

NewsUpdate

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More Schools Take eCommerce Path

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School Bullies "Get the Picture," Thanks to New Short Films

School bullies are often portrayed as menacing, domineering figures in movies. And for some real eighth-grade instigators in Illinois and Nebraska, playing pseudo-fictionalized character renditions of themselves in two new films may be giving them a first glance at their harmful behavior.



The two 25-minute movies, *Stories of Us*, star students from Franklin Middle School in Champaign, Ill., and Irving Middle School in Lincoln, Neb., and are being sold to schools throughout the country along with accompanying teaching and professional development resources as part of a new anti-bullying program. Directed by Australian filmmaker Christopher Faull, the films capture the school drama of how initial rumors or incidents can escalate into altercations or fights, sometimes exacerbated through the use of cell phones and the Internet.

Those involved with the project say the films act as a mirror to the students' actual lives.

"It has had a profound effect," says Angela Smith, principal of Franklin Middle School, which will be among the first group of schools to use the film and resources next year and has already used them to tailor discussions for graduating eighth-graders. In-depth conversations about race and behavior have been generated among both students and staff, she says, "and the movies have prompted some former bullies to say, 'That's not right.'"



Faull says that with the growing attention the project has received - four of the students were interviewed on the CBS Early Show in late April - combined with the experience of having launched a similar program in Australia, the company expects between 500 and 800 orders for the classroom resources by mid-June. For more information go to www.storiesofus.com.

Daniel A. Domenech Named AASA Executive Director

Daniel A. Domenech, senior vice president and head of the Urban Advisory Resource for McGraw-Hill Education, was recently selected as executive director of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) after an extensive nationwide search. He succeeds Paul D. Houston, who will retire on June 30 after leading AASA as executive director for 14 years. "This is a great opportunity for us to move AASA forward," Domenech said in an interview, "as we lead a revitalization effort to expand our membership and offer improved programs and services."



Corporate sponsorships, foundation grants and federal funding, and conference enhancements are some of the efforts the organization is focusing on to ensure high-quality public education for all children, he added.

Domenech has more than 36 years of experience in public education, and has served as superintendent of

Fairfax County (Va.) Public Schools, the 12th largest school system in the country. He takes over as AASA executive director on July 1.

More Schools Take eCommerce Path

The average school district spends 356 hours a month processing cash and check payments - bad checks in particular can cost districts significant sums of money - but a growing percentage of school business officials are accepting credit cards and online payments to streamline the process, according to a recent study.

The K12 Payment Survey polled 290 members of the Association for School Business Officials (ASBO) and the National Business Officers Association (NBOA) and found that schools are actually ahead of the eCommerce curve for small to medium enterprises. As schools create a Web presence more transactions are taking place online, the ASBO/NBOA/My Payment Network-sponsored survey says.