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In August 2007, with the support of the Idaho Legislature, the Department of Education authorized **The Safe and Secure Schools Assessment** in Idaho. The assessment was completed in November 2007 and produced an accurate and comprehensive picture of the current security profile of our schools. This independent assessment revealed troubling information that requires immediate action to correct.

The current state of safety and security across Idaho K-12 public schools is inadequate, and is a clear concern among administrators, staff and parents. **The Safe and Secure Schools Assessment** surveyed 520 school principals and 92 district superintendants across Idaho. Superintendants rate 85 percent of all Idaho schools as partially or fully inadequate in the safety and security they provide. These ratings were validated by data gathered through stakeholder surveys, statewide site visits, public meetings and interviews with school officials. The assessment evaluated schools and districts on their ability to ensure a school environment that:

1. Effectively controls access to school grounds and facilities
2. Provides for the physical safety and security of students, staff and visitors
3. Effectively responds to a crisis in a timely and efficient manner

The Idaho State Department of Education has developed this planning guide to provide a roadmap for school districts to be proactive, trained, prepared and equipped for recovery. It is designed to provide administrators and principal planners with a set of guidelines for building an effective Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). This document has been created for the education sector. Many of the guidelines and procedures for implementation have been written from the State of Idaho Education Safe and Secure School Assessment. Therefore, this planning guide will be available for use by all school districts within the state of Idaho.

In a broad sense, the district level of Emergency Response capability encompasses several key factors, including but not limited to:

- a) The ability of each employee, regardless of their position to respond to and manage the effects of an emergency or disaster.
- b) The ability of each school district to effectively prevent and/or minimize disruption of school operations, services to students and to communicate the district's Emergency Operations Plan to its employees.
- c) The ability of each school district to competently implement its Emergency Operations Plan in a timely and appropriate manner.



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A. Objectives

Any unplanned interruption of normal school activity may impact a school's ability to operate. A properly implemented and executed Emergency Operations Plan will minimize the impact of any given interruption.

The following are objectives for developing and maintaining a school Emergency Operations Plan.

- a) To reduce loss of life and injury.
- b) Minimize damage and loss of school facilities, equipment and other assets.
- c) Reduce or diminish disruptions to critical and essential school operations and services.
- d) Assure Administrators, Teachers, Staff, Students and Stakeholders that their interests are protected.
- e) Expedite the restoration of school activities through a timely and organized process.

B. Principles of Emergency Management

Planning for emergency response in schools should take into account the following eight principles of emergency management. These principles should be utilized when developing your Emergency Operations Plan.

1. **Comprehensive** – emergency managers consider and take into account all hazards, all phases, all stakeholders and all impacts relevant to disasters.
2. **Progressive** – emergency managers anticipate future disasters and take preventive and preparatory measures to build disaster-resistant and disaster-resilient communities.
3. **Risk-driven** – emergency managers use sound risk management principles (hazard identification, risk analysis, and impact analysis) in assigning priorities and resources.
4. **Integrated** – emergency managers ensure unity of effort among all levels of government and all elements of a community.
5. **Collaborative** – emergency managers create and sustain broad and sincere relationships among individuals and organizations to encourage trust, advocate a team atmosphere, build consensus, and facilitate communication.
6. **Coordinated** – emergency managers synchronize the activities of all relevant stakeholders to achieve a common purpose.



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7. **Flexible** – emergency managers use creative and innovative approaches in solving disaster challenges.
8. **Professional** – emergency managers value a science and knowledge-based approach based on education, training, experience, ethical practice, public stewardship and continuous improvement.

C. Coordination of Plans

Each school district must disseminate their Emergency Operations Plan to all teachers, staff, County Emergency Management, EMS, Fire and Police.

It is also recommended that the school district disseminate the Emergency Operations Plan to all departments including Information Technology.

Because each stakeholder or staff member has their own responsibilities; i.e., legal considerations, levels of training, cultures and operating missions, it is imperative that all stakeholders have a sound understanding of their Emergency Operations Plan. This understanding must include not only their roles but also the roles of others as they pertain to any given emergency.

Emergency Operations Plans must be communicated to all employees regardless of their specific assignments.

PART II - Guidance for Developing an Emergency Operations Plan

Through the development of the Emergency Operations Plan a district establishes a set of predetermined actions that will streamline decision-making during response and recovery phases of a damaging event. By reducing the number and magnitude of decisions to be made, school personnel will be able to resume critical services and return to normal school activities at the earliest possible time.

The purpose of a district Emergency Operations Plan is to help develop strategies to support prevention and preparedness priorities. These strategies should include guidance and action items for the protection of school personnel, facilities, systems, equipment, and assets, and the continuation of essential, critical operations and services.

The success of an Emergency Operations Plan is directly related to the degree of involvement of Districts and school members during the planning stage. The following is a brief description of each of the sections within the Emergency Operations Plan and the steps a district should consider as it completes each section.

The Idaho State Department of Education has provided this guide and accompanying forms to assist school districts in developing and implementing standardized plans that provide for appropriate mitigation of critical incidents and rapid recovery.

