Thanks to the teachers of Will County, Illinois the K-12 School Safety Advisory Task Force has learned a great deal about where training efforts for high-quality school emergency operations would be most effective. As promised, a summary of survey results follows.

- Teachers perceived that they are less trained to keep students safe during and after Nuclear Emergencies, Biological Emergencies, Earthquakes, and Floods.
- Teachers perceive they are not adequately trained to keep students safe when emergencies occur outside of their classrooms; this includes recess, before and after school, assemblies, off-campus events, and extra-curricular activities.
- Teachers felt students would report another student who intended to inflict harm. These results also indicated that teachers would overwhelmingly report their concerns to the social worker and that they felt confident that they could deal with such a situation.
- Teachers were unfamiliar with the terms National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS).
- Teachers were most interested in learning about Active Assault Response. The following topics were also often chosen as topics to learn more about:
  - Working Collaboratively with First Responders
  - Threat Assessment Teams
  - Biological Hazards
  - School Climate/Culture
  - Bomb Threat Response
- Teachers added the following topics to trainings or information they would like:
  - Health Issues – Topics included: CPR, First Aid, defibrillators, and current topics such as Ebola.
  - Terrorism- Such issues were mentioned as hostage situations and more than one type of attack happening at once.
  - Mental Health Issues – There were requests for training on mental health first aid, suicide prevention, and stress management for students and staff.
  - Structural Issues – Elevator failure, Special needs students, best protection in a tornado on the second floor of a school.
  - Active Assault Response – evacuating, ALICE training, assessing staff and parents as a threat, and dealing with non-custodial parents as a threat.

On behalf of the Will County Emergency Management Agency and the Regional Office of Education, the teachers of Will County have our sincere thanks for participating in this survey. We respect and value their ideas, and appreciate the time they took to assist in this project. We are grateful for their continued support in providing the students of Will County a safe environment for learning.
“Drive for Tomorrow” Program Helps Peotone High School Sophomores Become Safe Drivers

Last September, Mr. Borkenhagen’s Drivers Education students had the privilege of participating in the State of Illinois’ “Drive for Tomorrow” program. The Illinois State Police, the Illinois Department of Transportation, and other local businesses sponsor the “Drive for Tomorrow” program. The program is designed to supplement and reinforce the classroom and behind-the-wheel instruction students receive at their local high schools.

In the two days that students participated in the program they were immersed in driving simulators and graphic images. These learning opportunities emphasized the effects of impaired and distracted driving, the necessity for seat belts, work zone safety, motorcycle awareness, blind spots of truck drivers, and the dangers of drowsy driving. In addition, they spent a good deal of time hearing first hand from victims and drivers of accidents that could have been prevented.

When speaking directly to the students who participated, they spoke highly of the program. Kara felt that it was extremely informational. She was impressed by getting to sit in a semi-truck and seeing what a truck driver sees and doesn’t see. She also took to heart the story of a mother who lost a child in an accident caused by a drowsy driver.

Michelle felt that it was fun to learn by being interactive. She learned a lot by using the “drunk driving goggles” and the other distracted simulations. She expressed that teens always think, “It’s never going to happen to me.”

Jacob was surprised by some of the statistics and the damage that can be done by a seven mile an hour crash. He felt the rollover crash was surprising in that the dummy was not held in without a seatbelt.

Ken thought that although the graphics were pretty intense, they were necessary because teens do not deal with what reality really is.

Priscilla learned a lot about the actual effects of texting while driving. Even Ethan described the experience as awesome and said the lunches were even pretty good.

Teaching safe driving practices to new drivers is a necessity considering that automobile accidents are the leading cause of death among students ages 16 to 19. Programs like “Drive for Tomorrow” are becoming increasingly popular across the country. During the last six years “Drive for Tomorrow” has become very popular in Illinois for its unconventional, yet effective methods of teaching the effects of risky behaviors behind the wheel.

The “Drive for Tomorrow” program has clearly had a positive impact on these Peotone High School sophomores. For more information regarding this program, please feel free to contact Chris Borkenhagen at 708-258-3236 or Vicki Abbinate at 815-693-7177.

Recommended Reads

Julia Cook and her partner Michelle Hyde have written two new books for elementary age students on the subject of disasters. These books help students learn how to respond to different crises in school, and other areas of their lives, with confidence.

I’m Not Scared... I’m Prepared!  
May 1, 2014  
by Julia Cook and Michelle Hazelwood Hyde

The Ant Hill Disaster  
Jan 1, 2014  
by Julia Cook and Michelle Hazelwood Hyde
Restorative Justice: Resources for Schools

By: Matt Davis, Freelance Contributor at Edutopia (reprinted with permission from (Edutopia)

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Restorative justice empowers students to resolve conflicts on their own, and it's growing in practice at schools around the country. Essentially, the idea is to bring students together in peer-mediated small groups to talk, ask questions and air their grievances. (This overview from Fix School Discipline is a wonderful primer.)

For the growing number of districts using restorative justice, the programs have helped strengthen campus communities, prevent bullying and reduce student conflicts. And the benefits are clear: Early adopting districts have seen drastic reductions in suspension and expulsion rates, and students say they are happier and feel safer.

In practice, these programs vary by district, but respect and responsibility seem to be common themes. Here's a look at restorative justice programs in a few schools:

Oakland Unified School District

Oakland Unified School District first implemented its restorative justice program at one school in 2007. Since then, it has expanded, and the district has seen promising reductions in suspensions, in addition to increased attendance.

The program is broken down into three tiers. In the first, entire classrooms come together in community-building circles to talk about problems and voice their concerns, which encourages peer-to-peer respect. For specific conflicts, though, smaller groups are used, which bring together the harmed student, the person causing the harm, and a group of their peers or adults. A third tier is reserved for student reintegration following suspension.

"Opening Up, Students Transform a Vicious Circle," by Patricia Leigh Brown, New York Times

"Restorative Justice: One High School’s Path to Reducing Suspensions by Half," by Stacy Teicher Khadaroo, Christian Science Monitor

Ypsilanti High School

The restorative justice program at Ypsilanti High School engages students in peer mediation in a "conflict resolution center." These interventions are designed to help resolve conflicts before they turn into bigger issues. For conflicts that have already happened, say a fight, all students involved as well as their peers participate in a "restorative circle," which allows the student who has caused the harm to hear the views of peers.

"School Hopes Talking It Out Keeps Kids From Dropping Out," by Jennifer Guerra, National Public Radio

"Dispute Resolution Center to mentor staff, students at Ypsilanti High," by Danielle Arndt, The Ann Arbor News

Guides for Successful Implementation

Of course, successful restorative justice programs require some planning. For those interested in taking those first steps, these guides provide plenty of insight.

Implementing Restorative Justice: A Guide for Schools, from the Illinois Criminal Justice Authority

Restorative Justice: A Working Guide for Our Schools, from the Alameda County Schools Health Coalition [PDF]

Parent-to-Parent Guide on Restorative Justice, from Community Organizing and Family Issues

Other Resources and Articles

Howard Zehr's Restorative Justice Blog

Restorative Measures Resources, from Minnesota Department of Education

Restorative Justice Resources from Restorative Justice Online

Can Restorative Justice Keep Schools Safe?, Greater Good Science Center

Bullying in Schools: Teaching Respect and Compassion Through Restorative Processes, Marquette University Law School Faculty Blog