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The Whole Child Newsletter

March 28, 2013



THE BEST-CASE SCENARIO

As demonstrated by the tragic events of not only the last few months in Connecticut, Georgia, and California, but also the last 10 years across the nation, school safety is a complicated issue with no single or simple solution. We have read, listened to, and participated in discussions on how to keep our schools safe and secure. From our homes, faculty rooms, school board meetings, and the halls of Congress, we are all moving from shock to recovery, fear to resiliency.

As educators, we put our students first every day. We know that [fostering trusting relationships between adults and students](#) is the most effective way to improve school safety. We work together to build positive school climate, create supportive environments, open doors, and invite the community into schools. We provide clearly communicated [rules, values, and expectations that support everyone feeling safe and secure](#). We share resources on [responding and building resiliency within safe learning environments before and after a crisis](#).

As we review and reinforce our schools' safety measures, we aren't planning for the worst-case scenario that *might* happen; we are working to make sure the best-case scenario—where schools are learning environments that are physically, socially, and emotionally safe for students and adults—is an everyday occurrence that *does* happen. In February, we looked at what we, as educators, believe is crucial to making our schools safe—not just physically safe, but also safe places to teach and learn. Listen to the [Whole Child Podcast](#) with guests **Joseph Bergant II**, superintendent of Chardon Schools in Ohio; **Howard Adelman**, professor of psychology at UCLA and codirector of the School Mental Health Project and the Center for Mental Health in Schools (a whole child partner); and **Jonathan Cohen**, adjunct professor in psychology and education at Teachers College, Columbia University, and president and cofounder of whole child partner National School Climate Center. Read the [Whole Child Blog](#) to hear from guest bloggers and experts on the importance of safer, connected schools.

LAST MONTH'S PODCAST

How Can We Make Our Schools Safer?

Download the February 2013 [Whole Child Podcast](#) to hear our guests discuss what we, as educators, believe is crucial to making our schools safe—not just physically safe, but also safe places to teach and learn. What is required for students and adults to feel socially, emotionally, and physically safe in school? What two or three things are fundamental to achieving safety in school?

IMPROVING SCHOOLS

The truth is that every school has a climate—it will be adopted by default or it will be planned and promoted. In his "[Improving Schools](#)" column, ASCD's Sean Slade shares an example of a principal and school that highlights the effects of a positive school climate.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION ON THE WHOLE CHILD BLOG

In the long term, writes psychologist and author Thom Markham in his post, "[Only Whole Children Can Make Schools Safe](#)," there is just one answer to the problem of school safety: more love. By integrating the most recent evidence-based findings about positive emotional development into schools, we make healthy emotional development the centerpiece of learning.

If a school isn't a safe place then it can't be a school as we know it—a place to learn and grow. In his post, "[Safer Schools for Living, Growing, and Learning](#)," ASCD's Sean Slade asks, "Is there a point when the physical safety requirements start to impede the teaching and learning environment?"

Well in advance of keeping students safe from the rare outside attack of a disturbed individual, we have lots of work to do to make sure our students are protected from the various forms of harassment and bullying they continue to report. In her post, "[Respect, Compassion, and Fairness in Schools](#)," Paula Mirk from whole child partner Institute for Global Ethics discusses establishing schoolwide practices that build a school culture of integrity.

One other safety issue for students and teachers often goes unaddressed. In "[A Blind Spot in School Safety](#)," principal and author Peter DeWitt talks about students or teachers feeling unsafe because of an authority figure. It's not as extreme as school violence, but it is just as important.

MORE RESOURCES

Is your school safe? Do you understand the influence of poverty on student learning? Have you fostered a bond between students and schools? Do you engage parents, families, and the community in authentic ways? ASCD authors William Parrett and Kathleen M. Budge use these questions to outline a continuous review and improvement strategy for creating healthy, safe, and supportive school environments for high-poverty, high-performing schools in [chapter 8](#) of their book, [Turning High-Poverty Schools into High-Performing Schools](#).

Whole child partner National Association of School Psychologists offers a wealth of [school safety and violence prevention](#) resources, including "[Tips for School Administrators for Reinforcing School Safety](#)" and "[Safe, Supportive Conditions for Learning: Making Connections for Student Success](#)" (PDF).

Creating a climate for learning is key to creating a safe and supportive school environment. Whole child partner the National School Climate Center has released [School Climate Practices for Implementation and Sustainability](#), which presents the latest in research and best practice for effective school climate reform from leading experts in 11 areas, including youth development, moral and social development, shared leadership, equity, and bullying prevention.

Find more resources on school safety and discussion areas on the websites of whole child partner organizations the [American Association of School Administrators](#), [National Education Association](#), and [National Parent Teacher Association](#).

REGISTER FOR THE WHOLE CHILD VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

Join ASCD for its third annual [Whole Child Virtual Conference](#). This free

BLOGS WE LIKE

Learn what's really happening in the world of education with veteran education writer Valerie Strauss and her guests in the *Washington Post's Answer Sheet* blog. In "[How big is the school counselor shortage? Big](#)," Strauss discusses the national call to improving mental health services in schools and the alarming shortage of school counselors.

In an [Edutopia blog post](#), psychology professor and social-emotional learning expert Maurice Elias writes on how the inevitable increases in security, including greater police presence, affect children. It is imperative to shift from security and danger to caring and concern.

In "[The Principal Rule: Safety First](#)" at Edutopia, Marin Country Day School Head of the Upper Division Matt Levinson shares how he defines his job in one word—*safety*—and its three dimensions: physical, emotional, and academic.

OUR PARTNERS

We are proud to [partner](#) with organizations working to ensure that each student learns in an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for students and adults.

[American Association of School Administrators \(@AASAHQ\)](#)

[American Association of School Librarians \(@aasl\)](#)

[Association for Middle Level Education \(@AMLEnews\)](#)

[American School Counselor Association \(@ASCAtweets\)](#)

online event offers thought leadership discussions; presentations from leading authors and experts; and an exploration of the steps outstanding schools, communities, and individual countries take as they move along the continuum of a whole child approach—from implementation to sustainability to culture. No matter where you are on this continuum, you'll find lessons you can learn and questions you can ask to improve and grow your schools.

This year the conference will include 24 sessions over 7 days between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. eastern time, with sessions on May 2 and 3 specifically for Australasian and European audiences. This year's conference speakers include authors and experts **Thomas Armstrong, Michael Fullan, Andy Hargreaves, Eric Jensen, Wendy Ostroff, William Parrett and Kathleen M. Budge, Pasi Sahlberg, and Yong Zhao.**

Sessions will also feature presentations from ASCD's Outstanding Young Educators Award winner, the recipient of Vision in Action: The ASCD Whole Child Award, and members of ASCD's Whole Child Network of Schools.

Registration is now open. Go to www.ascd.org/wcvirtualconference to sign up.

[Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA](#)
[Character Education Partnership \(@CEPnews\)](#)
[Council for Exceptional Children](#)
[\(@CECMembership\)](#)
[Educators for Social Responsibility](#)
[\(@esrnational\)](#)
[GLSEN, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network \(@GLSEN\)](#)
[National Association of Elementary School Principals \(@NAESP\)](#)
[National Association of School Psychologists \(@nasponline\)](#)
[National Association of Secondary School Principals \(@NASSP\)](#)
[National Education Association \(@NEAToday\)](#)
[National Parent Teacher Association \(@NationalPTA\)](#)
[National School Climate Center \(@school_climate\)](#)
[Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc. \(Responsive Classroom\)](#)
[School Social Work Association of America \(@TheSSWAA\)](#)

"When we talk about whole child, we talk about really, 'What are you doing directly at the school every day to address factors that are interfering with those kids learning well, with teachers teaching well, with the ability of teachers to re-engage kids when they're disconnected?' It's only as those change things directly that we see the threat go away."

—Howard Adelman, professor of psychology at UCLA and the Center for Mental Health in Schools, on the [Whole Child Podcast](#)