

# **PARTICIPANT PACKET**

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

**A Live National Satellite Broadcast  
From  
The White House—East Room**

*Presented by the*

**Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention  
U.S. Department of Justice**

*In association with the*

**Safe and Drug Free Schools Program  
U.S. Department of Education**

*And the*

**Juvenile Justice Telecommunications Assistance Project  
Eastern Kentucky University—Training Resource Center**

October 5, 1998

Dear Friend of America's Children:

I am pleased that you and your organization are joining the nationwide effort to create safer environments for our children by participating in our White House Conference on School Safety -- Causes and Prevention of Youth Violence. The conference will take place on Thursday, October 15, 1998, and I hope that you will use this opportunity to engage your community in confronting this challenging problem and finding solutions.

While schools are still among the safest places for America's young people, we know that violent crime continues to plague a number of our schools. We also know that the problems children face in school often reflect the problems of their communities: drugs, gangs, and guns, on the street and even in their homes. Solving these problems will call for the best effort from each of us -- from schools and teachers, parents and families, law enforcement officials and religious and community organizations. The federal government must also be an active partner.

At the White House Conference on School Safety, we will listen to and learn from students themselves and from parents, teachers, law enforcement, and other experts about efforts to keep our children safe in their schools and communities. We will build on the existing body of knowledge about young people and aggressive or violent behavior. We will share best practices and explore new solutions, and we will highlight strategies to put these models into practice nationwide.

Local events like yours are being developed across the country to underscore the importance of schools, communities, and families working together to create safer learning environments for our young people. You will have the opportunity to link via satellite to my live address when I issue the first Annual Report on School Safety; to a roundtable discussion on school and youth violence with the Vice President, the First Lady, Mrs. Gore, and me; and to a roundtable discussion, led by the First Lady, highlighting successful initiatives for creating safer schools and communities.

When our children's safety is at stake, we must take action -- and we all must do our part. I thank you for participating in this important event and for making a positive contribution to the future of America's children.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

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**White House Conference on School Safety:  
Causes and Prevention of Youth Violence  
October 15, 1998**

*“...[L]earning cannot occur unless our schools are safe and orderly places where teachers can teach and children can learn. Wherever there is chaos where there should be calm, wherever there is disorder where there should be discipline, make no mistake about it, it's not just a threat to our classrooms..., it is a threat to the strength and vitality of America.... We have to do more... I will host the first ever White House Conference on School Safety... to find new solutions to this profound challenge.”*

-- President Clinton, July 20, 1998

**White House Conference on School Safety**

On October 15, 1998, the President is hosting the *White House Conference on School Safety: Causes and Prevention of Youth Violence*. The Conference will be a day-long event in the East Room of the White House that will include participation by the President, Vice President, First Lady and Mrs. Gore; workshops; a morning panel discussion; and an afternoon session that will explore best practices and model safety strategies. The Conference will include communities recently affected by school shootings and will be linked by satellite to communities and schools across the country.

Although schools remain among the safest places for America's young people, even one incident of violent crime in a school is too many. The Conference's goals include: building on the existing body of knowledge about young people and aggressive or violent behavior; listening and learning from students, parents, teachers, law enforcement and other experts about the safety of our children both in and out of school; sharing best practices and exploring new solutions; and developing strategies to put these safety models in place in schools and communities across the nation. The White House Conference on School Safety will work toward finding solutions to this challenge: How do schools, families and communities work together to make sure that every child is safe in every school in America?

**The President Is Announcing New Initiatives Promoting Discipline and Safety in Schools**

At the Conference, the President is issuing the first Annual Report on School Safety, which will include: an analysis of all existing national school crime data and an overview of state and local school crime data; examples of schools and strategies that are successfully reducing school violence, drug use, and class disruption; actions that parents can take locally to combat school crime; and resources available to schools and communities to help create safe, disciplined and drug-free schools. In addition, the President is announcing a number of new initiatives to help schools and communities prevent and respond to violence.

**Conference Participants**

The President, Vice President, First Lady, and Mrs. Gore will be joined by the Attorney General, the Secretary of Education, Members of Congress, a number of state and local elected officials, including mayors, and approximately 100 other Conference participants. These participants will include: students, parents, teachers, principals, school superintendents, members of law enforcement, experts from the medical and psychological fields, clergy and religious leaders, and other community representatives.

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

## AGENDA October 15, 1998

### **10:30 AM – 12:15 PM EDT Live Coverage of the White House Conference on School Safety**

- Welcoming Remarks by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
- Remarks by Mrs. Gore
- Remarks by Vice President Al Gore
- Remarks by President Bill Clinton
- Expert Panel

### **12:30 – 1:45 PM EDT      Rebroadcast of White House Conference Morning Panel: Excerpt**

### **2:00 – 3:45 PM EDT      Live Satellite Broadcast with the First Lady**

- First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, Moderator
- Paul Kingery, Director, Hamilton Fish National Institute on School & Community Violence
- Discussion of Effective Programs
  - Families and Schools Together (FAST)
  - Resolving Conflict Creatively Program
  - Baltimore Police Athletic League (PAL)
  - San Diego County's Comprehensive Strategy
- Audience Questions

## **School Crime and Safety**

Recent incidents of extreme violence on school grounds have focused national attention on the issue of school crime and violence. As a nation, we must ensure that our schools are safe havens for children. Two decades of research tells us that the vast majority of schools are in fact, safe. But even one incident of violence is too many. When students fear guns, drugs, gangs or violence, it compromises the ability of our children to learn. All students deserve safe, orderly classrooms where they can learn and grow.

### **School and Community Collaboration**

Schools are using a variety of tools to address crime and violence, including implementing zero tolerance policies, increasing school security, engaging youth in conflict resolution, or establishing other school violence prevention or reduction programs. Whatever the approach, the most effective school safety initiatives systemically address the needs of students, their families, school personnel, and the community through a community-wide effort.

Schools often reflect the problems of the larger community. Successful efforts to address school violence will involve the entire community and build partnerships that engage the community in the life of the school. Many communities are successfully reducing school crime and violence by adopting problem-solving strategies that take into account the specific safety problems experienced by the schools and the community and then identifying appropriate intervention strategies. These communities are successfully reducing school crime and youth violence by inviting the local stakeholders in the community to collaborate to develop and implement a comprehensive school safety plan. Schools, parents, business leaders, social service, law enforcement and juvenile justice agencies, faith communities, businesses, community organizations, and students play an important part in preparing and implementing a comprehensive plan. Strong leadership from school officials is also essential to harness these resources and to create a successful partnership to reduce school crime.

Action steps necessary to establish school/community partnerships include:

- Identify and Measure the Problem
- Set Measurable Goals and Objectives
- Identify Appropriate Programs and Strategies
- Implement the Comprehensive Plan
- Evaluate the Plan

Implementing a comprehensive school and community approach to school and community safety is hard work. It requires the stakeholders to work across their disciplines, monitor their progress, evaluate the effectiveness of their strategy, and sustain their commitment and successes. The rewards, however, are worth it.

## **Families and Schools Together (FAST)**

FAST is a two-year program that engages parents in providing social supports for children ages 3-13 and their families. Implemented by schools nationwide, this program seeks to improve student behavior and strengthen communities, schools, and families by reaching out to socially isolated families, creating support networks, and encouraging parents to take leadership roles in the program. It does this through a well-defined collaboration between parents, the school, a local mental health agency, a local provider of substance abuse prevention and intervention services, a youth advocate, and a youth partner.

Children referred to the FAST program, usually by school personnel, tend to display problem behaviors in the classroom, but students may also be invited to join because of low reading skills or other individual or family problems. Nationally, the children in FAST are 65% male, 95% eligible for free or reduced lunch, 51% Caucasian, 25% Latino, and 23% African-American.

After referral by an elementary school teacher, FAST parent graduates make home visits to invite a child and his or her whole family to participate in the program. Families are clustered in groups of 10 to 12 according to where their children attend school, and then attend eight weekly sessions run by a team of professionals from the community. During these sessions, several interactive and fun strategies for increasing the social bonds of the child are taught to parents and practiced by the whole family. These strategies include:

- play therapy, in which parents spend at least 15 minutes per day playing with their children in a non-directive, non-judgmental manner;
- structured, interactive activities which involve the whole family (e.g., sharing a meal);
- a parent self-help group which is encouraged to become cohesive and provide a network for social support;
- parent empowerment, in which parents learn that they can be the primary prevention agents for their children; and
- school-community partnerships which include parental involvement with the school.

Following the initial eight weeks, groups of families run their own meetings for two years while continuing to receive support from the FAST team as needed. The FAST program has had a significant impact on students' behaviors. Outcome evaluation data from statewide FAST replication in 30 Wisconsin schools and in California schools both showed parents reporting 25% improvement at home and teachers reporting 20% improvement at school after only eight sessions in the following behaviors: reduced behavior problems, such as bullying, hitting, stealing, and lying; reduced withdrawal and anxiety; and reduced attention span problems.

The FAST program has also had a great deal of success engaging hard-to-reach, low-income families. In evaluations of the program, teachers and parents have reported increases in family cohesion, and decreases in social isolation. Of the families that come to one FAST meeting, 88% remain at least to the end of the initial eight-week phase. Results after 10 weeks show statistically significant improvements in classroom behaviors, home behaviors, and self-esteem of the youth and also in family closeness. After six months, these gains are maintained and there is increased parent involvement in school, increased parent self-sufficiency, along with the above referenced decreased social isolation. Over the following two years, schools report dramatic sustained increases in parental involvement (75%) and self-referral to family counseling (26%) and substance abuse treatment (8%). Two to four years after FAST, 92% of the FAST parent graduates report an increase of their involvement with community activities, including further education for themselves (44%), church (35%), and employment (55%).

## **The Resolving Conflict Creatively Program**

The Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP) is a comprehensive, school-based program in conflict resolution and intercultural understanding. RCCP began in 1985 as a collaboration of the New York City Public Schools and the New York City Chapter of Educators for Social Responsibility Metropolitan Area, an independent nonprofit organization. The RCCP National Center was established in September 1993 to forge multi-year partnerships with school districts and to support dissemination efforts to implement the program throughout the country.

The overall goal of RCCP is to incorporate these skills into the classroom curriculum and everyday social interactions. RCCP's primary objectives are to achieve a long-term reduction in violence and violence-related behavior; to promote caring and cooperative behavior among children, adolescents, and adults in and out of school; and to promote intergroup understanding and positive intergroup relations. At the same time, the program also seeks to promote greater student academic achievement and a reduction in the absentee rates for both students and teachers. Components of the RCCP program include:

- showing young people nonviolent alternatives for dealing with conflict;
- teaching children skills to create nonviolent solutions for real conflict in their own lives;
- increasing students' understanding and appreciation of their own culture and of cultures different from their own;
- showing children that they can play a powerful role in creating a more peaceful community;
- teaching student mediation;
- providing staff development; and
- providing parent training.

In addition to the school-based components, RCCP also focuses on parent training in order to make parents better leaders in the school and community. Two to three parents per year are trained for sixty hours to lead workshops for other parents on intergroup relations, family communication and conflict resolution. The program believes there is a need for cooperation among the school and community activities to create an environment in which children and youth learn how to think and act in a caring and socially responsible way toward one another and the community.

An evaluation by Metis Associates found that teachers saw an improvement in the behavior and attitudes of children involved in RCCP:

- 64% of teachers reported less physical violence in the classroom;
- 75% of teachers reported an increase in student cooperation;
- 92% of students felt better about themselves;
- Over 90% of parents reported an increase in their own communication and problem solving skills;
- The in- and out-of-school suspension rates at the RCCP middle school decreased significantly while non-RCCP middle school rates increased during the same time period; and
- The dropout rate at the RCCP high school decreased significantly while non-RCCP high school rates increased during the same period.



## **Baltimore Police Athletic League (PAL)**

The mission of the Baltimore Police Athletic League (PAL) is to reduce juvenile-involved crime and victimization by allowing young people to interact with police officers in a positive setting, while participating in constructive alternatives to antisocial behavior. An innovative partnership of public and private interests provided funding to transform a former convenience store in northeastern Baltimore into the first center of the Baltimore PAL. With the success of this pilot project, additional centers were acquired as fast as they could be absorbed. Today, PAL operates 27 centers and serves the needs of more than 7,000 youth.

As the regular school day ends, PAL centers open their doors between 2 p.m. and 10 p.m. to provide a safe haven for youth. PAL's after-school and summer academic and recreational activities are run by Baltimore police officers, community service officers, and parent and community volunteers. These adults, serving as role models and mentors, work to create a healthy atmosphere that fosters trust and mutual respect between youth and adult authority figures. Young people learn integrity, responsibility, diligence, and teamwork.

PAL incorporates proven strategies that strengthen protective factors and promote positive and productive behaviors and attitudes. Key elements include:

- Opportunities for caring relationships with peers and adults;
- High expectations and clear standards of behavior for youth;
- Productive educational and cultural activities;
- Community service projects;
- Continuity of supports and role models.

The program has four components: character development, home assistance and academic enrichment, arts and cultural activities, and physical activities. Collaborative partnerships with other organizations, businesses, and community groups strengthen PAL's programs and its learning environment. PAL works with a number of local groups that provide volunteers for training, mentoring, tutoring, and additional resources to the centers. In addition, PAL has established active partnerships with the Baltimore City Public Schools and with the Maryland State Department of Education, and discussions are underway for PAL to host Super Camps, a program to help third graders who are not reading at grade level. The Baltimore Police Department is also working to implement at least one PAL center in each of the City's 29 police sectors. Collectively, these centers will serve more than 10,000 youth, representing approximately 10 percent of the school-age population in Baltimore.

In neighborhoods where PAL centers are located, crime involving youngsters has dropped markedly. A recent evaluation of the first PAL center found that in the area immediately surrounding the center, between 1994 and 1997, juvenile victimization decreased 43.9%, nearly three times as much as the overall city-wide rate for all victimization. Between 1996 and 1997, for the time periods during which PAL centers are open (2 p.m.-10 p.m.), juvenile arrests in the immediate area decreased by 9.8%, while juvenile arrest rates for the City rose 4.4%.

## San Diego County's Comprehensive Strategy

San Diego is the fourth largest county in the United States. Its diverse population of more than 2.7 million speak more than 80 different languages. There are 43 school districts in the county. The San Diego Unified School District is one of the 43, and is the sixth largest school district in the Nation. In the last decade, the County experienced high rates of unemployment, 50 percent higher than other southern California counties; and an increase in juvenile violence and crime, especially in weapons charges.

In response to these increases, San Diego County is implementing a successful comprehensive strategy to reduce youth violence and crime and develop healthy, responsible youth through prevention, intervention and appropriate sanctions. Building upon Federal and State support and a rich local history of collaborative ventures across agencies, diverse members of the community joined together towards the common goal of creating healthy and safe children and communities in San Diego County. The group includes community based organizations, the PTA, and key leaders from education, health, social services, the faith community, law enforcement, juvenile court, probation, universities, and 43 school districts.

The hallmark of this comprehensive strategy is that schools, public agencies and communities work together to respond to community identified needs. An interdisciplinary team and subcommittees regularly advance an agenda that includes a range of activities from the earliest of prevention strategies to the use of appropriate sanctions and the suppression of crime. By sharing data and resources and its commitment to the safety of children and the community as a whole, the collaboration is identifying gaps in services; coordinating existing activities; leveraging federal, state, local and private funds; and offering a range of promising and effective programs and services for children and families in need.

**Accountability:** San Diego's Comprehensive Strategy is improving public safety through a number of approaches. Breaking Cycles, a prevention and early intervention program targeted at juvenile offenders and gang members are making schools, streets and communities safer for San Diego County youth and families. Last year, the County and City of San Diego implemented a daytime loitering ordinance in an effort to decrease daytime juvenile crime. San Diego has also recently begun to cite violence and alcohol, tobacco and drug violations occurring on or near school campuses using existing and local penal codes. Schools identify students committing specific infractions, initiate their citing by local law enforcement, and then the power of the local courts is used to prescribe the attendance of the cited youth and their families in an appropriate intervention program.

**Safe and Drug Free Schools:** San Diego's comprehensive strategy is creating safe and drug free schools. Using Federal Safe and Drug Free School monies, the school districts have developed an impressive alcohol and drug prevention education initiative. The Life Skills curriculum is a key aspect of this intervention initiative. There are few prevention programs that have been tested as thoroughly as this model. In studies involving more than 180 suburban and urban schools, grades 7-12, diverse populations of youth, various substance abuse issues—and with long-term follow-up for up to six years—the Life Skills program has generally documented initial reductions of 50 percent in youth alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana use, along with a sustained impact. San Diego has recently received a federal grant to implement this program in the Unified School District.

San Diego also has one of the oldest Zero Tolerance policies in the country for guns and drugs in schools. A student found with a gun on campus is automatically expelled and placed in an alternative school setting. A student in possession of drugs is arrested, suspended, and ordered by the court to participate in an intervention program. Police officers, juvenile judges, and probation officers work with the schools to

ensure that youth who break the law are held accountable, but also effectively diverted from leading a life of crime. Juvenile Court and Community Schools (JCCS) operate alternative educational environments for students who have been expelled from home schools for violence, weapon possession, and drug and alcohol violations. JCCS programs prepare students for graduation and employment and provide a wide array of counseling and rehabilitation services. Nine of the school districts also employ probation officers to work directly with students to provide interventions, thwart violence and drug and alcohol use, reduce truancy and improve attendance, and provide referrals to students and families for special services from community-based agencies.

**Community-wide Prevention:** San Diego's comprehensive strategy is also supporting healthy families and communities. Each of the 43 school districts has referral programs to an array of community-based organizations that provide family and individual counseling, conflict resolution, domestic violence prevention, substance abuse prevention and intervention programs, in-home family support services, community service projects, youth development, and recreational activities. Together, the school districts, probation department and local law enforcement work to access all available resources for children and families. Programs include:

- Parenting classes, including in-home services provided to families;
- Family Resource Centers, which treat families involved or impacted by abuse and violence;
- Healthy Start, which provides health services in more than 50 schools and communities for school age children and their families;
- The Healthy Kids Initiative, which provides immunization for children and expands preschool, Head Start, child-care and welfare to work services. Some districts have also implemented twilight Head Start programs for working parents;
- Title V Community Prevention Grants from the Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, which provides special funding to existing collaboratives in San Diego County to focus on delinquency prevention. Funding has supported teen centers that offer social, recreational and youth development programs for local young people;
- Critical Hours Programs, which provide after school activities for middle school youth in 38 communities. With more than 150 collaborative partners, Critical Hours has served more than 14,000 youth in its first year;
- Youth Congress advocates for youth voice and involvement in policy and decision making in local government and establishes programs to encourage youth to be actively involved in all aspects of their community ;
- Choices Program, a family-centered program to provide intensive case management supervision for minors on probation; and
- To improve substance abuse treatment, the County of San Diego has increased the number of residential treatment beds to 750, increased the number of youth served from 600 to 3000 and has reduced the wait time for services from 12 weeks to 2 weeks or less.

San Diego County's communities and school districts have seen a correlation between the implementation of these activities and some short-term benefits. While San Diego experienced a dramatic increase in juvenile crime from the mid-1980's until the early 1990's, the effectiveness of the county's comprehensive approach is demonstrated by a significant decrease since 1994 in juvenile homicide and a decrease in juvenile crime overall. Further, there have been reductions in teen birth rates, dropout rates, possession of drugs and weapons on campus, and truancy rates. In addition, youth report feeling safer going to and from school and in their communities. This is the result of the concerted effort by local leaders, community organizations, schools and law enforcement to collaborate and implement prevention and intervention strategies with sustainable and measurable results. Now San Diego is primed to expand

these accomplishments into a long-term strategy by institutionalizing these multi-disciplinary relationships. In order to maximize the impact of this work, San Diego is partnering both with the State of California and the Federal Government through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and will shortly announce a five-year plan to further their work in this area.

**For Additional Information on these Programs Contact ...**

**Families and Schools Together (FAST)**

University of Wisconsin—Madison  
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**Resolving Conflict Creatively Program  
National Center**

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Fax: 212-509-1095  
Email: [esrrccp@aol.com](mailto:esrrccp@aol.com)

**Baltimore Police Athletic League**

601 East Fayette Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Baltimore, MD 21202  
Phone: 410-396-2166  
Fax: 410-396-2545

**San Diego County's Comprehensive Strategy  
C/O Children's Initiative**

4438 Ingraham Street  
San Diego, Ca 92109  
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Fax: 619-490-1676

## **First Annual Report on School Safety: 1998**

The Secretary of the Department of Education and the Attorney General were asked by President Clinton to develop the First Annual Report on School Safety to provide the nation with an accurate picture of the nature and extent of school crime and a comprehensive model for enhancing school safety.

In this report, data on criminal and violent incidents on school property are examined at the national, state, and local levels. A range of incidents, from violent student deaths at school to crimes against teachers, is presented to provide the reader with a complete picture of school crime and safety. The data show that the vast majority of America's schools are safe places. Thus, the First Annual Report on School Safety is dedicated to highlighting what can be done to make schools even safer, more effective learning environments.

The report includes action recommendations for community-wide collaborations, school staff, students, parents, juvenile justice officials, youth serving agency personnel, and business leaders. Actions are presented in sequence (whenever possible) and critical aspects of each action, such as important considerations, possible barriers, and potential benefits, are discussed. All of the recommendations combined produce a framework for enhancing school safety.

To facilitate the development and implementation of comprehensive school safety plans, the report also contains information on model programs, model schools, and resources. Intervention descriptions, evaluation summaries, and contact information are provided. To assist schools and communities in meeting their needs, the model programs are grouped according to the types of problems schools face: aggression/fighting; bullying; family issues; gangs; racial/ethnic conflict; sexual harassment/sexual violence; substance abuse; truancy/dropout; vandalism; and weapons. In addition, for each program, information on its level of scientific support is provided.

Brief descriptions of model schools appear throughout the report as examples of effective comprehensive initiatives. Each of these schools has identified one or more serious problems and involved multiple stakeholders in implementing solutions. Developing comprehensive plans can be a difficult process, but these model schools show that the benefits far outweigh the costs. The resources section includes Federal resources, organizations, information rich web sites, publications, and videos.

The First Annual Report on School Safety can be ordered from the U.S. Department of Education by calling 1-877-4ED-PUBS. It is also available on the Internet at <http://www.ed.gov> on October 15, 1998.

## **Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools**

Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools is a research-based guide developed to assist school personnel, parents, and community members in identifying potentially violent youth. President Clinton asked the Department of Justice and the Department of Education to produce and widely disseminate the guide so that all youth-serving officials and concerned citizens would have access to reliable information on violence prevention, intervention, and crisis response.

When announcing the guide, Education Secretary Richard Riley said,

*“Schools remain among the safest places for young people, yet even one incident of violent crime in a school is too many. This guide is a practical resource for schools and communities to use to reduce the likelihood of violence and improve existing prevention and intervention efforts. Because there is no one-size-fits-all approach to this complex issue, it is important that everyone—parents, students, teachers, staff, and community members—be part of creating safe, disciplined school environments.”*

While emphasizing that everyone has a role in keeping children safe, the report highlights common features of effective schools such as meaningful parental and community involvement. The following sections are included:

- Characteristics of a School That is Safe and Responsive to All Children
- Early Warning Signs
- Intervention: Getting Help for Troubled Children
- Developing a Prevention and Response Plan
- Responding to Crisis
- Methodology, Contributors, and Research Support
- Resources

Thus, the guide not only tells readers what to look for, it provides them with a course of action to follow. The guide also provides advice for schools, checklists for action planning and crisis procedures, and action steps for parents and students.

In order to put the information in this guide to good use, the warning signs must be used responsibly. Warning signs indicate cause for concern and inquiry, not labeling or stigmatization. Hopefully, this guide will enable school and community members to identify troubled youth before their problems become serious.

Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools can be ordered from the U.S. Department of Education by calling 1-877-4ED-PUBS. It is also available on the Internet at <http://www.ed.gov> and <http://www.air-dc.org/cecpc/>.

## **School and Youth Violence: A Statistical Snapshot**

### **-- SCHOOL SAFETY AND VIOLENCE --**

#### **Violence In the 1996- 97 School Year**

43% of schools reported no incidents of crime -- Most schools (80%) reported 5 or fewer crimes. [1996-97 Principals Survey]

47% of schools reported only less serious crimes like theft or vandalism to law enforcement -- This includes an estimated 190,000 physical attacks or fights without a weapon, 116,000 incidents of thefts or larceny and 98,000 incidents of vandalism. [1996-97 Principals Survey]

10% of schools reported one or more serious violent crimes -- This includes an estimated 11,000 physical attacks or fights in which a weapon was used, 7,000 robberies and 4,000 rapes or other types of sexual assault. [1996-97 Principals Survey]

Schools with serious discipline problems were more likely to experience crime or violence -- Principals rate absenteeism, tardiness, and fights as the three most common discipline problems among students. [1996-97 Principals Survey]

[Source: National Center for Education Statistics report titled: Violence and Discipline Problems in U.S. Schools: 1996-97 -- a national survey of 1,200 principals]

#### **School Crime in 1995 Compared to 1989**

Little change in the overall level of school crime was reported. The overall level of victimization in schools in 1995 was similar to that in 1989 -- 14.6% to 14.5%. Violent victimizations increased from 3.4% to 4.2%, and property crimes decreased slightly from 12.2% to 11.6%. [1989 and 1995 School Crime Supplement]

Reports of Drug availability went up—Reports of the overall availability of drugs increased slightly from 63.2% to 65.5%, with marijuana remaining the most readily available drug. The percentage of students reporting that it was easy to obtain marijuana rose from 30.5% to 36.4%. [1989 and 1995 School Crime Supplement]

Reports of gangs in schools nearly doubled -- The percentage of students reporting gangs in their schools increased dramatically from 15.3% in 1989 to 28.4% in 1995. Increases were reported in central cities, suburbs and non-metropolitan areas. And where students reported the presence of gangs they were about 3 times more likely to be victims of violent crime. [1989 and 1995 School Crime Supplement]

Few students reported guns in schools -- in 1995, less than one half of one percent of students reported taking a gun to school. However, 5.3% reported seeing another student with a gun at school, and 12.7% reported knowing another student who brought a gun to school. [1989 and 1995 School Crime Supplement]

## -- YOUTH VIOLENCE --

### **Young Victims of Violence**

2,600 juveniles were murdered in 1995 -- Between 1985 and 1995, nearly 25,000 juveniles were murdered in the United States. [1997 Update on Violence]

Nearly all of the increase in the murder of juveniles over the past decade was firearm related. And between 1985 and 1995, while non-firearm murders of juveniles increased 9%, the number of juveniles murdered with firearms increased 153%. [1997 Update on Violence]

Juveniles are more likely than adults to be the victims of violent crime and be injured as a result. Juveniles ages 12-17 were nearly three times as likely as adults to be victims of violent crimes in 1994, and almost three times as likely to experience a crime related injury. [1997 Update on Violence]

### **Crimes Committed by Young People**

The rate of juvenile crime is down--Victims Reported a 25% Drop in Violent Crimes by Juveniles in 1995. Between 1994 and 1995 violent victimizations by juveniles declined more than those committed by adults (25% for juveniles vs. 18% for adults). Robberies by juveniles decreased 15% in 1995, and juvenile aggravated assaults decreased 32%. [1997 Update on Violence]

Juvenile arrests rates down two years in a row -- While the juvenile violent crime arrest rate increased 64% between 1988 and 1994, it decreased each of the next two years. The three percent rate reductions between 1994 and 1995 was followed by a nine percent drop in 1996, for a two year total decline of 12 percent. [Juvenile Arrests, 1996]

Murder arrest rates have decreased significantly -- The decrease in the juvenile murder arrest rate has been more significant. Following the 1993 peak, juvenile murder arrest rates declined substantially in each of the next three years for a total decline of 31 percent. [FBI, Uniform Crime Report, 1997]

Murders by individual juveniles and gangs are down -- After more than a decade of increases, homicides by juveniles dropped 17% in 1995. Compared to 1994 juvenile homicides, declines were found in both homicides involving a single offender and those committed by groups involving juveniles. Nearly all of this decline in 1995 were in firearm-related homicides. Of the murders committed by juveniles in 1995, 79% of the victims were killed with a firearm. Ten percent of victims were family members, 54% were acquaintances, and 36% were strangers. [1997 Update on Violence]

#### SOURCES

Source: Heaviside, S., Rowand, C., Williams, C. and Farris, E. Violence and Discipline Problems in U.S. Public Schools--1996-97. Washington, D.C. : National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, 1998.

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## Discussion Questions

1. What are the safety problems that our schools face? How much of the problem is violence-related? How much of the problem is discipline-related? What are the connections between the two?
2. How can we promote greater discipline in our schools? Would smaller class sizes help? School uniforms or other dress policies? What other steps can we take at the local level?
3. How much do people in our community fear violence in schools? Do they think schools are safe places for children? How can we make our schools the safest places in our communities?
4. How can we ensure that children are safe on their way to and from school?
5. How can we get a more accurate picture of our community's school crime problem? Do our schools regularly report crimes to law enforcement? Is that information made available to the public?
6. Are after-school options available in the area? If so, how have they benefited the community? Do they have room to improve? If they are not available, would providing children with safe, learning environments after school create a safer community?
7. To what degree are the problems we face in schools reflecting the problems in our communities? How do we address problems facing both schools and communities?
8. How do we involve the community in our schools in order to ensure safety? How do school leaders reach out to other community partners?
9. What initiatives are working to reduce youth violence in our communities? How can we build on these successful initiatives?
10. What are the biggest risk factors for violence amongst youth? Are guns too readily available? Have students been caught bringing guns to school? Does the local area face a gang problem? How can we better target resources to the problems that we face at the local level?
11. To what extent are drugs present in our schools? Do we have any local assessment of youth drug use in our community? Are certain drugs more of a problem? What is the connection between drug use and the problems schools face with discipline and violence?
12. How can we involve different elements of our community in these efforts? Can we build partnerships with faith-based organizations? With law enforcement? With the private sector?
13. Can we create a single community-wide effort that crosses disciplines to reach families and children? How do we ensure children and families have the support they need in order to avoid the problems of violence and delinquency?

## **Promoting School Safety, Preventing Youth Violence & Encouraging Learning**

**-- The Clinton Administration Record --**

### ***Making Our Schools and Communities Safer & Drug-Free***

**Forging School-Based Partnerships Between Schools and Law Enforcement.** Under the new School-Based Partnerships grant program, the Department of Justice released \$16.4 million in grants to 155 law enforcement agencies in September. The School-Based Partnerships grants will be used by policing agencies to work with schools and community-based organizations to address crime at and around schools. This initiative emphasizes using principles of community policing and problem-solving methods to address the causes of school-related crime. The grants will help forge or strengthen partnerships between local law enforcement and schools to focus on school crime, drug use and discipline problems.

**Helping Teachers and Principals Respond to the Early Warning Signs of Troubled Youth.** President Clinton directed the Secretary of Education and the Attorney General to develop a guide to help teachers and principals identify and respond to the early warning signs of troubled youth that can lead to school violence. In August 1998, the Departments of Justice and Education released *Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools*. This guide provides schools and communities with information on how to identify early warning signs and take action steps to prevent and respond to school violence. Every school in the nation received a copy of the guide.

**Issuing the First Annual Report on School Safety.** In December 1997, President Clinton called for the Annual Report on School Safety, which will be released on October 15, 1998. The report will include: an analysis of all existing national school crime data and an overview of state and local crime reporting; examples of schools and programs that are successfully reducing school violence, drug use, and class disruption; actions that parents can take locally to combat school crime; and resources available to schools and communities to help create safe, disciplined and drug-free schools.

**Strengthening and Expanding the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act.** In 1994, the Drug-Free Schools Act was expanded into the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act, making violence prevention a key part of this program. The Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program provides support for violence and drug prevention programs to 97% of the nation's school districts. Schools use these funds to keep violence, drugs and alcohol away from students and out of schools. The President's FY99 budget expands the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program by \$50 million to fund 1,300 Drug and Violence Prevention Coordinators who will help junior high and middle schools across the country develop and implement effective strategies to keep our kids safe and away from drugs.

**Enforcing Zero Tolerance for Guns and Other Weapons in Schools.** In October 1994, President Clinton signed into law the Gun-Free Schools Act, requiring states to have in effect a law requiring LEAs to expel students who bring guns to school. He issued a Presidential Directive later that month to enforce "zero tolerance" for guns in schools, a policy requiring the expulsion of students who bring guns to schools. In school year 1996-97, the U.S. Department of Education estimates that, under zero tolerance policies, 6,093 students were expelled from public schools for bringing a firearm to school.

**Supporting Civic, Community and Faith-based Organizations.** Recognizing the important role that civic, community and faith-based organizations can play in reducing crime, the Administration launched a new Values-Based Violence Prevention Initiative to make \$2.2 million in grants available to 16

community-based collaboratives, including religiously-affiliated organizations, that target youth violence, gangs, truancy, and other juvenile problems by promoting common-sense values and responsibility.

**Providing Safe After-School Opportunities for Up to Half a Million Children a Year.** Last year (FY98), the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program was expanded by \$40 million. This funding will enable 315 rural and urban schools in 36 states to provide school-based after-school programs, including on weekends and during the summer. The President proposed a major expansion of this program to \$200 million, which will provide safe and educational after-school opportunities for up to 500,000 school-age children in rural and urban communities across the country. In addition, the Education Department released a report in June 1998, titled *Safe and Smart: Making the After-School Hours Work for Kids*. This report shows that after-school programs can lower juvenile crime and improve academic performance. *Safe and Smart* was sent to every school district in the country.

**Cracking Down on Truancy.** Truancy prevention initiatives have been shown to keep more children in school and dramatically reduce daytime crime. The Education Department issued a guidebook to the 15,000 school districts nationwide which outlines the central characteristics of a comprehensive truancy prevention policy and highlights model initiatives in cities and towns across the country. Since then, the Education Department has provided grants to local school districts to develop innovative truancy prevention programs of the kind described in the guidebook.

**Encouraging Schools to Adopt School Uniform Policies.** School uniforms have been found to be a promising strategy to reduce violence while promoting discipline and respect in school. Because of this, the Clinton Administration has encouraged schools to consider adopting school uniform policies by sharing with every school district a school uniforms manual prepared by the Department of Education in consultation with local communities and the Department of Justice. Since then, a growing number of schools have decided to require school uniforms. Since then, a growing number of school districts have adopted a school uniform policy including: New York City, Dade County, San Antonio, Houston, Chicago and Boston.

**Supporting Curfews at the Local Level.** Community curfews are designed to help keep children out of harm's way and enhance community safety. Because of their success, President Clinton has encouraged communities to adopt curfew policies. A 1997 survey by the U.S. Conference of Mayors has shown that 276 of 347 cities surveyed—or 80 percent—had youth curfew laws, up from 70 percent in 1995.

**Developed a Comprehensive Anti-Gang and Youth Violence Strategy.** The Clinton Administration has proposed a comprehensive strategy to: (1) target gangs and violent youths by hiring new prosecutors and probation officers, and expanding anti-gang task forces and the use of racketeering statutes (i.e., RICO) for gang-related offenses; (2) crack down on kids and guns by prohibiting violent juveniles from buying guns and increasing penalties for selling handguns to youth; and (3) keep kids off the streets and out of trouble by expanding after school programs and promoting anti-truancy initiatives and youth curfews.

**Keeping Guns Out of the Hands of Children.** A number of laws and initiatives are keeping guns out of the hands of children and away from criminals. For instance, since the Brady Law's enactment, more than 250,000 felons, fugitives and stalkers have been denied handguns, and the 1994 Crime Bill banned 19 of the deadliest assault weapons and their copies, keeping assault weapons off America's streets. The Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative (YCGII) is cracking down on the illegal gun markets that supply firearms to juveniles and criminals in 27 target cities. The YCGII has already traced more than 93,000 guns, providing law enforcement with crucial investigative leads about illegal gun trafficking. The

Administration's FY99 budget proposal contains an expansion of YCGII. In addition to these programs, President Clinton signed a directive to every federal agency, requiring child safety locking devices with every handgun issued to federal law enforcement officers. And, in an historic agreement, eight major gun manufacturers have voluntarily agreed to provide child safety locking devices with all their handguns, helping to protect our children.

**Encouraging Conflict Resolution.** The Departments of Education and Justice have developed and distributed 40,000 conflict resolution guides to schools and community organizations, providing guidance on how to develop effective conflict resolution programs; Education and Justice are training community officials and educators on these conflict resolution measures.

**Targeting Young People with a National Anti-Drug Media Campaign.** In July 1998, the Federal government launched the national expansion of the Anti-Drug Media Campaign first proposed in last year's drug strategy and budget. The 5-year, \$2 billion campaign is designed to let teens know—when they turn on the television, listen to the radio, or surf the Net -- that drugs are dangerous, wrong and can kill you.

**Building and Strengthening 14,000 Community Anti-Drug Coalitions.** The bipartisan Drug-Free Communities Support Program was signed into law in 1997. Over the next five years, this program will provide \$143.5 million to help community coalitions rid their streets of drugs—the coalitions are made up of young people, parents, media, law enforcement, religious and other civic organizations and school officials. Under this program, the President recently announced new federal assistance to enhance grassroots efforts in 93 communities in 46 states to prevent youth drug abuse. This assistance will fund the work of broad-based community coalitions to target young people's use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

### ***Strengthening Schools, Promoting Discipline & Supporting Learning***

**Working Toward Smaller Classes with Well-Prepared Teachers.** President Clinton has proposed helping school districts reduce class size in grades 1-3 to a nationwide average of 18 students by helping them to hire an additional 100,000 well-prepared teachers. This initiative will help children learn to read well in the early grades by giving them more individualized attention, will help teachers get the training and preparation they need to succeed and help educators maintain discipline and order which fosters a better learning environment.

**Providing Early Education to More Children with Head Start and Early Head Start.** Since 1993, the Department of Health and Human Services has expanded Head Start by 57 percent, from \$2.8 billion in FY93 to \$4.4 billion in FY98. Now, 830,000 children are enrolled in Head Start, 200,000 more today than in 1992. In addition, the landmark Head Start Act Amendments of 1994 established the Early Head Start program, which expands Head Start to low-income families with children under three and to pregnant women. Under the President's budget, by 1999 nearly 50,000 infants, toddlers and their families will be served by Early Head Start. Studies have shown that investments made during the early stages of life reduce tendencies towards violence later in adulthood. Additionally, early investments also ensure that children are ready to learn when they enter school.

**Replacing Crumbling Schools with Safer Ones.** The proposed School Modernization Initiative will, if enacted, provide communities with interest-free bonds to help renovate, modernize and build over 5,000 schools nationwide.

**Teaching Every Child to Read by the Third Grade.** More than 1,000 colleges have committed work-study students to tutor children in reading, and thousands of AmeriCorps members and senior volunteers are organizing volunteer reading campaigns. In addition, a proposed early literacy bill, such as the America Reads Initiative, will provide more tutors after school, improve the teaching of reading in our schools, and help parents help their children learn to read.

**Striving for Excellence with National Education Standards.** Seeking high national standards for all students, the Education Department has proposed a first-ever national test in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math. Goals 2000 is helping States to establish voluntary standards of excellence and to plan and implement steps to raise educational achievement. In addition, the Title I program is helping more than 10 million disadvantaged students reach high academic standards by giving them extra help with basic and advanced skills.

**Expanding Choice and Accountability in Public Schools.** The number of public charter schools has increased from only one charter school in the nation in 1993 to more than 1,000 charter schools this year, providing greater choices in public education to families across the nation. The Administration has also called for an end to social promotion, aggressive intervention in failing schools, and higher standards for students, teachers and schools.

## References

Combating Fear and Restoring Safety in Schools, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (1998, NCJ 167888). Focuses on the national effort to reach youth who are absent or truant from school because of school- associated fear and intimidation.

Conflict Resolution Education: A Guide to Implementing Programs in Schools, Youth-Serving Organizations, and Community and Juvenile Justice Settings, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (1996, NCJ 160935). Provides a reference tool that offers both basic information and the experience of experts to assist educators and other youth-serving professionals in building effective conflict resolution education programs. The Guide is based on a shared vision that youth of all ages can learn to deal constructively with conflict and live in civil association with one another.

Creating Safe and Drug-Free Schools: An Action Guide, U.S. Department of Education (1996, call 800-624-0100). Contains action steps for schools, students, parents, community groups, and businesses, along with a series of information briefs on specific issues affecting school safety, including gun violence, truancy, uniforms, and drug testing of student athletes. Also includes appendices on research and evaluation findings, resources, related readings, and contacts for additional information.

Fast Response Survey System: Principal/School Disciplinarian Survey, National Center for Education Statistics. This study was conducted during the spring and summer of 1997. The FRSS is a survey system designed to collect small amounts of issue-oriented data within a short time frame, and with minimal burden on respondents. The FRSS Principal/School Disciplinarian Survey focused on incidents of crime/offenses and specific discipline issues in schools. For more information on the FRSS, see S. Heaviside, C. Rowand, C. Williams and E. Farris, February 1998. National Center for Education Statistics. Violence and Discipline Problems in U.S. Public Schools: 1996-97. U.S. Department of Education. NCES 98-030.

Indicators of School Crime and Safety, 1998 by P. Kaufman, X. Chen, S. P. Choy, K. A. Chandler, C. D. Chapman, M. R. Rand, and C. Ringel. U.S. Departments of Education and Justice. NCES 98-251/NCJ-172215. Washington, DC: 1998. <http://nces.ed.gov> or <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/>. Single hard copies can be ordered through ED Pubs at 1-800-4ED-PUBS (NCES 98-251) (TTY/TDD 1-877-576-7734), and the Bureau of Justice Statistics Clearinghouse at 1-800-732-3277 (NCJ-172215).

Keeping Young People in School: Community Programs That Work, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (1997, NCJ 162783). Highlights dropout prevention initiatives, with a particular focus on the Communities in Schools (CIS) initiative and its evaluation conducted by the Urban Institute.

Monitoring the Future (MTF): A Continuing Study of American Youth, University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research. This is an ongoing survey conducted to study changes in youth drug use and their values, behaviors and lifestyle orientations. Since 1975, the study has surveyed a large, representative sample of U.S. high school seniors. Survey topics include attitudes toward education, social problems, occupational aims, marital and family plans, and deviant behavior and victimization.

National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), Bureau of Justice Statistics. Administered for the Bureau of Justice Statistics by the Bureau of the Census, this is the nation's primary source of information on crime victimization and victims of crime. The study was initiated in 1972 and redesigned in 1992, and collects detailed information on the nature and frequency of the crimes of rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated and simple assault, theft, household burglary, and motor vehicle theft experienced by

Americans and their households each year. The survey measures crimes reported as well as those not reported to police.

The National Household Education Survey (NHES), National Center for Education Statistics. This study collects descriptive data from a representative sample of households in the country on the condition of education in the United States. The study was conducted in 1991, 1993, 1995 and 1996. In 1993, the study focused on school safety and discipline. For more information about this component of the study, see J. M. Brick, M. Collins, M. J. Nolin, P. Ha, M. Levinsohn, and K. Chandler, 1994. National Household Education Survey of 1993, School Safety and Discipline Data File User s Manual (NCES 94-193).

National School-Based Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This study is one component of the larger Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), an epidemiological surveillance system developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to monitor youth behaviors that most influence health. The YRBS focuses on behaviors that result in the most significant mortality, morbidity, disability and social problems during both youth and adulthood. The report uses 1993, 1995 and 1997 YRBS data.

Reaching Out to Youth Out of the Education Mainstream, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, (1997, NCJ 163920). Describes a new effort to reach youth out of the education mainstream (YOEM) \*\* juveniles who leave school prematurely and are at risk of delinquency because they are truants or dropouts, are afraid to attend school, are suspended or expelled, or need to be reintegrated into mainstream schools from the juvenile justice system.

School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey (SCS), National Center for Education Statistics and Bureau of Justice Statistics. This survey was conducted in 1989 and 1995 to gather additional information about school-related victimizations on a national level. The survey asks students a number of key questions about crime and violence inside school, on school grounds or on the way to and from school. For more information about the SCS, see K. A. Chandler, C. D. Chapman, M. R. Rand, and B. M. Taylor, 1998. Students Reports of School Crime: 1989 and 1995. U.S. Departments of Education and Justice. NCES 98-241/NCJ-169607.

Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), National Center for Education Statistics. This school-focused study, conducted in 1987-88, 1990-91 and 1993-94, surveys schools, principals of selected schools, a subsample of teachers within each school and public school districts. The report focuses on the Public School Teacher Questionnaire from the 1993-94 SASS. For more information on SASS, see R. Abramson, C. Cole, S. Fondelier, B. Jackson, R. Parmer and S. Kaufman, 1996. 1993-94 Schools and Staffing Survey: Sample Design and Estimation (NCES 96-089).

Sharing Information: A Guide to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and Participation in Juvenile Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (1997, NCJ 163705). Provides basic information on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) for elementary and secondary education professionals and those involved in the delivery of services to juveniles, including students involved in the juvenile justice system.

Truancy: First Step to a Lifetime of Problems, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (1996, NCJ 161958). Discusses truancy as a major problem in this country, both for youth and society. Highlights seven communities whose truancy reduction programs are achieving good results through

innovative approaches that involve schools, law enforcement, families, businesses, judicial and social service agencies, and community and youth service organizations.

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