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The WSSCA NEWSLETTER

For January 2016

The "news you can use " periodical for
Wisconsin's school safety and security professionals.

48th ANNUAL WSSCA CONFERENCE AND EXPO INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION

MARCH 7-8, 2016



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Thank You Peter Pochowski

Welcome to 2016 and the start of what is already shaping to be a wild ride of a year. I hope that the New Year finds you and your loved ones in good health.

Since coming on board on November 1st I've been able to meet and work directly with our outgoing Executive Director Pete Pochowski several times. While I knew Pete before I joined WSSCA, and was impressed with him from the start, it was a special experience coming to better learn the depth of character and fidelity that are central to who he is. WSSCA owes its success and achievements to the efforts and dedication of its members, especially those many who come forward to do the heavy lifting throughout the year. That said, I clearly see that as your Executive Director, I have an extremely tough act to follow. Pete's knowledge of WSSCA, its history, by-laws, membership, contacts, strengths, and challenges in encyclopedic. Again, a tough act to follow.

Many thanks, Pete, for everything you've done to help me step into this position, and more so, thank you for establishing a high bar for WSSCA. Truly, our organization and the entire state are better for your work to enhance safety and security.

December 2015 was a Tumultuous Month

December 2015 was a tumultuous month in the realm of safety and security. We marked the third anniversary of the horrors at Sandy Hook, we saw the entire Los Angeles Public School system closed due to a threat, and learned of a young man in Tennessee who gave his life shielding three schoolmates from a vicious killer. (cont.)

Man-made tragedies weren't the only bad news. The early morning hours of Christmas Eve saw a series of tornadoes rip across the southeast, leaving eight dead as of this writing.

One of the saddest elements in these and so many other similar stories is the certainty that given time, the stories will be repeated. That's not pessimism, it's admitting the reality of what we regularly face and must address. Fortunately, we aren't sitting by, wringing our hands waiting for the next horrible shoe to drop. We are addressing, preparing, and preventing actively and effectively.

I believe we can do more to bring to the forefront the critically essential nature and irreplaceable essence of our work to ensure safe and secure learning environments.

OSHA just published a draft document that updates their guidelines for Safety and Health Program Management. The document lays out six core elements, and the one I want to highlight is, "Management Leadership." Four action items are suggested, and without going into them word for word, I found a powerful concept I would hope to see embraced by every school organization in Wisconsin. It is this: **"Make safety a core organizational value."**

I've seen many statements from school leaders stating, "Safety and security are our highest priorities." I believe those statements are sincere, and we can help to make sure that we walk the talk in the ways we communicate, model, allocate resources, inspect, investigate, mitigate, and celebrate.

Perhaps you've already reviewed the OSHA document I'm referring to. It is worth a look, keeping in mind it's still a draft document and OSHA was looking for public comment. The hyperlink to the "OSHA Safety and Health Program Management Guidelines" November 2015 draft is:

<http://www.osha.gov/shpmguidelines/>

E- Mail from a Concerned Dad to WSSCA

A few weeks ago I received a letter from a concerned Dad. I get letters much like this one every so often. I am publishing this one so you will understand that the fears you have about school security are shared by many many parents – just like this one.

Dear Pete,

I had just had the talk with my kids (a 1st and 3rd grader). They go to an elementary school in Wisconsin. The talk involved shootings because everyday we hear about them in the news. I was driving down the street, looking at Christmas lights and then thought, "Wow, the parents of the Sandy Hook students just went about their lives like I am now and had no idea that the next day could change forever". My son was a 1st grader when it happened and even today, it worries me that our town could be the next Sandy Hook. We just don't know what other people are capable of nowadays. I know that some Arkansas schools have given special training to teachers to the equivalent as armed guards which should be a consideration in this mad world. I know there are procedures but even walking into my child's school, I know that the current safety measures are not enough. I guess my question is this, what can we do to improve the safety of Wisconsin schools to be the standard of safety nationwide? My children's school may have training in procedures for lockdown with emergency drills, but we need training to handle a real crisis. The protocol has changed very little since I was a kid in school. It is very much the same with visitor passes and drills. The same procedures that Sandy Hook had and look at that outcome ended, in tragedy. I just pray every night that my children go to school and come home safe and that if someone was thinking about doing the unthinkable, that they consider the innocent lives that would be changed forever.

Signed,

Concerned Dad.

I responded with this: (cont.)

Dear Concerned Dad,

Thank you for your note. I completely understand your fear and your sleepless nights worrying about your two children. We have 875,000 students in Wisconsin and I worry about each of them every night. The frustration I feel is close to maddening. Yes, I could quote statistics that show the odds of your children being killed at school are about the same as being hit by lightning - twice. That is accurate, of course, but not very comforting, is it?

This is indeed, the new normal for all of America and you are as confused and as concerned as everyone else, including law enforcement and our political leaders. As bad as it has been, I fear that we have not seen the end. In fact, I fear we have only seen the end of the beginning. If Horace Mann could have envisioned our world today, he probably would not have suggested starting the public school system in 1852. Who could have blamed him? The problems we face are daunting and seemingly endless.

I learned many years ago that the first step in solving a problem is to clearly identify the problem. As I see it, we are still grappling with that. I have written about the mental health issues facing our students, and gangs, and drugs, and race, and now, as if we don't have enough on our plate of woes, the world has added radical religious zealous hell-bent on destroying our American way of life. Clearly, we face problems in our schools that are unprecedented. How do we clearly identify all of that? How do we devise a plan to address each? Regrettably, I don't have a good answer for you.

Sir Winston Churchill once wrote, "The Americans always get things right - after they have tried everything else first." Frankly, our track record validates his comments. We seldom hit the target on the first attempt. But, consider this: Haven't we cured most of those dreaded diseases of the past; haven't we overcome the threats of Nazism, communism, slavery, and yes, by adding fluoride to our water, haven't we made great strides in preventing tooth decay. My point? Have faith, sir. (cont.)

Americans, perhaps more than any people in the history of the world are creative, determined, positive, up-beat, and most important - successful. As we did with diseases that took thousands of our children 100 years ago, we will find a way through this. **We WILL** find a way.

The key? I think we must follow the pattern that our predecessors established when they overcame great challenges: We must stick together, keep working, and challenge our leaders. One of my two favorite quotes is: "This too, shall pass." It may not appear as if it is, and it may even get worse for a while, but it will pass.

I know law enforcement officials are working very hard, and the same for school leaders and elected officials. We may not agree with everything they are doing, but as Mr. Churchill reminds us, we are only part-way through the process. My guess is that we still have some "tweaking" to experience before an answer is found. Eventually, Dad, we will get it right. For now, I suggest you resend your letter. Address this one to your local school board. They need to know of your concern. If we push from the bottom, and there is movement from the top, we just might speed up the end product. And for me, it can't come too soon.

My other favorite saying? "If there must be trouble, let it be in my time – that my child may find peace." –Thomas Paine, circa 1800's. See? They had trouble back then, and with unity, determination, and leadership, we **WILL** overcome. Just as they did. It's what we Americans do.

Now Dad, go write that letter!

Peter Pochowski

Note: This month Jeremiah Johnson, WSSCA Board Member and B&G Supervisor at Muskego-Norway writes an outstanding article that should truly be considered a “must read” no matter how far along one is in the field of school safety. One of our greatest challenges is keeping the level of concern for our work at a high level. I won’t steal Jeremiah’s thunder by giving away too much of what he has shared, but please do give close attention and strong consideration to those points that support the “institutionalizing” of a safety orientation throughout the organizations we serve. Ed

A Roadmap to Creating an Employee Safety Program

As a safety coordinator or building leader you find yourself wearing many hats. Employee safety and injury avoidance may not rise to the top of your duty list... that is until injuries begin to compile and your insurance ‘mod factor’ rate rises. You may be called upon to begin an initiative to curve workplace injuries or simply put something in place as a wellness approach. Programs are not born overnight and may take years to become fully imbedded in the culture of your School District. The following is a proactive approach to getting a program off the ground.

1. **Identify the concern** and some overarching goals that can be accomplished throughout a fiscal year. Many districts have strategic plans or key performance objectives. It is important at this phase to create buy-in with either your School Board or leadership team. It is extremely helpful to compile a list of how many injuries your District has experienced (Loss-Run Report) and a dollar amount associated with the injuries. Business managers will typically have this info at their fingertips. This data will substantiate the program and help establish a baseline as your District begins to see improvement. (cont.)

2. **Form your team-** It is critical to have key employees involved, such as an HR Generalist, Business Manager, Buildings & Grounds Supervisor and possibly a head custodian. Most work comp carriers will have specialists that are more than happy to be a part of this core team and even drive the process.
3. **Encourage Early Reporting of injuries-** Each day an injury goes unreported, expenses will also increase. Make sure all employees, especially front end aides and administrative assistants understand your reporting procedures. This is best implemented by the HR department.
4. **“Tell Someone” Mentality-** Encourage all employees to look out for each other, noting the District’s efforts toward a safe working environment. For every injury that occurs, up to ten people noticed the issue and did nothing to correct it.
5. **Institute Accident Investigation & Interviews-** When an employee is injured, it is critical to gather facts, interview witnesses and even take pictures or save surveillance from the injury. Much can be learned in this process that can avoid further injuries and even protect your District against fraudulent claims. A simple investigation form can be completed by the Principal, B&G Director or Head Custodian.
6. **Meet with the injured party-** It is important to build a culture that shows the District cares about those that are injured. By creating an interview question set, you will be able to learn more about the incident from the injured employees’ perspective. This step helps to spread the message that the District is taking injuries very seriously. If there are actions to be taken after the meeting, notify the employee & principal what you have done to remedy the issue.
7. **Return to Work Policy-** In every chance possible, help return injured employees to work within three business days. “Lost Time” injuries compound the costs once an employee misses more than three days of work. It is very helpful to have a list of light duty work that can be provided to a physician. Anything from clerical work to watching training videos will prevent injured employees from missing time. It should be noted that student’s grades drop up to 10% when a sub is filling in long term for their

teacher. Employee morale suffers as workloads often increase to cover for the injured. From an injured employee's perspective, being injured at home increases the risk of depression as the injured is disengaged from work and life in general.

8. **Safety Walks-** Much like fire drills, a monthly safety walk of every school involving the principal and head custodian (and others if possible) will validate safety efforts. Develop a list of "lookfor's" to identify any areas of improvement. Are ladders accessible? Are salt or shovels available? Are wet floor signs posted? Just a few things for a checklist.

9. **Create an Incentive Program-** Enlisting a teacher in this phase would be preferred as they would be the best advocate for their colleagues. This individual becomes the go-to for any safety celebrations/suggestions and recognizes their peers. By reaching out to local contractors or vendors, you could seek donations of nominal gift cards to support the safety program. The teacher-safety rep can raffle off prizes for those that have made safety suggestions at their site. This phase really helps to build momentum and rallies excitement for the program.

10. **Celebrate, Celebrate, Celebrate-** It is important to celebrate the accomplishments of the program and those that are working to improve safety. Send an email blast recognizing a school for no "lost time injuries" for ___ months. Take a picture of a staff member who made a suggestion or a safe act and include in a District newsletter. Involve students in a safety walk and share it on your District's social media page. Report progress to your School Board. This approach continues to keep safety front and center.

"Our safety program has reduced workplace injuries by over 55% since 2013 and saved our District over \$60,000 in insurance premiums this fiscal year!" -After three years of implementing the steps noted, this was a very rewarding message to deliver to my School Board this year.

Implementing a strong program takes a great deal of effort, but in the end keeps employees safe and helps keep finite resources in the classroom. There are many ways to approach your employee safety program and your insurance consultants can help point you in the right direction. OSHA just released a draft roadmap for starting a safety program as well. (cont.)

They are looking for public feedback through February 2016. That link can be found here- <http://www.osha.gov/shpmguidelines/>

**Jeremiah Johnson- WSSCA Board of Directors/Member
Buildings & Grounds Supervisor-Muskego-Norway School District**

Note: The impact that social media has on our world needs little explanation. I think it's fair to say, that the majority of folks we work with, and certainly all the students served in our schools are "digital natives." More than thirty-five years ago author John Naisbitt in his landmark book, Megatrends said that we were moving from an industrial age to an information age. I'll admit that I had a hard time swallowing that thought at the time, but today it's undeniable. John Stangler, WSSCA Board member and Pewaukee Director of B&G is one of our leaders and resources in utilizing social media. This month he shares some timely information for those of us who still struggle as "digital immigrants." Ed

(Be sure to follow WSSCA on Twitter & Facebook links are in the title header)

Twitter

How is it useful? Twitter contains information you will find valuable. Messages from users you choose to follow will show up on your home page for you to read. It's like being delivered a newspaper whose headlines you'll always find interesting – you can discover news as it's happening, learn more about topics that are important to you, and access information in real time.(cont.)

- **Twitter** - online social networking platform where users send and receive short, text-based messages called "tweets"
- **Tweets** - text-based messages; up to 140 characters
- **@** - "at"; referring to another user; i.e. @WSSCAupdates, @PSDBGSafety (John)
- **Follower** - users that follow you on Twitter (not always a 2-way relationship on Twitter)
- **Feed** - running list of tweets based on a specific topic
- **Hashtag** - #; word or phrase preceded by the # sign; allows users to aggregate messages on a topic; i.e., #safetychat, #edchat
- **Reply** - directly respond to a specific user, beginning the tweet with their username (@xxxx)
- **RT** - retweet; share the tweet of another user with your followers
- **MT** - modified tweet; a retweet that has been edited in some way
- **DM** - direct message; private message that can be sent to only those you follow

Twitter Resources

- [Creating a Twitter Account](#)
- [Signing Up with Twitter](#)

"Getting Started with Twitter." Twitter Help Center. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 Jan. 2015. <<https://support.twitter.com/groups/50-welcome-to-twitter/topics/204-the-basics/articles/215585-getting-started-with-twitt>

School Safety Assessments Bring Peace of Mind!

WSSCA has formed a partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI), CESA 4, and CESA 9 to provide school security assessments in Wisconsin. With an assessment by our team of professionals you will receive a credit; \$1,000 for a single school; \$1,500 for 2; \$1,750 for 3, and; \$2,000 for assessing 4 schools. This credit will be applied to the final fee (in the spirit of Christmas shopping, consider this a coupon for 50% to 90% off!) The reason most schools give for not having an assessment has now been addressed (money). Our team has assessed 66 schools in Wisconsin and testimonials from our satisfied customers are available. These funds run out soon so call now! For details, contact WSSCA's Executive Director at 920-615-3926, or at wssca@wssca.org.

Start the New Year with peace of mind for your students, your staff, and your parents.

WSSCA is looking for a few good men and women!

Do you want to be a part of the leadership team of our growing organization? Each year our board of directors look for new talent – young or old, to join our team. If you think you can make this a better organization, or if you care to be a presenter at our conferences or training sessions, contact WSSCA's Executive Director at 920-615-3926, wssca@wssca.org.

Quotes of the Month:

“You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face.” Eleanor Roosevelt 1960

“A day without sunshine is like, you know, night.” Steve Martin

Thank you, WSSCA Thank You.

As some of you may have heard, I am retiring. In fact, by the time you read this, I will be gone. I don't handle goodbyes real well so please bear with me for a minute.

I believe there is a difference in being asked - and being called. When the opportunity arose for me to replace Bryan Roessler to become WSSCA's second executive director, I knew something special was being offered to me. I knew that with great privilege comes great responsibility. Working closely with our President, Gary Rosploch, we set out to separate WSSCA from the parent company (Wisconsin Safety Council) and to create our own name and identity. Gary set the leadership example by unselfishly extending his term another full year to help a struggling new enterprise find its direction. What we established that year, and institutionalized the next year under the leadership of President Bill Freeman, continues to this day. We called it "the WSSCA 2.0."

Another great leader, Mike Hinske, took a great idea started by his predecessors and completed the program we now know as the WSSCA School Safety Certification Course, an amazing feat. Others contributed to that program by being the subject matter experts; like Dave Young, Bill Freeman, Doug Reynolds, Jodi Traas, and Mike Hinske, himself. We then elevated our overall program with the advent of a new style e-newsletter, records keeping program Wild Apricot, and converting our financial records to Quick Books. All this was done by our IT guy, one the finest men I have ever known – Bob Severson.

There are many more names I could mention and I apologize to them, but space is limited. My point is that WSSCA never was and never will be a one-man show. It took a team to build it and it will take a team to continue it. My one request is that you give my replacement, Ed Dorff, the same support you gave me. If done, I firmly believe Ed will lead WSSCA's into its finest days. (cont.)

Finally, I have to mention the single most important person of all during my time with WSSCA – my wife Issy. I would not have accepted the position without her agreeing to handle our books. A retired banker, she agreed to keep our financial records and our taxes, and she did it for seven years—without pay. She just wanted to be a part of something like WSSCA – helping to keep schools safe. To paraphrase Nathan Hale, " I regret that I have but one wife to give for my company." I intend to pay her back over the rest our lives.

In closing, I want to mention the guy who really put WSSCA on the map many years ago – Dick Klawiter. Dick set the bar high, and did so with class, dignity, and integrity. The highest compliment anyone could pay me is to say that Dick would have approved of what I did.

WSSCA gave Issy and me far more than we gave WSSCA, and to that I say: Thank you WSSCA, thank you!

Peter Pochowski

"Keep the Main Thing the Main Thing."

An Old Confucius saying - that Pete just made up.

For the better part of the last seven years it is what drove Pete in his position as Executive Director of WSSCA. Keeping WSSCA and its mission the main thing. Through his leadership, knowledge, humor but most importantly his passion for school safety he helped WSSCA grow and become a greater resource for schools across the state. WSSCA's Board of Directors wish Pete only the best in his retirement. We thank him and his wife Issy for all their hard work and the efforts they undertook to bring positive changes to WSSCA. They have our hopes, our prayers and our wishes for sunny days, warm nights and only healthy and safe days before them.

Borrowed Humor of the Month:

Honor among thieves?

A mother complained to my son, a schoolteacher, that other students were stealing her daughter's pencils.

"It's not the money—it's the principle," she insisted. "My husband took those pencils from work."

Thanks, I Think

I recently ran into an old student of mine, who said, "I always liked you.

You never had favorites. You were mean to everyone."



Edward L. Dorff
Executive Director and Editor

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