



SCHOOLS EXCESS LIABILITY FUND

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NEWS RELEASE

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March 6, 2002
For Immediate Release

Claims Managers Recognized for Handling Difficult School Cases

Sacramento, CA- School claims administrators from around the state gathered in Sacramento in January to discuss interesting techniques for tackling tough cases. The Innovative Solutions Award is an annual meeting of liability and workers' compensation claims administrators. This meeting gives the managers a chance to share with their colleagues ways to improve the handling of claims. This is the fourth time SELF has held this meeting.

The reason this meeting is so unique is that claims managers are able to use their peers' creative techniques in their own district. By discussing difficult cases with their peers, the claims administrators give new ideas to the other managers but also get feedback about the handling of the case. For example, one of the claims involved the shooting deaths of several faculty members on campus. Following the shooting, the claims manager was proactive in flying in members of the families from outside the country, giving free tuition for the children and setting aside a day of remembrance for the slain staff members. The claims manager emphasized the importance of doing the right thing for the families and also thinking outside the box when it comes to claims handling. It's situations like these that show the skill of these claims managers.

The goal of the meeting is to give the managers an opportunity to share how they handle certain claims and recognize those who excel in their field. There are two areas both in liability and workers' compensation claims where managers are recognized: Success Story and Lesson Learned. The Success Story category includes claims that may have had bad fact patterns but the manager was able to close the claim at low cost or no cost. The Lesson Learned includes simple claims that may have gone bad. From these

two categories, a third Innovative Result category includes the most original way of handling a case. The winners in these categories are chosen by their peers at the meeting.

- **Martin Brady-** *Workers' Compensation Lesson Learned-* Martin shared a claim involving a woman who injured her head while getting out of a car on school property and sued the district two-and-a-half years after the incident occurred. After reviewing the file, it was discovered the woman had already reached a previous large settlement with the car manufacturer. Martin stressed how important it is to review files and follow up with the claimants. He is the Executive Director of Schools Insurance Authority.

- **Catherine Wilson Jones-** *Workers' Compensation Success Story and Innovative Result-* Catherine short-circuited a claim by using a method which targets bad bus drivers. The method involves drivers meeting all the requirements to operate a bus. If a medical injury prevented the operator from driving the bus, you may be able to get them de-certified. By using this method, she has had four bus drivers de-certified. Catherine is the Director of Safety and Loss Control for Self-Insured Schools of California.

- **Marsha C.S. Kelly-** *Liability Lesson Learned-* Marsha discussed a claim where a woman tripped over a sprinkler head at a campus and sued the district. Following this claim, campus police now take photographs of every potential incident that could result in a case against the district. Marsha is the Risk Manager for Foothill-De Anza Community College.

- **Charlene Minnick-** *Liability Success Story and Innovative Result-* Charlene discussed a medical settlement that involved a debilitating student injury. Charlene set up a special needs trust for the student, paid the legal bills and set up the mother and her daughter in a duplex on the water. By taking care of the family, Charlene was

able to avoid a multi-million dollar claim. Charlene is the Director of Systemwide Risk Management for California State University.

Other workers' compensation claims included mentally disabled and injured educators. The liability claims included shootings and various student and employee injuries.

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