

Assessments

Assessments are a vital part of the planning process. There are many assessments that can be used, including site assessments, culture and climate assessments, school behavioral threat assessments, and capacity assessments. These assessments will help the planning team not only assess risk but also identify resources and issues that the plan may need to address. Through the assessment process, the planning team may also identify additional threats and hazards.

The most successful assessments are conducted by a broad array of individuals, including support staff and first responders. Students and parents, including students and parents with disabilities, and others with access and functional needs, should be included to the maximum extent appropriate.

Assessments will be used not only to develop the initial plan but also to inform updates and revisions to the plan on an ongoing basis. The following table provides more information about some of the most essential assessments the planning team should undertake.

Type of Assessment	Description	Purpose and Results
Site Assessment	A site assessment examines the safety, accessibility, and emergency preparedness of the school's buildings and grounds. This assessment includes, but is not limited to, a review of building access and egress control measures, visibility around the exterior of the building, structural integrity of the building, compliance with applicable architectural standards for individuals with disabilities and others with functional and access needs, and emergency vehicle access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased understanding of the potential impact of threats and hazards on the school buildings and grounds. • Increased understanding of risk and vulnerabilities of the school buildings and grounds when developing the plan. • Knowledge of which facilities are physically accessible to students, staff, parents, volunteer workers, and emergency response personnel with disabilities and can be used in compliance with the law.
Culture and Climate Assessment	In schools with positive climates, students are more likely to feel connected to adults and their peers. This fosters a nurturing environment where students are more likely to succeed, feel safe, and report threats. A school culture and climate assessment evaluates student and staff connectedness to the school and problem behaviors. For example, this assessment may reveal a high number of bullying incidents, indicating a need to implement an anti-bullying program. If a student survey is used to assess culture and climate, student privacy must be protected. A range of school personnel can assist in the assessment of culture and school climate, including school counselors and mental health staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of students' and staff's perceptions of their safety. • Knowledge of problem behaviors that need to be addressed to improve school climate.

Type of Assessment	Description	Purpose and Results
<p>School Threat Assessment</p>	<p>A school threat assessment analyzes communication and behaviors to determine whether or not a student, staff, or other person may pose a threat. These assessments must be based on fact, must comply with applicable privacy, civil rights, and other applicable laws, and are often conducted by multidisciplinary threat assessment teams. While a planning team may include the creation of a threat assessment team in its plan, the assessment team is a separate entity from the planning team and meets on its own regular schedule.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students, staff, or other persons that may pose a threat are identified before a threat develops into an incident and are referred for services, if appropriate.
<p>Capacity Assessment</p>	<p>The planning team needs to know what resources will be at their disposal. A capacity assessment examines the capabilities of students and staff as well as the services and material resources of community partners. This assessment is used to identify people in the building with applicable skills (e.g., first aid certification, search and rescue training, counseling and mental health expertise, ability to assist individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs). Equipment and supplies should also be inventoried. The inventory should include an evaluation of equipment and supplies uniquely for individuals with disabilities, such as evacuation chairs, the availability of sign language interpreters and technology used for effective communication, accessible transportation, and consumable medical supplies and durable medical equipment that may be necessary during a shelter-in-place or evacuation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increased understanding of the resources available. • Information about staff capabilities will help planners assign roles and responsibilities in the plan.

Resources

Site Assessments

Cummins, Arthur. n.d. *The Vulnerability Assessment Process* [webinar]. American Clearinghouse on Educational Facilities. <http://www.acefacilities.org/webinars>.

International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). 2013. *Safe Schools: Assessing School Safety* Online Course. <http://elearning-courses.net/iacp/registrationPortal/courseInformation.cfm?courseID=3>.

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice. n.d. "OJJDP National Training and Technical Assistance Center (NTTAC)." <https://www.nttac.org/>.

Ortiz, Heather R. 2011. *Safe School Facilities Checklist*. American Clearinghouse on Educational Facilities. http://rems.ed.gov/Docs/ACEF_ED_Facilitiesvulnerability-Hazardchecklist.Pdf.

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools. 2008. *A Guide to School Vulnerability Assessments: Key Principles for Safe Schools*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools. http://rems.ed.gov/Docs/VA_Report_2008.Pdf.

———. 2008. *Guía para las Evaluaciones de Vulnerabilidad Escolar: Principios Clave para Escuelas Seguras* [A Guide to School Vulnerability Assessments: Key Principles for Safe Schools]. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools. http://rems.ed.gov/docs/4.%20REMS%20Guide%20to%20School%20Vulnerability%20Assessments_SPANISH.pdf.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). 2012. *Primer to Design Safe School Projects in Case of Terrorist Attacks and School Shootings*, 2nd ed. Washington, DC. www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/st/bips07_428_schools.pdf.

Culture and Climate Assessments

Office of the President, University of California. 2012. "Campus Climate Survey." <http://campusclimate.ucop.edu/what-is-campus-climate/index.html>.

School Behavioral Threat Assessment

Fein, Robert A., Bryan Vossekuil, William S. Pollack, Randy Borum, William Modzeleski, and Marisa Reddy. 2004. *Threat Assessment in Schools: A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and to Creating Safe School Climates*. Washington, DC: Safe School Initiative, U.S. Secret Service, and U.S. Department of Education. <http://rems.ed.gov/docs/ThreatAssessmentinSchools.pdf>.

Pollack, William S., William Modzeleski, Georgeann Rooney. 2008. *Prior Knowledge of Potential School-Based Violence: Information Students Learn May Prevent a Targeted Attack*. Washington, DC: Safe School Initiative, U.S. Secret Service, and U.S. Department of Education. http://rems.ed.gov/docs/DOE_BystanderStudy.pdf.

Vossekuil, Bryan, Robert A. Fein, Marisa Reddy, Randy Borum, and William Modzeleski. 2010. *Final Report and Findings: Implications for Prevention of School Attacks in the United State*. Washington, DC: Safe School Initiative, U.S. Secret Service, and U.S. Department of Education. <http://rems.ed.gov/docs/FinalReportandFindingsofSafeSchoolInitiative.pdf>.

Capacity Assessment

Emergency Management Institute, Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Department of Homeland Security. 2009. *Staff Skills Survey Form*. <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/emischool/EL361Toolkit/SampleFormsChecklistsExercises.htm>.

Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance Center:

- *Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDS) and CPR Training*, (Success Stories, Vol. 1, Issue 3, 2011). http://rems.ed.gov/docs/SS_Vol01Issue03_DaytonaState.pdf.
- *Emergency "Go-kits,"* (Helpful Hints, Vol. 1, Issue 2, 2006). http://rems.ed.gov/docs/HH_Vol1Issue1.pdf.
- *Teen Cert Credit Course*, (Success Stories, Vol. 1, Issue 1, 2011). http://rems.ed.gov/docs/SS_Vol01Issue01_LincolnCounty.pdf.