Wynantskill Union Free School District

District-Wide School Safety Plan

Commissioner's Regulation 155.17

2024 – 2025 School year

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Wynantskill Union Free School District
District-Wide Safety Plan

Introduction

Districts are required to develop a District-Wide School Safety Plan designed to prevent or minimize the effects of serious violent incidents and emergencies and to facilitate the coordination of the district with local and county resources in the event of such incidents or emergencies. The district-wide plan is responsive to the needs of all schools within the district (public and non-public) and is consistent with the more detailed emergency response plans required at the school Building-Level. Districts are at risk of a wide variety of acts of violence, natural, and technological disasters. To address these threats, the State of New York has enacted the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) law. This component of Project SAVE is a comprehensive planning effort that addresses risk reduction/prevention, response, and recovery with respect to a variety of emergencies in the school district and its school.

Section I: General Considerations and Planning Guidelines

The Wynantskill UFSD supports the SAVE Legislation and has engaged in its planning process. The Superintendent of Schools encourages and advocates the on-going district-wide cooperation and support of Project SAVE.

It is the intention of the Wynantskill UFSD to provide for a safe and secure learning and teaching environment for our students and staff. This mission statement has formed the basis for our district safety policy and plan. The mission statement and supporting policies will be implemented through the following means:

- Development of a detailed building-level emergency response plan for the Wynantskill UFSD Gardner-Dickinson School.
- Establishment of policies for responding to threats of violence and other emergencies concerning school district property, facilities and premises.
- Establishment of policies for responding to acts of violence and other emergencies by students, teachers, administrators, staff or visitors. This may include a zero-tolerance policy in some cases of violence and other emergencies in our schools.
- Establishment of policies and procedures for contacting law enforcement officials and parents in the event of a violent or other emergency incident.
- Establishment of policies and procedures for school building security and training of students and staff in school security.
- Establishment of comprehensive multi-hazard emergency response protocols for responding to violence, bomb threats, hostage situations, intrusions, kidnappings, and other emergencies.
- Developed strategies to improve communication regarding the reporting of violent incidents.
- Rensselaer County Sheriffs Deputy SRO will be in the building.

A. Purpose

The Wynantskill UFSD District-Wide School Safety Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17. At the direction of the Board of Education, the Superintendent of the Wynantskill UFSD appointed a District-Wide School Safety Team and charged it with the development and maintenance of the District-Wide School Safety Plan.

B. Chief Emergency Officer

The Wynantskill UFSD appoints a Chief Emergency Officer. The designee is responsible for ensuring the Building-Level Emergency Response Plan is in place and that all requirements for the plan set forth by New York State Department of Education are followed. The designee is responsible for ensuring that the details of the plan is understood by faculty and staff.

C. Identification of District Teams

The Wynantskill UFSD appoints a District-Wide School Safety Team annually. The members of the team and their positions or affiliations are as follows:

- Superintendent
- Principal
- School Counselor
- Director of Facilities
- Supervisor of Transportation
- School Nurse
- Parent Organization
- Wynantskill Fire Department
- North Greenbush Police Department
- Questar III Health & Safety Specialist
- SRO
- Other school personnel including lunch aides, teacher organizations, etc.

D. Concept of Operations

The District-Wide School Safety Plan is directly linked to the Building-Level Emergency Response Plan. These plans complement each other. The District-Wide Plan contains protocols that guide the implementation of the Gardner-Dickinson Building Safety Committee and creation of specific emergency response protocols. The District-Wide Safety Committee reviews the Building-Level Emergency Response Plan annually and makes revisions to reflect current hazards. This committee recommends that all emergencies at the Wynantskill UFSD will follow the Gardner-Dickinson Building-Level Emergency Response Plan and will use town, county, and state resources as needed.

E. Plan Review

Copies of the District-Wide School Safety Plan and any amendments will be submitted to the New York State Education Department and will be placed on the district website.

This plan and the Building-Level Emergency Response Plan will be reviewed as needed during the course of the year and will be maintained by the District-Wide School Safety Team. A review of the plan will be completed at least annually. A copy of the District-Wide School Safety Plan will be available at the District Office. The Building-Level Emergency Response plan must remain confidential. The Building-Level Emergency Response plan will be submitted to the New York State Education Department, the New York State Police, and local emergency response agencies as required by law.

Section II: Risk Reduction/Prevention and Intervention

A. Prevention/Intervention Strategies

Program Initiatives

The Wynantskill UFSD and its community have programs and activities that are used for improving communications which include the following:

- Use of staff trained in de-escalating or other strategies to diffuse potentially violent situations (mediation handle with care)
- Character Education
- Discipline Referrals
- TSL Kids Crew Program
- Fire Safety Prevention
- Bus Safety Programs
- Pre-K-8 Guidance Programs
- School Clubs
- District Threat assessment in conjunction with Rensselaer County TAM

Training, Drills, and Exercises

The District provides multi-hazard school safety-training for staff and students, including strategies for implementing training related to multi-hazards. The District has established a full school safety training for students and staff. Staff receive emergency response training from local law enforcement Drills for Lockdowns, Evacuations, and other emergency situations are routinely practiced in conjunction with local law enforcement and Questar III Health & Safety personnel.

Students and staff are dismissed fifteen minutes early each November and the student emergency evacuation/drop-off plan is implemented. The District, in cooperation with local emergency response agencies, also conducts one Emergency Management Team exercise each year during Fire Prevention Week.

The District conducts twelve emergency drills each school year. The twelve emergency drills are comprised of eight fire and four lockdown drills at various times and with various conditions as required by Education Law § 807. A combination of eight drills is to be achieved by December 31 of each school year. The remaining four drills must be achieved by summer recess. Local law enforcement assists in training, drills, and exercises as needed. The result of such training, drills, and exercises are assessed by the District-Wide Safety Committee.

- Drills should be completed on different days of the week and during different times of the school day. Drills shall be conducted in a trauma-informed, developmentally, and age appropriate manner and shall not include props, actors, simulations, or other tactics intended to mimic a school shooting, incident of violence, or other emergency. Parental or guardian notification of drills must occur one week prior to any emergency drill.

Implementation of School Security

The District has established policies, procedures related to school building security. Physical security measures have also been implemented. These security measures include the following:

- Visitor badge/sign-in/out procedures
- Secure entrance vestibule/waiting area
- Video surveillance
- Locked doors during school hours
- Multi-hazard emergency response protocols
- District SRO

Vital Educational Agency Information

The District maintains contact information for local schools, local emergency contacts and Questar III Health and Safety personnel.

B. Early Detection of Potentially Violent Behaviors

The following violence prevention and intervention strategies are implemented in the Wynantskill Union Free School District:

Violence Prevention:

The following policies and procedures are in effect to facilitate the early detection of potentially violent behaviors, including but not limited to identification of family, community and persons deemed appropriate to receive such information:

- Annual review and adoption of codes of conduct for students, employees and visitors to school premises. These codes of conduct include enforceable rules, clear consequences, due process, and explicitly defined roles, rights and responsibilities of the parties.
- All students participate in multi-hazard school safety training on an annual basis.

- Classroom teaching practices and learning activities that conduct classrooms with agreed upon rules, reinforce positive social behaviors, foster dispute resolution with dare and respect rather than coercion and intimidation, include cooperative learning techniques, rich and varied learning activities, and authentic assessments promote more peaceful school climate.
- Provide Academic Support Services in reading, writing, and math to improve student achievement.
- Alternative education opportunities may be provided for more students with histories of disruptive or violent behavior. Such programming can serve students transitioning from mental health or juvenile justice facilities, those experiencing extreme family dysfunction and are unable to attend regular school settings.
- School/community support and coordination of family/home programs that offer support to families and students, through the Guidance Office.

Early Warning Signs:

It is not always possible to predict behavior that will lead to violence. In some situations, and for some youth, different combinations of events, behaviors, and emotions may lead to aggressive rage or violent behavior toward self or others. School personnel and students as well as parents are often in a good position to observe these early warning signs.

None of these signs alone is sufficient for prediction of aggression and violence. Moreover, it is inappropriate - and potentially harmful - to use the early warning signs as a checklist against which to match individual children. Rather, the warning signs are offered only as an aid in identifying and referring children who may need help. A good rule of thumb is to assume that these warning signs, especially when - they are presented in combination, indicate a need for further analysis to determine an appropriate intervention.

It is the policy of the Wynantskill Union Free School District that staff and students are informed about and trained in the recognition and use of early warning signs only for identification and referral purposes but not for diagnostic purposes. Behavioral screening is routinely conducted as part of our Comprehensive Response to Intervention Plan (RTI). Only trained and licensed professionals should make diagnoses in consultation with the child's parents or guardian.

Reporting Early Warning Signs:

In the event students and staff observe a student manifesting early warning signs, the following procedures should be followed: Contact the Principal to report the information about the student manifesting such signs. The Principal shall maintain a record of each reported incident. In cases that do pose imminent danger, the Principal or Guidance Counselor will contact the School Psychologist or

other qualified professional, who assists with the district's responsibility in addressing the situation immediately. The child's family should also be contacted.

Local Law Enforcement:

Local law enforcement agencies are contacted at the discretion of the Superintendent or Principal, after consideration of mitigating and aggravating circumstances, in the event of a crime having been committed on school property; there is an imminent threat that a crime will be committed on school property; there is an imminent threat to the health, safety or welfare of any member of the school community.

Emergency Services and Local Governments:

The procedures for obtaining the assistance of emergency services providers and local government officials during an emergency situation are described in the Building-Level Emergency Response Plan.

Availability and Coordination of District Resources:

District resources used during an emergency are listed in the Building-Level Emergency Response Plan.

District Responsibility to Other Educational Agencies:

The Superintendent or designee takes appropriate steps to secure the following information about each educational agency within the district: number of students, number of staff, transportation requirements associated with the evacuation of each facility, and the telephone numbers of key officials of each agency. The Superintendent updates such information at least annually. In the event of an emergency in the educational agency, including private and parochial schools within the District, and upon notification of such, the Superintendent coordinates the delivery and availability of such services and resources as requested, depending upon the nature of the emergency.

Public Information and Medial Relations:

The Superintendent or Principal shall deal with the news media in the event of any school emergency as necessary.

Hazard Identification:

The District identifies all types of potential emergencies and details response actions for them in the Building-Level Emergency Response Plan.

Section III: Response

A. Notification and Activation (Internal and External Communication)

The Superintendent of Schools will contact all appropriate officials by dialing 911 Emergency in the event of a serious violent incident or emergency.

In the event of an emergency or impending emergency, the Superintendent notifies all educational agencies within the district of an emergency. This system includes the following possible forms of communication: telephone tree, email, intercom system, local media outlets, and other means as appropriate. The District contacts parents, guardians or persons in parental relations to students in the event of a serious violent incident or an early dismissal by using our emergency notification phone and e-mail contact information cards provided by parents using the School Messenger notification system. The District also uses local media to notify the public and parents in the event of an early dismissal closing.

The Wynantskill UFSD works with Questar III Health and Safety and Questar III Communication Services on these matters.

B. Multi-Hazard Emergency Response

Multi-hazard emergency response protocols are located in the Building-Level Emergency Response Plan**.**

Response to Acts of Violence: Implied or Direct Threats

The District will use the following procedures when responding to implied or direct threats of violence by students, teachers, school personnel and visitors to our school:

- Immediately inform the Principal of implied or direct threats
- Determine level of threat with the Superintendent
- Contact appropriate law enforcement and emergency service personnel, if necessary
- Monitor situation, adjust response as appropriate, use the Building-Level Emergency Response Plan, and Building Safety Team, if necessary

Section IV: Recovery

A. District Support for Buildings

The District will involve the Questar Health & Safety Director/Coordinator and the Rensselaer County Director of Public Safety as well as other federal, state and local resources as needed to assist with security and safety efforts in our school building and on its campus, during and post emergency.

B. Disaster Mental Health Services

The District will involve Questar III and Rensselaer County Mental Health to assist with mental health issues identified post emergency and to assist in working through both short- and long-term needs identified.

Section V: Additional District Plans for Reference

A. Public Health Emergency – Continuity of Operations Plan

The District Public Health Emergency – Continuity of Operations Plan is located on the Wynantskill UFSD website at the following location:

https://www.wynantskillufsd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Wynantskill-Public-Health-Emergency-Continuation-of-Operations-Plan.pdf

B. Remote Learning Plan:

Wynantskill UFSD Remote Learning Plan

The Wynantskill UFSD will offer a remote learning model should we encounter an unforeseen schoolwide closure due to emergency conditions. Snow days, in excess to the 3 built into the district calendar, will be considered an emergency condition and the remote plan will be activated.

Further information can be found here:

Remote Instruction in Emergency Conditions FAQ | New York State Education Department

How will Remote Learning work?

- In order to access instruction from home, students must login with their issued Chromebook computer.
- Teachers will use Google Classroom or Seesaw to compile lesson materials and assignments for each content area/class.
  - The schedule for students will be a combination of both synchronous (live meet with the teacher and students participating) and asynchronous (independent online work/activites for students to complete) instruction.
  - During live Meet sessions, the video should be on so that the teacher can see your child, unless there is a situation that makes this impossible or difficult.
  - Audio should be off unless your child needs to ask a question. This reduces background noise that may interfere with classroom instruction.

Expectations for Students

Students participating through remote learning continue to be members of our school community and it is expected that they adhere to the same expectations as those students who are physically present in school. These expectations include:

    - Students must log in to their classroom's Google Meet and Google Classroom on time, every day according to the schedule provided. Attendance will be taken.
- Students should complete all work assigned and turn their work in as directed by their teachers. Assigned work will be graded.
    - Students should be seated in a chair and/or at a table or desk if possible.
    - Students should be appropriately dressed during the classroom sessions.
    - Students should refrain from eating, playing with toys or games, and watching TV during the lesson times.
    - Interactions with teachers and classmates should be polite at all times.
    - The School Code of Conduct applies to all students, including those participating through Remote Learning.

- All District equipment, including Chromebooks, adapters, chargers, etc. must be used in accordance with the Acceptable Use Policy. At any time, the District has the right to request that any equipment not being used for educational purposes be returned in working order.

The Role of the Parent/Guardian

- Provide a learning environment at home that is as free from distractions as possible.
- Make sure your child has all of the supplies that they need at their learning location (a desk or table if possible).
- Be sure your child logs in on time, every day, according to the schedule provided.
- Be supportive of your child as they strive to work remotely. Please encourage your child to remain attentive during instruction.
- Be supportive and understanding as your child's teachers navigate providing instruction to students working remotely and those physically present in the classroom.
- Please reinforce to your child that the academic and behavioral expectations during remote learning are the same as those of students physically present in the classroom.

Security and Privacy

Your child and any individual in the presence of the virtual instruction is prohibited from altering, reproducing, videotaping or audiotaping the virtual instruction, or utilizing the teacher's or any other student's image, likeness or voice, nor shall they publicly disseminate, reproduce, distribute, or otherwise publicize the virtual instruction on social media or any other platform.