

Playing the “Blame Game”

Are we guilty of playing the “blame game” when educator sexual misconduct occurs?

At [WylliE³ Solutions](#), the data analysis team consistently reviews multitudes of publicized cases of educator sexual misconduct that occur daily within our nation’s schools. This equates to thousands and thousands of cases each and every year, and most are not unlike those shown below.

Date: Last Week			
Google Alerts	Google Alert - teacher student sex	Wed 2/29/2012 7:00 PM	14 KB
=== News - 3 new results for [teacher student sex] === Teacher Charged With Having Sex With Student Brevard Times ORANGE CITY, FLORIDA -- Volusia County Sheriff's investigators arrested a former English teacher Wednesday afternoon on charges that sh...			
Google Alerts	Google Alert - teacher student sexual misconduct	Wed 2/29/2012 6:49 PM	9 KB
=== News - 1 new result for [teacher student sexual misconduct] === LA Unified Supt. Deasy wants to change teacher's contract to protect students 39.3 KPCC (blog)			
Google Alerts	Google Alert - teacher student sex	Wed 2/29/2012 4:18 PM	15 KB
=== News - 3 new results for [teacher student sex] === Teacher Charged With Sex Abuse Sent Slew of Explicit Texts, DA Says DNAINFO MANHATTAN CRIMINAL COURT— A veteran Hell's Kitchen high school teacher who trained aspiring soldiers groped a 14-year...			
Google Alerts	Google Alert - school sexual misconduct	Wed 2/29/2012 3:52 PM	7 KB
=== Web - 1 new result for [school sexual misconduct] === Sex abuse signs aren't always clear - The Daily Breeze Many school teachers across the nation are trained to pick up on clues of child ... of the nation's 3 million educators are involved in a...			
Google Alerts	Google Alert - teacher student sexual misconduct	Wed 2/29/2012 2:58 PM	15 KB
=== News - 3 new results for [teacher student sexual misconduct] === 4th School Employee Charged With Sexual Misconduct This Month Gothamist Another day, another New York City teacher arrested for inappropriate behavior with their students. Yesterda...			
Google Alerts	Google Alert - teacher student sex	Wed 2/29/2012 2:37 PM	8 KB
=== News - 1 new result for [teacher student sex] === Mo. teacher planning same-sex wedding is fired Belleville News Democrat Bill Kempf, St. Ann's pastor, said in an emailed statement that the parish was 'recently informed by one of its teachers of...			
Google Alerts	Google Alert - teacher student sex	Wed 2/29/2012 1:01 PM	14 KB
=== News - 3 new results for [teacher student sex] === Another NYC Teacher Charged With Groping Student, 6th One This Month New York's PD11 / WPD-TV By KERRY DREW PD11.com / @kerrydrew A Manhattan high school teacher was arrested Tuesday on charg...			
Google Alerts	Google Alert - teacher student sexual misconduct	Wed 2/29/2012 11:40 AM	8 KB
=== News - 1 new result for [teacher student sexual misconduct] === NYC teacher accused of abusing student Wall Street Journal AP NEW YORK — A New York City high school teacher is accused of inappropriately touching a 14-year-old student. Police cha...			
Google Alerts	Google Alert - teacher student sex	Wed 2/29/2012 10:04 AM	12 KB
=== News - 2 new results for [teacher student sex] === Teacher Andrew Beattie jailed over pupil sex assaults BBC News He added: "You must understand the public revulsion that a teacher should			

What is exceedingly apparent is our blatant inability as a community and a nation to stop this epidemic. That inability is a direct result of the “Blame Game” played by those who are affected when educator sexual misconduct happens. Case in point, just this week the team documented the following from recent cases in the news (school, district, and individual names excluded):

1. *A superintendent blames the union for non-disclosure of past issues.*
2. *An administrator is blaming the board for a lack of school policies.*
3. *An administrator is blaming another for “passing his trash” in the form of a misconduct-prone teacher to his district.*
4. *A teacher blames an administrator and a board for an unfair witch hunt.*
5. *A student is blaming a teacher for their 8 month affair.*
6. *A student is blaming the administrators and the board for not stopping the behavior between her and the teacher.*
7. *A parent blames the board, the superintendent, the administrator, and the teachers for not knowing what to look for and for not stopping what should have been noted as inappropriate staff behavior.*
8. *A parent is blaming a principle for not checking references of a teacher he hired.*
9. *An administrator is blaming a teacher for being a predator and purposefully choosing education as a reaping ground for her desires.*
10. *A court is blaming a school district to the tune of multiple millions for not doing all they should have to prevent the sexual misconduct between the teacher and the student.*

After reading about these blame tactics, we say..."STOP the blame game, STOP the madness!!

It is time for each of us to acknowledge the problem and demand action from the very top down: from board members, to unions, to superintendents, to school administrators, to teachers, to students, to parents, and to citizens.

Instead of casting blame, imagine what we could accomplish if we all worked together on proactive recognition and prevention? Districts must implement a best practice risk management solution. We suggest one that is based on a simple 3-prong approach:

1. Create and communicate best practice policies and procedures related to hiring and conduct.
2. Document and train staff on federal and state laws relating to criminal behavior and reporting.
3. [Educate and equip](#) all student facing staff on #1, and # 2, as well as the who, what, when, why and hows of educator sexual misconduct.

In doing so we take responsibility, minimize legal, financial, ethical, and moral risks associated with allegations, and protect our community from the total devastation these cases produce. Ask yourself, "What is being done in our schools to proactively prevent educator sexual misconduct?" As risk management leaders, if an incident occurred, could you defend risk management efforts when suddenly cast into the harsh spotlight and faced with the news media, an angry parent, a judge, or a jury?

Stronger laws and stiffer penalties are not enough. If they were, our jails would not be overflowing. Implement a risk management strategy for success and educate all student-facing staff. Be proactive so that your team can minimize risks and demonstrate compliance efforts that protect against educator sexual misconduct.