

School District Profile

Van Meter School District

**Dallas County
Hazard Mitigation Plan 2023**

Local Planning Team

Table VMS.1: Van Meter School District Local Planning Team

Name	Title	Jurisdiction
Deron Durlinger	Superintendent	Van Meter School District

Location and Services

Van Meter School District is located in Dallas and Madison Counties, just west of Des Moines. The district’s mission, as expressed on its website, states “The mission of Van Meter Schools is to personalize learning for each student’s success today and tomorrow” The district is comprised of three schools: Van Meter High School, Van Meter Middle School, and Van Meter Elementary School. English is the predominant language in the district, but Spanish is also spoken. The school district provides opt-in services for students from Waukee, West Des Moines Schools, Adel-De Soto-Minburn Schools, Winterset, Perry, Earlham, West Central Valley Schools, Norwalk, Indianola, and Dallas Center-Grimes Schools.

Demographics

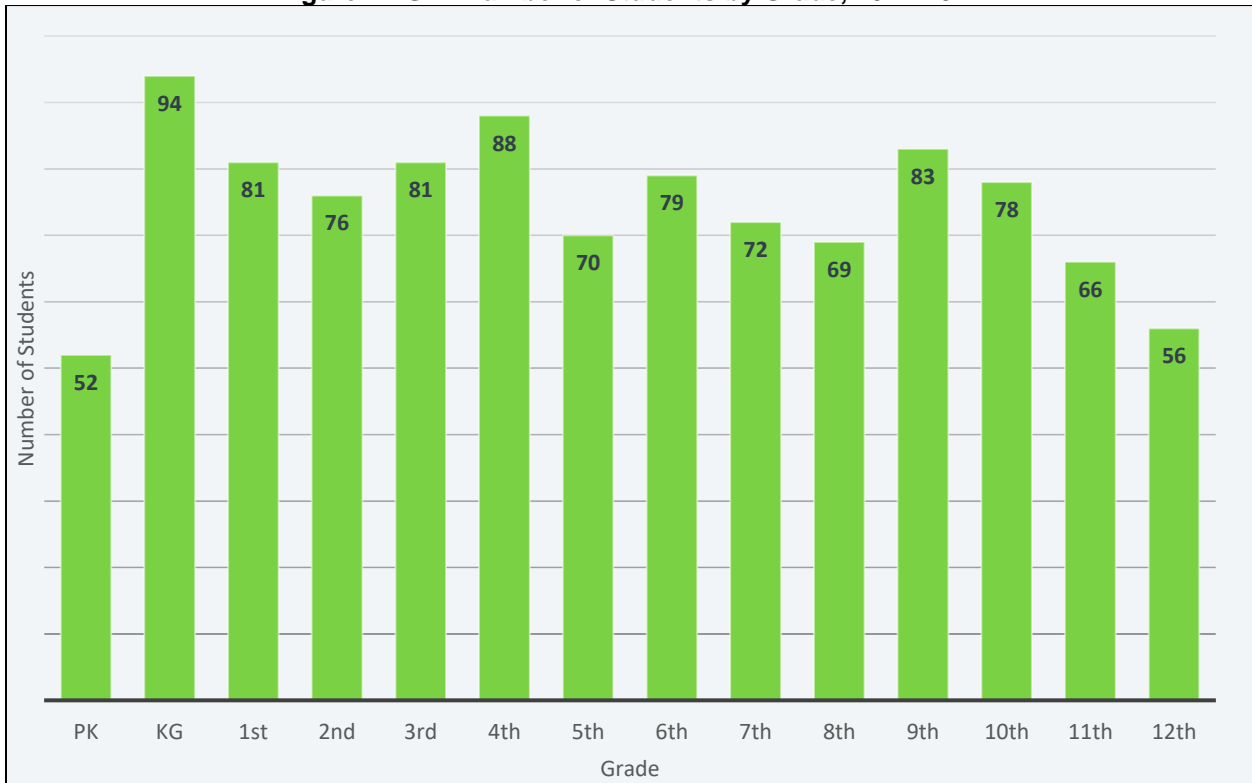
The following figure displays the historical student population trend starting with the 2005-06 school year and ending with the 2021-2022 year. It indicates that the student population has steadily increased since 2011. The local planning team noted seeing an increase in student population due to new homes being built within the district. There are 1,045 students enrolled in the district.¹ Aside from English, students within the school district speak Spanish. Emergency instructions or notices are available in Spanish if needed.

¹ Iowa Department of Education. December 2021. “2021-2022 Iowa Public School Building PreK-12 Enrollments by School, Grade, Race and Gender.” <https://educateiowa.gov/document-type/public-school-building-prek-12-enrollment-grade-race-and-gender>.

Figure VMS.1: Student Population 2005-2022



Figure VMS.2: Number of Students by Grade, 2021-2022



Source: Iowa Department of Education

Figure VMS.3: Van Meter School District

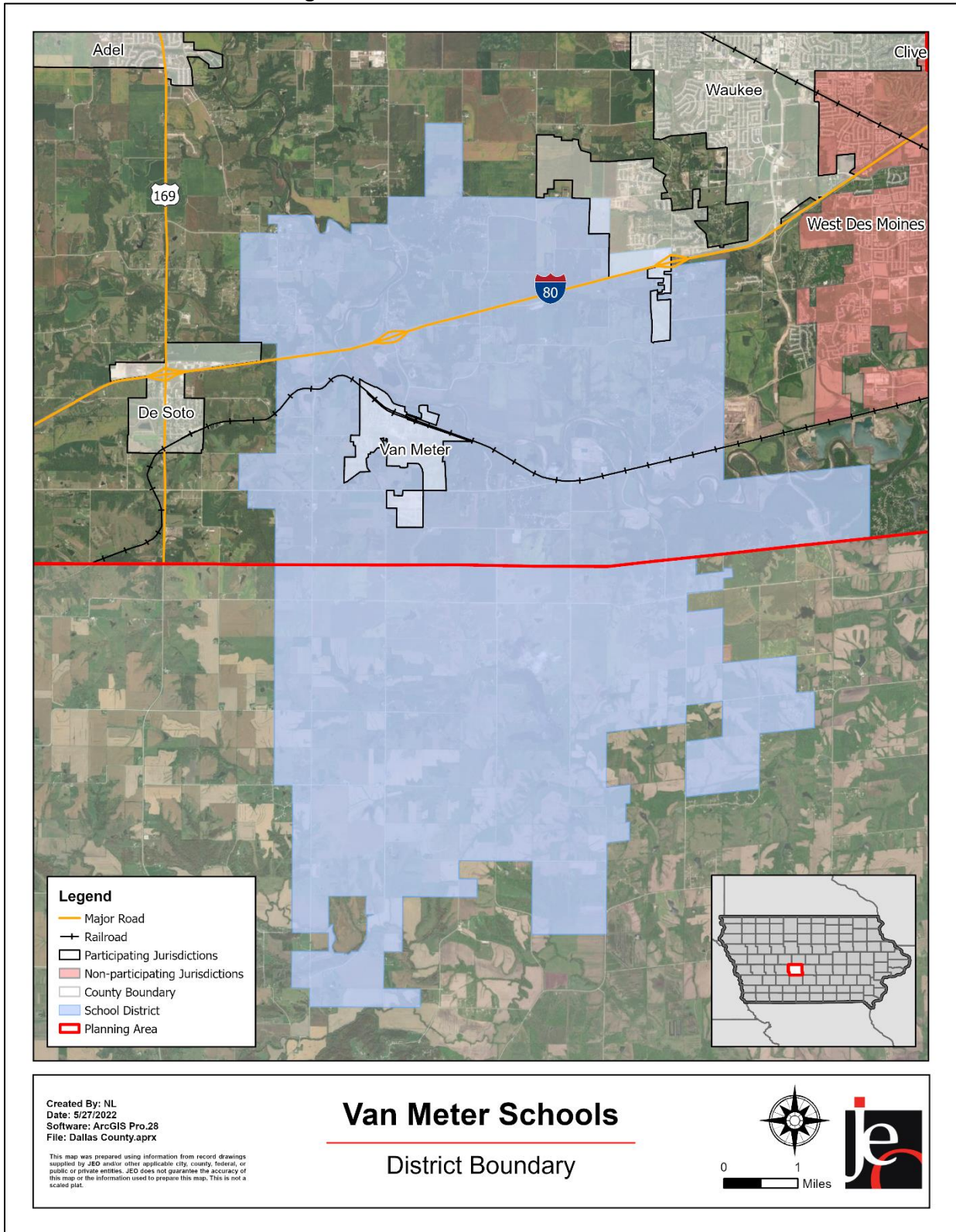


Figure VMS.2 indicates that the largest number of students are in Kindergarten, 4th, and 9th grades. The lowest number of students are in Pre-Kindergarten. According to the Iowa Department of Education, 5.7% of students receive either free or reduced priced meals at school. This is lower than the state average of 40.7%. Additionally, 8.6% of students are in the Special Education Program and 0.3% of students are English Language Learners. These particular students may be more vulnerable during a hazardous event than the rest of the student population.

Table VMS.2: K-12 Student Statistics, 2021-2022

	District	State of Iowa
Free/Reduced Priced Meals	5.7%	40.7%
Special Education Students	8.6%	13.2%
English Language Learners (ESL)	0.3%	6.6%

Source: Iowa Department of Education²

Administration and Staff

The school district has a superintendent, two principals, 2 deans of students, and supportive staff. The school board is made up of a five-member panel. The district employs between 100 and 120 teachers and staff. The district’s Business Office, Human Resource Office, Operations and Maintenance Office, and a number of additional departments and staff that may be available to implement hazard mitigation initiatives. The school district trains staff members on emergency procedures through drills and tabletop exercises.

Capability Assessment

The capability assessment consisted of a review of local existing policies, regulations, plans, and programs with hazard mitigation capabilities. The following tables summarize the district’s planning and regulatory capability; administrative and technical capability; fiscal capability; educational and outreach capability; and overall capability to implement mitigation projects. Emergency procedures are provided to students and families through handbooks, newsletters, and performing drills. In the event of an emergency, the district notifies parents and staff through email or newsletters in all languages students speak when necessary. The school district works with the Van Meter Public Safety Department for education and exercises.

Table VMS.3: Capability Assessment

Survey Components/Subcomponents		Yes/No
Planning & Regulatory Capability	Facility Improvements Plan	Yes
	Continuity of Operations Plan	Yes
	Crisis Response Plan	Yes
	Strategic Plan	Yes
	Grant Manager	No
	Mutual Aid Agreement	No
	Other (if any)	

² Iowa Department of Education. “Student Demographic Information.” Accessed April 2022. <https://educateiowa.gov/data-reporting/education-statistics-pk-12>

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Fiscal Capability	Applied for grants in the past	No
	Awarded grants in the past	No
	Authority to levy taxes for specific purposes such as mitigation projects	No
	General Obligation Revenue or Special Tax Bonds	Yes
	Approved bonds in the past	Yes
	Flood Insurance	No
	Other (if any)	
Education & Outreach Capability	Local school groups or non-profit organizations focused on environmental protection, emergency preparedness, access, and functional needs populations, etc. (Ex. Parent groups, Crisis Response Teams, etc.)	No
	Hazard education or information program	No
	StormReady Certification	No
	Other (if any)	
Drills	Fire	4 / year
	Tornado	4 / year
	Intruder	2 / year
	Bus evacuation	1 / year
	Evacuation	2 / year
	Other (if any)	

Table VMS.4: Overall Capability

Overall Capability	Limited/Moderate/High
Financial resources needed to implement mitigation projects	Moderate
Staff/expertise to implement projects	Moderate
Public support to implement projects	Moderate
Time to devote to hazard mitigation	Moderate

Plan Integration

Grants and Funding

According to the local planning team, district funds have been sufficient to both pursue new capital projects and to maintain facilities and systems. A large portion of funds is currently dedicated to the renovations of the Van Meter Elementary School in the next few years. District funds have increased in recent years. No grants have been applied for or awarded to the district within the past five years.

Crisis Response Plan

The school district uses a Crisis Response Plan to react to hazardous events. The Crisis Response Plan discusses natural hazards of earthquake, fire, lightning, pandemic, severe weather and floods, and tornado. The plan addresses shelter in place protocols and identifies the following: scenarios requiring evacuation, critical evacuation routes, sheltering locations,

opportunities for mitigation following an event, and any gaps related to particular hazards. The plan is updated as needed.

Future Development Trends

The local planning team notes there have been no major developments within the district in the past five years, though new equipment and infrastructure has been acquired. New construction is planned on the East Campus in the near future.

Community Lifelines

Transportation

According to the local planning team, any rural routes are of most concern for the school district. To date, no major accidents have impacted schools within the district. Van Meter School District owns 12 school buses and approximately 500 students are bused to and from school each day.

Hazardous Materials

According to the Tier II System reports submitted to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, there is one chemical storage sites in Van Meter that contains hazardous chemicals. According to the local planning team, while no chemical spills have impacted the schools, Van Meter Public Safety Department would be the first to respond if a chemical spill were to occur. Within the district, the road most at risk if spills occurred would be R16 when it crosses the railroad tracks.

Table VMS.5: Chemical Storage Sites

Facility Name	Address	Located in Floodplain?
CenturyLink - Van Meter CDO	406 Wilson Avenue Van Meter, IA 50261	No

Source: Iowa Department of Natural Resources³

Using location data for district buildings and chemical storage sites, an analysis was run to determine which schools have chemical sites within a one-mile radius. The results of this analysis can be seen in the table below.

Table VMS.6: School Buildings Within One Mile of Chemical Storage Sites

School Building	Address	# of Storage Sites Within One Mile
Van Meter Elementary	520 1st Ave Van Meter, Iowa, 50261	1
Van Meter Middle School	520 1st Ave Van Meter, Iowa, 50261	1
Van Meter High School	520 1st Ave Van Meter, Iowa, 50261	1
District Office	520 1st Ave Van Meter, Iowa, 50261	1

³ Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2022. "Emergency Response - Tier II Chemical Storage." Accessed April 2022. <https://facilityexplorer.iowadnr.gov/facilityexplorer/>.

Section Seven: Van Meter School District Profile

Critical Facilities

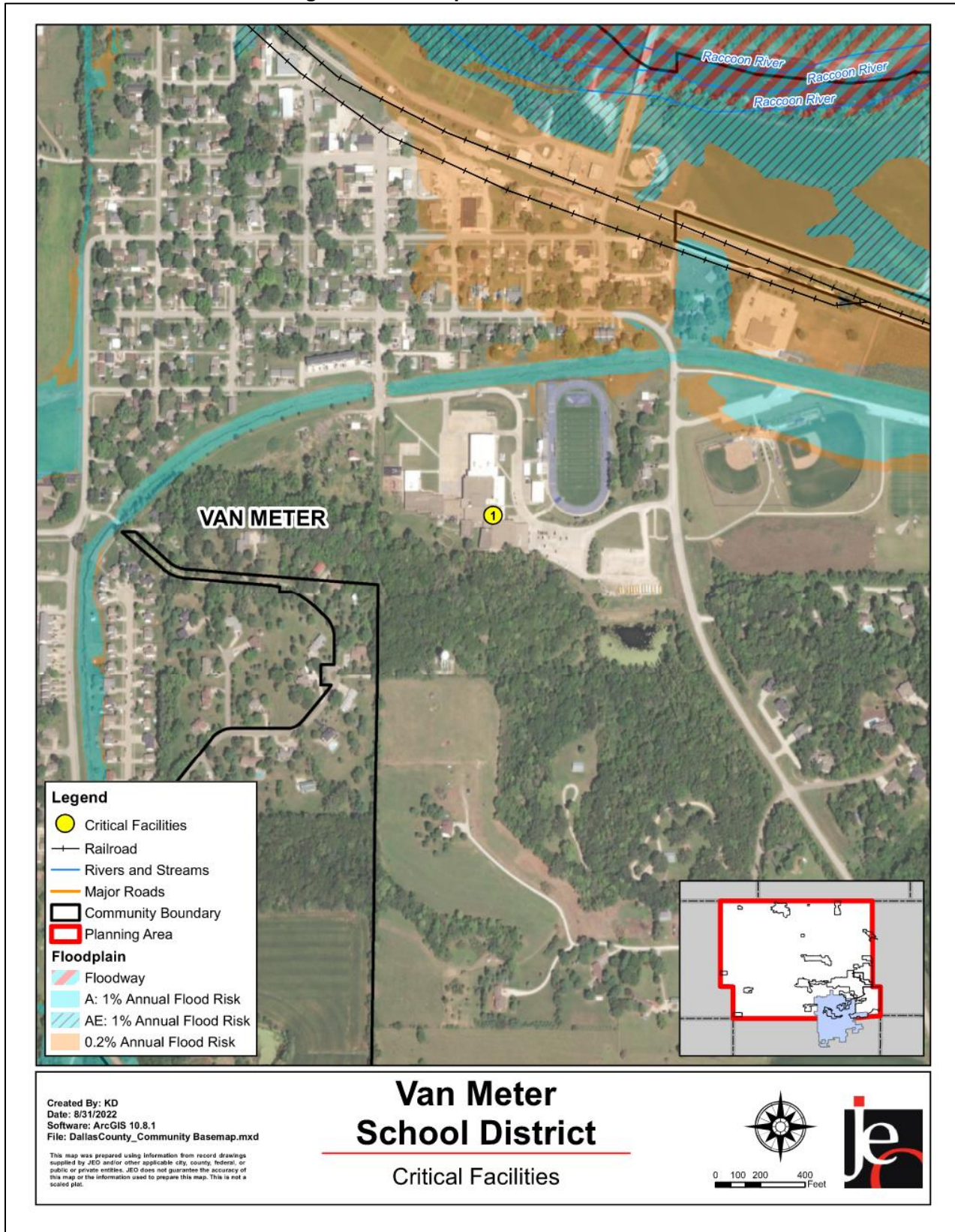
The local planning team identified critical facilities that are vital for disaster response, public shelter, and essential for returning the jurisdiction’s functions to normal during and after a disaster per the FEMA Community Lifelines guidance. Critical facilities were identified during the original planning process and updated by the local planning team as a part of this plan update.

The following table and figure provide a summary of the critical facilities for the jurisdiction.

Table VMS.7: Critical Facilities

CF #	Name	Mass Care (Y/N)	Generator (Y/N)	Floodplain (Y/N)
1	Van Meter Elementary School	Y	N	N
	Van Meter High School	Y	N	N
	Van Meter Middle School	Y	N	N

Figure VMS.4: Map of Critical Facilities



Historical Occurrences

See the community profiles for the City of Van Meter for historical hazard events.

Hazard Prioritization

The hazards discussed in detail below were selected by the local planning team from the county hazard list as the relevant hazards for the jurisdiction. The selected hazards were prioritized by the local planning team based on historical hazard occurrences, potential impacts, and the community's capabilities. For additional discussion regarding area-wide hazards, please see *Section Four: Risk Assessment*.

Landslide

Landslides are of major concern for the school district's buildings located at the bottom of a hill. According to the local planning team, the school district has not experienced any significant landslides events in the past. The county offers text alerts for hazardous events, allowing for the school district to be alerted of any impending events. The school district's critical facilities are not equipped with weather radios.

Severe Thunderstorms (Includes Hail and Lightning)

This hazard was identified as a top hazard of concern for the school district due mainly to the possibility of roof damages and flooding. The local planning team reports that past hail events have resulted in roof damage to critical facilities within the school district. To mitigate future risks to this hazard, the local planning team has stated a backup generator would be a good tool for the district to have. The county offers text alerts for hazardous events, allowing for the school district to be alerted of any impending events, however the district's critical facilities are not equipped with weather radios.

Tornado and Windstorm

Tornado and Windstorm was identified as a top hazard of concern for the school district due to potential for rooftop damage. Past windstorm events have impacted the school district's critical facilities, including some fencing damage during a derecho event a few years ago. During a tornado event, the schools use locker rooms and interior areas of buildings to protect students and staff from potential injury. There are no official safe rooms or storm shelters within the school district.

Mitigation Strategy

Completed Mitigation and Strategic Actions

Mitigation Action	Van Meter Schools Storm Water Drainage
Description	Provide more disperse intake, provide greater diameter piping, provide more points of discharge, and provide areas of retention. Storm water management is inadequate. The facilities and grounds need better storm water management, intake, flow, discharge, and retention.
Hazard(s)	Flooding
Status	Completed

Continued Mitigation and Strategic Actions

Mitigation Action	Backup Generator
Description	Purchase a generator to support energy needs of the district and provide power as needed when electricity goes out.
Hazard(s)	All hazards
Estimated Cost	\$100,000
Funding	Local Funds, HMA
Timeline	2-3 months
Priority	High
Lead Agency	Superintendent
Status	Not started

Mitigation Action	Safe Room
Description	Construct saferoom to provide shelter for Van Meter students, staff, and citizens during a tornado.
Hazard(s)	All hazards
Estimated Cost	\$2,500,000
Funding	Local Funds, HMA
Timeline	1-3 years
Priority	High
Lead Agency	Superintendent
Status	Not started

Plan Maintenance

Hazard Mitigation Plans should be living documents and updated regularly to reflect changes in hazard events, priorities, and mitigation actions. These updates are encouraged to occur after every major disaster event, alongside planning documents (e.g., annual budgets, etc.), during the fall before the HMA grant cycle begins, and/or prior to other funding opportunity cycles begin.

The local planning team is responsible for reviewing and updating this profile as changes occur or after a major event. The local planning team will include the Superintendent, the Director of Public Safety, and the Director of Operations and Maintenance. This plan will be reviewed annually. The public will be included in the review and revision process via newsletters.