

Dr. Nancy Degnan Joins *Safe to Learn* Advisory Team

Dr. Anne (Nancy) Degnan, Director, Academic Initiatives for the Earth Institute, Columbia University has joined the *Safe to Learn* Advisory Council, "I believe that one of the most important things we can do for our children is to create a sense of safety for them. With safety comes their freedom from worry, freedom from anxiety that allows creativity and learning to blossom. Being part of a community of practitioners, researchers and others who are about the work of the *Safe to Learn Project* allows me to contribute and to receive insights and knowledge from smart, talented people each of whom is dedicated to building and maintaining safe environments. It is profoundly good work. I am fortunate to be a part of it."

Dr. Degnan has dedicated her life to supporting education and safety, "Being part of the conversation about education and safety requires us to ask the questions that we may not have asked before ... and then to support each other in making sure that the solutions we come up with are implemented, assessed and consistently revisited for excellence sake. I would offer that this is our highest responsibility to our children and each other."

One of the most profound "untold stories" in America took place on September 11, 2001. In the midst of the headlines and response is the story of the evacuation from the eight public schools are situated within a quarter mile of Ground Zero. About 9,000 students ranging in ages from three to eighteen years – grammar, middle and high schools had arrived at their schools on election day just before the plane struck the twin towers.

Dr. Degnan was the lead for a team that authored *Uncommon Sense, Uncommon Courage - How the New York City School System, Its Teachers, Leadership, and Students Responded to the Terror of September 11* is the true story of Tuesday, September 11, 2001 in the midst of chaos and a relentless unfolding of tragedy, professionals of the Board of Education, principals and staff safely evacuated all 9,000 students from the eight schools without injury. The New York Board of Education (NYBOE) also ensured that all 1.1 million school children, in every part of the city got home safely, reunited with family and loved ones.



They did this as transportation around the City was halted, subways, roads, bridges were closed, and airspace over the United States was shutdown except to military flights.

Uncommon Sense, Uncommon Courage:

How the New York City School System, Its Teachers, Leadership, and Students Responded to the Terror of September 11

Link to the Study

http://rem.s.ed.gov/docs/UncommonSenseUncommonCourage_NYCSchools.pdf

Anne (Nancy) Degnan is the Director, Academic Initiatives for the Earth Institute, Columbia University. The Earth Institute brings together the people and tools needed to address some of the world's most difficult problems, from climate change and environmental degradation, to poverty, disease and the sustainable use of resources. Dr. Degnan spearheads initiatives and programming in education, training and applied research in sustainability science and practice, as well as in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics).

Degnan has consulted with nonprofit and public sector organizations domestically and internationally including the: Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights, the United Nations Environment Program, and Development Program, the National Science Foundation, The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, U.S. Department of Education, The New York City Department of Education, The Kentucky Technical and Community College System, and the Colombian and Mexican governments. Dr. Degnan received her BA from the College of New Rochelle in international relations, and her MPA and Ph.D. from Columbia University. She is a life-long resident of New York.

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If you would like to schedule an interview and do not hear from Dr. Nancy Degnan, please contact Dee Beaugez, Founder of the *Safe to Learn* Community Project

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Look for Principals for Principals – Leading the Way to School Safety

by Ada Rosario Dolch

Published by Visual Imagry, Inc.

Distributed as a Safe to Learn Community Project to all Principals for FREE

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Safe to Learn