Kentucky Center for School Safety

Continuing the Journey to Keep Our Children Safe

17th Annual Report 2015
Message from the Executive Director

One of the real pleasures of my position at KCSS comes when it is time to write my message for the Annual Report and I know that what I have to report demonstrates that real progress has been made during the year for school safety in Kentucky. This is one of those times. The 2015-2016 school year was one that I can proudly affirm saw KCSS take many meaningful, proactive steps in our continuous journey to keeping our children safe. Not surprisingly, it was also yet another year when we had no shortage of support from the Kentucky General Assembly, our Governor, the Kentucky Department of Education and our gifted partners at Murray State University and the Kentucky School Boards Association.

Without any doubt, Kentucky is extremely fortunate to have a General Assembly and Governor who still protect the annual Safe Schools Allocation that enables KCSS to exist and provides each of our school districts with safe school funds. Indeed, we are also just as fortunate to have the cooperative efforts of those entities mentioned alongside them above. Together with KCSS, they help to provide our state’s school officials with the vital services and critical information they need in order to continue the substantive enhancement of safety in our schools. In my mind then, it is with sincere gratitude and a deep sense of pride that I firmly say that KCSS does not, should not, and will never take for granted any of these blessings.

Permit me to share just a few of the highlights of the previous year:

- The General Assembly basically adopted the definition of bullying that the Governor’s Task Force on Bullying Prevention developed. As is always its mission when any new development or change in policy occurs impacting school safety, KCSS stands ready to provide training and technical assistance for school district officials as they implement this change in their policies and procedures.
- After a flurry of pranks, bomb and terroristic threats early in the school year, KCSS responded by providing regional trainings with ATF and Law Enforcement experts offering guidance for school districts to consider in addressing these incidents.
- The Safe School Assessment Program remains KCSS’ hallmark service. Our teams of school safety practitioners have conducted 841 assessments to date, thus illustrating the demand for them by our state’s school superintendents and principals. (We have already scheduled our quota for the upcoming 2016-17 school year!) Read more about the assessment on page (4.)
- KCSS welcomed our colleagues from the non-public schools into our fold during 2015. Working with their leadership, we provided safety information, technical assistance and training to many of their schools. In March, we conducted a one-day School Safety Symposium for a group of 130 non-public school administrators. We had a tremendous response and intend to build upon this new relationship. See more details about this on page (6.)
- In an effort to reach as many school administrators as possible, KCSS has partnered with KASA’s (Kentucky Association of School Administrators) summer leadership conference. We will provide 12 breakout sessions that deal with a variety of school safety topics. (Due to a decline in attendance in previous years and a seemingly progressive reduction in state professional development funds to our school districts, we chose not to have our annual conference this school year.)
- Murray State University, via our KCSS partners there, continued to have the best website for school safety. It received more than 4 million hits in 2015. It is a veritable fountain of practical, current information on school safety. Read more about our website as well as other tremendous contributions from our partners at Murray State University on pages (14-15.)

In closing, I sincerely hope that you will enjoy perusing the 2015 Annual Report as much as we have enjoyed preparing it for you. We all know that school safety efforts are never done. In fact, these efforts must be as ongoing as the populations they serve and as ever-changing as the next harmful craze trending in our schools. However, with hard work, determination and the level of generous support we have received heretofore, I am confident that we can continue to make a positive difference in the safety level of our schools for our precious children and the dedicated educators who inhabit them each day.
Kentucky Center for School Safety (KCSS)

Central Operations

Where We Are

Upon creating KCSS in 1998 as a component of House Bill 330, the Kentucky General Assembly stipulated in the legislation that the Center was “to be located at a public university.” In accordance with the stipulation, KCSS is located on the beautiful campus of Eastern Kentucky University Stratton Building (Room 111) in Richmond, Kentucky.

Who We Serve

• Kentucky’s One-Hundred and Seventy-Three Public School Districts
  ✓ Superintendents ✓ Guidance Counselors ✓ Parents ✓ Public Agencies
  ✓ Principals ✓ Teachers ✓ Community Members

• Kentucky School for the Blind
• Kentucky School for the Deaf
• Private-Parochial Schools
• Essentially anyone contacting the Center about a P-12 school safety-related matter

What We Do

• Evaluate existing school safety programs through conducting safe school assessments and other site visits
• After evaluating school safety programs, make recommendations for the school/district to implement to enhance safety practices in specific areas
• Establish clearinghouse of information/materials on school safety accessible to all school districts in the state
• Oversee and distribute Safe Schools Funds to each local school district and the Kentucky School for the Blind and the Kentucky School for the Deaf
• Provide/Coordinate training, technical assistance, and program development to schools, law enforcement agencies, and communities throughout Kentucky
• Analyze school safety and discipline data reported by local school districts
• Promote interagency efforts to address school discipline and safety issues in collaboration with other post-secondary institutions and juvenile delinquency prevention councils
• Accommodate school officials, parents and community members when they contact the center for assistance either through direct phone communication, e-mail or arranged visit to district/school
• Oversee the KCSS and KyCID (Kentucky Center for Instructional Discipline) operating budget
• Conduct annual survey of each of the state’s public school superintendents and principals regarding their satisfaction/dissatisfaction with KCSS
• Work closely with Justice and Law Enforcement Training (JLET) throughout the state
• Independently study issues that do or could impact school climate and culture
• Offer Post-secondary services, including a 12-hour Kentucky School Safety endorsement at Murray State University, materials and curricula on best practices in school safety and assistance with grant funding opportunities
• Provides continuous updates of the Emergency Management Guide used throughout the state
• Advise Kentucky Board of Education on administrative policies/regulations

…and much, much, more.

www.kysafeschools.org 3
Working Toward Safety With

Safe School Assessment

Began as a concerted effort between KCSS, KDE (Kentucky Department of Education) and KSBA (Kentucky School Boards Association) in response to a Kentucky school district’s plea for assistance with a specific disciplinary issue in 2002, the safe school assessment has today become one of the premiere and most demanded services offered by the Kentucky Center for School Safety. The map below illustrates the length and breadth of the state’s schools that have already benefitted from the opportunity extended by KCSS to enhance their overall safety plan by participating in a safe school assessment.

Advantages Derived from Assessment

Superintendents and principals in districts and schools where assessments have been conducted between 2003-2015 offer feedback citing many advantages to having an assessment for a school’s overall learning environment, including:

- Gaining an objective view of the school community’s perceived level of safety;
- Being praised by the school/district community for providing students, school staffs and parents with an unbiased conduit from which their concerns regarding all things that can potentially impact the school’s safety can be heard;
- Being given a list of “Areas of Concern” that can become a part of a school’s Needs Assessment from which to focus on completing/achieving;
- Being given a work plan to guide improvement activities and measure progress, such as with Comprehensive School and District Improvement Plans (CSIPS and CDIPS);
- Being given a list and description of best or promising practices in safety that have been used with some success at other schools;
- Being given the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues on the assessment team, most of whom have been principals in schools much like yours;
- Demonstrating to parents and the school community that extra effort is being made to maximize the school’s safety level;
- Staff and students are generally grateful to principals and superintendents who request an assessment; this can boost the overall school morale as many appreciate all efforts made to improve safety at school.
- The assessment team’s findings are sometimes helpful in convincing the school’s Council or the district’s Board Of Education of the importance of making a specific change in the interest of school safety. The assessment process directly involves representatives of each stakeholder position of the school; when opportunity is provided for input to be given, students, staff and parents are frequently more conciliatory to change and efforts to improve.
- The fact that the safe school assessment is completely free to the school/district as are the follow-up, wrap-around services offered to target specific concerns discussed during the assessment;
- The “physical walk-through” which is a component of the assessment helps to ensure that the school is in compliance in many physical areas with state and federal rules and regulations.

KCSS Consultant Carol Cunningham & East Bernstadt
Parent, Laurel County Sheriff John Root
After inviting all of the state’s school superintendents to consider participating in this opportunity, KDE asked each to complete a district EOP Assessment Tool that would provide more information as to the resources each would need. In the meantime, (5) professional development consultants were trained to guide each school district requesting training by:

- Acquainting school district personnel with suggested guidelines for emergency preparedness, mitigation, continuity and disaster response procedures.
- Encouraging school district School Safety Coordinators to maintain a database of emergency staff and other designated representatives trained in National Incident Management System-Incident Command System protocols.
- Assisting with the planning and design of tabletop, functional, and/or full-scale exercises to prepare school district staff for effective response for all emergencies regardless of severity with the intent to measure preparedness.
- Providing technical assistance to LEAs during the review, revision, and implementation of emergency operations plans.
- Preparing or coordinating after-action reports following exercises, including giving recommendations for improvement and incorporating findings into current emergency operations plans.
- Acting as facilitator of the Emergency Preparedness Committee.
- Assisting with the identification of diverse representatives who can convey emergency information and stimulate social action.
- Acting as a liaison and point of contact to school district official and first responders when developing a school/district’s emergency operations plan(s).
- Assisting school officials in developing MOA’s with emergency responders during the grant period.

The provisions of the EOP grant will end in 2017.
On the morning of March 15th, approximately 130 educators from the Archdiocese of Louisville and other non-public schools around the state assembled at the Flaget Center, 1935 Lewiston Place, in Louisville Kentucky. Their purpose for being there: to spend the day learning about school safety through listening and interacting with featured speakers on various school safety topics, as well as collaborating with colleagues at the first-ever, KCSS-sponsored Non-Public Schools’ Safety Symposium. It was to be a day chock-full of tips and best practices to use in enhancing the safety of schools.

To begin the day, KCSS’ own Karen McCuiston delivered the keynote address entitled “The Social ‘Me’ in Social Media: Tips to Stay Safe.” Having been the Public Relation’s Officer for the McCracken County School District during the horrific Heath High School shooting in 1997 that tragically left three students dead and five others injured, Karen has an exceptional perspective and passion for safety in schools. She is presently the director of the KCSS Resource Center located at Murray State University and also speaks frequently around the state on the hazards of the Internet, particularly social media, and the havoc their inappropriate use can bring to a child’s life and a school. At the symposium, she cautioned educators from becoming too relaxed/close to students on social media; instead encouraging them to “always keep that professional distance.” Expounding on that theme, she discouraged educators from “friending” students or their parents on Facebook, advising them to delay taking that step until there was no longer a teacher/student connection.

Such tips were plentiful in her presentation and a healthy give-and-take period with attendees succeeded her presentation.
The remainder of the symposium featured break-out sessions where educators in attendance were given the opportunity to hear and interact with presenters, all of whom were extremely well-versed in a variety of safe school topics, such as:

Jessamine County Police Sergeant Scott Harvey is an 18-year veteran of the police department in Nicholasville. His topic, “I am Someone! Bullying in Our Schools,” a presentation he has made to tens of thousands of people throughout the state. He discussed the reality of 24/7 bullying, now made possible by the Internet, and the impact this can have on a victim. Sergeant Harvey stressed the importance of educators working closely with students, parents, law enforcement and other community entities to investigate each case of bullying and to attempt to keep abreast of advances and changes in the ever-popular and steadily growing sources of today’s electronic media.

Captain James Stephens, a recent retiree with more than 20 years in law enforcement including 10 years of supervisory experience with the Kentucky State Police, held a packed session on “Situational Awareness for Personal Safety.” Much of his session was interactive as he demonstrated to participants how unaware of their surroundings most people are and offered useful strategies for honing those skills. He also ventured into a short discussion on bullying in the schools, saying that when he speaks to young people in schools that he focuses on the “bystanders because (together) they have the ability to stop the bullying since almost all bullying incidents have witnesses.” Telling the young folks to refuse to accept the bullying phenomenon in their school’s culture, he said he frequently uses Martin Luther King Jr’s words, “In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.”

Denny Vincent, KCSS consultant and former high school principal, presented, “School Safety 101 – Best Practices to Keeping Students and Staff Safe.” Stressing the critical importance for educators in schools to form meaningful, appropriate relationships with all students, he provided symposium participants with the most frequently targeted areas for improvement in school safety and best practices being utilized to improve them. No strategy, he emphasized, is as important to school safety as the continual efforts school staffs must make to appropriately connect with their students. “A safe school is one where every student there feels genuinely connected to, at the very minimum, at least one adult employee in the building.”
The Kentucky Center for School Safety supports the idea that school culture improves when a school-wide prevention plan consistently addresses the needs of all students to encourage a safe and healthy learning environment.

Kentucky School Boards Association:
- Provides quality training statewide
- Assists Alternative Education sites
- Sponsors conferences and workshops
- Serves as a resource for schools and community agencies
- Collects School Safety Data from all schools in the state
- Allocates School Safety Funds to all 173 school districts (as well as the KY School for the Deaf and KY School for the Blind)
- Supports state conferences dealing with school safety issues
- Contracts with KCSS delivery of innovative school safety programs

KCSS Board of Directors
From left - KCSS Executive Director Jon Akers, KCSS Board Chair Bill Robertson, Judge Earl-Ray Neal, Elizabeth Hack, Lena Morehead, Danielle Bailey-Ratliff, Sylvia Kuster, Christina Weeter, and Dr. Vestena Robbins.

KCSS Staff at KSBA
Kerri Schelling (donated services), Don Martin and Shannon Robinson.
KCSS Belief Statement
The Kentucky Center for School Safety supports the idea that school culture improves when a school-wide prevention plan consistently addresses the needs of all students to encourage a safe and healthy learning environment.

Eastern Kentucky University:
- Appointed by the Board of Directors to serve as the contract agency to coordinate all programs and activities of partners of the consortium
- Produces annual reports on school safety issues to governmental agencies
- Monitors the safe schools allocation to all school districts
- Facilitates relationships with state agencies regarding safe school issues and concerns

Murray State University:
- Serves as the resource center for information regarding safe school efforts
- Provides safe school curricula for state colleges and universities
- Offers the only state approved post-secondary School Safety Educator Endorsement Program
- Provides training in best practices in classroom management for pre-service educators
- Works with state agencies to enhance school safety information
- Hosts KCSS website for information

KCSS Staff at EKU
Tiffany Hardin, Barbara Gateskill, Jon Akers and Nadine Johnson.

KCSS Staff at MSU
Dr. Jack Rose, Elizabeth Abanathy and Karen McCuiston.
Much like David Gilliam, ask nearly anyone familiar with School Resource Officers (SROs) in Kentucky and they will tell you how invaluable the women and men serving in these roles are to the schools they serve. They are integral to a safe school’s learning environment and their roles are widely diverse. Currently, Kentucky has 275 SROs, an increase of (12) from 2014. Some school districts without official SROs encourage their local police or sheriff’s department to make an informal commitment to their schools by providing them with a routine law enforcement presence whenever they can. Although this scenario is not ideal, it does provide students and staff with a few of the very positive elements of having a law enforcement official within the learning environment daily. The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) advocates for SROs to fulfill a “triad” role encompassing three primary functions: Educator, informal counselor, and law enforcer.

Facts You May Not Know about Kentucky’s School Resource Officers

- SROs receive required, specialized training through the Department of Criminal Justice and the National Association of School Resource Officers
- Some SROs teach basic and advanced courses at the Department of Criminal Justice Training (DOCJT)
- Most SROs are assigned to work each day in 2 or more schools
- The majority of the SRO’s time is spent in the middle and high schools of the school district he/she serves
- At the most recent Law Enforcement in Schools Conference, many of the state’s SROs presented on topics such as: properly interviewing students during an investigation, cyber issues and drug trends in schools
- The new KYASRO website is www.kyasro.org
- KYASRO sponsors annual scholarship for a Kentucky high school graduate
Characteristics of the Kentucky School Resource Officer in 2015

The first School Resource Officer program in Kentucky was initiated in Jefferson County in 1977. Since that time, the program has grown steadily due primarily to the availability of grants through the federal Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Office in the U.S. Department of Justice. Biennially, KCSS conducts a study examining the characteristics of School Resource Officers throughout the state by sending a questionnaire to each SRO. This questionnaire generates useful information as to their experience levels, training, work-related activities, perceptions of school safety, role in school safety, etc. The data contained in the charts on this page are a small segment of the outcome of that effort during the 2015-2016 school year.

Approximately 75% worked full-time as SROs (40 hours per week) during the 2015-2016 school year. More than one in six (17.9%) worked more than 40 hours per week. Thus, the majority of SROs were full-time SROs during the school year, a trend that matches the findings from the four previous reports.

In 2015, most of Kentucky’s SROs had been working in that capacity for 3-5 years (22.0%) and 6-10 years (34.6%).

In 2015, fewer than one in five (18.6%) were assigned to one school while two in five (41.8%) were primarily assigned to one school but were on call for other schools. Almost one in ten (8.9%) split their time between two schools while one in three (30.6%) were assigned to more than two schools. Thus, despite the fact that the optimal situation is one SRO per school, most officers are responsible for more than one school in their district and that trend appears to be increasing over time.

In 2015, 43.8% spent the majority of their time at schools with 500 to 1000 students. Almost two in five (38.5%) spent the majority of their time at schools with 1001 to 2000 students while 12.3% spent the majority of their time at schools with less than 500 students. Only seven SROs (5.4%) spent the majority of their time at schools with 2000 or more students.

Given the findings from this report, it appears that the SROs who work in schools in Kentucky work collaboratively with school administration and are an asset to the schools in which they perform their duties.
DEDICATED TO THE ENHANCEMENT OF SAFE AND HEALTHY LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS IN EACH OF KENTUCKY’S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The KY General Assembly has appropriated more than $144 million to support safe school efforts since 1999 as illustrated directly below.

**Breakdown of Safe Schools Funding**

- Kentucky Department of Education (Flow-Through Agency)
- Kentucky Center for School Safety Operations

**How Kentucky’s School Districts are Using Those Funds**

- FY16 Allocation to 175 School Districts: $9,278,300

**How the Kentucky Center for School Safety is Using Those Funds**

- KCSS Internal Operating FY16: $1,100,000

*Includes the KY School for the Blind and KY School for the Deaf*
KCSS and the Kentucky School Boards Association (KSBA) have been partners in providing safety training and related services to Kentucky’s schools since 1998. The partnership has been instrumental in educating school personnel, students, and associated agencies on topics that are current and important to all impacted. KSBA has provided an invaluable service in providing sponsorships of various safety conferences and workshops, and serves as a resource for schools and community agencies. Trainings are developed and maintained based on current school trends in KY.

Collaborative Partner Trainings (Over 23,796 participants)
- College of Justice and Safety (EKU)
- Department of Criminal Justice Training
- Green River Educational Cooperative
- Job Corp
- KY Association of School Resource Officers
- KY Association of Superintendents
- KY Attorney General’s Office
- KY Center for Instructional Discipline
- KY Counselor Association
- KY Crime Prevention Coalitions
- KY DARE Association
- KY Department of Education
- KY Educational Collaborative for State Agency Children
- KY Homeland Security Office
- KY Parent Teacher Association
- KY Partnership for Families and Children
- KY Society for Technology in Education
- Mid-Cumberland Counseling Association
- National Association of School Resource Officers
- National Dropout Prevention Network
- Office of Family Resource Youth Service Center
- Ohio Valley Education Cooperative
- South Central Educational Cooperative
- West KY Education Coop

Technical Assistance (Over 296,779 participants)
- Alternative Education
- Bullying Prevention
- Bus Behavior Management Skills
- Classified Staff Training
- Effective Communication Skills
- Emergency Management Planning
- Internet Safety
- Leadership Skills Training
- Physical Plant Management
- Substance Abuse Recognition/Prevention
- Positive School Culture and Climate
- QPR
- Student Threat Assessments
- Role of SRO
- Recovery
- Alternative Schools
- Back-to-School
- Parent Aggression
- Enhanced Supervision
- Cyber Bullying
- Choices
- Traffic

State and Regional Trainings (Over 30,160 participants)
- Active Shooter Training
- Bullying
- Bullying Prevention Symposium
- Bus Driver Behavior Management
- Crisis Management for Schools
- Gang Identification
- Impacts of Social Networking
- National Disaster Response
- Prescription Drug Use
- QPR (Suicide Prevention)
- Threat Assessment
- Working With Troubled Students
- Youth Leadership Symposium
- First 30 Seconds
- Terroristic Threats
- Synthetic Drugs
- Gatekeeper
- Personal Safety
- Safety 101
- Social Media
- Rewire
- Coping with Violence

Former Columbine High School Principal, Frank DeAngelis, was the keynote speaker at the 2015 Safe Schools and Communities Conference.
The KCSS website provides tools and templates that guide administrators and teachers in developing crisis management plans. The website has every detail covered and is chock-full of school safety resources with embedded professional development materials. The straightforward design offers seven tabs at the top of the page and a left-hand menu to easily navigate the site.

**Website Statistics**

- **www.kysafeschools.org**
  - Over 4.8 million hits this year
  - Daily Avg hits 13,578
  - 1.6 million page views
  - Over 1.6 million hits during Safe Schools Campaign

- **Most Frequently Visited**
  - S.T.O.P. ! Tipline Pages
  - SSW Book of Handouts
  - SSW Superpledge
  - KCSS Annual Report
  - Bullying Page

- **Web pages**
  - 614 pages of info
  - 1,408 Printable Resources Provided
  - High-Quality Reviewed Safety External Links

**Website**

Kentucky Schools focus on providing a warm culture and climate for both students and staff conducive to high levels of productivity and outstanding academic performance.

In today's society, school safety is a daily issue that ranges from classroom to campus to community. The Kentucky Center for School Safety (KCSS) was established to provide a collaborative forum for schools, families, businesses, and law enforcement to address the critical issues of school safety.

**Website Features**

- Search
- Library
- School Safety Issues
  - Bullying
  - Choking
  - Classroom Management
  - Cyber Bullying
  - Drug Abuse
  - Gangs

**Social Media**

- Twitter: @KCSS_Safety
- Facebook: Kentucky Center for School Safety

**Presentations**

- Safe Schools Week – 3,229
- Post Secondary – 1,360
- Other Safety Topics – 2,514

**S.T.O.P! Tipline**

- 162,486 students have access to S.T.O.P! Tipline at 69 school districts and partnerships across Kentucky
- Over 2,060 tips were sent using the Tipline

**Spreading the Word**

- Continually updating the Website
- 218,652 resources downloaded
- 310 Social Media Posts
- Developed Social Media Presentation for Non-Public Schools also presented for Title 1 Conference and Technology Conference
- Bullying page updated in coordination with new definition and KASA Webinar

**I WANT TO BE A SCHOOL SAFETY SUPERHERO...**

Ky Safe Schools Week – October 18-24

This year’s theme focused on building up the self-esteem of the students in your school, while working toward an environment free of Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment and Conflict. From Superman to Captain America most Superheroes started with problems or issues and turned their uniqueness into a power or force. They used their power for the betterment of society.

The campaign highlights the word SUPER and qualities necessary to be a SUPERHERO at school.

S - Strong,
U - Understanding,
P - Powerful,
E - Encouraging and
R - Respectful,

by using these character words to teach and describe our students, they can become School Safety Superheroes!
The Safety Tipline, Online Prevention or S.T.O.P.! Tipline is designed for use as an “online” bullying reporting/prevention tool. Provided free to Kentucky School by KCSS.

Students, parents or community members can report unsafe situations in school (bullying, weapons, drugs or alcohol, etc.) through the school’s website.

This tipline was created, published and piloted during November 2013 using seven school districts representative of the diverse populations across Kentucky. At the present time 69 districts and partnerships have launched the program on their websites and in their schools.

School safety research and development support quality programming at our state’s teacher preparation colleges and universities.

The Kentucky School Safety Educator Endorsement has been offered at Murray State University since 2004. This endorsement prepares educators to plan and promote safe healthy learning environments.

“WANT TO BE A SCHOOL SAFETY SUPERHERO…”

Ky Safe Schools Week – October 18-24th

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For Our Children, For Our Future

Students featured in the 2015 Annual Report are from schools all across the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

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The Annual Report was written and produced by Kentucky Center for School Safety staff.
For more detailed information, visit www.kysafeschools.org