



The New York State Center for School Safety
Providing support to schools, families, and communities

Emergency Response Planning: Integrating the Needs of Students and Staff with Disabilities and Other Access and Functional Needs

April 2021



New York State Education Department



New York State Center for School Safety



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PREVENT



MITIGATE



PROTECT



RESPOND



RECOVER

Session Outline

Introduction to the topic

- Relevance of topic
- Overview of access and functional needs
- Range and types of disabilities and access and functional needs
- Applicable laws and statutes
- Six key planning principles

Connection to the Six-Step Planning Process

Summary and next steps



Session Outcomes

Identify	A range of access and functional needs that your team should consider when developing your Building-Level Emergency Response Plan.
Identify	Key individuals to include on your Building-Level Emergency Response Team.
Explain	Assessments that will help your team adequately plan for access and functional needs.
Describe	How to integrate the needs of students and staff with disabilities and integrate access and functional needs into all functional annexes.

Relevance of Topic

Of the 2.6 million students in K-12 schools in NY, approximately 18% are students with disabilities.

- Schools are required to comply with the functional and access requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Students, staff, and others with disabilities and other access and functional needs **may face unique challenges when responding to an emergency situation:**
 - Awareness of alert systems;
 - Clear understanding of the emergency situation;
 - Mobility and/or transportation needs; and
 - Communication.

A comprehensive Emergency Response Plan must account for the entire school community.



Emergency Response Planning: Teams and Plans

Education Law §2801-a & Commissioner's Regulation §155.17
require creation of different **Safety Teams**:

❖ District-Wide Safety Team

❖ Building-Level Emergency Response Team

- Emergency Response Team
- Post-Incident Response Team



Emergency Response Planning: Teams and Plans

**District-Wide
Safety Team**



District-Wide
Safety *Plan*

**Building-Level
Emergency Response Teams**



Building-Level
Emergency Response *Plan*

Overview of Access and Functional Needs

What are the access and functional needs that should be addressed by a Building-Level Emergency Response Plan (ERP)?

Range and Types of Disabilities and Access and Functional Needs

Types of Disabilities and Access and Functional Needs:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Sensory○ Physical○ Cognitive/Developmental | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Speech/Language○ Social/Emotional/Behavioral |
|--|---|

Range of Disabilities and Access and Functional Needs

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Mild to severe○ Apparent or not obvious | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Short or long-term○ Singular or multiple |
|--|---|

Applicable Laws and Statutes

■ Federal

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
(reauthorized in 2004 and called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA))
- Individuals with Disabilities in Emergency Preparedness (Executive Order No. 13347)
- Nondiscrimination under Federal Grants and Programs (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation, Comprehensive Services, and Developmental Disabilities Act of 1978)

■ New York State

- NYS Education Law
- NYSED [CR Part 200](#): Students with Disabilities

■ Other Considerations

- Local Board of Education policies
- Regulations of the Chancellor of the NYC DOE
- Health Codes

Comprehensive ERPs Are Supported by Six Key Planning Principles



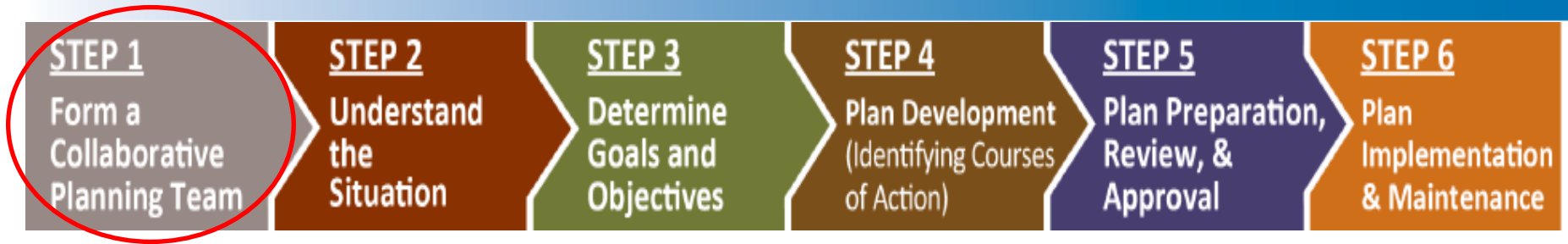
Connection to the Six Step Planning Process



Building-Level Emergency Response Plans:

Consider what information is **CONFIDENTIAL** and determine who has a **NEED TO KNOW**

Step 1: Form a Collaborative Planning Team



Identify the Core Planning Team

- Determine community partners (such as first responders, mental health and public health professionals, as well as representatives from the disability community).
- Consider including teachers, counselors, school nurses, individualized education program (IEP) case managers, school psychologists, and transportation providers in your team.
- Include students with disabilities or other access and functional needs, or their representatives, in planning activities.

Identify a Core Planning Team and Form a Common Framework

Identify Core Planning Team – Consider including the following individuals:

- School staff, such as teachers, counselors, school nurses, IEP case managers, school psychologists, and transportation providers;
- Students and staff with disabilities or other access and functional needs, or their representatives;
- Parents, paraprofessionals, teaching assistants, 1:1 aides;
- Community partners, such as first responders, mental and public health professionals, and individuals from organizations that represent individuals with disabilities;
- Facilities staff.

Form a Common Framework

Define and Assign Roles and Responsibilities and Determine Regular Schedule of Meetings

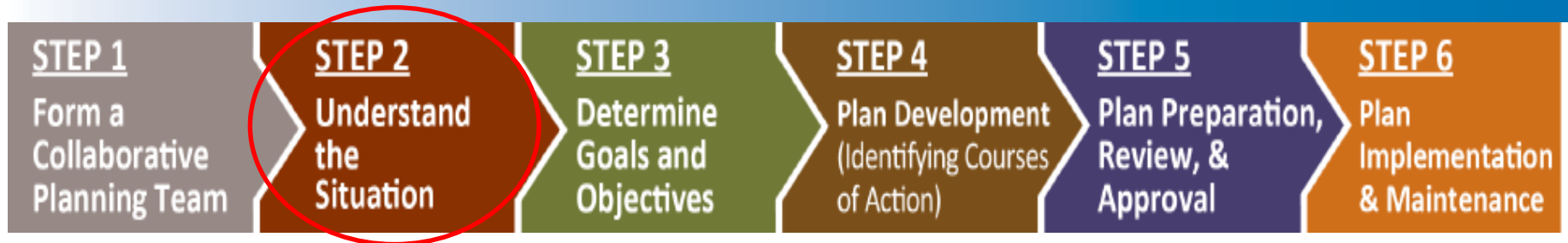
Define and Assign Roles and Responsibilities:

- Review all policies and procedures.
- Establish procedures for managing, maintaining, and operating specialized medical equipment and supplies.
- Serve as trainers to other community partners.

Determine a Regular Schedule of Meetings:

- Facilitate discussions to get community buy-in and support.

Step 2: Understand the Situation



- In Step 2, schools will conduct a number of assessments to identify the threats and hazards that will be addressed in their school ERP.
- Assessments that may reveal critical information about how threats and hazards impact individuals with disabilities and other access and functional needs include:
 1. the Site Assessment; and
 2. the Capacity Assessment.
- In addition, your student's Individualized Education Plans (IEP) and 504 plans will help your team identify their physical, social-emotional or behavioral needs which are pertinent to planning for emergencies.

Conducting a Site Assessment

- Check and then repair or modify pathways with access to assembly areas, evacuation routes, etc.
- Check regularly to ensure that all fire and safety codes are being met:
 - Hallways are clear and open.
 - Doors are not blocked.

Evaluate ADA Compliance:

- Width of doors is adequate.
- Floors are leveled.
- Electrical backups have been provided for.
- Universal symbols are used on signage.
- Toileting facilities ensure privacy.
- Emergency notification system addresses the access and functional needs of the entire school community, including those of persons with disabilities.

Nine Areas to Guide a Site Assessment

- Personal health needs
- Getting around (wheelchairs)
- Transportation (specialized car/van)
- Electricity dependence
- Disaster debris
- Evacuation difficulty (e.g., from a floor above ground-level)
- Building exits
- Service animals
- Communication

From the American Red Cross publication, *Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities*.

Conducting a Capacity Assessment

Check alert systems:

Are they appropriate and relevant?

Are these tested during drills and exercises?

Ensure that essential supplies and equipment are onsite:

For example, evacuation chairs for schools without elevators.



Understanding Your Students

Considerations:

- Social-emotional needs
- Behavioral needs and behavior plans
- Do your students need to be alerted in advance to changes in their schedule?
- Do your students need a social story to practice and learn a procedure?
- Do they exhibit a challenging behavior when stressed or upset (e.g. aggression, self-harm, elopement, etc.)?

Sources of Information:

- Individualized Education Plans (IEP)
- 504 plan
- Your staff, students, and families



Understanding Your School Community

Consider Access and Functional Needs for:

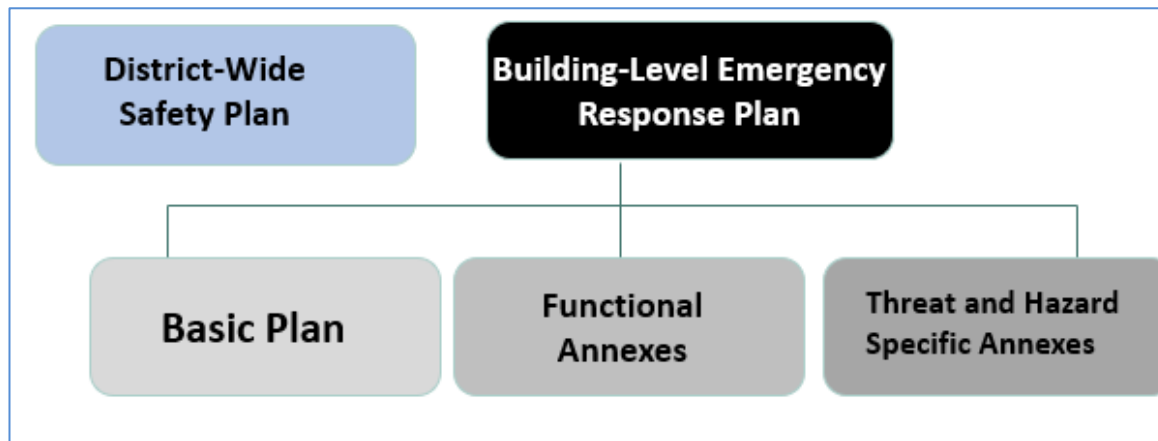
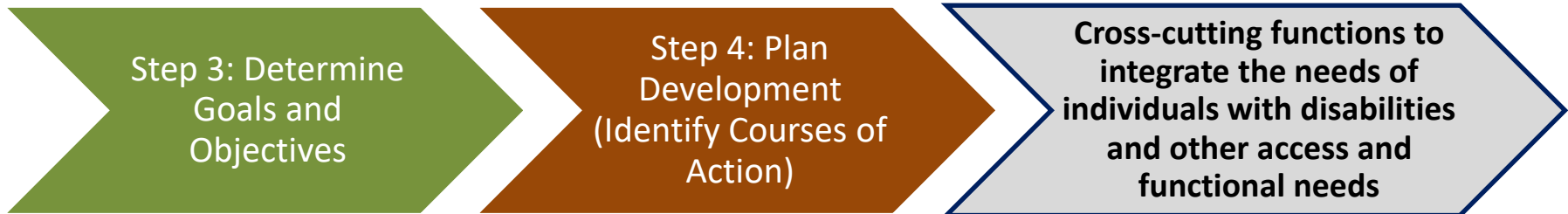
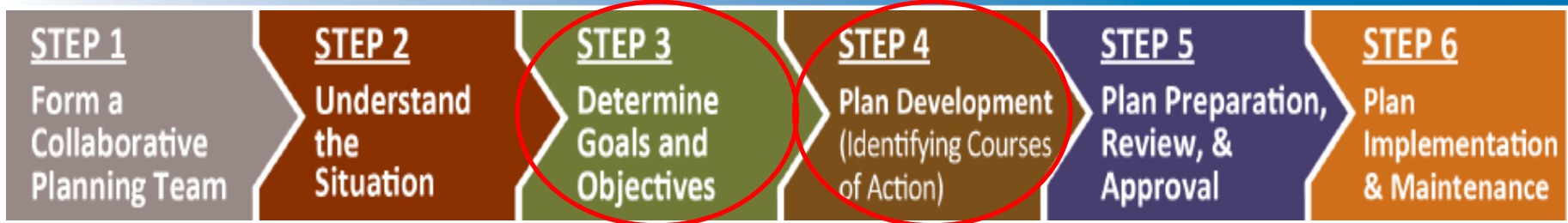
- Your staff
- Contracted staff
- Visitors to your school
- Temporary needs of students and staff



Understanding Your School Community



Steps 3 & 4: Develop Goals, Objectives, and Courses of Action



Functional Annexes

■ Evacuation	■ Family Reunification
■ Lockdown	■ Continuity of Operations
■ Shelter-in-Place	■ Recovery
■ Accounting for All Persons	■ Public Health, Medical, and Mental Health
■ Communications and Warning	■ Security

Evacuation Annex

Evacuation considerations:

- Can the individual navigate an exit route unassisted?
- Will the individual know the exit route, even when not able to see it?
- What are the alternative exit routes, devices, or assistance procedures?
- Do any of your students respond to emergencies in a concerning way?

Considerations related to lending assistance:

- Provide staff training on the appropriate procedures to lend assistance.
- Plan for guide dogs to be evacuated with their owners.
- Consider special transportation needs.
- Communication needs - access to/understanding of assistive technology.

Other Considerations:

- Food and water.
- Medications, medical equipment, and supplies.*
- Bathroom and toileting needs.

*Connects to Public Health, Medical, and Mental Health Annex

Evacuation Annex (cont.)

Prepare Go-Kits:

Stockpile essential emergency supplies.

Ensure that go-kits meet the needs of the individual student or staff member with the disability or access and functional need.

Check your inventory periodically to ensure that equipment and supplies are in working order.

Ensure that all members of your team know where go-kits are stored.

Lockdown Annex

Lockdown considerations:

- Classroom size must be large enough to allow students and staff to move away from windows and doors.
- Students with mobility impairments can be moved to the interior of the classroom.
- Bathroom and toileting needs (if student must utilize the nurse's office for toileting).
- Social communication needs - if whispering or no talking during a lockdown, this needs to be communicated to students in advance, with a rationale explained, with opportunities for practice.

Shelter-in-Place Annex

Considerations for sheltering in place:

- Access to bathrooms, toileting needs.
- Availability of medications.
- Food and necessary feeding equipment are accessible.
- Accommodations have been made for service animals.
- Appropriate activities for keeping students occupied are on-hand.
- Staff-to-student ratio is appropriate for extended stay in classroom.
- Coping mechanisms to support student anxiety or emotional needs during the emergency situation.

Communications and Warning Annex

Use communication systems to alert all students and staff, including those with disabilities and access and functional needs, to emergencies by using:

- **Visual aids;**
- **Sign language;**
- **Large print signage; and**
- **Alarm systems (audible, visual).**

Consider planning for students who use communication devices.

Family Reunification Annex

Considerations for addressing the needs of the entire school community during family reunification procedures include:

- Re-locating students to safe areas;
- Using staff who recognize students as well as parents and guardians;
- Following release procedures with parents and caretakers; and
- Implementing an established documentation process.

Recovery Annex

Academic Recovery:

- Return to a regular schedule as soon as possible.
- Attempt to move forward with previously scheduled activities (e.g., graduation ceremony).
- If necessary, design a split schedule.

Physical Recovery:

- Plan for utility disruptions.
- Consider sharing space with neighboring schools.

Public Health, Medical, and Mental Health Annex

To meet the medical needs of the entire school community, have:

- Safe and secure storage of necessary supplies and medicine;
- A supply of prescription medications (3- 5 days);
- Secondary/backup equipment and supplies;
- Copies of physicians' orders; and
- Mobile records.

Examples of specialized equipment and supplies:

- Evacuation chairs
- Transfer-height cots
- Communication boards
- Oxygen tanks and masks
- Feeding tubes
- Wheelchairs (manual & electric)
- Gurneys
- Walkers
- Respirators
- Communication devices

Step 5: Plan Preparation, Review, and Approval

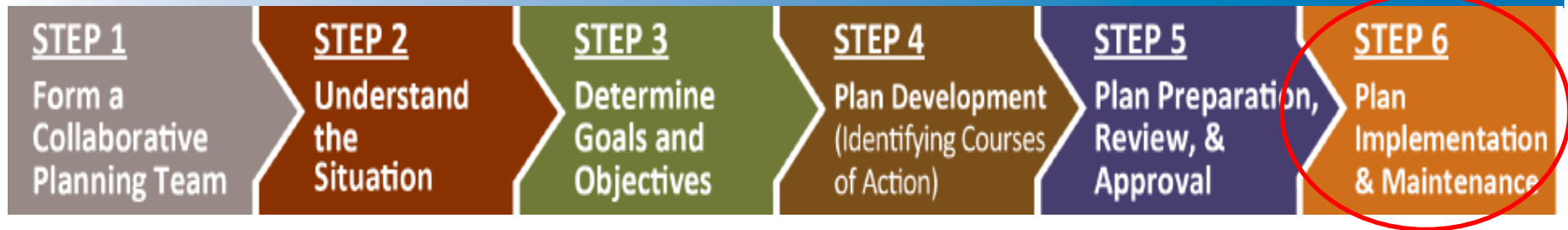


The emergency planning team reviews the plan, obtains official approval, and shares the plan with:

- community partners, such as first responders;
- local emergency management officials;
- staff; and
- stakeholders.

Emergency planners should review the written plan for compliance with applicable laws and for its usefulness in practice.

Step 6: Plan Implementation and Maintenance



In Step 6, the emergency planning team:

- **Trains** stakeholders on the plan and their roles in it;
- **Exercises** the plan; and
- **Reviews, Revises, and Maintains** the plan.

Train Stakeholders on the Plan and Their Roles

Training topics may include:

Learning about the types of disabilities and access and functional needs within the school

How to work with service animals

How to use specialized equipment and supplies

How to lend assistance to vulnerable persons using appropriate emergency response techniques.

Exercise the Plan

Practice evacuations, lockdowns, and shelter-in-place response procedures to ensure that:

- All populations are planned for adequately; and
- First responders are familiar with the unique needs of persons with disabilities and others with access and functional needs.

Practice Conducting Drills and Exercises Using:

- American Sign Language
- Tactile sign
- Limited vision/communication
- Picture books
- Braille
- Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)
- Computer-assisted communication
- Electronic text messaging

Summary and Next Steps

This training has outlined several ways in which the needs of persons with disabilities and of others with access and functional needs can be integrated into each step of the planning process.

Based on what you've learned in this training, identify:

- One **new** way in which you plan to involve students or staff with disabilities or others with access and functional needs in your planning process; and
- **One new** strategy you will add to your Emergency Response Plan to accommodate the needs of students or staff with disabilities or with access and functional needs during an emergency event.



For more information

- ❖ Visit our website www.nyscfss.org
- ❖ Contact The New York State Education Department safetyplans@nysed.gov
- ❖ Visit the REMS TA Center website <https://rems.ed.gov/>



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