Chapter 8

# Ethical Leadership in Troubling Times:
## Creating a Safe School Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)

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## ABSTRACT

*An administrator in a PK-12 setting has is an ethical responsibility to ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone on campus. With an increasing number of safety incidents on school and university campuses throughout the country, the development and maintenance of a school emergency operations plan (EOP) everyone knows, understands, and follows is imperative. This chapter presents a format to make sure students, staff, parents, and any others on campus at the time of an incident are safe. Following the blueprint created by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, this chapter walks the planning team through the necessary steps to create a safe plan to follow in the event of an emergency. Special interest is provided dealing with an active shooter incident. The decisions the leader makes can have a positive or negative impact on the student/staff at the site. An ethical leader needs to plan for the worst and have staff prepared to deal with the worst with the hopes of never having to implement the plan.*

## INTRODUCTION

Safety concerns and decisions are a daily occurrence for pk-12 administrators. Most decisions do not require a quick emergency response, but some due. Ensuring the safety of all students and staff is vital. This chapter will examine the ethical response for various school emergencies with specific outlines and guides for each emergency. Specifically, this chapter provides an overview of creating, implementing, and following a school emergency operations plan (EOP) which would be enacted in the event of a school emergency, be it a natural or environmental event. This chapter also covers what to do in the event of an active shooter on campus; how to conduct safe lockdowns. By following this outline and

guide, the school site should develop an emergency operation plan that will assist the school is safely dealing with an incident which may occur. Weather-related issues in addition to man-made issues are discussed. As an ethical leader of a school site, the responsibility to maintain the safety of all students, faculty, and staff is relegated to the leader.

## BACKGROUND

Columbine High School, Sandy Hook Elementary School, and Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in Parkland, Florida, all share a horrendous tragic event – a school shooting. These are the names of the schools where numerous students/faculty members were killed. These are the locations that saw both terror and heroism within the same time frame. These are the locations where movements sprang forth as well. *Rachel's Challenge* (see http://rachelschallenge.org) was started by the father of slain Columbine student, Rachel Joy Scott, who was the first person killed at Columbine, and Mr. Scott has taken Rachel's message to schools across American. The recent shooting at Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida (2018) has also sparked nation-wide protests for gun reform, with the emphasis on purchasing automatic weapons and the ease with which they can be purchased. There have been more than 200 shootings/violence occurrences in the United States at schools, colleges, and/or universities.

Over 200 incidents of violence have occurred in public and private schools, colleges and universities, and yet, the mainstream public does not appear to be aware of the staggering number of these events. It's apparent that there is some type of violence occurring each month on schools and campuses across the nation. So, what can an ethical leader do to prevent from having the school site be either a "statistic" or highlighted in the media for some tragic occurrence? As a school leader, one's ethical responsibility is to prepare for the worst, by preparing an effective EOP.

## MODEL CODE OF ETHICS FOR EDUCATORS (MCEE)

The MCEE is a set of five Principles to which educators should adhere to. They are as follows:

**Principle I:** Responsibility to the Profession
**Principle II:** Responsibility for Professional Competency
**Principle III:** Responsibility to Students
**Principle IV:** Responsibility to the School Community
**Principle V:** Responsible and Ethical Use of Technology (NASDTEC, 2015)

Each of these principles has subsets underlying and outlining expectations. Principles II and II will be examined in this chapter.

### Principle II: Responsibility for Professional Competence

*The professional educator is committed to the highest level of professional and ethical practice, including demonstration of the knowledge, skills and disciplines required for professional competence.*

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