Maximizing School Safety by Minimizing Student Violence on and Near School Grounds

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MAXIMIZING SCHOOL SAFETY BY
MINIMIZING STUDENT VIOLENCE
ON AND NEAR SCHOOL GROUNDS

William J. Bryson

Fall, 1994

MASTERS PROJECT
Submitted to the graduate faculty at
Grand Valley State University
in partial fulfillment of the Masters of Education
ABSTRACT

This research applications project addresses the phenomenon of rising violence among the youth of the United States, and includes a discussion of how this trend impacts our schools, particularly both the perceived and real danger it creates for our schools' students and staff members. Also considered are three youth activities which have accompanied this phenomenon. These behaviors are drug abuse and trafficking, gang activity, and weapons carrying and use. A brief analysis is presented regarding the degree and nature of these activities' relationships to each other and to youth violence. Finally, a handbook for school administrators' use is included titled Maximizing School Safety by Minimizing Student Violence on and Near School Grounds: A Handbook for School Administrators. This book incorporates the ideas of a number of researchers and other professionals, representing a variety of fields, regarding strategies for preventing and intervening in student violence.
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CHAPTER 1
Problem Statement

In American public schools a substantial number of students exhibit inappropriate behavior. All too often this behavior takes the form of crimes such as drug use and trafficking, gang related assault, and the carrying and use of weapons. These acts create in many schools the perception, and in many cases the reality, that a safe and orderly environment does not exist. For example, the 1989 Victimization Survey discovered that one in five students surveyed feared attack in and around school; nine percent of the students questioned claimed to have been the victim of some sort of crime (Grant, 1994). Often both students and their parents hold school personnel responsible for maximizing students’ safety by minimizing drugs, gangs and weapons in and around school.

While youth crime has long been associated with the inner city only, the phenomenon is no longer relegated to this setting alone. "The fact of the matter is that the level of crime in suburban and rural areas is rapidly increasing to the point where in many cases it is equal to (and in some cases surpassing) that of the inner city" (Taylor, 1990, p. 3). This upward trend has caught many school officials across the country unprepared. School staffs have generally not been trained to maintain security and to prevent crime. However, it has become imperative that staff members understand ways in which violence within their schools can be minimized. "No one is immune. Everyone needs to be aware of what is happening and what needs to happen" (Taylor, 1990, p. 1).
Importance and Rationale of the Study

School officials must work diligently to prevent drug, gang, and weapons activity at school for a number of critical reasons. First, they must do so to ensure that their school can accomplish its mission; to educate. More specifically, many school communities have committed themselves to educating students who are "skilled and active learners", "self-directed", "creative problem solvers", "collaborative and cooperative workers", and "responsible and contributing citizens." Yet students can only begin to develop such qualities when more basic needs have been met.

Abraham Maslow might have described students who possess the above characteristics as evolving toward the state of self-actualization; "...the supreme development and use of all our abilities, the fulfillment of all our qualities and capabilities" (Schultz, 1977, p. 64). He would argue though that they could only embark on this process if certain more basic needs were met.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory states that each individual must have certain needs at least partially met before he/she can be motivated to concentrate on satisfying others (Schultz, 1977). At the very base of the hierarchy are the physiological needs such as food and sleep. The next level of needs is the necessity of safety. "These include needs for security, stability, protection, order, and freedom from fear and anxiety" (Schultz, 1977, p.64). If these are met, one can focus on meeting the belonging and love needs, followed by the esteem needs. Finally, the motivation to self-actualize becomes a possibility, and for some a reality.

Duane Schultz writes, "Young children possess a natural curiosity about
their world... Healthy adults continue to be curious about their world. They want to analyze it and to develop a framework within which to understand it. Failure to satisfy these needs is frustrating and results in a personality which has little curiosity about things, is not involved with life, and has little zest for living. It is impossible to become self-actualizing if these needs are frustrated..." (Schultz, 1977, p. 64). Possibly this is why one of the seven correlates of effective schools is the maintenance of a safe and orderly environment (Jacoby & Lezotte, 1990, p.10).

If a school intends to rear self-actualizing students an integral component of its mission statement should be "...to guarantee that our learners experience individual success through an educational system characterized by parents, staff, and community working together to provide a safe, nurturing environment..." (Holland Public Schools, 1993, p.4). Creating strategies to reach this goal and then implementing them are critical.

Secondly, the courts hold that school districts are duty bound to ensure a safe environment (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 1992, p. 452). This responsibility includes not only maintaining facilities and equipment in proper working condition, but sufficiently supervising and instructing students and warning them of clear and present dangers. In the opinion of the courts, this responsibility is generally a tort liability issue.

Three types of tort liability exist. One type, strict liability, describes the creation of an unusual danger resulting in injury to an individual. Another is intentional liability, which includes actions taken with the intent to cause harm to an individual. Negligent liability involves "conduct which falls below
acceptable standards of care and results in injury”; most school cases fall
under this category (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 1992, p. 451).

Negligence, as the term applies to the law, is defined as "a breach of one's
legal duty to protect others from unreasonable risks of harm" (Cambron-
McCabe & McCarthy, 1992, p. 451). Four circumstances must be present in
order to constitute negligence; the duty to protect from excessive risk existed,
there was an infraction of this duty, physical or mental injury occurred, and
the party's injury was a direct result of the other party's infraction (Cambron-

Nelda Cambron-McCabe and Martha McCarthy state that "This does not
require school personnel to have every child under constant surveillance at all
times during the school day. However, if circumstances indicate an unusual
risk of harm or unsafe conditions, reasonable preventive measures must be
taken" (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 1992, p. 452). They add, "Several
courts have concluded that school districts have a duty to warn students or to
provide increased security measures if assaults or other violent acts are
reasonably foreseeable. For example, if criminal attacks have occurred on
school grounds or nearby, failure to institute measures to protect students may
John Grant cautions that violence in the community outside of school
constitutes foreseeable danger at school (Grant, 1994).

Being declared guilty of negligence entails a cost in money and public
image that few if any school districts can afford. Clearly then, school
personnel hold a grave responsibility to minimize drug, gang, and weapons
related crime at and near school.

Background of the Study

While inappropriate student behavior in schools must surely have occurred to some degree prior to the 1800's, the first formal reference to such activity seems to have been the introduction during that century of the term juvenile delinquency. The development of this concept was followed by the foundation of the first publicly funded school for delinquents. At the turn of the century more studies of child psychology were carried out, resulting in more frequent challenges by the public to traditional methods of strict school discipline.

Demands were made for a return to stricter school discipline after World War II, in response to the rise during this period in delinquent behavior of American youth. In 1955 and 1956, ninety-five percent of public school teachers reported their students to be "well behaved". However, as a result of the Soviet launch of the Sputnik satellite, extensive changes were made in public school discipline and curriculum. Many changes in both structure and approach were innovative and unprecedented.

Unprecedented in the 1960's was the Supreme Court's commitment in some cases to uphold the rights of students when school officials' policies and disciplinary actions were challenged (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 1992). Another new development was the fact that America's youth demanded more rights than it had in previous decades. Also unprecedented was this student population's behavior. Student protests - not peaceful ones in many instances
- were staged regarding the Viet Nam conflict and a myriad of other issues. These events, coupled with the recreational drug use of upper middle class youth and others, characterized the youth culture as "anti-establishment". Robert J. Rubel, who authored The Unruly School, states that at that time student baiting of teachers was the biggest form of school disorder.

By the mid-1970's, however, school disorder often meant vandalism, burglary, arson and assault. According to the National Institute of Education, violent behavior on the part of students was a national phenomenon. During this same period, school officials were placed under greater pressure by the courts to provide each perpetrator with due process, which complicated the disciplinary process even as the issues were increasing in complexity (Glazer, 1992).

In a 1940 survey, teachers were asked to list the top seven discipline problems in the public schools. The responses included talking out of turn, chewing gum, making noise, running in hallways, cutting in line, violating dress codes, and littering. In 1980 this question was again posed to teachers. This time the responses were drug abuse, alcohol abuse, pregnancy, suicide, rape, robbery and assault (Jackson, 1990). Since 1980 our public schools have experienced a rise in other problems as well: gang activity and weapons possession. No longer are discipline problems simply issues of disrespect for authority. They have become in many instances issues of deliberate threats to others' safety. While few if any of the 1940 behaviors would likely be defined as direct threats to the safety of self and others, every one of today's behaviors would be.
Violent crime in general rose twenty-three percent between 1993 and 1994 (Lacayo, 1994). Sixteen percent of eighth graders, fourteen percent of tenth graders, and twelve percent of twelfth graders fear for their safety, according to a recent University of Michigan study (Toch, 1993). In 1992, over three fourths of teenagers believed violence against students at school was a problem; over fifty-three percent believed that students carrying weapons was a problem in their schools (Glazer, 1992). In 1991, principals in over one thousand districts were interviewed about the trend of violence in their schools. Over half of those in urban and suburban districts and forty-three percent of those in rural districts told Xavier University researchers that violence had increased (Toch, 1993). Journalist Steven Roberts reports that ninety-seven percent of principals feel violence at school has increased across the nation. Classroom teachers share the concern; more than one fourth fear assault in or near school (Lewis, 1994).

The perception that violence exists in the public schools and that it has increased in frequency and intensity seems to be shared by students, administrators, and teachers. Some shocking statistics support their concerns.

University of Michigan researchers found that of twelfth graders who said they had been victimized at school the previous year, fourteen percent claimed they had been threatened with a weapon and five percent had actually been injured with one (Toch, 1993). Almost one fifth of violent crime is committed by those under eighteen (Lacayo, 1994). Violence and violence related death among youth is increasing (Gest, 1989). For instance, in Montgomery County
Ohio juvenile assault charges increased by 218 percent between 1988 and 1991 (Emery, 1993). In 1993, New York State's public schools reported 8,879 assault cases, 348 sex offenses and 155 cases of weapon use (Elsworth, 1994). More than three million crimes are committed in or near 85,000 U.S. public schools a year, injuring an average of 183,590 people (Gest, 1989). Homicide rates among youth have increased dramatically. Steven Roberts laments, "A generation ago, adults worried that their children would be lured by the counterculture into turning on and dropping out. Now they worry that their kids will be jumped on or shot down. And often, the enemy is other children" (Roberts, 1994, p.4).

Why are violence and drug free schools not the norm today? Drug use, gang activity, and weapons use are much more prevalent among American youth today than in the past; the schools tend to reflect trends in the community. As the youth population becomes more volatile, school personnel find maintaining safe environments more challenging.

Gangs of youth became more prevalent as the country industrialized. As cities grew in population early this century, more youth were able to socialize together. A variety of immigrant populations arrived and settled in their own pockets in attempts to preserve cultures and combat prejudice; territory was defined by culture, ethnic background, race, etc. Sometimes members of one group would enter another group's neighborhood and intimidate through extortion, robbery, etc. Thus local merchants welcomed the formation of youth groups bent on protecting "their own". Inevitably fragmentation within these groups sometimes occurred and feuds erupted. These groups eventually lost
sight of their original intents and began emulating the people they had first organized to fight; they had truly become gangs. Some groups learned the art well, such as Detroit's famous Purple Gang, which connected with bootlegging gangsters of the 1930's.

During the 1960's the influence of organizations such as the family, church, and school waned. This trend was accompanied by race rioting and the deterioration of many cities' industrial bases. For many youth, gangs seem to fill human needs for belonging and income, and desires for power (Trump, 1993). "...Urban gangs have replaced Ford, GM and Chrysler as major employers. Social conditions created by industrialization are now producing criminalization", theorizes Taylor (Taylor, 1990, p. 2).

Researchers of Chicago gangs have observed that "nonlethal, nondrug offenses attributed to street gangs were violent confrontations (assault and battery) or damage to property" (Block & Block, 1993). The U. S. Bureau of Statistics concluded in 1992 that students with gangs at school were twice as likely as those without gangs to fear attacks while at, or traveling to and from school (Trump, 1993). Dr. Ronald Stephens laments that gangs are becoming involved in not only violence, but also drug activity (James & Stephens, 1993). Gang-related activities are permeating communities large and small across the nation (Glazer, 1992). For instance, Michigan's Drug Education Advisory Council states that "even serene cities like Holland, Michigan, report gang activity" (Engler, 1993, Michigan's Strategy, p.26). This spread is in part a result of technology which allows heightened long distance communication and travel, extensive access to media, and disintegrating family units. Many gangs
now define territory in terms much broader than neighborhood or social class; it is now defined as the area of business transactions (Taylor, 1990). Stephens describes some gangs as "sophisticated enterprises of well armed domestic terrorists" (James & Stephens, 1993).

A relatively high number of young people are attending school armed. In fact, one 1990 study found that one in five high schoolers carried some type of weapon to school at least once a month; one in twenty a gun (Glazer, 1992). Another study revealed that nine percent of eighth graders carried a gun, knife or club at least once a month, and 270,000 guns were carried to American schools each day (Glazer, 1992). This high rate of weapons toting, especially firearms, has heightened the volatility of youth violence. Between 1985 and 1991 the increase in homicide on the part of sixteen year olds rose 158 percent; fifteen year olds, 217 percent; and thirteen to fourteen year olds, 140 percent. In 1992 alone, 3,000 teenagers were arrested for murder (Lewis, 1994). Such statistics have resulted in the American Medical Association declaring gunshot wounds the second leading cause of death among high school age children, and have prompted the Surgeon General to declare gunshot wounds a public health crisis (Glazer, 1992).

Which, if any, of the behaviors discussed above is the cause of the other two has not been determined. No clear pattern seems to exist in which one of the activities consistently develops in a school before the others appear. What is clear, however, is that the drug business, gang activity and the carrying and use of weapons are closely intertwined. The presence of one of these activities at a school often correlates with the presence of one or both of
the others.

For instance, the drug trade may increase the propensity for students to exhibit gang and weapons activity. Drug availability has been reported more often by those reporting gangs at their schools than those not reporting their presence (Trump, 1993). Governor John Engler's Drug Education Advisory Committee claims, "Drug and gang issues are often intertwined ... often, fully developed and organized gangs are not yet in operation, but groups of youth mimic gang activity" (Engler, 1993, *Michigan's Strategy*, p.26). Researcher Kenneth Trump adds, "The problem is exacerbated by drug trafficking ... With drug trafficking comes better armed and more violent gangs" (Trump, 1993, p. 4). In a recent study, "Student drug sellers reported higher levels of firearm activity than nonsellers who were not also users" (Sheley & Wright, 1993, p. 9). One theory regarding the correlation of drug dealing and weapons carrying in schools is that those who become involved in dealing drugs arm themselves with weapons, and others then do the same due to a perceived need to defend themselves from the dealers (Toch, 1993).

As drug trafficking continues and gang activity increases, so does the rate of violence. This violence is becoming more lethal in nature. Apparently the heightened use of guns among youth has worsened gang violence; "Virtually the entire increase in the number of street gang - motivated homicides seems attributable to an increase in the use of high-caliber, automatic, or semi-automatic weapons" (Block & Block, 1993, p.7). The Center to Prevent Handgun Violence purports that the chief cause of gun violence at school between 1986 and 1990 were gang or drug confrontations.
The presence of drug dealing and gangs in schools may motivate students to carry weapons (Sheley & Wright, 1993). But Doctors Sheley and Wright say, "While the link is apparent, it is not at all clear whether gangs cause gun use or whether they simply offer safety and a sense of belonging to youth who are already well acquainted with guns and perceive the need for them" (Sheley & Wright, 1993, p. 9).

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to describe the phenomena of youth drug use and trafficking, gang activity, and weapons possession and use, and to assess the relationships of these behaviors to youth violence. The purpose also is to present strategies for minimizing such activities at and near school with the interest of maximizing school safety.

More specifically this study will:

1. Assess the correlations between drug use and trafficking, gang activity, and weapons possession and use.
2. Highlight the correlation of these behaviors to violence within the public schools.
3. Provide an overview of statistics and observations regarding drug use and trafficking, gang activity, weapons possession and use and overall violence in the public schools.
4. List a number of tactics for preventing or combating drug use and trafficking, gang activity, and weapons possession and use on the part of students.
5. Present strategies for minimizing student violence at or near
school in the form of a handbook for school administrators' use.

Limitations

This study does not attempt to generate new information regarding student drug abuse and trafficking, gang activity, weapons possession and use, and student violence at or near school.

No attempt is made to include every possible strategy which may be effective in minimizing these student behaviors at or near school.

This study focuses on strategies to curb such behavior on and near school grounds only, rather than elsewhere in the community.

The concentration is on strategies which can be used by schools specifically, not necessarily by other agencies whose clients are school-age students.

Definition of Terms

**Assault** - A violent attack.

**Drug Abuse** - The misuse of a habit-forming narcotic.

**Drug Trafficking** - The action of purchasing and/or selling narcotics.

**Gang** - A group of individuals associated for criminal or other antisocial purposes.

**Gang Activity** - The collective behavior exhibited by gang members.

**Physical Intimidation** - An attempt to induce fear in another through nonverbal means.

**Safe and Orderly Environment** - An atmosphere characterized by structure and a reasonable degree of physical and emotional security.
Student Violence - Student activity which deliberately places one or more individuals in real or perceived danger (i.e., threats, assault).

Verbal Intimidation - An attempt to induce fear in another through oral or written means.

Weapons Use - The utilization of any device for attack or defense.
CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Drug abuse has proven to be a difficult activity to combat. The attack upon this behavior from the angle of law enforcement has generally been ineffective due to the nature of addiction, as well as the immense profits that can be gained by trafficking, which motivates dealers to take great risks. Programs which focus on reducing demand for drugs through treatment of users are often productive, provided they are integrated with the efforts of other resources in the community (Slaby, 1992, p. 15).

Certain procedures are recommended for eliminating or preventing gang activity. Experts generally recommend first making an assessment of the situation before taking action, and then piloting programs to deal with it (Engler, 1993, Michigan's Strategy). In other words, examine the extent of and nature of the gang activity and develop strategies which focus on the particular situation at hand. Although the gang phenomenon has caught many communities off guard, a number of specific steps can and should be taken to combat this undesirable trend. The schools play an integral role in these actions.

Kenneth Trump of the Ohio Urban Research Center has observed that when a community first begins to experience gang activity, it remains for a period of time in a state of denial. Citizens tend to think reports of gangs are exaggerated or even false, etc. Schools, which are frequently the sites where local gang activity can be observed, must then work diligently with city officials to overcome community denial (Trump, 1993). In order to do so, school
personnel may need to assist in bringing the issue to the attention of those city officials who are not yet aware of the problem. The challenge in this instance is to convince those who do not deal directly and regularly with the youth of the community that a crisis exists. Another hurdle is to enlist the cooperation of those who fear bringing attention of the problem to the public will threaten the interests of real estate, tourism, etc.

If and when the denial on the part of city representatives and the overall community ceases, local assessments of the problem can be made. This analysis must be made by the community with a focus on that particular community (Trump, 1993). The research should be carried out by all relevant local agencies; schools, social work and law enforcement agencies, etc. The involvement of each agency allows for all relevant data to be collected and studied with the factors unique to that community taken into account. It also guarantees the involvement of organizations who serve youth in solving the problem from the outset.

Next, a specific plan for action must be developed. This plan must be based upon the assessment that was made by the community agencies if it is to be effective. However, action of some sort, no matter how subtle, is imperative. Trump says, "Suburban schools and communities often respond more quickly and more thoroughly than big cities; however, the action taken is kept at a much lower profile ... This response is acceptable providing the concern for action takes priority over issues of image" (Trump, 1993, p. 7).

Trump recommends that when action to combat gangs is necessary the school take a leadership role among the agencies involved (Trump, 1993). One
manner in which the school can lead the process is through setting the example of "zero tolerance" for gang related activity. Dr. Ronald Stephens of Pepperdine University's National School Safety Center suggests a number of strategies for communicating this message to the students. First, he advocates the establishment of clear behavior expectations for the student body. Stephens argues that the staff must be visible to students throughout the school grounds during the course of the school day. He recommends removing all graffiti as soon as possible after it appears. Full cooperation with law enforcement officials is necessary, states Stephens. The education of staff members, parents and the overall community regarding prevention and intervention is critical, he claims. Stephens also feels that encouraging parent and community involvement with the school is an important strategy. An effective long term strategy, he believes, is to create and implement a gang prevention plan (James & Stephens, 1993).

Methods to reduce weapons possession and use at school exist also. One strategy is to create and strictly enforce policies and programs which make carrying weapons undetected extremely difficult for students. Requiring all backpacks, handbags, etc. to be transparent is one idea. Prohibiting clothes in which weapons can be easily concealed is another. Continual random locker searches may motivate students to keep weapons at home in order to avoid police confrontations (Fenley, 1993). Schools across the nation are experimenting with policies of this nature. Dr. C. Ronald Ruff states that regardless of what schools attempt, district boards must create policies which unmistakably prohibiting weapons, assaults, and intimidation, ensuring a safe
environment (Trump, 1993).

Another method is the installation and use of metal detectors. In fact, as of 1992 one fourth of large urban school districts were using them. While security experts agree that detectors symbolize to students an awareness on the part of school officials, they claim evidence does not support the theory that detectors decrease violence. However, many individual districts report a decrease in violence since installing detectors. New York Public, for example, cites a fifty-eight percent drop in violence since the installation of scanners. Many districts are reluctant to use metal detectors, though. One reason is that detectors are extremely expensive to purchase and maintain. Another is the fear of many districts that litigation will result from requiring all students to pass through detectors (Glazer, 1992). Researcher Sarah Glazer points out, "It's not clear... whether such security checks as metal detector stations would come under the Supreme Court's definition of a search" (Glazer, 1992, p. 791). Consequently, districts tend to avoid the use of such equipment until a weapons related act of violence occurs (Glazer, 1992).

The ideas above may succeed in some instances in putting a stop-gap on the flood of weapons into American schools. As long as the desire on the part of students to carry and use weapons exists, measures like these will remain necessary. Yet the key to maintaining truly weapons-free schools may be in school staffs assisting society to decrease the obsession with weapons that a segment of our youth exhibit. According to U.S. News and World Report, "Getting weapons out of the hands of juveniles is one thing. Reducing their motivation to arm themselves in the first place is another" (Toch, 1993).
Sheley and Wright conclude in their research, "...the fundamental policy problem involves convincing youths they can survive in their neighborhoods without being armed" (Sheley & Wright, 1993, p. 1).

In order to accomplish such goals, a great deal more must be learned about the causes of violence in our society (Fenley, 1993). One understanding we do have is that violence can be classified into two categories. One type is expressive violence, in which the main goal is to cause the injury itself. The other is instrumental violence, in which the primary goal is to obtain money or property (Block & Block, 1993). Researchers have also determined that violence is behavior which is learned (Fenley, 1993). It would seem, then, that violence could be unlearned.

The ability to curb youth violence may rest upon programs which succeed in teaching young people how to peacefully resolve conflicts. Such programs should focus on juveniles who exhibit high-risk behaviors, since they are "...those most likely to be injured, to engage in violent behavior and injure others, or both" (Fenley, 1993, p. 15). Why is this the case? In a Harvard study, behavior psychologists Ronald Slaby and Nancy Guerra found that highly aggressive youth exhibit some disturbing tendencies. They tend to blame their hostility on others. These youngsters rarely solicit the facts when assessing a situation. They find envisioning violence-free solutions to conflicts extremely difficult (Glazer, 1992). Students who possess these characteristics comprise a substantial portion of our schools' populations. Therefore, it may be in the schools' best interests to incorporate conflict resolution courses into their curriculums.
Harvard's Doctor Deborah Prothrow-Smith claims, "There is no better setting than the schools to implement a violence prevention strategy" (Congress of the U.S., Senate Committee on the Judiciary, 1992, p. 54). One reason is obvious; youth violence is occurring in the school setting at an alarming rate. Another is that outreach is critical when dealing with high-risk students. It has been suggested that to be effective in reaching a target group, one must make four considerations. First, select a setting where the group can be reached; second, choose a setting which is appropriate for the strategy used; third, select a variety of settings; fourth, choose a setting which is suitable for all groups involved (Fenley, 1993). It is likely then that school is a place where a high number of these students can be reached and affected. Doctor Prothrow-Smith makes the following compelling point. The public schools have proved themselves to be effective settings to assist in fighting epidemics such as polio and the measles by allowing public health agencies to vaccinate large portions of target groups against these diseases. These same schools can now assist in vaccinating our children from the epidemic of youth violence (Congress of the U.S., Senate Committee on the Judiciary, 1992).

Prothrow-Smith professes that students who master the academic skills traditionally taught in school will be less prone to use violence than those who do not. She believes that the "Three R's" assist students in reasoning through stressful situations and in using words rather than actions to settle conflicts. She has testified, "The fact is that learning is a vital form of violence prevention" (Congress of the U.S., Senate Committee on the Judiciary, 1992, p. 55). Since students who enjoy the support of caring and involved parents
succeed better in school, and therefore are less apt to be violent, schools should encourage parent involvement as a strategy for violence prevention. Such encouragement will theoretically heighten the students' skill levels, improving their abilities to handle conflicts responsibly, and indirectly reduce youth violence (Congress of the U.S., Senate Committee on the Judiciary, 1992).

A growing number of educators believe the strategy of education is one way to solve the predicament of youth violence. Various types of programs can be taught in the public schools; classes in firearms safety, for instance. However, many advocate the inclusion of classes in which children are specifically taught skills for resolving conflicts peacefully. Conflict resolution training, social skills development through adult mentoring, and peer counseling programs are some options. Some educators argue that these courses should be taught even at the pre-school level. All believe that such curricula might have a long term affect on those students taught (Fenley, 1993). As of 1992, over fifty percent of public school districts were attempting to prevent violence through education (Glazer, 1992).

While the above school strategy is direct, other interventions are less so. One theory is that keeping youth connected to school during and beyond the school day is critical in decreasing their propensity toward violence (General Accounting Office, 1992). Structured recreational activities, for example, may cut down violence by providing an environment which is purposeful, allows for the alleviation of tension and creates productive social interaction (Fenley, 1993). Effective counseling and/or teacher-advisor programs during the school
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day may decrease violence also. Steven Roberts comments, "Children need to know that someone, anyone, cares about them. Otherwise more of them will become enemies and victims..." (Roberts, 1994, p. 4).

Of course, the commitment to resolve conflicts peacefully derives from one's value system. Whether the public schools should play a role in teaching values is an ongoing debate. One theory is that values education occurs necessarily, as children learn informally through the example of adults' actions. School systems are beginning to implement more formal programs that teach values as a way to combat the perceived increase in amoral behavior; violent acts being one of them. St. Louis Schools Home Economics Supervisor Mary B. Williams includes ten reasons to "guide the acceptance of moral values and development of strong character". Her most urgent reason is that young people are hurting each other. Another of her reasons is that she believes where schools are working to develop character, the results are positive (Williams, 1992).

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines character as "moral excellence and firmness." Williams believes character encompasses three components; knowing, feeling, and behavior. Among her twelve strategies for developing character in students are acting as caregivers and mentors, teaching values in the curriculum, teaching conflict resolution, encouraging moral reflection, creating a positive moral culture in the school, and recruiting parent and community support. Williams says, "Character doesn't function in a vacuum; it functions in a social environment ... If schools wish to develop character they must provide a moral environment with emphasis on good
values that are on-going and reinforced" (Williams, 1992, p. 7).

The attitudes projected by teachers is a critical component of priming students to develop character. The approaches of these adults should focus on fostering in students a sense of self-confidence and a desire to commit serious effort to tasks. Teachers who embrace the adage that "all children can learn" will be more effective in fostering these qualities in students (Congress of the U.S., 1992). This perspective will likely help a teacher's association with a student be characterized by the term "relationship". This relationship may heighten a student's level of learning; the student who requires help in managing anger and conflict may now be receptive to learning the necessary skills.

Relationships, sometimes referred to as the "Fourth R", is something which many schools are attempting to teach. Relationships not only with teachers, but with classmates, family members and others are addressed also. Topics such as handling peer pressure, rumors, etc. are discussed. Often these are carried out through Teacher-Advisor programs. Sometimes peer counseling programs are implemented. Often, in order to deal specifically with conflict resolution, peer mediation teams are created. For instance, the Conflict Resolution Program enlists student mediators to help settle student disputes before they erupt into physical violence. New York City's Peacemaker Program encourages youth to think carefully before reacting to events and emotions. This curriculum "is designed to engage children, help them think about their own behavior, appreciate the control they can exert over their own behavior, and to question their assumptions about the inevitability of fighting"
Prevention and treatment are key components of any full scale public health campaign (General Accounting Office, 1992). As in the fight against any health crisis, "We need to weaken or break the chain of events that leads to violence" (Fenley, 1993, p. 12). Attacks from the angles of education, regulatory control and manipulation of the environment can be made. These attacks must be made not by one organization, but by a unified and committed community (Fenley, 1993). Schools are a vital element in the prevention/containment of youth violence, and should even assume a leadership position, because, "Effective programs (for fighting youth violence) combine a number of activities to render the maximum impact on the problem and reach as many young people as possible" (Fenley, 1993, p. 35). Schools are the logical settings for many of these activities since they provide a setting where a high number of the target group can be reached (Fenley, 1993). Public schools are the settings where the vast majority of youth come together, where students who would not otherwise be reached can be contacted, and where daily interaction with adults is assured to some degree (General Accounting Office, 1992). Our public schools simply must play a role in eradicating youth violence. Schools mirror the health of their communities, and this cancer has already permeated their playgrounds and hallways.
CHAPTER 3

Project Components

A handbook titled "Maximizing School Safety by Minimizing Student Violence: A Handbook for School Administrators" was created. This book was developed to serve as a resource for school district administrators' use in their efforts to maintain safe and orderly school campuses.

This handbook addresses two major components of minimizing student violence; the prevention, or "heading off", of such activity, and the intervention of specific incidents of student violence (in order to prevent continuation, escalation, or recurrence). The suggested strategies for prevention and intervention lie within three thrusts. The first thrust is education through formal curriculum and additional programming for both staff members and students. Regulatory control via building and/or district policies and rules is the second thrust. The third is manipulation of the environment from the aspects of facilities, staffing, and approaches taken and attitudes toward students.

Project Methodology

The content of this handbook is based upon the data and theories put forth in some forty resources which include a wide array of government reports, position papers, books, magazine articles, etc. These writings were gathered from three libraries using the ERIC system, and from one local school system. Also supporting this book's content is the input of forty professionals from the fields of education, social work, law enforcement, sociology and psychology.
The input of these individuals was enlisted in the form of a survey. (To obtain specific data regarding the phenomenon of youth violence and related factors, refer to the Background and Literature Review sections of this paper.)

**Conclusions**

Violent behavior on the part of American youth is increasing. This behavior has a direct bearing on the atmosphere of American schools. The effects are that our schools are often perceived to be unsafe, and in some instances, are unsafe. This necessitates an emphasis by school personnel on carrying out effective methods for preventing such behavior on campus wherever and whenever possible, and on intervening in such activity when it occurs. Appropriate prevention and intervention requires knowledgeable leadership on the part of school administrators.

Treatment of youth violence must be carried out from various angles. Three of them are education (curriculum and programming), regulatory control (policies and rules), and manipulation of the environment (facilities, staffing, and approaches and attitudes toward students). Administrators must become aware of how to deal with youth violence from these perspectives, and must facilitate strategies to do so. They must model for and educate their school communities in valid techniques and skills to minimize youth violence by heading it off, de-escalating it when it occurs, and discouraging its recurrence. It is critical that these administrators enlist the enthusiastic cooperation of local agencies committed to assisting youth, and lead this effort if necessary; the phenomenon of youth violence is a community crisis, and can be combated
effectively only by an organized, energetic, and consistent effort on the part of all relevant organizations. Successfully doing so will further enable school personnel to carry out the mission of educating our nation's youth.

Recommendations/Plans for Dissemination

It is recommended that school administrators study and utilize the information included in this handbook. It is also recommended that they obtain any additional valid information from local resources; professionals from the fields of education, social work, law enforcement, sociology, and psychology, as well as writings obtainable from university and college libraries and professional organizations such as the National Association of Secondary School Principals, etc. The information they gain should be shared with staff members, the school community, and all agencies invested in assisting youth.

This handbook will be distributed to each Holland Public Schools building administrator. It will also be available through Grand Valley State University's James H. Zumberge Library.
References


MAXIMIZING SCHOOL SAFETY

BY

MINIMIZING STUDENT VIOLENCE

ON AND NEAR SCHOOL GROUNDS

A HANDBOOK FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
In an era of rising violence on the part of American youth, it has become imperative that school systems curb the trend in the most effective manners possible. School officials are responsible to maintain a safe and orderly environment for the students who attend their schools. Therefore, administrators must maximize school safety by minimizing student violence on and near school grounds.

This handbook has been created with the assistance of a number of professionals including researchers, educators, social workers, law enforcement officials, sociologists and psychologists. The purpose for its creation is to assist school administrators in carrying out the following responsibilities:

I. PREVENTING, or "heading off", student violence.

II. INTERVENING in incidents of student violence.

Suggested strategies lie within the following three thrusts:

I. EDUCATION
   A. CURRICULUM
   B. PROGRAMS

II. REGULATORY CONTROL
   A. POLICIES
   B. RULES

III. MANIPULATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT
   A. FACILITIES
   B. STAFFING
   C. APPROACHES/ATTITUDES

NOTE:

Student violence is defined here as "student activity which places one or more individuals in perceived or real danger (i.e., verbal and/or physical intimidation, assault)".

Safe and orderly environment is defined here as "an atmosphere characterized by structure and a reasonable degree of physical and emotional security."
PREVENTING, OR HEADING OFF, STUDENT VIOLENCE

I. THROUGH EDUCATION

A. CURRICULUM

1. Implement an advisor-advisee course.
   a. Train staff members to serve as advisors.
   b. Arrange for the class to meet on a regular basis.
   c. Include units concerning topics such as...
      I. Social responsibility
      II. Conflict resolution
      III. Self-control
      IV. Peer pressure resistance
      V. Cultural sensitivity training

2. Incorporate character education into the regular curriculum.
   a. Focus on respect and responsibility from the facets of students' knowledge, feelings and behavior.
   b. Take a comprehensive approach, fostering character in students through formal lessons and modeling.

3. Include in the curriculum a public service component.

4. Integrate courses created by community agencies which assist in accomplishing the goal of decreasing student violence, such as...
   a. Dare to Keep Students off Drugs ("DARE"), offered by police departments
   b. "Project Charlie" and other self-concept programs

B. PROGRAMS FOR STAFF

1. Train staff members in relevant teaching responsibilities, which may include...
   a. Advising in an advisor-advisee program.
   b. Community service supervision.
   c. Character education techniques/programs.
2. Inservice staff members in...
   a. Familiarization with agency programs.
   b. Conflict management skills.
   c. Crisis Prevention Intervention skills.
   d. Areas of cultural sensitivity.
   e. Pre-crisis indicators

3. Continually update staff members regarding...
   a. Specific building and district rules and policies.
   b. "Problem" locations, times, etc.
   c. Trends in drug use and trafficking, gang activity, and weapons carrying and use.
   d. Incidents within the community and at the school(s).

C. PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS

1. Train students in...
   a. Conflict management skills.
   b. Anger management.
   c. Problem solving techniques.
   d. Leadership skills.
   e. See components of advisor-advisee program and character education above.
   * Implement programs such as...
     I. Support groups led by a behavior specialist, counselor or social worker.
     II. Mentoring (Student assigned to a specific adult role model).
     III. Grade level retreats.
     IV. Conflict management program.

2. Sponsor an orientation session at the start of each school year at which time the following information will be clearly communicated...
   a. Specific building and district rules and policies.
   b. Consequences of violent behavior.
   c. Exactly what activity is defined by the school as verbal or physical intimidation and assault.
   * Communicate this information both orally and in writing.
   * Make this information clear to parents also.
   * Periodically review this information.
II. THROUGH REGULATORY CONTROL

A. POLICIES

1. Create and institute a disciplinary plan to deal with student violence which contains the following components...

   a. A "zero tolerance" of verbal or physical intimidation, or assault.
   b. A clear definition of what behavior constitutes verbal or physical intimidation, or assault.
   c. Investigation of all rumors as if they were true.
   d. Intervention which is immediate on behalf of the victim.
   e. Intervention which involves parents of both the offender and the victim.
   f. Consequences which are issued immediately upon completion of the investigation.
   g. Progressive disciplinary consequences (i.e. in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, disorderly conduct charges filed with police, expulsion).
   h. Involvement of police regarding any criminal activity which takes place.
   i. Follow up which is consistent for all students.
   j. Student input in the plan's development.
   k. Clearly written outline distributed to the school community (students, parents, staff members).
   l. Periodical review and updating.

2. The following specific policies are recommended...

   a. Request written statements of all witnesses to incidents.
   b. Write notes of appreciation to those witnesses who provide information.
   c. Periodically carry out random searches of lockers.
      *For legal purposes, make known at the start of the year to students that these will be carried out, and always carry out searches with another school or law enforcement official.
   d. Arrange for law enforcement officials to take a "drug dog" through the building(s).
   e. Require identification cards of all students, staff members and authorized visitors.
   f. Confront all unfamiliar/suspicious individuals.
   g. Record license tags and/or photograph all unfamiliar/suspicious individuals.
B. RULES

1. The primary rule must be that all students must comply with all community, state and federal laws.

2. The following specific rules are recommended...
   a. Prohibit students' storing of their materials in others' lockers.
   b. Enforce strict dress codes.
      *Research the legalities of what clothing may be prohibited/required.
   c. Prohibit all gang references (graffiti, body markings, hand gestures, other blatant symbols, oral references).

III. THROUGH MANIPULATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

A. FACILITIES

1. The following accommodations to the school facility are suggested...
   a. Maintain a "clean campus".
      I. Remove all graffiti immediately after photographing and recording it.
      II. Do not provide areas where graffiti is allowed.
         (Prohibit "writing places").
   b. Place lockers in highly visible locations.
   c. Install surveillance cameras, and film wherever and whenever possible within the boundaries of the law.
   d. Install and use metal detectors.

2. Utilize the facility in the following manner...
   a. Eliminate student traffic in areas that cannot be easily monitored by school staff.
   b. Isolate students into manageable groups during less structured, idle times.
   c. Maintain reasonable class sizes.

B. STAFFING

1. School personnel
   a. Administrator(s) be visible at and around the school campus at all times possible.
   b. Assign counselors and other staff members to specific posts during passing times, etc. so that they are
visible and accessible.
c. Alter posts often so that the appearance of an extensive adult staff is maintained.
d. Hire security personnel to travel throughout the campus regularly.
e. Assign to security personnel responsibilities which require them to visit classrooms.
f. Arrange for school employees to maintain high visibility in the lunch room(s).

2. Volunteers

a. Develop partnerships with agencies which will provide positive intervention within the school setting (ie, Boys and Girls Club).
b. Post trained volunteers throughout the campus to head off incidents by their adult presence, and to report inappropriate activity.
c. Post trained volunteers at bus stops (See 2.b. above).
d. Establish a "parent watch network" along student travel routes.
e. Arrange for parents of potentially disruptive parents to monitor the campus.

B. APPROACHES/ATTITUDES

1. Communicate to the student body that the inappropriate behavior on the part of a small number of students will not be allowed to control the agenda of the school community; encourage them to report incidents when they are witnesses or victims.

   a. Support them by consistently following through on their concerns.
   b. Respect their requests for confidentiality.
   c. Dialog with them about what they feel can be done to maintain their security, while acting on the information they have divulged.

2. Communicate to students that the laws apply at school also.

   a. Involve police in criminal incidents which take place at or near school.
   b. Drive/walk the neighborhood streets to convey expectations of this compliance.

3. Exude an attitude of "being in charge".

   I. "Say what you mean, and mean what you say."
   II. Enforce rules strictly and consistently.
III. Know students' names.

4. Provide opportunities for team initiatives (ie, ropes courses).

5. Train staff members to...
   a. View students as individuals first, apart from their affiliations and/or offenses
   b. Avoid holding grudges, and resolve to move beyond past incidents, offering future opportunities for success.
   c. Treat all students with respect.
   d. Operate under the philosophy that all children can learn.

6. Develop an awareness in staff members that they as authority figures sometimes unconsciously practice verbal intimidation.

INTERVENING IN INCIDENTS OF STUDENT VIOLENCE

I. THROUGH EDUCATION

A. CURRICULUM: SEE PREVENTING, OR "HEADING OFF", STUDENT VIOLENCE, I. A.

B. PROGRAMS

1. Train staff members in the following techniques...
   a. Nonviolent Crisis Intervention training.
      1. Supportive demeanor.
      IV. Non-violent physical crisis intervention.
      V. Therapeutic rapport during postvention.
   b. Conflict Management Facilitator training.

2. Provide students the opportunity to utilize...
   a. Anger management (ie. "Time Out", "In-School Suspension").

   b. Conflict Management.
      1. Leadership.
      11. Communication.
      III. Problem solving.
      IV. Skills in improving the school environment.
V. Responsibility for their own actions.

c. Problem-solving strategies (i.e., "Instruction Outside the Classroom" program).

II. THROUGH REGULATORY CONTROL

A. POLICIES

1. Develop agreed upon emergency messages such as...

   a. One which indicates to staff members that their assistance is needed in quelling a disturbance at a particular location of the campus, and which is subtle enough in nature that it does not further escalate the situation (i.e., "Mr. Strongman to ..... please").

   b. One which communicates to staff members that a situation has arisen in which it would be prudent to prevent students from travelling throughout the building, and which is subtle in nature so as not to cause undue tension or panic (i.e., "Teachers, there will be a 4:30 PM staff meeting today," means shut your classroom door and prevent students from exiting; "Teachers, the 4:30 PM staff meeting has been cancelled," means students may now exit).

2. Agree on which situations warrant a "911" call, and on who will make the call before such situations arise.

3. Hold each staff member responsible for reporting all observed incidents of student violence.

4. If possible, intervene immediately.

5. Commit to involve the police wherever and whenever necessary.

6. Always issue an immediate consequence for each incident of student violence.

7. Always include the parent(s) of both the offender(s) and victim(s) in the intervention.

B. RULES - Not relevant.

III. THROUGH MANIPULATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

A. FACILITIES
1. Install a public address and/or telephone system.

2. Provide administrators, security personnel etc. with two wave radios, beepers, etc.

3. Maintain this equipment in proper working condition.

B. STAFFING

1. School personnel
   
a. Encourage each staff member, if trained in valid nonviolent crisis intervention, to intervene to stop any incident of student violence unless he/she determines that doing so will place him/her or others in further danger.

b. Establish teams of properly trained staff members, who will be "on call" for particular areas of the school campus. (Post rosters of these teams in locations visible to staff members, but not to students.)

2. Volunteers
   
a. Encourage volunteers to intervene only in the following manners...
      
      1) Observe carefully what takes place.
      2) Decrease their physical proximity to the degree that it may encourage the perpetrator to cease the violent behavior, but does not escalate the situation or increase the risk of harm.
      3) Record the incident in writing and report it to the proper authorities.

C. APPROACHES/ATTITUDES

* Always behave in a manner which maintains the care, welfare, safety and security of others.

1. When a student is engaged in verbal intimidation ...
   
a. Approach the student using the following body language...
      
      1) Maintain a reasonable proximity to the student (generally two and one half to three feet).
2) Stand at a forty-five degree angle, with your left side toward the individual.
3) Take a "casual" stance (ie, legs apart, hands in pockets).
4) Do not touch the student at this point.

b. *Take the attitude* that the threat could be one the student intends to carry out, and respond accordingly (ie, call for an intervention team to arrive and maintain a low profile presence).

c. *Respond verbally* in the following manner...
   1) State a nonthreatening directive.
   2) When stating this directive, set limits for the student which are clear and concise.
   3) Use a calming tone, accompanied by a low volume and even cadence. (Sometimes using humor, but not sarcasm, works.)

2. When a student is engaged in *physical intimidation* (ie, invading one's personal space, pointing, touching, etc.)...
   a. *Approach* the student using the following body language...
      1) Maintain a reasonable proximity to the student (generally two and one half to three feet).
      2) Stand at a forty-five degree angle, with your left side toward the individual.
      3) Take a "casual" stance (ie, legs apart, hands in pockets).
      4) Do not touch the student at this point.
   
   b. *Take the attitude* that an assault could follow, and if possible, call for an intervention team to arrive and maintain a low profile presence.
   
   c. *Respond verbally* in the following manner...
      1) State a nonthreatening directive.
      2) When stating this directive, set limits for the student which are clear and concise.
      3) Use a calming tone, accompanied by a low volume and even cadence.

3. When a student is engaged in an *assault* which threatens to cause harm to self or others...
a. Utilize the appropriate "nonviolent crisis intervention" technique(s) presented by the National Crisis Prevention Institute, Inc.
   *Only do so if you have completed the proper training offered by certified trainers of this program.
   *Resort to these techniques rarely; the law does not allow for them to be used habitually.

b. Throughout the crisis, behave in a manner which maintains the care, welfare, safety and security of each individual involved.

c. Always act in accordance with state corporal punishment laws.
NAME: William J. Bryson

MAJOR: (Choose only 1)

_____ Ed Tech  _____ Elem Ed  _____ Elem LD

x  Ed Leadership  _____ G/T Ed  _____ Sec LD

_____ Sec/Adult  _____ Early Child  _____ Read/Lang Arts

TITLE: Maximizing School Safety by Minimizing Student Violence On and Near School Grounds

PAPER TYPE: (Choose only 1)  SEM/YR COMPLETED: Fall 1994

x  Project  

_____ Thesis

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE OF APPROVAL

Using the ERIC thesaurus, choose as many descriptors (5 - 7 minimum) to describe the contents of your paper.

1. Behavior Management  6. Student Discipline
2. Conflict Management  7. Violence
3. Counseling
4. Discipline
5. School Effectiveness

ABSTRACT: Two to three sentences that describe the contents of your paper.

The phenomenon of rising violence among American youth, and the impact of this trend on our schools, is discussed. Three activities which have accompanied this phenomenon are considered: drug abuse and trafficking, gang activity, and weapons carrying and use. Finally, a handbook for school administrators' use outlining strategies for minimizing student violence is included.

** Note: This page must be included as the last page in your master's paper.

rev 5/94

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