



# Safe Schools Agenda

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**Route to:**  
\_ Superintendent  
\_ School Business Off.  
\_ Athletic Director  
\_ Supt. Bldgs/Grounds  
\_ Site Administrators  
\_ Transportation Dir.  
\_ Lunch Director  
\_ Classroom Teachers  
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*A monthly service provided to help you with your efforts to make your school safe for students, staff and the public*

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## Loading Zone Fatalities Down, But...

The results of the 2002-2003 study of Loading and Unloading Zone fatalities by the Kansas Department of Education are in, showing 12 fatalities vs. 13 in the previous school year. That is good news, especially when put in the perspective that 75 fatalities occurred in 1970, the first year of the study. There has been a remarkable decline in fatalities over the intervening years, thanks to new bus designs, staff training, and vigilance by school bus drivers.

Youngsters are much more likely to die from transportation accidents in other ways – since 1992, 968 children seven and under were killed in non-school bus accidents on our highways.

But, the bad news is that the percentage of fatalities caused by passing drivers is up from 36% to 50%. So, in addition to continued staff awareness training, don't forget to work closely with local law enforcement agencies to educate the public and enforce no passing laws.

## Research Connects Substance use and Aggression in School

National surveys have demonstrated that alcohol and other drugs are present and accessible in schools to a degree not always recognized by school staff:

- One-third of 9-12 students reported that drugs

were available to them at school in a study conducted by Kaufman et al in 2001.

- One-half of high school students observed their fellow students under the influence of alcohol or marijuana during school hours. (National Household Education Survey, 1997.)
- Thirty-six per cent of 12 to 19 year old students reported that marijuana was easy to obtain in the school building, on its grounds, or on the school bus. (Chandler, Chapman, Rand, & Taylor, 1998.)
- Only 12% of teachers vs. 41% of students reported witnessing drug sales on school grounds in a study by Califano and Booth in 1997.
- Sixty-five per cent of teachers vs. 34% of students reported their schools to be drug-free in a 2001 study by Califano.

Research has found associations between aggressive behavior and defiant personality traits, low grades, nonparticipation in the classroom, truancy, and alcohol. Finn and Frone investigated the role of alcohol use in aggression in school in a recent study of high school students' health related behaviors. They found that school aggression was higher among students who were male, rebellious, had a weak sense of school identification, low academic achievement, and engaged in alcohol use during the school day. ("Predictors of Aggression in School: the Effect of School-Related Alcohol Use" in NASSP Bulletin, September, 2003.)

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Alcohol use in school was positively associated with aggression and vandalism significantly more than any of the other variables. General alcohol use outside of school was not significantly related to aggression.

Aggression and vandalism were more likely to occur among students with low levels of school identification and poor school achievement, *but school identification had a stronger relationship with aggression than did school grades.*

The study results suggest that:

- Administrators, especially in suburban schools, need to be fully aware of the extent to which students use alcohol and drugs on school property. This is especially important in schools where the presence of illegal substances is likely but not apparent.
- Every school needs a defined approach to discipline which is perceived by the students to be fair, effective and instructive.
- Expectations for student behavior should be conveyed clearly and consistently.
- Open communication between teachers and administrators is essential.
- School climate is a key factor.

Students who relate poorly to school are at a greater risk for alcohol problems and aggression. Positive school climate based on positive relationships between students and staff members, clear disciplinary policies strengthened by programs that connect students to school and strengthen their coping skills, have been shown to help students resist substance abuse.

### **Secure Those Cafeteria Tables Every Day**

Folding cafeteria tables are used in thousands of schools across the country. They weigh up to 350

pounds, stand about 6 feet tall when folded, and stand on wheels so that they can be easily moved. They are commonly used in combination lunchrooms/gymnasiums. Nine students have been killed and 18 injured since 1980 by these tables. In the most recently reported tragedy, a fold-up table toppled over and crushed a 5-year old kindergartner who was standing in line for lunch. (The insurer of the table manufacturer has paid \$10 million to settle a lawsuit brought by the boy's mother.)

This boy apparently leaned against the folded-up table. Other students have become victims when they moved or played on the tables, or the table tipped over on them. Your safety program for folding tables should include:

- A warning label on each portable folding table. (Available from the manufacturer)
- Notification to school personnel about the tip-over hazard
- Prohibition of moving tables by elementary students.
- Prohibition of playing on the tables.
- A mechanism for securing the tables against a wall or fixed object when folded.
- An inspection program to assure that tables are securely stored every day.

### **Spring Inspection of Soccer Goals**

Since 1979, 23 deaths and 38 serious injuries from soccer goals tipping over have been reported to the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Most involved unanchored homemade goals. Look for:

- Warning label "Warning: Always anchor goal. Unsecured goal can fall over causing serious injury or death."
- Number and type of anchors based on soil type and goal weight. "Guidelines for Movable Soccer Goal Safety" available at CPSC, Washington DC 20207.