

# CALHOUN COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

**WILSON T. MCCLELLAN, Superintendent**

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

June 3, 2003

## Safety and Security Best Practices

Of the Safe Passage Act  
2003 Self-Assessment Final Report

### AREA: Efficiency and Effectiveness

**1. BEST PRACTICE:** The district has established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the safety and security 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 Family Services 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, State Fire Marshall, OSHA, Panhandle Area Education Consortium, and the Calhoun County School Board. A loss-prevention specialist analyzes injury and accident reports and makes recommendations for corrective action for our district Risk Management personnel. Priorities are established, responsibilities are assigned, and timelines developed to address those needs. The district monitors the progress of each action plan.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Local fire departments will be requested to annually perform a response drill in coordination with their schools. 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. Response drills will be performed annually.

**2. BEST PRACTICE:** The district ensures the accuracy of its safety and security related data and reports accurate data to the Department of Education.

**FINDINGS:** Each school follows state guidelines in reporting of SESIR incidents. The district cross-references the incidents, recommends corrective action where needed, and ensures the reliability of the reports.

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

### **AREA: *Safety Planning***

**4. 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.

**5. 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. Educators and non-educators were involved in the planning and development process. 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 and will be included in an updated plan.

**6. 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. The Fire Marshall and other appropriate agencies analyze the school environment and report potential hazards. Duties and timelines are assigned to address each identified need. Students participate in the Florida Youth Tobacco Survey, Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey, etc. and data are utilized in SDFS program planning. Safety deficiencies are placed at the top of a prioritized maintenance list and work orders are issued to be addressed as soon as possible. Each school has a safety committee which meets to identify possible safety and security hazards and make recommendations for corrective action.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** The school Resource Officer will meet with the Safety Committee from their assigned schools with an agenda of the relevant health and safety issues.

**FISCAL IMPACT AND TIMELINE:** There will be no expected additional cost to the district as existing personnel will be utilized. The SRO and the Principal will assume this responsibility during the 2003-2004 school year.

**7. BEST PRACTICE:** The district has developed emergency response procedures.

**FINDINGS:** The Crisis Management Plan provides a sequence of procedures that are to be followed in response to an emergency.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** The school district, local law enforcement agencies, fire departments, hospital personnel and EMT personnel will investigate better cooperation and the capability of simultaneous contacts between the school and the first responders.

**FISCAL IMPACT AND TIMELINE:** There will be no expected additional cost to the district during this investigation. Recommendations should be made prior to the end of the 2003-2004 school year.

**8. BEST PRACTICE:** The district has provided each school with an emergency checklist.

**FINDINGS:** A sequential 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 fax.

An emergency crisis team is available to any school upon request.

**9. BEST PRACTICE:** The district and each school regularly practice emergency responses based on potential safety concerns 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.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** A district-level response drill will be held annually.

**FISCAL IMPACT AND TIMELINE:** There will be no expected additional cost to the district as existing personnel will be utilized on an annual basis.

**10. 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.

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

**FINDINGS:** The district provides safety in-service training for employees. 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. The district reviews the Master Plan for In-Service annually to update the safety training available to staff members, as well as the specialized training and incorporate these components into the plan.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Each Building Administrator will report how many classrooms lack the ability to alert the administrative office during a crisis situation.

**FISCAL IMPACT AND TIMELINE:** This will be accomplished during the 2003-2004 school year at a minimal cost to the school district.

### **AREA: Discipline Policies and Code of Student Conduct**

**12. BEST PRACTICE:** The district and each school have a code of student conduct based on stakeholder input and revised on an annual basis.

**FINDINGS:** The Calhoun County School Board is in compliance with relevant laws and regulations regarding discipline policies including the code of student conduct. 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.

**13. BEST PRACTICE:** The district's code of conduct and other policies provide clear procedures for handling disciplinary actions.

**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, in cooperation with Police Department, Sheriff's Department, the Judge's Office, and DJJ, promote and enforce a zero tolerance policy for crime, substance abuse, and victimization. Policies are in place that deal with relocation of students who victimize others. The Code of Conduct defines interviews by DCFS, law enforcement, student and locker searches, and the rights of students. The CARE Discipline Program is an alternative prevention program aimed at altering the course of students who create chronic disruptions, create an unsafe environment and are in danger of suspension or expulsion.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Procedures regarding interviews of students by a member of a law enforcement agency or by DCFS will be clarified in the Code of Student Conduct and the Employee's Handbook.

**FISCAL IMPACT AND TIMELINE:** This will be accomplished during the 2003-2004 school year. Cost estimates will be minimal.

### **AREA: *School Climate and Community Outreach***

**14. BEST PRACTICE:** The district has a process in place to minimize danger to students from community members, staff, or other students.

**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. Personnel are required to report violations of laws concerning controlled substances. DJJ informs the district of charges and convictions and progress of each. Principals and other administrators are annually directed to monitor the website that identifies sexual predators and offenders. State published standards for the use of reasonable force are provided in the employee handbook.

**15. BEST PRACTICE:** Each school has a system in place to identify students that exhibit early warning signs of, or pose a threat of future violent behavior.

**FINDINGS:** The regional consortium provides current, appropriate staff development and additional information related to early warning signs of violence for the appropriate educators as it becomes available. 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.

**16. 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 Community Advisory Council, Emergency Management, the School Readiness Coalition, the Children's Coalition, the Panhandle Area Healthy Network (Inc.), School Improvement / Advisory Councils, the North West Florida Community Based Care Alliance, Fire Department, Police Department, Sheriff's Department 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. Reports on current school prevention programs, Health issues, school crime, discipline, and (if available) trends are provided annually. The Calhoun County Sheriff's Department has initiated a school safety hotline for the 2003-2004 school year.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Each school will inform parents of the school safety hotline in a newsletter each school year.

**FISCAL IMPACT AND TIMELINE:** The notification will be completed annually at a minimal cost to the district.

### **AREA: Safety Programs and Curricula**

**17. BEST PRACTICE:** The district fosters a positive learning climate and culture by assessing the school climate and implementing relevant scientifically based curricula and programs at each school.

**FINDINGS:** Climate surveys address subjects such as discipline, bullying and threats. Proven programs such as Life Skills and Character First are utilized to promote a positive school culture and climate. Family involvement programs address subjects (such as bullying) with parents, teachers and students. Climate Surveys are reviewed by the school advisory councils annually to determine the effectiveness of these programs and revise relevant programs when needed.

**18. BEST PRACTICES:** The district has an approved Safe and Drug-Free School Plan that has been developed with appropriate stakeholder input.

**FINDINGS:** The district has an approved SDFS Plan developed with stakeholder input and revises in accordance with annual review. Enforcement of policies prohibiting tobacco, drug and alcohol use is monitored.

**19. BEST PRACTICE:** Based on the district's safety assessment process (see Best Practice 6) the district implements scientifically based violence and drug prevention programs and curricula 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. 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.

**20. BEST PRACTICE:** Each school has a system in place to identify, assess and minimize the risk for students indicating a threat of, or exhibiting suicidal behavior.

**FINDINGS:** Most teachers have not been trained to identify the warning signs of students who pose a risk for suicidal behavior.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Each Guidance Counselor will be trained and, in turn, train their teachers to identify the high risk behaviors of suicidal students. The Guidance Counselors will make referrals for evaluation for those deemed at-risk.

**FISCAL IMPACT AND TIMELINE:** Guidance Counselors will complete training prior to the completion of the 2003-2004 school year at an estimated cost of \$2000.

## **AREA: Facilities and Equipment**

**21. BEST PRACTICE:** The district designs educational facilities and sites to enhance security and reduce vandalism through the use of "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.

**22. 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 and monitored by law enforcement when unoccupied.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** The school administrator will evaluate each exterior door that allows access to the student population to ensure that it will close and will lock properly and that egress is never prevented.

**FISCAL IMPACT AND TIMELINE:** The evaluation report will be completed prior to the end of the first semester of the 2003-2004 school year with minimal cost.

**23. 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.

**24. 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.

**25. 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. More training is made available as new equipment is added. The necessary types of protective equipment (gloves, goggles, masks, etc.) are also supplied to minimize the number of injuries to students and others.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Each employee trained in CPR and First Aide will be equipped with a First Aide Kit and a CPR mouthpiece.

**FISCAL IMPACT AND TIMELINE:** These materials will cost an estimated \$1000 in the 2003-2004 school year.

**26. 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..

### **AREA: Transportation**

**27. 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 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. One school needs 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 to allow separate pick-up zones and repairing broken walkways for pedestrian safety. School Administrators and their SRO's will evaluate the current placement of their school zone signs, consult with the appropriate government agency, and make recommendations as to their future placement.

**FISCAL IMPACT AND TIMELINE:** Driveways and sidewalks should cost \$50,000. Driveways and the evaluation of the school zone signs should be completed by the end of the 2003-2004 school year.

**28. 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.

**29. BEST PRACTICE:** School buses, including buses operated by schools, charter schools, and contractors are inspected and maintained in accordance with state laws and state 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.

APPROVED BY THE CALHOUN COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD  
IN REGULAR SESSION ON JUNE 10, 2003

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David Price, Chairman

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Wilson T. McClellan, Superintendent

BOARD MEETS SECOND TUESDAY  
OF EACH MONTH  
PHONE 674-5927

## **CALHOUN COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD**

**WILSON T. MCCLELLAN, Superintendent**

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

June 11, 2003

Dear Commissioner Horne:

During the publicly noticed School Board Meeting of June 10, 2003, the Calhoun County School Board received the results of the Safety and Security Best Practices Self-Assessment conducted in the Calhoun County School District. Parents, students, community members and Board employees attended to hear the presentation and all were offered the opportunity for input. After time for discussion, the Board approved the findings and the recommendations of the Committee of stakeholders and representative interagency groups.

Sincerely,

Wilson T. McClellan,  
District Superintendent  
Calhoun County Schools

*"An Equal Opportunity Employer"*