

Schools are increasingly being called upon to provide not only academics but also a safe haven — a home away from home.

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School Safety

UPDATE

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Programs, training enhance plans for safe schools

In many of the country's largest urban centers — indeed, in smaller cities and towns across America — youngsters experience during their school hours the only calm, structured, productive and reinforcing hours of a given day. In some cases, the breakfasts, lunches and nutritious snacks served at school constitute a child's only source of food. Some children each day face anxieties born of poverty, abuse and fear of violence in their homes and in the community — violence that often invades the schools in which teachers, administrators and other school personnel strive daily to preserve as safe havens for learning.

Truants, dropouts and children who are fearful — even hopeless — due to stresses engendered by conditions such as those mentioned above nonetheless have advocates: the self-same teachers, administrators and school personnel who are committed to reaching and teaching all their students every day. The two articles below illustrate ways in which dedicated youth-serving professionals respond to students' needs and commit themselves to long-term, far-reaching plans for keeping all America's youth involved and secure in mainstream schools, learning and life.

Programs that help make schools safer

Schools today are like micro-cities containing a diversity of people that reflect the full spectrum of citizenship, from "good" to "bad." Crime and violence now coexist with the three R's in America's schools. The specter of students with guns at school has introduced an element of fear among students, teachers, administrators and parents gathered in

what used to be called the "halls of learning."

Keeping schools safe and conducive to learning must remain the most important item on the educational agenda. As the environment of a school goes, so goes teacher, student and community morale. Academic success, the product of teaching and learning, has a direct correlation to a safe school environment.

After two years as an administrator and 17 as a classroom teacher, I finally truly understand what *in loco parentis* means. It means we all must be responsible for keeping students safe. It means we must "parent" our students so they feel safe in what could justifiably be called their home away from home. For the past three years I have explored ways of keeping students safe. The results of this exploration and research, augmented by the efforts of a dedicated staff, can be seen today at Perkiomen Valley High School. The following represent only some of the initiatives in our school.

Safe School. Maintaining a safe school is our corporate goal. Our faculty, staff and students have embraced the safe school concept by making it a schoolwide goal. Posters and banners in our building mirror this goal. At our opening day staff assembly, we proclaim unity in our ongoing effort to keep our school safe and recognize teachers' and students' efforts in carrying out our safe school initiative.

The V-Factor is one aspect of that initiative. Each high school assistant principal starts every day by standing at one of the school's entrances greeting students. When students enter our building, the first person they see is a special greeter. Such "visibility" combined with the familiar presence of our staff lowers student anxiety and sets the mood for the entire day by establishing a sense of security. Teachers stand outside their rooms and in the halls each morning. Students see their teachers, visible and vigilant, adding to that sense of security throughout the building.

After the last "wave" of students enters the building, the assistant principals begin their "visibility walks." During their walks, administrators count the number of teachers seen standing in the halls in order to inform our staff daily of the number of adults seen by our students — the V-Factor (visibility factor). That number is recorded every day in our printed attendance bulletins, with special "thank you's" recognizing

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teachers for their efforts to keep our students safe.

Give 'Em Five is another program dedicated to keeping our students safe. This program epitomizes the caring and nurturing attitude of a dedicated staff. In the Give 'Em Five Program, teachers voluntarily donate five of their preparation periods to doing a building security walk during that donated period. The teacher walks the halls, checking the lavatories, stairways, classrooms, parking lots and outside perimeter. Some of the staff use the time simultaneously as a "wellness walk" by donning sneakers and keeping a fast pace. The pool of donated periods has become so large that during almost any given period over the scope of a school year, students can see teachers "doing the walk" and thus enhancing a sense of school security. Even the student smokers are leery about lighting up, since a teacher "doing the walk" might come around the corner of a bathroom stall at any time. Staff who participate in this program receive a Viking (school emblem) pin symbolizing school safety. In fact, it was as though the pin, being worn so often and seen so often by so many, became the catalyst for other staff to volunteer.

Adopt A Kid. This popular proactive program uses a pool of volunteer staff members to form big brother/big sister relationships with students in the eighth grade. (Our high school houses grades eight through 12.) The students involved in this program are identified by middle school counselors as students who would benefit from participation. Many selected students are shy and introverted, with low self esteem. Others are borderline discipline cases. Some are just kids who need a friend. In all situations, these "adoptions" foster an environment of friendship among those who participate. The adopters and adoptees meet weekly simply to talk. The result is generally a bond of friendship that extends throughout the students' academic careers in high school.

The S.A.F.E. Team. The S.A.F.E. (Society Against Fearful Environments) Team is composed of community and school members: a district court judge; two police officers; a juvenile probation officer; teachers; administrators and students. The team meets about six times a year to assess the school's safety needs and to plan activities around those needs. Using a questionnaire, our team has assessed students' concerns about safety and violence in our high school. The community members of the team have provided the school staff with information about how the various agencies interact with the school. The team has even put together our first Safe School Summit. This summit brought together for a day personnel from over 15 school districts in the county to share what works in maintaining a safe school environment in each of the schools.

The programs mentioned involve staff with students during noninstructional time; these programs are of little or no cost to our school. They rely upon volunteerism and are made

possible by the rearrangement of teachers' time. Teachers are thus able to get involved, benefitting our students and enhancing the total school environment.

Submitted by John Romanoski, an assistant principal at Perkioman Valley High School, 509 Gravel Pike, Route 29 and Trappe Rd., Collegetown, PA 19426, 610/489-1230.

Crisis simulation training: Everyone benefits

On August 5, 1996, an armed gunman entered his daughter's high school classroom. This noncustodial parent held hostage his daughter, the teacher and fifteen classmates. Could this situation be any worse?

Moments later, the estranged husband of the principal entered the school. Once in the main office area, he pulled a handgun, demanded to see his wife and threatened the principal's secretary with the gun. The principal exited her office upon hearing the disturbance and was confronted by her husband. He took both women into the principal's office and announced that he was going to kill both of them and then himself.

What would you do in your school district or community if these crises occurred? Are you prepared? Such scenarios are every school district's worst nightmare. Fortunately, these two situations were not real; they were part of a day-long emergency and crisis-planning seminar for Indianapolis-area educators and local, county and state police personnel.

This seminar concluded eight months of planning on the parts of the participating agencies: the Indiana Department of Education, the Marion County School Violence Prevention Committee, the Indiana State Police, the Indianapolis Police Department and the Marion County Sheriff's Department. The focus of the educational training simulation was to encourage schools to develop comprehensive school safety plans and guidelines.

Marion County school districts spent months designing school crisis plans; finally the time came to test the plans' effectiveness. The Marion County School Violence Prevention Committee decided that school hostage scenarios would be the most dramatic way to test a school district's plan and guidelines.

The participation and cooperation of the state's three major law enforcement agencies contributed greatly to the success of the program. All three police agencies committed necessary resources and manpower. Police personnel were excited about the project — it afforded them a hostage training opportunity unlike any other in which they had previously been involved.

The hostage simulation training was conducted in August 1996 at a vacant high school in Indianapolis. Over 80 educators and 40 law enforcement personnel were involved in this collaborative training experience. The training was highly successful, as evidenced by one principal's comments: "The

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school hostage crisis simulation training was one of the best professional development sessions I have ever attended. The crisis training gave me a new perspective on being prepared. The whole experience taught me that even with the best crisis plan, if I don't walk my staff through the plan, we won't be ready."

In two hostage exercises, law enforcement special weapons and tactics (SWAT) personnel demonstrated how SWAT team members would respond in school hostage situations. A third exercise allowed school teams to practice their school safety guidelines in a "table-top discussion." This exercise simulated a student with a handgun taking his classmates hostage. Participants had to problem-solve this scenario.

In the classroom hostage situation, a police officer played the role of a distraught parent who entered the classroom with a gun and took his child and the entire classroom hostage. SWAT team officials from the Indiana State Police and the Indianapolis Police Department explained to participants actions the team would normally take in this type of situation and the reasoning for those actions.

In the second hostage-taking simulation, an estranged husband took his wife, who was the school principal, and her secretary hostage in the principal's office. SWAT team negotiators were able to successfully achieve the release of both hostages and the hostage-taker. Again, representatives from the Marion County Sheriff's Department explained how they typically negotiate hostage releases. Participants learned that in more than 95 percent of all hostage situations, the hostages and the hostage-taker are secured without a single shot being fired by law enforcement personnel. The goal of the negotiations is to calm the person holding the hostages and maintain communication with the hostage-taker so that the crisis can be brought under control.

In the third scenario, participants were divided into groups of four to six and were asked how they would respond to a report of a student with a gun holding a classroom hostage. Overhead transparencies were flashed on a screen every two to three minutes detailing ongoing reports and giving information about school incidents. Educators were asked to describe what their roles or responsibilities would be in each incident. As part of this discussion, each group had to select a spokesperson to talk with the media. A law enforcement public information officer played the role of a reporter. A SWAT team coordinator from the Indiana State Police facilitated this unique learning experience.

As one participant commented, "The hostage rescue was such a striking experience that [I feel] all students and teachers should know how professionally the police handle these situations."

Several of the program participants had developed comprehensive K-12 safe school plans that address all possible

emergency situations. Components of these plans were shared with participants at the training session.

Another community group represented in the training was the media. Actual media representatives were invited not only to cover the training program but also to participate in the training. All agencies represented at the training recognized the importance of the media's involvement, and the media representatives' interest and cooperation were outstanding. Participants learned from members of the media what not to do as well as what to do when responding to the media in a school crisis.

Video crews from Chicago and Bloomington, Indiana, were on hand for the entire day to film the hostage simulations. A series of videotapes of these simulations will be developed, marketed and distributed worldwide to school, police and community agencies for educational and training purposes.

In the end, the benefits to the community of the training were many. Each school district that participated had an opportunity to test the effectiveness of their school safety guidelines. The school administrators were able to observe law enforcement personnel in action and learn what law enforcement officials would need from the school in a crisis situation. Law enforcement personnel also learned what school staff can do. Mutual respect developed between the two groups. The media learned that schools and police agencies are working together to maintain safe schools. The media participants also learned that the police and school personnel do not consider the media to be the enemy, but rather feel compelled first to focus on the safety of the students and staff in a crisis. The parents in attendance discovered that the schools are aware of potential dangers in the community and are prepared to deal with possible related emergencies.

The reality is that crises have occurred in many schools throughout our country; most likely, they will continue to occur. School districts must have safe school plans that include crisis intervention contingency plans. One assistant superintendent who participated in the Indiana training said, "We have all learned that while we cannot prevent a crisis, it is better to have a plan and a crisis than to have a crisis and no plan."

This type of simulation could be duplicated in any community across the country. Such training only takes a small group of concerned citizens to make it happen. There is no guarantee that schools can prevent hostage or crisis situations; however, as Emerson has said: "This time like all times is the best of times, if we but know what to do with it."

Submitted by Cathy Danyluk, Indiana Department of Education; Chuck Hibbert, Metropolitan School District of Wayne Township; Duane Hodgkin, Metropolitan School District of Lawrence Township; and Linda Knoderer, Metropolitan School District of Lawrence Township.

Crisis control: Planning high-risk dismissals

The tension at Central High School was palpable. Two rival groups had tangled at the mall over the weekend and the underlying problem had continued during the first part of the week. There had already been two fights during one of the lunch periods, and the individuals involved had received out-of-school suspensions. Nevertheless, the situation worsened, and rumors persisted all week that one group or the other was going to "finally settle this." Non-involved students had even told administrators or their favorite teachers that "... today, at the end of school something is going to happen."

With slight variations, many school administrators have experienced similar situations involving rival gangs, off-campus or on-campus groups, or situations sparked from a single incident early in a given day. Regardless, administrators are sometimes faced with a school dismissal during which there is great potential for "something" to happen.

In St. Petersburg, Fla., where school resource officers are assigned to all high schools and middle schools, if there is a likelihood that "something" is going to occur, a "high-risk dismissal plan" is implemented. The high-risk dismissal (HRD) plan involves close cooperation between law enforcement officers and school personnel. HRDs require careful preplanning, long before warning signs indicate impending disruption at the end of the school day.

School administrators must establish working relationships with local law enforcement officials to keep each other apprised of incidents that have occurred or might occur. Problems that start in the community, for example, frequently spread to school campuses. Why does this occur? "Johnny" knows that come Monday morning, he can always find "Mike" at the bus circle, in third period history class or at lunch.

In Florida, school boards and law enforcement agencies are required to have information-sharing agreements, and a suggested practice calls for the law enforcement agency to:

- ...develop policies and procedures that will reflect that the police chief or designee shall cause the appropriate

school-based administrator to be notified in a timely manner of incidents or arrests involving students where there is a possibility of ongoing violence, victimization or school disruption at the school site.

Likewise, administrators must be prepared to notify law enforcement when on-campus incidents may spread to neighborhoods, bus-stops, areas around the school or other parts of the community.

By sharing information on a regular basis, the likelihood of major incidents taking school administrators by surprise is reduced, and a strong foundation for future collaboration between the agencies is built. In the case of a high-risk dismissal, law enforcement personnel can be extremely beneficial. Just as school administrators would not hesitate to call in the fire department if a chemistry lab were on fire, administrators should not hesitate to involve local law enforcement in maintaining order. Thus, an effective HRD plan should provide that on-site school resource officers be assisted by additional officers during a dismissal crisis.

Preplanning collaboration crucial

In planning an HRD, the school administrative team should identify those areas at the school that require monitoring at the end of the day, i.e., a particular hallway, a favorite student meeting area, a parking lot or anywhere there is potential for disruption. Once such sites are identified, staffing such posts should be prioritized, with the most critical posts filled first.

The availability of additional police personnel will depend greatly upon effective preplanning to ensure that educators and law enforcement personnel are ready to work together to defuse a crisis. In most HRD cases, extra officers will only be needed for 10 minutes before the bell rings and five or 10 minutes after the final bell. Personnel such as school resource officers from other schools, juvenile officers and D.A.R.E. officers should always be considered for this assignment.

In addition to extra law enforcement personnel, additional administrators from other district schools should be brought in to assist. The extra administrators should have some type of official identification card or badge clearly visible so that a misbehaving student cannot claim "I didn't know he was an assistant principal!" These personnel know how to work with kids. They are knowledgeable about school board policies, and they also have the authority to enforce them, an authority that law enforcement officers do not have. Likewise, officers have the appropriate skills and tools as well as the authority to make arrests if the disruption rises to the level of a criminal or delinquent act.

Dismissal procedures should be developed during

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preplanning. Consideration should be given to assigning school administrators to monitor and accompany incident ringleaders to campus exit points, allowing police to drive such students home (providing the support agency agrees), grouping remaining students for dismissal according to school location, specifying the length of intervals for group dismissals, and notifying parents and school bus drivers of all procedures related to delayed dismissals.

High-risk dismissal implementation

With preplanning completed well in advance of an HRD, the next step is to implement the plan as circumstances dictate. Each school administrative team must first evaluate the situation. Consultation with a local law enforcement liaison can be extremely beneficial at this stage. Whenever possible, every effort should be made to resolve the problem so that a high-risk dismissal will not be needed. Administrators' intervention efforts should include learning as much as possible about the problem, involving parents and student leaders in utilizing conflict mediation strategies, stressing adherence to existing school codes of conduct, and issuing clear warnings to those involved that disruptive behavior will be not be tolerated.

However, situations are sometimes not easy to define, so in the interest of student safety, an HRD may be the best option. The sooner the decision is made, the better it is for all involved. With sufficient lead time, other administrators can arrange for coverage at their schools, and law enforcement supervisors can ensure that assigning officers to the school will not strip the streets of police personnel. Once the decision is made to implement the HRD plan, a number of things need to occur:

- *Assign administrators and officers to paired teams.* Provide campus maps, clearly assigned duties and posts, and information on the current problem and "major players" in the situation. Equip school personnel with portable walkie-talkie radios. (Law enforcement officers will have their own radios, which usually operate on a frequency different from the school walkie-talkies. Thus, each team can use both frequencies for interteam communication.)
- *Monitor motor vehicle access to campus.* A school administrator or employee should direct arriving officers to park their marked police vehicles at campus entrances to prevent interlopers from entering the campus. The last thing anyone needs is a carload of nonstudents coming onto campus to help out their "home boys."
- *Identify and isolate major players and their "lieutenants" 10 to 15 minutes before the final dismissal bell.* An administrator — not a student monitor — should go to the classrooms of those believed to be involved and direct those persons to accompany him/her to the school office. Upon

arrival in the office, the administrator should take particular care to separate individuals or groups and to isolate them in order to prevent an outbreak of hostilities in the office area or in the school at large.

- *Assign at least one administrator to escort sequestered students* to their respective buses or cars or to the edge of campus for the walk home. Each student should be instructed to leave campus immediately and to return home. If the supporting law enforcement agency agrees, such students may be driven home by police officers.
- *Use the school public address system* just prior to ringing the dismissal bell to announce that students will be dismissed in groups. Teachers should be publicly directed to take disciplinary action against students who leave without being specifically dismissed. The administrator then should dismiss students according to their location in the school. For example, "Students on the second floor of A-wing are now dismissed." Attempting to dismiss students by "walkers or bus riders" is not recommended, since individual classroom teachers do not know who walks or who rides the bus home from school. By controlling the dismissal in this way, administrators and officers can monitor students in comparatively small groups, keep the noise level down and preserve a calm atmosphere.
- *Instruct students riding buses to board without delay.* The buses' motors should be running and the bus drivers sitting behind the wheel. Once loaded, buses are moved out, perhaps with police assistance, to ensure that no bus stops for any reason. It is advisable to secure the cooperation of a transportation supervisor who can deal exclusively with bus drivers in times of HRDs. The presence of such a supervisor can free a school-based administrator to expedite students' boarding of buses.
- *Maintain high visibility of administrators and officers* throughout high-risk dismissals to deter any disruptive behavior. Investigate and disburse groups of students who congregate. Reduce the likelihood that students who linger on campus might join in a melee or interfere with the duties of administrators or police officers.
- *Follow through on a high-risk dismissal* by involving in conflict resolution procedures all major players at the root of the causative incident. If there is no program in place at the school, seek the help of the police department or the local bar association in resolving the immediate problem so that future confrontations are forestalled.

Remember that prevention is the most effective crisis management technique.

Submitted by Thomas A. Gavin, lieutenant with the St. Petersburg Police Department and president of School Safety Consultants.

Setting priorities for reducing youth, school violence

School security: Ignorance is not bliss

Education and security are not natural fits. Public school administrators and school board members have for years operated in a comfortable environment of immunities from litigation which will not necessarily continue in today's school settings.

Many acts of violence in public schools are now considered "foreseeable." School officials must realize that they are responsible for safe and secure school environments and workplaces. They also must consider the liability associated with the failure to admit that school crime and violence problems exist; the deliberate indifference to the increasing violence problem; not adhering to security standards and practices; negligence; inappropriate use and/or lack of professional supervision of security force personnel; or any other factors contributing to increasing violence and criminal acts.

Districts that have the foresight to recognize, accept and implement the recommendations of security and police professionals will have taken significant steps toward successfully defending themselves against security-related litigation. Success will come as a result of organizing, training, operating and supervising security personnel in keeping with professional security and policing standards and procedures.

Security/police personnel must be supervised by professionals who are trained in crime prevention and intervention and are aware that law enforcement is mandatory when violations occur. School administrators and school security/police personnel must work cooperatively to bridge the gap of understanding between their respective roles, sworn duties and responsibilities. Such mutual knowledge improves the effectiveness of school security and policing efforts and community law enforcement through improved relationships, increased trust and reduction of tension, the free exchange of information, and the empowerment of officers to be problem solvers to reduce violence.

The long-term answers to most problems of violence in the schools is a combination of both security/policing programs and education/behavioral programs and strategies. The latter take time, whereas the former usually yield immediate re-

sults that stabilize and maintain control of volatile situations while long-term educational/behavioral modifications are put in place to help influence true change.

School administrators must realize the necessity for embracing and accepting security recommendations from security/police personnel to reduce the exposure to liability, provide increased control, and reduce school crime and violence. Such crime and violence will continue to grow to unacceptable, unnecessary crisis proportions if educators rely on wishing their security problems away. Schools are subject to the same security-related litigation factors as is the rest of society. Ignorance or deliberate indifference to such exposure to liability will not only eventually lead to unsafe learning environments, but will also create the ultimate public relations challenge for a school district — public distrust of public schools and educators.

Submitted by J. Barry Hylton, Ph.D., president of Hylton & Associates, security management, training and consulting in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Youth Violence Summit report released

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) recently released a report on its Youth Violence Summit, the third conference in a series convened by the IACP to address the nation's most critical public safety crisis — violence. The recommendations from the summit comprise a comprehensive set of strategies to respond decisively to youth crime and violence. The recommendations were crafted by leading practitioners and theorists, who represent a broad spectrum of stakeholders.

The summit report, *Youth Violence in America: Recommendations from the IACP Summit*, is intended to serve local jurisdictions in two ways: as a process guide to help local law enforcement and other community stakeholders take a leadership position on youth violence by holding their own local summits to refine and prioritize recommendations, and as an omnibus set of strategies from which members of a community can select, refine and use those strategies deemed promising for curbing youth violence and dealing effectively with youthful offenders.

The Youth Violence Summit was held in Arlington, Virginia, on April 24-26, 1996. The participants included leaders in the fields of law enforcement, juvenile justice, criminal justice, community programs, and health and social services as well as students from area schools. Summit workshops were highly interactive. Participants worked in small groups to examine youth violence and to identify or develop strategies designed to reduce youth violence.

Copies of the summit report are available from John R. Firman, IACP coordinator for research and analysis, at 1-800/THE-IACP.

Teachers teaching teachers: Lessons from the real world

*You get a stick and I'll get a gun, honey, honey.
You get a push and I'll get a shove, babe, babe.
You get a knife and don't make a sound,
We'll go down to the school playground.
HONEY, OH BABE, BE MINE!*

The educators who wrote this song parody were not at play. They were working during their summer vacations. Their hours were long. Their purpose was clear. All of them knew that far too many of their students today are no longer innocent and carefree, playing children's games. Too many young people today are playing deadly games.

This rhyme was written by participants in a week-long summer institute at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Va. Training focused on the complex nature of youth violence. At the end of the week, participants were invited to synthesize creatively the information they had studied and bring some levity to an otherwise intense experience. The somber topics of discussion contrasted starkly with the serene beauty of Virginia's Shenandoah Valley.

As these educators talked and listened and learned about violence, they developed a heightened awareness of the extent of the sadness and tragedy created by angry young people. Many of today's youth become victims of violence, some are perpetrators of violence, but all are in danger of losing their tomorrows. Every participant seemed to share a common commitment — to increase their level of personal understanding and improve their professional expertise.

The model for this teacher training course was developed as a collaborative project between James Madison University and the Virginia Department of Education. The model recognizes that adult learners can and should be architects of their own learning and dispenses with the traditional method of graduate-level courses. Instead, the model incorporates a variety of interactive learning modes, including video presentations, independent reading and case studies.

The most significant component of the model is the use of educators to lead small groups during the week to facilitate the learning process. With teachers as the leaders of the

groups, it became easier for participants to assimilate theory and relate it to practice, a process that teachers commonly advocate.

The three-hour graduate course entitled "Aggressive Behavior Interventions and Conflict Mediation Skills for Teachers" was supported by both state and federal funds. The content of the course provided a broad-based understanding of youth violence issues. These educators read and discussed articles about children who seem to lack consciences; they heard experts speak about the psychology of youth aggression and the challenges of diverse populations; they watched videos about the devastating impact that bullies have on their victims; and they practiced conflict mediation role plays. Finally, teachers used theory as a basis for developing individual classroom management plans to use in their own classrooms. They were encouraged to use creative strategies for dealing with aggressive behaviors and conflict that have invaded their classrooms. While some courses seem to try to identify ways to "fix" kids, this course encouraged teachers to focus dually on developing personal awareness and changing teaching methods. After a week's immersion in the topic, everyone left the institute with new strategies and renewed hope.

As a result of what they learned during the summer, these teachers are making a difference back home. For example, teachers from Cold Harbor Elementary School in Hanover County, Va., helped their fellow staff members to accept the reality that their school is not immune to potential random acts of violence. A school safety team has begun a comprehensive safe school initiative and has chosen as its first objective to make "safety bags" for every classroom. Each bag contains essential emergency supplies such as a class list, bandages and a flashlight. The school has made contact with the local fire marshall, the sheriff's department and rescue squads. Codes and signals have been established; a public information officer has been named; and a nearby church has been selected to serve as a backup facility if needed. In addition, the school's staff has been surveyed to determine who has special skills, such as CPR. Such follow-up underscores the relevance and applicability of the lessons learned during the institute.

This training model has served Virginia's teachers well because it has brought together the resources of a variety of important players — higher education, the state department of education, the local school divisions and classroom teachers. Such collaboration strengthens what might otherwise be individual efforts and establishes ongoing networks of mutual support. This is a winning combination.

*Submitted by Marsha O. Hubbard, school safety specialist,
Virginia Department of Education.*

NSSC REPORT

There's safety in numbers — school safety, that is!

This issue of *School Safety Update* features articles submitted by five authors who have at least one thing in common: Each of them took part in a session of NSSC's 1995-96 School Safety Leadership Training Series. Six three-day training events were conducted between March 27, 1995, and March 8, 1996, at sites in Charlotte, N.C.; Chicago; Honolulu; Nashville, Tenn.; Portland, Ore.; and Westlake Village, Calif. Approximately 190 youth-serving professionals — including trainers and participants — discussed and exchanged information and expertise on topics such as safe school planning, community partnerships, gang prevention, bullying, sexual harassment, parenting, cultural diversity, crisis management, disruptive students, and school safety and the law. These participants became charter members of NSSC's International Association of School Safety Professionals.

Beginning with the 1995-96 school year, NSSC received a commission from its partners, the U. S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the U. S. Department of Education's Safe and

Drug-Free Schools Program, to focus on the national Youth Out of the Education Mainstream Initiative. The NSSC newsjournal *School Safety* and the newsletter *School Safety Update* have addressed issues related to the initiative's targeted student population: dropouts; truants; youth whose school attendance is irregular due to fear of violence at home, at school and in the community; suspended/expelled students, and youth seeking to return to mainstream schools from adjudication within the juvenile justice system. Participation in the initiative's kickoff meeting and in the subsequent four regional training forums exceeded 1,300.

Over 50,000 persons yearly receive NSSC's newsletters and newsjournals. The above cumulative figures indicate that a considerable number of experienced, dedicated youth-serving professionals are involved with and committed to promoting youth and preserving school safety. NSSC wants to hear from YOU! Let us know if you are interested in attending Leadership Training sessions. Write to NSSC with news of your successes and your needs. Call us today, or send your news and requests to National School Safety Center, 4165 Thousand Oaks Blvd., Suite 290, Westlake Village, CA 91362; phone 805/373-9977; fax 805/373-9277. Find NSSC on the Internet at <http://www.nssc1.org>.

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