



September 2002

School Safety Update

National School Safety Center

Education Law:

Educators Empowered at the Expense of Students' Rights

By Bernard James

The key to understanding the legal relationship between the student and the educator appears to lie in court cases arising out of the Fourth Amendment—the right to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures. The Court decisions regarding searches on campus, while not likely chosen for this purpose, have become the canvas for the restatement of the law on student rights.

Educators may have more authority than ever before to structure schools programs to provide students with a safer learning environment. Broad language in three landmark cases reflect the belief of the U.S. Supreme Court that educators should indeed have more power. In the 1985 case of *TLO v. New Jersey*, the

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'School Shooter' study:

Secret Service & DOE Offer Guide for Managing Threatening Situations

In 1999, following several serious violent attacks on school campuses across the nation, the U.S. Secret Service's National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC) and the U.S. Department of Education's Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program (SDFSP) formed a collaboration to help schools identify and avert potentially dangerous situations. Recently, the agencies released a final report of their Safe Schools Initiative along with a guide for using the threat assessment information gleaned from their study. *Threat Assessment in Schools: A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and to Creating Safe School Climates* sets forth a process for identifying, assessing, and managing students who may pose a threat of targeted violence in schools.

To promote the findings and implications of the initiative, NTAC and SDFSP hosted 12 one-day Threat Assessment Seminars this summer in six cities throughout the country. These seminars pro-

vided training for officials who are concerned about preventing targeted violence, responding to threatening situations, and creating safe school climates.

The Safe School Initiative

The initiative's objective was to attempt to identify information that could be obtainable or "knowable" prior to a school attack. That information would then be analyzed and evaluated to produce a factual, accurate knowledge base on targeted school attacks. This knowledge could be used to help communities across the country to formulate policies and strategies aimed at preventing school-based attacks.

A key feature of the Safe School Initiative was its focus on "targeted" school violence. Targeted violence in school settings refers to school shootings and other school-based attacks where the school was deliberately selected as the location for the attack and was not simply a random

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School Shooter Study . . .

site of opportunity.

After examining 37 incidents of targeted violence in U.S. schools that occurred between 1974 and 2000, federal researchers found that a large majority of school attackers reported being bullied, in some cases severely. Unfortunately for those trying to prevent similar crimes, this is one of a very few commonalities among those who cause serious violence in schools.

According to the report, some attackers were popular, others were loners. Most did well in school and had not been in previous trouble; about two-thirds came from two-parent families. Only 20 percent had been identified formally as needing mental health services, even though nearly four of five had attempted suicide or entertained suicidal thoughts before the attack. The authors concluded that “there is no accurate or useful ‘profile’ of students who engaged in targeted school violence.”

While the use of “profiling” is of no benefit to assessing potential threats, the study offers evidence that other preventive actions may be helpful. For example, acts of school violence rarely are spontaneous. Not only are they typically planned in advance, they also are shared with others to some degree. Even if the student attackers didn’t offer details, they usually did or said something shortly before the attacks that caused concern. Therefore, since signs of trouble are often evident, schools and families must learn to recognize and act upon them.

Other preventive actions may include:

- Trying to ensure that each child has a relationship or connection with one adult in the school;
- Making certain students recognize the seriousness of even

School Shooters: 10 Key Findings

1. **Incidents of targeted violence at school rarely are sudden, impulsive acts.**
2. **Prior to most incidents, other people knew about the attacker’s idea and/or plan to attack.**
3. **Most attackers did not threaten their targets directly prior to advancing the attack.**
4. **There is no accurate or useful profile of students who engaged in targeted school violence.**
5. **Most attackers engaged in some behavior, prior to the incident, that caused others concern or indicated a need for help.**
6. **Most attackers had difficulty coping with significant losses or personal failures. Many had considered or attempted suicide.**
7. **Many attackers felt bullied, persecuted, or injured by others prior to the attack.**
8. **Most attackers had access to and had used weapons prior to the attack.**
9. **In many cases, other students were involved in the attack in some capacity.**
10. **Despite prompt law enforcement responses, most attacks were stopped by means other than law enforcement intervention and most were brief in duration.**

- the most casually aired threats;
- Evaluating the climate of the school through surveys and conversations, and then finding ways to make the environment more positive and nurturing;
- Implementing ways to prevent or reduce bullying; and
- Developing systems to evaluate and defuse threatening situations.

Study implications

The Safe School Initiative developed 10 key findings that have implications for the development of strategies to address the problem of targeted school violence (See box above). The findings suggest focusing efforts in two principal areas:

- Developing the capacity to pick up on and evaluate available or knowable information that might indicate that there is a risk of a targeted school attack; and
- Employing the results of “threat

assessments” in developing strategies to prevent potential school attacks from occurring.

Assessing a school threat

According to the *Threat Assessment in Schools* guide, the process of threat assessment is a continuum. Evaluation of a threatening situation proceeds from a **threat assessment inquiry**, carried out by school officials or the school threat assessment team to a **threat assessment investigation**, carried out by a law enforcement agency. The primary objective of both is to determine whether a *particular* student poses a threat of targeted school violence. If information gathered in an inquiry suggests that the student of concern is considering mounting an attack at school or that a violation of law has occurred, most likely the situation should be referred to law enforcement for an investigation.

The recommended threat assessment process is not about the “wholesale examination of the student body to identify students who may be at risk of committing acts of targeted school violence.” Instead, threat assessment is a tool for responding to threatening situations in which there is a concern about a *particular* student who has come to the attention of school administrators or other authorities.

Threat Assessment Inquiry

The inquiry should be initiated when information about a student’s behavior and communications passes an agreed-upon threshold of concern. This suggests that behaviors must be identified and policies must be developed and implemented in advance of the threatening situation.

Once the decision has been made to conduct an inquiry, information should be sought in five key areas:

- the facts that drew attention to the student, the situation and possibly the targets;
- information about the student (characteristics that identify the student, background data, and information about his or her current life style);
- information about “attack-related” behaviors;
- motives; and
- target selection.

The information collected in the inquiry should be guided by 11 key questions:

1. What are the student’s motives and goals?
2. Have there been any communications suggesting ideas or intent to attack?
3. Has the subject shown inappropriate interest in school attacks or attackers, weapons, or incidents of mass violence?
4. Has the student engaged in attack-related behaviors in-

cluding developing an attack idea or plan; making efforts to acquire or practice with weapons; casing or checking out possible sites and areas for attack; rehearsing attacks or ambushes?

5. Does the student have the capacity to carry out an act of targeted violence?
6. Is the student experiencing hopelessness, desperation, and/or despair?
7. Does the student have a trusting relationship with at least one responsible adult?
8. Does the student see violence as an acceptable/desirable way or the only way to solve problems?
9. Is the student’s conversation and “story” consistent with his or her actions?
10. Are other people concerned about the student’s potential for violence?
11. What circumstances might affect the likelihood of an attack?

Thoughtful consideration of these questions and their answers will produce a sound foundation for the response to the fundamental question of the inquiry: Does the student of concern pose a threat of targeted violence at school?

If the threat assessment team concludes that there is enough reliable information to answer the 11 key questions and the weight of the information is convincing that the student does not pose a threat of targeted school violence, then the threat assessment team may end the inquiry.

If the team concludes that there is insufficient information to be reasonably certain that the student does not pose a threat or the student appears to be on a path to attack, then the team refers the inquiry to the appropriate law enforcement agency for a threat

assessment investigation.

Threat Assessment Investigation

The focus of a threat assessment investigation is similar to that of a threat assessment inquiry. However, the scope of an investigation’s collection and analysis of information is broader than that of an inquiry, reaching outside the school and across agencies and systems within the community.

Investigators should evaluate information they gather with particular focus on the 11 key questions used in the inquiry. In addition, investigators should continually ask:

- Does the information collected prompt more concern or less concern about the possibility that the student is moving on a path toward a school attack?
- What information might prompt less concern?
- What information might heighten concern?
- What options exist for intervening in the behavior of or redirecting the student away from ideas of or plans for a school attack?
- Should potential targets be contacted, warned, and/or protected?

As with a threat assessment inquiry, it is critical that investigators document and keep a record of the information that they gather and evaluate in carrying out a school threat assessment investigation.

A well-documented record provides baseline information about a student’s thinking and actions at a certain point in time. This information can be useful if the student comes to authorities’ attention again, or if at some point in the future investigators need to determine whether the subject has changed patterns of thinking and behavior.

Also, should a threatening situ-

School Shooter Study . . .

ation result in civil or criminal action against a student or others, a carefully documented investigative file will be an important asset in demonstrating that a threat assessment investigation was conducted properly and in compliance with applicable laws, policies, and procedures.

Threat Assessment in Schools: A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and to Creating Safe School Climates offers additional insight into forming threat assessment teams; establishing threat assessment policies and procedures; managing threatening situations; creating safe school climates; and implementing a threat assessment program.

To order copies, write to: ED Pubs, Education Publications Center, U.S. Department of Education, P.O. Box 1398, Jessup, MD 20794-1398; or call toll-free: 1-877-433-7827. Both the final report and the guide are also available online at www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS and www.secretservice.gov/ntac.

CDC releases 2001 Youth Risk Behavior data

Conducted biennially by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System monitors priority health-risk behaviors among youth and young adults. The latest survey includes the following findings:

- 6.6 percent of students nationwide had missed one or more days of school during the 30 days preceding the survey because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school — a 1.4 percent increase from 1999.
- 6.4 percent of students across the country carried a weapon on school property on one or more days of the 30 days preceding the survey — down 0.5 percent from 1999.
- 8.9 percent of students had been threatened or injured with a weapon on school property one or more times during the 12 months preceding the survey — a 1.5 percent increase from 1999.
- 12.5 percent had been in a physical fight on school property one or more times during the 12 months preceding the survey — a 1.7 percent decrease from 1999.

National SAFE KIDS Campaign Focuses on 'Walkability' of Pedestrian Routes to School

While many parents and kids believe their neighborhood is a friendly place to walk, a new survey conducted by the National SAFE KIDS Campaign found that nearly 60 percent of parents and kids encountered serious hazards on their routes to school. That's why SAFE KIDS will once again join program sponsor FedEx Express in a nationwide pedestrian safety initiative, "SAFE KIDS Walk This Way."

Last fall, nearly 10,000 parents and kids in more than 70 communities assessed their routes to school by conducting walkability checks. Participants used a walkability test to rate each aspect of their walk and recorded physical and behavioral hazards they encountered along the way. The walkability check asked the following: Do you have enough room to walk safely? Was it easy to cross streets? Do drivers behave well?

Was it easy to follow safety rules?

The survey results serve as a catalyst for pedestrian safety groups to improve walking conditions in school zones and surrounding neighborhoods. SAFE KIDS found that 60 percent of parents and kids encountered the following serious hazards on their routes to school:

- Pedestrians not able to follow the safety rules; for example, cross the street with the light (27 percent);
- Drivers speeding (25 percent);
- Sidewalks broken or cracked (20 percent);
- No sidewalks, paths or shoulders for pedestrians (17 percent).

On October 2, 2002, as part of International Walk to School Day, thousands of volunteers from FedEx Express will join SAFE KIDS coalitions at schools across the nation to

teach students safe pedestrian behaviors, identify dangerous pedestrian hazards, and work with school communities to improve environments for child pedestrians.

To create long-term solutions, SAFE KIDS will spearhead task forces around the country that will identify key improvements vital to child pedestrian safety; forge relationships with city and county officials to participate in the task force; and work to promote the enactment of recommendations.

Parents who want to examine the walking conditions in their own neighborhood can download a walkability check from the Campaign's website at www.safekids.org or write to the National Safe Kids Campaign, 1301 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Suite 1000, Washington DC 20004.

To learn more about International Walk to School Day activities being held in your community, visit www.walktoschool.org.

New Study Questions Quality of Drug Education in Schools

Drug use among high school students may be going down, but it does not appear to be because of what middle and high schools are teaching children in major metropolitan areas. According to the results of a study published in August's *Health Education Research*, the quality of drug prevention programs among the nation's large school districts is lower than expected.

Previous studies showed that many large school districts in major metropolitan areas were not selecting effective drug prevention programs. However, this study shows that even among the school districts that selected effective programs, only one out of every three school districts used the programs effectively.

The study, which focused on middle- and high-school students, concludes that lack of teacher

training, lack of requisite materials, use of some but not all of the required lessons and teaching strategies, and failure to deliver lessons to age-appropriate students have contributed to the slow progress in keeping children away from tobacco, alcohol, and illegal drugs.

The study, conducted by the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation and funded by the Substance Abuse Policy Research Program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, surveyed 104 school districts from 11 states and the District of Columbia to examine the adoption and implementation of the federal program. Fifty percent of the study sample was large school districts. Large school districts account for only 5 percent of the school districts in the country, but enroll more than 50 percent of the nation's children.

The U.S. Department of Education provides the largest single source of federal prevention funding through its Safe and Drug Free Schools Program (SDFSP). In 1998, the department, which distributes the funds through state and local education agencies, began requiring that school districts spend the money on research-based, effective drug prevention programs or run the risk of losing their SDFSP funding.

Believed to be the first study to assess the quality of program implementation under the new federal policy, this analysis shows that besides problems of implementing effective programs at the classroom and school level, other problems, such as low levels of funding for drug prevention and lack of program guidance have also contributed to the slow progress in improving school-based prevention.

Visit <http://www.phs.wfubmc.edu/sshp/rwj/rwj.htm> for more information.

America's Safe School Week: October 20-26, 2002

The National School Safety Center invites you to join the governor and constituents of your state and your local school community to support the future of this country by observing

**America's Safe Schools Week
October 20-26, 2002.**

Governors who have officially signed proclamations in support of the 2002 celebration thus far include **Lincoln Almond, Rhode Island; Gray Davis, California; Michael Easley, North Carolina; John Engler, Michigan; Jim Geringer, Wyoming; Bill Graves, Kansas; Jim Hodges, South Carolina; Mike Johanns, Nebraska; Frank Keating, Oklahoma; Angus King Jr., Maine; Michael Leavitt, Utah; James McGreevey, New Jersey; Paul Patton, Kentucky; John Rowland, Connecticut; George Ryan, Illinois; and Mark Schweiker, Pennsylvania.**

NSSC's goal in sponsoring this annual celebration, now in its 19th year of observation, is to motivate key education and law enforcement policymakers, as well as students, parents, and community residents, to vigorously advocate school safety. Excellence in education is dependent on safe, secure and peaceful school settings. Schools make substantial contributions to the future of America and to the development of our nation's young people as knowledgeable, responsible and productive citizens. Schools that are safe and free of crime, violence, bullying, weapons, and drugs are necessary to ensure the well-being of all America's children and the quality of their education.

America's Safe Schools Week provides an exceptional opportunity for you and your organization to focus on the educational issues that directly affect the safety of your school and community.

Drug-Testing . . .

Justices agreed to relax Fourth Amendment standards to allow educators to conduct searches based not upon probable cause, but rather on the suspicion “that the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school.”¹

Ten years later, in the 1995 case of *Vernonia School District v. Acton*,² educators were allowed to conduct random, mandatory, suspicionless searches (by testing urine samples for drugs) of students who participated in sponsored athletic programs. The “relevant question,” opined the Justices, “is whether the search is one that a reasonable guardian and tutor might undertake.”³

Fast forward to 2002. This year in *Board of Education v. Earls*, the Supreme Court renders students rights in a manner that permits local educators to broaden suspicionless drug testing programs to reach almost the entire student body.⁴

While still likely to be an unpopular decision with student rights advocates, the ruling in *Earls* should end the debate over whether educators have an exemption from the ordinary requirements of the Fourth Amendment. The shadows cast by these decisions will affect educational policy making well into the future.

The context

The Tecumseh (Oklahoma) School District’s student drug testing policy required students to submit urine samples for drug testing as a condition for participating in interscholastic competition. The policy was implemented in response to perceptions shared by parents, teachers, administrators, counselors, and the school board that student drug use remained a persistent problem in the schools. While some traced the problem back as far as the 1970s, most focused on the more recent

anecdotal accounts.

Under the policy, all students participating in interscholastic competitive activities must agree to submit to drug testing. The testing screens urine samples for amphetamines, cannabinoid metabolites, cocaine, opiates, barbiturates, and benzodiazepines. Students who refuse cannot participate in any competitive activity.

Participating students who test positive are subject to a graduating scale of requirements. After the first positive test, a student may continue in an activity if he or she agrees to drug counseling and follow-up testing. Students who test positive a second time within one school year are suspended from the competitive activity for 14 days and may return to the activity after agreeing to four hours of substance abuse education and follow-up testing. Students who test positive three times within a school year are suspended from the competitive activity for the rest of the school year.

The rulings

The federal court ruled that the school district’s drug testing policy did not violate the Fourth Amendment’s prohibition against unreasonable searches. In appeal, the Tenth Circuit ruled that the policy failed the “special needs” requirement under *Vernonia* — in other words, a school must show “that there is [a] drug use problem among a sufficient number of those subject to the testing, such that testing ... will actually redress its drug problem.”⁵

At the Supreme Court level, Justice Thomas wrote the majority opinion reversing the lower court and upholding the drug-testing plan.

The power of school officials to maintain safe campuses, opines the Justices, includes the power “to discover ... latent or hidden conditions, or to prevent their development. [The interest to keep children safe] is sufficiently compelling to justify

the intrusion on privacy entailed by conducting such searches without any measure of individualized suspicion.”⁶

In place of an objective requirement of some fit or precision between those tested and any actual drug problem, the Court substitutes a presumption that educators will act in good faith in the communities to which they are accountable. As a result, drug testing policies are valid if they “reasonably [serve] the School District’s important interest in detecting and preventing drug use among its students.”⁷

The language of the holding in *Earls* is remarkably broad. While it settles the role of suspicionless searches on public school campuses, it also appears to endorse drug testing of the student body as a whole. At the heart of the matter is the belief of the majority that “Fourth Amendment rights ... are different in public schools than elsewhere; the ‘reasonableness’ inquiry cannot disregard the schools’ custodial and tutelary responsibility for children.”⁸

The caveat

Justice Breyer concurred in a separate opinion. He reminds readers caught in the wake of the Court’s deference to educators that a reversal of fortune might occur — if a testing program subjects the entire school to testing or fails to preserve an option for a conscientious objector, or subjects those who refuse to be tested to expulsion.⁹

Since *Earls* is a 5-4 ruling, Justice Breyer may be the controlling vote to hold the feet of educators to what little fire the Fourth Amendment produces in the area of student rights. Any shift in his vote would fortify the dissenters who collectively expressed alarm regarding the implications of the *Earls* decision. According to them, the educator’s exemption to ordinary Fourth Amendment requirements is now “so expansive or malleable as

to render reasonable any program of student drug testing a school district elects to install.”¹⁰

Good policy or bad?

The fact remains that education is still a local enterprise. After *Earls*, the harder work for school boards will be on the policy side. That which makes good law (allowed by the courts) may not make good policy (be the best fit for a the needs of a local district.)

For the most part, educators have been decidedly indecisive about implementing the tools of authority from *TLO* and *Vernonia*. Part of this has been due to uncertainty over the precise relationship between the cases and the Fourth Amendment standard.

Suspicionless searches have been perceived to be “bad policy” even when legal obstacles have been removed. Policies of this type are still seen as strong medicine by many parents, board members, and administrators — medicine to be reserved for epidemic misconduct outside of the norm of student behavior. Notwithstanding, it is now clear that the law allows educators to consider such searches as a part of a safe schools policy.

Endnotes

1. *TLO*, 469 U.S. at 342.
2. 515 U.S. 646, 652 (1995)
3. *Vernonia*, 515 U.S. at 664.
4. *Board of Education v. Earls*, ___ U.S. ___, 122 S. Ct. 2559; 2002 U.S. LEXIS 4882 (2002).
5. *Earls v. Bd. Of Educ. of Tecumseh Pub. Sch. Dist.*, 242 F.3d 1264, 1278.
6. 2002 U.S. LEXIS 4882, at 14-15.
7. 2002 U.S. LEXIS 4882, at 30.
8. 2002 U.S. LEXIS 4882, at 13.
9. 2002 U.S. LEXIS 4882, at 35.
10. 2002 U.S. LEXIS 4882, at 40.

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Virginia SRO programs showing evidence of continued success

Virginia’s state-assisted SRO programs are reducing school violence and increasing the feeling of safety among school staff and students, according to the “Second Annual Evaluation of DCJS (Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services) Funded School Resource Officer Programs.”

This report is the second in a series of ongoing evaluations of the Virginia School Resource Officer program published by the DCJS. The findings are based on data submitted by 78 local SRO programs, all of which were awarded grants of federal or state monies from DCJS. The data reflects SRO program activity from July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2000.

The findings affirm that SROs in Virginia have succeeded in their roles as law enforcers, instructors, crime prevention specialists, and community liaisons and are viewed as effective agents of change.

According to the report, Virginia SROs deal with a wide range of criminal behavior and are providing services that are critical to the goal of improving school safety. They participate in a variety of activities to prevent or reduce school crime:

- conducting school security assessments;
- * applying Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to reduce the probability of crime;
- developing or improving school crime prevention policies;
- intervening in conflicts before they escalate into reportable incidents; and
- engaging students and staff in crime prevention activities.

According to the evaluation, nearly all students and staff support the presence of SROs in school, and substantial majorities

of both groups rate SROs as effective in reducing fear, fighting, and incidents of bullying. Based on such findings, evaluators conclude that SROs constitute an increasingly professional cadre who has earned a high degree of support from students and staff.

Findings from this evaluation report confirm the findings of the earlier report. Both reports lend greater credence to the assumption that SROs, when properly selected, trained, and assigned to purposeful and planned SRO programs, will improve the security and safety of schools.

Data submitted in the form of activity reports, school incident reports, staff and student surveys, and field reports also provide significant school safety information:

- the overwhelming majority of students and staff feel safe at Virginia schools;
- regardless of the perception of safety, a substantial number of students and staff are victimized in a wide variety of locations on school property;
- two-thirds of the students report seeing someone being bullied or being punched, slapped, or kicked on purpose;
- intentional physical violence comprises one-fourth of the wide range of criminal offenses which come to SROs’ attention;
- most offenders are male students; and
- the majority of *student* victims are male, while the majority of *staff* victims are female.

Complete copies of both reports are available by contacting the Crime Prevention Center, Department of Criminal Justice Services, 805 E. Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219; 804/371-0864 or visiting www.dcjs.state.va.us.

Preparing for September 11, 2002

As the anniversary of the September 11 attacks approaches, educators should expect that children might display many of the same crisis reactions demonstrated immediately after the attacks. The National Association of School Psychologists offers some excellent tips on its website, www.nasponline.org, for dealing with the anniversary at school:

- **Prepare your school community for the anniversary.** Ensure that all caregivers are prepared for a re-awakening of intense emotions and reactions. Provide information about reactions that might be displayed by youth and remind the community of available mental health resources. Consider including information on any memorial plans in back-to-school communications to parents prior to the beginning of the school year.
- **School staff members should work together in developing plans for responding to the anniversary.** Now is also an excellent time to **revisit safety plans**. It may also be appropriate to develop policies/procedures for the referral of at-risk youth, and to offer staff training in threat assessment and suicide prevention.
- One-year anniversaries of crises typically receive **significant media coverage** and often include imagery of destruction. It will be important to **try to limit students' exposure to media reports**.
- **Anticipate and plan how your school will deal with media inquiries regarding your school's response to the anniversary.** The school that presents itself as prepared will be a powerful source of reassurance and resiliency.
- **All caregivers need to be acutely aware of the impact of their own anniversary reactions.** The distress of significant adults will be directly transferred to the children

in their care. It is important to maintain a calm and controlled demeanor. Through your actions show students that school is functioning normally.

- **Take time to listen and talk to children about what they are experiencing and feeling.** Reassure students that adults are doing everything possible to keep children safe. Although it will not be possible to guarantee students will never be attacked, it may be appropriate to explain that to date the attacks on our country have been aimed at buildings that are highly symbolic, not at schools or homes.
- **Be prepared for, and tolerant of, a wide range of behaviors.** Explain to children that it is understandable to be upset or disturbed.
- **Be realistic about curriculum demands.** It may not be a good time for intensive instruction or tests. On the other hand, it can present an opportunity to begin the school year with a focus on the importance of positive issues such as tolerance, anger management, and global awareness.
- **Encourage healthy habits.** Ensure that physical exercise is integrated into the curriculum. Reinforce substance abuse prevention activities.
- **Help students to identify trusted friends and adults from whom they can seek support** when they feel overwhelmed or panic.
- **Ensure that caregivers are available to listen to students' stories.** Hold classroom discussions as appropriate, but do not force discussion or repeatedly bring up the catastrophic events: doing so may re-traumatize students.
- **School support staff and administrators should make special efforts to be highly visible and provide leadership and support** during the days and weeks prior to and following the anniversary.

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