



To: Elementary and Secondary School Principals
Date: July 1, 2020
From: Christian Riso
Re: Guidelines for “School Safety Plans”

Section 155.17 of NYS Education law, which applies to nonpublic schools and our Catholic schools, (http://www.p12.nysed.gov/facplan/Laws_Regs/8NYCRR155.htm#_155_17_Schl_Safety_Plans) states:

(a) **Development of school safety plans.** Every [public and nonpublic school] shall adopt by July 1, 2001, and shall update by July 1st for the 2002-2003 through the 2015-2016 school years and by September 1st for the 2016-2017 school year and each subsequent September 1st thereafter, a comprehensive district-wide school safety plan and building-level emergency response plans regarding crisis intervention and emergency response and management. [Portion Removed] Such plans shall be developed by a district-wide school safety team and a building-level emergency response team... and shall be in a form developed by the commissioner in consultation with the Division of Criminal Justice Services, the superintendent of the State Police and any other appropriate State agencies. Each district-wide school safety plan and building-level emergency response plan shall be reviewed by the appropriate school safety team on at least an annual basis, and updated as needed.

I am sure all of our schools already have an “Emergency Plan” or “Crisis Manual” since Tom Peters previously sent out advice on these plans and offered templates in 2001 and 2007. New language referring to the “School Safety Plan” was introduced in 2011 and was updated in 2016 and then again in 2019. If you have not already adjusted your plan to include the newly required information, please consider using the attached template as you review and adjust your plan.

The attached document, “Guidelines for Catholic Schools’ School Safety Plans 2020-2021”, is a template that includes all sections of a “School Safety Plan” required by both building-level and district-wide plans under the NYS Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) legislation and can be found online at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ss/ssae/schoolsafety/save/> and http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ss/documents/QuickGuideEmerPlanningMarch2018_final.pdf. All sections should be included in your individual school’s “School Safety Plan”. The framework should be maintained as your School Safety Team adjusts the language to fit your school setting. The examples included are potential tools and strategies for your use and by no means should be considered the only tools and strategies available. They may be utilized by themselves or with other strategies as you deem prudent. It should be understood that your school might require the use of additional strategies beyond those illustrated in this document depending upon your individual circumstances.

NYS asks that you review and adjust your “School Safety Plan” each school year by September 1st. I have been recommending that this be done over the summer so that it is ready to present to your school community near the start of the school year. If you anticipate utilizing a more rigorous review of your plan you may want to delay sharing it with your school community until closer to October 1. Please remember that only Part One is shared with the community while Part Two is a confidential document for internal use only.

Please call me if you have any questions (716-847-5511).