

The Kentucky Safety Educators Endorsement: Emphasizing School Safety in Educational Settings

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School days of yesteryear when chewing gum and using tobacco products were the major cultural and management problems are history. Bullying and violence of various sorts have replaced gum and tobacco as major issues confronting teachers and administrators. No one questions the complexity and significance of these deadly issues as the very foundation of our great society has been shaken by the knowledge that dangerous and deadly events are occurring in our schools. The school year of 1997-98 proved to communities across the country from Oregon to Kentucky that violence at school can cause a loss of students' lives and it can happen anywhere and at anytime. The National Center for Education Statistics reports that regarding non-fatal crimes, students were victims of 1.9 million crimes while they were in school during 2000. Illusions that it will not happen in my school and in my community are dangerous notions which have no place in today's world. For students to fulfill their academic potential, schools must be safe and secure places for all students, teachers and staff. Educational leaders must become better equipped to address various challenges to school safety. However, heretofore, few educators have been given any training in school safety.

In response to this critical situation, Murray State University (MSU) cooperated with the Kentucky Center for School Safety (KCSS) and the Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) to develop "Kentucky's Safety Educator Standards for Preparation and Certification". The endorsement is designed to prepare certified P-12 educators, teachers and administrators, to promote and maintain a positive, safe and healthy school culture that is conducive to high academic achievement.

What value does the endorsement add to your professional certificate? Are you looking for a way to gain an edge when you apply for a position? Are you interested in enhancing your knowledge base and skills in school safety, classroom management, etc? Each year, teachers and administrators go to interviews trying to convince interviewers that they have something special to bring to the table. This endorsement might provide an advantage in the interview. The standards and performance criteria are included below to assist the reader in understanding and appreciating the intent of this 12-hour graduate endorsement program.



Kentucky's Safety Educator Standards for Preparation and Certification

PREAMBLE

School safety is essential to an effective school as it promotes higher achievement for students and a more productive teaching and learning atmosphere. School safety is everyone's job – students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members, but having a properly trained safety educator facilitates the maintenance of safe schools.

SCHOOL SAFETY STANDARD I

Creates conditions that promote and maintain a positive, safe, and healthy school culture, climate, and environment

The safety educator facilitates and coordinates efforts to provide a safe, healthy, and nurturing school climate to promote student learning.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA: The extent to which the safety educator:

- 1.1 Demonstrates knowledge of research-based strategies and best practices that facilitate a safe, healthy, and nurturing school climate that promotes student learning.
- 1.2 Demonstrates knowledge of and skills in facilitating positive interpersonal relationships.
- 1.3 Demonstrates knowledge of and skills in identifying symptoms of stress, anger, and fear, as well as research-based positive intervention strategies.
- 1.4 Demonstrates knowledge of and skills in positive techniques such as problem solving, verbal de-

escalation, conflict resolution, and peer mediation.

- 1.5 Demonstrates skills in addressing diversity, bullying, harassment, and discrimination issues.
- 1.6 Demonstrates knowledge of and skills in developing, implementing and assessing a building safety and supervision plan that utilizes school personnel, parents, and community representatives.
- 1.7 Demonstrates knowledge of and skills in identifying physical facility factors and high-risk areas.
- 1.8 Demonstrates knowledge and appropriate use of detection/surveillance technology.
- 1.9 Demonstrates knowledge of policies, procedures and educational alternatives to facilitate effective classroom, school, and district-wide behavior management.
- 1.10 Demonstrates knowledge of appropriate strategies for the identification, assessment, and management of threats.

SCHOOL SAFETY STANDARD II

Fosters positive individual development

The safety educator fosters positive individual development of students that contributes to a positive, safe, and healthy school culture, climate, and environment

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA: The extent to which the safety educator:

- 2.1 Applies knowledge of typical and atypical physical, socio-emotional, and cognitive development of P-12 students to promote a safe school environment.
- 2.2 Demonstrates knowledge of resiliency and risk factors in providing appropriate prevention and intervention strategies.
- 1.3 Collaborates with students, teachers, administrators, certified/classified support staff, and parents to facilitate the integration of school safety, violence prevention, and social skills training into the academic curriculum.

SCHOOL SAFETY STANDARD III

Utilizes safe school assessment data

The safety educator utilizes data from a variety of sources to promote school safety.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA: The extent to which the safety educator:

- 3.1 Demonstrates knowledge of and the ability to access multiple sources of school safety data such as the Kentucky Center for School Safety's Safe Schools Annual Report, School Data Safety Project Report, Effective School Survey, KIDS Count Data, Dropout and Truancy Reports, CATS: Cognitive and Non-Cognitive Data, Safe School Surveys, Crisis Response Plan, Physical Plant Criteria such as OSHA and state regulations, Southern Association SACS, and State Agency Assessments
- 3.2 Assists with the interpretation of cognitive and non-cognitive data to facilitate changes to support school safety for student learning.
- 1.3 Reports data on school discipline practices related to race, gender, and disability.
- 1.4 Uses appropriate school safety data in developing and implementing the school safety plan, including needs assessment, selection of research-based strategies, and program evaluation.

SCHOOL SAFETY STANDARD IV

Coordinates crisis/emergency procedures and communication

The safety educator demonstrates the knowledge and skills to prevent crises and to appropriately implement crisis intervention and post-intervention plans under extremely stressful circumstances.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA: The extent to which the safety educator:

- 4.1 Assists in the development of an emergency management plan that includes preparation, response, recovery, and communication.
- 4.2 Establishes a trained multidisciplinary crisis response team based on a nationally accepted model (Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD), National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA), or Red Cross) to develop an emergency/crisis response kit/box for each building, conduct school crisis drills, and plan for post-intervention activities.
- 4.3 Establishes a trained mental health team to deliver psychological first-aid services following a crisis.
- 4.4 Facilitates the training of school personnel, students, and community members in crisis prevention, response, and recovery.
- 4.5 Accesses a network of community, state, and national crisis responders as necessary.
- 4.6 Assists in crisis response assessment.
- 4.7 Provides information to media and other appropriate audiences following a crisis.
- 4.8 Maintains knowledge of current issues, research, laws, and regulations relating to crisis response.

SCHOOL SAFETY STANDARD V

Possesses knowledge of policies and legal issues related to school safety

The safety educator demonstrates knowledge of current legal issues and professional responsibilities essential for safe schools.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA: The extent to which the safety educator:

- 1.1 Demonstrates knowledge of civil and criminal law related to school safety.
- 1.2 Demonstrates understanding of how district policies and codes of conduct support safety efforts and comply with local, state, and federal laws.
- 1.3 Assists school personnel in addressing legal issues and professional responsibilities with regard to student behavior and school safety.
- 1.4 Demonstrates knowledge of issues related to diversity, bullying, harassment, and discrimination.
- 1.5 Demonstrates knowledge of appropriate and lawful information gathering procedures.
- 1.6 Facilitates partnerships between law enforcement and school personnel.

EPSB approved the endorsement program in the fall of 2004. Immediately following the EPSB's approval, MSU, through the KCSS's Post Secondary Education component at MSU, developed a 12-hour graduate program to meet the standards. EPSB subsequently approved the MSU program.

MSU is the only institution in Kentucky, and possibly the entire country, to offer this program. Eastern Kentucky University is presently in the process of developing a similar endorsement to meet the standards. It is exciting to think Kentucky may soon have two institutions with a School Safety Educator Endorsement. Students entering the Endorsement for School Safety Program at Murray State University are certified teachers or administrators who seek the knowledge and skills to provide a safe, healthy, and nurturing school climate to promote student learning. They will also be skilled in strategic crisis planning, classroom management, "at-risk" student behavior interventions, successful teaching in alternative settings, safe school data analysis and crisis communications. The endorsement is meant to extend and complement the skills of the classroom teacher or administrator.

Two new courses and one existing course became the nine-hour required core. One three-hour course is selected from four existing courses. The two new courses are ADM 677, *Crisis Management in Educational Settings* and ADM 675, *Introduction to Alternative Education Settings*. Descriptions for each of these courses follow:

ADM 677 Crisis Management in Educational Settings (Three hours)

School safety is essential to an effective school as it promotes higher achievement for students and a more productive teaching and learning atmosphere. The content of this course provides educators with the skills and information to analyze safety data, plan for both school safety interventions and procedures and to manage crises in an educational setting. Students enrolled in the course must maintain a portfolio of course assignments.

ADM 675 Introduction to Alternative Education Settings (Three hours)

Kentucky school districts are required to provide alternative education settings for students removed from the traditional school setting, yet many teachers and administrators have little, if any, experience in this area, complicating the development of effective programs and practice in alternative settings. This course, a state-wide, on-line curriculum delivered by the Education Professional Standards Board through the Kentucky Virtual University, serves as an overview to effective teaching and administrative practice in the alternative education settings. Students enrolled in the course must maintain a portfolio of course assignments and documentation of field experiences for evaluation for university credit.

The existing course required is GUI 687, *Introduction to Guidance*. The description of the course follows:

GUI 687 Introduction to Guidance (Three hours)

This course is planned to help individuals define counseling programs and prevention/intervention strategies for all youth at all risk levels; to help them evaluate present services or programs; to introduce new services and programs where needed; and, to encourage cooperative efforts to better serve students and meet KERA goals. This course should be of value to teachers who wish to personalize teaching, to encourage improved human relations, and by individuals interested in entering the field of counseling.

Below are the MSU courses from which one course may be elected.

SED 540 Procedures for Classroom Management and Discipline (Three hours)

The course is designed to provide current research-based methods of several behavior management techniques that will allow teachers to choose the method that works best for their classroom. The content of this course provides educators with the information and skills needed to increase their knowledge of advanced methods, models, and techniques of classroom management procedures. (Graduate level requirements)

SED 651 Social Competence for Safe Environments (Three hours)

This course is designed to inform education professionals of universal/targeted/intensive level instructional discipline strategies and techniques that can be used to deal with students with challenging behaviors. This course includes advanced instruction and research related to school safety issues. An emphasis will be placed on advanced instruction, therapeutic techniques and interventions, and research related to best practices.

SED 657 School Safety and Classroom Management (Three hours)

The content of this course provides educators with the information and skills needed to create conditions that promote and maintain positive, safe, and healthy school culture, climate, and environments. Educators will also increase their knowledge of advanced strategies and techniques for classroom, school-wide, and district level, positive behavior management procedures.

EDU 625 Theories of Classroom Management and Control (Three hours)

This course is an analysis of the theoretical and practical aspects of selected systems of classroom management and control. It includes the study of several approaches that can assist teachers in establishing and maintaining a healthy and productive system of classroom operation. This course is designed to examine current theories of classroom management and control and explore the implication of each for motivation.

ouse Bill 330, approved by the Kentucky Legislature in 1998, defined the mission for KCSS. Included in that mission is the development of new programs. The belief statement developed by the KCSS Board of Directors states:

"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."

The MSU Kentucky Safety Educator certification program is one response to the mission and the belief statement.

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