

Honor the SSD Staff Member that is Making a Difference in Your Child's Education

Complete the following form and answer the questions at the bottom on a separate sheet of paper and return it to the Communications Department by *December 10, 2010*. For electronic versions of the nomination forms, visit www.ssdmo.org.

Mail:	Fax:	E-mail:
Special School District Communications Department 12110 Clayton Road Town & Country, MO 63131	314.989.8470	wbuchek@ssdmo.org

For which award are you nominating?

- Key to the Classroom/Teacher of the Year Award (classroom teachers) Building Block Award (paraprofessionals) Lasting Impression Award (support/other)

Part I - Nominee Information

Name: _____

School: _____

District: _____

Position: _____

Part II - Nominator Information

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Relationship with SSD: _____

Nominator Signature: _____

Please answer the following questions thoroughly and on a separate sheet of paper:

1. Describe what makes the nominee worthy of special recognition. Please provide specific examples.
2. What attributes make the nominee stand out?
3. Describe how the nominee makes a difference in the lives of students.
4. Please describe the nominee's ability to speak on behalf of all educators and his/her ability to withstand a busy schedule. (Key to the Classroom nominations only)

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NEWS FROM SSD



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What's Hot? Cool Tools.

Be sure to check out "Cool Tools" on the new SSD website – www.ssdmo.org.

This online warehouse of parent resources features podcasts, helpful checklists, resources on specific disabilities, information on parent workshops and even an "Ask the Expert" corner.

Featured Cool Tool

Workshop: Is Your Child a Target of Bullying?

Learn bullying intervention strategies and guidelines for developing action plans to address individual child needs. This workshop is applicable for all disability categories and age groups.

6–9 p.m., Nov. 8, SSD Central Office – Room 61

Register by calling 314.989.7807 or 711 (Missouri Relay) or online at www.solutionwhere.com/ssd.



Accentuate the Positive PBIS Creates an Environment for Student Success

In the not-too-distant past, when students misbehaved at school, they were reprimanded and sent to the principal's office.

At more than 100 schools in St. Louis County, this has all changed, said Lisa Powers, Ph.D., SSD area coordinator who helps spearhead Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, or PBIS.

Nowadays, teachers, staff and students are looking at behavior holistically. With support and training from SSD's PBIS program, schools are creating campus-wide routines, expectations and rules to create positive learning environments where all children can find success.

While some students still find themselves in the principal's office, in the first two years a school receives PBIS support, office referrals for poor behavior drop anywhere from 20 to 60 percent, Powers said.

"Our whole purpose is to create more inclusive practices for children with behavioral problems," Powers said. When kids are in the office for behavior infractions, they're not in the classroom learning, she said.

PBIS has revolutionized how educators look at specific locations in the school that are plagued by troublesome behavior, particularly for children with behavior disorders. For example, the playground, the cafeteria and the hallway often present challenges. To improve student behavior in these locations, teachers, students and administrators work together to establish a routine and expectations. This might mean that in the hallway, students are

expected to walk on the right, open and close their lockers gently and reduce congestion by only talking to their friends while walking.

On the playground, teachers may help improve behavior by ensuring there is adequate room for play and a variety of activities for students to choose from. Instead of simply supervising the playground, teachers may also take an active role in encouraging positive interactions among students.

In all of these scenarios, expectations and appropriate behaviors are taught, reinforced with praise and taught again as needed.

"What I hear parents saying is, if we can create a school environment that is peaceful, calm and predictable, that's a support for children with disabilities," Powers said. In this sort of environment, children are less likely to be excluded from activities due to behavior problems.

What principals are saying is that PBIS is helping ALL children — with and without disabilities — be successful at school.

Principal Meg Brooks took the reins at Westridge Elementary in Rockwood School District during a challenging time. When she arrived in 2004, the district had just redrawn its school boundary lines, and Westridge was getting ready to welcome a whole new group of students that weren't particularly excited to be there, Brooks said.

"PBIS gave us a common language. It helped us set expectations for behavior and well-being in our school," she said.



Brooks collaborated with teachers, parents and students to establish a positive culture that helped all children feel welcome and successful. Expectations for behavior were set for all areas of the school, from the bus to the classroom, the playground and the restroom.

"We saw progress within the first three months of school," Brooks said.

In 2004, the school had more than 150 office referrals. During the 2009–2010 school year, the school had only 20 office referrals.

PBIS has a direct positive impact on bullying, which can undermine any child's emotional well-being at school. By reinforcing good behavior and reminding children of expected behavior, unkind actions that can lead to out-right bullying are quickly stopped and redirected.

"If a child is unkind to another child, we go back to that common language and common expectations, and we talk about what those are," Brooks said. "It's not a question of whether you did wrong, but rather, how are we going to make this better? How are we going to change our behavior the next time?"

"When the teacher has less disciplinary issues, the teacher can focus on academics, and achievement is increased." ■

Trading Sticks & Stones for Internet and Cell Phones: What Families Should Know about Cyberbullying

With advances in technology, everyday actions become more convenient. After all, when is the last time you actually got up from your seat to change the channel on the television, or wrote someone an actual letter? Remote controls and e-mail are a just a drop in the electronic bucket when it comes to technological conveniences.

Today most people have the convenience of a phone in their pocket, and many others do their shopping and banking from home. Computers and assistive technology have allowed for great advances in home and school — particularly in special education.

Unfortunately, negative things are also advanced by technology — like bullying.

According to a survey conducted by the National Crime Prevention Council, 43 percent of teens had been victims of cyberbullying in the last year. According to NCPC, cyberbullying is “when the Internet, cell phones or other devices are used to send or post text or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person.”

Examples include:

- Sending threatening texts
- Stealing a person's password
- Posting pictures of someone without approval
- Pretending to be someone else while online
- Harassing someone through a social networking site

In August, the Missouri General Assembly passed a measure that requires school district's anti-bullying policies to include cyberbullying and electronic communications. But much cyberbullying happens outside of schools.

Unlike traditional bullying that typically happens during school hours, cyberbullying can occur 24 hours a day, giving the recipient no reprieve from the stress it can cause.

In addition, bullying victims are more common among children with disabilities and special needs. Those who talk, act or think differently are considered easy targets to bullies.

Although there has only been limited research on the subject to this point, students with less visible disabilities tend to get the larger brunt of the harassing compared

to those with visible physical challenges. This is believed to stem from the fact that children (as well as some adults) have a harder time understanding differences they cannot see.

In addition, other research shows that some students with certain disabilities may be more likely to be bullied, as well as bully others.

This means that all parents should be vigilant about monitoring their child's Internet and electronic device usage so that any cyberbullying is revealed — both if a child is being bullied or bullying another.

Some helpful tips for parents/guardians:

- Keep the computer in a high-traffic room in the house
- Educate children on cyberbullying
- Stay updated on technologies and how they are being used
- Participate in open communications with your child

As with traditional bullying, there are methods that can be applied to decrease or prevent cyberbullying:

- Block the bully's message electronically
- Do not seek revenge to “get back” at the bully
- Never share passwords
- Report any bullying to Internet Service Providers (ISPs)
- Keep a record of cyberbullying incidents

The conveniences of today's technology have both positives and negatives. Although many tasks are now much easier, they also require much more vigilance and precaution. ■



Warning signs of cyberbullying

A child or teenager may be a victim of cyberbullying if he/she:

- Unexpectedly stops using the computer or cell phone
- Appears nervous or jumpy when an instant message or e-mail appears
- Appears uneasy about going to school or outside in general
- Appears to be angry, depressed or frustrated after using the computer or cell phone
- Avoids discussions about what they are doing on the computer or cell phone
- Becomes abnormally withdrawn from usual friends and family members

A child or teenager may be engaging in cyberbullying behaviors if he/she:

- Quickly switches screens or closes programs when someone walks by
- Gets unusually upset if computer or cell phone privileges are taken away
- Appears to be using multiple online accounts (or an account that is not their own)

Let's talk about cyberbullying

Research has indicated the importance of open communication about cyberbullying. Following are some conversation starters to open up dialogue with children and teens.

- Have you ever had any problems with people on the Internet? Has anyone ever bothered or threatened you or treated you badly while online? I'm asking because I know that many people have been harassed and bullied on the Internet and I want you to be able to talk to me about things like that if they happen to you.

- I heard your cell phone beeping a lot the other day. Are you having any problems with it? With all of the news stories about kids harassing each other I wanted to check. You shouldn't have to deal with this. If someone is bothering you using your cell phone, we can report them to the cell phone company and have their number blocked.

- Are other kids picking on you online? Does it happen once in a while, or is it a constant problem? Do you get concerned that people will read what others have written about you online and think it's true? ■

Take the cyberbullying quiz

1. What are some electronic devices used to bully others?

- A. Cell phones
- B. Computers
- C. Internet-enabled gaming consoles
- D. Digital camera
- E. All of the above

2. How many active users does Facebook, generally regarded as the #1 social networking site, have?

- A. 500 thousand
- B. 10 million
- C. 100 million
- D. 250 million
- E. 500 million

3. How many hours of the day are children vulnerable to cyberbullying?

- A. 0
- B. 2
- C. 6
- D. 12
- E. 24

4. Why don't victims tell their parents what is happening to them on the computer?

- A. They don't want their computer privileges taken away
- B. They are embarrassed that they are being picked on
- C. They don't think their parents can do anything about it
- D. They aren't able to openly share their struggles and problems with parents
- E. All of the above

5. What are some ways that digital evidence of cyberbullying can be collected and used to get an adult to discipline the bully?

- A. Instant messaging logs
- B. Screenshots taken of offending web pages
- C. Tracing the identity of an e-mail sender
- D. Analyzing computer hard drives and flash memory cards in phones and cameras
- E. All of the above

6. Cyberbullying victims tend to be harassed by:

- A. A stranger who is much older than them
- B. A stranger who is much younger than them
- C. Someone they know at school
- D. A relative
- E. None of the above

7. Let's say that you use AOL for your email. What email address should you use to contact AOL if you receive a harassing, threatening, or otherwise problematic email?

- A. abuse@aol.com
- B. cyberbully@aol.com
- C. help@aol.com
- D. saveme@aol.com
- E. spam@aol.com

8. How do you know that a website has a secure connection?

- A. There is a lock in the top right or bottom right corner of your web browser
- B. There is a red flashing pop-up that informs you
- C. It is your friend's site
- D. The web address looks to be legitimate
- E. It is impossible to know

9. How can you find out if there is personal information about you on the Internet?

- A. Ask a stranger
- B. Ask an adult
- C. Google yourself
- D. Call the police
- E. You can't find out, it is impossible

10. Which of the following is the best way to protect your personal information online?

- A. Set your MySpace and Facebook page to “private”
- B. Only tell your friends your passwords
- C. Don't ever put any personal information online
- D. Only post private information on websites that you trust
- E. All of the above

Warning signs, conversation starters and quiz used with permission from the Cyberbullying Research Center (www.cyberbullying.us).

- C(10)
- A(9)
- V(8)
- V(7)
- C(6)
- E(5)
- E(4)
- E(3)
- D(2)
- E(1)

Answers:

Overview of Award & Scholarship Programs

SSD has developed a wide range of award programs aimed at recognizing those individuals who contribute to the success of the district and its students. Additionally, the district partners with local organizations, including the Special Education Foundation and the Bonhomme Lions, which generously provide awards, scholarships and opportunities to SSD students.

Key to the Classroom/Teacher of the Year Award

With more than 2,600 teachers, SSD boasts a remarkable wealth of excellent educators. The Key to the Classroom/Teacher of the Year Award recognizes the achievements of these dedicated individuals. One Key to the Classroom recipient will be selected as the district's Teacher of the Year. Nominees for the award must be SSD classroom teachers who are employed during the current school year. Award winners and the Teacher of the Year are recognized annually at the SSD Salutes Banquet. *The deadline for nominations is Dec. 10, 2010.*

Building Block Award

The SSD Building Block Award honors outstanding paraprofessionals from around the district. Nominees for the Building Block Award are judged on their skills and on their dedication to students. Winners of the Building Block Award are recognized annually at the SSD Salutes Banquet. *The deadline for nominations is Dec. 10, 2010.*

Lasting Impression Award

The Lasting Impression Award recognizes the achievements of dedicated individuals, working both in and outside of the classroom, who stand out in their role at SSD. The Lasting Impression Award is open to all SSD staff except teachers or paraprofessionals. Winners of the Lasting Impression Award are recognized annually at the SSD Salutes Banquet. *The deadline for nominations is Dec. 10, 2010.*

Scholarship applications are also available at www.ssdmo.org.

Allison M. Haake Memorial Scholarship

Established in 2008, the Allison M. Haake Memorial Scholarship was created to honor an aspiring teacher who lost her battle with cancer in 2007. The scholarship recipient is recognized annually at the Commitment to Kids Banquet. *The deadline for applications is Feb. 18, 2011.*

Bonhomme Lions Scholarships

The Bonhomme Lions, longtime supporters of education in the St. Louis area, have been providing scholarships to graduating SSD students for many years. Scholarship winners are recognized annually at the Commitment to Kids Banquet. *The deadline for applications is Feb. 18, 2011.*

SSD Board of Education Scholarship

Established in 2008, the SSD Board of Education Scholarship is awarded to a graduating SSD student who shows both strong leadership skills and a track record of volunteerism. The scholarship recipient is recognized annually at the Commitment to Kids Banquet. *The deadline for applications is Feb. 18, 2011.*

Special Education Foundation Programs

The Special Education Foundation (SEF) is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the education and lives of students with disabilities throughout the St. Louis area. Over the years, the Foundation has provided hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarships, camperships and mini-grants to SSD students and teachers. Additionally, the Foundation offers the Fred Saigh Youth Leadership Program for high school students. For more information about these programs, visit www.sef-stl.org.

Important Dates

• **Dec. 10, 2010** – Building Block Awards (nomination deadline)

• **Dec. 10, 2010** – Lasting Impression Awards (nomination deadline)

• **Dec. 10, 2010** – Key to the Classroom/Teacher of the Year Awards (nomination deadline)

• **Feb. 11, 2011** – Dianne Arbeiter Scholarships and Camperships (application deadline)

• **Feb. 18, 2011** – SSD Board of Education Scholarship (application deadline)

• **Feb. 18, 2011** – Bonhomme Lions Scholarships (application deadline)

• **Feb. 18, 2011** – Allison M. Haake Memorial Scholarship (application deadline)

• **Feb. 28, 2011** – Special Education Foundation Scholarships (application deadline)

• **March 11, 2011** – Laura K. Sherman Laughlin Scholarship (application deadline)

• **March 2, 2011** – SSD Salutes Banquet

• **March 11, 2011** – Sammy Goldman “Living Big” Campership (application deadline)

• **April 18, 2011** – Special Education Foundation Camperships (application deadline)

• **April 28, 2011** – Commitment to Kids Student Banquet