



Technical Assistance

DoDEA Safe Schools Workshop attendees have expressed interest in hearing about the availability of Technical Assistance.

Administrators have the Safe Schools Program at their disposal for Technical Assistance. Support is available for any safe school planning question. Call when you need help implementing your:

- ◆ Emergency Drills
- ◆ Planning Tools
- ◆ Safe School Plans

Contact us today at: safeschools@csc.com or 703-461-2271 or 1-866-711-6477. ■

Workshop Participants Share Wisdom

Administrators in Laurel Bay, South Carolina used the January 22, 2004 DoDEA Safe Schools workshop as an opportunity to discuss how they would re-examine their Safe School Plans. Community Superintendent Dr. Joseph Guiendon hosted the workshop facilitated by Coral Cappelman, Assistant Principal for Laurel Bay Elementary School, Jan Long, Instructional Systems Specialist, Bob Heffley, Security Specialist, and Ron Shaffer, DDESS Headquarters.



The 14 participants and 3 observers shared the following solutions while discussing Risk Reduction Planning challenges:

Issue: Students with a conflict would agree to meet at a tree just off the school property to settle their disputes physically.

Solution: School officials requested that the military command trim bushes at the edge of the school property. After the foliage was gone, school staff were able to supervise the area and the fights ceased.

Issue: Finding an affordable way to teach staff how to respond to a crisis.

Solution: Using “table top exercises” with staff, such as the ammonia leak scenario used in the workshop, one administrator realized she could conduct similar exercises at monthly staff meetings and improve readiness, without a substantial investment of time or money.

Issue: Safe School Plan compliance with DoDEA, the School Improvement Plan (SIP), and the military service requirement for a crisis plan.

Solution: Administrators realized the handbook could help them complete all three plans required by DoDEA, SIP, and their military service requirement.

Safe Schools Workshops continue with visits to Fort Benning, Camp Lejeune, and Fort Bragg during February, then on to Europe during March 2004. ■

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Student Drug Trends

Drug use often leads to risky and emotionally unstable behaviors. Research indicates targeting young students decreases the lifetime usage of drugs. Educators can dramatically impact their students' early decisions by designing an anti-drug campaign using prevention programs, such as Project ALERT and DARE.

The 2003 *Monitoring the Future Survey* indicates that drug use among 8th graders is rising. This is most troubling because eighth grade responses historically foretell changes in future 10th and 12th grade drug usage.

Alert: DoDEA does not want schools administering surveys to students that include potentially incriminating questions (i.e., weapons possession or drug use).

To give administrators an idea of the current student drug trends, some of the results from the 2003 *Monitoring the Future Survey*, conducted by The National Institute on Drug Abuse, are listed below.

Use of Some Drugs Rises . . .

- ◆ Illicit use of prescription painkillers OxyContin and Vicodin increased slightly in 2003.
- ◆ Inhalant use among 8th graders rose to 8.7 percent in 2003.

. . . While Other Drug Use Drops

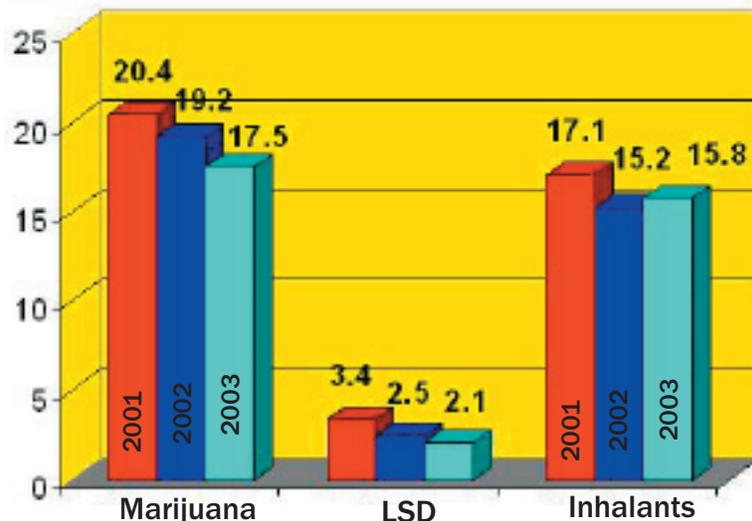
- ◆ Ecstasy use fell by over half since 2001.

DoDEA Safe Schools Program Managers
Ed Englehardt, Rose Chunik

Safe Schools Newsletter Editorial Staff
Bob Michela, Jennifer Bloom, Brian McKeon

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8th-grade Drug Usage



Source: 2003 *Monitoring the Future Survey*

- ◆ Marijuana use fell by three-tenths among 8th-graders since 1996, and one-tenth among 10th and 12th-graders since 1997.
- ◆ Cigarettes, amphetamines, tranquilizers, and sedatives have experienced an overall decline.

Drug Use Which Held Steady

- ◆ Alcohol use among 12th graders decreased slightly, but is not dropping in other grades.
- ◆ Rohypnol, GHB (Club Drugs), cocaine, heroin, and narcotic drugs held steady.

As a result of these findings, researchers strongly suggest the need for anti-drug campaigns to continuously remind students of the harmful effects of drugs. If administrators use drug prevention programs to target young students, the chances of these individuals becoming lifetime drug users will decrease. For more on this issue, go to: www.whitehouse.drugpolicy.gov or www.monitoringthefuture.org. ■

Plan, Practice, Prepare

Veterans of crisis situations believe that the only way to prepare to respond effectively to a crisis is to plan, practice and prepare their Incident Response Planning procedures (IRP). IRP drills benefit everyone. Staff and students learn what is expected of them, and as a result, experience less anxiety and stress during an actual incident.

Your drills should include: lockdown, shelter-in-place, take cover, and evacuation procedures. Creating a plan of action for each of these scenarios gives administrators an opportunity for personnel to plan ahead, prepare needed equipment, and practice any procedures necessary to support the school during a crisis.

Administrators who have diligently practiced their Protective Actions suggest the following:

- ◆ *Inspect your facility.* One principal discovered that someone must go up on the roof during an incident to turn off the HVAC. **Note:** DoDEA School Security Upgrade Projects can fund wiring a central emergency HVAC shut-off switch to the school administrative office.
- ◆ *Discuss Incident Response Planning procedures with the PMO or security officials.* Due to a lack of coordination between the school and security officials, lives were almost put at risk during one incident in which a shooter was reported near a school.
- ◆ *Inform parents about the procedures for releasing students.* In previous incidents, crowds of parents have interfered with emergency responders by blocking their access to injured students. ■



Carol Lee Kip, Assistant Principal, Britton Elementary School, presents the results of an IRP exercise.

What is Your Level of Risk?

Risk Reduction Planning (RRP) is a proactive process of assessment. The Five Phase Process is used for RRP. During this process the administrator uses tools to evaluate their policies, programs & physical security measures. Understanding the meaning of “risk” is essential in this process, particularly as it relates to Phase Three (Evaluating and Identifying Measures).

Risk involves the concept that something “might happen,” usually something unfavorable. A full definition of risk must take into account not just the probability of an outcome, but its severity. Consider the following four aspects of risk by using the “Risk Consequence Questions” below when reviewing your policies, programs and physical security measures:

1. **Probability** - What is the likelihood that something will happen?
2. **Hazard** - How would a safety or security hazard present itself? How could it cause harm?
3. **Exposure** - When, where, and how could the school be exposed to the safety or security hazard?
4. **Consequences** - What could the consequences of the incident be? The nature and severity of the consequences will help administrators determine if the safety and security risk would be big or small.

Phase Three has two valuable tools, the Policy & Program Review and the Physical Security Review. With these tools administrators can evaluate their current measures and identify measures to meet new objectives. This will help to better focus time and resources on those categories that warrant the most attention.

Reducing risk is a vital component of your safe school plan. For more information on Risk Reduction Planning, refer to Chapter Two of the Revised DoDEA Second Special Edition of *Safe Schools: A Handbook for Practitioners*. ■

Accidental Biological Incident or Suspected Biological Attack

This month's education article focuses on biological incidents such as botulism, often found in a processed food, or a suspected biological attack. The National Defense University's (NDU) Center for Technology and National Security Policy offers guidelines administrators can use to prepare for biological incidents.

To prepare for a suspected biological incident, NDU suggests:

- ◆ Developing a staff, student and family contact plan (i.e. how to get in touch via E-mail or some alternative communications method).
- ◆ Pre-positioning a portable radio and supply of batteries (to enable you to listen to instructions from health officials.)
- ◆ Stockpiling antibiotics or purchasing gas masks is NOT recommended.



If an incident occurs:

- ◆ Plan and prepare to evacuate if and when Emergency Management Teams or your Base Emergency Team advises you to do so.
- ◆ Isolate staff and students from contagious diseases. (This will protect you from further contamination.)
- ◆ Listen to the news.
- ◆ Boil all drinking water.
- ◆ Most agents are destroyed by bleach or in some cases, soap and water – do not swallow bleach or allow it to get on your skin.

In general, do not rush to the emergency room right away, unless you have inhaled a toxic agent or suffered direct exposure on your skin. With some biological agents such as smallpox, anthrax or tularemia, receiving a vaccination or antibiotics within three days can counter or mitigate the effects, so there is time to seek treatment. For more on biological exposure symptoms and detailed treatment suggestions, go to: www.ndu.edu/ctnsp/index.html. ■



Participants in Laurel Bay South Carolina work through an Incident Response Planning (IRP) "table top" exercise requiring them to determine the Protective Actions they would use in a crisis situation.

De-escalating Student Fights

When students begin to participate in the “male dance” that precedes a physical fight, they have the choice to listen to outsiders who chant, “Fight, fight, fight” or to say to the person they are having problems with: “Come on, let’s forget it, what are we making such a big deal about?”

Students who choose to de-escalate a conflict contribute to a more peaceful climate within themselves and their school. Ron Slaby, author of *Aggressors, Victims and Bystanders* offers this practical exercise that teaches students how to retain their cool, even in stressful situations. Here are Slaby’s directions for playing the “Cool Heads” and “Hot Heads” game in class:

- ◆ Read Situation 1 of the “Cool Heads/Hot Heads” dialogue available at: www2.edc.org with a student volunteer.
- ◆ Invite students to discuss the situation. Ask them how they would react in those circumstances.
- ◆ Emphasize that the Cool Head and Hot Head are not two different people. Explain that both of these personality traits are within each of us and it is up to us to decide if we will react negatively as a Hot Head, or take a step back and react positively as a Cool Head.
- ◆ Have student volunteers read Situation 2 to the class. Ask student volunteers to role-play the mental confrontation.
- ◆ When the Cool Head and Hot Head volunteers have exhausted their arguments, terminate the role-play and invite the class to share their observations and lessons learned.

- ◆ Explain to students that sometimes it is difficult to remember to choose cool thoughts when in the midst of the emotions and turbulence of a real situation. Remind students to take time to take a deep breath and think before they react. Reassure students that it is okay to seek help from adults when deciding on an appropriate response. ■



New Anti-Bullying Resource

Everyone affected by the frustrations of bullying has a new web-based resource to turn to for support in the battle against bullying. The Anti-Bullying Network recently launched a comprehensive catalog of information pertaining to school-based bullying that is grouped into two main categories entitled “What Do We Know About Bullying?” and “How Can Bullying Be Tackled?” Regularly updated, this site is user friendly and flows in a logical format. The site is designed to be accessible to the groups who need it the most – students, parents, teachers, service providers, and administrators. To view the site, go to: www.antibullying.net/knowledge/knowledgenew.htm. ■



Aligning Your Staff With Your Prevention Programs

Seasoned administrator, Jan Long, offered this insight into how administrators might benefit from discussing approaches to staff behavior problems. Workshop participants nodded in agreement as Long mentioned that sometimes inconsistent behavior among staff erodes the impact of a student prevention program. For example, occasionally a popular prevention program is purchased to address a sensitive student issue, such as bullying or substance abuse, but the school neglects to teach it to personnel affected by the same problems. Long suggested that administrators confronting this situation work closely with the staff member to address the problem. Employee assistance programs often offer specialized curriculum and private counseling to address these issues. This approach could benefit not only the individual involved, but the students and the school climate.

Mr. Long stressed the importance of communicating a consistent prevention program message throughout the school. For example, if the school is implementing a character education program that uses a “word of the month,” such as “integrity” or “responsibility”, it is important that those character traits are evident throughout the school community.



Presenter Paul Hersey greets Instructional Systems Specialist Jan Long at Laurel Bay, SC

Prevention programs teach students positive character traits, refusal skills, decision-making and communication skills. However, prevention programs are more effective if the adults teaching the curriculum exemplify the desired behavior. Students are usually keenly aware of inconsistencies between what adults do and say. Addressing tough topics with school staff before your school implements a prevention program avoids obvious inconsistencies and enables staff to learn and grow personally and professionally.

Investing the effort to help staff at the outset of a prevention program strengthens the effect of the program and improves the school climate for everyone. Mr. Long acknowledged that most teachers are “on target” with their behavior. Mr. Long also said that the difference in school climate is obvious in successful schools, “Adults and children are interacting positively, and students enjoy learning.” A climate where students feel appreciated and involved in learning contributes to academic success, improves relationships between students and staff, and increases the probability that students will alert administrators to any potential threat of violence. ■

President Lauds Prevention Efforts

“One of the worst decisions our children can make is to gamble their lives and futures on drugs. Our government is helping parents confront this problem, with aggressive education, treatment, and law enforcement. Drug use in high school has declined by 11 percent over the past two years. Four hundred thousand fewer young people are using illegal drugs than in the year 2001.” ■

President George W. Bush, January 20, 2004

