

NATIONAL SCHOOL SAFETY CENTER

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Keeping in touch with the bunch



By Ronald D. Stephens
NSSC Executive Director

The top banana keeps in touch with the bunch. This statement takes on a special meaning when applied to the management of disruptive students. To be effective, the principal must remain keenly aware of student needs — their activities, their expectations and their aspirations. The academic curriculum is a key part of the educational mission, yet it is difficult to make the academic part work if the personal needs of students are not met.

At one school that was particularly plagued by incorrigible students, the principal brought the 12 toughest kids, together and said to them, “There is one thing we both both in common. First, by your behavior, you indicate that you do not want to be here, and second, you can be assured that I do not wish to have your kind of attitude here either. The law says, however, that you must attend school. Let’s figure out some ways to work together.”

Over the course of the year, with a great deal of patience and commitment, an amazing turnaround took place as they formed a partnership of shared expectations: The troublemakers became responsible players.

A return on investment goes far beyond financial matters and often penetrates the educational setting. The investment of time does not come cheaply, but it can have its rewards.

Alternative schooling for disruptive youth carries the expectation that more intensive personal and educational efforts will be made with the child. Failure

to provide this type of care can penalize the perpetrator further, to the point where he or she becomes the victim.

The way that educators deal with the serious habitual offender says a great deal about the way other students perceive fairness and consistent application of school policies. When well-behaved students observe disruptive students getting away with all sorts of misbehavior, free from any sanctions, it sends a message. This message says, “Hey, it’s okay to mess up and intimidate others.”

Schools can do several things to improve the climate of their campuses through an effective alternative school program. Here are several recommendations to consider:

- Place a comprehensive alternative school program on your district’s educational agenda. Depending upon your district’s size or financial capability, offer a series of educational options.
- Separate serious habitual offenders from victims and other students who may be in the alternative school because of some nonviolent disability.
- Have clearly communicated and fairly enforced behavior expectations.
- Carefully control campus access.
- Thoroughly train all teachers and support staff who work with difficult students.
- Establish a crisis prevention and response plan at each school.
- Install a two-way communication system and emergency buzzer between each classroom and the front office.

Educational intensive care, a new start, a second chance are all great, but

how many chances should a student be given? This question must be answered up front. Determine what the limits will be, establish a plan and then stick to it. Kids know when you are bluffing.

After their first serious contact with the law, about 80 percent of juveniles make a turnaround and never revisit the juvenile justice system. For others, the problem is more chronic. After all options have been exhausted, expulsion may be the only remaining alternative.

We have to believe we can make a difference, but nobody is expected to sacrifice his or her own safety, sanity and limited resources for a serious habitual offender who is unwilling to respond.

Much of the writing about schools today takes the form of deficit models or problems. This issue of *School Safety* reverses that trend by focusing on model alternative programs that work, placing an emphasis on why they work and how their strategies can be replicated. School officials across the country responded to NSSC’s request for information, submitting program descriptions about alternative school strategies within their districts.

Many districts offer a menu of alternative opportunities for youth who do not perform well in traditional school settings. Focusing specifically on alternative programs for disruptive youth, the following factors are characteristic of successful programs:

- lower student to staff ratio;
- carefully selected personnel;
- strong leadership;
- early identification of student risk factors and problem behaviors;
- districtwide support of the programs;
- intensive counseling/mentoring;
- pro-social skills training;
- emphasis on parental involvement;
- very strict behavior requirements; and
- curriculum based on real-life learning.

While separating disruptive students from the mainstream is not always the best answer, when the only other choice is suspension or expulsion, alternative schools make a great deal of sense.

**NATIONAL
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Pepperdine University's National School Safety Center is a partnership of the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education. NSSC's goal is to promote safe schools free of drug traffic and abuse, gangs, weapons, vandalism and bullying; to encourage good discipline, attendance and community support; and to help ensure a quality education for all children.

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In deference to the rights of all students to a safe school environment, the singular consequence of violent or disruptive behavior must be the removal of the offending student from the regular school or classroom environment.

A safe school environment for all

Current and past efforts to address the problem of student violence have focused primarily on violent and potentially violent students. Such efforts have been aimed at:

- early identification of students with violent tendencies;
- the application of preventative measures, such as education, counseling and mentoring; and
- the rehabilitation of students who ultimately commit acts of violence.

These efforts are predicated on the assumption that students who commit violent acts are at once perpetrators and victims, victims of destructive influences in the broader society. They are also predicated on the sound belief that the ideal way to protect the broader school community is to prevent students from becoming violent in the first place.

As we intensify attempts to prevent potentially violent students from becoming violent, we must also focus on assuring a safe school environment for *all* students.

Clearly, the respective emphases on preventing students from become violent and protecting all students from violence are interrelated. However, helping violent and potentially violent students to be nonviolent is not alone an effective

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means of protecting all students from harm. The complexity of the problem, limitations of social service institutions, imprecision of the social sciences, and other variables combine to make the task of eliminating violence through prevention more than challenging.

Competing rights

It must be recognized, first and foremost, that the issue of school violence is essentially one of the competing rights of students in a compulsory attendance situation. Violent and severely/chronically disruptive students have a right to a free public education and to assistance in resolving the societal problems that may underlie their behavior. It is in everyone's interest that these students be educated and helped to become productive citizens.

Yet, ultimately, these students and their families must be accountable for their behavior in the school environment. Their rights must not supersede the rights of all students to a safe environment in school which they are compelled to attend by state law. Students who do not engage in violence and who don't attend school armed must not be forced to tolerate threats to their physical safety when they come to school to learn. Their right to a safe school environment must receive first consideration.

The emerging emphasis on providing a safe learning environment for all stu-

dents encompasses, but is broader than and somewhat different from, the prevalent emphasis on helping violent and severely/chronically disruptive students to become nonviolent and nondisruptive. The latter concept stresses the important rights of violent students to a free public education and the obligation of society to provide support and assistance.

The "safe schools" notion incorporates the concepts of prevention and support, but also includes an emphasis on the rights of all students to a free public education and, therefore, their right to freedom from the threat of school violence. It includes also the idea that society has a primary obligation to assure the safety of these students through whatever means are necessary. Such means must include the immediate removal from the regular education environment of any student who poses an imminent threat to others.

New Jersey's constitution guarantees a thorough and efficient system of education for all children. The concept of a "system for all" implies a collective responsibility of students to the broader system and to each other. Collective responsibility involves individual obligations, as well as rights, and there must be clearly defined consequences when obligations are not met.

Every school should define clearly the obligations of students — expectations regarding acceptable behavior. Each school should also define and communi-

cate the consequences, both rewards and penalties, that will result from students' success or failure in meeting their obligations. These consequences should be administered immediately and consistently in individual instances.

In the case of violent and severely/chronically disruptive students, efforts to address their problems must be expanded and intensified. But, in deference to the rights of all students to a safe school environment, the singular consequence of violent and severely/chronically disruptive behavior must be removal of the offending student from the regular school or classroom environment. Where it is clearly warranted, this consequence must be applied in individual instances immediately and consistently, and without regard to other secondary considerations.

Although there are notable exceptions, past efforts have, on the one hand, focused on helping violent students to be nonviolent while, on the other, they have addressed the need to remove these students in ways that are strictly punitive — through suspension and expulsion.

Suspension and expulsion have a place in any system of obligations and consequences. However, there ought to be intermediate removal provisions that, whenever possible, address the right of the removed student to receive an education.

Ironically, because expulsion denies that right, it has actually inhibited the removal of students who might be dangerous. Expulsion cases have generated an accumulation of case law that protects the rights of these expulsion candidates by providing them layers of due process. Therefore, the removal of violent students through long-term suspension or expulsion is neither immediate nor guaranteed. The severity of these measures and their denial of educational opportunity render them ineffective as means of helping students who are violent or disruptive, and as means of protecting all students.

Protecting educational disability

The severity of expulsion has also gener-

ated other federal and state protections. In particular, laws, regulations and court decisions require that each candidate for expulsion be evaluated by a child study team. If that evaluation indicates the existence of an underlying "educational disability," then the student is classified for special education and may not be expelled. Students who are so classified must be placed in the "least restrictive environment," which, wherever feasible, is the regular classroom.

Unfortunately, while some special education categories are clearly defined, others — such as "socially maladjusted" and "emotionally disturbed" — are sufficiently vague to encompass many forms of unacceptable behavior.

In order to be effective, strategies aimed at removing dangerous students from school should also address the educational needs of those students. Strategies that meet these needs will allow the immediate removal of violent and severely/chronically disruptive students. Where appropriate, due process should be afforded after removal to an alternative program or site. These approaches will maximize the protection of all students who are forced by compulsory education laws to be in the school environment.

Alternative schools and programs provide removed students with an education outside the regular school or classroom site. Alternative education strategies can help address the underlying social causes of students' violent or severely/chronically disruptive behavior. However, as proposed here, the primary purpose of the strategies is to meet students' educational needs in an alternative environment so that they can be removed from the regular environment more readily.

Society at large and institutions of that society also are obligated to address underlying social causes of the behavior of violent and severely/chronically disruptive students. However, meeting this obligation:

- is not borne exclusively or even primarily by schools;
- is not within the capabilities of the

education system alone to address;

- is not the primary purpose of alternative education as conceived in this proposal; and
- cannot be a condition of removing violent and severely/chronically disruptive students from the regular education environment.

The primary mission of schools is to provide quality instruction in academic subjects. That is what educators are prepared and licensed to do, and that task alone is one of the most important and challenging in our society. To meet that challenge, educators must maintain, and must be allowed to maintain, a disciplined school environment. However, unreasonable expectations that schools will not only maintain order and teach, but will also eliminate the negative societal influences that affect children's behavior, will have only two consequences:

- Negative societal influences on children will not be eliminated; and
- The academic mission of schools will be diluted and will not be achieved.

It is unreasonable to thrust upon schools responsibility for resolving society's ills. This simplistic tendency is particularly insidious because it creates the illusion of a solution where none exists and none is possible. The danger is that schools are more likely to become, not the social panacea they are expected to be, but rather the "carpet" under which society sweeps those societal problems that it cannot solve.

Other institutions of society, especially the institution of the family, must fulfill their obligations as well. If they do not try, or if they are unsuccessful, then schools will not and cannot be effective in providing high-quality academic instruction in a "safe, disciplined environment conducive to learning."

Schools can, however, serve as a physical point of contact between children and the many institutions and agencies that are intended to serve them. The concept of the "community school" is a vehicle by which this goal can be achieved,

particularly in neighborhoods where the circumstances are most challenging.

New Jersey's Safe Schools Initiative

The New Jersey Department of Education "Safe School Initiative" recommends the following actions:

Codes of conduct. In accordance with both national and state goals of a "disciplined environment conducive to learning," every school will be encouraged to develop a written code of student conduct that clearly defines:

- the rights and obligations of students and their parents;
- behaviors that are expected and behaviors that will not be tolerated; and
- a continuum of rewards for exceptional behavior, recognition for adherence to school codes, and penalties (for both students and parents) for unacceptable student behavior.

Possession/use of weapons. In addition to requiring enforcement of existing laws, the following policies are proposed. For any student who possesses a firearm on school property:

- immediate removal from the regular school environment for a period of not less than one year, with a further requirement that school administrators report such incidents to the police;
- alternative education, with clear entrance and exit criteria; and
- discretionary readmittance to regular school on a case-by-case basis and a reduction in the duration of removal from school where there are extenuating circumstances (e.g., in the case of young children).

For any student who uses a dangerous weapon other than a firearm to threaten or harm another student or staff member:

- immediate removal from the regular school environment for a period of not less than one year; and
- participation in an alternative education program, subject to availability of space, and a demonstrated readiness to assume responsibility for behavior prior to readmission to regular school.

Gun-free schools. Aggressive compliance with provisions of the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994, without any exceptions, is recommended.

Incarcerated students. Students released from correctional institutions or juvenile services programs shall be legally prohibited from direct readmission to school if they pose a threat to the school environment. Instead, they shall be required to participate for at least one year in alternative schooling.

Weapons reporting. Every high school should be required by law to post a phone number that students can use anonymously to call law enforcement agencies to report a dangerous weapon on school property.

Alternative education programs. In order for districts to maintain an environment conducive to learning and increase the effectiveness of disciplinary policies and procedures, violent and severely/chronically disruptive students should be removed from regular settings to:

- district alternative schools or programs, either in existing facilities or at off-campus sites, so that a principal will be able to immediately and indefinitely place students who engage in severe/chronic disruption; or
- a statewide network of county alternative schools, with tuition payment supported by sending districts. Such programs will help disruptive students develop more responsible behavior patterns and assist them to meet curriculum requirements and both state and local graduation requirements.

Communication of records. Through means of a confidentiality initiative, juvenile codes will be amended to "permit confidential communication between law enforcement and school personnel regarding juvenile arrests, convictions and other suspicious or unreported activity ongoing in the community that may impact on the school environment or school safety."

Special education. Common disciplinary procedures must be applied to all students in addressing incidents of violence

and severe/chronic disruption. While special education students may not be expelled, a review of current regulations will assure that (a) acting-out special education pupils are placed in appropriate programs and not retained in regular classes, and (b) special education does not serve as an obstacle to dealing swiftly and effectively with violence.

The special education category "socially maladjusted," which does not exist in federal laws or rules, should be eliminated from state code. The funds that support these placements should be rerouted for the development of alternative education programs.

School-located community service centers. Community agencies must attempt to address the complex societal, family and personal problems that affect students' learning and that are the root causes of students' violent behaviors. Schools can be partners in these efforts by serving as the primary location at which various agencies provide services to children and families.

Community service centers, which operate mainly after regular school hours and on weekends, provide a wide range of educational, recreational and human services to families in the neighborhood. A coordinating board or person organizes the delivery of services at the community school site. Community service schools can be a means by which:

- social problems of children and families are addressed more effectively;
- parents become more involved in their children's lives;
- school buildings become "safe havens" after school hours;
- the resources available are better coordinated at a single site;
- publicly funded facilities are utilized more efficiently; and
- community support for the school is strengthened, especially among residents without school-age children.

Excerpted with permission from the "Safe Schools Initiative," published by the New Jersey State Department of Education, July 1994.

The lower ratio between pupil and teacher, additional support staff located at the facilities, strong leadership within each program, and support within the district are important aspects of these programs' success.

Educational intensive care

Helping students to succeed at Buechel Metropolitan

In Louisville, Kentucky, Jefferson County Public Schools strive to provide educational programs that are inclusive of all students — even those who make poor decisions and violate the district's uniform code of student conduct.

To accomplish this goal, JCPS created an alternative school — Buechel Metropolitan — for students who are suspended or expelled from regular school because of disruptive behavior.

Just as medical specialists provide intensive care for hospital patients with specific needs, educational specialists at Buechel Metropolitan High School provide *educational intensive care* for students in grades six through 12.

At any given time, Buechel can serve a maximum enrollment of 300 students (100 middle school students and 200 high school students). To earn their way out of Buechel, students must maintain an 85 percent attendance record, must receive no out-of-school suspensions, must pass the majority of their classes, and must receive staff approval to return to their assigned school.

Buechel's staff is the key to its success. Everyone — the bus driver, the school secretary, the custodian, the counselor, the teachers, the assistant principal — is committed to helping students succeed.

Transforming disruptive students into winners is quite a challenge. Buechel meets this challenge daily by providing a highly structured, disciplinary program with clearly defined and very consistent consequences for inappropriate behavior. The top three consequences for misbehavior include attending after-school detention, making up work through the In-School Adjustment Program (ISAP), and forfeiting participation in the Friday activity (such as softball, basketball, volleyball, movies, computer activities, or arts and crafts).

In addition to consistent consequences, Buechel also offers students a variety of incentives and field trips for improved attendance, grades and behavior through Project Succeed. For example, students selected as "Student of the Week" receive free soft drinks each Monday. If four teachers recommend the same student, that student receives four free soft drinks on Monday.

Students with perfect attendance for the week are eligible to win prizes such as a professional sports team T-shirt or ball cap. Monthly incentives for perfect attendance include field trips for rafting, camping, mountain climbing and rappelling, touring the state capitol in Frankfort, and visiting Washington, D.C.

Students on the honor roll are treated to a recreational activity such as skating, a movie, a Cincinnati Reds baseball game or lunch at a local restaurant.

From these experiences, students can see for themselves what society defines as acceptable behavior.

What works at Buechel? Discipline works. Positive reinforcement works. Community involvement works. Structure works. Changing attitudes works. The Buechel staff firmly believe that their students are great kids. Somewhere amidst all that built-up anger and hostility lurk young minds that not only deserve to learn, but honestly want to learn. It is a matter of breaking down the barriers that prohibit each student from reaching his or her full potential.

Role-playing the *bad guy* does not work at Buechel. When a student enters the school building for the first time, he or she is faced with the startling reality that being a troublemaker is no longer an oddity. Indeed, to stand apart from the crowd at Buechel, one has to be a good student.

Fights generally do not occur at Buechel. The students police one another's behavior, and they tell a staff member before a fight breaks out. A fight is stopped before tempers get too heated.

To reach each student, Buechel's student/teacher ratio is low. The goal is 15 students per teacher. In addition, each teacher is paired with five students and serves as an advisor to these students. These staffing strategies, combined with the opportunities to get to know students during scheduled field trips and activi-

ties, help to create a family atmosphere among the students and staff.

Separating disruptive students from well-behaved students is not always the answer. However, when the only other choice is to bar students from the classroom and their regular school through suspension or expulsion, alternative schools like Buechel make sense.

Students at Buechel are special. They thrive on discipline and structure. For the first time in their lives they can be on a school's newspaper staff. They can be part of a school's video camera crew. They can be recognized by their school for improved academic achievement. In other words, Buechel students can stand apart from the crowd — without being troublemakers.

Prepared by Stephen Daeschner, superintendent of Jefferson County Public Schools.

Houston alternative schools: "A positive trend"

The Houston Independent School District (HISD) strives to stem the dropout rate, raise academic achievement and meet the needs of students with special interests and skills. One of the most effective ways to accomplish these challenges is through alternative schools.

While HISD's goal is to give every student the best possible education, the fact remains that not all young people can reach their full potential in traditional classrooms. HISD alternative schools give students the special attention they need, offering them unique opportunities for success.

A 1993 Texas Education Agency audit report commended HISD's alternative schools, calling them "a positive trend," citing their "strong support services for the unique needs of urban students" as one of the bases for their success.

Essentially, alternative schools serve students who can learn best in a nontraditional setting. These include:

- those with special learning requirements caused by physical and mental disabilities;
- those with advanced academic ability and talents in areas beyond regular academic studies;
- those who, because of encounters with the criminal justice system, are at risk of dropping out and giving up on their education; and
- those who have been assigned by the courts to secured residential facilities.

HISD offers two programs for disruptive youths whose volatile behaviors indicate that a nontraditional setting would best serve these youths. Both programs address the behavioral and academic needs of the referred students.

Terrell Alternative Middle School offers a comprehensive academic and developmental program for at-risk youngsters. These students have been referred by their assigned schools to an alternative setting because of aggressive, anti-social behavior. A highly effective behavior modification system focuses on specific types of positive behavior and rewards students for practicing them.

Students' success in this system is a prerequisite for returning to their assigned schools. Each student at Terrell benefits from a strong support system, which features unique diagnostic procedures and instructional strategies, professional development for staff, and parental involvement.

Harper Alternative School was approved as an alternative school in 1985. This program was designed to serve moderately to severely emotionally disturbed adolescents ages 13 to 22. These youths are at high risk for placement in mental institutions or closed residential settings or incarceration by the juvenile justice system. In addition, Harper provides vocational education for these students.

Students return to their assigned schools or a less restrictive environment after they successfully complete the behavior adjustment program at Harper.

Students who are eligible to attend

Harper must qualify for exceptional education. Most of the students are diagnosed as emotionally disturbed.

In addition, Harper has a program called Code IV, designed to serve students, grades six through 12, who have violated the code of conduct with regard to weapons. These students are placed at Harper as an alternative to expulsion. They attend a separate class with a maximum enrollment of 15. Placement is designated by a court order and is facilitated by the assistant superintendent for the alternative schools.

Common characteristics that increase the effectiveness of these and other alternative schools can be readily identified. The lower ratio between pupil and teacher, additional support staff located at the facilities, strong leadership within each program, and support within the district for these programs are important aspects of their success.

Prepared by Rod Paige, superintendent, Houston Independent School District, Houston, Texas.

The Martyn system facilitates positive changes

John H. Martyn High School is an alternative school for behavior disordered adolescents in Jefferson, Louisiana. Martyn utilizes a schoolwide behavior management system to provide a safe learning environment and allow students to obtain pro-social skills.

Martyn's "Pupil Progression Plan" is researched-based, integrating many of the theories of Long, Drieker, Valentine and Goldstein. The program is based on a hierarchy of six levels. Students must acquire appropriate behaviors and skills that are identified on their individual behavior plans prior to moving to the next level and eventual re-entry at their assigned schools.

Components of the plan include: *The point system.* To reinforce academic achievement and appropriate acquisition

of behaviors, a point system is used. A student enters a classroom with zero points and earns a maximum of 10 points per period. A daily point sheet assists in maintaining documentation, serving as an outcome indicator to assess an individual's acquisition of skills.

Level review meetings. Level review meetings are multidisciplinary and provide opportunities to help each student internalize appropriate behaviors. All aspects of a student's behavior are discussed, and new target behaviors are assigned. The student is given the opportunity to express individual strengths and weaknesses to assist in the internalization process.

Contracting. A variety of contracts are used at Martyn, including a violence elimination contract among the principal, student and parent. When a student is promoted to the fifth level, an exit contract is formulated, delineating the specific criteria for exiting. The student is no longer required to earn points, but is rated using a periodic review form.

Intervention. The Martyn intervention model facilitates positive changes for the student who is acting inappropriately or experiencing distress. This is not a "time-out" room," but an opportunity for counseling.

Discipline. Martyn's discipline philosophy involves helping each student accept responsibility for his or her own behavior. Consequences result from the choices the student makes: Points are not awarded; privileges are withheld. Parental cooperation/involvement is a must.

Social skills training. Each student at Martyn receives instruction that stresses pro-social behaviors. Such instruction helps to modify aggression and provides training in empathy, altruism, moral reasoning and cooperation. The staff's goal is to provide opportunities for each student to acquire positive social behaviors. This component is a must in addressing the needs of Martyn's students.

Vocational opportunities. Opportunities for vocational skills development occur as a student moves through each level of the system. At the entry level,

students can either opt for a life skills curriculum, which includes career orientation, or work toward a high school diploma in a Carnegie program.

Once students reach the third level, they take classes in cooking, recycling, industrial arts and ceramics. During the fourth and fifth level, a student can work with the cafeteria, maintenance or secretarial staffs. Also, if appropriate, students may be placed into an vocational training course off-campus or employed in the community.

Crisis team. A crisis team and a crisis management plan are in place on the Martyn campus. Proactive steps help eliminate violence. All staff members receive training concerning the crisis plan and participate in drills.

Prepared by Melissa C. Caudle, principal of John H. Martyn High School in Jefferson, Louisiana.

Students get act together at Raymond Telles Academy

The Raymond Telles Academy was built to address problems that prevent students from getting an education. Many of the young people in the El Paso Independent School District are at-risk and potential dropouts from the system.

The district's goal is to provide students with a quality education. This goal may be achieved only in an environment that meets individual student needs, where teachers are creative and the atmosphere is free from disruptions that interfere with the educational process. Universal standards of honesty, integrity, self-discipline and love for knowledge are intended to guide all actions at Raymond Telles Academy.

All students attending the academy follow the district's management plan, which sets forth specific rules of conduct and general behavioral requirements and provides sanctions against students not following the rules and regulations. In addition, Raymond Telles Academy has

its own rules of conduct and requirements that students must follow.

Raymond Telles Academy is officially listed by the Texas Education Agency as an alternative disciplinary school. The academy is made up of students who have been recommended for expulsion from the regular schools in the district. The students, ranging in age from 12 to 19 years and placed in grades six through 12, were recommended for expulsion from their regular schools because of gang activity, drugs, defiance of authority, fighting, poor attendance or a variety of other offenses.

Each middle school and high school in the district may send no more than 10 students to Raymond Telles Academy. When all schools have used their "slots," the school serves 250 students.

The academy operates on a strict point and level system. Students earn points for appearance, attendance, grades and behavior. As students learn to comply with these four essentials, they begin to move up from level one to level four. When students reach level four, they are eligible to be considered for return to their assigned schools.

The entire program is bolstered by intensive counseling and parental involvement. Most students finish their program successfully and are returned to their schools. Some cannot accept the rigid dress and behavior requirements and drop out. Many feel so comfortable in the secure surroundings that they do not want to leave. The academy, however, does not graduate students. It is merely a place where students can "get their act together." Students must transfer their successes back to their assigned school.

Many factors make an alternative school work. The most important by far is to select teachers who are not afraid of the students. These teachers must also be given the freedom to improvise and teach without the many distractions encountered on the regular campus.

Prepared by Charles F. Hart Jr., principal of Raymond Telles Academy in El Paso, Texas.

Fairfax County provides a place for every child

Put yourself in this adolescent's shoes: 14 years old, out of school, in trouble with the law, a substance abuser and lonely. School is nothing but another setting for failure. Where do you go? What do you do?

Young people such as this one are being supported by Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS). In addition to the alternative high schools and programs administered by area offices, 28 alternative programs are located in county agencies that deal with at-risk students.

The FCPS Department of Student Services and Special Education provides a wide range of educational options in cooperation with Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court, the Department of Human Development and the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board. These alternative programs, many of which are integral parts of treatment programs, are interconnected. As participants progress, their academic needs can be met in another FCPS alternative school setting.

Ranging from one-room schools to multidisciplinary settings, alternative schools can have as few as eight students or as many as 80. All offer standard courses planned from the FCPS program of studies; all use county-approved instructional materials and texts. Many of the teachers make extensive use of community resources, volunteers and tutors to enrich a basic core curriculum. These professionals meet regularly to share their academic expertise and continually refine an integrated curriculum made possible by small class size and individualized student programs and pace.

In addition to providing academic challenge, FCPS alternative school teachers stress fundamental social skills and study habits that prepare students to succeed in any academic or career setting. These skills include respectful behavior, use of appropriate language and dress, good attendance, promptness,

class participation, and conscientious completion of homework. As much as possible, students are given the opportunity to plan a study program according to their interests and strengths. In this way, they have ownership and take responsibility for personal academic success.

For adolescents who have broken the law, the first experience with alternative schools is often the Juvenile Detention Center. Participants attend class each school day and study math, English, social studies, science and art. The average student's stay is brief.

Often the next step is the Less Secure Shelter Home, where juveniles are remanded by the court for 90 days of treatment. In other cases, probation officers arrange placement in residential or day treatment programs. FCPS teachers continue to support these students' studies.

For adolescents who remain court-involved, options include probation house for either boys or girls. Both programs are long-term residential treatment programs that require individual and family counseling. Another less restrictive placement option is a court day-school program. At these schools, probation officers work closely with teachers to monitor the circumstances of the students. Older students and students returning from a state court placement may choose the Independent Study Alternative Schools to complete their high school education while working.

Boys may be placed at Fairfax House, a long-term residential setting with an emphasis on mental health counseling. Other mental health placements with alternative schools are Northern Virginia Mental Health Institute, Northwest Center, Oakton Arbor Girls Group Home, and the new program for elementary students called My Friend's Place.

In cases where it is not in the best interests of the adolescent to return home, alternative schools in 90-day assessment sites are available. Again, the alternative school teachers work closely with students' base schools to ensure that academic careers flow smoothly and without interruption.

Substance abuse is addressed on many different levels within FCPS. The three-day Alcohol and Other Drug Use Intervention Seminar for identified students and their parents is the shortest program. The Fairfax County Alcohol and Drug Services Office (ADS) offers two day-treatment programs that include alternative schools located in adolescent assessment centers. The short- and long-term residential substance abuse treatment programs are Sunrise House and Crossroads. Placement in ADS programs results from the request of families or the court system. Once primary substance abuse treatment has been completed, students may apply to a FCPS recovery school where students are required to work on their recovery and stay drug- and alcohol-free. Although this is not a treatment program, an ADS staff person coordinates communication with students' after-care programs.

The Enterprise School, a private school staffed by FCPS teachers and Enterprise School counselors, deals with the full spectrum of special needs. Enterprise School is partially funded by Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court as a delinquency prevention program. Family and student counseling is an integral part of this academic program.

In all alternative school settings, graduations are celebrations! They are as personalized as the study program of the graduate. In most cases, diplomas are awarded from the students' base schools. Students may participate in ceremonies at their base schools and at special graduation observances held in alternative school settings.

FCPS is trying to provide every student, whatever his or her needs, with an opportunity for academic achievement. Alternative school settings are one way that students are being given this opportunity. There is a place for every child.

Prepared by Ann Recasner, a teacher at Girls Probation House, and Ann Turk, a specialist at the Juvenile Detention Center, both programs of the Fairfax County Public Schools in Fairfax, Virginia.

Early identification of problems, providing individualized attention by a committed staff, strong communication with the home, and reinforcing school and work with real-life learning are essential ingredients of these programs.

Last chances, new starts: alternatives to expulsion

Tri-A: assessment, assignment, adjustment

After 10 years as an effective alternative for students with serious behavior problems, St. Louis Public Schools' Tri-A Outreach program expanded to a second location for the 1994-95 school year.

Tri-A stands for assessment, assignment and adjustment. It began in 1984 as an alternative program for students who had either committed offenses that made them subject to expulsion or who had failed to adjust to the behavior required in regular high schools.

Potential enrollees for Tri-A, including previously expelled students and dropouts, were assessed, assigned to the program, and provided with individualized instruction and counseling. The purpose was to help them adjust their academic and social behavior toward successful re-entry into traditional high schools.

The Tri-A program was created during the early years of the court-ordered St. Louis school desegregation plan because of concerns raised about school discipline, expulsion rates and a high dropout rate. A revised discipline code adopted in 1983-84 specified that "alternative educational opportunities shall be made available for expelled students."

Until last fall, the program had been confined to one site because of limited funding. Tri-A enrolled up to 230 stu-

dents annually, with between 50 to more than 100 attending at any one time. Space was rented in a popular boys club for the first nine years, but Tri-A moved to a renovated middle school building in north St. Louis in 1993-94.

Advisory committees on discipline continued to recommend expansion of Tri-A. In the fall of 1994, funding came through to open a second center at a former magnet school site on the near South Side. This is expected to nearly double the number of students who choose the Tri-A alternative rather than dropping out.

Students referred to Tri-A generally have committed "Type-I" offenses under the district's disciplinary code — use or possession of weapons, assault or threatened assault, or alcohol or drug possession. They face expulsion or long-term suspension, with the strong probability that they will drop out rather than return to regular programs. For many, the Tri-A program has represented a last chance to regain eligibility to attend and graduate from a regular high school or middle school.

Nearly all of the staff members teaching and administering the Tri-A program have asked for the assignment, after building impressive records in dealing with at-risk students at regular schools. About 20 teachers were assigned to Tri-A duty when school began.

Students are required to maintain a

respectful attitude for staff members and fellow students. Good attendance is also a requirement.

Over the years, the Tri-A program has had very few recurrences of the types of behavior that led to the assignment of about 95 percent of its participants. Overall, the approach has produced excellent results. On the average, only one student annually is recommended for exclusion from Tri-A.

Each year, 35 percent of the students qualify to return to their regular schools after a semester or two in the alternative program. Nearly 50 percent of those who return to regular schools go on to graduate or earn a general educational development certificate. These results are impressive considering that the program deals with students with extremely severe behavior and adjustment problems.

With the cooperation of area businesses, the effectiveness of Tri-A has been augmented in recent years by the use of work-study programs. This approach builds a larger sense of responsibility in the students. Summer programs for at-risk students also have helped reduce the probability of some Tri-A students dropping out between semesters.

While it has not been the answer for every troubled or troublesome student, Tri-A has helped many students improve behavior and achieve eventual success in school. Early identification of problems,

providing individualized attention, leading students to realize their potential, and reinforcing school and work with real-life learning are the keys to the success of the program.

Prepared by David J. Mahan, superintendent of St. Louis Public Schools, St. Louis, Missouri.

Alternatives to expulsion in Cleveland

During the 1987-88 school year, concerns were raised regarding the number of students expelled from the Cleveland City School District. Approximately 50 percent of these students eventually dropped out of school after they returned from expulsion. An additional 15 percent of the students expelled withdrew from the district to other school districts or educational programs, and it was suspected that a high percentage of those students also dropped out of school.

Based on those findings, the Cleveland City School District started an alternative to expulsion program for secondary students in 1988.

The major goal of the program is to allow students who commit expellable offenses to continue their education at an alternative site. Students receive a number of supportive services that address behavior. The support staff includes a parent education counselor, a guidance counselor, a school psychologist, an attendance specialist and a school administrator. The services provided by these staff members complement the academic portion of the program to address students' holistic needs.

Students receive course work in mathematics, English, science, social studies, reading, and health/physical education. The program also includes computerized learning. The students are involved in activities designed to provide alternative ways of behaving and handling adjustment problems. Features of the program include:

- drug prevention and intervention services from an outside agency on a weekly basis;
- individual student training in conflict mediation;
- small group instruction;
- individual and group counseling;
- assistance with summer employment;
- an incentive program that provides daily, weekly and monthly rewards;
- special programs that feature guest speakers, including positive role models, prison ministers, clergy, and an AIDS education specialist who focuses on behavior modification; and
- weekly "group" (much like a 12-step approach to managing problems) facilitated by a staff member and representatives from six outside agencies.

Students are aware that if they fail to abide by program rules, the superintendent may reconsider the placement order and invoke an expulsion. Students are also aware that these behavioral matters, because of the nature of the offenses, may be referred for legal action. The Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court has been very supportive of the program and accepts adjustment reports prior to making final disposition on cases.

Following a structured two-day orientation with the support staff, students begin their schedule of basic courses. No electives or study halls are offered.

Students attend at least 80 school days and are returned to comprehensive schools at the end of a grading period. The program serves a maximum of 125 students at one time.

Program success can be attributed to:

- its small size;
- a committed staff working as a team;
- strong communication with the home;
- strong communication with the Office of Pupil Adjustment and the comprehensive school sites; and
- the Reality Therapy approach toward conflict and behavior.

Prepared by Sammie Campbell Parrish, superintendent of Cleveland Public Schools, Cleveland, Ohio.

Salt Lake City's New Start program: focus on solutions

Granite School District, located in the Salt Lake Valley between the Wasatch and Oquirrh mountain ranges, spans an area of 300 square miles and serves almost 80,000 students. Concern regarding national and local trends toward an increase in student violence motivated a districtwide search for new solutions to address the problem.

One option was the development of a program designed to provide intensive assessment and intervention services to student offenders and their families. Granite District received a U.S. Department of Education, Division of Safe and Drug-Free Schools emergency grant that provided the additional funding needed for the program. In October 1993, "New Start," a program directed at student violence and substance abuse issues, opened its doors to students.

New Start provides a short-term, three-week program to students across the district. While enrolled in the program, students participate in educational and counseling activities, including academic support, study skills, peer relationships, conflict resolution, decision making, problem solving, anger management, and leisure/recreation skills. The program attempts to minimize the time a student spends outside a traditional educational program while maximizing the students' opportunity for a successful return.

New Start's emphasis from the first meeting with a student and his or her family is solution focused. The initial goal is to identify strengths exhibited by both student and family that can form a basis for future success. The referring school and past educational placements may also serve as a source of information regarding strategies to increase the likelihood of educational success. Use of a solution-focused rather than a problem-focused approach invites all participants to have a positive role in the development of the student's new start.

Each student is viewed as an expert on his or her behavior and is therefore critical in the design of an effective plan for positive change. Outcome goals are established in collaboration with the student, family, staff, school and, when appropriate, community agencies. The connection between a student's choice of future goals and personal responsibility for attainment is emphasized during program placement. Students then work closely with teachers, counselors and other staff to identify strategies to overcome obstacles.

Program staff represent a multidisciplinary approach that includes teachers, a school counselor, a social worker, a psychologist, a vocational specialist and a case manager who provides follow-up support for students. Staff members participate in a brief meeting at the end of each school day to share observations and contribute to the student's plan.

The low ratio between students and staff provides students with an opportunity to share and explore personal beliefs regarding violence, substance abuse and crime from a pro-social perspective. Some students have commented that New Start is the first place that an adult outside of their family listened to what they were saying.

Students interested in job training and placement are provided support from the program employment specialist. The employment specialist works with the student during program placement as well as providing support in establishing a transition-to-work link upon the student's return to the traditional school.

New Start begins by identifying school- and community-based resources for students and their families. Then, with the consent of the student and family, New Start actively works with target programs to provide coordinated support services.

Critical to student success is a system of support for the student, the family, and the receiving school to enhance a successful transition. A case manager meets with students and their families to discuss the return to school and to pro-

vide support for continued services through community programs.

New Start is just approaching the end of its first full year of program operation and initial results are encouraging. Ninety-three percent of students served in the program have returned to school after placement and shown improvement by not again violating district policies.

Prepared by by Rick Scheibe, coordinator of the New Start Program in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Lapham Park supports "last chance" kids

In January, 1984, Lapham Park Assessment/Support Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, opened its doors to the first group of students. Gang problems in the schools had caused the school board to seek a facility to house those students who were removed from regular schools for the possession of weapons. Assignment to Lapham Park was considered to be a "last chance" before expulsion.

The center began with one teacher and one administrator, one social worker and one psychologist. It was designed to work toward changing negative behavior patterns of those who were deemed "challenging" because of incidents that had resulted in central office referrals.

Lapham Park's population began to include a great number of students coming back to Milwaukee Public Schools from incarceration and residential treatment, as well as those returning from expulsion and administrative transfers for violent behavior or weapon possession.

While Milwaukee Public Schools provides several alternative education programs for troubled youth, the Lapham Park Center currently is the biggest and most comprehensive.

During the course of their semester at Lapham Park, the great majority of students move from anger to acceptance and learn to appreciate the individual attention the center has to offer. A change in

attitude and the positive experience of accepting individual responsibility are typical results of time spent at the center.

The mission of the Lapham Park Assessment/Support Center is to provide students with many varied and positive school experiences in a caring and nurturing environment that is conducive to personal well-being. The goal is to provide students with an individually guided academic and counseling program aimed at improving behavior and increasing academic success.

Staff believe that each student possesses special needs as well as special talents that previously may have been untapped. It is up to the staff to identify the unique characteristics of each student who becomes a part of the program.

Lapham Park's instruction focuses on process and climate. The focus is holistic in principle: Concern is with the positive growth and development of the whole person so he or she becomes an asset to society. Individual Learning Plans (ILP) are developed for each student. Behavioral objectives are written to address the academic, emotional and behavioral needs of the students.

Students attend six classes. Reports to parents are issued every six weeks, at conferences — a minimum of three parent/guardian conferences each semester.

Each student is assigned a psychologist and a guidance counselor who work with student and parent to assess academic and behavioral needs. The counselor also acts as a team leader and facilitator for preventive and interventive staffing coordination for each student assigned to the team.

All students are assigned through the Department of Student Services. The program is limited to administrative transfers only. Students may not volunteer for the assignment. After completing the Lapham Park program, students are returned to regular schools or programs.

Prepared by Dorothy Travis Johnson, administrator of the Lapham Park Assessment/Support Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Fulton County teens get a second chance

The Second Chance Program, in Fulton County, Georgia, is designed as an alternative school option for students who have been through the tribunal process. These students would otherwise be expelled, except that members of the tribunal committee believe that there is hope for these individuals.

Through a process of projective evaluation, intensive group and individual counseling, a sound academic presentation of basic skills, and a carefully sequenced outdoor recreational therapeutic program, these students are better prepared for the stresses and challenges that they confront upon their return to a regular school situation.

This program is arranged in phases, each building upon the other to provide a solid academic and socio-emotional base for the individual as he or she is reintegrated into the traditional school setting. It is a comprehensive approach. All facets of the student's schooling are addressed — academic, behavioral, social, occupational and recreational.

Parents are required to become involved in the process, and their cooperation is an important element in this holistic presentation of services.

The Fulton County Board of Education disciplinary tribunal serves as a clearinghouse for Second Chance referrals. Included among the offenses for which students may be referred are chronic disruption of regular school classes, possession and/or use of a deadly weapon, and exhibition of dangerous behavior toward self or others.

Prior to entry into the Second Chance Program, each student must go through an intake process which includes projective testing, an interview with parent or guardian, and student orientation. This process is a key to smooth integration into the program and requires approximately two to three hours per student.

Phase I is a period of intense academics, counseling and therapeutic recre-

ation designed to prepare the student for reintegration into the traditional school program. The counseling portion focuses primarily on conflict resolution, problem solving, self-awareness and democratic development. Therapeutic outdoor recreation helps the student to enhance his or her self-concept to become a positive member of a group. A variety of community trips are made to enhance various components of the program. These trips are designed to be both motivational and educational.

Additionally, the students are required to participate in supervised community service activities such as assisting at the on-site day care center, serving at a home for the elderly, helping with the Special Olympics or participating in a work service project. These activities are designed to help the student gain a greater sense of community and are also effective tools for promoting self-worth.

After the successful completion of Phase I, the high school student is mainstreamed into classes at the open campus school. Schedules vary depending upon individual student progress. The student continues to have access to counseling, recreational therapy and academic tutoring from Second Chance teachers as needed. The student who is unsuccessful in Phase II, may be returned to Phase I. Phase II may also extend beyond the recommended time frame for students with such needs.

Middle school students are more likely to be returned to permanent school placement with extensive monitoring.

During Phase II, the student is closely monitored by the Second Chance teacher through individual conferences and assessment provided by the mainstream teacher. Progress to the Phase III level is dependent upon academic and behavioral success accomplished during Phase II.

Upon successful completion of Phase II, the student is usually returned to a permanent school placement. This placement is determined by a committee consisting of the Second Chance team, Phase II mainstream teachers and counselors, open campus school administra-

tor, the administrator and counselor from the receiving school, the director of student discipline and parents.

Phase III is an ongoing process in which the Second Chance teacher makes regular personal contact with the student, parents, teachers and counselors regarding the student's personal as well as academic progress. These contacts are increased or decreased as needs dictate. To some extent, the student is monitored through high school graduation.

A key to the long-range success of the Second Chance Program is the follow-up, particularly during Phase III. Second Chance teachers are responsible for following students' progress through the 12th grade. Teachers assure students that there is someone available to either help them as they continue their education or who can at least refer them to others who can help. This child advocacy helps to ensure that Second Chance graduates will not feel the need to replicate the decision that resulted in their initial referral to the program.

Prepared by Michael Stewart, a Second Chance teacher at Frank McClarin Open Campus High School, and Wanda Daniel, director of Business, Family Resource Management and Alternative Programs, Fulton County Board of Education, Atlanta, Georgia.

Broward County offers hope for young children

Disruptive behavior is damaging to student learning. Educators have developed many successful behavior management plans to minimize disruption in the classroom. Yet, for some students, these efforts are not enough. These students require intensive programs that support them as they change their behavior from disruptive to appropriate.

Florida's Broward County Public Schools have developed intensive intervention strategies that help maintain a positive educational environment for all.

This model, the Behavior Change Program (BCP), assists severely disruptive elementary children in learning and applying appropriate behaviors.

This model addresses behaviors such as truancy, academic failure, problems with parents, and disruptive behavior in school and the community. This program is housed at two schools in the district: Nova Blanche Forman Elementary School and Cross Creek School. BCP has served 338 students.

To date, the Behavior Change Program has been a tremendous success. BCP has resulted in a significant reduction of discipline problems at these school sites, with the ultimate goal of providing the highest quality education to both students in BCP and the other students at the home school site. It has also strengthened the bond between the schools, the parents and the community.

The program serves kindergarten through fifth-grade students who are found to be disruptive, rebellious, struggling academically and engaged in behaviors which are disturbing to others.

In their regular school, these disruptive students detract from the learning atmosphere in the classroom, reduce teacher effectiveness, and present a danger to themselves or to others.

The program includes a diagnostic classroom approach and incorporates weekly parent meetings and in-service training for home school teachers. A teaching team, comprised of one teacher and one paraprofessional, works with a class of 10 students. This team uses an academic behavioral management system that employs a combination of student praise, modeling, role playing, and a token economy system and maintains an appropriate positive interaction system.

Each student progresses through a series of levels designed to improve behavior and academic performance. Through a referral and screening process, eligible students are reassigned temporarily for 90 to 180 instructional days to BCP. The students remain in the program until they exhibit consistently appropriate behaviors in both the diagnostic classroom

and the mainstream classes.

During the 90- to 180-day period, home school teachers are provided with the opportunity to observe the student at the BCP sites. They also must attend inservice/training sessions that teach techniques for working with the BCP student upon the child's return to the home school setting. The services of a guidance counselor, a school social worker and a school psychologist are assigned to students on an as-needed basis.

The goals of the program are:

- to reduce disruptive behavior in the elementary school setting by identifying and developing techniques for effective behavior management.
- to have 100 percent of the participants continue a credit-earning educational program leading to a high school diploma.
- to have 85 percent of the participants who were enrolled for disciplinary referral reasons achieve 50 percent fewer referrals.
- to have 85 percent of the participants who were enrolled due to suspension achieve 50 percent fewer suspensions.
- to prevent students who have committed an expellable offense from committing another.
- to combine the efforts of parents, home school personnel and BCP staff, through consultations and training, to deal with disruptive behavior.

At Nova Blanche Forman Elementary School, progress through BCP is reflected through a system of levels. BCP staff predicts that students in levels 3, 4 and 5 can function successfully and academically in a regular classroom setting. Outcome research in 1992 validated that students who returned to their home school after achieving level 4 or higher were significantly more successful upon their return than those who failed to achieve level 4.

The Behavior Change Program works for several reasons. First, it involves all stakeholders in being part of the solution — BCP teachers, home school staff, the children's parents and the children

themselves. Secondly, the Broward County School Board has committed appropriate resources to the program so that the class sizes are reasonable, support services are provided and effective training is conducted. Finally, the program identifies and assists children when they are still young enough to change maladaptive behavior patterns and significantly increase academic skills.

BCP at Cross Creek School is a variation of the approach implemented at Nova Blanche Forman. At Cross Creek, initial emphasis is placed on a team approach, training home school staff to work with the disruptive student prior to consideration of placement in an alternative setting. Progress through BCP includes the use of an external level system and the development of a system that requires the student to rely on internal mechanisms, such as self-monitoring and self-control techniques.

The success of the BCP is a result of the whole child approach. Employing a wide variety of behavior management techniques to identify and address the specific and unique behavioral needs of each child provides children with a sense of security and trust in staff. Close parent communication is critical. Parents are encouraged at every step to take an active, positive role in shaping their child's behavior. The key component is that the child has internalized the need to manage his or her own behavior, reducing the need for external controls.

The findings of a recent evaluation suggest BCP has served as a valuable intervention for elementary students who exhibit consistent and extremely disruptive behavior and for whom behavior management plans at the school have been ineffective.

Prepared by Frank R. Petruzielo, superintendent of Schools, Broward County Public Schools, Margaret Underhill, principal of Nova Blanche Forman Elementary School, and John Smith, principal of Cross Creek School, in Broward County, Florida.

Flexibility is key to success for Baltimore students

The Central Area Alternative Center in Baltimore, Maryland, provides educational and therapeutic services to students who are unable to perform successfully in their home school. The goal of the program is to assist students in developing the skills necessary to return to their home schools and become successful.

The school's mission is to build self-esteem and self-discipline in each student by providing the educational and support services needed to bring out a more responsive student. The curriculum includes the framework outlined for all Baltimore county schools, with alternatives to instruction that help meet the needs of each student.

Instruction is given through both individual attention and small groups, with emphasis on functional and lifelong learning skills. Using themes and cross-curricular approaches, teachers stress the importance of the material to the students' lives and the need for cooperation and responsibility.

Therapy includes crisis intervention, individual and small group counseling, and school/family counseling. A psychologist is available for consultation, as are county agencies and referral services. The services focus on developing self-awareness and self-esteem to enable students to demonstrate appropriate reactions and make thoughtful choices and decisions.

A structured behavior management system provides daily feedback to students and parents. The primary goal of the program is to encourage students to accept responsibility for their behavior. Students reflect on their behavior and assign themselves points prior to dismissal from each class. Their decisions must be approved jointly with teachers and differences resolved before points can be earned and recorded.

This self-assessment and negotiation is a difficult task for most students, but as

they make progress in this area, they begin to make positive overall progress. As the students move through each level of the program, they gain more responsibility and simultaneously more privileges. As they approach the exit level, home school contact is increased, visits are scheduled and, finally, an out-take conference is held at the home school to share information and establish the expectations for return.

Several features of the program have made it successful this year. An intake conference sets the tone for the initial transfer, establishing the student's goals and expectations. It is attended by both home school and alternative school staff, as well as the student and parent.

At that time, a student is assigned to a mentor, who touches base three times a day and affords the opportunity to check disposition, attitude and behavior. The mentors are also involved in "touch down" at the end of every school day to share information on the students.

A low student-teacher ratio is essential to the success of this program, and individual attention is crucial to establishing a rapport with each student. This allows a relationship to develop that will have a positive effect on their behavior and attitude.

A final feature, the ability to be flexible with the programming, has allowed for creative, innovative instruction that gives students the freedom to explore, develop and expand their individual interests. Teachers plan together on a daily basis, brainstorming themes, planning cross-curricular instruction and adapting activities to each student's needs.

The Central Area Alternative Center program is continually evolving and changing. Schedules, approaches and plans are manipulated, daily if necessary, to meet the needs of students. Success is due in large part to the patience, understanding and flexibility of a very talented staff.

Prepared by Constance Peterson, principal of the Central Area Alternative Center in Baltimore County, Maryland.

Solutions to violence: teleconference training series for teachers

The National School Safety Center and the Teacher's Workshop will present a teleconference series for teachers, parents, college faculty and all educators titled "**Stopping the Violence! Model Safe School Programs.**" Scheduled 1995 telecasts include:

- March 8: **Solutions to Violence**
- March 28: **Practical Safe School Strategies**
- April 26: **Teachers' Safety**

Other program sponsors include the National University Teleconference Network, the Council for Learning Disabilities and the National Association of School Psychologists.

The Teacher's Workshop Series will be delivered via tele-satellite to downlink locations throughout the nation. During interactive workshops, teachers can call in their questions via the 1-(800) phone lines and speak directly with many of the nationally recognized program participants. Curriculum materials will be available to participants at each downlink site.

The cost for the series of three telecasts and the curriculum materials is \$675 per downlink location, regardless of the number of participants per site.

Either a C-Band or a KU-Band satellite dish is necessary to downlink the telecasts. Call the Teacher's Workshop for assistance regarding possible downlink sites or the availability of staff development credit. For further information, contact Darryl Ellrott, Programming Coordinator, The Teacher's Workshop, 1250 Overlook Ridge Road, Bishop, GA 30621, 1-800/991-1114

Information listings for featured programs

Alternative to Expulsion Program

Susan Peters, Program Administrator
Cleveland Public Schools
1380 East Sixth Street
Cleveland, Ohio 44114
216/523-7993

Alternatives to Expulsion

Steve Fish, Deputy Superintendent
Long Beach Unified School District
701 Locust Avenue
Long Beach, California 90813
310/436-9931, ext. 1620

Baltimore County Public Schools

Morris C. Hoffman
Coordinator of Alternative Programs
Towson, Maryland 21204
410/887-4310

Behavior Change Program

Frank R. Petruzielo, Superintendent
Broward County Public Schools
600 SE Third Avenue/10th Floor
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301
305/765-6271

Buechel Metropolitan High School

Maurice Risner, Principal
1960 Bashford Manor Lane
Louisville, Kentucky 40218
502/473-8316

Chesterfield Communities In Schools

Martha J. Frickert, CIS Administrator
P.O. Box 10
Chesterfield, Virginia 23832
804/560-5706

City-As-School

Buffalo Alternative High School
Dea McAuliffe, Coordinator
D'Youville College
320 Porter Avenue
Buffalo, New York 14201
716/888-7185

Clark County School District

Sidney J. Franklin, Ass't Superintendent
Alternative Education Division
2701 E. St. Louis Ave.
Las Vegas, Nevada 89104
702/799-8625

DeKalb County School System

Garry McGiboney, Director
Student Relations, School Psychologist
3770 North Decatur Road
Decatur, Georgia 30032
404/297-1200

Fairfax County Public Schools

Joan Ledebur, Coordinator
Alternative Schools
Belle Willard Administrative Center
10310 Layton Hall Drive
Fairfax, Virginia 22030
703/246-7780

Fulton County School System

Dr. Wanda Daniel, Director
786 Cleveland Ave., SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30315
404/763-6790

Houston Independent School District

Rod Paige, Superintendent
Hattie Mae White
Administration Building
3830 Richmond Avenue
Houston, Texas 77027
713/892-6300

John H. Martyn High School

Melissa C. Caudle, Principal
1108 Shrewsbury Road
Jefferson, Louisiana 70121
504/833-3711

Lapham Park Assessment and Support Center

Dorothy Travis Johnson, Administrator
1758 North 9th Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53205
414/263-5070

Moving Forward Program

Sandra Riley, Coordinator
Escambia County School District
J.E. Hall Educational Services Center
30 East Texar Drive
Pensacola, Florida 32503
904/469-5318

New Start Program

Rick Scheibe, Coordinator
Granite School District
4055 South 2300 East
Salt Lake City, Utah
801/273-2161

Northdale Magnet Academy

Leroy Helire Jr., Principal
1555 Madison Avenue
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802
504/383-1812

On-Line High School

David E. Brann, Resource Specialist
School District of Palm Beach County
3314 Forrest Hill Blvd., Suite A-242
West Palm Beach, FL 33406-5869
407/434-8350; FAX 407/434-8110

Safe School Initiatives

New Jersey State Department
of Education
CN 500
Trenton, New Jersey 0008625
609/292-0321

Raymond Telles Academy

Charles F. Hart Jr., Principal
320 S. Campbell
El Paso, Texas 79901
915/542-0336

Tri-A Outreach Program

Charles E. Burgess, Director
Community Relations and
Public Information Services
St. Louis Public Schools
905 Locust Street
St. Louis, Missouri 63101
314/231-3720

NSSC Publications

The National School Safety Center (NSSC) serves as a national clearing-house for school safety programs and activities related to campus security, school law, community relations, student discipline and attendance, and the prevention of drug abuse, gangs, weapons and bullying in schools.

NSSC's primary objective is to focus national attention on the importance of providing safe and effective schools. The following publications have been produced to promote this effort.

School Safety News Service includes three editions of *School Safety*, news-journal of the National School Safety Center, and six issues of *School Safety Update*. These publications feature the insight of prominent professionals on issues related to school safety, including student discipline, security, attendance, dropouts, youth suicide, character education and substance abuse. NSSC's News Service reports on effective school safety programs, updates legal and legislative issues, and reviews new literature on school safety issues. Contributors include accomplished local practitioners and nationally recognized experts and officials. (\$59.00 annual subscription)

School Safety Check Book (1990) is NSSC's most comprehensive text on crime and violence prevention in schools. The volume is divided into sections on school climate and discipline, school attendance, personal safety and school security. Geared for the hands-on practitioner, each section includes a review of the problems and prevention strategies. Useful charts, surveys and tables, as well as write-ups on a wide variety of model programs, are included. Each chapter also has a comprehensive bibliography of additional resources. 219 pages. (\$15.00)

Set Straight on Bullies (1989) examines the myths and realities about schoolyard bullying. Changing attitudes about the seriousness of the problem are stressed. It studies the characteristics of bullies and bullying victims. And, most importantly, it provides strategies for educators, parents and students to better prevent and respond to schoolyard bullying. Sample student and adult surveys are included. 89 pages. (\$10.00)

Child Safety Curriculum Standards (1991) helps prevent child victimization by assisting youth-serving professionals in teaching children how to protect themselves. Sample strategies that can be integrated into existing curricula or used as a starting point for developing a more extensive curriculum are given for both elementary and secondary schools. The age-appropriate standards deal with the topics of substance abuse, teen parenting, suicide, gangs, weapons, bullying, runaways, rape, sexually transmitted diseases, child abuse, parental abductions, stranger abductions and latchkey children. Each of the 13 chapters includes summaries, standards, strategies and additional resources for each grade level. 353 pages. (\$75.00)

Developing Personal and Social Responsibility (1992) is designed to serve as a framework on which to build successful school and community programs aimed at training young people to be responsible citizens. 130 pages. (\$9.00)

Gangs In Schools: Breaking Up Is Hard to Do (1992) offers an introduction to youth gangs, providing the latest information on the various types of gangs — including ethnic gangs, stoner groups and satanic cults — as well as giving practical advice on preventing or reducing gang encroachment on schools. Already in its seventh printing, the book contains valuable suggestions from law enforcers, school principals, prosecutors and other experts on gangs. The concluding chapter describes more than 20 school- and community-based programs throughout the country that have been successful in combating gangs. 48 pages. (\$5.00)

School Crime and Violence: Victims' Rights (1992) is a current and comprehensive text on school safety law. The recently revised book offers a historical overview of victims' rights, describes how it has been dealt with in our laws and courts, and explains its effect on America's schools. The authors cite legal case histories and cover current school liability laws. The book explains tort liability, sovereign immunity, duty-at-large rule, intervening cause doctrine and foreseeable criminal activity, as well as addressing their significance to schools. The concluding chapter includes a "Checklist for Providing Safe Schools." 127 pages. (\$15.00)

Educated Public Relations: School Safety 101 (1993) offers a quick course in public relations for school district public relations directors, administrators and others working to achieve safe, effective schools. This newly revised book explains the theory of public relations and successful methods for integrating people and ideas. It discusses how public relations programs can promote safe schools and quality education and gives 101 specific ideas and strategies to achieve this goal. 72 pages. (\$8.00)

School Discipline Notebook (1992) will help educators establish fair and effective discipline policies. The book reviews student responsibilities and rights, including the right to safe schools. Legal policies that regulate discipline methods used in schools are also explained. 53 pages. (\$5.00)

The Need To Know: Juvenile Record Sharing (1989) deals with the confidentiality of student records and why teachers, counselors, school administrators, police, probation officers, prosecutors, the courts and other professionals who work with juvenile offenders need to know and be able to share information contained in juvenile records. When information is shared appropriately, improved strategies for responding to serious juvenile offenders, and for improving public safety, can be developed. The second part of the book reviews the legal statutes of each state, outlining which agencies and individuals are permitted access to various juvenile records and how access may be obtained. A model juvenile records code and sample forms to be used by agencies in facilitating juvenile record sharing also are included. 88 pages. (\$12.00)

Points of view or opinions are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Department of Education or Pepperdine University. Prices subject to change without prior notification.

Resource Papers

The National School Safety Center (NSSC) has produced a series of special reports on a variety of topics related to school safety. Each NSSC Resource Paper provides a concise but comprehensive overview of the problem, covers a number of prevention and intervention strategies, and includes a list of organizations, related publications, and article reprints on the topic.

Safe Schools Overview offers a review of the contemporary safety issues facing today's schools, such as crime and violence, discipline, bullying, drug/alcohol trafficking and abuse, gangs, high dropout rates, and school safety partnerships.

Corporal Punishment in Schools outlines the arguments for and against corporal punishment. It also discusses the alternatives to corporal punishment that have been developed by schools and psychologists.

School Crisis Prevention and Response identifies principles and practices that promote safer campuses. It presents reviews of serious schools crises — fatal shootings, a terrorist bombing, armed intruders and cluster suicide. Interviews with the principals in charge also are included.

Weapons in Schools outlines a number of ways to detect weapons on campus, including using searches and metal detectors, establishing a security force, and eliminating book bags or lockers where weapons can be hidden.

Drug Traffic and Abuse in Schools, after summarizing students' attitudes and beliefs about drugs, covers drug laws and school rules; the legal aspects of student searches and drug testing; and the connection between drug use and truancy, crime and violence.

Role Models, Sports and Youth covers a number of programs that link youth and sports, including NSSC's urban school safety campaign that uses professional athletes as spokesmen; several organizations founded by professional athletes to help youth combat drugs; and a number of programs established to get young people involved in school or neighborhood teams.

School Bullying and Victimization defines bullying, offers an overview of psychological theories about how bullies develop, and covers intervention programs that have been successful.

Student and Staff Victimization, after outlining schools' responsibility to provide a safe educational environment, covers strategies for dealing with victimization.

Increasing Student Attendance, after outlining the problem and providing supporting statistics, details strategies to increase attendance by preventing, intervening with and responding to students who become truants or dropouts.

Display Posters

"Join a team, not a gang!" (1989) — Kevin Mitchell, home run leader with the San Francisco Giants.

"The Fridge says 'bullying is uncool!'" (1988) — William "The Fridge" Perry, defensive lineman for the Chicago Bears.

"Facades..." (1987) — A set of two, 22-by-17-inch full-color posters produced and distributed to complement a series of drug-free schools TV public service announcements sponsored by NSSC.

All resources are prepared under Grant No. 85-MU-CX-0003 from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view or opinions in these documents are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Department of Education or Pepperdine University. **Prices subject to change without prior notification. Charges cover postage and handling. Check must accompany order.**

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The combination of adult mentoring and the opportunity to learn technical skills empowers alienated youth to begin to accept control of their lives and change self-defeating behaviors.

Adventures in education

Exciting programs gain Baltimore kids' attention

Johnny slowly, tentatively rappels down the escarpment; his teachers and classmates offer continual encouragement as he makes his descent. When he reaches the ground, Johnny's face lights up in an unrestrained smile. He continues to smile broadly in acknowledgment of congratulations from his fellow students and teachers as he hands his safety harness and helmet to another student eagerly waiting his turn.

Johnny and other youngsters are enjoying the adventure education component of the curriculum at Catonsville Center for Alternative Studies. This is just one of the exciting alternative curricular foci employed at the school to meet the needs of at-risk youngsters who are unsuccessful in a traditional high school.

The Catonsville Center for Alternative Studies serves young people, ages 14 to 21, who have dropped out of school or who have been expelled or transferred from a regular high school due to behavior problems. These students are quite alienated and disconnected from society, so the staff's first priority is to develop meaningful relationships with these youths. Since traditional methods did not work in traditional high school, alternative strategies, such as adventure education, are used to reach these young

people. The establishment of trusting relationships with students is the first step in working successfully with them.

In outdoor education, students work with their teachers to learn how to canoe, cave, kayak, hike, bike, climb and rappel. Wonderful things happen on these outings. Not only do these young people garner new technical skills, but they also obtain self-confidence and new social skills. They develop self-esteem and a sense of accomplishment because they have mastered exciting new challenges. They have learned leadership and teamwork skills. Most importantly, students have developed trusting relationships with their teachers.

Once established, this rapport enables staff to guide students in their development of pro-social, academic and vocational skills. Ultimately, many students who demonstrate improved behavior and social skills are able to return to and succeed in a regular high school.

Teens POWER

During the summer of 1994, while their peers were hanging out in the mall or sunning themselves at the beach, students at Baltimore County's two public alternative high schools were participating in a carefully planned program at their schools, Rosedale and Catonsville Centers for Alternative Studies.

The program, Teens POWER (Teens Preserving Our Water and Environmen-

tal Resources), was jointly funded by the Baltimore County Public Schools and the Baltimore County Office of Employment and Training (BCOET). BCOET paid the students who qualified a small hourly wage for working in the program.

Teens POWER integrated education and work by helping the students to become personally involved in learning about water and other environmental resources and working to preserve them in the community. The program design offered students an alternating off-site/on-site schedule — one day students engaged in off-site experiential activities; the next day at the center the students worked on interdisciplinary projects that were fully integrated with their off-site experiences and instruction.

The teens concentrated on learning about and working in the watershed of Baltimore County. While traveling the length of the Gunpowder and Patapsco rivers in canoes and hiking the adjacent trails, the participants performed cleanup, tested for water quality, planted trees, seined for samples of river life, snorkeled and studied various life forms. Many of the students who had transferred into suburban Baltimore County from Baltimore city just a year or two before suddenly found themselves in a river valley as foreign to them as the Amazon.

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources, park rangers, employees at the waste water and water treatment

plants and Save Our Streams advocates all offered their expertise in helping the students.

One hot July day, 25 of the students from Rosedale joined with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and a private company, Bluemount Quarry, to remove ties, an old conveyor belt and numerous pieces of machinery from the Gunpowder River. The debris had been washed into the river by Hurricane Agnes in 1972. Bluemount Quarry brought heavy equipment to make the job easier, but much trash still had to be pulled out and hauled to the bank by the students and staff.

Many fears were conquered as these disadvantaged, disconnected youths latched on to something bigger than themselves. One conquered her terror of the water and walked gingerly across the rocks in the river to take a closer look at a beautiful waterfall. Another learned to love snakes as one from the wildlife sanctuary for wounded animals wrapped slowly around him.

Shovels to plant trees, numerous plastic bags full of sometimes disgusting trash, collection jars to bring back plants and animal specimens, and, of course, canoes were carried with great care and determination.

Back at the center, aquariums and terrariums housed guests from the "wilds" for study. They were called guests because all specimens were returned to their natural habitat within a week. The students accomplished a prodigious amount of related math, reading, writing and science as the academic team facilitated their learning.

Maps were studied with new enthusiasm as the next day's trip was plotted. "Save Our World" T-shirts were crafted in art, and a group produced a video of the entire summer experience.

Every student had an opportunity to participate in group counseling sessions on the days the students were at the center. In addition, small mentoring groups met with staff mentors during breakfast and lunch to "dump any baggage" that had accumulated the night before or dur-

ing the day. Since all the participants were classified as disadvantaged, Summer Food Service Program provided free lunch and breakfast.

While students learned a tremendous amount of subject matter, increased their math and reading skills, and developed an awareness of the fragility of our environment, the underlying goals of our entire program were also accomplished — to help students improve their self-esteem, to learn to make positive choices and to resolve conflicts appropriately.

The following ingredients that made the program an overwhelming success continue to make the Rosedale and Catonsville Centers for Alternative Studies model programs all year long:

- *Experientially based.* Hands, heads, hearts — the entire body is involved in the learning experience.
- *Computer-assisted.* Technological, nonjudgmental teaching assistance keeps staff and students fascinated with the learning process.
- *Unconditional positive regard.* Teens (many of whom have disrupted an entire comprehensive high school) are taken off guard by consistent, genuine caring from staff members.
- *Building internal locus of control through choices.* Empowered students learn to make positive choices, accept responsibility for the choices, and take control of their lives.
- *Small student body and small student to staff ratio.* No more than 100 students participate with a one to 10 staff to student ratio. Everybody knows everybody else's name.
- *Debriefing.* Staff meetings are held for 30 minutes every day after student dismissal to develop strategies, teamwork, consistency and support in dealing with student behaviors.
- *Counseling/mentoring.* Every day students receive opportunities to discuss problems and discard the "baggage" that is weighing them down.
- *Community involvement.* Students give back to the community through service learning and are served by the community through agencies, employ-

ment opportunities, and various cooperative ventures with businesses and agencies.

- *The right staff.* Carefully selected, caring staff who have similar philosophies share a common vision and an understanding that in alternative schools the only constant is change.

Provided with unconditional, positive regard, students are empowered to accept control of their lives and to change the self-defeating behaviors that have caused them to be unsuccessful.

Prepared by Anna Knauer, head facilitator of Rosedale Center for Alternative Studies, and Judith Edgar, principal of Catonsville Center for Alternative Studies, both in Baltimore County, Maryland.

Harmonious partners: musicians and students

In its first year of operation during 1993-94, Campfield Alternative Middle School, one of five alternative schools in the Baltimore County Public School system, served 68 at-risk middle schoolers. These students were either voluntarily transferred to the facility or enrolled after being suspended from their home schools.

All of these students were chronically disruptive. The staff used commonly accepted procedures, such as behavior modification programs, community service programs and monthly field trips, and a curriculum based on the theme of personal identities.

However, a unique opportunity was presented to these troubled kids through a grant from the Recording Industries Music Performance Trust Fund awarded jointly to Campfield Alternative and Young Audiences. The project was based on the educational theory of multiple intelligences developed by Howard Gardner. He put the "s" in intelligences by examining seven types of intelligences. It was proposed that some of the

students might have a musical intelligence. If that intelligence could be stimulated, the students could be helped to discover a healthier way to live.

Fourteen students were chosen to participate. These students expressed an interest in music or a particular musical instrument on an interest inventory that was administered to all students.

Three musical groups were selected to help: Peabody Ragtime, MAIA Quartet, and Baltimore Brassworks. These 16 musicians attended a workshop at Campfield where they learned about chronically disruptive kids and helped to design ways to work with students. The three music groups agreed to perform four concerts for the entire student body, then work individually and in small groups with Campfield's music group.

The day before the first concert by Peabody Ragtime, students listened and learned about ragtime music. At the end of the day's lesson, one student asked, "Is this music part of the punishment at an alternative school?" He was serious.

The next day, students, even those who had been identified for the project, begged not to attend. The staff decided that whether students thought it was punishment or not they would be required to attend. The students were not happy; they went, they sat and they were quiet. By Peabody's third visit, more and more students listened and responded to the music by tapping their feet, clapping their hands, and even voluntarily applauding at the end of the songs.

The best part of this project was watching the students work with their musician partners. After the large group concert, when they met one-on-one with the musicians, most of the students no longer acted angrily or defiantly as they had during large concerts or in the classroom. They were quiet, attentive children. They listened, asked questions, and respected the musicians.

The musicians and students developed a special rapport. Many students wrote in their journals that they felt "respect" for their musicians and felt that this respect was returned.

The school rented a variety of instruments for the project. No one really expected the students to learn to play, but they did learn. The students not only behaved well, they had talent.

As part of the project, students performed side-by-side with the musicians at a local elementary school. The students opened musical numbers and demonstrated how instruments were played.

Of course, the musicians did not offer any magical cure. The students did not turn into model students overnight. They were, however, able to develop a rapport with an adult — not an easy task for many troubled kids.

While Campfield has not found a magical cure, we can say that the musicians provided students with a healthier way to look at themselves. In that sense, we were successful. The children demonstrated a great deal of natural talent, and they learned that they could be successful through music.

But there are other reasons we saw healthier students when they were participating in the project: they were in small groups, received individual attention, and learned something they wanted to learn. The students were working on a real-life task, a performance.

Prepared by Marcella Emberger, former principal of Campfield Alternative Middle School, Baltimore County, Maryland.

Palm Beach's On-Line High School: technology + safety

Concerned about finding alternatives for expelled and adjudicated students, the School District of Palm Beach County, Florida, combined computer-assisted instruction with telecommunications to provide students with uninterrupted access to course work from any student's remote location. The intent was to devise methods to furnish disruptive kids an educational alternative while also maintaining the safety and security of our schools.

In addition to finding ways to deal with disruptive youth, the district, which serves 125,000 students, needed a program to address other increasing problems: teen parents, "at-risk" potential dropouts, homebound students, and students needing to complete graduation requirements.

"On-Line High School" was established in 1993 as an option to fill these needs. The concept was developed by a resource specialist who was familiar with computer-based instruction and computer lab software applications.

He hypothesized that if courses could be taught in a computer network within a classroom, then they could also be accessible in the community through the use of telecommunications technology. As a result, On-Line High School was created, with a centrally located network server and remote access through four modems.

The software program for students was developed by TRO Learning, Inc. and is titled "PLATO 2000." This software program offers course work and learning activities correlated with the Florida Department of Education course frameworks and the CTBS, HSCT, TABE and GED tests.

Students "sign on" after verification of an application approved and signed by both their counselor and principal. They may receive high school credit, GED preparation, child care and parenting services, HSCT remediation and assessment. Students also receive access while homebound due to long-term medical problems.

For disruptive students whose conduct prohibits safe attendance in a regular program, the remote access enables students to either maintain their educational services and progress or complete a substance abuse program while off campus. The program is based on individual need under the philosophy that the bottom line is "helping kids."

On-Line High School is in operation 24 hours a day and 360 days a year, offering 90 courses. Access within the community is available through school

centers, neighborhood recreation centers, county libraries, and juvenile corrections centers through interagency agreements. In a limited number of instances, personal computers have been available for lending in hardship cases. The 24-hour access empowers students to work at their own pace, when they are motivated, without the normal constraints of a daily or weekly schedule.

Classes average between 22 and 30 hours of on-task time for each half credit awarded. When principals were introduced to this program, they were skeptical of the number of required on-line hours versus the number of required classroom hours for equivalent courses. Once presented with research regarding "actual on-task" time in the average classroom, the principals expressed satisfaction that On-Line High School classes offered comparable course work.

Principals were also dubious concerning the measurement of competencies learned under this format. To address this issue, safeguards guarantee the program to be supplemental rather than supplantive in nature.

Upon fulfillment of all the activities and competencies required by the state of Florida, the student takes a supervised examination on the computer to ensure validity. A computer-generated report is prepared. Credit is awarded through the home school and added to the student's transcript. The principal approves the initial application, enabling him or her to maintain control over program access.

In the School District of Palm Beach County, it was decided that On-Line High School could not be used to replace bad grades or to improve grade point averages. Replacing failed grades and earning needed credits, however, has been viewed as one of the most legitimate and often essential program benefits.

During the initial year of operation, 87 students were served by this program. Twenty-eight students were able to graduate on time as a direct result — six were pregnant teens, and three were long-term homebound students. In many instances, flexible contracts between

schools and students defined expectations and responsibilities. In some situations, students earned a combination of on-line, in-school and work experience credits. The potential and applications for this program are limitless.

Costs for the On-Line High School program are negligible, utilizing readily available standard modems, phone lines and low-power computers. The program requires only one instructor per network server to operate. During the first year of operation, the three homebound students alone more than covered the instructor's salary and related costs.

A small district wanting to replicate this program could do so for under \$20,000. Larger districts would command a larger network server and additional modems, computer stations and phone lines. The estimated cost for a larger district is approximately \$50,000.

As a result of its success, On-Line High School is expanding to a larger capacity server offering 20 phone lines. The expansion will permit the system to have up to 480 hours of access daily.

The rewards and benefits from this program far exceeded all expectations. Students that failed in the regular classroom setting experienced success. They have been able to track their accomplishments one course at a time and have demonstrated enhanced self-esteem. Students needing courses to graduate realized their goals and dreams.

Many students graduated with their class rather than waiting through summer school for a semester course. Previously unmotivated students ascertained that they "could learn," provided they were able to work at their pace and on their own terms.

School center personnel voiced relief and thanks when juveniles were not permitted to disrupt their schools. Similarly, community leaders have been delighted with the program because it helps to keep troubled teens off the streets.

Prepared by Thomas W. Buchanan of the School District of Palm Beach County, Florida.

New book examines school search and seizure issues

With the alarming increase of drugs and weapons at American schools, school personnel have stepped up their efforts to search for contraband on campus in order to provide a safe environment for all students. Despite court-imposed safeguards on students' constitutional rights, school officials have greater leeway in conducting searches than do police officers.

Student Searches under the Law, a new book soon to be available from the National School Safety Center, takes a close look at the legality of conducting searches on school campuses. Included in the book is a discussion of the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case of *New Jersey v. T.L.O.*, which set the standard for conducting student searches.

Since 1985 when the *T.L.O.* Court established the reasonable suspicions standard, court decisions have helped to further define what constitutes an appropriate search on school campuses.

Student Searches under the Law examines recent court cases concerning student searches, including locker searches and strip searches. Other sections discuss searches conducted on school grounds by law enforcement and probation officers and school security personnel; the use of drug testing and surveillance equipment on campus; and searches using metal detectors or drug-sniffing dogs.

Student Searches under the Law also covers practical matters such as sample school board policies and procedures for conducting legal searches at school.

Earning-while-learning, apprenticeship learning and service learning all contribute to the effectiveness of these community/school partnerships that challenge youths to succeed.

Antidote to crime: jobs and education

Long Beach kids offered a choice that beats the streets

Instead of being sent to California Youth Authority (CYA) camp and returning to the streets, juvenile offenders have a new alternative: jobs and mandatory continuation high school classes. The initial results are encouraging.

Known as Alternatives to Expulsion, the new approach has won the full cooperation of the juvenile court judges, the district attorney's office, the police department, probation department, the Board of Education of the Long Beach Unified School District, the City of Long Beach, and the Los Angeles County Office of Education. It also enlists the Long Beach Conservation Corps and the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) to provide two powerful antidotes to crime: jobs and education.

If students are involved in a battery against a school employee, gang-related violence or possession of a firearm, they are immediately referred to the school's administrator and arrested. The school suspends the offenders and recommends them for expulsion — but not the kind of expulsion that puts kids out of school and on the streets.

What makes a difference in these cases is that when the offenders appear in juvenile court, the judge spells out a choice that beats the streets or incarceration.

The students enroll in alternative classes and then work four hours a day in a job. Funded by the JTPA, they earn a stipend for working with the Conservation Corps of Long Beach.

Working and studying lasts either one semester or a full year, depending upon the length of the expulsion and the seriousness of the offense. The goal is for the offenders to stay out of serious trouble that lands them in the CYA camp or in jail — a tremendous cost to society for incarcerating individuals compared to the relatively small cost of educating and training them.

So far it appears to be working. The students know that making one mistake will result in losing their job and their freedom. They would be sent off to camp — a powerful incentive to take both schoolwork and job seriously. So far, not one of the Alternatives to Expulsion students has been sent to CYA camp for failing to show up for work or for school.

Community leaders have strongly endorsed the approach, believing that it provides “consequences with teeth in them” that really help kids. One school board member commented that it is “an ideal combination of work and study, and it removes kids from the revolving door of the juvenile justice system.”

Without this opportunity, some of these students might never get a job, because they lack strong motivation to

show up for school and work every day.

Much of the credit should be given to the juvenile court judges who talk directly to the young offenders. These judges let the offenders know that, if it were not for this unique opportunity, they would be locked up and remain at high risk to repeat their mistakes. Both the juveniles and their parents must agree to the alternative. Most jump at the chance.

Long Beach is seeing fewer repeat offenders and a lower rate of recidivism. These results will hopefully lead to an end to the cycle of juvenile crime: arrests, sentencing, camp or incarceration, probation, then back on the streets again and more crime.

The partnership developed in Long Beach could be adapted in most cities. Future plans include expansion of the program to include more and younger students. The Los Angeles County Office of Education covers the cost of instruction through the funding the students' attendance generates. The JTPA program covers additional staff, work experience opportunities and administrative support. Long Beach Unified School District provides facilities and program coordination. There is no added cost to taxpayers, but there may be a substantial savings if juvenile crime declines as a result of the jobs and schooling.

There is a lot to be said for earning while learning and not having to resort

to crime because of a lack of job skills. If all goes well, these students will no longer need gangs or become involved in offenses against the people who are helping them stay out of trouble.

Prepared by Steve Fish, deputy superintendent, Long Beach Unified School District, Long Beach, California.

Baton Rouge students dare to dream at Northdale

In 1985, the community of East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana, was experiencing the same problem faced throughout the nation. The dropout rate in its school system was climbing. It was evident that the educational system was not working for all students.

As this became apparent, something very unique occurred. The community did not blame, it did not demand, it did not turn its head. Instead, citizens and business and education leaders joined forces in partnership. The Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce and the East Baton Rouge Parish School Board worked together to develop an alternative school for those students failing in traditional educational settings.

The result was Northdale Magnet Academy, an innovative school designed for one purpose. Northdale was to be the parish's first alternative school offering a high school diploma curriculum for dropouts or youth at risk of dropping out of school.

Northdale Magnet Academy opened its doors in 1986. In 1993, it was selected as one of Louisiana's Top 25 Exemplary Schools. The school educates 120 students annually. All have applied for admission.

Those who are selected possess characteristics associated with at-risk youth: failure in traditional school settings, performances consistently below potential, teens who are parents, substance abuse, low income, single-parent families, dropouts, behavior problems requir-

ing disciplinary measures and involvement in the legal system. Consistent with nationwide trends, these students often exhibit low self-esteem and low academic achievement.

Ask students why they succeed at Northdale but failed elsewhere, and they will answer that the staff cares and believes in them. Ask the staff why the students succeed at Northdale but failed elsewhere, and they will answer that it is because the students care and believe in themselves. Both statements are obviously true.

Northdale Magnet Academy staff and students refer to themselves as a family. Students go to each other and staff for support and guidance. The Peer Helpers Club is one of the most popular clubs to join. Students once considered troublemakers become positive role models, chronically absent students win perfect attendance awards, and students considered educationally deficient earn scholarships to universities.

Educators at Northdale believe that each student comes through the doors of the school with his or her own unique history. They know that the at-risk student has learning styles different from those required to succeed in traditional schools. What works for one student may not work for another. As in the clothing industry, one size does not fit all.

As an outcome of these beliefs, Northdale has developed what is called the school's "Tenet of Evolution." Programs that are working well with students expand, while those that are inadequate are altered to fit new individual needs.

The result is a revolutionary and evolutionary curriculum that offers learning in a variety of ways and locations. Frustration levels are reduced, self-esteem is increased, and the standards set for traditional high schools are maintained.

Because Northdale is a community school, a strong emphasis is placed on giving back to that community through service learning. Off-campus programs include tutoring at elementary schools and two "Serve and Learn" grants

funded by the lieutenant governor's office that involve environmental issues and teach life-coping skills to at-risk elementary students.

The school has formed alliances with other community agencies, creating additional roads to learning. The Baton Rouge Recreation and Parks Commission offers a nearby gym and a community substance abuse prevention facility for Northdale students. Southern University has offered monthly self-esteem classes, a weekly skills enrichment program and a continuous supply of tutors who work individually with students.

Through its ongoing partnership with the Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce, Northdale has a highly successful mentoring program through its Girls Club in which students are matched to female members of the business community. This program proved so successful, that it has evolved this year to include a Boys Club.

Since its inception, 220 students have graduated from Northdale. Many have gone on to college, vocational schools, the military and the work force.

For the community, this school has eased the burden of \$441,000 in lost revenue attributed to each male dropout over the course of his lifetime (half of that amount for females). But most importantly, for all of the students enrolled at Northdale it has meant a new beginning for a dream once forgotten — the dream of earning a high school diploma.

Prepared by Leroy Helire Jr., principal of Northdale Magnet Academy in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Moving forward in Pensacola, Florida

The "Moving Forward" program of the Escambia County School District in Pensacola, Florida, is designed as a positive discipline alternative for students in grades nine through 12 who are disruptive in the traditional school setting and

have been recommended for lengthy suspension or expulsion. Moving Forward helps students to close the door on certain behaviors and to move forward as self-directed, responsible achievers.

The Moving Forward program is a collaborative effort of the school district and the 100 Black Men of Pensacola, Inc., which serves as the coordinating agency for the program. The 100 Black Men of Pensacola, Inc., is a nonprofit organization that pools the talents of successful black men to improve the quality of life for community youth. Membership includes businessmen, attorneys, physicians, dentists, educators and other professionals.

The site for the Moving Forward program is a neighborhood church which serves to link the program effectively with the community. Program staff includes a full-time coordinator/counselor, a teacher, and program/intake specialists. Volunteer mentors work with students on an individual basis, and satellite services are provided by a principal and psychologist. The program provides intensive academic support and counseling. The minimum stay in the program is four weeks, and behavioral and academic progress of students is monitored after release from the program.

The program goal is to provide a positive disciplinary program for students whose behavior and lack of academic effort impede success in their home school. The program works to modify behavior and academic achievement so that students may return to their home school or alternative program. Success is evaluated in several categories: staying in school or earning a high school diploma as well as a decrease in the number of expulsions, suspensions and referrals.

This program is open to students who have been expelled or have a case for expulsion, who are remanded by the court to Community Control via the Juvenile Justice Department, or who have a record of 10 or more disciplinary referrals. Students are referred to the program by building-level or district-level personnel or the court to an established admis-

sions committee.

The curriculum for the program addresses the student's academic needs as outlined in his or her district school program. The academic program is complemented with group activities and counseling to ensure the building of self-esteem and personal responsibility. Both career and vocational counseling are included.

Moving Forward utilizes career shadowing as well as individual/group mentoring with appropriate role models. Instruction uses a variety of effective teaching strategies: tutoring, computer instruction, modified scheduling, field trips, resource speakers, a violence prevention curriculum and awards/incentive programs. All personnel involved with the program receive district staff development opportunities in the areas of reading, technology, violence prevention and cultural diversity.

Prepared by Ella Sims, director of Secondary Education, the School District of Escambia County, Florida.

The city is a classroom in Buffalo, New York

"City-As-School" (CAS) is a program that has the potential to serve any type of student, but it is designed especially for the disenfranchised teen who has done battle with the system in one way or another for some time. CAS places at-risk teens in internship situations which actually replace the classroom. Junior and senior students earn academic credits while working as interns at dozens of sites in Buffalo, New York.

Once teens realize that they can complete high school outside classroom walls in the "real world," their motivation picks up considerably and their negative behaviors change. Good results through CAS have parents, teachers, kids, administrators and community leaders celebrating. Although the concept may seem innovative, it is basically the time-honored

process of apprenticeship learning.

Students earn, for example, an English credit by working and learning at a theatre, newspaper, library or any site which calls for communication skills. History and social studies credits are earned at local courts, municipal offices, police organizations and community action centers. Attorneys, judges, business people, and civic and cultural leaders have shown great willingness to mentor kids on a one-on-one basis. Credits are also available in trades, the arts, science and math.

A small group of teachers explained the program individually to local leaders. The teachers found acceptance and enthusiastic willingness to help an at-risk teen, so they proceeded to write student academic plans tailored to each work site. Teachers closely monitor student progress at each work site.

The academic plan, Learning Experience Activity Packet (LEAP), is a series of goals and activities that call for research, reading, writing, vocabulary and site-specific topics. The final product is a lengthy project that is monitored by the teacher throughout the marking period. Regular grades are awarded based on the quality of the LEAP, attendance and an evaluation from the work-site supervisor.

Required state competency courses are offered to all students who need them.

Students learn much more than subject matter. They learn to relate to adults in a whole new way as students see adults in careers and jobs of various kinds. Kids learn the nuances of business etiquette — when to shake hands, how to dress, proper telephone greetings and the need for confidentiality.

Students see teachers in a new light, too. Instructors are "resource coordinators" who work to smooth out problems and provide academic coaching; they are not authority figures wielding a red pen. This climate is a great improvement over the traditional classroom where many of the participating students had a history of disruptive behavior.

Now entering its third year, the program has convinced early skeptics of its

power to reach at-risk students. Naysayers who did not believe that teens would honor the 100 percent attendance policy required by City-As-School now find students making up hours missed because of illness so they can earn credit.

Two teachers meet each applicant, explain the program and conduct an interview. If the student agrees to the 100 percent attendance policy, which includes a weekly seminar on job skills and behaviors, and shows some enthusiasm for CAS, he or she is invited to select a resource from the current catalog of sites in the city of Buffalo.

Some of these at-risk students, of course, find that they cannot handle the requirements of CAS. But a solid 70 percent to 75 percent successfully complete internships and earn diplomas. Teens with negative histories, and sometimes disabling personal and family problems, have found success in City-As-School. CAS is sanctioned by both the state and federal departments of education.

Prepared by Raymond Perreault, principal of City-As-School, Buffalo Alternative High School, Buffalo, New York.

Communities In Schools: partners for success

Sixteen Burger King Academy students in Chesterfield County, Virginia, received high school diplomas in June, and one was inducted into the National Honor Society earlier in the year. This could not have been accomplished without the support of Chesterfield Communities In Schools (CIS). Many of these students live in families under tremendous pressure due to family conflict, poverty, divorce, child abuse, teen pregnancy, drug abuse and other factors.

Recognizing the needs of at-risk students in the county, the school system took the lead in 1992 in bringing together private business executives, heads of county government and county agencies, and key school administrators to

discuss ways to improve and coordinate services for at-risk children.

The result was Chesterfield Communities In Schools, a public/private partnership created to enhance the potential for youth to complete school and become contributing members of society. CIS is affiliated with the national Cities In Schools, Inc. network, now serving 200 communities in 27 states, and uses their proven dropout prevention process.

The CIS concept is a simple one. (See page 29.) The breakdown of the family, the physical decline of neighborhoods, lack of job opportunities and overloaded social service systems all add to the burgeoning problems confronting an ever-growing number of youths. By repositioning community service providers to work as a personalized team serving alongside teachers, CIS brings help into the schools for at-risk students.

CIS in Chesterfield County operates as a school-within-a-school at the middle and high school levels. A key feature of the program is the integration of a traditional core curriculum with basic skills, vocational training, career counseling, job readiness and college preparation using individualized, hands-on instruction. Computer-assisted learning allows students to progress at their own pace until subject material is mastered.

Students in the Chesterfield CIS program typically include youth who:

- have been retained one or more times;
- have dropped out and are returning to school one or more years behind their peers;
- are failing two or more classes;
- have a history of behavior problems in the class, school or community;
- are chronically absent; or
- have multiple social service needs.

Objectives for Chesterfield CIS students are to improve attendance, decrease disruptive behaviors, complete assignments and produce quality work. Students can measure growth and evaluate progress in these four areas each day, while staff use this data to track both short-term and long-term progress.

Overall, CIS delivers services more efficiently and effectively with the use of limited resources. Partners state their desire to increase the opportunities for youth to complete school so that they will have a better trained work force.

CIS offers opportunities for youth to become productive members of society through community partnerships. Youth at-risk can be connected with resources to address the many challenges they face.

During the first year of operation, CIS created 46 partnerships. Supporting the school system in the endeavor are county human services agencies, nonprofit organizations and private business. They have provided funding scholarships, jobs and job shadowing, furniture, mentors, computers, and other student incentives that demonstrate interest in the students and encourage them to complete school. Burger King Corporation supports the program locally and nationally.

The CIS program is results oriented. For the first semester of the 1993-94 school year, 45 percent of the students in one academy had an attendance rate of 85 percent or better, and 45 percent of the students received grades of C or better in five out of six of their courses.

In another academy, 37 percent of the students had an attendance rate of 95 percent or better, and 74 percent of the students received grades of C or better in math. At the end of the 1993-94 school year, on a four-point grading scale, the three academies' average GPAs had improved from the previous year from .96 to 1.89, 1.31 to 2.13, and .68 to 1.38.

As one graduate said, "You inspired me to go on when things didn't look too promising. You helped me believe in myself ... most of all, you helped to give me something that no one can take away, and that was my education."

Chesterfield Communities In Schools is operated by a committee of the Chesterfield Public Education Foundation, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation.

Prepared by Martha J. Frickert, administrator for Communities In Schools, Chesterfield, Virginia.

Cities In Schools: Turning kids around

Founded in 1977, Cities In Schools, Inc. (or Communities In Schools, as the program is known in some states and communities) is the nation's largest nonprofit dropout prevention program. It is a network of local, state, regional and national initiatives and thousands of dedicated individuals who contribute their time and talents to helping young people in jeopardy of dropping out of school.

The CIS concept is a simple one. CIS brings help into the schools for many at-risk students by realigning community service providers to work as a personalized team serving alongside teachers.

Local CIS programs are independently incorporated community-, city- or county-wide public/private partnership organizations. Led by their own boards of directors, they address the dropout problem within their communities (and related problems affecting youth and their families) by adapting the CIS process to the needs and resources of the community.

Local CIS projects are the individual school sites that make up a local CIS program. The project's team of assigned and repositioned staff, under the direction of the project director, connects the community's existing health, education and human resources with students and their families.

The CIS Academy is a different kind of CIS project site: an alternative education site where the CIS team members work with enrolled students throughout the school day. Typically

serving 60 to 135 students, the CIS Academy offers an option for students who have not reached their potential in the traditional school setting.

Among the 58 CIS Academies now operational are the CIS Corporate Academies, which follow the CIS Academy model. These alternative education sites or wings of existing schools receive financial and other assistance from a sponsoring partner. In addition to Burger King Corporation, Goldman Sachs and Foley's department stores sponsor CIS Corporate Academies.

State CIS programs, like the local programs, are independently incorporated and led by their own boards of directors. Staffed by site management teams, their mission is to replicate the CIS dropout prevention program as widely as possible throughout a state and to secure state-level resources and networking for the individual CIS communities within the state.

CIS, Inc. offers training and technical assistance through its five regional offices in Washington, D.C.; Chicago; Atlanta; Los Angeles and Houston. A state-of-the-art training curriculum for those communities interested in replicating the CIS model is offered at the CIS Training Institute, located at Lehigh University's National Center for Partnership Development in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

In October 1992, CIS, Inc. signed an agreement with the U.S. Department of the Army whereby local CIS programs can use surplus defense equipment and join the Army Support for Students in

Search of Tomorrow working group. The proposed objectives include: develop and conduct a prototype federal interagency round-table discussion; facilitate local CIS program access to Army resources; integrate joint Army/CIS initiatives into CIS operations at the local, state and national levels; and provide CIS training and resources to support and enhance local Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps collaboration with local health and human services organizations.

Another objective addresses the integration and expansion of programs sponsored by the Department of the Army and CIS operations at all levels within the CIS network. Enrollment of JROTC cadets will allow CIS to provide health and human services and programs on AIDS education, alcohol and other drug abuse prevention, family and classroom violence, teen pregnancy and minority male initiatives to reach a greater percentage of youth in at-risk conditions. Local cooperation will also promote JROTC citizenship values and leadership skills.

Vocational training will be available in JROTC Career Academies. As part of the school-to-work transition effort, the JROTC Career Academies are intended to provide students with training to better prepare themselves as future members of the community and national work force. CIS will assist in the JROTC Career Academy initiative by helping to broker in programs of pre-employment training, career counseling, basic workplace skills, entrepreneurial training, motivational activities and educational services designed to prepare disadvantaged youth for employment. Funding of \$7.8 million from the Department of Defense will allow CIS to establish 10 new academies that reflect the JROTC/CIS partnership.

Cities In Schools, Inc., 1199 North Fairfax Street, Suite 300, Alexandria, VA 22314-1436, 703/519-8999.

A variety of alternative educational settings assists in directing students in these districts toward their goals of graduation and the ultimate step — transition into productive members of society.

A menu of alternative opportunities

Clark County programs help reduce dropout rate

The goals of Clark County (Nevada) School District's Division of Alternative Education are to provide educational opportunities to those wishing to obtain a high school diploma and keep campuses safe and orderly. These programs have helped to stabilize and bring state dropout figures to a substantial low.

Adult education/GED is for out-of-school students and adults 17 years or older who desire to earn a high school diploma or a general education development certificate. This program also serves students enrolled in regular day schools who need to make up the number of deficient high school credits.

Horizon High Schools are alternative settings for students in grades nine through 12 under the age of 19 who are at risk of dropping out of school or who have already dropped out of school. Horizon is not a discipline program but an educational option to the comprehensive high school. Horizon High Schools have on-site day care facilities for teen parents who are unable to afford child care but wish to continue their education.

Clearinghouse of Student Tracking and Replacement (COSTAR) is the hub of the alternative education division. COSTAR identifies at-risk students and refers them to the appropriate programs

districtwide. COSTAR provides counseling, assessment, placement, community service linkage and student tracking.

Sunset High School is a fully accredited high school, open to any sophomore, junior or senior who prefers to attend school during evening hours as opposed to daytime hours. Sunset also offers a teen pregnancy program that provides pregnant girls an opportunity to continue their education, with encouragement and practical planning toward continuation of their education after delivery.

Home schooling is provided to students whose parents do not wish to have them attend public schools. Exemptions are granted to students who must be excused from compulsory attendance at a public school when written evidence is provided to the Board of School Trustees. Exemptions are reviewed yearly.

Opportunity Schools provide instruction for students in grades six through 12 who have experienced adjustment problems in the regular school setting. Students receive necessary assistance to improve their behavior to meet acceptable community and district standards. Opportunity schools are only a "time-out" program, not a permanent placement.

Institutional school programs are offered to male adults within state prisons. The curriculum follows the adult education open entrance, open exit format for an adult high school diploma. A GED program and occupational classes are

also offered.

Juvenile Court Programs. Students expelled for serious offenses such as possession of dangerous weapons, sale of drugs, staff assault, or unprovoked student assault that results in severe injury to the victim are subject to arrest and referral to the Clark County Family and Youth Services for adjudication. The court may place such students in either an incarceration or probation status.

Correspondence Courses/Credit-by-Exam: The school district allows students to earn up to five credits outside the traditional classroom setting through correspondence courses, credit-by-exam, travel study, music equivalent, math institute and dual credit.

Homebound Program provides academic instruction for school-age students who are unable to attend classes due to illness, physical handicaps, mental handicaps, or when confinement will be 15 or more school days.

The Math/Science Institute makes math and science more accessible to both students and their parents. Math and science are presented as more than just a body of knowledge; math and science are a form of reasoning and a way of thinking that affects students' future lives.

Prepared by Sidney J. Franklin, assistant superintendent, Division of Alternative Education, Clark County School District, Las Vegas, Nevada.

DeKalb provides a “recipe for social competence”

The backgrounds of at-risk students generally include academic and social failure, poor self-concept, inadequate social skills, negative attitudes toward school, as well as an external locus of control relative to their environment and destiny. Any effort to reduce or eliminate school violence and improve social competence must be grounded in a personal social growth improvement model rather than the current “put-out” punitive approach. Inherent within this approach is the need to provide students with a “recipe for social competence.”

A collaborative effort among the department of Secondary Instruction, the department of Special Instruction and the division of School Administration within the DeKalb County (Georgia) School System is currently under way to design a model for alternative education for at-risk students. The program is called Crossroads.

The mission of the Crossroads program is to provide at-risk students with nonpunitive educational options designed to facilitate personal, social, emotional and academic growth. The Crossroads program includes the following components in its master plan.

Student Support Team is a joint effort of regular and special education personnel to identify and plan instructional programs for students at-risk.

Gaining Results in Intervention and Prevention (GRIP) is a program designed to work with students and their parents in small group settings once a week. Students participate in seven two-hour sessions that will be offered after school; four two-hour sessions will be provided for parents. Two trained facilitators will lead each group of not more than 15 students.

In-school Suspension/Life Skills Training is a structured program involving individual and group activities for students who have been removed from regular classes and assigned to an alter-

native instructional setting in the local school. Students’ assignments are sent to the student by the teacher, and the student may not attend or participate in extracurricular activities while assigned to alternative instruction. The Life Skills Training component helps students to learn effective communication, decision-making and other self-enhancement skills.

Student Evidentiary Hearing Committee is a panel of administrators, psychologists, social workers and special educators who hear evidence presented by the school system, the student and parents when a student is referred by the local school principal for serious disciplinary infractions. The committee has the authority to make decisions ranging from returning the student to the local school to permanent expulsion.

DeKalb Life Skills Academy is a collaborative effort between the DeKalb School System and the Department of Children and Youth Services. The academy is an alternative discipline model designed to provide specialized training for selected students in grades six through 12. Students acquire new skills for restructuring negative attitudes and behaviors, exercising personal responsibility and improving general social competencies.

The DeKalb Life Skills Academy concept is grounded in the belief that:

- Self-discipline is developmental.
- Therefore, any workable plan of action to improve student behaviors and/or attitudinal patterns must ultimately include curriculum-based teaching approaches.
- The acquisition of constructive self-management skills and life skills provides the basis for students to learn and apply new ways of thinking. Students can examine discrepancies between personal values and behaviors that improve chances for both school and lifelong success.

DeKalb De LaSalle is a vocational and academic skills, job placement and GED program for young people ages 16

to 21 who have been unsuccessful in the traditional educational setting. New students will undergo intensive testing and diagnostic services during their first three weeks in the program. These tests are carefully evaluated to place the student at the appropriate level of learning.

During the instructional phase of the program, students contract with teachers to meet a specific goal. If a goal is not met, a new contract is negotiated.

The counseling component provides intensive counseling in a variety of settings to students who need assistance staying away from drugs and alcohol, dealing with anger and violence, seeking job placement and college outreach, and handling problems related to pregnancy and parenthood.

DeKalb Alternative School (DAS) provides an opportunity for DeKalb County students to continue their education during the time they have been excluded temporarily from their home schools for disciplinary reasons. Students may not return to their home school while attending DAS. Students who successfully complete courses while at DAS may use these credits toward graduation or promotion requirements.

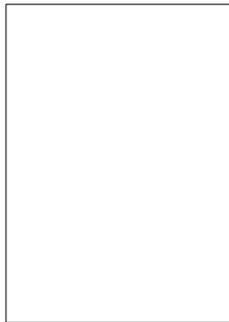
Open Campus High School, an alternative secondary school program, provides an educational opportunity to:

- high school seniors wishing to enter college or join the work force early;
- students who need to make up courses for graduation;
- students who have dropped out who are seeking education while they remain employed; and
- married students.

Open Campus enrollment is available to DeKalb County residents 16 years of age who have complete 150 quarter hours toward a diploma and have passed all three sections of the Georgia Basic Skills Tests.

Prepared by Garry McGiboney, director of student relations and school psychologist for the DeKalb County School System in Decatur, Georgia.

Top concerns: violence and drugs



Publication of the *26th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools* shows a shift in public perception of schools' problems. For the first time, "fighting, violence and gangs" moved to the top of the list to tie with "lack of discipline" as the biggest problem facing schools.

The percentage of respondents ranking the following causes of increased violence in schools as "very important" were:

- increased use of drugs and alcohol among school-age youth, 78 percent;
- growth of youth gangs, 72 percent;
- easy availability of weapons (guns, knives), 72 percent;
- a breakdown in the American family, 70 percent;
- schools lacking the authority to discipline that they once had, 65 percent;
- increased portrayal of violence in the media (especially in movies and on TV), 60 percent;
- inability of school staff to resolve conflicts between students, 59 percent;
- shortages in personnel, 52 percent;
- trying to deal with troubled or emotionally disturbed students in the regular classroom instead of in special classes or schools, 51 percent;
- a curriculum that is out of touch with the needs of today's students, 48 percent;
- cutbacks in many school support programs, 45 percent;
- increased poverty among parents, 44 percent; and
- increased cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity among the public school population, 43 percent.

The authors point out that it is not until the seventh item on the list that the school has any responsibility. The first six problems are attributable to societal breakdown.

Respondents also considered violence reduction strategies for effectiveness, with the following rated very effective:

- stronger penalties for possession of weapons by students, by 86 percent;
- training school staffs in how to deal with student violence, by 72 percent;
- additional vocational or job-training courses in public schools, by 67 percent;
- drug and alcohol abuse programs for students, by 66 percent;
- values and ethics education for students, by 60 percent;
- education designed to reduce racial and ethnic tensions, by 57 percent;
- courses in how to be a better parent, by 51 percent; and
- conflict education for students, by 45 percent.

The National Parents' Resource Institute for Drug Education conducted its annual survey of high school students, and results from the 1993-94 school year show a rise in self-reported drug use among students in grades six through 12.

The survey covered 197,735 students who responded to the PRIDE questionnaires. They reported increased usage of cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, inhalants, hallucinogens, uppers and downers. Only two decreases (of slightly less than 1 percent each) occurred: incidences of either beer or wine cooler drinking by junior high school students.

In addition to drug use, the survey asked questions about violence. Of the high school students surveyed:

- 7.4 percent reported carrying a gun to school at least once during the past school year;
- 13.8 percent indicated they took part in gang activities;
- 7.5 percent thought about suicide "often" or "a lot";
- 35 percent threatened another student or a teacher at school;
- 27 percent had been in trouble with the police; and
- 35 percent feared being harmed by another student at school.

In all cases, alcohol and drug use was more prevalent among students who said they carried a gun to school, joined a gang, thought about suicide, threatened others, or got into trouble with police.

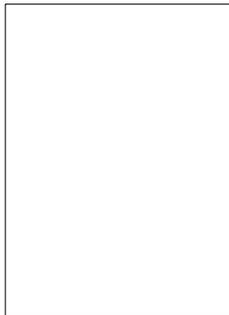
Protective factors such as good family management, attachment to school and attachment to community guard against drug use. A positive survey note involved all students who participated in school and community activities or whose parents had talked to them frequently about the dangers of drug use. Such students were 50 percent less likely to use drugs.

PRIDE president Thomas Gleaton referred to the protective factors and noted that "when prevention is practiced, prevention works. We (and that means every individual as well as government) must do more prevention."

The National Parents' Resource Institute for Drug Education, Inc., is an organization that provides parents with the training to prevent, recognize and intervene in their child's drug use. PRIDE, 1240 Johnson Ferry Place, Suite F-10, Marietta, GA 30068, 1-404-577-4500. For reprints of the Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll (minimum order of 25 copies for \$10), contact Phi Delta Kappa, P.O. Box 789, Bloomington, IN 47402, 800/766-1156.

Prepared by Sue Ann Meador, associate editor of School Safety.

Alternative schools: legislative response



Legislative responses to the alternative schools concept tend to reflect assessments of the needs of the juveniles in the jurisdiction. The laws that authorize and fund district alternative schools, therefore, range from the reactive to the proactive.

In description, reactive alternative school statutes focus on the efficient delivery of services to juveniles in need, including those who violate school codes of conduct and/or criminal laws. The state of Florida has provided the most recent model of such a law. The Dropout Prevention Act¹ is a broad-based alternative school statute designed "to authorize and encourage district school boards throughout the state to establish comprehensive dropout prevention programs."

The focus of the law is the creation of educational alternative programs which offer variations of traditional instructional strategies for students in grades four through 12. The purpose of these alternative programs is to increase the likelihood that students who are unmotivated or unsuccessful in traditional programs will remain in school and obtain either a high school diploma or its equivalent.

In Florida, the alternative school concept is also designed to keep schools from expelling juvenile delinquents into the streets for further exposure to criminal activity. The legislature specifically urges school boards to "include in these provisions alternatives to expulsion and suspension, such as in-school suspension."² However, the Florida alternative school is not a detention substitute. Suspensions and in-school suspensions from

the regular school programs are limited to 10 days in duration. Student participation is voluntary.

The Florida alternative school concept is a comprehensive solution based upon the findings of the legislature that "traditional education programs [that] ... do not meet certain students' educational needs and interests may cause these students to become unmotivated, fail, be truant, be disruptive, or drop out of school."³

School districts are encouraged to cooperate with other local agencies to provide alternative programs for juvenile groups with varying needs, including teen parent programs, substance abuse prevention programs, disciplinary programs, youth services and community-based dropout prevention programs.

An alternative schools program of a more proactive character is modeled by the state of Minnesota. The American Indian Education Act⁴ sets forth a detailed directive for alternative language and cultural education programs encompassing pre-kindergarten through high school. This alternative school concept makes "the curriculum more relevant to the needs, interests, and cultural heritage of American Indians pupils."

Schools are provided with guidelines and resources for following this directive, including:

- instruction in selected American Indian languages;
- inservice training and technical assistance in teaching American Indians;
- research program to help teachers and administrators relate to American Indian pupils;

- counseling for American Indian students;
- modification of curriculum; and
- cooperative liaisons with nonsectarian nonpublic, community, tribal or alternative schools and the ability to contract with these organizations to fulfill program components.

Although the school districts are required to establish these programs, participation by students and the community is voluntary. Schools are directed to make affirmative efforts to encourage participation. The program is not restricted to American Indian pupils, but school districts are directed to give priority to them in the event that participation is limited. Students enrolled in nonpublic schools may participate in these programs on a shared-time basis.

These cultural awareness programs are to be implemented within the schools. School districts are prohibited from assigning students to schools based on their participation in these programs in a manner that promotes segregation by race, sex, color or national origin.

The statute also mandates that American Indian pupils participate on an equal basis in subjects such as art, music and physical education or extracurricular activities. Instruction in these classes may incorporate aspects of American Indian heritage, but the inclusion of cultural history is not required.

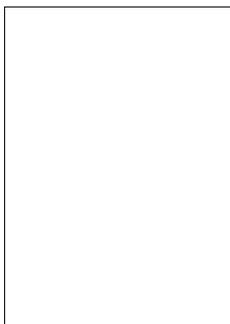
The Minnesota and Florida programs possess similar elements; both emphasize interagency cooperation. School districts are encouraged to work with local agencies, community groups and businesses to create a support system for students to insure that no juvenile slips through the cracks.

Endnotes

1. FLA.STAT.ANN. §230.2316 (West 1994).
2. FLA.STAT.ANN. §230.23 (West 1994).
3. FLA.STAT.ANN. §230.2316 (West 1994).
4. MINN.STAT.ANN. §126.48 (West 1993).

Prepared by Bernard James, special counsel for NSSC, and Pepperdine University law student Patricia Brennan. .

No duty to provide alternative schools



Discussions about alternative schools are really variations on the theme of education. When alternatives in schooling exist in a school district, it reflects decisions that educators and community leaders have made regarding the importance of providing access to education for a wide range of youths who may not be similarly situated. The assumption of the duty to educate — acknowledged and accepted — in communities and school districts with alternative school programs says much about their dedication to youth.

Suspension or expulsion is often a result of behavioral problems which threaten either the safety of students and teachers or the necessary order of the educational environment. But what happens to the relative safety of the community when a student is placed out on the streets?

Do educators have a duty to their communities to have alternative educational placements for these students? Can the courts of a jurisdiction order school officials to create alternative programs for juvenile offenders?

In *The Matter of Calvin Wayne Jackson, Jr., Juvenile*, a North Carolina Court of Appeals answered these questions by concluding that a court cannot place an affirmative duty on schools to provide alternative education programs for students who have been suspended.

In October 1985, Calvin Wayne Jackson was suspended from school for physically assaulting and threatening a student and teacher. Two days later, the student was separately charged with simple assault, breaking and entering

with intent to commit larceny, larceny of a firearm and carrying a concealed weapon.

In juvenile proceedings, the district court declared Calvin a delinquent but did not find Calvin's behavior so reprehensible as to require incarceration in a juvenile detention center. The court did not believe, however, that the student should be "left free to roam at will." The judge indicated that the student should be placed in some type of public school situation, and the board of education was invited to submit a proposal for an appropriate program.

No such program was available at the time, and the board failed to propose an alternative. The court determined that the school system had an obligation to provide such a program.

The court recognized the school's right to suspend students, but when countered by the court's responsibility to "fashion sensitive and appropriate dispositions" for juvenile delinquents, the court concluded that the school's decisions must sometimes be abrogated. The school system, however, was given the discretion to determine what type of program would be provided.

The board of education appealed. It sought both a limitation of the court's authority to compel school systems to accept suspended students and a determination that school systems are not legally obligated to provide alternative educational programs for suspended students.

The Court of Appeals ruled that the district court exceeded its authority in this case. The lower court had, in effect, required the school system to develop a

new program and to expend existing resources in doing so. The Court of Appeals concluded that the district court was limited to imposing participation in programs that were already in existence.

The most compelling reason for the Court of Appeals' determination was its finding that a court is limited in exercising its authority when a juvenile has been lawfully suspended. In North Carolina, the principal is empowered by statute to suspend or expel students who willfully violate conduct policies. The authority to suspend students includes both suspension from an individual classroom and suspension from the entire school system.

Despite a desire to harmonize the judge's authority to require school attendance with the principal's authority to suspend students, the Court of Appeals could find no legislative intent in the Juvenile Code to allow the lower court to interfere with the school's disciplinary procedures.

In this case, the Court rejects a "special needs" argument set forth on behalf of Jackson, citing statutes that prohibit normal disciplinary procedures against children with special needs. The court reminds us that behavioral or disciplinary problems cannot be the determinative factor for categorizing special needs students.

In fact, North Carolina's statutes are clear in the provision that if a "special needs" student is expelled, the school system is under no duty to provide special education-related services.

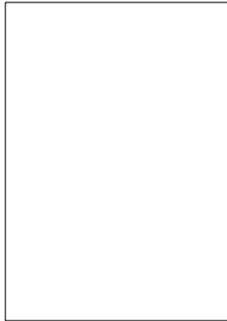
Interestingly enough, North Carolina provides the right to an education in Article IX, Section 2 of its constitution. However, the Court of Appeals held that the student's right to an education can be constitutionally denied when outweighed, under a due process analysis, by the interests in protecting other students, teachers and school property.

Endnotes

1. 84 N.C. App. 167

Prepared by Bernard James, special counsel for NSSC.

Valid evaluation: What is working?



the primary issue. The right person for the task is the key, and the implications for any program's success hinge upon understanding of this fact.

Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation, *Joseph S. Wholey, Harry P. Hatry and Kathryn E. Newcomer, eds. Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers, 1994, 602 pages.*

Another aspect of what works and what doesn't concerns the valid researched examination of a program's success. Does the program or service help those it is intended to help? Is it cost-effective? Do outcomes match objectives?

Comprehensive evaluation procedures can be expensive, and sophisticated analyses often require extensive staffing and lengthy time requirements. These evaluative items are unaffordable luxuries for programs operating on the proverbial shoestring budgets. Yet policy decisions affecting thousands of programs in both the public and private sectors are often made based on scant information, or no information at all.

The *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation* shows that there are ways to effectively assess a program's performance without resorting to full-scale sociological evaluations. Although the resultant data may not be as thorough or complex as the data from in-depth research, the editors note that "It is better to be roughly right than to be precisely ignorant."

This comprehensive text is not for the casual reader. Sections cover evaluation design, data collection, data analysis, and evaluation planning, management and utilization. There are technical aspects to some chapters, but the book as a whole is not overly so. Readability is excellent, and the information beneficial to managers, administrators, analysts, policymakers, school district personnel and professionals at all levels of government and private enterprise.

Prepared by Sue Ann Meador, associate editor of School Safety.

Urban Sanctuaries: Neighborhood Organizations in the Lives and Futures of Inner-City Youth, *by Milbrey McLaughlin, Merita A. Irby and Juliet Langman. Jossey-Bass, Inc., Publishers, 1994, 246 pages.*

Model programs are popular reading material for administrators and teachers, youth workers and volunteers. But in the search for a program with a proven track record, the desire to help often overrides the need to evaluate what type of program each particular situation demands.

Urban Sanctuaries: Neighborhood Organizations in the Lives and Futures of Inner-City Youth examines six different, successful youth programs. The authors' success criterion is simplicity itself: Does the organization/program attract and retain adolescents?

Successful programs, no matter how diverse in activity, have several things in common. Safety, in both the physical sense, from the dangers of the neighborhood, and an emotional sense, from society's negative assumptions that tend to strip away all vestiges of self-esteem from inner-city adolescents.

In programs where teens stay, they interact with adults who listen respectfully. Teens stay where there are opportunities to learn and to expand the physical and mental horizons imposed by the proscribed boundaries of their neighborhoods. Teens stay where they are offered real work and real responsibility. Teens stay in programs that have predictable environments with consistent discipline and a few clear, culturally appropriate rules. And teens stay where education is

valued, not as an end goal, but as the means to build a future.

"Adolescents vote with their feet," the authors write. "Youth from inner-city neighborhoods do not participate in organizations or programs ... when they are irrelevant or inhospitable to youth."

Even more important than programs' commonalities, however, is the nature of the person in charge. Each successful program is headed by someone who has a unique way of developing youth and giving them hope.

A single leader in each of these organizations has the drive and determination to make teens' futures a vision of promise. None of these leaders ignore the brutal realities of inner-city life, but none of them make the mistake that the youth they serve are "problems" to be fixed. Adolescence is a time of choice; these leaders know that they can and do make a positive impact in teen-agers' lives. Such leaders feel a responsibility to give to the community, and they do so by affirming its young people.

Policymakers and program organizers should let the message sink in. The cookie cutter approach does not work. Outsiders' assumptions that do not recognize participants' life goals and personal values doom a program, now matter how well-planned, to failure. Each neighborhood is different, and programs that work respect community history and community values.

What *Urban Sanctuaries* brings sharply into focus is this: The best intentions in the world aren't enough. Adequate funding, although often desperately needed and always welcome, isn't