



## **Vulnerable Educators - 3 Part Newsletter Series**

**By William D. Berard III Esq., Senior McGrath Trainer, and  
Mary Jo McGrath, Esq., CEO/Founder, McGrath Training Systems**

### **Part One: EDUCATORS, BE WISE.... SUPERVISE!**

One of the most common causes of legal action against school districts today is negligent supervision of students. Although we can never guarantee the safety or well being of a student, school districts must take precautions and ensure that every reasonable effort is made to provide a safe educational experience. This is particularly critical during less structured times such as recess, school bus loading and unloading, class change periods, after-school activities, club meetings, assemblies, and field trips. "Hot spots" where students congregate require increased vigilance. Locations such as cafeterias, hallways, bleachers, tracks, fields, athletic courts, playgrounds, and parking lots need special attention and constant adult supervision.

If a student is injured during the course of a school activity, liability will not automatically attach to the school district. In order for liability to be found, it must be demonstrated that the school district failed to act reasonably under the circumstances. In other words, would another person, with like education, skill and experience, have handled a particular situation in a similar way?

There are eight basic principles of supervision that educators must understand. Proper supervision entails the following:

- Vigilance
- Alertness
- Planning
- Practice
- Communication
- Knowledge
- Discipline
- Movement

Surprisingly, few educators have a clear understanding of what the supervision of students entails. Proactive training on the basic elements of supervision is quickly becoming one of the most important types of training conducted in school districts throughout the country. This training is essential for anyone who supervises students outside the classroom and/or off-campus, including athletic coaches, bandleaders, drama and debate coaches, cheerleading moderators, field trip leaders and chaperones. Inculcating the eight basic principles, along with specific practices and guidelines, into daily routines will protect against negligent supervision claims and contribute to a quality education for all students.

In assessing claims, the courts will look to see whether the school district fulfilled on its responsibility to train employees properly on the "how to" of supervising students. When school employees and volunteers are steeped in the eight basic principles of effective supervision of students, great strides can be made toward protecting students from harm and minimizing the risk of school district and employee liability.

### **Next Issue: Avoiding Vulnerable Situations**

## McGrath Vulnerable Educator Programs

### McGrath Vulnerable Educators Liability Training: Minimize the Risk

McGrath Vulnerable Educators Liability Training: Minimize the Risk provides school personnel with essential information about their duties and responsibilities for the safety of students, volunteers and staff, on and off campus, and provides guidelines for fulfilling those duties. The training addresses a wide range of topics, leaving participants with heightened awareness and sensitivity to issues and situations that could cause harm to students, or put them and the district at risk for legal liability.

### Athletic Liability Training

The McGrath Athletic Liability Training Program is designed to provide athletic directors, principals and coaches with useful information and guidelines regarding their duties and responsibilities for student and staff safety both on and off campus. The program covers a wide range of topics leaving employees with a heightened awareness and sensitivity to those issues and circumstances which could put both employees and the district at risk for legal liability.

Learn more on our website at [www.mcgrathinc.com](http://www.mcgrathinc.com).

**Also...Prepare Adults in Your Schools to take effective action, protect students and limit the harm and liability that may attach when Bullying and Harassment go unchecked...**

**School Bullying: Tools for Avoiding Harm and Liability** by Mary Jo McGrath (Corwin Press). This volume provides a wealth of information on liability for all types of peer harassment and intimidation, including hazing, and the tools and procedures needed for conducting legally fit investigations. It is now in print and available from McGrath Training Systems. [Order now!](#)

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