



# Safety Focus



2009-2010

SAFE AND DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS

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## Positive Behavior Support Works!

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is a general term that refers to the application of positive interventions and system changes to achieve socially important behavior change. It is based on a problem-solving model and aims to prevent inappropriate behavior through teaching and reinforcing appropriate behaviors (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports, 2007).

School-wide PBS fits into Georgia's Response to Intervention (RTI): Student Achievement Pyramid of Intervention as a universal approach which focuses attention on the set of social skills/ behaviors that all students are expected to display. The curriculum consists of specific school-wide expectations developed at each school which are then taught to students and reinforced in every setting. Progress monitoring by teachers and school-based PBS teams guides the application of interventions in a consistent and systematic manner.

Bagley Middle School in Murray County implemented PBS. The results in staff and student time saved by

### Time Regained

	Student	Administrator
Minutes	9135	4060
Hours	152	68
Days	19	8

### Bagley Middle School

Recent research indicates that school-wide PBS is associated the decreased exclusionary and punitive discipline practices, increased student satisfaction, improved student achievement, and improved perceptions of school safety. (Horner, Sugai, Todd, & Lewis-Palmer, 2005)

reductions in time spent on student discipline referrals is significant. There was a 52 percent reduction in referrals, which allowed administrators to regain eight days of time and students regained the equivalent of 19 days of instruction time. The chart shows the difference PBS can make.

Other schools have seen similar positive changes in student behavior. For example, Swainsboro Middle School in

Emanuel County School System reported a 34 percent reduction in student discipline referrals, which for them saved the equivalent of 33 days of instructional time compared to the previous school year.

Lee County School System implemented PBS in all schools during the 2008-2009 school year. The results indicate that student discipline referrals declined by 25 percent compared to data from the previous school year.

During the 2009-2010 school year, as many as 100 schools in Georgia will be implementing PBS. Additional PBS training sessions will be scheduled during the school year for schools and school districts interested in implementing PBS.

For more information about PBS, including training sessions and implementation, contact the PBS Program Manager, Ginny O'Connell, at 404-657-9953.



## Safe Passage to School



Recently, Georgia students were fatally injured while walking to school. Walking and bicycling to school are often overlooked when considering school safety. It is estimated that 10 percent of Georgia's students walk or bicycle to and/or from school each school day. That means that approximately 160,000 students need a safe passage to school.

Investigations of the recent student fatalities focus on three primary areas: (1) vehicles speeding through school zones; (2) students

ignoring or ignorant of safe behavior; and (3) complacency about identifying safe passage routes to school. There is another component that needs attention - students, parents, school staff, and citizens reporting unsafe conditions to school and law enforcement officials.

School districts might consider reviewing all student routes to school and seek law enforcement and community input. Additionally, some school districts have a meeting at the beginning of the school year with all stu-

dents who walk or bicycle to school to discuss safety and to encourage students to report unsafe conditions. This information could also be shared with parents at a PTA meeting.

Students, parents, other citizens and school staff should immediately report unsafe conditions to local law enforcement.

If a school district wishes to create an information sheet or brochure about Safe Passage, CDC has a website entitled Pedestrian Safety. The website includes "Kids Walk to School Safely."

Educate students about walking and bicycling safely to school. Teach students about looking for traffic, being visible, how to cross streets safely, and how to obey traffic signs and signals.

Teach students about the role of Crossing Guards and how they should always obey them.



SAFETY FOCUS

### Tips for Walking Safely to School

Walking is fun, but you need to be safe while doing it. Follow these tips to make sure you get to and from school without any problems.

#### Walk together

Younger children should always walk with an adult. Tell your parents that walking is great exercise and a nice way to spend time together.

If your parents say that you can walk to school on your own, remember these tips:

- Walk with a friend when possible.
- Ask your parents to help you pick a safe route to school; one that avoids dangers.
- Stick to the route you picked with your parents. Don't let friends talk you into shortcuts that are more dangerous.
- When you are near the street, don't push, shove, or chase each other.
- Never hitchhike or take rides from people not arranged by your parents.
- Talk to your parents and teacher about any bullying that may happen during your walk.

#### Be seen

Remember, drivers may not be able to see you well. Always wear bright-colored clothes and if it is dark or hard to see, carry flashlights or wear reflective gear.

#### Look for traffic

Watch out for cars and trucks at every driveway and intersection on your walk to school. Look for drivers in parked cars. They may be getting ready to move.

#### Cross the street safely

1. Stop at the curb or edge of the street.
2. Look left, right, left and behind you and in front of you for traffic.
3. Wait until no traffic is coming and begin crossing.
4. Keep looking for traffic until you have finished crossing.
5. Walk, don't run across the street.

Obey traffic signs, signals and adult school crossing guards

**SafeRoutes**  
National Center for Safe Routes to School



#### Reminder

According to Title IV, Safe and Drug-Free School funds may be used for "supporting safe zones of passage activities that ensure that students travel safely to and from school."

# Fire Drills and Reports

State law mandates monthly fire exit drills in all public schools in Georgia when school is in session. Furthermore, the law requires schools to report each fire drill to the Office of Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner (OISFC).

OISFC created a website where the fire drills can be reported electronically:

[www.inscomm.state.ga.us/publiceducation/schoolfiredrills](http://www.inscomm.state.ga.us/publiceducation/schoolfiredrills)



There is concern that schools are not reporting their fire drills in a timely manner. Schools seem to be conducting fire drills, but are not taking the time to record their fire drills to the OISFC.

OISFC posts all fire drill reports on its website. A school's record of fire drills is available to the public. In fact, from the OISFC website,

anyone can enter a school name and find out if the school

has reported fire drills. This file dates back several years.

The OISFC fire drill report website also includes the capacity for schools to report severe weather drills.

Please take the time to make sure each school conducts fire drills and then reports the fire drills on the OISFC website. If you have questions, contact the OISFC at (404) 657-0831 or (404) 651-0157

**Remember**  
The local fire department can train school personnel on the proper use of a fire extinguisher.



# Intruder Alert Drills

It does not happen very often in public schools, but when it does the reaction can be chaotic and the results can be troubling.

An intruder in a school is a scary and potentially dangerous event. That is why schools should have intruder alert procedures in their Safe School Plan or Emergency Procedures.

School safety experts recommend that schools practice their intruder alert drills at least twice each year.



They also recommend that employees hired during the school year and substitute or itinerant

staff be briefed on the intruder alert procedures.

It is critically important for schools to convey the message to employees and students that during an intruder alert no one should be in the hallways, restrooms, cafeteria, playground, gym, locker room, etc. Classrooms should be secured and no one should enter the hallways until the "all clear" signal is given.

The GaDOE Safe and Drug-Free Schools staff and the Georgia Emergency Management Agency School Safety staff can review intruder alert procedures and observe intruder alert drills for feedback and recommendations.

# Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD)

Founded as Students Against Driving Drunk, the name was changed to Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) at the request of students. SADD continues to endorse the "no use" message related to the use of alcohol and other drugs. However, SADD now also focuses on prevention of destructive behaviors and attitudes that are harmful to students, includ-

ing underage drinking, substance abuse, impaired driving, violence and suicide.

SADD is a program in the Georgia Governor's Office of Highway Safety (GOHS). Each Georgia high school is encouraged to establish a SADD chapter, because research shows that students in schools with SADD chapters are more informed about the risks of underage

drinking, other drug use, and impaired driving, and violence prevention.

Annual \$2,000 grants for high schools are available from Georgia SADD through GOHS. The application for the grants is on the GOHS website.

[www.georgiahighwaysafety.org/saddga](http://www.georgiahighwaysafety.org/saddga)





All educators and parents should make a commitment to stop bullying now.



36% of 12-17 year olds reported that someone said threatening or embarrassing things about them through email, instant messages, web sites, chat rooms, or text messages.

## Bullying Prevention Training

Each time the GaDOE staff conducts bullying prevention training, stories of bullying are shared by the audience that reveals in dramatic fashion how invasive bullying is in many lives.

During the Question and Answer segment of a recent training session, a member of the audience shared a very personal story that was so powerful that it stunned her colleagues. She held up a picture of her beautiful baby

grandchild. She said, "My grandson was born healthy and he is a very happy baby; however, he was born with only one arm. When his mother, my daughter, first learned that her baby had one arm her very first comment was, 'I hope they don't pick on him and bully him in school.'" Bullying is so pervasive and so demeaning that she was already fearful of it for her baby.

Stories about being bullied or having their own children ex-

perience the trauma of bullying are almost always shared by the audience during the bullying prevention training sessions, regardless of the audience - teachers, bus drivers, administrators, parents.

The GaDOE Safe and Drug-Free School (SDFS) staff is available to conduct bullying prevention training sessions. Also, please remember that the SDFS Bullying Prevention Toolkit on the GaDOE website is frequently updated.

## Cyberbullying: A Growing Challenge

Cyberbullying is rapidly becoming a major problem for students, parents, and educators. Cyberbullying is when a student is threatened, intimidated, ridiculed, harassed through email, instant messaging, text messaging, web pages, web blogs, chat rooms or discussion groups. Since contact and emotions are masked by the technology, often the bullying is more personal, more mean-spirited, and even more threatening. Some bullies have taken cell phone pictures of the victim and posted them on websites.

The prevalence of cyberbullying is staggering. According to **Stop Bullying Now**,

- 18% of students in grades 6-8 said they had been cyberbullied at least once in the last couple of months; and 6% said it had happened to them 2 or more times.
- 11% of students in grades 6-8 said they had **cyberbullied** another person at least once in the last couple

of months, and 2% said they had done it two or more times.

- 19% of regular Internet users between the ages of 10 and 17 reported being involved in online aggression; 15% had been aggressors, and 7% had been targets (3% were both aggressors and targets).
- 17% of 6-11 year-olds and 36% of 12-17-year-olds reported that someone said threatening or embarrassing things about them through email, instant messages, websites, chat rooms, or text messages.
- Cyberbullying has increased in recent years. In nationally representative surveys of 10-17 year-olds, twice as many children and youth indicated that they had been victims and perpetrators of online harassment in 2007 compared with 2000.
- 45% of preteens and 30% of teens who had been cyberbullied

received the messages while at school.

- 44% of preteens and 70% of teens who had been cyberbullied received the messages at home.
- 34% of preteens and 25% of teens who had been cyberbullied received the messages while at a friend's house.

Educate students, teachers, and other staff members about cyberbullying, its dangers, and what to do if someone is cyberbullied. Be sure that the schools' anti-bullying rules and policies address cyberbullying. Also, it should be standard operating procedures to closely monitor students' use of computers at school.

For more information on cyberbullying, go to:

[www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov](http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov)

# Georgia Student Health Survey II Results

The Georgia Student Health Survey II (GSHS II) is an anonymous, state-wide survey created by the GaDOE. The survey was administered in schools in the fall semester of 2008 to 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th graders enrolled in Georgia public schools. Surveys were administered in school computer labs. A total of 252,887 students from almost 800 schools participated in the survey which represented over 92 percent of Georgia public school districts. 239,050 surveys were validated and analyzed by the Georgia Division of Public Health.

## 2008-2009 GSHS Results Summary

- When compared with students across the nation, fewer Georgia students reported using alcohol, chewing tobacco, smoking tobacco, or marijuana regardless of grade.
- Students that reported using drugs or alcohol initiated use between ages 10-14.
- 90 percent of students in Georgia reported that they feel successful in school.
- 75 percent of students in Georgia feel safe at school.
- More than one quarter of students in the 8th, 10th, and 12th grades reported that they had thought about dropping out of school.
- The majority of students reported that they got along well with other students and adults.

For more detailed information, go to the GaDOE Safe and Drug-Free Schools webpage and click on **GSHS II Survey**.



*The GSHS II is the most comprehensive student health survey in Georgia.*

## School Safety: Be Proactive

Parents, teachers, students and other members of the community expect schools to be safe. That is why it is important to be proactive in planning and forthcoming in communications. The following are some examples of what school districts can do to promote school safety:

- >**Inform parents** about the school district efforts to maintain safe and caring schools through clear behavioral expectations, positive behavior interventions and supports, and crisis planning.
- >**Ensure** that staff members are visible throughout the school day.

- >**Annually** conduct a formal review of all school safety policies and procedures to ensure that emerging school safety issues are adequately covered in current school crisis plans and emergency response procedures. (GaDOE can assist.)
- >**Review** communication systems within the school district and with community responders. This should also address how and where parents will be informed in the event of an emergency.
- >**Connect** with community partners (emergency responders, area hospitals, victim's assistance, etc.) to review emergency response plans and to discuss any

- short-term needs that may be obvious in response to a crisis (Georgia Emergency Management Agency can assist).
- >**Provide** crisis training and professional development for staff members based upon needs assessments.
- >**Keep** staff members informed about crisis planning and emergency procedures on a regular basis.
- >**Practice** emergency procedures and communication protocols at least twice each school year.



## Coping with Traumatic Events



Reassurance is the key to helping children through a traumatic time.

Answer questions about the event honestly, but do not dwell on frightening details or allow the subject to dominate classroom time

indefinitely. Encourage children of all ages to express emotions through conversation, writing, or artwork and to find a way to help others who were affected by the event. Try to maintain a normal classroom routine, and encourage children to participate in recreational activity. Temporarily reduce your expectations about performance in school. Acknowledge that you, too, may have reactions asso-

- ciated with the traumatic event, and take steps to promote your own physical and emotional healing.
- Provide children with opportunities to talk about what they are seeing on television and to ask questions.
- Do not be afraid to admit that you cannot answer all of their questions.
- Answer questions at a level the child can understand.

For more information, see "Coping with Traumatic Events" on the GaDOE Safe and Drug-Free Schools website or go to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) website.

## Storm Prediction Center: Tornado Preparedness

If the school's alarm system relies on electricity, have a compressed air horn or megaphone to sound the alert in case of power failure.

Make special provisions for disabled students and those in portable classrooms. Portable classrooms are exceptionally dangerous in a tornado.

Make sure someone knows how to turn off electricity and gas in the event the school is damaged.

Keep students at school beyond regular hours if threatening weather is expected and inform parents of this policy. Children are safer deep within a school than in a bus or car. Students should not be sent home early if severe weather is approaching, because they may still be out on the roads when it hits.

Lunches or assemblies in large rooms should be postponed if severe weather is approaching. Gymnasiums, cafeterias, and auditoriums offer no protection from tornado-strength winds. Even if there is no tornado, severe thunderstorms can generate winds strong enough to cause major damage.

The National Storm Prediction Center offers the following guidelines for schools in preparation for severe storms.

Ideally, the lowest possible level is the safest. However, in some large schools, there may not be enough time to direct all occupants of the upper floors into safe areas, or enough space in those lowest-floor safe areas to hold everyone. Ultimately, the school administrators need to evaluate the time, space, traffic flow and coordination needed to direct all the kids and staff down into safe areas in an organized manner. That will require a *customized drill* which will vary from building to building, so the guidelines here must be rather open-ended by necessity. But here are some things to consider:

**SECONDS COUNT.** If it takes more than 2 or 3 minutes to move all upper-floor people down, things get really risky. Though the average lead (advance) time on tornado warnings has increased in recent years, remember that the average still includes some warnings with NO lead time, or just a minute or two. Warnings are not absolutely perfect, radars cannot see everything, and tornadoes do not always touch down miles away and make themselves visible before hitting. Plan for a *reasonable worst-case scenario* -- a

tornado is spotted very close by and hits with little or no warning. That way, during the majority of cases when there are warnings with several minutes of lead time, the plan can be executed and everyone is in a safe place within one or two minutes of the first alert. That is the ultimate goal.

**FLYING DEBRIS** is the biggest tornado hazard. That's why there needs to be as many walls as possible between people and the tornado. Are there interior hallways, rooms or corridors which are NOT exposed to the outside through windows, doors or walls of glass? If not, then it can turn into a hazard of flying broken glass. Always plan ahead for areas of the building with no glass.

**PORTABLE CLASSROOMS:** These are very dangerous during a tornado and severe thunderstorms. Portable classrooms are most often constructed like mobile homes, and they are just as dangerous. Any sound tornado safety plan must include getting students out of portable classrooms and into a safe area in the main building as quickly as possible to minimize the time spent outside and exposed to the elements. While the seconds spent

outside will pose considerable risk, the danger inside the trailer is greater. If feasible, students should be evacuated from portable classrooms *before the storm threatens* -- before the warning, when a tornado or severe thunderstorm watch is issued, but at the very least, portable classrooms must be evacuated when any type of warning is issued by the National Weather Service. Remember: Tornadoes can occur with little or no advance warning. Moving students inside the main building may be a hassle, but it may also save precious seconds and the lives of students if a tornado or extremely severe thunderstorm hits.

**DANGER - GYMS and AUDITORIUMS:** Large, open-span areas, such as gymnasiums, auditoriums and most lunchrooms, can be very dangerous even in weak tornadoes, and should not be used for sheltering people. This sort of room has inherent structural weaknesses with lack of roof support, making them especially prone to collapse with weaker wind loading than more compact areas of the same school building. Consider the aerial photo of Caledonia (MS) High School (below) as an example of this, when the school was hit by a tornado in January 2008.



**After-Event Notes:** Account for all students and staff. Keep students assembled in an orderly manner, in a safe area away from broken glass and other sharp debris, and away from power lines, puddles containing power lines, and emergency traffic areas. While waiting for emergency personnel to arrive, carefully render aid to those who are injured. Keep everyone out of damaged parts of the school; chunks of debris or even whole sections of the building may collapse. Ensure nobody is using matches or lighters, in case of leaking natural gas pipes or fuel tanks nearby.

DUCK and COVER



# Prevention and Intervention Works

Each year, the GaDOE Safe and Drug-Free Schools (SDFS) staff members ask for success stories about SDFS-funded programs that helped students. The following are just a few of these stories. In the near future, these and other stories will be highlighted each year on the GaDOE SDFS website.

“We are in the second year at Statham Elementary School with our Safe School Ambassadors program. The leadership skills and confidence building developed through this training is truly won-

derful to witness. Children who would otherwise be too timid to step up or intercede in situations, do so now to prevent bullying or hurt feelings. It is rewarding to the peers who receive support and to the children giving aid.”

Dindy Owens, Counselor

“It seems like every year there is a resource which the SDFS program provides to us that ends up being a cornerstone of our program at Cartersville Elementary School. During the 2008-2009 school year one of the programs was “Take a

Stand, Lend a Hand, Stop Bullying Now”. We implemented this bully prevention model with approximately 900 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders. This has been one of the most effective and timely programs we have used.” Marty Barber, Counselor

“The Peaceful School Bus training has impacted our bus referrals. I trained our bus drivers on October 14th. Prior to the training I had 22 bus referrals. That has been reduced since the training to only one bus referral.” Lisa Travis, Assistant Principal, Locust Grove Elementary.



## Success Story: “Think Before You Drink”

April Thomason wrote the following about Coffee County School System’s very successful DUI prevention efforts.

“The ‘Think Before You Drink’ video was a huge success in an effort to promote alcohol awareness as well as DUI prevention. The idea for the video originated from local middle school life skills teachers challenging each other to be creative in implementing the Botvin’s Life Skills curriculum.

The video is a story about the consequences that occur when teens make the decision to drink and get behind the wheel of a vehicle. The video features local teens, parents, community agencies and volunteers. After the video was aired on our local television station we received numerous requests for copies. It has been distributed throughout our community to be shown in churches, drivers education classes, afterschool programs

and personal use. Other counties and other states have requested copies. The video received a Gold Award of Excellence from the Georgia School Public Relations Association and received the Superintendent’s Award locally. Most importantly, there have been numerous testimonies from students who were affected by the video and prevented them from drinking and driving.”



## Labelle Elementary School Recognized as a Model Bullying Prevention School

Labelle Elementary School was recognized by the Prevention/ Intervention Center as a Model Bullying Prevention School. Since spring 2007, Labelle Elementary School has worked hard to successfully implement all of the components of the research-based Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. The hard work has paid off. The results of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program Questionnaire

administered in spring 2008 showed a reduction in students’ self-reports of being bullied by 37 percent.

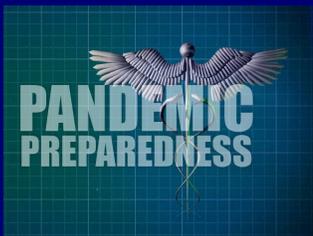
The faculty and administration worked together to develop an action plan for their bullying prevention program core components by adopting class rules against bullying, incorporating regular classroom discussions about bullying and bystander behavior, and increased monitoring of “hotspots” for bullying.





<http://www.flu.gov>

*“CDC guidance says that the decision to dismiss students should be made locally....”*



*“Reactive dismissals might be appropriate when schools are experiencing excessive absenteeism ... preemptive dismissals can be used to decrease the spread of the flu....”*

## H1N1-Swine Flu and Seasonal Flu

After the onset on the H1N1 virus, commonly referred to as the Swine Flu, in Mexico and across the United States in the spring of 2009, school officials and public health officials realized how complicated it was to close schools for public health reasons.

The CDC school dismissal guidance that was sent to school districts in April, 2009, assumed that the novel H1N1 virus had the potential to be a deadly strain. Later, laboratory tests and epidemiological studies showed that the manifestation of the H1N1 was no

different than seasonal flu. However, we should remember that seasonal flu cases 36,000 deaths each year due primarily to pre-existing medical conditions.

CDC school dismissal guidance was updated and distributed to school districts in August, 2009.

CDC guidance says that the decision to dismiss students should be made locally and should balance the goal of reducing the number of people who become seriously ill or die from influenza with the goal of minimizing social dis-

ruption and safety risks to children sometimes associated with school dismissal.

Based on the experience and knowledge gained in jurisdictions that had large outbreaks in spring 2009, the potential benefits of preemptively dismissing students from school are often outweighed by negative consequences, including students being left home alone, health workers missing shifts when they must stay home with their children, students missing meals, and interruption of students' education.

## School Dismissal

**Reactive dismissals** might be appropriate when schools are experiencing excessive absenteeism among students or staff, a large number of children are visiting the school health office or being sent home from school during the school day with documented fever, the school is not able to keep potentially infectious people out, or for other reasons that decrease the ability to maintain school functioning. Reactive dismissals might reduce the burden on the local health care system.

As with selective dismissals, the decision to dismiss students should be made locally and should balance the goal of reducing the number of people who become seriously ill or die from influenza with the goal of minimizing social disruption. School officials are encouraged to work collaboratively and communicate with

neighboring districts or schools to keep others in the region aware of actions that are taken. Officials might decide to dismiss or not dismiss students from their own schools based on the experiences of their neighbors. The risk to students and staff from an ongoing school-based outbreak if potentially infectious individuals cannot be excluded from school may also lead some jurisdictions to decide to close schools. In this case, school-related mass gatherings also should be cancelled or postponed.

**Preemptive dismissals** can be used to decrease the spread of influenza virus or to reduce demand on the health care system. If global or national risk assessments indicate an increased level of severity compared with the spring 2009 H1N1 influenza outbreak, CDC might recommend pre-

emptive school dismissals. If schools are dismissed, school-related mass gatherings should be cancelled or postponed. This would include sporting events, school dances, performances, rallies, commencement ceremonies, and other events that bring large groups of people into close proximity with one another.

School dismissal is likely to be more effective in decreasing the spread of influenza virus in the community when used *early* in relation to the appearance of the virus in the community and when used in *conjunction* with other strategies (for example, cancellation of community sporting events and other mass gatherings). Cancellation or postponement of community events is a decision of event organizers, local public health officials and other government agencies.

# Stay Home When Sick



CDC recommends that individuals with flu-like illness remain at home or be sent home until

at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100 degrees F [37.8 degrees C] or greater), or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications.

This recommendation is based on epidemiologic data about the overall risk of severe illness and death and attempts to balance the risks of severe illness from flu and the potential benefits of decreasing transmission through the exclusion of ill persons with the goal of minimizing social disruption.

Sick students and staff should always be required to stay home. CDC recommends that students and staff who appear to have flu-like illness at arrival or become ill during the day be promptly sepa-

rated from other students and staff and sent home.

In order to do this effectively, schools should be planning for this now by identifying areas in the school building where ill students and staff can be relocated until they can leave the school building.

Some parents require leaving work to pick up their child. Consequently, it may be several minutes before a student with flu-like illness can be removed from the school.

“About 55 million students and 7 million staff attend the more than 130,000 public and private schools in the United States each day. By implementing these recommendations, schools and health officials can help protect one-fifth of the country’s population from the flu.”

## Resuming Classes After School Dismissal

### Resuming classes after a dismissal

The length of time students should be dismissed from school will vary depending on the type of school dismissal as well as the severity and extent of illness. **When the decision is made to dismiss students, CDC recommends doing so for 5 to 7 calendar days.** Reactive school dismissals are likely to be of shorter duration than selective or preemptive dismissals. Because the goals of selective dismissals (to protect students and staff at high risk of severe illness or

death) and preemptive dismissals (to decrease the spread of influenza virus) are usually different from those of reactive dismissals, the length of time schools are dismissed might be longer.

On a regular basis (for example, weekly) communities that have dismissed students from school should reassess the epidemiology of the disease, the benefits of keeping students home, and the societal repercussions of doing so. Based on this reassessment, communities may decide either to extend the school dismissal or to reopen

schools. In the event that CDC recommends preemptive school dismissals, this recommendation also might include a modification to the suggested length of dismissal, based on the severity observed across the nation and globally. Therefore, schools and school boards should plan for more prolonged periods of school dismissal. If schools attempt to continue educational services to all students during a lengthy school dismissal, students with disabilities should receive comparable access to education.

### Preparing for the flu: A Communication Toolkit for Schools (Grades K-12) (PDF) includes:

[Questions and Answers \(PDF Version - 141KB\)](#) about CDC’s *Guidance for State and Local Public Health Officials and School Administrators*

[Action Steps for Schools to Prevent the Spread of Flu \(PDF Version - 96KB\)](#)

[Action Steps for Teachers to Prevent the Spread of Flu \(PDF Version - 90KB\)](#)

[Action Steps for Parents if School is Dismissed or Children are Sick and Must Stay Home \(PDF Version - 99KB\)](#)

[Action Steps for Parents to Protect Your Child and Family from the Flu this School Year \(PDF Version - 92KB\)](#)

[Action Steps for Parents of Children at High Risk for Flu Complications \(PDF Version - 98KB\)](#)

[Information on where to find Posters for Schools about Flu Prevention \(PDF Version - 319KB\)](#)

[Steps the School is Taking During Current Flu Conditions \(Word Version - 41KB\)](#)

[Steps the School is Taking During More Severe Flu Conditions \(Word Version - 45KB\)](#)

<http://www.flu.gov/plan/school/toolkit.html>



The GaDOE Safe and Drug-Free Schools staff has developed comprehensive strategies and plans to identify and meet the needs of students in Georgia schools to reduce the risk factors that jeopardize student achievement.

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- Goal 1**  
Increase high school graduation rate, decrease high school dropout rate, and increase post-secondary enrollment rate.
- Goal 2**  
Strengthen teacher quality, recruitment and retention.
- Goal 3**  
Improve workforce readiness skills.
- Goal 4**  
Develop strong education leaders, particularly at the building level.
- Goal 5**  
Improve the SAT, ACT, and achievement scores of Georgia students.
- Goal 6**  
Make policies that ensure maximum academic and financial accountability.

**GEORGIA WILL LEAD THE NATION IN IMPROVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT.**

## Safe and Drug-Free Schools Annual Summit

The 4th Annual Summit on Substance Abuse, Mental Health, HIV/AIDS, and School Safety/Discipline was held at the Callaway Gardens Conference Center in March, 2009.

Over 275 people attended the conference, representing 70 school districts. The Summit was a collaboration of the Georgia Department of Human Resources - Division of Public Health, the Georgia Council on Substance Abuse, Centers for Disease Control, the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice, and the Georgia Department of Education. Presentations by state and national experts were provided on topics such as gang recognition, drug testing, bullying prevention, Internet safety, underage drinking, violence prevention, self-mutilation, suicide prevention, legal issues and youth, school safety, student discipline, Positive Behavior Supports (PBS), and others.



Some of the featured speakers included Charley English, Director of Homeland Security and the Georgia Emergency Management Agency; J. Tom Morgan, author of *Ignorance is No Defense*; Dr. John Diggs, nationally recognized expert on HIV/AIDS; and Bill Bond, school safety expert. A trainer for the United States Secret Service provided a half-day session on Bystander Violence and lessons learned from incidents such as Colum-

bine High School.

The participants' program evaluations of the Summit were overwhelmingly positive, with typical comments such as "This is the most useful conference I attend each year. It always includes information that I can take right back to my school system and implement."

Mark your calendar now for the 5th Annual Summit, which will be held at Callaway Gardens on March 7-10, 2010.



If you have suggestions for topics or speakers, please contact Marilyn Watson, Program Specialist, GaDOE Safe and Drug-Free Schools program.

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