



SAFE SCHOOLS

NEWSLETTER



Issue 9

May 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.

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Safe Schools NEWS

Student Survey Essentials

Remember, surveys are just another means of providing communication between the students and the principal. The sample student survey contained in the DoDEA Safe Schools Handbook (Tool #2) is *representative* and must be customized for use in each school. It is essential to remember that the objective is to obtain usable information from your students. So, don't be overcome by concerns of questionnaire reliability, validity, and statistical requirements. You want your survey to:

- ✓ Provide information that will reveal "potential" problems (Phase I).
- ✓ Allow for anonymity but not necessarily require it — your choice.
- ✓ Document student / school staff member responses.

Involving representatives of the school community in the work of preparing the questionnaires helps principals discover and address possible objections to the survey. Students, teachers, parents, and others who assist with the work involved in editing and preparing questions are more likely to support the effort and



explain to others the potential enhancement to school climate. Principals planning to work with a group of eight to ten representatives of the school community might include:

- ✓ School administrators
- ✓ Teachers
- ✓ School Liaison Officers
- ✓ Teachers union representatives
- ✓ School support staff
- ✓ Students
- ✓ Parents
- ✓ Provost Marshalls

For younger students, some surveys use graphics to help children identify how they feel about school security. For example, the anti-bullying strategy *Operation Respect: Don't Laugh At Me* (<http://www.dontlaugh.org>) invites students to respond to questions about whether they feel safe at school using smiling faces or sad faces to depict their emotions. The Pennsylvania Center for



I like it



OK



I don't like it

Schools and Communities (<http://www.center-school.org/>) prepared separate surveys for middle school and junior high school students, high school students, parents, and teachers. For other examples of school safety surveys, email DynCorp (mckeonb@dyncorp.com).

Representative surveys can assist school administrators in surveying the school community. However, principals should not expect to provide off-the-shelf questionnaires to their students without adjusting the questions to make them appropriate for the students' maturity and the specific characteristics of the school.

National Character Education Legislation

On February 14, 2001, Rep. Lamar Smith (R-TX) and Bob Clement (D-TN) introduced the Character Learning and Student Success Act of 2001 (H.R. 613). The legislation would establish a national center to research effective ways of teaching character education (CE) and provide information on CE to students, parents and teachers.

Program Evaluation Update

Thank you to all of the school administrators who responded to the DoDEA Program Evaluation. The quantity and thoughtfulness of the responses received was encouraging. The survey results should provide information to make the DoDEA Safe Schools Program more useful to school superintendents and principals.



30% of U.S. Students Involved in Bullying

“Metal detectors and police presence are not enough. . . . Those signs that say, ‘No Drugs, No Weapons’ should also say ‘No Bullying.’”

Scott Poland, National Association of School Psychologists

Source: *Education World* (http://www.education-world.com/a_issues/issues163.shtml)

30% of U.S. middle school and high school students participate in bullying either as bullies (13%), victims (10.6%) or both (6.3%) according to “Bullying Behaviors Among U.S. Youth”, a report in the 4/25/01 *Journal of the American Medical Association* (<http://jama.ama-assn.org/issues/v285n16/abs/joc01746.html>). The research, funded by the World Health Organization, surveyed more youth than previous studies. Fifteen thousand six hundred eighty six U.S. 6th-graders to 10th-graders provided self-reports of their involvement with bullying behavior. Researchers noted that school-based interventions in Norway and England decreased bullying 30% to 50% by:

- Changing school and classroom climate to increase awareness of bullying.
- Establishing anti-bullying policies.
- Teaching students that bullying behavior is not acceptable.
- Providing students classes on social skills.
- Increasing supervision of students at school.
- Enhancing parental involvement.
- Supporting and protecting bullying victims.



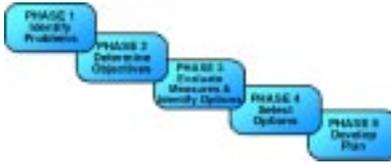
President Bush Endorses Character Education

“Education is not complete unless we are willing to teach our children not only how to read and write, but the difference between right and wrong.”

*President George W. Bush
Central Connecticut State University,
4/18/01*

During a 4/18/01 Education Speech at Central Connecticut State University, President George W. Bush endorsed allowing faith-based and community-based groups to provide Character Education (CE) for students (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/04/20010418-3.html>). President Bush said, “Open up those after-school programs to faith-based and community-based programs.” According to the President, the FY2002 Department of Education budget request included three times the amount of funding for CE provided during FY2001. For more information on CE, see the January 2001 Newsletter (Newsletter #5) or the Intervention Strategies article in this newsletter.

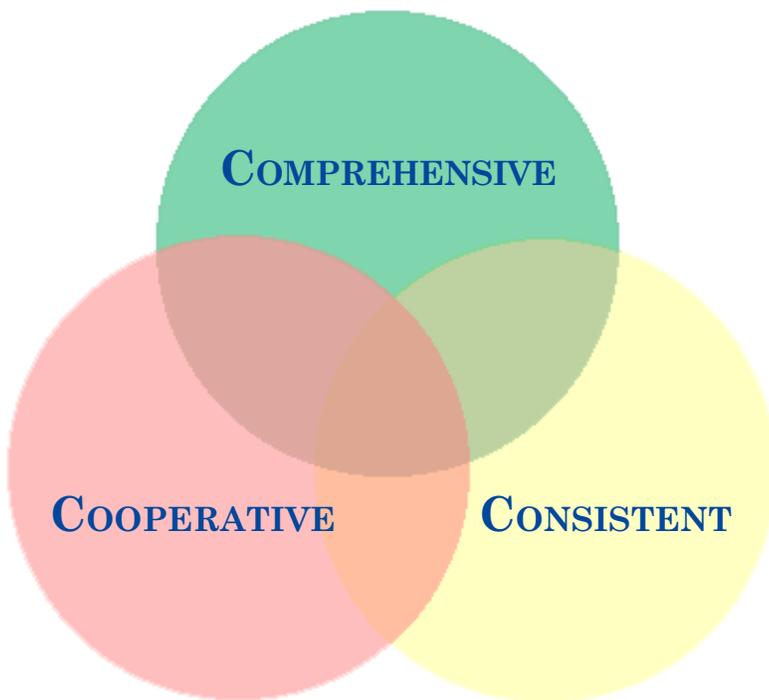
Applying the 5 Phase Process



PHASE 4
Select
Options

Phase Four – Selecting Options

Last month we focused on the process of deciding which policy, program, and physical security options to adopt that would bring about the greatest benefit to your overall program. In the decision process, the basic factors to consider were the importance of the objective, the effectiveness of the measure, financial ramifications, legal impediments and ease of implementation. In addition to these factors, keep in mind The Three C's – Components for Concerted Action.



Ensure that your options are **Comprehensive** by considering all the pertinent policies, the community climate, and the facility itself. For example, a school in the state of Washington decided to implement student identification cards. The principal selected a system that provided each student one card to authorize access to the campus, Internet, and bus service. The cards also allowed students to charge their cafeteria meals and the card system enabled administrators to verify student class schedules.

Cooperative choices consider all of the stakeholders – students, parents, administrators, etc. For example, at a school in the state of

Colorado an attorney volunteers as a guest teacher. The attorney discusses fundamental ethical principles. Students are taught the “golden rule” and are challenged to look at situations by collecting evidence, evaluating arguments, and seeing the other side of an issue. In this example, the students benefit from the community and the community becomes involved.

Consistent choices are sometimes very difficult to implement in a DoDEA setting because one family could easily have children in two or three different schools – all within the same system but not necessarily governed by the same rules or policies. This is a situation in which policy, from school to school, should be consistent. Otherwise, the family will have a difficult time explaining differences to their children about punishments being inconsistent for similar infractions.

Developing policies, determining programs, and selecting physical security measures with The Three C's in mind will help you immeasurably. Your overall safe schools program will be developed within the context of thorough analysis and planning.

Watch These Dates

Copycat crimes are a reality and the perpetrators of these crimes sometimes use anniversary dates to inflict their terror. The graphic accompanying this article presents dates worthy of increased vigilance and heightened awareness because of the risk of copycat offenses. Except for the Columbine High School (CHS) incident at Littleton, Colorado, that began at approximately 11:35 a.m., these incidents usually occurred during the early morning hours of school.

In the weeks following the CHS incident in 1999, there were reports of mimicking behavior at schools in every state except Vermont. Pennsylvania reported sixty threats of school violence. An event such as CHS provides an

example for copycats. “This jolts them or motivates them to do what they’d toyed with doing anyway,” says David Silber, a professor of psychology at George Washington University, who studies violence. Leonard Berkowitz, a University of Wisconsin psychologist, who has studied aggression for decades, says, “such crime booms are fueled in part by the intense news coverage surrounding such events which primes people already inclined toward aggression.” Michael Napier, formerly of the FBI’s Center on Violent Crime, believes that teachers and students should watch for clues that youngsters have become withdrawn or fascinated with violence.

So, be alert, look for indicators, and be aware that schools might be at higher risk of violent incidents on these dates.

FEBRUARY 2, 1996

MOSES LAKE, WA
FRONTIER JUNIOR H.S.
MALE – AGE 16



FEBRUARY 19, 1997

BETHEL, AK
BETHEL REGIONAL H.S.
MALE – AGE 16



MARCH 5, 2001

SANTEE, CA
SANTANA H.S.
MALE – AGE 15



MARCH 7, 2001

WILLIAMSPORT, PA
BISHOP NEUMANN H.S.
FEMALE – AGE 14



MARCH 24, 1998

JONESBORO, AR
WESTSIDE M.S.
MALES – AGES 11 & 13



APRIL 20, 1999

LITTLETON, CO
COLUMBINE H.S.
MALES – AGES 16 & 17



APRIL 24, 1998

EDINBORO, PA
PARKER M.S.
MALE – AGE 14



MAY 19, 1998

FAYETTEVILLE, TN
LINCOLN COUNTY H.S.
MALE – AGE 18



MAY 20, 1999

CONYERS, GA
HERITAGE H.S.
MALE – AGE 15



MAY 21, 1998

SPRINGFIELD, OR
THURSTON H.S.
MALE – AGE 15



OCTOBER 1, 1997

PEARL, MS
PEARL H.S.
MALE – AGE 16



DECEMBER 1, 1997

WEST PADUCAH, KY
HEATH H.S.
MALE – AGE 14



Center Helps Schools Teach Character Education

Since students readily identify discrepancies between principles advocated and principles taught, it is important to discern the principles that guide ethical decisions by members of the school community before writing Character Education (CE) lessons. The Ethics Resource Center ([ERC] <http://www.ethics.org/>) established The National Institute for Character Education (NICE) to teach schools how to begin, continue, and evaluate, effective CE classes. NICE has helped more than one hundred sixty schools start or improve CE programs.

NICE works with students, parents, teachers, and school administrators to identify guiding principles. School communities identify their existing values through *surveys* for teachers, school staff, and students; *interviews* with school and community decision-makers; and *conferences*. Conference participants discuss the information learned in the surveys and interviews and identify guiding principles for their school community. Participants establish a hierarchy of desired character traits by comparing the relative importance of words such as “respect”, “justice”, “self-discipline” and “responsibility”.

Specific NICE services include:

- **Planning:** Gather information about the school and report on the guiding principles. Design CE programs that can be taught in existing classes.

- **Workshops:** Prepare school administrators, teachers, parents, and community members to include CE in existing classes and activities.
- **Consulting services:** Support the school with newsletters, lesson plans, phone and email responses to specific inquiries.
- **Evaluation:** Report on CE progress using surveys, interviews and document research. Written report and briefing include recommendations on how to continue and improve CE.

Miss America Discusses Character Education and Violence Prevention

At a 4/30/01 Ethics Resource Center (ERC) reception, Angela Perez Baraquio, Miss America 2001, encouraged students, parents and educators to work together to establish classroom character education (CE) programs. Ms. Baraquio has discussed CE and how to prevent racism, discrimination, and violence in schools and communities, with students in Massachusetts, Ohio, Illinois, Hawaii and Washington, D.C.. Prior to becoming Miss America, Ms. Baraquio was an elementary school gym teacher in Hawaii.

Senator Domenici (D-NM) explained that the Senate Budget Committee favored increasing the \$25.0M request for CE to \$50.0M — \$1.0M for each of the fifty States. Senator Domenici cautioned that rather than select specific intervention strategies or CE programs, the federal government should provide the funds to the States and let communities decide how to teach CE.

Limiting Children's Access to Guns

This is part one of a two part series on "Limiting Children's Access to Guns." This article (Newsletter #9) offers ideas on communicating with parents. The June 2001 DoDEA Safe Schools newsletter (Newsletter #10) presents ideas for educating students.

Although school administrators have a limited ability to influence children's access to guns at home and in the community, diplomatic communication and education might decrease the risk of a gun being used in a violent incident at school. Specifically, principals can *communicate with parents* regarding responsible storage of guns at home, and *educate students* about the consequences of gun usage. Teaching students about the physical, emotional, and legal consequences of gun violence deglamorizes guns. Informing parents about school policies prohibiting weapons possession, and offering specific suggestions regarding gun storage, decreases students' access to guns.



Communicating With Parents

Parents might find it difficult to imagine that their child could use a gun from home in a violent incident at school until it happens. However, the weapons used in recent school shooting incidents were usually obtained from home. The Josephson Institute (<http://www.josephsoninstitute.org>) reported that 22% of all Middle School students and 47% of all High School students indicated that they could obtain a gun if they needed it (Newsletter #8).

Securing Guns

School administrator and medical associations offer information describing how principals can communicate with parents about gun safety. The Washington State School Directors Association (<http://www.wssda.org>) guide "Communicating About School Safety" provides an example of a "safety letter to parents". School administrators send parents the letter describing school policy and discipline guidelines regarding weapons. The letter diplomatically asks that parents securely store any weapons in the home, and requests the family's cooperation in protecting their children. Parents are encouraged to take five specific actions.

- Ensure that weapons at home are not accessible to your child.
- Talk to your child about situations that would make them feel they need protection.
- Counsel your child that violence does not solve problems.

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- Discuss movies and television shows that suggest that violence solves problems.
- Enhance your child's self-esteem so they can make good choices and avoid potentially dangerous situations.

Decreasing youth access to guns is “Priority 5” of the December 2000 American Medical Association (AMA) report *Youth And Violence* (<http://www.ama-assn.org/violence>). AMA recommends that gun owners remove handguns from areas where children “live and play”, store ammunition and guns separately, and secure both guns and ammunition. Medical professionals are encouraged to help schools and communities prevent gun violence through education, just as doctors would use preventive measures to respond to other public health epidemics.

Listening to Children

Parents can decrease the risk that their child will become involved in gun violence by emphasizing the parent's disapproval of violence as an acceptable response to stressful situations, and listening to their child's ideas about the consequences for victims, aggressors and their families.



Student Involvement in Safe Schools Planning

Scott Poland, President, National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), recommends involving students in safe schools planning efforts to encourage students to take responsibility for school security (4/25/01 *Education World* <http://www.education-world.com>). Student assistance gathering information and publicizing results enables school administrators to concentrate on Safe Schools decision making. Including student representatives on the Safe Schools Planning Committee (SSPC) provides needed assistance to school administrators, gives students valuable leadership experience, and improves awareness among other students and parents regarding the school's efforts to enhance school security. Increasing the *awareness of and participation in Safe Schools Planning (SSP)* usually *results in better school community support* for the resulting plan.

The DoDEA Safe Schools Program includes several opportunities for student participation:

1. Identifying Problems, Phase 1: Students can help complete Incident Reports (Tool #1) to help school administrators identify where and when problems occur at their school. Working with an adult advisor, students can distribute, explain, and evaluate student and school staff surveys (Tools #2 and #3) to help the SSPC understand how students and teachers perceive security at their school.
2. Determining Objectives, Phase 2: Student ideas regarding how to enhance school climate provide inspiration to the SSPC in determining security objectives for the school. School administrators can invite all students to provide written comments at the school Internet site or email suggestions to the principal. Student SSPC members could summarize the comments for the committee.
3. Evaluating Measures, Phase 3: Groups of students working with an adult advisor or school administrator can inspect the school facility and complete the Physical Security Review (PSR). Later, students familiar with the PSR can help evaluate the affect of security measures selected.
4. Communicating Your Plan (DoDEA Safe Schools Handbook pp.63-73) Student SSPC members can help publicize the school's efforts to enhance school climate and decrease the risk of an incident of violence by: writing updates on SSPC progress for the school Internet site; preparing news releases for local newspapers and radio stations; and contacting community businesses to request their support for community service projects.

Student participation in SSP enhances school climate because students feel responsible for seeing the resulting plan work.



Violence in School

Nathaniel “Nate” Holley, 5th grader

“The consequences . . . you’ll get kicked out of school . . . you’ll get in big, big, trouble with your parents.”

I really hate violence. I really get scared about violence. I feel bad for the kids who got hurt or killed in schools. In this paper I’m going to talk about violence in school and about how bad it is in school.

The first thing I’m going to talk about is the consequences. The first consequence is you’ll get kicked out of school. The second is you’ll get in big, big trouble with your parents. The third, you will go to jail if you fight and hurt the person real bad.

The second thing I’m going to talk about is violence with drugs. This is a violence that you can do to yourself and others. To hurt people with drugs is to be a drug dealer. You can go to jail for being a drug dealer. You can hurt yourself with drugs by smoking cigarettes, marijuana and drinking alcohol, which is bad for young people and can kill you.

Another violence is threats. One threat can lead you to jail for life. It could get people real mad if they are under a lot of stress and they may want to hurt you real bad. If you make a fake threat, you can still go to jail.

I’ve described some things about how violence is bad. We should stop violence and get along. This will make us a happier society.

*Garmisch American School,
Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany*

*Olaf Zwicker, Principal;
Bob Van Epps, Teacher,
Brenda Lynch, Counselor*



Violence in School

Princeton J. Tabon, 5th grader

“Teachers should encourage their students to realize if someone picks on you that they are just jealous of you.”

I am going to discuss violence in schools. I'm very sorry for the parents that have to put up with their kids disrespecting them and going out to commit homicide. I also think that older kids should remember that the younger kids look up to them and will do anything they do. I'll discuss how I feel about violence, how to stop violence, how to put an end to fighting, gangs, and how to keep kids from bringing weapons into school.

To stop kids from bringing guns to school, the schools should have a book bag check in the morning, locker checks in the afternoon, and desk checks at the end of school.

To stop violence, schools should have programs to take their minds off of doing something wrong. Programs may not work, but there would be less shooting and more learning.

To put an end to fighting, teachers should encourage their students to realize if someone picks on you that they are just jealous of you. I think that disabled people are the bravest people ever because everyday they do their best in anything no matter how much others make fun of them. In my book that makes them the bravest people in the world today. A lot of violence comes off of the streets.

Kids join gangs and think that people will respect and like them more, but that is not the way life is. If you join a gang people respect you less and you would

probably have no future. As you grow up you will find out who your real family is. Gangs are just low, dirty, scamps who want to mess up your future by getting you in trouble. If you have a bad record people wouldn't hire you. That is why you should not join the gang.

This paper that you have just read proves that programs can lower the risk of violence. It tells why you shouldn't join a gang, it tells why people pick at you, how to stop kids from bringing guns into school, and for me, I finally got a chance to let out how I feel about violence. I hope that this essay comes through to all kids that steal or do any thing that they know is wrong. Thank you for reading this essay.

Garmisch American School, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany

Olaf Zwicker, Principal; Bob Van Epps, Teacher, Brenda Lynch, Counselor

Student Article Corrections:

We would like to apologize for errors in the information identifying some of the student articles. Here are the corrections.

In Newsletter #7, Olga Zeveleva is a 7th-grader not a 5th-grader.

In Newsletter #8, Kayla Weiglein and Erin Emblar are 5th-graders but their teacher is Bob Van Epps, not Dovie Jones.

Our apologies to Olga Zeveleva, Bob Van Epps, Dovie Jones and our readers.

Please feel free to email responses to the articles (mckeonb@dyncorp.com).