

The Education Report

A weekly report of public policy issues in American Education from

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Report Released to Help Schools Deal with Violence

A joint report produced by the Department of Education and the U.S Secret Service revealed that incidents of targeted violence in schools are rarely impulsive and that attacks are typically the end result of a process of thinking and behavior that often can be detected by others. The report is called, ***The Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the Prevention of School Attacks in the United States***, and it examines the behavior and thinking of young persons who commit acts of targeted violence in the nation's schools.

The most important findings show that, “before more than three quarters of the incidents, others knew about the attacker's idea or plan to attack. Most attackers also engaged in some behavior that caused others concern or indicated a need for help. In virtually all the cases where someone knew of the plan, the person with advance notice was a peer—a friend, schoolmate or sibling. In only two cases did an adult know of the idea or plan.”

Additional findings show:

- More than half of the attackers had revenge as a motive and almost three-quarters were known to hold a grievance prior to the attack.
- Most attackers had previously used guns and had access to them. Two-thirds got the guns used in attacks from their own home or that of a relative.
- Despite prompt law enforcement response, most shooting incidents were resolved before law enforcement authorities arrived on the scene. Other students or faculty stepped in, or the student stopped shooting or committed suicide.
- In almost half the cases, the attacker was influenced or encouraged by others. In most cases, the attacker acted alone.
- There is no accurate or useful "profile" of those who engaged in school-based attacks. Student attackers come from various ethnic and racial backgrounds; a range of family situations; and have varying academic

performance. Some were socially isolated, some popular; some had behavior problems, some had none that were evident; and few had any diagnosed mental disorder.

Within the next few weeks, a new guide to the final report will be disseminated to schools and law-enforcement agencies throughout the country. This publication, *Threat Assessment in Schools: A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and Creating Safe School Climates*, also will be used in 12 regional training sessions sponsored by the Department of Education and the U.S. Secret Service. The first training is scheduled to be in Chicago on June 5. Other sessions will be held in Seattle, Wash.; Houston, Texas; Boston, Mass.; Atlanta, Ga.; and San Francisco, Calif. For more information about the training sessions, visit <http://www.threatassessmentseminars.org>.

Reading First Application Process

The Department of Education announced the identities of the 72 review panelists who will be reviewing state applications for the \$900 million in new *Reading First* grants. This group represents some of the most experienced and expert reading researchers and education practitioners from around the country.

Panelists will ensure that state applications reflect the statutory requirements including those based on the National Reading Panel's comprehensive findings that effective reading instruction must include a combination of instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension and vocabulary. The *Reading First* program centers on:

- improving the quality of classroom instruction;
- building instruction on scientific research proven to work in the teaching of reading;
- providing professional development in reading instruction for educators; and
- ensuring that educators have the resources and research to support the extraordinary initiative.

States with approved applications will begin to receive grants based on formula funding beginning July 1. Once funded, states will open competitions for subgrants to eligible school districts. A list of estimated state grants is available at: www.ed.gov/PressReleases/01-2002/estimates.html.

Satellite Town Meeting
“Early Childhood Education: Ready to Read, Ready to Learn”
Tuesday, May 21, 2002 – 8:00 - 9:00 pm Eastern

Guest panelists are:

Dr. Susan Neuman

Dr. Susan Neuman is the Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education at the U.S. Department of Education.

Dr. Susan Landry

Dr. Susan Landry is the director of the Center for Improving the Readiness of Children for Learning and Education (C.I.R.C.L.E.) in the Department of Pediatrics at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston.

Dr. Eric Smith

Dr. Eric Smith is the Superintendent of schools for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg district in Charlotte, North Carolina

Mr. Ronald Whitmore

Ronald Whitmore serves as an Officer of Early Childhood Education for the Chicago Public Schools.

During the May Satellite Town Meeting Under Secretary Hickok and his guests will explore the following questions and challenges:

- In what ways can communities ensure that all children are given the opportunity to learn the fundamental skills needed to be successful in school?
- What do effective preschool and early literacy programs look like?
- What resources are available for early childhood teachers, parents, grandparents, and childcare providers on ways to prepare children to be successful in school?
- What does the medical community tell us about the latest research on brain development and its ties to early learning?
- How can early childhood programs meet the needs of all students despite drastic preparation levels?
- In what ways does poverty affect the children's acquisition of pre-reading skills

You will need to register before receiving satellite coordinates for our free programming. For more information go to: Satellite.Town.Meeting@ed.gov or call 1-800-USA-LEARN. To view live or archived webcasts of the *Satellite Town Meeting* and to submit a question instantly on-line please visit <http://www.connectlive.com/events/edtowntownmeetings/>

2002 Presidential Scholars

The Department of Education has announced the selection of 141 outstanding high school seniors as the 2002 Presidential Scholars. A 25-member Commission on Presidential Scholars made the final selection from a field of 2,600 candidates. The scholars were selected on the basis of broad academic achievement, including SAT or ACT scores, essays and transcripts, as well as evidence of leadership, character and commitment to high ideals.

The 141 winners include one young man and one young woman from each state, the District Columbia, Puerto Rico, and from U.S. families living abroad. Another 15 scholars are chosen at-large. The 2002 scholars represent the 39th class of Presidential Scholars and join nearly 5,000 past honorees.

The scholars, who are recognized for their achievements in academics, the arts, leadership and community involvement, will visit Washington, D.C., June 22-27, to be honored at a recognition ceremony where each will receive a Presidential Scholar medallion. For more information, please visit www.ed.gov/offices/OIA/Recognition/PSP/index.html.

Negotiated Rulemaking, Title I Public Comment Meetings

All meetings will start at 9:00 a.m. local time with a morning briefing on Standards and Assessments. The official public comment period will begin at 1 p.m. and conclude at 5:15 p.m.

- **Thursday, May 30, 2002**
New York City Area (East Elmhurst, New York)

To register for these meetings, please visit: http://www.esilsg.org/Title_1/

President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education

The 24-member President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education is holding a series of meetings that will culminate with a report recommending reforms for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The site for the first meeting was Houston, TX. The Commission held a March 20th meeting in San Diego and a March 21st meeting in Los Angeles. The remaining meeting will be held **May 30-31 in Washington, DC.**

107th CONGRESS, 2nd SESSION

TENTATIVE SENATE CALENDAR 2002/ NON-LEGISLATIVE PERIODS

Tom Daschle, Majority Leader

May 27 - 31

Senate not in session

May 27

Memorial Day (observed)

June 3 (Mon.)

Senate reconvenes

July 1 - 5

Senate not in session

July 4

Independence Day

July 8 (Mon.)

Senate reconvenes

August 5 - September 2

Senate not in session (August Recess)

September 2

Labor Day

September 3 (Tues.)

Senate reconvenes

September 16 (Mon.)

Yom Kippur (NO VOTES)

October 4

Target adjournment