SOUTH DAKOTA
GAME, FISH and PARKS
Hunter Safety in Schools???

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Yes, we can!!
Where we are now

- A handful of schools across the state offer the Hunt SAFE course as part of the school curriculum.
- Recently, the New Underwood School, Rapid City Stevens HS, and Douglas Middle School added this to their school curriculum.
  - New Underwood: 6th-8th grades as a required unit in PE
  - Douglas MS: 7th-8th grades as a “personal choice” elective
  - RC Stevens: unit in Wildlife & Fisheries and Natural Resources classes
- International Hunter Education Association (IHEA) created [standards](#) for hunter safety courses (2015)
How Do I Start?

- Know your local school district administration and staff
  - Depending on the district, you might approach the teacher(s) or the administration (principals & superintendent) together or separately
  - Some districts allow their staff flexibility in how/what they teach while others are very top-down in their management
  - Regardless, you will need the administration’s support (along with the School Resource Officer, if present)
  - The superintendent may want to check with their school attorney (the one for New Underwood & many other districts gave the thumbs up)
  - While the local school board oversees the district, it is ultimately the superintendent’s authority to manage the daily operation of the schools. Some districts may be different, so know how yours operates!
Class Format

• May vary from district to district
  • Physical Education
  • Environmental Science
  • Student-choice
  • Block schedule?
• Optional vs. required
• Be flexible and work within the school schedule as much as possible. Encourage the teacher(s) to become an instructor!
• Plan on at least 2 weeks to get the necessary contact hours
• Live-fire session (optional)
Class Format Example

Day 1: Intro & Expectations; *The Last Shot* video & pen safety
Day 2: Rules & Regulations (depending on CO schedule)
Day 3: Parts of a gun & ammunition (action types, safety, etc.)
Day 4: Carry & shooting positions; zones of fire
Day 5: Fence crossing; safe transportation;
Day 6: Wildlife management; licensing & big game tagging
Day 7: Review
Day 8: Test

Outdoor survival topics were used as “homework” in this example. Also, students were tasked with reading the next day’s chapter and bringing a written question about it to class.
Teaching Tips

• Have the kids read the section of the book before you cover it in class
  • Ask them to write down a question & bring to class
• Incorporate as much hands-on as possible
  • Nerf guns
  • Dummy guns
  • Fence crossings
  • Shooting positions (laser pointer)
  • Big game tagging
• Be prepared for questions!
• Practice pen safety
• Use HE Tools, but minimize video use
• Task them with sharing the good & bad behavior they observed in videos and other hands-on experiences
• Utilize the existing Kahoot! quiz for review
  • [https://play.kahoot.it/#/k/5b6f2882-2f8f-4e7c-9f78-f7262e0398ad](https://play.kahoot.it/#/k/5b6f2882-2f8f-4e7c-9f78-f7262e0398ad)
• Prizes!
Challenges

- Working within the daily school schedule
- Administrators may be hesitant or resistant
  - Emphasize gun safety over hunting skills
  - Be creative, in case dummy guns may not be allowed
- Instructor schedule
- Getting paperwork from parents (especially SSNs)
- 50-minute attention spans
  - Better than 3-hour ones!!
Takeaways

- Be flexible
- Keep good communication & relationships with the school staff and administration
- Be creative in teaching
- Try to get the teacher(s) to become certified instructors

Why does the gun explode when you put the wrong bullet in?

Why do jackrabbits tracks look like this?
#SDintheFIELD

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