

MISSOURI SAFE SCHOOLS

Newsletter of the Missouri Center for Safe Schools

May 2005

FROM THE DIRECTOR . . .

I can't believe that spring is already here. It seems that Easter was way too early this year. As the school year is ending, it's time for the Annual Safety Coordinator Survey. Letters have been sent out to all district safety coordinator asking them to go to the Center's website (www.umkc.edu/safe-school) and complete the online survey questionnaire. Your participation in the survey is greatly appreciated and your comments are extremely helpful to the Center.

Russ and I are preparing for the FY05-06 Safety Coordinator Trainings. Most of the dates for the FY05-06 Safety Coordinator Trainings have been determined. The sites and dates are:
November 8, 2005 – Rolla RPDC
November 9, 2005 – Cape Girardeau RPDC
November 10, 2005 – St. Louis RPDC
November 15, 2005 – Kirksville RPDC
November 16, 2005 – Maryville RPDC
December 6, 2005 – Warrensburg RPDC
December 7, 2005 – Columbia RPDC
December 15, 2005 – Kansas City RPDC
SW Center for Ed. Excellence – TBA
Southwest RPDC - TBA

Times and agenda will be posted in the August Newsletter or you can go to our website in May to check additional safety coordinator training information.

Recently, I attended the National Mass Fatalities Institute (NMFI) training. Here are a few ideas to consider in preparing for a mass fatality event:

- Get to know the players before an event. Boundaries/political lines must take second place to preparedness. "We don't get a second chance to get it right."
- Families will drive the process.
- All events begin and end as a local event.
- Training is critical. Must plan/train regularly.
- Every event is different. Write a plan to be flexible.
- All first responders must talk in plain language.
- Develop mutual aid agreements.
- Communications are crucial.
- Acronyms related to mass fatality incident
 - DMORT – Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team
 - VIP – Victim Identification Process
 - CST – Civil Support Team
 - NIMS – National Incident Management System
 - FAC – Family Assistance Center
 - PADD – Proper Person Authorized to Direct Disposition of Remains
 - CHAOS – Chief Has Arrived On Scene (*LOL – Laugh Out Loud, this one is intended to be funny*)

Resources for your use in planning for mass fatalities can be found at:

www.LLIS.gov (lessons learned)
www.MIPT.org

www.DMORT.org
www.traumahealing.com
www.centerfordisastermedicine.org

As a reminder, we are instituting a Share Your Success column in the newsletter. Have you implemented a safety program that has gotten results? Share it with other safety coordinators in the newsletter. Write: berryg@umkc.edu or thompsonrs@umkc.edu.

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. As always, keep up the good work!

Glenn Berry

SAFETY MEETINGS

The Putnam County R-I School district, located in rural North Central Missouri has found that school meetings with local service and law enforcement agencies prove to be worthwhile.

Due to the lack of resources in the rural community, Putnam County R-I administrators strive to get the most out of the services that are available. In 2001 the School Based Social Worker began coordinating a monthly school meeting to facilitate communication and ensure that students and families were receiving adequate services. The original meetings consisted of Building Principals (K-12), School Counselors, School Based Social Worker, Division of Family Services Social Worker, and Putnam County Juvenile Officer. The meetings allow for better communication and preventive services at the onset of a problem.

Finding the meetings to be a worthwhile cause, there have been two additional agencies that now attend the meetings. The Putnam County Sheriff and the Probation and Parole Officer have joined the group and now attend on a regular basis. Recently the Sheriff was in a meeting with the High School Principal and Social Worker, and he shared his appreciation for having the ability to facilitate communication and offer assistance to families and children. When a crisis occurs, and assistance is needed from the Children's Division or Juvenile Office, having those working relationships well established really proves to be beneficial. The agencies that can offer support are aware of the needs, and can react in a timely manner.

Although communication is very open between agencies and Putnam County R-I, we continue to look for ways to improve. In the next few months all of the administrators and School Based Social Worker will have I-notes communication to ensure confidential communication between the school and juvenile officers.

Diane McClain
School Social Worker
Putnam County R-I

SCHOOL QUARANTINE EXERCISES

The presentation of a highly communicable disease within a school building, resulting from either the normal spread of disease or an act of terrorism, can easily occur. Quarantine of a school building needs to be rehearsed to assure an adequate and timely response.

Commonly, schools have a lock-down procedure which has been practiced time

and again. So what is the difference between that and a quarantine action? The answer is TIME. Lock-downs last for hours. Quarantines may last for days or even weeks. How will your district deal with providing for those within the building while health, medical and other agencies deal with the external problems of treatment, containment and security?

With three years of experience in quarantine exercises at several school districts, Clay County has arrived at a three step process for school quarantine preparedness. The first step is an *Informational Exercise*, which usually takes no more than two hours. The agencies involved (law enforcement, fire, EMS, HAZMAT, emergency management, Red Cross, Salvation Army, public health, and others) meet with the school district and each presents their responsibilities, authority, and limitations. The second step is a *Table-top Exercise*, again attended by all the agencies involved, at which the unified team responds to a series of problems presented by the exercise controller. The table-top can easily take all day to complete and sets the stage for the third step, which is the *Field Exercise*. The field exercise deals with many of the same problems encountered in the table-top, although the agencies are deployed and the time involved is usually held to several hours. A debriefing following the field exercise is beneficial to allow problems and solutions to be discussed before everyone returns to their everyday responsibilities. An after-action report, compiled from the debriefing, provides a valuable record for participating agencies.

Some of our lessons learned from Clay County school quarantine exercises are:

- Adequate staffing is the biggest problem for responding police and fire agencies.
- School staff need to practice the changes incorporated in quarantines, as normal lock-downs do not meet the required actions.
- Communications remains a big problem in both internal and external transmission of information.
- Actions required of staff in the building at time of quarantine will soon exhaust their capabilities and additional staffing may be required. Particularly important for school nursing staff.
- Security, security, security.

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MISSOURI VIOLENCE PREVENTION CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

The State Board of Education approved a revision to the Missouri Violence Prevention Curriculum Framework at the December 16, 2004 meeting. Copies have been distributed to superintendents. The revision is available on the “downloads” sub-page of the Missouri Center for Safe Schools website, www.umkc.edu/safe-school.

In the Spring of 2004, the Center started the process of revising the framework. The Center’s staff presented to numerous groups and provided opportunities for individuals to review for input.

SCHOOL BUS BULLYING

In working with thousands of children of all ages to reduce and prevent bullying behaviors, BJC School Outreach has developed a survey question to determine the areas where students encounter bullying most frequently. The results rank buses as the number two place for bullying, second only to the playground. The bus is noted by nearly 25% as the place for serious incidents of bullying.

When investigating bus safety concerns, it is easy to find specifications for brakes, steering, exhaust, engine performance, lights, and other equipment standards. However, one of the most serious problems on buses has little to do with mechanical functions, and everything to do with the passengers themselves. Many drivers are simply not equipped to handle the student behaviors they are faced with.

With acts of violence on the increase, bus safety will continue to be a growing concern with regard to bullying. Organizing a bus committee comprised of students, staff, drivers, and parents is an important first step in creating a plan that ensures safety and wellbeing of all passengers. Having cameras on buses cannot entirely solve the bullying problem. Some key points for making school buses safer are:

- Define bullying and make sure everyone knows the definition: one person or more intending harm, humiliation and/or intimidation to others with words and/or actions. There are five types of bullying: verbal, emotional, physical, gender, and more recently, cyber (use of the computer).

- Create immediate and consistent consequences for misbehavior; post guidelines on buses
- Train drivers to de-escalate aggression, and know where police and fire stations are along the route in the event they need help; also train them on safety procedures when weapons are present
- Recognize the importance of dealing with low-level aggression such as name-calling, put downs, or negative humor in preventing more serious offenses
- Have assigned seats
- Develop incentives for positive behavior. Praise and reward appropriate behavior.
- Get parents involved; have a “meet the driver” session before the year gets started to discuss mutual expectations
- Consider adding another adult on the bus; this can be a volunteer or paid staff
- Give daily reports of incidents – a bad experience on the way to school can affect the entire day for some children.
- When it is difficult to determine the fault, have all students write out statements privately so the truth can emerge
- Support training and keep communications open with drivers and building administrators
- Set policy that supports positive steps rather than punishments
- Help troublemakers become peacemakers by giving them responsibility
- Train students to be vigilant, caring witnesses – teach empathy; if students take

- responsibility for safety, they can work together to stop violence
- Bring bus drivers into classrooms to allow students to relate to them in a different environment

Lynne Lang
BJC HealthCare

[BJC is arranging a Conference on Female Aggression to take place at the Eric P. Newman Educational Center at Barnes Hospital in St. Louis on Thursday, November 3, 2005. For more information about BJC HealthCare's School Outreach & Youth Development call 314-286-0504 or send an e-mail message to LML1435@bjc.org.]

USDOE EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT GRANT

At this time the U.S. Department of Education is planning for the third cycle of the Emergency Response and Crisis Management Grant. The Department has not provided an estimate of appropriations. Grant timeline:

Application Notice – 6/14/2005
Application Deadline – 7/29/2005

Contact Person:

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SCIENCE LAB SAFETY

The Science Lab Safety workshop with Dr. Jack Gerlovich, Drake University, which had been scheduled for Saturday, May 7th, in St. Louis is being rescheduled for August.

The tentative date is Thursday, August 25th, and the registration point of contact is the St. Louis Regional Professional Development Center at 800-835-8282.

Edwin Buckner from Region 7 of the Environmental Protection Agency recommends that science educators review the following information:

- Schools Chemical Cleanout Campaign
(www.epa.gov/rcc/clusters/schools)
- Mismanagement of Laboratory Waste Creates Risk of Serious Injury (4 pages)
(<http://www.epa.gov/Compliance/resources/newsletters/civil/enfalert/labalert.pdf>)

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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