School Violence Prevention:

Strategies to Keep Schools Safe (Unabridged)

by Alexander Volokh with Lisa Snell

Part 1

Introduction

> "Have you had a rebellion lately, eh, eh?"
>
> -George III (1760-1820) to Eton public school boys

School violence is a serious problem, especially in public schools. Improving the quality of American education is difficult without also addressing school violence, since regardless of how good the teachers or curriculum are, violence makes it difficult for students to learn.

School violence wears many faces. It includes gang activity, locker thefts, bullying and intimidation, gun use, assault—just about anything that produces a victim. Violence is perpetrated against students, teachers, and staff, and ranges from intentional vendettas to accidental killings of bystanders. Often, discussions of school violence are lumped together with discussions of school discipline generally, as both involve questions of how to maintain order in a school.

We divide school violence-prevention methods into three classes—measures related to school management (that is, related to discipline and punishment), measures related to environmental modification (for instance, video cameras, security guards, and uniforms), and educational and curriculum-based measures (for instance, conflict-resolution and gang-prevention programs). All methods have their advantages and disadvantages.

Our research leads us to the following conclusions:

There is no one-size-fits-all solution. As William Modzeleski of the U.S. Department of Education put it, "There is no one program, no silver bullet, so that you can get one program up and say, Here it is if you put this program in your school, you are going to resolve violence." If all schools were the same, in demographically similar neighborhoods, with similar crime rates in the surrounding community, with similar-quality teachers and similarly committed staffs, and similar budgetary constraints, then we could feel safe advocating a common policy for all schools. But schools are self-evidently not like that. The ideal violence-prevention policy will likely be different for each school.

For most anti-violence interventions, evidence of effectiveness is either sparse or mixed. Many

programs have been imperfectly monitored or evaluated, so few data on results exist. Those programs that have been monitored work in some cases and not in other cases.

Yet programs that "don't work" in some overall sense may work at individual schools. Every case study of an anti-violence program that works at some school should be an individual cause for rejoicing, even if we wouldn't want to mandate that same program everywhere. Since programs work in some places and not in others, the only reasonable agenda for fighting school violence is to encourage individual schools to experiment and to find what "works" in their particular circumstances.

As in any field, out of the many hot, new solutions, some are real, and some are unsubstantiated fads. Moreover, since school violence research is sparse and mixed and since there are so many variables that it is even difficult to recognize success or failure-the most reliable way of distinguishing between the real and the faddish is to subject individual schools, in their experimentation, to the discipline of competition. Schools choose their anti-violence programs; parents choose their children's schools.

Many traditional anti-violence remedies, mostly those related to discipline and punishment, have been limited at public schools, either legislatively or judicially (through constitutional interpretation). This is not because these methods should not be used at schools at all if parents choose their children's school, they should be able to delegate authority to schools to use discipline measures, up to and including corporal punishment. But these methods have been limited at public schools because the government must provide safeguards against the abuse of its power in circumstances where education is compulsory and attendance at specific schools is mandatory. These safeguards involve notice and hearing requirements and other procedural roadblocks to punishment—all necessary, given the mandatory and monopoly nature of the service, but all making it difficult for schools to effectively choose a disciplinarian approach. These constraints on public schools may be one reason why private schools have less violence than public schools, and it may be one reason to encourage private schools as educational providers.

This paper concludes with a discussion of what some private schools are doing, including the results of our interviews with principals of several Catholic schools. We further suggest that compulsory education laws may be contributing to violence in public schools.

Our general conclusion is to encourage innovation and experimentation in schools through decentralization and deregulation. Incentives matter, so effectively addressing school violence must include some level of parental choice, and an emphasis on private, voluntary, contractual methods rather than compulsory ones.

Part 2

Background

A. The Extent of the Problem

In 1940, public school teachers ranked the top seven disciplinary problems at public schools. Public school teachers ranked the top problems again in 1990. A comparative glance at the two lists, shown in Table 2-1, does not give any actual data regarding the incidence of the problems detailed, but is nonetheless instructive.

Table 2-1: Public School Teachers Rate The Top Disciplinary Problems	
1940	1990
• Talking out of turn	• Drug abuse
• Chewing gum	• Alcohol abuse
• Making noise	• Pregnancy
• Running in the hall	• Suicide
• Cutting in line	• Rape
• Dress code violations	• Robbery
• Littering	• Assault

As one elementary student eloquently and succinctly put it, "My perfect school would have everything except violence things." "Violence things," or, as most researchers prefer to call it, "school violence," is a broad term, which includes, but is not limited to, assault (with or without weapons), threats of force, bomb threats, sexual assault, bullying or intimidation, arson, extortion, theft, hazing, and gang activity. The Uniform Discipline Reporting System provides a useful list of discipline problems, from the merely annoying to the violent (see Table 2-2).

The total number of crimes committed per year in or near the 85,000 U.S. public schools has been estimated at around 3 million. Many students feel unsafe in schools. A high school student explains, "I dislike having to attend a school where there is so much violence. Our school has a big gang problem. At times I don't feel I'm safe, which is my constitutional right!" The statement is oblique and not quite accurate, but it's the thought that counts. Student drawings of the perfect school often include police helicopters and security personnel. "People who fight would be locked up," one student suggests. Many teachers feel the same way. As a middle school teacher put it, "You're on constant management and police patrol. If you let up your guard for a second, you don't know what's going to happen in the room. I try to maintain high standards in my room and I will not allow anything to go

on that will infringe on a child's safety, but I go home drained because you can never rest or relax. You step outside your room for the four-minute passing, you're on more patrol than you are within your four walls."

Table 2-2: National Center for the Study of Corporal Punishment and Alternatives Uniform Discipline Reporting System (Offense Details)	
1940	1990
Defiance	06–Physical sexual harassment, molestation
• 01–Failiure to follow specific instructions by a person in authority	• 07–Sexual assault, including attempted and completed rape
• 02–Arguing beyond acceptable limits	• 08–Assault with a gun
• 03–Raising of voice beyond acceptable limits	• 09–Assault with knife
• 04–Use of profane language	• 10–Assault with weapon other than gun or knife
• 05–Display of an obscene gesture	• 11–Other
• 06–Refusal to follow a school rule	Fighting Between Students
07–Dishonesty in dealing with another person	• 01–Hitting, punching, kicking, choking, etc.
• 08–Creating a disturbance	• 02–Making verbal or gestural threats
• 09–Leaving the classroom without permission	• 03–Verbal tauning
Defacing School Property	04–Slapping, poking, pushing
• 01–Littering	• 05–Other
• 02–Creating graffiti	Activities Interfering with School Performance
03–Throwing books	• 01–Not completing assignment, homework, etc.

• 04–Purposely destroying school property	• 02–Excessive talking in class
• 05–Accidentally destroying school property	• 03–Inattentiveness in class
• 06–Throwing other objects (specify in written note)	• 04–Not prepared for activity
• 07–Pulling fire alarm	• 05–Failure to return to/from parent
• 08–Setting a fire	• 06–Creation of disturbance
• 09–Other	• 07–Leaving classroom without permission
Illegal Activities	• 08–Carrying a beeper
• 01–Stealing	• 09–Other
• 02–Tresspassing	Breaking Miscellaneous School Rules
03–Possession of weapon	• 01–Smoking
• 04–Extortion	• 02–Leaving school grounds without permission
• 05–Gambling	• 03–Making excessive noise
• 06–Possession or use of drug	• 04–Tardiness
• 07–Selling drugs	• 05–Truancy
• 08–Other	• 06–Cutting class
Assault or Abuse	07–Loitering
• 01–Hitting, punching, or kicking	• 08–Use of profane language
• 02–Making verbal or gestural threats	• 09–Use of obscene gesture
• 03–Reckless endangerment (e.g. shooting gun in public, speeding on school grounds, setting off fire-crackers)	• 10–Dishonesty in dealing with another person • 11–Other

• 04–Unneccessary use of force	
05–Verbal sexual harassment	

But horror stories and personal testimonials aside, the one constant in school violence literature is that it is hard to pin down the extent of the problem. We will repeatedly point out that differences in the results of different studies could indicate actual differences in school violence between different groups or in different places, or they could be by-products of different survey designs or question wordings. Different surveys often define victimization slightly differently, and/or refer to a different timeframe ("Have you ever been victimized?", "Have you been victimized at least once within the past year?", "within the past month?"), or interview different populations. We will therefore merely present the main results on the extent of school violence from a few authoritative studies.

Table 2-3: Types Of Violence: Victims and Perpetrators				
	% Of Student Victims	% Of Student Perpetrators	Perpetrators' Gender	
			Male	Female
Verbal insults	60	50	60	40
Threats	26	23	34	12
Pushing, shoving, grabbing, slapping	43	42	54	30
Kicking, biting, hitting with a fist	24	26	37	15
Threats with a knife or gun	4	5	8	3
Using a knife or firing a gun	2	3	6	1
Theft	43	1	2	1
Other	2	14	18	9

According to the National Crime Victimization Survey Report, conducted in 1989 and printed in

1991, about 9 percent of all students were victimized at school at least once during a six-month period (see Table 2-3). For all main groups, the rate of violent victimization hovers around 2 percent, while the rate of property crime hovers around 7–8 percent. These numbers seem to hold, regardless of gender or race. Hispanic students were less likely to be victims of property crimes. Victimization rates are similar in junior high and high schools, though they seem to peak among 13- and 14-year-olds (eighth and ninth graders). Overall crime rates are higher among students who have moved frequently, and seem to weakly increase with increasing income (mainly because of increased property crimes). Victimization rates also seem to be largely independent of whether the student lives in a central city, suburb, or rural area.

On the other hand, according to the MetLife survey, 23 percent of students (30 percent of male students, 16 percent of female students) and 11 percent of teachers have been victimized in or around school. Student reports of whether they were victimized, and of whether they themselves victimized someone, are given in Table 2-4.

The numbers in the MetLife survey are higher than the numbers in the National Crime Victimization Survey. This is probably due to the fact that the MetLife survey does not limit itself to a six-month period, but instead asks whether a student was ever victimized at school. The data may thus be consistent. It is, in theory, possible that 9 percent of students were attacked in the last six months, and 23 percent have ever been attacked. However, self-reported data has its problems. If only 23 percent of students have ever been victims of a violent act, then how can 24 percent have been kicked, bitten, or hit with a fist, and how can 43 percent have been pushed, shoved, grabbed, or slapped just in the past year? The students may be inconsistent, or rather it may be that many do not consider certain forms of rough behavior to fall under the definition of a "violent act."

Table 2-4: Students Reporting at Least One Victimization at School, by Personal and Family Characteristics				
Student Characteristics	Total Number of Students	Percent of Students Reporting Victimization at School		
		Total	Violent	Property
Sex				
• Male	11,166,316	9	2	7
• Female	10,387,776	9	2	8
Race				

• White	17,306,626	9	2	7
• Black	3,449,488	8	2	7
• Other	797,978	10	2*	8
Hispanic Origin				
• Hispanic	2,026,968	7	3	5
• Non-Hispanic	19,452,697	9	2	8
• Not Ascertained	74,428	3*	--	3*
Age				
• 12	3,220,891	9	2	7
• 13	3,318,714	10	2	8
• 14	3,264,574	11	2	9
• 15	3,214,109	9	3	7
• 16	3,275,002	9	2	7

• 17	3,273,628	8	1	7
• 18	1,755,825	5	1*	4
• 19	231,348	2*	--	2*
Number of times family moved in last 5 years				
• None	18,905,538	8	2	7
• Once	845,345	9	2*	7
• Twice	610,312	13	3*	11
• 3 or More	1,141,555	15	6	9
• Note Ascertained	51,343	5*	5*	--
Family Income				
• < $7,500	2,041,418	8	2	6
• $7,500 – $9,999	791,086	4	1*	3
• $10,000 – $14,999	1,823,150	9	3	7

• $15,000 – $24,999	3,772,445	8	1	8
• $25,000 – $29,999	1,845,313	8	2	7
• $30,000 – $49,999	5,798,448	10	2	8
• $50,000 and over	3,498,382	11	2	9
• Not Ascertained	1,983,849	7	3	5
Place of Residence				
• Central City	3,816,321	10	2	8
• Suburbs	10,089,207	9	2	7
• Non-Metropolitan Area	5,648,564	8	1	7

Source: Bastian and Taylor, School Crime, p. 1

The National Household Education Survey asked sixth through twelfth graders to report on the incidence of violence during the 1992–93 school year; the information was collected before the end of the school year, from January to April 1993. Seventy-one percent of students in the sixth through twelfth grades know about bullying, physical attack, or robbery at their schools (see Table 2-5). If we break this number down by type, bullying accounts for the greatest share (56 percent), followed by physical attack (43 percent) and robbery (12 percent). Over half of all students have witnessed at least one instance of victimization; a quarter worry about it happening to them. A third have witnessed a physical attack, and a tenth worry about it. As far as actual victimization goes, 12 percent of students

have been victimized; 8 percent were bullied, 4 percent were physically attacked, and 1 percent were robbed.

Table 2-5: Sixth- Through Twelfth-Graders' Reports Of The Occurrence, Witnessing, Worrying About, Or Victimization, By Selected Incidents: 1993				
	Occurred	Witnessed	Worried About	Happened to Students
Bulling, Physical Attack, or Robbery	71%	56%	25%	12%
Bullying	56%	42%	18%	8%
Physical Attack	43%	33%	10%	4%
Robbery	12%	6%	6%	1%

Source: Mary Jo Nolin, Elizabeth Davies, and Kathryn Chandler, *Student Victimization at School: Statistics in Brief*, National Center for Education Statistics, Report No. NCES-95-204, October 1995, figure 1, p. 2, citing U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, 1993.

B. Secondary Effects of School Violence

The effect of school violence is broader than actual victimization statistics suggest. Violence, in any setting, is a problem. The problem is compounded when it pertains to schools, because violent behavior and actions take away from the educational process. In their own words—"Some of my classes are really rowdy," said a student from Seattle, "and it's hard to concentrate." "They just are loud and disrupting the whole class," said a student from Chicago about some of her classmates. "The teacher is not able to teach. This is the real ignorant people."

Moreover, violence affects the behavior of students, who act differently to avoid the threat of violence. Some students take a special route to get to school; some stay away from certain places in the school or on school grounds; some stay away from some school-related events; some deliberately stay in groups; and some sometimes stay home. One South Pasadena [Florida] woman says that when her now college-age son was attending a local high school, he was afraid of getting roughed up in the public school restrooms. The boy regularly sneaked home to go to the bathroom and then went back to school. A Haitian boy from a lower-tier New York high school described how he survived: "I gave them the impression I was somewhat dumb . . . . I set my own trend . . . . Some people would mock me and I would ignore them. Then they would look at me funny . . . . I would act eccentric."

The cost of violence in society at large (i.e., purchases of security systems, carrying of guns, enrollment in self-defense classes, and avoidance of certain streets at certain times) is measured not only by actual harm, but by expenditures to avoid harm, and by the general disruption of people's lives. Students who spend their time thinking about violence, and rearranging their life to avoid violence, are spending valuable "brain cells," which could otherwise be spent on learning or fun, and are foregoing the pleasure that they would have gotten by frequenting the places that they now avoid.

Many students believe restrooms are unsafe, and some have persistent health problems because they are afraid to use restrooms. In one elementary school, students watched a lot of television because they were afraid of going outside; the fears they report range from being abducted to being caught in a drive-by shooting. Seventeen percent of those surveyed in a November 1994 Starch Roper poll want to change schools, and 7 percent have stayed home or skipped classes because they are afraid of violence. The Justice Department estimated in 1993 that 160,000 children occasionally miss school because of intimidation or fear of bodily harm.

C. Some Unclear Trends

We should neither minimize nor exaggerate the problem of school violence. Violence is not unique to schools, nor did it begin in the postwar era, despite the movie The Blackboard Jungle, which suggested that juvenile delinquency and disruption of classes was a new phenomenon. Misbehavior, violence, and disruption have been recurrent themes in schools for centuries, and school officials have rarely been happy with student behavior. Youth misbehavior is discussed in clay tablets from Sumer written in 2000 B.C. Schoolchildren in 17th-century France were often armed; they dueled, brawled, mutinied, and beat teachers. Schoolmasters feared for their lives, and others were afraid to walk past schools for fear of being attacked. Student mutinies, strikes, and violence were also frequent in English public schools between 1775 and 1836; schoolmasters occasionally sought assistance by the military. In 1797, some boys at Rugby, who had been ordered to pay for damages they had done to a tradesman, responded by blowing up the door of the headmaster's office, setting fire to his books and to school desks, and withdrawing to an island in a nearby lake. British constables finally took the island through force.

American schools, historically, have also had their share of violence, sex, drugs, and gambling. In colonial times, students mutinied at over 300 district schools every year, chasing off or locking out the teacher. One observer commented in 1837 (a year when nearly 400 schools in Massachusetts were broken up as a result of disciplinary problems), "There is as little disposition on the part of the American children to obey the uncontrollable will of their masters as on the part of their fathers to submit to the mandates of kings." It is hard to trace the evolution of school violence, since reporting procedures have never been consistent. But some analysts are not sure that student misbehavior was worse in the 1970s than it was in the 1890s.

There is some regional evidence and anecdotal evidence that juvenile violence, including school violence, is increasing. Some researchers suggest that juvenile violent crime has tripled since 1960. Studies in individual states, such as Wisconsin and North Carolina, indicate substantial increases in youth violence or school violence. (It is hard to compare such studies, though, since youth violence and school violence, while overlapping, are not exactly the same problem.) Some studies within the school system also find that violence has increased; 82 percent of school districts reported an increase in violence over the previous 5 years, and over 80 percent of officials in the American Federation of Teachers considered teenage violence a bigger problem today than in the past. Anecdotal evidence from students concurs. "I come in," says an Alabama teen, "and I see guys pulling up their shirts showing me guns. And then I go to the movies, and there's someone on the corner selling weed, and I try to stay away from that stuff." Another teen in the same group: "I think it's harder today because there's more stuff to do wrong. They didn't have as many people killing each other, and people fighting as much, at least I don't think so from what I've heard. There's just more stuff to get into.

There wasn't as much damage to be done."

But the evidence is mixed on whether school violence has actually been increasing or decreasing. Since few surveys are consistent with one another, any difference in findings can easily be explained by differences in survey format, question wording, surveyed audience, or definitions of violence. The percentage of twelfth graders who reported that they were victimized at school during the previous year seems to have stayed more or less constant since 1980 (see Figure 2-1). Moreover, the Safe School Study of the late 1970s, one of the most important studies of school violence, concluded that while school violence was "considerably more serious than it was 15 years ago," it was "about the same as it was 5 years ago."

Despite the fear of school violence, crime rates are generally much lower in schools than in society at large (see Table 2-6). "I think and know I'm not that safe in school," a middle school student says, "because people come up and say things to you and if you stay quiet they'll start pushing you around. I really don't feel safe anywhere but in my house and with my family to protect me." But according to Irwin Hyman of Temple University, schools are one of the safest institutions for children and youth, while homes are more dangerous places to be than is generally thought.

Whether overall school violence is increasing or decreasing, though, the mix of violence seems to have changed, in the direction of more violent crimes. Twenty percent of suburban high school students surveyed by Tulane researchers Joseph Sheley and M. Dwayne Smith endorsed shooting someone "who has stolen something from you," and 8 percent believed that it is all right to shoot a person "who had done something to offend or insult you." Sheley and Smith conclude that "one is struck less by the armament [among today's teenagers] than by the evident willingness to pull the trigger."

Some researchers in Texas and Wisconsin, discussing conditions under which it is acceptable to hit or kill someone else, discovered reasons like the following: "If someone stared at me weird; if someone bullies me in front of my friends; if someone calls my mother names." This is in addition to reasons like self-defense, or retaliation for violence initiated against oneself or a family member. Many students never even mention reporting violence or murder to the police or school authorities; "if there's an argument, kids should just settle it after school among themselves." Few students in workshops conducted by these researchers mentioned alternatives to violence, and most ignored a student who said, "it is not O.K. to hit anyone." These children value peer approval, which often involves escalating aggression, and personal and swift revenge.

The breakdown of violence between junior and senior high schools is unclear. At the time of the Safe Schools Study in the late 1970s, junior high schools were substantially more violent than senior high schools. Today, the National Crime Victimization Survey shows about the same percentages of victimization in junior and senior high school (though violence seems slightly higher in junior high). In the MetLife survey, though, high school students were more likely to report being victimized and engaging in violent behavior than junior high school students (see Table 2-7).

Table 2-6: Violent Crime Rates (Per 100,000 Persons) in Selected Areas, 1991-1993		
Area	Overall Crime Rate	School Crime Rate
Homicide		
• Dallas	48.60	0.71
• Houston	36.50	0.48
• Chicago	29.30	0.24
• Los Angeles	29.30	0.12
• Florida	8.70	0.91
• Dade County, Fla.	17.38	1.02

• Hillsborough County, Fla.	8.35	0.00
Aggravated Assault		
• Dallas	1308.00	16.00
• Houston	657.00	38.00
• Chicago	1502.00	325.00
• Los Angeles	1324.00	47.00
• Florida	350.80	21.39
• Dade County, Fla.	907.90	115.30
• Hillsborough County, Fla.	470.90	5.51
Robbery		
• Florida	350.80	21.39
• Dade County, Fla.	907.90	115.30
• Hillsborough County, Fla.	470.90	5.51
Rape		

• Florida	101.10	7.82
• Dade County, Fla.	85.02	7.82
• Hillsborough County, Fla.	100.60	0.00

Source: Adapted from *Irwin A. Hyman, School Discipline and School Violence* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1997), Tables 10.2 and 10.3, pp. 312–313. Texas, Chicago, and Los Angeles overall numbers are from 1991. Texas school numbers are from 1993. Chicago and Los Angeles school numbers are from 1992. All Florida numbers are from 1993.

Table 2-7: Violent Victimization, Reported By Victims And Perpetrators, By Junior And Senior High School Level, 1993				
	Victims		Perpetrators	
	Jr Hi	Sr Hi	Jr Hi	Sr Hi
Verbal insults	66	66	58	69
Threats	28	39	23	38
Pushing, shoving, grabbing, slapping	39	38	45	62
Kicking, biting, hitting with a fist	20	25	29	42
Threats with a knife or gun	4	15	3	15
Using a knife or firing a gun	0	5	1	2
Theft	35	38	9	32
Threatening a teacher	—	—	3	23

Source: Adapted from Jackson Toby, "*The Schools,*" *in Crime*, ed. James Q. Wilson and Joan Petersilla (1995), ch. 7, p. 8, citing *The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher: Violence in*

America's Public Schools (1993), conducted for Metropolitan Life Insurance Company by Louis Harris and Associates, Inc.

According to the National Household Education Survey, perceptions and occurrences of school violence varied significantly according to grade level, but these generally decreased in high school. For instance, more elementary (29 percent) and middle and junior high school students (34 percent) said they worried about becoming victims at school than did senior high school students (20 percent). Seventeen percent of middle or junior high school students reported being personally victimized, compared to 8 percent of senior high school students (see Table 2-8).

Table 2-8: Percentage of Students Reporting The Occurence of, Witness of, Worry About, or Victimization Through Robbery, Bullying, or Physical Attack at School, by School Grade Level: 1993				
	Occurred	Witnessed	Worried About	Happened To Student
Elementary school	60%	47%	29%	13%
Middle or junior high school	77%	60%	34%	17%
Senior high school	71%	58%	20%	8%
Combined school	60%	45%	19%	11%

Source: Mary Jo Nolin, Elizabeth Davies, and Kathryn Chandler, *Student Victimization at School: Statistics in Brief*, National Center for Education Statistics, Report No. NCES-95-204, October 1995, table 1, p. 7, citing U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, 1993.

Breaking actual victimization in that study down by type of victimization, we find that differences in bullying account for most of the difference between junior and senior high schools (see Table 2-9).

Table 2-9: Percentage of Students Reporting Victimization at School, by School Grade Level: 1993			
	Bullying	Physical Attack	Robbery
Elementary school	10%	4%	1%
Middle or junior high school	12%	5%	2%
Senior high school	6%	3%	1%
Combined school	9%	3%	1%

Source: Mary Jo Nolin, Elizabeth Davies, and Kathryn Chandler, *Student Victimization at School: Statistics in Brief*, National Center for Education Statistics, Report No. NCES-95-204, October 1995, table 2, p. 8, citing U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, 1993.

The breakdown of violence among inner cities, suburbs, and rural areas is also unclear. Inner cities are reputed to be more violent than suburbs or rural areas, but regional and anecdotal evidence indicates that the problem is not limited to inner cities. Sixty-four percent of urban principals said violence increased in their schools from 1988 to 1993; these numbers were 54 percent in suburbs and 43 percent in rural areas. A Texas study reported suburban violence rates that were twice as high as urban violence rates in Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio. According to a Roper Starch survey, students in small cities, suburbs, or rural areas are less likely than those in big cities to feel that teen violence is serious in their neighborhood, but they are equally likely to believe that it is a problem at their school. The percentage of students who say they carry a weapon to school is higher in small cities (17 percent) than in rural areas (12 percent), and almost twice as high in small cities as in large cities (9 percent).

D. The Extent of Weapon Possession

According to the national MetLife survey in 1993, teachers, on average, believed that three percent of students regularly carried weapons to school. Students believed, on average, that the average was 13 percent, while law enforcement officials believed it was eight percent. Onetime L.A. Councilman (now L.A. County Supervisor) Zev Yaroslavsky used to say that his daughter Mina, who graduated from North Hollywood High School in 1996, saw guns on campus "all the time." Others believe, however, that either Zev or Mina was exaggerating. But estimates and survey results differ so widely that it is difficult to reliably talk about the extent of weapon possession. Part of the difference is due to differences in survey design and wording; much of the difference stems from differences in the area and population surveyed, and the time period under consideration. Some estimates of weapon carrying are obtained from numbers of weapons confiscated. For instance, the number of weapons seized in Virginia schools rose from 348 in 1992–93 to 373 in 1993–94, and drug seizures also increased during the same period. This rise could indicate increased weapon-carrying (possible, since other measures of violence, such as assaults, also increased), but it could also indicate more effective policing.

Most estimates of weapon-carrying range from 1 to 10 percent, though some estimates in certain areas can be much higher—20 percent in some urban high schools, including New York, and more in some other inner-city areas, and possibly over 50 percent in some lower-tier New York high schools. Studies of male students in inner-city high schools near juvenile correctional facilities found gun ownership rates of 22 percent. Of this sample, 12 percent carried guns all or most of the time, while 23 percent carried a gun "now and then." Estimates of the average number of guns in schools range from 100,000 to 270,000 per day. Many of these weapons are stolen and cheaply available on the street.

Students carry guns both for protection and for self-esteem and peer acceptance. When surveyed, students tend to stress self-esteem and peer acceptance, while law enforcement officials tend to stress protection. (Teachers were divided on this question.) The Department of Justice estimates that about

430,000 students took some weapon to school for protection at least once during a six-month period in 1988–89.

Only 18 percent of gun violence reported for 1992 was related to gangs or drugs; 39 percent related to long-standing arguments, fights over possessions, and relationship (boyfriend-girlfriend) arguments.

Some schools have dealt with the problem of guns in schools through punitive means (by suspending or expelling students for carrying a weapon), by heightening security (e.g., metal detectors), or by educating people on how to react to gun crimes in such a way as to produce a minimum of bloodshed—for instance, lecturing teachers on guns and violence and telling them what to do if a student pulls a gun in class (don't make any fast moves and follow the student's orders).

E. Congressional Initiatives

Congress has passed a number of laws designed to deal with school violence. These include:

- The Safe Schools Act of 1994, under which the Department of Education makes grants to school districts with high violence rates for educational activities to reduce violence. For fiscal year 1994, about $20 million was appropriated through this program.
- The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1994, under which the Department of Education makes grants to states to prevent violence in and around schools, and to reduce drug and alcohol use. Allowable activities include violence-prevention and education programs for students, training and technical assistance, and comprehensive violence and drug prevention programs. Fiscal year 1995 appropriations through this program were about $482 million.
- The Family and Community Endeavor Schools Act and the Community Schools Youth Services and Supervision Grant Program of 1994. Under the act, the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services make grants to improve the overall development of at-risk children in poor, high-crime communities. Allowable programs include after-school programs that provide homework assistance and educational, social, and athletic activities. The fiscal year 1995 appropriation for the Family and Community Endeavor Schools Program Act was $11 million, while the Community Schools Youth Services and Supervision Grant Program Act appropriation was $26 million.

This is not an exhaustive list. These congressional initiatives all have a laudable goal—to reduce school violence—but they should be viewed with caution.

These initiatives result from a determination by Congress that some activities are better than others. The grants are mainly targeted to those particular specified activities. The result of these grant programs is to encourage those activities, at the expense of non-approved alternatives. This paper, however, will question the claim of any particular program to produce across-the-board reductions in violence rates. Some programs may produce marginal benefits at best; others may be downright harmful; some programs that do not work well may produce a false sense of security and may forestall the development of other, better options. The thesis of this paper is that there is no one-size-fits-all solution, and that the correct anti-violence policy is probably different for each school. Congress is in no position to determine what this program is for each school. Nor has Congress determined whether encouraging any school to adopt these particular policies would be beneficial or harmful.

It is often said that Congress's natural inclination is to "throw money at a problem." Does throwing money at a problem actually do harm? In these cases, it might. Public schools (especially in poor areas, where their clientele, generally unable to afford private school tuition, is essentially captive) have a perverse incentive to exaggerate their violence problem to get more grant money. It is difficult to determine how often this occurs, but what is clear is that when Congress provides a generous grant program, many schools find it foolish to turn away what essentially seems like free money. "Getting a federal grant has become simple," says John Devine: "just start your own conflict-resolution program."

If one's view is that there is a direct relationship between the amount of money spent and the results in terms of school violence reductions, this is all to the good. However, if the relationship is more complicated, and depends more on the actual nature of the school's problems, the attitudes of the administration, support from the community, and other factors, the amount of money is not necessarily beneficial. If schools set up programs for no other reason than for extra funding, the programs may end up being downright harmful. Many hastily instituted programs use untrained staff and give the administration a false sense of security. Some schools do best with an inexpensive program, as the experience of some public schools and many private and religious schools suggests. (One of the authors of this paper went to a private, secular school, where tuition was approximately equal to California per-pupil public school expenditure, with no security guards, no metal detectors, and never even one word about violence prevention in any class or in any part of the curriculum.) Some schools that would be best served, for example, by adopting a hard-line disciplinarian approach may be tempted to forego such an approach, in favor of a more expensive, and less effective, violence-prevention curriculum.

F. Relation to Social Trends and to Crime in Society at Large

This paper's primary thrust is to explore school policies and public policy related to education, to find out what policies can reduce school violence. But one obvious question related to school violence is to what extent this is a school problem. The literature on school violence is rife with complaints that "this is all of society's problem" and that society is so violent that much school violence is merely expected. In a society where violence is a pervasive part of life, the schools bear less blame for school violence, and in such a society, the schools would probably not be seen as the primary place to stem violence. On the other hand, in a generally peaceful society where schools are violent, schools would both bear more of the blame and be expected to solve the problem to a greater extent.

While we accept that there are many causes of violence, and that general crime-prevention policies have their place in society (and that successful crime-prevention policies will probably also reduce school violence), we concentrate on what schools can do about the problem. We do not expect schools to reduce violence to zero, nor do we expect schools to solve all our problems, but this will not stop us from exploring the effectiveness of different school policies.

What else, then, can explain school violence rates?

First, one must realize the diversity of types of school violence. Some schools are located in violent, economically depressed neighborhoods. In Thomas Jefferson High School, in Brooklyn—where in January 1992, two students were fatally shot by an angry 15-year-old classmate—drug dealers

routinely kill one another and innocent bystanders. Some of this violence flows into the school. Over 50 Thomas Jefferson students died in the early 1990s, some in the school itself. But not all school violence happens in violent communities. In 1989, Patrick Purdy, an alcoholic drifter, walked onto the playground of Cleveland Elementary School in Stockton, Calif., and without warning began to spray the playground with AK–47 bullets. Five children died and 29 people were wounded. This act, while tragic, is hard to predict or prevent, and the school is not to blame in it.

This is different from everyday school violence, for instance, students beating up a classmate in the restroom, or a student forcing another to give them their lunch money or jewelry. As Rutgers University criminologist Jackson Toby puts it, "everyday school violence is more predictable than the sensational incidents that get widespread media attention, because everyday school violence is caused at least in part by educational policies and procedures governing schools and by how those policies are implemented in individual schools."

The following possible sources of school violence have been suggested:

- Poverty, which lays a foundation of anger and discontent;
- Illegitimacy and the breakdown of families, which lead children to seek the stability and caring environments of gangs;
- Domestic violence and child abuse, which foster learning and behavior problems, frustration, and retaliation;
- Society-wide violence rates and juvenile violence rates, which spill over into the school;
- The drug culture and its violent distribution network, which encourage students to arm themselves;
- Immigration, especially from countries where formal education is less valued;
- Population mobility, which creates an atmosphere of anonymity;
- Discrimination, which exacerbates the frustration and anger of minority students;
- Violent cultural imagery, from TV shows to sympathetic news coverage of militaristic foreign policy, which numbs children to the effects of violence;
- Materialism and advertising, which creates a culture where children are manipulated and feel exploited;
- Competitiveness and high parent expectations, which make children lose the identity and uniqueness of childhood before their time.

These possible explanations (presented in no particular order) run the gamut from the plausible to the ridiculous. But we will let readers decide for themselves which are which. They are outside of the scope of this paper, and we doubt that some of them significantly explain school violence. School violence is complicated and determined by many factors. This does not mean that schools should do nothing, nor does it mean that schools should do everything. Schools cannot mandate love, make poor people rich, break up gangs, or change the composition of TV programming.

Increasing violence rates may or may not indicate a failing school-violence policy; even a successful policy might lead to increased violence, if it is implemented in a community where other factors would otherwise make violence rates increase even faster. Add this to the already sparse set of valid evaluations of school-violence programs, and the conclusion emerges that we should be extremely careful before deciding whether a policy does or does not work.

G. Categorizing Violence-Prevention Programs

This paper categorizes violence-prevention programs in the following way:

- *School-management–based programs*. These are programs that focus on discipline and student behavior, alternative schools, and cooperative relationships with police and law enforcement.
- *Environmental modification*. These are programs based on changing student behavior by changing students' social or physical environment. This includes installing metal detectors and hiring security guards, but also includes larger-scale programs like setting up after-school programs and increasing or decreasing school size.
- *Educational and curriculum-based programs*. These are programs based on teaching students behavior-management skills and nonviolent conflict resolution.

There is great variation in the types of programs instituted at different schools (see Table 2-10). Among the more than 750 programs implemented were alternative schools or programs for disruptive students (66 percent), conflict-resolution and peer-mediation training (61 percent), and safe havens for students (10 percent).

Unfortunately, evaluation of these programs has been slim. The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, after a survey of such programs, remarked that "it is impossible to state with conviction which types of violence prevention programs or intervention strategies reviewed are the most effective." Few violence prevention programs even collect evaluation data. In many programs, data collection is limited to measuring the attitudes of program participants, or measuring the number of services provided. Most programs, in fact, only aim at changing attitudes or social skills, though the relationship between these and actual violent behavior has not been firmly established. This has important implications for education policy. All evidence—or, rather, the lack thereof—points toward adopting a policy that does not mandate one sort of program across the board. Even where evidence exists, it is often inconclusive, and for good reason—programs will work in some places, but not in others, because schools and students are different.

Table 2-10: School Districts' Responses To Violence				
	Percent Responding that they used strategy			
Strategy	Overall	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Suspension	78	85	78	75
Student conduct/discipline code	76	87	79	70
Collaboration with other agencies	73	93	73	62
Expulsion	72	85	68	70

School board policy	71	76	69	71
Alternative programs or schools	66	85	66	57
Staff development	62	74	66	52
Conflict resolution/mediation training/peer mediation	61	82	63	49
Locker searches	50	64	43	49
Closed campus for lunch	44	46	48	37
Mentoring programs	43	65	44	31
Home-school linkages	42	55	45	32
Dress code	41	52	42	33
Law-related education programs	39	57	36	33
Multicultural sensitivity training	39	62	49	18
Parent skill training	38	51	39	28
Search and seizure	36	51	35	28
Security personnel in schools	36	65	40	18
Support groups	36	47	37	28
Student photo identification system	32	41	39	20
Gun-free school zones	31	46	26	26
Specialized curriculum	27	48	25	18
Drug-detecting dogs	24	27	18	27
Work opportunities	23	34	21	19
Telephones in classrooms	22	31	21	16

Metal detectors	15	39	10	6
Volunteer parent patrols	13	17	14	8
Closed-circuit television	11	19	8	8
Establishing safe havens for students	10	16	9	6

Source: National School Boards Association (NSBA)

We have found no evidence that any one anti-violence program works best. Instead, we have found the truism validated that a one-size-fits-all policy fits no one. The best way to reduce school violence—separating the programs that work from those that work less well, or are the results of the latest academic fads—seems to be to encourage different schools to innovate and try out different approaches, conduct proper evaluations and make the information available to parents as a marketing tool, and to subject schools to the discipline of competition to enhance both parental options and accountability.

Part 3

School Management

The first set of methods we address for dealing with school violence goes under the general term of "school management." These methods include everything related to discipline and punishment administered at the school site—the rules and regulations by which the school is managed, and the consequences of violating these rules.

"Love is a boy, by poets styl'd; Then spare the rod and spoil the child," Samuel Butler wrote in 1664 in his poem *Hudibras*. The belief in discipline and punishment as an effective way to mold moral beings is, of course, older than the 17th century. "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it from him," the book of Proverbs tells us. The notion is, besides, intuitively plausible, and has produced tolerably good effects over the centuries.

While discipline and punishment have been—and continue to be—quite unpopular among academics, especially in the last 30 or so years, the practice itself is making a bit of a comeback. Educators on the front lines, parents, and politicians have observed the increase in violence at public schools since the 1960s, have observed the contemporary decrease in the belief in and use of discipline and punishment to maintain order, and have wondered whether there is not somewhat of a connection between the two.

Still, the civil-rights revolution, while not as fervent as it once was, has left its mark on public schools, in the form of various due process restrictions that often make it hard to actually punish troublemakers in meaningful ways. While this may be bad news from the point of view of public school administrators interested in adopting punitive measures, it is also a necessary consequence of compulsory education and mandated attendance at specific schools. When the government provides a service, it is also obligated to provide the service fairly, and assure safeguards against abuses of power. Private schools are provided voluntarily, using private money, and are chosen, and so are not subject to due process restrictions; private schools can, by and large, contract with whomever they like on whatever terms they like. But due process considerations must be considered for all government services—whether it be the disbursing of Social Security checks, the awarding of driver's licenses, or the choosing of contractors. The fact that education is compulsory and that attendance at a particular school is assigned makes the burden on the government all the greater. It is not by accident that public schools have a hard time suspending and expelling students. The alternative —government-run schools that punish left and right and expel students frivolously—would be even worse. This may also be one of many reasons why public schools generally have a worse record of violence than private schools.

A. Discipline and Punishment

1. The student civil-rights revolution—in the academy and the courts

Discipline is somewhat unpopular in the academic literature; according to critics, punishment (even the nonphysical kind) can damage relationships, create resentment, compel rather than encourage obedience, and may promote school absenteeism, dropping out, school vandalism, and anxiety. Some anti-discipline educational analysts, following Dewey, are reluctant to endorse imposing teacher values on students, and would limit teachers to the role of bringing out students' natural curiosity which, it is claimed, would make disciplinary problems moot. Some are informed by a world-view that sees schools as primarily agents of state compulsion, and students as essentially benign and kept down by hegemonic middle-class values, non-multicultural curricula, boring classes, and rote learning—and that sees the ideal education as one that questions the status quo and strives to reduce inequality in society. Much educational literature downplays student-initiated violence, or avoids it altogether, and in any event generally does not bring up the possibility of disapprovingly confronting the student during an act of misbehavior. Anti-disciplinarian language can occasionally be rather strident; many education experts disliked the film *Lean on Me*, which portrayed a tough, disciplinarian principal, because they thought it sent an overly simplistic message about the efficacy of discipline and expulsion to reduce violence and increase student achievement. "Its popularity shows how badly the public can be deceived when offered easy solutions to its fears of teenagers, blacks, Hispanics, drugs, and crime," wrote one professor. "In fact, the public support [Joe] Clark has gained for his tough-guy antics may well demonstrate the fragility of democracy."

A number of disciplinary methods are subject to legal limits. These include suspension, expulsion, and corporal punishment. Public embarrassment has been successfully challenged in court. So has grade reduction, once used routinely as retaliation for disciplinary infractions; some courts have treated grades as a constitutionally protected "property interest." Dress codes and locker searches have been challenged as well. (These are discussed later in the paper.) School officials are also potentially liable for civil damages. Administrators are now increasingly wary of disciplining students.

Punishment is often challenged for constitutional reasons, to avoid government abuse, and also because a major mission of schools is said to be social adjustment. Disabled students are a special case, which is addressed in a following section. It is also sometimes said (not a little bit patronizingly) that enforcing standards of conduct would have a disparate impact on minorities. (Though, as Al Shanker noted, "Actually it would: They would benefit disproportionately.") Courts are likely to side with the student they see than with the other, orderly students, whom they do not see. And many cases do not even get into court, because principals are reluctant to participate in what they know will likely be a losing cause, and in any event will give them a bad reputation and will be highly expensive.

The student civil-rights revolution of the 1970s, after which the relationship between the school and the student was increasingly mediated by the courts—which usually sided with unruly students and assumed bad faith on the part of teachers—created obvious problems for school disciplinarians. When Hawaii implemented new regulations to deal with the due process requirements newly established in *Goss v. Lopez* (1975), principals were unanimously dissatisfied. First, because of the evidence, notice, and hearing requirements for long-term suspensions, principals downgraded serious offenses to deal with them more quickly and with informal hearings. Second, because principals could not impose many short suspensions in a single semester if the suspensions cumulatively amounted to more than ten days, students who had already served ten days could misbehave with impunity. And third, the requirement to provide "alternative education" for students expelled or suspended for more than ten days was prohibitively expensive.

Even critics of this extension of civil rights, such as Jackson Toby and John Hood, admit that autocratic excesses, worthy of curbing, occurred under the old system. But if discipline is really effective in stemming violence, which many believe, limitations on punishment may partly explain schools' difficulties. Thus, part of the increase in violence at public schools may have occurred for excellent reason. We should note that such civil-rights problems are largely nonexistent for private schools. The primary reason for this phenomenon is the fact that private schools are entirely chosen, and parents can delegate their own legitimate disciplinary authority to whomever they like. Therefore, by contracting with parents, private schools have much greater latitude in setting disciplinary policy.

2. Order and authority

While discipline is unpopular in academic circles, some educators see discipline "as a kindness on the part of teachers, a necessary part of growing up, as necessary to personal growth," in the words of Stephen Wallis, an assistant principal at Howard High School in Howard County, Md. We suspect that even most critics of discipline still, at heart, believe in discipline. Even in a school with their choice of exemplary preventive programs, some violent crime may occur; if so, there must be some way of dealing with it—in the same way that dealing with "root causes" of crime in no way precludes maintaining a police force and prison system. To say that schools should not rely primarily on punitive discipline does not mean that there should be no punitive discipline at all. The success of any non-punitive measures requires, as a foundation, that students who are likely to be violent know that they will be made to answer for their misbehavior. The strictness of the discipline and the severity of the punishment, of course, is a matter on which reasonable people may disagree.

It is widely agreed that schools are a breeding ground for moral and societal norms. "Children will spend seven hours a day, 35 hours a week, nine months out of the year for 12 years of their life in

school. Therefore, the schools are the last and, in too many cases, the only institution remaining to develop productive and just members of society." When schools develop good values in students, violence is prevented; bullying and other destructive behaviors set up competing moral value systems that schools should resist.

It follows that if schools truly want to promote orderly conduct, one way to do so may be to instill in students the moral value of orderly conduct and obedience to one's superiors, in particular teachers and administrators. According to school violence researcher Jackson Toby, the prevalence of disorder—and its offspring, violence—is directly related to how much respect students have for authority figures in the school. Such respect acts as an informal control on behavior; typically, formal controls, like metal detectors, are only instituted when violence has already become a major problem—that is, when the informal controls have broken down.

Disorder occurs when many students do not recognize the legitimacy of school rules and violate them often, and when many students defy the authority of the enforcers of these rules, that is, teachers and staff. Disorder can take the form of students arriving late, students wandering the halls, or even graffiti and litter. All of these invite students to test the limits further; in fact, testing the rules becomes part of the fun. Students who are not stopped when they wear hats, litter, carry forbidden beepers, or write on walls, soon challenge more important rules, like "Thou shalt not assault other students." John Devine calls such a situation—where the school disciplinary structure yields whenever it is pushed—the "marshmallow effect."

In the extreme, street culture ("You gotta hurt them and hurt them first") takes over. The Safe School study described one such urban school, Carver Junior High School, where the students had taken over: "Each individual teacher, in effect, was on his or her own, and the extent to which the teachers were able to control their own classrooms determined not only their own success but also their own safety. Teachers would lock themselves and their classes into their rooms, opening the doors only for class changes and to eject unruly students. Students who were put out of class were supposed to report to the principal's office but in fact roamed the halls at will. The school's corridors, the gym, the playground, and the bathrooms were essentially under the control of the students. The principal and his assistants, who were also elderly, remained in the administrative offices throughout the day and responded only when problems actually were brought to them by the teachers."

Once, teachers did act as peacekeepers, actively enforcing discipline both in and out of class. This role of teachers has continuously decreased in recent decades. Partly, the change in teachers' roles results from the erosion of the notion of discipline generally. When many of students' actions no longer carry real consequences, teachers lose moral authority, are less likely to be able to control their classes, and are more likely to be ineffective and demoralized. The loss of moral authority, as well as the resulting teacher burnout and absenteeism, can be seen as a cause of disorder and violence. But the change in teachers' roles is also an effect of disorder and violence. Interfering with disorderly conduct has become potentially more dangerous for teachers. The Safe School survey reported that 28 percent of teachers in large cities hesitated to confront misbehaving students at least once in the month before the survey. (This number was 18 percent in smaller cities, 11 percent in suburban schools, and 7 percent in rural schools.) Teachers' unions have discouraged teachers from trying to enforce discipline and have pushed for greater reliance, in certain violent, inner-city schools, on security measures such as guards and metal detectors. John Devine, director of the School Partnership

Program at the New York University School of Education, and author of Maximum Security, says that teachers are now given the impression that "dealing with violence and aggressive students is a subspecialty that they had better not get involved with because they are neither trained in this area nor given that specific responsibility."

The disciplinary measures described in this section should be viewed in light of the general concept of order. Punishment—whether suspension, corporal punishment, or anything else—is often seen as ineffective and creating resentment, but punishment does not exist in a vacuum. Punishment can be imposed within a climate where children respect authority figures and see the rules, and their corresponding punishments, as basically fair. Then, punishment can be credibly threatened and will carry moral force, as corporal punishment does in some families. On the other hand, if informal controls have broken down and any discipline is considered akin to police brutality, force may provoke retaliation from students, even when there are security guards, and from their parents. The Safe School report tells of an inner-city high school principal who, in a fire drill, tried to direct a student down a flight of stairs by grabbing his arm from behind and pushing him. The student "turned and hit the principal in the eye, breaking his glasses and bruising his face around the eye." The teachers in the school and the principal himself decided in retrospect that he had violated a cardinal rule: Don't put hands on students.

3. The variety of forms of discipline

Jackson Toby tells of a school, described in the Safe School study, which, unlike most of the schools described in the study, was orderly. The school was in an all-black, run-down neighborhood in a large city, with high unemployment and a history of riots. The study describes the disciplinary procedures at that school:

This formula worked partly because the school's students were young and because the school, being small, was more tightly knit than if it had been larger. But its disciplinary policy also depended on three factors: monitoring students' behavior, identifying rule violations when they occur, and punishing misbehavior. The precise form of punishment is less important than the expression of strong disapproval.

Of course, this is not the only form of school discipline. Some districts rely more on the law enforcement system. In 1983, the Anaheim Union High School District (AUHSD) established an incident reporting system called School Management and Resource Teams (SMART), which encompasses 26,000 students. It is funded through the school district and the National Institute of Justice. SMART is a school management program that lets administrators know easily, through a computerized data collection system, how many policy violations, offenses, and crimes were committed in each school. SMART teams analyze data from the system and try to develop solutions to discipline problems.

About a third of AUHSD students have limited English proficiency, and about a third eat lunch at reduced price or for free. AUHSD began experiencing drug, crime, and gang problems in the late 1970s, and gang activity increased significantly from 1985 to 1994. In 1985, AUHSD communities had 8 gangs with about 179 members; today there are over 50 gangs with about 2,100 members. AUHSD has already adopted a number of anti-crime strategies, including a zero-tolerance policy for

gangs, weapons, and drugs; an antigang dress code and closed-campus policy; and non-uniformed community volunteers as security guards. Two police officers work full-time on gang prevention in the district. In an innovative move, AUHSD has placed mobile homes on several campuses, where retired people live rent-free in exchange for helping deter after-hours vandalism.

The SMART program evolved out of AUHSD efforts, dating from the late 1970s, to identify, categorize, log, and deal with campus incidents. In 1983, the U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, and the U.S. Department of Education jointly funded SMART as a pilot in AUHSD and two other sites. SMART consists of a safety and security audit of district policies and practices affecting drugs, crime, discipline, and safety; sets up a computerized incident profiling system (IPS); establishes teams of students, parents, teachers, staff, law enforcement, and administrators who meet monthly to analyze the data, devise actions, and monitor results; and coordinates activities among different government agencies.

IPS data include rule violations like a failure to serve detention, and law violations like robbery, sex offenses, drug or weapons possession, assaults, and property crimes. SMART teams compile and analyze IPS data to identify and characterize discipline problems, and to assess the consequences of actions taken; they identify areas and times when the most disruption occurs, and also pinpoint problem students. SMART teams then produce and monitor a plan concentrating on one topic at a time, for instance locker thefts. A district SMART team follows a similar process when analyzing districtwide information. AUHSD has also developed ways to deal with particular students or systemic problems, including peer tutoring, alcohol- and drug-prevention programs, crisis intervention, and conflict-resolution training.

District statistics show that incidents on campuses have decreased gradually, while community crime has increased. In schools, 55 percent of the 37 main categories of incidents have declined since 1993 (and only 9 categories increased); police activity on campus dropped 51 percent from spring 1993 to 1994, and the total costs of incidents dropped 66 percent from fall 1991 to 1993. Categories that declined include assaults, battery, robbery, possession of destructive devices, property crimes, forgery, tardiness, weapons, failure to serve detention, throwing objects, threats/intimidation, profanity, tobacco, and off-campus incidents. Another evaluation found that school board members, the superintendent, and staff strongly supported and encouraged the SMART program; that AUHSD officials developed a depth of understanding and experience well beyond the core elements of SMART; and, most importantly, that schools using SMART had less problems with graffiti, fighting, failure to attend detention, and defiance of authority.

These two systems—in the anonymous school from the Safe Schools study, and in the AUHSD—are quite different. One relies on informal methods of moral suasion, to stop incidents from happening in the first place, and to punish them severely by "making a fuss" if they do happen, even if the violation itself is not inherently serious. The other relies on computers and law enforcement, and seems highly technical. Certainly, AUHSD officials have said that developing the SMART computer system, with its data files, reports, and computer-scannable forms, has had its share of troubles. And SMART costs money; major ongoing expenses for 18 sites during 1993-94 totaled about $37,000. This includes site coordinator stipends ($16,000), materials and supplies ($4,000), and a part-time program specialist ($17,000). On the other hand, success is its own justification. AUHSD officials believe SMART has succeeded because it adopted a systematic, problem-solving approach to crime and discipline

problems; focused on local control; used mostly existing resources, with minimal additional funding; developed positive working relationships among educators, parents, students, local leaders, and community agencies; and focused on "school problems, not problem schools."

B. Some Disciplinary Methods

1. Behavior and discipline codes

One way of setting norms of behavior is to adopt a written policy clearly prohibiting certain activities, like bringing weapons or harassing other students. "Zero-tolerance" laws, discussed in the next section, also prohibit a range of activities, from drugs to beepers.

The discipline code movement began in the 1970s, when policy makers decided that schools should be guided by behavior codes, embodying a reasonably uniform set of rules and penalties, to bring consistency and order to schools' reactions to misbehavior. In the 1980s, state departments of education were encouraged to develop model discipline codes. Behavior codes typically come with enforcement mechanisms attached, or they are toothless. In a district in Idaho, students who misbehave on the school bus can lose their riding privileges. The code, drafted by parents, bus drivers, administrators, and students, bans profane language, fighting, tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or weapons. Zero-tolerance laws often mandate suspension or expulsion as a penalty.

Some teachers unions, such as the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), have endorsed developing such codes of student conduct. "Unless you have order . . . not much learning will go on," according to former AFT president, the late Albert Shanker. In 1993, the Texas branch of AFT, the TFT, launched a campaign calling for zero tolerance for certain kinds of violent and disruptive behavior, which ultimately led to the passage of the Texas Safe Schools Act in 1995. The law requires districts to remove violent students from regular classrooms and put them in alternative educational settings; it allows teachers to remove consistently disruptive students from their classes; and it prohibits administrators from automatically returning that student. The law also set up an appeal committee to guard against abuses of the law by teachers.

A TFT study found that since the law was adopted, the number of teachers reporting threats of violence to students was down by 6 percent, the number reporting threats of violence to themselves was down by 33 percent, the number reporting assaults by students on other students was down by 10 percent, and the number saying that they had been assaulted in the past year was down by 35 percent. The numbers are still high—59 percent of teachers still report threats of physical violence to students, and 47 percent report assaults by students on other students—but the trend is downward, even with only 35 percent enforcement by school districts.

While behavior codes are popular, there is little evidence that they have markedly decreased misbehavior; school disruptions and violence did not decrease and emphasis on rules and punishment increased. Moreover, in their reaching after consistency, the codes may, in some cases, sacrifice fair treatment. Irwin Hyman tells the story of an inner-city high school student, Kisha, with no prior history of disciplinary infractions, who was suspended from school in the mid-1980s for defacing school property. Her offense consisted of covering up the words "Kisha is a slut" in the girls' restroom with a marker—arguably not the sort of offense the writers of the discipline code had in mind, though perhaps a punishable offense nonetheless. The assistant principal, however, took a legalistic attitude

toward the discipline code, and said, "Rules are rules and they are not made to be broken. You broke the rules, and you are suspended for three days." Two days were added to the suspension when Kisha told the principal, "Go ahead and suspend me for the whole year. I have had enough of you and your stupid rules."

The mixed evidence on behavior codes suggests that strict policies need not be adopted on the state level. They can just as well be adopted school by school, and in fact this may be preferable, since schools differ and a blanket zero-tolerance policy, especially for some of the smaller disruptions, may or may not be appropriate, given a particular school's student body.

2. Suspension and expulsion

Suspension or expulsion is a common way of addressing behaviors that fall under the many "zero-tolerance" laws in different states. With the passage of the Gun-Free Schools Act in October 1994, states were required to implement an expulsion policy for any student who brings a weapon to school. Compliance with this mandate allows states to continue getting federal funds under the Elementary and Secondary School Act of 1965. Zero-tolerance policies in different states are summarized in Appendix 2–1, and rules on pagers and cellular phones are summarized in Table 3-1.

Unfortunately, data are scant on the effectiveness of increasing suspensions (or expulsions, which can be thought of as simply very long-term suspensions). Intuition suggests, however, that at least in the school itself, removing a disruptive student from a school will have the salutary effect of removing a source of disruption to other students. In-school suspensions may be more effective than out-of-school suspensions, because students who do not care about school may see out-of-school suspensions as week-long holidays. But how much does suspension change the behavior of such students? "Suspension does not work. Students don't care whether they are suspended or not," noted one respondent to a National School Boards Association survey.

The use of suspension and expulsion is often controversial. In Fairfax County, Va., a 1993 "mob assault" policy, that requires principals to recommend expulsion for all students who participate in a group attack (regardless of who threw a punch or used a weapon), has been criticized both for racial bias and for the possibility that it will be used to unfairly target spectators. At West Potomac High School, several parents of children who were expelled after a mob assault say their children were the victims of overzealous administrators who assumed their children were part of the attack because of their race. Critics of the policy cited significant increases of the expulsion recommendation rates for blacks, Asians, and Hispanics, over the past several years, while rates for white students dropped. On the other hand, gangs in Fairfax County tend to be made up of racial minorities. "The people being caught are the people committing the crimes," according to police lieutenant Lee Williams, who is also black and a parent of two boys in Fairfax schools.

Zero-tolerance laws—whether for drugs, weapons, or inappropriate behavior—have also spawned their share of absurd horror stories. In Fairborn, Ohio, 13-year-old honor student Erica Taylor was suspended for ten days and recommended for expulsion for taking Midol, an over-the-counter menstrual-cramp reliever. (The girl who gave it to her was given nine days.) An 11-year-old girl in South Carolina was suspended and arrested for taking a kitchen knife to school so she could cut her chicken. (Officials only found out about the knife because the girl asked her teacher whether she

could use it.) A kindergartner in Virginia was suspended for bringing a beeper to school. A six-year-old from North Carolina was expelled in 1996 for violating the school's sexual harassment code by kissing a female classmate.

Table 3-1: Pagers/Cellular Phones				
State	Citation	Partial Text	Penalty	Notes
Alabama	§16-1-2	"No board of education shall permit any pupil to carry a pocket pager or electronic communication device."	Suspensions or expulsion	Exceptions made for medical emergencies.
Connecticut	Enacted HB 6898/SB 291	"Prohibits from using beepers in school." Limits the use of cellular phones by students in public schools.		"Specified circumstances"
Georgia	§20-2-1183	"No are, county, or independent board of education shall permit a pocket pager or electronic communication device."	In-school suspension	Exceptions made for medical emergencies.
Illinois	§105 ILCS 510-21.10	"No student shall have in his or her possession any pocket pager or similar electronic paging device while in any school building."	Appropriate discipline	Exceptions may be granted by the school board.
Indiana	Enacted HB 1202	Provides that possession or use of telephone beepers and	Expulsion or suspension	Exceptions may be granted by school board.

		portable telephones on school premises is grounds for the student's expulsion or suspension.		
Maryland	§26-104	"An individual may not possess a portable pager on public school property."	"The school authorities shall immediately contact a law enforcement officer" penalty no exceeding $2,500 or 6 months imprisonment, or both.	Exceptions may be granted by school board.
Michigan	§380.1303	"The board of a school district shall not permit any pupil to carry a pocket pager or electronic communication device."		Exceptions may be granted by school board.
New Jersey	§2C: 33-19	"Bringing or possessing remotely activated paging device by student on property used for school purposes."	Disorderly persons offense	School board can authorize, express written permission.
Oklahoma	§24-101.1	"The board of education of each school district shall establish and implement rules and regulations which prohibit a		School board, with parent, can authorize permission.

		pupil from possessing an electronic paging device while said student is on school property."		
Pennsylvania	§13-1317.1	"The possession by students of telephone paging devices, commonly referred to as bepers, shall be prohibited on school grounds."		Exceptions made for medical emergencies; student working with a fire company or rescue squad
Rhode Island	§16-21.2-11	"Any student enrolled in any secondary	Confiscation of device	School principal can give written permission on case by case basis
South Carolina	§59-63-280	"A student under the age of eighteen in the public schools may not possess a paging device a paging device while on school property."	A peace officer shall be summoned to confiscate the device.	School board can authorize express written permission.
Tennessee	§49-6-4214	"The board of a school district shall not permit any pupil to carry a pocket pager or electronic communication device."	Appropriate penalties	Exceptions made for medical emergencies
Virginia	§18.2-322.1	"Possession of beeper or similar communications		

		device in school."		

Source: Education Commission of the States, Denver, CO, 1996.

The courts have also weighed in on the matter of suspension and expulsion. A range of disciplinary measures, including expulsion, has been successfully challenged in court. In *Goss v. Lopez* (1975), the Supreme Court ruled that students have the right to receive oral or written notice of the charges against them, an explanation of the evidence, and a chance to tell their story. Under current suspension-and-expulsion law, short-term suspensions do not require a formal hearing, but longer suspensions, or expulsions, involve more formal procedures. This is as it should be; students punished in a public school ought to have at least as much protection as motorists who are given speeding tickets. Different constraints apply at a private school; since attendance at a private school is entirely voluntary, it is appropriate that suspension and expulsion procedures be as strict or as lax as agreed on in the contract between the school and the parents.

Procedural limitations make administrators more hesitant to suspend or expel, even when doing so would enhance the quality of education for the other students, and even when administrators might be theoretically able to support their case in a hearing but are unwilling to do so because of the time and expense involved. Another downside is that in reaction to such procedural requirements, public schools adopt bright-line rules, such as zero-tolerance policies, that lead to sadly amusing horror stories like the ones cited above.

3. Criminal penalties

Much school violence—such as theft, assault, on-campus possession of guns and drugs, setting fires—is also criminal in the "real world." Many schools have avoided the use of the police, preferring to rely on their own, internal, disciplinary procedures. But schools are now more likely to treat whatever is a crime outside school as a crime in school, and less likely to decide that "no one was really hurt." They are making greater use of law enforcement and the criminal justice system. Schools are working together with court officials, probation officers, and other professionals, where court officials give administrators information on convicted criminals returning to school, and probation officers are invited to monitor their charges on campus. About ten states have approved or proposed laws to increase the exchange of information about violent students between school districts and law-enforcement agencies.

In 1993, Colorado established a separate penal system for juvenile weapons offenders and made some juvenile records public. Also in 1993, California required that when violent students are moved to new schools under a second-chance program, their records be shared with their new teachers. This action was in response to an incident where a student nearly killed his eighth-grade history teacher. In Connecticut, two special prosecutors were assigned to address a surge of violence in Hartford schools. One commentator has even gone so far as to suggest the use of asset forfeiture laws for prosecution of gang, drug, and weapons activities. This proposal also involves working with local realtors and public housing authorities to establish drug-free lease clauses, written so as to specifically ban drug trafficking and providing for the forfeiture of public housing leases if the lessee is involved in drug trade or use.

In Missouri, on the first day of school in 1995, students were warned that children who commit a crime can be tried as adults. The state's tough new juvenile-crime law requires schools to inform students about the provisions of the law. "Your juvenile record can follow you forever," a brochure given to students notes. "You risk losing the respect and trust of other people." The law also requires police to fingerprint and photograph juveniles accused of felonies, and for the first time opens juvenile-court proceedings to media and public scrutiny. In St. Louis, a task force investigating violence in the city's schools suggested that assaults on teachers be regarded as an automatic felony, similar to assaults on police officers.

Putting children into the criminal justice system has its advantages; if the school's budget is tight, it may benefit from sending wrongdoers into a system that was explicitly designed to deal with such occurrences. It also accords with many people's moral convictions to treat criminals as criminals, regardless of whether they were in school or not. (It also accords with many people's moral sensibilities to treat juvenile criminals as adults.)

A major problem is that the juvenile-justice system is not very effective. Schools are less and less able to get help from the juvenile courts, which are more and more concerned with student defendants' rights. In 1967, the Supreme Court ruled, in In re Gault (1967) that children could only go to juvenile prisons if they had done something that they could be imprisoned for. Formal hearings, involving attorneys, became increasingly common for serious offenses. Some states, like New York and New Jersey, restricted the discretion of juvenile court judges, prohibiting sending a child to prison for "status offenses," like truancy or certain forms of delinquency, which would not be criminal if done by adults.

Juvenile courts often only intervene after serious violence occurs. According to a recent study of juvenile courts, less than one-third of youths accused of violent acts stay in custody; the rest are put on probation or set free. Only 3 percent are tried in adult courts, and even those are often given light punishments, as judges, who routinely see older, more dangerous defendants, are more likely to put children on probation. Thus, Jackson Toby of Rutgers University concludes, "for its own very good reasons, the juvenile justice system does not help the schools appreciably in dealing with disorder."

4. Corporal punishment

Table 3–2 reports the number of paddlings in 1992, in states that allow corporal punishment. In 1995, 27 states prohibited corporal punishment, and 11 states, by local rules, banned corporal punishment for most public-school students. While Catholic schools used to be well-known for using corporal punishment, most Catholic schools today forbid the practice. In 1995, yearly paddlings were estimated at about 750,000. Some states, particularly in the South and Southwest, have recently tried to reinstitute the practice.

The value of corporal punishment as a deterrent to school violence is disputed. Critics charge that "violence breeds violence"; corporal punishment teaches children that violence is an acceptable way to compel behavior, and makes them more likely to be violent themselves. Corporal punishment is often misdirected—while most violence is in higher grades, much corporal punishment occurs at primary and intermediate levels, and is more rarely used against bigger students who might retaliate. Corporal punishment, instead of being used as a last resort, is often used as a first punishment for

nonviolent and minor misbehaviors. Some studies have found that eliminating corporal punishment in a school does not increase misbehavior. Corporal punishment can also, depending on its frequency, duration, and intensity, induce post-traumatic stress disorder in its victims, and the victims themselves may show an increase in absenteeism, apathy, and vandalism. At least one critic has brought up the possible sexual implications to the hitting of teenage girls by male principals.

Table 3–2: Reported Paddlings In Schools*	
Alabama	53,443
Arizona	895*
Arkansas	50,773
Colorado	38*
Delaware	398
District of Columbia	2
Florida	26,619*
Georgia	47,946
Idaho	65*
Indiana	8,756
Kansas	213*
Kentucky	673*
Louisiana	41,673
Mississippi	52,289
Missouri	15,608*
New Mexico	3,960
North Carolina	13,188

On the other hand, at least in the family context, corporal punishment is widely used, and widespread anecdotal evidence, both from parents and from adults who were spanked as children, indicate that, at least in some cases—for instance, when the rules applied are seen as fair—it may be effective, especially when the children involved have an imperfectly developed moral sense. As Mayor David Dinkins put it, when he was nine and stole reflectors to decorate his skateboard: "[My mother and grandmother] "took all my clothes off, stood me in the bathtub and beat me with straps. I have not stolen a reflector since." Moreover, in a survey of Ohio pediatricians and family practitioners, 67 percent supported the use of corporal punishment (70 percent of family practitioners, and 59 percent of pediatricians), and the support for corporal punishment was greatest when the misbehavior was serious or endangered the child (for instance, running into the street).

Whether or not corporal punishment is justified, insurance rates can be high for schools that practice corporal punishment. Child abuse law can also limit a school's punishment options. Some Florida educators who used legal corporal punishment in school have found themselves listed as child abusers. And corporal punishment is also subject to legal limits. Federal courts are divided on corporal punishment; while sensitive to the possibilities of abuse of government power, they also defer somewhat to schools. They may rule against corporal punishment in disproportionately severe, malicious, and "shocking" instances, but the exact line is unclear. The Supreme Court has held that common-law rights, and criminal law, are adequate to guard against abuse, and so notice and hearing requirements are unnecessary.

And parents have been known to sue over instances of corporal punishment. One lawsuit involved a nine-year-old who, while being held upside-down by her teacher, was struck by the principal with a paddle so split that "when it hit, it clapped and grabbed." In another case, a second-grade teacher tied a pupil's waist and legs to a chair for most of two

Ohio	9,356
Oklahoma	19,184
Pennsylvania	n/a
South Carolina	11,660
Tennessee	50,959
Texas	140,928
Wyoming	32

consecutive days, keeping her from using the bathroom. The teacher described this as "instructional technique," not corporal punishment. In yet a third case, an eight-year-old's arm was broken while he was being paddled. The principal claimed the boy made a twisting movement to avoid a second lick of the paddle; the parents asserted the child had been jerked up off the floor so hard the arm broke. The parents who sue do not always win; some states, like Georgia and Virginia, provide immunity to teachers to spank their students and require that their schools back them in court. But even when the parents lose, a lawsuit can be costly and can create negative publicity for the school and district.

What are the implications for school policy? Certainly, parents are allowed to spank their own children, and, in fact, one of the justifications for allowing corporal punishment in schools is that schools are claiming parental rights. The claim of parental right does not ring entirely true, though. In Georgia, for instance, parents of a sixth grader and a third grader in the Fannin County Elementary School filed a complaint with school officials in the mid-1980s, alleging that their children were being spanked for not doing their homework. Gene Crawford, the local superintendent, explained that "our policy fits the community in which we live. Parents in our community spank their own children."

Essentially, the superintendent in that case was claiming that because many parents spank their children (in circumstances that the parents decide), the school district is justified in assuming that any children can be spanked (in circumstances that the teachers decide). In Fannin County, at least, parents could override the school's presumption by specifically asking that their children not be spanked. In other areas, this may not be the case. In Noble County, Ohio, in 1995, social studies teacher Bill Dimmerling paddled ten-year-old Zebedee Gurewicz until the boy was black and blue. While some called the child "an obnoxious little brat," his mother, Deanna Warner, counters that "it's abuse. If I had done that to my child, I'd be in jail." Warner removed her child from the school and filed a criminal complaint against Dimmerling; a jury acquitted the teacher after 10 minutes of deliberation. The family moved.

If parents choose to enroll their child in a private school that practices corporal punishment, they should be allowed to do so; any action that parents can do legally should be transferable to anyone else through voluntary contract. But when the school is not chosen—as is the case for most public-school students—"parental right" should not be claimed without the parents' explicit consent.

5. Alternative education

Unruly children are often sent to, or required to enroll in, alternative education programs. In recent years, in response to federal law requiring schools to suspend for at least a year those students who carry guns, the New York City school system created a new set of high schools exclusively designed for "very disruptive and violent students." Alternative education programs are a frequent outlet for troublesome children who cannot be kept in a regular school, but who, because of compulsory

education laws, must be educated somehow. In the case of such students, alternative education may improve their learning and their attitudes toward school.

For instance, Stephen Wallis, an assistant principal at Howard High School in Howard County, Md., recommends that problem students join such programs as the Job Corps or the National Guard, and he favors hiring retired military personnel to staff public school one-on-one tutorial programs. "The U.S. armed forces are a superb reserve of talent with science and technology training ideal for kids," he says. Alternative schools in the Tupelo, Miss., Public School District concentrate on extensive behavioral counseling and guidance in collaboration with law enforcement and court system officials, and completely isolate students from the regular school system, not even allowing them to attend regular district football games. In Syracuse, N.Y., alternative schools provide counseling but also require that their students perform community service. Some alternative education proponents favor using college campuses as alternative education settings, on the theory that exposing kids to older, more serious, students will improve their behavior and motivation.

Contrary to popular belief, public schools do not operate all alternative education facilities. Difficult-to-educate students are often sent, at public expense, to private schools who specialize in educating problem children.

There are three main categories of education for difficult-to-educate students: special education for students with disabilities, education for at-risk students, and corrections education. Just over 2 percent of the 5.1 million students with disabilities—107,000 students—attend private and non-public schools at public expense; students with Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED) account for 40 percent of such students. "At-risk" is a broad category which includes dropouts, students with substance abuse problems, and emotionally troubled youth; districts in at least 17 states contract with private alternative schools to serve at-risk students. As for corrections education, about 35,000 adjudicated youths are housed in 2,000 privately operated facilities, including training centers, ranches, shelters, halfway houses, and group homes; many such facilities also provide related services like behavior modification, counseling, and vocational training.

Some critics of alternative schools, though, charge that "all too frequently . . . the 'alternative' involves little more than a watered-down version of the traditional school program, where students are warehoused rather than educated, [where] there is little to distinguish these alternatives from traditional schools." Community college officials criticize the college-as-alternative-setting theory on the grounds that it transfers the problem from high schools to colleges and, moreover, makes high schools look better because a student who participates in a college-based program is counted not as a "dropout," but as a "transfer." Another drawback of such programs is that even good programs have high recidivism rates—often 70 percent or higher. Even "boot camps," which concentrate on military discipline, have high repeat-arrest rates. One successful program, Associated Marine Institutes, which runs 35 programs in 8 states, many involving youths in marine environmental projects, has repeat-arrest rates under 50 percent, but this is still very high.

6. Civil liability

At least six states have passed legislation to hold parents and guardians more responsible for students' behavior. In Alabama, the 1994 Safe School and Drug-free School Policy makes parents and

guardians financially liable for property damage caused by their underage children. In Nevada, the Felonies Committed on School Property law "removes the limitation on the civil liability of parents for the delinquent act of a minor." Teachers have taken disruptive students to court; in some cases, the students and their families have been fined, and the students have been expelled from school. Teachers' unions in Chicago, New York and Miami now urge teachers to sue when a student's behavior becomes intolerable.

> Deborah Sanville, a government teacher at Hayfield High School in Fairfax County, Va., sued a student, obtained a $100 fine against him, and had him expelled for a year. The student had been noisy and verbally abusive toward Sanville, and had almost struck her once. "It was behavior that would not be tolerated at a mall," said Sanville, who was not supported by her school. "Why should it be tolerated in school?"

- The largest such award has gone to Frances Cook, a Spanish teacher in Alexandria, Ky. In 1995, Cook won $25,000 in punitive damages and $8,500 in emotional damages. Junior Andy Bray made frequent references to murder during class and doodled drawings that included women with daggers slashing through their bodies, Ms. Cook said. He also frequently yelled "matar," the Spanish word for "kill," during class. The jury stated that the student "exceeded the bounds of common decency" for his classroom behavior, and for leaving a note after being removed from class, urging other students (his "disciples") to talk "about different methods of murder" and other things that would drive Cook "over the edge" in her classes. Bray received 40 minutes of detention for the note.

In New York City, the United Federation of Teachers reported that physical attacks on teachers and staff were down 23 percent from 1993 to 1994. The union attributed the change to the extensive support it provides teachers, including those suing students. Any benefits from lawsuits against students, of course, should be balanced against their considerable expense.

Meanwhile, there have also been lawsuits of the opposite variety. In 1980, George Deukmejian, then-attorney general of California, sued the L.A. Unified School District, on the theory that if education was compulsory, children should have the right to a safe environment—effectively reversing the logic of Goss v. Lopez, which established that if education was compulsory, children have the right to an education even if they have been charged with violence. Deukmejian lost the suit; the court ruled that how safe schools should be was a political matter best left to the legislative process. In 1982, the year Deukmejian became governor of California, California voters approved Proposition 8, the "Victims' Bill of Rights," which gave students an "inalienable right to attend campuses which are safe, secure and peaceful," and an attendant right to sue unsafe districts. Such lawsuits may be a good idea, even if only on fairness grounds, but it is still unclear whether they are effective in improving school safety or reducing school violence. In July 1992, for instance, the mother of Eric Hawk, a boy who was killed at Surrattsville High School, sued the Prince George's County (Md.) Board of Education for negligence, and won a jury award of $3.1 million. This award was not accompanied by a nationwide rush to improve school security.

C. Students with Disabilities

The civil rights revolution has fundamentally changed the way students in general are disciplined, but

nowhere more so, perhaps, than in the case of handicapped students. In 1975, Congress passed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to guarantee a "free, appropriate public education" for children with disabilities.

Under IDEA, disabled students must also be educated in the least restrictive setting. The Department of Education favors "inclusion" or "mainstreaming," or education together with non-disabled students, where possible. According to the Department of Education, 4.8 million school-age children are disabled; 3.5 million of these fall into broad categories like learning disabilities or speech and language impairments (these categories include dyslexics and the hyperactive). There are also 550,000 mentally retarded children, and under 100,000 are deaf and blind. Some students can be mainstreamed without too much difficulty. But children with Downs syndrome or autism, who need a lot of personal attention—for instance, special diapering rooms for those who are not toilet-trained—and who may be violent must be mainstreamed as well.

If a school district wants to change the student's placement, for instance, if the student is too disruptive to teach in a regular classroom, a lengthy court process may ensue. The court must determine that the school district has made reasonable efforts to accommodate the child in a regular classroom—and these efforts must be recent (having tried two years ago doesn't count). It must also determine that the child would benefit more from a special-education class than from a regular class, and also that including the child in a regular class may have negative effects on other students' education. In the meantime, the student cannot be moved.

Suspensions are also limited by a similar legal process. For suspensions exceeding ten days, the school must get permission from a judge. The court process takes a great deal of time and money; it is often hard to prove that lives are threatened; and IDEA, which places disabled students' self-esteem and inclusion above most other considerations, prevents courts from being sensitive to teachers' concerns. Schools also often have to pay their opponents' attorneys' fees, which can amount to tens of thousands of dollars, and which reduce the school's budget for other activities.

To be exempt from these rules, a district must establish that the misbehavior was unrelated to the disability. This involves applying the notoriously vague "relationship test." There are no firm guidelines, and states vary in their exact tests. Generally, whether the student knew the difference between right and wrong is immaterial. One cannot assume that the misbehavior and the disability are unrelated, even if it seems that way. And the relationship between the misbehavior and the disability need not be direct, but may be attenuated; a student with an orthopedic disability may be more aggressive toward other children as an outcome of frustration and feelings of physical vulnerability. (Not all courts agree with this notion.) Therefore, it is often hard for the school district to treat disabled students the same as non-disabled students in cases of violent behavior.

Some results of that law follow:

- Six students at a public school in Fairfax County, Va., were linked to the discovery of a loaded .357 Magnum handgun. Five were expelled, but the sixth, because of a "writing disability" (unrelated to the offense), stayed in school. According to Jane Timian, a hearing and legal assistant for the Fairfax County School Board, "the student later bragged to teachers and students at the school that he could not be expelled."

- In February 1994, a security guard at El Capitan High School in Lakeside, Calif., saw a gun in a student's car in the school parking lot. The district tried to expel the student, as California law requires, but the boy's parents said he suffered from attention-deficit disorder. (The student had no history of disability, and the parents had never asked that he be evaluated.) Two months later, U.S. District Judge Judith N. Keep of San Diego ruled that the student could not be expelled or moved to another school until he was evaluated. But in her opinion, the judge wrote that IDEA "can be used as a manipulative tool to undercut a school's ability to discipline students and, frankly, I think that these are the kind of situations that can cause [other] parents, if they have any money whatsoever, to remove their children from a public school."

The Supreme Court has ruled that this "stay-put" provision of the law even applies when the student is dangerous. Truly violent behavior is a somewhat new issue for IDEA; generally, the framers of the law had playground fights in mind when they thought about violence by disabled students.

Moreover, while it is possible, though difficult, for a school to remove a student from regular classes, "educational services" must continue, for instance at home or in some alternative setting. The acceptable amount of educational services, and what cost to the school district this would involve, has not been precisely determined.

This whole process, in which disciplinary action is harder to administer for the disabled than for everyone else, raises the possibility that students who are not disabled can claim "kleptomania," "pyromania," or the "Twinkie defense," or that legitimately disabled students can invent a plausible-sounding claim that their unrelated misbehavior in fact stemmed from their disability. Rebecca Sargent of the California School Boards Association testified that in California, cases have doubled in which parents seek referrals to special education only when a student is about to be expelled; "it has resulted in situations where the students who committed the violent acts are returned to sit in the same classroom with those who were victims of their behavior," she said. This tactic has often proven effective in delaying or preventing expulsions and suspensions. In California, a student was able to avoid legal trouble when he was caught selling drugs, because his parents accused his school of "missing" his disability and asked that he be placed in special education. A Tennessee judge also ruled that a high school overstepped its authority when it called police to arrest a special education student.

The double standard at work produces obvious disciplinary problems. When Hawaii implemented IDEA, the Hawaii Board of Education adopted a rule that handicapped children in special education programs could not be expelled or suspended for more than ten days for violating school rules. According to a 1980 *Hawaii Crime Commission report, Violence and Vandalism in the Public Schools of Hawaii*, students classified as "emotionally disturbed" (usually inferred from "acting out" behavior) seemed to be "essentially immune to punishment." While some special-education students have legitimate behavior problems that stem from their disability, others could control themselves if they knew they would be punished. Because of federal zero-tolerance gun law, students who carry guns can be suspended for up to 45 days, whether they are disabled or not—but of course the double standard still applies in non-gun cases.

Some handicaps are indeed independently verifiable—deafness, blindness, motor problems, speech pathologies, or retardation exist regardless of misbehavior. The more ambiguous cases—behavior "disorders" which are inferred from actual misbehavior, without independent psychological

justification—are, of course, more problematic, especially in light of the "attenuated relationship" defense.

Part 4

Environmental Modification

While some violence-prevention strategies focus on disciplinary measures to deter and punish school crime and violence, other strategies focus on changing the school environment. Some of these methods, such as metal detectors, security guards, and video cameras, try to improve behavior by enhancing security. Other methods try to indirectly influence violence rates by changing the general attitudes of the students—these range from dress codes to changing school size to sponsoring after-school activities to changing the culture so that employers demand good performance in high school.

This section will discuss potential advantages and limitations of such methods. While some programs may work in their particular circumstances, they are unlikely to work everywhere, and which, if any, of these methods is used must be decided case by case.

A. Security-Related Solutions

1. Metal detectors

If guns are the problem, metal detectors are one obvious way of solving the problem. In 1992, the New York City Board of Education installed weapons-scanning metal detector systems in the 41 high schools with the highest number of violent incidents, partly to forestall potential lawsuits by students, teachers, and parents. By 1994, the number of New York schools with metal detectors grew to 47, and some schools obtained airport-type ("archway") metal detectors. These were mostly large, crowded neighborhood schools in run-down, violent neighborhoods with high minority populations.

Metal detectors seem to have had their successes. Unannounced use of portable metal detectors was associated with reductions in weapon-carrying at 13 of 15 New York schools, though the exact effect of metal detectors is difficult to determine, since other violence-prevention methods were also used at the time. Generally, use of metal detectors is increasing, even in elementary schools. At least 45 urban systems now screen students with metal detectors. In 1992, the Green Pastures Center in Oklahoma City started screening students after the principal found fifth graders carrying guns on three occasions. In Atlanta, gun seizures declined by more than half in one year, and assault and battery and criminal trespass dropped by 35 percent; school police attributed the decline to the presence of more metal detectors.

But the usefulness of metal detectors in preventing violence is limited. After all, they cannot prevent aggression, but can only detect metal, and not even all of that. Hand-held "wands" are more often used than walk-through detectors; while they are less expensive (on average, $115 versus $2,500),

they are also less effective. Lost time is also a high cost; since it would take hours to screen every student, many schools don't check everyone. Some New York schools only screen one student in nine, though at less crowded times they have been known to scan one in three to five. Even with partial scanning, long waits and bottlenecks are common, and often detract from the educational process; students sometimes come to their first class half an hour late.

Some possible costs of metal detectors and X-ray machines can be more subtle. One black girl at a lower-tier New York high school transferred out of the school (which is a difficult thing to do) because one of the guards had made suggestive remarks as he moved the scanner near her legs. In recent years, more female guards have been hired to interact with girls. Moreover, some have suggested that hand-held scanners are "a technological market of radical suspicion, inimical in every way to the school's historic and humanistic aim of fostering mutual trust, respect, and courtesy," and "the first radical and direct reorganization of the student's body space, now no longer sheltered within a cloistered pedagogical universe, by the technological power of the state." A bit hyperbolic perhaps, but it goes to show that whether technological gadgets are appropriate or not depends in part on the values that each particular school is trying to further.

2. Video cameras

Several analysts have advocated setting up video cameras (closed circuit television) to reduce violence. The assumption behind video cameras is that violence is less likely to occur if it can be seen. Video cameras have been operating on buses for years, but more recently, they have also been suggested for high-traffic areas, like hallways; and places where fights often happen, like parking lots. Some school systems, like the Clark County, Nevada, district, also use handheld video recorders to capture gang fights on film and help convince parents that their students are gang members. Evidence from surveillance cameras has been used to prosecute law-breaking students in court.

Much anecdotal evidence suggests that video cameras have a significant effect on fights, violent crime, and property crime like break-ins, theft, and vandalism.

> The Huntsville, Alabama, school system has used camera surveillance since 1986. According to district officials, the number of burglaries dropped from 10–30 per month to five per year, with a 99 percent apprehension rate. Losses to the school system through fire, theft, and vandalism dropped from $6 million in the five years before installation to "little, if any," and insurance premiums declined, saving the district $700,000 in the first two years of the surveillance policy.

- Schools in Minnesota started installing more cameras after an intruder raped a 15-year-old student at Spring Lake Park High School in 1994. (From February to April 1996, there were also three reported incidents of a man exposing himself to girls.) In Minneapolis, South High School installed nine cameras during Spring break of 1996 and immediately caught two graffiti artists. Vandalism dropped dramatically after the cameras were installed. Moreover, according to principal Bill Sommers, "the lunchroom lady says that her pizza counts are on for the first time in years." In rural Minnesota, locker thefts at Willmar High School declined after eight video cameras were installed in January 1996. Roseville, a 1,500-student Minnesota high school, has 22 surveillance cameras, the most of any Minnesota school. Four of them are in the lunchroom, hidden in black bubbles on the ceiling. When it finishes its $25.5 million

remodeling, it could have up to 35 cameras. "Once in a while," a video screen monitor revealed, "you see kids necking." School officials give the cameras credit for increasing their ability to respond quickly to fights. Says Star-Tribune writer Rob Hotakainen, "There have been no major food fights at Roseville High School since Big Brother arrived."

- In early 1996, Glendale school officials installed video cameras at the entrances and exits to the new classroom building at Glendale High, following acts of vandalism and burglary at the school. Computer equipment had been stolen at Glendale High, in October and November 1995, and on November 1, 1995, arson at Hoover High School caused $3 million in damage and shut down over 30 classrooms. Two years earlier, cameras were installed at district headquarters, where cars had been stolen, and at middle schools, which had been struck by vandals.

There is no uniform rule as to how many cameras, if any, are preferable for a given school. Resources available, and the nature of the problem, can yield widely differing results. For instance, in the Renton School District in Washington state, violent crime is low and the major concerns are car theft, trespassing, drug dealing, and graffiti. Three high schools have four cameras each, primarily monitoring the outside of the school. On the other hand, in Clark County, Nevada, problems are more diverse, and two cameras are used in elementary schools and 10 in secondary schools. Euclid High School, near Cleveland, has 30 cameras for 2,000 students, while Townview in Dallas (see discussion of Townview later in this paper) has 37 for 2,200 students. In Norfolk, Virginia, the school system limits its school to 16 cameras, because any more would require buying multiplexers and other expensive equipment. The reality of school budgets and operations precludes a one-size-fits-all solution.

Video cameras also have their problems. They may reduce violence, though they are only as good as the people doing the surveillance. If—for example, because of tight budgets—no one is available to actually watch the screens, and if this becomes known, video cameras might lose their deterrent value. Unmonitored cameras are said to be one of the least-effective deterrents to robberies in banks and convenience stores, and areas with expensive and easily removed computer equipment could make the schools more attractive to burglars.

Some schools do put up "placebo cameras" to create the illusion of surveillance, but even if these cameras have some deterrent effect, they could create liability issues for the school. The cameras may create the illusion of security, and a student attacked within "view" of such a camera could claim he reasonably expected security to come to his aid. Similar concerns apply to cameras that are working but are unmonitored.

Moreover, as some of the figures above indicate, cameras cost money, though if they are truly successful, this cost must be balanced against the decreased incidence of violence and property crime. The federal government estimates that school crime and vandalism cost taxpayers over $200 million a year, nationally. Depending on the severity of the problem, these investments may be worthwhile. Willmar High School's eight video cameras cost $22,000; Independence High School's 12 black and white cameras, two monitors, VCR, and multiplexer cost $23,000. More elaborate systems, like in Huntsville, cost $1.7 million and required licensing by the Federal Communications Commission (because it used microwave-based cameras). Huntsville's new ISDN system cost $150,000. These numbers do not include maintenance and personnel costs, nor do they include the costs of keeping the

videotapes in a secure location, possibly off-site. Black and white cameras are cheaper than color cameras, but are also less useful in identifying students. Hand-held cameras are cheaper, but require extra labor and potentially put their operators at risk.

Whether cameras are advisable also depends on one's educational philosophy. The installation of the video cameras in Glendale seemed not to cause much controversy, though some students found them irritating. "We're not prisoners," according to Diana Larios, a 17-year-old senior. Brad Sales, a spokesman for the Los Angeles Unified School District, explained that Los Angeles schools were reluctant to use surveillance cameras (though they did use metal detectors) because "we don't want our kids in an environment where they feel like they're in prison." Such concerns are not merely window dressing; some attorneys warn that some surveillance at a government school can be considered "search and seizure," and may require particularized evidence of a crime by a specific person. Excessive surveillance could raise privacy concerns where people have reasonably expect privacy (like near lockers or in bathrooms), and could also raise association and free speech concerns (though constitutional problems are less of an issue if the behavior could be easily seen anyway).

3. Security guards

Today, there are over 3,200 uniformed security guards in the Division of School Safety of the New York City Board of Education. If the Division of School Safety were a police department, it would be the ninth largest in the country, larger than the entire Boston Police Department. This number does not even include regular plainclothes and uniformed police officers assigned to the more troubled schools or the ancillary personnel. But older teachers cannot remember the presence of security guards at schools until about 1968–69, and even then, schools usually hired a single guard, usually a retired policeman, to protect the main school entrance during the boroughwide demonstrations associated with the teacher strikes and decentralization debates. In most New York schools, large numbers of security guards only began appearing in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Now, the lower-tier New York schools have about 12 to 18 guards on regular duty, not counting a few regular police officers and some undercover officers to deal with specific problems. When metal detectors were introduced into some schools, the number of guards temporarily increased sharply, to as many as 40.

In addition to security guards, in October 1993, then-New York mayor David Dinkins announced plans to station city cops in all 1,069 New York public schools, at a potential cost of $60 million, and in June 1995, mayor Rudolph Giuliani moved to place disciplinary control of the school system under the direct supervision of the police. John Devine recounts, "One tenth grader, commenting on the mayor's proposal, remarked that the mayor was apparently unaware that the police were already in his school, striding daily down the corridors, two by two, with weapons visible!"

Security guards, also called school safety officers or SSOs, keep unauthorized people out of buildings and try to defuse situations that could escalate into violence. Some schools use "police-school liaison officers," who help administrators, staff members, and students deal with law enforcement-related situations like vandalism, violence, reckless driving, crowd control, and theft.

The arguments for having security guards are essentially the same as the arguments for having police officers on the street. Security guards imply the threat of retaliatory force as punishment for violence, and their very presence may deter violence. On the other hand, presence does not equal effectiveness.

In New York, for instance, security guards report to their headquarters in the Division of School Safety, and are not managed by principals. John Devine, in Maximum Security, describes the inadequate performance feedback mechanisms in some lower-tier New York schools:

Other limitations of security guards are similar to those of the police.

- They cannot be everywhere.
- They are no substitute for voluntary respect for the law, which the students at some schools, with few or no security guards and low violence rates, apparently have.
- In the bureaucratic public school system, which is not highly sensitive to the demands of parents (especially in poor, inner-city areas), high rates of violence, instead of provoking massive school flight, provokes additional security expenditures, whether on metal detectors, alarm systems, electromagnetic door locks, or security guards. These tangible "rewards" for schools with high violence can be a disincentive to pursuing other, nontechnological, violence-prevention methods. As one boys' dean at a lower-tier New York school is said to have remarked, "If I have a rape in the school this year, I'll get two extra security guards next year."
- Reliance on security guards may lull other participants in the school system into a sense that violence prevention is not their responsibility. John Devine points out "the gradual withdrawal of teachers, over the past several decades, from the responsibility for schoolwide discipline, when the union contract removed this function from their job descriptions or reduced it," and notes that in some ways, this withdrawal of teachers (and their replacement by guards) may have exacerbated disorder, as teachers no longer even try to prevent violence.
- Finally, guards cost money, and whether they are the best investment for a particular school depends on that school's resources, violence rates and types of crimes, and feasible alternatives.

4. Other security-based methods

Other methods suggested to relieve violence problems vary widely. Some rely on knowing exactly what all students have at all times:

- Searching lockers;
- Requiring all bookbags to be clear;
- "Shaking down" students.

These methods may work in some cases, but require a large commitment of resources to be effective; merely having the right to search lockers does not guarantee that all lockers will be searched—and since most lockers will not contain weapons, finding one incriminating item will require that many lockers be searched. Moreover, some searches are of dubious constitutionality, and regardless of the Constitution, there is a point where searches become unreasonably intrusive. The American Civil Liberties Union has filed a lawsuit challenging practices at Galt High School in California's Central Valley, particularly the school's security company's policy of vacating classrooms and sniff-searching students' bags.

Other methods dispense with the need to know everything through even more drastic measures:

- Removing student lockers altogether;
- Giving every student two sets of textbooks, one for school and one for home, to eliminate the

need for book bags;
- Prohibiting overcoats and large bags during school hours.

San Diego's school system got rid of lockers, reportedly reducing gun crimes, robberies, and graffiti. These methods are cheaper to implement, but their very scope guarantees that they will also impose significant costs on law-abiding students, who derive real benefits from lockers, coats, and bags.

Some methods rely on successfully identifying intruders:

- Mandating picture identification cards for students and staff;
- Encouraging staff and students to report suspicious people or activities;
- Fencing in campuses;
- Conducting "drive-by-shooting drills" in addition to traditional fire drills.

These methods can perhaps be a successful strategy for deterring or reacting to violence by intruders, but do not address violence by insiders. One article suggests limiting access to all campuses, "particularly from drug dealers." If only.

Still other methods limit themselves to producing a physical environment that will make it more difficult to commit crimes:

- Placing trained parent/community volunteers in hallways, on playgrounds, in study halls, and at extracurricular activities;
- Monitoring entrances;
- Limiting the number of potential entrances;
- Placing concrete barriers;
- Increasing lighting.

Some are merely wishful thinking, such as broad goals to "make corridors safe."

5. Conclusion

While schools may toy with other programs, says San Diego school police chief Alex Rascon, one answer in the meantime "is to lock the campuses down. Have everyone enter through one door, sign in, and have permission to see a teacher ahead of time." Good security, Rascon adds, is inconvenient "but we just cannot dilly-dally around with the way things are now." And sometimes, the security-based approach can work and can even save money in the long run. Farragut High School, on Chicago's West Side, installed cameras, added security officers, and established a dress code. In a year, the number of fights dropped from 100 to three, and stabbings and property crimes were eliminated. Graffiti removal, which had cost $35,000 per year, only cost a projected $4,000. And the school, which had been losing students, saw its enrollment increase by 700, to 2,300—presumably because it had now become such a nice place to attend.

But while security measures may reduce violence, they have obvious limitations, in that no school can be made truly secure, just as society as a whole cannot be made truly secure through security-based measures alone. The absolute number, as well as the density, of students, requires a large commitment of surveillance and policing resources; moreover, large buildings have as many as 50 exits that have

to be unlocked from the inside for quick escape in case of fire. Violent incidents rose 20 percent in 1992–93 in District of Columbia public schools, even though tougher security and a new closed-campus lunch policy were in place at the time. To do everything desirable in terms of increased security, says Dallas' C.W. Burruss, "you're talking megabucks." Megabucks, most schools do not have.

According to school violence researcher Jackson Toby, while security guards and metal detectors are useful—especially in inner-city schools plagued by "invading predators" in general, additional security measures would not help much to deter student violence, nor would they necessarily promote a more orderly atmosphere by their sheer visibility. Since there can never be enough security guards to patrol large junior or senior high schools thoroughly or to screen all of the students in a school for weapons every day, it is unlikely that security-based measures can be the main method to deal with violence. Toby believes that a true solution must address the fundamental causes of disorder, which would require a change of public policy, and not new infusions of scarce resources into technology. Moreover, from a research point of view, there are no controlled experiments, and so (aside from anecdotal evidence) it can be hard to assess the effect of security measures on school violence. Security guards are only introduced when the school already has a problem. As the report of the Safe School Study put it: "Security personnel do not cause crime, but crime causes schools to hire security personnel, and our multivariate analysis cannot distinguish between these two explanations."

B. Indirect Behavior-Based Solutions

Why security-based measures are said to work is clear. They rely on producing an environment in the school that helps security personnel detect crimes in progress, punish crimes that have been recorded, and deter potential crimes by methods similar to those used by law enforcement in the "real world." Indirect, behavioral solutions do not try to deal with the crimes themselves, but rather aim to create a "social" environment that, without reference to violence itself, will, as a pleasant side effect, produce fewer crimes.

Indirect methods are varied. Dress codes and uniform requirements try to change behavior on an individual level, on the theory that children wearing uniforms will be better behaved. On a larger level, after-school, extracurricular programs have been suggested. On a still larger level, the size of the schools themselves may affect the probability of crime. And on a grand, societal level, the attitude of the outside world to one's scholastic record has been said to influence the likelihood of disorderly conduct.

1. The individual scale: Uniforms

In recent years, several hundred schools around the country, including some in such urban areas as Miami, Baltimore, Detroit, Milwaukee, Dallas and Louisville, have begun to require or encourage students to wear uniforms. Table 4-1 gives some examples of district-level uniform policies.

School uniforms have two justifications. One is to reduce violence, by:

- Decreasing the probability that students will carry concealed weapons.
- Decreasing the probability that students will fight over clothing jealousy.
- Decreasing the probability that students will be victims of robbery and assault because of their

expensive jackets or shoes. In Detroit, a 15-year-old boy was shot for his $86 basketball shoes; in Fort Lauderdale, a 15-year-old student was robbed of his jewelry; in Oxon Hill, Maryland, a 17-year-old honor student was killed at a bus stop, in the crossfire during the robbery of another student's designer jacket.

- Decreasing the possibility that students will be victims of gang violence because they are wearing the colors or clothing associated with a gang. One St. Louis mother tells the story of how a uniform saved her two sons. Her sons were waiting at a bus stop, a block from their home, when a car pulled up to them, and one of the passengers pulled out a sawed-off shotgun and asked them to open their jackets. When the passengers in the car saw that the boys were not wearing any red or blue, but were dressed in a uniform with a white shirt and gray pants, they drove away.

The other justification of uniforms is to modify student behavior. According to administrators in Phoenix, their district's uniform policy has led to increased school pride, fewer distractions involving clothes, an improved atmosphere, increased attendance, and hence a better learning environment. "Kids tend to behave the way they're dressed," according to Ronald Stephens, executive director of the National School Safety Center. Some schools explicitly advocate choosing uniforms that "instill pride" in students by "helping the kids fully understand their heritage." Bishop Healy, a parochial elementary school on St. Louis' North Side, is the first and only parochial school in St. Louis to have Afrocentric uniforms.

Dress codes seem to have had some successes.

Table 4-1: Examples of District-Level Uniform Policies	
Highland Park, MI	Voluntary in 5 schools
Long Beach Unified, CA	Mandatory in 70 schools—parents have option of refusing to comply; there are provisions to supply low-income students with uniforms.
Dade County, FL	Voluntary in 80 schools, mandatory in 46 schools
Oakland, CA	Mandatory—see Long Beach Unified
District of Columbia	Voluntary in 41 schools
Detroit, MI	Voluntary in 5 schools
Country Club Hills, IL	Voluntary in 3 schools

Chicago, IL	Voluntary in over 225 schools
Prairie Hills, IL	Voluntary in 7 schools
Baltimore, MD	Voluntary in 120 elementary and middle schools
Dayton, OH	Voluntary in 17 schools
Phoenix, AZ	Mandatory in 1 school—constitutionality upheld by county court judge in 1995
St. Paul, MN	Mandatory in 1 school—Hazel Park Middle School Academy is phasing in uniforms in 1996–97

- In Long Beach, Calif., where uniforms became "mandatory" (children can opt out with parental consent) for 58,500 elementary and middle school students in 1994, overall school crime decreased 36 percent in the year following implementation, fights decreased 51 percent, sex offenses decreased 74 percent, weapons offenses decreased 50 percent, assault and battery offenses decreased 34 percent, and vandalism decreased 18 percent.
- In Seattle, Wash., where in 1995 uniforms became "mandatory" for 900 middle school students at South Shore Middle School (children can opt out with parental consent, but then they must attend another school), the principal reported that before the uniform policy, the kids were "draggin', saggin', and laggin'," but that the following year the demeanor improved 98 percent, truancy and tardiness decreased, and thefts dropped to zero.
- In Norfolk, Va., where uniforms became truly mandatory in 1995 for 977 students at Ruffner Middle School, leaving class without permission dropped 47 percent, throwing objects dropped 68 percent, and fighting dropped 38 percent.

That parochial schools, which have lower violence rates than public schools, often have uniforms, is another piece of anecdotal evidence in favor of uniforms, though there are naturally many other factors at work in this case.

On the other hand, there has been little scientific study on the effectiveness of uniform policies. While most school violence takes place at the high school level, many of the success stories have been in elementary and middle schools. A Harvard report suggests that since uniforms are generally voluntary, they may encourage discrimination against students who choose not to wear them, perhaps by students but also by teachers in their disciplinary actions. In Clarke Street Elementary School in Milwaukee, a uniform policy didn't work because there was no neighborhood vendor to sell uniforms to parents, and because many parents could not afford the uniforms. Also, since gang identity consists of more than merely colors, there is the danger that a uniform policy may create a false sense of security.

Some analysts also believe that to be effective in changing student behavior, the uniform also has to be supported by the students themselves. At the Florence B. Price Elementary School on Chicago's

South Side, the teachers, in solidarity with the students, wear forest green every Wednesday to show that they support the uniform policy. Such symbolic acts may not always be enough to instill respect for the uniform among the youth, who are notoriously blasé in such matters.

Moreover, one educator's statement that "if everyone is dressed alike, they will feel equal" strikes an ominous chord with some, who feel that having children wear uniforms to avoid competition sidesteps the need to teach children to respect diversity among their peers.

Uniform policies have on occasion sparked legal disputes, including in Long Beach, Oakland, and Phoenix. The Supreme Court has held that schools can adopt reasonable dress codes and hair-length requirements that do not restrict political expression, but it has not ruled specifically on uniforms. The lawsuits have typically been unsuccessful for the plaintiffs or have been settled, but they can still be costly for the school. The evidence suggests—and the Manual on School Uniforms from the Department of Education confirms that this is a good idea anyway—that for a school uniform policy to pass muster, it should provide financial assistance for parents who might have problems affording the uniforms, and it should avoid restricting students in their political, religious, or other expression. (Restricting T-shirts may be problematic. Typically, schools allow students to wear buttons, for religious or political expression, but many T-shirts today are elaborate, artistic affairs. Artistic expression, just like political or religious expression, is fully protected under the First Amendment.) Schools may want to charge for their uniforms—among other advantages, students will be more likely to treat their uniforms well if they or their parents are paying—but it may be preferable, on fairness grounds, for a school to provide its uniforms to students (at least low-income students) for free, just as it distributes textbooks. When education is mandatory, schools have an obligation to make the imposition as light as possible for the affected families. The school should consider that while an individual uniform may not cost much, parents usually buy more than one for each child, children grow out of sizes quickly, and parents still have to buy extra clothes for after school (since children are unlikely to wear their uniforms outside of school). The financial assistance may prove to be a substantial burden on some school districts, and may make a uniform policy inadvisable for many schools.

2. The schoolwide scale: Addressing juvenile violence

The theory behind using school-based after-school activities to stem violence is that if students are in a place where they can be easily observed, violence will be more easily controlled. In some ways, such programs do not really aim at decreasing school violence—what disruptive students do on their own time may contribute to violence as a whole, but perhaps not to school violence. (Paradoxically, if such after-school activities take place on school grounds, then even if violence as a whole is reduced, what violence still occurs will now be considered "school violence." If this happens, school violence will seem to increase.) However, if such programs reduce gang activity as a whole or promote greater respect for people and property among students, they may even have a spillover effect of reducing school violence during school hours.

There are a number of school-based activity programs aimed at reducing violence. Some merely give students a place to go, and try to promote camaraderie through clubs, sports leagues, camps, and other after-school programs. Under the Beacons Initiative in New York City, 37 schools stay open seven days a week from early morning until late evening, to provide "one stop shopping" services such as

counseling, tutoring, recreational activities, vocational training, and a safe place for kids to hang out. In the Midnight Hoops Program in Columbia, S.C., 12- to 18-year-old boys and girls participate in late night organized leagues on weekend evenings. Many of such programs make contracts with their participants, and violations of the contract are cause for expulsion from the program. It is unclear, however, how effective physical fitness programs are in reducing bad behavior like weapon-carrying or substance abuse. In some cases, those most interested in the activities may be those who need them the least.

Some programs actually try to provide psychological services for potentially unstable students, like victims or observers of violent events. Examples include foster care programs for abused youth, respite day care for short-term reaction to problems, and crisis-management services to deal with a violent event. Such programs may help break the "cycle of violence," but these programs are rarely evaluated.

Others have suggested adopting "alternative school calendars." This would include extending the school year to overlapping trimesters, or increasing the school day by one hour. In theory, the more time students spend in school, the less time they have to spend on the streets or associated with undesirable characters on the playground, and if trimesters overlap, there are fewer people on vacation at any one time, and so there is less opportunity for criminality. Also, in theory, the more time people spend in school, the more likely it is that they will acquire academic skills and behave in positive ways. These methods are primarily aimed at reducing juvenile crime in general, not in-school crime. We have not seen evaluations of such calendar changes, but we find it doubtful that they would have much of an effect, especially since arrests of juvenile offenders are not appreciably greater during the summer vacation or other holiday periods than when schools are in session.

3. The school system scale: School size

School size has also been offered as an explanation of school violence rates. Smaller schools are said to be more likely to become "communities of learners" where teachers, students, staff, parents, and community feel that they belong and share responsibilities. In a small school, teachers may be more likely to counsel a late or forgetful student instead of relying on discipline. Small schools allegedly provide a "human touch" where "personal relationships flourish" and students succeed, largely because of less bureaucracy and fewer regulations. Some studies indicate that students in small schools have more positive attitudes toward school, feel more deeply attached to their schools (as shown in higher attendance rates and lower dropout rates), and are more likely to participate in extracurricular programs such as drama and sports.

Jackson Toby traces the trend toward larger schools as part of a development he calls "the separation of school and community." While even the traditional, rural, one-room schoolhouse was physically separate from the students' families, more recent developments, such as consolidated nonmetropolitan school districts, large inner-city schools, and busing programs, have greatly increased the separation from families and neighborhoods. Larger schools were initially attractive because of decreasing marginal costs. As schools became bigger, per-student costs dropped; hiring teachers in specialized subjects like art, music, drama, or advanced mathematics became easier; and teaching according to professional standards and offering sometimes controversial subjects like evolution or sex education became more feasible as local sensitivities became less important in school administration.

The unintended result was that students were freer to develop their own, non-education-related subcultures, sometimes related to sports and personal popularity, and often promoting misbehavior. Even in the 1950s, fights between members of street gangs from different neighborhoods broke out in New York secondary schools. By the 1960s and 1970s, administrators began to realize "the potential for disorder when many hundreds of young people come together for congregate instruction." Principals were reluctant to call in police or to call in security guards, and did not build schools with an eye to security (i.e., for ease of surveillance and with restricted entry and exit). In this way, first parents and then school administrators lost control of their students. Toby, too, advocates setting up smaller schools to establish "smaller communities of learning." New York and Philadelphia have already begun to establish schools within schools, or "house plans," ostensibly to promote community, relationships between teachers and students, discourage destructive subcultures, and give teacher disapproval more of a sting.

This is an interesting theory, but the empirical evidence is mixed. The Safe School Study of the late 1970s did indeed find that large schools have greater property loss through burglary, theft, and vandalism, and also have slightly more violence. But the authors of the study explained that larger buildings with more expensive equipment and more students provide more opportunity for loss, and per-capita property loss from large schools is not higher than in small schools. On the other hand, the proportion of students victimized is indeed higher in larger schools, perhaps because of the greater anonymity in large schools. It also found that the more students each teacher teaches, the greater the amount of school violence, perhaps because students develop fewer personal relationships with teachers. The study concluded that crowding—the size of the school population in relation to school capacity—was a greater problem, though, than size itself.

According to the Department of Education, students at larger schools are more likely than students at the smallest schools to be exposed to bullying, physical attack, or robbery. More students at schools with 600 or more students than at schools of less than 300 students reported knowledge of crime or threats at school and witnessing crime. However, there was no difference in worry about crime or in actual victimization for students at larger schools—and actual victimization, after all, is the number we're really interested in. Table 4-2 summarizes these results. Table 4-3 breaks actual victimization down into bullying, physical attack, and robbery. (The numbers in each row of Table 4-3 may add up to slightly more than the corresponding actual victimization number in Table 4-2, both because of rounding error and because students can be victimized in more than one way.) Table 4-2 also shows no significant differences between the largest and the smallest schools.

Table 4-2: Percentage Of Students Reporting The Occurence Of, Witness Of, Worry About, Or Victimization Through Robbery, Bullying, Or Physical Attack At School, By School Size: 1993				
	Occurred	Witnessed	Worried About	Happened To Students
Under 300	58%	44%	21%	10%
300–599	68%	53%	27%	13%

600–999	74%	59%	25%	12%
1,000 or more	75%	60%	25%	10%

Source: Mary Jo Nolin, Elizabeth Davies, and Kathryn Chandler, *Student Victimization at School: Statistics in Brief*, National Center for Education Statistics, Report No. NCES-95-204, October 1995, table 1, p. 7, citing U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, 1993.

Table 4–3: Percentage of Students Reporting Victimization at School, By School Size: 1993			
	Bullying	Physical Attack	Robbery
Under 300	7%	4%	< 0.5%
300–599	10%	4%	1%
600–999	8%	3%	1%
1,000 or more	7%	4%	1%

Source: Mary Jo Nolin, Elizabeth Davies, and Kathryn Chandler, *Student Victimization at School: Statistics in Brief*, National Center for Education Statistics, Report No. NCES-95-204, October 1995, table 2, p. 8, citing U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, 1993.

Even if smaller schools help learning and reduce violence, different ways of establishing small schools can have different results. In New York, for instance, small, model public schools—"Vision Schools," part of the "effective-schools movement"—are often only created in areas with political clout, and may drain the surrounding bigger schools of their best students. John Devine, in Maximum Security, a small-school believer, says that creating small schools in isolation may thus exacerbate school violence problems at the larger schools. He advocates a more thorough effort—closing down the large, 2,000–5,000-student schools, and reopening them as small schools. According to Devine, these lower-tier schools would end up looking like currently existing alternative schools. These schools, with about 200 students each, were formed in the 1970s as havens for dropouts from the "regular schools," and have now become safer and more desirable than the schools for which they were originally designed as alternatives.

But even if breaking all large schools into smaller schools of 200–600 students were the most effective option—and it is not clear that it is—the large expense involved demonstrates that while this may be a feasible solution in some cases, it is clearly impractical on a large scale. Devine does not state how much this effort would cost in New York City, except insofar as it "would mean an expenditure of funds larger than any present-day politician would deem remotely reasonable or even imaginable."

Similar cost problems plague the movement toward reducing class sizes. In California, where the state government offers monetary incentives to schools that reduce class sizes, schools are having to use school spaces (auditoriums, libraries, cafeterias) that would otherwise go to other uses, hire teachers that would otherwise be considered marginally qualified, and spend money that would otherwise have been spent on higher grades. Reducing class size is an idea that may work, but, like reducing school size, is an expensive idea if done for the sole purpose of reducing school crime, and is therefore not appropriate everywhere.

4. The societal level: Employers demanding high-school performance

Japanese high schools seem immune from many of the discipline problems plaguing American high schools. There is a reason for this; Japanese students have vastly more respect for their teachers than do their American counterparts, and more respect for education in general. They care more about their high-school grades, because colleges and employers carefully scrutinize their grades and their teachers' recommendations. Japanese high school teachers are virtually never assaulted by their students; rather, high school students pay attention to their teachers and graduate from high school in greater proportions (93 percent) than American students. They want to go to school because they are convinced, correctly, that their occupational futures depend on educational achievement. Employers are much more closely connected with high schools in Japan than in the United States.

Advocates of a closer school-work relationship hypothesize that if employers in the United States start to demand high-school transcripts—which would involve a wholesale change in corporate practice better jobs might go to better students and, by correlation, to less violence-prone students; teachers would have an easier job maintaining control of work-bound students, much as they now have an easier job maintaining control of college-bound students. Currently, employers pay little or no attention to high-school transcripts, and only require a high-school diploma, not bothering to check whether, as Jackson Toby puts it, "that diploma represents four years of effort, achievement, and good behavior—or four years of seat time and surliness." James Rosenbaum describes the consequences: "Since employers ignore grades, it is not surprising that many work-bound students lack motivation to improve them. Many kinds of motivation and discipline problems are widespread: absenteeism, class cutting, tardiness, disruptive behavior, verbal abuse, failure to do homework assignments, and substance abuse . . . . While employers ask why teachers don't exert their authority in the classroom, they unwittingly undermine teachers' authority over work-bound students. Grades are the main direct sanction that teachers control. When students see that grades don't affect the jobs they will get, teacher authority is severely crippled."

The "Japanese connection" has been explored by commentators of different political stripes John Bishop, James Rosenbaum, Albert Shanker, and Jackson Toby. The theory is interesting, and somewhat plausible. The more high school matters, the more students will feel the need to excel at it, appreciate the costs of violence, criminality, and unruliness, and exert pressure on their peers to maintain an orderly atmosphere. The truly violent might not be focused on their future jobs, but the marginally violent may be persuaded to relent, and a generally more studious atmosphere may contribute to a lessening of the minor manifestations of disorder that are precursors to more serious violations. However, for our purposes, the theory has two main problems. The first problem is that schools cannot affect what employers demand, except in the very broad sense that if they consistently produce much higher-quality students, employers may be more willing to discriminate in favor of

prospective employees with clean high school records. But this is too vague to use as a policy to combat school violence.

The second problem is more basic. It has been suggested that curbing school violence this way would cost little. Says Jackson Toby, "the only cost it would entail would be the cost of spreading the message to employers: better job opportunities should go to the high school graduates with the better grades. Teacher approval and disapproval would become a force to be reckoned with in every American high school, including what are currently considered the worst inner-city high schools, as soon as jobs came to depend on academic performance." Simply tell employers often enough, and they will listen. This is possible but does not seem likely. While the costs may be low to the school, they may be high to employers, who might not currently demand high-school performance because they do not find it important. Employers may act as they do because of a lack of students with impressive high-school credentials, but many low-level jobs, such as hamburger flipper or grocery-bag stuffer, may simply not require many skills that cannot be learned or inculcated on the job.

Part 5

Educational and Curriculum-based

Other strategies apparently the most popular among academics, who dislike punishment as a way of dealing with school crime and violence, and favor addressing "root causes" mostly involve new educational programs to improve student and teacher conflict-resolution skills, prevent or discourage gang membership, or to enhance students self-esteem through new curricula. Other programs, such as mentoring or "personalization" programs, also aim to boost the self-esteem of at-risk students.

Jackson Toby and others have critiqued such programs on the grounds that they cannot successfully address everyday school violence because they do not try to make every high school in an urban school district safe, and that across-the-board safety is best achieved by empowering high school teachers. While this may be true, this argument is most compelling to someone intent on mandating a uniform violence-prevention policy for all schools. From this perspective, a policy that cannot make every school safe is severely lacking.

We do not, however, endorse mandating one policy for all schools. All schools are different; different strategies will have different benefits and different costs wherever they are tried. Therefore, arguing that a program may only work sometimes is not sufficient; it is, instead, an argument for adopting that program in those circumstances where it works. After all, the success of a program is its own justification. What follows is an overview of educational and curriculum-based programs. Experience

with such programs is highly mixed and confirms again the basic principle that there is no one-size-fits-all solution.

A. Individual Conflict Resolution

We use the term "conflict resolution program" to lump together an assortment of violence-prevention programs. What makes them similar is their shared reliance on education instead of discipline as a way of preventing violence. From "Just say no to violence" (i.e., violence prevention) to "Can't we all just get along?" (i.e., conflict resolution) is, educationally, a short step. This section deals with conflict-resolution programs that try to give each student, individually, the tools to recognize and defuse conflict; this includes mediation techniques, anger management, and the like. Methods designed to actually change students affiliation with, or activity within, peer groups such as gang prevention programs are addressed in the next section.

1. Some success stories

A number of school systems have reported positive results from conflict-resolution programs:

- The New Haven, Conn., school system, with the Yale Psychology Department, trains middle-school students in social skills, emphasizing self-control, stress management, problem solving, decisionmaking, and communication skills. Once students have learned a general problem-solving framework, they are urged to apply their critical-thinking skills to specific issues, such as substance use.
- In Oakland, Calif., the peer education and mentoring group Teens on Target was formed after two junior high students were shot in school by other students. Founded on the assumption that students could prevent violence among their peers more effectively than adults could, the program trains selected high-school students in an intensive summer program to be violence-prevention advocates, especially as regards guns, drugs, and family violence. These students mentor other high-school, middle-school, and elementary-school students.
- In Dayton, Ohio, the "Positive Adolescents Choices Training" (PACT) program, established in 1989, teaches social skills and anger management. PACT trains 190 students per year at Roth Middle School. The program is funded by federal and state governments and by private sources and has been widely recognized as a model program for addressing violence among black middle-school students. "Developed with sensitivity to racial, ethnic, and cultural issues," the program uses African-American role models, and mainly addresses problems involving loss of control between family, friends, or acquaintances, that supposedly represent the greatest threat to adolescents. To remedy adolescents obvious deficiencies in communication, negotiation, and problem-solving, PACT provides training in specific social skills to help students avoid violence.
- In New York, the "Resolving Conflict Creatively Program" (RCCP), established in 1985, teaches conflict resolution and peer mediation. It serves 70,000 students districtwide in 180 elementary, intermediate/junior high, and high schools in New York City individual schools join the program voluntarily with 3,000 teachers and 70,000 students participating. Most of the programs serve at-risk students located in poor neighborhoods in Brooklyn, South Bronx, Manhattan, and Queens. RCCP is funded by the school district, private sources, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and is jointly sponsored by the New York City Board of

Education and the nonprofit organization Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR). It is widely regarded as a promising violence-prevention program.

- RCCP has also been implemented at Roosevelt Middle School in Oceanside, Calif. In 1989, most of the school's 1,500 sixth, seventh, and eighth graders lived in fear as gangs "mad dogged" each other deliberately provoking fights. Today, "the school is a placid oasis." Now that an anger-management and anti-bias curriculum has been implemented and a system of peer mediation started, problems are usually settled within a day by trained student mediators. Typically, one student threatens another, but they agree to avoid a confrontation until their anger passes. Lea Gattoni, 13 (then an eighth grader), explained that two years earlier, "I was afraid I'd get beat up by the eighth graders. Now, I haven't seen a fight in a while." "We want to weave conflict resolution into the fabric of everyone's educational experience," says Larry Dieringer of ESR.

2. A critical view

The preceding examples have been culled from glowing reports in the literature. But what is remarkable about such "success stories" is how little actual success they seem to show. They may work wondrously well, or they may merely give their participation a false sense of security—but it is often hard to tell which is which.

Despite the popularity of programs like RCCP (such approaches have been dubbed "the most effective way of intervening" in violence problems), many such programs lack proof that they significantly reduce school crime. The RCCP study, for instance, produced percentages on many variablesstudent name-calling, verbal put-downs, teachers' belief that students can take responsibility for their own problems, teachers' belief that students could apply concepts in hypothetical situations, and teachers' belief that children had been given an important tool. Aside from the statistic that 71 percent of teachers reported that students were less violent, the vast majority of these numbers are only very crude proxies, not really dealing with the sort of violence most people care the most about at all. Even the statistic on how many teachers felt students were less violent does not tell us how much less violent teachers believed students were; it doesn't tell us what the other 29 percent of teachers thought; and most important, it doesn't measure actual school violence.

A review of three popular violence prevention curriculums Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents, Washington [D.C.] Community Violence Prevention Program, and PACT found no evidence of long-term changes in violent behavior or reduced risk of victimization. A main function of such programs is often to give the impression that school officials and politicians are doing something anything about the problem. Another study, after reviewing the existing research on violence prevention, concluded that many schools are engaged in well-intentioned efforts without any evidence that the programs will work, and worse that some programs actually influence relatively non-violent students to be more violence-prone.

Another study surveyed 51 violence prevention programs around the country—including RCCP—and concluded that much more research needed to be done:

Of the 51 programs, 30 percent conducted no evaluation, or had outdated or unavailable data. Another 10 percent collected no data aside from the number of people served. Another 16 percent did

participant evaluations; 21 percent did outcome evaluations but most of these evaluations were merely "before" and "after" measurements of participant attitudes and knowledge, using unvalidated measures with no control-group comparisons. "In short, there have been only a handful of programs that have been evaluated at a level approaching rigorous experimental design. None would meet the most rigorous methodologic standards of outcome evaluation." That schools adopt these programs without valid effectiveness information may merely indicate that they use these programs as a last resort. But why do they continue with the programs without any evidence that they work? If solid evaluations are useful to school administrators, it may seem surprising that these programs are so poorly evaluated. We can only conclude that schools do not evaluate these programs because they do not have to; from the administration's point of view, there is no significant loss in attendance or funding from a program that does not work well.

One review of school-based conflict-mediation programs summarizes the basic problems with most programs this way:

- Most programs have overall goals, not long- and short-term objectives that are related to specific program objectives and content;
- When programs have clearly defined outcomes, they are often specific to a particular program and not comparable with other programs;
- Interpretation of changes in interesting variables is problematic because there is no randomization and no control group, and no compensation for the most obvious sources of experiment bias;
- There has been little effort to capture the complexity of violent behavior through multi-dimensional measures;
- Most of the reported findings are short-term changes in knowledge, attitudes, and self-reported behaviors, which are not clearly correlated with or predictive of violent behavior;
- There is little collection of baseline data or analysis of differential effects on subgroups.

Moreover, there are virtually no studies of how effective it is to offer these curricula to younger students in the hope that they will forestall the future development of more destructive habits. Conducting a meaningful study of whether these programs work will take substantially more resources than anyone has been willing to commit to them. Also, the people who run such programs are often not familiar with the statistical research on aggressive behavior.

- Even among the anecdotal evidence and, given the "soft" nature of many of the phenomena we are trying to observe, we should not knock anecdotal evidence-results are often mixed.
- The "Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents," developed by Deborah Prothrow-Stith with the Education Development Center in Boston, is another violence-prevention educational program. Its methods include providing factual information on an adolescent's risk of being involved in a violent act, having the student analyze precursors of a fight, showing alternatives to fighting by discussing potential gains and losses, and resolving conflicts through role playing. This curriculum has been widely acclaimed for its success in dealing with interpersonal violence, but in fact, program effects varied widely in the schools where it was offered. According to the National Research Council, "The widespread interest in this curriculum is not due to systematic evaluation results so much as other factors: the concern by school administrators that something be done about adolescent violence, the lack of an alternative

intervention clearly demonstrated to be effective, and the impressive credentials and visibility of the author . . . . The results of this evaluation are not persuasive that this approach is helpful in reducing aggressive behavior by high school students."

- "Straight Talk About Risks" (STAR), once called "Kids + Guns = A Deadly Equation," is a Miami gun-prevention program, with a kindergarten through fifth grade curriculum and a sixth grade through high school curriculum. The program teaches alternatives to gun use, through audiovisual materials, public information campaigns, counseling, peer education, mentoring, and crisis intervention. A *Journal of School Health* review concluded simultaneously that the program holds promise and that no evaluation component has tested the program's effectiveness.

David Johnson and Roger Johnson offer a few reasons why many programs focusing exclusively on violence prevention may not work:

- Many programs are poorly targeted, lumping together a broad range of violent behaviors and people, ignoring the many different reasons for violence. Few programs focus on the minority of students who commit most of the violent acts (often, less than 5 percent of students account for more than one-third of violent incidents).
- Many programs provide materials but don't focus on program implementation, assuming that students can be "fixed" with a few hours of class, teachers can be prepared with a few hours of training, and no follow-up is needed.
- Many programs confuse methods that work in neighborhoods with those that work in schools. Street conflicts often involve macho posturing, competition for status, access to drugs, large amounts of money, and people who have short-term interactions with one another—while the school is a cooperative setting where students are in long-term relationships. Different conflict resolution procedures are required in each setting. Street tactics should not be brought into the school, and it is naive and dangerous to assume that school tactics should be used on the street.
- Many programs are unrealistic about what they can accomplish. School programs are rarely broad-based enough to, where necessary, involve families, neighbors, the media, employers, health-care officials, schools, and other government agencies; they cannot guarantee health care, housing, food, parental love, or hope; their ability to control guns, drugs, and the dangers of walking to and from school has its constraints.

Johnson and Johnson have a specific alternative paradigm in mind. Their ideal program would not try to eliminate conflict as such (which, in itself, can be beneficial), but would only try to control the destructive management of conflict; "attempts to deny, suppress, repress, and ignore conflicts may, in fact, be a major contributor to the occurrence of violence in schools." This would occur in schools where competitive, individualistic learning, which supposedly breeds distrust, miscommunication, and misperception of others' true motivations, is replaced by cooperative, collective learning. They would try to minimize "in-school risk factors," such as "allow[ing] students to fail" and alienation from classmates, and encourage long-term caring relationships, sharing, and helping others. (Two of their specific suggested fixes are using cooperative base groups that last for a number of years, and assigning teams of teachers to follow cohorts of students through several grades, instead of changing teachers every year.) Their model of "cooperative learning" also includes using academic controversy to increase learning and teaching all students (not just a select group of peer mediators) to resolve conflicts constructively.

Most such conflict-resolution programs present violence prevention not as an add-on but as an integral part of the curriculum, and incorporate the notion that it is desirable to make students part of the violence-prevention process by empowering them to think through their own problems and come to realize "on their own" that violence is undesirable. "On their own," in this context, means without a lot of punishment—which is presumed not to work, as it reinforces students' belief that power is everything—though presumably with a great deal of indoctrination through anti-violence or peer-mediation curricula.

The Johnson and Johnson model may work well in some places; their own studies suggest possible 80 percent drops in conflicts between students, 95 percent drops in conflicts referred to the principal, and increases in academic learning to boot. But its evaluation has been limited, and, even on educational-theory grounds, is not for everyone. Some schools have almost no violence, and manage to get by without muttering a word about violence anywhere in their curriculum, so whether such a program is even desirable in the first place depends on how much of a problem already exists, and how effective a curriculum change is expected to be in the conditions at hand. Other commentators believe that violence-prevention programs, which do nothing but talk about violence, are inherently limited in that they are often adopted as a substitute for actually stopping students in the act of violence, and moreover, inadvertently teach students that violence is a normal state of affairs to be adapted to, instead of being an aberrant situation to be reversed.

But regardless of what alternative theory one has in mind, this much is clear: violence-prevention or conflict-resolution programs only work if properly done, and since there is currently no universal consensus on what constitutes doing violence prevention properly, we have every reason to expect empirical results of such programs to be highly mixed.

B. Peer-Group Programs

1. A much-touted gang-prevention program

Paramount, Calif., was one of the first cities to include a course in gang prevention in the school curriculum. The city has a serious gang problem, with multigenerational Hispanic gangs, a gang of immigrant youths, a Crip clique, and several tagger groups. Since the early 1980s, over 9,000 students in the second, fifth, and seventh grades have taken a 15-hour course called "Alternatives to Gang Membership" (ATGM).

ATGM, which has been widely replicated in Southern California, seeks to reduce gang membership and activity by teaching students the harmful consequences of a gang lifestyle, how to not participate in it, and how to choose positive alternatives. ATGM tries to reach students early; the second grade program is taught in ten weekly 40-minute lessons, the fifth grade program is taught in 15 weekly 55-minute lessons, and the seventh grade follow-up program consists of eight biweekly lessons which expand on previous topics, such as peer pressure and drug abuse. The program also focuses on self-esteem, higher education and career opportunities, and uses guest speakers. Every year, ATGM holds about 50 bilingual neighborhood gang-education and gang-prevention meetings with parents and residents, at schools, churches, parks, community centers and private residences to educate them about gangs. Program staff also contact individual students and their families, and meet one-on-one with at-risk students referred to them by teachers.

The Paramount Unified School District had 13 schools and 13,879 students in 1993-94. The student body was 73 percent Hispanic, 14 percent black, 8 percent white, and 4 percent Asian; 46 percent were not fluent in English, and 60 percent ate lunch for free or at reduced price. Most of the 30 expulsions that year were for weapons possession or assault and battery; school officials estimate that most of the 4,254 suspended days that year involved drugs, fighting, or defying authority. The district contracts for one armed, uniformed sheriff's deputy at the single high school. As of March 1994, because of racial tensions, the high school was considering buying metal detectors.

ATGM evaluations have typically used "before" and "after" participant questionnaires. These evaluations, and staff opinions, have suggested that the program was effective. Fifth graders who had neither positive nor negative feelings toward gangs before the program tended to have a negative attitude after the program. Of fifth graders from the original 1982-83 group, 90 percent said two years later that the program had helped them avoid gangs. The same students gave the same responses two years later. Of course, these studies should be taken with a small shaker of salt, since people often tell interviewers the information they believe the interviewers want to hear. When the behavior to be avoided is so obviously antisocial, and when the interviewees are school-age children, skilled at saying what adults want to hear, the problem is compounded.

In February 1993, working with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, city officials matched 3,612 names of ATGM participants with a listing of identified gang members. This match identified 152 students, or four percent, as gang members, and 3,460 participants, or 96 percent, who were not. How many students would have joined gangs without the program is unknown, and because the evaluation did not use random assignment, we cannot draw causal connections between behavior and program participation. Longitudinal follow-up on students for four to five years after participation (or until graduation) would show how persistent the program's effects are.

Program officials believe the program has succeeded because of its factual presentation of the material, its family and community outreach, its incorporation into early-grade curricula, its bilingualism and cultural sensitivity, and its use of positive role models and alternatives to the gang lifestyle. Program staff seem to have overcome the lack of research on the subject, and their own lack of training, since the program began. The district's 33 percent yearly student turnover rate is a continuing problem, as new Paramount residents have not been exposed to ATGM. A 1992 survey of Paramount high school students showed that 56 percent did not attend elementary school in the district. Program officials speculate that many of these "transient" students cannot develop strong ties to the school and will more likely be involved in gangs, and that the problem would lessen if other areas had similar programs. The budget for the program in 1992–93 was $150,000, which funded three neighborhood counselors and supplies.

Aside from the above-mentioned statistics on gang membership, there does not seem to have been any measured effect on school violence.

2. A pessimistic outlook

One observer, from an inner-city school, tells a true story of a teachers' meeting where a serious proposal was made to divide the school by gangs and apportion to each gang one part of a floor as its "turf." The students would then be taught in multi-age groups consisting only of members of a single

gang. Gangs are a serious problem.

There is cause, though, to be skeptical of the success of gang-prevention and other peer-group programs. While even the ATGM figures do not clearly show that the program is a success, other studies are even more pessimistic. Patrick Tolan and Nancy Guerra, who have reviewed the literature on peer-group interventions, conclude that "there is little evidence that this type of approach is effective in reducing antisocial or violent behavior, and some programs have demonstrated negative effects." Empirical studies of peer-mediation programs are "almost nonexistent."

One common program, Guided Group Interaction (GGI), designed to restructure peer interactions to increase conformity to social norms, has not been effective, whether in community-based treatment with delinquent youth, in residential therapeutic settings, or in juvenile institutions. Some studies even suggest that the program had negative effects on high-schoolers' attitudes toward school and self-reported delinquency measures. Another method, mixing "pro-social" peers with at-risk youth, has been compared both with a GGI-type approach and with minimal intervention; consistently with the previous results, this approach fared better than the GGI-type approach, but unfortunately not better than minimal intervention.

There is a relation between gang involvement and antisocial behavior, but most studies of gang-prevention programs—which have tried to decrease gang recruitment or to channel gang members to better community activities—either have flaws in their methodology, or suggest that the programs are ineffective. In one study, 800 members of four gangs were given athletic and social events and academic tutoring. Because these activities made the gang members spend more time together, criminal behavior increased. An experiment that tried to provide services to gang members without increasing their time together reduced criminal activity, but such programs are hard to devise.

Other gang-prevention efforts are mostly harmless but are also amusingly simplistic. One report, Working Together to Erase Gangs in Our Schools, from the National Consortium on Alternatives for Youth at Risk, tells teachers how to identify gang members and gang activity at their school. Bloods call each other "Blood" and Crips call each other "Cuz"; Latino gangs call gang members "cholo" while black gangs say "let's bail" for "let's leave." Teachers are told to watch out for caps and jackets with sports logos such as that of the L.A. Raiders, colored shoelaces, sagging pants worn low around the hips, tattoos, and hand signals. All this while warning teachers to "eliminate any preconceived notions you may have about gangs." Another author suggests watching out for students with beepers, and for "informal social groups" with unusual names, like "Females Simply Chillin'" or "Kappa Phi Nasty." A naïve teacher reading this report and accurately observing the behavior of today's high-school students would be forced to conclude that everyone must belong to a gang.

Similarly disappointing results have often been found for many drug-prevention programs, for instance the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program. Several studies have found either that DARE had no effects on students' drug or alcohol use, that the effects were short-lived, or, for some groups, that it even slightly increased their tendency to use drugs or alcohol.

C. Mentoring

Various programs involve providing good role models for at-risk students. These role models can come from the student body, school staff, or the outside world.

- In the early 1990s, the administration of Huntington Beach (Calif.) High School launched an effort to "personalize the school experience" for disruptive or low-achieving students by setting up personal acquaintanceships between adult professionals in the school and at-risk students. School staff and faculty members compiled lists of students who seemed to need extra attention, and staff members started to get to know these students by name. The adults, who met with the students before school, after school, over lunch, and sometimes during class, were expected to listen and to provide information, support, and advice. Some of the teachers appointed these students as their class aides. Students' learning styles were matched, as far as possible, with the adults' personality styles. Since the program relied on volunteers, it involved no direct costs for the school.

There are so many different types of programs that it would not be useful to discuss all of them. While there are some successes, the evidence on their effectiveness is ambiguous and suggests that it is difficult for adults, whether people in the community (who have their own personal lives) or school employees, to have the time and the ability to truly form real, lasting, and effective relationships with students. Moreover, the success of such a program depends on successfully identifying an "at-risk" population, and the accuracy of such efforts is not all that might be desired. Finally, there is the possibility of "boomerang" effects'the act of identifying "at-risk" students and providing different services to them than to others may stigmatize the students more than they were before.

The Cambridge-Somerville Youth Study, begun in 1939, was a carefully controlled study in which one group of 325 young, at-risk boys was given assistance ranging from academic tutoring to psychological counseling, and another, similar group was given nothing. In a follow-up report in 1956 once the boys had reached manhood, Joan and William McCord compared the criminal records of both the treatment group and the control group. They found that there was no significant difference between the number of convictions in each group. The differences were also not significant after controlling for the age at which each boy committed crimes, the age at which each crime was committed. The number of counselors each boy had did not seem to influence the boy's criminality; neither did the length of treatment by the first counselor, or the total length of treatment. The number of times the boy saw his counselor, the age of the boy when the treatment was begun, and the gender of the counselor did seem to have some effect (female counselors were better). "Using the standard of 'official' criminal behavior," the McCords concluded, "we must conclude that the Cambridge-Somerville Youth Study was largely a failure."

D. Self-esteem

Much school-violence literature, and many of the preceding programs, assume that violent students lack self-esteem, confidence, and power; they cannot "control negative influences in their lives," and have learned aggressive behavior as a protective mechanism. Their self-esteem therefore needs to be boosted through, for instance, "assertiveness training." According to education professor James Beane, "the litany of statistics about self-destructive tendencies such as substance abuse, crime, and suicide must surely be seen as a signal from young people that many do not find much about themselves to like."

But it is not universally agreed that low self-esteem causes violence. Roy Baumeister et al. write that while low self-esteem is often assumed to be a cause of violence, the opposite assertion is also theoretically viable that violent people overwhelmingly have high self-esteem (defined as a high appraisal of one's own self-worth) and become violent when confronted with an "ego threat," or a challenge to their self-esteem. "People turn aggressive when they receive feedback that contradicts their favorable views of themselves and implies that they should adopt less favorable views. More to the point, it is mainly the people who refuse to lower their self-appraisals who become violent. One major reason to suggest that violence may result from threatened egotism is that people are extremely reluctant to revise their self-appraisals in a downward direction."

The classic 1950 study of juvenile delinquency by S. and E.T. Glueck found that delinquent boys were more likely than the control group of non-delinquent boys to be self-assertive, socially assertive, defiant, and narcissistic, none of which seems compatible with low self-esteem; they were also less likely than the control group to exhibit characteristics of low self-esteem, such as severe insecurity, feelings of helplessness, feelings of being unloved, general anxiety, submissiveness, and fear of failure.

M.S. Jankowski, who studied gangs in the 1980s, rejected the notion that acting tough results from low self-esteem or feelings of inadequacy. Many gang members joined the gang for the respect they would get from the community and from other gang members; most gang members "expressed a strong sense of self-competence and a drive to compete with others"; they blamed external factors, not themselves, when they failed (a typical behavior of people with high self-esteem); they had great personal ambition; and they were violent toward people "whom they perceived to show a lack of respect or to challenge their honor."

Other gang studies support these findings. Baumeister writes:

Baumeister's view is at odds with the views of many professional educators, who define self-esteem in a way that eliminates all "distasteful and problematic forms." If self-esteem is defined in such a way that it can produce no bad results, then high self-esteem does not produce violence; but this is circular. For a causality argument to hold water, the concept of self-esteem must be defined without reference to its effects. It is still possible that high self-esteem among violent people masks a low self-esteem below the surface; but if this is the case, the hypothesis is essentially unfalsifiable. At any rate, people with unambiguously low self-esteem are generally non-violent. So, if violent people have a veneer of high self-esteem covering up their low self-esteem, according to Baumeister, it is the veneer of high self-esteem that causes the violence, not the core of low self-esteem.

What does this imply for school-based violence-prevention programs that rely on increasing students' self-esteem? Even if one does not accept the bulk of Baumeister's analysis and many do not-it is still plausible that inflated self-esteem ("conceit," as opposed to "realistic" self-esteem) is destructive. The question then becomes: Can a school-based self-esteem program reliably distinguish between the "good" self-esteem and the "bad" self-esteem? Evaluating whether someone's self-esteem is realistic or inflated is inevitably subjective and value-laden, and an approach that merely strives to raise everybody's self-esteem may create violence by unwittingly inflating the self-esteem of people whose self-esteem needs no inflation. We cannot, after all, protect everyone against ego threats. A self-esteem program, therefore, will only be successful if it targets the right people in the right way.

Given the "softness" of such distinctions, the only way to know whether the "right people" are being targeted in the "right way" is by observing the results of the program. Since student populations are different at different schools, no one program is likely to be successful everywhere.

E. Multiculturalism

Another popular view among many educators is that much school violence has racial overtones; in particular, that minority youths are more likely to be violent because of discrimination in the world at large, on the part of their fellow students, and on the part of teachers and administrators.

The solution to the problem, therefore, according to race theorists, is to boost students' self-esteem by making a special effort to adopt culturally sensitive, non-Anglo-biased curricula. Even for those who doubt that low self-esteem causes violence, it is not implausible that blatantly biased materials could fuel student violence not by making minority kids hate themselves but rather by making them resent the dominant culture. According to Herbert Grossman of San Jose State University, prejudice within the school system "drives many minority and working-class students to actively resist both their teachers and the system by purposefully misbehaving," and "may also contribute to the unnecessary suspension of so many African-American, Hispanic, and working-class students." Grossman writes that as minority populations increase, school policies "designed with EuroAmerican middle-class students in mind" may not work as well. Grossman's idea of "cultural sensitivity" involves recognizing that minority students cannot necessarily be expected to "sit in a quiet and controlled manner." Moreover, "the elimination of teacher prejudice is one of the most important steps educators can take to reduce disciplinary problems with minority students."

Race and ethnicity can also influence discipline and misbehavior through misunderstanding of differing cultural norms. For instance, an Anglo teacher may expect a Puerto Rican student to look her in the eye when she is reprimanding him, not knowing that in his home, respectful conduct requires him to look down when he is being scolded. The teacher may read the student's misbehavior as disrespectful and punish him more harshly than necessary, perhaps prompting him to perceive the rules as unfair and treat the teacher with less respect in the future. Similar situations may occur if non-black teachers misinterpret the tenor of adolescent black street language, which is full of expletives and is often used inadvertently in everyday speech in school. These are issues to be kept in mind if, for instance, the school chooses to adopt a "zero-tolerance" policy for inappropriate language.

Whether violence really has much to do with race, though, is unclear. It is an interesting proposition, but we have not found convincing statistical evidence in its support. We doubt whether widespread prejudice within the school system is truly responsible for racial disparities in discipline, and we find it more than a little demeaning to suggest that black students are unable, and should not be expected, to sit still in class.

Part 6

Structural Considerations

So far, we have dealt with actual school-violence prevention methods—the different means that schools use to reduce the incidence of violence. Our general conclusion has been unsurprising —different methods work in different schools; no method clearly works in all cases. There are too many variables, most of them difficult to quantify, and all of them changing over time. To a hypothetical education planner trying to predict violence rates corresponding to different anti-violence programs, we may remark, as Yoda did to Luke Skywalker in *The Empire Strikes Back*, "Hard to see. Always in motion is the future."

Any policy that strives to impose a particular school-violence prevention method on many different schools is unlikely to be the best solution to school violence. This realization leads us to a more basic question what policies can we adopt that will encourage schools to adopt the most appropriate anti-violence methods for their needs?

A. How Public and Private Schools Differ

1. Incentives

We have already suggested that decentralization is desirable—that centralized regulations are likely to end up micromanaging decisions that are best left to the schools themselves, since they tend to be more aware of their own communities, problems, and constraints. But decentralization and a simple "ability to be more aware" is not enough. Al Shanker has pointed out that when New York City schools were decentralized in 1968 and decisionmaking authority brought closer to the neighborhood level, the result, in many cases, was corruption, and board members who were ignorant of many important aspects of their schools. As a result, Shanker says, New York schools have recently become partly recentralized.

What is required is that decisionmaking authority go to people who are more able to know what will work in their case, and that these people operate within an institutional structure that gives them an incentive *to actually find out* what will work, and act on that knowledge. This means that a mechanism must be in place through which those who run schools are rewarded for making good decisions and punished for making poor decisions.

The institutional setting of private schools provides some lessons. Private schools have a better record at keeping violence down than public schools. Private schools are usually smaller and less bureaucratic. They are often more academically challenging, so that to the extent violence is perpetrated by unmotivated students faced with undemanding course offerings, private schools offer advantages over public schools. They often offer stronger accountability to parents and students, since their survival depends on performance and meeting parental and student expectations. Moreover, the voluntary nature of attendance at these schools gives them greater latitude to set rules and "contract" with students to abide by them. Some evidence suggests that by competing with public schools, private schools also force quality (including safety) up in public schools.

Choice matters, even in non-private schools. Yvonne Chan, principal at the Vaughn Learning Center—one of the first schools in California to be awarded a charter, in 1993, under California's charter-school legislation—described the revolutionary effects of choice, and the pride in having a school that the administrators, community, and students can feel to be "their own":

In its first year, discipline referrals dropped from 500 to 100 a year. Likewise, public schools that use private contractors to manage them may be better able to enhance accountability and reduce violence by making achievement of these goals a contract renewal condition. For example, public schools now managed by the Edison Project use contracts with each student and their parents to set goals and evaluate student performance.

2. Doing what the government can't

Public schools, by contrast, labor under a host of legislative and judicial restrictions on discipline and punishment. Yet many of these restrictions exist for excellent reason—to prevent abuse of government power and discriminatory provision of mandated government benefits. In a private context, where parents' choice of school is entirely voluntary, and where parents can contract with the school for any policy imaginable (as long, of course, as it is legal), these constraints naturally (and correctly) do not apply.

This is good news for advocates of the disciplinarian model private schools often keep violence down through strict and uniform regulations. Researchers like James Coleman find that private-school discipline, while less legalistic than in public schools, is both perceived as fairer by students and (possibly as a result) more effective. (James Coleman also reports that private-school sophomores do, on average, two more hours of homework per week than their public-school counterparts, which may contribute to keeping them out of trouble, at least out of school and perhaps in school too.) But making students better able to attend private schools would also be good news for advocates of the non-disciplinarian model, as non-disciplinarian private schools are also widespread, and parents would be able to choose whatever private school suited their vision of what their children's education should look like.

There are many other things the government cannot do. The government cannot indoctrinate children with any particular brand of religion-based morality. But the connection between violence and moral values is not accidental. Many believe that truly addressing problems of violence depends on inculcating a sense of moral values in children. And while morality is possible without religion, many people derive their morality from religion. Many parents also believe that morality aside, religious schools also provide structure to children who lack structure in their lives. Government-run schools, again, for excellent reasons, are forbidden from using religion to inculcate moral values—but many parents find morality more acceptable for their children, and many students find it more compelling as a personal guide, if it is religiously based. This is yet another reason why one might expect private schools, particularly religious schools, to do a better job at controlling violence.

For reasons related to discrimination law, the government cannot run same-sex schools; on the other hand, many private schools, including Catholic schools, have been same-sex. That boys are generally more violent than girls is well-known and not surprising (though this is becoming less true, at least in public schools). Same-sex education may not reduce violence appreciably for boys, though it may reduce relationship-related violence, and some have suggested that it may reduce violence by giving boys from single-parent home "healthy male role models," thereby helping to break "the cycle of welfare and intergenerational illegitimacy." By removing boys, same-sex education may also reduce violence substantially for girls.

Also, for obvious reasons related to discrimination law, the government cannot run same-race schools. Some educators and parents, though, believe that all-black schools can provide significant benefits to black children, particularly by exposing black boys from fatherless families to positive black male role models they can identify with. More generally, to the extent that a black community may share certain cultural characteristics (much as ethnic communities do), such schools may succeed by being more in tune with community values and prompting greater parental involvement and student interest. Several cities, including Baltimore, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Seattle, Cleveland, Portland, Ore., and Camden, N.H., have opened schools with Afrocentric curricula. In Detroit, Malcolm X Academy, a public school, strives to be all-black and all-male and has an Afrocentric curriculum. Students are taught Swahili and refer to male and female instructors as "Baba" and "Mama" (Swahili for "father" and "mother"). The school sports a red, black, and green "African" flag, and displays pictures of Malcolm X, Thurgood Marshall, and other prominent blacks. It features books on black history and literature, and emphasizes the contributions of blacks to math and science. (Teachers at Malcolm X also enforce a strict dress code, and also are free to spank unruly children.) Though 75 percent of its students are raised in single-parent households and more than 60 percent are poor enough to get free lunches, Malcolm X students have higher scores on standardized tests, higher GPAs, and better attendance rates than district norms—and, more interestingly for our present purposes, has low violence rates.

Since the school is government-run, it has been desegregated by court order, along with Detroit's two other black-male academies. Still, it is mostly black because of its location, and still almost all-male because the community has rallied around the school and few girls have applied. The school has made enemies of the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Organization for Women, but the principal denies that his school is segregationist. "Why shouldn't our children learn about their origins, too?" asks principal Clifford Watson. Actually, Watson's critics have a point; the school is indeed segregationist, but no more so than, say, a Jewish school, of which there are many. Government-run schools should be restricted from endorsing this brand of racialism, just as Judaeocentric curricula are inappropriate in public schools, regardless of Jews' needs for positive role models. But if this type of school truly offers educational benefits for some, as Watson and the parents of his students believe, it should be allowed and encouraged—except, of course, without government funding.

B. Doing the Numbers

As private school enrollment began rising after more than a decade of decline—in Florida, for instance, combined private-school enrollment in Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties rose by 10 percent in 1994—private schools came to experience many of the same problems as public schools, including crowding, discipline, and drugs. But this increase in private-school enrollment has come about because of parents' dissatisfaction with the crowding, discipline, and drug problems at public schools. "I think a lot of people right now are afraid to send their kids to public school," said Edward Gilgenast, headmaster of the Admiral Farragut Academy in St. Petersburg. And these problems are still significantly smaller at private schools. In the words of Sister Noreen Werner, schools superintendent for the Archdiocese of Miami, "we have the same problems they do; we just have them in less numbers." Seventy percent of respondents to a national poll felt that private schools did a better job keeping out drugs and violence; 6 percent thought public schools did a better job.

Relevant statistics, culled from different studies, on the performance of public and private schools, are shown in Table 4-1. On the availability of drugs, the prevalence of violence and property offenses, the extent to which students avoid places at school or fear attacks, private schools are consistently shown to be safer places to be than public schools. While victimization in general is lower in private schools than in public schools, physical attacks are lowest by the largest amount. Private-school teachers are also more positive about their students than are public-school teachers; private-school students are more positive about their classmates than are public-school students; and private-school administrators are more likely to give their schools high marks than are public-school administrators. The comparisons between assigned public schools and chosen public schools also indicate that while choice whether attendance is voluntary and responsibility who has ultimate control and who must bear the costs of bad behavior are always important, ownership whether a school is public or private is also important.

Table 6-1: Selected Statistics On Public And Private Schools					
	Private	Public			
Students who...					
Say their school have too much drugs and violence	22%	48%			
Say drugs are available at their school	52%	70%			
Were victimized at school	7%	9%			
• Violent offense	1%	2%			
• Property offense	6%	8%			
Avoid places at school	3%	6%			
Fear an attack at school	13%	22%			
	Private	Public (chosen)	Public (assigned)		
Students who...					
Know of the occurrence of victimization	45%	71%	73%		

	Catholic	Other private	Public		
Witnessed victimization	32%	54%	58%		
Worried about victimization	13%	27%	26%		
Were actually victimized	7%	10%	12%		
• Were bullied	5%	8%	9%		
• Were physically attacked	1%	4%	4%		
• Were robbed	< 0.5%	1%	1%		
	Catholic	Other private	Public		
Students who...					
• Talk back to teachers	29%	27%	51%		
• Disobey instructions	20%	17%	39%		
Administrators who...					
• Think student absenteeism...	15.2%	13.8%	56.6%		
• Think cutting classes...	4.6%	0%	37.0%		
• Think verbal abuse of teachers...	4.7%	5.3%	9.6%		

• Think drug and alcohol use...	26.2%	18.0%	48.5%		
• Think vandalism of school property...	13.8%	11.7%	24.5%		
...is a serious or moderate problem.					
	Total private	Catholic	Other religious	Non-sectarian	Public
Teachers who...					
Think student misbehavior and substance abuse					
• interferes with education	16%	12%	15%	23%	38%
Think student tardiness or cutting classes					
• interferes with education	15%	10%	17%	18%	52%
Think student attitudes reduce their chances					
• for success	31%	26%	28%	42%	61%

Note: Because these numbers come from different studies, they may not all agree exactly. Sources: Jean Johnson and Steve Farkas, *Getting By: What American Teenagers Really Think About Their Schools* (New York: Public Agenda, 1997), p. 42. Lisa D. Bastian and Bruce M. Taylor, *School Crime: A National Crime Victimization Survey Report*, U.S. Department of Justice, September 1991, NCJ-131645, pp. 2, 4, and 11. Mary Jo Nolin, Elizabeth Davies, and Kathryn Chandler, *Student Victimization at School*, National Center for Education Statistics, NCES-95-204, October 1995, pp.

7–8. Peter Benson and Marilyn Miles McMillen, *Private Schools in the United States*, National Center for Education Statistics, February 1991, NCES-91-054, pp. 97–99.

C. Religious Schools

It is often asserted that private schools do well because they can expel whomever they like; thus, they can weed out the most difficult-to-educate students like those with emotional or physical handicaps foisting them on the public school system. Religious schools, though particularly Catholic schools have a legendary reputation for educating the difficult-to-educate. On average, Catholic schools expel less than 1 percent of their students, and suspend less than 3 percent of them. Cardinal John O'Connor of New York City, responding to a long-standing challenge by the American Federation of Teachers Al Shanker, even offered to enroll 5 percent of the city's most difficult-to-educate students in parochial schools for Fall 1996. Mayor Rudolph Giuliani accepted the offer, originally floating the prospect of using vouchers to fund the transfers. The money must now come from private sources, because of concerns about the separation of church and state. (At any rate, public schools already do not accept everyone. Nationwide, more than 100,000 difficult-to-educate students students with physical handicaps, learning disabilities, emotional troubles, or involvement with the juvenile-justice system are already enrolled in private secular and religious schools at taxpayer expense.)

For students from comparable backgrounds, absenteeism, disciplinary problems, threats to teachers, and rates of violence among students are lower among Catholic-school students. Many parents choose religious schools for reasons quite unrelated to religion; "Our school is free of drugs, free of violence and free of sex," says Sulaiman Alfraih, principal of the boys' school at the Islamic Saudi Academy in Washington, D.C. "Regardless of their ideology, the parents love to see their kids in a very safe, clean environment." "Our schools have a sense of order," says Sister Catherine McNamee, president of the National Catholic Education Association. "Parents feel their children are safe, especially in urban areas, and they will develop a sense of moral values."

Many Catholic schools used to have uniforms, though many today merely have a general dress code (i.e., no baggy jeans or nose rings). Most have few guards or security gadgets, and overwhelmingly, they do not incorporate violence prevention as such into the curriculum. Naturally, they have school prayer, and strict behavior codes. Legendary Catholic school discipline (i.e., being rapped on the knuckles by a menacing nun) is more lax today than it once was. The success of Catholic schools is mostly attributed to such factors as "high expectations, firm discipline, academic rigor, and a sense of community." One writer describes the typical Catholic-school approach to discipline, in the person of Brother Greg (a pseudonym):

One 15-year-old, who has attended both a Catholic school and a lower-tier New York public school, puts the matter quite clearly: "It's like here [in the public schools], the teachers . . . don't say anything when you miss their class or mess up your homework; the nuns, they make you look stupid and feel bad kind of like my mom treats me." The Jesuits, renowned among Catholics (and in the outside world) for their quality educational system:

When teachers were asked to rate aspects of their school climate, Catholic school teachers gave their schools generally higher marks than public-school teachers, but the difference was greatest in teacher assessment of student behavior (see Table 6-2).

Table 6-2: Percent of Teachers Reporting Positive School Climate in Public and Catholic High Schools: 1984		
Factor	Public	Catholic
Principal leadership	50	59
Staff cooperation	52	68
Student behavior	39	73
Teacher control	66	81
Teacher morale	74	85

Source: Peter Benson and Marilyn Miles McMillen, *Private Schools in the United States: A Statistical Profile, With Comparisons to Public Schools*, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, NCES 91-054, February 1991, p. 115, figure 5-5.

D. Catholic School Principals Speak

1. Public and Catholic schools in Los Angeles

The Los Angeles Unified School District has its own police department, which has been in existence since 1948. The LAUSD Police Department has about 280 sworn personnel—one chief, three assistant chiefs, four lieutenants, 25 sergeants, 18 detectives, six senior police officers, and about 223 police officers. The police department serves about 58,394 regular employees, 811,713 students (in school year 1995–96), and 899 schools and centers spanning an area covering 708 square miles. Table 6-3 shows LAUSD crime statistics for years 1990–91 through 1995–96, with offenses ranging from assault with a deadly weapon and homicide to property crimes and trespassing.

Table 6-3: Violence in Los Angeles Public Schools						
	90–91	91–92	92–93	93–94	94–95	95–96
Assault	104	121	132	119	99	*
Assault with a Deadly Weapon	458	483	399	308	292	226

Battery	874	776	741	629	686	n/a
Chemical Substance Offenses	248	259	384	665	959	1471
Crimes Against Property	7396	7905	7215	6676	5449	5441
Destructive Devices	178	176	108	52	111	93
Extortion	2	5	4	6	3	*
Homicide	1	1	2	0	1	3
Loitering/Trespassing	286	216	150	142	385	733
Possession of Weapons	1305	1403	1325	1032	1018	416
Robbery	475	433	451	401	461	422
Sex Offenses	404	429	409	427	477	93
District enrollment (thousands)	790	800	811	792	795	812

Note: n/a = not available. Assault reporting rules changed in 1995-96; see battery. Extortion reporting rules changed in 1995-96; see robbery. Source: Los Angeles Unified School District home page, http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/police/crimstat/

According to the California Safe Schools Assessment 1995-96 annual report to the legislature, Los Angeles County had an enrollment of 1,511,054 (including the 811,713 in LAUSD). The financial loss to the county due to crime-related incidents (mostly property crimes) was just under $12 million. California public schools also invest a large amount of resources into violence-prevention programs:

- $7.2 million statewide for the School Violence Reduction Grant Program;
- $10 million for eight or more sites (in a three-year demonstration grant) for the Targeted Truancy and Public Safety Grant Program;
- $50,000 for each school that applies for the School Community Violence Prevention Grant Program;
- $8,000 for each applying school for the Conflict Resolution and Youth Mediation Grant Program;
- $5,000 for each of 100 schools (plus a district matching fund) for Safe School Plan Implementation Grants;
- $3 million statewide for the Gang Risk Intervention Program;
- $4.03 per pupil (a federal fund entitlement) for Title IV Safe and Drug Free Schools and

Communities.

Catholic school enrollment is 2.6 million nationwide. Minority students account for nearly one-fourth of the total, and a rising percentage (now 13.2 percent) of the students are not Catholic. On average, Catholic schools expel less than 1 percent of their students, and suspend less than 3 percent of them. Most Catholic principals (84 percent) say that "discipline is a strong emphasis."

Total enrollment in Los Angeles County parochial schools is 93,200. There are 207 elementary schools (K–8), four middle schools, and 45 high schools (9–12). According to Sister Mary Joanne, research analyst for the Los Angeles Archdiocese, there is no need for a formal violence tracking system in Los Angeles-area Catholic schools because the number of incidents is so small. The Catholic school principals we interviewed reported less than one incident per year that would require police involvement. "There have been no incidents on school property in the last two years, although there has been violence in the community which has affected the children," according to John Quarry, principal of San Mogul Elementary. And as Margaret Nadeau, principal of St. Malachy Elementary, said, "I have worked here for six years and we have only called the police one time when outside gangs were causing trouble on our street corner. In fact, the police do not even know where we are located." When the police are called at Los Angeles Catholic schools, it is usually because of a disturbance from outsiders who come on or near the school campus.

Sister Mary Joanne confirmed our findings from the interviews with local principals and said that the low rates of violence are generalizable to all Catholic schools in Los Angeles County.

2. Ten Los Angeles Catholic schools

We interviewed ten Catholic school principals at K–8 schools in East and South-Central Los Angeles. The student populations at these schools were 100 percent minority. At Santa Teresita Elementary School, all 274 students are Hispanic; at Santa Isabel, all 304 students are Hispanic; and at St. Lawrence of Brindisi, 60 percent of students are Black and 40 percent are Hispanic. These Catholic schools also have a high student-teacher ratio. The smallest student-teacher ratio was 28-to-1, and most schools had a ratio closer to 35-to-1. (A *Wall Street Journal* editorial once remarked that Mrs. Roman, an eighth-grade teacher at New York's Our Lady Queen of Angels, "manages a class of 46, a number that would send most public school teachers on strike.")

The Catholic schools we contacted do not have student mediation and conflict resolution programs, metal detectors or security guards, locker searchers or small class sizes. They manage to maintain discipline without many of the popular public school methods for preventing violence. Our interviews identified three sorts of strategies Catholic schools use to promote order, maintain discipline, and avoid violence—assertive discipline, contact with parents, and a strong sense of moral values.

3. Assertive discipline

Amity Schlaes wrote of New York's Our Lady Queen of Angels that it "enjoys another, giant advantage not shared by its public counterparts: the freedom to demand civilized behavior from its students. A blue school handbook lays out a stern line: 'Self-discipline is the Christian ideal which all students are encouraged to achieve.' The 'Rules of general behavior' include 'polite greeting to each other' and 'holding doors and stepping back to let adults pass first.'"

All of the schools we contacted have a clear and consistent discipline policy. Public schools have zero tolerance for bringing weapons to school; Catholic schools have zero tolerance for misbehaving. All types of misconduct carry serious consequences, so student misbehavior never gets to the point where students are carrying weapons.

According to the principal of San Miguel Elementary School, "the number one component to prevent violence is a very strong, assertive discipline program. Although teachers have autonomy to find the best way to control their classrooms, they consistently enforce a set of rules that all students are made aware of." At St. Lawrence, students are given a handbook at the beginning of the year, and the teachers review the handbook with students at mid-year to remind them of appropriate behavior. At this school, the punishment associated with different types of misconduct becomes harsher as the year progresses.

At Holy Cross Middle School, Sister Daniel Therese Flynn explains that the policies in the student handbook are strictly enforced. "We do not deviate. We have complete consistency in applying our policies. If students throw punches, for example, they are both suspended. There is no determination of who is at fault. There is not one predator and one victim—we do not act as a court of law so as to divide students into groups. There is no arbitration; everyone gets the same penalties."

Ms. Collins of St. Gregory pointed out that when children learn to respond to discipline in the first grade and the child stays in the Catholic schools for eight years, a sense of self-control becomes ingrained in the child. "We teach children self-discipline," explains John Quarry of San Miguel Elementary, who has expelled only two children in 12 years.

At Santa Isabel the principal, Sister Joanne Marie, pointed out that all teachers present a unified front of consistency. "We have zero problems because we emphasize that misconduct is just not permitted. When two seventh-grade boys were caught smoking marijuana before school, we took it very seriously. We made a heavy-duty big deal. They know, the other students know, their parents know—we set an example—this behavior is not tolerated."

In Catholic schools, students know the exact consequences for their behavior. At St. Thomas the Apostle school, for example, there is a very specific process leading up to student expulsion. If students receive three pink slips, they are put on probation. If they receive three more, they are asked to withdraw from the school. School principal Dan Horn explains that "it rarely gets to this point. The kids know the policy and they have a sense of shame when they receive a pink slip because they know it is serious. The student's parents are contacted even before the first pink slip is issued. Before a student is asked to withdraw, every effort has been made to work with the student and parent and we even recommend outside counseling. The last automatic probation was for an eighth-grade boy who continued to verbally and sexually harass a female student."

4. Contact with parents

Catholic schools keep in close contact with parents through letters or phone calls. Catholic school teachers call between 28 and 35 parents on a regular basis. At Holy Cross Middle School, the teachers maintain constant contact with parents to report positive and negative student conduct. Santa Isabel has mandatory parent meetings; every Tuesday, students take home a progress report detailing the student's behavior, which the parents must sign.

And at Santa Teresita Elementary, when two seventh grade boys grabbed a note from a seventh grade girl, they received a detention slip just for "the nonsense" and because they took someone else's property. Sister Mary Virginia, the school principal, told the boys to have their parents call her at home that night. One boy did, but the other did not. Sister Mary Virginia called the second boy's home at 9:30 that night; his parents had been told nothing about the incident or his detention. The principal made sure the parents were aware of the incident.

5. Moral values

All of the school principals we talked to stressed the importance of explicit moral values in maintaining a safe and positive environment in their schools.

As St. Malachy's principal, Margaret Nadeau, explained, "Catholic schools have the moral advantage; we live by the Ten Commandments and install a strong sense of right and wrong in our children. We talk about values and teach the children to respect their teachers and each other. Our teachers demand respect. Children cannot live without a framework. We spell out our expectations and the children appreciate this—they appreciate the safe environment."

Similarly, Holy Cross Middle School's Sister Daniel Theresa says, "We make youngsters aware that they have a moral obligation to behave. Their parents are sacrificing their time and money to send them to this school." And at Santa Isabel, they emphasize "saying kind things rather than unkind." At St. Thomas the Apostle school, Dan Horn explains that the faculty has a strong philosophy of respect and dignity. "Beyond just academics, we care for the students. And both students and teachers share in that philosophy."

E. Compulsory Schooling

To be most effective, choice in education may need to go further than merely allowing parents to choose which school their child goes to. There is an interesting case to be made that compulsory schooling laws themselves exacerbate school violence problems, and that repealing or softening such laws, at least at the high-school level, would alleviate school violence, would improve the quality of education, would not flood the streets with delinquents, and would not appreciably increase crime in society at large.

Current compulsory school age requirements for different states and U.S. territories are shown in Table 6-4.

The costs of compulsory schooling are twofold. First, public schools find it difficult to expel troublesome students. When a troublesome student attends class, he can make education difficult for the willing students; when he doesn't attend class, as is often the case, he blurs the line between intruders and students, making it harder to maintain order. An anonymous ninth- and tenth-grade teacher at a large high school in New Jersey puts the problem this way:

Second, compulsory schooling may not even benefit the dropout. Compulsory schooling laws are often called "compulsory education" laws, but they are more accurately called "compulsory enrollment" laws. For unwilling, disaffected students, who have not chosen their school and who feel like prisoners, enrollment does not equal education. Such students are hostile, do not respect authority,

and do not feel their education is worthwhile, and the higher the age of compulsory education, the more such students there are.

Table 6-4: Compulsory School Age Requirements, 1996			
State/Commonwealth	Requirement	State/Commonwealth	Requirement
Alabama1	7–16	Montana	7–16 or completed 8th
Alaska	7–16 or h.s. grad.	Nebraska	7–16
American Samoa	6–18	Nevada	7–17
Arizona	6–16 or completed 10th	New Hampshire	6–16
Arkansas	5–17	New Jersey	6–16
California	6–18	New Mexico	5–16
Colorado	7–16	New York6	6–16
Connecticut	7–16	North Carolina	7–16
Delaware	5–16	North Dakota	5–16
District of Columbia	7–17	Ohio	6–18
Florida	6–16	Oklahoma	5–18
Georgia	7–16	Oregon	7–18
Hawaii2	6–18	Pennsylvania	8–17
Idaho	7–16	Puerto Rico	8–14
Illinois	7–16	Rhode Island	6–16
Indiana3	7–16	South Carolina7	5–17
Iowa	6–16	South Dakota	6–16 or completed 8th

Kansas	5–16	Tennessee	7–18
Kentucky4	6–16	Texas	6–17
Louisiana	7–17	Utah	6–18
Maine	7–17	Vermont	7–16
Maryland	5–16	Virginia	5–18
Massachusetts	6–16	Washington8	8–18
Michigan	6–16	West Virginia	6–16
Minnesota5	7–16	Wisconsin	6–18 or h.s. grad.
Mississippi	6–16	Wyoming	7–16
Missouri	7–16		

It is no coincidence that many academically or artistically selective schools—such as Boston Latin School, the Bronx High School of Science, Aviation High School, and the Murry Bertraum High School for Business Careers—are both safe and academically meritorious. They are entirely chosen, and have a critical mass of willing students. Thus, Aviation High School, for instance, serves both plane lovers like then-17-year-old Bridgette Miles and students like then-junior Pastora Rivas who was "looking for a place where there wasn't going to be a fight every day." According to Toby, schools can ensure such a critical mass:

What would happen if schools really allowed and even encouraged potential dropouts to drop out? Since most children are ruled by their parents, most children, even unwilling ones, would still go to school. The data from different states with different ages of compulsory attendance confirms that the vast majority of students would still attend school. Table 6-5 compares the percentages of students in 1970 that attended school until ages 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18, in two groups of states—the five states that compelled attendance to age 15 or under at the time, and the four states that compelled attendance to age 18.

For all years, the percentages of students that stay enrolled in school are similar. Since enrollment is an overestimate of attendance, the differences in attendance should be even smaller. And since attendance is an overestimate of learning, the true differences should be even smaller than that (and while "learning" cannot be measured directly, we cannot rule out the possibility that the lower-compulsory-attendance states might come out ahead under such a comparison).

Table 6-5: White Males Enrolled in School by Age and Compulsory Attendance Requirement, 1970 (Compulsory Attendance Required by State Law)			
Age	To Age 15 or Under (five state %)	To Age 18 (four state %)	Difference (%)
14	94.6	97.1	2.5
15	93.7	96.5	2.8
16	90.2	94.9	4.7
17	85.8	90.1	4.3
18	70.3	71.3	1.0

Note: The five states with compulsory attendance until age 15 or under are Arkansas, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, and Washington. The four states with compulsory attendance until age 18 are Hawaii, Ohio, Oregon, and Utah. Source: Jackson Toby, "The Schools," in Crime, ed. James Q. Wilson and Joan Petersilla (1995), ch. 7, p. 24, citing United States Bureau of the Census, Census of Population 1 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973), ch. D, parts 5, 13, 20, 21, 37, 39, 46, 49.

School violence would also decrease for three reasons. First, those who don't want to be there, who disproportionately exhibit delinquent behavior, would leave. Second, since schools, freed from the requirement to take all comers regardless of behavior, would be able to maintain higher standards, incorrigible students who do not want to drop out would be expelled. Third, once schools enforce higher standards, individual students' behavior would probably improve. "Making schools tougher academically, with substantial amounts of homework, might have the paradoxical effect of persuading a higher proportion of families to encourage their children to choose of their own volition to try to learn . . . . Keeping internal dropouts in school is an empty victory." As the crude comparison in Table 6-6 indicates, higher ages of compulsory attendance seem to be associated with higher rates of secondary-school crime. The interesting variable in the table is the right-hand column, which calculates the difference between secondary-school crime and elementary-school crime. As the age of compulsory school attendance rises, so does this difference.

Would dropouts increase the crime rate in the outside world? Probably not. Intuitively, one can observe that juvenile arrest do not increase much during summer vacation, even though students, including violent ones, are not in school. One can also observe that many students who eventually drop out already spend a lot of time outside of school, since their nonattendance rates are high. Quantitative studies support this intuition, and suggest that while dropping out may be a symptom of larger problems, it is not itself the problem, and in fact, forcing dropouts to stay in school will likely be counterproductive, both for the school and the would-be dropout. While dropouts do indeed have high delinquency rates, dropping out is not the cause of delinquency. Dropouts generally adopt antisocial behaviors while still in school, often as a result of experiences in the school itself. Once

they drop out, their delinquency does not increase (see Figure 6-1); according to one study, dropping out actually decreases the dropouts rate of delinquent behavior and the likelihood of official police contact.

Table 6-6: Referral of School Crimes to the Police by Age of Compulsory School Attendance in the State, 1974-75			
Age of Compulsory School Attendance	In Elementary Schools	In Secondary Schools	Difference
£ 15 (AR, LA, ME, MS, WA)	3.1	8.0	4.9
16 (36 states + DC)	3.2	10.5	7.3
17 (NV, NM, PA, TX, VA)	3.8	11.6	7.8
18 (HI, OH, OR, UT)	4.8	20.1	15.3

Note: Because there are so few states in the 18 age group, extreme values for one of them greatly influence the average. Hawaii, for example, had by far the highest rate of school crime on both the elementary and secondary levels. If Hawaii were excluded from the average and the remaining eight states with compulsory ages of school attendance of 17 or higher were averaged, the result would be 4.0 for elementary schools and 11.4 for secondary schools, with a difference of 7.4. Source: Jackson Toby, "The Schools," in Crime, ed. James Q. Wilson and Joan Petersilla (1995), ch. 7, p. 25, citing United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Violent Schools-Safe Schools: The Safe School Study Report to the Congress (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978), p. B-6.

Figure 6-1: Cross-Time Delinquency Score for Three Levels of Education
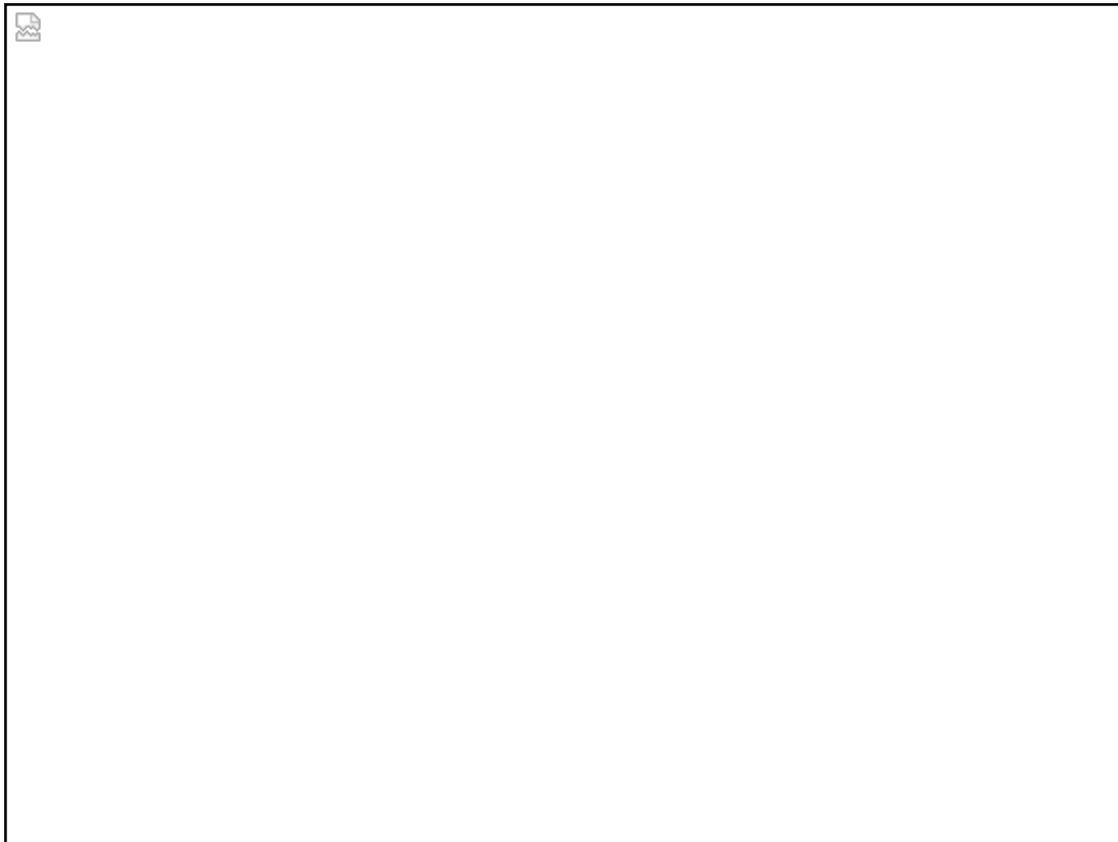
High school dropouts

Stayins who were "primarily students" after high school

Stayins who were not "primarily students" after high school

Notes: Lines connect means for only those participating in all data collections. Circles indicate means based on all Time 1 respondents, regardless of further participation, who could be classified into analysis groups. Ordinates are scaled to show time 1 grand mean 1 standard deviation.

Source: *Bachman, Green, Wirtanen, Youth in Transition*, p. 124.

Thus, only a small minority of students are likely to drop out, and these are possibly the students that ought to drop out in any event; these dropouts would not appreciably increase violence in society at large. As schools became able to be more demanding, other would-be dropouts might conclude that education was valuable and worthwhile. Schools may well be safer for the other students as well, increasing the value of the education for well-behaved students, and possibly slowing down the flight of students from public schools.

Voluntary high schools may account for some of the successes of the Japanese educational system; Japanese high schools are voluntary, and can therefore be selective and demand hard work from willing students. Ninety-four percent of Japanese junior high school graduates attend high school, and 90 percent of them complete it. As high school attendance becomes more selective and voluntary, higher academic and behavioral standards seep into junior high schools, where students know that

their acceptance into the high school of their choice depends on how they do in junior high. Japanese junior high schools (which are compulsory) are more violent than Japanese senior high schools, even though most junior high students are too busy preparing for high school admission exams to break the rules.

Schools might benefit not only by allowing students to drop out, but also by encouraging adult dropouts to return to school—not in special adult classes, but together with children. In Chicago, DuSable High School, which allows adults in regular classrooms, has found that "returning students," "urban Rip Van Winkles," act as "unofficial teacher's deputies" and provide a "calm and wisdom" that reinforces the power of teachers. Children are often ashamed to misbehave because their adult relatives, or other adults they know (who "don't have time for no foolishness"), might see what they are doing. As 17-year-old senior Alex Lee remarked, "I don't want to be cursing and acting silly around them. I got respect for old people. Some of them are 40, 45 years old." For those children who misbehave anyway, adults can also be extra disciplinary aids. Once, the principal of DuSable, Charles Mingo, thought he saw a girl beating a boy in the hall. It turned out to be a mother disciplining her son, who was about to skip gym class. "She popped him right there in the hall and marched him off to the gym." (On the other hand, while sending teenagers to school with middle-aged adults may seem intuitively appealing, sending them to school with college-age students is perhaps another story.)

In the words of the anonymous New Jersey teacher:

[In the real world, dropouts] could ponder their choices without draining time and resources from other kids who want to learn. Teachers would have more time to teach, and principals would have the opportunity to meet responsible students instead of dealing with the same problem kids over and over. I'm sure some of the dropouts would do well in the work world, especially those who got into a trade that emphasized experience over book learning. I'm equally sure that others would come back to school with their attitudes adjusted . . . . Compulsory education laws obscure the fact that most students would choose to be in school anyway—and that choice is a major motivator in learning. Perhaps more important, in the end, such laws make willing students pay the freight on unwilling ones. And those charges are pretty steep.

Part 7

Conclusion

Our conclusion is threefold.

- There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Since no solution clearly works in all cases, no solution should be mandated from on high. Moreover, different schools, in different communities, will differ in their reasonable interpretations of the same data; people disagree on "what works" partly because they disagree on what it means to "work." Schools should be free to experiment with different systems to find the solution that is best for their own needs.

- Incentives matter. Decentralizing decisions will do no good if the decisionmakers are not punished for bad decisions and rewarded for good decisions. Schools should have an incentive

to produce the information on whether their violence-prevention programs work or not, and make that information available to parents. Ultimately, parental choice is the only way to ensure that good decisions are being made, because there is no objective standard by which to distinguish "bad decisions" from "good decisions."

- Private schools have their advantages. They are not only chosen, but their owners directly gain when they attract students and directly lose when they lose students. They are also not subject to many of the rules of government-run schools—they are free to pursue a number of possibly promising paths to reduce violence, including same-sex education, disciplinarian methods, and religiously based moral teaching.

A preferred public policy solution to school violence, therefore, lies not in changing the individual acts of individual schools, but rather in creating an educational environment relying less on centralized, government-run, compulsory approaches, and more on localized, voluntary ones, including private-school options.

Part 8

About the Authors

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