

Effective prevention and intervention call for community partnerships to mediate risk factors in young people's lives.

School Safety

UPDATE

A place for every youth in America's schools

As this nation approaches the 21st century, the federal government and the country's citizens are jointly concerned about how to improve American education. The U.S. Department of Education projects that by 1996, total K-12 enrollment in both public and private schools should reach 51.7 million, surpassing the 1971 peak level of 51.3 million.¹ Politicians, parents — even students themselves — are engaged in a national debate about how best to ensure quality and safety in education for all these students.

A report from Public Agenda reveals that the public backs holding students to higher standards of educational performance, but that citizens also feel that higher standards cannot be achieved without first providing a safe, orderly learning environment. This study indicates that most Americans want their children to master basic skills in reading, writing and math, but that they are concerned that public schools are so disorderly, unsafe and undisciplined that such learning cannot take place.²

Indeed, a consistent survey of news articles from across the country or daily television news viewing leaves the impression that school violence is like the mythical Hydra, the nine-headed serpent slain by Hercules: when any one of its heads is cut off, it is replaced by two others. Educators, government officials and parents clamor for interventions, programs and

policies that will effectively mediate such aspects of school violence as weapons in schools, gang activity, substance abuse, bullies, sexual harassment and disruptive students.

Youth out of the educational mainstream

At the root of school violence are elements of anger, frustration, fear and social/political/educational disenfranchisement and disillusionment born of many causes. A recent nine-year study focusing on children ages 10 to 14 conducted by the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development concludes that "the nation is neglecting its 19 million young adolescents to such an extent that half of them may be irrevocably damaging their chances for productive and healthy futures. Ten-to-14-year olds are being abandoned by their governments, communities, schools and parents just when they most need guidance and support. They are in danger of becoming 'lifelong casualties' of drug and alcohol abuse, violence, suicide, AIDS, teen pregnancy and failed education."³

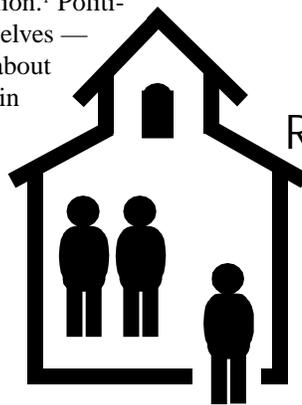
For these reasons and others, an increasing number of young people have left school or are in danger of leaving the educational mainstream. They are joining the already large population of American youth at risk of delinquency or crime.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention reports that in 1991 juveniles were responsible for 19 percent of all violent crimes, including rape, personal robbery, and aggravated

and simple assault, in which there was a single offender; one in seven serious violent crimes involved juveniles in groups.⁴ According to FBI statistics, in 1992 juveniles were responsible for 13 percent of all violent crimes and 23 percent of all property crimes.⁵ In 1991, persons most likely to be victimized by juveniles were themselves juveniles between the ages of 12 and 19.⁶

Students on the outside

For too many youth, regular school attendance culminating in



Reaching
youth
out
of the
education
mainstream

high school graduation is no longer the norm. Starting as early as elementary school age, young people are turning away from school for a variety of reasons. Two broad, common influences — each with its own risk factors — underlie the reasons that youth exit the education mainstream:

- *Environmental influences.* These influences include negative role models exemplified by friends who are chronically truant/absent from school; pressures related to family health and/or financial concerns; difficulties related to coping with teen pregnancy or teen marriages/parenthood; lack of family support and motivation for education in general; and violence in or near youths' homes and/or schools.
- *School-related influences.* These include the lack of motivation related to poor academic performance, such as low reading and math scores and failure to keep pace with other students in lessons or promotions; low self-esteem derived from being classified as verbally deficient or a slow learner; lack of personal and educational goals due to absence of stimulating academic challenge; and teacher neglect and lack of respect for students.

The costs of ignoring these youth are prohibitively high, both for them and for society. "Each year's class of dropouts costs the nation more than \$240 billion in lost earnings and foregone taxes over their life times. Billions more will be spent on crime control, and on welfare, health care and other social services. Every \$1 spent on early prevention and intervention can save \$4.74 in the costs of remedial education, welfare and crime further down the road."⁷ And as we all know, costs are rising — in dollars and in kind.

One writer has termed youth out of the education mainstream "a generation of strays ... youngsters who through defiance or neglect drift away from the regimen of school ... to smoke or drink or use drugs, to escape tests or to just hang out."⁸ Compelling statistics describe these youth — truants, dropouts, children who fear going to school, students who have been suspended or expelled, and youths needing to be reintegrated into school upon release from juvenile justice placements.

Truants

The amount of time actually spent in class is a significant aspect of student access to education. Each instance of absence or lateness means that a student has given up an opportunity to learn — or has disrupted class continuity, thus interfering with other students' chances to learn.

In 1991, the national student absentee rate increased with school level and was generally greater in public central city schools.⁹ This trend seems to have persisted to the present time. For example, the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum seats 67,800. Every school day in 1995, the coliseum could nearly

be filled with the estimated 62,000 students absent from classes in the Los Angeles Unified School District, the nation's second largest.¹⁰ In 1993, an estimated 300,000 students from among the 1.6 million in Los Angeles County schools were truant on any given school day.¹¹ These absences expand to 54 million truant absences in a 180-day school year, a figure that contributes to the estimated \$9 million a day that truancy costs the state of California.¹²

Truancy has become such a problem that some cities are now passing ordinances allowing traffic citations to be issued to students for truancy offenses.¹³ Parents of habitually truant children can be fined up to \$500, ordered to attend parenting classes and be held in contempt of court. In some cases, a child may be physically taken away from a parent and made a ward of the court.¹⁴ (See page 4.)

Dropouts

No one can agree on the causes underlying dropout rates. The Southwest Regional Laboratory in Los Alamitos, California, conducted a survey of dropouts that indicated three main reasons for quitting school: academic problems, difficulties with other students and expulsion due to discipline problems.¹⁵ Other individuals or agencies add to this list influences such as the lure of jobs, teenage pregnancy, lack of parental concern, and boredom with school classes. Dropout rates not only negatively impact individual students' lives but also can indicate economic disaster for cities and states since "dropouts are more likely than high school graduates to be unemployed and on welfare."¹⁶

The National Center for Education Statistics reported in 1992 that approximately 383,000 students (4.4 percent of all high school students) ages 15 to 24 dropped out of grades 10-12; approximately 3.4 million persons in the United States ages 16 to 24 had not completed high school and were not currently enrolled in school, a figure representing about 11 percent of all persons in this age group.¹⁷

Within a school district, comparisons of dropout rates school-to-school often reveal wide disparities. Schools having the lowest dropout rates seem to share common factors: relatively small size; extensive one-on-one work with students; teaching methods that draw students into the learning process; and teachers, staff and parents who are personally involved with helping students learn.

Even as the debate about causes of dropouts continues, the statistics rivet our attention on the pressing need to rectify this national problem.

Fearful students

Born of easy access to drugs and firearms and of the youthful trend to committing increasingly violent acts, today's climate of violence seems to shroud school settings. Parents fear for

their children's safety; children are apprehensive at school.

The 1991 National Crime Victimization Survey of 10,499 students ages 12 to 19 reported that overall, 15 percent of public school students surveyed feared an attack on their way to or from school and 22 percent feared an attack while at school.¹⁸ A survey by *USA WEEKEND* published in 1993 and based on mailed-in responses of 65,193 students in grades 6 to 12 reported that overall, 37 percent of students did not feel safe in school; 50 percent knew someone who switched schools to feel safer. Of those responding to the survey, 43 percent of students avoided school restrooms, 20 percent avoided school hallways, and 45 percent avoided school grounds in general.¹⁹ As the shadow of fear casts its pall over the nation's schools, it undermines student potential by transforming learners into victims.

Suspended/expelled students

Weapons possession, substance abuse, disruptive behavior, assaults on school staff and students, and crimes committed outside of school provide five bases for removing increasing numbers of students from the educational mainstream.

Wisconsin schools expelled about 70 percent more students [in 1993-94] than in the previous school year.²⁰ By the end of the 1993-94 school year, Colorado's public schools recorded 65,547 suspensions, some students having been suspended more than once.²¹

During the 1993-94 academic year, New York City's schools were plagued by a record 17,046 violent incidents. More than 4,000 teachers were assaulted, and 7,254 weapons were confiscated. According to the New York Board of Education, 150 students were caught with firearms.²²

Since that time, the concept of zero tolerance for gun-toting students has gained support across the country, notwithstanding the Supreme Court's recent ruling that overturned a federal ban on gun possession within 1,000 feet of schools. (See page 5.) Currently, the Improving America's Schools Act requires, as a condition for receiving federal Title I funds, that there be a state law "requiring local educational agencies to expel from school for a period of not less than one year a student who is determined to have brought a weapon to school."²³ Thus increasingly, automatic one-year expulsions are being ordered for students who bring guns to school, spawning a bumper crop of students ranging from elementary to high school age who must be dealt with in alternative schools, in the juvenile justice system or on city streets.

Re-entry students

Youth risk behaviors often place youngsters in jeopardy at school and ultimately also in society. In 1988, the William T. Grant Foundation quoted Joy Dryfoos in its Interim Report on the school-to-work transition: "Of our 28 million 10- to 17-

year-olds, one in four is in jeopardy of suffering the negative effects of some combination of school failure, premature parenthood, substance abuse, crime, or delinquency. Of these, one in 10 is in dire straits."²⁴

Furthermore, youth whose risk behaviors place them in the juvenile justice system often face a type of double jeopardy: Once they complete their adjudications and are ready to return to society and to regular school environments, they frequently face parents who have given up on them, teachers and fellow students who fear them and citizens who wish they would disappear.

The challenge

Young people deserve a chance to demonstrate that they are capable of success. We must reduce the number of students in danger of leaving the educational mainstream and bring back into the mainstream those youth who have left. Prevention and intervention programs which mediate the risk factors in young people's lives are urgently needed so that young people can achieve their potential and become positive contributors in American society.

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Intervention tactics crafted to create accountability

California truants ticketed

The city of Monrovia has enacted an ordinance designed to keep students in school. Police may cite students ages 12 to 17 who are out of school, unsupervised, between 8:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. The student must appear in Juvenile Traffic Court, accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. Nonappearance results in the issuance of an arrest warrant and suspension of the student's driver's license.

Modeled after the Monrovia plan are two similar anti-truancy ordinances. Students in San Gabriel who loiter on school days can also get citations to appear in traffic court with a parent or guardian. Truant students may be subject to fines of \$135 or 27 hours of community service. In the city of Los Angeles, students under 18 who loiter between 8:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. on school days can be also cited by the police. The citation appears as an infraction on the student's driving record. Cited students must appear in court with a parent or guardian and give their excuses for being out of school to a judge. Students under age 16 who receive these truancy citations face the possibility of having the driving license application privilege revoked.

Younger teens at greatest crime risk

The Bureau of Justice Statistics' most recent National Crime Victimization Survey showed that in 1993, the persons in the youngest age group surveyed had the highest risk of being victims of violent crime. Overall during the year there were almost 11 million violent victimizations, including rape and sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated and simple assault. Those ages 12 to 15 had a 1 in 8 chance of violent victimization.

Parents answerable for class-cutting

An Oregon law permits parents to be fined \$100 if their children have more than eight half-day unexcused absences in a four-week period. Once determination of poor attendance is made, a letter in the student's native language must go to the home within 24 hours. The letter requests that the student attend a conference the next school day. If

the student shows up for the conference, no further action is taken. If the student does not show up, the parents are contacted. If parents refuse to attend a conference and the absences continue, their lack of cooperation will net them a citation to appear in district court.

Santa Clara County, California, also now charges parents with a crime if they allow their children to become habitual truants. Uncooperative parents who do not respond to letters, home visits, conference requests or attendance review board meetings find themselves before a superior court judge. State law allows the court to order parenting classes and/or fines of up to \$500. In certain instances, the law permits the court to remove the child from the parent's custody and make that child a ward of the court.

Alternative "court" school

Disruptive special education students in LaPlace, Louisiana, can be sentenced to attend an alternative school in which they must take instruction in regular school subjects and participate in group activities that focus on behavior standards for the more traditional classroom.

By law, these students who threaten others, carry weapons or deal drugs are not "expellable," so the public school system, the sheriff's office and the court system collaborate to provide schooling in a classroom at the sheriff's office. These students formerly received their lessons at home from visiting teachers, but school officials decided that appropriate training should include preparation to re-enter the classroom. The school's location inside a law enforcement facility and visits from law enforcement personnel help promote a climate of discipline.

Peers judge fate

Perry Middle School in Miramar, Florida, uses trained students as judges, jurors, bailiffs and attorneys in a teen court. Students face a jury of their peers for a variety of suspendable offenses such as hitting another student or talking back to a teacher. There is one catch: Referral to teen court can only occur if the student admits the s/he is guilty of the accusation.

Sentences can include community service such as campus cleanup, peer counseling sessions, attendance at educational seminars or Y-scout camp (a Saturday mini-boot camp at the YMCA), or a combination of several penalties. Students' parents must attend the court session, and students must agree in advance to complete the sentence imposed in teen court.

Thirty similar programs in Texas report much lower recidivism rates for students sentenced in teen courts (5 percent) than for students sentenced in state juvenile courts (30 percent to 50 percent).

Federal gun-free school zones nixed

Congressional concern about the state of school crime and violence began when Congress commissioned the Safe School Study Report of 1978, which indicated serious problems of order and safety in many of America's schools. Congress' first reaction was to address school-related drug trafficking in 1985 amendments to the Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1970, which contained provisions popularly known as the "schoolyard statute." These amendments made drug trafficking in and around 1,000 feet of schools a federal crime carrying enhanced penalties.

The constitutionality of the schoolyard statute has been tested and received court approval in several federal district courts and one federal appellate court case. No question was raised as to the authority of Congress to enact such a statute.

Congressional concern continued with a more direct focus on the issue of school violence with the passage of the Gun-Free School Zones Act of 1990, which made it a federal offense "for any individual knowingly to possess a firearm at a place that the individual knows, or has reasonable cause to believe, is a school zone."

Many state legislatures followed these leads and enacted laws making drug trafficking or weapons possession within a school zone (varying from 300 feet to 1,000 feet, depending on the state) a violation carrying enhanced state criminal penalties. Congressional leadership in this legislative movement to combat school crime put the issue in the national spotlight.

The recent Supreme Court decision in *U.S. v. Lopez* signaled a major defeat in the war against school crime and violence. On April 26, 1995, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed the decision of the U.S. Fifth Circuit Appellate Court invalidating the Gun-Free School Zones Act. Congress had claimed authority for enacting the statute under the Commerce Clause. However, while the district court agreed, both the appellate court and the Supreme Court disagreed.

Lopez, a twelfth-grade student in a Texas public high school, was found to be carrying a concealed handgun and

was charged with violation of the Gun-Free School Zones Act. The act was challenged as being beyond the power of Congress under the Commerce Clause. Analysis of the law led to the Court majority's conclusion that the act "is a criminal statute that by its terms has nothing to do with 'commerce' of any sort of economic enterprise, however broadly one might define those terms."

It is clear that the decision to invalidate the Gun-Free School Zones Act rests on the Court majority's concern for federal intrusion on states rights. In regard to the national problem of gun-related school violence, the majority places confidence in the ability of states to craft their own laws and appropriate enforcement measures.

In the meantime, supported by the president, Congress legislated alternate if less powerful approaches to federal intervention in the problems of gun-related violence in America's schools. Two gun-free schools acts were enacted in 1994. One was passed on March 31, 1994, as part of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act and another was passed October 20, 1994, as part of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994. (The first will remain in effect only until the second takes over.)

Compliance with the second provision is particularly important for a state's continued receipt of federal Title I funds for educationally disadvantaged students. It requires, as a condition for receiving these funds, that by October 20, 1995, there be a state law "requiring local educational agencies to expel from school for a period of not less than one year a student who is determined to have brought a weapon to school," except that there may be modification based on a case-by-case analysis. Additionally, the act requires a local policy of referral of students possessing weapons to the criminal/juvenile justice system. The act complies with federal law pertaining to the treatment of disabled students as well.

School administrators, students, teachers and parents may be less concerned about balancing of states' rights with federal authority than they are about controlling school crime and violence. *U.S. v. Lopez* represents a sacrifice of school safety for the purpose of strengthening states' rights, regardless of states' needs and preferences. Indeed, Texas authorities chose the federal law as a more preferable alternative to the Texas law under which Lopez could have been prosecuted.

Schools must now rely on district policy or state law, but not directly on the power and authority of the national government, to eliminate school crime and violence.

Prepared by Julius Menacker, professor and chair of the Policies Study Department, College of Education, University of Illinois at Chicago.

What's working: Success for kids "on the way out"

An orderly environment for all

In an effort to improve discipline in Columbus (Ohio) Public Schools, a joint community/school task force examined in-school and out-of-school programs targeting students with disciplinary problems. Recommendations from the task force resulted in the establishment of a program that fulfilled the civic obligation to provide uninterrupted instructional and support services for all students.

The Individualized Plan for the Attainment of Success in School (I-PASS) Center serves as a means for alternative education when a student has been recommended for expulsion. At the expulsion hearing, both parents and students sign a contract stating their understanding that completion of the I-PASS program will annul the penalty of expulsion. Failure to complete the program or abide by the guidelines results in immediate expulsion.

Students in grades six through 12 are assigned to the I-PASS Center for a period of five to nine weeks. The center is staffed by five teachers, several educational assistants, a guidance counselor, a psychologist and a community liaison. In addition to the instructional program, students receive individual psychological and academic assessment.

The comprehensive program includes: small group instruction; proficiency test preparation and administration; daily individual and group counseling; training in conflict resolution and/or peer mediation; cooperative learning activities; mandatory community service; assistance with goal setting and career planning; motivational and informational speakers from the community and its organizations; mentoring and tutoring from the Ohio National Guard; educational field trips sponsored by the Ohio Commission on African-American Males; and daily and weekly positive merit programs that reward appropriate behavior.

On completing their assignment to the center, students return to a comprehensive school (usually the previously assigned school). A profile detailing the results of academic and behavioral assessments is then forwarded from the center. This narrative also includes information regarding participation, progress, student conduct and parental involve-

ment and concludes with recommendations for continued academic, behavioral and social progress.

The program serves an average of 225 students per school year, with approximately 70 percent of them advancing to the next grade or graduating.

Contact person for I-PASS is R. H. Nixon, administrative coordinator, Discipline Clearinghouse, 100 East Arcadia Ave., Columbus, OH 43202, 614/365-5842.

San Jose takes action

What does a county do when the level of juvenile violent crime climbs 122 percent in one year? What action do school districts in that county take when the use of weapons on campuses increases 8 percent that same year? What if, in the same time period, the on-campus use of firearms increases 25 percent?

The San Jose (California) Police Department Crime Prevention unit collaborated with Santa Clara County Juvenile Probation and law enforcement personnel, educators, and representatives of numerous county agencies to create Safe Alternatives and Violence Education (SAVE), a program that deals with the escalating number of weapons confiscated on school campuses.

The students cited to attend SAVE represent an ethnic, economic and cultural cross section of Santa Clara County. These middle- and high-school-aged students share one common factor, an arrest for the possession of a weapon on a school campus. The majority of participants are boys; only 11 percent are girls.

SAVE addresses the complexities of teaching nonviolent means of conflict resolution. Program facilitators are police officers who have had 24 hours of specialized training. The program incorporates parental involvement and parent/youth interaction. Together, families attend six hours of violence awareness education that includes the following:

- awareness of desensitization to violence;
- identification of styles of anger;
- identification of styles of parenting;
- options to avoid/avert potential violence;
- making choices; and
- the juvenile justice system.

SAVE has served more than 400 families. In some cases, the program provided translators for parents whose first language is Spanish, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Korean or Farsi. Often the six-hour class that parents and students attend together in this program is the longest period of time they have spent together in years. For some families, the six hours represents the longest time they have ever spent in a constructive, nonpunitive environment.

Follow-up on program attendees' new violation records

STRATEGIES/PROGRAMS

shows good results. From December of 1994 through September of 1995, 80 percent of SAVE student participants received no further citations. Of the 20 percent who have been cited again, less than half of those second-time offenders were cited for further school-related weapon violations.

Further information is available from Suzan Stauffer, SAVE Program, San Jose Police Department Crime Prevention Unit, 201 West Mission St., San Jose, CA 95110, 408/277-4133.

Without courts or violence

Schools, like communities, are potential sites of racial tension and violence. The Community Relations Service (CRS), part of the U.S. Department of Justice, has 10 regional offices located throughout the United States, with staff available to help communities and schools address issues related to real or perceived discriminatory practices.

Schools in which there are high levels of race-related tension are less able to provide safe learning environments for students and comfortable places of employment for staff. Unaddressed violence and tensions do not "go away;" they intensify as frustration levels increase. Unchallenged anger and hostility can destroy both school and community spirit.

CRS, as a neutral third party, can help local community leaders and school administrators communicate more effectively with each other over issues that carry heavy emotional impact: disproportionate suspensions, student tracking or racist vandalism, for example.

Another illustration of the type of help available is the Racial Tension Assessment Model. CRS can show school and community leadership how to work together to develop and interpret their own violence avoidance model. Leaders learn to identify tension factors specific to their locale and formulate violence contingency plans.

Many kinds of school problems can be solved with the expertise of members of the community. Individuals must be provided with the opportunity to offer that help, however. CRS philosophy views the community as a partner in the educational process

CRS can also assist schools with training in conflict resolution and cultural awareness. Any interested party, whether student or adult, can contact CRS regarding conflicts or disagreements involving discriminatory practices based on race, color or national origin. CRS assistance is free.

Contact CRS by writing: Department of Justice, Community Relations Service, 5550 Friendship Blvd., Suite 370K, Chevy Chase, MD 20815.

The sky's the limit

Motivating students at risk of school failure is the purpose of Success through Academic Readiness (STAR), a program created by the Institute for Community Development (ICD), a nonprofit educational foundation. STAR was developed in collaboration with Roosevelt (New York) School District at Roosevelt Junior-Senior High School in Long Island, a school with the least funding and the lowest test scores in the area. ICD hoped to prove that an intensive, holistic support program could help youngsters living in poverty beat the odds imposed by their environment.

In 1990, school personnel identified incoming ninth-graders considered *least* likely to complete high school. Twenty-nine joined the STAR program; 25 did not. Of that first STAR group, all graduated on time in 1994. Twenty-six of those 29 students went on to college. Of the 25 students who declined the 1990 invitation to enroll, only two made it to the 12th grade. Most of the other 23 dropped out; a few were incarcerated or expelled.

Enrolling in STAR takes commitment. Students and parents must agree in writing to a 10-hour per week study requirement (outside of "regular" school time) with the school-within-a-school STAR staff.

STAR students receive comprehensive support from committed teams: teachers, tutors, psychologists, social workers, outreach coordinators, college/career coordinators and experienced truant officers. This network provides daily intensive academic enrichment/remediation; individual and group counseling; computer skills training; field trips; PSAT and SAT preparation; internships; job readiness training; and community service opportunities.

STAR's success provided the impetus for Children of Many Educational Talents (COMET), ICD's model middle school program for children at risk of unsuccessful transition from elementary school to middle school. In 1993, 47 seventh-graders signed two-year letters of commitment to spend seven hours per week beyond the regular school schedule in supervised program activities. The first year showed overwhelming success. All of COMET's seventh-graders were promoted to the eighth grade.

These programs provide daily encouragement to students to develop socially, emotionally and intellectually. STAR and COMET keep kids at high risk of dropping out in school and headed for college, careers and futures as economically independent adults.

For more information, contact the Institute for Community Development, 600 Community Dr., Manhassat, NY 11030 or Dianne Baumert at Rubenstein Associates, Inc., 1345 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10105-0109, 212/843-8013.

NSSC REPORT

Reaching students who are outside the educational mainstream

Juvenile misbehavior has given rise to new terminologies and descriptors. A growing number of youth who fit into such subcategories as truants, dropouts, serious offenders, gang members and substance abusers are now being referred to as youth out of the education mainstream. Included in this group are those who stay away from school because they perceive school to be unsafe. One of the biggest challenges educators face is determining how to manage and serve these youngsters.

Nearly 1 million youth drop out of school each year, according to a 1994 Casey Foundation report. In many large metropolitan areas, as many as 20 percent of the students are truant each day. Truants are responsible for an estimated 80 percent of daytime burglaries. One out of 12 students who avoids school, does so because of fear.

Across the country, nearly 1 million young people are under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court. As increasing numbers of juvenile cases are adjudicated, youngsters incarcerated for less violent offenses are released early to make way for the more violent. Those released early are often sent back

to school as a condition of their probation.

As the number of youth out of the educational mainstream grows, it is evident that neither expulsion nor incarceration is an effective alternative. These young people need to receive intensified training, attention, supervision, encouragement and support in order for them to become productive citizens. Our nation supports young people — in the educational system, the criminal justice system or the welfare system. The criminal justice and welfare systems cost nearly 10 times more than education costs. Consequently, youth-serving professionals are challenged to develop effective policies and programs to assist and educate these youngsters who so desperately need special attention.

Subsequent *School Safety Update* issues will spotlight programs throughout the country that serve these young people. NSSC welcomes news of your successful programs.

Serving youth out of the education mainstream does not mean that youth who are successful in traditional school settings will be ignored. It is quite the contrary. When youth out of the educational mainstream are served, opportunities for success increase and educational quality and school climate improve for all children. Serving youth out of the educational mainstream is a win-win strategy for everyone.

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