

SECOND ANNUAL REPORT ON SCHOOL SAFETY
October 19, 1999 – DRAFT

*Video
Crime -
School
Safety*

The President today will release the findings of the second Annual Report on School Safety. The report, prepared by the Departments of Justice and Education, gives parents, teachers, kids, and policymakers a snapshot of school crime, as well as information on practical steps they can take to make their schools safer. He will announce that school crime rates have declined by many measures, but will also emphasize that more must be done to ensure the security and safety of our schoolchildren. Key findings from this year's report include:

- **While homicides in school remain extremely rare, multiple victim school homicides have increased.** Less than one percent of the total number of children nationwide who were murdered or committed suicide were killed at school. And the number of school-associated violent death incidents decreased from 55 in the 1992-93 school year to 46 in the 1997-98 school year. However, the number of multiple victim homicide events has steadily increased from zero in 1993-94 school year to five in the 1997-98 school year.
- **Overall crime rates are down at school and away from school.** The overall school crime rate declined from 155 school-related crimes for every 1,000 students ages 12 to 18 in 1993, to about 102 crimes in 1997. Between 1993 and 1997, crime victimization rates outside of school declined from 139 crimes for every 1,000 students to 117 crimes.
- **Most school crime is not serious violent crime.** Serious violent crime at schools comprises about ten percent of all school crime, and has continued to decline. About 90 percent of all injuries at school were not the result of violence, but were unintentional (e.g., through falls, sports). Property crimes constitute the majority of school crime: in 1997, thefts accounted for 61 percent of all crime committed against students
- **Fewer students are carrying weapons to school and getting into fights.** Between 1993 and 1997, there was a decrease in the percentage of high school students – across sex, grade, and ethnic subgroups -- who carried a weapon on school property, as well as a decline in the percentage of students who got in physical fights on school property. The number of students expelled for bringing a gun to school decreased from 5,724 in the 1996-97 school year to 3,930 in the 1997-98 school year.
- **Minority students and younger students feel less safe at school than others.** Black and Hispanic 4th-grade students were more likely to report feeling "very unsafe" at school than white students (9 percent and 6 percent, respectively, compared to 2 percent of white students). Notably, 12th grade students of any race were less likely than 4th or 8th grade students to report feeling "very unsafe" at school.

*Schools are safer, but we can make them even safer
Overall numbers in schools down overall, but # of ^{homicides that claim} multiple victims is up.
That's*

Second Conviction in Dragging Death

Former Leader of White Supremacist Prison Group Faces Death Penalty in Texas

By PAUL DUGGAN
Washington Post Staff Writer

BRYAN, Tex., Sept. 20—Lawrence Russell Brewer, the former leader of a white supremacist prison group, today became the second defendant to be convicted in the slaying of James Byrd Jr., a black man chained behind a pickup truck and dragged to his death along a backwoods road in Jasper, Tex.

"I can't begin to describe how good we feel right now," said Mary Verrette, one of Byrd's six sisters, standing with family members outside the courthouse after the verdict. "The second weight has been lifted from our shoulders."

Brewer, 32, who could be sentenced to lethal injection, is one of three men charged in one of the most gruesome racial crimes of the post-civil rights era. In the early morning

darkness of June 7, 1998, Byrd, 49, was driven into an East Texas forest, beaten, then chained at the ankles and dragged for three miles, until his head was torn off by the jagged edge of a roadside concrete culvert.

The jury that convicted Brewer of capital murder this afternoon immediately began hearing testimony in the penalty phase, which is expected to conclude Wednesday. The panel will then decide whether Brewer should join the instigator of the attack, John William King, 24, on Texas's death row. King, a self-described white supremacist, was found guilty in February and became the first white man in Texas since Reconstruction to be sentenced to die for the murder of a black victim.

The third defendant, Shawn Allen Berry, 24, is scheduled to go on trial Oct. 24.

"Relieved—that's the word, relieved," Jasper County District Attorney Guy James Gray said after waiting four hours for today's verdict. "Twenty-two years I've been doing this, and it never gets easy," he added. "Everybody got nervous waiting."

Brewer's lawyers, who declined to discuss the case during the trial, did not attend a news conference after today's verdict.

The jury, which includes no black members, reached its verdict after five days of testimony. If the panel of five women and seven men, including a Latino man, opts against the death

penalty, Brewer will be sentenced to life in prison with parole eligibility after 40 years.

"There was never a worry that an all-white jury wouldn't do the correct thing," said Gray, who had prosecuted King before a jury that included one black member. "It just doesn't matter who the victim is. A murder is a murder."

Byrd, who was unemployed and living alone in a subsidized apartment, was walking home from a family gathering after midnight when he was picked up and driven to woods outside Jasper, a racially mixed city of 8,000, about 125 miles north of Houston. After being beaten, chained and dragged along a winding ribbon of pavement, his body was dumped at the gate of a small, historically black cemetery.

Brewer and King, both of whom had arrest records for burglary, were prison cellmates in the early 1990s and belonged to a racist group, according to Gray, who said Brewer was the group's leader, with the title "exalted cyclops." Prosecutors told jurors in both trials that King instigated Byrd's murder to draw attention to a white supremacist group that he planned to form in Jasper.

Brewer, who took the witness stand on the fifth day of testimony in the case last Friday, admitted that he was present when Byrd was chained and dragged, but said he did not take part in the killing. Brewer said he thought Byrd was already dead when



James Byrd Sr. and daughter Mylinda Washington leave courthouse in Bryan, Tex., after Lawrence Russell Brewer's conviction in death of James Byrd Jr.

the dragging began because, he testified, Berry had slashed Byrd's throat.

But Gray offered an array of evidence that he said proved that all three men took part in the killing. Medical witnesses said there was no evidence of Byrd's throat having been cut, and traces of Byrd's blood were found on each man's shoes.

As they did in King's trial, prosecutors in Brewer's case presented evidence that Byrd was alive and conscious when the dragging began. The evidence was crucial because it was the underlying felony of kidnapping that made Byrd's murder a death penalty offense, and for Byrd to have been kidnapped under Texas's legal

definition, he had to have been alive during the dragging.

"I don't know if he was conscious when he hit the culvert," pathologist Thomas Brown testified. "I pray that he wasn't."

Because of the worldwide publicity generated by the crime and by King's trial in Jasper, the judge in Brewer's case granted a change of venue to the defense, moving Brewer's trial 160 miles west to the small city of Bryan, near Texas A&M University.

"I don't like the death penalty, but that's what he deserves," Gray said of Brewer. "The just punishment for his case and these facts and circumstances is death."

The Washington Post

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1999

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Ideas

Making Schools Safe

By LAURA SESSIONS STEPP
Washington Post Staff Writer

One winter morning less than two years ago, a grandmother named Mary Duncan was standing in a Kentucky high school parking lot when a 14-year-old freshman opened fire on a student prayer group, killing three kids and wounding five others.

Duncan, the 57-year-old janitor at Heath High School in West Paducah, knew the young shooter, Michael Carneal. But she had never talked to him. That fact nags at her still, and today she pushes her broom down the corridors of Heath with a mission: to seek out kids who feel angry, depressed, or sad. Known as "Miss Mary" or "Mom," she belongs to a new brigade of staff and students at Heath called Natural Helpers, a group identified by students and trained in communication skills.

"What these kids are looking for is someone who will not 'narc' on them but can help them think through what they should do," Duncan says. "I just treat 'em like my own."

Heath High School principal Bill Bond considered the high-tech measures that many other schools have rushed to adopt: metal detectors, electronic surveillance cameras, video access IDs. He thought about adding another police officer to the one he already had, or requiring kids to carry backpacks made of see-through material.

But with the exception of locking several doors and posting teachers at the front of the school to look through bookbags every morning, he decided against additional external protections and went for the internal.

"When you're trying to establish a sense of security, you can surround yourself with so much stuff that you're conscious of it all the time," he says. "What really makes schools safe

is kids having a sense of belonging and purpose."

To further that goal, Bond also divided the school's 600 pupils into classes of 20 each, headed by a teacher. The classes meet once a week to read and discuss a book on goal-setting and character, "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens," by Sean Covey. The classes will meet weekly with the same teacher as the kids move up through the grades.

Dozens of other approaches to violence prevention have surfaced or are being tried at various schools. One recent book, "Violence in American Schools" (Cambridge University Press), a scholarly review of research and programs, lists 31 components to a safe school plan. A few of those

pieces relate to what Bond is trying to do: Build a social climate within a school where kids feel challenged and cared about, and where those who don't are spotted quickly and helped.

It's worth noting that Columbine High School had a lot of technological fixes and an armed security guard and it didn't stop the violence there," says Beatrix Hamburg, a psychiatrist and co-editor of "Violence in American Schools." "The structural kinds of things may be useful but we've got to move beyond them."

Gavin de Becker, author of the best-selling "Protecting the Gift: Keeping Children and Teenagers

Safe (and Parents Sane)" (Dial Press), is working on the early identification component. "You can look at any population of students and know that some are likely to act violently," says de Becker, a threat assessment expert whose clients include the Supreme Court. "The challenge is to listen when those students seek to communicate their circumstances."

De Becker is collaborating with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms to develop a computer program for schools, profiling the child who is likely to act violently. Under this plan, a child who misbehaves would be scrutinized for 10 or more factors, all weighted. Authorities might ask, for example, what kind of relationship the student has with his parents, whether he keeps a diary, and whether there are unsecured guns in his home. The assessment would be fed into a computer, which would compare his profile with that of known violent offenders. If he scored high on the threat scale, he and his family would receive help.

De Becker believes the method will be fairer to troubled kids than the idiosyncratic evaluations principals currently use. The profiling scheme is being tested in 20 schools this fall.

Rep. James Greenwood (R-Pa.) argues that such a formal identification system isn't necessary if teachers

and other staff really know their students. A former social worker who works on juvenile issues in Congress, he says schools should divide their student population among the faculty, along the lines of Paducah, assigning to every child a teacher or other staff member who would be responsible for that child. Teachers and principals, he says, should be trained to recognize and act on signs of distress.

Once kids are identified, getting them real help can pose a problem. According to "Violence in Schools," many intervention programs either don't show long-term results or haven't been evaluated. Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, a D.C.-based national organization of law enforcement authorities and crime survivors, has identified two successful interventions, one involving disruptive first- and second-grade boys and the other troubled seventh-graders. The kids in both groups who received special services were considerably less likely to get in trouble in later years than those who didn't.

The question that most plagues educators is how to run a school so kids don't act out in the first place. How can schools counteract the negative influences of poverty, crime-ridden neighborhoods and dysfunctional families? "Kids have a lot of problems these days," says Mary Duncan, Heath's janitor. "They come from homes where the parents are married for 20 years and then break up, or maybe their mama or daddy is an alcoholic, or their brother is a drug addict."

Duncan's boss, Bill Bond, says the answer is to get better at "the business of education."

Bill Modzelski, director of the Department of Education's Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program, agrees. "A safe school is a good school," he says. That means building smaller schools or dividing up large schools into several smaller, self-contained units, "so teachers know who's in their classrooms." It means providing challenging courses for kids when they are in school as well as attractive activities after school, that unsupervised time when disturbed kids tend to plot their violent schemes.

The Scourge of School Violence

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Back-to-School Sale — on Safety

Educators Snap Up Security Products After Gun Tragedy

By JOSHUA HARRIS PRAGER

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

WHEN SCHOOL BEGINS this fall, the hallways at the Jo Byrns School in Cedar Hill, Tenn., will be filled with students toting identical, see-through backpacks.

The public school, with 900 students in kindergarten through 12th grade, is banning all backpacks but the transparent vinyl ones in the wake of April's shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo. In that tragedy, two students concealed weapons prior to their rampage, which left 15 dead.

The clear bags, made by Innovo Group Inc. and a handful of other companies, promise to be big back-to-school sellers. At the request of school administrators across the country, stores and pharmacies such as CVS Corp., Kroger Corp. and Kmart Corp. have placed large orders for clear bags. "We've had a tremendous request for them," says Jay Furrow, vice president of Innovo, in Knoxville, Tenn. "It started literally a week after the shooting."

In the aftermath of Littleton, dozens of small companies marketing everything from surveillance cameras to safety videos and seminars have seen a jump in demand. The shooting coincided with the start of the ordering season of supplies and services for the nation's 116,000 schools, lending a sense of urgency as vendors began making the rounds.

"They're coming out of the woodwork," says Ron Stephens, executive director of the National School Safety Center, a nonprofit organization in Westlake Village, Calif.

The Columbine killings led Strohl Systems Group Inc., which provides crisis-planning services to businesses, to look to schools as well. This month, the company, based in King of Prussia, Pa., agreed to work with Crisis Management International Inc., an Atlanta provider of crisis-intervention services, to create software aimed at helping schools deal with events like the Columbine shooting.

Myles Strohl, president and chief ex-

ecutive officer of Strohl, says he foresees "up to \$300 million in opportunity annually" for the two companies.

Indeed, it's a pattern fed by tragedies. "Business doubles whenever there's an incident," says Ron Garrison, a safety consultant to schools since 1985 and the founder and president of Garrison Associates, a network of safety consultants based in Benicia, Calif. In the two months since Littleton, he's had about 50 engagements, at \$1,350 a lecture, at schools in Ohio, California, Mississippi, Texas and Arizona.

Meanwhile, NES LLC, a Bloomington, Ind., publisher of books and videos targeting "at-risk youth," employs a stable of 25 speakers on school safety. Bookings for the speakers, at \$3,000 a lecture, are up more than 50% from a year ago. And sales of NES's books, including "Safe Schools: A Handbook for Violence Prevention," have quadrupled since Littleton. Already, the 158-page

manual (which runs \$29.95) has been distributed to schools in 16 states.

Business has also been brisk for Canter & Associates Inc., a teacher-training company in Santa Monica, Calif. The Sylvan Learning Systems Inc. subsidiary says that since the Colorado shootings, 50 school districts have signed up for its instructional seminars, double the number this time last year. On average, the programs cost \$75,000.

Some school districts are focusing on their buses for the coming school year. Silent Witness Enterprises, a maker of surveillance cameras in Surrey, British Columbia, says that sales in its school-bus division have jumped 25% since Littleton. The company already has orders to install cameras, which cost roughly \$1,000, on about 5,000 school buses throughout the U.S.

Metorex Security Products Inc., a maker of metal detectors based in Ew-

ing, N.J., has also seen its business with schools jump since the Columbine shooting. Until the tragedy, Metorex did business almost exclusively with federal agencies and airports. Now, schools account for 20% of orders.

Like other executives at companies selling safety products, Carol Shaltis, Metorex's director, is concerned about appearing opportunistic. "Now that there's the need, I'm not sitting here going *ka-ching, ka-ching*," she says. "I've taken the stance that I'm trying to inform the schools."

Some companies have clearly linked their pitches to Columbine. Seven days after the killings, Ripple Effects, a computer-software company in San Francisco that offers a set of CD-ROMs on school safety for \$4,799, sent out a press release titled: "Could software prevent the next school shooting?" The CD-ROMs were introduced eight months before the Littleton shooting. Before the calamity, 37 schools bought them. In the two months since, 41 have.

"With these events, people are seeing these aren't just frills that would be nice to do," says Sarah Berg, co-founder of the company. "They're critical."

And the crisis has drummed up capital for other companies. Last year, SafeNet-Corp.com, whose computer-software products monitor the sites people view on the Internet, struggled to get financing through a private placement. "Never raised a dime," says Howard Cooper, the president of SafeNetCorp.com, in Kaysville, Utah.

Then, in the week following the shootings, when reports focused on concerns about youths logging onto violent Web sites, the company was showered with unsolicited phone calls from local people looking to invest. SafeNet raised \$150,000 by early May, and soon after reached deals with two school districts. Says Mr. Cooper, "The money came right in."

At the same time, the tragedy in Littleton has threatened some businesses. President Clinton has indicated that he may subpoena the marketing documents of movie studios to see if they are using violence to target young audiences. And while sales of transparent backpacks made by New York-based Bijoux International have picked up, the company also projects a 6% drop in sales of regular backpacks, a much bigger part of Bijoux's business, in this back-to-school selling season.

Art Grayer, Bijoux's vice president of sales, is skeptical about the safety value of clear backpacks. "I'm afraid it will give false security to the schools," he says. "I think someone can stick a knife or a gun in between two books."

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

MONDAY, JULY 12, 1999

Internet Firms Set Lobby Group to Push Views on Privacy, Intellectual Property

By KARA SWISHER

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
Nine leading Internet companies are forming a Washington lobbying group to focus on issues important to the industry.

Founding members of the public-policy organization, called NetCoalition.com, include America Online Inc., Amazon.com Inc., Yahoo! Inc., eBay Inc. and Excite @Home Corp. Sites operated by member companies are visited by 90% of Web users and represent seven of the Net's busiest locations, the group says.

Young technology companies often seek to avoid political distractions. But members of the group, which has been in the planning stages for several months, became increasingly concerned that existing technology trade associations aren't attuned to their concerns or potential legislation that could affect them.

Top issues, coalition members say, include online privacy, intellectual-property concerns and regulation aimed at protecting children online. The group's main aims will be to educate and lobby policy makers about the Web industry and to promote nonregulatory solutions.

"I believe that over the next few years, the future of the Internet will be determined more by policy choices than technology choices," AOL Chairman Steve Case said in a statement about the group. By forming the group, "Our companies are demonstrating a strong commitment to ensure the continued growth and vitality of this extraordinary medium."

People familiar with the situation said the group will shy away from issues that divide them, such as the current fight between AOL and Excite @Home over access to high-speed cable lines. In addition, the

Viacom Inc. Issues Class B Shares

NEW YORK—Viacom Inc. said it received about \$327 million and issued 9.3 million Class B common shares after investors exercised stock warrants issued as part of its 1994 acquisition of Paramount Communications.

The warrants, which expired July 7, gave holders the right to buy two of the shares at \$35 a share. Viacom said it used the proceeds to repay debt. Including the new shares, the entertainment company now has 558 million Class B shares outstanding. The Class B shares rose \$1.625 a share to \$45.8125 in New York Stock Exchange composite trading.

group isn't likely to add members soon and are veering away from including bigger technology and media companies with significant Internet interests, such as Walt Disney Co. and Microsoft Corp.

Other members of the group are interactive advertising company DoubleClick Inc., Internet-software company Inktomi Inc., Web community theglobe.com Inc. and Lycos Inc., a big Web portal site.

The need for a Washington presence was demonstrated anew Friday by another scuffle in the capital over the awarding of World Wide Web addresses, the site names ending in ".com," ".org" and other familiar suffixes.

The Commerce Department demanded an Internet-address-governance body, the Internet Corp. for Assigned Names and Numbers, abandon a \$1-a-site tax on Web addresses and open its meetings to the public. The government also threatened to revoke the contract of Internet registry Network Solutions Inc., which has a monopoly on awarding site names, known in the industry as domain names. The government accused the firm of resisting federally ordered competition in the registry business; Network Solutions insists that part of its work is proprietary and doesn't have to be shared.

Study Shows Hospitals in 'Top 100' List Don't Necessarily Provide Better Care

By ANNE FAWCETT

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
WASHINGTON—A public-policy journal says patients treated at hospitals named on a list of the "best" U.S. health-care facilities don't necessarily get better care than at unranked hospitals.

Analysts with Health Affairs, the journal of the health-education foundation Project HOPE, studied the care given Medicare patients with acute myocardial infarction at hospitals listed in "100 Top Hospitals: Benchmarks for Success," a prominent survey conducted annually by the health-care consulting firms HCIA Inc. of Baltimore and William M. Mercer Inc. of New York.

The analysts found that while the ranked hospitals showed significantly shorter lengths of stay, lower in-hospital costs and lower rates of readmission within 180 days than for AMI patients treated in unranked hospitals, there was no significant difference in the quality of care as shown by treatment therapies and their 30-day mortality rates.

"Our findings suggest that the 100 Top Hospitals study may be better suited for identifying hospitals with higher performance on financial and operating measures than superior clinical performance in treating elderly AMI patients," the report said. It did note, however, that the information provided by the rankings would be useful for managed-care providers looking for facilities that provide equivalent quality care for patients at a lower cost.

The study's authors wrote that even though HCIA-Mercer warns consumers not to base their health-care decisions on the ratings, the hospitals consider selection to be a "public-relations bonanza" for attracting customers and bargaining with managed-care providers.

Study Created in 1993

"Although our study finds no evidence that quality care was sacrificed for increased financial efficiency among the top hospitals, the ranking is somewhat misleading," said Jersey Chen, one of the lead

study investigators. "Top-ranked hospitals are mistakenly marketing this report as evidence of their superior quality and disseminating it widely to the media."

HCIA Senior Vice President Jean Chenoweth said her company created the study in 1993 in response to the rise of managed care on the medical scene and the cost-cutting that followed.

"What we wanted to do was identify hospitals that would thrive in a tough environment rather than just survive," Ms. Chenoweth said. "My sense is that the insurance companies and managed-care organizations that have contracted with 100 Top Hospitals award-winners will be thrilled with these results."

She said HCIA-Mercer is also comparing the clinical practices of the top 100 hospitals with those of their peers to learn what the top hospitals do that makes them more cost-effective. "It's never been proved that excellence in management means excellence in clinical care, but I expect they go hand in hand," she said.

A Warning to Consumers

The Health Affairs analysts warned that as hospital ranking systems become more prevalent, consumers must consider the reports' strengths and weaknesses before using them to make health-care choices.

U.S. News and World Report, which publishes another well-regarded hospital ranking, released its latest findings Friday. It listed Baltimore's Johns Hopkins Hospital and the Rochester, Minn., Mayo Clinic at the top. In contrast to the HCIA-Mercer rankings, hospitals were scored on patient care exclusively, using the hospitals' reputations, mortality rates and medical information such as technology available and nurses-to-beds ratio.

The results of the HCIA-Mercer and U.S. News surveys differ significantly. Only two of U.S. News' top 10 hospitals were ranked in the "100 Top Hospitals": Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston and the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio.

Crime School Safety

Schools Add Security and Tighten Dress, Speech and Civility Rules

A1 By KEVIN SACK

NEWNAN, Ga., May 21 — The members of the Coweta County Board of Education are not naive enough to think that they vanquished school violence two weeks ago when they voted to prohibit students from carrying book bags unless the bags were transparent or made of mesh.

But at least it is something, they say. And after last month's deadly attack in Littleton, Colo., and now Thursday's shootings in Conyers, Ga., school officials and political leaders here and around the country feel an urgency to do something, to do anything, really, that will ease the anxieties of students and parents.

In such a frantic atmosphere, the pressure to act is increasingly winning out over concerns about privacy and constitutionality.

"We've got to let the kids know who's in charge of the schools," said Michael E. Sumner, a Newnan lawyer who is chairman of the school board in Coweta County, about 45 miles southwest of Atlanta. "And if that means we're infringing on somebody's individual freedom of expression, then so be it."

"There's been some criticism that, well, where does it end? And my point would be that I don't know where it ends but it's sure going to begin with book bags. Just because we can't do everything to make our schools absolutely safe doesn't mean we shouldn't take the first step."

Mr. Sumner's attitude is far from unique. Since the shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, school boards, county commissions and state legislatures across the country have proposed and enacted a broad series of measures intended to attack the youth violence problem at the margins. In each case, the proponents acknowledge that their actions are not cure-alls and that a more enduring solution will require sweeping reassessments of today's youth culture and its countless corrupting influences.

But with six shooting rampages at American schools in the last 20 months, few parents and school administrators have the patience to wait. And so they are darning a patchwork strategy and praying that incremental changes will ward off the next tragedy.

In an effort to eliminate hiding places for weapons, proposals to require mesh book bags have become commonplace. For the same reason, some school districts are discussing the removal of student lockers. Here in Coweta County, the school board is already thinking about amending its new policy on book bags by banning them altogether and buying each student two sets of books, one for home and one for school.

Some school districts also are considering dress codes that would require students to tuck in shirts, so that weapons could not be hidden in waistbands. And public school districts are discussing mandatory uniforms for students, at least partly because officials think uniforms deter gang activity and help administrators determine who belongs on their campuses.

Many schools, even in the most pastoral settings, are installing locks and buzzers on doors, positioning surveillance cameras in hallways and placing two-way intercoms in classrooms. Budgets are being reconfigured to find money for metal detectors.

At meetings with faculty members, parents and students on this morning, the day after six students were shot at Heritage High School in Conyers, Donald A. Peccia, superintendent of the district that includes Heritage, discussed banning opaque book bags, removing lockers, installing metal detectors and imposing a strict dress code.

In Lexington, Ky., the Fayette County school board freed up \$125,000 after the Littleton shootings to buy a surveillance camera and door buzzers for each of its 54 schools. John E. Toye, the district's director of law enforcement, said the security plans had been discussed before the April 20 attack, but money was appropriated only afterward. "It got everybody's attention," he said.

Shortly after the Littleton shootings, Georgia's state school superintendent, Linda C. Shrenko, renewed her call for increased security financing and suggested that school

boards be given the authority to allow principals to carry Mace, pepper spray or stun guns. In North Carolina, where there were 42 bomb threats at schools in the three weeks after the Littleton shootings, the state school superintendent, Michael E. Ward, has proposed increased penalties for students who make such threats: an automatic one-year suspension and a maximum jail term of 13 months instead of six months. "This was driven almost entirely by Columbine," he said.

Inspired by the school shootings that preceded those at Columbine, the public schools in Boston this week joined several other systems that have anonymous toll-free telephone lines for tips and warnings

about threats of violence. Kathleen M. Johnston, the system's school-safety coordinator, said school officials recognized that the tip line could be abused by students.

"That's a chance you take," she said. "But people very much want this type of outlet. People are becoming more aware of what's going on around them, what people are saying, what people are writing, what people are doing."

Clearly, the recent shootings have had a direct impact on gun-control legislation being debated — and passed — in Congress, and they have prompted many governors to promise disciplinary crackdowns in schools and to propose study commissions on youth violence.

But the shootings also have inspired legislation aimed at curbing what minors can view on the Internet, in video games and in rock concerts, all of which are said to have influenced the two teen-agers who killed 12 classmates and a teacher at Columbine before killing themselves.

In Washington, State Representative Michael J. Carrell, a Republican who is chairman of the Judiciary

Committee, introduced a bill after the Littleton shootings that would make it a misdemeanor for anyone to provide information about bomb-making — either through the Internet or the sale or loan of a book — to a minor who then builds a device that injures someone.

In Alabama, State Representative Perry Hooper Jr., Republican of Montgomery, has introduced a bill that would ban the sale of violent video games to minors and would give the state's Attorney General the authority to determine which games fit that definition. Mr. Hooper acknowledged that such a ban would pose First Amendment concerns. "You've got to weigh constitutional rights with what's best for the state and its citizens," he said.

Taking an almost parental approach, the Senate in Louisiana passed a measure on May 12 that would require elementary school students to address teachers and school administrators "by using the respectful terms 'Yes, Ma'am' and 'No, Ma'am' or 'Yes, Sir' and 'No, Sir.'"

The legislation, which passed by a 34-to-5 vote, was proposed by Gov. Mike Foster, a Republican, who conceived of the bill before the Littleton shootings, said his spokeswoman, Marsanne Golsby. But the bill's sponsor in the Senate, Donald R. Cravins, Democrat of Lafayette, said the shootings had influenced the timing of the bill's introduction, and Ms. Golsby said the Colorado incident probably expanded its margin of passage.

Supreme Court precedents allow modest restriction of student speech and give school officials significant leeway to conduct random searches. But the American Civil Liberties Union has grown concerned in recent weeks about several measures taken in reaction to the Littleton shootings, particularly stringent disciplinary actions against students for wearing or saying things that school officials deemed inappropriate.

In Wilmington, N.C., a high school student spent three days in jail this month after being charged with communicating a threat because he wrote the phrase "the end is near" on his computer's background wallpaper. And in Brimfield, Ohio, 11 high school students were suspended after contributing to an off-campus Web site about the Gothic subculture.

"Every time there is a violent or tragic incident, the first reaction of public officials is to scapegoat civil liberties," said Nadine Strosser, president of the A.C.L.U.

Paul D. Houston, the executive director of the American Association of School Administrators, agreed that there had been some overreaction. But he said he understood the instinct of school officials and politicians to respond to the fears of students, teachers and parents.

"It's not the same world as it was before," Mr. Houston said. "It's finally come home that these things can happen anywhere."

Since the rash of school shooting began, that has certainly become the reality here in Newnan, a sleepy town of 12,500 people that likes its distance from the big-city problem of Atlanta. Its high schools now feature security cameras, on-campus police officers, random searches by contraband-sniffing dogs and investigators wielding hand-held metal detectors — measures mostly instituted over the last two years. When a dog became particularly interested in a book bag during a recent search at Newnan High, school officials were relieved to find only a soggy chicken biscuit.

"We're playing by a different set of rules now," said Alan D. Wood, the principal. "To serve and protect has become our motto. It used to be on the sides of police cars."

Not surprising, most students at the school object to the new policy on book bags, which will take effect next year. Karen Hembree, a senior, said that the mesh bags, which cost about \$15, would do little to impede a determined gunman, would impose on privacy, would pose a financial burden on some students and would fail to protect books and papers in rain storms.

Her friend Flynn K. Tracy, the year's valedictorian, said she felt much the same way until Thursday's shootings in Conyers, about an hour's drive away.

"I didn't think it would make much difference," Ms. Tracy said. "But now after what happened in Conyers whether they take minor steps or major steps, schools should do anything they can to make themselves safer."

The New York Times

MONDAY, MAY 24, 1999

After Many Misses, Pentagon Still Pursues Missile Defense

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By WILLIAM J. BROAD

After decades of flops, \$100 billion in costs and sharp rises in the political stakes, the Pentagon is trying again to defend the United States against missile attack.

The "Star Wars" dream of zapping enemy warheads with orbiting lasers, which President Ronald Reagan championed, is long gone. Instead, the military leaders of the Clinton Administration have seized on an older, less contentious approach that is nonetheless proving to be diabolically hard.

On Tuesday, if all goes as planned, a launcher on a 10-wheel truck is to fire a 20-foot interceptor missile from a test site in the New Mexico desert. The goal is for the interceptor to speed above the earth, pinpoint a mock warhead, zero in with a "kill vehicle" on its radiated heat and smash it to bits by force of impact.

Since this approach was first proposed in 1976, it has been tested 16 times. Fourteen times it failed, most recently in March. In two tests, in 1984 and 1991, the interceptors succeeded in hitting targets. But Congressional sleuths later found that the tests had been quietly made less challenging and that some results had been exaggerated.

Critics say this record suggests the idea will never be practical. But this would-be weapon still stars in a push to build a limited system to protect the United States from enemy warheads.

"It's not an impossible task," Lieut. Gen. Lester L. Lyles of the Air Force, director of the Pentagon's Ballistic Missile Defense Organization, insisted in an interview, saying improvements in the program would prove the critics wrong. "We just need to make sure we take all the bugs out."

Last year, North Korea fired a missile over Japan, helping stir the current defensive push. But Republicans have also seized upon anti-missile defense as an issue. In March,

after the White House yielded to pressure and dropped longstanding objections to anti-missile deployments, the Senate and House voted overwhelmingly for the United States to build a defensive system based on what are known as hit-to-kill interceptors.

Last Thursday, the House reiterated that stance, approving a bill passed by the Senate in March that calls for deploying the system as soon as technologically possible. President Clinton is expected to sign the bill.

Now the question is whether there is any reason to think the weapon can actually work reliably and, if so, when a system might be built. Congress is pushing for an anti-missile force to be set up as soon as 2003 or 2005, and the Pentagon says that such dates may be feasible.

General Lyles and other Pentagon leaders say that the run of testing flops had forced major overhauls and that in coming months feats of interception would prove the weapon's feasibility.

But critics say political considerations, including a Democratic desire to deprive Republicans of a campaign issue, are triumphing over scientific truth. They are concerned that with deployment of a missile system, Washington might abandon the proven approach of diplomacy and arms control in favor of a potentially false sense of security backed by a faulty defense system.

"It makes us feel good," said Joseph Cirincione, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "But it's just the illusion of protection."

Over the decades, the United States has sunk about \$110 billion into anti-missile arms and research. Successes have been rare, but not ballyhoo.

In March, in the New Mexican desert, the Theater High-Altitude Area Defense, or Thaad, the most advanced interceptor the Pentagon is testing against targets, was fired toward a mock warhead. The 6-foot "kill vehicle" missed its target.

Even so, the Pentagon claimed success in 16 of 17 test goals, though weeks later it sheepishly admitted 2 of 4 was a more accurate portrayal.

This Tuesday, the same balky interceptor is to be fired again from the White Sands Missile Range, probably to the accompaniment of hundreds of crossed fingers. To date, since the early 1990's, Thaad has cost taxpayers \$3.9 billion. Its main contractor is the Lockheed Martin Corporation, which was fined \$15 million for the failure in March.

The troubled system is but one of a small army of similar defensive arms undergoing development. The culmination is to be a large interceptor meant to shield the nation — not just soldiers, ships and battlefields — from enemy attack.

Claims of Success, Series of Failures

The hit-to-kill effort grew out of the realization, decades ago, that a defense system based on nuclear warheads could do more harm than good. Fiery blasts from interceptors tipped with nuclear arms might destroy even distant enemy warheads, but they would also produce huge bursts of electromagnetic energy that, like a riot of lightning bolts, could disable electronic devices on the ground, crippling the nation and the military.

Starting in 1976, the Pentagon sought interceptors so extraordinarily precise that nuclear fireballs would be unnecessary. The key was to be destruction by impact, just as when two cars collide. Interceptor and warhead would hit at blinding speeds and destroy each other.

The rub was how to guide the racing interceptor. Ground controls were too slow. So final guidance had to be done by the defensive weapon itself, working autonomously.

The Pentagon's solution was to have the interceptor zero in on heat emanating from enemy warheads. An infrared seeker and a tiny com-

puter would fire small jets, steering the hurtling mass of metal toward sure destruction.

The first test was in February 1983. A mock enemy warhead was launched from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. Thousands of miles away in the South Pacific, at Kwajalein Atoll, an interceptor of the Homing Overlay Experiment blasted off. Unfortunately, it missed the warhead by a wide margin. New tests that May and December also failed.

In June 1984, however, an interceptor smashed a mock target to bits.

"We successfully 'hit a bullet with a bullet' for the first time," Lieut. Gen. James A. Abrahamson of the Air Force, head of the Pentagon's anti-missile program, told Congress. The interceptor, he added, had worked by zeroing in on a warhead "with its inherent heat."

But the Pentagon had actually raised that heat artificially so the test was easier, investigators at the Congressional General Accounting Office reported years later. The doctoring was done by heating the mock warhead before launch to 100 degrees. And in flight, the long warhead was instructed to fly sideways, exposing a greater surface area to the

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The New York Times

MONDAY, MAY 24, 1999



A Guide to Safe Schools

Organizations Supporting This Guide

American Association of
School Administrators

American Counseling
Association

American Federation of
Teachers

American School Counselors
Association

Council of Administrators of
Special Education

Council for Exceptional
Children

Federation of Families for
Children's Mental Health

National Association of
Elementary School
Principals

National Association of
School Psychologists

National Association of
Secondary School
Principals

National Association of
State Boards of Education

National Education
Association

National Mental Health
Association

National Middle Schools
Association

National PTA

National School Boards
Association

National School Public
Relations Association

Police Executive Research
Forum

The full text of this public domain publication is available at the Department's home page at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/earlywrn.html> and in alternate formats upon request. For more information, please contact us at:

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August 1998



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202

August 22, 1998

Dear Principal and Teachers:

On June 13, after the tragic loss of life and injuries at Thurston High School in Springfield, Oregon, President Clinton directed the Department of Education and the Department of Justice to develop an early warning guide to help "adults reach out to troubled children quickly and effectively." This guide responds to that Presidential request. It is our sincere hope that this guide will provide you with the practical help needed to keep every child in your school out of harm's way.

America's schools are among the safest places to be on a day-to-day basis, due to the strong commitment of educators, parents, and communities to their children. Nevertheless, last year's tragic and sudden acts of violence in our nation's schools remind us that no community can be complacent in its efforts to make its schools even safer. An effective and safe school is the vital center of every community whether it is in a large urban area or a small rural community.

Central to this guide are the key insights that keeping children safe is a community-wide effort and that effective schools create environments where children and young people truly feel connected. This is why our common goal must be to reconnect with every child and particularly with those young people who are isolated and troubled.

This guide should be seen as part of an overall effort to make sure that every school in this nation has a comprehensive violence prevention plan in place. We also caution you to recognize that over labeling and using this guide to stigmatize children in a cursory way that leads to over-reaction is harmful. The guidelines in this report are based on research and the positive experiences of schools around the country where the value and potential of each and every child is cherished and where good practices have produced, and continue to produce, successful students and communities.

We are grateful to the many experts, agencies, and associations in education, law enforcement, juvenile justice, mental health, and other social services that worked closely with us to make sure that this report is available for the start of school this fall. We hope that you and your students and staff, as well as parents and the community, will benefit from this information.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Richard W. Riley in black ink.

Richard W. Riley
Secretary
U.S. Department of Education

Handwritten signature of Janet Reno in black ink.

Janet Reno
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice



Early Warning, Timely Response

A Guide to Safe Schools

Although most schools are safe, the violence that occurs in our neighborhoods and communities has found its way inside the schoolhouse door. However, if we understand what leads to violence and the types of support that research has shown are effective in preventing violence, we can make our schools safer.

Research-based practices can help school communities—administrators, teachers, families, students, support staff, and community members—recognize the warning signs early, so children can get the help they need before it is too late. This guide presents a brief summary of the research on violence prevention and intervention and crisis response in schools. It tells school communities:

- **What to look for**—the early warning signs that relate to violence and other troubling behaviors.
- **What to do**—the action steps that school communities can take to prevent violence and other troubling behaviors, to intervene and get help for troubled children, and to respond to school violence when it occurs.

Sections in this guide include:

- **Section 1: Introduction.** All staff, students, parents, and members of the community must be part of creating a safe school environment. Schools must have in place approaches for addressing the needs of all children who have troubling behaviors. This section describes the rationale for the guide and suggests how it can be used by school communities to develop a plan of action.
- **Section 2: Characteristics of a School That Is Safe and Responsive to All Children.** Well functioning schools foster learning, safety, and socially appropriate behaviors. They have a strong academic focus and support students in achieving high standards, foster positive relationships between school staff and students, and promote meaningful parental and community involvement. This section describes characteristics of schools that support prevention, appropriate intervention, and effective crisis response.
- **Section 3: Early Warning Signs.** There are early warning

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signs that, when viewed in context, can signal a troubled child. Educators and parents—and in some cases, students—can use several significant principles to ensure that the early warning signs are not misinterpreted. This section presents early warning signs, imminent warning signs, and the principles that ensure these signs will not be misinterpreted. It concludes with a brief description of using the early warning signs to shape intervention practices.

- **Section 4: Getting Help for Troubled Children.** Effective interventions for improving the behavior of troubled children are well documented in the research literature. This section presents research- and expert-based principles that should provide the foundation for all intervention development. It describes what to do when intervening early with students who are at risk for behavioral problems, when responding with intensive interventions for individual children, and when providing a foundation to prevent and reduce violent behavior.
- **Section 5: Developing a Prevention and Response Plan.** Effective schools create a violence prevention and response plan and form a team that can ensure it is implemented. They use approaches and strategies based on research about what

works. This section offers suggestions for developing such plans.

- **Section 6: Responding to Crisis.** Effective and safe schools are well prepared for any potential crisis or violent act. This section describes what to do when intervening during a crisis to ensure safety and when responding in the aftermath of crisis. The principles that underlie effective crisis response are included.
- **Section 7: Conclusion.** This section summarizes the guide.
- **Section 8: Methodology, Contributors, and Research Support.** This guide synthesizes an extensive knowledge base on violence and violence prevention. This section describes the rigorous development and review process that was used. It also provides information about the project's Web site.

A final section lists resources that can be contacted for more information.

The information in this guide is not intended as a comprehensive prevention, intervention, and response plan—school communities could do *everything* recommended and still experience violence. Rather, the intent is to provide school communities with reliable and practical information about what they can do to be prepared and to reduce the likelihood of violence.



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A Guide to Safe Schools

Most schools are safe. Although fewer than one percent of all violent deaths of children occur on school grounds—indeed, a child is far more likely to be killed in the community or at home—no school is immune.

The violence that occurs in our neighborhoods and communities has found its way inside the schoolhouse door. And while we can take some solace in the knowledge that schools are among the safest places for young people, we must do more. School violence reflects a much broader problem, one that can only be addressed when everyone—at school, at home, and in the community—works together.

The 1997-1998 school year served as a dramatic wake-up call to the fact that guns do come to school, and some students will use them to kill. One after the other, school communities across the country—from Oregon to Virginia, from Arkansas to Pennsylvania, from Mississippi to Kentucky—have been forced to face the fact that violence can happen to them. And while these serious incidents trouble us deeply, they should not prevent us from acting to prevent school violence of any kind.

There is ample documentation that prevention and early intervention efforts can reduce violence and other troubling behaviors in schools. Research-based practices can help school commu-

nities recognize the warning signs early, so children can get the help they need before it is too late. In fact, research suggests that some of the most promising prevention and intervention strategies involve the entire educational community—administrators, teachers, families, students, support staff, and community members—working together to form positive relationships with all children.

If we understand what leads to violence and the types of support that research has shown are effective in preventing violence and other troubling behaviors, we can make our schools safer.

About This Guide

This guide presents a brief summary of the research on violence prevention and intervention and crisis response in schools (see Section 8 for a review of methodology and information on how to locate the research). It tells members of school communities—especially administrators, teachers, staff, families, students, and community-based professionals:

- **What to look for**—the early warning signs that relate to violence and other troubling behaviors.
- **What to do**—the action steps that school communities can take to prevent violence and other troubling behaviors, to intervene and get help for



troubled children, and to respond to school violence when it occurs.

The information in each section is not intended as a comprehensive prevention, intervention, and response system or plan. Indeed, school violence occurs in a unique context in every school and every situation, making a one-size-fits-all scheme impossible. Moreover, school communities could do **everything** recommended and still experience violence. Rather, this guide is designed to provide school communities with reliable and practical information about what they can do to be prepared and to reduce the likelihood of violence.

Creating a safe school requires having in place many preventive measures for children's mental and emotional problems—as well as a comprehensive approach to early identification of **all** warning signs that might lead to violence toward self or others. The term "violence" as used in this booklet, refers to a broad range of troubling behaviors and emotions shown by students—including serious aggression, physical attacks, suicide, dangerous use of drugs, and other dangerous interpersonal behaviors. However, the early warning signs presented in this document focus primarily on aggressive and violent behaviors toward others. The guide does not attempt to address all of the warning signs related to depression and suicide. Nevertheless, some of the signs of potential violence toward others are also signs of depression and suicidal risk, which should be addressed through early iden-

tification and appropriate intervention.

Using the Guide To Develop a Plan of Action

All staff, students, parents, and members of the community must be part of creating a safe school environment:

- **Everyone** has a personal responsibility for reducing the risk of violence. We must take steps to maintain order, demonstrate mutual respect and caring for one another, and ensure that children who are troubled get the help they need.
- **Everyone** should have an understanding of the early warning signs that help identify students who may be headed for trouble.
- **Everyone** should be prepared to respond appropriately in a crisis situation.

Research and expert-based information offers a wealth of knowledge about preventing violence in schools. The following sections provide information—what to look for and what to do—that school communities can use when developing or enhancing violence prevention and response plans (see Section 5 for more information about these plans).

We hope that school communities will use this document as a guide as they begin the prevention and healing process today, at all age and grade levels, and for all students.

"Violence is a major concern to parents, students, teachers, and the administration of any school. We have found that our best plan starts with prevention and awareness. At our middle school, the school psychologist, in conjunction with the assistant principal, has developed an anti-intimidation and threat plan. Our school statistics reflect a dramatic decline in violence from the 1996-97 to the 1997-98 school year. We treat each and every student with respect. We are finding that they in turn are demonstrating a more respectful attitude."

G. Norma Villar Baker,
Principal, Midvale, UT



Characteristics of a School That Is Safe and Responsive to All Children

Well functioning schools foster learning, safety, and socially appropriate behaviors. They have a strong academic focus and support students in achieving high standards, foster positive relationships between school staff and students, and promote meaningful parental and community involvement. Most prevention programs in effective schools address multiple factors and recognize that safety and order are related to children's social, emotional, and academic development.

Effective prevention, intervention, and crisis response strategies operate best in school communities that:

- **Focus on academic achievement.** Effective schools convey the attitude that all children can achieve academically and behave appropriately, while at the same time appreciating individual differences. Adequate resources and programs help ensure that expectations are met. Expectations are communicated clearly, with the understanding that meeting such expectations is a responsibility of the student, the school, and the home. Students who do not receive the support they need are less likely to behave in socially desirable ways.
- **Involve families in meaningful ways.** Students whose families are involved in their growth in and outside of school are more likely to experience school success and less likely to become involved in antisocial activities. School communities must make parents feel welcome in school, address barriers to their participation, and keep families positively engaged in their children's education. Effective schools also support families in expressing concerns about their children—and they support families in getting the help they need to address behaviors that cause concern.
- **Develop links to the community.** Everyone must be committed to improving schools. Schools that have close ties to families, support services, community police, the faith-based community, and the community at large can benefit from many valuable resources. When these links are weak, the risk of school violence is heightened and the opportunity to serve children who are at risk for violence or who may be affected by it is decreased.
- **Emphasize positive relationships among students and staff.** Research shows that a



"I just recently got out of the hospital. I was a victim of a shooting at my school. I've been teaching for 20 years and I never thought it could happen at my school. Some of the kids knew about it before it happened, but they didn't want to say anything—they have a code of honor and they did not want to tattle tale. But someone has to stand up, someone has to take a stand because, if you don't, then somebody else is going to get hurt."

Gregory Carter, Teacher,
Richmond, VA

positive relationship with an adult who is available to provide support when needed is one of the most critical factors in preventing student violence. Students often look to adults in the school community for guidance, support, and direction. Some children need help overcoming feelings of isolation and support in developing connections to others. Effective schools make sure that opportunities exist for adults to spend quality, personal time with children. Effective schools also foster positive student interpersonal relations—they encourage students to help each other and to feel comfortable assisting others in getting help when needed.

- **Discuss safety issues openly.** Children come to school with many different perceptions—and misconceptions—about death, violence, and the use of weapons. Schools can reduce the risk of violence by teaching children about the dangers of firearms, as well as appropriate strategies for dealing with feelings, expressing anger in appropriate ways, and resolving conflicts. Schools also should teach children that they are responsible for their actions and that the choices they make have consequences for which they will be held accountable.
- **Treat students with equal respect.** A major source of conflict in many schools is the perceived or real problem of bias and unfair treatment of students because of ethnicity, gender, race, social class, religion, disability, nationality, sexual

orientation, physical appearance, or some other factor—both by staff and by peers. Students who have been treated unfairly may become scapegoats and/or targets of violence. In some cases, victims may react in aggressive ways. Effective schools communicate to students and the greater community that all children are valued and respected. There is a deliberate and systematic effort—for example, displaying children's artwork, posting academic work prominently throughout the building, respecting students' diversity—to establish a climate that demonstrates care and a sense of community.

- **Create ways for students to share their concerns.** It has been found that peers often are the most likely group to know in advance about potential school violence. Schools must create ways for students to safely report such troubling behaviors that may lead to dangerous situations. And students who report potential school violence must be protected. It is important for schools to support and foster positive relationships between students and adults so students will feel safe providing information about a potentially dangerous situation.
- **Help children feel safe expressing their feelings.** It is very important that children feel safe when expressing their needs, fears, and anxieties to school staff. When they do not have access to caring adults, feelings of isolation, rejection, and disappointment are more likely to occur, increasing the probability of acting-out behaviors.

- **Have in place a system for referring children who are suspected of being abused or neglected.** The referral system must be appropriate and reflect federal and state guidelines.
- **Offer extended day programs for children.** School-based before- and after-school programs can be effective in reducing violence. Effective programs are well supervised and provide children with support and a range of options, such as counseling, tutoring, mentoring, cultural arts, community service, clubs, access to computers, and help with homework.
- **Promote good citizenship and character.** In addition to their academic mission, schools must help students become good citizens. First, schools stand for the civic values set forth in our Constitution and Bill of Rights (patriotism; freedom of religion, speech, and press; equal protection/nondiscrimination; and due process/fairness). Schools also reinforce and promote the shared values of their local communities, such as honesty, kindness, responsibility, and respect for others. Schools should acknowledge that parents are the primary moral educators of their children and work in partnership with them.
- **Identify problems and assess progress toward solutions.** Schools must openly and objec-

tively examine circumstances that are potentially dangerous for students and staff and situations where members of the school community feel threatened or intimidated. Safe schools continually assess progress by identifying problems and collecting information regarding progress toward solutions. Moreover, effective schools share this information with students, families, and the community at large.

- **Support students in making the transition to adult life and the workplace.** Youth need assistance in planning their future and in developing skills that will result in success. For example, schools can provide students with community service opportunities, work-study programs, and apprenticeships that help connect them to caring adults in the community. These relationships, when established early, foster in youth a sense of hope and security for the future.

Research has demonstrated repeatedly that school communities can do a great deal to prevent violence. Having in place a safe and responsive foundation helps **all** children—and it enables school communities to provide more efficient and effective services to students who need more support. The next step is to learn the early warning signs of a child who is troubled, so that effective interventions can be provided.

"We must avoid fragmentation in implementing programs. The concepts in preventing and responding to violence must be integrated into effective school reform, including socially and academically supportive instruction and caring, a welcoming atmosphere, and providing good options for recreation and enrichment."

Howard Adelman, Professor of Psychology, University of California, Los Angeles





Early Warning Signs

Use the Signs Responsibly

It is important to avoid inappropriately labeling or stigmatizing individual students because they appear to fit a specific profile or set of early warning indicators. It's okay to be worried about a child, but it's not okay to overreact and jump to conclusions.

Why didn't we see it coming? In the wake of violence, we ask this question not so much to place blame, but to understand better what we can do to prevent such an occurrence from ever happening again. We review over and over in our minds the days leading up to the incident—did the child say or do anything that would have cued us in to the impending crisis? Did we miss an opportunity to help?

There are early warning signs in most cases of violence to self and others—certain behavioral and emotional signs that, when viewed in context, can signal a troubled child. But early warning signs are just that—indicators that a student may need help.

Such signs may or may not indicate a serious problem—they do not necessarily mean that a child is prone to violence toward self or others. Rather, early warning signs provide us with the impetus to check out our concerns and address the child's needs. Early warning signs allow us to act responsibly by getting help for the child before problems escalate.

Early warning signs can help frame concern for a child. However, it is important to avoid inappropriately labeling or stigmatizing individual students because they appear to fit a specific profile or set of early warning indicators. It's okay to be worried about

a child, but it's not okay to overreact and jump to conclusions.

Teachers and administrators—and other school support staff—are not professionally trained to analyze children's feelings and motives. But they are on the front line when it comes to observing troublesome behavior and making referrals to appropriate professionals, such as school psychologists, social workers, counselors, and nurses. They also play a significant role in responding to diagnostic information provided by specialists. Thus, it is no surprise that effective schools take special care in training the entire school community to understand and identify early warning signs.

When staff members seek help for a troubled child, when friends report worries about a peer or friend, when parents raise concerns about their child's thoughts or habits, children can get the help they need. By actively sharing information, a school community can provide quick, effective responses.

Principles for Identifying the Early Warning Signs of School Violence

Educators and families can increase their ability to recognize early warning signs by establishing close, caring, and supportive

relationships with children and youth—getting to know them well enough to be aware of their needs, feelings, attitudes, and behavior patterns. Educators and parents together can review school records for patterns of behavior or sudden changes in behavior.

Unfortunately, **there is a real danger that early warning signs will be misinterpreted.** Educators and parents—and in some cases, students—can ensure that the early warning signs are not misinterpreted by using several significant principles to better understand them. These principles include:

- **Do no harm.** There are certain risks associated with using early warning signs to identify children who are troubled. First and foremost, the intent should be to get help for a child early. The early warning signs should not be used as rationale to exclude, isolate, or punish a child. Nor should they be used as a checklist for formally identifying, mislabeling, or stereotyping children. Formal disability identification under federal law requires individualized evaluation by qualified professionals. In addition, all referrals to outside agencies based on the early warning signs must be kept confidential and must be done with parental consent (except referrals for suspected child abuse or neglect).
- **Understand violence and aggression within a context.** Violence is contextual. Violent and aggressive behavior as an expression of emotion may have many antecedent factors—factors that exist within the school, the home, and the larger social environment. In fact, for those children who are at risk for aggression and violence, certain environments or situations can set it off. Some children may act out if stress becomes too great, if they lack positive coping skills, and if they have learned to react with aggression.
- **Avoid stereotypes.** Stereotypes can interfere with—and even harm—the school community's ability to identify and help children. It is important to be aware of false cues—including race, socio-economic status, cognitive or academic ability, or physical appearance. In fact, such stereotypes can unfairly harm children, especially when the school community acts upon them.
- **View warning signs within a developmental context.** Children and youth at different levels of development have varying social and emotional capabilities. They may express their needs differently in elementary, middle, and high school. The point is to know what is developmentally typical behavior, so that behaviors are not misinterpreted.
- **Understand that children typically exhibit multiple warning signs.** It is common for children who are troubled to exhibit multiple signs. Research confirms that most children who are troubled and at risk for aggression exhibit more than one warning sign, repeatedly, and with increasing intensity over time. Thus, it is important not to overreact to single signs, words, or actions.

"When doing consultation with school staff and families, we advise them to think of the early warning signs within a context. We encourage them to look for combinations of warning signs that might tell us the student's behavior is changing and becoming more problematic."

Deborah Crockett, School Psychologist, Atlanta, GA





Early Warning Signs

It is not always possible to predict behavior that will lead to violence. However, educators and parents—and sometimes students—can recognize certain early warning signs. In some situations and for some youth, different combinations of events, behaviors, and emotions may lead to aggressive rage or violent behavior toward self or others. A good rule of thumb is to assume that these warning signs, especially when they are presented in combination, indicate a need for further analysis to determine an appropriate intervention.

We know from research that most children who become violent toward self or others feel rejected and psychologically victimized. In most cases, children exhibit aggressive behavior early in life and, if not provided support, will continue a progressive developmental pattern toward severe aggression or violence. However, research also shows that when children have a positive, meaningful connection to an adult—whether it be at home, in school, or in the community—the potential for violence is reduced significantly.

None of these signs alone is sufficient for predicting aggression and violence. Moreover, it is inappropriate—and potentially harmful—to use the early warning signs as a checklist against which to match individual children. Rather, the early warning signs are offered only as an aid in identifying and referring children who may need help. School communities must ensure that staff and students only use the early warning signs for identification and referral purposes—only trained professionals

should make diagnoses in consultation with the child's parents or guardian.

The following early warning signs are presented with the following qualifications: They are not equally significant and they are not presented in order of seriousness. The early warning signs include:

- **Social withdrawal.** In some situations, gradual and eventually complete withdrawal from social contacts can be an important indicator of a troubled child. The withdrawal often stems from feelings of depression, rejection, persecution, unworthiness, and lack of confidence.
- **Excessive feelings of isolation and being alone.** Research has shown that the majority of children who are isolated and appear to be friendless are not violent. In fact, these feelings are sometimes characteristic of children and youth who may be troubled, withdrawn, or have internal issues that hinder development of social affiliations. However, research also has shown that in some cases feelings of isolation and not having friends are associated with children who behave aggressively and violently.
- **Excessive feelings of rejection.** In the process of growing up, and in the course of adolescent development, many young people experience emotionally painful rejection. Children who are troubled often are isolated from their mentally healthy peers. Their responses to rejection will depend on many background factors. Without support, they may be at risk of ex-

Use the Signs Responsibly

None of these signs alone is sufficient for predicting aggression and violence. Moreover, it is inappropriate—and potentially harmful—to use the early warning signs as a checklist against which to match individual children.

pressing their emotional distress in negative ways—including violence. Some aggressive children who are rejected by non-aggressive peers seek out aggressive friends who, in turn, reinforce their violent tendencies.

- ***Being a victim of violence.*** Children who are victims of violence—including physical or sexual abuse—in the community, at school, or at home are sometimes at risk themselves of becoming violent toward themselves or others.
- ***Feelings of being picked on and persecuted.*** The youth who feels constantly picked on, teased, bullied, singled out for ridicule, and humiliated at home or at school may initially withdraw socially. If not given adequate support in addressing these feelings, some children may vent them in inappropriate ways—including possible aggression or violence.
- ***Low school interest and poor academic performance.*** Poor school achievement can be the result of many factors. It is important to consider whether there is a drastic change in performance and/or poor performance becomes a chronic condition that limits the child's capacity to learn. In some situations—such as when the low achiever feels frustrated, unworthy, chastised, and denigrated—acting out and aggressive behaviors may occur. It is important to assess the emotional and cognitive reasons for the academic performance change to determine the true nature of the problem.
- ***Expression of violence in writings and drawings.*** Children

and youth often express their thoughts, feelings, desires, and intentions in their drawings and in stories, poetry, and other written expressive forms. Many children produce work about violent themes that for the most part is harmless when taken in context. However, an overrepresentation of violence in writings and drawings that is directed at specific individuals (family members, peers, other adults) consistently over time, may signal emotional problems and the potential for violence. Because there is a real danger in misdiagnosing such a sign, it is important to seek the guidance of a qualified professional—such as a school psychologist, counselor, or other mental health specialist—to determine its meaning.

- ***Uncontrolled anger.*** Everyone gets angry; anger is a natural emotion. However, anger that is expressed frequently and intensely in response to minor irritants may signal potential violent behavior toward self or others.
- ***Patterns of impulsive and chronic hitting, intimidating, and bullying behaviors.*** Children often engage in acts of shoving and mild aggression. However, some mildly aggressive behaviors such as constant hitting and bullying of others that occur early in children's lives, if left unattended, might later escalate into more serious behaviors.
- ***History of discipline problems.*** Chronic behavior and disciplinary problems both in school and at home may suggest that underlying emotional needs are not being met. These unmet





needs may be manifested in acting out and aggressive behaviors. These problems may set the stage for the child to violate norms and rules, defy authority, disengage from school, and engage in aggressive behaviors with other children and adults.

- **Past history of violent and aggressive behavior.** Unless provided with support and counseling, a youth who has a history of aggressive or violent behavior is likely to repeat those behaviors. Aggressive and violent acts may be directed toward other individuals, be expressed in cruelty to animals, or include fire setting. Youth who show an early pattern of antisocial behavior frequently and across multiple settings are particularly at risk for future aggressive and antisocial behavior. Similarly, youth who engage in overt behaviors such as bullying, generalized aggression and defiance, and covert behaviors such as stealing, vandalism, lying, cheating, and fire setting also are at risk for more serious aggressive behavior. Research suggests that age of onset may be a key factor in interpreting early warning signs. For example, children who engage in aggression and drug abuse at an early age (before age 12) are more likely to show violence later on than are children who begin such behavior at an older age. In the presence of such signs it is important to review the child's history with behavioral experts and seek parents' observations and insights.
 - **Intolerance for differences and prejudicial attitudes.** All children have likes and dislikes. However, an intense prejudice
- toward others based on racial, ethnic, religious, language, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and physical appearance—when coupled with other factors—may lead to violent assaults against those who are perceived to be different. Membership in hate groups or the willingness to victimize individuals with disabilities or health problems also should be treated as early warning signs.
- **Drug use and alcohol use.** Apart from being unhealthy behaviors, drug use and alcohol use reduces self-control and exposes children and youth to violence, either as perpetrators, as victims, or both.
 - **Affiliation with gangs.** Gangs that support anti-social values and behaviors—including extortion, intimidation, and acts of violence toward other students—cause fear and stress among other students. Youth who are influenced by these groups—those who emulate and copy their behavior, as well as those who become affiliated with them—may adopt these values and act in violent or aggressive ways in certain situations. Gang-related violence and turf battles are common occurrences tied to the use of drugs that often result in injury and/or death.
 - **Inappropriate access to, possession of, and use of firearms.** Children and youth who inappropriately possess or have access to firearms can have an increased risk for violence. Research shows that such youngsters also have a higher probability of becoming victims. Families can reduce inappropriate access and use by restrict-

ing, monitoring, and supervising children's access to firearms and other weapons. Children who have a history of aggression, impulsiveness, or other emotional problems should not have access to firearms and other weapons.

- **Serious threats of violence.** Idle threats are a common response to frustration. Alternatively, one of the most reliable indicators that a youth is likely to commit a dangerous act toward self or others is a detailed and specific threat to use violence. Recent incidents across the country clearly indicate that threats to commit violence against oneself or others should be taken very seriously. Steps must be taken to understand the nature of these threats and to prevent them from being carried out.

Identifying and Responding to Imminent Warning Signs

Unlike early warning signs, imminent warning signs indicate that a student is very close to behaving in a way that is potentially dangerous to self and/or to others. Imminent warning signs require an immediate response.

No single warning sign can predict that a dangerous act will occur. Rather, imminent warning signs usually are presented as a sequence of overt, serious, hostile behaviors or threats directed at peers, staff, or other individuals. Usually, imminent warning signs are evident to more than one staff member—as well as to the child's family.

Imminent warning signs may include:

- Serious physical fighting with peers or family members.
- Severe destruction of property.
- Severe rage for seemingly minor reasons.
- Detailed threats of lethal violence.
- Possession and/or use of firearms and other weapons.
- Other self-injurious behaviors or threats of suicide.

When warning signs indicate that danger is imminent, safety must **always** be the first and foremost consideration. Action must be taken immediately. Immediate intervention by school authorities and possibly law enforcement officers is needed when a child:

- Has presented a detailed plan (time, place, method) to harm or kill others—particularly if the child has a history of aggression or has attempted to carry out threats in the past.
- Is carrying a weapon, particularly a firearm, and has threatened to use it.

In situations where students present other threatening behaviors, **parents should be informed of the concerns immediately.** School communities also have the responsibility to seek assistance from appropriate agencies, such as child and family services and community mental health. These responses should reflect school board policies and be consistent with the violence prevention and response plan (for more information see Section 5).

Know the Law

The *Gun Free Schools Act* requires that each state receiving federal funds under the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) must have put in effect, by October 1995, 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 firearm to school.

Each state's law also must allow the chief administering officer of the local educational agency to modify the expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis. All local educational agencies receiving ESEA funds must have a policy that requires the referral of any student who brings a firearm to school to the criminal justice or juvenile justice system.





Using the Early Warning Signs To Shape Intervention Practices

An early warning sign is not a predictor that a child or youth will commit a violent act toward self or others. Effective schools recognize the potential in every child to overcome difficult experiences and to control negative emotions. Adults in these school communities use their knowledge of early warning signs to address problems before they escalate into violence.

Effective school communities support staff, students, and families in understanding the early warning signs. Support strategies include having:

- School board policies in place that support training and ongoing consultation. The entire school community knows how to identify early warning signs, and understands the principles that support them.
- School leaders who encourage others to raise concerns about observed early warning signs and to report all observations of imminent warning signs immediately. This is in addition to school district policies that sanction and promote the identification of early warning signs.
- Easy access to a team of specialists trained in evaluating and addressing serious behavioral and academic concerns.

Each school community should develop a procedure that students and staff can follow when reporting their concerns about a child who exhibits early warning signs. For example, in many schools the principal is the first point of contact. In cases that do not pose imminent danger, the principal contacts a school psychologist or other qualified professional, who takes responsibility for addressing the concern immediately. If the concern is determined to be serious—but not to pose a threat of imminent danger—the child's family should be contacted. The family should be consulted before implementing any interventions with the child. In cases where school-based contextual factors are determined to be causing or exacerbating the child's troubling behavior, the school should act quickly to modify them.

It is often difficult to acknowledge that a child is troubled. Everyone—including administrators, families, teachers, school staff, students, and community members—may find it too troubling sometimes to admit that a child close to them needs help. When faced with resistance or denial, school communities must persist to ensure that children get the help they need.

Understanding early and imminent warning signs is an essential step in ensuring a safe school. The next step involves supporting the emotional and behavioral adjustment of children.

"Being proactive and having the ability to consult and meet with my school psychologist on an ongoing basis has helped create a positive school environment in terms of resolving student issues prior to their reaching a crisis level."

**J. Randy Alton, Teacher,
Bethesda, MD**



Intervention: Getting Help for Troubled Children

Prevention approaches have proved effective in enabling school communities to decrease the frequency and intensity of behavior problems. However, prevention programs alone cannot eliminate the problems of all students. Some 5 to 10 percent of students will need more intensive interventions to decrease their high-risk behaviors, although the percentage can vary among schools and communities.

What happens when we recognize early warning signs in a child?

The message is clear: It's okay to be concerned when you notice warning signs in a child—and it's even more appropriate to do something about those concerns. School communities that encourage staff, families, and students to raise concerns about observed warning signs—and that have in place a process for getting help to troubled children once they are identified—are more likely to have effective schools with reduced disruption, bullying, fighting, and other forms of aggression.

Principles Underlying Intervention

Violence prevention and response plans should consider both prevention and intervention. Plans also should provide all staff with easy access to a team of special-

ists trained in evaluating serious behavioral and academic concerns. Eligible students should have access to special education services, and classroom teachers should be able to consult school psychologists, other mental health specialists, counselors, reading specialists, and special educators.

Effective practices for improving the behavior of troubled children are well documented in the research literature. Research has shown that effective interventions are culturally appropriate, family-supported, individualized, coordinated, and monitored. Further, interventions are more effective when they are designed and implemented consistently over time with input from the child, the family, and appropriate professionals. Schools also can draw upon the resources of their community to strengthen and enhance intervention planning.

When drafting a violence prevention and response plan, it is helpful to consider certain principles that research or expert-based experience show have a significant impact on success. The principles include:

- **Share responsibility by establishing a partnership with the child, school, home, and community.** Coordinated service systems should be available for children who are at risk for violent behavior. Effective schools



"Partnerships with local community agencies have created a safer school and community."

Sally Baas, Educator, Coon Rapids, MN

"Students should feel a sense of responsibility to inform someone if they're made aware of an individual who may perform a violent act. They should not feel like they are tattle telling, but more in the sense of saving someone's life. Students should have a role on the school's violence prevention and response team because they know what points of student life and school to target."

Elsa Quiroga, Graduate of Mount Eden High School and Student, University of California at Berkeley

reach out to include families and the entire community in the education of children. In addition, effective schools coordinate and collaborate with child and family service agencies, law enforcement and juvenile justice systems, mental health agencies, businesses, faith and ethnic leaders, and other community agencies.

- **Inform parents and listen to them when early warning signs are observed.** Parents should be involved as soon as possible. Effective and safe schools make persistent efforts to involve parents by: informing them routinely about school discipline policies, procedures, and rules, and about their children's behavior (both good and bad); involving them in making decisions concerning schoolwide disciplinary policies and procedures; and encouraging them to participate in prevention programs, intervention programs, and crisis planning. Parents need to know what school-based interventions are being used with their children and how they can support their success.
- **Maintain confidentiality and parents' rights to privacy.** Parental involvement and consent is required before personally identifiable information is shared with other agencies, except in the case of emergencies or suspicion of abuse. The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)*, a federal law that addresses the privacy of education records, must be observed in all referrals to or sharing of information with other community agencies. Furthermore, parent-approved interagency communication must be kept confidential. FERPA does not prevent disclosure of personally identifiable information to appropriate parties—such as law enforcement officials, trained medical personnel, and other emergency personnel—when responsible personnel determine there is an acute emergency (imminent danger).
- **Develop the capacity of staff, students, and families to intervene.** Many school staff members are afraid of saying or doing the wrong thing when faced with a potentially violent student. Effective schools provide the entire school community—teachers, students, parents, support staff—with training and support in responding to imminent warning signs, preventing violence, and intervening safely and effectively. Interventions must be monitored by professionals who are competent in the approach. According to researchers, programs do not succeed without the ongoing support of administrators, parents, and community leaders.
- **Support students in being responsible for their actions.** Effective school communities encourage students to see themselves as responsible for their actions, and actively engage them in planning, implementing, and evaluating violence prevention initiatives.
- **Simplify staff requests for urgent assistance.** Many school systems and community agencies have complex legalistic referral systems with timelines and waiting lists. Children who are at risk of endangering them-

Tips for Parents

▲ ***Parents can help create safe schools. Here are some ideas that parents in other communities have tried:***

- Discuss the school's discipline policy with your child. Show your support for the rules, and help your child understand the reasons for them.
- Involve your child in setting rules for appropriate behavior at home.
- Talk with your child about the violence he or she sees—on television, in video games, and possibly in the neighborhood. Help your child understand the consequences of violence.
- Teach your child how to solve problems. Praise your child when he or she follows through.
- Help your child find ways to show anger that do not involve verbally or physically hurting others. When you get angry, use it as an opportunity to model these appropriate responses for your child—and talk about it.
- Help your child understand the value of accepting individual differences.
- Note any disturbing behaviors in your child. For example, frequent angry outbursts, excessive fighting and bullying of other children, cruelty to animals, fire setting, frequent behavior problems at school and in the neighborhood, lack of friends, and alcohol or drug use can be signs of serious problems. Get help for your child. Talk with a trusted professional in your child's school or in the community.
- Keep lines of communication open with your child—even when it is tough. Encourage your child always to let you know where and with whom he or she will be. Get to know your child's friends.
- Listen to your child if he or she shares concerns about friends who may be exhibiting troubling behaviors. Share this information with a trusted professional, such as the school psychologist, principal, or teacher.
- Be involved in your child's school life by supporting and reviewing homework, talking with his or her teacher(s), and attending school functions such as parent conferences, class programs, open-houses, and PTA meetings.
- Work with your child's school to make it more responsive to all students and to all families. Share your ideas about how the school can encourage family involvement, welcome all families, and include them in meaningful ways in their children's education.
- Encourage your school to offer before- and after-school programs.
- Volunteer to work with school-based groups concerned with violence prevention. If none exist, offer to form one.
- Find out if there is a violence prevention group in your community. Offer to participate in the group's activities.
- Talk with the parents of your child's friends. Discuss how you can form a team to ensure your children's safety.
- Find out if your employer offers provisions for parents to participate in school activities.





selves or others cannot be placed on waiting lists.

- **Make interventions available as early as possible.** Too frequently, interventions are not made available until the student becomes violent or is adjudicated as a youthful offender. Interventions for children who have reached this stage are both costly, restrictive, and relatively inefficient. Effective schools build mechanisms into their intervention processes to ensure that referrals are addressed promptly, and that feedback is provided to the referring individual.
- **Use sustained, multiple, coordinated interventions.** It is rare that children are violent or disruptive only in school. Thus, interventions that are most successful are comprehensive, sustained, and properly implemented. They help families and staff work together to help the child. Coordinated efforts draw resources from community agencies that are respectful of and responsive to the needs of families. Isolated, inconsistent, short-term, and fragmented interventions will not be successful—and may actually do harm.
- **Analyze the contexts in which violent behavior occurs.** School communities can enhance their effectiveness by conducting a functional analysis of the factors that set off violence and problem behaviors. In determining an appropriate course of action, consider the child's age, cultural background, and family experiences and values. Decisions about interventions should be measured against a standard of reasonableness to

ensure the likelihood that they will be implemented effectively.

- **Build upon and coordinate internal school resources.** In developing and implementing violence prevention and response plans, effective schools draw upon the resources of various school-based programs and staff—such as special education, safe and drug free school programs, pupil services, and Title I.

Violent behavior is a problem for everyone. It is a normal response to become angry or even frightened in the presence of a violent child. But, it is essential that these emotional reactions be controlled. The goal must always be to ensure safety and seek help for the child.

Intervening Early with Students Who Are at Risk for Behavioral Problems

The incidence of violent acts against students or staff is low. However, pre-violent behaviors—such as threats, bullying, and classroom disruptions—are common. Thus, early responses to warning signs are most effective in preventing problems from escalating.

Intervention programs that reduce behavior problems and related school violence typically are multifaceted, long-term, and broad reaching. They also are rigorously implemented. Effective early intervention efforts include working with small groups or individual students to provide direct support, as well as linking children and their families to necessary community services and/or

"Our school system has created a student services team—including the principal, a special educator, the school psychologist, other behavioral support personnel, the child development specialist, and others—that meets weekly to address safety and success for all students. Our teachers and families have easy access to this team. As part of our plan, we conduct a campus-by-campus risk assessment in coordination with city, county, and state law enforcement agencies. We provide interventions for children who are troubled and connect them and their families to community agencies and mental health services."

Lee Patterson
Assistant Superintendent
Roseburg, OR

Action Steps for Students

▲ *There is much students can do to help create safe schools. Talk to your teachers, parents, and counselor to find out how you can get involved and do your part to make your school safe. Here are some ideas that students in other schools have tried:*

- Listen to your friends if they share troubling feelings or thoughts. Encourage them to get help from a trusted adult—such as a school psychologist, counselor, social worker, leader from the faith community, or other professional. If you are very concerned, seek help for them. Share your concerns with your parents.
- Create, join, or support student organizations that combat violence, such as "Students Against Destructive Decisions" and "Young Heroes Program."
- Work with local businesses and community groups to organize youth-oriented activities that help young people think of ways to prevent school and community violence. Share your ideas for how these community groups and businesses can support your efforts.
- Organize an assembly and invite your school psychologist, school social worker, and counselor—in addition to student panelists—to share ideas about how to deal with violence, intimidation, and bullying.
- Get involved in planning, implementing, and evaluating your school's violence prevention and response plan.
- Participate in violence prevention programs such as peer mediation and conflict resolution. Employ your new skills in other settings, such as the home, neighborhood, and community.
- Work with your teachers and administrators to create a safe process for reporting threats, intimidation, weapon possession, drug selling, gang activity, graffiti, and vandalism. Use the process.
- Ask for permission to invite a law enforcement officer to your school to conduct a safety audit and share safety tips, such as traveling in groups and avoiding areas known to be unsafe. Share your ideas with the officer.
- Help to develop and participate in activities that promote student understanding of differences and that respect the rights of all.
- Volunteer to be a mentor for younger students and/or provide tutoring to your peers.
- Know your school's code of conduct and model responsible behavior. Avoid being part of a crowd when fights break out. Refrain from teasing, bullying, and intimidating peers.
- Be a role model—take personal responsibility by reacting to anger without physically or verbally harming others.
- Seek help from your parents or a trusted adult—such as a school psychologist, social worker, counselor, teacher—if you are experiencing intense feelings of anger, fear, anxiety, or depression.





providing these services in the school.

Examples of early intervention components that work include:

- Providing training and support to staff, students, and families in understanding factors that can set off and/or exacerbate aggressive outbursts.
- Teaching the child alternative, socially appropriate replacement responses—such as problem solving and anger control skills.
- Providing skill training, therapeutic assistance, and other support to the family through community-based services.
- Encouraging the family to make sure that firearms are out of the child's immediate reach. Law enforcement officers can provide families with information about safe firearm storage as well as guidelines for addressing children's access to and possession of firearms.

In some cases, more comprehensive early interventions are called for to address the needs of troubled children. Focused, coordinated, proven interventions reduce violent behavior. Following are several comprehensive approaches that effective schools are using to provide early intervention to students who are at risk of becoming violent toward themselves or others.

**Intervention Tactic:
Teaching Positive
Interaction Skills**

Although most schools do teach positive social interaction skills indirectly, some have adopted social skills programs specifically designed to prevent or reduce an-

tisocial behavior in troubled children. In fact, the direct teaching of social problem solving and social decision making is now a standard feature of most effective drug and violence prevention programs. Children who are at risk of becoming violent toward themselves or others need additional support. They often need to learn interpersonal, problem solving, and conflict resolution skills at home and in school. They also may need more intensive assistance in learning how to stop and think before they react, and to listen effectively.

**Intervention Tactic:
Providing
Comprehensive Services**

In some cases, the early intervention may involve getting services to families. The violence prevention and response team together with the child and family designs a comprehensive intervention plan that focuses on reducing aggressive behaviors and supporting responsible behaviors at school, in the home, and in the community. When multiple services are required there also must be psychological counseling and ongoing consultation with classroom teachers, school staff, and the family to ensure intended results occur. All services—including community services—must be coordinated and progress must be monitored and evaluated carefully.

**Intervention Tactic:
Referring the Child for
Special Education
Evaluation**

If there is evidence of persistent problem behavior or poor academic achievement, it may be ap-

"Since we developed the high school peer mediation program, we have seen a decline in physical fights. We are defusing potentially dangerous situations."

Terry Davis, School
Psychologist, Natick, MA

appropriate to conduct a formal assessment to determine if the child is disabled and eligible for special education and related services under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA). If a multidisciplinary team determines that the child is eligible for services under the IDEA, an individualized educational program (IEP) should be developed by a team that includes a parent, a regular educator, a special educator, an evaluator, a representative of the local school district, the child (if appropriate), and others as appropriate. This team will identify the support necessary to enable the child to learn—including the strategies and support systems necessary to address any behavior that may impede the child's learning or the learning of his or her peers.

Providing Intensive, Individualized Interventions for Students with Severe Behavioral Problems

Children who show dangerous patterns and a potential for more serious violence usually require more intensive interventions that involve multiple agencies, community-based service providers, and intense family support. By working with families and community services, schools can comprehensively and effectively intervene.

Effective individualized interventions provide a range of services for students. Multiple, intensive, focused approaches used over time can reduce the chances for continued offenses and the potential for violence. The child, his or

her family, and appropriate school staff should be involved in developing and monitoring the interventions.

Nontraditional schooling in an alternative school or therapeutic facility may be required in severe cases where the safety of students and staff remains a concern, or when the complexity of the intervention plan warrants it. Research has shown that effective alternative programs can have long-term positive results by reducing expulsions and court referrals. Effective alternative programs support students in meeting high academic and behavioral standards. They provide anger and impulse control training, psychological counseling, effective academic and remedial instruction, and vocational training as appropriate. Such programs also make provisions for active family involvement. Moreover, they offer guidance and staff support when the child returns to his or her regular school.

Providing a Foundation To Prevent and Reduce Violent Behavior

Schoolwide strategies create a foundation that is more responsive to children in general—**one that makes interventions for individual children more effective and efficient.**

Effective and safe schools are places where there is strong leadership, caring faculty, parent and community involvement—including law enforcement officials—and student participation in the design of programs and policies. Effective and safe schools also are places where prevention and intervention programs are based

"Everyone is trained to use consistent language. We remind students to stop and think. Students also know we will always follow through if they make poor behavioral choices. As a result, we have been able to diffuse violent situations."

Annette Lambeth
Assistant Principal
Chester County, PA

"Appropriate behavior and respect for others are emphasized at all times. However, despite our best efforts, unfortunate incidents do occur. When they do, it is our responsibility to provide appropriate support to meet the needs of every child."

Carol S. Parham,
Superintendent of Schools
Anne Arundel County, MD





upon careful assessment of student problems, where community members help set measurable goals and objectives, where research-based prevention and intervention approaches are used, and where evaluations are conducted regularly to ensure that the programs are meeting stated goals. Effective and safe schools are also places where teachers and staff have access to qualified consultants who can help them address behavioral and academic barriers to learning.

Effective schools ensure that the physical environment of the school is safe, and that schoolwide policies are in place to support responsible behaviors.

Characteristics of a Safe Physical Environment

Prevention starts by making sure the school campus is a safe and caring place. Effective and safe schools communicate a strong sense of security. Experts suggest that school officials can enhance physical safety by:

- Supervising access to the building and grounds.
- Reducing class size and school size.
- Adjusting scheduling to minimize time in the hallways or in potentially dangerous locations. Traffic flow patterns can be modified to limit potential for conflicts or altercations.
- Conducting a building safety audit in consultation with school security personnel and/or law enforcement experts. Effective schools adhere to federal, state, and local nondiscrimination and public safety

laws, and use guidelines set by the state department of education.

- Closing school campuses during lunch periods.
- Adopting a school policy on uniforms.
- Arranging supervision at critical times (for example, in hallways between classes) and having a plan to deploy supervisory staff to areas where incidents are likely to occur.
- Prohibiting students from congregating in areas where they are likely to engage in rule-breaking or intimidating and aggressive behaviors.
- Having adults visibly present throughout the school building. This includes encouraging parents to visit the school.
- Staggering dismissal times and lunch periods.
- Monitoring the surrounding school grounds—including landscaping, parking lots, and bus stops.
- Coordinating with local police to ensure that there are safe routes to and from school.

In addition to targeting areas for increased safety measures, schools also should identify safe areas where staff and children should go in the event of a crisis.

The physical condition of the school building also has an impact on student attitude, behavior, and motivation to achieve. Typically, there tend to be more incidents of fighting and violence in school buildings that are dirty, too cold or too hot, filled with graffiti, in need of repair, or unsanitary.

"The police are a school's greatest community asset when effectively preventing and responding to school violence. Building a relationship with law enforcement strengthens the school's ability to ensure safety."

Gil Kerlikowske
former Police Commissioner
Buffalo, NY

Characteristics of Schoolwide Policies that Support Responsible Behavior

The opportunities for inappropriate behaviors that precipitate violence are greater in a disorderly and undisciplined school climate. A growing number of schools are discovering that the most effective way to reduce suspensions, expulsions, office referrals, and other similar actions—strategies that do not result in making schools safer—is to emphasize a proactive approach to discipline.

Effective schools are implementing schoolwide campaigns that establish high expectations and provide support for socially appropriate behavior. They reinforce positive behavior and highlight sanctions against aggressive behavior. All staff, parents, students, and community members are informed about problem behavior, what they can do to counteract it, and how they can reinforce and reward positive behavior. In turn, the entire school community makes a commitment to behaving responsibly.

Effective and safe schools develop and consistently enforce schoolwide rules that are clear, broad-based, and fair. Rules and disciplinary procedures are developed collaboratively by representatives of the total educational community. They are communicated clearly to all parties—but most important, they are followed consistently by everyone.

School communities that have undertaken schoolwide approaches do the following things:

- Develop a schoolwide disciplinary policy that includes a code of conduct, specific rules and

consequences that can accommodate student differences on a case-by-case basis when necessary. (If one already exists, review and modify it if necessary.) Be sure to include a description of school anti-harassment and anti-violence policies and due process rights.

- Ensure that the cultural values and educational goals of the community are reflected in the rules. These values should be expressed in a statement that precedes the schoolwide disciplinary policy.
- Include school staff, students, and families in the development, discussion, and implementation of fair rules. Provide schoolwide and classroom support to implement these rules. Strategies that have been found to support students include class discussions, schoolwide assemblies, student government, and participation on discipline teams. In addition, peer mediation and conflict resolution have been implemented widely in schools to promote a climate of nonviolence.
- Be sure consequences are commensurate with the offense, and that rules are written and applied in a nondiscriminatory manner and accommodate cultural diversity.
- Make sure that if a negative consequence (such as withdrawing privileges) is used, it is combined with positive strategies for teaching socially appropriate behaviors and with strategies that address any external factors that might have caused the behavior.
- Include a zero tolerance statement for illegal possession of

"Everyone follows the same discipline plan. Everyone—including the lunch room workers and custodians—works as a team. There are always times when children forget the rules. But there is immediate intervention by faculty and staff, and even other children. The responsibility is on the students."

**Anna Allred, Parent
Lakeland, FL**

"It is necessary to provide training and support to staff. We have provided inservices on behavior management systems that are effective in regular classroom settings. These inservices have been of great benefit. Numerous schools throughout our district presently use stop and think, conflict resolution, and peer mediation."

**Denise Conrad, Teacher
Toledo, OH**





weapons, alcohol, or drugs. Provide services and support for students who have been suspended and/or expelled.

Recognizing the warning signs and responding with comprehensive interventions allows us to

help children eliminate negative behaviors and replace them with positive ones. Active sharing of information and a quick, effective response by the school community will ensure that the school is safer and the child is less troubled and can learn.



Developing a Prevention and Response Plan

Effective schools create a violence prevention and response plan and form a team that can ensure it is implemented. They use approaches and strategies based on research about what works.

Creating the Violence Prevention and Response Plan

A sound violence prevention and response plan reflects the common and the unique needs of educators, students, families, and the greater community. The plan outlines how all individuals in the school community—administrators, teachers, parents, students, bus drivers, support staff—will be prepared to spot the behavioral and emotional signs that indicate a child is troubled, and what they will need to do. The plan also details how school and community resources can be used to create safe environments and to manage responses to acute threats and incidents of violence.

An effective written plan includes:

- Descriptions of the early warning signs of potentially violent behavior and procedures for identifying children who exhibit these signs.
- Descriptions of effective prevention practices the school community has undertaken to

build a foundation that is responsive to **all** children and enhances the effectiveness of interventions.

- Descriptions of intervention strategies the school community can use to help troubled children. These include early interventions for students who are at risk of behavioral problems, and more intensive, individualized interventions and resources for students with severe behavioral problems or mental health needs.
- A crisis intervention plan that includes immediate responses for imminent warning signs and violent behavior, as well as a contingency plan to be used in the aftermath of a tragedy.

The plan must be consistent with federal, state, and local laws. It also should have the support of families and the local school board.

Recommendations in this guide will prove most meaningful when the entire school community is involved in developing and implementing the plan. In addition, everyone should be provided with relevant training and support on a regular basis. Finally, there should be a clearly delineated mechanism for monitoring and assessing violence prevention efforts.



Forming the Prevention and Response Team

It can be helpful to establish a school-based team to oversee the preparation and implementation of the prevention and response plan. This does not need to be a new team; however, a designated core group should be entrusted with this important responsibility.

The core team should ensure that every member of the greater school community accepts and adopts the violence prevention and response plan. This buy-in is essential if all members of the school community are expected to feel comfortable sharing concerns about children who appear troubled. Too often, caring individuals remain silent because they have no way to express their concerns.

Typically, the core team includes the building administrator, general and special education teachers; parent(s), and a pupil support services representative (a school psychologist, social worker, or counselor), school resource officer, and a safe and drug-free schools program coordinator. If no school psychologist or mental health professional is available to the staff, involve someone from an outside mental health agency. Other individuals may be added to the team depending on the task. For example, when undertaking schoolwide prevention planning, the team might be expanded to include students, representatives of community agencies and organizations, the school nurse, school board members, and support staff (secretaries, bus drivers, and custodians). Similarly, crisis response planning can be enhanced with the presence of a cen-

tral office administrator, security officer, and youth officer or community police team member.

The core team also should coordinate with any school advisory boards already in place. For example, most effective schools have developed an advisory board of parents and community leaders that meets regularly with school administrators. While these advisory groups generally offer advice and support, that role can be expanded to bringing resources related to violence prevention and intervention into the school.

Consider involving a variety of community leaders and parents when building the violence prevention and response team:

- Parent group leaders, such as PTA officers.
- Law enforcement personnel.
- Attorneys, judges, and probation officers.
- Clergy and other representatives of the faith community.
- Media representatives.
- Violence prevention group representatives.
- Mental health and child welfare personnel.
- Physicians and nurses.
- Family agency and family resource center staff.
- Business leaders.
- Recreation, cultural, and arts organizations staff.
- Youth workers and volunteers.
- Local officials, including school board members and representatives from special commissions.

"Our district initiated a safety task force involving parents, students, teachers, support staff, administrators, and community members to enhance our plan for safety and crisis management. It works."

Richard E. Berry,
Superintendent, Houston, TX

"We need to give attention to the segment of the population that includes bus drivers, secretaries, and cafeteria workers. They are a very important yet often overlooked group of people who can provide support to children."

Betty Stockton
School Psychologist
Jonesboro, AR

Action Planning Checklist

Prevention-Intervention-Crisis Response

▲ *What To Look For—Key Characteristics of Responsive and Safe Schools*

Does my school have characteristics that:

Are responsive to all children?

▲ *What To Look For—Early Warning Signs of Violence*

Has my school taken steps to ensure that all staff, students, and families:

Understand the principles underlying the identification of early warning signs?

Know how to identify and respond to imminent warning signs?

Are able to identify early warning signs?

▲ *What To Do—Intervention: Getting Help for Troubled Children*

Does my school:

Understand the principles underlying intervention?

Make early intervention available for students at risk of behavioral problems?

Provide individualized, intensive interventions for students with severe behavioral problems?

Have schoolwide preventive strategies in place that support early intervention?

▲ *What To Do—Crisis Response*

Does my school:

Understand the principles underlying crisis response?

Have a procedure for intervening during a crisis to ensure safety?

Know how to respond in the aftermath of tragedy?





- Interest group representatives and grass roots community organization members.
- College or university faculty.
- Members of local advisory boards.
- Other influential community members.

The school board should authorize and support the formation of

and the tasks undertaken by the violence prevention and response team.

While we cannot prevent all violence from occurring, we can do much to reduce the likelihood of its occurrence. Through thoughtful planning and the establishment of a school violence prevention and response team, we can avert many crises and be prepared when they do happen.

Responding to Crisis

Violence can happen at any time, anywhere. Effective and safe schools are well prepared for any potential crisis or violent act.

Crisis response is an important component of a violence prevention and response plan. Two components that should be addressed in that plan are:

- Intervening during a crisis to ensure safety.
- Responding in the aftermath of tragedy.

In addition to establishing a contingency plan, effective schools provide adequate preparation for their core violence prevention and response team. The team not only plans what to do when violence strikes, but it also ensures that staff and students know how to behave. Students and staff feel secure because there is a well-conceived plan and everyone understands what to do or whom to ask for instructions.

Principles Underlying Crisis Response

As with other interventions, crisis intervention planning is built on a foundation that is safe and responsive to children. Crisis planning should include:

- Training for teachers and staff in a range of skills—from dealing with escalating classroom

situations to responding to a serious crisis.

- Reference to district or state procedures. Many states now have recommended crisis intervention manuals available to their local education agencies and schools.
- Involvement of community agencies, including police, fire, and rescue, as well as hospital, health, social welfare, and mental health services. The faith community, juvenile justice, and related family support systems also have been successfully included in such team plans.
- Provision for the core team to meet regularly to identify potentially troubled or violent students and situations that may be dangerous.

Effective school communities also have made a point to find out about federal, state, and local resources that are available to help during and after a crisis, and to secure their support and involvement **before** a crisis occurs.

Intervening During a Crisis To Ensure Safety

Weapons used in or around schools, bomb threats or explosions, and fights, as well as natural disasters, accidents, and suicides call for immediate, planned



action, and long-term, post-crisis intervention. Planning for such contingencies reduces chaos and trauma. Thus, the crisis response part of the plan also must include contingency provisions. Such provisions may include:

- Evacuation procedures and other procedures to protect students and staff from harm. It is critical that schools identify safe areas where students and staff should go in a crisis. It also is important that schools practice having staff and students evacuate the premises in an orderly manner.
- An effective, fool-proof communication system. Individuals must have designated roles and responsibilities to prevent confusion.
- A process for securing immediate external support from law enforcement officials and other relevant community agencies.

All provisions and procedures should be monitored and reviewed regularly by the core team.

Just as staff should understand and practice fire drill procedures routinely, they should practice responding to the presence of firearms and other weapons, severe threats of violence, hostage situations, and other acts of terror. School communities can provide staff and students with such practice in the following ways:

- Provide inservice training for all faculty and staff to explain the plan and exactly what to do in a crisis. Where appropriate, include community police, youth workers, and other community members.
- Produce a written manual or small pamphlet or flip chart to

remind teachers and staff of their duties.

- Practice responding to the imminent warning signs of violence. Make sure **all** adults in the building have an understanding of what they might do to prevent violence (e.g., being observant, knowing when to get help, and modeling good problem solving, anger management, and/or conflict resolution skills) and how they can safely support each other.

Responding in the Aftermath of Crisis

Members of the crisis team should understand natural stress reactions. They also should be familiar with how different individuals might respond to death and loss, including developmental considerations, religious beliefs, and cultural values.

Effective schools ensure a coordinated community response. Professionals both within the school district and within the greater community should be involved to assist individuals who are at risk for severe stress reactions.

Schools that have experienced tragedy have included the following provisions in their response plans:

- **Help parents understand children's reactions to violence.** In the aftermath of tragedy, children may experience unrealistic fears of the future, have difficulty sleeping, become physically ill, and be easily distracted—to name a few of the common symptoms.
- **Help teachers and other staff deal with their reactions to the crisis.** Debriefing and grief

"Early intervention and quick response from our school district team resulted in no one getting hurt."

Pamela Cain
Superintendent
Wirt County, WV

Crisis Procedure Checklist

▲ *A crisis plan must address many complex contingencies. There should be a step-by-step procedure to use when a crisis occurs. An example follows:*

- Assess life/safety issues immediately.
 - Provide immediate emergency medical care.
 - Call 911 and notify police/rescue first. Call the superintendent second.
 - Convene the crisis team to assess the situation and implement the crisis response procedures.
 - Evaluate available and needed resources.
 - Alert school staff to the situation.
 - Activate the crisis communication procedure and system of verification.
 - Secure all areas.
 - Implement evacuation and other procedures to protect students and staff from harm. Avoid dismissing students to unknown care.
 - Adjust the bell schedule to ensure safety during the crisis.
 - Alert persons in charge of various information systems to prevent confusion and misinformation. Notify parents.
 - Contact appropriate community agencies and the school district's public information office, if appropriate.
 - Implement post-crisis procedures.
-





counseling is just as important for adults as it is for students.

- **Help students and faculty adjust after the crisis.** Provide both short-term and long-term mental health counseling following a crisis.
- **Help victims and family members of victims re-enter the school environment.** Often, school friends need guidance in how to act. The school community should work with students

and parents to design a plan that makes it easier for victims and their classmates to adjust.

- **Help students and teachers address the return of a previously removed student to the school community.** Whether the student is returning from a juvenile detention facility or a mental health facility, schools need to coordinate with staff from that facility to explore how to make the transition as uneventful as possible.



Conclusion

Crises involving sudden violence in schools are traumatic in large measure because they are rare and unexpected. Everyone is touched in some way. In the wake of such a crisis, members of the school community are asked—and ask themselves—what could have been done to prevent it.

We know from the research that schools can meet the challenge of reducing violence. The school community can be supported through:

- School board policies that address both prevention and intervention for troubled children and youth.
- Schoolwide violence prevention and response plans that include the entire school community in their development and implementation.
- Training in recognizing the early warning signs of potential violent behavior.
- Procedures that encourage staff, parents, and students to share their concerns about children who exhibit early warning signs.
- Procedures for responding quickly to concerns about troubled children.
- Adequate support in getting help for troubled children.

Everyone who cares about children cares about ending violence. It is time to break the silence that too often characterizes even the most well-meaning school communities. Research and expert-based information is available for school communities to use in developing and strengthening programs that can prevent crises.

School safety is everyone's job. Teachers, administrators, parents, community members, and students all must commit to meeting the challenge of getting help for children who show signs of being troubled.

"Coordinated school efforts can help. But the solution does not just rest in the schools. Together we must develop solutions that are community-wide and coordinated, that include schools, families, courts, law enforcement, community agencies, representatives of the faith community, business, and the broader community."

**Wilmer Cody, Kentucky
Commissioner of Education**



Methodology, Contributors, and Research Support

Also On The Web

- An annotated version of the guide with references to support each assertion as well as references to practical materials that can be employed to implement the recommendations it contains.
- Additional resources that can be employed to implement the recommendations contained in the guide.
- Links to other Web sites that provide useful and usable information.
- English and Spanish versions of the guide that can be downloaded for dissemination.

This guide synthesizes an extensive knowledge base on violence and violence prevention. It includes research from a variety of disciplines, as well as the experience and effective practices of teachers, school psychologists, counselors, social workers, family members, youth workers, and youth.

Much of the research found in this guide was funded by federal offices whose senior staff were involved in supporting and reviewing this document. They include:

- Office of Special Education Programs, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education.
- Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, U.S. Department of Education.
- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and National Institute for Justice, U.S. Department of Justice.
- National Institute of Mental Health and Center for Mental Health Services, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The guide was produced by the Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice of the American Institutes for Research in collaboration with the National Association of School Psychologists. The project was led by:

- **Kevin P. Dwyer**, Principal Investigator, National Association of School Psychologists

- **David Osher**, Project Director, American Institutes for Research

The guide was developed in collaboration with **Cynthia Warger** of Warger, Eavy and Associates.

Each assertion in the guide is backed by empirical data and/or expert consensus. Research references can be found on the project's Web site at <http://www.air-dc.org/cccp/guide>.

The guide was conceptualized by an interdisciplinary expert panel. The writing team, led by Kevin P. Dwyer, included members of the expert panel—George Bear, Norris Haynes, Paul Kingery, Howard Knoff, Peter Sheras, Russell Skiba, Leslie Skinner, and Betty Stockton—in addition to David Osher and Cynthia Warger. The writing team drew upon the other expert panelists for guidance and for resources.

The first draft was reviewed for accuracy by the entire expert panel as well as staff from the federal agencies. The federal reviewers are listed on the project's Web site at <http://www.air-dc.org/cccp/guide>.

The second draft was reviewed by family members, teachers, principals, and youth, in addition to leaders of major national associations. The expert panel reviewed the document again at this stage. These reviewers are also listed on the project's Web site at <http://www.air-dc.org/cccp/guide>.

Expert Panel Members

▲ *The expert panel included national experts from a variety of disciplines, as well as principals, teachers, pupil personnel staff, families, and youth:*

J. Randy Alton, Teacher
Montgomery County, MD

George Bear, Professor
University of Delaware

Renee Brimfield, Principal
Montgomery County, MD

Michael Bullis, Professor
University of Oregon

Andrea Canter,
Lead School Psychologist
Minneapolis, MN

Gregory Carter, Teacher
Richmond, VA

Deborah Crockett, School
Psychologist
Atlanta, GA

Scott Decker, Professor
University of Missouri-St. Louis

Maurice Eliás, Professor
Rutgers University, NJ

Michael J. Furlong,
Associate Professor
University of CA-Santa Barbara

Susan Gorin, Executive Director
National Association of School
Psychologists
Bethesda, MD

Denise Gottfredson, Director
National Center for Justice
University of Maryland

Beatrix Hamburg, Professor
Cornell Medical Center, NY

Norris Haynes, Director
Yale University Child Study Center

DJ Ida, Director
Asian Pacific Development Center
Denver, CO

Yvonne Johnson, Parent
Washington, D.C.

Gil Kerlikowske, Former Police
Commissioner
Buffalo, NY

Paul Kingery, Director
Hamilton Fish National Institute on
School and Community Violence
Arlington, VA

Howard Knoff, Professor
University of South Florida

Judith Lee Ladd, President
American School Counselors
Association
Arlington, VA

Brenda Muhammad, Founder
Mothers of Murdered Sons &
Daughters
Atlanta, GA

Ron Nelson, Associate Professor
Arizona State University

Dennis Nowicki, Police Chief
Charlotte, NC

Scott Poland
Director, Psychological Services
Cyprus-Fairbanks ISD
Houston, TX

Gale Porter, Director
East Baltimore (MD) Mental Health
Partnership

Elsa Quiroga, Student
University of California-Berkeley

Michael Rosenberg, Professor
John Hopkins University

Mary Schwab-Stone, Associate Professor
Yale University Child Study Center

Peter Sheras, Associate Director
Virginia Youth Violence Project
University of Virginia

Russell Skiba, Professor
University of Indiana

Leslie Skinner, Assistant Professor
Temple University

Jeff Sprague, Co-Director
Institute on Violence and Destructive
Behavior, University of Oregon

Betty Stockton, School Psychologist
Jonesboro, AR

Richard Verdugo, Senior Policy Analyst
National Education Association
Washington, DC

Hill Walker, Co-Director
Institute on Violence and Destructive
Behavior, University of Oregon

▲ *The following represented federal agencies on the panel:*

Renee Bradley
U.S. Department of Education

Betty Chemers
U.S. Department of Justice

Lou Danielson
U.S. Department of Education

Kellie Dressler
U.S. Department of Justice

David Frank
U.S. Department of Education

Cathy Girouard
U.S. Department of Education

Tom V. Hanley
U.S. Department of Education

Tom Hehir
U.S. Department of Education

Kelly Henderson
U.S. Department of Education

Judith Heumann
U.S. Department of Education

Peter Jensen
National Institute of Mental Health

Tim Johnson
U.S. Department of Justice

William Modzeleski
U.S. Department of Education

Juan Ramos
National Institute of Mental Health

Donna Ray
U.S. Department of Justice

Diane Sondheimer
Center for Mental Health Services

Sara Strizzi
U.S. Department of Education

Kevin Sullivan
U.S. Department of Education

Gerald Tirozzi
U.S. Department of Education

Joanne Wiggins
U.S. Department of Education

Clarissa Wittenberg
National Institute of Mental Health



Resources

U.S. Department of Education

<http://www.ed.gov/>

Center for Effective Collaboration
and Practice

American Institutes for Research
1000 Thomas Jefferson St., NW

Suite 400
Washington, D.C.

<http://www.air-dc.org/cecp/>

U.S. Department of Justice

<http://www.usdoj.gov/>

National Association of School
Psychologists

4340 East West Highway
Suite 402
Bethesda, MD 20814

<http://www.naspsweb.org/center.html>

National Institute of Mental Health

<http://www.nlmh.nih.gov/>

Center for Mental Health Services
Knowledge Exchange Network

<http://www.mentalhealth.org/index.htm>



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 14, 1998

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON SCHOOL SAFETY

DATE: October 15, 1998
LOCATION: The East Room
BRIEFING TIME: 12:15 pm - 12:35 pm
EVENT TIME: 12:45 pm - 2:30 pm
FROM: Bruce Reed
Richard Socarides

I. PURPOSE

To bring together a broad coalition of youth violence experts and advocates; educators, elected officials, law enforcement, and prevention and intervention practitioners -- as well as communities across the country through 600 satellite sites -- to discuss and learn more about what we do to make our schools and communities safer.

II. BACKGROUND

Although schools are generally safer today than they were just a few years ago -- and statistics show that students are safer sitting in a classroom than walking down the street -- there is still much more that can be done to improve school safety and security. In particular, the multiple shootings that took place in schools in Pearl, MS, Paducah, KY, Jonesboro, AK, and Springfield, OR, serve as painful reminders that no community is immune from senseless violence -- and that all communities must do their best to prevent such tragedies from ever occurring.

At the conference, you will unveil the first Annual Report on School Safety, prepared by the Departments of Justice and Education in response to a directive by you after the Paducah shooting last December. The report is intended to give parents, principals and policy makers a yearly snapshot of school crime, as well as to provide information on what practical steps they can take to make their schools safer. [*Key findings of the report are attached.]

In your opening remarks you will announce the following new initiatives that address many of the problems identified in the Annual Report:

(1) A New Federal Response for Violent Deaths in Schools. You will propose a \$12 million School Emergency Response to Violence -- or Project SERV -- to help schools and local communities respond to school-related violent deaths, such as those that occurred last year in Jonesboro, Arkansas; Paducah, Kentucky; Pearl,

Mississippi, and Springfield, Oregon. Developed with input from local officials and educators in these and other communities, Project SERV will enable the federal government to assist local communities in much the same way FEMA assists in response to natural disasters.

(2) Targeted Resources for Schools with Serious Crime Problems. To help give the estimated 10% of schools with serious crime problems the tools they need to put the security of our children first, you will announce a new \$65 million initiative to hire up to 2,000 community police and School Resource Officers to work in schools -- and to train police, educators and other members of the community to help recognize the early warning signs of violence.

(3) Reforms to Help Make All Schools Safe, Disciplined and Drug-Free. You will outline a plan to overhaul the nearly \$600 million Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Program. Under this new proposal, schools will be required to adopt rigorous, comprehensive school safety plans that include: tough, but fair, discipline policies; safe passage to and from schools; effective drug and violence policies and programs; annual school safety and drug use report cards; links to after school programs; efforts to involve parents; and crisis management plans.

(4) A Community-Wide Response to School Safety and Youth Violence. To help communities throughout the country promote a coordinated, comprehensive response to school safety, you will also launch a new Safe Schools -- Safe Communities initiative designed to help 10 cities develop and implement community-wide school safety plans. A minimum of \$25 million in discretionary grants from the Departments of Education, Justice and Health and Human Services -- or \$1-3 million per site -- will be made available for this initiative.

Finally, you will announce a partnership between the federal government and MTV to engage youth in solutions to violence. Beginning in 1999, MTV will launch a year-long media campaign -- "Fight For Your Rights: Take A Stand Against Youth Violence" -- designed to give young adults a voice in the national debate on school and youth violence. Working with the Departments of Education and Justice, and the National Endowment for the Arts, MTV will distribute a Youth Action Guide that aims to engage youth in mentoring and other positive solutions to violence. The guide will be made available through a 1-800 number at the Justice Department and through MTV. In an earlier panel, the First Lady will have introduced one of the MTV media campaign segments.

III. PARTICIPANTS

Briefing Participants:

Bruce Reed/Elena Kagan

Marsha Scott

Melanne Verveer

Ron Klain
Michael Cohen/Tanya Martin
Richard Socarides
Jose Cerda
Leanne Shimabukuro
Neera Tanden
Lynn Cutler

Presidential Panel Participants:

The Vice President

The First Lady

Jamon Kent, Superintendent of Springfield Public Schools, Springfield, Oregon

Police Commissioner Paul Evans, Boston, Massachusetts

Mayor Deedee Corradini, Pres. of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, St. Lake City, Utah

Liberty Franklin, National Boys and Girls Club Youth of the Year, Everett, Washington

Tony Earles, Professor Harvard School of Public Health

Joanna Quintana Barroso, Third Grade Teacher, Coral Way Elementary, Miami, Florida

Representative Bobby Etheridge

IV. PRESS PLAN

Open Press.

V. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

- YOU will be announced into the room accompanied by the Vice President and the First Lady.
- The Vice President makes remarks and introduces YOU.
- YOU will make remarks.
- YOU will make remarks and then take your seat at the table.
- YOU will then moderate the discussion by calling on each individual.
- YOU, the Vice President, and the First Lady will have the option of asking follow up questions to each speaker.

[*Suggested speaking order and questions attached.]

VI. REMARKS

Provided by Speechwriting.

VII. ATTACHMENTS

- Summary of Key Findings.
- Suggested Sequence of Events.
- Conference Agenda

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS OF THE ANNUAL REPORT

- **Students less likely to be victimized but more likely to feel unsafe.** Although the number of multiple homicide events at schools has increased since 1993 (from 2 to 6 -- and with 4 times as many victims), the overall school crime rate has actually dropped (from 164 crimes per 1,000 students in 1993 to about 128 such crimes in 1996). However, the percentage of students reporting that they felt unsafe at or on their way to school has increased.
- **Most schools safer than community at large.** While the overall level of school and non-school crime is about the same (about 3 million crimes in each setting), students are more than twice as likely to experience serious violent crime while out of school. And the very worst violent victimizations -- murders and suicides -- rarely occur in or near schools. Fewer than 1% of the 7,357 thousand children who were murdered in 1992-93 -- or 63 -- were killed at school.
- **Serious crime and violence concentrated in a small percentage of schools.** Only about 10% of public schools report serious or violent crimes to their local police departments. Nearly half -- or 47% -- of schools report less serious or non-violent crimes to police, and 43% report absolutely no crimes at all.
- **Violence more likely in larger, urban schools and with older students.** One third of large schools (1,000+ students) report serious violent crimes to police, compared with less than one tenth of small schools. Also urban schools are twice as likely as rural schools to report serious violent crimes, and middle and high schools are 4 times more likely than elementary schools to report such crimes.
- **Fist fights and theft the most common crimes.** Overall, physical attacks and fights without weapons are the crimes most often reported to police by middle and high schools. Theft is the most common school crime overall. In 1996, less than 10% of crimes against students were of a serious or violent nature.
- **Fewer weapons in schools.** About 6% of high school seniors -- less than in recent years - are carrying firearms and other weapons to schools. Also, the percentage of seniors intentionally injured -- with or without weapons -- has not changed significantly over the past 20 years.
- **Gang presence nearly doubled.** Between 1989 and 1995, the percentage of students reporting the presence of street gangs in their schools increased from 15% to 28% -- including large increases at urban, suburban and rural schools.
- **Violence and drugs linked.** Students who reported being the victims of violent crimes at schools were more likely to report the availability of drugs at school. The presence of gangs and guns is also related to school crime and the victimization of students.
- **Teachers often crime victims.** On average, 3% of teachers are the victims of violent crimes, and nearly 5% are the victims of theft at school.

PRESIDENTIAL PANEL SEQUENCE

[From the Podium]

- The Vice President makes remarks, introduces the President, and takes a seat at the table.
- The President makes remarks and then takes a seat at the table.
- The President moderates the discussion by calling on each individual to share their experiences. After each statement, the President, the Vice President, and the First Lady will be free to ask follow up questions.

[All panelists and the First Lady will be seated at the table during the opening remarks.]

Jamon Kent, Superintendent of Springfield Public Schools, Springfield, Oregon

Superintendent Kent has also served as a teacher and principal throughout his 26 years in education. He led the community-wide effort to promote school safety that has been ongoing since before the shooting occurred, which includes creating alternative programs for at-risk students and troubled youth who have been expelled.

POTUS SUGGESTED QUESTION: *When I visited your community after the shooting everyone there was struggling to cope with this terrible tragedy. There was so much that needed to be done, which is one of the reasons why I am proposing a new federal response team to help schools and communities in a time of crisis. Do you feel this type of federal action would have helped your community?*

FLOTUS SUGGESTED QUESTION: *How did you forge partnerships with the surrounding community before this tragedy? How did these partnerships allow you to better cope with this crisis?*

VPOTUS SUGGESTED QUESTION: *Can you tell us about how the mental health community played a role in helping the community heal during this terrible tragedy? And how did you reestablish a feeling of safety and security for students when they returned to school this fall?*

Police Commissioner Paul Evans, Boston, Massachusetts

Commissioner Evans led Boston's innovative Operation Ceasefire, which has dramatically reduced youth violence through a comprehensive community approach.

POTUS SUGGESTED QUESTION: *You have incorporated the principles of community policing in your fight against youth violence. How have police officers adjusted to a more pro-active and prevention-oriented role?*

VPOTUS SUGGESTED QUESTION: *I know the faith community is also very involved in your efforts to reduce juvenile crime. How has the faith community worked with you to provide positive opportunities for at-risk youth while also holding them accountable for their actions?*

FLOTUS SUGGESTED QUESTION: *Initially, did different parts of the community resist working together? How did you manage to develop these unique partnerships in your community and what suggestion do you have for other cities?*

Liberty Franklin, National Boys and Girls Club Youth of the Year, Everett, Washington
She turned to the Boys and Girls Club to give her a safe haven where she could learn and grow. She was raised by a single mother in a housing project with older brothers who were in and out of jail. When she joined the Boys and Girls Club in the sixth grade she began to have an adult mentor who helped her succeed in school and stay out of trouble. She is now a high school senior with a 3.95 GPA working at Washington Mutual Bank saving money for college. She is interested in becoming an Orthodontist and providing free care to low-income children.

POTUS SUGGESTED QUESTION: *You see up close the issues confronting your peers. What more do you think adults should do to help young people?*

FLOTUS SUGGESTED QUESTION: *How specifically has mentoring helped you and are you mentoring others now?*

VPOTUS SUGGESTED QUESTION: *President Clinton and I have fought hard to provide children with positive opportunities in the hours after school when most juvenile crime occurs. Do you think that most young people in your community want some place to go after school? Do you notice a difference in what happens to young people with access to after school programs and those without?*

Joanna Quintana Barroso, 3rd Grade Teacher, Coral Way Elementary, Miami, Florida
Joanna will speak about the successful anti-crime efforts at her school including school uniforms, gun safety curriculum, DARE officers, and alternative classes for at-risk youth. She will talk about the importance of reducing class size in order to identify troubled youth and to improve learning. She will also talk about business efforts to encourage students to work hard, including Pizza Hut reader of the week awards that entitle students to a free meal and help promote work.

VPOTUS SUGGESTED QUESTION: *The President has fought hard to reduce the size of classes nationwide to an average of 18. I understand your classes have over 30 students in them. How do you think smaller classes would benefit your students?*

FLOTUS SUGGESTED QUESTION: *Who do you find your students are most influenced by? Parents? Teachers? Media?*

Thelton "Tony" Earles

Professor, Harvard School of Public Health

Conducted research on human development in Chicago neighborhoods which found that neighborhood cohesiveness and responsible adult interaction with children reduces violence significantly.

POTUS SUGGESTED QUESTION: *You have made a strong a strong case for the importance of adults taking responsibility to promote positive values in their community. What do you think the government and other public figures in this country can do to encourage parents and other adults to become more involved in the lives of children?*

FLOTUS SUGGESTED QUESTION: *What does your research show about community involvement in the schools and did you find that children learn more in schools where there is active parental involvement?*

Mayor Deedee Corradini, President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, St. Lake City, Utah
Mayor Corradini will present the U.S. Conference of Mayors' Action Plan, compiled at the recent Mayors Conference on School Safety in St. Lake City, which describes the unique role of cities in preventing youth violence.

POTUS SUGGESTED QUESTION: *I understand that you invited police chiefs to your conference to help contribute to the Mayors Action Plan. What role can mayors play in bringing together law enforcement and the education community.*

VPOTUS SUGGESTED QUESTION: *Through our community empowerment strategy, President Clinton and I have found that local governments have developed dynamic partnerships to assist distressed communities. Mayor Corradini, how can the federal government work with cities to develop these same types of partnerships with respect to n youth violence?*

Representative Bobby Etheridge, North Carolina

Rep. Etheridge was elected to the Congress in 1996 upon completing his second term as Superintendent of Public Instruction in North Carolina, a position he had held since 1988. He has two children who are teachers. He lead the effort to bring School Resource Officers to the majority of his schools and to promote character education.

POTUS SUGGESTED QUESTION: *Can you explain to us exactly how character education works, and how did you arrive at this concept? What can we do on a national level to encourage more schools to incorporate character education initiatives?*

VPOTUS SUGGESTED QUESTION: *How did the education community react when you suggested bringing School Resources Officers into schools?*

White House Conference on School Safety: Causes and Prevention of Youth Violence

October 15, 1998 -- Program Agenda

7:30 am - 8:30 am

Registration - White House Conference Center

8:30 am - 9:45 am

Morning Workshop Sessions - White House Conference Center

Preliminary discussion groups with Senior Administration officials:

1) Education and Safety (Truman Room)

Chaired by Secretary of Education Richard Riley with Deputy Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr.

2) Early Warning Signs, Mental Health Interventions and Crisis Response (Jackson Room)

Chaired by Assistant Secretary for Planning & Evaluation Margaret Ann Hamburg, MD, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

3) School, Community and Law Enforcement Partnerships (Lincoln Room)

Chaired by Associate Attorney General Raymond C. Fisher with Under Secretary for Enforcement James E. Johnson, U.S. Department of the Treasury

4) Causes of Youth Violence in Early Childhood Development (Eisenhower Room)

Chaired by Attorney General Janet Reno with Assistant Secretary For Elementary & Secondary Education Gerald Tirozzi, U.S. Department of Education

After these sessions, please follow directions to the East Visitor Gate of the White House for the Morning Plenary Session

10:30 am - 11:30 pm

Session I - White House East Room

Discussion of the Causes of Youth Violence

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton

Video by MTV

Attorney General Janet Reno

Secretary of Education Richard Riley

Suzann Wilson, Jonesboro, AR

Marlene Wong, Director, L. A. School of Mental Health,
Valley Branch, CA

Paul Kingery, Ph.D., Director, Hamilton Fish National Institute
on School and Community Violence, Rosslyn, VA

11:30 pm - 12:30 pm

Lunch - White House State Dining Room

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton

Representative Carolyn McCarthy

Robert Chase, President of the National Education Association

Sandra Feldman, President of the American Federation of Teachers

12:45 pm - 2:30 pm

Session II - White House East Room

Remarks by the President and Discussion of Prevention Strategies
That Address Youth Violence

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton

Vice President of the United States Al Gore

President of the United States William Jefferson Clinton

Jamon Kent, Public Schools Superintendent, Springfield, OR

Paul Evans, Commissioner, Boston Police Department,
Boston, MA

Liberty Franklin, Boys and Girls Club Youth of the Year,
Everett, WA

Joanna Quintana Barroso, Teacher, Coral Way Elementary School,
Miami, FL

Tony Earles, Professor, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

Mayor Deedee Corradini, Salt Lake City, UT

Representative Bobby Etheridge

2:45 pm - 4:00 pm

Session III - White House East Room

Discussion of Programs that Work to Reduce Youth Violence

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
Attorney General Janet Reno
Secretary of Education Richard Riley

Lynn McDonald, Ph.D., Founder, Families and Schools Together (FAST), Madison, WI

Irma Howard, FAST Graduate, New Orleans, LA

Mariana R. Gaston, Director, Resolving Conflict Creatively Program, New York, NY

Thomas C. Frazier, Police Commissioner, Baltimore Police Department, Baltimore, MD

Sandy McBrayer, Executive Director, Children's Initiative, San Diego, CA

Lt. Gary French, Boston's Operation Ceasefire, Roslindale, MA

4:30 pm - 6:00 pm

Reception - Sponsored by the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers at 1201 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036

(buses located at the East Visitor Gate on East Executive Avenue beginning at 4:00 p.m. will take you to the NEA. NEA is providing buses to bring people back to the White House.)

THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON SCHOOL SAFETY

October 15, 1998

- **The White House Conference on School Safety.** Although schools are generally safer today than they were just a few years ago -- and statistics show that students are safer sitting in a classroom than walking down a street -- there is still much more that we can do to improve school safety and security. In particular, the multiple shootings that took place in schools in Pearl, MS, Paducah, KY, Jonesboro, AK, and Springfield, OR, serve as painful reminders that no community is immune from senseless violence -- and that all communities must do their best to prevent such tragedies from ever occurring. The White House Conference on School Safety provides an opportunity for Americans to learn more about how they can make their own schools and communities safer.
- **The First Annual Report on School Safety.** At the conference, the President will discuss the findings of first Annual Report on School Safety -- a report intended to give parents, principals and policy makers an accurate, yearly snapshot of the school crime, as well as to provide information on what practical steps they can take to make their schools safer.

Major Findings of the Report:

Students less likely to be victimized but more likely to feel unsafe. Although the number of multiple homicide events at schools has increased since 1993 (from 2 to 6 -- and with 4 times as many victims), the overall school crime rate has actually dropped (from 164 crimes per 1,000 students in 1993 to about 128 such crimes in 1996). However, the percentage of students reporting that they felt unsafe at or on their way to school has increased.

Most schools safer than community at large. While the overall level of school and non-school crime is about the same (about 3 million crimes in each setting), students are more than twice as likely to experience serious violent crime while out of school. And the very worst violent victimizations -- murders and suicides -- rarely occur in or near schools. Fewer than 1% of the 7,357 thousand children who were murdered in 1992-93 -- or 63 -- were killed at school.

Serious crime and violence concentrated in a small percentage of schools. Only about 10% of public schools report serious or violent crimes to their local police departments. Nearly half -- or 47% -- of schools report less serious or non-violent crimes to police, and 43% report absolutely no crimes at all.

Violence more likely in larger, urban schools and with older students. One third of large schools (1,000+ students) report serious violent crimes to police, compared with less than one tenth of small schools. Also urban schools are twice as likely as rural schools to report serious violent crimes, and middle and high schools are 4 times more likely than elementary schools to report such crimes.

Fist fights and theft the most common crimes. Overall, physical attacks and fights without weapons are the crimes most often reported to police by middle and high schools. Theft is the most common school crime overall. In 1996, less than 10% of crimes against students were of a serious or violent nature.

Other Important Findings:

Fewer weapons in schools. About 6% of high school seniors -- less than in recent years -- are carrying firearms and other weapons to schools. Also, the percentage of seniors intentionally-injured -- with or without weapons -- has not changed significantly over the past 20 years.

Gang presence nearly doubled. Between 1989 and 1995, the percentage of students reporting the presence of street gangs in their schools increased from 15% to 28% -- including large increases at urban, suburban and rural schools.

Violence and drugs linked. Students who reported being the victims of violent crimes at schools were more likely to report the availability of drugs at school. The presence of gangs and guns is also related to school crime and the victimization of students.

Teachers often crime victims. On average, 3% of teachers are the victims of violent crimes, and nearly 5% are the victims of theft at school.

The President's Call to Action. During a panel discussion with a group of recognized school safety advocates and youth violence experts, the President will announce a series of new initiatives that address many of the problems identified in the Annual Report on School Safety. Specifically, he will propose:

(1) A New Federal Response for Violent Deaths in Schools. President Clinton will propose a \$12 million School Emergency Response to Violence -- or Project SERV -- to help schools and local communities respond to school-related violent deaths, such as those that occurred last year in Jonesboro, Arkansas; Paducah, Kentucky; Pearl, Mississippi; and Springfield, Oregon. Developed with input from local officials and educators in these and other communities, Project SERV will enable the federal government to assist local communities in much the same way FEMA assists in response to natural disasters.

(2) Targeted Resources for Schools with Serious Crime Problems. To help give the estimated 10% of schools with serious crime problems the tools they need to put the security of our children first, the President will announce a new \$65 million initiative to hire up to 2,000 community police and School Resource Officers to work in schools -- and to train police, educators and other members of the community to help recognize the early warning signs of violence.

(3) Reforms to Help Make All Schools Safe, Disciplined and Drug-Free.

President Clinton will announce his plan for a significant overhaul of the nearly \$600 million Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Program. Under the President's proposal, schools will be required to adopt rigorous, comprehensive school safety plans that include: tough, but fair, discipline policies; safe passage to and from schools; effective drug and violence policies and programs; annual school safety and drug use report cards; links to after school programs; efforts to involve parents; and crisis management plans.

(4) A Community-Wide Response to School Safety and Youth Violence. To help communities throughout the country promote a coordinated, comprehensive response to school safety, the President will launch a new Safe Schools -- Safe Communities initiative designed to help 10 cities develop and implement community-wide school safety plans. A minimum of \$25 million in discretionary grants from the Departments of Education, Justice and Health and Human Services -- or \$1-3 million per site -- will be made available for this initiative.

The President will announce a partnership with MTV to engage youth in solutions to violence. He will announce that MTV, beginning in 1999, will launch a year-long media campaign -- "Fight For Your Rights: Take A Stand Against Youth Violence" -- designed to give young adults a voice in the national debate on school and youth violence. Working with the Departments of Education and Justice, and the National Endowment for the Arts, MTV will distribute a Youth Action Guide that aims to engage youth in mentoring and other positive solutions to violence. The guide will be made available through a 1-800 number at the Justice Department and through MTV.

Putting Security First for Schools with Serious Crime

To help give the estimated 10% of schools with serious crime problems the tools they need to put the security of our children first, the President will announce a new \$65 million initiative to hire an estimated 2,000 community police and School Resource Officers to work in schools -- and to train school safety officers, educators and other members of the community to help recognize the early warning signs of violence.

Up to 2,000 Community Police Officers for Schools

While students are less likely to be a crime victim at school than in previous years, serious crime continues to plague many larger and urban schools -- and more students now feel unsafe at or on their way to school.

- **Building on the President's successful Community Policing Initiative.** To help address the needs of these schools, the President will announce the availability of \$60 million from his COPS Program to hire new community police and School Resource Officers to work in schools with serious crime problems. These new funds will help communities to expand their community policing efforts to include school crime problems as part of their overall community policing strategies. Generally, local police departments will receive up to \$125,000 per officer for three years -- with no local match required.
- **New training resources.** Additionally, this new initiative will dedicate \$5 million -- through the COPS Office's Regional Community Policing Institutes -- to train new police officers, and to train educators and other community members to help recognize the early warning signs of school violence.

A record of building partnerships between law enforcement and schools

- **Forging School-Based Partnerships Between Schools and Law Enforcement.** In September 1998, the President announced \$16.4 million in grants to 155 law enforcement agencies to fund new School-Based Partnerships grants through the Department of Justice. These grants will be used by policing agencies to work with schools and community-based organizations to address crime in and around schools. This initiative emphasizes using community policing principles and problem-solving methods to address the causes of school-related crime. The grants will help strengthen partnerships between local law enforcement and schools, and help them to focus on school crime, drug use and discipline problems.
- **Meeting the President's Pledge of 100,000 More Police.** Last week, the Justice Department's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) announced \$27.4 million in grants for 151 policing agencies across the country to hire 428 officers -- bringing the total number of officers funded under the President's COPS Initiative to over 88,500 -- keeping the COPS Initiative ahead of schedule and under budget.

Promoting a Community-Wide Response to School Safety and Youth Violence

To help communities throughout the country promote a coordinated, comprehensive response to school and youth violence, the President will launch a new Safe Schools -- Safe Communities initiative designed to help cities develop and implement community-wide school safety plans. He will also kick-off a partnership between the federal government and MTV to engage youth in solutions to violence.

The Safe Schools -- Safe Communities Initiative

- **A Community-Wide Response.** Parents, principals, police and others should work together to prevent school crime and violence from ever taking hold in their communities. To help promote such coordinated, community-wide responses throughout the country, the President will launch "Safe Schools -- Safe Communities." Under this initiative, 10 cities will be eligible for at least \$25 million in discretionary grants from the Departments of Education, Justice and Health and Human Services to develop and implement strategies with the following components:
 - ✓ *Formal school safety policies*, including zero tolerance for guns and drugs, discipline, school uniforms, and truancy prevention;
 - ✓ *School security measures*, such as metal detectors and police patrol of schools;
 - ✓ *Assessment and interventions for troubled youth*, such as mental health counselors and alternative schools;
 - ✓ *Prevention*, including mentoring for students; and
 - ✓ *After school programming* for children and youth
- **One-Stop Shopping.** Under this initiative, communities adopting a comprehensive approach to school safety will no longer have to seek federal support for their efforts in a piece-meal fashion. Instead, eligible applicants will benefit from "one stop shopping" -- or a single application, through which a series of federal grants targeting youth violence can be accessed. Each site will be eligible for up to \$3 million, depending on the size and needs of the community.

Getting Youth Involved in the Community Response

- **MTV Partnership.** The President will announce a partnership with MTV to engage youth in solutions to violence. He will announce that MTV, beginning in 1999, will launch a year-long media campaign -- "Fight For Your Rights: Take A Stand Against Youth Violence" -- designed to give young adults a voice in the national debate on school and youth violence.
- **Providing Solutions for Youth.** In partnership with the Department of Justice and Education, and the National Endowment for the Arts, MTV will create and distribute a Youth Action Guide that aims to engage youth in mentoring and other positive solutions to violence. The guide will be made available through a 1-800 number at the Justice Department and through MTV.

Creating Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools

Many of our nation's schools report difficulties with maintaining order and discipline. In the 1996-97 school year, 41% of public schools reported moderate discipline problems and 16% reported serious discipline problems. Among the most common discipline problems reported were tardiness, truancy, fist fights, and student drug, alcohol and tobacco use. Moreover, schools that had more serious discipline problems were more likely to report crime or violence. That is why the President will outline a proposal to overhaul and strengthen the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program to ensure that students have safe, disciplined and drug-free environments for learning.

Revamping Safe and Drug-Free Schools. President Clinton will announce his plan for the overhaul of the nearly \$600 million Safe and Drug-Free Schools program to provide more effective prevention programs for the reduction of drugs and violence in schools, more accountability for results, and better targeting to those schools that need the most assistance.

- Increasing funding for effective plans and strengthening accountability. Under the proposal, federal funds will provide support to school districts with demonstrated need and a commitment to adopt a rigorous, comprehensive approach to drug and violence reduction and prevention.
- Creating incentives to develop comprehensive and results-oriented plans. Districts will be expected to use relevant drug and violence data to develop a comprehensive plan -- in consultation with parents, teachers, students, law enforcement officials, mental health providers and other members of the community -- to do the following:

Adopt and enforce, clear and fair discipline policies, such as zero tolerance policies for guns and drugs, school uniforms, and closed campus policies, and parent notification and involvement.

Secure schools and pathways through implementing measures such as metal detectors, and formal agreements with law enforcement or safety officials to patrol school grounds and pathways to school.

Provide effective anti-drug and violence prevention programs, including programs that teach responsible decision-making, mentoring, mediation, or other activities aimed at changing behaviors. Funded activities must demonstrate effectiveness in helping to create a drug-free and safe learning environment.

Collect data and report to the public results by providing annual report cards on the number and type of school-related drug and/or violence incidents.

Assess and intervene for troubled youth through procedures to identify students for evaluation and counseling; training for teachers and staff; and providing linkages between district officials, mental health, and other community professionals where appropriate.

Connect to after-school activities for youth to extend the school day and/or develop links to other after-school programming, and help provide children with meaningful connections to responsible adults in the community.

Develop plan for crisis management, such as a shooting on school grounds or drug overdoses. The plan will also address assistance for victims, contacts with parents, law enforcement, counseling, and communication with the media.

Taking on Bullying. Bullying often interferes with learning, and when perpetrators go unpunished, a climate of student fear can take over. Youths who are victimized by bullies occasionally take drastic measures -- which can lead to violent behavior or weapons-carrying.

- Bullying common among youth. Bullying among children is generally defined as intentional, repeated hurtful acts, words, or other behavior, such as threats or name calling. It may be physical, verbal, emotional or sexual in nature. In one study of junior high and high school students, 88% of students reported having watched bullying and 76% reported being a victim of bullying at school.
- New manual to combat bullying. Today, the Education Department will release a manual to combat bullying. The manual contains innovative strategies, and resources to help teachers, school staff, students, parents and other community members to prevent and intervene with bullying problems before they escalate into violent outbreaks.

Encouraging School Uniform Policies. School uniform policies, combined with other prevention efforts, have shown promise in helping to reduce violence while promoting discipline and respect in school. Because of this, the Clinton Administration has encouraged schools to consider adopting school uniform policies by sharing with every school district a school uniforms manual prepared by the Department of Education in consultation with local communities and the Department of Justice.

- Major crime reduction in Long Beach schools reported. Recently, the Long Beach, California Unified School District -- the first large urban school district in the United States to require school uniforms -- released data showing a 91% drop in K-8 school crime since implementing their policy in September 1994, including a 92% decline in weapons/look-alikes; 91% fewer robberies; and 62% less drugs.
- More schools adopting uniform policies. Since President Clinton announced his support for school uniforms in 1996, a growing number of schools have adopted policies including: New York City, Dade County, San Antonio, Houston, Chicago, and Boston.

Project SERV: School Emergency Response to Violence

President Clinton will propose a \$12 million School Emergency Response to Violence -- or Project SERV -- to help schools and local communities respond to school-related violent deaths, such as those that occurred last year in Jonesboro, Arkansas; Paducah, Kentucky; Pearl, Mississippi; and Springfield, Oregon. Developed with input from local officials and educators in these and other communities, Project SERV will enable the federal government to assist local communities in much the same way FEMA assists in response to natural disasters.

Project SERV: Helping Communities Respond to School Shootings. To help communities respond to rare but tragic school-related violent incidents, Project SERV will provide communities with resources to respond to immediate crisis need; to provide increased security and ongoing counseling; and to help state and local officials plan for, prevent against and respond to similar tragedies. The mission of Project SERV will be to:

Provide Immediate Assistance for Emergency Response. As soon as a school-related violent or traumatic incident occurs, the federal government will be able to provide the affected community with immediate assistance, through:

- **A \$12 million Emergency Response Fund** to help communities meet urgent and unplanned needs, such as additional security personnel, emergency mental health crisis counseling, and longer-term counseling to students, faculty, and their families.
- **Crisis Response Experts** trained by the Departments of Education, Justice, Health and Human Services, and the Federal Emergency Management Administration, who can help local officials identify and respond to community needs, help in developing a plan to address those needs, and assist in locating necessary financial and human resources.

Establish Coordinated Federal Response to School Crises. Officials from the Departments of Education, Justice, HHS and from FEMA worked together to help communities impacted by this year's shootings. These agencies will continue to work together as part of Project SERV, and improve ongoing federal crisis response efforts.

Strengthen the Ability of States and Communities to Respond to School Crises. Project SERV will work to strengthen the ability of each state's emergency management, education, community mental health and law enforcement agency to prevent and respond to school crises.

Support Research and Evaluation. To help communities deal with future school-related crises, Project SERV will support research and evaluation on effective ways to prevent and respond to the consequences of school-related homicides and other such incidents.

Building An Effective Partnership with Local Communities and States. In the aftermath of the school shootings, the Departments of Education, Justice and HHS worked closely with officials from Pearl, Paducah, Jonesboro, and Springfield by providing crisis response teams, victim assistance, and funds for added security and immediate counseling for students, teachers and families. Following up on these tragic events, White House and agency officials reviewed these efforts and in September met with officials and educators from each community. As a result, we learned that communities could benefit from longer term, coordinated and comprehensive federal assistance. The President's plan is a direct response to these lessons and will be refined through continued consultation with these and other communities.