FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Statewide Policy for Strengthening Domestic Security in Florida's Public Schools

Approval Date: October 10, 2003

(Modified by NIMS Policy Project Final Report February 28, 2006)

Scope

Florida public schools have not been targeted to date, nor are there any known, direct and credible threats against any potential target in Florida. However, schools are included in the Florida Domestic Security Strategy, which is a comprehensive approach to ensuring that Florida will address all known vulnerabilities, providing a level of certainty that, given the nature of the possible target and its potential vulnerability, it has taken every prudent step to limit that vulnerability consistent with the value of the potential target.

Intent

The intent of this policy is to:

- Capitalize on current school protection measures;
- Provide policy guidance to school districts in terms of terrorism protection procedures and training focused on deterrence; and
- Explore infrastructure enhancements and policy guidance for infrastructure.

This policy is not intended to be exhaustive or to supercede federal, state, or local statutes or regulations.

Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to help Florida's public schools prevent, prepare for, and respond to possible terrorist attacks.

Development

During fiscal year 2002-2003, Florida school district superintendents or designated staff members met with representatives from 1) the Florida Department of Education, 2) the Florida Regional Domestic Security Task Forces Education Sub-Committees, and 3) the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Office of Domestic Security, to develop this statewide policy. In addition, the policy was reviewed and approved by the Florida Domestic Security Oversight Board.

During fiscal year 2005-2006, the policy was revisited to address compliance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS). Representatives from the Florida Department of Education, the Florida Regional Domestic Security Task Forces Education Sub-Committees, and a variety of school districts convened to provide input.

Requirements

The following list of policy requirements is provided in priority order and covers the six major elements of domestic security.

1. ACCESS CONTROL

Control access to and enhance security of school campuses and transportation by:

- Establishing single points of entry (reduce access points);
- Integrating fencing into the design of school campuses;
- Integrating vehicle standoff barriers on school campuses;
- Integrating appropriate locking systems;
- Restricting access to ventilation system intakes;
- Reassigning plainclothes officers to uniforms in order to enhance visibility and coverage of vulnerable areas;
- Providing uniformed school resource/security officers as a preventative measure;
- Maintaining a ratio of one school resource officer to 1,500 students, including elementary schools, consistent with school resources and in consultation with local law enforcement;
- Enhancing police patrol of campus during peak times of traffic and activity; at a minimum, at all schools that lack school resource officers; and at all schools during increased security level alerts;
- Providing marked patrol cars for school district police/security personnel;
- Establishing visitor control (i.e., sign-in requirement, screening, badging, etc.);
- Installing visitor screening and tracking systems for photo identification and fingerprint verification, as appropriate (follow best practice standards);
- Establishing staff and student verification (identification and accountability) procedures (follow best practices standards);
- Ensuring personnel are highly visible at non-classroom settings;
- Reviewing employee screening procedures;
- Recommending common background check policy for volunteers, mentors, and service personnel, to include fingerprint-based state and national criminal history checks, along with checks through local law enforcement (follow best practices standards);
- Controlling bus embarkation and debarkation;
- Inspecting buses each morning;
- Providing a secure facility for unattended buses;
- Inspecting school grounds daily for possible suspicious persons, objects, behavior, or activities;

- Increasing physical checks of critical operations equipment on campus during periods of increased alert (i.e., mechanical room, etc.); and
- Maintaining safe mail handling procedures.

2. EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

Ensure availability and operability of emergency equipment and supplies by:

- Providing personal protective equipment to school-based law enforcement personnel;
- Ensuring primary and back-up communications connectivity between first responders and school/district personnel; and
- Ensuring emergency supplies and equipment are available, operational, current on shelf-life, and appropriate for specific school campus, with considerations to access and location issues; presence of an emergency shelter facility; contract supplier vs. stockpiles; as well as school kits for emergency use with suggested inventories specific to school site and size of student population.

3. TRAINING

Provide training to school personnel, students and state and local partners by:

- Conducting a standard Weapons of Mass Destruction course for first responders for school districts;
- Conducting table-top exercises for administrators and district-level staff, and practical exercises for schools;
- Conducting domestic security drills in addition to required fire drills, specific to age group and school needs;
- Training school personnel to recognize potential hazards and to respond appropriately (common responses include evacuation, lockdown, and shelter-in-place);
- Providing security training to school bus drivers and school personnel; and
- Providing safe mail handling training to appropriate personnel.

4. COMMUNICATION AND NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES

Ensure external communication and notification procedures are developed and implemented by:

- Providing ThreatCom access for appropriate school district staff with proper access level;
- Establishing and sharing parent communication procedures;
- Establishing communication procedures to notify parents of possible or actual terrorist or emergency incident (before and during an emergency);
- Informing students and parents of district's policy regarding National Domestic Security Alert levels (red, orange, etc.);
- Reviewing school and district websites to ensure that sensitive information such as security plans and procedures, detailed school floor plans, etc. is not included with general public information;

- Establishing procedures to communicate with the media during incident; and
- Following best practices standards.

5. COORDINATION WITH PARTNERS

Ensure coordination with state and local partners by:

- Developing a close working relationship with local law enforcement and emergency responders from all disciplines and the County Emergency Operations Center; and
- Providing Regional Domestic Security Task Force (RDSTF) representation for planning and policy.

6. VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT

Conduct vulnerability assessment and establish standards by:

- Establishing core recommendations for critical areas;
- Tailoring assessment to each school;
- Coordinating with RDSTF for vulnerability assessment tools and standards;
- Providing guidance of what to look for;
- Providing guidance for individual solutions;
- Establishing statewide best practices standards; and
- Developing policies specific to school-level needs; i.e., elementary, middle, high and alternative education schools and vocational technical schools.

7. NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (NIMS) COMPLIANCE

Ensure compliance with NIMS requirements by:

- Incorporating NIMS protocols and Incident Command System (ICS) procedures into emergency plans; ensuring all emergency plans are consistent with NIMS terminology in accordance with applicable state and county emergency management protocols;
- Coordinating plan modifications with appropriate county emergency management officials;
- Ensuring that staff assigned as members of the school district's incident command element, such as Incident Commander, Operations Chief, Planning Chief, Logistics Chief, Finance Chief, Intelligence Officer, Public Information Officer, Safety Officer, or Liaison Officer and their assigned alternates as well as any other key emergency responsibilities complete the IS-100 *(Introduction to ICS)* and IS 700 *(NIMS-An Introduction)* courses.
- Considering the adoption of IS-100 *(Introduction to ICS)* and IS-700 *(NIMS-An Introduction)* courses as the minimum standard maintained for school principals and their crisis management team members, as appropriate;

- Administering and maintaining additional training courses, per federal compliance guidelines, for those persons designated as members of an incident command element (such as a school district police department or county emergency operations center), according to specific institutional policy. This requirement is also applicable to all persons with emergency responsibilities;
- Developing school district policies for the institution and maintenance of NIMS training.

8. NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (NIMS) CERTIFICATION

- In order to ensure the maximum availability of funding of Florida school districts for U.S. Department of Homeland Security funding, the Florida Department of Education will participate in a process of NIMS compliance and certification with the Florida Division of Emergency Management and county-level emergency management organizations.
- Districts shall coordinate plans and training with appropriate level County Emergency Management Officials for verification as NIMS-compliant in accordance with Florida Department of Education statewide standards.
- School districts shall request a letter from their County Emergency Management agency to the Florida Division of Emergency Management indicating compliance with NIMS requirements.
- Upon notification by letter from the Florida Division of Emergency Management, the Commissioner of Education will provide a letter of certification to individual school districts noting the approval of the Florida Division of Emergency Management and the appropriate county.

Resources

"Advice for Safeguarding Buildings Against Chemical or Biological Attack," Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, Indoor Environmental Department

- http://securebuildings.lbl.gov/

Mail Handling Procedures:

- U.S. Postal Service http://www.usps.com/news/2001/press/pr01_1010tips.htm

Florida Regional Domestic Security Task Forces

- http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/osi/DomesticSecurity/Regionalcontacts.htm

Personnel Background Check information:

- Florida Department of Law Enforcement www.fdle.state.fl.us

- Florida Sexual Predator/Offender Registry
  http://www3.fdle.state.fl.us/sopu/

Volunteer and Employee Background Checks--Florida and FBI fingerprint-based criminal history record checks for volunteers, employees, and certain vendors of

qualified organizations that provide service to children, the elderly, or the disabled.
Public Records Checks--Florida Criminal History Record Checks:

http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/CriminalHistory/

• Florida Wanted Persons Search Page
http://www3.fdle.state.fl.us/fdle/

• Florida Corrections Offender Network
http://www.dc.state.fl.us

• Local law enforcement agencies; search local criminal history databases

• National Sex Offender Registry:
http://www.nsopr.gov/

• The National Response Plan (*December 2004*)
http://www.dhs.gov/interweb/assetlibrary/NRPbaseplan.pdf

Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (*February 28, 2003)*
http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030228-9.html

Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8 (*December 17, 2003)*
http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/assessments/hspd8.htm

IS 100: Introduction to ICS:
Fact Sheet: http://www.fema.gov/pdf/nims/ics_100_fs.pdf
Course: http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is100.asp

IS 700: Incident Management System (NIMS), An Introduction:
Fact sheet: http://www.fema.gov/pdf/nims/is_700_fact_sheetm.pdf
Course: http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is700.asp)

IS 362: Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools
http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is362.asp

Glossary

Evacuation
Involves leaving the building or campus in an emergency such as a fire, bomb threat, indoor chemical release, or any event where students and staff are safer outside the building/off campus. (More information on evacuating in a chemical emergency available from the Centers for Disease Control at: http://www.bt.cdc.gov/planning/evacuationfacts.asp)

Lockdown
Involves gathering students and staff in classrooms, closing and locking all doors and windows, and turning off lights. Everyone is to remain quiet and make the room appear vacant. Many districts also require that staff not respond to knocks or voices at the door unless directed by a school administrator or civil authority.

Personal Protective Equipment
Includes both respiratory and physical protection from chemical, biological, and nuclear contamination.

Shelter-in-Place
Involves creating a shelter out of the place where students and staff are by making the building as safe as possible from outside contamination. Leaving the area may take too long or put people in danger. Vehicles are not airtight enough to give adequate protection from some chemicals or biological agents. Shelter-in-place usually requires turning off any ventilation systems, sealing off doors and windows, and having access to a radio or telephone to monitor the incident. (More information available from the Centers for Disease Control at: http://www.bt.cdc.gov/planning/Shelteringfacts.asp)

Tabletop Exercise
Involves a simulation of an emergency situation in an informal, stress-free environment. Tabletops are designed to generate discussion as participants examine and resolve problems based on existing emergency plans. Generally, a facilitator provides a scenario and a series of events to stimulate discussion related to emergency roles and responsibilities.