



Mayday, Mayday!

National and state safety resources for school leaders

Gary E. Myrah

Mayday, Mayday! This is the international radio distress signal used by ships and aircraft indicating a loss of control and the crew is facing imminent danger. This may be the sentiment of many as we respond to yet another mass shooting.

Wisconsin school leaders may remember that after the shootings that occurred in Sandy Hook Elementary School in December 2012, a coalition of police, fire, mental health, school administration, parents, students, Wisconsin tribes, teachers, school security and key individuals from the

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Health Services came together to assess our current resources and develop a plan of action.

This team was committed to taking action to improve services to school-age children and youth as well as their families. Since then, many state and national resources have been developed for school leaders.

Please note: Links to these resources and more are available at wasb.org/policy/hot-policy-topics/school-safety.

■ National Resources

- **National Incident Management System (NIMS) Training**
goo.gl/egsf6z

NIMS is an arm of Homeland Security and is a uniform system for agencies to collaborate during a crisis. This system is designed to minimize the chaos following a crisis.

- **Secret Service Safe School Initiative “Project Appleseed”**
goo.gl/jQ1h8Y

Project Appleseed is a national campaign for public school improvement with a focus on school safety led by the Secret Service.

- **National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)** goo.gl/gQzncu

NIMH has an initiative focused on child and adolescent mental health with additional resources and contacts for further service in assisting with students with mental health issues.

- **UCLA School Mental Health Project** goo.gl/qGyyXr

The Center for Mental Health in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA features numerous resources and toolkits for school

leaders and teachers at all levels of education.

- **National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)**
goo.gl/N2QobE

The NASP website has information relevant for all school professionals, not just school psychologists. Featured resources include “School-Based Social-Emotional and Behavior Screening: Using Data to Guide Interventions.”

- **Special Report – Advancing Education Effectiveness: Interconnecting School Mental Health and School-Wide Positive Behavior Support** goo.gl/2TCYlb

This is an extensive document that was prepared by leaders throughout the nation with hopes of creating an Interconnected Systems Framework (ISF). The focus of this monograph is to demonstrate model systems from throughout the nation that have developed a successful network of collaboration of all agencies working together.

■ State Resources

Much work has been done at the state level following the Sandy Hook event in 2012. This includes exten-

sive resources from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and the Wisconsin Office of Children’s Mental Health.

- **DPI: Safe Schools**
goo.gl/Zy71XN
- **DPI: Wisconsin School Mental Health Framework**
goo.gl/3uHbvb
- **Wisconsin Office of Children’s Mental Health** goo.gl/SGp1r8

■ Conclusion

In summary, as a nation, we may still believe that we are facing imminent crisis with our youth and individuals that have been responsible for mass school shootings. The rate of these incidents since Sandy Hook has been alarming and there needs to be more action taken to prevent these from occurring.

This article is intended to offer hope to improve the mental health of our youth. We must remain vigilant to continue to work collaboratively with the expectation that we will create systems that will be sustained for generations, not just years. ■

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