

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mr. Cooper Dixon of Dixon Safety Consulting conducted our annual TPSD Safety Audit.

For the past couple of years, we have intensely focused on our two greatest threats:

1. A crime taking place off campus that comes onto one of our campuses.
2. Psychotic student who plans some type of Mass murder event. (Guns, knives, vehicles, or explosives)

This year, our safety team wanted to ensure we are staying focused on other areas in terms of student safety. It was time to expand our audit to cover additional areas of school safety that can be just as dangerous. Therefore, we are using MDE Standard #30 to conduct a full scale School Facility Safety Assessment. In addition, since there has been a steady increase in the number of school bus accidents across the state, we have included MDE Standard #29 which is a monitoring tool from the Office of Safe and Orderly Schools. This also helps everyone remain focused on student transportation safety.

Another portion of our 2019 Safety Audit was a tabletop exercise. On February 18<sup>th</sup>, all of our School Security Officers, Campus Enforcement Officers, and School Resource Officers participated in a variety of tabletop scenarios at the North Mississippi Law Enforcement Academy. We also invited our Tupelo Fire Department to help provide insight on possible tweaks in our safety program. This training was provided primarily by the Tupelo Police Department and their SWAT staff. Our officers were able to see things from a different lens and look at a parent's perspective concerning overall school safety.

Officer Dixon recommended all of the safety upgrades presented in October. Listed below is Officer Dixon's complete 2019 Safety Audit report for Tupelo Public School District.



**J. Cooper Dixon**  
**Owner**

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## **DIXON'S SAFETY CONSULTING, LLC**

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# SCHOOL SAFETY ASSESSMENT

## TUPELO PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

### ***RECOMMENDATIONS:***

- Classroom doors should be locked at all times
- Visitors *shall* surrender their driver's license, car keys or something of importance i.e. cell phone upon entry into the school and update the district visitor's policy to reflect the change
- Install visitor catch areas at the schools notated below (I explained to each building level Principal the most useful and economical way to accomplish this)
- All schools use the "flag style" placards to number/identify rooms
- All schools should label hallways and stairwells
- On campuses where multiple buildings exist, label each building with reflective signage on the exterior
- Put room numbers on the exterior of the building as well as the roof
- All staff should be required to wear their district issued ID's at all times
- Provide safety training to non-certified employees (maintenance workers, custodians, etc.) on the importance of recognizing intruders
- Either remove unused lockers or permanently seal them where applicable
- Replace lanyards for visitors passes instead of stickies
- All schools should have an emergency evacuation kit in the front office
- Custodian and electrical closets and electrical panels should be secured at all times
- Replace/repair flood lights and exit signs where necessary

- Provide community and student training on the importance of recognizing intruders
- If applicable, ensure students do not have baseball/softball bats in their possession during the educational day
- Ensure classroom windows are closed and locked at the end of the day
- At each campus ensure the surrounding public streets are labeled as “School Zones”
- Remove graffiti from bathrooms where applicable

### ***NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (NIMS)***

- Schools shall use plain language when announcing drills and actual events
- Schools should use red and green cards for drills/actual events
  - a. **Red**- Need assistance
  - b. **Green**- All is well

## **CARVER ELEMENTARY**

### **910 NORTH GREEN STREET**

#### ***RECOMMENDATIONS:***

- Install key fobs at the door leading to the Kindergarten Hall and the door leading outside (to the gym)
- “Black-out” the cafeteria windows facing the parking lot
- Install cameras in the stairwells

#### ***SIGNAGE:***

- Label hallways and stairwells

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTER**

### **1402 NORTH GREEN STREET**

#### ***RECOMMENDATIONS:***

- Install a buzzer on the door leading into the main hall
- “Black-out” the playground
- Block off the drive facing North Green Street during the educational day

#### ***SIGNAGE:***

- Better and larger directional signage to the main office from North Green Street

## **FILLMORE CENTER**

### **903 FILLMORE DRIVE**

#### ***RECOMMENDATIONS:***

- Install a visitor catch area
- Block off unnecessary entrances to the parking lot during educational hours
- Close off the access road going around the exterior of the building

#### ***SIGNAGE:***

- Directional sign to front office

## **JOYNER ELEMENTARY**

### **1201 JOYNER AVENUE**

#### ***RECOMMENDATIONS:***

- Install a visitor catch area
- Close the east gate leading to the rear of the building during the educational day
- Block off the road leading to the “Rockwell Center” during educational hours
- Label the bathrooms
- Keep maintenance, custodial closets, etc. secure at all times
- Where applicable, use the extra door in classrooms as the 2<sup>nd</sup> means of egress
- Where applicable, when using a window as a 2<sup>nd</sup> means of egress, ensure the teacher(s) can reach the lock
- Install a key fob on the double doors leading to the 1<sup>st</sup> grade hall and the external doors going from the Kindergarten Hall to the Gym

- “Black-out” the playground

## **LAWHON ELEMENTARY**

**140 LAKE STREET**

### ***RECOMMENDATIONS:***

- Construct a visitor catch area
- “Black-out” the fence around the playground

### ***SIGNAGE:***

- Directional Signage to the Front Office

## **LAWNDALE ELEMENTARY**

**1563 MITCHELL ROAD**

### ***RECOMMENDATIONS:***

- During educational hours, block off access to employee parking
- Install a buzzer on the door leading into the school

### ***SIGNAGE:***

- Directional signage to the school from the intersection of Mitchell Street and Lawndale Road
- Directional signage to the front office at the “Y Junction”

### ***NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION AGENCY (NFPA) LIFE SAFETY CODE***

- All classrooms are required to have an additional mean of egress
- 2<sup>nd</sup> means of egress *shall* be labeled

**MILAM ELEMENTARY**  
**720 JEFFERSON STREET**

***RECOMMENDATIONS:***

- During the educational day, block off the extra entrances off of North Gloster that lead to the bus lane/front office
- Move visitor parking to the north side of the school
- Install a buzzer on the door leading from the front office to the cafeteria
- Remove/secure unused lockers

**PARKWAY ELEMENTARY**  
**628 RUTHERFORD ROAD**

***RECOMMENDATIONS:***

- Block off the road leading to the rear of the building during the educational day
- Install a buzzer leading into the main hall from the front office
- Ensure the window(s) being used as a 2<sup>nd</sup> means of egress is easy to open



**PIERCE STREET ELEMENTARY**  
**1008 PIERCE STREET**

***RECOMMENDATIONS:***

- Install “black-out”/bulletproof film to the main double doors leading into the school
- Install “black-out”/bulletproof film to the “visitor’s window”
- Keep maintenance, custodial closets, etc. secure at all times
- Move visitor parking to the front drive
- Block off access to employee parking during the educational day

***NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION AGENCY (NFPA) LIFE SAFETY CODE***

- Add an additional fire extinguisher in the cafeteria

**RANKIN ELEMENTARY**  
**1908 FORREST STREET**

***RECOMMENDATIONS:***

- Block off access to employee parking during the educational day
- Fence the main breezeways used for transition
- Keep maintenance, custodial closets, etc. secure at all times
- Repair the panic bar leading to the “day-care lane”
- Repair the intercom where necessary

***SIGNAGE:***

- Directional signage to the front office from the main road
- Directional signage to visitor parking

***NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION AGENCY (NFPA) LIFE SAFETY  
CODE***

- 2<sup>nd</sup> means of egress *shall* be labeled (portable building)

# **THOMAS STREET ELEMENTARY**

## **520 SOUTH THOMAS STREET**

### ***RECOMMENDATIONS:***

- Block access to employee parking during the educational day
- Secure the gate leading to the dumpster at all times
- Lock the gates leading to the playground from the dug-outs
- “Black-out” the fence around the playground
- Install “black-out”/bulletproof film to the main double doors leading into the school
- Swap the lock on the door connecting the Library with the Support Therapist Room
- When loading buses, ensure the first daycare van’s ignition is OFF

### ***SIGNAGE:***

- Directional signage to the front office from the main road

# **TUPELO MIDDLE SCHOOL**

## **1009 VARSITY DRIVE**

### ***RECOMMENDATIONS:***

- Install a buzzer leading into the main hallway
- Install key fobs on the exterior doors
- Ensure the fence surrounding the campus is secured at all times
- Create Visitor Parking

### ***SIGNAGE:***

- Directional signage to the school from South Gloster Street
- Directional signage to the Front Office from the intersection of Truman Street and Varsity Street

- Directional signage to the Front Office from Varsity Street

**TUPELO HIGH SCHOOL**  
**4125 GOLDEN WAVE DRIVE**

***RECOMMENDATIONS:***

- Install a fence that will separate the Natchez Trace from the campus
- At each guard shack, create a vehicle trap (I explained this concept to the Principal)
- Install large and reflective signage on each building. (I recommend placing them higher up on the buildings where it is easier for 1<sup>st</sup> Responders to see)
- Classroom doors should have the capability to lock from the inside
- “Black-out”/bulletproof the main doors leading into the Admin Building/Front Office
- Install a fence that encloses the instructional buildings but not the parking lot
- Make the Administrative Parking Lot as Visitor/Vendor Parking

***SIGNAGE:***

- Directional signage to the front office

***NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION AGENCY (NFPA) LIFE SAFETY CODE***

- All classrooms are required to have an additional means of egress
- 2<sup>nd</sup> means of egress *shall* be labeled

# TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

3606 JEFF HOMAN BLVD

## ***RECOMMENDATIONS:***

- Implement a “Bus Change Policy”
- For the driver’s that leave buses on campus, create a policy forbidding them to leave the keys on the bus unattended
- Have drivers submit a signed form acknowledging they have received their Transportation Manuals
- Include in the “Bus Rules:” At no time are students permitted to occupy the stairwell of the bus while it is in motion
- Include “Nathan’s Law” in the Transportation Manual
- Create and Implement a “Patron Complaint Form”
- Create a “Parent Packet” Things to include:
  - Nathan’s Law
  - A Contact Information Form for Each Bus Rider
  - Bus Rules
  - A Copy of the New Bus Change Policy and Parent Form
  - Information on how to officially file a complaint against a driver/chaperone to include language stating that only written complaints will be investigated
- When buses are left on campuses unattended, have each bus pull up close enough to the one in front of them, to where the back hatch will not open. If possible, put a bus that has the capability of locking the rear hatch as the last bus in line.

# SCORES

Scores are based on the following guidelines:

## Personnel (teachers, students, staff)

- Access to the school via Personnel
- Once in the school, intruder recognition by Personnel
- Access to hallways, classrooms, playgrounds, cafeterias, etc.

## Physical Security

- Fencing
- Gates
- Buzzers
- Locked classrooms
- Locked exterior doors
- Signage

90-100= A

80-90= B

70-80= C

60-70= D

Below 60= F

<i>School</i>	<i>Personnel</i>	<i>Physical</i>
<i>Carver Elementary</i>	<b>95</b>	<b>95</b>
<i>ECEC</i>	<b>99</b>	<b>89</b>
<i>Filmore</i>	<b>90</b>	<b>80</b>
<i>Joyner Elementary</i>	<b>85</b>	<b>80</b>
<i>Lawhon</i>	<b>97</b>	<b>83</b>
<i>Lawndale</i>	<b>95</b>	<b>95</b>

<i>Milam</i>	<b>95</b>	<b>90</b>
<i>Parkway</i>	<b>80</b>	<b>90</b>
<i>Pierce Street</i>	<b>80</b>	<b>95</b>
<i>Rankin Elementary</i>	<b>85</b>	<b>92</b>
<i>Thomas Street</i>	<b>80</b>	<b>90</b>
<i>TMS</i>	<b>82</b>	<b>85</b>
<i>THS</i>	<b>85</b>	<b>89</b>

## **OVERALL IMPRESSION:**

Five years ago, I conducted the same safety assessments on this district as the ones I just completed. Without a doubt, the Tupelo School District has made school safety a priority. From a physical standpoint, it is very evident the district has taken a proactive approach to safety. The fencing, security film, buzzers, command center and cameras are of great benefit to the district. As with any school, it is only as safe as the staff, students and community allow it to be. Whereas the aforementioned could benefit from intruder training, based on an average of the scores for each school, in my expert opinion I would rate this district at an "A" as it pertains to safety. Moreover, the School Safety Officers, School Resource Officers and Campus Enforcement Officers are extremely valuable to this district. Unlike in a lot of schools and districts in which I visit, the Officers also take a proactive approach to safety. All too often school safety personnel view their job as a reason to stay holed up their offices, thus is not the case at Tupelo School District. Additionally, the Administrations recognize their value and are appreciative of the job they do and the services in which they provide.