

# MISSOURI SAFE SCHOOLS

Newsletter of the Missouri Center for Safe Schools

May 2003

## FROM THE DIRECTOR . . .

Are you prepared for terrorism?

Over the past couple of months, the national threat level was raised to orange and then lowered to yellow. The fluctuation in threat level caused some school officials to inquire about the how a school district is to respond to the highest level, which is red. I contacted Colonel Tim Daniel, Missouri Homeland Security Director concerning this issue. He responded: "Whether or not the schools close would be based upon the nature of the intelligence that drove the decision to declare a 'red'. Red signals that an attack is imminent. Schools could be closed but it isn't automatic. It is a local decision, not a national decision."

Therefore, to assist schools in preparing for terrorism, we have included a couple of articles on biological terrorism preparedness and emergency management planning.

Deployments associated with the war in Iraq have impacted many schools and communities. The following online toolkit may be helpful. PARENTLINK makes available an online toolkit for Healthy Parenting (<http://outreach.missouri.edu/parentlink/>). The toolkit includes information for military personnel and their families, ranging from how children learn and grow, to helping children during deployment, relocation, and other challenges.

As the school year winds down, I wish each of you a safe and successful graduation and closing of the school year. May you have a relaxing summer. Keep up the good work!

Glenn Berry

## FROM RUSTY . . .

A few updates from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education are:

1. As of April 21, the budget appears to provide funds for Safe Schools Continuation Grants and, *possibly*, a few, first-year grants. While the recent budget recommendation calls for \$2 million in cuts, the remaining funds will be distributed following grant guidelines. If there are funds for new grants, the first-year applications are due June 15, 2003.

2. The Missouri School Violence Hotline has been averaging 28 calls each month. The calls seem to be equally generated from all four quadrants of the state with fights/assaults, threats, and bullying leading the types of reports. The hotline has a new website at <http://www.SchoolViolenceHotline.com>

3. Dr. Leanna Depue from the Missouri Safety Center at Central Missouri State University has completed a video, *Underage=Unprepared*, along with a website that addresses underage drinking. Workshops using the video were presented to participants from 47 Missouri counties. Nearly three-fourths of the participants indicated that their communities had increased activities to prevent underage drinking issues. For more information about the video, please contact Dr. Depue at [depue@cmsu1.cmsu.edu](mailto:depue@cmsu1.cmsu.edu) or call 660/543-4830.

4. For information about crises planning (including bioterrorism) please check the Department's website of resources at <http://www.dese.state.mo.us/divimprove/SSIP>

If I can be of help to you in your school safety needs, please feel free to contact me.

Rusty Rosenkoetter, Director  
Special State Instructional Programs  
DESE

## FROM DEE . . .

The State Board of Education, at the April meeting, passed the final rule for the identification of persistently dangerous schools in Missouri. The process for identifying persistently dangerous schools is a requirement of No Child Left Behind. The criteria for identification is in two parts:

A. In each of three (3) consecutive years:

1. The school has a federal and/or state gun-free schools violation

2. A violent criminal offense as set forth in the Missouri Safe Schools Act is committed on school property which includes but is not limited to school buses or school activities; and

B. In any two (2) years within the three (3) year period listed above, the school experienced expulsions by local board action, for drug, alcohol, weapons or violence that exceed a certain number depending on the size of the school.

As a preventive measure, the federal programs staff at DESE will be looking at the data for each year to see if any school met either criterion for that year. A team of people from DESE will work with a team from the building and the district to determine what kind of preventive measure could be taken to keep that criterion from being met in a subsequent year. DESE will use a Title IV set aside to help fund whatever the team determines could keep that school safe from those violations.

The first goal, in Missouri, is to have our children feel and be safe in school. The second goal is to prevent any schools from meeting the criteria.

Dee Beck, Coordinator  
Federal Programs  
DESE

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## SCHOOL NURSE TRAINING ON BIOLOGICAL TERRORISM PREPAREDNESS

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, in collaboration with St. Louis University Department of Public Health and this center, is providing regional training for school nurses as follows:

June 19, St. Louis

June 23, Kansas City

July 11, Springfield

For more information and registration contact Marjorie Cole, RN MSN, Coordinator of the School Health Program, Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, (573) 751-7285 or [ColeM@dhss.state.mo.us](mailto:ColeM@dhss.state.mo.us).

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## GUIDELINES ON HANDLING SARS INFECTED STUDENTS

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently issued guidelines for school administrators and health officials in determining what to do if a student has SARS.

The guidelines are available on the Internet at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

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## SAFE SCHOOLS SYMPOSIUM

The next Safe Schools Symposium is scheduled for the Lenoir Center in Columbia on Thursday, September 25<sup>th</sup>. 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. The specific agenda items for this year's symposium will be announced in the August *Missouri Safe Schools* newsletter.

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## SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Thirty years ago 66% of students walked to school or rode a bike. Now the percentage is only 13, at least partly because the routes to school are no longer safe. School districts should conduct a safety assessment of the routes to school for walkers and bicycle riders. The first step is determining where students who walk or ride bikes to school live and what routes they take. The routes should be mapped. Then someone needs to walk the routes and look for hazards.

Eliminating hazards and improving safety along the routes to school may result in more students walking or riding bikes, decreasing the vehicle traffic around the school. Less congestion around the school improves safety for everyone. Furthermore, kids who walk to school lose extra pounds, are healthier, and that translates to improved academic performance.

Two concepts, developed in England, should be considered by school districts interested in improving safety for students who walk or ride their bikes to school. The "Walking Bus" involves organizing students in the neighborhood to walk to school together under parent supervision. Students may wear bright yellow vests. The "Walking Bus" uses the safest routes. The students who participate in the "Walking Bus" meet the bus at their assigned pick-up point, just as they would for a normal school bus. In the evening, the "Walking Bus" drops each student off at the designated drop-off point. "Cycle Trains" are the same as "Walking Buses" except everyone rides a bike.

October 8, 2003, "Walk To School Day," presents a good opportunity for stressing the safety of this portion of our student population. The three E's are the key to route safety: education, engineering, and enforcement. Students should be educated on the rules of the road, safe walking and biking practices, and

what to do if there is an emergency.

Engineering includes the installation of effective crosswalks, traffic humps, and other traffic calming measures. Enforcement involves police enforcement of posted speed limits, positioning of crossing guards, etc.

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## CLEARING BUSES

We have all read newspaper accounts of early childhood or primary grade students left on buses for extended periods of time when the driver failed to effectively clear the bus at the end of a run. Drivers for St. Paul public schools in Minnesota must now walk to the back of the bus, checking for sleeping students, and hang an "empty" sign in the rear window as tangible evidence that the bus has been completely checked.

Another school district, White Bear Lake school district, also in Minnesota, installed an electronic system on each bus that requires the driver to open and close the rear door of the bus when the ignition is turned off or an alarm sounds. Unit cost was \$50.

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## UNIDENTIFIED CHEMICALS

There's always a risk when dealing with any chemicals present in school laboratories. So, what do you do when faced with an "unknown/unidentified" bottle sitting on the shelf? Lets face the facts - unlabeled containers are not manufactured, they are created by someone. The first step to identifying the contents is to ask the people who work/study in the area. Someone just might know what is in the container but because they know what's in the bottle they don't feel that the container is "unknown". Once the creator has identified the contents TAKE A MINUTE AND WRITE THE CONTENTS ON THE JAR WITH A PAINT

PENCIL. Paper labels can and will fall off - look at most of the older containers sitting on your shelves. Most chemicals have a shelf life and the manufacturer's figure the labels only need to last as long as this time frame.

Chemistry or Biology labs really need to have a tracking system in place for containers. The tracking system includes a master index with a unique identifying number/code for each container that is currently in the inventory. The identification numbers are placed on all containers of chemicals purchased for the lab. Nothing fancy is required. A paint pencil and a simple Excel spreadsheet will keep the "Unknown" problem away.

If the questioning of staff and pupils does not give you the identity of the contents, try performing basic "fingerprint" analysis. What is the pH? What are the visual properties? Odor? (Best not to smell but some chemical have odors that are so characteristic that they are easily identified - Acetone for example.) Is the item stored in a small lead lined box? In the refrigerator or the freezer? All of these are helpful in identifying the contents.

When all else fails, there are companies that will accept the entire container for analysis. Once the analysis is complete and the contents are 100% identified, then the remaining contents can be handled for disposal. The cost for identification through one of these firms can range from \$150.00 to \$250.00 per item on average. If you would like more information on this topic or if you have items that are unlabeled please give me a call.

Monica Baker  
Waste Express  
Kansas City, MO  
(816) 924-5884 Ex. 428

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## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANNING

There is now a completed example of a district level emergency management plan on the Internet (at the bottom of the "Downloads" sub-page of our website <http://www.umkc.edu/safe-school>) for ShowMe School District, along with a building level plan for Tiger High School, one of the secondary schools in this hypothetical Missouri community. The examples are based on the format provided by the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), parallel to the format utilized by counties and cities in their planning. Also on the site are example classroom and bus emergency response procedures.

If you are ready to develop or revise your own district plan, begin by reviewing the county/city plan(s) for your community. Then become familiar with the Incident Command System. Comprehensive multi-hazard planning should include incident/unified command organization at the building, school district, and community level. Laying the emergency management plans of the county, city, school district, and building side-by-side should reflect the continuity of the combined plans. Several aspects of each plan should be consistent, including:

- There should be a distribution list at the front of the plan. Copies of the school district plan should be provided to emergency service planners from the city/county.
- There should be a chart that indicates who has primary and support responsibilities for each of the functional areas of the plan (Appendix 1 to the Basic Plan).
- There should be a hazards analysis that aligns with the hazards analysis of the next higher planning authority (Appendix 2 to the Basic Plan).
- Annex A should be entitled "Chain of Command" or "Command and Control" and should describe how the Incident Command System will

work in this organization and how it will link up and down the organization.

- Annex B should be entitled “Communication and Warning.”
- Annex C should be entitled “Emergency Public Information.”
- Annex H generally addresses “Hazardous Materials.”

The St. Joseph School District, in collaboration with the City of St. Joseph, Buchanan County, and the Missouri Center for Safe Schools, has been adapting the example plans to their community. The process began in March 2003. After two district-level meetings and two building-level meetings with one middle school, the district was able to produce a district plan and a building plan that is consistent with the city plan. The incident command organization developed in this process resulted in new training requirements. Training will begin this summer based on the Community Emergency Response Team training program. When the training is completed, various exercises will be conducted to test the plan. Each exercise is likely to result in changes and improvements to the plan. The district will then be ready to involve the rest of their schools in the plan development process.

Please provide your suggestions regarding the example plans on our website (816-235-5656 or [thompsonrs@umkc.edu](mailto:thompsonrs@umkc.edu)). If you have questions about the St. Joseph School District activity, contact Nasser Memarian, Director of Safety and Transportation, (816) 671-4000.

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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.

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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](mailto:thompsonrs@umkc.edu) or mail it to:  
Dr. Russ Thompson, Assoc. Dir.