EDA 611: Emergency Plan Reflection

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**Assignment: Candidates will review and evaluate the current school or district emergency plan and complete a 2–3-page reflective paper addressing at least 2 components, strengths or areas to be addressed, of the emergency plan.**

*School Leadership that Works* (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005) states, “Communication refers to the extent to which the school leader establishes strong lines of communication with and between teachers and students.” This quote can extend beyond the instructional context into effective schoolwide communication related to operational procedures and safety protocols. When considering key aspects of an effective communication culture for an emergency response, practice and precision are prerequisites to safety protocol.

 Preparation and practice are key components of an effective emergency response. At the School of Business and Tourism (BT) at the Miguel Contreras Learning Complex, the main office has assembled in every classroom backpacks to be used in case of an emergency. The BT office technicians update the backpacks once a semester with an Emergency Contacts and Classroom Rosters that compile a list of emergency contacts, including local law enforcement, fire department, medical facilities, key school personnel and comprehensive period by period student rosters.. In reflection, the student rosters should be updated quarterly due to changes in schedules and the emergency contacts should be updated annually and cross-referenced to District IOC memorandums and bulletins that modify operational procedures.

 Evacuation Routes should also be included that clearly mark primary and secondary evacuation routes throughout the campus. These emergency exit routes should be used to conduct regular drills to familiarize students, faculty, and staff. These evacuation maps should be updated annually and should be color-coded to identify specific exit routes, arrows for main exit procedures, a key legend to communicate specific parts of the evacuation plan specific to other schools sharing the MCLC campus, and also should place campus aide Radio number call signs in pre-identified areas of supervision. This can be related to Campus Aides and other out-of-classroom personnel designated to provide emergency guidance via Emergency Assembly Points that designate safe assembly points outside the school for students and staff to gather after evacuating the building. In this case, BT usually exits out the main entrance, walks around the block, across a main thoroughfare, and into the Football field across the street. In reflection, depending on the type of emergency, the emergency exit stairwells should be used for quicker access to exit the campus. Obviously, in case of an earthquake, do not use bridges or elevators that can become nonoperational; however, in case of an active shooter, the school will need to identify if it is best to keep the students on campus, corralled in designated areas to count for whereabouts or to exit the building as quickly as possible away from identified danger.

 To mitigate problems it time of varied emergencies, different kinds of regular Training and Drills should be calendared for regular emergency preparedness training sessions and drills. In reflection, there should be a collective opportunity to evaluate and update the safety plan based on feedback and lessons learned from drills. Because there are varying kinds of emergencies, the school should, which we do not presently practice, intercom codes to identify all stakeholders the kind of emergency without divulging information that could lead to danger. Also, leveraging district sponsored communication tools for emergency communication and coordination should be considered and used to provide mass notification quickly. Also, BT should consider best practices related to radio traffic during an event with one lead that can orchestrate the emergency steps without being encumbered by too many people sharing radio communication and/or sharing information over the radio that can aid (e.g., an active shooter to learn the whereabouts of possible victims). A strong Communication Plan helps to establish a communication system, including emergency alerts, intercom announcements, and a system for notifying parents and guardians. In reflection, the use of cell phones by students, faculty, and staff should be articulated beforehand to make sure nothing is leaked to social media that can exacerbate worried parents, etc. As stated, depending ont he kind of emergency, BT should practice Shelter-in-Place Protocol in case of natural emergencies, These steps should clearly outline procedures for sheltering in place during situations like severe weather, earthquakes, etc. The school should identify and designate safe areas within the school buildings. In case of fire, BT should have Fire Safety Protocol that is practiced multiple times a year, conducting regular fire drills to identify exit protocol. Also, BT ensures that fire extinguishers are strategically placed and regularly inspected. However, I am not sure if many faculty/staff know where these extinguishers are located and if the faculty/staff know how to use the extinguishers. BT needs to incorporate more incremental opportunities to educate students and staff on fire safety procedures.

Part of the different kinds of emergencies, Lockdown Procedures should be very clear and understood by all main emergency personnel, typically by out-of-classroom personnel and administration. In reflection, since we have multiple schools with different administrators on one campus, the last emergency was very dysfunctional as each of the administrators were deciding on conflicting lockdown procedures, There should be one administrator in charge of safety and security for the entire campus. There is definitely a need to develop and communicate clear lockdown procedures in case of security threats. This protocol should include agreeing on classroom lockdown procedures that might include turing off all lights, barricading doors with furniture, moving away from exits and windows, and maintaining silence, even on social media, until administration gives further notice over the intercom or whatever communication tool. Also, every classroom should routinely have checks to make sure each classroom can be locked quickly in time of an emergency. We recently placed emergency stops on each door to ensure that classrooms can be secured from the inside.

BT provides the backpacks that include all relevant Emergency Supplies including a porta-a-potty in the classroom for obvious reasons. The emergency supplies should be able to maintain emergency supply kits in key locations, including first aid supplies, flashlights, blankets, and other essentials.

Defibrillator and First Aid Training should be mandatory for every faculty and staff to provide basic first aid training for staff members and select students. Bt should also provide and identify that every classroom and main office have first aid kits readily available. Also, training and whereabouts of narcan supplies should be a concentration since the epidemic of fentanyl is plaguing our students.

 Lastly, one thing we do have in place that is exceptional is an active Crisis Team with identified personnel that meet bi-monthly to discuss specific student, faculty, and staff supports that can be offered in times of crisis. One thing the Crisis Team really focuses on is providing Mental Health Support to include provisions for providing psychological first aid and mental health support in the aftermath of emergencies. Just recently, a campus-wide Crisis Team was called together and mobilized to respond to the arrest of a key faculty member that impacted all stakeholders. The district’s metal health department representatives sent to the campus experts to provide mental wellness resources, supports, and opportunities to process this emotionally intense circumstance.

All in all, BT has massive room to grow since there are many unaccompanied exits that students exit and then enter again via the main Welcome Center. This lack of protocol followed by really no punishment for exiting the campus without permission is very troublesome. Also, as stated, BT needs to be very specific with strategic practice to coordinate a strong communication plan so that there is clarity and efficiency among all stakeholders.

References

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