

# 1. Need for Project

*a. The magnitude of the need for the services to be provided or the activities to be carried out by the proposed project.*

School District Five of Lexington and Richland Counties (SD5) is a growing district of 16,500 students and 80,000 residents in the Midlands area of South Carolina, 10 miles northwest of Columbia. It encompasses a land area of 196 square miles, approximately one-half of which is situated in each of Lexington and Richland Counties. The school district consists of the northern



portion of Lexington County lying north of Lake Murray and the Saluda River, including the towns of Irmo and Chapin, and the northwestern portion of Richland County lying south of the Broad River. The Midlands area is also home to Columbia (MSA = 537,000), the state capital, and Fort Jackson, the largest and most active Initial Entry Training Center in the United States Army.

The school district has 3 attendance areas - Chapin, Dutch Fork, and Irmo – and 20 current facilities, including 11 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, 3 high schools, an alternative middle and high school, and a central district office. A 12<sup>th</sup> elementary school is opening in August 2006, during the project period, so this proposal encompasses emergency response and crisis planning for **21 total facilities**. The district also operates 3 bus transportation hubs, located on the Irmo High School, Dutch Fork Middle School, and Chapin Middle School campuses. SD5 is growing by 200-300 students each year, nearly all schools are at or above capacity, and its smallest school is over 500 students. In Spring 2004, the school board passed a 10-year building plan that includes additions to 3 schools and the district office, a 13<sup>th</sup> elementary school, 5<sup>th</sup> middle school, and 4<sup>th</sup> high school to be completed by the end of the decade. The district is also becoming increasingly diverse, with 11 schools at 25% or higher African American, 7 schools at 30% or higher free/reduced lunch, and 3 schools with majority minority populations.

## **Vulnerability Assessment**

Like most public school districts, SD5 faces threats to school safety from multiple hazards:

***Coordination of First Responders*** – Because the district’s population is divided roughly 50%-50% between Richland County and Lexington County, district staff must maintain relationships, communication, and coordination with 2 or more agencies for many services – 2 county sheriff’s departments, 3 fire and 2 EMS departments, 2 mental health districts, etc. For some services, such as local government and law enforcement, there are **5** jurisdictions (Columbia, Irmo, Chapin, and the 2 counties) to coordinate. Although each district facility has designated first responders from one or the other county, several school attendance zones include both counties, leading to potential confusion during a crisis situation.

***Lake Murray Dam*** – The largest earthen dam in the world at the time of construction, the Lake Murray Dam provides hydroelectric power to South Carolina Electric & Gas Company (SCE&G) by holding back Lake Murray’s 763 billion gallons of water, covering more than 50,000 acres. If a catastrophic dam failure occurred, due to an earthquake or terrorist attack, 8 schools (6,000+ students) would be flooded within 1.5 hours and would have to evacuate immediately.

***Natural Disasters and Severe Weather*** – According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, South Carolina and other southeastern states experience natural disasters at a rate 2-3 times greater than any other region of the United States, predominantly hurricanes and floods. The South Carolina Midlands area is located on an earthquake fault. Severe thunderstorms, hailstorms, tornados and ice storms are common occurrences annually.

***Fires*** – County Emergency Departments reported 139 fires within the school district attendance area in the past 12 months. There were 7 arson fires at 2 schools in 2004-05, all involving a fire department investigation, an arson investigation, and students as suspects. Inspectors suspect some of the fires were part of a gang initiation. Several schools are located within neighborhoods, in isolated rural areas, or near heavily forested areas.

***Chemical or Hazardous Materials*** – 100% of district schools are within five miles of a major truck route. Interstate 26 and U.S. 76/176 bisect the district, Interstate 20 runs along the district's southeastern border, and Interstate 77 is less than 10 miles away. All 3 interstates carry low-level radioactive waste to the Barnwell and Savannah River nuclear facilities. The district is in the weather footprint of the Savannah River nuclear sites, should a catastrophic release occur. One high school and the new elementary school will be within the 10-mile perimeter of the 1,000-megawatt V.C. Summer Nuclear Station, capable of powering 650,000 homes. Two district schools are designated Decontamination Sites and Reception Center Shelters for the V.C. Summer Nuclear Station. A Honeywell chemical plant, with volatile and hazardous chemicals, is located across the street from one elementary school and within 3 miles of 4 school facilities.

***Motor Vehicle/Train/Plane Crashes*** – The proximity of schools to high-traffic thoroughfares and hazardous rural roads increase the odds of a disastrous motor vehicle accident causing school evacuations. According to the S.C. Dept. of Public Safety, 94 people were killed and 6,992 were injured in motor vehicle crashes in Lexington and Richland counties in 2003, including 40 injuries on school buses. The majority of school facilities are within ¼ mile of a train route, and more than 5,000 students attend school across the street from train tracks. Columbia Metropolitan Airport and several smaller air fields are less than 10 miles away.

***Violent Incidents/Threats*** - SD5 ranks 15<sup>th</sup> out of 85 districts in South Carolina in the rate of school crime incidents – 3.08 per 100 pupils, well above the state average of 1.86 (source: S.C. Dept. of Education). School Resource Officers reported 106 additional criminal incidents in 2004-05 (153 total) compared to the previous year. While fortunate to have had no school shootings in recent years, SD5 averages 12 incidences of guns or other weapons in school facilities and more than 150 assaults each year.

There is also an increasing gang presence in the district, with more than 20 gangs now active in the area according to local law enforcement. During the 2005 Summer School program, a middle school boy had his throat cut with an unknown object making a 4-inch laceration. In a related incident, a large gang fight occurred in front of the high school next door, involving summer school students and members

of a rival gang from another district. In 2004-05 there were 2 dozen incidences of gang graffiti, and 2 gang-related burglaries to a school building have occurred in the past 3 months. There has been an increase in drive-by shootings in the area over the past year, due to tensions between the GKB Bloods (Gangsta Killer Bloods) and GPAN (a hybrid Crips and Bloods gang which rival the local Bloods). Over the past 3 years, the GKB Bloods have been responsible for a drive-by shooting at Irmo High School (10 rounds fired at school students after a school event) and for injuring 3 deputies at an intra-district football game (Irmo vs. Dutch Fork HS), where there was a small riot in which 22 officers responded from 5 law enforcement agencies, resulting in 7 arrests and over 60 people forced to leave the game.

There have been several intruder threats at multiple elementary schools in recent years by individuals (adult males) lurking on school grounds, looking in windows, indecent exposure, etc. One elementary school called 911 and spent several anxious hours after a parent called saying her husband was on his way to the school with a gun. In another case at a middle school, a stepfather tried to force his way into the school to take a child for whom he did not have custody rights. As the school district has become more diverse, there is a community perception of increasing racial tensions, both verbal and physical, among students and between students and staff. District leadership and members of the African American community have formed a district Race Relations Committee and youth-led Unity Committees in the middle and high schools to address this issue.

***Bomb Threats*** – In recent years, the district has experienced waves of bomb threats, mostly at the high schools, requiring several evacuations of school buildings. Several high-risk bomb threats involved letters sent to the State Law Enforcement Division and Irmo Police Department threatening multiple explosive devices. State police, two county sheriff's departments, and Fort Jackson's Military Police Bomb K9's responded to the incidents.

***Medical Emergencies*** – Local EMS personnel have responded to **more than 100** calls from SD5 schools in the past 3 years. One volunteer tragically died in a school lunchroom. In this instance, the school nurse was at another school and the incident was reported inaccurately, causing the EMS to react

to a “fainting” rather than a “cardiac arrest,” causing a delay in response time. Additionally, the school’s medical response team was not initially summoned.

*Student or Staff Deaths* – Over the past 3 years, there have been 19 student and staff deaths, 10 of which were from suicide, homicide, or accidental causes.

*Acts of Terror or War* – While terrorism is an unlikely threat to the school district itself, the Midlands area is at moderate to high risk. Columbia is home to the governor, legislature, and all state government agencies; Fort Jackson, the nation’s largest military training institution, is nearby; several high-traffic routes for motor vehicles and trains go through the district; and the V.C. Summer Nuclear Station and Lake Murray Dam are natural terrorist targets.

*b. The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.*

To better coordinate the district’s emergency response and crisis management systems, SD5 formed a security advisory committee several years ago, made up of district personnel, board members, and staff and parent representatives from each school, to regularly review existing crisis plans and address emerging safety issues for the district and schools. The work of this committee resulted in SD5 securing a FY2004 Emergency Response and Crisis Management (ERCM) grant from the U.S. Department of Education to address several identified weaknesses in the four areas of crisis planning: prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. What follows is a current assessment of crisis planning resources and the gaps in services, infrastructure, and opportunities that still exist, to be addressed by FY2005 ERCM funds and district/partner resources:

### **Overall Organization**

- Active district-wide committee for crisis management (ACT-Team), led by the ERCM Project Coordinator and including representatives from each school, local government, law enforcement, public safety/emergency response, public health, mental health, and other business and local partners.
- Improved Emergency Response Plan and Procedures for each school and district office, developed by the ERCM Project Coordinator with input from the ACT-Team, which addresses an increased range

of hazards and the four phases of crisis planning. Each section of the plan includes district-wide procedures and templates for each facility to customize their plan to the school and classroom level. Distribution of the new plans and training of staff and students will begin in Fall 2005.

- All schools and the district office have designated crisis teams in place, expanded through the 2004 ERCM grant, now called CERT (Community Emergency Response) Teams.
- Full-time ERCM Project Coordinator for SD5 with qualifications and experience in emergency response and crisis management.
- In-depth training for the ERCM Project Coordinator – ERCM training from USDOE; FEMA’s Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools; Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Instructor training through the Department of Homeland Security; National Weather Service’s Storm Spotter training; and various trainings from state and county emergency preparedness offices.
- Formal ERCM Evaluation Plan and Independent Evaluator.

#### Organizational Weaknesses to be Addressed

- Schools and the District Office are **not operating** under the Incident Command System and NIMS (National Incident Management System) and rarely set up a functional Command Post during incidents.
- The district’s communication system is inadequate.
- Crisis Plans still do not **do not adequately address** the needs of students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency. Responsibility for evacuating disabled students is left to the School Nurse in many plans. Multiple staff members need to be assigned and trained on an ongoing basis to serve individual students based on the needs of the students and the school.
- School crisis teams and district ACT-Team need representation and involvement of staff and parents with knowledge of **special needs populations**, including persons with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency.

#### Prevention/Mitigation

- An assigned, full-time School Resource Officer in all middle and high schools and part-time SROs in the 6 Richland County elementary schools.
- District ACT-Team representatives (ERCM Project Coordinator, law enforcement, fire marshal, and EMS) conduct comprehensive safety and security inspections of one school site per week (avg 2 hrs)

using a 20-page checklist that includes: crime prevention, fire prevention, medical equipment, facilities, response plans, hazardous materials and lab safety, and a comprehensive debriefing with the principal and follow-up visits, if necessary. Afterward, the inspection team shares results and recommendations with school and district administrators. Each facility is inspected at least once during the school year by the district ACT-Team. School CERT teams, led by an assistant principal (CERT Team Leader), will also begin inspecting their facilities once per semester starting in 2005-06.

- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) training for staff in 2004.
- Several district staff are trainers in threat assessment and de-escalation strategies. Began annual threat assessment training for principals in 2004-05.
- Community Forums on gangs and youth violence, presented by local law enforcement and the ERCM Project Coordinator, a former Gang Unit Detective and Police Academy Gang Training Provider.
- Regular inspections of transportation and food service equipment/facilities.
- Periodic nighttime inspections of district facilities.
- ID systems for students and staff in secondary schools; sign-in procedures in all facilities.
- CERT Crisis Team members in each facility have been trained on treating life threatening injuries and disaster triage, and most are trained annually in CPR. Special education and counseling staff are also CPR-trained. Certified in-district trainers provide annual training. Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) are present in all middle and high schools.
- Outdoor cameras are installed on school grounds where needed to combat vandalism.
- District-wide continuum of prevention programs, K-12, including: conflict resolution; violence prevention; substance abuse prevention, intervention, and treatment; parent education; youth development; and gang prevention.

#### **Prevention/Mitigation Weaknesses to be Addressed**

- Follow-up training and implementation of CPTED is needed to train more school staff in environmental crime prevention. Further implementation of CPTED could further reduce the district's higher than average crime rate.
- Gang identification and prevention training is needed for teachers and school staff.

- Not enough staff at each facility have been trained in threat assessment and de-escalation strategies.
- Inspections have found that older school facilities, which have classrooms and hallways opening to the outside, need additional technical assistance controlling access and egress.

## **Preparedness**

- Cooperative relationship with local law enforcement and first responders, including:
  1. Regular inspections of alarm systems and facilities by fire marshals.
  2. Annual “**Open Houses**” at each facility for first responder agencies to tour campuses and meet staff, starting Fall 2005.
  3. **First Responder Emergency Plans** for each school, maintained by SROs: three-ring binders with detailed facility floor plans, phone/electrical systems, photos, hazards, keys, and contact information. Copies are kept at each school, sheriff’s department, and county dispatch center.
- Among the first school districts in the state and nation to establish **Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT Teams)** as the crisis team for each school, based on the model developed by the Department of Homeland Security’s “Citizen Corps” program. In partnership with state and county Homeland Security offices, 74 school and district staff underwent 3 days of CERT training in Summer 2005, with instruction provided by the ERCM Project Coordinator (a certified CERT Instructor) and county/state law enforcement, fire department, EMS, behavioral health, and emergency preparedness staff.
- Annual training for school staff in revised Crisis Plans, beginning Fall 2005.
- Revised Crisis Plans include curriculum for each teacher to review their classroom’s prevention, preparedness, response and recovery plans with students on a regular basis, beginning in 2005-06.
- Provided each facility with a central Crisis Toolkit in Spring 2005 and CERT bags for each CERT Team member following training.

### Preparedness Weaknesses to be Addressed

- SD5's current capability for crisis preparedness **does not meet** the guidelines set by the Department of Homeland Security's Advisory System. The district cannot meet the recommended security standards for the "Elevated" (Yellow) alert level, let alone the country's current level, which requires inter-agency communications.
- Not enough staff are certified in CERT – recommendation is 1 CERT Team member per 150 students.
- Training materials and procedures need to be developed for parents.
- Additional equipment and supplies are needed for moving individuals with disabilities in the event of a crisis.
- Accountability is needed to ensure full implementation of crisis management procedures by school and district staff, and that training of students and parents is institutionalized throughout the district.

### Response

- Practice drills: conducted evacuation drill at each elementary and middle school in 2004-05. Will complete drill schedule in 2005-06, including: hazardous materials shelter-in-place drills, tornado and earthquake drills, fire drills, and lockdown drills at all facilities in 2005-06, continuing an annual rotation of evacuation and lockdown drills in subsequent years. Crisis drills are observed by the district ACT-Team and involve partners in law enforcement and public safety, as well as public health and mental health when appropriate. Each drill is followed by a debriefing session with the facility's CERT Team and ACT-Team observers.
- As part of Homeland Security coordination, Lexington and Richland counties conducted 4 separate exercises in July 2005 at the district's 2 schools that are identified V.C. Summer Nuclear Station shelters – 2 tabletop sessions, one dress rehearsal and one full drill.
- Purchasing weather detection equipment in 2005 through ERCM funds to respond quickly to severe weather conditions.

### Response Weaknesses to be Addressed

- SD5 is **not in compliance** with the National Incident Management System (NIMS). The district has not completed NIMS training, adopted NIMS policies, established a baseline for NIMS implementation by September 30, 2006, or fully adopted the Incident Command System (ICS).

- SD5's communication system is **inadequate** for meeting NIMS standards and the Homeland Security Advisory System. Most schools use line-of-sight 400 MHz radios, but they do not work in certain structures and any distance from the school, and there is no communication capabilities district-wide.
- The district's radio system **cannot communicate** with local dispatchers and emergency managers or the V.C. Summer Nuclear Station, which all use 800 MHz radio frequencies.
- Current response plans **do not provide** for communicating with students and parents with limited English proficiency.
- The district has **not practiced** an evacuation/reunification drill (moving students to a secondary location and reuniting students with parents) in more than 4 years. Most transportation staff have **never** participated in a district crisis drill.
- Current crisis drills **do not adequately** practice evacuation or lockdown procedures for persons with disabilities.

### **Recovery**

- SD5 is fortunate to have social work and counseling staff, employed by local public health, mental health, and behavioral health partners and based in the schools, who have been trained in post-traumatic stress and disaster response. ERCM and partner funds are providing K-FLASH (Kids Frontline Assistance and Support for Healing) training to SD5's public health social workers and mental health counselors.
- Partner agreement with LRADAC/Behavioral Health Center of the Midlands provides post-traumatic stress debriefings for training and practice drills.
- Revised crisis plans now include a Recovery/debriefing component.
- CERT Team members have received basic training in post-traumatic stress, disaster psychology, and procedures for recovery (assessing structural damage, medical triage and follow-up, public information, etc.).

#### **Recovery Weaknesses to be Addressed**

- Public health and mental health partners need to be more involved in crisis drills and in training school and district staff.
- The district has not yet fully implemented the Incident Command System (part of NIMS), which incorporates the supervision of recovery services.

While these gaps and weaknesses are significant, SD5 has many local resources in place, including a district-wide focus on safety and security, existing efforts in each of the four crisis planning areas, strong relationships with project partners, and a commitment from top leadership to make this project a success and sustain emergency response planning efforts well beyond the period of this grant.

## 2. Significance

*a. The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project.*

The **goal** of this project is to improve and strengthen the school district's emergency response and crisis management plans in order to reflect best practices research in the four phases of crisis planning. SD5's Board of Trustees, superintendent, leadership team, and school staff, as well as both county sheriff's departments, other partner agencies, and the community at large all support the development of **systemic** emergency response and crisis management planning for the school district that addresses identified weaknesses in the four phases of crisis planning: prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery. District policy, from the top down, has long supported a culture of **shared responsibility** for safety and security issues and has intentionally **limited** the use of security equipment in the district except when necessary to protect exterior areas from vandalism during off-hours. Even with limited funding, the school district has been able to incorporate crisis and safety issues into the school culture. In their 2004 District Security Assessment, both County Sheriffs praised the school district (a "B" rating) for having awareness of security issues among its staff.

Through its FY2004 ERCM grant, SD5 has and will continue to develop the capacity for a comprehensive approach to emergency response and crisis planning, both to address the needs of existing facilities and to develop policies and procedures to integrate newly constructed facilities into district crisis planning resources. In less than one year, ERCM project staff and partners have revised school and district crisis plans to address an increased range of hazards; established the first district-wide Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT Teams) in the state and one of the first in the nation; trained team members using a state-of-the-art training model; provided supplies and resources for crisis preparedness

and response; and conducted safety inspections and evacuation drills in nearly all facilities. For the remainder of the FY2004 ERCM project period, staff and partners will train school staff and students in the new crisis plans, develop parent education materials, continue drills and inspections, and collaborate with the district and partners to sustain project efforts after the grant.

Additional funds are needed, however, to improve and expand current emergency response and crisis management efforts to comply the standards and recommendations set by NIMS and the Department of Homeland Security; expand current practice drills to include evacuation/reunification procedures; improve and expand training for staff, parents, and students; and meet the diverse needs of individual students, particularly students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency. This proposed 18-month project for SD5 is a comprehensive plan for: 1. improving and expanding the positive efforts already taking place through district staff and partner agencies; and 2. addressing identified gaps and weaknesses in the four phases of crisis planning, both through grant funding and planning for long-term operating and capital investment. The activities outlined in this proposal are designed to **build capacity** that can be sustained over time with institutional resources.

### 3. Quality of the Project Design

*a. The extent to which the design of the proposed project reflects up to date knowledge from research and effective practice.*

**Best Practices Research** – The ERCM Project Coordinator and ACT-Team will incorporate several research sources into the development of SD5’s emergency response and crisis plans, including: FEMA’s *NIMS IS-700 Training Manual* and *ICS System Training Manuals*; USDOE’s *Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities*; U.S. Secret Service’s *Threat Assessment in Schools*; Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms’ *Bomb Threat Response* interactive planning guide; U.S. Department of Justice’s *A Model for School-based Crisis Preparedness and Response*; and others. The project will also take advantage of resources and opportunities available through USDOE training and the ERCM Technical Assistance Center.

## **Project Design**

The design for SD5's FY2005 Emergency Response and Crisis Management project builds upon, and addresses gaps and weaknesses in, the district's current efforts to improve and strengthen emergency response and crisis management plans. The catalyst for SD5's current efforts is a FY2004 ERCM grant which, by the end of the project period, will position the district significantly further along in implementing research-based principles of crisis planning and management by leveraging grant funds with local efforts and the contributions of community partners in local government, law enforcement, public safety, public health, mental health, local business and industry, and others. The many components and training taking place through the FY2004 ERCM project will not be duplicated here, as most of its activities are detailed in the Need for Project section above. The following description outlines the additional activities and resources needed to bring SD5's current emergency response and crisis management efforts in line with national standards.

### **Prevention/Mitigation Activities**

*Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Training and Implementation* – CPTED is a nationally-recognized prevention model for schools, municipalities, and businesses based on the theory that the proper design and effective use of the facilities environment can lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime and an improvement in the quality of life. The CPTED philosophy is crime prevention through natural means - how natural access control and natural surveillance decrease the opportunity for crime. Other grant funds paid for an initial 3-day training of select district staff and 1-2 staff from each school in Fall 2004, which informed the development of improved school and district crisis plans by the ERCM Project Coordinator and ACT-Team. In 2005-06, staff in each facility will receive training and technical assistance to customize their crisis plan to meet their individual needs. Knowledge of CPTED will improve this process by providing more staff with the knowledge and skills to make informed choices about facilities design (fences, windows/doors, landscaping, etc.) in their crisis plans. The ERCM Project Coordinator will conduct CPTED Inspections along with local law enforcement

in Summer 2006 and train at least 2 additional staff from each elementary school and 3 additional staff from each secondary school.

***Threat Assessment*** – Research of both youth and adult behavior demonstrates that nearly 100% of the time, catastrophic incidents of violence (ex. school shootings) are preceded by weeks, often months, of escalating behaviors. Additionally, staff can intervene early with students abusing alcohol or drugs or becoming involved with gangs, if they have the skills to interpret warning signs. ERCM funds will provide staff development time for in-house trainers to teach these valuable skills to teachers and staff at each facility.

### **Preparedness Activities**

***CERT Training*** – In Summer 2005, SD5 partnered with state and county law enforcement and public safety experts to become the first South Carolina school district to participate in the Department of Homeland Security’s Community Emergency Response Team training. Staff from each school and the district office (74 total) participated in a 3-day certification course. However, with 20 current facilities and the 21<sup>st</sup> facility opening within 12 months, there are not enough staff trained for each facility. An additional 40 staff members will attend 3 days of CERT certification training in Summer 2006, which will achieve the desired ratio of one certified staff member per 150 students. ERCM funds will provide stipends for staff not on 12-month contracts, CERT kits for participants, and supplies. Additional staff will attend CERT Instructor training to build capacity for in-house training beyond the grant period.

***Individuals with Disabilities*** – Most current crisis plans only list the School Nurse as the person responsible for evacuating disabled individuals, which is unrealistic under the best of circumstances. Backup contacts and specific roles for staff are not addressed. Practice evacuation drills often omit students with disabilities because it is too difficult to move them or would be too stressful for the child. While the improved crisis plans have expanded information for dealing with special needs populations, most of the work developing crisis procedures for special needs students must be developed by staff at the individual facility. School staff, in addition to the School Nurse and special education teachers, must have clearly defined responsibilities during a crisis situation for assisting with moving or evacuating students

and adults with disabilities, securing medication and other needed supplies, etc. In the high schools, students may also be trained to help staff – elevators aren't an option in many crisis situations, and strong helpers will be necessary. Facilities with multiple stories need “evacuation chairs,” stretchers that can change to a sitting position, for navigating stairs. Each role needs to have at least 3 persons assigned to it, in case people are absent or otherwise unable to fulfill their duties. Each school's CERT Team and the ERCM Project Coordinator will assist each school in developing crisis procedures for special needs students in 2005-06, and staff (and students if assigned) will attend training on transporting persons and using the evacuation chair. Starting in 2005-06, inspections and practice drills will include students with disabilities. One or more experts in special needs populations will join the ACT-Team and inspection teams.

## **Response Activities**

*National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS) – SD5* agrees to support full implementation of NIMS and ICS. **Program Assurance:** SD5 will complete NIMS and ICS implementation by September 30, 2006, through the following:

1. **NIMS Training:** NIMS training will take place in four phases:
  - a) NIMS Awareness Course – The ERCM Project Coordinator and one ACT-Team representative (a CERT Team member) from each school will take this electronic self-study course offered by the Emergency Management Institute in Fall 2005. School administrators, district staff, and local government representatives will be encouraged to take this overview course as well. This overview will enable ACT-Team members to complete the NIMS baseline and implementation plan.
  - b) NIMS Instructor Training – The ERCM Project Coordinator will become a certified NIMS Instructor in 2005-06 in order to conduct training for district and partner staff.
  - c) NIMS Overview for School/District Administrators – Conducted by the ERCM Project Coordinator during 2005-06.

- d) NIMS Certification Training, Incident Command Refresher Training – All CERT Team members certified in 2005 or 2006 (approx. 114) will participate in a 4-hour NIMS training session by September 2006. The ERCM Project Coordinator will also offer training to local government representatives.
2. **Adopt NIMS Principles** – The ACT-Team will present NIMS principles to the SD5 Board of Trustees for adoption by Spring 2006. Local government partners will be encouraged to adopt NIMS as well.
3. **Establish Implementation Plan** – Following overview training, ACT-Team members will determine any gaps in compliance and develop an implementation plan and timeline by January 2006, for full NIMS compliance by September 30, 2006.
4. **Establish Incident Command System (ICS)** – CERT Team members in each school have already participated in ICS training by project partners in emergency response, and refresher training will take place in 2006 after necessary equipment and resources have been provided to fully adopt the ICS in SD5. Practice drills and inspections will assess the institutionalization of the ICS in each facility.

***Communications Infrastructure*** – SD5’s primary barrier to full NIMS/ICS implementation, as well as adoption of recommended preparedness/response capabilities contained in the Department of Homeland Security’s Advisory System, is its inadequate communications. Its existing 400 MHz radio system used by its 19 school campuses only allows short range communications, and there is no communications capability across campuses, between the schools and the district office, and between the district and first responder agencies. New 800 MHz radios for key staff and “repeaters” (signal boosters) for each facility will integrate new radios with the existing radio system and allow incident commanders (principals or designates) to communicate with emergency responders. Other necessary features include:

- Unique channel for each campus and service area, with “all call” feature for emergency announcements limited to key school and district staff.

- Working signal throughout the district's service area, including normal bus transportation routes.
- Remote cut-off feature in case a radio is lost or stolen to keep the network secure.
- Temple transducers for staff working loud events (ex. football game) and earpieces for quiet events (ex. school board meetings).

**Command Center Interpreters** – The ERCM Project Coordinator will create a phone tree of school staff and/or community volunteers who speak Spanish and other common languages in the district to staff the ICS during a crisis and respond to parent/community concerns.

**Evacuation/Reunification Drills** – FY2005 ERCM funds will expand the practice drill schedule developed by the FY2004 project through at least 2 evacuation/reunification drills, involving different geographic areas of the district, to take place by the end of the project period. Grant funds will provide bus driver costs for training, practice drills, and debriefings.

## **Recovery Activities**

**Involving Public Health and Mental Health Partners** – These two partner agencies have been less involved than other partners thus far in SD5's ERCM initiatives. The ERCM Project Coordinator will address this issue by:

- Instituting the Incident Command System, which includes supervision of recovery services in collaboration with community partners.
- Developing on-call Recovery Teams in partnership with local public health, mental health, and behavioral health agencies, using public health social workers, school psychologists, and mental health counselors from the district and outside agencies.
- Arranging Recovery Team members' participation in practice drills at their assigned schools, working with the school's CERT Team.
- Developing additional training sessions for school staff on disaster psychology and post-traumatic stress during in-service time.

*b. The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.*

A detailed description of how this project appropriately addresses the needs of the target population is included in Part A of this section. The following summarizes the strengths of this plan to address the specific needs of each school, of individuals with disabilities and special needs, and of limited English proficient populations:

**Strength: Customized Plans.** At the start of the 2005-06 school year, each school will receive a copy of the district's revised facility crisis plan, which the CERT Team will then customize for their school under the supervision of the ERCM Project Coordinator. Team members have received state-of-the-art training to give them the tools they need to adapt their plans to their school's student population, staff population, physical plant, and surrounding area. Each staff member will then receive a copy of their school's plan during school-based staff development time, where they will learn about crisis procedures, how to use the provided templates to customize their plan down to the classroom/office level, and how to teach students in each of their classes the emergency response procedures for their classroom. Those procedures will be posted in all classrooms and multi-purpose areas. Inspections by the school's CERT Team and the district ACT-Team, as well as practice drills, will assess staff and student knowledge of their crisis plan and emergency procedures.

**Strength: Addressing Needs of Individuals with Disabilities.** As described under Part A above, each school's CERT Team will collaborate with special education staff, the School Nurse, and others to create a detailed plan for addressing students and adults with special needs, following the guidelines of the district's revised facility crisis plan. As student populations continually change, assignments will need to be modified by the CERT Team on a regular basis as students enroll or leave the school. All persons assigned to help with disabled individuals in crisis situations will participate in specialized training and schools will receive needed equipment for evacuating persons with physical disabilities. Inspections and practice drills will include the school's preparedness and response to crisis situations as they relate to special needs individuals.

**Strength: Addressing Non-English Speaking Populations.** Nearly 200 families with children attending SD5 do not speak English as their primary language, and that number is growing each year. Once developed, parent materials will be translated into Spanish and other languages as necessary. Command Center interpreters will be on-call to communicate with anxious parents in the event of a crisis.

*c. The extent to which the proposed project encourages parental involvement.*

SD5's FY2004 ERCM project will address parental involvement during 2005-06. The ACT-Team, which includes parent representatives, will draft template materials to inform parents of their school's safety and emergency procedures for schools to then customize each school year. Part of facility inspections will be assessing whether schools have effectively involved parents through the following:

1. Distribution of parent materials at the start of school
2. Reminders in school/parent newsletters throughout the year
3. Posting of emergency procedures on the school web site
4. Presentations/discussion at School Improvement Council meetings
5. Parent surveys soliciting input on safety issues

*d. The extent to which the proposed activities constitute a coherent, sustained program of training in the field.*

SD5's ERCM training program is described fully in Part A above and includes:

- CERT – 3-day training is the Department of Homeland Security's endorsed training model for community response teams, with refresher workshops annually for team members.
- NIMS – both introductory and in-depth training for school and district staff, NIMS Instructor Training for ERCM Project Coordinator and additional staff.
- ICS – ICS training contained in CERT program, refresher training annually for CERT team members.
- CPTED – research-based national model for environmental crime prevention. Initial and in-depth training provided during the project.
- Threat Assessment – Training offered by in-house trainers on an ongoing basis for staff in recognizing and de-escalating situations, annual training for school administrators.

- CPR – Annual training for school Code Blue Teams by in-house trainers.
- Recovery/Post-Traumatic Stress – Training offered by in-house counselors on an ongoing basis.
- Staff Training in Crisis Plan and Procedures – By ERCM Project Coordinator and school CERT Teams annually.
- Student Training – Annually by each classroom teacher, postings in each classroom.
- Assisting and Transporting Individuals with Disabilities – Annual training for assigned staff.
- USDOE and Other Regional/National Training – For ERCM Project Coordinator and selected staff to strengthen expertise in ERCM practices.

Key to the project’s ongoing training “in the field” are debriefing sessions following facility inspections and practice drills, each taking place at least once annually in every school. These sessions are important for administrators, CERT Team members, and project staff to go over facility strengths and weaknesses, develop plans for improvement, and review research-based crisis management principles.

#### **4. Quality of the Management Plan**

*a. The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.*

SD5’s current ERCM Project Coordinator will oversee both FY2004 and 2005 project activities on behalf of the applicant throughout the project period. This full-time position currently oversees all emergency response and crisis planning for the school district, therefore it is reasonable for this position to undertake both ERCM projects as they are so closely intertwined and rely on the same community partnerships and school-district relationships. It is anticipated that this position will be sustained through local funds as the district’s Office of Safety and Security. This position reports to the Supervisor of Student Services for the district, Gregory McCord, who serves as the ERCM Project Director. SD5 will continue to provide office space, fax/copier, phone, Internet, and support staff services for this position.

The district’s ERCM Project Coordinator is Michael Poole, who has successfully managed SD5’s current ERCM project to stay on time, within budget, and on track to completing its identified process

and outcome objectives. He, along with the ACT-Team and district staff, developed this proposal. Mr. Poole has a Masters Degree in Criminal Justice and a strong background in law enforcement, safety and security, and emergency response/crisis management as a former Special Agent and Detective with the Lexington County Sheriff's Department and the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division, where he specialized in youth law enforcement by heading various gang task forces. He is a Certified Firefighter, formerly an EMT, Certified Bomb Technician, Hazardous Materials Technician, and Counter-Terrorism Trainer and College Instructor. He has also completed ERCM training from the Department of Homeland Security, FEMA, USDOE, National Weather Service, and state and county emergency preparedness agencies. Resumes for the Project Director and Project Coordinator are included in the appendices.

The management plan timeline outlined below details the process objectives for the project. The district's current ERCM Independent Evaluator will also be contracted to oversee FY2005 project evaluation, thereby providing accountability for fidelity to the project timeline and achieving project objectives.

### **Project Timeline (September 2005 – March 2007)**

*PC = Project Coordinator, SSS = Supervisor of Student Services (Project Director)*

*NOTE: Activities already included in the FY2004 ERCM project timeline are not duplicated here*

<b>Process Objective</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>By</b>
Announce grant award to local media, SD5 stakeholders	SD5 PR Office	9/05
Attend Project Director meeting, 2 other grantee meetings in Washington, DC	PC, SSS	As scheduled
Schedule, develop agendas for ACT-Team meetings	PC	10/05-3/07
Inspect each facility 1x/yr for compliance with district ERCM policies and procedures	PC, ACT-Team	10/05-3/07
Inspect facilities 1x/semester for ERCM compliance	CERT Teams	10/05-3/07
Hold timed lockdown drills at each school	ACT-Team, CERT Teams	10/05-4/06
Hold timed evacuation drills at each school	ACT-Team, CERT Teams	10/06-3/07
School Crisis Plans completed	CERT Teams	10/05
Train school staff in revised Crisis Plans	PC, CERT Teams	10/05
Schedule Threat Assessment and Disaster Recovery training for the school year during district staff development time	PC, local trainers	10/05, 10/06

Order equipment for transporting individuals with disabilities	PC	11/05
Train school staff in assisting individuals with disabilities	PC, trainers	11/05, 8/06
Develop phone tree of interpreters for crisis response	PC	11/05
Establish on-call Recovery Teams	PC, project partners	11/05
Purchase and install district radio system, conduct user training	PC	12/05
Complete NIMS Awareness Course	PC, 1 per school	12/05
Attend NIMS Instructor Training	PC	12/05
Present NIMS overview to school administrators, ACT-Team	PC	12/05
Complete parent education materials	PC, ACT-Team	1/06
Prepare NIMS implementation plan	ACT-Team	1/06
Hold 2 timed district evacuation/reunification drills with pre- and post-training for Transportation staff	PC, ACT-Team, partners	3/06, 11/06
Conduct follow-up CPTED training	PC	3/06
Recommend changes to school and district Crisis Plans for 2006-07	ACT-Team	4/06
Present NIMS adoption to SD5 Board of Trustees	PC, ACT-Team	5/06
Send selected staff to CERT Instructor Training	PC	5/06
Conduct CERT training for 40 staff members	PC, local trainers	7/06
Conduct NIMS training and ICS training for est. 114 staff members	PC, local trainers	9/06
Complete NIMS implementation plan	PC, ACT-Team	9/06
Develop and sign new Partnership Agreement for sustaining crisis planning in SD5	ACT-Team	3/07
Submit required reports to USDOE	PC, SSS	As directed

*b. How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others as appropriate.*

Key to the success of this project will be the **Advisory Coordination Team for Emergency Response and Crisis Management (ACT-Team)**. The ACT-Team has met regularly during the district's

current ERCM project to inform members on the progress of crisis planning efforts, solicit input from a diversity of perspectives on strengthening crisis planning, and coordinate the involvement of community partners. The ACT-Team membership includes:

- SD5: Project Coordinator, district representatives from Student Services, Transportation, Food Services, Instructional Services, Special Education, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Safe Schools/Healthy Students; one administrator per school; one SIC member (teacher or parent) per school; and at least one school board member
- Independent Evaluator
- Local Government: Representatives from Irmo, Chapin, and county councils
- Law Enforcement: Representatives from Lexington County Sheriff's Department, Richland County Sheriff's Department, Columbia Police, Irmo Police, and Chapin Police
- Public Safety: Representatives from both county agencies, local EMS, fire departments
- Public Health: Representative from Palmetto Public Health District, Lead School Social Worker for SD5, representatives from Lexington Medical Center, Palmetto Health Alliance
- Mental Health: Representative from Lexington Mental Health, school mental health counselor(s)
- Businesses: Representatives from SCE&G, Honeywell, Irmo Chamber of Commerce
- Organizations: Representatives from V.C. Summer Nuclear Station

**Each of the 5 required partners** (local government, law enforcement, public safety, public health, and mental health) as well as other ACT-Team members, will be involved in the development of school and district crisis plans, and will receive a copy of the final plan and subsequent revised plans. Representatives from **all of the required partner agencies have signed the attached Partnership Agreements**, agreeing to collaborate with SD5 on the following: 1. Reviewing current plans and procedures; 2. Advising the school system and School Board on ways to broaden and improve its plans; 3. Appointing of a representative to participate on the SD5 Advisory Coordination Team for Emergency Response and Crisis Management (ACT-Team); 4. Participating in training programs to improve crisis

management; 5. Assisting in training of district personnel, school personnel, students, and parents; and 6. Participating in any tests or drills where appropriate.

ACT-Team members have been invaluable to the success of ERCM initiatives thus far. Required partner agencies and other community partners have provided CERT training for school staff and training for the ERCM Project Coordinator; participated in facility inspections, practice drills, debriefings, and tabletop sessions; and provided technical assistance.

***Coordination with Homeland Security Plan*** – The project is closely aligned with state and local Homeland Security Plans. The project aligns SD5 with guidelines set by the Homeland Security Advisory System, adopts the DHS model for community responder training (CERT), and implements the National Incident Management System and Incident Command System. County and state emergency preparedness offices are working closely with the ERCM Project Coordinator to provide ongoing training and support.

#### **Other Certifications**

***Participation of Private Schools*** – Only private schools for preschool and kindergarten are located in SD5. The ERCM Project Coordinator notifies private schools in writing of opportunities to participate in training, inspections, and practice drills, and will continue to do so for opportunities provided through this project. No private school thus far has chosen to participate.

***Maintenance of Effort*** – SD5 exceeds the Maintenance of Effort requirement (see appendices).

### **4. Quality of the Project Evaluation**

*a. The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.*

Both quantitative and qualitative data will be used to measure progress toward the following performance indicators:

1. By March 2007, 100% of the district's 21 facilities (20 schools, district office) and the district will complete emergency response plans that address an increased number of hazards as compared to their baseline plan (GRPA); include all four phases of crisis planning; base their plans on an assessment of

the unique vulnerabilities of their facility and population; and address the needs of special populations, including individuals with disabilities and limited English proficiency.

2. By March 2007, 100% of the district's 21 facilities (20 schools, district office) will receive a "Good" or higher rating on their most recent inspection by ACT-Team members, including representatives of partner agencies.
3. By March 2007, at least 15 of 20 district facilities (75%) will demonstrate improved response time and quality of response to practice drills and simulated crises, from 2005-06 to 2006-07 (GRPA).
4. By March 2007, SD5 and community partners in local government, law enforcement, public safety, public health, and mental health will sign a Partnership Agreement committing resources to the sustainability and continuous improvement of school and district emergency response plans (GRPA).

*b. The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.*

SD5 has contracted with an Independent Evaluator, Dr. Mitch Miller, Professor of Criminology with the University of South Carolina with significant experience in the area of emergency preparedness and crisis response, to conduct the project's process and outcome evaluation. The process evaluation will address questions such as: 1. Were program procedures carried out with fidelity to the management plan in a timely fashion? 2. Were training programs effective? 3. Were the major project strategies effective in their day-to-day operations? An ongoing analysis of all program components will enable project staff and the ACT-Team to make **timely modifications** in any component that is not functioning in an adequate capacity. *Process indicators* will include participant surveys/interviews, training evaluations, checklists, and daily/weekly reports by the ERCM Project Coordinator. Adherence to the Project Timeline for training and conducting activities will be closely monitored. *Outcome indicators* will include a review of all Crisis Plans, inspection reports, response time logs, debriefing sessions, after-action reports, and the revised Partnership Agreement. The Independent Evaluator will attend ACT-Team meetings and present quarterly reports on process and outcome indicators so that the team can make any necessary changes to the project to ensure its successful completion.