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ABSTRACT

To stop violence, school professionals should apply both reactive and proactive methods. Schools that focus on the psychological and sociological causes of youth violence have greater chances of success. This document presents the different aspects of school violence in order to bring about a better understanding of the violence and in turn construct a more comprehensive program for dealing with it. Included is a discussion of the role the media play in covering school violence. The psychological impact of school violence is considered, as well as the causes of school violence by teens. Intervention programs to prevent violence show more promise than other forms of intercession. Such programs include students leading anti-violence activities and programs, learning and teaching conflict resolution, and teaching anger management skills. Incorporating discussions on violence and its prevention into the subject matter of the classrooms is also a form of intervention. Safe schools can be maintained by creating culturally oriented environments and by establishing drug abuse prevention programs. What is witnessed in the schools is a part of the culture. Schools are microcosms of our society. The community with all its members: government, religions, business, parents, students, and educators, all will have to take some responsibility for the violence. (Contains 76 references.) (ADT)

The Anatomy of School Violence

ED 454 459

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Abstract

The government's approach to school violence differs from how families and the schools discipline youth who have been violent. On one hand, the government programs are focused on resource officers, early warnings in the school, video cameras, and crisis management plans. On the other hand, court efforts to reduce school violence use rule enforcement against criminal activity. And, the courts hold the schools responsible if they violate the students' rights.

For example, every state is required under zero tolerance of violence to have a state law requiring local educational agencies to expel any student found in possession of a gun. Some exceptions are made for students with disabilities under either the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. These laws caused inequities in solving school violence problems among disabled and normal progress students.

There are many instances of where strict punishments for zero tolerance have been uneven. Some have resulted in harsh penalties for clearly minor transgressions. The incidents show that zero tolerance penalties for adult crimes have been dispensed to innocent children.

To stop violence, school professionals should apply both reactive and pro active methods. The key is in their skills of conflict management. Schools that focus on the psychological and sociological causes of youth violence have greater chances of success. Students are the products of the society that cares for them. If the society does not care, solutions to school violence will be hard won.

Violent crime in the United States has been dropping steadily since 1991, nonetheless, school violence has been on the rise (Shen, 1997). However, this is a problem found not only in the U.S. States but in other parts of the world (McConaghy, 1994). Concern over crime in the U.S. has mounted even though the juvenile crime rate for murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assaults among juveniles has been declining since 1994 (Michel, 2000). Parents, community members, educators and students are very concerned about this issue.

Apprehension over School Violence

There was a time when going back to school meant the excitement of seeing friends again and shopping for new clothes and the latest school supplies. But, school violence over the last few years has changed that. Now, alarmed parents prepare by reading about school safety and violence while school officials and police consider ways to prevent the troubles. They worry about students bringing guns into schools. For many parents, sending their children to school next year will require more encouragement than ever before (Edson, 2000). Some parents are frightened that something is profoundly wrong with the schools (Owens, 1999). However, while nearly half of all parents fear for their children at school, the Gallup poll found students usually do not share the same fears as their parents. Just 18% of parents reported their children have expressed concerns about safety at their schools. These percentages are higher among rural families where 22% of parents say their children have expressed fears. While school violence is driving the conversations about school problems, it does not seem to be the most significant school problem for either the

parents or their children. When parents were given a list of potential problems facing schools and were asked to rank them, just 28% cited violence as a serious problem. This compares with 43% who cited drugs, 40% who cited sex, and 39% who cited discipline in the classroom as serious problems (Gillespie, 1999).

A Survey of School Violence

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is required to collect data to determine the frequency, seriousness, and incidence of violence in elementary and secondary schools as part of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1994 (National Center for Education Statistics, 1998). NCES responded to this requirement by commissioning a survey. The Principal/School Disciplinarian Survey on School Violence, for school year 1996-97 is summarized below:

More than one-half of U.S. public schools reporting had experienced at least one crime incident in school year 1996-97. Fifty-seven percent of public elementary and secondary school principals reported that one or more incidents of crime/violence required the police or other law enforcement officials had occurred in their school during the 1996-97 year. Of the ten percent of all public schools that experienced one or more serious violent incidents. The violent incidents were defined as murder, rape or other type of sexual battery, suicide, physical attack or fight with a weapon, or robbery. These were reported to police or other law enforcement officials. Among the physical attacks, fights without a weapon led to a list of reported crimes in public schools with about 190,000 such incidents reported for 1996-97. About 116,000 incidents of theft or larceny were reported along with 98,000 incidents of vandalism.

These less serious or nonviolent crimes were more common than serious violent crimes, with schools reporting about 4,000 incidents of rape or other type of sexual battery, 7,000 robberies, and 11,000 incidents of physical attacks or fights in which weapons were used.

(4) While 43 percent of public schools reported no incidents of crime in 1996-97, 37 percent reported from one to five crimes and about 20 percent reported six crimes or more.

(5) Crime and violence were more of a problem in middle and high schools.

(6) Forty-five percent of elementary schools reported one or more violent incidents compared with 74 percent of middle schools and 77 percent of high schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 1998).

In general, elementary schools reported proportionately fewer incidents of serious violent crime. They reported lower rates of physical attacks or fights with a weapon and rape or other types of sexual battery when compared with middle and high schools. However, while elementary schools reported lower ratios of robbery compared with high schools, they were not significantly different from middle schools. Schools that reported serious discipline problems were more likely to have experienced one or more incidents of crime or violence, and were more likely to experience serious crime than those with less serious discipline (National Center for Education Statistics, 1998).

School Violence

The media are constantly activating social stratification among teenagers.

Whether class distinctions are made through television programming, news shows, or commercials, the effects on teenagers are lasting. Marketing tactics to promote clothing, foods, shoes, athletic apparel, almost any and everything imaginable promotes separation. The media exposes children to a world of corruption and violence (Meyrowitz, 1985).

Youth in U.S. are exposed to more information today than at any point in time. The advent of the information age has brought the world to homes throughout this nation via the home computer. Students gain access to information at the touch of a button, which in turn provides an opportunity to learn at amazing rates. Unfortunately not all of the information is beneficial for the academic nor social development of students. The media has shouldered much of the blame for the problems facing the public education system and for that matter America as a nation (U.S. House of Representatives, 1999).

With knowledge comes understanding, and with that understanding comes a certain level of maturity. Today the idea of adolescent development has taken on several new dimensions. Children become too familiar with topics like sex and drug use when they are young. Usually these topics are activated by mental and physical abuse and misguided family structures (Garbarino, 1999). The evidence is easily demonstrated by the media's representation of the Columbine shootings, termed as "the Littleton Massacre." In all the press coverage of public school killings in the past school year, the media did not address the fact that credible research indicated that school violence has been on the decline (Michel, 2000). Instead, it highlighted gang

participation by students when relatively few young people join gangs. Reports indicate that usually the school student gang participation statistic is less than 10 percent. It is also important that less than 2 percent of all crime by juveniles is gang-related (Thornberry & Burch, 1997).

Media Labeling of School Violence

Unfortunately, the media's emphasis on teenagers is to feature school violence in 1999 as a trend toward more violence in 2000 and beyond. Instead of extending the findings that school violence is an anomaly, the media added to the public's fears about the safety of their children by predicting that school violence could take place in any school setting at any time. Rarely did the media frame anything that said the real threat of school violence is elsewhere. It overlooked the crucial but readily accessible data pointing out that violence was in decline. For instance, data collected by the National Safe Kids Campaign found that unintentional shootings among children are most likely to happen at times when children are unsupervised. And, the peak hours for these shootings are not during school hours. They occur after school, between 4:00 P.M. and 5:00 P.M. in the late afternoon, on weekends and over the summer months of June, July, and August. They also occur during the holiday seasons of November and December (Volkh, & Snell, 1997). The media has highlighted school shootings as tragic, but they should not call them trends toward more violence. Valid data of violence shows that 50 percent of all unintentional childhood shooting deaths occur in the homes of the victims, and about 40 percent occur in the homes of friends or relatives (Volkh, & Snell, 1997). The 1998 data from the National School Safety

Center also shows a 27.3% decline in school-associated violent deaths from the 1992-1993 academic year through the 1998 academic year. Based on the review of the available data as of February 1999, the recent shootings at schools were not typical events and they are not part of any trend (Fisher, 1998).

TV Violence and School Violence

One of the problems is in the perceptions of teenagers. They appear to see themselves as indomitable, superpersons, believing that nothing can happen to them. They feel that guns are additions to their power for that invulnerability. According to one study on TV violence, teenagers learn how to be aggressive in unbelievable ways (Huesmann & Eron, 1986). They watch violent programs that lead them to committing aggressive behaviors. This TV watching is often reflected in the lives of children. For example, by the time a child reaches the age of three, that child will watch television about 95% of the time and will imitate their favorite character (Michel, 2000). A five-year-old will spend an average of two and one-half hours daily watching TV and by age twelve an average of five hours per day. During the teen years, TV watching will drop to about two to three hours daily (Liebert & Sprafkin, 1988).

The research on violence on television shows that children may: 1) be fearful of the world, 2) become less sensitive to the pain and suffering, and 3) respond in aggressive ways toward others (Palmer, 1988). These major effects can be characterized having a direct effect that children and adults who watch many hours of violence on television. On the other hand, they may develop favorable attitudes and values about aggressiveness. Psychologists suggest that desensitization may appear

in children who watch many hours of television. Children may become less sensitive to violence in the real world, less sensitive to the pain and suffering of others, and more willing to tolerate increasing levels of violence. Researchers in this field developed the *Mean World Syndrome* that suggests that children and adults who watch many hours of television violence may believe that the world is mean and dangerous. They view the world as a mean and dangerous place (Murray, 1973).

The concern for TV violence started in 1952 with congressional hearings that were held in the House of Representatives before the Commerce Committee (United States Congress, 1952). There is ongoing concern with school violence by the American Psychological Association. A report in 1992 from the American Psychological Association Task Force on Television and Social Behavior (Huston, Donnerstein, Fairchild, Feshbach, Katz, Murray, Rubinstein, Wilcox, & Zuckerman, 1992), concluded that 30 years of research confirmed the harmful effects of TV violence on children. At Pennsylvania State University, a study was completed with 100 pre-school children. Some of those children watched cartoons with many aggressive and violent acts and others watched cartoons that didn't have any kind of violence. The children who watched the violent cartoons were more likely to be physical, to disobey class rules, to argue, and to leave a task unfinished. These behaviors were fewer in those children who watched the non-violent programs (Comstock, 1991).

The Psychological Impact of School Violence

Violence, by definition, occurs when someone or something is harmed or

damaged (Gove, 1986). Whether the setting is a street corner in Philadelphia, a hockey rink, or a fourth grade classroom, the results are the same. In the last quarter century, attention increasingly has been focused on the incidents that occur either on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities. Furthermore, while school violence may include thefts from school lockers and school bullying, public attention has been drawn only to those more horrific events resulting in deaths. More importantly is the fact that as tragedy after tragedy has occurred in American schools, the focus continues to be on drug use and school violence (Conrad, 1995). However, the roots of school violence are deeper (Levine & Brown, 1973).

Even within the confines of the sporting events, particularly in team contact sports such as ice hockey and American football, there has been an escalation of violence (Abdal-Haqq, 1989). Generally, this violence is most common among the individuals that are looked upon as role models for students. A psychological interpretation of the athletes' behavior for the teens emphasizes that they are violent because of frustration (Abdal-Haqq, 1989).

Maslow's hierarchy of human needs emphasizes that all persons have a need to belong. This sense of belonging is very strong among adolescents. Children who already feel they are not accepted nor liked also faced a significant lack of attention both at home and at school. Unfortunately, the attention they seek appears to be as shooters in horrific school crimes (Gove, 1986). Closely related here is the fact that many of these teen shooters lack of significant role model of a singular, responsible adult. However, in addition to the psychological roots of school violence already

presented, one of the largest contributors, but understated causes of the perceptions that schools are unsafe, is the psychological damage brought upon children by adults. Many parents seemingly are unable to be appropriate role models for basic human values of their children (Garbarino, 1999).

The Causes of School Violence by Teenagers

Millions of tax dollars have been allocated by the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act to eradicate school violence. However, with the tragic incidents in Pearl, Mississippi; Paducah, Kentucky; Edinboro, Pennsylvania; Springfield, Oregon; Fayetteville, Tennessee; and Littleton, Colorado, the society has become more fearful. Even in light of these tragic incidents, the Department of Justice statistics show significant decreases in violent juvenile crime since the early 1990's (Gough, 2000). Overall, violent crime in the United States has fallen 12% since 1995 and has continued to drop. In response to misperceptions of the real extent of school violence, schools have increasingly adopted law enforcement models rather than educational models for violence reduction. Despite the additions of metal detectors, police officers, and ID cards for students and staff, there is little evidence supporting the effectiveness of these approaches (Hyman & Snook 2000). Statistical data continues to show that the real threat of violence to teenagers is not in school. In 1996, students from ages twelve to eighteen were victims of 671,000 incidents of crime away from school. The same age groups were victims of only 225,000 crimes during the school day. In 1996 - 1997, 43% of public schools reported no incidents of crime. Thirty-seven percent of public schools reported a total of five crimes or less (Michel, 2000).

Are Teenagers at Risk of School Violence?

The fact that has already been presented is that juvenile crime is decreasing in the school and in the home. It is unfortunate, but the data continues to show that teenagers are three times more likely to encounter violence away from school than in school (Michel, 2000). A recent Department of Justice study revealed that for every violent and sexual offense committed by a youth under the age of eighteen, there are three crimes committed by adults against children and teens. Children are more likely to be the victims of violence and their attackers are most likely to be adults. And, when young children are killed, the parents are usually their murderers (Linquist & Molnar, 1995). Still the public's fear of violence in the schools is high, in spite of all the evidence shows that the schools are safe. The problem for most communities and families is that many students don't go home. As has been pointed out, most of the violent and risky behavior that young people engage in occurs during the four hours immediately after school is out (Lewis, 2000).

Brendtro and Long discuss what they called the three roots of violence. The first cause is the broken social bonds between children and adults. Divorce, abuse, and drugs interfere with normal parenting. This creates situations where adults and children are detached from each other and detached from their children. When the social bonds between children and adults are not nurtured, children fail to internalize values. The second root cause of violence is severe stress and conflict generated by growing up, family issues, crime, and poverty. These can build up stress breeding in children a tendency to employ defensive behaviors. Since the U.S. has the highest rate of poverty

of the industrialized world, more children in this country than anywhere else are at risk for violence. The third is the "culture of violence" (Synder & Sickmund, 1995). Despite strong laws against it, the U.S. population is absorbed with violence. This is evident through the media, sports, politics, church, and school. Finally, the problems of violence in the U.S. are related to the abuse of alcohol and drugs.

Only an intact, rational, and a sober person can control anger. Many violent acts are often the result of intoxication. Mental illness, trauma, disease, or chemical imbalance can impair the thinking and perception. When the prison population is examined, one-half of the youth in prison convicted of murder have a history of some brain trauma or dysfunction (Brendtro & Long, 1995). Another cause of school violence comes from the students' homes.

Family Violence Produces School Violence

Children see and hear all kind of abuse where their parents are involved (Sonkin, 1991). And, alcohol and drug abuse is increasing among the parents. For some children, violence is an ever-present occurrence. Violence is prevalent in over one-third of those homes where couples are married. Often children are the victims of their parents' anger and frustration. Half of the men who assault their partners also batter their children (Hershorn & Rosenbaum, 1985). And, the women who are battered in their relationships also abuse their children. Children learn not to trust the adults in their homes when they are abused (Sonkin, 1991). Events of family violence range from assault on family members to sibling assault and assault on others living in the household. Family violence is unlike random acts of violence between strangers

because this violence occurs between people who are interacting almost daily.

Repeated violations are common. The victims are often powerless, especially young children who are not mature. In studying families, the changing structure of the families also is related to school violence. Two parent households in the U. S. are a minority, and the nuclear family has decreased. In fact, more and more children are to unmarried mothers, and in many cases, these parents are still children themselves (Sonkin, 1991).

Child abuse contributes significantly to school violence. In 1995, a published report on juvenile victimization found that although new data comes out yearly, the basic patterns of family violence remain constant (Snyder & Sickmund, 1995). In 1992, there was an average of seven children murdered per day. The rate of homicide is higher for children from birth to five than for those ages, six to eleven. The fathers were responsible for 59% of violence committed against children ten and under. Most victimization of children under age six occurred at dinnertime. For ages six to 17, the peak time is about 4:00 P.M. (Snyder & Sickmund, 1995). There is a clear relationship between domestic violence and behavioral and emotional problems in children who are the victims of abuse. These children are six to seven times more likely to abuse alcohol and drugs. Some studies reveal that a high percentage of juvenile offenders come from violent homes. One-third of convicted sex offenders were abused as children. The victims of domestic violence are more likely to be problems in school and more likely to engage in violence in school.

Social Grouping Arouses School Violence

The issue school violence is intensified every day as random acts of violence occur on school playgrounds and in schools (School Shootings, 1999). Another contributing cause of school violence is the result of the social stratification developed in the public schools. Specifically, the problem is social stratification across income, race, and ethnic groups, and that begins in the American culture (Hilton Head Management Seminar, 2000). It is transmitted from the community, to the family, to the schools, and it is aided by the school administrators and the teachers.

Stratifying is classifying or separating people into groups graded according to some status determined by birth, income, or education. Socially separated groups in the school have caused violence within inner city public schools. What is surprising is that social stratification also causes school violence in rural schools (Michel, 2000; Kalb, 1999). Several of the school shootings support this finding:

Two Columbine High School students who were not accepted socially and resented preferential treatment of athletes by teachers and administrators decided to kill their fellow classmates. (Cooper & Russakoff, 1999)

Two middle school students in Jonesboro, Arkansas angered because of a failed relationship and the lack of attention from fellow students decided to simulate a fire drill and kill their fellow classmates. (Schwartz, 1998).

In Conyers, Georgia, a young man described as an average student who became upset over a failed relationship opened fire on fellow students as they arrived for class in what is described as a middle class Atlanta suburb (Pressley, 1999).

In Paducah, Kentucky a student decides that he would disrupt a Morning Prayer group

and kill his fellow classmates (A deadly trend, 1998).

In Richmond, Virginia, a student in an argument with another student suddenly opens fire wounding a coach and aide (Baker & Hsu, 1998).

The profiles of school violence can be culled from the level of the public schooling where the violence occurred, the personal, and the group relationships of the shooters. Many of the incidents occurred in rural or suburban middle schools and high schools. Several of them concerned relationship problems with teachers and other students, and other acts of school occurred among socially isolated middle school or high school students (Michel, 2000).

Educational Practices to Reduce School Violence

Recently television screens have been filled with scenes at schools of weeping parents, students, and education personnel after a violent incident. Keeping violence from erupting is the objective of school administrators and teachers in these crises. However, it is very expensive. The financial cost of school security, counseling, and implementation of prevention programs after an incident is far greater than preventive programs begun at an earlier level.

Preventing School Violence

Intervention programs to prevent violence show more promise than any of the other forms of intercession. A statement at a Congressional hearing from Bill Smith for the National Education Association suggested the following preventative programs for reducing school violence that included the following:

(1) Training of teachers, administrators, and all education support personnel to

recognize the early warning signs of potential violence;

(2) Developing comprehensive, community-based school safety programs and enhanced security throughout schools;

(3) Increasing the number of school counselors;

(4) Increasing in children's access to mental health services;

(5) Creating anonymous tip lines so that students will feel free to alert adults to potential problems (School Safety, May 1999).

In the same hearing, a teacher also made the identical pleas for the Congress to make funding available to stop the flow of violence before it begins (School Safety, May, 1999). The National Crime Prevention Council also suggested that school violence can be prevented by encouraging student led anti-violence activities and programs, learning and teaching conflict resolution, and anger management skills, incorporating discussions on violence and its prevention into the subject matter of the classrooms (National Crime Prevention Council, 1999).

Although Congress has passed several initiatives such as: The Safe Schools Act of 1994, The Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1994 and The Family and Community Endeavor Schools Act and the Community Schools Youth Service and Supervision Growth Program of 1994; these do not seem to be adequate to solve the problems of school violence. Violence in schools is not a problem to be solved by further regulations, but it can be reduced by comprehensive curriculum teaching and modeling of alternative behaviors for teenagers. Many programs have success with interventions that emphasize behavior standards, anger management, mentors and

tutors, and academic achievement. However, some rethinking of the educational process is necessary. It appears those programs for the students that address responsible behaviors and caring for the community offer greater success.

The use of mass search strategies to reduce crime in schools has very limited utility. Because the courts allow such procedures, several schools will adopt and use these methods whether they are needed or not. But, consideration should be given to the serious disadvantages of these technological means of searching for contraband and weapons. First, funding may be removed from other educational programs to provide for mass surveillance and search measures. Second, school security measures are complicated and expensive. They involve complex dimensions of funding, facilities, building age, building layout, administrators, teachers, parents, students, personalities, campus order, security personnel, procedures, the neighborhood, policies, the school board, local law enforcement, fire codes, local government, politics, and reputation. And lastly, there is no sound research that shows mass surveillance would reduce school violence. The efforts in mass surveillance provide only limited viable options to enhance school safety. And, the other legislative mandates available to the schools and to the courts are numerous and strong (Title IX, Gun Free School Zone Act of 1990, 1994, Safe and Drug Free Schools Act, Zero Tolerance provisions). It means only that federal laws when implemented properly provide school districts with strategies for reducing school crime (Burker & Herbert, 1996). However, these are school district decisions. When circumstances are so urgent that strict search or disciplinary policies are necessary, it may be that the best

interests of students and the school community will be met by implementing mass search strategies. At a minimum, these search methods should be implemented with reasonableness, advance notice to students, and carefully constructed procedures to safeguard students' due process and privacy rights (Stefkovich & O'Brien, 1997).

Safe, Culturally Oriented Schools

The reasons for youth violence in schools are few, but they are more often than not also are complex. The youngest person charged in a school shooting incident was just six years old and the oldest was only 18 years old. There are some social solutions that can be enacted that will more effectively curb this violent and aggressive behavior. Young people can be helped to better deal with life's difficulties by offering stronger counseling and coping programs without making a police state in the school (Gabarino, 1999). One common sense approach in schools is to create school cultures where all students feel that they have a stake in the school. The schools should foster a sense of belonging where everyone in the larger community plays a contributing part. In order for this approach to happen, everyone has to be engaged in this process. School and community groups can begin this process by starting and incorporating programs designed to reach young people in the formative years of their development (Michel, 2000).

The schools have mandates to educate and keep students healthy and safe. However, both the school and the students encounter the challenges brought by changes, a diverse student body, societal unrest, and different values. As an example, there are many children in school already prepared to face those challenges. Although

there also are many children who are not even prepared even to meet the demands of an ordinary school day. These challenges may furnish the fuel for violence in school expected by racial tensions, cultural differences, busing, and other issues. And, there are still other school factors that are conducive to disorder in the schools. They include: (a) high teacher/student ratio, (b) poor school facilities, (c) overcrowded classrooms, (d) low student achievement, and (e) adult failures to raise their children in stable, caring homes. These are the factors that encourage school violence.

In addition, there are problems in recruiting and retaining good teachers. The climate of fear of violence in public schools makes it nearly impossible to attract and retain good teachers. Teachers hesitate to confront unruly students for fear of their own safety. Students are sophisticated enough to recognize a teacher's limitations with respect to using discipline or force to gain compliance and retain order in his/her classroom.

Schools need strategies that have shown to be effective in reducing drug use, discipline problems, and school violence. One such way is community policing that describes increasing interactions between the community and the police identifying and resolving problems. This way the community is emphasized as an active partner in solving the problems of crime. With the community and the police teaming, there are better decisions made. And, they give members of the police force flexibility for responsive, integrated, and relevant police service (Michel, 2000).

The Safe and Drug Free School & Community Act gives the community flexibility and recognizes that no efforts can succeed to make young people safe and drug free.

Whether it's inside or outside the classroom, without all elements of the community should be centered on creating safe learning environments (Safe and Drug Free Schools Act, 1994).

Zero-Tolerance Policies

At the end of the 20th century, the shootings in the public schools brought zero tolerance back by establishing zero tolerance school regulations. Zero tolerance appears to represent regression to the harsh punishments of the 18th century where children committed crimes. Then, they were treated like adults in terms of the penalties imposed on them (Roberts, 1995).

There have many abuses of the zero tolerance provisions of the laws meant to prevent school violence. One of those occurred in October, 1999, a middle school student calmly persuaded a fellow student to allow him to take custody of a knife she had brought to school, but the boy was ultimately suspended (Washington Post, 1999, November 16). Apparently, the school board judged securing the knife in a safe place had no substantive relationship to the decision of the school board. Violence was prevented one time, yet a good, well-meaning student received punishment for his unselfish act (Washington Post, 1999, December 11).

Unfortunately, this is not the only problem with zero tolerance laws. Within the Gun Free School Zone Act, there is special protection for disabled children. These protections only apply to disabled children, and not to normal progress students who may face the same charges under zero tolerance laws. Students with disabilities under either the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 can be

expelled for only a short term, then they must be provided with an alternative placement. However, normal progress students can be expelled for one year (Rehabilitation Act, 1973). The errors embedded in zero tolerance provisions should be focused not on unyielding punishment, but on these inequalities of the policy development among the states.

Drug Abuse Prevention Programs

Clearly, drugs and violence contribute to the critical problems to the nation. There is no denying that the statistics demonstrate the presence of these problems. Moreover, concerns about drugs and violence in schools have gained national prominence, as well as national support. Even with this support, there are no easy solutions. There are, however, a number of directions that should be considered (Stefkovich & O'Brien, 1997). But, the evidence is sparse that drugs or drug abuse contributes directly to school violence.

Drug abuse prevention means helping people develop strong personal values. Personally strong values will reduce the chance they will hurt themselves or others by abusing drugs. Drug abuse is the use of any chemical substance for nonmedicinal purposes that results in the impaired physical, mental, emotional, or social health. It is not confined to youth, but the theory is that if young people can be prevented from abusing drugs, they will avoid problems when they are older (National Clearinghouse for Drug Abuse Information, no date). The theory also predicts that parents can raise thinking and caring children. They can set reasonably firm limits on children's behavior, and they can teach responsibility to make choices and help them to

understand society's restrictions (National Clearinghouse for Drug Abuse Information, no date).

Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) is the most recognized, widely used anti-drug program in the American education system today. DARE originated in 1983 by the Los Angeles Police Department under the administration of police chief Daryl F. Gates and the Los Angeles School District. DARE has become the nation's standard anti-drug curriculum, currently installed in approximately 80% of all school districts in the country and forty-nine foreign countries. DARE is the only drug education program sanctioned for funding under the federal Safe & Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act. In one year, the program will receive \$750 million deriving from federal, state, and local governments. At the core of the DARE curriculum are seventeen weekly lessons taught in the fifth or sixth grade (Glass, 1997).

President Clinton strongly endorsed DARE. He has been positive toward it ever since his daughter graduated from an Arkansas DARE program (Glass, 1997). Yet, in the past five years, study after study has shown that DARE does not work. Studies have repeatedly found that students who go through DARE are just as likely to use drugs as those who do not go through the program. Behavioral scientists have begun to question whether DARE does little more than make students feel good, and is not effective in combating drug abuse. As one researcher put it: "DARE is the world's biggest pet rock. If it makes us feel good to spend the money on nothing, that's okay, but everyone should know DARE does nothing" (Elliott, 1997).

The problems have been that almost two billion dollars is being spent when

there are other programs in use that have been proven to be effective (Elias, 1997).

Putting DARE aside, successful drug education programs have found the following list of key elements that makes programs successful:

- (1) Planning and design, including identification of short and long-term goals.
- (2) Timing, including continuity over grade levels.
- (3) Social factors, including cultural sensitivity.
- (4) School policies, including school-sponsored activities and disciplinary policies consistent with the program.
- (5) Staff training, including ongoing training and in-school support.
- (6) Implementation, including use of up-to-date and engaging materials.
- (7) Family and community involvement, including use of take home assignments.
- (8) And, an individualized curriculum, including tailoring for appropriate grade levels and community characteristics.
- (9) Instructional features, including skill building and active participation (Elias, 1997).
- (10) Support services, including tutoring and counseling.
- (11) And, evaluation guidelines, including specific indicators of positive and negative classroom behaviors (Elias, 1997).

Following these guidelines will make programs more successful in preventing drug abuse. But, violence and drugs are not simply the problems drug abuse in urban schools. They are problems in suburban and rural schools of Iowa; Conyers, Georgia;

and Jonesboro, Arkansas. In deed, all students may be at some little risk to exposure to drugs, and some more than others (National Center of Educational Statistics, 1998). Besides, for the U.S. to pass sensible legislation with an impact on drugs in schools, students and parents should be involved. Some suggestions have proposed massive drug testing as a solution. Drug testing of all youth in primary, elementary, middle and high schools will cause more problems. Many of the recent shootings in schools had little to do with drug, alcohol, or tobacco abuse. Finally, citizens and parents will not support massive testing for drugs, alcohol and tobacco (Keel, 1998).

Law Enforcement Approaches to School Violence

The nation's schools are an accurate mirror of a violent society. The newspapers depict a very gloomy view of schools in which violence is pervasive and a "police state" mentality of crime prevention prevails. Stories of weapons, drugs, gangs, and violent behavior in schools abound in the news media (Couch and Williams, 1995). And yet, schools are charged with educating all students in them. And, every day they face the challenges of a diverse student body. Children bring into the classroom their family environments, their experiences in the neighborhood, their attitudes about how to handle frustration and respond to discipline, and their views of the world.

Security is a major concern in the nation's schools. The violence of youth crime threatens to undermine the safety of the learning environment. For the law enforcement community, the causes for school violence rest with the proliferation of weapons among students. In some communities and school districts the pressure of safe and orderly schools has increased (Johnson and Johnson, 1995). Many school

districts can no longer be ignore the safety issues, and community oriented policing is one way that efforts can be concentrated on reducing crime by improving the quality of life in the community (Hylton, 1996). Tactics used in prevention programs range from proactive student support services such as the Boys Town Model to law enforcement measures (Grady, Bendezu, & Brock, 1996). Law enforcement relies on measures such as the visible police presence, confiscation of weapons, and security cameras (Couch and Williams, 1995). Weisenburger reported among these options, the police, the use of security personnel, detection dogs, and metal detectors in urban school districts are more frequently used in urban school districts. However, there are wide differences in the effectiveness. And, some programs remain questionable or unproven. The study concluded that the best way to preserve a safe learning atmosphere is to be proactive, to have policies and procedures for dealing with problems before they occur. Polices that defined the operations of law enforcement personnel in schools. The districts must comply with city and state laws that governs the police activity in schools (Weisenburger, 1994).

In some situations, certified law enforcement officers should be employed in the school districts. Their duties include providing building and grounds security. Off-duty officers are employed to provide security during school hours, and athletic and special events of the school districts. In these cases, the school district or the group sponsoring events are responsible for the officers' salaries. For example, the efforts by police to address school crime is the Drug Addiction Resistance Education program. And, there are many active D.A.R.E. programs in more than half of the school districts

in the United States (Abel, 1999).

Many school districts regard the presence of police officers as common place in the schools. Although they are divided in their views about the police searching school buildings, student searches, school personnel cooperate with police for interrogations and arrests. Although most schools view the situation as unfortunate, they believe that police interrogations and arrests are needed to preserve the safety of the learning environment. Unfortunately, wide diversity in governance structures for crime prevention is very controversial in many communities (Grady, Bendezu & Brock, 1996). For effective planning to occur, principals and superintendents need to keep accurate records of violent incidents and have a clear understanding the use of these violence prevention resources.

School Uniforms to Reduce Conflict in Public Schools

Many urban and suburban public school systems in the United States have experienced problems among students that involve how the students dress and appear in school. Competition among students over dress and appearance can result in verbal taunts, fights, and thefts within the school setting. Behavioral problems related to dress and physical appearance raise important socialization issues for the nation's public schools. Because the nation's public schools play a major role in the socialization of youth and are charged to provide healthy, safe environments for youth to learn and develop, they use many approaches to resolve youth behavioral problems related to dress and physical appearance (Holloman, LaPoint, Alleyne, Palmer, & Sanders, 1996).

One such school strategy to reduce the conflict and disruption caused is the institution of school uniforms. Advocates of school uniforms point out several advantages. One is that uniforms serve as a symbol or representation of the school organization. Uniforms also serve to certify the individual student as a legitimate member of the school. Advocates also contend that uniforms serve to conceal the social and economic status of students thereby equalizing them in terms of their appearance (Holloman, LaPoint, Alleyne, Palmer, & Sanders, 1996). Despite these claims, not all school officials, students, parents, and legal advocates favor the adoption of school uniform policies. Some oppose school uniforms because they view them as restricting student and parental rights to freedom of expression in appearance.

Conclusions

The issues related to school violence are truly complex. Children are living examples of the cultural values in the U.S. They bring their conflicts, stress, social issues, and family issues with them when they enter school halls. The data show that what is witnessed in the schools is a part of the culture. Schools are simply microcosms of our society. An unbiased look at statistics has helped to identify where to begin to solve the problem of school violence. The schools reflect the society; and the causes of violence within and outside its walls are complicated. The community with all its members: government, religions, business, parents, students, and educators all will have to take some responsibility for the violence. School districts and schools must interpret of the Safe Schools and Drug Free Communities Act with neutrality. The laws against school violence must be implemented , but with fairness and equality

in all schools.

The discussions about school violence have moved to the international level. All branches of government are involved in the national dilemma. The best approaches to solve the school violence problems do not include the expensive technological hardware. Instead, they are centered on assessing the psychological and sociological causes of school violence. Putting those causes together with the schools and will show higher probabilities of success. On the other hand, it is not very comfortable to believe that the students are the products of the schools and the society. The violence lies within the family, the school, the students and the society. It will not reach acceptable resolution until the basic values of these groups can come together in a reasoned way (Warner & Krulak, 1999; Michel, 2000).

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