NYSED Project SAVE
District Wide Safety Plan
For

# Warrensburg Central School District Warren County, New York

2023 - 2024

### Introduction

In January 2021, NYSED began offering virtual training to support school officials and staff in the planning principles and planning process recommended in the federal "School Guide", *Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans* (FEMA 6.2013), along with the existing New York State's Project SAVE legislation for the District Wide School Safety Plan and Building Level Emergency Response Plans. Additional federal guidance is provided in the "District Guide", *The Role of Districts in Developing High Quality School Emergency Operations Plans*, a Companion to the School Guide (REMS 9.2019), and the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance (TA) Center website, including the REMS TA Center Virtual Toolkit (ed.gov). NYSED encourages schools to integrate the federal and REMS guidance into their District Wide and Building Level school safety plans.

To ensure that our school district's emergency planning efforts align with the emergency planning practices at the national, state, and local levels, REMS guidance including vocabulary, processes, and approaches are integrated into the plan. Revising and adapting our plan using REMS principles and process will help ensure alignment with the terminology and approaches used across the nation.

Emergencies and violent incidents in school districts are critical issues that must be addressed in an expeditious and effective manner. Districts are required to develop a District Wide school safety plan designed to prevent or minimize the effects of serious violent incidents and emergencies and to facilitate the coordination of the district responses with local and county resources in the event of such incidents or emergencies. The District Wide plan is responsive to the needs of all schools within the district and is consistent with the more detailed emergency response plans required at the school building level. Districts stand at risk from a wide variety of acts of violence, natural, and man-made disasters. To address these threats, the State of New York has enacted the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) law. Project SAVE is a comprehensive planning effort that addresses prevention, response, and recovery with respect to a variety of emergencies in each school district and its schools.

The Warren-Washington-Saratoga-Hamilton-Essex BOCES, in coordination with the Warrensburg Central School District, supports the SAVE Legislation, and intends to facilitate the

planning process. The Superintendent of Warrensburg Central School encourages and advocates on-going District Wide cooperation and support of Project SAVE.

# <u>Section I: General Considerations and Planning Guidelines</u>

### A. Purpose

The Warrensburg District Wide School Safety Plan is developed and maintained pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17. At the direction of the Warrensburg Central School District Board of Education, the Superintendent of the Warrensburg Central School District appointed a District Wide School Safety Team and charged it with the development and maintenance of the District Wide School Safety Plan.

#### **B.** Identification of School Teams

The Warrensburg Central School District has created a District Wide School Safety Team consisting of, but not limited to, representatives of the School Board, students, teachers, administrators, parent organizations, school safety personnel and other school personnel, including bus drivers and monitors.

Warrensburg Central School District Wide School Safety Team (Titles Only)			
School Superintendent	School Counselor		
Board of Education Members (2)	Director of Facilities		
Business Manager	School Nurses (2)		
Junior/Senior High Principal	Transportation Supervisor		
Elementary Principal	School Resource Officer		
Director of Pupil Personnel Services	District Safety Specialist		
Guidance Grades 7-12 (2)			

#### C. Concept of Operations

- The District Wide School Safety Plan is linked to the individual Building Level Emergency Response Plan for Warrensburg Central School. The protocols reflected in the District Wide School Safety Plan guide the development and implementation of the individual Building Level Emergency Response Plan.
- The Board of Education has appointed Amy Langworthy, Superintendent, as the Chief Emergency Officer. The Chief Emergency Officer or designee is responsible for coordinating communication between staff and law enforcement and first responders and for ensuring the staff's understanding of the District Wide school safety plan. The Chief Emergency Officer or designee shall also be responsible for ensuring completion and yearly update of Building Level emergency response plans.
- The development of the District Wide school Safety Plan was a collaborative effort involving members of the District Wide safety team, law enforcement officials, county emergency service coordinators, and the District Safety Specialist.

• In the event of an emergency or violent incident, the initial response to all emergencies at an individual school will be by the Building Emergency Response Team. The Warrensburg Central School District is divided into two facilities. One building houses grades PK-6 and the other 7-12. All information pertaining to an emergency or violent incident shall be directed to either the building Principal/Designee or the Superintendent.

- Upon the activation of the Building Emergency Response Team, the Superintendent of Schools, or his/her designee shall be notified and, where appropriate, local emergency officials will also be notified by calling 911.
- County and State resources through existing established protocols may supplement emergency response efforts.

#### D. Plan Review and Public Comment

- The District Wide School Safety Team shall review the District Wide Safety Plan on an annual basis on or before July 1 of each year. A copy of the plan will be available at the School Superintendent's Office.
- The School District will submit full copies of the District Wide School Safety Plan and any substantial amendments to the New York State Education Department within 30 days of adoption. The School District submitted the plan to the New York State Education Department on June 18, 2001.
- Pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17(e)(3), this plan was available for public comment on May 14, 2001, for a 30-day period prior to adoption. The District Wide and Building Level Plan was adopted by the School Board after the public hearing that provided for the participation of school personnel, parents, students, and any other interested parties. The Board of Education formally adopted the plan on June 11, 2001.
- While linked to the District Wide School Safety Plan, the Building Level Emergency
  Response Plans shall be confidential and shall not be subject to disclosure under Article 6
  of the Public Officers Law or any other provision of law, in accordance with Education Law
  Section 2801-a.

# <u>Section II: General Emergency Prevention, Mitigation, Protection, Response and Recovery Planning</u>

The School District emergency preparedness includes prevention, mitigation, protection, response and recovery planning to decrease the likelihood of an emergency and to reduce losses or damage should one occur. Preparedness includes ensuring policies and protocols are in place as well as the readiness and knowledge to respond. This involves clarifying team member roles, having the incident command system (ICS) in place, continuous training on ICS and the plan procedures, and conducting exercises and drills.

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The REMS Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), as followed by the school district, is anchored in three main pillars that include:

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1. **Integrated, Collaborative Approach**; The plan is developed with the notion that everyone has expertise to share, and that planning should be a collaborative effort aligned at all levels for a common purpose — to create a safe learning environment for children.

- 2. **Five (5) Preparedness Missions** (Prevent, Mitigate, Protect, Respond and Recover); The plan is developed with the notion that specific, complementary activities along a continuum foster a safe learning environment for children. This approach to preparedness, represents an evolution in our collective understanding of national preparedness and is based on the lessons learned from terrorist attacks, hurricanes, school incidents, and other experiences.
  - I. **Prevention** means the capabilities necessary to avoid, deter, or stop an imminent crime or threatened or actual mass casualty incident.
  - II. Mitigation means the capabilities necessary to eliminate or reduce the loss of life and property damage by lessening the impact of an event or emergency. Mitigation involves the identification of risks and vulnerabilities, an assessment of resources and facilities, identification of stakeholders including knowledgeable and collaborative emergency responders and mental health resources, and the communication process.
  - III. **Protection** means the capabilities to secure schools against acts of violence, man-made or natural disasters.
  - IV. **Response** means the capabilities necessary to stabilize an emergency once it has already happened or is certain to happen in an unpreventable way.
  - V. **Recovery** means the capabilities necessary to assist schools affected by an event or emergency in restoring the learning environment.

These mission areas align with the three-time frames associated with an incident: **before**, **during**, and **after**. When planning, the paradigms before, during and after are used to consider actions we can take to help build capacity in each of the five mission areas. For example, we need to be ready to respond and recover throughout all five mission areas.

- 3. **Planning Principles**: The following six principles are key to developing a comprehensive high-quality school Emergency Operations plan (EOP) such as the school district's DWSSP and BLERPs that address a range of threats and hazards.
  - I. Planning must be **supported by leadership**. This principle translates into district-level prioritization of resources; allocation of time, budget, staff, etc.; and integration into district vision, policies, and practice.
  - II. Next, effective planning is built around comprehensive, ongoing **assessment** of the school community. Data gathered through assessments are used to

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**customize plans** to the building level, taking into consideration the school's unique circumstances and resources.

- III. A comprehensive school emergency planning process must consider a wide range of threats and hazards that may impact the school, addressing safety needs **before**, **during**, and **after** an incident. The assessments, community data, and local trends will help to identify the threats and hazards in a specific school setting.
- IV. A key consideration is how specific threats and hazards might differ in severity depending on the population impacted. What are the access and functional needs of the whole school community? Are there students, staff, family, contractors, and other visitors who:
  - Have mobility issues (temporary or permanent) (e.g., sports injury, pregnancy, aging, wheelchair).
  - Are in the process of learning English and require additional linguistic support.
  - Have a disability that impairs the way they receive and process information (e.g., autism, blind/deaf);
  - Are from a different racial/ethnic, cultural, or religious background that requires considerations on safety practices, or
  - Require medical assistance (e.g., diabetic).
- V. School EOPs must account for incidents that may occur during and outside the school day as well as on and off campus. This is even more significant now that schools have hybrid learning environments that may include outdoor classes, lunch, and other school activities. Examples include:
  - Outside activities (e.g., recess, physical education);
  - Before and after school (e.g., the school bus, gathering times and places immediately before and after school);
  - Outside of the school day (e.g., after school programs, athletic programs, clubs, school dances, weekend sporting events); and
  - Field trips during the school day and extended trips.
- VI. Creating and revising a model school EOP is done by following a **collaborative process**. If a planning team also uses templates, it must first evaluate their usefulness to ensure that the tools do not undermine the collaborative initiative and collectively shared plan. Do not get stuck on what has been; focus on what needs to be.

Research shows that creating positive school climates can help districts, schools, and teachers meet key goals, including boosting student achievement and closing achievement gaps;

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increasing high school graduation rates; decreasing teacher turnover and increasing teacher satisfaction; and turning around low-performing schools. Positive school climates also enhance safety in the school and community by increasing communication between students, families, and faculty. At the same time, schools reduce various forms of harm to students that can stem from negative school climates, including violence, bullying, and even suicide. Positive school climates are inclusive of and responsive to students of all backgrounds, regardless of race, color, national origin, language, disability, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

A positive school climate that provides students with ready access to emotional and behavioral support can affect the capacity of students and staff to prevent, respond to, and recover from emergencies. For example:

**Prevention and Mitigation:** A positive school climate can help to prevent emergencies because it can reduce the incidence of behaviors that can contribute to crisis (e.g., violence, bullying, harassment, substance abuse). Further, schools with positive school climates engage students in developing strong relationships with staff and peers, increasing the likelihood that students will quickly report potential threats to trusted adults within the school.

**Protection and Response:** Schools with positive school climates instruct students the social and emotional competencies that enable them to develop persistence, tolerance of frustration, and ability to manage their emotions during an emergency. The teachers, counselors, school resources officers, and other staff who create positive school climates train regularly on child and adolescent development, and on how to respond appropriately to a variety of student behaviors so they can de-escalate aggressive behavior before it becomes a threat to school safety.

**Recovery:** A positive school climate can help in the recovery from an emergency because it represents a commitment, even prior to an emergency, to providing emotional and mental health services and support to all members of the community. Schools with such a climate create an environment that recognizes the importance of social and emotional health, and so support the recovery of all members of the school community and promote an understanding that individual needs will vary in a post-emergency situation.

This focus helps schools promote a positive school climate when implemented as part of a single, comprehensive, and integrated strategy for improving student health and safety.

# Section III: Risk Reduction/Prevention and Intervention

# A. Prevention/Intervention Strategies

#### **Program Initiatives**

Prior to and since the implementation of the District Wide School Safety Plan, the Warrensburg Central School District has offered and participated in programs and activities

for improving communications among students and between students and staff for reporting potentially violent incidents.

#### Training, Drills, and Exercises

The Warrensburg Central School District has developed policies and procedures for annual multi-hazard school safety training for staff and students, including the strategies for implementing training related to multi-hazards. All drills required by the NYS Department of Education are satisfied annually. The district has established the following procedure(s) for annual multi-hazard school safety training for staff and students:

- The School District will submit certification to NYSED that all district and school staff have undergone annual training on the emergency response plan, and that the school safety training includes components on violence prevention and mental health. New employees hired after the start of the school year will receive training within 30 days of hire. The School District will certify that all school staff receive this training by September 15 of each school year, or within 30 days of hire, whichever is sooner.
- Full participation in the Annual Early Dismissal Go Home Evacuation Drill.
- Full participation with 4 Building Lockdown/Security Drills annually.
- The School District conducts 8 Emergency Evacuation Drills annually.
- The School District conducts 4 School Bus Safety and Evacuation Drills annually.
- The district will conduct these drills and other training exercises to evaluate components
  of the emergency response plan, including the use of tabletop exercises in coordination
  with the following agencies:
- Warrensburg Volunteer Fire Department
- Warrensburg Rescue Squad (EMS)
- Warren County Sheriff's Department
- New York State Police
- Warren County Office of Emergency Services

# Implementation of School Security

The Warrensburg Central School District has procedures related to school building security, including a full time School Resource Officer from Warren County Sheriff's Department random site visits by a patrol officer of the Warren County Sheriff's Department or New York State Police, building access control, staff identification badges and various security systems.

 The District and Warren County has entered into a contract for School Resource Officer services. The contract, memorandum of understanding and job description are available in Appendix B. (To be completed prior to BoE public meeting, 30-day public comment period and approval.)

#### **Vital Educational Agency Information**

The Warrensburg Central School District has three facilities (Elementary School, Junior Senior High School, and Transportation Facility). The district has memorandums of

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understanding (MOUs) with neighboring school districts to provide shelter and transportation needs if necessary. MOUs are in the Building Level Emergency Response Plan.

# • Early Detection of Potentially Violent Behaviors

The Warrensburg Central School District has implemented policies and procedures for dissemination of informative materials regarding the early detection of potentially violent behaviors, including, but not limited to the identification of family, community, and environmental factors to teachers, administrators, parents, and other persons in parental relation to students of the district, board members, students and other persons deemed appropriate to receive such information.

#### **B.** Hazard Identification

• The identification of sites of potential emergencies is in the Building Level Emergency Response Plan. The location of potential hazards is documented on a building and facility diagram. The School District provided Emergency Response Agencies with copies of these documents for their use when responding to school emergencies.

# **Section IV: Response**

- A. Notification and Activation of Internal and External Communications
- The district policies and procedures for contacting appropriate law enforcement officials in the event of a violent incident are in the Building Level Emergency Response Plan.
- In the event of an emergency staff, students and visitors will be contacted in one or more of the following manners:
  - Telephone
  - Automated Callout System Thrillshare
  - Walkie Talkies
  - Intercom/Public Address System
  - Runner with verbal message
  - District Handheld Radio System
- The district has established guidelines for staff and students, that if they initially discover an emergency, or impending emergency, they will notify the School Principal and provide him/her with information on the nature of the event. If the School Principal cannot be reached, the Superintendent will be contacted.
- The Building Level Emergency Response Plan provides procedures for contacting parents, guardians, or persons in parental relation to the students in the event of a violent incident or an early dismissal.

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# **B.** Situational Responses

 The district has developed multi-hazard response plans. These guidelines are present in Section F (Multi-Hazard Emergency Response Actions) in the Building Level Emergency Response Plan. The emergencies addressed in the plan include, but are not limited to:

Threats of Violence	Explosion	
Intruder	Bomb Threat	
Hostage/Kidnaping	Hazardous Materials	
Civil Disturbance	Biological	
Natural/Weather Related Hazards	Radiological	
School Bus Accident	Mass Casualty	
Flammable/Explosive Gas Leak	Epidemic/Pandemic	

# Others as determined by the Building Level School Safety Team

# Responding to Acts of Violence: Implied or Direct Threats

The Crisis Response Plan and Multi-Hazard Emergency Response Action Guidelines in each Building Level Emergency Response Plan provides guidance on the districts policies and procedures for responding to implied or direct threats of violence by students (including to themselves), teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school. The following types of procedure(s) are addressed in the plan, and could be used by the district:

- Contacting parents, guardians, or persons in a parental relation to a student in the event of an implied or direct threat of violence by a student against themselves, including threat of suicide.
- The use of staff trained in de-escalation or other strategies to diffuse the situation.
- Informing the Building Principal of implied or direct threat.
- Determining the level of threat with the District Emergency Response Team.
- Contacting an appropriate law enforcement agency, if necessary.
- Monitoring the situation, adjusting the district's response as appropriate, and include implementation of District Emergency Response Team.

### Acts of Violence

• The Building Level Emergency Response Plan provides guidance on the district policies and procedures for responding to direct acts of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel, and visitors to the school.

### Response Protocols

• The Building Level Emergency Response Plan provide guidance on the district's policies and procedures for responding to bomb threats, hostage takings, intrusions, and kidnapping.

# Arrangements for Obtaining Emergency Assistance from Local Government

 The Building Level Emergency Response Plan provides guidance for obtaining assistance during emergencies from emergency services organizations and local government agencies.

# Procedures for Obtaining Advice and Assistance from Local Government Officials

- The district will utilize procedures outlined in Section D (Emergency Communications) and Section E (Incident Command System) in the Building Level Emergency Response Plan for obtaining advice and assistance from local government officials including the county or city officials responsible for implementation of Article 2-B of the Executive Law. The types of procedures for obtaining advice and assistance from local governments during countywide emergencies include the following:
- Superintendent/Designee in an emergency will contact the Warren County Civil Defense and Natural Disaster Coordinator and/or the highest-ranking local government official (Town Supervisor) to obtain advice and assistance.
- The district has identified the following agencies as potential resources for responding to an emergency: Adirondack Chapter of the American Red Cross, Warren County Office of Emergency Services, New York State Police, Warren County Sheriff's Department, Warrensburg Volunteer Fire Department, Warrensburg Rescue Squad, and Utica National Insurance Group. The activation of the resources can be accomplished by calling 911.
- In preparing the District Wide and Building Level Safety Plans the following agencies were provided a copy of plans to review and were provided the opportunity to comment on revisions:
- Warren County Sheriff's Department (Sheriff James LaFarr)
- > Warren County Office of Emergency Services (Ann Marie Mason)
- > New York State Police Troop G Headquarters (Steven Rothwein)

### District Resources Available for Use in an Emergency

 The Building Level Emergency Response Plan identifies the district resources which may be available during an emergency.

# Procedures to Coordinate the Use of School District Resources and Manpower during Emergencies

 The Building Level Emergency Response Plan provides a description of the district's procedures to coordinate the use of resources and manpower during emergencies.

# **Protective Action Options**

• The Building Level Emergency Response Plan describes actions that can be taken in response to an emergency where appropriate.

# **Section V: Recovery**

### A. District Support for Buildings

The Building Level Emergency Response Plan provides information on resources for supporting the Emergency Response Team and Post-Incident Response Team at Warrensburg Elementary School and Warrensburg Junior/Senior High School. The district's Incident Command System Plan identifies alternates to relieve team members, and interfaces with the Crisis Response Plan to provide team members the opportunity to debrief and rehab in a controlled environment.

#### **B.** Disaster Mental Health Services

- The Administrative branch of the Post-Incident Response Team will work through the School Psychologist and Student Advocate Specialist to coordinate disaster mental health resources through the Warren County Mental Health Department, community resources, neighboring school districts, and other disaster mental health resources to fully support members of the crisis response team.
- A debriefing of the Post-Incident Response Team is an essential part of the recovery phase following an emergency incident. The debriefing will be used in part to evaluate the district's plan for revisions.

# C. Public Health Emergencies - Communicable Disease

Effective April 1, 2021, Labor Law §27-c, amends Labor Law §27-1 and adds a new provision to Education Law §2801-a. Labor Law §27-c requires public employers to develop operation plans in the event of certain declared public health emergencies. Education Law §2801-a requires school districts to develop plans consistent with the new Labor Law requirement. The new law requires public employers to prepare a plan for the continuation of operations if the Governor declares a public health emergency involving a communicable disease. Education Institutions must prepare plans consistent with Labor Law §27-c as part of their school safety plans pursuant to newly added subsection (2)(m) of Education Law §2801-a. The plan must include at a minimum:

1) A list and description of positions and titles considered essential with justification for that determination. 2) The specific protocols that will be followed to enable non-essential employees and contractors to telecommute. 3) A description of how the employer will, to the extent possible, stagger work shifts of essential employees and contractors to reduce workplace and public transportation overcrowding. 4) Protocols to be implemented to secure personal protective equipment (PPE) sufficient to supply essential workers with 2 pieces of each PPE device needed for each work shift for at least six months. This must include a plan for storage of such equipment to prevent degradation and permit immediate access in the event of an emergency declaration. 5) Protocols to prevent spread in the workplace in the event an employee or contractor is exposed, exhibits symptoms, or tests positive for the relevant communicable disease. Such protocols must include disinfection of the individual's work area and common areas. It must also address the policy on available leave with respect to testing, treatment, isolation, or quarantine. 6) Protocols for documenting precise hours and work locations of essential workers for the purpose of aiding in tracking the disease and identifying exposed workers to facilitate the provision of any benefits that may be available to them on

that basis. **7)** Protocols for coordinating with the locality to identify sites for emergency housing for essential employees to contain the spread of the disease, to the extent applicable to the needs of the workplace.

School District NYS Public Employer Health Emergency Plan: Public Information available on the district website.

Warrensburg Public Employer Health Emergency Plan

# New for 2023-2024

Appendix A: Emergency Remote Instruction Plan

The Warrensburg Central School District has developed an Emergency Remote Instruction Plan to address the instruction of students if extraordinary circumstances prevent students and staff from physically attending school. The Emergency Remote Instruction Plan was developed with the intention of meeting the requirements of the New York State Education Commissioner's Regulations to include this plan in the Warrensburg Central School District Wide School Safety Plan. Additionally, the plan adheres to guidance set forth in the following Board of Education Policies:

- Policy Number 6570 Remote Working
- Policy Number 7150 Remote Learning

The Emergency Remote Instruction Plan is available on the district website.

### https://core-

docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded\_file/2087/WCS/3126915/2023\_2024\_WC\_SD\_Emergency\_Closing\_Remote\_Instruction\_Plan \_ 1 .pdf

# **Appendix B: Warren County School Resource Officer Documentation**

- Contract Agreement
- Memorandum of Understanding
- Job Description

# **Appendix C: Plan Approval Dates & Board of Education Appointments**

30-Day Public Comment Period	Public Hearing	Board of Education Approval	District Safety Team Appointment
May 8, 2023	June 10, 2023	June 10, 2023	June 10, 2023