



peachjar | Webinar for Schools

School Safety & Prevention Series
with Rick J. Kaufman, APR

A Parent's Guide to School Crisis Response



What we'll cover...

- Steps to engage parents in the school safety conversation
- What parents want to know
- What to do before, during & after a crisis
- Emergency communications



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Today's Reality

- Children spend more time at school other than home
- School security remains a top-of-mind concern for parents, staff & community
- Staff, parents seek reassurances schools are safe



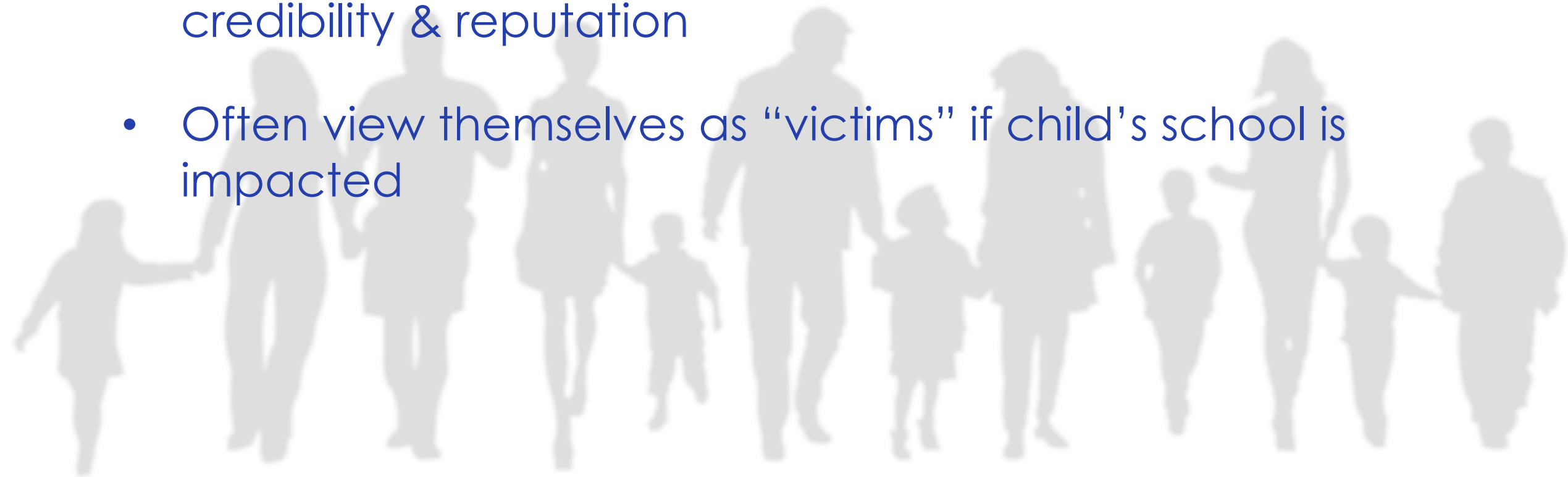


“The midst of a crisis is not the time to let students, staff and families know what to do in an emergency. That needs to occur before it happens.”

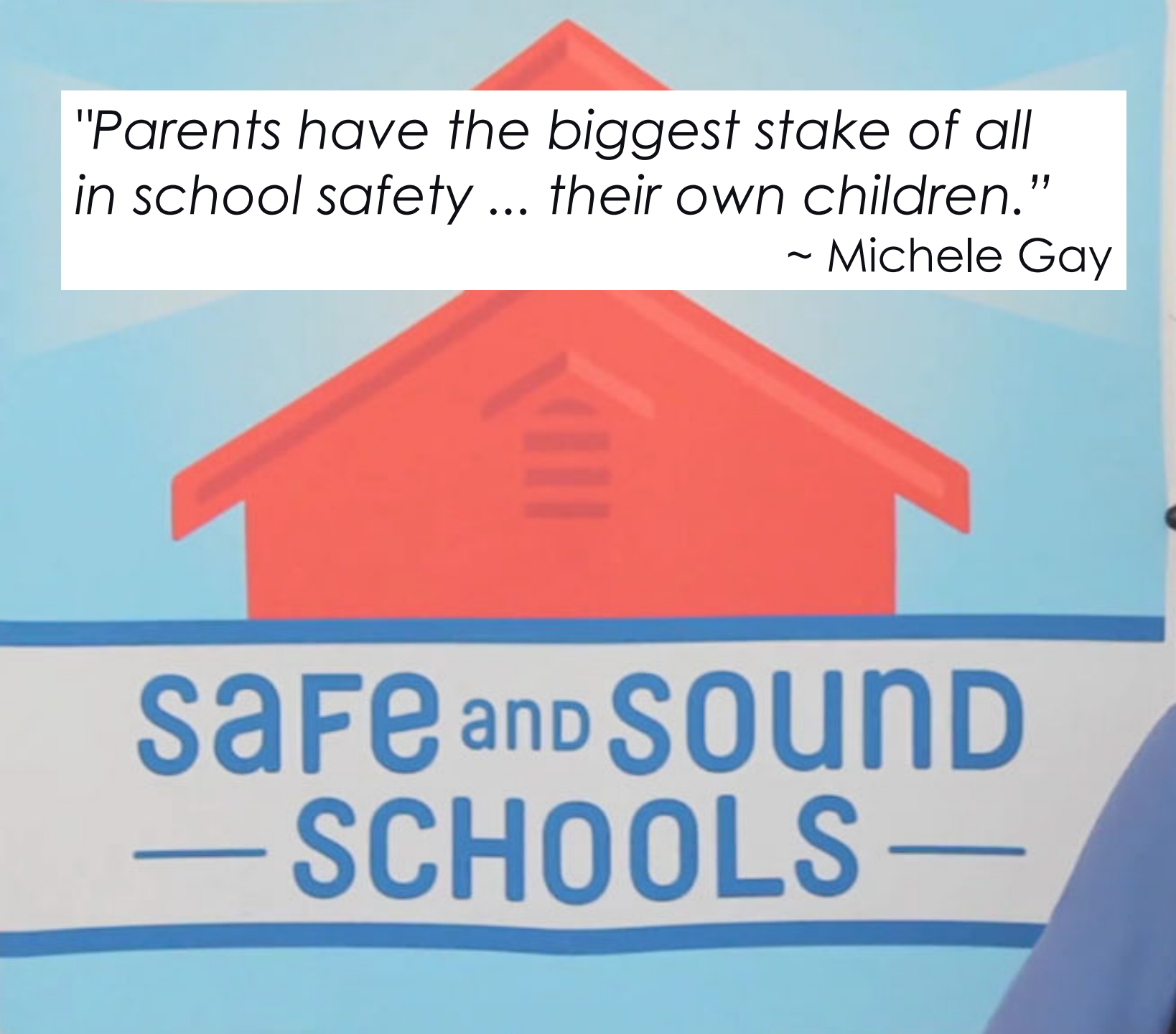
Margaret Spellings
Former U.S. Secretary of Education

Key Stakeholders: Parents

- Must know if children are safe, unharmed
- Failure to allay fears, anxiety undermines organization's credibility & reputation
- Often view themselves as “victims” if child's school is impacted



*"Parents have the biggest stake of all
in school safety ... their own children."*
~ Michele Gay



safe and sound
— SCHOOLS —



Parent & Family Emotions

- Sympathy
 - Elicits a range of supportive behaviors
- Anger
 - Direct ire at organization, leaders; may elicit a negative bandwagon effect on other stakeholder groups
- Anxiety

What Parents Want to Know

- What's being done to ensure schools are safe, secure?
- Training for school employees? Students?
- How do schools respond to an emergency?
- What happens in a school emergency?
- What should parents do in a school emergency?
- How will parents be notified in a school emergency?
- Why does it take so long to inform (parents)?



May 9, 2019

Dear Parents and Families:

We wish to inform you of an incident today that led to our school going into a shelter-in-place at the recommendation of local law enforcement.

We do not have information on the incident to share with you.

Keeping your child safe while at school is our top priority.

If you have any questions, please feel free to me with questions.

Sincerely,

What to do?

Engage parents in school safety conversations and planning to:

- Prepare in advance how schools will communicate in a crisis
- Create strong relationships
- Reduce anxiety associated with a lack of knowledge in a crisis



Engage Parents: Start with a conversation

- Greatest fears?
- Safety elements that stand out as effective in your child's school?
- Most pressing safety/security needs in your school?
- Barriers to improving current or non-existent safety/security measures?
- Safety topics to be aware of in the event of a school emergency?
- Prevention, response efforts you aware the school has in place?
- Steps to prevent violence?

Prepare

Prevent

Respond

Recover

back to
school
night

Parents: Before a School Emergency

- Ensure emergency contact info is accurate & current, including who is authorized to pick up your child
- Establish a family emergency plan, including communications
- Become familiar with school/district social media sites where emergency info is posted
- Understand school/district “School Safe Conditions” or protocols of response; stress importance of following procedures
- Emphasize that cell phones **should not** be used during an emergency unless directed to do so by a teacher/adult

SEE
SOMETHING
SAY
SOMETHING



Parents: During a School Emergency

- **TRUST** that child's school is **FIRST** doing what is needed to protect students ... communication will follow
- Remain calm; monitor information sources
- Natural instinct to want to rush to child's school ... **DON'T**
 - Phone lines, staff & roads are needed for emergency response
 - Parents will not be allowed on campus
- Do not phone or text child
 - Sound, vibration or conversation could put students in danger
 - Students need to be paying attention to instructions from trained staff

Parents: After a School Emergency

- Parents, guardians will be directed to child's specific location
- **Parent Reunification Plan:** Students will be released ONLY to parents/guardians or other pre-designated persons identified on emergency contacts.
 - Reunification process is time consuming ... be patient
- Listen to & acknowledge child's concerns
 - Provide reassurance child is safe & additional prevention efforts are being put in place
 - Seek help from school or mental health professionals if concerns persist

Parting thought ...

When schools take time to talk with parents, ask for feedback and opinions, and communicate in a timely manner when bad stuff happens, it creates an environment where children and parents feel secure.



We'd like to hear from you!



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Next Webinar: June 4, 2019

Crisis Communications Principles that School Emergencies Taught Us

SchoolSafetySeries.com

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Thank you!