

4-2020

Elementary Teachers' Perceptions Of The Development And Implementation Of A Comprehensive School Safety Plan

Rachina Holman Heron

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.nl.edu/diss>



Part of the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), [Educational Administration and Supervision Commons](#), [Educational Leadership Commons](#), [Educational Psychology Commons](#), [Pre-Elementary, Early Childhood, Kindergarten Teacher Education Commons](#), [School Psychology Commons](#), [Secondary Education and Teaching Commons](#), and the [Special Education and Teaching Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Holman Heron, Rachina, "Elementary Teachers' Perceptions Of The Development And Implementation Of A Comprehensive School Safety Plan" (2020). *Dissertations*. 461.
<https://digitalcommons.nl.edu/diss/461>

This Dissertation - Public Access is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons@NLU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@NLU. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@nl.edu.

ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND
IMPLEMENTATION OF A COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN

Rachina B. Holman Heron

Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

Submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements of

Doctor of Education

National College of Education

National Louis University

2020

Elementary Teachers' Perceptions of the Development and Implementation
of a Comprehensive School Safety Plan

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of
Doctor of Education
National College of Education
National Louis University

Rachina B. Holman
Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

Approved:

Carla L. Sparks
Chair/Co-Chair, Dissertation Committee

Leann B. Butler
Member, Dissertation Committee

David C. Buckner
Dean's Representative

Harrington Shires
Program Director

[Signature]
Dean, National College of Education

2-20-20
Date Approved

Copyright by Rachina B. Holman Heron, 2020

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandmother, Sarah Smith, who believed I could do anything I put my mind to. I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Colin who told me, “Remember all things are possible, if you believe.” To my daughters, Zion, Maya, and Delani, continue to flourish and know that life is full of endless possibilities.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the many people who encouraged me during this process. Family and friends who have become family provided a tremendous amount of assistance and support to ensure my success. You all hold a very special place in my heart. Without you, none of this would have been possible.

I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the members of my dissertation committee. Thank you for your patience and encouragement along the way. You truly guided me to the finish line.

Abstract

The problem addressed within this qualitative study involved exploring the limited research regarding kindergarten through fifth grade teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the school's Comprehensive School Safety Plan (CSSP). The purpose of this study was to explore six kindergarten through fifth grade teachers' perspectives of their school's safety plan. First, the study described how elementary teachers perceived the professional development or training received in preparation for implementing their school's safety plan. Second, the study explored six elementary teachers' perceptions of their ability to implement their school's safety plan using semi-structured interviews. Finally, areas where elementary teachers perceive they required more knowledge or training to effectively implement the CSSP were explored. Bandura's (1977) conceptual framework of self-efficacy theory guided this study. All teachers agreed that training for the school's safety plan occurred at the beginning of the year during pre-planning for approximately 90 minutes; they practiced monthly fire drills with students; they were well-prepared in implementing the school's safety plan; they were knowledgeable about lockdown and evacuation but not as knowledgeable about reunification; they needed practice drills with a 'refresher type training'; lifesaving training should be required of all teachers and staff; all drills should be unannounced to get the 'real feel of a real drill.' It is recommended that the school should conduct an annual review of its school safety plan to identify weaknesses and capitalize on its strengths that are performed well. Future research could expand the study by conducting a quantitative study using a school safety plan survey with a larger sample of kindergarten through twelfth grade public and charter schools teaching staff.

Preface

School safety has always been a concern of mine because as an educator, I realized early in my career that the safety of the children in my care is crucial. The idea of evaluating and understanding how teachers perceive school safety came to me when I first began my research several years ago. We had fire drills, tornado drills, and other drills for evacuation. I observed teachers who seemed frustrated that those monthly drills were unnecessarily interrupting instruction. Those drills were mundane, boring, time consuming, and a waste of instructional time. So, I wondered if a study was conducted, how would teachers perceive the training, practice, and time it took to perform drills each month.

From this study, there were lessons learned. The first lesson was how difficult it was to get volunteers to participate in a case study. Several teachers were afraid that the principal and others would find out they participated, and consequences would occur to impact their evaluation and job security. Finally, six teachers volunteered after weeks of discussing my study with them.

The second lesson was how difficult it was to find a school to participate in a study on my topic. The charter school was selected because the public school district would not approve a study of school safety concerns due to a serious incident that occurred some years ago within one of its schools. As a result, the school district was apprehensive about exposing teachers in any of its schools to issues of school safety and teachers could have feared job security concerns if they spoke of school safety issues within their schools. Only one elementary charter school allowed me to conduct school safety interviews with its kindergarten through grade 5 teachers who volunteered to

participate. Charter schools do not fall under such strict regulations as public schools, so the fear of job security was not an issue for its teachers.

Finally, I learned that a lot of moving pieces go into school safety, from the initial threat to the perceptions of faculty and staff. All aspects should be practiced with fidelity. I would like to see more studies include the reunification process.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Problem Background	11
Statement of the Problem.....	20
Purpose of the Study	24
Research Questions.....	25
Limitations and Delimitations.....	255
Limitations	275
Delimitations.....	27
Definitions of Terms	28
Significance of the Study	31
Overview of the Study	32
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	33
Theoretical Framework.....	355
Social Persuasion and Self-efficacy.....	40
Effective Emergency and Disaster Awareness Plans.....	42
School Disaster Management Committee.....	45
Factors Affecting Effective Emergency Preparedness Plans.....	46
Comprehensive School Safety Plan	48
Schools' Level of Preparedness	50
Training and Preparation of Staff	51
Teachers' Perceptions of a School's Emergency Preparedness Plan.....	52
Crisis Situations in Schools	54
Devising Strategies and Procedures in a Crisis.....	61
Evolution of Emergency Operations Plans	62
Emergency Preparedness and Stakeholders.....	68
Historical Perspective of School Crisis Intervention	69
Implementation of School Safety Plans.....	71
Teacher Self-Efficacy and School Safety Plans.....	76
The Changing Role of the Teacher as First Responder	78
Summary	80
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	82
Introduction.....	82
Research Questions.....	82
Research Design.....	823
Research Setting and Participants	84
Setting	84
Participants.....	86
Sampling Method.....	87
Instrumentation	88
Interview Questions	89
Data Collection	922
Data Analysis	94

Procedures	95
Researcher's Role	957
Trustworthiness	977
Methodological Assumptions and Limitations	99
Ethical Considerations	100
Summary	1033
 CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS	 104
Restatement of the Purpose.....	104
Overview of Participants.....	104
Teacher 1	105
Teacher 2.....	105
Teacher 3.....	105
Teacher 4.....	105
Teacher 5.....	105
Teacher 6.....	106
Results	106
Research Question 1	107
Theme 1	108
Theme 2	112
Theme 3	114
Research Question 2	116
Theme 1	116
Theme 2	119
Theme 3	128
Research Question 3	148
Theme 1	148
Theme 2	150
Theme 3	151
Theme 4	155
Themes	156
Summary of the Findings.....	157
 CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	 160
Introduction.....	160
Discussion of the Findings.....	161
Discussion of Research Question 1.....	161
Theme 1	161
Theme 2	164
Theme 3	165
Discussion of Research Question 2.....	168
Theme 1	168
Theme 2	170
Theme 3	173
Discussion of Research Question 3.....	178
Theme 1	178
Theme 2	179

Theme 3	179
Theme 4	180
Conclusions	181
Implications for Practice	184
Recommendations for Future Research	186
REFERENCES	188

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Demographics of Participants.....	106
Table 2. Overview of Themes.....	156

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Percentage of public schools recording incidents of crime at school and reporting these incidents to the police and the rate of crimes per 1,000 students, by type of crim: School year 2015-16	9
Figure 2. Six steps in the planning process.....	66

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A. Teacher Recruitment Email Narrative	2132
Appendix B. Informed Consent	213
Appendix C. Interview Protocol	214
Appendix D. Matrix for Research Questions and Interview Questions	217

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

“Each school day, America’s schools are entrusted to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for approximately 55 million elementary and secondary school students in public and nonpublic schools” (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2012, p. 1). Schools must be safe places in which to learn (Americans for the Arts, 2018; Cowan, Vaillancourt, Rossen, & Pollitt, 2013; Long, 2017). Kindergarten through grade 12 schools have long served as a safe space for students (Garcia & Weiss, 2017; Gunn, 2018). Schools are supposed to be safe places and based on what has happened with school shootings, they are not very safe for children and educators. A nation was plagued by school shootings and watched in horror in Southeast Texas when eight Santa Fe High School students and two teachers were killed and 10 others were wounded in one of the worst school shootings (Infoplease, 2017).

In February of 2018, there was a horrific assault on Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida (Americans for the Arts, 2018; Miranda, 2019). Since the shootings at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School and Sandy Hook Elementary Schools, concerted efforts to prepare the nation’s students for gunfire have intensified. Educators and safety experts encouraged students to deploy such unlikely self-defense tools as hockey pucks, rocks, and canned food (Christakis, 2019). More commonly, preparations included lockdown drills in which students sat in darkened classrooms with the shades pulled and door windows covered. Sometimes a teacher or a police officer played the role of a shooter, moving through the hallway and attempting to open doors as children practiced staying silent and remaining still (Christakis, 2019).

For learning to occur, school faculty and staff must feel safe enough to perform the duties assigned to their job descriptions, and students must feel safe enough to engage in the learning process (Applebury, 2018; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). To feel safe in schools, a role of trust between teachers and students, teachers and administrators, and schools and families must exist. A joint statement from several professional organizations (i.e., American School Counselors Association, National Association of Elementary School Psychologists, School Social Work Association of America, National Association of Elementary School Principals, School Social Work Association of America, National Association of School Resource Officers, and National Association of Secondary School Principals) provided a framework supported by educators for improving school safety and increasing access to mental health supports for children and youth:

Efforts to improve school climate, safety, and learning are not separate endeavors. They must be designed, funded, and implemented as a comprehensive school-wide approach that facilitates interdisciplinary collaboration and builds on a multitiered system of supports. We caution against seemingly quick and potentially harmful solutions, such as arming school personnel, and urge policy leaders to support...guidance to enact policies that will equip America's schools to educate and safeguard our children over the long term. (Cowan et al., 2013, p. 1)

Several areas could impact the safety of schools. The United States Department of Education (2013) noted that a school's safety is impacted by several issues to include mass school shootings, general school violence, and emergency situations due to intruders, natural disasters, and other acts of violence. School administrators, faculty and

staff must address the challenges that pose threats to school safety. All school employees are engaged in the process of ensuring the school's safety. However, it is important to explore teachers' perspectives of school safety as teachers' interaction with students and safety issues is most significant.

Though schools are much safer than the public might believe, school shootings capture national headlines that lead to some imprudent policy decisions such as the use of zero-tolerance policies in schools (National Council for Behavioral Health, 2019). The result of zero tolerance means that students are suspended for a variety of minor misbehaviors (i.e., nail clipper, plastic toy gun, rubber knife), sometimes unnecessarily, potentially creating isolation and resentment that can lead to more and more serious, problematic behaviors. In addition, excessive security measures could include bulletproof building entrances, electronic door locks, metal detectors and panic rooms with video monitors. The use of school-shooter drills, in some cases not announced in advance, may lead students and staff to believe that an active shooting is occurring and can be psychologically traumatizing. Some safety drills are warranted, however, those that evoke fear and create trauma do more harm than good (National Council for Behavioral Health, 2019).

Kemp, Robers, Rathbun, Morgan, and Snyder (2014) noted there were 31 school-associated violent deaths from July 2010 through June 2011. Twenty-five of those deaths were homicides and six were suicides. From July 2010 through June 2011, there were 11 homicides and three suicides of school-age youth (ages 5-18) at school (Kemp et al., 2014). In 2011, among students ages 12-18, there were over one million nonfatal victimizations at school, which include nearly 650,000 victims of theft and nearly

600,000 victims of violence. The effects of any of those crises continue to disrupt the core of surrounding communities and the nation (Hernandez, Floden, & Bosworth, 2010).

In school year 2012–13, about 3.1% of students ages 12 through 18 reported they were the victims of any crime at school (Lessne, Cidade, Gerke, Roland, & Sinclair, 2016). About 1.9% reported being victims of theft, 1.2 % reported a violent victimization, and 0.2 % reported a serious violent victimization. There were few differences in experiences of criminal victimization at school based on the student demographics analyzed. Male and female students did not report significantly different rates of victimization, nor were there significant differences among racial or ethnic groups. There were some statistically significant differences by grade and household income category. However, these did not appear to follow any consistent patterns (Lessne et al., 2016).

From July 1, 2015, violent deaths at school that occurred through June 30, 2016, there were 38 students, staff, and other nonstudent school-associated violent deaths in the United States. These figures included 30 homicides, seven suicides, and one legal intervention death (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2019b). From 1992 to 2017, the nonfatal student victimization rate and rates of specific crimes such as thefts, violent victimizations, and serious violent victimizations declined for students ages 12–18, both at school and away from school.

The rate of serious violent victimization against students ages 12–18 was lower at school than away from school in most years between 1992 and 2008 (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2019b). Between 2009 and 2015 and in 2017, there was no statistically significant difference between the rate of serious violent victimizations at school and away from school. The serious violent victimization

rates reported in 2017 were four victimizations per 1,000 students at school and six victimizations per 1,000 students away from school (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2019b).

During the 2015–16 school year for violence and crime at school based on Principal Reports, 79% of public schools recorded that one or more incidents of violence, theft, or other crimes had taken place, amounting to 1.4 million crimes (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2019b). This translates to a rate of 28 crimes per 1,000 students enrolled in 2015–16. During the same school year, 47% of schools reported one or more of the specified crimes to the police, amounting to 449,000 crimes, or 9 crimes per 1,000 students enrolled. For many types of crime, the percentages of public schools recording incidents of crime or reporting incidents of crime to the police were lower in 2015–16 than in 2009–10. For instance, 65% of public schools recorded incidents of physical attack or fight without a weapon in 2015–16 compared to 71% in 2009–10, and 25% reported such incidents to the police in 2015–16 compared with 34% in 2009–10 (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2019b).

In 2015–16, the percentage of public schools that recorded incidents of violent crime, serious violent crime, theft, and other incidents varied by school characteristics (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2019b). For example, 57% of primary schools recorded violent incidents compared with 88% of middle schools and 90% of high schools. Similarly, a lower percentage of primary schools recorded serious violent incidents (9%) than middle and high schools (23% and 30%, respectively), a lower percentage of primary schools recorded incidents of theft

(23%) than middle and high schools (55% and 76%, respectively), and a lower percentage of primary schools recorded other incidents (43%) than middle and high schools (77 and 88 %, respectively; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2019b) as depicted in Figure 1.

Data from the 2017 National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) estimated that students ages 12–18 experienced 827,000 total victimizations (i.e., theft and nonfatal violent victimization) at school and 503,800 total victimizations away from school (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2019a). The total victimization rates were 33 victimizations per 1,000 students at school, compared to 20 victimizations per 1,000 students away from school. The NCVS is a self-reported survey that is administered from January to December 2017. Respondents were asked about the number and characteristics of crimes they have experienced during the prior 6 months. Crimes are classified by the year of the survey and not by the year of the crime. From 1992 to 2017, the total victimization rate and rates of specific crimes including thefts, violent victimizations, and serious violent victimizations declined for students ages 12–18, both at school and away from school (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2019a).

In addition to the school shootings and violent situations, other emergency situations or disasters impacted schools. After the horrific events on September 11, 2001, many school leaders realized they did not have plans in place to address emergency situations, whether man-made or natural (Chung, Danielson, & Shannon, 2009). Natural disasters such as Hurricanes Katrina and Rita of 2005, left over 5,000 children displaced from their families (Chung et al., 2009). Even years after those disasters, schools in the

United States still are seemingly ill-equipped to handle large-scale disasters involving children (Chung et al., 2009). However, some schools have revised their crisis management plans to incorporate weather-related incidents, such as the tornadoes that have recently ravaged the United States.

Figure 1 showed the percentage of public schools recording incidents of crime at school and reporting these incidents to the police, and the rate of crimes per 1,000 students, by type of crime for the school year 2015–16. Survey responses were provided by the principal or the person most knowledgeable about crime and safety issues at the school. *At school* is defined to include activities that happen in school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses, and at places that hold school-sponsored events or activities. Respondents were instructed to include incidents that occurred before, during, and after normal school hours or when school activities or events were in session. Violent incidents included serious violent incidents and physical attack or fight without a weapon and threat of physical attack without a weapon (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2019b). Serious violent incidents included rape, sexual assault other than rape, physical attack or fight with a weapon, threat of physical attack with a weapon, and robbery with or without a weapon. Theft or larceny or taking things worth over \$10 without personal confrontation was defined for respondents as the unlawful taking of another person's property without personal confrontation, threat, violence, or bodily harm that includes pocket-picking, stealing a purse or backpack if left unattended or no force was used to take it from owner, theft from a building, theft from a motor vehicle or motor vehicle parts or accessories, theft of a bicycle, theft from a vending machine, and all other types of thefts. Other incidents were possession of a

firearm or explosive device, possession of a knife or sharp object, distribution, possession, or use of illegal drugs or alcohol, inappropriate distribution, possession, or use of prescription drugs, and vandalism (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2019b). See Figure 1 below for an illustration of these data.

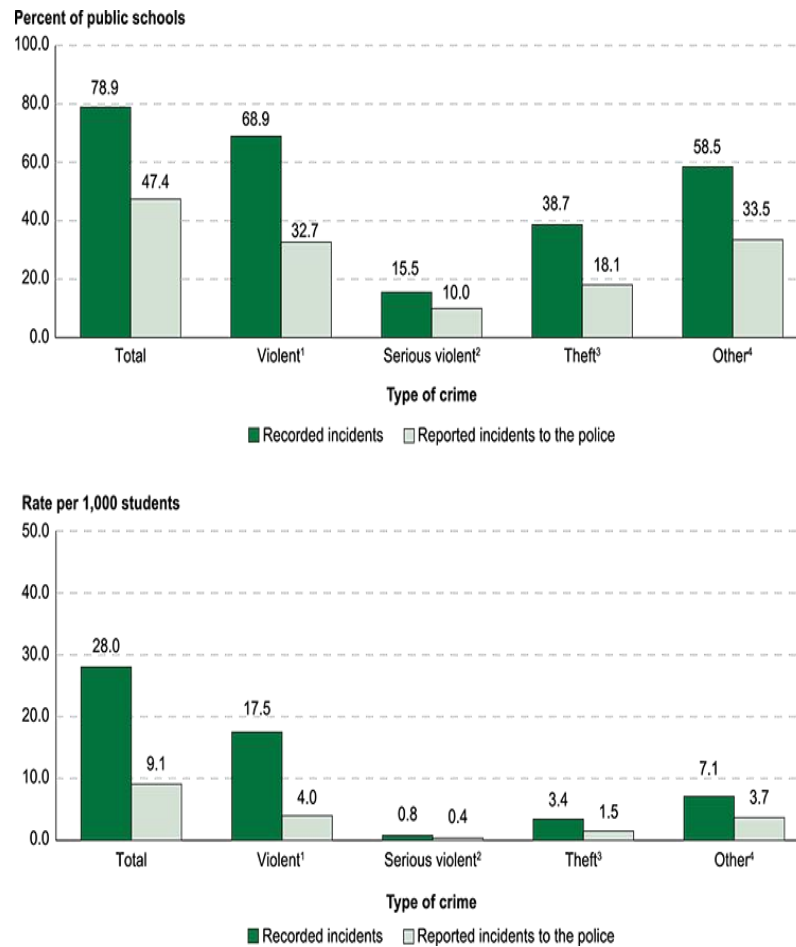


Figure 1. Percentage of public schools recording incidents of crime at school and reporting these incidents to the police, and the rate of crimes per 1,000 students, by type of crime: school year 2015–16. Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2019b).

As a result of school crises, natural disasters and other general school safety concerns, school safety has become a major topic of discussion for researchers and educators and a significant concern for students, parents, and school staff (DeVos, 2018; Heath, Ryan, Dean, & Bingham, 2017; National Education Association, 2018; U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2018a). Consequently, school safety and violence situations including school intruders, verbal or physical threats to harm, and natural

disasters necessitated an increased need for Comprehensive School Safety Plans (CSSP) to be prepared for all-hazard crisis situations. The United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) laid the foundation to offer a wide range of emergency preparedness resources to help schools create a safe and secure environment for students (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], 2014).

At the direction of President Donald J. Trump following the shooting in Parkland, Florida, the Administration and specifically the Department of Education (ED), Department of Justice (DOJ), U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and Health and Human Services (HHS) immediately began taking steps to support state and local efforts to improve school safety (DeVos, 2018). Immediate actions to secure America's schools occurred on March 12, 2018 when President Trump called for immediate action on a range of policies designed to protect schools and students (Trump, 2018). The Trump Administration worked to build a bipartisan coalition to garner passage and enactment of two bills: HR 4909, Students, Teachers, and Officers Preventing (STOP) School Violence Act (2018) and S. 2135, Fix National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Act (2018). The STOP School Violence Act helps school personnel and law enforcement identify and prevent violence in schools. The law authorized more than \$1 billion in grant funding through Fiscal Year 2028, administered by the Department of Justice (DOJ), to support evidence-based violence-prevention programs in schools throughout the country. These grants supported a range of proactive strategies for identifying and preventing school violence, including evidence-based training, anonymous reporting systems, threat assessments, intervention teams, and increased coordination between schools and local law enforcement.

The first grants were announced in October 2018, when DOJ awarded more than \$70 million in grant funding to support school safety (DeVos, 2018). The Fix NICS Act (2018) strengthened the federal firearms background check system. Federal agencies were required by law to share critical information with the NICS, which can help determine whether a person is legally prohibited from buying or possessing firearms. The Fix NICS Act (2018) reinforced those obligations by requiring federal agencies to submit to William Barr, the Attorney General, semi-annual certifications on several reporting metrics, as well as to submit four-year plans for improving reporting (Devos, 2018). Barr must publish the names of those agencies that fail to comply with these requirements, and political appointees from non-complying agencies may not receive bonus pay. In addition, the DOJ was working with states and tribal governments to develop plans to improve record sharing with the NICS, as required by the act (Devos, 2018).

Problem Background

A safe school environment is necessary for educating America's youth. Middle school and high school students who engage in school shootings may be victims of crime at school, in the classroom, and at home and might be seeking attention (Murphey & Sacks, 2019). While school crime has always been a major concern for educators, researchers, and policymakers, it gained national attention in the aftermath of several school shootings that took place in the 1997–98 school year (Jackson, Diliberti, Kemp, Hummel, Cox, ... Hansen, 2018). More than two decades ago, many drills practiced in schools were fire drills. More recently, those fire drills still occur monthly, but lockdown drills are becoming practiced nearly equal to fire drills in the wake of serious school shootings. In the 2015–16 school year, 95 % of public schools held lockdown drills

(Jackson et al., 2018). This study included lockdown practice drills in the event of an emergency.

According to Kingshott (2012), fire drills were the point of reference with school safety plans and the role and responsibilities of administrators and teachers. School administrators provided procedures and train teachers, staff, and teach students how to respond in a local fire drill. Over the years, teachers exited the building several times, with their students, while practicing monthly fire drills. Fire drills were standard procedures in all kindergarten through twelfth grade public schools in America (National Education Association, 2018). However, some teachers may not fully understand their role in their school safety plan with other drills and exercises that are typically located in the CSSP (Kingshott, 2012). Administrators may provide teachers with annual reviews of the components of the CSSP and it may not be reviewed again until the following year. Lack of consistency in reviewing the contents, having common knowledge and practicing the components of the CSSP is not known. Although an emergency off-site location was included in the CSSP, it is not known whether teachers and staff know the location of an alternate site for students to go in the event of an emergency (U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2011).

Schools officials developed CSSPs and appointed a team of principals, teachers, social worker, counselor, parents, and business partners to provide input into the school safety plan (International Finance Corporation, 2015). The CSSP team puts the plan in action through implementation of drills and updating the management plan on a regular basis. Meetings were encouraged at the beginning of each year and regular meetings were scheduled to review monthly fire drills, tornado drills, and ensure that the off-site

locations were still available for emergencies (International Finance Corporation, 2015). The various drills were evaluated, and the plan was adjusted based on the results of the plan. Teachers brought concerns to the committee regarding the drills and the CSSP was reviewed by the committee. The CSSP team continued a relationship with the local fire department, police department, and the off-site contact person to maintain communication also with disaster management authorities (International Finance Corporation, 2015).

The incidents of Columbine High School in 1999 to the massacre of 20 students in 2012 at Sandy Hook Elementary in Connecticut, as well as other instances of crime and violence in schools, have sparked a rapid increase in the use of technology to ensure the safety and security of Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K), elementary, middle, and high schools. The urgency for school safety plans and the vital roles within public schools has become crucial (Kingshott, 2012). Due to incidents of school shootings and violence, there was a transformation regarding the effectiveness of school safety or school safety plans among school administrators and teachers. There was a renewed concern regarding the effectiveness of school safety or school safety plans among school personnel and parents (Shapiro, 2019).

The father of a Newtown, Connecticut girl named Avielle who was killed in the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, has died in an apparent suicide (Smith, 2019). Newtown Police reported that 49-year-old Jeremy Richman was found dead not far from his office. In 2012, Richman's 6-year-old daughter, Avielle, was among the 26 children and educators killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown. A few months after the death of Avielle, Richman and his wife, Jennifer Hensel, co-founded the

Avielle Foundation to support neuroscience research to shed light on what leads someone to engage in harmful behavior with the hope of bridging biochemical and behavioral sciences. Richman's dream was a paradigm shift in the way society views the health of the brain. In 2017, Richman explained that he wanted people to see the brain as just another organ that can be healthy or unhealthy, just like heart disease, or cancer or diabetes. Richman was despondent and depressed and took his own life (Smith, 2019).

Two decades ago, resource officers had to wait until SWAT teams arrived, which gave the gunman 45 minutes to continue shooting others. Currently, most police departments have rapid response officers who carry heavier assault weapons and were trained to enter immediately and follow the firepower to confront the shooter and kill the perpetrator if necessary, to stop him from shooting others (Shapiro, 2019). Two decades ago, classrooms were only locked from the outside and teachers had to open the door to lock it, which put the teacher and students in immediate danger of getting shot. Currently, schools have doors that lock from the inside and teachers must cover the door windows, pull down the shades, and hide children in an area away from the door and windows (Shapiro, 2019).

Gun violence in schools dates to the 1700s and its characteristics continue to evolve (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2018a). Thus, it was critical that school administrators, government officials, first responders, and others continue to refine and improve their efforts to mitigate threats. Through a collective effort like Hometown Security and the Connect, Plan, Train Report (CPTR), communities can strengthen the protective and preventive measures in place at kindergarten through twelfth grade institutions. The lack of research was obvious concerning school safety plans in schools.

The prior research of Brener, Kann, McManus, Stevenson, and Wooley (2004) noted several public health studies on school safety but those studies focused on inspections of fire safety in elementary and secondary schools. The course of action taken by schools was not undertaken to prepare for a variety of destructive events. Graham, Liggin, Shirm, Nation, and Dick's (2005) research targeted a nationwide investigation to determine whether schools were prepared for disasters that resulted in massive loss of life such as school shootings. Graham et al. (2005) found that several school districts had functioning school safety plans, but they lacked training drills for staff, ignored special populations, such as students with disabilities, within the schools, and lacked communication with local emergency authorities.

More recently, a nationwide epidemic of violent school threats of school shootings is breeding fear, anxiety and frustration for educators, children and parents. While many of these threats are anonymous and turn out to be hoaxes, they are investigated and taken seriously (Trump, 2019). Bomb and shooting threats are sent by Facebook and Instagram. School shooting threats are sent through international proxy servers. A death threat scribbled on a restroom wall triggers texting rumors throughout the school community. Trump's study of 812 school threat incidents across the country, from August 1 to December 31, 2014 revealed that threats were up 158% since the year before when the study was first begun. This rapid escalation of school threats required urgent attention. Bomb and shooting threats make up the majority, and that is probably where school administrators and police should focus their preparations and planning. There were 359 (44%) bomb threats and 234 (29%) shooting threats during 2014-15 against schools (Trump, 2019).

School shootings occurred nationally and internationally; however, more school shootings occurred in the United States more than anywhere else in the world (Taylor & Greenberg, 2016). Although schools were generally safe in the U.S., rare incidents of extreme violence at schools in the United States and abroad earned public and political scrutiny and a call to gauge ways to effectively secure public and private schools and college campuses. Schools are safe places, especially compared with many other community locations (Mayer & Furlong, 2010; Mayer & Jimerson, 2019; Nekvasil, Cornell, & Huang, 2015). Forty-nine states and territories passed laws that required the adoption of a school safety or security plan. More specifically, the law in 23 of these jurisdictions prescribed the application of some type of technology as part of a comprehensive school safety, crisis response, or emergency preparedness plan (Taylor & Greenberg, 2016).

Kano and Bourque (2007) tested the level of emergency preparedness of in California public schools. A review of the results showed that less than half of the school staff had received training on emergency responses. During a three-year period, students and teachers were involved in several lockdowns and evacuations. Teachers and students reported injuries as a result of implementing school safety plans (Russell, 2019; Salmon et al., 2019).

Recently, a mixed-methods study was conducted on the perception of school safety upgrades and protocols in a suburban school district in the United States (Jagodzinski, 2019). Parents, teachers, and support staff perceptions were examined regarding the relationship between the perceptions of safety regarding various school safety options. Quantitative data were collected to determine which protocols and safety

upgrades were viewed as essential, effective, and positive or negative. Focus group sessions were held to obtain an in-depth view of teachers' perceptions of school safety. Qualitative data were also collected. Themes were identified from the focus group discussion to uncover strategies and protocols that were not expected (Jagodzinski, 2019).

High expectations are placed on schools to ensure the safety of students from a multitude of potential threats (DeVos, 2018; U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Consequently, “whether destructive natural disasters, or isolated school shootings these incidents brought a renewed recognition that while schools as a whole are incredibly safe places, the unthinkable will happen somewhere at some point” (Cowan & Rossen, 2013, p. 9). To address the expectation that threats to school safety were inevitable, several school systems adopted emergency preparedness plans in accordance to guidelines outlined by each individual school system. Each school system preparedness plan incorporated taking action to save lives, prevented injury, and minimized property damage in the moments of a crisis by having a crisis plan in place drawn from a State Homeland Security Plan, the National Response Plan, and guidelines within *Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide for School and Communities* prepared by the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, U.S. Department of Education (2016).

According to the School Health Policy and Programs Study (2012) and the National Education Association (NEA, 2018), over 80% of U.S. have laws mandating schools to have a crisis plan. However, internationally children, teachers, and parents with nearly 1.3 million people, including 650,000 children, are presently in need of some form of humanitarian assistance in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon

located in Central Africa, as the security situation and living conditions continue to worsen (Fricker, 2019). Approximately 450,000 of these people, half of whom are children, are internally displaced. Children and their families were suffering and escaping armed violence, attacks occurred on their homes and schools, abduction of youngsters and teenage girls, sexual violence among young girls and women, and recruitment of young men into armed groups. Imposed lockdowns established by non-state armed groups, were affecting people's freedom of movement and the delivery of humanitarian assistance (Fricker, 2019). Yet American children were also suffering and fleeing from active shooters in their schools where freedom existed.

A school crisis can happen at any given moment, and teachers must know their roles and responsibilities during any crisis (Trump, 2011, 2019). According to the American Red Cross (2014), there were various procedures in emergency safety that exist for schools and were not just isolated to acts of violence, but also included recommendations for emergency procedures in the event of illnesses and outbreaks, natural disasters including earthquakes, fires and other emergencies. In emergencies, various types of drills and evacuation methods were designed to reduce the amount of damage that could possibly occur.

Crises have the potential to affect every student and staff member in a school building (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2018a). Despite everyone's best efforts at crisis prevention, it is a certainty that crises might occur in schools. Good planning facilitates a rapid, coordinated, effective response when a crisis occurs. Being well-prepared involves an investment of time and resources, but the potential to reduce injury and save lives is well worth the effort (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2018a).

According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (2018b), schools were not traditionally response organizations. Statistically, when a school-based response occurred, school personnel reacted as quickly as possible. However, researchers questioned whether the immediate response of school personnel was based on the guidelines outlined in the district-sanctioned preparedness plan, grounded in pure adrenaline or a combination of the two (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2018b). Natural disasters and school shootings could happen without expectations. If such shootings happen, school officials must be prepared for lockdowns to keep staff and students safe. Working together, school officials can promote and maintain safety throughout the entire school to keep everyone safe from danger (Russell, 2019).

Understanding and adeptness of the actual plan were very important factors during such emergencies. According to Trump (2019), teachers responded better in an actual crisis by knowing and understanding their roles in a crisis. Teachers were expected to take control of emergencies and if trained, should be comfortable with the students for whom they were responsible. The ritual and routines that have been practiced are lifesaving, real-world experiences that must be followed with skilled precision and fidelity.

National groups such as the National Rifle Association (NRA) asserted that teachers and administrative staff should take control of school shootings by carrying a gun into the classroom (Curry, 2013). NRA's recommendation was that schools should train teachers and administrative staff to carry firearms to protect students. In the wake of the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary school shooting, the federal government released the following statement, "The possibility of an active shooter situation is not justification for

the presence of firearms on campus in the hands of any personnel other than law enforcement officers” (U.S. Department of Education, 2013, p. 66). The federal safety guidelines recognized educational staff as first responders, however, they ascertained that proper training of teachers, staff, and parents was the best method of defense, especially in a school shooting incident.

In 2017, the Ohio Legislature allocated \$200,000 in taxpayer dollars to subsidize the program, known as Faculty/Administrator Safety Training and Emergency Response (FASTER) Program, specifically for teachers to train them how to use firearms. Ohio teachers who were authorized to bring guns into schools completed a separate program run by the Buckeye Firearms Association (2017) in a wooded enclave on the edge of the Appalachian Mountains operated by John Brenner, a former police commander and Marine. In an article, *Five Years After Sandy Hook, Push to Bring Guns into Ohio Schools Gains Strength* (2017), Brenner said, “I believed in this [armed response training] for a long time. I never frankly believed in this world that we would get an opportunity to do this until Sandy Hook” (Simmons, p. 2). The FASTER training program is funded in part by unnamed private donors and is provided free of charge. The program was funded until 2019. Nearly 1,100 educators from 225 school districts in 12 states had completed the course (Buckeye Firearms Association, 2017).

Statement of the Problem

The problem was determining the effectiveness of the implementation of the CSSP. Elementary school teachers’ perceptions of the development and implementation of comprehensive school safety plans was warranted based on recent school shootings and other school incidents. Few safety plans for schools have been addressed in the

literature. Most of the literature was blogs and Internet articles, but few peer-reviewed studies in journals. Currently, 49 states have statutes that specifically required every school or school district to have a comprehensive school safety or emergency plan. Legislation mandated schools to implement crisis intervention protocols like school safety plans or crisis plans. Producing a plan on paper and putting the CSSP into action are two different issues (NEA, 2018).

Georgia legislation mandated schools to implement crisis intervention protocols like school safety plans and/or crisis plans. O.C.G.A. 20-2-1185 stated that every public school shall prepare a Safe School Plan (Georgia Department of Education, 2010):

To provide a safe learning environment for Georgia's children, teachers, and other school personnel. Such plan shall also address preparedness for natural disasters, hazardous materials or radiological accidents, acts of violence, and acts of terrorism. The plans shall be prepared with input from students enrolled in that school, parents or legal guardians of such students, teachers in that school, community leaders, other school employees, and school district employees, and local law enforcement, juvenile court, fire service, public safety, and emergency management agencies. The Safe School Plan shall include (1) Training school administrators, teachers, and support staff, including, but not limited to, school resource officers, security officers, secretaries, custodians, and bus drivers, on school violence prevention, school security, school threat assessment, mental health awareness, and school emergency planning best practices; (2) Evaluating and refining school security measures; (3) Updating and exercising school emergency preparedness plans; (4) Strengthening partnerships with public safety

officials; and (5) Creating enhanced crisis communications plans and social media strategies. (p. 1)

Additional training and assistance may be provided by the Georgia Emergency Management Agency. GA. CODE ANN. § 20-2-1185 (2013):

Every public school shall prepare a school safety plan to help curb the growing incidence of violence in schools, to respond effectively to such incidents, and to provide a safe learning environment for Georgia's children, teachers, and other school personnel. School safety plans of private schools may be prepared with input from students enrolled in that school, parents or legal guardians of such students, teachers in that school, other school employees, and local law enforcement, fire service, public safety, and emergency management agencies.

(National Conference of State Legislators, 2014, p. 10)

The gap was in the CSSP and what teachers and staff know about the plan and how to efficiently implement it. More research was necessary to distinguish specific needs and effective policies and procedures to discover examples of best practices for school personnel in emergency situations (Kingshott & McKenzie, 2013). Olive (2019) addressed the gaps in a qualitative study by examining the beliefs and opinions of teachers about school safety and school shootings.

The perceptions of safety held by the teachers within school systems were necessary to understand as many times the duty was placed on teachers to establish and maintain the level of safety and to protect students if a school shooting occurred. Little empirical research existed that examined how safe teachers perceived their workplaces to

be when considering school shootings (e.g., Columbine High School, Sandy Hook Elementary School, and Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School).

From natural disasters to the premeditated acts of violence such as school shootings, crises continued to happen and Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) continue to evolve (Trump, 2011). To be prepared for a crisis was to be prepared for expected and unexpected consequences that resulted from school shootings. Preparation and training included planning and determining what actions were taken in an emergency and determining who responded (Kaul, 2019). The United States Department of Education (2003) suggested that during a crisis should not be the time for staff to be trained or to develop impromptu safety measures. School staff should be trained on how to implement safety plans when there was no imminent danger from a crisis. Because teachers have the most direct contact with students, it was imperative that they were prepared to implement safety plans amid a crisis. School crises challenged educators' ability to provide a safe environment for students. Therefore, it was imperative that all of educators were prepared to respond to emergencies (Brock et al., 2009).

The PREPaRE School Crisis Prevention and Intervention Training Curriculum assisted schools to meet the safety needs of students, staff, and families before and after school emergencies (Brock et al., 2009). It was developed by school-based professionals with direct experience to prepare for and respond to emergencies like school shootings. One of the main goals was to build crisis management capacity at the school level. Crises that affect schools range from natural disasters, school shootings, terrorism and pandemic disease to school violence, the death of students or staff members and economic distress. Training and preparedness were critical to effective response and recovery.

The school, community, and stakeholder partnership were vital when establishing a safe environment for students (Pollack, 2001). Effective school emergency management planning was not done in isolation. Everyone had an important role to play in the development of CSSP, from the administrators, teachers, parents to law enforcement, and school district officials, collaboration is essential (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013). Although previous research pertaining to CSSP often have been related to how school districts should implement CSSP and the development of school safety plans (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2019b), there was minimal research that focused on teachers' perspectives of their ability to implement CSSP. Previous studies were conducted on various behavioral responses to disasters or emergencies, yet very little research was available examining emergency preparedness in schools (Kano & Bourque, 2007).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore six kindergarten through fifth grade teachers' perspectives of their school's Comprehensive School Safety Plan (CSSP). First, a case study description of how elementary teachers perceived the professional development or training received in preparation for implementing their school's CSSP was explored. Second, elementary teachers' perceptions of their ability to implement their school's CSSP was examined through semi-structured interviews. Finally, any areas where elementary teachers perceived that they required more knowledge and training to effectively implement the CSSP was investigated. Bandura's (1977) conceptual

framework of self-efficacy theory guided this study. Information on the theoretical framework was included in Chapter Two.

Research Questions

Data collection and analysis for the study were guided by one main research question and three sub-questions. The main research question for this study was, *What are elementary teachers' perceptions of the development and implementation of their school's CSSP?* The sub-questions are listed below.

Research Question 1: How do elementary teachers describe the professional development or training received in preparation for implementing their school's CSSP?

Research Question 2: What are elementary teachers' perceptions of their ability to implement their school's CSSP?

Research Question 3: What additional knowledge or training do elementary teachers perceive is needed in order to improve their ability to implement their school's CSSP?

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations

Within the scope of research, limitations often addressed the areas of weakness within the study that were outside of my control (Creswell, 2009). The limitations of the study were those characteristics of design or methodology that set parameters on the application or interpretation of the results of the study (Horga, Kaur, & Peterson, 2014). Therefore, the areas of weakness can affect the results and findings of the study. When investigating teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of school safety plans, there were a few limitations that were considered including biases and trustworthiness.

First, potentially biased or dishonest responses from the participants was a limitation of the study. Bowen (2005) maintained that the threat of trustworthiness could result in biased responses from participants. For example, participants might provide responses that they assume I wanted to hear, instead of providing their authentic perceptions. I addressed this limitation by developing a rapport with the participants and confirming that their honest responses were most desired.

Second, participants may provide biased responses out of fear that their responses might impact their employment status. Therefore, there might be a possibility of making statements which protected the reputation of the school that was being represented. I addressed this threat by informing participants that the information they provided was confidential except as it was represented in this dissertation. There were no identifiers that would indicate the identity of any participant in this study. Specific statements provided by the participants were not reported directly to their administrators. All findings were reported with the use of pseudonyms for both the individual participants and the charter school, if necessary.

Third, there was a limitation regarding the implementation, professional development, and training provided by the school. I had no control over the effectiveness of either of these areas and could only explore the perceptions of the participants. Fourth, the relatively small sample size of the research study participants represented a limitation of the study. Researchers who may seek to replicate the study in their school settings may encounter challenges when trying to replicate the study with a larger participant group. I based the sample size of the research study participants upon similar studies, but a limitation of the research study may exist in generalizing the study data in a larger

context. The individual comments would not be generalized to a larger group of kindergarten through Grade 5 teachers in the state or nationally. Additionally, the demographic composition of the charter school in the research study was a potential limitation of the study because schools with different demographics may pose different challenges for the replication of the research.

Finally, the principal utilized screening parameters that are standardized for each school. This one-on-one interview process included a subjective element in the research process, which was a potential limitation of the study. While the principal was required to use outlined protocols for selecting teachers to invite to participate in the research, I assumed that the principal was going to follow the procedures outlined. If the principal decided to deviate from the standardized screening protocol (see Appendix E for Interview Protocol that matches the interview questions with the Research Questions in this study), the process was no longer a standard, objective selection process, which would impact negatively the potential reliability and validity of the research study.

Delimitations

Delimitations were within the control of the researcher. Delimitations were established when I created the design to answer the three research questions. I placed certain restrictions and requirements to create boundaries during the study (Creswell, 2009). During this study, participants were delimited to state certificated elementary school teachers with at least three years teaching experience, employed for a minimum of two years at the charter school site where a CSSP was implemented in the last six months, and was actively being implemented. In addition, participants were teachers who engaged in some training or professional development on how to implement the CSSP

during a crisis. Other delimitations included the type of school which was a charter school. Public schools were not included in the study because a charter school was more accessible to the sample size and location. Another delimitation was including only kindergarten through fifth grade (elementary) teachers in the sample.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms were used throughout the study to provide clarity for the reader:

Active shooter: Active shooter is defined as “an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area; in most cases, active shooters use firearms and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims” (Jackson et al., 2018, p. 3).

Comprehensive school safety plans: Safety plans and building emergency response plans, which are the framework for preparing for, preventing, responding to, and recovering from emergency situations (Dinapoli, 2019).

Crisis or emergency situation: A crisis or emergency situation is any natural or man-made event that causes an unstable or dangerous situation. A crisis sometimes, although not always, results in the displacement of students; in this document, a crisis is defined as “any natural or man-made event that causes the displacement of students” (NCES, 2010, p. 1). A crisis includes an event or situation contributing to or causing the crisis, where the crisis occurs, and the vulnerability of those involved. A crisis may vary regarding a school-based intervention. In the literature, crisis is often referred to as critical incident. In the school setting, crisis plans are often referred to as crisis

intervention. Federal and state agencies use the term *safety plan* rather than crisis plan (NCES, 2010).

Crisis management: Crisis management is the process by which an organization deals with a major event that threatens to harm the organization, its stakeholders, or the general public. The study of crisis management originated with the large scale industrial and environmental disasters in the 1980s (Madigan, 2017).

Emergency preparedness: Emergency preparedness includes activities and measures designed or undertaken to prepare for or minimize the effects of a hazard upon the civilian population, to deal with the immediate emergency conditions which would be created by the hazard, and to effectuate emergency repairs to, or the emergency restoration of, vital utilities and facilities destroyed or damaged by the hazard (Blanchard, 2007).

Evacuation: Evacuation is defined as “a procedure that requires all students and staff to leave the building. While evacuating to the school’s field makes sense for a fire drill that only lasts a few minutes, it may not be an appropriate location for a longer period. The evacuation plan should encompass relocation procedures and include backup buildings to serve as emergency shelters, such as nearby community centers, religious institutions, businesses, or other schools. Evacuation also includes ‘reverse evacuation,’ a procedure for schools to return students to the building quickly if an incident occurs while students are outside” (Jackson et al., 2018, p. 3).

Evacuation drills: Evacuation drills are designed to prepare students, teachers, administrators, and other people in the school to leave the building quickly and in a pre-planned and organized manner in the event of danger such as a bomb threat, when

conditions outside the building are safer than the conditions inside the building (Lee, 2017).

Implementation: Implementation is putting plans and strategies into effect (Christensen & Donovan, 2015).

Lockdown: A school lockdown is when students, teachers, and faculty are confined to their rooms due to a perceived or real threat (Lee, 2017). A lockdown is a precautionary measure in response to a threat directly to the school or in the surrounding community. The purpose of a school lockdown drill is to protect the children and adults in the building from a potential emergency such as the presence of a school shooter. As with fire drills and other safety programs, the hope is to acclimate students and teachers to a procedure that they will be able to follow quickly, effectively, and safely (Lee, 2017).

Perceptions: Perceptions are gaining experiences through senses. Individual perception lends understanding of a situation or the meaning of an experience (Munhall, 2013).

Reunification: Reunification means reunifying unaccompanied minors and separated or missing children with their parents or legal guardians in the aftermath of a disaster. The process of assisting displaced disaster survivors, including children, to voluntarily re-establish contact with family and friends after a period of separation (U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2013).

Risk: Risk refers to “something that has not happened yet and is related to random chance and possibility” (Pazzi et al., 2016, p. 1).

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study was that participants' perceptions of school safety plans were insightful to specific institutions, to the entire educational community, including stakeholders such as administrators, teachers, staff, parents, students, emergency responders, and emergency management systems (Rinaldi, 2016). Specifically, little research was available that examined the development, implementation, training, and protocols of emergency response plans, leaving administrators, faculty, staff, and students unprepared for emergencies (Kano & Bourque, 2007; Pitts, 2018; Rinaldi, 2016).

Pitts (2018) conducted a quantitative study where 100 college faculty completed the Faculty Active Shooter Preparedness Survey (FASPS) online. Findings from the survey indicated that 57% of the respondents received active shooter training from their institution. Furthermore, about half of the respondents perceived themselves as being prepared for active shooter incidents on campus. In addition, findings showed that active shooter training at institutions of higher learning was limited to discussion-based training exercises and operations-based training exercises were rarely conducted.

The qualitative research of the current study provided schools and emergency management systems with information that can be considered in future creation and implementation of safety plans. It provided a clearer understanding of how school safety plans are perceived by those who are responsible for executing them, as well as giving clearer knowledge of how effective these school safety plans were perceived to be. Students may feel safer with teachers and staff with whom they interacted daily. Understanding and adeptness of the safety plan was a very important factor even before

emergencies occurred. According to Trump (2019), teachers responded better in an actual crisis by knowing and understanding their roles in a crisis.

Overview of the Study

This study was conducted to explore teachers' perceptions of their ability to implement their school's CSSP. Chapter One provides the introduction and the foundation for the study that included the problem background and statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, limitations and delimitations, definition of terms, and significance of the study. In Chapter Two, the literature includes such topics based on the theoretical framework of the self-efficacy theory including a history of crisis in educational settings, the perceptions of safety plans in schools, the roles and responsibilities of teachers in implementing school safety responsibilities, as well as the evolution, modification of school safety plans. Chapter Three includes the plan for research method in executing the qualitative case study and reiterated the research questions, identification of participants, procedures, data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations. Chapter Four consists of the results, restatement of the purpose, overview of participants, and a summary of the findings. Chapter Five includes the discussion of the findings by research questions, conclusions, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

“This job of keeping our children safe, and teaching them well, is something we can only do together, with the help of friends and neighbors, the help of a community, and the help of a nation.”

President Barack Obama (December 17, 2012, p. 3)

“All forms of violence against children are unacceptable and every child has the right to be protected.”

G. Trauernicht (2017, p. 1)

“Creating safe, orderly, and welcoming learning environments is critical to educating and preparing all of our children and youth to achieve their highest potential and contribute to society. We all share this responsibility and look forward to working with the Administration, Congress, and state and local policy makers to shape policies based on these best practices in school safety and climate, student mental health, instructional leadership, teaching, and learning.”

K. C. Cowan, K. Vaillancourt, E. Rossen, & K. Pollitt (2012, p. 2)

School leaders are expected to take their responsibility of preparing children of today for society of tomorrow and to keep students safe (Tong, Smith, Gamlem, Sandal, & Engelsen, 2016). Chapter Two includes a review of research and literature that support the various topics of this study. This chapter is an overview of the general experiences that schools have had over time as it pertains to national crises, and how schools reacted to such threats to their environments. This chapter consists of the expectations of teachers and the roles they play in crisis prevention. Other topics explore the perceptions of teachers regarding preparation of emergency preparedness, school safety plan process, procedures and implementation, the relationship between the self-efficacy of teachers and school safety. A discussion of Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory is presented as the theoretical framework in this chapter.

A literature review of related peer reviewed articles, books and other sources associated with the research topic was searched. A review of the literature was conducted by accessing an online library and researching the topic of teacher perceptions of their

ability to implement comprehensive school safety plans was researched using various topics regarding school safety plans to retrieve specific articles. Research was lacking in the specific area of disaster preparedness and implementation of written school safety plans (Kano & Bourque, 2007; Maynard, 2017). Once the search was expanded to include school violence, mass casualty and medical preparedness, and training, many sources were identified including books, peer-reviewed journals, articles, and other relevant websites.

In March 2011, President Barack Obama signed national preparedness efforts from a Presidential Policy Directive (PPD-8) that described the nation's approach to emergency preparedness (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2018b). This directive represented an evolution in America's collective understanding of national preparedness, based on the lessons learned from terrorist attacks, hurricanes, school shootings, and other incidents. PPD-8 defines preparedness around five mission areas: Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery. The resources in this research study were divided using these same areas from the PPD-8. By grouping the sources in these categories, I was able to see which areas lacked resources. The sources were reviewed, grouped, and used for this research study (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2018b).

Protection means that administrators, teachers, and staff should be proactive to ensure that acts of violence do not occur. Of course, natural disasters cannot be prevented but teachers and students should be trained in what to do in the event of hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, fire, and other disasters (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013).

Administrators and teachers must take proactive steps to protect anyone in the school building at the time of a threat or emergency. Being proactive is one of the prevention phases of protection to stop a threat or incident from occurring. *Mitigation* is a form of protection to eradicate or “reduce the loss of life and property damage by lessening the impact of an event or emergency” (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013, p. 2).

Generally, school personnel are the first responders when school shootings occur because they are present at the exact time such emergencies happen (National Education Association, 2018; U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013). As a result, school officials must be trained to ensure that staff and students are safe and in a secure place to save lives. Staff must be trained to be proactive to prevent and respond appropriately to emergencies on school property. *Response* means to “establish a safe and secure environment, save lives and property, and facilitate the transition to recovery” for students to arrive safely to their parents. *Recovery* is what happens after an incident, so school staff can help to restore the learning environment for everyone in the school building (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013, p. 2). **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study was Bandura’s (1997) theory of self-efficacy as it related to teachers’ perceptions and their abilities to implement school safety plans. Bandura defined perceived self-efficacy as the extent to which individuals believed in their ability to complete a task or accomplish a goal. This internalized belief in themselves impacted how people think, behave, and feel. Bandura maintained that

people with high assurance in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided. Significantly, if Bandura's theory were considered as the basis of appropriate behavior enacted during a crisis coupled with sanctioned preparedness procedures, satisfactory results can be produced.

Gaudreau, Royer, Frenette, Beaumont, and Flanagan (2013) shared the results of an in-service teacher training program to foster better classroom management by developing teachers' sense of professional self-efficacy. The program, *Positive Behavior Classroom Management*, was implemented with elementary school teachers, and encompassed 24 hours total of professional development spread out over a year. The results of the study showed positive changes in participating teachers' sense of teaching self-efficacy (Gaudreau et al., 2013).

Gaudreau et al. (2013) concluded that in-service training should prepare teachers, not only with classroom management, but with the necessary preparation regarding school safety behavior. If a teacher does not receive the necessary emergency skills during training, they may not feel prepared to deal with the reality of the safety of students in the classroom. A teacher's level of confidence is crucial when danger affects the school safety of all students.

Bandura's Self-efficacy and Self-determination Theory

A person's self-efficacy towards a specific task has an impact on the effort put into it, and the result of one's actions influence self-efficacy, feelings, thoughts and expectations towards own capacity to succeed (Bandura, 2006). A person with high self-efficacy towards a task produces engagement and effort to a higher degree than a person with lower self-efficacy towards a task and is more motivated. Bandura (1977) posited,

“Self-motivation involves standards against which to evaluate performance” (p. 193). An individual continues to perform until those standards match expectations. Negative discrepancies between performance and standards cause dissatisfaction that motivates the person to “correct changes in behavior” (Bandura, 1977, p. 193).

Self-efficacy Factors

The four major factors affecting self-efficacy were influenced by: (a) mastery experiences, (b) verbal and non-verbal persuasion, (c) vicarious experiences, and (d) physiological and affective states (Bandura, 1997). Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2002) identified five key antecedents to self-concept, called *frames of references*. They distinguish between internal and external frames of references, which relate to academic self-concept: Judgements of own achievements, causal attribution, and appraisal from significant others, mastery experiences and psychological centrality.

Mastery experiences. People do not rely on “experienced mastery as the sole source of information concerning their level of self-efficacy” (Bandura, 1977, p. 197). Bandura (1994) emphasizes mastery experiences as the strongest and most effective source of self-efficacy. Mastery experience is the most productive method of developing and nurturing a great amount of self-efficacy according to Bandura (1977). Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2002) referred to Bandura (1997) in discussing mastery experiences as an important source of self-efficacy. The relation between self-concept and self-efficacy is salient in Bong and Skaalvik’s (2003) claim that self-concept shows a general perception of oneself in a domain, whereas self-efficacy expresses a person’s expectations of achievements in a given situation. Cherry (2014) referred to Bandura’s explanation of the mastery experience which is that it is not so much the task that is expected to be executed

but it is the how successful an individual is in performing that task. Self-efficacy is strengthened in this manner (Cherry, 2014).

Verbal and non-verbal persuasion. A second source of perceived self-efficacy was verbal and non-verbal persuasion that refers to the perception of other people's beliefs in themselves (Bandura, 1994; Pastorelli, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Rola, Rozsa, & Bandura, 2001). Social persuasion and feedback that concentrated on supporting the learner and showed belief in the learner's competence and capacities might lead to greater effort and personal efficacy (Bandura, 1994). In attempts to "influence human behavior, verbal persuasion is widely used because of its ease and ready availability" (Bandura, 1977, p. 198). The impact of verbal persuasion on self-efficacy may vary substantially depending on the perceived credibility of the persuaders, prestige, trustworthiness, expertise, and assuredness (Bandura, 1977).

Vicarious experiences. The third source of self-efficacy was vicarious experiences. Bandura (1977) asserted that, "Many expectations are derived from vicarious experience. Seeing others perform threatening activities without adverse consequence can generate expectations in observers that they too could improve if they intensified and persisted in their efforts" (p. 197). Bandura (1997) noted vicarious experiences as a student's efficacy beliefs can also be influenced by the performance of others, and especially if the student identifies with the others. Seeing others succeeded through effort might influence the observers' efficacy beliefs and make them believe in their capabilities (Bandura, 1994). Some individuals were persuaded to believe that if others can do it, they should be able to achieve at least some improvement in

performance (Bandura & Barab, 1973). Vicarious experience is not as strong as direct experience of personal accomplishments (Bandura, 1977).

The vicarious experience, as it pertains to self-efficacy, referred to an individual observing another individual teach (Wagler, 2011). Vicarious experiences mainly take place amid hands on field experiences in which teachers are involved. The hands-on experience and involvement required of teachers attributes significantly to the cultivation of self-efficacy (Wagler, 2011).

Physiological and affective state. The fourth source of self-efficacy was the individual's interpretation of physiological and affective state (Bandura, 1994). Both reducing stress reactions and negative emotions mean that emotional and physical conditions can generate self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Butler and Winne (1995) presented a model that illustrates the interplay, or dialogue, between self-regulation and feedback. The basic assumption of the model was that when individuals are given a task, the perceptions of that task is strongly connected to their prior knowledge and beliefs, domain knowledge, strategy knowledge and multiple motivational beliefs (i.e., self-efficacy).

Consequently, individuals can set goals for their engagement with the task and decide on strategies and tactics in how to approach the task to achieve the goals (Bandura, 1977). Upon completion of the task, they assessed it considering goals and criteria. During the process, the self-regulated learner monitored the process and the progress related to internal feedback provided by the learner when performing the task. The affective aspects relate to learners' belief in competence and the way they perceived the possibilities to achieve the task goals (Bandura, 1997). If learners do not believe in

their competence, they are likely to abandon the task or to reset the goals, to make them more achievable (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Social Persuasion and Self-efficacy

Bandura's (1977) explanation of social persuasion was that people can be persuaded to believe that they have the skills and capabilities to excel. Positive reinforcement was a driving force of self-efficacy and was instrumental in helping others to achieve goals pertaining to their responsibilities and obligations (Cherry, 2014). One of the goals was to think critically and analytically, while simultaneously being able to execute the plan, by allowing others to feel as though they are well equipped with the knowledge, skills, and disposition to master any situation (Cherry, 2014).

Academic Outcomes and Self-efficacy

According to Al-Alwan and Mahasneh (2014), self-efficacy was one of the most important factors in education, as it was responsible for many of the positive academic outcomes in educational settings. Furthermore, Mihadiz, Duran, and Dogan (2011) supported the significance of self-efficacy that encompasses teaching methods, teacher responsibilities, the establishment of the educational environment, the feelings, and attitudes of student. Those skills were complex that are not mutually exclusive. To have positive outcomes, teaching methods must be connected to the skills.

Psychological Experiences and Self-efficacy

Bandura (1977) asserted the concept of psychological experiences are those things which can be interpreted in one's own words combined with personal emotional reactions which is extremely significant in self-efficacy development. For example, during a situation, the amount of stress can significantly impact the way a person executes

responsibilities. The more prepared a person is including understanding the plans prior to execution increases the chances of one's ability to execute successfully and more willingly (Cherry, 2014). To that end, one must experience a certain level of competency, a certain level of mastery.

The role of the teacher transformed from helping students understand and apply concepts to that of surrogate parent, disciplinarian, role model, and sometimes counselor (Shaffer, Nash, & Ruis, 2015). Shaffer et al. examined:

The changing landscape of education in the digital age, the changing roles of teachers in a technology-rich education system, and the skills, knowledge, values, and ways of thinking that teachers must have to use new technologies to support students' social, emotional, and intellectual development. (p. 2)

Good teachers already know their students and their students' communities. To develop more individualized learning agendas for students, teachers need to be familiar with students' lives (Shaffer et al., 2015). This requires cultivating a deeper understanding of students' homes and communities, learning about the other adults in students' lives, knowing the activities in which students are engaged, and being familiar with the interests students have. Teachers need to be able to navigate complex social environments. When not solely responsible for content delivery and assessment, teachers can focus on enhancing existing relationships with individual students and the community (Shaffer et al., 2015). In addition to having numerous roles in the classroom, the teacher must assume the responsibility of first responder due to recent episodes of school shootings and natural disasters that have devastated the American landscape. As these events are random and unimaginable, so is the response of a school's administrative

staff and its teachers, especially if it is assumed that emergency preparedness procedures and guidance are lacking (Russell, 2019).

Effective Emergency and Disaster Awareness Plans

There are 55 million U.S. children enrolled in kindergarten through 12th grade, attending 17,000 public school districts and 29,000 private schools (McFarland et al., 2019). Children spend a large part of their time in school, so whether a large-scale crisis occurs during school hours, before or after school, or off the school campus, the school district plays an important role in the unfolding of events. Although there were no federal laws requiring all school districts to have emergency-management plans, Government Accountability Office's (GAO) survey of 51 state educational agencies, 32 states reported that they required districts to have emergency operations plans, 34 reported they require schools to have plans, and almost all states reported providing training, technical assistance, or guidance to support districts in developing or implementing plans. GAO also found that 32 states reported requiring districts to conduct emergency exercises, such as drills, and 40 states reported requiring individual schools to do so. In addition, many states reported allowing districts and schools to determine specific plan content, with fewer than half reporting that they required districts or states to review district or school plans (McFarland et al., 2019).

The 2012 school shootings in Newtown, Connecticut and the 2013 tornado in Moore, Oklahoma emphasized the need for schools to prepare for emergencies to help protect the students in K-12 public schools (McFarland et al., 2019). In 2007, GAO found that most districts developed emergency operations plans and GAO officials made recommendations to improve school emergency planning. In 2013, President Barack

Obama directed U.S. Department of Education, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Justice to help schools with their plans. GAO reported on these efforts and examined (1) how federal agencies supported school emergency management planning and the extent to which they coordinated efforts; (2) the extent to which states required and supported efforts to plan for school emergencies; and (3) what districts had done to plan and prepare for school emergencies and challenges faced. GAO interviewed federal officials and surveyed relevant state agencies in all 50 states and the District of Columbia (McFarland et al., 2019). GAO also surveyed a generalizable random sample of 573 districts (70 % response rate) and visited five districts and 12 schools in three states selected to reflect diverse locations and characteristics. GAO found gaps in coordination that suggested efforts were insufficient because not all relevant agencies and officials were included in collaborative efforts or were aware of related efforts and resources. In addition, agencies offered different interpretations of the same federal guidance, all wasted limited federal resources on duplicative, overlapping, or fragmented efforts (McFarland et al., 2019).

Key Principles of a Comprehensive School Safety Plan

Key principles should be followed to develop a comprehensive school safety plan (CSSP) that addresses a range of threats and hazards to teachers and students (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013). Those key principles were: (1) planning supported by leadership, (2) comprehensive, ongoing assessment of the school community, and (3) comprehensive school emergency management planning.

Planning supported by leadership. The first of those principles was planning must be supported by leadership. At the district and school levels, senior-level officials can help the planning process by demonstrating strong support for the planning team. Planning used assessment to customize plans to the building level.

Comprehensive, ongoing assessment of the school community. The next principle was effective planning that was built around comprehensive, ongoing assessment of the school community (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013). Information gathered through assessment was used to customize plans to the building level, taking into consideration the school's unique circumstances and resources. Planning considers all threats and hazards. The planning process must consider a wide range of possible threats and hazards that may impact the school (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013).

Comprehensive school emergency management planning. Finally, comprehensive school emergency management planning considered all threats and hazards throughout the planning process, addressing safety needs before, during, and after an incident. Planning provided for the access and functional needs of the entire school community (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013). Children, with and without disabilities and individuals with diverse backgrounds, and limited English proficiency are part of the entire community. No one was excluded (U.S. Department of Education,

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013).

School Disaster Management Committee

Each school should establish and maintain an ongoing School Disaster Management Committee to oversee disaster risk reduction and preparedness (International Finance Corporation, 2015). A pre-existing committee, sub-committee with a similar mission, or one newly established for this purpose can be designated as the committee. Part of this committee's responsibilities was to develop, adapt, implement, and update the school disaster management plan. The committee generally meets on a comprehensive basis at the beginning of each school year and monthly during the school year. Encouraging personal and organizational preparedness, guiding mitigation work, assuring two fire and building evacuation drills annually, leading one full simulation drill annually, evaluating the results, and adjusting the plan accordingly are responsibilities of the committee. The committee should maintain communication with disaster management authorities (International Finance Corporation, 2015).

Kano and Bourque (2007) conducted a study that examined how prepared selected California schools were to face emergencies and disasters. Many of the schools that were studied have ongoing experience with natural emergencies. The researchers selected schools from over 200 school districts, and the final tally of participating institutions was 470. The researchers created a self-administered questionnaire based upon school officials' perceptions of school preparedness in Los Angeles County, existing literature, and feedback from the Los Angeles County Office of Education Safe Schools Center. Some of the natural disasters that the researchers studied reflected

earthquakes, school violence, and power outages. The survey respondents were asked if they had an experience with any identified emergency event within different ranges of time or not at all. Additionally, they were asked about schools' responses to the emergencies or resulting outcomes from the emergencies including lockdowns, evacuations, financial loss, building or property damage, illness, and death (Kano & Bourque, 2007). The comparative results of responding schools to nonresponding schools revealed that urban schools were somewhat less likely to respond than other groups. Schools in the nonresponse had a minimal effect on research-relevant outcomes and associations between variables. The majority of the respondents (86.7%) were in administrative positions.

Alternate site for evacuation. All schools should designate an alternate site to evacuate to a safe location for assembly should school grounds need to be evacuated. They should identify evacuation routes ahead of time and inform parents of this alternate site (International Finance Corporation, 2015). Schools that face known risks such as flooding, landslide, debris flow, tsunami, chemical release, or schools that do not have a safe assembly area on-site, should arrange and prepare safe havens ahead of time with emergency supplies. If necessary, school officials should arrange transportation to a safe location depending on the threats encountered (e.g., following earthquake in coastal areas with tsunami threat). Otherwise, individuals may wait for evaluation by on-site incident commander and assessment team (International Finance Corporation, 2015).

Factors Affecting Effective Emergency Preparedness Plans

According to the Georgia Department of Education's Crisis Management and Prevention Information for Georgia Public Schools (GDOE, 2014) manual, an emergency

can occur at anytime and anywhere, whether at home, in schools, places of worship, a library, the supermarket, at amusement parks, or at a shopping mall. In recognizing that danger can strike at any given moment, it is important to develop definitive strategies that can avoid, minimize, alleviate, or combat imminent threats. It is crucial that administrative staff, teachers, and students of every American school, public, private or charter, are set to quickly enact the school's emergency preparedness plan.

Prevention and crisis management should be a core element of schools' comprehensive safety plans (GDOE, 2019). The development of school safety plans demands that specific dynamics are in place. There are several influences that figure into formulating practical school safety plans. By identifying potential threats, partnering with concerned stakeholders, and focusing on federally directed mission areas, the impact of inoperable and unrealistic emergency safety strategies is lessened. In understanding the value of school safety plans within the American educational system, an investigation of their historical significance is crucial.

Parents entrust their children to schools with the expectation that their health and safety will be of the utmost concern to school officials. Students look to teachers, principals, and other school staff to protect them from harm and to instruct them during emergencies (Salmon et al., 2017). Thus, school personnel have an ethical obligation to ensure appropriate response during crisis and emergency situations. Schools play a unique role in the lives of students and must have plans to deal with emergencies while students are in their care. There is a great difference between crisis intervention and emergency planning (Salmon et al., 2017). Crisis intervention is a spontaneous event that takes place during and after something has occurred. In contrast, emergency planning is

an active process by which local school systems and schools (LSS) plan for a variety of emergency circumstances before they happen to reduce unpleasant moments during an emergency. Emergency planning attempts to provide prompt and correct responses. This type of planning increases confidence and helps communities, parents, staff, and students respond appropriately during an emergency (Salmon et al., 2017).

School emergencies highlight the importance of preparing school officials and first responders to implement emergency operations plans (National Education Association, 2018; U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013). By having plans in place to keep students and staff safe, school officials play a key role in taking preventative and protective measures to stop an emergency from occurring or reduce the impact of an incident. Although schools are not traditional response organizations, when a school-based emergency occurs, school personnel respond immediately. Schools provide first aid, notify response partners, and provide instructions before first responders arrive (National Education Association, 2018; U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013).

Comprehensive School Safety Plans (CSSP)

Schools also work with their community partners such as governmental organizations that have a responsibility in the school emergency operations plan to provide a cohesive, coordinated response. Community partners include first responders (e.g., law enforcement officers, fire officials, and emergency medical services personnel) as well as public and mental health entities (National Education Association, 2018; U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe

and Healthy Students, 2013). Comprehensive school safety plans must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Among other prohibitions on disability discrimination, school safety plans must address the spectrum of emergency management services, programs, and activities. This includes preparation, training, testing, notification and alerts, evacuation, transportation, sheltering, emergency medical care and services, transitioning back, recovery, and repairing and rebuilding (National Education Association, 2018; U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013).

CSSP should include administrators, teachers, staff, parents, and students with disabilities. School emergency plans must address the provision of appropriate auxiliary aids and services to ensure effective communication with individuals with disabilities (e.g., interpreters, close captioning, and accessible information technology). School safety plans must ensure individuals with disabilities are not separated from service animals and assistive devices and can receive disability-related assistance throughout emergencies (e.g., assistance with activities of daily living, administration of medications). Schools must comply with the “law’s architectural and other requirements” (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013, p. 15).

The Safe Schools against Violence in Education (SAVE) Act generally requires schools to develop, update, adopt, file and implement district-wide school safety plans and building-level emergency response plans annually (Dinapoli, 2019). Such plans are designed to prevent or minimize the effects of violent incidents and emergencies and facilitate coordination with local, county and state resources. School boards must ensure

compliance with the SAVE Act and must annually adopt a safety plan designating a chief emergency officer and appoint a team to review the plan. The chief emergency officer's responsibilities include ensuring the plans are updated, ensuring staff understand the plans, and coordinating emergency training.

Schools' Level of Preparedness

Kano and Borque (2007) examined the ratings of teachers' planning, training, conducting drills, and exercises, and maintaining equipment and supplies using a Likert-type scale that ranged from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very well prepared). The researchers also probed how well teachers felt the school was prepared to shelter students for a 24-hour period and handle emergencies in the future. Finally, the researchers explored the elements of emergency preparation for future emergencies in the school's existing disaster plan, training for the respondents, equipment readily available for any crisis, and local community partners who work with the school to address any crisis. The participants were asked to indicate 'yes' or 'no' if they felt that the appropriate levels of preparation were made to address future emergency situations.

The results showed that of the 157 schools that were in 34 counties in California, 33% of the invited survey respondents mailed in their surveys (Kano & Borque, 2007). Some of the data showed that many emergency situations that the schools faced included angry parents, animals or insects on campus, power failure, neighborhood crime, strangers on campus, and violence involving students. Some of the lowest reported emergency issues over the previous three years that the respondents identified were terrorist activity, epidemics, bioterrorism, school shootings, and airplane crashes (Kano & Borque, 2007). The respondents felt most prepared according to the data in the area of

drills and exercises. The respondents also rated their school with 3.8 out of 5 for having a disaster plan that the faculty knew and understood. However, they felt least prepared in the area of being able to shelter students in the event of an emergency for 24 continuous hours (Kano & Borque, 2007).

Many administrators rated their school's preparedness to deal with a crisis as a 4 out of a possible rating of 5 (Kano & Borque, 2007). The data showed that most schools found that their disaster plans were regularly reviewed and available to school staff. Respondents felt that their schools had adequate supplies to address any human-caused or natural emergency (Kano & Borque, 2007). One discrepancy among school level tiers that was apparent in the data was only 68% of elementary respondents felt that their school coordinated well with emergency preparedness and responses issues. Middle and high school respondents rated their partnerships with the police department at over 80%. Respondents at all school levels rated their partnership with local fire departments similarly, while the ratings for partnerships with the public health department were significantly below other agencies and fell to the lowest level among high school respondents (Kano & Borque, 2007).

Training and Preparation of Staff

The data from the study by Kano and Borque (2007) confirmed that school staff's exposure to training and preparation helped them to deal with situations that involved violence or crimes both in school and in local communities. The data showed that over 50% of the schools had also experienced some emergency involving a natural occurrence (Kano & Borque, 2007). What the survey data indicated was that respondents felt (a) they had an effective emergency preparedness plan and process because their resources were

readily available, (b) the staff was trained about the emergency preparedness plan, and (c) the schools established partnerships with state and local agencies to support disaster relief efforts (Kano & Borque, 2007).

Teachers' Perceptions of a School's Emergency Preparedness Plan

Perumean-Chaney and Sutton (2013) conducted a study in the area of student behavior during implementation of school safety plans. The overall research was insufficient regarding teachers' perceptions while executing a school's safety plan. Teacher and student classroom perceptions were used as an illustration to highlight the importance of teacher perceptions, especially during the implementation of school safety plans. Within the last decade, schools moved to install safety measures such as metal detectors, camera, incident reports, visitor sign-in sheets, and locked doors (Perumean-Chaney & Sutton, 2013).

Bandecchi, Pazzi, Morelli, Valori, and Casagli (2019) assessed the geo-hydrological and seismic risk awareness in schools in Tuscany, Italy using questionnaires that focused on the knowledge of the correct behaviors and procedures during an emergency as well as risk awareness and perception. These questionnaires were different for each school age (from 3 to 19 years old) and were an educational instrument. Nearly 6,000 questionnaires were distributed to the school staff and over 5,000 to the students. A review of the results revealed that as age and responsibilities increased, geo-hydrological and seismic risk awareness and preparation did not increase proportionally. Second, there was a disconnect between the school evacuation plans and the city civil protection plan. The researchers suggested priorities for future school-based emergency management efforts to increase school resilience and develop a resilience culture in the community.

Johnson, Ronan, Johnson, and Peace (2014) examined the national implementation of disaster preparedness education in New Zealand primary schools through the dissemination of *What's the Plan, Stan?* that is a voluntary, curriculum-based teaching resource. A focus group was convened with schoolteachers and local civil defense staff in 2011. A nationally representative survey of schools in 2012 was analyzed to identify intervening, facilitating and deterrent factors of uptake and use of the resource. A review of the findings indicated that the main intervening factors between resource promotion and schoolteachers' awareness of the resource were word of mouth among schoolteachers and proactive lesson plan research. The strongest facilitating factor was the schoolwide use of the resource. Lack of awareness of the resource and the perceived need for teacher training were the greatest deterrents to use of the resource. Based on the findings, several recommendations were provided for increasing use of the resource including use of web-based technology for teacher training, integration of disaster preparedness messaging into other children's programs, ongoing evaluation and curriculum requirements.

Hernandez, Floden, and Bosworth (2010) explained that regardless of the safety measures put in place, children have the right to be able to learn in a safe and secure environment. Most children and adolescents older than five years spend at least six hours of their day in school settings (Robinson, Leeb, Merrick, & Forbes, 2016). Like parents, education professionals can promote health and protect youth from harm by providing safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments (Robinson et al., 2016). Essentially, if a teacher's classroom is considered unsupportive and not conducive to learning, the classroom cannot be deemed safe.

Crisis Situations in Schools

To initiate a wide-ranging set of procedures that addressed crisis management and prevention, the term *crisis* must be defined. Regarding education, The National Center for Education Statistics defined a crisis as “any natural or manmade event that causes the displacement of students” (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010, p. 1).

Depending on the setting, Heath et al. (2017) maintained that various agencies and professions define a crisis differently. For example, state and federal education agencies use the words *safety plan*, as opposed to school psychologists who use the terms *crisis plans* and *crisis intervention* (Heath et al., 2017). For the purpose of this study, several terms such as *comprehensive school safety plan* (CSSP), *emergency preparedness strategies*, and *crisis intervention management* were used interchangeably. Despite the usage of vocabulary, preparation of school safety procedures was crucial. Additionally, crises were further categorized as natural and manmade events can range from fires, earthquakes, and storms to accidents and medical emergencies to school shootings, bomb threats, and terrorism (Heath et al., 2017).

Several high-profile school crises in the United States over the last several decades threatened the safety of administrators, teachers, staff, and students (National Public Radio [NPR], 2007). For example, kindergarten through grade 12 schools across the nation are impacted by the following school shootings and crises situations. The deadliest campus shooting in U.S. history was a rampage that took place in 1966 at the University of Texas at Austin.

At Virginia Tech on August 1, 1966, Charles Whitman climbed the clock tower and opened fire with a rifle from the 28th-floor observation deck (NPR, 2007). He killed

16 people and another 31 were wounded before police killed him about 90 minutes later. Whitman, 25, a Lake Worth, Florida native and former university student, opened fire shooting people on the streets 231 feet below. In 2001, a Fort Worth man died of what physicians said were complications from a gunshot wound inflicted that day by Whitman, bringing the death toll to 17. The school marked the tragic anniversary last year with a low-key observance, flying flags on campus at half-staff. Among Whitman's victims was a receptionist near the top of the tower who was fatally beaten and two tourists from Texarkana who were shot to death (NPR, 2007).

On January 29, 1979, 16-year-old Brenda Ann Spencer opened fire from her home across the street from Grover Cleveland Elementary School in San Diego, California. She killed principal Burton Wragg and custodian Mike Suchard (Repard, 2019). Eight students and one police officer were wounded. Spencer was armed with a rifle and scope her father gave her for Christmas. She fired 36 rounds and shot students as they headed into the elementary school. Eleven bullets killed eight children and three adults. The others, including San Diego police Officer Robert Robb, survived their wounds (Repard, 2019). Spencer fired at the school for about 20 minutes and told a reporter who reached her by phone that she was shooting because she did not like Mondays, and it was a way to make her day brighter "cheer up the day" (Repard, 2019, p. 1). Her former defense attorney said Spencer suffered from a broken home, an abusive father, drug use and hostility toward authorities and society in general. Her standoff with Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team lasted more than six hours. Officers found around 200 rounds of unspent ammunition in the house. Spencer, who was charged in court as an adult, pleaded guilty in 1980 to two counts of murder. She was sentenced to

concurrent terms of 25 years to life in prison. Nine counts of attempted murder were dismissed (Repard, 2019).

A young Asian male student opened fire in a Virginia Tech dorm and then, two hours later, in a classroom across campus, killed at least 32 people in the deadliest shooting rampage in U.S. history (CBS News, 2007). The gunman was killed bringing the death toll to 33. At least 26 others were injured in the shootings. The FBI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives believed the gunman, described as a young Asian male, used two handguns in the shootings before taking his own life. One official added that the gunman was heavily armed and wearing a vest. Investigators offered no motive for the attack. It was not known if the gunman was a student. Students complained that there were no public-address announcements or other warnings on campus after the first burst of gunfire. Students reported the first word they received from the university was an e-mail more than two hours into the rampage around the time the gunman struck again. Steger said authorities at first believed that the shooting at the dorm was a domestic dispute and that the gunman had fled the campus. The shootings spread panic and confusion on campus. Witnesses reporting students jumping out the windows of a classroom building to escape the gunfire. SWAT team members with helmets, flak jackets and assault rifles swarmed over the campus. Students and faculty members carried out some of the wounded themselves, without waiting for ambulances to arrive.

On April 20, 1999, Erick Harris, 18 and Dylan Klebold, 17 shot and killed 12 students and one teacher and injured 21 others at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado (Cable News Network [CNN] Library, 2019). The pair made home videos prior to the attack making references to what they were going to do and apologizing to their

parents for it. Harris and Klebold killed themselves with gunshot wounds to the head in the school's library at approximately 12:08 p.m. on the day of the shootings. SWAT teams entered the school 47 minutes after the shootings started. Five hours passed before law enforcement declared the school under control. The Columbine shootings ranked as one of the worst mass shootings in U.S. history and one of the deadliest episodes of school violence (CNN Library, 2019).

Some research has found Americans of low socioeconomic status to be less prepared than other Americans for disasters (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2017). Regardless of socioeconomic status, parents, teachers, administrators, or anyone can never be fully prepared when their children are gunned down in a school classroom, as in the case of Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. The Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting occurred on December 14, 2012, when 20-year-old Adam Lanza, wearing combat gear and armed with semiautomatic pistols and a semiautomatic rifle, shot and killed 26 people, including 20 children between six and seven years old, and six adult staff members (Barron, 2012). Before driving to the school, he shot and killed his mother, Nancy Lanza, at their home. His mother apparently owned the guns he used. As first responders arrived at the school, Lanza committed suicide by shooting himself in the head. Lanza, with brutal efficiency, chose his victims in two classrooms while other students dove under desks and hid in closets. Although reports at the time indicated that the principal of the school let Lanza in because she recognized him, and he shot his way in, defeating a security system requiring visitors to be buzzed in. Moments later, the principal was shot dead when she went to investigate the sound of gunshots. The school psychologist was also among those who

died. The rampage was the nation's second-deadliest school shooting in U.S. history (Barron, 2012).

Many concepts and strategies adopted by a significant number of schools demonstrated that early, unofficial and inaccurate accounts of the Sandy Hook Elementary School mass shooting could not have prevented this unfortunate event from occurring (Dorn, Dorn, Satterly, Shepherd, & Nguyen, 2013). Millions of dollars and countless staff hours were expended to implement active shooter response strategies based on occurrences, according to the report, never happened. Those funds could have been allocated differently to provide proven solutions based upon the responses of other communities to tragic events to address violent situations and threats that schools face (Dorn et al., 2013).

Rumors after Sandy Hook prompted many schools to implement unproven strategies (Dorn et al., 2013). Schools could make improvements based on school security incidents such as Sandy Hook. Students, parents and elected officials often urge action be taken quickly after a catastrophic event like the Sandy Hook shooting, and sometimes the strategies that are adopted have not been proven to be effective. While most schools had opportunities for improvement immediately after the Newtown, Connecticut shooting, many opportunities to implement response concepts that have been proven to work were missed while unproven concepts were implemented instead (Dorn et al., 2013).

Because of tragic situations such as Sandy Hook, many administrative stakeholders' anxieties were high (Dorn et al., 2013). Subsequently, the importance of implementing a revised crisis management plan that addressed similar event scenarios

was crucial. However, such quick responses can result in the mismanagement of efforts, especially if the revised emergency preparedness plans are based on groundless conclusions and speculations (Dorn et al., 2013). Another point was that staff and students must be taught how to respond during stressful situations. It was documented that several students survived the Sandy Hook attack by escaping from their opened classrooms. Staff members who are appropriately trained should avoid being passive when they are presented with a violent threat (Dorn et al., 2013).

Additionally, it is noted that it is important to train teachers and staff to be prepared to change responses when a situation dictates. This conclusive statement was evidenced by the actions of Antoinette Tuff on August 20, 2013 in the main office of McNair Elementary School (Smith, 2013) when a gunman walked into the Ronald E. McNair Discovery Learning Academy in DeKalb County, Georgia armed with multiple firearms. Tuff, the school's bookkeeper, seized the opportunity to engage the gunman in conversation. After several hours, Tuff ultimately convinced the shooter to surrender to the authorities. Her actions averted a disaster and saved hundreds of lives. Her testimonial demonstrated that Bandura's (1997) definition of self-efficacy was true. Similarly, the school crisis encounters together with Tuff's past experiences verified fundamental elements of self-efficacy development.

Another school shooting occurred on October 1, 2015 in Roseburg, Oregon when a gunman opened fire at Umpqua Community College. Nine people were killed and seven more wounded (Ford & Payne, 2015). The gunman opened fire at Oregon's Umpqua Community College and specifically targeted Christians when he asked all

Christians to stand after shooting them. The suspected shooter, 26-year-old Chris Harper Mercer, killed himself after exchanging gunfire with the police.

Another incident happened on January 23, 2018 in Marshall County, Kentucky. Gabriel Ross Parker, a sophomore student at Marshall County High School, went to his school and opened fire in the school lobby shooting 16 people and injuring four more by other means (Wolfson, 2019). Two students died while 14 others were shot. Parker, of Hardin, Kentucky was arrested within minutes of the shooting.

The next incident occurred on May 18, 2018 in Santa Fe, Texas when a student at Santa Fe High School, Dimitrios Pagourtzis, opened fire at his school, killing 10 and wounding 13 students (Infoplease, 2017). They had just picked up their caps and gowns and were days away from graduation, but some of the victims did not live to claim their diplomas. At 7:30 a.m., 17-year-old Pagourtzis, a junior, entered the school located in the suburbs of Houston and killed students with a shotgun and a .38 caliber revolver he took from his father. Pagourtzis ultimately surrendered and was arrested. Pagourtzis also brought explosive devices, although they never detonated. He was charged with counts of capital murder and attempted murder (Infoplease, 2017).

On February 14, 2018 in Parkland, Florida, 17 people were killed at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School (Miranda, 2019). Nikolas Cruz, 19, had been expelled from Parkland for disciplinary reasons. He returned to the campus armed with a semiautomatic rifle and killed 17 students and staff members, seven of whom were only 14 years old. He triggered a fire alarm and shot the fleeing students and faculty. While shooting victims, he wounded approximately 12, some seriously. Cruz was ultimately arrested without incident a distance away after he escaped in the crowd of students.

Currently, he faces charges for the murder of 17 people and the attempted murder of 14 more (Miranda, 2019).

Although these school shootings were widely publicized, mass school shootings are typically rare. Despite the fear and public scrutiny, mass shootings are rare events. Mass shootings accounted for less than one-tenth of one percent of homicides in the United States between 2000 and 2016 (Follman, Aronsen, & Pan, 2019; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018). Even school shootings, the most tragic of such events, are infrequent (National Council for Behavioral Health, 2019). However, violent crimes at schools are proliferating throughout the nation. School shootings and violence often occur on a smaller scale but with much impact. A shooting of just one student at school has ramifications far beyond those directly involved (Center for Injury Research and Prevention, 2019). Students and staff who witness school shootings are likely to suffer from traumatic stress and psychological symptoms, become anxious or depressed and have general concerns about their safety. While many witnesses could have temporary symptoms, others may be symptomatic for a much longer period and even develop chronic psychiatric disorders that require psychiatric counseling for years or perhaps a lifetime. Even short-term impairments can cause severe distress and have profound effects on academic achievement and the social and emotional growth of impact to students, administrators, teachers, and parents (Center for Injury Research and Prevention, 2019).

Devising Strategies and Procedures in a Crisis

The National Crime Prevention Council's (2015) article on *School Safety* estimates that "Children spend more time at school than anywhere else other than their

home. At school, children need a secure, positive, and comfortable environment to help them learn” (p. 1). To create this type of environment, local school boards are charged with, not only developing curriculum, but also devising strategies and procedures should a crisis occur. Their responsibility is to guarantee that all types of crisis situations are identified, creating response benchmarks to prevent future threats, while certifying schools are practicing drills regularly. To do so, comprehensive planning is essential.

Georgia’s Crisis Management and Prevention manual suggests that crises can have a dramatic impact on an individual school or the entire school district, which necessitates the need for adequate planning for emergency situations and the implementation of preventative measures (GDOE, 2014). Therefore, school boards must recognize critical elements such as crisis management and prevention when developing school safety procedures in a comprehensive school safety plan (GDOE, 2014).

Evolution of Emergency Operations Plans

America’s schools and school districts were mandated by law to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for approximately 55 million elementary and secondary school students in public and nonpublic schools (Council of State Governments, Justice Center, 2014; Russell, 2019; Salmon et al., 2019; Taylor & Greenberg, 2016; U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Families and communities expect schools and school districts to keep children and youths safe from threats, including human-caused emergencies such as school shootings, crime and violence, and hazards like natural disasters, disease outbreaks, and accidents. Emergency preparedness is a shared responsibility in collaboration with local government and community partners. Schools

and school districts can take steps to plan for these potential threats and hazards through the creation of an emergency operations plan (EOP).

In Step 1, a common framework of all team members should consider taking time to learn to meet one another, become knowledgeable about what the other person brings to the table regarding talents and abilities, and to whom each person can turn to when emergencies occur (U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2018). Each person's assigned roles and responsibilities should be defined regarding who is involved in the development and refinement of the plan in the planning process. In addition, each member should get acquainted other members of the team regarding issues and questions that might arise during the planning process. A flexible but regular schedule of planning meetings should be determined to reinforce the ongoing planning effort (U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2018).

In Step 2, the planning team must understand the situation and identify possible threats and hazards and assess the risks and vulnerabilities posed by those threats and hazards (U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2018). Effective emergency planning depends on an analysis and comparison of the threats and hazards a school or business face. This is usually performed through a threat and hazard identification and risk assessment process that collects information about threats and hazards and assigns values to risk for the purposes of deciding which threats and hazards the plan should prioritize and consequently address.

In Step 3, the planning team determines goals and objectives and decides which of the threats and hazards identified in Step 2 were addressed in the school's plan. The planning team may decide to address only those threats and hazards that were classified

as high risk, or to include some of the threats and hazards that were classified as medium risk that is a critical decision point in the planning process (U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2018). It was recommended that the planning team addressed more than only the high-risk threats and hazards. Once the planning team determined the threats and hazards that were addressed in the plan, it should develop goals and objectives for each threat or hazard. Goals and objectives were broad, general statements that indicate the desired outcome in response to a threat or hazard. Goals are what personnel and other resources are supposed to achieve. Goals also helped to identify when major activities were completed and what defined a successful outcome. The planning team should develop at least three goals for addressing each threat or hazard. Those goals should indicate the desired outcome for *before*, *during*, and *after* the threat or hazard (U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2018).

In Step 4, the planning team develops and identifies courses of action for accomplishing each of the objectives identified in Step 3 (for threats, hazards, and functions). Courses of action address the *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how* questions for each threat hazard and function. The planning team should examine each course of action to determine whether it is feasible and whether it is acceptable to the stakeholders necessary to implement it (U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2018).

In Step 5, the planning team develops a draft of the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) using the courses of action developed in Step 4 (U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2018). In addition, the team reviews the plan, obtains official approval, and shares the plan with surrounding community partners and other

stakeholders. The team formats the plan by using an effective plan that is presented in a way making it easy for users to find information compatible with local and state plans. This plan may include the use of plain language and provide pictures or visual cues for key action steps (U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2018).

Step 6 that includes training business stakeholders and schools on the plan and their roles in the plan (i.e., teachers, employees, frequent vendors, customer service, and facilities). Everyone needs to know their roles and responsibilities in the phases before, during, and after an incident (U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2018). Tabletop exercises are small group discussions that walk stakeholders through a scenario and the courses of action a school and business will need to take before, during, and after an incident. This activity helps assess the plan and resources and facilitates an understanding of emergency management and planning concepts (U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2018). Drills allow local emergency management officials, community partners, and relevant business stakeholders to use the actual business grounds and school buildings to practice responding to a scenario. Functional exercises are like drills but involve multiple partners. Participants react to realistic simulated events (i.e., a bomb threat or an active shooter) and implement the plan and procedures using the Incident Command System (ICS).

Full-scale exercises are the most time-consuming activity in the exercise continuum and are multiagency, multijurisdictional efforts in which resources are deployed (U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2018). This type of exercise tests collaboration among the agencies and participants, the business

stakeholders, public information systems, communications systems, and equipment. An emergency operations center is established (usually by the local emergency management agency) and ICS is activated. Figure 2 below depicts the six steps in the planning process. At each step in the planning process, schools and businesses should consider the impact of their decisions on ongoing activities such as training and exercises, as well as on equipment and resources (U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2018).

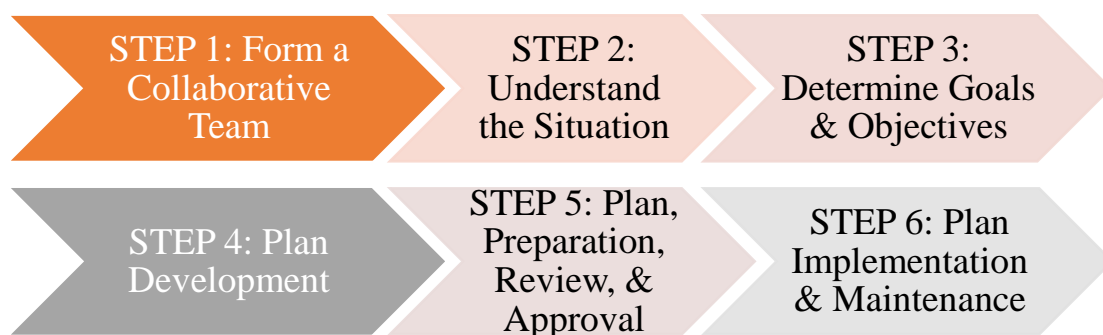


Figure 2. Six steps in the planning process.

Note. U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2018, p. 6). *Developing emergency operations plans: A guide for businesses*. U.S. Department of Justice. Retrieved from file:///C:/Users/anglr/Downloads/active-shooter-guide-for-businesses-march-2018.pdf

To defend the security of school campuses and its students, school officials must prepare and implement emergency preparedness plans and train staff to respond in the event of a crisis (Brock et al., 2001; U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2018; Heath et al., 2017). Trump (2019) explained that school plans should incorporate a variety of emergency scenarios including natural disasters, weather-related events, hazardous materials spills, hostage situations, violent intruders, active shooter drills, and other emergency procedures. Emergency planning that school board officials establish must cover the possibility of any of these events occurring. Not all these events

occurred at any one school, but there was a possibility that they could occur at different schools in the same school district. “School threats are a fast-growing problem that send fear and panic throughout a community,” said Ken Trump (p. 1), President of National School Safety and Security Services, who directed a study of school threats across the country. Trump reviewed 812 school threats across the country, from August 1 to December 31, 2014 – the first half of the school year. Based on data, threats were up 158% since 2013, when the first survey of this kind was completed. This type of rapid escalation of school threats requires urgent attention.

School safety plans are created after federal and state crisis management directives (Stone & Spencer, 2010). Subsequently, federal and state-mandated crisis management directives assist school districts in developing emergency preparedness plans. Based on the district-commanded preparedness plans, a school can design its own school safety strategies, perhaps employing involvement from non-educational resources. For example, Georgia law required all public schools to solicit input from stakeholders to create school safety plans (Council of State Governments, Justice Center, 2014).

In Georgia, each school was required to consider feedback from its stakeholders such as the students and parents, the community surrounding the school, law enforcement, and safety officials when conceiving its safety plans. The assessment that the Council of State Governments Justice Center (2014) compiled lends credence to the fact that each school, not specific to the state of Georgia, has the responsibility to develop its safety plan based on district-mandated directives. Those directives were created from state-issued policies and federal initiatives.

The Council of State Governments Justice Center's (2014) review affirmed that several states have statutes that specifically require every school or school district to have a comprehensive school safety or emergency plan. School districts may choose to implement additional requirements dependent on the needs specific to the area (Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2014). In outlining its emergency preparedness plans, a school must be able to identify the types of crises that may infiltrate its campus and the surrounding community, confer with its core stakeholders, all the while designing procedures and strategies that immediately address each of the identified situations (Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2014).

Emergency Preparedness and Stakeholders

To understand emergency preparedness, one must first understand the concept of what an emergency is (Harley, 2012). According to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), an emergency should be considered any event that is unplanned and can be considered responsible for the result of injuries or even deaths. The impact of an emergency can affect many stakeholders including employees, students, the public and others. Furthermore, the results of an emergency might cause long term or short-term damages to all who are affected by such events (Harley, 2012).

Veil (2012) conducted a case study of American Red Cross's response to Hurricane Katrina to demonstrate the utility of the best practices in risk and crisis communication as an assessment tool. The qualitative case study methodology was used to provide a rich description based on media analysis and internal and external evaluations. The best practices in risk and crisis communication were then used to assess Red Cross's response efforts. A review of the findings provided contextual support for

the best practices in risk and crisis communication and demonstrated their usefulness in post-crisis assessment. Veil outlined the importance of maintaining flexibility in the crisis plan, developing a crisis communication protocol with partners, considering the effects of response procedures on the emotional and psychological health of crisis victims, and establishing connections with diverse populations and the communities in which the organization works. As an assessment tool in the post-crisis stage, the best practices provided an outline for organizations to question whether their planning was sufficient, and whether their strategies and responses met the needs of their stakeholders. The National Education Association (2018) advocated the involvement of stakeholders at the onset is essential to building emergency plans that are relevant and meaningful. Schools were required to solicit the feedback of stakeholders because they could be affected by an emergency at the school, and they should know how to respond to the crisis.

Historical Perspective of School Crisis Intervention

As distinctive varieties of crises emerged over the years due in part to an upsurge of natural disasters and manmade incidents, so have the kinds of school emergency strategies that are being identified, trained for, and rehearsed (Heath et al., 2017). The history of school crisis intervention or school safety plans was long steeped in the implementation of school fire drills. Fire drills were one of the first precautions school crisis plans addressed (Heath et al., 2017). Since the early 1900s, there have been several recorded fire-related events, such as the 1851 false alarm evacuation at the Greenwich Avenue School (New York, New York), the 1908 Lake View Elementary School fire (Collinwood, Ohio), and 1958 Our Lady of Angels School fire (Chicago, Illinois) that led to the development of fire safety education and preparatory drills (Heath et al., 2017).

Until 1961, regulation of fire drills and how schools in each state were conducting these drills was unclear (Heath et al., 2017). Practicing fire drills had become a commonplace exercise in addition to becoming a well-organized practice in American schools. For fire drills, or any type of emergency training, most states require schools to conduct a fire drill per month throughout the school year, beginning the first week of school. To ensure compliance, school principals are required to report their school's fire drills to the district school boards. However, the number of instances in which fire drills are routinely performed at a school may depend upon each state and city's fire codes and regulations (Heath et al., 2017).

Regardless of the number of times fire drills are performed, successful drill training and practices, not entirely specific to fire drills, must be coordinated efforts (Heath et al., 2017). Enlisting the support of the local school district, training school administrative, teaching and support staff, and soliciting assistance from neighborhood fire and emergency personnel are components of coordinated efforts to keep teachers and students safe (Heath et al., 2017).

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) maintained that the coordination of stakeholder efforts is often plagued by the issue of territory (Brock et al., 2009). With numerous agencies and participants engaged in employing school fire drill exercises, there are several questions that should be answered. For example: (a) who leads crisis prevention practices, (b) who pays for training and supplies, (c) where does support for long-term services come from, and (d) who is the lead commander when multiple agencies are involved (Brock et al., 2009). The National Association of School Psychologists suggested that stakeholders can resolve territorial issues by promoting

collaboration among all concerned parties including the school board, school administrators, and local responders (Brock et al., 2009). Furlong, Felix, Sharkey, and Larson (2005) posited that schools are obligated to ensure that campuses are safe and that they have collaborated with surrounding communities to address organized violence.

Implementation of School Safety Plans

To ensure that the efforts of school emergency planning efforts are aligned with the emergency planning practices at the national, state, and local levels, the *Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans* is a response to the president's call for model emergency management plans for schools (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013). Those preparedness efforts were called *Presidential Policy Directive 8* (PPD-8), which officially describes the national methodology to preparedness. The PPD-8, which was signed in March 2011, outlined emergency preparedness by applying five mission areas. The five mission areas were characterized as: (a) prevention, (b) protection, (c) mitigation, (d) response, and (e) recovery (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013). The federal government considered those areas crucial when creating school safety plans (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013).

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA, 2015) website, the five mission areas were detailed within the National Preparedness Goal. Released during President Obama's administration, the National Preparedness Goal suggests that the focus of the United States of America should be to protect its citizens

and respond to any threats and hazards facing its people using its superior resources and capabilities (FEMA, 2015). This brief, yet definitive goal summarized the awareness of danger, while having an organized strategy that is devised to alleviate, counteract, and diminish a crisis clearly and immediately. The manual implied that mission areas are generally associated with the phases related to an incident either before, during, or after (FEMA, 2015).

In grasping how and when mission areas occur throughout incident phases is beneficial to improving emergency preparedness strategies, or rather, school safety plans (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013). The federal organizations who conceived the Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans described mission areas in relation to incident phases by stating that the majority of efforts and activities are preventative in nature and occur before an incident, but the activities can also take place during an incident. Conversely, the response to an incident can take place during the event and extend after it has ended (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013). Distinctly, the relationship between federally mandated mission areas and incident phases configured prominently to the practical execution of emergency readiness strategies. In developing best practices for school safety plans, the manual specifies that educational institutions should apply and use concepts and principles originating from the National Incident Management System (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013). “As school officials plan for and execute response and recovery activities through the emergency operations

plan, they should use the concepts and principles of the NIMS” (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013, p. 3).

The NIMS (2013) was sanctioned in 2003, from a Homeland Security directive to improve management of domestic incidents. A component of NIMS, known as the *incident command system*, offers a standardized approach for incident management allowing schools to work more efficiently with responders and stakeholders (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013). Comparably, the *Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans* supported the concept that school safety plans worked effectively when practical crisis management strategies were devised. Furthermore, the guide reinforced that joining forces with invested stakeholders and community responders during the planning process could prove to be beneficial in the long run (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013).

Heath et al.’s (2017) assessment indicated that school safety should be a priority issue for policymakers at the federal level as they create educational guidelines and standards. The authors suggested that school crises were directly impacted by the disproportionality of the number of adults to the number of children that they supervise as well as the availability of resources. To know that the safety of school children is directly dependent upon the staff’s awareness and familiarity of their safety plans is a daunting task for any school board to undertake. The guidelines and standards that the local school boards established must be specific, comprehensible, as well as open to annual evaluation

and fine-tuning. Moreover, school safety plans are not useful if suitable resources are not taken into consideration and staff expertly trained (Heath et al., 2017).

As a need is identified, stakeholders synchronized, and drills rehearsed, definitive school emergency management planning was a requirement, as lessons learned from school emergencies highlight the importance of preparing school officials and first responders to implement emergency operations plans (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013). The *Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans* indicated that proper development of school safety plans can reduce the impact of an incident. One of the recommendations was that its contents should be implemented as a reference for creating and revising school Emergency Operations Plans - EOPs (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013). School safety plans are derived from state mandates and federal directives. Federal directives are developed in collaboration with and support from the Office of the U.S. President, the Department of Homeland Security, and the National Security Agency (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013).

Lockdown. Lockdowns are needed when there is a violent intruder with a weapon, either inside or outside the school, and if evacuation is dangerous to teachers and staff (International Finance Corporation, 2015). Lockdown means that classroom security is implemented to protect students and staff from impending threats (Kaul, 2019). The public address for lockdown could be “Lockdown! Locks, Lights, Out of Sight!” and it could be repeated twice each time the public address is performed. The lockdown

protocol requires locking individual classroom doors or other access points, moving students out of line of sight of the corridor windows, and maintaining silence. Teachers and students are trained to not open classroom doors during lockdown. Once the lockdown is over, the principal or designee unlocks all doors to ensure that the intruder has been accosted (Kaul, 2019).

In monitoring the situation, administration should reassess and provide updates and instructions as available. Public safety authorities return command to the principal when it is safe to do so. Following the incident, the principal should inform teachers, students, and parents, as appropriate, providing time for review and discussion. Teachers and staff are expected to have done the following:

1. Gather students into classrooms, maintaining calm.
2. Try to warn other faculty, staff, students and visitors to take immediate shelter. If you are outside the building proceed immediately to a secure area, away from the threat.
3. Close and lock the doors from inside. Stay out of sight and stay away from doors and windows.
4. Wherever you are, turn all available desks and/or tables onto their sides facing the hallway and/or outside windows, if necessary.
5. Instruct students to drop and cover behind the desks making themselves as small a target as possible. Do not close coverings on outside windows.
6. Turn off lights and turn off radios and other devices that emit sound. Silence cell phones.
7. Stay where you are until instructed in person by police or school authorities.

8. Follow instructions to continue class and/or use Disaster and Emergency Student Release procedures. (International Finance Corporation, 2015, pp. 25-26)

Evacuation. Administration sounds the fire alarm and makes an announcement to students and staff. In case of fire, close doors and windows. In case of hazardous materials, close the ventilation system. Teachers and staff must monitor and provide updates and instructions as available and maintain communication. Administrators then announce any new procedures such as *All Clear* when emergency has ended. The School Disaster Management Staff should announce ahead of time, practice as a class, following both fire and earthquake procedures.

Reunification. After a threat has eased, the Reunification Team greets parents and emergency contacts at the request gate, providing them with Student-Family Reunification Form (permit to release child) form to fill out (International Finance Corporation, 2015). The team verifies that the adult picking up the child is listed on the List of Emergency Contacts and verifies their identity by asking for identification such as a driver's license or State identification card. Students are reunited with parents at the reunification gate. Team members keep signed copies of Student-Family Reunification Forms in order to respond to any query (International Finance Corporation, 2015). Then organizes request and reunification functions for maximum efficiency and safety (International Finance Corporation, 2015).

Teacher Self-Efficacy and School Safety Plans

Self-efficacy is defined as perceived capability to perform a target behavior (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997, 2004). Self-efficacy beliefs are an important aspect of human motivation and behavior as well as influence the actions that can affect one's life.

Regarding self-efficacy, Bandura (1995) explained that it “refers to beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations” (p. 2). To fully grasp the fundamentals of self-efficacy, Bandura (1977) identified four areas of developing self-efficacy: (1) performance outcomes (performance accomplishments), (2) vicarious experiences, (3) verbal persuasion, and (4) physiological feedback (emotional arousal). These components help individuals determine their belief in having the capability to accomplish specific tasks.

Performance outcomes. According to Bandura (1977), performance outcomes or past experiences were some of the most important sources of self-efficacy. Positive and negative experiences can influence the ability of an individual to perform a given task. If a person has performed well at a task previously, he or she is more likely to feel competent and perform well at a similar task. If an individual performed well in a previous job assignment, he or she is more likely to feel confident and have high self-efficacy in performing the task when a manager assigns a similar task. The individual’s self-efficacy could be high in that area. Since the person has a high self-efficacy, the effort is to try harder to complete the task with much better results. In contrast, if an individual experiences failure, he or she will most likely experience a reduction in self-efficacy. However, if those failures are later overcome by conviction, they might serve to increase self-motivated persistence when the situation is viewed as an achievable challenge (Bandura, 1977).

Vicarious experiences. Individuals can develop high or low self-efficacy vicariously through other people’s performances and experiences. A person can watch someone in a similar position perform, and then compare his or her competence with the

other individual's competence (Bandura, 1977). If a person sees someone like them succeed, it can increase his or her self-efficacy. However, the opposite is also true; seeing someone similar fail can lower self-efficacy. Mentoring programs can help individuals to enhance their self-efficacy through others' vicarious experiences and through observing others.

Verbal Persuasion. According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy is also influenced by encouragement and discouragement pertaining to an individual's performance or ability to perform. Principals who express belief in teachers and staff's ability to accomplish tasks can enhance their self-efficacy. Using verbal persuasion in a positive light generally leads individuals to put forth more effort; therefore, they have a greater chance at succeeding. The reverse is true when principals discourage others' performance and downgrade their ability.

Physiological feedback (emotional arousal). People experience sensations from their body and how they perceive this emotional arousal influences their beliefs of efficacy (Bandura, 1977). Some examples of physiological feedback are giving a speech in front of a large group of people, making a presentation to an important client, and taking the teacher certification examination. Although this source is the least influential of the four, it is important to note that if one is more at ease with the task at hand, he or she might feel more capable and have higher beliefs of self-efficacy.

The Changing Role of the Teacher as First Responder

As America's public school systems implement new teaching models with the purpose of competing within the global marketplace, the role of the instructor was modified. Anderson, Walker, and Ralph (2009) hypothesized that successful teachers

have positive experiences during their practicum that enables them to develop strategies that help them develop self-efficacy. Anderson et al. concluded that one of the key goals for teacher development in the pre-service programs was to encourage new teachers to develop self-efficacy to the point that they continued to involve themselves in professional development opportunities throughout their teaching careers (Anderson et al., 2009). Including emergency preparedness instruction and procedures during a teacher's pre-service phase could possibly have substantial influence on a teacher's ability to react confidently during crisis conditions (Anderson et al., 2009).

Similarly, considering the numerous emergencies and natural disaster situations, the World Health Organization (WHO) recognized nurses as frontline workers and adamantly recommended that emergency preparedness strategies should be included in pre-service nursing curricula. In collaboration with other international nursing councils, the WHO purposely developed proposals for integrating skills and competencies into undergraduate curricula (WHO, 2015). As the emergency preparedness landscape in the United States changed and the teacher's role expanded to incorporate new responsibilities as first responder, it was imperative that self-efficacy and crisis management education happened during pre-service educator instruction (WHO, 2015).

The job of the first responder was to provide medical assistance in an emergency before highly trained medical staff arrived on the scene (Philpot, 2010). In such incidents where there was a shooting or a tornado that may occur during school hours, the teacher and administrative staff assumed the role of first responder. Within the last 15 years, there have been several major events, such as the Columbine school shooting, the September 11th attacks, and Hurricane Katrina that have affected how educators were

expected to respond in a crisis. To ensure that all administrators, teachers, and city and state responders were acting on one accord, the U.S. government developed a set of policies and procedures that should be exercised during a time of crisis. In response to the attacks of September 11th and to improve national emergency preparedness, President George W. Bush issued a series of Homeland Security Presidential Directives (HSPDs). While the general events of September 11th do not directly correlate to the response efforts of a school's administrative staff, the outlining purpose of HSPDs was to expand the coordination efforts among federal response agencies (Philpot, 2010).

In 2003, HSPD-5 was issued to improve management of domestic incidents by creating the National Incident Management System (NIMS) (Philpott, 2010). Accordingly, the purpose of HSPD-5 directly affected how the U.S. school systems responded to emergencies, by defining guidelines that immediately addressed crises. The American instructor and school administrative staff were asked to assume the role of first responder in addition to his or her daily responsibilities.

Summary

Through the support of previous studies, this chapter provided a greater explanation of the general explanation of a crisis by exploring various scenarios in which crisis situations compromised the safety and security that the schools had established for their students. Crisis situations were not just categorized as those incidents which took place as a result of school violence but also natural disasters or manmade disasters. The complexities of emergency preparedness strategies must be planned and executed well for all different types of situations where spontaneity occurred.

Identifying the changing trends of crisis situations in which schools are exposed bring a better understanding as to why the roles of those who play instrumental parts in the execution of school safety plans evolve with the challenges faced. Understanding the challenges and the history of the establishment of school drills and safety plans lends clarity as to how and why teachers' roles change and why planning and preparation for crisis is imperative. The success of any executed plan is measured by the impact of the process of change. Based upon the research in this chapter, the level of impact was measured by how teachers perceived their roles, how the plan was executed, how they compared the execution process, and how they were trained in emergency preparedness. The validity of the process was measured by their perceptions of their preparation for a crisis and the execution of the safety plan.

Chapter three includes an explanation of the methodology of this study. It also includes the specifics regarding the research design, selection of participants, data collection, and data analysis. Ethical considerations are presented.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore elementary teachers' perceptions of their school's Comprehensive School Safety Plan (CSSP). Elementary teachers' roles in the development of the CSSP, the training received to implement the CSSP, and perceived efficacy related to implementing the CSSP were explored. In using Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy as a foundation source, how teachers' perceptions impacted their ability to implement school safety plans were examined. The intent of this analysis was to provide an assessment of operational self-efficacy as well as present areas where there may be variances in previous studies of the effectiveness of safety planning. Within the field of education, there was insufficient data that detailed how teachers perceived themselves during an emergency incident. This examination provided an understanding as to how teachers realistically employed school safety plans, while offering a discussion of various plans within their school building. This methodology section provided a comprehensive description of the research design and methods used in this qualitative case study.

Research Questions

The main research question for this study is, *What are elementary teachers' perceptions of the development and implementation of their school's CSSP?* The sub-questions are listed below.

Research Question 1: How do elementary teachers describe the professional development or training received in preparation for implementing their school's CSSP?

Research Question 2: What are elementary teachers' perceptions of their ability to implement their school's CSSP?

Research Question 3: What additional knowledge or training do elementary teachers perceive is needed in order to improve their ability to implement their school's CSSP?

Research Design

A qualitative case study design was utilized to conduct the research for this study. According to Creswell (2009) qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, exploring by using a possible theory, and the analysis of research problems examining the meaning of social or human issues. Qualitative researchers use a qualitative approach to explore problems or issues, collect data in the natural setting, arrive at conclusions based on observations, and establish patterns and themes (Creswell, 2009). The final written report contained the opinion of the participants, the researcher's reflections, and provided a solid interpretation of the problem and possible solutions to tackle the issues. The research also added to the body of literature on school safety plans.

The case study research design of this qualitative study was aimed at investigating the perceptions of teachers' self-efficacy as related to the development and implementation of comprehensive school safety plans. For this study, a basic qualitative study was suitable to examine the viewpoints of teachers regarding their self-efficacy in relation to the development and implementation of comprehensive school safety plans. According to Yin (2014), this strategy of inquiry provided the researcher with insightful information of the teachers' perceptions resulting in an in-depth understanding. The

qualitative study methodology provided tools for researchers to study phenomena within their context (Baker & Jack, 2008).

Several well-known qualitative study researchers such as Robert Yin, Helen Simons, and Robert Stake described techniques for gathering, organizing, and conducting a successful research process. The following were six steps that should be utilized: (a) establish the research question, (b) select the cases and establish data collection and analysis method, (c) organize and gather data, (d) gather data in the field, (e) assess and analyze data, and (f) report the findings. I developed research questions utilizing the Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (2010). A constant comparative approach was used to study the data and identify common themes (Yin, 2003).

Research Setting and Participants

Setting

The selected school site was a charter school located in the Southeastern United States. A charter school is a public school created through a charter with the state, a school district, or some other public entity (Heubert, 2002). As such they received public funding, could not charge tuition, must have fair and open enrollment, must be secular, and were required to serve all student populations, including students with disabilities and English language learners (Heubert, 2002).

State charter school statutes typically relieved charter schools of state and local regulations, so the schools were free to innovate and experiment. In exchange, charter schools agreed that renewal of their charters were contingent on their success in improving student academic achievement. Depending on state law, charter schools may

be subject to the control of traditional school boards or granted independence from local school authority (Heubert, 2002).

In recent years, charter schools in the United States have received a great deal of media attention (Rooks & Muñoz, 2015). At the heart of most of this scholarly research on charter schools is the *achievement gap*, such as the racial and class disparities in student achievement that have plagued the American educational system for decades (Hemphill & Vanneman, 2011; Kozol, 1992, 2005; Schrag, 2003; Vanneman, Hamilton, Baldwin Anderson, & Rahman, 2009). Much of the scholarly research on charter schools examined their ability to close this achievement gap (Rooks & Muñoz, 2015).

Founded in 2006, Charter International Academy (pseudonym) is an International Baccalaureate World Programme School serving students of diverse backgrounds throughout a local school district in the United States. Charter International Academy is a public charter school for kindergarten through 8th grade. The charter school is an accredited International Baccalaureate (IB) World Programme School, serving more than 750 students in single-gender classrooms. Students receive daily lessons in Mandarin Chinese language taught by Chinese faculty. Selected middle school students experience a summer immersion program in China.

At Charter International Academy, the IB Programme offerings are divided based on age and grade. The IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) is specifically for kindergarten through grade 5. The IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) is especially for sixth through eighth grades. The PYP and MYP areas are supervised by separate principals and assistant principals.

The IB MYP Programme continues through 10th grade, and students are encouraged to continue their IB journey by completing the MYP in high school before moving on to the Diploma Programme or Career Programme. However, if the next step into high school does not include IB, Charter International Academy students are prepared to excel in a variety of educational settings based on the high expectations and preparation of an IB education. Charter International Academy focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both in the classroom and in the world. The students are engaged as inquirers and thinkers and encouraged to make connections, think critically, work collaboratively with others, act, and reflect.

Charter International Academy takes the safety of its students seriously. The school building is locked during school hours each day, and all visitors must sign in at the front office to enter. Safety officers are also onsite to help keep the building secure.

Participants

Research participants were recruited from an elementary charter school in a local school district located in the United States. Upon obtaining consent from eligible research participants, semi-structured interviews were completed, and the data were organized and analyzed. The participants for this study included six elementary school teachers employed at Charter International Academy during the 2016-2017 school year. Both male and female educators were considered for the study. The participants met the following requirements: (a) certified in their content areas, (b) had a homeroom, (c) had been employed at their current school for at least three years, and (d) had participated in training to implement their school's CSSP within the last six months.

Inclusion in the research study was based upon six elementary kindergarten through fifth grade charter schoolteachers' willingness to participate in the interviews about their perceptions regarding their readiness to implement the CSSP. I mitigated the elimination of bias from the sample group of teachers by providing the school principal with specific requirements related to their teaching experience that assisted the principal in selecting teachers to be invited to participate in the study. Exclusion from the research study was based upon teachers who were either unwilling to sign the consent form or teachers who taught students in the middle, or high school levels because the interview responses were specifically designed for elementary school teachers at the selected charter school site.

Sampling Method

Several strategies can be utilized to extract focused sampling for information-heavy cases, especially in qualitative studies. According to Bernard and Ryan (2010), there are two kinds of samples in research: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. The research objective employed the non-probability sampling. There are three consistent rules that applied to both qualitative and quantitative research. First, probability sampling is used only when the objective is to estimate parameters from a sample of data to a larger population. The second rule requires the researcher to use a non-probability sampling method when the research objective requires a statistically representative sample, unfortunately, due to logistical or ethical problems there is no way to obtain one. Finally, the third rule indicates that if the research objective needs a non-probability sample, then the researcher selects a suitable sampling method and applies it (Bernard & Ryan, 2010).

There are various examples of non-probability sampling approaches, such as quota, convenience, theoretical and snowball sampling. Quota sampling categorizes a specific population of interest. Convenience sampling is used to select cases based on availability; and theoretical sampling involves the selection of cases pertaining to the interest of the study (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). However, there are also criterion and purposeful sampling, which are used when the researcher selects a sample of individuals that meet specific criteria for inclusion in the study and have experiences that align with the purpose of the study (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). Purposeful criterion sampling was used for this study.

Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study was the interview questions (see Appendix B). In the context of qualitative research, the human being is the main research instrument (Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013). Peredaryenko and Krauss investigated how novice qualitative researchers perceived themselves as the research instrument in the process of their first qualitative interviewing experiences. The findings from interviews with four such novice researchers were that their initial calibration gravitated towards one of two states, either being researcher-centered or informant-centered.

The following interview questions were taken from the review of the literature in a document entitled, *Guide for Developing High-quality School Emergency Operations Plans* (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013). Contents of this guide were discussed in Chapter 2, the review of literature.

Interview Questions

RQ1: How do elementary teachers describe the professional development or training received in preparation for implementing their school's CSSP?

1. What training have you received regarding implementing your school's CSSP?
2. What professionals provided the CSSP training at your school?
 - a. Were emergency and medical personnel (e.g., law enforcement officers, fire officials, and EMS personnel) present?
 - b. Were you informed of your schools safety planning team members, the selection process choosing the safety planning team members, and their roles within the CSSP?
3. How often is training provided on your school's CSSP?
 - a. How often are updates regarding the school's CSSP provided? In what ways are the updates provided?
4. What concepts or skills were discussed in the CSSP training provided by your school?
 - a. Were the evacuation sites, reunification areas, media areas, and triage areas identified during the training?
 - b. Were you informed of how to assist students, staff, and parents with disabilities as well as others with access and functional needs with getting to these sites and areas?
5. What specific role and position were you assigned during the training to implement the school's CSSP?

- a. For example, were you identified to complete first aid, threat assessment, and provision of personal assistance services for students with disabilities, and others with access and functional needs?

RQ2: What are elementary teachers' perceptions of their ability to implement their school's CSSP?

1. How prepared are you to implement your school's CSSP?
2. Do you feel like you'd be able to implement the CSSP effectively in an emergency? Why or why not?

RQ2a: How do elementary teachers describe their experiences implementing lockdown, evacuation and reunification procedures?

Lockdown

1. What courses of action does your school execute to secure school buildings and grounds during incidents that pose an immediate threat of violence in or around the school?
 - a. How do you lock all exterior doors? When might it not be safe to do so?
 - b. What classroom and building characteristics (i.e., windows, doors) impact possible lockdown courses of action?
 - c. What do you do when a threat materializes inside the school?
 - d. What are the different variations of a lockdown? Are you aware of when to use specific variations (e.g., when outside activities are curtailed, doors are locked, and visitors are closely monitored, but all other school activities continue as normal)?

Evacuation

1. What courses of action does your school execute to evacuate school buildings and grounds?
 - a. How do you safely move students and visitors to designated assembly areas from classrooms, outside areas, cafeterias, and other school locations?
 - b. How do you evacuate when the primary evacuation route is unusable?
 - c. How do you evacuate students who are not with a teacher or staff member? How do you evacuate individuals with disabilities (along with service animals and assistive devices, e.g., wheelchairs) and others with access and functional needs, including language, transportation, and medical needs?

Reunification

1. What are the details of how students will be reunited with their families or guardians?
 - a. How do you inform families and guardians about the reunification process in advance?
 - b. How do you verify that an adult is authorized to take custody of a student?
 - c. How do you facilitate communication between the parent check-in and the student assembly and reunion areas?
 - d. How do you ensure students do not leave on their own?
 - e. How do you protect the privacy of students and parents from the media?
 - f. How do you reduce confusion during the reunification process?

- g. What is the process for frequently updating families?
- h. How do you account for technology barriers faced by students, staff, parents, and guardians?
- i. How do you effectively address language access barriers faced by students, staff, parents, and guardians?

RQ3: What additional knowledge or training do elementary teachers perceive is needed to improve their ability to implement their school's CSSP?

- 1. What other information and/or training could the school provide to assist you in improving your ability to implement the school's CSSP?

Data Collection

Yin (2009) suggested the researcher should utilize several sources of data to establish construct validity. Yin also stated to ensure validity additional resources are needed beyond interviews to seek further understanding of the case. In this case study, semi-structured interviews were used to interview kindergarten through fifth grade teachers. According to Yin, six sources can be used when collecting data for a case study. Individual semi-structured interviews were utilized.

An in-depth interview is a data collection method used by qualitative researchers (Hennink, 2011; Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011, 2020). This method involved an interviewer and an interviewee having a focused and fixed conversation. Similar to the current research, I established a rapport with the participant and asked questions to induce the participant to share her perspective on an issue. During this time, I used a semi-structured interview guide to gather more thorough information (Hennink, 2011; Hennink et al., 2011, 2020). With this type of data collection, I remembered that the interviewee

should feel like we were simply having a conversation. This was not a one-way dialogue. My role was to extract the story from each participant.

I conducted individual, semi-structured interviews with six participants. Semi-structured interviews are popular within the context of qualitative research; they are considered less rigid than structured interviews (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). Interviews may vary from being semi-structured to highly structured (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). The problem was how much control the researcher has over the entire interview. Benefits can be found in both types of interviews (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). With semi-structured interviews, the researcher has a clear plan, but minimum control over how participants respond to the questions. The conversation may lead to different directions, and may vary, according to the participant (Harrell & Bradley, 2009).

There was little control on how far the discussion went with the semi-structured interview. I asked additional questions to provide clarity to the responses. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes. Collecting information this way did not take a long time (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). Those types of interviews are most suitable when researchers have a great deal of time to spend with participants under study (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). However, in the highly structured format, there are no changes in the structure and the researcher has some control over the questions but not the responses. Minor additional questions are asked. However, the format of the questions is the same for each participant (Harrell & Bradley, 2009).

An interview protocol (see Appendix B) included three research questions developed from the Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (2010). This manual contains information to support the development and implementation of a systematic crisis

management plan in schools and school districts. Each semi-structured interview lasted at least 45 minutes and was audio-recorded for accuracy. Participants were interviewed during each teacher's planning period for that day in the Media Center in a closed-door office where there was privacy and uninterrupted interviews.

Data Analysis

According to Creswell (2009), data analysis was the process interpreting collected facts and figures. During the research process, data analysis was an ongoing progression. It involved a process of analysis that achieved a deeper understanding of the data. I began analyzing data as soon as data collection process began. I obtained a clearer understanding of the questions during interviews. Once data were collected, the results were organized properly, distinctly interpreted, accurately coded, placed into interrelating themes, and their meanings translated.

During this study, I analyzed data as soon as data collection began. Specifically, the following procedures were adhered to:

1. After interviews were completed, I transcribed the interview tapes, excluding literal statements and non-verbal and para-linguistic communication.
2. During the bracketing reduction phase, I listened to the transcriptions with openness to whatever meanings emerged and journaled during this phase.
3. I reviewed every word, phrase, sentence, and paragraph, and noted significant non-verbal communication.
4. I utilized the dissertation chairperson as an independent judge to verify the units of relevant meaning.

5. I reviewed the list of units for relevant meaning and eliminated those that were previously listed.
6. I determined if any of the units of relevant meaning naturally clustered together.
7. I determined themes from clusters to decide if there were more meanings.

Procedures

I obtained written permission from the district office of Charter International Academy to conduct the study by submitting the appropriate forms to district personnel. An appointment was made with the person in charge of the district safety to obtain and review any documents that were relevant to the Comprehensive School Safety Plan. A letter was emailed to the charter school principal describing the study and soliciting participation.

Once I received a favorable response, the principal was issued an informational letter (see Appendix E). I scheduled a phone interview with the charter school principal to review the set criteria for the participants for the study. The participants met the following criteria: (a) State certified classroom teacher with at least three years of teaching experience, (b) taught at the specific location of the research for at least two years, and (c) implemented the Comprehensive School Safety Plan in the last six months. Participants were given informed consent forms (see Appendix D) to sign prior to each interview. I initially met with the participants after school hours on the campus to avoid interruption of the instructional day. Creswell (2009) submitted that data collection occurs at the site where participants experienced the issue of the study.

After I submitted the Institutional Review Board (IRB) packet to the school district's review committee for approval of the research study, the university granted the

IRB approval for this study on July 26, 2017. Once consent from the university IRB was granted and permission from the principal to use the charter school site were obtained (see Appendix B), I distributed teacher consent forms (see Appendix D), prior to the interviews, to voluntarily participate in this study. After the consent forms were returned indicating their permission to participate in the research study, I met individually with the teachers to begin the interviews.

I met individually with each participant to discuss the scope of the research study after the university IRB and district IRB approval were obtained. During the initial meeting, I explained the purpose of the research study and provided sample questions that would be used in the interview. I also provided participants with the research-based foundation for the study components and outlined anticipated benefits for the participants. The participants were given an informational letter to explain the scope of the research study, benefits, and any identifiable risks to them. I explained to the teachers that their participation in the interviews was strictly voluntary, and they had the right to terminate their participation in the research study at any time. If a participant did not want to participate in the research study, he or she could decline by not signing the teacher consent form. The participants were encouraged to ask any questions that they may have had about the research process. At the end of the three-year period following the conclusion of the research study, I will shred all documents related to the research study including the consent forms, the interview questions and responses, and any other information from the study to protect confidential information.

Researcher's Role

I analyzed elementary (kindergarten through fifth grade) school teachers' perceptions about their ability to implement the school's CSSP, their perceptions about professional development that they felt was necessary to prepare them to implement the CSSP, and their recommendations for any future training or preparation related to their implementation of the CSSP. No individual student data, teachers' names, or identification information were included in the research study. The teacher interviews did not include any teachers' names or the principal's name or identifying information about the school or school district. I compared the teachers' individual perception data about their ability to implement the CSSP to determine the school's level of preparedness. The school and district names were listed as pseudonyms. Additionally, the teachers were coded as Teacher 1 through Teacher 6 to differentiate each participant's interview and maintain confidentiality.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to the validity and quality of a qualitative study and indicates to what extent the researcher has addressed credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability (Merriam, 2002). A variety of strategies were utilized to increase the trustworthiness of the research study. For example, to increase the credibility of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), member checks were performed (Merriam, 2002) to increase the dependability of the results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I requested a colleague to review the study findings as they became available and increased the transferability of the findings by providing a very detailed description of the findings.

An audit trail was produced so that other studies could follow the outlined procedures and replicate the study format (Merriam, 2002).

A 45-minute period was allocated during teachers' planning periods in the school's Media Center. Interviews were conducted in the solitude of the Media Center to avoid interruptions with the research study participants regarding the key issues related to the school safety plans. In addition, planning periods were used to avoid interruption of the instructional day for students.

Self-reflection was utilized in Chapter Four about any underlying biases or assumptions about the research study, which increased my reflexivity and enhanced the trustworthiness of the research study (Brennan, 2017; Merriam, 2002). I also utilized a member checking process in which I met face-to-face with the participants to verify the accuracy of the transcriptions of the focus groups and interviews. The member checking process increased the trustworthiness of the study because it confirmed that the recorded responses from the interviews reflected the actual thoughts of the study participants from the transcripts and not the individual bias or thoughts of the researcher. This verification process also increased the trustworthiness of the interview data. This process enabled the researcher to self-correct any errors in the transcriptions and assisted with the analysis of the data using a constant comparative analysis.

The qualitative nature of the research study allowed me to identify and analyze themes and patterns in the responses of the participants. Aggregate data were presented from the interviews in a summarized report to function as a process of increasing the credibility of the information gleaned from the interviews. Findings were presented that were deemed transferable and could be applied in other contexts and settings. Written

documentation of the interviews that chronicled the experiences of the participants with their perceptions of their preparation to follow the steps in their individual school safety plans. The readers of this research study could be able to determine, based upon the included documentation, whether the data were accurate from the interviews applicable to teacher perceptions about their readiness to implement school safety plans. Artifacts detailed the individual interview questions, responses, procedures, and an analysis of the data to ensure that the findings of the study were transferable to other settings and studies, and that also increased the trustworthiness of the study.

Methodological Assumptions and Limitations

According to Creswell (2007), qualitative research has five philosophical assumptions: (a) ontological, (b) epistemological, (c) axiological, (d) rhetorical, and (e) methodological. In this study, a stance for the social constructivist paradigm was held and abided by qualitative research assumptions. First, ontological reality is both subjective and multiple, and participants' perspectives can vary depending on participants' reality. It was assumed that the participants' responses to the interview questions were honest. Second, during epistemological assumption, I lessened the distance between personal biases and the research. An assumption was both the insider and outsider in this study. To mitigate bias, I assumed an objective stance during both data collection and data analysis to ensure that the strategies of trustworthiness were adhered to (Creswell, 2007).

Next, the axiological assumption of qualitative research acknowledged that research is valuable and as a result biases exist. In qualitative research, my role served as the human instrument and subjective researcher. I revealed to the reader the life experiences that shaped my values. Fourth, the rhetorical assumption utilized the

language associated with qualitative research. Finally, the methodological assumption is the use of resourceful logic to identify the proper research design. After researching different designs and studies, an ontological basic qualitative case study was used for the design to gain different perspectives of several participants (Creswell, 2007).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations consist of three Belmont Report (1979) principles: (a) respect for persons, involving treating individuals as autonomous agents or providing protection for those with diminished capabilities, (b) beneficence, meaning obligatory attention to complementary actions of not harming individuals and of increasing benefits while minimizing possible harm, and (c) justice, implying the equitable distribution of derived benefits and the selection of subjects so that a particular class of persons is not systematically chosen because of easy availability, compromised position or manipulability rather than for reasons directly related to research needs. Other requirements were informed consent, sufficient sharing of information with participants, including research procedures and purpose, risks and benefits, alternative procedures, and the option of withdrawing, and participants' understanding this given information.

I have access to the information collected in this study. All materials and consent letters will be stored in locked file cabinet at my residence for a period of 3 years following the completion of the study. At the end of that period, all documents and materials are scheduled to be shredded and safely destroyed. No gifts, tokens, or rewards or any form of compensation were given to any participants in this study. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or consequences affecting their jobs.

Hennink (2011) maintained qualitative research is more distinct in ethical responsibility as represented by other types of research. There are several reasons why ethical principles are more distinct in qualitative research. First, qualitative research uses methods that enable researchers to interpret the beliefs and feelings of its participants. Second, qualitative researchers accomplish this task by building a connection with participants. Due to the nature of this relationship, researchers must remember the ethical principle of doing no harm or non-maleficence (Koocher & Keith-Spiegel, 2018). Researchers have a duty to do no harm to participants by ensuring that the potential for harm is eliminated completely or minimized to the greatest extent possible, or to avoid causing any harm is vital. This principle is accomplished by maintaining a level of confidentiality, ensuring that the data remain anonymous. I took all precautions to protect participants' responses, guaranteeing that their identity is not exposed to others (Koocher & Keith-Spiegel, 2018).

Benefice

Benefice is known as minimization from harm. During the design phase of qualitative research, the benefit of the research must be heavily considered. The benefit should be reflected in the purpose and outcome of the study. I seriously thought of why I wanted to achieve the proposed research study and if any ethical ramifications would prevent effective participation. Researchers should identify the gap in the literature and determine how the results of the study could benefit those evaluating the research (Hennink, 2011).

If researchers are to maintain beneficence, they should consider the consequences of disclosing the participants' names and answers during a study. Overseeing the privacy

process is a moral obligation. In conducting research, the use of pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants is essential. After the conclusion of the research, participants should be made aware of the published results.

Autonomy

When participants agree to participate in a research study, they have a reasonable right to expect privacy. To accomplish this, it was suggested that no identifying information about the participants be revealed in any type of communication. Researchers should consider both the privacy of the institution as well as the individual. Due to the acceptance and dependability of the Internet, new challenges posed a hazard to researchers that were never considered upon the inception of privacy statements (Lichtman, 2010).

All research should be guided by the principle of respect (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2000). To ensure this practice, as a researcher, it was imperative that participants sign a consent form to join the study. Participants had the right to be kept abreast throughout the study. It was participants' right to decide whether they wanted to contribute or withdraw from the study, at any given time during the study, without consequences.

Justice

Qualitative researchers have a duty to ensure equal share and fairness. I ensured that participants were not exploited or deceived. I considered how to enter the community and how to present myself to the participants. I was cognizant of participants' vulnerability regarding the study.

Researchers should always listen to the minority and disadvantaged groups. Researchers should keep in mind that certain issues can arise by trying to implement the principle of justice. As the researcher, I ensured that by implementing the principle of justice I was not burdening an already burdened and vulnerable group of participants (Orb et al., 2000).

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions of their ability to implement school safety plans. The study design was chosen as the best method to elicit information from the lived experiences of participants. The participants' viewpoints should give a perspective of what teachers experienced while implementing school safety procedures. The following chapter provided insight to the experiences of participants and their experiences to help readers' understanding of school safety plans.

This study used a qualitative case study approach. The qualitative method relied on semi-structured individual interviews with teachers. Data were analyzed using the constant comparative approach to develop themes for the research questions. The qualitative component was a comparative analysis method to compare, contrast, and find common themes in kindergarten through fifth grade teachers' interviews. Qualitative data were collected through discussion with kindergarten through fifth grade teachers' perceptions of their school's safety plan.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Restatement of the Purpose

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore elementary teachers' perspectives of their school's Comprehensive School Safety Plan (CSSP). Specifically, elementary teachers' roles in the development of the CSSP, how elementary teachers were prepared to implement the school's CSSP, and elementary teachers' perceptions of their efficacy related to implementing the CSSP were explored. I identified any areas in which elementary teachers perceived they required more knowledge or training to effectively implement the CSSP. Bandura's (1977) conceptual framework of self-efficacy theory guided this study. More information on the theoretical framework was included in Chapter Two.

Overview of Participants

An overview of participants showed a diverse participant sample in this study at the charter school site. There were five females and one male who voluntarily participated in this study. The sample included three African Americans, one Hispanic, one Caucasian, and one Asian member of the faculty. Grade levels currently taught ranged from kindergarten through fifth grades, including the Media Specialist who also was classified as a classroom teacher because she taught media technology to students in kindergarten through fifth grades. The educational level of participants ranged from five bachelor's degrees to a master's degree of Library Media Technologies. Although Ms. S. was not a participant in this study, she oversaw the school's safety plan and was assigned as a transparent, competent leader of the school safety plan. Teachers seemed to respect her authority to inform them what to do to protect the safety and welfare of teachers and

staff, students, parents, and visitors, and Ms. S. is referenced in several of the interview responses describe below.

Teacher 1

Teacher 1 was an African American female between the ages of 25-35 who was currently teaching kindergarten at the charter school. She had between 3-6 years of teaching experience and had an earned bachelor's degree.

Teacher 2

Teacher 2 was between 30-40 years of age and was an African American female. She was currently teaching fifth grade but had also taught fourth grade. She had between 3-12 years of teaching experience and had an earned bachelor's degree.

Teacher 3

Teacher 3 was an African American male between the ages of 25-35. Currently, he taught fourth grade but had also taught fifth grade. He had between 3-6 years of teaching experience and had an earned bachelor's degree.

Teacher 4

Teacher 4 was a Hispanic female who was currently the school's Media Specialist. She was approximately 35-45 years old, with 3-7 years of experience as a Media Specialist. She had an earned master's degree in Library Media Technologies.

Teacher 5

Teacher 5 was a Caucasian female between the ages of 40-55. She was currently teaching first grade and had 20 years of teaching experience. She had an earned bachelor's degree.

Teacher 6

Teacher 6 was an Asian female between the ages of 40-55 years. She taught fourth grade at the charter school site. She had approximately 6-7 years of teaching experience. She had an earned bachelor's degree.

Table 1 contains the demographics for all participants including gender, age, race/ethnicity, grade level currently teaching, years of teaching experience, grade levels taught, and level of education.

Table 1

Demographics of Participants

Participants	Gender	Age	Race/ethnicity	Grade level currently teaching	Years of Teaching Experience	Grade levels taught	Level of Education
Teacher 1	Female	25-35	African American	Kdg.	3-6 years	Kdg.	Bachelor's
Teacher 2	Female	30-40	African American	5th	10-12 years	4th – 5th	Bachelor's
Teacher 3	Male	25-35	African American	4th	3-6 years	4th – 5th	Bachelor's
Teacher 4	Female	35-45	Hispanic	Media Specialist K-5	3-7 years	Media Specialist K-5	Master's
Teacher 5	Female	40-55	Caucasian	1st	10-20 years	1st	Bachelor's
Teacher 6	Female	40-55	Asian	4th	6-7 years	4th	Bachelor's

Results

Prior to each interview, I welcomed each participant and thanked them for coming to the interview. I handed each participant an informed consent letter informing them that the interview would be audio-taped with their signed permission and consent. Participants were informed that they could stop the tape recorder, if they felt uncomfortable and did not want to continue. The interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes because they were held during each participant's planning period. The instructional school day was

uninterrupted. After consent forms were read, explained, and signed by each participant, the informed consent forms were placed in an envelope and maintained in my possession throughout the completion of all interviews. I spent the entire day at the charter school completing participant interviews.

Central Research Question

The central research question for this study was, *What are elementary teachers' perceptions of the development and implementation of their school's CSSP?*

Research Question One

RQ1: How do elementary teachers describe the professional development or training received in preparation for implementing their school's CSSP?

Research Question Two

RQ2: What are elementary teachers' perceptions of their ability to implement their school's CSSP?

Research Question Three

RQ3: What additional knowledge or training do elementary teachers perceive is needed in order to improve their ability to implement their school's CSSP?

Research Question One

Research question one asked, "How do elementary teachers describe the professional development or training received in preparation for implementing their school's CSSP?" Three themes developed from the teacher interviews regarding research question one. The themes were: (1) occurrence of training, (2) materials used to train, and (3) drills.

Theme One: Occurrence of Training

Most teachers provided similar opinions that training occurred at the beginning of the school year during pre-planning for over an hour. However, they did not all agree that the training was ongoing. Some stated that the training was ongoing and should be practiced with each drill rather than just a conversation about the procedures.

Teacher 1 replied that teachers received ongoing training, especially before the start of school. Teacher 1 said, “We always receive an emergency training, whether it is for weather, intruder alerts, or just in case if anything were to happen inside our school” (personal communication, August 11, 2017).

Teacher 2 responded that training occurred on an ongoing basis throughout the year that is extensive at the beginning of the year. She stated:

When we first come back, we always have a session or two, or three, and that they just break down regarding adult safety and student safety and what that looks like, and what is expected. They tell us about the protocols for fire drills, lockdown drills, and what levels there are and what is expected from them. Usually, Ms. S. runs those trainings, handles the training sessions, and provides an overview.

Then it is a follow-up email. We have another meeting right before school starts.

If we do something and it does not go well, we have a debriefing session usually as a school. If we are taught a protocol and then a fire drill happens, and something goes awry regarding how we did it, we usually have a meeting.

(personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 3 had a similar position about the training session that occurred during pre-planning for approximately a 90-minute session. Teacher 3 said:

All the school safety procedures are discussed, what they look like, how to implement them, and who we can talk to for questions that we have. At the end of the session, a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) period is provided to ensure that teachers have a clear understanding of all the procedures. added (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 4 is the Media Specialist, and she participated in this study because she interacted with each grade level during planning and follows up with instruction for students on projects and conducting research. She also familiarized students with the Media Center, technology lab, and the contents. Teacher 4 responded to the school safety training by explaining that this is her sixth year, and that during pre-planning, Ms. S. had a professional development training about our school safety plan. Teacher 4 continued:

The in-service lasts about an hour long where Ms. S. walks us through the different kinds of drills, and the protocols for the drills. She makes the connection that the drill is related to the real-life circumstance. I teach PD sessions during her time now, so I did not sit in on it in the past year. But we also have binders with each protocol in it, and steps to go through. In every room, we have our emergency exit plans posted by the door. All information is sent via email, so we have digital copies of all our fire emergency, or bomb drills. We practice the actual drills and follow up afterwards to discuss what we did well and what needs improvement. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Similar to other participants, Teacher 5 said:

At the beginning of the year, we usually attend a meeting on the school's emergency preparedness plan. We meet in small clusters rather than in a large

group setting because questions are asked in small groups to discuss what we must do in the school. As part of our orientation, we are given red bags containing notebooks that have all the protocols for what we do for each sort of drill. I have been here for 10 years and so it has changed over the years. I feel like in the beginning, we had time to maybe practice and were shown where we are supposed to go. For me, I do not need to be shown where I am supposed to go. So, I already know where to go if there is a fire drill or what room I walk out of. I do not think we have any formal training. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 6 said that school safety training was different only if something new had been added to the procedures. As a result, she said:

We may not walk through training procedures with teachers. I think part of that is if you have been here for a while, even if it is a change to where you are supposed to go for a fire drill, we know where to go. We do walk our students through the process before anything is implemented. They had training to discuss the use of EpiPens when children with allergies must use those pens to avoid an allergic reaction to medication, bee stings, and foods. The school nurse presented that information. CPR training is available, but it is not mandatory for people to take. They do talk about that. It is mostly conversations. I do not know that I have had any actual demonstrative training other than with the EpiPen where she would show us how inject it in your arm or how to inject it in the child's arm or leg. Again, when you are talking about the safety plan as far as the drills went, the

lockdowns, we practice those, but it is mainly conversation. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 3 recalled:

School safety training is held once a year at the beginning of the school year. My experience being here, if there were updates that need to be provided, they would provide it on a timely basis and quickly, but they were not given if there were not any changes to it. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 4 stated:

We just have our main training at the beginning, from what I can recall, but if something changes within the district or the state, then Ms. S. compiles all the information we need, and either talks to us in a staff meeting personally, or send out an email or combination of both. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 5 mentioned:

Training on our school safety plan is provided just at the beginning of the year. If anything does change when we have faculty meetings on Wednesdays, they usually let us know during that time. Training is usually verbal communication to the entire group. Ms. S. uses a microphone and if there is anything that has a demonstration or a slide, they show it on a Promethium board in front of us. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 6 said:

At the beginning of every year, we go through the school safety plan. I think they have come on once or twice if there was a drill or something that did not work out well, we discussed it during the training on the EpiPen that we did. I have been

here 6 years. We have probably discussed it three or four years out of the six, but it has not been every single year. Usually updates are provided by email, but I cannot think of anything specific that has changed a lot. The state implemented new things where we had to have an earthquake drill or those kinds of things. When that happened, we did have emails, but we also had staff meetings where that was introduced to us. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Theme Two: Materials Used to Train

Some participants mentioned that certain materials were used to train them such as PowerPoints, Promethean Boards, videos, wall maps placed inside and outside every classroom, and handouts. Other maps were placed on walls throughout the school, in the cafeteria, auditorium, restrooms, near stairs, principal's office, school counselor's office, and main office. Occasional updates were part of the materials used to train teachers. In addition, emails were sent out for some of the updates. Handouts were given during faculty meeting updates.

Teacher 2 responded:

There is an exit plan posted by your door. There is a map that identifies where all the rooms are before you leave. Wherever I am, I am right by these steps, so my students know we go down those steps. We go a certain route and then we go meet on the field, so we practice it. I think every classroom has that posted and every classroom has practiced it. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 1 added that training included materials used to train teachers and staff.

Teacher 1 said:

Training typically lasts approximately an hour and a half, including a PowerPoint, protocols, and school exit maps are provided for all teachers and staff to place on the front of the classroom doors. The exit maps are for emergencies such as a fire or if someone pulls the fire alarm, then teachers and staff know how to exit accordingly and go wherever they should be to keep students safe. PowerPoints, protocol examples, school exit maps, and technology are used during annual and monthly practices through Promethean boards, PowerPoint presentations but there is little practice conducted for some drills (e.g., reunification), and more discussion. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Participants reported that when new information on school safety was provided, then updates were presented as needed, especially to new teachers. Teacher 3 recalled:

School safety training is held once a year at the beginning of the school year. My experience being here, if there were updates that need to be provided, they would provide it on a timely basis and quickly, but they were not given if there were not any changes to it. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 1 responded:

In terms of the training, we at least have one once a semester. There were two semesters or at least twice a year. Sometimes, depending on the dynamics of the school, if we have some type of incidents, we have training during our weekly faculty meetings. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 2 replied:

I know it is usually like, I do not want to use the word annually, but at the beginning of the school year. I think at the middle, the end, and looking at the end. Then I think it is as needed as in like, again, if something does not go well, there is like a follow-up about it. We get emails about it, but like the beginning, middle, and end. I remember a session about it. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 2 also said that the school safety plan was updated as often as needed:

Pretty often. Usually, again, it might be informal meetings or like an impromptu meeting for the entire staff. There might be email reminders. Ms. S. might push into our team planning meetings and she reminds us, so I think it is like on a needed basis after the other ones are done, or after the general ones are done. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 3 recalled:

School safety training is held once a year at the beginning of the school year. My experience being here, if there were updates that need to be provided, they would provide it on a timely basis and quickly, but they were not given if there were not any changes to it. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Theme Three: Drills

Regarding drills, Teacher 4 stated:

We just have our main training at the beginning, from what I can recall, but if something changes within the district or the state, then Ms. S. compiles all the

information we need, and either talks to us in a staff meeting personally, or sends out an email or combination of both. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 5 mentioned:

Training on our school safety plan is provided just at the beginning of the year. If anything does change when we have faculty meetings on Wednesdays, they usually let us know during that time. Training is usually verbal communication to the entire group. Ms. S. uses a microphone and if there is anything that has a demonstration or a slide, they show it on a Promethium board in front of us. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 6 said that school safety training was different only if something new had been added to the procedures. She said:

We may not walk through training procedures with teachers. I think part of that is if you have been here for a while, even if it is a change to where you are supposed to go for a fire drill, we know where to go. We do walk our students through the process before anything is implemented, and, they had training when they discussed the use of EpiPens when children with allergies must use those pens to avoid an allergic reaction to medication, bee stings, and foods. The school nurse presented that information. CPR training is available, but it is not mandatory for people to take. They do talk about that. It is mostly conversations. I do not know that I have had any actual demonstrative training other than with the EpiPen where she would actually show us how inject it in your arm or how to inject it in the child's arm or leg. Again, when you are talking about the safety plan as far as

the drills went, the lockdowns, we practice those, but it is mainly conversation.

(personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Research Question Two

Research question two asked, “What are elementary teachers’ perceptions of their ability to implement their school’s CSSP?” Three themes emerged: (1) very prepared, really confident, but not incredibly comfortable in some areas, (2) understand risks posed by identifying threats and hazards, and (3) comfortable stabilizing an emergency situation. Many teachers in this study felt as prepared as they could be; they said they basically had the same plan every year; they were comfortable with the plan at the same school, but not comfortable in some areas; they had been in the same roles for six years; and felt well prepared for 20 years implementing a similar plan repeatedly. Only one participant admitted being able to implement the safety plan but did not feel as prepared as she could be because she did not remember certain procedures. Most teachers felt confident because of their years of experience, drills practiced with students as if they were real, information provided had prepared them, annual updates were provided with the goal of student safety in mind. All the teachers felt that Ms. S. was a transparent, competent leader of the school safety plan and they seemed to respect her authority to inform them on what to do to protect the safety and welfare of students, parents, and visitors.

Theme 1: Very Prepared, Really Confident, but not Incredibly Comfortable in Some Areas

Many participants felt confident and comfortable that they were prepared to effectively implement their school’s safety plan. However, one participant did not feel as

prepared as she thought she should have been but reported that she could successfully implement the school safety plan.

Teacher 1 replied, “Very prepared. As prepared as I guess I am going to be” and went on to say:

Yes. I think so, but in that same breath, I would want, no matter what, to get my students to safety. You know, could that mean if there were an emergency in the place in which we are supposed to go is not correct because there could be people who are dangerous there? I am going to take them somewhere else to get them where they need to be, and just to make sure that they are safe. So yes, my plan would be, as much as possible, to effectively follow the plan as much as I could. However, if something were to go off, because things like that happen, then my main priority would be to get the students to safety. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 2 answered:

I do feel able to implement the school safety plan in an emergency because Ms. S. is very transparent about it. I have been here for years, so I feel like there are minor changes, but it stays basically the same. I practice with my students at the beginning of the year, and we role play. I know there are always things that go wrong. I think Ms. S. does a good job, ‘This is what we do. Now if X, Y, Z happens, you have to keep your head and do what you do.’ I know that there are some things I cannot control, but I know that I am supposed to react a certain way. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Like Teacher 2, Teacher 3 felt quite prepared. He said, “I think I feel really confident carrying out the school’s safety plan.” Teacher 3 answered, “I would say yes. I think that the information that we received has prepared me for that--so yes. I would say I feel confident.”

Teacher 4 stated:

I feel incredibly comfortable with it, but I have been in the same school with the same roles, for like six years now. But I believe the people who teach the older students, or the people who have been here for a while probably feel much more confident. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 5 said:

I feel like I am very well prepared, especially on the intruder alert, because real life situations happen, and I feel like we really take safety seriously. We make sure students know that we are there to help them; that is really our goal. I feel competent to implement the safety plan at school mainly because I have been teaching for 20 years. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

In contrast to other teachers, Teacher 6 did not feel as prepared as she should be because she thought she should know all of the plan by heart. Teacher 6 said:

I should not have to pull out my red binder in our emergency bags. To me, I am not prepared if I cannot say, ‘This is what I am going to do’ without looking at that folder. I do not feel like I am as prepared as I need to be. I could implement the school safety plan effectively in an emergency situation; however, I would implement it more successfully if I did not have to take a minute. I will know where to take my students. I know where to walk them. If I know before I leave

the building and do not have to read, 'This is where you are walking them to.'

That is on me because they have told us all of that. It is just a matter of us trying to refresh everything. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Theme 2: Understand Risks Posed by Identifying Threats and Hazards

Teacher 1 recalled:

Whenever we hear over our intercom announce, 'This is a *code red*', we automatically get up, turn off the lights, lock our doors, and voices are quiet. We get away from our door. We sit silently. Most of our classroom doors only have a small rectangular window. We do not have the big windows anymore. We take a sheet of paper and cover the door window. We count how many children are inside of the room, make sure that there are no children in the restrooms, because in kindergarten, we have restrooms inside of our classrooms. We make sure we account for all students. We slide something up under our door that lets whoever is walking by know that we are secure and safe. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 1 continued to explain what happened if a threat materialized inside the school:

Typically, we are warned. We hear it over the intercom. Or if it is someone coming into our room and say, 'Hey, this is going on. Lock your doors or whatever you have to do.' We immediately act. We have different codes. Sometimes they do not say, 'This is a code red.' They give us a specific code such as *lockdown*. When they give us those codes, we automatically know what that protocol is. We are trained on that, so we know which code means to do what. If

you hear a code, we know automatically to pull down that window. We know to get away from the window. If you hear another one, you know to lock all doors in that classroom. A lot of classrooms downstairs share a large office. There are instructors and coaches in another office within our classrooms. We know to go in there, lock the door, and be quiet. Depending on the code that is given, we know exactly what protocol applies. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 2 was well informed about the levels of lockdown and what risks were involved in each level:

There are levels to the lockdown beginning with level one, then level two, and next level three. Someone gets on the intercom, usually Ms. S. and says, 'We are in lockdown.' We know what to do. If it is level one, you just close your door, you keep working. Level two, you close the door, it is locked. The students remain quiet. The lights are turned off, students move to the side of the room away from the window, and we practice all those levels. The students know, we know, and she knows. We practice all levels at the beginning of the year, so we know what to do with that. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 2 went on to say:

The exterior doors are locked with teachers' keys. Locking doors may not be safe if students and teachers have a threat coming from inside the classroom. But if the threat is a fire drill when everybody must evacuate, that is different. But if the threat is on the outside, we must lock our doors and we are not allowed to respond to it because the first responders enter the room. They are supposed to be able to open the door with a key. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

In response to classroom and building characteristics impact, possible lockdown courses of action, Teacher 2 identified the conditions regarding the risks and hazards based on where teachers and students are located:

Just depends on where you are. If you are in the trailers outside, that is a different conversation. If you are in older parts of the building, that is a different conversation. Middle school, I do not know how they do it. I know that we just lock our doors and we have to move away from the windows so you cannot be seen. I know that if there are windows, they do not ask us to close the blinds, but we stay away from those too. The students know to get up against the wall, the furthest corner, and be silent. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 2 said that if the threat materialized inside the school:

We are taught to lockdown into our classrooms until we are told differently, and we do not answer the door for anybody, including Ms. S. or any of them, until an announcement is made. That is just like being a first responder because that has happened before. We had a parent who came in and immediately it was like lockdown level. We just followed that lockdown procedure until we were given the all call, the all clear. Now if you are in that area where it is happening, I am not sure how that would look. I assume if you are right there, you still just follow the procedures such as going into your area and locking the door. Students are right there whether they are yours or not and bringing them in with you. Then there is a sheet that teachers slide under the door to let Ms. S. and the rest of the staff know that all students have been accounted for and there are no injuries. That is how we communicate. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

The different variations of lockdown and knowing when to use specific variations were familiar to many participants in this study. Teacher 2 replied:

There are three lockdown levels that are identified on the intercom if it is lockdown level one, lockdown level two, or lockdown level three. Level one means to close your door, you keep working. Level two is close the door and lock it, and the students move to one side of the room. Level three means everybody moves to the side of the room, lights off, and everyone remains quiet. Then there are tornado drills and fire drills. Those are different. Then there are hurricane drills. There are three other ones, but they are different; we practice all of them. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

In describing his experiences implementing lockdown, evacuation, and reunification procedures, Teacher 3 described the courses of action his school executes to secure school buildings and grounds during incidents that pose an immediate threat of violence in or around the school. Teacher 3 said:

I know that the exterior doors are always kept locked. I would not think that there would be a case where they would need to be locked. I know, as a classroom teacher and our classroom duties, we all have classroom keys that are on our persons. In case there is a lockdown situation, and that came on the intercom, my keys are available to lock my door. Lockdown is pretty much the same procedure depending on the given code. We must make sure all the students are secure and that they are out of view and out of harm. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 3 was knowledgeable about the different variations of a lockdown.

Teacher 3 said, “Yes. We have a one, two, and a three level codes so I can easily distinguish among them” (personal communication, August 11, 2017).

Teacher 4 said she was able to differentiate among the various codes. She answered:

Most definitely. I am a rule-follower, so I keep abreast of all the things that need to be done. I know every student and staff member in the school, so it is probably easier for me to be able to direct them in areas they need to be. But I also brush up on reading through the binder occasionally, to make sure that the lockdown drill is a little bit more complicated, so I make sure I am doing things properly. During a lockdown, we receive announcements if it is level one, two, or three... Level one, you do not lock you just keep teaching. Level two, you lock the door and you keep teaching. Level three, you lock the door, turn everything off, which means everything stops, and you hide. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 4 continued:

Say it is a level three lockdown, my students would already know to move between my bookshelves in the Media Center and hide. I turn off the lights, lock the door, and count my students. Put my count card underneath the door, and then I maintain a silent classroom... If it is a lockdown because someone is in the building, then it would not be safe necessarily to lock the exterior doors, or if it is a lockdown that has something violent, and we are also dealing with a fire or something at the same time. Or you would not be able to get your emergency

personnel in if all the doors were locked in certain circumstances as well.

(personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 4 discussed the issues that are posed in the Media Center when there is a lockdown and provided examples. Teacher 4 went further and explained:

On a ground floor, there are just so many windows that pose some issues for us, trying to hide children. Like in the library, there are not that many opportunities. It took us a while to find an area that would work for them. Some of the other classrooms are just incredibly visible from the street, so the teachers must pull their shutters, and that might take more time out of their response. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

In response to what she would do when a threat materialized inside the building, Teacher 4 replied:

I am one of the staff members who has a walkie-talkie in my space. I could either call zero. But typically, I pick up the walkie-talkie because administrators and our police officer are on the walkie-talkie. And then I would do whatever I need to do to get the children to safety. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 5 said:

Lockdown involves a tier system where there are the teachers on the bottom taking care of their students, and then there is somebody above us making sure we are doing the right thing. And then there is somebody above them making sure they are doing the right thing. So, there are many checks and balances for all the different drills that we do. Locking all exterior doors means that we all have our

keys. We lock them if it is an intruder alert, and we lock them before we go into hiding. It is never safe not to do so. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

In explaining how classrooms and building characteristics impact possible lockdown courses of action, Teacher 5 provided an example of the position of her classroom in relation to the main road:

My classroom is on a main road, and so I guess if somebody were to throw a rock at my window and it were to shatter the window, I would call the office and maybe alert that something is happening. And then somebody might decide to do a lockdown drill or some sort of safety precaution. When a threat materializes inside the school, what happens next depends on what level it is. If it is level one, we keep doing what we are doing. We just know to be aware. The students are still able to move around. They are just not allowed to go out of the building. On level two, they must stay inside their classroom, and we try to limit movement around. And then level three, we stop what we are doing; and if it is an intruder alert, we hide. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 5 went on to say:

And we have color cards, so if there is any problem inside our room, we are supposed to put a different color out, like red if there is a problem or yellow if I am missing students or I have extra students that do not belong to me. And green if everything is alright. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 6 said she felt quite comfortable implementing lockdowns and said:

Lockdown is not an issue because I know the three levels for the lockdowns. I know what is required as far as the doors being locked, what goes on in the

classroom when the children must be hidden and when they do not necessarily have to be, if that makes sense, hidden. That is not it. I do not think lockdown is any issue at all. Evacuation as far as leaving to go to the field for fire drills or anything else where we just must clear the immediate vicinity that is not an issue. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 6 explained that the course of action the school executes to secure school buildings and grounds during incidents that pose an immediate threat of violence in or around the school means that the school already has all the outside doors locked. She said:

School officials decided, for example, that if we have children on the playground, rather than coming back to the school for the lockdown, they have a way to notify them. Then they go to the community center, and they are going to let them in. All exterior doors are automatically locked. They are never unlocked. They must be, unless somebody props them open, but that is something they also check for on a regular basis. It is not safe to open those doors if the threat is right on the grounds, or if there has been a bank robbery. We used to be on Custer Avenue, which is about three blocks from the Atlanta State Penitentiary. If there was an immediate threat in the vicinity, I think if it was right outside your door, people are running by or people have guns, I do not know that it would necessarily be safe to run up to the doors because the doors are automatically locked. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 6 explained a situation when classroom and building characteristics might impact possible lockdown as a course of action:

I think the windows downstairs might be an issue. The windows are right on the ground by the garden. Teachers have pull down metal shutters that they lock up at the end of the day, so that nobody can come in that way. The upper floor is this floor and the one above it. I am not sure if there are any specific safety protocols, but then we also have the fence around the front of the building, so they do not really have access to the windows. Most of the windows are behind those bars; although they are not steel, but it is an impediment. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 6 said that if a threat materialized inside the school:

We know if there is a level two lockdown to level three, the children know if they are not inside a classroom, they know to go immediately to the room that is next to them. That includes in the restroom because we have told them, ‘Do not come back to class. Go to the teacher right next door to you.’ We lockdown the doors. I have my key. Sometimes I do keep my door locked, so I do not have to lock it. I do not know that they have prescribed that, as we all must keep our doors locked the whole time we are in the building, even when we are in class, because of the people coming in and out of the building. I am not going to say I remember everything. They may have told us to do that, and that just may be inconvenient. It is something that I have not kept at the top of my head. The locking down is not that big of a deal. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 6 recalled the variations of a lockdown and said:

I know that level one is when the threat is outside the building. Level two is when there is a situation escalating in the building. It may be a parent who gets upset or

someone who comes in where they think it could be a potential threat. I will not say I know for sure when there is a potential threat to people in the building. Then level three is when they have an actual active threat in the building. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Theme 3: Comfortable Stabilizing an Emergency Situation

Responding to an emergency meant that teachers must be able to stabilize it once it had already happened. Otherwise, teachers must be certain that the situation could be stabilized in an unpreventable way and they could establish a safe and secure environment. Teachers knew they must remain calm and know what procedures must be taken to maintain the safety of all students. Teachers expressed the goal was to save lives and property.

Teacher 1 responded:

We have been trained to follow the emergency exit maps. We try our best to evaluate the situation and take the quickest and safest way out. No matter who students are in which teachers' class, first we check all areas, especially the restrooms. We do not ask any questions. We take the children, and we go to safety. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teachers expressed their ideas about evacuating students with disabilities with wheelchairs, and others with access and functional needs, including language, transportation, or medical needs. Teacher 1 answered:

I think about last year. We had a child in a wheelchair, and we had an emergency. Our fire alarm went off. There was a fire in the kitchen. They were panicking because he was in a wheelchair. It was like, 'Oh my God! Do we push his

wheelchair out or do we grab them and go?’ You think about the safety of the child and the safety of all the children, and you pick the child up and you go.

(personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 2 responded:

There is an exit plan posted by your door. There is a map that identifies where all the rooms are before you leave. Wherever I am, I am right by these steps, so my students know we go down those steps. We go a certain route, and then we go meet on the field, so we practice it. I think every classroom has that posted and every classroom has practiced it. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 2 explained what would happen if the primary evacuation route was unusable:

Whatever is closest and safest is where we evacuate. If that door was not working or something was happening with the middle school coming down, I would just go through the next door. There are several different doors, so if that option does not work, we can go out the other door. Of course, you train your students where we move to like we go this way, or we go that way. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 3 answered:

In all our classrooms, we have a map. It has a black line that tells us where we are, and where we would need to go in the event we need to evacuate the building. If I am doing a fire drill, for example, it tells us where we go and where we would need to meet up. Evacuating when it is unusable, for me, it is a matter of using that same map, but it is a matter of planning ahead and kind of thinking about

what is another safe route that we can get out of the building that also is not really overcrowded. Students who are not with anyone or unaccompanied are taken and placed with an adult and other child. If I see some students who are unaccompanied, they will just come with me and my class and then when we get to the place where we meet up, then have them find their teacher. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

The question regarding evacuating individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, including language, transportation, or medical needs was difficult and could not be answered by Teacher 3 who said, “Unfortunately I do not have an answer to that question” (personal communication, August 11, 2017).

Using the specific variations of evacuation of school buildings and grounds may affect the safety of students and staff. Teacher 4 answered:

We have a new alarm with a different sound. It says, ‘Fire, fire, fire’ instead of just being a generic alarm. So, we all know what it is. Next week will be my first week of library services to teachers and students. I will show all the teachers and students the evacuation route for my area. And we exit all the doors, so there is no confusion and congestion. Our first year here, we had some jumbles and build-ups. We fixed it and figured out how to get them out. Fortunately, we could use the public park down there, so we can get everyone on one field, in one space, and at one time. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

To move students and visitors safely to designated assembly areas from classrooms, outside areas, cafeterias, and other locations, Teacher 4 said:

Teachers and students must be aware of their exit plan. Often, I, Ms. S., and other people stand at different routes and move people along to make sure students do not get broken up from their classes and keep middle school student movement during emergencies under control. To evacuate when the primary evacuation route is unusable, I think we have been told to save the students in any way possible, but I do not know that one specifically. Students who are unaccompanied or get misplaced from their class must follow the exact same protocols as others. I have often had parents in the room when we were going to do a drill. Since I have a post, I know when the drills are going to be. I tell the parents, 'You have to act like you are a staff member. You must follow with us, and you must stand with the adults.' And we do a head count with them as well, so we can compare it to what has been logged in at the front office. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Regarding evacuating students with disabilities, and others with access or functional needs, including language, transportation, or medical needs, Teacher 4 said:

I know that we have a kindergartner now, who we think is on the spectrum. We showed actual pictures to the child such as a fire picture or a tornado picture, and we teach them the drill through those pictures. I know students who are immobile have been carried in certain circumstances, if they have a broken leg and they cannot keep up. We ask, 'Can we carry you?' Our student with the wheelchair never seemed to have a problem. She was a go-getter and she just went by herself. But often the school nurse would help in those circumstances, or the special education department staff as well. The course of action our school executes to

evaluate school buildings and grounds is, for example, we receive a fire drill signal, and then we are supposed to line up and go outside to our respective areas on the fields. And everything is designated for where first grade students stand, second graders stand, all the grades go out as far as they can to the field. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 5 responded to how safely students and visitors were moved to designated assembly areas from classrooms, outside areas, cafeterias, and other locations. She said:

We line up and exit through a specific location and everybody has a different location point, so we are all not going through the same door. I know the other exits. I would go to the closest exit to mine. If my exit is locked or barricaded or I cannot get out, I would locate another close exit. It happened one time where a fence was around the school, and we all got out, but the fence was locked so we could not get through the fence. But we were very close to the building. So, somebody immediately called somebody to let us out, but then we all started heading back so we could go out another route. After that, it was a learning experience. For us, a drill is a drill, and everybody knows a drill, and I wonder about those specific instances when it is not a drill, you know, if those gates are unlocked. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Evacuating students who were not with a teacher or staff during an emergency requires teachers to search areas where students may hide and be afraid to leave the room or building. Teacher 2 said:

Well, if they are not with a teacher or staff member, I just take them. They come with me and then when we get to the field, you go back to whoever you are assigned to. Individual disabilities, they will have to be with somebody specific, but that would be part of their plan. If I see them, I can try to bring them with me. But if you have a wheelchair to help you get to the elevator. Usually, they have their own specific plan and whoever is responsible for them will give them the contingency plans. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 5 answered:

We take whatever child we see and then evacuate. That is why we have the colored cards to help administration know the condition the classroom is in. Green means all children are present and accounted for; yellow means someone is missing, or I have somebody else's child, and red means there is an emergency problem in my group. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 6 described evacuation as:

The alarm that goes off and it is clear because the alarm says, 'Evacuate the building immediately.' It is loud beeping, but there is a voice in there saying, 'Leave the building immediately.' Any teachers who are not with their students, anyone in the hall who is ushering parents out. Classroom teachers have specific routes to take children out, know where we are supposed to walk, know where we are supposed to line up, so we can get the count of all students and ensure that everyone has evacuated the building. Then you have other teachers, specialists and the regular staff who are actually going through the halls, and as they go through as quickly as they can checking the rooms, they are looking through the

windows of the rooms to make sure everybody is out of the building. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 6 was unfamiliar with the procedures for how to evacuate when the primary evacuation route was unusable:

That I do not know. I would say we have two primary locations, which are both going down, one is down Kelly Street, and one is down Conway. I would imagine that we would all go down one of the streets, but we have never practiced if that were to happen. Evacuating students who are not with their teacher or staff member means that all teachers look for strays, and then you take them. If the student is in the restroom, they do not run back to their class. That has happened to me. I used to be right across from the restroom, and I had two children who came out of the bathroom. I put them into my line and took them out with me. We take responsibility for our children whether they are in our room or not. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 4 said she was one of the persons assigned to assist students, staff, and parents, with disabilities, as well as others with access and functional needs, with getting to these sites and areas. Teacher 4 responded:

Yes. We had students in wheelchairs in our past, and we have had several broken legs over the years, so we are definitely well-versed in how to get those children out, or staff members, if that be the case. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 5 had not been assigned a specific role during the training, except she is the grade level chair and ensured that her team was well-formed and knew what to do.

She said:

I have not been given a role or position in the training. I am a grade level chair, and so I make sure my team knows what to do, and I make sure they know where to go, and know what is in that red binder. I was not identified to complete first aid, threat assessments, provisions of personal assistance services for students with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. But teachers were asked if they were CPR certified. If so, the names of certified teachers and staff were turned in. Often, you cannot remember if you are still certified or not or if your certificate has lapsed. As a result, many people say they are not, although they may be. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 5 recalled assisting students, staff, and parents with disabilities, as well as others with access and functional needs with getting to the areas and sites some years ago. Teacher 5 shared:

I did have a student in a wheelchair who was a paraplegic years ago, and somebody came to me and said, 'This is what you need to do. You will probably have to carry her to the site.' And I do not know if I asked beforehand or somebody came to me, but I know that she was considered in our safety plan. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 6 was not familiar with working with students with disabilities in an emergency drill; however, she recalled a discussion about getting the student in a wheelchair to safety. She remarked:

I do not know if that is something we have done as a school. I know that when I have had students whom I have had concerns about, I have talked with the nurse or she talked with me about what they do. I remember one year, there was a child here that was in a wheelchair. Even though she was not in my class, I do remember being in the discussion about how to make sure she got safely out of the building. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 1 mentioned:

Skills were discussed and identified during our training about the school safety plan. We even had to walk to them. We had to practice walking, so walking out to the areas, or going to whatever areas we had to go to, so that we would know the sense of urgency and how to get there as quickly as possible. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 2 recalled:

We went over how we leave the building, like what exits or where the safety plan is by your door. Every teacher has one by their door. They go over how you go out and where we reunite on the field. We go over if there is a different level. If we must go to this other site like a church; we were told but I cannot remember the name of the church. But if we reunite there, we were told the protocol for that and how we are not allowed to respond to parents' text messages or anything like that and release the location. We must wait for the administration to handle that so it can be funneled down. There is a procedure, but if you see a student or something and they are not yours, you still supervise them and then you just go. Then you figure it out afterwards. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 3 said, “Yes. Evacuation sites and reunification sites were all covered during that time. Media areas (i.e., television and radio, photographers, announcers) and triage areas, I do not believe were covered during the training” (personal communication, August 11, 2017). Triage means to sort victims based on the severity of their injuries into life threatening who are treated first and non-life threatening are treated last. None of the participants knew what the triage areas were because this topic was not discussed during training. Teacher 4 said:

That I do not know. I do not believe we have had that circumstance before.

Triage, I would assume that means the nurse, or calling 911. We have been informed that if something major happens, do not wait for the nurse, call 911, if needed. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Regarding evacuation sites, Teacher 4 said, “Yes. We know our evacuation sites. We know our reunification areas. I am not sure what you mean by media areas” (personal communication, August 11, 2017). Few participants knew the areas where the media should go in the event of a tragic incident. Several participants knew that they should not speak to the media because the principal is the sole spokesperson for the media at the school. Otherwise, the designated school district official in charge of media and communications is the spokesperson.

Teacher 5 said:

In the past trainings they had, I do not believe we discussed it this year. We always talk about where we go when we leave this building. I know the word *reunification* area, and I know we have talked about that. I know we are not supposed to call parents and say we are heading to the reunification area because

somebody will notify them where we are. We are not supposed to share where the reunification area is until it is time for us to let people know. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Not all teachers had children with disabilities such as wheelchairs in their rooms. Teacher 6 was unfamiliar with how to evacuate individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs including language, transportation, or medical needs. Teacher 6 said:

That I do not know a lot about. That is the one that I said that little girl that was in the wheelchair, I heard them talking, 'You are going to pick her up, make sure you are taking her out those doors because this is the closest one.' Instead of trying to roll her to a wheelchair access area, they were talking about picking up her wheelchair. There were two people assigned to do that, but that is the only one that I knew about. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

In describing the details of how students are reunited with their families or guardian, Teacher 1 replied:

We have, prior to school starting, we always have something, like at registration time. During that registration time, parents are told about our maps, our urgency, and our school whenever we have an emergency, and to talk to the children about it as well. We have specific follow up paperwork that must be filled out at the beginning of the school year. The school's front office staff conducts verification of adults authorized to pick up students during an emergency. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Communicating between the parent check-in and the student assembly and reunion areas, required properly matching parents with their children after an emergency.

Teacher 1 thought that this was a good question:

You think about it ideally, it is a whole lot going on then. Your biggest concern is to get the child to safety. What, as a school, that I think we have done very, very well with is we have gotten to know our parents and our students. When I say that, I mean we know who they should go with and who they do not go with because we communicate and have those kinds of conversations with our parents. When parents complete their child's information sheets and they are asked, 'Are there people that your child should not go with?' They fill that out, and we read it. We try our best to remember. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

To ensure students did not leave on their own, Teacher 1 said:

That is another good question because I teach kindergarten. You cannot necessarily ensure that they will follow your instructions. You teach students and you instill in them very early that when there is an emergency, 'I need you to stay by me the entire time no matter what. No matter who you see, no matter who you think you may know, I want you to stay with me.' I gain their trust to ensure that they stay with me. Protecting the privacy of students and parents from the media means not sharing anything. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 1 did not understand the meaning of the term 'reducing confusion' during the reunification process. An example was provided with the question, "When teachers are trying to get children to their parents, and teachers have left the building, how do you reduce the confusion going on around you?" Teacher 1 said that she just "focuses on

what is important at that time and that is all that matters...getting the child back to the parent” (personal communication, August 11, 2017).

Teacher 1 explained that the process for frequently updating families regarding student safety is conducted every week. Teacher 1 replied:

There have been some events that have been taken very seriously since I have been here. That process is to contact the parent as soon as possible. You do not wait until things escalate. You do not wait until we can calm this down. You contact them right then and there. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Regarding reunification, Teacher 2 said she thought:

That is a message to parents from the administration. I do not think that comes from the teachers. Now they do know that we are not allowed to respond to their messages or texts identifying where the students are such as, ‘We are on the field.’ We cannot respond to that even with the families that we are close to. I think Ms. S. and the administration let them know this is where we go if we had to reunite somewhere. They know we are on the field, but if it is like a serious lockdown, we had to go to the off-site location like the church. I think they send messages out to the parents or that is where we meet. They know to come there to get their child, as far as I know. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Verifying that an adult was authorized to take custody of the student was not what Teacher 2 would do. Teacher 2 responded:

If we are reuniting, I am not allowed to do that. I think that they must go through Ms. S. or the administration to get them. I cannot just release a student to a parent even if I know them. We cannot even do that during carpool unless their number

comes up, which causes you, as you can imagine, all kind of arguments. We are not allowed to do that because that causes problems. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 2 added:

That is above my pay grade. I do not do that. I think the parents are told to. Of course, sometimes they do not listen to how to check-in at a certain point, and then that is handled from there. Then when they come to me, I assume there is like some number they are giving you, so I know that they have been cleared. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

To ensure students did not leave on their own, Teacher 2 answered:

All you can do is actively monitor and make sure they understand ‘ Do not leave until I tell you.’ That is an expectation, and students must sit with their class. I cannot control anybody else’s class, but I can easily control my own. Teachers should not post anything on Twitter or Instagram to inform others that their school is on lockdown. Discretion is the key. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

To reduce confusion during the reunification process, Teacher 2 said, “That is hard because there are many variables that I cannot control. But I hope the administrators could control their part of it” (personal communication, August 11, 2017). Updating families frequently regarding reunification is a process that would not come from teachers but from the administration. Teacher 2 also said, “I think that it should be kept streamlined and one source; otherwise, all teachers would be saying different things. So,

they should not get any information from me” (personal communication, August 11, 2017).

Regarding reunification, Teacher 3 said, “I do have an answer to that question. I just thought about it. There is a ramp that is on the side of the auditorium that they would go down” (personal communication, August 11, 2017). Teacher 3 indicated that he was not familiar with how students are reunited with their families or guardians, and she also said:

I do not know if that is something that we have. I know that in a very general sense, we have communicated as if there were an event where we needed to evacuate the building and leave the premises and then they would be reunited somewhere else. But I know that we are supposed to keep it general. I know that we are not supposed to tell where the relocation place is. There is another place where parents go to meet teachers and children. We would just tell them where the ultimate reunification place is. To verify that an adult is authorized to take custody of a student is done through teachers’ rosters. I also have a list of parent contacts and emergency contacts. We have a red emergency bag in which to keep our rosters. If someone came to pick them up, I could verify that their name would be on the list of people to pick them up. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 6 recalled that she has never practiced any procedures related to reunification:

The reunification—I have never walked through that, and I do not necessarily want to take our children and walk that all the time. You do not want your

children going back and telling the parents, ‘Oh, this is where we are going’ because some of the parents will show up there. I think that might be something we need to think about maybe in pre-planning that either they show it, like put the map up and show us exactly where we are going or that we have a chance to at least drive to it. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 6 was asked to describe reunification and provide details about how students would be reunited with their family or guardian. Teacher 6 answered:

From what we have been told, we will go to the reunification site. Reunification is with the family, so I may have had it backwards. I am trying to look at this. What is the other one? Evacuation. Well, reunification is when they take us from wherever we are supposed to assemble to another school. Then I know the parents must arrive there. We do not release children to the parents until we are specifically told to, so they can keep track that they have all the children and they have gotten them safely to their parents. Guardians and families are informed about the reunification process in advance. That is something that the staff does. I think they have an automatic caller that they can send a message out to the parents. It goes by email and it goes by phone. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

To verify that an adult was authorized to take custody of a student, Teacher 3 said:

I have a roster. Then I also have a list of parent contacts and emergency contacts. We have a red emergency bag and those things are in the emergency bag. If someone came to pick them up, I could verify that their name would be on the list

of people to pick them up. I facilitate communication between the parent check-in and the student assembly and reunion areas by referring to my training. I know that from my training that we would streamline communication with Ms. S. It would probably be too chaotic if we are all on the phone trying to talk to a lot of different people and the students generally have cell phones trying to call parents. I guess the students would turn off their cell phones so that they are not communicating with their parents sending mixed messages. Then I would wait for a directive from Ms. S. or the principal. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

To ensure that students did not leave on their own, Teacher 3 said he would make sure that students were in the designated area. He said:

If we are with our class in the designated area where they are supposed to be, we let them know that their parent or guardian picking them up should see the teacher who will match the child with the parent or guardian. I need to physically see parents before I let the child go. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Regarding protecting the privacy of students and parents from the media, Teacher 3 did not seem to know the answer to this question. Teacher 3 said:

I think it is just a matter of asking the media not to film students. To reduce confusion during the reunification process, I have never actually been through this. I would think that there is one person who gives a set of directives for people to follow. Updating families probably would be done on a text or phone blast that is normally sent out. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

On this same point, Teacher 6 said, “Verifying which adults are authorized to take custody of a student is also done through the office personnel and administrative staff. We must be authorized to release them to parents, as far as I know” (personal communication, August 11, 2017). Facilitating communication between the parent check-in and the student assembly and reunion areas seemed to be an area with which she was unfamiliar. Teacher 6 continued:

I really do not know that. I know that we are not supposed to call them. Their children are not supposed to call them. It is supposed to be done, and I am sure the parents have been told when they receive the handbook and when they receive all the information when they first enroll their children. I do not really know that process for that. I will be vigilant to ensure students do not leave on their own. I do not know what else to say other than that you have to watch children to ensure that they do not leave or wander off. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Continuing on the topic of protecting the privacy of students and parents from the media, Teacher 6 also said:

I am pretty sure there is a plan in place to do that, but I do not think that is something they have told us other than we are supposed to stay away from the media ourselves. I would trust that if it is an emergency, there is going to be police and other personnel there to make sure that the media is not just wandering around. Reducing confusion takes everyone’s cooperation. Basically, they have a plan in place where we all know exactly what we are doing and who is going to release the students to parents and who is going to be doing whatever. We have

not rehearsed it in a walk through that I know of. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

After being asked about accounting for technology barriers faced by students, staff, parents, and guardians during that time, Teacher 1 said:

In terms of not being able to reach the parents and vice versa, what we tried to do is to send out a blast using technology. If you cannot get through by calling the school, or the principal, we have an email blast that we send out that goes directly to parents. It could contain whatever the emergency is. We had two instances where the school's pipes burst, and the students had to leave within the hour. The Charter County Schools officials may say, 'School is canceled today'. There was an immediate blast that went out to parents at home, cell phones, and at work. But with this blast, it was sent to everyone on the contact list, including grandparents, cousins, aunts, and uncles. Whoever is on that contact list, the blast goes out and says, 'We have an emergency. We need to evacuate within the next hour', and it is effective. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

To the question regarding effectively address language access barriers faced by students, staff, parents, and guardians, Teacher 1 answered:

Our school is very diverse. Language barriers, in terms of being able to communicate, we have a lot of people on staff who can translate for us in the event of anything, whether it is a conference, an emergency, or even an interview. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Accounting for technology barriers faced by students, staff, parents, and guardians, Teacher 2 said:

That is a hard one. I do not know. If they do not have access to the website, I assume they would have a phone. I think they use text messages. What is it, Text 101 or something? I think they use different or like the roll call. I think they use different levels to make sure that all the parents are notified because otherwise, they would not be able to log on. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

On the topic of addressing language access barriers faced by students, staff, and parents and guardians, Teacher 2 suggested the use of English as a Second Language (ESLL) support staff. “We have a staff member who oversees language barriers and are able to communicate with ESLL students and their parents” (personal communication, August 11, 2017).

Technology barriers faced by students, staff, parents, and guardians may impact school safety of students and staff. Teacher 3 said, “I have an app called *Remind* on my phone where the parents get a text message. If I could not get to a computer, I could send them a text message through the Remind app” (personal communication, August 11, 2017). To effectively address language access barriers faced by students, staff, parents, and guardians, Teacher 3 said, “If students do not speak English, I would ask another student to translate. If a student was not there who could translate or a parent or a guardian who could translate, I am not sure what to do” (personal communication, August 11, 2017).

Updating families requires communication. On this point, Teacher 6 said:

I am sure that through the communication routes families are notified about what is going on. But I do not know that either. Of course, there are technology barriers faced by students, staff, parents and guardians, especially if parents do not have a

smartphone or do not have email because there are parents that do not have any access to that, or how the school has a plan to address that. It may be interesting to find out. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Parents and students may also have language barriers. Teacher 6 said:

At this school, we have a very, very low ESOL population. I think we have some Chinese students that have been adopted or whatever, and we have nine Chinese teachers. Then we have a couple of students who are Spanish speakers, and we have teachers who speak Spanish. Again, I am sure the school has a plan. If it were me, I would just make sure that student was with a person who spoke their family's language if it is at all possible, even if it is not their regular classroom teacher. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Research Question Three

Research question three stated, "What additional knowledge or training do elementary teachers perceive is needed in order to improve their ability to implement their school's CSSP?" Four themes developed from the interview data regarding research question three. The themes were: (1) more time for practice, (2) refresher training throughout the year, (3) lifesaving training, and (4) real time drills rather than automatic drills.

Theme 1: More Time for Practice

Some of the teachers in this study expressed the need for more time to practice because they felt uncomfortable implementing lockdown procedures, evacuation procedures, and especially, reunification procedures. Yet others who had been at the

school for six years to 20 years said they did not need any more practice but they did need training, especially for new teachers.

Teacher 2 commented:

I honestly feel like there is not anything except for more time in practice and that is not even feasible. Our schedule is so tight, so it is always like at the beginning during pre-planning. Sometimes during physical education and sometimes back to school. Our schedules are tight, and we are pulled in many different directions. We are not able to practice as much as we probably should with the classes, but I think this is an issue of time. I do not know how that would be fixed. But I do not think it is like another training or high level something I need. I just need more time to practice with the students or troubleshoot problems. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 5 said:

I feel like in the beginning, we had time to maybe practice and we were shown where we are supposed to go. For me, I do not need to be shown where I am supposed to go. So, I already know where to go if there is a fire drill or what room I walk out of. I do not think we have any formal training and we should. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 6 said that school safety training was different only if something new had been added to procedures. As a result:

We may not walk through it with teachers. I think part of that is if you have been here for a while, even if it is a change to where you are supposed to go for a fire

drill, we know where to go. We do walk our students through the process before anything is implemented. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 6 also said, “Again, when you are talking about the safety plan as far as the drills went, the lockdowns, we practice those, but it is mainly conversation, and very little practice. We need more practice; I know I do” (personal communication, August 11, 2017). In agreement, Teacher 5 said, “I do not think we need any more training; I think we need just more practice” (personal communication, August 11, 2017).

Theme 2: Refresher Training Throughout the Year

Some teachers mentioned that they did not know about implementing certain procedures such as who was in charge of evacuating students with disabilities, how should they protect children from the media, where were the media and triage areas, where was the reunification location, what should they do when an area was unusable, and how should they facilitate communication between parent check-in and student assembly and reunion area. Therefore, refresher training may be needed throughout the year for teachers. Graham et al.’s (2005) study supported the findings that teachers wanted more training, not more practice, participants were unfamiliar with what procedures to do with students with disabilities, and community resources were not properly used to promote training among teachers and staff. Those researchers found that several school districts had functioning school safety plans, but they lacked training drills for staff, ignored special populations, such as students with disabilities, and lacked communication with local emergency authorities.

Teacher 3 mentioned:

I think, because we hear about the school's safety plan at the beginning of the year, and when some of the actual things happen, like the drills for example, people say, 'Wait. What am I supposed to do?' I think it is a matter of maybe like a refresher type training we need throughout the year so that it is in the forefront of their minds. You do not want an actual event to happen and people are like, 'Wait. What am I supposed to do? What is the evacuation plan? What is the lockdown plan?' (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 6 said:

I think the things that they do onsite such as the fire drills that we normally practice is good. However, when we talk about the serious emergencies where teachers and students must leave the school, I think we probably could receive more training. A lot of teachers are not going to want to, but more of this is what is going to happen, this is how it is done, and have that refreshed to us at least at the beginning of every year may help us to remember. I know they talked about it the other day, but I think it is something that when you are telling me I am going to go to this street or go wherever and I do not know the area, it helps if there is a map showing where I am going. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Theme 3: Lifesaving Training

Few teachers were trained and certified in lifesaving training techniques at this school. Children with epilepsy, choking in the cafeteria, heart attacks and fainting may require staff who know how to administer lifesaving techniques until professional medical teams arrive at the school. Teacher 4 recalled:

This may not be directly related, but I am a *Girls on the Run* coach. This is a safe and fun club for girls to learn healthy habits and exercise together. My cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and emergency training have allowed me to provide lifesaving techniques for children needing my services. In addition, I am certified to help not only children, but other teachers and staff in emergency circumstances. Heimlich maneuver and other lifesaving procedures. I personally believe that all staff members and all schools should have to go through that training during pre-planning because something could happen in the middle of these different circumstances. A child could hyperventilate or need CPR assistance. If the teacher does not know how to help the child in that moment, and waits for help, it could be a problem. We have had a teacher before who did not know how to respond to a child who was bleeding profusely. We saw then, how alarming it was that each teacher could not help in that circumstance. And maybe videos on what it looks like to do each step. Maybe a video on a reunification process, like this is literally what it looks like when a parent comes, this is how you should do it, instead of just having handbooks to read and forget the information. Sometimes the visual learners might do much better with that.

(personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 6 said:

CPR lifesaving training is available, but it is not mandatory for people to take, but I think we need it. They do talk about that. It is mostly conversations. I do not know that I have had any actual demonstrative training other than with the EpiPen

where she would show us how to inject it in your arm or how to inject it in the child's arm or leg. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 6 continued:

Teachers need more training in what to do when children have seizures and faint from epilepsy or are allergic to bee stings or peanuts. They need to know how to help a child in crisis. If a child is choking, what should be done? If a child is not breathing, what should be done? Many teachers are experienced and may have the training and know what to do, but newer teachers may not know what to do when a child is in a crisis. We learn from the school nurse how to use the EpiPen. A student had a seizure disorder. I knew, and they said, 'Make sure she is on her side.' Things that I knew to do, but I do not necessarily know that some young student right out of college, if they have never been exposed to anything, they might [not] understand it. But I think it would give you more confidence if someone actually walked you through that process when you have special needs students. Because I know when I started student teaching 15 years ago, and this may be getting off topic, there was a student in our class who had diabetes. I was always worried because, yes, you can tell me, 'Oh and they have diabetes.'

...That school did not have a nurse onsite all the time. She left. She was there for four hours. You have to make sure that this is in your room or that you have access, or you can get somebody to do. If a child is in the middle of a diabetic seizure, you really do not want to have send another child running for the school nurse. I went to the nurse. Like I said, I was just a student-teacher. I went to the nurse and said, 'Exactly what do I need to do? Exactly what do we need to have in

this classroom,' to make sure that the teacher who was in that classroom had it because I did not know that she had [the EpiPen]. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 6 continued further:

I think an emergency specific to a particular child should require specific training for the teachers who have that child in their classroom, so they know what they are doing when you have a serious emergency. Because when I was at another school, we did not have an emergency as in a threat. The sewage system went out in our school, and sewage started backing up into the building. We had to evacuate the students. We got them out of the building. We are standing and we really did not know. Because we are a charter school, we have buses now picking up children from the school. The children were scared, and they do not know what was going on. Then we were evacuated to the library. As far as I know, they were not able to tell the parents we were in the library for almost five hours before all the parents got their children. Because they did not know. It was an emergency that we never discussed at that school. If we must evacuate the children, how are we going to do it? Because it is like here, we do not have buses. We depend upon the School System for the buses. If we are not sure what we are doing and we are not confident and we are not calm, they are going to pick students up, and they are going to be scared. You already have a situation that scares them. Students that are upset are harder to manage than students who are calm. The more we know, the more we can be calm, the more we can be confident, the better off it is going to be for our students.

Theme 4: Real Time Drills Rather than Automatic Drills

Lund's (2013) research revealed concerns about unplanned, unannounced fire drills that were seemingly disruptive to classroom activities. Such unplanned drills may present a hazard to students depending on the classroom activities that occurred during the fire drill. For example, fire drills may occur during science experiments and create havoc if staff are untrained (Lund, 2013). Teacher 3, Teacher 4, and Teacher 6 readily admitted there were procedures that, as a faculty, had been practiced and of which they were not familiar. Teacher 5 said:

I do not like knowing when a drill is about to happen. I really need it to be unexpected to get our adrenaline elevated. I need to wonder if it is real or if it is not, because then I would feel more comfortable knowing that I know what to do. We always know in advance. And if we are not supposed to know in advance, somebody knows and then it trickles down. Or they do it at the same time every time. It just becomes habitual rather than unexpected and random rather than knowing each month when it will occur. We teach the students these drills to ensure their safety and because I know there might be a drill, I do not want to worry about where they are. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 5 added, "I do not think we need any more training; I think we need just more practice" (personal communication, August 11, 2017). Teacher 5 felt well prepared to implement her school's safety plan effectively in an emergency because she felt she could do it very well. She said, "I have gone through the drills over and repeatedly for the past 20 years. I know how serious they are. And I practice as if it is real every time and not just a drill" (personal communication, August 11, 2017).

Teacher 6 admitted to not being able to remember everything written in the red binders that they were given at the beginning of the year. Teacher 6 said, “I think we probably could receive more training so we can be ready for a real drill” (personal communication, August 11, 2017).

Themes

The themes for Research Question 1 were: (1) occurrence of training, (2) materials used to train, and (3) drills. The themes for Research Question 2 were: (1) very prepared, really confident, and incredibly comfortable in some areas, (2) understand risks posed by identified threats and hazards, and (3) comfortable stabilizing an emergency situation. The themes for Research Question 3 were: (1) more time for practice, (2) refresher training throughout the year, (3) lifesaving training, and (4) real time drills rather than automatic drills. The major themes in this study are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Overview of Themes

Themes
<p>Research Question 1: How do elementary teachers describe the professional development or training received in preparation for implementing their school's CSSP?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme 1: Occurrence of Training • Theme 2: Materials Used to Train • Theme 3: Drills
<p>Research Question 2: What are elementary teachers' perceptions of their ability to implement their school's CSSP?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme 1: Very Prepared, Really Confident, but not Incredibly Comfortable in Some Areas • Theme 2: Understand Risks Posed by Identifying Threats and Hazards • Theme 3: Comfortable Stabilizing an Emergency Situation
<p>Research Question 3: What additional knowledge or training do elementary teachers perceive is needed to improve their ability to implement their school's CSSP?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme 1: More Time for Practice • Theme 2: Refresher Training Throughout the Year

- Theme 3: Lifesaving Training
 - Theme 4: Real Time Drills Rather Than Automatic Drills
-

Summary of the Findings

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore elementary teachers' perspectives of their school's CSSP. Specifically, I explored elementary teachers' role in the development of the CSSP, determined how elementary teachers were prepared to implement the school's CSSP, and understood elementary teachers' perceptions of their efficacy related to implementing the CSSP. The study also was used to identify any areas where elementary teachers perceived they require more knowledge or training to implement effectively the CSSP. Bandura's (1977) conceptual framework of self-efficacy theory guided this study. The following findings were based on the data in this study:

Research Question 1: How do elementary teachers describe the professional development or training received in preparation for implementing their school's CSSP.

The findings in this study for Research Question 1:

1. Occurrence of training: All teachers agreed that training for the Comprehensive School Safety Plan (CSSP) occurred at the beginning of the year during pre-planning for approximately 90 minutes.
2. Materials used to train: All teachers agreed that they practiced monthly drills using PowerPoints, protocol examples, school exit maps, fire drills, lockdown drills, evacuation drills, and reunification drills, with professional staff and emergency and medical personnel present together.
3. Drills: Training was conducted practicing actual drills and mainly holding discussions; and sometimes in small and large groups, teachers walked the students through the fire drills before any drill was implemented.

Research Question 2: What are elementary teachers' perceptions of their ability to implement their school's CSSP? The findings for Research Question 2 were:

1. Most of the teachers in this study felt well-prepared in implementing the school's safety plan.
2. All the teachers in this study knew the procedures for the lockdown drill and what the lockdown levels meant; they knew the procedures for evacuation of students in implementing their school's CSSP.
3. There were mixed results regarding reunification procedures and what the term meant. Few teachers knew what the triage area was and what the media triage was. Teachers 3, 4, and 6 did not quite understand the procedures for evacuating students with disabilities, especially those in wheelchairs, and reunification procedures after a disaster when children and parents are unified.
4. Teachers knew how to stabilize an emergency regarding what to do in the event of an emergency.

Research Question 3: What additional knowledge or training do elementary teachers perceive is needed in order to improve their ability to implement their school's CSSP? The findings for Research Question 3 were:

1. Many teachers felt more time to practice drills and review procedures were needed, especially evacuation and reunification drills.
2. All of the teachers felt that more training was needed and not necessarily practice.

3. Several teachers suggested a “refresher type training” was needed throughout the year.
4. Teachers felt that emergency lifesaving training should be required of all teachers and staff.
5. Some teachers felt all drills should be unannounced to get the ‘real feel of a real drill’ rather than announced.

These findings from the research questions are summarized as themes in Table 2.

Chapter 5 will present a discussion of the findings for each research question, conclusions, and implications for practice. Recommendations for future research will also be presented.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Included in Chapter 5 is a discussion of the findings and overall analytical conclusions, but the emphasis is on implications for professional practice, recommendations for implementation and areas for future research. The purpose of this study was to explore six kindergarten through fifth grade teachers' perspectives of their school's Comprehensive School Safety Plan (CSSP). First, I described how elementary teachers perceived the professional development or training received in preparation for implementing their school's CSSP. Second, elementary teachers' perceptions of their ability to implement their school's CSSP were explored. Finally, I identified areas in which elementary teachers perceived they required more knowledge or training to effectively implement the CSSP.

Chapter 1 presented the problem background and statement of the problem. The purpose of the study and research questions were discussed. The limitations and delimitations and definitions were presented. Definitions were given to provide clarity in this study. The significance of the study and overview were presented.

Chapter 2 consisted of various topics on school safety plans and teachers' perceptions of the implementation of comprehensive school safety plans. Topics included a historical overview of school emergency plans, modern emergency plans, effective emergency and disaster awareness plans and factors affecting those plans, schools' level of preparedness, and training and preparation. Other topics were engaging teachers in the school safety plan process, crisis situations in schools, implementation of school safety plans, and a theoretical framework.

Chapter 3 detailed the research questions, research design, research setting and participants, data collection and data analysis, and the researcher's role. Trustworthiness included credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Methodological assumptions and limitations were presented followed by ethical considerations and procedures.

Chapter 4 consisted of an introduction with a restatement of the purpose. An overview of the participants was presented. Themes were generated from the data and presented under the three research questions. A summary of the findings was included.

Discussion of the Findings

Children need a secure, positive, and comfortable environment to help them learn (National Crime Prevention Council, 2015). To create this type of environment, local school boards were charged with not only developing curriculum, but also devising strategies and procedures to use should a crisis occur. Their responsibility is to guarantee that all types of crisis situations are identified, create response benchmarks to prevent future threats and certify schools are practicing drills regularly (National Crime Prevention Council, 2015). Therefore, school boards must recognize critical elements such as crisis management and prevention when developing school safety procedures in a comprehensive school safety plan (GDOE, 2014). Emergency plans allow children in schools to feel a greater sense of security and safety in their environments (Harley, 2012).

Discussion of Research Question 1

Discussion of Theme 1: Occurrence of Training

Critical training and exercise activities in the school could use support of the CSSP that included the core training objectives and frequency to ensure that staff,

students, faculty, parents, and community representatives understand roles, responsibilities, and expectations during an emergency (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013). Schools should train staff on the skills necessary to fulfill their roles. Staff should be assigned specific roles in the plan and positions supporting the Incident Command System (ICS) that require special skills, such as “first aid, threat assessment, and provision of personal assistance services for students with disabilities, and others with access and functional needs” (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013, p. 21).

This discussion also established the expected frequency of activities to be conducted by the school. Content may be influenced based on similar requirements at the district and local jurisdiction level. Exercises ranged from basic fire and shelter-in-place drills to full-scale community wide drills that realistically portray a crisis and showed the role the school plays in professional development to prepare faculty and staff for school emergencies (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013).

The more a school safety plan was practiced, and stakeholders were trained in professional development activities on the plan, the more effectively they were able to act before, during, and after an emergency to lessen the impact on student safety. Exercises provided opportunities to practice with community partners (e.g., first responders, local emergency management personnel), as well as to identify gaps and weaknesses in the school safety plan (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013).

All participants in this study stated that professional development on school safety was provided at the beginning of the school year, with one participant who said professional development on school safety was presented once each semester. All participants stated one person and a committee were responsible for conducting the professional development and that Ms. S was proficient and professional in her duties. However, many participants stated that more training was needed, not more practice.

Teachers and staff must be trained how to become true ‘first responders’ in an emergency. Professional development must cover not only keeping children safe, but it must consist of how to provide first aid and treatment to injured children until medical personnel arrives. Although teachers also qualify as the ‘first responder’ to get the children to a safe location and to ensure their safety, some teachers may not know how to provide medical assistance to children and staff who may be injured during an emergency. The job of the first responder is to provide medical assistance in an emergency before highly trained medical staff arrives on the scene (Philpot, 2010). In such incidents where a shooting or a tornado that may occur during school hours, the teacher and administrative staff must assume the role of first responder. Within the last 15 years, there had been several major events, such as the Columbine school shooting, the September 11th attacks, and Hurricane Katrina that affected how educators were expected to respond in a crisis (Philpot, 2010).

To ensure that all administrators, teachers, and city and state responders were acting on one accord, the U.S. government developed a set of policies and procedures that should be exercised during a time of crisis. In response to the attacks of September 11, 2001 and to improve national emergency preparedness, President George W. Bush

issued a series of Homeland Security Presidential Directives (HSPDs). While the general events of September 11th did not directly correlate to the response efforts of a school's administrative staff, the outlining purpose of HSPDs was to expand the coordination efforts among federal response agencies (Philpot, 2010).

Discussion of Theme 2: Materials Used to Train

Updates were provided as often as needed; however, training was provided annually at the beginning of school, with an update during the second semester. Training in the current study was conducted using Promethean boards and through emails., Training was held during meetings at pre-planning, faculty meetings, and departmental and grade level meetings. Developing the initial school safety plan is not enough, designated school officials should also inform updates and revisions to the plan on an ongoing basis. Planning is a continuous process even after the plan is published (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013). However, some teachers complained that most of the training and planning were through conversation only. Plans should evolve as the school and planning team learn lessons, obtain new information and insights, and update priorities. Reviews should be a recurring activity using an established process for reviewing and revising the plan. Many schools reviewed their plans on an annual basis (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013). Participants in this study did not mention how often they reviewed their school safety plans.

In no case should any part of a plan go for more than two years without being reviewed and revised (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and

Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013). Some schools found it useful to review and revise portions instead of reviewing the entire plan at once. Schools may consider reviewing a portion each month or at natural breaks in the academic calendar. Certain events could also provide new information that can be used to inform the plan. Schools should consider reviewing and updating their plans or sections of their plans after actual emergencies. Changes should be incorporated into the plan that have been made in policy, personnel, organizational structures, processes, facilities, or equipment. Formal updates of planning guidance or standards are then finalized (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013).

Several participants in this study mentioned that training occurred in small groups to increase the level of participation during the presentation which is supported in the related literature (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013). To lessen the impact on faculty and staff, schools should participate in tabletop or small group exercises. These small-group discussions allowed faculty and staff to actually take the time to practice and walk through a scenario and the courses of action needed before, during, and after an emergency (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013).

Discussion of Theme 3: Drills

All participants stated monthly drills were held, some announced and some unannounced. The principal or designee would announce that the drill was active and would indicate the level of threat (e.g., level 1, 2, or 3). Such drills were fire drills,

tornado drills, intruder alert, and faculty and staff had to either perform lockdown, evacuate, and reunification. However, some participants did not recall evacuation and reunification drills. Lockdown and evacuations were practiced, according to a few participants; but reunification was not practiced at the school site. Designated staff verbally communicated during faculty meetings, grade level meetings, and through conversations, as reported by many participants in this study. As a result, most of the participants were unable to recall where reunification took place or what to do in the event parents had to be reunited with their children after an emergency event.

Until 1961, regulation of fire drills and how schools in each state were conducting these drills was unclear (Heath et al., 2017). As time continued, practicing fire drills had become commonplace exercise in addition to becoming a well-organized practice in American schools. For fire drills, or any type of emergency training, to remain applicable, most states require schools to conduct a fire drill per month throughout the school year, beginning the first week of school. To safeguard against mishaps, school principals are required to report their school's fire drills to the district school boards. However, the number of instances in which fire drills are routinely performed at a school may depend upon each state and city's fire codes and regulations (Heath et al., 2017).

Regardless of the number of times in which fire drills were performed, successful drill training and practices, not entirely specific to fire drills, must be coordinated efforts (Heath et al., 2017). Thus, enlisting the support of the local school district, training school administrative, teaching and support staff, and soliciting assistance from neighborhood fire and emergency personnel. If those stakeholders were not on one accord, failure could ensue (Heath et al., 2017).

According to the American Red Cross (2014), there were various procedures in emergency safety that exist for schools and were not just isolated to acts of violence, but also included recommendations for emergency procedures in the event of illnesses and outbreaks, natural disasters including earthquakes, fires and other emergency preparedness plans. In these extreme cases, various types of drills and evacuation methods had been designed to reduce the amount of damage that can possibly occur (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013).

A few teachers in this study mentioned that they wanted more time to practice some drills with their students. More experienced participants reported that they needed more training, not more practice. One of the areas in which teachers needed more training was the reunification process and procedures and who was responsible for what. Only one participant knew the purpose of triage. No one mentioned during drills that they had used school personnel and community partners such as first responders or local emergency management staff to practice responding to a staged scenario. Real, functional exercises on reunification could be videoed and then reviewed to see where there was chaos and confusion and what could be improved. Those exercises and drills could involve community partners including fire and police department, medical and emergency personnel who are trained to conduct such drills.

Participants could react to realistic simulated events of a bomb threat, or an intruder with a fake gun in a classroom. Someone could really come in and pretend to be an 'intruder' and faculty could be taught how to react and implement the plan and procedures using the CSSP. Those exercises are the most time-consuming activity in the

exercise continuum but could be part of intensive training to help with understanding the reunification process.

Discussion of Research Question 2

Research question 2 stated, “What are elementary teachers’ perceptions of their ability to implement their school’s CSSP?” The majority of teachers in this study felt as prepared as they could be. Teachers said the same plan was basically implemented every year and they felt comfortable with the plan as they had been at the same school and in the same roles for six to 20 years. Only one participant admitted she was able to implement the safety plan but did not feel as prepared as she could be because she did not remember certain procedures. Many teachers felt confident because of their years of experience, as well as drills practiced that were authentic. They also felt confident because information provided had prepared them, annual updates were provided, and opportunities were provided to practiced drills with students, all with the goal of student safety in mind. All the teachers felt that Ms. S. was a transparent, competent leader of the school safety plan, and they seemed to respect her authority to inform them about what to do to protect the safety and welfare of students, parents, and visitors.

Discussion of Theme 1: Very Prepared, Really Confident, and but not Incredibly Comfortable with Some Areas

All teachers, except one, in this study agreed that concepts and skills were provided during training and more specifically identifying evacuation sites, reunification areas, media areas, and triage areas during the training. For example, teachers were able to practice those skills by going to those areas and reviewing the safety plan that was posted by teachers’ doors. Two participants could not remember the name of the

emergency area in the event of evacuation or where it was located. One participant did not recall the review of media areas and triage areas and one participant did not understand what was meant by media area and did not know where the media went if something tragic happened at the school. Most participants knew where to go for the reunification with parents and guardians and knew that parents and others were not to be informed where that area was until all children were accounted for and safe.

Most participants seemed to understand how to implement reunification procedures. However, Teacher 3 did not know how to protect the privacy of students from the media and appeared confused about some reunification procedures. He was confused regarding how to evacuate students with disabilities and who oversaw that procedure. Teacher 6 also did not know what to do with students with disabilities, however, she had “heard others discussing what to do.” Another area of reunification that confused Teacher 6 was how to facilitate communication between parent check-in and the student assembly and reunion area. She also did not understand the procedures for how to protect the privacy of students from the media or what to do if an area of the building was unusable.

Graham et al.’s (2005) study confirmed the finding in the current study that teachers felt prepared to implement their school’s safety plan; however, some still wanted more training, not practice. Graham et al. completed research targeting a nationwide investigation to determine whether schools were prepared for disasters that resulted in massive loss of life. Graham et al. found that several school districts had functioning school safety plans, but they lacked training drills for staff, ignored special populations, and lacked communication with local emergency authorities.

Most participants felt confident and comfortable that they were prepared to implement their school's safety plan. Although Teacher 6 did not feel as prepared as she needed to be and felt somewhat apprehensive, she believed that she could implement the school safety plan and keep the students safe. She did not want to need to refer to the red binder when there were emergency situations. She knew where to take the students but said, "It is just a matter of us trying to refresh things."

All the teachers in this study provided similar opinions that training occurred at the beginning of the school year during pre-planning for over an hour. In the implementation process of emergency preparedness, schools rely tremendously on the support of teachers and staff to feel confident and comfortable about the execution of the necessary strategy that must be implemented to keep students safe (Trump, 2010). However, teachers in this study did not all agree that the training was ongoing. Some said that there should be refresher courses on the training. Others agreed the training was ongoing and should be practiced with each drill rather than just conversation about the procedures.

Discussion of Theme 2: Understand Risks Posed by Identifying Threats and Hazards

Most participants in this study understood risks posed by identified threats and hazards. Several participants appeared to be knowledgeable about what types of exercises and activities their school executed to secure school buildings and grounds during incidents that posed an immediate threat of violence in or around the school. A few participants in this study knew how to stabilize a situation regarding students with disabilities, especially those students in wheelchairs who were paraplegics.

One participant mentioned that she witnessed a teacher pick the child up out of the wheelchair and carry the child to safety. Other teachers of children in wheelchairs generally pushed them to safety. Some teachers were concerned that if an area was blocked or a door was unpassable, they looked for alternate exit doors or the closest and safest exit to get students to safety. After taking a head count, teachers generally located some students with other teachers, especially some students in the lower grades such as kindergarten and first graders who occasionally became dislocated from their teachers. Restrooms were checked and other areas where students who were afraid and may hide in the building. Every room was searched, and every closet door opened to ensure that no students were left in the building during a drill. Some students with disabilities also may have language barriers and were unable to communicate, medicinal needs, were immobile, or had a broken leg.

Participants in this study all agreed that their main priority during threats and hazards was the safety and welfare of their students. With that in mind, all participants felt confident that they were knowledgeable in implementing the CSSP and ensuring students' safety. A few participants did not know what to do step by step or "by heart," as one participant said. However, all participants knew the three levels of threats known as the "tier system" during a lockdown. Level 1 was "green" which meant that everything in the room was alright; level 2 was "red" which meant there was a problem in the room; and level 3 was "yellow" which meant that a student was missing from the room. During the lockdown, one of these colors was slipped under the door to alert administrators regarding the status of each classroom.

Although school safety plans may be reviewed with teachers, there were gaps in the literature pertaining to perceptions of school officials in relation to their preparedness and sufficient training to implement the school safety plan (DeVos, 2018; Kano & Bourque, 2007; Maynard, 2017; Rinaldi, 2016). School shootings and emergencies created the need for educators to be proficient in emergency response procedures; yet they did not always receive the requisite training (Rinaldi, 2016). Some schools had strong safety procedures, but most schools did not have the necessary crisis management procedures in place due to a lack of safety resources. Resources such as community responders, crisis managers, law enforcement officers, and training were needed to provide a timely response in the event of an emergency (Maynard, 2017).

National Education Association (2018) reported that administrators, teachers, and students encountered crises that could cause harm to everyone's mental, physical, and psychological health, as well as influenced the entire school environment and safety of others. NEA defined a school crisis as "any traumatic event that seriously disrupts coping and problem-solving abilities of students and school staff" (p. 1). Crisis events are often unforeseen, abrupt and without warning, breathtaking, and could threaten survival with a catastrophic change to the learning environment causing overwhelming and uncontrollable and frightening feelings. Crisis events created in adults and children a feeling of defenselessness, desperation, and weakness combined with a loss of safety. Kano and Borque (2007) asked building principals and assistant principals to evaluate their level of preparedness based upon their training to handle the crisis. They rated their planning, training, conducting drills, and exercises, and maintaining equipment and supplies using a Likert-type scale that ranged from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very well prepared).

The survey also probed the respondents to determine how well they felt the school was prepared to shelter students for a 24-hour period and handle emergencies or disasters that could occur in the future. The respondents felt most prepared according to the data in the area of drills and exercises. The respondents also rated their school with a high mark of 3.8 out of 5 for having a disaster plan that the faculty knew and understood. However, they felt least prepared in the area of being able to shelter students in the event of an emergency for 24 continuous hours (Kano & Borque, 2007). A discrepancy in Kano and Borque's (2007) study among school level tiers that was apparent in the data was that only 68% of elementary respondents felt that their school coordinated well with emergency preparedness and response issues while middle and high school respondents rated their partnerships with the police department at over 80%.

Discussion of Theme 3: Comfortable Stabilizing an Emergency Situation

Schools personnel must be able to stabilize an emergency by deciding ahead of time what course of action will be used to evacuate school buildings and grounds and safely moving students and visitors to designated assembly areas from classrooms, outside areas, cafeteria, and other school locations. Response meant the capabilities necessary to stabilize an emergency once it had already happened or was certain to happen in an unpreventable way, to establish a safe and secure environment, to save lives and property, and to facilitate the transition to recovery (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013).

Included in the school safety plan to describe the broad roles and responsibilities of teachers during all emergencies, teachers should be responsible for the supervision of

students and remain with students until directed otherwise. Teachers' responsibilities include directing students to inside or outside assembly areas according to instructions provided by the designee and taking the roll book outside and calling the roll to account for students when class relocates to an outside or inside assembly area or evacuates to another location. If a student did not answer the roll call, the teacher must report the student as missing to the chairperson or principal. If a student was injured (i.e., heart palpitations, fainting, panic attack, falling and scraping knee or other body part during the evacuation procedures), first-aid treatment must be provided by trained and certified personnel, as reported by the teacher (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013.)

Most participants in the current study knew the course of action at their school to execute and secure school buildings and grounds during incidents that posed an immediate threat of violence. They also knew the meanings of the three lockdown levels identified on the intercom if it was lockdown level one, lockdown level two, or lockdown level three. Teacher 2 succinctly summed up the levels, "Level one means to close your door and keep working. Level two is close the door and lock it, and the students move to one side of the room. Level three means everybody moves to the side of the room, lights off, and everyone remains quiet. Then there are tornado drills and fire drills. Those are different. Then there are hurricane drills. There are three other ones, but they are different; we practice all of them" (personal communication, August 11, 2017).

Many participants knew about evacuation procedures regarding the course of action used to evacuate school buildings and grounds and safely moving students and visitors to designated assembly areas from classroom, outside areas, cafeteria, and other

school locations. However, several participants were not certain about who was responsible for evacuating students with disabilities, especially those children in wheelchairs as was also noted in the research of Heubert (2002). Some teachers were undecided about children in wheelchairs and asked themselves if they should pick up the child and leave or attempt to roll the wheelchair out of the building. Two teachers were uncertain if the special education staff or teachers who had students with disabilities in their rooms were the responsible ones for evacuation. Teacher 6 did not know what to do with students with disabilities, however, she had “heard others discussing what to do” (personal communication, August 11, 2017).

All the participants were familiar with the evacuation routes posted on a map by their classroom doors. When parents were in the room, teachers told them to assist with getting the children out of the building safely and to follow the same protocol as teachers. Evacuating students who were not with a teacher or staff during an emergency required teachers to search areas where students may hide because they were afraid to leave the room or building. All participants knew to take unaccounted for children with them during evacuation until they could meet up with their class. If a child was in the restroom or was out of place, all participants immediately knew to take that child with their class out of the building.

Three participants were uncertain of the course of action to take if a route was unusable and the exit was blocked, but they figured it out. Teacher 5 said, “If my exit is locked or barricaded or I cannot get out, I would locate another close exit. It happened one time where a fence was around the school, and we all got out, but the fence was locked so we could not get through the fence. But we were very close to the building. So,

somebody immediately called somebody to let us out, but then we all started heading back so we could go out another route” (personal communication, August 11, 2017).

Teacher 3 said, “Yes. Evacuation sites and reunification sites were all covered during that time. Media areas and triage areas, I do not believe were covered during the training” (personal communication, August 11, 2017). Media areas were designated for television and radio, photographers, announcers. Only the principal was the designated individual to speak to the media. Triage areas were reserved for injured persons and to sort victims based on the severity of their injuries. None of the participants knew what the triage areas were because this topic was not discussed during training. Few knew the meaning of the term *media areas* where television and radio reporters go to wait to speak with school or school district officials regarding a school incident.

Teacher 4 said, “Yes. We know our evacuation sites. We know our reunification areas. I am not sure what you mean by media areas” (personal communication, August 11, 2017). Few participants knew the areas where the media should go in the event of a tragic incident. Several participants knew that they should not speak to the media because the principal is the sole spokesperson for the media at the school. Otherwise, the designated school district official in charge of media and communications is the spokesperson. Teacher 4 was the only individual who guessed that triage referred to the school nurse or calling 911.

Most participants did not seem to understand how to implement reunification procedures. Some participants stated that they had never practiced reunification procedures and were not sure how to get children reunited with their parents. Others had contact lists of parents’ names but did not know which children belonged to what parents.

Teachers were afraid to release children to unauthorized parents. None of the participants knew who oversaw reunification procedures. Although Ms. S. oversaw the school's safety plan, they had not practiced this procedure and could not comfortably respond to this question. Teacher 4 suggested that the school plan should include viewing videos on the reunification process and procedures for those who needed to see a visual enactment that could help them to remember what to do.

However, Teacher 3 did not know how to protect the privacy of students from the media and appeared confused about some reunification procedures. He was also confused regarding how to evacuate students with disabilities and who oversaw that procedure. An area of reunification that confused Teacher 6 was how to facilitate communication between parent check-in and the student assembly and reunion area. She also did not understand the procedures for how to protect the privacy of students from the media or what to do if an area of the building was unusable.

All teachers, except one, in this study agreed that concepts and skills on reunification procedures were not provided during training. For example, teachers were able to practice those skills by going to those areas and reviewing the safety plan that was posted by teachers' doors. Two participants could not remember the name of the emergency area in the event of evacuation or where it was located. One participant did not recall training on the review of media areas and triage areas and one participant did not understand what was meant by media area and did not know where the media went if something tragic happened at the school. A few participants knew where to go for the reunification with parents and guardians but did not know that parents and others were not to be informed where it was located until all children were accounted for and safe. No

children could be released to parents until identification of parents and their children were processed.

Discussion of Research Question Three

Research question three stated, “What additional knowledge or training do elementary teachers perceive is needed in order to improve their ability to implement their school’s CSSP?” Four themes developed from the interview data regarding research question three. The themes were: (1) more time for practice, (2) refresher training throughout the year, (3) lifesaving training, and (4) real time drills rather than automatic drills.

Discussion of Theme 1: More Time for Practice

Many of the teachers in this study expressed the need for more time for practice and less conversation because they felt uncomfortable implementing lockdown procedures, evacuation procedures, and especially reunification procedures. Yet others who had been at the school six years to 20 years said they did not need any more practice, but training yes, especially for new teachers.

Teacher 6 said, “Again, when you are talking about the safety plan as far as the drills went, the lockdowns, we practice those, but it is mainly conversation, and very little practice. We need more practice; I know I do” (personal communication, August 11, 2017). In agreement Teacher 5 said, “I do not think we need any more training; I think we need just more practice” (personal communication, August 11, 2017).

Evacuation and reunification are areas in the CSSP in which teachers are told what to do, but rarely had a chance to implement or practice the plan (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy

Students, 2013). Without ever practicing the plan, one can only assume that they are ready to implement the plan until a disaster occurred. Data from the research revealed that teachers felt confident to implement the plan on paper, but when asked specific details about the evacuation process and reunification process there were several gaps of inaccurate information. Since the evacuation and reunification procedures had not been practiced nor had teachers received enough training in these areas to be comfortable, both teachers and administrators should have a strong and tested understanding of exact procedures that included practice and training (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, 2013).

Discussion of Theme 2: Refresher Training Throughout the Year

Several teachers mentioned that they did not know about implementing certain procedures. These procedures included who was in charge of evacuating students with disabilities, how they should protect children from the media, where the media and triage areas were located, where the reunification location was located, what they should do when an evacuation area was unusable, and how they should facilitate communication between parent check-in, student assembly and the reunion area. Therefore, refresher training may be needed throughout the year for teachers.

Discussion of Theme 3: Lifesaving Training

Few teachers were trained and certified in lifesaving training techniques at the school in this study. Children with epilepsy, choking in the cafeteria, heart attacks and fainting may require staff who know how to administer lifesaving techniques until professional medical teams arrived at the school. The participants in this study did not know which staff had relevant training or experience in CPR. No CPR training occurred

during any training although it was briefly discussed. A few participants were unaware if their CPR certification had expired. Teacher 4 said,

I personally believe that all staff members and all schools should have to go through that training during pre-planning, because something could happen in the middle of these different circumstances. A child could hyperventilate or need CPR assistance. If the teacher did not know how to help the child in that moment, and waited for help, it could be a problem. We had a teacher before who did not know how to respond to a child who was bleeding profusely. We saw then, how alarming it was that each teacher could not help in that circumstance. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Teacher 6 said,

CPR lifesaving training was available, but it was not mandatory for people to take but I think we need it. They do talk about that. It is mostly conversations. Teachers need more training in what to do when children have seizures and faint from epilepsy, or are allergic to bee stings or peanuts, they need to know how to help a child in crisis. If a child is choking, what should be done? If a child is not breathing, what should be done? Many teachers are experienced and may have the training and know what to do, but newer teachers may not know what to do when a child is in a crisis. (personal communication, August 11, 2017)

Discussion of Theme 4: Real Time Drills Rather Than Automatic Drills

Teacher 3, Teacher 4, and Teacher 6 readily admitted there were procedures that, as a faculty, had been practiced and of which they were not familiar. Half of the participants expressed preference for real time drills rather than automatic drills when

drills were announced in advance. Teachers and staff should always assume and act as though an alarm is signaling a real threat. Participants in this study felt that drills should be performed in real time and not scheduled. They wanted the drills to be unannounced and unplanned rather than automatic at a specific time of the month.

Teacher 5 felt well prepared to implement her school's safety plan effectively in an emergency because she felt like she could do it very well. She said, "I have gone through the drills over and repeatedly for the past 20 years. I know how serious they are. And I practice as if it is real every time and not just a drill" (personal communication, August 11, 2017). Whether an alarm was a real situation, a drill, or even a false alarm, safety demanded that teachers, staff, and students practiced response procedures as though they were real events.

Conclusions

Based on the findings in this study, the following conclusions were made. For Research Question 1, school safety training was generally held at the beginning of the school year during pre-planning because this was one of the few opportunities to train the entire staff as students were not present during this time. Although monthly fire drills were required by the state and the local school district, those fire drills were the most common and expected drills for students and staff to practice on a regular basis together. Technology was used during annual trainings through the use of Promethean boards and PowerPoint presentations, and discussion, but there was little practice conducted for some drills (e.g., reunification). Participants in this study recommended more practice and training and less discussion.

During emergencies, teachers only knew what to do based on what they were told and what was written in the CSSP. What concerned me in this study was the information in the CSSP regarding what teachers should do if instructions specific to the situation were not written down. Most of the steps to take were presented to teachers and staff in the form of PowerPoints, videos, and handouts but were not related to practical application of what should be done in an emergency. I concurred that this may be a universal problem in schools because many schools have similar conditions where school safety is a problem in emergencies.

One teacher had a safety concern with classroom and building characteristics. There were windows on the ground floor by the garden with metal shutters that must be fully closed before leaving the building. Teachers had no access to the windows, and it may be a safety protocol if a fire occurred in those classrooms in that portion of the building because the windows were behind metal shutters with no outlet. This was a serious concern for the teacher and became a recommendation for the school to take precautions to safeguard the teachers and students in that portion of the building.

Research Question 2: What are elementary teachers' perceptions of their ability to implement their school's CSSP? For Research Question 2, most of the teachers in this study felt well-prepared in implementing the school's safety plan. My concern was teachers were not as prepared as they stated or thought they were because they only had a briefing of the CSSP rather than have one or two days of full training regarding updates on school safety. Most of their training was through conversation rather than full training and practice with students. Most teachers in this study knew the procedures for the lockdown drill and what the lockdown levels meant and knew the procedures for

evacuation of students in implementing their school's CSSP; however, some teachers did not feel well-prepared in procedures of reunification of children with their parents after the emergency ban had been lifted. Several teachers were concerned that little practice was held for reunification and others did not know what the term meant or what to do in this safety area.

Another gap was lack of administrators' involvement. School administrators should provide information to and from the central office and become the school's spokesperson for the media to keep them abreast of what has happened and report updates on injuries and provide counselors from other school districts to help children, teachers, and staff deal with injuries and deaths. Some administrators may not know how to handle severe emergencies and should be trained how to do that. A future study should interview principals of schools that have encountered severe tragedies to help them deal with the violence in their schools and how to prevent and be proactive if such tragedies occur again. Administrators may need counseling as well.

There were mixed results regarding reunification procedures and what the term meant. Teachers said they knew how to stabilize an emergency regarding what to do in the event of an emergency. For example, many teachers and staff may not know where to reunite children with their parents after an emergency. They need to know whether there is a central location where parents can meet with their children to pick them up and how to determine whether the parents who are picking up the children are the real parents. They need to know what happens next after children and parents are reunited. They need to know if parents sign out their children, or if they should just allow children to run up to parents shouting, "Mommy, Daddy!" and let the parents take them home.

Research Question 3: What additional knowledge or training do elementary teachers perceive is needed in order to improve their ability to implement their school's CSSP? For Research Question 3, many teachers felt that they needed more time to practice drills and review procedures. Several teachers suggested a 'refresher type training' is needed throughout the year. Emergency lifesaving training should be required of all teachers and staff. Some teachers felt all drills should be unannounced to get the real feel of a real drill rather than announced drills.

Implications for Practice

The following implications for practice are recommended. The concern is that teachers felt confident and they knew what to do, so they did not need to worry about what they should be doing. There is evidence of self-efficacy among teachers and they were competent, but they had become complacent in not pursuing the full implementation of the CSSP. There were two teachers who had been teaching over two decades and had been at the school under study the longest. Their attitudes were that they did not need the training or practice because they knew exactly what to do and where to go. But when I asked more specific questions about the media triage and the triage for teachers and staff one teacher said, "Well, actually I don't feel really comfortable with the process," and "I do not know what the media does and the triage" (personal communication, August 11, 2017). Another teacher said, "But you know, we knew it was a meeting, but I do not know what was said, I cannot remember all of it" (personal communication, August 11, 2017).

The school should conduct regular and ongoing reviews of its CSSP on all parts of the plan to identify any weaknesses or gaps and capitalize on some of its strengths or

parts that are performed well. In addition to schools conducting annual reviews, school safety is more comprehensive than at the school level, but should be expanded to the district level, state level, and federal level. At the funding level, the federal government should, if not already, provide additional funding to release teachers and staff annually for one to two days to receive a full and complete review of the CSSP. Schools can combine with other schools for a districtwide training to review other schools' plans and incorporate components of other schools' CSSP. In addition, there could be districtwide, statewide, or federal school safety plans and schools could develop their local plans based on the district, state, and federal plans.

A serious concern was raised by one participant in this study regarding classroom and building characteristics. Several windows on the ground floor by the garden with metal shutters were fully closed before leaving the building. However, teachers had no access to the windows. This was a safety concern because if a fire occurred in classrooms in that portion of the building, the metal shutters caused the windows to provide no outlet. It is recommended for administrators to take precautions to safeguard the teachers and students in that portion of the building so that teachers and students will not be trapped inside the building should a fire occur.

One of the issues with obtaining a school for the research was lack of cooperation and fear in a school district because I was not allowed to view their CSSP. The research topic of school safety was a 'no-no' issue and few principals wanted to be under review with their CSSP. Some felt that their jobs would be threatened if something was wrong with their plans. The Deputy Superintendent in one district said, "I think it is a wonderful study, and I would love to know the results, but they are still very sensitive about school

safety because of what happened at a middle school in the school district a few years ago.” Finally, I was able to meet face-to-face with a charter school principal, who was not bound by the strict regulations of public schools and he agreed to allow me to conduct the research in his charter school.

Each school should have safety posters visible throughout the school. School districts should have safety posters visible throughout all offices in the central office. Parents can post safety plans at home and practice safety exits in the event of fires, and safety shelters in the event of tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes and other emergencies. The school should partner with law enforcement officers, EMS practitioners, fire department personnel, and local emergency management staff to be more informed about their roles and responsibilities. Administrators and teachers should invite community partners to visit the school to discuss emergency preparedness situations.

The following implications for practice are recommended:

1. Video a scenario of faculty and staff practicing a drill and review the results and make suggestions for improvement.
2. Show videos of lockdown, evacuation, and reunification procedures and answer questions.
3. The school should provide CPR and other lifesaving training for all staff to provide treatment and first aid for staff and students during crises.

Recommendations for Future Research

The problem is producing a CSSP plan on paper and putting one into action are two different issues (NEA, 2018). More research is necessary to distinguish specific needs and effective policies and procedures to discover examples of best practices for

school personnel (Kingshott & McKenzie, 2013). One of the gaps revealed in this study was lack of parental views. A future study could involve parents regarding when to contact the school, where to pick up their children after an emergency, who to call in the event of an emergency, and hospital contacts if children are transported by ambulance to the hospital. Parents may also need counseling in such cases.

Researchers interested in the topic of school safety plans, more specifically teachers' perceptions could continue research in the following areas:

1. Expand the study by conducting a quantitative study using a school safety plan survey with a larger sample of K-12 public and charter schools teaching staff.
2. Interview the administrative staff to gain their views on emergency preparedness and explore their perceptions of their readiness for a CSSP.
3. Replicate this study with a larger sample of kindergarten through fifth grade, 6-8, and 9-12 teachers from a charter school compared to a public school to explore their perceptions of preparation and training to implement school safety plans.
4. The study could be replicated in a rural school district to determine K-12 teacher perceptions of their school safety plans. A mixed methods study could be conducted using a quantitative school survey for the entire district and later follow up with a focus group of teachers, parents, and students to obtain a rich, in-depth view of how this group views their CSSP.

References

- Al-Alwan, A., & Mahasneh, A. (2014). *Teachers' self-efficacy as determinant of students' attitudes toward school: A study at the school level*. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/res.v6n1p171>
- American Red Cross. (2014). *Masters of disaster*. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/figure/American-Red-Cross-Masters-of-Disasters_fig2_249043605
- Americans for the Arts. (2018). *Schools must be safe places for students to learn and pursue their passions*. Retrieved from <https://www.americansforthearts.org/news-room/americans-for-the-arts-news/schools-must-be-safe-places-for-students-to-learn-and-pursue-their-passions>
- Anderson, K., Walker, K., & Ralph, E. (2009). Practicum teachers' perceptions of success in relation to self-efficacy (perceived competence). *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 55(2), 157–170.
- Applebury, G. (2018). *Why is school safety important?* Retrieved from https://safety.lovetoknow.com/Why_is_School_Safety_Important
- Astor, R. A., Guerra, N., & Van Acker, R. (2010). How can we improve school safety research? *Educational Researcher*, 39(1), 69-75. Retrieved from [doi:10.3102/0013189X09357619](https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X09357619)
- Bandecchi, A. E., Pazzi, V., Morelli, S., Valori, L., & Casagli, N. (2019). Geo-hydrological and seismic risk awareness at school: Emergency preparedness and risk perception evaluation. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 40(2019), 1-15. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdr.2019.101280>

- Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, 34(2), 191-215.
- Bandura, A. (1986). The explanatory and predictive scope of self-efficacy theory. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 4, 359–373.
doi:10.1521/jscp.1986.4.3.359
- Bandura, A. (1994). Self-efficacy. In V. S. Ramachaudran (Ed.). *Encyclopedia of Human Behavior*, 4, 77–81. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Bandura, A. (1995). Exercise of personal and collective efficacy in changing societies. In A. Bandura (Ed.), *Self-efficacy in changing societies* (pp. 1-45). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York, NY: Freeman.
- Bandura, A. (2006). Toward a psychology of human agency. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 1, 164-180.
- Bandura, A., & Barab, P. G. (1973). Processes governing disinhibitory efforts through symbolic modeling. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 82, 1-9.
- Barron, J. (2012). Nation reels after gunman massacres 20 children at school in Connecticut. *New York Times* (December 14, 2012). Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/15/nyregion/shooting-reported-at-connecticut-elementary-school.html>
- Belmont Report. (1979). *The Belmont Report: Ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research*. Retrieved from [hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.html](https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.html)

- Bernard, H. R., & Ryan, G. W. (2010). *Analyzing qualitative data: Systematic approaches*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Blanchard, W. (2007). *Guide to emergency management and related terms, definitions, concepts, acronyms, organizations, programs, guidance, executive orders and legislation*. Retrieved from <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/edu/docs/terms%20and%20definitions/Terms%20and%20Definitions.pdf>
- Bong, M., & Skaalvik, E. (2003, March). Academic self-concept and self-efficacy: How different are they really? *Educational Psychology Review*, 15(1), 1-40.
- Bowen, G. (2005). *Preparing a qualitative research-based dissertation: Lessons learned*. Retrieved from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR10-2/bowen.pdf>
- Brener, N. D., Kann, L., McManus, T., Stevenson, B., & Wooley, S. F. (2004). The relationship between school health councils and school health policies and programs in U.S. schools. *Journal of School Health*, 74, 130-135.
- Brennan, M. K. (2017). *Innovations in assessing practice skills: Using social cognitive theory, technology, and self-reflection*. Doctor of Social Work Banded Dissertations. Retrieved from <http://sophia.stkate.edu/dsw/2>
- Brock, M., Kriger, N., & Miró, R. (2018). *School safety policies and programs administered by the U.S. federal government: 1990-2016*. Washington, DC: Office of Justice Programs. Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/app/publications/abstract.aspx?ID=273697>

- Brock, S. E., Nickerson, A. B., Reeves, M. A., Jimerson, S. R., Lieberman, R. A., & Feinberg, T. A. (2009). *School crisis prevention and intervention: PREPaRE model*. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists. Retrieved from file:///C:/Users/anglr/Downloads/PREPaRE_Overview_November_2009.pdf
- Brock, S. E., Sandoval, J., & Lewis, S. (2001). *Preparing for crises in the schools: A manual for building school crisis response teams* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Wiley.
- Buckeye Firearms Association. (2017). *2017: Buckeye firearms in the news*. Retrieved from <https://www.buckeyefirearms.org/2017-bfa-news>
- Butler, D. L., & Winne, P. H. (1995). Feedback and self-regulated learning: A theoretical synthesis. *Review of Educational Research*, 65, 245–281.
doi:10.3102/00346543065003245
- Cable News Network (CNN) Library. (2019). *Columbine High School fast facts*. Retrieved from <https://www.cnn.com/2013/09/18/us/columbine-high-school-shootings-fast-facts/index.html>
- CBS News. (2007). *At least 33 killed in Virginia Tech massacre* (CBS News, April 16, 2007). Retrieved from <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/at-least-33-killed-in-v-tech-massacre/>
- Center for Injury Research and Prevention. (2019). *School shootings*. Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Research Institute. Retrieved from <https://injury.research.chop.edu/violence-prevention-initiative/types-violence-involving-youth/school-shootings#.XcNDnjNKiUk>

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2018). *Injury prevention and control: Data and statistics*. Web-Based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS). Fatal injury data and nonfatal injury data. Retrieved from [http:// www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html)
- Cherry, K. (2014). *What is self-efficacy?* Retrieved from http://psychology.about.com/od/theoriesofpersonality/a/self_efficacy.htm
- Christakis, E. (2019). Active-shooter drills are tragically misguided. *The Atlantic* (March 2019). Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/03/active-shooter-drills-erika-christakis/580426/>
- Christensen, C., & Donovan, T. (2015). *The process of strategy development and implementation*. Retrieved from <http://www.innosight.com/documents/The%20Processes%20of%20Strategy%20Development%20and%20%20Implementation.pdf>
- Chung, S., Danielson, J., & Shannon, M. (2009, January). *School-based emergency preparedness: a national analysis and recommended protocol*. Center for Biopreparedness, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA.
- Council of State Governments. (2014). *The school discipline consensus report*. Justice Center. Retrieved from http://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/The_School_Discipline_Consensus_Report.pdf
- Cowan, K. C., & Rossen, E. (2013). Responding to the unthinkable: School crisis response and recovery. *Phi Delta Kappan* (December 1, 2013). Retrieved from

<https://www.kappanonline.org/cowan-rossen-responding-unthinkable-school-crisis-response-recovery/>

- Cowan, K. C., Vaillancourt, K., Rossen, E., & Pollitt, K. (2012). *A framework for safe and successful schools* [Brief]. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists. Retrieved from <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/home/FrameworkforSafeandSuccessfulSchoolEnvironments.pdf>
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Curry, G. E. (2013). National Rifle Association misfires again. *Washington Informer*. Retrieved from <https://washingtoninformer.com/curry-deadly-and-dangerous-health-care-in-america/>
- DeVos, B. (2018). *Final report of the Federal Commission on school safety presented to the President of the United States*. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/school-safety/school-safety-report.pdf>
- Dinapoli, T. P. (2019). *Safety plans*. Safe schools against violence in education (SAVE) act. Retrieved from <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/audits/swr/2019/safe-schools/global-2019-ms-1.pdf>
- Dorn, C., Dorn, M., Satterly, S., Shepherd, S., & Nguyen, P. (2013). Seven lessons learned from Sandy Hook. *Campus Safety Magazine*. Retrieved from

<https://www.campusafetymagazine.com/emergency/7-lessons-learned-from-sandy-hook/>

Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2017). *Making prevention a reality: Identifying, assessing, and managing the threat of target attacks*. Quantico, VA. Retrieved from https://www.fbi.gov/filerepository/making_prevention_a_reality_identifying_assessing_managing_threats_of_ta.pdf/view

Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA]. (2013). *Guide for developing high-quality school emergency operations plans*. U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Retrieved from https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1922-25045-3850/rem_s_k_12_guide.pdf

Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA]. (2014). *Preparedness in America: Research insights to increase individual, organizational, and community action*. Retrieved from https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1409000888026-1e8abc820153a6c8cde24ce42c16e857/20140825_Preparedness_in_America_August_2014_Update_508.pdf

Fix NICS Act. (2018). Title VI, Division S, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, Pub. L. No. 115-141 (March 23, 2018).

Follman, M., Aronsen, G., & Pan, D. (2019). *U.S. mass shootings, 1982–2019: Data from Mother Jones' investigation*. Mother Jones. Retrieved from <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/12/mass-shootings-mother-jones-full-data/>

- Ford, D., & Payne, E. (2015). Oregon shooting: Gunman dead after college rampage. *Cable News Network (CNN)*, October 2, 2015. Retrieved from <https://www.cnn.com/2015/10/01/us/oregon-college-shooting/index.html>
- Fricker, T. (2019). *Report from the United Nations Children's Fund*. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/cameroon/over-80-cent-schools-closed-result-crisis-denying-more-600000-children-access>
- Furlong, M., Felix, E. D., Sharkey, J. D., & Larson, J. (2005). Preventing school violence: A plan for safe and engaging schools. *Student Counseling Journal*, 14(5), 33-50.
- Garcia, E. (2017). *2017-18 comprehensive school safety plan*. Santa Paula Unified School District, Santa Paula, CA. Retrieved from https://www.santapaulaunified.org/cms/lib/CA01001761/Centricity/Domain/280/9_e_SantaPaulaHighSchoolCSSP201718_0.pdf
- Garcia, E., & Weiss, W. (2017). *Education inequalities at the school starting gate: Gaps, trends, and strategies to address them*. Economic Policy Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.epi.org/publication/education-inequalities-at-the-school-starting-gate/>
- Gaudreau, N., Royer, E., Frenette, E., Beaumont, C., & Flanagan, T. (2013). Classroom behavior management: The effects of in-service training on elementary teachers' self-efficacy beliefs. *McGill Journal of Education*, 48(2), 269-337.
- Georgia Department of Education. (2010). Georgia Code, Title 20-Education, Chapter 2-Elementary and Secondary Education, Article 27-Loitering at or Disrupting Schools,

- § 20-2-1185 - *School safety plans*, O.C.G.A. 20-2-1185 (2010). Retrieved from <https://law.justia.com/codes/georgia/2010/title-20/chapter-2/article-27/20-2-1185/>
- Georgia Department of Education. (2014). *Crisis management and prevention information for Georgia public schools*. Retrieved from <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Curriculum-and-Instruction/Documents/Crisis%20Management%20and%20Prevention%20in%20Georgia%20Public%20Schools%20Updated%202014.pdf>
- Graham, J., Liggin, R., Shirm, S., Nation, B., & Dick, R. (2005). Planning for a mass casualty incident in Arkansas schools. *The Journal of School Health*, 75(8), 327-358.
- Gunn, J. (2018). *Opening the doors to learning through safe spaces in k-12 schools*. Retrieved from <https://education.cu-portland.edu/blog/classroom-resources/creating-safe-spaces/>
- Harrell, M. C., & Bradley, M. A. (2009). *Data collection methods: Semi-structured interviews and focus groups*. National Defense Research Institute. Retrieved from http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/technical_reports/2009/RAND_TR718.pdf
- Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, 77, 81–112. doi:10.3102/003465430298487
- Heath, M. A., Ryan, K., Dean, B., & Bingham, R. (2017). History of school safety and psychological first aid for children. *Brief Treatment and Crisis and Intervention*, 7(3), 226-223. doi:10.1093/brief-treatment/mhm011

- Hemphill, F. C., & Vanneman, A. (2011). *Achievement gaps: How Hispanic and White students in public schools perform in mathematics and reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress* (pp. 1–95). Washington, DC: National Center for Educational Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences.
- Hennink, M. (2011). *Qualitative research methods* (1st ed). London, UK: Sage.
- Hennink, M., Hutter, I., & Bailey, A. (2011). Qualitative research methods. *Journal of Critical Public Health*, 22(1), 111-112.
- Hennink, M., Hutter, I., & Bailey, A. (2020). *Qualitative research methods* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Sage.
- Hernandez, D., Floden, L., & Bosworth, K. (2010). How safe is a school? An exploratory study comparing measures and perceptions of safety. *Journal of School Violence*, 9, 357-374.
- Heubert, J. P. (2002). Schools without rules? Charter schools, federal disability law, and the paradoxes of deregulation. In *Minority issues in special education*, G. Orfield and D. Losen (Eds.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Publishing Group.
- Horga, G., Kaur, T., & Peterson, B. S. (2014). Annual research review: Current limitations and future directions in MRI studies of child- and adult-onset developmental psychopathologies. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 55(6), 659-680. doi:10.1111/jcpp.12185

Infoplease. (2017). *Timeline of worldwide school and mass shootings*. Retrieved from <https://www.infoplease.com/history/world/timeline-of-worldwide-school-and-mass-shootings>

International Finance Corporation. (2015). *Disaster and emergency preparedness: Guidance for schools*. Retrieved from <https://www.preventionweb.net/educational/view/13989>

Jackson, M., Diliberti, M., Kemp, J., Hummel, S., Cox, C., Gbondo-Tugbawa, K., Simon, D., and Hansen, R. (2018). *2015-16 school survey on crime and safety: Public-use data file user's manual*. (NCES 2018-107). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2018/2018107.pdf>

Jagodzinski, C. L. (2019). School safety upgrades and perceptions of safety in prevention of school shootings. In R. Papa (Ed.), *School violence in international contexts* (pp. 185-197). Springer, Cham. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-17482-8-12>

Johnson, V. A., Ronan, K. R., Johnson, D. M., & Peace, R. (2014). Implementing disaster preparedness education in New Zealand primary schools. *Disaster Prevention and Management*, 23(4), 370-380. doi:10.1108/DPM-09-2013-0151

Kano, M., & Bourque, L. B. (2007). Experiences with and preparedness for emergencies and disasters among public schools in California. *National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) Bulletin*, 91(3), 201-218. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192636507305102>

- Kaul, J. L. (2019). *Comprehensive school security framework*. Wisconsin Department of Justice. Retrieved from https://www.doj.state.wi.us/sites/default/files/school-safety/WI_School_Safety_framework.pdf
- Kemp, J., Robers, S., Rathbun, A., Morgan, R. C., & Snyder, T. D. (2014). *Indications of school crime and safety: 2013*. National Center for Education Statistics, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2014/2014042.pdf>
- Kingshott, B. F. (2012). Violence in educational establishments: Cause, effect, and response. *Criminal Justice Studies*, 25(1), 41-49. Retrieved from ProQuest.
- Kingshott, B. F., & McKenzie, D. G. (2013). Developing crisis management protocols in the context of school safety. *Journal of Applied Security Research*, 8(2), 222-228. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/19361610.2013.765339>
- Koocher, G. P., & Keith-Spiegel, P. (2018). *What should I do? Ethical risks, making decisions and taking actions*. American Psychological Association, ContinuingEdCourses.Net, National Board for Certified Counselors, New York State Education Departments' State Board for Social Work. Retrieved from <https://www.continuingedcourses.net/active/courses/course050.php>
- Kozol, J. (1992). *Savage inequalities: Children in America's schools*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial.
- Kozol, J. (2005). *The shame of the nation: The restoration of Apartheid schooling in America*. New York, NY: Crown.
- Lee, K. (2017). *What is a school lockdown drill?* Retrieved from <https://www.verywell.com/what-is-a-school-lockdown-drill-620548>

- Lessne, D., Cidade, M., Gerke, A., Roland, K., & Sinclair, M. (2016). *Student victimization in U.S. schools: Results from the 2013 school crime supplement to the national crime victimization survey*. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/2016145.pdf>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Long, C. (2017). Keeping schools safe, happy places for everyone. *NEA Today* (January 3, 2017). Retrieved from <http://neatoday.org/2017/01/03/creating-positive-school-climate/>
- Madigan, M. L. (2017). *Handbook of emergency management concepts: A step-by-step approach* (1st ed.). CRC Press. Retrieved from <https://www.crcpress.com/Handbook-of-Emergency-Management-Concepts-A-Step-by-Step-Approach/Madigan/p/book/9780203704257#googlePreviewContainer>
- Mayer, M. J., & Furlong, M. J. (2010). How safe are our schools? *Educational Researcher*, 39(1), 16-26. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X09357617>
- Mayer, M. J., & Jimerson, S. R. (Eds.). (2019). *The importance of school safety and violence prevention*. School Safety and Violence Prevention: Science, Practice, and Policy. American Psychological Association. Retrieved from <https://www.apa.org/pubs/books/School-Safety-and-Violence-Prevention-Chapter-1-Sample.pdf>

- Maynard, L. B. (2017). *School safety preparedness: A case study*. Doctoral dissertation. Morehead State University, Morehead, KY. Retrieved from https://scholarworks.moreheadstate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1116&context=msu_theses_dissertations
- McFarland, J., Hussar, B., Zhang, J., Wang, X., Wang, K., Hein, S., Diliberti, M., Forrest Cataldi, E., Bullock Mann, F., & Barmer, A. (2019). *The condition of education 2019* (NCES 2019-144). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2019144>
- Merriam, S. B. (2002). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Miranda, C. A. (2019). Recent mass shootings in the U.S.: A timeline. *The Los Angeles Times* (September 1, 2019). Retrieved from <https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2019-08-03/united-states-mass-shootings>
- Munhall, P. (2013). *Research methods*. Retrieved from <http://srmo.sagepub.com/view/sage-encyc-qualitative-research-methods/n314.xml>
- Murphey, D., & Sacks, V. (2019). Supporting students with adverse childhood experiences: How educators and schools can help. *American Educator*, 43(2), 8-10, 43. American Federation of Teachers. Retrieved from <https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/ae-summer2019.pdf>
- National Association of School Psychologists. (2013). *Conducting crisis exercises and drills: Guidelines for schools*. Retrieved from http://www.nasponline.org/resources/crisissafety_drills_guidance.pdf

- National Association of School Psychologists. (2013). *A framework for safe and successful schools*. Retrieved from <http://www.nasponline.org/schoolsafetyframework>
- National Crime Prevention Council. (2015). *School safety: What parents can do to keep kids safe at school*. Retrieved from http://archive.ncpc.org/topics/school-safety/copy_of_school-safety.html
- National Council for Behavioral Health. (2019). *Mass violence in America: Causes, impacts and solutions*. Retrieved from https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Mass-Violence-in-America_8-6-19.pdf
- National Education Association. (2018). *NEA's school crisis guide: Help and healing in a time of crisis*. Retrieved from <http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/NEA%20School%20Crisis%20Guide%202018.pdf>
- National Public Radio. (2007). *Shootings recall horror at University of Texas*. (NPR, April 17, 2007). Retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=9603965>
- Nekvasil, E. K., Cornell, D. G., & Huang, F. L. (2015). Prevalence and offense characteristics of multiple casualty homicides: Are schools at higher risk than other locations? *Psychology of Violence*, 5(3), 236–245. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038967>
- Obama, B. (2012). Full remarks by President Obama at Sandy Hook prayer vigil. *New York Post* (17 December 2012). Retrieved from

<https://nypost.com/2012/12/17/full-remarks-by-president-obama-at-sandy-hook-prayer-vigil/>

Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, U.S. Department of Education. (2016). *Practical information on crisis planning brochure*. Retrieved from

<https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/crisisplanning.html>

Olive, M. (2019). *Teachers' perceptions of safety regarding school shootings*. Electronic Theses and Dissertations. Master's Degree, University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL. 6550. Retrieved from <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/etd/6550>

Orb, A., Eisenhauer, L., & Wynaden, D. (2000). Ethics in qualitative research. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 33(1), 93-96.

Pastorelli, C., Caprara, G. V., Barbaranelli, C., Rola, J., Rozsa, S., & Bandura, A. (2001). The structure of children's perceived self-efficacy: A cross-national study. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, 17, 87-97.
doi:10.1027//1015-5759.17.2.87

Pazzi, V., Morelli, S., Pratesi, F., Sodi, T., Valori, L., Gambacciani, L., & Casagli, N. (2016). Assessing the safety of schools affected by geo-hydrologic hazards: the geohazard safety classification (GSC). *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 15(2016), 80-93. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2015.11.006>

Peredaryenko, M. S., & Krauss, S. E. (2013). Calibrating the human instrument: Understanding the interviewing experience of novice qualitative researchers. *The*

- Qualitative Report*, 18(85), 1-17. Retrieved from
<http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR18/peredaryenko85.pdf>
- Perumean-Chaney, S. E., & Sutton, L. M. (2013). Students and perceived school safety: The impact of school security measures. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 38, 570–588.
- Philpott, J. (2010). Applying themes from research ethics international education partnerships. *American Medical Association Journal of Ethics*, 12(3), 171-178.
- Pitts, L. L. (2018). *Preparation matters: A quantitative examination of faculty active shooter preparedness*. Dissertations. 1555. The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS. Retrieved from
<https://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations/1555>
- Pollack, I. (Ed.). (2001). The safety zone. Northwest Regional Educational Lab, Portland, OR. National Resource Center for Safe Schools. Department of Justice, Washington, DC. *The Safety Zone*, 3(4), 1-4. Retrieved from
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED473628.pdf>
- Repard, P. (2019). 40 years ago, Brenda Spencer took lives, changed lives in a mass shooting at a San Diego elementary school. *The San Diego Union-Tribune* (January 29, 1979). Retrieved from
<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/public-safety/sd-me-brenda-spencer-school-shooting-20190129-story.html>
- Rinaldi, R. P. (2016). *Assessing educators' school safety and security preparedness at a New Jersey K-12 nonpublic school*. Doctoral dissertation. Nova Southeastern

- University. Retrieved from NSUWorks, Abraham S. Fischler College of Education. Retrieved from https://nsuworks.nova.edu/fse_etd/90
- Robinson, L. R., Leeb, R. T., Merrick, M. T., & Forbes, L. W. (2016). Conceptualizing and measuring safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments in educational settings. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 25(5), 1488-1504. doi:10.1007/s10826-015-0332-2
- Rooks, D., & Muñoz, C. B. (2015). Brilliant, bored or badly-behaved? Media coverage of the charter school debate in the United States. *Teachers College Record*, 117(8), 1-48. Retrieved from <http://www.tcrecord.org>
- Russell, J. (2019). *Emergency preparedness in school*. Community for Accredited Online Schools. Retrieved from <https://www.accreditedschoolsonline.org/resources/emergency-preparedness-in-school/>
- Salmon, K. B., Smarick, A. R., Hogan, L., Lawson, S. A., Gable, M. L., & Sallee, W. J. (2017). *Emergency planning guidelines for local school systems and schools*. Maryland State Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/about/Documents/DSFSS/SSSP/EPSS/EmergencyPlanningGuidelines2017.pdf>
- Schrag, P. (2003). *Final test: The battle for adequacy in America's schools*. New York, NY: The New Press.

- Shaffer, D. W., Nash, P., & Ruis, A. R. (2015). Technology and the new professionalism, *Teachers College Record*, 117, 1-30. Retrieved from <http://www.andrewruis.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Technology-and-the-New-Professionalization-of-Teaching.pdf>
- Shapiro, E. (2019). 20 years after Columbine, what's changed and what hasn't for school shootings in America. *ABC News* (April 20, 2019). Retrieved from <https://abcnews.go.com/US/20-years-columbine-changed-school-shootings-america/story?id=62248885>
- Simmons, D. (2017). Five years after Sandy Hook, push to bring guns into Ohio schools gains strength. *The Trace* (December 14, 2017). Retrieved from <https://www.thetrace.org/2017/12/sandy-hook-guns-schools-armed-teachers-ohio/>
- Skaalvik, E., & Skaalvik, S. (2002). Internal and external frames of reference for academic self-concept. *Educational Psychologist*, 37, 233–244.
doi:10.1207/S15326985EP3704_3
- Smith, M. (2013). *Georgia school shooting: Antoinette Tuff hailed as hero*. Cable News Network (CNN). Retrieved from <https://www.cnn.com/2013/08/22/us/georgia-school-shooting-hero/index.html>
- Smith, T. (2019). *Father of Sandy Hook shooting victim dies by apparent suicide*. National Public Radio (March 25, 2019). Retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/2019/03/25/706602331/father-of-sandy-hook-shooting-victim-dies-by-apparent-suicide>

- Students, Teachers, and Officers Preventing (STOP) School Violence Act, Title V, Division S, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, P.L. No. 115-141 (March 23, 2018).
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2017). *Greater impact: How disasters affect people of low socioeconomic status*. Disaster Technical Assistance Center Supplement Research Bulletin (pp. 1-20). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/dtac/srb-low-ses_2.pdf
- Taylor, S. R., & Greenberg, S. F. (2016). *A comprehensive report on school safety technology* (Chapter 1 Introduction). Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory. U.S. Department of Justice National Institute of Justice. Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/250274.pdf>
- Tong, K.-W. (Ed.) Smith, K., Gamlem, S. M., Sandal, A. K., & Engelsen, K. S. (2016). *Educating for the future: A conceptual framework of responsive pedagogy*. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2016.1227021>
- Trump, D. J. (2018). *President Donald J. Trump is taking immediate actions to secure our schools* (March 12, 2018). Retrieved from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trump-taking-immediate-actions-secure-schools/>
- Trump, K. S. (2011). *Proactive school security and emergency preparedness planning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Trump, K. S. (2019). *Threat assessment: School threats, social media, texting, and rumors*. National School Safety and Security Services. Retrieved from

<https://www.schoolsecurity.org/trends/threat-assessment-threats-rumors-text-messages/>

Tschannen-Moran, M. (2014). *Trust matters: Leadership for successful schools*.

Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons.

Trauernicht, G. (2017). *The right to protection: Ending violence against children*.

Societas Socialis (SOS) Children's Villages International. Retrieved from

https://www.sos-childrensvillages.org/getmedia/83145000-19d4-451c-9e98-15565fd6842d/TheRightToProtection_EN.pdf

U.S. Department of Education. (2002). *Virginia's model school crisis plan*. Retrieved from

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/safety_crisis_management/emergency_crisis_management/model_plan.pdf

U.S. Department of Education. (2014). *Building blocks to school safety: A toolkit for school and districts for developing high-quality emergency operations plans*.

Office of Safe and Healthy Students, Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools, and Technical Assistance Center. Retrieved from

https://rems.ed.gov/docs/BuildingBlocksToSchoolSafety_ToolkitForEOPs.pdf

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2012). Guide for developing high quality school emergency operation plans. *Digest of*

Education Statistics 2011. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from

<http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d11/index.asp>

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2019a).

Indicators of school crime and safety. Retrieved from

https://nces.ed.gov/programs/crimeindicators/ind_02.asp

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2019b).

Indicators of school crime and safety: 2018 (NCES 2019-047), Figure 6.1.

Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=49>

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of

Safe and Healthy Students. (2013). *Guide for developing high-quality school*

emergency operations plans. Washington, DC. Retrieved from

https://rem.s.ed.gov/docs/REMS_K-12_Guide_508.pdf

U.S. Department of Homeland Security. (2007). *Homeland security exercise an*

evaluation program. Vol. I: HSEEP overview and exercise program management

Washington, DC. Author. Retrieved from <https://ffhseep.dhs.gov/pages/1001>

HSEEP7.aspx

U.S. Department of Homeland Security. (2018a). *K-12 school security: A guide for*

preventing and protecting against gun violence (2nd ed.). Retrieved from

[https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/K12-School-Security-Guide-](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/K12-School-Security-Guide-2nd-Edition-508.pdf)

2nd-Edition-508.pdf

U.S. Department of Homeland Security. (2018b). *Presidential Policy Directive/PPD-8:*

National Preparedness. Retrieved from [https://www.dhs.gov/presidential-policy-](https://www.dhs.gov/presidential-policy-directive-8-national-preparedness)

directive-8-national-preparedness

U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Federal Emergency Management Agency.

(2011). *Comprehensive school safety guide*. Retrieved from

<https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/Public-Education/By-topic/Schools/MinnesotaSchool-Safety-Guide.ashx?la=en>

U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2013). *Post-disaster reunification of children: A nationwide approach*. Retrieved from <http://rems.ed.gov/docs/24post-disaster-reunification-of-children-a-nationwide-approach.pdf>

U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2018). *Developing emergency operations plans: A guide for businesses*. U.S. Department of Justice. Retrieved from file:///C:/Users/anglr/Downloads/active-shooter-guide-for-businesses-march-2018.pdf

U.S. Government Accountability Office. (2016). *Report to congressional requesters. Emergency management: Most school districts have developed emergency medical plans but would benefit from additional federal guidance*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Accountability Office. Retrieved from www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-609

Veil, S. R. (2012). Best practices as an assessment for crisis communication. *Journal of Communication Management*, 16(2), 131-145. doi:10.1108/13632541211217560

Wagler, R. (2011). *The impact of vicarious experiences and field experience classroom characteristics on preservice elementary science teaching efficacy*. Retrieved from <http://ejse.southwestern.edu/article/viewFile/7336/6993>

Wolfson, A. (2019). A year later: Marshall County High School shooting and the prosecution. *Louisville Courier* (January 17, 2019). Retrieved from

<https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/crime/2019/01/17/marshall-county-high-school-kentucky-shooting-a-year-later/2593728002/>

World Health Organization (WHO). (2015). *Emergency and disaster risk management for health*. Retrieved from www.who.int/hac/techguidance/preparedness/en/

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Appendix A: Teacher Recruitment Email Narrative

Dear Participant:

My name is Rachina B. Holman Heron and I am a doctoral student in Educational Leadership at National Louis University. I am conducting research on elementary teachers' perceptions of their ability to implement comprehensive school safety plans. The qualitative study will collect data specifically relating to elementary teachers' perceptions of their ability to implement comprehensive school safety plans.

The target group for this study is kindergarten through fifth grade elementary school teachers. The participants must meet the following criteria: (a) be a State certified classroom teacher with at least 3 years teaching experience, (b) must have taught at the specific location of the research for at least 2 years, and (c) implemented the Comprehensive School Safety Plan in the last 6 months. I am asking the participants to volunteer to participate in a semi-structured, face-to-face interview. The interviews are scheduled to last no longer than 45 minutes within each participant's personal planning period.

Participation is completely voluntary. At no point will participants' names be released. Participants can withdraw from the study at any time without repercussions. Interviews will take place after the instructional day. There are no known risks to this study. I have attached a consent form for your signature if you wish to participate. After receiving your permission, I will be contacting you to arrange a time and date for the interview.

Please contact me with any questions or concerns. My email is Rachina.Holman@gmail.com

I can also be reached at 404-936-1575 (cell).

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Rachina B. Holman Heron

Appendix B: Informed Consent

I will volunteer to participate in a research project conducted by Rachina B. Holman Heron from National Louis University. I understand that the project is designed to gather information about elementary teachers' perceptions of their ability to implement school safety plans. I will be one of approximately six people being interviewed for this research.

1. My participation in this project is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty. If I decline to participate or withdraw from the study, no one at my school will be told.
2. I understand that most interviewees in will find the discussion interesting and thought-provoking. If, however, I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview.
3. Participation involves being interviewed by Rachina B. Holman Heron, a researcher from National Louis University. Each semi-structured interview will be at least 60 minutes and will be audio-recorded for accuracy. Notes will be written during the interview. If I do not want to be taped, I will not be able to participate in the study.
4. I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions.
5. Faculty and administrators from my campus will neither be present at the interview nor have access to raw notes or transcripts. This precaution will prevent my individual comments from having any negative repercussions.
6. I understand that this research study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at National Louis University and approval was obtained through the charter school site principal.
7. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
8. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

Signature

Date

Signature of the Investigator

Date

For further information, please contact: Rachina B. Holman Heron 404-936-1575.

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

RQ1: How do elementary teachers describe the professional development or training received in preparation for implementing their school's CSSP?

1. What training have you received regarding implementing your school's CSSP?
2. What professionals provided the CSSP training at your school?
 - a. Were emergency and medical personnel (e.g., law enforcement officers, fire officials, and EMS personnel) present?
 - b. Were you informed of your school's safety planning team members, the selection process choosing the safety planning team members, and their roles within the CSSP?
3. How often is training provided on your school's CSSP?
 - a. How often are updates regarding the school's CSSP provided? In what ways are the updates provided?
4. What concepts or skills were discussed in the CSSP training provided by your school?
 - a. Were the evacuation sites, reunification areas, media areas, and triage areas identified during the training?
 - b. Were you informed of how to assist students, staff, and parents with disabilities as well as others with access and functional needs with getting to these sites and areas?
5. What specific role and position were you assigned during the training to implement the school's CSSP?
 - a. For example, were you identified to complete first aid, threat assessment, and provision of personal assistance services for students with disabilities, and others with access and functional needs?

RQ2: What are elementary teachers' perceptions of their ability to implement their school's CSSP?

6. How prepared are you to implement your school's CSSP?
7. Do you feel like you'd be able to implement the CSSP effectively in an emergency situation? Why or why not?

RQ2a: How do elementary teachers describe their experiences implementing lockdown, evacuation and reunification procedures?

LOCKDOWN

8. What courses of action does your school execute to secure school buildings and grounds during incidents that pose an immediate threat of violence in or around the school?
 - a. How do you lock all exterior doors? When might it not be safe to do so?
 - b. What particular classroom and building characteristics (i.e., windows, doors) impact possible lockdown courses of action?
 - c. What do you do when a threat materializes inside the school?
 - d. What are the different variations of a lockdown? Are you aware of when to use specific variations (e.g., when outside activities are curtailed, doors are locked, and visitors are closely monitored, but all other school activities continue as normal)?

EVACUATION

9. What courses of action does your school execute to evacuate school buildings and grounds?
 - a. How do you safely move students and visitors to designated assembly areas from classrooms, outside areas, cafeterias, and other school locations?
 - b. How do you evacuate when the primary evacuation route is unusable?
 - c. How do you evacuate students who are not with a teacher or staff member? How do you evacuate individuals with disabilities (along with service animals and assistive devices, e.g., wheelchairs) and others with access and functional needs, including language, transportation, and medical needs?

REUNIFICATION

10. What are the details of how students will be reunited with their families or guardians?
 - a. How do you inform families and guardians about the reunification process in advance?
 - b. How do you verify that an adult is authorized to take custody of a student?
 - c. How do you facilitate communication between the parent check-in and the student assembly and reunion areas?
 - d. How do you ensure students do not leave on their own?
 - e. How do you protect the privacy of students and parents from the media?
 - f. How do you reduce confusion during the reunification process?
 - g. What is the process for frequently updating families?
 - h. How do you account for technology barriers faced by students, staff, parents, and guardians?
 - i. How do you effectively address language access barriers faced by students, staff, parents, and guardians?

RQ3: What additional knowledge or training do elementary teachers perceive is needed in order to improve their ability to implement their school's CSSP?

11. What other information and/or training could the school provide to assist you in improving your ability to implement the school's CSSP?

Appendix D: Matrix for Research Questions and Interview Questions

(See Appendix C for Interview Questions)

Research Questions	Interview Questions
RQ1: How do elementary teachers describe the professional development or training received in preparation for implementing their school's CSSP?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
RQ2: What are elementary teachers' perceptions of their ability to implement their school's CSSP?	6, 7
RQ2a. How do elementary teachers describe their experiences implementing lockdown, evacuation, and reunification procedures?	8, 9, 10
RQ3. What additional knowledge or training do elementary teachers perceive is needed in order to improve their ability to implement their school's CSSP?	11