



### DoDEA Director Advocates Continuous Improvement

DoDEA middle and high school counselors and principals gathered in Leipzig, Germany on February 2-6, 2009, for a conference devoted to Kaizen – continuous improvement. Throughout the conference, DoDEA Director Shirley Miles, Ph.D., challenged participants to commit themselves to continuous improvement in achieving DoDEA’s mission of providing an exemplary education that inspires and prepares all students for success. On February 4, during a joint session attended by counselors and principals, Dr. Miles explained how DoDEA will support educational leaders. Principals will receive additional resources to help them concentrate on serving as instructional leaders for their staff. Counselors will continue to focus on implementing model counseling programs to help all students achieve their potential.

Dr. Miles noted that accountability requires data to measure results. She emphasized the need for administrators and counselors to provide evidence of progress toward objectives by stating: “In God we trust, all others bring data.”

Rose Chunik, Chief, Office of Safety and Security, provided an overview of Serious Incident Reporting. Ms. Chunik noted that accurate reporting of incidents assists DoDEA in recognizing vulnerabilities and identifying resources to address recurring needs. “The online reporting system helps administrators complete reports faster, and helps us provide the resources needed in the field,” noted Ms. Chunik.



During a conference break-out session on Safe Schools, participants discussed how they can continuously improve security for students. Administrators and counselors learned about the resources and technical assistance available through the DoDEA Safe Schools Program. Participants also discussed how they could better serve students with deployed parents and improve coordination with emergency responders. Each participant received an example of a protective action flip chart for classrooms and a CD with extensive school security resources and reference documents. To obtain a copy of the DoDEA Safe Schools Reference CD, contact Bert Garcia at [Sigberto.Garcia.CTR@hq.dodea.edu](mailto:Sigberto.Garcia.CTR@hq.dodea.edu). To learn about other resources available through the DoDEA Safe Schools Program visit the Office of Safety and Security Web site at [www.dodea.edu/offices/safety/safeSchools.cfm?sid=5](http://www.dodea.edu/offices/safety/safeSchools.cfm?sid=5). ■

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## April Is Alcohol Awareness Month

During April, schools across the United States participate in Alcohol Awareness Month to emphasize the importance of preventing alcohol-related problems. Alcohol Awareness Month is sponsored by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD). A number of governmental organizations, including the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) have developed programs to educate students about the dangers of alcohol. Most of these programs are available to school administrators at no cost through the Web sites of SAMHSA ([www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)) and the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy ([www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov](http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov)).

There are many ways schools can participate in Alcohol Awareness Month. Administrators can invite the installation Alcohol and Drug Control Officer to speak on the importance of making healthy choices. Some military police departments have vision-distorting devices, popularly referred to as “beer goggles,” which warp vision to an approximation of drunkenness. These are a useful educational tool for demonstrating the difficulty of walking (or driving) under the influence of alcohol. Students enjoy experiencing the difficulty of trying to walk on a straight line while wearing the goggles.

For teachers or counselors interested in integrating alcohol awareness into the classroom curriculum, SAMSHA offers two alcohol prevention programs designed for fifth and sixth graders. The programs contain discussion topics, activities, and lesson plans to help teachers educate rising middle school students about how to make positive choices. Communication tools for grades 5-6 that can be ordered through the mail or downloaded from the Internet include: *Reach Out Now: Talk with Your Fifth Graders About Underage Alcohol Use (Grade 5)*, and *Reach Out Now: Start Talking Before They Start Drinking (Grade 6)*. The program also includes posters to reinforce the message.

SAMSHA offers fact sheets to help raise awareness of the dangers of alcohol. Tips for Teens: The Truth About Alcohol, presents facts to debunk myths associated with alcohol and offers eye-opening statistics for individuals who think binge drinking is a harmless social activity: “Studies show that more than 35 percent of adults with an alcohol problem developed symptoms — such as binge drinking — by age 19.” ■

## Administrators Share Security Tips

A recurring theme during conversations with principals and counselors attending the recent conference in Leipzig, Germany was the sense that each DoDEA school is different. During the break-out session on the DoDEA Safe Schools Program, participants realized that although their situation is unique, they are not alone. The room was filled with more than 100 other administrators facing similar challenges and brimming with ideas about how to help DoDEA students feel secure so they can concentrate on learning.



Together, DoDEA administrators represent a reservoir of intellectual capital available to suggest ways to improve security. To share an example of a security measure that worked, or request technical assistance (i.e., planning an upcoming drill) contact the DoDEA Safe Schools Program at [safeschools@csc.com](mailto:safeschools@csc.com). ■

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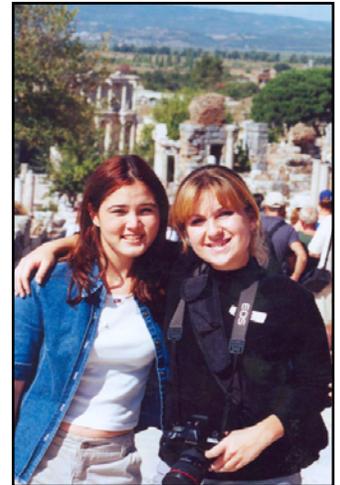
Comments and questions should be directed to [safeschools@csc.com](mailto:safeschools@csc.com).

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## Personal Security Tips

DoD mandated Antiterrorism Level I training provides practical tips on how to maintain security awareness and take basic security precautions to recognize potential signs of trouble. With spring break approaching, administrators can offer staff, students, and parents the following personal security reminders to help them decrease the chances of becoming the victim of criminal or terrorist activity while travelling.

- ◆ **Blend in with the local populace** – Avoid wearing clothing or badges that make it obvious you are an American when you are traveling. Wear clothing appropriate for the area you are visiting and pack a plain suitcase with covered nametags.
- ◆ **Avoid crowds where you are continually jostled** – this leaves you prey to pick-pockets or stampedes of panicked people. Always leave yourself room to maneuver.
- ◆ **Leave room to leave** – If you see security responding to a situation, or feel uneasy, leave the area.
- ◆ **Inspect your rental car** – Inspect your rental car and familiarize yourself with the emergency equipment. Check the exterior again each time it is parked in an unsecured location.
- ◆ **Use Safe Havens** – If you suspect you are being followed or “tailed” proceed at normal speed to a military installation, police station, bank, government building, hotel, or well lighted public location.
- ◆ **Protect your personal space** – Check the room for operational locks on the doors, balcony, and windows. Do not answer the door or open the door to unexpected visitors.
- ◆ **Observe incidents carefully** – In the event of a terrorist attack, remain calm, encourage others to remain calm, and attempt to understand the developing situation. Cooperate with responding officials and report your observations when asked.
- ◆ **Use “teaching opportunities”** – Ask students and companions how they would exit an area or protect themselves if a terrorist attack started. Thinking through hypothetical scenarios has several benefits. It increases security awareness and also helps individuals control emotion and respond more quickly if an event occurs.



Practicing security awareness reassures personnel that even in a situation that appears overwhelming, there is always something that can be done to minimize damage and loss of life. Learning and practicing personal security enables individuals to respond smoothly and help others during a crisis event.

Level I Antiterrorism Security Awareness Training is available to all DoDEA employees and dependent students 14 years old and older. To arrange to attend or host a refresher briefing on your installation, contact your Antiterrorism Officer. Two excellent resources from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) are the Antiterrorism Individual Protective Measures Card and the Antiterrorism Personal Protection Guide. Both of these documents are distributed at AT Level I trainings and available on the DoDEA Office of Safety and Security Web site at [www.dodea.edu/offices/safety/personalSecurity.cfm?sid=4](http://www.dodea.edu/offices/safety/personalSecurity.cfm?sid=4). ■

## Stop Bullying Now! Campaign Raises Awareness

Many schools in DoDEA are now using bullying prevention programs. Awareness campaigns, such as the Stop Bullying Now! Campaign, can supplement and reinforce the positive messages of those programs without detracting from them in any way.

The Stop Bullying Now! Campaign is a national public awareness and prevention campaign, developed by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) within the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. The objective of the campaign is to empower children age 9 to 13 to recognize and respond positively to bullying at schools and in other social environments.



*Ansbach Elementary School uses posters on hallway walls to reinforce the anti-bullying message. During a recent visit to the school, Principal Essie Grant explained that the posters have helped create a school climate where bullying is not tolerated.*

The campaign Web site features animated anti-bullying videos which can be viewed via download. A series of “Stop Bullying Now!” public service advertisements have aired on U.S. television stations in an attempt to educate adults about bullying behaviors. The campaign also provides public service announcements for print media (i.e., newspapers) and a resource kit about bullying prevention programs and activities for schools or communities. All of the materials mentioned above are also available for Spanish speakers.

The program is not designed to serve as a stand-alone bullying prevention program, instead the materials reinforce anti-bullying programs already in use. The materials can be helpful in educating the school community about the importance of the anti-bullying message. All 66,000 elementary and middle schools in the United States have received the Stop Bullying Now! DVD tool kit. HRSA has attempted to expand the reach of the campaign by working with federal partners in the Department of Education, the Department of Justice, and with community-based groups such as the Boys and Girls Clubs.

DoDEA administrators can order a copy of the Stop Bullying Now kit at <http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/index.asp?area=main>. For additional information, contact the Safe Schools Program at [safeschools@csc.com](mailto:safeschools@csc.com) or view previous Safe Schools newsletter articles on anti-bullying programs on the Office of Safety and Security Web site at [www.dodea.edu/offices/safety/safeSchools.cfm?sid=5](http://www.dodea.edu/offices/safety/safeSchools.cfm?sid=5). ■

### Got Safe Schools Questions?

During the Worldwide Middle and High School Principals and Counselors Conference in Leipzig, Germany, the Safe Schools team informally met with several school administrators and counselors to discuss security concerns and answer questions. Some administrators shared success stories about how they have improved security at their schools. Others asked technical questions specific to the geography or culture of their schools. It was not possible, however, for the Safe Schools team to meet everyone in attendance. If you have additional questions for the Safe Schools team, contact [safeschools@csc.com](mailto:safeschools@csc.com) to set up an online conference. ■

## Online Bullying Increases in Prevalence

A study published in the September 2008 issue of the *Journal of School Health*, “Extending the School Grounds? – Bullying Experiences in Cyberspace,” reports that nearly 75 percent of teenagers say they have been bullied online at least once during the past year. University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), psychologists conducting the study found that only ten percent reported the cyberbullying to parents or other adults. Although most students have been victimized by their peers online, few have reached out for help. Both statistics underscore the importance of creating a climate where all members of the school community can recognize and respond appropriately to cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is the act of using technology, such as computers or cell phones, to harass another individual. It usually involves one person or group harassing an individual directly through messages via e-mail, instant messaging, or social networking Web sites. Students can also be targeted indirectly when personal information is divulged by others without their permission.

The UCLA study showed that the most common forms of bullying – both in school and online – were name-calling or insults. Stealing passwords to access another person’s online account was the next most prevalent form of bullying. Other forms of harassment included sending embarrassing pictures, sharing private information, and spreading rumors or unflattering images of people that had been taken with camera-phones.

Cyberbullying victims are also likely to be victims of bullying at school. According to the UCLA study, “The probability of students experiencing bullying online was substantially higher for those who have been the victims of school bullying.” The research suggests that even online bullies are usually not strangers. Jaana Juvonen, professor of psychology and chair of UCLA’s Developmental Psychology program noted, “This finding runs counter to the prevalent myth that cyber-bullying is anonymous.” Of the survey participants who reported being bullied online, many knew the individuals harassing them (the total adds to more than 100 percent because some respondents answered affirmatively to more than one question):

- ▶ 51 percent said the bully was someone at their school.
- ▶ 43 percent said they knew the bully only online.
- ▶ 20 percent said they knew the bully, but not from school.

**Nearly one-third of the students who had been cyber-bullied reported that they kept it to themselves fearing their parents would restrict Internet access.**

Professor Juvonen also noted that cyberbullying parallels bullying in real life: “Bullying on the Internet looks similar to what kids do face-to-face in school.” Harassment at school interferes with learning and makes many students want to withdraw, according to previous studies by the same researchers. Being victimized by cyberbullying will have similar costs, yet students often do not report incidents of cyberbullying to an adult.

There is a strong reluctance among victims to report bullying. The study reported that half of the victims did not report the bullying to an adult because they believed that they “need to learn to deal with it.” Nearly one-third of the students who had been cyber-bullied reported that they kept it to themselves fearing their parents would restrict Internet access.

School administrators can implement programs and policies that discourage online harassment between students. In addition, many educators have pointed out that teaching ethics in the context of Internet use, may be the best way to teach students how to behave appropriately online. To share strategies your school is using to prevent cyberbullying, or to learn more about the resources available, contact [safeschools@csc.com](mailto:safeschools@csc.com). ■

## Students Benefit from Learning Friendship Skills

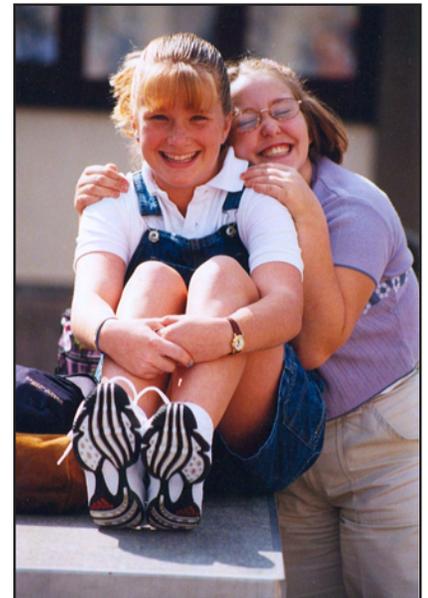
For a variety of reasons, some children are no longer learning at home the social skills they need to achieve, thrive, and interact well at school. This can interfere with the child’s ability to learn and the teacher’s ability to lead the class. On the other hand, students with strong friendship skills can positively affect the social climate of a school. Friendship skills also provide “insulating factors” – the term researchers use to refer to characteristics that make it less likely students will participate in risky behavior or encounter other daily difficulties as they mature. In fact, not all children have the same powers of empathy and synthesis required to develop strong social skills.

To explore how children learn friendship skills, one researcher studied a group of children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). According to Amori Mikami, Ph.D., a psychologist at the University of Virginia, few adults are aware of the serious peer relationship problems over half of children with ADHD experience. According to Mikami, who received a grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to develop friendship clinics for children with ADHD, these peer problems can affect school climate because children with ADHD are at greater risk of failing out of school or developing depression, criminal behavior, or patterns of substance abuse later in life. If they also feel rejected by their peers, these risks multiply.

Some adults struggle with friendship skills as well. A 2006 study published in the American Psychological Association journal *Psychological Review* found that friendship skills in general seem to be waning in American society. The study noted that 25 percent of Americans have no close confidants, and the average total number of confidants per citizen has dropped from four to two since 1985. Research has found a link between fewer friendships (especially quality relationships) and poor coping skills.

Teaching friendship skills is not as straight forward as it sounds. Most adults know intuitively what a “friend” is, but would be hard pressed to define friendship. Administrators may find the following descriptors a useful starting point to teach friendship skills to children. While the following are described in child-friendly terms, they also apply to adult interactions. Friends always:

- ◆ **Talk.** Friends share ideas, offer interesting stories (not just about themselves).
- ◆ **Share the conversation.** One person does not always get to be the leader. They take turns. They give others a chance to share their views.
- ◆ **Listen to each other.** Friends listen to what others have to say. They give compliments and ask questions to show others that they are paying attention. This is called active listening.
- ◆ **Offer praise.** Friends are happy when others do well and they give compliments freely. They do not criticize, nor do they talk “behind your back.” (Tip: Sometimes if a person has nothing to say, just giving a compliment can start a conversation, and a friendship.)
- ◆ **Use their manners.** Many people think manners have gone out of style, but friends say “excuse me,” “please,” and “thank you” to one another. They are pleasant and forgiving of the mistakes others make.



The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Center for Mental Health Services offers an 11 page friendship guide which administrators can adapt for young children. This guide is available at <http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/sma-3716/making.asp>. ■