



SAFE SCHOOLS

NEWSLETTER



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Safe Schools NEWS



Quantico, Virginia Safe Schools Workshop

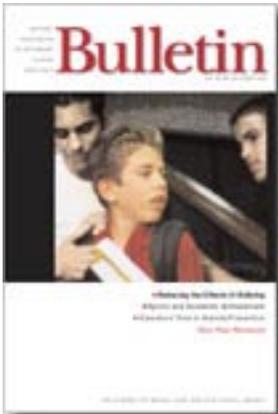
DDESS school administrators from New York and Virginia recently met at Quantico, Virginia for a Safe Schools workshop. The school district superintendent, Antiterrorism/Force Protection officer, and principals discussed Incident Response Planning in a group exercise and recommended specific actions for responding to a critical incident. For information on updated workshop training contact Brian McKeon, phone (703) 461-2271 or email: mckeonb@dyncorp.com.





NASSP: Anti-bullying Recommendations

A study of bullying among 9th-graders in U.S. high schools published in the March 2002 National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) *Bulletin* recommends countering bullying behavior with student surveys, anti-bullying policies, and teacher training (www.principals.org/news/bltn_9thbully0302.html).



The report recommends establishing antibullying policies, providing training for school staff on how to respond to bullying incidents, and increasing supervision in the lunchroom, classroom, and at co-curricular events. Researchers endorsed using annual student surveys to discover the extent of bullying behavior at school. The study recommended sharing the results of student surveys with school staff and parents to enhance awareness of bullying problems, and discussing the problem openly with students.

Results from the survey indicated three out of four students observe bullying behavior and one in four bullying victims feel anger or sadness. Researchers supported the use of surveys to help school administrators learn about unreported incidents. Of the students identified as bullying victims, 40% told a friend, 17% told their mother, 4% told a teacher and 17% did not tell anyone.

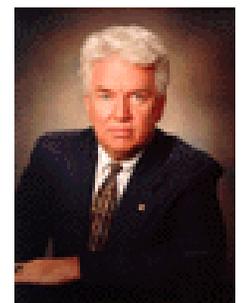
Students did not tell teachers or school administrators about incidents because they did not feel school staff were interested in preventing bullying behavior. Only 25% of students felt that school administrators

wanted to prevent bullying, 28% of students said they did not believe that school administrators were interested in preventing bullying, and 21% indicated teachers were not interested in intervening to protect victims.

CDC: School “Connectedness” Prevents Substance Abuse

The April 8, 2002 update to the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, referred to as the “Ad Health” study, indicates that U.S. adolescents are more likely to avoid risky behaviors if they “feel connected to their school.” This update to the ongoing Ad Health study explores how a teacher’s classroom management affects student involvement with violence, substance abuse, and suicidal behavior. The study also examines how groups of friends or “cliques,” classroom size, discipline policies, and experienced teachers, affect students’ involvement in “risky behavior”.

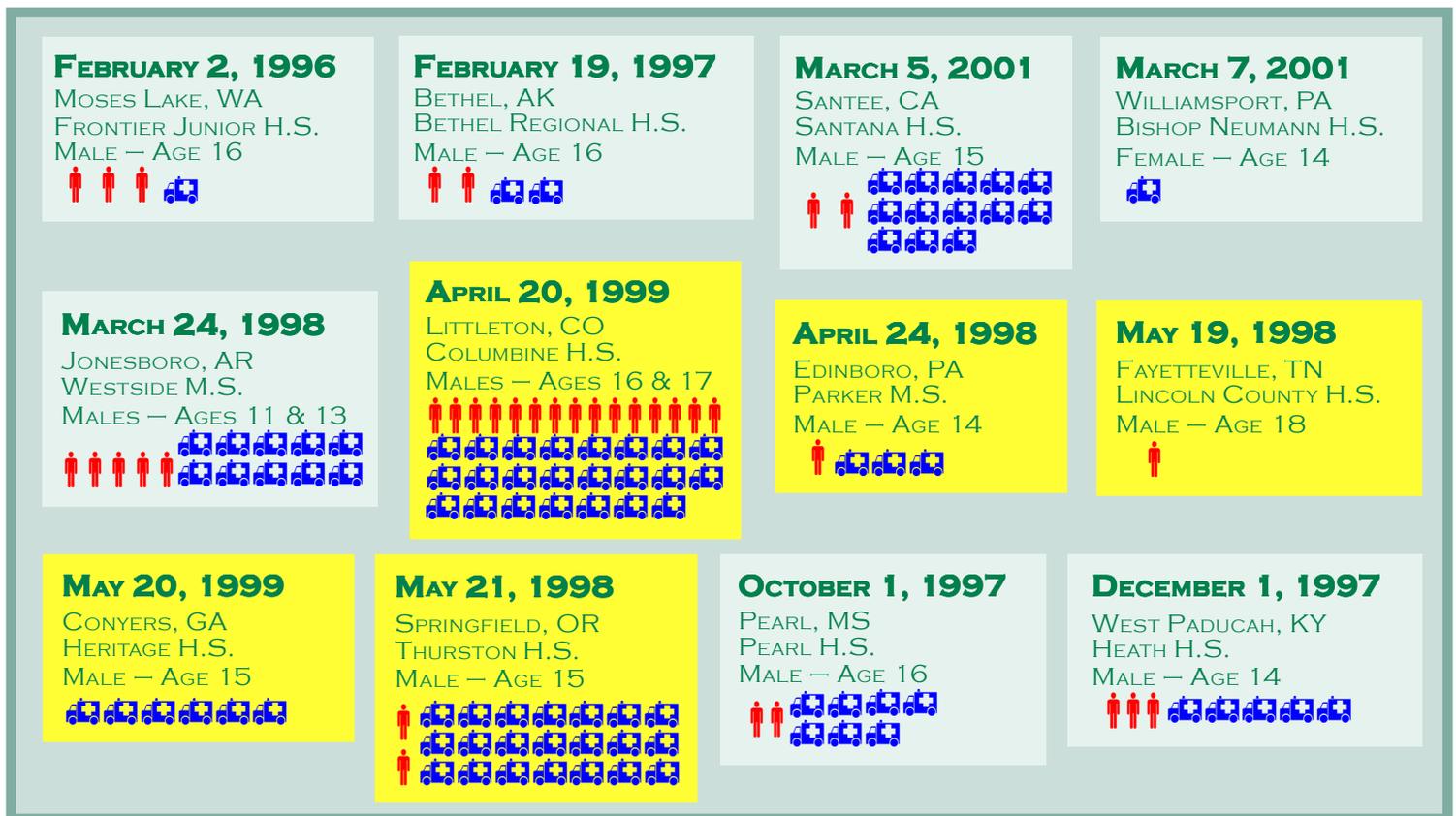
The Ad Health study surveyed 90,000 students in grades 7-12. Then 20,000 students and their families were interviewed in students’ homes. Paul Houston, Executive Director, American Association of School Administrators (AASA), with researchers from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the University of Minnesota, presented the results (www.aasa.org/issues_and_insights/children/adolescent_report_4-08-02.htm). For a description of previous reports from the Ad Health study see the December 2000 DoDEA Safe Schools newsletter #1-4.





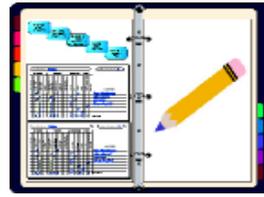
Time for Prevention

Pressure of exams, the anticipation of transition to the summer, changing relationships, and related anxieties bring frustration to the end of the school year. Now is the time to be vigilant. Remember the caution from the May 2001 DoDEA Safe Schools newsletter regarding similar dates for school violence incidents. Copycat crimes are a reality and perpetrators of these crimes sometimes use anniversary dates to inflict their terror. The examples highlighted in the graphic below indicate the prevalence of school violence incidents as students approach the end of the school year. School administrators and school staff can use this reminder to heighten their awareness and increase their vigilance. Listen for troubled students, refer them to counseling, and report indications of possible school violence.



 FATALITIES  WOUNDED

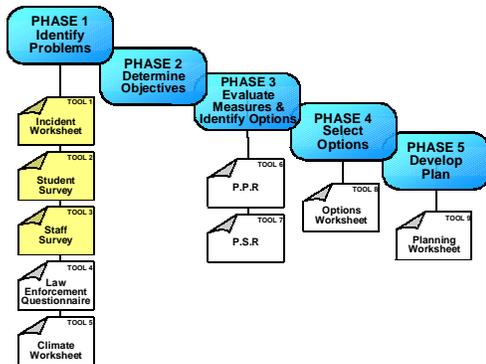




Safe School Planning

The Proactive Nature of the Five Phase Process

The tools for Phase One of the Five Phase Process are designed to help you identify future problems that you are likely to encounter at your school. Problems can be grouped into one of two categories: past problems and future problems.



The DoDEA Safe Schools Handbook refers to problems that have occurred as being **real or actual**. In other words, they are historical. These problems can be identified and researched in your school files or database of disciplinary actions. Incidents reported in previous Serious Incidents Reports (SIR) would certainly qualify for Incident Worksheets. Tool 1: Incident Worksheets are designed to help you determine the patterns from these past incidents that might be predictive of the future if actions are not taken to prevent continuation of these patterns or trends.

The second category of problem discussed in your Handbook is described as a **potential or perceived** problem – the one that is likely to occur in the future without yet having been identified. Although this type of problem has not yet manifested itself, it is looking for a place and a time to occur. How does an administrator identify this type of problem? Tool 2: Student Surveys and Tool 3: School Staff surveys can help! The answer resides in the school community. Students know about most problems. School staff and parents might also offer valuable insight regarding security vulnerabilities. Surveys are one means of obtaining information about potential or perceived problems that lurk within your school community. Other forms of communication such as suggestion boxes, hot lines, personal discussions or student representation on the Safe School committee can elicit pending problems.

PHASE ONE: Identify Problems enables you to be proactive rather than reactive.

Tools #2 & 3-Student/Staff Surveys

Safe Schools: A Handbook For Practitioners

Survey Results Sheet

Unreported Incidents

Question	Yes	No	N/A	1	2	3	-3	-10
Extortion (Question 1-2)								
								Rocked?

Tool #1-Incident Worksheet

Type of Incident: Fighting Number of Incidents: 7

TIME PERIODS	LOCATIONS	PERPETRATORS	DANGERS	PATTERNS
Before School				Most fights happen after school in
During Classes				
Lunch Period				
After School				
Other				
Restroom				
High Value Room				
Student				
Staff				
Outsider				
Gun				
Drugs				
Ethnic/Racial Conflict				
Other				



Characteristics of Effective Prevention Programs

DoDEA school administrators selecting prevention programs for their school might consider the characteristics of effective programs, as well as cautions regarding specific techniques to avoid. Reports from the U.S. Surgeon General, the American Association of School Administrators and an independent evaluation of prevention programs by Drug Strategies, Inc. offer suggestions regarding effective and ineffective techniques. Enthusiastic support from the principal enhances the effectiveness of any prevention program because teachers and students perceive and respond to the school administration's commitment to the program.

TECHNIQUES TO AVOID

SCARE TACTICS

Experts recommend avoiding the use of scare tactics to change student behavior. Research indicates that impressionable youth exposed to violence through entertainment and news media are more likely to behave violently. Therefore, using violent images to teach students to avoid potentially dangerous situations might be counterproductive.

GROUPING

Avoid grouping problem students in the same prevention program or discussion group. Grouping anti-social or aggressive students together helps them make friends with other "at-risk" youths. Disruptive students often reinforce each other's undesired behavior and worsen discipline problems at school.

SELF-ESTEEM

Avoid prevention programs that concentrate solely on self-esteem. Bullies that feel good about themselves are still bullies. Researchers are discovering that prevention programs designed to change a specific behavior such as bullying by enhancing students' self esteem are not effective.

Continued ►



Characteristics of Effective Prevention Programs *continued*

EFFECTIVE TECHNIQUES

EXERCISES

Simulating realistic situations in the classroom prepares students to use decision-making and communication skills. Later, students are more likely to respond to actual situations at school and in the community by using the words and skills taught in the prevention programs.

LESSONS

Effective prevention programs usually include approximately ten to twenty lessons. Providing five to ten additional lessons in the two succeeding academic years enhances results by reinforcing skills learned in the original training.

PROGRAMS

Effective prevention programs usually offer separate curriculums for elementary, middle, and high school students so that the material presented is appropriate for the maturity of the participants.

DIVERSITY

Student workbooks and simulations should be appropriate for the racial, ethnic, and demographic characteristics of highly diverse student populations.

WORKSHOPS

Workshops for educators give teachers the confidence and information needed to implement the prevention program as intended.

Youth Violence: A Report of the Surgeon General (www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/youthviolence/)

American Association for School Administrators (AASA) *School Violence Prevention Programs* (www.aasa.org/issues_and_insights/safety/programs.htm)

Drug Strategies, Inc., *Safe Schools, Safe Students, A Guide to Violence Prevention Strategies* \$14.95 (www.drugstrategies.org/pubs.html#safe)

Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice *Safe, Drug Free, and Effective Schools for all Students, What Works!* (http://cecp.air.org/resources/safe&drug_free/main.htm) and *Prevention Strategies That Work* (www.air.org/cecp/safetynet.htm)



Communication Devices

Inexpensive portable radios enable school administrators and school staff members to communicate during school lockdowns and evacuations.

Radios can assist with command and control, whether the principal decides to move or lockdown in response to a crisis situation. Reliable portable radios enable a principal to receive reports on student attendance from teachers moving to diverse locations during an evacuation.

The technology of portable radios has progressed so that a “ruggedized” 5-watt radio can be packaged in a size of approximately 5" x 2" x 1". Most small two-way radios can reliably transmit to a distance of two miles. These radios, and the batteries needed to power them, can be stored with other classroom emergency supplies. Although limited quantities of cellular phones, or more powerful radios, might be preferred for communication with school buses, portable radios offer some benefits for communication within the school. Rather than monthly or annual service charges, costs for radios are limited to a one-time purchase price of approximately \$20.00 to \$100.00, depending on the capabilities selected. A simple radio such as the Motorola “Talkabout” (<http://commerce.motorola.com/cgi-bin/ncommerce3/CategoryDisplay?cgrfnbr=8&cgmenbr=126>) recently selected by DDESS for use at schools in Quantico, Virginia, can be included in the emergency supplies in each classroom. Since radios are more economical than cellular phones, principals can provide radios for each classroom teacher and more of their school staff.

Using radios effectively requires training in radio communications procedures. School staff can familiarize themselves with communications equipment and procedures during emergency response simulations. Experts recommend limiting the number of people listening to one communication network to approximately fifteen people. Fortunately, the modest size of many DoDEA schools makes portable radios a viable option.

Radios are a physical security measure that can decrease the risk of an incident and enhance school climate. The presence of the principal with a radio at the school entrance helps deter incidents by letting possible perpetrators know the school is prepared. Updates from the principal during a lockdown or evacuation reassure teachers that they will learn what is happening during the incident and be able to respond to protect their students.

[Click on radio to view description.](#)

