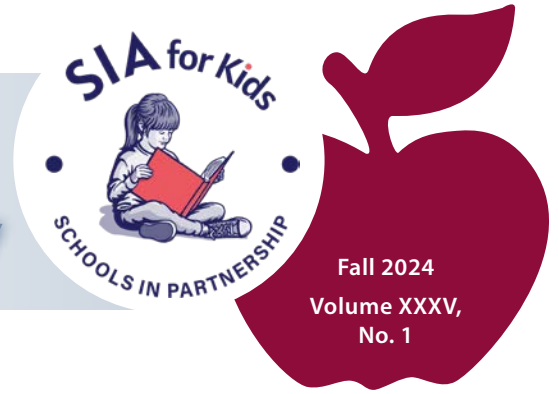


Risk Review

Schools Insurance Authority



SIA celebrates 50 years

Schools Insurance Authority is celebrating its 50th anniversary! Formed on July 1, 1974, SIA is the oldest joint powers authority (JPA) in California.

In the early 1970s public agencies were faced with rising insurance costs and few coverage options. Sacramento County school districts were among those affected. The Sacramento County grand jury charged the Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) with the responsibility of studying this problem and seeking ways to implement a countywide insurance program.

SCOE formed a task force, which decided to establish a self-insurance pool to cover common property losses and to purchase excess insurance to cover catastrophic losses.

The California legislature then amended the government code to provide that any two or more public agencies could join together to

exercise jointly any rights they may individually have, creating the first joint powers agreement that enabled Sacramento County school districts to pool resources for the purpose of self-insurance.

The original five district members were San Juan USD, Natomas USD, Del Paso Heights SD, Elk Grove USD and the Sacramento County Office of Education. The property program was the first program implemented, followed by the liability program in 1975, the workers' compensation program in 1977 and the benefits program in 1980.

Today SIA has 37 members representing school districts, county offices of education and joint powers authorities, all located in Northern and Central California. While not all members participate in all programs, it's through the joining together for the purpose of self-insuring, group purchase, risk management and enhanced financial resources that continued stabilization of insurance costs can be maintained for our members. SIA is committed to protecting the human and financial resources of our member school districts.



Cybersecurity

October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month

Gustavo Mastroianni
SIA Chief Information Security Officer

October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month, an annual international initiative that educates everyone, individuals and businesses alike, about online safety. Its mission is to provide computer users everywhere with the information necessary to protect their data from cybercrime. It was created as a collaborative effort between government and industry to help ensure that every American has the resources needed to stay safer and more secure online.



First launched by the National Cybersecurity Alliance and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in October 2004, the awareness efforts were centered around advice such as updating antivirus software twice a year, paralleling similar efforts involving changing batteries in smoke alarms during daylight-saving time. Nowadays, the focus has expanded and improved because of the ever-changing threat landscape.

The theme of Cybersecurity Awareness Month for 2024 is Secure Our World, to remind us that even simple steps can help protect ourselves, our families and our businesses from online threats.

The current campaign highlights the top four ways to stay safe online:

- Use strong passwords and a password manager
- Turn on multifactor authentication (MFA)
- Recognize and report phishing
- Update software

Even amid large-scale data breaches and cyberattacks, Cybersecurity Awareness Month is here to remind everyone that securing personal data can ultimately help secure our world.

Designed with school district leaders in mind.



Reduce costs by preparing your campus for winter

Northern California has experienced serious storms in the last few years and those events have damaged some of our member schools. In some cases, preventative maintenance could have mitigated the costs and reduced the amount of repair work needed.

SIA member districts contribute to the pool that helps pay claims for all members. Therefore, by reducing losses, districts can protect their budgets from unnecessary deductibles and future contribution increases.



To help protect schools and district sites, now is the time to implement the following:

Roofing/Structural

- Check for evidence of leaks.
- Look for standing water, bubbles, and tears and cracks in roof covers.
- Manually check parapet walls for bounce back. Walls should be solid, not spongy.
- Check for gaps and broken roof flashing.
- Clear debris on roofs and in gutters and downspouts.
- Check gutters and downspouts for leaks and ensure they are secure to the building.
- Consider a fresh coat of paint for weatherproofing help.
- Have a plan to respond to roof leaks.
- Stock any necessary repair materials.
- Review tasks and responsibilities with staff.
- Visually check all storm drains and pipes for debris. Leaves, garbage and other materials blocking the drainage systems can cause water backup that in turn can destroy floors and walls.
- Check shade structures and storage areas to ensure they're secure to prevent wind damage.

(continued on page 4)



Engage your community for campus holiday protection

Campuses closed for the holidays and dark nights make schools vulnerable to vandalism, theft and arson. To help protect your sites, ask your school families and neighbors to keep an eye out for unusual activity and encourage them to reach out to local law enforcement and anonymous reporting resources as may be needed.

Other preventative measures to implement:

- Check fire and intrusion alarms to be sure they're working properly. Repair elements that are malfunctioning.
- Check campus lighting. Report burned-out bulbs.
- Consider installing motion sensors.
- Shut down the gas supply to science rooms during the holidays.
- Remove garbage cans when school is out of session. Garbage has been used as an ignition source for arson fires or may be used to keep an unwelcome visitor warm.
- Check fences and gates for damage.
- Ensure that all door and windows are properly locked and secured.

These actions and the help of your community can help ensure that your school is ready when students return after the holidays.



Leadership Academy

7 years of guiding managers toward leadership success

SIA's Leadership Academy started its seventh year with a virtual session called *Boost Your Creativity: Find Solutions to Your Challenges*. In this session, participants considered current professional challenges and learned creative ways to work through problems.



Katrina Kennedy, an expert in training and coaching leaders toward achieving their goals, facilitated the workshop. Kennedy has a master's degree in human resource management and development and a bachelor's degree in sociology. Participants reported that they benefited greatly from her expertise and presentation.

Many managers are promoted because of their excellence in the technical skills of their jobs, but may not have learned how to be leaders of people. The Leadership Academy is a collection of courses offered throughout the year designed to help managers become more competent and confident in their interactions with staff and colleagues. SIA believes that successful leaders make successful schools.

To learn more about the Leadership Academy and to be added to the contact list, reach out to Lisa Konarski at lkonarski@sia-jpa.org.

Upcoming Leadership Academy sessions:

December 13, 2024

8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Teamwork Skills for Supervisors (in-person)

January 28-29, 2025

8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Bud to Boss (in-person)

March TBD

8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Conflict (in-person)
Check the website calendar for other upcoming sessions.

Motivating staff boosts engagement and retention

Engage your staff members by showing them how their efforts contribute to the district's overall goals. Your organization will thrive as employees become more actively involved in their jobs and form bonds that make them want to stay and pursue higher goals.

To begin, ask yourself these challenging questions to gauge your staff's level of engagement and to determine your readiness to improve:

- What are staff assumptions about their roles in the workplace?
- What does my staff want to hear from me?
- What do I want to hear from them?
- What will interfere with my ability to listen?
- How will I demonstrate my interest to different staff members?

- How am I monitoring each worker's professional progress and responding to each one's challenges and successes?
- Do I let others know that I'm open and receptive to their ideas, opinions and suggestions?

Then take these steps:

1. Provide learning opportunities. Invite employees to weigh in on the types of training they need. Together identify areas where increased knowledge would benefit both the individual and the team.
2. Nurture their interests. Notice what they excel at and let them know you consider them your go-to people in those areas. Recognize their successes publicly.
3. Pass it on. Allow them to share their skills and knowledge with others throughout the organization. When you spread institutional knowledge widely, you'll develop a competent and content workforce.

Source: *Communication Briefings*



Designed with school district leaders in mind.



Free virtual trainings

SIA provides our member districts with virtual trainings on a variety of personal and professional topics designed to benefit both staff and management. To learn more about any of the training courses listed below, contact tfranco@sia-jpa.org.

- 10/15 How to be an Effective Workplace Leader
- 10/17 How to Create Passion and Motivation in the Workplace
- 10/22 Critical Incident Stress in the Workplace for Managers
- 10/23 I Am Too Busy to Eat Healthy
- 10/28 Maintaining Well-being Through Times of Uncertainty
- 10/30 Managing and Motivating Your Remote Workers

Rebuild a damaged relationship

Trust is the cornerstone of successful relationships. So if you inadvertently damage your trust relationship with a co-worker, boss or community member, is the relationship doomed? Not necessarily. Focus on these recovery steps:

- Ask and listen. Be open about the problem that occurred and admit the part you played.
- Ask the other person what you can do to patch up your relationship and then work to fix what you can, as soon as you can.
- Communicate openly. Let the other person know what steps you're taking to rectify the situation or to ensure that it doesn't recur. Your ability to react and to keep others informed will salvage your reputation.

Source: Communication Briefings

Visit the SIA website at www.sia-jpa.org for:

- Templates and forms
- Upcoming trainings and events
- Safety warning labels
- Monthly safety bulletins - and more!



Reduce costs

(continued from page 2)



Electrical

- Develop a plan for an electrical failure.
- Review the correct way to turn off electrical hazards in flood zones.
- Ensure that emergency equipment has been serviced and is properly fueled and lubricated.
- Emergency equipment may include backup generators, wet vacs and sump pumps.

General

- Trim overhanging trees. Remove dead trees and dead limbs.
- Fit interior/exterior pipes exposed to cold air with proper insulation.
- Winterize sprinkler systems according to manufacturer recommendations. Blowing out excess water with a compressor may be the best way to prevent frozen and broken pipes.
- Visually inspect window seals.

QUOTE TO NOTE

*"Be not afraid of growing slowly;
be afraid of standing still."*

– Chinese Proverb

The material in this newsletter should be part of your Injury and Illness Prevention Plan (IIPP).

Keep a copy of this newsletter in your IIPP binder.