



PUTNAM NORTHERN WESTCHESTER BOCES  
200 BOCES Drive  
Yorktown Heights, New York 10598-4399

# **BOCES Wide School Safety Plan**

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.

## Purpose

The Putnam Northern Westchester BOCES-Wide School Safety Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17 by a team appointed by the Board for this purpose. The team consisted of representatives from the Board, the student body, parents, teachers, administrators, school safety personnel and other school personnel.

## Identification of the Team

The Putnam Northern Westchester BOCES Board appointed a BOCES-Wide School Safety Team consisting of representatives of the School Board, students, teachers, administrators, parents, school safety personnel and other school personnel. The **original** members of the team and their positions or affiliations were as follows:

Gary Beaumont	Student
Vince Garnot	Director of Operations & Maintenance
Jeanne Gold	Director of Guidance & Child Study Center
Thomas Higgins	Assistant Superintendent
Thomas Knight	Board of Education
Nicholas Lamberti	Safety Coordinator
Donald Mannella	Assistant Principal, Career and Technical Education
Susan Micolo	Director of Human Resources
Irene Snow	Teacher, Career & Technical Education
	President, United Staff Association
Barbara Streany	Parent

## Concept of Operations

The BOCES-wide team built on what was already in place, specifically the existing Emergency Response Plan that had been developed pursuant to previous Commissioner's Regulations. The 1997 Emergency Response Plan had been updated in Fall 1998, and a Quick Reference Guide had been developed in Fall 1999 to provide employees with readily available information about how to respond to a crisis.

As well, prior to the enactment of the SAVE legislation, school safety had been identified as a staff development priority for the 1999-2000 and the 2000-2001 school years at Putnam Northern Westchester BOCES. Two initiatives were implemented:

- Staff development activities were planned during the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 school years addressing issues related to school violence, the planning process for dealing with crises, violent behavior in our society, assessing threats and violent potential of students.
- A committee began updating the existing documents and developing a Crisis Manual. Once the State Education Department distributed the "Guidance Document for School Safety Plans," the BOCES-Wide School Safety Committee took over the task and used the previous work to assist in creating the required Plan.

The BOCES-Wide School Safety Plan is linked directly to the individual Building-Level Emergency Response Plans. In the event of an emergency or violent incident, the initial response at an individual building will be by the Program Safety/Emergency Response Team. The Program Safety/Emergency Response Team will immediately notify the District Superintendent and, where appropriate, will also notify local emergency officials. If the emergency or violent incident has an impact beyond the individual building, the Central Safety/Emergency Response Team will be activated and will coordinate the response.

As a part of developing the BOCES-Wide School Safety Plan, input was gathered from both the local police and the state police. We will continue to work closely with the law enforcement agencies, the ambulance departments and fire departments that have jurisdiction over our three campuses. We will also continue to seek resources and support through other state and county agencies.

This Plan seeks to develop a solid framework upon which Putnam Northern Westchester BOCES can provide:

- A safe learning environment for our students
- A thorough and thoughtful process for responding to a wide range of emergency situations.

## Plan Review and Public Comment

The Plan will be reviewed periodically and will be maintained by the BOCES-Wide School Safety Team [see Appendix A – Team Members]. The required annual review of the Plan will be completed, made available for public comment, and formally adopted by the Board of Education pursuant to Commissioner’s Regulation 155.17. A copy of the plan will be available in the School Services Building, 200 BOCES Drive, Yorktown Heights, New York 10598.

While linked to the District-Wide School Safety Plan, 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.

Full copies of the District-Wide School Safety Plan and any amendments will be submitted to the New York State Education Department within 30 days of adoption. Building-Level Emergency Response Plans will be supplied to both local and state police.

## Section II: Risk Prevention and Intervention

Risk Reduction/Prevention and Intervention are comprised of activities that are taken prior to an emergency or disaster to eliminate the possibility or the occurrence, or reduce the impact of an emergency if it does occur.

### Prevention/Intervention Strategies

A BOCES differs in some ways from a school district. While this in no way lessens the concern for creating a safe educational environment for its students, the differences may result in differing strategies to address prevention and intervention issues. For example, some of our programs provide educational services to students who have been identified as having emotional disabilities. By their very nature, such programs focus on strategies designed to help the students cope with stressful situations.

However, all of our programs, despite the range of student needs they address, are concerned with reducing risk of violence through effective prevention and intervention strategies.

## Program Initiatives

Putnam Northern Westchester BOCES, through its Central and Program teams, will examine a wide range of prevention and intervention programs and activities to determine the most appropriate and effective approaches to achieve a safe environment. The programs to be examined will encompass a wide range of strategies including such areas as:

- Preventing aggressive behavior
- Promoting social and emotional competence
- Preventing academic failure
- Developing conflict resolution skills
- Improving communication skills
- Identifying early warning signs
- Improving character education
- Developing personal safety skills

A list of resources that provide information about prevention/intervention strategies will be developed and maintained through the Central Safety/Emergency Response Team and will be available to all Program Teams. Examples of such resources include:

- “Early Warning, Timely Response,” (1998), U.S. Department of Education
- “Safeguarding Our Children: An Action Guide,” (2000), U.S. Department of Education
- “Conflict Resolution Education,” (1996), U. S. Department of Justice
- “Preventing School Problems – Promoting School Success: Strategies and Programs that Work,” (2000), K. Minke and G. Bear
- “Crisis Counseling Guide to Children and Families in Disasters,” (2000), NYS Office of Mental Health
- Excerpts from “Violence Prevention Resource Guide for Connecticut Schools,” (2000), the Character Education Study Group of P/NW BOCES
- “The School Shooter: A Threat Assessment Perspective,” Critical Incident Response Group, FBI Academy
- “Procedures for Assessing the Potential for Violence,” Dallas Public Schools
- *Coping With Crisis: Lessons Learned*, Poland and McCormick, (1999)
- *School Crisis Survival Guide*, Petersen and Straub, (1992)

- *Crisis Prevention and Response: A Collection of NASP Resources*, Canter and Carroll, Eds., (1999)

## Training, Drills, and Exercises

During the 2000-2001 school year, the Putnam Northern Westchester BOCES Central Safety/Emergency Response Team and the Program Safety/Emergency Response Teams worked with a consultant to train the teams and utilize an emergency exercise. Also, the BOCES Safety Coordinator prepared draft lockdown procedures for each building and met with each staff to gather feedback on lockdown procedures. Given the varied nature of the different structures at Putnam Northern Westchester BOCES (e.g., open space in Pines Bridge, large adjacent shops in the Tech Center, raised ranch style houses in the Regional Alternative High School and Walkabout), the procedures must be carefully individualized. Specific plans and strategies are located in program-level safety plans.

All personnel who regularly answer telephones received updated training on protocols for data gathering in the event of a bomb threat made over the telephone. The state police provided the training.

During the 2001-2002 school year, additional training was provided to the Central and Program Safety/Emergency Response Teams to hone their skills in responding to emergencies. As well, additional training will be provided to the entire staff related to our developing safety plans and responding to emergencies.

In addition to the required fire drills and the early dismissal drill, each building will conduct two additional drills during the course of the year to prepare students and staff for responding to other emergencies. Each drill will be assessed carefully, and modifications will be made to existing procedures based on the feedback.

During the 2004-2005 school year, additional training was provided to all staff who regularly answers telephones. This training focused on procedures for handling reports of an emergency or crisis event.

In August 2005, a safety technician joined the BOCES staff. His responsibilities include reviewing program-level safety plans and providing training for the Central and Program Safety/Emergency Response Teams, as well as other members of the staff.

During the 2006-2007 school year, all staff received copies of the Quick Reference Guide version of their Building-Level Emergency Response Plan.

In the 2007-2008 school year, an independent consultant was hired to conduct a campus-wide safety and security audit. In addition, staff was trained in emergency response procedures. In an effort to improve the safety of staff and students, the arrival and dismissal procedures for buses was revised.

During the 2008-2009 school year, all staff received updated copies of the Quick Reference Guide. The revised procedures for lockdown, lockout, shelter in place, and evacuation were reviewed at staff meetings.

In July 2010, a Crisis Steering Committee was created to assess the emergency planning needs of the agency and to make recommendations for training and other safety-related matters. The committee consists of representatives from each program/building. This committee meets regularly to ensure that the agency's emergency response procedures are implemented in a uniform manner. The committee will be responsible for determining future emergency preparedness goals based upon SED regulations and the needs of the BOCES.

### Implementation of School Security

- Each building, as a part of developing the Building-Level Emergency Response Plan, examines specific security needs for their building. Different strategies are required to address needs specific to individual schools as indicated by the programs offered and the age of the students that are served. Administrators conduct a comprehensive security assessment survey of their school's physical design, safety policies, and emergency procedures.
- Each building develops and enforces restrictions about students loitering in parking lots, hallways, bathrooms, and other areas. Restrictions are included in the student handbook/Code of Conduct.
- All Operations and Maintenance staff as well as key office staff in each building have a communication system allowing for communication among key staff in an emergency.
- All employees are required to wear photo ID badges.
- All visitors are required to sign in/out and to wear identification badges to indicate their "visiting" status. School Safety/Emergency Teams meet routinely to review and discuss issues related to school safety and security. In addition, the hiring and screening of all staff is in accordance with District policies and in conformance with SAVE legislation.
- Teachers, teaching assistants, and teacher aides are responsible for general school security. They receive annual training in school security. Private security guards are hired to monitor the building and grounds at the Tech Center.
- Each building has a single point of entry. All other doors are locked, and they are checked periodically throughout the day.

### Vital Educational Agency Information

Each individual educational program within the Putnam Northern Westchester BOCES collects and maintains information such as student enrollment, student personal data, staff numbers for their program and staff assignments. The Human Resources and Administrative Services Department maintains information about the business and home telephone numbers of all employees. The pertinent information for key officials is a part of the BOCES-Wide School Safety Plan.

### Early Detection of Potentially Violent Behaviors

Each year, the BOCES staff attends workshops and training that address issues related to threat assessment strategies, characteristics in children that predict violent behavior, and the appropriate actions to be taken. (Threats are alarming statements or behaviors that give rise to concern about subsequent violence.)

Since BOCES students come from both component and non-component districts, the information we have about students is dependent on the quality of information we receive from the districts. As a part of our effort to focus on early detection, we need to continue to communicate effectively with our districts so that we have immediate and accurate information.