



# SAFE SCHOOLS

# NEWSLETTER



Volume 2, Issue 1

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*A very special "Thank You" to Kim Perino of Brussels DSO for contributing the photographs on page 5.*

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# Welcome Back!



## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

We are here to help you! DynCorp supports the DoDEA Safe Schools Program with technical assistance that includes responding to requests from DoDEA school administrators with specific questions about Safe School Planning, such as:

- Applying the Five-Phased Process for writing a Safe School Plan
- Sources of Information on Substance Abuse and Violence Prevention
- Examples of Student, Staff and Parent Surveys for Elementary School Students
- Best Practices

### Contact us at:

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## Welcome to DoDEA Safe Schools Newsletters for School Year 2001-2002

Welcome to the first Safe Schools Newsletter for SY2001-2002. We enjoyed presenting the newsletter during the previous school year and look forward to providing another year's worth of interesting information, useful to you.

We also appreciated the thoughtful and favorable email responses received regarding previous newsletters and have made some changes in response to readers' suggestions:

### ➔ **More concise newsletter**

- **News & Updates** includes updates on the DoDEA Safe Schools Program, as well as recent events, studies, and reports regarding school violence prevention.
- **Safe School Planning** includes ideas on Risk Reduction Planning, Incident Response Planning and Emergency Exercises.
- **Intervention Strategies** includes lessons learned as well as updates on specific intervention strategies such as anti-bullying, conflict resolution, and parental involvement.
- **Education Issues** includes best practices, significant government reports and statistical studies on school violence, as well as thoughtful discussions about specific topics of interest to DoDEA school administrators.

### ➔ **Interactive Internet addresses**

- Click on internet addresses to visit referenced internet sites

### ➔ **Interactive email addresses**

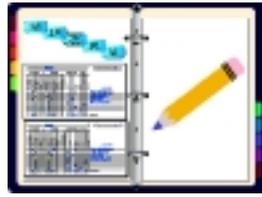
- Click on email addresses to write an email response.

## 75% of Students Concerned About A Shooting at Their School

On August 28, 2001, Dr. Edward Gaughan, Alfred University Psychology professor, described the results of "Lethal Violence in Schools" Alfred University and Harris Interactive's survey of two thousand seventeen middle and high school youth during June and July 2001 ([www.alfred.edu/teenviolence/](http://www.alfred.edu/teenviolence/)). Highlights of the report on student attitudes about school violence include:

- **Concern:** 75% of respondents were concerned about a shooting occurring at their school. 25% of respondents said their schools are only "somewhat" safe, or not at all safe.
- **Causes:** 87% of students reported that revenge for bullying behavior was the cause of school shootings. 61% of students recognized that physical abuse at home contributes to school violence.
- **Prevention:** Students recommended better relationships between teachers and students as one option for preventing lethal violence in schools. Only 50% of students reported that they would tell an adult if they heard other students planning a school shooting. Students reported that they would be more likely to tell a teacher than a guidance counselor or an athletic coach.





# Safe School Planning

## How's Your Plan Working?



How can you determine if your Safe School Plan is working? How can you measure the effectiveness of your Safe School Plan? The answers are in the Five-Phase Process described in your Safe Schools Handbook. If the five phases are properly used to develop a plan, then the metrics will appear in Phase One — Identify Problems. Here is how it works!

Picture this scenario. You analyze data from your school files on the Incident Worksheet — Tool 1, and identify bullying as a problem at your school. From Phase Two of the Five-Phase Process, you write a corresponding objective to *reduce bullying by 50% by the end of the semester*. Remember, Phase Two — Determine Objectives, requires you to establish objectives that are clearly written, reasonable, and *measurable*. At the end of the semester, by simply analyzing data from your school files again, you can compare the frequency of occurrence of bullying at the end of the semester with the frequency of incidents at the beginning of the semester. Comparison of the two snapshots of the bullying situation at your school will provide a measurement of the effectiveness of your anti-bullying efforts.

**Students believe that teachers should intervene in bullying incidents.**

## When is the Best Time to Conduct the Five Phase Process?

As the school year begins there is more than enough to occupy your mind as you work to establish routines, new relationships, and ultimately a sound program of instruction for your students. Not to worry! Conducting the Five-Phase Process to develop your Safe School Plan requires *some time* to elapse before you will have sufficient data to analyze for decision-making. Therefore, a good time to Identify Problems — Phase One, is at the mid-semester mark. By then you will have enough data on the Incident Worksheets to make information-based decisions.

This leaves time before the Christmas break to complete the Safe School Plan for the remainder of the year. Together with the other Tools in your Safe Schools Handbook (e.g., student surveys, staff surveys, climate surveys, etc.) you will be able to evaluate your measures and identify options for your plan.

To avoid losing perspective, remember the formula from last year's newsletter (Newsletter #8), *Safe School Planning = Risk Reduction Planning + Incident Response Planning (SSP = RRP + IRP)*. The Five Phase Process is the RRP. On the other hand, you cannot afford to wait until mid-way through the first semester to have an Incident Response Plan (IRP).



## Sophisticated Children/Not Yet Adults: Connecting With Middle School Youth

Middle School (MS) administrators and teachers can influence their students to decrease violence and substance abuse at school and beyond. White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) research indicates effective prevention education with 6th-, 7th-, and 8th-graders decreases their involvement with drugs and violence as MS students, later in high school, and as adults.

Experienced MS educators know their students are different than elementary school or high school students. They are more sophisticated than elementary school students, but not yet mature. MS youth absorb knowledge but are easily distracted. Court Television guides such as *A Teacher's Guide to Working With Young Adolescents* ([www.courttv.com/choices/teachers/](http://www.courttv.com/choices/teachers/)) offer suggestions to faculty and parents for improving communication with MS youth about substance abuse and violence prevention. A critical ingredient in the communication recipe is simply listening to youth.

- ★ **Respect:** MS youth appreciate and respond to adults who *listen* and *respect* them as individuals. Avoid language suggesting social or ethnic stereotypes.
- ★ **Expectations:** Challenge students with high expectations for academics and behavior.
- ★ **Service projects:** Service learning projects harness MS students' awareness of social and environmental needs and enable students to work with adults on meaningful issues.
- ★ **Perspective:** View/listen to students' music, video games, and entertainment to understand the influences affecting their perspective on life decisions.
- ★ **Evaluation:** Evaluate progress frequently to help youth remember how specific classroom activities connect to the larger academic concepts they are studying.
- ★ **Conversion:** Convert large concepts into specific projects and classroom activities. Modest-sized assignments enable students to concentrate on their work and complete activities before they become distracted.
- ★ **Technology:** Teach MS students to analyze messages and advertising received via technology, such as television, movies, emails, and the Internet.



When MS administrators and teachers listen to MS youth, students feel they have a relationship with at least one adult at their school who will be there if they need to discuss a specific concern such as a problem with bullying, substance abuse, or a possible incident of violence at school.



## A Gem from Germany - DSSO Training in Wiesbaden Highlights the Summer Activities

District Safety and Security Officers (DSSOs) gathered in Wiesbaden, Germany, for a week of training on chemical safety and the DoDEA Safe Schools Program. The DoDEA Office of Safety and Security sponsored a Safe Schools workshop on 16-17 August 2001, which Bob Michela (below) and Paul Hersey (above) of DynCorp conducted for ten DSSOs from DoDDS-Europe and DDESS. The workshop provided DSSOs with information and skills to better assist school administrators in implementing the Safe Schools Program.



The workshop immersed participants in both the theoretical and practical aspects of Safe School Planning. The first day's training focused on changing trends in school violence and how to conduct a school risk assessment using the Five-Phased

Approach. Attendees spent the second day in interactive training concentrated on roles & responsibilities, best practices, program evaluation results, and how best to assist principals with policies, intervention programs, and physical security measures.

The talented group of DSSOs exhibited enthusiasm for their jobs and developed

a camaraderie that is sure to benefit administrators who are preparing to implement the Safe Schools Program at



their schools in the coming school year. Principals should feel comfortable consulting their respective DSSOs for tips on conducting the Five-Phased Approach and insight on how to formulate a Safe School Plan. Gary Jones, Terri Stover, and Wayne Cox hosted the week-long event that included a group dinner and additional opportunities for discussion and team building.




### Tell Us What Works!

Share lessons learned! Address *incident response exercises...ways to achieve parental involvement...or tell us your most successful idea.* We prefer drafts of approximately 150 words or less in the Microsoft Word format. Email ([mckeonb@dyncorp.com](mailto:mckeonb@dyncorp.com)) and remember to include your name, school, location and email address.

