

LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

GUNS, GANGS & VIOLENCE
SCHOOL SAFETY AT THE CROSSROAD

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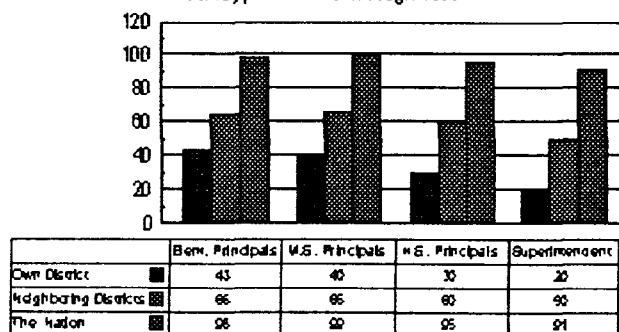
CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION

Is violence in schools on the increase? Today one cannot pick-up a newspaper or watch the TV news without a story about violence in schools. Politicians and Legislators are beginning to take notice of the daily barrage of stories about school violence. In a recent survey conducted nationally and in Texas, results show strong perception by educators that crime in schools is increasing. Teachers perceive greater crime problems than do principals. Administrators are also more likely to perceive crime to be increasing in schools outside of their own districts but not in their own district.¹ (See Chart 1)

Chart 1 Has Violence Increased?

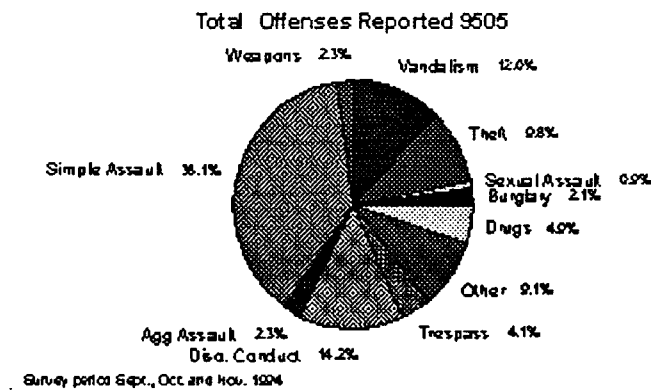
Percentage indicating increases in school violence.
Survey period 1988 Through 1993



Yet, with the perception that crime is on the rise, there is very little actual evidence to support the belief that crime is increasing. Of the 1048 school districts in the State of Texas, nine reported to the Texas Department of Public Safety, 2,478 UCR crimes for 1992. By 1994, twelve school districts reported 2,804 UCR crimes. From January 1, 1992 to December 31, 1994, UCR crimes increased by 426, a 13 increase.² However, these figures may be misleading because three more school districts reported crime in 1994 than did in 1992. Also the 12 reporting school districts represent less than 1% of the Texas school districts. Thus, without broad based official and accurate documentation of criminal activity on school property, one can only make an assumption that crime in Texas schools is increasing. In order to ascertain the quantity and types of crimes that are occurring in public schools, the 73rd Legislature adopted a pilot program with fifty districts to track school crime. The Texas Department of Public Safety Uniform Crime Reporting Section, in cooperation with Texas Education Agency, Juvenile Probation Commission and Sam Houston State University conducted the survey. School crime information was collected during the months of September, October and November, 1994. The sampling procedure involved school districts of various student population and locations throughout Texas. The three month survey produced 9,505 crimes committed on school grounds or at school functions.³ Chart 2 illustrates the percentages of

major crimes that were reported. The pilot program results tend to support the assumption that school related crime and violence is a problem in many Texas school districts. However, without subsequent surveys, comparison is not available. Since the 1994 pilot survey, similar surveys have not been conducted due to the lack of funding by the state.

Chart 2
Percentage of Major Offenses



PURPOSE

The purpose of this research paper is to explore the available data on school crime and expose the many problems facing educators and law enforcement officials in their efforts to control crime and violence in the educational environment. Another aspect of this research is to make recommendations on how to provide safe schools and to highlight some of the successful programs used by various groups to prevent crime growth.

THE NEED

As law enforcement becomes more involved in school safety, the need for better communication and understandings between law enforcement and school administrators is essential. Presently, in many communities and school districts in Texas, the cooperation between school districts and law enforcement officials is almost non-existent. Law enforcement officials have testified before State legislative hearings regarding the lack of cooperation between school administrators and law enforcement officials. School administrators have also complained that they are not informed about students who have violent criminal records that may endanger other students or faculty members.⁴ This research paper will offer suggestions on how both law enforcement and school officials can work together more closely for safe schools.

UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

Before solutions and recommendations can be discussed there must be an understanding of why the problem of youth crime and violence is confronting school administrators and law enforcement. What problems are today's youth facing which is causing them to resort to crime and violence?

Some of today's youth were drug-addicted, abused and unloved. A number were born into dysfunctional families with one parent or no parents at all. Many of our youths are being raised by older siblings or grandparents who are unable to provide the proper care and guidance that a child needs to become a productive citizen. Other problems facing the youth of today are poverty, teen pregnancy, unemployment, high drug use, gangs and gang violence. Because of these problems, some youth today lack hope and faith in the future, have low self-esteem and little motivation. Lacking the skills necessary to exist in today's environment, these troubled youth turn to gangs and violence to meet their need to survive.

The many problems facing today's youth did not happen over night. A slow evolution has occurred over the past thirty years that led society to the problems that we are now facing. Prior to the 1960's, the youth of that era had high family interaction, one parent working, low divorce rate, low teen pregnancy, low drug use and quality role models. The

post 1960's youth have had to deal with low family interaction, both parents working, high divorce rate, high teen pregnancy and drug use, and media created role models that don't set the proper example of high moral values.

With all the changes that have occurred over the last thirty years it is no wonder that the youth of the 90's are facing a up hill battle to overcome these changes and become productive citizens.

CRIME IN SCHOOLS

The types of crime that are committed in schools are as numerous as those committed in the community around the schools. In fact, schools are a mirror of the surrounding community. If robberies, drug dealing, drive-by shootings and gang activity are prevalent in the neighborhood surrounding a school, then those same types of crime are occurring in the school or on school property. In a survey of students conducted by U.S.A. Weekend, 63% of the students felt that they would learn more if they felt safer at school. Also, as reflected in a recent survey by the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence, one in five students bring a gun to school every day for protection. These surveys substantiate the perception by many students that school is not safe. Fifty-five percent (55%) of surveyed police executives rate school crime as a major problem. Thirty-four percent (34%) of surveyed school districts nation wide have their own police or security departments.⁵

One of the major reasons why school crime appears to be on the rise is the increase in gang activity. Dr. Ron Stephens, Director of the National School Safety Center, states "gangs are a significant threat to the safety and well being of the U.S. schools and communities. No school system is immune to gangs and gang violence."⁶ Schools serve as a breeding ground for gang recruitment and gang related conflicts and confrontations.

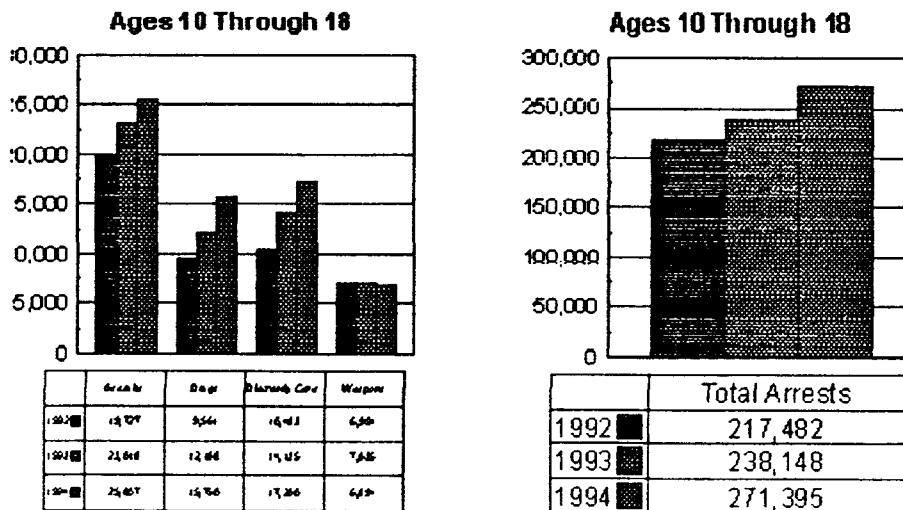
Hard core gang members use the school environment to recruit new gang members and, on many occasions, initiate the new members into the gang while they are still on school grounds. In the Spring Branch School District, known gang membership has increased from less than 100 members in 1990 to over 620 confirmed members by the beginning of the 96/97 school year.⁷ Gang membership consists of all races, sex and economic backgrounds. Several reasons have been identified as to why students join gangs. The need to belong, protection from other gangs, money, drugs or just the thrill of being involved in violent activities are some of the reasons.

The gang phenomenon that is sweeping the nation is a threat not only to the communities where gangs exist, but also to the schools in the communities. Whatever the cause of school violence, low self-esteem, parental example, peer pressure, inconsistent discipline, disrespect for authority or societal influence, teachers cannot teach and students cannot learn in an environment filled with fear and intimidation.⁸ In order for the educators to achieve their goals of educating our youth, they must become aware of the gang problems in the community and in their schools. This means that the educators must stop the denial that is prevalent in our schools and begin to adopt programs that will effectively deal with the gang and violence problems facing today's educators. "The challenge facing parents and teachers is to stay current and learn to recognize the signs gangs send out."⁹

YOUTH CRIME IN TEXAS

Gangs and gang violence are some of the reasons why arrest of school age children has risen significantly over the past three years. Assaults, drugs, weapons and disorderly conduct are the predominate type of crimes that occur on school grounds. Using data supplied by the Texas Department of Public Safety, Chart 3 illustrates the increase in arrests for these predominate school crimes. With the exception of weapons offenses, the other categories showed a significant increase. Chart No. 3 also illustrated the increase in school age children arrested for all categories of crime.¹⁰

Chart 3 Arrest of School Age Children



The arrest data does not delineate the location of the arrest. However, the majority of the arrested individuals attend school. Therefore, the assumption can be made that some of the reported arrest resulted from crimes that were committed on school grounds.

Working together, law enforcement, educators and the community can make a significant impact on youth crime. A reduction in youth crime in general will result in a reduction of school related crime.

CHAPTER II

REMOVING THE BARRIERS TO SAFE SCHOOLS

For school administrators, law enforcement officials, parents and community groups, controlling crime and violence in schools must become a partnership of trust and cooperation. Working together the goal of safe schools can be achieved through the use of proactive programs that will effectively reduce crime and violence in schools. However, there are numerous barricades that must be overcome before this goal is achieved.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR

For the school administrators there are numerous problems that the administrators must overcome. One of the major concerns is the denial that administrators show when they consider crime in their schools. "Official denial of gang problems appear to facilitate victimization by gangs, especially in public schools."¹ School principals are reluctant to acknowledge crime in their school. Recognizing crime and gang activity is another area that administrators must overcome. The administrator must lead the way for his faculty and staff to learn to identify crime and then report the crime to law enforcement. School administrators who try to investigate criminal acts that occur on school grounds and then take school action on the offender are only looking for problems. In a recent case in Dallas, a school principal was arrested and charged with a Class B Misdemeanor for failing to report to law enforcement, a parent's accusations of sexual abuse involving a school employee. In fact, the principal, in a meeting with the parent, tried to discourage police involvement. School administrators must overcome the notion that they are exempt from the law and have total unlimited control over what occurs on their campuses. However, this may be hard for them to do when the administrators receive information from association publications that is misleading and in some instances, a violation of state law.

In a recent publication from the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the author advised principals that "it should not normally be necessary for law enforcement officers to initiate and conduct any investigation and questioning on school premises during school hours pertaining to criminal activities unrelated to the operation of the school."¹¹ The author does state that if the officer showed absolute need, the principal may voluntarily permit the interview. The author also advises principals to "make reasonable efforts to persuade law enforcement officers not to make arrest or take students into custody on school premises".¹² In the State of Texas, such conduct is a violation of State Law.

School administrators must put aside this type of information and develop a strong commitment of cooperation between the school and law enforcement. In order to develop cooperation, the school administrators must work with law enforcement officers to rid the school and the community of the criminal element. If a student is suspected of committing a criminal offense, either on school grounds or off school grounds, administrators must do their part to see that justice prevails. Another point is why would the administrator want a suspected criminal in his school?

The last area that school administrators must address when considering school violence is the problem of parent and

community involvement. The administrators must overcome the problem of community awareness of what type of crime problems are occurring in schools. The administrator must bring parents and the community into the school for open forums on measures for safe schools. In many communities, school administrators have had problems obtaining parent and community involvement in safe school programs. Well publicized programs for parents and community meetings on school safety can be successful in bringing all parties together. The administrator can enlist all the faculty, students and law enforcement in an awareness program for parents and the community that will educate and hopefully, break down the barriers of apathy, denial and lack of committment, thus bringing together the school, community and law enforcement in a joint effort for safe schools.

LAW ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATORS

For law enforcement, there are several problems that must be addressed in order to achieve the goal of safe schools. The lack of effective communication and cooperation between law enforcement agencies and public schools must be overcome. In a survey by PERF, Police administrators advised that there is little consistency among school administrators about when to involve law enforcement in school related crime.¹³ Without the knowledge of what type of crime is occurring in schools, law enforcement is hampered in their efforts to provide safe schools. Law enforcement officials must take the initiative to contact school administrators to establish an open line of communication. When communication is improved, law enforcement will be able to track crime in schools. Police executives stated that communication among police officers, school officials and students is critical to preventing and resolving crime.¹⁴

Another area that law enforcement must improve upon is understanding the school environment. In a PERF survey, "A significant number of police executives are not aware of the policies and procedures of their local schools that directly affect crime and violence and the school system's response to victims and suspects."¹⁵ Police administrators may also lack appreciation for the philosophy and role of public education

in a free society. In order to overcome this barrier, the police executive must develop written policy on responses to crime committed on school property. The National Criminal Justice Reference Service states "very few law enforcement agencies have such policies".¹⁶

PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY

For the parents and the community the roles are basically the same. Both need to work together for the good of the schools and the community. As with school administrators, denial is one of the major barriers that must be removed. In order to do this, both parent and community leaders must become informed on what is going on in the schools and the community. Meetings with school administrators and law enforcement officials will help bridge the gap between each group. All parties will be able to establish lines of communication that will help remove the denial barrier.

Once the denial barrier is removed, the next area that must be addressed is apathy. Leaders of both the parents and the community must work together to keep all parties informed and to displace apathy with involvement in safe school programs that will benefit both the community and the schools. Only 20% of parents are willing and able to be involved in safe school programs.

Therefore, the task of involving a large group of parents will be difficult. In some instances parent and community leaders may ask school administrators to help involve more parents by publishing meetings and events that the parents can attend and participate in. The old saying "IT TAKES THE WHOLE VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD" applies to parent and community involvement in safe schools.

The commitment of a joint effort for safe schools by all parties is difficult to achieve. However, when the barriers are identified and then removed everyone involved can begin to work together for safe schools.

CHAPTER III

PROACTIVE MANAGEMENT FOR SAFE SCHOOLS

School administrators and law enforcement must develop proactive programs that will be effective in providing a safe school climate. In order to achieve this goal, the school administrator must first assess the school climate and then, working with law enforcement and the community, develop programs that will achieve this goal.

ASSESSMENT OF SCHOOL CLIMATE

School administrators must take a proactive approach for safe schools. Too many educators wait until a major crisis has occurred before they take action to provide a safe school climate. The first proactive step is an assessment of the conditions that may cause unsafe schools. The administrator must first perform a self-evaluation of their knowledge of what makes a school unsafe. The administrator should be able to recognize problem areas and then take action to eliminate the problem. If there is denial the problem will continue and most likely will grow. Once the administrator has a clear view of what their objectives are, then they should review the following areas.

1. Discipline - is it effective and consistent.
2. Gangs - are they present in the community and the school.
3. School, community and law enforcement linkage - does it exist.
4. Inattention/insensitivity to ethnic or racial concerns.
5. Crisis management planning - does it exist, is it adequate.
6. Expectations of staff and students - are they too low or negative.
7. Policies - are they articulated so everyone can understand them.

CHANGING THE CLIMATE

After the administrator has completed the assessment, then a plan of action must be implemented to improve the areas that are deficient. The administrator should develop effective characteristics for a safe school plan. Some of the recommended characteristics are as follows:

1. Well defined mission statement and goals.
2. Communications network between the school and the community.
3. High staff morale/high expectations of staff and students.
4. Consistent discipline and attendance policies.
5. Effective student support groups.
6. Parental involvement in school activities.
7. Staff development - gang awareness and violence prevention.
8. Effective crisis and gang management plans.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

The next step is establishing a safe schools plan is to develop a detailed crisis management plan that can be implemented to cover any type of crisis that may occur on school grounds. The administrator should follow the following steps in formulating a crisis management plan:

1. Establish a safe schools school board policy.
2. Appoint a district wide task force comprised of law enforcement, school administrators, students, staff and parents.
3. Survey surrounding school districts.
4. Set guidelines for developing building level crisis management teams.
5. Conduct assessment of building security - strengths and weaknesses.
6. Task force will develop a action plan for safety and crisis management.
7. Local campus teams will distribute copies of the plan to all persons and train all involved parties on how to implement the plan.
8. Evaluate the crisis management plan on a continuing basis.

With the implementation of a crisis management plan, the pro-active school administrator will be in a position of total control when a crisis situation occurs on their school campus.

GANG MANAGEMENT PLANNING

One of the major factors causing violence in schools is the emergence of the gang culture. Fifteen percent (15%) of surveyed students report gangs in their schools and thirty-five percent (35%) state that they feared being attacked at school;¹⁷ because of this fear, 100,000 students bring guns to school each day.¹⁸

In order for a school administrator to maintain control of their campus and provide a safe campus atmosphere, the administrator must take a proactive approach in dealing with gangs. The administrator must begin with his/her own knowledge of what is a gang and where they are in the community. The administrator must then identify the gang activity that is in and around their school. The use of a Gang Assessment and Planning Guide and a Gang Assessment Tool (Exhibits 1 & 2) will assist the administrator in their gang management planning. Unfortunately many administrators wait until it is almost too late to start the gang management planning process. Referring to the Planning Guide the administrator should start action on gang activity when the completed assessment indicates that the level of gang activity is one or no higher than two. If the administrator waits too long the chances of controlling gang activity becomes increasingly hard to accomplish.

After the assessment is complete the school administrator

must then develop proactive techniques that will control the gang activity in the school. Some of the techniques that can be used are as follows:

1. Provide initial training in gang awareness and intervention for faculty and staff.
2. Inform all students of the school discipline management plan, school policies, and appropriate laws governing public school students' membership in gangs. Personal clothing, jewelry and/or equipment that identifies one as a gang member are prohibited at school and school sponsored functions.
3. Develop positive relationships with students and invite and encourage students to be productively involved in school activities.
4. Identify and counsel with known gang members in an effort to break the gang relationship.
5. Work with law enforcement to maintain proper communication regarding gang activities.
6. Enforce school district policies and discipline management plan equally, fairly and swiftly.
7. Inform parents when their children are identified as gang members.
8. Prosecute all law violators - Zero Tolerance.
9. Refer as necessary to other community agencies, gang members who express the desire for intervention with their personal problems.

10. Maintain a surveillance of known gang members.
11. Observe student activity and graffiti on books and buildings to determine if new gangs or gang conflicts are emerging in the school.

The school administrator who adopts a proactive gang management plan will be well on his way to providing a safe campus atmosphere.

ROLE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

The role of law enforcement in schools has changed over the past twenty years. Law enforcement officers have been involved in school activities for many years; but their roles have changed from an educator in D.A.R.E. programs to one of a full time crime suppression specialist. School districts across the State of Texas have either formed their own school district police departments or contracted with the local law enforcement agency to provide full time peace officers for campus patrol duties.

According to a 1991 inventory of Texas School Facilities, thirteen percent of the 6100 campuses had campus police officers or security personnel.¹⁹ Since 1990 school district police departments have increased from 32 to now more than 80 state wide. With over 800 licensed police officers working for these school districts.²⁰

Why are school districts spending hard earned education dollars for law enforcement? The answer lies in the fact that youth crime and violence is increasing in the community and presumably in schools. School districts are finding that in order to educate their students, the campuses must be safe. In fact, one of the six goals of Goals 2000 is that all school campuses be safe from crime and drugs by the year 2000.

School districts are also becoming aware of litigation

that some school districts have faced because the school district failed to safe guard the student's safety. In a recently decided case Doe V. Taylor I.S.D., the Federal Court ruled that when children are required to attend school, the school district must provide for the students' safety or face possible litigation for civil rights violations. In the case of Doe V. Taylor I.S.D., the court ruled that the school district was negligent in providing safety for a student who was lured into a sexual relationship by a school employee. The court ruled in favor of the plaintiff and awarded a judgement of one million dollars.

With all the legal and criminal problems facing school districts many have decided to involve law enforcement in the daily operations of their schools. The role of the campus police office whether he is employed by the local law enforcement agency or by the school district is basically the same. The campus police officer's main job functions are as follows:

1. Enforce all Federal, State and local laws.
2. Investigate and report all criminal law violations that occur on school grounds.
3. Intervention into situations that may lead to conflicts.
4. High visability thus resulting in suppression of criminal activity.
5. Enforce school board safe school policies.

The campus police officer can be an important part of a safe schools program.

However, there are several problems that arise when law enforcement and educators try to achieve the same goal of safe schools. The lack of understanding and communication can cause serious problems for both the campus police officer and the school administrator. To avoid these problems school and law enforcement administrators should develop policies and procedures that specifically define the scope of duties for the campus police officer and clearly define who will be in charge of a criminal situation. Both the school administrator and the campus police officer should become aware of these policies and then gain a understanding of each others role in providing for a safe school climate.

One of the major problems that school law enforcement has had to face has not been crime itself but trying to work with school administrators who want to supervise the actions of a police officer and to decide what crimes will be investigated and who will be arrested. School administrators, citing the Texas Education Code Site Based Management Directive, claim that they have the authority to supervise the actions of any police officer who is assigned to their school. Site based management gives the school administrator the ability to control the school campus operations including the hiring of teachers and staff. The school administrator has taken the

site based management system one step further in their supervision of the campus police officer.

An example of this problem occurred in a school district near Houston. A campus police officer was advised of an assault on a teacher. The teacher wanted the officer to file a police report on the matter and arrest the student that assaulted her. The principal became involved in the matter and tried to get the teacher not to file on the student. The teacher advised the officer that she still wanted to file assault charges. The officer presented the case to the District Attorney who accepted the charge. The officer arrested the student for assault. The principal disciplined the officer for filing the charges without his permission. The officer appealed the discipline to the local school board. The school board agreed with the officer and removed the discipline record from the officer's file. To resolve this problem, the 74th Legislature amended the Texas Education Code, Sec. 37.081. The amendment requires only licensed police officers, Chief of police or his designee can supervise school district police officers.²¹

The principal over stepped his authority by interfering with the teacher's right to file charges and the responsibility of the campus officer to enforce the law. Because of these types of situations with school administrators, the Texas Legislature amended section 39.02 of the penal code to make it unlawful for a school principal to

coerce or prevent a person from informing law enforcement of a criminal act.²²

Law enforcement's role in safe schools will continue to grow as long as youth crime and violence continue to disrupt the educational environment. However, without a clear understanding of what the role is of the law enforcement officer and the effectiveness of law enforcement will be limited.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Evaluation results show that the Conflict Management Program can be successful if implemented properly. The following suggestions should be considered when implementing a conflict management program:

Examine current school environment. Include information on the level of tension; the kind of number of student conflicts, ways conflicts are handled and the effectiveness of the current approach.

Present conflict management program to the school administrator. In the presentation, state the objective of the program. Sample objective:

1. To decrease tension, hostility, conflict and violence in school.
2. To enable students to build cooperation with other students, parents and teachers.
3. To teach students communication problem solving and conflict resolution skills.
4. To enable students to exercise responsibility for improving their school environment.

Describe how the program works. List how students are selected and trained. After training, describe how the students are used in helping other students resolve their conflicts. Show how students are supervised by faculty and are able to discuss problems with faculty supervisors.

The final point in the presentation is how the program will be implemented. Explain how faculty members will work in pairs as trainers and coordinators. All faculty members must be educated about the program so that the program will receive total cooperation. A successful conflict management program requires all parties to understand the program. Without this total committment, the program will not be successful.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (S.A.P.)

In the last four years, Student Assistance Programs have gained acceptance in many school districts. The basic function of a S.A.P. is prevention, early identification and initial action or intervention.

S.A.P.'s are basically set-up to incorporate all persons who are a part of the educational environment. This includes not only educators but also parents, business leaders and law enforcement officers who are involved with schools. The individuals are set up as a core team that will provide the leadership in the student assistance program.

The core team will review and help plan a comprehensive prevention program that will deal with the multitude of problems that today's youth are facing. The core team will receive training, in all aspects of drug and alcohol abuse, child abuse and other type social problems that may be adversely affecting a student.

Once the core team is in place, it shall be the responsibility of the school's administrators to:

Advise the student of the availability of the student assistance program.

Refer to the program, any student who requests help or is in need of help.

Cooperate with the core team in developing treatment plans.

Coordinate on-going training and awareness programs for all staff and community leaders.

When a student requests help from the S.A.P., members of the program will meet with the student to determine the student's needs. A plan of action is developed that will involve the student and their parents in an effective program that will assist the student through the problems they are facing. The S.A.P. member will implement and monitor the program. Once the program is complete, the S.A.P. members will evaluate the results and make follow-up evaluations during the recovery time.

In the Spring Branch Independent School District, all four of the senior high schools have S.A.P. Each school has shown varying degrees of success. The school that has had the greatest success has had a total commitment from all parties involved. The S.A.P. can be a benefit to all students who are in need of help. However, without support from all persons in the school's educational community, the program will falter and fail. In order to avoid the failure of a S.A.P., the core team must conduct a yearly self-examination to determine areas of deficiency and then make the needed corrections.

IV. CONCLUSION

School safety is a major concern to both law enforcement officials and educators. The methods used to provide for safe schools may vary from community to community, but one aspect remains the same and that is that cooperation and understanding between school and law enforcement officers must be the primary concern of both groups.

Law enforcement officers must become aware of how an education system operates. They must understand the environment that educators are required to work in and the laws that educators must follow. Law enforcement officers should become aware of the Education Code and the provisions in the code that provide for safe schools. Law enforcement officers must be able to adapt to the educational environment and learn to enforce the laws in a manner that builds cooperation between educators and the officers.

The use of specialized school district police departments is one avenue that law enforcement has moved into the school environment to successfully enforce the laws in order to provide safe schools. School district police officers are more in tune with how schools function than outside law enforcement agencies, because they are responsible to school officials for their actions.

Local law enforcement agencies are also becoming more

involved within the school setting. Many school districts are entering into agreements with the local agencies to provide law enforcement in the schools. School resource officers are now working in many Texas schools. As these officers blend into the school setting, they are becoming aware of the needs of school administrators and are also gaining a understanding of how schools function.

Both types of school related law enforcement are important to the safety of the students and staff who work and learn in the Texas schools. Both systems will continue to grow as the demands for safe schools continue to rise.

For the school administration, the role of schools is evolving. The administrator must not only conduct the everyday general educational responsibilities but must also be a peace keeper, consultant and problem solver when it comes to school safety issues. Just as the law enforcement officer or administrator must become aware of the school administration's role and responsibility, the school administration should have a basic understanding of how the criminal justice system works. They should become aware of the Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedures as it relates to the duties and responsibilities of peace officers and their own responsibilities to report crime to the proper law enforcement agency.

The days of school administrators handling criminal matters "in house" without proper notification is over. Many

law enforcement agencies are refusing to take the confiscated drugs and weapons that the administration has acquired during the school years unless the officers have a person to go with the item. In some cases, school administrators have been charged with criminal offenses for failure to report child abuse cases that occur on their campuses.

School law enforcement and administrators must work together with a clear understanding of what each one's role and responsibilities are. One way this can be done is through a training program that will teach the education community how to work with law enforcement. An identical program for law enforcement is also needed. With both sides learning to better understand each other, the goal of safe schools will be met with much more efficiency and results.

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GANG ASSESSMENT & PLANNING GUIDE

LEVELS OF GANG ACTIVITY

GANG PREVENTION/INTERVENTION PROCESS

Level 1	No Known Gang Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have some existing gang prevention & education programs • Recreation, employment & other programs for youth • Strong sense of community/family • Minimum crime/delinquency 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain existing programs/priority • Reinforce positive attitudes for family, home, community & the laws • Maintain strong business/civic interaction
Level 2	Limited Gang Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gangs near your community; sporadic gang crimes/graffiti • Limited gang intrusion • General indifference/denial • Community passive/"let others respond" 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share gang intelligence and program information • School & community prevention/education programs • Increase sports/other community activities • Graffiti abatement efforts • Anti-gang public information campaign
Level 3	Emerging Gang Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One or more gangs in area • Local schools & parks are hangouts • Loss of community identity/pride • Limited short-term counter measures • Increase in gang crimes 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop & implement target area strategies • Specialized gang suppression/abatement • Community mobilization ("Reclaim the Community") • Parent education/accountability • Job placement (youth-at-risk)
Level 4	Community In Crisis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major gang activity/drive by's • Parks & schools dominated by gangs • Community living in fear • Increase in truancy/dropouts/crime • Police overburdened 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop & implement major community mobilization efforts • Collaboration between community groups, anti-gang professionals/law enforcement • "Reclaim the Schools, Parks, Kids" campaign
Level 5	Gang-Controlled Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gangs dominate most of daily life • Tax base eroded/businesses flee • An "illegal" economy thrives • General breakdown of family/community • Institutional response to gangs overwhelmed 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declare gang "state of emergency" • Majority of efforts left to professionals • Develop a block-by-block effort • Selected resident/law enforcement patrols

GANG ASSESSMENT TOOL

Responding to the presence of gangs on school campuses requires an awareness of the complex issues that evolve into gang membership, a readiness to be prepared "just in case" and a decisive pledge to actively protect the interest of the majority-those who want an education in a secure environment. Often a school administrator will not recognize the preliminary signs of gang activity. Some see admission of gang presence as a personal failing rather than a community problem.

The National School Safety Center has developed the Gang Assessment Tool to help communities overcome the problem of denial and determine the extent of gang and gang-related activity in the vicinity of a school. Each "yes" answer will score the number of points following the question.

- ✓ Do you have graffiti on or near your campus? (5)
- ✓ Do you have crossed-out graffiti on or near your campus? (10)
- ✓ Do your students wear colors, jewelry, clothing, flash hand signals or display other behavior that may be gang-related? (10)
- ✓ Are drugs available near your school? (5)
- ✓ Has there been a significant increase in the number of physical confrontations/stare downs within the past twelve months in or around your school? (5)
- ✓ Is there an increasing presence of weapons in your community? (10)
- ✓ Are beepers, pagers or cellular phones used by your students? (10)
- ✓ Have you had a drive-by shooting at or around your school? (15)
- ✓ Have you had a "show-by" display of weapons at or around your school? (10)
- ✓ Is the truancy rate of your school increasing? (5)
- ✓ Are there increasing numbers of racial incidents occurring in your community or school? (5)
- ✓ Is there a history of gangs in your community? (10)
- ✓ Is there an increasing presence of "informal social groups" with unusual names, like the "Woodland Heights Posse," "Rip Off and Rule," "Females Simply Chillin," or "Kappa Phi Nasty?" (15)

Point values should be totaled. The following scores will indicate the level of need for a school security review: 0-15 points, no significant gang problem; 20-40 points, an emerging gang problem; 45-60 points, a significant gang problem for which a gang prevention and gang intervention plan should be developed; 65 points or higher, an acute gang problem that merits a total gang prevention intervention and suppression program.