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Perceptions of Missouri School Superintendents and School Resource Officers Regarding Preparedness for Multi-Hazard Events

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Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to garner the perceptions of superintendents and school resource officers in regard to district preparedness for multi-hazard events. Nationwide, schools are facing dramatic changes in the area of safety and security due to natural disasters, and more commonly, manmade hazards (Schaffhauser, 2013). Routinely, school personnel do not have the mindset, nor are they equipped, to respond to a major crisis (Trump, 2012). Recent mass murders and natural disasters in the United States have prompted districts to reach beyond the walls of their schools and into local communities for support (Gereluk, Donlevy, & Thompson, 2015). To identify how districts have fostered partnerships within the community and have collaborated to form an all-hazards team, three research questions were answered. Findings revealed perceptions regarding school district preparedness were less than favorable, while those related to having multi-jurisdictional, all-hazards teams were promising. Furthermore, data collected exposed limited knowledge of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as a common tool for managing all threats and hazards. By failing to adequately prepare for a major crisis event by utilizing free models and resources available, those responsible for emergency management within schools are jeopardizing the safety and security of all stakeholders.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The majority of Americans believe schools should be among the safest places for children, possibly even safer than their places of residence (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], 2015). According to Kena et al. (2015), over 50 million pre-kindergarten through 12th-grade students are enrolled in public schools in the United States; approximately 900,000 attend public schools in Missouri (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [MODESE], 2015; Tuck, Haynie, & Davis, 2014). With respect to parental expectations regarding the safety of children at school, responses from focus groups, surveys, and general conversations strongly indicate no issue is a higher priority than safety (DeLapp, 2014). Presently, the only emergency response drill Missouri schools are required to conduct, pursuant to state law, is an active shooter/intruder response drill (Missouri General Assembly, 2015). Furthermore, all policies adopted from the Missouri School Board Association (2017) by local school districts in Missouri generalize the types of drills and only require the number of drills be sufficient to inform and prepare staff and students for a crisis event.

The history of multi-hazard events in schools and the advancement of planning and knowledge systems as a result of information garnered following major crises will be presented in this chapter. A theoretical framework, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, and research questions used to guide the study will also be included. Additionally, the significance of the study is supported, key terms are defined, and the limitations and assumptions of the study are revealed.

Background of the Study

Public schools are fundamental components of communities across the country, housing the majority of the nation's youth each day and also serving as resource centers for the local population (Kena et al., 2015). A century ago, schools began the transformation from one-room school houses into larger structures with multiple levels and many rooms (Bliesner & Munger, 2017). In the mid-1900s, following several deadly fires which resulted in loss of lives and property, schools were required to perform regular fire drills and adhere to strict compliance codes in an attempt to make existing buildings safer and to govern future construction of public schools (Bliesner & Munger, 2017).

Subsequently, students in schools across the United States have been trained regarding fire safety for over 50 years (Hendry, 2015). Children as young as preschool age are taught what to do in the event of a fire and how to escape, even if they are without direct supervision of their teacher or parent due to injury or death (Hendry, 2015). School massacres at Columbine, Virginia Tech, and Sandy Hook Elementary, make it now necessary to require students to face the reality of having to prepare, train, and drill for school shooters (Peterson, 2014). Across the nation, districts have added a multitude of procedures, programs, and new technologies ranging from lockdown protocols to disconcerting innovations such as bulletproof backpacks in response to these unanticipated events (Peterson, 2014). According to Herlianita (2017), integrating awareness initiatives into programs for school-aged children is an excellent way to publicize safety and preparedness. In reaction to the recent Parkland, Florida, school

shooting, Felix et al. (2018) explained how new security procedures, which had been implemented, appeared to mitigate several potential injuries.

Safety is defined as protection from risk, injury, or danger (*Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary*, 2017). Gallup Polls have revealed over 33% of parents with kindergarten through 12th-grade students fear for the physical safety of their children at school, which is a significant increase from 15%, just five years earlier (Jones, 2013, para 1). Nevertheless, this figure is down from the 55% publicized in 1999 following the Columbine shootings (Jones, 2013, para 3). Jones (2013) surmised parents' level of fear has decreased since the turn of the century, possibly attributable to the increase in frequency of tragic events, global coverage of the occurrences, and media desensitization.

One might perceive safety plans to be a recent trend in education, while in fact they have been a focus for schools and communities for the past century (Keeney, Buan, & Diamond, 2012). In the 1940s, United States post-war labors sparked the movement for improvement in the area of safety through the development of a national early warning system (Keeney et al., 2012). In an effort to minimize the impact of natural disasters and potential threats to citizens, the development of a system of weather surveillance radars and the formation of a wide-ranging, multi-agency emergency broadcast system were commenced (Keeney et al., 2012).

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was created on April 1, 1979, with the signing of an executive order by President Jimmy Carter as a commitment to the American people to strengthen the nation's ability to prepare for and respond to emergencies (FEMA, 2016b; Kaiser, 2016). Over a quarter of a century ago, following a succession of catastrophic fires, wildland firefighters initiated the development of a

structure designed to integrate various radio styles and command tasks, allowing emergency responders from other locations across the country to effectively and efficiently adjust to the command system being used when they arrived on scene (FEMA, 2016b; Isaac & Moore, 2011). Following the creation of the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in 2002, the FEMA and a number of other federal agencies, offices, and programs joined the department to form a comprehensive disaster response division (FEMA, 2016b).

Due to a significant number of deaths and millions of dollars in property damage, personnel were given the task of reviewing case histories to ascertain explanations for the staggering statistics (DHS, 2014). Studies revealed the problem did not lie with tactical failures or lack of resources; rather, the problems almost always resulted from ineffective management during a crisis or emergency (DHS, 2014). According to Keeney et al. (2012):

> Those initiatives were followed by the creation of the National Response Framework, the Incident Command System (ICS), the multi-channel Emergency Alert System, and policies at the federal, state and local level that promoted broader hazard awareness, risk reduction and emergency preparedness. (p. 115)

The objective of the National Response Framework is to provide the general population with an understanding of procedures, as well as implementation strategies, during the occurrence of a multi-hazard event (DHS, 2014).

The comprehensive approach of the National Response Framework employs extensive community efforts from a multitude of stakeholders to increase local awareness and organize an effective national preparedness action plan where multiple partnerships

are born and a strategy is designed for successful response efforts to future incidents (DHS, 2014). According to the DHS (2014), "Emergency response leaders are tasked with the responsibility of communicating and engaging the entire community through the development of shared goals and aligned capabilities designed to decrease the probability of a single jurisdiction becoming besieged during a crisis event" (p. 5). The Incident Command Center (ICS) is the emergency management tool which alleviates the burden of response falling on the shoulders of a single organization by incorporating a common organizational structure responders can use at the local, state, or federal level (Spears & Costabile, 2012).

Following the creation of the ICS, a collaboration among officials at local and state levels, representatives from public safety organizations, and the DHS, established the National Incident Management System (NIMS) in March of 2004 (FEMA, 2015). The NIMS was invented to establish a logical, proactive approach to prevent, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of incidents-regardless of cause, size, location, or complexity-employable by various agencies, government, non-government, and private sector organizations (FEMA, 2015). Hardin (2018) stated the National Incident Management System actually enhances the ability of governmental and private sector agencies to coordinate identification and mitigation efforts during multi-hazard events.

The NIMS model was designed to train and prepare individuals to perform specific jobs regardless of the type of emergency; this negates the need for a checklist, because people are trained for their specific roles (Isaac & Moore, 2011). The South Carolina Emergency Management Division (2018) explained:

> [The] NIMS establishes standardized incident management processes, protocols, and procedures that all responders-Federal, state, tribal, and local-will use to coordinate and conduct response actions. With responders using the same standardized procedures, they will all share a common focus, and will be able to place full emphasis on incident management when a homeland security incident occurs-whether terrorism or natural disaster. In addition, national preparedness and readiness in responding to and recovering from an incident is enhanced since all of the Nation's emergency teams and authorities are using a common language and set of procedures. (para. 2)

Establishing specific titles, such as incident commander, communicator, and reunification director, and providing training for those key individuals allows them to know their roles and increases their ability to operate as an effective team regardless of the type of emergency (Isaac & Moore, 2011).

Theoretical Framework

The protection motivation theory, or fear appeals, was the guiding framework for this study (Rogers, 1975). Disasters often cause many of the individuals involved to have traumatic experiences, leading to exacerbated stress, which causes negative and lasting effects on the cognitive, physical, and emotional realms of the psyche (Rogers, 1975). Intellectual acts depend on a healthy brain functioning at a high level, in addition to specific learning practices and background knowledge (Masten & Obradovic, 2008). The intelligent response to a threat depends on a multitude of facets including prior growth, knowledge, and familiarity, in addition to immediate recognition and adaptation to the perils of stimulation, anxiety, exhaustion, sickness, injury, drive, ideals, feelings, and

several added stimuli possibly aroused during the evolution of a disaster (Maddux & Rogers, 1983; Masten & Obradovic, 2008).

Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary (2018) defined threat as "an expression of intention to inflict evil, injury, or damage; or one that threatens; or, an indication of something impending," differing from the perception of a threat, which exists only if an individual holds a thought that a threat exists (p. 1). The result of fear appeals within the protection motivation theory supports the perceptive assessment of threats, hence accentuating the belief individuals will act purposefully to protect their self-interests in evading the pain linked to the threats (Rogers, 1975).

The original protection motivation theory postulated three key elements generate a fear appeal: 1) severity-the scope of a catastrophic, noisome event; 2) vulnerability-the likelihood of a tragic event occurring; and 3) response efficacy-the effectiveness of a defensive response (Rogers, 1975; Tannenbaum et al., 2015). Rogers (1975) stated, "Each of these communication variables initiates corresponding cognitive appraisal processes that mediate attitude change" (p. 93). However, a fourth component was later added: self-efficacy, one's belief in his or her ability to successfully perform a suggested plan of action (Maddux & Rogers, 1983).

There has been a vast amount of research designed to identify the behaviors of people during a threatening event (Park, 2016). When self-efficacy is added as a predictor of participant behavior in a crisis situation, human perceptions and behavior can be more readily understood and anticipated during a crisis event (Park, 2016). Citizens view schools as significant and essential role players, which manifests following a disaster (Masten & Obradovic, 2008). High-functioning schools communicate the

perception a community is capable of handling tasks, which can lead to community endurance following a catastrophe through the continuation of normal school routines (Masten & Obradovic, 2008).

Statement of the Problem

Both historical and current events have heightened the need for more comprehensive emergency operations plans for schools containing well-rounded planning, community involvement, and ongoing training (Schaffhauser, 2011). Disaster gives no regard to how idyllic schools appear to be, and if a catastrophic ordeal transpires, it will be abysmal; the magnitude of the tragedy will be determined by the level of preparedness prior to the event (Schaffhauser, 2011). According to the Missouri Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program: Responsive Services, endorsed by the MODESE, "…The new Missouri Safe School Initiative will ensure that school emergency plans are in compliance with NIMS" (Brewer, 2018, p. 4). Responding to emergencies and refining safety procedures are crucial to maintaining a positive learning environment (Cowan, Rossen, & Pollitt, 2013).

According to Hamilton-Ekeke (2017), "Knowing how to deal with a crisis situation and what to do when a crisis occurs is what is the difference between calm and chaos, between courage and fear, between life and death" (p. 145). Hardin (2018) proposed preparedness is essential to effective response during an emergency or disaster. The events of the 21st century have heightened threats to a new level requiring keen attention and precision in preparation and response efforts and demanding an innovative intensity of resiliency throughout interdependent systems (Masten & Obradovic, 2008). Estep (2013) resolved, "In this turbulent world, new types of crisis continually present

themselves. It is imperative that districts' crisis teams meet regularly to determine how to address those missing parts of their plan" (p. 19). There is no single program or elaborate piece of equipment that allows a school to achieve a safe and positive climate; instead, active comprehensive planning efforts by community stakeholders in a multi-tiered approach to emergency planning improve response efforts to a crisis (Cowan et al., 2013).

Curriculum planning charts a school's path to academic success; likewise, comprehensive safety planning positions schools to be effective when responding to various crises and emergency events (Cowan et al., 2013). School districts are constantly discussing issues surrounding risk management; failing to implement a sound, well-planned emergency operations plan leaves schools as a target for possible legal action (Isaac & Moore, 2011). It is unrealistic to expect schools to prepare for every type of event, because no two events are alike, and there is often no predictor or probability of if and when an event will occur (Schaffhauser, 2013). Schaffhauser (2011) gave credence to three cornerstones for effective response to a disaster: "developing a comprehensive safety plan; testing the plan… which may also be the most effective way to secure funding… and deploying the technology to prepare for and respond to a crisis" (p. 40). Planning, preparing, testing, and revising emergency operation plans on a regular basis is the only way to potentially minimize loss during a crisis (Schaffhauser, 2013). Dwyer, Osher, Maughan, Tuck, and Patrick (2015) stated schools are frequently the geographical and sociological community center and as such can be used to maximize the potential impact of event management, especially during a crisis or emergency.

Purpose of the Study

When it comes to their children, parents may pardon school officials with regard to unsatisfactory test scores, but they are much less lenient about failure to implement prevention measures or crisis management (Trump, 2012). The Missouri Parent Teacher Association (2017) ascertained the following in reference to mandatory safety drills in Missouri schools: "The most powerful tool in an emergency is a school's safety plan, and plans should be assembled by teams including emergency management personnel, community partners and school-based staff and include components such as prevention-mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery" (p. 2). According to Hamilton-Ekeke (2017), "Crisis Response Teams need to be established to effectively respond during and after a crisis and to minimize any number of casualties and injuries that might be sustained" (p. 145). Parents expect school personnel to be trained in emergency response measures, whether reacting to a natural disaster, the death of a student, an active shooter, or a terrorist threat (Trump, 2012).

Research questions. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the perceptions of superintendents and school resource officers regarding school district preparedness for a multi-hazard event?
2. What are the perceptions of superintendents and school resource officers regarding the use of the National Incident Management System in the wake of a multi-hazard event?
3. What are the perceptions of superintendents and school resource officers regarding a multi-jurisdictional, all-hazards team approach to crisis response?

Significance of the Study

Children across the country practice drills that require them to go to a corner inside their classrooms and take cover while their teacher barricades the door and turns off the lights (Will & Blad, 2018). Schools must take action to prepare for manmade acts and natural disasters by implementing an all-hazards method when it comes to school emergency planning (Hamilton-Ekeke, 2017). Safety plans, crisis plans, and emergency operations plans are all typical manuscripts found in school offices across the country, but habitually, rather than the living documents they are intended to be, they become nothing more than dust collectors (Estep, 2013). Unfortunately, when a tragedy strikes, the real crisis is that few if any people know how to respond (Estep, 2013). Despite the fact school districts are required to have emergency plans, Cornette and Angelique (2011) revealed most plans are out of compliance with federally endorsed practices and reasoned funding shortages prevent the procurement of essential equipment for training and implementation of emergency plan development.

The FEMA (2016c) described emergency management as the executive function that creates the framework within which communities decrease vulnerability to hazards and cope with disasters. Although this definition is widely recognized and used by many national emergency management establishments, local emergency managers remain increasingly unaware of and unfamiliar with the process (FEMA, 2015). Over a quarter of the United States population is comprised of youth, giving credence to the belief emergency responders should view children as a distinct at-risk population due to their exclusive needs (Cornette & Angelique, 2011). Consequently, this requires emergency personnel to ruminate about the numerous issues which may affect children in an adverse

manner and to prepare school faculty and staff, because school employees are often the first responders on scene if a disaster strikes during school hours (Cornette & Angelique, 2011; Pine, Costello, & Masten, 2005).

Definition of Key Terms

The following terms are defined:

Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate (ALICE). According to the ALICE Training Institute (2018), "…Instructor led classes provide preparation and a plan for individuals and organizations on how to more proactively handle the threat of an aggressive intruder or active shooter event" (p. 1).

All-hazards. All-hazards is defined as "an approach for prevention, protection, preparedness, response, and recovery that addresses a full range of threats and hazards, including domestic terrorist attacks, natural and manmade disasters, accidental disruptions, and other emergencies" (Blanchard, 2008, p. 13).

At-risk individuals. According to the Pandemic and the All-Hazards Preparedness Reauthorization Act, at-risk individuals are defined as "children, older adults, pregnant women, and individuals who may need additional response assistance" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016, p. 1).

Community emergency response team (CERT). According to Ready.gov (2017):

> The CERT program educates volunteers about disaster preparedness for the hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. CERT offers a consistent, nationwide approach to volunteer

> training and organization that professional responders can rely on during disaster situations, which allows them to focus on more complex tasks. (p. 1)

Critical infrastructure. According to Blanchard (2008), critical infrastructure includes:

> Systems and assets, whether physical or virtual, so vital to the United States that the incapacity or destruction of such systems and assets would have a debilitating impact on security, national economic security, national public health or safety, or any combination of those matters. (p. 141)

Incident action plan (IAP). An IAP is: An oral or written plan containing general objectives reflecting the overall strategy for managing and incident. It may include the identification of operational resources and assignments. It may also include attachments that provide direction and important information for management of the incident during one or more operational periods. (FEMA, 2016a, p. 5)

Incident command system (ICS). According to the FEMA (2016a), an ICS is: A management system designed to enable effective and efficient domestic incident management by integrating a combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure. ICS is normally structured to facilitate activities in five major functional areas: command, operations, planning, logistics, Intelligence & Investigations, finance and administration. It is a fundamental form of management, with the purpose of enabling incident managers to identify the key

concerns associated with the incident-often under urgent conditions-without sacrificing attention to any component of the command system. (para. 2)

Multi-hazard. According to Gill, Duncan, and Budimir (2016), multi-hazard or multi-hazard approach can be defined as:

An approach that considers more than one hazard in a given place (ideally progressing to consider all known hazards) and the interrelations between these hazards, including their simultaneous or cumulative occurrence and their potential interactions. Note that to progress from hazard potential to risk, a multi-hazard approach should also consider the dynamic nature of vulnerability, for instance following a primary hazard event, exposed assets will have an increased vulnerability to subsequent hazards. (p. 1)

National Incident Management System (NIMS). According to the FEMA (2016b):

[The NIMS is] a systematic, proactive approach to guide departments and agencies at all levels of government, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector to work together seamlessly and manage incidents involving all threats and hazards – regardless of cause, size, location, or complexity-in order to reduce loss of life, property and harm to the environment. The purpose of NIMS is to provide a common approach for managing incidents. (para. 2)

National Response Framework (NRF). The National Response Framework is "a guide to how the Nation responds to all types of disasters and emergencies. It is built on scalable, flexible, and adaptable concepts identified in the National Incident

Management System to align key roles and responsibilities across the Nation" (FEMA, 2016b, p. i).

Resilience. Resilience is "the ability to adapt to changing conditions and withstand and rapidly recover from disruption due to emergencies" (FEMA, 2015, p. A-2).

Strategos International. Strategos International (2018), "an innovative leader in security training, consulting and protective services, is here to safeguard people and property" (p. 1).

Unified command. According to the FEMA (2016a), unified command is:

> An application of ICS used when there is more than one agency with incident jurisdiction or when incident cross political jurisdictions. Agencies work together through the designated members of the Unified Command, often the senior person from agencies and/or disciplines participating in the Unified Command, to establish a common set of objectives and strategies and a single Incident Action Plan. (p. 6.1)

Limitations and Assumptions

Limitations acknowledged in this study include the following:

Sample demographics. The sample included specific stakeholders (superintendents and school resource officers) of selected school districts in Missouri. The identified schools may not be representative of all districts in the state. Also, the schools were selected based on the Missouri School Resource Officer Association Zones. All schools within the study were public schools governed by the MODESE with at least one commissioned school resource officer.

Interview questions. The questions created for this study were developed by the researcher.

Interviews. Consent of individuals participating in this study was purely voluntary. Answers provided by the participants were of various detail and length.

The following assumptions were acknowledged:

1. School stakeholders interviewed by the researcher for this study responded with truthful and thorough communication.

2. School stakeholders interviewed by the researcher for this study had direct knowledge of and job experience related to multi-hazard events.

Summary

The main goal of this study was to analyze school superintendent and school resource officer perceptions of district preparedness for a multi-hazard event, including their awareness of the NIMS and the ICS and the implementation of an all-hazards response team within their respective communities.

When teams follow the whole-community approach, as recommended by the National Response Framework, all stakeholders have the ability to be meaningful contributors and therefore benefit from the preparedness efforts (FEMA, 2016b). According to Hamilton-Ekeke (2017), when schools are the center of the community, everyone benefits; therefore, all stakeholders must be on board to guarantee schools are crime- and violence-free harbors for educating youth. Boychuk (2014) described a collective approach to school security as a comprehensive effort to address the issues surrounding school safety.

The background of the study and an introduction to the theoretical framework, which will guide this study were included in Chapter One. The statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, and the research questions were provided. Chapter One also included the significance of the study and the definition of key terms. Finally, the limitations and assumptions were stated.

Chapter Two contains an in-depth literature review of emergency management for schools. Incident command systems and the NIMS, along with emergency operation plan development, and school preparedness are included. The need for schools, emergency responders, and key stakeholders to join together in the formation of an all-hazards team to reach beyond the school walls and benefit the entire community are also provided.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

Hamilton-Ekeke (2017) stated, "As caretakers of a community within a community, administrators of schools must deal with the effects of tragedies that occur both on and off school grounds" (p. 143). Schools are tasked with the job of educating students, providing suitable access, and delivering curriculum for all, while students are responsible for applying themselves and learning while they are under the schools' supervision (Low, 2010). Educational institutions, their faculty, and staff are often held to a widely accepted requirement of care expressed in terms of guaranteeing the safety and security of students while at school (Gereluk, Donlevy, & Thompson, 2015).

These standards often include tasks such as supervision, daily duties, and emergency response operations, and are usually conveyed in school board policies and procedures (Gereluk et al., 2015). Every school day is different, and there is no tool for predicting what may or may not happen on a given day; nonetheless, proactive planning and preparation for the unknown are beneficial in the face of a crisis (Low, 2010). However, the current efforts of school district administrators and local boards of education to provide safe and secure environments conducive to learning are often hindered by substantial hurdles (Timm, 2015).

Campus Safety Magazine shared the results of a recent Gallup poll which revealed the number of public school students fearing for their safety at school was the highest it had been in the past 15 years, with nearly one-third of all parents surveyed reporting concerns with their child's safety at school ("Poll Finds Students," 2016). Additionally, virtually all students who expressed fear or concerns about their safety while at school had shared those trepidations with their parents ("Poll Finds Students," 2016). It is often

pressure from parents and other stakeholders which pushes districts to address liabilities and make hasty decisions without a well-thought-out plan of action (Timm, 2015).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2017) stated keeping students in school while promoting a perception of school safety is a national priority. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2017) further implied a precondition for student learning and peak physical, social, and emotional development is the requirement of feeling safe at school. Aldridge, McChesney, and Afari (2017); Vidourek, King, and Merianos (2016); Ulak (2017); and Brewer, Meckley-Brewer, and Stinson (2017) examined the impact of school safety on students' perceptions of school. As stated by Flynn, McDonald, D'Alonzo, Tam, and Wiebe (2018), school violence can be viewed as a societal health issue with collateral consequences which impact students both academically and socially.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2016b) described the effects of school violence as ranging from phobia of attending school to serious bodily injury. Data from a 2015 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey revealed the following: 4.1% of the 15,624 urban students surveyed carried a weapon onto school property, 6.0% were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property, 23% were in a physical fight, 6% did not go to school because they felt unsafe, 16% were electronically bullied, and 20% reported being bullied at school. (Kann, L., McManus, T., & Harris, W., et al., 2016, p. 8). According to the United States Department of Education (2016), nearly one in seven public school students in the nation are habitually absent potentially due to concerns about school safety (p. 5).

The Bureau of Justice Statistics reported students in rural areas have a lower rate of victimization during school hours as opposed to urban students (Musu-Gillette, Zhang, Wang, Zhang, & Oudekerk, 2017). As a reaction to these studies, schools have responded by implementing a variety of safety precautions (Connell, 2016). These precautions include cameras and metal detectors, but effects of their use have not been evaluated thoroughly (Reingle Gonzalez, Jetelina, & Jennings, 2016). Crawford and Burns (2015) discovered entry door control and metal detectors helped decrease attack threats in high schools and middle schools, while security cameras were related to an increase in threats.

Kupchick, Brent, and Mowen (2015) suggested recent high-profile events in schools have prompted an improved demand for the presence of school resource officers. Theriot (2016) proposed new research to promote understanding of the role resource officers play in affecting student and parent opinions of school safety, because perceptions and reality often diverge (Zhang, Musu-Gillette, & Oudekerk, 2016). Chrusciel, Wolfe, Hansen, Rojek, and Kaminski (2015) described these efforts as a remedy for school officials to demonstrate school safety is being taken seriously.

As proposed by Goodrum, Woodward, and Thompson (2017), many of the studies on school violence suggest the need for students, not school officials, to impart knowledge about disquieting peers. Goodrum et al. (2017) proposed continuous improvement as a method for reducing instances of multi-hazard events in schools. The first step is to move away from a defensive model to a continuous advancement model of reviewing, learning from, and leveraging information to lead toward improvement (Danner & Coopersmith, 2015).

Jones (2018) reported that in recent years, the ability of K-12 school districts to mitigate, prepare, protect, respond, and recover from emergencies has gained national attention as a wide variety of manmade and non-manmade disasters have impacted school systems in the United States. Students arrive at school each day, bringing with them life experiences which may enrich or encumber their learning (Low, 2010). It is impossible for schools and administrators to thwart or ameliorate every negative incident that affects students; however, when an opportunity presents itself which allows a leader to intervene, it cannot be ignored (Low, 2010). School district administrators must recognize and identify potential internal and external threats which may affect the safety and security of their schools (Trump, 2011). When a crisis situation unfolds and affects students, school leaders and teachers typically have no control over the event, but they do have excessive potential to influence the outcomes of the event (Low, 2010).

A key component in creating a positive school climate is understanding safety as an essential requirement for the well-being of each student, and it is imperative for schools to meet that basic need (Bradshaw, Waasdorp, Debnam, & Lindstrom, 2014). Chrusciel et al. (2015) described how quality school administrators do not question whether a crisis will actually occur; their mindset is focused on when it will occur, how serious it will be, and what the response of key stakeholders will be. Low (2010) specified effective school leaders are aware of the possibility of potential crises and recognize the inherent need for solid preparation and training for their entire staff and themselves.

Within this chapter, literature is reviewed and synthesized to provide an in-depth review of emergency management and preparedness in schools. Included are the

following: the protection-motivation theory/fear appeals model as an approach for preparedness; emergency management; the Incident Command System and NIMS models; and emergency operations plan development.

Theoretical Framework

The protection motivation theory and fear appeals model provided the framework for this study due to the unique nature of schools and the complex makeup of individuals housed therein. Safety drills, while intended to prepare students for the worst, actually have the ability to enhance students' sense of self efficacy and increase resilience (Lee, 2018; MacDonald, 2015). Fear appeals have been used in a number of contexts over the years and can be applied in schools or organizations to motivate policy compliance behaviors (Johnston, Warkentin, & Siponen, 2015). According to Johnston et al. (2015), "Fear appeals take the form of messages or communications intended as a mechanism for manipulating the recipient's intrinsic notions of threat and efficacy regarding a particular threat and corresponding protective behavior" (p. 114). The extensive research of Rogers & Maddux (1983) concluded, "Despite some inconsistencies among experimental findings, fear appeals have been found to be generally effective in producing attitude change" (p. 470). The protection motivation theory primarily focuses around how individuals cope and formulate decisions during high stress or potentially harmful events (Johnston, Warkentin, & Siponen, 2015).

The protection motivation theory, a perceived theory of behavior change, when coupled with fear appeals approach is, "…intended to model outcomes resulting from (and subsequent to) some type of stimulus (e.g., a fear appeal) that communicates a threat and a recommended response to the threat" (Johnston, Warkentin, & Siponen, 2015, p.

115). Changes in behavior and altered self-efficacy probability are directly correlated, which suggest changes in self-efficacy facilitate changes in behavior (Maddux & Rogers, 1983).

Multiple theories on fear appeal predict it works only when efficacy and risk, or threat, are amply elevated, and each person has varying degrees of base-level behavior (Albarracãn, 2015). Lee (2018) determined, "Perceived control refers to the level of belief that one has about his/her capability to perform a behavior and control the barriers for performing that behavior" (p. 141). Rogers (1975) explained, "The intent to adopt the communicator's recommendation is mediated by the amount of protection motivation aroused. Protection motivation is an intervening variable that has the typical characteristic of a motive: it arouses, sustains, and directs activity" (p. 98). Naturally, for any particular behavior, individuals might respond in different ways and may be apathetic (low threat or risk, low efficacy), avoidant (high threat or risk, low efficacy), pro-active (low threat or risk, high efficacy), or reactive (high threat or risk, high efficacy) (Lee, 2018; Rogers, 1975).

Schools across the nation have plans in place to respond to a gamut of multi-hazard events from natural disasters and bio-hazard risks to terrorist attacks and active shooters (MacDonald, 2015). According to Herlianita (2017), "There is increasing evidence that students of all ages can actively study and participate in school safety measures, and also work with teachers and other adults in the community towards minimizing risk before, during, and after disaster events" (p. 32). Nevertheless, good judgment in the face of a crisis necessitates more than simply a decent information-processing system; it must also be noted that heightened levels of arousal often impair

decision-making skills and working memory, among other types of executive functioning (Pine et al., 2005).

Fishbein and Ajzen (2015) noted the theory of planned behavior, or reasoned action approach, suggests an intimidating or hostile communication raises the perception of a threat, which escalates attitude and accelerates intention, but only increases target behaviors if there is a high level of self-efficacy. This theory assumes intention is therefore predicted by attitude and social pressures to perform or not perform a task (self-efficacy), and a person's mindset comprehends and processes the perception of a threat, along with other beliefs he or she may possess (Albarracãn, 2015). Lee (2018) stated, "Self-efficacy is the belief in oneself that he or she can successfully perform a specific task" (p. 142). As detailed in the research conducted by Robert White in the late 1950s on the mastery motivation system and competency, human beings are driven to adapt to their surroundings and strive to gain compensation for perceived success (Pine et al., 2005). The extent to which an individual can control arousal and manage available resources is apt to play an essential role in crisis response and resilience (Pine et al., 2005).

Every major disaster directly or indirectly involves a human response (Masten & Obradovic, 2008). Herlianita (2017) determined, "More than 400 national disasters take place every year, affecting more than 230 million people and causing an average of almost 75,000 deaths annually" (p. 29). Resilience is commonly perceived as a theory pointing toward the issue of response by individuals when dealing with a rapid, generally unforeseen, and hence shocking, altercation (Kuhlicke, 2013; Maddux & Rogers, 1983).

Resilience ascends from progressions of interaction through various levels of functioning, including biologic systems and individual-media communications; disaster planning must take into account the attachment system and the level to which relationships are motivators of certain behaviors and can offer a sense of well-being and security (Masten & Obradovic, 2008). Lee (2018) discovered, "The importance of self-efficacy comes from the fact that it determines how much perseverance and self-regulation one will expend in the face of difficulties" (p. 142). Kuhlicke (2013) also revealed 'myth of resilience' is:

> …a way of retrospectively making sense of the radically surprising discovery of something entirely unknown (nescience) by explicitly referring to the capacity to deal with rapid and radical change as well as having the capacity to survive and even benefit from this change. (p. 74)

Resilience assists in providing an all-hazards approach, holistic in nature, focused on combined human-environment systems, taking into consideration qualms and dynamics (Kuhlicke, 2013).

Along the same line, authentic behaviors exhibited before, during, and following a crisis are not the best indicators of response; rather, the best indicators are how individuals build a relationship bridging their experiences and their mental processing or sense-making of the events (Kuhlicke, 2013). Lock-down and other various drills have proven to lessen student anxiety (Blad, 2018). Case studies have revealed the importance of these sense-making processes for arriving at an empirically justified knowledge of resilience that reaches outside doctrinaire conceptualizations of resilience and accepts an optimistic vision of an authentic reality (Kuhlicke, 2013).

The assemblage of documents and research studies focused on positive learning environments continues to increase, revealing the emergence of a relationship between students' perceptions of a positive school climate and the personal traits exhibited by those students including pro-social motivation, desire to achieve academically, self-confidence, conflict management, and philanthropic behavior (Bradshaw et al., 2014). Correct school-based crisis intervention plans aid in facilitating the grieving process, alleviate the negative results of crisis events, and cultivate the psychological healing and overall well-being and functioning of children (Herlianita, 2017).

Education and knowledge empower students to promote safety within the community; this sets the foundation upon which they can learn how to strengthen their communities through construction of disaster-resilient buildings and the implementation of a variety of preventative actions (Herlianita, 2017). Ruiter, Kessels, Peters, and Kok (2014) reiterated the importance of avoiding fear appeals as the motivational component in the formation of multi-hazard campaigns, as this can often be counterproductive. Rather, the authors proposed combining fear arousal with specific instructions for response (Ruiter et al., 2014).

Emergency Management

Not just on any given day, but throughout every school day, all institutions of learning across the nation are appointed with the task of ensuring the educational environment for students is safe, healthy, and conducive for learning (United States Department of Education [USDOE], 2013). When a traumatic event strikes during the school day, irrespective of the location of the event, school administrators, faculty, and staff members immediately become first responders with regard to the welfare of their

students, whether they are trained for this responsibility or not (Felix et al., 2018). Historical data provide a multitude of examples of school emergencies which emphasize the importance for both school officials and emergency responders to be adequately prepared when facing a crisis (USDOE, 2013).

The range of emergency situations addressed by institutions of learning is often immense and diverse (Jones, 2018). Schools play a vital role in taking precautionary and defensive actions to prevent an emergency from happening or in reducing the impact of an event when they have effective plans established to improve the safety of staff and students (USDOE, 2013). A community approach to school safety and emergency preparedness is crucial to successfully address the complex issues related to developing a safe school environment (Jones, 2018).

Traditionally, schools are not recognized as response organizations; however, when a school-based crisis or an event impacting the school or students occurs, faculty and staff automatically take on the role of first responders by providing first-aid, notifying authorities, and providing instruction and directions prior to emergency personnel arriving (USDOE, 2013). The school safety plan should be comprehensive in nature and should involve the whole community (Hamilton-Ekeke, 2017). Through collaboration with local government agencies, community partners (local law enforcement, fire department personnel, and emergency medical service personnel), public health entities, and mental health professionals, schools can prepare for possible emergencies by creating an emergency operations plan that outlines a cohesive, coordinated effort of response (USDOE, 2013).

As a nation, there exists a shared responsibility of preparedness through contributions by the entire community and all its stakeholders (FEMA, 2015). The USDOE (2013) stated, "National preparedness efforts, including planning, are now informed by Presidential Policy Directive 8, which was signed by the president [Barack Obama] in March 2011 and describes the nation's approach to preparedness" (p. 2). This directive signified an advancement in mutual intelligence of national preparedness, derived from information gained from natural disasters, terrorist attacks, school-based incidents, and other major crises (FEMA, 2015).

The FEMA (2015) declared the following when assessing risk and the core capabilities:

> Understanding the greatest risks to the Nation's security and resilience is a critical step in identifying the core capabilities. The information gathered during a risk assessment also enables a prioritization of preparedness efforts and an ability to identify our capability requirements. (p. 8)

Preparedness in Presidential Policy Directive 8 is defined through five main mission areas:

> Prevention, means the capabilities necessary to avoid, deter, or stop an imminent crime or threatened or actual mass casualty incident. Prevention is the action schools take to prevent a threatened or actual incident from occurring.
>
> Protection, means the capabilities to secure schools against acts of violence and manmade or natural disasters. Protection focuses on ongoing

> actions that protect students, teachers, staff, visitors, networks, and property from a threat or hazard.
>
> Mitigation, means the capabilities necessary to eliminate or reduce the loss of life and property damage by lessening the impact of an event or emergency. Mitigation also means reducing the likelihood that threats and hazards will happen.
>
> Response, means the capabilities necessary to stabilize an emergency once it has already happened or is certain to happen in an unpreventable way; establish and secure environment save lives and property; and facilitate the transition to recovery.
>
> Recovery, means the capabilities necessary to assist schools affected by an event or emergency in restoring the learning environment. (USDOE, 2013, p. 2)

The five mission areas contained in the National Preparedness Goal are the well-defined, essential components necessary for success which function as preparedness tools and as a process for organized implementation (FEMA, 2015).

Core Capabilities

The FEMA (2015) National Preparedness Goal declared, "The core capabilities are not exclusive to a single government or organization, but rather require the combined efforts of the whole community" (p. 3). The Strategic National Risk Assessment serves as a tool to identify the types of incidents and events that present significant threats to the nation (DHS, 2015; FEMA, 2015). The initial assessment limited included events to occurrences having a discernible beginning and end, along with incidents possessing a

perspicuous link to homeland security operations (FEMA, 2015). According to the South Carolina Emergency Management Division (2018), this initial assessment included event management best practices established and proven by multiple responders and authorities across the nation. The following list, although not all-inclusive, is reflective of the FEMA (2015) inventory of potential all-hazards events:

- natural hazards-weather related threats, i.e., tornadoes, floods, tornadoes, wildfires, winter storms, hurricanes, earthquakes, and droughts;
- pandemic hazards-influenza strains, infectious diseases from humans and/or animals, and unknown or undiscovered viruses;
- accidental and technological hazards-dam failures, transportation system malfunctions, chemical spills, and hazards occurring as the result of aging infrastructure;
- terrorist hazards-active shooters, weapons of mass destruction, armed attacks and explosive detonation carried out by lone actors, or multiple, targeted terrorist attacks;
- cyber-attack hazards-financial system breaches, power grid failures, and security infrastructure contraventions.

When a community is faced with risks as outlined, individuals or groups of individuals responsible for carrying out the core capabilities are directly impacted (FEMA, 2015).

The community, as a whole, must retain the capacity to manage chief mission functions in the midst of an actual incident or hazard to assure transmission of core capabilities on behalf of each mission area (Blanchard, 2008; FEMA, 2015). As stated by the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (2018), the compliance objectives of

the NIMS are to ensure the interoperability of resources; that is, to build a consensus of definitions for individuals and team members covering equipment, knowledge, abilities, and skills for optimal coordination and collaboration. The Indiana Department of Homeland Security (2018) proposed multi-jurisdictional responses necessitate interoperability, or cohesive coordination of efforts. Blanchard (2008) expanded this to further encompass specific compliance steps for school districts which include the following: NIMS awareness courses by key school emergency personnel, adoption of NIMS principles and policies, assessment and establishment of baselines for compliance with NIMS, development of a time frame and strategies for full NIMS implementation, and institutionalization of the Incident Command System.

Prevention. Capabilities included in the area of prevention include those required to prevent, avoid, or eliminate a possible threat or an authentic act of terrorism (FEMA, 2015). Most mission areas are designed as an all-hazard approach, with the exception of prevention, which specifically focuses on potential terrorist threats, threats which are ongoing, or halting imminent sequel attacks (Blanchard, 2008; FEMA, 2015). When looming terrorist threats are present, effective prevention measures properly in place prompt a forceful counterterrorism response where all mechanisms of national power may be activated to undertake threats and therefore save lives (FEMA, 2015). Prevention, as a core capability, incorporates intelligence, homeland security, and policing activities, all working in conjunction to resolve real and potential threats (FEMA, 2015). This mission area depends on continuous support methods enveloping the whole community to carry out the core capabilities to prevent imminent terrorist threats (FEMA, 2015; Oregon Office of Emergency Management, 2018).

Protection. The capabilities of the country to protect the homeland from terrorist acts and natural or manmade disasters are described in the protection mission area, along with the actions dedicated to protect citizens, vital interests, and lifestyle (FEMA, 2015). Specific areas outlined in the Presidential Policy Directive 8 protection mission area include defense against "weapons of Mass Destruction threats; defense of agriculture and food; critical infrastructure protection; protections of key leadership and events; border security; maritime security; transportation security; immigration security; and cybersecurity" (FEMA, 2015, p. 8). Hardening the target is the focus of the protection mission area, including ensuring the next generation of emergency managers are prepared and educated to respond to the next natural or manmade disaster (California Office of Emergency Services, 2018).

Mitigation. Often prevention and mitigation are combined, but they are actually two separate mission areas; mitigation encompasses resiliency (Blanchard, 2008; FEMA, 2015). The core mission area of mitigation comprises the capabilities to decrease loss of life and destruction of property by reducing the consequence of disasters (FEMA, 2015). Mitigation is focused on the proposition that people, private and not-for-profit sectors, communities and towns, critical infrastructure, and the entire nation become increasingly resilient when they pull through tragic incidents as a collaborative and cohesive unit (FEMA, 2015). The rising trend of impacts from life-threatening events and ruinous incidents sets mitigation as an acute cornerstone to decrease or eradicate the persisting perils to life, well-being, and property (FEMA, 2015).

Mitigation covers present and future planning efforts, including information systems, critical infrastructure, land use, healthcare, and public health in general, and

requires an awareness of threatening events and hazards that contribute to the risk assessments and disaster resilience of the broad community (FEMA, 2015). The community as a whole plays a part in the overall reduction of risk by identifying, accepting, collaborating, and forecasting for future resilience; however, there is a significant amount of mitigation action which transpires at the local level (FEMA, 2015). Vigilance at the individual level, as well as the broader community level, is fundamental in achieving successful recovery from a disaster; preparedness endeavors promote favorable fortification and mitigate the shock of disasters through malleability and competency for swift recovery (FEMA, 2015).

The involvement of the community at the local level is significant to success of the mitigation process, because the information flows upward to the state, regional, and national levels for planning efforts (FEMA, 2015). Brewer (2018) suggested involvement at the local level promotes attention to detail and ensures a thoughtful approach to the process. Homeland security officials have avowed:

> For risk information to result in specific risk reduction actions, leaders-whether elected in a jurisdiction, appointed in a given department, a non-governmental director, a sector official, or in business or community-must have the ability to recognize, understand, communicate, and plan for a community's future resilience. (FEMA, 2015, p. 11)

An atmosphere of trust established among community leaders before a disaster occurs raises the prospect of risk reduction and amplifies maturity, allowing improved preparation for reducing risks over time (FEMA, 2015; Pennsylvania Office of the State Fire Commissioner, 2018).

Response. The capabilities contained within the response mission area are those required to save lives, safeguard assets and the environment, and sustain fundamental human needs following an incident (FEMA, 2015; Stambler & Barbera, 2011). Response efforts ensure the nation's ability to effectively react to a threat or hazard-small, large, and with intensifying effects-by placing emphasis on protecting and preserving human lives, alleviating the incident, promptly sustaining fundamental human needs, reinstating important services and technologies, reestablishing community functionality, furnishing collective accessibility, instituting an environment that is safe and secure, and championing the move to recovery (FEMA, 2015; Pennsylvania Office of the State Fire Commissioner, 2018). Minor emergencies and adversities are regularly dealt with in communities across the nation and most have local capacities to meet the needs of the public for these minor occurrences; however, catastrophic events involve an expansive clique of atypical cohorts to supply equivalent investiture to the core capabilities within the response mission area beyond those customarily addressed (FEMA, 2015).

During the first few hours and possibly days following an incident, local individuals and groups within the community are vital links to delivering supplementary backing to response workers, which is why there is such a high level of importance placed on training, exercising, and partnering with emergency management and key community officials (FEMA, 2015; Kaiser, 2016). Nothing is static during a catastrophe, and if the incident has surging components, the implementation of pertinent laws and policies may be impacted or bypassed for improved conveyance of core capabilities (FEMA, 2015). During the planning phase, team members should pinpoint relevant laws and policies, with the help of respective counsel, to guarantee they are taken into account

over the course of an incident (FEMA, 2015; Pennsylvania Office of the State Fire Commissioner, 2018). The implementation of an effective multi-hazard management process includes the following components, according to the FEMA (2015): recognition of the need for a multi-hazard process, assignment of responsibilities to trained threat management personnel, understanding of communication protocols, incident tracking and detailed documentation, liaison with community and vested agencies, valid and consistent threat assessment methods, and continuous fact-finding activities.

Recovery. Recovery comprises the capabilities essential for a community to effectively acquire knowledge from an incident (FEMA, 2015). Maintenance of recovery requires a plan of care for community members to continue and reestablish health, well-being, freedom, and incomes, particularly for those who encounter economic, emotional, and physical adversities; communities arise from any threat, disaster, or hazard robust and ready to face the future (California Office of Emergency Services, 2018; FEMA, 2015). Restoring, strengthening, and revitalizing infrastructure and housing; maintaining a strong economic base; establishing social and health systems; and fortifying cultural, historic, and conservational threads must all be supported and well-coordinated through the recovery response capabilities (FEMA, 2015). The quicker a community can begin the process of recovery, the more effective disaster revitalization will be; this begins with pre-incident preparedness, collaboration, inclusive forecasting, development of resilience, and building of management capacity (California Office of Emergency Services, 2018; FEMA, 2015). This total community approach necessitates a multi-agency, interdisciplinary method that engages a wide range of assistance and resource benefactors and stakeholders (FEMA, 2015).

Recovery efforts are not limited to a single entity; local and government leaders all play a primary role and have an obligation to plan and coordinate all pieces to ensure major team members are involved and keenly engaged (FEMA, 2015). A well-coordinated administrative process, in the aftermath of an incident, provides an avenue for community leaders and recovery activists to sustain unrestricted and transparent communication, partner in the decision-making process, develop and appoint traditional and non-traditional allies, effectively identify necessities and urgencies, transfer and portion current resources, and detect other prospective resources from local and surrounding areas (FEMA, 2015). Recovery efforts, succeeding any incident, are a timely opportunity to influence solutions that improve inclusive community resilience and get the most out of prevailing areas of strength, meanwhile targeting areas of weakness which existed pre-incident (FEMA, 2015; Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, 2015).

The overarching premise of the National Preparedness Goal and the five mission areas is to prepare the nation for possible risks that have the potential to brutally stress mutual capabilities and resources (FEMA, 2015). As each community makes contributions to the National Preparedness Goal through risk assessments and preparation for incidents respectively relevant and urgent, the strength, security, and resilience of the nation as a whole are improved (FEMA, 2015). The National Preparedness Goal is regularly reviewed and revised; it is a living document which evaluates the nation's advancement in constructing, supporting, and supplying the core capabilities vital for a protected and resilient nation (FEMA, 2015; Isaac & Moore, 2011).

Incident Command System

Without a doubt, one of the most efficacious systems created by the FEMA is the application of the ICS (DHS, 2016; Kaiser, 2016). The ICS, which takes an all-hazards approach to emergency management, was developed by the United States Forest Service in 1970 following a sequence of fatal wildfires in California (DHS, 2016; Stambler & Barbera, 2011). Through use of the ICS, emergency managers are oriented to recognize various threats and hazards in the surrounding area and to conduct assessments that categorize the likelihood of an event occurrence (DHS, 2016; Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, 2015; State of Louisiana Governor's Office, 2018).

In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the government restructured its response to all threats, manmade or natural (DHS, 2016). The ICS management system is intended to manage people and resources from a range of agencies to guide incidents in an effective manner (Stambler & Barbera, 2011). A principal target of the ICS is standardizing incident management undertakings and providing malleability and scalability for the demands of any incident, regardless of the size or scope (FEMA, 2016a). By design, the ICS is organized in a structural manner which identifies uniform roles, responsibilities, and titles for responders (Stambler & Barbera, 2011).

The ICS structure has five main functions which can be activated as needed depending on the precise circumstance; they are as follows: command, operations, logistics, planning, and finance and administration (FEMA, 2016a). Each task within the ICS model is distributed by practical responsibility, with each section having a precise and well-designed obligation (Stambler & Barbera, 2011). This allows the structure to widen and incorporate subunits, largely distinguished as an overseer having

approximately five subordinates, which increases the ability to efficiently sustain a viable degree of hegemony (Stambler & Barbera, 2011). By having the ICS structured so each element is responsible for reporting to a single supervisor, the unity of command is effectively maintained (Stambler & Barbera, 2011).

Command. The first functional area is command; the incident commander, and if necessary, members of a crisis management team made up of a safety officer or school resource officer (SRO), public information officer (PIO), liaison officer, and possibly a mental health officer, all fall in this zone (FEMA, 2016a). Characteristically, there is one individual who acts as the primary Incident Commander, accountable for appropriately apportioning resources needed to manage the incident, albeit Unified Command oftentimes is more applicable in large-scale or highly complex incidents (Stambler & Barbera, 2011). The Incident Commander is the person who mobilizes and begins the on-site Incident Command Center (FEMA, 2016a; International Finance Corporation, 2010). The incident command force is the decision-making team responsible for incident action plans containing prime incident objectives, combined with operational objectives to be accomplished in a set amount of time; this tactic is known as management by objective (International Finance Corporation, 2010; Stambler & Barbera, 2011).

Planning. The framework of the planning section contains items pertinent to successfully supporting the mission through collection and analysis of situation and resources information (DHS, 2017; International Finance Corporation, 2010). Once the information has been processed, it becomes intelligence, more commonly referred to as intel, which can be disseminated to the appropriate agencies through incident action plans, informal briefings, or status boards (DHS, 2017). Additionally, the planning

division is responsible for documenting the situation, activities, schedules, personnel, etc. and ensuring precise record keeping (DHS, 2017; International Finance Corporation, 2010).

Operations. The operations section of the ICS is the hub for all tactical operations; members of this team are the doers responsible for carrying out the objectives of the mission (DHS, 2017; International Finance Corporation, 2010). It is vital the Operations Section Chief be an extremely organized and well-respected individual, because he or she delivers all directives from the IAPs (DHS, 2017; International Finance Corporation, 2010). The determination to expand the operations section is determined according to the amount of tactical resources engaged and is guided by span of control contemplations (DHS, 2017; International Finance Corporation, 2010). Teams in this branch are responsible for fulfilling functions such as light search and rescue, disaster first-aid, utility shut-off, hazardous materials control, fire suppression, security, and reunification operations (DHS, 2017; International Finance Corporation, 2010).

Finance/Administration. All financial aspects of an incident, such as cost analyses, compensation and claims functions, records of resources, and records of personnel time expended, are handled by the finance/administration section (DHS, 2017; International Finance Corporation, 2010). The leading role of this section is to pay and negotiate as needed for access to compulsory resources (International Finance Corporation, 2010). There is the potential some incidents will not require the activation of this section; it will only be activated when the agencies involved have an explicit need for finance services (DHS, 2017; International Finance Corporation, 2010).

Logistics. The logistics section, according to the DHS (2017), "…is responsible for providing: facilities, transportation, communications, supplies, equipment maintenance and fueling, food services (for responders), medical services (for responders), and all off-incident resources" (p. 29). The International Finance Corporation (2010) defined the logistics branch as "the getters… These teams will find and distribute supplies and provisions, shelter and sanitation, water and nutrition, and organize volunteer recruitment and assignment" (p. 19). The Logistics Section Chief, as a rule, is an individual who knows the site and has a good working knowledge of its resources, provides logistical intelligence to the Incident Action Planning Team, and oversees the creation of the Communications, Traffic, and Medical Plans, as needed (DHS, 2017; International Finance Corporation, 2010).

Multiple levels of activation are what make the ICS and the NIMS an effective response method for emergencies and disasters (International Finance Corporation, 2010). Low-level incidents involving a small number of people may only require a Level I activation of the ICS, while larger-scale events, such as an earthquake or major terrorist event, may require a Level III activation (International Finance Corporation, 2010). Flexibility is one of the major reasons the ICS is widely applicable and is used to organize operations for an expansive continuum of emergencies (DHS, 2017).

National Incident Management System

The DHS (2017) determined, "NIMS provides the template for the management of incidents, while the National Response Framework provides the structure and mechanisms for national-level policy for incident management" (p. 1). The Emergency

Manager training course offered by the FEMA reinforced the explanation found in the DHS (2017) NIMS manual describing the NIMS as:

> . . . a core set of doctrines, concepts, principles, terminology, and organizational processes that enable effective, efficient, and collaborative incident management . . . by integrating best practices into a comprehensive framework for use nationwide by emergency management/response personnel is an all-hazards context. (p. 3)

Although most incidents typically start and finish at the local level and are handled each day at the lowest organizational, jurisdictional, and geographical level, there are situations which require the involvement of several jurisdictions, governmental, functional, and emergency response agencies for successful incident management to occur (DHS, 2017) (see Table 1).

Table 1

Overview of the National Incident Management System

What the NIMS is:	What the NIMS is not:
A comprehensive, nationwide, systematic approach to incident management, including the Incident Command System, Multiagency Coordination, Systems, and Public Information	A response plan
A set of preparedness concepts and principles for all hazards	Only used during large-scale incidents
Essential principles for a common operating picture and interoperability of communications and information management	A communications plan
Standardized resource management procedures that enable coordination among different jurisdictions or organizations	Only applicable to certain emergency management/incident response personnel
Scalable, so it may be used for all incidents (from day-to-day to large-scale)	Only the Incident Command System or an organization chart
A dynamic system that promotes ongoing management and maintenance	A static system

Note. The overview of the NIMS table, found in the *National Incident Management System Manual*, provides clarification of exactly what the NIMS is and what it is not (DHS, 2017, p. 2).

Flexibility and standardization are the primary principles which make the NIMS an effective response structure to use, because it is not static and allows agencies to determine the scope of an event in order to make response decisions appropriately scaled to the immediate situation (DHS, 2017). The NIMS is much more than simply utilizing a structure chart or the ICS; it is a strategically developed method designed to prepare for and recover from any type of multi-hazard event (DHS, 2017).

Preparedness requires a cohesive tactic to emergency management and response activities following an event (FEMA, 2016b). The FEMA (2016b) identified the following points related to preparedness: "To achieve a unified approach, components of NIMS should be integrated within the emergency management and incident response structure, as well as into resource management, command and management, and communications and information management to form an effective system" (pp. 3-8). Preparedness activities are most effective when they are coordinated with all applicable agencies, jurisdictional organizations, and multi-jurisdictional partners (FEMA, 2016b).

Stakeholders such as individuals, preparedness organizations, non-governmental agencies, and representatives from the private sector may be included (FEMA, 2016b). In addition, preparedness organizations should certify and retain plans, procedures, and policies which give a description of how information and resources will be prioritized, coordinated, managed, and supported (FEMA, 2016b). The FEMA (2016b) indicated to advance all-hazards capabilities nationwide, all personnel with emergency management and incident response roles should be correctly trained and should participate in ongoing trainings, exercises, and events.

Mitigation is one of the primary components of the preparedness area because it provides a vital foundation and supports efforts designed to decrease the loss of life and property, as well as lessen the impact of natural and/or manmade disasters on the environment (FEMA, 2016b; Rubin, 2014). Mitigation helps create safer communities; impedes the sequence of disaster damage, renovation, and recurring damage; and usually will have a long-term prolonged effect (FEMA, 2016b). Mitigation and preparedness efforts must be ethically embraced to carry out an effective and coordinated response to an incident (FEMA, 2016b). The standardized structure of the NIMS focuses on three key areas: resource management; command and coordination; and communications and information management (NIMS, 2017).

Resource management. Resource management includes the following: personnel, equipment, supplies, and facilities, all of which must be inventoried and categorized prior to an incident (FEMA, 2016b). This is a crucial component, according to the FEMA (2016b), which stated, "During an incident, getting the right resources, to the right place, at the right time, can be a matter of life and death" (p. 5-3). Resource Typing, NIMS credentialing, Inventorying, the Resource Typing Library Tool, and the National Mutual Aid System are all sections of the Resource Management component (United Stated Department of Homeland Security, 2018). Typing is specific and serves as a common language for the mobilization of resources following a crisis event (United Stated Department of Homeland Security, 2018). Protocols are standardized to request, prioritize, activate, mobilize resources, and return them to standard status (FEMA, 2016b).

The United Stated Department of Homeland Security (2018) has a specific guideline through the NIMS for credentialing personnel: "Qualifying and credentialing personnel ensures that the identity and attributes of individuals or members of teams are validated against an established set of minimum criteria and qualifications for specific job titles" (para. 5). Resource management is most effective when it includes systems and protocols (FEMA, 2016b). Systems must be backed up to a secondary source or location, because this is where resource data are collected, updated, and processed and where the status and location of resource data are tracked (FEMA, 2016b).

Command and coordination. Two elements essential for ensuring a successful response are command and coordination (FEMA, 2016b). The NIMS (2017) described four NIMS Command and Coordination Structures which may be used when the NIMS is activated:

> Incident Command System (ICS), Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs), Multiagency Coordination Group (MAC Group), and Joint Information System (JIS). The structures are referred to as Multi-Agency Coordination Systems (MACS) and may be used singly or in conjunction with other structures (NIMS, 2017).

According to the NIMS model, "Command is the act of directing, ordering, or controlling by virtue of explicit statutory, regulatory, or delegated authority at the field level" (FEMA, 2016b, p. 6-5). The NIMS defined coordination as "the process of providing support to the command structure and may include incident prioritization, critical resource allocation, communication systems integration, and information exchange" (FEMA, 2016b, p. 6-5).

This is the where the ICS model falls within the NIMS, due to the fact the NIMS induces the activation of the ICS for each incident or planned event (FEMA, 2016b; Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, 2015). "ICS is a standardized approach to the command, control, and coordination of on-scene incident management that provides a common hierarchy within which personnel from multiple organizations can be effective" (DHS, 2017, p. 24). The FEMA (2016b) supported the belief "using ICS on all incidents helps hone and maintain skills needed for the large-scale incidents" (p. 6-7). Coordinating with public information officers and senior on-site officials allows a joint, cohesive, factual message to be broadcast in a timely manner, which increases public confidence in the response efforts through the appearance of the team speaking with one voice (FEMA, 2016b). The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (2015) stated the NIMS provides the process whereby a common operating picture is presented during an incident or planned event.

Communications and information management. Schaffhauser (2011) stated, "Communications lie at the heart of any emergency response system" (p. 46). In modern-day society, social media outlets are extremely powerful; however, in the aftermath of a catastrophe, social media has the power to intensify the traumatic feelings parents and students experience, thus adversely affecting students' ability to learn (DeLapp, 2014; Schaffhauser, 2011). Communications systems during and following Hurricane Katrina failed, which harshly impacted the flow of information and response operations and resulted in the inability to effectively coordinate a response (FEMA, 2016b). The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (2015) emphasized the importance of the

NIMS in establishing a common and consistent terminology to ensure plain and clear multi-jurisdictional communications.

The NIMS pinpoints several essential elements of information systems and public safety communications needed for effective emergency response (FEMA, 2016b). According to the FEMA (2016b):

> Communications systems need to be:
>
> - Interoperable-able to communicate within and across agencies and jurisdictions.
> - Reliable-able to function in the context of any kind of emergency.
> - Portable-built on standardized radio technologies, protocols, and frequencies.
> - Scalable-suitable for use on a small or large scale as the needs of the incident dictate.
> - Resilient-able to perform despite damaged or lost infrastructure.
> - Redundant-able to use alternate communications methods when primary systems go out. (pp. 4-3 - 4-4)

Strategic communications, tactical communications, support communications, and public address communications are all standardized methods used by emergency management and response personnel to carry out successful information management during an incident (FEMA, 2016b). Within these communication areas, high-level directions and priority decisions are made; communications flow between command posts and cooperating agencies; dispatching and health services coordination occur; and emergency alerts, warnings, and press conferences take place (FEMA, 2016b).

School District Preparedness

In 2017, Webber described school shootings as a form of retaliatory violence, specifically identifying Columbine as raising public consciousness from being a revenge act to a political act. According to Webber (2017), links to digital coverage possibly limit data analysis with key stakeholders due to stylized media coverage. Likewise, Allman (2016) and Madfis (2014) discussed the culture of violence in America and whether this leads to school violence and proposed alternative viewpoints as to whether school security can help resolve the issue. Although schools have undergone improvement in monitoring and addressing school climate, Blad (2016) stated a high percentage of schools have failed to impart this information by drilling students in use of the plan.

Because schools are central parts of each community and local government, the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Center recommended all schools adopt the implementation of the NIMS, regardless of whether or not they receive federal funding for preparedness efforts (Spears & Costabile, 2012). Evaluation and preparation is where all thoughtful mitigation and safety endeavors begin; without assessment, planning efforts would be haphazard, and where there is no plan, assessment is purposeless (International Finance Corporation, 2010). As proposed by Nicholls, Picou, Curtis, and Lowman (2015), community health workers can meaningfully enhance community resiliency in preparation for multi-hazard events. With proper training and collaboration, Nicholls et al. (2015) indicated timely interventions could be instituted to help reduce long-term trauma, as well as to build social capital. A school district crisis team's effectiveness is maximized when representatives from all key stakeholder units

are involved and the team promotes a strong leader, typically the building administrator (International Finance Corporation, 2010).

The NIMS proposed a principal series of comprehensive procedures which permit schools to manage crises and coordinate with local first responders and key stakeholders (Spears & Costabile, 2012). Stakeholder groups include school district administration; faculty representatives from each building and/or department, including special education; staff representatives from facilities, grounds and maintenance, food service, student health services, counselors, and transportation; parent representatives from parent-teacher organization groups, booster clubs, and specific committee groups; school neighbors from civic organizations; businesses; elected officials; individuals from the public safety arena, such as law enforcement, emergency management, and fire departments; and student representatives, such as the student body president or an elected student official (International Finance Corporation, 2010). Implementation of the NIMS model allows schools, faculty, staff, students, and parents to benefit from more operational and efficient response services (Spears & Costabile, 2012).

School crisis plans should be created by a team of individuals and should follow an all-hazards approach, including situational and functional protocols, which outline action steps and processes needed to effectively navigate a multi-hazard event (Zdziarski, 2016). Members of the crisis team must keep in mind it is impossible for resilience to be achieved in one fell swoop; rather, it is an incessant course of action that can be divided into miniature steps that when combined are immensely important in accomplishing the goals of safety, security, and educational continuity (International Finance Corporation, 2010). Duncan (2018) indicated the response team also needs to be aware of the

interconnectedness and compounding effects of hazards to accurately respond to an event. In the most effective school crisis plans, a stringent planning process is imperative, as opposed to an elaborate binder on a shelf (International Finance Corporation, 2010). Risk assessments are regularly conducted to gauge potential hazards in relationship to a school and/or community's susceptibility characteristics which may make them vulnerable to the effects of an event (International Finance Corporation, 2010).

All stakeholders must have a certain level of familiarity with the crisis plan so they can work effectively if the need arises for the plan to become operational, because these individuals are major response players in the disaster management process (International Finance Corporation, 2010). Individuals with the capacity to effectively control their emotions are often assumed to be better able to handle stressful events (Cadamuro, Versari, Vezzali, Giovannini, & Trifiletti, 2015). Timm (2015) advocated for proactive security, identification of risks, and communication as key elements in school security. Response capability consists of awareness, techniques, services, and provisions, but most importantly response capacity involves configuration and deployment of prevailing aids and resources (International Finance Corporation, 2010). The ability to grasp the mental state of others enables leaders to deduce, expect, and sway others' behavior, and as a result, better cope with stress (Cadamuro et al., 2015). The individuals who step up as leaders are also able to maintain emotional control, allowing them to effectively draw on existing social relationships or social support circles in order to stifle the adverse effects of the trauma (Cadamuro et al., 2015).

This is where the ICS model comes into play as a steering framework for synchronizing the various functions which may be required in diverse emergency situations (International Finance Corporation, 2010). During an interview with Patrick Fiel, chief security director for the District of Columbia Public Schools, Deborah Yaffe (2015) revealed findings which support the multi-layer approach to school safety program planning. Selekman and Melvin (2017) suggested simple, timely, disseminated, and practiced prevention and mitigation is the key to preparedness and that prevention is the most appropriate response to potential violent events.

Fundamental shifts are required in order for a school district to embrace the concept of a community school where all stakeholders are involved in planning (Weinzapfel, 2018). Effective school drills are a learning opportunity for students and teachers, and they should always be tailored to the most likely hazards (International Finance Corporation, 2010). Preparing the staff prior to a drill, ensuring students are properly trained and procedures have been reviewed, and debriefing with the entire staff following the simulation are key ways to improve mitigation measures and response preparedness; however, the most vital component of any drill is the revision of action plans after the experience (International Finance Corporation, 2010). Targeted violence will continue to present a danger to school security (Lenhardt, Graham, & Farrell, 2018). Carlton, Wyrick, Frederique, and Lopez (2017) reiterated the importance of bringing together collaborative resources in developing activities, training, resources, and guidance in the development of school safety plans.

Communication

When navigating through a crisis, effective and efficient communication is crucial (Agozzino & Kaiser, 2014). Information dissemination and communication are suggested as important to the identification and prevention of violent behavior (Gerard, Whitfield, Porter, & Browne, 2016; Ioannou & Hammond, 2015). Likewise, Randolph (2015) reiterated the importance of an inclusive emergency preparedness plan that must be communicated and understood by all stakeholders. Schools not only play a vital part in emergency response to crisis events, they are also key players in the recovery efforts (Felix et al., 2018). Following the Virginia Tech massacre, campus officials took action to ensure communication notifications were deployed quickly and accurately (Glum, 2015). Many school districts have increased the use of online resources to strengthen home and school connections and to foster community engagement (Taddeo & Barnes, 2016).

Taddeo and Barnes (2016) reasoned, "When school districts are involved in emergency situations, their websites and online presence may become an advanced communicative tool… and thus help to facilitate communication, the exchange of information and ideas, and the sharing and creation of knowledge" (p. 433). Due to the capability to send out emergency notifications in a timely manner by phone, email, text, or a social media platform, the potential to reduce loss of life, or risk thereof, is minimized (Glum, 2015). In addition to the school website and other district resources found online, there is still a high level of importance for traditional methods of communication like telephone, radio, and television broadcasts (Liu, Fraustino, & Jin, 2015).

Agozzino and Kaiser (2014) emphasized the importance of communication during a crisis and how the lack thereof can significantly damage an organization's image. Many stakeholders advocate for the communicative multiplicity idea, supporting it with evidence proving the importance of using multiple forms of communication through various sources to correspond with the community during a disaster (Liu et al., 2015). The increase of social media usage gives school districts the ability to communicate with stakeholders with the push of a button (Houston et al., 2014). Individuals in the United States increased their use of social media by 63% between 2005-2013, making it a very effective tool which can be used by districts to communicate information about emergency preparedness, response, and recovery (Houston et al., 2014).

It is imperative school districts have communication protocols in place to address digital or social media threats rather than reacting in a knee-jerk fashion (Trump, 2017). As suggested by Love and Roy (2017), it is critical to establish safety procedures and processes rather than trying to correct inappropriate reactions or habits which are unsafe. It is critical to work with all stakeholders when developing and implementing an efficient response to an active shooter scenario where all critical components are communicated to minimize the loss of life (Adkins, 2015). Roberts, Zhang, and Morgan (2015) stressed the recognition crime and violence not only affect the individuals involved, but the community at large. Hall (2016) also emphasized the importance of school personnel working closely with students and parents in order to promote a school climate where students feel safe.

Summary

Chapter Two included a review of literature related to the importance of the development and implementation of emergency operations plans including multi-jurisdictional teams by local school districts. In the review of literature, the protection motivation theory and fear appeals model was explored, as it is related to school safety and the self-efficacy and resilience of individuals within schools. The topics reviewed included emergency management; Core Capabilities: prevention, protection, mitigation, response, recovery; the Incident Command System: command, planning, operations, finance administration, and logistics; the National Incident Management System: resource management, command and coordination, communications and information management; school district preparedness; and communication. In Chapter Three, the methodology and design of the study are discussed.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Recently, Abunyewah, Gajendran, and Maund (2018) revealed perceptions held in regard to hazards and risk are both directly and indirectly influenced by disaster experience. According to Abunyewah et al. (2018), "While critical awareness refers to the number of times people talk and think about a hazard, risk perception involves the thoughts of people about the likelihood and consequences of a hazard occurring" (p. 238). A multitude of factors play into stakeholders' motivation to take protective action when assessing a threat (Abunyewah et al., 2018).

In this chapter, the problem and purpose of the study are discussed, the research questions are restated, and the population and sample for the study are revealed. Interviews were conducted with one superintendent in each of the Missouri School Resource Officer Association Zones currently working in a district with the presence of a school resource officer (SRO). In addition, interviews were conducted with a school resource officer from each of these districts and/or an SRO representative from each of the Missouri School Resource Officer Association zones. Data collection procedures are documented in this chapter. In the data analysis section, a discussion is included as to how the data were organized and analyzed following the collection and statistical research tools applied. To conclude, ethical considerations are outlined to ensure understanding of the process used to protect the identities of the districts, schools, Missouri School Resource Officer Association Zones, and participants in the study.

Problem and Purpose Overview

The purpose of this study was to identify the perceptions of school district superintendents and school resource officers regarding school district preparedness for

multi-hazard events, the use of the NIMS, and all-hazards, multi-jurisdictional teams. School districts are normally staffed to handle day-to-day operations and are not equipped with the personnel needed to create long-range plans, which are required when developing a solid strategy for disaster prevention and recovery (Schaffhauser, 2013). Amid a crisis, students look at the actions of the adults around them in order to measure their own degree of safety (Silverman et al., 2016). There has to be an identified person assigned who can call meetings, take notes, formulate documents, and reach out to stakeholders; if and when a disaster strikes, the district must be prepared (Schaffhauser, 2013). Educating school district faculty and staff on how to respond to a crisis increases their self-efficacy and improves their ability to handle an event (Silverman et al., 2016).

Research questions. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the perceptions of superintendents and school resource officers regarding school district preparedness for a multi-hazard event?
2. What are the perceptions of superintendents and school resource officers regarding the use of the National Incident Management System in the wake of a multi-hazard event?
3. What are the perceptions of superintendents and school resource officers regarding a multi-jurisdictional, all-hazards team approach to crisis response?

Research Design

Qualitative research objectives vary greatly from quantitative research objectives and yield a much more explicit kind of information following the completion of the study (Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2015). This qualitative study was designed to allow for an analysis of superintendent and school resource officer perceptions of school district

preparedness for multi-hazard events. The primary source data collected in this study came from interviews conducted with school district superintendents and school resource officers within the same Missouri School Resource Officer Association Zones. Interviews were conducted with one superintendent and one school resource officer from each of the nine zones. All persons interviewed were provided with the opportunity to voice their opinions regarding school district preparedness for multi-hazard events. For the convenience of study participants, interviews were conducted at a place and time which met each participant's needs.

Instrumentation

The study consisted of interviews with nine school superintendents and nine school resource officers in an effort to better understand perceptions held by these groups regarding school district preparedness for multi-hazard events. The superintendents' and school resource officers' perceptions of the use of the NIMS and of multi-jurisdictional all-hazards teams were also addressed during the interviews. Interview questions were created based on the framework of the protection-motivation theory.

Interview questions were field-tested by superintendents and school resource officers who did not participate in the study. Field testing is an approach to confirm reliability of a study and to evaluate the suitability of the questions in regard to data being collected (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2015). Comments from those who field-tested the questions were considered, and changes were made where needed to provide clarity. Interview participants were notified the interviews would be conducted by telephone or in person. Each participant was provided a letter of participation, a letter of informed consent, and a copy of the interview questions to clarify the study.

Qualitative research, by its very nature, draws extensively on social research; as such, the inductive strategy moves from reality to representation of the participants' perception of that reality (Pandy & Patnaik, 2014). Furthermore, Pandy and Patnaik (2014) asserted, "Qualitative research involves the use and selection of a variety of empirical material, case studies, personal experiences, introspectives, life story interviews, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts-that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning individuals' bias" (p. 5744). Qualitative research does not present concrete, measurable data; rather, opinion and perceptual bias of the participants are elicited in relation to the topic (Pandy & Patnaik, 2014).

Population and Sample

The population for this study consisted of 144 school superintendents in Missouri accredited districts and 427 school resource officers within those same districts or Missouri School Resource Officer Zones. The sample included nine superintendents and nine school resource officers randomly selected from schools within the nine zones. One superintendent and one school resource officer were selected to represent each zone. The researcher contacted the Missouri School Resource Officer Zone representative for each of the nine zones to identify all schools within said zone that employed a school resource officer.

Following the identification of the schools, a random sampling generator tool was utilized to choose schools according to size and location to gain a balanced overall representation of schools. The superintendent of schools at each of the randomly selected districts was contacted to seek agreement for participation. In the event a superintendent was unable or unwilling to participate, the next district superintendent on the list was

selected. Once agreement to participate was reached, the researcher contacted the SRO to request an opportunity to interview either by telephone or in person. Codes were randomly assigned without consideration of school district size.

Data Collection

Prior to contacting any potential participants, the researcher received approval from the Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board. To inform participants of the study, participants were notified by telephone or through electronic communication. When potential participants showed interest in the research, each participant was presented, through electronic communication, a letter of participation, a letter of informed consent, and a copy of the interview questions. Once the participants agreed to take part in the study, the interviews were scheduled and confirmed.

All interviews were conducted in person or by telephone at a location and/or time chosen by the participants. To ensure an accurate transcription, interviews were audio-recorded with permission of the participants and uploaded to a private, password-protected computer. To ensure authenticity, transcripts were randomly compared to the original audio recordings. Also, participants were given an opportunity to review their individual responses for accuracy.

Data Analysis

Qualitative research is a method of inquiry that consists of gathering and analyzing materials and non-numeric data which can take the form of interviews, field notes, and diaries (Henwood, 2014). Interviews have long been a collective and reliable method for gathering research and data to be used in qualitative studies (Peters & Halcomb, 2015). Well-crafted interview questions can elicit responses from participants

and provide the researcher with an avenue to inquire further to gain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the opinions and perceptions of the participants (Peters & Halcomb, 2015). The data analysis of interviews within a qualitative study requires the researcher to arrange the information in a manner which explicitly conveys the results in a logical and organized fashion (Taylor et al., 2015). Upon the conclusion of the interview process, the qualitative data acquired by the researcher were studied, organized, and analyzed.

For this study, qualitative data were gathered to develop a comprehensive and personal understanding of the perceptions held by Missouri school superintendents and school resource officers in regard to school district preparedness for multi-hazard events. Through the data analysis process, patterns and trends were noted in the data to uncover any recurring themes. Developing a familiarity with the data allowed for the identification of specific categories and descriptions to aide in the analysis of the data.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to conducting any research, the researcher received approval from the Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A). All selected individuals were notified regarding their participation in the study via electronic communication (see Appendix B) which included two attachments, the informed consent form (see Appendix C) and the interview questions (see Appendix D). Individuals were notified their participation was voluntary, their identities would not be made public, and they had the option to opt out of the study at any time without negative consequences. No names were recorded, and the information from participants was not shared with

anyone. Anonymity of the information collected was assured by assigning data codes to all individuals who chose to participate in the study.

Once data were collected from the interviews, paper copies of the data were placed in a locked cabinet, and all electronic files were saved on a personal computer located on a secure, password-protected network. Transcripts of the interviews were sent to the participants, and all participants were provided with an opportunity to ask questions or make comments before the transcripts were finalized. At the completion of the study, all documents and files will be saved for three years. At the end of three years, the electronic files will be deleted and paper transcripts will be shredded.

Summary

Chapter Three contained a presentation of the problem and purpose of the research and the research questions. A description of the methodology and research design were included. The instrumentation methods were detailed and the population and sample were identified. A description of the data collection process and analysis were included. Furthermore, ethical considerations were declared. In Chapter Four, an analysis of data collected from interviews with participants is presented. Data results are presented through opinions of school superintendents and school resource officers obtained from interviews.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Data

The purpose of this study was to acquire perceptions of school superintendents and school resource officers in accredited schools across Missouri regarding district preparedness for multi-hazard events. By nature, school resource officers take on a protective role in the school and community, but they are also charged with building relationships with local community agencies to promote safety within the school (Sneed, 2015). Missouri state law requires school districts to have a designated safety coordinator, which many times is the superintendent of the school district (LawServer, 2016). School resource officers can assist school leaders with safety procedures and serve as emergency managers and community liaisons (Theriot, 2016).

School resource officers have gained popularity in American schools as a result of concerns regarding school violence and student safety (Barnes, 2016). However, Barnes (2016) stated there is a lack of research concerning the school resource officers' daily procedures and job description in reference to providing for safe schools. Eklund, Meyer, and Bosworth (2018) also discussed the effectiveness of multi-hazard plans and response strategies and stated very few researchers have examined the role of the SRO in crisis events.

Eklund et al. (2018) also noted that SROs and school health officials had similar perceptions of school safety plans which differed from school administrators, who had lower appraisals of multi-hazard event plans. Olinger Steeves, Metallo, Byrd, Erickson, and Frank (2017) surveyed the preparedness of school staff in six elementary schools and found many plans lacked best practice implementation components. Furthermore, although there were positive perceptions toward school preparedness for a multi-hazard

event, they reported lower preparedness for multi-hazard events as well as inconsistencies on response procedures (Olinger Steeves et al., 2017).

Organization of Data Analysis

In this chapter, qualitative data collected from interviews with nine school district superintendents and nine school resource officers in Missouri are presented. To acquire a range of essential data for this study, interviews were conducted with superintendents and SROs in school districts across Missouri ranging in size from small to large and in both urban and rural areas. The data were gathered to gain a better understanding of school district preparedness for multi-hazard events and how school officials perceive the preparedness measures within their own districts, as well as across the state. The interviews of the study participants consisted of 11 questions designed to measure the opinions of these individuals regarding district preparedness for multi-hazard events.

Analysis of Qualitative Data

Study participants were divided into two groups, school superintendents and school resource officers. To keep participant identities and responses confidential, all participants were given identification codes, and the school district names of the participants were not mentioned. The superintendents were labeled Superintendent 1 (SUP1), Superintendent 2 (SUP2), Superintendent 3 (SUP3), and so on. The school resource officers were labeled School Resource Officer 1 (SRO1), School Resource Officer 2 (SRO1), School Resource Officer 3 (SRO3), etc.

School districts were selected at random from within each of the Missouri School Resource Officer Zones, which resulted in a sample of districts of varying size and geographic location across Missouri. For this study, district enrollment was presented in

Table 2 to show the potential for greater access to resources in larger, urban districts than in smaller, more rural districts. Out of the nine participating districts, four were considered small districts with enrollment numbers of fewer than 2,500 students. Large districts included districts with more than 2,500. Three of the 5 large districts had enrollments over 10,000. All of the participating small districts had enrollments of under 1,500 students. The variance among the participating districts created a natural contrast as data collected from interview questions were analyzed to identify similarities or differences in opinions.

Table 2

Interview Participants

Participant	Code	District Enrollment
Superintendent 1	SUP1	17,800
Superintendent 2	SUP2	1,000
Superintendent 3	SUP3	17,300
Superintendent 4	SUP4	1,400
Superintendent 5	SUP5	4,900
Superintendent 6	SUP6	700
Superintendent 7	SUP7	700
Superintendent 8	SUP8	11,300
Superintendent 9	SUP9	4,500
SRO 1	SRO1	17,800
SRO 2	SRO2	1,000
SRO 3	SRO3	17,300
SRO 4	SRO4	1,400
SRO 5	SRO5	4,900
SRO 6	SRO6	700
SRO 7	SRO7	700
SRO 8	SRO8	11,300
SRO 9	SRO9	4,500

Note. For this study, schools with a district enrollment below 2,500 students were classified as small districts. District enrollment was rounded to the nearest hundred.

Prior to the interviews, individuals who agreed to participate were provided a letter of participation, a copy of the interview questions, and an informed consent form. Participants were informed approximately one hour would be needed to complete the interview, but additional time would be allowed at the request of the participants. All interviews were conducted in locations selected by the participants and were scheduled at times of their choosing. To ensure research accuracy and after gaining permission from the participants, the interviews were audio-taped and the recordings were transcribed.

Interview question one. How long have you been a school administrator/SRO?

This question resulted in a wide range of answers from both superintendents and SROs alike. School administrators' years of experience were significantly higher than those of the SROs. Almost all of the administrators interviewed had been in an administrative role for more than 15 years, while most of the SROs had been in their positions for fewer than seven years.

Interview question two. What kind of measures do you take in preparing your district staff, students, and parents for multi-hazard events?

All superintendents interviewed indicated they held some form of training for their faculty and staff during the school year. Several of the SROs corroborated those statements and elaborated on how they specifically addressed training from their positions. School Resource Officer 1 responded, "We do in-service training and then we usually try to squeeze in a couple other PLC days and… I'm currently planning a Saturday training, but that's difficult to do because the money is not in place for that." Expanding on his response, SRO2 explained:

> We do a lot of the trainings, as far as drills throughout the school year, and we also do training on teacher professional development days, during professional learning community times at school, and we have active shooter training during the summer months.

Additionally, SRO2 shared his passion for training the staff at his school, but he, too, expressed concern because of a lack of funding to support it.

School Resource Officer 4 mentioned drills minimally; his answer was more focused on specific trainings held during summer months and concentrated on active shooters and Community Emergency Response Training (CERT). Specifically, SRO4 stated, "The CERT Training gets them [faculty] prepared for any type of crisis event." Furthermore, SRO4 mentioned, "We have talked about doing a tabletop exercise and going through a mock scenario on a teacher professional development day, so they [teachers] can see what could happen during an event." He went on, "This helps prepare all team members' minds how to react in the event of an actual emergency and helps make their response quicker and more natural." In contrast, SRO5 expressed the least involvement in drills within the school and rather described his role as more of an assistant to the training: "I'm just coordinated through the district assistant superintendent; I just assist in the training arranged with an outside company."

Interviews with SRO5, SRO6, and SRO7 revealed there was full collaboration with local law enforcement and other local professionals who joined them to lead intruder drills and provide professional development for the faculty and staff. According to SRO6:

> We do emergency drills like fire, tornado, earthquake, etc., at the district level, but then also law enforcement leads intruder drills and we have professional development on school intruders and the psychology of the school, the school intruder, and things of that nature.

School Resource Officer 7 described the involvement of outside agencies in his response, declaring, "We conduct crisis training with our local fire and EMS personnel on what we're going to do in the event of a mass casualty incident, whether that be from an active shooter or a natural disaster." Superintendent 7 affirmed the response from SRO7, claiming, "These partnerships have also led to crisis training on how to respond to mass casualty incidents, manmade, and natural disasters." Superintendent 6 mirrored the answers of SRO7 and supported the strong relationship with local emergency response personnel and their role in the drill practices with the district.

School Resource Officers 3, 7, 8, and 9 described their involvement in various drills which take place at their schools on a regular basis, such as tornado, fire, earthquake, and intruder drills. Both SRO3 and SRO8 stated, "We do regular emergency drills and… intruder drills." Specifically, SRO7 mentioned "emergency drills and …lockdowns." Similarly, SRO9 responded, "Emergency drills and …active shooter drills." They all took the position of evaluator during the drills to check for any areas of weakness or gaps in the process which needed to be addressed. Although these responses were almost identical, there was some inconsistency in the term used by the SROs when it pertained to a manmade threat within the school; intruder, lockdown, and active shooter were all used interchangeably.

Overall, SUP9 was the least involved of all the participants in the emergency training aspect. This was attributed to the size of the district and the fact the district has a person specifically designated as a safety and environmental services director who heads up all emergency drills and hazard-mitigation plans. Superintendent 9 described that individual as "the primary line of communication between the school and local emergency management personnel." In addition, SUP4 was from a large school where the role of emergency manager or school safety coordinator was delegated to a separate individual who "…spearheads all of the crisis drills and emergency management for the district." Superintendent 1 spoke of "…a safety council which works directly with the safety director and meets twice per year to conduct tabletop exercises and review crisis plans for the district." Similarly, SUP4 has a safety committee and stated, "Our district has a very robust safety and security process in place."

Although he was relatively new to the district at the time of the interview, SUP1 was very aware of the training processes. He referred to "…regular ALICE training and active shooter trainings which are very in-depth and hands-on experiences." Furthermore, SUP1 explained the magnitude of the trainings, which included law enforcement officers with blanks in their weapons firing rounds and giving faculty and staff members "real-world, real-time experiences to heighten their awareness of the sights, smells and sounds of a weapon being fired in the building." Superintendent 1 described, "Our personnel are able to learn maneuvering techniques to safely exit the building in a zig-zag motion, to avoid contact with a fired round." In addition, SUP1 articulated a strong emphasis on hardening the target by "…ensuring all exterior doors

are secured or locked at all times, with only a single point of entry for every building… and students are trained not to ever let any unauthorized person in a door for any reason."

Superintendent 2 was very clear on his position of the importance of safety training in schools, avowing, "Having personally been through a crisis in a school, I have taken an active role in ensuring all of our staff, faculty, and students are prepared for a major event." Furthermore, SUP2 stated, "Educating our faculty and staff and empowering them with the knowledge of how to respond in the event of an emergency is one of the most important things we can do to keep our students safe." A well-crafted safety plan, along with strong community partnerships and regular drills, keep safety at the forefront throughout his district.

Both SUP6 and SUP8 spoke of regular drills throughout the year, such as fire, tornado, active shooter, and earthquake. According to SUP6:

> We had a scenario where our students were at an outdoor activity and there was a shooting in the parking lot. The students, having been trained on how to respond, ran to the nearby woods and took cover until it was safe to come out.

He further stated, "I was pleased with how our students responded. We've trained it enough that people have an accurate consciousness and know what they need to do in a situation of that nature." Superintendent 6 emphasized the situational awareness of students and staff was excellent because of the trainings in which they had participated.

Providing few specifics, SUP3 simply mentioned, "We have regular emergency response drills each school is responsible for doing throughout the year." He clarified, "Each of our schools has their own safety committee responsible for handling the training aspects for their buildings." Likewise, SUP5 held a similar stance, mentioning routine

drills; however, he was uncertain of every training which took place in the district. He was certain when training exercises were completed, follow-up occurred to identify areas of strength and weakness, and building administrators reviewed those with the faculty and staff.

Interview question three. Describe what safety/crisis training you have had related to multi-hazard events, if any, and what did it entail?

School Resource Officers 1, 5, and 8 came from a military background, and the descriptions they provided when responding to this question hinged largely on the training they received from the military. Specifically, SRO1 described his experience, stating, "I spent an excess of two years in direct combat, where I received hands-on training, so I am always ready to take immediate action in any type of manmade or natural disaster." Similarly, SRO7 spoke of being an officer in the military, and along with SRO9, both stated they had the knowledge needed to lead an incident command center and to coordinate response and recovery efforts in a crisis situation.

Superintendent 1 was the only administrator with any military experience, and his answers mirrored those of the SROs who had the same background. He stated, "My answers will probably look different than those in my same position who haven't had such an extensive military training background." Superintendent 1 also shared how there had been several instances in his previous district where parts of the city were on lockdown due to a shooting nearby. He strongly emphasized, "Having a quality relationship with law enforcement is key in these type of situations because they alert the schools so we can take action to protect the students and staff."

School Resource Officer 3 gave a brief response and referred to his trainings as "…an active shooter type scenario, the appropriate way to respond during an event, and the reunification measures to take following an event." School Resource Officer 2 shared the same background as SRO3, but in addition to the active shooter training, he regularly communicates with other SROs and constantly collaborates with others in his field to increase the effectiveness of prevention and preparedness measures within his school. To emphasize, SRO3 stated, "My passion for protecting the students and staff has pushed me to extend my training to include multiple stakeholders within our district."

School Resource Officer 4 had the most training specific to schools and active shooters. He holds certification as a trainer for Strategos Inc. and serves as an instructor in his district, at other schools around the state, and in schools across the nation, providing training to teachers on how to prepare their rooms and respond to an event. He is also certified through the DHS and has been trained in a program called Blazer, which focuses on the Run, Hide, Fight model of response for schools in the event of an active shooter.

School Resource Officer 6 discussed the Strategos Inc. training he attended and the prevention, preparation, and response techniques he learned. According to SRO6, after being trained in incident command, "I am prepared to step up in any type of multi-hazard or mass casualty event." As a certified Strategos trainer, he is well-versed in the curriculum and works closely with local law enforcement officials to ensure proper and timely response in the event of a crisis.

Superintendent 2 referred to his training in a more literal way, stating, "Most of my training has been from the school of hard knocks." Expanding on that statement, he

described having been involved in a crisis in his former district and how much was learned from that event which prompted a more robust safety plan. He now takes steps to ensure he is trained in emergency response, including the Strategos Inc. training, multi-hazard event training and partnering with local agencies, and safety training through the district's insurance company. Superintendent 2 was the only administrator who mentioned the training available to districts through the school insurance provider for sexual harassment, bullying, and violence in the workplace.

Superintendents 3, 5, 7, 8, and 9 admitted to having minimal training in regard to multi-hazard events. Superintendent 6 attested, "I have participated in several emergency response type trainings and I take safety training very seriously." In addition to training on routine emergency practices, SUP6 has also attended trainings on how to respond in the aftermath of an event, as well as how to communicate during and after a crisis event. Furthermore, SUP6 mentioned CPR and First-Aid training for himself and other district staff members; he was the only superintendent who discussed these measures.

Interview question four. What is your experience with a multi-hazard event in school? What knowledge did you gain from it?

None of the SROs interviewed had ever experienced a multi-hazard event in school; however, several of them indicated they had experienced a crisis event in the regular line of duty. According to SRO3, "We have had several soft lockdowns, where there was a localized threat outside of the school, but I have never experienced an actual event taking place inside the school." All SROs expressed an attitude of relief they have not had an event take place in their schools.

Superintendents who had experienced an event had similar responses, although a few had undergone various types of occurrences, ranging from tornadoes to a student being run over by a school bus. Superintendent 1, who had involvement with a tornadic event, confirmed, "It was not during the regular school year and there were no students present, so it was more of a recovery type of event with the insurance company." Superintendent 9, who experienced a child being run over by a school bus, expanded on the situation, which thankfully only resulted in the child sustaining a broken arm. The response to the event was handled appropriately; key personnel followed procedures, communicated with stakeholders, and held a debriefing session following the event.

Superintendent 2 was also involved in a tornadic event, but his experience painted a much different picture than SUP1. According to SUP2, "Students were already present at school when the tornado hit that morning and there was significant damage to the school." He elaborated, "The roof was blown off of the high school building, but fortunately, no students were injured and there was no loss of life." Because of the extent of the damage and to protect students, SUP2 described the actions the district took, stating, "The relocation of students had to take place immediately, and partnership efforts with local emergency responders instantly went into action." Superintendent 2 was satisfied with the outcome of the event and how all stakeholders came together to ensure students were safe. The main takeaway from the event for SUP2 was the procedure for all students, faculty, and staff members to wear formal identification badges at all times. He emphasized the fact, saying, "When law enforcement gets there or emergency management gets to the building, they need to be able to tell who the students are, who the teachers are, and who they can go to for information."

Another lesson SUP2 learned from the tornado event was the importance of drilling at various times throughout the day. Although the school conducted regular emergency response drills, they were never done before or after school, nor during the first or last hour of the school day. In this particular instance, the teachers did not have their emergency response bags and morning attendance had not even been taken yet, so there was some uncertainty as to who was actually present at the time of the tornado. Superintendent 2 concluded his response to this question by asserting, "The last thing we learned is very important and that is, don't ever call parents and ask them if their child was sent to school that day." He stressed the importance of not causing parents any undue reason for panic and to let the response and recovery efforts run their course before making any calls of that nature.

Superintendent 6 experienced the death of a faculty member several years ago, prior to the social media phenomenon. He explained, "At that time our procedure was to go face-to-face and inform each teacher, personally, which allowed our staff members to step out and deal with their emotions, while another individual covered the class." In addition, SUP6 explained, "Social media outlets have totally changed the game on information and communication." He continued, "Now you have to have a written statement that goes to all stakeholders and is available for all district secretaries to read when the school is inundated with phone calls." Superintendent 6 went on to say, "When a crisis occurs, social media hits and you better be prepared." He added:

> Every time something happens, you go back and you reflect on the fact that every person in the school has a different skillset… and we have to make sure in those

> times, we put the right people, with the right skillsets, in the right position for them to be successful, as well as for the district to be successful.

Interview question five. How do you implement the NIMS within your current emergency operations plan? If you are presently not employing the NIMS techniques, how might this new knowledge affect your preparation or revision of plans in the future?

School Resource Officer 1, SRO2, SRO3, SRO4, SRO7, SRO8, and SRO9 do not implement the NIMS within their current school emergency plans. Although SRO1 and SRO2 did not fully use the NIMS model, both suggested they use various components of the NIMS within their emergency plans, specifically terminology like prevention, preparedness, and recovery. While SRO4 did not currently use the NIMS model, he made the recommendation to get stakeholders on board to move toward a more community-minded approach to responding to a major event. School Resource Officer 4 expressed, "I am especially concerned about the reunification process within our campuses, because I fear there would not be adequate space to conduct a quality reunification process with the space available on school grounds." He continued, "Having the NIMS model lays out an exact plan and process that simplifies the roles and responsibilities of everyone and involves all stakeholders."

Both SRO5 and SRO6 communicated the use of the NIMS within their current plans. School Resource Officer 5 leaned more toward the involvement of outside agencies, such as law enforcement and emergency medical services (EMS), stating:

> We do utilize NIMS, but we rely mostly on our law enforcement and our EMS personnel to activate that system, because obviously there needs to be a central point of command. We work closely with them to make sure that those points of

command are adhered to so there is some consistency in what's going on with the response.

In regard to the NIMS, SRO6 specifically mentioned, "It goes with the incident command system… It provides a clear and common language and puts the proper people in the right place so they know exactly what they are supposed to do."

The responses revealed there was not a single superintendent interviewed who was aware of the NIMS. Many stated they had to refer to the definition provided to them before they could answer the question. Superintendents 3, 8, and 9 mentioned a common, simple language they use within their plans. Superintendent 8 added, "I think most superintendents don't know what the model is… Basically, the NIMS model assigns specific roles to specific people so that if something happens… It's like a universal language everyone can understand." Superintendent 1, SUP5, and SUP6 referred to the safety coordinator for their respective districts and made the assumption those people were probably aware of the NIMS model, but individually, none had any knowledge of it. This is likely an accurate statement by both SUP5 and SUP6, as the SROs in each of those districts acknowledged the awareness of and inclusion of the NIMS in their current plans. All superintendents were in agreement the NIMS model could be beneficial if integrated into their current emergency response and crisis plans.

Interview question six. Former Missouri Attorney General Chris Koster stated, "Missouri school district personnel do not adequately understand nor are they prepared to react effectively during a multi-hazard event" (OnTheIssues, 2015, p. 1). How would you respond to this statement?

This question resulted in the most diverse set of responses, and perceptions were from one end of the spectrum to the other. Surprisingly, the responses from SROs were much more generous than the answers from superintendents. Neither SRO1 nor SRO7 committed to a solid stance in his response and rather diverted to the human nature of an educator and the lack of training each had in responding to crisis-type situations. School Resource Officer 1 reasoned, "People do not have the mindset to accept that you can't take a natural nurturer and put them in a severe situation without extensive training and have them react the way you need them to react." School Resource Officer 7 elaborated:

> To convey the reality of a possible major event to somebody who is not trained that way or who doesn't see the world that way, is difficult. You're going to have some people that are never going to think it could happen, no matter how much you talk to them. But, I do think the majority of people in the professional field of education… I think now that mindset is changing.

School Resource Officers 2, 3, 5, and 6 disagreed with the statement, collectively sharing they believe schools are very prepared and know exactly what to do in emergency situations. Their answers were all qualified by sharing examples of scenario discussions, drills, and the fact there have been so many crises in schools that educators think about what could happen all the time. In response, SRO2 specified:

> I would definitely say that is false as far as what I've seen in schools, because with our school district I feel that every building I've ever been in from elementary, junior high, middle school, to high school, they're very prepared and know exactly what they're going to do.

School Resource Officer 5 specified the level of school personnel he felt were prepared was limited to administration and teachers, and he was unsure if food service personnel, custodial staff, and bus drivers would be prepared for a major event.

According to SRO4, "I believe that most people aren't ready for anything until it actually happens." He elaborated:

> I don't think there are very many districts in the state of Missouri that are prepared from the beginning of the incident through when we're all clear. It's one of those things where most policies unfortunately are written in blood without the foresight of what could happen.

Supporting Koster's stance, SRO8 and SRO9 both expressed the statement was not made in an attempt to offend anyone, rather to help others understand the magnitude of a major event and the impact it has on schools and communities. According to SRO9, "Safety is an ever-evolving thing because it encompasses so much of our society… Anytime you have a crisis event it changes people's perceptions of how things should be."

Only one superintendent in this study disagreed with the statement made by Chris Koster. Superintendent 6 was very firm on his stance that Missouri school district personnel are prepared to react effectively when faced with a multi-hazard event. In his words, "If you put them [teachers] in a high octane situation, they can think critically and make good decisions to protect our children." While SUP6 asserted schools are prepared for an event, he hesitated to say they would be prepared for what happens following an event, because as a general rule, "…schools run drills to prepare for what happens during a crisis and that's where it ends." He elaborated, "I think there's enough media coverage

that gets people thinking about what would happen that a lot of folks walk through scenarios all day long in their heads."

Responding to question six, SUP1, SUP4, SUP5, and SUP 8 held many of the same beliefs and were all in agreement Missouri school district personnel do not have the awareness needed to effectively respond during a major crisis event. Specifically, SUP1 explained, "I think when you're talking about Missouri district personnel as a whole, I think by and large we do not have a high level of safety and security consciousness; even though we've tried to train, we don't have the awareness that we need in schools." Superintendent 4 supported SUP1's perspective and noted there is a likelihood some districts are well-prepared and ready to act, but overall, he agreed with Koster's statement.

Both SUP5 and SUP8 concurred schools have come a long way in the area of safety and security, but they also reported there is a long way to go to be adequately prepared. Superintendent 8 explained, "Small changes like incorporating name badges, covering windows with polysynthetic glass, and having crisis plans, have all improved safety in many school districts, but there are probably a lot of districts unprepared for what could happen." Superintendent 5 supported his argument by addressing the funding shortage faced by Missouri schools and the lack of any financial backing for safety and security measures. He avowed, "Missouri provides no funding or fiscal resources for emergency planning in schools. I think if they [government] truly want all districts to do it well, there has to be some additional funding and resources available."

In response to question six, SUP3 declared, "I'll agree with the first part of the statement, meaning we're not adequately prepared." However, he disagreed firmly with

the second part of the statement and indicated, “I think teachers are very resourceful, and they are going to do whatever it takes to take care of kids in an emergency situation.” Superintendent 3 further stated, “They [teachers] might not be prepared and they might not do textbook things, but they are going to do everything in their power to protect the kids.” Sharing a similar opinion, SUP9 included the emergency responders, expressing, “I’m very defensive of our teachers and I look at our police force and our firefighters; those folks aren’t adequately prepared either, but they do everything in their power to protect the people they serve.”

Superintendents 2 and 7 viewed educators in a favorable manner, although they both agreed more training in the area of preparedness was needed. Superintendent 2 discussed how he has seen the mindset of administrators change to one of heightened awareness, where they are scanning the room at events with large groups of people present, “running through what-if scenarios in their heads.” Superintendent 7 spoke of the ultimate demonstration of effectiveness by school personnel, and gave this sobering analysis:

> How many times do we hear about school shootings and the people who got shot? Unfortunately, many times teachers or administrators are the ones, because they stepped in front of harm’s way for children. And so with that… that’s not textbook on what they’re supposed to do, but they’re being effective in taking care of kids because they sacrificed their own lives.

Interview question seven. As the superintendent/SRO of the district, how do you promote ongoing efforts to promote safety preparedness with the staff, students, and community?

In response to question seven, SRO1, SRO2, SRO4, and SRO5 focused on face-to-face communication with the personnel in their schools. School Resource Officer 1 mentioned, "I visit with teachers on their plan time and talk to them about what the plan is in the event of an emergency." He elaborated by explaining, "I run through 'what if' situations with the teachers and train them to think about what they will do if they are on the playground, in the lunchroom, or in class." School Resource Officer 2 spoke of emergency kits within the teachers' classrooms and performing random checks of the kits to ensure they are emergency-ready. In addition, SRO2 stated, "I talk with the teachers and students about lockdowns and run, hide, fight scenarios so they will feel more comfortable if they are faced with an emergency."

This was a tactic SRO4 and SRO5 mentioned in their responses as well. They both admitted to regularly speaking with the teachers and students in their schools about how to respond if a crisis occurs. School Resource Officer 4 claimed, "All the drills for fire, earthquake, tornado, and active shooter reassures society, students, and teachers, that we're doing all these drills to be prepared for a bad event." Reflecting the possible perspective of students, SRO5 described:

> The students may not realize all the ins and outs of what the teachers' responsibilities are in an emergency, but at least to the students it provides a mindset of… if this happens at school I'm protected, and I know that they [the teachers] are going to tell me what to do.

According to SRO3, "I participate in professional development trainings and POST certifications to gain knowledge and learn new information to share with my school." An emphasis on getting a comprehensive safety plan in place district-wide was SRO6's goal

to promote ongoing awareness and preparedness. He elaborated, "The roadblocks in achieving a comprehensive emergency operations plan is from the various needs across grade levels within a school." He continued, "The processes and procedures for preschool aged children are entirely different than those needed at the middle and high school level."

Recognizing at-risk students and training teachers to "identify characteristics of students who are going downhill… or having trouble psychologically" were key themes conveyed in SRO7's response. School Resource Officer 8 concurred with SRO7 in this respect, stating, "We need to be very understanding with our students, but we also need to make sure that any, significant incidents or things that are raising our attention are being reported to the counselors or administration so it can be looked into further." A total attitude of safety for all was the stance taken by SRO9. He strongly emphasized, "Student must feel safe at school, which is a constant focus for me as the School Resource Officer."

Highlighting school safety as the responsibility of everyone in the school is how SUP1 explained his ongoing efforts to promote safety and security within his district. Superintendent 2 responded, "Communication and regular meetings with stakeholders to educate, inform, and reflect on current safety processes and procedures" are his focus. Superintendent 3 replied, "The physical security of the buildings and facilities cannot be overlooked; there must be an attitude of protection and awareness exercised at all levels." Promoting a mindset of attentiveness within the schools to prevent thoughtless acts, like propping exterior doors open, is a high priority for SUP3. He asserted, "Way too many people prop single entrance doors open with a wedge or a pebble for convenience sake,

and I communicate your convenience is not worth putting my child at risk or the neighbor's child at risk; this is about safety." Superintendent 5 supported SUP3's position stating, "By modeling and being persistent, from a leadership standpoint, helps keep us from becoming lackadaisical and apathetic about school safety."

Superintendents 4, 6, and 7 shared similar viewpoints that safety and security must be promoted from a top-down approach, starting with the board of education. According to SUP6, "An approach to safety has to be supported at the highest level within the district, which is the board of education." Superintendent 7 added, "The practice of cross-training administrators to walk through other buildings in the district and look for possible areas of weakness is a cost-free way to strengthen the awareness of your people." Similarly, SRO7 indicated, "Having a fresh set of eyes helps to eliminate familiarity and complacency and has proven to be beneficial within the district."

Permitting local law enforcement into district buildings to conduct tactical training is the method used by SUP9 to promote ongoing safety efforts. He explained, "This tactic not only benefits the local law enforcement agencies, but also enhances the security of our schools by allowing emergency personnel to familiarize themselves with the layouts of each of our buildings." This, coupled with ongoing professional development for leadership, safety coating on all exterior windows and doors, and blocking all entrances with columns are just some of the additional safety measures SUP9 mentioned when responding. Superintendent 8 indicated improving the safety and security within his district through "…physical site and facility improvements."

Interview question eight. What agencies do you include in your multi-jurisdictional all-hazards team?

All respondents answered this question in a very similar manner. School resource officer responses were more specific in their identification of the law enforcement agencies who are a part of their team, identifying by name the "Missouri State Highway Patrol, [County name] Sheriff's Department, and [City name] Police Department." Most superintendents described those agencies as "local law enforcement." All districts involved local fire and EMS; two SROs and two superintendents from larger districts also included local emergency managers and health care providers.

Interview question nine. What benefits or obstacles do you see or have you seen in having a multi-jurisdictional all-hazards team?

Collectively, the responses from all SRO respondents were similar, with the benefit being "more heads at the table" and the obstacle being "too many individuals wanting to be solely in charge." Moreover, SRO9 added, "In a small, rural area, most of the first responders are volunteers and that means there is often turnover, which can result in inconsistencies on an all-hazards team." An obstacle shared by SRO7 was "finding individuals who are committed to serving and placing safety as a priority." Similarly, SRO5 expressed, "Everyone is so busy, and finding a time when everyone is available to come to the table is a huge hurdle in having a successful team."

School Resource Officer 1 stated, "The benefits are endless because the more organizations involved, means more experience at the table; the obstacle is everyone thinking they are in charge." Agreeing with SRO1's view of the obstacles, SRO2 said, "What I've found in education, and I think it's probably across the board, is administrators want to be in charge when something goes down… It's hard for them to take a backseat." School Resource Officer 3 agreed with SRO1 and stated, "I think the

benefits are having a larger number of people to utilize and different people bringing different levels of experience and knowledge to the table."

Although SRO4 and SRO8 both agreed there were some benefits, they honed in on the obstacles they perceived in an all-hazards team approach. According to SRO4, "I think the only obstacle I've ever seen when working with other agencies is… some people might want to do things a different way… and if you don't adapt to it, then it's difficult." Likewise, SRO8 added, "You always have that dynamic where one person wants to do it one way and the other one wants to do it together." The viewpoint of SRO6 differed when he added, "Whenever police and fire have to work together, there is bound to be a power struggle of who is in charge."

Superintendent responses were similar to those received from the SROs in regard to benefits, and only two superintendents interviewed mentioned an obstacle. Superintendents concurred with SROs that bringing varying levels of experience and knowledge to the team was beneficial, but there were some additional areas superintendents felt were really important. Superintendent 1, SUP5, SUP6, and SUP8 all brought up the communication aspect of the team model. Superintendent 1 expressed, "The benefit is certainly just communication and alignment of resources; a sharing of information and training." Adding to that, SUP5 discussed the importance of having "…a single point person on the team who serves as a liaison between team members, so everyone stays in the loop." Having a person delegated to communicate with outside agencies "helps everyone use a common language that everyone can understand if an emergency event occurs," stated SUP8. The relationship piece is the key, and according

to SUP7, “Having one [safety director] person who can build a relationship with different administrators gives them someone they can trust and go to who can talk the language.”

Superintendent 2 added:

> From a school standpoint, we have so many factors that draw our energies, whether it is curricular work, a budget crisis, trying to pass a bond, or build a building… There’s a hundred and ten things for a one hundred item box. And, so the obstacle is just time management and making sure that it is a priority.

Superintendent 3 echoed:

> Having someone who is a champion for safety, who does not let us, as a school system, forget about the topic of safety. So the safety champion is the one who reminds us to do the things that need to be done, like a safety coordinator. It’s definitely a challenge to build it in, but it is essential to have if and when you have a crisis.

In response, SUP4 replied, “I know we are fortunate we’ve got a pretty good relationship with all of those outside agencies and all of them are more than willing to come in. The obstacle is everyone having the time to do it; that’s always a challenge.” The response from SUP9 resonated with that of the others: “I think it’s really more beneficial than anything because what happens is when you have an all-hazards incident, the lead emergency management people know who comes in and takes command.” Superintendent 9 added to this, stating, “The obstacle is what happens before that person arrives; if the people who are first on site can keep things coordinated until that person gets there, when he arrived, it will hopefully run pretty smooth.”

Interview question 10. What methods of communication do you use to alert stakeholders in the event of an emergency, and how do you assess the effectiveness of those methods?

In response to question 10, SROs provided a range of answers, some from the position of SRO in the school, and some from the law enforcement perspective. School Resource Officer 1 stated:

> Our communication is probably extremely subpar; I have a radio that connects me to the Sheriff's department, which is on an entirely different frequency than the dispatch center, and then I have another radio completely separate from that which goes to the administration.

He blamed a lack of funding for the poor communication tools or lack thereof. School Resource Officer 2 also mentioned funding in his response and claimed communication is an area budgeted for the coming year. According to SRO2, "We're planning on upgrading to a voice over internet protocol within the district next year, but again, that all goes back to funding."

School Resource Officer 2 added, "We don't have a technologically savvy parent base, but we do use Facebook to get information out, although I don't know how to access it." Officers 3, 6, 8, and 9 all claimed their districts utilize Facebook as a method to communicate with parents, along with several other methods. According to SRO9, "In our district, it seems like all of our parents are on Facebook, and if they aren't, they know someone who is, so that is the way we get information out in a hurry."

Both SRO3 and SRO4 also mentioned their districts are considering implementing the use of a crisis app that would send messages out to all stakeholders. School Resource Officer 3 spoke of a specific app:

> We've been talking about a Crisis Go App that will send out text messages to people on the app. It also has a feature where parents can check their kids in and out on the app, so you know who picked up a student and at what time.

According to SRO4:

> Right now we just use a call system, email system and Facebook, but it's getting more advanced and I think we are going to an app. We are going to have good things in place eventually, but right now, it is just calls and emails.

Several of the buildings in SRO5's district utilize Twitter as a communication method to reach patrons. Furthermore, SRO5 stated, "We have a phone system that can put out different warnings, and I think with all of those different methods of getting information out to parents and community members, everyone will know what is going on."

In addition to communicating via Facebook, Twitter, and the all-call system, SRO6 also mentioned posting information to the district website and using the intercom systems within the buildings. School Resource Officer 7 focused his answer on the emergency response factor for law enforcement during a crisis. He stated:

> The sheriff's department has remote access to all of our cameras, so they can actually pull up our cameras on their in-car computers while they are in route to our school and they can see exactly where the threat is in real time. Once they arrive, they can enter the building and another officer can direct them via radio communication as to what and where things are happening in the building.

Superintendents' answers revealed a more in-depth explanation of communication methods, as well as some measures used to assess their effectiveness. Eight out of the nine superintendents interviewed mentioned the use of an all-call system to alert their stakeholders in the event of an emergency. Superintendent 1 briefly discussed the all-call system used, which includes phone calls, text messages, and emails. He centered his answer on the need for all staff to be notified first and foremost: "…A lesson learned historically, is that social media is running faster than we can, so we try to get it out to staff initially and then with the public next, via alert messages, Twitter, and Facebook." Corresponding with SUP1 was SUP9, who also uses the all-call alert system, as well as social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter.

The communications department sends out all the information in SUP2's school via school messenger and social media platforms. Superintendent 2 elaborated:

> The school messenger system is an immediate communication method that allows us to isolate information to a specific building, age group, or the entire district. It goes to cell phones, landlines, emails, and texts, and parents can choose which method they prefer to use.

Superintendent 6 reported being fortunate to have a communications director in his district. He explained, "Anytime something happens, no matter how big or how small, the principals know to immediately contact the communications director… so we immediately get information out to the public."

Both SUP3 and SUP4 specified, "Communicate, communicate, communicate." Superintendent 3 specifically stated, "Our philosophy here is to over-communicate; you put it on every resource you can utilize for communication." Facebook and Twitter are

two social media platforms SUP3 and SUP4 regularly use to communicate with the stakeholders in their districts. In concurrence, both also described the use of their communications departments to get information out quickly. In regard to emergency information, SUP4 elaborated, "…Our communications director can send it to five different sources in 60 seconds." Incidentally, DeLapp (2014) indicated it is not enough to just communicate, even though communication is critical; effective communication must result in proactive compliance with the directives or messages.

According to SUP5:

> We try to be proactive. We utilize social media a bunch; we go to Facebook… to get the correct information out and let parents know what is happening and that all the kids are safe. We also use school messenger to send out an immediate blast of phone calls, text messages, or emails just to let people know that everything is under control.

He went on to say, "I think social media has become our friend; it could be our enemy, but in this type of situation, it is our friend." In agreement with SUP5, SUP7 stated, "We definitely use caution when putting information out, but I still feel like you have to put some information out; I think the less you communicate, the worse it can get."

Concurring with all the other superintendents, SUP8 also described using an all-call system to send out phone calls, texts, and emails to the parents in the district. Furthermore, he stated:

> We have an app for crisis management; our safety team is working on updating and uploading our crisis plans into that app, although that specific method of

> communication would probably be more for faculty, staff, and people here on campus.

To reach a broader audience, SUP8 suggested the use of press releases, on-air, or television media broadcasts.

Superintendents 8 and 9 were the only two superintendents who discussed methods to evaluate the effectiveness of their communications. Reviewing the message alert system to see how many people answer the calls from the district and how many do not receive them is the main method SUP8 uses to determine the effectiveness of delivery. Superintendent 9 approached the answer from a public relations point of view, stating:

> It might be a little archaic, but I think it's pretty accurate; when we started fielding phone calls here [at school] and messages start coming across our Facebook page, because people don't know what's going on, we're getting real-time feedback that maybe our communication was not clear, concise, or maybe this person is not on our calling system.

Interview question 11. What would you like to share about your thoughts or perceptions about emergency operations planning in schools?

The responses to question 11 were very diverse and specific, with some fueled by a desire to see change and some from a place of resentment. School Resource Officer 1 honed in on the fact he believes emergency personnel are not taken seriously by administrators and school officials because of the difference in educational attainment. He elaborated:

> I think administrators look down on those people because they don't have Dr. in front of their names. I have 25 years of experience responding to high pressure situations, just having a Masters or a Doctorate wouldn't change that, but it would change their perception. I think that's across the board… and if that's the perception then those guys [emergency operations experts] probably don't feel welcome coming in the buildings.

School Resource Officer 6 had a similar perception regarding law enforcement and administration in the schools: "…Nobody acknowledges them [law enforcement] except the kids, you know …hey, there's a cop, but to the administration, it's just another cop."

The perception of SRO7 was very similar, and he stated:

> It's difficult because most people who become educators are there to educate, where most people in my position, law enforcement, our job is to protect. And when emergencies happen in school, we have to merge those two, where the needs of the student, law enforcement needs, and needs of the educator, all have to come together in situations that weren't really thought of 10, 15, 20 years ago.

According to SRO8, "Fifteen or 20 years ago, it [school safety] would have been a relatively low priority… and now I think you find it is probably in the top two or three things of all school administrators." School Resource Officer 7 declared:

> We have to change our mindset… I'm an educator, but I'm also here to protect the students. It used to be, surround the building and wait for the SWAT [Special Weapons and Tactics] team to show up. We need to change the perception to, there's an active situation and we need to get there as fast as we can and we need to put ourselves between the threat and the people that we're there to protect. It's

> all about changing the mindset in that situation… It may not be what they are trained for, but do something rather than nothing.

Similarly, SRO8 shared, "I think that many districts think safety is important, and it's obviously gaining momentum." He continued, "With every critical incident the media portrays and covers, it [school safety] becomes more and more important in the eyes of all of the school districts in the state of Missouri."

When responding to question 11, SRO3 stated, "I think schools are moving in the right direction with more of them shifting there thinking from the 'what if' point of view to the 'when' mindset." He continued, "Just like the possibility of a fire hazard, tornado, or earthquake in this area, now they [teachers] think of active shooters since they have become more prevalent." In support of the position of SRO3, SRO5 stated, "I think that schools are slowly but surely making emergency preparedness a top priority."

School Resource Officer 9 focused on school funding, and while he admittedly did not understand the entire process of budgeting from the state to the local level, he expressed, "The legislature needs to look at ways of funding a school safety initiatives." He strongly supported the idea every educator believes the number one thing students require when they are at school is the feeling of safety and security. School Resource Officer 9 went on to say, "If the state is not doing anything from a funding standpoint to help fund… some new safety initiatives, then I don't think they're doing everything that they should."

Superintendent responses hinged largely on the lack of state funding for districts in the area of safety and security and overall preparedness. Looking for ways to do things in an economical manner across all areas of education was a point made by SUP1.

He specified, “I think MODESE definitely could be exploring ways to increase funding through a grant initiative or through the use of professional development funds and legislature could help with this.” Superintendent 2 focused on the need for a mandated training program for leaders and administrators in the area of safety and security. He asserted, “It’s not something we want to have on-the-job training for, rather we want folks to come into the seat with some background and awareness.” The responses from SUP3 and SUP8 were along the same lines. According to SUP3, “Safety is all about awareness and communication, and I don’t think you can over communicate.”

Preparation on a large scale and getting the word out to the public that because of the level of preparedness in the district, it is not an easy target for a criminal to attack, was the focus of SUP4’s response. He went on to say:

> I think the more people that you can have trained in leadership positions, even teachers and even some students, creates an all-hands-on-deck type of environment where you have as many people prepared to take action as possible.

Superintendent 7 supported the preparedness movement with the idea of gearing professional development hours to specific trainings related to emergency response and recovery.

Changing the mindset of educators toward a proactive versus reactive approach to safety was what SUP5 wanted to share. According to SUP5:

> I truly believe that to a certain extent, many people think this [safety] is a hoop to jump through. The state says we have to do… drills, and we do that because it’s something we have to do. It is not necessarily something that we continue to evaluate and grow and get better at, and I think that that comes from mindset.

Superintendent 6 responded in a similar manner, placing a focus on proactive thinking and being prepared for an emergency by practicing what-if scenarios.

According to SUP6, "Keeping things fresh on people's minds by rotating trainings so they are always thinking about possible emergency situations and how to handle them during and after is the only way we will be successful." Similarly, SUP9 said, "There has to be a balance with everything." He quantified, "I agree that everyone needs to be trained, but we need to work smarter and select the best people for the best roles… make the best use out of the resources available to us."

Summary

Chapter Four included a summary of the perceptions of nine school district superintendents and nine school resource officers regarding district preparedness for multi-hazard events. Each participant was employed by a Missouri school district or was working in a school district that contracted services with a local police department or sheriff's office. In this chapter, participants' transcribed interviews were examined to discover similarities and differences that existed in their opinions.

By analyzing interview responses, this qualitative study was crafted to disclose how varying perceptions exist in regard to school district preparedness for multi-hazard events. Interview responses of participants were studied to provide data on how all-hazards, multi-jurisdictional teams are utilized in school districts when preparing for a multi-hazard event and the benefit of having those teams in place for the effective response to a crisis. The data revealed some variance in access to community resources, and therefore, the perceived benefit varied among participants.

Results from the analysis of data and a summary of these findings are presented in Chapter Five. Each research question is reexamined, and conclusions to each are discussed. Suggestions for practice are addressed, and recommendations for future research regarding the effect of multi-jurisdictional teams and their impact on student safety and security are presented.

Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusions

Approximately one-fourth of the nation's population are children who are separated from their parents/guardians each day while in attendance at school (Silverman et al., 2016). Rarely does a day pass by without news media outlets sharing news of an incident which has occurred in a United States school (Hamilton-Ekeke, 2017). Hamilton-Ekeke (2017) specified, "These incidents may range from a school bus accident to a student committed suicide, or from a sexual assault to a death in connection with hazing" (p. 143). According to Lynch (2017):

> The best thing that schools can do to prevent intruder violence is to be prepared. Schools should conduct active shooter lock down drills, have emergency plans in place, and require staff training to ensure that they are knowledgeable about what to do in the event that an armed assailant enters the building. (p. 28)

Communities and families expect schools to protect their children from threats such as violence, criminal acts, and intruders, as well as hazards which may arise from events like natural disasters, accidents, and disease outbreaks (USDOE, 2013).

Herlianita (2017) found, "In the last five years, more than 15 million children have been affected by man-made disasters alone" (p. 29). A large number of United States school shootings widely publicized by the news media have increased national concerns regarding school safety (Jaffee, 2018). Hamilton-Ekeke (2017) revealed one of the most cost-effective ways for schools to improve safety is to constantly focus on improving plans and to regularly practice drills. Using tools such as a school climate survey or safety assessment to measure strengths, note areas which may need

improvement, and monitor progress can enhance the overall effectiveness of school security (Schweit & Mancik, 2017).

School security expert Kenneth Trump (2011) encouraged schools to strengthen their ability to prevent, mitigate, and recover from a crisis event by building relationships with outside entities and local community partners. Schools must be able to handle crises of varying degrees of intensity and on large and small scales (Hamilton-Ekeke, 2017). The FEMA (2016b) indicated to advance all-hazards capabilities nationwide, all personnel with emergency management and incident response roles should be correctly trained and should participate in ongoing trainings, exercises, and events.

Within Chapter Five, the guiding research questions are answered. Findings are provided with associating qualitative data to support answers to the research questions. Additionally, conclusions, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research on district preparedness for multi-hazard events are provided.

Findings

This qualitative study involved an analysis of the perceptions of school superintendents and school resource officers regarding district preparedness for multi-hazard events. To gain the needed data, interviews were conducted with nine school superintendents and nine school resource officers and were transcribed for accuracy. Data were then analyzed to broaden an understanding of how these individuals perceive school district preparedness for multi-hazard events. The following findings were identified from the qualitative data collected during the interviews and are supported with literature from Chapter Two.

When comparing the years of experience between school administrators and SRO officers, it readily became apparent that SROs responding to interview question one had not been in that capacity for as many years as the superintendents. Interview question two was designed to give the researcher some insightful assumptions pertaining to the type of measures in place to prepare the school community for multi-hazard events. First, a lack of funding was specifically mentioned as a factor in the amount and extensiveness of professional development for two of the district SROs interviewed. Second, there was a wide range in the scope and sequence of event training as described by the nine SROs.

Many of the SROs failed to mention coordination with the community at large, specifically beyond the local community. School Resource Officers 5, 6, and 7 demonstrated a more thorough understanding of multi-jurisdictional involvement by incorporating training with other local authorities and entities. School Resource Officers 7 and 9 showed more in-depth understanding of the process by conducting post evaluations to identify strengths and weaknesses. An overall weakness demonstrated was a lack of education concerning terms and definitions of multi-hazard terminology. There did not appear to be a correlation between size and preparedness of personnel in the various districts.

Interestingly, school administrators from districts with designated school safety coordinators appeared to be the least aware of procedures. However, the superintendent of the largest school district was the most-informed, concerned, and proactive of all those participating in the study. As ascertained from the interview responses, the superintendent of one of the smaller districts demonstrated a hands-on, passionate approach to school community training. Two of the participants showed little or no

interest in the process, nor did these superintendents appear to be aware of the procedures in place to address multi-hazard events. There did not appear to be a correlation between district size and preparedness of the personnel.

Responses to interview question three revealed the SRO participants indicated for the most part they had training related to multi-hazard events, with four participants stating training was acquired through involvement in military service. Both SRO7 and SRO9 specifically mentioned having knowledge to lead an incident command center, yet SRO9 was the least involved in training in his district due to the district having a safety coordinator. School Resource Officer 3 demonstrated a working knowledge of preparation and training yet failed to mention any type of collaboration or coordination with outside agencies. Both SRO2 and SRO3 stressed the importance of communicating to increase the effectiveness of prevention and preparedness within their schools.

School Resource Officer 4 was the most-trained and educated of all SROs interviewed, indicated a thorough understanding of the mitigation process, and was a certified trainer for the DHS. Although it appeared SUP4 was not directly involved in or aware of all trainings, SUP4 acknowledged the ability of SRO4 to provide the district with excellent training and education. Likewise, SRO6 verified extensive training for multi-hazard events, and SUP6 was aware of and supported implemented school trainings. Superintendent 1 received training in multi-hazard events attributable to the military. This participant demonstrated an understanding of communication with multi-jurisdictional entities in the event of threats to student safety. Superintendent 2 demonstrated a more in-depth training than other superintendent participants, while

Superintendents 3, 5, 7, 8, and 9 alluded to having minimal training in multi-hazard events.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the interviews of SROs and superintendents was revealed in response to interview question four. There appeared to be a lack of experience of both groups in dealing with multi-hazard events involving violence. For the SROs and superintendents participating in this study, the only multi-hazard event discussed was climate-related, specifically tornadoes, in addition to dealing with the death of a student on school grounds. Superintendent 6 expressed the importance of drills and responses after experiencing a tornadic event. He also asserted how important it is to have a plan in place to deal with media communications.

From the responses to interview question five, the NIMS model has not been implemented in seven of the districts included in the study, although the SROs interviewed expressed a knowledge of and awareness of the NIMS. Both SRO5 and SRO6 expressed an awareness of the NIMS and stated local law enforcement and EMS personnel incorporated components specifically in regard to a point of command. School Resource Officer 6 also mentioned the value of a common language provided through use of the NIMS system of management.

Conversely, the majority of superintendents interviewed were unaware of the NIMS model of management, although SUP8 was aware roles could be assigned to provide a universal language. Superintendents 1, 5, and 6 were under the assumption their district safety directors were aware of the model, which was supported by the SROs expressing knowledge of the NIMS model.

A variety of opinions were expressed by SROs and superintendents in response to interview question six. As previously stated, the spectrum of answers varied with the responses from SROs being much more generous than the answers from superintendents. Both SRO1 and SRO7 responded educators are not adequately prepared to deal with the emotional and physical stress produced during an emergency event. School Resource Officers 2, 3, 5, and 6 disagreed with the statement, collectively sharing they believe schools are very prepared and know exactly what to do in an emergency situation. Furthermore, SRO8 and SRO9 supported this somewhat and defended Koster's stance as one that attempted to bring awareness to the greater community.

School Resource Officer 4, on the other hand, expressed the opinion most people are unprepared for emergency events. Responses to interview question two revealed SRO4 as the most highly trained in dealing with multi-hazard events. Therefore, this answer revealed a depth of knowledge which might not have been as extensive for other SROs, except for SRO6, who also appeared to have extensive knowledge in dealing with multi-hazard events. However, SRO6 stated schools were prepared.

All but one superintendent interviewed disagreed with Koster's statement that schools are prepared to deal with the immediate event; however, they expressed some concern as to the follow-up process. Responding to question six, SUP1, SUP4, SUP5, and SUP8 held many of the same beliefs and were in agreement Missouri school district personnel do not have the awareness needed to effectively respond during a major crisis event. This was also supported by responses to interview question three, as SUP3, SUP5, SUP7, SUP8, and SUP9 admitted to having minimal training in regard to multi-hazard events. Superintendent 1 discussed situational awareness and the likelihood that overall,

Koster's statement holds a measure of truth. Both SUP5 and SUP8 agreed schools have attempted to address the mitigation process, but still have a strong learning curve. Superintendent 5 suggested additional funding was needed to adequately prepare the school community for a crisis response mitigation education. Superintendents 3 and 9 interpreted the statement with a more defensive stance, supporting the school community and the willingness of the districts' teachers to do everything within their power to protect and defend. Both SUP2 and SUP7 believed more training was needed.

In response to question seven, SROs and superintendents emphasized focused face-to-face communication with personnel in their schools. However, it appeared the focus was on the physical security of the building, although SRO7 did discuss identification of those students demonstrating psychologically dangerous characteristics. Superintendents 4, 6, and 7 shared the viewpoint safety and security must be promoted via a top-down approach starting with the board of education. Superintendent 9 partners with local law enforcement and schedules district buildings to receive tactical training to promote ongoing safety efforts. At no time did any of the participants mention training for district personnel which incorporated multi-jurisdictional resources. In addition, SROs and superintendents failed to mention preparation for all personnel-bus drivers, food service, coaches, maintenance,-and the community at large. Both SROs and superintendents neglected to address multi-hazard plans for students on school grounds or en route to activities, nor crowd control or response management during events.

In response to interview question eight, all participants replied with similar statements. School resource officers viewed responsive entities by title, while the majority of superintendents referred to all entities as law enforcement. Only two

participants included health care providers and county emergency management in multi-jurisdictional all-hazards team. This indicates there is a large gap in the understanding of both SROs and superintendents of a multi-hazard management plan, and in the event of a multi-hazard event, resources might function in a less-than-efficient manner due to lack of education, communication, knowledge of resources, and training, specifically in the areas of crisis management and identification of key component figures.

Responses to interview question nine were revealing in the sense they demonstrated the possibility of authority confusion during a multi-hazard event. Collectively, the responses from all SROs were similar, with the benefit of more heads at the table and the obstacle of too many individuals wanting to be in charge. Without concise flow charts to assign responsibilities, time and efforts could be duplicated, overlooked, underutilized, or totally neglected without the NIMS system which provides a clear, succinct flowchart to provide for efficient management of an event. School Resource Officer 7 discussed staff attrition where command structures could be obsolete. The NIMS designation assignments account for this possibility and provide concise avenues for continuity. There also appeared to be a lack of collaboration among existing management entities with concern over who was in charge. Without being accurately defined, these issues hinder crisis response time and efforts.

Although SRO4 and SRO8 agreed there were some benefits of the NIMS system of management, they honed in on the obstacles they perceived in an all-hazards team approach. Superintendent 9 hinted the lack of coordination might be blamed on time constraints of personnel who all have multi-faceted responsibilities, mirroring the findings of Tsang and Liu (2016). Tsang and Liu (2016) indicated administrators seem to

be perpetually overworked, and disaster planning and preparation are continually moved to the bottom of the list.

Most superintendents agreed a multi-jurisdictional, all-hazards team approach was a positive with the main concerns being effective communication and an understanding of critical roles. Superintendent 2 determined time management and setting priorities to ensure the language is understandable and consistent were essential. Superintendent 9 went one step further from this point and expressed there should be clear steps in place to manage an event until other resources arrive. This was a valid point, as many districts are located in rural areas and response times could prevent intervention until an event is well-established.

Interview question 10 elicited the most overarching component in response to a multi-hazard event-communication. School Resource Officer 1 explained the necessity of multiple contact points for communication due to various use of dispatch channels for other resources. In addition, SRO2 stated funding is an obstacle to acquiring adequate, efficient communication equipment. School Resource Officers 3, 6, 8, and 9 claimed their districts utilize Facebook as a method to communicate with parents, along with several other methods. Both SRO3 and SRO4 mentioned their districts are considering implementing the use of a crisis app to send messages out to all stakeholders. Several of the buildings in SRO5's districts utilize Twitter and Facebook as a communication method to reach patrons.

Eight out of the nine superintendents interviewed reported the use of an all-call system to alert their stakeholders in the event of an emergency. Twitter and Facebook are also avenues used by the superintendents to communicate with the community. Both

SUP3 and SUP4 reiterated the need to "communicate, communicate, communicate." Superintendent 3 specifically stated, "Our philosophy here is to over-communicate; you put it on every resource you can utilize for communication."

Concurring with all the other superintendents, SUP8 also described using an all-call system to send out phone calls, texts, and emails to the parents in the district. Yet with all of these communication methods, SUP8 and SUP9 were the only two superintendents who discussed methods to evaluate the effectiveness of their communications. Without concise, directed communication statements and delegated communicators, information might be misconstrued, misinterpreted, and mishandled, causing media confusion and escalation of the event. It appeared most SROs and superintendents supported social media outlets, yet there was no mention of who was designated to communicate to the public and directives on what should be communicated in order to prevent escalation of the issue. Additionally, in this global digital age where communication is instantaneous, there was no mention of miscommunication which could originate within district buildings from students or other sources.

DeLapp (2014) described how use of social media can be a strong component in building community disaster resilience. As demonstrated by responses to interview question 10, social media is currently being used for social messaging; however, social media was not included as a method for dissemination and information gathering for collaborative multi-hazard management. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2016a) stressed the importance of informing the public to access reliable sources of information during a crisis event, as social media may misconstrue the information and cause individuals to panic and become counterproductive in the event of a crisis situation.

School Resource Officers 1, 6, and 7 indicated more emotional responses to interview question 11 about their perceptions in regard to emergency operations planning in schools. There seemed to be a consensus school administrators are lacking in respect toward law enforcement officers. School Resource Officer 7 stated eloquently:

> When emergencies happen in school, we have to merge those two [educating and protecting], where the needs of the student, law enforcement needs, and needs of the educator all have to come together in situations that weren't really thought of 10, 15, 20 years ago.

Officers 3, 7, and 8 agreed school safety is becoming a higher priority in Missouri schools. In support of SRO3, SRO5 stated, "I think that schools are slowly but surely making emergency preparedness a top priority." Nevertheless, funding was mentioned by SROs and superintendents as a hindrance to effective multi-hazard management training and implementation.

A recurring theme surfaced across responses from the superintendents in regard to planning, preparing, and responding to a multi-hazard event. A lack of funding for safety and security initiatives coupled with minimal support from the state level for systems and programs was a point of discontent which surfaced across responses to multiple interview questions. According to Nelson (2018), " Former Governors Jay Nixon, a Democrat, and Eric Greitens, a Republican, have both vetoed school safety funding in state budgets from some previous years" (para. 5). Randols (as cited in Nelson, 2018) stated, "Missouri ranks near the bottom in school safety funding" (para. 7). However, Nelson (2018) added recent changes in state leadership have resulted in a shift of priorities to include more funding for school safety initiatives.

President Donald Trump signed a federal spending bill into law in March of 2018 designed to provide funding for safety and security in school districts (Blad, 2018). This bill will fund research and implementation initiatives targeted at strengthening school facilities through comprehensive safety plans, as well as bullying prevention and community support efforts (Blad, 2018). Although significant progress has been made toward ensuring the nation's schools are safe for children, the National School Safety Center (2018) suggested all stakeholders-policymakers, law enforcement, community members, parents, and students-need to vigorously advocate for school safety through creative, conscientious applications to improve efficacy and effectiveness.

The data from this study clearly show an awareness and mindset from all respondents toward the importance of preparedness for a multi-hazard event, but it was clear not all have solid plans and procedures in place to face an event. The most striking finding from the study was that none of the superintendents interviewed had a working knowledge of the NIMS, although all agreed it could be beneficial if integrated into current emergency response and crisis plans. School resource officers demonstrated a much higher level of familiarity with the NIMS, although only two of the nine alluded to the use of it within their current emergency operations plans. Likewise, although the SROs and superintendents discussed having school response plans, there was minimal discussion pertaining to the prevention of crisis or emergency events, indicating this was not a high priority.

Research question one. What are the perceptions of superintendents and school resource officers regarding school district preparedness for a multi-hazard event?

Due to the unique characteristics that make up educational facilities and the children housed therein, the requirement for schools to have an all-hazard response plan to navigate natural and manmade disasters is non-negotiable (Silverman et al., 2016). Within this study, superintendents and SROs had differing viewpoints in regard to school district preparedness for a multi-hazard event. Superintendent responses painted a much bleaker notion of preparedness, with the overall belief schools are not adequately prepared for a major crisis from beginning to end. However, the majority of SROs reported schools are prepared and equipped to handle any crisis with which they are faced.

According to Shaughnessy (2017), "No one can guarantee the safety of children today… We know only too well that things happen every day over which we have no control" (p. 2). This statement by Shaughnessy accurately encompasses the attitudes and ideals held by the school administrators. Both administrators and SROs felt no matter how much districts plan and prepare, there is still a factor of the unknown that comes into play when considering multi-hazard events, which can leave a district unprepared. School resource officers are trained to attack manmade disasters head-on without hesitation.

Knowing Missouri statute requires all schools to participate in active-shooter response drills, preferably led by a law enforcement officer certified by the Peace Officers Standards and Training Council, it is reasonable to believe SROs would have a different perception of preparedness for these types of occurrences. The variance in perceptions from the two groups warrants further research on the topic to determine exactly what types of events SROs feel schools are prepared to encounter. As expressed

by Trump (2011), preparedness is critical when discussing school safety, and a proactive approach requires common sense and best practices even when there is not a national crisis in the media headlines.

Research question two. What are the perceptions of superintendents and school resource officers regarding the use of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) in the wake of a multi-hazard event?

It is important to consider "the Emergency Management Institute developed the Introduction to ICS for Schools… in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Education" (FEMA, 2018, p. 1). The findings of this study revealed superintendents had little to no knowledge of the National Incident Management System. The NIMS was invented to establish a logical, proactive approach "to prevent, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of incidents-regardless of cause, size, location, or complexity-to reduce the loss of life, destruction of property, and harm to the environment," employable by various agencies, government, non-government, and private sector organizations (FEMA, 2016b, p. 3).

The NIMS model trains and prepares individuals to perform a specific job, regardless of the type of emergency; this negates the need for a checklist, because people are trained for their specific roles (Isaac & Moore, 2011). Although the majority of superintendents were unfamiliar with the NIMS system, most SROs had a working knowledge, if not a detailed understanding, of the process. Both superintendents and school resource officers expressed the desire to implement an effective crisis management plan.

Research question three. What are the perceptions of superintendents and school resource officers regarding a multi-jurisdictional all-hazards team approach to crisis response?

Collaboration and partnerships with community stakeholders provide a wider range of resources and allow for the uniform integration of all responders in the event of an emergency (Nowicki, 2016). Having a close working relationships with community agencies makes the comprehensive approach to school safety more effective (Schweit & Mancik, 2017). Participants in this study shared perceptions regarding a partnered approach to crisis response. Respondents were in agreement there are endless benefits to having close working relationships with first responders and emergency personnel within the community. This closely mirrors research from the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. There was some trepidation noted in regard to incident command, but it was revealed the use of the NIMS could alleviate this area of concern, because specific roles are identified and assigned.

According to Schweit and Mancik (2017), "Law enforcement agencies play a vital role in school safety" (p. 1). Members of the multi-jurisdictional all-hazards team should be familiar with one another, and the strengths and weaknesses of each member should be assessed to effectively assign team members to the roles for which they can be most successful (Trump, 2011). As detailed in the interview responses, superintendent and school resource officer perceptions are varied, yet there is a general consensus supporting training and education around a multi-jurisdictional approach to multi-hazard management.

Conclusions

Within the limitations of this study, the perceptions of superintendents and school resource officers regarding school district preparedness for multi-hazard events were viewed utilizing Rogers' (1975) protection motivation theory of fear appeals to formulate conclusions. Findings were analyzed and then applied to the three research questions of the study. To provide further support for the conclusions from the study, supporting literature from Chapter Two was included, as well as literature with discussion related to identification, prevention of, and response to multi-hazard events.

As stated previously, school district crisis teams' effectiveness is maximized when representatives from all key stakeholder units are involved and a strong leader is assigned a key position (International Finance Corporation, 2010). Wynne-Moylan (2018) proposed risk and hazard management be incorporated into all events, gatherings, or venues where groups of people or crowds congregate. As schools, by their nature, provide a concentration of people on a regular basis, it is imperative potential adverse incidents are identified and introspective, rigorous hazard management plans are developed to address potential risks. Likewise, Drake, Kontar, Eichelberger, Rupp, and Taylor (2015) emphasized the need for sharing new communication technologies which can be used to enhance response time and coordinate efforts, mitigation plans which focus on resiliency, and development of procedures which encompass the ever-changing global environment.

According to Muschert and Sumiala (2015), violence in schools has increased since the 1990s until it has become a media cultural phenomenon. The exaggeration of violence in schools has cultural, social, political, and ethical implications which lead to

broader implications almost to the point of becoming a cultural epidemic (Muschert & Sumiala, 2015). Lynch (2017) stated, "Most schools think that violent acts will not happen at their school; therefore, they do not enforce policies or procedures that will reduce those types of violence" (p. 173). Muschert and Sumiala (2015) went on to say the sensationalism of violence in schools has extending cultural and sociological dimensions.

Low (2010) ascertained a quick and effective method for administrators and school personnel to evaluate readiness for multi-hazard events and suggested, "Understanding the significance and use of school crisis teams is vitally important and often unknowingly overlooked" (p. 101). The following questions are suggested to evaluate the efficiency of a crisis management plan:

1. Do I know what a crisis response team is and does?
2. What are my attitudes toward and assumptions about crisis response and its impact on students?
3. Does my district have a crisis team? How do I access/activate the team?
4. Who in my building is a trained member of the crisis team?
5. Who in my building has crisis intervention experience even if there is not a team?
6. To whom can I turn if I don't know the answers? (Low, 2010, p. 102)

Nowicki (2016) suggested although many districts have developed school crisis management plans, there is inconsistent procedural implementation in states, counties, schools, and communities.

Risk assessment, collaboration, event analysis, and prevention strategies continue to be a basic theme throughout literature concerning school violence. Yet a cohesive, structured, central plan does not run through the literature, even though most sources have the same goal: the prevention of violence in the America, specifically in schools. From the inception of the FEMA in 1979 (FEMA, 2016b; Kaiser, 2016) to the development of the DHS in 2002 to the formation of a comprehensive disaster response division (FEMA, 2016b), which ultimately resulted in the National Incident Management System, there has been a plan in place to pull together the independent, disjointed policies and procedures established by multiple states, municipalities, cities, tribal communities, and neighborhoods to address multi-hazard events in the nation, specifically in schools. However, as supported by this research, efforts to create a multi-jurisdictional, multi-faceted approach to mitigation have failed to achieve the desired results, despite national and state promotion of the NIMS. This is not to say the NIMS and the ICC have not provided a level of confidence and security for those entities who have implemented the strategies, even to a lesser extent.

In addition to continued collaborative planning, entities need to focus on the long-term effects of disasters and emergencies on students. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (2012) suggested insufficient comparative analysis has been conducted on impacts as related to multi-hazard events. According to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (2012):

> The research required should be largely focus on each of three areas of school facilities safety, school disaster management, and disaster risk reduction in the

> curriculum separately, seeking both best practices with a focus on highest impacts, and on measuring and comparing long term behavioral impacts. (p. 64)

It appears education, training, collaboration, and consistency are needed to bring together the many plans and procedures currently in place across America. This would benefit all constituents from the initial implementation, as resources and personnel would offer a collaborative, enhanced ability to those entities dealing with multi-hazard events. The NIMS would provide for the following:

- Comprehensive, nationwide systematic approach to incident management
- Core set of doctrine, concepts, principles, terminology and organizational processes for all hazards
- Essential principles for a common operating picture and interoperability of communications and information management
- Standardized resource management procedures for coordination among different jurisdictions and organizations
- Scalable and applicable for all incidents. (Department of Homeland Security, 2018, p. 1)

The components of the NIMS were not designed to stand alone, but rather to work together in a flexible, systematic manner to provide a national framework for incident management (DHS, 2017). As described by the FEMA (2016a), the key elements of the NIMS are as follows: preparedness in advance of an incident; a standardized communication system which provides for a cohesive operating picture; fluid and adaptable flow of resources through a managed process; effective; a flexible command and management structure; and use of the National Integration Center which includes

supporting technology for management and maintenance. The NIMS would not only provide a direct, concise avenue for effective management during a multi-hazard event, the process would provide for collaboration of resources through a multi-jurisdictional command structure, promote relevance through clarification of each entity's role in the plan, and promote definitive communication procedures (FEMA, 2016a).

Implications for Practice

The data from interviews conducted with nine superintendents and nine SROs yielded a wide array of perceptions and experiences. Although there were varying opinions discovered within the study, there was an underlying thread of familiarity running through the mindset of all participants. As literature reviewed in Chapter Two of this study revealed, preparation, planning, mitigation, response, and recovery plans for engaging in a crisis event should be a priority in every school district. When effectively implemented, the following measures would prove to have a positive effect on improving district preparedness for a multi-hazard event.

1. Increase awareness throughout the district by taking proactive steps to train teachers and staff members how to respond to a crisis event (Herlianita, 2017). Provide an option for employees to participate in NIMS Training, CPR, and First Aid training, in addition to regular crisis training. The probability of natural safety champions emerging will be high, and these individuals can be assigned designated roles within the emergency operations plan where they will be most effective. This will empower employees and will increase safety and security throughout the district.

2. Develop a plan of action with district leadership to form a multi-jurisdictional, all-hazards team and allocate time for team members to train together a minimum of

twice per school year. It is often pressure from parents and other stakeholders which pushes districts to address liabilities and make hasty decisions without a well-thought-out plan of action (Timm, 2015). Training should include the NIMS, tabletop exercises, and emergency drills.

3. Partner with local teacher associations, such as the National Education Association and the Missouri State Teacher's Association, as well as parent organizations such as the Parent Teacher Association, to bring awareness to the lack of funding for safety initiatives (Herlianita, 2017). These partnerships may aid in getting the information in front of lawmakers and attaining legislation for change.

4. Foster strong relationships with local law enforcement agencies and fire departments (Sneed, 2015). Invite them to participate in education events and trainings for students, such as fire prevention week and law enforcement appreciation month. Extend an invitation for these agencies to conduct trainings across the district; this not only breaks down barriers, but also increases first responders' familiarity with layouts of the schools.

5. The addition of safety, emergency preparedness, and emergency response to undergraduate teacher education programs and higher education coursework is a key way to strengthen the overall preparedness of administrators and classroom teachers (Trump, 2011). Communicate with education department deans at local and state higher education institutions to recommend the addition of a safety and security course for pre-service teachers and students seeking graduate degrees in education.

6. Research and apply for grant opportunities to fund school safety initiatives. The Comprehensive School Safety Initiative grant is designed to award grantees funds for

several areas of school safety and security improvements, such as school resource officers, school safety programs, and bullying prevention (Riffle, 2018). Districts are able to apply for grants at no cost and the benefits could be significant (Riffle, 2018).

7. The Missouri School Boards' Association Center for Education Safety offers multiple training opportunities each year focused on school safety and security (Missouri School Boards' Association, 2018). The Missouri School Safety Association became operational in 2017 and is focused on helping public and private schools and universities with safety initiatives (Winn, 2017). Each district should have, at the very least, one person as a member of this organization. Members have access to materials, trainings, and experts in the field of safety and security for a minimal membership fee. The key to successful preparation, mitigation, response, and recovery from a crisis is training key stakeholders to effectively carry out their roles (Estep, 2013).

Recommendations for Future Research

Trump (2011) stated, "Academic research is sorely lacking in school security and emergency preparedness issues, not just prevention and intervention" (p. 285). Blad (2018) agreed there is a dire need for additional information on ways to make schools safer; this concerns educational researchers, because the data are not readily available. This qualitative study was crafted to elicit perceptions and opinions of superintendents and school resource officers concerning school district preparedness for multi-hazard events. Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations for further research are offered:

1. Additional research related to school district preparedness and perception of first responders would yield useful data. This study revealed a discrepancy between

superintendents and SROs in perceptions of district preparedness. A more in-depth review of specific areas of strength and weakness would lay the foundation for future trainings and information to benefit schools across the country.

2. A quantitative study expanding on the research questions or a mixed methods study including descriptive statistics and perceptions of additional stakeholders, such as parents, students, and community members. An analysis of the number of drills per building in relationship to feelings of preparedness for multi-hazard events by administrators, staff members, and students would allow districts to better understand the necessity of preparing for events.

3. A mixed methods study of student and teacher perceptions of personal growth in self-efficacy and resilience characteristics through the facilitation of school safety drills. This type of study would provide an awareness of the perceptions of those individuals actually participating in the drills/events. This information could make both students and staff more aware and ready to respond to any type of crisis event.

Summary

The 21st century seems to have ushered in heightened threats requiring keen attention and precision in preparation and response efforts and demanding an innovative intensity of intelligence of resiliency throughout interdependent systems (Masten & Obradovic, 2008). Hamilton-Ekeke (2017) determined, “Knowing how to deal with a crisis situation and what to do when a crisis occurs is what is the difference between calm and chaos, between courage and fear, between life and death” (p. 145). As a nation, citizens have a shared responsibility of preparedness through contributions by the entire community and all its stakeholders (FEMA, 2015).

This study was designed to identify the perceptions held by superintendents and SROs regarding school district preparedness for multi-hazard events. Nine superintendents and 9 SROs participated in the research. This study was guided by the theoretical framework of Ronald Rogers' (1975) protection motivation and fear appeals model. When individuals are faced with a threat, the level of preparedness for the event has a direct impact of the ability to react effectively and appropriately (Rogers, 1975). Heightened awareness and self-confidence minimize the lasting effects of a crisis on a person's psyche (Maddux & Rogers, 1983). The literature reviewed focused on building resiliency and self-efficacy through preparation and training.

Chapter Three encompassed the methodology of the study. The problem and purpose were explained, and research questions were defined. The sample consisted of nine superintendents and nine SROs from Missouri public schools. This purposive sample of administrators and law enforcement officers agreed to participate in semi-structured interviews crafted to gain their perceptions concerning school district preparedness for multi-hazard events. Data from the interviews were reviewed and analyzed to reveal commonalities between respondents' perceptions and literature reviewed in Chapter Two.

Chapter Four contained an analysis of data gathered through the interview process. Findings validated much of the literature reviewed in Chapter Two; however, there were gaps in the application and follow-through of processes and procedures. Overall, superintendent and SRO responses to interview questions exposed concern regarding district preparedness for a multi-hazard event.

From this study, a number of conclusions were formed. One, school districts suffer from a lack of funding for safety and security initiatives. Two, there is an awareness of the importance of solid, emergency operation plans and a functional multi-jurisdictional, all-hazards team, although few districts are fully operational in this area. It was further concluded the majority of superintendents do not believe districts are prepared for a major crisis event, while over half of SROs reported districts are prepared. Furthermore, school personnel who have a growth mindset regarding safety and security have increased self-efficacy and are cognizant of ways to improve safety within schools. A final conclusion was that having a multi-jurisdictional, all-hazards team and quality relationships with community stakeholders can benefit school districts when a crisis occurs.

Appendix A

LINDENWOOD

LINDENWOOD UNIVERSITY ST. CHARLES, MISSOURI

DATE:	March 1, 2017
TO:	Jennifer Wheeler Lofton, Ed.S.
FROM:	Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board
STUDY TITLE:	[1031715-1] Perceptions of Missouri School Superintendents and School Resource Officers Regarding Preparedness for Multi-hazard Events
IRB REFERENCE #:	
SUBMISSION TYPE:	New Project
ACTION:	APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE:	March 1, 2017
EXPIRATION DATE:	February 28, 2018
REVIEW TYPE:	Expedited Review (Cat. 7)

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research project. Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office. Please use the appropriate adverse event forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to the IRB.

This project has been determined to be a Minimal Risk project. Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the completion/amendment form for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of February 28, 2018.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years.

If you have any questions, please contact Michael Leary at 636-949-4730 or mleary@lindenwood.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

If you have any questions, please send them to IRB@lindenwood.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board's records.

Appendix B

Letter of Participation

<Date>

<Title> <First Name> <Last Name>
<Position>
<School District>
<Address>

Dear <Title> <First Name> <Last Name>:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study entitled, *Perceptions of School Superintendents and School Resource Officers Regarding School District Preparedness for Multi-Hazard Events,* as fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral program at Lindenwood University. I look forward to having the opportunity to talk with you on <Date> at <Time> to gather your perceptions on the preparedness of your school district for a multi-hazard event. I anticipate the interview taking approximately one hour to complete.

Attached you will find the interview questions in an effort to provide you time to prepare and reflect prior to our scheduled interview. I have also attached the Informed Consent Form for your review and signature. If you agree to participate in the study, please sign the consent form.

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you have the option to withdraw at any time. Your confidentiality will be protected throughout the study. If you have any further questions, please call [redacted] or email [redacted]. Once the study has been completed, the results will be available to you upon request.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Wheeler Lofton
Doctoral Candidate
Lindenwood University

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form

LINDENWOOD

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

"Perceptions of Missouri School Superintendents and School Resource Officers Regarding Preparedness for Multi-Hazard Events"

Principal Investigator Jennifer Wheeler Lofton
Telephone: [redacted] E-mail: [redacted]

Participant_____ Contact info _____

1. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Jennifer Wheeler Lofton under the guidance of Dr. Shelly Fransen. The purpose of this research is to study the perceptions of district superintendents and school resource officers regarding the preparedness of school districts for multi-hazard events.

2. a) Your participation will involve verbally responding to open-ended questions in a face-to-face or telephone interview to gather your perceptions on the preparedness of your school district regarding multi-hazard events.

   b) The amount of time involved in your participation will be one interview session including 6-10 open-ended questions that will take approximately 45 minutes to one hour.

   Eighteen individuals will be involved in this research.

3. There are no anticipated risks associated with this research.

4. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge of school district preparedness for multi-hazard events.

5. Your participation is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.

6. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study, and the information collected will remain in the possession of the investigator in a safe location.

7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Jennifer Wheeler Lofton [redacted] or the Supervising Faculty, Dr. Shelly Fransen [redacted]. You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Marilyn Abbott, Provost, at mabbott@lindenwood.edu or 636-949-4912.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above by participating in the interview.

Appendix D

Interview Questions

The following questions will be asked to you face-to-face or via telephone. In an effort to assist you in understanding the questions, definitions to certain terms used within the questions have been provided.

Definitions

All-hazards. All-hazards is defined as "an approach for prevention, protection, preparedness, response, and recovery that addresses a full range of threats and hazards, including domestic terrorist attacks, natural and manmade disasters, accidental disruptions, and other emergencies" (Department of Homeland Security, 2013, p. 103).

Multi-hazard. According to Gill, Duncan, and Budimir (2016), multi-hazard or multi-hazard approach can be defined as:

> An approach that considers more than one hazard in a given place (ideally progressing to consider all known hazards) and the interrelations between these hazards, including their simultaneous or cumulative occurrence and their potential interactions. Note that to progress from hazard potential to risk, a multi-hazard approach should also consider the dynamic nature of vulnerability, for instance following a primary hazard event, exposed assets will have an increased vulnerability to subsequent hazards. (p. 1)

National Incident Management System (NIMS). According to the FEMA (2016b):

> [The NIMS is] a systematic, proactive approach to guide departments and agencies at all levels of government, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector to work together seamlessly and manage incidents involving all threats and hazards-regardless of cause, size, location, or complexity-in order

> to reduce loss of life, property and harm to the environment. The purpose of NIMS is to provide a common approach for managing incidents. (para. 2)

1. How long have you been a school administrator/SRO?
2. What measures do you take in preparing your district staff, students, and parents for multi-hazard events?
3. Describe what safety/crisis training you have had related to multi-hazard events, if any, and what did it entail?
4. What is your experience with a multi-hazard event in school? What knowledge did you gain from it?
5. How do you implement the NIMS within your current emergency operations plan? If you are presently not employing NIMS techniques, how might this new knowledge affect your preparation or revision of plans in the future?
6. Former Missouri Attorney General Chris Koster stated, “Missouri school district personnel do not adequately understand nor are they prepared to react effectively during a multi-hazard event” (OnTheIssues, 2015, p. 1). How would you respond to this statement?
7. As the superintendent/SRO of the district, how do you promote ongoing efforts to support safety preparedness with staff, students, and community?
8. What agencies do you include in your multi-jurisdictional, all-hazards team?
9. What benefits or obstacles do you see or have you seen in having a multi-jurisdictional, all-hazards team?
10. What methods of communication do you use to alert stakeholders in the event of an emergency, and how do you assess the effectiveness of those methods?

11. What would you like to share about your thoughts or perceptions concerning emergency operations planning in schools?

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Vita

Jennifer Renae Wheeler Lofton is a native Missourian who grew up in the Ozark Mountains. She comes from a family of educators; her great grandparents, grandparents, and parents were all administrators in the public education system. She currently resides with her husband and two sons in Nixa, Missouri.

Jennifer completed her Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education at College of the Ozarks in Point Lookout, Missouri. She attended Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Missouri, where she obtained her Master's Degree and Specialist Degree in Educational Leadership. Jennifer started her career as an elementary teacher, but she soon moved into administration and is now completing her 13th year as an elementary school principal.

Jennifer is passionate about school safety and security and has made it a priority throughout her career. She enjoys educating others about the importance of building strong relationships with community partners, including local law enforcement. She is a strong supporter of the D.A.R.E. program and was awarded Missouri D.A.R.E. Educator of the Year in 2011.