



Valley View Public Schools

*Serving portions of Bolingbrook, Romeoville, Lemont,
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School & Community Relations Office

Larry Randa, Director

755 Luther Drive
Romeoville, IL 60446
Phone: 815.886.2700 X261
Cell: 815.641.7681
E-mail: RandaLK@vvsd.org

For immediate release

September 23, 2009

For more information please contact:

Larry Randa 815-886-2700 Ext. 261

Police chief tells safety officials to plan ahead

School administrators and public safety officials are overloaded with everyday tasks, but that's no excuse to avoid obligations to make sure a safe learning environment is maintained in every school system according to Jeff Chudwin, Olympia Fields Chief of Police.

"Is your planning real or have you only built a paper Tiger?" Chudwin asked attendees of Valley View School's District Safety in School Conference. "Security is either a paper exercise that exists only in folders or it is a matter of continued practices that are examined, reinforced and validated. There is no in between."

The general trend in the nation's schools, Chudwin said, is to deal with each crisis as it occurs. And, while many educators will say available time is an issue, the real issue is "the will to act."

"Get focused or get out of the way," he said. "It's a freight train. It's time to slow it down. It's time to start triaging your life."

Chudwin told the safety experts, who came from towns and school districts throughout the state, that schools need:

- A simple crisis plan that includes guidelines on how to deal with specific crises such as fires, tornadoes, an active shooter, school violence and medical emergencies
- Realistic, accepted and continual training which is easy to understand and builds confidence in an individual's ability to exercise the plan. Plus followup training that puts individual trainees outside their comfort zone.
- A plan on how to communicate with parents, the community and the media.
- A crisis evacuation kit
- Reunification sites for parents who may come to the scene
- Accountability. It is critical to detect the weaknesses in plans and correct them.

"Above all prepare. We are not on some island in America where the bad guys go somewhere else," he said. "You do not control the events around you. You can only control the response to them.

"Don't say it'll never happen here. The lives of our children are at stake."