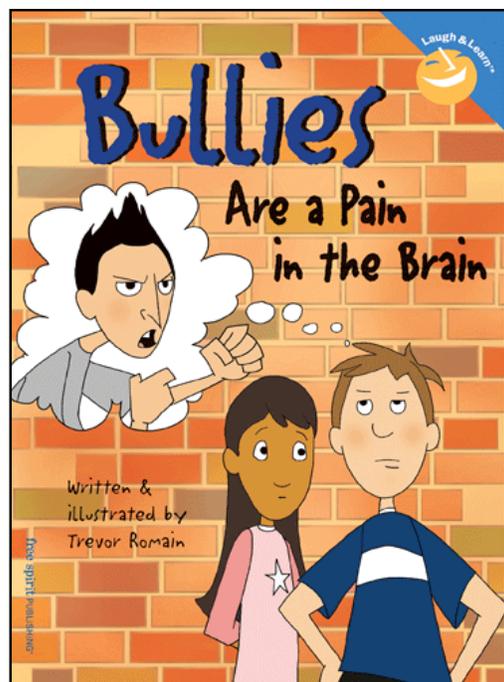




Trevor Romain: Prevention and Inspiration for DDESS Counselors

DDESS counselors and principals recently met for a three-day conference devoted to building student resiliency. The purpose of the conference was to develop a repertoire of tools for counselors to address the real life issues that DoDEA students face and to empower students with problem solving in social situations.

The keynote speaker at the conference was Trevor Romain, a writer and motivational speaker, whose work focuses on teaching children self-management and coping skills. During his address, Romain shared his own experiences as a target of childhood bullying. He also validated the key role counselors play in student well-being, and reiterated the importance of listening to, and speaking individually with, children.



“The counselors seemed to be very interested in the presentation,” said Terry Marsteller, a counselor at West Point Middle School, who attended the conference. “Lots of questions were asked and experiences were shared.” Romain’s Bullying Prevention Curriculum was distributed at the conference. DDESS counselors returned to their schools with the entire *Bullies Are a Pain in the Brain* kit, along with extra booklets and materials.

Marlene Wong, Ph.D., Director of Crisis Counseling and Intervention Services at the Los Angeles Unified School District, also spoke at the conference. She offered guidance into how schools can support students’ emotional well-being while still enhancing academic achievement. An attorney from DoDEA’s Office of General Counsel outlined steps administrators should take to respect and maintain student privacy. Lorna Harrison, Ph.D., led trainings to help counselors integrate the new Trevor Romain materials with the Competency Based Counseling Program (CBCP) components already in use. ■

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Involving Parents in Crisis Management

Educating parents about the Safe School Plan reassures them that their school is prepared in the event of a crisis incident. From Heidelberg, Germany comes an innovative system for ensuring that parents understand and are committed to the school's Crisis Management Plan: Warn them that if the school goes into lockdown, they will be required to participate in the drill.

During a recent interview, Heidelberg Middle School (HMS) Assistant Principal Susan Gehring explained that sometimes parents are “caught” during their protective action drills. “If a parent is inside when we start a drill, they are expected to comply with directions. If it is a lockdown, they are locked in for the duration of the drill,” said Gehring who reports that most parents are happy to comply.

Parents at HMS collaborate with school staff because administrators have taken pains to educate and inform them about the need for, and the nature of, school drills and exercises. Communication and parent education are the key components of ensuring effective parent involvement in safe school planning. Following are the steps Gehring and her team take at Heidelberg:

Communicate

Start before the school year begins and include reminders in the regular communication with parents. Use the take-home folders, the parent-student handbook, the school web page, and Parent Teacher Organization meetings to inform parents about the Safe School Plan and their role during crisis management procedures. As parents learn that the school has procedures for lockdown, shelter-in-place, take cover, and evacuation, they are reassured that the school is prepared to respond in a crisis and are thus more accommodating to the needs of administrators.



Involve parents and other school visitors in protective action drills such as lockdown and evacuation.

Educate

Explain that there are two important ways that parents can contribute to the success of the Crisis Management Plan. First, if they are in the school during a protective action they should follow directions and move to the designated area. For example, during a lockdown, the school clerk or a school secretary often ushers visitors and parents into a room near the entrance so that they are protected. Second, they should know and comply with the school's parent-child reunification procedures to avoid confusion and maintain accountability in the event of an actual incident.

It is important to practice protective action procedures consistently so that everyone remembers what to do when the crisis is real. Insisting that parents and school visitors comply with the procedures may cause unforeseen delays for parents attempting to visit the school. However, this practice sends a strong signal to the entire school community that the school takes security seriously and is ready to protect students during any type of incident. ■

Parent Involvement Prevents Alcohol Abuse; Increases Academic Success

Many studies have shown that parental involvement in school boosts academic achievement. New findings from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), however, indicate that parental involvement is also an insulating factor in the prevention of underage drinking. There are several ways that parents can participate in their child's education so everyone can reap the benefits of better health and academic success.

Parental Involvement Increases Academic Achievement

Students whose parents are actively involved in their education have better grades, test scores, and long-term academic achievement. Students also attend school more regularly, complete more homework, and demonstrate more positive attitudes and behaviors than those with less involved parents.

– Source: U.S. Department of Education, *Family Involvement in Education: Successful Local Approaches Idea Book*, www.ed.gov/pubs/FamInvolve/index.html

Results culled from the 2006 NSDUH study found a marked correlation between how often parents checked homework and whether students had used alcohol. Nearly 70 percent of the students who said their parents always checked their homework reported that they had not used alcohol in their lifetimes. Half of those students (52.2 percent) who said that their parents sometimes checked their homework reported using alcohol. Perhaps not surprisingly, the group of students reporting the highest percentage of alcohol use during the past year (23.3 percent) said that their parents' seldom checked their homework.

The researchers used student reports of how often parents checked homework as a measure of how involved students felt their parents were in their school work. There are several other ways parents can demonstrate the importance they place on seeing their children achieve academic success. These include:

- ◆ Attending school events.
- ◆ Participating in parent-teacher conferences.
- ◆ Asking children about what happened at school.
- ◆ Eating Dinner with their children.

Involvement in learning does not necessarily mean that parents need to devote a lot of time to visiting their child's school. A December 2005 study by the Harvard Family Research Project, *Parental Involvement and Student Achievement: A Meta Analysis*, found that some of the most effective approaches included reading and talking with children, establishing high expectations, and homework discipline at home.



In a series of public service announcements on drug prevention sponsored by the Office of National Drug Control Policy, actor Jamie Lee Curtis suggests that simply having dinner together as a family, and asking about school work, provides an insulating factor that makes it less likely students will experiment with alcohol or drugs. In short, parents are “the anti-drug.” For more information, visit www.theantidrug.com or see the NSDUH results at www.oas.samhsa.gov/NSDUH/2K6NSDUH/2K6results.cfm#6.8. ■

Byte-sized Security Measures: Cybersecurity Mini Self-Assessment

Phase 1 of the Five-Phase Planning Process in the DoDEA Safe Schools Handbook teaches administrators to identify the problems that threaten the security of their school. Recognizing the patterns of technology used in a school can help administrators identify their primary objectives for mitigating risk. Administrators can then evaluate specific measures to prevent future cybersecurity incidents and develop a plan to implement these measures.

A similar approach works in assessing cybersecurity. The two main threats are security problems, such as intruders, and climate problems, such as bullying. Just as an effective strategy for school security addresses all types of threats, an effective cybersecurity plan should take specific action to address any significant issues. Following are a dozen questions that an administrator should consider when reviewing the schools' preparation against cybersecurity risks:

1. What security incidents related to technology have occurred in the school? (These could include hacking, copying, or changing data, equipment theft, etc.)
2. Is computer/Internet access limited only to authorized personnel (students and staff)?
3. Does the school have policies regarding Internet access and online behavior?
4. Do teachers ever allow unsupervised students to use computers?
5. Have school policies on computer/Internet access been communicated to all students, staff, and parents/sponsors?
6. Are personal passwords to computers, e-mail, and the school network adequately protected by staff members? Are they changed periodically?
7. Are all individual computers protected from viruses?
8. Do administrators receive periodic updates on how their IT systems are being protected?
9. Are network security measures such as firewalls and anti-virus software programs up-to-date?
10. Is network equipment secure from environmental hazards (floods, leaks, etc.)?
11. Is access to network equipment limited to authorized personnel only?
12. Is information on the network periodically "backed up" to prevent loss?



Enhancing overall cybersecurity practices can help protect the school computer network, the information stored on it, and the privacy of students and staff. School computer systems are vulnerable not only from perpetrators attempting to gain access, but also from the negligence of those already using the school computers.

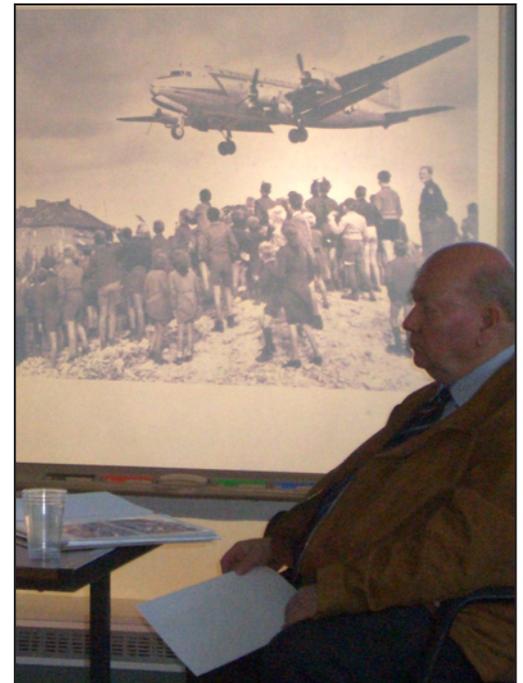
Because, in an educational setting, the value of computers lies in their use as educational tools, there can exist a lack of awareness of the fact that those very tools also pose a vulnerability if not adequately protected. Most online security concerns are easy to address. By educating all system users on the proper rules, ethics, and online etiquette, schools can guarantee the security of their information and systems, in addition to the privacy of their students and staff members. ■

Students' Partnership Builds Bridges of Understanding

Participation in a competition to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Berlin airlift has left a legacy of cooperation between students and teachers at Aukamm Elementary School and their German counterparts at Grundschule Nauheim in Wiesbaden. "The theme for the competition was "building bridges," noted Corinne Voyer, a teacher at Aukamm ES. "Our students built bridges by reaching out to German students of the same age and learning about our shared history."

At Aukamm, Voyer and fellow teacher Elizabeth Green teamed up with host nation teacher Ute Bopp to help students research the Berlin airlift. "Frau Bopp proposed a partnership with a German school as a way to bring German and American students closer together and to educate them about their joint history," noted Voyer.

The students read a nonfiction children's book, "Mercedes and the Chocolate Pilot," by Margot Theis Raven, which tells the true-story of Mercedes Wild who was a young girl living in Berlin during the time of the blockade. They were inspired by the generosity and bravery of retired U.S. Air Force Col. Gail S. Halvorsen, who is known as the "Candy Bomber" because he dropped thousands of tiny parachutes filled with chocolate and gum to the hungry children of Berlin.



Retired Air Force Col. Gail S. Halvorsen, popularly known as the "Candy Bomber," discusses his experiences in the Berlin Airlift.



Mercedes Wild signs copies of Mercedes and the Chocolate Pilot for students at Aukamm Elementary School.

This story became the basis of the joint project between the schools. "The American class put together a video with facts about the airlift and the German class made a claymation movie about the Mercedes Wild story," said Voyer. Later, Frau Wild visited the students to talk with them about her memories of the Berlin Airlift and their depiction of her story. "The students were very excited about their class projects and learned a great deal about this time in history," noted Voyer. The students also made parachutes of candy. After Frau Wild's visit, the German fire department arrived and, much to the delight of the children, tossed parachutes of chocolate down from their tallest ladder.

The project earned second place in a competition sponsored by the city of Frankfurt and U.S. Consulate. "It was a very positive experience," noted Voyer. "Both classes will remember it for years to come."

At Wiesbaden High School, students in Christine Taylor's German III class took third place in the same competition. Inspired by the stories, Taylor shared her parents' experiences in Berlin after the war. Students also built a dual-language Web site about the Berlin Airlift. To learn more about the Berlin airlift, visit the Wiesbaden High School Berlin Airlift Web site at www.wies-hs.eu.dodea.edu/CurrentEvents/BerlinAirlift/berlin_airlift_website.html. ■