

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Contact**Dot Woodfin
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281.245.3392**DR. SUSAN SCLAFANI FROM U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION VISITS MINDOH! SCHOOL****IN HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Houston, TX, December 10, 2003 – A middle school in the heart of Houston’s inner city school district received an honorary visit from a U.S. Department of Education official last September when Dr. Susan Sclafani visited Houston to review the school’s model discipline management program. With its legacy of early adopter educators, the Houston Independent School District is a pioneer in discipline management and character education and has the oldest, largest and most successful program in the United States.



The *MindOH! Discipline and Life Skills Series*TM is one element of the discipline management program being utilized at Johnston, and is specifically for students in the discipline process. While waiting to see the principal after they’ve been sent to the office, students are sent to a workstation to interact with video-streamed mentors who guide students through interactive exercises that help students think about what got them into trouble. The system works to help students improve their communication skills by providing more information about their behavior and helps them reduce emotional distress, so they can return more quickly to learning.

The middle school was one of several Houston schools that participated in a pilot study conducted by MindOH! from September 2001 to June 2003. In August 2003, MindOH! reported real-time quantitative results from the two-year research study on using character education in the discipline process. The school reported that in 2000/2001, the year the MindOH! program was first implemented, 27 students were transferred from the middle school to alternative schools. After the second year of the pilot program, the number reduced to six transfers.

During her visit, Sclafani interviewed students about the MindOH! program. Three students told Dr. Sclafani that just one experience with the MindOH! program had been powerful enough to keep them from getting into trouble again. “It’s easier to be real and honest talking to a computer than it is speaking to real person,” one student said. The students reported that they liked the opportunity to tell their side of the story without being interrupted, and to think through what they did wrong. They expressed their appreciation for attending a school like Johnston that provided these kinds of opportunities. One student had fallen behind in her studies and wanted to take the program with her to the special makeup classes she needed to attend. Another said he preferred talking to the computer rather than the assistant principal because the computer did not talk back and gave him time to get his story together.

To date, MindOH! has been implemented in 43 Harris County schools, one truancy prevention program and five alternative schools. Outside the Houston school district, the programs have been implemented in alternative schools and truancy prevention programs in four states outside Texas including Florida, Louisiana, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

About MindOH!

The MindOH! programs are owned by OH! Educational Services, a Houston-based, e-learning company formed to develop innovative discipline management and character education software systems that effectively increase high school graduation rates and decrease discipline referrals, suspensions, alternative school transfers and dropout rates. *MindOH!'s Discipline and Life Skills Series[™]* (DLSS) and *At Home Series[™]* incorporate scientifically based research and flexible operating environments that quantify performance and adapt successfully in education, juvenile justice, and youth organization facilities. The Web-based systems are designed to be self-sustaining, resulting in a minimal impact on existing systems and to allow administrators to run the programs.

For more information, visit www.mindoh.org.
