THE IMPACT OF COLUMBINE AND SCHOOL VIOLENCE ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Executive Development

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ABSTRACT

In recent years school violence has caused the educational community and emergency management agencies to re-evaluate the course of action that they must take. The events at the Columbine High School helped bring to the forefront the issues that have been evident for years. The Village of Libertyville and the fire department had experienced similar but less dramatic situations in their own schools.

The purpose of this research project was to evaluate the preparedness of the local school districts for a disruptive situation. An evaluative research methodology was used to answer the following questions:

1.   Are the local school districts implementing policies that deal with disruptive situations?

2.   What are the components that the educational community includes in their policy statement?

3.   Is there an effort by the police, fire, medical and school districts to unify their efforts and evolve into a centralized command?

4.   Is it necessary to further investigate the need to upgrade the polices on   school violence and disasters?

The procedure used to complete this research included a review of literature on the subject and surveys of local school districts and fire departments.

The results of this research presented a distinct need to work with the schools in developing plans to deal with disruptive situations in schools. Developing and training to the standards of the policies are needed because of the diverse background of the responding and affective agencies.

Recommendations from the study indicate a need to contact local school districts

to review and/or develop the necessary components for a plan to deal with disruptive situations in school. Once the plan has been developed, the school must train their staff on how to deal with the situation according to their stated policy.

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INTRODUCTION

Today's emergency management agencies and the educational communities are being hard pressed to provide programs and information to their constituents concerning disruptive situations within the educational community. Are the schools and the responding agencies prepared to deal with natural disaster, disruptive situations, and hazardous material incidents? Are the schools prepared to deal with the prospect of a domestic terrorist event at their school?

April 20, 1999 dawned as any other spring day in Littleton, Colorado. Families prepared to go about their daily activities of work, shopping, caring for their families, and going to school. Littleton is served by Columbine High School. Columbine High School is an open, attractive, sprawling campus in the middle of a relatively safe enclave of Littleton, Colorado (Dority, 1999).

Two members of the student body, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold belonged to the self-proclaimed Trench Coat Mafia, and had been a target of derision for at least four years (Dority, 1999). This set the stage for one of the most tragic events to take place on United States soil. As the morning drew to a close, Harris and Klebold unleashed an attack on the student body at Columbine with a multitude of weapons.

The results of their attack were devastating. Thirteen people died as a result of the injuries inflicted during the attack. Many more sustained injuries of various magnitude. Some of these injuries were of the physical nature. Many more were of the emotional nature and failed to come to light until months later.

The suicide of the two perpetrators brought the day's death total to fifteen. A school, community, and nation were left to question this act of violence.

There is no single definition of terrorism. The Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI)

defines terrorism as the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives (Department of Justice, 1996).

The FBI defines a terrorist incident as a violent act or an act dangerous to human life, in violation of the criminal laws of the United States, or of any state, to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof. Furthermore, the FBI classifies terrorism as either domestic or international, depending on the origin, base and objectives of the terrorist group (Department of Justice, 1996).

The attack by Klebold and Harris, self-proclaimed members of the Trench Coat Mafia, fits the definition of one of the sub-categories used by the FBI on related terrorist incidents. The attack by Klebold and Harris cam reasonably be classified as an act of domestic terrorism.

In the aftermath of Columbine, questions were asked of the school, community, and responding agencies as to their preparedness for an incident of such great magnitude. Did they possess the knowledge, the expertise, and the manpower to deal with a disaster of this type?

The purpose of this applied research paper was to determine the preparedness of the local educational community when dealing with various levels of disruptive situations and not limiting it to the subject of domestic terrorism. A descriptive research methodology was employed to answer the following questions:

1. Are local school districts implementing policies that deal with disruptive situations?
2. What components are the school districts including in their policy statements?
3. Is there an effort by the local authorities to unify their efforts with the school districts and evolve into a centralized command structure?
4. Is it necessary to further investigate the need to upgrade policies on school violence

and disasters?

An evaluative research technique was used encompassing a literature review as well as two surveys to collect data.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

The Village of Libertyville is located thirty-five miles north of Chicago in central Lake County. Lake County has long been recognized as one of the more prestigious and wealthier counties in the state of Illinois. Libertyville and the surrounding area have become a home for business and industry. Abbott Laboratories and Motorola are two corporate giants that maintain large campuses with the jurisdiction of the Libertyville Fire Department.

The Libertyville Fire Department serves 20,000 residents of the village. The department also serves the surrounding areas of Green Oaks, Mettawa, and various unincorporated areas. These areas add approximately 10,000 additional residents to the fire protection district. Commuters to the many business and industrial parks in the area can swell the daytime population to over 50,000.

The Libertyville Fire Department consists of 33 career firefighters and officers, 9 contractual firefighters, and 15 paid-on-call firefighters. Two civilian employees assist them. The Libertyville Fire Department currently operates out of three stations. It offers its customers fire protection, prevention, education, and emergency medical services. The personnel are cross trained as firefighters and paramedics. The traditional 24/48 hour work schedule is being used by the department. In 1999, the Libertyville Fire Department responded to 3194 calls of which 1500 were fire related and 1694 were emergency medical

The Libertyville Fire Department serves both the village and the surrounding area, better known as the Libertyville Fire Protection District. Both taxing bodies provide funding with the Village providing about 55% of the annual budget.

Within the Libertyville Fire Protection District, there are three grade school districts, one high school district, two parochial schools, and numerous daycare facilitates. The student population of the respective school districts and their schools is reflective in Table 1.

In 1997, the residents of the high school district voted to appropriate funds to build an additional high school to help relieve the overcrowding of its present building. The resulting project, Vernon Hills High School, opened its doors in the fall of 1999. This school was built in the neighboring town of Vernon Hills but stayed within the boundaries of District 128. This necessitated the combined efforts of two fire and police departments plus the school district as they addressed policies concerning life safety issues. To make matters even more of a concern, the schools in the immediate area had a long history of behavior disorders including, bomb threats, staged mock shootings, arson fires, published hit lists, major natural gas leak, a faction of the Ku Klux Klan, and a student with a carload of weapons being apprehended just miles from the school. All of these incidents took place in the relatively safe suburban enclave called Libertyville Illinois within the last five years.

School District and Schools	Student Enrollment 1999-2000
Libertyville High School District 128	2263
Adler School, District 70	319
Copeland School, District 70	412
Rockland School, District 70	370
Butterfield School, District 70	649
Highland Junior High School, District 70	892
Oak Grove Elementary School, District 68	945
Rondout School District 72	116
St Joseph Elementary School	542
St. John's Elementary School	154
TOTAL STUDENT POPULATION	**6,662**

Table 1

James Garbarino, of Cornel University, is one of the nations top scholars on juvenile delinquency. Mr. Garbarino states, "If I could do one single thing to stop the scourge of violence among juveniles, it would be to ensure that teenagers are not in high schools bigger that 500 students (Raywid, Oshiyama, 2000).

Raywid and Oshiyama also state that "large school size is related to higher levels of disorder and violence, student alienation, and teacher dissatisfaction. Until we make schools engaging communities whose members value those communities and feel welcome within them, we are right to think that the next Columbine could happen anywhere." (Raywid, Oshiyama, 2000).

 Many schools within the jurisdiction of the Libertyville Fire Department surpass the safe enrollment figure of 500 students. Therefore, one could conclude that the schools are sharing characteristics that could lead to a disaster. Libertyville is not alone in this predicament as many Lake County schools surpass the 500-student enrollment professed by Garbarino as the safe limits.

This paper has been produced to satisfy the applied research requirement for the Executive Development class in the course of study for Executive Fire Officer offered at the National Fire Academy. The project relates to the course work on team building, and problem solving techniques. The information contained in this project has become a resource for the Libertyville Fire Department and is also being made available to the local school districts upon request.

LITERATURE REVIEW

"The fire service has learned that past experience is sometimes the best teacher."(Scannell, 1995). After the spring of 1999 at Columbine, safety has become a more important issue at our nation schools. Pamela Riley, director of the Center for the Prevention of School Violence states, "Schools can no longer assume safety. They must plan for safety."(Time, 1999). The schools and the people responsible for emergency management must pool their resources and knowledge. Together they must devise a plan that takes into account staffing, building configuration, acceptable practices, and available resources. The plan must create a management team of all agencies that is capable of mitigating an event similar to that of Columbine High School. Gerald Scannell of the National Safety Council reminds us that when a disaster hits, it's too late to turn the clock back. But if you act quickly and have a good plan, you may be able to control the damages (Scannel, 1995).

"All parents send their children off to start a new school year with great expectations. They look forward to seeing the confidence that comes with mastering a skill, acing a tough exam, and making new friends. Most of all, though, and especially this year, they hope their children are safe. In wake of the recent school disasters, students, teachers, and parents need to be aware of what emergency plans are in place in their schools" (Time, 1999).

In today's educational environment, school administrators and emergency management agencies must ask the tough question, are we prepared for a crisis? Years ago, the schools prepared for fires and weather emergencies. Today, the hazard analysis produced the following potential threats of fire, hazardous materials (local storage, transportation and on-campus facilities), natural disasters, and school violence (Lynsky, 2000).

The aftermath of Littleton, Colorado and similar incidents in a Michigan grade school,

and an Arkansas junior high school have produced a great concern surrounding school violence. This concern is very evident despite the findings of a recent survey of school principals. In that survey, all of the principals said their schools are very or fairly safe. Only 22% reported an increase in violence at their schools between 1996 and 1999, and 96.3% have developed a crisis plan (Schroeder, 1999).

The reality of the situation is the highly publicized events involving school violence. Barbara Dority also suggests that the media coverage of the events aided in fueling the fire and harried opinions on legislation concerning gun ownership and school violence (Dority, July 1999). The school and the emergency management agencies have been forced to react to these situations. Whether driven by the media, parent demands, or good management, plans have been developed. Fred Medway, psychology professor at the University of South Carolina points out that people felt much more comfortable overreacting than under reacting. It makes them feel they've done something to prevent a potentially negative thing from happening (Dority, 1999).

Administrators must be proactive about unplanned events. According to Mick Han, you may not be able to avoid a disaster but you can be prepared when it hits (Hans, 1995). Hans goes on to state, "Cast in cold objective light, crisis management is just another aspect of business. If you want to be a forward thinking manager, you should try to evaluate all possibilities, consider your resources, and options, and commit to a strategic plan of crisis and recovery management. You may need to revise the plan during the crisis. But at least you've got something to work with (Hans, 1995).

Administrators must also take into account what we have learned from prior disasters and acts of violence. For example, in incidents like Columbine, wireless companies lacked enough antennae to handle the big emergencies, where dozens of people jammed telephone lines

by dialing 911 at the same time. In addition, the emergency telephone number for wireless users in many parts of the country is not 911, as it is around Denver (Davant, 1999).

In Columbine and the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, the accountability of responding fire, police, and emergency medical personnel were virtually non-existent as hundreds of courageous people, including firefighters, police officers, emergency medical responders, and neighborhood volunteers all risked their own safety to look for survivors in the rubble (Scannel, 1995).

The school administrators must then decide on the nature and scope of their disaster plan. The plan may be contingent in the school size and location. As suggested by all the standard indicators, truancy, dropout rates, graffiti, vandalism, violence, youngsters in small schools rarely display the anger at the institution and the people in it that was so blatant at Columbine and is evident in many high schools elsewhere (Raywid and Oshiyama, 2000).

Raywid and Oshiyama go on to point out that the evidence regarding school size and risk comes not only from individual schools studies, but also from research synthesis-analysis of relevant studies undertaken from across the country. This research claims that larger school size is related to higher levels of disorder and violence, student alienation, and teacher dissatisfaction. It also indicates that student social behavior, as measured by truancy, discipline problems, violence, theft, substance abuse, and gang participation, is more positive in small schools. Finally, research has consistently found that students at small schools are less alienated than students in large schools and this positive effect is especially strong for students labeled "at risk"(Raywid and Oshiyama, 2000).

Clearly then, the demographics that help to make up a community and its schools have to be taken into account when assessing the risk of certain types of school disasters, namely school

violence.

Raywid and Oshiyama suggest that school size may very well play a role in this phenomenon. But Dority points out two relevant points when dealing with school violence: First, not one of the mass school shootings of the past two and a half years had occurred in an inner city area, and nearly all victims have been white. Also, according to information from the National School Safety Center, killings are the exception, not the rule, at schools across the United States, and suburban and rural schools remain safer than their inner city counterparts (Dority, July 1999).

It can then be reasoned that school violence is not relegated to the inner city. The responsibility to formulate a comprehensive plan that includes school violence lies with the administrators of both inner city and suburban schools. "One of the clearest lessons of suburban Columbine High School is that violence is not confined to the inner city or to the disadvantaged youngsters. Indeed both at Columbine and at other schools in which multiple killings have occurred, the assassins have come from middle class families"(Raywid and Oshiyama, 2000).

With the added focus on the issue of school violence, the schools and emergency management agencies should still be able to write a generic plan that would address the needs of the community. Each school needs to take into account the capabilities of the responding agencies, the community and the school itself. By having the involved parities preplan such incidents, the needs of those responding agencies can be understood and respected. District Chief Rich Lynsky and Morgan Shawn Winder, Community Relations Officer of Park City Utah Fire Service District, developed the following preplan considerations for all agencies:

Area perimeters

Building Layouts

Staging areas

Medical or tactical helicopter landing zones

unified command posts (interior and exterior)

Potential locations to disseminate information to parents

Reunification points for students and parents

Primary and secondary off-campus evacuation sights

Media collection areas that provide access while inhibiting interruption of emergency

operations

(Lynsky,Winder, 2000)

With the development of this plan, all of the agencies would become informed team members. This is especially true in the relatively new area of concern, school violence. As discussed earlier, school violence can be equated to domestic terrorism. Hal Bruno (Firehouse, 1991) states that during a terrorist attack, firefighters, police, and emergency medical personnel often are the prime target. This was certainly the case at Columbine High School as Harris and Klebold has numerous secondary devices that would have either killed or injured the responding police and fire personnel. But the devices failed to operate and many responders were spared injury or death. Bruno also points out that "there is some doubt as to how well prepared America's fire and rescue forces may be (Bruno, March 1991).

It is therefore necessary for those involved in emergency services to re-evaluate those situations that may involve violence at a local school. Every fire department, regardless of size has to be prepared. Whether you belong to a small town volunteer department or an all career metropolitan department, you may suddenly find yourself on the scene of a terrorist type incident (Bruno, 1995).

When developing these comprehensive response plans, the schools and the local government entities should try to keep the models broad and simple in nature. Chichlow observed that "local governments should focus their emergency management (EM) attention on more broad response and recovery imperatives, communications, transportation, medical, damage assessment, impact control, leadership continuity, public information, finance and coordination. (Chichlow, 1997).

The development of Comprehensive Emergency Management (CEM) in 1979 by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was due to inadequate response to disastrous situations. A study by the National Governors Association (NGA) helped to reveal these inadequacies. The NGA study showed the absence of a stately for managing major emergencies. Events such as aircraft mishaps, train derailments, hazardous material incidents, and even criminal acts such as bombings were not regarded as disasters by much of the federal government. The meaningful planning that did exist was largely nuclear attack specific and reflected little or no understanding of how cities and counties function under emergency conditions (Crichlow, 1997).

As a result of this study, the NGA proposed the concept of CEM to the various levels of government. It was suggested that the CEM dealt in four distinct phases. The first phase of mitigation would take into account actions and policies that either prevent major emergencies or reduce potential effects. Phase two would deal with the preparedness and planning of an incident. In this phase the overall process of evaluating and researching hazards, drafting plans, preparing systems to warn, communicate, and coordinate, training responders and practicing the plan is addressed. The third phase is the response phase and this would be the application of the plans and systems to protect life, commerce and the environment. The final phase is the recovery

phase and this would include the application of plans and measures aimed at returning communities to normalcy (Chichlow, 1997).

The CEM model is sound in concept. Its application deals in all phases of preparedness. The actual deployment and management of resources once a situation exists becomes the responsibility of the incident commander or those of the unified command. Lynsky and Winder suggest that multiple agency manuals be developed to disseminate necessary information. They suggest that the manuals contain such key points as:

Emergency telephone numbers (utility companies and emergency hot line numbers)

Designated telephone numbers for each school management position (principal, assistant principal, maintenance supervisor etc.)

Pre-designated primary and secondary evacuation locations

Aerial photographs taken in summer and winter (access changes with the change of season)

Maps of surrounding neighborhoods and intersections

School organizational flow charts with names of incident commanders and operations and safety officer as well as other key personnel.

Fire and law enforcement flow charts with the names and telephone numbers of key operational personnel relative to the Incident Command System (Lynsky and Winder, 2000).

The Incident Command System is has been used for many years in the fire service. The National Fire Protection Association defines the ICS as a system that will define how the

chain authority forms and progresses during an incident. Most important, command definition should establish the authority for first arriving units to assume command (NFPA, 1989).

Once the plan has been drafted and reviewed by the participating agencies, the concepts such as span of control, unified command, and standard operating procedures must be taught to the educators. The ICS is the most important phase of this plan and must be introduced to the school administrators. School officials in Park City, Utah have gone through training of this type. Todd Stajeskle, assistant principal at Ecker Hill Middle School, says that the ICS has helped increase the overall preparedness level of the school and community. The biggest advantages are the organization and mutual understanding that comes from using this system. When students, teachers, administrators, parents, medical personnel, firefighters, and law enforcement officials are operating within the same boundaries and expectations, communications become much more effective and efficient.

A written set of standard operating procedures for the schools and responding agencies are a necessity. What also is needed are a set of guidelines to help implement, (practice) and to prevent situations of violence in the schools.

Many schools have initiated a procedure termed "lock down". This entails having the students huddle under desks, locking classroom doors, staying away from windows, and being quiet. "While most schools have added lock downs to their emergency plans, some administrators have resisted practicing the drills, fearing they would cause anxiety among the children" (Fitzgerald, 2000). Harold Kintz, superintendent of the Pennsanken School District in Pennsylvania states, "As far as doing the mock drills for a lock down, I'm not personally enamored of the idea. I think it creates more worry than we need to". On the other hand, Carol Hacker, a former counselor at Columbine High School and now a national counselor for school

security makes the following observation: "With the lockdown drills, we have found students get really scarred, while other students find them reassuring. Some kids are glad school officials are thinking about what can be done to keep them safe." Hacker goes on to explain, "I used to lean against doing the drills. But now, after all the shootings, I think, yeah, you've got to do this. You have to have a plan, and it can be a great plan on paper. But if you don't practice it, there can be a funny little glitch"(Fitzgerald, 2000).

More important than the practicing of a specific plan is the aspect of prevention. Although the fire service would not become actively involved in this discipline, it is interesting that many of the authors addressed it. Chief John Whetsel, President of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, addresses this issue by saying, "Until the family assumes the responsibility of teaching children values and promoting self-esteem, I don't think we're ever going to cure the root cause of crime and violence in this country. Teachers can't replace parents. Police can't replace parents. The court and prison systems can't replace parents. Often, police, courts, and prison systems get involved when parents fail to assume responsibility (Whetsel, 1995).

The important link to bringing an incident of violence or a disastrous event to a successful conclusion is the need for post-incident counseling. The Department of Justice teaches us that there is a need to deal with the victims of a disastrous event. They go on to point our that in Oklahoma City the Federal response plan did not have an integrated disaster mental health plan. (Department of Justice, 1999)

In the case of Columbine High School, there have been at least 2 suicides and additional shooting that have definitive links to the initial attack. The Department of Justice strongly recommends that there is a plan drafted for managing stress and mental health needs of staff and

victims.

Children are still the greatest natural resource of any country. With the violent events in our schools, we must now take a proactive role in the planning and mitigation of such an event. Mr. Frank DeAngelo, Principal of Columbine High School writes, "Have we gotten back to normal? The fact is we will never get back to normal, to where we were before April 20. You just go to bed and hope that the next day, when you wake up, things will be a little bit better" (DeAngelis, 2000).

PROCEDURES

The first stage of this research paper was to define the following terms:

Terrorism. The unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property for the purpose of intimidating or coercing a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, intolerance of political and social objectives. Domestic terrorism involves groups or individuals whose activities, conducted in the United States without foreign influence are directed at elements of the United States Government or population.

Incident Command, National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1500 defines the incident commander as the fire department member in overall command at any emergency incident.

Comprehensive Emergency Management- a practical common sense approach to Emergency Management developed by FEMA. Consists of four distinct phases: 1) mitigation, 2) preparedness, 3) response, and 4) recovery.

A literature review was conducted to research the subject of violence in the educational community. Articles for this review were obtained from various periodicals housed at the Learning Resource Center of the National Fire Academy. These resources were researched in person in January 2000. Additional articles for the review were obtained from the Info Trac 2000 Database. This is a computer database of periodicals, magazines, and newspapers published from 1995 through the present. Access to the Info Trac 2000 Database was made through the Internet access and subscription of the Cook Memorial Library in Libertyville, Illinois during the month of June 2000. Related books and articles were also obtained from the library maintained by the Libertyville Fire Department. The books and articles identified during these searches were reviewed for their applicability to the literature and results section of the research paper.

The second stage of the research project was the administration of two surveys. Administering them to various members of the Libertyville Fire Department validated the survey instruments. The first survey instrument was designed for school administrators in Lake County, Illinois. The survey employed both open and closed questions. The survey tool was ten questions in length with additional five questions asked of all high school administrators. The additional five questions for the high schools were designed to measure to some degree the demographic make-up of the school. The United States Mail Service to 44 school districts in Lake County, Illinois, delivered this survey. The mailing list was obtained for the local grade school district offices.

The second survey was designed for the fire departments in Lake County, Illinois. The survey used opened and closed questions. The survey was sent, by United States mail, to 30 selected departments in Lake County.

Both surveys were accompanied with a cover letter explaining what the survey was being

used for, who was conducting the survey, and when it was to be returned. The departments and schools who were surveyed were offered the results if interested. A self-addressed, stamped envelope was supplied for the respondent's convenience. A copy of the survey instruments and the cover letter are provided in the Appendix A.

There were certain limitations that affected this research project. The surveys were a convenience sampling of the fire departments and school districts in Lake County, Illinois. They were not a representative sampling of the more than 34,000-fire department and the numerous school districts in the United States. Instead, they were an acceptable sampling of what is represented in Lake County. It is also assumed that the respondents to the survey understood the questions as presented.

RESULTS

At the beginning of this research project, four questions were identified. The results of the research are:

Are local school districts implementing policies that deal with disruptive situations?

In the survey administered in May 2000, school districts in Lake County, Illinois were asked to respond to various questions concerning disruptive situations. The surveys were mailed to 44 school districts in the county. 28 school districts (68%) answered the survey. The survey asked the school administrator to delineate the difference between internal and external policies. Of the responding schools, fifteen (54%) stated they had separate policy statements concerning

threats that were inside of the school as opposed to threats that may be outside of the school building.

The administrators where then asked for a specific plan of action concerning each type situation. Did they plan to evacuate the students, protect the student population by not moving them and keeping them in their classrooms, or did they plan to use a combination of evacuating and protecting their student by not moving them.

The results of the survey illustrate that a clear majority of the school districts employ a combination of protecting in place and evacuating the students. This would suggest that their policies have taken into account a multitude of situations and that a great deal of planning has gone into their policy statements. There were also a small percentage of school districts that only had one option for their students and staff. This would suggest rigid polices or the need to upgrade their plans. Also, a small percentage of schools identified they had no plan in place. This would be unacceptable under the present circumstances in our society, no matter how small the school may be. Complete results of the survey can be found in Appendix D.

2. What are the components that the school districts include in their policy statements?

The school districts were asked to identify the type of disasters or disruptive situations they had planned for, what agencies were involved in the policies and what job specific assignments did they designate? With the exception of one school district that stated they had no current policy, there were three areas of concern that all of the school district identified, namely, natural disaster (weather related), bomb threats, and intruders within the school building. The schools identified the areas of biological, radiological, and chemical emergencies as their least worrisome situations. This seems curious because of the amount of chemicals and biological agents that may be present in the schools for a number of reasons. They may be used for

teaching, cleaning, or maintaining within the building. Also, the students today have a number of means to obtain or manufacture their own products, and bring them into the school setting.

The schools in Lake County identified the police, fire, and school administration as the most likely agencies needed to help mitigate an incident. These agencies would utilize a central command post and would be assisted by a safety officer and a media relation's officer, according to the survey.

Conversely, the schools found little need to include the federal agencies in their plans. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), and Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) are conspicuously absent from a number of school plans. The schools also saw little need to include their engineering supervisor, crisis counselor, or a representative of the community in their plans. Results of the survey can be found in Appendix B.

3.) Is there an effort by the police, fire, medical, and educational community to unify their efforts into a centralized command?

Lynsky and Winder point out that the needs of the schools in an emergency situation are not different than that of the fire service. They both face the imposing needs of communication, accountability, span of control, and functioning under pre-established roles. The authors point out that if the Incident Command System (ICS) works for the fire service, then why wouldn't it work for the schools.

FEMA, in 1979, developed the concept of Comprehensive Emergency Management (CEM) which deals in the mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery of an incident. If this model is employed correctly, the user should be in one of the four phases regardless if there was an incident or not.

The fire service has used the ICS for years. In Lake County, Illinois, 26 out of 27 agencies train to the ICS standards. (The only agencies not utilizing this system is a village ambulance service) Of the 26 community fire departments that train to the ICS standard, six of them have offered instruction to their schools on this concept. The schools are also aware of these needs, as 25 of them have addressed a centralized command in the plans.

The question of whom is in charge of the situation still needs to be addressed. Crichlow points to the fact that emergent organizations are temporary at best, and they dissolve quickly once the situation has concluded. The fact that the fire service and the educational community have policies and written procedures help strengthen the organization and give it structures. The "in charge" person may very well be a changing element of the organization. This would be incumbent on the needs of the organizations and dictated the situations. All of the agencies would have to work in unison, and the ICS system would be of great importance to the mitigation process. A "Unified Command" would best serve the emergent organization.

The procedures must then be tested. Training to the standards of ICS is necessary for the agencies involved in the plan. In Lake County, Illinois, training is evident in the fire service, but the schools need further effort. In Park City, Utah, the schools and the fire department trained to the ICS standard with great success. This has better prepared the community and the school for future incidents.

4. Is it necessary to further investigate the need to upgrade policies on school violence and disasters?

Riley spoke of the need for schools to plan for safety. Raywid and Oshiyama state that we have the right to think that the next Columbine could happen anywhere. The Federal Government is spending millions of dollars to train first responders about domestic terrorism and

weapons of mass destruction (WMD). County schools are now tabulating and recording disturbances in their facilities. The number of incidents in Lake County, Illinois is not excessive but none the less is evident. Appendix D records the number of recorded incidents that schools have been experiencing.

The concern about school violence is heightened not by the frequency of it, rather by the sensational nature when it does occur. Schools have become more aware of the need for policies addressing school violence. However, some of the suggestions for controlling this type of behavior are sound in philosophy, but impractical to implement. Raywid and Oshiyama suggest those schools larger than 500 students are the source of problems in our school system. If that is the case, then large metropolitan areas similar to Lake County, Illinois, would be hard pressed to make the corrections to lower then student population in their schools. This would involve a number of building referendums and an increase in the tax dollar to realize this goal. Tables --- and --- address the school size and community populations in just Lake County Illinois alone. This would suggest that the majority of the communities in Lake County would be faced with some difficult restructuring to meet the suggestions of Raywid and Oshiyama.

Time magazine (September 1999) suggests that there are other measures to help ensure a safe environment. Measure such as police presence, immediate intervention, student involvement, hands on adults, and a greater focus on academics would be more economically correct than trying to build a whole new school system.

Finally, the schools must address two important needs in their plan. The subject of reunification of parents and students has to be addressed. 28 percent of the responding schools indicated they had no plan in place to reunite the families. This can lead to problems of accountability and a potential for a public relations nightmare. The schools and command

structure need a minimum of an attendance officer, transportation coordinator, and a remote area or building to conduct this procedure. The survey administered to Lake County schools showed a number were addressing this concern, but there were also a few schools that had no plan in place, and one respondent questioned the need to address the situation. With the added mobility of the older students and the number of students being bused on a daily basis across the United States, accountability, reunification, and transportation becomes a major concern for the schools and command. In Lake County, it is not unusual to have over forty percent of high school students being bused or driving personal vehicles on a daily basis.

DISCUSSION

As the problem statement and research questions were developed, it was assumed that the schools were experiencing a rise in school violence. This assumption was based upon the personal experience of the author in his own community. Although the experience of the author's hometown was not as spectacular or tragic as Columbine, they did have the potential to have a more serious outcome. The need to address these issues were brought to the forefront by the tragic incident in Colorado, Michigan, Arkansas, and many others.

No matter how tragic the situation may be, our schools are still a fairly safe haven for our children. In a survey conducted in November 1999, Schroeder reported that only 22% of the responding schools reported an increase in school violence, and the principals reported that their schools were still safe. But, as with fire, we can still take all of the necessary precautions and still end up with a disaster.

School violence is the sensational, media related item of school disaster plans. The

violence can come from within or outside the school. It can be a disgruntled student, teacher, parent, staff, or a misguided member of society. The attacks can be carried out inside the school, outside of the school, on school grounds, or off campus. The attack can be as violent in nature or a simple threat through a telephone call, or an electronic message through a computer network.

Irregardless of whether the schools feel they are safe, or the fact that the reported number of incidents of school violence are down, the children of our society deserve a safe place to go to school. Riley (September, 1999) is emphatic in that schools can no longer assume safety, but must plan for it.

The Federal Government has also sounded the alarm recently with the allocation of millions of dollars for the training of the first responders in the area of domestic terrorism. The Department of Justice offers training for first responders in weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The course named COBRA, stands for attacks or emergencies that deal with chemicals, ordinance, biological agents and radiological agents. The terminology of these courses may seem a little out of place for our schools, but remember, the attack on Columbine included the use of different types of weapons, including bombs of differing types and multiple types of hand guns.

The other source of information that is available to our youth is the vast computer Internet. This new source of information is readily available to anyone with access to a computer. The information that can be accessed through the Internet is endless. The COBRA student manual lists seven pages of Internet addresses, which address this subject. It has been suggested that the students at Columbine may have used the Internet as a source of information for building some of their weapons. The Internet can be a deadly source of information to our youth and cannot be overlooked.

Our schools have to be prepared for their worst safety and health nightmares. A student

with a handgun, a fire in a chemical storage area of the campus, food poisoning in the cafeteria, or an intentional or unintentional release of a toxic substance are possible on any given day. Hans (June, 1995) reminds us that we may not be able to avoid a disaster, but we can be prepared when it hits.

Hans (June, 1995) and Lynsky and Winder (March, 2000) both suggest that producing a response manual go a long way in incorporating the needs of various agencies. They also agree that the concept of a unified command will aid in the administering of the plan.

The results of the local survey showed a wide variation of items that schools in Lake County considered necessary to implement a school disaster plan. The plans may be generic in nature, but it is safe to assume that they addressed school violence. It must be remembered that high profile school violence has occurred as early as the 1950s (Dority, July 1999). However, the sensational acts at Columbine in April of 1999 have mobilized the schools and emergency response agencies to address the subject violence on the educational community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Through the literature search and evaluative analysis conducted in this project, the following recommendations can be suggested to improve school districts and emergency response personnel when dealing with disruptive situations.

The school district must prepare to make their environments safe for the students. They must plan for the potential of student violence of other disruptive situations that may impede the school day. This has to be done in harmony with the local authorities, as they are the ones that are going to be charged with the task of bringing the situation under control.

The schools and all responding agencies must be schooled, trained, and receptive to the concept of Comprehensive Emergency Management. An integral part of this concept is the Incident Command System. The ICS can also lead to a cooperative effort of Unified Command when multiple agencies are used to mitigate a situation.

All of those involve must help to develop a response manual. The manual should be generic in nature and able to address the multitude of situations that may become disruptive to the school day. Without pre-existing relationships and plans, communities will have difficulty addressing these important issues.

Once the plan is in place, the involved parties must train to the plan. This will give all of the involved agencies a chance to see how the plan works and to make the necessary adjustments.

From the data collected, there seemed to be little concern for emergencies that involved chemicals or biological agents. This is one area that the schools and the response agencies must address. Schools have these products on sight in many cases, i.e., cleaning agents or as products necessary for daily activities. The Department of Justice has also identified such products as being used as components in homemade weapon or bombs. The schools and emergency agencies must be prepared for this possibility.

The schools, fire, emergency medical, and police departments must have open communications when dealing with this subject. The children of our nation remain the most precious natural resources, and we must protect them from harms way.

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Appendix A

School Survey

1)Does your School District have plans for (circle all that apply)

        Natural disaster, i.e., tornado, blizzard, severe storm, heat or cold emergencies
        External police emergency
        External hazardous conditions, i.e., spill within proximity to your facility
        Internal hazardous conditions
        Bomb threat
        Intruders — Internal
        Biological emergencies
        Chemical emergencies
        Firearms emergencies
        Radiological emergencies
        Currently no policies

2)   What outside agencies are included in your Policy Statement?

        School administration
        Police (including County & State)
        Fire
        Hospital
        Public Works
        FBI
        ATF
        DEA
        Public Utilities
        Media
        Transportation
        Telephone Companies
        Clergy
        Other (please specify)

3)   Do your policies on intruders specify the difference on internal and external threats?

            Yes   No

4)   If you have an internal threat, do you plan to

        Evacuate   Lock Down/Protect in place
        Combination   No Plan of Action

5)   If you have an external threat, do you plan to

        Evacuate
        Lock down/Protect in place
        Combination of the above
        No plan of action

6)   Given a disruptive situation, is your agency prepared to administer a reunification program for students and parents?

        Yes   No

7)   Given a disruptive situation, has your agency designated a remote building(s) that is capable of handling your student/teacher population?

        Yes   No

8)   Does your internal policy(s) on disruptive situations designate
        A central command
        Safety officers
        Sector coordinators
        Medical staffing
        Media Relations
        Attendance & reunification coordinator
        Engineering supervisor
        Community
        Liaison
        Communications officer
        Other (specify)

9)   Within the last two school years, how many disruptive civil situations have occurred at your school? (Bomb threats, arson fires, firearms brought to school, hazardous, etc.)
        0   1 to 3
        4 to 6   7 to 10
        More than 10

10)   Do your policies address a unified or centralized command system?

        Yes   No   Unknown

If you would like a copy of this survey, please include your name and address below.

Appendix B

Fire Department Survey

1)   Does your agency train to and utilize the Incident Command System?

                  Yes   No

2)   Excluding training received as part of hazardous materials, has anyone in your agency received training in the area of domestic terrorist preparedness?

                  Yes   No

3)   If yes, please specify number of personnel training in terrorist activities.

4)   Is your Department

        Paid   Paid-On-Call   Combination

5)   Does your department serve a (check all that apply)

        High School District
        Grade School District

6)   What type of programs did your Department offer the schools prior to Columbine? (Check all that apply.)
        Educational fire safety for students
        Disaster preparedness training for students
        Educational fire safety for staff
        Disaster preparedness training for staff

7)   What type of programs have your offered the school districts after Columbine?

8)   Which term best describes your relationship with your local schools?

        Nonexistent
        Improving
        Open dialogue
        Average
        Above average
        Excellent working relationship

Appendix C

High School Demographics

1) What is the size of your school?

Less than 100	1,000 - 1,500
100 - 500	1,500 - 2,000
500 - 750	More than 2,000
750 - 1,000	Does not apply

2) What population does your high school serve?

Less than 5,000	20,000 - 30,000
5,000 - 10,000	More than 30,000
10,000 - 20,000	Does not apply

3) How many school buildings (buildings which house students) are in your high school district?

    1   2   3   More than 3

4) What is the percentage of students bused daily?

0% - 20%	41% - 50%
21% - 30%	More than 51%
31% - 41%	

5) What is the percent of students driving private cars?

0% - 10%	41% - 50%
11% - 20%	More than 51
21% - 40%	

Appendix D

Survey Results

1)Does your School District have plans for (circle all that apply)

        27   Natural disaster, i.e., tornado, blizzard, severe storm, heat or cold emergencies

        22   External police emergency

        14   External hazardous conditions, i.e., spill within proximity to your facility

        19   Internal hazardous conditions

        27   Bomb threat

        27   Intruders — Internal

        12   Biological emergencies

        12   Chemical emergencies

        24   Firearms emergencies

        8   Radiological emergencies

        1   Currently no policies

2)   What outside agencies are included in your Policy Statement?

        26   School administration

        26   Police (including County & State)

        26   Fire

        9   Hospital

        6   Public Works

        0   FBI

        1   ATF

        0   DEA

        7   Public Utilities

        13   Media

        18   Transportation

        6   Telephone Companies

        4   Clergy

        2   Other (please specify) neighboring schools, village government

3)   Do your policies on intruders specify the difference on internal and external threats?

        15   Yes   13   No

4)   If you have an internal threat, do you plan to

        2   Evacuate

        5   Lock down/Protect in place

        19   Combination of the above

        2   No plan of action

5)   If you have an external threat, do you plan to

      0   Evacuate
      9   Lock down/Protect in place
     18   Combination of the above
      1   No plan of action

6) Given a disruptive situation, is your agency prepared to administer a reunification program for students and parents?

     20   Yes   8   No

7) Given a disruptive situation, has your agency designated a remote building(s) that is capable of handling your student/teacher population?

     20   Yes   8   No

8) Does your internal policy(s) on disruptive situations designate
     25   A central command
     17   Safety officers
      9   Sector coordinators
     12   Medical staffing
     21   Media Relations
     11   Attendance & reunification coordinator
      6   Engineering supervisor
      7   Community
     10   Liaison
     16   Communications officer
      4   Other (specify) Threat assessment team, crisis counselors, school safety committee, finance director

9) Within the last two school years, how many disruptive civil situations have occurred at your school? (Bomb threats, arson fires, firearms brought to school, hazardous, etc.)
     11   0   14   1 to 3
      3   4 to 6   0   7 to 10
      0   More than 10

10) Do your policies address a unified or centralized command system?

     24   Yes   3   No   1   Unknown

If you would like a copy of this survey, please include your name and address below.

Fire Department Survey Results

1) Does your agency train to and utilize the Incident Command System?

        26   Yes   1   No

2) Excluding training received as part of hazardous materials, has anyone in your agency received training in the area of domestic terrorist preparedness?

        19   Yes   8   No

3) If yes, please specify number of personnel training in terrorist activities.

1 person/4 departments   2 people/3departments   3 people/2 departments
4 people/3 departments   6 people/2 departments   10 or more/2 departments

4) Is your Department

    5   Paid   5   Paid-On-Call   17   Combination

5) Does your department serve a (check all that apply)

    17   High School District
    22   Grade School District

6) What type of programs did your Department offer the schools prior to Columbine? (Check all that apply.)

    22   Educational fire safety for students
     5   Disaster preparedness training for students
    17   Educational fire safety for staff
     7   Disaster preparedness training for staff

7) What type of programs have your offered the school districts after Columbine?

    6   Incidents Command Training   1   Accountability training
    6   Disaster training   1   Reaction training
    1   Disaster drill assistance   1   Terrorist training

8)   Which term best describes your relationship with your local schools?

          2   Nonexistent
          3   Improving
          2   Open dialogue
          4   Average
          7   Above average
          10   Excellent working relationship

High School Demographics Results

1) What is the size of your school?

0	Less than 100	1	1,000 - 1,500
0	100 - 500	6	1,500 - 2,000
0	500 - 750	7	More than 2,000
1	750 - 1,000		Does not apply

2) What population does your high school serve?

1	Less than 5,000	6	20,000 - 30,000
0	5,000 - 10,000	6	More than 30,000
11	10,000 - 20,000		Does not apply

3) How many school buildings (buildings which house students) are in your high school district?

9- 1 buildings   2- 2 buildings   2- 3 buildings
2-More than 3 buildings

4) What is the percentage of students bused daily?

0	0% - 20%	3	41% - 50%
1	21% - 30%	7	More than
4	31% - 41%		

5) What is the percent of students driving private cars?

4	0% - 10%	1	41% - 50%
3	11% - 20%	0	More than 51
7	21% - 40%		

Appendix E

Cover Letter for Survey

May 17, 2000

Dear Administrator:

It has been over a year since the tragic Columbine High School incident. Since that day, we have witnessed other events that have taken place in the educational community that have disrupted the school community, and the private lives of students, teachers, administrators, and families. The attached survey is designed to measure the preparedness of fire departments when dealing with events of natural disaster, domestic terrorism, bomb threats, and other related incidents that may disrupt the school day.

As a participant of the of the Executive Fire Officer Program that is offered by the National Fire Academy, I am required to submit an applied research paper to satisfactorily meet the course objectives. One of the factors that the evaluator will consider is the application of meaningful data that is secured by a survey. Therefore, I would appreciate it if you could take a few minutes out of your busy schedule and complete the enclosed survey. I have enclosed a return envelope for
your convenience. Could you please have this completed and returned to me by the first week of June.

Thank you for your time in completing the survey. If you wish to see the results of the survey, please indicate at the bottom of the survey form.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Dolan
Assistant Chief
Libertyville Fire Department