

GUIDE 8

Acquiring and Utilizing Resources To Enhance and Sustain a Safe Learning Environment



NORTHWEST REGIONAL
EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY



SAFE AND DRUG-FREE
SCHOOLS PROGRAM
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION



OFFICE OF JUVENILE
JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY
PREVENTION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

GUIDE 8

Acquiring and Utilizing Resources To Enhance and Sustain a Safe Learning Environment

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FOREWORD

School safety requires a broad-based effort by the entire community, including educators, students, parents, law enforcement agencies, businesses, and faith-based organizations, among others. By adopting a comprehensive approach to addressing school safety focusing on prevention, intervention, and response, schools can increase the safety and security of students.

To assist schools in their safety efforts, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) has developed a series of eight guidebooks intended to build a foundation of information that will assist schools and school districts in developing safe learning environments. NWREL has identified several components that, when effectively addressed, provide schools with the foundation and building blocks needed to ensure a safe learning environment. These technical assistance guides, written in collaboration with leading national experts, will provide local school districts with information and resources that support comprehensive safe school planning efforts.

One objective of the guides is to foster a sense of community and connection among schools and those organizations and agencies that work together to enhance and sustain safe learning environments. Another objective is to increase awareness of current themes and concerns in the area of safe schools.

Each guide provides administrators and classroom practitioners with a glimpse of how fellow educators are addressing issues, overcoming obstacles, and attaining success in key areas of school safety. These guidebooks will assist educators in obtaining current, reliable, and useful information on topics that should be considered as they develop safe school strategies and positive learning environments.

Each of the guidebooks should be viewed as one component of a school's overall effort to create a safer learning environment. As emphasized in *Threat Assessment in Schools: A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and to Creating Safe School Climates*, a joint publication of the U.S. Secret Service and the U.S. Department of Education, creating cultures and climates of safety is essential to the prevention of violence in school. Each guidebook contains this message as a fundamental concept.

Under No Child Left Behind, the education law signed in January 2002, violence prevention programs must meet specified principles of effectiveness and be grounded in scientifically based research that provides evidence that the program to be used will reduce violence and illegal drug use. Building on the concept in No Child Left Behind—that all children need a safe environment in which to learn and achieve—these guides explain the importance of selecting research-based programs and strategies. The guides also outline a sample of methods on how to address and solve issues schools may encounter in their efforts to create and enhance safe learning environments.

Guide 1: Creating Schoolwide Prevention and Intervention Strategies, by Jeffrey Sprague and Hill Walker, is intended to put the issue of schoolwide violence prevention in context for educators and outline an approach for choosing and creating effective prevention programs. The guide covers the following topics:

- Why schoolwide prevention strategies are critical
- Characteristics of a safe school
- Four sources of vulnerability to school violence
- How to plan for strategies that meet school safety needs
- Five effective response strategies
- Useful Web and print resources

Guide 2: School Policies and Legal Issues Supporting Safe Schools, by Kirk Bailey, is a practical guide to the development and implementation of school policies that support safe schools. Section 1 provides an overview of guiding principles to keep in mind when developing policies at the district level to prevent violence. Section 2 addresses specific policy and legal components that relate to such topics as discipline and due process, threats of violence, suspension and expulsion, zero tolerance, and dress codes. Checklists are included to ensure that schools attend to due process when developing policies for suspensions or expulsions, search and seizure, or general liability issues.

Guide 3: *Implementing Ongoing Staff Development To Enhance Safe Schools*, by Steve Kimberling and Cyril Wantland, discusses the role of staff development within the context of school safety. The guide addresses how staff development should be an integral part of the educational planning process and discusses what its relationship is to safety-related outcomes and overall student achievement.

Guide 4: *Ensuring Quality School Facilities and Security Technologies*, by Tod Schneider, is intended to help educators and other members of the community understand the relationship between school safety and school facilities, including technology. The guide covers the following topics:

- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)
- Planning To Address CPTED: Key Questions To Ask
- Security Technology: An Overview
- Safety Audits and Security Surveys

Guide 5: *Fostering School-Law Enforcement Partnerships*, by Anne Atkinson is a practical guide to the development and implementation of partnerships between schools and law enforcement agencies. Section 1 provides an overview of community policing and its relationship to school effectiveness. Section 2 focuses on developing the school-law enforcement partnership from an interagency perspective. Section 3 focuses on steps for implementing school-law enforcement partnerships in schools. Also included are descriptions of the roles of law enforcement in schools with examples of many strategies used to make schools safer and more effective.

Guide 6: *Instituting School-Based Links With Mental Health and Social Service Agencies*, by David Osher and Sandra Keenan, discusses how schools can improve their capacity to serve all students by linking with mental health and social service agencies. Agency staff members can contribute to individual and schoolwide assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation. Agency resources can enhance schools' capacity to provide universal, early, and intensive interventions. Links with agency resources can also align school and agency services.

Guide 7: *Fostering School, Family, and Community Involvement*, by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor, provides an overview of the nature and scope of collaboration, explores barriers to effectively working together, and discusses the processes of establishing and sustaining the work. It also reviews the state of the art of collaboration around the country, the importance of data, and some issues related to sharing information.

Guide 8: *Acquiring and Utilizing Resources To Enhance and Sustain a Safe Learning Environment*, by Mary Grenz Jalloh and Kathleen Schmalz, provides practical information on a spectrum of resources that concerned individuals and organizations can use in the quest to create safe schools. It draws on published research and also includes interviews with experts working on school safety issues at the state and local levels. Major topics covered include:

- What are resources?
- What role do resources play in safe school planning?
- Identifying and accessing resources
- Appendix of online and print resources

—Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

INTRODUCTION

I understand why kids kill Other kids hit them, tease them, bully them all the time. I would want to hurt them, too.

—12-year-old boy responding to publicized school shooting
(Newman, Horne, & Bartolomucci, 2000, p. 24)

Amid such headline-making events as the Columbine High School shooting, many people may be surprised to learn that schools remain the safest places for children to be. Most schools are doing an admirable job of keeping the premises safe for students and staff. In fact, the proportion of students reporting fears of attack or gang violence at school declined noticeably between 1995 and 1999 (Small & Tetrick, 2001). However, as long as even a few children dread going to school, whether the cause is a high-profile bloodbath or a taunt from a bullying classmate, there is a need for well-planned, multifaceted school violence prevention programs.

Recent events have led many states to institute laws requiring schools to put measures in place to protect students and staff. By 2002, 18 states had chosen to provide resources to their schools by establishing or extending state school safety centers. In some states, these have emerged as parts of a state agency. In others, they exist as a collaboratively funded entity with ties to local educational units or state university systems.

While the structure of school safety centers varies state to state, most work to provide technical assistance, training, and clearinghouse resources to constituent school districts in their state. In addition, they serve as resource centers for state agencies, community and professional organizations, and policymakers within each of their states.

New York has extended the work of its school safety center (New York State Center for School Safety [NYSCSS]) to provide support to schools enacting what has been termed the “most comprehensive” piece of school safety legislation in the nation. While this guide is intended for audiences all across the country, it is informed by the experiences of safe school planning in New York.

On July 24, 2000, the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education Act (SAVE) was enacted in New York State (Project SAVE, 2001). Project SAVE concluded the work of the Task Force on School Violence chaired by Lieutenant Governor Mary O. Donohue, and represented the collaborative efforts of law enforcement experts, business leaders, mental health professionals, and elected officials—an example of the human resources involved in the massive initiative to make all schools safe.

The final report by the task force, *Safer Schools for the 21st Century*, included a set of recommendations for reducing violence in the school and reinforcing the ability of schools to respond to emergencies that could endanger the welfare of students (Project SAVE, 2001). A central theme in the task force meetings was the crucial importance of ongoing dialogue among stakeholders to leverage all available resources toward creating the safe, supportive school environment that is intrinsically linked with academic achievement. Children learn best in a safe environment where they feel their rights, and those of others, are respected. Strategic and innovative use of resources is key to creating safe and supportive learning communities.

What This Guide Includes

This guidebook provides practical information on a spectrum of resources that concerned individuals and organizations can use in the quest to create safe schools. It draws on published research and also includes interviews with experts working on school safety issues at the state and local levels.

Major topics covered include:

- What are resources?
- What role do resources play in safe school planning?
- Identifying and accessing resources
- Appendix of online and print resources

In the design of comprehensive school violence prevention programs, a perennial obstacle has been the lack of a clear-cut definition of *violence*. The Respect and Protect program developed an operational definition encompassing both physical and nonphysical violence. While this is by no means a universally accepted definition of violence, it offers a framework for the discussion in this guide:

Violence occurs whenever anyone inflicts or threatens to inflict physical or emotional injury or discomfort upon another person's body, feelings, or possessions.

—Remboldt (1994, p. 5)

Simplified for children and adolescents:

Violence is any mean word, look, sign, or act that hurts a person's body, feelings, or things.

—Remboldt (1994, p. 6)

Defining what we mean by *resources* may seem just as challenging. That, and other pertinent questions, will be addressed in the following sections.

WHAT ARE RESOURCES?

From traditional organizations such as Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) to the growing number of related Web sites, a wealth of individuals, agencies, organizations, materials, strategies, and techniques can be deployed to strengthen school violence prevention efforts.

Human Resources

Several components of safe school planning refer to the most important type of resources for creating safe schools: human resources. Collaborative partnerships with law enforcement, mental health and human services professionals, parents, and community members are vital to the success of a school violence prevention plan. Within the school, teachers and support staff are essential human resources; thus, staff development is an important part of a comprehensive plan. Most important of all are the students: Involving students gives them a sense of ownership in the plan and the school and instills in them a sense of responsibility. Students who model positive social behavior and are willing to intervene on behalf of their peers (or, especially, younger children) are crucial to the success of a program designed to convey the message that it's cool to settle conflict peacefully and to show others that everyone counts.

The importance of human resources was identified by the U.S. Department of Education as one of the fundamental qualities of a safe and responsible school: strong leadership, caring faculty, family and community involvement from all sectors, and student involvement (National Criminal Justice Reference Service, 2002). The importance of involving all stakeholders was emphasized for both program design and policy development.

When involving stakeholders in the process of planning for school safety, the U.S. Department of Education also identifies the critical need for supportive staff development, so that all participants are given the skills and support necessary to design and implement program strategies.

Information

Information is a second type of resource, although a constant bombardment of information carries the danger that much of it may be distorted, or even blatantly false. The media coverage of high-profile cases of school violence tends to convey the impression that knives and guns in schools are as common, and carried as nonchalantly, as cell phones and sneakers. Even researchers admit that data on youth violence are often misinterpreted or misunderstood, when people attempt to find simple solutions to complex problems. Certain identified factors may predispose youth toward violence, but *predisposed* does not mean *predetermined*. Identifiable factors are associated with choices to engage in either violent or nonviolent behavior. Having accurate information on the complex interaction of factors and the way youth make behavioral choices is a prerequisite for designing effective programs (New York State Center for School Safety [NYSCSS], 2001).

Information is a major element of any effective prevention program. Research on drug-abuse prevention has determined that children and adolescents respond better to concrete information and “here-and-now” experiences than to more remote possibilities like long-term consequences. Information targeting children and youth should be accurate and personally relevant and focused on immediate or short-term consequences (Upstate Center for School Safety, 2000).

For adults, public information and education campaigns can work to enlist community members in violence prevention while dispelling popular myths and misconceptions (perhaps the #1 myth is, “It can’t happen here”). Accurate information can be viewed as the first line of defense and the first line of intervention.

School safety teams need to access information in their planning process to identify the needs they are addressing and determine interventions based on this assessment. This fits with the U.S. Department of Education’s Principles of Effectiveness, which were developed to guide states and districts in a strategic planning process for safe and drug-free schools (see Page 11 for more information on the Principles of Effectiveness.)

Online information resources range from general Web sites such as the American Association of School Administrators (www.aasa.org) to the New York State Center for School Safety (www.mhric.org/scss), to more specific Web sites such as *Facts About Gun Violence* (www.abanet.org/gunviol/schoolshm.html) sponsored by the American Bar Association, or the American Psychological Association's (APA) *Is Youth Violence Just Another Fact of Life?* (www.apa.org/pi/pii/isyouthviolence.html), which dispels many prevalent myths. The APA clearly states that violence is a learned behavior, not a genetic trait. By identifying the ways in which children learn violence, the APA offers valuable information on how program developers can help children replace the lessons of violence with lessons that stress the benefits of positive behavior. (See Resources.)

These are only a few of the online resources addressing school violence and safety. Federal, state, and local agencies all publish documents that can be used in the design of a comprehensive school safety program. Although legislation and focus differ with state and locality, identified best practices can readily be adapted to comply with local laws or suit the needs of a particular community.

Time

Time constraints are routinely cited as a reason for the absence or shortage of staff development programs in schools or the failure of a promising program. While there may be far less time than information, both need to be targeted to be fully effective program components. Expanding human resources may entail juggling schedules or holding meetings at unusual times, such as Friday or Sunday evenings. Most parents work outside the home, with limited flexibility with regard to taking time off to volunteer as members of school safety planning teams. Children in all communities may live with caregivers other than parents. It is essential to recognize them as respected adults and as the child's first-line source of support. Parents and local community members are most likely to be involved in a program that treats them as valued contributors by taking their needs into consideration.

Strategically planning time goals and allotting the time needed for each facet of the program to be carried out can make a crucial difference between program success and failure. Setting realistic time goals is a key factor in planning any endeavor.

Strategies for Resource Utilization

In the "Guidelines for Developing School Safety Plans," the school safety work group of Project SAVE included a list of suggestions that can be used to guide effective use of resources. The work group cautions against the two contrasting impediments to efficient organization: redundancy and cutting corners. To avoid these pitfalls:

- **Build upon strengths:** Schools should build upon existing plans and activities, as well as the ideas and experience of others who have successfully designed and implemented school safety plans.
- **Remember that leadership is important:** School and community leadership is essential at all stages of the planning process. Good leadership works to build and maintain the momentum for successful planning.
- **Be aware that successful planning takes time:** Be sure that the planning process allows sufficient time for broad participation and active involvement by key stakeholders in the development of plans.
- **Avoid "packaged products":** Using a packaged or "off the shelf" school safety plan may seem like a tempting option, but it may be a poor solution to addressing your school's or district's specific needs.
- **Consider formal arrangements if needed:** Personnel changes, organizational restructuring, or other factors within the schools and/or collaborating agencies may require formal agreements, as well as periodic review and updates to ensure the durability of plans over time (Project SAVE, 2001, p. 11).

Now that the concept of resources has been defined, the next step in the planning process is determining how resources are best used in planning for safer schools.

WHAT ROLE DO RESOURCES PLAY IN SAFE SCHOOL PLANNING?

To effectively synthesize the essential components of safe school planning, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory recommends that schools follow a strategic plan consisting of six steps:

- Building school–community partnerships
 - Conducting comprehensive needs assessment
 - Developing a comprehensive school plan
 - Identifying strategies and implementing programs
 - Conducting an evaluation
 - Sharing outcomes and making adjustments
- (Pollack & Sundermann, 2001, p. 15)

The following section delineates the role that resources play in each step of the strategic process.

1. Building School–Community Partnerships

Parent and community involvement is a key factor in creating a safe school climate. Constituents include students, parents, teachers, school administrators, support staff, local business and civic leaders, and law enforcement officials. Each group brings unique strengths to the process of planning for safer schools, although there are challenges in effectively synthesizing the perspectives of disparate groups.

Developers have a number of models to draw upon, including both programs created specifically to address school violence and safety, as well as comprehensive school models that recognize the importance of including parents and community members in other aspects of planning and program design. There are many examples of innovative programs devised by schools to create a safe and supportive learning environment. The following are examples of school–community partnerships developed through Safe Schools/ Healthy Students grants (Pollack & Sundermann, 2001, pp. 15–16):

- In Denver, Colorado, public schools have established ongoing communication between the school district and the Denver Police Department. In addition to hiring school safety officers, the schools have instituted community–school assistance teams and hired “quadrant liaisons” to provide training and technical assistance to schools, families, community members, and the staff of collaborating agencies to address the mental health and social behavior needs of students and families. The initiative is coordinated by a council representing the stakeholder groups involved in the project.
- In Polk County, Iowa, 100 citizens representing more than 50 organizations joined to devise a plan to enhance the quality of life of local youth. The dual goals of the program are the creation of a comprehensive drug and violence prevention curriculum (targeting alcohol and tobacco use as well as illicit drug use) and the promotion of extensive parent involvement. School-based intensive case management services provide parents and families with comprehensive mental health and social services, a school transitioning program, and Parents as Teachers programming, as well as targeted drug and violence prevention efforts.

- The Comer School Development Program has a proven track record for turning around the learning conditions of troubled inner-city schools. The Parent Program of the Comer schools has been singled out as an exemplary way to create a safe learning environment (Peterson & Skiba, 2001). The Parent Program solicits the active participation of parents as members of the School Development Committee, one of three core school governance bodies, as well as in the more traditional roles of classroom aides and volunteers in social activities. The success of the program derives from the fact that from the onset of planning, parents are treated as equal and valued partners. Many Comer schools have site-specific parent-led violence prevention initiatives.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2002, under Title IV, authorizes additional appropriations for the 21st Century Community Learning Center Initiative. The legislation contains several provisions that address the importance of collaboratives. The Non-Regulatory Draft Guidance describes the advantage of collaboration:

By bringing together community organizations with school districts, centers can take advantage of multiple resources in the community. Community learning centers can offer residents in the community an opportunity to volunteer their time and their expertise to help students achieve academic standards and master new skills. Collaboration can also ensure that the children attending a learning center benefit from the collective resources and expertise throughout the community.

—U.S. Department of Education (2002, p. 18)

Community learning centers represent an excellent way of consolidating resources to create a safe and caring learning environment. Reliance on federal funding represents a top-down approach to organizing community schools. A bottom-up or grassroots approach begins by seeking out local residents who can share their ideas, experience, and knowledge to advance the goal of creating safe schools.

Forming effective school–community partnerships does not require major restructuring at the school level. If there is a cultural, social, or ethnic barrier between the community and the school staff, it may be wise to seek out an adviser from the community. In the planning process, listen to what your adviser has to say about the needs of parents and community members. Do the students have adequate opportunities for engaging in constructive activities after school? Find out what the kids have to say. Once you begin a concerted effort to engage parents, community leaders, and local residents, you may be surprised at the talents and expertise you find.

The vast majority of parents are interested in their children’s education and their safety at school. The problem is that, especially where there is social distance between the school and the community, parents may believe teachers and school leaders are not interested in what they have to say. As a result, parents shy away from involvement. In many schools, parents only hear from the school when their kids are failing or are already involved in drugs or violence. Involving school families in all stages of planning not only reduces the chances that parents will be defensive when they hear from the school, but also the chance that students will be involved in an offense to begin with. In general, parent involvement in schools has been linked with higher attendance, fewer suspensions, and higher academic outcomes for students (Peterson & Skiba, 2001).

In New York state, legislation has defined the requirement for school–community partnerships through the establishment of formal planning teams (Project SAVE, 2001). The guidelines set by the state ensure that the teams represent the perspectives of all stakeholder groups, and can be used as a guide for establishing teams to pursue a range of related goals. The state has designated two types of school safety planning teams:

- **The districtwide school safety team:** Appointed by the board of education or the chancellor in New York City, the team must include representatives from the school board; student, teacher, administrator, and parent organizations; school safety personnel; and other school staff members. This represents only those stakeholders who are required to be on the team. Membership is not limited to these groups.

- **The building-level school safety team:** Appointed by the school principal, the team includes representatives of teacher, administrator, and parent organizations; school safety staff; other school personnel; community members; local law enforcement officials; members of local emergency response agencies; and any other representatives that the school board, chancellor, or other governing body perceive as appropriate choices (Project SAVE, 2001, pp. 7–8).

The development of teams other than formal school safety planning teams can take a more innovative approach. Seeking out a variety of interested individuals can result in new and unexpected approaches to solving school problems. Sources for community representatives might include:

- Local businesses
- Health and human service agencies
- Religious institutions
- Community organizations
- Youth organizations
- Athletic organizations
- Senior citizen groups
- Colleges and universities
- Military installations

Community organizer and educator Patricia Laino describes how a community can provide many of these resources to assist in the planning process:

The Business Training Institute is a community-based organization that works in partnership with the Utica (NY) City School District. The overall mission of this partnership is to focus on reducing violence and increasing harmony and diversity through the most effective strategies possible by implementing numerous after-school programs in all of the 12 Utica schools. The first year that the institute was awarded funding for after-school and violence prevention programs (Extended School Day/School Violence Prevention), we realized the need to involve all our school and community partners in the school safety planning process, so we could best meet the needs of our children. We also realized the grant from the state alone was not going to fund all the activities we identified through our planning process. It was at that point that we realized we needed to establish strong partnerships with others in the community to meet our needs for additional funding and programming. We looked wide for identifying our partners—financial institutions, professional clubs, local businesses, the news media, and legislators were all part of our partnership group.

Banks were asked to adopt a school, and work on an ongoing basis with the school to provide mentors, tutors, volunteer speakers, supplies, and materials, and to provide job training skills for students and parents. Several also chose to sponsor savings programs for participants, offer rewards for student achievement, and sponsor workshops and seminars for school staff. The commitment in time and dollars has expanded each year, and the institute director has been able to rely on the strong relationship with the banks to support special events.

Professional clubs were asked to sponsor school activities, as well. Those participating include the Rotary, the Kiwanis, the Optimist Club, and the Lions Club. The level of involvement varies, from offering tutors and mentors, providing scholarships, sponsoring a community resource center, and participating in workshops for at-risk students and their parents.

Local businesses provide job skills training, sponsor career days, and assist students with job applications and job placements. They have broadened the exposure of possible employment options for youth from inner-city areas through on-site visits and experiences at different places of employment.

The media—radio, television, and newspapers—all have a pledge to the community partnership that originally formed to plan for school safety to cover events conducted throughout the community. They have held to that pledge. Legislators also cannot be excluded. We meet with key legislators in the state capital, and invite them to participate with our activities locally. Many have given their pledge to continue funding the program from the state.

Working with community partnerships takes time and effort, but the results are worth it. It's amazing what you get when you ask for it—in time, financial support, and commitment. It's important for the youth in our community to see that we are all committed to their well-being and are working together and joining resources for a better plan to be developed and implemented.

—Dr. Patricia Laino, president, Business Training Institute, Inc., Utica, New York
(personal communication)

2. Conducting a Comprehensive Needs Assessment

Once the initial steps toward a good school–community partnership have been completed, it's time for the next stage of strategic planning: collecting the data needed to inform decisionmaking and direct the project toward the desired goals.

Enlisting the help of community members can be an effective way of assessing needs. Although informal methods of gathering data are valuable, designing a comprehensive program entails seeking out data through a variety of formal and informal channels and keeping detailed documentation. To make the best use of typically limited human, time, and financial resources, it is essential to understand school–community priorities. A needs assessment serves the following purposes:

- Targeting the nature and extent of problems
- Identifying existing initiatives and activities
- Helping to determine the school's top priorities (Pollack & Sundermann, 2001, p. 16)

Conducting a thorough needs assessment involves three critical stages of planning. These are:

- **Creating a planning team:** The strongest planning teams involve all constituents: school administrators, faculty, support staff, parents, students, and community members.
- **Collecting data:** A community can be creative in synthesizing a variety of formal and informal methods of data gathering. Among the most common methods are community forums, focus groups, surveys, and questionnaires. Snowballing—which involves soliciting one member of a target group who leads you to another, and then another, and so forth—can be a good way to gather insider knowledge, especially from groups that are usually excluded from more traditional means. Gang members, for example, may provide information to a trusted adult that can be used for focusing interventions. Social indicators can be an important data source. These are generally derived from descriptive statistics contained in public records and reports. Included in this category of data at the school level are incidence reports, suspensions or expulsions for violence, statistics on substance abuse, and weapons possession. Release of student information is subject to provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a federal law governing disclosure of information from education records. Some states have similar privacy and confidentiality laws that also address sharing information from education records (Medaris, Campbell, & James, 1997). At the community level, social indicators include sociodemographic population data and social behavior related to crime and/or substance abuse, or, alternately, behavior related to community activism and involvement.

Many sources of data that can be utilized already exist within schools. Demographic data, for example, exist for all schools and can help in clarifying and understanding the population being served. In education, demographic data include items such as:

- > Numbers of students in school
- > Ethnic representation of students
- > Numbers of students with special needs
- > Numbers who drop out each year
- > Attendance rates
- > Numbers of students living in poverty
(Bernhardt, 1998, p. 25)

Demographics can play an important role in disaggregating data and contributing to understanding that will help frame planning efforts for school safety.

- **Creating a school–community profile:** A school–community profile describes a school’s characteristics: community, staff, physical plant (an important but often neglected factor in school safety), personnel, student body, programs, policy, culture, and learning environment. A comprehensive profile identifies strengths and weaknesses, thus highlighting areas for prospective intervention. Profiles are useful for correcting misconceptions (such as exaggerations of student problems: “But they all do drugs!”) by presenting a factual picture of the school and the community it serves. Developing an accurate profile has three basic purposes:
 - > Provides a means for evaluating school activities with the goal of targeting areas where change is needed.
 - > Provides school and community members with opportunities to express, share, acknowledge, and gain understanding of diverse (and sometimes conflicting) perspectives.
 - > Establishes a baseline for focusing improvement initiatives—stated succinctly, “Schools and communities that use data to inform decisions are more likely to use their resources effectively” (Pollack & Sundermann, 2001, p. 16). Because these resources are often limited, effective deployment can be a critical factor in program success.

The Upstate Center for School Safety (2000, p. 111) delineates the following benefits of data collection:

- Supports evidence for decisionmaking, program improvements and changes, and curriculum changes
- Provides answers to internal and external questions about school safety
- Provides documentation of program accomplishments and successes
- Provides factual support and evidence needed for accountability
- Can be used to monitor school safety levels
- Provides documentation needed to obtain grant money (a critical resource in school safety)

The data collected can be organized and analyzed according to five domains:

- Sociopolitical environment
- Community
- School system
- School families
- Individual students and peer groups
(NYSCSS, 2001, p. 82)

This approach, adapted from Hawkins and Catalano (1993), allows for the development of a comprehensive picture of the multiplicity of internal and external factors that affect the safety of a school and its inhabitants. While it guides the planning team to consider factors directly related to school conflict (i.e., consider the number of fights occurring in the cafeteria), it also guides the team to consider factors such as the effect of racism and homophobia on school safety, and how the social, linguistic, and cultural disconnect between staff and students can make a school a safe or unsafe environment for students and staff.

In designing a strategically focused school safety plan, it is not only vital to gather and report relevant data, it is equally important that the data be *interpreted accurately* (Upstate Center for School Safety, 2000). To ensure that this is accomplished, *Safe Spaces* contains handouts that address how to connect the data to identified risk factors. (Remember: *Predisposing* factors do not mean that antisocial behavior is *predetermined*.) *Safe Spaces* handouts can be used as guidelines for gathering and interpreting data to be used to develop an action plan (See Handouts 2.4.1, 2.5.1, and 2.7.1, Pages 111–127).

At the beginning of the process, teams may be reluctant to plan in this way. However, using a structured format for organizing information can help teams make the connections between data and program intervention. This process is constantly refined through regular meetings with members of the team, and new information is reexamined to guide the planning process. Key to the process is skilled facilitation, with meeting agendas, task and role definitions, and expectations. With this, team members are coming together to work in a structured manner and are able to see the results of their efforts.

3. Developing a Comprehensive School Plan

The data have been collected and analyzed. Now is the time for the planning team to prioritize problems and set goals for focusing interventions. Data gathering is still an essential program component; a strategic plan always contains measurable objectives that form the basis for ongoing program evaluation and improvement. This becomes one of the most difficult tasks for school safety teams—developing a plan with measurable goals and objectives, based on the analysis of data collected in the needs assessment. It also is difficult for schools to see how to make linkages in all the planning activities within the school, and make necessary linkages between school safety and student achievement. Elizabeth Mastro, director of a regional learning support center in New York, describes the struggle schools have with this:

Administrators are involved in the development of many different plans, whether at the building or district level. It is often difficult to prevent the pratfall of tunnel vision and rather maintain a wider focus on how all of the separate and discrete plans can be linked. The plans can be seen as scaffolding and support for many different mandates and initiatives within the district, rather than competitive processes or exercises in futility. And probably the most important, school teams can begin to see how all the plans are linked for the ultimate goal of increasing student achievement.

(personal communication)

The effective deployment of resources at this stage involves an examination of the financial resources available (including the use of data to obtain a grant), and the allocation of adequate time to explore and evaluate a range of program options.

Investigating existing programs with the goal of selecting the most appropriate one for addressing the school's needs while fitting into budget or other constraints is a slow, methodical process. Team members should allow sufficient time for researching proposed initiatives, visiting other schools that have instituted comparable programs, and learning all they can about different approaches.

An essential ingredient is staff buy-in, “for if teachers are not in favor of proposed change, success will be unlikely” (Pollack & Sundermann, 2001, p. 17). Successful programs like the Comer schools understand that staff members feel ownership when they are involved in the planning and implementation of all plans that affect the school. A school safety program is no exception to that basic rule. In addition, teachers and other staff members who work closely with students are a major source of information about student behavior. Observation of student behavior in the classroom—indeed, in all areas of the school plant—is an integral part of the ongoing evaluation of program effectiveness. Teachers often observe subtle behavior changes and cues that are missed by quantitative analysis yet are significant indicators of positive change.

Choosing a program that is cost efficient as well as successful in achieving the designated objectives and goals means avoiding commercial programs in favor of those that are research based. Programs derived from a research base are more likely to have undergone rigorous evaluation than those that are commercially marketed (Upstate Center for School Safety, 2000). Testimonials may sound great, but they are often no more than paid announcements with minimal (or no) documented evidence to support the impressive claims.

Several resources are available to guide in program selection. The U.S. Department of Education adopted its Principles of Effectiveness for Drug Prevention Programs in 1998. The principles require grant recipients to implement activities based on research or evaluation that provides evidence that the strategies used prevent or reduce drug use, violence, or disruptive behavior.

The Principles of Effectiveness have been reemphasized in the No Child Left Behind legislation, which requires that violence prevention programs and activities meet specified principles of effectiveness and be grounded in scientifically based research that provides evidence that the program to be used will reduce violence and illegal drug use. Under No Child Left Behind, states also must report school safety statistics to the public on a school-by-school basis, and districts must use federal school safety funding to establish a plan for keeping schools safe and drug free.

Under the Principles of Effectiveness guidelines, an effective program is defined as having documented effectiveness in three areas:

- Preventing or reducing substance abuse or violent and disruptive behavior
- Influencing the knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs that lead to substance abuse and violent behavior
- Promoting or strengthening prosocial behavior and skills

Examples of effective programs include Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America, Life Skills Training (LST) Program, Across Ages, Bullying Prevention Program, Focus on Families, and Families and Schools Together (FAST). Effective programs are research based by definition. Beyond being grounded in research, they have generally been subject to stringent evaluation and have demonstrated effectiveness in achieving defined objectives and goals.

A second category of research-based programs consists of programs in which only certain components have been found to produce the desired goals. Among the programs in this category are Adolescent Transition Program (ATP), CHOICE Interventions, Project ALERT, Project CARE, and Project Success.

Promising programs hold the potential for reducing drug use or violence or enhancing protective factors. They have been publicly recognized but require further evaluation before they can be deemed effective. Included in this category of programs are Effective Behavior Support (EBS), Peace Builders, Project ACHIEVE, and Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP) (Upstate Center for School Safety, 2000).

A good review of research-based programs is offered in *Safe Schools, Safe Students* (Drug Strategies, 1998). The summary list was developed through a detailed review of the literature on violence, juvenile delinquency, and substance abuse. The resulting programs were a synthesis of “best practices” in prevention, encompassing school, family, and community, with the intended goal to transform school culture and norms for prosocial behavior.

Teacher training is an integral part of the programs in *Safe Schools, Safe Students*—as the training of all school staff and students is essential to the success of any program designed to create a culture that prevents antisocial behavior and violence, promotes peaceful conflict resolution, and rewards prosocial behavior.

Two additional resources to guide in program selection include:

- **Blueprints for Violence Prevention**, a project of the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Since 1996, the Blueprints project has identified 11 model programs designed for violence prevention and intervention that meet a strict standard of effectiveness. These model programs, culled from a review of 500 programs, have shown measurable evidence of reducing violence, delinquency, and/or substance abuse. In addition to sharing a strong research design, model programs have demonstrated a sustained effect, and have been replicated at multiple sites. The Blueprints project has identified additional programs as promising. (For more information about Blueprints see www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/about/main.htm.)
- **Hamilton Fish Institute**, a national resource focusing on developing effective strategies to prevent school violence. The institute has published a list of prevention programs that it considers to be well designed, have demonstrated effectiveness, and can be implemented as part of a comprehensive school safety plan. Selection was based on meta-analytic studies of school-based efforts to prevent and reduce youth violence and other undesirable behaviors. (For more information, see www.hamfish.org/pub/evpp.html)

4. Identifying Strategies and Implementing Programs

Effective programs include 10 key components that have been consistently linked with program success. Some elements work well independently; however, a program containing all 10 offers the most effective strategy for creating a safe, supportive learning environment. The 10 elements are:

- **Information:** Information must be clear, accurate, relevant, and targeted to the way children and adolescents make behavioral decisions.
- **Communication and assertiveness skills:** Children and youth need to know how to express themselves verbally, convey thoughts and feelings, listen actively, agree or disagree, and convey clear verbal and nonverbal messages.
- **Decisionmaking skills:** Even young children require skills that will help them resolve problems that come up in social situations. Mastery of decisionmaking skills enhances self-esteem and self-efficacy during childhood and adolescence.
- **Refusal/resistance skills:** “Just Say No” may have been a catchy slogan, but an empty one. Students need to be taught how to say no without jeopardizing peer relationships (which take on increasing importance during adolescence).
- **Coping skills:** Skills that facilitate coping with stress, emotions, or problems can take a variety of forms. Athletic activities, arts activities, hobbies, relaxation, yoga, hobbies, self-awareness, and social support are only a few of the options that help students cope.
- **Goal-setting activities:** While Piaget may have designated adolescence as the onset of abstract thinking, most youth still think in concrete and immediate terms when making decisions. Students need to be taught the importance of long-range goals when making lifestyle decisions. Goal-setting activities help students identify short-term and long-range goals and develop strategies that will help them attain them.

- **Peer helpers/peer education:** Programs that enlist students to teach their peers about violence prevention are powerful tools for shaping adolescent behavior. Peer programs are especially helpful in dispelling popular myths about youth behavior. Most students are relieved to learn that contrary to what they see on the media, “everybody” doesn’t do drugs or engage in other risky behavior.
- **Parent involvement:** Parents have already been singled out as a powerful force for creating safe schools. Especially for children in the primary grades, involving parents can:
 - > Increase students’ interest in classroom activities
 - > Strengthen communication between children and parents or caregivers
 - > Provide a forum for parents to discuss their ideas, opinions, and values
 - > Reinforce family bonds
 - > Enhance academic achievement(Upstate Center for School Safety, 2000, p. 83)
- **Public information and education campaign:** Deploying information resources can call attention to issues that affect the community and help to define desirable behavior.
- **Alternatives:** Programs offer activities designed to engage children and youth, such as recreational programs, experiential programs, and mentoring.

While a synthesis of these elements addresses the problems of most schools and their constituents, some students will require intervention beyond the capabilities of the best trained teachers, mentors, and peers. For example, the Multisystemic Therapy Program is an intensive family- and community-based treatment format that uses a systems approach to address the complex contributors to serious antisocial behavior in juvenile offenders (Pollack & Sundermann, 2001, p. 18).

Several federal agencies have joined to convene expert panels to review and define programs as “best practices,” “exemplary programs,” and “promising programs.” Current federal education policy, articulated in No Child Left Behind, requires schools and states to ensure that strategies and programs selected for prevention implementation are able to be supported through research.

The U.S. Department of Education’s Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program, in cooperation with the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, has established the Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools Expert Panel. The 15-member panel is composed of education practitioners, researchers, evaluators, program developers, and representatives from local and state education agencies, businesses, institutions of higher education, and from medical and legal communities.

The purpose of the panel is to oversee a process for identifying and designating as promising and exemplary school-based programs that promote safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools. Once programs are designated as promising or exemplary, the department will disseminate new information about the programs and will encourage their use in new sites. The expert panel initiative is a way of enhancing prevention programming by making schools aware of alternative programs that have proven their effectiveness when judged against rigorous criteria.

Debra Fuchs Nadeau, prevention director and education administrator, explains the difficulty schools have with this issue:

How are educators to address the issues related to safety? The prevention literature is inconclusive. Schools are left wondering which programs are effective. The matter is further complicated by the school district's inability to critically analyze the prevention programs, and the existing research, in order to determine if indeed this program will fit their needs. What often happens is that the school district falls victim to the glitzy marketing of the commercially developed and marketed programs. They purchase programs based on a sales pitch instead of objective data and district need. If schools are to make a difference in this area, they must be willing to make a commitment to research-based programs that address their specific problems.

—Fuchs Nadeau (2002, pp. 24–25)

Evaluation, the next critical area for safe school planning identified by Pollack and Sundermann (2001), becomes an essential component in light of this requirement.

5. Conducting an Evaluation

Evaluation plays an important role in the safe school planning process. However, resources to design and conduct an effective evaluation may be in short supply in the school community. Not all schools or districts will have access to a researcher with expertise in evaluating violence prevention programs. What's more, evaluation is often one of the first components to be trimmed if program funding is reduced.

The scope of an evaluation will be determined by available resources, including money budgeted for evaluation (typically, 10 to 15 percent of a project's budget), and availability of staff to support the process (Flannery & Seaman, 2001).

Questions asked at the beginning of the process will shape the evaluation. These may include:

- What kind of intervention is needed?
- Who should be targeted?
- What are the program's desired results?
- What components of the program make it successful?
- Is the program cost effective?
- Can the intervention be sustained over the long term?

(Flannery & Seaman, 2001)

Generally, the evaluation process consists of five basic steps:

- Focusing the evaluation
 - Designing the evaluation
 - Collecting program data
 - Analyzing program data
 - Reporting findings
- (Pollack & Sundermann, 2001, p. 18)

Program developers may use different types of evaluations to determine program effectiveness. These include:

- **Process evaluation:** Determines program features while the program is being implemented. Sometimes referred to as program monitoring, process evaluation addresses the question: What makes the program work and why? Questions that can guide process evaluation include: Is the program being implemented according to original plan (i.e., program fidelity)? Does the intensity of the program change over time? Do staff members implement the program consistently (Flannery & Seaman, 2001)?

- **Impact evaluation:** Provides immediate assessment of the program, addressing the question: Are short-term goals being met?
- **Outcome evaluation:** Measures change in the target population over time (e.g., fewer violent incidents, fewer suspensions, higher attendance, higher academic performance) (Upstate Center for School Safety, 2000, p. 151). An outcome evaluation attempts to answer the question: What has changed as a result of this intervention? Clearly defining program goals, desired outcomes, and their connection will help to establish effective outcome assessments (Flannery & Seaman, 2001).

The methods of evaluation may be the same as those used in the first stage of data collection: interviews, surveys, questionnaires, discussion formats, focus groups, analyses of records, and observation. Behavioral observation can be an excellent way of assessing program effectiveness, particularly in the early stages of implementation when quantitative analyses may not yield significant results. While teachers are first-line observers of student behavior, so are parents, coaches, youth counselors, and peers (to cite only a partial list). Comparing the observations of different observers with different perspectives may yield unexpected results (for better or worse), and may serve as a basis for improving or redirecting program elements.

An effective evaluation process establishes a system for gathering data, providing access to information, and managing that information (i.e., setting up a database). Involving an evaluator from the beginning of the project allows for questions to be addressed early about evaluation design, instrumentation, and method of information gathering. In addition, an experienced evaluator can assist in maximizing resources available for data analysis (Flannery & Seaman, 2001).

6. Sharing Outcomes and Making Adjustments

The purpose of ongoing evaluation is to inform stakeholders about which program elements are working, and which are not, so that the program can be more effectively focused or streamlined. In this era of accountability, the team needs information to be presented to all stakeholders on the development, implementation process, and outcomes of the school safety plan.

The presentation itself can be construed as an integral part of the plan. A colorful multimedia presentation will not cover up for a badly designed plan, but a polished, professional presentation can enhance the value of an effective one. This may be especially true when presenting findings to business leaders, who expect to see a polished presentation replete with charts, graphs, stakeholder surveys, and comments from focus groups. In fact, it might be a good idea to identify your toughest audience and design your presentation for them on the theory that if it impresses the skeptics, it will impress others as well.

If results do not measure up to what was expected, remember that the purpose of evaluation is to inform decisionmakers, not to grade the participants. And even if the results seem spectacular, there is always an avenue for improvement—and you will probably have plenty of volunteers who are more willing (or less reluctant) to participate in a program with proven results.

Dr. Gary Ciurczak, who has conducted evaluations of the planning process of safety teams across New York State and served as a member of onsite review teams examining district safety planning, shares the following:

School safety planning efforts often occur on two tracks: Track 1, the building, grounds, and crisis response components; and Track 2, the primary prevention, intervention, community development, and teacher inservice component. Both are essential and both are required in every district in New York state, as well as other states. In some districts the teams include people conducting both duties, and in some districts the two tracks are committees from the district's safe school planning team. The areas of expertise or knowledge for both are very different, but both require the input of a wide range of school, community, and student participants.

One popular and effective way schools conduct planning efforts for Track 1 is through the use of a safe school checklist. Team members develop their own checklist, or utilize one available from colleagues or consultants that have conducted safe school reviews in the past. Once the team members have the lists, they may make modifications appropriate for their own particular district and/or school. The categories covered range from reviewing the lay of the land outside the school and its proximity to potentially hazardous accidents, to the safety and security of the walls and windows of the school, to the sound quality of the public address system within the school. Student and teacher traffic flows at the beginning and end of the day, and throughout the school, near the buses, and in the student parking lot, are often important. Patterns of entrance and exit, during the student arrival, departure and throughout the day are also examined. Some schools have found having only one entrance open during the day at times when students are already in the school, with that entrance opened by buzzer from an office where the visitor may be seen via remote security camera, adds an additional layer of security over the school.

One district used a safe school checklist and began their school review at 6:30 a.m. on a school day. They found middle school students arriving 45 minutes before school began standing outside the door awaiting the opening of the school. As the crowd became larger the team realized that the unsupervised students had the potential of engaging in vandalism, fighting, harassment, and other risky behaviors taking place. To remedy this newly identified situation, the school decided to extend the school day into the morning to allow the students to come into the school, be supervised by adults, and participate in productive social and academic activities. In other words, a potentially dangerous situation was discovered through a safe school review, with students participating in extended school day activities early in the morning.

Track 2, the primary prevention, intervention, community development, and teacher inservice component, is often built upon the results of a district needs assessment. Not all districts can conduct needs assessments in every category, and they phase in needs assessments as they are able. Often the district professional development plan, or PDP, can be reviewed to determine current areas of professional development for school staff. When examined with a focus on training to promote a safe school environment (i.e., training in student-led peer mediations, conflict resolution techniques, cultural sensitivity, and antibullying techniques), the safe school team will gain an insight into areas that may need further emphasis to improve the overall school environment. When more time and resources are available, the safe school team could review patterns in student disciplinary infractions and resolutions. This is often done through an analysis of computerized summaries of infractions, which are disaggregated, or broken out, according to the needs of the committee. In some districts, this would mean disaggregation by grade, by gender, by ethnicity, or some other locally important attribute. This results in knowing the key students and teachers in the disciplinary infraction cycle in a district. This information can be utilized to provide additional and specific training and support to teachers and students, as well as a basis for additional support services.

One district analyzed the inservice [training] it offered to its staff, and compared it to its student population, which is predominantly poor, academically low performing and experiencing high and increasing levels of disciplinary infractions. There are also low levels of education among the parents. Since the teachers were predominantly middle class and highly educated, the committee saw a gap between the way teachers were teaching the students in the classroom, which was resulting in high levels of disciplinary infractions and low levels of academic success, and the way the students could be taught that was meaningful to them. To bridge that gap, the district decided to initiate widespread training to sensitize the teachers to the needs of students in poverty. The district sent a team of trainers to receive training from a well-known expert in this area, Ruby Payne, to then train teachers across the district. Though the resources required to initiate this activity were great, the district believes that over the long-term this will have a substantial positive effect on the teacher/student relationships and thus student outcomes. Careful tracking of student results of teachers receiving training will help the district determine its effectiveness. Without this analysis, both at the beginning and the end of the project, this important training to improve the school environment would never have occurred.

Obtaining points of view from students is an often overlooked way to assess the safety of the environment. Students experience the school in a different way than adults do, and their insights frequently go unknown and unheard by decisionmakers in the school. They simply see things we don't see, and have an acute awareness of school culture that has surprised the vast majority of adults seeing the results of student-led focus groups. Through the use of surveys, interviews, and/or focus groups the ideas and opinions of students can be brought out in ways beneficial for the district, provided the district is open to the idea of obtaining valid information for school improvement from students. With training, students are able to conduct their own focus groups and obtain information adults would simply not be able to get from their co-students. An argument could be made that all schools that want a holistic perspective need to listen to students.

One district supports a highly trained student leadership team in its high school, which has conducted high-quality, methodologically sound, focus groups with students. As a result of these focus groups, and the team's determination of need based on the analysis of the focus group results, the students discovered that incoming ninth-graders were the largest security risk in their school. To help decrease this risk, the students presented their results to the school administration, created a collaborative committee with the administration, and organized peer-training activities into Project "Get Ready" for the incoming ninth-graders to take place before school begins in the fall. The training covers key points of school culture and social interaction that are different from the norms in the middle schools they are leaving, as well as information and resources they can use to help make sense of the amazingly new environment in which they will find themselves on opening day.

Utilizing evaluation tools and techniques to develop a safe school environment does not require a consultant or a packaged program. It requires a trained and committed team willing to gather and review information, ask questions, and obtain answers from a wide range of people and other sources to further enhance school safety. One of our biggest challenges is to find ways to bridge the gap between experts in the field and the general public, and make the data user friendly for the safe school teams and the community in ways that motivate positive action. Involving a safe school team, with parents, students, and other community members, helps bridge that gap.

—Gary Ciurczak, president, Ciurczak and Company, Inc. (personal communication)

IDENTIFYING AND ACCESSING RESOURCES

Identifying Resources

A variety of resources are available at the local, state, and federal levels. In some cases, a single organization or agency may provide assistance through all stages of the planning process.

National level. On a national level, several organizations work to provide this function. They include the following:

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (www.safetyzone.org):

- Works with schools, communities, and state and local education agencies to create safe learning environments and prevent school violence
- Provides information about youth courts and mentoring programs
- Incorporates conflict resolution education into school programs to enhance building safety
- Promotes the hiring of school resource officers
- Establishes or works toward the expansion of before- and after-school programs
- Promotes the adoption of policies and procedures that are consistent, clear, and developed collaboratively by the school community

Hamilton Fish Institute (www.hamfish.org):

- Determines what works for the reduction of violence in America's schools and their immediate communities
- Evaluates the effectiveness of this prevention strategy and disseminates the information to the nation's school safety strategists

National School Safety Center (www.nsscl.org):

- Serves as an advocate for safe, secure, and peaceful schools worldwide
- Serves as a catalyst for the prevention of school crime and violence
- Provides school communities and their school safety partners with quality information, resources, consultation, and training services
- Identifies and promotes strategies, promising practices, and programs that support safe schools for all students

Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (www.colorado.edu/cspv):

- Provides informed assistance to groups committed to understanding and preventing violence
- The information house serves to collect research literature and resources on the causes and prevention of violence and provides direct information services to the public
- Offers technical assistance for the evaluation and development of violence prevention programs
- Maintains a basic research component through data analysis and other projects on the causes of violence and the effectiveness of prevention and intervention program

State level

New York State Center for School Safety (NYSCSS) (www.mhric.org/scss):

- Offers technical assistance and consultation to schools, communities, and state agencies on safe schools and violence prevention
- Renders crisis-intervention services in a responsive and timely basis
- Creates and develops educational materials and resources for use in schools and communities
- Acts as a clearinghouse of up-to-date, research-based, and data-driven information on effective strategies for creating and maintaining safe schools
- Initiates collaborative partnerships and facilitates coordination among schools, state agencies and organizations, and communities
- Provides staff development and training on school safety and violence prevention

North Carolina Center for the Prevention of School Violence (www.ncscu.edu/cpsv):

- Serves as a resource center for efforts that promote safer schools and foster positive youth development and understanding the problems of school violence and developing solutions to them
- Provides information (presentations, meetings, mailings, Web sites, etc.) and technical assistance (workshops, training sessions, and efforts in the areas of program development, maintenance, research, and evaluation) to any and all schools with regard to safekeeping

Kentucky Center for School Safety (www.kysafeschools.org):

- Works in establishing a clearinghouse of information and materials concerning prevention of school violence
- Provides/coordinates training, technical assistance, and program development to schools, justice/law enforcement agencies, and communities
- Evaluates existing school safety programs
- Administers grants to local districts
- Promotes interagency efforts to address school discipline and safety issues

Texas School Safety Center (www.txssc.swt.edu):

- Serves as an ongoing interdisciplinary resource providing training and technical assistance statewide to reduce youth violence and promote safety
- Facilitates collaborative efforts made with state agencies
- Organizes various activities (training institutes, annual summits, surveys, etc.)

Pennsylvania Center for Safe Schools

(www.center-school.org/viol_prev/css/css-s-about.html):

- Works in collecting data, assisting schools, and providing resources to educators on a variety of programs and issues
- Seeks creative and effective solutions to problems that disrupt the educational process and affect school safety
- Provides training, technical assistance, and a clearinghouse of video and print materials to help schools identify and implement effective programs and practices
- Maintains a database of resources available to assist school districts

Although the NYSCSS and other state centers can help get the planning process off to a good start, enlisting the participation of school and community members is done at the local level. Thus, outreach efforts must be targeted to the community within and outside the school. Schools generally have seasoned activists from all stakeholder groups. Parents who are already active make perfect recruiters of other school families, as well as their friends and associates from the community. People who live in the neighborhood often work there, as well. They also frequent local businesses and belong to community groups outside the school. In any grassroots venture, insiders make the best recruiters. This is especially true when social distance may form a barrier among some of the parties. Acknowledge the strengths of school families—when they perceive that their contributions are valued, they form a strong link between the school and community.

The cultural and professional expertise of school families can be an invaluable resource. Ethnically focused strategies may be needed to recruit linguistically and culturally diverse families, while at the same time, appreciation of diverse cultures is a tool for breaking down ethnic and cultural barriers. Multicultural school events can be used to bring people together in a relaxed and even festive atmosphere, before getting down to the serious business of school safety planning.

School families also have a diverse array of professional and technical skills to offer. Don't be afraid to ask for help. While the educators involved may have never conducted a comprehensive needs assessment, it is possible that some parents have. Parents may be involved with or familiar with the agencies and organizations that have information the team needs. Or they may be involved in local politics, which unquestionably makes them valuable allies.

Media campaigns can be effective, and the most effective campaigns are the ones that appeal to their audience. A good eye- and ear-catching campaign does not necessarily require a costly investment in a public relations expert (although there may be school parents with expertise in that field). A poster contest offers a great way to get students involved in the campaign.

Unless the school has a team of seasoned veterans in needs assessment, this is one area where the assistance of experts is crucial to project success. Agencies like NYSCSS provide training and technical help as well as distributing detailed information on successful programs. Schools that have successfully implemented programs can make perfect partners in promoting school safety (especially schools with a similar school–community profile). And once a collaborative partnership forms, there are other ways in which both schools might benefit. For example, one school might have an extensive athletic program while another specializes in arts education, and a third has an elaborate technology lab. Forming partnerships with other schools extends limited resources, whether directly or indirectly related to the school safety plan.

Once a comprehensive needs assessment has been conducted and documented, the school may want to apply for a grant from federal or state agencies. Funding is one resource without which no school safety plan, however extensively researched and well-designed, can be fully implemented. The U.S. government lists available funding from federal sources on its Web site (www.access.gpo.gov). State-level school safety centers may also be able to provide information about funding sources.

Local level. At the local level, the team's human resources must be effectively deployed to work on the planning initiative, setting realistic time goals and measurable objectives. The local team, with involvement of many stakeholders in the process, will be able to identify sources of financial support through area foundations, community groups, and businesses to support safety programs in the schools. Community collaboratives can also pave the way for coordination of existing resources to serve implementation needs.

Identifying strategies and implementing programs constitutes the most resource-intensive stage in the process. One way to allocate tasks is to have different team members (or small groups) focus on programs of different types. For example, one person or pair might investigate programs on conflict resolution, while another addresses peer modeling and another examines mentoring or character-building programs. Virtually any program must be adapted to the specific needs of the school. Adequate time and skilled personnel are needed to train staff on implementation strategies and to coordinate the implementation process at the school level.

Coordination of evaluation efforts should be embedded in the implementation effort. As with needs assessment, collaboration with NYSCSS or another agency may be essential to see that the process is carried out as flawlessly as possible. Although the methods of data gathering may be the same as in needs assessment, the goals and objectives are different for evaluation. Evaluation must be continuous. Adequate time and skilled personnel are needed to feed information to the planning team so the plan is continually refined and updated. The importance of presenting the plan to stakeholders cannot be overlooked. Team members may require information and training on how to make a professional presentation.

Accessing Resources

Accessing information resources can be conducted online, through Web-based search engines, or the old-fashioned way, through library research or public archives. Data collection for needs assessment includes researching law enforcement records in addition to school files. Although few instances of school violence are serious enough for police reports, there may be reports of underage drinking or illicit drug use that go toward creating the school–community profile. Reports of child abuse should not be overlooked. Abused children are at risk for being the perpetrators and/or victims of bullying or violence, for substance abuse, and for other risky behaviors. Despite mandatory reporting laws by school personnel, school staff often do not recognize subtle signs of abuse (a possible focus for training), and inquiries are likely to be met by vehement denial by parents (a cue that the teacher’s assessment may be correct).

Often the best way to find Web sites is through hyperlinks. Just as snowballing is a good way to find interview subjects, it’s a great way to find informational resources (in print as well as electronic resources). The reference lists of books, pamphlets, and articles contain the sources of *their* information, which offer additional channels for exploration. In addition, many booklets, particularly those put out by public agencies, contain lists of related resources in various media formats.

Sheryl Post, information specialist for the NYSCSS, identifies the following as the key strategies for accessing resources online:

- There are millions of Web pages on the Internet, waiting for you to search them. The first step is to be specific. If you’re searching for information about grooming and feeding German Shepherd dogs, enter the entire phrase. The more specific your search, the more likely you will find what you want.
- Read the help files at each search engine for a detailed explanation about how to search more effectively. Each search engine also offers advanced search features which are useful when you are able to fine-tune your search.
- After your search yields results, Web sites must be evaluated before you use the information provided. Remember, the Internet is a self-publishing media without a governing agency to monitor it. Ask yourself who sponsored or created the site, and why. Who is the site intended for? And what is its purpose? (personal communication)

CONCLUSION

The array of available program models for planning safe schools can be mind-boggling. Although it may be tempting to reach for a packaged program, or click on a Web site and expect to find all the answers you need, it is clear that an effective program demands careful strategic planning. Even if you are fortunate to be in a school community where volunteers are plentiful and the school in the neighboring district has published its evaluation of its effective school strategy, it is unlikely that shortcuts will produce the intended results. Each stage of the planning process requires effective allocation of typically limited resources and detailed planning and evaluation.

Virtually all effective interventions build evaluation into the model. Even before being bombarded with such concepts as continuous quality improvement and accountability, school and community program developers were aware that they had to produce results to gain public or private funding and that they were responsible to local district residents and administrators, as well as to the adult and youth stakeholders within the school. Detailed resource planning and allocation is a critical factor in program success. A haphazard or *laissez-faire* approach to safe school planning is unlikely to produce favorable outcomes; in fact, it is precisely a *laissez-faire* approach that allows “trivial” incidents of bullying or harassment to escalate to full-scale conflagration.

Human and informational resources are critical components at all stages of planning. From the first tentative partnerships through the process of evaluation, sharing outcomes, and program refinement, teamwork and collaboration and data collection, analysis, and dissemination are the keynotes of program success. The proportion of children and youth who are forced to learn in a school climate that allows antisocial behavior is dwindling. However, as long as even a few children dread going to school out of fears of bullying or harassment, schools fall short of the goal of creating a safe, supportive learning environment for all students.

Without adequate resources, school safety planning initiatives are doomed to fail. It should be equally obvious that resources are “adequate” only when they are effectively targeted and deployed through meticulous and methodical—and continuous—strategic planning efforts by program developers in concert with school and community stakeholder groups.

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RESOURCES

The SafetyZone

www.safetyzone.org

The SafetyZone, a project of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's Comprehensive Center, Region X, provides technical assistance related to school safety and violence prevention. The center also provides information and a variety of resources, as it tracks the latest research about possible causes of violence and the best practices that foster resilient youth and promote safe and productive schools and communities.

101 S.W. Main St., Ste. 500

Portland, OR 97204

Phone: 1-800-268-2275 or (503) 275-0131

Fax: (503) 275-0444

E-mail: safeschools@nwrel.org

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL)

www.nwrel.org

NWREL is the parent organization of the SafetyZone, a project of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's Comprehensive Center, Region X. It provides information about coordination and consolidation of federal educational programs and general school improvement to meet the needs of special populations of children and youth, particularly those programs operated in the Northwest region, through the U.S. Department of Education. The Web site has an extensive online library containing articles, publications, and multimedia resources. It also has a list of other agencies and advocacy groups that addresses issues pertaining to, among other things, school safety issues as well as alcohol and drug abuse.

101 S.W. Main St., Ste. 500

Portland, OR 97204

Phone: (503) 275-9500

E-mail: info@nwrel.org

Afterschool.gov

www.afterschool.gov

This site helps connect users to federal resources that support children and youth during out-of-school hours.

U.S. General Services Administration

1800 F St., N.W.

Washington, DC 20405

Phone: (202) 501-0800

American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress

www.schoolcrisisresponse.com

This Web site offers an invaluable resource, *A Practical Guide for Crisis Response in Our Schools*, for administrators, support personnel, and faculty in preparation for, and during, actual crisis situations.

368 Veterans Memorial Hwy.

Commack, NY 11725

Phone: (631) 543-2217

Fax: (631) 543-6977

American Association of School Administrators (AASA)

www.aasa.org

AASA, founded in 1865, is the professional organization for more than 14,000 educational leaders across America and in many other countries. AASA's mission is to support and develop effective school system leaders who are dedicated to the highest-quality public education for all children.

1801 N. Moore St.
Arlington, VA 22209-1813
Phone: (703) 528-0700
Fax: (703) 841-1543
E-mail: webmaster@aasa.org

Center for the Prevention of School Violence

www.cpsv.org

Established in 1993, the Center for the Prevention of School Violence serves as a primary point of contact for information, programs, and research about preventing school violence.

313 Chapanoke Rd., Ste. 140
Raleigh, NC 27603
Phone: 1-800-299-6054 or (919) 773-2816
Fax: (919) 773-2904
E-mail: joanne.mcdaniel@ncmail.net

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH)

www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash

The mission of DASH is to identify the highest priority health risks among youth, monitor the incidence and prevalence of those risks, implement national programs to prevent risks, and evaluate and improve those programs.

1600 Clifton Rd.
Atlanta, GA 30333
Phone: (404) 639-3311

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Violence Prevention

www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/dvp.htm

The Division of Violence Prevention in the Centers for Disease Control's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control has four priority areas for violence prevention: youth violence, family and intimate violence, suicide, and firearm injuries.

1600 Clifton Rd.
Atlanta, GA 30333
Phone: (404) 639-3311

Communities Against Violence Network (CAVNET)

www.cavnet2.org

This interactive site serves as a guide to many high-quality antiviolence resources. The links provided by CAVNET almost make it a one-stop shopping site for resources on violence prevention.

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

www.fbi.gov/kids/k5th/kidsk5th.htm

This site is specifically geared for children and teachers. It offers games, safety tips, and guides.

935 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.

Washington, DC 20535

Phone: (202) 324-3000

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

www.fema.gov

FEMA is an independent agency of the federal government, reporting to the president. Since its founding in 1979, FEMA's mission has been to reduce loss of life and property and protect our nation's critical infrastructure from all types of hazards through a comprehensive, risk-based, emergency management program of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

500 C St., S.W.

Washington, DC 20472

Phone: (202) 566-1600

Hamilton Fish Institute

www.hamfish.org

Founded with the assistance of Congress in 1997, the institute serves as a national resource to test the effectiveness of school violence prevention methods. Its goal is to determine what works and what programs can be replicated to reduce school violence.

2121 K St., N.W., Ste. 200

Washington, DC 20037-1830

Phone: (202) 496-2200

Fax: (202) 496-6244

Join Together

www.jointogether.org

Join Together, a project of the Boston University School of Public Health, is a national resource for communities working together to reduce substance abuse and gun violence.

One Appleton St., 4th Fl.

Boston, MA 02116-5223

Phone: (617) 437-1500

Fax: (617) 437-9394

E-mail: info@jointogether.org

National Alliance for Safe Schools

www.safeschools.org

The National Alliance for Safe Schools was established to provide training, technical assistance, and publications to school districts interested in reducing crime and violence in schools.

Ice Mountain

P.O. Box 290

Slanesville, WV 25444-0290

Phone: (304) 496-8100

Fax: (304) 496-8105

E-mail: NASS@raven-villages.net

National Association of School Psychologists

www.nasponline.org/index2.html

This site provides a wide variety of resources to promote educationally and psychologically healthy environments for students.

4340 E. West Hwy., Ste. 402
Bethesda, MD 20814
Phone: (301) 657-0270
Fax: (301) 657-0275
E-mail: nasp@naspweb.org

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

www.nces.ed.gov

NCES is the primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data related to education in the United States and other nations.

1990 K St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20006
Phone: (202) 502-7300

National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS)

www.ncjrs.org

NCJRS is a federally sponsored information clearinghouse involved with research, policy, and practice related to criminal and juvenile justice and drug control.

P.O. Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20849-6000
Phone: 1-800-851-3420
Fax: (301) 519-5212

National Education Association (NEA)

www.nea.org

The NEA works to advance the cause of public education including school–community partnerships. The organization is active at the local, state, and national level. The Web site has links to useful resources.

1201 16th St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20036-3290
Phone: (202) 833-4000
Fax: (202) 822-7974

National Institute on Out-of-School Time

www.niost.org

For more than 20 years, the National Institute on Out-of-School Time has successfully brought national attention to the importance of children's out-of-school time.

Wellesley Centers for Women
106 Central St.
Wellesley, MA 02481
Phone: (781) 283-2547
Fax: (781) 283-3657

National Mental Health and Education Center

www.naspcenter.org

The National Mental Health and Education Center, a public service of the National Association of School Psychologists, is an information and action network to foster best practices in education and mental health for children and families—building upon strengths, understanding diversity, and supporting families.

4340 E. West Hwy., Ste. 402

Bethesda, MD 20814

Phone: (301) 657-0270

Fax: (301) 657-0275

E-mail: nasp@naspweb.org

National School Boards Association (NSBA)

www.nsba.org

This site has released a 10-point safe schools plan, available online at www.keepschoolssafe.org

1680 Duke St.

Alexandria, VA 22314

Phone: (703) 838-6722

Fax: (703) 683-7590

E-mail: info@nsba.org

National School Safety Center (NSSC)

www.nssc1.org

This site has information on successful violence prevention strategies, data on school violence, and training opportunities.

141 Duesenberg Dr., Ste. 11

Westlake Village, CA 91362

Phone: (805) 373-9977

Fax: (805) 373-9277

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)

www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org

OJJDP's mission is to provide national leadership, coordination, and resources to develop, implement, and support effective methods to prevent juvenile victimization and respond appropriately to juvenile delinquency. This is accomplished through prevention programs and a juvenile justice system that protects the public safety, holds juvenile offenders accountable, and provides treatment and rehabilitative services based on the needs of each individual juvenile.

810 Seventh St., N.W.

Washington, DC 20531

Phone: (202) 307-5911

Fax: (202) 307-2093

Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS)

www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS

The OSDFS is the federal government's primary vehicle for reducing drug, alcohol, and tobacco use, and violence, through education and prevention activities in our nation's schools. Its Web site has information on exemplary and promising programs and key publications on drug and violence prevention, including school safety.

U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20202

Partnership Against Violence Network (PAVNET)

www.pavnet.org

PAVNET provides information on programs, resources, and funding sources (federal, state, and private) on the issue of violence prevention. The search engine is the U.S. government gopher via the University of California, Irvine.

Safe Schools Coalition (SSC)

www.ed.mtu.edu/safe

The SSC is a nonprofit, all-volunteer organization. The SSC's mission is to unite national business, labor, governmental, community, religious, school, and student organizations in a common effort to reduce violence, promote health, and foster skills and attitudes for civic and economic responsibilities.

P.O. Box 1338
Holmes Beach, FL 34218-1338
Phone: (941) 778-6652
Fax: (941) 778-6818
E-mail: ssc@tampabay.rr.com

UCLA School Mental Health Project

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

The School Mental Health Project (SMHP) was created in 1986 to pursue theory, research, practice, and training related to addressing mental health and psychosocial concerns through school-based interventions. To these ends, SMHP works closely with school districts, state agencies, the New American Schools Urban Learning Center model, and organizations and colleagues across the country.

University of California, Los Angeles
Center for Mental Health in Schools
Department of Psychology
P.O. Box 951563
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563
Phone: (310) 825-3634
Fax: (310) 206-8716
E-mail: smhp@ucla.edu

U.S. Department of Education

www.ed.gov

This site offers a vast array of resources, from publications regarding school safety and violence prevention to extended research.

400 Maryland Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20202

U.S. Department of Justice

www.usdoj.gov

This site offers a vast array of resources, from publications regarding violence prevention and school safety to statistical information regarding youth violence.

950 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20530-0001

State Safety Centers**California Safe Schools and Violence Prevention Office**

www.cde.ca.gov/spbranch/safety

California Department of Education
660 J St., Ste. 400
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: (916) 323-2183
Fax: (916) 323-6061

Colorado Safe Communities—Safe Schools

www.colorado.edu/UCB/Research/cspv/safeschools/index.html

In an effort to address the immediate concerns of the Colorado education community, the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV) introduced the Safe Communities—Safe Schools initiative in the fall of 1999. This project will consist of the following strategies that will be available to all school communities in Colorado: information about the Safe Communities—Safe Schools Model; technical assistance; publications; and a Web site, information house, media campaign, and long-term response plan.

900 28th St., Ste. 107
Boulder, CO 80303
Phone: (303) 492-1032
Fax: (303) 443-3297

Connecticut Safe Schools and Communities Coalition (SSCC)

www.drugsdontwork.org

The SSCC seeks to stimulate discussion, collaboration, and action against youth violence by bringing schools, police, youth-serving agencies, the judicial system, and other interested parties together in a statewide collaboration. The coalition, formed in 1994, involves more than 1,500 educators, police, and youth workers in activities and stimulates the creation of community-based violence prevention coalitions. It has assisted schools in developing new violence prevention programs and facilitated networking and information sharing among members through bimonthly forums, major conferences, training seminars, task groups, youth involvement, and in-depth consultation and technical assistance to schools and communities.

30 Arbor St.
Hartford, CT 06106
Phone: (860) 523-8042
Fax: (860) 236-9412
E-mail: SSCC@preventionworksct.org

Office of Safe Schools, Bureau of Equity, Safety and School Support, Division of Public Schools and Community Education, Florida Department of Education

www.firn.edu/doe/besss/safehome.htm

The Office of Safe Schools is responsible for three major areas: (1) the federal Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, (2) schoolwide discipline, and (3) school emergency management plans, as well as other safe schools-related activities. The federal Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS) is responsible for administering Title IV and distributing the Title IV grant funds to Florida's school districts, university lab schools, and the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind. The main purpose of these funds is for school-based substance abuse and violence prevention and early intervention programs in K–12. In the areas of school discipline, school emergency management planning, and other safe schools-related activities, as well as the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program, the office establishes standards, provides technical assistance, guides assessment, and reports results to schools, the Legislature, U.S. Department of Education, and other agencies as appropriate.

325 W. Gaines St.
301 Turlington Bldg.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400
Phone: (850) 410-1667
Fax: (850) 410-1796
E-mail: sdfs@mail.doe.state.fl.us

Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA)

www2.state.ga.us/GEMA

P.O. Box 18055
Atlanta, GA 30316-0055
Phone: (404) 635-7000
Fax: (404) 635-7205
E-mail: Webmaster@gema.state.ga.us

Indiana School Safety Specialist Academy

<http://doe.state.in.us/issa>

In 1999 the Indiana General Assembly enacted legislation requiring each public school corporation in Indiana to appoint a school safety specialist whose duties would include serving on the county school safety commissions and coordinating school emergency preparedness plans. The Indiana Department of Education was charged with the responsibility to train and certify the school safety specialists. The Indiana School Safety Specialist Academy was created and began training in December 1999. To date more than 600 school safety specialists have been trained. The academy provides annual training to advanced school safety specialists and basic training for new specialists. A new basic training online program will deliver a portion of the five days of beginning training online to the new specialists.

Indiana Department of Education
Rm. 229 State House
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2798
Phone: (317) 234-0326
Fax: (317) 232-9140
E-mail: csnapp@doe.state.in.us

Kentucky Center for School Safety (CSS)

www.kysafeschools.org

CSS provides a clearinghouse of information and materials concerning school violence prevention; training and technical assistance to schools and law enforcement agencies; data collection; evaluation of school safety programs; and information on best practices. The CSS is operated by a consortium of three state universities (Eastern Kentucky University, University of Kentucky, and Murray State University), with the assistance of the Kentucky School Boards Association.

Center for School Safety
Eastern Kentucky University
105 Stratton Bldg.
521 Lancaster Dr.
Richmond, KY 40475-3102
Phone: (877) 805-4277

Mississippi Department of Education, Division of Safe and Orderly Schools

www.mde.k12.ms.us/lead/osos

The division of Safe and Orderly Schools provides training to local school district personnel in the development of school safety plans.

P.O. Box 771
Jackson, MS 39205-0771
Phone: (601) 359-1028
Fax: (601) 359-3184

Missouri Center for Safe Schools

www.umkc.edu/safe-school

The Missouri Center for Safe Schools promotes safe and orderly schools by providing assistance in the identification of resources and by facilitating networking of schools across Missouri.

Center for Safe Schools
University of Missouri, Kansas City
5100 Rockhill Rd.
Kansas City, MO 64110-2499
Phone: (816) 235-5656
Fax: (816) 235-5270

Nebraska Department of Education School Safety Programs

www.nde.state.ne.us/safety

Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall, S.
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987
Phone: (402) 471-1925
Fax: (402) 471-8127

New York State Center for School Safety

<http://int11.mhrcc.org/scss>

The New York State Center for School Safety serves as a clearinghouse of school safety resources and a provider of training and technical assistance, and assists in the collection, assessment, and dissemination of successful school safety programs.

175 Rte. 32, N.

New Paltz, NY 12561

Phone: (845) 255-8989

Fax: (845) 255-3836

North Carolina Center for the Prevention of School Violence

www.cpsv.org

Established in 1993, the North Carolina Center for the Prevention of School Violence serves as a primary point of contact for information, programs, and research about preventing school violence.

313 Chapanoke Rd., Ste. 140

Raleigh, NC 27603

Phone: 1-800-299-6054 or (919) 773-2816

Fax: (919) 773-2904

E-mail: joanne.mcdaniel@ncmail.net

Ohio Safe Schools Center

www.uc.edu/safeschools

The Ohio Safe Schools Center, funded by the Ohio Department of Education, identifies and distributes materials on school safety from the OPERC clearinghouse, a clearinghouse for alcohol and other drug abuse prevention funded by the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services and the Ohio Department of Education. The center also provides on-site and phone program assistance and provides training on topics related to comprehensive school safety planning.

OPERC/Safe Schools Center

University of Cincinnati

P.O. Box 210105

Cincinnati, OH 45221-0105

Phone: 1-800-788-7254 (opt #2) or (513) 556-0440

Fax: (513) 556-3764

E-mail: Andie.Barker@uc.edu

Pennsylvania Center for Safe Schools

www.center-school.org/viol_prev/css/css-s-about.html

Created in 1995, the Pennsylvania Center for Safe Schools provides training, assistance, resource development, and grant management to Pennsylvania public schools.

1300 Market St., Ste. 12

Lemoyne, PA 17043

Phone: (717) 763-1661

Fax: (717) 763-2083

E-mail: setter@csiu.org

South Carolina Center for Safe Schools (SCCSS)

www.myschools.com/offices/ssys

The goal of the SCCSS is to serve as primary point of contact for information, strategies, technical support, and research addressing school and community safety. Research indicates that successful violence prevention strategies include consistent, continual reinforcement, and community support and involvement. The center encourages and supports schools to utilize community resources to design and implement proven effective strategies to address the needs of their youth and communities. These strategies include but are not limited to addressing issues on dropout prevention, character education, parental involvement, mentoring, and service learning. The center's work is directed to maximize efforts to make schools safe places where teachers can teach and students can learn.

South Carolina Department of Education
1429 Senate St., Rm. 706
Columbia, SC 29201
Phone: (803) 734-8402
Fax: (803) 734-2034
E-mail: sccss@sde.state.sc.us

Tennessee School Safety Center

www.state.tn.us/education/tssc.htm

The purpose of the Tennessee School Safety Center is to support schools and communities in their efforts to provide a safe and disciplined learning environment for Tennessee students. The center assists school systems in developing school safety plans and emergency preparedness plans through training and technical assistance. The center is in the process of developing a statewide data collection system that will monitor public, student, and school personnel perceptions of fear or actual threats of violence in schools.

Tennessee Department of Education
710 James Robertson Pkwy.
7th Fl., Andrew Johnson Tower
Nashville, TN 37243-0375
Phone: (615) 741-3248
Fax: (615) 741-6236

Texas School Safety Center

www.txssc.swt.edu

The Texas School Safety Center serves as an ongoing interdisciplinary resource providing training and technical assistance statewide to reduce youth violence and promote safety. The center is a collaborative effort of the governor's office/Criminal Justice Division, the attorney general's School Violence Prevention Task Force, and Southwest Texas State University.

Southwest Texas State University
601 University Dr.
San Marcos, TX 78666
Phone: (512) 245-3696
Fax: (512) 245-8151
E-mail: txssc@swt.edu

Virginia Center for School Safety

www.virginiashoolsafety.com

The Virginia Center for School Safety provides training for Virginia public school personnel in school safety and the effective identification of students who may be at risk for violent behavior and in need of special services or assistance. The center also serves as a resource and referral center for Virginia school divisions by conducting research, sponsoring workshops, and providing information regarding current school safety concerns.

Department of Criminal Justice Services
805 E. Broad St.
Richmond, VA 23219
Phone: (804) 786-7684
E-mail: vcss@dcjs.state.va.us

Washington State School Safety Center

www.k12.wa.us/safetycenter

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Old Capitol Bldg.
P.O. Box 47200
Olympia, WA 98504-7200
E-mail: dfitch@ospi.wednet.edu

Additional Readings

(Adapted from New York State Education Department. (2001, April). *Guidance document for school safety plans* [pp. 85–92]. Albany, NY: Author.)

Crisis counseling and intervention

Educational Service District 105. (1997). *Quick response: A step-by-step guide to crisis management for principals, counselors, and teachers*. Yakima, WA: Author.

Focuses on what to do before, during, and after a crisis. Listing which steps to take and which communication materials to use, helps educators and support staff prepare for and respond to crisis.

New York State Office of Mental Health. (2000). *Crisis counseling guide to children and families in disasters*. Albany, NY: Author.

Intended for use by individuals who respond to the mental health needs of children in emergencies and disasters. A useful guide for emergency staff, human service workers, community members, and elected officials who are responsible for organizing and staffing services to meet the needs of children and families affected by emergencies and disasters.

Poland, S., & McCormick, J.S. (1999). *Coping with crisis: Lessons learned. A resource for schools, parents, and communities*. Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

Offers detailed and comprehensive steps schools can take in the event of any type of crisis situation. Includes actual case studies from several high-profile school shootings.

Creating safe schools

National Association of Secondary School Principals. (1996). *Safe schools: A handbook for practitioners*. Reston, VA: Author.

A joint effort of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and DynCorp intended to help educators develop plans for reducing violence in schools. Provides step-by-step instructions for assessing security at a school and for developing an individualized security plan.

Somers Hill, M., & Hill, F.W. (1994). *Creating safe schools: What principals can do*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

A joint publication of the National Association of Secondary School Principals and Corwin Press offers real-world examples of steps schools can take to end violence on campus.

Remboldt, C., & Zimman, R. (1996). *Respect and protect: A practical step-by-step violence prevention and intervention program for schools and communities*. Minneapolis, MN: Johnson Institute/QVS.

A practical, step-by-step violence prevention and intervention program for schools and communities.

U.S. Departments of Education & Justice, & American Institute for Research. (2000). *Safeguarding our children: An action guide*. Washington, DC: Author.

A follow-up resource to *Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools*, offers additional information on how to develop school safety plans.

General violence prevention

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (2001). *Blueprints for violence prevention*. Washington, DC: Author.

Provides information on violence prevention and intervention programs that have been proven to be effective in reducing adolescent violent crime, aggressive delinquency, and substance abuse and pre-delinquent aggression and conduct disorders. Describes the criteria established by the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV) to designate these model programs as part of CSPV's Blueprints for Violence Prevention Initiative.

U.S. Department of Education. (1998). *Creative partnerships for prevention: Using the arts and humanities to build resiliency in youth*. Washington, DC: Author.

Demonstrates how participation in the arts and humanities can help build young people's resiliency and their ability to successfully adapt and develop in healthy ways.

Bemak, F., & Keys, S. (2000). *Violent and aggressive youth: Intervention and prevention strategies for changing times*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Provides school counselors and other staff with practical principles and guidelines for understanding and providing effective interventions and developing prevention models to deal with aggressive students.

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Kathleen Schmalz, R.N., Ed.D., C.H.E.S., is an associate professor and associate chair in a unique department of Health and Human Services at the College of Mount St. Vincent in Riverdale, New York. She has more than 30 years of experience in teaching, leadership, and management, and serves as a consultant to schools, businesses, government, and nonprofit organizations. She is a nongovernmental representative to the United Nations for three health promotion and educational organizations. With Mary Grenz Jalloh, she has coauthored a book chapter on health education and violence prevention for elementary school teachers.

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Guide 1: Creating Schoolwide Prevention and Intervention Strategies

Guide 2: School Policies and Legal Issues Supporting Safe Schools

Guide 3: Implementing Ongoing Staff Development To Enhance Safe Schools

Guide 4: Ensuring Quality School Facilities and Security Technologies

Guide 5: Fostering School–Law Enforcement Partnerships

**Guide 6: Instituting School-Based Links With Mental Health
and Social Service Agencies**

Guide 7: Fostering School, Family, and Community Involvement

**Guide 8: Acquiring and Utilizing Resources To Enhance
and Sustain a Safe Learning Environment**



**Northwest Regional
Educational Laboratory**
101 S.W. Main St.,
Suite 500
Portland, OR 97204

Phone:
1-800-268-2275
(503) 275-0131

Fax:
(503) 275-0444

E-mail:
safeschools@nwrel.org

Web:
www.safetyzone.org