



Wyoming Department of Education

Dr. Jim McBride, Superintendent of Public Instruction
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October 9, 2008

Brad Ballard
Catalytic Media Group, LLC
18314 Kentucky Ravine Rd.
Nevada City, CA 95959

Dear Mr. Ballard:

Thank you for the interactive "FireFacts" CDs we recently received for all Wyoming elementary schools.

The Health & Safety Unit Director and I knew we had a usable educational tool when we reviewed the first sample. It is age appropriate and can fit into a number of activities regarding Wyoming school safety. We are currently in the process of distributing the CDs.

These CDs will serve as a basis for further discussion in our state. Many students are not taught specific and concrete actions at home regarding how to handle a fire. For those that are, this tool can supplement what they know.

One of the additional things that got our attention was the potential for using this type of interactive system for *other* school safety issues (though we are not diminishing the need for fire education because of the potential horrific consequences of a real fire).

The main enemy of student health and well being now is increasingly in the social arena. We are losing kids to gangs and drug sub-cultures. In Wyoming, one out of every four high school students are offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property by someone every year. More than one in seven smoke daily. More than four out of ten have had a drink of alcohol within the past 30 days. Many of these evolve into alcoholics.

According to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), nearly five out of ten Wyoming high school students have had sexual intercourse. More students are having children. These children find themselves at a

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disadvantage without the benefit of two committed parents. It is well documented that children in single parent homes (or broken homes) on average get less attention, have a greater likelihood to struggle academically, and often suffer from an absence of male role models.

One recent survey revealed that the main safety concern is bullying for over 50% of the parents of K-12 students. Nearly one out of six Wyoming middle school students has been in a fight. Bullying is a growing problem. Many do not want to go to school or are afraid to go to school because of the hostile social atmosphere that can exist there.

It is our conviction that we can all collectively do better. The Department envisions that it could utilize interactive tools similar to "FireFacts" in the areas of drugs, bullying, values, and other related areas.

The universal values that could possibly be used in such a tool include **integrity, knowledge, respect, courage, decisiveness, dependability, tact, enthusiasm, endurance, unselfishness, loyalty, and judgment.** There are others one could add. This CD could include age appropriate examples, stories, and opportunities to make choices with the long-term consequences associated with their interactive choice.

If the students are not finding understanding of these values at home, they will have to get them someplace else. The tools provided by your group could very well become part of the solution.

Thanks again for a very usable tool on fire safety.

Sincerely,

Bruce Hayes

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