

MISSOURI SAFE SCHOOLS

Newsletter of the Missouri Center for Safe Schools

August 2003

FROM THE DIRECTOR . . .

I hope all of you have found some time for rest and relaxation!

The summer is quickly drawing to a close and the start of a new school year is rapidly approaching. In regards to preparing for the coming school year, as in the past, the staff of the Missouri Center for Safe Schools is ready to assist you in preparing for the possible safety challenges that you may encounter.

In July, while making a presentation at a conference, I was asked about funding for school safety issues. Recognizing the budget challenges school districts are facing this year, I found a couple of funding opportunities that might be of interest.

First is the \$32 million in grants available to school districts for emergency planning. The application deadline for School Year 2003-04 has already passed. However, after speaking with U.S. Department of Education officials, they believe this funding will be offered again next year. So, you may want to start drafting a proposal for submission next June. To obtain more information about this grant, go to the US Dept. of Education website: www.ed.gov/emergencyplan.

Second, for any school districts considering student drug testing, the US Department of Education has released information on their website about the Student Drug Testing Grant. You will find applications for the FY 2003 Demonstration

Grants for Student Drug Testing. The closing date for this program is August 20, 2003. More information on this grant can be found on the index page of our website or at www.ed.gov/offices/OSDFS/drugtesting.html.

As you prepare for the upcoming year, take time to review your emergency management plans. As plans are being revised you may want to go to the Center's website to review the model emergency classroom/building/district plans, as discussed elsewhere in this newsletter.

Have a great school year and keep up the good work!

Glenn Berry

FROM SUSAN . . .

Because of the budget uncertainties, school districts have been calling frequently asking about the status of the Safe School Program. Beginning July 1, 2003, the Special State Program section that managed the Safe School grants was eliminated from the Division of School Improvement. Rusty Rosenkoetter, the director, has moved to a different division to become the Director of Teacher Certification. Management of the existing grants will stay within the Division of School Improvement and, for this year, will be managed by the staff of Instructional Technology.

Grants for the current year have been negotiated and letters of approval have been sent for 75 continuation grants and 18 pilot

grants. Because it is certain that there will be some withholdings this year, the Department is not accepting first year Safe School Grant applications at this time.

Questions about the Safe School Program should be directed to my office, 573-751-3175 or scole@mail.dese.state.mo.us.

Susan Cole, Coordinator
State Programs
DESE

SAFE SCHOOLS SYMPOSIUM

The next Safe Schools Symposium is scheduled for the Lenoir Center in Columbia on Thursday, September 25th. The focus for our annual symposium will continue to be violence prevention programming for schools, including alternative education. The symposium will begin at 10:00 a.m. and end at 3:00 p.m. Cost per participant, covering the dinner meal, facility use, etc., is \$25, the same as last year.

The agenda for this year's symposium is:

- 9:30 Registration
- 10:00 Welcome
DESE Update
Breakout Sessions (first 2 rounds)
- 11:45 Dinner
- 12:30 Breakouts (last round)
- 1:20 Networking
- 2:30 Debriefing and Closing

Breakout sessions are tentatively: alternative education associations, positive behavior supports, regional professional resources, character education.

The dinner meal will be a buffet,

including: beef tips and burgundy, egg noodles, green beans, assorted pies, and iced tea. Please let us know if you have dietary restrictions.

Registrations must be received by the Missouri Center for Safe Schools not later than Wednesday, September 10th. Register by sending a message listing the names of the attendees, their position titles, and the district/agency. The registration should be sent by e-mail to thompsonrs@umkc.edu or by fax to the Russ Thompson, Missouri Center for Safe Schools, (816) 235-5270. Payment of the registration fee is requested prior to the symposium, however, purchase order arrangements are satisfactory. An invoice will be provided on request. Payments should be made out to the Missouri Center for Safe Schools and mailed to:

Missouri Center for Safe Schools
UMKC School of Education, Suite 024
5100 Rockhill Road
Kansas City, Missouri 64110-2499

REPORT ON ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

During our June meeting, (the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) received an outstanding report about alternative school programs in Missouri. It was presented by staff—along with students and parents—from the St. Joseph and Camdenton School Districts. We heard about St. Joseph's "management school" program for elementary-age children. We also heard first-hand accounts about the impact of the Camdenton School District's program for secondary-level students and dropouts, the Horizons Laker Educational Center.

Partly as a result of grants available under the state's Safe Schools Act, alternative programs have expanded rapidly in school districts over the past seven years. In many cases, districts have joined forces to provide innovative alternative programs for at-risk youth, dropouts and potential dropouts, teen parents, students with chronic behavior problems, or other special needs. As a result of these programs, there is today a much stronger and more sophisticated support system in our schools for students who, in the past, would not have been likely to succeed in the traditional classroom setting. The teachers and students from St. Joseph and Camdenton gave us powerful testimony about how such programs can make a life-changing difference for Missouri kids and their families.

The dropout rate in Missouri has dropped steadily over the past five years and is now below 4% for all students for the first time ever. We believe that the growth of effective alternative programs is partly responsible for this positive trend. We also know that some districts are dropping or trimming alternative programs in response to state-level budget reductions. It will be most unfortunate if the budget crunch leads to the elimination of programs and services that we know can make a positive difference for students who need extra support, direction and assistance.

Taken from a DESE report to school board presidents, July 7, 2003

SAFETY COORDINATOR TRAINING

Don't forget to register for Safety Coordinator Training through the Regional Professional Development Centers. Regional trainings provided by the Missouri Center for Safe Schools are scheduled as follows:

Warrensburg RPDC (800-762-4146) Nov 4
 Kirksville RPDC (660-785-4220) Nov 7
 Rolla RPDC (800-667-0665) Nov 11
 Southeast RPDC (800-401-6680) Nov 10
 SW Center for Ed. Excellence, Webb City
 (417-673-7078) Nov 18
 Kansas City RPDC (800-555-9048) Nov 20
 Maryville RPDC (800-663-3348) Dec 9
 Columbia RPDC (800-214-2753) Jan 22
 St. Louis RPDC (800-835-8282) Feb 5
 (advanced training only at St. Louis)

Basic Safety Coordinated Training (3.5 hours) will be presented in the morning. Advanced Safety Coordinator Training (3 hours) will be presented in the afternoon.

All District Safety Coordinators are encouraged to complete the 3.5 hour basic course at least one time. The material is updated continuously and it may be beneficial to attend this course every other year. The material presented includes:

- Role of the Safety Coordinator
- The components of a comprehensive school safety program (*Safety Review Checklist*)
- Missouri Safe Schools Act
- Violence prevention and the *Missouri Violence Prevention Curriculum Framework*

The 3 hour advanced course addresses different topics from year to year. Some of the information addressed in the advanced course will be rolled into the basic course for subsequent years. Safety Coordinators should attend the advanced course each year. During school year 2003-2004 the

material presented as part of the advanced course will include:

- Safety Review Checklist Update
- Emergency Management Planning (including bomb threat procedures, media interface, etc.)
- Bullying Prevention
- Science Lab Safety Issues

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

According to the American Association of University Women report, based on a national survey of 2,064 public school students in 8th through 11th grades, sexual harassment is a widespread problem throughout the nation. The 2001 report is a follow up to a study conducted by the AAUW in 1993. The report revealed the following alarming statistics regarding sexual harassment in our schools:

- 83% of girls and 79% of boys report having been sexually harassed
- 76% of students have experienced non-physical harassment while 58% have experienced physical harassment.
- Peer-on-peer harassment is most common for both boys and girls, although 7% of boys and girls experiencing physical and non-physical harassment report being harassed by a teacher.
- Most harassment occurred under teachers' noses in the classroom (61% for physical harassment and 56% for non-physical and in hallways (71% physical harassment and 64% non-physical).
- Half of the boys reporting harassment have non-physical

harassed by a girl or woman, and 39% by a group of girls or women.

In contrast, girls are most likely to report harassment by one boy or man (73% in non-physical harassment; 84% in physical harassment).

- Over one-third (35%) of students who have been harassed report that they first experienced it in elementary school.
- Students are perpetrators, too. Slightly more than half of students (54%) say that they have sexually harassed someone during their school life.

School districts face liability for student sexual harassment of students, teacher sexual harassment of students and for sexual harassment of school employees by their supervisors and fellow employees. **The Missouri Center for Safe Schools provides in-services on sexual harassment.** If you would like to schedule training for your district, please contact us at: berryg@umkc.edu.

INCREASED FEES FOR BACKGROUND CHECKS

Effective August 28 there will be a fee adjustment passed along through DESE Conduct & Investigations (573-522-8315) for background checks. Open records checks, to include those done for substitute teachers, which had been done at no cost, will now cost the school district \$5 each. Fingerprint checks, which had cost \$22, will now cost the district \$38.

SCHOOL SAFETY SUMMIT

The Southwest Regional Professional Development Center, in collaboration with this center, is hosting a school safety summit on October 15, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., in Springfield. Topics being addressed include:

- Security for Special Events
- Coping with Stress
- School Bullying
- Threats of Terrorism
- Missouri Violence Prevention Curriculum Framework
- Crisis Planning and Management
- Bomb Threats

Registration is online at <http://education.smsu.edu/rpdc/>.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANNING

There have been a number of improvements made over the past two months to the example school district and building emergency management plans on “downloads” sub-page of our website (<http://www.umkc.edu/safe-school>). Of particular note are the additions made to Annex C, Emergency Public Information, including:

- Appendix 1 to Annex C (both building and district plan), *Example Annual Letter to Parents*
- Appendix 2 to Annex C (district plan), *First 48 Hours Checklist*
- Appendix 3 to Annex C (district plan), *Template For Prescribed, Immediate Response*
- Appendix 4 to Annex C (district plan), *Message Development Worksheet*

The last three of these additions came

from the new Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication course material released by the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention.

Please look over these and other parts of the example plans and adapt them for your use.

Dr. Russ Thompson, Associate Director of the Missouri Center for Safe Schools, is the newsletter editor. If you would like to submit an article for a future *Missouri Safe Schools Newsletter*, please send him your submission by e-mail to thompsonrs@umkc.edu or mail it to:

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Kansas City, MO 64110-2499

Check out the web page for the Missouri Center for Safe Schools at <http://www.umkc.edu/safe-school> and call us at our offices in the School of Education, University of Missouri-Kansas City, (816) 235-5656.