



# SAFE SCHOOLS

# NEWSLETTER



Issue 10

Summer 2001

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This is an unofficial publication produced by DynCorp, Inc. on behalf of the Department of Defense Education Activity Safety & Security Office. The material herein is presented for informational purposes and does not constitute official policy of the Department of Defense. All comments and questions should be directed to Bob Michela at 703-461-2000 or michelar@dyncorp.com



## Safe Schools NEWS

### Newsletters to Continue in SY2001-02

This DoDEA Safe School Newsletter (Newsletter #10) is the last in the series for this year. Your editors enjoyed the interaction and we look forward to providing newsletters for the school year beginning in September 2001.

Special thanks to the students who contributed their articles on school violence for all to read. We hope that initiative assisted school principals in developing greater student awareness.

### Applying the 5 Phase Process





## Cost of Responding to Bomb Threats

Sgt. Jerry King, Michigan State Police Prevention Services, said that investigating a school bomb threat could cost several thousand dollars, depending on how many personnel respond, the size of the school, and what equipment is used (4/20/01 *The Detroit News*). King estimated:

- \$200.00 for two police officers
- \$400.00 for four to six emergency response personnel
- \$1000.00 to \$3000.00 for emergency response equipment

School officials include the cost of moving students out of the school to another facility, and note that the real cost is the time that students are not learning about science, mathematics, and literature.



County governments and school districts are providing financial rewards of \$1000.00 for information identifying perpetrators. School districts are also teaching school secretaries and administrators how to carefully listen to, identify, and report, bomb threats received at school. In April 2001, Michigan began implementing legislation requiring students' parents to reimburse school districts for the cost of responding to bomb threats. At Howell County, Michigan, an adult convicted of making a bomb threat was required to pay \$7000.00 for the cost of incident response. Howell Public Schools Superintendent Charles Breiner explained "She was charged with all the expenses related to the evacuation of the school, busing, lunch program and security services."



## Futuristic Thinking

In 2000, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) funded a study evaluating the applicability of Less-than-Lethal (LTL) munitions to assist Law Enforcement Agency (LEA) officers in dealing with the problem of school violence. The challenge was to determine if non-lethal technologies were applicable to preparing to manage emergency situations in school environments.

The study identified no serious obstacles to the introduction of selected LTL munitions in school environments from a consideration of psychological, legal or geographic factors. The study concluded that LTL systems could complement other law enforcement tools across the spectrum of force, and could alter some situations enough so that lethal force might not be necessary.

The principal limitation of LTL technologies in schools, as in other areas, is that although they are evolving rapidly and some systems have great potential, none can yet offer an assured means of incapacitating suspects in all situations. Effective operating distances, physical effects on suspects, and safety considerations limit the use of LTL in schools. This limitation requires authorities to balance the need to limit student and perpetrator injuries and damage to the school with the concern for increased personal risk to law enforcement officers.

The study identified several LTL systems with operational capability for state and local authorities based on performance, price, and safety. An electronic taser, “pepperball” munitions, a shotgun flashbang round, and an engine disabling system possessed the greatest potential for the future.



# Applying the 5 Phase Process



## Phase Five: Develop Plan

### PHASE 5 Develop Plan

A clearly written Safe Schools Plan will enable you to communicate to all of your stakeholders (e.g., students, staff, parents, administrators, and command personnel) the “who,” “what,” “where,” “when,” “why,” and “how” of your strategy for reducing school violence and for maintaining a secure learning environment. Above all, your *written plan* is the *road map* for achieving objectives and monitoring progress.

Because your plan will contain a schedule for implementing policies, programs, and physical security measures, you will be able to use your plan to “benchmark” your progress. Your plan must be linked to your budget process if you expect to procure physical security items or purchase intervention program materials or training. This necessarily implies that your plan would project several years into the future.

The DoDEA Safe Schools Program, as shown in the Handbook, provides a template for creating a Safe Schools Plan. The template, included on the CD provided, may be used as an aid to incorporate all the options determined during the 5 Phase Process into a single document to share with your stakeholders. Principals should feel comfortable adapting the template to their own style



of planning. If district-wide uniformity is important then the uniformity should apply to the elements that comprise the plan and not on the exact format. For example, one plan may show the implementation schedule using a Gantt Chart display from MicroSoft Office while another plan might depict the information in an Excel spreadsheet or a MicroSoft Word table. In other words, don't let form overtake substance. Include an implementation schedule in your plan. The checklist below is a good summary of the components that must comprise your plan.

- ✓ Purpose statement
- ✓ Overview of the current situation
- ✓ Listing of the Risk Reduction and Climate Improvement Objectives
- ✓ Descriptions of Options to be implemented in the domains of Policy, Intervention Programs, and Physical Security
- ✓ Responsibilities of those expected to help implement the plan
- ✓ Implementation schedule
- ✓ Costs associated with each Option

Your Safe Schools Plan should be reviewed annually. Use the 5 Phase Process to re-evaluate your school's security situation to determine the level of success of your previous year's efforts and make subsequent modifications to your plan. If you have a three-year plan, try to keep on the same cycle. Continue to project your budget requirements and the schedule of options which will be implemented when the funding becomes available.

## Most Common Elements in Incident Response Plans (IRPs)

If you are wondering whether or not you have covered all the bases in your Incident Response Plan (IRP), check the list below. It is a listing of the criteria most often included in IRPs that we have seen from schools around the world.

- ➔ Threats of violence/civil disturbance/gangs
- ➔ Out of control student(s)
- ➔ Death in the community
- ➔ Media procedures
- ➔ Runaway student(s)
- ➔ Suicide situation
- ➔ Hazardous material/chemical spills/biohazard
- ➔ Gas leaks
- ➔ Air contamination/natural gas leaks
- ➔ Severe weather/natural disasters/earthquake/tsunami
- ➔ Evacuation procedures
- ➔ School bus accident
- ➔ Missing student(s)
- ➔ Bomb threat
- ➔ Hostage situation/abduction/kidnapping
- ➔ Armed/dangerous intruder/weapon possession
- ➔ Shooting/stabbing
- ➔ Physical assault / sexual assault
- ➔ Fire
- ➔ Explosion
- ➔ Power failure
- ➔ Building collapse
- ➔ Aircraft accident
- ➔ Medical responses regarding
  - + Moving the injured
  - + Allergies
  - + Asthma/hyperventilation
  - + Bleeding
  - + Breathing
  - + Broken bones
  - + Burns
  - + Choking
  - + Dental emergencies
  - + Diabetes
  - + Drug overdose/substance abuse
  - + Electric shock
  - + Eye emergencies
  - + Fainting
  - + Heart attack
  - + Insect bites/stings
  - + Poisoning
  - + Seizures
  - + Shock



## Anti-bullying Strategies

*For further information on bullying prevention see: DoDEA Safe Schools Handbook, (Intervention Strategies, pp.159-170), and the Intervention Strategies articles in Newsletter #3: “Bullying The Three Groups”, and Newsletter #4: “Anti-Bullying Actions” for School Administrators, Teachers, Student Bystanders, and Parents.*

### School Shootings Create Interest in Bullying Prevention

*“Bullying was common. Two-thirds of the attackers described feeling persecuted, bullied or threatened—not teasing but torment.”*

Source: 10/15/00 *Chicago Sun Times* report on U.S. Secret Service Study *School Shooters: A Threat Assessment* ([http://www.treas.gov/usss/ntac/chicago\\_sun/find15.htm](http://www.treas.gov/usss/ntac/chicago_sun/find15.htm))

Anti-bullying strategies are receiving more attention in U.S. schools because recent school shootings such as the 3/5/07 Santana H.S. incident illustrate the risk that bullying victims might respond with gun violence. Separate studies by the U.S. Secret Service and *Time* magazine (5/28/01 *Time* “Voices from the Cell: Time Looks At the Harsh Realities of Twelve Teens Who Shot Up Their Schools”) identified retaliation for bullying as significant motives for school shooting incidents. The U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center analyzed thirty-seven school shooting incidents and reported that two-thirds of the attackers felt “persecuted, bullied, threatened, attacked or injured.” (*Time* 3/25/01 “Let Bullies Beware”, <http://www.time.com/education/article/0,8599,103822,00.html>).

Illinois State Police Officials Gene Marlin and Barbara Vogt explain that bullying victims believe a gun can correct the situation. “Some kids who have been bullied romanticize a gun as being an equalizer. Many of the shootings stemmed from the ‘need for retribution’ for perceived injustices inflicted upon the assailant . . . These children believed the only way to cope was to get rid of their problems, and the way to get rid of them was to kill them,” (April 1999 *Police Chief Magazine* p.169, <http://www.theiacp.org/pubinfo/pubs/safeschol.htm>).

### Questionnaires Recommended

*“The problem of bullying is in all schools. . . . If schools don’t acknowledge it, they support it. We know it’ll get worse. It’s like an infection—if you don’t take steps early to stop it, it’ll grow.”*

Wendy Craig, professor of psychology at Queens University in Kingston, Ontario (<http://www.cfchildren.org/PUfeatfall00.html>)

Student surveys that include questions regarding bullying behavior enable school administrators to learn about the size of the problem at their school and evaluate students’ concerns. Consistently, more incidents of bullying behavior are reported by students than by teachers and school staff members. Bullying is usually not detected by adults for three reasons:

1. Bullying behavior occurs in unsupervised areas of the school.

2. Children are reluctant to report bullying behavior to adults because they are ashamed and they do not think adults will intervene to prevent the bullying.
3. Adults misinterpret bullying behavior as normal activity, for example, not distinguishing clearly between rough play and aggressive behavior.

Committee for Children (CFC) designed a twenty-question survey to help elementary schools measure young students' abilities to identify feelings, solve interpersonal problems, and control anger (<http://www.cfchildren.org/outeval.html>). A report on the survey and instructions for use are available from CFC's client services department, phone: (800) 634-4449. CFC offers separate surveys to measure elementary, middle and junior high school students' knowledge of anti-bullying concepts, vocabulary and strategies.

University of Oregon's Institute for Violence and Destructive Behavior (<http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~ivdb/>) offers recommendations for designing and using school discipline referral reports to measure the effectiveness of anti-bullying interventions ("Using Office Discipline Referral Data To Evaluate School-Wide Discipline and Violence Prevention Interventions" Sprague, Sugai, Horner, & Walker, Vol. 42, Winter 1999, *Oregon School Study Council Bulletin*).

## Effective Anti-Bullying Intervention Strategies

*Steps to Respect: A Bullying Prevention Program* (\$595.00) Committee for Children, Seattle, Washington, phone: (800) 634-4449, (<http://www.cfchildren.org>) includes a handbook for school staff, videotapes, lesson plans and a parents' guide. Lessons include: "Refusing to Be Bullied", "Reporting Bullying" and "Bystanders Can Be Part of the Solution".

*Bully Proofing Your School* (\$35.00) Sopris West, Longmont, Colorado, phone: (800) 547-6747, (<http://www.sopriswest.com>). Handbooks for elementary/middle school educators describing how to enhance school climate to prevent bullying behavior by working with the "caring majority" of students. Includes guidelines for school staff training, student instruction, victim support, intervention methods and improving school climate.

*Choices & Consequences* (no cost) Court Television (<http://www.courtvtv.com/choices/curriculum/homicide/>) Lesson One: "Full Court Press" includes a videotape, lesson plan and letter to parents. Students view a videotape about a basketball player who bullies some students and is later killed by one of the bullying victims. The videotape includes police interviews with members of the community who could have prevented the bullying. Students are asked to consider community action to prevent the bullying and write a draft anti-bullying policy for their own school. *Choices & Consequences* is a public affairs effort by Court Television, National Middle School Association, and Cable in the Classroom.



## Limiting Children's Access to Guns: Educating Students

*This is part two of a two part series on "Limiting Children's Access to Guns." This article (Newsletter #10) presents ideas for educating students.*

Although principals can indirectly affect children's access to guns at home through communication with parents, they can ensure that students at their school learn about school policies and the consequences of gun violence.

### Policies

Student education regarding gun safety begins with communication that school policies prohibit guns at school. Menwith Hill High School 10th-grader Kyle Walsh's article on school violence (Newsletter #6) provides an example of effective communication regarding policies prohibiting weapons at school. Walsh writes: "The policy bans weapons and replicas of weapons at school functions or activities . . ." Walsh refers to a "pamphlet explaining the policy" that describes discipline actions in response to weapons possession. This student's explanation of the weapons policy and reference document indicates that the school succeeded in communicating DoDEA's policy.

### Physical/Emotional Consequences

However, children who read and listen to explanations of policies do not necessarily understand the physical and emotional pain inflicted by gunshot wounds. Paul Esselstyn, an emergency responder who aided students injured in the Thurston H.S. shooting at Portland, Oregon said, "I can't imagine



that they [student shooters] are mature enough to understand the mayhem and the heartache they create. . . . That Kinkel kid, there's no way

he can understand how many people he affected" ("Shootings Muddle the Gun Debate" 12/9/98 *Courier-Journal* Louisville, KY., (<http://www.courier-journal.com/cjextra/schoolshoot/SCHshootingsmuddle.html>). Evan Ramsey, the student convicted for killing his high school principal and another student at Bethel, Alaska, explains in a video taped interview with the U.S. Secret Service, that he did not intend to kill people, only "punish" them for bullying him. During the interview, the student shooter explains that from the video game *Doom*, he understood several gunshots were required to kill a person. Excerpts from a *Chicago Sun Times* report on the Ramsey interview include Ramsey's realization of the emotional pain he caused the victims' families (<http://www.treas.gov/usss/index.htm?ntac.htm&1>).

[U.S. Secret Service] **Q.** "Why the school?"

[Ramsey] **A.** "That's where most of my pain and suffering was."

[Ramsey] "I figured since the principal and the dean weren't doing anything that was making any impression, that I was gonna have to do something, or else I was gonna keep on getting picked on."

[Ramsey] “I would tell you, if you think the pain you’re feeling now is lots, the aftereffects will be worse. . . . I wish I hadn’t done it. Nobody should have to deal with that kind of pain.”

Effective gun safety classes teach students about the realistic physical and emotional affects of gunshot wounds. The Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) May 1996 report *Reducing Youth Gun Violence*, provides a directory of youth gun violence prevention programs available from National Criminal Reference Service (<http://www.ncjrs.org>). According to OJJDP, adults from the mentoring group Concerned Black Men bring high school students to the hospital emergency room at Prince George’s County, Maryland, to see doctors treating victims of gunshot wounds. Baltimore County Police worked with public schools to design classes for 3rd-graders, 7th-graders, and 9th-graders that “deglamorize guns” and teach children “how to respond when threatened by or coming into contact with a gun.” On 4/9/01, the Maryland legislature approved legislation requiring gun safety education for all K-12 public school students.

The National Rifle Association’s (NRA) Eddie Eagle program teaches children who find a gun to “leave the area, and tell an adult” (<http://www.aaof.com/ed.htm>). Although the Violence Policy Center criticized Eddie Eagle classes for increasing students’ interest in guns (<http://www.nrahq.org/safety/eddie>) the NRA responded that the classes prevent accidental shootings of children.

Handgun Control, Inc.’s Straight Talk About Risks (STAR) classes (<http://www.bradycenter.org/star/index.asp>) are taught in seventy municipalities including New York, N.Y., Los Angeles, CA., Chicago, IL. and Dade County, FL. Independent evaluations concluded STAR was highly effective at preparing teachers to present gun violence strategies and motivating students to participate in the classes. Educators also considered the pre-K-12 materials developmentally and culturally sensitive.

Principals working with parents to decrease children’s access to guns, and giving students a realistic sense of the pain resulting from gun violence, convert the “It cannot happen here” mentality into the “Actions taken to prevent it happening here” reality.



## Program Evaluation Results

The recent Safe Schools program evaluation has given us a great deal of material and data to work with to make Safe Schools a vital and proactive program within your school.

The objectives of the DoDEA Safe Schools Program Evaluation (PE) were to:

- 1) determine the effectiveness of training workshops
- 2) measure the extent of usage of the Safe Schools Program

To help achieve these objectives, school administrators and principals who attended the DoDEA Safe Schools workshops, between November 1999 and April 2000, were asked to respond to a survey consisting of sixteen questions. A full report on the program evaluation will be provided to DoDEA headquarters during July 2001. This article highlights responses to three of the questions:

- Handbooks
- Newsletters
- Written safe school plans

### Handbooks

The main components of the Safe Schools Program (handbooks with CDs, videotapes, workshop training, and technical support) have been positively received throughout the DoDEA community. Textual comments from the schools provided many useful suggestions for a more concisely written handbook with simplified handbook tools.

## Newsletters

Principals indicated that they benefited from the DoDEA Safe Schools newsletters. 25% of respondents reported that the Safe Schools newsletters were “extremely helpful” and another 31% of respondents indicated that the newsletters were “very helpful”. Textual responses from the schools included requests for updates on:

- School violence prevention research
- New research-based intervention strategies
- Information schools could use with their students or in their individual school newsletters

## Written Plans

Almost all of the responding principals were working to establish Safe Schools Plans. 89% of the respondents had written a plan or were writing a plan. This includes:

- 21% who had completed proactive type Safe School Plans (SSP)
- 32% who had completed reactive type Incident Response Plans (IRP)
- 36% who had partially written plans

As many DoD communities have already found, all the resources are in place to make Safe Schools a vital part of your community effort to protect your students and staff. We at DynCorp, the NASSP, NAESP, and your DoDEA management and Safety and Security staff are here to help you make school year 2001-2002 safe, secure, and successful.