

“Weed and Seed” site San Antonio, Texas, gains momentum in its battle against crime, violence and drug trafficking.

School Safety

UPDATE

Building a positive community alliance

“An opportunity for positive interaction with members of the community” is one of the reasons Weed and Seed Police Officer Ezra Bailey volunteered to be trained to work this special patrol. On his regular shift, the “dog watch,” from 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m., Officer Bailey patrols San Antonio’s east side, known for its crack houses, drug trafficking and high crime rates.

Prior to his new role in the Weed and Seed special patrol, it seemed to Officer Bailey that his only contact with area families was negative, responding to complaints of criminal activities, domestic violence, disturbances of the peace. Now, Officer Bailey works with community members to help them “instill pride for their community,” and, for him, the long hours are worth it.

Project Weed and Seed is a \$1 million federal grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance. Sixteen cities throughout the United States were invited to submit proposals for the grant funding. The San Antonio Weed and Seed program is one of the top in the nation.

Weed and Seed is a new urban renewal strategy. Focusing on community involvement, the goal of the program is to “weed out” crime from targeted neighborhoods and then to “seed” the neighborhoods with a wide range of crime

prevention programs, drug education and human service resources. Weed and Seed is a multi-agency approach in which law enforcement, educational agencies, community groups and social service agencies work together to revitalize distressed neighborhoods.

In San Antonio, the law enforcement component of the program is designed to enhance and strengthen existing detection, apprehension and prosecution efforts in narcotic trafficking, weapons violations and violent crime. But the focus is not only on traditional law enforcement methods. Beyond apprehension and incarceration, the program relies heavily upon citizen involvement in combating the problems of drugs and violent crime. Community residents are empowered to assist in solving crime-related problems in their neighborhoods.

In an effort to bridge the gap between the weeding and seeding portions of the program, San Antonio is implementing a community-oriented policing approach, increasing police visibility and developing cooperative relationships between the police and the citizenry in the target area. The Weed and Seed Officer program is a special unit created to address problems in the target area. In addition to the vehicular patrol, the unit involves foot and bicycle patrols, placing the officers closer to the people they serve.

Only certain officers can qualify to be Weed and Seed officers. The program admits patrol officers who are willing to be trained on their own time, without pay. The one-day training program for foot patrol and the three-day training for bicycle pa-

trool further eliminates those who are not cut out for this special duty. Officers who maintain a hard line, no-nonsense attitude usually do not make the cut, for the program’s goal is not to make more arrests.

Weed and Seed officers must have good public relations skills and a sensitivity to the needs of the target area resi-

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dents. They must have the ability to make positive contacts, to change the negative image of police held by many in the community and to work together with grass-roots organizations and the neighborhood as a whole to resolve difficulties within the area. The incentive for officers to participate in the program is overtime pay. Weed and Seed officers maintain their regular duties and are offered additional hours at overtime rates.

A key element in the officer program is flexibility. Officers are encouraged to develop new ways to improve contact between police and the community. For example, bike patrol officers recently took the time to stop and play basketball with some neighborhood children. The youths were amazed to realize that these policemen were actually real people, not the enemy. The officers received some criticism for taking time out from performing traditional police functions, but were exonerated once it was explained that these were not just ordinary cops — and that activities such as these are part of their mission.

The target neighborhood for the pilot project in San Antonio is a three square mile area of the east side. This area was chosen not only because of its high crime rates, but also

because its citizens appeared to be ready for change. The area is home to many active churches whose members reside nearby, and several grass-roots organizations were already operating from the neighboring Barbara Jordan Community Center.

At first, residents of the community expressed resistance to the proposed program. “Why us?” they asked. “Why a black community?” It seemed to them that they were being targeted for police harassment. Residents soon learned how the program would benefit them — they were promised top police priority, more protection and a good deal of positive attention from the city of San Antonio. In addition, they would be given a police command post located within their own area. No longer would they have to deal with the large, distant, downtown police headquarters.

One of the first reassurances of these promises came in late February last year. The response from the residents of the target neighborhood was so positive that the law enforcement factions initiated a cooperative covert operation in this area. A four-week blitz deploying officers from the gang unit, SWAT unit, the Park and Walk foot patrol and regular shifts made a sweep of the area, identifying drug

and weapon offenders. Since February, the target neighborhood has been saturated with visible police presence relying on a mobile substation, the foot patrol, a bike patrol and increased vehicular patrol to combat the numerous problems plaguing the area — drug trafficking, prostitution and gang-related activity. Through relaxed criteria, many of the offenders are now being arrested and prosecuted on a federal level.

Conviction notices, in the form of posters and flyers, are placed twice each week in community businesses in the area to let residents know that specific action is being taken against those who are committing crimes in their neighborhoods. Presently, officers are participating in a door-to-door effort to make the community aware of what Weed and Seed is and how they can become involved.

The law enforcement effort toward suppression of criminal activity is only part of the picture of the San Antonio

Weed and Seed program. Community-oriented policing, prevention, intervention and treatment, and neighborhood restoration are all part of the broader focus.

Focusing on the “art of the possible” in developing positive

community policing and crime prevention strategies, the San Antonio police department and community agencies have created smart solutions for tough problems. Through a coordinated effort of numerous city agencies, including Community Initiatives, Parks and Recreation, the San Antonio Library, and the Police Athletic League (PAL), along with community organizations such as *San Antonio Fighting Back*, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA, and People against Corruption and Metro-Alliance, a multitude of service programs are being made available.

For example, PAL has offered some unusual activities for young people from the target area. During the summer on Friday nights at one local community pool, youngsters were invited to watch video movies displayed on a rented big-screen TV while they floated in the pool. Called “Dive-In Movies,” the program attracted many young people, who would otherwise be on the streets long after dark. After sitting in the pool for several hours to watch movies, the youngsters were both wet and cold and were obliged to go home when the program ended, rather than to go back out onto the streets.

Other recreational programs have been scheduled

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through PAL with assistance from officers working with the Weed and Seed program and with funds donated from the community. These programs include midnight basketball programs for youths ages 17 to 25, K-9 Posse Basketball League sponsored in part by the San Antonio Spurs, boxing, football, softball, overnight retreats, graffiti clean-up, BMX bicycle racing and PGA-sponsored golf lessons.

The midnight basketball programs, engaging a number of volunteers from different segments of the community, serve as a model of interagency cooperation and alliance. Paragon Cable televises the games locally using local college students to broadcast, the San Antonio Spurs do commercials to advertise the program and community members volunteer to coach. The games are held on Friday and Saturday nights, practices are mandatory and a draft system of first come, first served is used. Each participant must attend a workshop that reaches out to these youths who are at risk of falling prey to the streets.

Recently, PAL sponsored a weekend lock-in for girls from the Weed and Seed target area. The overnight retreat — a relaxed, informal experience at a downtown Riverwalk hotel — was for many of the participants the first time to see life outside of their neighborhood. Pizza, games and a presentation from the health department were highlights of the evening.

Weed and Seed can also point to other accomplishments in the city of San Antonio. The establishment of a baseball complex at the Springview Homes, a low income housing facility in the target area, was a united effort of the Weed and Seed officers, the San Antonio Housing Authority, the U.S. Army Reserve Engineer unit, U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and other agencies. In a two-weekend effort, local citizens joined hands with the military, police and probationers to clear the land, lay out the field, install fences and dugouts and build the baseball diamond. Materials were supplied by the local housing authority and HUD. Refreshments for the workers were donated by a local United Way agency, *San Antonio Fighting Back*. Future expansion plans include a volleyball court, a basketball court and bleachers.

Community clean-up efforts have involved adult probation and juvenile restitution programs, where Weed and Seed officers have worked with probationers and concerned citizens to clean hazardous and unsightly areas within the target site. This is an unique setting that has a profound effect on those involved: Perpetrators and victims work side by side and have the chance to get to know one another on

a personal basis. Local parks and vacant lots have been cleared of debris and narcotic paraphernalia; grass and shrubs have been planted; home maintenance services have been provided to the elderly. On days when the city's garbage trucks are out in force, area citizens join in the clean-up effort to beautify their neighborhood. In cooperation with the parks and recreation department, area parks receive continual maintenance and policing to assure families that children have a safe place to play.

Weed and Seed officers are also working with HUD to shut down criminal activities in vacant houses in the target area. By Texas law, police cannot respond to the problem of trespassing unless a formal complaint has been received. Since no one is present in a vacant house to complain about trespassing, criminal activities continued to proliferate. Officers working in the area have succeeded in having no trespassing signs posted on vacant HUD-sponsored houses, thus making it easier to identify and address illegal activity. Officers have also made it easier to respond to calls for police assistance in one of the federally funded, low income housing projects. Street signs were constantly being stolen, making it confusing to patrol once inside the housing district. By having theft-proof street signs installed, officers can now respond quickly to calls for help.

Community Initiatives, a department within the city gov-

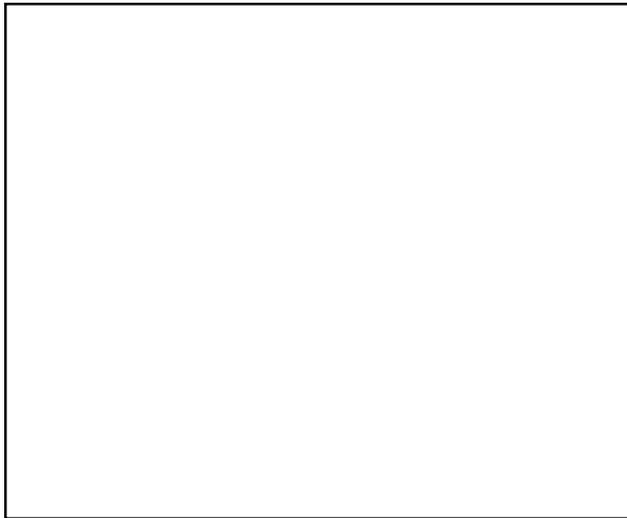
Area residents, police, and federal and local agencies combined efforts to build the Springview Homes baseball diamond.

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ernment of San Antonio, offers an array of services to Weed and Seed neighborhood residents. The homemakers division provides personal attendant services as well as family care services to the disabled. The literacy division offers adult basic education, GED preparation and classes for improving reading and writing skills. The youth services division has programs for juvenile restitution and substance abuse prevention.

Through asset forfeiture laws, the U. S. Attorney's office provided to San Antonio the title to a strip shopping center located within the target area . The strip was formerly known as the Sonny Mitchell center, after a notorious drug dealer who for years operated the shopping center as an "open air" market for drugs. His outrageous activity became a local symbol of lawlessness.

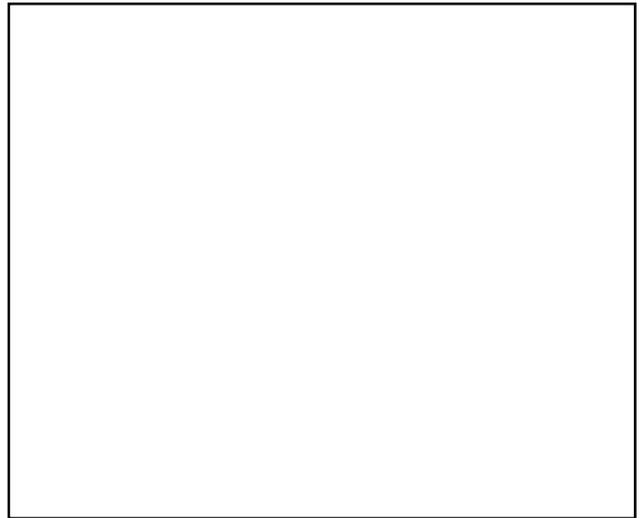
The city is allowing People Against Corruption, an intensely active community group, to utilize a portion of the center for office and activity space. Although the feasibility of long-term renovation and use of the property is in



Weed and Seed officers and San Antonio Fighting Back area coordinators team up to assist area residents. (Left to right) Linda Tippins, Ezra Bailey, Earnestine Marshall and Duane Killian.

question, the community views the current progress as the rightful retaking of a landmark from a notorious outlaw for use by the law-abiding community.

The San Antonio Public Library provides "safe havens" for children after school. The library offers tale-spinning, a storytelling program, as well as tutoring and mentoring, using volunteers from the police department, FBI and military.



PAL Officer Troy Smith created "Dive-In Movies", a summer activity for neighborhood youth.

Police officers also volunteer in a program called "One on One," where officers take students to lunch and discuss what it is like to be a police officer. For many children, their first contact with the police was the arrest of their parents. This program helps to offset the negative feelings children often harbor for officers, helping them to see that police are people, too.

Weed and Seed has also initiated a new program called FACTS, or Family Assistance Crisis Teams, a volunteer program providing referral services and assistance to victims of domestic violence.

These are only a few of the programs and services that are available or coordinated through San Antonio's Weed and Seed project. They represent the kind of welcome and support the coordinated, multi-agency approach is receiving in this city. Further, these programs represent the people who stand ready to contribute their time and resources for the successful implementation of this program.

San Antonio is a leader in fighting crime. According to the National Crime Prevention Council, San Antonio became the first city in the United States to establish a Crime Prevention Commission by vote of the city council. The commission is charged with developing both a short-term and long-term coordinated citywide response to crime problems. Crime commissions in many communities have taken an active role in prevention but are generally nonprofit groups rather than city-chartered bodies.

San Antonio seems to be on the right track. With vibrant community mobilization and a city council primed to fight crime, San Antonio can move nowhere but forward in its battle against drugs, crime and violence.

Weapons and drugs continue to impact students

LAUSD toughens weapons policies

Compelled by a recent accidental shooting at Fairfax High School, the Los Angeles Board of Education has taken action to strengthen its policies against weapons at school.

School officials in Los Angeles have followed the lead of other districts around the country, including New York and Chicago, in using metal detectors to randomly screen students as they enter school buildings.

Last month, the Los Angeles Unified School District began using hand-held metal detectors at three to five high schools or middle schools each day. The detectors are used on a rotating basis, without warning to students.

LAUSD has been using metal detectors at athletic events and dances, but not for campus searches. The school board had not endorsed the use of these devices because of the expense and difficulty in scheduling them within such a large district. In response to recent public outcry, however, the board has endorsed the pilot program. If the program succeeds in uncovering weapons, additional detectors will be requested to expand the searches.

The district also mandated that any student caught with a gun on campus be expelled. Previously, the district committee that decides on weapons-related expulsions had the option of recommending reassignment of students under age 16 to alternative schools.

Under the new policy, any student carrying any sort of gun, or even a realistic replica, will face expulsion for the rest of that semester and the next. Last school year, nearly 100 students were expelled for carrying weapons on LAUSD school grounds.

The district is also launching a campaign, including an anonymous telephone hot line, to persuade students to turn in guns.

The January 21st incident occurred when a student brought a gun to school in a book bag, allegedly to protect himself from gang members who had beaten him up on the school bus earlier in the week. The student was handling the gun in his book bag when it accidentally fired, killing one student and seriously wounding another.

Drug study compares personal histories

Women of child-bearing age continue to use illicit drugs and alcohol at an unprecedented rate. The reasons they do not "just say no" may be rooted in their personal histories of dysfunctional relationships with parents and siblings and their exposure to violence.

A National Institute for Drug Abuse study conducted in association with the National Association for Perinatal Addiction and Research (NAPARE) recently revealed that, of those studied, higher percentages of pregnant drug-using women experienced physical abuse, domestic violence, rape and the loss of a loved one by violence than pregnant women who did not use drugs. Many of the drug-using women in the study also reported that their childhood attachments to their parents were not strong. Many had felt unwanted or unloved as children and were told they were worthless.

The study demonstrates the importance of recognizing that women bring problems beyond drug or alcohol use to treatment. The lack of role models for parenting inhibits the mother's ability to provide for the emotional needs of her children. Other research from NAPARE has found that a positive environment for children who have been prenatally exposed to drugs can help overcome the developmental deficits caused by prenatal drug exposure, including tendencies towards disruptive behavior.

LSD: Back again

Recent studies of high school and college students have revealed that LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) and other hallucinogens, long associated with the flower children of the 1960s, have paid a return visit. According to a 1991 national survey of high school seniors, LSD is becoming a drug of choice among that population. In 1991, more seniors used LSD (6.3 percent) than used cocaine or crack (4.4 percent), and the Drug Enforcement Administration says that it is "the fastest growing drug of abuse among the under-20 age group." For further information, contact the American Council for Drug Education in Rockville, Maryland, at 1-800-488-DRUG.

Plan drug/alcohol-free celebrations

"Virginia Operation Prom/Graduation" was created through the efforts of parents and communities across the state to prevent teens' risky behavior patterns at prom and graduation time. *Celebrate Life!*, a planning guide for alcohol-free and drug-free parties, provides ideas for an exciting, memorable occasion. Contact Arlene Cundiff, Principal Specialist-Youth Risk Prevention, Virginia Department of Education, P.O. Box 2120, Richmond, Virginia 23216, 804/225-2838.

Teachers' duties: a balance of rights and responsibilities

Court injunction to stop harassment

According to the Supreme Court, criminal prosecution for using offensive or inappropriate language in school is difficult. Courts in at least three states — Washington, California and Florida — have struck down on First Amendment grounds state laws making it a crime to use insulting or abusive language toward school employees. Unfortunately, that makes punishment under the school's code of conduct the only real remedy against students' use of vulgar or abusive language with school employees. A teachers union in Madison, Wisconsin, however, is taking a different approach.

Madison Teachers Inc. files "harassment" charges with the local circuit court against any student who threatens to injure a teacher. Rather than pursue criminal charges, the teacher asks for a restraining order or injunction to keep the student from initiating any contact.

Teachers often feel that the public school system does not give adequate support when students threaten to physically attack school employees. A Madison school board policy limits the maximum punishment for student misconduct to a three-day suspension. Thus, a student who threatens a teacher with bodily harm can be back in that teacher's classroom three days after the incident.

Any violation of the terms of these court orders is punishable by a \$1,000 fine or 90 days in jail. To date, no student has violated any of the 11 injunctions obtained in the three years Madison teachers have been utilizing this approach.

Laws vary from state to state. It may not be possible to replicate the success of these actions in other jurisdictions, but it is one option that works for those discouraged by official inaction.

Teachers' duty to protect examined

In *Board of Educ. of County of Gilmer v. Chaddock*, 183 W. Va. 638, 398 S.E.2d 120 (1990), the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia considered a case in which a teacher was dismissed by the district for willful neglect of

duty.

Mr. Chaddock had been employed by the school board for nine years and was a sixth-grade teacher when student Robert T. brought a loaded revolver to his class. When Chaddock learned of the gun's presence, he asked Robert to give him the gun. Robert refused. Chaddock took no additional steps to obtain the gun and continued to teach the class. He later asserted that he attempted to protect the class and Robert by conducting the class in a normal manner and by keeping Robert calm.

Near the end of the class period, the school principal, acting upon a tip, sent her secretary to the classroom to escort Robert to the office. When the principal attempted to take the gun, Robert jumped back, aimed the loaded weapon at her and ordered her to stay away. After a few tense moments, Robert turned and ran from the building.

The board voted to dismiss Chaddock. Subsequently, the hearing examiner found that dismissal was unwarranted. When Robert openly brandished the loaded gun, Chaddock had a duty to protect all of his students, including Robert, from harm and to act in a reasonable manner under the circumstances. However, since the school had no policy on handling such situations, Chaddock had to rely on his own instincts.

The dismissal was upheld on appeal to the circuit court, which agreed with the board that Chaddock had failed to carry out his duty to protect the other children in the class and a secondary duty to separate Robert from the gun. The Supreme Court of Appeals reversed on the grounds that a "willful" neglect of duty imports a knowing and intentional act, as distinguished from a negligent one. According to the court, the most that can be said about Chaddock is that he may not have exhausted all of the opportunities to obtain the gun from the student.

Though it ruled the board's dismissal of Chaddock was done arbitrarily and capriciously, it held that a lesser sanction of one-year suspension without pay was appropriate.

Minnesota expands Drug-Free Zones

The Minnesota legislature recently increased the scope of "Drug-Free Zones" to encompass any school, park, public housing project or school bus carrying students. The new laws increase the penalties brought upon anyone who is convicted of selling or holding illegal drugs within 300 feet or one city block of the designated areas. The new legislative action also includes tougher penalties for anyone possessing or using a dangerous weapon within a Drug-Free Zone. This action supplements the federal Gun-Free School Zone Act of 1990, which prohibits the possession or discharge of a firearm on or within 1,000 feet of private, parochial or public school grounds.

Drug prevention partnership effort empowers residents

A comprehensive drug prevention program of the United Way and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, *San Antonio Fighting Back* (SAFB) works together with the Weed and Seed program in San Antonio's target neighborhood. Pairs of Weed and Seed officers and *San Antonio Fighting Back* area coordinators walk door-to-door in the target area to meet and greet the residents and provide information about the two programs.

The purpose for this teamed foot patrol is to let neighborhood residents know on a weekly basis that San Antonio cares about them and their neighborhood. Police officers introduce themselves, ask if there are any problems that need police assistance, ask for reports about suspicious activities and, in general, let the residents know that police officers care.

Area coordinators of *San Antonio Fighting Back* also introduce themselves and describe the services offered by SAFB. Residents are polled regarding the children in the family. How are they doing in school? Are they having any problems? A wide variety of communication and outreach activities are offered, such as workshops, seminars, town meetings, adult education classes, parenting classes, crime prevention, community rallies, support groups and community events.

The goal of *San Antonio Fighting Back* is to establish a continuum of care to effectively address alcohol and other drug abuse through prevention, intervention, treatment and relapse prevention activities. The program aims to consolidate resources and create a single, communitywide system of drug prevention and treatment. Hopefully, SAFB will demonstrate that, over time, communities can achieve substantial reductions in the demand for and illegal use of alcohol and other drugs.

Three neighborhood resource centers are located throughout the target area. These facilities house training, coordination, support, resource development and technical assistance activities for the community.

Drug prevention efforts include community coalitions, parent and youth groups, mentor programs with the

schools, court watch committees, community events, chemical-free celebrations and local, regional and state conferences.

SAFB's team of community coordinators and neighborhood networkers also provides training in community mobilization, drugs in the workplace, conflict resolution and mediation skills, positive parenting, accessing resources, student drug awareness training, in-service training on drug prevention for teachers and school staff leadership development.

An example of SAFB in action is its Parent Education Program (PEP). Working closely with the schools, SAFB receives referrals regarding high-risk students who might be frequently truant or tardy or are having behavioral or academic problems. SAFB personnel then make home visits to establish a working relationship with the responsible adult. Problems or limitations such as drug involvement or lack of employment are assessed. Together they identify goals and objectives. SAFB makes the appropriate referrals and parents/students are linked up with support groups and activities.

Community empowerment is the key to the efforts of *San Antonio Fighting Back*. SAFB provides comprehensive training designed to mobilize and enable residents to "take back" their neighborhoods. Education, leadership development and advocacy training are the means for accomplishing these goals.

Very often, communities offer a variety of resources to assist families in need of support services, but those in need themselves do not know how to access the system. SAFB assists in a number of ways, including child care, transportation and other services necessary to effectively aid the individual, family and community in seeking help for themselves.

With a culturally sensitive touch, *San Antonio Fighting Back* also offers:

- family intervention and counseling services;
- individual assessment, placement and advocacy counseling;
- intervention and treatment referral services; and
- after-care services involving support groups, occupational and supported living services, and ongoing education.

San Antonio Fighting Back does not seek to duplicate existing programs. It coordinates, collaborates and cooperates with other organizations to enhance and assist with job training, economic development, intervention, treatment and relapse prevention.

For further information, contact SAFB, 1023 N. Pine, San Antonio, Texas 78202, 512/299-1057.

Are metal detectors in school a viable solution?

The incidence of weapons in schools nationwide has risen to unacceptable levels, often threatening the security of schools and their primary mission to teach and train students. In many schools, administrators and teachers wrestle with appropriate responses to deter weapon carrying and promote a positive learning environment.

The use of metal detectors may represent a viable tool for school officials to discourage weapons on school grounds. Local school officials are the appropriate authorities to determine, as a matter of policy, if, when, where and how metal detectors should be used in the effort to rid schools of the presence of weapons.

How do school officials balance the privacy concern of individual students with the safety concerns of others? The Fourth Amendment prohibits unreasonable searches and seizures, including those of students by public school officials. This raises the question, "What is considered reasonable?" Before a school decides to employ metal detectors, the following recommendations are offered by the California Attorney General's Office.

School administrators should make a specific finding of

necessity to justify the weapon deterrence system. For example, school officials might point to particular incidents involving student use of weapons or a developing pattern of weapon usage or presence. Such a finding would allow a court, if necessary, to review the context in which the school decided to adopt a weapons prevention program that involved metal detectors.

The California Attorney General also recommends that a uniform procedure be established to govern the implementation of the metal detector search by officials in the field. Where a pre-established administrative plan is followed, the opportunity for officials to exercise arbitrary discretion is diminished. Provisions also should be established to minimize the intrusiveness of the search and to ensure that the procedures are fairly applied to all students.

Often, a school community is lured into a false sense of security, believing that using weapon detectors alone will end the problem. If a local school system makes the decision to implement a metal detector program, NSSC recommends that it be only one part of a more comprehensive strategy. This plan should encompass several components, including educational elements such as a nonviolence curriculum, a peer mediation and/or conflict resolution program, supervision strategies, and a comprehensive safe school plan that is developed by representatives from all stakeholder groups.

The National School Safety Center is looking for model programs and strategies that focus on weapons prevention, school crime prevention and safe school planning. If you have a program that has worked for your school or community, we want to know about it and to share it with others. We welcome your input for possible inclusion in either *School Safety* newsjournal or *School Safety Update*.

Pepperdine University's
National School Safety Center
4165 Thousand Oaks Blvd., Suite 290
Westlake Village, California 91362

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