

**WHAT ARE THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF INDIANA PUBLIC
SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS OVERSEEING SCHOOL SAFETY?**

by

Mark D. Francesconi

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THE PURDUE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL
STATEMENT OF COMMITTEE APPROVAL

Dr. Marilyn A. Hirth, Chair

Department of Educational Studies

Dr. Alice Johnson

Department of Educational Studies

Dr. Christine S. Rienstra-Kiracofe

Department of Educational Studies

Dr. William McInerney

Department of Educational Studies

Approved by:

Dr. Janet Alsup

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, all of whom have played an instrumental role in my doctoral journey. Without the encouragement, sacrifice, love, and support of my wife, Laura, my accomplishments would not have been possible. I would like to thank my parents, Bob and JoAnn, who instilled in me the appreciation of hard work throughout my childhood. I am also grateful to my children, Jenna, Nick, and Gino, who grew up too fast and never complained when I spent so much time at work and missed out on their development. Last, I dedicate this dissertation to all first-generation college students, who are aspiring to be the first in their family to graduate with a college degree.

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examined the thoughts and perceptions of Indiana public school superintendents overseeing school safety response and planning in their districts. The study was based on interviews of five public school superintendents overseeing safety planning and response in large Indiana school districts located in varying regions of the state. Participants were purposely sampled according to the number of students served in their districts and the number of schools that they were responsible for overseeing. Data were collected by conducting semi structured interviews via telephone with the researcher taking field notes and digitally recording dialogue from the interviews.

Two theoretical frameworks were used in the study—phenomenology and reality testing. Phenomenology was used to focus on the lived experience of the participants in the study. This particular study examined the five participating superintendent’s experiences while overseeing safe school planning and response measures. The participants were asked to describe their experiences and share their perceptions (i.e., what they were doing, why they were doing it, and how it affected safety response and preparedness in their district). One of the planning measures involved participation in the recently mandated safe school plan audit. Reality testing was used to determine what is actually happening in the real world. The use of reality testing in this study focused on determining what was actually occurring in the districts that completed the safe school plan audit process.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

School superintendents and administrators in the United States are under enormous pressure to maintain safe and orderly learning environments for students (Trump, 2011). Increases in the number of school tragedies since the Columbine High School shooting in 1999, along with media articles and incident data, shape public opinion and legislation aimed at assuring the safety of students and staff. In his book, Bracey (2003) presents that privatization of schools is big business, and making public schools look bad, or in this case, unsafe, empowers special interest groups and others to support private schools as an escape. Bracey went on to say that the third most common reason why parents choose to homeschool their children is because of the poor learning environment in public schools. Vollmer (2010) listed negative media and fear of school violence as presented by the media as two of the top 20 *terrible trends* in education today. School administrators are challenged to address these issues alone, which is impossible without communities getting involved. In this atmosphere, public opinion reflects doubt regarding the safety of schools, and the result has fueled a multibillion-dollar safety industry (Cox & Rich, 2018). The existence of this industry perpetuates a variety of opinions as to what it is that school leaders should be doing to assure the safety of their students. A recent Phi Delta Kappan poll on school safety reported that 34% of parents fear for their children's safety at school (Waldman, 2018). A recent report by the U.S. Department of Education showed that 65% of public schools reported one or more incidents of violence amounting to an estimated 750,000 crimes (Musu-Gillette et al., 2018). In an effort to respond to these factors and guarantee consistency in school safety efforts, state and federal legislation has been evolving over the years in an attempt to respond to the challenges and assure the public that school leaders are working responsibly to provide safe learning environments for both students and staff. In a memo to state school superintendents, Woodward (2018) confirmed that the state of Indiana instituted legislation calling for mandated safe school plan audits for all school corporations in Indiana with the passing of House Enrolled Act 1230. With the current realities of the safety of schools in question, legislative mandates, and an industry promoting answers to school safety, Indiana school superintendents are left to wonder

if the newly mandated safety plan audits will be effective in helping them address school safety issues in their districts.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Public school safety planning and response has changed over the years and continues to be an evolving field (Trump, 2011). Much of this evolution can be attributed to an increase in the type of threats that exist in the world today. Over the past 150 years, fire drills were the first precautions that safe school plans addressed. As tragedies and threats to the safety of children progressed, the groundwork was laid for changes in safety planning. Not all tragedies and crisis situations are widespread, which poses the potential for mandates that may or may not reflect conditions in individual school corporations that superintendents are charged to keep safe (Heath et al., 2007).

The National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (2018) identified the following safety issues that exist in schools today: violence, exposure to weapons, threats, bullying, cyber bullying, suicide, drugs or illegal substances, harassment, and discrimination. There are a number of *hidden* dangers in our schools as well. Examples of hidden dangers include school climates that are *emotionally* unsafe due to labels being placed on children such as special needs and free and reduced economic status (Gunzelmann, 2018). The U.S. Department of Education (2016) reported that students face barriers in the form of discriminatory harassment, violence, and discipline.

In response to public school safety challenges, mandates via federal and state legislation respond to the most recent tragedies and shape the safety planning required of school superintendents. For example, following the Columbine High School shooting in 1999, profiling of shooters associated with school shootings led to questioning of school leaders as to how they were working to address student social and emotional issues. Studies by the U. S. Department of Education (USDOE) and the Secret Service determined that student at-risk factors contributed to school violence (Buchesky, 2018). The federal government responded with reporting requirements on gangs and bullying and requirements for social emotional programming.

In 2018, findings by the Federal Commission on School Safety recommended that each state require school districts to develop a comprehensive safe school plan (USDOE, 2018). The training of all personnel in prevention and response to violence and threats of violence (USDOE,

2018). Indiana Code 511 calls for school administrators to document and communicate crisis management and intervention procedures. Requirements call for documentation of two severe weather drills a year, one fire drill a month. Over time the requirement was added to include required *man-made* disaster drills. These man-made disaster drills called for responses, such as lock downs, shelter in place, and procedures for communicating with authorities. Initially titled “Crisis Response Plans,” these mandated plans have evolved over the years to include elements of safety planning and are now called “Building Safety Plans.”

The purpose of this research study was to explore superintendent perceptions and experiences while overseeing school safety planning in their districts. The expectation is that this study will produce valuable assertions that will inform future improvements in school safety planning. Superintendents in five large suburban school districts were interviewed. These individuals were selected based on predetermined criteria, and the goal of the study was to uncover their insights and perspectives regarding their experiences, ultimately informing the field of school safety. Each district where the superintendents served consisted of multiple schools, buildings, buses, and personnel. This requirement was essential in order to produce data, which reflected administrative responsibilities consistent with large districts where multiple processes were needed to assure that safety planning processes met state requirements and were consistently delivered across the corporation.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study explored the perceptions of Indiana superintendents of large public school districts regarding their thoughts and perceptions while planning and overseeing safe school practices in their districts. Legislation at both the federal and state level has directly influenced the evolution of school safety planning over the years. Much of the legislation passed is in response to recent tragedies involving schools, as well as public opinion, regarding threats to the safety of children (Heath et al., 2007). This study also considered whether or not superintendents believed that the current school safety plan audits adequately addressed the specific safety threats that are unique to each individual school district, and if not, what suggestions or improvements could be made in order to add value and quality to current processes. Superintendent perceptions and thoughts were specifically targeted, because regardless of the personnel they assign regarding safety planning and operations, they are ultimately responsible for providing leadership, vision,

and overseeing all operations within the district. Last, it is the superintendent that is ultimately responsible for responding to stakeholders and the media regarding the safety status of the district.

Although it is unrealistic to believe that there will ever be a perfect plan or intervention that guarantees the safety of students and staff, superintendent thoughts, perceptions, and experiences have been relatively absent from the research on school safety. This study contributes to the research regarding how safe school plan audits influence behaviors of staff, add value and quality to the field of school safety, and what the superintendent's role is in overseeing processes. The study searched for common themes that emerged from superintendent responses and provided suggestions to advance school safety planning, preparation, and safety levels.

1.4 Research Question

This study answered the following research question:

What have been the lived experiences of superintendents in selected large, school districts in Indiana regarding planning for and overseeing school safety in their districts?

1.5 Limitations of the Study

This study examined the opinions and experiences of superintendents from large, public school districts in Indiana, purposely chosen from a geographically diverse sample. One limitation of this study was the assumption that superintendents interviewed for this study were informed of and effectively leading safe school efforts in their districts. Additionally, it is acknowledged that these school leaders may have based their responses to the interview questions on personal successes, frustrations, bias, or concerns. Although the questions used for the interviews were designed to keep the responses focused and factual in nature, the superintendents responded according to their own knowledge and interpretation of the questions. As a result, it is possible that a superintendent could state certain items as fact when they were actually opinions and, additionally, stray from the intent of the questions.

CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In order to make meaning of superintendents' thoughts, suggestions, and perceptions regarding safety planning, it is important to review the history of safe school plans across the United States, including an in-depth look at the evolution of safety planning in the State of Indiana. Considering that superintendent's perceptions of participating in a safe school plan audit was the focus of this study, a review of key safety planning terms used in the field of school safety planning will follow. Safety assessment terms, such as safety audit, security audit, and threat assessment, are defined so as to bring meaning to the specific safety plan audit that superintendents responded to in this study. Finally, the Indiana Safe School Plan Audit and requirements were reviewed, including communications used by the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE), to inform superintendents of the onsite audits and prepare them for the feedback at the conclusion of the audits.

2.1 History of School Safety Planning in the United States

If one looks at author and public education advocate Vollmer's (2012) "list" one gets a good sense of how school curriculum, public interest, and related school administrator responsibilities have evolved since the early 1900s. According to Vollmer (2010), it was at this time that schools shifted from common schools, to schools being viewed as tools for public officials to assimilate immigrants and socially engineer citizens. Vollmer's (2012) list includes roughly 85 curricular items that have been added to school curriculums and responsibilities since the start of the 20th century. The list includes items, such as nutrition, immunization, mandated transportation, drug and alcohol abuse education, anti-smoking education, sex abuse education, teen pregnancy, character education, childcare, conflict resolution, inclusion, gang education, bus safety, gun safety, bike safety, and water safety. The list goes on and on concluding that these responsibilities have been added to public schools without adding to the school year. Where does the time come from and the personnel necessary for all of these items to be addressed by public schools?

Over the years, federal requirements for safety data reporting and practices have evolved and reflect some of these same political and societal issues. When national tragedies or issues

surface, the recovery from such events is followed with new laws or practices which shape behaviors. A solid example of this is the response to the events that occurred in the United States on September 11, 2001, when airplanes were intentionally crashed into the Twin Towers in New York City. The result was a reform in in-flight security measures and 100% screening of passengers, including electronic imaging and background checks (U.S. Transportation and Security Administration, 2011). Events or issues surface and legislative changes follow. In an article for the History Channel, Pruitt (2019) outlined that during the cold war in the 1950s, duck and cover drills were required in schools as a result of Civil Defense directives. The directives were in response to the threat of potential air raids by the Soviet Union. Accompanying the Cold War was the establishment of nuclear fallout shelters, which were constructed in many public schools. These shelters were created to protect people from nuclear bomb radiation fallout (Pruitt, 2019). Heath et al. (2007) wrote that in 1958, a fire at Holy Angels School in Chicago killed 92 children. The investigation that followed the incident determined that the school lacked a plan to notify and direct students and staff out of the building. The investigation also revealed that the materials used in the construction of the building were highly combustible, which increased the spread of fire and reduced the amount of time students and staff had to exit the building. In response to this incident, fire drills, exit plans, and monitoring of building construction materials became required safety practices (Heath et al., 2007).

For years, fire and tornado drills were the only drills that were required in school safety plans. The response to the Columbine High School shooting in 1999 produced a number of new elements to safe school plans, including active shooter drills, student mental health monitoring, bullying data reporting, building access restrictions, and weapon detection procedures (Heath et al., 2007).

Federal legislation influences safe school planning and highlights the power of political mandates in shaping school safety efforts across the United States (Heath et al., 2007). Public education is not a federal right and, thus, the funding and oversight of education has been placed on individual states. This position was established by the landmark court case of *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez* (1973). This fact is not to be construed with the thought that the federal government has not had influence over public schools in the area of school safety. In an effort to respond to national issues regarding school safety and to assure consistency across states, the federal government influences public education and safety measures via legislation and

federal funding. A recent report made available through the National Criminal Justice Reference Service outlined the history of federal programs and aforementioned funding, which comes with obligations of schools to comply with federal safety guidelines, including submission of specific incident data reports that are monitored by the USDOE (Brock et al., 2018). Federal funding began in 1965, when President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act into law (Brock et al., 2018). This legislation was designed to provide additional financial resources to schools with higher levels of student poverty (Ramirez, 2002). Federal funding is, as well, provided through the Education for all Handicapped Children Act, first signed into law by President Gerald Ford in 1975, and later reauthorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 1997. Included in this monitoring is the jurisdiction of the USDOE, which produces annual reports on school violence, gangs, harassment, discrimination, and violence (USDOE, 2016). This office was established in response to the civil rights movement of the 1960s. In 1993, President Bill Clinton passed the Educate America Act. One specific goal of the act was focused on school safety and challenged schools to be free of drugs and violence and assure that students have an environment conducive to learning (Goals 2000: Educate America Act, 1994). In 1994, in response to concerns about weapons in schools, the federal government passed the Gun Free Schools Act making it unlawful for guns to be on school grounds and required reporting of incidents. Finally, in July of 2013, the federal government passed a law requiring all schools to report incidents of criminal gang activity and required plans to be in place to address gangs (IDOE, 2013).

It was the No Child Left Behind Act passed in 2002 that presented all schools with the challenge of implementing safety plans as one knows them today. This requirement was a paradigm shift in the influence of safety planning in the United States as the act moved beyond previous federal reporting legislation and introduced comprehensive safety plans into requirements. As of August 2007, all but 18 states responded by passing laws requiring safety plans (Heath et al., 2007). In reality, many states have had safety plans in place for a number of years. For decades, school officials have recognized the need for school emergency plans, whether it was having students crawl under a desk for a 1950s nuclear attack drill or filing out in orderly fashion for a simple fire drill. Over time, threats have changed; thus, emergency plans have become more sophisticated (Patterson, 2018). Over the years, school superintendents and state departments have been working to implement the evolving federal safe school requirements into their school safety plans. In 2018 the National School Boards Association (NSBA) reported that over 40 states

required school districts to have a school safety plan or crisis management/emergency response plan in place (NSBA, 2018). Heath et al. (2007) associated federal mandates on safe school planning with a lack of specificity to local school issues, a lack of specific implementation direction, and lack of necessary funding. This reality is problematic for school administrators as they work to implement requirements and avert losing federal funds for other programs for failure to comply. Problematic is the fact that these requirements come with little to no funding or guidance for implementation, and in some cases the requirements do not reflect local needs. The result is that states have been left on their own to include federal requirements in their school safety planning measures and meet their own local needs.

2.2 School Safety Planning/Reporting in Indiana

Much of the evolution of school safety plans in Indiana can be attributed to federal influence and public opinion. As early as the 1980s, public opinion across the United States reflected that there was a denial of security problems in schools and that school officials have contributed to problems by not recognizing such threats or managing the problems (Huff, 1989). School administrators were being accused of underreporting mandated school incident data, which led to concerns about the reality of safety in schools (Trump, 2011). Evidence of this mistrust can be seen in a number of state and federally mandated reporting areas where investigative reporters publicly scrutinize data that is released in annual reports. A 2017 Call 6 investigative report released by the Indy Channel reported that schools are missing the mark on bullying reporting (Kenney, 2017). The report presented that Indiana signed the bullying reporting law in 2013 and that bullying data from school year 2016–2017 was reported to have revealed that on average 6 of 10 schools reported zero bullying incidents. This data led to questioning school superintendents about the validity of their data and whether or not they were underreporting to minimize the issue. In the report, Superintendent Pat Mapes from Perry Meridian presented that schools report *substantiated* bullying cases and by definition bullying has to involve repeated acts. Thus, presenting that schools have different reporting codes for complaints that are investigated and determined not to rise to the level of bullying as defined by law.

In response to federal legislation, Indiana Code 20-33-9-10-5 requires school personnel to report to the department of education, suspected incidents of criminal organization and activity. To assist schools with management of gangs and reporting, the IDOE (2013) produced “The

Indiana Model Policy to Address Criminal Organizations and Criminal Activity in Schools.” These requirements and guidance follow a 2018 report from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) that stated only 10% of schools reported gang activity for the 2015–2016 school year (Musu-Gillette et al., 2018). The report went on to note that the trend of criminal gangs hit a peak in the 1990s. Trump (2020) posted an article that cited the lack of a universally accepted definition of a gang as a reason leading to questions regarding the validity of reporting data on gangs in schools. Similarly, Trump (2019) posted an article that said that federal statistics grossly underestimate school crime and the public perception overstates it. Reality and validity of the data and the issues thus lies somewhere in-between.

Additional need for intervention by legislators and departments of education came with questions surfacing as to how school administrator certification programs were preparing them to lead safe school reform (Trump, 2011). Media pressure thus began to shape opinions and policies regarding school safety planning. Increased pressure led to increased legislatively required safety trainings for staff. Evidence of the increased numbers of required trainings is found in an August 15 memo to school principals from Michael Brown, Director of Legislative Affairs for the IDOE (Brown, 2018; Appendix A).

2.3 Mandated Trainings

- IC 5-2-10.1-11 (school safety specialist).
- IC 5-11-1-27 (local government internal control standards).
- IC 20-20-40-13 (restraint and seclusion; notice requirement; training; elements of the restraint and seclusion plan).
- IC 20-26-5-34.2 (bullying prevention; training for employees and volunteers). IC 20-26-13 (graduation rate determination).
- IC 20-26-16-4 (school corporation police officer minimum training requirements).
- IC 20-26-18 (criminal gang measures).
- IC 20-26-18.2 (school resource officers).
- IC 20-28-3-4.5 (training on child abuse and neglect).
- IC 20-28-3-6 (youth suicide awareness and prevention training).

- IC 20-28-3-7 (training on human trafficking).
- IC 20-28-5-3(c) (cardiopulmonary resuscitation training).
- IC 20-34-7 (student athletes: concussions and head injuries)

Eleven of the required staff trainings relate to school safety. Not included in the list are required trainings for blood borne pathogens, stop the bleed, and trauma informed schools. In an October 4, 2019, e-mail, Robert Taylor, of the Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents, encouraged all superintendents to participate in a survey on required trainings which would provide feedback to an Indiana Legislative Services Agency interim study committee (Appendix B). Feedback was intended to shape recommendations on eliminating, reducing, or streamlining the number of training mandates placed on schools, as well as streamlining fiscal and compliance reporting to the Indiana General Assembly.

Circling back to the beginning of school safety planning changes, in 1998 Indiana Code 511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5 required all school corporations to develop a written emergency preparedness plan for natural and manmade disasters. Specifically, the plan elements focused on traditional disasters, such as fire, tornado, and potential local environmental disasters. In a recent article for Insider Inc., Marks (2019) attributed the 1999 mass shooting at Columbine High School to transforming the way schools prepared for safety planning and crisis response. As a result, school building maps are now in the hands of authorities, liaison officers immediately enter the buildings upon hearing gunfire, active shooter drills are practiced, and so forth. Whereas previous safe school plans were focused on student behavior data and natural threats, attacks by outsiders or former students now came to the forefront (Marks, 2019). The IDOE responded to safe school challenges by establishing a School Safety Specialist Academy. With the passing of Indiana Code 511 IAC 5-2-10.1-9 in 1999, all Indiana school superintendents were required to select and assign a school employee to serve as a *school safety specialist*. This specialist had a number of duties assigned by statute. This same law, which outlined the importance of safe school plans and safety specialists, was amended in 2013. With this amendment, school safety specialists, in conjunction with superintendents, were to assure the department of education that safe school plans met the shifting obligations that were outlined in Indiana. Indiana Code 511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5 also established that

plans were required to be updated each school year within the first 60 days of the school year and that the plans were subject to review by the IDOE.

In 2013 the state of Indiana signed the Secured School Safety Grant into law which offered matching grant money to school corporations to employ school resource officers, conduct threat assessments, and purchase security equipment (Indiana Department of Homeland Security, 2018). Legislation passed in 2019 expanded the parameters of the safe school funds to allow more schools to access the grant (Indiana Department of Homeland Security, 2019). Additionally, items to be eligible for reimbursement now included costs for warning systems, firearms training, and student/parent support services plans.

In 2017, the IDOE began conducting random reviews of school safety plans. Schools were randomly selected to participate, and over the course of three years, the department expected to have all corporations audited. Reviews called for documentation review of the school safety plan, crisis intervention plan, minutes of safety meetings, and documentation of fire, tornado, and preparedness drills. In 2018, Indiana legislators passed Public Law 511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5c, which required an audit of each school's safety plan and an onsite visit for the school corporation. This change in legislation superseded the previous code calling for the random selection of 60 schools to be audited.

To help prepare schools for the 2018–2019 safe school plan audit, the IDOE provided school safety specialists with a comprehensive checklist (Appendix C) to use as a measure against their safety plans prior to their audit. The checklist empowers safe school specialists to critique their safe school plans prior to the actual audit to be conducted by the department of education. Checklists have been used in the past in Indiana in order to assure that schools were working to guarantee safe school planning processes and interventions. Items are specifically required to be included in safe school plans and are referenced on the checklist used to guide the audit results. In most cases, the plan elements are accompanied by the specific Indiana Code that outlines the requirement.

In a doctoral study for Purdue University, Folks (2008) reported that previous to safe school audits being mandated in Indiana, some schools elected to adopt a safe school checklist to guide safety efforts. Folks' (2008) study documented the thoughts and perceptions of school administrators on school safety preparedness and the value of using a mandatory school safety checklist to guide safety efforts. In Folks' study, a county safe school commission in Indiana

decided to mandate a safe school checklist. It was not a statewide requirement at the time. The study concluded that the checklist was beneficial in guiding practices and assuring the public that schools were being held accountable for safety of students and staff. It is important to note that, in this case, the participants were using a checklist to document safety steps and actions taken throughout the school year.

2.4 Safe School Planning and Assessment Terminology

In order to make meaning from superintendents' thoughts about safe school planning, it is important to look at the literature which defines key safety terms, planning terminology, and assessments, which are commonly referred to in the field of school safety. Are the terms "safety" and "security" synonymous terms? Is a safety plan the same as a response plan and crisis plan? These questions will be answered as the literature on these terms is reviewed and references are made to how the requirements for Indiana safe school plans address these issues. Upon investigating the literature addressing safe school planning and assessment, the importance of first defining safety, security, threat, and crisis was evident as these terms are referenced throughout the literature.

2.5 Safety and Security

The terms *safety* and *security* are often used interchangeably, but according to the literature, they are, in fact, not synonymous terms when it comes to school safety. The term safety is used to refer to the condition of being protected, or the feeling of being protected from aspects or threats that are likely to cause harm. The key word in this definition is *condition*. Safety is a condition within schools or at school activities where students are safe from violence, bullying, harassment, and substance abuse (National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments, 2018). Indiana Code 511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(b) specifically references the obligation that superintendents have to certify that *safe school plans* for each school have been updated within the first 60 days of the school year.

Security refers to the protection of individuals from harm or unsafe conditions and is commonly used in reference to specific actions or interventions that exist to protect individuals from harm or unsafe conditions. Threat management expert Coursen (2014) presented an analogy

regarding safety and security in a recent online post. In his post, he associated an umbrella with being a security measure and safety as the goal of the person holding the umbrella to stay out of the rain, thus, warm and dry. School threats to safety and security can be internal or external. For example, a school could put up a security fence or barriers to protect the safety of students and staff from outside threats; however, the fence or barriers do not protect students from unsafe conditions where bullying may be occurring within the school (DifferenceBetween.com, 2018). Thus, safety is a condition and security is one tactic used to provide for a safe environment.

2.6 Threat

The word *threat* is a key safe school term to define. Referenced previously, threats can be internal or external situations that have the potential to result in unsafe conditions in schools. Trump (2011) supported this concept in his writing when he stated that school leaders must prepare for both internal and external threats. He went on to report that superintendents should be aware of the specific internal and external threats that exist in their schools, that threats are continuously evolving, and some types of threats are higher risk than others. What may be a threat in one area of the nation or state may or may not be a threat in every district, thus the need for local threat assessments to assure that planning efforts address local needs. A communication published by the Indiana Department of Homeland Security outlined three emerging threats to schools that school districts should be preparing for:

- Active shooters: Shooters actively opening fire in a school or at a school event.
- Cyber threats: Criminals targeting children through education technologies.
- Teenage homegrown violent extremists: Teens who turn to extreme violence because of a void in their lives, (ABC News, 2018, para 4)

Indiana code specifically identifies threats, both internal and external, that must be addressed and/or incidents reported to the department of education. Many of these threats are in response to federal mandates. Threats included in Indiana Code include:

- Bullying and Cyber Bullying–IAC 20-33-8-13.5,
- Criminal gang activity–IAC 20-26-18-6,
- Sex offenders–IAC 35-42-4-14, and
- Use of seclusion and restraint–IAC 513 1-2-7(g).

Schools are obligated to report harassment/intimidation/discrimination cases for protected classes to the USDOE in what is known as the *Civil Rights Data Collection Report* (USDOE, 2016).

2.7 Crisis

The term *crisis* is referenced in school safety literature nationwide. Some schools refer to their safety plans as crisis plans. The San Francisco Unified School District (2019) produced a manual, which defines crisis as a reaction to, or perception of, a situation or event for which crisis causes psychological trauma to students and/or staff and requires immediate action because of its disruption or potential disruption to the educational process. A school crisis may impact a small group of students in one classroom or the entire school community. Possible types of crises are: death of a student or staff member, acts of violence, suicide attempt or completion, natural disaster such as earthquake, fire, toxic spill, automobile or other accident (San Francisco Unified School District, 2019). In this sense, there is some distinction between a crisis and a threat, as the crisis is an actual situation calling for a response, whereas a threat is a potential harm that may or may not manifest itself. Other problematic aspects of dealing with a crisis include the limited amount of time that decision makers have to make response decisions regarding the threat at hand and the associated media/parent pressure for details. In a presentation to new school superintendents in 2013, public relations experts, Clyde Lee and Diane Willis, presented crisis as being a head-turning, work-stopping, reputation-defining event where time is the number one enemy (Lee & Willis, 2015). In 2002 the Virginia Department of Education defined crisis as situations, including but not limited to: death of a student, staff member, or a member of a student's immediate family by suicide, substance abuse, illness, or accident (Virginia Department of Education, 2002). Indiana Code 511 IAC 4-1.5-7 specifically calls for each school to have a crisis intervention plan included

in the total school safety plan, which is designed to meet student and staff emotional needs during and after a tragic event.

Last, it is important to address a specific type of crisis known as a *media crisis*. According to public relations experts Lee and Willis (2015), with today's electronic media, word spreads quickly. Whenever schools are responding to a threat of any sort, real or contrived, the media begins putting communications out and contacting the school. When this happens, school leaders point out that there are two crisis situations for the school, the first being responding to the media in a way that does not falsely alarm the public, and the second, addressing the actual threat for which the school is responding. It is for this reason that safe school plans assign a specific staff member to communicate with the media (Lee & Willis, 2015).

2.8 Safety Planning

Safe school planning, documentation, and terminology has evolved over the years since the Columbine High School tragedy in 1999. In 1998, Indiana Code 6.1-2-2.5 required all school corporations to develop what was termed a written *emergency preparedness plan* for natural and manmade disasters. Following the Columbine High School shooting in 1999, Indiana Code 511 IAC 4-1.5-7 introduced *crisis intervention and response plan* as the terminology used to reference mandated safety planning. Finally, in 1999 Indiana Administrative Code 511 IC 5-2-10.1-9 introduced the term *school safety plan* into state law as a requirement for school safety planning.

Following the progression of Indiana safety planning requirements as outlined above, it is clear that the names of the required plans have changed over time. For purposes of interpreting superintendent responses in this study, it is important to distinguish between and outline how planning terms, such as emergency preparedness plans, crisis response plans, and safe school plans, relate to the current safe school plans that are currently being audited in Indiana.

2.9 Safe School Plan

Today, Indiana law requires elements of safety planning, emergency preparedness planning, response, and crisis response to be integrated into mandated safe school plans. The most recent Indiana legislative code, 511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5 outlines safe schools and emergency preparedness planning requirements to be included in the overall safe school plan. Indiana Code 511 IAC 4-1.5-

7 mandates crisis intervention plans to be included in the larger safe school plan. In this respect, a safe school plan as it currently exists is presented to be an overall plan that is comprehensive and addresses emergency planning, preparedness, and crisis response. Supporting a comprehensive approach to planning, Dorn (2011), outlined four key areas that should be considered by school administrators as they plan for the safety of their schools: “prevention/mitigation; preparedness; response; and recovery” (p. 86).

In 2018 the NSBA released a legal guide for *fostering* safe schools. This guide identified the same four phases as key to safety planning but referred to them as the four phases of crisis management). Considering the aforementioned, it is apparent that the terms crisis planning, safety planning, emergency planning, and crisis management are interrelated. The four phases are outlined below for purposes of clarifying this relationship.

2.9.1 Prevention/Mitigation

In Dorn’s (2011) outline of key elements for safety plans, the *prevention and mitigation* element identifies exactly what unsafe conditions/threats the plan will work to prevent or mitigate. He outlined specifically the importance of protecting from injury, death, or harm. An example of a preventative measure for school violence is the establishment of the “PK–12 Social- Emotional Learning Competencies” authored by Desautels and Oliver (2019). Indiana adopted these competencies to guarantee a common curriculum across the state for social emotional learning. Initially, one of the big pushes for social emotional programming was the profiling of previous school violence perpetrators. With profiling came questions as to what schools were doing to meet student needs of those that were bullied, loners, or not fitting in. Buchesky (2018) argued that profiling of school shooters did not work to prevent violent acts in school and that social emotional development plans teach students how to grow emotionally and how to control their emotions.

Previously safety was defined as a situation where student, staff, and school patrons are protected from both internal and external threats. These threats could be either manmade or natural, physical, or emotional. A comprehensive safety plan would address each element that the school commits to preventing or mitigating for the safety of students. The following Indiana code citations, listed in the Indiana Safety Plan Audit Checklist (Appendix D), present the specific threats that safe school plans should address to prevent and plan interventions for:

- Fire-511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a)(7);
- Natural disaster/adverse weather-511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a)(7)
Tornado, earthquake, flooding, winter storm, extreme heat;
- Nuclear contamination-511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a)(7)
Chemical spill, nuclear reactor malfunction, radiological contamination;
- Exposure to Chemicals-511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a)(7)
Chemical spill inside or outside of the building, nuclear contamination;
- Manmade occurrence-511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a)(7)
Student disturbance, weapon on campus, weapon of mass destruction, contamination of water or air supply, hostage kidnapping, bomb threat, active shooter;
- Intruder/suspicious person-511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a)(7);
- Disruptive person-511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a)(7);
- Active shooter-511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a)(7);
- Weapons on campus-511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a)(7);
- Bomb threat-511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a)(7);
- Hostage-511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a)(7);
- Kidnapping-511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a)(7); and
- Student search-511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a)(7).

2.9.2 Preparedness

The 2018 NSBA guide identifies safety preparedness as the second phase of crisis management. During the preparedness stage of safe school planning, the school district, as well as individual schools in the district, identify school crisis teams and clearly delineate the role that staff play during emergencies. Crises teams work with community stakeholders involved in crisis planning and link internal crisis planning to the other community crisis plans (Heath et al., 2007). The American Academy of Pediatrics (2008) stated that school crisis teams should assess the

medical equipment, as well as mental health and other resources available in the school environment. Indiana Code 511 IAC 4-1.5-7 identifies the need for schools to develop emergency preparedness plans including crisis plans. Crisis, as defined, encompasses any threat to school safety, thus crisis plans need to address specific situations. Indiana Code outlines the crisis situations which call for planning and preparedness.

2.9.3 Response

Dorn (2011) noted that response involves the actions that students and staff carry out during an emergency or crisis situation. The following traditional responses were outlined by the USDOE:

1. Evacuation: a response that requires students and staff to exit the building and report to pre-arranged locations. Planning should provide for communication to be disseminated in the event that relocation to secondary safe areas is necessary. Planning should also address re-entry and/or pick-up procedures for parents or school transportation vehicles.
2. Lockdown: a response that involves occupants of the school directed to remain confined in a room or area of the building that can be secured. Outside doors are secured and hallways are cleared. Specific procedures are followed regarding movement in the safe areas, communications, lighting, and response.
3. Shelter in place: similar to a lockdown, occupants remain in the building while exterior threats such as chemical spills, air contaminants, and other environmental disasters are addressed outside of the building. Provisions are made for possible lengthy stay and food and water are typically on hand, if needed. Air handling systems are shut down to prevent outside contaminants from entering the building (NCES, 2018).

In light of recent school shootings, a number of incident response suggestions exist for administrators to consider when training students and staff, some of which are considered unconventional. In a 2018 article in *USA Today*, Cummings (2018) addressed recent shooting incidents, such as the incident in Parkland, Florida, as a cause to encourage scenario-based training, which involves a combination of responses for staff and students, based on the situation. Examples included delaying before running out of the building when the fire alarm sounds and making certain students have a safe path to exit. In the Parkland, Florida, high school shooting, school officials and responders were criticized when the shooter pulled the fire alarm and some students

fled safely, while others were trapped in the building. Some trapped in the building were locked out of rooms and left stranded in the halls, 17 people were killed. In 2018, the USDOE published a 177 page report that detailed best practices for improving safety in schools across the country. The report outlined that teaching situational awareness to staff and students should include teaching response tactics including *run*, *hide*, and *fight*. The report further detailed that schools and crisis situations vary, and situational awareness dictates the best approach to take under the circumstances (USDOE, 2018). Hogue (2018) supported training staff and students on situational awareness. According to Hogue, staff and students need to be aware of their surroundings in order to better recognize threats and be prepared to either flee to or stay in a secure place and be prepared to act. Freezing or doing nothing, according to Hogue, is a typical response and one must plan and practice responses that empower individuals to avoid freezing. Hogue (2018) outlined priorities for response, in no order, to include:

1. Escape—to a place that you have practiced previously.
2. Lockdown—in a predetermined safe area, secure the area and stay on your feet ready to move.
3. Fight—take a position of tactical advantage (location), bring the attacker into your “circle of violence,” and use predetermined items in the area as weapons.

2.9.4 Recovery

The last of the stages of a complete safety plan addresses the actions school administrators take in the period following the threat event. By now, most people have witnessed video footage of the chaos that occurs during and after these crisis situations. According to Dorn (2011), most schools overlook the recovery stage as a part of their overall crisis plan. Dorn (2011) outlined the following details that should be documented in a crisis response plan:

1. Identify which school personnel will serve on the recovery plan.
2. Outline how the school will deal with the death of students or teachers.
3. Identify how emotional recovery services will be delivered in the event of loss of lives.
4. Plan for emotional support and organization of the family reunification center.

5. Provide for classroom recovery activities that can be distributed to teachers.
6. Outline the types of counseling and intervention techniques the team will use. (p. 129)

The American Academy of Pediatrics (2008) released a disaster planning article, which outlined the importance of the *restorative power* of returning students to the education routine in guiding students through emotional crisis. The article also outlined the importance of the community in assisting schools to meet the emotional needs of parents and students following crisis situations. Trump (2011) delved into much greater detail when identifying the following recovery steps:

1. Schools should plan for which representatives will be at the hospital to help in coordination of parents and consoling them.
2. Crisis communications should be in full swing, including notifying parents, internal communications, and press briefings.
3. Arrangements should be made for counseling and mental health support.
4. Incident reports and documentation should be developed and updated.
5. School legal counsel should be consulted.
6. Debriefing should occur regularly with crisis team members.
7. Community meetings should be held to discuss the incident details and provisions for future security and recovery services. (pp. 251–252)

2.10 School Safety Assessments

The subjects in this study presented their experiences and thoughts regarding participation in the mandated Indiana school safety plan audit. Because there are a number of assessments that exist in the field of school safety, it is important to explore the literature as it pertains to the various safety assessments that surface in what has become the *business of school safety*. Business in this sense refers to the number of experts, assessments, and opinions that exist today as to what school leaders should be doing to assure the safety of students and staff. Pressure is on school administrators and departments of education to demonstrate that schools are safe and that they are

doing everything possible to secure the safety of students and staff. Included in this pressure is the threat of lawsuits for negligence (Dorn, 2017). In 2018, the NSBA, recognizing this pressure, released an article entitled, “Legal Guide for School Board Members” (NSBA, 2018). The guide acknowledged that the aftermath of emergencies and mass tragedies often leaves communities sorting through a number of questions, including what could have been done to avoid the unspeakable, what can be done to prevent it in the future, and how do we move forward?

Because of the number of assessments on the market today and so called *experts*, Trump (2011) warned administrators and communities that outside consultants and overnight experts should be scrutinized to avoid getting packaged assessments that fail to focus on the uniqueness of individual schools and school districts. The number of self-proclaimed school security experts continues to grow after each shooting. Former educators, administrators, police officers, and others are soliciting schools regardless of whether they have professional education, training, or experience in school safety (Trump, 2011). The following school safety assessments are defined for purposes of comparison to the Indiana safe school plan audit.

2.10.1 Safety Audit

Safety audits are mandated in a number of states. The state of Texas requires a safety and security audit of each school every three years. These mandated audits include document reviews, interviews, intruder assessments, surveys, and incident data collection. Audits are described to be ongoing with the aim of identifying hazards, threats, and vulnerabilities that pose danger and interfere with a safe, secure, and healthy environment that is conducive to teaching and learning. Neither the Texas Education Code nor administrative rules require that school district personnel conducting the audit hold a specific certification. Therefore, districts may utilize their own personnel from various disciplines to conduct safety and security audits (Texas School Safety Center, 2019). In addition to Texas, the state of Virginia requires safety audits of all schools and has done so since 1997 (Virginia Department of Education, 2002). This predates the Columbine high school tragedy in 1999. The state of Colorado requires mandated safe school audits and uses a checklist developed originally by the Virginia State Education Department and modified by the New York State Police (Virginia Department of Education, 2002). This particular checklist outlines the following minimum components to be audited for evidence of compliance:

- Development and enforcement of policies;
- Procedures for data collection;
- Development of intervention plans;
- Level of staff development;
- Opportunities for student involvement;
- Level of parent involvement;
- Role of law enforcement;
- Standards for safety and security personnel;
- Safety and security of buildings and grounds; and
- Development of emergency response plans (Colorado Department of Education, 2019).

Initially, when this study began, the state of Indiana had yet to mandate school safety audits despite the fact that there had been interest expressed in the topic. Folks' (2008) study in Indiana regarding the use of a safety checklist to audit school safety found that administrators deemed the checklist to be useful in helping them audit the level of safety in their schools. It is important to note here that Indiana has now mandated a safe school plan audit which was the focus of this study.

2.10.2 Security Audit

Security audits cover a wide range of issues from physical facilities, to policies, programming, and prevention plans. Often a checklist of the topics included in security audits is used as a starting tool for these audits, with additions and modifications made for a specific facility. A good example of this is the checklist released by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (2013). This checklist addresses key areas, such as building access control, classroom security, cybersecurity, communication systems, and school culture (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2013). There are a number of parallels between safety audits as defined above and security audits. The purpose of a school security assessment is to provide educational leaders with an evaluation of existing security conditions within their school to make recommendations for

improvement. An assessment, which educators call safety assessment and security assessment interchangeably, identifies vulnerabilities and risks related to school safety threats (Trump, 2011). Supporting the use of interchangeable terms is the reference above where different states mandate safety audits and reference security audits in their descriptions. In looking at the definition of security as it was defined previously in this chapter, a slight distinction can be made in that security infers securing or protecting, thus a predominant focus of security audits relates to auditing physical access or the preventing of potential threats from entering a school.

Finally, awareness of cyber threats and cyber security is becoming more and more important. There is now a need for schools to audit the security of school technology and databases, in addition to the physical safety of the school. Schools are encouraged to look beyond physical safety audits for reasons such as (a) liability for network breeches (b) legal requirements to protect student information, professional reputation, disruption of learning, and (e) student digital record retention (Pusey, 2018). To date, Indiana legislative code is silent on mandated security audits for schools, and therefore provides no guidance on the topic.

2.10.3 Threat Assessment

Trump (2011) recommended that each school and support facility assess potential internal and external threats (threat assessment) and prioritize threats as high or low priority for planning purposes. Trump outlined that threat assessments are important because no school is the same regarding the risk of internal and external threats, and threat assessments allow school administrators to analyze data and develop risk reduction tailored to their district. Following this line of thinking Trump warned school officials of the inefficiencies of using a standard safety plan or checklist that does not necessarily reflect the threats identified in a threat assessment. In this respect, threat assessments document both internal and external threats of any kind and aid in personalizing safe school plans. Currently, neither Indiana Code nor the department of education require threat assessments; however, it appears to be on the horizon.

In the fall of 2018 the state of Indiana released a report entitled “2018 Indiana School Safety Recommendations.” This report was the result of a team of Indiana Executive Branch Agency Leaders, who were commissioned by Governor Eric Holcomb, to produce recommendations on school safety. Among the listed recommendations was a requirement for schools to conduct a threat assessment by December 31, 2021. Additionally, the IDOE indicated

that it intended to take a more active role in the safety of schools by requiring the use of tools that can guide decision making based on actual data and can be used by the state to assist in funding decisions (“2018 Indiana School Safety Recommendations,” 2018).

Performing a threat assessment will provide schools data to help them identify specific threats, some of which are internal and involve students. In addition to the definition of threat assessment as outlined above, the same terminology is often associated with a specific threat assessment process that trains staff to identify students that are exhibiting behaviors which indicate the potential for individuals to cause harm to themselves or others. A recent report by the NSBA members defined this type of individual threat assessment as one to identify students of concern, assess their risk for engaging in violence or harmful activities, and identify intervention strategies to manage the risk (NSBA, 2018). In order to know what behaviors to look for, staff are trained to look for behaviors which have been identified through a 2004 U.S. Secret Service and USDOE project entitled “Safe School Initiative.” This project, spearheaded after the tragedy at Columbine High School in 1999, examined 37 incidents of targeted school violence. The goal of the study was to gather and analyze information about the behavior of students, who committed these types of violent school acts. Ultimately, the findings of the report were released and have served as the impetus for threat assessment programs in schools today. Indiana legislative code does not currently require schools to conduct threat assessment programs of this type; however, many of the initiatives regarding bullying prevention and emotionally safe schools stem from behaviors identified in a publication entitled “The Safe School Initiative” (2004) which addresses the value of using a threat assessment.

2.11 Indiana School Safety Plan Audits

Earlier in this chapter, school safety experts outlined how the topic of school safety has evolved into an extensive field over the last 20 years since the shooting tragedy at Columbine High School in 1999. In response to increasing incidents of school shootings and acts of terror not previously experienced, Indiana mandated school crisis response plans with the passage of Indiana Code 511 IAC 5-2-10.1-9 (1999). This particular code also established the requirement that each school designate a “school safety specialist” to oversee the development of safe school practices and plans. Over the years, required plan elements, training for staff, and incident data reporting increased as pressure was placed on state departments of education and schools to assure

that schools were safe for students and staff. With the passing of Indiana Code 511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5 schools were required to develop what was termed an *emergency preparedness plan*, which was to be created in conjunction with local authorities. The plan was to be updated each year along with school written assurance to the department of education that the plans were up to date and compliant with all requirements set forth by the state of Indiana. This self-monitoring/reporting continued for a number of years until 2017 with the passing of Indiana Code 511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5 (c) which authorized the department of education to conduct what were called *random* reviews of school safety plans. In a memo to school superintendents, the Director of Indiana School Safety Specialist Academy, Dave Woodward (Appendix E), communicated that each year a number of schools would be randomly selected to participate in a safety plan review. Onsite reviews would focus on ensuring that the elements detailed under the following requirements within Indiana Administrative Code were being met:

- 511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5–Safe schools’ emergency preparedness planning,
- 511 IAC 4-1.5-7–Crisis intervention plans,
- IC 5-2-10.1–Safe school committees school plans, and
- IC 20-34-3-20–Drills

The reviews were expected to provide feedback for the Indiana School Safety Specialist Academy and inform decisions regarding training opportunities and safety initiatives.

In less than a year after initiating the random safety plan reviews, IDOE School Safety Specialist Deborah Swain–Bayless issued a letter to superintendents notifying them that the Indiana General Assembly passed legislation requiring an audit of all school corporations with the passing of HEA 1230. Audits were to consist of an onsite visit, a review of all building safety plans, and a report of the audit findings (Appendix F). These safety plan audits began in the 2018–2019 school year and were the focus of the interviews conducted in this study.

2.12 Indiana School Safety Plan Audit Process

Previously in this chapter, safety audits, security audits, and threat assessments were defined, compared, and contrasted. The safety plan audit required by Indiana state law specifically audits safe school plan elements for compliance with expectations consistent with Indiana code. There is a distinction here from the previously addressed assessments in that safety plan audits assess school corporation compliance in implementing the required components of safe school plans. Safety plan audits do not directly assess school safety or threat levels. The audits indirectly assess safety under the assumption that if schools are compliant with the required elements, they are either safe or emerging to being safe.

In a presentation to school superintendents, Folks (2018) outlined the process for the audits in a power point presentation. To conduct the safety plan audits, the IDOE hired 11 contractors to ensure that all audits could be completed by the spring of 2019. Folks outlined the process in the following steps:

1. A letter explaining the process is sent to each superintendent.
2. Superintendents will be asked to complete a Jot Form listing a point of contact (P.O.C.) for the project.
3. Point of contact will receive a Moodle Login, audit checklist (Appendix D), and a list of resources.
4. Contractor will contact the P.O.C. to review the checklist, answer any questions, and set a date when all documentation will need to be uploaded to Moodle.
5. P.O.C. will upload all building safety plans and required documentation to Moodle by the agreed upon deadline.
6. Contractor will audit all documentation and will set a date to meet with the P.O.C.
7. During the onsite meeting the contractor will discuss the results of each building plan audit.
8. No Deficiencies–Contractor will provide a link to the superintendent and the P.O.C. asking them to complete a final Jot Form. Once completed, a letter of compliance is sent to the superintendent and P.O.C.
9. Deficiencies–Contractor will outline deficiencies and how they can be rectified. The P.O.C. will have 30 days to revise, edit and update safety plans.

10. After the 30-day window the P.O.C. will no longer have the ability to upload or edit documents in Moodle. Contractor will review uploaded items.
11. Contractor will provide a link to the superintendent and the P.O.C. asking them to complete the final Jot Form. Once completed, a letter of compliance or non-compliance will be sent to the superintendent and the P.O.C.

2.13 Safety Plan Audit Checklist

The safety plan audit checklist supplied to superintendents for preparation of their audit served as the outline for the site visits conducted by auditors (Appendix D). The checklist consisted of a listing of documentation necessary for the auditors to review, as well as a listing of the specific safety plan requirements that would be referenced by auditors for scoring the school safety plans. The following is a summary of the items on the safety plan audit checklist, as well as a citing of the Indiana legal code associated with each item.

2.13.1 Audit Documentation Requirements

- Corporation safety plan–511 IAC 6.1-2.5(a),
- Building safety plans (plans are to be building specific)–511 IAC 6.1-2.5(a),
- Most current fire or security alarm inspection–511 IAC 6.1-2.5(a-1);
- Sample building map with evacuation routes noted–511 IAC 6.1-2.5(a-3),
- Meeting minutes or other documentation showing emergency procedures instruction was provided to staff–511 IAC 6.1-2.5(a-4),
- Dates that staff provided instruction to students–511 IAC 6.1-2.5(a-4),
- Certification that the superintendent reviewed safety plans within 60 days after the beginning of the school year. This documentation will be verified by the IDOE using online database maintained by IDOE–511 IAC 6.1-2.5(b),
- Copy of drill logs–fire, tornado, and manmade occurrence–IC 20-34-3-20,
- Names of certified school safety specialists–IC 5-2-10.1-9,
- Names of local first responders that have received copies of floor plans for each building–IC 5-2-10.1-12,
- Minutes for corporation safe school committee meetings–IC 5-2-10.1-12, and
- Discipline rules prohibiting bullying; includes provisions for anonymous reporting–IC 20-33-8-13.5.

2.13.2 Required Safety Plan Elements

- Procedures for notifying agencies and organizations—511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a-2);
- Public information procedures—511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a-5);
- Procedure for evacuating building or dismissing classes—511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a-6);
- Fire protocol—511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a-7-A);
- Natural disaster protocol—tornado, earthquake, flooding—511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a-7-B);
- Adverse weather protocol—winter storm, extreme heat—511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a-7-C);
- Nuclear contamination—511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a-7-D);
- Exposure to chemicals—511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a-7-E);
- Manmade occurrence—student disturbance, weapon on campus, weapon of mass destruction, contamination of water supply or air supply, hostage, kidnapping—511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a-7-F); and
- Provisions for warning and evacuating those whose disabilities require special warning or evacuation procedures—511 IAC 7-36-6.

Schools that are found to have the required documentation of safety plan elements essentially would be considered compliant. It is important to note again the distinction between compliant and safe. To be synonymous, one would have to assume that the checklist items for compliance addresses all of the threats to safety that exist for each school corporation. Complicating matters is that each district is different and may have different priorities to address for school safety.

2.14 Safety Plan Requirement Omissions

In looking at the required safety plan elements and cross referencing them with literature regarding unsafe issues in schools, a distinction exists. Elements of the current required safe school plan apparently fail to address a number of threats to safety that superintendents must establish practices to prevent, respond, and recover from. The following safety issues represent a portion of those that are not addressed in the safe school plan requirements.

2.14.1 Bed Bugs

In June of 2016 the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA; 2016) released guidance to school administrators entitled “Bed Bugs in Schools.” This guidance presented the reality that bed bugs can *hitchhike* into schools creating physical and social media challenges for administrators. Recommendations were for administrators to develop plans to educate staff and develop procedures for prevention, response, and recovery from issues associated with the bugs.

2.14.2 Bus Safety

Chen (2021) found increases in violence on school buses including verbal, physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. The article further presented that most dangers that can occur in schools can occur on buses. Furthering the challenge is the fact that bus drivers are challenged to control their bus atmosphere while focusing on driving safely. Trespassers boarding busses and threatening students has also presented itself as an issue for administrators to prepare and respond to. Newton (2018) released an article which focused on challenges that districts and states are facing to combat school bus trespassing. This same article referenced specific incidents in Indiana where trespassers were allowed on the bus and threatened students. The IDOE (2020) recently updated a 33-page document outlining school bus transportation statutes and bus driver certification policies. Within the document reference is made to certain statutes that could lead to drivers being criminally charged for not upholding.

2.14.3 Emotional Safety

Previously addressed, the focus on social emotional safety in schools emanated from studying the profiles of school violent offenders. In recognizing these tendencies, school leaders began to focus on how to create safe atmospheres that not only minimized disgruntled students but established atmospheres where students felt safe enough to be themselves and discuss their thoughts/needs. Hamp (2019) identified the importance of school administrators being proactive in order to create emotionally safe environments. Planning and preparation were key elements she presented to minimize/prevent, respond to, and recover emotionally from crisis. Indiana has adopted competencies for social emotional learning; however, the safe school plan requirements fail to require prevention, response, and recovery plans for an emotionally safe atmosphere.

2.14.4 Food Allergy Reactions

Blad (2017) presented that food allergies have increased 21% since 2010, thus increasing the potential for a student to have an allergic reaction at school. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC; 2019) released guidance in their report that identified that eight% of children in the America or roughly two in every classroom have a food allergy that could cause a reproducible immune response to certain food. The potential for students to have allergic reactions has resulted in schools adopting policies and following suggestions of the CDC which include:

- Ensuring the daily management of food allergies in children
- Prepare to respond to food allergy emergencies
- Provide professional development for staff on food allergies
- Educate children and families about food allergies
- Create and maintain a healthy and safe educational environment

Plans of this sort are not currently included in the required safe school plan elements.

2.14.5 Lead in Water

It would be an unsafe condition for schools to have lead levels in water that rise above acceptable levels. In 2019 the Indiana Finance Authority established a lead sampling program for public schools. The result was a 24-page document outlining their lead testing program and responsibilities of schools to assure the public that water is safe to drink (Indiana Finance Authority, 2019). The program review reported that in 1991 the EPA approved the Lead and Copper Rule requiring schools to test their water for lead. The program allows eligible schools to apply for free lead testing and reports the numbers and percent of schools that participate in the program. The media publishes the results of the testing, including schools that refuse the offer for the free testing. For example, in August of 2018, Barrett wrote an article for WFYI Indianapolis entitled, “Central Indiana Schools Test Positive for Lead.” The article reported that at least 56 schools across central Indiana were found to have elevated lead levels identified through the

Indiana Finance Authority testing program. The blog post for the online article revealed a media crisis as parents and community members were concerned about their school's results. Recognizing the danger of lead and the importance of having a plan to prevent, respond to, and recover from lead in water is not currently incorporated into safe school plan requirements in Indiana.

2.14.6 Mold

Indiana Code 410 33-1-5 (2011) defined air quality standards, and Indiana Code 410 33-1-6 (2011) specifically required schools to identify a person to be considered the indoor air quality coordinator (IAQ). IAQ coordinators are responsible for overseeing processes to assure that the school/organizations are complying with administrative code. In the event of a complaint or suspicion of poor air quality, IAQ coordinators arrange for air quality tests to be conducted and results are shared with the local and state departments of health. In October 2018, Fox 59 News reporter Alexa Green posted an article entitled, "Greencastle School Back Open After Mold Issues." The article went on to report that after being closed for a month because of mold, a Greencastle Elementary School was reopening. In the article, the superintendent was presented to be responsible for reporting test results to parents and updates to the media. Similarly, in November of 2019, West Vigo Elementary classes were relocated to another school for two days due to high levels of mold being detected (Laughlin, 2019). Both incidents of mold produced media and safety crisis situations; however, preventing, responding to, and recovering from mold in schools is not required in school safety plans.

2.14.7 Communicable Diseases

Currently, in Indiana there are no requirements for school corporations to include prevention, response, or recovery from communicable diseases in their safe school plan. Outside of the safe school plan requirements, legal standard 6, listed on the IDOE website addresses "health compliance" requirements. Prevention of the spread of communicable diseases is addressed in the form of required student and staff immunizations that schools are obligated to monitor. The Indiana State Department of Health determines and communicates to schools, the recommended and required immunizations for students (Appendix G). Balco (2019) communicated the newly

implemented “school vaccination coverage report card” which the Indiana Department of Health created. This report card was intended to provide the public information on the safety of schools as related to student vaccination compliance. In addition to preventative immunization requirements, 512 IAC 1-2-2 requires schools to report 20% student absenteeism to the local health department. This reporting requirement is compliance related and does not accompany guidance on shutting down schools for high absenteeism associated with disease.

The spread of the coronavirus in 2020 was cause to revisit the required safety planning and response elements for communicable diseases. Currently, school superintendents are challenged in new ways to assure staff, students, and parents that processes are in place to assure their safety.

2.15 Safety Plan Audit Feedback

Upon conclusion of the required school safety plan audit, Indiana superintendents receive feedback on site at the time of the audit. Referenced above, there are two conclusions that auditors arrive at—planning and documentation reviewed is either *compliant*, meaning no deficiencies, or *non-compliant*, meaning deficiencies exist. If compliance is verified, the audit visit is followed up by the auditor with a letter of compliance being sent to both the superintendent and the P.O.C. for the corporation. In cases where the audit resulted in deficiencies, the superintendent is provided a list of the deficiencies along with suggestions for remediation. Superintendents then have a 30-day period to rectify the noted deficiencies at which time a final determination is made by the auditor.

2.16 Summary

This chapter began with a look at the literature as it addressed the history of safe school planning across the United States. Public opinion and national tragedies were recognized as being responsible for shaping safety mandates and legislation. Safety plans evolved from earlier nationwide tragedies, such as fires, to the most recent threats today involving active shooters. Legislation at the state level led to the mandated school safety plan audits that are instrumental to the findings of this study. In order to provide perspective regarding the mandated safety plan audits, literature was explored for reference to key safety planning and assessment terms. Specifically, these key terms were clarified in an effort to clearly present the distinctions between the various assessments referenced in the field of school safety and the school safety plan audit,

which is the focus of this study. Finally, the chapter outlined details in the literature communicated to Indiana school superintendents regarding the mandated safe school plan audits that were being implemented during the 2018–2019 school year. The thoughts and perceptions of superintendents after participating in the safety plan audits will help develop the field of school safety.

CHAPTER 3. METHODS

This qualitative study examined the lived experiences of five superintendents of large, public school districts across the state of Indiana. Through the methodology of systematic grounded theory, this study aimed to understand the perspectives and experiences of superintendents in regard to school safety planning and mandated school safety plan audits which were implemented in the 2018–2019 school year. Additionally, insight was gained regarding how school safety planning and safety plan audits have affected the safety practices and overall safety of their school corporations.

3.1 Background of the Researcher

The topic of school safety has become a passion of mine over the 31 years I have been in the field of education in Indiana. Of those years, 25 have been within the field of administration, the last five of which I have spent serving as superintendent of schools. Over this span of time, I have witnessed the role of school administrators expand in the area of school safety. Early in my tenure, safety was important; however, at that time, safe school issues were those of student behavior, fires, and tornados. Presented in previous chapters, the number of safety concerns that keep administrators up at night has grown to the point where school administrators are responsible for assuring the safety of students and staff for every unsafe element of society. Some of these issues are a struggle even for governmental units, police, and the military to address.

Safety training and preparation was absent in coursework and training I received to become a publicschool administrator. While serving as a high school principal, I had the opportunity to graduate in one of the first school safety specialist classes in Indiana. The academy from which I graduated has gained national attention for increasing school administrator knowledge in the ever changing field of school safety. Despite all of the training that the state of Indiana has provided through this academy, there is still the need for improvement and consistency across the state in how administrators work and communicate to improve the safety of schools. Required school safety plans have evolved over the years culminating with mandated safety plan audits in Indiana. I believe the timing of this study presents an opportunity to contribute to the field of school safety,

and it is my goal to use the results of this study to help improve the safe school efforts across the state of Indiana.

3.2 Research Question

What have been the lived experiences of superintendents in selected large, public school districts in Indiana regarding planning for and overseeing school safety in their districts? These lived experiences were examined in regard to four dimensions of superintendent responsibility:

- Personnel resource deployment for safety planning and response;
- Safety planning, data collection, and reporting;
- Safety and security interventions/assurances; and
- The mandated school safety audit.

3.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the thoughts and perceptions of superintendents of large, public school districts in Indiana regarding safety planning. Studies regarding superintendent perceptions have been largely absent from research data. Using the semi-structured interview protocol illustrated in Appendix H, the superintendents responded to a battery of questions designed to target four dimensions of superintendent safety responsibilities. Responses provided perceptions on a variety of topics, including the perceived impact of the audits at the state and local level, resulting behavioral changes in safety practices, and recommended changes to the audits based on their personal experience. The results of this study provide insight into how safety audits have affected districts throughout Indiana and informs the research in the larger field of school safety.

3.4 Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study is a qualitative study within the framework of applied research. Specifically, two theoretical frameworks apply to the study, those being phenomenology and reality testing. These frameworks provide structure for examining the phenomena of the lived experiences of

Indiana public school superintendents after participating in a mandated safe school plan audit process. Phenomenology examines the lived experiences of a person or group of people as it relates to the phenomenon being studied (Patton, 2002). In this study, school superintendents in Indiana are the group being studied. Reality testing examines the phenomena to determine to what extent the research is indicative of what is truly occurring in the real world (Patton, 2002). The thoughts and perceptions produced by the respondents after participating in the first annual school safety plan audit in Indiana presents the reality of participants' responses and ultimate analysis of their thoughts and perceptions.

In this case, phenomenology is the broad framework of "analysis that seeks to grasp and elucidate the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of a group of people" (Patton, 2002, p. 482). The lived experience of superintendents as they participate in school safety planning and the mandated safety plan audit process brings meaning to the responses gathered during the interviews.

Reality testing, as described by Patton (2002), applied to this study as the participants, through the interview process, provided their thoughts and experiences after bringing to reality the application of a school safety plan audit. In this case, the audit was real and not theoretical. Participant thoughts regarding the audit, combined with their experiences in working to provide safe schools, brings meaning to the study.

3.5 Research Design

The research design selected for this study was a combination of both summative and formative research. The summative element of the research resulted from interview questions as to the value of the safe school audits at the center of this study. According to Patton (2002),

Summative evaluations serve the purpose of rendering an overall judgement about the effectiveness of a program, policy, or product for the purpose of saying that the thing being evaluated is or is not effective and therefore, should or should not be continued, and has or does not have the potential of being generalizable to other situations. (p. 218)

Given the aforementioned definition, summative evaluation design is fitting to this study in that the participants, given their background and understanding of school safety and their

thoughts and perceptions of the mandated safety plan audit, provided data that led the researcher to an evaluation of the tool being evaluated. The formative element of the research design comes into play upon considering the potential for improvements in the safe school plan audits and process implementation. Considering the experiences of the study participants in leading school safety practices for their district, the potential exists to tap into their experiences and document the value of the audits, as well as contribute to the improvement of the audits and safety plan requirements in the future. According to Patton (2002),

Formative evaluations, in contrast to summative evaluations, serve the purpose of improving a specific program, policy, group of staff, or product. Formative evaluations aim at forming the thing being studied. No attempt is made to generalize the findings beyond the setting in which the evaluation takes place. (p. 220)

Patton (2002) supported the fact that research is an evolving process and, although typology of research design has its basic categories, such as summative and formative, research cannot be thought of as fixed or exhaustive as research develops and evolves.

3.6 Population and Sample

Target population, as defined, refers to the larger group which a researcher wants to learn more about and use to generalize his or her sample results (Johnson & Christianson, 2014). The target population for this qualitative study was public school superintendents, who work in large school districts across the state of Indiana. For this qualitative study, participants were selected using the purposeful sampling technique (Patton, 2002). “Qualitative inquiry typically focuses in depth on relatively small samples, selected purposely” (Patton, 2002, p. 230). Patton further explained that sampling techniques for qualitative studies are typically small and purposeful in contrast to quantitative samplings, which are typically large and random. Thus, a purposeful sampling technique is supported for this study design.

Within the category of purposeful sampling, the specific technique of *homogeneous* sampling was selected. Picking small, homogeneous samples allows for describing a particular subgroup in depth (Patton, 2002). A program, such as a statewide audit, has many different participants adding to the difficulty of demonstrating that the study findings apply to all

corporations. Narrowing in on suburban schools allows for a deeper understanding of superintendent thoughts and perceptions. This distinction results in increased strength of the study because generalizations associated with larger random sampling are narrowed if not eliminated. This is a key point of support for this study. The focus of the study was in the lived experience of school superintendents, who had experience leading their district safe school planning and participation in mandated safety plan audits. Thus, the potential exists to contribute to the research in the area of school safety and improvements in the audit process in the state of Indiana.

District size was an important consideration in selecting districts to be included in this study. Small districts of 1,500 students and under have fewer administrative personnel and fewer buildings to assure safety processes for. In those districts, the superintendent serves as the primary administrator for the corporation. The tasks of ensuring school safety are just as urgent in those districts as in larger ones, but the complexity of larger districts with many more schools, buildings, students, and staff members to oversee and direct meant that the lived experiences of the superintendents were qualitatively different, particularly with respect to coordination and oversight. Similarly, the superintendent's role in a very large district of 20,000 students or more was necessarily less hands on than in smaller districts. School safety studies could (and probably should) be done in very small and very large districts. However, the intention of this study was to focus on districts of a size and complexity that would make coordination and oversight demands on the superintendent, but would at the same time be small enough that the superintendent could have first-hand knowledge of and engagement with the schools and personnel of the district.

Consequently, to be considered for this study, districts had to be public school corporations with at least 3,000 students, separate buildings for elementary, middle, and high school, and five or more schools in the district. To ensure representative responses across the state of Indiana, a purposeful sample was selected to include superintendents serving in northern, central, and southern Indiana. Five superintendents were contacted via email which was then followed up with a telephone call (Appendix I). All identifiable information of the superintendents and districts studied were removed so that responses remained anonymous. Prior to initiating the selection process, approval for the study was secured by the Purdue Institutional Review Board. Upon securing study approval, the researcher contacted the individual superintendents to coordinate their participation in the study.

3.7 Data Collection

The participants of this study were interviewed by the researcher using a standardized open-ended interview format so as to achieve consistency. Johnson and Christianson (2014) supported this method of qualitative interview as it reduces interviewer effects of bias and increases the comparability of the results. Interview questions were selected in an effort to unveil the phenomenon or lived experiences of the participants following participation in the mandated school safety plan process. Study questions were designed to produce data which allowed for assessment of reality, what was truly going on, and what explanations existed for the patterns that unfolded from the data. The questions and the protocol used by the interviewer are attached in Appendix G. The data collected were in the form of transcribed interview responses to ensure accuracy in the data collection. Five cases or units of analysis were used in the study, each being a public school corporation superintendent in Indiana. Each superintendent was provided a copy of the interview protocol in advance. It was understood that superintendents may consult with their school safety specialist in advance of the interviews; however, only the researcher and subject were present during each interview. Interviews were conducted in person or via video conference.

3.8 Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis is not an exact science. The very thought of an objective researcher is suspect, and to be human, lends itself to interpretation (Bradley, 1993). To assure credibility of the data analysis for this study, systematic grounded theory was used as the data analysis design for this study. Glaser and Strauss (1999) developed this inductive theory of qualitative data analysis in the late 1960s. Grounded theory design is a systematic qualitative procedure used to generate a theory that explains on a conceptual level an interaction about a substantive topic (Glaser & Strauss, 1999). Over the years following its discovery, grounded theory variations were developed. There are “probably as many versions of grounded theory as there are grounded theorists” (Dey, 1999 p. 2).

In this study, the interview data were transcribed and analyzed using each phase of grounded theory: coding, open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Johnson & Christianson, 2014). Open coding was the first stage in the analysis process and involved reducing the real or transcribed data into key words and phrases, ultimately leading to the formation of open codes,

categories, themes, and theory. Coding charts were used to visually present each participant's responses to the interview questions. Open coding charts (Appendix J) consisted of columns for key words to be charted after being extracted from respondent responses. Subsequent columns in the chart allowed for key words to be analyzed and reduced into properties and ultimately open codes. During the next phase of analysis, axial coding, codes produced during the open coding stage were further developed into categories or abstract concepts through identification of relationships between codes. Open codes were visually laid out, and the codes were analyzed for relationships and themes, which led to categories and subcategories. The number of categories were reduced in comparison to the number of open codes, thus reducing and enriching the data. Categories produced were then synthesized into themes during the last phase of analysis or selective coding. Charting was used to visually represent open codes next to the categories produced in the axial coding stage. In other words, codes and categories that were related were selected, thus enriching the data that were being analyzed. Themes or concepts were then extracted from the relationships, which then led to assertions or theory. The result of the process was that data, codes, categories, and concepts were grounded into the final assertions. Each of the aforementioned phases of coding involved memoing on behalf of the researcher, whereby informal notes were recorded while analyzing the data. Researcher memos were recorded during each stage of coding, which provided insight to the researcher for the development of the codes, categories, and themes into assertions Figure 1 provides a visual representation of how the coding process used in this study progressed from codes to categories, ultimately leading to a grounded theory.

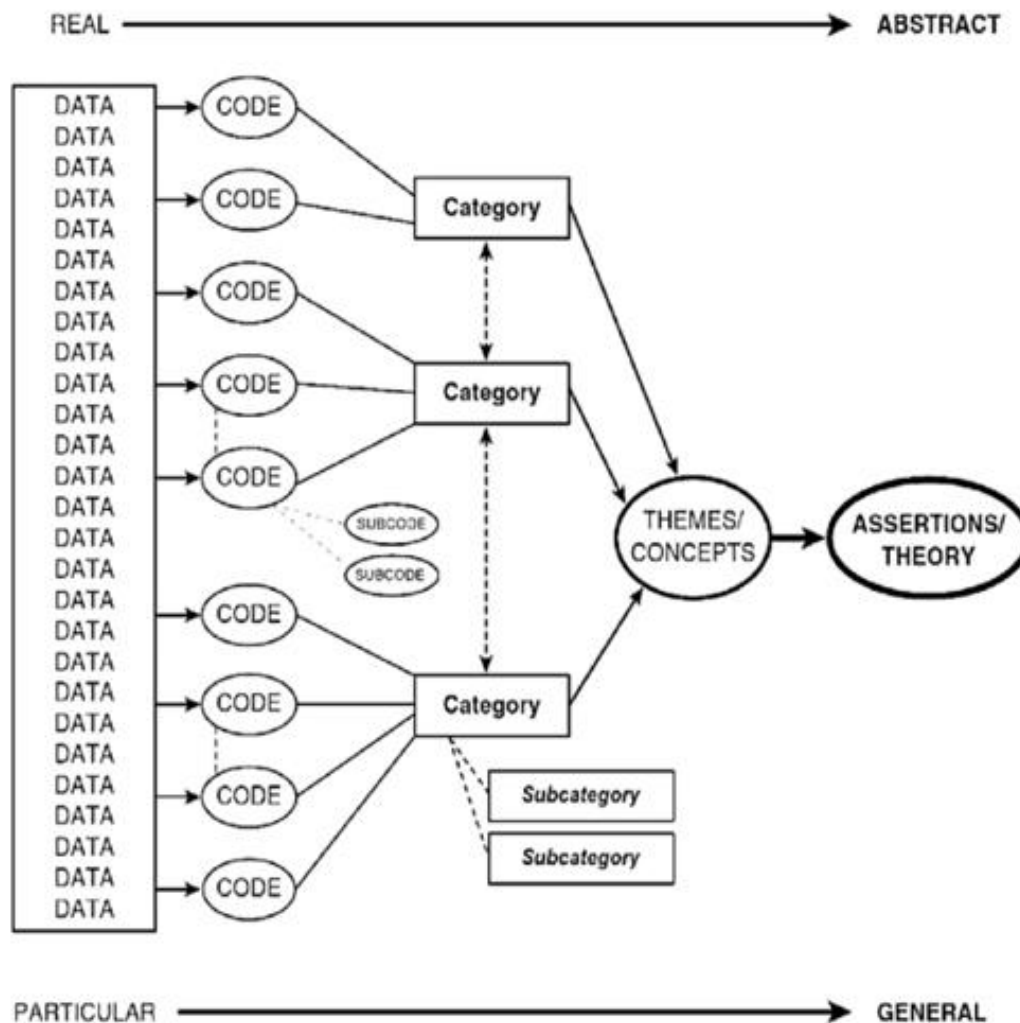


Figure 1. Saldana's (2016) streamlined codes to theory model for qualitative inquiry.
 Note. Adapted from J. Saldana (2016) *Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (p. 3).

3.9 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity measurement for qualitative studies differ from those of quantitative studies. Social constructivists use the term *dependability* as an analog for *reliability* and *credibility* is used as opposed to *validity* (Patton, 2002). One of the very strengths of qualitative study is the human element. Unfortunately, this very strength can be viewed as a weakness from those assessing qualitative study results. Fortunately, there are standards and practices accepted in the research to assure respect for qualitative study methods and outcomes. The design of this study

as outlined previously was representative of accepted practices in the field, thus contributing to its reliability or dependability. The transparency of identifying and outlining the methods of the study added to its reliability. Finally, the intention of the study was to inform the research in the field of school safety and in no way represent a summative conclusion associated with the subject. Researcher bias presented the potential to discredit the credibility or validity of a qualitative study. The need to assure the validity of qualitative research is real and the researcher's role is a key factor. According to Johnson and Christianson (2014), "Researcher bias tends to result from selective observation and selective recording of information and also from allowing one's personal views and perspectives to affect how data are interpreted and how the research is conducted" (p. 299). During this study, I was cognizant of the potential that existed for researcher bias to be present. To address the potential that my 25 years of public school administrative experience could overly influence the interpretations and results of the study, reflexivity was applied. Johnson and Christianson (2014) described reflexivity as a key strategy used to understand researcher bias where the researcher actively engages in self-reflection regarding predispositions in an attempt to control and manage bias. Consequently, questions asked of the participants in this study were worded in a way that presented the opportunity for each participant to present their own experiences and left open ended to allow flexibility in response and interpretation. I was also very careful during the interview process to avoid using leading questions or interjecting my own experiences in an attempt to prevent producing biased results. I was conscious of practicing empathetic neutrality to strengthen the credibility of the study. Patton (2002) presented empathetic neutrality as the ability of the researcher to find middle ground between becoming too involved and remaining too distant. Being conscious of the importance of balance strengthened my judgments and objectivity throughout the study. Another step in assuring validity came as the participants were engaged in feedback or member checking discussions. During this process, participants had the opportunity to hear and discuss my interpretation of their responses during the study. This process led to excellent dialogue and produced no objections from the participants. Throughout the interview process, I assured respondents that I would work to protect their anonymity as superintendent and that of their district, to the extent possible. This assurance was confirmed in writing prior to their participation in the study. Last, the explanation of the study purpose added to the assurance that this study was formative in nature and intended to contribute to the future of school safety and the safe school plan audit process in Indiana.

3.10 Reporting Results

The final reporting of study findings is in narrative form. Each participant is described along with the methods for collecting the data. A rich descriptive summary of the experience is provided, including details of the experience for the researcher, as well as the participants. The narrative also includes researcher thoughts regarding both similarities and differences that surfaced in the data along with the summative and formative findings regarding superintendent participation in the mandated safe school plan audits. The results include assertions that were developed during the study, as well as suggestions for improvements in school safety planning.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

This study sought to explore the thoughts and perceptions of superintendents of large, public school districts in Indiana with respect to safety planning and oversight. Chapter 4 includes data from five interviews with public school superintendents that were conducted in the fall of 2020. The interviews consisted of nine questions, each representing one of four a priori themes associated with school safety and oversight. The four themes were: personnel resource deployment, data collection and reporting, safety and security interventions, and mandated safety plan audit. The length of the semi-structured interviews ranged from 40 minutes to 70 minutes and were conducted via telephone and recorded to assure accuracy. Recordings from the interviews were later transcribed. Transcriptions were then open coded to produce codes, themes, and assertions from the data.

4.1 Participants

To be considered for this study, superintendents had to be serving public school corporations with at least 3,000 students, separate buildings for elementary, middle, and high school, and five or more schools in the district. To ensure representative responses across the state of Indiana, a purposeful sample was selected to include superintendents serving in northern, central, and southern Indiana. In order to protect the anonymity of the participants each superintendent was assigned an alphabetical letter ranging from A–E. Letters assigned had no significance other than the order that the interviews were conducted.

4.1.1 Superintendent A

Superintendent A served a public school corporation in north central Indiana. The school district consisted of 19 schools and served roughly 13,500 students across 12 grades. At the time of the interview, Superintendent A had been the superintendent in the district for 13 years.

4.1.2 Superintendent B

Superintendent B served a public school corporation in northwest Indiana. The school district consisted of 10 schools and served close to 10,000 students across 12 grades. At the time of the interview, Superintendent B had been the superintendent in the district for 11 years.

4.1.3 Superintendent C

Superintendent C served a public school corporation in central Indiana. The school district consisted of 18 schools and served roughly 17,000 students across 12 grades. At the time of the interview, Superintendent C had been the superintendent in the district for 10 years.

4.1.4 Superintendent D

Superintendent D served a public school corporation in eastern Indiana. The school district consisted of nine schools and served close to 8,000 students across 12 grades. At the time of the interview, Superintendent A had been the superintendent in the district for seven years.

4.1.5 Superintendent E

Superintendent E served a public school corporation in northern Indiana. The school district consisted of 12 schools and served over 5,000 students across 12 grades. At the time of the interview, Superintendent E had been the superintendent in the district for 10 years.

Outside of the number of schools served by the participants, each was responsible for service departments that served their students and staff. Service departments included maintenance, food service, transportation, and technology.

4.2 Interview Questions and Associated Themes

Following is a list of the nine interview questions along with the associated a priori school safety theme:

4.2.1 Personnel Resource Deployment for Safety Planning and Response

1. What are the challenges you face in overseeing personnel resource deployment in the area of safety planning in your school district?

4.2.2 Safety Planning, Data Collection, and Reporting

2. What challenges has your district faced with safety planning, data collection, and reporting?
3. How have increases in school safety issues impacted time away from your other responsibilities?

4.2.3 Safety and Security Interventions, and Assurances

4. What significant prevention measures have you implemented that were not mandated? What influenced your decision to implement these measures?
5. What significant safety response interventions have you implemented? What influenced your decision to implement these interventions?
6. What significant recovery interventions have you implemented over the past five years? What influenced your decision to implement these interventions?
7. Describe the community's influence into your decision-making process on preventing, responding to, and recovering from school safety issues. How does the community respond to the finalized administrative decisions and plans?

4.2.4 Mandated Safety Plan Audit

8. How has the mandated safety plan audit impacted the behaviors/practices of staff and students?
9. How has the mandated safety plan audit impacted the overall safety of your schools?

4.3 Open Coding of Superintendent Responses

Table 1 through Table 9 present the open coding data for each interview question conducted during the study. Following each table is a collective summary of the responses which includes data analysis for the development of themes.

Table 1. *Open Coding for Superintendent Interview Question 1*

What are the challenges you face in overseeing personnel resource deployment in the area of safety planning in your school district?				
Superintendent A	Superintendent B	Superintendent C	Superintendent D	Superintendent E
There doesn't seem to be enough personnel, we're always looking for personnel... but then finding time to discuss what our safety plans are.... I think the pandemic has caused us to use the remote or the Google Meets and Zooms more prevalently, and I think that's actually been a nice change, although in person is always better, but at least we can maybe meet during the day and aren't asking people to travel and get together for meetings and things of that nature. So yeah, I mean, those are a few things that come to my mind right away.	We went from having one to two Resource Officers then as things started to creep up we wanted to add another person so we went to three, and eventually, a year and a half ago, we got to our total of 5...we have 38 people who have been through the specialist certification process at the state. And some people value it more than others, some people think that it's not as robust as it could be,	With the pandemic, we have seen some additional challenges. Add on that, some of the civil unrest that we see across our country... I think about our school resource officers.... I focus on our administrators and making sure that they have ongoing training on the police officer side and school resource officer side, we also see a capacity issue. Just having enough people that are willing to do the job and do that job and that's becoming more challenging especially in this current environment.	We have all of our principals go through the Indiana school safety program... We have three County police officers who are resource officers for us, we also are a part of the County School Safety Committee, and they send meetings to our... Or they sent delegates to our meetings quarterly. And so, we meet once a month as a district group.	We do not have a specific person to be in charge of safety planning so it takes people we have away from their jobs. We only have 2 SRO's in the corporation. We would like to have more of them. They split their time between their assigned school and the other elementaries. We are challenged to train more staff members to be certified by the DOE school safety specialist training program. We like the training and think it adds to our ability to deploy more staff to situations when they occur.

Analysis of Open Coding for Question 1. Question 1 asked superintendents to address personnel challenges they faced in overseeing safety planning. Significant in the responses was the fact that each superintendent emphasized that school resource officers were key personnel in their districts as it related to school safety. Each superintendent made it a point to state the number of the officers they currently had and the majority expressed their efforts and interests in securing additional officers over the years. Another common factor in the responses was the importance of professional development of both staff and officers that were involved in school safety planning and oversight. Most mentioned their reliance on the Indiana School Safety Specialist Training program as a way to both train and gauge the number of personnel that are prepared to contribute to safety planning and oversight. Significant as well was the various agreements and processes used to work with their local community officials to secure officers that met their individual safety needs. Superintendents A and C both mentioned additional challenges that the COVID 19 pandemic had presented in the course of overseeing personnel and safety planning in their districts.

Table 2. *Open Coding for Superintendent Interview Question 2*

What challenges has your district faced with safety planning, data collection, and reporting?				
Superintendent A	Superintendent B	Superintendent C	Superintendent D	Superintendent E
<p>It's always difficult to plan because there are so many scenarios that come your way and you just never know . . . We sort of have a manpower shortage for planning . . . when we plan it always ends up turning out different than we expected . . . We have monthly safety meetings with the county to discuss planning... With data that's hard too, to try and develop the surveys, you gotta know what questions you wanna ask people to be able to collect the information that you need. ...we've got a pretty good data person that's designated to do that. So I think once you get over the hurdle of collecting what you need, I think making the state report and submitting the report is fairly simple.</p>	<p>Our SROs maintain databases separate from our assistant principals with a discipline file . . . But at our monthly meetings, our SROs report out on those little things that didn't get pushed to the assistant principal. So those things that they handled on their own, maybe they did a student a solid and cleaned it up because they felt confident that whatever the conflict was ended. And so this is how we keep tabs on what our SROs are doing that doesn't show up in the official student disciplinary database. I think it's important to know that all of our SROs have been through the appropriate training to be an SRO, as well as, we send them to the safety academy...there's always the concern that they could be inclined to want to arrest somebody...us being able to select the right people, we've been able to put in people who are good at de-escalation, and that's benefited us greatly.</p>	<p>We have worked hard to have an Indiana school safety specialist in every building... consistency and making sure that we have common practices have been something that we have really worked hard on. ...we developed a standard template that is available for our school safety plans...at is a challenge and we meet frequently with different law enforcement agencies, but in our area, we have multiple agencies that service our school district so working with each one of those on our District Safety Council has been critically important Talking about things like chain of command and our reunification efforts have been a significant focus for us... then we have implemented audits in our individual buildings that have been important for us. One, it helps us obviously when we're writing grants but doing those safety audits in our buildings helps us to stay current and make sure that we have everything up-to-date.</p>	<p>Really, the only problem is trying to deal with the IntelliGrant system to report down to the state. We're spending the money on the SROs, especially given that it is basically just sending a check to the County Police Department...o ur county has been a very organized and very supportive county for schools and school safety... all the schools in the county work together. So not really a lot of problems.</p>	<p>We have challenges with one of our schools being outside of the county . . . We have had to work with a second county to establish an MOU regarding who is in charge and who reports to who in the event of an emergency. The coordination of response services in our county has been challenging but we communicate well with the city and the county police, fire and emergency responders.... Regarding data, we have had trouble because the data outside kept by the county is not necessarily our data or kept accurately. The county is big and each school is different in the county. We try to be as transparent as possible with our parents but sometimes parents want more information than we can give them.... We did a lot of surveys for parents during COVID 19 planning stages and that was helpful in getting a feel for parent needs and interests.</p>

Analysis of Open Coding for Question 2. Question 2 was a multi-faceted question that addressed challenges superintendents face when addressing safety planning, data collection, and reporting. Significant in responses regarding planning was the fact that each mentioned district and county-wide meetings as playing a key role in safety plans. Most expressed the challenge of coordination of emergency response plans with county officials and, in some cases, city emergency response units. Regular meetings played a key role in coordinating their efforts. Various scenarios existed regarding how the corporations' leaders worked with local emergency response teams with most expressing some challenges existing because each school corporation faced its own unique challenges.

References to data reporting addressed the mandated reporting of student incident data that is filed annually. Superintendent E detailed challenges that are faced with the public wanting to know more about the data and discrepancies in county or city data as it relates to schools. Outside of student incident data, superintendents A and E mentioned the use of parent surveys to provide feedback for decision making. Significant as well from all responses was the fact that there was no mention of the value placed on the required safety data reports nor evidence that the data drives safety planning or safety assessment.

Table 3. *Open Coding for Superintendent Interview Question 3*

How have increases in school safety issues impacted time away from your other responsibilities?				
Superintendent A	Superintendent B	Superintendent C	Superintendent D	Superintendent E
I would say it's caused us to think about different things in different ways. Maybe not even things that have happened in this particular district, but in other districts that you're aware of that make the headlines. Definitely the types of issues have increased. When I started, social media wasn't as prevalent as it is today. So, when... A lot of times these safety issues end up rearing their head on social media, or at least you can get information to try and be... To head off a safety issue, because there's more information available from social media sources. So, I would say it's been an increase in the types of cases that we see.	Well, we have five people supporting us now, it has taken a lot of pressure off of us. And so, you can't really place a value on that, but from a decade ago, when we went to our second SRO in the schools and people are like, "This place is turning into a war zone," to three or four years ago when we went to the fifth officer, people are like, "That's peace of mind. We think that having the police presence makes us a harder target and it makes people wanna go somewhere else if they wanna cause problems." So, it's funny how that mentality has changed over time as well.	I don't know how it could not impact as.... When we have somebody who wants to do harm and is able to do so... it has shifted time, effort, resources, pressures...15 years ago we did not have police cars in front of the schools because of the fear of the perception that it would have. ...now, there's a fear of insecurity when we don't have our officer in the building.... So things have definitely changed as we've seen school violence continue to change and it has shifted time, focus, effort...all of those kinds of things which then obviously take away from some of the other responsibilities... During the pandemic it has made the job for our police officers, our resource officers easier.	COVID certainly has, and I would include that in the safety and that.... That committee has been very involved in putting together and working with the county health department to make sure everybody's staying safe that way. Technology and human ingenuity being what it is, kids find new and exciting ways to bring contraband into school, and so keeping up-to-date on the latest vape technology and all that sort of stuff is certainly a challenge...the use of tip lines and a number of other communication tools has made it very easy for kids to report when they have concerns about the behaviors of their classmates	There have been a lot of increases over the years with regard to safety issues and the amount of time we spend. COVID 19 has been a full time job and very demanding on our time... We often have our attention diverted from academic matters and in some cases safety issues delay us from implementing improvements in other areas.

Analysis of Open Coding for Question 3. Question 3 addressed perceptions that superintendents had regarding how increases in school safety issues have impacted their responsibilities in their areas. Overall, each superintendent confirmed that the number of safety issues that they are responsible for impacts the time and effort that they have to attend to other areas of responsibility. COVID 19 was presented by Superintendent's D and E as an example of how additional issues impact their time and efforts. Superintendent A responded that in some cases they respond and plan for issues that have happened in other districts because social media brings the issues to the school community. Superintendent E went so far as to say that COVID 19 had been a full-time job. The use of School Resource Officers surfaced again as being valuable to superintendents not only in assisting in addressing safety issues but also played an important role in shaping public perception of schools being safe through assurances that they are on site minimizing issues and prepared to respond should issues surface.

Table 4. *Open Coding for Superintendent Interview Question 4*

What significant prevention measures have you implemented that were not mandated? What influenced your decision to implement these measures?				
Superintendent A	Superintendent B	Superintendent C	Superintendent D	Superintendent E
We have expanded our school resource officer cadre... We are now up to five. Five is not enough.... We started a See Something, Say Something initiative...So we encourage our kids and our teachers to remain alert and aware, and if they see something out of place, they need to say something. ... We held a school safety town hall meeting format with the public. So parents and employees were able to attend and	Well, one of the things we've done...we significantly increased the number of cameras across the district in all of our secondary schools...at our secondary schools, we have cameras throughout and on the exterior of the buildings. And so, I believe again, that students are aware that they're being watched.... I mentioned already, we moved from one to two SROs and then we jumped to four and then we eventually went to.	I think the most important thing that we have implemented is kind of the campaign of See Something, Say Something, providing safe spaces for staff and students to report situations that they see that may cause a safety concern. When students see something on social media that is concerning, they can tell an officer or an administrator ... We do have the 3M safety glass on all of our entrances. ... We have silent notification systems at a lot of our front offices that alerts not only administration in the building, but also a separate system that will alert the law enforcement officials with a silent 911 call.... Of.	We have cameras all over the place...Raptor, is a sign in system which runs a background check on visitors and we put that in. We haven't done Raptor. We looked into that and had all kinds of privacy concerns...we've got digital cameras everywhere, including on the bus, GPS on the bus.... We are looking at a fingerprint system for on and off the bus.	We went beyond the expectations in preparation for Covid 19.... We purchased desk shields for students, water bottle filling stations, we also have cleaning and disinfecting solutions in the classrooms. None of these were mandated...We have added cameras over the years to all of our buildings... we have worked on entries of each of

Table 4 continued

Superintendent A	Superintendent B	Superintendent C	Superintendent D	Superintendent E
<p>just held a discussion in public about the different prevention measures that we have in our district... we allowed the public to speak so that we could gather some input...we have been methodically renovating existing school office entry areas to set them up and move walls such that there's a controlled entry vestibule...</p> <p>Reading accounts of emergencies and safety issues that happened in other districts, the community input influenced many of those decisions...we added window coverings of classroom doors. ...So yeah, just a lot of reading, a lot of input, a lot of discussion is what led to those measures.</p>	<p>five for our 10 buildings, we have to be able to say we've done what we think we can to avoid a tragedy." ... Well, I mentioned earlier, one of the things is, we wanted to make ourselves a harder target. I do believe that when you look at some of the school shootings, they targeted places that didn't have anybody to stop them.... We also think that even for non-violent stuff, just for people acting rude and belligerent, we believe that the police presence helps us bring everything down a notch, especially in light of the fact that we have officers engaged with us ... students' respect them so that they don't act up in teachers' classes</p>	<p>course, our SROs have been critical though they're not required in the state, but certainly something that we feel is a great value, primarily in our secondary schools full-time. ...We have a truancy officer, somebody who has police powers... we do have, and ironically, we're prepared to begin random walk-through metal detector screenings at our high school ninth grade center this year. We already have done that at all of our major athletic events....</p> <p>We work with national consultants; we have a safety council that meets quarterly. What we try to do is to be as proactive as we can, to follow best practices...we assessed vestibules in our schools that weren't built originally. They have vestibules that can actually screen individuals before they're allowed to enter ...we are trying to follow what we're learning from events that occur around the country and from other agencies that we're working with</p>	<p>Every building's got a secured entryway. We did that over the first four years I was here; we got all of the buildings up-to-date on that...We added SRO's, when I first got here 11 years ago, we had one Resource Officer and we've got three now.... We have robust background checks for anybody going through or working with children ... We're redesigning our high school right now, school safety, we're looking at all kinds of features in that to make sure that the building is safe.</p>	<p>our schools in order to have a secure vestibule. ...We also do background checks for all employees, guests, and guest speakers....</p> <p>School shootings across the nation had a lot of influence with our interventions planning, we also have a county safety commission that works to discuss safe school practices across the county.... We had people coming into the school with Opioid problems before we started doing checks on people.... For COVID, it was the anxiety of parents and staff that influenced many of our decisions.</p>

Analysis of Open Coding for Question 4. In responding to Question 4, superintendents presented the types of school safety prevention measures that they had implemented during their tenures. Additionally, they discussed factors that influenced the decisions they made to implement the preventive measures taken. Significant in their responses was that four of the five superintendents discussed how the presence of their school resource officers had been effective in minimizing and preventing safety issues from occurring. Each superintendent discussed being intentional about

increasing the number of officers and their presence throughout the corporation. Reconstructing entryways in order to control visitor traffic in schools was another preventative measure that most of the superintendents reported. In conjunction with secure entryways, the majority mentioned that they had incorporated visitor background screening to minimize the risk of safety threats to students and staff. Three of the five superintendents mentioned that they had increased the number of surveillance cameras in their buildings, especially at the secondary level. Superintendent B explained that students knew that they were being watched by the cameras and that this had deterred students from violating school rules and acting unsafely. Additionally, superintendent B described that having officers and cameras was important to the district, because they wanted to be a “harder target” for outside threats.

The question of what prompted the superintendents to initiate the interventions they selected led to varied responses but the predominant reason was that they were responding to school safety incidents that occurred statewide and nationally in an effort to minimize the risk of the same thing occurring in their districts. Superintendents A and E mentioned that prevention methods emanated as well from public forums and or surveys. These opportunities, along with the mention of social media, resulted in feedback which influenced their decisions.

Table 5. *Open Coding for Superintendent Interview Question 5*

What significant safety response interventions have you implemented? What influenced your decision to implement these interventions?				
Superintendent A	Superintendent B	Superintendent C	Superintendent D	Superintendent E
<p>We started a CRT team. C is crisis, R, response, T, team, a CRT team, Crisis Response Team. ...It's made up of various administrators, it's made up of school resource officers. That began probably six years ago. And that has been a... That's been a very positive committee. They vet a lot of different ideas, they promote different ideas and some of these strategies. They created our... Relocation and reunification plan. Oh, and they also created our Standard Response Protocols, our SRP. ...it is posted in all the classrooms to parents. What does a lockdown mean, what does a lockout mean, what does a shelter-in-place mean? And that has been adopted by the local sheriff's department, the local police force so that if we are dealing with a bank robbery in the area, there's a law enforcement issue going on around one of our schools and they recommend a lock out or a full lock down...common vocabulary with all of us that's been another positive response intervention.</p>	<p>We revamped our reunification process, something we hope we never have to use, of course, but instead of using our own schools as reunification sites, we re-thought that out.... We've developed a better relationship with two large churches in our area, and have designated those two external places as our reunification sites. It did require training and coordination with all of our principals to walk through what their role would be. ...We decided let's keep them separate and let's have them at a place that we don't advertise to people, but everybody knows where they are.</p>	<p>We wanted some consistency across the district, having accurate, up-to-date students' chart is not always possible in our emergency kits... And so, we actually went with a program called Navigate Prepared. We also have 360-degree views of every single room for our first responders to be able to see a footprint of not only the building but also the classroom that they may have to enter. ... And we work with local law enforcement agencies to do some training at our buildings and to utilize our buildings as sites where they can get to know and can practice some of these interventions that they may have to put into place if we have an incident inside the building. And I've mentioned police, but we also work very closely with the fire department. Obviously, they're a critical aspect to this. And our Fire Chief and I have worked very closely together. He's part of our district safety team. ...We have exterior doors numbered for emergency responders but one thing that we have not yet done is have a numbering system on the roof for emergency responders via air or drone.</p>	<p>We have the peer responder system, so every police and fire vehicle have access to the floor plans of the building and where the cameras are and all of that. The SROs are stationed throughout the district... We have fire stations very close to most of the buildings. The influence for some of these things emanates from the county professional development, the county committee that meets and the expertise of the people on that committee,</p>	<p>We have done a number of things in response to national shootings.... We have increased the number of people trained by the School Safety Specialist Academy in Indianapolis.... We have FOBS now at entries for staff in case someone loses their keys. We can also track who is in the building with them. ...Security officers at events have also increased. ...We also have PPE for all employees, social distancing cleaning and disinfecting stations, mask supplies for students.</p>

Analysis of Open Coding for Question 5. Question 5 prompted superintendents to address the types of safety response interventions that they had implemented, as well as the influences that led them to decide upon those interventions. The majority of the superintendents discussed having implemented relocation and reunification plans in the event of an emergency where students and staff are evacuated. Implementing these interventions called for staff training and coordination with local emergency responders. Superintendent E discussed the significance of the Indiana School Safety Specialist Academy in training of school staff responsible for safety plans and interventions. Superintendent A described the importance of having a common vocabulary for staff and local authorities under these circumstances. Along the lines of common vocabulary, superintendents referred to standard response protocols and common definitions for lockdowns, lockouts, and evacuation. Additionally, superintendents presented that they had systems that allowed for emergency responders to communicate with them, as well as having access to building floor maps and reunification plans. Once again, the importance of school resource officers was predominant in responses. The influences behind the response interventions implemented varied. Superintendent E mentioned national shootings as an influencer. Most superintendents presented that their corporation or county safe schools committees met regularly to discuss safety and these meetings led to the efforts they decided upon.

Table 6. *Open Coding for Superintendent Interview Question 6*

What significant recovery interventions have you implemented over the past five years? What influenced your decision to implement these interventions?				
Superintendent A	Superintendent B	Superintendent C	Superintendent D	Superintendent E
<p>The reunification strategy plan, that's been relatively new. ... It goes back to 2013 when our school district experienced a natural disaster. A tornado came through the area and destroyed a couple of our schools. It caused us to think about what if we had kids in the building during that severe weather and if a building were destroyed so you need site B if site A is rendered impassable. And so that, I think, probably going all the way back to 2013, that we began those conversations and began building the reunification plans.</p>	<p>So, we've made a re-commitment to our Crisis Intervention Team. We have brought in people to retrain and/or train for the first time our counselors and administrators.... Most of the intervention has been related to either accidental death or suicide with students, but we did have a neighboring district that suffered a drowning, and their community was devastated..... We normally have 25 or 30 people involved and we sent a group of six up to that district to support them.... This is the perfect kind of thing that we want to do. We have the expertise; we should utilize it. We can help children. Doesn't matter that they're our neighbor and not in our boundaries, they're region students who need support... that stuff makes you feel good about being prepared for something, even when it doesn't strike you locally, you're still able to help kids.</p>	<p>Yeah, we've not had any significant school or mass school safety issues. Unfortunately, we have students who, out in the community, in their neighborhoods, etcetera, have unfortunate situations occur sometimes that end their lives, and we've become far too good at coordinating our team for that...it's something that we do, unfortunately, more frequent than we would like, but we do have the intervention teams that we can gather and mobilize. We also do have a mental health provider that we contract with, that we can leverage their resources. Something for us that has been really important and we focused on a great deal in the last several years, is simply that reunification process. And so each one of our schools has identified, or we have identified for them a primary and a secondary reunification site. ... we practiced with our buses, and to see how long it would take them.... Each one of the teams and the schools have visited both their primary and secondary reunification sites.</p>	<p>We've built out our reunion plan for how you return kids to family...We've actually practiced drills doing that. We've got a communications professional here who gets professional development in how to deal with those situations. We have an incident command structure that we go through and we make sure that there is a whole section on communication and the reunification piece. We coordinated with our EMS and county... We have a whole big flow chart of who's in charge of what, who's the incident commander, and all those sorts of things.</p>	<p>We have added a number of interventions including a counselor crisis intervention team that can counsel needy students and staff when someone passes away.... We have worked to improve communication with parents and staff when things are happening. When I first came they had just gotten rid of all social workers and now we are bringing them back. We now have a communication person in the district who uses social media and our peach jar platform to keep parent's students informed.... There has been a focus on the Social and emotional needs and programming for students. Grant money has been available through a number of entities and we have taken advantage of that</p>

Analysis of Open Coding for Question 6. Question 6 called for superintendents to address the types of recovery interventions that they had implemented in response to school safety tragedies and emergency situations. They were also prompted to address the influences that led them to decide upon those interventions. Superintendents A and D reiterated the importance of coordinating and implementing their reunification plans. Staff training, coordination with local officials, and communication lines surfaced as important in their efforts. Superintendents B, C, and E focused on recovery efforts in relation to social emotional needs of students, staff, and the community following tragedies. Intervention teams of counselors and social workers were reported to have been trained and coordinated to work with those in need in the aftermath of significant events and loss of life. All of the superintendents addressed the importance of communication both during crisis and following crisis situations. Superintendents E and D presented the important role that their communications directors play in responding to social media and communicating with the media and parents. Influences on the recovery decisions made by superintendents reflected that they gained ideas on how to recover from training and from being educated regarding issues that happened in other districts both locally and nationally.

Table 7. *Open Coding for Superintendent Interview Question 7*

Describe the community's influence into your decision-making process on preventing, responding to, and recovering from school safety issues. How does the community respond to the finalized administrative decisions and plans?				
Superintendent A	Superintendent B	Superintendent C	Superintendent D	Superintendent E
<p>Any time there is an event, whether it's in your own district or somebody else's district, that gets the public ramped up and the ideas and the suggestions and the what if's start coming to you via email or phone...we want to hear what the community has to say. So, I think, the challenge for us as superintendents, is to just kinda weigh all that and balance the community interest versus what is really practical or meaningful within the school setting.</p> <p>I think you need to respond to that. But if there's a vocal minority, then perhaps you could pull some pieces and bits from their thoughts and ideas.</p> <p>I'd say, all in all, our community is typically very supportive of what those decisions and plans are that come out of the school board...a good recent example is all of our kind of COVID reopening plans, and there was a lot of input and ideas and opinions. And I think for the most part, I think people were satisfied with the options that we provided for our school community.</p>	<p>Our experience has been that the community really only gets involved at the time of an incident, and it's sort of a big outcry, and then they disappear shortly after. But I think it's important that we maintain these good relations with our local police departments.</p> <p>Our SRO idea was expensive... back seven or eight years ago, that was community influence, they didn't think we had enough presence, our move to go to three and then four and then five was not so much for the community, although we've gotten good reviews for it. It's been positive. Not really anybody questioning, "Why are you doing that?" They think it's a good use of resources.</p>	<p>We have not done any huge polling of our community or done any forums or anything like that, but we try to have community members that are involved both in community leader's meetings and in our safety council. So we have representation from various community groups on our District Safety Council to give us feedback... We don't share our specific plans. What we have shared with our community are generalized plans, real high-level general plans, so that we can keep those safety plans as secure as we possibly can, as safe as we possibly can. We really don't want to advertise to the bad guys how we plan to react to certain things. So we get requests on occasion, mostly from the media and mostly after an incident has occurred in another community, but our specific safety plans, we keep those pretty secure.</p>	<p>We passed a general fund referendum five years ago, and part of that was funding for additional SROs. The building projects that we have done have all been through G.O. bonds that we had to go through the board process and public input into that, and they're widely supported in the community. The referendum that we had with the SRO on it passed 76% yes, so a huge support in the community for that...</p>	<p>First, we always listen to the concerns of parents and the community so that we know what we need to address.... During Covid and at other times like when there are shootings we surveyed parents about their safety concerns. Most of the Parents respond positively but there are always those that don't agree. Especially during Covid when people are panicking. During the period of time during COVID when we had red, yellow, and green phases- this was before the state came up with their 4 colors, we established learning centers for parents because we surveyed them and knew that they needed was child care.</p>

Analysis of Open Coding for Question 7. Question 7 requested responses regarding the influence that the community had on decisions made by superintendents which related to school safety. Further, superintendents were asked how the community responded to plans and decisions they made. All responses reflected forms of input and influence by the community in decisions made. Superintendent C described the role that parents played on the corporation safety committee. Superintendent E presented that surveys on various topics were sent to parents to help the corporation make decisions. Other responses included the community's role in referendums. Despite varying methods of community input, all respondents mentioned the importance and value of community. Superintendent A, B, and C each mentioned that input came via phone calls, email, and social media predominantly when something happened nationally or in a neighboring community. Balancing the community input with feasibility and reasonableness was a necessity that Superintendent A mentioned. Relationships with police, emergency responders, and local officials were identified by a number of the superintendents. Superintendent C was the only respondent that mentioned that the corporation purposely did not communicate specific details of their plans in an effort to assure the information does not get into the hands of someone who would want to do harm. Safety planning and community opinions on COVID 19 were presented by both superintendents A and E. Superintendent E went so far as to say that parents and community members were panicked. As for support of the decisions made, each respondent described in one way or another that overall the community supported decisions made. Each as well presented that there were times, when parents and the community were more vocal than others, and these situations were typically when a local or national safety issue was in the media.

Table 8. *Open Coding for Superintendent Interview Question 8*

How has the mandated safety plan audit impacted the behaviors/practices of staff and students?				
Superintendent A	Superintendent B	Superintendent C	Superintendent D	Superintendent E
I think it's impacted in a positive way. I think it's given us a reason to offer different training sessions and have different conversations about school safety... I think our district has taken it seriously and just utilized that as an opportunity to learn and grow and reflect and perhaps institute things that we hadn't thought about before.	Well, it was a good start. Any time that you're forced to articulate your plans, that generally leads to a new analysis of what you're doing. the mandated safety plan led to us including our SROs, and then their different viewpoint came in and it mattered...any time you can adjust and make yourself stronger through whatever changes you make, it benefits the students.	You know, it really didn't have a significant change because we were already emphasizing the safety plans and the audits that we were going through. I think the one thing that it has done for us is doing the additional threat assessments...we go through and do threat assessments so that we can continually revise and update and make sure that we're being responsive. But we did not see any significant change to what the state had mandated because we were already in that process.	Not much because we were already in line with most of it, and, in fact, the person that was hired by the state to kind of go around and do the audits was from our district...a lot of what's being done in our county actually is reflected in that plan. But it really has not impacted us here.	It caused us to have more of a focus... What we're trying to do is to build coherence, in terms of what are the expected behaviors and practices and things that should be done, either once a year or quarterly, or things of that nature, things to look out for.... We actually, after the shooting, we adopted codes throughout the district, verbal codes that were utilized consistently across the district, so that if that information is communicated, teachers know how to respond, what to do with doors and windows and things of that nature.

Analysis of Open Coding for Question 8. Question 8 asked superintendents to address how the mandated Indiana school safety audit impacted the behaviors/practices of staff and students. Overall there were mixed responses regarding the impact of the mandated safety plan audits. Both respondents A and B reported that they thought the audits had a positive impact in that it forced them to look closely at what they were doing and challenged them to think differently in some cases. Superintendent E mentioned that it helped them focus on coherence across the district regarding expectations and behaviors. Superintendents C and D both presented that it had minimal impact on behaviors in their corporations, because they had already been in line with and implemented the elements that the audit reviewed. Superintendent C added that their district went beyond the audit requirements and had implemented threat assessments. Superintendent D mentioned that their entire county safety commission had already coordinated the elements outlined in the plan before it was mandated. Overall the analysis showed that the audits had not been detrimental and that the benefit depended on the individual corporation.

Table 9. *Open Coding for Superintendent Interview Question 9*

How has the mandated safety plan audit impacted the overall safety of your schools?				
Superintendent A	Superintendent B	Superintendent C	Superintendent D	Superintendent E
<p>It's improved it.</p> <p>For the reasons previously mentioned.... I think it's just given us an opportunity to put that topic in front of more people more frequently.</p>	<p>That's kind of hard to put a value on. ...For years we have been doing safety audits, not as robust as the one that came out of the state...we've been fortunate enough to have a lot of our people go down to school safety training to look at this thing from different angles. But any time you review the plan, there's always something that has changed... So, it's healthy to review those plans, and if you have turnover with administrators or SROs, they may not have thought about it as in depth as they need to, and sitting down and reviewing that plan can be beneficial.</p>	<p>Well, I think on a positive side, we have much safer schools, we have protocols in place, and I think it's an environment where students and staff feel safe to come and learn each day.... Having a more secure building does, it also limits the interaction and engagement of the community which is not always a bad thing, but it's certainly, it's not a place where people can just come walk in and be engaged without having to go through several protocols. And so, it is a sign of the times.... different communities have different levels of concern and protocols that need to go in place based on the community you live in.</p>	<p>What we really like about it is it is a really robust checklist to go through and make sure you're checking everything, because there's so many places and ways that things can distract you from just going around monthly or quarterly... We're big fans of checklists. And so it provides a really, really great checklist for us to make sure that we're checking off everything in a timely fashion and communicating with each other about it, so... Basically, it reinforced the things we were already doing and put it in a nice easy-to-use checklist; it makes sense to us, and so it's allowed us to make sure that we're not getting lax... Especially the bigger you get, having a checklist like that allows you to be consistent and make sure that everybody is reading from the same page.</p>	<p>Well, I would say that based on the fact that we wanted to do something district-wide and really get an understanding of what our needs were.... It led us to conduct a district-wide safety audit that was conducted by performance services to identify any and all safety concerns at each of our schools within the district.... and then a prioritization of those safety concerns that were subsequently incorporated into our multi-year capital plan... Tuesday, there'll be a report out on what has been done thus far, and we'll continue to try to work through those things that have been identified that are high priority to get those things in place as well.</p>

Analysis of Open Coding for Question 9. Question 9 was similar to Question 8 with the exception that it called for superintendents to address how the mandated Indiana school safety audit impacted the overall safety in their corporation. Overall superintendents responded that either the audit itself or the practices that they already had in place within the audit led to increased safety in their districts. Most mentioned that the idea of the checklist in the audit was beneficial in establishing consistency across the districts they were challenged to lead. Superintendent C expressed that despite the contents of the audit, each district had its own unique issues and protocols that needed to be in place. Another significant response came from Superintendent B. Large districts often have staff turnover and the audits and/or checklists within the district serves as a valuable instrument for training new staff that were not employed when the initial trainings were conducted.

4.4 Emergent Themes

Upon categorization of the open coding results for Questions 1–9, three themes emerged from the data. Superintendent lived experiences, thoughts, perceptions, and actions regarding school safety planning and response are centered around consistency, reaction, and security. These three themes surfaced throughout the data coding and categorization of questions which represented school safety themes of personnel, planning and reporting, interventions, and mandated safety audit.

4.4.1 Consistency

Superintendent responses reflected the importance they placed on establishing consistency within their safety planning and response efforts. Their responsibility of overseeing safety efforts in large districts produced a number of examples where their efforts had been focused on establishing plans, protocols, training, and practices that are in place throughout their districts. Each superintendent mentioned their efforts to increase the number of school resource officers so that buildings and schools are served consistently. Despite varying opinions on the value of the mandated school safety plan audits, superintendents recognized the value the audits had regarding assuring that they were working to be consistent with the guidelines established by the department of education and consistent within their schools across their districts. The Indiana School Safety Specialist Academy was referenced by superintendents as a valuable tool for training staff within

their districts. Superintendents demonstrated their efforts to train as many staff as feasibly possible and, because of staff turnover, assure that at any one time, schools had trained staff on hand for the purpose of assuring that knowledge and practices that reflect up-to-date safety issues and practices. Coordinating consistent school safety response and recovery efforts with local police and emergency responders also proved to be important to superintendents. Protocols for emergency response and recovery efforts including common vocabulary for response terminology was the focus of corporation and county-wide safety commission meetings, for the purpose of assuring consistency and improving outcomes in the event of an incident. Consistency at each school entrance was also emphasized by superintendents. To accomplish this, most referenced having invested in visitor screening software, as well as their efforts to reconstruct all school vestibules to control entry at the main entrances. Last, superintendents stated the importance of consistent communication with their staff, parents, and the community both during and after school incidents and just as importantly, during times where news media or social media crises erupted in their districts. Efforts on their behalf were developed with an expectation that varying opinions will likely surface as to how all audiences will respond. Superintendents C, D, and E all referenced a media relations person on staff to help them with these challenges.

4.4.2 Reaction

Despite their efforts to plan and establish consistent mitigation, response, and recovery efforts, superintendents' lived experiences presented that their thoughts and efforts were oftentimes reactionary. Most superintendents acknowledged that they planned and prepared for incidents based on issues and incidents that were occurring in schools nationally, statewide, and in neighboring districts. Each new incident added to the time, effort, and breadth of the responsibilities they have for school safety. Training and safety plans reflected what experts know about and have learned from actual incidents or issues that happened across the county. Some superintendents recognized that each incident presented a different challenge or twist, thus they live with doing the best they can with what they know. Each superintendent mentioned their community as having an impact on the issues they react to. Variances from one district to another were apparent as only a few superintendents mentioned the impact that the political unrest in the county has had on their schools. Second, COVID 19 was not mentioned by all superintendents; however, those who did mention it presented it to be another challenge that they had been reacting

to with little prior planning or training. Superintendent E described COVID 19 as “a full-time job.” Superintendents described how they had to react and put together COVID plans, and then react to the community and their responses to those plans.

Superintendents referenced reacting to issues that surfaced in social media and other electronic sources and that this was something that had intensified over the years. Electronic messaging systems were presented to be something that the superintendents relied heavily on to get information out to parents, staff, and community as quickly as possible in order to limit misinformation from being spread. Overall, superintendent comments reflected that school safety issues that they monitored and reacted to had increased over their careers.

4.4.3 Security

Throughout the interviews, superintendents represented security to be a pivotal element of their safety efforts. Without question, superintendent responses centered around school resource officers being a crucial element of their security efforts. Each respondent identified the number of school resource officers that they currently employed, how they had worked to increase the numbers over the years, and that they still could use additional officers. Superintendent B mentioned that the school resource officers helped them from being perceived as “soft targets.” Differences in each community surfaced regarding school resource officers and how each corporation went about approving of and securing them. Superintendent C mentioned that initially, his community worried when they saw police cars in front of the school, but now there is a sense of insecurity when they do not see police cars. Superintendent A said that they could not get enough personnel to address safety. Most superintendents were still pursuing additional officers to increase the presence of school resource officers at their elementary schools.

The focus on securing buildings surfaced across the responses as a priority for superintendents. There was a particular focus on securing the buildings from outside threats more so that securing safety for students and staff from inside threats. Specific efforts mentioned included locked doors, security cameras, controlled entrances, visitor screening, bulletproof glass, keyless entry systems, and visitor identification. Only superintendent C mentioned metal detectors and that was in reference to use for fans at extracurricular events. Knowledge of what other schools were doing or school safety incidents in the country drove the rationale for adding these security

items. Additionally, most mentioned some form of safety tip hotlines being established in order to help prevent unsafe conditions from happening in the buildings.

4.5 Assertions

Superintendent lived experiences, thoughts, perceptions, and actions regarding school safety planning and response were previously grounded into the three themes that emerged during axial coding. Considering the three emergent themes, selective coding was used to further ground data from real to abstract. Selective coding of themes produced the following two assertions, thus concluding the final phase of coding/grounding data.

4.5.1 Assertion 1

Indiana public school superintendents live with a number of uncertainties as they oversee and plan safe school efforts in their districts. What is the next safety issue that will surface? Superintendents in the study identified that they plan to mitigate, respond to, and recover from issues that they learned about because they happened to schools in their state, county, or nationally. Responses in this study reflected a focus on the hot topics of school shootings, security breaches, and bullying. These topics lead superintendents preparing their districts so the same mistakes made elsewhere do not happen in their district. Superintendents in this study placed value on working to assure standard mitigation, response, and recovery protocols across their districts for their school safety practices. Secure entryways, school resource officers, cameras, and social emotional education for staff and students all were developed. Additionally, superintendents discussed state-wide training of safety specialists, safe school conferences, and safety devices implemented in response to these issues. This study was conducted during the COVID 19 communicable disease crisis. Superintendent E referred to COVID 19 responsibilities as being a “full time job.” Superintendents had no way of knowing in advance that this was coming. There were uncertainties as to how to proceed due to no prior precedence existing for this particular communicable disease. Health department officials were uncertain themselves and went back and forth on guidance previously communicated.

Uncertainty exists for superintendents because learning from other districts and mandated incident data reporting only goes so far when each school corporation has its own unique

community and circumstances that are safety concerns. Each community is different. As a result, each superintendent addressed the importance of engaging the community in their safety efforts. Superintendent C was the only superintendent to mention political unrest and social injustice as issues of concern locally. Most superintendents mentioned the role of the school resource officers being critical to their efforts, although nationally, and in some communities, police are being defunded and looked upon as serving the population unjustly. Superintendent B mentioned that there were times when police presence at the school produced concerns about the safety of the schools.

Superintendents described numerous improvements and efforts that have been accomplished over their tenures. Despite their best efforts to minimize issues from surfacing, uncertainties remain regarding the level of school safety that exists. Despite these efforts, superintendents have to live with the uncertainty that they cannot guarantee staff or the public that unsafe incidents will be prevented. Social media posts, news media articles emails, and other sources discuss and debate the most recent safety issues along with questioning whether schools are safe. Much of this debate surfaces in the absence of viable safe school data and statistics. The end result that surfaced in this study is that given what they know, superintendents work tirelessly and do more and more to make their schools safe. The reality is that uncertainty exists regarding what the next safety issues will be as superintendents find themselves leading the corporation, and the community, through issues that government and justice systems struggle with themselves.

4.5.2 Assertion 2

Indiana public school superintendents plan and oversee safety operations in the absence of viable quantitative safety incident data. Superintendents in this study were given opportunities to discuss incident data reports, safe school audits, and any other significant data sources that they work with across their responsibilities to plan for and oversee school safety efforts in their districts. Upon grounding the responses, it became evident that quantitative safety data is either absent or insignificant as an influence in their decision-making experiences. Question 2 presented the opportunity for respondents to discuss safety data collection and reporting. The superintendents that addressed the issues focused more on the reporting process that they used to gather the information and submit the reports to the department of education. There was no evidence in their responses that they received feedback from the department of education about the numbers in their

reports. In Chapter 2 of this study, state reports were addressed in detail and produced information that required bullying incidents, arrests, weapons violations, and fight incident data to be reported. Significant here is the fact that the reports were reported to be made public by the department of education with no ratings or scores given to schools for their specific incident data. The result is that the public makes its own determinations as to what the data reveals. The results of such opinions often result in scrutiny of public schools and their level of safety. Upon review of superintendent responses to current safety challenges they faced, the mandated incident items in this study did not surface as being significant concerns for superintendents as they went about their responsibilities to oversee safety planning and operations in their districts. Thus, the reports surfaced as having little to no quantitative importance to superintendents as they addressed relevant safety issues within their districts.

One of the emergent themes in this study identified the importance superintendents placed on school security. This focus revealed numerous prevention methods implemented ranging from locked doors, security cameras, controlled entrances, visitor screening, bulletproof glass, keyless entry systems, and visitor identification. Superintendents have implemented all of these measures without mention of quantitative data demonstrating that they had reduced the number of incidents as a result of their efforts. The result is they have made great improvements and work tirelessly with little to show for their efforts or to inform the public as to their actual improvement in the number of safety incidents.

Despite an absence of incident data in the responses of this study, evidence did exist that trends are moving toward integrating data into decision making. Questions 8 and 9 provided superintendents to discuss their thoughts regarding the role and effectiveness of the mandated safety plan audits in Indiana. The responses in this study produced evidence that the plans are useful to superintendents in their efforts to guarantee processes across their districts and to confirm their compliance with the department of education requirements. As outlined in Chapter 2, the audits included the requirement of schools to report specific incident data to the state but fall short of requiring corporations to analyze the incident data to inform decisions. The end result of the assessments does inform decisions made by schools regarding potential threats but falls short of providing quantitative data that demonstrates a reduction in incidents.

Superintendent's A and C addressed the fact that they had incorporated threat assessments in their safe school planning efforts. As described in Chapter 2, threat assessments are valuable

tools that assess the physical plant and environments of schools for the potential that certain safety issues may manifest themselves. The findings produce suggestions for improvements that can be made in order to mitigate the potential for incidents to either occur or successfully breach current processes or interventions.

Previously discussed was the importance that superintendents place on engaging their individual communities in their safety efforts. Superintendents B and D mentioned town hall type formats to gather feedback from the community. These formats involve updating the community and opportunities for community opinions. For example, Superintendent B mentioned having three town councils and communities in the district each with its own police force for coordinating response efforts along with community concerns about traffic near schools. Superintendent D mentioned that during recent meetings the community brought concerns about COVID 19 and student vaping. Surveys were also mentioned as a tool used by superintendents to gather input. Superintendent E responded that recent school shootings, COVID 19, and teen suicide have been surfacing as issues that the community is concerned about. These efforts to gather input from their communities serve as valuable information for superintendents. It is, however, important to note that no evidence surfaced in responses that incident data was the impetus for the public opinion, nor associated with follow up actions involving data monitoring. Regardless, the feedback is evidence that each school community is different and one size does not fit all for superintendents to go about their safety responsibilities.

In summary, relevant safe school incident data surfaced as being absent from the experiences that superintendents live with regard to safe school planning and oversight. Mandated state safety data categories, like criminal gang activity, weapons, bullying, and arrests, does not reflect the individual issues of concern that superintendents face in their districts. Additionally, the data superintendents report via the mandate does not result in ratings or feedback from the department of education, nor does it result in continuous improvement goals. Thus, the process does not produce information that superintendents use when they implement school safety improvement measures, nor does the data reflect the effectiveness of safe school efforts that they implement in an effort to minimize unsafe conditions, respond, and recover from safety issues in their communities.

4.6 Summary

This chapter explored the thoughts and perceptions of superintendents of large, public school districts in Indiana with respect to safety planning and oversight. Data from five interviews with public school superintendents conducted in the fall of 2020 were analyzed using grounded theory methods described in Chapter 3. The questions selected represented four school safety themes: personnel resource deployment, data collection and reporting, safety and security interventions, and mandated safety plan audit. Analysis consisted of open coding of participant responses which produced codes and categories. Axial coding grounded the codes and categories into three emergent themes, which represented the thoughts and experiences of superintendents as they planned and oversaw safe school efforts in their districts. The three themes were: reaction, consistency, and security. Selective coding of the three themes lead to two significant assertions:

Assertion 1. Indiana public school superintendents live with a number of uncertainties as they oversee and plan safe school efforts in their districts.

Assertion 2. Indiana public school superintendents plan and oversee safety operations in the absence of viable quantitative safety incident data.

Chapter 5 addresses the assertions grounded from participant responses, as well as presents researcher recommendations and possibilities for future studies.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Study Overview

This study sought to explore the thoughts, perceptions, and lived experiences of public school superintendents in Indiana with respect to their responsibilities to safe school planning and oversight. Superintendents of large public school corporations across Indiana were interviewed in the fall of 2020. The interviews consisted of nine questions each representing one of four themes associated with school safety and oversight. The four themes were: personnel resource deployment, data collection and reporting, safety and security interventions, and mandated safety plan audit. The length of the semi-structured interviews ranged from 40 minutes to 70 minutes and were conducted via telephone and recorded to assure accuracy. Recordings from the interviews were later transcribed. Transcriptions were then open coded to produce codes, themes, and assertions from the data.

5.2 Findings

Chapter 4 revealed the findings of this study which were the result of applying a grounded theory process of coding and categorization of the data collected from superintendent interviews. As a result of the open coding process and categorization of key concepts, three themes emerged from the data. Superintendent lived experiences, thoughts, perceptions, and actions regarding school safety planning and response are centered around consistency, reaction and security.

5.2.1 Consistency

Superintendent responses reflected the importance they placed on establishing consistency within their safety planning and response efforts. Their responsibility of overseeing safety efforts in large districts produced a number of examples where their efforts have been focused on establishing plans, protocols, training, and practices that are in place throughout their districts. Superintendents stated the importance of consistent communication with their staff, parents, and the community, both during and after school incidents and just as importantly, during times where news media or social media crises erupted in their districts. Prevention, response, and recovery efforts on their behalf are developed to protect students and ease the minds of community members

regarding safety of the schools in relation to any number of safety issues that are hot topics in the media or threatening the community at a given time. Superintendents also work to establish consistency not only within their districts but as well among countywide and neighboring school districts.

5.2.2 Reaction

Despite their efforts to plan and establish consistent mitigation, response, and recovery efforts, superintendents' lived experiences presented that their thoughts and efforts are oftentimes reactionary. Superintendents acknowledged that they planned and prepared for incidents based on issues and incidents that were occurring in schools nationally, statewide, and in neighboring districts. The media's role—including social media—spurs the community and the nation when unsafe issues surface. Each superintendent mentioned their community as having an impact on the issues they react to. Overall superintendent comments reflected that school safety issues that they monitor and react to have increased over their careers.

5.2.3 Security

Throughout the interviews, superintendents represented security to be a pivotal element of their safety efforts. Without question, superintendent responses centered around school resource officers as being a crucial element of their security efforts. The focus on securing buildings surfaced across the responses as a priority for superintendents. There was a particular focus on securing the buildings from outside threats, more so than securing safety for students and staff from inside threats. Specific efforts mentioned included locked doors, security cameras, controlled entrances, visitor screening, bulletproof glass, keyless entry systems, and visitor identification. Once again, superintendents were very much in tune with their specific community and the safety concerns that were either real or popular in the media.

5.2.4 Assertions

Chapter 4 presented two assertions that surfaced from the study data. A summary of those assertions follows:

Assertion 1. Indiana public school superintendents live with a number of uncertainties as they oversee and plan safe school efforts in their districts. Superintendents' lived experiences in this study revealed that they operated under the uncertainty of what the next hot topic for safe school issues is going to be. As well, they live with the uncertainty as to whether stakeholders will accept their plans and efforts to provide safe schools. COVID 19, mold in the school, air quality, protected class discrimination, kidnapping, all are prime examples of things that pop up in the media in a moment's notice and dominate a superintendent's attention. The result is media frenzies that debate every element of these issues, including whether or not school leaders are doing all that they can do to prevent and respond. These frenzies influence superintendents as they oversee school safety efforts in their districts. Eventually, legislation is passed, directives result, and grants become available for everything that others think will solve the issue. Vendors begin to badger schools to purchase their cure-all products. It is a vicious cycle supported by the fact that superintendents in this study placed value on the number of interventions that they had implemented. Incident data demonstrating decreases in safe school incidents were practically non-existent.

Assertion 2. Indiana public school superintendents plan and oversee safety operations in the absence of viable quantitative safety incident data. Superintendents in this study were not accessing safe school data when making safety decisions. Evidence did not exist that local safe school data were being collected to demonstrate improvements in safety, nor to influence decisions made for future interventions. State reporting of incident data was referenced by superintendents; however, there was no indication that they received feedback from the department of education about the required safety data reports that are submitted annually. In Chapter 2 these reports were addressed and identified bullying incidents, suspensions, expulsions, arrests, weapons violations, bullying, restraint, seclusion, and fight incident data to be reported. Reports are made public with no ratings or scores given to schools for their specific incident data, or improvement from previous years. The result is that the public makes its own determinations as to what the data reveals.

Efforts to gather input from their communities regarding school safety was a focus presented by superintendents. These efforts produced information that helped superintendents identify the issues that are important to their community. Responses by superintendents reflected that communities are unique regarding their specific local safety issues and comfort regarding

school safety. Community feedback gathered, in most cases, was not based on quantitative safety data nor associated with data collected to assess improvements in safety levels following the implementation of interventions to mitigate, respond to, and recover from safety threats.

5.3 Discussion

If someone were to ask you if your home was safe, how would you respond? Most likely you would ask: Safe from what? Safe from fire? Safe from burglary? Safe from mold? Safe from abductors? Safe from accidents, tornadoes, etc.? In this study, numerous safe school threats or issues were identified that superintendents are responsible for mitigating, responding to, and recovering from. When one reads headlines and watches the news, it is evident just how many issues that school administrators are responsible for protecting students and staff from. Issues, such as mold, child abuse, concussions, child abductions, drugs, suicide, harassment, seclusion and restraint, gangs, bullying, cyber bullying, lead in drinking water, peanut butter allergies, choking, MRSA name a few, but the list goes on and on, including COVID 19. Evidence in this study reflected that if school administrators were asked the question about their school safety they would assume the question was referencing the most recent safe school issue that was in the media. “Reaction” was a theme identified in this study as superintendents find themselves reacting to any number of the safety issues that happen across the nation or surface in the media. The conversation would likely go on to include superintendents attempting to assure the public that the corporation has established practices and safeguards to mitigate the unsafe condition, respond, and recover afterward. This assumption is supported by the fact that another theme “consistency” surfaced as a priority for the superintendents of large districts that work to assure consistent interventions and responses are in place across their districts. Superintendents interviewed for this study demonstrated a good understanding of the interventions they have improved upon over the years to secure their buildings and mitigate incidents from occurring. Assisting them in their efforts to establish consistency, superintendents found the mandated safe school plan audits helpful, but nowhere in the audit was there a requirement for listing mitigation strategies that the school had implemented for each safety threat. This is likely the result of safe school plans that are framed to address responses and not preventative nor recovery measures.

Across all respondents in the study, there was high value placed on “security” which was the last theme extracted from the data. The presence of security and the journey to continue to add

more resource officers was clearly of major importance. It will be interesting to track this topic in the future given the current social justice movement associated with defunding police.

When answering questions about their school safety levels, the superintendents in this study did not directly state this, but answers to the battery of questions asked in this study reflected the assertion that their lived experience overseeing school safety results in challenges from staff, parents, and community members during uncertain times where people are looking for safety guarantees that do not exist. Again, COVID 19 is a great example. This assertion is significant in that it accurately described the cycle superintendents went through when working to improve safety and assure others that their schools are safe. All of this under circumstances where there are always new twists surfacing to previously addressed safety and issues like COVID 19 surfacing which federal and state governments struggled to address.

Last, the lived uncertainty and constant circling that superintendents go through to implement interventions and address concerns about their school safety levels is the result of a lack of viable quantitative safe school data. This was the second and final assertion produced in this study. In the absence of data that addresses their local needs, superintendents found themselves working harder and harder to do more with the expectation that more interventions meant safer schools. All of this in the absence of supporting data that demonstrates that interventions implemented are reducing the number of unsafe incidents and that schools are on a continuum to be safer than they have been in the past. In this study we documented the required safe school data that superintendents sent to the state and checked off regarding their reporting requirements. Among the required reporting items were gang activity, weapons, assault, fights, bullying, and more. Much of this data is not relevant to superintendents and did not surface in this study as a priority. Furthermore, the data submitted are published for all to read without any assessment of acceptable levels which would demonstrate that the schools are safe for those categories. The current safe school plan audit requirements do not call for schools to collect additional local safety data nor demonstrate that fewer unsafe incidents are resulting due to their safe school efforts. The result of a lack of viable data existing to assist superintendents in assuring stakeholders that their schools are safer today than they have ever been

5.4 Limitations

Timing is everything and upon reflecting on this study, one of the limitations was the fact that the interviews were held in October of 2020. It is important to note that at the time, the state of Indiana was at a heightened point of the COVID 19 epidemic. The fact that COVID 19 was on the minds of superintendents at this time may have influenced the responses that superintendents gave to certain questions. Very clearly a few of the superintendents were consumed by the crisis that began in March of the previous year. One superintendent went so far as to say that managing the crisis was a “full time job.” More than likely with further prodding by the researcher during interviews, other superintendents would have elaborated more than they did regarding the crisis at hand. Overall, the crisis may have influenced the responses to what the most immediate local safety issues were that they were working on.

Another limitation of the study may have been the sampling of participants. The five superintendents selected were purposely sampled as a result of their district student population and the number of schools they were responsible for regarding safety. Within the category of student enrollment, there were any number of districts that could have been selected. Given that every district had its own unique issues and community makeup, the results of the study may have turned out differently. Regardless, the size did lend itself to my being able to spend more time with respondents and get to know their experiences at a deeper level.

Last, in retrospect, as the researcher conducting the interviews, I learned that during the semi-structured interview format, I was not consistent across the interviews with regard to the prodding that I did. There were instances in the data where I realized that if I would have interjected clarifying questioning or repeated some of the multi-tiered questions, the responses may have been influenced toward more depth and clarity.

5.5 Implications

The themes and assertions produced in this study lead the researcher to a number of potential implications for future consideration. These implications are presented with the intention of empowering superintendents through the lived challenges that surfaced in this study. Specifically, the following implications are presented for consideration: threat assessments, safe school plan improvements, and analysis and goal setting of incident data.

5.5.1 Threat Assessments

In Chapter 3, school safety expert, Trump (2011) was cited for his recommendation that each school and support facility assess potential internal and external threats (threat assessment) and prioritize threats as high or low priority for planning purposes. Additionally, the results of this study demonstrated support for mandated threat assessments for schools and corporations as schools were clearly determined to have unique communities and safety issues that in a number of cases have very little to do with the school data that are required to be sent into the department of education. Threat assessments would also help superintendents in their efforts to plan for consistency in addressing incidents and minimize some of the stress that comes with reacting and dealing with uncertainty. All of these challenges surfaced in this study as either themes or assertions. Last, threat assessments, and the resulting plans to mitigate and data would empower superintendents when addressing the community regarding concerns about the safety levels of their corporation. Currently, neither Indiana Code nor the department of education require threat assessments; however, it appears to be on the horizon.

5.5.2 Safe School Plan Improvements

Safety plans, and the role they play for superintendents have evolved over the years. In Chapter 2, the evolution of safety plans was addressed. Over the years, the plans were loosely defined and titled. The structure was a one-size-fits-all approach. Titles ranged from crisis plans, to emergency response plans, and eventually safe school plans. Today, Indiana law requires elements of safety planning, emergency preparedness planning, response, and crisis response to be integrated into mandated safe school plans. The findings of this study support the implication that these plans should continue to be improved upon. Specifically, the plans should include mitigation, response, and recovery strategies that target the unique, local safe school issues that exist in the community. In Chapter 2, school safety author Dorn (2011) was cited for supporting this implication as he supported four key areas for considered by school administrators as they planned for the safety of their schools: (a) prevention/mitigation, (b) preparedness, (c) response, and (d) recovery. Specifically, the following implications are presented for consideration: threat assessments, personalized safe school plans, and collection, analysis and goal setting for local safety threats/incidents.

5.5.3 Analysis and Goal Setting of Safety Data

In Chapter 2 and Chapter 4, the safe school data that superintendents are required to collect and report to the IDOE were discussed in detail. Findings in this study reflected that the required reporting topics do not necessarily reflect issues that superintendents are facing locally, nor, when the data is sent in, is there any rating or evaluative element. The data are posted on line for the public to determine if the numbers are good or bad regarding school safety. More importantly, during this study, lived experiences of superintendents did not reveal the use of incident data as a factor when deciding upon safety interventions or attempting to calm the public regarding the safety of schools. In this setting, continuous improvement data was absent and continuous reaction, uncertainty, and public scrutiny existed for superintendents.

Examples of the current required reporting topics are listed below. Threats included in Indiana Code include:

- Bullying and Cyberbullying–IAC 20-33-8-13.5,
- Criminal gang activity–IAC 20-26-18-6,
- Sex offenders–IC 35-42-4-14, and
- Use of seclusion and restraint–IAC 513 1-2-7(g).

Schools are also obligated to report harassment/intimidation/discrimination cases for protected classes (USDOE, 2016). Last, schools also report suspensions and expulsion data, which along with aforementioned reporting requirements, is made public via Annual Performance Reports (Appendix K). A quick glance at the topics and it is evident that required reporting topics were not identified as significant issues for superintendents in this study; thus, the data serves little if any purpose for local decisions and growth demonstration. Thus, the implication here is for superintendents to consider using threat assessment and local incident data to identify the local safety issues that will be included in the safety plan and monitored with data for the purpose of decision making, goal setting, demonstrate continuous growth, and transparency with the public regarding safety levels.

5.6 Recommendations for Further Research

This study set out to document the lived experiences of superintendents while overseeing and planning school safety efforts. Considering the findings, limitations, and implications of this study there is cause for speculation regarding future research which may contribute to the topic of school safety as it relates to superintendent planning and oversight. The following thoughts are my suggestions after having conducted this study.

The implications and findings of this study prompt the need for more information about the use of school safety data and how it could play a role for superintendents when they make decisions regarding safety plans and work to address public scrutiny regarding the safety of their schools. Quantitative studies regarding safety issue differences from school corporation to corporation would contribute to future improvements. Studies examining school incident data analysis could produce data identifying the most significant school safety issues that exist, as well as which areas show improvement in reduced incidents in relationship to safety plan decisions and interventions. Additionally, a study which addressed the most effective ways to measure school safety and the success of interventions would be powerful for superintendents as they go about their duties to plan for and oversee school safety in their districts.

In 2020 COVID 19 surfaced as a never before seen challenge for superintendents and evidence suggested that superintendents in this study were preoccupied with COVID 19. Superintendents responded, reacted, and lived in uncertainty while taking direction from the federal government, state government, and state and local health departments. Studying the effects of COVID 19 and how it may have reshaped the roles between government, state and local health officials, and school superintendents could prove significant for the future when alternative communicable diseases cause destruction and hysteria.

Finally, given the growing depth and breadth of superintendent safety oversight responsibilities, strong consideration should be given to corporations hiring a full-time safe school coordinator who is not only knowledgeable regarding school safety but as well, skilled in leadership, goal setting, and communicating with all audiences.

5.7 Conclusion

This study set out to explore the lived experiences of superintendents in selected large school districts in Indiana regarding planning for and overseeing school safety in their districts. Through exploration of superintendent experiences, themes and assertions emerged, which reflected the lived experiences of superintendents in the study. Themes and assertions led to implications for improvements in both school safety and assistance to superintendents as they go about their duties leading schools and communities through safe school planning. This study did not set out to address the broad topic of school safety; however, the result of studying the superintendent's experiences led to implications for improvements in school safety, as well as a foundation for future studies. It is the hope of this researcher that the results of this study lead to improvements in school safety practices and more importantly, validation that the hard work that superintendents put forth, in a time where more safety challenges exist, results in recognition that schools are safer than they have ever been.

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APPENDIX A: INDIANA REQUIRED TRAININGS



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Dr. Jennifer McCormick
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Working Together for Student Success

To: School Principals

From: Michael Brown, Director of Legislative Affairs

Date: August 15, 2018

Subject: UPDATED - Required Trainings for School Employees

Background:

This required training guidance is to provide schools with an understanding of what training is required for school employees under state and federal law. This guidance does not include trainings that are optional for schools, and additional trainings may be required by the school corporation or governing body.

NOTE: Any updates since the last publication are *italicized*.

1. Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) per IC 20-28-5-3(c)

- a. Description: CPR training must include a test demonstration on a mannequin; removing a foreign body causing an obstruction in an airway; the Heimlich maneuver; and the use of an automated external defibrillator. The educator must hold a valid certification in each of the outlined procedures issued by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, or a comparable organization or institution approved by the State Board of Education (SBOE).
- b. Required for: All teacher license holders
- c. Frequency: Initial Practitioner License Application; License Renewal Application
- d. Resources:
<https://www.doc.in.gov/licensing/cpr-heimlich-maneuver-aed-certification>

2. Suicide Prevention per IC 20-28-5-3(d), and IC 20-28-3-6

- a. Description:
 - i. Per IC 20-28-5-3(d): The applicant must show evidence the applicant has successfully completed education and training on the prevention of child suicide and the recognition of signs a student may be considering suicide.
 - ii. Per IC 20-28-3-6: Research-based inservice youth suicide awareness and prevention training must be demonstrated to be an effective or promising program and recommended by the Indiana Suicide Prevention Network Advisory Council. The training may include an in-person presentation;

electronic or technology-based medium, including self-review modules available on an online system; an individual program of study of designated materials; or any other method approved by the governing body that is consistent with current professional development standards.

- b. Required for:
 - i. Per IC 20-28-5-3(d): Initial Practitioner License Applicant
 - ii. Per IC 20-28-3-6: Each school corporation, charter school, and accredited nonpublic school shall require all teachers to complete the training. "Teacher" includes: a superintendent who holds a license under IC 20-28-5; a principal; a teacher; a librarian; a school counselor; a school psychologist; a school nurse; and a school social worker.
- c. Frequency:
 - i. Per IC 20-28-5-3(d): Initial Practitioner License Application
 - ii. Per IC 20-28-3-6: At least two hours every three school years.
- d. Resources: <https://www.doe.in.gov/licensing/suicide-prevention-training>;
<https://www.doe.in.gov/student-services/suicide-prevention-and-response>

3. Bloodborne Pathogen per 29 CFR 1910.1030

- a. Description: Bloodborne pathogen training must include information regarding bloodborne pathogens and related diseases, methods to use to control occupational exposure, hepatitis B vaccine, medical evaluation, and post exposure plan and follow-up procedures.
- b. Required for: All school employees of each school corporation, charter school, and accredited nonpublic school.
- c. Frequency: Annually
- d. Resources: <https://www.doe.in.gov/student-services/health>

4. Bullying Prevention per IC 20-26-5-34.2

- a. Description: A school corporation shall provide training concerning the school's bullying prevention and reporting policy adopted under IC 20-33-8-13.5.
- b. Required for: School corporation's employees and volunteers who have direct, ongoing contact with students.
- c. Frequency: N/A
- d. Resources: <https://www.doe.in.gov/student-services/bullying-cyberbullying-prevention-and-response>

5. Child Abuse and Neglect per IC 20-28-3-4.5

- a. Description: Training shall include the duty to report suspected child abuse or neglect under IC 31-33-5 and recognizing possible signs of child abuse or neglect. The training format may include an in-person presentation; electronic or technology-based medium, including self-review modules available on an online system; an individual program of study of designated materials; or any other method approved by the governing body consistent with current professional development standards.
- b. Required for: Each school corporation, charter school, and accredited nonpublic school shall require each school employee likely to have direct, ongoing contact with children within the scope of the employee's employment.
- c. Frequency: At least once every two years.
- d. Resources:
<https://www.doe.in.gov/student-services/child-abuse-prevention-response-resources>

6. Criminal Organization Policy per IC 20-26-18-4

- a. Description: A school corporation shall establish the following educational programs in its efforts to address criminal organization activity: (1) an evidence-based educational criminal organization awareness program for students, school employees, and parents; and (2) a school employee development program to provide training of the criminal organization policy.
- b. Required for: School employees
- c. Frequency: N/A
- d. Resources: <https://www.doe.in.gov/safety/criminal-organization-information>

7. Human Trafficking per IC 20-28-3-7

- a. Description: Each school corporation and accredited nonpublic school shall require training pertaining to the identification and reporting of human trafficking. The format of the inservice training may include an in-person presentation; an electronic or technology-based medium, including self-review modules available on an online system; an individual program of study of designated materials; or any other method approved by the governing body, or the equivalent authority for an accredited nonpublic school, that is consistent with current professional development standards.
- b. Required for: All school employees likely to have direct, ongoing contact with children within the scope of the employee's employment.
- c. Frequency: At least one hour of inservice training every two school years.
- d. Resources: <https://www.doe.in.gov/student-services/human-trafficking>

8. Reading Specialist Trained in Dyslexia per IC 20-35.5

- a. Description: By the 2019-2020 school year, each school corporation must employ at least one reading specialist trained in dyslexia.
- b. Required for: Any school employee deemed a reading specialist trained in dyslexia.
- c. Frequency: N/A
- d. Resources: Coming soon

9. Indiana Education for Homeless Children and Youth per IC 20-50-1-6

- a. Description: The Every Student Succeeds Act mandates all McKinney-Vento Liaisons (statewide) participate in extensive McKinney-Vento training year round. Additionally, every school corporation and charter school must receive the same training annually, provided by the McKinney-Vento Liaison. The training must be demonstrated to be an effective or promising program and recommended by the Indiana Education for Homeless Children and Youth and Indiana McKinney-Vento Academy. It may include an in-person presentation; electronic or technology-based medium, including self-review modules available on an online system; an individual program of study of designated materials; or any other method approved by the governing body consistent with current professional development standards.
- b. Required for: School corporations homeless education liaison
- c. Frequency: Annually
- d. Resources: <https://www.doe.in.gov/student-services/training>

10. School Safety Specialist per IC 5-2-10.1-11

- a. Description: The school safety specialist training and certification program is provided by the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE). There are five days of basic training and two days of advanced training individuals must complete to be certified as a school safety specialist.
- b. Required for: School safety specialists (minimum one per district)
- c. Frequency: Yearly
- d. Resources: <https://www.doe.in.gov/safety>

11. Training for Staff and Testing Security and Integrity Agreement per 511 IAC 5-5-5 and Indiana Assessment, Policies, Administration and Security Manual

- a. *Description: All school employees, excluding bus drivers, shall complete assessment training and sign a testing security and integrity agreement. The agreement is to remain on file in the appropriate building-level office.*
- b. *Required for: All school employees, except bus drivers*
- c. *Frequency: Yearly*
- d. *Resources: Indiana Assessment, Policies, Administration, and Security Manual*

12. Seclusion and Restraint per IC 20-20-40-13(J)

- a. *Description: Training should include the appropriate use of effective alternatives to physical restraint and seclusion, including the use of positive behavioral intervention and support and conflict de-escalation. The training must include the safe use of physical restraint and seclusion in incidents involving imminent danger or serious harm to the student, school employees, or others.*
- b. *Required for: Appropriate school employees*
- c. *Frequency: Recurrent*
- d. *Resources: <https://www.doe.in.gov/srcommission>*

13. Concussion per IC 20-34-7-6 and IC 20-34-7-7

- a. *Description:*
 - i. IC 20-34-7-6: Certification course required for all football coaches that coach children under the age of 20, who coach children in grades 1 through 12, and who utilize public property (parks, schools, public fields) for practice or games. Course must: (1) be football specific; (2) contain player safety content on (a) concussion awareness; (b) equipment fitting; (c) heat emergency preparedness; (d) proper technique; (3) contain a comprehensive test; (4) award a certificate of completion; (5) be approved by the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE).
 - ii. IC 20-34-7-7: Certification courses required for all interscholastic coaches, including cheerleading that coach children in grades 5-12 must take: (1) concussion certification course; (2) heat illness prevention certification course. Certification courses must: (1) contain a comprehensive test; (2) award a certificate of completion; (3) be approved by the IDOE.
- b. *Required for:*
 - i. IC 20-34-7-6: Football coaches (head coaches and assistant coaches)
 - ii. IC 20-34-7-7: All other sports, including cheerleading (head coaches and assistant coaches)
- c. *Frequency: Not less than once during a two year period.*

d. Resources:

<https://www.doc.in.gov/student-services/health/concussion-and-sudden-cardiac-arrest>

14. Heat Preparedness per IC 20-34-7-7

- a. Description: Heat preparedness courses must: contain a comprehensive test; award a certificate of completion; and be approved by IDOE.
- b. Required for:
 - i. Boys Coaches: Baseball, basketball, cross country, football, golf, soccer, swimming, tennis, track, and wrestling.
 - ii. Girls Coaches: Basketball, cross country, golf, gymnastics, soccer, softball, swimming, tennis, track, and volleyball.
- c. Frequency: Not less than once every two year period.
- d. Resources:

<https://www.doc.in.gov/student-services/health/concussion-and-sudden-cardiac-arrest>

15. Internal Control Standards per IC 5-11-1-27

- a. Description: In an effort to promote accountability and transparency, every school corporation must utilize internal control standards as outlined in IC 5-11-1-27. The State Board of Accounts (SBOA) has defined acceptable minimum level internal control standards. According to SBOA, internal controls include the reduction of risk associated with fraud as well as a safeguard of resources against loss due to waste, abuse, mismanagement, or errors. Internal control provides a check and balance system over operations, promoting operational effectiveness and efficiency. A system of sufficient internal control produces reliable financial and management data, ensures accuracy and timeliness in reporting, and promotes compliance with laws.
- b. Required for: The employee of a school corporation whose official duties include receiving, processing, depositing, disbursing, or otherwise having access to funds belonging to the federal government, state government, a political subdivision, or another governmental agency.
- c. Frequency: N/A
- d. Resources: <https://www.in.gov/sboa/files/UniformInternalControlStandards.pdf>

16. Lock Out/Tag Out per 29 CFR 1910.147

- a. Description: Training should ensure the purpose and function of the energy control program are understood by employees and the knowledge and skills required for the safe application, usage, and removal of the energy controls are acquired by employees. The training shall include recognition of applicable

hazardous energy sources, the type and magnitude of the energy available in the workplace, and the methods and means necessary for energy isolation and control. When tag outs are used, employees must also be trained in the limitation of those tags.

- b. Required for: Affected employees must be trained in the purpose and use of the energy control procedure. All other employees whose work operations may be in the area shall be instructed about the procedure, and about the prohibition relating to attempts to restart or re-energize machines or equipment which are locked out or tagged out.
- c. Frequency: When there is a change in job assignments, a change in machines, equipment, or processes that present a new hazard, when there is a change in the energy control procedures, or during periodic inspections of inadequacies among employee knowledge.
- d. Resources: https://www.in.gov/idem/ctap/files/small_bus_chap22.pdf

There are a few training provisions of the Indiana Code that apply only if the school exercises authority:

1. School Resource Officer (SRO) per [IC 20-26-18.2](#)

- a. Description: SROs must have (1) completed the minimum training requirements for law enforcement officers under IC 5-2-1-9; and (2) received at least 40 hours of SRO training through: the Indiana law enforcement training board; the National Association of School Resource Officers; or another school resource officer training program approved by the Indiana law enforcement training board.
- b. Required for: School Resource Officers
- c. Frequency: N/A
- d. Resources: <https://insroa.org/>

2. School Corporation Police; Autism and Asperger's Syndrome Training per [IC 20-26-5-31](#)

- a. Description: If a school corporation establishes a school corporation police department, the governing body must adopt a policy requiring the corporation police officer to complete training, so they may appropriately deal with individuals with autism and Asperger's syndrome.
- b. Required for: Only corporation police officers
- c. Frequency: N/A
- d. Resources: See governing body policy



3. School Corporation Police Minimum Training Requirements per IC 20-26-16-4

- a. Description: Corporation police officers must successfully complete at least: (1) the pre-basic training course established under IC 5-2-1-9(f); and (2) the minimum basic training and educational requirements adopted by the law enforcement training board.
- b. Required for: Only corporation police officers
- c. Frequency: N/A
- d. Resources: <https://www.in.gov/ilea/2382.htm>

**Updated as of August 15, 2018.*

This is a working document and will be updated as laws change and are added. If you have any questions, please visit the Resources link at the end of each section.

APPENDIX B: ROBERT TAYLOR SURVEY E-MAIL



Mark Francesconi <mfrancesconi@lpcsc.k12.in.us>

IDOE "Required Trainings Survey" - Priority HIGH

Robert Taylor <rtaylor@iapss-in.org>

Fri, Oct 4, 2019 at 7:11 AM

To: Robert Taylor <rtaylor@iapss-in.org>, "J.T. Coopman" <jtcoopman@iapss-in.org>

Cc: Sherry Brewer <sbrewer@iapss-in.org>, Lana White <lwhite@iapss-in.org>, "bwalker2@doe.in.gov" <bwalker2@doe.in.gov>

IAPSS Members,

In cooperation with the IDOE we are requesting that all members provide the following survey information to all school employees with your full endorsement for the timely completion and submission of the enclosed survey.

As indicated below, this survey is being conducted in support of the Interim Study Committee on Education's ongoing review and consideration of the current mandated trainings. I would encourage your full support in obtaining 100% completion by your staff members. IDOE needs to hear from as many educators as possible in order to provide the members of the Education Committee with complete and accurate input from those educators most directly impacted by the mandated trainings. Please note the requested submission date of before **October 11, 2019 (NLT 5PM.)**

Your distribution and endorsement of this survey is sincerely appreciated.

IAPSS would like to acknowledge and thank IDOE Policy and Communication Specialist, Ms. Bailey Walker for her time and efforts in facilitating the creation of this survey instrument.

Action Item to follow:

Required Trainings Survey

IDOE, at the request of the Interim Study Committee on Education, has been charged with surveying Indiana educators regarding how to do the following:

1. Eliminate, reduce, or streamline the number of training mandates placed on schools.
2. Streamline fiscal and compliance reporting to the General Assembly on a sustainable and systematic basis.

IDOE worked in collaboration with the Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents, the Indiana Association of School Principals, the Indiana State Teachers Association, the American Federation of Teachers - Indiana, and the Indiana School Board Association to create this survey.

All school employees are encouraged to take this survey before October 11. The survey can be found here.

Thank you all for your help and input in the quick turnaround of this deployment.

If you have any questions please reach out.

Bailey A. Walker

Policy & Communications Specialist

Indiana Department of Education

P: (317) 234-6811 | C: (317) 407-6924 | bwalker2@doe.in.gov

www.doe.in.gov | Feedback: How are we doing?

With appreciation

Bob T

Dr. Robert L. Taylor, Ed.D.
Associate Director
IAPSS
One North Capitol #1215
Indianapolis, IN 46204
Cell: 317.372.1264
Phone: 317.639.3592
Fax: 317.639.4360

With Diamond Business Partners:



With Platinum Business Partners:

American Fidelity
Barton Coe Vilamaa
Ico Miller
Ind/Ky/Oh Regional Council of Carpenters - IKORCC

APPENDIX C: INDIANA SCHOOL SAFETY SUGGESTED PRACTICES



Dr. Jennifer McCormick
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Working Together for Student Success

SCHOOL SAFETY REQUIREMENTS AND BEST PRACTICES

This document provides an outline of legal requirements and suggested practices for Indiana schools and is a collaborative product of the Indiana Department of Education, the Indiana Department of Homeland Security and the Indiana Secured School Safety Board. The checklist provided is intended to provide your school with information and guidance to ensure that school emergency preparedness plans are meeting the requirements of Indiana Administrative Code and Indiana Code. Suggested practices are also provided to promote school safety plans in Indiana that are above and beyond the legal requirements.

This guide was created to assist school officials in their quest to examine their safety practices and procedures in an attempt to better serve their student populations. It is therefore incumbent upon these school officials and their local community partners to consider this guidance and determine what they believe is critical to address when considering emergency preparedness issues. This guidance document will be most beneficial when the end user has utilized it to create a safer learning environment and provided training to ensure a well-prepared staff and student body.

SECTION 2:

SUGGESTED PRACTICES NOT REQUIRED BY CODE

The action items below are recommendations for schools to consider as they update their policies and protocols but are not required per Indiana code. These recommendations are not intended to burden schools financially but are included for consideration.

1. THREAT ASSESSMENT

- b. To better address threats (both known and anonymous), schools should consider establishing a threat assessment team of school personnel and local first responders and community mental health
- c. Establish anonymous reporting systems for students (can be combined with bullying reporting system which is required by law)
- d. Establish social media policy for monitoring or capturing threats
- e. Work with student groups who can identify trends or ongoing safety concerns (student safety council).

- f. Utilize the sex offender registry to receive notifications regarding new or existing offenders to the community. Make note of these sex offender location when establish bus stop locations.
- 2. MORNING AND AFTERNOON PROCEDURES**
- a. Due to large influx of students and vehicles, law enforcement presence is key during morning and afternoon departure/arrival.
 - b. Minimize entry points for continued access control when possible.
 - c. Establish protocols for supervision of students before and after school.
 - d. Establish protocols with local law enforcement to include human and vehicle traffic management.
- 3. ACCESS CONTROL**
- a. Review exterior of facility for potential placement of vehicle bollards (for areas of high student walking traffic).
 - b. Exterior doors locked during school hours.
 - c. Classroom doors locked during instruction or provided with means for quick lockdown.
 - d. Empty classroom and unsupervised areas should be locked/restricted.
 - e. Utilize buzzer systems when available. Empower staff to refuse entry and notify law enforcement for suspicious behavior.
 - f. Visitors guided to main office for identification check. Issue visitor passes utilizing bright lanyards.
 - g. Establish protocol/check-in system for deliveries.
 - h. Train staff and students to report unauthorized persons in the building.
 - i. Provide first responders with key access to building via knoxbox or keycard. Establish Memorandum of Understanding outlining that access only occur during crisis.
- 4. CAMERAS/RADIOS**
- a. Cameras installed in appropriate locations to protect people, not equipment.
 - b. Provide access to live feed for local law enforcement. Establish Memorandum of Understanding outlining that camera access only occur during crisis.
 - c. Provide two way radios for any staff taking students outside of the building.
 - d. Charge additional batteries for radios in case of extended shelter in place after school hours.
- 5. MOBILE OFFICE/CRISIS KITS**
- a. Mobile capabilities to address crisis after an evacuation.
 - b. Include copy of safety plan and emergency contacts. If school utilizes a mobile app with this capability, ensure it is a native app not requiring active internet or cellular service.
 - c. First aid kits, tourniquets. Nurse may equip a "go bag" with necessary medications for students with particular medical issues (diabetic).
 - d. Include emergency contact information for staff and students (paper copy or thumb drive updated each semester).
 - e. Student release forms in case students must be released from evacuation/relocation point.
 - f. Other items to consider; high-visibility vest, signage, clipboards, paper, pens, tarp.
- 6. RELOCATION PROTOCOL**
- a. Establish Memorandum of Understanding with offsite location.

- b. Maintain keys for access to offsite location.
 - c. Consider establishing multiple relocation sites (one within quick walking distance, one further away what would require transportation).
 - d. Consider means of transportation. Possibly establish MOU with neighboring School Corporation.
 - e. Establish protocols for reunification process with local law enforcement to include human and vehicle traffic management, emergency contact information for staff and students, and release protocols.
- 7. DEATH OF STUDENT OR STAFF**
- a. Establish protocols to work with staff and students, including student and community notification process, available counseling services, and crisis center.
- 8. AFTER SCHOOL EVENTS INVOLVING COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS/SPORTING EVENTS**
- a. Coordinate details of each event with local law enforcement and participating schools. Be aware of increased supervision for rivalries.
 - b. Clearly posted policies for attendees.
 - c. Pre-event announcements outlining safety procedures.
 - d. Update rental agreements to include weather safety/tornado safe zone awareness for outside groups using school facilities.
 - e. Establish protocols for severe weather/heat index for practices.
 - f. Establish concussion protocols.
- 9. SCHOOL AS COMMUNITY SHELTER**
- a. Communicate with county Emergency Manager to determine if school has a role during large scale community crisis.
 - b. Include after-hours contacts for county Emergency Manager and school administration.
 - c. Establish Memorandum of Understanding for use of school as shelter to include access control to particular areas of school and use of school transportation.
- 10. PLAYGROUNDS**
- a. Appropriate supervision staffing and positioning.
 - b. Practice reverse-evacuation for quick reentry to the building.
 - c. Staff access to radios for quick notification to office for emergencies.
 - d. Public address system audible for quick notification from the office for emergencies.
 - e. Instruction on proper use of equipment for supervisors and students.
 - f. Inspections of equipment completed and kept on file.
- 11. FACILITIES REVIEW/SITE SURVEY**
- a. Conduct full facilities review utilizing checklists provided by IDOE incorporating principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design.
 - b. Request facilities review from insurance provider.
- 12. LAW ENFORCEMENT PRESENCE**
- a. Promote law enforcement presence at high vehicle and human traffic times such as arrival/departure.
 - b. Welcome law enforcement walkthrough of facilities to ensure familiarity.
 - c. Work towards having a full-time security presence or certified School Resource Officer.

APPENIX D: INDIANA SAFETY PLAN AUDIT CHECKLIST

School Corporation:	
Number of School Buildings:	
Contact Name & Title:	
Telephone Number:	
Email	

Audit Documentation Requirements		Legal Code
<input type="checkbox"/>	Corporation Safety plan	511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Building Safety Plan(s) (safety plans should be building specific – if multiple schools are housed under one roof e.g. junior high and high school only one plan needs to be submitted)	511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Most current fire and/or security alarm inspection	511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a-1)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sample building map with evacuation routes noted. (choose one classroom map)	511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a-3)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Meeting minutes or other documentation showing emergency procedures instruction was provided to staff	511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a-4)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Date(s) that staff provided emergency instruction to students	511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a-4)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Certification that Superintendent reviewed safety plans within 60 days after the beginning of the school year. Here is a link to the form that must be submitted; https://www.doe.in.gov/safety/safe-schools-and-emergency-preparedness-planning-certification-form This documentation will be verified by IDOE using online database maintained by IDOE.	511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(b)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Copy of drill logs – fire, tornado and manmade occurrence	IC 20-34-3-20
<input type="checkbox"/>	Name(s) of certified School Safety Specialist(s)	IC 5-2-10.1-9
<input type="checkbox"/>	Name(s) of local first responders who have received copies of floor plans for each building.	IC 5-2-10.1-12
<input type="checkbox"/>	Minutes for corporation safe school committee meetings.	IC 5-2-10.1-12
<input type="checkbox"/>	Discipline rules prohibiting bullying; includes provisions for anonymous reporting	IC 20-33-8-13.5

SAFETY PLAN MUST INCLUDE		Legal Code
<input type="checkbox"/>	Procedures for notifying other agencies and organizations	511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a-2)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public information procedures	511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a-5)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Procedure for evacuating building or dismissing classes	511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a-6)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fire protocol	511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a-7-A)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Natural disaster protocol - e.g. tornado, earthquake, flooding	511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a-7-B)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adverse weather protocol – e.g. winter storm, extreme heat	511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a-7-C)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nuclear contamination	511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a-7-D)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Exposure to chemicals	511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a-7-E)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Manmade occurrence – e.g. student disturbance, weapon on campus, weapon of mass destruction, contamination of water supply or air supply, hostage, kidnapping	511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(a-7-F)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provisions for warning and evacuating those whose disabilities require special warning or evaluation procedures (plan can also reference where these provisions can be found e.g. IEP, IHP or ILP)	511 IAC 7-36-6

APPENDIX E: WOODWARD SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN REVIEW MEMO



Dr. Jennifer McCormick
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Working Together for Student Success

August 28, 2017

Mr. Mark Francesconi
Superintendent
LaPorte Community School Corporation
1921 A Street
LaPorte, IN 46350

Mr. Francesconi,

In an effort to assess school safety planning and preparedness the school safety staff for the Indiana Department of Education is conducting a review of school safety plans as authorized by 511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(c). Schools selected for review are done so through a random selection process. Once a school, within a school corporation, has been reviewed the school corporation is removed from the selection group for 3 years. These on-site reviews will focus on ensuring that the elements detailed under the following requirements within Indiana Administrative Code and Indiana Code are being met.

- 511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5 – Safe schools and emergency preparedness planning
- 511 IAC 4-1.5-7 – Crisis intervention plans
- IC 5-2-10.1 – Safe school committees: school plans
- IC 20-34-3-20 – Drills

These reviews will also provide an opportunity for the Indiana School Safety Specialist Academy to:

- assess the effectiveness of the trainings and resources the academy provides to school corporations
- learn about new/high-level school safety initiatives that can be shared with others
- provide individualized assistance and resources to your school corporation

This letter is a notification that your school corporation has been randomly selected for a safety review that we would like to conduct on **Wednesday, September 20, 2017**. This review will focus on the school safety plan for **Lincoln Elementary School**. If possible, we could like to conduct the meeting at this location. The meeting is most effective when the following people are present; building administration most involved in school safety, the corporation's school safety specialist, school resource officer (if one is employed by the corporation), and any corporation personal who are keenly involved in the development and/or implementation of the school safety plan. We understand if time and budget constraints do not allow for everyone to be present, this is a recommendation, not a requirement.

As authorized by 511 IAC 6.1-2-2.5(c), please submit the emergency preparedness plan for **Lincoln Elementary School** to the Department of Education by **Monday, September 11, 2017**. Submissions should be sent to, dwoodwar@doe.in.gov.

I will be contacting you by phone on **Monday, September 11, 2017** to confirm the date, time, location, and other pertinent details of the review. An attachment is included with this letter that provides further details related to the process, procedure and expected time frame for the monitoring review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Woodward".

David Woodward
Director Indiana School Safety Specialist Academy
Indiana Department of Education

115 W. Washington Street ■ South Tower, Suite 600 ■ Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

317.232.6610 ■ www.doe.in.gov



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Dr. Jennifer McCormick
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Working Together for Student Success

School Safety Plan Monitoring Review Process

Expected time required: 2 - 3 hours

Documentation that may be required:

School Safety Plan

1. Documentation of the following required emergency preparedness plan minimum requirements:
 - Appropriate warning systems.
 - Procedures for notifying other agencies and organizations.
 - Posting of evacuation routes.
 - Emergency preparedness instruction for staff and students.
 - Public information procedures.
 - Steps that will be taken prior to a decision to evacuate buildings or dismiss classes.
 - Provisions to protect the safety and well-being of staff, students, and the public in case of:
 - fire;
 - natural disaster, such as tornado, flood, or earthquake;
 - adverse weather conditions, such as winter storms or extreme heat;
 - nuclear contamination, such as power plant or transport vehicle spills;
 - exposure to chemicals, such as pesticides, industrial spills and contaminants, laboratory chemicals, and cleaning agents; and
 - manmade occurrences, such as student disturbance, weapon, weapon of mass destruction, contamination of water supply or air supply, hostage, and kidnapping incidents.
 - Within sixty (60) days after the beginning date of each school year, the superintendent shall certify to the department that the emergency preparedness plans for the school corporation and each school in the school corporation have been reviewed and revised, if necessary. Within sixty (60) days of opening a new or significantly remodeled school, the superintendent shall certify to the department that a new plan has been developed or that the existing plan has been reviewed and revised, if necessary.
2. Documentation of the Crisis intervention plan
3. Documentation related to the Safe Schools Committee, including:
 - Membership list;
 - Meeting dates;
 - Minutes;
 - Provision of a copy of the floor plans to local law enforcement and fire department.
4. Documentation of fire, tornado preparedness, and manmade occurrence disaster drills, including:
 - Dates of scheduled/completed drills
 - Type drill scheduled/conducted

Other items:

- The school may provide information and documentation related to school safety planning/preparedness considered best practice that is not required by Indiana statute or administrative code.
- The monitoring review will be excerpted from disclosure requirements as allowed by IC 5-14-3-4.
- Indiana Department of Education school safety staff will provide assistance and resources as applicable to support needs identified through the school safety monitoring review.

PPENDIX F: SWAIN-BAYLESS SAFETY PLAN AUDIT LETTER



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Dr. Jennifer McCormick
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Working Together for Student Success

October 29, 2018

Dr. Mark Francesconi
Superintendent
Laporte Community School Corporation
1921 A St.
Laporte, In. 46350

Dr. Mark Francesconi,

During the 2018 Special Session the Indiana General Assembly passed legislation requiring an audit of all school corporations (HEA 1230). The audit is comprised of an onsite visit, a review of all building safety plans within the corporation, and a report of the audit findings.

In order to support this legal mandate, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) office of Indiana School Safety Specialist Academy (ISSSA) will be utilizing Moodle for this project. Moodle allows documents to be uploaded easily and it ensures all documentation shared during the audit will be kept confidential.

The first step in the audit process requires you to assign a point of contact (POC) by filling out the JotForm provided through this link; <https://form.jotform.com/82384741329967>. IDOE would like the JotForm completed by **November 16, 2018**. Once the form is submitted the POC will receive a Moodle login allowing them access to the School Safety Audit course.

Due to the scope of this project ISSSA hired eleven contractors to ensure all audits are completed in early spring. Milan Damjanovic is the contractor assigned to conduct the corporation audit. He will be reaching out to the designated POC to discuss the audit process and answer any questions.

Milan Damjanovic
mdamjanovic@doe.in.gov
219-712-7790

A checklist outlining the legal mandates of a school safety plan can be found on the IDOE website; www.doe.in.gov/safety. IDOE has sample protocols, drill logs, checklists, and many other resources available to facilitate compliance. If you have any questions or concerns please contact me or your assigned contractor.

Sincerely,

Deborah Swain-Bayless

Deborah Swain-Bayless
School Safety Specialist
Indiana Department of Education

115 W. Washington Street ■ South Tower, Suite 600 ■ Indianapolis, Indiana 46204
317.232.6610 ■ www.doe.in.gov

APPENDIX G: REQUIRED IMMUNIZATIONS FOR STUDENTS

Indiana 2020-2021 Required and Recommended School Immunizations

Grade	Required	Recommended
Pre-K	3 Hepatitis B	1 Varicella (Chickenpox)
	4 DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus & Pertussis)	1 MMR (Measles, Mumps & Rubella)
	3 Polio	2 Hepatitis A
K-5 th grade	3 Hepatitis B	2 Varicella
	5 DTaP	2 MMR
	4 Polio	2 Hepatitis A
6 th -11 th grade	3 Hepatitis B	2 MMR
	5 DTaP	2 Hepatitis A
	4 Polio	1 MCV4 (Meningococcal)
	2 Varicella	1 Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria & Pertussis)
12 th grade	3 Hepatitis B	2 MMR
	5 DTaP	2 Hepatitis A
	4 Polio	2 MCV4
	2 Varicella	1 Tdap

HepB: The minimum age for the 3rd dose of Hepatitis B is 24 weeks of age.

DTaP: 4 doses of DTaP/DTaP/DT are acceptable if 4th dose was administered on or after child's 4th birthday.

Polio*: 3 doses of Polio are acceptable for all grade levels if the 3rd dose was given on or after the 4th birthday and at least 6 months after the previous dose.

*For students in grades K-10, the final dose must be administered on or after the 4th birthday and be administered at least 6 months after the previous dose.

Varicella: Physician documentation of disease history, including month and year, is proof of immunity for children entering preschool through 12th grade. Parent report of disease history is not acceptable.

Tdap: There is no minimum interval from the last Td dose.

MCV4: Individuals who receive dose 1 on or after the 16th birthday only need 1 dose of MCV4.

Hepatitis A: The minimum interval between 1st and 2nd dose is 6 calendar months. 2 doses are required for all grades K-12.

Indiana State Department of Health
Immunization Division
(800) 705-0704

APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Personnel resource deployment for safety planning and response

1. What are the challenges you face in overseeing personnel resource deployment in the area of safety planning in your school district?

Safety planning, data collection, and reporting.

2. What challenges has your district faced with safety planning, data collection, and reporting?
3. How have increases in school safety issues impacted time away from your other responsibilities?

Safety and Security Interventions, and Assurances

4. What significant prevention measures have you implemented that were not mandated? What influenced your decision to implement these measures?
5. What significant safety response interventions have you implemented? What influenced your decision to implement these interventions?
6. What significant recovery interventions have you implemented over the past five years? What influenced your decision to implement these interventions?
7. Describe the community's influence into your decision-making process on preventing, responding to, and recovering from school safety issues. How does the community respond to the finalized administrative decisions and plans?

Mandated Safety Plan Audit

8. How has the mandated safety plan audit impacted the behaviors/practices of staff and students?
9. How has the mandated safety plan audit impacted the overall safety of your schools?

APPENDIX I: PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT E-MAIL

Dear Superintendent,

My name is Mark Francesconi and I am the Superintendent of La Porte Community School Corporation while also pursuing a doctorate at Purdue University. I am looking for 5 fellow Indiana Superintendents who would be willing to be interviewed for a study that explores the lived experiences of superintendents after planning for and overseeing school safety in their districts.

This study intends to analyze superintendent responses, the results of which will inform the field of school safety planning and add value and quality to the processes currently in place in Indiana. Specifically, the target sample is Indiana public school superintendents responsible for safe school planning and oversight in a district which has at least 3,000 students, 5 or more schools, and separate buildings for elementary, middle, and high school.

Your participation in this study would involve a 30-60-minute interview consisting of 8 open-ended questions. Your responses will remain confidential and the results will be presented as summary data. No individual, school, or district will be identified in the study findings.

By agreeing to participate in the study, you will be giving your consent for the researcher or principal investigator to include your responses in their data analysis. Your participation in this research study is strictly voluntary, and you may choose not to participate without fear of penalty or any negative consequences.

Interviews will be conducted either over the phone, or via a video conferencing format. The interview questions will be e-mailed in advance and it is understood that it may be necessary for participants to consult with their respective school safety specialists

I will be following up this e-mail with a phone call to answer questions and inquire about your interest in participating in this study. I am including my dissertation chair's name and contact information if you would like to contact him with questions. The promise of this study is to contribute to the field of school safety and the safety of our students and staff.

Thank you for your consideration,

Mark D. Francesconi
Doctoral Candidate, Purdue University
Email mfrancesconi@lpcsc.k12.in.us

Dr. William McInerney
Dissertation Team Chair
bncinern@purdue.edu

APPENDIX J: OPEN CODING CHART

Question 1	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5
Properties					
Key words					
Open Codes					

Axial Coding Chart

Question 1	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5
Open Codes					
Category					
Theme/Concept					

Selective Coding Chart

Question 1	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5
Open Codes					
Category					
Theme/Concept					
Assertion/Theory					

APPENDIX K: ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORTS

LaPorte Community School Corp

2020 Annual Performance Report

LaPorte Community School Corp, LaPorte 4945					
Indicator	Corporation Results				State
	'16-'17	'17-'18	'18-'19	'19-'20	Total
A-F Accountability Grade	B	B	B	B	
Student Enrollment	6,676	6,573	6,417	6,497	1,135,193
Non-Waiver Grad Rate	71.5	82.7	82.2	89.2	88.25
Percentage of Career and Technical Diplomas	4.3	7.1	7.1	10.8	9.02
Number of Certified Teachers	383	386	374	383	60,771
Teacher Salary Range - Minimum	\$32,632	\$36,000	\$35,912	\$33,532	\$35,834.94
Teacher Salary Range - Maximum	\$77,322	\$77,322	\$79,255	\$76,866	\$67,453.24
Number of Students in Special Education	1,055	1,153	1,145	1,177	173,516
Percent of Students in Special Education	15.8	17.5	17.8	18.1	15.9
Number of Students in Gifted and Talented Education	1,196	1,154	1,245	1,336	133,326
Percent of Students in Gifted and Talented Education	17.9	17.6	19.4	20.7	12.8
Number of Students Receiving Free or Reduced Lunches	3,536	3,533	3,385	3,782	533,656
Percent of Students Receiving Free or Reduced Price Lunches	53.0	53.8	52.8	58.2	48.3
Number of Limited English Proficiency Students	223	256	292	319	72,309
Percent of Limited English Proficiency Students	3.3	3.9	4.5	4.9	6.4
Percent of Students in Foster Care	N/A	0.4	0.97	1.1	1.81
Number of Students in Alternative Education	140	130	138	61	117.7
Percentage of Students in Alternative Education	2	1.9	2.1	0.9	7.5
Number of Students in Career and Technical Program	1,080	1,172	1,152	1,511	206,025
Percentage of Students in Career and Technical Program	16.17	17.83	18.0	23.3	42.8
Intra District Mobility	1.4	1.4	1.4	0.9	0
Inter District Mobility	6.8	5.8	5.5	4.3	0
Graduation Rate	82.7	91.0	86.0	89.2	88.4
Number of Incidents of Restraint	6	63	86	41	7,364

Corporation Goals for Expenditure Categories in Indiana Code 20-42.5-3-5

LaPorte Community School Corp

2020 Annual Performance Report

LaPorte Community School Corp, LaPorte 4945

Indicator	Corporation Results				State
	'16-'17	'17-'18	'18-'19	'19-'20	Total
Number of Incidents of Restriant Involving a School Resource Officer	N/A	0	1	0	2,224
Number of Incidents of Seclusion	0	24	51	30	6,219
Number of Incidents of Seclusion Involving a School Resource Officer	N/A	0	0	0	297

Corporation Goals for Expenditure Categories in Indiana Code 20-42.5-3-5

LaPorte Community School Corp

2020 Annual Performance Report

LaPorte High School, LaPorte 4741

Indicator	School Results				State
	'16-'17	'17-'18	'18-'19	'19-'20	Total
A-F Accountability Grade	B	B	B	B	
Student Enrollment	2,166	2,056	1,970	1,975	1,135,199
Non-Waiver Grad Rate	71.46	82.67	82.24	89.21	88.25
College and Career Readiness Rate	67.60	68.60	68.1	N/A	N/A
Number of Certified Teachers	118	125	122	118	60,474
Number of Students in Career and Technical Program	1,080	1,172	1,152	1,260	206,025
* Grade 10 Percent Passing ISTEP+/ ILEARN Math Standard	44.3	39.6	29.5	N/A	N/A
* Grade 10 Percent Passing ISTEP+/ ILEARN Language Arts Standard	55.9	56.8	58.5	N/A	N/A
* Grade 10 Percent Passing ISTEP+/ ILEARN Science Standard	39.7	15.9	33.3	N/A	N/A
Percent of Graduates Who Have Passed Both ECA Standards	86.4	85.8	***	***	***
Percent of Graduates Granted Waivers	13.6	9.2	4.3	0.00	0.23
SAT Average Score for Graduating Class	1079	N/A	1062		
Number of graduates receiving Core 40 Diploma	372	404	352	340	161.7
Percent of 12th Graders Taking SAT	41.1	N/A	21.9		
Percent Core 40 with Honors Diploma	35.2	41.7	40.8	39.0	40.3
Percent Core 40 Diploma	88.6	92.7	89.8	91.4	91.0
Pupil Enrollment to Certified Employee Ratio	12.3	11.7	11.2	11.5	13.4
Graduation Rate	82.7	91.0	86.0	89.2	88.4
Attendance Rate	92.0	94.4	93.6	95.1	95.4
Number of Students with More Than 10 Unexcused Days Absent	313	127	170	148	0
Number of Students absent greater than 10% of School Year	463	276	329	171	0
Number of Students Retained in the 9th Grade	0	0	0	0	132
Number of Students Who Have Dropped Out	73	16	42	19	6,083
Number of Students Suspended	155	171	177	116	82,767
Number of Students Expelled	11	14	11	13	1,989

LaPorte Community School Corp

2020 Annual Performance Report

LaPorte High School, LaPorte 4741

Indicator	School Results				State
	'16-'17	'17-'18	'18-'19	'19-'20	Total
Number of Students Expelled or Suspended Involving Drugs, Weapons, or Alcohol	45	28	27	29	5,095
Number of Out of School Suspensions	153	171	177	116	55,563
Number of Bullying Incidents	0	0	0	2	4,496

LaPorte Community School Corp

2020 Annual Performance Report

Handley Elementary School, LaPorte 4773

Indicator	School Results				State
	'16-'17	'17-'18	'18-'19	'19-'20	Total
A-F Accountability Grade	B	D	D	D	
Student Enrollment	354	368	389	331	1,135,199
Number of Certified Teachers	23	23	24	23	60,474
Percentage of Students Passing IREAD	88.9	83.9	81.4	N/A	N/A
* Grade 3 Percent Passing ISTEP+/ ILEARN Math Standard	73.4	57.4	50.8	N/A	N/A
* Grade 3 Percent Passing ISTEP+/ ILEARN Language Arts Standard	73.4	67.3	45.9	N/A	N/A
* Grade 4 Percent Passing ISTEP+/ ILEARN Math Standard	70.6	53.2	57.6	N/A	N/A
* Grade 4 Percent Passing ISTEP+/ ILEARN Language Arts Standard	77.5	60.9	54.2	N/A	N/A
* Grade 4 Percent Passing ISTEP+/ ILEARN Science Standard	75.8	62.5	66.1	N/A	N/A
* Grade 5 Percent Passing ISTEP+/ ILEARN Math Standard	72.1	72.3	36.9	N/A	N/A
* Grade 5 Percent Passing ISTEP+/ ILEARN Language Arts Standard	54.0	50.8	47.7	N/A	N/A
* Grade 5 Percent Passing ISTEP+/ ILEARN Social Science Standard	67.2	64.6	50.8	N/A	N/A
* Grade 7 Percent Passing ISTEP+/ ILEARN Social Science Standard	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pupil Enrollment to Certified Employee Ratio	13.6	14.1	12.5	11	13.4
Attendance Rate	96.7	96.9	95.9	94.5	95.4
Number of Students with More Than 10 Unexcused Days Absent	8	2	13	54	0
Number of Students absent greater than 10% of School Year	8	5	23	44	0
Number of Students Suspended	7	3	7	2	82,767
Number of Out of School Suspensions	7	3	7	2	55,563

VITA

Mark D. Francesconi

697 S. 400 W.

La Porte, IN 46350

219-363-5468

mfrancesconi@lpcsc.k12.in.us

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Teacher/Coach Portage Twp. Schools- 1987-1992

Assistant Principal- Union Township Schools-Union Twp. Middle 1993-1996

Assistant Principal Portage Twp. Schools – Portage High School 1996--1998

Principal Michigan City Area Schools – Michigan City Junior High 1998-2000

Principal Michigan City Area Schools – Michigan City High school 2000-2010

Assistant Superintendent La Porte Community Schools -2010-2013

Superintendent La Porte Community Schools- 2013 to present

EDUCATION

Bachelors Degree - Education University of Indianapolis, 1986

Masters Degree - Secondary Administration, Indiana University, NW, 1993

Purdue University, West Lafayette- Education PHD program-2012-present

ORGANIZATIONS

La Porte County Park Board Member -2003-2006

Indiana Association of Public School Principals 1993-2010

Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents 2012- Present

Indiana School Board Association 2010-Present

La Porte Rotary Club member- 2013-present

La Porte Chamber of Commerce Executive Board-2013-present

Greater La Porte Economic Development Corporation Board– 2013-present

La Porte County Tobacco Free Communities Committee- 2010-2012

La Porte County Historical Society-member 2015

La Porte County Safe Schools Commission-Chair 2013-2017

La Porte Hospital Board- member 2015- present

Knights of Columbus member 2017-present