

Controlling campuses

School shootings spark debate on student rights

WASHINGTON (AP) — As America's children head to school, security-conscious school administrators are also having to think about students' rights. Bloody tragedies, especially last April's incident which two students at Columbine High School in Littleton Colo., gunned down a dozen classmates and a teacher before killing themselves, left an indelible mark.

As a result, police officers, metal detectors, student ID cards and surveillance cameras are part of the new normal in schools across the nation. So are routine backpack searches, increased use of drug tests, stricter dress codes and less tolerance for schoolyard taunts and threats.

All of this worries Nadine Strossen, national president of the American Civil Liberties Union. "We're seeing the equivalent of Fort Sumner, where students' privacy rights and freedom of speech are under attack from within," she said.

In the wake of increasing violence, courts seem to be becoming more deferential to school districts' general concern for student safety and security. Cynthia L. Ryan, general counsel for Palm Beach County, Fla., schools, said. "Students still have rights and I'm sure the ACLU will stay on top of this, but any legal challenge will face a high hurdle."

In Allen, Texas, senior Jennifer Boccia is back in school after having last spring's suspension expunged from her record.

She and nine other students wore black armbands in class to mourn the Columbine victims and to protest the rules imposed in their school as a result. Jennifer, an honors student, was suspended after ignoring an order to remove the armband.

"The school district just would not acknowledge the First Amendment applies to students," Diana Filip, an ACLU regional director in Dallas, said. "We had to take them to court before an agreement could be reached."

Ray Vasvari, the Ohio ACLU's legal director, cited two invasions of student rights that were challenged successfully. In one, a Stow boy was suspended from class for a personal Website titled "Stow High School Sucks." In another, a Youngstown area high school sought to administer drug tests for all students participating in extracurricular activities.

"The post-Columbine reaction is regrettable," Vas-

Student Rights Q&A

Questions and answers about students' rights:

Q: Students are just kids. Why do they have rights?

A: Children, like adults, have legal rights. The Supreme Court, dating back to a landmark 1969 decision, has said students who attend public schools do not surrender all constitutional rights at the schoolhouse gate.

Q: What about students' privacy rights?

A: The Constitution's Fourth Amendment, which protects against unreasonable searches and seizures, applies in public schools, but school officials get more leeway than police. And school searches of lockers and backpacks, even the use of metal detectors, are much easier to justify when the target is illegal drugs or weapons.

Q: What about drug tests?

A: The law is still evolving on this issue. The Supreme Court ruled in 1995 that student athletes could be subjected to random drug tests because the athletic programs are voluntary and student athletes are role models. Since then, some lower courts have allowed drug testing of students engaged in other extracurricular activities.

vari said. "When rights are whittled away, they tend not to return."

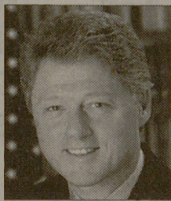
In Mississippi, the Harrison County School Board rescinded a policy that barred a Jewish boy from wearing his Star of David pendant after the ACLU sued on his behalf. School officials had considered it a gang symbol.

Julie Underwood, general counsel of the National School Boards Association, said school districts are well-served by programs emphasizing culture and climate — how people treat each other, whether a respectful learning environment exists.

"We routinely get called for advice after a problem arises, after some policy is challenged," she said. "We would like to field such calls earlier on."

Clinton criticizes GOP tax-cut plan

NORFOLK, Va. (AP) — President Clinton chose an overcrowded elementary school yesterday as the backdrop for a renewed assault on the Republican-passed tax cut plan, which Democrats contend would steal money from desperately needed school construction programs.



CLINTON

At Coleman Place Elementary School, built in 1924, Clinton called on Republicans in Congress to "leave politics at the schoolhouse door" and embrace his proposal for tax breaks to help school districts repair, expand and modernize schools.

Clinton, before addressing parents, teachers and students who had gathered on the school softball field, joined in renovating one of the school's classrooms. Using a cordless electric

drill, the president fastened about eight screws to attach the top of a computer table.

Then addressing the crowd, Clinton attacked the GOP tax-cut plan, which he already has promised to veto.

"It means larger classes, fewer students and more leaky roofs," Clinton said.

"I am not against cutting taxes," Clinton said, but added the Republican's \$792 billion cut over five years would mean sharp cuts in domestic spending including education. The Democrats have suggested a more modest nearly \$300 billion cut.

Clinton spoke in front of temporary trailers used by Coleman students as classrooms because of lack of school space.

Clinton said Virginia schools alone use 3,000 such trailers and there are similar classroom shortages and schools in need of repair nationwide.

The Texas A&M Career Center Presents... **Interview savvy** Wed. Sept. 8, 6:30 pm 224 MSC

During this seminar you will learn how to put your best foot forward during interviews! Starting in Early September there will be over 1,200 employers recruiting on-campus. Get the facts about "how to interview" from these expert panelists!

Panelists from:
Universal Computer Systems
Andersen Consulting
Ernst & Young

Career Center 209 Koldus 845-5139 <http://aggienet.tamu.edu/cctr>

TOWN HALL

WANTS YOU!

Town Hall, a programming committee of your MSC, is looking for young able bodied aggies to help support the coffeehouse, club, comedy, and concert scene of your Texas A&M University. Informational meetings will be held on September 6th and 7th in room 212 of the MSC from 8:30 to 10:00 pm. Ask not what you can do for TAMU, just join Town Hall!

SETTING MUSIC FREE

WELCOME BACK CO-OPS!

Great Door Prizes:
Dinner for Two @ Blackeyed Pea

WHEN: SEPTEMBER 9TH @ 5:30
WHERE: CAREER CENTER LOBBY
WHAT: FREE FOOD & FUN
WHO: ALL CO-OPS

Hollywood Movie Tickets

Teacher walkout called off

DETROIT (AP) — Striking teachers and the school board agreed on a tentative three-year contract yesterday, ending a weeklong walkout over reforms proposed by a new school district chief hired to fix the city's struggling schools.

Teachers could be back in school by tomorrow, negotiators said.

"I'm going to recommend to the teachers that they accept this contract," Detroit Federation of Teachers President John Elliott said.

Students missed four days of class last week and would miss class again today.

The teachers struck in defiance of state law, and legislative leaders had said they would move to seek sanctions against the teachers today.

Student Counseling Service

Division of Student Affairs
Texas A&M University

What is group counseling and how can it help?

Group counseling involves about four to ten people meeting with one or two counselors serving as group leaders. Group leaders work to provide a safe, confidential environment where group members are free to discuss their problems and concerns. Through the group, members identify with others who are experiencing similar issues and increase their self-awareness by obtaining genuine and honest feedback.

How much you talk about yourself depends on what you are comfortable with. You can benefit from group even when you are saying little because you will learn about yourself as others talk about their concerns. Make an appointment at the SCS to speak to a screening counselor or to help you determine if a group might benefit you.

Henderson Hall
845-4427
www.scs.tamu.edu

Fall 1999 Groups

Biofeedback Workshops Thursdays 5 - 6:30 PM One-session workshops that give an introduction to relaxation techniques, including how biofeedback aids in relaxation. Individual follow-up consultation is available. Facilitator: Carlos Orozco	Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered Mondays 3 - 4:30 pm This group will meet on various topics such as relationship issues, religious concerns, self-esteem, and coming out to family and friends. Facilitators: Mary Ann Moore & Arnie Ables	Personal Growth Group Tuesday (Group 1) 8:30 - 10 am Tuesday (Group 2) 5 - 6:30 pm Thursday (Group 3) 1:30 - 3 pm These groups facilitate self-exploration and personal growth through interaction with other students. Facilitators: Ron Lutz & Leena Batra (group 1) Ron Lutz & Heidi Koehler (group 2) Nancy Welch & Carlos Orozco (group 3)
Conflict and Loss in Relationships Mondays 3 - 4:30 PM This group is for students who are currently or have previously experienced conflict in interpersonal or romantic relationships, or who have recently experienced a loss of a meaningful relationship. Facilitators: Brian Williams & Ronke Lattimore	International/Multicultural Discussion Group Wednesdays 4:30 - 6:15 PM A discussion group for 1) international students who want to learn about Aggie culture, U.S. culture, and to improve their English skills by interacting with native English speakers and 2) for U.S. students who are interested in interacting and sharing their cultural heritages with international students. Facilitators: Gisela Lin & Leen Batra	Older Than Traditional Age Thursdays 3 - 4:30 PM This group addresses concerns that differ from those of the traditional undergraduate student. Potential topics are marriage, divorce, office politics, committee chairpersons, dissertation projects, and dealing with children or partners. Facilitators: Robert Carter & Heidi Koehler
Dissertation / Thesis Support Group Wednesdays 5 - 6:30 PM This group is for graduate students who are struggling in the process of writing a thesis or dissertation. Group topics include issues of competence, procrastination, anxiety, goal-setting, and bureaucratic struggles. Facilitators: Brian Williams & Mara Latts	Mind / Body Relationship Thursdays 3 - 4:30 PM There is strong evidence of the mind / body connection. Through Tai Chi, Yoga, relaxation, and discussion with others this group will allow you to learn about yourself, explore your spirituality, and learn to manage stress. Facilitators: Ron Lutz & Mara Latts	Psychopharmacological Support Mondays 5 - 6:30 PM This group will provide students an opportunity to relate to and get support from others who are on psychiatric medication. Potential topics include self-esteem issues, family variables, and coping strategies. Facilitators: Steve Strawn & Robert Carter
Eating Concerns & Body Image Issues Wednesdays 3 - 4:30 PM The purpose of this group is to increase insight about eating problems and make progress toward recovery. Group topics include daily eating and exercise behaviors, dealing with others about food issues, developing trusting relationships, expressing feelings, and managing stress. A PHYSICIAN'S RELEASE IS REQUIRED FOR GROUP PARTICIPATION. Facilitators: Debbie Rabinowitz & Mara Latts	Multicultural Issues & Relationships Tuesdays 5 - 6:30 PM The purpose of this group is to increase awareness of multicultural issues and improve communication and self-confidence when dealing with multicultural relationships. Group topics include, but not limited to, cultural shock; cultural, religious, and social differences; and bicultural/multicultural relationships issues. The group is open to all students. Facilitators: Gisela Lin & Arnie Ables	Women of Color Thursdays 4 - 5:30 PM Join with other women of color to explore issues and concerns related to culture, relationships, self-esteem, body image and other issues pertinent to the group. Facilitators: Ronke Lattimore & Gisela Lin
Empowering Yourself Mondays 1:30 - 3 PM A group for men and women with sexual molestation in their pasts. Identifying and exploring aftereffects of abuse will be the focus. Handling relationships, building self-esteem, and gaining personal power are emphasized. Facilitators: Robert Carter & Mara Latts	Women's Self-Esteem Group Wednesdays 3 - 4:30 PM Come together with other women and work on becoming the woman you've always wanted to be! Improve your self-confidence, assertiveness, and relationships. Leave your guilt and self-doubt at the door! Facilitators: Nancy Welch & Ronke Lattimore	

Texas A&M has a strong institutional commitment to the principle of diversity in all areas. In that spirit, admission to Texas A&M University and any of its sponsored programs is open to all qualified individuals without regard to subgroup, class or stereotype.