



DoDEA Safe Schools Program Founder Retiring

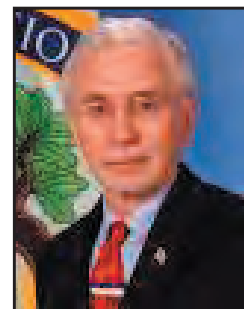
Ed Englehardt, Chief, Office of Safety and Security, will retire after 38 years of federal service on December 31, 2006. Many of Ed's accomplishments during his 14 years with DoDEA involved providing a safe and secure learning environment for students and staff.

In 1998 Ed founded DoDEA's Safe Schools Program to provide administrators practical training and information on school security and antiterrorism. A 2004 Joint Staff Integrated Vulnerability Assessment lauded DoDEA's Antiterrorism program, calling DoDEA "one of the best agencies assessed to date." ■

Reviewing Emergency Management Plans

On November 15, in the wake of recent school shootings and the President's Conference on School Safety, the Department of Education sponsored a one-hour Webcast on Emergency Management for Schools. The broadcast provided practical guidance for school crisis teams on the four components of emergency response: 1) prevention, 2) preparedness, 3) response and 4) recovery. Debbie Price, Assistant Deputy Secretary of Education, explained that planning should address not only extreme incidents such as school shootings, but also everyday situations that disrupt learning.

During the Webcast, Bill Modzeleski, Director of the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, related a statistic to illustrate the need for planning. He multiplied 180 school days, by 53 million students, to arrive at 9.5 billion "student school days" – the exposure for potential incidents in schools. Mr. Modzeleski said that with all these opportunities for incidents in schools, "It's a strange day when strange things don't happen."



Bill Modzeleski

While acknowledging that most schools have some type of emergency response plan, he urged administrators to review and test their plans to see if they can effectively respond to an incident. Mr. Modzeleski said that effective emergency management plans should be:

- ▶ Comprehensive.
- ▶ Based on sound data (i.e., incident worksheets and surveys, Tools 1-4 in the DoDEA Safe Schools Handbook).
- ▶ Coordinated with the community.
- ▶ Discussed with school staff, students and parents/sponsors.
- ▶ Regularly practiced, and updated based on the results of drills.

He added that plans should adopt an "all-hazards approach" to address events ranging from bullying to catastrophe (i.e., school shootings). An archived version of the Webcast is available for viewing at www.ConnectLive.com/events/edschoolsafety. For additional insights from this webcast see the article on page 3. ■

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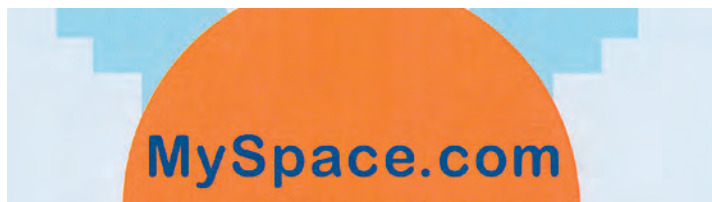
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CyberSecurity Guide for Administrators

The social networking site MySpace has published a cybersecurity guide for school administrators. *The Official School Administrator's Guide to Understanding MySpace and Resolving Social Networking Issues* familiarizes administrators with the buzzwords and tools of social networking sites. The guide provides direct phone and e-mail contacts to reach appropriate MySpace officials should school leaders experience a problem with "postings" by any of their students.

According to MySpace, 61 percent of students have a personal profile on a social networking site such as Xanga, Facebook, MySpace or Bebo (Bebo is growing quickly in the UK). On average, teen MySpace users spend 26 minutes per day on the site and view about 81 pages per visit. The guide familiarizes administrators with the dangers and vulnerabilities that students are exposed to through social networking.

As the guide also includes hot line numbers for administrators to report sites that should be deleted, MySpace limits distribution to educational organizations. The American Association of School Administrators and the National School Boards Association are distributing the guide to their members and **warning them NOT to post it on the Internet**. DoDEA administrators can obtain a copy from DoDEA's Safe Schools Program by writing safeschools@csc.com. Please include your name, position, school district, school, and phone number for verification purposes. ■

DoDEA Safe Schools Program Managers
Ed Englehardt, Rose Chunik

Safe Schools Newsletter Editorial Staff
Bob Michela, Keith Shaver, Sarah Markel, Scarlett Williams,
Catherine DiDonato, Ellen Craig and Brian McKeon.

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Share Success and Win

One purpose of this newsletter is to provide a forum for DoDEA administrators to share security success stories. To encourage this sharing, the first 20 DoDEA educators who submit a description of a prevention program, or security measure that worked at their school, will receive a \$20 Amazon.com gift certificate for your school. To contribute an idea, please:

- ▶ Describe a policy, prevention program or physical security measure that succeeded in your school.
- ▶ Identify the security objective you were attempting to achieve, the implementation required, and the results.
- ▶ Send your submission in MS Word (450 words or less) by January 30, 2007 to safeschools@csc.com.
- ▶ Include your name, school, district, e-mail, phone, and attach any appropriate pictures or supporting documentation that you would like to share.

For examples of previous DoDEA success stories see the following articles available at www.dodea.edu/offices/safety/safeSchools.cfm?sid=5; select "indexed articles" half way down on the right:

- ▶ "Atsugi Peer Mediation Program," and "Yokota Violence Prevention," June 2002 Newsletter.
- ▶ "As a Tank Rolls Up," June 2005 Newsletter.
- ▶ "Innovative Dress Codes, A Picture is Worth A Thousand Words," May 2005 Newsletter.
- ▶ "Video Explains Lockdown Procedures," April 2006 Newsletter.



Picture of Prevention Program described in "As A Tank Rolls Up"

For additional information or assistance finding resources on policy, prevention programs or physical security measures contact safeschools@csc.com. ■

Security Awareness and School Culture – The New Challenge

Elevating security awareness in schools can reduce the risk of violence, but sometimes it requires a change in school culture. Administrators can maintain a welcoming atmosphere in school while educating staff, students and parents to be “security conscious.”

Administrators have repeatedly expressed their desire to maintain a caring, inviting school climate to encourage parental participation and support learning. However, the security challenge confronting schools has changed. Bill Modzeleski, Director of the Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, described the change in threats to schools during the Department of Education’s November 15 Webcast on school security. He said that a generation ago, discipline problems consisted of running in the halls and chewing gum, but today schools must recognize the reality for weapons in schools or violent intruders.

During the October 2006 White House conference on school security, President Bush asked whether cultural change is needed in schools to raise security awareness. During the discussion President Bush commented:

“The whole purpose of this exercise is to help educate and, if there needs to be cultural change inside schools, for teachers to become more aware and more active – or principals – to stimulate those kinds of discussions . . . in the hopes of preventing these incidents from happening in the first place.”

Balancing openness with security requires careful communication and leadership. Administrators can use Parent Teacher Organization meetings and newsletters to parents, to explain that parents are welcome in school, but enhanced security measures are being implemented to ensure that their children are protected from all possible threats. Administrators can enhance security using the following actions:

- ✓ **Communicate the importance of access control** to staff, students and parents. For guidance regarding visitor sign in procedures, see DoDEA Regulation 4700.2: Internal Physical Security available at www.dodea.edu/regs/regs_num.htm.
- ✓ **Educate staff on the “May I help you?” technique** to challenge unidentified visitors, and direct visitors to sign in at the school office.
- ✓ **Ensure all staff are familiar with the warning signs** that a student might be troubled, as well as referral procedures. Early recognition of a troubled student allows staff to address the student’s needs before the student’s behavior threatens others.

Observable warning signs identified in the U.S. Department of Education guide *Early Warning, Timely Response* include: social withdrawal, expressed feelings of isolation or rejection, sudden decrease in academic performance, expression of violence in writing or drawings, uncontrolled anger, aggressive behavior, history of discipline problems, drug use, access to firearms, and serious threats of violence. The Department of Education cautions educators to view individual warning signs in context, and refer students to qualified mental health personnel such as the school psychologist or counselor. For the White House conference transcript visit: www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/education/schoolsafety. To view the Department of Education Webcast visit www.ConnectLive.com/events/edschoolsafety. ■



Study of Teen Brains Shows Benefit of Prevention Programs

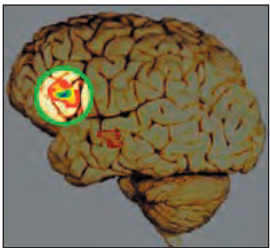
Teenagers can be pretty exasperating when they don't respond to questions, misunderstand basic social cues, or become upset with simple requests. Add to the list the impulsivity, mood swings, and forgetfulness (i.e., forgetting to wear seat belts no matter how many times they are reminded).

It's enough to cause educators to throw up their hands in frustration. However, a recent study mapped the differences between teen and adult brains, finding that the question that should be asked is not **what** teens are thinking, but **how**. The answer to that question illustrates the value of prevention programs that teach decision-making skills.



Dr. Deborah Yurgelun-Todd, a neuropsychologist at McLean Hospital, a major teaching facility of Harvard Medical School, has found that adolescent brains work differently than adult brains when processing information. The study involved volunteers who underwent a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), a technology that captures an image of the brain every three seconds in order to see which parts are being used during processing. The volunteers were shown photographs of faces and the MRI measured their brain activity as they tried to name the expressions on the faces. Surprisingly, the teens didn't do very well at reading basic facial expressions.

Fear is a good example. Adults recognized that the wide eyes and clenched jaw in a photograph represented fear, yet over half of the teens missed it. "They felt that the expression was sadness, or confusion. Some said they didn't know; some said shock. But it was surprising to us that most fairly sophisticated adolescents did not correctly identify fear," notes Yurgelun-Todd.



The MRI revealed one reason for this failure to properly read facial expressions. It has more to do with which portions of the brain are functioning and when. "In an adult," says Yurgelun-Todd, "the prefrontal part of the brain carries out a lot of executive functions . . . planning, goal-oriented behavior, judgment, insight. That particular area influences the more emotional or gut part of the brain."

For teens, however, the study showed that the relationship was reversed. The adolescent brain was less dynamic in those prefrontal portions that control judgment. And, unsurprisingly, the emotional region was running in overdrive. Thus, faced with a stressful situation, "the adolescent will have more of an emotional response." This helps explain risky behaviors seen in even well-adjusted teens. According to Yurgelun-Todd, "the teenager is not going to take information that is in the outside world, and organize it and understand it in the same way we do."

But there is hope. "Enrichment or prevention programs during this period are very valuable; the brain is ready and responsive in a way that it's not later in life," said Yurgelun-Todd. Researchers have found that teaching teens to use judgment, time management, and decision-making skills helps lay the neural foundations for those processes to be hardwired into the brain later. Eventually those higher functioning skills will become automatic, much like driving a car. In the meantime, though, keep reminding them to wear their seatbelts.

Chapter 3, Section 2 of the DoDEA Safe Schools Handbook, as well as the Prevention Program Guides, include prevention programs that teach decision making skills. Two programs appropriate for middle school youth are Wise Skills (www.wiseskills.com) and Raising Resilient Youth www.copes.org. For additional programs, see DoDEA's prevention program guides at www.dodea.edu/offices/safety/safeSchools.cfm?sid=5. For further information on the study, visit the McLean Hospital at www.mclean.harvard.edu/research/clinicalunit/cnl.php. ■

Using Posters to Reinforce Anti-bullying Campaign

Schaffer Elementary School in Manheim Township School District, near Lancaster, Pennsylvania, uses posters to reinforce their school-wide anti-bullying campaign. The text of the poster summarizes the components of the district's bullying prevention program. The poster reminds students that:

“At Manheim Township School District We all Agree:

- ◆ Bullying is not permitted.
- ◆ We will help students that are being bullied.
- ◆ We will include all students in all activities.
- ◆ We will report all incidents of bullying to an adult.”

This poster starts with a direct statement to all students and staff that this school does not tolerate bullying. To further support this message, the entire school community including the principal, faculty, cafeteria workers, custodians, students, and some parents participated in a one-day assembly where they learned about the harmful effects of bullying and how to prevent it.

About 85 percent of students are neither bullying victims nor bullies, but rather bystanders to bullying incidents. This program teaches the bystanders that it is okay to assist the victim. The second statement, “we will help students that are being bullied,” reassures bullying victims that they can depend on assistance from school staff. In addition, the second statement empowers student bystanders by letting them know that it is okay to help a bullying victim say “no” to a bully. Bystanders also learn how to help victims report the incident to an adult.

The third statement, “We will include all students in all activities” deals with psychological bullying. Isolating individuals is a more subtle version of bullying that often goes unnoticed by adults. However, Schaffer Elementary publicized a definition of bullying that increased awareness that ostracism is a form of bullying. Statement three emphasizes the importance of inclusion.

The fourth statement encourages students to report incidents of bullying. This statement counters the tendency of victims to suffer in silence, and prompts bystanders to take an active role.

The program Website also includes practical warning signs to help adults recognize whether a student is being bullied: reluctance to take the bus or to go to school; unexpected bruises or cuts; not eating lunch; withdrawn behavior; sudden drop in grades; and becoming aggressive or “oppositional.” For additional information on the Schaffer Elementary School Anti-bullying Program visit www.mtwp.net/staticfiles/schaeffer/nobullying.html. ■



Helping Students Cope With Loss

The holidays are a tough time for students suffering from the loss of a loved one, especially DoDEA students affected by casualties in Iraq or Afghanistan. School psychologists, counselors, administrators and educators can work together to ease the stress students experience from bereavement and loss. According to Dr. David Schonfeld, Executive Director of the National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement, it is not uncommon for students to experience loss:

- ◆ 66% of students under age 10 experience the death of a grandparent, sibling or friend.
- ◆ 5% of students experience the death of a parent by age 16.

Loss becomes more common as students grow older. In a survey of Kansas high school students, titled *The Real Experience of Death Among Adolescents: An Empirical Study*, researchers P. Ewalt and L. Perkins found:

- ◆ 90% of high school students had experienced the death of a grandparent, aunt, uncle, sibling, or someone else they cared about.
- ◆ 40% had experienced the death of a close friend their own age.
- ◆ 20% had witnessed a death.



In a September 2006 briefing to Department of Education Crisis Management grant recipients, Dr. Marlene Wong, Director, Crisis Counseling and Intervention Services, Los Angeles Unified School District, discussed unaddressed trauma and grief. According to Dr. Wong, trauma and grief impact learning by decreasing IQ and learning ability, lowering grade point averages, increasing school absences, decreasing high school graduation rates, and increasing rates of suspension and expulsion. Dr. Wong suggests a variety of ways that educators can help students cope with trauma and loss, including:

- ◆ **Listen** – Encourage students to share experiences and express feelings of fear or concern. Be willing to listen and respond to non-verbal cues. Give them extra reassurance, support and encouragement.
- ◆ **Protect** – Maintain structure, stability, and predictability. Intervene to prevent incidents or behaviors such as teasing or bullying that could re-traumatize the student.
- ◆ **Connect** – Encourage interaction, activities, team projects. Refer student to counselor. Share positive feedback with teachers and parents or sponsors.
- ◆ **Teach** – Reassure students by acknowledging the normal changes that occur in people who grieve, including physical, emotional, and cognitive changes.

Dr. Wong notes that administrators and staff should maintain their expectations for behavior and performance and should not be afraid to use discipline. However, they can provide extra support and encouragement to students. She adds that teachers can provide a good example of emotional balance by maintaining level emotions when interacting with students. Providing another source of stability helps students achieve emotional stability. For additional information visit the U.S. Department of Education’s Emergency Response and Crisis Management Center at www.ercm.org/index.cfm?event=trainings#efgm_CA; select: “Trainings,” “Second Plenary Session,” “Bereavement, Loss and School Memorials.” ■