



SAFE Schools

NEWSLETTER



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Draft Minnesota Legislation Requires Lockdowns

Public school districts, in the U.S., are placing increasing emphasis on lockdown drills. In Minnesota, the legislature has responded to the fatal March 2005 school shootings in Red Lake, MN with legislation requiring five lockdown drills per year.

Senator John Marty (Roseville) proposed Senate File 2292 to enhance the security and readiness of schools in Minnesota. Governor Tim Pawlenty has indicated he will sign the bill into law if it passes in the legislature. For further information look up SF 2292 at: www.senate.mn. ■

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Video Explains Lockdown Procedures

Heidelberg Middle School (HMS) has produced a video, explaining lockdown procedures, that is ideally suited for use with DoDEA students. The six-minute video, *Reacting to the Violent Threat*, begins with a brief explanation of the reason for lockdown drills, then shows students and staff how to respond when they hear the lockdown command.

Several features make this video unique. First, the tone will not alarm younger students. There is no portrayal of a violent incident. Instead, the narrator refers to locations of violent incidents in the U.S. and states: “There is no present danger requiring the presentation of this video.” He adds, “Like learning first aid and CPR techniques, it’s good to be prepared.”

Second, the students respond calmly in the classroom as the teacher locks the door, closes and covers the windows, moves students away from the windows, and takes attendance. The class remains quiet and calm until the “all clear” signal is given and a Military Police Officer comes to the door.

Third, the video shows what students should do if they are caught in common areas including the bathroom or hall. The narrator suggests that there are plenty of safe places to go, including the principal’s office, the guidance office or the nurse’s office. Students are reminded to remain calm and comply with the supervising adult’s direction. The students then demonstrate how to respond if caught in a large area with many students, such as the:

- ✓ Media center;
- ✓ Cafeteria; or
- ✓ Gymnasium.

Finally, a gym teacher directs students to a safe location away from the school. Lynn Mattingly, chair, HMS crisis team, wrote the script. Pat Kiebler’s drama class participated in key demonstrations. The professional-quality filming and production make the lockdown video a tool that DoDEA administrators could use with K-12 students, staff or parents. For copies, please contact producer and Patrick Henry E.S. Principal Maria Buchwald at Maria.Buchwald@eu.dodea.edu. ■



Maria Buchwald, producer, former Assistant Principal, Heidelberg M.S.



Role-Play Teaches Bias Prevention

A role-playing exercise from the Mendez Foundation teaches students how to avoid making judgments based on prejudice. Cindy Cooney, Executive Director of the Mendez Foundation, demonstrated the role-play at the April 2006 National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) convention in San Antonio, Texas.

Students volunteer to play the roles of judge, prosecutor, defense attorney and suspect. The remainder of the class serves as the jury. The role-players read from a script. Critical to the role-play are two pictures that serve as evidence.

- ◆ Picture 1 shows the suspect committing a crime.
- ◆ Picture 2 shows the same picture as Picture 1, but with a larger view that includes an audience watching a play – the suspect is only acting.

Both pictures are large enough to be clearly visible to the entire class. When the judge listens to all of the evidence and “sees the big picture,” he or she is less likely to condemn others. Students learn the value of

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delaying their judgments about individuals and situations until they learn more about them.

The exercise could be used in any after-school program or character education program to help teach students and staff how to guard against letting their personal bias influence their decisions. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) recognized some of the Mendez Foundation curricula as model programs. For more information on their programs visit www.mendezfoundation.org. ■

Anti-Bullying Guide for Educators

A Canadian anti-bullying group produced a guide to help educators prevent bullying. Child and Youth Friendly Ottawa (CYFO) produced *Who Me . . . A Bully?* to help teachers and administrators learn strategies to use with bullies, victims and bystanders.

According to CYFO, principals have a powerful influence on school climate. Administrators establish an environment in which bullying will not be tolerated, publicize the definition of bullying (i.e., bullying involves an imbalance of power), and enforce consequences for bullying behavior. CYFO advocates involving all stake holders (i.e., students, teachers and parents) early in the process of creating a school-wide anti-bullying program.

The guide provides a wide variety of information for teachers including:

- ✓ Information about adoption of a whole school approach;
- ✓ “Do’s and Don’ts” for dealing with bullies;
- ✓ Definitions and student discussion topics;
- ✓ Homework assignments;
- ✓ Statements from victims of bullying; and
- ✓ A school/class covenant.

CYFO designed the guide as a supplement to other available materials. The teacher’s guide works well in a school that has already committed to establishing school-wide policies and procedures for the management of bullying behavior. For additional information visit: www.bullyingawarenessnetwork.ca/guide.html. ■

End-of-Year Safe School Actions: Still Time For Drills

There are only a couple of months of school until summer vacation. What should be done to address school security with such little time remaining in the school year? The answer to this question depends on the Safe School Plan that you developed earlier in the year, whether or not you have met the objectives that you set, and if you have practiced your Protective Actions (i.e., lockdown, shelter-in-place, taking cover, or evacuation). In other words, what is the state of your planning?

This is a good time to review your accomplishments. Determine whether you have met all your objectives. If you have not, then identify those not met as potential objectives for next year. This won't take more than an hour of your time.



Since there isn't a lot of school time remaining, you can't try to do too much. Leave the unrealized objectives for future planning and turn your attention to the present. Historically, we know that this is the time of year when major incidents of school violence are most likely to occur. Remember the "Big Rock" approach (March 2006 Newsletter), keep it simple, and think in terms of Incident Response Planning (IRP). More specifically, think about Protective Actions.

When did you last practice a Protective Action? Have you raised your awareness with this historical fact in mind? Now would be a good time to take 15 minutes to practice a lockdown and raise the awareness of your staff and students. Or, since fire drills are always a requirement, think of them as an evacuation – which it really is. Actually go to your evacuation site, not just outside into the parking lot or an open field. A fire drill should be thought of as an evacuation. If a fire is the reason (i.e., threat) for leaving the school, then it will be necessary to evacuate a sufficient distance to:

- ◆ Avoid fire trucks and other emergency vehicles/equipment arriving at the scene;
- ◆ Protect students from possible secondary explosions and flying debris; and
- ◆ Keep out of the way of emergency response personnel.

So, don't give up on Safe School Planning just because the end of the school year is in sight. Make good use of available time, even though there is not much of it. **Your efforts just may save a life!** ■



NAESP Reports on After-School Programs

In March 2006, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) published the results of a two-year study of after-school programs in both elementary and middle schools. *Making the Most of After-School Time* presents 10 case studies of exemplary after-school programs in rural, suburban, and urban settings. All of the schools evaluated shared the following **common characteristics**:

- ▶ Strong family commitment and involvement.
- ▶ Effective management and administration of the program.
- ▶ Excellent staffing and training.
- ▶ Active participation by the principal in the development and management of the program.



NAESP purposely selected sites where principals had varying levels of involvement to study ways that administrators support after-school programs without becoming over extended. Researchers conducted telephone interviews with the principal, after-school coordinator, and other key personnel. NAESP also reviewed selected documents including information on community and school demographics, evaluation reports, and curriculum materials. Finally, the project researcher visited each school and met with staff, students, parents, and volunteers. NAESP found that successful after-school programs share the following characteristics:

- ◆ A principal who views after-school programs as an asset to the school, and communicates the message that school does not end when the dismissal bell rings.
- ◆ A separate, paid coordinator responsible for running the program.
- ◆ Regular communication between the principal and the after-school coordinator.
- ◆ Transition time for students to have a snack and unwind before after-school activities begin.
- ◆ Recognition that after-school can serve as a different way of reaching students and helping them to see the importance of education.

The NAESP report concluded that after-school centers offer much more than a way to help students stay out of trouble; they provide an opportunity to help disadvantaged youth succeed academically. For additional information on *Making the Most of After-School Time* visit: www.naesp.org. ■

Depression Among Adolescents

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Agency (SAMHSA) recently reported results of their analysis of the 2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). According to the NSDUH analysis, approximately one in 10 adolescents experience depression:

- ✓ Nine percent of adolescents ages 12 to 17 (approximately 2.2 million youth) experienced at least one major depressive episode (MDE).
- ✓ Among adolescents ages 12 to 17 who reported experiencing an MDE, less than half (40.3 percent) received treatment for depression.
- ✓ Adolescents who experienced MDE were more than twice as likely to have used illicit drugs in the past month as their peers who had not experienced depression.

Further details are available from SAMHSA at www.oas.samhsa.gov/2k5/youthDepression/youthDepssion.htm. A resource available to help students suffering from depression is the Jason Foundation Suicide Prevention Kit. For more information visit: www.jasonfoundation.com. ■

Facing Fear: Helping Young People Deal With Terrorism and Tragic Events

Disasters, both natural and man-made, create fear! After the devastating attacks of September 11, 2001, the ongoing “War on Terrorism,” and the horrific hurricanes of 2005, educators have been forced to help students deal with disaster and face fear. It is important for the students to understand that disasters include natural events such as floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, fires, earthquakes, tsunamis, as well as the effects of war and terrorism.

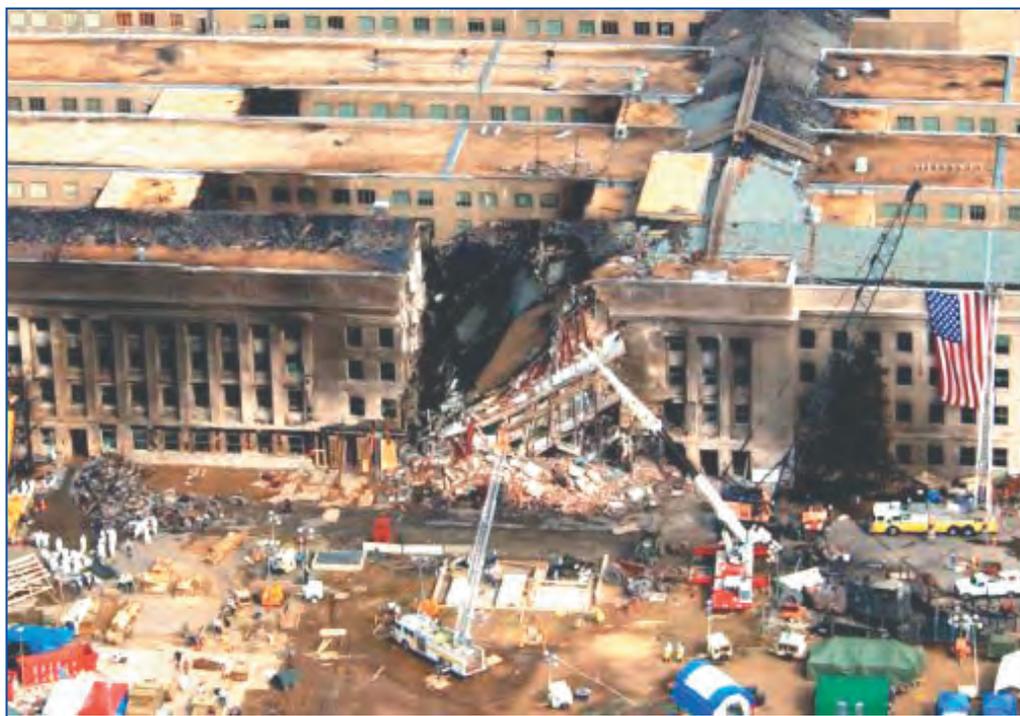
This is a difficult and multi-faceted challenge. The American Red Cross has developed tools in its *Masters of Disaster* curriculum to help teachers integrate important disaster safety instruction into their regular core subjects such as language arts, math, science, and social studies. The original *Masters of Disaster* curriculum was pilot tested in 1999 and emphasized natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods. In the wake of 9/11, the Red Cross developed a supplemental curriculum, *Facing Fear*, to help children deal with terrorism and other tragic events.

The *Facing Fear* curriculum provides educators with age appropriate materials to help children cope in uncertain times such as times of war. The Board of Education in New York City reviewed and approved the *Facing Fear* curriculum for use in its 600,000 student school system to help students cope with the psychological stress of the attacks of September 11, 2001.

Each lesson plan is easy to use and includes accompanying activities specifically geared for grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8, or 9-12. The lesson plans and accompanying activities are arranged in the following three chapters:

- ▶ Chapter 1: “Feelings,” includes lessons and activities that are timely, immediately following a tragic event. Lessons in this chapter address dealing with feelings of loss, sadness and anger.
- ▶ Chapter 2: “Facts and Perspectives,” gives information on how the media plays a role in conveying information and how to be able to discern facts as reported in media coverage, without becoming overly frightened.
- ▶ Chapter 3: “Future,” provides positive ways for children and their families to respond to past events and plan for future uncertain times.

The *Facing Fear* curriculum is aligned with the National Education Standards and supplements lessons educators are already teaching. At the same time, it provides students with valuable information to help them cope with stressful events. Off-the-shelf lesson plans are available in a free downloadable form at: www.redcross.org/disaster/masters/facingfear/downloads.htm. ■



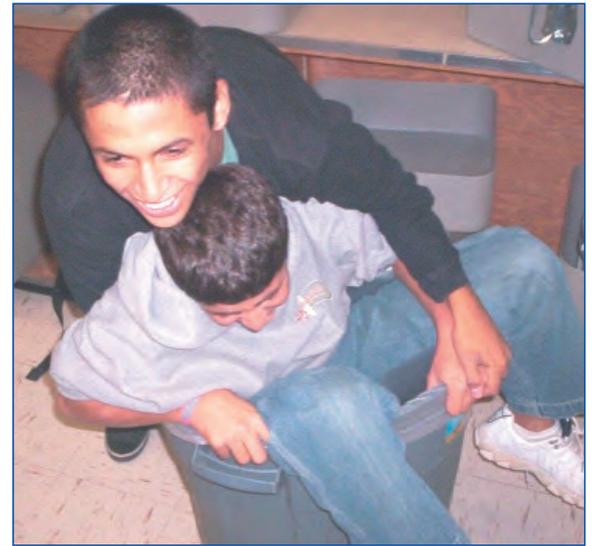
Adult Authority – The Bullying Antidote

A student ended a poem describing his experience as a victim of bullying with the lines:

*There were not many bruises on my skin.
A few, but most of the bruises were on the inside.
That is the worst part of bullying.
The bruises are on the inside.*

(Anonymous: www.bullyingawarenessnetwork.ca/somewords.html)

The nature of bullying makes it difficult for adults to become aware of bullying situations. In their anti-bullying manual *Bully-Proofing Your School*, authors Carla Garrity, Kathryn Jens, William Porter, Nancy Sager and Cam Short-Camilli describe why students conceal bullying. According to the authors:



- ▶ Victims are afraid to tell adults and are ill-prepared to stand up for themselves.
- ▶ Bystanders are afraid of the bullies and do not usually know how to help.
- ▶ The bullies are clever enough to find out who told and retaliate later.

However, *Bully-Proofing Your School* offers two antidotes to bullying: adult authority and trained bystanders. Dr. Dan Olweus reported that 20 years of research suggested the single most effective deterrent to bullying is adult authority. By publicizing an anti-bullying policy, and teaching adults and students how to intervene appropriately, administrators create an atmosphere where bullying is not tolerated. According to the authors, children can and will take action to protect the victim if they:

- 1) Are part of a group; and
- 2) Know they have the support of the school staff.

Therefore, it is critical to reassure students that something will be done about the bullying and they will not be the only person to stand up to the bully. *Bully Proofing Your School* offers lessons for use with victims, bullies and bystanders. Some schools refer to bystanders who stand up for victims as upstanders.

- ▶ The lessons for victims teach students how to assert themselves, enhance self-esteem, and practice friendship making skills. Making friends increases the number of allies the victim has to protect them self from bullying.
- ▶ Lesson plans for use with bullies provide educators tools and a plan to help bullies correct flawed thinking, develop empathy for victims, and learn that not everything has to go their way.

Bully Proofing Your School teaches all students and staff, including the 85 percent of students characterized as bystanders, six strategies to confront bullies and diffuse the situation. These strategies are summarized in the mnemonic HA HA, SO (see the November 2002 newsletter on Kadena Middle School's anti-bullying program available at: www.dodea.edu/schools/newsletters.htm). Worksheets and handouts accompany each lesson plan in *Bully Proofing Your School*. For more information on *Bully Proofing Your School* manuals for elementary, middle and high school, visit: www.bullyproofing.org. ■