



SAFE SCHOOLS

NEWSLETTER



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Safe Schools NEWS



LEARNING FIRST ALLIANCE

Learning First Alliance: Challenging Classes Improve Behavior

The Learning First Alliance (LFA) November 2001 report *Every Child Learning: Safe and Supportive Schools* recommends using challenging classes, personal attention, and high academic expectations to improve student behavior (visit www.learningfirst.org and select "New Report: Every Child Learning..."). *Every Child Learning* notes approximately 15% of students misbehave frequently and need moderate levels of support, and approximately five percent of students need intensive intervention. Educational organizations participating in LFA, including NASSP, NAESP and the American Federation of Teachers, recommend that schools:

- ✓ Teach expected behaviors
- ✓ Recognize and reward good behavior
- ✓ Administer consequences for bad behavior

LFA explains that challenging academic curriculums, supportive school climates, consistently applied discipline policies, and basic safety measures help students feel safer at school.





DoDEA Increases Awareness of Safe Schools Technical Assistance

Eighty three percent of DoDEA principals responding to the Safe Schools Program Evaluation survey indicated they would find technical assistance helpful. Some school administrators were unaware they already had access to the service. Others requested a point of contact for assistance evaluating Safe School Plans. However, respondents who were aware of the consulting services expressed appreciation for the benefit.

Recent support included providing:

- Examples of student surveys used in elementary schools
- Guidance on planning and implementing school lockdown exercises
- Examples of Incident Response Plans

For questions regarding Safe School Planning, phone DynCorp's National Institute for Safe Schools (NISS) at (703) 461-2370 or toll free at (877) 711-NISS (6477) or email: niss@dyncorp.com

Indicators of School Crime & Safety 2001

Sixteen percent of public school principals consider discipline issues a serious problem in their school, according to the Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The NCES report *Indicators of School Crime and Safety 2001* described perceptions of school security among students, teachers, and principals (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2002/crime2001>). Discipline problems included student tardiness, absenteeism, physical conflicts among students, weapons possession, verbal or physical abuse of

teachers, and involvement with gangs. Principals of middle schools (18%) and high schools (37%) reported more discipline problems than elementary schools (8%).

Indicators 2001 states that students feel safer at school. The percentage of middle and high school students reporting that they felt unsafe at school decreased from 9% in 1995 to 5% in 1999. Since students usually avoid areas of the school where crimes occur, NCES also used student reports of whether they avoid certain locations to measure student perceptions of school safety.

Terrorism Fears Increase Student Newspaper Reading

Forty-three percent of students expressed concern about a terrorist attack at their school, according to a survey of a representative group of three hundred U.S. high school youth by market research firm Insight Express (www.insightexpress.com). "Teen Fears Regarding Bioterrorism and Other Attacks" reports that since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, students are reading newspapers and watching more televised news to learn about bioterrorism. The accompanying table presents the percentage of students reporting *increased* use of news media to learn about terrorism and how to protect themselves and their communities (Source: 10/31/01 PR Newswire).

	MALES	FEMALES
TELEvised NEWS	64%	51%
ONLINE RESEARCH	48%	28%
NEWSPAPERS	38%	29%





DoDEA Safe Schools Contractor Support for SY2001-02

Safe Schools support planned for SY2001-02 is similar to the support provided during the school year SY2000-01 and will include:

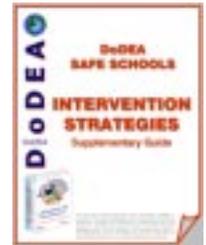


Monthly Safe Schools Newsletters

Monthly Safe Schools Newsletters will be emailed directly to school principals through June 2002. Principals will begin receiving newsletters again in September 2002 for the SY2002-03 school year.

Intervention Strategies Guide

A Guide that updates the Intervention Strategies section of the DoDEA Safe Schools Handbook will be emailed to newsletter recipients during December 2001 and March 2002. This electronic document will provide descriptions and Internet links to recent intervention programs. The Guide can be printed and inserted behind the Intervention Strategies section of the Handbook or used as a separate reference. Principals can save the Guide on a computer and access the referenced Internet sites later by clicking on the Internet addresses.



Consultative Support

DynCorp will continue providing consultative support to DoDEA school administrators to assist them in the use of the DoDEA Special Edition Handbook and its tools. This assistance is intended to operate as a hotline by responding to specific inquiries, and includes providing updated information on Safe School Planning, intervention strategies, lessons learned and physical security. Give us a call or email us with your questions.

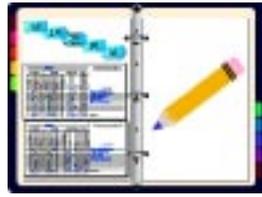
Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection

The Safe Schools Program includes updating guidance on Anti-terrorism regulations affecting DoDEA such as the June 2001 DoD Anti-terrorism regulation (DoDI 2000.16).

Workshops/Training

Additional training is also available to those who were not able to attend previous workshops. DynCorp can provide workshop training, participate in principals' regional conferences, or provide presentations for specific school districts as requested. School districts interested in workshop presentations should contact the DoDEA HQ Safety & Security Office to discuss available dates and cost-sharing arrangements.





Safe School Planning

Lockdown vs. Evacuation

The traditional rule of simple evacuation has become complicated because of a new style of threat. Since the Jonesboro, Arkansas shootings in 1998, school administrators have been faced with the highly complex decision process of whether to evacuate students from the school or to lock the students in place, one of which will provide the greater measure of protection. In Jonesboro, two students used the fire drill evacuation procedure to parade fellow classmates directly into the threat zone.

When conducting Incident Response Planning for potential incidents, student control is accomplished by either **LOCKDOWN** or **EVACUATION**. Here are the basic factors administrators should consider in the case-by-case decision of student control during a critical incident.

- ☞ Location of the threat
- ☞ Threat mobility
- ☞ Threat containment

The most important aspect of a quick assessment is to determine the location of the potential threat. The assessment will assist in producing the logistical approach best suited in order to respond to the event or situation.

The mobility of the threat will be the key factor in deciding whether to move students or to keep them in place. School administrators should ask themselves: Can the threat move to various parts of our campus?

On the other hand, a contained threat will allow school administrators the ability to plan for student movement away from the contained area.

A full-scale evacuation or lockdown based on location and containment of the threat may not be necessary. The key issue is not just immediate safety, but what is the best decision for the relative long term. Administrators should consider the following when deciding to evacuate or lockdown.

For **EVACUATION**, ask: *Can students safely exit the building without moving toward the threat?* Evacuation routes should minimize exposure to hazards. Take the quickest and safest way out of buildings.

- ☞ Move away from buildings
- ☞ Avoid walking under covered walkways, alongside block walls or buildings, under power lines, etc.
- ☞ Practice evacuation routes regularly in drills
- ☞ Include people with disabilities in drills
- ☞ Practice alternate routes (*advise students and staff that planned evacuation routes may be blocked in an emergency*)

For **LOCKDOWN**, ask: *Can students remain safely in their current location without the threat moving toward them?* If any of the following are observed consider lockdown as the option of choice.

- ☞ Fire outside school buildings
- ☞ Gunfire
- ☞ Safety hazard reported by police
- ☞ Visible smoke or a vapor cloud
- ☞ An unusual sound

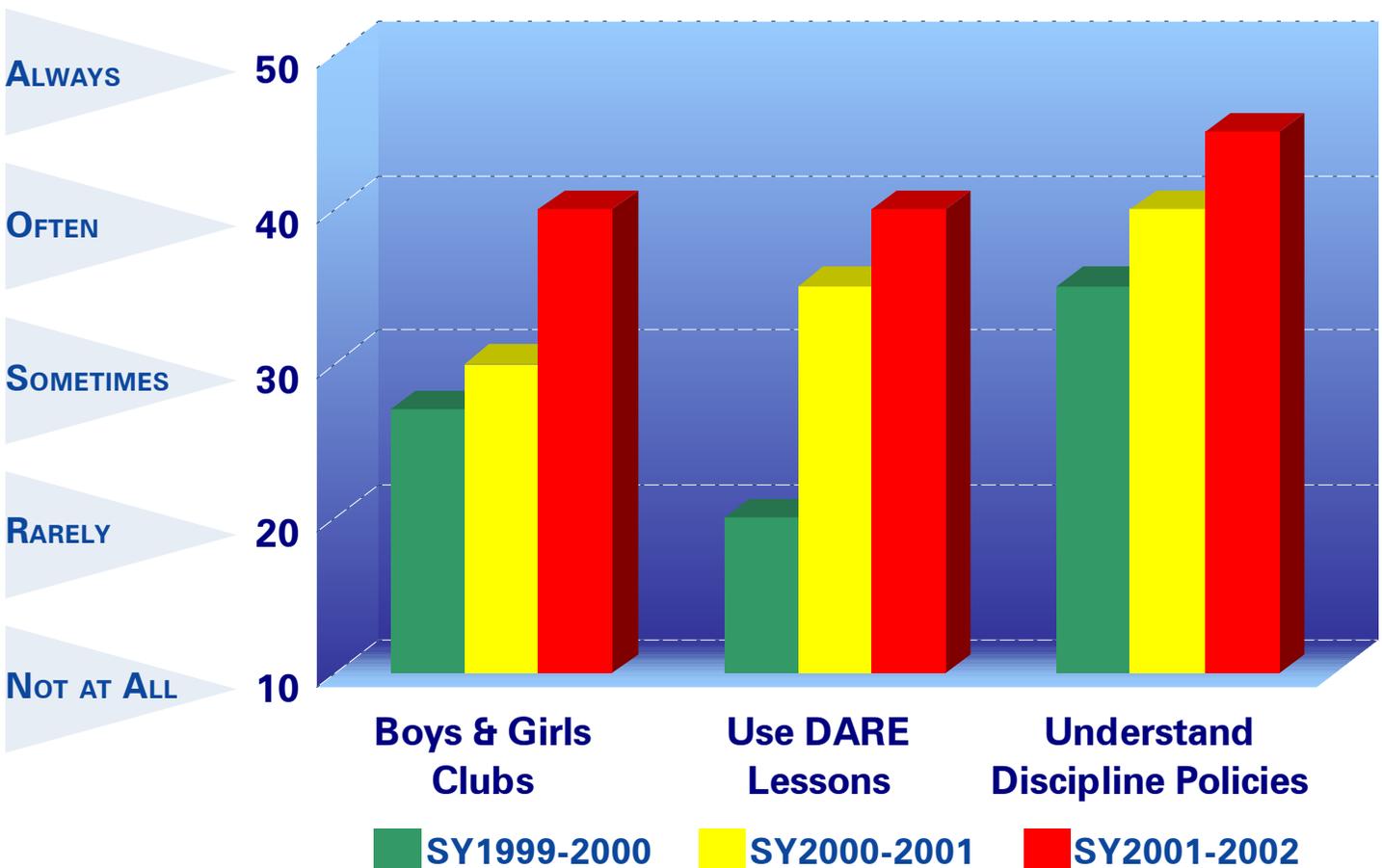
These general guidelines should be modified to suit each school. In your planning, consider the lessons learned from the Jonesboro incident while evaluating the safety of your evacuation area.



Assistance with Student Surveys

Principals surveying students to identify security concerns already have a survey example available in the DoDEA Safe Schools handbook (Tool #2). DoDEA school administrators are welcome to change the handbook example to adjust it to the characteristics of their school. Rather than becoming preoccupied with statistical validity, consider a survey simply another communication vehicle that enables school administrators to learn about student perceptions of security. Also, remember that technical assistance is available from the DoDEA Safe Schools Program to assist with modifying student surveys for your particular school and community.

Principals can include new questions to see what is working well in their Safe School Plan. Asking how often students participate in activities with Boys/Girls Clubs, use lessons taught in DARE classes, or understand discipline policies, provides results that could be depicted graphically to compare answers with responses from previous school years. An illustrative example is presented below.



(The example above is solely for illustrative purposes.)

For assistance modifying or implementing student surveys, phone DynCorp's National Institute for Safe Schools (NISS) at (703) 461-2370 or toll free at (877) 711-NISS (6477) or email: niss@dyncorp.com.



Consumers Guide to Intervention Strategies

Several national education organizations have attempted to identify effective intervention strategies or Social Emotional Learning (SEL) programs. Because it is difficult to predict the results at a particular school, researchers seek programs that demonstrate a measurable difference in behavior between students participating in the intervention program and a control group of students that do not receive the training.

From October 1, 1998 to September 30, 2001, the Department of Education funded an effort by the University of Illinois' Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) to study hundreds of SEL programs and provide a "consumers report" on effective programs (www.casel.org/library.htm). The CASEL "buyers guide" would describe programs that:

- Teach skills students need
- Provide adequate guidelines for implementation
- Include training and technical assistance to support program delivery
- Demonstrate effectiveness in well-designed studies

On November 9, 2001, John Payton, CASEL Director, explained the challenge of presenting the research so it is useful to school administrators: "This is an enormous job. We want to provide enough detail to be helpful but don't want to overwhelm." The SEL "buyers guide" is expected to be available in December 2001.

The DoDEA Intervention Strategies Supplementary Guide updates the Intervention Strategies section of the Safe Schools Handbook. Programs selected for the Guide were described as effective and considered applicable at DoDDS and DDESS schools. Previous reports on effective SEL programs include:

- The U.S. Surgeon General's January 2001 report, *Youth Violence: A Report of the Surgeon General* (www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/youthviolence/sgsummary/summary.htm), grouped programs into three categories: "Model Programs", "Promising Programs" and "Does Not Work".
- The Department of Education September 2001 Expert Panel report identifies nine exemplary and thirty-three promising intervention programs (www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/ORAD/KAD/expert_panel/drug-free.html).
- The Hamilton Fish Institute (www.hamfish.org) evaluated three hundred sixty-four intervention programs in 1999 using stringent criteria and described twelve programs as "effective" and another eleven programs as "noteworthy" (www.hamfish.org/programs/).

Continued on next page





Intervention Strategies

- The American Association of School Administrators' (AASA) June 1998 guide, *Safe Schools, Safe Students: A Guide to Violence Prevention Strategies* awarded an "A" to ten of eighty-four programs evaluated. Forty-nine of the programs received a "C" or a "D". (www.aasa.org/issues_and_insights/safety/programs.htm).
- The Colorado Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV) provides information on intervention programs it considers effective as part of its *Blueprints Initiative* (www.colorado.edu/cspv/).



behavior management

hate prevention

life skills training

mentoring

conflict resolution

The collage consists of several overlapping photographs. At the top left, a young boy and girl are shown in a classroom setting. To their right, a group of students is sitting on the floor in a library or classroom, engaged in a discussion. Below these, there are images of students in a classroom, a student talking to a teacher, and a student sitting at a desk. At the bottom left, a group of students is gathered outdoors near a rocky area. At the bottom center, two students are shown in a conversation. At the bottom right, a student is sitting at a desk, possibly being mentored. The text labels are placed around the collage to identify the different strategies.

