Violence Prevention in Schools: A Case Study of the Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter High School

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ABSTRACT

This report is based on research conducted by the Urban Institute's Justice Policy Center on the violence prevention activities taking place at the Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter High School during the 2008–2009 school year. Based on an assessment of the school's violence prevention approach using qualitative and quantitative data from stakeholder interviews, field observations, programmatic records, and surveys with students and faculty, this report includes: a logic model of the school's violence prevention approach; detailed information on each of the violence prevention activities within the violence prevention approach and how they compare to national best practices; student and faculty perceptions of the school climate and the violence prevention approach; and recommendations to the school administrators on how to strengthen their violence prevention approach based on the assessment findings. The report concludes with brief remarks on next steps in school violence prevention research.

INTRODUCTION

In May 2009, the Urban Institute was tasked by the Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter High School to conduct an assessment of the violence prevention activities that were taking place during the 2008–2009 school year. Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter High School (TMA)—based in a disadvantaged neighborhood in Washington, D.C.—has implemented a range of traditional and non-traditional violence prevention activities to improve school safety and increase the academic performance of its students. This report is based on the Urban Institute's assessment, designed to inform school administrators throughout the country about the violence prevention activities taking place at one school. The information contained in this report is designed to assist school administrators seeking to develop, refine, and/or assess the violence prevention approaches taking place in their own school.[1]

Using information gleaned from stakeholder interviews, programmatic records, and field observations, this report describes the logic of the violence prevention activities taking place at TMA and places the activities within the context of "best" or "promising" practices in the area of school violence prevention. To situate the violence prevention activities within the school's current environment, this report also includes survey data from the two primary beneficiaries of the violence prevention activities—students and faculty. These surveys cover the students and faculty experiences with violence and victimization in school and their neighborhood and their perceptions of the violence prevention activities taking place within the school. Conclusions are drawn from the surveys and the assessment of the violence prevention activities, including recommendations to the TMA stakeholders on ways to expand and/or focus their violence prevention approach in the future.

This report develops over several sections. It begins by providing a brief introduction to TMA, including a sociodemographic profile of the school and its core mission. The next section discusses the issue of violence in schools and some of the responses to school violence that have been implemented throughout the country. The following section provides a detailed description and systematic categorization of the violence prevention approach at TMA, including a logic model of the school's violence prevention approach. Findings from the student and faculty surveys are discussed in a subsequent section and conclusions and recommendations based on the study's findings are discussed in the final section.

THURGOOD MARSHALL ACADEMY PUBLIC CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter High School is a nonprofit, college preparatory high school located in the Anacostia neighborhood of Washington, D.C. The school serves students in grades 9 through 12 with the explicit mission of preparing them to succeed in college and actively engage in a democratic society. Most TMA students reside in Wards 7 and 8, two of the most disadvantaged neighborhoods in Washington, D.C. The school is located in Ward 8, which has the highest rate of overall poverty (36 percent) and child poverty (47 percent) in D.C. According to the school's administrative records, 99 percent of the students enrolled in TMA are Black and more than two-thirds qualify for free or reduced-price lunches.

[1] TMA received a grant from the U.S. Office of the State Superintendent, U.S. Department of Education to partner with a firm to disseminate its violence prevention approach.

Yet, in contrast to other schools in the Ward 8 neighborhood and Washington, D.C., TMA boasts a 100 percent college acceptance rate among its graduating seniors. Further, recent scores from D.C.'s Comprehensive Assessment System (DC CAS) tests showed that 67 percent and 72 percent of TMA students were proficient in reading and math in the 2009 school year, respectively. These proficiency scores are significantly higher than other D.C. high schools.[2] In fact, during the 2009 school year, TMA was ranked first for math scores and ranked second for reading scores among D.C. open enrollment high schools. In addition to one other school, TMA was one of D.C.'s more than 20 secondary schools nominated for the U.S. Department of Education's Blue Ribbon Schools Program for vast improvement in student achievement and it was the first D.C. school to move out of "school improvement status" under the No Child Left Behind Act. In addition to the U.S. Department of Education, TMA has received honors from the U.S. News and World Report and the National Charter School Conference.

Noteworthy features of TMA include a data-driven approach to academic achievement, a law-centric curriculum, a focus on serving as a youth development organization, extensive afterschool programs and community activities for students, and local partnerships with law firms, community organizations, and volunteers. In addition to creating a rigorous academic program, TMA administrators have focused their efforts on building and maintaining a safe learning environment for their students and faculty. In response to the prevalence of violence in the neighborhood where TMA is based and incidents of violence in other schools in and around the Anacostia neighborhood, TMA has been focused on violence prevention since it opened in 2001.

The school has worked to include a variety of violence prevention activities to enhance the overall school environment, provide a safe space for learning, and distinguish the school environment from typical urban schools where metal detectors, routine bag searches, and a heavy police presence is the norm. The activities at TMA range from traditional violence prevention approaches, such as security guards, police resource officers, and random searches, to non-traditional approaches, such as supervised morning greetings and afternoon dismissals, and a summer preparatory program for incoming freshmen and sophomores. Indeed, the violence prevention approach at TMA is broad, multi-pronged, and focused on various aspects of the student environment. The stakeholders at TMA do not define their violence prevention approach as a "program" per se, but as a set of activities implemented to increase academic success and to reduce violence.

THE ISSUE OF VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

Schools face significant challenges in providing a safe learning environment for students, particularly those schools located in urban neighborhoods. According to the most recent annual report by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) on school crime and safety, students across the United States reported more than 750,000 violent crimes during the 2007–2008 school year. Further, more than one in eight high school students was involved in a fight on school property. Schools in urban neighborhoods have the highest rates of violent crime, and their students tend to be more fearful of attacks occurring during school. Schools serving low-income students report higher crime rates than those serving

[2] The 2009 DC CAS results: All DC Public High Schools, Reading and Math proficiency of 44 percent and 40 percent, respectively; DC Open Enrollment Public High Schools, Reading and Math proficiency of 38 percent and 35 percent, respectively.

higher-income students and levels of gang activity also increase with the level of representation of minority and low-income students (Dinkes, Kemp, Baum, and Snyder 2009).[3]

Victimization in schools extends beyond the students. According to the national report from NCES and BJS, one in twelve high school teachers have been threatened with a physical attack by students in the 2007–2008 school year. Another 2 percent of teachers reported being physically attacked by students in the 2007–2008 school year. In general, these rates were highest in urban schools in the 2007–2008 school year, where 12 percent of high school teachers reported being threatened and 4 percent reported being attacked (Dinkes et al. 2009). Slightly more than one-third of all teachers reported that student misbehavior interfered with their teaching in the 2007–2008 school year (Dinkes et al. 2009).

The statistics from Washington, D.C. on student victimization and violent experiences are no more encouraging. Compared to the national average, D.C. students are more likely to carry a weapon to school and to get into a fight at school (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: CDC 2007). Over half of the students in the city attended schools that were considered "persistently dangerous" by federal standards as of 2007 (Keating and Haynes 2007), and the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) responded to over 900 violent incidents at public schools during the 2007–2008 school year (Mulhausen, Soifer, and Lips 2009). About 85 percent of the incidents were for assault and another 6 percent and 5 percent were for robberies and sexual assaults, respectively (Mulhausen et al. 2009). These statistics are especially noteworthy since, nationwide, researchers estimate that only half of these incidents are actually reported to the police (Dinkes et al. 2009).

In addition, research has linked violence to poor educational outcomes. Studies show that bullying and victimization make it more difficult for students to adjust to new schools (Craig 1998) and focus in the classroom (Wei and Williams 2004). Further, victimized students are reported to have lower grades and lower attendance than those who have not been victimized (Juvonen, Nishina, and Graham 2000), and students who witness violence are more likely to engage in violence (Albus, Weiss, and Perez-Smith 2004). Overall, not only do victimized children find themselves less attached to school (Cunningham 2007, Juvonen et al. 2000, Wei and Williams 2004), but violence in schools has been shown to have an aggregate impact, weakening the academic performance of all students in a school, not just those who are victimized (Barton, Coley, and Wenglinsky 1998). In response to these findings, school administrators across the country have designed and implemented a range of strategies to reduce violence, improve safety, and foster a comfortable learning environment for both students and staff, some of which are discussed below.

RESPONSES TO SCHOOL VIOLENCE

Since school violence is a complex problem that refers to a host of behaviors from verbal teasing to hitting to mass school shootings, responses to school violence have been diverse. Examples of school violence prevention activities include metal detectors, school cameras, cognitive-behavioral approaches, and afterschool programming. Research findings on the efficacy of each

[3] The references cited are inclusive of all schools—including public charter schools. Charter schools are fairly new and centralized reporting on charter schools has begun only recently. Annual statistics on charter schools tend to report on finances, governance, student and staff demographics, and student performance (see http://www.uscharterschools.org). However, there is some evidence that charter schools experience fewer safety and disciplinary problems than traditional public schools (see Christensen 2007).

of these strategies vary across intervention types, but some violence prevention efforts have become universally accepted. According to one study, 93 percent of high schools and middle schools use research-based violence prevention methods, identified as "best practices" (Crosse et al. 2001). These practices include restricted building access (Dinkes et al. 2009) and the implementation of conflict resolution programs (Brener et al. 2007, Sheley 2000). Nationally, the average high school engages in ten different violence prevention activities, including, in most schools, at least one nationally designed and marketed program (Cantor et al. 2001).

For example, the Safe Schools/Healthy Students (SS/HS) Initiative—a grant program established by the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services, Education, and Justice—has garnered national attention for its breadth and depth. The SS/HS Initiative encourages grantee schools to coordinate with local law enforcement to assess school conditions and establish safety plans, violence prevention curricula, and staff training programs. This Initiative provides a research-based intervention structure and the flexibility to adapt programming to individual school characteristics. Indeed, evaluation research has found that SS/HS participating schools saw a 15 percent drop in students participation in violence, a 12 percent decrease in students who witnessed or experienced violence, and 77 percent staff approval for SS/HS programs' effect on violence (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2009). The SS/HS Initiative is just one of the various means through which governmental and non-profit organizations have addressed school violence issues; others include the Safe and Drug-Free School Program, the National Resource Center for Safe Schools, the Hamilton Fish National Institute on School and Community Violence, and the What Works Clearinghouse of the Institute of Education Sciences.

The following section describes the violence prevention activities taking place at TMA and the logic behind these activities in terms of expected outputs and outcomes. These activities have been placed within a well-known classification system as a means to describe the research base supporting those activities. As previously mentioned, TMA's violence prevention approach is comprehensive. The research team has classified it within a previously-established taxonomy of school violence prevention activities, developed by Gottfredson, Gottfredson, Czeh, Cantor, Crosse, and Hantman (2004) to allow for a systematic evaluation of the prevention strategy. Gottfredson et al. (2004) established this classification system as part of the federally-funded National Study of Delinquency Prevention in Schools.[4] The study was conducted in the late 1990s and the findings were published in 2000. The classification scheme developed through this national study is used in the current analysis because of its depth and national recognition.[5]

VIOLENCE PREVENTION AT THURGOOD MARSHALL ACADEMY

Data collection for the assessment consisted of interviews with eighteen school stakeholders, including administrators and staff, a half dozen field observations during school hours and after school hours, and a review of program documents and records in May and June 2009. Based on

[4] The National Study of Delinquency Prevention in Schools was conducted to develop a comprehensive, national assessment of school violence and violence prevention activities. Data collection for the national study included: (1) examples of school violence prevention and intervention techniques to develop a comprehensive taxonomy of activities culled from information from government agencies, technical assistance providers, professional organizations, a review of literature, etc; (2) two surveys with a national probability sample of school principals to identify activities their schools had implemented to reduce delinquency, drug use, or other problem behavior or to promote a safe school; (3) surveys of individuals knowledgeable about school prevention activities in the sampled schools; and (4) student and teacher surveys in the sampled schools. For more information on the National Study of Delinquency Prevention in Schools, see http://www.gottfredson.com/national.htm

[5] Though the Gottfredson and colleagues taxonomy was originally published in 2000, the classification scheme used for this study draws on Gottfredson and colleagues' 2004 publication, since it is more parsimonious than previous iterations.

this information, figure 1 describes the activities taking place at TMA in the 2008–2009 school year in a logic model. The activities that TMA identified as part of their violence prevention model were both traditional and non-traditional. To create a safe learning environment, the TMA violence prevention activities included security cameras, security guards, and a police resource officer as well as activities that create a distinct school culture through daily supervised morning check-in and afternoon dismissal, a staffing structure that encourages wraparound support to address student needs, and a robust extracurricular program.

The co-founders of TMA opened the school under the philosophy that safety is an outcome of a high-achieving academic environment. The co-founders developed this philosophy after working at another school in a disadvantaged neighborhood with metal detectors and mandatory bag searches, which one co-founder contends fostered a school environment where students felt academic achievement was secondary. According to this co-founder, "if students are more invested in school, they won't sabotage it… Students have no time to misbehave if they're really into their education." While TMA has implemented a series of traditional violence prevention approaches, their view of violence prevention is broad, inclusive of activities that encourage and facilitate a high-achieving academic achievement. Therefore, each of the activities that stakeholders identified as increasing academic achievement and a positive school culture were included in the program logic model.

PROGRAM INPUTS

As shown in figure 1, TMA leverages resources among its faculty and staff as the primary inputs to their violence prevention model. Key staff in the violence prevention model include: an academic director; deans; a parent coordinator; program staff, including a program director, coordinator, and volunteer associates; a school counselor; a school resource officer; security guards; a summer prep coordinator; and teachers. These nine positions are key resources to the school's approach to violence prevention. Table 1 lists the key functions of these program inputs as well as the mechanism (in bold) by which long-term outcomes are achieved. All of the activities that are discussed in the description of the staff's function are described in the following section (*Categorization of Violence Prevention Activities*).

In addition to the staff investment, TMA has a physical security system that includes an alarm system and 25 cameras placed throughout the building. The alarm system is monitored by the security guards and alerts them when any door or window is opened in the building. The alarm system includes a digital video recorder to assist staff in reviewing incidents, as necessary. The security cameras are also monitored by the security guards and allow them to see all parts of the building, including stairways, hallways, and things in the immediate vicinity of the school grounds.

Figure 1. Thurgood Marshall Academy Violence Prevention Approach

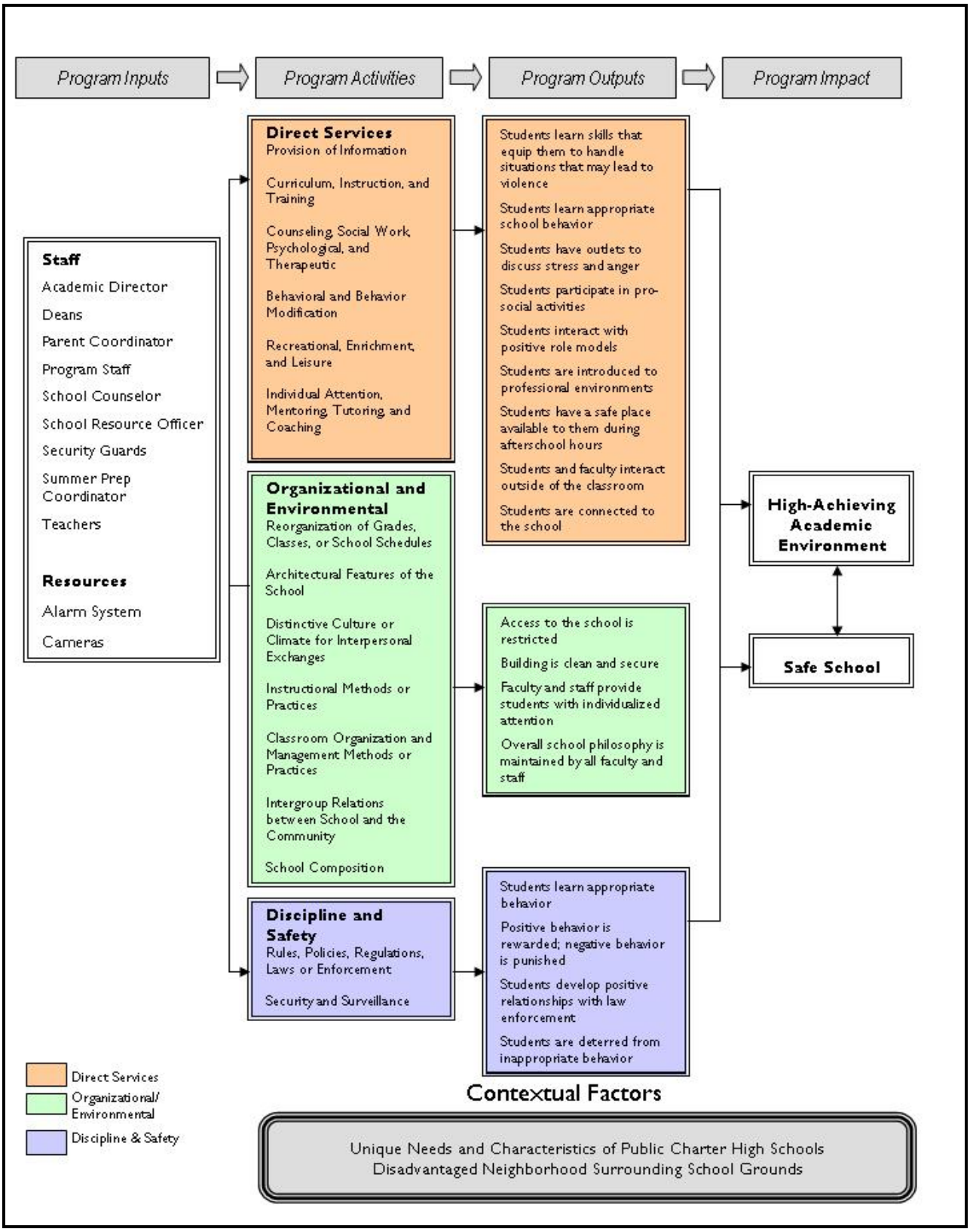

Table 1. Key Staff Inputs to the TMA Violence Prevention Model

Key Staff	Function
Academic Director	**Oversight.** There is one academic director employed at the school who oversees day-to-day school operations. The academic director also meets weekly with the deans on behavior contract cases, makes the final decision on the outcomes of all disciplinary hearings, welcomes the students at the beginning of each day (morning check-in), and dismisses students at the end of each day (afternoon dismissal).
Deans	**Support/Culture.** Three full-time deans support the teachers and students in an administrative capacity. Two deans serve one grade each, while another dean serves two grades. The deans welcome the students during morning check-in, dismiss students at afternoon dismissal and periodically check the nearby public transportation station. The deans are the primary facilitator of support or discipline for students—they administer the code of conduct, refer students to the school counselor as necessary, mediate situations between students and students and faculty formally and informally, and are the primary contact for family members. Deans may also interact with students' probation officers, as needed. A smaller dean-to-student ratio allows for more individualized attention.
Parent Coordinator	**Communication/Discipline.** There is one parent coordinator who acts as a liaison to the parents/guardians of TMA students, sending parents/guardians information such as newsletters and progress reports, notifying parents/guardians when a child is absent from school, and clarifying questions parents/guardians may have about school announcements, notifications or student requirements. The parent coordinator also manages detention, supervising youth under detention by providing structured work activities for students while in detention.
Program Staff	**Programming.** The school has a robust extracurricular program, which includes mandatory and voluntary programs. These activities are spearheaded by a full-time program director, coordinator, and three volunteer program associates, of whom each lead one or more mandatory and voluntary extracurricular programs.
School Counselor	**Counseling.** The school has a full-time clinical counselor that sees students on a referred and walk-in basis. The counselor is also available to the parents of TMA students.
School Resource Officer	**Security.** A resource officer from the District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Department is deployed at the school part-time. The officer responds to incidents occurring on campus and informs school staff (e.g., deans) when an incident takes place outside of school that involves a TMA student.
Security Guards	**Security.** One part-time and two full-time security guards monitor the school from 7:00am though 8:00pm every day, covering both the entire school day and afterschool activities. The security guards are staggered throughout the day and monitor the front desk and security cameras.
Summer Prep Coordinator	**Orientation.** The summer prep coordinator leads the Summer Prep Program, which is offered to incoming freshmen and sophomore students. The Summer Prep Program is intended to orient new students to the TMA culture, philosophy, and staff/faculty expectations for behavior. The Summer Prep Program is also used to orient students to college expectations and to improve their academic skills. It is the first occasion where TMA staff/faculty interact with incoming students.
Teachers	**Culture.** Teachers are part of TMA programming and part of the overall discipline code enforcement—they administer detentions and infraction and merit points. Teachers maintain office hours and are in the hallways as students walk to classes between periods. Teachers participate in advisory lessons.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

Through the nine key staff positions and physical security system, there are a myriad of activities as part of the violence prevention model at TMA. These activities are discussed in a subsequent section, where they are categorized according to the previously discussed classification scheme developed by Gottfredson et al. (2004). In summary, TMA is engaged in activities that are directed toward: the provision of direct services to students, families, and staff; the organizational and environmental arrangements of the school; and the discipline and safety management techniques employed at the school. In the following section, each of the TMA activities that fall within these broad categories is discussed as well as the research base underlying their utility in an overall violence prevention model. While the primary beneficiaries of the violence prevention activities are the students and faculty/staff, parents of TMA students and the community may also reap secondary benefits. However, parents/guardians and community residents are far less engaged in the TMA activities than the students and faculty/staff.

PROGRAM IMPACT

The two primary long-term outcomes of the violence prevention activities at TMA are a high-achieving academic environment among students and a safe school for students, faculty, and staff. As mentioned previously, the TMA stakeholders that developed the violence prevention program see school safety as an outcome of a high-achieving academic environment. It is also possible that a safe school leads to a high-achieving academic environment. Therefore, the logic of the violence prevention model includes both of these outcomes in a bi-directional relationship. The success of the violence prevention activities in meeting these two long-term goals is related to two important contextual factors: the unique needs and characteristics of public charter high schools and the disadvantaged neighborhood that surrounds the school grounds.

While the assessment conducted by UI cannot establish a causal relationship between the violence prevention model and the two long-term goals empirically, TMA's administrative records demonstrate some success. As discussed in the beginning section, TMA is achieving its academic goals. As it relates to school safety, school stakeholders suggest that the school is indeed safe, which is supported by results from the student and faculty surveys discussed in a subsequent section. The majority of incidents that occur with and between TMA students, stakeholders contend, occur off school grounds, often with TMA students as the victims. Incidents of violence with and between TMA students have been reported to occur at the corner store, in the neighborhood, and the nearby public transportation station. The school has been responsive to these incidents as the violence prevention approach extends beyond the school walls. According to TMA reports to the public charter school board, there were nine incidents in which an actual fight or an incident that could escalate into a fight between students occurred in the 2008–2009 school year. The nine students involved in these incidents were the only students expelled during the 2008–2009 school year (TMA has a zero-tolerance policy for fighting—discussed below). There were only three physical assaults.

CATEGORIZATION OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

Gottfredson et al.'s (2004) classification scheme breaks school prevention activities into three broad categories: direct services to students, families, and staff—including interventions such as community service and peer mediation intended to prevent certain behaviors and promote order in school; organizational or environmental arrangements of the school—including interventions such as the use of architectural and/or structural arrangements to prevent certain behavior and promote order; and discipline or safety management techniques—including interventions such as rules and procedures to prevent and punish certain behaviors (see Gottfredson et al. (2000) for more information). Within each of the three broad categories of violence prevention activities, a description of the TMA activities that fall into that category is listed and the research evidence supporting this prevention strategy is offered (tables 2, 3, and 4). Each activity is listed in only one category, for parsimony, though several may serve multiple functions.

DIRECT SERVICES TO STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND STAFF

Gottfredson and colleagues (2004) discuss eight sub-categories of activities that fall into the direct services category, including: provision of information; curriculum, instruction, and training; counseling, social work, psychological, and therapeutic interventions; behavioral and behavior modification interventions; recreational, enrichment, and leisure activities; individual attention, mentoring, tutoring, and coaching; services to families; and treatment and prevention interventions for administrators, faculty, or staff.

Table 2. Categorization of TMAs Direct Services to Students, Families, and Staff Activities

Category	TMA Activity
Provision of Information	Wall Postings of Conduct Code Student and Family Handbook
Curriculum, Instruction, and Training	Summer Prep Program Advisory Lessons Discipline Classes
Counseling, Social Work, Psychological, and Therapeutic Interventions	Counseling Services
Behavioral and Behavior Modification Interventions	Success Sheets Merit and Infraction Point System
Recreational, Enrichment, and Leisure Activities	General Afterschool Programs and Clubs Athletics
Individual Attention, Mentoring, Tutoring, and Coaching	Homework Help Mentoring Program Law Firm Tutoring Law Day Job Shadow Day
Services to Families	.
Treatment and Prevention Interventions for Administrators, Faculty, or Staff	.

As shown in table 2, the majority of TMA activities that fall into the category of direct services to students, families, and staff, are focused on: individual attention, mentoring, tutoring, and coaching; and curriculum, instruction, or training. According to discussions with school stakeholders, field observations of the school, and a review of programmatic materials, there were few activities with the primary purpose of providing direct services to families or treatment and prevention interventions for administrators, faculty, and staff. The following is a brief description of each activity listed in table 2 and its primary objective.

Provision of Information

- *Wall Postings of the Code of Conduct.* Throughout the school, TMA staff has placed posters on the walls that list the behaviors that are not acceptable by school standards, including gum chewing, fighting, and grooming. Abbreviated lists of activities that are not acceptable according to the code of conduct, considered "no brainers", are posted in every classroom.
- *Student and Family Handbook.* The handbook is a comprehensive list of TMA rules and guidelines.

These two examples of the provision of information are geared toward all students who are enrolled in TMA. Since the information is displayed clearly and is readily available to all students, every student has the same understanding of the rules governing conduct. The primary function of each activity is to provide information on what school stakeholders consider appropriate behavior and to provide a clear delineation of the rules that govern that behavior. These activities are intended to provide a direct service to students mainly and to parents/guardians secondarily (through the student and family handbook, in particular). These techniques are similar to those employed in other schools. In a nationally representative sample conducted during the 1996–1997 school year, 97 percent of surveyed high schools and 100 percent of the surveyed "problem" high schools used techniques similar to those of TMA to provide information, such as posters and wall hangings (Crosse et al. 2001).

Curriculum, Instruction, and Training

- *Summer Prep Program.* Incoming 9th and 10th grade students participate in a five-week program during the summer to learn about the discipline code, general TMA policies, and school culture. The Summer Prep Program is also used to provide students with an orientation to college expectations and to improve their academic skills. Teachers can use the Summer Prep Program as an opportunity to establish a rapport with students before the school year begins by participating in the program.
- *Advisory Lessons*. Advisory lessons are held during school with groups of students once per week from 3:00 to 4:00pm. Every student participates in advisory lessons. The lessons include team building exercises, individual guidance, and enrichment. Advisory lessons are also used to help students develop their portfolios. Portfolios are a compilation of students' achievements throughout the year, used to prepare for their advancement to the next grade. At the end of the year, students give an oral presentation of their portfolio to three selected adults and one parent. The portfolio includes a graphical presentation of the student's pattern of infraction and merit points and a reflection on the pattern. The portfolio presentations are intended to help students prepare for college.
- *Discipline Classes*. Discipline classes are held after school for approximately ninety minutes and cover conflict resolution, stress management, defense mechanisms, and self-esteem. The

classes can be used to reduce infraction points. They are mandatory for students who have received a certain number of infraction points.

The prevention curriculum, instruction, and training classes' primary function is to provide all students with the skills to avoid violent behavior through mediation, guidance, and stress management. In addition, the prevention curriculum, instruction, and training classes are intended to increase students' skill at recognizing and responding to situations in a non-violent manner. These activities provide direct services to students primarily and direct services to teachers secondarily. In addition, the prevention curriculum, instruction, and training seek to provide cognitive-behavioral techniques to deal with potentially volatile situations (e.g., discipline classes). Studies have shown that programs that teach social skills (Cunningham 1999, Derzon, Wilson, and Cunningham 1999, Hamilton Fish Institute 1999, Sprague 2007), conflict resolution (Crawford and Bodine 2001, Hamilton Fish Institute 1999, Sprague 2007), and communication skills (Hamilton Fish Institute 1999) are effective ways to reduce violence. Further, studies and meta-analyses have shown that cognitive-behavioral techniques are effective ways to reduce aggression and problem behavior among youth (Armelius and Andreassen 2007, Gottfredson et al. 2000). However, many of these studies are focused on students in elementary or middle school, not students in high school.

Counseling, Social Work, Psychological, and Therapeutic Interventions

- *Counseling Services*. A licensed clinical social worker provides counseling services to students on a referral basis. Appointments with the counselor are also available on a walk-in basis. The counseling sessions cover a range of issues that occur inside and outside of school such as academic problems, family issues, stress, and peer conflicts. Counseling is available on an emergency and on-going basis. The counselor is available to TMA parents/guardians as well.

According to the school stakeholders, the students use the school counselor often. However, very few parents use the counseling service. For some students, counseling is part of their formal individualized educational plan. The counseling resource functions to provide counseling to students primarily and parents secondarily. Researchers have suggested that a comprehensive counseling program is a necessary requisite of keeping schools safe (Nims 2000). In 2006, 79 percent of all schools had at least one school counselor on staff to provide services to students, and 42 percent of those schools kept a social worker on staff for that purpose (Brener et al. 2007). Osher and Warger (1998) suggest that one of the most important roles of a counselor is to incorporate research-based programs, monitoring, and evaluation techniques in the school's practices. In doing so, counselors shape the school environment and improve student safety and behavior and the performance and perception of the school (Lapan, Gysbers, and Sun 1997).

Behavioral and Behavior Modification Interventions

- *Success Sheets*. Once a student is at risk for more serious disciplinary consequences, he or she is required to use success sheets to track his or her daily behavior. The success sheets track target behaviors (e.g. prepared with class materials, followed rules, on time to class) during each class period and allow teachers to check off whether each behavior was fulfilled or not. Teachers complete and sign the success sheets each day and the student's parent/guardian must sign and return it to the dean. If the student's behavior is deemed unacceptable while using the success sheets, more serious disciplinary measures are considered (e.g., behavior contract).

- *Merit and Infraction Point System.* A system of infraction and merit points is used to track the status of a student's behavior. Students receive one infraction point for every detention or uniform violation, three infraction points for every in-school suspension (ISS), and four infraction points for every out-of-school suspension (OSS). When students receive more than ten infraction points, they are required to attend a three-hour discipline class. Students must have less than twenty infraction points to progress to the next grade. Students' positive behaviors are rewarded with merit points: one merit point is equivalent to 0.25 infraction points. Students receive merit points for acts of democracy, excellence, community, or other positive behaviors. Some student merits are recognized on video monitors in the front hallway of the school (e.g., attendance, college admission) and TMA administrators offer various awards for academic achievement, civic involvement, and resilience. Students track and reflect on their behavior by graphing the pattern of their merit and infraction points during advisory lessons.

The most successful violence prevention programs tend to be ones that use cognitive-behavioral techniques to teach "social competence" (Gottfredson et al. 2000). These types of programs teach skills and model behavior to help develop socially appropriate responses to difficult situations. They include constructive rewards and incentives. Notably, TMA's discipline code, merit and infraction point system, and behavior contract create a structure for incentivizing positive behavior and dis-incentivizing negative behavior following a behavioral modification model. TMAs rewards for positive behavior (e.g., merit points) are especially important because many researchers have argued that positive reinforcement is more important for, and more effective in, improving student behavior (see Sugai and Horner 2002 for a review).

Recreational, Enrichment, and Leisure Activities

- *General Afterschool Programs and Clubs*. Extracurricular activities meet at least once a week after school. Available clubs change annually, according to student interest. Recent clubs have included: Green/Environmental Club, Debate Club, and Teen Action Club. Students are provided with snacks during afterschool activities.
- *Athletics*. Similar to the other afterschool program and clubs, athletics are subject to student interest. Recent examples of athletic teams have included flag football, basketball, and cheerleading.

TMA is a relatively new school; therefore, the afternoon program is in development. The school opened its gym facility in fall 2009, with intentions to expand the number of afterschool programs and athletic activities to students. The afterschool programs and clubs and athletics activities provide students with recreational, enrichment, and leisure activities primarily. Secondarily, they provide students with a safe space to be during afterschool hours.

Afterschool programs have developed in response to the statistics showing that most juvenile crime occurs in the hours immediately following school dismissal (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention 1999). Yet, similar to the afterschool programs at TMA, afterschool programs are extremely diverse across the nation, which hinders a synthesis of the research findings across individual programs (Harvard Family Research Project 1999). Some studies have found positive benefits for afterschool recreational programs whereas other studies have found no positive effects. For example, Catalano and colleagues (1999) argue that afterschool recreation programs provide opportunities for more prosocial interaction among students. Gottfredson and colleagues (2004) suggest that afterschool programs help keep students

supervised and engaged in structured activities during a high-risk period for juvenile crime (e.g., 3:00-5:00pm), and programs that include instruction on social skills and character development are particularly beneficial. Yet, Catalano and colleagues (1999) find that programs that function for the purposes of recreation or leisure solely are not beneficial. Others have found little or deleterious effects of afterschool activities. For example, Baker and Witt (1996) found little evidence that afterschool programs reduce youth criminal activity and Mahoney et al. (2000) found evidence that recreation programs increase antisocial behavior among youth by joining high-risk youth together.

Afterschool programs that have had successful violence prevention outcomes have common elements, including: goal setting and strong management; quality staff; low staff-to-student ratios; attention to safety, health, and nutrition; effective partnerships with community-based, law enforcement, and juvenile justice organizations and agencies; strong family involvement; coordinated learning with the regular school day; and linkages between school-day teachers and after-school personnel (Pederson et al. 1999).

Individual Attention, Mentoring, Tutoring, and Coaching

- *Homework Help*. Afterschool tutoring is held five days a week in the library and supervised by at least one of the program staff, the librarian, and three teachers. During this time, the students are able to use the school computers and ask for assistance with homework.
- *Mentoring Program*. 10th grade students who choose to participate in the Mentoring Program are matched with a trained volunteer mentor. In addition to speaking weekly, mentors and mentees meet during monthly Mentor Days and one other monthly outing. Mentors are trained on behavior management techniques.
- *Law Firm Tutoring*. All 11th grade students visit one of six participating law firms on Tuesday evenings to have dinner, tutoring, and to develop a mentoring relationship with volunteers from the law firms. Tutors are trained on the school discipline code and behavior management techniques. Students receive a pass/fail grade for the tutoring program.
- *Law Day*. All 9th students participate in Law Day once a month, which includes a field trip to a law firm to attend workshops on legal topics such as discrimination, bargaining/negotiation, criminal trials, and civil trials.
- *Job Shadow Day*. All 10th grade students observe a professional for one day in their career area.

At TMA, some programs are mandatory while others are voluntary. Law Firm Tutoring, Law Day, and Job Shadow Day are mandatory programs while the Homework Help and Mentoring Program are voluntary programs. These programs function to provide individual attention, mentoring, tutoring, and coaching to students primarily; they also give students a safe space to be during afterschool hours. As discussed in the previous section, the diversity in school programming makes it difficult to compare outcomes across the type of programming (Harvard Family Research Project 2006). Yet, research on afterschool programs has linked these programs to improved academic outcomes (Harvard Family Research Project 2006, Lauer et al. 2004) and psychosocial development (Harvard Family Research Project 2006). Several studies have also shown that afterschool programs can decrease juvenile crime and youth participation in risky behaviors, the type which often leads to violence (Fox and Newman 1997, Pederson et al. 1999). Mentoring and tutoring are expected to assist youth through forming attachments to positive

adult role models and to assist in academic achievement. In general, research has shown promising findings for mentoring programs' impact on delinquent behavior (see Tolan et al. 2008 for a review).

One factor missing from TMA's approach to violence prevention is direct services to teachers and families. While the counseling service is available to parents, it does not appear that parents are using this service. Furthermore, the counseling service is not targeted to parents. Evidence suggests that family services are critical in improving student behavior at school. A large and growing body of literature spanning several disciplines has implicated family aggression, instability, and dysfunction as major contributors to student school aggression and delinquency, along with a host of other negative school-related outcomes (see Gerrard 2008 for a review).

ORGANIZATIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ARRANGEMENTS

Gottfredson and colleagues (2004) discuss nine sub-categories that fall into the organizational and environmental arrangements category, to include: reorganization of grades, classes, or school schedules; architectural features of the school; use of external personnel resources in the classroom; distinctive culture or climate for interpersonal exchanges; instructional methods or practices; classroom organization and management methods or practices; school planning structure or process; intergroup relations or interaction between school and community; and school composition.

Table 3. Categorization of TMAs Organizational and Environmental Arrangement Activities

Category	TMA Activity
Reorganization of Grades, Classes, or School Schedules	Locker/Classroom Placement
Architectural Features of the School	Clean Facility and Abundant Windows Fence Single, Secure Entrance
Use of External Personnel Resources in the Classroom	.
Distinctive Culture or Climate for Interpersonal Exchanges	School Size Morning Check-in Afternoon Dismissal
Instructional Methods or Practices	Data-driven Instruction Experiential Teaching Teaching Academy
Classroom Organization and Management Methods or Practices	Behavior Management Techniques in the Classroom
School Planning Structure or Process	.
Intergroup Relations or Interaction between School and Community	Anti-Defamation League Program Community Service
School Composition	Extensive Participation Requirements and Application Process for Entry

As demonstrated in table 3, most of the activities that TMA has implemented within this category are focused on: architectural features of the school; creating a distinctive culture or climate for interpersonal exchanges; and instructional methods or practices. The stakeholders did not identify the use of external personnel resources in the classroom as primary components of their violence prevention strategy or the school planning structure or process. The following is a brief description of each activity listed in the table above and its primary objective.

Reorganization of Grades, Classes, or School Schedules

- *Locker/Classroom Placement*. Classrooms and lockers for each grade are contained on the same floor, where the upperclassmen and lowerclassmen have classrooms and lockers on separate floors.

Teachers monitor the hallways between periods; therefore, the purposeful organization of lockers and classrooms by grade allows for improved monitoring. Further, students have no reason to leave their respective floor between classes and remain under the supervision of their teachers.

Architectural Features of the School

- *Clean Facility and Abundant Windows*. The building facility and the grounds around the building are clean and well lit. Stairways and hallways are free of clutter and debris and allow students to flow without frequently bumping into each other. There is no graffiti inside the school or on the walls outside the school building.
- *Fence*. A fence surrounds the school with an opening that leads to the front entrance.
- *Single, Secure Entrance*. There is only one entrance into the building, which is locked and maintained by a security guard.

The primary function of these activities is to create a positive environment for students and faculty. The students learn that the school administrators are serious about safety, the upkeep of the physical building, and keeping individuals who are not part of the student/faculty body out of the school. The bulk of research on physical school design is built on the premise of "undefined public space" (Astor and Meyer 2001). Undefined public spaces are not seen as anyone's responsibility to monitor, and so violence tends to cluster in these areas. Newman (1972), who developed the concept of undefined space, has advocated for the importance of open, well lit, clearly visible, and well-defined space to improve monitoring of these locations and to create a concept of openness in individuals' minds. These ends are served by secure grounds and abundant windows within TMA and supported by the purposeful placement of the lockers and classrooms by grade. The openness and security fosters comfort among potential victims and signals an increased risk of detection by potential offenders (Newman 1996).

Distinctive Culture of Climate for Interpersonal Exchanges

- *School Size*. The school consists of 375 students with 60 staff, which allows for a culture where teachers and staff know every student by name and vice versa, regardless of class. The school size also keeps the student-to-dean ratio small, so deans have the ability to know the students well.
- *Morning Check-In*. The deans and the academic director greet students at the front door as they enter school each day.

- *Afternoon Dismissal*. The deans and the academic director stand at the school doors as students are dismissed at the end of each day.

TMA is a small school, which creates an environment where every student is known by all of the faculty and staff. It also facilitates an environment that allows for comprehensive support services for students who need help—that is, by administrative staff, teachers, deans, and specialty staff members, such as the school counselor or school resource officer. Small schools like TMA tend to be more conducive to academic achievement (Wasley et al. 2000, see Duke et al. 2009 and Stevenson 2006 for review). Of public schools with less than 300 students, approximately 64 percent experienced some violent crime during the 2007-2008 school year compared to 77 percent of schools with 300-500 students, 82 percent with 500-1000 students, and 96 percent with more than 1000 students (Dinkes et al. 2009). In a study commissioned by the New Jersey Legislature, Harrison (2003) found that even after controlling for a range of school-level characteristics including race, percentage of students who are low-income, location within the county, and spending per pupil, school size played a significant role in predicting school violence.

In a summary of extant research, McRobbie (2001) points to seven channels through which small schools are more advantageous compared to larger ones, by fostering: stronger personal bonds with students and teachers; greater parental and community involvement; greater staff focus, communication, and cooperation; more professional development and instructional goals among teachers; greater teacher satisfaction; more effective accountability among teachers, parents, and students; and promoting higher aspirations and expectations. Klonsky (2002) argues that the most important channel through which small schools decrease violence is by eliminating anonymity among students and fostering close relationships among students and between students and faculty. These informal social bonds are often argued to be more effective than hard security measures like security cameras and metal detectors at preventing violence (Garbarino 2005, Klonsky 2002, Meier 1996).

In one of the most cited studies on small schools, Cotton (1996) reviewed fourteen studies connecting school size to a wide range of social and behavioral problems and found that all fourteen studies showed positive effects of school size on behavioral outcomes, including aggressive behavior, theft, and gang participation. While some research has questioned the magnitude of the benefit of small schools (Duke et al. 2009, Johnson 2002, Stevenson 2006), most contend that small schools reduce violence (Cotton 2001, Duke et al. 2009, Gladden 1998, Jimerson 2006, McRobbie 2001, Vander Ark 2002). The academic benefits of a small school size may be even stronger for students of a low socioeconomic background (Cotton 1996, Johnson, Howley, and Howley 2002) and among schools with a large percentage of African-American students (Howley and Bickel 1999, Lee and Smith 1997, McRobbie 2001). Some of the benefits of small schools are small classrooms, of course, a relationship that is difficult to disentangle meaningfully (Barton et al. 1998, Duke et al. 2009).

Instructional Methods or Practice

- *Data-Driven Instruction*. TMA teachers use internal assessments to organize lesson planning and improve student achievement.
- *Experiential Teaching***.** TMA uses various forms of experiential teaching, including field trips and mock trials to improve student achievement.

- *Teaching Academy*. Yearly, all teachers participate in a training workshop intended to develop teachers' use of assertive discipline techniques, motivational techniques, and other skills.

Since the research team was unable to observe classroom teaching during the study period and the classroom techniques were not identified as strong components of the violence prevention model by the school stakeholders, this report will not cover the areas of instructional methods or practice or classroom organization and management (below) in detail. However, academic achievement, theoretically enhanced by effective instruction, is an important factor for youth violence (Hawkins et al. 2000).

Classroom Organization and Management Methods or Practices

- *Behavioral Management Techniques in the Classroom*. Teachers are encouraged to use behavior management techniques in the classroom. Posters are located in each classroom to inform students of the different levels of behavior problems and the specified response.

Behavior modification is most effective when consistently applied in all environments (Elder et al. 2007, Henggeler, Shoenwald, and Pickrel 1995). TMA practices effective behavior modification by encouraging teachers to integrate behavioral modification strategies within the classroom environment.

Intergroup Relations or Interaction between School and Community

- *Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Program*. ADL is a student club where students learn leadership skills and how to facilitate workshops on prejudice and stereotypes. The club meets once per week following an introductory training session at the beginning of the school year. Some sessions are facilitated by peers.
- *Community Service*. All TMA students are required to do a number of community service hours each school year. Volunteering opportunities are offered through the Teen Action afterschool club. The number of required community service hours increases with grade level.

The ADL Program is voluntary, while community service is mandatory. The primary function of each of these activities is to better intergroup relations among students and the interaction between the school and the community. A secondary function of these activities is to provide individual attention, mentoring, tutoring and coaching and recreation, enrichment or leisure for students. A rigorous study of the ADL's school prejudice program found that the program effectively increased student awareness of prejudice and its negative effects and student action in intervening and preventing bullying (Paluck and Green 2006, see Banks and Banks 2010 for a more general overview of multicultural education). This is important since research suggests that an improved school climate is necessary for anti-violence programs to succeed (Howard, Flora, and Griffin 1999, Johnson 2009). Community service has also been shown to reduce violence by providing emotional support for students and enhancing their intellectual, psychological and moral development (Kinsley, Southworth, and Boston 1999).

School Composition

- *Extensive Participation Requirements and Application Process for Entry*. Students are required to complete an application for admission to TMA, although admission is guaranteed if a student graduated from a middle school. Admission is on a first-come, first-served basis.

In applying to TMA, students have to agree to participate in additional activities required by the school, such as law firm tutoring and advisory lessons.

While the application process is not used for admissions selectivity, it has the potential to alter the school's composition. The application process ensures that the students and their parents understand TMA's mission, educational approach, and expectations of students.

DISCIPLINE AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT

Lastly, Gottfredson, and colleagues (2004) discuss three sub-categories that fall into the discipline and safety management category, to include: rules, policies, regulations, laws, or enforcement; security and surveillance; and youth roles in regulating and responding to student conduct. As demonstrated in table 4, most of the activities that TMA has implemented within this category are focused on security and surveillance and rules, policies, and regulations rather than on youth roles for regulating and responding to student conflict.

Table 4. Categorization of TMAs Discipline and Safety Management Activities

Category	TMA Activity
Rules, Policies, Regulations, Law or Enforcement	Graduated Sanctions Discipline Code Anti-violence Contract Behavior Contract Discipline Hearings
Security and Surveillance	Front Desk Check-In Monitoring between Class Periods and Lunch Public Transportation Station Monitoring Random Searches
Youth Roles in Regulating and Responding to Student Conduct	.

Rules, Policies, Regulations, Law or Enforcement

- *Graduated Sanctions*. Students receive punishments of increasing severity for discipline problems, including detention, ISS, OSS, behavior contracts, required discipline classes, discipline hearings, and expulsion.
- *Discipline Code*. Discipline rules are outlined in the student handbook and on various postings throughout school. The code includes a consistent set of rules to impose sanctions on students for certain behaviors. Students may receive a variety of punishments for misbehavior, including detention, ISS, OSS, behavior contracts, required discipline classes, discipline hearings, and expulsion. Any faculty or staff member can give a student a detention; only deans give out ISS or OSS. The discipline code applies when a student is at school as well as when they are on their way to or from school or the public transportation station. The school has established clear, consistent, and certain consequences for any behavior that leads to violence; students will definitely receive punishment for certain behaviors.

- *Anti-Violence Contract*. Students sign an anti-violence contract at the time of enrollment to demonstrate that they understand what is written in the discipline code and will adhere to its rules.
- *Behavior Contract*. Students are placed on a behavior contract if they have not changed their behavior after being required to take discipline classes and to use success sheets. The behavior contract lists the offenses that violate the contract. Failure to adhere to the rules outlined in the contract may result in expulsion. The contract is signed by the students, their parent/guardian and dean.
- *Discipline Hearings*. Discipline hearings are held in cases of academic dishonesty, repeated minor discipline problems, moderate discipline problems, and violations of anti-violence and behavior contracts. Three members of the school staff serve on a panel while the student's dean, a student advocate, and the student's parent/guardian present their understanding of the situation and the student. The panel determines the consequences of the student's behavior. The student has the right to appeal the decision.

The school has a robust discipline system that includes specific rules regarding acceptable and unacceptable student behavior. The primary function of the aforementioned activities is to provide a system of rules and policies governing behavior. The system of graduated sanctions and the merit and infraction point system discussed previously are also forms of behavioral modification. In a study comparing schools' disciplinary practices to the field's recommended best practices, Gottfredson and colleagues (2000) determined that 90 percent of schools were using inadequate discipline practices. While almost all schools displayed adequate practices regarding the communication of rules and the documentation of rule violations, very few schools use a wide range of responses to misconduct or apply positive rewards for desirable behavior (Gottfredson et al. 2000). According to the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice (2000), disciplinary rules should be clear and enforced consistently. Further, research shows that it is beneficial to have a range of both punitive and non-punitive consequences for behavior (Hutton and Bailey 2007). However, the issue of disciplinary responses to more severe behavioral issues has become a controversial issue in the education field. Suspension rates have increased over time, and it is unclear whether this increase is due to a rise in problem behavior or due to stricter disciplinary policies (U.S. Departments of Education and Justice 2000). Research suggests that more serious responses to discipline problems such as expulsion should include a formal due process such as notices sent to students and parents, appeal hearings, right to representation, and the opportunity to examine witnesses (Hutton and Bailey 2007). The disciplinary hearing process employed by TMA aligns with this recommendation.

Security and Surveillance

- *Front Desk Check-In*. Students must check in with the front desk using their identification card every morning when entering the school building. All visitors and guests to TMA must check in and out with the front desk security guard. Visitors are given name badges while they are in the building.
- *Monitoring between Class Periods and Lunch*. Teachers stand in hallways during passing periods, and program staff and deans monitor lunch periods.

- *Public Transportation Station Monitoring*. A public transportation station is located directly across the street from the school. Deans often monitor the public transportation station after school dismissal to prevent incidents.
- *Random Searches*. Random, unannounced searches occur periodically throughout the school year.

The primary function of these six activities is security and surveillance. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the most common security strategy in public schools during the 2007–2008 school year was controlling access to the building (85 percent), followed by the use of badges by teachers and staff (48 percent) (Dinkes et al. 2009). Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) has become an increasingly common method for reducing violence behavior among children and other populations (Sprague 2007). Examples of this approach include the use of security cameras, two-way communication systems, and instituting a closed campus. The use of a school resource officer (SRO) is another common strategy to prevent violence in schools; there were more than 6,700 full-time SROs around the country in 2000 (BJS 2000).

By the 2007–2008 school year, the prevalence of security cameras had more than doubled since 1999 and 43 percent of all public schools (70 percent of all high schools) were using security cameras. In contrast, only 5 percent of schools were using metal detectors and only 1 percent used metal detectors daily. Metal detectors are more commonly used in urban schools, where approximately 10 percent of all urban schools use metal detectors occasionally and approximately 4 percent use them daily. Rural schools are more likely to use dogs as a security measure to search for drugs (Dinkes et al. 2009). Estimates for the use of security cameras specifically among urban schools are not available.

Despite the widespread expansion of security measures in the last decade, little research has been done on their effectiveness in improving school safety (Addington 2009, Brown 2005, Garcia 2003, Sugai and Horner 2002). In fact, Shreck and colleagues (2003) found that guards, metal detectors, hallway supervision, or drug education were significantly related to more victimization within schools among high school and middle school students. A study of New York City high school students found that students in schools with metal detectors were less likely to report carrying a weapon in school than students from schools without metal detectors (Catalano et al. 1999). However, this effect did not extend outside of school where students were equally likely to carry weapons, whether or not they attended a school with a metal detector.

Mayer and Leone (1999) find that "hard" school security measures, including both physical tools (metal detectors, door locks, etc.) and personnel-based techniques (guards, faculty supervision, etc.), actually contribute to school disorder. While some argue that this finding is a reflection of the fact that more disorderly schools are more likely to implement these security measures, the authors draw on a long list of references to suggest that heightened security measures create a "prison-like" environment that is more conducive to disorder, misconduct, and violence. On the other hand, the authors find that greater awareness of school rules and policies, along with increased perceived consistency of rules and consequences, significantly improves order and reduces violence. These findings suggest that building and population security measures may do more harm than good, while "soft" measures like effective communication and consistent school rules may be the key to reducing school violence. Similar arguments for the importance of a

healthy, positive, pro-social school atmosphere in preventing violence can be found in Johnson (2009) and Sugai and Horner (2002).

Other research has examined perceptions of hard security measures. Many schools have chosen to form partnerships with security and law enforcement personnel as a potential solution to school violence. During the 2007–2008 school year, nearly half (45 percent) of schools used security or police officers on a regular basis (Dinkes et al. 2009). Security and police personnel were more common in high schools, urban schools, and schools with higher levels of crimes than other types of schools. SROs are thought to be effective at improving school safety by both students (McDevitt and Panniello 2005) and school principals (May, Fessel, and Means 2004). Findings suggest that some of the most important elements for schools to maximize the efficiency and efficacy of their SRO include clearly defining their specific responsibilities; establishing a detailed SRO training program before new SROs start; and forming clear channels of communication and cooperation between SROs, teachers, and parents (Finn and McDevitt 2005). A crisis or emergency plan is another important security tool for schools (Sprague 2007).

The only discipline and safety management technique not employed by TMA is the inclusion of youth in student conflict regulation and response. This is important because research on peer mediation programs, designed to get students involved in resolving student problems, is conclusive. Well-implemented peer mediation improves student understanding of the effects of bullying (Johnson and Johnson 1996, Paluck and Green 2006, Powell, Muir-McClain, and Halasyamani 1995). This, in concert with skills taught in mediator training, leads students to get involved in constructive ways that maintain student relationships while improving the school atmosphere and preventing and intervening in violent behavior (Caruthers and Sweeney 1996; Johnson and Johnson 1996). These results have been consistent in both qualitative (Nix and Hale 2007) and quantitative (Smith et al. 2002) research. A systematic review of 43 quantitative studies revealed that 93 percent indicated positive effects of peer mediation, with an average estimated reduction of 68 percent in school violence (Burrell, Zirben, and Allen 2003). Importantly, some research suggests that peer mediation can be even more effective in the context of school-wide intervention strategies (O'Connell, Pepler, and Craig 1999); that is, in a context like that of TMA.

STUDENT SURVEYS[6]

The conclusion section offers recommendations for how TMA can alter or focus their violence prevention strategies based on reviews of best and promising practices. Before turning to that discussion, this section presents data based on a survey of students enrolled and faculty employed during the 2008–2009 school year. Surveys covered their perceptions of the school, the neighborhood, and TMA's violence prevention activities to provide a more contextual review of the students and faculty and their experiences and perceptions of violence and safety.

The paper-and-pencil student surveys were administered to the entire student body—grades nine through twelve—during one of their lunch periods in May 2009.[7] The surveys were anonymous to the faculty, staff, and research team. Students were not asked to provide any identifying

[6] The checklists for the student surveys include: parent/community involvement checklist; discipline policy checklist; school climate checklist; school crime and violence reporting/monitoring checklist; school safety and security checklist; crisis management checklist; at-risk student assessment and referral checklist; student resources checklist; and information sharing checklist.

[7] Surveys were administered to those students whose parents consented for them to participate in the survey.

information on their survey responses. Two hundred and twenty-five students (n=225)[8] consented to participate in the research and returned the surveys, out of a total of 375 enrolled during the 2008–2009 school year, representing a 60 percent response rate of the entire school.[9] Of the students who were present on the day of the surveys, 71 percent returned the surveys. With the exception of the sociodemographic questions, all of the following questions were asked on a scale of one to five where one corresponded with "strongly disagree" or "never" and five corresponded with "strongly agree" or "often." The categories between those two extremes were not named in the surveys. In all cases where these scales were used, we grouped the one and two response categories to form the "disagree" or "rarely" category and the four and five response categories to form the "agree" or "often" category in the following tables. The middle response category, three, equates to "sometimes," "neutral," or "moderate" in the following tables.

SOCIODEMOGRAPHICS

About half of the students who responded to the survey were male (51 percent). The majority of the students responding were 15 (21 percent), 16 (23 percent), or 17 (25 percent) years old at the time of the survey. As for the grade distribution, 29 percent were in the 9th grade, 16 percent were in the tenth grade, 30 percent were in the eleventh grade, and 24 percent were in the twelfth grade. The overwhelming majority (88 percent) of the students self-identified as Black or African-American and another 8 percent responded identified as being two or more races. At the time of the survey, most students were living with their mother (82 percent); fewer were living with their father (19 percent) or grandmother (19 percent). When asked what kinds of grades they have received during the current school year across all subjects, most responded that they had received B's (50 percent) or C's (41 percent).

PERCEPTIONS OF NEIGHBORHOOD DISORDER

Since the majority of TMA students come from historically disadvantaged sections of Washington, D.C., the survey included questions about their experiences with disorder and violence. This information helps contextualize the potential impact the TMA violence prevention activities had on its students. Indeed, TMA students have been exposed to violence and disorder in their home or neighborhood frequently (table 5) as evidenced by the proportion of students that *often* see gangs in the neighborhood (54 percent), see drug deals (55 percent), see someone being beaten up (60 percent), hear gun shots (61 percent), and see someone arrested (70 percent). While nearly half of students reported having *never* seen anyone stabbed or shot (46 percent; results not shown), for nearly a quarter of students, these events are regular occurrences.

[8] Although 225 students signed a consent form and returned the survey, a handful of surveys were returned blank, missing a significant number of questions, or missing a few questions. As a result, the valid N fluctuated with each question.

[9] On the date of the student surveys, a majority of the 10th grade class was absent due to a previously scheduled field trip.

Table 5. Percentage of students who have seen or heard the following things happen around their home or neighborhood, by frequency

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Heard a gun being shot	14.9	24.2	60.9
Seen somebody arrested	11.2	18.6	70.2
Seen drug deals	32.6	12.6	54.9
Seen someone being beaten up	21.1	18.8	60.1
House has been broken into	88.7	3.8	7.5
Seen somebody get stabbed or shot	62.3	14.9	22.8
Seen somebody pull a gun on another person	60.7	11.7	27.6
Seen gangs in the neighborhood	34.9	11.6	53.5

*Due to rounding, actual percentages may not total 100%.

Parental Attachment

To contextualize the student body attending TMA further, students were asked to respond to a series of questions about their relationship with their parent or guardian (table 6). In general, TMA students reported strong relationships with their parent or guardian; recall that the majority of students reported living with their mother at the time the survey was administered (82 percent). The majority of students reported that they regularly feel respect (86 percent) and pride (83 percent) for their parent/guardian. Similarly, a majority reported that they trust (80 percent) and get along with (76 percent) their parent/guardian often. Most students reported rarely or never being angry at their parent/guardian (60 percent). Students were more evenly dispersed in the frequency with which they felt their parent/guardian understood them, was too demanding, or interfered with their activities.

Table 6. Percentage of students who report the following, by frequency

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
You get along well with your parent	6.0	18.1	76.0
You feel that you can really trust you parent	8.9	10.8	80.2
Your parent does not understand you	38.3	24.3	37.4
Your parent is too demanding	43.9	25.5	30.7
You have a lot of respect for your parent	5.1	8.8	86.1
Your parent interferes with your activities	34.1	31.8	34.2
You think your parent is terrific	15.8	19.5	64.6
You feel very angry toward your parent	60.0	21.4	18.6
You feel proud of your parent	4.7	12.6	82.8

*Due to rounding, actual percentages may not total 100%.

Tolerance for Aggressive Behavior

Students were asked several questions about the degree to which they agreed with violent and aggressive behaviors because part of the violence prevention approach at TMA was to teach students how to behave and relate to each other in civil, non-violent ways (e.g., ADL Program, discipline hearings, conduct code). A crucial component of the program is to debase violent attitudes and therefore, discourage violent behavior. Student attitudes about violent behavior were mixed, as demonstrated in table 7. Most students *disagreed* that there are only two kinds of

kids – the kids who fight and the kids who get beaten up (68 percent) and that sometimes you have to fight other kids to get respect (55 percent). Many students *agreed* that it is not right to join in when a kid is getting picked on (56 percent), that there are always ways to resolve an argument instead of insulting a kid or getting put down yourself (70 percent), and that it is best to avoid gossip and rumors (56 percent). On the other hand, more than half of students agreed that it is okay to say something mean to someone if he or she says something mean to you and only 34 percent of the students surveyed disagreed with the statement, "when two kids are fighting each other, it's alright for you to stand and watch." While the more prosocial response category often represented most students' attitudes, there were a number of students who had attitudes that encouraged or justified violent behavior.

Table 7. Percentage of students who agree with the following statements about aggressive behaviors

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
Sometimes you have two choices – getting hit or hitting the other kid first	44.0	20.8	35.2
It's okay to hit someone who does something mean to you	38.4	29.7	31.9
It's okay to hit someone who really makes you angry	44.5	34.4	21.1
It's okay to say something mean to someone if he or she says something mean to you	21.8	23.1	55.1
Sometimes you have to fight other kids to get respect	54.5	17.3	28.2
When two kids are fighting each other, it's alright for you to stand there and watch	34.1	35.0	30.9
There are only two kinds of kids – the kids who fight and the kids who get beaten up	67.6	17.1	15.3
When one kid is picking on another, it's *not* right for you to join in	33.0	11.5	55.5
There are always other ways to solve an argument besides insulting a kid or getting put down yourself	11.9	18.3	69.7
It's best to avoid listening to gossip or rumors	16.1	25.2	58.8

*Due to rounding, actual percentages may not total 100%.

Experiences of Victimization in School

While some students appeared to have attitudes that condoned violence, as demonstrated in table 8, TMA students reported a very low frequency of victimization at the hands of other students in school. While a percentage of students did report being victimized, having their things taken or damaged or being verbally or physically attacked, the overwhelming majority of students reported that these events occurred rarely (table 8). Since the table collapses some response categories, it masks the fact that most students reported these events as "never happening." For example, 59 percent of students reported never having other students in the school take things that belonged to them, and 76 percent reported never having their property intentionally damaged or destroyed. Also, most students reported never being verbally (58 percent) or physically (66 percent) victimized. Only about half (48 percent) reported never being threatened or cursed at.

Table 8. Percentage of students victimized by other students in school, by frequency

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Took things that belonged to you	85.0	9.5	5.5
Destroyed/damaged your property on purpose	90.0	7.3	2.8
Physically hurt or bothered you	84.5	10.5	5.0
Teased you	80.0	10.5	9.6
Threatened or cursed at you	70.3	11.9	17.8

*Due to rounding, actual percentages may not total 100%.

PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL CLIMATE

In addition to asking about the frequency of victimization in school, the survey also asked students more general questions about their safety in school. In response to the question, "your school does enough to promote safety", a small percentage of students disagreed with that statement (18 percent); most agreed with that statement (52 percent; results not shown). Consistent with the findings detailed in table 8 on victimization, a majority of students reported feeling safe at school (68 percent) as shown in table 9. Further, most disagreed that there are a lot of fights between different groups at school (77 percent). Nearly all of the students who responded to the survey reported as *disagreeing* with the statement that students beat up the teachers (95 percent), that there is a lot of pressure to join gangs (92 percent), that there is a lot of gang activity at school (88 percent), and that there are gang fights at the school (91 percent). Students were almost evenly dispersed in their reported feelings about whether students get along well at the school. Finally, though 68 percent of students felt safe at school, only 30 percent reported feeling safe in the neighborhood around school (table 9).

Table 9. Percentage of students who agree with the following statements about their school climate

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
I feel safe at school	11.9	19.7	68.3
Students get along well with each other at school	31.0	32.4	36.5
There are a lot of fights between different groups at school	76.5	14.3	9.2
Students beat up teachers	94.9	1.9	3.2
There is a lot of racial conflict between students at school	89.8	5.6	4.6
I feel safe in the neighborhood around school	40.1	30.0	29.9
There is a lot of pressure to join gangs at school	91.7	5.0	3.2
There is a lot of gang activity at school	87.6	7.3	5.0
There are gang fights at school	91.3	5.0	3.7

*Due to rounding, actual percentages may not total 100%.

Similarly, table 10 shows that students reported feeling safe in school and rarely engaging in violent, aggressive, or disruptive behavior. More than three-quarters of the students reported that they rarely show off in class (77 percent), try to physically hurt or bother other people (84 percent), cheat on tests or copy someone else's assignments (85 percent), or take things that don't belong to them (90 percent). A smaller number, but the majority of the students who responded to the survey, reported that they rarely come late to class (55 percent), fight or argue with students or teachers (61 percent), tease other students (67 percent), or do things to make the teachers angry (74 percent). Further, 71 percent of students reported doing what the teacher tells

them often. Notably, nearly every student reported rarely skipping school because they feel unsafe at school or on their way to school (96 percent). However, a slightly higher percentage of students reported engaging in some behaviors compared to being victimized by some behavior. For example, approximately 15 percent of the students responding to the survey reported teasing students often, but less than 10 percent of the students reported *being* teased often (see table 8).

Table 10. Percentage of students who report engaging in the following activities, by frequency

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Avoid certain places at school because you feel unsafe	86.1	5.6	8.3
Skip school because you feel unsafe at school or on your way to school	96.3	1.9	1.9
Take things that don't belong to you	89.8	6.5	3.7
Do what the teacher tells you to do	9.3	19.5	71.1
Destroy or damage property	94.0	3.2	2.8
Try to physically hurt or bother other people	83.9	10.1	6.0
Tease other students	67.4	17.7	14.9
Fight or argue with other students or teachers	60.5	23.7	15.8
Show off in class	77.3	10.2	12.5
Do things you know will make the teacher angry	73.5	11.2	15.3
Cheat on tests or copy someone else's assignments	85.3	8.8	6.0
Come late to class	54.7	25.2	20.0

*Due to rounding, actual percentages may not total 100%.

PERCEPTIONS OF TMA VIOLENCE PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

Finally, the survey asked a series of questions on the violence prevention activities implemented at TMA. As discussed in earlier sections of this report, TMA engaged in a comprehensive approach to violence prevention and school safety during the 2008–2009 school year. The school stakeholders identified a number of key areas that they expected to contribute to school safety, which ranged from dismissal policies to security guards to mandatory and voluntary programs offered after school. The students were asked the degree to which they agreed the school safety measures contributed to their safety (table 11) and the degree to which they liked the school safety measures (table 12).

As shown in table 11, students' reported feelings about the different violence prevention activities varied widely. The majority of students disagreed that advisory lessons (60 percent) and the summer prep program (54 percent) contributed to their safety at TMA. On the other hand, more than half of the students surveyed agreed that the school resource officer (68 percent), deans (64 percent), security cameras (62 percent), security guards (57 percent), voluntary programs (57 percent), and teachers (57 percent) improved safety. While there was greater variation across the response categories, more students agreed rather than disagreed that mandatory programs, afternoon dismissal, and counseling services improved safety. The code of conduct, anti-violence contract, morning check-in, and random searches were seen as beneficial for approximately the same percentage of students who saw those activities as not beneficial. In summary, students' views differed in regards to what they considered successful safety measures; however, the majority of students seemed to find most of TMA's policies as helpful.

Table 11. Percentage of students who agree that the following activities contribute to their safety

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
Deans	11.6	24.2	64.2
Teachers	17.7	25.1	57.2
Security guards	14.5	24.8	60.8
Police school resource officer	15.8	15.8	68.4
Morning check-in	38.1	27.4	34.4
Afternoon dismissal	31.3	25.2	43.5
Security cameras	17.3	21.0	61.7
Random searches	40.7	21.0	38.3
Code of conduct	38.1	27.9	33.9
Anti-violence contract	41.4	21.4	37.2
School counseling services	33.3	23.9	42.2
Summer Prep Program	53.5	20.7	25.8
Advisory lessons	60.0	16.3	23.8
Mandatory programs	34.4	19.5	46.0
Voluntary programs	22.3	20.5	57.2

*Due to rounding, actual percentages may not total 100%.

Although most activities were considered to contribute to safety at TMA (table 11), some activities were unpopular among the student body (table 12). For example, while 68 percent of students agreed that the school resource officer contributed to safety, only 49 percent liked him/her. Similarly, though 38 percent of the students agreed that random searches contributed to their safety, less than a quarter actually liked this practice. There is a similar large discrepancy among what students agreed contributed to their safety and what activities they actually liked in attitudes about security cameras. Yet, in general, the majority of students seemed to like the school violence prevention activities that they agreed were keeping the school safe (e.g., deans, security guards, security cameras, and voluntary programs). As well, most tended to dislike the school violence prevention activities they thought do not help keep them safe at school (e.g., summer prep program, advisory lessons). Among the most popular safety measures taken by TMA were both mandatory and voluntary programs, the deans, the security guards, and the afternoon dismissal (table 12).

Table 12. Percentage of students who dislike the following school safety activities at TMA

	Dislike	Neutral	Like
Deans	15.5	27.7	56.8
Teachers	19.1	33.0	47.9
Security guards	14.1	28.2	57.8
School resource officer	25.7	25.7	48.6
Morning check-in	40.9	25.6	33.5
Afternoon dismissal	22.8	26.5	50.7
Security cameras	25.6	28.4	46.0
Random searches	55.8	23.7	20.5
Code of conduct	49.8	26.5	23.7

	Dislike	Neutral	Like
Anti-violence contract	38.5	33.8	27.7
School counseling services	29.7	31.1	39.1
Summer Prep Program	54.2	22.6	23.1
Advisory lessons	50.0	24.8	25.3
Mandatory programs	28.0	18.7	53.3
Voluntary programs	22.8	18.6	58.6

*Due to rounding, actual percentages may not total 100%.

Consistent with the previous questions, the deans and the school resource officer garnered the most votes by students as the number one contributors to school safety at TMA (22 percent). More than half of the students placed the deans and/or the school resource officer as one of the top contributors to school safety. Also, almost half of the students named the cameras as one of their top three contributors to school safety, including 15 percent of the students who said it was the top contributor to school safety. Finally, though only 10 percent of the students named the security guard as the top contributor to school safety, roughly 45 percent considered the guards as one of the top three contributors to school safety (table 13).

Table 13. Percentage of students who rank the following as contributing the most to school safety

	Number one	In top three
Deans	21.9	56.7
Teachers	2.0	15.5
Security guards	10.0	44.9
School resource officer	21.9	54.7
Morning check-in	2.5	10.5
Code of conduct	2.5	9.5
Anti-violence contract	4.0	11.5
School counseling	1.0	5.0
Advisory lessons	0.5	2.5
Afternoon dismissal	1.0	7.0
Summer Prep Program	0.0	1.0
Random searches	2.5	19.0
Voluntary programs	1.5	5.0
Mandatory programs	3.5	13.0
Security cameras	15.4	47.7

*Due to rounding, actual percentages may not total 100%.

The survey also asked the students about what they considered the least effective school safety measure at TMA. More than 10 percent of students named the code of conduct, the morning check-in (11 percent), the Summer Prep Program (11 percent), and the advisory lessons (14 percent) as contributing the least to school safety. More than a quarter of the students mentioned the Summer Prep Program (26 percent), the code of conduct (28 percent), the morning check in (29 percent), and the anti-violence contract (29 percent) as one of the three things they believed contributed the least to school safety (table 14).

Table 14. Percentage of students who rank the following as contributing the least to school safety

	Number one (worst)	In bottom three
Deans	4.5	11.5
Teachers	7.5	19.5
Security guards	4.5	13.0
School resource officer	1.5	5.0
Morning check-in	10.9	29.3
Code of conduct	10.4	28.4
Anti-violence contract	8.0	29.4
School counseling	2.0	12.0
Advisory lessons	14.4	43.2
Afternoon dismissal	5.5	18.0
Summer Prep Program	11.4	35.8
Random searches	3.5	16.5
Voluntary programs	2.5	14.5
Mandatory programs	4.5	18.0
Security cameras	1.0	8.5

Finally, the students were asked to write in what they thought the school could do to improve school safety. Of the 225 students who handed back a survey, 34 percent left this question blank or wrote that they did not know what else the school could do to make them safe. Another 16 percent wrote that they felt the school was doing everything that it could. In the remaining responses, though only accounting for about half of all survey respondents, students outlined a range of options that they thought could further improve safety. The most common responses included adding more security guards (17 percent) or metal detectors (11 percent). A handful of students mentioned more random searches, cameras, increased consultation with students, and changes in the afternoon dismissal procedure (table 15).

Table 15. Number and percentage of students who felt the school should do the following to improve school safety (open-ended)

	N	Percentage
Left blank/did not know	77	34.2
Nothing	37	16.4
Add metal detectors	25	11.1
More security guards or police officers	39	17.3
More random searches	8	3.6
More cameras	8	3.6
Dismissal times/practices (e.g., walking to metro, earlier dismissal time)	11	4.9
Activities/programming	5	2.2
Monitor surrounding area	11	4.9
Consult more with student population	4	1.8
Other*	21	12.4

N=225; however, the responses account for more than 225 since several students wrote in more than one safety measure in their responses. *Twenty-eight students wrote something else in the open-ended question; none of these could be grouped into one category. Due to rounding, actual percentages may not total 100 percent.

FACULTY MEMBER SURVEYS

The faculty was administered the paper-and-pencil surveys through their faculty inboxes, and was asked to fill out the surveys and place them in a locked file box at the school. Similar to the student surveys, the faculty surveys were anonymous to the school administrators and the research team. The faculty was not asked to provide any identifiable information on the surveys. Nineteen faculty members (61 percent of the entire faculty) completed the questionnaire. Similar to the student surveys, the faculty surveys asked several questions to provide context for the TMA violence prevention activities—that is, what are the faculty attitudes about the student body, their experiences of violent behavior in the school, and their perceptions of the TMA violence prevention approach. Although the survey responses presented below represent more than half of the faculty employed at TMA during the 2008–2009 school year, percentages should be interpreted with caution given the small number of faculty responding to the survey (n=19).

Similar to the student survey response categories, with the exception of the sociodemographic questions, all questions were asked on a scale of one to five where one corresponded with "strongly disagree" or "never" and five corresponded with "strongly agree" or "often." The categories between those two extremes were not named. In all cases where these scales were used, we grouped the four and five response categories together to form the "agree" or "often" category and one and two to form the "disagree" or "rarely" category in the following tables. The middle response category, three, was left as the middle-most measure, which equates with "sometimes" or "neutral" in the following tables.

PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT BODY

The most common problems cited by faculty who responded to the survey were student apathy, preparedness, and poverty. Roughly four out of five faculty members surveyed considered these serious problems. Though less universal, more than half of the faculty also agreed that poor student health and wellbeing and a lack of parental involvement were serious problems. On the other hand, faculty typically did not consider class cutting or teacher absenteeism problems, and the majority did not consider students dropping out a significant problem (table 16).

Table 16. Percentage of faculty who feel the following is a problem at the school

	Minor problem	Moderate problem	Serious problem
Student tardiness	21.1	31.6	47.4
Student absenteeism	36.8	26.3	36.8
Student class cutting	94.7	5.3	0.0
Teacher absenteeism	89.5	5.3	5.3
Students dropping out	63.2	21.1	15.8
Student apathy	5.3	10.5	84.2
Lack of parental involvement	5.3	42.1	52.6
Poverty	5.3	15.8	78.9
Students' preparedness	5.3	10.5	84.2
Poor student health and wellbeing	21.1	26.3	52.6

*Due to rounding, actual percentages may not total 100%.

PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL CLIMATE

The overwhelming majority of faculty members who responded to the survey agreed that: the school administration's behavior toward faculty/staff is supportive and encouraging (95 percent) and that the academic director/deans enforce school rules for student behavior consistently (100 percent). There was less consensus, but certainly overall support that most of the faculty share beliefs and values about what the central mission of the school should be (79 percent) and rules for student behavior are consistently enforced by teachers in the school, even for students who are not in their class (53 percent). Further, 53 percent of the responding faculty felt that student tardiness and class cutting in the school does not interfere with teaching. However, a sizable percentage (21 percent) did feel that these behaviors interfered with their teaching. Finally, only 11 percent of the faculty agreed that they receive a great deal of support from parents for the work they do, with 53 percent feeling neutral about that statement and more than a third (37 percent) disagreeing that parents are supportive. In summary, though faculty feels their work is supported by the administration and generally unhindered by the students, they feel less support from parents (table 17).

Table 17. Percentage of faculty who agree with the following statements

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
The school administration's behavior toward faculty/staff is supportive and encouraging	0.0	5.3	94.7
The academic director/deans enforce school rules for student behavior consistently	0.0	0.0	100.0
The amount of student tardiness and class cutting in this school interferes with my teaching	52.6	26.3	21.1
Most of my colleagues share my beliefs and values about what the central mission of the school should be	0.0	21.1	79.0
I receive a great deal of support from parents for the work I do	36.8	52.6	10.5
Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced by teachers in this school, even for students who are not in their classes	15.8	31.6	52.7

*Due to rounding, actual percentages may not total 100%.

All of the formal programs that are listed in table 18 received broad support from the surveyed faculty, with all nine of the programs supported by more than half of the respondents. Counseling, social work, and psychological or therapeutic activity received unanimous support from surveyed faculty, while behavior modification and individual student attention from adults were almost universally supported. Prevention curricula, recreational or leisure activities for students, and programs promoting social integration among students was also supported by faculty. Though still broadly supported, hotlines, student mentoring by other students, and increased student involvement in conflict resolution were less popular. This may indicate that the faculty does not trust students to the extent that they do adults and outside experts. It should be noted that TMA has many formal programs in place that fall into the categories listed in table 18; it could be that faculty members feel there needs to be more formal programs to respond to safety issues.

Table 18. Percentage of faculty who felt the following formal programs should be implemented for the upcoming school year

	No	Yes
Prevention curriculum, instruction or training for students	15.8	84.2
Behavioral or behavior modification intervention for students	5.3	94.7
Counseling, social work, psychological or therapeutic activity for students	0.0	100.0
Individual attention/mentoring/tutoring/coaching of students by students	38.9	61.1
Individual attention/mentoring/tutoring/coaching of students by adults	5.3	94.7
Recreational, enrichment, or leisure activities for students	15.8	84.2
Student involvement in resolving student conduct problems (e.g., peer mediation)	36.8	63.2
Programs to promote sense of community/social integration among students	10.5	89.5
Hotline/tip line for students to report problems	36.8	63.2

*Due to rounding, actual percentages may not total 100%.

The majority of faculty who responded to the survey reported that they were never threatened (61 percent) or physically attacked (83 percent) by students (table 19). Although a minority of faculty members reported being attacked or threatened by students, the numbers are higher than national averages for urban high schools, where 12 percent of teachers report being threatened and 4 percent report being attacked (Dinkes et al. 2009).

Table 19. Percentage of faculty who have been threatened or physically attacked by a student

	No	Yes
Threatened to injure	61.1	38.9
Physically attacked	83.3	16.7

*Due to rounding, actual percentages may not total 100%.

Despite a number of faculty members reporting being threatened or physically attacked by students, faculty responses about the safety and disorder in school were identical to those of the students. As shown in table 20, the majority of the faculty members reported feeling safe at the school (95 percent). All of the faculty members who responded to the survey disagreed that students beat up teachers or that there are gang fights at the school. Further, nearly all of the teachers disagreed that there was a lot of racial conflict between students at the school or that there was a lot of gang activity at the school. A smaller percentage, though still a majority of faculty (79 percent) disagreed that there are a lot of fights between different groups at the school. Of the questions proposed about school safety, the faculty were mixed on their perceptions of how well students get along in the school and how safe they feel in the neighborhood around the school. Though 11 percent of the faculty responding to the survey disagreed that students get along well at the school, the remaining 89 percent were split between whether they agreed with that statement or were neutral with that statement. As for their perceptions of safety in the neighborhood around the school, while 26 percent of those who responded feel safe in the neighborhood around TMA, another 37 percent disagreed that they feel safe in the neighborhood, the remaining 37 percent fell somewhere between those two extremes.

Table 20. Percentage of faculty who agree with the following statements

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
I feel safe at this school	0.0	5.3	94.7
Students get along well with each other at school	10.5	47.4	42.1
There are a lot of fights between different groups at this school	78.9	15.8	5.3
Students beat up teachers	100.0	0.0	0.0
There is a lot of racial conflict between students at this school	94.4	5.6	0.0
I feel safe in the neighborhood around this school	36.8	36.8	26.3
There is a lot of pressure for youth to join gangs at this school	77.8	22.2	0.0
There is a lot of gang activity at this school	94.4	5.6	0.0
There are gang fights at school	100.0	0.0	0.0

*Due to rounding, actual percentages may not total 100%.

Table 21 lists the responses of the faculty to a series of questions asking them their feelings on what limits their school's efforts to reduce or prevent crime. Of the six questions posed, the majority of the faculty felt the following were only minor limitations with one exception. Just over half (53 percent) of the faculty who responded to the survey responded that the lack of parental support for school policies was a moderate limitation to crime prevention. In fact, 17 percent of the faculty who responded felt a lack of parental support for school policies was a major limitation. Also noteworthy, more than a third of the faculty who responded considered inadequate alternative placement for disruptive students as a major limitation, although the majority considered it only a minor limitation.

Table 21. Percentage of faculty who believe the following limits their school's effort to reduce or prevent crime

	Minor limitation	Moderate limitation	Major limitation
Lack of/inadequate teaching training in classroom management	61.1	27.8	11.1
Lack of/inadequate alternative placement/programs for disruptive students	55.6	5.6	38.9
Likelihood of complaints from parents	83.3	11.1	5.6
Lack of teacher support for school policies	72.2	27.8	0.0
Lack of parental support for school policies	27.8	55.6	16.7
Teachers' fear of student retaliation	94.4	5.6	0.0

*Due to rounding, actual percentages may not total 100%.

The teachers were asked to discuss how often various behaviors occurred at the school (table 22). According to the faculty who responded to the survey, while some behaviors appeared to occur rarely at the school (racial/ethnic tension and cult or extremist group activities), others occurred more often. Nearly half of the faculty who responded suggested that student bullying, verbal abuse of teachers, and other student acts of disrespect other than verbal abuse occurred often. In addition, while the majority of the faculty did not believe that widespread disorder happened often, almost half suggested that it occurred sometimes. Finally, the faculty was almost equally dispersed among the response categories in their perspectives of how frequently student sexual

harassment of other students occurred. While roughly a third suggested that it happens rarely, another third felt that it occurs sometimes and another third felt that it occurs often.

Table 22. Percentage of faculty who feel the following occurs at school, by frequency

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Student sexual harassment of other students	31.6	36.8	31.6
Student racial/ethnic tensions	94.7	5.3	0.0
Student bullying	5.3	47.4	47.4
Widespread disorder in classrooms	44.4	44.4	11.2
Student verbal abuse of teachers	36.8	15.8	47.4
Student acts of disrespect for teachers other than verbal abuse	26.3	26.3	47.4
Cult or extremist group activities	100.0	0.0	0.0

*Due to rounding, actual percentages may not total 100%.

PERCEPTIONS OF TMA VIOLENCE PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

Similar to the students, the faculty was asked the degree to which they agreed that several TMA activities contributed to school safety. The faculty agreed that most of the activities contributed to school safety, with overwhelming agreement for the deans (100 percent), teachers (95 percent), school resource officer (95 percent), morning check-in (95 percent), security cameras (95 percent), and the security guards (90 percent). A smaller majority supported the afternoon dismissal, Summer Prep Program, school counseling services, and mandatory and voluntary programs. Of the activities listed in table 23, the only one that received disagreement from most faculty was the advisory lessons. Almost three quarters of the faculty disagreed that advisory lessons contributed to school safety.

Table 23. Percentage of faculty who agree that the following activities contribute to their safety

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
Deans	0.0	0.0	100.0
Teachers	0.0	5.3	94.7
Security guards	5.3	5.3	89.5
School resource officer	0.0	5.3	94.7
Morning check-in	0.0	5.6	94.4
Afternoon dismissal	10.5	26.3	63.1
Security cameras	0.0	5.3	94.7
Random searches	21.1	36.8	42.1
Code of conduct	0.0	15.8	84.3
Anti-violence contract	23.5	29.4	47.0
School counseling services	10.5	15.8	73.6
Summer Prep Program	10.5	26.3	63.2
Advisory lessons	63.2	15.8	21.1
Mandatory programs	5.3	36.8	57.9
Voluntary programs	5.3	31.6	63.1

*Due to rounding, actual percentages may not total 100%.

In general, the faculty who responded to the survey liked the TMA school safety activities with few exceptions (table 24). A quarter of those responding to the survey suggested a dislike for random searches and advisory lessons. On the other hand, the deans, teachers, school resource officer, morning check-in, the code of conduct, and voluntary programs were universally or nearly universally well-liked.

Table 24. Percentage of faculty who dislike the following school safety activities at TMA

	Dislike	Neutral	Like
Deans	0.0	0.0	100.0
Teachers	0.0	0.0	100.0
Security guards	10.5	5.3	84.3
School resource officer	0.0	5.3	94.7
Morning check-in	0.0	5.6	94.4
Afternoon dismissal	10.5	21.1	68.5
Security cameras	5.3	5.3	89.5
Random searches	26.3	15.8	57.9
Code of conduct	0.0	5.3	94.7
Anti-violence contract	5.3	5.3	89.5
School counseling services	5.3	15.8	78.9
Summer Prep Program	0.0	10.5	89.5
Advisory lessons	47.4	10.5	42.2
Mandatory programs	0.0	10.5	89.5
Voluntary programs	0.0	5.3	94.7

*Due to rounding, actual percentages may not total 100%.

The faculty responded that the deans (79 percent), teachers (53 percent), code of conduct (47 percent), school cameras (37 percent), morning check-in (32 percent), school resource officer (26 percent), and security guards (23 percent) contribute the most to school safety. The remaining school safety measures were not in the any of the faculty members' top three. More than one third of the faculty who responded felt that the deans (37 percent) and the code of conduct (37 percent) were the number one activity that contributed to school safety, while another 10 percent felt the school resource officer was the number one contributor to school safety. The teachers, the cameras, and the morning check-each received one vote from the responding faculty members as the number one contributor to school safety (table 25).

Table 25. Percentage of faculty who rank the following as contributing the most to school safety

	Number one	In top three
Deans	36.8	78.9
Teachers	5.3	52.6
Security guards	0.0	26.3
School resource officer	10.5	26.3
Morning check-in	5.3	31.7
Code of conduct	36.8	47.3
Anti-violence contract	0.0	0.0

	Number one	In top three
School counseling	0.0	0.0
Advisory lessons	0.0	0.0
Afternoon dismissal	0.0	0.0
Summer Prep Program	0.0	0.0
Random searches	0.0	0.0
Voluntary programs	0.0	0.0
Mandatory programs	0.0	0.0
Security cameras	5.3	36.9

*Due to rounding, actual percentages may not total 100%.

Mirroring the results from table 25, the majority of the faculty agreed that advisory lessons contribute the least to school safety (table 26). In fact, nearly the entire faculty (88 percent) placed the advisory lessons in their bottom three list of school safety measures. More than one third of the faculty who responded felt the anti-violence contract was not a significant contributor to school safety, with nearly 30 percent of the faculty believing that the afternoon dismissal, summer preparatory program, random searches, and mandatory programs were among the worst school safety measures. This may be because the faculty members do not see the connection between the violence prevention activity and actual safety (e.g., afternoon dismissal) and/or feel the school administrators do not use these activities enough to prevent violence (e.g., random searchers)

Table 26. Percentage of faculty who rank the following as contributing the least to school safety

	Number one (worst)	In bottom three
Deans	0.0	0.0
Teachers	0.0	0.0
Security guards	0.0	5.9
School resource officer	0.0	0.0
Morning check-in	0.0	0.0
Code of conduct	0.0	0.0
Anti-violence contract	11.8	35.4
School counseling	0.0	5.9
Advisory lessons	52.9	88.2
Afternoon dismissal	11.8	29.4
Summer preparatory program	0.0	29.4
Random searches	5.9	29.4
Voluntary programs	11.8	41.2
Mandatory programs	0.0	29.4
Security cameras	0.0	5.9

*Due to rounding, actual percentages may not total 100%.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

School administrators have many decisions to make when developing a violence prevention model. Interventions may be targeted at the entire school, to specific individuals, or to address a specific problem (e.g., gang violence, bullying, dating violence) using a defined program. Further, school administrators may want to use traditional or "hard" security measures such as cameras or metal detectors or they may choose more non-traditional or "soft" security measures such as training and programming. The approach at TMA is broad and multi-pronged, focused on various aspects of the student environment. Indeed, the stakeholders at TMA did not define their violence prevention approach as a "program" per se, but as a set of activities implemented to increase academic success and reduce violence. Based on the categorization of TMA activities against a systematic review of the literature and the responses from the student and faculty surveys, the following recommendations are offered as way to enhance the efficacy of the violence prevention approach at the school. The report concludes with some recommendations for the school violence field.

Strengthen Cognitive-Behavioral Activities in the Violence Prevention (VP) Approach—Findings from the student surveys suggest that some TMA students are tolerant of hitting, teasing, cursing and other aggressive behaviors, although it does not appear that many actually fought each other or were victimized. This suggests that students' behavior is being successfully modified (possibly due to the behavior modification activities and the discipline code); however, students' underlying tolerance and acceptance for violent behavior does not appear to have changed. The cognitive component of cognitive-behavioral activities could be strengthened at TMA to better target these attitudes. As previously discussed, cognitive-behavioral approaches are effective means of changing violent attitudes. Furthermore, the results from the faculty surveys also indicated that formal cognitive-behavioral activities could be introduced into the TMA violence prevention approach. Indeed, the faculty members seemed to agree that a formal behavior modification program would be beneficial to their students (in addition to the other programs discussed in table 21). A significant percentage of teachers (45 percent) saw the lack of adequate programs/placements for disruptive students as a moderate or major limitation to their work.

Greater Involvement of Parents/Family in the VP Approach—The students at TMA seemed to have strong relationships with their parents/guardians, yet TMA did not appear to use parents in the VP approach deliberately. Poverty, apathy, and preparedness among students were identified among the faculty surveys as major limitations for the students and faculty surveys showed a significant number feeling that the lack of parental support was a moderate or major limitation to their work (71 percent). Perhaps the way to combat some of these issues is the deliberate inclusion of TMA parents/guardians and family in the VP approach (e.g., afterschool programming, advisory lessons, community service).

Greater Involvement of Youth in Responding to Student Conflicts in the VP Approach—School stakeholders should consider using TMA youth in their violence prevention approach. Research has shown that this is an effective means for responding to student conflicts, and peer mediation could be an effective means for disrupting students' tolerance or acceptance for violent behavior. Peer mediation could take many forms, such as a system where older students routinely and deliberately mentor younger students or having formal representation of TMA students in the disciplinary process (e.g., peer mediation in conjunction or in addition to

the dean mediation process). The peer-to-peer learning component of the ADL Program seems to be an appropriate step in including more youth in responding to student conflicts; however, this is voluntary and is not necessarily connected to violence prevention but greater tolerance.

Develop a Set of Performance Measures Based on Student/Faculty Needs— Research suggests that schools should develop a process of: identifying needs; establishing measureable objectives; choosing a school safety plan; and evaluating the success of these approaches (Pollack and Sundermann 2001; Sprague 2007). The following outlines how TMA can take this approach to strengthen their VP approach.

Identifying Need. Although TMA's VP approach has been to focus on every student in the school, that may not be necessary or the best approach. The TMA stakeholders could conduct an assessment of disciplinary and administrative records to determine which students seem to be at the highest risk of violence and victimization and target most of their interventions toward that population. Stakeholders could develop a set of universal and focused prevention techniques, where the former are geared towards all students and the latter are geared towards high-risk students. Targeting the at-risk population could be more preventative, leading to more long-term violence reductions. It is likely that some students already receive greater attention from faculty and staff, but this could happen more systematically. In addition to identifying the students who have the greatest need of violence prevention services, TMA stakeholders could conduct an assessment of what services students and faculty feel are needed. According to our interviews with school stakeholders and responses to the student and faculty surveys, there are several things that they feel could be added to TMA's approach that may strengthen its impact (e.g., more counseling/counselors, metal detectors, greater monitoring of students outside the school facility).

Establishing Objectives. Since the current focus of TMA activities is broad, a set of performance measures to assess the output of the activities would be helpful to explore whether the activities are meeting their intended goals. The following performance measures were developed in conjunction with the logic model detailed in figure 1 (table 27):

Table 27. Potential performance measures for TMA violence prevention activities

Number of students and faculty trained on violence prevention techniques
Number of students using counseling services
Number of students enrolled in Summer Prep Program
Number of students and parents requesting counseling sessions
Number of students and parents served by counseling sessions
Number of counseling sessions held
Number of students and faculty requesting mediation/conflict resolution sessions
Number of students and faculty served by mediation/conflict resolution sessions
Number of mediations/conflict resolution sessions held
Number of students and faculty participating in extracurricular programs (by program)
Number of mentors working with students
Number of students working with mentors
Number of students working with community members (or groups)
Number of community members (or groups) working with students

Number of students working with organizations (e.g., law firms)
Number of organizations working with students (and the school)
Number of discipline classes held
Number of random searches conducted
Number of unauthorized visitors found on property
Number of windows broken on property
Number of doors compromised on property
Amount of graffiti found on property inside and out

Developing a set of performance measures would help ensure that TMA activities meet their intended objectives. For example, to assess whether students are introduced to professional working environments through the Job Shadow Day and other programs, measuring the number of students working with external organizations helps TMA track their success toward that goal.

The faculty and student surveys demonstrated that there was some consistency in what was perceived as contributing the most and least to school safety. The deans and school resource officer were seen as critical components to school safety—among students and faculty. This is important, demonstrating that TMA's approach to school safety using traditional and non-traditional approaches is liked by students and faculty. By including students and faculty in the assessment of need, TMA may be even more successful in reaching their long-term goals.

Choosing a School Safety Plan. After TMA has identified its need and established a set of objectives to address that need, it should move toward implementing a safety plan to meet that need. For example, should TMA stakeholders decide that they would like to have another school counselor to provide more support for students and parents, they should first assess the unmet need using the performance measures listed in table 27—comparing the number of students and parents requesting counseling services against the number of students and parents served by the counseling services.

Evaluation. Once a set of performance measures has been established and routinely collected, TMA could evaluate whether the program is meeting its intended goals in the long-term. For example, are students in grade 11 and 12 behaving better than students in grade 9 and 10, because they have been exposed to the TMA violence prevention activities for a greater period of time (after controlling for other factors)?

Conduct a Rigorous Outcome Evaluation of VP Activities—Because the Urban Institute study did not involve an outcome evaluation, it is not possible to say definitively that the TMA students and faculty were safer *due* to the violence prevention activities implemented at the school. However, if TMA stakeholders develop a set of performance measures for their activities linked to the logic of the program and then evaluate, it would be possible to say whether the activities have an impact on their long-term goals. By measuring TMA student outcomes over time or by comparing TMA students to students enrolled in a similar school, matched on various criteria, researchers could assess whether TMA's VP activities lead to the outcomes presented in table 28.

Table 28. Potential outcomes of the TMA violence prevention activities

Reduced the number of students involved in violence and disputes
Reduced the number of student suspensions associated with violence and disputes
Reduced the level of stress among teachers and administrators
Reduced the level of stress among parents and students
Reduced the fear of violence among students, parents, faculty and staff
Increased faculty and staff job satisfaction
Improved student-faculty/staff and student-student relationships
Increased the academic outcomes among students

In the absence of defined performance measures (program outputs) and comparisons, it is difficult to say whether TMA activities truly met their long-term goals. In addition, the Urban Institute study did not include a formal assessment of administrative data on the disciplinary processes (e.g., detentions, suspensions, and expulsions or notes from the disciplinary hearings), dean mediations, or other administrative activities, such as records or notes from afterschool program activities, advisory lessons, or the Summer Preparatory Program. Therefore, the research is limited in its ability to determine the mechanisms underlying the TMA approach. A more rigorous outcome evaluation that included quantitative and qualitative data would allow researchers to connect program outputs (e.g., mediations, advisory lessons, detentions) to program outcomes. For example, are TMA students safer than students in similar schools because their participation in afterschool activities keeps them occupied during a risky time or because they are learning specific skills that help them avoid violent behaviors?

Despite the limited ability to come to any firm conclusions on the violence prevention approach's long-term outcomes, the assessment conducted by the Urban Institute at TMA demonstrates the range of violence prevention approaches taking place at one school. This research shows the utility of innovative practices such as TMA's use of both traditional and non-traditional approaches in an overall violence prevention approach. Other schools could learn from this approach and additional research of this type could shed light on innovative practices taking place in other schools. Students and faculty appear receptive to holistic approaches, such as TMA's, which leverages all aspects of the school environment towards a safer school community. Therefore, this research shows that students and faculty could and should be used more systematically to inform violence prevention approaches and to assess the need for additional safety measures. The survey that was administered to the students and faculty could be used by other schools looking to assess their own violence prevention approach and learn about student/faculty needs. There is still much to be learned about this school's violence prevention approach; yet, the information gleaned from this study provides a baseline for conducting future analyses.

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