

Smith, S., T. Kress, E. Fenstermaker, M. Ballard, and G. Hyder (2001). "Crisis Management Preparedness of School Districts in Three Southern States in the USA." *Safety Science*, 39, 83-92.

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The article describes the results of a baseline study to assess the status of crisis management preparedness in public school districts in three southern states in the United States. Self-reported responses were collected by distributing a 22 question self-reporting survey to all school districts and systems in the states of Tennessee, North Carolina and Georgia. Threats by students were indicated as requiring district team activation by 40% of responding districts. This baseline study indicated that 95% of responding districts have some type of district crisis management plan, 77% have a district crisis management team and 88% have a part- or full-time director designated for crisis situation. While these initial findings sound promising, the low number of districts (less than 50%) self-reporting at least one full day of training in the last year and no full-scale drill is indicative of a very low level of crisis preparedness. This lack of preparedness reported in combination with the relatively high level of crisis incidents, such as student deaths, violence (fights), weapons on campus, and student threats, gives rise for concern, and districts should pay special attention to increasing future training efforts and performing more full-scale drills. Overall, crisis plans should be improved in order to ensure adequate school district crisis preparedness.