

Planning for the Unimaginable

Preparing Your School District for a Major Catastrophe

- **Before A Disaster**
 - Disaster Plans? Questions of your plans today.
 - IT / Critical Data / Backup examples
- **Lessons Learned**
 - Plan Failures, examples
 - Lessons learned, changes being implemented by districts.

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- **Questions of Your Existing Plan**
 - Do you have a **WRITTEN** plan today?
What triggers the Plan?
 - Does your current plan involve all critical staff in its creation, review and testing?
 - Who do you consider critical staff?

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- **Questions of Your Existing Plan**
 - **If a disaster did occur, what means will you use to communicate?**
 - How will critical staff communicate?
 - How will you communicate to employees?
Them to you?
 - **How will you communicate to families/students?**
 - **How do you plan to deliver payroll checks?**

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- **Questions of Your Existing Plan**
 - A disaster has occurred... you must run payroll, you can not find your Superintendent, your Board President or your Business Manager / Finance Director. What do you do in your plan today?
 - You have printed payroll checks after a disaster. Do you have to mail them?

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- **Questions of Your Existing Plan**
 - You are about to open some schools after a disaster. Your district office does not exist (disaster took it away). How do you communicate to parents, families students...web site, radio, TV?
 - More than 50% of your staff has lost their homes. You need them back to open schools. What do you do?

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- **Questions of Your Existing Plan**
 - Internet access in your immediate area is down for 60 or more days. Does this cause your plan problems?
 - Cell phones and local phones and long distance lines are out for weeks. Does this cause your plan problems?

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- **Questions for Your Existing Plan**
 - You have buildings and other assets that are no longer controlled by you. They are now used by FEMA, Sheriffs, National Guard, State Police and others. Does this cause your plan problems?

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- **Questions of Your Existing Plan**
 - **IT / DATA: Do you do this today?**
 - Review with administrative and curriculum staff and update the list of what is considered critical data and then change existing backup procedures to reflect this change. Do you do this now? Routinely? Monthly? Annually?
 - TEST your existing backup / plan to verify data recovery. If so, how often? (do you do a full restore, a test restore, a simulation of your plan?)

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- **Questions for Your Existing Plan**
 - **As part of your current disaster plan, how do you back up critical data? Ex:**
 - Backup ALL critical server data daily and move from district to a school site
 - Backup Admin servers to tape and daily move to another building and weekly move to a bank vault

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- **Questions for Your Existing Plan**
 - **As part of your current disaster plan, how do you back up critical data? Ex:**
 - School Site servers backup weekly and swap with neighboring schools site or brought to staff house and rotated
 - Backup critical data and mail / send to another city out of the region (issues in duplicating hw)

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- **Plan Failures, Lessons Learned - Ex:**
 - **#1 Problem: Can not find critical staff:
Critical Staff Can Not Communicate**
 - Districts did not have good information where critical staff would be. Some staff had to move more than once due to the size of the devastation. Once moved, phones did not work and web sites were not available. Decisions could not be made.

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- **Plan Failures, Lessons Learned**
 - **#1 Problem: Can not find critical staff:
Critical Staff Can Not Communicate**
 - A: SOLUTION: Plans now demand more information of all staff and specifically critical staff. Must define who is critical and part of the execution of the plan.

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- **Plan Failures, Lessons Learned**
 - **#1 Problem: Can not find critical staff: Critical Staff Can Not Communicate**
 - B: SOLUTION: Web sites moved from on-site to an out of region host. They are adding components for check in/out of staff and for staff to update where they are. Web site will have information of disaster issues within 4 hours of initiation of plan
 - C: SOLUTION: Satellite phones / local "walkie talkies"

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- **Plan Failures, Lessons Learned**
 - **#2 Problem: NO MAIL DELIVERY:**
Cannot mail payroll checks or accounts payable checks or any information because of no mail delivery (entire region lost mail for weeks, some months) One district spent 2 weeks on the phones to locate all employees so as to properly deliver payroll checks (became detectives)

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- **Plan Failures, Lessons Learned**
 - **#2 Problem: NO MAIL DELIVERY:**
 - A: SOLUTION: Direct deposit for employees for payroll checks and for vendors
 - B: SOLUTION: Emergency addresses / locations of employees with ability for employees to update information after disaster
 - C: SOLUTION: Web access for employees that leave the region to have information

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- **Plan Failures, Lessons Learned**
 - **#3 Problem: NO POWER:** Even though many buildings were available for use, power was not available.
 - **A: SOLUTION:** Have generators available for key buildings or for key rooms at buildings and portable generators ready for deployment to areas to assist staff and recovery.
 - **B: SOLUTION:** Have fuel contracts with vendors outside of the region to delivery fuel for generators.

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- **Plan Failures, Lessons Learned**
 - **#4 Problem: BACKUPS DESTROYED**
 - Backups on 1st floor in flooded areas: Water damage
 - Backups on 2nd floor but buildings destroyed
 - Water is damaging

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- **Plan Failures, Lessons Learned**
 - **#4 Problem: BACKUPS DESTROYED**
 - A: SOLUTION: have backups in more secure site (water proof vault or containers, some outside of region)
 - B: SOLUTION: Districts now has all servers with removable drives and besides their backup procedures, they will remove the drives to another, more safe location when they execute their pre disaster plan

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- **Plan Failures, Lessons Learned**
 - **#5 Problem: PAPER RECORDS DESTROYED**
 - Every teacher evaluation ever done in the district.
 - All historical student transcripts (supposedly safe archive room flooded)
 - Significant IEP documents and other important documents, micro fiche, etc

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- **Plan Failures, Lessons Learned**
 - **#5 Problem: PAPER RECORDS DESTROYED**
 - A: SOLUTION: Image archive critical documents with digital off-site backups
 - B: SOLUTION: Key systems ASP hosted out of the region or that have backups routinely moved out of the region

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- **Plan Failures, Lessons Learned**
 - **#6 Problem: CELL PHONES USELESS, land lines down, long distance down.**
 - Staff can not communicate for weeks.
 - Infrastructure destroyed / flooded

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- **Plan Failures, Lessons Learned**
 - **#6 Problem: CELL PHONES USELESS, land lines down, long distance down.**
 - A: SOLUTION: Satellite phones and "walkie talkie" phones for communications
 - B: SOLUTION: In your plan, you need to have contingencies on how/ where to meet in case communications are down. Decisions must be made quickly.

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- **Plan Failures, Lessons Learned**
 - **#7 Problem: KEY STAFF DISPLACED**
 - Policies and decisions must be made: many districts could not put together quorum of Board members for key decisions.
 - Banking is paralyzed and you need signatures and verified communications with banks.
 - District could not locate their Superintendent for 5 Days.

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- **Plan Failures, Lessons Learned**
 - **#7 Problem: KEY STAFF DISPLACED.** District could not make decisions readily due to communication issues and distance between staff
 - **A: SOLUTION:** One district has emergency agreement with outside agency (Ex: Marriott) to house critical staff when their disaster plan is executed. They have full access to key servers and web from location so as to run key business functions (Payroll, A/P, etc)

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- **Plan Failures, Lessons Learned**
 - **#7 Problem: KEY STAFF DISPLACED.**
District could not make decisions readily due to communication issues and distance between staff
 - **B: SOLUTION:** Another district has an arrangement with another school district and hotel (about 125 miles away) for key staff to have shelter and offices with backup servers.

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- **Plan Failures, Lessons Learned**
 - **#7 Problem: KEY STAFF DISPLACED.**
District could not make decisions readily due to communication issues and distance between staff
 - **C: SOLUTION:** Your Plan must address key staff, Board, etc on how to move on with decisions after a disaster; consider emergency decision process that would be different from normal quorum, etc . This could require Board policy/procedure/action.

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- **Plan Failures, Lessons Learned**
 - **#8 Problem: Could NOT COMMUNICATE to parents / Students / Staff**
 - A: SOLUTION: Automatic phone/email system that can broadcast information via phone (up to 1,500 calls in 5 minutes) and/or email to designated groups or parents or staff. This plus automatic availability of out of region web site (part of pre disaster plan) (regional media has this so they can access and share information)

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- **Plan Failures, Lessons Learned**
 - **#8 Problem: Could NOT COMMUNICATE to parents / Students / Staff**
 - B: SOLUTION: Relationship and plan with local media, State DOE, State Police and other agencies so they can also access emergency information of the district to share with public and staff.

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- **Plan Failures, Lessons Learned**
 - **#9 Problem: BACKUP RESTORE PROBLEMS:**
 - You had remote/regional backups but could not restore because they could not simulate the original hardware/software in reading the images. New hardware/software not compatible.
 - Others had other restore issues due to poor or no testing of backups or incomplete backups

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- **Plan Failures, Lessons Learned**
 - **#9 Problem: BACKUP RESTORE PROBLEMS:**
 - A: SOLUTION: Test backups and restore procedures routinely
 - B: SOLUTION: Review what is backed up and what is considered CRITICAL. This changes and you need input from more than just IT.

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- **Plan Failures, Lessons Learned**
 - **#10 Problem: DECISION / Board Process Problems**
 - Many districts standard decision process and policies became barriers or obstacles for decisions to be made quickly with limited board member attendance or key staff attendance.

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- **Plan Failures, Lessons Learned**
 - **#10 Problem: DECISION / Board Process Problems**
 - **A: SOLUTION:** As part of your plan, you need to have the BOARD develop an emergency decision process and define what triggers the process.
 - **B: SOLUTION:** Have clear agreements with Banks and other investment accounts on authority for access, etc during emergencies

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- **Plan Failures, Lessons Learned**
 - **#11 Problem: Multi Agency Issues**
 - Districts may have issues in communicating with other agencies (State Police, Department of Education, Local Government, Local Sheriffs. This causes conflicting and/or incomplete information to be released to the public. This also causes issues with safety of personnel.

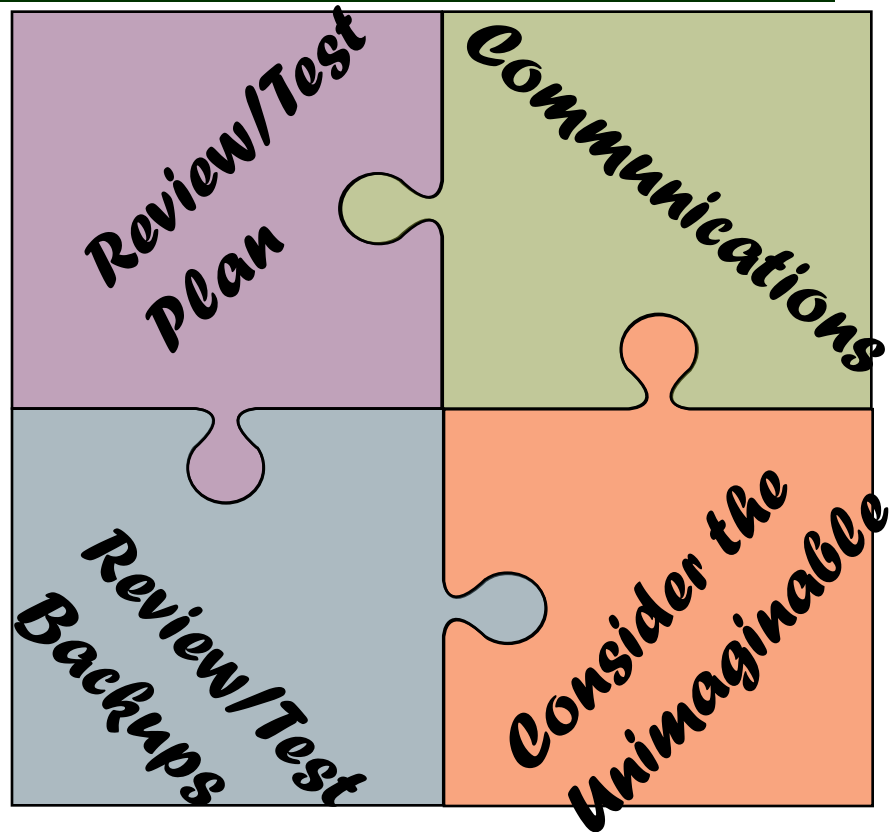
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- **Plan Failures, Lessons Learned**
 - **#11 Problem: Multi Agency Issues**
 - A: SOLUTION: Have understanding of other Districts/Agencies' disaster plans and how to work together. Share with them your communication and process plan so they know what you are doing and they can help.
 - B: SOLUTION: Issues of who has authority in your plan is needed by other Districts/Agencies when they make critical decisions immediately after a disaster.

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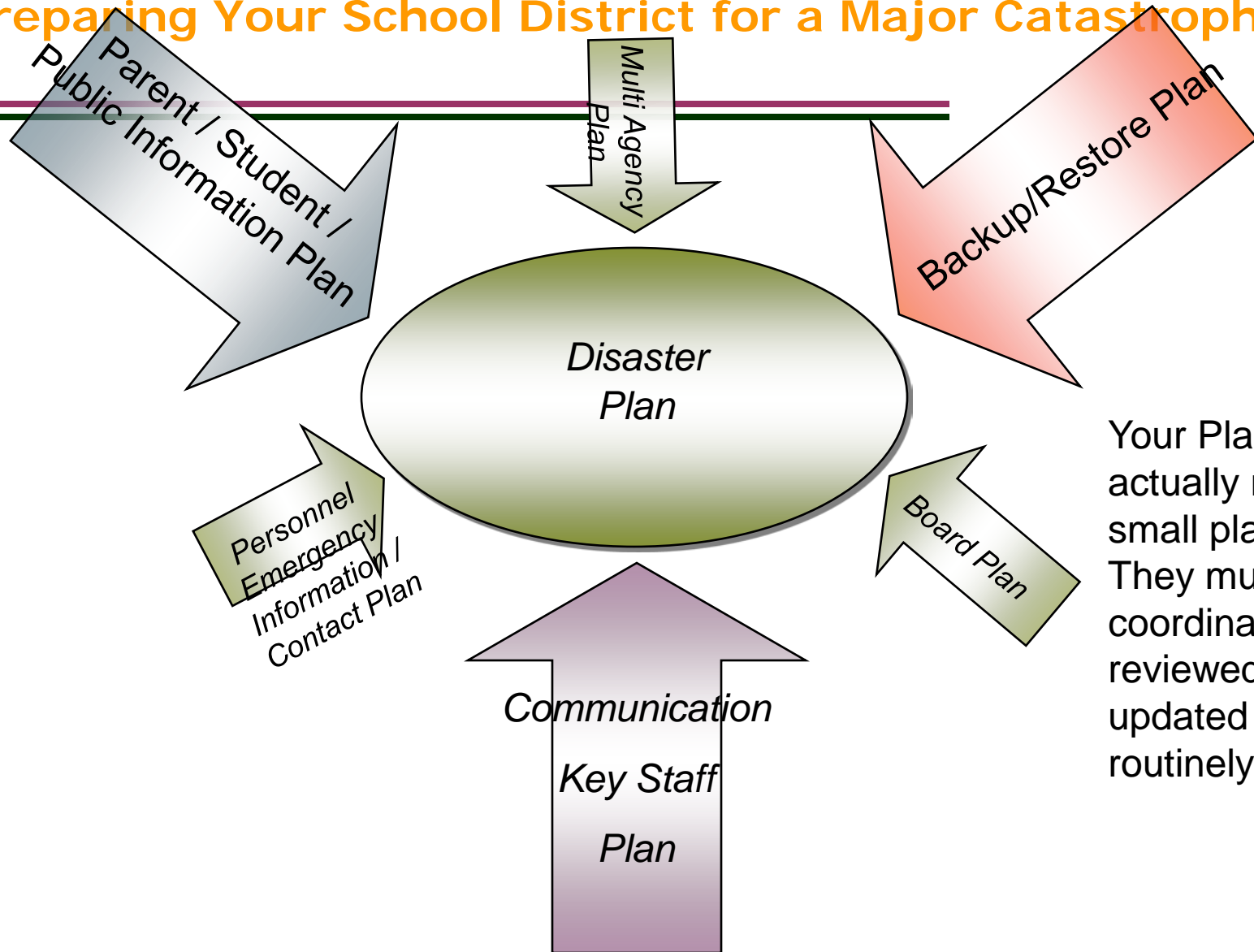
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- **Components of Lessons Learned**

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Your Plan is actually many small plans. They must be coordinated, reviewed and updated routinely.

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- This information was intended to expand your view of disaster planning and to consider what may have once been unimaginable circumstances for you and your district. The odds may be slim but in today's world, no one is statistically removed from such possibilities. We hope that our experiences can help you be more aware and better prepared as you create and maintain a plan that will best work for you and your School District.
- Good Luck and may you never have to execute your plan.

Questions