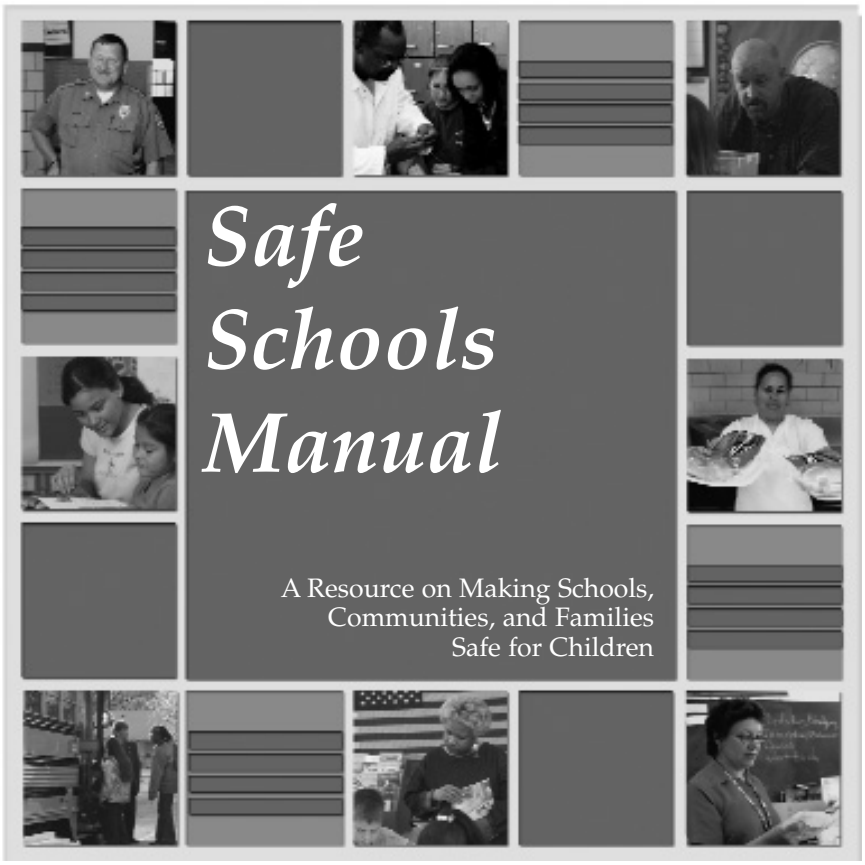


NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
nea.org
Great Public Schools for Every Child

Human and Civil Rights
1201 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036-3290

# National Education Association

The National Education Association (NEA) is a professional association and union of public school employees. Founded in 1857 and expanded in 1966 through its merger with the American Teachers Association, the NEA currently has 2.7 million members who reflect the diversity of the United States. NEA's objectives are to build broad-based support for quality K-12 public and higher education, to generate community partnerships for excellence in public schools and colleges, and to support individual and collective initiatives that create quality teaching and learning for all students.

Through the Safe Schools Program, housed in NEA Human and Civil Rights, the NEA networks with national organizations and shares information with its members on advocating for safe schools and communities and a positive learning environment. NEA also maintains a clearinghouse on school safety, provides technical assistance to affiliates, funds state and local projects, and delivers school safety workshops and training. NEA training focuses on campus and school safety, emergency preparedness, community coalitions, and positive school-community relations.

# Acknowledgments

This Safe Schools Manual was written by Richard R. Verdugo, Ph.D., with assistance from NEA Human and Civil Rights colleagues: Linda Bacon, Gaye Barker, Kevin Kamushiro, Ph.D., and Pamela Mobley-Rios. Editorial assistance was provided by Nelson Canton and Bronna Zlochiver, and the original manuscript was typed by Shannon Nephew.

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# Foreword

For well over a century, America's public schools have taught students to be active participants in our democracy and productive members of society. Much of this excellent work goes unreported, however, by critics who choose only to report problems in the schools. Nonetheless, research clearly shows that the vast majority of America's public schools are not only safe, but also places where quality teaching and learning are a constant in the lives of most children.

Of course, some schools face serious problems in the area of school safety, which not only hamper teaching and learning, but also place children and education employees at risk. It is for this reason that NEA Human and Civil Rights developed this publication and synthesized in it the best research available, as well as a broad set of guidelines designed to help make schools safer.

These guidelines are intended as a set of suggestions for making children safer in their schools, communities, and families. There are two reasons for taking this approach. First, schools vary greatly, and the communities and families from which they draw their student populations are diverse. Consequently, no one set of principles could possibly be applied to the challenges each schoool faces. Indeed, school safety programs must be implemented one school at a time.

Secondly, there is nothing inherent in the nature of schools that breeds crime and violence. Problems in schools are almost always the result of problems, such as poverty, bullying, or alienation, already existing in communities and families. Therefore, in order to make schools safer, we need to work closely with communities and families, which is the challenge not only for education employees but for every segment of our society.

John I. Wilson
NEA Executive Director

# *Introduction*

The first edition of NEA's "Safe Schools Manual", published more than ten years ago, reached thousands of NEA members and nonmembers. It was used in developing other publications focused on school safety, e.g., "Early Warning, Timely Response" (Dwyer, Osher, and Warger 1998), and "Every Child Learning: Safe and Supportive Schools" (Learning First Alliance 2001).

Since 1996, the subject of school safety has changed in at least five ways. First, there has been a considerable amount of research on school safety, a result of school shootings that occurred during the middle and late 1990s. This body of research encompasses articles published in scholarly or policy journals, unpublished papers at conferences, and working papers published by various policy and education organizations. Much of that research can be found in this edition of the "Safe Schools Manual".

Second, there is an emerging view that school safety activities need to be placed under one theoretical umbrella. Many educators view school safety programs as "add-ons" to their already busy schedules that take time away from their main activity, teaching. Placing school safety under one theoretical umbrella could fit nicely into a comprehensive quality schools framework, such as NEA's KEYS and C.A.R.E. programs—thus reducing the perception that school safety is an add-on and making it an integral part of the curriculum. The work conducted by the Learning First Alliance (2004) points in that direction (Verdugo and Schneider 1999, 2005); so does NEA's C.A.R.E. resource guide (NEA 2005).

Third, though schools are safe places, educators and decision makers agree that certain problems, such as bullying, teasing, and harassment, for example, need to be eliminated because they can lead to more serious problems. Fourth, provisions in the current Elementary and Secondary Education Act—the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law—have affected school safety. NCLB asks states and schools to develop standards for safety, apply research-based programs, gather and evaluate data, and improve on safety problems identified by schools and states in order to make "Adequate Yearly Progress" (U.S. Department of Education Website: ed.gov/admins/lead/accounts/nclbreference/page_pg31.html). Indeed, the NCLB legislation says:

> The U.S. Department of Education is required to conduct an evaluation on the impact of schools funded under Safe and Drug Free Schools (SDFS) and other drug-and violence-prevention programs. This evaluation should focus on whether district and community programs comply with the Principles of Effectiveness. The report should also ask whether or not the programs have appreciably reduced the level of youth illegal drug, alcohol, and tobacco use. Programs must also reduce school violence and the illegal presence of weapons in schools.

Of course, the primary problem with NCLB is that it is an under-funded mandate and does not provide the funds necessary for schools to tackle the many issues related to school safety and student achievement.

Finally, worries about homeland security are affecting the safe schools debate. As a result of 9/11, the subsequent anthrax scare, and terrorists taking over a school in Beslan, Russia, many educators and decision makers worry that U.S. schools might become the target of terrorist attacks. This new concern has added yet another layer to the topic of school safety (Borja 2002; Cavanagh 2002; Galley 2001; Hoff and Manzo 2001; Viadero 2001; Zehr 2001, 2004).

Indeed, these factors give new impetus to the need for every school to have a safe schools pro-

gram in place. With its anti-violence programs[1], and this "Safe Schools Manual", NEA approaches this goal based on two facts:

1. Although students and education employees have been victims of violence on or near school grounds, schools are not any less safe than other similarly populated communities (Reiss and Roth 1993; NCES/USDOJ 2005; CDC 2004a; Duhart 2000; Catalano 2004; USDOJ 2003; Rennison and Rand 2003; Verdugo 2000; Verdugo and Vere 2003).

2. School violence transcends the school and is a societal problem, with its roots in community and family dysfunctions—and exacerbated by issues such as racism, sexism, and high unemployment (Chalk and King 1998; Lauritsen 2003; NRC 1993; Reiss and Roth 1993).

Because children are first socialized in families, they model the behavior they observe or experience in their homes. If children grow up in families that practice spousal abuse, child abuse, or child neglect, they will be more likely to exhibit aggressive or violent behavior in school (Chalk and King 1998; Lauritsen 2003). They may also model the violent and dysfunctional behavior they see in their neighborhoods, fearing or becoming numbed by the violence they witness (Lauritsen 2003).

However, there is a bright spot. Intervention is possible. If these factors are recognized and acted upon by all segments of society (mainly school and community service agencies), children can be safe everywhere. But to achieve that, each segment of society must take responsibility for different components of the anti-violence program while cooperating as partners with other groups in a comprehensive anti-violence coalition. In other words, schools must take responsibility for reducing school violence, communities for reducing community violence, and families for reducing family violence.

Although this comprehensive view of school safety is understood, it is seldom implemented because those who propose solutions usually have a limited view of the issue. The education community is no exception. To stem the tide of school violence, schools have proposed some specific plans focusing on gang activity, drug abuse, or sexual harassment. Some schools that have high levels of gang activity randomly search students for weapons. Others attempt to isolate their schools' campuses by constructing fences around school grounds to keep out gangs and other unwanted individuals.

These approaches seldomly work because the problem, namely the violence-prone student, is usually inside the school. For their part, communities have proposed and implemented teenage curfews and gun control laws. And parents have reacted to school violence in several ways. On one hand, many support school and community safety programs as the only way to solve the school violence problem. On the other hand, some deny family responsibility for their children's misbehavior. Often, parents criticize safety programs as being ineffectual in reducing violence, or for invading student privacy and violating the Second Amendment. And still others criticize their public school systems for failing to protect their children. In some cases, these parents pull their children out of public schools and join campaigns to divert public funds to private schools they consider safer.

All of their criticisms have one thing in common. They fail to address the larger, systemic roots of school violence or to provide for intersector cooperation (Drug Strategies 1998; Gottfredson 1998; Guerra and Williams 1996; Tolan and Guerra 1998; U.S. General Accounting Office 1995; Verdugo 2000; Williams and Guerra 1997). Indeed, if school safety programs are to succeed:

- Schools must implement strategies with their programs that entail global plans which (a) are comprehensive, (b)

[1] See Appendix 6, 7, 8, and 9 for a listing of NEA HCR programs, publications, working papers, and articles by NEA HCR staff.

address more than one issue, and (c) integrate activities into the daily routines of educators.

- School safety plans must make school personnel the leaders in school safety initiatives with adjuncts that include parents; community activists; religious leaders; business people; and representatives of government agencies, protective and health services, and other community groups.

- Community safety plans must include community representatives as leaders with parents and school personnel as their adjuncts.

- Parental anti-violence initiatives must cede the same leadership to parents, with community representatives and school personnel as advisers.

Moreover, for all of the reasons listed above, safe school strategies must be under one large theoretical umbrella that integrates these activities into the daily routines of educators (Verdugo and Schneider 1999, 2005).

Encouraging such a sector-based, cooperative and theoretical approach to violence reduction is the purpose of this "Safe Schools Manual." NEA members can and must help to create and work in conditions that integrate their safety activities into their daily routines to make schools safer for America's children.

# *Organization*

## OF THE SAFE SCHOOLS MANUAL

*Background Information.* This section describes why school safety is important and briefly reviews some of the available research on school violence.

*How to Make Schools Safer*. This section provides suggestions for making schools safer. Three general areas are covered: establishing a school safety committee, developing and implementing action and crisis management plans, and monitoring and assessing progress.

*How to Make Communities Safer.* This section outlines a series of activities to be taken in mobilizing the community around school safety issues. These activities include involving key community leaders, forming a community safety committee, conducting a survey, and planning programs and evaluation criteria.

*How to Make Families Safer.* This section provides information about the family and how it can be instrumental in reducing crime and violence in the schools. Three areas of concern are briefly discussed: working with students, working with parents, and training education employees.

*Appendices.* The manual's appendices contain examples of discussion topics, checklists, reporting forms, procedures, guidelines, and NEA HCR programs, publications, and services.

*Bibliography.* This section contains a list of resources that can help to make schools safer.

### *Why it is Important to Work with Communities and Families to make Schools Safer?*

**Schools.** The reasons why it is important for schools to be safe are manifold. At least two prime reasons, however, come to mind. First, school violence places both educators and students at risk of injury or even death. Neither educators nor students should be subjected to such risk.

Second, violence, or the threat of violence, impedes the teaching and learning process and thus student achievement (Barton et. al. 1998; NEA 2005; Verdugo and Schneider 1999).[2] Schools are not battlegrounds. They serve very specific functions for society, as places where children are introduced to a social system and given the foundation for learning that will be with them for the rest of their lives. In schools, students also learn skills for later use in the labor market or in higher education and acquire citizenship skills for becoming active participants in society's political and social processes. Moreover, in schools, students and adults find the prototype of the social system in which they live and learn the history and values emanating from that social system. These are fundamental imperatives for any society, and violence in schools impedes the broader educational process that contributes to their fulfillment.

**Communities.** It is important for public school employees to work with communities because community dysfunctions seed school violence. If anti-social behaviors, such as gang involvement and drug abuse, exist in a community, students will bring these problems with them to schools. If unemployment is high in a community, students will carry the frustration, disillusionment and, perhaps, anger their families are experiencing into their classrooms.

To reduce school violence, public school employees must work with community groups and government agencies with the expertise and knowledge to ameliorate the problem. They can also take the initiative in assembling the individuals, groups, and governmental agencies, which rarely work together, to resolve their school and community problems.

**Families.** Working with families is important because, in most cases, violent behavior is learned behavior that originated in the home (National Research Council 1998; Reiss and Roth 1993). The family stands as a child's first socializing agent within the larger social system. Through the family, children learn the norms of social and individual behavior. If, however, children are raised in violent families, they will learn dysfunctional behaviors that will then be applied in various social settings, including schools.

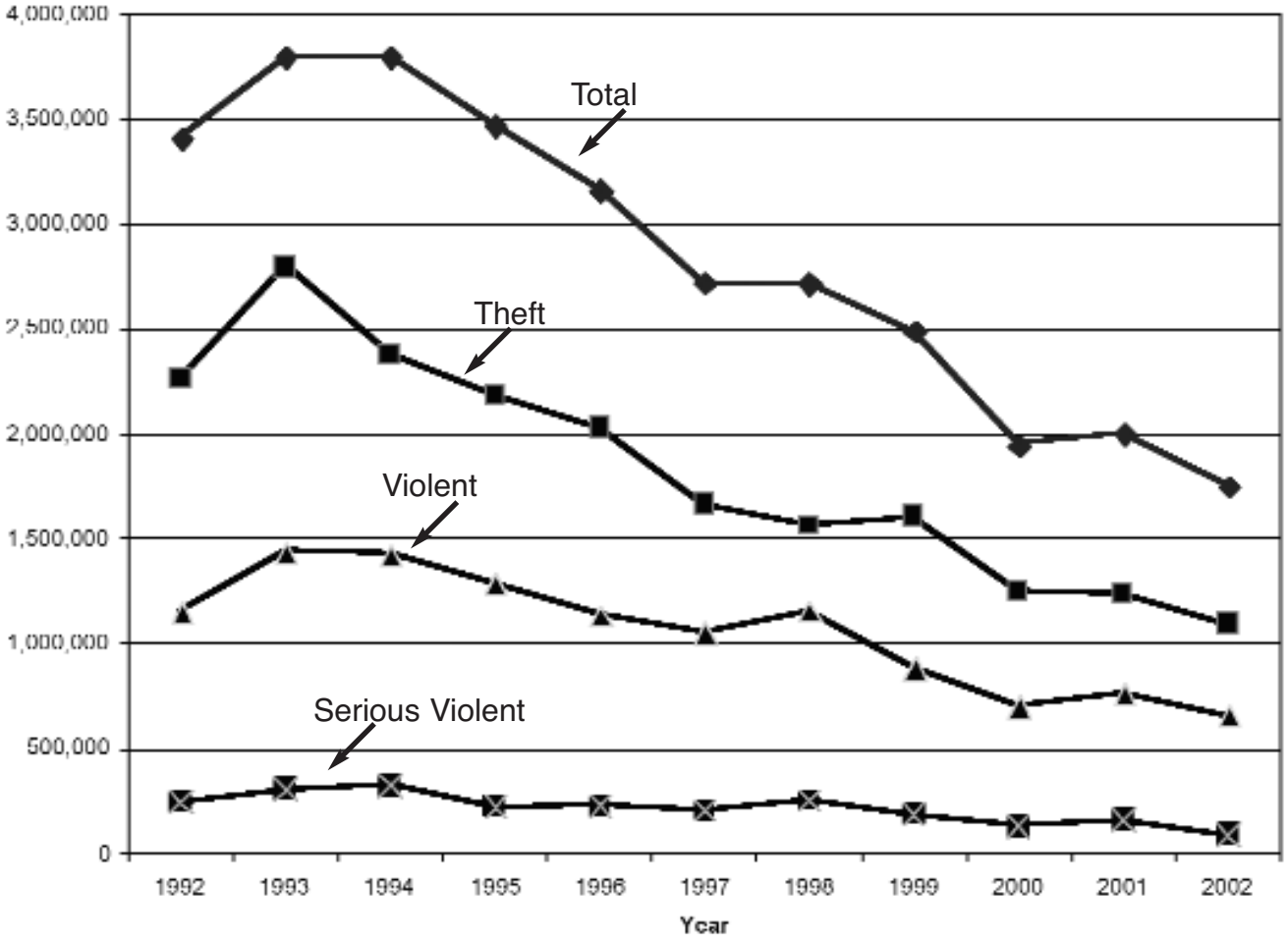
In fact, families are often complicit in a vicious cycle of violence. Children raised in violent families are more apt as adults to raise their own children in a similar manner (Lauritsen 2003). Violent children become violence-prone adults who raise other violence-prone children—and perpetuate school violence. This cycle also perpetuates mental health problems, such as depression, social isolation, and anti-social behavior, which may severely impede a child's ability to learn.

[2] School crime and violence also includes such inappropriate behavior as hate behavior directed at students/adults with different sexual orientations, sexual harassment, and hateful behavior directed at persons of different ethnic/racial and cultural backgrounds.

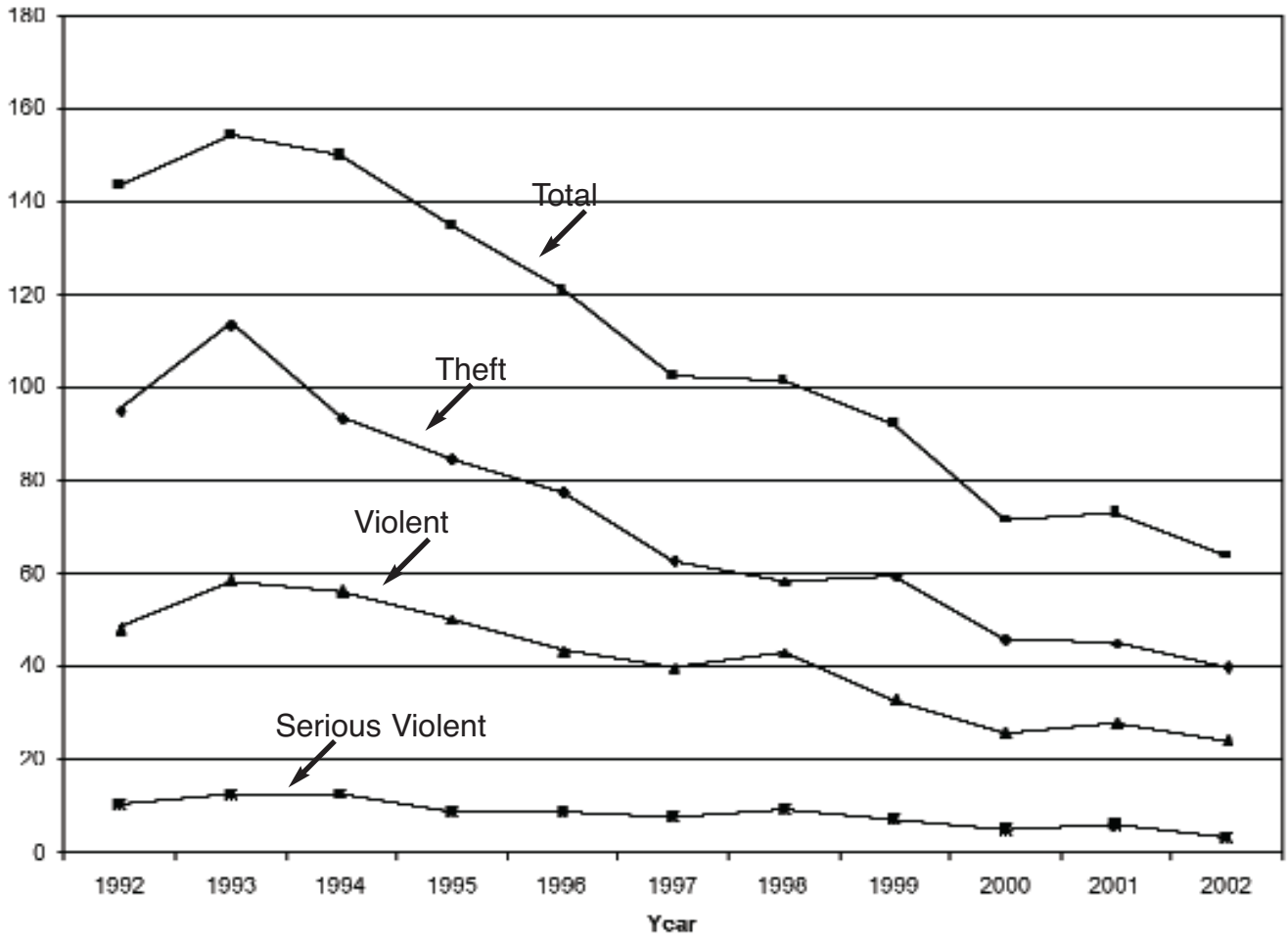
### *What Research says about Violence in Schools, Communities, and Families.*

**Schools.** Although, schools are generally safe places, several troubling issues must be addressed to make them safer.

*Injuries and Assaults—Students and Teachers:* Data for this section may be found in Figures 1 and 2.[3] Figure 1 presents data on the actual number of incidents for the years 1992 to 2002, while Figure 2 presents the rate of incidents over the same time period (that is, incidents per 1,000 students). For both statistics, nonfatal crimes against students declined significantly between 1992 and 2002. Indeed, in 1992 there were 3.4 million nonfatal crimes in schools and by 2002 the figure had dropped to 1.8 million crimes.




[3] Data are from NCES/USDOJ (2005).




These are absolute figures and they fail to take into consideration the number of students age 12 to 18. So, a better picture can be derived by looking at rates per 1,000 students. Figure 2 exhibits such data. Again, the rate per 1,000 students declined between 1992 and 2002: from 144 crimes per 1,000 students to 64 per 1,000 students in 2002.

What about teachers? Teachers are also victims of crime in school, though to a considerably lesser extent than students. Consequently, data are aggregated over a given time span. Data in Table 1 present information on the number and percentage of teachers threatened by students in 1993–94 and in 1999-2000.

There are two stories being told in Table 1. First, threats against teachers declined over that six-year period. In 1993, approximately 12 percent (11.7%) of teachers reported having been threatened with injury by a student. In 1999, the percentage dropped to about 9 percent (8.8%).

Second, while percentages declined, schools in the central cities had a greater percentage of teachers threatened, both in 1993 and 1999.

## Table 1. Percent and number of teachers who reported being threatened with injury by a student in public schools during the past 12 months: 1993-1994 and 1999-2000

| | 1993-1994 | | | | | | | | 1999 -2000 | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | PERCENT | | | | NUMBER | | | | PERCENT | | | | NUMBER | | | |
| | Total Public | Central City | Urban fringe/ large town | Small town/ rural | Total | Central City | Urban fringe/ large town | Small town/ rural | Total | Central City | Urban fringe/ large town | Small town/ rural | Total | Central City | Urban fringe/ large town | Small town/ rural |
| Total: | 12.8 | 17.8 | 11.6 | 10.2 | 325,400 | 126,800 | 92,600 | 10,600 | 9.6 | 13.5 | 7.9 | 8.6 | 287,400 | 109,300 | 119,300 | 58,800 |

Source: NCERS/USDOJ 2005. Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2004.
US Departments of Education and Justice. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.

## Table 2. Percent and number of public school teachers reporting that they were physically attacked by a student during the previous 12 months: 1993-1994 and 1999-2000

| | 1993-1994 | | | | | | | | 1999 -2000 | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | PERCENT | | | | NUMBER | | | | PERCENT | | | | NUMBER | | | |
| | Total Public | Central City | Urban fringe/ large town | Small town/ rural | Total | Central City | Urban fringe/ large town | Small town/ rural | Total | Central City | Urban fringe/ large town | Small town/ rural | Total | Central City | Urban fringe/ large town | Small town/ rural |
| Total | 4.4 | 6.4 | 4.2 | 3.2 | 110,700 | 45,100 | 32,900 | 32,600 | 4.2 | 6.2 | 3.5 | 3.1 | 125,000 | 50,700 | 53,200 | 21,200 |

Source: NCES/USDOJ. 2005. Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2004.
US Departments of Education and Justice. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.
Details may not sum to totals because of rounding.
Numbers are rounded to the nearest 100.

Table 2 presents data on the percent and number of teachers actually assaulted during the school years 1993 and 1999. These data are similar to those in Table 1.

First, there is a slight decline in attacks against teachers by students between 1993 and 1999: 4.1 versus 3.9.

Second, teachers are more likely to be attacked in central city schools than in other areas. There is also a very slight decline in these data.

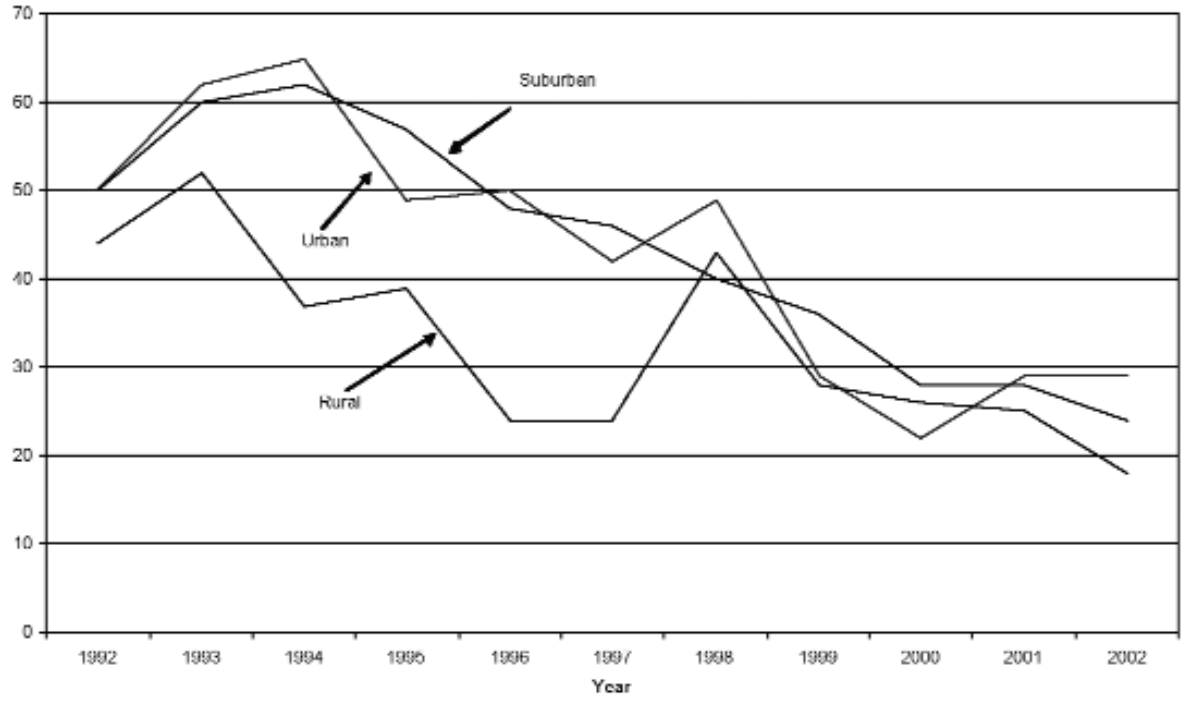
**Communities.** Certain aspects of community violence have a direct bearing on school violence, and this can be seen by variation in crime and violence by community type—urban, suburban, rural (see figure 3).

*Correlation Between Community Violence and School Violence.* Perhaps the most important indicator of this correlation is between general violence and school violence by community type. Statistics show that the incidence of both kinds of violence increases the closer one comes to urban areas, especially those containing the most disadvantaged communities. Lauritsen (2003: 5) says:

> …community disadvantage does not have a substantial influence on violence risk until the 80th percentile. For most youth (about 80 percent of the adolescent population), community characteristics are unlikely to account for the differences in their risk for violence. However, for the 20 percent of youth in the least advantaged communities, the risk for violence is much higher.

The same pattern holds for teenage victims and for school violence in general. Data are presented below that chart the rate of nonfatal crime against students by community type for the years 1992 to 2002 (Data are from NCES/USDOJ 2005).

**Figure 3 Rates per 1,000 students of violent, non-fatal crimes against students ages 12-18: 1992-2002**



These data indicate that urban and suburban areas have the highest and yet nearly the same rates of violent nonfatal crimes perpetrated against students. Although some differences over the time span are exhibited in the chart, especially during the late 1990s, the general pattern is nearly identical. Note, also, that rates are generally lower in rural schools.

**Community-School Partnerships**. Working with the community to reduce school violence is an important and necessary strategy. Research indicates that programs using such a strategy tend to be very successful (Drug Strategies, Inc. 1998; Gottfredson 1998; Guerra and Williams 1996; Newkumet and Casserly 1994; Tolan and Guera 1998; U.S. GAO 1995; Williams et al. 1997). These programs are successful because they are inclusive, as indicated in the following statement from the National Crime Prevention Council (1994):

"All partnerships that bring together law enforcement officials and the community are founded on common concerns and goals and on a shared belief that everyone must play a role in preventing violence."

**Families**. The research on how family violence affects children and, thus, school violence is very clear (Chalk and King 1998; Lauritsen 2003; Reiss and Roth 1993). Complicating matters are the changes undergone by the modern American family over the past 50 years—in structure, function, and roles assigned to family members.

Today, various constellations of people constitute a family. And most traditional family functions, such as provisions for education, health care, and economic support, are shared by community, business, government, and religious institutions. Indeed, most traditional family roles, such as caregiver and wage earner, have become less defined. Combined with advances in technology and growing materialism, these changes have contributed to role confusion and family violence. At the same time, television (with its prevalence for violent programming) affects every home. Other complicating factors include the easy availablitity of illicit drugs and children being left alone at home while parents or guardians work or look for work. Some results of the complex changes and the ensuing violence are—

- Bullying—Children who are abused in families are apt to become bullies on the playground. (See Ross 2003 for an excellent overview of bullying in schools.)

- Feelings of Guilt and Responsibility—Children who experience family violence often have feelings of guilt and a sense of responsibility for their mother's or father's plight. These feelings can become generalized so that children feel responsible for whatever may go wrong in school.

- Social Isolation—Children who come from violent homes are more apt than others to be socially isolated. They often don't relate well to their peers, are shy, and have trouble expressing their feelings.

- Poor Academic Performance—Children from violent homes tend to be poor academic performers. These children have difficulty concentrating, present behavioral problems, are frequently absent from school, and often have a history of conflict with other children (NRC 1998; Reiss and Roth 1993).

- Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered (GLBT) students—There is concern that GLBT students are being increasingly harassed and assaulted on school grounds. In 1991 and 2001, a majority (84%) of GLBT students reported hearing homophobic remarks. Also, 39.1 percent reported being physically harassed, and 64.3 percent of GLBT students reported feeling unsafe at school (GLSEN 2004). There are important educational consequences for GLBT students who are harassed: those who are harassed have grade point averages 10 percent lower than GLBT students who are not harassed (GLSEN 2004).

# How To Make Schools Safer

To create and implement a safe schools program, a tripartite school-community-family approach that engages students in school is recommended (Verdugo 2000). Students who are engaged in school and its culture are better students and tend to be better behaved (See Learning First Alliance 2001; NEA 2005). NEA suggests three basic steps.

## *Steps for Making Schools Safer*

1. Establish a School Safety Committee
2. Develop and implement action and crisis management plans
3. Continue monitoring and assessing data

## *Step 1: Establish a School Safety Committee*

NEA members can make their schools safer by forming a school safety committee involving a core group of school employees—teachers, administrators, and education support professionals—who can explore short-term strategies, then invite community representatives to work with them on long-term efforts. Holding two preliminary meetings of the educators core group before involving community representatives is recommended.

## Community Groups to Involve in a School Safety Committee

**Government and Community Agencies and Organizations**

Health Department
Social Service agencies
Police Department
Judicial system
Fire Department
Housing authority
Tribal councils
Neighborhood associations
Tenant councils

***First and Second Meeting of the School Safety Committee*** (*Educators Core Group Only)*

**Membership.** Representatives of all education employee and student groups should attend this first meeting. It is especially important to include education support professionals, who are often excluded from school discussions, because they deal with problems of school violence and usually possess information and insights on the matter. Students should also be involved because they can offer views on the student culture that school staff might fail to see or understand. For "Suggestions for Schools to Promote and Make Use of Community Support," see Appendix 1.

**Agenda.** Two topics should be discussed at the first meeting: the school's immediate problems based on observations, data, and the composition of the school safety committee. In discussing immediate problems, the educators core group should identify violence problems and possible short-term solutions. In discussing the composition of the larger school safety committee, the core group should select parents and

representatives of community groups who can help reduce or eliminate the identified problems. Care should be given to the nature of the problems the school is facing and exactly how those community representatives can help the school reduce or eliminate school safety problems. See "Possible Topics for Antiviolence Seminars," Appendix 2.

**Third Meeting of the School Safety Committee** (*Educators Core Group and Community Representatives)*

During its third meeting, the educators core group should involve representatives of selected community groups. Together, they would assess data about the community and school and, if appropriate, discuss who else should be invited to join the school safety committee.

**Addressing community and school violence and their perpetrators.** The objective of this discussion is to gain a wider view of community and family violence and how those problems affect the school. Such a discussion can then be used to plan the next topic on the agenda—the assessment.

## Organizations, Clubs, and Groups to Contact for Assistance

**Volunteer Service Organizations**

Veterans organizations
Salvation Army
Goodwill Industries
Fraternities and sororities
100 Black men and women
Links
National Network of Runaway and Youth Services

**Clubs**

Big Brothers and Sisters
Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts
Other youth clubs

**Professional Groups**

School psychologists organizations
Education associations
Medical associations
Nursing associations
Legal associations
Social worker associations
Morticians

**Private Organizations**

Foundations
NAACP
National Indian Justice Center
National Asian Women's Health Organization
National Urban League
National Council of La Raza
League of United Latin American Citizens
ASPIRA
Churches and religious groups
Hospitals
Colleges and universities
Local businesses
Local media
YMCA and YWCA
Respected individuals in the community
Local athletes
Local entertainers
Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network
Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund
National Pacific Islander Educators Network

**Assessing data about the community and the school.** The assessment has two parts. In the first, the group will gather data about the community, and in the second it will gather data about the school. The data about both sectors should include sociodemographic data and data on crime and violence in the community. In terms of socio-demographic data, the following items are related to crime and violence:

- Unemployment
- Poverty
- Income inequality
- Changes in ethnic and racial distribution
- Residential segregation

In terms of crime and violence, the following might be important data to collect:

- Homicide rates
- Number of robberies and thefts
- Prevalence of gang violence
- Incidents of domestic violence
- Child abuse
- Hate-motivated crime
- Sexual harassment and rape
- Assault
- Vandalism
- Incidents of violence

In each of the areas listed above, it is important to know–

- *Who* (what groups) are involved?
- *What* are they doing?
- *When* are they doing it?
- *Where* are they doing it?
- *Why* are they doing it?

In conducting the school assessment, please see Appendix 3, "School Safety Checklist."

**Inviting others to join the school safety planning committee**. At this third meeting, members will have a better grasp of the problems with which they are confronted. Members of the committee should have a general sense of the nature of the problem, be aware of the groups involved, and know the views of other community members.

At this point, the committee might engage in a discussion of their needs and whether additional community representatives should be invited. For example, should gang leaders be invited to join? Should representatives of rape crisis centers and local hospitals be part of the group?

## *Step 2: Develop and Implement Action and Crisis Management Plans*

**Action Plan**

The school action plan follows from the assessment and should be tied to the school's overall mission, that is, programs that are to be implemented in the school to address the issues and problems that have been identified in the assessment. See Appendix 4, "Action Plan for Specific School Emergencies." In making schools safer, three areas are critical: 1) school management, 2)curriculum, and 3)the physical environment.

**School Management.** School management involves roles, behavior, and standards. In making schools safer, the school district must advocate and constantly reinforce roles and standards for behavior. Specifically, it must generate a mission statement and a disciplinary code.

*Writing the Mission Statement*. This management component begins by developing an overarching mission or philosophical statement about the school's goals and objectives regarding school safety and student and staff behavior. This statement, a sample of which appears below, sets the tone for the school and its safety programs. In addition, it will address three principles: 1) the right of all students to receive an education; 2) the right of all individuals on school grounds to be safe from harm; and, 3) the importance of education to groups, individuals, and society. The school district should make such a statement available to education employees, students, and parents—and should repeatedly state, review, and amend the document.

*Disciplinary code.* In addition to including a mission statement, the action plan should also contain a disciplinary code that deals with

***Sample Mission Statement*** *(Note: Please revise to suit your school's needs.)*

It is the intent of the (district) to promote harmonious human relationships that enable students to gain a true understanding of the rights and duties of people in our heterogeneous society. Furthermore, it is our intent to promote the rights of equality and human dignity basic to the American heritage.

Each school is responsible for creating an environment that fosters positive attitudes and practices among students and staff. In addition, the school is responsible for promoting learning. Because it is well established that anxiety and lowered self-esteem impede learning, the school is responsible for creating and protecting an environment that mitigates against anxiety-producing or demeaning incidents taking place within the confines of the school. These incidents include, but are not limited to, those targeting members of a particular race, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation.

Thus, rather than allowing the school system to inadvertently support unequal educational opportunities for some by virtue of their demographic characteristics, as well as inadvertently contributing to poor citizenship in others, it is our intent to provide an environment that further allows persons to realize their full individual potential through understanding and appreciation of the society's diversity of race, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation. To accomplish this objective, the district will be accountable through a visible commitment to human rights.

**Source**: Cristina Bodinger-DeUriarte. 1992. *Hate Crime: Sourcebook for Schools*. Los Alamos, CA: Southwest Center for Educational Equity, Southwest Regional Laboratory.

language, behavior, dress, drugs and alcohol, and guns on school premises. Check to see if the school district has existing disciplinary codes; if they do, use them. The disciplinary code should make it perfectly clear to parents, students, and staff what behavior is expected on school grounds. Due to increased violence, especially gang-related violence, some schools require students to wear uniforms or clothes chosen from a limited line of clothing. They also have codes regarding the use of abusive language, the use and sale of drugs and alcohol on school grounds, and the possession and use of weapons on school grounds. Although the U.S. Constitution guarantees freedom of speech, it does not guarantee the right to use language that causes harm to others. And, in terms of weapons, codes should be clear and strictly enforced. Guns are not tolerated on school grounds. A "Zero Tolerance" policy is acceptable in these cases.

In summary, a good disciplinary code will contain certain characteristics. It will—

- Be short and easy to understand
- Have student input
- Contain enforceable rules
- Be enforced fairly and consistently
- Be reviewed and updated periodically
- Be sent to students, parents, and staff at the beginning of each school year

*Issues*. Finally, school management must address three issues.

1. Open versus closed campuses. In many areas, violence and crime occur

during lunch breaks or as students are allowed to leave campus. If this is a problem, schools might consider closing their campuses during school hours and limiting entry to outsiders without proper identification. Student input is crucial here because unless students have a voice in such a policy, closed campuses could lead to other kinds of problems. The intent is to be inclusive.

2. Student participation. It is important for students to participate in activities that make their school safer. Students can offer insights about problems that fail to catch the eyes and ears of education employees.

3. Alternative educational environments.[4] In the event that a school cannot convince some students that their behavior is disruptive and in need of control, it may wish to consider alternative educational placements. The school should think hard about this alternative. A related issue is the special education student. Although federal law requires states to have laws on the books for students to be expelled for possession of weapons on campus, it allows local administrators to make exceptions on a case-by-case basis. Placing a student in an alternative school is a sensitive subject, but one that needs to be addressed by education employees, students, parents, and community leaders.

**Curriculum**. The school curriculum is a second area that school safety committees must address. Making schools safer is not merely a matter of creating and enforcing rules and regulations. It is also a matter of inculcating in students the values and norms that lead to appropriate behavior in school, as well as in their families and communities.

Some schools require students to attend peer mediation, conflict resolution, or multicultural classes at some time during the school year. Others attempt to merge these programs into the curriculum so that students are continually exposed to them throughout their school careers.

Other programs receiving considerable attention involve student and adult mentoring. In both cases, a mentor assists troubled students with problems they might be having inside and/or outside of school. Information on topics, programs, and strategies that can be integrated into the curriculum is provided below.

## *Programs that can be Integrated into the Curriculum*

- Conflict Resolution
- Diversity
- Drug Education
- Anger Management
- Multicultural Education
- Peer Mediation
- Sexual Harassment

**Physical Environment**. For many schools, working to improve the physical environment is crucial. The use of metal detectors is an option in schools with high rates of crime and violence. Other options include eliminating student lockers, providing better and more lighting, and improving the appearance of the school by cleaning and painting. By asking for parent and student volunteers, and by soliciting the assistance of community leaders, the school can offset the cost of some of these programs.

If building new schools is the answer, districts might well consider a truly community design. A well-lit circular building will enhance the

[4] Make sure that school officials talk to a special education professional so that laws, such as IDEA, are followed.

ability of education employees to see students in play areas or areas where students congregate, such as hallways. In addition, there appears to be a correlation between school size and crime and violence problems. School decision makers should consider building smaller schools designed for safety and which house a smaller student population.

**Crisis Management Plan**[5]
It is absolutely crucial that schools develop and implement a crisis management plan. The plan makes it perfectly clear who does what, when, and with whom in the event of a crisis, such as a shooting on school grounds. The crisis management plan covers the following three broad areas (More can be added if a school so chooses): communication, facilitation, and counseling.

As part of the process, school leaders should meet with local law enforcement authorities to become familiar with what is expected of school personnel in the event of a crisis. For example, in the event of a crisis, law enforcement agencies have an Incident Command System (ICS), which lays out a hierarchy of authority and roles for all law enforcement personnel. In the event of a crisis, school leaders are not in charge, but must take on an advisory role if they are asked to do so. School personnel should become familiar with how their law enforcement agencies operate in the event of a crisis.

**Communication.** The communications component of the crisis management plan should address three groups.

- *Parents*. Parents of victims and offenders should be notified and informed about the condition of their children and the status of the situation as soon as possible. Someone from the staff needs to be given this responsibility. More than likely, parents will hear, call, or even make the trip to the school in the event of a crisis. At least two individuals should be identified to handle phone calls and to deal with parents who come to the campus.

- *Staff*. Staff members need to be identified and given the responsibility of dealing with students. First, they must enable students not involved in the crisis to be taken out of harm's way. Second, they must help develop a policy for keeping students in school or letting them out after a crisis has been contained.

- *Media*. In addressing the media, the plan should speak to establishing a media room, determining who should talk to the media. Developing prior relationships with reporters who cover education issues for local papers is helpful.

Additionally, schools must help develop a strategy and policy for the next day. For example, some schools have a cooling-down period of one or two days and offer on-site counseling for students in need of such services. Other schools open for regular classes the day after a crisis. Whatever the policy, someone should be designated as the school's spokesperson, responsible for talking to community officials who arrive on campus during or after a crisis.

Teachers who are out of harm's way must be informed about the crisis so they can help other students. Most often, involving teachers in the crisis plan is the best way to make teachers aware of what they are to do. Frequent reminders are also helpful.

**Facilitation**. A crisis management plan should outline who will help whom. If possible, someone should stay with the victims until the authorities arrive or, if necessary, ride with the victims in an ambulance to the hospital. When authorities arrive, a designated school employee should assist in answering questions or completing forms.

[5] See Crisis Management Plan at www.nea.org/crisis

Offenders must also be assisted. If possible, someone should stay with the offender(s) until the authorities arrive, and then speak to the authorities on behalf of the offender(s) if they cannot do so. Offender(s) have certain rights, and school facilitators should ensure that those rights are upheld.

**Counseling.** Counseling services might be necessary for students and employees following a crisis. In extreme cases, such as a fatal shooting, post-traumatic reactions can set in at any time. Counseling might be needed for both students and employees.

## *Educational Strategies for Violence Prevention*

The following suggested strategies can be used individually or in combination to prevent violence in schools.

- Teach students about the nature and extent of violence in society and in their community. This is especially important for young people who have a natural tendency to believe they are immortal and often have an "it can't happen to me" attitude. Complement discussions of violence with instruction on how to avoid becoming a victim of crime.

- Prevent hate crimes by discussing and rejecting stereotypes of minority groups (including, students who are GLBT), encouraging interaction with members of different cultures, and encouraging an appreciation of diversity. Also, ensure that educational materials reflect the many cultures of this society.

- Use existing courses to teach safety topics. For example, social studies or current events classes can discuss social unrest and resulting violence in society. English classes can write essays on self-esteem or interpersonal conflict, and art classes can design antiviolence posters.

- Teach students about the damaging effects of sexual harassment and sexual assault. From an early age, children can learn the difference between "good touching" and "bad touching," and that "no means no." Older students can have group discussions about dating and relationship expectations.

- Instruct students in laws that affect juveniles and the consequences for breaking these laws. In some instances take students to visit a jail to observe incarceration firsthand and to talk to prisoners about what led to their being imprisoned. Encourage respect for the law by leading discussions on social contract theory and other theories about creating laws.

- Tell students about the lethal impact of guns and the legal implications of carrying or using guns. Try to counteract the attractiveness of guns for young people. Emphasize that students should not carry guns, and include a discussion about gun safety.

- Videotape television news stories that describe actual incidents involving guns and ask students to watch and discuss the tapes.

- Teach elementary and secondary students to avoid gang activities and provide them with alternative programs to meet their social and recreational needs. Invite guest speakers, such as law enforcement or probation officers, who work with gang members, to speak to classes or assemblies. Former gang members who have "turned their lives around" can also tell stories that inspire students to keep away from gangs.

- Teach problem-solving skills in both academic and extracurricular school settings.

- Tell students that anger is an acceptable feeling, but that acting on anger in violent ways is unacceptable. Teach children how to express their anger non-violently or to confront the source of their anger with plans to "work it out" through peaceful, problem-solving discussions.

- Offer assistance in finding jobs to students who are at risk of dealing drugs or joining a gang.

- Teach students social skills, such as how to use self-control, communicate well with others, and form and maintain friendships.

- Intervene when name calling and harassment occur, including when students use terms such as, "That's so gay."

- Talk with students about being "good sports" to discourage the disruptive and violent behavior that can break out at school athletic events. Encourage coaches, teachers, parents, and other adults to set good examples.

**Source**: These strategies have appeared in many other publications. See Cristina Bodinger-DeUriarte and Anthony A. Sancho. 1992. *Hate Crime*. Los Alamos, CA: Southwest Center for Educational Equity, Southwest Regional Laboratory.

## *Step 3: Continue Monitoring and Assessing Data*

To reduce or eliminate school violence and crime, the school safety committee must continually monitor certain kinds of activities. Of great importance is the collection of data or indicators that alert the committee to potential problems. Such indicators can include an increase in the number of gang-related activities and changes in the distribution of ethnic and racial groups in the community.

NEA suggests two broad data gathering activities for school safety committees: 1) community data gathering and analysis, and 2) school data gathering and analysis.

*Community Data Gathering and Analysis*

**Socio-demographic Data**. At the community level, data might be collected on selected socio-demographic traits, such as—

- Poverty
- Population, especially race and ethnicity
- Unemployment

**Crime**. Selected crime statistics need to be collected. Again, the focus is on indicators that the committee feels may alert it to potential problems in the school. A suggested list of crime indicators are—

- Drug arrests
- Robbery
- Vandalism
- Prostitution

**Violence**. Finally, data on the incidence, frequency, and kind of community violence need to be collected and analyzed because of their possible implications for school violence. A suggested list of indicators would include—

- Domestic Violence
- Child Abuse
- Assault
- Homicide
- Gang and drug-related violence and activities

*School Data Gathering and Analysis*

It is important that data gathering and analysis continue at the school building level and involve students and employees. Data collected from these groups can be recorded on specially designed forms. These data can paint a portrait of criminal or violent behavior surrounding a school and can be used in developing school safety policies.

# How To Make Communities Safer

The second focus for NEA affiliates that want to create safer schools involves working with the community. To do so effectively, it will be helpful for affiliates to address several issues, including identifying community groups with which to work, helping to form a community safety board, and giving the community control over the board. This section outlines four steps for accomplishing these objectives.

## Steps for Making Communities Safer

1. Involve key community leaders
2. Form a community safety board
3. Conduct a community survey
4. Take stock and evaluate

### *Step 1: Involve Key Community Leaders*

The participation of community leaders is crucial to any plan that would make schools safer. In soliciting their involvement, make sure that key community leaders are identified and recruited and that they represent the public and private sectors. After the entire group is in place, involve those leaders in a one-day seminar. At the seminar, try to—

1. Formulate a vision around common goals and objectives.

2. Decide whether or not to conduct a community assessment study. (If you decide to conduct such a study, proceed to design one.)

3. Determine who else should serve on the community safety board.

4. Formulate a method for selecting community (non-educator) leadership of the board.

### *Step 2: Form a Community Safety Board*

Forming the community safety board is an important step because it sets the foundation for community ownership of the program. As was mentioned earlier, school violence and crime do not have their origins in schools but in communities and families, and members of the board who represent those two sectors can offer insights on possible solutions.

NEA offers the following guidelines for forming the community board:

- Invite community leaders in addition to the key leaders.

- Make sure that those leaders represent all segments of the community, such as representatives of protective services; parent groups; cultural groups, and media, as well as local clergy, businesspeople, and community activists

- Schedule a series of training events to address evaluation, funding, data collection and analysis, and program promotion

- Schedule regular meetings and develop a newsletter to keep community leaders informed and feeling good about themselves and their antiviolence achievements

- Elect a community leader to serve as chairperson of the board

## *Step 3: Conduct a Community Survey*

A third step in working with the community is conducting a community survey. The survey should take stock of selected socio-demographic and crime and violence information.

- Conduct a community assessment that will help the community board to develop a clear, comprehensive portrait of the community. (For suggested issues, see "Risk Factors to Address in a Community Assessment Survey" on the next page)

- Gather information on programs and data that are already available in the community

## *Sources of Information to Describe the Problem*

In gathering data about school safety and the surrounding community, the following sources may be helpful.

### *Health Outcome Information*

Health department
Medical examiner
Hospital and emergency room
Outpatient records
Emergency medical service records
School records

### *Information that Describes Causes of the Violent Event*

School records: attendance, truancy, suspensions, racial tension
Substance abuse clinics
Police and legal systems
Firearm sales

### *Opinion Information*

Discussions with community leaders
Discussions with police, legal and health personnel, and parents
Discussions with all types of youth in the community
Opinion surveys of the general population
Focus groups

### *Community Background Information*

U.S. Bureau of the Census
U.S. Department of Labor
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
U.S. and state departments of education
Churches
Community businesses

## *Step 4: Take Stock and Evaluate*

At some point, the community safety board will need to take stock of its efforts to reduce violence in the community and schools. Specifically, the board will need to evaluate the programs it has implemented and, to do so, it will need to design an appropriate evaluation instrument. Training will need to be provided, unless a core group on the board has expertise in program evaluation.

In designing a training event, keep in mind the need to develop evaluation skills and an action plan focusing on the three essential sectors: community, family, and school. Make sure that participants in the training event learn how to—

a. Relate school safety programs to the conditions and behaviors they are intended to change.

b. Develop an action plan that contains steps for—

   - Identifying and prioritizing the most important risk factors within the community

   - Selecting strategies that have been tested and evaluated for their effectiveness

- Developing goals and objectives for an action plan that respond to the problems identified in the community needs assessment
- Identifying obstacles to executing the plan and the resources for overcoming these obstacles
- Establishing appropriate program evaluation strategies

c. Focus on the community by acquiring information about—

- Ways to mobilize the community
- Policies aimed at behaviors and activities that harm the community and school
- Ways to educate the media about how children are placed at risk and how children can be protected

d. Focus on the family by acquiring information about prenatal and infant care, early childhood education, and parent training.

e. Focus on the school by acquiring information about school development and management, instructional improvements, school architecture, and curriculum.

**Risk Factors to Address in a Community Assessment Study**

| Community Factors | Family Factors | Individual and Peer Factors |
|---|---|---|
| Drug availability | Family history of high-risk behavior | Bullying |
| Community norms that allow drug use and crime | Family management problems | Alienation, rebelliousness, and lack of bonding with peers |
| Mobility (transients and people moving in or out) | Negative parental attitudes and limited involvement in children's lives | Antisocial behavior in early adolescence |
| Community disorganization and low neighborhood attachment | Lack of family commitment to school | Friends who engage in problem behavior |
| Economic and social deprivation | | Favorable attitudes toward the problem behavior |
| | | Early initiation of the problem behavior |

# How To Make Families Safer

The third focus for affiliates that want to create safer schools involves working to reduce family violence. This focus is necessary because the effects of such violence are often manifested in school through a child's academic failure, behavioral problems, emotional difficulties, truancy, and dropping out of school (American Psychological Association 1996; NRC 1998; Reiss and Roth 1993).

In this effort, educators and community leaders need to address the ways that adults relate to and work with children and other adults, such as parents and education employees. NEA offers suggestions for helping children and developing cooperative relationships.

## Suggestions for Making Families Safer

1. Model positive behaviors when educating, supervising, and parenting children
2. Encourage parental support for children
3. Help education employees to become more aware of parents' roles in educating children

### *Suggestion 1: Model Positive Behaviors when Educating, Supervising, and Parenting Children*

For children to grow, learn, and compete in a global society, and have positive relationships with others, they must be free of stress caused by neglect and physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. Even if family violence continues to be a problem, education employees can work to change its proportions and outcomes. This can be achieved by teaching children to use positive behaviors in a community or family in which violence is a major factor.

To help adults work better with children, members of school safety committees and community safety boards might consider modeling and publicizing positive ways for adults to relate to children. These include—

- Distributing a one-page suggestion on parenting to families in the community
- Staying next to children when giving individual instructions or setting limits. Adults should bend down and talk directly to them in a quiet voice
- Being aware of your body language
- Wording statements positively, which draws children's attention to what they should be doing rather than what they are doing wrong
- Helping children develop options other than displaying aggression by defining limits on unacceptable behavior
- Giving children choices, within limits
- Differentiating between feelings and behavior. Abused youth have poor models for impulse control, generally lack vocabulary for labeling their feelings, and fail to understand what causes their feelings. Therefore, it is important to help them identify differences between feelings and behavior, define their feelings, and learn why they have particular feelings—moreover, helping them to develop introspection
- Encouraging assertiveness. Emphasize to the classes, children's groups, or youth groups, that children have rights. Then teach them how to assert those rights appropriately, effectively, and respectfully

## *Suggestion 2: Encourage Parental Support for Children*

Research shows that parental support is an important predictor of student achievement. Parents can influence children's self-esteem and set the value they place on education. However, for appropriate parental support to occur, parents must first know how to function as parents, be capable of learning how to function as parents, or be helped to become better parents.

In optimally functioning families, parents or guardians balance their needs with the needs of their children. They comfort and befriend their children, and they teach their children by—

- Setting limits while demonstrating patience and understanding until children learn their limitations and the ways of the world
- Socializing children so they will be able to use appropriate behavior in interacting with their peers while understanding and exhibiting family values, which may differ from society's values
- Providing role models so children can learn from example instead of the "school of hard knocks"

Such ideal teachings may be used as yardsticks by families wanting to evaluate their parenting skills. Unfortunately, in modern American society, parents often lack such yardsticks for a number of reasons. People who don't know how to function as parents often lack the support or self-confidence to do so because they didn't receive adequate parenting or are individuals isolated from their parents who could advise them. Divorce and chronic mobility have also interfered with the transfer of child rearing information from one generation to another. The increase in the number and kinds of nontraditional families, the number of mothers who work outside the home, and the number of parents who are busy with their careers or establishing themselves socially have also increased this isolation. Adding to this problem are changing and confusing gender roles, as well as conflicting advice on child rearing from experts.

Finally, some parents are parents in name only. They may love their children and want to help them but be unable to do so. They themselves may be products of dysfunctional families that abused or neglected rather than parented them. They may be unemployed workers coping with poverty and dangerous neighborhoods. They may be addicted to drugs or alcohol. Or they may be absorbed and overwhelmed by their plight or condition, which engulfs them in chaos and violence and contributes to the neglect of their children—all of which make a successful school experience difficult.

But parental involvement in the education of children is necessary. And affiliates that are helping to create safer schools are strongly encouraged to build strong family-school partnerships by working with school districts and communities to—

- Communicate regularly and creatively with parents, which might involve contacting and meeting with parents before school begins; developing and mailing a regular newsletter; sharing grade-level objectives; holding regular parent-teacher conferences; and holding brainstorming meetings to develop creative activities for bonding students, teachers, and parents into a cohesive, supportive community
- Develop a parent-student-teacher contract, detailing goals and responsibilities for both students and parents
- Establish a homework hotline to answer students' questions. Let parents know their children's homework assignments, and give advice for getting children to do their assignments
- Mobilize parents as volunteers to help in monitoring school buses, hallways, restrooms, lunch rooms, parking areas, trips, and assisting in time-out rooms.

This may entail providing lunch and transportation for some parents

- Encourage parents to attend school functions. Ask them to help develop parent-student-teacher activities, and provide social activities for parents and school staff. Identifying parents who need transportation and providing it might be required

- Offer a parenting skills course for all parents and another for those whose homes are violent or abusive. Include information on conflict resolution, problem solving, and anger management

- Develop lists of social service agencies in the community that can help families surmount a variety of problems and assist parents whose home life is abusive or violent. Share the lists with parents who need help

- Develop a public relations campaign whose message involves accepting children as they are and expressing support for them even when they exhibit negative behavior

## *Suggestion 3: Help Education Employees to Become More Aware of Parents' Roles in Educating Children*

It is important for the community and schools to support training for education employees. Education employees will be better able to contribute to violence reduction if they receive training in the following areas:

- Identifying children whose behavior indicates a need for an intervention by a family member and/or representative of a social agency

- Reporting incidents of potential violence against children in the home and concerns about children who seem troubled, without violating their rights

- Being an advocate for children who have experienced or witnessed violence in the home, and helping others in the class and school to understand those children's experiences

- Being prepared to interact helpfully and realistically with potentially violent parents

- Working with all students' families so that they are purposefully involved in the education of their children

- Using "teachable moments" to raise students' awareness about violence in the home and its consequences

## *Appendix 1 Suggestions for Schools to Promote and Make use of Community Support*

Solicit advice from community residents on identifying and addressing school problems.

Invite members of the community to visit the schools and discover ways in which they can become involved.

Develop a resource file of influential community residents—movers and shakers—who are known for their ability to shape public opinion. Keep these people informed about all school activities and projects.

Include community representatives on the school safety committee; encourage them to develop a sense of "our" school, rather than "their" school.

Use the attention that school crime and violence receive to pressure local politicians and police to focus more efforts on the areas in which schools are located.

Kick-off community activities for violence prevention during America's Safe Schools Week, which is observed during the third week in October.

Ask news organizations to cover school safety activities and to emphasize the school's and community's efforts to reduce violence. Publicize violence prevention efforts through public service announcements, educational video programs, appearances on local news shows, posters, brochures, and other print materials.

Develop a school safety fact sheet that is updated and distributed on a regular basis; include numbers and types of incidents, discipline actions taken, vandalism, and repair costs.

Set up school information booths at local community events.

Publish a newsletter from the principal and distribute it widely. Include information about school and community efforts to reduce violence as well as general information about school activities.

Use the school's and/or district's emblem and logo to present a unified image in all publications and announcements.

Ask businesses to allow employees time off to volunteer at schools or to participate in school activities. Promote "Adopt-A-School" programs by local businesses.

Encourage community organizations to use the school in the evenings and on weekends. Make the school a community center.

Ask church leaders and clergy to help with violence prevention efforts at the school and with efforts to involve the community.

Invite local government officials to school events.

Encourage adults in the neighborhood to create, lead, or participate in after school youth clubs, community athletic teams, and other recreational programs.

Recruit volunteer mentors and tutors from local colleges, universities, and businesses.

Ask community residents to volunteer their homes as "safe houses" where children can go if they are threatened while walking to and from school or waiting at the bus stop. These homes can have signs in their windows designating them as safe houses. Screen volunteers carefully before including them in the program. Safe houses work best when used in elementary school environments. They will most likely not work in middle and senior high school contexts.

Request that residents near the school take part in a nighttime school watch program and report any unusual activity at the school to the police.

Honor a citizen-of-the-week at the school.

## *Appendix 2 Possible Topics for Antiviolence Seminars (Classroom and Community Discussions)*

- Social and other problems contributing to school crime and violence
- Understanding diverse cultures
- Implementation of disciplinary policies and procedures
- The law and school security
- General security of the school plant
- Laws regarding search and seizure
- The criminal justice system and the juvenile offender
- Victims' rights
- Legal rights and protections for education employees
- Sexual harassment and assault
- Date rape
- Illegal drugs on campus
- Gang awareness
- Managing a confrontation
- The stages of confrontation
- Intervention in fights
- Social and individual responsibility
- Crowd management at athletic and special events
- Bomb threat procedures
- Disciplinary techniques for more responsive and positive interactions with misbehaving and troubled youth
- Effective classroom management
- First aid and CPR
- Self-defense
- Identification and reporting of child abuse
- Impact and consequences of violence
- Referral of drug and alcohol use problems

**Source**: Stefanie Kadel and Joseph Follman. 1993. *Reducing School Violence*. Tallahassee, FL: SERV.

## *Appendix 3 School Safety Checklist*

Give your school a thorough crime prevention inspection now. Use this checklist as a guideline to determine your school's strengths and weaknesses.

### *Organization*

1. Is there a policy for dealing with violence and vandalism in your school? (The reporting policy must be realistic and strictly adhered to.)

   Yes _ No _

2. Is there an incident reporting system?

   Yes _ No _

3. Is the incident reporting system available to all staff?

   Yes _ No _

4. Is there statistical information available as to the scope of the problems at your school and in the community?

   Yes _ No _

5. Have the school, school board, and administrators taken steps or anticipated any problems through dialogue?

   Yes _ No _

6. Does security fit into the organization of the school? (Security must be designed to fit the needs of the administration and made part of the site.)

   Yes _ No _

7. Are the teachers and administrators aware of laws that pertain to them?

   Yes _ No _

8. To their rights?

   Yes _ No _

9. To students' rights?

   Yes _ No _

10. Of their responsibility as to enforcement of and respect for rules, regulations, policies and the law.

    Yes _ No _

11. Is there a working relationship with your local law enforcement agency?

    Yes _ No _

12. Are students and parents aware of expectations and school discipline codes?

    Yes _ No _

13. Are there any actual or contingency action plans developed to deal with student disruptions and vandalism?

    Yes _ No _

14. Is there a policy as to restitution or prosecution of perpetrators of violence and vandalism?

    Yes _ No _

15. Is there any in-service training available for teachers and staff in the areas of violence and vandalism and other required reporting procedures?

    Yes _ No _

16. Is there a policy for consistent monitoring and evaluation of incident reports?

    Yes _ No _

17. Is the staff trained in standard crime prevention behavior?

    Yes _ No _

### *Existing security system*

1. Have there been any security problems in the past?

    Yes _ No _

2. Are there specific staff assigned or trained in security awareness?

    Yes _ No _

3. Is there an existing alarm system?

    Yes _ No _

4. Do you have intrusion-detection equipment?

Yes _ No _

5. Have you consulted with an expert?

Yes _ No _

6. If you have an alarm system, do you as an administrator know its capabilities and limitations?

Yes _ No _

7. Do teachers and staff understand how the alarm system works in to prevent needless false alarms?

Yes _ No _

8. Do you have an alarm response policy and does everyone involved clearly understand their responsibilities?

Yes _ No _

9. Is the system centrally located?

Yes _ No _

10. Is it local?

Yes _ No _

11. Is it a police alarm?

Yes _ No _

12. Is there a policy for consistent maintenance and testing of the system?

Yes _ No _

13. Do some members of the custodial staff work nights and weekends?

Yes _ No _

14. Are valuable items of property identified?

Yes _ No _

15. Are valuables properly stored?

Yes _ No _

16. Are high-target areas properly secured?

Yes _ No _

17. Is there a visitor procedure?

Yes _ No _

18. Do students have I.D. cards or other identification?

Yes _ No _

19. Do all employees have I.D. cards?

Yes _ No _

20. Is there a policy for intruders, those who loiter, or non students on campus? (To insure a safe campus, violators should be arrested.)

Yes _ No _

21. Is there good visibility of parking areas?

Yes _ No _

22. Is there supervision in hallways, corridors and other congregating places for students between classes, at lunch, and before and after school? (Teachers and staff must participate in supervision.)

Yes _ No _

23. Is the school designed with crime prevention in mind (landscaping, fencing, parking, and exterior lighting)?

Yes _ No _

24. Is there a light/no-light policy for after-school hours?

Yes _ No _

25. Whenever possible, is vandal damage repaired immediately?

Yes _ No _

***Target hardware/perimeter***

1. Is there proper fencing around adjacent areas and target areas?

Yes _ No _

2. Are gates properly secured with working locks?

Yes _ No _

3. Is the perimeter free of rocks or gravel?

Yes _ No _

4. Are signs properly posted as to rules and enforcement?

Yes _ No _

5. Are signs properly designed for crime prevention?

Yes _ No _

6. If there is exterior lighting, is it properly directed? Is there proper intensity? Are target areas well-lighted? Are there shadows?

Yes _ No _

7. Are all grips, window ledges, roof accesses, and other equipment that could be used for climbing properly secured?

Yes _ No _

8. Are all items removed from the building area that could be used to break in or stand on and climb on? (Examples: lumber, ladders)

Yes _ No _

9. Is the school designed with vandal-resistant walls?

Yes _ No _

10. Do the texture, color, etc., of the walls act to deter vandal activity?

Yes _ No _

### *Target hardware/exterior*

1. Is there a key control system?

Yes _ No _

2. Are outside handles removed from doors used primarily as exits?

Yes _ No _

3. Are first floor windows nonexistent or properly secured?

Yes _ No _

4. Is broken window glass replaced with plexiglass or other break-resistant material?

Yes _ No _

5. Are school facilities kept neat and in good shape?

Yes _ No _

6. Are school facilities sectioned off to limit access by evening users?

Yes _ No _

7. Is after-hours use of playground facilities consistently and closely monitored?

Yes _ No _

8. Are protective screens or window guards used?

Yes _ No _

9. Can any door locks be reached by breaking out glass?

Yes _ No _

10. Are your locks in good condition?

Yes _ No _

11. Are doors equipped with security locks in mind?

Yes _ No _

12. Are all doors secured by either deadbolts or chains and locks?

Yes _ No _

13. Are locks maintained regularly and changed when necessary?

Yes _ No _

14. Are doors constructed properly?

Yes _ No _

15. Are door frames pry-proof?

Yes _ No _

16. Are high-target areas (such as the shop, administrative offices, etc.) sufficiently secured?

Yes _ No _

### *Target hardware/interior*

1. Is school property permanently and distinctly marked?

Yes _ No _

2. Has an inventory been made recently of school property?

Yes _ No _

3. Are school files locked in vandal-proof containers?

Yes _ No _

4. Are valuable items thieves can easily fence (such as typewriters, calculators, etc.) properly locked up or secured when not in use? (Valuable items should be stored in a security room or bolted down.)

Yes _ No _

5. Is all money removed from cash registers?

Yes _ No _

6. Are cabinets properly secured?

Yes _ No _

### *Security System*

1. Are there specific persons designated to secure buildings following after-hours activity?

Yes _ No _

2. Is someone made responsible for overall school security procedures?

Yes _ No _

3. Do job descriptions include vandalism prevention duties?

Yes _ No _

4. Are security checklists used by school employees?

Yes _ No _

5. Through as many channels as possible, are vandalism costs made known to taxpayers?

Yes _ No _

6. Do local law enforcement agencies help and advise on vandalism prevention?

Yes _ No _

7. Are administrators, teachers, and students urged to cooperate with the police?

Yes _ No _

8. Is the evening and weekend use of school facilities encouraged?

Yes _ No _

9. Do law enforcement or security personnel monitor school facilities during school hours?

Yes _ No _

10. Do law enforcement personnel, parents, or students patrol the grounds after school hours?

Yes _ No _

11. Are local residents encouraged to report suspicious activity to school officials or police?

Yes _ No _

12. Do students actively get involved in security efforts?

Yes _ No _

13. Are there emergency procedures for incidents, including fire and bombing?

Yes _ No _

### *Alarms*

1. Is the entire system checked regularly or, at least, every six months?

Yes _ No _

2. Is the number of false alarms kept down to below two for any six-month period?

Yes _ No _

3. Can selected areas of the school be "zoned" by an alarm system that will indicate which area is being entered by the intruder?

   Yes _ No _

4. If public utility power fails, is there back-up power to keep the system operating without generating an alarm signal?

   Yes _ No _

5. Are suitable procedures established for response and turning the system on and off?

   Yes _ No _

6. Are the alarms the self-resetting type?

   Yes _ No _

**Source:** *The School Safety Checkbook*, copyright 1990 by the National School Safety Center. Original Source: *School Security: Get a Handle on the Vandal*. 1981. Sacramento, California: California Department of Justice, National School Safety Center.

## *Appendix 4 Action Plans for Specific School Emergencies*

In addition to having a general plan for dealing with violent emergencies, schools should also develop strategies for coping with specific crises that could arise on the school campus. School safety committees can develop clearly defined responses for such contingencies, have them printed, and hand them out to all staff and faculty members. Staff and faculty members should review and update these plans annually.

### *Civil Disturbance*

1. Encourage teachers and staff to be sensitive to the emotional climate of the campus and attempt to defuse any tensions prior to the eruption of problems.

2. Notify on-site law enforcement of the disturbance and meet at a pre-designated site to evaluate the situation.

3. Have on-site law enforcement personnel evaluate the situation and call a law enforcement agency for any necessary resources, such as back-up and emergency medical help.

4. Activate needed emergency plans, which may include—

    a. Instructing school personnel to staff communications and initiate lock-down orders.

    b. Notifying transportation personnel to bring an appropriate number of buses for evacuation or transportation.

    c. Assigning staff to a temporary detention facility, such as a gymnasium, to secure students and log information.

    d. Directing teachers to initiate a lockdown and immobilize the campus.

    e. Briefing a representative to meet the media.

    f. Assigning staff to pre-designated medical treatment/triage facility.

5. Notify guidance counselor(s).

6. Convey information at a debriefing.

### *Assault and Battery of Staff*

1. Notify the principal or his or her designee.

2. Notify law enforcement personnel.

3. Secure medical assistance as needed.

4. Identify the assailant(s) and victim(s). Isolate the assailants in a predetermined location.

5. Report incidents and injuries to the district office.

6. Notify the guidance office so it may address students' counseling needs.

7. Have a replacement ready to teach the victimized teachers' classes or to assume an ESP's duties and responsibilities.

8. Meet with faculty and staff, if necessary, to defuse rumors.

## *Appendix 5 School Violence, Crime, and Vandalism Reporting Form*
(modify as needed)

Reporting and monitoring of crime, violence, and vandalism on school grounds. School districts need to encourage students and education employees to report these kinds of problems immediately. To facilitate the reporting, they should develop reporting forms, perhaps similar to the one presented below.

School Name _____

Date/Time of Incident _____

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. School Level: | Elementary | Middle School/Junior | | High School |
| 2. Persons Involved: | Student | Non Student | Staff/Personnel | Other Adult |
| 3. Site of Incident: | Classroom<br>Gym | Hallway<br>Parking Lot | Bathroom<br>Grounds | Office<br>Other (specify) |
| 4. Consequence: | Suspension Alternative<br>Other (specify) _____ | | Suspension | Expulsion |
| 5. Arrest: | Yes | No | | |

**Circle one number under category/incident and one number in each corresponding subcategory, if options are given.**

| **Category/Incident** | **Subcategory I** | **Subcategory II** |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Alcohol/Drugs: | 1. Tobacco<br>2. Alcohol<br>3. Drug(s) | 1. Use/Possession<br>2. Sale |
| 2. Arson/Damages: | <300 | <$300<br>>$300 |
| 3. Assault: | 1. Battery<br>2. Fight<br>3. Verbal Assault/Threat | 1. Injury |
| 4. Breaking and Entering: | 1. Vehicle<br>2. Building | 1. <$300<br>2. >$300 |
| 5. Disruptive Behavior: **Circle only when no other offense is involved.** | | |
| 6. Explosive Device | 1. Threat<br>2. Device Found | |
| 7. Homicide | | 1. Negligent<br>2. Non-negligent |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 8. Larceny | 1. Personal Property<br>2. School Property | 1. <$300<br>2. >$300 |
| 9. Malicious Harassment<br>Assault | 1. Verbal<br>2. Physical<br>3. Religious<br>4. Sexual Orientation | 1. Race<br>2. Ethnicity |
| 10. Obscenity | 1. Language/Gestures | 2. Materials |
| 11. Robbery | 1. Personal Property<br>2. School Property | 1. <$300<br>2. >$300 |
| 12. Sexual Battery/Misconduct | 1. Attempt<br>2. Actual<br>3. Child Molestation | 1. Sexual Battery<br>2. Indecent Behavior |
| 13. Trespass: **Circle only when no other offense is involved.** | | |
| 14. Vandalism | 1. Graffiti<br>2. Personal Property<br>3. School Property | 1. <$300<br>2. >$300 |
| 15. Vehicle Theft | 1. Theft of Vehicle<br>2. Theft from Vehicle | 1. <$300<br>2. >$300 |
| 16. Weapons | 1. Firearm<br>2. Other weapon | 1. Injury |
| 17. Other (Please specify) | | |

**Source**: C. Hammond. 1992. *School Incident Report*. Tallahassee, FL: Florida Department of Education.

# *Appendix 6 NEA HCR Programs, Publications, Working Papers, and Articles Published by NEA HCR Staff*

## NEA-Human & Civil Rights Programs

**Training & Workshops**

NEA's Human and Civil Rights department provides training and workshops on topics related to school safety. Six topics comprise our training and workshops: school safety, bullying, harassment, hate-motivated behavior, diversity, and domestic violence. Specific trainings include:

- Creating a Safe Work Environment for Educators
- Building Respect and Equity in Our Diverse Society: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Issues in Education
- Creating a Safe Environment for all Students. A two hour workshop delivered at state and regional leadership conferences
- Train the Trainer workshops for NEA members on creating a safe learning environment for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered (GLBT) students
- Understanding and Appreciating Diversity
- Taking a Stand: Creating a Safe Schools for All Students
- Walking the Talk: Classroom Resources for Addressing Bias
- Safety, Bias, and GLBT Issues

Sessions range from 90 minutes to two to three days. Please contact the designated NEA HCR staff to schedule a training session in the following areas—

Bullying and Harassment: Gaye Barker, 202-822-7732
Domestic Violence: Pamela Mobley-Rios, 202-822-7727
Hate-Motivated Behavior: Kevin Kumashiro, 202-822-7439
School Safety: Richard Verdugo (202-822-7453), Linda Bacon (202-822-7724)
Diversity: Patricia Wright (202-822-7334)
GLBT Issues: Kevin Kumashiro (202-822-7439)

**Technical Assistance**

HCR staff are able to provide technical assistance on topics concerning school safety, domestic violence, bullying and harassment, diversity, and hate-motivated behavior. Please contact the appropriate staff listed above.

# *Appendix 7* Publications

**School Safety**

Verdugo, Richard R. 1998. *Hate Motivated Crime and Violence: Information for Schools, Communities, and Families*. Washington, DC: National Education Association.

_____. 1997. *Youth Gangs: Findings and Solutions for Schools, Communities, and Families*. Washington, DC: National Education Association.

_____. 1996. *Safe Schools Manual: A Resource for Making Schools, Communities, and Families Safe for Children*. Washington, DC: National Education Association.

- Quit It! A Teacher's Guide on Teasing and Bullying for Use with Students in Grades K-3
- Bullyproof: A Teacher's Guide on Teasing and Bullying for Use with Fourth and Fifth Grade Students
- Flirting or Hurting: A Teacher's Guide on Student-to-Student Sexual Harassment in Schools (Grades 6-12)
- Strengthening the Learning Environment: A School Employee's Guide to GLBT Issues
- Crisis Communications Guide and Toolkit (online), https:/www.nea.org/crisis/index.html
- Know Your Rights: Legal Protection for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Education Employees
- Dealing with Legal Matters Surrounding Students' Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (online), http: //www.nea.org/teachers/images/glbtguide.pdf

## *Appendix 8* Working Papers

Verdugo, Richard R. 2000. *Safe Schools: Trends and Analysis*. Washington, DC: National Education Association.

_____. 2000. *Zero Tolerance: A Crtical Review*. Washington, DC: National Education Association.

_____. 2000. *Strategies That Work: A Review of Successful Safe Schools Programs*. Washington, DC: National Education Association.

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_____. 1999. *Children Who Act Out Sexually: Research and Remedies For Schools, Communities, and Families*. Washington, DC: National Education Association.

## *Appendix 9* Articles Published in Journals, Book Chapters, and Conference Presentations

Verdugo, Richard R., and J. M. Schneider. 2005. "School Quality, School Safety: An Empirical Analysis." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Congress on School Effectiveness and Improvement. Barcelona, Spain.

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Verdugo, Richard R. 2004. "The School Environment." *School Health Policy and Practice*. (6th edition). Elk Grove Village, ILL.: American Academy of Pediatrics.

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