



**DoDEA**

# SAFE Schools

## NEWSLETTER



Volume VI - Issue 7 March 2006

### NAESP and ERS Publish Security in Schools Guide

Addressing students' security supports academic achievement. The National Association for Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and their research arm, Educational Research Service (ERS), recently published the seventh guide in their "Essentials for Principals" series: *Creating Physical and Emotional Security in Schools*. This guide encourages principals to:

- ✓ Develop a proactive, school-wide approach to discipline;
- ✓ Prepare Crisis Response Plans; and
- ✓ Coordinate with emergency response agencies.

For further details on the guide visit the NAESP Web site at: [www.naesp.org](http://www.naesp.org). ■

### DoDEA Participates in HPO Pilot Program

The DoDEA Office of Safety & Security (OSS) and all DoDDS and DDESS worldwide Safety & Security functions are undergoing a full Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) study that started in October 2005. This contracted study is performed by Grant Thornton LLP and is monitored by the DoDEA Commercial Studies Program Office.



*The worldwide OSS Team gathered at the DDESS Area Service Center in Peachtree City, Georgia.*

The worldwide OSS Team met in Wiesbaden, Germany in December to start compiling the current workflow data, which began the "As Is" phase of the study. Work on the BPR continued in Peachtree City, Georgia in February to analyze data, and identify deficiencies, best practices, etc., which kicked off the "To Be" phase of the study.

The worldwide OSS operation is one of eight DoD organizations participating in a High Performance Organization (HPO) pilot program for the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). OSS will be reviewed by OSD for its performance in the following areas:

- ◆ Organic knowledge, skills, or expertise;
- ◆ Efficiency and effectiveness of key functions and organizational structure;
- ◆ General customer satisfaction, and
- ◆ Cost.

As part of the OSD HPO pilot program, an organization has a better chance of making changes and improvements and it provides an alternative to performing A-76 studies. ■

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## Teenangels Teach Internet Safety

Internet safety is **not** just the responsibility of the parents or school administrators; students can share some accountability for their personal security in cyberspace. Executives at WiredSafety.org — a non-profit online safety and help group — enlist 13-18 year-old students to educate their peers on the dangers of unsafe Internet practices. Called “Teenangels,” the students are volunteers who are trained in online privacy and security.

Students interested in becoming Teenangels are trained by local law enforcement personnel and leading Internet security experts. Teenangels participate in six training sessions that prepare them to teach other students how to use the Internet responsibly and safely. Teenangels then conduct orientation sessions in schools to share their knowledge with other students, parents, and teachers. Students learn how to recognize the hazards of the Internet and protect personal information.

Teenangels share tips on how to safely surf the Internet and chat online. Students learn how to report suspicious or suspected criminal activity. The program is loosely structured to allow each chapter of Teenangels to develop their own priorities. Another positive aspect of the program is that Teenangels learn how to create PowerPoint presentations and practice public speaking.

Teenangels also help students by coaching parents to openly communicate with their children about the Internet. They challenge parents to stay involved in their children’s online activities and talk about potential problems. Teenangels encourage their peers to be open and honest with parents, obey the law, and balance their use of the Internet with other extracurricular activities.



For more information about starting or joining a chapter of Teenangels near you, visit the Teenangels web site at: [www.teenangels.org](http://www.teenangels.org). For further information on Internet security visit Wired Safety at: [www.wiredsafety.org](http://www.wiredsafety.org) or i-Safe at: [www.i-safe.org](http://www.i-safe.org). ■

## Share Your Ideas for Teaching Tolerance

DoDEA has been recognized in reports such as Vanderbilt University’s *March Toward Excellence* for success in eliminating the “achievement gap” and encouraging an appreciation of the benefits of racial diversity. The magazine *Teaching Tolerance*, published by the not-for-profit Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) recently requested ideas on activities used to teach students to appreciate diversity.

Specifically, *Teaching Tolerance* is seeking suggestions for activities that teachers can use in the classroom. They would welcome suggestions for practical exercises that can be completed in one or two class periods. Selected activities will be published in the magazine, which reaches more than 500,000 educators twice a year, or in a new *Activity Exchange Booklet* that SPLC expects to publish during fall of 2006.

For suggestions on lesson plans and activities to teach tolerance, visit the *Teaching Tolerance* Web site at: [www.tolerance.org/teach/](http://www.tolerance.org/teach/). For examples of the type of ideas *Teaching Tolerance* is seeking, visit the SPLC Web site at: [www.splcenter.org](http://www.splcenter.org). ■

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This is an unofficial publication produced by DynCorp, Inc. on behalf of the Department of Defense Education Activity Office of Safety and Security. The material herein is presented for informational purposes and does not constitute official policy of the Department of Defense. All comments and questions should be directed to Bob Michela at: [rmichela@csc.com](mailto:rmichela@csc.com).

## The Big Rock Theory

Our busy world challenges us every day to make choices about focusing on priorities and managing our time effectively. In almost every walk of life, leaders are confronted with these prioritization and time management issues. Doctors, lawyers, corporate leaders, administrators, and especially principals have more to do than time allows. How do we survive? Some of us manage quite well. Some of us struggle. All of us can benefit from considering or revisiting the “Big Rocks” approach to priority and time management.

What does all this have to do with Safe School Planning? The answer is that Safe School Planning is, and needs to be, a “Big Rock.”

Theoretically, here is how it works. Start with a one-gallon, wide-mouth mason jar. Fill the jar with fist-sized rocks. The question now is: “Is the jar full?” The answer is “No.” At this point, dump some gravel in the jar and shake it so pieces of gravel work themselves down into the spaces between the big rocks. Still the jar is not full because now sand can be added to the jar and will fill in the spaces between the rocks and the gravel. Is the jar full yet? No! Water can be added to fill the jar to the brim.

The point of this illustration is not to force more things into your schedule. Instead, the point is that if you don’t prioritize projects, or put the big rocks in first, you will never get them in at all. Since Safe School Planning is just one of the many responsibilities confronting principals and challenging their time management and prioritization skills, the “Big Rocks” model may be a useful concept in addressing the time management challenges of Safe School Planning.

Make Safe School Planning a “Big Rock.” Divide its two main ingredients, Risk Reduction Planning (RRP) and Incident Response Planning (IRP), into workable sub-components. For example: Think of RRP in terms of Policy, Prevention Programs, and Physical Security. For a period of time, concentrate on only one of these areas (i.e., Physical Security). Use the tools in the *Safe Schools Handbook* to address Physical Security. Then, after addressing Physical Security, change your focus to Prevention Programs and then finally to Policy. Similarly, think of IRP in terms of its three stages: Pre-Critical, Critical, and Post-Critical Period. Focus on the critical stage, and on planning and practicing Protective Actions (e.g., Evacuation, Lockdown, Shelter-in-Place, and Taking Cover).

This is one example where dividing and conquering make sense. Remember, Rome wasn’t built in a day! It was built one rock at a time. ■



### Making School Security a Priority

“While schools must rightly focus their attention on standards and high achievement, they will not be able to meet the goal of increasing student achievement without providing a safe, supportive community in which their students can learn.”

*(Learning First Alliance, 2001, p. vii)*

## Benefits of Cultural Diversity

One of the opportunities that DoDEA administrators share with the principals of “American Schools” and “International Schools” is the chance to help students appreciate and understand other cultures – including other cultures that exist in the United States. As researcher Amy Taylor writes in the National Association of School Psychologists’ September 2004 issue of *Communique*, “No amount of reading or studying could provide the depth of understanding” that students can gain from experiencing a different culture for themselves. Helping students recognize cultural differences also decreases miscommunication between students that could lead to conflicts and violence.



According to the Southwest Regional Education Development Laboratory (SREDL), students who explore other cultures “tend to be more open-minded, develop positive citizenship traits, and experience greater intellectual self-confidence” than students who have not experienced these relationships. In their December 2, 2000 newsletter, SREDL noted that students with greater cultural awareness develop stronger interpersonal communication skills. Perhaps most important, students exposed to a variety of cultures learn to recognize their own biases and help others eliminate prejudice.

Some educators find it difficult to help students “connect with other cultures” and appreciate their virtues, rather than merely living beside these cultures. Paul Poore, the Director of the Harare International School, Zimbabwe, lamented, “How many of us have learned this all-important foundation of our very business — cultural understanding — by osmosis and on-the-job-training rather than by design?” Mr. Poore appealed to administrators of international schools to help students develop a deeper appreciation for the benefits of cultural diversity:

“Our role, then, must be to ensure our students are educated in an environment which bridges the lack of a universal language and causes them to transcend the limits and differences of individual cultures. As the new International Baccalaureate mission statement so aptly states, our goal must be to develop **‘active, compassionate life-long learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.’**”

Resources available to assist administrators and educators in fostering an appreciation for cultural diversity include:

- ◆ *Brave New Schools: Challenging Cultural Illiteracy Through Global Learning* by Jim Cummins, [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).
- ◆ *Barriers of Diversity: Multicultural Education and Rural Schools* by F. Yeo, [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).
- ◆ Southern Poverty Law Center [www.splcenter.org](http://www.splcenter.org).

For the full text of Mr. Poore’s speech, “Culture, the Space between the Bars, the Silence between the Notes” visit the AAIE Web site at: [www.nshss.org/AAIE\\_Address\\_2005.pdf](http://www.nshss.org/AAIE_Address_2005.pdf). ■



## Peer Mediation Complements Conflict Resolution Training

Peer mediation is a negotiation-based strategy using trained students to moderate disputes between classmates. It can be an excellent complement to any conflict resolution program. While conflict resolution involves two people trying to solve their disagreements without outside help, peer mediation includes an objective third party. It is a process where students help their peers to solve a problem. Mediation can be used with students from fourth grade all the way through high school.

Peer mediation can contribute to school safety by helping to solve minor problems before they become major ones. The types of problems that are typically addressed using peer mediation include:

- ✓ Gossip and rumors.
- ✓ Verbal harassment.
- ✓ Racial or cultural conflicts.
- ✓ Classroom or playground disputes.
- ✓ Cheating or stealing.
- ✓ Vandalism.



Peer mediation is not appropriate for serious problems such as: assaults, alcohol, drugs, weapons, or attempted suicide. Professional, adult intervention in these situations is essential.

### Why use peer mediators instead of simply having an adult step in to solve the problem?

Peer mediation is more likely to lead to a win-win solution. A principal or other authority figure can be intimidating; students are sometimes more honest and willing to compromise when working with a peer. Research has shown that an effective mediation program can contribute to a positive school climate and helps to maximize the time teachers and students spend on their studies. Peer mediation can also reduce the number of fights, suspensions, and expulsions.

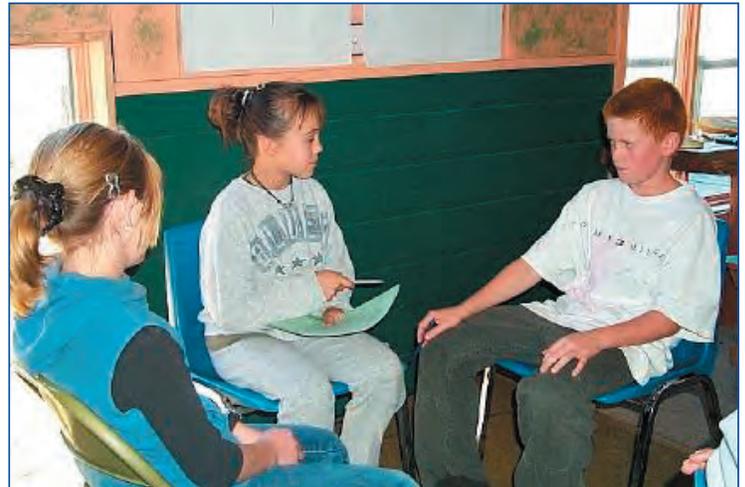
### What does a peer mediation session look like?

A typical mediation session involves the program coordinator, the peer mediator, and the disputants. It is usually held in a counselor's office or other private location. The session itself consists of six steps.

- 1. Introductions and Ground Rules** – The mediator formally introduces the disputants and goes over the ground rules. These include the fact that mediation is voluntary and that everything discussed is confidential.
- 2. Telling the Story** – Each person has the opportunity to tell his or her side of the story. No one is allowed to interrupt. Mediators might paraphrase what they hear in order to ensure that each person's position is clear.

## Peer Mediation Complements Conflict Resolution Training (Continued)

3. **Identifying the Issues** – Peer mediators help the parties uncover the issues behind the disagreement. Understanding why each person is upset often helps to solve the problem.
4. **Brainstorming Solutions** – The mediator helps the disputants come up with a list of possible solutions to their problem. Participants discuss how they feel about each proposed solution.
5. **Reaching an Agreement** – With the help of the peer mediator, the two parties agree on a solution. This decision is formalized in writing and signed. The document should include an explanation of what will happen if either side breaks the agreement.
6. **Follow-up** – A few days after the session, the peer mediator contacts each party to make sure things are going well. This helps to remind disputants of the agreement and provides an opportunity to congratulate them on their success.



### How can I start a peer mediation program?

Every peer mediation program needs a program coordinator. This is usually the school counselor or a teacher who has received training in mediation. Peer mediators are chosen to reflect the general school population, in terms of age, race, gender, etc. Successful peer mediators should be trustworthy, helpful and respected by both students and teachers. Students usually need between 10-20 hours of training to learn the basics of a successful mediation. Because these students miss some class time when conducting a mediation, they need to be able to make up any missed assignments. Even though the students do the majority of the work during a mediation, they should always be supervised by an adult coordinator.

### Where can I find additional information about starting a peer mediation program?



The Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation Research Project offers a peer mediation training manual at: [www.coe.ufl.edu/CRPM/CRPMhome.html](http://www.coe.ufl.edu/CRPM/CRPMhome.html). *Peer Mediation: Conflict Resolution in Schools* is a guide for middle and high school peer mediation programs that can be ordered from [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). The National Resource Center for Youth Mediation in Albuquerque, NM, (505-247-0571), and/or The Mediation Center in Asheville, NC, (<http://mediatebuncombe.org>) can also provide helpful information.

Do you already have a successful peer mediation program at your school? Please let us know about it by e-mailing us at: [safeschools@csc.com](mailto:safeschools@csc.com). ■