SCHOOL SAFETY SOLUTIONS

Research • Experience • Results

SUPERINTENDENT'S TOP 10 SCHOOL SAFETY CHECK

For a new superintendent - or any district leader taking a fresh look at safety - these ten areas provide a practical starting point for understanding current capability, gaps, and priorities.

1 GOVERNANCE & OWNERSHIP

Who owns school safety at the district level? Clarify executive oversight, campus responsibilities, decision authority, committees, and how safety work is coordinated across departments.

LOOK FOR:

- ☐ Designated district safety lead / executive oversight
- ☐ Clear district and campus responsibilities
- ☐ Multidisciplinary safety committee / coordination process
- ☐ Method to assign and track improvement actions

2 EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

Is the EOP current, usable, and understood - not simply compliant? Review hazards, functional annexes, campus procedures, continuity, reunification, communications, and how staff access the plan.

LOOK FOR:

- ☐ Current district and campus plans
- ☐ Hazard / risk analysis tied to local conditions
- ☐ Usable procedures and functional annexes
- ☐ Evidence staff are trained and plans are updated

3 INCIDENT COMMAND & ROLE CLARITY

Can district and campus leaders explain what they will do during an emergency? Confirm site and central-office ICS roles, backups, command locations, communications, and public-safety interface.

LOOK FOR:

- ☐ Primary and backup ICS assignments
- ☐ Defined campus and central-office roles
- ☐ Command / coordination locations and communications
- ☐ Clear interface with responding public-safety agencies

4 TRAINING, DRILLS & EXERCISES

Look beyond completion counts. Determine whether staff are trained before drills, scenarios reflect real conditions, leaders practice decision-making, and after-action findings drive improvement.

LOOK FOR:

- ☐ Annual training and exercise strategy
- ☐ Staff trained before drills / exercises
- ☐ Realistic scenarios and leadership tabletops
- ☐ After-action findings tracked to completion

5 BEHAVIORAL THREAT ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT

Examine how concerns are reported, assessed, managed, documented, monitored, reassessed, and closed. Pay particular attention to case management - not just initial assessment.

LOOK FOR:

- ☐ Clear reporting and triage process
- ☐ Trained multidisciplinary teams
- ☐ Individualized management and monitoring
- ☐ Reassessment, step-down, and closure criteria

6 PHYSICAL SECURITY & ACCESS CONTROL

Understand how people enter, move through, and use district facilities. Review visitor management, exterior doors, keys/credentials, cameras, communications, alarms, and known vulnerabilities.

LOOK FOR:

- ☐ Exterior-door and visitor-management procedures
- ☐ Key / credential control and accountability
- ☐ Cameras, alarms, radios, and communications
- ☐ Known vulnerabilities prioritized and corrected

7 SCHOOL-BASED LAW ENFORCEMENT & PUBLIC-SAFETY PARTNERSHIPS

Clarify roles, expectations, MOUs, training, communication, emergency coordination, and program objectives. Ask how the district knows its school-policing strategy is producing intended outcomes.

LOOK FOR:

- ☐ Current MOU / written roles where applicable
- ☐ Clear discipline vs. law-enforcement boundaries
- ☐ School-specific officer and staff training
- ☐ Regular coordination, exercises, and program evaluation

8 COMMUNICATION & REUNIFICATION

Assess how the district will communicate with staff, students, families, responders, and media during a crisis. Verify backup methods and whether reunification plans are operational and practiced.

LOOK FOR:

- ☐ Staff / family / media communication procedures
- ☐ Defined message approval and release authority
- ☐ Primary and backup communication methods
- ☐ Reunification sites, roles, resources, and practice

9 DATA, REPORTING & PROGRAM EVALUATION

What does the district actually measure? Review incidents, threats, drills, response issues, climate/perception data, corrective actions, and recurring trends so priorities are based on evidence.

LOOK FOR:

- ☐ Defined indicators tied to district priorities
- ☐ Incident, threat, drill, and corrective-action trends
- ☐ Regular leadership review of safety information
- ☐ Evidence data influence priorities and resources

10 CULTURE OF PREPAREDNESS & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Ask whether people report concerns, understand their roles, learn from incidents, and fix identified gaps. Strong safety systems are continuously reviewed, tested, and improved - not just audited.

LOOK FOR:

- ☐ Staff and students know how to report concerns
- ☐ Leaders encourage identification of gaps
- ☐ Corrective actions have owners and deadlines
- ☐ Plans and capabilities are routinely tested and improved

THE SUPERINTENDENT'S QUESTION:

Can we clearly explain how our safety system identifies risk, prepares people, manages incidents, learns from experience, and improves over time?