School Safety Recommendations

Section 1: Baseline Legal Requirements

Items listed in this section are provisions required by Indiana Code. Full code citations and text are available online here:
https://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/safety/laws-reference-2017.pdf

☐ School Safety Specialist; each corporation must have a certified school safety specialist. Registration is available for school safety partners referred by local school officials, and is available online here: https://www.doe.in.gov/safety

☐ Emergency Preparedness Plan; each corporation shall, in consultation with local public safety agencies, develop plans for the corporation and each school in the corporation.

☐ Within 60 days of the beginning of each school year, the local superintendent shall certify to the Indiana Department of Education that the plans have been reviewed and revised. This can be done online here: https://www.doe.in.gov/safety/safe-schools-and-emergency-preparedness-planning-certification-form

☐ Emergency preparedness plans shall include provisions for warning and evacuating students with disabilities. Special warning and evacuation provisions shall:

☐ Drills; Each building within a corporation shall perform; one tornado and one manmade drill per semester, along with monthly fire drills. Schools are permitted by code to substitute a manmade drill or tornado drill for a fire drill up to two times per semester (not in consecutive months).   Drill records shall be approved by the principal and kept on file.

☐ Safe School Committee; Every school corporation shall establish a safe school committee to address unsafe conditions, crime prevention, and school violence. Each safe school committee shall provide a copy of the floor plans for each building located on the school's property that clearly indicates each exit, the interior rooms and hallways, and the location of any hazardous materials located in the building to the law enforcement agency and the fire department that have jurisdiction over the school.

☐ Criminal Organizations; School corporations shall establish a written policy to address criminal organizations and criminal organization activity in schools. Rules prohibiting criminal organizations should include; education programs, reporting requirements and interventions. School corporations shall establish educational programs to address criminal organization activity.

☐ Bullying; Each school corporation shall adopt rules prohibiting bullying. Rules prohibiting bullying should include; procedures for reporting, investigating, timetables for contacting parents, and support services for the victim and bullying education for the bully. Staff and student training on bullying prevention/identification must be provided, along with anonymous reporting mechanisms.

☐ Suicide Awareness/Prevention; Each school corporation, charter school, and accredited nonpublic school shall require school employees working with grades 5-12 to participate in two hours of evidence based youth suicide awareness and prevention training every three years.

Section 2: Recommended Practices

Items listed in this section are intended to augment school safety planning and code requirements documented in Section 1. Each check box item represents a recommendation from IDOE but is not a requirement under Indiana Code.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLANS

☐ Plans should be approved by the governing school board in executive session.

☐ Safety plans are not subject to public disclosure and should not be reviewed in a public forum.

APPROPRIATE WARNING SYSTEMS

☐ Fire alarm and sprinkler system should be tested annually.

☐ Public address system should be tested. Be aware of dead spots in the building where the P/A may not be audible.

☐ Use public address system for areas outside of school (playgrounds, arrival/departure areas).

☐ Enable public address system access from all rooms when able. This allows all staff who receive training to access the public address system and call a lockdown when necessary.

☐ Supply radios for any staff that take students outside to enable two-way communication.

☐ Use plain language to notify staff/students of safety event. Codes will likely cause confusion and inaction.

☐ Use of appropriate technology such as emergency alert app

PROCEDURES FOR NOTIFYING OTHER AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

☐ Enable any and all staff to notify 911 during an emergency, then immediately notify the front office.

☐ Enable any and all staff to call lockdown.

☐ Post important Information on classroom phones including specific directions to call 911, school address, room number where the phone is located.

☐ Use of appropriate technology such as emergency alert app

POSTING OF EVACUATION ROUTES

☐ Include primary and secondary shelter locations for severe weather.

☐ In addition to classrooms, post this information in all general assembly rooms and conference rooms.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS INSTRUCTION FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS

☐ Staff must be trained regarding their position specific responses during a crisis.

☐ Cross-train crisis team members and outline secondary team members to cover when primary staff are out of the building.

☐ Document that all emergency preparedness policies and procedures have been reviewed by staff.

☐ Have staff sign off on their understanding of policies/procedures.

☐ Enact procedure to inform substitutes of emergency procedures.

☐ Use quick reference guides or flipcharts.

☐ Encourage staff to be aware of the closest AED, fire pull station, extinguishers, exterior door numbers, and severe weather shelter in relation to their classroom.

PUBLIC INFORMATION PROCEDURES

☐ Use sample media releases to establish appropriate messaging during a crisis.

☐ Utilize social media to convey accurate messaging. In the absence of accurate messaging from the school and first responders, inaccurate messaging from community may exacerbate the existing crisis.

☐ Establish a pre-determined media staging area away from the crisis and students. Identify a spokesperson for the corporation.

STEPS THAT WILL BE TAKEN PRIOR TO A DECISION TO EVACUATE BUILDINGS OR DISMISS CLASSES

☐ Review existing fire codes with local fire marshal to determine up to three minute delay option prior to evacuation for unexpected fire alarm activation.

FIRE PROTOCOL

☐ Evacuation routes reviewed with local fire department.

☐ Suggest specific staff receive fire extinguisher training.

☐ Invite the local fire department to participate in at least one drill yearly.

☐ Indiana law allows schools to barricade or block a door for up to three minutes in the event of an unplanned fire alarm activation.

NATURAL DISASTERS/ADVERSE WEATHER PROTOCOLS

☐ Identify tornado safe zones with architect or structural engineer. These zones should be campus wide, and include information for events occurring outside of the building.
https://www.doe.in.gov/safety/tornado-preparedness

☐ Identify tornado protocols with bus drivers; including possible structurally safe areas along bus route if it is necessary to take shelter.

☐ Earthquake specific protocols. Participate in the annual "Great Shakeout Drill"
https://www.shakeout.org/centralus/

NUCLEAR CONTAMINATION PROTOCOL

☐ Establish a shelter in place and /or offsite evacuation protocol.

EXPOSURE TO CHEMICALS PROTOCOL

☐ Establish protocols for chemical release/spill inside the building.

☐ Establish protocols for shelter in place or evacuation due to chemical spill outside of the building.

☐ Hazardous chemical training.

☐ Establish protocols for handling and disposal of hazardous chemicals.

MANMADE OCCURRENCE PROTOCOLS

☐ Incorporate two levels of lockdown notification. A "soft lockdown" or "secure in your classroom" which keeps students in classrooms and allows continued instruction as prevention during a low level crisis, and "hard lockdown" which requires alerting of potential violence coming to the class.

☐ Provide options based training empowering staff to make necessary decisions when a crisis is fluid in nature.

☐ Establish procedures for handling bomb threats, utilizing the ATF bomb threat checklist.

☐ Establish procedures, in conjunction with law enforcement and school attorney, for searching students who may be suspected of weapons possession.

ACCESS CONTROL

☐ Review exterior of facility for potential placement of vehicle bollards (for areas of high student walking traffic).

☐ Exterior doors locked during school hours.

☐ Classroom doors locked during instruction or provided with means for quick lockdown.

☐ Empty classroom and unsupervised areas should be locked/restricted.

☐ Utilize and entry buzzer systems when available. Empower staff to refuse entry and notify law enforcement for suspicious behavior.

☐ Visitors guided to main office for identification check. Issue visitor passes utilizing bright lanyards.

☐ Background check policy is implemented for visitors having contact with students.

☐ Establish protocol/check-in system for deliveries. Vendors implement background checks for staff visiting schools.

☐ Train staff and students importance of securing facility; do not prop doors, allow piggybacking for unknown persons, or opening doors for unknown persons. All visitors should be guided to main entrance.

☐ Train staff and students to report unauthorized persons in the building.

☐ Provide first responders with key access to building via knoxbox or keycard.

☐ Establish Memorandum of Understanding outlining that access only occur during crisis.

☐ Doors checked to ensure each one is latched and locked periodically during the school day.

☐ Install vehicle protection bollards in areas of high pedestrian traffic and near school entrances.

AFTER SCHOOL EVENTS INVOLVING COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS/SPORTING EVENTS

☐ Coordinate details of each event with local law enforcement and participating schools. Be aware of increased supervision for rivalries.

☐ Clearly post policies for attendees.

☐ Pre-event announcements outlining safety procedures.

☐ Update rental agreements to include weather safety/tornado safe zone awareness for outside groups using school facilities.

☐ Establish protocols for severe weather/heat index for practices.

CAMERAS

☐ Cameras installed in appropriate locations to protect people, not equipment.

☐ Provide access to live feed for local law enforcement.

☐ Establish Memorandum of Understanding outlining that camera access only occur during crisis.

COMMUNICATIONS

☐ Provide two way radios for any staff taking students outside of the building.

☐ Charge additional batteries for radios in case of extended shelter in place after school hours.

☐ All staff have access to Public Address (PA) system whenever possible. All staff should be empowered to call lockdown.

☐ Monitor PA system for areas where it cannot be heard.

☐ Install and use the PA system at congregation areas outside of the building.

☐ Have access to megaphone/bullhorn in case of power outage.

☐ Mass notification systems utilized to notify parents of a situation when time permits. Include other area schools and school safety partners on your mass notification calls.

☐ Utilize social media to provide accurate information to the community.

☐ Utilize anonymous tip lines (either phone, text, app, or online) to provide students and community the opportunity to report suspicious or threatening behavior.

DEATH OF STUDENT OR STAFF

☐ Establish protocols to work with staff and students, including student and community notification process, available counseling services, and crisis center.

FACILITIES REVIEW/SITE SURVEY

☐ Conduct full facilities review utilizing checklists provided by IDOE incorporating principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design.

☐ Request facilities review from insurance provider.

LAW ENFORCEMENT PRESENCE

☐ Promote law enforcement presence at high vehicle and human traffic times such as arrival/departure.

☐ Welcome law enforcement walkthrough of facilities to ensure familiarity.

☐ Work towards having a full time security presence or certified School Resource Officer.

MOBILE OFFICE/CRISIS KITS

☐ Mobile capabilities to address crisis after an evacuation.

☐ Include copy of safety plan and emergency contacts. If school utilizes a mobile app with this capability, ensure it is a native app not requiring active internet or cellular service.

☐ First aid kits, tourniquets. Nurse may equip a "go bag" with necessary medications for students with particular medical issues (diabetic).

☐ Include emergency contact information for staff and students (paper copy or thumb drive updated each semester).

☐ Student release forms in case students must be released from evacuation/relocation point.

☐ Other items to consider; high-visibility vest, signage, clipboards, paper, pens, tarp, flashlight, and any other items that might assist efficiency in a crisis.

MORNING AND AFTERNOON PROCEDURES

☐ Due to large influx of students and vehicles, law enforcement presence is key during morning and afternoon departure/arrival.

☐ Minimize entry points for continued access control when possible.

☐ Establish protocols for supervision of students before and after school.

☐ Establish protocols with local law enforcement to include human and vehicle traffic management.

PLAYGROUNDS

☐ Appropriate supervision staffing and positioning.

☐ Practice reverse-evacuation for quick reentry to the building.

☐ Staff access to radios for quick notification to office for emergencies.

☐ Public address system audible for quick notification from the office for emergencies.

☐ Instruction on proper use of equipment for supervisors and students.

☐ Inspections of equipment completed and kept on file.

RELOCATION PROTOCOL
☐ Establish Memorandum of Understanding with offsite location.

☐ Maintain keys for access to offsite location.

☐ Consider establishing multiple relocation sites (one within quick walking distance, one further away what would require transportation).

☐ Consider means of transportation. Possibly establish MOU with neighboring School Corporation.

☐ Establish protocols for reunification process with local law enforcement to include human and vehicle traffic management, emergency contact information for staff and students, and release protocols.

☐ Establish concussion protocols.

SCHOOL AS COMMUNITY SHELTER
☐ Communicate with county Emergency Manager to determine if school has a role during large scale community crisis.

☐ Include after-hours contacts for county Emergency Manager and school administration.

☐ Establish Memorandum of Understanding for use of school as shelter to include access control to particular areas of school, and use of school transportation.

SCHOOL CLIMATE
☐ Create a welcoming school environment.

☐ Greet students each morning.

☐ Create student safety council, including students from various social groups. Identify areas of the schools of concern, and improvements to school safety training for students.

☐ Identify students of concern; have all staff identify students that are not connected to school.

☐ Work with staff to determine ways to reach out to those students.

☐ Work with local law officials to coordinate implementation of Red Flag Law (IC 35-47-14) where applicable.

☐ Utilize anonymous tip systems (either phone, text, app, or online) to provide students and community the opportunity to report suspicious or threatening behavior.

STAFF AND STUDENT TRAINING

☐ All staff review their role in safety protocols at the beginning of each school year. Staff sign off on training acknowledging their receipt and understanding.

☐ Dedicate ten minutes of each staff meeting to discussing safety protocols.

☐ Utilize DOE password protected materials, including video scenarios and tabletop scenarios.

☐ Provide "Stop the Bleed" first aid training in conjunction with cpr/aed (which is required for teachers licenses)

☐ Utilize school staff to initiative planned drills. Staff must be empowered to call lockdown and notify first responders to facilitate quick responses.

☐ Provide staff viewing of the "Unarmed Response to Active Shooter" training video created by the Indiana State Police. Discuss implications for your plan and response with staff.

☐ Train your student body on appropriate responses to emergencies prior to drills. Further debrief drills with staff and student body.

☐ Promote a 'student safety week' with each day of the week focusing on a different safety priority (access control policies, fire evacuation, violence in schools, see something/say something).

THREAT ASSESSMENT

☐ To better address threats (both known and anonymous), schools should consider establishing a threat assessment team or student assistance team of school personnel and local first responders and community mental health.

☐ Coordinate team meetings monthly to share up to date information related to students of concern.

☐ Establish anonymous reporting systems for students (can be combined with bullying reporting system which is required by law)

☐ Establish social media policy for monitoring or capturing threats

☐ Work with student groups who can identify trends or ongoing safety concerns (student safety council).

☐ Utilize the sex offender registry to receive notifications regarding new or existing offenders to the community.

☐ Make note of these sex offender location when establish bus stop locations.