NIMS IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES FOR SCHOOLS AND HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

NIMS uses a core set of concepts, principles, procedures, processes, standards, and terminology that may all be integrated with school emergency management practices. The collective use of NIMS across *all* local incident response agencies, including K-12 schools and higher education institutions (HEIs), and disciplines creates a common operating picture, promoting mutual goals and responsibilities, and ultimately, more efficient and effective response services. Furthermore, in the event of a large-scale incident crossing multiple jurisdictions and disciplines, NIMS unites all response teams across all of the participating jurisdictions and facilitates effective and appropriate assistance from outlying communities when needed based on the size and complexity of the incident.

> For more information on NIMS see the REMS TA Center publication, *ERCM*Express "*National Incident Management System*" accessible at http://rems.ed.gov/views/documents/NIMS.pdf

NIMS COMPLIANCE FOR SCHOOLS AND HEIS

All K-12 schools and HEIs — urban, suburban, and rural; large and small — receiving Federal preparedness monies through the U.S. Department of Education (ED), the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and/or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) are required to support the implementation of NIMS. For example, award recipients of ED's Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) and Emergency Management for Higher Education (EMHE) grants are required to implement, in conjunction with community partners, identified NIMS compliance activities. Furthermore, many State and local jurisdictions are requiring schools to complete these activities to ensure greater communication between community partners and schools as well as to provide for more efficient responses to school-based incidents. Because all schools and HEIs are integral components of every community and its government, DHS and ED recommend all schools and HEIs – regardless of whether they are recipients of Federal preparedness funds – implement NIMS.

U.S. Department of Education's *NIMS Implementation Activities for Schools and Higher Education Institutions* outlines those actions schools must take in order to 1.) Fulfill NIMS compliance requirements; 2.) Integrate NIMS into the educational setting; and 3.) Connect schools and campuses to their community partners. ED has identified those NIMS implementation activities that match the unique role of schools in a community, its needs, and its functions as response agents along the chain of command. Therefore, the following activities are required for schools to support the implementation of NIMS and be compliant.

Although school and HEI officials are not tasked to be highly-trained, first-response, emergency management personnel, they play a vital role in the process; schools provide critical command and management directives in advance of a first response agency's arrival. Additionally, NIMS benefits the whole community and, in order to be effective, relies on all community agencies' implementation. Therefore, school adoption of NIMS and completion of *NIMS Implementation*

Activities for K-12 Schools and Higher Education Institutions mutually benefits schools, its partners, and the greater community.

NIMS is applicable and suitable for all K-12 schools and HEIs — those in rural and urban settings, large and small, and those using traditional, alternative, and charter models as well as for local education agencies (LEAs), State education agencies (SEAs), regional, and intermediate units operating the schools. Building from the already established interdependent roles of government and schools, the NIMS goals are achieved through partnerships with community partners (e.g., local government officials, fire and rescue officials, emergency medical service providers, law enforcement, and public and mental health personnel.)

SCHOOL AND HIGHER EDUCATION EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Each school day, our nation's schools, administrators, teachers, and staff are entrusted to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for more than 55 million elementary and secondary students. Additionally, more than 15 million students attend postsecondary degree-granting institutions in the United States annually. To protect students, staff, and visitors day-to-day as well as in the event of an emergency, schools and HEIs should work with local government and community emergency response agencies in advance of any potential emergencies.

Each year, natural threats and risks such as weather-related events (e.g., wild fires, hurricanes) and public health threats (e.g., Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, [MRSA]) and even food-borne incidents can threaten the entire school or campus community. Schools and HEIs are not immune from accidents, intruders, crime, acts of violence, or the impacts of events taking place in the surrounding community. Schools and HEIs can take steps, in collaboration with their local government and community partners, to prevent and mitigate potential incidents as well as to prepare for, respond to, and recover from those that are unavoidable.

Schools and HEIs are tasked with providing a safe environment for teaching and learning, and therefore, must be integrated with the local, State, tribal, and Federal agencies who contribute to the well-being, health, safety, and security of the whole community. Lessons learned from recent school incidents (on K-12 and HEI campuses alike) show that school officials *and* first responders must both be knowledgeable and be trained to implement pre-established practices and procedures. If a school-based incident occurs, school personnel are the immediate responders — they provide first-aid, notify community response partners, and give command and management directives — all in advance of first response arrival.

School and campus staff members must be ready — ready to provide immediate and effective response, ready to transfer command to the local response agency's lead, and ready to work with the response agencies and teams. This readiness promotes safety and efficiency as well as increases the likelihood that the specific objectives of the incident are achieved. School and HEI officials and community officials should continually prepare and practice a seamless, coordinated response using the standard Federal terminology and approach to incident management; school and HEI officials should use National Incident Management System (NIMS).

NIMS IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES FOR SCHOOLS

NIMS is the United States' single, comprehensive system for managing domestic incidents and is suitable for *all* schools and educational institutions to implement throughout all phases of school emergency management: 1) Prevention-Mitigation; 2) Preparedness; 3) Response; and 4) Recovery. NIMS was established March 1, 2004, following the Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5 (HSPD-5) Management of Domestic Incidents.[1] NIMS puts forth one comprehensive approach and builds a structure for private and public entities including Federal, State, territory, tribal and local jurisdictions to effectively, and collaboratively manage incidents. NIMS was designed to include State, regional, and local educational entities.

NIMS uses a core set of concepts, principles, procedures, processes, standards, and terminology that all may be integrated with school emergency management practices. The collective use of NIMS across *all* local incident response agencies (including K-12 schools and HEIs) and disciplines creates a common operating picture, promoting mutual goals and responsibilities, and ultimately, a more efficient and effective response. Furthermore, in the event of a large-scale incident crossing multiple jurisdictions and disciplines, NIMS is critical. In this scenario, the common use of NIMS unites all the response teams from all of the participating jurisdictions. The systematic approach of NIMS facilitates effective and appropriate assistance from outlying communities when needed based on the size and complexity of the incident.

School implementation of NIMS formalizes many of the partnerships, procedures, and activities already taking place at schools and on campuses around the nation. By fulfilling the *NIMS Implementation Activities for Schools and HEIs*, educational entities will become compliant; formalizing existing effective practices; and be stronger in the event of an emergency incident. The *NIMS Implementation Activities for Schools and HEIs* identifies those NIMS items schools should fulfill in close coordination with their community partners. Fulfilling NIMS implementation activities is a process for which schools may take steps to accomplish over time with their partners.

[1] The Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) 5, Management of Domestic Incidents is accessible at http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030228-9.html

Activity 1: Adopt NIMS at the school and campus community level.

K-12 schools and higher education institutions (HEIs) support the successful adoption and implementation of NIMS at the school and campus community level. This includes all applicable organizational and operational offices, departments, committees, and teams within the educational entity, and is not limited by geographical locations such as rural, urban, or suburban locations.

Association to NIMS

HSPD-5 requires NIMS adoption and implementation by all local jurisdictional levels and functional disciplines as well as across the full spectrum of potential incidents and hazard scenarios. NIMS defines local jurisdictions as including schools, school districts, and HEIs. Although schools are not traditional response organizations, they have immediate and critical roles in response such as providing command and management directives until local first responders arrive.

When community response organizations (e.g., law enforcement, fire personnel, public and mental health officials) adopt NIMS, they are taking on the same uniform and systematic approach and integrating processes and methods into one unified framework. The NIMS structure features six integrated components that are the foundation of its systematic approach for responding to incidents: 1.) Command and Management; 2.) Preparedness; 3.) Resource Management; 4.) Communications and Information Management; 5.) Supporting Technologies; and 6.) Ongoing Management and Maintenance. The NIMS framework forms the basis for interoperability and compatibility for all agencies with a key role in emergency management. Through joint planning, training, exercises, and evaluation activities, adoption of NIMS enables a diverse set of public and private organizations, including schools and HEIs, to conduct well-integrated and effective incident response operations.

Implementation Guidance

Since all K-12 schools and HEIs have a critical role in emergency management, it is important that they adopt NIMS at the organizational and operational levels and within all appropriate offices, departments, committees, and teams. The NIMS framework and its six components provide the necessary tools for developing an integrated school and campus emergency management program within the community's program. Therefore, NIMS adoption is to be accomplished in close coordination with the local government and community response organizations.

When adopting NIMS, it is also important for education leadership to provide guidance to its school community. HEIs, regional education agencies, State and local education agencies, and district boards of education can all adopt NIMS at the macro level, and then can provide adoption guidance to their individual school and campus sites. For example, applicable college and university offices managed under the Office of the President or the Office of the Provost

may adopt NIMS in partnership with the relevant State and local governments. The same leadership should then provide guidance with its affiliated schools and systems, such as satellite campuses, and auxiliary buildings. Guidance may include timelines, strategies for implementation, and models for partner agreements.

> **Example**: A State-managed university system should provide leadership, guidance, and support to its related campus leadership facilitating adoption of NIMS and integration with the local emergency management agencies.
>
> **Example**: Local school districts should facilitate each of its schools' adoption of NIMS and work in close collaboration with its community partners to conduct the implementation activities.
>
> **Example**: REMS and EMHE grantees are required to provide equitable access to private schools within their jurisdictional boundaries, and therefore should provide nonpublic schools with the same leadership, guidance, and opportunities for partnership with the community response agencies.

NIMS adoption should be formalized and documented. Specifically, K-12 schools and HEIs should formalize and document all their collaborative efforts related to the specific actions described in *NIMS Implementation Activities For Schools and Higher Education Institutions*.

Activities demonstrating that schools and HEIs are adopting NIMS include:

- Documenting NIMS adoption at the school and campus community level;
- Encouraging partners to document school adoption and partnerships;
- Creating a strategy and a timeline for fulfilling each of the activities outlined in *NIMS Implementation Activities For Schools and Higher Education Institutions*;
- Documenting the use of NIMS and its components in all school emergency management activities and documents;
- Scheduling and convening ongoing meetings with partners;
- Working closely with community partners to develop procedures, provide training, conduct exercises, and review plans;
- Ensuring training, in coordination with community partners, is provided to key personnel with critical roles in emergency management (i.e., command-level officers and team members); and
- Reviewing individual school and HEI site plans with partners and ensuring NIMS components are incorporated — training, joint emergency exercises, schedules for continual updates to the plan, interoperability.

Activity 2 – Institutionalize the Incident Command System (ICS) for managing all emergency incidents and pre-planned school and campus events.

All schools and higher education institutions (HEIs) institutionalize the Incident Command System (ICS) for managing all emergency incidents, exercises, and preplanned (recurring/special) events in accordance with ICS organizational structures, doctrine, and procedures, as defined in NIMS.

Association to NIMS

The *Command and Management* component of NIMS creates the ICS that facilitates incident response activities across five major functional areas: *Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance Administration*. The school's, district's, or HEI's emergency management plan(s) detail the use of ICS, its members, their roles and responsibilities, incident action planning activities, and a common communication plan. The established processes and protocols put forth by the ICS must be supported by ongoing training opportunities, collaborative functional exercises, and updates to the plan based on lessons learned.

ICS is scalable and flexible and uses a standardized approach. This approach makes it adaptable to the complexities and demands of a wide variety of school-related incidents. Additionally, the standardized approach facilitates a joint operations response among schools and their emergency management partners including

- Fire personnel and law enforcement;
- Hospitals and emergency service personnel;
- Public and mental health officials;
- Local government and community representatives;
- Media; etc.

When schools and their community response partners institutionalize the ICS, they are better able to implement an effective and coordinated response and hasten the recovery process. Use of ICS serves as the bridge uniting the school response teams to the community first response team partners. ICS makes it possible for a variety of groups to operate from a common structure — one management system designed by integrating a combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure. The strength of the system is reliant on the standardized approach.

NIMS Implementation Guidance

ICS was designed to create one, standardized, on-scene, all-hazard emergency management approach and operating structure to be used by *all* communities (e.g., school and campus personnel, local government officials, community response personnel.) The capacity of NIMS and ICS to support schools is reliant upon strong partnerships that include ongoing communication, coordination, and collaboration among school officials, local government officials, and community response partners (public and private).

ICS roles and responsibilities should be developed, practiced, and enhanced as a team. Therefore, school officials should contact representatives from related agencies and offices in order to ensure appropriate coordination and planning. Furthermore, school and campus leaders should provide the same guidance to auxiliary schools, satellite campuses, and subsidiary schools.

Because the ICS structure is comprehensive yet flexible — able to grow and shrink — it is a practical, cost-effective management tool that is equally appropriate for organizing large-scale, school-hosted events such as athletic events, ceremonies, and dances. These realistic scenarios offer opportunities for practice and evaluation.

Teams should lead debriefing meetings, draft after-action reports, and provide guidance for changes and updates to the plan. Whenever possible and appropriate, emergency management teams should seek feedback from participants such as staff, faculty, students, and parents. The data collected should be analyzed and directly linked to the effectiveness of the plan. Subsequently, these lessons learned become the basis for modifications and strengthening the plan. Institutionalizing the ICS and applying its functions to more common events can be a powerful tool for training, developing positive relationships with partners, and evaluating established plans.

Activities demonstrating school/HEI institutionalizing of ICS include:

- Using ICS to manage all related activities before, during, and after school and campus events to provide for the safety and well-being of attendees.
- Determining, designating, and documenting in advance key personnel and their roles and responsibilities within ICS, including the chain of command;
- Determining, designating, and documenting back-ups to personnel with leadership positions within ICS;
- Integrating common operating and response procedures from all response partners, including public health, mental health, fire and law enforcement departments and agencies;
- Integrating ICS into functional and system-wide emergency operations policies, plans, and procedures;
- Ensuring compatibility of communication devices internally and externally with local responders; and
- Providing joint training opportunities to support ICS.

Activity 3 – Coordinate and support the development and use of integrated Multi-agency Coordination System (MACS).

All schools and higher education institutions (HEIs) coordinate and support emergency incident and event management through the development and use of integrated multi-agency coordination system (MACS).

Association to NIMS

MACS is activated when an incident requires a comprehensive response from agencies across more than one jurisdiction. MACS is a multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional incident response structure and is activated when incidents occur across jurisdictional boundaries (i.e., across city, county, state borders) and involve complex incident response scenarios. For example, during the "DC Sniper Incident," officials from multiple agencies and jurisdictions with the District of Colombia, Maryland, and Virginia carried out a coordinated response via the MACS.

MACS employs a combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures and communications all integrated into one lead system that has the responsibility for managing, coordinating, and supporting incident response activities. MACS comprises personnel, resources, and equipment from multiple agencies, disciplines, and jurisdictions. MACS uses the same unifying principles as the ICS and manages a single incident using the assistance of numerous agencies from various locations. For example, MACS is often employed in response to wide spread seasonal wildfires when firefighters from around the nation provide assistance.

Implementation Guidance

School and HEI participation in the local MACS will help reinforce the NIMS standardized framework among partners and serve to strengthen school emergency management capacity. Successful implementation of a MACS depends on the membership's successful adoption of NIMS, institutionalization of ICS, and the pre-determined coordinated support. When schools adopt standardized methods, they can better facilitate collaboration, foster accountability, and reduce confusion.

The primary functions of a MACS are to:

- Support emergency management policies and priorities;
- Facilitate logistics support and resource tracking;
- Provide information regarding resource allocation decisions to incident response personnel in concert with incident management priorities;
- Coordinate incident related information; and
- Coordinate interagency and intergovernmental issues regarding emergency management policies, priorities, and strategies.

A MACS can include the following entities:

- K-12 schools and HEIs;
- Local law enforcement offices and fire departments;

- Local public and mental health departments;
- Emergency medical services (EMS) (both private and public);
- Local 911 centers;
- Hazardous materials response teams;
- Local and/or state emergency management agencies;
- Local hospitals, ambulatory and urgent care centers, community health centers, and private physicians' offices.

School and campus emergency management officials should work closely with local government and community partners to identify the appropriate avenues for coordinating and supporting the local MACS. Building from pre-established relationships with community partners, schools can take steps to ensure that they are both represented and integrated into the MACS structure. Additionally, school officials should work to ensure that school and campus procedures and equipment complement those of community responders, and support the formation of MACS.

Once MACS relationships have been established, school officials and community response officials participate in ongoing, collaborative planning sessions, including training and emergency exercises. Although the exercises are designed to test the MACS' capacities; identify gaps and weaknesses; and test and validate facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures and integrated communications, they offer additional opportunities for practice and nurturing relationships.

Activities demonstrating that schools/HEIs support MACS coordination include:

- Ensuring interoperability of communication devices with partners and local government;
- Integrating and documenting procedures from all response partners, including public health, mental health, fire, and law enforcement departments and agencies;
- Participating in MACS exercises and debriefings, and integrating determined modifications to plans; and
- Writing partnerships agreements that detail each partner's roles and responsibilities, procedures and protocols, and transfer of command.

Activity 4 - Establish a Public Information System (PIS) within the ICS framework.

All schools and higher education institutions (HEIs) establish a Public Information system within the ICS framework. Public Information includes the assignment of a Public Information Officer and the creation of a Joint Information System and a Joint Information Center.

Association to NIMS

The Public Information System (PIS) establishes a system and protocol for gathering, verifying, coordinating, and disseminating timely and accurate information during a crisis or emergency situation on behalf of the incident commander.

This system uses a single Public Information Officer (PIO) to create a single message on behalf of the many agencies and organizations involved. Using the pre-established policies and protocols, the PIO is the sole person responsible for communicating with the community and media and working to ensure every stakeholder has the necessary information for supporting an effective response. For schools and HEIs, a PIO may communicate to the media a brief description of the event; the school's or HEI's response; and the condition of the students, staff, and visitors. The PIO is pivotal for giving directives on family reunification for K-12 schools, making connections between families and students on campus at HEIs, as well as communicating with students about staff.

Two additional and critical components of the PIS are the Joint Information System (JIS) and the Joint Information Center (JIC). The JIS works to create a single message from multiple response agencies. This is another mechanism to ensure delivery of timely and accurate information. The JIC is a physical location where public information professionals from the organizations involved in the incident response activities can co-locate to exchange critical emergency information, communicate crisis communications, and conduct public affairs functions.

Implementation Guidance

K-12 schools and HEIs should identify and train at least one Public Information Officer (PIO) who is responsible for media and public inquiries before, during, and after an incident. Prior to an incident occurring, the designated PIO should establish working relationships with a variety of local media outlets. The stronger a PIO's relationship is with the local media, the more the media can be of help during an emergency. A single point of contact for the media will help ensure the community receives the necessary information, and subsequently contribute to an effective incident response. The PIO has a distinct role within the ICS, and therefore, the Incident Commander should not also serve the role of the PIO.

The PIO will have roles and responsibilities throughout the four phases of school emergency management. The PIO can create information awareness campaigns for students, staff, and families promoting key prevention-mitigation and preparedness messages. The PIO should also create basic templates in advance addressing a wide variety of scenarios. Therefore, if an emergency were to occur, templates could be tailored quickly to provide the community with essential information. For example, a PIO can maintain an informational page on the school or HEI's campus website, providing preventative information such as how to prevent the spread of germs and critical response information such as how to get information and directives in the event of an emergency.

Roles and Responsibilities of the District, School, or HEI Public Information Officer

During an event, the school or HEI Public Information Officer (PIO) handles:

- Media and public inquiries;
- Emergency public information and warnings;
- Rumor monitoring and response;
- Media monitoring;
- Disseminating accurate and timely information related to K-12 school family reunification;
- Disseminating accurate and timely information related to creating contact between students on campus and family members at home; and
- Other functions required for coordinating and clearing information with appropriate authorities.

Depending on the nature of the incident, the joint information center might be located on or near a school campus. During incidents that occur beyond school grounds, the joint information center should be situated at a separate location predetermined by the local emergency plan. Schools should plan for both scenarios.

Activities demonstrating schools and HEIs are establishing Public Information and its key components (Public Information Officer, Joint Information System, and Joint Information Center) are documented in the emergency management plan and include:

- Identifying a PIO to be the primary liaison for communicating with the public during an emergency;
- Disseminating all pertinent information through the designated PIO;
- Creating their own information centers to execute predetermined processes and procedures for communication during and after a crisis;
- Identifying the processes and procedures for utilizing a PIS, PIO, JIS, and JIC;
- Creating processes for verifying, coordinating, and disseminating information during an incident;
- Determining the names, roles, and responsibilities of the PIO;
- Detailing the management and coordination of publication information with community partners; the media; and the community, including parents, guardians and families;
- Completing all applicable on-line Emergency Management Institute Independent Study courses;
- Developing a plan for communicating critical emergency information to K-12 families in advance and ensuring ongoing crisis communications during an incident; and
- Working with the media proactively to form and communicate response policies and protocols (e.g., when and why an evacuation is ordered and subsequent steps for reunification).

Activity 5 — Establish NIMS strategy and timeline for full implementation.

All schools and higher education institutions (HEIs) establish a NIMS implementation strategy to assess current status of progress towards fulfilling the *NIMS Implementation Activities for Schools and Higher Education Institutions*.

Association to NIMS

Within the six NIMS components, preparedness activities are operationally focused on establishing guidelines, protocols, and standards for planning, training and exercises, personnel qualifications and certification, equipment certification, and information management. NIMS implementation activities are designed to support the building and maintenance of the NIMS structure and approach across multiple jurisdictions and disciplines, at all levels of government. In order for NIMS to effectively support the community, schools and HEIS are urged to fulfill and maintain these implementation activities in close coordination with community partners.

Implementation Guidance

The baseline identifies completed activities and those activities to be developed or completed in close coordination with community partners. K-12 schools and HEIs should develop a strategy and accompanying timeline for completing all *NIMS Implementation Activities for Schools and Higher Education Institutions*. Established partnerships will help facilitate the sharing of information necessary to monitor NIMS compliance progress, build capability, and promote safety and security for schools and HEIs.

NIMS compliance for schools and HEIs receiving Federal preparedness funding is self-assessed and self-reported — it is the sole responsibility of the district, school, or HEI to self-certify that it is supporting NIMS and implementing the required activities. However, NIMS compliance is a community-wide and interdependent effort. Schools, response organizations, and local government must work together to support NIMS components, policies, and procedures. Implementation of NIMS in every tribal and local jurisdiction establishes a baseline capability that, once established nationwide, can be used as a foundation upon which more advanced homeland security capabilities can be built. Therefore, to determine the community-wide incident preparedness level, it is important that schools, HEIs, and the local government work together to integrate and coordinate self-assessments of school and HEI preparedness.

Annual NIMS compliance activities are progressive, building from the prior years' focus and requirements. NIMS Implementation Activities For Schools and HEI are also developmental, growing from year to year. The accompanying checklist to the NIMS Implementation Activities reflects school and HEI implementation activities through Fiscal Year 2007. It is important that schools and HEIs stay current with the directed implementation activities in order to enhance their own preparedness as well as that of the community.

Activities demonstrating schools and HEIs annual self-assessment and coordinated analysis with community partners include:

- Documenting and tracking NIMS adoption and maintenance of requirements at the operational campus, and school levels;
- Creating a strategy and timeline for fulfilling all school and HEI NIMS implementation activities;
- Tracking staff and faculty student completion of ICS and NIMS courses;
- Coordinating assessment timelines with community partner timelines;
- Scheduling and conducting assessment reviews and data analysis; and
- Using the accompanying checklist for *NIMS Implementation Activities For Schools and HEIs*.

Activity 7 – Update emergency management plans to incorporate NIMS and reflect National Response Framework (NRF).

All schools and higher education institutions (HEIs) work closely with community partners to revise and update the emergency management plans to reflect National Response Framework (NRF) and incorporate NIMS components, principles, and policies. School and HEI emergency management plans detail processes for planning, training, response, exercises, equipment, evaluation, and corrective actions. These processes are developed collaboratively between the school and campus teams and the partners from the local first response agencies.

Association to NIMS

NRF supports the nation in the event of an emergency incident in the same manner NIMS supports local communities.[2] NRF builds from NIMS and extends its flexible, scalable, and adaptable coordinating structures to align key roles and responsibilities across jurisdictions, throughout the nation using all-hazards response guidance. Furthermore, using a tiered-response, the NRF is always in effect working to ensure the nation is continually ready to coordinate assistance without a formal activation.

The tenets of the HSPD-5 NIMS, and NRF are interconnected and are designed to be synchronized at the community level. In the spirit of HSPD-5 "Managing Domestic Incidents." NIMS, and the NRF, the school emergency management plan should document and describe organizational structures, roles and responsibilities, policies, and protocols for providing emergency support. The planning activities and the continually refined plan facilitate a coordinated response; hasten the start of recovery activities; and drive decisions on prevention and mitigation efforts or risk based preparedness measures for specific hazards. The school emergency management plan is a reference documents detailing the procedures for performing a single function or a number of independent functions.

Implementation Guidance

School and campus leadership should work with community partners to ensure compatibility of emergency management systems, procedures, and equipment at the State-level and across multiple jurisdictions. Following the NRF, schools and campuses should work to ensure they are not only continually ready to activate an all-hazards response, but also are continually compatible with partnering response entities across multiple jurisdictions and disciplines. Using the principles articulated in NIMS and NRF, schools and HEIs should engage community partners to develop site-specific school and campus emergency management plans that provide strategies and appropriate timelines for providing training, practice, and enhancement opportunities.

NIMS and NRF also emphasize ongoing plan maintenance and continual improvement. School and campus emergency management teams should collaboratively review and update plans with

[2] Published by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in February 2008, the NRF supersedes the National Response Plan.

partners. Any update should reflect the adoption of NIMS and its implementation activities throughout the four phases of emergency management. The plans should reflect NRF and its tenets for continual improvement through training, exercises, and debriefing activities. The plans should document the formally established relationships with community partners.

Once updated, plans should be tested and reviewed through emergency exercises to determine and measure their functional capability. Exercise designs include evaluation and debriefing activities that facilitate a critical analysis of the plan — identifying what went right, and what needs to be improved upon. Collaborative plan reviews should be conducted at least annually and following any event or incident requiring response activities.

The district, school, and HEI plans should detail the team's processes and timelines for continually:

- Identifying and meeting training needs;
- Developing, conducting, and evaluating exercises including plan updates and enhancement activities;
- Procuring or obtaining required incident response resources through mutual aid mechanisms and vendors/suppliers; and
- Assessing and prioritizing risks specific to the school community and campus.

Activities demonstrating schools and HEIs are integrating principles of NIMS, NRF, and continual improvement include:

- Reporting school and campus emergency activities to local community partners, and operational offices;
- Formalizing partner agreements detailing roles and responsibilities in reviewing, maintaining, and continually enhancing the plan;
- Scheduling and conducting plan review meetings with community partners;
- Designing, conducting, and evaluating collaborative emergency exercises that include testing specific components of the plan and its capabilities;
- Leading debriefing meetings and writing after-action reports that put forth tangible activities and timelines for updating the plan; and
- Submitting the revised plan to the local community government.

Activity 8 – Participate in and promote mutual aid agreements.

All schools and higher education institutions (HEIs) participate in and promote interagency mutual aid agreements, to include agreements with public and private sector and/or non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Association to NIMS

Mutual aid is a legal agreement between two or more entities in which they agree to assist one another when their respective resources cannot meet demands. Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) and/or Agreement (MOA) are voluntary commitments exercised at the discretion of the participating entities based on partnerships' specific needs and available resources to meet demands. The signed agreements reflect each partner's roles and responsibilities for providing assistance.

Examples of mutual aid agreements include:

- Direct One-on-One Mutual Aid: resources are obtained from local entities.
- State Coordinated Mutual Aid: once local and direct one-on-one mutual aid resources have been exhausted, schools and HEIs can coordinate with local emergency management who can request additional resources through the state emergency management agency.
- Interstate Mutual Aid: once State coordinated mutual aid resources have been exhausted, state emergency management can activate Emergency Mutual Aid Compact (EMAC). EMAC is more readily available since conditions for providing assistance have been established prior to an event.

Mutual aid agreements are established between districts, schools, HEIs, private sector and nongovernmental organizations to supply personnel, equipment, supplies, facilities, services (i.e. transportation, mental health services), etc. These agreements need to be authorized by officials from each of the participating agencies and jurisdictions.

Implementation Guidance

Schools and HEIs should establish written mutual aid agreements with neighboring districts and campuses, public and mental health agencies, law enforcement and fire agencies, healthcare systems, transportation service providers, etc. Established mutual aid agreements should be shared with local emergency management prior to an incident occurring and should detail the roles and responsibilities specific to each individual partner as opposed to generic statements of support. The responsibilities listed should connect directly to activities and objectives outlined in the school and campus emergency management plan.

The mutual aid system is not a replacement for any individual district, school, or campus emergency planning; rather, it will provide schools or HEIs the additional resources to build their capacity during response and recovery from an incident if needed. It is intended to reinforce each partner's commitment to the sustainability and improvement of the plan as well as each partner's support for the implementation of NIMS.

Agreements demonstrating mutual assistance aid include:

- Definitions of key terms used in the agreement;
- Roles and responsibilities of individual parties;
- Procedures for requesting and providing assistance;
- Procedures, authorities, and rules for payment, reimbursement, and allocation of costs;
- Notification procedures;
- Protocols for interoperable communications;
- Relationships with other agreements among jurisdictions;
- Workers compensation;
- Treatment of liability and immunity;
- Recognition of qualifications and certifications; and
- Sharing agreements, as required.

Activity 9 – Key school and campus personnel complete NIMS training.

All schools and higher education institutions (HEIs) key personnel complete training.

Association to NIMS

Training is one of the most important NIMS implementation activities that Federal, State, territorial, tribal and local entities must complete as they work towards becoming fully compliant with NIMS. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and its training branch, the Emergency Management Institute (EMI), provide training to all officials with emergency response roles and responsibilities. Training requirements are prescribed based on the school or HEIs officials' role and responsibilities in emergency management and incident response.

The U.S. Departments of Homeland Security and Education recommend all **"key personnel"** involved in school emergency management and incident response take the NIMS, ICS, and NRF training courses and support the implementation of NIMS. Because every school, district, and HEI is unique, and works from different operations and management structures, key personnel will vary from education community to community. Therefore, schools and HEI emergency management teams should use their discretion to identify *key personnel* at each of their institutions.

Currently, *key personnel* are required to complete four courses in order for an individual or organization to be considered NIMS compliant through FY 2007. To date, the following courses are required:

- **ICS-100**: *Introduction to the Incident Command System*
- **ICS-200**: *ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents*
- **ICS-700**: *NIMS, An Introduction*
- **ICS-800**.B: *National Response Framework, An Introduction*

NOTE:
1. Completion of course *IS-100.SC: Introduction to the Incident Command System, I-100, for Schools*, constitutes completion of course ICS-100. This course was specifically designed to provide ICS training within a K-12 school-based context.

2. A new course *IS-800.B: National Response Framework* has replaced the previously existing ICS-800, National Response Plan training. If personnel have completed the previous version of this course, they do not need to take the replacement course in order to be considered compliant. However, it is recommended they complete the updated course in order to have the same information as their partners.

Implementation Guidance

U.S. Departments of Homeland Security and Education recommend all "key personnel" involved in school emergency management and incident response be trained in NIMS, ICS, and NRF. Because the process for defining key personnel is complex and schools and HEIs have frequently requested feedback, ED has developed recommendations for consideration when determining who should be trained in which courses.

Schools and HEIs should identify *key personnel* to receive training based on their roles and responsibilities in the overall emergency management program as well as the specific responsibilities related to emergency preparedness, incident management, or response. Schools and HEIs should identify 1.) General Personnel, 2.) Critical Personnel, and 3.) Leadership.

1. **General Personnel:** Personnel with any role in emergency preparedness, incident management, or response.

   Depending on the school or HEI campus, general personnel may include:
   - Emergency Management (Crisis/Incident Response) Team members
   - Nurses and Health Officials
   - School Resource Officers
   - School Security Officials
   - Counselors, Psychologists, Psychiatrists
   - [Information] Technology Specialists
   - Bus Drivers
   - Administrators
   - Educators/Faculty
   - Coaches and Athletic Staff
   - Facilities, Housing, and Food Preparation Staff
   - Resource staff, paraprofessionals, and support personnel

General personnel should take the following TWO courses:

- *ICS 100: An Introduction to ICS for Schools*
- *IS-700 NIMS: An Introduction*

2. **Critical personnel:** Personnel with a critical role in response such as the Incident Commander, command staff, general staff, or member of another key campus emergency management team. This will vary depending upon the school or HEI campus.

   - Command staff typically refers to any staff that serves in the following role of incident commander, public information officer, safety officer, or liaison officer.
   - General staff includes any staff that serves on the operations, planning, logistics, or finance/administration branches of the Incident Command System.

Critical personnel should take the following FOUR courses:

- *ICS 100: An Introduction to ICS for Schools*
- *IS-700 NIMS: An Introduction*
- *IS-/ICS-800.B National Response Framework, An Introduction*
- *IS-/ICS-200 ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents*

3. **Leadership Personnel:** Personnel with a leadership role and are typically obligated to command and manage incidents that occurred on the school or HEI campus in the absence of traditional incident response personnel (e.g., school or IHE Incident Commander). Leadership personnel also include those who would likely be integrated into a more advanced ICS role (unified command and management) should it become necessary.

Depending on the school or HEI campus, leadership personnel may include the following personnel:

- Institution President
- Superintendents
- Provosts
- Director of Campus Security
- School Security Chief
- Campus Chief of Police

The following additional courses are recommended for leadership personnel:

- ICS-300 Intermediate Incident Command System
- ICS-400 Advanced Incident Command System: *ICS-400 Advanced Incident Command System*

NOTES ON ADDITIONAL TRAINING

- ICS-300 and ICS-400 *may* be appropriate for school or HEI campus personnel typically obligated (required) to command and/or manage an incident in the absence of traditional emergency/incident response personnel – for example, the incident commander.
- ICS-400 may be appropriate for school or HEI campus personnel who would likely be integrated into a more advanced ICS role (unified command and management) should it become necessary.
- School or HEIs emergency management teams might discuss the need for this training for appropriate campus staff in close consultation with their local community partners.
- ICS-300 and ICS-400 are not available online and must be taken through in-person State, tribal, and local emergency management training programs.

NIMS courses are administered and accessible in multiple formats.

1. Instructor

Schools and campuses can work with their community partners to identify a qualified instructor and conduct joint training opportunities. The National Integration Center (NIC) Incident Management Systems Division has developed guidance that outlines the content and objectives for acceptable NIMS training materials. Any agency or organization sponsoring NIMS training is responsible for ensuring that the materials being taught adhere to the guidelines provided in the Five-Year NIMS Training Plan[3]. In addition, the sponsoring organization must also verify the qualifications of the instructors based on the guidance provided by the NIC. Certificates of course completion are also the responsibility of the sponsoring agency or organization.

[3] The National Standard Curriculum Training Development Guidance document dated March 2007 was replaced by the Five-Year NIMS Training Plan, published February 2008.

2. On-line, Independent Study

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and its training branch, the Emergency Management Institute (EMI), offer numerous online, independent study courses that are free and include certificates of completion. The ICS- 100, 200, 700, and 800.B courses are all available online as Independent Study (IS) courses offered through the FEMA's Emergency Management Institute (EMI) at http://training.fema.gov. However, ICS-300 and ICS-400 are not available online and must be taken in the classroom.

3. State Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agencies

Local or State Emergency Management Agencies offer training in a classroom setting. School emergency management officials should contact their partners for details on course schedules and logistics.

EMI offers additional NIMS-related online courses that support school emergency management for schools and HEIs:

- IS-701 NIMS Multi-Agency Coordination System (recommended for heads of school and HEI campus emergency management planning programs and ICS Teams)
- IS-702 NIMS Public Information System (recommended for school and HEI campus Public Information Officers)
- IS-703 NIMS Resource Management (recommended for heads of school and HEI campus emergency management planning programs and ICS Teams)

NOTE: For additional information on accessing NIMS training courses please see Appendix B.

Activity 10–Incorporate NIMS and ICS into all emergency management training and exercises.

Schools and higher education institutions (HEIs) incorporate the NIMS and ICS frameworks, principles, and approaches into all trainings and exercises (e.g., table-tops, full-scale drills etc.).

Association to NIMS

School and campus incident response personnel must be adequately trained and practiced in the systematic implementation of NIMS and the ICS. Continual training, practice, and updates to the plan are critical components. Every opportunity should be provided to better integrate NIMS and ICS into these activities. School staff need practical exposure to NIMS and its tenets, in both their school emergency management activities and day to day activities when possible. Because of NIMS reliance on multiple organizations conducting themselves in a similar manner, everyone will need to practice the system developed in conjunction with partners. The strength of NIMS and ICS as foundations for effective response are dependent on training, functional exercises, and updates to the plan.

It is recommended that schools and HEIs participate in realistic multi-disciplinary and multi-jurisdictional exercises to improve integration, interoperability, and response. Functional exercises provide opportunities for realistic practice using the standardized NIMS approach for building relationships and increasing integration with partners.

Implementation Guidance

Schools and HEIs should include NIMS and ICS policies and practices into internal and external training and exercises. During trainings and exercises, plans should be reviewed to ensure school officials are knowledgeable and able to carry out properly their roles and responsibilities during an incident. This is especially critical for scenarios that require a transfer of command. All staff must know, at all times, who is in charge and how to respond under the new command.

In addition to training and practice directly with partners, schools should consider conducting activities that involve the greater community — students, staff, families, and the media. Everyone needs to be informed and trained on their responsibilities in advance of an emergency. For example, families should know how to get information (i.e., website, local radio or TV station) for reunification during an event at a K-12 school. If there is an evacuation or a lockdown in progress, parents and guardians arriving at the school door will impede effective responses. With prior instructions, emergency response and reunification can take place safely and smoothly.

Activities demonstrating schools and HEIs are the incorporating NIMS and ICS principles into all emergency management training and exercises include:

- Documenting the use of NIMS and ICS in all training and exercise programs;
- Creating a timeline for providing appropriate training in collaboration with community partners;
- Creating a timeline for multi-jurisdictional exercises; and
- Creating a timeline for coordinated activities aimed at enhancing the plan.

Activity 11 – Participate in an all-hazard exercise program based on NIMS that involves first responders from multiple disciplines and jurisdictions.

Schools and higher education institutions (HEIs) will participate with partners in an all-hazard exercise program based on NIMS that involves first responders from multiple disciplines, agencies, and organizations.

Association to NIMS

Schools and HEIs will be appropriately trained with their community partners to improve all-hazards incident response capabilities. All agencies involved in incident response participate in realistic multi-disciplinary and multi-jurisdictional exercises to improve integration and interoperability. This type of training ensures that personnel at all jurisdictional levels and across disciplines can function effectively together during an incident. Joint practice will help bridge the gaps between the educational community and their partners.

Schools and campuses can design, conduct, and evaluate a variety of functional exercises to achieve proficiency. Drills provide instruction and/or training for personnel on particular roles, responsibilities, plans, and/or equipment. Additionally, these exercises test the plan. These scenario-based trainings are categorized by tabletops, functional exercises, and full-scale exercises.

- **Tabletops** allow the collaborative team to talk through an emergency scenario in an informal, stress-free environment. A tabletop exercise is a facilitated, scenario-based group discussion regarding the coordination of plans, procedures, and resources with partners. It typically lasts two to four hours and can be used as a getting to know you meeting.

- **Functional Exercises** are stressful simulated events that allow participants to work through plans and procedures in a real-time scenario, typically based in an operations center environment. The exercise pace can be increased or decreased depending on participants' ability to work through their plans and procedures. School buildings and campuses are useful settings for hosting simulated events because they provide realistic sites for training and give partners advance-knowledge of the building.

- **Full-scale Exercises** involve multi-agency responses where resources are actually deployed. Exercises require participants to move actual people and use the authentic apparatus while working through plans and procedures in real-time. All factors are taken into consideration allowing for the activation of the ICS as necessary.

Implementation Guidance

Schools and HEIs should participate in local, regional, and/or State multi-discipline and multi-agency exercises twice per year or every 2 years (dependent on the type of drill or exercise to be held and the size and complexity of the systems involved). Exercise activities should address immediate response (lockdown, evacuation, and shelter-in-place), notification and communication systems, transfer of

command, first-aid, family reunification, and resource management. Exercises can be conducted through drills, tabletop, functional, and/or full-scale exercises.

It is strongly encouraged that personnel conducting drills or helping to plan exercises should have the experience and documented training to facilitate these events. Such exercise design and evaluation training is available from federal and state emergency management agencies.

Evaluators should also be included in all of the planning meetings. The evaluation should be developed progressively, taking into account issues addressed during the exercise development process. As the evaluation tool is being developed, it needs to be framed around four cornerstones:

1. The current capacity to respond to an emergency;
2. Implementation of NIMS compliance activities;
3. Collaboration and integration with community partners; and
4. The unique goal or statement of purpose and criteria of the specific emergency exercise.

Evaluations should provide both quantitative and qualitative data and contribute to improvements in the plan. The ability to identify both strengths and areas for improvement is critical to strengthening the exercise program, the plan, and the partnerships.

Implementation Examples

School and campus emergency management activities demonstrating participation in an all-hazard exercise program include:

- Scheduling and conducting a series of planning meetings and an exercise with community partners;
- Developing a timeline for an exercise program — i.e., schedule meetings for tabletops, functional exercises and full-scale drills;
- Using an evaluator in all meetings for developing a tailored tool capturing the effectiveness of the plan, capacity of the team, implementation of NIMS activities, and the ability to respond to the specific scenario; and
- Informing the local media and community of the event before, during, and after it occurs.

Activity 12 –Incorporate corrective actions into preparedness and response plans and procedures.

All schools and HEIs will incorporate corrective actions into preparedness and response plans and procedures with community partners.

Association to NIMS

NIMS implementation activities work to build emergency management capacity at the community, State/territorial, and Federal levels. This capacity depends on continual improvement activities such as training, exercises, and updates to the plan. Corrective action plans are designed to apply lessons learned from actual events, trainings, or exercises. For example, following a full-scale drill, exercise participants would host a debriefing meeting with the partners and evaluator identifying what went well, and what did not. Using these lessons learned, an After Action Report (AAR) is created along with identified changes for strengthening the plan. Corrective actions make up the improvement plan along with responsible parties and timelines.

Implementation Guidance

After schools and HEI campuses conduct a drill or exercise, a review of activities should be conducted to identify strengths and weaknesses in the plan regarding preparedness, protocols, personnel, equipment, and resources. The school and campus emergency management team should host a debriefing meeting and review the data captured in the evaluation process. After a thorough analysis of the exercise, a corrective action plan should be created and the following aspects should be included:

- The identified corrective action to address the issue(s) or deficiency(ies) found;
- The responsible person or group of people to implement the corrective action;
- The due date for completion of the corrective action;
- Assessment to determine effectiveness of corrective action installed; and
- An indication that the resulting corrective action will be incorporated into all plans and procedures once completed.

School and campus emergency management team activities that demonstrate commitment to incorporating corrective include:

- Identifying strengths and weakness identified in the plan by:
  - Holding debriefing meetings,
  - Reviewing evaluation data collected, and
  - Writing AARs;
- Developing corrective action plans that include:
  - A description of the issue and corrective action,
  - A timeline and person(s) responsible for implementation, and
  - Standards for ensuring the issue is adequately addressed;
- Updating the plan to reflect corrective actions.

Activity 13 – Response Inventory

All schools and higher education institutions (HEIs) maintain an inventory of organizational response assets — equipment, resources, and supplies.

Association to NIMS

Resource management involves coordinating and overseeing the application of tools, processes, and systems that provide incident managers with timely and appropriate resources during an incident. Resources include personnel, teams, facilities, equipment, and supplies. Resource inventory is maintained throughout the four phases of emergency management (Prevention-Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery.)

For example, during the response and recovery phase, personnel, supplies, and equipment may be needed from agencies, organizations, and service providers. Memorandums of Agreement (MOA) and Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) established during the preparedness phase will help ensure schools and campuses are able to secure the necessary services and supplies.

NIMS standardizes the procedures, methodologies, and functions involved in resource management before, during, and after an incident. As with other activities, completing inventories with community response partners and making agreements in advance of an emergency will help ensure resources move quickly and efficiently to support managers and emergency responders. When they are established, multi-agency coordination entities may also prioritize and coordinate resource allocation and distribution during incidents.

Implementation Guidance

Schools and HEIs should support a process for maintaining resources, equipment, tools, and supplies in advance of an emergency and another for securing additional emergency stock in the event that it is needed. The process includes identify the roles and contributions of schools and their partners, persons responsible, and a timeline for replenishing supplies. Additionally, the process should include advance planning with community organizations and agencies for their contributions during an emergency. For example, if a school contracts with a company to provide school bus transportation services, they might formally document and arrange for prioritized services in the event of an emergency evacuation.

> When creating MOUs and MOAs in the preparedness phase, schools and their community partners can address these issues. Agreements can include these maintenance processes as well as the specific resources, supplies, and services that would be needed during the response phase. MOA information may include the following:
>
> - Contact information of who the agreement is with;
> - Types or actual services, supplies, and equipment to be provided;
> - Mobilization method and receipt of resources;
> - Tracking and reporting of resources;
> - Recovery of resources; and
> - Reimbursement of resources.

The emergency management team should select supplies that address the needs of the specific school and campus, its population, climate, facilities, and resources. The plan should document persons responsible for making sure supplies and go-kits are properly stocked and replenished.

In case of an emergency evacuation, it is helpful if every classroom and administrative office (i.e., principals, nurse, facilities, cafeteria) maintain a "go kit," a self-contained and portable stockpile of emergency supplies, often placed in a backpack and left in a readily accessible but secure location so that it is ready to "go." Schools and campuses may store emergency supplies in case its students and staff are required to shelter in place due to an emergency or a lockdown. All supplies should be securely stored in an accessible, central location. They should be labeled, protected, and maintained. Supplies that have expiration dates (such as batteries, food, water, and prescription medications) must be replenished as needed.

School and campus emergency management activities demonstrating integrated maintenance of inventories include:

- Sharing resource inventory information with partners to identify gaps and redundancies;
- Documenting MOAs or contracts for securing additional services, supplies, and equipment during an emergency; and
- Documenting contents, persons responsible, and timelines for quality assurance of go-kits and supplies.

Activity 14–Resource Acquisition

To the extent permissible by law, schools and higher education institutions (HEIs) ensure that relevant national standards and guidance to achieve equipment, communication, and data interoperability are incorporated into acquisition programs.

Association to NIMS

In order for a common operating system to exist, equipment, communications, and data interoperability must be standardized and understood by all. Schools and HEIs should be able to communicate directly with their own staff via phone, computer, and/or radio. An incident or event may disable one or more communication methods, resulting in limited communication resources. For that reason, it is helpful for schools and campuses to build redundancy into their communications plans by ensuring multiple modes of communication are available in case of an emergency. The coordination and usage of common equipment and data sources allows for communications still to function when infrastructure (e.g., phone lines, computer lines) has been impacted. Information technology, phone, and radio communications allow for information to be relayed and coordinated in real-time.

Implementation Guidance

To the extent possible, schools and HEIs should work with their community partners to establish common equipment, communications, and data interoperability resources and standards. School and campus assets should be compatible with those their community partners will be using during incident response. Partners include law enforcement, fire personnel, local hospitals, emergency medical services (EMS), public health, mental health, and any partner with a role in emergency response. To establish and maintain a common operating picture, schools, HEI campuses, and their emergency management partners must work to ensure that accessibility and interoperability are principle goals.

School and campus activities demonstrating an effort to achieve national, State and local equipment, communication, and data interoperability standards includes:

- Coordinating with community partners to emphasize the interoperability of response equipment, communications, and data systems; and
- Making purchasing decisions based on the interoperability of the communications equipment.

Activity 15–Standard and Consistent Terminology

All schools and higher education institutions (HEIs) apply standardized and consistent terminology for school and campus incidents, including the establishment of plain English communication standards across the public safety sector.

Association to NIMS

Effective communications, information management, and information and intelligence sharing are critical aspects of emergency response and emergency management. To support this, NIMS emphasizes the importance of using uniform terminology and plain English to ensure that incident response commands can be easily understood by all.

Communications and information management is reciprocal and requires all partners to speak the same language and use the terminology. When operating in a multi-discipline and multi-jurisdictional setting, using a common language among entities will help to alleviate confusion and miscommunication. This includes both verbal communication and communication equipment.

Implementation Guidance

To support the implementation of NIMS and to ensure effective multi-agency responses, schools and HEIs should use a common language based on plain English. Incident response commands should be communicated uniformly and be understood easily by educational staff (including new personnel, substitutes and volunteers), first responders, and all other community partners. School district and campus staff should use vocabulary and terminology that match that of their community partners. Clear communication standards, including encouraging the use of plain English, should be developed and used in the plan, training activities, and emergency exercises. These communications must be understood by all who need to respond — clear communication should be understood by people new to the community, learning English, and who have auditory impairments.

Furthermore, schools and HEIs should establish a common language that is consistent with the language used by their community partners. Schools, local emergency management, law enforcement, emergency medical services, fire department, and public health personnel all need to become familiar with a common set of terminology — based on plain English. Plain English will bridge the “cultural” and “technical “gaps” between partners. Schools and their partners should use plain English in their plans, training activities, and exercises.

When groups use code words, color codes, and color placards to communicate information during an emergency, they are only effective if all partners agree to their meaning and everyone is trained in the system and is able to remember the codes under duress — new staff, new students, substitutes, new community members, new first response partners, etc. For example, if a district uses terminology such as “Code Red” to indicate a lockdown, a new student or a substitute teacher who is new to the school or to the district may not know what this code means and may not be trained on the required response procedures. Furthermore, everyone would have to be able to recall and process codes. This may be a challenge for many people during an emergency. Instead, if the word “lockdown” is used, and if instructions to lock the doors are given, new or temporary staff will have more information and

are likely to respond more effectively, ensuring the safety of the entire school community. To help ensure clear communication, schools and HEIs should initiate dialogue with the community partners to establish a universal approach to language during emergencies.

School and campus emergency management activities demonstrating an emphasis on plain English include:

- Documenting in the emergency management plan the use of plain English;
- Conferring with partners to agree upon a set of common terminology (e.g., lockdown, evacuate) based on plain English;
- Providing training activities that emphasize the use of plain English;
- Designing, conducting, and evaluating emergency exercises to identify that communications are accessible to all participants and presented using plain English; and
- Designing, conducting, and evaluating emergency exercises to identify that communications equipment are interoperable.

APPENDIX A: RESOURCES SUPPORTING SCHOOL AND HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (HEIS) IMPLEMENTATION OF NIMS

The U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security offer numerous resources to support building school and HEI emergency management capacity:

"Emergency Planning" Website

The U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS) offers the "Emergency Planning" Website designed to support administrators. It is accessible at http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/index.html.

Readiness and Emergency Management For Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance (TA) Center

ED also offers training, resources, and technical assistance to the education community through its REMS TA Center. The REMS TA Center is accessible at http://rems.ed.gov.

"School Preparedness" Website

DHS offers resources to the education community through its website named "School Preparedness." The site, offering information and resources, is accessible at http://www.dhs.gov/xprevprot/programs/gc_1183486267373.shtm.

National Integration Center (NIC) Incident Management Systems Integration Division (IMSID)

DHS created the NIC Incident Management Systems Integration Division. Administered through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA), it oversees the maintenance and refinement of the NIMS and offers resources promoting its adoption. The NIC IMSID is accessible at http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/index.shtm.

NIMS Guides

The National Integration Center (NIC) Incident Management Systems Division Home presents "NIMS Guides" on its website. The NIMS Guides provide clarification on NIMS and provides updates to specific elements of the NIMS document. It is accessible at http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/rm/guide.shtm.

Lessons Learned Information Sharing (LLIS) Web Portal

DHS established LLIS to help first responders, emergency planners and managers, and homeland security partners share information to prevent, prepare for, and respond to terrorism. Additional information on gaining authorization and access to this secure web portal may be found at https://www.llis.gov.

Emergency Management Institute (EMI)

EMI is the FEMA training branch and provides training to the emergency management field. For example, EMI administers the "Introduction to the ICS for Schools" (IS-100.SC), which was developed collaboratively by DHS and ED for schools and HEIs. School emergency management officials can access the free, on-line independent study training courses through EMI's website accessible at http://training.fema.gov/.

APPENDIX B: ACCESSING NIMS TRAINING COURSES

NIMS courses are administered and accessible in multiple formats:

1.) Instructor,
2.) On-line, Independent Study, and
3.) State Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agencies

1. Instructor

Schools and campuses can work with their community partners to identify a qualified instructor and conduct joint training opportunities. The National Integration Center (NIC) Incident Management Systems Division has developed guidance that outlines the content and objectives for acceptable NIMS training materials. Any agency or organization sponsoring NIMS training is responsible for ensuring that the materials being taught adhere to the guidelines provided in the Five-Year NIMS Training Plan[4]. In addition, the sponsoring organization must also verify the qualifications of the instructors based on the guidance provided by the NIC. Certificates of course completion are also the responsibility of the sponsoring agency or organization.

2. On-line, Independent Study

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and its training branch, the Emergency Management Institute (EMI), offer numerous online, independent study courses that are free and include certificates of completion. The ICS- 100, 200, 700, and 800.B courses are all available online as Independent Study (IS) courses offered through the FEMA's Emergency Management Institute (EMI) at http://training.fema.gov.

ICS-300 and ICS-400 are not available online and must be taken in the classroom.

3. State Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agencies

Local or State Emergency Management Agencies offer training in a classroom setting. School emergency management officials should contact their partners for details on course schedules and logistics.

Additional Training Opportunities

EMI offers additional NIMS-related online courses that support school emergency management for schools and higher education institutions (HEIs):

- *IS-701 NIMS Multi-Agency Coordination System* (recommended for head of school and campus emergency management planning program and ICS Team)
- *IS-702 NIMS Public Information System* (recommended for school and campus Public Information Officer)
- *IS-703 NIMS Resource Management* (recommended for head of school and campus emergency management planning program and ICS Team)

[4] The National Standard Curriculum Training Development Guidance document dated March 2007 was replaced by the Five-Year NIMS Training Plan, published February 2008.