

HOSTAGE SCENARIO

It is 11:00 a.m., Monday morning, the first day of school following a significant weekend in the school's history. The previous Friday night _____ High School had defeated its rival school and had qualified for the State playoffs. Unfortunately, immediately following the game, a fight occurred in the school parking lot. The fight appeared to be gang-related, and two students from the visiting school were transported to the local emergency room. The hospital reports that their injuries were severe.

At 11:05 a.m., a student reports to the gym teacher that he saw four students from the rival school on campus between the gym and the baseball field. The student reports that the students are dressed in gang attire and appear to be armed. The teacher immediately checked outside and observed two individuals approaching the _____ wing of the building. The teacher immediately contacts the school principal's office to report the intruders. During this conversation, two gunshots are heard. Within several seconds, a school custodian calls on his radio from the second floor to report that a teacher has been shot and is lying outside room 206. The custodian also reports that he observed two teenagers run into room 204.

The superintendent of schools is out of town attending a conference.

Scenario Questions:

1. Based on this scenario, what are the principal's first concerns?

The principal's first concerns should be the safety of the students and staff and the condition of the teacher who has been shot.

2. What initial actions should the principal take?

The principal should establish command and order a lock-down immediately.

3. What should the principal do next?

The principal should dial 9-1-1. This is not a situation with which school personnel are equipped to deal. After calling 9-1-1, size up the situation. Try to find out what is happening, whether additional people are injured, and how seriously. (Caution the groups that they should place no one at risk to gather this information.)

HOSTAGE SCENARIO (CONTINUED)

4. Draw your initial emergency organization, including personnel assigned to each position (by title), in the space below.

Focus on the rationale behind the groups' organization charts. Do not let the groups merely state that the organization is "in the school's emergency plan." Try to draw out the individuals' qualifications for the positions assigned.

Minimally, the groups' organization charts should include an Incident Commander, a Safety Officer, and Section Chiefs. Remind the groups that, because of the lock-down situation, not all personnel will be available for their regular ICS assignments.

5. For what contingencies must you plan?

The incident is unfolding in a classroom and you know that the intruders are armed. You should prepare for the possibility that the intruders will:

- **Shoot or otherwise injure additional students and/or staff.**
- **Leave the classroom and pose a risk to others as they make their escape.**

HOSTAGE SCENARIO UPDATE #1

[Distribute this update 20 minutes into the exercise!]

It is now 11:20 a.m., and the initial police officers have responded to the scene. One officer has radioed dispatch that two teenagers dressed in gang attire were running into the intermediate school complex. The officer believes that the teenagers entered the building through the door at the _____ of the complex.

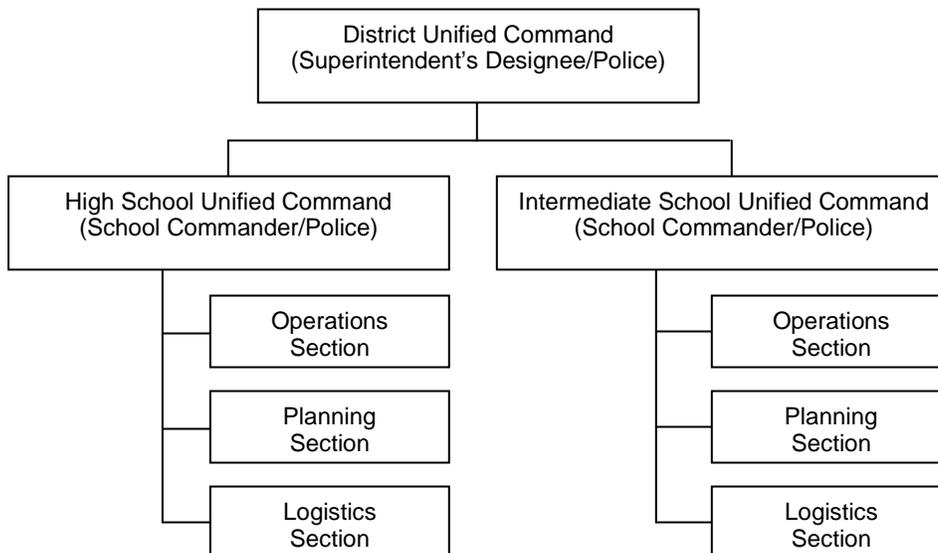
Update #1 Questions:

1. How will the expansion and escalation of the event affect school command and control?

This expansion and escalation of the event takes the incident beyond a single school. The school command should be transferred to someone at the district level. Because the superintendent is out of town, command should be assumed by the superintendent's designee. (Note that if the superintendent has no designee, this should be recorded as a "lesson learned" and addressed when the students return to their schools/districts.)

2. Draw your new incident organization in the space below.

Point out that incident management should now shift to the district office. Each school should also have an ICS structure in place that reports to the district structure, similarly to that shown below.



HOSTAGE SCENARIO UPDATE #1 (CONTINUED)

3. How will the Unified Command at the district office be briefed on the situation? What information will you provide?

The groups should have a notification mechanism in their school plans. If they do not, suggest that they record district notification as a “lesson learned” from this exercise.

Information provided (by the high school commander) to the district office should include:

- **What has occurred.**
- **The current situation.**
- **Information about the teacher who has been shot.**
- **Actions that have been taken to this point in the incident.**

School protocols may require that other information be provided to the district office as well.

4. How will you work with police officers for the remainder of this incident?

The groups’ responses should focus on cooperation with response personnel. At this point, the incident should be managed using a Unified Command that includes law enforcement and school personnel jointly making decisions. Although the school personnel’s role may be limited to providing information, a school representative must be part of the command structure because the school district remains legally responsible for the welfare of the students and staff.

5. For what contingencies must you plan?

The groups should plan for:

- **The possibility that the teacher who was shot could be fatally injured.**
- **The possibility that additional persons could be injured.**
- **Long-term counseling needs for students, faculty, and staff.**

The groups may plan for other contingencies as well.

HOSTAGE SCENARIO UPDATE #2

[Distribute this handout 35 minutes into the exercise!]

It is now 11:30 a.m.. After consulting briefly with the superintendent's designee, the police Incident Commander has ordered that a perimeter be established around the _____ wing of the high school and the _____ wing of the intermediate school and has ordered a complete evacuation of all other school facilities. He has also ordered an outer perimeter around the entire school property.

Fire and emergency medical services units have been dispatched to the scene.

Word of the incident is beginning to circulate through the faculty, staff, and student body. Several students have used their cell phones to call their parents.

Update #2 Questions:

1. What actions should you take based on this new information?

School officials should:

- **Carry out the evacuation order as quickly and quietly as possible.**
- **Begin student accounting procedures as soon as the evacuation is complete.**
- **Order a lock-down in the parts of the school that have not been evacuated.**
- **Prepare for a surge of parents and media at the school.**

2. To what location will you evacuate the students? If you evacuate to a different location than is usual during school drills, how will you notify the teachers of the change in location?

The groups should specify a location, whether it is the usual location or a different one, that is at a safe distance from the school building (preferably out of the line of sight to avoid the possibility that stray bullets could injure students or staff).

Because the situation is unfolding so quickly, the best way to notify the faculty is by placing someone at each exit from the school. The person would be responsible for directing teachers as they leave the building with their classes.

3. Draw your organization as it appears at this time.

Note that all personnel who have primary responsibilities during an incident may not be available. The groups should mention a list of available backup personnel and include those personnel in their organization charts.

HOSTAGE SCENARIO UPDATE #2 (CONTINUED)

4. What will you do in response to the students who have called their parents?

The groups should prepare for the arrival of parents and the media. One way to try to control the potential situation is to ask the Public Information Officer to prepare an immediate media release that briefly explains:

- **The current situation.**
- **That police are on the scene and are responding to the situation.**

The media release should also tell parents:

- **Not to call the schools or district office.**
- **That they will not be allowed on campus at this time.**

5. For what contingencies should you plan?

The groups should plan for the possibility of one or more injuries to students or staff as they leave the building.

HOSTAGE SCENARIO UPDATE #3

[Distribute this handout 60 minutes into the exercise!]

It is now 11:50 a.m. A news helicopter has arrived on the scene and is circling the campus. Significant numbers of parents have arrived at the perimeter and are angry that they cannot pick up their children. Two news crews have also arrived at the perimeter and are attempting to interview the police officers and parents. They are broadcasting live from the scene to their stations.

The phones at the district office have been ringing constantly, and 9-1-1 dispatch reports that its lines are jammed with incoming calls requesting information.

Update #3 Questions:

1. Based on this new information, what should you do?

One action that could help this situation is to send the Public Information Officer to the perimeter to establish a Joint Information Center (JIC). A JIC will ensure that all media representatives receive the same information and help to prevent unsubstantiated reports from being broadcast.

A senior school representative (not the school's representative to the Unified Command) should also go to the perimeter to talk with the parents, explain the situation, and diffuse their anger.

2. What does your organization look like at this time?

HOSTAGE SCENARIO UPDATE #3 (CONTINUED)

3. How can the media be used to assist the police and school authorities?

The media can be very helpful in assuring parents and others that the situation is being dealt with by professional responders and that the students are safe. They can also broadcast an appeal not to call or come by the school and explain that, for the students' safety, parent/student reunification will not occur at this time.