



# SAFE SCHOOLS

# NEWSLETTER



Issue 8

April 2001

## No. 8 INSIDE this issue

Safe Schools News & Updates..... 1

Applying the Five Phase Process ..... 3

    Phase Four: Selecting Options

Emergency Planning..... 4

    Incident Response Planning vs.  
    Crisis Response Procedures

Intervention Strategies ..... 5

    Teachers Listening to Troubled Students

Lessons Learned ..... 6

    Affect of Students Frequently Changing  
    Elementary Schools

Education Issues ..... 7

    21% of High School Males Brought a  
    Weapon to School

Student Articles ..... 8

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## Safe Schools NEWS

### Physical Security Guidance

DoDEA REGULATION 4700.2, INTERNAL PHYSICAL SECURITY, was published on March 27, 2001. This regulation reissues the November 1993 D.S. Regulation 4700.2. On page 4, DoDEA Director Joseph Tafoya instructs principals on the requirements for implementing security controls and procedures, developing emergency procedures, and scheduling physical security inspections at their schools. For District Safety and Security Officers, the regulation describes requirements regarding site checks at schools, and regular school visits to evaluate physical security controls and procedures.

### Program Evaluation Update

Thank you to the school administrators who have already responded to the DoDEA Safe Schools Program Evaluation. School superintendents and principals who attended the DoDEA Safe Schools workshops during SY1999-00 should have received an email message regarding the survey. By responding to the questions, participants have an opportunity to shape the future of DoDEA's Safe Schools Program. Survey results will be presented in a future newsletter.



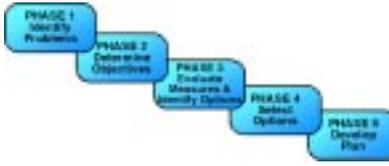
## Teaching Responsibility

Powell Middle School Principal Cy Wingrove used a verbal threat from a bullying victim as an opportunity to teach classroom bullies about responsibility (3/28/01 *St. Petersburg Times*, St. Petersburg, Florida). On Monday, 3/26/01, the sixth graders' classmates were taunting him about his appearance and taking his chair. He responded by saying, "I am going to shoot you all." At least three students did not go to school because they were afraid the boy might harm other students. However, Principal Wingrove consulted with the boy, his parents, and law enforcement officials, and determined that the bullying victim did not have access to a gun and that he was not considered a real threat. Wingrove discussed respect with the sixth graders involved and said that a group of fifty students assured him that they would not tease the boy in the future. "Our students agreed that they would take responsibility for their behavior," explained Wingrove. For more information regarding how school administrators and teachers can prevent school violence by listening to students, see the Intervention Strategies article in this newsletter.



## International Safe Schools Conference

On March 3-5, 2001, The European Observatory on School Violence sponsored the international safe schools conference "Violence in Schools and Public Policies" in Paris, France (<http://www.obsviolence.pratique.fr/program/index.html>). Conference speakers included Eric Debarbieux, University of Bordeaux, and Jack Lang, the French Minister of Education. Conference workshops addressed anti-bullying strategies and topics such as "Prevention Policies and the School Environment" and "Intervention Schemes". The conference attempted to include government leaders and academic researchers. At the "Public Policies" workshop, for example, Dr. Schrewe Hartmut described violence in schools and public policy in Germany, and psychologist Schütz Corinna Todt, described research on violence in German schools from 1990 to 2000.



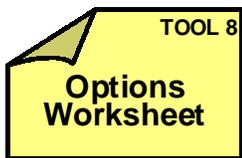
# Applying the 5 Phase Process

## Phase Four – Selecting Options

**Phase Four** is selecting options. When deciding which options to adopt, choose those policies, intervention programs, and physical security measures, or a combination of options, providing the greatest benefit. This is the decision-making phase.



During Phase Three, you developed a list of your possible options by identifying new measures and modifications to your existing measures. Now, during Phase Four, it is time to decide which options you will actually adopt. You may have to do some research to determine best cost and most appealing operating specifications. Once you decide, record your choices on the Options Worksheet (Tool 8). Remember, use a separate worksheet for each of your Objectives from Phase 2.



For example, you may have listed several different types of physical security devices in Phase Three, such as hand-held or walk-through metal detectors, or baggage x-ray equipment. Decide which of those devices you believe makes the most sense to adopt. Similarly, you may have determined that you need to implement an anti-bullying policy and an appropriate intervention program to address bullying behavior. Record your intention to institute an anti-bullying policy on the Options Worksheet. In

addition, record your intention to institute an appropriate anti-bullying program and consult your DoDEA Safe Schools Handbook for a list of possible programs.

Consider the following as a sample of the criteria you may wish to factor into your decision-making. Add additional criteria if you wish.

- Importance of the objective that the measure seeks to address.
- Effectiveness of the measure.
- Financial ramifications.
- Possible legal impediments.
- Ease of implementation.

You most likely will need some technical expertise to assist you in the selection of intervention programs and physical security measures. Use your support network. Look around your community for the expertise. Most likely it is close at hand. Consult the Internet, which is replete with helpful information. And, don't forget that DynCorp ([mckeonb@dyncorp.com](mailto:mckeonb@dyncorp.com)) is part of your support network and just an email message away, as some of you have remembered.

Next month, this section will feature an article on the Three C's - Comprehensive, Consistent, and Community. The Three C's are helpful in the selection of "Options".

## Incident Response Planning vs. Crisis Response Procedures

What are the differences among *Risk Reduction Planning*, *Incident Response Planning* and *Crisis Response Procedures*? Are the differences important? Do the terms really mean something different or are the terms really different descriptions of the same thing? This article describes the differences.

*Risk Reduction Planning* (RRP) is achieved through implementation of the Five Phase Process contained in the DoDEA Safe Schools Handbook. RRP results in a written plan that describes the implementation of the options best suited to the objectives that you have set. The process is pro-active because it analyses and evaluates school policies, intervention programs, and physical security measures to identify preventative steps, in a holistic fashion, for reducing the chances that an event would or could occur. This aspect of Safe School Planning is the most overlooked and neglected. It is overlooked because the process is time consuming and because the community is preoccupied with the need to conduct *Incident Response Planning* (IRP).

Establishing an IRP is not a trivial exercise. Developing your IRP can be facilitated by reviewing any crisis with which the school has already dealt. Develop your IRP (See Newsletter #2) from the lessons learned in your school or from the lessons learned by others. The key elements of an IRP are its organization, content, assignment of responsibilities, and rehearsals.

*Crisis Response Procedures* result from Incident Response Planning. In all crisis and emergency situations, preparation and planning are key elements in producing positive outcomes. Your step by step guide should provide guidelines for prudent response in a variety of emergency situations. Think of your *Crisis Response Procedures* as your 3<sup>rd</sup> and final line of defense. Your 2<sup>nd</sup> line of defense is your *Incident Response Planning* and your 1<sup>st</sup> line of defense is your Risk Reduction Planning. The better the 1<sup>st</sup> line of defense the less likely you will have to use the others.



## Teachers Listening to Troubled Students

Teachers are the eyes and ears of the school. They have an opportunity to identify children at risk of violence by learning about students' family life and troubles from students' writing assignments, artistic work and conversation. Tony Feinberg, Executive Director, National Association of School Psychologists (<http://www.nasponline.org/index2.html>), described how teachers are well situated to listen to troubled students. Feinberg stated that by simply listening to students and talking with them in "a caring, gentle manner", teachers can learn about students at risk, or prevent an increase in student angst, that might lead to an incident of violence (3/14/01 *Dallas Morning News*). "The teacher should be talking with either a mental-health counselor or a school administrator," Feinberg explained. "Talk to the parents and find out if there's anything going on at home adding to the child's irritability."

The U.S. Department of Education report *Early Warning, Timely Response* recognized the opportunity teachers have to identify troubled students. *Early Warning, Timely Response* stated that school communities that *encourage school staff members to articulate their concerns about troubled children*, and that *have a system for getting help to the students identified*, are more likely to experience a decrease in classroom disruptions, bullying, fighting, and other aggressive behavior. "It's okay to be concerned when

you notice warning signs in a child—and its even more appropriate to do something about those concerns." (*Early Warning, Timely Response* p.13). The report recommended that school administrators support teachers and school staff members who identify troubled students by providing policies that enable teachers to refer students to counseling quickly. School administrators can also arrange teams of qualified personnel, such as counselors and school psychologists, to work with the troubled youth. *Early Warning, Timely Response* describes specific indicators that help teachers identify troubled students.

### Imminent Warning Signs:

- Student describes a specific plan (time, location and system) for harming himself or others. Particularly if the student has behaved aggressively previously or attempted to hurt other students before.
- Student has a weapon, particularly a gun, and has threatened to use it.

### Indicators of Possible Trouble:

- Serious physical fighting with peers or family members.
- Severe destruction of property.
- Severe rage for seemingly minor reasons.
- Specific threats of lethal violence.
- Possession of a gun or other weapons.
- Self-injurious behavior.

## Affect of Students Frequently Changing Elementary Schools

School principals can mitigate the affect of frequent changes in elementary schools on students' academic performance and behavior by welcoming new students and helping them feel included in school activities.

### Research

*The Washington Post* reported that the affects on students from frequently changing elementary schools include not only poor behavior, but also a decrease in students' self esteem and academic achievement (4/5/01 *The Washington Post*). While attempting to identify "early predictors" of youth violence, researchers at the Rand Corporation found that frequent moves between elementary schools caused boys to be more at risk of violence as teens: Phyllis L. Ellickson and Kimberly A. McGuigan, "Early Predictors of Adolescent Violence" *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 90, No. 4, April 2000 (pp.566-572) available from Rand Corporation (<http://www.rand.org/>). Ellickson and McGuigan found three variables: poor academic performance, high elementary school mobility, and early misbehavior, increased the likelihood that elementary students would become involved in violence as teenagers. The researchers concluded that effective violence prevention programs should consider the special vulnerability of girls with poor self-esteem and boys who frequently moved between elementary schools.

The same percentage of students change elementary schools in DoDEA schools during a school year, as change

schools in U.S. public schools during two school years. The U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics ([NCES] <http://nces.ed.gov/index.html>) reports that in 2000, **32% of U.S. fourth-graders had changed elementary schools during the previous two years.** In DoDEA schools, approximately 33% of all students change schools yearly. However, an NCES official cautioned that DoDEA students appear to perform well in academic evaluations despite high mobility rates because the classes taught within DoDEA schools are similar. A student who moves from one DoDEA school to another, will study the same academic curriculum and hopefully adjust to their new school more quickly.

### Responses

The Alexandria, Virginia School District recommends that principals alert parents to the affect of mobility and provide students copies of student files to bring to their new school. In his Montana school, Darrell Rud, President, National Association of Elementary School Principals, arranges reading groups by ability rather than academic grades, so new children are assigned where they can work comfortably.

*The Washington Post* article included a description of one principal's efforts to mitigate the affects of frequent moves. Marcia Baldanza, Principal, Patrick Henry Elementary School, Alexandria, Virginia:

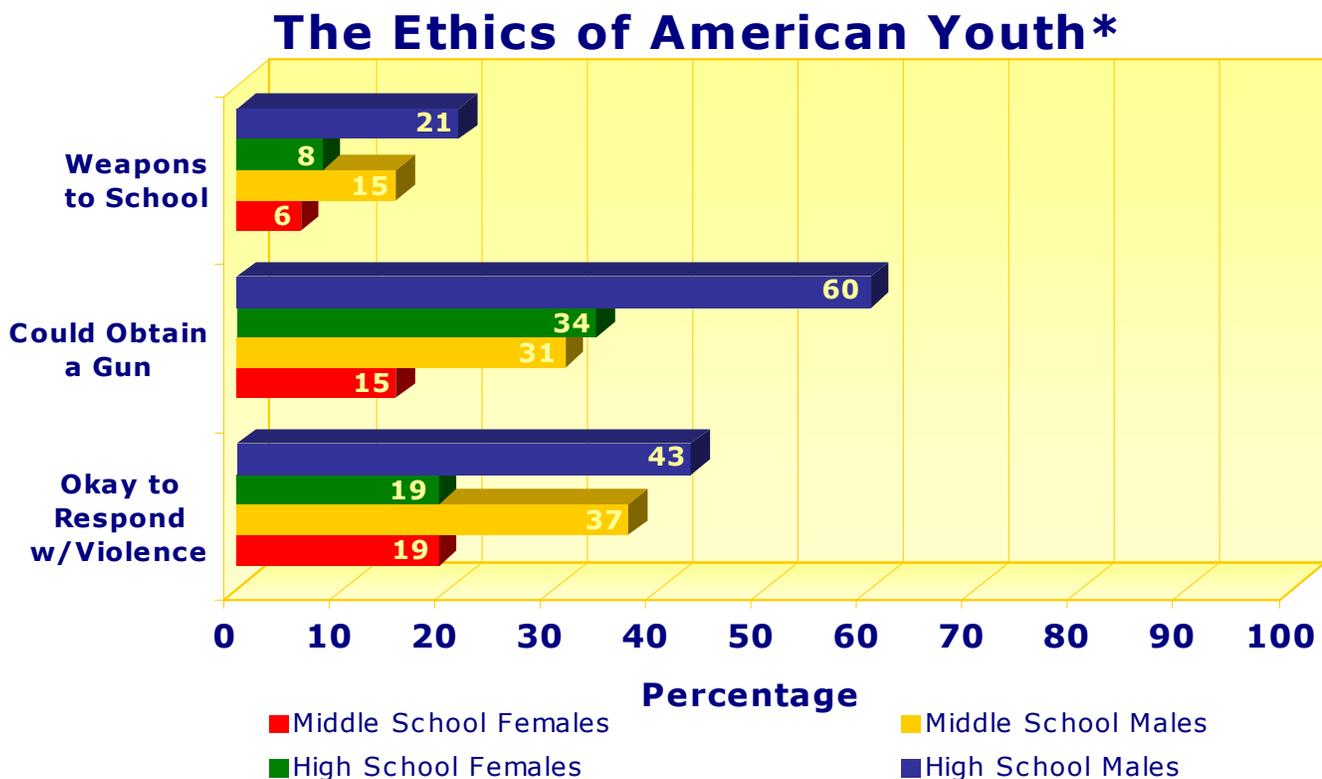
- Familiarizes new students with the school facility,
- Uses a "buddy system", and
- Arranges for a social worker to welcome and provide school supplies for new students.

## 21% of High School Males Brought A Weapon To School

On April 2, 2001, The Josephson Institute for Ethics (JIE), located in Marina del Rey, California, (<http://www.josephsoninstitute.org>), reported that their *2000 Report Card on The Ethics of American Youth* indicated that more than 21% of U.S. high school males and 15% of U.S. middle school males took a weapon to school. JIE teaches character education through its *Character Counts* program taught to millions of students in thousands of U.S. schools and youth groups.

*“Metal detectors and gun regulation can’t solve this problem alone. We have to work on the character of youngsters, changing their attitudes about violence and fortifying their ability to deal with anger and feelings of alienation,”* said Michael Josephson, President, JIE. Josephson recommended teaching character education to change student attitudes towards violence.

JIE surveyed fifteen thousand youth. The study used student self reports of involvement with violence, similar to U.S. government reports such as *The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health* (Newsletter #4) and the U.S. Surgeon General’s Report on School Violence (Newsletter #6). Although the Josephson Institute provides results for males and females, the report highlights the impressive results for selected groups such as high school males. *The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health* reported one in four teens interviewed had used or carried a gun or a knife, or had been involved in an incident in which someone was injured by a weapon. The Surgeon General reported that 30-40% of male youths and 15-30% of female youths reported having committed a serious violent offense. Selected findings from the JIE study include:





## Violence in Schools

Kayla Weiglein, 5th grader

*“She should not have to worry about going to school and being picked on or threatened.”*

I think violence is not supposed to be happening in schools. I feel a little scared coming to school. My article is about bullies, weapons and stealing.

Bullies are older children who treat younger children badly. They threaten to hurt younger children if don't give them their lunch money or things they want. Bullies call other children really bad names and tell them they will beat them up. This frightens the little kids. They are scared to come to school unless they give the bullies what they want. Younger kids are afraid to tell on the bullies. Younger children should not be afraid to come to school.

Another kind of violence is when kids bring weapons to school, like guns or knives. If someone brings a weapon to school someone could get seriously hurt or killed. Even if the person with the weapon didn't mean to hurt someone there could be a serious accident. He could fall down and someone could get badly hurt. I read a story about a little girl with the same name as me that was shot by a boy in her class. She was killed. This little girl was in the first grade and didn't deserve to die. She should not have to worry about being shot with a gun in school. I know of another story where a boy brought a gun to school and shot his teacher. I don't want to worry that I could get shot at school.

The last kind of violence I want to talk about is stealing. People should not take

things that do not belong to them. If someone steals your lunch money you will have to go hungry. It hurts your feelings when someone takes your things. People who steal are greedy and do not respect other people.

There should not be any violence in school. A kid should go to school thinking he will have a really nice day. She should be able to think about doing her work at school and be proud of her school. A school should be a safe place. She should not have to worry about going to school and being picked on or threatened. She should not have to worry about being shot or killed. She should not have to worry that someone will steal her jacket or lunch money.

I have some ideas on how to make school a safer place. If someone tells on a bully, that person should get in trouble. Then maybe that person would stop being a bully. Schools would also be safer if the school had an inspection and would check backpacks and lockers for weapons. Parents should keep guns away from kids at home. They should keep them in a safe place or get rid of them. Parents need to teach their kids that guns can really hurt people and even kill them. They should also teach their kids that stealing is wrong. TV could also help to teach children to do the right thing. Instead of violent stuff on TV they could show commercials kids that violence is bad. I hope some day there won't be any more violence that teach in school.

*Garmisch American School, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany*

*Olaf Zwicker, Principal  
Dovie Jones, Teacher  
Brenda Lynch, Counselor*



## Violence in Schools

Erin Embler, 5th grader

*“When this happens most kids hit back, but I think, if they don’t stop, you should just tell a teacher or grown-up.”*

I will be telling you what I think about violence. I think violence in school should be stopped. I hope some day schools won’t have any more violence. First I will say what I think violence is, then I will tell you about bullies, and last I will tell you about the weapons kids bring to school.

I think violence in school is when one kid makes another kid mad and they start trying to hurt each other physically or mentally. Sometimes violence in school is just when someone starts hitting someone else for no reason. When this happens most kids hit back, but I think, if they don’t stop, you should just tell a teacher or grown-up.

Bullies are kids that are mean for no reason. Usually bullies pick on little kids. Bullies hit, kick, punch and call names. Bullies pick on all kids and if you are a bully here is a question to ask yourself. Why do you like being mean to other kids?

In school kids use all kinds of weapons, from pencils to guns. You might think, “how could a pencil be a weapon?” but it could. I myself have been poked by a pencil and it hurts. There are lots of other weapons kids use in school. I don’t think kids should use violence in school or at home. Violence never solves problems. It just makes people feel bad.

*Garmisch American School,  
Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany*

*Olaf Zwicker, Principal  
Dovie Jones, Teacher  
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## Violence in Schools

By Cory Hodges, 7th grader

*“We need to help others realize that it’s not OK to handle situations with violence. We need to be educated on how to defuse situations when facing violent situations.”*

“Violence”: an act that is done with intention to do harm. “School”: a place that learning is conducted in a safe and nurturing environment. These two words just don’t go together, do they? There are growing numbers of violent incidents in schools across the world.

Do you know what violence is? Do you think your school is safe? You may be wrong. 3 out of every 10 school children have experienced violence in school. The common types of violence are not always looked upon as problems – but they must be addressed. Most violence in schools occurs when someone is being bullied. The individuals doing the violent actions often feel insecure, peer pressure, emotional problems, or have a violent background. Sometimes, violence is started by trouble that the child may have at home.

Types of violence could be mental, physical or verbal. All are bad and cause damage. Mental violence occurs with teasing, imposing fear and emotional pressure. Physical violence is physical pain to the person’s body. Verbal violence is hurting individuals with words. All forms of violence are wrong and can damage a person. Cases of violence in schools have increased over the years. You used to think of violence maybe a bully picking on or beating up a kid. Now we kids have to worry about guns, knives and more physical violence.

When a student is bullied, threatened or has to deal with violence, it takes away from their learning ability. If you are a victim of violence in school, you will probably end up spending more time worrying whether you are going to get a black eye than you worrying about whether you are going to pass your tests. Students should have a fair opportunity to learn – those that are subject to violence lose that fair chance.

How do we prevent violence in school? One way is to have more education about the problem. The teachers need to be trained how to deal with violence. Sometimes, schools ‘ignore’ minor violent problems but all violent situations should be addressed quickly. Violence should not be tolerated. It’s not easy but we students need to be involved. We need to treat our peers properly and caringly. We need to be understanding and helpful to each other. We need to help others realize that it’s not OK to handle situations with violence. We need to be educated on how to defuse situations when facing violent situations. We need to know who to go to if a situation begins.

We all play a part in preventing violence by identifying the problems, education and helping to understand people. The problem does not go away by ignoring it.

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Dovie Jones, Teacher  
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## Stopping School Violence— Everyone’s Duty

By Devon Valliere, 10th grader

*“Only when everyone is responsible for fostering a safe school environment will the violence end.”*

From shootings to stealing and to fighting, schools are becoming institutions of violence, and communities no longer take teen-age threats lightly.

In Texas, four eighth grade boys were arrested for conspiracy to commit murder, conspiracy to commit arson, and conspiracy to manufacture explosives after teachers and students overheard conversations about an attack on the school. In another Texas town, four teenagers were arrested after police found bomb-making materials in the back seat and trunk of the car the boys were in.

“Hopefully, vigilant pursuit of those who would visit death and harm on other teens and teachers can prevent another heart-rending massacre,” said a spokesperson for the School Violence Council of Texas.

Sadly, there are those who still think the above events are a joke. Every day, schools all over the country are being forced to interrupt their teaching to deal with malicious bomb threats made by deranged and unstable people who think it is “fun” to cause pain, grief, fear and disruption.

Everybody—not just the schools—needs to take a hand in helping prevent school violence. Parents must insist that their children stay away from negative influences, and students must hang with the “right crowd”—a crowd that will ostracize bullies and will report to school officials situations or incidents that are potentially volatile.

Only when everyone is responsible for fostering a safe school environment will the violence end.

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