Quick Reminders for WS 1
PREPāRE Trained School Professionals

Schools play a critical role in helping to reestablish a sense of normalcy and stability for children after natural disasters. Follow these six reminders, utilize your PREPāRE handouts, and visit www.nasponline.org/safety-and-crisis.

**Conduct a Vulnerability Assessment**
How safe is your school? Utilize this assessment tool to assess your school’s physical and psychological safety. Use your safety team to help analyze data and identify areas needing attention.

**Engage a Crisis Team**
The ICS structure should be used to designate specific individuals to manage the different aspects of recovery effort.

**Review Current Crisis Plans**
Have a multi-disciplinary crisis response team review your crisis plan (including how to manage media). From feedback provided by school and community crisis resources make indicated changes.

**Practice! Practice! Practice!**
Conduct drills and exercises to ensure school staff and crisis team members understand their roles.

**Consider Those With Special Needs**
The crisis response must account for the needs of persons with disabilities, language differences, medical needs, and mobility concerns.

**Continuity of Operations Planning**
Work with your multi-disciplinary crisis response team to determine what needs to be done to reopen schools damaged by disasters.

The PREPāRE curriculum includes school safety, crisis management, and emergency response training, with a special emphasis on the role of school-based mental health professionals. Learn more at www.nasponline.org/prepare.
While school crisis prevention should always be our goal, it must be acknowledged that it is just a matter of time before all schools need to respond to crises. Further, recent events have reminded us that school associated crisis events can quickly overwhelm available resources. The NASP PREPaRE curriculum provides guidance on how to prevent, protect, mitigate, respond, and recover to crisis events. The following brief preparedness reminders are provided to support individuals that have completed the PREPaRE Workshop 1: Crisis Prevention and Preparedness: Comprehensive School Safety Planning. For more information, refer to your workshop materials.

**Conduct a Vulnerability Assessment.** To determine if your building has the necessary balance of physical and psychological safety, the building safety or leadership team should conduct a vulnerability assessment to determine safety strengths and weaknesses for each school building. The information from this assessment helps schools improve safety procedures and protocols for all students, staff, and visitors to the building.

**Engage the Crisis Team.** School and district crisis teams provide procedures to follow when responding to emergencies. The Incident Command System (ICS) is a structure designed to give crisis team members specific roles to manage emergencies. Using the ICS facilitates communication as most responders from other agencies (e.g., FEMA, local police, fire, and emergency management) use the ICS.

**Review Current Crisis Plans.** Multi-disciplinary teams, in collaboration with local police, fire, hospital, and additional emergency management agencies should use data from previous crisis instances to review and revise crisis plans. Determine how local and state laws might regulate the school’s role during disaster. It is also important to check current memoranda of understanding with local government agencies to see when schools will be used as emergency shelters.

**Practice! Practice! Practice!** Crisis plan must be exercised to ensure school employees and crisis team members understand their roles and responsibilities in a crisis. There are multiple ways to practice, including orientations, drills, tabletop exercises, functional exercises, and full-scale exercises. Drills and exercises should be conducted at various times to ensure readiness. Functional annexes (e.g., lockdown, evacuation, communication, family reunification) can be exercised to determine readiness for multiple types of crisis events.

**Consider Students and Staff With Special Needs.** Districts are required by federal law to plan for the needs of students and staff with disabilities (e.g., autism, medical conditions, deaf or hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired; elderly; limited English proficiency; transportation disadvantaged). Some school districts incorporate special plans for students within their IEP or 504 plans. Planning for individuals with special needs should incorporate what to do when the staff or student needs to stay (e.g., lockdown) or leave (e.g., evacuation).

**Engage in Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP).** Determine the required personnel needed to assist in reopening schools (e.g., Superintendent, Finance, Operations/Maintenance), including who has the authority to allocate funds and make district-wide decisions if the typical individuals are not available to fill their roles. Work with local government officials to gain temporary designations (e.g., libraries, places of worship, mobile classrooms) if school building is unavailable. If facilities are not available, consider providing online learning or sending educational materials home to families for students to complete. Partner with community agencies, emergency services, and businesses to gather supplies needed. Designate a team to determine how to transport students to school. Decide when and for how long school will last each day. Determine how to access, maintain, and receive records (e.g., attendance, special education, cumulative). Identify how to communicate with staff, families, and the community about temporary school district operations. Decide how to resume normal operations of the district and restore the learning environment.

**Key PREPaRE Handouts (Available at www.nasponline.org/prepare-safety-handouts)**
- WS1 Handout 6: School Building Vulnerability Assessment
- WS1 Handout 8: School Incident Command System (ICS) Roles and Responsibilities
- WS1 Handout 15: Essential Elements of a Release and Reunification Plan
- WS1 Handout 31: Advocacy Tips for School Personnel for Crisis Planning
- WS1 Handout 36: Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)
- WS1 Handout 40: Template for a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for School Crisis Response Mutual Aid