



Hurricane Harvey Recovery Leadership: Peer-to-Peer Mentor Project



Summary Report

March 2018



Saving Lives. Protecting Americans.



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Introduction

*“Recovery is a marathon, not a sprint; but it may feel like a marathon of sprints!” –
Joshua Barnes, Recovery Director, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Hurricane Harvey made landfall near Rockport, Texas, on August 25, 2017, as a Category 4 hurricane. It then hovered over southeastern Texas for five days as a tropical storm, dropping over four feet of rain and causing unprecedented flooding. Harvey affected an area 300 miles long and 100 miles wide. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) estimates the storm affected up to one million students, and 200 of the state’s 1,200 school districts had closures.

Recovery consequences from a major disaster can be difficult to identify, unless those issues are elevated from community leaders to state and federal recovery and response officials. Therefore, to better understand the recovery needs from Hurricane Harvey, the Health and Social Services (HSS) Recovery Support Function (RSF)¹ worked alongside state, regional, and local partners to conduct a multi-agency landscape assessment across the region. Six teams visited 112 sites in 13 of the most heavily affected counties. Throughout the visits, the central role that schools play in leading the local recovery effort was a recurring theme. A key observation during these visits was the recognition of the central role the school districts play not only in supporting the students and families, but also as a community anchors – critical for recovery.

Leading school districts under normal circumstances can be challenging. Leading school districts during response and recovery efforts is overwhelming. Experience from prior incidents supports the value of peer-to-peer engagements in disaster recovery as a critical tool in building capacity and facilitating local recovery momentum to deal with immediate, short-term, and long-term recovery issues. The purpose of the peer-to-peer mentoring project was to connect school district leaders with disaster recovery experience with school district leaders currently engaged in recovery efforts to build upon and share lessons learned from past recovery efforts through mentorship.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), in partnership with the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), the School Superintendents Association, the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance Center (REMS TA), the U.S. Department of Education, and TEA identified school leaders to serve as mentors and worked with affected regional Education Service Centers (ESCs) to develop the peer-to-peer mentoring sessions.

¹ Led by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response

SESSION OVERVIEW

At the core of this project was bolstering leadership capacity at the local, state, and federal level by crowd sourcing past knowledge and expertise, applying lessons learned to current models, and building upon that knowledge for future response efforts. In doing so, the expected outcomes include increased leadership retention, resource capacity, and sustainability.

Four education service center (ESC) regions hosted peer-to-peer seminars in February and March 2018. The purpose of the event was to share best practices and lessons learned to build capacity across education systems. The seminar served as a platform for sharing ideas and experiences and identifying tools and resources to support recovery efforts from any catastrophic event.

Each session was between five and six hours in length and included presentations on a variety of topics including mental health needs, communication in disasters, hazard mitigation for schools, Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) tools, and leader care. In addition, both mentors and participants were able to share lessons learned and best practices.

Region	Workshop Date	Workshop Location	# of ISDs
2	February 20, 2018	Corpus Christi, TX	4
3	February 27, 2018	Victoria, TX	11
4	March 6, 2018	Houston, TX	35
5	March 7, 2018	Beaumont, TX	17

Table 1: Peer-to-Peer Workshops: Dates and Locations

There were 134 representatives from 67 independent school districts (ISDs) involved in the four events (see Table 1). All together, these districts represent 911 schools, 52,984 teachers (based on the 2016-2017 school year), and 830,160 students (as of October 2017)

FEMA-4332-DR-TX - Hurricane Harvey
Peer-to-Peer Network Participating School Districts

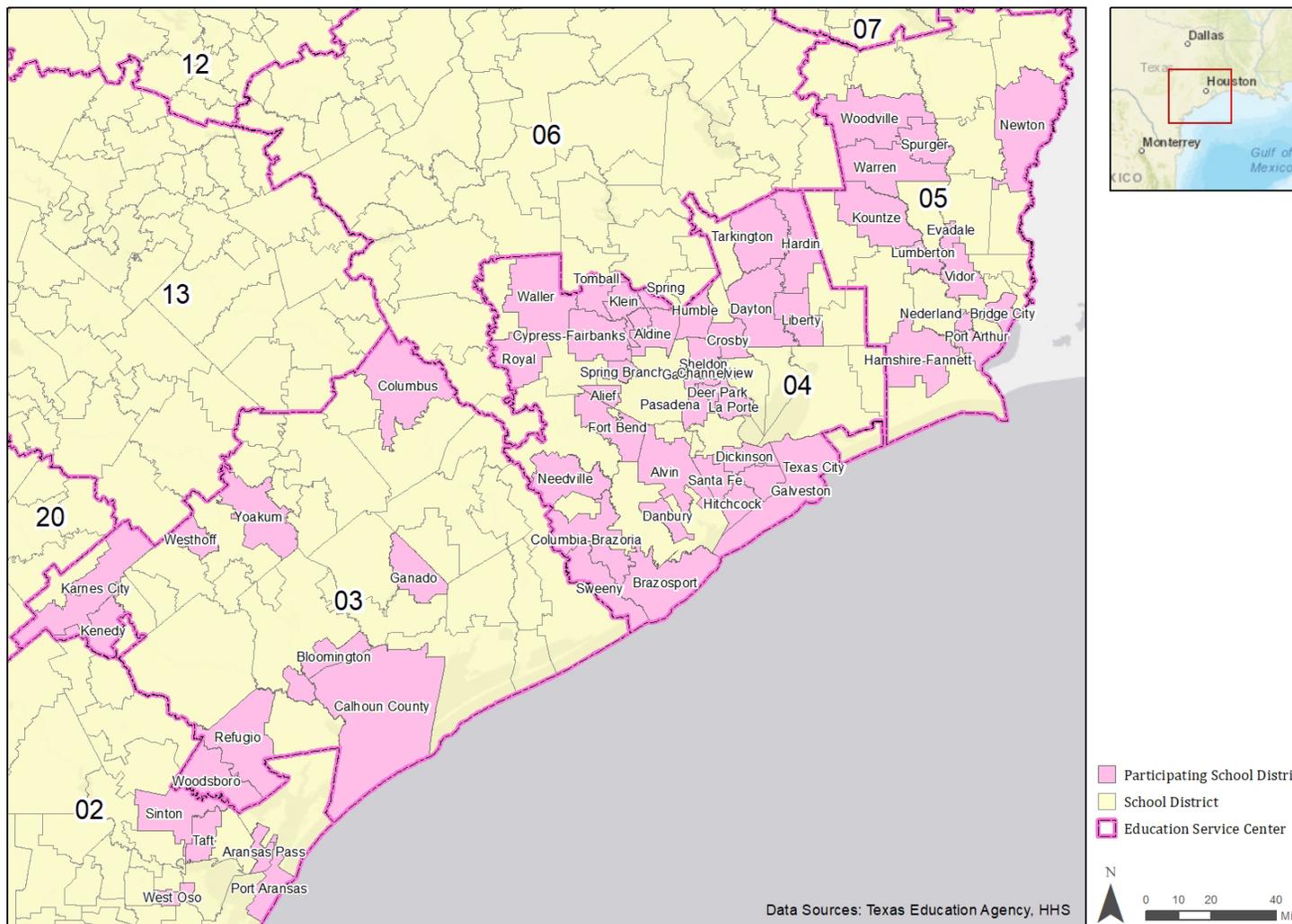


Figure 1: Participating School Districts

Mentors from the four sessions included:

- ◆ Troy Albert, Principal, Salem (IN) High School
- ◆ Richard Asbill, Superintendent, Cassville (MO) School District
- ◆ Joanne Avery, Superintendent, Anderson (SC) School District
- ◆ Rick Cobb, Superintendent, Midwest-Del City (OK) School
- ◆ Joan Colvin, Assistant Superintendent (retired), East Rockaway (NY) School District
- ◆ Phil Cook, Superintendent, Carl Junction (MO) Schools
- ◆ Frank DeAngelis, Principal (retired), Columbine HS/Jefferson County (CO) Schools
- ◆ Dan Decker, Superintendent, Neosho (MO) School District
- ◆ Michael DeVito, Chief Operating Officer, Long Beach (NY) City School
- ◆ Janet Dunlop, Superintendent, Broken Arrow (OK) Public Schools
- ◆ Janet Earl, Interim Assistant Director of Special Services, Joplin (MO) School
- ◆ Darin Headrick, Superintendent (retired), Kiowa County (KS) Unified School District
- ◆ John Reed, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, West Clark (IN) Community Schools
- ◆ Dusty Reid, Director of Facilities & Operations, Cassville (MO) School District
- ◆ James Robinson, Former Superintendent, East Rockaway (NY) School District
- ◆ Janet Robinson, Superintendent, Stratford (CT) Public Schools
- ◆ Robert Romines, Superintendent, Moore (OK) Public Schools
- ◆ Lisa Ruiz, Superintendent, East Rockaway (NY) School District
- ◆ Patrick Sweeney, Superintendent of Schools, Napa Valley (CA) Unified School District
- ◆ Bernard Taylor, Former Superintendent, East Baton Rouge Parish (LA) School
- ◆ Kim Vann, Executive Director, Bright Futures USA (formerly with Joplin Schools)

Summary of Recommendations for School Leaders by School Leaders

Participants and mentors identified recommendations during the four peer-to-peer mentoring seminars. Included below is a summary of the recommendations from all four workshops. The recommendations captured are those reported from the peer mentors and local leaders; they do not necessarily reflect HHS policies or positions. Regardless, they may assist other leaders with their recovery efforts in the future.

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER A DISASTER OR EMERGENCY

“People matter. My teachers matter, my parents matter, and my students matter. Remember the people are the most important. It’s not the books, it’s not the schools, it’s the students and staff. Take care of them.” – Mentor, Region 5

- ◆ **Expect a decline in school and student performance.** The stress of a disaster and the recovery process will personally affect the emotional health of students and teachers. Student achievement will likely drop in the aftermath of a disaster but should gradually return to pre-storm levels over time. How much time that takes can be driven by how efficiently and effectively the overall community recovery effort progresses. For this reason, if a community recovery planning effort is established or if the federal government supports the state in implementing Recovery Support Functions, become involved and be sure to have your voice and the needs of your district heard.
- ◆ **Every issue will be considered “critical” or require “immediate action.”** You will be overwhelmed by all of the things that need immediate attention. You will also be expected to manage expectations of your community while they themselves are recovering. Determine your immediate goals, communicate those goals, stay focused on those goals, and make clear what items are non-negotiable as you move towards achieving those goals. For issues that fall outside your immediate priorities, it is often helpful to establish a community-driven support committee to which you can delegate the deliberation (and then re-engage when needed).
- ◆ **Recovery is long-term and widespread.** Do not become so focused on your school recovery that you forget the effect the disaster had on the community as a whole. Continue to meet with community stakeholders to maintain open lines of communication and keep a pulse on the needs of the community.
- ◆ **What is “normal” will need to be redefined.** After a disaster, there is a strong desire to return to “normal,” but the reality is that you will never return to exactly how things were prior to the disaster. Work with your community to define what the long-term recovery vision looks like and engage them in the planning process.

DONATIONS MANAGEMENT

- ◆ **Identify processes for vetting individuals offering help.** You will be inundated with calls and overwhelmed with offers, and it can be difficult to parse out who may not be genuine. As a part of your planning process, it is important to think through the relationships and capabilities you may need to support recovery and establish those relationships in advance of any disaster. In addition, the plan should also identify a single point of contact in the school or community who will filter requests for outside support. Spontaneous or ad hoc volunteerism can be a challenge to manage. You need to consider how to use volunteers while maintaining the safety of volunteers, students, and staff. Meaningful ways to use these volunteers may include having them assist with general clean-up activities, writing thank you notes, packing food, supporting the distribution center, etc.
- ◆ **Logistics can be difficult.** The damage to your community may be widespread, so the logistics necessary to restore normal operations is complicated and takes time.
- ◆ **It is okay to decline donations.** The volume and variety of donations received after a disaster can be overwhelming for school systems and school leaders. The influx of material can create significant challenges for storage and allocation of resources to manage the donations. It is acceptable to politely decline or redirect unneeded donations during the response phase. As the recovery continues, identify materials your schools may need for their classrooms or make a list of generic items you know staff or students will need. Have that list ready to provide to donors as they contact you. As part of emergency preparedness planning, develop a plan and create a system to collect cash donations both in the form of hard currency and online donations.

REIMBURSEMENT PROCESSES

- ◆ **Familiarize yourself with reimbursement processes.** Become well-versed in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reimbursement processes and programs. Track any time or labor put into the physical recovery process, as FEMA will likely request this documentation when considering reimbursements.
- ◆ **Be prepared to advocate.** The recovery process can last for months or years. Be prepared to continue advocating for your community for several years after the disaster. There will be technicalities and challenges that will come up along the way. For example, the FEMA Public Assistance Program Project Worksheets and frequent changes in FEMA staffing may cause frustration for school personnel. Take good notes, keep good documentation, and do not be afraid to question FEMA staff and advocate on behalf of your schools.
- ◆ **Identify a dedicated liaison to advocate on your behalf.** Trying to manage FEMA processes while continuing with regular responsibilities will be difficult. Hiring a FEMA Coordinator or a Disaster Recovery Manager can be critical to sustain the recovery over the weeks and months that follow. To maintain continuity of operations, having additional personnel to assist with the reimbursement process will allow the district staff to focus on other more pertinent aspects of recovery and to ensure that regular

duties are completed. The expenses associated with hiring an individual to serve as a recovery coordinator are partially reimbursable through FEMA.

- ◆ **Keep detailed records.** Unexpected issues are likely to arise during the reimbursement process. It is imperative to maintain detailed records that account for donations received, immediate costs incurred, eligible volunteer hours, and other items that will be used to determine reimbursement. Remember that contractor overhead is *not* reimbursable by federal funding. FEMA will provide a liaison to make the recovery closeout process as smooth as possible, but ultimately the responsibility of verifying FEMA reimbursement claims will be up to the district.
- ◆ **Be transparent.** Document and be able to explain your processes and decisions that were made as part of the disaster response and recovery effort and include a diverse set of perspectives to support your decision-making process (e.g., legal representation, communications experts, FEMA representatives, established community recovery organizations, etc.).

COMMUNICATION

“The first thing we have to do is show empathy. They [the community] want to first know that you care about what’s going on. You don’t have to answer every question. It’s okay to not answer every question.”

– Mentor, Region 2

- ◆ **Maintain open and frequent communications.** Provide daily updates at the height of the crisis, both with your internal stakeholders and with the media. A regular schedule can provide a sense of order throughout the recovery effort over the weeks and months that follow. It is important to realize those who are not intimately involved in the recovery efforts may not understand the complexity, details, or the length of time that will be required to return to normal. As part of your planning process, consider establishing a private phone line for administrators and staff to communicate information throughout the response and recovery process.
- ◆ **Accurately communicate challenges.** While on the surface everything may appear fine, issues such as behavioral health needs may intensify and require long-term, sustainable solutions. Communicating those types of challenges with staff, holding recovery forums to discuss current and on-going challenges, maintaining open communication with local media, and discussing those challenges in open public forums can help to keep the community aware of the long-term recovery realities. *You and the school district leadership cannot communicate these updates and realities too much.*
- ◆ **Remember that everything is (or will become) public.** School leaders are accustomed to serving in public capacities, but disasters have a tendency to focus the attention of the community on very specific aspects of what the district is doing to support the recovery. Communication, even when intended for internal audiences, may end up in the public domain.

- ◆ **Prioritize internal communications.** Maintain and sustain internal communications and ensure that internal stakeholders (e.g., School Board members, administrators, teachers, staff, etc.) are informed before external stakeholders. Develop your communications plans with the expectation that once you notify internal stakeholders, an external notification should follow shortly thereafter. Faculty, staff, and administration may be able to assist with sharing information and also identifying and correcting misinformation. Establishing a system of regular, consistent communications with your staff will allow them to help keep the community informed. This will also ensure that a consistent message is being shared to your community.
- ◆ **Accept help.** Community resources may be available to assist with outreach and communication, as well as responding to requests for information. For example, there may be a local retired or former communications expert with the skill sets to support communications and outreach efforts. Be creative and open to engaging others during the response and recovery phases.
- ◆ **Collaborate with community partners and non-profit organizations.** Working together with these partners may allow the district and community to communicate a more unified message. Make sure that as a part of your preparedness efforts you have established strong working relationships with community partners. Those relationships will be essential in crises and will make communication and collaboration during the recovery process much more manageable.
- ◆ **Decisions do not have to be made in isolation.** Keep people informed and involve others in the decision-making process. Involving others in the decision-making process brings perspectives, resources, and relationships that may not have been considered otherwise.
- ◆ **Stay in front of the story.** If there is a story, you frame it and tell it. Do not let others define your narrative. If you make a mistake, acknowledge it and take the necessary steps to remedy it. It is also important to quickly identify resources to support communications. Managing crisis communications is a challenging task. Consider using mutual aid agreements with other districts or partnering with organizations such as the Texas School Public Relations Association (TSPRA).
- ◆ **Identify a set time to speak with the media.** Establishing a regular schedule to speak with the media will allow you to manage your time and will also help the local media know what to expect. Otherwise, the media may monopolize time you need to focus on the recovery. Use communication resources, such as TSPRA.
- ◆ **Do not ignore the media.** Remember that even though the national media is demanding your attention, it is the local media that was with you before the crisis and will be afterward. Maintain those local media relationships and make sure they have the same or better access than the national media. While you will work with media, do not do their work for them.
- ◆ **Social media can be a powerful tool.** Sharing information via social media may allow you to reach a broader audience. You can use it to advocate for your recovery and communicate with your students and community members. Be aware of activity on social media, and if issues begin to arise, be proactive in addressing them. Use social

media to help dispel rumors, provide accurate information, highlight what is going well, celebrate recovery milestones, and spotlight individuals and organizations that are supporting the recovery efforts.

- ◆ **Be consistent in messaging.** Consider multiple formats, to include text and video. Use social media as a tool to release key information. Remember that you do not have to answer every question from the media. In the initial response, it may be helpful to develop two or three general statements that you can use when asked questions and tailor, depending on your progress in the recovery. It is critical to be consistent across all platforms with your messaging. Using a public relations office or firm can be exceptionally useful to manage this process for you.
- ◆ **Consider non-English speakers and those with hearing and speech difficulties.** Identify bilingual staff to communicate with non-English speaking populations and their families. In addition, build the capacity to ensure all residents who may have difficulties with hearing or speech have the ability to access the information you're sharing.
- ◆ **Streamline the information requests.** Information requests can come in from multiple audiences (media, affected families, government response, etc.), and streamlining the requests will help you focus on the recovery as a whole instead of having attention pulled into multiple directions. Develop a plan to sort through and prioritize those requests.
- ◆ **Beware of threats.** Following an incident, schools may receive additional threats from people calling in to the phone line. Make sure that staff members understand that this is a possibility and provide clear guidance on how to address these threats. Involving law enforcement in this training has proven helpful.

SELF-CARE

*"I wish I would have asked for more help from friends, colleagues. I should have asked for more help. I didn't, and not only did I pay the price, but so did my family."
– Mentor, Region 2*

- ◆ **Take care of yourself.** Self-care is important. The response and long-term recovery effort can take a physical and emotional toll on those providing recovery leadership. It is important for leaders to model healthy behaviors for others to follow. If you stay in the office until late in the evening, those just as committed to the students will follow your lead. Not only will doing this night after night take its toll on you and your family, it will also hurt those helping you. Protect them by protecting yourself.
- ◆ **Build a network to provide assistance and support.** Having a personal support system during challenging times is important. Make sure you have people you can talk to, and do not be afraid to ask for help.

- ◆ **Show emotions.** You are human and have been affected by the disaster. Loss is inevitable after a disaster. It is okay to grieve and not hide that you are grieving along with your community members.
- ◆ **Prepare yourself for a long recovery.** Recovery is a marathon, not a sprint. It will be a long time before you can return to your normal routines. Be realistic as you set goals and expectations. There will also be a moment when the demands of your normal duties become just as demanding as the on-going recovery needs. Recognize when it is time to bring in additional help to carry on the recovery work, so you can allocate more time to what was day-to-day business before the disaster or emergency.
- ◆ **Do not be afraid to ask for help.** There are state and federal resources available to help, and resources within your own communities. Do not be afraid to reach out to them for assistance.
- ◆ **Prioritize your time.** It is okay to make people wait. Your time is valuable, and you do not have to answer every request as soon as it is made. Identify ways to screen requests and make sure they are being channeled in the right direction.
- ◆ **Trust and use your team.** Response and recovery efforts require everyone's assistance. Leverage the strengths of your team. If you provide them the time, resources, and opportunity to do their job, it will help with the recovery effort.
- ◆ **Take time for yourself.** Be aware of your own needs and give yourself permission to take time off. Setting too hard a pace to get back to normal can lead to burnout and cause you to forgo addressing your individual recovery needs.

MOVING FORWARD – “THE NEW NORMAL”

“I didn't get my “old job” back for eight years.” – Mentor, Region 3

- ◆ **Realize that the challenges of a disaster persist for longer than you'd expect.** You will be managing the recovery process while you continue your regular duties and responsibilities. It is important to delegate responsibilities and to make sure you have the right support staff and resources in place to support the long-term recovery effort.
- ◆ **Recognize anniversaries.** Anniversaries may be emotional times for individuals and will put the recovery efforts back in the media spotlight. Be sensitive to the wishes of your community as they relate to those anniversaries and collaborate with them at every opportunity. Think and plan ahead.
- ◆ **Recovery is a community effort.** Be an advocate for your community. It may be helpful to establish a community-driven support committee to assist with recovery.
- ◆ **People are the priority.** The students and staff are the most important asset of a school. The people you work with and the students you serve should be the primary focus throughout the recovery effort. There will likely be many distractions during the recovery process; remember to prioritize your students and staff.

- ◆ **Leverage local resources.** Identify community resources and volunteers who can help meet the unmet needs of your staff, students, and their families. Capitalize on the strengths of your community to support the recovery. This includes mental health, communications, donations management, case management, pastoral care, etc.

ENGAGE YOUR TEAM

- ◆ **Be visible in your buildings and with your staff and students.** Following a disaster, students and staff will need to see more of you, not less. It is easy to become overwhelmed by paperwork and the demands of recovery, but be present, listen, and engage with your staff and students throughout the process.
- ◆ **Remember that faculty and staff also need support.** Your faculty and staff need to be a primary focus through the recovery effort. They will be focused on the children they serve. The school community needs to make sure the needs of faculty and staff are being met while they take care of the children.

MENTAL HEALTH

“My healing started when I was able to share my story.”
– Region 3 Participant

- ◆ **Be patient.** During recovery efforts you will see the best and worst of people throughout the process. As people grow tired, emotions may run high. It is important to keep in mind that those emotions will surface unexpectedly from time to time. Expect it and try to build in the capacity to allow *anyone* who needs it to take advantage of on-site resources. This may include setting aside a quiet room, establishing on-site child care capabilities for your staff, bringing in outside crisis counselors or pastoral care to offer their assistance, etc.
- ◆ **Understand that acute stress, anxiety, and diagnosable mental health disorders after and event are pervasive and affects everyone in the community.** Teachers may be first responders in some disasters. In many cases, staff members may have experienced personal losses themselves. One strategy that could be useful is the creation of a staff survey to determine the extent of staff losses for awareness and support purposes.
- ◆ **Address the mental health needs of your staff.** Staff members may have experienced substantial losses and have other traumas in their own lives. Teachers are stressed and dealing with their own recoveries as well as supporting their students. Ensure that support services are available to address these issues.
- ◆ **Remember that schools are accountable for the welfare of their students.** Schools are held accountable for the welfare of children; however, they have no authority to make a parent participate when a student could benefit from mental health services. You need to identify services and educate the community on their benefit.

- ◆ **Be conscientious of the fact that people recover at different rates.** Disasters affect people in different ways. Just because someone appears fine today does not mean they will be tomorrow. The mental health effects of a disaster are long lasting. Some are ready to move on quickly, while others are not.
- ◆ **Identify proactive mental health services.** Mental and behavioral health issues are a challenge after every large-scale disaster. You will need to address these issues. Build relationships with your Local Mental Health Authority and plan accordingly.
- ◆ **Expect that funding for mental health services is often temporary.** Funding from mental health grants or fundraising efforts may be available in the short term, but it is important to recognize some of these needs are more long term and sustainability planning is necessary to ensure that support continues to be in place. Building that capacity is essential and should be considered in the emergency operations planning process.
- ◆ **Take a holistic approach.** To fully address mental health challenges, it is important to provide support systems that address the many needs people have after a disaster. Specifically, effectively meeting basic needs for food, water, shelter, and safety will allow survivors the opportunity to begin the healing and recovery process. In the planning process, consider developing strategies and processes to ensure those basic needs can be quickly met.
- ◆ **Be aware of compounding problems after a disaster.** Throughout the recovery process, issues will arise that will need varying levels of attention. In addition to issues specific to the disaster, many may experience secondary trauma as a result of other issues. It is important to be flexible when compounding problems arise.

PLANNING FOR NEXT TIME

- ◆ **Allow people to help.** As a leader, you do not have to do the work of recovery on your own. Delegate tasks and give your staff the freedom and resources they need to do their jobs. They want to be a part of the solution, and you have to allow them to carry part of the recovery burden.
- ◆ **Establish relationships before a disaster occurs.** Establishing relationships with the county emergency preparedness team and local responders before the crisis is invaluable. Ensure that you are familiar with each other's policies and procedures.
- ◆ **Seek outside help.** When drafting evacuation or safety plans, request a consultation from structural engineers and safety specialists to evaluate and identify safe spaces for various types of hazards.
- ◆ **Evaluate insurance plans.** Consider including a rider on insurance plans that includes liability for injuries, and the insurance company will take measures to evaluate and make recommendations to improve safety.
- ◆ **Remember that every district and community is different.** You have to take a multi-hazards approach to school safety and custom plans and processes based on what is best for your district. There is no one size fits all solution.

- ◆ **Create an emergency page on the district website.** Consider developing a dark site on the school's (or district's) web site. This is a page that can be put up immediately in the case of emergencies, sharing select information while locking the rest of the site.
- ◆ **Ensure that emergency plans are in place.** Review your district's mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery plans. Take advantage of grants and funding to support plan development.
- ◆ **Collaborate with local and state efforts.** Collaborate with local emergency management in developing plans and other preparedness efforts.
- ◆ **Take advantage of training opportunities.** Consider taking available training, such as the Local Mitigation Planning Workshop. In many cases, the training is free of charge and can help you create a shared understanding and language regarding emergency management issues.
- ◆ **Prepare before a disaster occurs.** Hold conversations to address campus safety and how to provide shelter before an emergency hits. Make sure your systems work. Discuss, understand, and test your systems before something happens.
- ◆ **Maintain digital back-ups.** Be sure to digitally store and back up student records and other critical information that is important for the continuity of operations. Technical support is critical.
- ◆ **Review and implement policies.** Put policies in place that protect your staff from liability. Whether its natural disasters, acts of violence, or technological disasters, they are going want to use whatever means at their disposal (that they deem appropriate) to protect their students. Are there policies in place to protect them?

Outcomes

"I am humbled by the heartfelt stories of this group. The professionalism and commitment is a true reflection of top-notch school leaders."

– Participant, ESC Region 3

"One of the best activities I have been involved in!" – Participant, ESC Region 4

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Of the participants that attended the workshops and completed the evaluation forms, **94 percent** either 'strongly agreed' (78 percent) or 'agreed' (16 percent) that they learned something during the event that they could apply to their district recovery efforts.² Over 80 percent of respondents noted that they would like to maintain ongoing contact with the mentors from their workshop, and 27 respondents noted that they would be willing to serve as mentors in future disasters.

Participants were asked to identify what steps they would take as a result of the information presented in the workshops. Responses included:

- Check on staff well-being; develop processes to communicate more with staff both during and after a disaster; develop strategic recovery plan for staff; tell our story.
- Proactively plan for the next disaster; identify lessons learned to inform future planning; work with the county to develop mitigation strategies; develop a more current crisis plan; document processes.
- Update training and school-related drills, especially tornado protocols; include safety topics in training; plan information meetings within the district to discuss safety procedures and plans.
- Update or develop communication strategies and better prepare; communicate progress; increase frequency of communication; formalize response processes.
- Identify and develop interagency networks; continue to establish regional connections.
- Advocate for and seek mental and behavioral health support; facilitate collaboration between counselors and administrators.
- Use the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) TA center and tools.
- Consult insurance provider for planning assistance.

² Of the four respondents that disagreed with this statement, two provided excellent feedback and comments on the rest of the form, leading us to believe that this may have been an error. If so, the percentage who 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' would actually be 97 percent and not 94 percent.

- Identify and implement ways to take better care of self.
- Develop trauma kits and prepare a toolbox prior to the next disaster.
- Share information learned with district leadership.
- Celebrate milestones and anniversaries.
- Learn more about FEMA safe space funding.

MENTOR FEEDBACK

“Great experience...I likely gained more than I contributed...but really enjoyed the collaboration and the ability to bring such a diverse group together and share common needs and themes.” – Mentor, ESC Region 2 Workshop

At the conclusion of the event, mentors were asked to provide feedback on the content and value of the workshops. All of the mentors responding to the feedback survey noted that they would be willing to serve as a mentor to other school leaders in future disasters, that the content was relevant to their own disaster experience, and that they believed that the content was of value to the participants.

“Excellent service for schools recovering from a natural disaster.” – Participant, ESC Region 3
