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Managing Bullying Events in Schools

Background
The victim, a transgender female high school student, was repeatedly harassed over the course of two academic school years by a fellow classmate. Each incident was more severe than the last, resulting in the ultimate expulsion of the aggressor.

Scenario
Throughout the Scenario, let the aggressor be known as Student A while the person who was bullied be known as Student B. The first critical incident occurred in the spring of the school year when Student A, a female high school student, approached Student B in the cafeteria during lunch period. A verbal confrontation ensued for reasons undetermined through post-incident investigations. Staff separated the students accordingly during that period; however, subsequent investigation concluded it to be unlikely that this incident would lead to any retaliation or further disruptions. Both students were made aware that such behavior was unacceptable and would be met with disciplinary actions if it happened again. The ongoing bullying led to a second incident, which took place in early September of the following school year. Student A observed Student B walking alone in the hallway after school was dismissed and began yelling and pushing her. This incident lasted about two to three minutes, and was mostly captured on video with a bystander’s cell phone. The students were again separated and an investigative process ensued, which lasted five weeks. Once the investigation was concluded in mid-October, Student A was notified that she would be receiving a three day out-of-school suspension. While waiting for the bus on that same day, Student A again confronted Student B and engaged in a variety of hostile and insubordinate behavior, including pushing Student B, striking a staff member, damaging school property, and defying administrators. Student A was ultimately expelled following an investigation and expulsion hearing.

Lessons Learned
• School staff failed to conduct a proper investigation that identified the cause of the first incident.
• The school did not notify the designated Title IX Coordinator or Law Enforcement of the potential bullying of a student in a protected class.
• The Board of Education failed to implement a safety plan to ensure the emotional health and physical safety of Student B during and following the investigative process.
• School did not follow its safe school climate plan, which is mandated under Connecticut Public Act No. 11-232.

Recommended Best Practices
CIRMA recommends the following best practices:
• Schools must follow Public Act No. 11-232 – An Act Concerning the Strengthening of School Bullying Laws, which mandates that “each local and regional board of education shall develop and implement a safe school climate plan to address the existence of bullying in its schools...”.
• Continue to train faculty and staff on how to identify the warning signs of bullying and appropriate ways of intervening.
• Schools should communicate to all faculty the roles and responsibilities of school staff, the Title IX Coordinator, and Law Enforcement, as each should play specific roles in their respective investigative and disciplinary processes.
• Schools should consider training all faculty and staff on the Restorative Practices method or another behavioral management technique, including asking the following questions in the interview process:
  – What happened?
  – What has been affected by what you have done? In what way?
  – What were you thinking at the time?
  – What do you think you need to do to make things right?
  – What have you thought about since?

For more information on this topic, please contact your CIRMA Risk Management Consultant. Visit CIRMA.org/Training & Education page for a list of current training programs and E-Learning Center courses.

Questions? Ask your Supervisor or CIRMA Risk Management Consultant.
Seasonal Employee Safety

Background
Seasonal employment programs often hire high school and college-aged young adults on a temporary basis to assist with projects throughout the organization. They are mutually beneficial to the employee, who gains valuable work experience, and to the employer, who gains an expanded workforce throughout the busy summer months. Although they are only employed with the school district for a short time, seasonal employees can pose a significant Workers’ Compensation exposure if they are misused or unsupervised. An analysis of seasonal-employee injuries indicates that there are areas of improvement and measures that public schools can take to prevent injury to seasonal staff.

Scenario
The claimant is a 21 year-old, part-time seasonal custodial employee with the school district. On the day of the incident, the claimant and his co-worker were directed by their supervisor on-site to sit against large, heavy tables in the back of a box truck while another co-worker drove the vehicle to another job site a mile down the road. While en route, the truck took a sharp right turn, causing approximately six or seven tables, with an estimated total weight of 600 pounds, to fall onto the claimant. The claimant’s body folded in a forward flexed position with the weight of the tables on top of him, pinning him for several seconds.

Damages. The claimant, who had no prior history of injuries or illness, was taken to the hospital the next day where it was found that he suffered a compression fracture of the L4 vertebrae. The injury resulted in a four-month period in which the claimant was totally disabled from work at his school district job and at his concurrent employment with a private landscaping company. Although surgery was not performed, the claimant received extensive medical treatment and was ultimately assigned a 10% permanent partial disability rating to his back. Claim costs totaled $157,000.

Key Recommendations. By implementing the programs below, municipalities will be able to reduce preventable accidents and exposures.

Lessons Learned
Do not allow passengers in the back of trucks during transport. Industry best practice is to never allow passengers to ride in the cargo area while the vehicle is moving. Instead, secure the load in the back of the truck with appropriate equipment, as necessary. Consider creating a policy that employees must secure equipment in transit and regularly train all employees to this policy.

Identify areas of improvement at the supervisory level. This incident is partially the result of a lack of judgment from the on-site supervisor. Continue to train and educate supervisors on how to effectively communicate with and manage staff. Hold supervisors accountable.

Train seasonal employees. Seasonal employees often go through an accelerated orientation program compared to full-time staff. This, coupled limited work experience, often leads to a lack of understanding on the how’s and why’s of employee safety. It is important to train all staff on department policies and procedures, including the program on vehicle use.

For more information on this topic, please contact your CIRMA Risk Management Consultant. Visit CIRMA.org/Training & Education page for a list of current training programs and E-Learning Center courses.
Cyber Phishing Scam

Background
Tax time is a period of increased computer hacking and email phishing scams due to the amount of personal and financial information being handled. Cybercriminals have increasingly targeted municipalities because they are considered high value targets that hold a significant amount of personal identifiable information that can be stolen and sold, and because they are often soft targets. A cyber phishing scam at a CIRMA member resulted in a data breach of personal information and a significant liability loss.

Scenario
The incident occurred in February when an employee in the Finance Department received an email that appeared to be from a coworker. The email asked for the W2 forms of all employees throughout the municipality. Without verifying the identity of the coworker or the nature of the request, the employee forwarded over 1,900 W2 forms in a reply email. It was later discovered that the email request was not sent from a coworker, but by a cybercriminal posing as a coworker by “spoofing” the coworker’s email address. Once the breach was discovered, the CIRMA member notified local authorities and CIRMA’s claims department.

Damages. Once CIRMA was notified, CIRMA’s cyber liability carrier was able to begin its forensic investigation. It was discovered that, out of the over 1,900 W2 forms that were released, 98 fraudulent tax returns were filed. Under Connecticut Public Act 15-142, the employer is responsible for providing credit monitoring to all employees who have been affected by a data breach for two years following the incident. CIRMA’s cyber liability carrier was able to assist the Town in establishing this program almost immediately, which provided ease of mind to the Town and their employees. However, due to the number of fraudulent tax returns that were filed, there was a potential for $600,000 in exposure. The claim was ultimately closed for $72,000.

Key Recommendations. By implementing the programs outlined below, the municipality will have a better understanding on how to limit preventable accidents and minimize exposures.

Lessons Learned
• Verify the source of E-mail requests, especially those that ask for personal identifiable information.
• Encourage staff to report all suspicious cyber activity following with the department’s internal reporting procedures.
• Contact local law enforcement and CIRMA if there is suspicion of a cyber-attack.
• Develop, implement, and provide frequent training to all staff on the municipality’s Cyber Policy.
• Provide frequent training to all employees on current and emerging cyber trends.

Resources:
Understanding the Basics of Cyber Security Training Program
Cyber Security Threats to Public Entities - E-Learning Program
CIRMA’s Cyber Tips & Alerts E-Publications
Cyber Security Whitepaper

For more information on this topic, please contact your CIRMA Risk Management Consultant. Please visit CIRMA.org/Training & Education page for a list of current training programs and E-Learning Center courses.

Questions? Ask your Supervisor or CIRMA Risk Management Consultant.
Pollution

Executive Summary
While it is impossibility to completely eliminate all risks in an operation, Public Entities have come a long way in minimizing the potential effects of owning and operating fuel tanks. Although intentions are good, there may exist inefficiencies in a system or miscommunication between parties that can lead to damages. Learning from these events allows us to almost constantly analyze and potentially change our current behaviors in an effort to mitigate future losses.

Scenario
On December 27th, a leak was observed in the above ground diesel storage tank located at a CIRMA Member’s Bus Garage. Diesel was observed to leak into a nearby brook and surrounding areas. When the leak was discovered, the Member notified CIRMA, DEEP, and Connecticut Tank Removal to begin with damage assessments, cleanup, and containment. CIRMA then informed its Master Pollution Carrier, who provides the pollution coverage, to assist with these efforts and respond to the claim.

Investigation and Damages
The Town owns and is responsible for the fueling of the tank; however, the School District is the sole operator, as they use the tank to fuel their school bus fleet. It was undetermined if the Town or the School District was responsible for implementing and following a preventative maintenance program or spill plan, as this information had not been formally documented. Upon further investigation, it was determined that the leak had been occurring for quite some time, potentially for many months. The Town was unable to pinpoint an exact date when the leak had started due to the lack of a formalized inspection program that included testing of the tank alarm.

The Pollution Carrier accepted coverage for the first party pollution loss under the CIRMA Master Pollution policy. Due to the widespread environmental impact of this claim, it was immediately classified as a large loss with $3 million in reserves. Ultimately, due to the excessive amount of cleanup and containment costs, the member exposure totaled $2.6M. The Town was able to reduce their $2.6M exposure down to $1.6M, by having a pollution policy that paid its policy limits of $1M towards it.

Lessons Learned
• Develop a Memo of Understanding (MoU). If the Owner and Operator of the tank are separate entities (i.e. the Owner is the Town and the Operator is the School District), develop an agreement that formally identifies who is responsible for monitoring fuel deliveries, preventative maintenance, spill prevention program, subsequent repairs/cleanup, etc.
• Spill Prevention Program. Create and implement a spill prevention program, which may include assessments and testing, such as overflow valve testing. Elements of this program may be contracted out to a third party. The municipality’s legal counsel should review all third party contracts to ensure necessary liability is appropriately transferred to the third party.
• Engineering Controls. Consider ensuring that the fuel tank has an alarm that will sound if a spill or leak is suspected. Also, ensure that the tank has double wall containment to reduce the likelihood that a spill will contaminate the surrounding area.
• Training. Train staff annually on the Spill Prevention program. Furthermore, the municipality may want to train employees on general hazard identification, how to identify warning signs of a spill, and who to report issues to.
• Signage. Consider posting signage near the tank that notifies individuals who to call in the event of a suspected incident.

For more information on this topic, please contact your CIRMA Risk Management Consultant. Please visit CIRMA.org/Training & Education page for a list of current training programs and E-Learning Center courses.
Emotional Support Animals

Background

Animals have long been used to provide companionship and aide to those who need it most. Throughout the past decade, this practice has expanded through various programs and, simultaneously, protections have been more clearly defined through legislation. However, not all animals are treated the same under the law. While service animals are protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), emotional support animals are not always protected. Therefore, schools should be prepared to handle these unique exposures in order to limit potential liability.

Scenario

On March 8th, a student arrived at school with his emotional support animal: a medium-sized male Dalmatian K9. The student entered the school and began his educational day. At approximately 9:30 am, the student was walking in the hallway and encountered another student in the hallway and they began to talk. At this time, the emotional support dog started to growl and bear its teeth at the other student. The other student asked several times if the dog was going to bite him and he assured that the dog would not bite. After several minutes, the dog lunged forward and bit the other student on the hand, causing lacerations and puncture injuries and a dislocated thumb.

Investigation and Damages

Investigation determined that, in the student’s first period, the emotional support dog was becoming agitated and barking in the classroom. The teacher asked the student to take the dog out into the hallway and try to calm the dog down. It was discovered that this was not the first time that the dog has created a disruption in class, and the technique of bringing the dog in the hallway tended to be successful in the past.

While in the hallway, the handler and dog encountered another student and the two students began speaking. At this time, the dog began to growl and bear its teeth to the other student. The handler communicated to the student that the dog would “calm down” if the student put his hand out in front of the dog’s nose, which would allow the dog to sniff the student and indicate that he is not a threat. When the student did this, the dog lunged forward and bit the other student on the hand, causing significant injuries. The injuries sustained by the student resulted in medical expenses, lost days from school while recovering, missed time from his part time job, lost sports scholarship money as a result of missing high school basketball games, a development of anxieties, and a fear of dogs. The student’s family retained legal counsel and ultimately filed a Notice of Intent to File Lawsuit.

At this time, the district defended their actions by stating that their Emotional Support Animals Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) indicated that the school required 24 hour advance notification before an animal will be brought into school; in this case, the handler’s parents followed these procedures. However, there were no requirements for ensuring that emotional support animals have been socialized, trained, or properly vaccinated. Also, in this case, it was determined that the school principal had received several previous complaints from teachers, other parents, and students regarding this particular animal related to exposure to animal waste, aggressiveness, and disruptive behavior.

The claim was ultimately settled out of court for $168,828; which included medical expenses, lost wages, estimated lost scholarship awards, and non-economic factors.

Lessons Learned

• Consider reviewing and updating of Emotional Support Animal SOP to require that the animal owner provides the school district with adequate documentation including:
  – Training records
  – Verification of veterinary vaccinations
  – Copy of adequate insurance limits
  – Certificate of insurance from the animal’s owner
• Consider working with the district’s legal counsel and Title I and Title II coordinators to further amend the Emotional Support Animal SOP to clearly define what is to be considered an Emotional Support Animal.

• Consider requiring animal owners to sign a Hold Harmless Indemnification Agreement to protect the school district.

• Consider implementing a review process regarding received complaints about a specific animal.

For more information on this topic, please contact your CIRMA Risk Management Consultant. Please visit CIRMA.org/Training & Education page for a list of current training programs and E-Learning Center courses.
Chronic Sexual Misconduct

Background
School districts are responsible for the safety and well-being of students in their care, even during after-hour extracurricular activities and tutoring sessions. Schools can be held liable when it is determined that they or a member/members of its faculty breach that duty of care.

Scenario
A student was sexually assaulted by her high school history teacher during the beginning of her junior year. The teacher and the student engaged in a pattern of sexual contact, including kissing and inappropriate touching. The student stated that the sexual contact and assaults continued throughout the school year. During deposition, school staff revealed that multiple teachers and staff members knew about the relationship and abuse, however, failed to report it to the school district’s leadership or to the State of Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF).

Investigation and Damages
• The male teacher had been teaching at the high school for three years prior to the incident and, during this time, had developed a friendly relationship with the principal.
• In early May, a parent sent an email to the male teacher, and copied in the principal, which stated to “keep his hands off” of her daughter (Student One).
• The principal immediately contacted the parent of Student One and advised her to contact the police; however, she insisted that the police not be involved. The principal then confronted the teacher, who stated that he grabbed Student One by the arm in an effort to get her to stop touching him. The principal advised the teacher to be more professional, *yet no other investigation or disciplinary follow up was conducted.*
• In late May, teacher’s union representative and the accused male teacher went to the principal to discuss concerns that someone was spreading a rumor around the school about a relationship between the male teacher and a female student (Student Two). The principal admitted that he had heard of the rumors.
• The principal then contacted the Director of Human Resources and Deputy Superintendent, who advised the principal to conduct an investigation.
• A few days later, the investigation was initiated and it was discovered that the teacher and Student Two had texted each other on a few occasions to discuss how Student Two was doing following some traumatic events that occurred in her life. Both the teacher and Student Two denied any misconduct.
• As a result of this investigation, *no disciplinary action was taken*; however, the teacher was advised that he should change his cell phone number and refrain from giving his personal number out to students.
• Later that month, a third female student (Student Three) met with the principal and reported that she was concerned because one of her friends alleged that she had been kissing the male teacher.
• The principal told Student Three that she was basing her claim on hearsay and additional evidence needed to be provided before he acted on a potential rumor.
• In June, Student Three became so concerned about her friend’s relationship with the teacher that she contacted the vice principal as well and told him what she reported to the principal the month prior.
• The next week, a gym teacher and history department chair reported to the vice principal that they had disturbing information regarding the male teacher and Student Two, specifically regarding rumors of an inappropriate relationship between the two parties. The gym teacher admitted to not reporting the incident in a timely manner due to fears of being wrong.
• Following the vice principal’s meeting with the gym teacher and history department chair, he spoke with the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent to advise them of the situation. These individuals consulted with the district’s legal counsel, who advised them that they need not make a report to DCF and could wait until the following Monday to investigate the rumor further.
• Over the weekend, the police were notified by the gym teacher and history department chair. The local Police Department commenced their investigation.

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• The School Board refrained from any further investigation on their part so as to not taint the police investigation.
• During the police investigation, Student Two admitted that she had kissed the teacher multiple times during the school day and in the classroom. Student Two’s old cell phone was found and voluntarily given to the police. On the phone, police found multiple inappropriate text messages sent by the male teacher.
• After about a two-week police investigation, law enforcement applied for and was granted a warrant for the arrest of the male teacher.
• The teacher ultimately pled no contest to two charges, for which he was sentenced to two years’ probation and two years suspended sentence. He was also required to register as a sex offender, surrender his teaching license, and undergo psychiatric evaluation and treatment.
• The principal clearly erred in not investigating the possibility of an inappropriate relationship between the male teacher and Student Two when the incidents were first reported to him.
• There was a 30-day period that passed from when Student Two reported the second alleged incident to the Principal and when the school actually started their internal investigation. As part of civil proceedings initiated by the victims’ families against the school district, CIRMA was responsible for paying a claim that ultimately settled for $400,000.

Lessons Learned
• Establish and communicate policies and protocols to all staff on a regular basis on the importance of reporting suspected misconduct or allegations of misconduct.
• Establish and communicate a Code of Professional Responsibility to all staff, including:
  – A staff Code of Ethics
  – An Administration Code of Ethics
  – A policy on Student & Staff Relations
• Educate staff on the parallel investigation protocol that incorporates internal (district) and external (law enforcement and DCF) parties.
• Provide staff with required Mandated Reporter Training as required by Connecticut General Statute 17(a)-101.
• Create and promote a culture where misconduct and inappropriate relationships are not acceptable.

For more information on this topic, please contact your CIRMA Risk Management Consultant. Visit our training schedule at CIRMA.org for a list of current training programs.
School Trip Abroad

Background

Students learn in a number of ways; school field trips are useful tools that allow young people to develop hands-on experience and learn outside of a traditional classroom setting. They can also ignite a student’s passion for learning that they may not have had the inspiration for in the classroom. However, school trips provide unique exposures that may not be as commonly experienced in the classroom and, thus, additional planning may be required.

Scenario

• On the last night of a school trip abroad, students were attending a dance that the program had arranged for them. The event was held at an outdoor facility on the campus of the University where the students were lodging.

• The dance was attended by all 23 students and 3 chaperones. During the event, claimant was dancing barefoot on the dance floor with a chaperone located “approximately 10 feet away.”

• Claimant stepped on a shard of glass. Investigation was unable to determine how the glass got on the dance floor or for how long the glass was there.

• The chaperone who observed the incident instructed two nearby students to grab paper towels from the bathroom and to notify the lead teacher. One student returned within a minute with paper towels from the bathroom; the lead teacher arrived about 4 minutes later.

• After approximately 25 minutes, the lead teacher determined that the student should be brought to the infirmary at the University. Claimant, the lead teacher, and another student arrived at the infirmary approximately 35 minutes after the incident.

• The nurse on staff at the infirmary cleaned the wound and applied 2 butterfly band aids to the laceration. Claimant was released from the infirmary that night; however, claimant’s parents were not notified of the incident.

• Claimant woke up in extreme pain in the middle of the night, when it was identified that the wound had reopened. The lead teacher was notified, who then escorted the claimant to the nearby hospital.

• At the hospital, it was determined that the laceration required 14 stitches. Claimant was discharged early that morning; however, claimant’s parents were not notified of the incident.

• During the flight home later that day, the student continuously complained about significant pain and discomfort in her foot and shin area. There was swelling and noticeable bruising in this area.

• Upon landing, EMS was notified and responded. EMS recommended transporting claimant to the local hospital.

• The Emergency Room doctor found that the student had developed a blood clot that was lodged in a main vein in her lower leg.

• School administration notified the claimant’s parents of what was happening approximately 2 hours after the claimant was admitted into the emergency room.

Liability Assessment

Total expenses for the incident, which included multiple hospital visits, medical procedures and treatments, equaled $17,375. In addition to the direct costs associated with this claim, the claimant’s parents also alleged that the school violated its responsibility of attempting to notify the parents of the incident. The parents ultimately decided not to file a notice of intent to sue against the district. Instead, the parents made the decision to enroll their child in a private school within town for the remainder of the student’s high school career.

Lessons Learned

• Emergency Action Plan: Develop an Emergency Action Plan that addresses what to do in emergency situations, resources available during the trip (such as local hospitals/infirmaries), best practice of transporting students during emergency situations, process for notifying parents/guardians, etc.

• Chaperone Program: Develop a training protocol that chaperones would be required to take before going on a school trip. This training can include the rules of the trip and the Emergency Action Plan.

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Ensure that the chaperone-to-student ratio is sufficient for the trip. Schools should keep in mind that this ratio may change if a chaperone must escort a student/students away from the group in an emergency situation.

- **Notification:** Notify the student’s emergency contact, as indicated in the child’s Emergency Information Card, as soon as possible following a medical event or emergency situation. Inform parents / guardians of this process beforehand and ensure that chaperones understand these expectations.

For more information on this topic, please contact your CIRMA Risk Management Consultant. Visit our training schedule at CIRMA.org for a list of current training programs.
Student Mental Health

Background

Educators are continuing to recognize the impact that a student’s mental health has on learning and achievement, as well as the importance of understanding a student’s home- and school-life. The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) subscribes to this more highly accepted concept; specifically, mentally healthy children are more successful and that a focus on student mental health supports the mission of schools: learning.

Scenario

Late in the school year, tragedy struck a Connecticut High School when a student, a gay 17-year-old male athlete, committed suicide at his home. The student was beloved by many in the school community, as he had been in the district since moving to Connecticut in the first grade and was well-known. The student had mostly maintained grades of As and Bs, until his grades began to decline into the high-D to mid-C range in the second half of his senior year. The student had never been disciplined in his high school career. The student was a former member of the school track and field team, staying on the team between freshman year, until he quit the team in the middle of his senior season. He stated that his father lost his job, and therefore, needed to get a job to help his family which prevented him from spending time participating in extracurricular school activities.

The student had previously been in a long-term relationship with another boy, who moved out-of-state at the conclusion of their junior year. This relationship ended near the end of the fall semester, as friends of the student cited difficulties in the long-distance relationship. Staff was made aware of this by the student and the student’s friends before the incident.

During the summer following the student’s death, the student’s parents filed a notice of intent to sue the district and the high school. The parents alleged negligence by the school, the district, and school staff. The suit alleged deficiencies in the district’s Suicide Prevention Program caused the school to not identify the student as at risk through the district’s Suicide Prevention Policy, failure to train staff on the warning signs of suicide, and failure to protect the student.

Liability Assessment

The investigation found that there were several precipitating events and actions of which staff was made aware before April (listed below).

The district has a policy for Youth Suicide Prevention and Youth Suicide Attempts, in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) Section 10-221. In this policy, the school contains a list of possible risk factors for suicide. Discovery found that the following factors were explicitly mentioned in the district’s Suicide Prevention Policy as possible suicide risk factors, and staff was aware that these factors were present in the student prior to the incident date:

- Periods of unusual family stress
  - Student’s father had been recently laid off from his job

- Loss of significant relationship
  - Breaking up with his boyfriend of four years

- History of alcoholism in immediate family
  - Student’s father suffered from alcoholism and was receiving treatment

- Sexuality conflicts
  - Student was part of the gay community, which has a higher-rate of suicide than heterosexual youths

- Academic problems
  - Student’s grades were declining throughout his senior year

- Fear of major change in life
  - Impending graduation

Furthermore, during the student’s senior year, he began writing in essays and homework assignments increasingly vague and disturbing texts. In one instance, the student wrote the following in a personal essay in his creative writing class,
Liability Assessment - continued

“I have many flaws that will eventually be the end of me. The tragedy that might be the end of me, like selfishness or other things like that. Riding around being selfish and not thinking of others. I’m scared for myself that I might do something actually harmful for others. I really messed up. There’s no way I’m gonna finish.”

The student received a high grade on the assignment, with the teacher’s comment stating that the student “really captured the essence of” his character. The teacher who graded the assignment, when asked about possible warning signs of suicide and the district’s policy, stated that she did not take this as a warning sign and that she was “relatively unfamiliar” with the district’s policy. The student’s parents were unaware of this assignment.

The district defended its efforts by providing training records that satisfy CGS 10-220a(a) and curriculum records that satisfy CGS 10-16b.

Following months of discovery, the school district settled the lawsuit out of court with a No Admission of Fault or Liability clause for $525,000.

• Continue to educate staff (CGS 10-220a(a)) and students (CGS 10-16b) on the prevention of and response to youth suicide. Training can include:
  – Possible warning signs and red flag indicators of thoughts of suicide, and
  – The district’s Suicide Prevention Policy;

• Consider establishing a Student Assistance Program aimed at identifying at-risk students and communicating possible treatment methods;

• Due to the fact that adolescents are vulnerable to suicide contagion, consider the following immediately after an incident:
  – Notify the school community in an appropriate manner with respect to the family and friends of the deceased student. It may be appropriate to notify staff and immediate friends of the deceased first
  – Offer emotional assistance to staff and students as soon as possible
  – Allow the school community time to process the information and the opportunity to grieve and talk about their emotions
  – Utilize the “After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools - 2nd Edition” document, or contact the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) for further assistance

For more information on this topic, please contact your CIRMA Risk Management Consultant. Visit our training schedule at CIRMA.org for a list of current training programs.