

# Rensselaer City School District

## District-wide School Safety Plan

**Project S.A.V.E.**  
(Schools Against Violence in Education)  
Commissioner's Regulation 155.17

# Rensselaer CSD

## DISTRICT-WIDE SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN

### PROJECT SAVE

(Safe Schools Against Violence in Education)  
Commissioner's Regulation 155.17

### **Introduction**

Emergencies and violent incidents in districts are critical issues that must be addressed in throughout the City School District. School districts are required to develop a district- wide school safety plan designed to prevent or minimize the effects of serious violent incidents and emergencies and to facilitate the coordination of the district with local and county resources in the event of such incidents or emergencies.

The district-wide plan is responsive to the needs of all schools within the district and is consistent with the more detailed emergency response plans required at the school building level. Districts stand at risk from a wide variety of acts of violence, natural, and man-made disasters. To address these threats, the State of New York has enacted the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) law. Project SAVE is a comprehensive planning effort that addresses prevention, response, and recovery with respect to a variety of emergencies in each school district and its schools.

**The Rensselaer City School District** supports the SAVE Legislation and intends to facilitate the planning process. The Superintendent of Schools encourages and advocates on-going district-wide cooperation and support of Project SAVE.

### **Section 1: General Considerations and Planning Guidelines**

#### **A. Purpose**

**The Rensselaer City School District's** District-wide School Safety Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.1 7. At the direction of the Ichabod Crane Central School District's Board of Education, the Superintendent of the Ichabod Crane Central School District appointed a District-wide School Safety Team and charged it with the development and maintenance of the District-wide School Safety Plan.

#### **B. Identification of District Team**

**The Rensselaer City School District** has created a District-wide School Safety Team consisting of, but not limited to, representatives of the School Board, students, teachers, administrators, parent organizations, school safety personnel and other school personnel. The Chief Emergency Officer is the Superintendent of Schools. The Chief Emergency Officer duties include:

- Coordination of the communication between school staff, law enforcement, and other first responders;
- Lead the efforts of the district-wide school safety team in the completion and yearly update

by September 1st, of the district-wide school safety plan and the coordination of the district-wide plan with the building-level emergency response plan;

- Ensure staff understanding of the district-wide school safety plan;
- Ensure the completion and yearly update by September 1st, of building-level emergency response plans for each school building;
- Assist in the selection of security related technology and development of policies for the use of such technology;
- Coordinate appropriate safety, security, and emergency training for district and school staff, including required training in the emergency response plan yearly by September 15th; and
- Ensure the conduct of required evacuation and lock-down drills in all district buildings as required by Education Law section 807.

### **C. Concept of Operations**

- The District-wide School Safety Plan is directly linked to the individual Building-level Emergency Response Plans as a matter of protocol. The activation of the Building-level Emergency Response Plan triggers the notification of the chain of command and the assessment of the activation of the District-wide Emergency School Safety Plan and District-wide Response Team.
- The District-wide School Safety Plan was developed through extensive analysis of the local environment, emergency potential, and available resources. Through training and workshops that included school employees, administration, and local emergency services, the plan has been developed to address the specific needs of the Ichabod Crane Central School District and the community.
- In the event of an emergency or violent incident, the initial response to all emergencies at an individual school will be conducted by the School Emergency Response Team, the membership of which is specified in the Building-Level Plan. The Building Principal is responsible for notifying the Superintendent or the highest-ranking person in the chain of command of any necessary Building-level plan activation. This notification shall be accomplished through the use of telephone or the district's radio network.
- Upon the activation of the School Emergency Response Team, the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee shall be notified and, where appropriate, local emergency officials shall also be notified.
- County and state resources shall supplement the school district's emergency action planning in a number of ways:
  - State and local law enforcement provide building reviews and employee training.
  - Local law enforcement and emergency services participate in planning and training exercises and develop strategies for managing building-level emergencies.
  - A protocol exists for the school district to use certain facilities for sheltering during times of emergencies.
  - A protocol exists for the use of county mental health resources during post-incident response.
- Efforts may be supplemented by County and State resources through existing protocols.

### **D. Plan review and public comment**

- This plan shall be reviewed and maintained by the district's District-wide School Safety Team

reviewed on an annual basis on or before September 1st of each year. A copy of the plan will be available at the office of the Superintendent of Schools and published on the school district website.

- Pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17(e)(3), this plan will be made available for public comment 30 days prior to its adoption. The district-wide and building-level plans may be adopted by the School Board only after at least one public hearing that provides for the participation of school personnel, parents, students, and any other interested parties. The plan must be formally adopted by the Board of Education before September 1 annually.
- While linked to the District-wide School Safety Plan, Building Level Emergency Response Plans shall be confidential and shall not be subject to disclosure under Article 6 of the Public Officers Law or any other provision of law, in accordance with Education Law Section 2801-a. The building-level emergency response plan shall be kept confidential and shall not be disclosed except to authorized department staff and law enforcement officers.
- Full copies of the District-wide School Safety Plan and any amendments will be submitted to the New York State Education Department within 30 days of adoption. Building Level Emergency Response Plans be supplied to both local and State Police within 30 days of adoption but no later than October 15 of each year.

## **Section II: General Emergency Response Planning**

The District-wide School Safety Plan will provide the framework for the Building-Level Emergency Response Plan. The purpose of a uniform plan is to ensure district-wide continuity for emergency responses. These general emergency responses will be used to assist school employees, students, parents, and emergency responders in learning one system that can be used in any of the Ichabod Crane Central Schools. This is particularly beneficial as students move from elementary to middle school to high school, and as full-time, part-time and substitute employees travel between the schools.

### **A. Identification of Sites of Potential Emergency:**

- The District-wide School Safety Team in conjunction with local officials has identified areas outside of school property that may impact a district facility during an emergency. Factors that were considered include population, presence of hazardous materials, potential for emergency based on national trends and proximity to district property.
- A list of areas has been identified as having the potential to impact within the district. This list has been created for reference and awareness. This list is not all-inclusive for every emergency. However, these areas have been identified as having the most probable impact on district facilities or district boundaries should they have or create an emergency. A list of potential community-based hazards or emergency situations has been noted in the Building Level Emergency Response Plans.
- The district team has recognized that there are many factors that could cause an emergency in our schools and facilities within the district. There are also factors that need to be considered when responding to an emergency. A list of potential internal and external hazards or emergency situations has been noted in the Building Level Emergency Response Plans.

### **B. The district has developed multi-hazard response guides. These guidelines are located in the Building Level Emergency Response Plans and are in ICS (Incident Command System) format. Plans for taking the following actions in response to an emergency where appropriate**

are, including but not limited to:

- Initial Actions
- Command Post Location (primary and secondary)
- Shelter in Place: Used to shelter students/staff inside the school
  - Severe Weather
  - Bomb Threat
  - HazMat Incident
- Hold-In Place: Limits student/staff movement while dealing with short term emergencies
- Evacuation: Used to evacuate students/staff from the school
  - Before, during and after school hours, including security during evacuation and evacuation routes
  - Evacuation/Relocation Sites (internal and external)
- Lockout: Used to secure school buildings and grounds during incidents that pose an imminent concern outside of the school
- Lockdown: Used to secure school buildings and grounds during incidents that pose an immediate threat of violence in or around the school.
- School Cancellation
- Early Dismissal
- Relocation
- Duck & Cover

Emergencies include, but are not limited to:

Air Pollution	Epidemic	Mass Casualty
Anthrax/Biological	Explosion	Medical Emergency
Aviation Crash	Fire Alarm Activation	Natural Gas Leak
Bldg. Structural Failure	Flood	Pandemic
Bomb Threat	Heating System Failure	Radiological
Civil Disturbance	Hostage Situation	Rook Leak/Failure
Crimes Against People	Intruder Situation	School Bus Accident
Earthquake	Loss of Building	Severe Weather Emergency
Elec. System Failure	Loss of Buses	Threats of Violence
Energy Supply Loss	Loss of Communications	Water Emergency

**C.** The district has identified various district resources that may be available for use during an emergency, including the identification of personnel, equipment, and shelters.

**D.** Using the ICS (Incident Command System) the district has identified the school officials authorized to make decisions during an emergency. Through ICS, the procedures to coordinate the use of school district resources and manpower during emergencies are clearly defined. ICS also identifies the staff members and their backups assigned to provide assistance during emergencies.

**E.** The district has policies and procedures for annual multi-hazard school safety training for staff and students, including the strategies for implementing training related to multi-hazards. All staff are required to have annual training by September 15 of each year on the building-level emergency

response plan which includes components on violence prevention and mental health. New employees hired after the start of the school year receive this training within 30 days of hire or as part of the district's existing new hire training program, whichever is sooner. The district certifies that this training is completed during the October NYSED BEDS data collection. The following procedures have been established to provide this training on an annual basis to include but not limited to: early dismissal/go home drill, shelter-in place, hold-in-place, evacuation/fire drills, lockout, lockdown, table top exercises and Incident Command System training.

**F.** The district conducts drills and other training exercises to test components of the emergency response plan, including the use of tabletop exercises, in coordination with local, county, and state emergency responders and preparedness officials. A debriefing concludes each test to determine if changes to the plan are necessary. The school district, at least once every school year, and where possible in cooperation with local county emergency preparedness plan officials, conducts one test of its emergency response procedures under its building-level emergency response plan, including sheltering, lock-down, or early dismissal, at a time not to occur more than 15 minutes earlier than the normal dismissal time.

#### Education Law §§ 807(1-a), 807 (b): Fire and Emergency Drills

The district shall conduct drills and other exercises to test and evaluate the effectiveness of the district emergency response plan. Each building principal will forward a schedule of planned emergency drills and fire drills to the Superintendent by September 15 of each school year. Each principal will be required to complete a minimum number of student drills as follows:

##### Fire Drills & Lockdown Drills

A total of 12 drills must be completed each year. Of the 12, 4 must be lock-down drills. 8 of the 12 drills (combination of) must be completed by December 31. The remainder 4 drills must be completed by June 1.

### **Section III: Responding to Threats and Acts of Violence**

- A.** Schools will refer to their Crisis Intervention Plans via the Post-Incident Response Team and the Multi-Hazard Emergency Response Guides located in their Building-Level Emergency Response Plans. These are reviewed by the District-wide School Safety Team to ensure content and consistency throughout the district. These policies and procedures are for responding to implied or direct threats of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school. The following types of procedures are addressed in the plan:
- The use of staff trained in de-escalation or other strategies to diffuse the situation. Training is and will be offered through the NYS Police Safe Schools Program, Columbia County Sheriff's Department, NYS Police, and Questar III BOCES.
  - Informing the building principal of implied or direct threats.
  - Determining the level of threat with the Superintendent or designee.
  - Contacting appropriate law enforcement agency, when necessary.
  - Monitoring the situation, adjusting the district's responses as appropriate to include possible implementation of the Emergency Response Team.
  - Communication with parents/guardians. When a student implies or specifically threatens self-inflicted violence including suicide, the school's Counselor directly contacts the respective parents/guardians.

**B.** The Multi-Hazard Emergency Response Guides in the Building-level Emergency Response Plans provide guidance on the district's policies and procedures for responding to direct acts of violence (i.e. Crimes Against Persons, Hostage Taking, Intruder and Kidnapping) by students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school, including consideration of zero-tolerance policies for school violence. The following types of procedures are addressed in the plan:

- Inform the building principal and superintendent.
- Determine the level of threat with principal and superintendent/designee.
- If the situation warrants, isolate the immediate area.
- Monitor the situation; adjust the level of response as appropriate; if necessary, initiate lockdown, evacuation, sheltering and/or early dismissal procedures as needed, if needed.
- Contact appropriate law enforcement agency.

**NOTE:** The district's "**Code of Conduct**" describes policies and procedures for responding to acts of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school.

**C.** Response protocols are identifier in the Building-level Emergency Response Plan in the ICS format along with renditions of ICS Roles and Responsibilities. The Multi-Hazard Emergency Response Guides address specifics procedures for responding to bomb threats, intruders, hostage takings and kidnappings.

**D.** The following protocols for appropriate responses to emergencies are provided as examples of responses to bomb threats, hostage takings, intrusions, and kidnappings:

- Identification of decision-makers.
- Plans to safeguard students and staff.
- Procedures to provide transportation, if necessary.
- Procedures to notify parents.
- Procedures to notify media.
- Debriefing procedures.

**E.** The district has established policies and procedures to contact parents, guardians, or persons in parental relation to the students in the event of a violent incident or an early dismissal. In the district, the following communication methods will be taken:

- For small-scale incidents, school personnel will directly call the parents/guardians of all students directly impacted by any acts of violence. All other parents/guardians will receive an informational letter. The Crisis Intervention Plans and Post-incident Response Team will be activated and available. If needed, community meetings will be scheduled in a timely manner for further discussion.
- For any major incident, the district will be working with the media (TV, radio, newspapers, etc.) to relay pertinent school related information (i.e., how and where can parents be reunited with children, etc.) It is unfortunate, but important to remember that major emergencies can quietly tie up phone lines with in coming and out-going calls and roads can be quickly blocked

by the traffic of emergency vehicles, concerned parents and community members. The School district will notify parents/guardians of all students directly impacted by any emergency or act of violence. All other parents/guardians will receive an informational letter or other type of communications. Community meetings will be scheduled in a timely manner for further discussion of event to include administration, school emergency response teams and crisis support.

## **Section IV: Communications and Health Emergencies**

The District-wide School Safety Plan will provide the framework for the Building Level Emergency Response Plan.

- A. The district is fortunate to have substantial ties to the county and the surrounding communities. If there were to be an emergency within any of our facilities, that facility would call 911 for emergency assistance. If involvement is needed from other local government agencies, then the Superintendent or designee would act as that contact person. Additional procedures for communications can be found in the Building-Level Emergency Response Plans including local emergency contacts and phone numbers, and the NYS/BOCES Communication Flow Chart. These contacts provide guidance for obtaining assistance during emergencies from emergency services organizations and local government. Identified district communications systems are as follows:

### **Internal**

Teachers and building staff	Public address system
Administrators and Office staff	Activation of district emergency calling system
Students	Public address system and verbally from supervising teachers
Superintendent of Schools	Phone by principal's secretary
Buildings and Grounds	Phone or radio by principal's secretary
Board of Education	

### **External**

State Police/Rens. County Sheriff	911
Rens. County Emergency Dispatch	911
Parents	District emergency calling system whenever possible
News Media	Superintendent of Schools
BOCES District Superintendent	Phone by district office

- B. Arrangements for obtaining advice and assistance from local government officials including the county or city officials responsible for implementation of Article 2-B of the Executive Law will be carried out through the protocols established in the NYS/BOCES Communication Flow Chart. The following are examples of the types of arrangements that

could be used by the district during county-wide emergencies:

- Superintendent (District-wide IC or backup IC) in an emergency will contact the Columbia County Emergency Management Coordinator and/or the highest- ranking local government official for obtaining advice and assistance.
- The district has identified resources for an emergency from the following agencies: Columbia County Civil Defense Office, American Red Cross, Rensselaer County Emergency Services Office, New York State Police, Rensselaer County Sheriff, Rensselaer County Mental Health Office and the Questar III BOCES Health & Safety Office.
- If the emergency is within the school district boundaries and has the potential to impact the surrounding community, the Superintendent or designee will notify the appropriate city officials (i.e. Mayor, Highway Dept., City Officials, and/or Public Safety). The district would contact the City of Rensselaer, as needed. Likewise, should there be an emergency within the community that has the potential to impact the facilities of the school district, the Superintendent shall be notified immediately.

C. If there is a disaster within the district that has the potential to impact other educational agencies within the district boundaries; the Chief School Emergency Officer (Superintendent) will activate a phone tree to inform all necessary parties. The phone tree will be located in the Building-Level Emergency Response Plan. Along with the phone tree, the district will also maintain the following information about each educational agency located in the school district:

- School population
- Number of staff
- Transportation needs
- Business and home telephone numbers of key officials of each such educational agency

#### **D. Public Health Emergency – Continuation Of Operations Plan**

The district has developed a Public Health Emergency – Continuation of Operations Plan. This plan has been developed in accordance with the amended New York State Labor Law section 27-c and New York State Education Law paragraphs k and l of subdivision 2 of section 2801-a (as amended by section 1 of part B of chapter 56 of the laws of 2016), as applicable. These laws were amended by the passing of legislation S8617B/A10832 signed by the Governor of New York State on September 7, 2020, requires public employers to adopt a plan for operations in the event of a declared public health emergency involving a communicable disease. The plan includes the identification of essential positions, facilitation of remote work for non-essential positions, provision of personal protective equipment, and protocols for supporting contact tracing. This plan is a stand-alone plan and can be requested for review through the Superintendent's Office.

## **Section V: Prevention and Intervention Strategies**

### **A. Program Initiatives**

The district and community have developed a number of programs and activities to aid in risk reduction. These initiatives are run at different age groups within the district.

- Character Education programming
- Student's Bill of Rights and Responsibilities
- The district's Code of Conduct
- Too Good For Drugs (K-5)
- Bullying Awareness
- The district has anti-bullying awareness programming in place for students
- Group counseling, individual counseling, and student counseling
- Cyber bullying awareness programming
- Internet safety programs
- SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions)
- Positive Action (6-8)
- Positive Action SEL Program (6-8)
- Social Media Digital Citizenship Grades with Prevention Educator (9-12)
- Too Good For Violence Too Good For Drugs (K-8)
- Project AWARE Training (all staff)
- Metal Health In Schools (virtual & in-person)

### **Facilities Initiatives**

The district has attempted to enhance the security of its facilities through a number of initiatives, including the following:

- The school has implemented a parent/visitor sign-in procedure and requires the use of visitor ID badges – RAPTOR Visitor Management System.
- School Resource Officer with the Rensselaer Police Department.
- Enhanced entrance door hardware.
- Electronic surveillance systems throughout the building.
- Handheld communication systems for school personnel.
- Classroom Emergency Response Procedures.
- Employee identification badges for staff and faculty.

The District-wide School Safety Plan will provide the framework for the Building-level Emergency Response Plan.

- B.** The district has developed policies and procedures related to school building security, including, where appropriate: visitor sign-in and badge procedures, the use of a Rensselaer County Sheriff's SRO, security devices and procedures, and random locker searches by administration. The Memorandum of Understanding with the Rensselaer City Police Department is included in Appendix B.

- C. The district has implemented procedures for the dissemination of informational materials regarding the early detection of potentially violent behaviors, including, but not limited to: the identification of family, community and environmental factors to teachers, administrators, parents and other persons in parental relation to students of the school district or board, students and other persons deemed appropriate to receive such information. The district has and continues to participate in programs that are designed to provide staff on how to identify potentially violent behaviors and other risk factors. The district additionally employs school counselors, psychologists, special education staff, and school health teachers who are instrumental in assisting the district in identifying early warning signs in students, early intervention/prevention strategies and the development of violence prevention instruction for staff and faculty.
- D. The district has appropriate prevention and intervention strategies such as:
- Collaborative agreements with state and local law enforcement officials designed to ensure that the district's SRO is adequately trained including being trained to de-escalate potentially violent situations
  - Non-violent conflict resolution training
  - Peer leadership
  - Extended day and other school safety programs
- E. The district has created and supported strategies for improving communication among students and between students and staff and reporting of potentially violent incidents, such as the establishment of:
- Peer Leadership
  - Staff Development on conference days relating to violence prevention
  - Others based on district need
- F. The district has descriptions of duties, hiring and training protocols, and requirements for the training of TA's and monitors and other school safety personnel.

## **Section VI: Recovery**

Recovery addresses the help needed for all involved to heal and to restore the school community to "normal" operations. The District Plan supports the school building plan by deploying district resources that support the school's building-level emergency response team and the post-incident response team.

Recovery plans include mental health/emotional recovery, academic, physical, and business recovery, and can continue long after the actual emergency. The District has social workers and school psychologist resources and support systems. The District has the ability to coordinate with school, local, county and state disaster mental health services. The District's role with mental health services includes looking at the school culture and climate, providing student access to services and following threat assessment procedures.

### **A. District Support for School Buildings**

The Building-level Emergency Response Plan provides resources for supporting the building-level emergency response team and post-incident response team. The district's Incident Command System

(ICS) identifies back-ups to relieve team members. This provides team members the opportunity to rotate personnel, to fill in if assigned personnel are unavailable and to debrief in a supportive environment.

The district realizes that some emergencies may overwhelm an individual school's ability to manage an extreme crisis. If/when the school is faced with an emergency such as threats of violence or actual violent incidents, the district-wide school safety team assists as follows:

- Acting as a sounding board regarding the implied or direct threats and/or violent acts.
- Assisting in determining the level of threat and appropriate response.
- Monitoring the situation and adjusting the district's response as appropriate.
- Assisting with parent/guardian, faculty/staff, and media communication.
- Assisting with coordinating building and grounds security in conjunction with Columbia County Sheriff and State Police.
- Assisting with offering a backup post-incident response team (i.e., another school district's team and/or an outside group) when needed.
- Offering debriefing sessions as needed working in conjunction with local agencies, Columbia County Emergency Management and/or State emergency responders.

#### **B. Disaster Mental Health Services**

The district office shall assist in the coordination of Disaster Mental Health Resources, in support of the Post-Incident Response Teams in the affected schools. The Superintendent or his/her designee may gain additional resources as the situation requires. Potential providers include Questar III BOCES Crisis Management Team and the Rensselaer County Mental Health Center.

**Appendix A**  
**Building Listing and Address**

The following is a listing of all school buildings covered by the district-wide school safety plan:

25 Van Rensselaer Drive  
Rensselaer NY, 12144

Jr-Sr High	
Van Rensselaer Elementary	

## **Appendix B**

### **School Resource Officer Agreement with the Rensselaer City Police Department**

## SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER AGREEMENT

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This Agreement is made, this 21st day of September, 2016, by and between the RENSSELAER CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT (hereinafter "School District"), and the RENSSELAER CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT (hereinafter "Police Department:") as follows:

### WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, the Police Department agrees to provide the School District a School Resources Officer (SRO) Program in the School District; and

WHEREAS, the School District and the Police Department desire to set forth in this SRO Agreement the specific terms and conditions of the services to be performed and provided by the SROs in the School District;

NOW, THEREFORE, THE PARTIES MUTUALLY AGREE AS FOLLOWS:

1. **Cost of the SRO Program.**
  - A. The cost of the SRO Program shall be paid by the parties as set forth in Exhibit A, which is attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference.
  
2. **Employment of School Resource Officers.**
  - A. The SRO shall be employees of the Police Department and shall be subject to the administration, supervision and control of the Police Department.
  - B. The SRO shall be subject to all personnel policies and practices of the Police Department except as such policies or practices may be modified by the terms and conditions of this Agreement.
  - C. The Police Department, in its sole discretion, shall have the power and authority to hire, discharge, and discipline the SRO.
  - D. A joint committee composed of representatives of the Police Department and the School District shall make recommendations for the SRO position to the Chief of Police who shall assign such officer. If the School Superintendent is dissatisfied with an SRO who has been assigned to the School District, then that School Superintendent may request that the Chief of Police assign a different officer as the SRO.
  - E. One SRO shall be assigned to the School District.

**3. Duty Hours.**

- A. SRO duty hours shall be determined by the provisions of the labor agreement between the Police Department and the School District. Whenever possible, it is the intent of the parties that the SRO's duty hours shall conform to the school day.
- B. It is understood and agreed that time spent by the SRO attending municipal court, juvenile court, and/or criminal cases arising from and/or out of their employment as an SRO shall be considered as hours worked under this Agreement.
- C. In the event of an emergency, if the SRO is ordered by the Police Department to leave the school during normal duty hours as described above and to perform other services for the Police Department, then the time spent shall not be considered hours worked under this Agreement. In such an event, the compensation paid by the School District to the Police Department shall be reduced by the number of hours of SRO service not provided to the School District or the hours shall be made up in a manner determined by mutual agreement of the parties.
- D. In the event the SRO is absent from work, the SRO shall notify his or her supervisor in the Police Department and the School Superintendent. The Police Department will assign another SRO qualified officer, if available, to substitute for the SRO who is absent beginning with the sixth consecutive day of absence.

**4. Term of Agreement.**

The initial term of this Agreement is one (1) year commencing on the 1st day of September, 2016, and ending on the 30th day of June, 2017, however, should either party encounter budgetary constraints that make the continuation of this agreement impractical, then either party may cancel this agreement upon sixty-day notice to the other. Following the initial term, this agreement shall be automatically renewed for successive one year periods unless either party requests termination or modification of this agreement. This request will be made in writing.

**5. Duties of School Resource Officers.**

The SRO's duties will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- A. To be an extension of the principal's office for assignments consistent with this Agreement.
- B. To be a visible, active law enforcement figure on campus dealing with law enforcement matters and school code violations originating on the assigned campus. As to school code violations, the SRO will take the

student to the principal's office for discipline to be meted out by school officials.

- C. To act as the designee of the campus administrator in maintaining the physical plant of the assigned campus to provide a safe environment as to law enforcement matters and school code violations. This includes building(s), grounds, parking lot(s), lockers and other public school property. As to school code violations, the SRO will take the student to the principal's office for discipline to be meted out by school officials.
- D. To provide a classroom resource for law education using approved materials.
- E. To be a resource for students which will enable them to be associated with a law enforcement figure and role model in the students' environment.
- F. To be a resource for teachers, parents and students for conferences on an individual basis dealing with individual problems or questions, particularly in the area of substance control.
- G. To make appearances before site councils, parent groups, and other groups associated with the campus and as a speaker on a variety of requested topics, particularly drug and alcohol abuse.
- H. To document activities of the SRO, on and off campus, and as a compiler of a monthly report to be provided to the Police Department and to the School Superintendent.
- I. The SRO will be involved in school discipline when it pertains to preventing a disruption that would, if ignored, place students, faculty and staff at risk of harm. The SRO will resolve the problem to preserve the school climate. As to school code violations, the SRO will take the student to the principal's office for discipline to be meted out by school officials.
- J. IN ALL OTHER CASES, disciplining students is a School District responsibility, and the SRO will take students who violate the code of conduct to the principal where school discipline can be meted out.
- K. It will be the responsibility of the SRO to report all crimes originating on campus. Information on cases that are worked off-campus by the Police Department or other agencies involving students on a campus served by an SRO will be provided to the SRO, but the SRO will not normally be actively involved in off-campus investigation(s).
- L. The SRO will share information with the administrator about persons and conditions that pertain to campus safety concerns.

- M. The SRO will be familiar with helpful community agencies, such as mental health clinics, drug treatment centers, etc., that offer assistance to dependency- and delinquency-prone youths and their families. Referrals will be made when necessary.
- N. The SRO and the principal will develop plans and strategies to prevent and/or minimize dangerous situations which might result in student unrest.
- O. The SRO will coordinate all of his/her activities with the principal and staff members concerned and will seek permission, guidance, and advice prior to enacting any programs within the school.
- P. The SRO may be asked to provide community wide crime prevention presentations that include, but are not limited to:
  - Drugs and the law – Adult and juvenile;
  - Alcohol and the law – Adult and juvenile;
  - Sexual assault prevention;
  - Safety programs – Adult and juvenile;
  - Assistance in other crime prevention programs as assigned.
- Q. The SRO will wear approved department uniform, formal business attire or business casual with appropriate logos and name badges depending on the time of school year, the type of school activity or program, and the requests of the school and/or police department. The Chief of Police and the School Superintendent shall jointly set expectations and resolve any disputes in this area.
- R. The SRO will wear their department authorized duty weapons in accordance with department policy.

**6. Chain of Command.**

- A. As an employee of the Police Department, the SRO will be subject to the chain of command of the Police Department.
- B. In the performance of their duties, the SRO shall coordinate and communicate with the principal or the principals' designee of the school to which they are assigned.

**7. Transporting Students**

- A. SROs shall not transport students in Police Department vehicles except:
  - (1) When the students are victims of a crime, under arrest, or some other emergency circumstances exist; and

(2) When students are suspended and/or sent home from school pursuant to school disciplinary actions, if the student's parent or guardian has refused or is unable to pick up the child within a reasonable time period and the student is disruptive/disorderly and his/her continued presence on campus is a threat to the safety and welfare of other students and school personnel.

- B. Students shall not be transported to any location unless it is determined that the student's parent, guardian or custodian is at the destination to which the student is being transported. SROs shall not transport students in their personal vehicles.
- C. SROs shall notify school personnel upon removing a student from campus.

**8. Access to Education Records.**

- A. School officials shall allow SROs to inspect and copy any public records maintained by the school to the extent allowed by law.
- B. If some information in a student's record is needed in an emergency to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals, school officials shall disclose to the SRO that information which is needed to respond to the emergency situation based on the seriousness of the threat to someone's health or safety; the need of the information to meet the emergency situation and the extent to which time is of the essence.
- C. If confidential student record information is needed by an SRO, but no emergency situation exists, the information may be released only as allowed by law.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have caused this Agreement to be executed the day and year first written above.

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
John M. Mooney, Board of Education President  
Rensselaer City School District

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
City of Rensselaer

## Appendix C

### **The Early Detection of Potentially Violent Behaviors – A Guide for Families and Communities**

#### **Early Warning Signs**

It is not always possible to predict behavior that will lead to violence. In some situations, and for some youth, different combinations of events, behaviors, and emotions may lead to aggressive rage or violent behavior toward self or others. School personnel and students as well as parents are often in a good position to observe these early warning signs.

None of these signs alone is sufficient for predicting aggression and violence. Moreover, it is inappropriate- and potentially harmful--to use the early warning signs as a checklist against which to match individual children. Rather, the warning signs are offered only as an aid in identifying and referring children who may need help. A good rule of thumb is to assume that these warning signs, especially when they are presented in combination, indicate a need for further analysis to determine an appropriate intervention.

The information that follows and such other information as may be appropriate concerning Early Warning shall be made available to all employees in a form to be determined by the Superintendent. It is the policy of the district that employees and students use the early warning signs only

for identification and referral purposes. Trained professionals should make diagnoses in consultation with the child's parents or guardian.

The following early warning signs are cited by the United States Department of Education in its publication entitled **Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools** and are presented with the following qualifications: they are not equally significant and they are not presented in order of seriousness. They include:

- Social withdrawal. In some situations, gradual and eventually complete withdrawal from social contacts can be an important indicator of a troubled child. The withdrawal often stems from feelings of depression, rejection, persecution, unworthiness, and lack of confidence.
- Excessive feelings of isolation and being alone. Research has shown that the majority of children who are isolated and appear to be friendless are not violent. In fact, these feelings are sometimes characteristic of children and youth who may be troubled, withdrawn, or have internal issues that hinder development of social affiliations. However, research also has shown that in some cases feelings of isolation and not having friends are associated with children who behave aggressively and violently.
- Excessive feelings of rejection. In the process of growing up, and in the course of adolescent development, many young people experience emotionally painful rejection. Children who are troubled often are isolated from their mentally healthy peers. Their responses to rejection will depend on many background factors. Without support, they may be at risk of expressing their emotional distress in negative ways-including violence.

Some aggressive children who are rejected by non-aggressive peers seek out aggressive friends who, in turn, reinforce their violent tendencies.

- Being a victim of violence. Children who are victims of violence-including physical or sexual abuse-in the community, at school, or at home are sometimes at risk themselves of becoming violent toward themselves or others.
- Feelings of being picked on and persecuted. The youth who feels constantly picked on, teased, bullied, singled out for ridicule, and humiliated at home or at school may initially withdraw socially. If not given adequate support in addressing these feelings, some children may vent them in inappropriate ways-including possible aggression or violence.
- Low school interest and poor academic performance. Poor school achievement can be the result of many factors. It is important to consider whether there is a drastic change in performance and/or poor performance becomes a chronic condition that limits the child's capacity to learn. In some situations--such as when the low achiever feels frustrated, unworthy, chastised, and denigrated- acting out and aggressive behaviors may occur. It is important to assess the emotional and cognitive reasons for the academic performance change to determine the true nature of the problem.
- Expression of violence in writings and drawings. Children and youth often express their thoughts, feelings, desires, and intentions in their drawings and in stories, poetry, and other written expressive forms. Many children produce work about violent themes that for the most part is harmless when taken in context. However, an overrepresentation of violence in writings and drawings that is directed at specific individuals (family members, peers, other adults) consistently over time, may signal emotional problems and the potential for violence. Because there is a real danger in misdiagnosing such a sign, it is important to seek the guidance of a qualified professional--such as a school psychologist, counselor, or other mental health specialist--to determine its meaning.

- Uncontrolled anger. Everyone gets angry; anger is a natural emotion. However, anger that is expressed frequently and intensely in response to minor irritants may signal potential violent behavior toward self or others.
- Patterns of impulsive and chronic hitting, intimidating, and bullying behaviors. Children often engage in acts of shoving and mild aggression. However, some mildly aggressive behaviors such as constant hitting and bullying of others that occur early in children's lives, if left unattended, might later escalate into more serious behaviors.
- History of discipline problems. Chronic behavior and disciplinary problems both in school and at home may suggest that underlying emotional needs are not being met. These unmet needs may be manifested in acting out and aggressive behaviors. These problems may set the stage for the child to violate norms and rules, defy authority, disengage from school, and engage in aggressive behaviors with other children and adults.
- Past history of violent and aggressive behavior. Unless provided with support and counseling, a youth who has a history of aggressive or violent behavior is likely to repeat those behaviors. Aggressive and violent acts may be directed toward other individuals, be expressed in cruelty to animals, or include fire setting. Youth who show an early pattern of antisocial behavior frequently and across multiple settings are particularly at risk for future aggressive and antisocial behavior. Similarly, youth who engage in overt behaviors such as bullying, generalized aggression and defiance, and covert behaviors such as stealing, vandalism, lying, cheating, and fire setting also are at risk for more serious aggressive behavior. Research suggests that age of onset may be a key factor in interpreting early warning signs. For example, children who engage in aggression and drug abuse at an early age (before age 12) are more likely to show violence later on than are children who begin such behavior at an older age. In the presence of such signs it is important to review the child's history with behavioral experts and seek parents' observations and insights.
- Intolerance for differences and prejudicial attitudes. All children have likes and dislikes. However, an intense prejudice toward others based on racial, ethnic, religious, language, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and physical appearance--when coupled with other factors--may lead to violent assaults against those who are perceived to be different. Membership in hate groups or the willingness to victimize individuals with disabilities or health problems also should be treated as early warning signs.
- Drug use and alcohol use. Apart from being unhealthy behaviors, drug use and alcohol use reduces self-control and exposes children and youth to violence, either as perpetrators, as victims, or both.

- Affiliation with gangs. Gangs that support anti-social values and behaviors--including extortion, intimidation, and acts of violence toward other students--cause fear and stress among other students. Youth who are influenced by these groups--those who emulate and copy their behavior, as well as those who become affiliated with them--may adopt these values and act in violent or aggressive ways in certain situations. Gang-related violence and turf battles are common occurrences tied to the use of drugs that often result in injury and/or death.
- Inappropriate access to, possession and use of firearms. Children and youth who inappropriately possess or have access to firearms can have an increased risk for violence. Research shows that such youngsters also have a higher probability of becoming victims. Families can reduce inappropriate access and use by restricting, monitoring, and supervising children's access to firearms and other weapons. Children who have a history of aggression, impulsiveness, or other emotional problems should not have access to firearms and other weapons.
- Serious threats of violence. Idle threats are a common response to frustration. Alternatively, one of the most reliable indicators that a youth is likely to commit a dangerous act toward self or others is a detailed and specific threat to use violence. Recent incidents across the country clearly indicate that threats to commit violence against oneself or others should be taken very seriously. Steps must be taken to understand the nature of these threats and to prevent them from being carried out.

### **Identifying and Responding to Imminent Warning Signs**

Unlike early warning signs, imminent warning signs indicate that a student is very close to behaving in a way that is potentially dangerous to self and/or to others. Imminent warning signs require an immediate response.

No single warning sign can predict that a dangerous act will occur. Rather, imminent warning signs usually are presented as a sequence of overt, serious, hostile behaviors or threats directed at peers, employees, or other individuals. Usually, imminent warning signs are evident to more than one employee member--as well as to the child's family.

Imminent warning signs may include:

- Serious physical fighting with peers or family members.
- Severe destruction of property.
- Severe rage for seemingly minor reasons.
- Detailed threats of lethal violence.
- Possession and/or use of firearms and other weapons.
- Other self-injurious behaviors or threats of suicide.

## **Threat Assessment**

A threat is an expression of intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something. A threat can be written, spoken, or symbolic – as in motioning with one’s hands as though shooting or strangling another person. There are principally four types of threats – direct, indirect, veiled, and conditional.

Threats are made for a variety of reasons: as a warning signal, a reaction to fear of punishment, anxiety, demand for attention or as retribution for a perceived or actual slight or affront. Threats may be intended to taunt, intimidate, assert power, punish, manipulate, coerce, frighten, terrorize, compel desired behavior, to strike back for an injury, injustice or slight; to be disruptive, to challenge authority or to protect oneself.

Individuals who make threats normally manifest other behaviors or emotions that are indicative of a problem. These can include: signs of depression, prolonged brooding, evidence of frustration or disappointment; fantasies of destruction or revenge in conversations, writings, drawings, or other actions; expressions of intense love, fear, rage, revenge, excitement or pronounced desire for recognition. Use of alcohol or drugs can be an aggravating factor, as can a romantic breakup, failing grades or conflicts with parents or friends.

## **Personality Traits**

Personality traits and behaviors that should be considered in assessing the likelihood of a student carrying out a threat include:

- a student intentionally or unintentionally revealing clues to feelings, thoughts, fantasies, attitudes, or intentions that may signal an impending violent act;
- low tolerance of frustration, easily hurt, insulted, angered by real or perceived injustices;
- poor coping skills, demonstrating little ability to deal with frustration, criticism, disappointment, failure, rejection or humiliation;
- lack of resiliency, is unable to bounce back from frustrating and disappointing experiences; failed love relationship, cannot accept or comes to term with humiliation or rejection;
- injustice collector, nurse’s resentment over real or perceived injustices, will not forgive or forget those who s/he believes are responsible;
- depression manifested by lethargy, physical fatigue, morose or dark outlook on life, malaise, lack of interest in activities once enjoyed, unpredictable anger, generalized or excessive hatred to others, hopelessness about the future, psychomotor agitation, restlessness, inattention, sleep and eating disorders;
- narcissism, self-centered, lacking insight to the needs / feelings of others, blames others for failure and disappointment, may embrace the role of victim, display signs of paranoia, self-importance, or grandiosity masking feelings of unworthiness, notably think or thin skinned;
- alienation, feels different or estranged from others, more than being a loner, involves feelings of isolation, sadness, loneliness, not belonging or fitting in;
- dehumanizes others, fails to see others as humans, sees them as objects to be thwarted;

- lacks empathy, demonstrates inability to understand feelings of others, may ridicule displays of emotion as weak or stupid;
- exaggerated sense of entitlement, has a sense of being superior and constantly expects special treatment and consideration;
- attitude of superiority, has a sense of being superior to others, smarter, more creative, talented, experienced, more worldly;
- exaggerated / pathological need for attention, positive or negative, regardless of the circumstances;
- externalizes blame, consistently refuses to take responsibility for own actions, blames others, often seems impervious to rational argument and common sense;
- masks low self-esteem, may display arrogance, self-glorifying attitude, avoids high visibility or involvement, may be considered a “non-entity” by peers:
- anger management problems, manifested by consistent temper tantrums, melodramatic displays, brooding, sulking, seething silence, reacts out of proportion to cause, may direct anger to those who have no connection to triggering incident;
- intolerance, racial, ethnic, religious, and other, displays symbols and slogans of intolerance on self or possessions;
- inappropriate humor, macabre, insulting, belittling, or mean.
- Attempts to manipulate others, attempts to con, and manipulate to win trust so others will rationalize aberrant behavior;
- Lack of trust, is untrusting and suspicious of the motives and intentions of others, may approach clinically paranoid state;
- Closed social group, introverted, with acquaintances rather than friends, may associate only with a single small group to the exclusion of others;
- Manifests a dramatic change in behavior, academic performance, disobedience of school rules, schedules, dress codes etc.
  
- Rigid and opinionated, judgmental, and cynical, strong opinions on topics about which little knowledge is possessed, disregards facts, logic, and reasoning;
  
- Demonstrates unusual interest in sensational violence;
- Fascination with violence-filled entertainment, movies, TV, computer games, music videos, printed material, inordinate amount of time with violent computer games and websites involving violence weapons and disturbing objects;
- Has negative role models, drawn to negative, inappropriate role models, Hitler, Satan, or others associated with violence and destruction;
- Manifests behavior that is relevant to carrying out a threat, spends inordinate amount of time practicing with firearms, on violent websites, begins excluding normal pursuits such as homework, class, work, time with friends.

### **Family Dynamics**

Family dynamics that should be considered in assessing the likelihood of a student carrying out a threat include:

- Turbulent parent / child relationship, relationship is particularly difficult, can be uniquely evident following recent or multiple moves, loss of parent, addition of step-parent, dismisses parents' role in his / her life, evidence of violence in the home;
- Acceptance of pathological behavior, parents do not react to behavior that most would find disturbing' parents appear unable to recognize or acknowledge problems in their children, respond quite defensively to real or perceived criticism of child, parents appear unconcerned about, minimize or reject reports of inappropriate behavior by child;
- Access to weapons, family keeps guns, weapons, explosives materials in the home and accessible to the children, weapons treated carelessly, without normal safety precautions, parent or role model may handle weapons irresponsibly or use as device for intimidation;
- Lack of family intimacy or closeness;
- Student "rules the roost," few limits set for children, parents regularly submit to child's demands, student insists on inordinate degree of privacy, parents have little information about student activities, school life, friends, or other relationships.
- No limits or monitoring of TV or Internet, parents do not supervise, limit, or monitor TV, Internet, computer use or access.

### **School Dynamics**

School dynamics that should be considered in assessing the likelihood of a student carrying out a threat include:

- Student attachment to school, student appears detached from school, other students, teachers, and school activities;
- Tolerance for disrespectful behavior, school does little to prevent or punish disrespectful behavior between students, bullying is part of the school culture, school authorities are oblivious to bullying, little or no intervention by school authorities, school atmosphere promotes racial or class divisions, allows them to remain unchallenged;
- Inequitable discipline, discipline is inequitably applied or is perceived as such by students or employees;
- Inflexible culture, official and unofficial patterns of behavior, values and relationships among students, teachers and administrators are static, unyielding, and insensitive to changes in society and the changing needs of newer students;
- Pecking order among students, certain groups have more prestige and respect – both officially and unofficially by students and school officials;
- Code of silence, prevails among students, little trust between students and employees;
- Unsupervised computer access, access is unsupervised and unmonitored, students are able to play violent games, explore inappropriate websites, promote violent hate groups, give instruction in bomb making etc.

### **Social Dynamics**

Social dynamics that should be considered in assessing the likelihood of a student carrying out a threat include:

- Media, entertainment and technology, easy unmonitored access to media, entertainment and Internet sites with violent themes and images;

- Peer groups, intense and extensive involvement with a group that shares fascination with violence or extremist beliefs;
- Drugs and alcohol, knowledge of student's use of drugs or alcohol or changes in such use is important;
- Outside interests, outside interests of students are important to note as they can mitigate or increase the school's level of concern in assessing a threat;
- Copycat effect, school shooting and other violent incidents that receive intense media attention can generate threats or copycat violence elsewhere, school employees should be highly vigilant in the aftermath of such incidents.