

SAMPLE SCHOOL SECURITY ASSESSMENT REPORT

ABC High School is made up of 1502 students enrolled in grades 9 thru 12. The breakdown of student enrollment is as follows:

9 th grade	394
10 th grade	378
11 th grade	351
12 th grade	330

The campus is an open campus for 11th and 12th graders, and a closed campus for 9th and 10th graders. The building is equipped throughout with elevators, which is restricted in use to those students with physical disabilities that prevent them from using stairways. All elevators are key controlled, and only students with specific physical needs have been issued a key.

The main doors to the building are open all day, as are doors on the east side, lower level doors, and one door to the round house. Other doors are open periodically throughout the day during periods of student traffic, and are manually locked by custodial staff during non-peak hours.

1. PEOPLE

a. Security staffing

Presently the district has a police officer from the ABC police department in the school five days a week, under a COPS grant. This officer's purpose is crime prevention, along with providing a safe and secure environment for all students, staff, and visitors. The officer has arrest authority and is a proactive agent in preventing drug and gang activity in the school.

In addition, a juvenile probation officer is based at the high school. While this individual's primary roll is to work with students who are on court appointed probation, he also responds to security emergencies in the building, and frequently assists in breaking up fights and other events which require a more qualified response.

b. Human resource management

Hiring of employees in the high school is the direct responsibility of the Principal, with final approval by the school board. When an employee is considered for employment, background checking includes all of the references that the employee supplies, as well as a criminal background check which is performed by the central office. The Principal does not do any of the background checks and was uncertain if the background check includes a check of the registered sex offend list, or if any type of financial or credit checks are done.

When an employee leaves the high school, there is no formal exit interview process. The Principal indicated that when an employee leaves, she normally visits with them to wish them the best of luck, and is usually aware of why they are leaving, but there is no formal exit interview process.

c. Staff interviews

As we have found throughout the district, the staff at the high school was very accommodating and quite willing to visit with us to discuss security issues. As in all the schools, staff at the high school expressed concerns over the changes taking place in the community, and the increase in criminal activity that has resulted.

At the high school, parking lots are an ongoing challenge for criminal activity. This includes recent acts of vandalism, breaking and entering of automobiles, drug dealing, gang fights, and criminal trespassing. (During our visit, an empty beer bottle was found in the parking lot at 9:30am.)

Staff expressed concern over ongoing problems with student congregation in the north hallways in the non academic area of the building. Students frequently congregate in this area, which is proximal to the cafeteria and is also used as a study hall. School officials make diligent effort to break up any congregations in this area. However, this is an ongoing problem as was reported by several staff members, and witnessed by the consultants.

Staff also voiced concerns regarding the northwest side of the building. Several blind spots exist and often result in criminal activity on the grounds. It is from this point that unknown person or persons have driven vehicles up onto the lawn, raised a ladder and gained access to the roof to commit acts of theft and vandalism. There are no windows in this area of the building, and a person can

easily act out without being seen. Staff reports finding cigarette butts and other paraphernalia suggesting that students frequently congregate in this area.

Staff also expressed concern over the growing gang presence in the school. Those with true knowledge of gang activity in the community indicated that most of the “gang activity” was by what police consider to be “wanna-bees” (meaning that they are unaffiliated with any of the major gangs in the major cities in Iowa); nonetheless, there is still a growing concern. There have been incidents of fighting both in the school and in the parking lot, started as a result of rival gang colors being worn to school.

Staff members interviewed, felt that most of the violence is student on student. On the rare occasion where violence is directed at a teacher or employee, it is usually secondary, meaning the teacher or employee were injured in the fight, but the anger was not intentionally directed at them. It was noted that there is conflicting information being given to faculty on how to respond to fights. Some administrative representatives told staff to stay out of fights, breaking up physical confrontations is the responsibility of the COPS officer. Other administrative representatives have informed faculty and staff that they have a legal responsibility to become involved when they see a physical altercation. They should do anything possible to break it up even at the risk of personal injury. Conflicting direction causes confusion among staff, and could very possibly lead to serious injury to a staff member.

RECOMMENDATION

A consistent standard for staff becoming involved in physical altercations should be developed. If staff members are going to be expected to step into physical altercations in an attempt to stop their aggression, staff should be provided with appropriate and ongoing training in techniques of aggression management, and in personal self defense techniques.

All of the staff interviewed expressed concern with the lack of visitor controls in the building. While the school has a system in place to track visitor presence and issues visitor badges, the system is considered inadequate by faculty and staff because of the multiple points of access that are always open throughout the building. It was noted in the main lobby, at the front entrance of the high school, that a very large sign in English and in Spanish, directs visitors to stop at the office for a visitor pass. Other perimeter doors have the same yellow sticker that was seen in many of the other schools in the district. Unfortunately, because of the location of the office, a visitor goes well into the building before reaching the

office to obtain a visitor pass. The system relies entirely upon the honesty and integrity of the visitor, as they can conceivably enter the front door and go any direction in the school without passing the checkpoint to sign-in and receive a visitor ID badge.

RECOMMENDATION

Perimeter doors to the building should be secured whenever possible. Those that the school chooses to leave open, must have an alternative system in place to monitor individuals entering the building, and to control the flow of visitor traffic in the building.



A large sign greets visitors and directs them to the main office for a visitors pass. Before getting to the main office, the visitor has several options on what direction they want to go in the building, and can easily ignore the sign and gain unauthorized access into the building.

During interviews, staff suggested that when night suspensions are taking place, the students who are serving these suspensions do so with little or no supervision. They regularly and routinely roam the halls, with access to the entire school. Staff indicated that outsiders have "free reign" of the building during after hour activities,

RECOMMENDATION

Night suspensions should be served in an enclosed or a defined classroom or auditorium. Aggressive restrictions should be imposed on the ability to leave the designated area without adult supervision. All students being detained should be supervised at all times.

2. PROGRAMS

a. *Written security management program*

At the time of this assessment, no written security management program exists for the district. Security has been addressed in a number of areas; no security practices are spelled out or defined in an organized manner through a written program. A written security management program authored by the district and approved by the school board, can then be used in the school, and provides the foundation for a strong and effective security management program.

RECOMMENDATION

A district-wide written security management program should be developed that includes at a minimum the following subject areas:

- § Mission statement on school security
- § Parking requirements and traffic control
- § Access/Egress control (including key control)
- § Staff identification systems, student identification systems, and visitor/vendor identification systems
- § Visitor control system
- § Information collection and evaluation system
- § Weapons in the school
- § Criminal activity in the school
- § Security training for staff
- § Incident response in the school
- § Physical security measures
- § Law enforcement presence in the school
- § Intruders in the school
- § Harassment and violence in the school
- § Aggression management and team response
- § Cash handling procedures
- § Security sensitive areas
- § Custody issues and child abductions
- § Media control
- § Emergency lockdown procedures
- § Mail handling procedures

This program should also become the basis for annual and ongoing training in school security for all faculty and staff.

b. Safety/Security committee

At ABC High School, there was no evidence of a safety/security committee in place at the time of our visit.

RECOMMENDATION

The district should consider forming one or more safety/security committees in the manner best suited to address safety and security issues across all grade levels in the district. Possible structure styles would included a committee at each building, a committee for each grade grouping (K-4, 5-8, 9-12), or a centralized committee which represents all schools and all age groups across the district.

c. Emergency lockdowns

The district has adopted a Code Yellow plan for all schools in the district. There was no evidence that this plan has been drilled, and no one is assigned to lockdown the perimeter doors.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Code Yellow action plan should be revisited so that all required emergency actions are addressed, and no step in the plan is missed or overlooked.

Like fire drills and tornado drills, emergency lockdown drills should be held periodically.

d. Information collection and evaluation systems

The high school has addressed information collection in the form of reports that are taken when an incident occurs. Typically, the COPS officer completes the report, which is then filed with the ABC Police Department. This report typically is based on criminal activity taking place in the school, and does not include non-criminal security incidents that may take place.

There is no requirement for incident reporting or documentation of security related events that take place in the classroom or elsewhere in the building unless criminal activity is involved, which then becomes a police report.

An information collection and evaluation system (ICES) becomes the basis for collecting information and data on incidents that occur in the school. The Principal or designee becomes the data collection center, and should receive and review all incidents with security implications in the school.

There was no evidence of a comprehensive information collection and evaluation system in place at the time of our visit that addressed any of the following:

- I. Past security incidents
- II. Incident reporting
- III. Staff surveys
- IV. Industry best practices
- V. Annual evaluation

RECOMMENDATION:

The district should consider the development and implementation of a standardized ICES system throughout the district that address safety and security incidents in every school, including but not limited to the following:

1. Suspicious activity
2. Criminal events
3. Personal injury to staff, students and/or visitors
4. Acts of vandalism/property damage (including graffiti)
5. Acts of violence or aggression in the school
6. Any other event that presents a risk or a threat to the district, its employees, or most importantly its students.

3. TRAINING

At present, the COPS officer does a security training program at the start of each school year for all faculty. Typically this training program focuses on the roll of a police officer in the school, and does not get in depth on security issues. We commend the school for providing this training and encourage them to expand the scope of the training program.

RECOMMENDATION

A security training program should be developed for all employees in the ABC High School. The training should be directed to meet the requirements of each employee in their respective position. This would include cash handling, telephone calls, visitor control, aggressive behavior, and other areas common to the associated risk of the employees.

For existing employees training should be provided initially, and then annually thereafter. From this point forward, this training should be part of a new employee orientation program, and again, provided as an annual refresher.

4. TECHNOLOGY

a. *Access / Egress controls*

Access in the high school is currently maintained through a lock and key system. Information provided suggests that over 200 keys have been issued for the building. Some masters were used in each department in the past; master keys are now routinely issued which allow key holders access to all areas of the building. The keys that are used are a common Yale key blank, and can be easily purchased and or duplicated at local hardware stores.

This current keying system defeats any attempts to control access into the building during non-peak hours or after hours, and should be replaced. Re-keying the building has been considered, but has been delayed because of cost considerations.

RECOMMENDATION

An access/egress control system should be designed that would control perimeter access at all doors of the school, and would incorporate heavy duty magnetic locks as well as card or proximity readers to not only screen who enters the building, but to control who enters the building and to provide a permanent record of who enters and leaves the building at what times of all days and nights.

b. CCTV and recording

Currently there is no CCTV system in the building. Staff stated that CCTV has been discussed in the past, but that no plans exist to install a system at this time.

With technology improvements and lowering costs, CCTV is a worthy consideration. New, wireless technologies on the market allow CCTV to be installed that can be monitored via the internet from administrator's homes, from police dispatch centers, and also from patrolling police vehicles in the ABC community.

RECOMMENDATION

A digital CCTV system should be considered to monitor all interior corridors as well as the entire exterior of the building, including all parking lots.

c. Alarm systems

The building is equipped with an intrusion detection system. Because of past false alarms, the system is no longer monitored by the police department, rather when an alarm sounds, an administrator is notified at home and responds to investigate. We are told that the alarm has been tagged out-of-service for the past twenty months.

RECOMMENDATION

A duress alarm system should be installed throughout the building, and staff trained in protocols for the use in this system.

In addition, the intrusion detection system in the building should be repaired, connected to, and monitored by the ABC Police Department.

d. Perimeter security issues

As part of the assessment, a comprehensive analysis was done of the building and grounds on the high school campus. The following conditions and recommendation are based on that visit:

When the auditorium is in use, whether for a school function or a community function, it automatically allows unrestricted access into the cafeteria and then into the rest of the school.

RECOMMENDATION

Access to and from the auditorium and the cafeteria should be controlled by an engineered access controlled system.

Any of the lock sets on the exterior of the building could be easily pried open with a simple screw driver.

RECOMMENDATION

Latch guarding should be installed on all perimeter doors where key-locking is being used.



Lock sets like the one shown here can be easily forced open. In absence of an engineered access control system, latch guards should be installed to lessen the risk of forcible entry.

Around the building, bushes and shrubs have been planted close to the building, in many cases close to perimeter doors. Many of these bushes have grown large, and create hiding places for an adversary.

RECOMMENDATION

Bushes near building should be kept trimmed low, in such a way to prevent the likelihood of a potential adversary being able to hide, waiting for an opportunity to strike.



Bushes and shrubs near doors and windows should be kept trimmed low to the ground so they cannot be used as hiding places.

Air intake louvers, located at or near ground level, are easily accessible and appear to have no special filtration capabilities. This lends to the risk of toxins or poisons being introduced to the HVAC / air handling system.

RECOMMENDATION

Fencing should be erected around all air louvers. In addition, an HVAC contractor should be consulted regarding filtration systems that may be adapted and / or retrofitted to the HVAC system.



Once thought of as nearly harmless, air intake louvers must now be considered a risk factor for the introduction of poison or toxic gases into the air handling system, and should be protected accordingly.

Access control into the existing green house is nearly non-existent. The current lock mechanism could be easily popped, which allows instant access into the greenhouse. The door between the greenhouse and the school, while sturdy in design is a single pane glass, which could easily be broken out and the door opened.

RECOMMENDATION

The single pane glass in the interior door should be replaced with polycarbonate plastic or a similar shatterproof type plastic, which minimize the risk of breaking and entering. This and other perimeter doors should be alarmed through the use of door contact switches.



Access into the greenhouse can be easily gained, which then allows unrestricted access to the rest of the building.

On the east side of the building, where the old portable classroom sits, an air intake vent has been pried away, suggesting that forcible entry may have been tried.

RECOMMENDATION

The air intake vent cover should be replaced by one that provides a strong degree of security and cannot easily be pried away or forced off to allow entry.