

# Jolene's Task Force: Results of 2014 School Survey

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Presented by

Amy Schweinle, Ph.D., William Schweinle, Ph.D., Ramu Sudhagoni, Ph.D., and Michael Lawler, Ph.D.

University of South Dakota

## Summary Findings

The common factor across the results was that each school seems to be doing something different. Some schools seemed content with their programs and trainings, others were not. Curriculum for students was often not formalized. Many of the programs did not specifically address sexual abuse, but abuse or stranger danger, in general.

For staff, most schools discussed mandatory reporting at the beginning of the year or annual trainings. Many trainings were not formal. This is an area for improvement as the most frequent concern about and barrier to reporting was lack of knowledge about the topic and the process. Schools were also concerned about how difficult it is to discuss the topic within the school and with parents. Training on communicating difficult topics might also be beneficial. As schools noted, though, time and money are also barriers not only to designing and implementing a reporting system, but also in designing and implementing training.

## Responses to Specific Questions

### Curriculum

Does your school district include any integrated curriculum on child sexual abuse?

If so, what grade/s is the curriculum taught?

Overall, very few schools had a formal integrated curriculum (9 out of 32). An additional 8 addressed the issue informally, at different times or in classes. Different schools incorporated the curriculum in varied ways across multiple grades ranging from pre-K through 12, with some schools reporting the full range, others only a single grade or a range.

The curriculum, in some cases, was incorporated into a class such as high school family and consumer sciences, PE, life skills, health, and sociology. There were also different models or programs utilized, such as the Circle of Grace Program, and the Boys Town Model. However, none of the programs specifically address sexual abuse. Some address stranger danger – either in a program or through books. Others, like Circle of Grace, emphasize positive relationships and maintaining appropriate physical, emotional, spiritual, and sexual boundaries, as well as what to do if violations occur. It was not clear how the Boys Town Model was used, or which components, but it can incorporate building healthy relationships and making good decisions.

In short, among the schools with either formal or informal curricula, there were varied approaches: asking children to read books to formal programs that address healthy relationships and boundaries. In some cases, it was utilized in a single class and grade. In others, it was incorporated across multiple grades.

## School Characteristics, Reporting and Training

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Does your school have a school counselor?

28 schools reported having at least one part-time counselor in the district. One school reported having an unofficial counselor in the schools, and 3 schools reported having no counselors. Those who did not have a counselor reported that if there were counseling issues children can speak to the principal, the school will collaborate with parents, and they provide tuition reduction if parents cannot afford counseling.

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If no, how do you attend to counseling issues?

As mandatory reporters, do you have an estimate of how many cases the school has referred over the past 5 years?

24 out of 32 schools responded. Some schools reported that they did not have the information. Results ranged from 2 to 3 to about 50 over the last 5 years. The majority reported about 5 (1 per year). Schools either reported few (1 to 10) or many (more than 25), but none were in the middle range. Over the past year, reports ranged from zero to 8-12.

Over the past year?

It was difficult to determine a precise number of referrals. Some schools only reported the number of total referrals over the last 5 years while others only reported over the last year or the last 2 years. It isn't clear if the numbers reported include only suspected sexual abuse or all abuse because some schools provided an overall number. We also do not know the size of the schools reporting, to get an estimate of the number of referrals per capita. That said, we estimated the number of referrals over 5 years, based on the numbers given. For example, if they reported 2 over the past 2 years, we estimated 5 over the past 5 years

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Do you conduct staff education or training about mandatory reporting?

Out of the 25 that answered the question, 22 schools said they do have mandatory reporting trainings. The majority have training at teacher in-services, and beginning of the year annual training. Some encouraged webinars in addition to the training or incorporated mid-year updates. It was interesting that two schools reported that the staff or administration was responsible for reporting, not teachers. One said, "No, we as administration take care of reporting through the staff/faculty." Another said, "Staff knows to pass it on to superintendent."

If yes, when?

See Appendix A for a more complete description.

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## Concerns and Barriers to Reporting

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Do you have specific concerns about addressing child sexual abuse in the school?

Only 22 schools answered. However, there were a wide range of answers. The top concerns reported were (a) the lack of information/training/education for the counselors and teachers about child sexual abuse and the reporting process, (b) the difficulty in discussing the topic with parents and children, and (c) being frustrated with the laws, court system, and DSS process.

See Appendix B for a more complete description.

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What barriers do you see in expanding awareness of child sexual abuse in the schools?

Overall, the answers were very similar to those expressed in the previous question. Of the 27 that answered, 5 did not see any barriers to expanding awareness. However, the top answers were (a) training, education and awareness, in general, to the topic and process, (b) the difficulty of the topic especially in communication with others including counselors, teachers, parents, and children, and (c) time and money to fund, train, and plan a system.

See Appendix C for a more complete description.

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## Contact Information

Amy Schweinle, Ph.D.

Amy.Schweinle@usd.edu

605-677-5250

Michael Lawler, Ph.D.

Michael.Lawler@usd.edu

605-658-6500

# Appendices

## << Appendix A >>

Do you conduct staff education or training about mandatory reporting? If yes, when?

Response	frequency
Teacher in service	11
Beginning of the year	6
Annual training	3
Updates in middle of year	1
Webinars available in addition to beginning of year	1
1 school said the principal addresses it informally/not great detail	1
Every three years for retained staff (in addition to new teacher orientation)	1
Yes	1
No training	3

## << Appendix B >>

Do you have specific concerns about addressing child sexual abuse in the school?

Response	frequency
Concerned about lack of information, training, education	5
Concerned about comfort level with the topic	4
Concerned about frustration with laws, courts, DSS, school board	4
Concerned about the parent's responses	3
Concerned that staff is too busy	2
Concerned that child sexual abuse is hard to identify and hard to prove	2
Concerned with cultural issues	1
Fear of retaliation once reported	1
The desire to make the school safer	1

## << Appendix C >>

What barriers do you see in expanding awareness of child sexual abuse in the schools?

response	Frequency
Worried about students not feeling safe in school	2
Communication with parents and children	3
Confidentiality	1
The need for more training	8
Time	4
The need for more awareness	5
Parental response	4
Uncomfortable topic	4
Low priority in schools, laws, and agencies	2
Money	3
The need for more support and resources for the children and counselors	3