

Anonymous Reporting Addresses Multiple Needs

Wentzville Schools enjoy immediate rewards from CyberBully Hotline deployment.

Overview

The Wentzville School District (WSD), situated in a rural/suburban Missouri community 40 miles west of St. Louis, is the fastest growing school district in the state - with currently over 13,000 students in 18 buildings.

For the past several years, the district has made huge gains in implementing effective measures to proactively educate students about the harmful effects of bullying and cyberbullying. In addition, district administrators were charged with offering students an anonymous way to request that certain websites not be blocked from their PC's, as mandated by the passage of a new state law requiring these services to be offered to students. Dr. Melody Marcantonio, Asst. Superintendent – Administrative Services, is responsible for student services including safety and discipline.



Implementation

Upon receiving a new product announcement about CyberBully Hotline from SchoolReach, Dr. Marcantonio immediately saw it as a potential solution to both their bully reporting needs and for compliance with new Missouri regulations on student access to online content. A team was formed to evaluate the program, which consisted of the district Superintendent, the Director of Technology, the Community Relations Director, and Dr. Marcantonio. The WSD kicked off the CyberBully Hotline in September with a communications plan that included a letter and email to all parents and guardians as well as extensive coverage on the district website and newsletters. Building Principals handed out wallet cards to students and hung the CyberBully Hotline posters throughout their school facilities.

Results - An Early Intervention

While several minor situations were reported within a few days of implementation, Dr. Marcantonio also received a significant alert from a parent, new to the district, concerning an incident with their child on the bus. A prompt reply from Dr. Marcantonio started an anonymous dialog with the parent which eventually led to a direct dialog. At this point she was able to pinpoint the bus in question and review on-bus video surveillance footage, which resulted in the offending student being properly disciplined.

Hotline Addresses Concerns About Safety Wentzville, MO

"If a child does not feel safe, they won't learn. The anonymity of the program is key & will be vitally important for students or parents who, for whatever reason, don't want to come forward..."

*Dr. Melody Marcantonio
Asst. Superintendant
Wentzville School District*

Summary

The WSD is committed to the safety and well-being of their students and the CBH has proven to be a very effective tool to respond to bullying. "If a child does not feel safe, they won't learn," said Dr. Marcantonio, "We want our students to feel safe." The CyberBully Hotline fits precisely with the goals and objectives of WSD in helping students feel safe and taking proactive measures to report incidents of bullying. "The anonymity of the program is key and will be vitally important for students or parents who, for whatever reason, don't want to come forward face-to-face initially or may not know who to contact." As students, parents, and the community become more familiar with the CyberBully Hotline, the hope is that it will also help prevent bullying in the future.