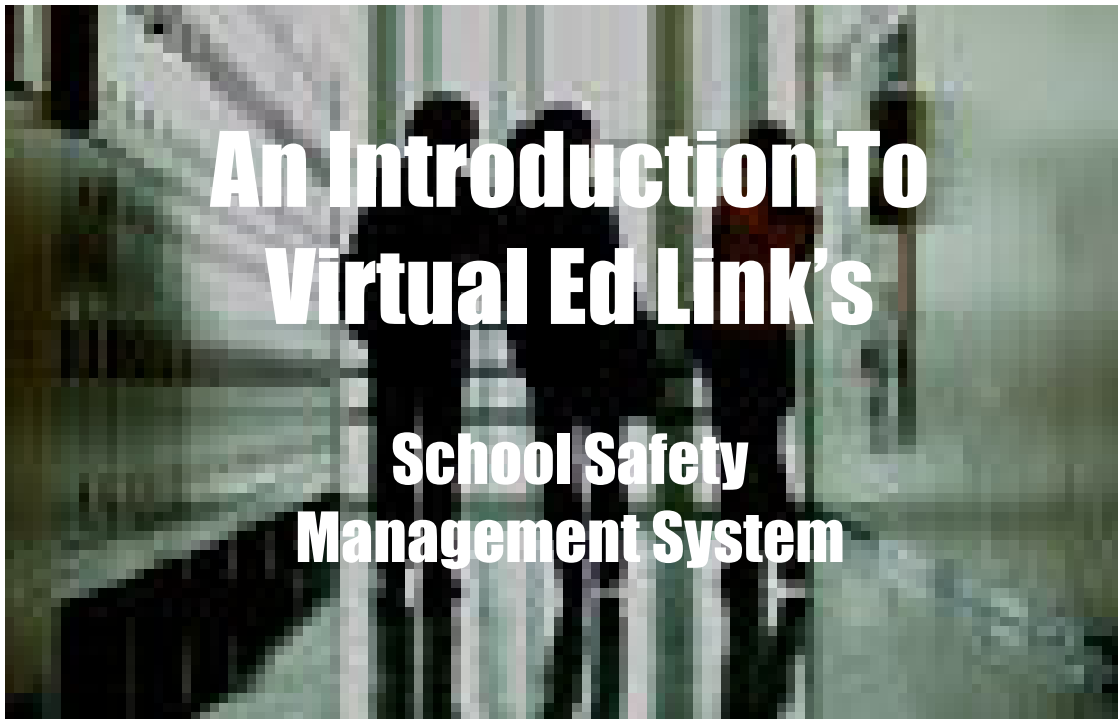


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INTRODUCTION

Virtual Ed Link (VELI)

Virtual Ed Link was created in June 2007 with comprehensive capabilities for teaching, training, and emergency notification, to respond to and help prevent events like those that occurred at Virginia Tech in April of 2007, and later at other schools in the United States.

VELI was formed to provide a seamless stream of security-related information and training for students, and those who work within our country's educational systems.

The School Safety Management System (SSMS) gives K-12 schools, colleges/universities and community/technical colleges a single source platform to promote positive community and staff involvement on a daily basis while also providing the most innovative, reliable, and comprehensive mass notification and communication solution on the market today.

Safety and security is not a one-time incident-based event; it is a process of planning, preparation, and training. Recent history has shown crisis situations can and do happen and they require swift decisive action by leaders.

VIYYA Technologies

The backbone of Virtual Ed Link is VIYYA's flagship solution: a proprietary web 2.0 portal application that manages mission-critical information by enabling users to customize the way they collect, process, and distribute real-time data. Its innovative technology gives users the ability to retrieve filtered information from multiple sources, organizes it through flexible and dynamic options, and delivers it to any device.

The core VIYYA application can be enveloped into a collaborative enterprise portal as the "engine" for information dissemination for all employees or clients. An entire portal can be configured with additional value-added, complimentary proprietary applications such as eLearning and Document Management Solutions. A proprietary web 2.0 portal application that manages mission-critical information by enabling users to customize the way they collect, process, and distribute real-time data.

- ❖ VIYYA's core proprietary technology provides a superior level of "search, retrieve, index and store" capabilities for unstructured data that:
- ❖ Extracts *client-defined* information from virtually any digital source (websites, RSS/XML feeds, corporate intranets or databases)



- ❖ Filters information based on variables defined by clients
- ❖ Stores the information for evaluation and analysis
- ❖ Distributes the results in hard or soft copy or retransmits them to wired or wireless devices.

The School Safety Management System (SSMS)

The SSMS allows your organization to create a “culture of preparedness” among students, parents, faculty, staff, emergency response personnel, security personnel, and administration through a *seamless gateway* of information.

- ❖ ***Information Provided*** - The SSMS will provide an up-to-the-minute resource of information for use in making decision, formulating responses, and disseminating information in both emergency and non-emergency situations.
- ❖ ***Flexibility In Activating the System*** - The SSMS uses different devices, such as a phone or password-protected web page to activate the system and send a message. It is even possible to activate the system through cell phones with web browser capabilities, or through our 24/7 Help Desk.
- ❖ ***Support for Multiple Forms of Communication*** - The SSMS gives administrators the ability to blast text or audio messages to students, faculty, and staff, or customized messages can go to pre-determined groups.
- ❖ ***Ability to Communicate with Non-English Speaking Communities*** - The SSMS can support the delivery of messages in the native language of a student. The translation tool will permit the user to type the message in English and automatically translate that message into a variety of different languages. The SSMS also allows the user to record the message in any number of languages and then deliver that notification to only those who speak that language.
- ❖ ***Different Administrative Rights to Users*** - The SSMS allows school administrators and senior-level staff to be given full access, allowing them to send notifications to selected groups. Only authorized school administrators may activate the system. Virtual Ed Link keeps all of its clients' information confidential and secure. All data is password-protected and accessible only by authorized school administration.



- ❖ **Support for Multiple Contacts** - The SSMS allows school administrators to create an unlimited number of contact lists for every need, as well as provide and receive input through discussion groups.
- ❖ **Non-Emergency Communication** - The SSMS can be used as a daily communication tool that can improve employee productivity and simplify everyday tasks, including class cancellations and changes, closings, delays, early dismissals, sporting events, extracurricular activities, and general announcements.
- ❖ **Report Generation** - The SSMS in an emergency situation can generate reports, tracking how many people the system contacted and on what devices.
- ❖ **Training and Preparation** - The SSMS can provide in-service training and awareness through the use of add-on education modules through eLearning.
- ❖ **Emergency Planning** - The SSMS allows school administrators to view and develop emergency evacuation routes, disseminate safety information, disseminate emergency policies and procedures, and develop and maintain required Emergency Management Plans.
- ❖ **Core Functionality** – Virtual Ed Link’s web 2.0 based portal solution allows you to work in unison with cooperating agencies to provide a standardized plan of action utilizing Incident Command System (ICS), National Incident Management System (NIMS), industry best practices, and government standards.

Service Overview

- ❖ Web 2.0 based portal environment
 - Service oriented architecture
 - Service hosted by VELI
 - Disaster recovery sites
- ❖ Authentication/data entry schema (LDAP)
- ❖ Ability to send and receive alerts and notifications
- ❖ Ability to integrate additional applications
- ❖ Ability to create unlimited groups
- ❖ Ability to post policies and procedures
- ❖ Ability to link to DHS crisis management plan and NIMS information
- ❖ Security training courseware



- ❖ Ability to view crime prevention tips
- ❖ Ability to view quarterly training videos
- ❖ Emergency case management reporting
- ❖ 24/7 Help Desk support

Additional Available Services

- ❖ Ability to view and develop emergency management plans
 - Create site simulations
 - Create site maps/evacuation routes
 - Create evacuation simulations
- ❖ Online training through eLearning
- ❖ VIYYA up-to-the-minute content/RSS feeds
- ❖ Document Management System
- ❖ Ability to access IP-based security cameras

Value-Added Benefits

The SSMS is the easiest and most cost-effective solution for community and technical colleges to quickly and accurately communicate personalized messages to students and staff. The SSMS will help develop positive relationships and commitment through a collaboration portal resulting in the following:

- ❖ Improved student/staff relations
- ❖ Student success through positive staff involvement
- ❖ Improved attrition rates
- ❖ Resources for gathering and sharing information
- ❖ Improved school emergency and safety preparation and awareness
- ❖ Rapidly deliver first-hand information during a crisis situation
- ❖ Resources for training and preparation
- ❖ Real-time event monitoring
- ❖ Dissemination of up-to-date relevant information to the appropriate audiences



The SSMS may also be used as a daily communication tool that will improve employee productivity and simplify everyday tasks such as general announcements, class cancellations or changes, closings, delays, early dismissals, events and activities, meetings, general notices, mailings, etc.

Comprehensive Crisis Management Planning

Virtual Ed Link works with leaders to develop mandated crisis management plans that can effectively handle plan development, mitigation and preparation, preparedness and training, response, recovery, communication, and data dissemination. We can also provide resources for Pandemic Flu preparation and planning. Our web 2.0 based portals allow you to work in unison with cooperating agencies to provide a standardized plan of action utilizing Incident Command System (ICS), National Incident Management System (NIMS), industry best practices, and government standards.

Crisis Management

Crisis management is the systematic attempt to avoid organizational crises or to manage those crises events that do occur (Pearson & Clair, 1998). A crisis is a major, unpredictable event that threatens to harm an organization and its stakeholders. Although crisis events are unpredictable, they are not unexpected (Coombs, 1999). Crises can affect all segments of society—businesses, churches, educational institutions, families, non-profits, and the government—and are caused by a wide range of reasons. Although the definitions can vary greatly, three elements are common to most definitions of “crisis”: (a) a threat to the organization; (b) the element of surprise; and (c) a short decision time (Seeger, Sellnow, & Ulmer, 1998).

There are three types of organizational crises:

Level 1 (Minor Emergency): A campus emergency with limited impact that does not affect the overall operation and function of the college. Examples would include a minor hazardous material incident, small fire, or temporary limited power outage. A minor emergency will not normally entail notification of the Incident Command Team except through routine communications.

Level 2 (Major Emergency): A local emergency that has disrupted or potentially may disrupt significant operations of the college or adversely impact a major population of the community. Examples include serious crimes on campus, major fires, death(s), or partial infrastructure failure.

Level 3 (Disaster): A community-wide emergency that potentially disrupts the operations of the college and involves major damage or systems failure. Disasters impact not only the college, but possibly the surrounding community and beyond. Examples include tornadoes, wide-spread extended power outage, severe natural causes, or serious acts of terrorism.



Irrespective of the size of an organization affected, the primary aims or benefits of crisis management would normally include:

- ❖ Ability to assess the situation from inside and outside the organization as all stakeholders might perceive it.
- ❖ Techniques to direct action(s) to contain the likely or perceived damage spread.
- ❖ A more effective way to rapidly trigger that part(s) of business continuity management.
- ❖ Better organizational resilience for all stakeholders.
- ❖ Compliance with regulatory and ethical requirements (e.g. corporate social responsibility).
- ❖ Improved management of serious incidents or any incident that could become serious.
- ❖ Improved staff awareness of their roles and expectations within the organization.
- ❖ Increased ability, confidence, and morale within the organization.
- ❖ Enhanced risk management, insofar that obvious risks will be identified and mitigated (where possible) as prepared for through crisis and business continuity management.
- ❖ Protected (and often enhanced) reputation, and thus, a much-reduced risk of post-event litigation.

Needs Assessment

Virtual Ed Link will work with you to reduce the vulnerability posed by potential crises. An assessment that will advise you of the initiatives to be addressed is needed. This will allow you to act in a responsible manner to fulfill the purpose and intent of existing legislation.

It can also provide a framework for anticipating future policy initiatives. An effective system for compliance can be developed only if you know what laws and regulations pertain to your organization. In order to accomplish this task, a survey of your organization should be undertaken.

The assessment should focus on these four areas:

- ❖ General administrative information
- ❖ Management awareness and control programs
- ❖ Identification of hazards and potential crises
- ❖ Organizational characterization



The ultimate benefits to be gained from this type of assessment are in terms of identifying areas in need of attention, establishing a list of potential crisis situations, determining what commitments you are comfortable with, and documenting current efforts. Once the survey program has been developed and implemented, it must be evaluated and kept current.

Training and Retraining

The training of the crisis management/response organization is one of the critical success factors that must be addressed if an adequate response is to be achieved. The development of the compliance program, the involvement of all levels of management, and establishing preparedness are only part of the overall process. To ensure an adequate response, a trained organization is vital.

Effective training programs should consist of the following:

Task Analysis: When designing an integrated training program you must first determine the skills, knowledge, and procedures required for the satisfactory performance of each task.

Lesson Development: Learning objectives are defined from the skills, knowledge, and procedures developed during task analysis. Instructional plans are then prepared to support the learning objectives.

Instruction: Lessons are systematically presented using appropriate instructional methods. Instruction may include lecture, self-paced or group-paced mediated instruction, simulation, and team training.

Evaluation: Performance standards and evaluation criteria are developed from the learning objectives. Each trainee's performance is evaluated during the course and during field performance testing.

In addition to the formal training program, a program of proficiency demonstration is also needed. This can be accomplished by establishing a program that supplements the training with drills and exercise.

Information Management

The need to establish and maintain an ongoing, dynamic Crisis Management Plan (CMP) is essential. The crisis management process doesn't end just because you finished the CMP, are in compliance, have involved the management, and have trained the staff.

In order to facilitate planning requirements, a record of all initiatives should be retained. This record serves to document the accomplishments, requirements, commitments, and



reports relating to various program requirements. The identification of commitments in the areas of compliance, emergency preparedness, and training is vital. The establishment of a defined information management system structure will ensure that documentation will be available when needed.

Senior leadership must be kept well-informed. Up-to-the-minute, accurate information is an asset. Information is expensive. It must be shared and managed effectively. Information management is also critical during a crisis. The need for active systems to provide information on materials, personnel, capabilities, and processes is essential. It is extremely important to have a system (and adequate back-up systems) in place that serve to identify, catalog, set priorities, and track issues and commitments relating to crisis management and response activities.

Broad-based Outcomes

Vulnerability Assessment: A multi-disciplinary risk assessment to determine current and potential areas of operational weakness and strength, and potential solutions, because identified weaknesses may result in emergencies or crises of varying magnitudes if not corrected. The scope of a vulnerability assessment can vary, depending on client preferences and needs. Often, a vulnerability assessment identifies situations and system weaknesses that can be completely avoided, precluding that type of crisis altogether.

Crisis Planning: Creating a written CMP based on the results of the vulnerability assessment. A partial list of plan components, the institution's crisis management philosophy, identification of the crisis communications team (and others who might assist the team in certain situations), 24/7 contact lists for all internal and external stakeholders, and draft key messages for different categories of potential crises. A plan needs to be consequence focused, versus scenario-focused (i.e. there are a lot of scenarios that could result in catastrophic loss of one's institution, but the basic consequence is the same for all).

Crisis Response Training: Potential participants in crisis response need to be formally trained in the basic tenets of crisis management. Upon completion of training, simulations should be conducted to test and refine their newly acquired skills, with simulations repeated periodically to maintain competence.



In Conclusion

We recognize that there is a challenge now, beyond teaching and learning, which culminates in the safety and security of the school populations; students, teachers, staff, and the communities in which they reside. Examples of violence in schools and catastrophic natural disasters have alerted everyone to the need for effective emergency response solutions.

In almost every instance of successful response to a crisis, leadership and response activities consisting of sound operating execution coupled with superior communication predominate. Operational response is essential however, the ability to communicate is no less important. It is the one essential element that saves lives and property.

When your crisis occurs, the hardest part of dealing with it can involve answering the public call for information - a call personified by a television correspondent or newspaper reporter who shows up at your doorstep or on your telephone line to get the story. How well you respond depends on how well you are prepared.

Taking action now can save lives, prevent injury, and minimize property damage in the moments of a crisis. If you do not have a crisis management plan in place, it is time to develop one. If you have one, it is time to review, practice, and update your plan. The moment safety is jeopardized, confidence is lost and learning stops.

School districts are community-based educational organizations; they are not and cannot be everything to everybody. This does not dismiss them from fulfilling their moral and legal obligation to ensure they are properly prepared to deal with emergencies. Failure to do so will expose them to risk. It requires dedicated time and resources to develop and maintain emergency plans that work; that's where Virtual Ed Link's School Safety Management System can assist.

Dr. Alan R. McCartney, COO

Virtual Ed Link





ATTACHMENT A

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – FAQ'S

Question: *Who is Virtual Ed Link?*

Answer: VELI was formed to provide a seamless stream of security-related information and training for students, as well as those who work within our country's educational systems. The SSMS gives schools and colleges a single source platform to promote positive community and staff involvement on a daily basis while also providing the most innovative, reliable, and comprehensive mass notification and communication solution on the market today. Safety and security is not a one-time incident-based event—it is a process of planning, preparation, and training.

Question: *How does the SSMS work?*

Answer: The SSMS uses the power of portal technology to provide a reliable and comprehensive mass notification solution that can be used daily or in the case of a school or campus-wide emergency. The SSMS has been engineered to integrate with most of today's standards, including Service-oriented architecture (SOA) and Service-Oriented Application Protocols (SOAP).

Question: *Do I need to buy any special equipment to use the SSMS?*

Answer: NO! The only thing you need is an internet connection, a browser that meets or exceeds Internet Explorer™ 4.5 or Netscape™ 4.7, and a telephone. VELI's solution will not affect the school district or college's current technology infrastructure, and hosts all the hardware and software necessary to deliver the services, eliminating the need for schools to purchase and manage hardware and software.

Question: *Does the SSMS provide functions besides daily and emergency notifications?*

Answer: YES! The SSMS gives you the ability to integrate additional applications; post policies and procedures; link to DHS Crisis Management Plan and NIMS information; provide online training through eLearning; view security training courseware, crime prevention tips and quarterly training videos; and create and maintain emergency case management reports.

Question: *Does the SSMS have the ability to provide resources for crisis management planning, review, and implementation?*

Answer: YES! VELI works with leaders to develop and review mandated crisis management plans that can effectively handle mitigation and preparation, preparedness and training, response, recovery, communication and data dissemination. VELI can also provide resources for Pandemic Flu preparation and planning. Our web 2.0 based portals allow you to work in unison with cooperating agencies to provide a standardized plan of action utilizing Incident Command System (ICS), National Incident Management System (NIMS), industry best practices, and government standards.



Question: *Can you integrate with school administrative database systems?*

Answer: YES! We use industry-standard file types to interface with your student information system. Additionally, we can work with most custom systems.

Question: *How do I get my contacts into the SSMS?*

Answer: The SSMS can utilize CSV files and integrates with LDAP.

Question: *Can I send messages in the native language of my students?*

Answer: YES! The SSMS will permit the user to type the message in English and automatically translate that message into a variety of different languages.

Question: *What if we have an emergency and don't have access to the internet to send a message?*

Answer: In case of an evacuation or power loss, you can activate the system with an IP-based cell phone or by calling VELI's 24/7 Help Desk.

Question: *Do message recipients need a computer?*

Answer: NO! The SSMS has the ability to send and receive alerts and notifications through SMS/text messages and integrated voice calls.

Question: *Can I send a message to just a part of my contact database?*

Answer: YES! The SSMS allows school administrators to create an unlimited number of contact lists for every need and also provide/receive input through discussion groups.

Question: *Do you share our information with anyone?*

Answer: NO! VELI does not sell, lease, share, rent, or barter personally identifiable information (i.e. names, addresses, phone numbers, etc.) to any companies or persons—except in the cases where the law requires disclosure or when we have permission to do so.

Question: *What security is used to protect our data?*

Answer: The SSMS service is hosted by an advance facility providing burstable bandwidth, redundant power feeds, multiple data connections, 24/7 security and monitoring to ensure full protection and total security. The security architecture is comprised of multiple Cisco PIX Firewalls, VPN's, and Smart Switches. The database servers reside behind their own firewalls and can only be accessed by specific calling applications via specific ports. Each machine is monitored for appropriate activity as well as potential hacks, viruses and other unwanted software.

Question: *How much does the SSMS cost?*

Answer: The SSMS solution can be implemented for just pennies per student per day. Most clients will save money otherwise spent on paper, postage, and administrative time.



ATTACHMENT B

CRISIS MANAGEMENT SURVEY

Crisis - Merely mention the word and you evoke visions of unspeakable pain and suffering. Yet, by developing and implementing a well defined crisis management program, leaders can mitigate the potentially disastrous effects of an incident.

Leadership is never put more strongly to the test than in a crisis situation. The objectives are immediate and so are the results. What you and those around you do or don't do will have long lasting implications. Today, leaders responsible for the safety of our children and educational institutions must deal effectively with increasingly complex laws and issues or face the consequences.

Points to Ponder Prior to Conducting a Crisis Management Survey

- ❖ Every institution should have a Crisis Management Plan.
- ❖ The CMP should be flexible to encompass all hazards.
- ❖ The CMP should address four phases of crisis management planning: Mitigation and Prevention; Preparedness; Response; and Recovery.
- ❖ The CMP should be practiced on a regular basis.
- ❖ The CMP should be developed and communicated in an interactive manner with stakeholders, including students, parents, faculty, other community partners, and first responders.
- ❖ The CMP should be continually reviewed and updated as new information becomes available.

Sample Crisis Management Survey Questions

Crisis Management Plan

- ❖ Does your organization have a formal Crisis Management Plan?
- ❖ When was the plan drafted and adopted?
- ❖ When was the plan last revised?
- ❖ Does it contain a Pandemic Flu Plan?
- ❖ Does it contain an "Active Shooter" plan?
- ❖ Is the plan posted to the organization's web page?
- ❖ Do all faculty and staff have a copy of the plan?
- ❖ Do students receive a copy of the plan and is it explained to them?
- ❖ Does the organization conduct table top exercises with the plan?
- ❖ Is organizational continuity included in the plan?



Crisis Management Team

- ❖ Does the organization have a Crisis Management Team?
- ❖ Define the membership of the team.
- ❖ Does the organizations chief administrator sit on the team or have a representative?
- ❖ How often does the team meet?
- ❖ Who can activate the team?
- ❖ Does the Crisis Management Team have the power to make decisions in an emergency?
- ❖ Are there identified events that trigger activating the team?

Pandemic Flu Plan

- ❖ Does the organization have a written pandemic flu plan?
- ❖ Is the pandemic flu plan part of the Crisis Management Plan?
- ❖ Have table top exercises been conducted using the pandemic flu plan?
- ❖ Are students, faculty, staff and community partners aware of the plan?
- ❖ Does the plan accommodate an 8 – 12 week closing of the organization?

General Questions

- ❖ Does the organization have sworn law enforcement with police powers?
- ❖ Does the organization utilize private security firms?
- ❖ Does the organization maintain close, frequent relationships with local first responders?
- ❖ Do you have a system for the collection of planning information?
- ❖ Do you have a system for dissemination of your planning information?
- ❖ Have you identified your own unique incident command structure?
- ❖ Have you coordinated your efforts with all effected entities?
- ❖ Have you clearly defined organizational responsibilities?
- ❖ Have you developed a mechanism to evaluate and periodically update your plan?
- ❖ Is your plan user-friendly?
- ❖ Do you have provisions for on-going training of personnel and their role in the implementation of your plan?
- ❖ Have you disseminated your plan to the proper authorities?