

2026 McLane Children's School Nurse Conference

# Severe Weather Preparedness for School Nurses

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Protecting students in Central Texas before,  
during, and after severe weather

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# Why This Matters in Texas Schools

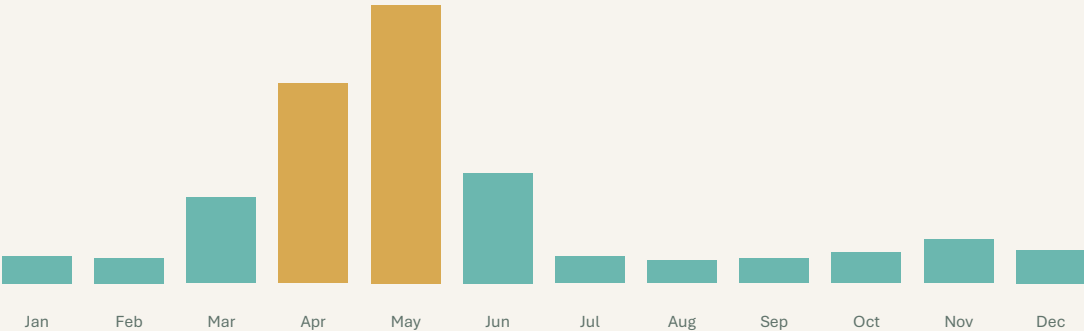
Severe weather risk overlaps directly with the school day.

**137**  
average tornadoes per year in Texas  
highest annual average among states

**1,953**  
North & Central TX tornadoes  
1950–2025 NWS Fort Worth data

**55%**  
occurred in April–May  
spring semester operations

North & Central Texas tornado activity by month



**School nurses translate weather risk into student-specific readiness.**



Sources: NWS Houston tornado climatology; NWS Fort Worth tornado climatology, 1950–2025.

# The School Nurse's Role

You bring the student health lens to emergency preparedness.

## 1 First Responder

Triage, first aid, rescue meds, reassurance until EMS arrives.

## 2 Student Advocate

Plan for mobility, medication, communication, sensory and chronic needs.

## 3 Plan Developer

Make sheltering, supplies, records, and backups workable for students.

## 4 Care Connector

Support reunification, EMS handoff, documentation, and emotional recovery.



# Watch vs. Warning

Know when to get ready and when to take cover.



## WATCH

### Get Ready

- Conditions are favorable
- Bring students inside early
- Check go-bag, meds, and rosters
- Review routes and students needing help



## WARNING

### Take Cover

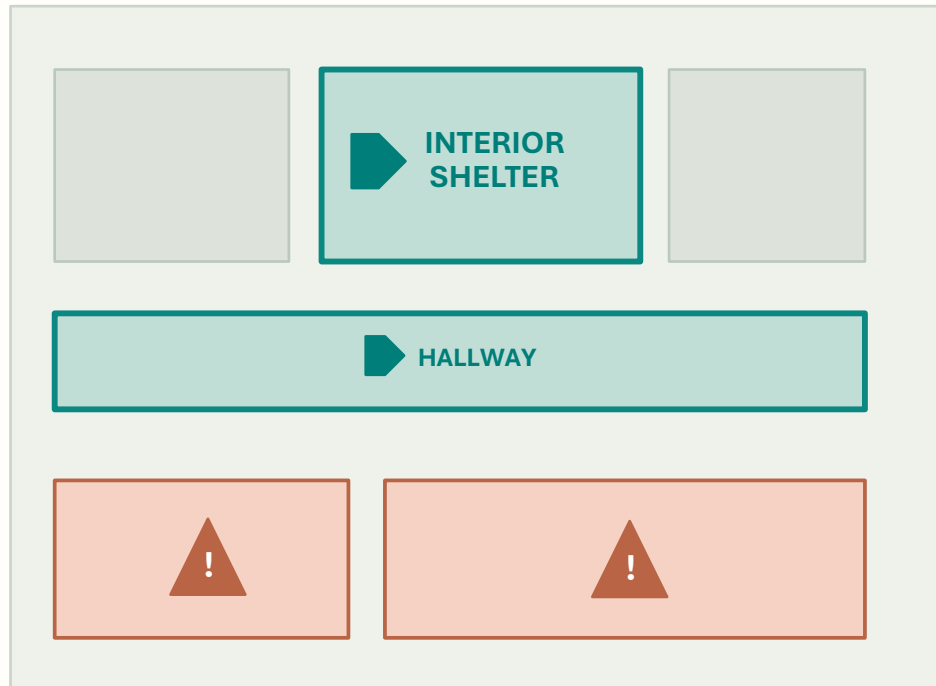
- Tornado indicated or observed
- Move to shelter immediately
- Protect head and neck
- Stay sheltered until all-clear

### Can every student receive, understand, and act on the warning?

PA announcement • District notification • Wireless Emergency Alerts • NOAA Weather Radio • Visual alerts • Buddy systems

# Safe Shelter Zones

Put as many walls as possible between students and the storm.



Avoid large open spaces / exterior glass

✓ **Best**

Interior rooms, bathrooms, and hallways on the lowest level

✓ **Acceptable**

Small interior offices or reinforced spaces away from windows

! **Avoid**

Gyms, cafeterias, auditoriums, portable buildings, and exterior glass

**Can every student get there safely and quickly?**

Consider mobility, medical equipment, rescue medications, sensory needs, and communication supports.

# Plan for Medically Fragile Students

The general plan must work for specific student needs.



## Rescue medications

Epinephrine, albuterol, glucagon, seizure rescue meds must be reachable.

## Mobility support

Assign staff, backup staff, routes, and elevator alternatives before warnings.

## Communication & sensory needs

Use visual prompts, calm language, buddy systems, and low-stimulation options.

## Time-sensitive care

Plan for food, scheduled meds, toileting, monitoring, and delayed dismissal.

### Does the plan work outside the classroom?

Lunch • Recess • Athletics • Dismissal • Field trips • Nurse unavailable

# Emergency Supplies & Health Records

Accessible. Portable. Usable without normal systems.

## Lifesaving meds & AED

Epinephrine, albuterol, glucagon, seizure meds, charged AED.

## Trauma supplies

Pressure dressings, gauze, gloves, scissors, splints, bleeding control supplies.

## Health information

Critical conditions, allergies, emergency contacts, care plans, paper backups.

## Redundancy

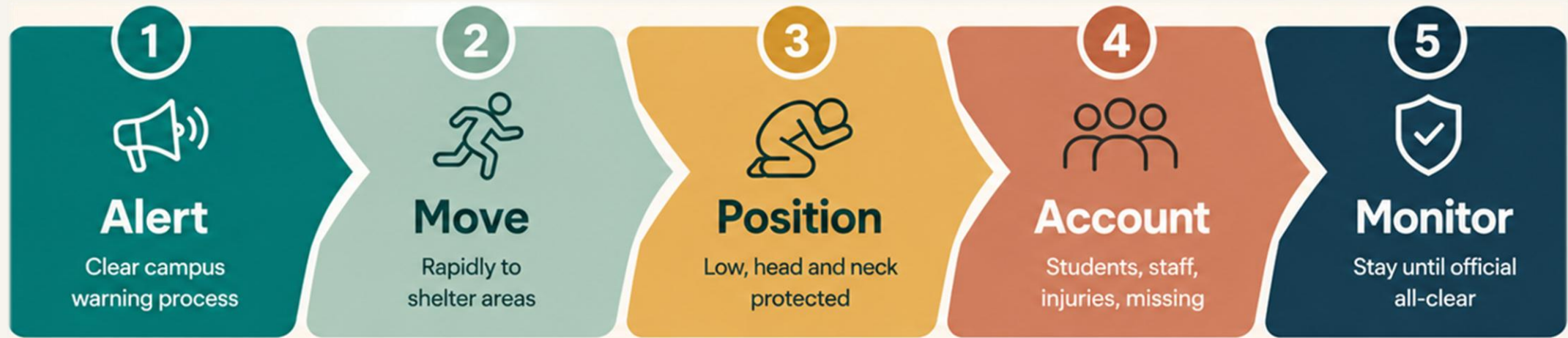
Power, refrigeration, radios, flashlights, chargers, go-bag or shelter storage.

**What would you be unable to do if you could not get back into your clinic?**



# Tornado Response Protocol

Alert. Move. Position. Account. Monitor.



## Verify before storm season

- ✓ 3-minute shelter timing
- ✓ staff assigned to assist students
- ✓ meds + records available offline
- ✓ substitute nurse knows the process

# Severe Thunderstorm Hazards

Tornadoes are not the only risk during the school day.

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## Lightning

When thunder roars, go indoors; wait 30 minutes after last thunder.



## Damaging Wind

Move away from windows; ordinary objects can become projectiles.



## Large Hail

Keep students inside and away from glass.



## Flooding

Arrival, dismissal, buses, and reunification may be disrupted.

**Severe storms can quickly become student health, transportation, and communication issues.**

# During Shelter-in-Place: Nurse Priorities

Stabilize student needs until the situation is safe.



## Assess

injuries, breathing, panic, seizure, allergy, diabetes



## Medications

rescue meds accessible with student, nurse, or shelter area



## Communicate

admin, EMS, parents, radios, charged phone, backups



## Document

name, time, concern, intervention, meds, notification



## Reassure

calm, direct, steady language for students



## Calm language students can hear

*“We are in our safe area.”*

*“We will stay here until the all-clear.”*

*“You are doing what you need to do.”*

*“The adults are here with you.”*

# After the Storm: Triage & Recovery

The emergency does not end when the warning expires.



## Triage

life-threatening injuries, EMS handoff



## Reunification

parent communication, student needs, transport



## Medication Continuity

scheduled meds, food, glucose checks, monitoring



## Documentation

injury care, meds given, notifications, disposition



## Emotional Support

distress, reassurance, referrals, follow-up



**After-action question:** What needs to change before the next event?



# Personal Preparedness

Preparedness at work starts at home.

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## 72-Hour Self-Sufficiency



Water, food, medications, first aid, flashlights, batteries, sanitation, pet needs.



## Family Communication Plan



Out-of-area contact, meeting locations, backup care for children, older adults, and pets.



## Work Go-Bag



Personal meds, charger, power bank, snacks, water, shoes, jacket, contacts, cash.

**Personal preparedness supports professional readiness.**

# Key Preparedness Resources

Use trusted guidance to strengthen campus planning.



## Texas School Safety Center

Texas-focused school safety and emergency planning resources.



## National Weather Service

Local weather warnings, preparedness education, and school guidance.



## Ready.gov

Family plans, emergency kits, Wireless Emergency Alerts, and student tools.



## National Association of School Nurses

School nurse disaster preparedness resources and health office considerations.



Trusted sources help you advocate: “This aligns with recognized school preparedness guidance.”

# Action Plan for Your Campus

Five practical next steps after the conference.

1

## Join the planning conversation

make sure the nurse perspective is represented



2

## Walk the building

test routes, shelter areas, access, timing, and PA reach



3

## Update nurse-specific procedures

meds, records, backups, substitute nurse process



4

## Train and drill

share gaps and observations after each exercise



5

## Build relationships

campus leaders, district safety, EMS,  
emergency management, nurses



Start with one or two improvements. Small changes before the storm can make a major difference during the storm.

# Prepared nurses help create prepared schools.

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**Your preparation creates safety.  
Your awareness identifies needs others may miss.  
Your leadership protects students when conditions change  
quickly.**

**Questions & Discussion**