SAFE SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

Recommended Security Measures

The Missouri Center for Safe Schools (MCSS) recommends measures to prevent school violence that DoDEA principals might want to bear in mind as they evaluate and update their Safe School Plans. The MCSS identifies the following measures for reducing the risk of violence and for improving school climate. They are:

● **Discipline Policies** – Enforce discipline policies consistently

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Safe Schools NEWS

DoDEA Safe Schools Seminars Available On-line

The Safe Schools Seminar is a unique, time-limited opportunity for the DoDEA community to address specific school safety topics with top professional researchers and practitioners. Each four-week seminar will begin by making available background readings, research activities, literacy connections, and school-based program descriptions. Each seminar will then present a two-week long Professional Consultation and Collaboration (PCC) session where participants can use threaded e-mail discussions to receive professional advice and information anonymously.

You can join these unique, interactive seminars held on-line by clicking on the Seminars link at the DoDEA Safe Schools web site at: www.dodsafeschools.org or by going to: http://webct.hawaii.edu:8900/public/safeschools/.
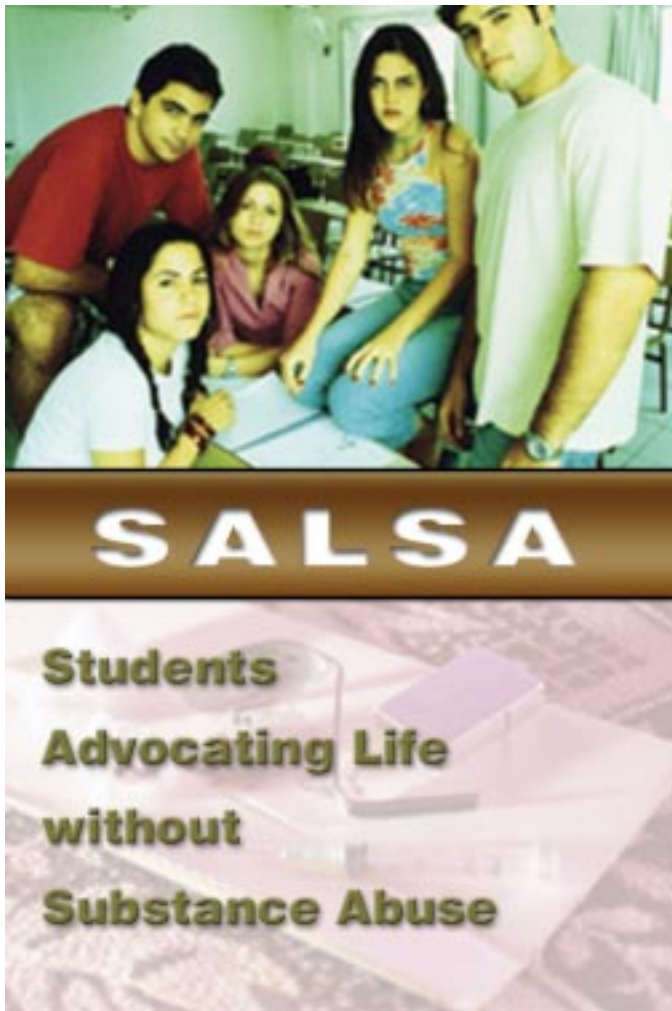
The following seminars will be held over the next few months:

Conflict Resolution: January 6 – 31. On-line Consultation and Collaboration: January 20 – 31.

Safe Schools Seminar

New York City Implements New Security Measures

New York City Schools are incorporating new security measures to ensure that "children who want to learn can" said Joel Klein, chancellor of New York City Schools. New security measures include: publicizing higher behavior expectations, implementing rigorous discipline policies, installing additional surveillance cameras, and opening alternative schools for students with significant behavior problems.

Randi Weingarten, president of the United Federation of Teachers applauded Klein's measures referring to them as "a giant step forward." Some teachers had been concerned about recent attacks on teachers by troubled students. For further information, see the November 26, 2002 *New York Times* at: www.nytimes.com.

Drug-Free Student Program

Students Advocating Life without Substance Abuse (SALSA) supports youth who choose to live drug-free. Started by educators concerned that students who get into trouble with drugs receive more attention than students making healthy choices, SALSA publicizes the joys of choosing not to use drugs. These middle/high school student-led groups are usually organized by students assisted by an adult moderator. Program activities include visiting elementary schools to present skits, lead discussions, and demonstrate by example that living drug-free is a "cool" and acceptable choice. For further information on establishing a SALSA chapter, write: fcdonline@fcd.org, or visit: www.fcd.org.

<u>Gang Resistance and Prevention</u>:
February 3 – 28. On-line Consultation and Collaboration: February 17 – 28.

<u>Hate Intervention and Prevention</u>: March 3 – 30.

<u>Substance Abuse Intervention and Prevention</u>: April 1 – 30. On-line Consultation and Collaboration: April 16 – 30.

<u>Suicide and Depression Intervention and Prevention</u>: May 5 – 30. On-line Consultation and Collaboration: May 19 – 30.

Please share your ideas on prevention programs and safe schools news with us.

Consider submitting an article or just a few tips for your colleagues for the next issue of this DoDEA sponsored newsletter!

Send your ideas or an article to safeschools@dyncorp.com, or phone us toll-free at: 1-(866) 711-6477.

throughout the school district. Policies emphasize instructing students in self-discipline. Consequences for infractions of discipline policies are well publicized and consistently implemented.

- **Conflict Resolution** – Teach conflict resolution and peer mediation programs in each school. Students and school staff use conflict resolution techniques to prevent and settle disputes.

- **Abuse Prevention** – Educate staff about the early warning signs of physical, emotional and substance abuse. Principals implement prevention programs at their school and establish procedures for reporting and referring students to appropriate counseling.

- **Anger Management Training** – Alert staff regarding the indicators of emotionally distraught students. Teach staff strategies for correcting inappropriate behavior at school.

- **Crisis Management Plans** – Establish Incident Response Plans at each school and implement them in the event of a crisis incident.

- **Positive/Negative Peer Relationships** – Organize student and staff participation in team-building activities. Teach social skills to strengthen peer relationships.

- **Citizenship (Character) Education** – Include character education in the existing academic curriculum. Invite community members to help identify leadership traits to emphasize in character education training.

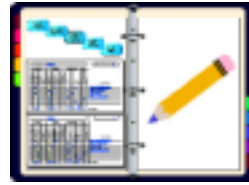For further information, visit: www.umkc.edu/safe-school/who/purpose2.html

manage or accomplish the tasks required. Ten to twelve people is the right size to provide a cohesive group with the diverse skills and perspectives needed. The old saying "too many cooks spoil the soup" could apply.

School leaders who work in conjunction with their Safe School Committee to institute needed policy, security, counseling, mentoring, and prevention programs are able to avoid critical incidents in most potential crisis situations.

One Committee You Can't Do Without!

As the primary leader of your school's safety and security planning process, it's essential that you involve both the school and community in the development of your Safe School Plan. Create a Safe School Committee to include representatives from all of your stakeholder groups who are interested in the school's greater good. Your stakeholder groups should encompass students, staff, parents, the local military community, local security officials (i.e., provost marshal) community health services, and the school district. The Committee will help to establish a sense of commitment to school security and ownership of the group's mission and goals. This Committee will also allow you to gather input and perspectives from a variety of knowledgeable people, about ways to better reduce the risks of violence in your school. This Committee will undoubtedly strengthen your chances for developing a successful Safe School Plan.

The size of your Safe School Committee is important. It should be comprised of enough people to be representative of your stakeholders, but not so many that it becomes difficult to

Safe School Committee Goals

The goals of your Safe School Committee might be to:

- Help create the Safe School Plan, which includes assisting in the Risk Reduction Planning Process;

- Implement the school safety surveys;

- Promote and support school security; and

- Become more educated and aware of school violence, safety, and security issues.

Evaluating Conflict Resolution Programs

How can you, after receiving FY03 funding for prevention programs, decide whether your Conflict Resolution (CR) program is working? The Department of Education recommends the following four steps for evaluating your CR program.

Program Objectives: State your CR program's objectives clearly so you can decide later whether they were accomplished. For example, are you attempting to establish peaceful and orderly classrooms, teach students to manage their own conflicts, or improve academic performance?

Observations: Discern improvements in school climate by measuring increases in student willingness to confront problems openly and to resolve conflicts cooperatively. Decide whether you achieved your objectives by measuring decreases in physical fights, victimization, verbal abuse, hurt feelings, or discrimination.

Documentation: Document observable behaviors with teacher reports, student self-reports, school discipline records, or surveys. Note improvements in students' responses to provocations as they internalize their CR skills.

Analysis: Identify the causes of your CR program's success. Is improved student behavior a result of the intervention, or had your students learned the same social skills elsewhere? Consider other changes in the academic curriculum or community that might have influenced your results.

One technique for evaluating CR programs involves having students role-play simulated conflicts. Better student responses during subsequent classroom role-playing indicates progress. For further information, visit: http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/digest/dig163.asp

CR Evaluation Checklist

☑ Program Objectives

☑ Observations

☑ Documentation

☑ Analysis

When Should I Phone for Technical Assistance?

Call us when you need help:
- Implementing any of your Safe Schools Planning Tools
- Writing your Safe Schools Plan
- Justifying funds for a needed Safe Schools Program or physical security modification

These examples are just a few ways that Technical Assistance can support you.

Please contact us at: safeschools@dyncorp.com, **or toll free at:** 1-(866) 711-6477

School Violence Loses in Court

The Center for Prevention of School Violence has produced a thought-provoking video that encourages adults and students to consider how they might contribute to school violence. *The Students vs. School Violence* presents all of the popularly attributed causes of school violence as witnesses in a simulated court trial. As students consider topics such as cliques, parental involvement, the availability of guns, and cultural influences including the media, movies, video games and music; they confront the realization that their actions or non-actions either enhance or decrease the risk of school violence.

How It Works

The 55-minute video offers a potent tool for attracting student interest and initiating student discussion or classroom journaling activities. The video was filmed on location in a North Carolina high school theater. Action progresses quickly and scenes change repeatedly to keep students' attention. The dramatic framing technique strengthens the believability of the characters and palatability of the "personal responsibility" message. Providing layers of critical distance lets viewers identify with the student actors, but ascribe emotional appeals to the courtroom drama that the students are rehearsing.

Learning Tools

The Resource Guide accompanying the videotape presents complete lesson plans to help educators lead discussion of each of the four acts of *The Students vs. School Violence.* The lesson plans include an overview, objectives, suggestions for teacher preparation, materials needed, discussion questions, and evaluation options. Students share their views in discussion groups, as a whole class or through creative writing assignments.

Lessons Learned

The video offers several lessons describing how members of the school community can take personal responsibility for school violence, including:

🍎 **Report Violence**: Students can take personal responsibility for their school's security by alerting adults to potential incidents of violence.

🍎 **Talk to Each Other**: Students can diminish the negativity of cliques by learning to treat each other as individuals.

🍎 **Involve Parents**: Parents can work with their children to establish realistic limits regarding their activities.

🍎 **Courtesy Counts**: Teach students that simple gestures such as smiling or saying "hello" to a student having a tough time might brighten their day.

For further information, visit the North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Center for Prevention of School Violence at: www.ncsu.edu/cpsv or contact Catherine Anderson at: catherine.anderson@ncmail.net.
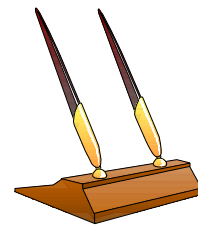
Advances in the Use of Behavior Management as a Violence Prevention Strategy

Behavior management has long been thought of within an A -B - C framework. A refers to antecedents of the behavior to be managed, that is, what activates or triggers the behavior. B refers to the behavior itself. And C refers to consequences for the behavior, such as reactions and responses of others. Traditional approaches to the management of aggressive and violent behavior in school settings have been primarily focused on C. As a result, there was an emphasis on modifying problem behaviors using both positive consequences (reinforcement) and aversive consequences (punishment).

More recently, there has been increased interest in the A component of behavior management. In part, this may be due to the relative ineffectiveness of purely aversive approaches, but it also represents a major shift in the goals of behavior management. Rather than simply being a reaction to negative behavior, this emphasis on antecedents provides an opportunity for both preventing these behaviors from occurring in the first place and promoting competing prosocial responses such as cooperation, kindness, and mutual respect.

Positive Prevention Through Behavioral Support

The term "positive behavioral support" refers to a set of strategies designed to replace violent and aggressive behaviors with enhanced "prosocial" skills, skills that promote positive social interactions. Positive behavioral support relies upon assessment, not only of a student's personal characteristics including both assets and deficits, but also of the context and setting in which problem behaviors occur. Contextual information is important because strategies to prevent or inhibit school violence may include modification of setting variables such as supervision patterns, class size, teaching style, and the school's physical structure and layout.

According to Dennis McDougall of the Department of Special Education at the University of Hawaii, "Positive behavioral support is not a new idea, but its focus on building competencies aligns it well with a prevention orientation." The basic question addressed by its proponents is what kinds of resources - teaching strategies, curriculum, related services, learning environment—are needed for a particular student to be successful. By providing the necessary levels of "support," teachers, parents, and others in effect prevent the occurrence of negative social behaviors including bullying, teasing, fighting, and other forms of aggression.

Opportunities to establish antecedent conditions that promote prosocial skills often take place in the classroom and on the playground. Russell Skiba and colleagues at the Indiana Education Policy Center note that both classroom structure, for instance, seating arrangements, and teacher modeling of positive social interactions are important antecedents for maintaining an effective learning environment. In addition, the establishment of clear rules of conduct, particularly with regard to what constitutes prosocial behavior, is critical for effective classroom management.

Other strategies that promote prosocial behavior include use of cooperative learning, ongoing communication with families, encouragement of active student participation in decision-making, and peer mediated support and learning. Finally, a general school climate that is attractive, clean, supportive, and nurturing is a crucial antecedent condition for establishment of prosocial norms.

Best Practices for Effective Behavior Management

Effective use of behavior management requires early intervention. Most acts of serious aggression in school settings begin as relatively minor interpersonal infractions that tend to accelerate if left unchecked. By imposing appropriate consequences for low level aggression while, at the same time, promoting positive social interactions between all students, teachers can orchestrate a tolerant and respectful classroom climate.

In addition to occurring early in the disruptive behavior cycle, behavior management interventions to be effective must be consistently and evenly applied across settings, including both home and school. Such an effort obviously necessitates communication between parents and teachers and is facilitated by a whole school approach.

Finally, a schoolwide climate fostering mutuality and respect results in fewer disciplinary problems and increased efforts toward academic proficiency. By focusing on individual, school, and systemic factors that promote positive youth development, we create an environment that is intolerant of behaviors such as teasing, bullying, and other forms of interpersonal violence.

For more information, see: *Prevention Research & the IDEA Discipline Provisions: A Guide for School Administrators and the Twenty-Second Annual Report to Congress*. (Available at: www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/Products/comppubs.html)

Effective Proactive Behavior Management Programs

The following are links to some behavior management programs that have been shown to be effective for both prevention of unwanted behaviors and promotion of prosocial behaviors.

- Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (University of Oregon): www.pbis.org
- First Step to Success, Sopris West: www.hamfish.org/programs/
- Project ACHIEVE: www.coedu.usf.edu/projectachieve
- PATHS (Promoting Alternative THinking Strategies): www.preventionscience.com/PATHS/PATHS.html
- Second Step Curriculum: www.cfchildren.org