Developing and Implementing a Statewide Policy for Schools on Cyber Threats

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November 7, 2007
APHA 135th Annual Meeting
Washington, D.C.

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Acknowledgements

◆ CDC Funded PREVENT Institute at the University of North Carolina Injury Prevention Research Center
  • Lenora Olson, University of Utah

◆ ACT for Youth Center of Excellence, New York State Department of Health Youth Development Initiative

Objectives

- Recognize prevalence of cyber threats in schools

- Identify challenges and barriers to implementing a statewide policy on cyber threats

- Discuss key strategies schools can implement to prevent cyber threats

Cyber Threats

◆ Definition: Online material that raises concern about violence against others or self. May be direct threats or may allude to a threat of harm to self or others.

Impact of Cyber Threats

◆ 58% of kids admit someone has said mean or hurtful things to them online.

◆ 32% of all teens say they have been targets of potentially menacing online activities.

What are Cyber Tools?

- ◆ Internet
- ◆ Cell phones, including camera phones
- ◆ Text messages
- ◆ Blogs (V-blogs)
- ◆ Online video games
- ◆ Instant messaging, message boards
- ◆ Chat rooms
- ◆ Social networking groups
- ◆ Email, listservs
- ◆ File sharing

Challenges and Barriers to Implementing a Statewide Policy

- Teacher knowledge

- Effective integration

- Local decision making (state guided/ locally decided)

Challenges and Barriers to Implementing a Statewide Policy

- Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)

- Perception of incidents happening outside of school purview

- Data collection methodology

Key Strategies to Prevent Cyber Threats

◆ Link school safety and technology committees to conduct needs assessment

◆ Establish and update local policy

◆ Inform all stakeholders (students, staff, parents, community)

Key Strategies to Prevent Cyber Threats

◆ Engage youth as educators

◆ Integrate cyber tools as normative instructional strategies

◆ Establish confidential method to report incidents

Issues for Consideration

◆ Concerns with filters and blocking

- False sense of security
- Do not filter all inappropriate content
- Do not prevent cyber bullying
- May restrict access to educationally rich sites
  - ◆ Inherent bias of blocked content
- Do not build student skills for safe navigation of the internet

Issues for Consideration

- Constitutional Issues
  - Monitoring and search of internet use records; Free speech

- Local/School Issues
  - Form situation review team

- Individual Issues
  - Create your own avatar

Change at a State Level – New York Example

- Review related efforts from other states

- Expand awareness of the problem
  - Sessions with state policy makers
  - Administrator professional development
  - Workshops for community organizations (56 cooperative extension offices and over 700 after school programs)

- End user survey (student focus groups)

Change at a State Level – New York Example

- Draft policy guidelines aligned with state and federal requirements

- Identify representative stakeholders for draft policy review and feedback

Change at a State Level – New York Example

- ◆ Engage selected schools for pilot implementation (rural, urban, suburban)

- ◆ Revise based on feedback

- ◆ Ongoing process

References/Resources

- Nancy Willard: Cyberbullying and Cyberthreats: Responding to the Challenge of Online Social Aggression, Threats and Distress

- Pew Internet and American Life Project: www.pewinternet.org

- Netlingo: www.netlingo.com

- National School Boards Association: www.nsba.org

- Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use: http://csriu.org

- New York State Center for School Safety: http://nyscenterforschoolsafety.org