

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

# AN EXAMINATION OF SCHOOL SAFETY PLANS IN CALIFORNIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS KINDERGARTEN THROUGH TWELFTH GRADES: THEIR CURRENCY, IMPLEMENTATION, AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERCEPTIONS OF “PERSISTENTLY DANGEROUS”

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### Introduction

This study focuses on school safety in California grades K-12 public schools. Limited information is available concerning how schools safety plans are developed and implemented. The data in this study refutes findings from the California Research Bureau 1999. This study examines some of the ways schools may be preparing for a range of crises. Finally, it assesses the knowledge of school administrators about the term “persistently dangerous.”

### Purpose of the Study

It is a legal requirement for schools to have in place current safety plans. A school considered, “persistently dangerous” by the state of California for 2 or more years is also considered “unsafe.” Under the “No Child Left Behind” law, it became a requirement for schools that receive categorical funding to provide an “unsafe school choice option” to parents. The purpose of this study was to examine the currency of California kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup>-grade

public school safety plans, the ways that schools may be implementing safety plans, and the perceptions held by administrators regarding the issue of “persistently dangerous.”

### Findings of the Study

The findings of this study indicate that 67% of the administrators who responded to the survey state their safety plans are current. Some schools are further along in planning and implementation than other schools. All school sites practice fire drills, and less than ¼ practice silent evacuation drills. The study also indicates that most administrators are unaware of the definition for persistently dangerous.

This study illustrates the need for administrators to have safety training for staff at school sites, to collaborate with outside agencies, and to practice safety drills.

### Conclusions

Chapter 1 includes a statement of the problem, purpose of the study, 3 research questions, and 24 terms are defined. Of surprise to the researcher was the low percentage of sites that have parent emergency letters.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that Local Education Agencies (LEAs) have an individual who understands how to report safety information. Included in this section is the reference, “*Safe Schools: A Planning Guide for Action*” for California public schools.

School safety in public education should be considered equally important as student academic achievement.