

*Comprehensive planning and multi-agency cooperation
are keys to cutting truancy and dropout rates.*

School Safety

UPDATE

Reducing truancy: making school the place to be

Compulsory education requires that young people attend school, but some students have always chosen to “play hooky.” Even the use of the term “playing” connotes, at most, a harmless game. But truancy *is* illegal, and its effects are far-reaching.

Definitions of truancy vary according to specific state codes, but an absence is generally considered a truancy when the student voluntarily misses school to engage in actions not deemed legally excused.

Legal excuses for absences differ, but most state education codes allow students to miss school for any of the following: illness, quarantine, medical or dental appointments, attendance at the funeral of a family member, exclusion based on health code regulation, or, in some instances, jury duty. Some states permit limited absences for religious reasons such as doctrinal instruction, retreats and special holiday observances or ceremonies; verified court appearances; employment interviews; college inspection trips; or medical appointments for a student's child if the student is the caretaker.

There is a fine line between excessive absences and truancy, since the student who has many absences may have a valid reason, such as serious illness, for missing school.

Truancy affects not only the student, but also the school

and ultimately the community. Irregular attendance for the individual means that he/she fails to learn what is needed for adequate competition in the employment market. Schools suffer the loss of state and federal funding. Society pays in monetary terms through escalated daytime burglary rates, costs to businesses for re-education and retraining, and costs of incarceration for those truants who also turn to patterns of delinquency and crime. The loss of self-esteem and waste of undeveloped potential are beyond price.

A 1992 Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report, *Women In Jail 1989*, showed that in the United States local jail population, only an estimated 50.6 percent of the women and an estimated 45.8 percent of the men had completed high school or attended college.

Truancy is the midway point in a continuum that begins with absenteeism and recurrent tardiness and ends with suspension or expulsion. Dropping out of school frequently follows periods of truancy. Often the decision to skip or

leave school is the result of a problem that began in elementary grades, where the student felt alienated from the traditional educational setting. Experiencing success at the elementary level promotes a more positive attitude toward school in general. This success factor is directly related to the attitudes generated from teachers, staff and administration. Teacher training for the recognition of the diversity of cultures, personalities and learning styles is an essential part of professional preparation.

A student's difficulties can be monitored beginning in kindergarten. A teacher aware of emotional, physical and behavioral indicators can make referrals to school and community resources, thereby eliminating at a very early stage escalating sources of frustration on the student's

part. The importance of a positive school environment cannot be overemphasized. A negative school climate usually translates into discipline and attendance problems, with high absenteeism rates for staff as well as students.

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Nonschool and family-related factors often promote a decision to avoid school, but numerous school-related difficulties contribute to the choice as well. *Scholastic elements* include lack of basic skills, low math and reading scores, achievement below grade level, poor or declining grades, or failure to pass. *Individual factors* include being somewhat older than other classmates, classification as a slow learner, classification as gifted and/or talented (and therefore easily bored), verbal deficiency, inability to tolerate structured activities, a lack of goal orientation and a disinclination to question or reason critically. *Faculty attitudinal indicators* show two failures on the part of school personnel: They neither respect students nor encourage them to stay in school.

Early, specific, individual help will eliminate later difficulties with low motivation and problem behavior. Great care must be exercised to avoid the stigmatization of students who are labeled "at-risk."

Truancy is a learned behavior, and strict attention to attendance patterns is crucial for the early identification of potential truants. The New York City Board of Education attributes the decline of high school dropouts in recent years in part to its increased emphasis on tracking truants.

The Los Angeles Unified School District offers the following guidelines for observing attendance patterns.

- Log frequent tardiness.
- Look for students present in the morning but absent in the afternoon.
- Be aware of Monday blues and Friday boredom.
- Watch absence patterns that increase during winter months, improve until the end of the year, then increase heavily during June.
- Observe those students who are often absent on gym days and/or test days.
- Note younger siblings following patterns of absence established by older brothers or sisters.
- Question frequent absences excused as illness.
- Monitor scattered but frequent absences due to "family business" or "personal business."
- Notice lengthy "unauthorized" family vacations or extensions of regular winter or spring vacation periods.
- Talk with staff regarding numerous same-period absences, before or after lunch absences, and the limiting of hall passes.

Taking attendance is the responsibility of the classroom teacher, yet frequently there is little feedback regarding information derived from this mundane chore. All school personnel need to be aware of current attendance percentages. Staff bulletins can publish attendance patterns along with the other information. Such information will better en-

able teachers to see their part in a larger districtwide effort to improve student attendance averages.

If the school carefully monitors attendance, corrections can be made before skipping school or habitual tardiness become established behaviors. Additionally, a school should be able to document in writing that every effort has been made to solve a truancy problem.

A fundamental step in a successful truancy reduction program is a strong policy regarding school attendance. The policy will gain a broad base of community, parental and student support if these constituents have had a part in formulating the policy. Expectations as well as the consequences of both good and poor attendance must be clearly stated. Parents and the public in general should also be made aware of the problems that high absenteeism create within a community.

Incidents of truancy should initiate a firm plan of action. Both student and parent need to be advised of mandatory attendance requirements, with appropriate disciplinary actions assigned and carried out. First time incidents of truancy usually result in detention. A second incident calls for a parent conference. Both student and parents should be completely aware that further truanies will carry stiffer penalties and could result in legal proceedings.

Enforcement of school attendance policies should, above all, be consistent. Whatever method is used, the parent or guardian should expect notification of each absence; both students and family carry the responsibility of attendance. Truancy reduction programs vary, but most are developed in cooperation with local law enforcement agencies. If all initial efforts to get the student to return to school fail, other agencies, such as the attendance review board and court system, must be prepared to fulfill their functions.

Truancy prevention strategies range from a simple telephone call to a complex system of interagency cooperation, depending upon budgetary considerations and available personnel. Some prevention strategies include:

- distribution of all policies to students and parents;
- parent education about consistent attendance;
- computerized telephoning to homes of all absentees;
- annual attendance reviews prior to opening of school;
- interviews with poor attenders from the previous year;
- weekly or monthly assessment of poor attenders;
- loss of credits after a specified number of absences;
- attendance incentive programs;
- special activities on Mondays and/or Fridays;
- counseling for students with ongoing health problems;
- electives for students with limited academic ability;
- teacher training to identify high-risk students;
- community-based truancy prevention committee;
- publicity within the community regarding truancy;

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- tutorial help for students with attendance problems;
- work permits for students with acceptable attendance;
- establishment of dropout prevention programs.

Support and/or counseling programs provide options for students unable or unmotivated to remain in the traditional classroom setting. A positive and satisfying educational experience can come through work experience, independent or contract study, alternative schools and a wide variety of nontraditional learning opportunities.

What works in one district will not necessarily work in another. Each plan needs to be tailor-made for the individual school, thereby incorporating the highest possible number of students in the school's service area. Students who can experience success, on whatever level, are overwhelmingly positive about the educational process. And, they remain in school.

The Richmond (Virginia) Public Schools have a system-wide community/school dropout prevention program. Schools are urged to demonstrate care and concern for every child's success by matching teaching and learning styles, providing interesting course content, motivating through a sense of achievement, involving students in school activities, formulating alternatives to traditional classes, and communicating regularly with the home.

Dropout prevention strategies at each school promote regular attendance: awards for perfect attendance, special extracurricular activities, an "adopt an absentee" plan for all staff, and competitive, spirited attendance campaigns. Other Richmond strategies include:

- providing a dropout prevention team at each school consisting of principal, counselor, social worker, teacher, parent and student;
- identifying potential dropouts by screening absence records in monthly segments;
- forming study groups and workshops for parents of potential dropouts;
- increasing public awareness of at-risk students;
- developing counseling programs for dropouts;
- encouraging teachers to use self-esteem activities;
- utilizing peer counseling;
- identifying reasons some marginally successful students choose to remain in school;
- training staff to work with potential dropouts; and
- implementing a schoolwide monitoring system.

In Richmond, monitoring begins on the first day of absence. A brief contact with the home is recommended, preferably from the teacher "who knows the student best." This touch can make more of an impact *with the home*.

The third consecutive absence also calls for contact with

the home, including home visitation, from an attendance officer at the secondary level or the teacher or principal at the elementary level. A fifth consecutive absence authorizes home contact from social workers and return-to-school officers. Five days of absence within any six week period will initiate a parent-student-school conference.

Returning absentees can find "making up" missed schoolwork an overwhelming experience. To help Richmond students readjust, plans include working with the student to positively redefine schoolwork, assigning absentees to special adjustment classes, developing "make-up" packets for lost time, and setting special tasks through which students can "repay" lost time from school.

Truancy reduction is geared for ages six through 18. Cooperating institutions include the home, Richmond Public Schools, Richmond Police Department, the Juvenile Court, and local businesses.

The community is expected to be the "chief enforcer of the school attendance law." Publicity campaigns have gained the cooperation of local merchants who:

- exhibit positive attitudes towards schooling;
- exclude children from businesses during school hours;
- employ students only after school, except for school-sponsored work-study programs;
- participate in neighborhood watch programs;
- provide incentives for school attendance; and
- recruit students for clubs and recreation programs.

Alternative programs for at-risk students are numerous: transitional first grade for developmentally slow kindergartners in preparation for entering the first grade; Pep-Up, a basic skills program for developmentally slow third graders preparing to enter fourth grade; Project Basics, a reading and mathematics competency program; technology education for students over 15 years; Park School for pregnant teens; vocational evaluation for physically challenged and economically disadvantaged students; vocational career training with day and evening schedules; Richmond 7001, an open entry/open exit, self-paced individualized GED preparation for out-of-school youth ages 16 to 21; Educare, alternative schooling with behavioral modification for long-term suspensions or expulsions; and various adult career and education programs.

Through coordinating the efforts of multiple agencies and the community, Richmond has made truancy reduction a top priority. School personnel check up on students at the first absence, officers make regular truancy sweeps, out-of-school truants are returned to school or an alternative class immediately, curriculum is adjusted to meet the needs and abilities of each student, and citywide planning and cooperation enables swift confrontation of the truant.

Truancy/dropout reports reveal common problems

Study analyzes truancy and drug use

The California Departments of Justice, Education, and Alcohol and Drug Programs recently sponsored a survey that studied the level of drug and alcohol use among dropouts and truants. The survey, conducted by the Southwest Regional Laboratory, interviewed 1,436 youths between the ages of 15 and 17. These youths from Anaheim and Oakland were either dropouts, former dropouts who have since joined an alternative education program, or chronic truants.

A comparison of the youths in the survey and their peers in school revealed the following startling differences: 73 percent of dropouts vs. 65.7 percent of their student peers drank beer within the last six months; 63.4 percent of dropouts vs. 61.4 percent of their student peers drank wine within the last six months; 59.7 percent of dropouts vs. 49.4 percent of their student peers used hard liquor within the last six months; and 63.7 percent of dropouts vs. 29.5 percent of their student peers used marijuana within the last six months.

The survey uncovered a wealth of valuable information about the reasons many youth drop out of school and the common fate of this group. The reasons cited for dropping out or being habitually truant included: trouble with school work, 37 percent; problems dealing with teachers and other staff, 35 percent; problems with other students, 32 percent; and trouble with gangs, 24.1 percent.

Only about one-fourth were employed, mostly with part-time jobs. One-third said that they had been involved in a gang at some point in their lives. Eighteen percent had children, 40.7 percent said that they had sold drugs, while 16.2 percent said that they had committed a crime to get drugs.

One positive note in the survey was that dropouts who had returned to school reported less drug or alcohol use than those who had stayed away.

U.S. dropout rates show progress

The National Center for Education Statistics has issued *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1991*, which includes

data for the 250 largest U.S. cities as well as individual state and county figures.

High school completion rates for black students rose from 74 percent in 1972 to 81 percent in 1991; for white students rose from 85 percent in 1972 to 90 percent in 1991; and for Hispanic students, fluctuated from 55 percent in 1972 to 66.4 percent in 1985 to 61.1 percent in 1991.

States with the highest dropout rates were Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia and Nevada. Lowest dropout rates were tabulated in Nebraska, Iowa, Wyoming, Minnesota and North Dakota.

Almost 7 percent of eighth-graders in 1988 dropped out between the eighth and 10th grade. The most common reasons cited were "because they did not like school, could not get along with teachers, could not keep up with schoolwork, and felt they did not belong."

Copies of the complete report are available from NCES, New Orders, Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954. Price is \$10; stock number is 065-000-00519-1.

School dropout to go to jail

A 17-year-old in Danbury, Connecticut, had his probation revoked because he dropped out of school. Staying in school was a condition of probation for burglary and trespassing charges. The teen will now serve 18 months for violation of probation and one year for a separate assault charge.

Young parents can stay in school

At Jenkins High School in Jenkins County, Georgia, dropout teen mothers have a chance to return to school without worrying about daycare for their infants. A nursery with a full-time aide is provided for students enrolled there. Parenting skills are enhanced and guided through a requirement that the young mothers spend two hours per day in the nursery. If the teen fathers are enrolled, they also are expected to do nursery duty.

Report cards send anti-abuse message

In response to reported increases in child abuse in Massachusetts, students in the Attleboro School District take home report cards with a warning statement to parents. The report card urges parents not to react violently when their children do not perform as well as expected. Parents are cautioned that grades "do not represent a totally accurate or complete assessment of this student or his/her ability" and "under no circumstances should this document be considered as a basis for drawing broad-based conclusions about or result in negative actions, especially physical, on the learner."

Beck challenges Brooklyn students to stay in school

A school's climate often determines whether a student will remain in school. It is a recognized fact that schools must provide a diversity of activities and programs that appeal to all segments of the student population. Although academics are the focus of a normal school day, academics alone do not prepare students for life outside the classroom.

In 1987, Carol Beck accepted the challenge to become the principal of Thomas Jefferson High School, which had New York City's highest dropout rate. Since then, she has improved attendance, graduation and scholarship award rates, overseen the complete physical rehabilitation of the building and introduced over 65 new programs.

Beck created Living for the Young Family through Education (LYFE), a school-based infant/toddler care for children of school-age parents. As part of this program, she began LYFE BRARY, the first toy lending library in the world for children of teenage parents. In addition, she has founded education centers in hotels for children of homeless families.

Future projects include the construction of the first public school dormitory in the country for at-risk students, a geodesic dome for a marine and agricultural program and a memorial garden for students killed in the area.

At Jefferson, where the at-risk population is over 75 percent, programs cover a full range of services and activities: career and employment preparation, cultural adjustment, clubs and recreation, emotional support, special education, teacher resources, academic enrichment, counseling for parents as well as students, and support of underachieving and at-risk students. Highlighted are some of the programs monitored and coordinated as Project Achieve, a three-year experimental program funded by a special grant.

College Discovery and Development Program is designed to help students prepare for college by providing an enriched and intensified high school experience. This program concentrates on changing attitudes regarding success, motivating self-growth, raising aspiration levels and stimulating students toward individual achievement.

Independent Study is offered for students who fail a class

and might not otherwise graduate on time. Some students also use this tool to facilitate their completion of graduation requirements.

Peer Tutoring. Remedial math and English instruction is provided by teacher-supervised peer tutors. These tutors also assist ESL or bilingual classes.

Colony South. This is a community-based organization that offers a full range of services to the potential dropout. The target population is seventh- and eighth-graders with multiple high-risk indicators. The professional staff follows attendance, provides case management of counseling, referral and advocacy, performs intake assessment, and provides after-school and weekend enrichment and college linkage activities.

Co-op. Students receive school credit for work experience, earning grades from their employers.

East New York Development Corporation. This youth employment center specifically targets the students who are unable to stay in school for lack of financial resources. The center helps them find part-time jobs and requires school attendance to remain in the program. Also provided is employment skills coaching.

Junior Achievement. This national program furthers education in applied economics and develops entry-level skills for jobs or college.

Liberty Partnership Program. This state-funded program provides essential support services to at-risk students: tutoring, counseling (academic and personal), enrichment activities and parent workshops. The goal is to help them finish high school and move on to a career or college.

PALS Lab. Principles of Alphabet Literacy is an IBM program, phonetically based, for adolescents and adults who read and write below the fifth-grade level. Daily writing assignments are required. Since the keyboard is used, touch typing skills are also learned. This program is useful, too, for those acquiring English as a second language.

Peer Mediation. Trained students teach alternatives to suspension, fighting, arguing and violence. They are available on a walk-in basis throughout the school day.

Teen Pregnancy and Parenting Program follows the progress of parents and parents-to-be and lends assistance so students can stay in school. Offerings include counseling, assistance in obtaining medical care, housing and child care, referrals to reputable medical clinics, parenting skills training and education regarding pregnancy prevention.

Carol Beck

States take action to reach youth at risk

States take both punitive and rehabilitative approaches to the problem of truancy. Most states distinguish between "truants" and "habitual truants," providing the majority of sanctions and programs for the latter.

Connecticut defines truancy as four unexcused absences in a month or 10 in a school year; habitual truancy is 20 unexcused absences in a school year. In contrast, Nevada defines truancy as an unexcused absence for any part of the day and habitual truancy as three or more unexcused absences within a school year.

States also use different strategies, some relying heavily on punitive measures. For example, in some states, including Idaho, Pennsylvania and Tennessee, students can be suspended or expelled for habitual truancy. In other states, such as Arizona, Florida and New York, truancy cannot be punished by either of these methods.

In Arizona, truancy is a crime investigated by the sheriff. The juvenile court handles truancy cases in Illinois and is given the discretion to punish either the child or the parent. Truancy in Illinois is a Class C misdemeanor, punishable by not more than 30 days imprisonment and/or a fine of up to \$500, for *anyone* who "knowingly and willfully permits such a child to persist in his truancy within that school year."

Intentional noncompliance with the North Dakota compulsory attendance law is considered a violation by the parent, not the child. Ohio courts may require a parent who has a truant child to post a \$100 bond. An Ohio school board can also require the parent to "attend an educational program established . . . for the purpose of encouraging parental involvement in compelling the attendance of the child."

A Wisconsin judge can suspend a truant's driver's license for 30 to 90 days, order the child to attend counseling, community service or a supervised work program, or require the child to remain at home and attend an educational program designed for him or her. Maine forbids habitual truants under age 16 from obtaining a work permit.

Other state programs tend to be less punitive and de-

signed more for treatment. Rhode Island has created a "youth diversion program," which provides outreach and advocacy services to youth ages nine to 17. The program is designed for those who are the subject of a family court petition or at risk of committing wayward or disobedient acts, including truancy, running away and violations of school rules.

Referrals to the program are for a maximum of 90 days and include:

- an assessment of the needs of the child and family;
- development of a plan for education and employment;
- counseling;
- family mediation;
- crisis intervention;
- advocacy on the child's behalf with schools, police, employment resources and other community agencies;
- short-term respite limited to three days during crisis periods; and
- follow-up and after care services as needed.

Virginia offers "Programs for Persons At Risk" focusing on the delivery of coordinated and integrated services for children at risk, including those who are truant.

Wisconsin requires each county to have a truancy committee, convened by the superintendent of the school district containing the county seat. Members include representatives from the following county agencies: each school district, the district attorney's office, the sheriff's department, the law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction over the county seat, the circuit court, the department of social services, the juvenile court intake unit, the department of human services, and other members as determined by the committee.

The responsibility of the committee is to develop recommendations for dealing with truancy. The school board must then adopt a truancy plan that includes:

- procedures to notify truants and their parents;
- plans and procedures for identifying truants and returning them to school;
- methods to increase public awareness and involvement in responding to truancy;
- the immediate response of school personnel when a truant is returned to school;
- the types of truancy cases to be referred to the district attorney for prosecution and the time period within which the district attorney will respond and take action;
- plans and procedures for coordinating the responses of public and private social service agencies to the problems of habitual truants; and
- methods that will involve the truant's parent or guardian in solving the problem.

Reducing truancy: creative ideas keep kids in school

Effective truancy programs address the needs of students through a wide range of community agencies and individual volunteers. Lowering truancy, dropout and daytime juvenile crime rates do not require a standard formula, as the following approaches demonstrate.

Project HOPE. Helping Others Pursue Education is a program established in 1983. Designed for intervention with students in grades five through 12, it provides schooling on a daily basis for those picked up in truancy sweeps and alternative placement for students who have been suspended or expelled. This approach uses resources from the City of Inglewood and Los Angeles County agencies of education, social services, probation and the juvenile courts.

The primary goal of Project HOPE is to educate high-risk students in a small, success-oriented academic atmosphere. Approximately 290 students are currently being served at this facility. Since the inception of this program, police records show lowered daytime burglary rates. For further information, contact Edward Brownlee, Project HOPE, Inglewood Unified School District, 401 Inglewood Avenue, Inglewood, CA 90301.

Absence-Addict Program. Blaming students for skipping school, instead of trying to understand their problems, contributed little toward keeping them in school. In 1989, principal Delia Armstrong-Busby of Colorado Springs decided to take a different approach.

Students with excessive absences are invited to join support groups, modeled after Alcoholics Anonymous. In these groups, students encourage one another, in addition to recruiting other students who also appear to be on the verge of dropping out. Both paid and volunteer personnel provide equal measures of counseling and listening.

In the last three years, the dropout rate has been reduced from 10 percent to 2 percent. More information is available from Delia Armstrong-Busby, Mitchell High School, 1205 Potter Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80909, 719/520-2701.

PALS and PRO. Tatum (Texas) Independent School District operates two low-cost programs designed to give

immediate help to at-risk youths. People Against Losing Students, for grades K-12, pairs a troubled student with an adult volunteer; the two meet at a mutually convenient time and place, at school. The adult attention fosters a basic need for feelings of self-worth among the students.

The Parents Reaching Out program, for grades 4-6, enlists parents to help students with homework for an hour after school each day. The parents are paid \$5 per hour using federal funds, and supervision is provided by a teacher. Student placement is recommended by teachers, who also contact individual families to make the specific study-time arrangements. PRO benefits both students who have little support at home for academic endeavors and students who need extra coaching in specific subjects. Further information is available from Dr. Jack Clemmons, Superintendent, Tatum Independent School District, P.O. Box 808, Tatum, TX 75691, 903/947-6482.

Community Service Early Intervention Program. The Marion County (Ohio) Juvenile Court and the Marion City schools have teamed together to develop a program aimed at providing supportive guidance and counseling for at-risk youth, helping them to have a more positive and productive school experience.

The Community Service Early Intervention Program focuses on potential truants and dropouts during their freshman year. The youth, referred by teachers, the school nurse, guidance counselors and outside youth-serving agencies, are evaluated to determine if they have physical problems or limitations or social dysfunction caused by sexual/physical abuse, drug/alcohol abuse, family difficulties or special education needs. Using this assessment, the coordinator selects community interventions that best serve the youth and his/her family.

While enrolled, youth devote their time to community service at local sites and tutoring appropriate to their needs. They are also required to participate in the Adolescent Drug/Alcohol Prevention and Treatment (ADAPT) Program, a social-educational program that deals with issues facing adolescents today. In addition, students are required to support the program, enabling them to incorporate what they have learned with what they can teach others. For example, a student might research and prepare a chart that displays current statistics on the age of dropouts.

Parental participation is required throughout the entirety of the program. Upon completion of the six-week sequence, school records relative to truancy are nullified. If the youth fails the program, formal court intervention is the next step.

For more information, contact Molly Ratliff, Coordinator, Community Service Early Intervention Program, Edward J. Ruzzo Juvenile Justice Center, 1440 Mt. Vernon Ave., Marion, OH 43302, 614/389-5476 or 614/387-3300.

NSSC produces new curriculum for school leaders

The 1990s are perhaps the most challenging time to be an educator. The changing climate for public education mandates both a broader understanding of culture and greater skills in serving students with a host of special needs.

This decade requires new dimensions in school safety to deal with the top issues: drug trafficking and abuse; crime and delinquency; gangs; violence; vandalism; schoolyard bullying; conflict resolution; victimization; teacher/administrator education; attendance improvement/truancy/drop-outs; weapons; school crime prevention; school crisis management and safe school planning.

With nearly 3 million index crimes occurring on or around school campuses each year, the issue of personal safety looms large among students, parents and teachers alike.

In order to address school safety issues and the changing educational climate, the National School Safety Center has developed a new **School Safety Leadership Curriculum**. Five instructional components focus on tough problems that require smart solutions.

Peer Aggression and Self-Esteem. When young people

fail to find acceptance, affirmation, a sense of belonging and a significant part in decision making, many of them seek these human necessities in ways that are both personally and socially destructive. Aggression in the form of bullying or criminal activity are symptoms of the lack of self-esteem experienced by many young people today.

Gangs and Youth Violence. The impact of gangs on drug trafficking and weapon problems in the school cannot be overemphasized — the burgeoning growth of youth gangs is one of the most gripping problems facing communities across the country. This segment deals with gang recognition and identification and suggests model prevention, intervention and suppression strategies.

Preparing for the Unexpected. Lessons learned from actual major crises teach prevention, preparedness, management and resolution. Special attention is given to instructions for dealing with the media and managing a crisis.

Balancing Student Rights and Responsibilities. Nearly every aspect of school safety is inseparably tied to the law. Constitutional provisions, legislative enactments and court decisions guide classroom management and supervision policies. Particular emphasis is placed on reasonable behavior expectations in terms of student conduct, appearance and disruption. The law identifies what must be done and defines the parameters of what administrators or teachers may do.

Making Every Campus Safe. This final component outlines the process for creating a comprehensive safe school plan.

NSSC will conduct regional training programs throughout the United States. During 1993, three pilot training programs are planned. Look for details in upcoming issues of *School Safety* and *School Safety Update*.

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