

The Crisis Response Box has one simple goal: to immediately provide information for effective management of a critical incident in our schools. With the help of the Mississippi Department of Public Safety, we have created the Crisis Response Box. “The Box” is an easy 1, 2, 3 approach to crisis planning and prevention. By being prepared, everyone involved will be able to work, in a combined effort, to control the situation, rather than be controlled by the situation. Each school should have “The Box” in a central location that is easy to access. With “The Box” in place, school administrators will be able to work with local authorities to prevent or control a crisis situation. A corresponding box should be kept with other officials such as the local law enforcement agency. I urge teachers, administrators and local authorities throughout the state of Mississippi to work together to embrace this plan and take the steps to be prepared. Students deserve the opportunity to learn in a safe environment and be able to realize their full potential without the worry of violence in the classroom. We need to take the steps to prepare ourselves for a crisis situation now, in case we are ever again faced with another situation such as the tragedy in Pearl or Columbine. The emergency personnel and school officials involved in these and other critical incidents were asked to consider what information would have been helpful during their time of crisis. Their answers became the basis for creating a crisis response information inventory. This list consists of 22 pieces of information that will be critical in a crisis situation, such as: a campus layout, rosters and pictures of students, teachers and other employees, evacuation sites and designated command posts. If a crisis occurs every school employee should be aware of the crisis plan in order to follow procedure and work hand in hand with the authorities. As mentioned before, a crisis requires a group effort and authorities and school administrators should be on a first name basis with each other. Knowing and trusting the people you are working with saves the time of assigning responsibility and provides a peace of mind that everyone knows their duties. Being prepared is the key to controlling and possibly preventing a crisis. With the Crisis Response Box, our schools can take the steps to prepare before a crisis occurs. Rather than waiting for another tragedy to remind us to act, now is the time to take action to prevent future crises.