





**Involving
Parents in
School Safety**

Lisa Mack, Ohio PTA President &
Sheila Ragland, Ohio PTA President-Elect





**Prevention/
Mitigation**

- Threat Assessment
- Programs
- Know the Building
- Know the Community
- Bring together regional, local, and school leaders, and others
- Establish clear lines of communication





**Assess the
School Climate**



Four Essential Dimensions of School Climate

Safety



- Rules and Norms
- Physical Safety
- Social and Emotional Security



Four Essential Dimensions of School Climate

Teaching and Learning



- Support for learning
- Social and civic learning



Four Essential Dimensions of School Climate

Interpersonal Relationships



- Respect for diversity
- Social support – adults
- Social support – students





Four Essential Dimensions of School Climate

Institutional Environment

- School connectedness/engagement
- Physical surroundings





School Data: Measuring Current School Climate





Existing Data

- What existing data is available?
- How is the data measured?
- Are there existing survey results regarding student and/or parent perceptions?





Gathering New Data

- Does the school district require active parental consent for student surveys?
- What are preferred survey distribution methods for student surveys and parent surveys?
- Are there existing guidelines/ templates for survey questions?



Policies: How the School Responds

- What are the current school policies addressing school climate?
- How are these policies communicated to families and students?
- How consistently are these policies implemented?
- How can families support these policies at home and in school?

Ohio School Climate Guidelines



The Ohio School Climate Guidelines describe how schools can create environments where every student feels welcomed, respected and motivated to learn.

Ohio School Climate Guidelines



The nine guidelines are summarized here:

1. Schools, parents and communities together bolster academic achievement.
2. Integrate students' social and emotional needs into the district's school improvement framework.
3. Evaluate the learning environment and ensure its ongoing improvement.





Ohio School Climate Guidelines

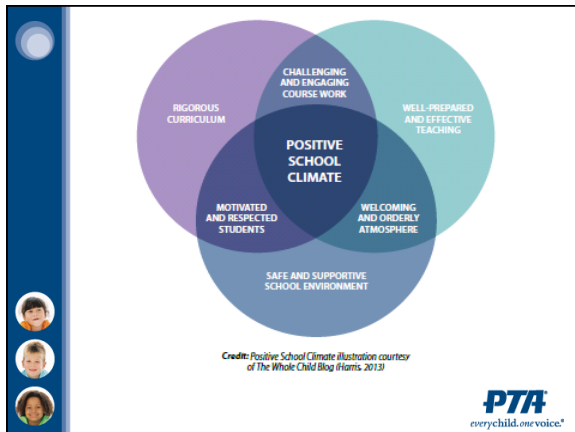
4. Maintain caring, engaging and well-managed classrooms.
5. Deal with threats to safety for a better focus on learning.
6. Teach social and emotional skills to foster student success.
7. Involve parents and families to maximize student learning.



Ohio School Climate Guidelines

8. Connect students with schools by empowering them in responsible roles.
9. Provide high-quality food service and emphasize physical activity.







Standard 1 Welcoming All Families

Goal 1: Creating a Welcoming Climate

- Developing personal relationships
- Creating a family-friendly atmosphere
- Providing opportunities for volunteering

Goal 2: Building a Respectful, Inclusive School Community

- Respecting all families
- Removing economic obstacles to participation
- Ensuring accessible programming



PTA
everychild.onevoice®

Standard 2

Communicating Effectively

Goal 1: Sharing Information Between School and Families

- Using multiple communication paths
- Surveying families to identify issues and concerns
- Having access to the principal
- Providing information on current issues
- Facilitating connections among families

Standard 3


Supporting Student Success

Goal 1: Sharing Information About Student Progress

- Ensuring parent-teacher communication
- Linking student work to academic standards
- Using standardized test results to increase achievement
- Sharing school progress

Goal 2: Supporting Learning by Engaging Families

- Engaging families in classroom learning
- Developing family ability to strengthen learning at home
- Promoting after-school learning



Standard 4


Speaking Up for Every Child

Goal 1: Understanding How the School System Works

- Understanding how the school and district operate
- Understanding rights and responsibilities under federal and state laws
- Learning about resources
- Resolving problems and conflicts

Goal 2: Empowering Families to Support Their Own and Other Children's Success in School

- Developing families' capacity to be effective advocates
- Planning for the future
- Smoothing transitions
- Engaging in civic advocacy for student achievement



Standard 5 Sharing Power

Goal 1: Strengthening the Family's Voice in Shared Decision Making

- Having a voice in all decisions that affect children



- Addressing equity issues



- Developing parent leadership



Goal 2: Building Families' Social and Political Connections

- Connecting families to local officials

- Developing an effective parent involvement organization that represents all families



Standard 6 Collaborating with Community

Goal 1: Connecting the School with Community Resources

- Linking to community resources
- Organizing support from community partners



- Turning the school into a hub of community life



- Partnering with community groups to strengthen families and support student success





What Parents Can Do to Help Prevent School Violence

- Demonstrate interest in their own children's lives
- Keep open communication between their children and them
- Discuss policies with their children
- Talk about impact of violence on TV, video games, movies, and books
- Discuss how to solve problems peacefully





What Parents Can Do to Help Prevent School Violence

- Talk about the value of differences
- Model appropriate behavior
- Monitor children's behavior
- Take an active role in children's education
- Get to know children's friends





Take Action As a School Community

- Brainstorm ways to address concerns at home, in school and in the community
- Hold a parent forum



Preparedness

- Identify and involve stakeholders
- Consider existing efforts
- Determine what crises the plan will address
- Define roles and responsibilities
- Develop methods for communicating with the staff, students, families, and the media





School Emergency Operations Plans

Comprehensive Plan that addresses response to:

- Severe weather & natural disasters
- Chemical accidents
- Medical emergencies
- School Violence
- Various types of terrorists threats

PTA
everychild.one voice.®

School Emergency Operations Plans



According to Ohio Revised Code 3313.536 (HB 422), each administrator should include:

- Community law enforcement and safety officials
- Parents of students assigned to building
- Teachers and nonteaching employees assigned to building

PTA
everychild.one voice.®

School Emergency Operations Plans



- Include parents and guardians in the process of outlining responsibilities that has an assignment in the plan
- Prior to start of school, inform students and parents of notification procedures

What Staff Should Be a Part of the District Team?



Directors:

- Security or law enforcement
- Building and grounds
- Maintenance
- Transportation
- Supply services
- Community or public relations
- Risk management and safety


What Staff Should Be a Part of the District Team?

- District level secretary or receptionist
- School psychologists and social workers
- Personnel with areas of expertise (i.e., CPR, first aid, etc.)


What Community Partners Should Be a Part of the District Team?

- Emergency Medical Services
- Social Service Agencies
- City/County government
- Medical & mental health professionals
- Emergency management agency
- Business representatives
- Clergy
- Parents
- Local American Red Cross




What Staff Should Be Part of the School Emergency Response Team?

- Principal
- Counselor
- Nurse
- Head custodian
- Office secretary
- Vocational education teacher
- Chemistry teacher
- School security or law enforcement personnel



What Staff Should Be Part of the School Emergency Response Team?

- School psychologist
- Social worker
- Special education teacher
- Transportation coordinator
- Cafeteria Manager Personnel with areas of expertise
- Staff located in strategic positions in the building



What Staff Should Be Part of the School Emergency Response Team?

- School Teams may also consider community representatives such as:
- Police, Fire, Emergency Medical
- Social Service Agencies
- Mental Health
- Clergy
- Parents



FERPA – Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

- Requires written consent before disclosing student's personal information
- Allows schools to take key steps to maintain school safety
- Must communicate to parents in school policy or information who serves at "law enforcement unit"





Why Include Parents

- Helps form relationships and creates trust
- Can help identify challenges from home perspective
- Protects parent volunteers
- Can help communicate in layman's terms





Benefits of Including Parents

- Allows to speak same language
- Improves internal and external flow of information
- Helps provide safer school community
- Creates buy-in
- Can be spokespersons to communicate to other parents





How to Include Parents

- Make part of planning committee
- Work with law enforcement and others to communicate with parents about what is being done to keep their children safe
- Provide a means of communicating in event of an emergency





How to Include Parents

- Involve in safety walk-through, drill, or training event
- Inform about the plan, objectives, and need for it.
- Identify parents who are willing to volunteer in case of emergency and include them in the preparation efforts and training





Ways to Communicate with Parents

- Social Media
- School newsletter
- Local public access media
- Website
- PTA or Parent Group
- Letters
- Reverse 911





Ways to Communicate with Parents

- Notices sent home
- Phone Trees
- E-mail Trees
- Radio and TV Stations
- Text Message Trees





Parent Considerations Before a Crisis

- Draft letters to parents
- Create talking points for parents
- Enumerate steps the school and school district will take to handle the situation
- Develop list of community resources
- Secure contact information for families and emergency contacts





Things Parents Should Know Before a Crisis

- School and district staff and emergency responders need to be able to do their jobs
- School phones will be needed to manage the situation
- Wait for instructions on student release rather than rushing to the school





Things Parents Should Know Before a Crisis

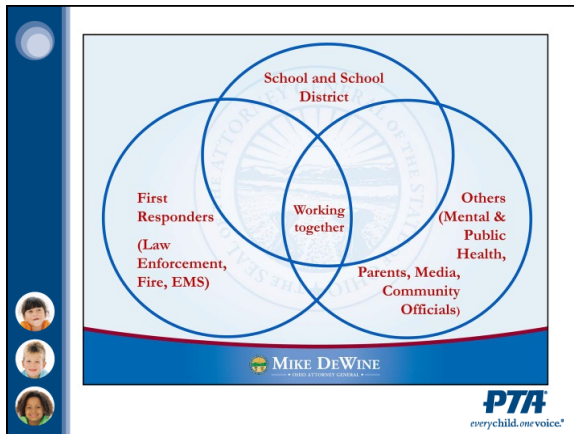
- Emergency responders need the area clear to do their job
- Families will be reunited with their children only after emergency responders determine that a safe student release is possible
- In most cases, children are safer in the school building



Response

- Expect to be surprised
- Assess the situation and choose the appropriate response
- Trust leadership
- Communicate accurate and appropriate information





Communicating with the Family During Crisis

- Prepare a telephone voice recording with important information
- Make arrangements with TV and radio stations to release such information
- In the case of an extended crisis, write a letter to families each day to update them

PTA
everychild.one voice.®

Communicating with the Family During the Crisis



During a school-level emergency event, the school may need to:

- Utilize automated telecommunication system
- Move students to an alternative site and notify parents where to meet their children

PTA
everychild.one voice.®



Communicating with the Family During the Crisis

- Tell parents exactly what is known to have happened
- Implement the plan to manage phone calls, traffic control and meet with parents who arrive at school.





Communicating with the Family After the Crisis

- Schedule an open question-and-answer meeting for parents
- Create Information Sheet
- Safely begin reunification procedures as soon as possible





Guidelines for Families After the Crisis

- Remain calm
- Attend to children's reactions
- Return children to normal routine as quickly as possible
- Refer media to the school spokesperson
- Attend community meetings. Families will receive invaluable information and support





Recovery

- Plan for recovery in the preparedness phase
- Keep students, families, and media informed
- Provide assessment of emotional needs of staff, students, families, and responders
- Evaluate





Parents' Roles

- Prepare
- Be Alert
- Be Honest
- Share Your Perceptions





Listen

- Listen
- Pay attention





Protect

- Answer questions simply and honestly
- Try to clear up any confusion
- Provide opportunities for your child to talk, draw, and play
- Learn resources available
- Think as a child
- Develop a family safety plan





Protect

- Talk to your child about what is going on to make him or her safe
- Limit access to television and newspapers
- Talk about common reactions that adults and children may have
- Maintain “normal” daily tasks and activities as much as possible




Protect

- Encourage your child to express his or her thoughts and feelings
- Take a break
- Find ways for your child to feel helpful to your family and others
- Find other things you do that make your child feel better




Connect

- Find people who can offer support to your child and your family
- Keep communication open with others involved in your child's life
- Check out school and community resources
- Spend extra time with your child and family




Connect

- Encourage after-school activities for your child.
- Have a family meeting
- Create a Family Communications Plan
- Set small goals with your child
- Build on your child's strengths
- Remind your child that a disaster is rare
- Seek out helpful information



The following statement was said by a parent of a child in a school near the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001:

“Children’s reactions are reflections of their parents. Too many parents expose children to their every emotion: fear, anxiety, anger, worry, etc. The fact is that children want parents want to be heroes. If parents can be strong, this will benefit their recovery.”



Contact Us

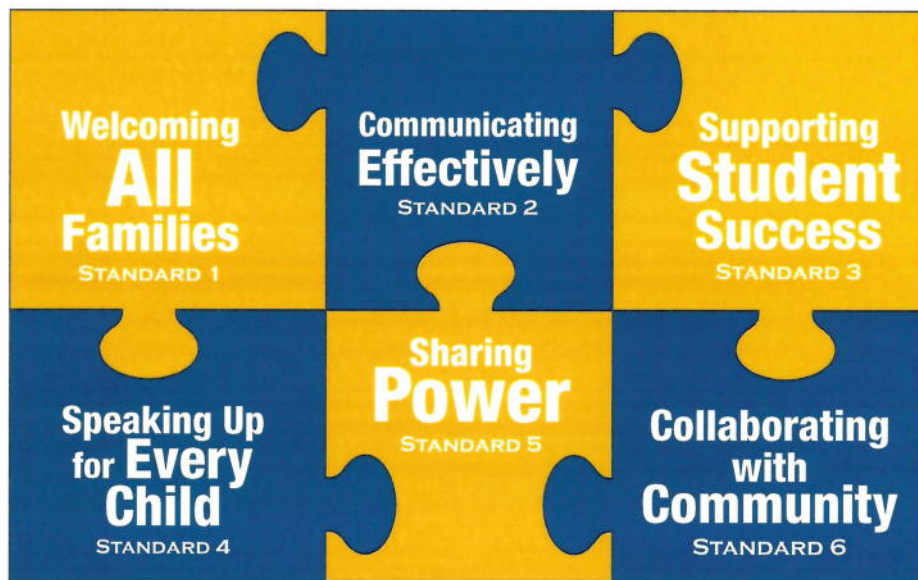
Ohio PTA
1-800-699-6628
office@ohiopta.org
www.ohiopta.org

November 2014

PTA
everychild.one voice[®]



National Standards for Family-School Partnerships



Connect for Respect embodies these standards:

- You will **welcome all families** and encourage **effective, two-way communication** by inviting all members of the school community to voice their concerns about school climate through surveys and at a *Connect for Respect* forum.
- You will **collaborate with the community** by engaging a wide variety of partners in the solution.
- PTA leaders will **share power** by teaming with student leaders to develop and implement their action plan.
- You will not only **speak up for the safety and well-being of every child**—you will empower students to stand up for themselves and their peers.
- As you create socially supportive school cultures, you will help to create environments that **support every student's long-term success**.

For more information about PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships, including an implementation guide and assessment forms, visit the National PTA website: [PTA.org/programs](https://www.pta.org/programs).