

## School Safety Assessment Services

***"Without safe schools, it is difficult, if not impossible for learning to take place..."***

*Ronald D. Stephens, Ed.D.  
Executive Director  
National School Safety Center*

... No task is more important than creating safe learning environments for our nation's children. A safe school is in place when students can learn and teachers can teach in a warm and welcoming environment free of threats, intimidation, violence and fear. "

A comprehensive assessment of the safety of students and staff and the security of the campus is critical to providing a safe and effective school. The National School Safety Center (NSSC) is pleased to offer its **School Safety Assessment** program and related services to K-12 schools throughout the United States. NSSC is an experienced leader in this field of service.

### **What is a School Safety Assessment?**

A school safety assessment is a strategic evaluation and facilities audit used to identify emerging and potential school safety problems. These activities identify the practices and places that are overlooked due a lack of understanding or an assumption that they are safe and trouble-free.

During an assessment, key factors are examined to ascertain their direct impact on the educational mission, student and staff safety, school climate, school attendance, and overall campus security. These factors may include:

- Existing school safety plans
- Crisis response and disaster mitigation plans
- Anti-terrorist measures
- The condition and safety of the facilities
- The use of environmental design to prevent crime and disruption
- School safety policies, procedures and practices
- School discipline practices
- Employee recruiting, selection, supervision and training practices
- The presence of gangs, weapons, drug and alcohol abuse
- The prevalence of bullying, hazing, hate-motivated behaviors and other forms of harassment
- Social climate (staff, student and parents)
- School/law enforcement partnerships and other safety-promoting partnerships
- Emerging school safety trends, issues and concerns

### **Why Should Your School Conduct a School Safety Assessment?**

Conducting a school safety assessment is a sound strategy that will:

- Promote student safety and academic excellence
- Identify and manage safety and security risks
- Help minimize liability from lawsuits
- Foster the confidence and support of parents and the community
- Provide critical data and insight for the development of school safety grant proposals
- Help schools re-tool existing crisis response plans to address the new threats and homeland security needs and issues
- Help prioritize school safety and security needs and the use of limited resources
- Heighten awareness about state of the art school safety practices
- Provide a qualified, professional outside opinion and evaluation of school safety issues
- In some states, an assessment fulfills the requirements of the law.

A school safety assessment highlights and reinforces what your school is doing right to keep students safe and provides direction in those areas that need improvement.

### **What is Included in a School Safety Assessment?**

A school site assessment typically consists of:

- ✓ A facilities audit
- ✓ A review of your school's comprehensive safe school plan
- ✓ A review of existing plans for crisis response and disaster mitigation
- ✓ A review of student codes of conduct
- ✓ An analysis of district policies related to student safety and management issues and their compliance with federal and state law
- ✓ An analysis of crime prevention through environmental design efforts
- ✓ Student input
- ✓ Discussions with key administrative personnel and local law enforcement
- ✓ A review of recent media activity
- ✓ An analysis of recent school crime and disorder incidents
- ✓ Commendations for effective practices and programs

A preliminary report, including an executive summary, with findings and recommendations will be sent to the school's designee within 10 working days following the site visit. A final report will follow soon after. Your school leadership will decide how and when the report will be shared with the school community.

### **No Child Left Behind**

Parents, citizens and lawmakers are demanding to know what schools are doing to provide for the safety of their children. Schools are now charged with providing safe schools or they risk being identified as "persistently dangerous" in accordance with the No Child Left Behind Act. Under this Act, students are given the option to transfer to a safe school if they attend a persistently dangerous school or are the victim of a violent crime at school. Schools that want to avoid losing students under the provisions of this Act can use a school safety assessment to demonstrate their commitment to:

- Protecting and keeping students
- Resolving school safety concerns
- Preventing and mitigating risks

### **Could NSSC Train Us to Do Our Own Assessments?**

**New!**

Yes. NSSC will design and bring a School Safety Assessment training program to your district, thus building your district's capacity to address your assessment needs, schedules and budgets.

Some states now mandate schools to conduct periodic safety assessments. For example, the State of Virginia requires school site assessments every two years. California requires schools to review and update their safe school plans annually. Schools that must comply with such requirements may be interested in learning how to conduct their own school safety assessments,

Contact NSSC to learn more about this exciting new option.

### **How Do I Schedule an NSSC School Safety Assessment and What Does It Cost?**

Generally, an assessment should be scheduled at least six to eight weeks in advance. However, if you have an urgent need, NSSC's Senior Staff will make every effort to work with you in a timely manner.

The cost for a School Safety Assessment is based on the scope of the requested services, the size of the on-site assessment team, and the number and location of the schools to be assessed.

To schedule an assessment or for more information, contact NSSC at 805/373-9977.



### **What Can I Expect from the National School Safety Center?**

Established by Presidential Mandate in 1984, NSSC is the only professional school safety organization that has been in continuous operation for over 19 years. Collectively representing over 100 years of school safety experience, the NSSC assessment team is comprised of experts and practitioners representing the following disciplines: school administration, classroom instruction, law enforcement, education law, school security, and mental health.

NSSC is the national leader in conducting school safety assessments. You can expect a professional, thoughtful and appropriate relationship with our organization. The NSSC's assessment team members are credible, competent, responsive, dependable and courteous. Most recently, NSSC has conducted School Safety Assessments for:

- New York City Public Schools
- Denver Public Schools
- Atlanta Public Schools
- Dallas Independent School District
- Oakland Public Schools
- Fort Smith, Arkansas Public Schools
- Heath High School, Paducah Kentucky
- Pearl High School, Pearl Mississippi
- Fairbanks Public Schools, Fairbanks Alaska
- Broward County Public Schools
- University of Chicago Laboratory School
- DeKalb County Public Schools
- Charlotte County Public Schools
- Phoenix Country Day School
- St. Margaret's Episcopal School
- Fresno Unified School District

#### **For more information, contact:**

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