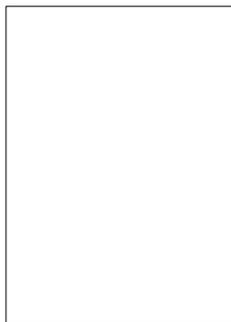


NATIONAL SCHOOL SAFETY CENTER

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Keeping gangs off center stage



By Ronald D. Stephens
NSSC Executive Director

Gang behavior and gang mentality continue to play prominent roles in the lives of many schools and communities. As more serious gang problems emerge, school administrators and teachers are beginning to recognize some of the early warning signs that may predict potential gang problems. A gang is often defined as two or more individuals who conspire to engage in illegal activity.

Gangs create a threatening and intimidating climate in both the school and community. Gang activity is not simply gang members intimidating rival gang members. Gang activity is the establishment of control and respect through a climate of fear.

Here are some of the things that school officials are doing to manage and control gang misbehavior.

Be honest. Admitting that gangs operate on your campus does not mean that you are a poor administrator. It means that you are an honest administrator. When school officials share their problems with the community, the community is much more willing to participate as a partner in the resolution of those problems.

Get smart. Train staff and parents to identify early warning signs. Early warning signs may include:

- graffiti on your campus. Crossed-out graffiti indicates that there is more than one gang and therefore the likelihood of gang rivalry in your area.
- certain students who always wear a particular color or dress style — for example, hats to the left or right, one pant

leg cuff rolled higher than the other, earring in left ear. Latin Kings typically sport anything toward the left; Gangster Disciples wear things to the right.

- students who flash gang signs or display symbols that are gang-related such as a pitchfork, a heart with wings (Gangster Disciples), a crown (Latin Kings), CK (Crip Killers), BK (Blood Killers), the number 187 (which is the penal code number for homicide in California), five-pointed star (Latin Kings) and six-pointed star (Gangster Disciples).
- a drive-by shooting or a “walk-by” beating at your school.

Establish a comprehensive dress code. Your dress code should clearly specify prohibition of “any apparel, jewelry, accessory, notebook or manner of grooming which, by virtue of its color, arrangement, trademark or any other attribute denoting membership in a gang or advocating drug use, violence or disruptive behavior.”

Make threatening gestures or stares (“hard looks”) actionable offenses. Students tend to act the way we allow them to act. Establish clear behavior standards. Enforce those guidelines consistently and fairly.

Remove graffiti promptly. The three R’s for dealing with graffiti are “Read, Record and Remove.” Graffiti is a message board that can alert school officials or law enforcement to an upcoming event. For instance in Tempe, Arizona, police officials discovered that local gangs would often telegraph through graffiti their intent to commit a drive-by shooting. By reading the graffiti and taking appropriate inter-

vention measures, law enforcers were able to preclude such activities. Take a picture of any graffiti. It could be important to the future prosecution of school crime. Remove the graffiti promptly, preferably within 24 hours.

Do not close the school doors at 3:15 p.m. Provide wholesome activities for young people. When recreation or specialty activities are not provided, young people must resort to their own creativity, which may include belonging to a gang.

Work with the police. A close partnership with law enforcement is critical. This partnership may include placing a police officer or probation officer on campus and could also involve better information sharing. In Texas, when a juvenile is arrested in the community, law enforcement officials are required to notify school officials verbally within 24 hours and in writing within seven days.

Control campus access. Control both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Minimize the number of entrance and exit points. Ensure that those locations are naturally supervised. Implement visitor screening procedures.

Create a partnership with other youth-serving professionals. Work with probation officers and the courts in developing appropriate behavior, education and supervision plans for disruptive young people. Educators should be included as partners in determining the conditions of probation. Create inter-agency partnership agreements that make this cooperation possible.

Ask students for help in reporting weapons and in supporting a locker search policy. Students have a great personal interest in keeping the campus safe and secure. Make certain they are involved in developing, implementing and evaluating safe school strategies.

Get parents on your side. Meet with parents to discuss the signs and symbols of gang activity. Work with parents to develop positive alternatives to gang membership and to discourage gang involvement.

Believe that you can make a difference — because you can!

**NATIONAL
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CENTER** 

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 goals are 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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About the cover:

Innocent-eyed youngsters "hanging out" together in sharp contrast to huddled groups of dispirited youth on the fringes of mainstream citizenship. Steely glances, intimidation and gang rivalries replace youthful friendships. Only caring communities can stop the erosive effects of gangs. Photo by Tony Stone Images.

CONTENTS

Features

4 Working with gangs on campus

by Steven W. Donahue

8 Asian youth gangs: basic issues for educators

by Donald W. Kodluboy

13 Girlz in the 'hood

by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Operation Safe Streets

20 School, police and probation: a winning team in Fresno

by Robert E. Hamilton

23 Drugs in high school — the disturbing truth

by Jeffrey L. Morelock

28 It's time for zero tolerance

by Donald J. Fielder

30 Between hope and fear: students speak out on violence

by National Institute for Citizen Education in the Law

33 A call for information

Updates

2 NSSC Update

31 National Update

32 Legal Update

34 Resource Update

Resources

18 NSSC Publications

19 NSSC Resources

36 NSSC Subscriptions

Establishing an atmosphere of respect, consistency and fair treatment will encourage students to accept responsibility for their actions on campus.

Working with gangs on campus

Since becoming a secondary school administrator, I have become increasingly concerned with gangs and their effects on a high school campus. Our school site in Tracy, California, is near Deuel Vocational Institute, the reputed birthplace of the Nuestra Familia or Norteño gang family. Despite gang presence in our area, there is very little gang activity on our campus. Gang members attend our school but do not obstruct the educational process except on rare occasions.

When first recruited as an assistant principal, I had been a classroom teacher for 22 years. I had little knowledge of gangs. My principal was able to teach me a great deal about gangs. In addition, two Tracy police officers taught me about gangs in general and about the specifics of local gangs. It was the best two hours of preparation that I have ever spent.

Elimination policies ineffective

Many schools have attempted to eliminate gang members from their campuses. I know of no administration that has been successful in effecting an elimination policy. Many of today's gang members or "gangbangers" are third- and fourth-generation gang members. Their

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grandparents and parents were involved in gangs. Their friends and siblings are also gang members. Nothing the schools can do will prevent students from joining gangs. Gang members do not accept as their own any other form of association. The gang is their family and cannot be eliminated from their lives.

It is not our school's policy to try to eliminate gang members from campus. We seek instead to eliminate gang activity and its detrimental effects on our campus. School administrators cannot control what gang members do on their own time, but we can attempt to control what occurs on campus.

We have established our campus as a "neutral zone," similar to a neutral zone in a war. This concept has been for the most part understood and accepted. In nearly three years, only one incident occurred that was gang-initiated — mutual combat between two students who were members of opposing gangs. While other schools in the area have experienced gang activity on a regular basis, our school has the gangs without the gang activity. This feat has been achieved by working with the gang leaders and prominent gang members who attend our school.

Identifying gang members

There is no method that can easily identify all the gang members on a given campus. We use a 10-point system that is

fairly common among school systems and police departments. In this system, individuals are assigned points based on particular circumstances or conditions. The point system is as follows:

- Individual's name as a gang member is given to the police by a confidential, reliable informant: 8 points.
- Person's name is listed on a legal document designating him/her as a gang member: 8 points.
- Person claims to be a gang member: 7 points.
- Person wears gang tattoo/s: 7 points.
- Individual appears in a photograph with other gang members: 4 points.
- Individual is seen associating with at least three known gang members: 3 points.
- Person is named by a gang member: 3 points.
- Person has a gang publication in his/her possession: 2 points.

If the individual's total equals 10 or more points, s/he is considered to be a gang member. If the total is five to nine points, s/he is considered to be an associate or a "wannabe," only marginally involved with a gang. If the total is one to four, s/he is not considered to be a gang member.

There are, of course, other indicators that parents and school officials should look for:

- a sudden, marked change in attitude;

- an observable change of friends;
- former friends carefully avoiding his/her company;
- a change in dress style (particularly if s/he begins wearing one particular color on a regular basis); and
- the presence of gang symbols/script on books, notebooks, apparel or parts of the body such as arms, hands or fingers. (In our area, examples include “Sur,” “Norte,” “14,” “13,” “XIV” or “XIII.”)

None of these “symptoms” by themselves are conclusive; however, observation of a number of them constitutes a profile that should be a source of concern.

The best indicator of gang activity is known gang members hanging out with one another on campus. Some members may be gang-involved only on the campus itself; they don’t run with the gang at any other time or location. Nevertheless, such individuals *are* gang members and should be considered as such. They can be just as dangerous as the 24-hour variety.

Identifying gang leaders

Identifying gang leaders is critical, but such confirmation can be a difficult process. Many gangs do not want their “patrón” or leader identified. Leaders very often carry no indicators that they are even in a gang, let alone the leader. Leaders sometimes do not even dress like other members. Leaders may not have any gang writing on their possessions. Leaders rarely participate in any of the gang’s everyday activities or crimes. Participation might identify them as leaders.

Leaders carry no weapons. If a leader requires a weapon, someone else takes it to the desired location and disposes of it when it is no longer needed. Other gang members carry drugs for the leaders. The only time that leaders have any contact with an illegal substance is when they actually use it. They never get caught possessing any illegal substance. Other members are more than happy to “take the rap” for their leaders.

Watching groups from a distance and unobserved can be an effective way to

identify gang leaders. Usually the leaders or major players can be determined by the way that they interact with others. For example, the leader may begin to walk in a direction and the group will “part” or make way for him. The group will walk to either side of him or behind him. When he stops, they stop. When he walks, they walk.

Another technique is to ask another administrator to approach a member with a request for information that is obviously intended for the leader. Observe this “contact” from a distance and notice to whom this member reports. On one occasion, this strategy revealed that the individual who I thought was the group “clown” was the leader. I repeated this identification process because I could not believe that this “joker” could actually be the leader. His joviality was all an act. On several occasions, I saw his disposition change dramatically to fit the situation. He changed in a moment from the clown mode to that of an experienced leader. Then he reverted to his jovial manner. Other members have since admitted that he calls the shots. This gang leader has subsequently been a great help in cooling down hot situations.

When you address an individual presumed to be a gang leader, if he responds to your request with “Why are you talking to me?” answer with “I think you can help me. If you can’t do it, who should I be talking to?” At the same time, begin looking over the other members of the group. If the individual still denies leadership, possibly you are talking to the wrong person or perhaps he simply will not allow himself to be identified. Continue with similar attempts. The individual may come around or at least indicate the person with whom you should be talking.

Working with gang leaders

The following are suggested strategies for working with gang leaders.

If you think that you know who the leader of a group is, approach him and begin to address him as you would any other leader with whom you deal. Show

respect to him without “cowering” to him. Respect or “face” is what gangs are all about. Tell him directly what you would like his gang to do or what kind of behavior you expect.

For example, if two gangs are facing off or “dogging” each other, I might approach one of the leaders and say, “I really need for you to move your people down to the end of the building. Would you please do that for me?” He might just start walking in the desired direction, with the others following him. If that occurs, he is the leader or designated spokesman. You have given him prestige, “juice” or clout with the rest of his gang because you as the administrator have approached him personally and addressed him like a colleague. Make sure that you move the opposing group in the same manner. Gang members want to know that you are treating both groups equally and not taking sides.

Once a leader is identified, deal exclusively with him on a regular basis. Except for isolated discipline cases, I deal only with the leaders, much like one would deal with a foreman on a construction site. Gang leaders can often accomplish much more with their followers than any school official could ever hope to accomplish.

Gang turf or territory

Turf or territory is important to gangs. They will mark it, define it, expand it whenever they can and most of all, defend it. Just as gangs claim turf in the community, they also claim turf or designated areas on a campus. The difference between gang turf on campus and gang turf elsewhere is that school turf is not generally a threat to nongang members. Noninvolved students can usually walk through one of these areas without even being aware of it. Nonmembers will not be bothered except by an occasional comment. If, however, a member of a rival gang moves into this area, the situation can quickly become volatile. Many gang confrontations on campuses can be avoided if school officials are proactive in dealing with gang leaders.

The school official should approach the encroaching group and ask, "What are you doing here? You don't normally hang here. Why aren't you where you usually hang?" Listen to the response carefully. Try to read between the lines for indicators of a possible conflict. If the encroachers don't respond, simply stay there and make small talk with them until they leave. If they remain, call for more school officials and start communicating with the leaders as previously mentioned. Do not wait until the situation escalates. Act immediately.

Documenting gang activity

School officials and local law enforcement agencies must document gang activity. It is a good idea to start a spreadsheet on "monikers." All gang members have a gang name or moniker. Each time you learn one, add it to the list. Many gang members are very protective of their monikers, especially the leaders. I maintain two versions of our moniker list. One is alphabetized by the monikers; the other is the same information alphabetized by last name.

I have over 200 names documented on these lists and regularly send updated versions to the local police department. Police officers have told me that these lists have helped them in more than one investigation.

I also maintain a photo album. Any student who exhibits obvious gang writing, apparel, photos, etc., is photographed and the picture is placed in the album. Generally, gang-involved students do not like this practice. (The police, however, do like it.) The police run the photo album through their scanner periodically to make a record of its contents. Being listed on my moniker list or having a photo in the album does not document anyone as a certified gang member. The album is not used to prosecute; it is only used to reference those who have been in possession of gang material or clothing.

Dress codes

No comprehensive high school should be

without an effective dress code. It should be updated yearly to keep up with current trends. The dress code is critical in dealing with gangs and establishing the campus as a "neutral zone." Furthermore, the dress codes must be enforced consistently and be applied to all students alike, from cheerleaders to gang leaders. Here is the portion of a school dress code that deals with gang apparel:

- Wearing apparel shall be neat, clean, safe and should not disrupt the instructional process.
- Wearing apparel that is sexually suggestive or that features crude or vulgar commercial lettering or printing and pictures that depict drugs, tobacco, alcoholic beverages, racial/ethnic slurs or gang affiliation is not acceptable.
- The wearing/displaying of gang-related apparel such as altered hats, hair nets and bandannas of any color is not allowed.
- Wallet chains 12 or more inches long will be confiscated for safety reasons.
- Oversized apparel — including baggy pants worn low on the waist, overalls with unfastened straps, and pants that are cut off below the knees (and worn with knee socks) — is not allowed.
- Belts which are extra-long with excess hanging loosely or belt buckles bearing initials that designate gangs are strictly prohibited.

In addition to the above stipulations, you may want to put specific restrictions on certain individuals as a result of their previous actions. For example, we have put some students on a "no red policy," which specifies consequences for wearing anything red on campus. (We take similar action for other colors if needed.) We also confiscate such articles as bandannas, hair nets and initial belt buckles and do not return them.

Searching students

In many states, only "reasonable suspicion" is required for school officials to search a student. However, police need "probable cause," which is a lot more difficult to prove than reasonable suspicion.

Two school officials should be in the room at all times during searches. Our procedure is as follows:

- Ask the student if s/he has anything in his/her possession that does not belong on a campus. Many times, the student will acknowledge that s/he does and will show it to you.
- Tell the student to empty contents of his/her pockets on the desk and turn the pockets inside-out. Check the pockets to ensure that they are empty.
- Check the wallet picture by picture. Gang members often document their affiliation with photographs. Some photos may be confiscated as evidence of gang activity.
- Students should remove shoes and socks so they can be checked.
- Before examining a backpack, purse or notebook, ask the student if it belongs to him/her. Even if the student claims not to own it, s/he is still responsible for its contents because s/he is in possession of it. Explain this before continuing the search.
- Search the backpack and/or purse. This search is sometimes best accomplished by emptying the contents on a desk and examining them while replacing the contents. A female gang member often writes her moniker on the pad of her makeup compact. Take the time to open all such articles and examine them thoroughly.
- Examine notebooks page by page for gang writing. (When I find gang writing, I ask what it is. The inevitable response is that "a friend wrote it" and "I don't know what it means.")
- Confiscate all bandannas. When a bandanna is folded and pressed in a particular fashion, it becomes a "rag". These rags are draped out of a pocket, tied around the head, or wrapped around a club or fist when fighting. They are a badge of membership in a gang and a challenge to other gangs.
- Take apart all ink pens to check for narcotics inside or examine for use in snorting narcotics. Some knives are cleverly disguised as ink pens and hairbrushes. Paggers may have drugs in

- the battery compartment. Always remove the battery and examine the compartment. Exercise caution when handling pagers. There is actually a device that is designed to look like a pager but that fires a .22-caliber bullet.
- Check everything. If anything looks suspicious, check it twice. It is a good idea to have the other school official watch the student's facial expressions while the search is going on. Sometimes the student's glance will expose a hiding area. If a student has anything gang-related in his/her possession, take a picture for the album.
 - Turn over all confiscated items to the police or to the juvenile probation officer. If the student or parents wish to retrieve confiscated items, they must deal with the appropriate agency. Usually people do not pursue the issue.
 - Parents should be notified if their child has been searched; give them both the reason for the search and the results. Some school policies require that parents be notified prior to the search. Either way, it is much better for the parents to hear about the search from school officials rather than after the fact from the student. If the student prefers to have the parent present during the search, try to accommodate such a request.

Law enforcement agencies

Schools reflect the communities around them. If there are gangs in a community, there are gangs on campus. As a rule, police are very interested in the gang activities on campus. Law enforcement appreciates any assistance that school administrators can give in this area. In turn, the police are a very good source of information to school officials. However, school officials should realize that there cannot be a free exchange of information due to confidentiality laws. The police will tell what they can. Do not press for more.

Make every effort to establish and maintain good relations with local law enforcement agencies, assisting them in any way possible and benefiting from reciprocated help. For instance, when our

new high school campus opened, gang members came from cities an hour away to establish new turf on campus. The Tracy Police Department discouraged this type of behavior in a way that school administrators could never have attempted. Regularly exchanging information has helped the Tracy police keep many of the nonstudent gang members and "cruisers" away from campus.

Dealing with parents

No parents are capable of being completely objective about their own child. Telling parents about their child's gang activities is no easy task. Parents do not want to believe that their child is gang-involved. I once showed a mother her son's gang tattoo. She was totally unaware of her son's gang involvement until that moment. I have had similar experiences with group photos of gang members. When parents see their son or daughter in a picture — wearing gang apparel and throwing gang signs towards the camera — they are shocked and hurt.

As stated earlier, many students are gang members only at school. Law enforcement officials say that these kids live a "secret" or "double" life. Parents cannot understand how a daughter or son can be involved in gangs if s/he is home every night. These parents are the most difficult to convince.

Some parents continue denial even after confronted with concrete evidence. In such cases, I usually tell them that their child's activities and appearance could lead to the child's being "mistaken" for a gang member and assaulted by a rival gang. This explanation is easier for the parents to accept and usually brings about cooperation. For the parents who accept that a problem exists, counseling should be recommended.

Educating the faculty

To ignore the presence of gangs on campus is both naive and foolish. Teachers should be aware of gang graffiti and gang symbols. They should be informed about what to look for in the event of a confrontation in or near their classrooms. Teach-

ers also should be advised on how to deal with gang members. A teacher who continues to verbally harass or humiliate gang members is asking for trouble.

Teachers can be a tremendous resource in dealing with gangs, but teachers must be prepared. Teachers are often the first to spot gang writing and graffiti on a notebook or backpack. When a campus is tagged with graffiti, administrators should take pictures and distribute copies to the faculty, asking for their help. Chances are that a teacher will spot that identical tag or moniker on a notebook or even written in the margin of an assignment, possibly leading to apprehending the tagger.

Consistency

School officials must be consistent in dealing with gang activity on campus.

- Establish a policy and stick with it.
- In the face of negative responses from any student, refer to the school discipline code.
- Explain that all students, parents and school personnel are mutually bound by such codes.
- Ask that students restate circumstances of their actions and those of the school administrator to ensure mutual understanding of the problem and actions taken.
- As a mark of respect, end an encounter or discipline session with a handshake.

It is sometimes difficult to understand or accept gang memberships and activity. Some young people view belonging to gangs as a matter of necessity. Others belong because not to belong would be to turn their backs on their families and friends. Anything else would seem completely alien to them. It is not productive to blame these students for their involvement in gangs. School administrators would instead do well to focus on establishing a mutually respectful working rapport with all students, gang members included. An atmosphere of respect, consistency and fair treatment will encourage students to accept responsibility for their actions on campus.

Showing respect for individuals, their cultural backgrounds and their traditional family roles and values is imperative and should be the basis for communicating with youth of all ethnicities.

Asian youth gangs: basic issues for educators

The problems presented to schools by Asian gang-involved youth are neither overwhelming nor insurmountable. Facing the problem of any type of gang activity requires administrative foresight and commitment to peaceful problem prevention and resolution. Vigilance, close supervision, respect for students, high expectations of respect from students to adults and to each other, cultural sensitivity and commitment to building a strong sense of community can help prevent problems, strengthen positive student behavior and mediate against the culture of gang violence.

Before 1975, Asian gangs were largely limited to disaffected Chinese youth living in the "Chinatowns" of larger cities. Such youth, alienated from the greater community, were also largely marginalized within the Chinese community itself due to a variety of social and economic conditions.

Prior to the departure of American forces from Viet Nam in 1975, the stereotypical American concept of Asian gangs derived largely from the image of San Francisco tongs or triads of an earlier era. Since that time, the image of

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Asian gangs has changed to include new immigrant groups, such as Vietnamese, Vietnamese-Chinese, Laotian, Cambodian and Hmong gangs, which can now be found in communities across the nation where recent Southeast Asian immigrants have settled.

Triads are enduring, secret societies, born of political turmoil in China during the 1600s. Modern-day triads are generally viewed by law enforcement as criminal organizations. Conversely, tongs or family associations are primarily legitimate organizations, which formed in America during the 1800s to provide social and financial support systems to new Chinese immigrant communities.

The path toward development and evolution of youth gangs within Hmong, Laotian and Cambodian cultures — and to a lesser extent, some current Vietnamese and Chinese independent youth gangs — closely parallels the development of ethnic gangs of an earlier era. Early Italian, Jewish and Irish ethnic gangs in America, to cite a few, were born of the same isolating forces now experienced by this latest immigrant group.

Racial and language isolation are common for recent immigrant groups, both for reasons of self-selection and rejection by the community in which they settle. Some adults dream of a return to their homeland and intentionally limit their acculturation. Language-isolated immigrant adults who do not learn the

predominant language and customs of their new homeland often find themselves estranged from their own English-speaking children and separated from the greater community. Thus a generation gap often expands within a single family and between the immigrant and the greater community as well.

Other immigrant adults develop a true bicultural orientation. A few totally adopt the language and mores of their new country. In any case, although their elders may not quickly assimilate, most youthful immigrants do. They learn English, adapt to the common youth culture and generally respond to their parents' cultural orientation in positive and productive ways. Relatively few such youth develop maladaptive social responses, which may include joining a youth gang. Nonetheless, it is imperative to recognize the negative influence of the racial and linguistic isolation that many Asian youth face in school.

Prevalence of gang involvement

It is critical to remember that gang membership for school-age youth is usually limited to only a small percentage of age-eligible youth, regardless of prevailing social conditions. While in some highly isolated neighborhoods or in particular schools gang membership may be high, it is estimated that typically less than 1 percent and rarely more than 3 percent of age-eligible Asian youth in a

given community are involved in gangs.

Gang-involved youth tend to be those who feel only marginally related to their own community and to the greater community. Some gang-involved youth come from reasonably stable homes, are good students, and are generally respectful and well-behaved in supervised settings. Such youth often hide gang membership from their parents. More commonly, however, gang-involved youth are often poorly supervised, frequently truant or tardy students who are in conflict at home, at school and in the community. Younger gang members may be only marginally gang-affiliated and thus are highly amenable to retrieval from gang life. Others may participate in delinquent gang activity and move inexorably into a life of crime and participation in organized, gang-directed criminal activity.

Asian youth can be influenced to engage in criminal and gang activity if gang-generating and -maintaining forces exist in the communities where the youth live. Despite the historically low levels of Asian youths' criminal involvement, recent trends in several American cities suggest dramatically rising arrest levels for some such youth, primarily due to gang-related criminal activity. The presence of divisive forces such as social, economic and racial sequestration in a context of misunderstanding and intolerance of other cultures is as sure to support gang presence in Asian communities as it is in other communities.

Influences in gang formation

The social group to which the gang belongs may determine gang structure and significance. Gangs may arise and form their structure either as an accepted or as an unofficial subset of established community groups. For example, youth who join soccer teams, community associations or church groups may form gangs within such groups with or without the knowledge of supervising adults. In some instances, criminally involved adults affiliated with a generally legitimate social organization may influence and provide support for youth gang development

within the structure of the organization. Though generally not sanctioned by the community elders, such gangs may nonetheless derive some support from acceptance or tolerance within the sponsoring group. Therefore, legitimate social structures may provide the converging and cohesive forces necessary to allow a gang to form.

For other Asian gangs, formation may be independent of any recognized social structure in the community and may even be formally rejected by the community. Gang members may be viewed as outcasts or "lost boys" within both the immediate and the greater communities.

As with other ethnic gangs that are an illicit part of their larger ethnic community, so are some gangs within the greater Chinese-American community. The number of these illicit gangs escalated in the 1960s. While some Chinese youth gangs are largely independent street gangs, others are associated with influential members of criminally involved tongs, especially those involved with illegal gambling enterprises. The role of tongs or of individual members of the tongs in maintaining youth gangs varies. (Most tongs are legitimate business and social enterprises, long established in Chinese communities across North America.)

Some Chinese gangs are involved with Hong Kong-based criminal triads. It is estimated that several thousand high school youth are recruited into the triad youth contingents each year in Hong Kong. In some cities, youth gangs maintain a formal but variable relationship with criminally influenced tongs or Hong Kong-based triads. These gangs may engage in both tong-related and independent criminal activity, especially extortion and robbery. Responding to stepped-up law enforcement pressure, Chinese youth gangs in other cities are increasingly separate and independent of tong influence or shelter.

Ethnic Vietnamese or ethnic Chinese-Vietnamese gangs are also a known, recent illicit subculture within their greater communities. Vietnamese youth gangs may develop independently of

adult influence or may arise when adults within the community develop influence over youth gang members, introducing them to more organized criminal activity. For example, within Vietnamese communities, a new form of gang is becoming well-known. It is called the "hasty gang" — a loose, quickly formed, mobile, nomadic gang that forms and disbands following a brief crime spree such as home invasions or burglaries of occupied dwellings. These gangs commonly lack adult leadership or organization.

Conversely, ethnic Hmong, Laotian and Cambodian gangs were largely unknown in their homelands prior to such ethnic groups' relocation in the United States following the Vietnam War. No history of development or maintenance of modern youth gangs in these cultures has yet been documented.

Many Asian youth gangs originally formed in American cities as protection or fighting gangs. The reasons for their formation in the absence of any historical or cultural basis include racial, geographic, economic and linguistic isolation as well as direct rejection by established community groups within the new communities where the recent immigrants settled.

Simple imitation of gang behavior present in other ethnic communities is the most likely explanation for the visible identifiers of gang life which have been adopted by Southeast Asian youth. For example, Cambodian and Hmong gang members in several American cities have adopted the dress, slang, nicknames, hand signs and names of Black and Hispanic gangs of the West Coast and Midwest. Many Hmong, Laotian and Cambodian gang members tell of forming self-defense groups following assaults or intimidation by other ethnic gang members. Groups have clashed when competing for space and status in public housing complexes in several American cities.

Other Southeast Asian gang youth report joining protective gangs to allow safe travel to community areas where they might be victimized. Still others

who live in locations remote from urban centers elect to join ethnic affinity groups or form gangs or “proto-gangs.” They then may choose common identifiers initially for no other reason than to be together with friends having similar backgrounds and experience.

Asian gang stereotypes

Even in 1996, it is common for educators to assume that all gangs, including Asian gangs, are basically the same. However, Asian gang structure, activities, status in the ethnic community and greater community, relationships with other ethnic gangs and roles in the schools vary according to several factors. These variables include the following:

- degree of social isolation, such as living in public housing, in “Chinatowns” or in newly formed “Asia Towns”;
- rejection and mistreatment of Asians by proximate populations;
- acceptance or rejection in schools;
- exposure to gang-organizing forces;
- lack of access to culturally appropriate social and recreational opportunities;
- employment policies discriminatory against Asians; and
- the presence of other gangs in the neighborhoods surrounding Asian enclaves.

The term Asian gang itself may be so overly broad that it inhibits learning about gang-participating youth and developing culturally appropriate responses to gang formation and evolution within a community. The term Asian includes East and Southeast Asian populations. These latter two broad categories include as many cultural dissimilarities as similarities between populations.

A general American stereotype is that all Asian youth and communities are the same. Unfortunately this invalid assumption is widely held and is extremely detrimental to understanding and interacting with Asian youth and their families.

Other common stereotypes of Asian gangs are that their gang members are more “vicious” than other ethnic gang

members, or that Asians are “all the same” and that they “do not have the respect for life” which Westerners have. These concepts are inaccurate and demeaning. Such beliefs communicate an extremely pejorative view of Asians in general. The fact that Asian family roles, values and religious beliefs often differ from some Western archetype of acceptability does not justify making such generalizations and judgments. In addition, available information suggests that an extremely small number of gang members commit most of the conspicuous violent acts attributed to Asian gangs.

The perception that frequent, extreme violence among Asian gang members is the norm may be due to the publicizing of many of the more violent gang episodes. These highly publicized violent crimes committed by some Asian gang members present a marked contrast to another public perception, that of Asian youth as quiet, respectful, academically high-achieving students. It is perceived that the strong family bonds within the Asian community provide a protective factor which largely inhibits *marginal* gang affiliation among Asian youth. Thus, age-eligible youth are seen either as avoiding gangs completely or as characteristically making a break with the traditional family structure and establishing a primary affiliation with a gang.

Many influences, including positive and negative stereotypes, have contributed to the rise of Asian youth gangs in the United States, not the least of which is the numbing of emotional responsiveness that can be seen in many recent immigrant youth. This dulling of personal affect may result in part from childhoods spent in border camps in Thailand or from horrific experiences in escaping Laos, Cambodia, China or Viet Nam. Such trauma can have significant and long-lasting effects for the youth and their families. Even children born of immigrants in America who have not personally experienced the effects of war or life in relocation and refugee camps nonetheless may suffer indirectly from the effects of such events upon their par-

ents, older siblings and other relatives. The experiential and cultural complexities underlying the observable behavior of ethnic youth within a given school district must be discovered and understood in order to respond effectively to the needs of such youth.

Basic cultural issues

Showing respect for individuals, their families and their cultural backgrounds should be the basis for communication with all people. It is especially important when dealing with Asian immigrant families to show respect for traditional roles and values, including a high regard for honesty and the sanctity of one’s promise, appreciation for education and work, and esteem for one’s elders and teachers. Most youthful Asian gang members are at least familiar with, if not accomplished practitioners of, basic aspects of both their own ethnic culture and their newly adopted Western culture. However, despite a given family’s or even individual gang member’s outward expressions of casualness and Westernization, it is imperative to be aware of and respect traditional roles within the family structure of the ethnic group to which each youth belongs.

Approaches to use with Asian youth

The following approaches are suggested to assist educators who work with Asian youth and their families.

- If an interpreter is needed, do not have the student provide interpretation except in a true emergency. Find an adult interpreter or wait until one can be found. For clan-based communities (i.e., Hmong clans), attempt to find a trained interpreter from the same clan, especially when disciplinary action is impending. Conversely, be cautious regarding unqualified interpreters when severe disciplinary consequences are being contemplated. Age-old rivalries can become entangled in what you may assume is a simple interpretation issue.
- When addressing adults, look directly at the adults, even if they do not speak English. When communicating with the

family of the student, first address the elder and then the primary person with whom you need to communicate.

- Do not speak to the interpreter or young person unless s/he is the person being addressed.
- Accept any courtesy offered by the student or family and respond to any requests to honor a family or to observe a household practice when conducting home visits (i.e., offers of food or drink).
- Remember to speak in a calm voice; do not show anger even when angry. Such behavior can cause you to lose the respect of the person with whom you are speaking.
- Do not make a promise you cannot keep. Clearly qualify any limitations of your offers of assistance when you are uncertain that you will be able to fulfill your promise to help.

• Respect the concept of “loss of face.” This term refers to causing the student or family unnecessary public embarrassment or humiliation. To cause an Asian student or family to lose face unnecessarily is a major mistake and is very counterproductive. When loss of face is inevitable, avoid exacerbating the situation as much as possible. Rather, do what is necessary and move on. Communicate your concerns; specify any consequences or contingencies which are necessary; accept apologies or offers of conciliation. Allow both the student and family, if at all possible, to salvage some self-respect (i.e., face). Correcting or punishing inappropriate behavior without damaging the family name is difficult and sometimes impossible. Students have been ejected from their homes for dishonoring their families. Your efforts to show respect, even in severe circumstances, are necessary and will allow you to be more effective within the community in the future.

- Learn basic cultural imperatives for the ethnic groups with which you deal most often. For example, do not pat the heads of small children from Buddhist families; learn to distinguish between child abuse and marks on students who have received “coin rubbings” from shamans as part of healing rituals; dress

professionally and modestly on a home visit; avoid casual posture; avoid crossing your legs except at the ankles. Seek out and provide staff inservice training from community elders on basic cultural norms and practices, especially child-rearing practices. Community leaders and elders may or may not be the same persons within the ethnic group. Listen carefully and ask questions. Asian community members do not expect Westerners to be well-versed in their cultural imperatives but do greatly appreciate any deference you may learn and express.

- Study hard and learn the names of Asian students with whom you deal most often. Despite the fact that many names are indeed difficult for Westerners to learn and pronounce, to both give and gain respect it is imperative to take the time and make the effort to learn complex names. For example, do not interchange Yang and Vang in Hmong communities; they are different clans. Do not give English nicknames to Thai, Laotian or Cambodian children simply because you have difficulty pronouncing their names. Learn names, no matter how difficult it is to do so. It is not uncommon for young immigrant youth to change their names to Westernized nicknames or even to change their first names legally to stop the discomfort of listening to peers and teaching staff chronically mispronounce their names.

Program development

Programs aimed at reducing gang presence in Asian communities must do several things. First, all prevention and intervention programs must be made acceptable both to the traditional and elder members of the communities and to the primary target of the programs, Asian youth. Such programs must be planned and presented to the community elders and established leaders, mediators, educators and law enforcement officials. Imposing programs from the outside is at best unwise and will most certainly lead to program failure or rejection. Planning should be interactive and participatory for members of the community being ap-

proached. Program developers should learn as much as possible of the community’s history, both from literature and directly from community leaders.

Second, program developers must remain aware of the cultural dualism common to most gang-involved Asian youth. Gang-involved youth are constantly moving between cultures — that of their parents and that of the modern West. Asian-American youth are commonly fluent in both cultures and often in both languages. Recently arrived immigrant youth may have been born in Laos, may have moved among Thailand refugee camps, then settled in one American city and moved to still another to join family.

Cultural dualism has a second critical implication. Educators should remember that gang members may behave one way in the gang subculture outside of school and behave in a totally different manner while in school. Some gang-involved youngsters who appear reasonably well-behaved in school may be engaging in extreme criminal acts while associating with their gang outside of school. Both aspects of their behavioral repertoire are real and must be reconciled to effect any reasonable chance of intervention.

A significant issue for foreign-born as well as first-generation Asian American youth is the gap between their American-influenced expectations of their parents compared to their parents’ traditional manner of interaction. For example, Hmong youth may want their parents to praise their school efforts in the manner of parents of American youth. However, many Hmong parents have yet to develop or accept the expectation to praise their children in such a manner, and school officials often notice reluctance of parents to accept and express such praise. Meetings between school personnel and community members are a crucial means of discovering common ground for parents and their children and bridging such cultural gaps.

Third, program developers must support appropriate interconnections between school, community agencies and juvenile justice agencies. Such planners

must work with community-based crime prevention, community-oriented policing and community-based corrections providers in the ethnic community. Legally mandated or permitted communication between agencies can prevent problems and greatly mitigate those which appear unavoidable. A program such as the Asian Community Outreach Program in St. Paul, Minnesota, is an example of a highly effective and respected connection among social service agencies, public housing and the St. Paul Police Department. ACOP, now called A Community Outreach Program, links providers by co-locating police, community agency and public housing personnel physically within the public housing complexes that serve a high percentage of southeast Asian families.

Fourth, program developers must study currently available programs and texts on street gangs and locate and utilize multiple, legitimate and established gang resources in the community. Planners should utilize agencies and programs that emphasize cultural sensitivity, conventional role models and social expectations and that also provide high quality supervision of at-risk and adjudicated youth.

Finally, planners should carefully establish the credentials of any person offering expert or experiential advice, being wary of instant experts or consultants who quickly arise to offer their services to communities in crisis or conflict.

School safety and gangs

Providing a safe school environment, regardless of community gang activity, is a basic necessity. Educators must develop written school safety plans and have them approved and modified as necessary by the appropriate administrators and legal authorities employed by the school district. A basic school safety plan includes such components as dress and behavior codes; crisis response procedures; perimeter and within-school security measures and procedures; telephone and radio communication procedures; a format for communicating with parents

regarding emergencies and gang prevention information related to community gang activities, dress and behavior; and a format for exchange of information among appropriate agencies. It is also necessary to provide training for school staff, increasing their safety awareness and involving them in developing the safe school plan. Formulating a plan to deal with rumor control is also essential.

When planning for after-school events such as dances, for example, administrators should base the safety measures taken upon the severity of the gang problem in the area. A proportionate response to the gang problem is desired, with neither over- nor underreaction as the goal.

It is important to control access to the facility where the function is to be held, especially the parking lot and all entries. Other measures include: prohibiting gang clothing and other types of gang representation; providing highly visible supervision by adults known to students; and limiting site access to students only or to preapproved others, requiring all nonstudents to present a photo I.D. There must also be sufficient lighting; immediate access to high intensity lighting should problems occur; adequate support staff for conducting searches as necessary; uniformed security on the perimeter as necessary; the visible presence of a marked police cruiser near the main entrance as necessary; a high ratio of adult supervisors to students; and agreement ahead of time with a representative student committee as to the types of dancing and music that will be acceptable. Solicit support of local police to increase patrols in the area before, during and especially after the dance.

When schools develop a close relationship with parents and community leaders and with local law enforcement and their gang units, it is possible to inquire about current gang relationships and the probability of encountering problems at school functions. Participation of parents and community leaders is highly desirable to provide both community sanction and supervision.

While gang-related behavior should be discouraged, each student, especially the gang-involved student, must be valued, guided, supervised as necessary and always welcomed into the school community. The vast majority of Asian students have the same aspirations, strengths and assets as students from all other ethnic groups. The positive contributions from members of the Asian community to the greater society far outweigh the problems caused by a few.

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Law enforcement personnel must direct their attention to female gangs. The increasing involvement of females in the street gang environment warrants documentation and assessment.

Girlz in the 'hood

Gangs have existed in Los Angeles County since the early 1900s, and since that time, females have increasingly been involved in gang activity. Because of the heavy volume of violent gang activity and the propensity for male gang members to be more violent than their female counterparts, law enforcement agents acknowledge that they do not fully track female gang members or female involvement with gangs. Gang investigators estimate that the female gang population is between 10 percent and 15 percent of the active gang population, and that number is steadily rising.

Statistics indicate that girls become involved in gang activity at ages ranging from 11 to 18 years old. The criminal activity of females at age 11 is minor in comparison to criminal activity of male gang members of the same age. By the time gang-involved females reach 14 to 15 years of age, many are willing to do the bidding of their male counterparts. Such conduct usually does not involve heavy violence but is relegated to status offenses, such as incorrigible behavior,

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truancy or theft-related crimes.

"Gangbanging," a term used to describe general gang activity, is still primarily a male endeavor. Young girls may start to gangbang as early as the boys, but they tend not to remain active as long as the males do. Young females tend to be more involved in school and employment opportunities than are boys. Females are not as tied to their particular gangs as males are because females seem to be forced into adult responsibilities earlier. Girls who are involved in gangs often become pregnant in their early teens and must then assume the responsibilities that come with motherhood.

Ethnic gang "specializations"

Gangs in Los Angeles County vary in their extent of organization, criminality and operations, mostly due to the significant differences within their racial/ethnic backgrounds. Each ethnic group is associated with its own unique criminal activities. Significant differences also exist within ethnic groups. Such differences are due either to an individual gang's isolation from its original ethnic beginnings or to the influence of other groups that border the gang's boundaries. Investigators must be aware that what is true in one area is not necessarily true in another.

Black gang members tend to be involved in monetary-motivated criminal conduct, such as drug trafficking, robbery

and sex crimes. Hispanic gang members are inclined to be turf-oriented, displaying a great pride for their neighborhood gangs. Asian gang members tend to involve themselves in property crimes, such as residential and commercial robberies, extortion and auto theft. White gang members tend to be involved in organized property crimes, drug trafficking, racist crime and vandalism.

Gangs are formed in neighborhoods and are usually named after the city streets, parks, geographic formations or housing projects in which members live. Each gang has a number of different "cliques" or "sets" that can be divided by age, sex and geographic areas. On occasion, groups of friends will make up their own clique. As many as five cliques within a particular gang can be exclusively female.

Female gangs, sets and cliques

Female sets or cliques are not significantly different from male gangs, but may exhibit very unique styles and personality traits. Some female gang members get involved in violent crimes, while others may only commit misdemeanor crimes, such as shoplifting, joy riding and miscellaneous narcotics violations.

Female gangs traditionally have been thought of as auxiliaries to their male gang counterparts; in that role, female gang members have served as girlfriends, providers of sex or other physi-

cal entertainment, lures for rival gangs, spies, carriers of drugs and weapons, scouts and alibis.

Female gang members are more likely to belong to cliques or offshoots of male-dominated gangs and answer to that dominant male hierarchy. Few independent or "solo" female gangs exist apart from male gangs.

Within a gang, no one person is the leader or calls the shots. A common practice is for the more influential members of the gang or clique to call a meeting in order to make a decision. Everyone is entitled to participate in a vote or make suggestions concerning a particular decision. The younger girls will defer to the older girls (those with status), thus accounting for the loose structure found in most female gangs.

All gang members are potentially violent. Female gang members can become violent if provoked and should always be given the same attention that any law enforcement officer would give to a hardcore male gang member.

Females are showing an increasing amount of involvement in gang-related crimes, violent and otherwise. This point was reinforced during an interview with "Black Widow," a female gang member. She said that the women of the '90s are "taking care of business" while their male counterparts are in jail.

Law enforcement agencies in communities primarily in Orange County, California, have identified at least 27 female gangs. These gangs generally have between 10 and 20 members, ranging in age from 13 to 20 years old.

While the female gang members consider themselves equal to males with respect to their loyalty to each other, females tend to be more discreet than males. Although their activity level is increasing, female gang members are less boisterous or boastful of their gang involvement. Their clothing is less likely to be as bold as that of male gang members; female actions towards law enforcement are not as abrasive. Female and male gang members, however, should be considered equally dangerous.

While many gang members come from dysfunctional families, gang members are not particularly rebellious or hostile to their parents or family members. There is usually a strong sense of pride and regard for the family. At the same time, however, a lack of adult supervision or guidance allows gang members to seek excitement outside of the family. The young adult believes s/he can become "somebody" by belonging to a street gang.

Girls who become gang members seldom have anyone to direct them into positive alternatives or activities. They are influenced by dismal role models, either from the neighborhood or from their families. Lack of direction causes the girls to seek recognition. Being a gang member fills a need for belonging and provides relationships and an exciting social life.

Researchers have documented the powerful influence of peer groups on the adolescent. The need for peer approval and identity directs the social behavior of adolescents, who look up to each other rather than to the adult community for guidance. At school or in the neighborhood, young girls are attracted to a popular gang of girls and have strong desires to join. These impressionable girls are striving for peer approval, support and an identity; they feel joining a gang will fulfill these needs.

Becoming a gang member is how younger girls get recognized; they obtain status in a gang. Based on their criminal activities, girls can raise their status within the gang and among their peers. The more involved girls are in crime, the higher their status rises. The female gang member has the same basic need for status as the male. Her gang becomes her family and best friends. Her fellow members are the ones she feels will support her no matter what happens. They get high together, hang together, and laugh and cry together. Their real families thus become less and less needed.

Because of lack of parental guidance and supervision, such girls learn their morals and ethics on the streets from

their peers. At an early age, young female gang members engage in sexual intercourse with the male gang members. Often such girls become pregnant at the age of 12 or 13. When a female gang member becomes an adolescent mother, her future is limited. She becomes dependent both physically and financially on her family members to help care for her and her child. Such family dependency generally leads to dependency on the county welfare system. Many of the children born to gang mothers are destined to follow in their mothers' footsteps. There are no effective family support services to help such children escape this type of environment. Thus, the dependency cycle is perpetuated.

Reasons for gang membership

Females join gangs for many of the same reasons that males do. Common denominators among male or female gang members are troubled childhoods and/or dysfunctional families. Researchers say that the majority of females gravitating towards gangs have been victims of or exposed to incest, drug addiction, physical/sexual abuse and death.

Reasons for girls to join gangs may include one or more of the following:

- *limited job opportunities*: The only employment that may be available for girls lacking education may be household labor or minimum-wage jobs.
- *desire for independence*: A young female may choose not to be subordinate to a male, as her mother and grandmothers were. This desire may be especially true for girls from families in which female members are traditional wives, homemakers and caregivers.
- *avoidance of traditional responsibilities*: Females may not want the responsibility of raising children or taking care of others as their mothers did.
- *desire for freedom*: Girls may not want to experience the perceived social isolation of being a "housewife."
- *a sense of identity*: Females who may feel that they are powerless representatives of an "underclass" may also be-

lieve gang membership gives them increased status.

Interviews with 30 female gang members reveal a number of additional reasons that they joined gangs. A number of the more common responses are included below. Some of the Hispanics interviewed believed that being born and raised in the same neighborhoods as that of their male counterparts should entitle girls to join the gangs, too. These females felt the same need as the males to help defend their neighborhoods. Some of the girls came from generations of family members, both male and female, who had belonged to the same gangs. This family tradition makes not joining seem impossible.

“Black Widow” said it was “law” that she join a gang, since she had been born and raised in the neighborhood. Others said that they joined for the easy access to money and drugs and that, overall, drug-dealing was not a bad way to make a living. “Breezy” said she started gang-banging for the money when she was 18 years old; she used the gang for protection and backup while selling drugs.

Others stated that they joined gangs for protection from rival neighborhood gang members and from violence in the schools. However, the most popular reason given for gang membership was “for the fun and excitement, all the parties, and all the people that you meet. It’s a good way to meet good-looking guys!”

Male gang members typically brag to the females about shooting or fighting with a rival neighborhood gang. These tales make the females want to be part of the excitement and the notoriety. However, females have a hard time being accepted by the dominant males. Males dictate everything, yet the females want to be considered as equals. Consequently, females try to prove themselves so they will be accepted and can increase their status with the male members of the gang.

Males generally do not want females involved in the gang’s criminal activities; males fear that females will falter under pressure, violate the code of si-

lence and behave emotionally rather than rationally. Males think that females are not as loyal to the gang as males are.

Female gang initiation

The process for initiating new female gang members has evolved from years ago when it was common for a female member to be “sexed in” to a gang. The prospective female member had to have sex with some of the male members of the gang. Sex then became the females’ major function in the male-dominated gang world.

Now the most common method of initiating a new female member is the same as for males — getting “jumped in.” A specific number of female gang members attack the prospective member and beat her with their hands and feet. This process is timed to last from 60 seconds to five minutes. This ceremony is performed to test the new member’s ability to give or take a beating and to see how much “heart” she has, thus theoretically testing her loyalty to the gang.

If a female is from a family that is well-known and respected in the neighborhood, she can bypass the beating and just “walk in.” A female may also walk in if the gang members have known the initiate since she was a child, if she has already proven herself through her actions, and if her courage and loyalty are not in question.

Another initiation for a prospective member is to be sent on a “job” or mission that consists of committing a criminal act. “Baby Girl” said, “We used to drop a girl off in a rival neighborhood, and she would have to cross through it and paint her gang’s placa (logo), and then she had to get out of there alive!”

“Special K” said, “We send them on missions that are pretty dangerous, 211s, 187s, whatever.” (This refers to sending the prospective member out to commit a robbery or murder.) This statement also reveals gang bravado. In reality, murder is rarely performed as an initiation rite by the male or female gang member.

In the past, the quality of the gang member was an important factor. The

quality of a gang member was judged by the member’s personality and personal toughness. Because of the frequency of personal conflicts involving fistfights, the gang member needed the ability to handle himself in those situations. As a result of the increased use of firearms in today’s gang wars, hand-to-hand gang fights have become a thing of the past. Gangs are now more concerned with the quantity of members rather than the quality. The bigger the gang, the better.

After the initiation process is completed, a member is given her moniker (street name) by the existing members. A moniker usually represents a member’s personality trait or appearance. For instance, if the new member has green eyes, her moniker could simply be “Green Eyes,” but if she has a reputation for being a fighter, her moniker might well be “Boxer.”

Leaving the gang is a more complicated procedure than entering. Once a person has joined a gang, that gang becomes a surrogate family to the gang member. When a member wants out, the consequences could be deadly. Fellow gang members decide whether her reason for wanting out is acceptable. If a girl wants out to further her education, to get a job, or maybe even to start a family, she may be allowed to leave with the blessings of her peers.

In these types of cases, the girl may be allowed to “walk out,” or her homegirls may decide to jump her out. Being “jumped out” is basically the same as getting jumped in. The difference is that the beating is usually more severe. There may not be any time limitations. In extreme cases, the girl may receive substantial injuries. In rare cases, the beating could even be fatal. If her departure is considered “honorable,” a former member may, on occasion, be allowed to return to party with the gang and associate with her former homegirls.

Females and Black gangs

In Black gangs, females are mixed in with the male gang members and generally work side by side with the males, es-

pecially when conducting narcotics sales. Female Black gang members do not usually have their own cliques or sets and are considered family by the males. Younger females are initiated into the gang by the older females.

"Breezy," a Black female gang member stated, "We are all one gang. We all grew up together. We all from the same neighborhood so we all back each other up. We like one big family."

The most common gang activities among female Black gang members are drug trafficking and robbery. The role of the female gang member in drug sales is very important to the gang because females are rarely searched by male police officers. Thus, incorporating females into a gang can increase a gang's profit margin and ease the risk of discovery. Females are also less likely to be pulled over by the police while transporting narcotics or possessing firearms. For example, "Bubba" stated that she has been confronted by the police on over 100 occasions while in possession of narcotics, weapons or money. Her statement may be somewhat inflated regarding the number of times she was stopped; however, Bubba would not have been able to brag about this particular achievement if her presence had been taken more seriously by the local police. Bubba went on to say that in almost every one of these confrontations the police detained and searched her male companions and ordered her and all the other females present to "get lost."

The clothing styles and appearances of individual members of female Black gangs differ widely from each other. Some of the girls dress similarly to the males, wearing T-shirts and baggy khaki or Levi pants, including boxer shorts. Sometimes these outfits make it difficult to differentiate the females from the males. However, this style seems to be an extreme; the majority of the girls dress in ordinary clothing. Many times female gang members will wear either red or blue to signify street gang affiliation. It is important to observe the colors of clothing accessories worn. The accesso-

ries could be hair ornaments such as curlers or barrettes, belts, shoes, socks or sweaters. Girls may even paint their fingernails in the gang-appropriate color.

Black gang girls seldom use tattoos; however, if girls are so inclined, the most common tattoos are the names of boyfriends, girlfriends and their gang.

Females and Hispanic gangs

Female Hispanic gang members practice territorial domination much like their male counterparts and are similar in many respects to the male gang members. Females will sometimes act on their own initiative. Today, Hispanic females get involved in all aspects of gang crime from fistfights to drive-by shootings and other violent felonies. As these females become active participants in crimes, they reduce emphasis on subservient female roles of the past.

Female Hispanic gang members continue to be used in "setting up" rival gang members. The females lure the victims into the gang's territory; then the male gang members ambush the victims. On occasion, females drive the cars in a drive-by, while their homeboys, who hide in the back seat, do the shooting. Females are used as drivers because they do not appear as suspicious as males and they are not recognized by the rivals or the police.

"Baby Girl," a Hispanic female gang member, was asked in an interview, "Why don't girls start their own gangs?" She answered: "We have. We got about 10 cliques that are separate from the guys — the La Primas, Locas, Jokers, Tokers, La Pee Wees, you know. We are part of the guys, but we do our own thing." The Hispanic females may believe that their cliques are separate from the males, but the females also understand that if the males need help, females are expected to back males up (and vice versa).

Hispanic cliques or sets are usually divided by age. Even though members are from the same gang, the name of the clique will have a prefix denoting differences. For example, the older girls might

be called "Las Locas," and the younger girls might be called the "Tiny Locas." As the Tiny Locas get older and move up to Las Locas, they must still be initiated or jumped in by the older girls.

In most cases, the Hispanic females are not extensively involved in narcotics trafficking, but such involvement is increasing. Female Hispanic gang members are more typically abusers of narcotics, primarily marijuana, heroin and cocaine. Alcohol abuse and paint and glue sniffing are also widely practiced.

Many female Hispanic gang members can be easily recognized on first contact. They may wear the basic uniform or clothing that the men wear — Pendleton shirts and khaki or Levi pants. The clothing is usually dark, varying among black, blue and brown. Hispanic gang females seldom wear dresses. They also wear bandannas around their heads, affix bandannas to their attire or use bandannas as belts. Hair is usually long and full; sometimes it is dyed blonde or red. Facial makeup is usually thick and light in tone. The makeup on eyes and eyebrows is especially thick and dark. Each girl wears her own style of jewelry and often also a "chola band," a thick black rubber band that is tied around the middle finger of the left hand and pulled across the top of the hand and around the wrist. This band signifies that the girls are married to the "barrio" or neighborhood where their street gang is located. Female gang members may even have the chola band tattooed on the backs of their hands.

Most hard-core female gang members have tattoos; the most common tattoos denote gang affiliation, monikers and boyfriends' names. Three dots shaped in a pyramid — meaning "Mi Vida Loca" (My Crazy Life) — are often tattooed on the hand in the webbing between the fingers. Girls may have teardrops tattooed beneath the lower eyelid to signify that they are crying for their barrio or for a loved one in prison. Tattoos on the chest or back of crucifixes and rosaries indicate a willingness to die for their neighborhoods.

Females and Asian gangs

Female Asian gangs tend to be structured like female Hispanic cliques. Each female Asian gang is allied with one or more male gangs. Recently, these female Asian gangs have started to fight among themselves. A current trend is for female Asians to form individual gangs that are not associated with a male counterpart gang.

Asian girls who initially began their own gangs did so out of frustration because they wanted to be more liberated and involved in the criminal activities of their male counterparts. Filipino and Vietnamese female gangs have also begun to operate independently of their male counterparts. Korean females have been observed associating with male gang members; whether the females are active gang members is yet unknown.

Asian female gangs typically interest themselves in property crimes such as auto theft and grand theft property, and members have even been arrested for assaults on rival gang members. Many of the girls are runaways and join gangs at the ages of 12 or 13 years old. Since these girls are on their own, their strongest motivating factor is survival. They can and will commit any kind of crime in order to survive.

Male gang members use the females as bait to lure rival gang members and as lookouts and getaway drivers. These young women are commonly used in ruses to gain entry into intended robbery locations. Most people will open their doors to a young woman (as opposed to a young man). Once the doors are opened, the males enter and rob the residents. In return for their involvement, the female gang members receive a percentage of the profits.

Female Asian gang members have adopted the characteristics of the female Hispanic gang members when it comes to appearance, hair and makeup. They dress in a manner designed to differentiate them from their nongang or "square" counterparts in the community. Female Asian gang members tend to favor short black leather skirts and tops, black stock-

ings and spike-heeled shoes. Some female gangs have a "signature." The "Dirty Punks" gang members always wear red spike heels, and the "Silver Middle Girls" paint silver the nail of the middle finger of each hand.

These girls appear very young and innocent to the average person. This appearance disguises the girls' gang affiliations so they are not confronted by their parents, police and school officials. Asian girls will tattoo themselves by burning or cutting the design into their skin in inconspicuous places. These body designs are used in the same manner that other ethnic gang females use them and usually consist of gang logos, nicknames or boyfriends' names.

Females and white gangs

White street gangs tend to be involved in criminal activity involving property crimes, drug trafficking and hate crimes. The number of females involved in these groups is comparatively low. White females associate with these gangs because of boyfriends, money or drugs. Unlike members in Black and Hispanic gangs, these girls are not considered to be "official" gang members, but more like tag-alongs; these females are usually subservient to their male counterparts.

Females in outlaw motorcycle gangs are considered to be property and wear patches on their clothing to identify themselves as such. These women are older than the average street gang member and stay with a gang either because of fear or dependence on the male gang members. The females who associate with outlaw motorcycle gangs sometimes try to appear "average" in order to secure employment by government agencies, particularly police records bureaus, to gather intelligence information for their gangs.

Recommendations

Female involvement in gang activity is increasing. The severity of the offenses is also greater than that in years past.

For the female gang member, delinquency stems from myriad sociological

influences. Important among these causative factors is a girl's lack of desire to fulfill a perceived traditional social role within her specific race or culture. Gangs provide the girls with particular activities that in turn provide status, recognition and a sense of belonging. The girls identify with the gang, and they begin to live by the gang's values.

Belonging to a gang is not something taken lightly. Female members are willing to get beaten up at an initiation and to fight for their gang. That young girls allow the gang to separate them from their families and their traditional responsibilities exemplifies the magnitude of the problem.

There is a lack of literature, knowledge, intelligence and training about female gang involvement. Many people, including parents, school officials and law enforcement personnel, do not believe that females are actively involved in gang-related crimes.

Law enforcement personnel must focus their attention on female gangs. Such gangs' increasing involvement in the street gang environment and in society warrants documentation and assessment.

Society has accepted women in the work force and in upper management positions, but the public appears not yet ready to see women on the front lines of war or in battles in the streets. This dichotomous reasoning reinforces the need for law enforcement to handle the female gang problems with the same tenacity used on male gangs. Female gang members must be taken seriously. They commit criminal acts.

Any form of gang prevention must include a concerted effort directed toward female gangs. Prevention efforts must address conditions for girls both at school and at home, while girls are young, in order to provide them with positive role models during their impressionable years. Programs that deal with girls on a one-on-one basis have been shown to be effective preventive measures in keeping young girls focused on positive activities and in helping them resist pressures from family and peers to join gangs.

NSSC Publications

The National School Safety Center (NSSC) serves as a national clearinghouse 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, bullying and weapon use 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*, newsjournal 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, school security, attendance, dropouts, prevention and intervention programs, 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 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. The book presents the characteristics of bullies and bullying victims, and most importantly, 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 understanding 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 in 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 such rights have been dealt with in our laws and courts, and explains the resulting effects on America's schools. The authors cite legal case histories and cover current school liability laws. The book explains tort liability, sovereign immunity, the duty-at-large rule, the intervening cause doctrine and foreseeable criminal activity, and also addresses the significance to schools of these legal aspects. 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)

Student Searches and the Law (1995) takes a close look at the legality of conducting searches on the school campus. The book examines recent court cases concerning student searches, including locker searches, strip searches, searches by probation officers, and searches using metal detectors or drug-sniffing dogs. 80 pages. (\$12.00)

School Safety Work Book (1995) highlights prevention/intervention models that show promise in stemming the rising tide of school crime and violence. The loose-leaf notebook showcases more than 100 school- and community-based programs. Contact information provides a resource for those who may seek to replicate these successful programs. Contents target conflict resolution, gang prevention, social responsibility, substance abuse prevention, truancy reduction, violence prevention and weapons prevention. 125 pages. (\$20.00)

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.

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.

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.

Role Models, Sports and Youth covers a number of programs that link youth and sports: NSSC's urban school safety campaign that uses professional athletes as spokesmen; several organizations founded by professional athletes to help youth combat drugs; and 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.

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. Also included are interviews with principals in charge of schools where crises have occurred.

Student and Staff Victimization, first outlines schools' responsibility to provide safe educational environments, then covers strategies for dealing with victimization.

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

Display Posters

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

"The Fridge says 'Bullying is uncool!'" (1988) — William "The Fridge" Perry, former 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.

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Interagency cooperation, information sharing and increased school staff involvement have multiplied the effectiveness of school-based police/probation teams.

School, police, probation: a winning team in Fresno

Vandalism, car theft, drug abuse, gang affiliation and crimes of violence are both widespread and at epidemic levels in many public school systems. A recent *USA Today* news article called attention to the fact that violence is not just a problem within inner-city schools. Violent crime, drug abuse and gang-related crime rates are also soaring in rural schools.

Yet in most communities, there is little service coordination evident among the government agencies responsible for dealing with troubled youth. Most notably, school officials, police and local juvenile authorities are the ones who fail to communicate and coordinate efforts to eliminate these problems.

Consider for example a hypothetical student apprehended by school officials for spraying graffiti. Typically a uniformed police officer would be summoned to the school to deal with the offender. The officer would likely be unfamiliar with school operations (especially in larger cities) and might never have been on the school campus before. Even if the officer were familiar with the school, s/he would probably not know the offender, the school administrators or anyone else on campus. Similarly, school officials would likely not know police

procedures or the investigating officer because different officers are usually dispatched each time school officials call for assistance.

If the responding officer determined that a crime had been committed, s/he would arrest the offender and take this person to a local juvenile detention facility. The arresting officer would not discuss the probable outcome of the arrest and subsequent prosecution with school officials. Moreover, it is doubtful that school officials would discuss with the officer the level of school discipline, if any, intended for the student.

Both the arresting officer and the involved school officials might call the juvenile's parents to report the criminal behavior; however, neither would do so with any thought of coordinating efforts or of exchanging information that might benefit the offender, his/her parents, school officials or the police.

Communication and coordination problems also exist between police and juvenile probation officials. Even though an arresting officer may speak with intake officials at a detention facility, it is unlikely that s/he will have contact with any juvenile probation officer — much less the probation officer who decides if the case will be brought before a juvenile court judge or if the offender will be placed on informal probation, i.e., in a work program. Nor does a probation officer normally consult with the arresting

officer or school officials before proceeding with what s/he believes to be the most appropriate course of action to rehabilitate the offender.

Finally, it is not likely that either school officials or the arresting officer will ever be told the final disposition of the case, especially if the offender is placed on informal probation. The offender will probably return to school while awaiting adjudication. In many cases, the offender may commit additional crimes before the original offense has been adjudicated.

Although this scenario is repeated daily in many communities throughout the United States, a number of law enforcement agencies have developed alternative strategies to deal effectively with juvenile offenders who become involved in crimes on school campuses. This article discusses an alternative plan developed in Fresno, California, that has evolved into a model of interagency cooperation between the Fresno Unified School District, the Fresno Police Department and the Fresno County Probation Department.

Campus-based police investigators

In 1968, the Fresno Police Department, in an attempt to improve the police department's image among youth, assigned seven officers to work in the junior high and elementary schools as school resource officers (SROs). These

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officers were based on school campuses. The officers' exclusive assignment was to promote effective community relations between students and the police.

The Fresno Police Juvenile Bureau was reorganized in 1974, and the seven SROs were reassigned as juvenile detectives to each of the seven area high schools and their feeder schools. (Police administrators thought that this measure was necessary to stem the rise of juvenile crime.) Each detective received an office at a high school, wore street clothes instead of uniforms and followed up on crimes that either occurred on the campus or involved the assigned school's students. Detectives generally conducted follow-up investigations on thefts, burglaries, sex crimes (involving students as both suspects and victims) and robberies.

Initially, these investigators did not assume the role of "first responder" to reports of crimes on school campuses. Even if a juvenile detective was on campus at the time of an incident, a patrol officer usually handled the initial investigation. Only on rare occasions did a detective actually respond to an initial campus crime call. Over time, calls for police service steadily increased, and overburdened manpower resources were unable to meet those demands. It became necessary for the role of the juvenile detective to change.

By 1982, the juvenile detectives handled most calls for police services on and immediately around their respective school campuses; patrol officers were seldom dispatched to a campus. Job titles changed as well; juvenile detectives became known as juvenile tactical officers, or juvenile TAC officers. These officers also responded to police calls at middle schools and elementary schools within assigned high school "pyramid" areas.

Today, these officers (a few of whom are the original juvenile detectives) still respond to nearly every call from high school campuses. Because of the increased student population within the city and the resulting activity levels at the high schools, juvenile TAC officers seldom respond to the calls from middle

school campuses. These officers are, however, still responsible for conducting complete investigations, pursuing leads and arresting offenders involved in crime on individual officers' assigned school campuses.

Throughout the 1980s, police and school administrators were satisfied with the program and its results. Former juvenile detectives, in their new and expanded role as juvenile TAC officers, were very effective in addressing law enforcement needs on school campuses. Juvenile TAC officers were usually on school grounds when an incident was reported and thus were more capable of quick response than patrol officers. More importantly, these officers were well-acquainted with school officials, students, those persons who reported incidents and, in many cases, the juvenile offenders as well. The juvenile TAC officers' constant presence on campus and their ability to deal with juvenile offenders in a swift, efficient manner helped shape excellent working relationships between police and school officials.

More changes

Despite the remarkable effectiveness of the program, police officials constantly sought new and innovative ideas to enhance the program's success. In the fall of 1992, a departmental policy change required the seven juvenile TAC officers to wear uniforms rather than street clothes and to drive marked police cars rather than unmarked detective cars. Initially, there was resistance to the notion of having uniformed officers stationed permanently on school campuses. Some school administrators, teachers and parents thought that the constant presence of uniformed officers on campus gave the impression that crime and violence on school property was out of control.

In reality, the presence of uniformed officers has had the opposite effect. Campus violence has steadily declined since the fall of 1992. The presence of a uniformed officer and a patrol car appear to deter crime as well as disruptive behavior, particularly the errant behavior of

the nonstudents who occasionally loiter around school campuses. Uniformed officers report that they receive increased respect and that those involved in offenses appear to be more compliant than in the past. Within three months of this change, even most of the naysayers agreed that the uniformed officers' presence actually created a safer learning environment for students.

The most positive change in the program, however, occurred a little over two years ago when the Fresno County Juvenile Probation Department joined forces with the juvenile TAC officers and the Fresno Unified School District to bring integrated police and juvenile probation services directly to the seven high schools.

Campus-based police/probation teams

Assigning uniformed police officers to high school campuses proved to be an extremely effective tactic, but some inherent limitations still existed for juvenile TAC officers when dealing with juvenile offenders. First, juvenile TAC officers worked alone, without the benefit of an assisting officer. This arrangement limited an officer's effectiveness, especially in cases of multiple arrests or incidents involving more than one violent offender.

Secondly, these officers had only two options for dealing with juvenile offenders. For a first-time offender, an officer could reprimand the juvenile and release this person to his/her parent or guardian. In cases involving a habitual offender or a serious crime, the officer could usually arrest the perpetrator and seek a juvenile petition for criminal charges. Both options had obvious limitations. If the offender demonstrated little or no remorse, or if the parents failed to follow through, reprimanding and releasing the offender served little purpose.

Arrest also had its disadvantages. In many arrest situations, except for the most serious offenses, the juvenile was released from the detention facility within two hours of his/her arrest. To make matters worse, there was very little communication or coordination between

the arresting officer and the probation officer who ultimately determined whether criminal charges would be sought or if some other form of disciplinary action would be taken. Often the probation officer arrived at a decision without consulting the juvenile TAC officer or school administrators, those persons who were most knowledgeable about the offender and his/her behavior on campus. The system did not provide for any meaningful dialogue or coordination among the police and probation and school officials.

Representatives from the police, schools and juvenile probation met several times to develop solutions to overcome this lack of coordination. One recommendation was to team up a juvenile probation officer with the juvenile TAC officer at each high school campus. All parties agreed to this arrangement.

In the fall of 1993, seven probation officers who had previously worked out of a central office were reassigned to work with juvenile TAC officers at each of the seven high school campuses. Caseload distribution was also modified. Previously, probation staff had been assigned cases alphabetically; offenders were scattered throughout Fresno County. The new system assigned case loads geographically, by school. Each probation officer now supervises students at his/her individual school. Juvenile TAC officers and their probation officer partners are called the Campus-Based Police/Probation Teams.

Tailoring probation

Each Police/Probation Team consists of one probation officer, one police officer and designated school resource officers. The teams are located at the seven major high schools within the district: Edison, McLane, Roosevelt, Hoover, Bullard, Duncan and Fresno high schools. The teams provide service to juvenile offenders attending elementary, middle or high schools within each of the attendance pyramids comprising the school district.

Minors who are currently on probation and attend a Fresno Unified School Dis-

trict School are supervised by the campus-based probation staff. Caseloads consist of minors who are on formal probation as wards of the court and minors who are on informal probation pursuant to Section 654 of the Welfare and Institutions Code. The probation and police officers assigned to each school pyramid also provide prevention and early intervention services through the joint operation of the campus-based Police/Probation Team.

Within the framework of the team, police diversion programs were developed and implemented with the capacity to respond to problems ranging from truancy to minor criminal offenses. Such diver-

sion programs include work projects, graffiti paint-outs and other forms of community service. Campus-based officers are also working to develop a network of community volunteers. Through collaborative efforts with the schools, these volunteers will be encouraged to develop a spectrum of intervention programs, such as a youth service corps, a student court, a peer mediation service and other school and community-based intervention and mediation services.

In addition to the continuing services juvenile TAC officers provide on school campuses — uniform patrol and crime investigations — each Campus-Based Police/Probation Team conducts informal hearings for students who have been cited for misdemeanor offenses. Punishment varies from on-campus community service such as painting out graffiti and picking up trash to writing essays and serving detention during school breaks. Depending upon the types of offenses committed, violators may also be required to make restitution to victims for damage or losses incurred. First-time offenders' parents are required to attend

the hearings and are encouraged to get their children "back on track" before the problems escalate. School counselors also provide parents with guidance and support in applying remedial or rehabilitative actions.

Fresno Unified School District provides office space, furniture, telephones, supplies, assistance from school counselors and secretarial support. The school district also shares the cost of the police computer for each office. When the need arises, police/probation teams are also allowed access to information from student files. School administrators and faculty monitor students who are on probation and the conditions each student must

"Police, school officials and juvenile probation authorities must band together to provide crime-free learning environments on school campuses."

meet to satisfy the requirements of probation. The staff involvement has multiplied the effectiveness of each of the police/probation teams.

Campus police/probation officers are linked to the police department's computer network to provide on-line criminal histories, booking pictures and police reports as well as e-mail and fax services from police headquarters.

Personal attention

The cases of minors involved in delinquent activity on any of the campuses within the Fresno Unified School District are preliminarily investigated and reviewed for the appropriate intervention by the assigned campus-based Police/Probation Team. The cases of all offenders arrested or cited off campus within the city of Fresno are reviewed initially by a centrally located probation intake officer. If the filing of formal charges is not warranted or required, the minor is referred for intervention services to the appropriate campus-based Police/Probation Team.

Once referred to a campus Police/Pro-

bation Team, each offender and his/her family are interviewed by the police officer and/or the probation officer assigned to that particular pyramid. If further intervention is required, the Police/Probation Team develops an appropriate program of intervention or diversion, makes referrals to selected programs and agencies, and monitors the minor's compliance with the terms of the diversion contract. Intervention options are selected to help prevent further entry into the juvenile justice system and to improve the youth's behavior in the home, the school and the community. Non-compliance with diversionary programs, however, results in a request for the initiation of formal court action.

Enhanced school climate

Since the inception of the police/probation team concept, there has been noticeable improvement in campus safety and violent crime on high school campuses. has decreased. For example, team members seized only 29 guns on school campuses during the 1993-94 school year, the first year of this program, compared to 49 guns seized the previous school year. Assaults on teachers plummeted 43 percent; fights between students decreased 4 percent; and the number of students found in possession of alcohol dropped by 52 percent in the same time period.

This project has enhanced the level of cooperation among school officials and police and probation officers, creating a much safer learning environment at each of the seven school campuses. Perhaps the most appealing aspect of the police/probation teams is that they were implemented at no additional cost to the participating agencies. The 14 police and probation officers committed to this project were already employed within their respective agencies.

The Campus-Based Police/Probation Teams have been so successful that plans are under way to assign police/probation teams to cover a number of middle schools within Fresno Unified School District. Currently, a Campus Police/Probation Team is assigned to Cooper and

School year	1992-93 arrests	1994-95 arrests	Percent change
Loitering	986	439	-55%
Probation violations	N/A	187	
Battery - teacher	55	23	-58%
Assault/deadly weapon - teacher	2	1	-50%
Assault/deadly weapon - student	12	7	-42%
Possession of firearms	49	12	-76%
Other weapons	151	129	-15%

After two years of operation, the school/police/probation partnership has shown remarkable results as indicated by these arrest statistics.

Tehipite middle schools and the corresponding elementary feeder schools. Although this team performs the same functions as those on the high school campuses, the multiple campus coverage results in less time spent on each campus and enough scheduling flexibility to allow the team to respond to serious problems at any of the assigned campuses.

A second middle school probation officer is also working on Kings Canyon, Scandinavian, Yosemite and Sequoia school campuses. Because of lack of funding, this position does not have a corresponding police officer. Although many of the functions are the same, for safety reasons, the lack of a police/probation team limits the type of intervention that can be accomplished.

On March 15, 1995, the Campus-Based Police/Probation Team program received the California Youth Authority Director's Award for services to youth. The teams were also featured as a model program at the April 1995 School-Law Enforcement Partnership conference held in Santa Clara, California.

Shared solutions

As crime, gang affiliation and senseless acts of violence continue to plague public schools, the government agencies most responsible for dealing with these problems — police, school officials and juvenile probation authorities — must band together to provide a more crime-free

learning environment on school campuses. Although placing police officers on school campuses may not be warranted or perhaps as financially feasible in some communities as it has been in Fresno, police administrators should develop systems that promote communication between patrol officers and school officials.

Patrol officers assigned to beats around school campuses should be encouraged to routinely visit those campuses and meet with school officials. During these meetings, discussions can focus on problem students, habitual juvenile offenders, students who are suspected of engaging in criminal behavior and other topics of mutual concern.

Police administrators should support and encourage meaningful dialogue among patrol officers, school officials and juvenile probation officers. Whenever possible, representatives from each agency should discuss problems of mutual concern, whether these discussions are accomplished through regular meetings, conference calls, informational bulletins or telephone conversations.

If a coordination of effort exists among governmental agencies, juvenile probation officers are more likely to make informed decisions about juvenile offenders and to prescribe appropriate courses of action. Partnerships are essential if the problem of increased crime and violence in public schools is to be brought under control.

Many parents and educators fall victim to the “not my kids/not my school” syndrome. Parents and educators should do all they can to educate themselves about drugs and the signs of drug use.

Drugs in high school — the disturbing truth

I was quite surprised when I was asked to repeat the twelfth grade. I didn't know what the other students were going to say about me. I knew I'd be a bit older than they, and I was afraid that I wouldn't fit in. I had to fit in; my job as an undercover narcotics detective depended on it.

The South Florida school cannot be named. Like all high schools, this one had a drug problem. The school administration requested that the law enforcement agency I worked for place an undercover detective in the school to investigate.

It usually takes police officers several years before they are assigned to a specialized division such as narcotics or homicide. There are some exceptions, one of which is the need for undercover officers who are not known by anyone in a small community. The school I was assigned to was a small school located in a small community.

I lived several hundred miles away and had only recently applied for a position as a patrol officer with the agency. They called and asked for my photo to make sure that I could pass for a high school senior. Next, agency personnel asked how soon I could move. Two weeks later, I showed up for my first class. I had no

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idea that I would be working under cover so soon.

Hanging out with the wrong crowd

The school staff compiled a list of students who were suspected of involvement with drugs and placed me in as many classes as possible with those students. I attended classes, did homework and took tests. I was surprised when I met some of those teen-agers, because I expected them to be typical burn-outs — long hair, dirty clothes and bad attitudes. Some were, but most seemed to be fairly typical teens. As I got to know them, I discovered they were far from typical. Their lives included drugs daily.

On my second or third day at school in auto mechanics class, I heard a student in a storage room say, “I know he's a narc, let's get him.” I couldn't see the student or who he was talking to, but I thought a group was coming for me. I picked up a wrench, but they never came. I put the wrench in my pocket and walked into the storage room. They were holding a frightened kid against a wall, calling him a narc and threatening to beat him up. I thought they were going to hurt the kid, so I pushed my way through the others, grabbed the kid by the shirt and asked him if he was a narc. The kid said, “No! Please believe me.” I told the kid he better not be if he knew what was good for him. I convinced the others to let the kid go. After that inci-

dent, they let me into their group. (If they had been hurting the kid, I would have had to blow my cover, identify myself and arrest them.)

We can get whatever you want

For some reason, those teen-agers were impressed with the way I handled the kid, yet I could sense that they didn't trust me. However, after hearing my well-rehearsed cover story, they soon began offering me drugs. Powder cocaine, crack cocaine, steroids, LSD and marijuana were just some of the drugs the teen-agers could access. They bought drugs at very low prices and told me that I could make money selling drugs without getting busted.

They taught me how to mix powder cocaine with vitamin B to make a larger profit. Adding substances such as vitamin B to cocaine increases the weight of the cocaine, resulting in a larger profit for the drug dealer. This process is called “cutting” and the additives are called “cut.” Keep in mind that some of the students were only 17 years old. They were not hardened gang members in some big-city high school — they were just like your kids or students at your school.

When I bought drugs, I saw firsthand how easy it is for teen-agers to sell, purchase or use drugs at school. The students used a lookout system, stationing a lookout outside a bathroom while a dealer sold drugs to me inside the bath-

room. They had plans to flush the drugs in case a teacher approached the bathroom. These dealers really didn't mind flushing drugs; it was part of doing business and much better than getting caught.

I also learned where teen-agers hide drugs at home. Teen-agers love to brag about the "genius" places they hide their dope. Hiding places range from stereo speakers to fish tank lights and everywhere in between.

If these teens had put the same amount of effort into their educations as they did into their drug activity, they would have been straight-A students. I saw some most creative devices used to smoke, snort, store and hide drugs. I saw teens make crack pipes out of soda cans within seconds and make pipes out of toilet paper tubes, ball-point pens and even apples.

I spent a lot of time with students who didn't sell drugs but used drugs whenever it was possible to get some. These teens went to great lengths to get drugs. One group made a practice of saving their lunch money to buy drugs and stole lunch from the school's lunchroom.

The end of my investigation came when I arrested two seniors for selling me 10 ounces of cocaine. At that time, cocaine was selling for about \$1000 per ounce. These two teen-agers, one 17 and one 19, negotiated a \$10,000 drug deal like they were pros. They could have sold me a larger amount if I had wanted it. In fact, they tried to set up the deal for a larger amount.

Not my kid

One of the most disturbing things about undercover work in the high school was learning that many of the students' parents and teachers did not realize that their teen-ager or student was involved with drugs. Most parents fall victim to the "not my kid" syndrome. Parents do not want to admit to themselves, or to anyone else for that matter, that their kids are involved with drugs. Everyone thinks, "It can't happen to me." It's always another family that has the problems.

There is no high school in America that does not have a drug problem. The

degree of the problem varies from school to school, but if one student in school is involved with drugs, the school has a drug problem. While working in school, and during the last three years working under cover, I have arrested drug-selling, drug-using teen-agers who attended the best schools in the area and who came from well-to-do families.

Of course the arrests were a complete surprise to parents. While serving a recent search warrant, we discovered about four ounces of cocaine in an 18-year-old's bedroom closet. The teen-ager's father protested our entry into his home and swore we were making a big mistake until we showed him enough cocaine to put his son in prison for years. The teen-ager's father is a well-respected chiropractor and had the means to give his son whatever he wanted. "He's a good kid," said the father. I agree. I liked the son; he just got involved with drugs and ended up in way over his head. "Not my kid" strikes again.

Common drugs

Parents and teachers should do all they can to educate themselves about drugs and the signs of drug use. This is a very extensive subject; everything parents and teachers should know cannot be covered in one article. However, here are some basics.

Marijuana. Next to alcohol, marijuana is the drug most-used by teen-agers. Recent surveys estimate that approximately 25 percent of high school students have tried marijuana. Some surveys estimate

the number to be nearer 30 percent. However, I believe the number to be closer to 50 percent based upon what I saw while under cover. The percentage of high school students who smoke marijuana on a daily basis is estimated at less than 10 percent.

Marijuana is much more potent today than it was 10 years ago. Marijuana growers have developed methods of cultivation that are yielding marijuana with a very high THC content. THC is the chemical in marijuana that produces its effects. There has been an increase in the amount of marijuana grown in this country due to recent improvements in indoor growing equipment. Mexico is the source country for most marijuana smuggled into the United States.

Marijuana is commonly sold at school in \$10 amounts called "dime bags." A dime bag contains enough marijuana for two or three cigarettes and is packaged in small plastic jewelry bags that are approximately two inches by two inches.

Signs of marijuana use include blood-shot eyes, paranoia, disorientation, uncontrollable laughter and increased hunger. Teen-agers who have been smoking marijuana at school usually sit and stare off into space while in class. Teen-agers who come home after smoking marijuana usually avoid socializing with family and go right to their rooms. They may stop in the kitchen for a snack, since marijuana tends to make users crave sweets. This condition is known as the "munchies."

Cocaine and crack cocaine. Cocaine and crack cocaine are popular in school. Powder cocaine is more popular than crack cocaine because it is less addictive. Both are very dangerous, but crack is closer to pure cocaine because additives such as vitamin B have been removed when the crack was made.

Crack is smoked and takes effect almost immediately. Many crack users say they felt addicted to it after the first time they tried it.

In school, crack is usually sold in small pieces about the size of a chocolate chip. Crack can be stored in just about anything — small plastic bags or vials, super glue tubes, chapstick or lipstick tubes. (See photograph on page 24.) A piece of crack this size is called a “twenty” and sells for \$20. Powder cocaine is sold in gram, one-half gram and one-fourth gram amounts. These weights sell for approximately \$100, \$50 and \$25 respectively.

Crack is usually smoked through a three-inch section of an antenna called a stem. There is usually electrical tape wrapped around one end of the “stem” so the smoker doesn’t burn his/her lips. The crack is held in place by a piece of steel wool inserted into one end of the stem. When crack addicts run out of crack,

they push the steel wool from one end of the stem to the other. The steel wool scrapes crack residue from the sides of the stem, and the user can smoke the residue. This is called a “push.”

Powder cocaine is usually snorted and will take effect within a few minutes. Powder cocaine is chopped into a fine powder on a mirror, made into thin lines and snorted through a straw or rolled up dollar bill. There are also small glass vials that are made for storing and snorting cocaine. The vials have lids with small spoons that fold out and are used to scoop the cocaine out of the vial.

LSD and other drugs. LSD is a mind-altering drug that causes users to see and hear things that are not there. When the students talked about their experiences with LSD, one said that he had seen walls swaying in and out as if they were breathing, and another said that she saw a car with rainwater dripping off it melt away.

LSD was very popular in the 1960s, and it is making a strong comeback with high school students. The surveys indicate that approximately 8 percent to 10 percent of today’s high school students have used LSD.

LSD is made in a liquid form but is usually sprayed onto small pieces of pa-

per. These pieces of paper generally have designs or cartoons such as MTV’s Beavis and Butthead printed on them. A dose of LSD lasts for approximately eight to 10 hours and costs about \$5. Six doses of LSD are about the size of a standard postage stamp.

This type of LSD, called “blotter acid,” is the most common form found in high schools. However, students usually name the LSD after whatever is printed on the paper. For example, the LSD with Beavis and Butthead printed on the paper is known as Beavis and Butthead acid.

Another type of drug similar to LSD is MDMA or ecstasy. It generally comes in a white pill with tan specks. The pills are called “wafers,” “splits,” “X” and “rolls.” One pill sells for between \$10 and \$25. Some ecstasy pills contain LSD, heroin or a combination of several chemicals. Ecstasy is made in basement labs; users never really know what is in the pill until they take it.

Ecstasy is very popular at large parties known as “raves.” Many raves are now held at nightclubs after the club has stopped selling alcohol. The nightclub personnel ask everyone to leave at the usual closing time, then readmit everyone, charging from \$10 to \$20 per person. Most raves last from about 3:00 a.m. until 9:00 a.m. Since the nightclub is no longer selling alcohol, underage people can be admitted into the club. Ecstasy is openly sold and used at raves. These parties are becoming very popular with high school students.

Two very dangerous and addicting drugs, heroin and PCP, are sometimes found in high schools. These two drugs are more popular in larger cities such as Los Angeles and New York. Students who use these drugs do not stay in school very long because they become addicted to the drug and drop out.

Signs of drug use

The warning signs of drug use vary from teen-ager to teen-ager; however, most display multiple signs. Usually the first sign of drug use in a teen-ager is a

decline of the teen's relationship with parents and other family members. Bad grades and a lack of interest in school and school-related activities such as sports are other signs. One of the more obvious signs of drug use in a teen-ager is the presence of drug emblems or slogans on the teen-ager's clothing. This is the teen's way of telling other teen-agers s/he uses drugs.

One sure sign of drug use is finding drugs in the teen's room or car. As obvious as this warning sign appears, parents still miss it when their child says that s/he is only holding the drugs for a friend. Parents want to believe this lie instead of admitting the truth that is staring them in the face. "Not my kid" strikes again.

Drugs cost money. Teen-agers who become involved with drugs often steal money and other valuables from their parents and family. If you are frequently missing money at home, there is a good chance that your teen-ager has a drug

problem.

On the other hand, your teen-ager might have large sums of money with no explanation of how s/he got it. This money, along with several teens visiting your teen for two or three minutes at a time, indicate that your teen-ager is dealing drugs from your home. I have bought drugs from teen-agers while their parents were watching the television show "Cops" in the living room.

The good news

The good news is that there is help available no matter how bad things have become at home or in school. For parents, help is as close as the local phone book. Look under "drug addiction" or "drug abuse" in the yellow pages. Many phone books have special pages in the front that may contain information that can help. Contact the larger hospitals in your area; many of them have treatment centers located inside the hospital.

For schools, try the local police or sher-

iff's department. The department might be able to assign a uniformed officer to school whenever it is in session or may be able to place an undercover detective in school.

Try to have as much documentation about the drug activity in your school as possible and make an appointment with the head of the agency.

The best way to reduce drug activity is for parents, teachers, school staff, law enforcement and teen-agers to work together. Consider MADD. This organization has done wonders for the drunk driving problem in this country and has saved countless lives. Just as MADD members organize around one thing, so can community members organize to remove drugs from schools.

Adapted from Drugs in High School — The Disturbing Truth, *a drug prevention guide for parents and teachers available from Guideline Publishing, PO Box 21178, St. Petersburg, Florida 33742; 813/577-0186.*

"Zero tolerance" has captured the attention of the American public. Proponents argue that removing violent offenders from school supports the primary purpose of education — teaching and learning.

It's time for zero tolerance

During the last few months there has been a lot of discussion in virtually every school district in the country about student violence and what to do about it. Much of the discussion has centered around the idea of "zero tolerance" toward those who commit or threaten violent acts while at school. The phrase itself immediately captures one's attention and has certainly been used repeatedly by the media in headlines and lead-ins to news programs. Zero tolerance has been the subject of entire television newscasts or specials on student violence.

Unfortunately, zero tolerance is often portrayed as yet another attempt by administrators to abrogate the rights of children to receive a free public education. Many arguments are used to convince the public that it is the school's responsibility to continue to educate students who commit violence, often at a cost exceeding that which is spent on the students who do not commit violence.

Despite these objections, more and more school boards are developing zero tolerance policies as a last-ditch effort to regain control of their schools. My own district implemented such a policy and was immediately sued by three different sets of attorneys representing five students who had been suspended for the re-

mainder of the school year either for transacting drugs on campus or for bringing a gun to school. The school board not only chose to defend itself in court, but also chose to strengthen board policies by increasing the length of such suspensions and by broadening the scope of actions that automatically result in removing a student's privilege to receive an education in our district.

Why is the concept of zero tolerance so compelling to such a large group of people? How are such policies structured? Can zero tolerance policies withstand the assault of the lawyers who believe that the individual rights of violent students are more important than the rights of the remaining students? This article attempts to answer these and other related questions.

Zero tolerance is defined as the act of suspending a student for a long period of time (such as one year) or expelling the student permanently because of an act of violence or potential violence that is prohibited by district policy. Typically, such policies prohibit the possession or use of weapons such as bombs, guns and knives on school property. In addition, drug distribution is usually considered a zero tolerance violation, as are extortion and other acts of violence committed by individuals or gangs. The suspension/expulsion of violent students may or may not be linked to an alternative education program provided by the school district.

A legislative mandate

Is zero tolerance really a compelling idea? If acts of state legislatures, Congress and the President of the United States are indicators, then zero tolerance is most definitely compelling.

In March of 1994 as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Congress voted to require as a condition for receiving federal education funds that a school district have in place a zero tolerance policy mandating a one-year expulsion for students who bring a gun to school. Although this provision of the act was watered down before it was finally enacted, a clear message and a clear requirement still remained that school districts must implement zero tolerance policies. This legislation was soon followed by an equally forceful action when President Clinton issued an executive order in October of 1994 mandating the very same requirement. However, these Washington officials were only duplicating the initiative already taken by many states and local school districts. For example, in July 1994, Utah passed an act that lowered from 16 to 14 the age at which local school districts may expel a student. On the issue of zero tolerance policies, federal officials merely reflected what they perceived to be the desires of the people.

A common-sense approach

There can be little doubt that the idea of

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zero tolerance is attractive to many people. But why is the idea so compelling? I believe there are a number of answers to this question.

First, we have practiced the exact opposite of zero tolerance in this country for approximately 50 years. The result is an increasingly violent school environment. Sometime around the end of World War II, the courts began to make decisions that extended individual constitutional rights to children in school. The court battles were well-publicized by the popular media, and our culture came to accept the premise that students have the right to an education regardless of the type of behavior they exhibit behind the schoolhouse doors.

This premise has led us to our current situation. A student commits a violent act at school, and educators respond with mild disciplinary action that has little or no effect on the student who committed the violent act. The fact that little is done to the offending student, however, does affect other students who have come to clearly understand that they, too, can commit acts of violence without serious adverse consequences. Such lackluster policies have only exacerbated the problem.

Zero tolerance adopts a totally different philosophy. Students may take part in education only as long as they act in a nonaggressive, nonviolent fashion, thereby guaranteeing the safety and welfare of all students. Students can learn only when they feel secure. Thus, those students who commit violent acts must be removed from the school environment in order to guarantee a secure atmosphere for those who remain behind.

As Dr. Phillip Schlecty, director of the Center for Leadership in School Reform, recently said, we have confused ideology with common sense.¹ The ideology that children are guaranteed an education is negated if and when the actions of a student violate a greater right of safety and security for others. Let us not lose our common sense.

Educators now stand at a crossroad. We either continue to do the same things

that we have done over the last 50 years, achieving the same results, or we can try a different approach. There is little doubt that if we continue to guarantee an education to students who commit violent or drug-related offenses on our campuses, we will continue to have increasingly violent and drug-infested schools.

If, on the other hand, school officials take action to develop and implement policies that expel students for violent and drug-related offenses on campus, our schools will become free of violence and drugs.

There are people who argue that not only should we continue to educate students who bring guns and drugs to school, but that we should also provide counseling and support services to those students in an attempt to mitigate the negative elements so often found in their personal lives. This view is another example of confusing ideology with common sense.

Pursuing the purpose of education

The primary role of education in our society has always been to foster academic understanding and to transmit cultural beliefs from one generation to the next. The purpose of education is not to mitigate the negative effects of our society. Again paraphrasing Dr. Schlecty, we simply cannot use the classroom as a therapeutic environment. Instead, we must use it for its primary purpose — teaching and learning.

The schools have often been asked to assume the job of correcting many of our society's problems. Educators have accepted such tasks as AIDS education, driver education, health education, sex education and drug education. Some people legitimately question whether these and similar subjects fall within the realm of public education. The answer is debatable, but there is one major thing all of these subjects have in common. They are all preventive education. They are all designed to prevent something negative happening to students.

Such preventive programs may well be within the purview of education. How-

ever, there is a distinct difference between these preventive programs and the remediation or therapy programs schools are also asked to provide. Therapy is not the responsibility of the public schools. It is the responsibility of other institutions. Schools can accept the role of preventive education but must not allow well-meaning people, attorneys, the courts or parents to transfer to schools the responsibility of remediating the country's social ills.

Many people will argue vociferously that we must not abandon students to the streets to continue their violent, gang or drug activity. Dr. Edwin J. Delattre, dean of the School of Education at Boston University, counterargues in a speech to the National School Boards Association that habits of self-indulgent remorselessness, sadism and pure hatred are virtually impossible to reverse.² Schools are not equipped to remediate such deeply ingrained attitudes. Educators must not fall into their usual trap of accepting a given responsibility simply because no one else in the society will do so. It is not the responsibility of the schools to remediate students' or society's problems.

Individual vs. group rights

Second, zero tolerance is compelling because of the failure of yet another deeply ingrained American tenet, which is often taken to the extreme. Since our inception as a country, we have maintained that individual freedom is a right to be guarded and preserved. However, it would seem that some have wrongly inferred that the good of the individual takes precedence over the good of the whole. I suggest the opposite is true. The good of the whole is paramount to the good of the individual.

This is not to say that we should abandon the individual rights established in our constitution. However, we must re-establish the common-sense notion that the rights of the individual cannot supersede the rights of the whole. That abrogation of rights is exactly what happens when schools do not remove students who are endangering others. Zero tolerance policies protect the rights of the whole.

As I mentioned at the start of this article, almost before the ink was dry on the policies, my district was attacked by three different lawsuits for suspending five students for the remainder of the school year. Our community was shocked at the lawsuits filed against the school district and angered by the attorneys who defended students who confessed to actions detrimental to the school and its students. The district was also compelled to accept the actions of a judge who issued two temporary restraining orders preventing the district from implementing its zero tolerance policy. Eventually the district prevailed, but it was still prevented from implementing the full suspension against the student who brought the gun to school.

Such inappropriate intervention by the legal profession is not unusual. Indeed, it may be more the rule than the exception. Courts faced with the dilemma of what to do with underage violent youth often prefer to impose on the schools instead

of on other social agencies the burden for supervising such youngsters. Daily examples can be found in virtually every state.

In Tampa recently, district officials were ordered by a judge to readmit two 12-year-olds accused of raping a nine-year-old boy at gunpoint. In the opinion of many, such rulings by judges are unwarranted and reflect a direct intrusion into the decision-making powers of local boards of education. Such actions by judges frequently occur despite the fact that case law clearly prevents magistrates from substituting their personal judgment for that of school boards unless the board has acted in an arbitrary or capricious manner.

Those who do not accept the zero tolerance philosophy sometimes believe that those who do are uncaring or insensitive to the needs of impoverished children and youth, especially those who make an honest, first-time mistake. That is an unfortunate and unfair conclusion.

Those who believe in zero tolerance want the same things that most people want for the children and youth of America — a safe and drug-free place in which our children can learn. It is of paramount importance for us to provide such an environment to the next generation that will run this great country. If we do not provide a safe school environment, we will have failed in the one thing that we must be able to guarantee above all else — that children have access to effective, supportive learning environments and that they can return home at the end of a school day free from the effects of violence and drugs. Any tool which helps us provide this basic guarantee must be used. Zero tolerance is just such a tool.

Endnotes

1. Schlecty, Phillip. Speech at the "School Reform: Leadership in the 21st Century" Conference. Orlando, Fla., November 3, 1994.
2. Delattre, Edwin J. "Pushing Against Our Age." *The American School Board Journal*. July, 1994.

Between hope and fear: students speak out on violence

The National Crime Prevention Council and the National Institute for Citizen Education in the Law have issued a survey, *Between Hope and Fear: Teens Speak Out on Crime and the Community*, conducted on behalf of their jointly sponsored program Teens, Crime and the Community. Researchers from Louis Harris and Associates interviewed 2,023 students in public, private and parochial schools in grades seven through 12, using a nationally representative sample of students and a representative sample of urban school students. The survey focused on "the effect of the awareness and fear of violence and crime on young people." Of the students interviewed:

- 46 percent had made at least one change in daily routines because of concerns about personal safety and about crime and violence in their communities.
- 29 percent said that they worried about being victimized in a drive-by shooting.
- 40 percent reported being in a physical fight in the past year with other persons the same age.
- 56 percent believed that friends should defend a person who is "dissed."
- 29 percent said that it was "very easy" to get illegal drugs in their neighborhoods; another 31 percent said that getting drugs was "somewhat easy or not very hard."

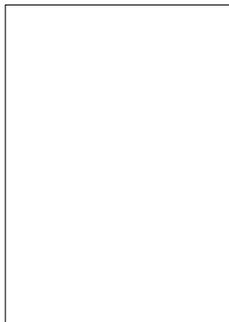
- Regarding factors that contribute to violence against teenagers, 61 percent of respondents blamed drugs, 53 percent cited lack of parental involvement, and 52 percent blamed peer pressure.

While 78 percent agreed with the statement that "Gangs are violent and destructive," the teens' attitudes about gangs expressed ambivalence. Forty-eight percent agreed that "gangs protect their members from people outside the neighborhood," 25 percent said that young kids their neighborhood looked up to gang members, and 21 percent said that belonging to a gang was "like having a family" that would "always be there."

Although the threat of crime and violence negatively affected the lives of numbers of teen-agers, many teens maintained the attitude that they could make a positive difference in society. Eighty-six percent of those surveyed said that they were willing to participate in crime prevention/crime reduction programs within their communities. Such enthusiasm bodes well for communities able to organize to tap this "enormous pool" of energy and talent.

The report is available from the National Institute for Citizen Education in the Law, 711 G Street, SW, Washington, DC 20003, 202/546-6644.

Risks to students in schools: deficient data hinders study



The 103rd Congress considered 66 bills related to school environments; 51 of those bills dealt with some aspect of safe schools. The need for background data relative to school safety issues led to a Congressional quest for information. *Risks to Students in Schools*, a background paper from the Office of Technology Assessment, is the OTA's examination of data on the risks for injury and illness at school.

The report focuses on public school students ages 5 to 18 while they are on school grounds, attending school-related activities, or traveling to and from school. Hazards are grouped into four categories:

- injuries resulting from unintentional actions, i.e., playground, organized sports;
- injuries resulting from intentional actions, i.e., physical fights, homicide;
- illnesses resulting from environmental factors, i.e., asbestos, lead; and
- illnesses resulting from exposure to infectious agents.

Although one section discusses comparative risk assessment, the report does not compare and rank the identified health and safety hazards. Priorities for the use of financial resources are set by local decisionmakers working on behalf of the general public. Pinpointing objective, available data that helps in developing those priorities is the intent of this report.

Key OTA findings regarding the hazards in schools include the following:

- The two leading causes of death in school-aged children are motor vehicles and firearms. Relatively few

deaths from these causes occur in schools or on school buses.

- There are many other less common causes of death among school-aged children. For these, schools sometimes pose a greater risk than other environments, sometimes about the same risk, and sometimes less. Quite often, the relative safety of schools, on a national average basis, is unknown.
- Schools contribute to the risks of injury or illness in school-aged children. Once again, schools sometimes pose a greater risk than other environments, sometimes about the same risk, and sometimes less. But little is known about schools' contributions to nonfatal illness and injury.
- For many of the risks OTA reviewed, national data were usually inadequate for an assessment of risks in schools. The largest data gaps existed for environmental hazards.
- Decisionmakers, from Congress to individual school boards, are likely to want much more information than just numbers of deaths, illnesses, and injuries when setting priorities for improving school safety. Public fear of particular risks and the feasibility and cost of reducing the risks are among other very important considerations.

Data sources for statistical information about intentional injuries at school include school-level incident reports, national crime statistics and national vital/health statistics. Each data source demonstrates certain deficiencies that cloud the identification of intentional injury trends:

- definitional inconsistencies in school crime logs and school security reports;
- the underreporting to local police of violent or criminal acts on school grounds or at school events;
- poor (or nonexistent) data baselines that prevent researchers from validating increases and decreases in school violence; and
- the absence of a national surveillance system and in most cases state-level surveillance systems to collect school violence data. The OTA found that only three states require reports of school crime and violence; those states could provide comprehensive data. Some additional states have voluntary reporting of school crime, but the quality of data varies.

The OTA has characterized school authorities as "reluctant" when it comes to reporting crime and violence on campus to appropriate educational and law enforcement personnel.

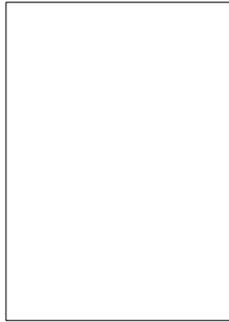
The absence of a national system to track data relative to intentionally inflicted violence in the school environment hinders efforts to identify and mitigate the risk factors associated with such injuries.

Only systematic tracking of such significant information as school-associated violent deaths, weapon carrying among students, verbal and psychological assault as well as physical assaults, physical fighting and gang activity will result in reliable data on school-related injuries. Such data is a prerequisite to identifying the scope of and ending school violence.

Copies of Risks to Students in Schools, U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, 1995, S/N 052-003-01447-5, \$14, are available from: New Orders, Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954. For credit card telephone orders, call 202/512-1800.

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

Hate speech and the First Amendment



The need to guarantee equal educational opportunity and an educational environment free of discrimination seems to be increasingly coming into conflict with the concept of freedom of expression. Nowhere is this clash more evident than in schools and colleges.

Schools and colleges are by statute and constitution charged with the obligation to provide educational opportunities free of discrimination on the basis of race, sex or ethnicity, amongst other protected classification.¹ On the other hand, the free speech clauses of the California and federal constitutions guarantee, to some extent, academic freedom, as well as freedom from compelled belief, for example, “political correctness.”

Although the case law is far from uniform, it appears that the right to freedom of expression may be winning out over the right to an environment free of racial or sexual hostility.

Efforts by government to regulate hate speech have generally been unsuccessful. However, efforts by government employers to regulate “hate speech” by public employees has met with greater success.

In *R.A.V. v. City of St. Paul*,² the U.S. Supreme Court found St. Paul’s hate speech ordinance to be unconstitutional. St. Paul enacted the following ordinance:

Whoever places on public or private property a symbol, object, appellation, characterization or graffiti, including, but not limited to, burning a cross or Nazi swastika, which one knows or has reasonable grounds to know arouses anger, alarm or resentment in others on the basis of race, color, creed, religion or gender commits dis-

orderly conduct and is guilty of a misdemeanor.³

Several teen-agers assembled a cross and burned it inside the fenced front yard of a black family. The Minnesota Supreme Court upheld the conviction of the teen-agers by construing the ordinance to only prohibit conduct which constituted “fighting words.” Fighting words are words which by their very utterance tend to incite an immediate violent reaction.

But the Supreme Court disagreed, and found the ordinance unconstitutional on its face. The Supreme Court found the ordinance to violate the First Amendment because it was a form of viewpoint discrimination:

The ordinance applies only to fighting words that insult, or provoke violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion or gender. Displays containing abusive invective, no matter how vicious or severe, are permissible unless they are addressed to one of the specified disfavored topics.

One could hold up a sign saying, for example, that all “anti-Catholic bigots” are misbegotten; but not that all “papists” are, for that would insult and provoke violence on the basis of religion. St. Paul has no authority to license one side of a debate to fight freestyle, while requiring the other to follow Marguis of Queensberry Rules.⁴

Seen in its best light, the Supreme Court’s problem with the St. Paul ordinance was that it was underinclusive. Theoretically, the Court would have affirmed the convictions if they had been

based on a general “fighting words” statute, i.e., one that regulates all “fighting words” and not just those words which provoke immediate violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion or gender.

St. Paul vehemently argued that the viewpoint discrimination inherent in its ordinance was justified because it was narrowly tailored to serve a compelling government interest. St. Paul asserted that the ordinance helps to ensure basic human rights to groups that have historically been subjected to discrimination. But the Court concluded that content discrimination was not reasonably necessary to achieving this admittedly compelling government interest.

Several cases serve to illustrate the impact of the *R.A.V. v. St. Paul* decision. In *IOTA XI Chapter of Sigma Chi Fraternity v. George Mason University*,⁵ a fraternity was sanctioned by the University for staging an “ugly woman contest” in a campus cafeteria. The court of appeal found that the ugly woman contest was inherently expressive conduct and entitled to protection under the First Amendment, even as low-grade entertainment.

The contest was found to be protected expressive conduct because it was intended to convey a particularized message and there was a great likelihood that the message would be understood by those who viewed it.⁶

The fraternity’s purposeful nonsensical treatment of sexual and racial themes was intended to impart a message that the University’s desire to promote diversity and equal educational opportunity, should be treated humorously.

Relying on *R.A.V. v. St. Paul*, the court concluded that despite the university’s substantial interest in maintaining an educational environment free of discrimination and racism and providing gender-neutral education, the university could not accomplish its goal by silencing speech on the basis of viewpoint.

*Dambrot v. Central Michigan University*⁷ illustrates the application of First Amendment principles in the employment context and the potentially greater

LEGAL UPDATE

authority of government to restrict speech in the classroom.

Dambrot was the white basketball coach at CMU. Most of the members of the team were black. In a locker room talk Dambrot referred to his players as “niggers” and “half-niggers.” Many players and Dambrot testified that the term was used in a “positive and reinforcing” manner during the closed-door locker room team meeting. There was no evidence to the contrary.

CMU’s affirmative action officer investigated a student complaint. The officer concluded that the word “nigger” was incapable of being used positively and that its use violated CMU’s policy against discriminatory harassment. Dambrot was suspended for five days.

News of the incident spread throughout the CMU community and became the subject of a student demonstration and further complaints. Dambrot’s contract to serve as head coach was not renewed.

The federal district court found CMU’s policy against discriminatory harassment to be unconstitutional based on *R.A.V.* The court, however, upheld Dambrot’s termination, because it found that since his speech was not on a matter of public concern, he was not, therefore, protected from adverse government action.

Unlike expression by students, the determination of whether expression by public employees is protected from adverse action requires a balancing of the right of public employees as citizens to comment on matters of public concern and the government’s interest in the effective and efficient fulfillment of its responsibilities to the public. According to the Supreme Court’s decision in *Connick v. Meyers*:

When employee expression cannot be fairly considered as relating to any matter of political, social, or other concern to the community, government officials should enjoy wide latitude in managing their offices, without intrusive oversight by the judiciary in the name of the First Amendment.⁸

In *Dambrot*, the court had no trouble

concluding that the coach’s locker room speech was not on a matter of public concern and, therefore, not protected.

Several trends in this area of law have begun to emerge. First, regulations which attempt to punish students for speech or expressive conduct which is racially or sexually derogatory will not be upheld. However, disciplinary action based on harassment, threats or intimidation which constitute “fighting words” or “hate violence” stand a better chance of being upheld, although it will frequently be difficult to distinguish between protected speech and unprotected conduct.

Classroom speech by teachers may or may not be protected depending on the circumstances. Offensive classroom speech on matters of public concern by faculty in higher education may receive greater protection under the rubric of “academic freedom,” because of the age of the students and the voluntary nature of attendance. On the other hand offensive classroom speech by elementary and secondary school teachers, even though arguably on matters of public concern, will be subject to greater restrictions because of the relative immaturity of the audience and the mandatory nature of attendance.

This is a developing area of law, one which educators should follow closely. We will keep you updated on developments as they occur.

Endnotes

1. See, e.g., Cal. Educ. Code, § 212 et. seq.
2. 112 S.Ct. 2538 (1992).
3. Minn. Legis. Code at 292.02 (1990).
4. 122 S. Ct. 2538 (1992).
5. 993 F.2d 386 (4th Cir. , 1993).
6. *Texas v. Johnson*, 109 S.Ct. 2533, 2539 (1989).
Holding that the burning of an American flag at a demonstration protesting the policies of the Reagan administration was expressive conduct protected by the First Amendment.
7. 839 F. Supp. 477 (E.D. Mich., 1993), affirmed, 55 F.3d 1177 (6th Cir. , 1995).
8. 103 S.Ct. 1684, 1690 (1983).

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A call for information

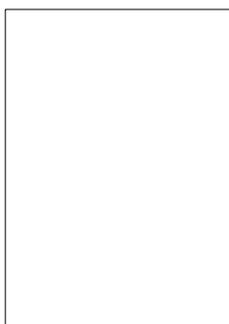
The National School Safety Center’s mandate is to focus national attention on cooperative solutions to problems that disrupt the educational process.

Individuals and agencies concerned with issues related to promoting and preserving safe schools regularly contribute to NSSC holdings. The NSSC resource center includes a growing collection of more than 50,000 articles, publications and videos for reference use on site. Individuals may call for appointments to do research at the Center, to request information and to purchase NSSC resources.

NSSC urges you to contribute articles, news clips, sample videos and other types of information about your own successful preventive and interventional efforts related to school crime and violence. Book and resource reviews are also welcome. Information about the following topics is specifically requested: victim support groups for students and staff members; programs to re-engage truants and dropouts; policies and in-school programs to deal effectively with disruptive students; school-to-work transitions; instructional alternatives targeting students suspended or expelled from regular school settings; and transitions for individuals exiting the juvenile justice system to re-enter traditional school settings.

The sharing of expertise and information can cut short development time and reduce implementation time in creating partnerships needed to solve problems confronting today’s students, parents and educators. Send your good news to the NSSC *School Safety News Service*. Join an information network designed to support the growth and development of the nation’s chief resource — its youth.

Pervasive violence negatively affects ability to learn



Hidden Casualties: The Relationship Between Violence and Learning, *Deborah Prothrow-Stith and Sher Quaday, 1995, 36 pages. National Health & Education Consortium, 1001 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 310, Washington, DC 20036.*

What does violence outside the learning environment have to do with what goes on inside even the safest schoolroom? Two violence prevention experts, Deborah Prothrow-Stith and Sher Quaday, relate the devastation inflicted by chronic violence upon this country's most vulnerable population.

For children, unremediated violence creates anxiety, anger, emotional withdrawal and often a numbing fatalism. Against issues of peril and survival, learning and schoolwork hold little relevance.

Children who suffer or witness violence, either in the home or in the neighborhood, learn that they cannot trust anyone. Living with violence entails the development of emotional defenses, which in turn interferes with cognitive ability, psychological well-being and physiological function.

Prothrow-Stith and Quaday are specific: "Both individual traumatic episodes and recurrent trauma have a significant impact on learning. These forms of trauma impair the acquisition of social skills and the ability to integrate values. Serious trauma ... hurt children's ability to incorporate skills and transfer them from one area of interest to another."

Children's ability to concentrate is also affected by such things as anxiety about family; sleep-related problems; stress-related headaches; stomachaches

and asthma; violence; and the fear of violence within the school itself. Overwhelming fears cause many children to act out in order to regain control of a hostile environment.

Specific attention is drawn to children of immigrant and refugee families. Educators need to be aware of the multiplicity of difficulties associated with adjustment to a new culture. Further, such adjusting must often be accomplished against a background of social, political and interpersonal violence witnessed by these children in their former homelands.

Violence prevention interventions must take into account childhood risk factors that can lead to violence: violent family members; child abuse or neglect; delayed intellectual or physical development; poverty; exposure to alcohol; and other drug abuse and addiction.

Citing research on adolescent resilience, the authors summarize what helps children who survive and cope with violence. Families that raise hopeful children in violence-ridden neighborhoods provide protective factors of strong family bonds, flexible family roles, strong religious faith, a serious work ethic and family expectation of high achievement. Further, these factors are often promoted by the family's social network of relatives, friends and institutions of faith.

Adverse environments can be counteracted by other factors: educational environments that actively cultivate coping skills and foster achievement; personal coping styles that promote positive social interaction; personal attributes of self-esteem and intelligence; and/or strong relationships with positive, adult role

models.

Teachers should note that they can be constants in their students' lives. Violence-exposed young children require for healthy development warm relationships with child-serving professionals. School environments for these children also need structure, predictable routines and activities that further self-expression.

An appendix offers several violence prevention programs that show promise and that are "comprehensive, family- and community-oriented, and collaborative in nature."

The authors note: "Learning itself is a vital tool for violence prevention." The cognitive skills developed in the course of academic study transfer to the broader arena of life outside the schoolyard fence. Reasoning, language skills and analytical ability are intellectual tools that students may use when they face conflict.

Violence is a public health issue that affects children, but violence-related emotional scarring need not destroy the potential of a whole generation. The authors characterize children as remarkably resilient persons who "can beat the odds with the help of supportive family, schools and educators." With appropriate guidance, children can learn to express their feelings, learn to avoid and defuse violence, and help each other control peer violence.

"Violence, whether in the home, school or community, negatively affects a child's ability to learn," according to Prothrow-Stith and Quaday. They further point out that schools occupy a logical place in the community framework for violence prevention education. That is not to say that schools should be the only place where violence prevention is taught. The message must be part of a broad-based societal effort, yet a safe school environment, conducive to learning, offers a protected climate within which tolerance, respect for others, and high expectations and high achievement can be nurtured.

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

Conflict resolution: from hard lines to handshakes

Reducing School Violence Through Conflict Resolution, by David W. Johnson and Roger T. Johnson, 1995, 119 pages. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1250 N. Pitt Street, Alexandria, VA 22314.

Attorney General Janet Reno is currently leading a national campaign to emphasize the urgency of addressing violence in our society. She states that every day in America 10 children are killed by guns. The message of the attorney general is that all segments of society must join together in combating the violence and the societal ills that fester and contribute to violent behavior.

In *Reducing School Violence Through Conflict Resolution*, David Johnson and Roger Johnson offer valuable insight as to how schools can positively confront violence in society. Johnson and Johnson provide a well-structured program for training teachers and students to constructively address conflict. The authors also provide evidence that a well-instituted conflict management program results in an improved learning atmosphere. This environment, combined with the knowledge of dispute resolution strategies, enhances the individual learners academic performance through the development of better reasoning skills.

The authors bring 30 years of theory building, research and practical experience to this project of training students to be "peacemakers." Their book provides a sequential process schools can follow in creating a safe and open environment where quality education can thrive.

Often, aggression in students is the result of student and/or teacher inability to effectively manage conflict. The book provides two interrelated approaches for managing conflict: developing violence prevention programs and instituting conflict resolution programs. All young

people need to learn how to manage disputes, for conflict in life is inevitable. The authors present a well-planned approach that allows schools to create their own culture and instruct students how to behave appropriately within the academic environment. They emphasize the importance of managing conflicts constructively. It is in "conflict-positive schools" that students can improve achievement, reasoning and problem-solving skills. Johnson and Johnson stress that the more students learn about how to take a cooperative approach to managing conflict, the healthier they tend to be psychologically. Conflict, in and of itself, is energizing; it can also strengthen relationships and highlight one's awareness of problems that need to be solved.

The authors suggest that "behavior is 85 percent determined by organizational structure and 15 percent determined by the individual." Therefore, the first step in teaching students to appropriately manage conflict is a school's commitment to creating a cooperative environment. This atmosphere allows the student to regard conflicts as community problems to be resolved in ways that can benefit everyone involved.

Conflict management

The book provides a clear assessment of various strategies in conflict management. The techniques for managing conflict included are:

- problem-solving negotiations;
- smoothing;
- win-lose negotiations;
- compromising; and
- withdrawing.

Each strategy is discussed in detail. There is a particularly useful and detailed discussion of problem-solving negotiations including a good explanation of the six steps of negotiating a conflict of interest:

- describing what each person wants;
- describing how each person feels;
- exchanging reasons for positions;
- understanding each other's perspective;

- inventing options for mutual benefit;
- reaching a wise agreement.

Mediation

The authors also elaborate on the concept of mediation. There are various situations that benefit from a neutral party intervening to aid conflict resolution. Students trained as peer mediators have a positive influence on the resolution of problems and personally benefit from the process. Several successful programs exist where entire classes have been trained to negotiate solutions to problems and share responsibility of mediating various conflicts that arise in class.

Arbitration

Ultimately, arbitration may need to be utilized; the adults in a school must assume final responsibility in conflict resolution. The authors believe that this method ought to be one of last resort.

The authors cite research evidence that conflict management abilities improve the learning process by strengthening students' reasoning skills. When teaching strategies of debate are compared to individualized learning and concurrence-seeking techniques, the latter conflict-managing skills produce in students higher achievement, longer retention, more creative insights and greater ability to synthesize various perspectives related to a given issue.

It is the duty of every school district to provide students a safe and enriching academic learning environment. The methods presented in *Reducing School Violence Through Conflict Resolution* encourage educators to promote and support negotiation and mediation procedures. The proactive approaches provided by the authors are useful to everyone in our society, but are of particular importance for academic and societal efforts to reduce school and community violence.

Prepared by John G. Watson, director of the Teacher Education Program and associate professor of education at Pepperdine University.