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Law enforcement officers, Lebanon school administrators hold mock 'school shooting'

The training is designed to teach officials how to handle dangerous situations.

by Dustin Hodges, KY3 News

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LEBANON, Mo. -- Protecting students with a shooter on the loose -- that was the scenario for officers. The high school was a training ground for a life-or-death situation on Tuesday.

Law enforcement officers went to the school to respond to a report of a shooter in the school. It was a drill that officers in Laclede County do every four to five years. For administrators, it was plenty real enough.

"You can see smoke coming in from the top corner," said Mark Warren of Strategos International, the company that conducts the training, as he described the surveillance video from inside Columbine High School to a room full of Laclede County law enforcement officers and Lebanon School District administrators.

For Warren, knowing what to do in an emergency is just as important for teachers as it is police officers.

"They truly are first responders," Warren said. "The law enforcement is coming, but, at the same time, what are they going to do in the mean time?"

"If it takes five or six minutes to get law enforcement on scene, what are those faculty members going to do inside that school?" Warren asked.

"It's important for staff to take an active role in protecting kids, so the days of hiding in the corner are kind of over," said Lebanon Assistant Superintendent Brad Armstrong.

School officials say they certainly hope they never have to apply any of the things they learned here, but it's good to know what to do in case of an emergency, especially in a situation where hesitation could cost lives.

"That way we know what they're gong to do, they know what we're going to do, and everything is planned

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out," said Armstrong.

"When the teachers hear that first gunshot, then they can start responding into their classroom, locking down. (We train) how to do your lockdown, but also what to do if it fails," said Warren.

"It's a huge eye opener for our staff, to see the magnitude of law enforcement coming down the hall with weapons drawn," said Armstrong.

"While we may hear about these things on the news and go on with our daily lives, the reality is it's this community that suffers from it, it's going to be this community that has to respond to it, that is affected by it, and has to recover from it," said Warren.

Funding for the training comes through a federal grant from the Department of Homeland Security and let the Laclede County Sheriff's Department, Lebanon Police Department, Crocker Police Department, and the Laclede County Office of Emergency Management participate as well.

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