



State of Alabama

Office of the Attorney General

2013 Safe Schools Initiative Best Practices



In 2013, Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange reinstated the Alabama Safe Schools Initiative with a special emphasis on the use of technology in school safety. Each school that submitted an application was reviewed by a panel of judges with representatives from the Attorney General’s Office, the Alabama State Department of Education, the Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center, the Alabama Department of Public Safety, the Alabama Department of Insurance, and the Alabama Association of School Resource Officers. Through this initiative, one school from each of the eight state school board districts was recognized for its efforts with an Attorney General’s Safe School Award of Excellence. Below is a compiled list of *Best Practices* from schools across the state. Some of the suggested practices require funding, while others are just a simple, common sense approach to safety. No matter what systems for safety a school may utilize, the common goal is to take the guess work out of providing a safe environment and work with parents, teachers, and local law enforcement to provide the safest school possible.

Best Practices

1) Quick Access Program

The Quick Access Program was created by the Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center to assist Alabama schools with keeping track of visitors and alerting school administrators of any potential threats a visitor may pose. When a visitor enters a school equipped with the Quick Access Program, a school staff person uses their driver’s license to sign them in. In addition to tracking the visitor’s movement in and out of the school facility, it notifies school officials if the person is a sex offender or if any other alerts have been placed on the visitor’s record, such as child custody restrictions. The program requires an initial equipment fee and a minimal monthly subscription. To have the Quick Access Program installed in your school, please contact Tracy Townsend, Crime Statistics and Information Division by calling 334-517-2400 or at tracy.townsend@alacop.gov.



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2) Virtual Alabama School Safety System and School Safety Summit

The Alabama Law Enforcement Agency through the Virtual Alabama School Safety System (VAS3) has brought school safety into the 21st century by digitizing school safety plans, emergency contacts, maps, and evacuation information. Alabama is the first state to have school safety plans and floor plans for schools in an online system that allows sharing that information with first responders. Since implementation approximately 1,200 K-12 public schools, seven K-12 private schools, seven community colleges and three universities have been entered into the program. Each year the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency hosts a School Safety Summit to educate law enforcement and school officials on the newest and best practices being used in school safety. To have the VAS3 implemented in your school or for school safety summit information, please contact the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency at <http://le.alabama.gov/contact.aspx> or visit <https://virtual.alabama.gov/Page-Support> for video presentations.

3) Teacher Panic Buttons - Orange Beach Elementary – District 1 Winner

Giving each teacher and staff person in a school the ability to instantly alert school administrators and local authorities to an emergency, whether it be an active shooter situation or other emergency, is a perfect example of using technology to make our schools as safe as they can be. That's exactly what Orange Beach Elementary accomplished by providing every teacher and staff person with a panic button they can carry throughout their facility. For more information on this type of technology, please contact the City of Orange Beach Police Chief Billy Wilkins by calling 251-981-9777.

4) School Connect Application - Leeds High School – District 7 Winner

Applications like the School Connect Application used by Leeds High School allows the school administrator to communicate with parents, students, and staff in real-time during emergency situations. This application, and others like it, operates on smart phones, tablets, and PCs. This is a great example of how schools in Alabama are using technology to their advantage when it comes to school safety. For more information on this tip please visit <http://www.schoolconnectservices.com>.*

*This office makes no representation about the quality of the services performed by this company.



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5) Safety Plan Flip Book - *Challenger Middle School – District 8 Winner*

When emergencies happen, effective and fast communication is the best response. That is why having a Safety Plan Flip Book in every classroom in your school is one of best, common sense approaches to increasing the safety of your school. Each Safety Plan Flip Book should include the protocol and points-of-contact for each foreseeable emergency scenario a teacher or administrator could potentially encounter. There should not be any guesswork when it comes to protecting the children in our classrooms. This is an easy, low cost solution that each school could implement to compliment other training and safety programs. To view an example of a Safety Plan Flip Book [click here](#).*

*This is an example from a submitted Safe School Initiative application.

6) Safety Bags - *Redland Elementary – District 3 Winner*

Having essential safety supplies in one spot can prove to be literally “life-saving.” That’s why having each classroom and teacher equipped with a Safety Bag, filled with safety essentials, made our list of Best Practices for 2013. Safety Bags should include items like two-way radios to communicate with first responders, a Safety Plan Flip Book, a first aid kit, flashlight, disposable camera, class roles, and other items that school staff would need in case of an emergency. To view an example of a classroom safety bag and suggested contents [click here](#).*

The Attorney General’s Office recommends that schools work in coordination with local law enforcement and school resource officers to implement their safe school plans.

For more information on the Attorney General’s Safe School Initiative please contact 334-242-7300 or visit <http://www.ago.alabama.gov/Page-AL-Safe-Schools-Initiative>