

Los Angeles Unified School District

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

333 S. Beaudry Ave., 24th floor

Los Angeles, CA 90017

Phone: (213) 241-6766

FAX: (213) 241-8952

www.lausd.net



News Release

Contact: Monica Carazo, LAUSD
(213) 247-4087 cell
Brett Naftzger, Community Matters
(915) 269-3467

Sept. 24, 2008
#08/09-070

LAUSD Officials Promote Student-Focused, Anti-Violence Programs at Symposium with Key Los Angeles Decision Makers

Los Angeles, CA – Determined to empower students to help reduce campus violence, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) officials today told 150 of Los Angeles' key decision makers that integrated, student-focused programs that promote conflict resolution and safe schools are helping to reduce violence at District campuses.

“The safety of our students is one of the District’s top priorities,” said LAUSD Supt. David L. Brewer III. “These innovative programs empower students and provide them with the tools they need to resolve conflicts on their own through the use of words instead of weapons.”

The LAUSD’s first-ever “Safer Schools Symposium” was designed to highlight innovative strategies that give students the power to resolve conflicts before the situation escalates to violence. More than 150 Los Angeles community leaders—including elected officials, city leaders, law enforcement officials, school administrators, teachers, community leaders and foundation representatives—participated in the event.

“Empowered students who recognize the value of these techniques can serve as peacemakers on campus to diffuse conflict and prevent violence before anyone gets hurt,” said LAUSD Board President Mónica García. “We want symposium attendees to embrace those programs and support their expansion to other District schools.”

“These programs challenge our students to compromise with each other and find common ground. At-risk students who master these techniques report feeling empowered and many times turn their lives around for the better,” said LAUSD Board Member Julie Korenstein, a champion of many District safety programs.

-more-

The symposium featured student-lead workshops on the Human Efforts Aimed at Relating Together (HEART), Achievement and Commitment to Excellence (ACES), Safe School Ambassadors and Peace Over Violence programs, which have been instituted at specific LAUSD schools, most in the last 10 years.

School violence can manifest itself in a variety of ways including fighting, bullying, aggressive behavior, verbal threats, taunting and teasing, among others. Many students react by accepting these behaviors or simply choosing not to become involved.

“Reducing incidents of bullying and violence cannot be solved by adults alone,” said Rick Phillips, the symposium’s keynote speaker and executive director of Community Matters. “Students see, hear and know what adults don’t. They can intervene in ways adults can’t. They are often the first ones on the scene of violence or mistreatment and they determine the social norms that guide how students treat each other.”

In the majority of U.S. school shootings, students knew what was going to happen but did not bring it to the attention of an adult. The premise behind the symposium is to break the “Code of Silence” by engaging young people as partners in preventing school violence.

Here is a synopsis of the four LAUSD program:

HEART—The program emphasizes the promotion of positive human relations, conflict management and the promotion of a safe-school campus by "living violence free." This program is available at 51 secondary schools throughout the District.

ACES—Available at 12 District schools, ACES is a comprehensive student success, youth empowerment and character-building program.

Safe School Ambassadors—The program helps prevent and stop peer mistreatment and violence among 4th- to 12th-graders. It’s available at 23 LAUSD schools.

Peace Over Violence—Formerly known as the Los Angeles Commission on Assaults Against Women, this organization sponsors gender-specific youth violence prevention programs, “My Strength” for young men, and “Be Strong” for young women. These programs are offered at 14 schools.

Community Matters, a nonprofit group that provides tools to build communities where all children and youth can feel safe, co-sponsored the event with the LAUSD. Funding support came from the Kaiser Permanente South Community Giving Program.