

## ***From the desk of the SRO:***

As I discussed in my introductory article, safety starts with you. If you have never been involved in an emergency situation, I can tell you from experience that it is not only physically exhausting, but mentally and emotionally exhausting as well. Your heart will race, you'll begin to breathe a little heavier, and your thoughts will begin to run wild. If it's the first time you have dealt with a traumatic situation, you will also likely learn where you fall in the fight, flight, or freeze response. To manage an emergency more successfully you should start with the basics. One of my first suggestions is that you take care of your health. You not only will be better suited to physically respond in an emergency, but are more quickly able to mentally recover after an emergency. My second suggestion is to prepare. Through preparation, you have a better chance of avoiding a freeze response, can mitigate the flight response, and focus more closely on a fight response.

Throughout my law enforcement career I have heard a couple of sayings that have inspired me and hold true when it comes to preparing for emergencies. Since you are the front line of school safety for TSC, I offer them to you. "Train like you fight, fight like you train," and "We don't rise to the level of our expectations, we fall to the level of our training." ***If you are not thinking about how you will respond in a situation, and have not practiced that response, you will likely fall short when the moment arrives for the real thing.***

As you work through your school day, train yourself to recognize signs of potential threats. One of the best ways to identify threats is to form relationships. Relationships with your students will allow you to recognize when something is off and will encourage them to confide in you should they see problems on the horizon. By taking an interest in your students, you will remind them that someone cares and is checking in to insure they are making the right choices.

Take ownership of your room and encourage your students to do the same. If a student feels that their classroom and their school is something in which they play a vital part, they will engage more often, protect it from vandalism, and be less likely to engage in activity that damages the sanctity of the campus. You can establish ownership and pride by encouraging students to help decorate the class, recognizing their accomplishments publicly, and engaging them to help form classroom expectations.

You must also be prepared for when an emergency occurs. Do you know your school emergency plans? Have you practiced these plans and asked questions about anything you don't understand? Do you have all necessary equipment to implement these plans? Do you have the TSC emergency response protocols visibly posted in your room, and are you prepared to initiate them? Have you prepped your students, encouraged them to take drills seriously, and offered discussion times with them to address any of their concerns? Have you made the extra effort to learn CPR and basic first aid skills including the newly available tourniquet procedures offered through the "Stop the Bleed program?"

"By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail." – Ben Franklin

SRO Aaron Gilman  
asgilman@tsc.k12.in.us