

School Safety: Lessons Learned



**From Your Friends at the
United States Attorney's Office
District of Minnesota**

**Thomas B. Heffelfinger
United States Attorney**

**With the Support of the
Minnesota Department of Education and the
Minnesota Department of Public Safety**

Winter, 2006



This publication is dedicated to those killed in Minnesota school shootings. In their memory, we pledge to work tirelessly to improve school safety in our state.

Seth Bartell, age 13, killed at Rocori High School, in Cold Spring, on September 24, 2003.

Aaron Rollins, age 17, killed at Rocori High School, in Cold Spring, on September 24, 2003.

Derrick Brun, age 28, killed at Red Lake High, on the Red Lake Reservation, on March 21, 2005.

Neva Rogers, age 62, killed at Red Lake High, on the Red Lake Reservation, on March 21, 2005.

Chanelle Rosebear, age 15, killed at Red Lake High, on the Red Lake Reservation, on March 21, 2005.

Chase Lussier, age 15, killed at Red Lake High, on the Red Lake Reservation, on March 21, 2005.

Thurlene Stillo, age 15, killed at Red Lake High, on the Red Lake Reservation, on March 21, 2005.

Dwayne Lewis, age 15, killed at Red Lake High, on the Red Lake Reservation, on March 21, 2005.

Alicia White, age 14, killed at Red Lake High, on the Red Lake Reservation, on March 21, 2005.

Daryl Lussier, age 58, and Michelle Sigana, age 32, were also killed by Jeff Weise, age 16, on March 21, 2005, prior to Weise's shooting rampage at Red Lake High School. Weise then took his own life.



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While the U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Minnesota, is happy to provide this information to Minnesota law enforcement and school administrators, the views of the contributors are their own. Those views do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Minnesota, or the U.S. Department of Justice.

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From the desk of.....

**Thomas B. Heffelfinger
United States Attorney
District of Minnesota**

Dear Law Enforcement Colleagues and School Administrators:

We know that school violence can occur anywhere, from a suburban school in Colorado, to a rural school in Central Minnesota. Thus, school violence is everyone's problem. And, we owe it to our children to work together to find out why such acts take place and what we can do to stop them. Only then will we create a safer and more nurturing education environment for our young people.

In October of 2005, this office, in partnership with the U.S. Secret Service, Minneapolis Field Office; the national Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, which is part of the U.S. Department of Education; the Minnesota Department of Public Safety; and the Minnesota Department of Education, sponsored a conference on school safety. The conference was well-received, and numerous requests for additional information followed. In particular, we were asked for more information about establishing and maintaining partnerships between law enforcement and school officials, so comprehensive school safety plans may be developed now and crisis response plans may be implemented effectively if needed in the future. We also were asked for additional information on how to involve community members more effectively in the creation of a positive school climate, where students and parents feel safe and connected. And, finally, we were asked to hear from those who have dealt with school violence directly. In an effort to provide all of that information, we developed this booklet.

The booklet includes a compilation of articles, resource materials, and tips from some of the speakers featured at the 2005 school safety conference as well as other national and local experts in the field of school safety. We have divided the material into sections, each focusing on an important aspect of school safety. Hopefully, the information will provide you with a better understanding of the safety and security issues facing our schools as well as various views on how we may more effectively address those issues.

To all those who contributed to this effort, thank you. To the readers of this booklet, we wish you the best in your future school safety endeavors. And, to our colleagues at the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, a special thanks for your support of and contributions to this project.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Tom Heffelfinger".

**THOMAS B. HEFFELFINGER
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
DISTRICT OF MINNESOTA**



Background

The U.S. Secret Service Studies School Shootings



In 2000, the U.S. Secret Service released a detailed analysis of school shootings. In preparing the report, entitled the Safe School

Initiative, the authors researched 37 school shootings. They read the journals, letters, and other writings of the young gunmen; and they visited ten of them in jail, conducting interviews about why and how the shootings occurred. A summary of the report is provided below.

No School Shooter Profile:

Secret Service researchers found no such thing as a typical school shooter. In other words, we cannot profile who is likely to go on a school shooting rampage. While some past shooters lived in poor, single-parent homes, others lived in what many might call ideal, two-parent households. Some were considered "loners," but many had a number of close friends. Some were on the academic honor roll, while others were failing courses. Few had prior disciplinary problems or issues with drugs and alcohol. Most, however, refrained from participating in sports or other group activities, and few had close relationships with adults. Many had a history of depression. Most had been bullied. All were boys.

Given those findings, which, for the most part, are quite diverse, researchers suggest we stop concentrating on the "traits" of a potential shooter and, instead, concentrate on engaging young people, particularly boys, in more dialogue about their feelings and the feelings of their friends. We must seek information. Does the child in question have major grievances? Is he depressed? Has he said anything that could lead someone else to believe he could be a danger to himself or others? Does he have access to weapons?

The Secret Service says that the uselessness of trying to profile potential school shooters can be illustrated by the case of Barry Loukaitis. At the



age of 14, Loukaitis walked into his high school with a rifle and killed two classmates and a teacher. A psychiatrist later wrote that Barry never seemed different from other kids his age.

School Shooters Don't Snap:

According to the authors of the Safe School Initiative, school shootings have never been spontaneous acts. In all cases, researchers say, the attacker developed the idea in advance. In half of the cases, the perpetrator considered the attack for at least two weeks and created in-depth plans at least two days ahead of the attack.

Other Students Usually Know:

While some students may dismiss the rantings of a despondent classmate as merely "big talk," others actually have been known to encourage attacks. The Secret Service research indicates that in one-third of fatal school shootings, the attacks were influenced or dared by other students. For example, Evan Ramsey, who was 16 when he shot and killed another student and the school principal in Bethel, Alaska, showed his friends his "hit list" a couple of weeks before the attack. His friends reportedly added eleven names to the list. Then, on the day of the shooting, Ramsey invited a few friends to stand on the library balcony to watch the action. By the time of the shooting, the balcony was crowded with students who wanted to see if Ramsey would really go through with his threat.



Attacks

Solve Problems:

The Secret Service concluded from its research that many school shooters saw their attacks as a way to solve a problem. The problem in two-thirds of the cases was that the shooter had been bullied. In more than three-fourths of the cases, the perpetrator held a grudge against one or more of the targets. In most of the cases, the motive for the attack was revenge.



Fatal U.S. School Shootings

March 21, 2005: Jeff Weise, age 16, entered Red Lake High School, on the Red Lake Indian Reservation in Northern Minnesota, and shot and killed a security guard, five classmates, and a teacher before turning the gun on himself. Earlier in the day, he had killed his grandfather as well as his grandfather's companion.

Sept. 24, 2003: Two students, Aaron Rollins, 17, and Seth Bartell, 14, were fatally shot at Rocori High School in Cold Spring, Minnesota. Fellow student John Jason McLaughlin, who was 15 at the time, stood trial as an adult, was found guilty of both first- and second-degree murder, and will remain incarcerated for at least 40 years.

March 5, 2001: Charles Williams, 15, killed two fellow students and wounded 13 others at Santana High School in San Diego County, California. Williams received 50 years to life in prison.

May 26, 2000: Nathaniel Brazill, a 13-year-old honor student, killed his English teacher, Barry Grunow, on the last day of classes in Lake Worth, Florida, after Grunow refused to let Brazill talk with two girls during class. Brazill was convicted of second-degree murder and is serving a 28-year sentence.

Feb. 29, 2000: A six-year-old boy shot and killed a six-year-old classmate at Buell Elementary School in Mount Morris Township, Michigan. Because of his age, the boy was not charged.

Nov. 19, 1999: A 13-year-old girl was shot in the head during school in Deming, New Mexico, and died the next day. A 12-year-old boy was sentenced to at least two years in juvenile prison.

April 20, 1999: Students Eric Harris, 18, and Dylan Klebold, 17, killed 12 students and a teacher and wounded 23 others before killing themselves at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado.

May 21, 1998: Two teenagers were killed and more than 20 people injured when Kip Kinkel opened fire at a high school in Springfield, Oregon. Kinkel, 17, was charged with those murders as well as the earlier murder of his parents. Kinkel was sentenced to nearly 112 years in prison.

May 19, 1998: Three days before his graduation, Jacob Davis, an 18-year-old student, opened fire at a high school in Fayetteville, Tennessee, killing a classmate who was dating his ex-girlfriend. Davis was later sentenced to life in prison.

April 24, 1998: Andrew Wurst, age 15, opened fire at a school dance in Edinboro, Pennsylvania, killing a science teacher. The boy pleaded guilty to third-degree murder and other charges and is serving 30 to 60 years in prison.

March 24, 1998: Two boys, 11 and 13, fired on their Jonesboro, Arkansas, middle school from a nearby woods, killing four girls and a teacher and wounding ten others. Both boys were later convicted of murder in juvenile court and may be held until age 21. The older shooter was released from custody in August, 2005.

Dec. 1, 1997: Three students were killed and five wounded at Heath High School in West Paducah, Kentucky. Michael Carneal, age 14 at the time, is serving life in prison for the crime.

Oct. 1, 1997: Sixteen-year-old Luke Woodham, of Pearl, Mississippi, fatally shot two students and wounded seven others after stabbing his mother to death. He was sentenced the following year to three life sentences plus 140 years.

Feb. 19, 1997: A 16-year-old boy took a shotgun and a bag of shells to school in Bethel, Alaska, where he killed the principal and a student and injured two others. The shooter, Evan Ramsey, is now serving a 210-year sentence.

Material obtained from the Edmonton Sun

School Shootings occur most often in the spring. Psychologists say that by then, despondent students are no longer able to cope.



Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris, far left and left, respectively, shot and killed 12 Columbine High classmates and a teacher before killing themselves in this country's deadliest school shooting. It took place in the spring of 1999.



Threat Assessments



How to Assess a Threat of School Violence

While life-threatening violence in our nation's schools is rare, it can forever impact students, communities, and even the country. Thus, prevention of such attacks must be a priority for school administrators, local law enforcement, and government officials.

The findings of the Safe School Initiative indicate that life-threatening attacks in schools may be preventable in a number of cases. In fact, researchers suggest that employment of a "threat assessment" process by educators and law enforcement may help stop such attacks.

By studying the threat assessment process, officials can learn to—

- Gather and evaluate information about a possible targeted school attack; and
- Use the results of that evaluation to create strategies to prevent school violence.

Threat assessment, as developed by the U.S. Secret Service, and applied in the context of school violence, is a "fact-based investigative and analytical approach that focuses on what a particular student is doing and saying, and not on whether the student 'looks like' those who have attacked schools in the past." The authors of the Safe School Initiative say that implementation of a threat assessment process is informed by six underlying principles:

1. Targeted violence is the end result of an understandable and, often, discernible process of thinking and behaving.

So, in doing a threat assessment, ask, "Has the person in question talked to anyone about his or her plans? Are there journal or web-site entries of concern? Have weapons been sought by the subject?"

2. Targeted violence stems from interaction among a) the person; b) the target; c) the setting; and d) the situation.

So, in doing a threat assessment, ask, "What makes this person see life as unbearable? What recent event has caused this person great stress? Is violence accepted by those around this person?"



Ten Key Findings of the Safe School Initiative

1. Incidents of targeted violence at school were rarely sudden, impulsive acts.
2. Prior to most incidents, other people knew about the attacker's idea or plan to attack.
3. Most attackers did not threaten their targets directly prior to advancing the attack.
4. There is no accurate or useful "profile" of students who engage in targeted school violence.
5. Most attackers engaged in some behavior prior to the incident that caused others concern or indicated a need for help.
6. Most attackers had difficulty coping with significant losses or personal failures. Moreover, many had considered or attempted suicide.
7. Many attackers felt bullied, persecuted, or injured by others prior to the attacks.
8. Most attackers had access to and had used weapons prior to the attacks.
9. In many cases, other students were involved in some capacity.
10. Despite prompt law enforcement responses, most shooting incidents were stopped by means other than intervention by law enforcement.

Is this person targeting a particular individual or a general group, such as 'jocks'?"

3. An investigative, skeptical, inquisitive mindset is critical to successful threat assessment.

So, in doing a threat assessment, continuously question the information in front of you. Look for credible verification of all essential points. And, use common sense.



4. Effective threat assessment is based on facts rather than characteristics or “traits.”

Conclusions about risk should be made based on analysis of the facts involved in the particular situation as well as behaviors specific to the person in question. Do not rely on general characterizations or profiles.

5. An “integrated systems approach” should guide threat assessment investigations.

Recognize the importance of working together with agencies and service systems outside the school, such as law enforcement and social services. Those agencies may hold pieces to your puzzle.

6. The central question of a threat assessment is whether a student “poses” a threat, not whether the student “made” a threat.

The Safe School Initiative found that in more than 80 percent of cases, school shooters did not threaten their targets directly. So, make your threat assessment judgments accordingly.

Want More Information?

After threat assessment teams are created and policies developed, procedures must be established for conducting threat assessment inquiries and law enforcement investigations of school threats.

Detailed guidance on how to establish inquiry and investigation procedures may be found in “Threat Assessment in Schools: A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and to Creating Safe School Climates.” That manual, published by the U.S. Secret Service and the U.S. Department of Education, is the result of the Safe School Initiative. The manual also contains details on how to establish threat assessment teams and manage threatening situations.

The manual, along with “The Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative,” may be found at www.secretservice.gov/ntac_ssi.shtml

Key Elements of a Good Threat Assessment Program

School administrators should work with district lawyers and community partners, including local law enforcement and social services, to develop an effective threat assessment program. Such a program must focus on at least three points:

- **Authority to Conduct an Assessment—**
First, a threat assessment policy should be developed. That policy must cover (a) the purpose of the policy; (b) the role of educators and the school’s threat assessment team (see section below) in relation to that of law enforcement; (c) the identity of the school official who will determine if a school-based threat assessment is adequate or a law enforcement investigation is needed; (d) a definition of the “threshold of concern” for initiating a school-based threat assessment as well as one for requesting an investigation by local law enforcement; (e) a description of the types of information that may be collected during a threat assessment; (f) the identity of those individuals authorized and responsible for gathering and analyzing threat assessment information; and (g) the steps and procedures to be followed during a school-based threat assessment as well as those for a law enforcement investigation.
- **Capacity to Conduct Inquiries and Investigations—**
Second, school administrators should (a) establish a school-based threat assessment team before a crisis occurs (members may include a faculty member, a school resource officer, a school psychologist, and a school counselor) ; (b) clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the members of that team; and (c) obtain comprehensive threat assessment training for the members of the team.
- **Integrated Systems Relationships—**
Third, in order to succeed at school-based threat assessments, the members of the assessment team, as well as school administrators, must reach out to professionals outside the school system, particularly, those in law enforcement who will be called on to perform school threat investigations.



Threat Assessments



Levels of Risk Associated with Threats of School Violence

The FBI's National Center for Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC) has spent a number of years researching school violence. Experts at the Center urge school officials to become familiar with the various levels of risk associated with threats of school violence so appropriate action can be taken in a timely manner.

- A "low level of risk" is a threat that poses minimal risk to potential victims and public safety.
 - The threat is vague and indirect.
 - The information contained in the threat is inconsistent, implausible, or lacks detail.
 - The threat lacks realism.
 - The content of the threat suggests the person is unlikely to carry out the act.
- A "medium level of risk" is a threat that could be carried out but may not seem realistic.
 - The threat is more direct and more concrete than a low-level threat.
 - The wording in the threat suggests the person making the threat has given some thought to how the act will be carried out.
 - There may be a general indication of a possible place and time for the attack, although these signs still fall short of a detailed plan.
 - There is no strong indication that the person making the threat has taken preparatory steps, although there may be some veiled references or inconclusive evidence pointing to that.
 - There may be a specific statement to convey that the threat is not empty. For example, "I'm serious!"
- A "high level of threat" is a threat that appears to pose imminent, serious danger.
 - The threat is direct, specific, plausible.
 - The threat suggests concrete steps have been taken toward carrying out the act. For example, the threat indicates the person making the threat has acquired a weapon or has had the victim under surveillance.



Although law enforcement officials in some communities may want to be informed of all threats of school violence, most police executives agree that school officials or school-based threat assessment teams should han-

dle "low level" threats. In doing so, the NCAVC suggests that, at the very least, interviews be conducted with the student making the low-level threat as well as with his or her parents. In addition, if the target of the threat is named, that person should be asked about his or her relationship with the threatening student as well as the circumstances leading up to the threat, if known. In response to such a threat, the NCAVC urges school officials to take disciplinary action against the threatening student, pursuant to established school policies, and consider referring the student for counseling or other form of intervention.

When school officials deem a threat to be a "medium level" risk, the NCAVC encourages them to immediately contact local law enforcement, so a joint review of the case can occur, and the threat can be reclassified as either "low risk" or "high risk." Note, however, this joint review may be hampered by issues surrounding "data privacy" laws as they relate to student information. (For more information regarding the sharing of student information, read "Are Private Student Records Jeopardizing School Safety," elsewhere in this booklet.)

According to the NCAVC, a threat designated as a "high risk" should prompt school officials and local law enforcement to begin working together right away to avert school violence. The school's crisis response plan, which should have been designed and rehearsed previously, must be implemented immediately.

"School shootings and other forms of school violence are not just a school's problem or a law enforcement problem. They involve schools, families, and the communities. An adolescent comes to school with a collective life experience, both positive and negative, shaped by the environments of family, school, peers, community, and culture...."

National Center for Analysis of Violent Crime



Examples of Threats and Possible Responses from the NCAVC

(These examples are provided for discussion purposes only.
They do not necessarily represent what should be done in an actual case.)



An Example of a Low-Level Threat—

Student John Jones sends another student an e-mail stating, “You’re a dead man.” The parents of the e-mail recipient bring the message to the attention of the school’s “threat assessment coordinator” the following morning.

The threat assessment team deems the threat “low level” because it is vague and lacks detail as to motive or method of attack. After reviewing John Jones’ school files, and finding reports that Jones seems immature but has no history of violence or troubling behavior, a member of the threat assessment team interviews him and his parents separately. Those interviews lead the interviewer to conclude that John Jones has no access to weapons and has made no preparations to carry out his threat. The target of the threat also is interviewed, and his responses suggest that the threat is meaningless. “We have arguments. He says stupid things, but he gets over it.”

School officials take disciplinary action against John Jones, according to school policy. They also counsel him about his use of e-mail as well as management of his anger.



A Example of a Medium-Level Threat—

Tom Murphy makes a class-project videotape that shows student actors supposedly shooting at other students on school grounds with guns that appear real. On the tape, the student actors also are heard making threatening comments to the other students and laughing. Murphy’s teacher receives the tape, becomes alarmed, and takes the tape to the threat assessment coordinator.

The threat assessment team deems the threat “medium level,” pending more information. That determination is made because the threat is specific as to perpetrators, victims, and weapon; however, it is not known if the student actors intended—or intend—to carry out the threat or if the weapons on the tape are real. Furthermore, the laughter heard on the tape may indicate a joke in poor taste rather than an actual threat.

The threat assessment coordinator contacts the police, who agree that interviews should be conducted by the trained members of the threat assessment team in an effort to gather more information. Those interviews yield that the guns in question are toys, and the students in question have no access to real weapons and harbor no ill will toward any of the other students on the video. The threat is reclassified as “low level.” School officials then take action against the students involved in the making of the video, pursuant to school policies.



An Example of a High-Level Threat—

The high school principal receives an anonymous phone call at 7:30 a.m. on a school day. The caller says, “There’s a bomb scheduled to go off near the gym today at noon. It’s actually in a locker that I can see from where I sit. So, I’ll know if someone tries to check things out.” The principal immediately calls the police department, and the school’s crisis response plan is implemented.

The principal and the threat assessment team deem this threat “high level” because it is direct and specific. The weapon along with the time and the location for the planned assault are identified. Moreover, the content of the threat suggests that the caller has taken concrete steps to carry out the threat.

Because of the specific detail and plausible nature of the threat, the situation is seen as seriously dangerous for students and staff in the building. Thus, law enforcement and school officials work together to evacuate the premises immediately. Law enforcement officers then conduct a thorough criminal investigation, while school officials address the needs and concerns of the students, parents, and community.

For more information about the FBI’s National Center for Analysis of Violent Crime or their findings about school violence, including additional examples of possible threat responses similar to those illustrated on this page, visit <http://www.fbi.gov/publications/school/scschool2.pdf>.



Threat Assessment Issues

Are Private Student Records Jeopardizing School Safety?

While developing threat assessment programs, school officials must grapple with a number of issues, one of which is the sharing of student information. A question certain to arise is, "How do I balance a student's right to privacy with the school's obligation to maintain a safe environment?"

In an effort to assist school administrators in answering that question, the Federal government published "Sharing Information: A Guide to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)." FERPA, codified at 20 U.S.C. 1232 (g), outlines the federal laws covering the disclosure of information possessed by school administrators about their students. The guide tries to explain what type of student information may be released, to whom, and in what circumstances.

Pursuant to FERPA, "directory information" about students may be released to the public at large, after notice is provided to parents, unless a parent otherwise advises the school. Directory information is defined as a "student's name, address, phone number, date of birth, previous education institutions attended, and photographs." Conversely, a student's "education records," which include everything from standardized test scores to disciplinary actions taken by school or juvenile court officials, are confidential. FERPA provides, however, that information from those records may be disclosed in certain instances. FERPA allows, for example, that whenever a health or safety emergency exists, educators may share with appropriate officials information about the students involved, including information from the students' educational records. Moreover, educators may share information from a student's education records with officials in the juvenile justice system if that student is at risk of involvement or is already involved in the system.

Presently, Federal school funding is contingent upon compliance with FERPA. But, because disclosure of information from education records is discretionary under the Act, many school administrators remain reluctant to share that information with authorities, particularly police.

In an attempt to resolve this issue, the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education encourage all schools to establish an official "school law enforcement unit." According to FERPA, a school law enforcement unit is comprised of an individual or a department of commissioned police officers or noncommissioned security guards authorized by the school district to enforce laws and maintain security in the school. FERPA provides that student information of any kind possessed by a school law enforcement unit may be disclosed to anyone; e.g., law enforcement or social services. Such disclosure is allowed since FERPA does not include in the definition of "education records" those records maintained by "school law enforcement units" for law enforcement purposes.

Nevertheless, many school officials remain concerned about releasing education records—with good reason. Improper disclosure of student information may result in costly lawsuits. Therefore, district officials are wise to consult with their attorneys when developing a policy regarding release of student information. And, they may want to read the "Sharing Information..." guide, which can be downloaded from www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/pubs/sharing-info.html.

School Security Gaps

Many groups around the State are looking at school safety and security. In doing so, some of the problem areas that keep surfacing include—

- Safety Assessments—How can a school afford to pay a for-profit company to conduct a safety assessment? And, if the school does so, how can it make sure the company is good at its work?
- Training—Where can school officials and local law enforcement find good, affordable crisis response training? At present, for example, local fire or police officials conduct most table-top crisis response exercises. But, since they are normally part of those exercises, shouldn't someone else be overseeing the process?
- Standards—How can a joint school-community safety committee tell if it is properly responding to a crisis? Where are the standards?
- First Responders—Shouldn't there be a "call" list of crisis-trained professionals who agree to coordinate their efforts in order to help victims?
- Sharing Student Information—See above article.
- Getting Students to Talk—See Page 8 articles.



Help Boys Open Up

"I believe school shooters are boys because we bring them up in a way that predisposes them to a sense of loneliness and disconnection and sadness." Those are the words of William S. Pollack, author of "Real Boys and Real Boys' Voices."

Pollack goes on to say, "When boys have additional pain, additional grievances, they are less likely to reach out and talk to someone, less likely to be listened to. Violence is the only way they start to feel they can get results."

Pollack, an assistant professor of psychology at Harvard Medical School, was a consultant to the Secret Service on its Safe Schools Initiative. He offers these tips for getting boys to "open up":

- A boy needs "timed silence," so let him choose when to speak;
- Find a safe place in which to talk, where the boy feels comfortable;
- Connect through play because boys often talk more when they are engaged in activity;

- Avoid teasing or shaming during your conversations with the boy;
- Make brief statements and then wait—do not lecture the boy;
- Share your own relevant experiences, as they show the boy that he is not alone;
- Listen carefully when the boy talks;
- Convey your love for the boy regularly;
- Give the boy undivided attention on a regular basis;
- Do not prematurely push the boy to become independent;
- Encourage the expression of a full range of emotions;
- Let the boy know that real men do cry; and
- When you see aggressive or angry behavior, look for the pain behind it.

Remember, in conducting a threat assessment, you will have to talk to the student in question. And, because that student will most likely be a boy, based on findings to date, you may find these tips helpful in getting him to open up.



Is the Price Right?

From the time they are young, children are taught by other children—and even adults—that they should not tattle. If they do, they quickly learn they will be teased, ostracized, and, in some instances, targeted for physical retaliation. It is not surprising, therefore, that adolescents often remain silent about potential school violence.

William Pollack, a professor at Harvard Medical School, who studied school shootings for the Secret Service's Safe School Initiative, found that students often had prior knowledge of school attacks but refrained from telling authorities. As a

result of that finding, some school administrators are now offering rewards, from cash to parking spots, to students willing to provide authorities with information regarding fellow-student involvement in vandalism, drug-dealing, or possible school violence.

Those administrators argue that such initiatives send students the message that they are responsible for the safety and security of their school community. Opponents, however, counter that the initiatives teach students only a selfish lesson—that they should always be rewarded.

Pollack says that paying kids to tattle on other students is "the worst message possible." He

says it creates an atmosphere of fear, distrust, and paranoia. Instead, he urges school officials and other adults to instill in young people, from an early age, that providing authorities with information that might avert trouble or save lives is not tattling. Instead, it is simply the right thing to do.





School Climate

Increasing Connectedness and Improving School Climate

By: Barb Zandlo Hutchinson

The findings of the recent Federal joint study on targeted violence in schools has increased our understanding of the relationship between school climate and school violence. We now know that the answer to school attacks is not simply bigger and better hardware. Safe schools do not build barricades; they create connections to foster climates of support and respect.

Like the meteorological concept, school climate is apparent even to the most casual observer and, often, the minute you enter the school-



"School climate is the 'feel' of the school."

Halpin and Croft, 1963

"It's the school's 'collective personality,'"

Norton, 1984

house door. Halpin and Croft describe it as the "feel" of a school.¹ And like its counterpart in nature, school climate is quantifiable. Factors affecting climate include perceptions of the school environment, school size, perceptions of safety, feelings of trust and respect, and the number and quality of interactions among students and between students and adults.² This last factor is a measure of "connectedness," which is correlated with lower levels of adolescents' involvement in risky behavior, including violence.³ Connectedness, it seems, helps make students healthier and schools safer.

So how can schools increase connectedness? District 16 staff, in Spring Lake Park, Minnesota, asked that question as they began a planning process that led to a successful *Safe Schools, Healthy Students* grant proposal. Working under

the premise that disconnectedness increases the level of risk for unhealthy behaviors and undermines school safety, a collaborative team developed a comprehensive plan for increasing that district's capacity for creating safe schools. That plan became the HAVENS Initiative, which includes efforts focused on school security, student and family support, and school climate improvement.



Safe Schools
Healthy Students

Spring Lake Park School District 16

HAVENS INITIATIVE

HAVENS Initiative clusters efforts in 3 areas:

- school safety:** audits, building improvements, staff safety and security training
- student and family support:** mentoring, family strengthening, mental health programs and services
- school climate improvement:** classroom/school improvement efforts, expansion and integration of afterschool programs, partnership development

How the research guided program planning



Under the plan, district and partner agency staff worked together to incorporate district-wide school and classroom strategies to increase connections by means of such best-practice approaches as mentoring, after-school programming, mental health services, and the research-based school improvement programs, "Second Step Violence Prevention," "Responsive Classroom," and "Olweus Bullying Prevention."

"Like the air in a room, climate surrounds and affects everything that happens in an organization."

Freiberg, 1983



Effective school and classroom improvement programs, like those used by District 16 and mentioned here, have many practices in common. All provide physical environments and routines that promote self-control, have clear and consistent rules and consequences, model and teach age-appropriate conflict management strategies, and work to create connections by establishing good relationships between teacher and child and between children.



Safe Schools
Healthy Students

Spring Lake Park School District 16

HAVENS
~INITIATIVE~

Classroom climate improvement efforts:

- provide environments, routines that promote self-control
- model/teach appropriate conflict management strategies
- understand the importance of establishing good relationships between teacher and child and between children
- have clear and consistent rules and consequences

Is it working? Although it is difficult—and most likely inappropriate—to claim that any single effort is responsible for improving school climate, we are seeing increases in key indicators of school connectedness. After the implementation of the Responsive Classroom approach in 75 percent of the district's K-5 classrooms, the number of students reporting feeling “happy at school” rose by nine percent. And, early childhood staff reported that there were no incidents of violence in a class of 12 high-risk children after incorporating Second Step in a therapeutic pre-school program. Findings from teacher focus groups and anecdotal reports from principals suggest that staff believe the improved climate to be a result of these concerted efforts.⁴



Safe Schools
Healthy Students

Spring Lake Park School District 16

HAVENS
~INITIATIVE~

School Leaders create a healthy climate by:

- having high expectations for all students
- being focused on mission
- understanding “how all the pieces fit”
- valuing, facilitating parent, community, and partner support
- using data to drive decisions
- seeking out and supporting highly trained staff
- managing both people and tasks efficiently and effectively
- creating positive physical environments

While heartened by these early results, HAVENS' staff members realize the challenge of sustaining safe climates and know it is not possible without strong and effective leadership at the school and district levels. Leadership is “a critical factor in shaping school culture and climate,”⁵ and those who hope to create positive school climates need to begin their work there.

1 Halpin, A.W., & Croft, D.B. The Organizational Climate of Schools. The University of Chicago, (1993).

2 Marshall, M.L., Examining School Climate: Defining Factors and Educational Influences, Georgia State University.

3 Protecting Adolescents from Harm: Findings from the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health, (1997).

4 Findings from the 2003 and 2004 HAVENS Safe Schools, Healthy Students Initiative Evaluation Reports.

5 Gonder & Hymes. Improving School Climate & Culture. American Association of School Administrators, (1994).

*Visit www.ed.gov/programs/dvpsafeschools/index.html for information about the “Safe Schools, Healthy Students” discretionary grant.

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The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health concluded that:

“Adolescent health is influenced not only by the strengths and vulnerabilities of individual adolescents but also by the character of the settings in which they lead their lives”; and

“American adolescents stand a better chance of avoiding risky behavior when they experience and express strong connections to their school.”

Second Step is a violence prevention curriculum, for preschool and kindergarten through Grade 9, that teaches social and emotional skills. The program includes research-based, teacher-friendly curricula and training. Visit www.cfchildren.org.

The Responsive Classroom® is an approach to teaching and learning that fosters safe and challenging classrooms for kindergarten through Grade 8. Developed by classroom teachers, it consists of strategies for bringing together social and academic learning. Visit www.responsiveclassroom.org.

See the “Violence Prevention Programs” section of this booklet for more programming ideas.



Community Involvement

How to Involve the Community in Your Efforts to Improve School Climate

By: Colleen MacRae

A healthy school climate helps a community ensure the health and well-being of area youth. Barb Zandlo Hutchinson, of Spring Lake Park HAVENS Initiative, states, "Classroom climate-improvement efforts promote self-control, model and teach appropriate conflict management strategies, establish good relationships between teacher and child as well as among children, and provide clear and consistent rules and consequences." (Minnesota School Safety Conference, October 4, 2005).

The development of a healthy school climate is often hindered, however, by the pursuit of the perfect program, able to address all issues facing a school district. In addition, some mistakenly think that a school can achieve a healthy environment within its own walls, without outside help.



The challenge actually lies in recognizing that no program is perfect or all-encompassing; and that school officials must reach out to human service providers and other stakeholders for support and assistance in the school's endeavor.

Before ever implementing a curriculum or a best practice, a network of relationships must be in place to ensure success in moving from an unhealthy to a healthy climate and to achieve immediate and long-term benefits. School administrators need to take an active role in fostering these community-wide partnerships.

There are several ways to bring a community together in an effort to move toward a healthy school climate. To do so, consider taking some of these steps:

- **Identify stakeholders and key leaders** who will support the partnership in reaching its goal. For example, invite representatives of law enforcement, public health, mental health, corrections, social services, community action



programs, business, local government, and students and families to get involved. School officials can position themselves as the lead partner in terms of bringing together—or convening—these community representatives.

- **Find a catalyst** that calls the community representatives to action. This can be a tragic or magic event, such as the passing of a student or the receipt of an award by the school.
- Bring the stakeholders together to **define a vision, focus, and purpose** for coming together.
- Clarify the group's **rules of engagement**. This will help all partners understand their roles and responsibilities and clarify expectations. It will also allow the group to address potential barriers and solutions relative to participation.
- Be **culturally competent**. Do the necessary homework to find out about the cultures of the proposed partners. Understand individual motivation and identify commonalities in the overall vision. Take time to identify similarities and dissimilarities in business approaches and make sure everyone is speaking the same language; that is, prevention, not intervention.
- Employ **resource mapping** for assessment and strategic planning purposes. By mapping out what each partner brings to the project, the group can identify gaps, evaluate resources, and determine clear and specific needs. Resource mapping helps the partners determine where duplication of effort is occurring and provides them with the information needed to streamline activities.

"Great discoveries and improvements invariably involve the cooperation of many minds."

Alexander Graham Bell

Community Involvement



Then, the group can focus on developing goals, activities, and outcomes, as well as strategies that are part of a work plan.

- Utilize national **resources**. Conduct regular web and literary searches for best or promising practices. Learn from other communities across the nation that have been through similar experiences.
- **Evaluate**, evaluate, evaluate. Work with an independent evaluator to help develop a “logic model” and tools to measure process and outcomes. Report findings in a format recognizable

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

to all stakeholders. Take additional action as deemed prudent by the evaluation findings. Evaluation data are important for securing ongoing support for the efforts of the partnership.

- **Share** in the challenges. When one partner faces hardship, other partners need to provide support. Support comes in the form of personnel,



resources, finances, and testimonials. Facing issues together as a collective and providing a united response, strengthens the

ability of the partnership to address a variety of situations and respond appropriately to challenges.

- **Celebrate** opportunities, milestones, and accomplishments. Even during hard times, opportunities exist to coordinate activities and achieve positive results. Then, during calmer times, program partners must take the steps necessary to ensure that program milestones are celebrated. It is important to recognize the work of individual partners and the partnership as a whole. Such celebrations also send a positive message to others in the community.



By taking the lead in organizing a community-wide effort to improve school climate, school administrators can invite participation from an array of service providers and interested members of the public. In doing so, those administrators can strengthen their resource base, become more efficient, and garner good will in addition to improving school climate. Although it takes dedication, commitment, and a willingness to relinquish some control, pursuing a community-wide effort to improve school climate is well worth the effort.

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A Logic Model

A logic model explains in an easy-to-read table format what an organization is trying to accomplish by documenting goals and activities, anticipated changes, target populations, indicators of success, and measures of progress.

A logic model outlines the types of services provided to a specific target audience, noting identified needs and how to tell when goals are reached. A good source of information on creating a logic model may be found on the W.K. Kellogg Foundation website, at <http://www.wkkf.org>. There, search for “logic model” under “publications and resources.” For another evaluation method, see the “Violence Prevention Programs” section of this booklet.

For more information on how to form and maintain productive partnerships among social service agencies, local law enforcement, and school administrators, for the purpose of working together to create safer schools and happier students, see the “Group Work Skills” section that follows in this booklet.



Group Work Skills

Involving Community: Be a Good Convener

A. Do pre-work–

- ✗ Plan an agenda for your meetings with community partners
- ✗ Arrange the meeting room and obtain supplies and refreshments
- ✗ Mail the complete agenda packets to invited participants in a timely fashion

B. Open the meeting–

- ✗ Make introductions
- ✗ Explain the purpose of the meeting; e.g., creating a school safety plan
- ✗ Review the agenda
- ✗ Review the ground rules for the meeting
- ✗ Initiate the discussion

C. Facilitate the meeting–

- ✗ Proceed through the agenda
- ✗ Help the group stay on track
- ✗ Ensure participation
- ✗ Build consensus
- ✗ Manage conflict
- ✗ Handle disruptive behavior



D. Close the meeting–

- ✗ Review decisions made and needed actions (Who's doing what? By when?)
- ✗ Preview the business for the next meeting
- ✗ Evaluate the meeting (Did the group meet the objectives of the meeting?)



Keep Group Goals in Mind When Making an Agenda

- ➔ **Define desired results**—What are the goals of the meeting?
- ➔ **Identify the meeting time frame**—How much time is being allowed for the meeting?
- ➔ **List the topics to be covered**—Is each subject relevant to the goals of the meeting?
- ➔ **Define time frames for each agenda topic**—Given the total meeting time, how much time can be allowed for each agenda item?
- ➔ **Plan processes to aid with topics**—Which tools might help engage group members in discussing the various agenda items? (See Pages 14 and 15.)
- ➔ **Do a sanity check**—Can all of the agenda items really be properly discussed by the end of the meeting? Remember your ultimate goals.



Create Meeting Ground Rules

Ground rules are normally established at a group's first meeting and then restated at the beginning of every meeting thereafter. Simply put, ground rules are the rules that the group creates to ensure a friendly meeting environment. It is the duty of the group leader to make sure ground rules are followed. Ground rules may include—

- ☉ One person speaks at a time.
- ☉ Clarifying questions are welcome.
- ☉ Speakers must focus on the subject at hand.
- ☉ Feelings may be expressed freely.
- ☉ Everyone is welcome to share.
- ☉ Discussions are to be about positions, not personalities.

*Adapted from Facilitation Resources,
U of M Extension Service and the
Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs*



Build Consensus

Although the “majority rules” approach may be the quickest way to make group decisions, it often leaves group members feeling like “winners” or “losers.” So, instead, you may want to try to build



“consensus,” which is “general agreement.” In building consensus, group members discuss decision options and ultimately agree on one as “best for the group in the particular instance,” even if they personally prefer another decision option.

To facilitate consensus–

- Seek proposals from everyone;
- Use active listening skills;
- Find similarities in what is being said;
- Summarize frequently;
- Ask if you are summarizing accurately;
- Ask for objections to each proposal;
- Seek suggestions on how to address those objections;
- Limit comments that have been previously stated; and
- Review decisions and clarify tasks.

Phrases that build consensus–

“I wonder if we could list some other possibilities.”

“Let’s brainstorm some advantages and disadvantages of each proposal.”

“Peter, I understand you are not in support of Proposal B. Is there anything you can say to make a case for the proposal you prefer?”

“Jim, help me understand your view better. Are you saying...?”

Adapted from Facilitation Resources, U of M Extension Service and the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs

“...If there’s a clear and distinguishing feature about the process of leading, it’s in the distinction between mobilizing others to do and mobilizing others ‘to want to do.’”

James Kouzes and Barry Posner

Make Group Decisions

Group decisions can be difficult to make. The “majority rules” approach doesn’t always leave participants feeling good about group work. So, you may want to try one of the decision-making techniques described below, especially when dealing with a complex issue. These techniques seek involvement from everyone while separating complex issues into manageable parts.

⇒ **Brainstorming** - Group members call out ideas to a recorder, who jots them down on a blackboard or large flip chart. The goal of this exercise is to generate lots of ideas. No idea is considered “bad.” A time limit is usually imposed for this exercise. Brainstorming is a great way to develop many potential solutions for an issue.



⇒ **Categorizing** - Group members do their own brainstorming, writing individual ideas on separate large sticky-back cards and then sticking those cards to the wall. Next, a few members of the group arrange the cards into categories and provide each category with a heading. (This task must be done very quickly.) The group then makes adjustments to the categories. Finally, the group prioritizes the categories and takes action, first carrying out the work associated with the ideas listed under the category awarded the highest priority.

⇒ **Worst-Case Scenario** - A recorder jots down all possible solutions to the issue at hand, as shouted out by the group. Then, starting with the first potential solution, the group leader asks, **“If we take this action, what is the worst that could happen?”** The recorder writes down all responses provided by the group. Next, the group leader asks, **“If we take this action, what is the best that could happen?”** Again, the recorder writes down the replies. Finally, the group leader asks, **“If we take this action, what is likely to happen?”** The recorder again writes down the responses. The process is then repeated for all other possible solutions. After all potential solutions are examined, group members should be able to determine the best solution to the issue before them.

Adapted from The Facilitator’s Tool Kit, by Lynn Kearny



Group Work Skills

Create Group Proposals

After your multi-disciplinary group has prioritized potential solutions for the problem at hand, the group must develop a proposal that is likely to be adopted and implemented by the entity best qualified to take the action necessary to fix the problem (e.g., the school safety team or the school board). Good proposals should—

- ✓ Clearly state the problem at hand.
- ✓ Explain why group members believe the recipient of the proposal is the right entity to address the problem.
- ✓ Highlight the preferred solution to the problem, as determined by the group, but describe at least two alternative solutions.
- ✓ Clearly link the problem to each solution option and support that linkage with evidence acquired through research.
- ✓ Outline the advantages and disadvantages, costs, and personnel requirements of each potential solution, focusing particular attention on the preferred solution.
- ✓ Describe how implementation of each solution option would be staffed and funded, focusing on the preferred solution.
- ✓ Explain how implementation of the various solution options would be carried out.
- ✓ Contain flexibility in the implementation instructions, guidelines, and timeline developed for each possible solution.
- ✓ Describe how each solution option may be evaluated for success, with special attention paid to the preferred solution.
- ✓ Summarize how the benefits of the preferred solution outweigh the costs.



Implement Proposals

Once a program or policy proposal is accepted, implementation takes place. Successful implementation requires that you—

- ✓ Plan and manage the implementation process carefully;
- ✓ Make changes to the program or policy easy to understand and quick to occur;
- ✓ Consider providing incentives to gain acceptance of the program or policy by those most affected by it;
- ✓ Utilize “action plans” and “time lines”;
- ✓ Develop a problem-solving strategy since problems are sure to arise;
- ✓ Create an evaluation process to insure that program or policy goals are achieved;
- ✓ Monitor implementation to assure group members that key program or policy components are maintained;
- ✓ Insure that there are enough resources for proper implementation;
- ✓ Undertake the organizational changes needed for long-term success;
- ✓ Maintain a group of policy supporters;
- ✓ Communicate, communicate; and
- ✓ Establish “review points,” at which times, the newly implemented program or policy may be altered or even terminated.

Adapted from Leadership for the Common Good, by J. Bryson and B. Crosby



Keep Meetings on Track

The group leader must keep the group on track. Try these tips—

- Do not overload the agenda. Leave time for a thorough discussion of each topic.
- In your introductory remarks at each meeting, remind the group that one of your tasks is to keep the group on track.
- If time is running out, and you have many items left on the agenda, ask the group to identify one or two items that they truly want to discuss, leaving the rest for the next meeting.

- Set time limits for discussions, if necessary. But, if you do so, explain how such a move enhances the process.
- Consider the level of intervention needed by you as facilitator. Some groups require on-going intervention, while other groups need intervention only once in a while.

Adapted from Facilitation Resources, U of M Extension Service and the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs



Handle Meeting Conflict

People are predisposed to conflict because they possess different backgrounds, which prompt varying perspectives and beliefs. Thus, conflict will occur within all groups. And, that's not necessarily a bad thing.

Disagreements, in fact, can actually aid groups in decision making since disagreements can cause group members to broaden their thinking. Conflict may be harmful, though, if it is directed toward people and not tasks.

Therefore, the group leader must steer conflict away from personalities and toward tasks and positions. This can be done by using "active listening," which requires the group leader to ask questions about the beliefs and feelings of those involved and then repeat the responses in order to confirm meaning.

Adapted from Conflict Within Small Decision-Making and Problem-Solving Teams by Valerie Sessa



Use Active Listening—Especially in Disputes

1. Give the speaker your full attention.
2. Search for the feelings at play.
3. Ask clarifying questions to make sure you understand—
 - a. "Are you saying that...?"
 - b. "What do you mean by...?"
4. Ask open-ended questions to expand communication—
 - a. "Could you say more about...?"
 - b. "How might that look?"
 - c. "How do you feel about that?"
5. Don't impose your own judgments. Don't use words that convey judgment, such as "should," "shouldn't," or "wrong."



Minnesota's schools are one of the safest places for our children. However, like other states, we have experienced tragedy. By looking closely and unflinchingly at our experiences and sharing what we have learned from them, we can determine how to pool our best ideas and resources to make our schools even safer. Hopefully, our department and this material will assist you in that effort. For more assistance, visit our website, at www.education.state.mn.us, or call us at (651) 582-8200.

Alice Seagren, Commissioner
Department of Education
State of Minnesota



The Minnesota Department of Public Safety strongly encourages all communities and school districts across the State to develop and exercise school safety and response plans. Unfortunately, school violence will happen, and it is critical to plan and train for such events. Planning, preparing, and exercising are the best forms of prevention.

The Department's Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management has produced a comprehensive document that can be easily downloaded from the Public Safety website, at www.dps.state.mn.us. This document offers first responders and school officials tips and guidance for responding to critical incidents at schools.

If you have other questions, comments, or concerns about school safety in Minnesota, contact my office, at (651) 296-6642.

Michael Campion, Commissioner
Department of Public Safety
State of Minnesota



Violence Prevention Programs



No More Bullying!

Preventing bullying is one of the most effective ways to reduce school violence.

Russell Skiba, director of the Safe and Responsive Schools Project at Indiana University, in Bloomington, says that statement is supported by program evaluations commis-

sioned by the U.S. Congress,

the U.S. Department of Education, the Justice Department, and the Surgeon General. "In the period after Columbine, we responded out of fear and often moved too quickly to put reactive measures in place." Instead, Skiba goes on to say that we should have addressed the issue proactively by, among other things, dealing with bullies. "When the Secret Service, in the most comprehensive analysis of school shootings to date, finds that 71 percent of the perpetrators viewed their acts as retribution for bullying by classmates, we had better take that seriously."

The National PTA defines bullies as "Children who intentionally and repeatedly inflict psychological or physical damage on less-powerful children in order to inflate their own sense of

self-worth.... The bully is aware that his or her behavior causes distress; the bully enjoys the victim's reaction; and the bullying continues and escalates."

According to the PTA, bullying is rationalized by others sometimes because victims appear "overly sensitive, cry easily, or act in ways that set them apart from other children." The group warns, however, that even when victims demonstrate these characteristics, people must concentrate on the fact that bullying is not a healthy coping response. Instead, a PTA spokesperson says, "It signals that a child [the bully] needs to learn how to manage his or her emotions, release anger and frustration in healthy ways, and learn constructive strategies for interacting with other children."

Contrary to what some may think, the National PTA claims that bullying is not "normal." Victims of bullies are most often passive people, who turn their anger inward, which leads to depression, anxiety, violence, and suicide. The bullies themselves also suffer from their behavior. They fail to learn to take responsibility or solve their own problems. And, they go on to blame others for the troubles they face throughout their lives.

Best Practices for Dealing with Bullies

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services leads an anti-bullying campaign that calls on all of us to "Take a Stand; Lend a Hand; Stop Bullying Now!" The campaign website lists the elements of any good school-based anti-bullying initiative. Those elements are summarized below. For more information, visit the website, at www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov,

- Raise school and community awareness of the seriousness of bullying;
- Use student surveys to determine the extent of the bullying in the school;
- Increase supervision of students to observe and intervene in bullying;
- Develop school rules and consequences regarding bullying;
- Have serious talks with bullies and victims;
- Enforce established bullying consequences;
- Encourage students to speak up about bullying; and
- Promote personal and social competencies, such as self-confidence and anger management through coursework.



Violence Prevention Programs



The Olweus Program: Preventing Bullying

By: Marlene Snyder, Ph.D.

The Olweus [pronounced OI-VAY-us] Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) is a comprehensive, school-wide program designed for use in elementary, middle, or junior high schools. Its goals are to reduce and prevent bullying problems among school children and to improve peer relations at school. This

A student is being bullied when he or she is exposed repeatedly and over time to negative actions on the part of one or more students.

research-based program has been found to reduce bullying among children, improve the social climate of classrooms, and reduce related antisocial behaviors, such as vandalism and truancy. The OBPP has been selected as a model Blueprint for Violence Prevention Program, a model program for the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration, and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Program Content

Core components of the program are implemented at the school, classroom, and individual levels. The community-level component has been added in the United States implementation of the program.

School-Level

Components Include—

- Formation of a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee;
- Distribution of an anonymous

student questionnaire, assessing the nature and prevalence of bullying;

- Training for committee members and staff;
- Development of a coordinated system of supervision;
- Adoption of school-wide rules against bullying;
- Development of appropriate positive and negative consequences for students' behavior;
- Holding staff discussion groups related to the program; and
- Involvement of parents.

Classroom-Level

Components Include—

- Reinforcement of school-wide rules against bullying;
- Holding regular classroom meetings with students to increase knowledge and empathy; and
- Informational meetings with parents.

Individual-Level

Components Include—

- Interventions with children who bully;
- Interventions with children who are bullied; and
- Discussions with parents of involved students.

Community-Level

Components Include—

- Convening meetings with community members; and
- Incorporating anti-bullying messages and strategies in youth-related activities in the community (including recreational activities, scouting, and after-school programs).

Information about the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

(program content, program evaluation, program materials, and training information) may be found at www.clemson.edu/olweus. Materials for the program may be ordered from Hazelden Publishing, at 1-800-328-9000.

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Program Evaluations

Schools are bombarded with violence prevention and skill-building programs created by well-meaning folks. So, what should officials consider when selecting programs for their schools?

Most experts in the areas of violence prevention and character development agree that programs should have a proven track record. In other words, programs need to be evaluated and found to work, as was done with the Olweus Program. If programs have not been evaluated, school officials should be ready to do so if, in fact, they plan to implement those programs in their schools.

Several evaluation processes are described in this booklet. Otherwise, administrators can ask an outside evaluator to review their programs. For assistance in finding an outside evaluator, or for other violence prevention program information, contact Nancy Riestenberg, of the Minnesota Department of Education, at (651) 582-8433.



Violence Prevention Programs

All Rise for Student Court!

On April 21, 1999, at exactly 10:45 a.m., the gavel sounded. Student Court at Four Winds Elementary in Minneapolis was called to order. Prosecutors, mostly eighth graders, informed the judge that they were ready to proceed. The defense lawyers, more eighth graders, did the same. The jurors, from grades four through eight, listened intently as the bailiff, another classmate, summarized the case.



Then-Attorney General Reno at Student Court in Minneapolis

guest, then-Attorney General Janet Reno. After all, they had a job to do. They had to determine a fair punishment for a classmate who admitted being disrespectful to a teacher.

Spectators at Student Court that day included someone whose presence would have made most adult lawyers quake in their legal briefs. The kids, however, paid little attention to their

Student Court was developed at the Minnesota Center for Community Legal Education. The program is similar in structure to Teen Court, which is popular in communities across the country. In Student Court, however, the cases result from issues that arise in school, such as fighting. Student Court also focuses on students from ages nine to fourteen, when delinquent behavior and violence is usually experienced for the first time.

Through Student Court, young people learn to respond to negative behavior in a non-violent manner. In Court, they have to talk things out. They also learn to speak up for what they expect from others in their schools. And, even though the student defendant admits wrong doing prior to attending Student Court, jurors still must consider the reasons behind the defendant's behavior before determining a sentence. Finally, all sentences handed down by the jury must be restorative in nature and include an order that the defendant serve on a future Student Court jury.

For more information about Student Court, contact the Minnesota Center for Community Legal Education, at (651) 772-4276.



"Outcome Based" Evaluations of Programs and Policies

After your multi-disciplinary group has implemented a school safety policy or a school-based violence prevention program, you must periodically evaluate it to identify areas that may need improvement. A popular evaluation type is the "outcome based" evaluation, which focuses on behavioral changes known as "outcomes."

Before obtaining an outcome-based evaluation, group members should have a thorough understanding of the subject program or policy. They should know (a) its purpose; (b) its functions; (c) how it differs from other efforts; (d) those served by it; and (e) the stakeholders critical to its success. Additionally, group members should agree on (1) the expected results of the policy or program; and (2) the reasons the policy or program should lead to those results. In other words, they should agree that *"If this is done, then that should happen, based on existing, creditable research."* Finally, desired outcomes must be identified.

To recognize desired outcomes, group members must answer the question, *"What does the group want to accomplish through this policy or program?"* In answering that question, however, the group must remember that outcomes need to be measurable. To insure that desired outcomes can be measured, group members should also answer the question, *"How will this group determine if the policy or program is successful?"*

Once measurable outcomes have been articulated, an evaluation plan can be created. In that plan, group members must note (i) desired outcomes; (ii) how outcome measures will be obtained; (iii) when outcome measurements will be collected; (iv) who will collect them; and (v) from where data will come. In creating a plan, the group should keep in mind that the outcome-based evaluation is popular because it costs little, is fairly easy to do, and provides up-to-date information. However, It sheds little light on the true cause of behavioral changes—or outcomes. Was it the program? Or, did change occur due to something else?

Portions adapted from *Outcomes Measurement in the Human Services*, by Mullen and Magnabosco

Violence Prevention Programs



Is It Working?

Evaluations are used to determine if school safety policies or programs are working. To conduct evaluations, several data-gathering techniques can be employed, such as—

Focus Groups

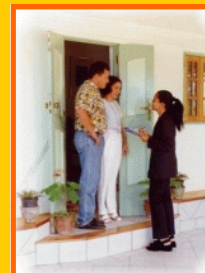
Focus groups often provide good program feedback. In preparing for a focus group—

- ✓ **Identify the major objective of the focus group.** In other words, determine the issue to be examined by the group.
- ✓ **Create five or six carefully worded questions to aid the group in discussing the issue.**
- ✓ **Invite six to ten people to participate in the focus group, making sure they are of comparable status relative to the program.**
- ✓ **Encourage equal participation at the focus group gathering.**
- ✓ **Repeat group findings to ensure accurate understanding.**
- ✓ **Record the group encounter.**

Evaluation Surveys

Surveys can also be a useful data-gathering technique. In creating surveys, remember to—

- **Explain the purpose of the survey.**
- **Provide easy instructions.**
- **Offer specific close-ended questions for the most part.** (Closed-ended questions allow for a “yes” or “no” answer or the selection of one of a few balanced possibilities, such as, “never,” “infrequently,” “frequently.”)
- **Use open-ended questions only when you truly need in-depth responses.**
- **Keep questions short and easy to understand.**
- **Allow for comments at the end of the survey.**
- **Pretest the survey before using it.**



The Student Pledge Against Gun Violence

On an October day each year, middle school and high school students nationwide stand up and pledge they will—

- Never carry a gun to school;
- Never resolve a dispute with a gun; and
- Always use their influence with their peers to keep them from resolving disputes with guns.

The Annual Day of National Concern about Young People and Gun Violence provides students an opportunity to organize anti-gun-violence programs and initiatives, culminating with the Student Pledge Against Gun Violence.

According to the project founder, Mary Lewis Grow, “By providing students nationwide with a common contract and the choice to sign it in the company of their peers, while knowing others across the country are doing the same, we help young people realize their collective ability to reverse the violence that affects too many of us.”

The National Day of Concern and the accompanying Student Pledge are supported by the American Federation of Teachers, the American Association of School Administrators, the American Medical Association, and the National Council of Churches, along with the U.S. Congress and the President of the United States.

It's never too early to begin making your “pledge” plans. So, visit www.pledge.org and get started.



The GREAT program, sponsored by the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, is a school-based gang- and delinquency-prevention program aimed at seventh graders.

The curriculum is comprised of nine, one-hour classes, taught by specially trained police officers. In GREAT classes, students learn non-violent conflict resolution, cultural sensitivity, how to spot when a friend needs help, and how to set goals and meet basic needs.

For more information, call 1-800-726-7070, or visit GREAT on line, at www.great-online.org.



Safety Assessments

Get a School Safety Assessment

Before drafting a school safety plan or a crisis response plan, conduct a school safety assessment to determine the strengths and weaknesses of your school community. As you will see from the following material, safety assessments should include a survey of staff, students, and parents, regarding their feelings about the school. In addition, assessments should include a thorough examination of the school building, other structures on the site, and the area surrounding the campus, in an attempt to spot potential security problems. Only then can good plans be developed. While there are many for-profit assessment companies, you may be able to obtain free assessment assistance through your local fire or police department or County Emergency Management Coordinator. If such help is not available, seek assistance from the State Department of Public Safety, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, at (651) 296-2233.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

The three principles of CPTED (crime prevention through environmental design) include—(1) natural surveillance; i.e., the ability to see what is occurring in a particular setting; (2) natural access control; i.e., the ability to restrict who enters or exists a particular setting; and (3) territorial maintenance; i.e., the ability to demonstrate ownership of and respect for a particular setting.

A good school safety assessment considers these principles. It looks at the school's physical plant and setting, the surrounding neighborhood, and the social interaction associated with the school. In addition, it identifies (a) all potential hazards on school premises, and (b) all potential hazards in the community that may affect the school.

For more information on how schools and school campuses can be designed or remodeled for better safety, read the material on CPTED for schools, at www.edfacilities.org/rl/cpted.cfm.



School Safety Assessments

For decades, it was widely believed by educators and others that learning could take place only if students were “well managed,” which meant “quiet and passive.” According to the folks at the Kentucky Center for School Safety (KCSS), however, most educators now urge students to be “active components in the learning process.” Also changing, KCSS says, is the importance placed on the learning environment. Consequently, KCSS has begun to conduct school safety assessments.

A safety assessment is an independent examination of a school's climate, culture, physical plant, and neighborhood. Working at the invitation of a district superintendent, an assessment team strives to gauge the “culture” and “climate” of the school by surveying and interviewing members of the student body, school staff, administrators, and parents. Team members work to obtain answers to questions, such as, “How do you feel about the school?” And, “What are your thoughts about the school's leadership?” From students, team members try to determine if there is at least one adult in the school building with whom each student can confide if faced with a serious problem or safety concern.

When teams, such as those from the KCSS, conduct school safety assessments, team members observe the school environment in the morning, before classes begin, as well as during class changes, lunch periods, and at dismissal time. They watch how staff interact with students. And, they watch how students interact with each other. Do they seem to accept individual differences? Are they aware of school rules? Do they appear comfortable in the building?

The team also considers the condition of the facility and the surrounding neighborhood. Is the school building clean and well maintained? Is it cheerful and inviting? Are other structures on the campus secure? Are there areas in any of the school facilities or in the nearby neighborhood that may pose safety concerns?

Once the assessment is complete, team members commonly meet and review their general observations with the superintendent, the school principal, and other appropriate staff. Then, about a month later, a detailed, written report is provided to the district, outlining the findings and suggestions for improvement.

While the KCSS is known nationally for the fine work it does in the area of school safety assessments, many other companies also conduct assessments. In addition, some police and fire departments perform free assessment services.

Safety Assessments



A What Does the Process Involve?

1. A written request from the superintendent;
2. A confirmation letter from the assessment team to the school, accompanied by surveys to be completed by students, parents, staff;
3. Materials sent from the school to the assessment team, for review, including—
 - a. Completed surveys;
 - b. Safe Schools data;
 - c. "Code of Conduct" handbook and school rules;
 - d. School safety and crisis response plans;
 - e. School board policies regarding discipline and safety;
 - f. Student supervision assignments and schedules;
 - g. Community risk-factor data; and
 - h. Workers' Comp. and insurance claims.

B The Day of the Site Visit

The assessment team arrives early and stays the entire day.

1. They observe traffic patterns and bus drop-offs and pick-ups;
2. They observe supervision patterns as students arrive and leave;
3. They conduct on-site interviews;
4. They observe and experience school lunch; and
5. They conduct a walk-through of the school building, other structures on the campus, and the surrounding neighborhood.



C At the End of the Day

1. The assessment team meets with the school principal and others, as appropriate; and
2. The team provides the preliminary report, which includes—
 - a. Commendations;
 - b. Areas of Concern; and
 - c. Ideas for Considerations.



D Within One Month

The assessment team provides a detailed written report to the superintendent, principal, and other administrators, which includes the—

- a. Overall School Safety Assessment;
- b. Survey Findings and Report;
- c. Findings and Report of the Physical Plant and Surrounding Area; and
- d. Findings from Policy Reviews.

E Areas of Concern in Most Cases

1. Inconsistency—There often is a lack of consistent and proper supervision and consistent enforcement of school rules and policies.
2. Complacency—There often is complacency regarding emergency measures; for example, lock-downs, while in existence, are seldom practiced.

Other Examples:

- Visitor Sign-in—Visitors don't always sign in;
- Access Control—Non-central doors don't always remain locked;
- Staff Identification—Staff members don't always wear their identification tags; and
- Surveillance—Security cameras are not always operational or monitored.

F Lessons Learned

1. Administration buy-in is critical;
2. Staff and students want to be heard; and
3. When it comes to liability, a pro-active position is preferable.

G How are Assessments Being Used?

1. As a baseline for continual improvement;
2. As a "needs assessment" for a comprehensive improvement plan;
3. As data for grant applications; and
4. As the basis for staff training and development.



Much of this material was obtained from the KCSS and, hopefully, provides a general idea of what a safety assessment entails. To contact the KCSS, call (877) 805-4277 (toll free), or visit www.kysafeschools.org.



Crisis Response Plans



Crisis Response Planning for Schools: Things to Consider

With many recent news stories highlighting the need for a swift emergency response to local, national, and international crises, educators are wise to consider crisis response planning a high priority. Development and implementation of an effective school crisis response plan, however, is a formidable task. Questions may arise around (1) protecting students and staff from personal crimes, such as robbery; (2) protecting buildings and infrastructure against property crimes, such as burglary; (3) preparing for natural disasters, such as hurricanes; and (4) terrorism.

While it may be tempting to buy a pre-existing “canned” response plan, one size does not fit all. The best plans grow out of the needs and capabilities of a specific site. A few tips, however, may help put crisis response planning into perspective and divide the planning process into manageable steps. Remember, though, while school administrators must try to reduce the opportunity for crime at their schools, they are not to take the place of police.

Cornerstones of Good Security

- **Limit Access**—This is the oldest security measure in the book. Pull up the drawbridge and close the gate to keep the pillagers out. You do not want to keep *everyone* out (parents will not allow that), but you do want to limit access to and within school facilities. Thus, all perimeter doors except the main entrance should be locked unless monitored. A policy for visitor sign-in must be clearly communicated and strictly enforced. Mechanical rooms, custodial closets, and tech storage areas must be kept locked. And, classrooms, when not occupied, should be locked too.
- **Create Security Zones**—The military does this best. They cut down trees, build a stockade, and make intruders cross a no-man’s land, so they can see them as they approach. In a school environment, check the site lines,



move or remove dumpsters or over-grown shrubs that could conceal a criminal, make sure there is adequate lighting, and, most importantly, insist that staff and visitors always wear ID badges or stickers.

- **Consider Community Surveillance**—Cameras are nice, but before spending a small fortune on technology, consider an “eye on the street” approach to surveillance. This approach emphasizes reducing school crime by having citizens become part of “school watch” programs. Through these programs, school hallways and playgrounds



become the education-environment equivalent of community streets, allies, and parks. As in “neighborhood watch” programs, community volunteers become part of surveillance teams. They keep their eyes and ears open, moving into hallways during passing times, monitoring lunch periods, and assisting visitors who do not appear to have checked in at the office.

- **Limit Knowledge of Your Facility**—Keep the bad guys guessing by being careful about what security information is made available to the public. Give parents enough information about school safety preparedness that they are reassured, but keep in mind that whatever information is available to them is also available to criminals.

Crisis Response Planning

The process for creating a crisis response plan begins with preplanning, followed by writing the plan, and then sharing the plan. Throughout the process, keep in mind the four basic phases of emergency management: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

Crisis Response Plans

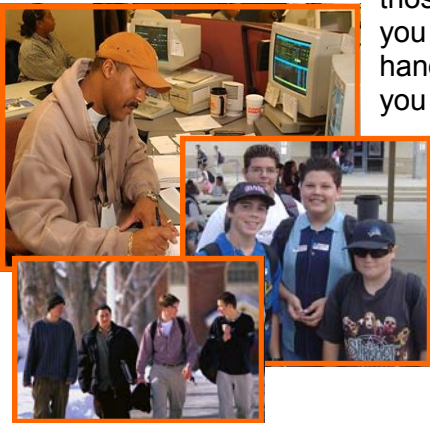


Mitigation

The preplanning mitigation stage is where you review and analyze the current state of your school environment relative to safety and security. If you jump right into writing your crisis response plan, you will not be informed by the reality of your situation. The preplanning stage tells you where you are, reveals the unexpected, and allows school safety personnel to establish and organize a baseline of information.

Assess All Hazards—To write a meaningful site-specific plan, you need to have a complete picture of your school's safety issues. A safety assessment, as outlined elsewhere in this booklet, will reveal areas that must be addressed.

Determine Resource Allocations—A safety assessment will also ensure proper allocation of limited resources. For example, if your school is far from a nuclear plant, you do not want to spend resources on planning for a related crisis. However, if your school is near Grand Forks, North Dakota, planning for a flood must be a priority. Also, keep in mind that when you are considering resource availability, look only at



those resources you have on hand—not what you hope to acquire in the future. Note, too, resources include materials, technology, personnel, and all mutual-aid agreements.

Identify Key Partners—Identify partners in your community who can provide expertise, resources, and support as you begin to formulate your plan. Forming a planning committee that represents the diverse makeup of your school district and community is an excellent way to ensure that your crisis response plan is comprehensive and site appropriate.

Potential partners include the fire department, local law enforcement, social service agencies, and the County Emergency Manager. Also, involve experts who routinely get overlooked

during the planning stage, such as the school engineer, the transportation manager, or the school secretary. But, limit the committee's size—large groups have a harder time reaching consensus. And, remember, a good plan allows for an integrated approach, with the school and community working independently but coordinating their efforts. Moreover, inter-agency ideas must flow from the bottom up as well as from the top down.

Write the Plan—As you move into the planning stage, it is important to remember that your plan must be *specifically tailored to your school district*.

The “Emergency Planning and Procedures Guide for Schools,” published by the State of Minnesota, is an excellent “best practices” resource. But, keep in mind, your plan must consider the capacities of those designated to carry it out in your district. And, do not forget that even the most comprehensive crisis response plan is just a guideline. Emergency situations vary, so response plans must be adaptable to a variety of situations.



Plan Structure—A comprehensive school crisis response plan must answer questions relative to three levels of school safety:

- **District**—Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)
 1. How will the district office support the school during the emergency?
 2. How will the district relate to other agencies; e.g., the city, county, state?
- **School**—Emergency/Crisis Plan
 1. What is the role of the School Emergency Response Team (SERT) until outside help arrives?
 2. What is the role of the SERT once outside help arrives?
- **Classroom**—Emergency/Crisis Plan
 1. How do classroom and other first-line staff respond?

Continued on the Following Page



Crisis Response Plans

"Crisis Response," Continued from Previous Page

A solid crisis response plan must also reflect a connection and coordination with community response planning, so that the school response integrates smoothly with state and local efforts. To that end, find out if your district or school site is included in the "emergency operations plan" of your local government. It is just as important for you to get involved and help develop the

"Find out if your district or school site is included in the 'emergency operations plan' for your local government. It is just as important for you to get involved and help develop the community EOP as it is for community partners to help with your plan."

community EOP as it is for community partners to help with your plan. Additionally, your school district sites should be represented in the local government's Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

Preparedness

Obtain Training—Your crisis response plan is really only as good as the training that goes with it. So, practice it and offer training to those who will carry it out. Training not only helps ensure an improved response from personnel, but it also gives them a chance to contribute input. Ask responders what additional training they feel they need. Training with external partners, such as the local fire and police departments and emergency medical services, is also important. It allows participants to uncover areas of concern, realize resource needs, point out strengths, and better coordinate inter-agency efforts.

Response

Testing the Plan—Having a plan is not a one-time "write it and never look at it again until there is an emergency" activity. In emergencies, we tend to do what we have practiced. So, once the plan has been drafted, conduct regular exercises internally and with community partners.



During these exercises, determine if your plan will work as currently written or if it will only work



in certain situations. In addition, find out if there are preparedness gaps between various school sites or among different personnel groups. Moreover, learn how well the school can coordinate with external partners and if school and community technology meet the needs presented in the emergency situation. Regular crisis response "practice runs" will allow you to stay familiar with your plan, re-assess and update it as needed, and keep issues of safety in front of people.

Recovery

Parents, Partners, Schools—Regardless of how well you plan, you will not have properly planned if you neglect the "recovery" phase of crisis response. Recovery encompasses far more than providing physical and psychological first-aid. It also marks the beginning of the next round of planning. Recovery must include (1) timely debriefing of school staff and community partners; (2) releasing complete, accurate information to the community and the media; (3) obtaining feedback; and (4) making changes to the plan as needed.

Emergency Planning

Before developing or updating your school's crisis response plan, review the "Emergency Planning and Procedures Guide," published by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. The guide can be downloaded from the web, at www.dps.state.mn.us/dhsem/uploadedfile/schools/pdf.

Sharing Your Plan—Once your crisis response plan has been written, decide which aspects of the plan can be shared without compromising safety. Fire, law enforcement, and other emergency responders must have total access to the plan. But, how much and what kind of information should be disclosed to parents, community, and the media? Parents need to receive enough information to feel their children are safe, while the community and media need enough information to do their jobs. However, you do not want to disclose so much information that the "bad guys" can confound safety measures. Thus, the group must make some tough decisions regarding disclosure of information.

Crisis Response Plans



Understanding Opposition—Whether you are starting from scratch or updating an existing crisis response plan, expect opposition. You may hear, “We have an unwritten plan!” To such opposition, respond that an unwritten plan is not a plan. No one has access to it or can train with it. You may also hear, “We’ve always done it this way.” To those folks, consider saying that “always doing something a certain way” does not make it right or mean it cannot be done better. Finally, you may hear, “Less detail is easier to



defend in court.” To that, you may want to reply that it is better to defend a “less than

perfect” plan than no plan. Courts want to see reasonable effort. Moreover, a lack of planning may be seen as malfeasance.

Ego or fear may play a role in opposition to a detailed crisis response plan. Perhaps you left someone off the safety committee who can actually derail the process? Seek them out and get them involved. It is likely they will provide positive input. And, to help alleviate fears, supply all safety committee members with information and training. If necessary, bring in experts. But, note, while such expertise may exist in your own community, you may need to bring in outsiders to get local people to buy into the process.

Model Crisis Management Policy

The Minnesota Commissioner of Education must maintain and make available to school boards a Model Crisis Management Policy. By July 1, 2000, school boards across Minnesota were required to have adopted a District Crisis Management Policy, developed in partnership with school administrators, teachers, students, parents, local fire and police departments, county attorney offices, and local social service agencies. A “Model Crisis Management Policy,” drafted collaboratively by the Minnesota Departments of Public Safety and Education, may be downloaded from www.education.state.mn.us.

Test Your Crisis Response Plan

To test your crisis response plan, run a table-top training exercise. Such an exercise should involve all school and community personnel who would respond to an actual school crisis. For free help in conducting the exercise, seek a FEMA-trained professional from your local fire or police departments or through your County Emergency Management Coordinator. If such help is not available locally, seek further assistance from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, at (651) 296-2233.

Finally, remember, even the best crisis response plan cannot prevent or solve every problem. It can, however, set forth an accurate assessment of school safety conditions, the names of those assigned to the school safety team, a process for and a promise of close coordination with external partners, a training agenda, and procedures to follow in the event of a school emergency.

This material was developed from information provided by William Waterkamp and Yanchy Lacska at the 2005 Minnesota School Safety Conference. For more information, visit www.safety.spps.org, or contact Waterkamp, Safety and Security Administrator of St. Paul Public Schools, via e-mail, at william.waterkamp@spps.org, or Lacska, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator for St. Paul Public Schools, at yanchy.lacska@spps.org.

Should a Bomb Threat Always Prompt an Evacuation?

Some school security experts suggest that upon receipt of a “vague” bomb threat, trained staff immediately conduct a “sweep” of the school building while teachers check their classrooms for suspicious objects. If nothing “out of the ordinary” is found, classes remain in session. If, however, school officials decide that evacuation is necessary, another security “sweep” is quickly done outside the building to ensure that students will be safe as they leave the premises. For more information about this protocol, contact David Osterquist of the Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Police Department. Osterquist, one of the authors of this protocol, can be reached via e-mail, at dosterquist@siouxfalls.org.



Law Enforcement Response



Making a Federal Case out of School Violence

Federal laws, called “statutes,” are established by the United States Congress to safeguard citizens of this country. Some criminal acts are Federal offenses only, and the prosecution of those crimes must take place in Federal district court. Other criminal acts are offenses under both Federal and state law; and for those crimes, county and Federal prosecutors must decide where the offender should be tried—state or Federal court. School violence may be a Federal crime, a state crime, or both, depending on the act and the location—or jurisdiction—in which the act takes place.

Criminal acts fall into two categories: felonies and misdemeanors, with felonies being offenses that may result in prison sentences of more than one year, and misdemeanors being offenses that result in jail sentences of less than one year. The U.S. Congress establishes all penalties, including prison sentences, for Federal crimes. Thus, Congress ultimately decides what constitutes a Federal felony and what constitutes a Federal misdemeanor. The state legislatures make those same determinations as to state statutes. Whether an act of school violence constitutes a felony or a misdemeanor, therefore, depends on the applicable Federal and state statutes.



A Felony Under Federal Law—

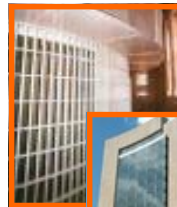
If an act of school violence violates Federal law because of the nature of the act (e.g., a bomb threat) or the location of the act (e.g., a Federal Indian reservation), the following steps are taken:

Arrest:

- A Warrant for Arrest and a Complaint are issued against the alleged offender, along with an Affidavit, which is usually signed by a law enforcement officer and outlines “probable cause.” Probable cause is an explanation of the crime allegedly committed and the offender’s role in that crime.
- As soon as practicable after arrest, the alleged offender must be granted an Initial Appearance before a Federal magistrate

judge, who will advise him of his rights, determine if he has the ability to hire an attorney or if a public defender must be appointed, and set bail. At that time, the Federal prosecutor, called an “Assistant United States Attorney,” may request that the alleged offender be denied bail and be detained.

- If the accused is detained, a Detention Hearing must be held within three working days. At the Detention Hearing, the magistrate judge will listen to evidence—positive and negative—regarding the alleged offender’s risk of flight and danger to the community. The magistrate judge will then decide whether the accused should be detained or released.
- Within ten days of arrest, the accused also has the right to a Preliminary Hearing, during which the prosecutor offers live testimony to establish probable cause. The defense attorney may offer witness evidence on behalf of the accused. If the magistrate judge overseeing the hearing finds sufficient probable cause as to the commission of the crime and the role of the accused in that crime, the accused is bound over for further proceedings by a “grand jury.”



Sometimes the grand jury returns an Indictment against an alleged offender before arrest is made. In those instances, a Preliminary Hearing is not necessary.

Grand Jury:

- The ultimate decision to prosecute a case is made by a grand jury. A Federal grand jury is comprised of randomly selected citizens from across the judicial district (in our case, citizens from across the State of Minnesota). They serve on the grand jury for a few days each month over the course of a year or so, after which, a new grand jury is selected by the Federal district court.



Law Enforcement Response



- Federal prosecutors (Assistant U.S. Attorneys) appear before the Federal grand jury to establish probable cause that a particular person has committed a Federal felony. Prosecutors do this by calling witnesses and presenting evidence obtained with Grand Jury Subpoenas.

Defense attorneys are not allowed to appear before the grand jury; the accused does not have to testify before the grand jury; and the work of the grand jury is to be kept secret.

- If the grand jury decides that the evidence presented establishes probable cause, it will issue an Indictment against the alleged offender. (At least 12 jurors must vote to indict.) The Indictment is called a “True Bill.” If the grand jury finds insufficient probable cause, a “No Bill” is returned.

In misdemeanor cases, or in felony cases where the accused has waived indictment and has already agreed to plead guilty, there is no need to present the case to the grand jury. Instead, an Information, which is a document outlining probable cause, is filed in Federal court.

Trial:

- Within ten days from the time an Indictment or Information has been filed—and arrest has been made—an Arraignment must take place before a Federal magistrate judge, during which the accused, now called the “defendant,” is read the charges filed against him and is advised of his rights. At that time, the defendant also enters a plea (“not guilty” or “guilty”); a trial date is set, if necessary; and a schedule is established for the hearing of all Motions, which are arguments as to the admissibility of evidence, etc.

The Federal Speedy Trial Act dictates that a defendant has the right to trial within 70 days from his first court appearance.

- Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty. Unless a Plea Agreement can be reached between the prosecutor

and the defense attorney, a trial takes place before a jury of citizens selected at random from across the judicial district. (A Federal district court judge oversees the trial.) During trial, prosecutors and defense attorneys call witnesses to the stand. If a Plea Agreement is reached during the trial, the defendant must offer a Change of Plea before the judge, who must approve of the terms of the Plea Agreement.



Sentencing and Appeals:

- After the entry of a guilty plea or the unanimous finding of guilt by a jury following a trial, the Federal Probation Office collects information about the defendant and the victims of the crime and supplies that information, along with a sentence recommendation, to the judge.
- Approximately eight weeks after the entry of a guilty plea or a jury finding of guilt, called a “verdict,” the judge imposes a sentence. Sentences may include incarceration in a Federal prison; a term of supervised release, formerly called “probation”; a fine; and an Order of Restitution, which is a court order entered against the defendant, directing him to pay to the victims of his crime the money lost or expenses incurred due to the offense.
- The defendant may appeal either the sentence or the finding of guilt or both if he files with the sentencing court a Notice of Appeal within ten days from the date the judgment—that is, the sentence—is imposed. (If the defendant pleads guilty, only the sentence may be appealed.)

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Law Enforcement Response

"Making a Federal Case..."
Continued from the Previous Page



A Felony Under State Law—

The State criminal justice system is very similar to the Federal system. All the U.S. Constitutional protections remain in place for individuals accused in the

State system. The State Constitution provides added protections for the citizens of Minnesota, and the State court is bound by both State and Federal decisions of constitutional law. However, as noted previously, the State statutes governing crimes are separate and apart from Federal statutes. In addition, the State judicial system has distinct criminal procedures.

If an act violates State law because of the nature of the act (e.g., "terroristic threats" or "possession of controlled substances"), and the act occurred in Minnesota, the following steps are taken:

Arrest:

- A Warrant for Arrest and a Complaint are issued against the alleged offender, along with an Affidavit containing probable cause that a crime has been committed. In juvenile cases, the charging document is a Petition rather than a Complaint.
- As soon as practicable after arrest, the alleged offender appears before a State district court judge for an Initial Appearance. The judge advises the accused of his rights. The court determines if there is probable cause to bind the defendant over to trial. The court also determines if the accused has retained a private attorney, or if a public defender should be appointed to represent the accused. The court further considers the issue of bail. The court may release the defendant, set bail, or hold the defendant without bail.
- In State court, most cases proceed to trial on a Complaint and without a grand jury determination. The rare exceptions are cases that carry a life-term sentence.



In juvenile offender cases, criminal procedures in Federal court are different from those in a state court.

Juvenile offenders are charged by Information and not by Complaint or Indictment. Further, in Federal juvenile trials, the court determines guilt, not a jury. In Federal "juvenile offender sentencing determinations," the court may sentence the offender to incarceration at a juvenile facility or place the juvenile on probation. Finally, Federal jurisdiction for the juvenile ends when the offender turns 21 years of age. Note, however, most juvenile cases are prosecuted in state court.

Pre-Trial Hearings:

- Prior to trial, the defendant may file motions to suppress evidence seized by law enforcement.
- Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty or until the defendant pleads guilty. The defendant may reach a Plea Agreement with the prosecutor or plead guilty without an agreement. A judge in State court may participate in plea negotiations.
- If the case proceeds to trial, the case is decided by a jury of 12 persons from the judicial district. The defendant may waive the right to have a jury determine the case and ask the judge to decide the question of guilt. In the case of a juvenile defendant, the case is decided by the district court judge.
- During a trial, the State prosecutor presents evidence for a jury or judge and has the burden of proving the defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. The defendant may present evidence if he chooses to do so.



"The law embodies the story of a nation's development..."

Oliver Wendell Holmes

Law Enforcement Response



Sentencing and Appeals:

- After a guilty plea by the defendant or the unanimous finding of guilt by a jury, the judge imposes a sentence. Sentences may include incarceration in a State prison, incarceration in a local jail, or probation. In the case of a juvenile defendant, the judge may order incarceration at a juvenile facility or probation.
- Prior to sentencing, the county probation office conducts an investigation and writes a recommendation to the court regarding sentencing.
- The State Sentencing Guidelines are considered by the judge as a guide to the average

sentence for a person guilty of the same crime and having the same criminal history. The judge may depart downward from the guideline if there are mitigating factors involved in the defendant's case. A jury may determine aggravating factors that would allow the court to sentence higher than the guideline sentence.

- The defendant may appeal either the sentence, evidentiary determinations, or the finding of guilty by a jury.

*This information was provided by Ann M. Anaya
Assistant United States Attorney
District of Minnesota
(612) 664-5600*



The FBI will provide assistance to local law enforcement on issues related to school violence. Just contact the nearest FBI office from the list below.

Bemidji Resident Agency—

Mailing Address:

FBI
Bemidji Resident Agency
P.O. Box 1461
Bemidji, MN 56619-1461

Location:

Four West Office Complex
403 Fourth Street NW
Bemidji, MN 56601-3142
Phone: (218) 751-0610
Fax: (218) 751-1535

Duluth Resident Agency—

Mailing Address:

FBI
Duluth Resident Agency
P.O. Box 397
Duluth, MN 55801-0397

Location:

Federal Building
515 W First Street, Room 304
Duluth, MN 55802-1302
Phone: (218) 722-3341
Fax: (218) 726-0794

Mankato Resident Agency—

Mailing Address:

FBI
Mankato Resident Agency
P.O. Box 204
Mankato, MN 56002-0204

Location:

NW Office Building
Suite 305
209 South Second Street
Mankato, MN 56001-3639
Phone: (507) 387-2460
Fax: (507) 387-8104

Minneapolis FBI Headquarters—

Mailing Address and Location:

FBI
Suite 1100
111 Washington Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55401
Phone: (612) 376-3200
Fax: (612) 376-3249

Rochester Resident Agency—

Mailing Address and Location:

FBI
Suite 200
1301 Salem Road SW
Rochester, MN 55902-0993
Phone: (507) 282-7322
Fax: (507) 282-2655

Saint Cloud Resident Agency—

Mailing Address:

FBI
Saint Cloud Resident Agency
P.O. Box 906
Saint Cloud, MN 56302-0906

Location:

Norwest Center
Suite 400
400 South First Street
Saint Cloud, MN 56301-3600
Phone: (320) 251-9394
Fax: (320) 251-8531



Law Enforcement Response



Bomb Threat Advice from ATF

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives advises all school administrators to consider the response to and prevention of bomb threats when creating crisis response plans. According to the ATF, all school staff, and particularly those who routinely answer the phones, should be trained in what to do if a bomb threat is received.

The ATF suggests that—

- Since it is desirable to have more than one person listening to a threatening phone call, such as a bomb threat, a signal of some kind should be established to advise a second person to listen in on the conversation and write down everything the caller says.
- Since a calm response may result in the disclosure of more information, the person answering a threatening phone call must remain cool and thoughtful.
- Since it is important that all of the caller's comments are recorded by either the person who answers the call or, preferably, by someone listening in on another line, the caller must be kept on the phone as long as possible and asked to repeat remarks.
- Since schools are routinely occupied when bomb threats are made, the person who answers a bomb threat call must remind the caller that the school is occupied, and therefore, detonation of a bomb could result in serious injury or even death to many innocent people.
- Since a quick response is necessary in a bomb threat situation, the person who answers such a call must ask the caller for the location of the bomb and exactly when it is scheduled to go off.
- Since the person who answers a bomb threat call will be key to the apprehension of the

caller, that person must listen closely to the voice of the caller, including tone, accents, and speech impediments, as well as background noises.

- Since a bomb threat is a very serious matter, the district's crisis response plan should be implemented as soon as a threat is received.
- Since a bomb threat may be received in writing, school officials must remember to save all related material for law enforcement and refrain from touching that material.
- Since a bomb or other suspicious package may be found on school grounds without notice, school officials should have a plan of action, which includes instructions that no one, regardless of the circumstances, move, jar, or touch the object, and that law enforcement be called immediately.
- Since most bomb threats are made by students, a good way to stop them is to impose a policy that adds days to the school year whenever school is interrupted due to bomb threats.
- For assistance with school safety or other explosive-related matters, local law enforcement should contact the ATF, in St. Paul, at (651) 726-0300.



* For more bomb threat information, see Page 26.



Call the Minnesota State Patrol!

Local law enforcement should remember that the Minnesota State Patrol is available to help plan for or respond to a school crisis. The State Patrol, strategically located throughout the state, is available to assist with an initial response, a strategic weapons and tactics' team response, traffic control, airborne surveillance and support, forensic mapping, and on-site radio communications. In addition, State Patrol personnel are willing to assist in the preparation of crisis response plans. Contact the State Patrol, at (651) 282-6870.



Call the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension!

Local law enforcement should remember that the Minnesota BCA is always available to help with criminal investigations, evidence gathering and processing, and media and community communications during a school crisis. In addition, BCA staffers will answer questions or otherwise assist in the preparation of crisis response plans. Call the BCA, at (651) 793-7000 (answered 24 hours a day).



Shop Wisely

Security technology is not the answer to all school security problems. However, products, such as video cameras and alarms, may help school administrators and local law enforcement provide a safer education environment if used properly. Too often, though, security products are used inappropriately, are expected to do more than they were designed to do, or are poorly maintained after installation. Moreover, there are thousands of security products on the market that are simply not as good as their producers claim. Therefore, school administrators may be wise to consult a security consultant before purchasing such equipment. If they cannot afford a consultant, they may want to discuss their needs with local law enforcement officials, who routinely work with security technology.

In determining the right security equipment for your school, first determine the school's risks. For example, does the school experience a lot of parking lot fights? Or, are the teachers afraid of being victimized by intruders? Or, are bomb threats the biggest issue? Second, make sure consequences for undesirable behavior have been put into place in the school and the community. After all, security measures, which are designed primarily to (1) detect misbehavior; (2) delay the offender; and (3) prompt a quick response from officials, have little deterrent value if potential perpetrators believe nothing will happen to them if they are caught. Third, determine the technology that will best address the school's concerns, given its budget and personnel.

- Cameras, for example, may capture on tape school intruders, parking lot fights, night-time vandalism, and supply room theft. But, cameras are expensive, and their tapes must be reviewed. In addition, the use of cameras may raise privacy concerns.
- Duress alarms, located under the desks of teachers, may provide comfort but little else if (a) teachers don't have the time or ability to reach the alarms to activate them; or (b) the alarm center is not constantly monitored.
- Caller identification systems, in conjunction with phone-call recording equipment, may go a long way in catching and prosecuting

"A large urban school was planning to purchase \$100,000 worth of exterior cameras to combat night-time vandalism being inflicted on the exterior of the building. This plan was halted abruptly when the school was asked who would be available to watch the monitors from the 40-plus cameras, and who would be able to respond quickly to these sporadic and relatively small incidents? A better and cheaper alternate plan was devised that included using anti-graffiti sealer on all brick surfaces, some strategically located wrought-iron fencing that could not be easily climbed, and the replacement of a few particularly vulnerable windows with glass block."

The Appropriate and Effective Use
of Security Technologies in U.S. Schools

people who make bomb threats. However, since most bomb threats are made by students who want to get out of class, a policy that extends the school year whenever class is interrupted due to a bomb threat may do a lot more to stop the act in the first place.

- Metal detectors are popular school security tools. They are considered a "mature" technology, able to "detect" firearms, knives, and other metal objects. Unfortunately, a metal detector cannot "distinguish" between a gun, a large metal belt buckle, or some other metal mass. Thus, highly trained people are needed to make those determinations.

Since security equipment is one of the most costly and important school purchases made, before you buy, read "The Appropriate and Effective Use of Security Technologies in U.S. Schools," at www.ncjrs.org/school/home.html.

After the Columbine shootings, school administrators decided they wanted help in assessing student threats. Gavin de Becker came to their aid by designing and selling computer software known as MAST, or MOSAIC for Assessment of Student Threats.

After downloading this software onto their computers, school officials let MAST determine whether the subject threat contains factors that "experts" associate with violence. Administrators simply provide MAST with the information it needs to make its assessment by answering a series of questions.

The authors of the Safe School Initiative, however, warn that MAST is not based on a study of actual school shootings but, rather, solely on the opinions of "experts" and a review of general school violence. But, Gavin de Becker defends his software, which is licensed for about \$1,200 per year per user.



Communication from School During an Emergency

By: Kevin Smith

The early hours of a school crisis can be confusing and difficult. By putting in place in advance the tools you will need, you will facilitate your ability to get timely and accurate information to all your audiences. In developing those tools, consider the following:

- A. Plan ahead
 1. Develop a public affairs action plan
 - a. Include up-to-date notification lists to reach key people quickly
 - b. Pre-arrange as many notification systems and procedures as possible
 - electronic notification of parents via e-mail or phone
 - hotline numbers for parents to call
 - dedicated phone number for the media to call
 - pre-written emergency news releases
 - work space for public information personnel
 - list of contacts outside the district you can call for assistance
 2. Develop relationships with first responders within your district
 3. Train district leadership regarding your public affairs action plan
 - make key leadership aware of the plan
 - conduct internal drills on the plan via table-top exercises
 - think of scenarios that could occur and test the district's reaction to them
 - identify spokesperson(s) for the district and the affected school
- B. Who is your "public"? How will you communicate with the following groups during an emergency?
 1. Parents—A phone calling system? An e-mail system?
 2. Students—How will you inform students of what to do? Where to go?
 3. School board—How will you and the board exchange information? Agree to meet?
 4. Other schools in the district—How will relevant information get to those schools? Who will decide what is "relevant"?
 5. General public—How will you disseminate information? Regular news conferences? Press releases?
- C. What is the difference between an ordinary and extraordinary emergency? There are several differences between ordinary and extraordinary times. These differences demand a new look at the context in which messages are created and delivered. For example—
 1. When lives are at stake—People require clear information. They must be told exactly what is happening and what they must do to safeguard their families.
 2. When there is great uncertainty—In a school tragedy, what you actually know is constantly evolving. So, provide regular updates, so people don't rely on rumors.
 3. When stress levels peak—Great distress can make it hard for people to process information. Therefore, word messages simply and repeat them often.
 4. When people simplify—The ability of a person to comprehend numerous details decreases early on during an emergency. Thus, advice and instructions must be stated clearly.



5. When there is fear—Fear is perhaps the single most powerful emotion present during an emergency. It has the capacity to propel community members to action. Whether that action is helpful or harmful depends on whether the community can hear, understand, and act on sound guidance from authorities. So, make sure you provide sound guidance.
 6. When panic occurs—The least common reaction to crisis is panic. People typically take action instead. Effective messages from officials can help people make appropriate decisions. Consequently, you must provide effective messages.
- D. How will you handle the media?
1. Who will be in charge of delivering the messages?
 2. What is the message?
 - a. What are the facts? Clarify the situation.
 - b. What DO you know, and what do you NOT know?
 - c. What steps are you taking to address the situation?
 - d. Provide a “call to action” for parents and students
 - e. Express empathy
- E. Identify assignments for district personnel
1. Who will staff the police command post as “spokesperson”?
 2. Who will staff the office and be responsible for taking media calls and faxing releases?
 3. Who will call for assistance in handling media?



Kevin W. Smith is the Director of Communications and Media Relations at the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. Contact him for further information or assistance by calling 651-296-8383 (work), 612-760-3274 (cell), or 651-793-7000 (the BCA Communications Center).



Trends



Mean Girls: Not Just a Movie

By: Dr. Deborah
Prothrow-Stith
and Howard Spivak

This country experienced a dramatic rise in youth violence in the early '80s, initially concentrated among urban, poor, minority males. Society's most vulnerable children were tragically affected in what was the first wave of America's epidemic of violent youth. Unfortunately, significant national attention followed only after the second wave, which involved middle-class, suburban, and rural America, epitomized by the massacre at Columbine High School.

For more than 20 years, we have traveled throughout the country, addressing youth violence as a public health problem. We started hearing occasional stories about girls fighting 15 years ago. Ten years ago, the stories became more frequent. We started getting an earful about girls fighting. The more we listened, the more we appreciated the approaching third wave of the epidemic—girls fighting.

Turning to the numbers, our fears were confirmed. Not only were school personnel anecdotally reporting that girls were fighting more, but girls were also getting arrested for violent crimes at all-time increasingly higher rates as well. National data were beginning to show the increase.

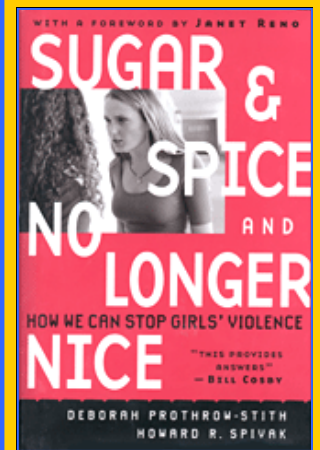
There are those who discount the facts and figures and explain away the changes in girls' behavior by saying, "It's about time they fight back"; or, "Girls' behavior hasn't changed; police are just arresting girls more." Or, they just don't believe that girls could do such things. But why wouldn't girls'

behavior change in this area, as it has in so many others? Statistics may not tell the whole story, but when coupled with real-life stories from throughout the country, the picture is clearer. The third wave is here, but is America paying attention?

Girls and women continue to break down barriers and close the gaps between their behaviors and achievement levels compared to that of boys and men in many areas. Tragically, violent behavior is no exception. As society has changed, the differences between the ways girls and boys display anger and aggression have as well. Today, American girls are showing their mean streaks. They are fighting and not just in self-defense. They are fighting other girls. They are not yet fighting as much as boys—and less often with guns—but the similarities are striking.

While it may be too unsettling to acknowledge the increasing violence among girls, we must admit the problem in order to dedicate ourselves to preventing it. Defensive explanations of gender-based victimization only delay a focus on prevention. Analytically-based attempts to show bias in police arrest practices are a denial of the obvious that won't serve us well.

Girls are different! In addition to the obvious biological differences, society socializes girls and boys differently. The gender inequality in America creates circumstances where girls and young women are vulnerable to violent victimization in their families, intimate relationships, and the larger community. We must take those differences into account. Girls must learn how to be non-victims and nonviolent.



Anyone who watched the popular movie, "Mean Girls," last year may be inclined to assume that girls' aggression is largely limited to bullying, name-calling, and social isolation. While these are serious problems in their own right, the pattern identified by Deborah Prothrow-Stith and Howard Spivak, in their new book, "Sugar and Spice and No Longer Nice" (Jossey-Bass, 2005), is even more disconcerting.

"In the past, girls who were feeling angry, hurt, or depressed tended to turn those feelings inward," explains author Deborah Prothrow-Stith. "Now, we are seeing a pattern where they are more likely to act out aggressively. There is an attitude among them that they need to be like boys—you need to give it and take it just like the boys—when the reality is that violence is a poor choice for either gender."

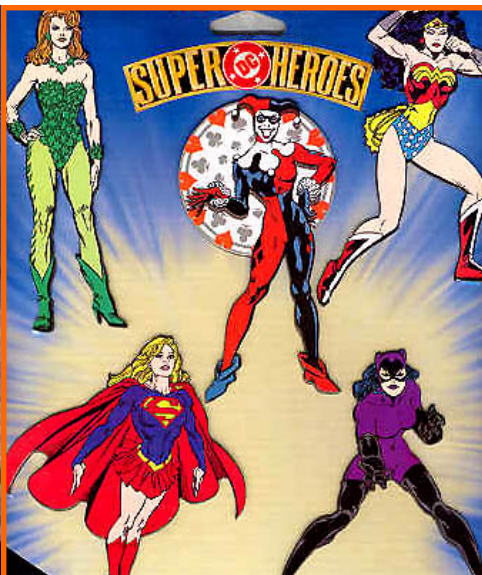
Did You Know...

Arrest rates for girls for aggravated assault went up 57 percent from 1990 to 1999.



Girls are not different! Girls are clearly demonstrating their similarities to boys with increased participation in sports, enhanced academic accomplishments, and expanded career achievements. When socialization and opportunity are coupled, girls' behavior has changed. Two decades ago, psychologist Leonard Eron suggested that to prevent youth violence in America, we should "socialize our boys more like we socialize our girls." We have done the opposite. We are socializing girls more like boys, and it is clear that girls are genetically and biologically capable of similar levels of violence. Like boys, girls report fighting to prove a point, get respect, gain a reputation, and for status. They report enjoying a good fight as well—just like boys.

We believe that socialization and cultural changes explain the changes in girls' behavior. Specifically, the entertainment media (movies, television, music, teen

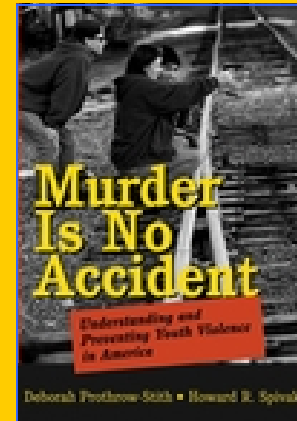


magazines) are depicting girls in roles a male superhero could play with hardly a script change. The female superhero has the same "make my day" attitude and uses the same level of violence as the

male superhero. The differences have disappeared, and "superheroes" abound. Beautiful, violent, and often sexy, they are portrayed regularly in the movies and children's cartoons. We are teaching girls, as we have for decades with boys, that fighting is appropriate and acceptable when dealing with hurt, pain, anger, and conflict.

The socialization of children and the cultural influences around them determine how children behave and respond. Much like James Garbarino's findings, published in his book, "Raising Children in a Socially Toxic Environment," we conclude that society sets the parameters within which children behave. As we market violence to girls, the parameters around girls' behavior have changed, and their repertoire of responses to problems and pain expands.

The major risk factors for violence include: gun availability, poverty, alcohol and drug use, biological factors, witnessing/victimization, and social/cultural influences. Historically, these risk factors have lined up for girls no differently than for boys. The notable recent exception is the change in the social and cultural influences on girls. Traditionally, high-risk girls acted out with self-destructive behaviors (using alcohol or drugs, running away, suicide attempts, prostitution, and cutting), not violence against others. Boys more typically externalized their risks with fighting, bullying, and violence. Now, violence and physical aggression are being marketed to our daughters in the same way as clothing, make-up, and other products, as it has been to our sons. We equate power with physical aggression and fighting for girls as for boys—and girls are catching on.



Deborah Prothrow-Stith and Howard R. Spivak, authors of "Murder is No Accident" (Jossey-Bass, 2004), are prominent Boston-area public health officials who played leading roles in that city's fight against violence. In their book, Prothrow-Stith and Spivak show that the key to Boston's success was creating an multi-disciplinary, city-wide movement. A variety of people—educators, community leaders, police, emergency-room workers, private citizens, and survivors of crime violence—worked for more than ten years to implement various crime prevention programs that confronted risk factors for youth violence.

Continued on the Following Page



Trends

"Mean Girls," Continued from the Previous Page

Predictably, school is where much of this plays out. Students and faculty are reporting more hazing, resulting in physical harm and illegal activity. Reports of girls fighting with serious physical injury are becoming more common. We hear about girls being mean-spirited and aggressive toward other girls and, recently, toward teachers. Standard responses to these occurrences consist of disbelief, uncertainty, and expansion of "no tolerance" policies predicated on the threat of severe punishment—expulsion in particular—as the primary deterrent. But, it is not working—in the same way it has not worked with boys. Threat of punishment alone is not an adequate deterrent to violence for girls any more than it has been for boys.



The problem rests in our "Rambo" hearts and "Terminator" minds. Equality is not the problem. Our values are. America has tolerated the epidemic of violence among boys far too long. Maybe this third wave will wake us up to the impact of a toxic environment that is now affecting even the most resilient.

No parent wants a wimp for a child. It is not just poor inner-city parents in high-violent crime areas who are telling their children to go back and fight to gain respect and not be pushed around. Parents don't want anyone to take advantage of their children, even more so for girls. However, there is a sad irony in the fact that often parents allow or even encourage children to do things in the name of self-respect that actually increase their risk of harm. Certainly there are other options for a child. Certainly a parent can protect a son or daughter from the corner fight with help in figuring out what else they can do to defuse a situation.

Without a society, community, and school that value negotiation, compromise, forgiveness, and other conflict resolution skills, it is hard for parents to raise nonviolent children. This is

where the entertainment media, the schools, and the larger society all have roles and are important stakeholders in supporting parents in the raising of safe and healthy children. Concentric circles of influence that affect their values and behaviors surround children. These layers—family, peers, school, community, media, nation—need to line up to promote values that deemphasize or discourage risky and dangerous behaviors. As parents, we need to raise our children by creating a supportive and healthy community around them. All adults, whether we have children or not, have this responsibility.

Are the changes in girls' behavior permanent? We really don't know. But we do believe in individual and collective action. We have seen the impact of deliberate and sustained community action in reducing youth homicide rates in Boston in the recent past. We have experienced the consequences of delay and inaction and do not want to follow that path again. The change in girls' behavior is significant enough to issue a warning that requires action. The stories are accumulating. The data are evolving. As Boston gears up to redouble its violence prevention efforts in response to a recent upswing in youth violence, our cry: Don't forget the girls!

Deborah Prothrow-Stith, M.D., is associate dean for faculty development and professor of public health practice at the Harvard School of Public Health. As a physician working in inner-city hospitals and neighborhood clinics, she recognized violence as a significant public health issue. In 1987, she established the first office of violence prevention in a state department of public health while serving as commissioner for the Department of Public Health for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Howard R. Spivak, M.D., is chief of the division of general pediatrics and adolescent medicine and vice president for community health programs at New England Medical Center in Boston, Massachusetts. He is professor of pediatrics and community health at Tufts University School of Medicine and director of the Tufts University Center for Children. He co-founded the Boston Violence Prevention Program and is nationally recognized for his work in pediatrics and violence prevention.

Editor's Note: Reprinted from the Boston Globe, November 20, 2005, with the authors' permission.



The Red Lake Indian Reservation: Proud and Strong



On the afternoon of March 21, 2005, Jeff Weise, age 16, entered Red Lake High School and shot and killed a security guard, five classmates, and a teacher before turning the gun on himself. Earlier in the day,

he had killed his grandfather as well as his grandfather's companion.

The events of that day shook the Red Lake Indian Reservation, population 6,000. Red Lake, located in Northwestern Minnesota, is a "closed" reservation, meaning all of its 1,200 square miles of land is owned in concert by tribal members and cannot be sold outside the tribe. The tribe also has the right to decide who can visit and live on the reservation. Thus, most people there know one another. And, almost all were touched by the shootings.



Upon receiving a call for help, the Red Lake Police Department quickly responded to Red Lake High

School. Although the officers knew many of the victims personally, they had a job to do. So, they worked through their grief. Because Red Lake is a Federal jurisdiction reservation, FBI agents also immediately traveled to the scene. In addition, countless other Federal, State, local, and tribal law enforcement and crisis response personnel offered their services.

First responders quickly learned that Red Lake High School had a crisis response plan in place at the time of the shootings. And, because of that plan and the heroic actions of teachers, staff, and students, many lives were saved during the nine-minute shooting spree.

Among those heralded as a hero that day was Derrick Brun, age 28. Brun, a school security guard, was working with LeeAnn Grant just inside the front door of the school when he spotted Weise climbing from his grandfather's truck. According to Grant, Weise fired two gunshots into the air and headed toward the school. Three



*Security Guard
Derrick Brun*

of the four school doors were locked, but Weise quickly found the open one. As he entered the building, he fired another shot, prompting many students to gather in the hallway to see what was happening. Brun, unarmed, confronted Weise, as Grant hurried students to safety. Brun was then shot to death. Later, Grant said, "I know Derrick bought me time by confronting Jeff—for me to even get that much farther away with the students.... Derrick's my hero."

Another hero that day appears to be Jeffrey May, age 15. According to relatives, May, armed only with a pencil, tried to protect other students by stabbing Weise with that pencil and then trying to wrestle his gun away from him. The gun went off, shooting May in the face. The bullet traveled through May's cheek and lodged in his neck, near his spinal cord. Unable to speak, May later wrote to his mother that he was certain if he had not wrestled with Weise, he and additional students would have been killed.

The people of the Red Lake Reservation are Ojibwe Indians, also called Chippewa. Following the tragic events of March 21, Ojibwe elders were called on to hold tribal healing ceremonies. The ceremonies, attended by many young survi-



*Tribal Elder Frank Dickenson
and partner Wanda Baxter have
performed many healing ceremonies
since the school shootings.*

vors of the shooting, provided an opportunity to talk publicly about anger, fear, and other feelings. Even though most students who participated in the ceremonies were uncomfortable speaking openly, they said

they felt better just being among the elders they trusted and admired. That didn't surprise tribal leaders. They knew the importance of immersing

Continued on the Following Page



Real Lessons Learned

"Red Lake," Continued from the Previous Page

tribal youth in their culture, particularly when those youth are hurting and can emotionally and psychologically benefit from strong identification with a familiar, loving group.

"In passing on the stories of our lives, we teach skills for resiliency."

Now, another school year is underway at Red Lake High. Some students have transferred to other schools, but many are back in the partially-remodeled building where friends were lost last spring. A Red Lake resident recently admitted responsibility in a Federal court juvenile proceeding for making threatening interstate communications in connection with the shootings. A number of youth violence prevention and intervention programs have been created and implemented by the school district and the tribal community. And,

the Red Lake Tribal Council, which is the sole governing authority on the reservation, has worked hard to address many issues that came to light following the shootings. In doing so, the Council and tribal leaders have strived to assist the people of Red Lake while maintaining the traditional Ojibwe culture, including its language, religion, and customs. Through those efforts, the people of Red Lake will remain proud and strong!

THINKING OF YOU

The following students were wounded during the Red Lake school shooting on March 21, 2005

Ryan Auginash, age 15
Steven Cobenais, age 15
Lance Crowe, age 15
Jeffrey May, age 15
Cody Thunder, age 15

Messages from Near and Far—



President George W. Bush

"This week we have seen tragedy at home. Families in Minnesota are mourning the loss of their loved ones after the terrible shootings at Red Lake High School. Hours after the shooting, communities and churches across the nation offered prayers for the victims and their families. The Red Lake Nation reports receiving thousands of calls from people all over the world, offering their sympathy and support. Laura and I are praying for the families of the victims, as are millions of Americans...."

From the President's radio address of March 26, 2005

"I am saddened by the horrible tragedy that took place yesterday on the Red Lake Indian Reservation in Minnesota. The Department of Justice will continue to work with our state, tribal, and local partners to keep our schools safe, so that our children can learn and grow in an environment free from fear.

Federal, State, tribal, and local law enforcement are on the scene to provide necessary resources, and grief counselors also are on site to provide assistance to victims. The FBI and the United States Attorney's Office in Minnesota will commit all resources needed to learn the facts behind this tragedy and provide comfort and relief to this grieving community.

Our hearts go out to the victims, their families, and the entire tribal community, all of whom have been harmed by this tragic event."

Comments made by the Attorney General on March 22, 2005



**United States Attorney General
Alberto Gonzales**



The Rampage at Red Lake

By: Dalton Walker

PHOENIX—My heart stopped 2,000 miles away. The unthinkable had happened, and it had happened in a place I call home. Innocent people were killed. Loved ones gone. Sons and daughters were lost forever. Mothers and fathers will never be seen again. I grew up on the Red Lake Chippewa Reservation. In 2000, I graduated from the same high school where a gunman decided, with a few tugs of his finger, that he was better than everyone else.

After hearing of Monday's Red Lake shootings, I didn't know which reservation school it was or who had been shot. My mother is a secretary at the Ponemah Elementary School, which is one of three elementary schools on the reservation. I tried to call her first, but the line was busy. I called my grandmother, my sister, my aunts and uncles and friends, but all the lines were busy.

I knew the news wasn't good. When I finally reached my mother, I was relieved for a split second. Her voice was full of sadness, but she said my family was okay. And, yet, my family is not okay. As a Red Lake member, we are all brothers and sisters. We are all one people. That was my Native American blood on the high school floors.

I spoke with my favorite high school teacher just hours after the shootings. One of her colleagues is now dead. Some of her students are now dead. She could barely talk because she was so overwhelmed. When I sat in her classroom five years ago, I was thinking about a State basketball championship, not Columbine.

I woke up at 6:20 a.m. every school day for the two-hour bus ride to school. I felt safe at school—particularly because it was surrounded with barbed-wire fencing. The building was laced with cameras, inside and outside. Metal detectors greeted each person entering the school. If the metal detector squeaked, security guards were there to pat you down.

The reservation will never be the same. Drugs have quickly taken over the youth. First, it was marijuana; now, it's crack cocaine. My own people are the suppliers, and my own people are pulling the triggers. The reservation has taken a turn for the worse.

My cousin, who is like a baby brother to me, is now a junior at Red Lake High School. I talk with him regularly. I ask him about school and about my old teachers. He tells me school is good, and the teachers are good. Now he must live the rest of his life in fear, with the school shootings always in the back of his mind.

Dalton Walker, a member of the Red Lake Band of Chippewa, attended Mesa Community College in Mesa, Arizona, at the time he wrote this article. He is a graduate of the Freedom Forum's American Indian Journalism Institute. He was selected for a reporting internship at the Duluth News Tribune under the Freedom Forum's Chips Quinn Scholars Program. This article appeared in the Duluth News Tribune on March 22, 2005, the day after the Red Lake school shooting. It expresses the raw emotion so many people felt immediately following the school shooting. The article is reprinted here with the permission of the Duluth News Tribune.



Real Lessons Learned

Investigating a School Tragedy

By: John Sanner

On Monday, September 24, 2003, at 11:45 a.m., the Stearns County Emergency Dispatch Center received a 911 call from Rocori High School in Cold Spring, Minnesota. The report was that a shooting had just occurred at the school. It was quickly ascertained that two students, both male, a freshman and a senior, had suffered gunshot injuries and appeared to be in very serious or critical



condition. It was also learned that the shooter, a freshman boy, was in local police custody.

All available law enforcement units were immediately dispatched to the school, in coordination with EMS personnel. Stearns County also dispatched detectives to (1) coordinate on-scene personnel; (2) secure the crime scene(s); and (3) initiate the criminal investigation. And, within approximately 15 minutes, the initial call was placed to the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA), requesting that their mobile crime lab conduct crime scene processing.

The Stearns County Sheriff, accompanied by the patrol captain, responded to the scene and established a command post, utilizing school office space and coordinating with

school officials. The Sheriff's office established control of the investigation and assigned specific duties to members of the responding agencies. For example, Cold Spring police officers were assigned crime scene preservation and security; fire department personnel were assigned school door security; and the Sheriff's detective initiated student interviews.

From the outset of the investigation, school officials worked in coordination with law enforcement, providing all resources requested and directed by law enforcement. School officials also assisted with the mental and physical needs of the student body, routed telephone inquiries, provided logistical support, and remained available to assist law enforcement with other needs.

The utilization of Federal, State, and local resources was a determination made by the Stearns County Sheriff, based on the expertise or type of resources offered by each discipline. When an investigation of this magnitude is initiated, the primary—or lead—role is normally decided based on two factors: (a) jurisdiction; and (b) resources. Initially, the primary law enforcement agency in this case was the Cold Spring Police Department, although such a small municipal agency would be unable to provide all necessary resources and expertise. The City of Cold Spring, however, also falls within the jurisdiction of the Stearns County Sheriff's Office, which is an agency with sufficient resources to conduct and control an investigation of this



nature. Thus, during the first 24 hours after the shooting, the Stearns County Sheriff's Office maintained the role of lead investigative agency, identifying the Stearns County Sheriff as primary incident commander.

On the second day of the investigation, once support agencies were in place and operating, the Sheriff made the decision to move the lead agency to the BCA. That decision was based solely on the fact that the identified shooter's father was a Stearns County Deputy Sheriff, and a potential conflict of interest could arise. Although roles changed, the Stearns County Sheriff's Office remained heavily engaged in the criminal investigation.

"In the event that a major act of school violence occurs in a more rural portion of the State, it is feasible that the municipal police department and the local sheriff's office would have insufficient resources to conduct the investigation. In that circumstance, it would be logical for them to defer the lead role in the investigation to the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension."

John Sanner
Stearns County Sheriff



Reference was made earlier in this piece to coordination and cooperation among agencies and disciplines, and that warrants a closer examination, as it is truly the heart and soul of an investigation. First, a primary incident commander must be named and utilized, much like



Sheriff John Sanner, School Superintendent Scott Staska, and Police Chief Phil Jones address the public.

the conductor of a large symphony orchestra, making sure talents and resources are used appropriately and in a coordinated way. The make-up of an investigation is extremely complex, however, and involves law enforcement agencies at all levels, along with school officials, EMS partners, students, parents, media, and, eventually, the community. It is both impractical and inefficient for the incident commander to supervise all of the available resources directly. So, second, to maximize efficiency, a command staff must be quickly organized, made up of managers—or leaders—representing their respective

disciplines. The staff at the primary command center must then work together in an effort to establish the flow of accurate information both ways. Historically, communication is the “X” factor that so often fails when conducting a multi-agency investigation.

Thus, my advice is simple: Plan and train for the worst and, in doing so, involve all potential partners. And, then, hope—no, pray—you will never need to use those skills.

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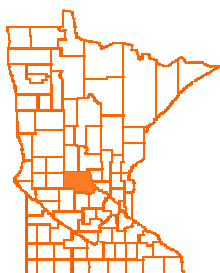
“It’ll Never Happen in My School,” or “Why ‘WE’ Includes Schools AND Law Enforcement in Stearns County”

By: Janelle Kendall



*Janelle Kendall
County Attorney
Stearns County*

We lived through the Rocori school shootings twice in my county—once in September of 2003 and a second time during the trial of the shooter in August of 2005. The facts of the Cold Spring murders, including the planning and cost-benefit analysis of the 15-year-old defendant, have been well publicized. Jason McLaughlin told investigators that he figured he would do 10 to 12 years in prison for shooting Seth Bartell but decided to do it anyway. Aaron Rollins died in the crossfire.



Stearns County

Jason comes from a good family. He was a member of his church youth group and had trouble spelling. I know. His family and my family were close. My children played with him; we watched the Vikings together. Jason was like kids you know too. He didn’t present

as some stereotypical homicidal maniac. Instead, he was like that kid soaping up your car at the youth-group car wash or that quiet, shy, 15-year-old with his mom at the grocery store.

When he was a little boy, Jason McLaughlin sat on my lap. Then, he went on to kill intentionally at school. Because of the relationship between Jason’s family and mine, and because of the relationship between his father (a deputy sheriff) and local law enforcement, Jason’s prosecution was handled by the State Attorney General’s Office (from the initial press conference through sentencing). However, the obvious questions remain: What went wrong? How did this happen in a small town, just south of Lake Wobegon? Of course, we don’t know. We never will. But, in Stearns County, we now know more about who we are, how safe we feel, and what we can do to make our schools more secure. We know because we’ve changed the definition of “we.”

In early 2004, I got a call from Superintendent Dan Brooks of Sauk Centre, located about a half

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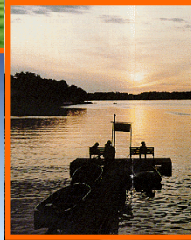
Real Lessons Learned

Continued from the Previous Page

hour from Cold Spring and 45 minutes from St. Cloud. They had finally caught the kid who had been writing, "This is going to be just like Rocori,"



Picturesque Stearns County



in lipstick on the school's bathroom mirrors. Because it had only been about six months since the Rocori shootings, this had gotten everyone's undivided attention, although I had not talked to this superintendent before about crime. The idea that school officials would talk to prosecutors and vice versa was new. What, really, other than truancy, did we have to do with each other?

Dan Brooks had some very legitimate concerns. He said school officials had talked with the local police chief, and because they'd been forced to evacuate the school multiple days because of the threats, they had decided the kid should be prosecuted. But, he wanted me to know that, not surprisingly, this kid had issues (family issues and psychological issues), and that the school had been working with the family for some time. He also asked, "What would happen to the kid once he was in the court system? Could the school tell me about his background? Could the school have something to say about his punishment? Could I talk to the teachers who had been working with him or the principals who had tried to get through to him? Could they get some information about what would happen next?" I replied that it might be best if I went to Sauk Centre and talked to the school administrators, who had never talked to a prosecutor before. Dan suggested that he also invite a few of his colleagues, who had never heard about what happens to kids involved in the court system.

When I arrived in Sauk Centre, I was greeted by representatives from nearly every school district in the county. The room was full. The discussion was great and went well beyond the kid in Sauk Centre who was going to make this "just like

Rocori." Officials from Rocori were there and spoke about their experience. Principals, counselors, and superintendents talked about kids. Are they meaner? More violent juvenile crimes were being referred to my office. What was going on? I mentioned that I'd been thinking about doing something to help educate the community about bullying. The room went silent. Finally, they asked what I was thinking. In response, I asked what they wanted. And, that's how the county-wide anti-bullying effort, "Bullying—It's Not Just Part of Growing Up," was created. It was written together, by "us," the prosecutors, and "them," the schools. And, "we" was born.

The anti-bullying message we developed asked adults in positions of authority (including, but not limited to, teachers) to intervene when appropriate and to consider, if and when their efforts failed, calling in juvenile court personnel. We took that message—that adults need to be the authorities that kids look to them to be—county-wide. More questions were raised: "When should we call the cops?" And, "When is it better to handle the situation in school?" Round 2 of the county-wide training included joint law enforcement and school administration sessions focusing on what law enforcement can and cannot do in schools. During the process, law enforcement gained significant knowledge of the schools' world as well. Round 3 is scheduled for next fall and will focus on "Mandated Reporting—What Happens After the School Calls the Cops in Abuse Situations?"

In our training, we reminded adults that kids don't run the world. That was pretty well received. But, when prosecutors suggested that school staff raise an eyebrow on bullying, they asked, "If I share information about a student's behavior or

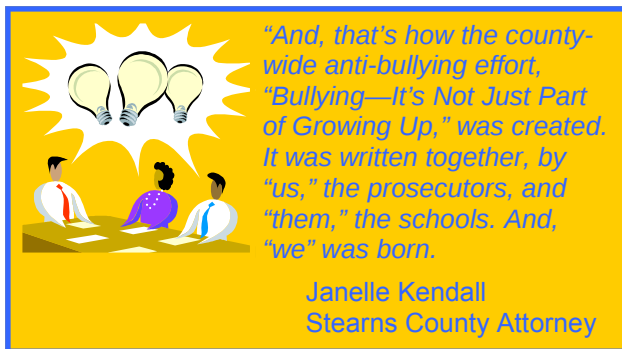


More of Stearns County





problems with other staff, won't I get sued?" My answer was, "If you just let it happen, and something really bad results from it, how do you suppose the lawsuit against you will go?" We also explained to educators that school consequences for many kids are far more immediate and sometimes more effective than the dispositions they might get in juvenile court for "minor" offenses. That was news to most of them. Hearing about the difficulties prosecutors have in getting district court judges, overwhelmed with murder, sexual abuse, and methamphetamine cases, engaged in minor school matters was a surprise as well.



I believe a joint effort between law enforcement and school administrators just makes sense. From our perspective, authority figures need to stick together. There aren't many of us, and we usually deal with the same small population of problems and problem-makers. Yet, in our midst, there are many great problem-solvers. What if we get together? What if we try to figure out from a joint public safety and educational perspective how to keep our kids safe and teach them, among other things, how to treat each other? How about putting our very best efforts toward finding a way to avoid ever again experiencing the suffering we lived through at Rocori.

I want to leave you with this: We know that when something bad happens at school, the effects will extend far beyond the building and its inhabitants. When something bad happens with our children, our society is changed. The cities of Rockville, Richmond, and Cold Spring have been transformed for generations, perhaps, forever. Because of this, we now understand that when a school crisis occurs, the importance of partnerships cannot be measured—the need is critical, complete, and immediate. Although law

enforcement will naturally pull together by necessity and training, a relationship with the schools is also necessary. Knowing and trusting the person or agency in charge can be difficult if basic professional competency isn't already known and understood. Knowing and trusting that you've talked before, discussed important issues, and planned out how to handle crisis situations will make a big difference in your response.

How do you move, however, from a situation in which schools and public safety professionals believe "it'll never happen here," to a place where kids know what to do to protect themselves if someone opens fire in their school? You build relationships. Then, you use those relationships to create plans, not just reactions. From there, you set out to be the person in your community to extend a hand in partnership.

Along with you, I watched Jason McLaughlin go to prison for the rest of his life. Please, from my family, on behalf of his, and on behalf of yours, let's learn something from what happened here, so the lives lost are not completely wasted.

Janelle Kendall, Stearns County Attorney
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THANK YOU

To Those Involved in the Immediate Rocori Response:

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| —Cold Spring Police | —Cold Spring Fire and Rescue |
| —Rockville Fire/Rescue | —Gold Cross Ambulance |
| —Life Link Helicopter | —Sartell Police |
| —Avon Police | —St. Joseph Police |
| —Richmond Police | —Eden Valley Police |
| —Waite Park Police | —Albany Police |
| —Stearns County Sheriff | —Minnesota BCA |
| —Minnesota State Patrol | —Minnesota DNR |
| —FBI | |



Real Lessons Learned

EXPERIENCE AT ROCORI: In Memory of Aaron Rollins and Seth Bartell

By: Phil Jones and Scott Staska

On September 23, 2003, the Rocori School District, including the Cities of Cold Spring, Richmond, and Rockville, were changed forever. Jason McLaughlin, a 14-year-old freshman, brought a gun to school and shot and killed two other students before surrendering the gun to a teacher.

The following days and months were filled with psychological confusion and countless stressful decisions. Although painful, the days went much better than could be expected because of teamwork and prior planning.

After the Columbine shooting, we had formed a committee and put together a plan and practiced that plan on a regular basis. We attribute everything that went right in this tragic incident to proper planning and teamwork before, during, and after the shooting.

At the time of the shooting, the principal implemented our "Code Red" plan. Here are some of the steps we then took, as well as some of the lessons we learned:

- We immediately implemented our emergency plan.
- We immediately secured the shooting suspect.
- We immediately called 911.
- We immediately ensured student and staff safety.



Shooting Victims Bartell and Rollins

Division of Responsibility Following the Shooting:

- Law enforcement officials assumed control of the crime scene (high school building).
 - 1st Ring was the area where the shootings took place.
 - 2nd Ring was the rest of the building and surrounding property, including the parking lot.
- Law enforcement officials directed emergency personnel and services.
- Collaboration among law enforcement, school personnel, and emergency-service providers was needed to secure the site and evacuate students.
- School officials notified other school sites, ordered school dismissals, and updated students as details unfolded.

Concerns of School Administrators:

- How do we offer hope and encouragement to students and staff?
- How do we support the families directly involved in the shooting?
- What kind of counseling and support will be needed for students and staff?
- When can classes resume?
- What logistical details relative to school planning and operations must be addressed?
- How do we communicate with staff?
- How do we prepare staff to interact with each other as well as with students?
- What information do we make available internally, and how do we do that?
- What information do we make available to students and parents, and how do we do that?

Concerns of Local Law Enforcement:

- Staying involved after turning the criminal investigation over to the State BCA, although doing so was necessary due to the workload created for local law enforcement by the shootings.
- Continuing to work with school officials to address all of their concerns, so they, in turn, could appropriately deal with students, staff, and parents.
- Being a competent spokesperson for the community regarding school security, community safety, and case progress.



EXPERIENCE AT ROCORI

Thursday, September 25

- Press Conferences (Morning and Afternoon).
- Meetings Conducted with Staff
 - explain circumstances;
 - set expectations for the day; and
 - identify resources available.
- Parent and Student Assembly
 - introduce mental health resources;
 - update by law enforcement; and
 - introduce daily “talk” schedule, so students and staff can gather and talk.
- Daily Schedule
 - no formal schedule for high school.

Friday, September 26

- Press Conferences Continued.
- Building Meetings Conducted with Staff.
- Community Response: “Welcome to Building”
 - mayor organized volunteers to greet staff and students at the school doors.
- Daily Schedule
 - loosened for conversation as needed.

Monday, September 29

- Daily Schedule
 - regular start time, but senior high dismissed for funeral;
 - coordinate transportation for funeral; and
 - keep building open.

Resources to Assist Constituents:

- NOVA (National Organization for Victim Awareness)
- Regional Counseling Services
 - Catholic Charities/Lutheran Social Services
- Local Clergy
- Local Support Agencies
 - recognizing and taking into consideration internal resources and
 - being cautious about resource selection

Working With the Media:

- Media will respond right away.
- Cooperate with the media, but do not allow the media to dictate.
- Remember, each reporter will seek a unique angle or perspective.
- Individual interviews can be good opportunities to get information out.
- Try to ensure that all reporters hear the same information.
- Do not forget the local media.
- Remind the public that you do not have an obligation to speak.

Working with the Community:

- The initial community response must be immediate and demonstrate security.
- Involve community leaders right away.
- At some point, conduct a community meeting, where people can provide feedback regarding instructional concerns, harassment, connecting students to the school community, and the reporting of problems.
- Assure the community that issues are being addressed.
- Assess the process repeatedly.

Tips for Encouraging Students and Staff During a Difficult Time:

- Recognize the efforts made.
- Reinforce safety, security, and order.
- Openly communicate opportunities for support and assistance.
- Assure everyone that a wide range of emotions and reactions is normal.
- Be willing to listen.
- Share as much information as possible.
- Set an example.
- Monitor reactions, responses, undercurrents.
- Understand long-term consequences.

Other Lessons Learned:

- Review the emergency plan regularly.
- Practice emergency procedures before they are needed.
- Develop an emergency packet.
- Establish a “command center” right after a crisis occurs.
- Verify steps before acting during a crisis.
- Be collaborative in crisis response.
- Recognize when decisions must be made.

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Real Lessons Learned



Reflections of Dr. Terrance L. Peterson: Providing Mental Health Services after a School Tragedy

Locked doors, metal detectors, and more liaison officers will not stop school violence! Rather, only the development of a district-wide school culture where students listen to each other, help each other, and know when to seek help from adults will reduce school violence and improve the response to it when it does occur. This contention is based on acknowledgement of the normal developmental milestone that occurs sometime in the late elementary years, when the peer group replaces adults as the most important social contact in the lives of adolescents.

Although this development has many implications, a primary one is that kids talk to kids! Of course, some also talk to adults, but essentially, all kids talk



mostly to other kids. Therefore, my suggestion is rather than to lament or fight this natural phenomenon, we systematically work to enhance the quality of this social support by providing school-wide training for what is often termed "peer helping." Enhancing the quality of the social support network of students should become a priority within the school curriculum on a level equal to that of helping students learn other basic skills!

First, how would such a program impact school safety? If

anyone knows about a student's plan to harm someone else, it is most likely another student. This is well documented in most school shootings. Second, how would such a program improve our response after a tragedy? After a tragedy, kids want to talk to and be with their peers. Yes, some students go to adults and "professional" helpers, but most share their thoughts and feelings with friends. The goal of a



peer-helper program would be to make peer-to-peer interactions richer. My suggestion is that the program begin in the early elementary years; that it be part of the curriculum at all levels; and that it be provided for all students rather than for a select few.

Briefly, the focus of a peer-helper program would be skill-based, paying particular attention to listening and responding skills, conflict resolution skills, stress management skills, how and when to seek adult help, and a process for making decisions. Overall, the model would explain and demonstrate each skill, and then students would practice and receive feedback regarding their use of those skills. The skills would be implemented in a developmental fashion, one level building upon another. Such a program could be implemented within a class

or in a training retreat, but it would be given importance on a par with other basic skills!

My suggestion involves a more comprehensive program than the currently popular anti-bullying programs. The goal of the peer-helper program would be to change the natural way students interact with one another! If students are equipped to use some of the skills outlined above, it is reasonable to expect a decrease in bullying and other forms of violent behavior. And, then, if and when a mass-tragedy occurs, it is also reasonable to expect that students would support each other in a more effective manner. It is, after all, the strength and quality of the social support network of students that is most crucial to their recovery after a trauma.

Lock-Downs

Schools have practiced fire drills for many years, yet some school officials are reluctant to practice lock-down drills. The most common reason given is that lock-down drills might cause students to be afraid. This logic would suggest that fire drills would make students afraid, yet everyone conducts fire drills. It appears that fire drills are such a common event that they don't "scare" students (or adults). Schools need to make lock-down drills a common event too. A lock-down drill provides an excellent opportunity to communicate to students (at a developmental level that students can understand) that the staff at the school will keep them safe.



Of course, lock-down drills should be done with students present! They should also be conducted at unusual times (e.g., lunch, between periods). After lock-down drills, staff should process the experience, focusing on things like what teachers did when asked to open doors for students who did not get into classrooms before the doors were locked (if they could be locked). Finally, law enforcement and first responder involvement in such drills would help make the practice more real and would allow law enforcement and first responders valuable experience on school grounds.

Preparing to Provide Mental Health Services

A school-based mass tragedy quickly overwhelms school counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers. In addition to the urgent needs of students, those helping professionals themselves are likely to have been directly impacted by the tragedy and, therefore, less able to provide help to others.

Immediately following a mass tragedy, there is an outpouring of offers of assistance from mental health volunteers. Although well-meaning, most are ill-equipped to deal with the needs of students in schools. Mental health volunteers may be available for a day or two, but most agencies are not

prepared to provide on-going help in the form of professional mental health staff with no remuneration for expenses. Professionals who do come to the school to work with students must make a commitment to continue their involvement with the students for at least a month. Being there one day and gone the next is not helpful and, in fact, can be detrimental to the recovery of students and staff. So, volunteers should be identified BEFORE a tragedy occurs, and agreements should be worked out so staff from community agencies can be available in the school for an extended period of time.

For more information on obtaining properly trained counselors after a school tragedy, visit the Health Resource Service Administration, at www.hrsa.gov, or Healthy Schools, Healthy Communities, at <http://www.bphc.hrsa.gov/HS HC/Default.htm>.

In addition, most helping professionals are unfamiliar with working in a school culture. Working in a school is very different than working in a community social service agency. And, without an understanding of how schools function, well-meaning professionals can be disruptive in an already chaotic school situation. Moreover, most students do not need therapy as it is conceptualized in an agency setting. They do not need to be put through a critical incident debriefing process that may, in fact, increase, rather than reduce, trauma responses! What students do need is a form of psychological first-aid that encourages them to use their social support system and adaptive pre-incident coping mechanisms.

It is important that mental health volunteers be provided training in psychological first-aid and how it differs from the diagnosis/mental-illness-based treatment model. Of course, one of the functions of these volunteer helpers should be to identify students who need more than psychological first-aid.

Finally, provisions need to be made for school staff to receive mental health services. Staff are traumatized at least as much as most students by school-based mass tragedies, yet they often are expected to come back to school and be the “strong” ones, there to take care of their students. For some, that is impossible, and they need to be relieved of their classroom duties. Others need their own psychological first-aid, and others need to be referred to outside therapy.

Providing for staff mental health needs is particularly challenging as individual staff needs change over time—as some get better, others may decompensate. Moreover, asking for or receiving help may be embarrassing for some staff, so confidentiality must be addressed. Easy access to off-school-site mental health services must be made available.

In summary, locks and chains will not keep our schools safe. Rather, our focus should be on building a different sense of community within our schools, where students feel listened to and cared about. Such efforts have the potential for the prevention of violence as well as a reduction in the number and severity of emotional casualties when tragedies do occur.



Real Lessons Learned

Crisis Counseling: Tips for Good Mental Health Responses to Mass Tragedies

By: Dr. Terrance L. Peterson

Encourage Titration of Arousal by—

- Limiting exposure to media reports;
- Recommending “time outs” from those most impacted by the trauma; and
- Promoting sleep and other basic needs.

Provide Access to Accurate Information—

Provide for Safety Needs—

- Talk about safety concerns, recognize feelings, and provide assurance that adults will take steps to keep everyone safe.

Normalize Trauma-Related Symptoms and Cognition—

- Emphasize that it is “normal” and “to be expected” to feel angry, sad, anxious...; and
- Emphasize that it is “normal” and “to be expected” to have trouble concentrating, sleeping, eating....

Assess which Individuals May Need More Individualized Help by Monitoring—

- Suicidal/homicidal ideation;
- Isolation; and
- High-risk behaviors (e.g., drugs, driving fast).

Encourage and Facilitate Social Support—

- Have victims talk to other victims and help them develop systems for checking in with one another;
- Help victims discern how they will know if one of their friends is having serious difficulty; and
- Help them decide what they should do if they think one of their friends is having serious difficulty.

A Final Word of Warning

The use of critical incident debriefing procedures with children and adolescents has not been proven effective. In fact, some data indicate that such procedures may increase trauma-related reactions. Thus, it is NOT recommended that such procedures be used with students following an incident of school violence.

Based on the work of Edna Foe, Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania, and the experiences of Dr. Peterson.

Recommended Interventions in the Wake of a Disaster

- People have their own pace for processing trauma. It is important to convey to them that they should listen to and honor their own inner pace.
- People should be encouraged to use natural supports and to talk with friends, family, and co-workers. They should follow their natural inclinations with regard to how much and with whom they talk.
- If someone wants to speak with a professional in the immediate aftermath period, it would be helpful to—
 - Listen actively and supportively but not probe for details and emotional responses. Let the person say what they feel comfortable saying, without pushing for more; and
 - Validate normal, natural recovery.

Terrance L. Peterson is Professor of Counselor Education and Educational Psychology at St. Cloud State University and Clinical Director at Caritas Mental Health Clinic, in St. Cloud, Minnesota. For 30 days following the shooting at Rocori High, Dr. Peterson counseled students and faculty and co-drafted a recovery grant for the community. After the shooting at Red Lake High, he worked with students and staff at St. Mary's Elementary Mission School in Red Lake. On this page and the previous two pages, Peterson sets forth key points to remember when working with disaster victims. To contact Peterson, e-mail him, at tpeterson@stcloudstate.edu.



For more in-depth information about the mental health response to school violence, read, “Mental Health Response to Mass Violence and Terrorism:

A Field Guide,” published in 2005 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and available for downloading at www.samhsa.gov



Hope and Healing: Lessons Learned from a School Shooting

By: Cathy Kennedy Paine

The shooting that occurred in Springfield, Oregon, has been, in many respects, a life-changing event for the Springfield community, the staff, and the students at Thurston High School. On May 21, 1998, our community experienced the most horrific school crisis imaginable. In a few short moments, we were transformed



from innocent, unsuspecting Individuals, engaged in our normal routines, to traumatized victims of a school shooting spree.

On the morning of Thursday, May 21, 1998, the innocence of 300 of the school's students and staff was brutally shattered when, at 7:50 a.m., Kip Kinkel entered the school with three concealed weapons—a rifle and two handguns. He passed the perimeter fencing, surveillance cameras, and campus monitors, and shot two students in a hallway. He then pulled the semi-automatic rifle from beneath his trench coat and sprayed 50 rounds of ammunition throughout the cafeteria. This single act of violence left two students dead and 25 others seriously wounded.



Soon we learned that the parents of the shooter had also been found dead in their home—shot by their son. Bill and Faith Kinkel, both Springfield teachers, were long-time residents of our community, and the loss of them was devastating to their many friends.

Through this terrible tragedy, we learned some valuable lessons:

Be prepared. Our initial reactions to this tragedy were shock and disbelief. When the shots were fired on that spring morning, our sense of safety and security was shattered, along with our

innocence. More than anything, this tragedy changed one basic, fundamental belief of our peaceful, ordinary community: No longer could we say, "It can't happen here." Nothing in our previous experience with individual student and teacher deaths really prepared us for the magnitude of this horrifying event.

However, we quickly organized a team of administrators, school psychologists, and mental health workers, and together we put our district crisis plan into place. Over the next days and weeks, we implemented the district's planned response with flexibility.

The media will come.

From the first moments of this tragedy, the media grabbed it as a major event. Before the first hour passed, a CNN helicopter hovered overhead, transmitting images of our newfound horrific "fame." This was the first school shooting that attracted international attention. Reporters from Japan, England, and Australia quickly took on a larger-than-life presence in our normally quiet community. Before long, a surrealistic scene developed as the wide street in front of the high school was reduced to a one-lane road, lined with the constantly humming generators and blazing lights of 20 satellite vans.



We made the decision not to allow the media onto the high school campus until after school resumed and, then, only briefly, late at night. This was done to prevent the filming of traumatic images and to allow the students' first view of the campus to be in person, not on television. Finally, six days after the shooting, the fleet of white vans crept away, almost as abruptly as they had arrived, leaving the school to stand free of lights, cameras, and sound bites.

The community can be your strength. Our community's response to this tragedy was effective largely because of our preparation and "connectedness." This tragedy made us realize how many good, caring, giving people there were

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Real Lessons Learned

"Healing," Continued from the Previous Page

in our community and our country. Over 200 counselors came to help in whatever way they could; people donated over \$400,000 to the Thurston Healing Fund; and hundreds came just to say, "I care." Although this horrific school crisis made news for its brutality, it also provided the opportunity for us to come together in a demonstration of unity and collaboration between school and community.

Students will react to trauma. We learned that trauma response was different from general grief and loss reactions. We needed to assure students that this was an unusual event. We needed to address the suddenness and irrationality of the tragedy. We needed to restore a sense of community at the school. We needed to reaffirm the future and talk in "hopeful" terms to help students rebuild trust and faith in their own future and the world. As we moved through each school year following the Thurston tragedy, we saw a variety of reactions from students. Many were able to go through the school years without noticeable effects and without outside help. However, for some, their beliefs about the safety and security of school were irrevocably altered.

Trauma impacts learning. Some said, "Let's get on with life, with school, with learning." And, that was the case for the majority of students and teachers. For the 300 students and staff who were in the cafeteria that day, however, it was not so simple. So, we asked them to be tolerant and patient, and we reminded other students that while many were ready to move on, some were not.

Twenty of the 25 injured students returned to Thurston High. For them, there were traumatic



reminders: an empty chair or a friend no longer there. Some still had the physical evidence of scars and carried bullets in them. Some faced surgeries and lengthy rehabilitation. Some could never return to the cafeteria, fearing



recurring violence. Bereavement was complicated by traumatic grief.

Healing takes a long time. The most impromptu of the memorials became one of the most powerful for a community looking for solace. Within hours of the shooting, community members of all ages placed flowers, posters, balloons, plants, teddy bears, candles, photos, poems, crosses, and other mementos along the chain-link fence in front of Thurston High School. Ultimately, this memorial stretched for several blocks, the entire length of the campus, and represented the community's outpouring of grief.

Following this tragedy, our approach to "follow-up" was two-fold. We wanted to recapture the school's normal activities; yet, we wanted to support the 1,500 students and staff in achieving a healthy recovery. The Thurston Assistance Center was established to provide counseling and information to Springfield students and families affected by the shooting. Uniformed security officers were added to both high schools. Counselors trained in trauma were added to the Thurston High School staff and continued to work there until the freshmen present at the time of the shooting graduated.

On November 10, 1999, Kip Kinkel was sentenced to 112 years in prison, with no parole, and our community breathed a sigh of relief. However, the complete answer to that lingering question (why?) remains in the mind of a lonely, troubled youth.

In May, 2003, the final chapter in our saga, a

Real Lessons Learned



permanent memorial, was dedicated. A group of students, parents, community members, and school staff members worked for many months to develop the design. The Thurston Memorial is a quiet, peaceful park setting near the high school. It is a reminder of the tragedy—of lives altered forever—but it is also a tribute to the unity and camaraderie between school and community.



Create a safe and connected school climate.

We can't go back to the way we were before the shooting. We are no longer unsuspecting individuals marginally affected by youth violence. This event forced us to deal with a large-scale tragedy that even now demands our attention and our strength. Now we talk more of school safety, violence prevention, identifying warning signs, and raising self-esteem.

The lessons we learned from this event led us to implement the following proactive strategies:

- (1) Foster a culture of respect—evaluate the school climate and implement support strategies that help reduce bullying and harassment;
- (2) Create connections between adults and students—explore mentor programs and peer-assisted learning;
- (3) Break the code of silence—have a clear process and a climate that supports students sharing information of concern; and
- (4) Take all threats seriously—implement a team-review process for all threats.

In her keynote address to our 500 teachers as they returned to school following the shooting, Marleen Wong, head of District Crisis Teams for the Los Angeles Unified School District, challenged us to “work hard to find that balance between mourning the past, treasuring the present, and keeping hope for the future.” That continues to be our mission.

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Get Prepared!

Cathy Paine reminds us that the time to prepare for a crisis is not when that crisis occurs but, rather, long before. She suggests that school staff in-service week is a good time to—

- Identify the members of the building crisis team;
- Review and update the building crisis plan with all staff and conduct a table-top drill;
- Review the results of your school's safety assessment and make appropriate changes to the facility and the school climate;
- Update and make available a copy of the building phone tree, including all certified and classified staff;
- Conduct a lock-down drill soon after school has started;
- Identify a site off campus for use during a school evacuation;
- Establish procedures for students to report suspicious behavior, conversations, or activities;
- Review and update all policies and discipline codes with staff members; and
- At back-to-school night and open houses, review major policies and procedures with parents.



Resources

Additional National Web Resources:

- See www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osdfs/resources.html, which is the website of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools. There, you will find lists of publications, research information, and other material relative to a variety of school issues, including safety and security. For example, in the "online publication" area of that site, you will find a very helpful booklet, "Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities," which can be downloaded from the site.
- See www.ercm.org, which is the Emergency Response and Crisis Management website, developed by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools. Through this website, you can obtain technical assistance, including help in developing emergency plans.
- See www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/crisisplanning.pdf for a 146-page, U.S. Department of Education manual on school safety, which deals with everything from preventing school violence to dealing with the aftermath of a violent incident on campus.
- See www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/crimeprevention.pdf, for the U.S. Department of Education's 45-page booklet on "Student-Led Crime Prevention: A Real Resource with Powerful Promise."
- See www.nssc1.org, which is the website for the National School Safety Center, for information, possible speakers, and other assistance, such as help in performing school safety assessments.
- See www.sshs.samhsa.gov for information about the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative, which provides program funding.
- See www.ncjrs.org, which is the Federal government's National Criminal Justice Reference Service, for information about school safety, including the 2005 Indicators of School Crime and Safety.
- See www.schoolsecurity.org/resources/security-equipment.html for information on school security and technology, including a link to "The Appropriate and Effective Use of Security Technologies in U.S. Schools," drafted by the National Institute of Justice.

National Mental Health Organizations:

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, at <http://www.aacap.org>

American Psychiatric Association, at <http://www.psych.org>

American Psychological Association, at <http://www.apa.org>

American Red Cross, at <http://www.redcross.org>

Federal Emergency Management Agency, at <http://www.fema.gov>

National Child Traumatic Stress Network, at <http://www.nctsnet.org>

Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice, at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, at <http://www.samhsa.gov>

Major Minnesota Educational Organizations

Minnesota Department of Education
Alice Seagren, Commissioner
1500 Highway 36 W.
Roseville, MN 55113
Phone: (651) 582-8204

Minnesota Association of School Administrators
Dr. Charles Kyte, Executive Director
1884 Como Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108
Phone: (651) 645-6272

Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals
Robert Schmidt, Executive Director
1667 Snelling Avenue N., Suite C-100
St. Paul, MN 55108
Phone: (651) 999-7333

Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association
P. Fred Storti, Executive Director
1667 Snelling Avenue N., Suite C-101
St. Paul, MN 55108
Phone: (651) 999-7310

Minnesota PTA
Karen Ferlaak, Office Manager
1667 Snelling Avenue North
St. Paul, MN 55108
Phone: (800) 672-0993

Education Minnesota
Judy Schaubach, President
41 Sherburne Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55103
Phone: (651) 227-9541

Download additional copies of this booklet from:

www.dps.state.mn/ojp

or

http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/mn/lecc/schoolbrochure_2006.pdf

or

[http://www.education.state.mn.us/mde/Learning_Support/
Safe_and_Healthy_Learners/
Alcohol_Tobacco_Other_Drugs_Violence/
Violence_Prevention_Restorative_Measures/index.html](http://www.education.state.mn.us/mde/Learning_Support/Safe_and_Healthy_Learners/Alcohol_Tobacco_Other_Drugs_Violence/Violence_Prevention_Restorative_Measures/index.html)

