



## School Health & Safety Newsletter April 2019

As we approach the final months of the school year, the Public Education Department's (PED) Safe and Healthy Schools Bureau (SHSB) would like to provide you some information intended to help you keep your school/district safe and healthy as we finish out the year.

### SAFE SCHOOLS:

April 20, 2019 marks the 20<sup>th</sup> commemoration of the **Columbine High School** shooting, which is still vivid in all of our minds. It is inevitable that this tragedy will be relived by the news media in the coming weeks. The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) has released an excellent resource, [Anniversaries of Tragic Events: Guidance for Educators](#), to help schools through this period. With all the school tragedies that have occurred since Columbine, we know that many parents and students worry about safety at school, however children are safer at school than at home. This may be an opportune time to highlight the efforts schools make to keep students safe. Last year, all 314 schools on the Safe Schools Plan (SSP) review cycle, successfully met the PED's requirements for compliance, an achievement for which we congratulate all of you who worked so hard to prioritize this task and submit quality safe school plans! We are currently reviewing this year's SSP submissions and are happy to support schools with training, technical assistance or other services. Please reach out to us if you have any questions.

Now is the ideal time to review your school's **behavioral threat assessment** process. Although it is not possible to prevent all school shootings, an effective behavioral threat assessment process and positive school climate are keys to minimizing these types of events through positive interventions and prevention strategies. It is important to note that an effective behavioral threat assessment process includes a relatively low threshold for intervention so that students in distress can be identified early and provided support before their behavior escalates to dangerous actions. More information on how to develop a school behavioral threat assessment team can be found on the U.S. Department of Education's [Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools \(REMS\) website](#), [U.S. Secret Service \(USSS\) website](#), or in Section 4.1 of the PED's [Planning for Safe Schools in New Mexico Guide](#).

The "**Momo Challenge**," similar to the 2017 "Blue Whale Challenge," is an on-line "game" geared toward youth that urges participants to commit various acts of self-harm that increase in severity with each new activity. For each activity, participants are encouraged to upload physical evidence to an on-line site and the final task urges participants to take their own life. Useful information from Suicide Voices of Education (SAVE) and the International Association of Suicide Prevention (IASP) regarding the Momo Challenge can be found [here](#). We encourage you to share these resources with staff and parents as appropriate, as this disturbing challenge may be

affecting the health and safety of our youth. To schedule free Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) suicide prevention training at your school, please contact Victoria Waugh-Reed, Statewide Suicide Prevention Coordinator, at Office of School and Adolescent Health at the NM Department of Health at [Victoria.waugh-reed@state.nm.us](mailto:Victoria.waugh-reed@state.nm.us)

In addition, schools, parents and other professionals are encouraged to teach children good online behavior practices, including but not limited to:

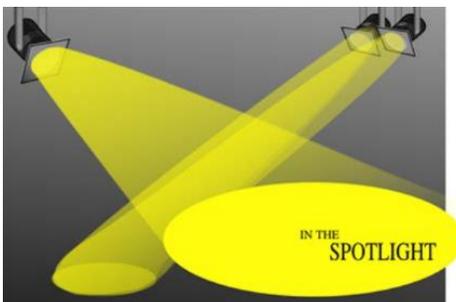
- Warn children not to correspond with strangers on-line
- Set device on-line privacy appropriate for the child's age
- Discuss with children the need for on-line precautions
- Foster an atmosphere of openness and transparency regarding on-line activities
- Monitor new or unrecognized numbers or e-mail addresses that your children are using
- Allow video games and video viewing only in shared family spaces where they can be openly monitored
- Set video game restrictions to "friends only" and prevent accessing user-generated content that could include Momo-themed or other harmful add-ons
- Set YouTube restricted mode to "on" to prevent videos marked as "viewer discretion advised" from being viewed

The PED's [Safe Schools Tab](#) provides free information on **FREE trainings** that are being offered throughout the state between now and the end of the school year, including:

- REMS training on [School Behavioral Threat Assessments](#): May 31, Taos, NM.
- National Fire Protection Academy (NFPA) Workshops on an Introduction to the NFPA 3000 Standard for Active Shooter/Hostile Even Response (ASHER) Program: [May 13<sup>th</sup> in Santa Fe](#), [May 14<sup>th</sup> in Placitas](#) and [May 15<sup>th</sup> in Albuquerque](#).
- FEMA's Site Protection Through Observational Techniques (SPOT): [June 3<sup>rd</sup> in Espanola](#), NM and [June 4<sup>th</sup> in Raton](#), NM. Use password "NCBRT2019" for both registrations.
- Teen Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Camp, Eastern New Mexico University, June 10-14<sup>th</sup>. Youth teams are encouraged to [apply now!](#)

### **School Safety Spotlight:**

Do you know of someone at your school or district who is going the extra mile to make your school safer? We would love to hear about innovative and successful programs being developed that are demonstrating positive results. Bullying prevention, positive climate, tip lines or reporting apps, behavioral threat assessment processes, reunification plans, transportation safety--please let us know so that we may share your success stories and best practices with others around the state!



***Congratulations to the Dora School District for submitting a high-quality Safe Schools Plan (SSP) to the PED and for receiving the PED's first SSP approval designation for the 2108-19 school year!***

## **HEALTH EDUCATION AND WELLNESS:**

### **April is National Nutrition Month®!**

Created by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND), [National Nutrition Month®](#) focuses on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits. Check out the [Fruit and Veggie Toolkit for Kids](#) from the American Heart Association or partake in the [Fruit and Veggie Challenge](#) with your school, classroom or family.

The coordinated school health model reflects that student health is supported by the schools through nutrition, physical activity, health and physical education, a safe environment, social emotional well-being and its partnership with families and the community. This effort is strengthened through the efforts of creating a quality District Wellness Policy. The linkage between student physical and emotional health and academic success is being addressed by all New Mexico schools, some in very creative and exceptional ways, such as:

- BIE schools “strive to incorporate healthy foods that reflect the traditions and culture(s) of the student body” and “serve at least one healthy traditional or cultural dish or snack per month to students and provide cultural education around the food dish, consistent with traditions and practices of the community.”
- The Public Academy for the Performing Arts (PAPA) requires that “all 6<sup>th</sup>- and 7<sup>th</sup>- grade students participate in a series of Citizens of PAPA workshops intended to improve communication skills and decrease harassment and bullying”.
- Bloomfield Schools recommends frequency and duration of developmentally appropriate physical activity breaks, such as: “PK-K: 3 minutes for every 15 minutes of instruction, grades 1-3: 3 to 5 minutes for every 20 minutes of instruction and grades 4-12: 5 minutes for every 30- 35 minutes of content instruction”.

## **SHSB LEGISLATIVE UPDATES—RECENTLY SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR:**

### **Senate Bill 288 (SB288) - SAFE SCHOOLS FOR ALL STUDENTS**

SB288 requires school districts to develop and implement bullying prevention policies and procedures to include definitions and descriptions of bullying. SB288 goes into effect on January 1, 2020. Policies and procedures will be communicated in student handbooks, provide a system for reporting alleged bullying, a process for investigating complaints of alleged bullying, due process for those students accused of bullying, and progressive discipline for students determined to have bullied other students. An annual reporting requirement is also required of schools.

### **House Bill 129 (HB129) - SCHOOL SECURITY PERSONNEL& DEADLY WEAPONS**

HB129 defines “armed school security personnel,” provides for school board and PED authorization of armed school security personnel, and establishes training requirements for such personnel, among other provisions. HB129 goes into effect on July 1, 2020, which means the PED will be working with the New Mexico Public Schools Insurance Authority (NMPSIA), the NM Department of Public Safety (DPS) and others to promulgate NMAC rules to further define and prescribe the required elements of this new law as it applies to schools.

## Senate Bill 147 (SB147) - SCHOOL SAFETY DRILL REQUIREMENTS

SB147 makes the following changes to school emergency drill requirements and takes effect on July 1, 2019:

### **NMAC 6.29.1.9 O (Current Law)**

Schools shall conduct the following emergency drills:

- An emergency drill once each week for the first four weeks of the school year and at least once a month thereafter through the end of the school year. Of these:
  - 9 must be fire drills;
  - 2 must be shelter-in-place drills; \*
  - 1 must be an evacuation drill.

Schools must ask emergency personnel, where available, to attend the drills to provide instruction and constructive criticism.

\* A shelter-in-place drill for the purpose of Active Shooter preparation should include parent/ guardian notification.

### **SB 147**

Requirements for school evacuation and active shooter drills:

- An emergency drill shall be conducted in each public and private school once a week during the first four weeks of the school year. Of these:
  - 1 shall be shelter-in-place that includes preparation to respond to an active shooter;
  - 1 shall be an evacuation drill;
  - 2 shall be fire drills.
- During the rest of the school year, each school shall conduct at least 4 additional emergency drills, at least 2 of which shall be fire drills.

In locations where a fire department is maintained, a member of the fire department shall be requested to be in attendance for the purpose of giving instruction and constructive criticism.

### **FINAL THOUGHTS:**

Safe and healthy schools contribute to the academic achievement of our students. One goal of the SHSB is that our schools provide positive and caring places for students, teachers and staff to learn, achieve and succeed. Please let us know how we can support your school/district to achieve a safer and more healthy environment.

*Lisa Hecker*

Safe Schools Coordinator  
lisa.hecker@state.nm.us  
(505)827-1589

*Jimmie Thompson*

Health Education Coordinator  
jimmie.thompson@state.nm.us  
(505)827-1804

### HEALTHIER SCHOOLS - NEW MEXICO

