



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Donna McMullin
Director of Marketing
Scenario Learning
800.434.0154, ext. 7020
dcmullin@safeschools.com

Sexual Misconduct Continues to Plague U.S. Schools

New SafeSchools Training Program Minimizes Risk of Staff-to-Student Offenses

CINCINNATI, OH, March 8, 2010 – While the vast number of school staff members are competent, capable, and caring professionals, sexual misconduct by staff involving students is occurring at an alarming rate in U.S. schools.

Research indicates that an estimated **10 percent** of U.S. children will experience sexual misconduct perpetrated by a school employee at some point during their academic career. With more than **50 million students enrolled in U.S. schools that equates to roughly 5 million students** who will be impacted by staff-to-student sexual misconduct while attending grades K-12.

According to the 2004 study “*Educator Sexual Misconduct: A Synthesis of Existing Literature*,” conducted for the U.S. Department of Education, by Dr. Charol Shakeshaft, **57.2 percent** of school sexual offenders are **male**, and **42.8 percent are female**; the majority of offenders serve as **teachers, coaches, substitute teachers, or bus drivers – the very individuals who are supposed to be nurturing our children.**

The numbers are startling. As more and more parents seek restitution in the legal system, districts nationwide are facing costly lawsuits. **How can districts effectively reduce the risk of sexual misconduct by staff?**

Dr. Robert Shoop, a noted author and leading national expert on sexual misconduct in schools, **recommends key action steps for districts** in his book “*Sexual Exploitation in Schools: How to Spot It and Stop It*”. The following is an excerpt:

I. Policies and Handbooks

Policies prohibiting sexual exploitation should **specifically describe inappropriate behaviors**, and include a separate sexual exploitation reporting procedure. Each staff member should submit a signed statement attesting that they have read and understand the policy, which should be kept on file. Handbooks should be updated regularly and include the anti-sexual exploitation policy.

II. Screening/Selecting New Employees

Develop a **comprehensive, rigorous screening protocol** that sends a very clear message to current and prospective staff members that inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated.

III. Central Record Keeping

Establish a **uniform system of incident reporting** and record keeping that facilitates tracking complaints from year to year and building to building, **so that patterns become evident.**

IV. Required Training for Employees

Require all staff to complete training regarding the content and implications of your anti-exploitation policy, the state reporting laws, the causes and consequences of exploitation and specific strategies to prevent and eliminate exploitation in your district.

One proven staff-training program is from SafeSchools, the leading provider of education-specific, web-based safety training for the K-12 market. **Today, the company introduces a new *Sexual Misconduct: Staff-to-Student* course, written by Dr. Shoop,** that educates teachers, coaches, and support staff members about the standards of care required for the education profession – including the legal requirements. In addition, the course will explain the law that requires all school staff members to act as mandatory reporters of sexual abuse of students.

The SafeSchools online training system is a subscription-based service that provides districts with a comprehensive library of more than 125 expertly written courses covering topics including **Sexual Harassment, Bloodborne Pathogens, Slips, Trips, and Falls, Cyberbullying, School Violence,** and many more.

These courses can easily be assigned to appropriate staff members, who then conveniently take the courses online. The SafeSchools Compliance Management System automatically tracks and records completions for each employee, and generates reports for administrators on-demand. Other administrative features, including automatic email notification, completely automate the training and tracking process for an entire district, making school safety training and tracking a simple, hassle-free process for administrators and staff alike. Using the SafeSchools system, districts can comply with important state regulations and develop a sound risk management culture to help mitigate their exposure and losses.

About SafeSchools

SafeSchools is the leading web-based safety training system designed specifically for the education market. Course offerings are 100% school-focused, and written by the country's foremost school safety experts. The program is currently being used in over 2,000 school districts nationwide and was developed by Scenario Learning in Cincinnati, Ohio. For more information, please visit www.safeschools.com.