

# New York State School Safety Group 491

## Safe Schools Agenda

\_\_\_\_ 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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### June Safety Reminders

- Review all plans for special events such as concerts, moving-up and graduation for hazards and security.
- Control traffic at all events
- Review arrangements with outside groups planning to use your facilities during the summer. Check certificates of insurance and Hold Harmless Agreements. Arrange for direct supervision of those operations as necessary. Coordinate all security arrangements.
- Inspect and repair all district equipment before use by summer tenants.
- Secure high cost moveable equipment such as computers in locked down areas which are not accessible from outside.
- Review hazard control systems for summer maintenance and construction projects.
- Train summer workers in safe operating procedures and use of protective equipment.
- Verify that the risks of pesticide exposure from staff use or drift from neighbors has been contained. (For the dangers associated with this, see Safe Schools Agenda, October, 2005.)
- Anticipate and control visits from graduates during the last days of school.
- Conduct an end-of-the-year inspection of athletic equipment.

### Keep Teen Workers Safe this Summer

We usually remind our members each June to take special care when hiring teenagers for summer jobs to set standards for their personal safety and train them accordingly. This responsibility has become easier to satisfy this year because OSHA has developed a *Teen Summer Job Safety Campaign*. If you are planning to hire teenagers this summer, be sure to visit the OSHA website and download the sections that are appropriate for your operations. If you are not planning to hire teenagers for the summer, we encourage you to pass along the information included in the Campaign through your guidance counselors to all the teenagers who apply for working papers.

OSHA says, "Every year, young people join the U.S. workplace for the first time. Their enthusiasm and eagerness to succeed can put them at risk of workplace injury. We do not want to tell them to be afraid, but we do want them to be cautious. That is why we are working to help educate teens on workplace dangers and offer solid safety tips that will help them stay safe and healthy on the job."

*According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than 38,000 teen workers were injured on the job, and another 134 were fatally injured in the year 2004.*

The OSHA resource kit on Teen Summer Job Safety can be downloaded at [www.osha.gov/SLTC/teenworkers/index.html](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/teenworkers/index.html). It includes fact sheets on workplace rights and responsibilities, hazards on the job, ways to prevent injuries, work hours, job restrictions and more. The

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information is valuable for educators and parents as well as the teenagers.

Common summer job hazards and injuries, and how to avoid them are discussed. Included are working in sun and heat, protecting against pesticide hazards, avoiding strains and sprains, and working safely in landscaping. A good, comprehensive resource.

Employers are responsible for providing a safe and healthful workplace for all employees under the OSHA act. You may even find some good reminders for your full time staff. For easy access to the materials, see [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov).

### **How Good Are Your Harassment Policies?**

One of the items on my July “to-do list” as a superintendent was to review district policies. You might want to make a note this year to pay special attention to your district policies on harassment. On January 25, 2006, *the U.S. Department of Education issued a letter warning school districts that it plans to audit school district sexual harassment policies*, apparently as a result of receiving over 5,000 complaints during 2004. The warning was included in a “Dear Colleagues” letter from Stephanie Monroe, the DOE’s assistant secretary for civil rights.

As you know, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and DOE regulations prohibit sex discrimination in programs and activities operated by educational institutions that receive Federal financial assistance. Harassment of students has been found to be a form of sex discrimination covered by Title IX.

It is important to note that Title IX protects students from unlawful sexual harassment in all of a school’s programs or activities, whether they take place in the facilities of the school, on a school bus, at a class or training program sponsored by the school at another location, or elsewhere. Title IX protects both male and female students from sexual harassment, regardless of who the harasser is. Clearly, there must be a full understanding of what constitutes sexual harassment and the remedies available by all students, staff members and parents.

The school is required under law to have a policy and to notify employees, students, and elementary and secondary parents of the policy. The school is also required to adopt and publish grievance procedures for resolving discrimination complaints, including complaints of sexual harassment. Also, the school is required to have at least one employee responsible for coordinating efforts to comply with Title IX. Based on DOE guidelines, you can evaluate your procedures based on the following:

1. Does your sexual harassment policy clearly state that sexual harassment will not be tolerated and explain what types of conduct will be considered to be sexual harassment?
2. Do you publicize a specific grievance procedure for resolving complaints?
3. Do you have effective methods to inform new administrators, teachers, guidance counselors, staff, students and parents of the policy and grievance procedures?
4. Do you have a plan and have assigned responsibility for conducting sexual harassment awareness training for all school staff?
5. Do you have a plan and have assigned responsibility for conducting age-appropriate sexual harassment awareness training for students?
6. Have you established discussion groups for both male and female students where they can talk about what sexual harassment is, and how to respond to it?
7. Do you have a plan to conduct periodic student surveys to find out whether sexual harassment is occurring?
8. When will you conduct periodic awareness training for parents?
9. How do you plan to work with parents and students to develop and implement age-appropriate, effective measures for addressing sexual harassment?

Add to your policy and procedures review reminders that harassment based on disability is wrong and illegal, as well as harassment based on race, color, or national origin. See [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov).