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Study Finds Both Students and Teachers Lack Basic Cyber Security Education

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 18
NCSA-ETPRO-study

New Study by National Cyber Security Alliance Reveals K-12 Teachers and Students Not Prepared to Protect Against Cyber-Crime

WASHINGTON, Nov. 18 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Less than 25 percent of educators feel comfortable teaching students how to protect themselves from online cyber predators, cyber bullies and identity theft, according to a recent study by The National Cyber Security Alliance (NCSA) and Educational Technology, Policy Research and Outreach (ETPRO).

At a time when children ages 10-to-14 spend more time on the Internet than watching television, the study found that only the Commonwealth of Virginia has education curriculum requirements that include information on how students can protect themselves online. Since completion of this study, several more states including Georgia, Illinois and Tennessee, have passed legislation requiring online safety education in the classroom. In addition, 90 percent of educators have received less than six hours of professional development on cyber security in the past year.

The 2008 National Cyberethics, Cybersafety, Cybersecurity Baseline Study was conducted to explore educational awareness policies, initiatives, curriculum, and practices currently taking place in the U.S. public and private K-12 educational settings. The survey was administered online. 1,569 public and private U.S. K-12 educators and 94 technology coordinators took the survey and local and state technology directors and 219 educators participated in focus groups for the survey.

"Children are integrating technology into their lives at lightning speed. Our schools need to find ways to introduce cyber security education as a fully integrated part of the K-12 curriculum," said Michael Kaiser, executive director of the NCSA. "We take the time to teach our children how to safely cross the street. Given the amount of time children spend online, the continuously emerging role of the technology in everyday life, and the risks that young people face, we are obligated to ensure that every child learns about safety, security and responsible use of the internet; yet we are not yet to the point of teaching children how to 'look both ways' to avoid the 'accidents' that can occur online."

"Schools are not alone. Nonprofit groups, government, the private sector and parents all play critical roles in ensuring children's safety online. However, educators and school systems will need to make the issue a priority if we can expect to see widespread adoption of cyber safety curricula in the classroom."

As part of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, all students are required to be digitally literate by the 8th grade but half of the survey's respondents said there were no clear methods chosen by their school or school district to convey information on cyber safety and cyber security to students. Despite feeling unprepared or uncomfortable discussing C3 topics with students, more than 60 percent of educators are interested in learning more about C3 issues in general and in many cases the percentage increased on specific topics such as cyber safety, which was rated their highest priority.

"Policies need to be updated regularly and reviewed to ensure that teachers, students and parents understand the basics of cyber security. We must ensure our teachers are given the training necessary for them to inform their students on these topics," said Davina Pruitt-Mentle, PhD, Executive Director and Senior Research Analyst for ETPRO. "However, the burden cannot be placed solely on our education

system. From media to corporate America to our federal, state and local governments, a variety of
partnerships need to be formed to protect our children."

For the full results of the study, visit http://www.staysafeonline.org.

About NCSA

The National Cyber Security Alliance (NCSA) is a collaborative effort among experts in the security,
non-profit, academic and government fields to teach consumers, small businesses and members of the
education community about Internet security. The NCSA aims to increase awareness about the risks
associated with using Internet technologies and how to help protect against them, while also providing
free tips, checklists and best practices for remaining safe while online. For more information visit
http://www.staysafeonline.org.

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