team which meets monthly or as needed for emergency situations to review site specific safety issues. The District also has an Interagency Agreement for the Community Assessment Center as well as the Juvenile Justice Department. Additionally, the District Transportation Office has established procedures for maintaining a safe and secure transportation environment.

RECOMMENDATION GOAL B, BEST PRACTICE #1

Continue to update plans annually. Provide more opportunities for site-based personnel to work with local emergency response personnel to continually refine the individual plans as situations and populations change.

ACTION PLAN GOAL B, BEST PRACTICE #1

Arrange for annual pre-school workshops for district staff and local emergency officials (e.g. Law Enforcement, Fire Departments and EMS).

Best Practice #2: The district has developed a checklist for each educational facility that provides step-by-step emergency procedures.

FINDING GOAL B, BEST PRACTICE #2

The District is in compliance with this Best Practice. When the site-specific emergency response plans were developed, all stakeholders were encouraged to develop responses for most types of emergencies.

RECOMMENDATION GOAL B, BEST PRACTICE #2

Same as Goal B, Best Practice #1.

ACTION PLAN GOAL B, BEST PRACTICE #2

The Assistant Superintendent of Operational Support Services will coordinate regional meetings for schools and the local agencies that respond to emergencies within that region. (e.g. Estero Fire and Rescue and Lee County Sheriff's Office would respond to Pinewoods Elementary School).

Best Practice #3: The district develops and maintains its school safety plan and emergency response procedures with stakeholder input.

FINDING GOAL B, BEST PRACTICE #3

The District is in compliance with this Best Practice. A broad cross-section of stakeholders including parents, local emergency agencies, teachers, staff, parents and students were involved in the development of each emergency response plan. The District Labor Management Safety Committee reviews the Emergency Response Plan format and makes recommendations for improvement on an annual basis. The completed Emergency Response Plans are shared with the regional agencies serving their respective schools.

RECOMMENDATION GOAL B, BEST PRACTICE #3

Continue to review and update plans using members from all stakeholder groups.

ACTION PLAN GOAL B, BEST PRACTICE #3

With the integration of Quality into the District, stakeholder input is being emphasized. The Division of Operational Support Services budget reflects resources to continue these practices.

Best Practice #4: The district provides emergency response agencies with floor plans and blueprints as appropriate.

FINDING GOAL B, BEST PRACTICE #4

The District is in compliance with this Best Practice. As new schools are developed the District Safety Office provides each fire district and law enforcement agency with a set of Emergency Response Plans. When schools are renovated or remodeled, a copy of the updated floor plans is provided to the appropriate agencies. When there are site changes effecting access to the school the appropriate agencies are consulted prior to the changes being approved. The Assistant Superintendent of Operational Support Services provided local law enforcement floor plans of each school. The Lee County Sheriff's Department has copied these floor plans on CD-Rom which are available in each Sheriff's department vehicle.

RECOMMENDATION GOAL B, BEST PRACTICE #4

Continue to provide yearly updates of floor plans to the Lee County Sheriff's Department. The Division of Operational Support Services will also provide a CD-Rom to local fire, EMS, and Emergency Operations Agencies serving each school.

ACTION PLAN GOAL B, BEST PRACTICE #4

The Assistant Superintendent for Operational Services will be responsible to provide update floor plan footprints and Emergency Response plans to local law enforcement, fire, EMS, and Emergency Operations Agencies serving their respective schools.

Best Practice #5: The district and each school regularly practice emergency responses based on potential hazards at each site.

FINDING GOAL B, BEST PRACTICE #5

The District is in compliance with this best practice. Fire, tornado, lock down, bus evacuation and bomb threat drills are all conducted in accordance with district policy and legal requirements. Records of all drills are maintained at each school and the District Safety Office.

RECOMMENDATION GOAL B, BEST PRACTICE #5

Work with the Department of Education and the State Fire Marshal to provide appropriate recommendations for the most effective type and number of training exercises to keep our schools safe but allow for minimum of class disruptions.

ACTION PLAN GOAL B, BEST PRACTICE #5

The Departmental Deployment Plan of the Safety department will include strategies for the department employees to be included on committees at the state and local levels to address emergency evacuation drills.

Best Practice #6: 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.

FINDING GOAL B, BEST PRACTICE #6

The District is in compliance with this goal. The training of all new employees in required safety practices is accomplished during orientation. Site based personnel are trained in all required areas of safety annually.

RECOMMENDATION GOAL B, BEST PRACTICE #6

The Safety Departmental Deployment Plan will include strategies to implement a stakeholder survey to determine needed areas of safety training.

ACTION PLAN GOAL B, BEST PRACTICE #6

All District budgets will reflect resources to continue this best practice.

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

Best Practice #1: The district and each school have established disciplinary policies and a code of student conduct that are well-defined.

FINDING GOAL C, BEST PRACTICE #1

Student Services annually revises the Student of Conduct. The Student Code of Conduct is presented to the Board for a public hearing. Input from stakeholders is then incorporated into the final Board approved Student Code of Conduct. The Student Code of Conduct is reviewed with all students at the beginning of the year. The Student Code of Conduct for PK-5 and 6-12 reflects appropriate disciplinary procedures for the level of students. The student and parent are required to sign the acknowledgment page of the appropriate Student Code of Conduct.

RECOMMENDATION GOAL C, BEST PRACTICE #1

Develop a process for review of the Student Code of Conduct with new students who enroll during the year.

ACTION PLAN GOAL C, BEST PRACTICE #1

The Department of Student Services and school budgets reflect resources to continue this best practice.

Best Practice #2: The district revises its code of student conduct and informs all stakeholders as to the final product.

FINDING GOAL C, BEST PRACTICE #2

The District is in compliance with this Best Practice. See Finding Goal C, Best Practice #1. The District Student Code of Conduct is on the District Web Page.

RECOMMENDATION GOAL C, BEST PRACTICE #2

See Recommendation Goal C, Best Practice #1.

ACTION PLAN GOAL C, BEST PRACTICE #2

No additional action is needed to continue this best practice.

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

Best Practice #1: Each school has a system in place to identify the early warning signs of student violence.

FINDING GOAL D, BEST PRACTICE #1

The District is in compliance with this Best Practice. Each school convenes Child Study Teams to address referrals from teachers and other professionals on behavioral issues. On a pilot basis, teachers and staff are provided training on Bullies & Victims Training and School Violence & Bully Prevention Training. School administrators and resource officers investigate and respond to all calls made through the CrimeStopper program.

RECOMMENDATION GOAL D, BEST PRACTICE #1

Continue to provide training for teachers and staff in identification and referral procedures and expand opportunities for Bullies & Victims Training and School Violence & Bully Prevention Training to all District personnel. Minimal training requirements should be developed for teachers and school-based personnel that will identify early warning signs of violence.

ACTION PLAN GOAL D, BEST PRACTICE #1

The Student Services budget reflects resources to continue this best practice and implement the recommendation.

Best Practice #2: The district identifies and implements parent and community outreach strategies to promote safety in the home and community.

FINDING GOAL D, BEST PRACTICE #2

The District is in compliance with this best practice. The District participates in several interagency agreements that support safety in the home and community. The District is involved in the Community Assessment Center and Juvenile Drug Court. Programs are also provided for student education through the SRO and DARE programs.

RECOMMENDATION GOAL D, BEST PRACTICE #2

A partnership with agencies like the Accident Prevention Coalition, Human Services Neighborhood Accountability Boards and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee will provide the opportunity for more training of students and staff and cooperation with community agencies.

ACTION PLAN GOAL D, BEST PRACTICE #2

The District Safety Office will coordinate with local agencies to provide classes in bicycle and pedestrian safety, and fire safety as well as other special training for students and staff. Safety issues will be addressed with school administrators, building supervisors and the school safety team.

Best Practice #3: The district conducts a hazards analysis to determine the potential safety and security issues facing each school.

FINDING GOAL D, BEST PRACTICE #3

The District is in compliance with this Best Practice. The District Safety Office conducts a comprehensive fire, casualty, safety and sanitation inspection for each site annually. Safe School audits, funded through Safe School dollars were performed during the year. Additional inspections are conducted to ensure fire alarms and sprinklers are functional as well as the security and surveillance equipment located at each site. Buses are inspected daily to ensure they are safe for operation.

RECOMMENDATION GOAL D, BEST PRACTICE #3

Continue to perform Safe School audits with the funding through Safe School dollars on an annual basis. Encourage Facilities Director, Safety Program Administrator and the Maintenance Director to work cooperatively on all safety related issues.

ACTION PLAN GOAL D, BEST PRACTICE #3

The Safety, Student Services, Construction Services and Maintenance departments and school budgets reflect resources to continue this practice. Develop written standard operating procedures to address all safety and security issues in an appropriate and timely manner.

Best Practice #4: Based on the needs identified in the school hazards analysis, the district implements appropriate violence and drug prevention programs for each school.

FINDING GOAL D, BEST PRACTICE #4

The District is in compliance with this Best Practice. Programs such as the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Grant, DARE, SRO and Juvenile Drug Court are in place as a result of needs identified by the District. The District also provides Bullies & Victims Training and School Violence & Bully Prevention Training on a limited basis.

RECOMMENDATION GOAL D, BEST PRACTICE #4

Continue to explore available programs within the community and the state for reduction of violence, drug and alcohol and cigarette use and harassment programs. Expand training to all employees about violence, drug and alcohol and cigarette use and harassment prevention.

ACTION PLAN GOAL D, BEST PRACTICE #4

Departmental Deployment Plan of Student Services and the Safety Department will address violence and drug prevention programs and work with community agencies such as the Human Services Neighborhood Accountability Board to align community programs and resources to continue to meet this best practice.

Best Practice #5: The district has crime watch and school safety hotlines available in all schools.

FINDING GOAL D, BEST PRACTICE #5

The District is in compliance with this Best Practice. Student CrimeStoppers is a District wide program. The District also encourages participation in the local CrimeStoppers program by placing stickers with the CrimeStoppers hotline number on all Math books, inside of all school buses and posters in all school facilities. The District emergency hotline number is provided to all District personnel and is listed on the District internet website.

RECOMMENDATION GOAL D, BEST PRACTICE #5

Find new ways to make CrimeStoppers and District hotline numbers available.

ACTION PLAN GOAL D, BEST PRACTICE #5

The Department of Student Services will encourage schools to make these numbers available to students, staff and parents through newsletters, planning books, internal and external communications and through the Code of Conduct.

Best Practice #6: The school board adopts curricula and programs aimed at protecting students, teachers, bus operators, administrators, and school personnel.

FINDING GOAL D, BEST PRACTICE #6

The District is in compliance with this Best Practice. Programs such as the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Grant, DARE, SRO and Juvenile Drug Court are part of the District's effort to protect schools. The District also provides Bullies & Victims Training and School Violence & Bully Prevention Training. Transportation personnel and the safety staff are trained to identify potential hazardous conditions and take corrective action.

RECOMMENDATION GOAL D, BEST PRACTICE #6

Review effectiveness of current programs and continue to explore for additional available programs.

ACTION PLAN GOAL D, BEST PRACTICE #6

Through Department Deployment Plans and School Improvement Plans, develop goals, targets and strategies to meet the Board's goal to provide a safe and healthy learning environment.

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

Best Practice #1: The district conducts an annual review of all relevant health and safety issues or each educational facility

FINDING GOAL E, BEST PRACTICE #1

The District is in compliance with this Best Practice. The District Safety Office conducts an annual comprehensive inspection of all district property using the standards established in the State Requirements for Educational Facilities and the Florida Fire Prevention code. Additionally, hazardous storage and materials inspections are conducted throughout the District every six months. The School Board recently reviewed all policies and approved changes to appropriate policies to ensure safe and healthy environments.

RECOMMENDATION GOAL E, BEST PRACTICE #1

Continue current practices. A new position has been added to Facilities Department to give greater coordination efforts for SREF. SREF suggestions and timelines will be emphasized for timely completion. Encourage Facilities Director, Safety Program Administrator and the Maintenance Director to work cooperatively to resolve health and safety issues in an efficient and timely manner.

ACTION PLAN GOAL E, BEST PRACTICE #1

The Division of Operational Support Services and the Division of Facilities and Maintenance reflect resources to resolve serious health and safety issues.

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

FINDING GOAL E, BEST PRACTICE #2

The District is in compliance with this Best Practice. The Construction Services Department uses the principles outlined in the Crime Prevention through Environmental Design when designing new schools. These principles are also incorporated in remodeling and renovation projects.

RECOMMENDATION GOAL E, BEST PRACTICE #2

Continue to consider previous successful designs for new construction projects.

ACTION PLAN GOAL E, BEST PRACTICE #2

As new schools are needed, the Construction Services department budget will include resources to enhance security and reduce vandalism through the use of “safe school design” principles.

Best Practice #3: The district has procedures that govern access to each educational facility and its students and access is limited to authorized students and visitors.

FINDING GOAL E, BEST PRACTICE #3

The District is in compliance with this Best Practice. Both the District Safety Office and the Lee County Sheriff’s Office conduct security inspections. Additionally, Student Services performs Safe School audits at individual schools procedures have been implemented to monitor the arrival and dismissal of students and visitors at schools.

RECOMMENDATION GOAL E, BEST PRACTICE #3

Continue security inspections and the Safe School audits on an annual basis.

ACTION PLAN GOAL E, BEST PRACTICE #3

Continue to find resources to continue conducting security audits and the annual safety inspection.

Best Practice #4: The district ensures that playgrounds are properly constructed, maintained, and supervised so as to reduce the risk of injury.

FINDING GOAL E, BEST PRACTICE #4

The District is in compliance with this Best Practice. The District Safety Office provides comprehensive inspections of all playground facilities during the annual comprehensive safety inspection. The standards of the US Product Safety Commission are followed. When new playground equipment is purchased the safety office reviews the purchase to ensure the equipment meets ADA and all safety standards for schools. The capital committee continually reviews safety issues at all schools. The Maintenance Department immediately responds to all safety to life issues. The Code of Conduct requires the Principal or administrative designee to supervise playground activities to reduce the risk of injuries.

RECOMMENDATION GOAL E, BEST PRACTICE #4

Continue current practices.

ACTION PLAN GOAL E, BEST PRACTICE #4

The District Capital Plan provides for continual funding of all school safety to life issues.

Best Practice #5: Each educational facility has appropriate equipment to protect the safety and security of property and records.

FINDING GOAL E, BEST PRACTICE #5

The District is in compliance with this Best Practice. Security equipment is installed in all schools. The District Safety Office and the Maintenance Department are responsible for maintaining and upgrading the equipment as necessary.

RECOMMENDATION GOAL E, BEST PRACTICE #5

Continue current practices.

ACTION PLAN GOAL E, BEST PRACTICE #5

Annual budgets of the District Safety Office and the Maintenance Department reflect resources to continue this best practice.

Best Practice #6: The district provides appropriate safety equipment and information to prevent injuries to students and others.

FINDING GOAL E, BEST PRACTICE #6

Safety equipment is provided to all students and all others as needed in appropriate lab and other locations where safety equipment is necessary to prevent injuries.

RECOMMENDATION GOAL E, BEST PRACTICE #6

To establish a data base to monitor student injuries in order to provide additional safety equipment where needed.

ACTION PLAN GOAL E, BEST PRACTICE #6

The District Capital Plan provides for continual funding to all district safety to life issues with the .integration of Florida Sterling Quality, safety is a core value.

Best Practice #7: The district follows environmental and food safety health practices and regulations.

FINDING GOAL E, BEST PRACTICE #7

The District is in compliance with this Best Practice. The District's Food Service Department is inspected by the local Health Department and has been continually found to comply with all state and federal regulations concerning the delivery of food to students and staff. Every member of the food service staff is trained annually in Right-to-Know, Bloodborne Pathogens and Universal Precautions.

RECOMMENDATION GOAL E, BEST PRACTICE #7

Continue current practices.

ACTION PLAN GOAL E, BEST PRACTICE #7

The Food Service Department's budget reflects resources to continue this best practice.

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

Best Practice #1: The district has procedures to create safe and orderly process for students arriving at or leaving each school campus.

FINDING GOAL F, BEST PRACTICE #1

The District is in compliance with this Best Practice. The Transportation Department has policies that meet or exceed every state and federal requirement for the transportation of students. The design of each school includes the state standards for bus service driveways. The District Safety Office conducts annual surveys of all bus stops and walking routes to ensure they are safe. Additionally, when an intersection meets the state requirements, crossing guards are used to protect the students traversing to and from school.

RECOMMENDATION GOAL F, BEST PRACTICE #1

With the implementation of a two-tier transportation model, the Transportation Department and Safety Department along with the school administration should continue to monitor the process for students to arrive and leave campus. The District should continue to work with local law enforcement to provide safe access to schools for parent transportation.

ACTION PLAN GOAL F, BEST PRACTICE #1

Each schools safety team will review the process for students to arrive and leave campus each quarter.

Best Practice #2: The district has implemented policies, procedures, and practices that ensure the safety of transported students.

FINDING GOAL F, BEST PRACTICE #2

The District is in compliance with this Best Practice. Prior to the start of each school year all bus routes are inspected for safety. Those found to present a hazard are changed. All bus drivers receive Defensive Drivers Training and an annual performance review. Additionally, attendants and drivers are trained in procedures to maintain or restore order on a bus to ensure the safety of all passengers.

RECOMMENDATION GOAL F, BEST PRACTICE #2

Provide cross training for the Safety and Security Office and the Transportation Safety Office to provide better training and reduce the response time in the event of an accident or incident.

ACTION PLAN GOAL F, BEST PRACTICE #2

The Assistant Superintendent for Operational Support Services will develop a transition plan to improve the efficiency of the Transportation Safety Department and the District Safety Office.

Best Practice #3: School buses, including buses operated by schools, charter schools, and contractors, are inspected and maintained in accordance with states laws and state Department of Education rules.

FINDING GOAL F, BEST PRACTICE #3

The District is in compliance with this Best Practice. All bus operators are required to perform pre-trip inspections using the inspection checklist provided by the Transportation Safety Office. Every bus is inspected at 20-day intervals to ensure they are safe for the transportation of passengers.

RECOMMENDATION GOAL F, BEST PRACTICE #3

Continue current practices.

ACTION PLAN GOAL F, BEST PRACTICE #3

The Transportation Department Quality Deployment Plan will include strategies for maintaining safe school buses that are operated within the district.

The cooperation of the staff is appreciated and acknowledged.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Campbell, Assistant Superintendent
Operational Support Services

DC:mpb