



National Public Health Leadership Development Network

2007 Balderson Leadership Project Awards RUNNER-UP

Kansas Public Health Leadership Institute

Individual/Team Members

Name	Grad. Year From Institute	Credentials	Job Title	Place of Employment
Robert Hull	2006	EdD	Assistant Superintendent	Olathe (KS) School District
Terri Ploger-McCool	2006	MS	Homeland Security Coordinator	KS Dept of Emergency Management
Jerry Tenbrink	2006	BA	Training Coordinator	Office of the KS Attorney General

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A Leadership Summit on Healthy and Prepared Schools

The capstone project from the Kansas Public Health Leadership Institute (KPHLI) consisted of conceiving, planning, and implementing a leadership summit exploring how Kansas schools can be better prepared for crisis events and provide a healthier and safer place for students and staff. The capstone was a collaborative effort designed to integrate public health with education and homeland security/emergency preparedness functions. Members of all three of those functions actively participated as members of the capstone team.

The summit was held in Topeka, Kansas, on July 11, 2006. Summit participants included approximately 30 leaders from key stakeholder groups and represented public, not for profit and private sector organizations from across the state of Kansas. The Kansas Health Foundation agreed to fund the summit in addition to researching and providing an extensive resource manual. Kansas Adjutant General Tod Bunting and Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) Assistant Secretary Doug Farmer welcomed attendees and participated in the summit. Shirley Orr, Director of Local Health at KDHE and mentor for the project, provided closing remarks for the summit.

At the summit, the need, challenges and opportunities for providing better prepared, healthier and safer schools were presented. Considerations included:

- Kansas educational settings are vulnerable to threats, including infectious diseases and criminal acts.
- Decision-making officials may not be aware of the seriousness of 21st-century threats to school safety.
- Schools are not sufficiently prepared, uniformly equipped, or adequately trained to engage in school/community crisis planning or emergency response.
- State and local agencies involved in school preparedness planning have fragmented or overlapping missions.
- Communities lack sufficient resources for school preparedness planning.

The unanimous conclusion of the summit was to prepare and send to Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius a recommendation to create an interagency commission on healthy, prepared, and safe schools, which could provide leadership for school preparedness planning and response across the state. The capstone team held several subsequent meetings with the Adjutant General and the Assistant Secretary of Health and Environment preparing the recommendation for the Governor.

On October 9, 2006, Governor Kathleen Sebelius issued Executive Order 06-12 creating the Governor's Commission on Healthy and Prepared Schools. The capstone team remains actively involved in the Commission. Dr. Bob Hull serves as the chair of the Commission, Jerry Tenbrink is a member of the Commission representing the Attorney Generals Office, and Terri Ploger-McCool continues to provide consultation to the Commission. The Governor attended the first Commission meeting and personally explained the charge and the importance of the work of the Commission and assigned a MPH graduate serving as a Governor's Fellow to support the work of the Commission. The commission meets on a regular basis and is currently pursuing data sets on the functionality of school crisis management planning as well as developing strategic recommendations for the Governor and exploring the option of establishing a state center for safe and prepared schools.