



Bits 'n Pieces

Summer 2019

For use by School Leaders

Did You Know?

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

The 2015 law builds on key areas of progress in recent years, made possible by the efforts of educators, communities, parents, and students across the country. The law addresses not only achievement, equity, graduation rates, etc. but also includes requirements to prevent abuse of students.

States, state agencies and local school districts are required to have laws, regulations and/or policies that eliminate moving an abusive employee to another site or recommending them for further employment. The following apply under ESSA legislation:

- If an agency has probable cause to believe sexual abuse has occurred between an employee and a student or child, the agency can no longer assist the employee in finding a new job.
- Confidential agreements between the suspected employee and the agency are forbidden.

“Child abuse occurs when an adult demonstrates dominance over a child by mistreating that child physically, mentally, emotionally, or through neglect.” (Avery Wilson, *This is Life or Death; The Relationship Between Child Abuse and the Education System.*)

A few things for educators to remember when dealing with potentially abusive circumstances:

- Schools and school districts do have a role in preventing abuse.
- Verbal abuse is still abuse.
- The greater the power the more dangerous the abuse.
- Acknowledgement and response to abuse assists individuals in the progression from victim to survivor.

School administrators have several opportunities to preclude sexual misconduct by educators. (Charol Shakeshaft, *Preventing sexual assault in schools: It is up to us.* Phi Delta Kappan, October, 2018))

- School board policies
- School and district hiring practices
- Training
- Supervision
- Response

Assault and Harassment in schools (America's Promise Alliance, April 26, 2018, *Three Ways Schools Can Help Prevent Sexual Assault*)

1. Start early (College may be entirely too late)
2. Equip students to take action as bystanders
3. Enlist parents to extend lessons beyond the classroom

Ramping up...or down? (Includes from Laura Lindberg, Principal Research Scientist at the Guttmacher Institute, *Trends in adolescent sexual behavior, health, and education*, as printed in *Phi Delta Kappan*, October, 2018)

- Rates of teen pregnancy have dropped about one-third since 1990 across ages, races and ethnic groups.
- The share of teenagers who are getting their driver's license is declining.
- Substance use is down.
- Teens are spending more time hanging out with their parents.
- The percentage of high schools teaching sex education has declined across a range of topics including:
 - ✓ Abstinence
 - ✓ Resisting peer pressure
 - ✓ Human development issues (such as reproductive anatomy and puberty).
 - ✓ Methods of contraception, including how to correctly use a condom.

Quotes and Quotables

Abuse and survival

- "Trauma is personal. It does not disappear if it is not validated. When someone enters the pain and hears the screams, healing can begin." –Danielle Bernock
- "From every wound there is a scar, and every scar tells a story." – HealthyPlace.com
- "Family is supposed to be our safe haven. Very often, it's the place where we find the deepest heartache." – Iyanla Vanzant
- "So often survivors have had their experiences denied, trivialized, or distorted." – Ellen Bass
- Writing is an important avenue for healing because it gives you the opportunity to define your own reality." – Ellen Bass
- "Overcoming abuse doesn't just happen, it takes positive steps everyday. Let today be the day you start to move forward." – Assunta Hannis

Hope for the future

- "A good teacher can inspire hope, ignite the imagination, and instill a love of learning." – Albert Einstein
- "The present is the ever-moving shadow that divides yesterday from tomorrow. In that lies hope." – Frank Lloyd Wright
- "We must vote for hope, vote for life, vote for a brighter future for all of our loved ones." – Ed Markey
- "I find hope in the darkest of days, and focus in the brightest" – Dalai Lama