

Attorney General and
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Safe Schools Task Force



FINAL REPORT



June 2000

Bill Lockyer
Attorney General

Delaine Eastin
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

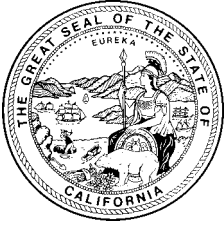
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Attorney General and State Superintendent of Public Instruction **Safe Schools Task Force**

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Dear Ms. Eastin and Mr. Lockyer:

On behalf of your Safe Schools Task Force, we hereby submit to you our recommendations and strategies for improving school safety in California.

The problems of school crime and violence affect us all. Recent tragedies on school campuses in Mount Morris Township, Michigan; Littleton, Colorado; and Conyers, Georgia raise new levels of interest and debate about addressing issues of school safety. School and law enforcement officials are increasingly concerned with preventing lethal youth violence.

Fortunately, despite these horrific events, youth violence is down in California, as it is across the nation. Our schools are among the safest places for our children. Yet, any crime on school campus is one too many. Our children's future and that of our state depend upon making every school campus a safe learning environment. We must work tirelessly to keep crime going down and to recognize early patterns of behavior — such as truancy, vandalism and substance abuse — that may result in youth turning to more serious crime. Research shows that when we intervene early, we can prevent youth from turning to a life of crime and violence.

You asked us to identify strategies and programs for improving school safety. At your direction, we also explored ways to develop partnerships between schools and law enforcement to keep schools safe and free from violence. The 23-member Task Force, representing education, law enforcement, community groups and youth, shared their views and knowledge on critical school safety issues. In-depth discussion regarding school crime and violence issues helped the Task Force formulate a report that identifies eight key policy recommendation areas and includes 46 strategies to strengthen school safety in California.

On behalf of the Safe Schools Task Force, we thank you for your outstanding leadership and the opportunity to have participated in this important process. We also thank the staff of the California Department of Education's Safe Schools and Violence Prevention Office and the Attorney General's Crime and Violence Prevention Center for their support of our efforts.

Respectfully submitted,

The Attorney General and State Superintendent of Public Instruction's Safe Schools Task Force.

A blue ink signature of Don Horsley.

Don Horsley
Co-Chair

A blue ink signature of Sandra McBrayer.

Sandra McBrayer
Co-Chair

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INTRODUCTION

Scope of the Problem

Recent tragedies on school campuses in Mount Morris Township, Michigan; Littleton, Colorado; and Conyers, Georgia raise new levels of interest and debate about addressing issues of school safety. School and law enforcement officials are increasingly concerned with preventing lethal youth violence.

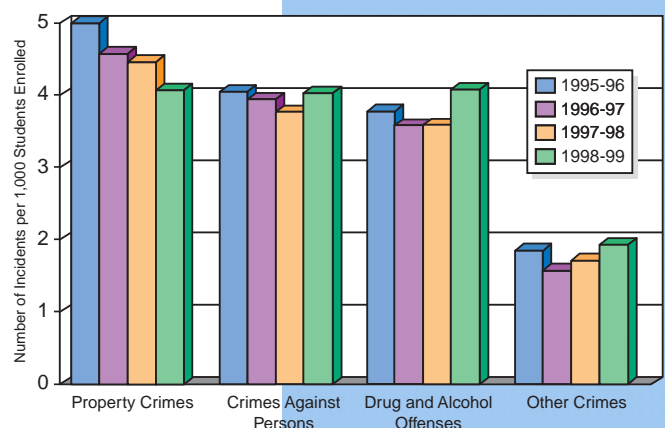
In 1998-99, there were 26 school-associated violent deaths nationwide. Tragically, 15 of the 26 were at Columbine High on April 20, 1999. A focus on these few, horrific incidents creates a perception that schools are not safe and can cause anxiety among students and teachers that is detrimental to the education process.

The truth is that the chance of a homicide in a California school is less than one in a million (*California Safe Schools Assessment, 1998-99*), similar to the probability nationwide. More than 5.8 million students attend over 8,330 public schools in California. California children today are safer in school, on average, than they are in a car, on the street or, sadly, even at home. Our schools are among the safest places for our children.

Nevertheless, there is cause for concern. Three of the deaths which took place nationwide last year were at California schools: a school parking lot shooting; a student found beaten to death in a school shed; and a head injury death over the use of a basketball court at a middle school (*National School Safety Center, School-Associated Violent Deaths, 1998-1999*).


In the 1998-1999 school year, the rate for drug and alcohol offenses rose 11 percent. The number of knives seized on campus increased to 6,168. And while down slightly from the previous year, the number of guns confiscated on campus last year was 637. As Chart 1 demonstrates, incidents of Property Crimes continue to decline from previous years, while incidents in other categories, such as Crimes Against Persons and Drug and Alcohol Offenses, increased. In our public high schools, drug and alcohol offenses have reached their highest reported level.¹

Chart 1: Analysis of School Crime Trends for California Public School Campuses for the 1995-96 through 1998-99 School Years



Source: *California Safe Schools Assessment, 1998-99*
California Department of Education

¹This may be due, in part, to improved reporting and the inclusion of possession of marijuana paraphernalia as a reportable incident effective July 1, 1998.



Our children's future, and that of our state, depend upon making every school campus a safe learning environment. Troubled children often develop a pattern that leads through escalating behavior problems to eventual violence. We must work tirelessly to recognize early patterns of behavior — such as truancy, vandalism and substance abuse — and implement strategies to prevent youth from turning to more serious crime. If caught early enough, at-risk youth can escape a life of crime and violence.

The Task Force recognized that short term, school safety strategies range from effective crisis response management to strong efforts to prevent behavior problems from escalating to violence. Long term, we must acknowledge the underlying causes of youth violence and work to address the needs of at-risk children before they commit crimes. While crisis intervention is critical, so is early intervention with at-risk children. The Task Force recognizes that probably the most important factor in steering young people away from crime is a nurturing and positive home environment. Early childhood experiences are critical. Strong relationships between children and their parents, teachers, other adult role models and mentors, and strong ties to community resources for assistance when needed, are critical to success. "There needs to be a full spectrum of response," stated Task Force member Patricia Huerta, Community Concerns Commissioner, California State PTA. "There should be more community control over the design and delivery of these programs....Youth are only as healthy as their family and community."

Finally, schools cannot accomplish this mission in isolation. Success depends on everyone working together — students, parents, school staff, law enforcement, community service organizations, social service agencies, businesses, local government, faith community leaders and all other community members. Success requires partnerships, cooperation, strong will and commitment.

Mission of the Safe Schools Task Force

In February 1999, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin and Attorney General Bill Lockyer formed the Safe Schools Task Force to further combat crime in our schools and create a more powerful partnership between schools and law enforcement to keep schools safe and free from violence. The 23-member Task Force — representing education, law enforcement, community groups and youth — were asked to identify model strategies and programs for improving school safety, determine current needs and make recommendations to strengthen partnerships between schools and law enforcement to enhance school safety strategies.

Purpose of Safe Schools Task Force Report

The purpose of this report is to provide the Attorney General and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction with recommendations on how to strengthen the partnership between schools and law enforcement to assure safe schools. These recommendations will serve as a guide to advocate for and implement programs and approaches that will continue to improve the safety of school campuses. The report provides a framework from which these two constitutional officers can work together to address school safety issues. It contains both short- and long-term goals to assure that California's schools remain safe and secure learning environments.

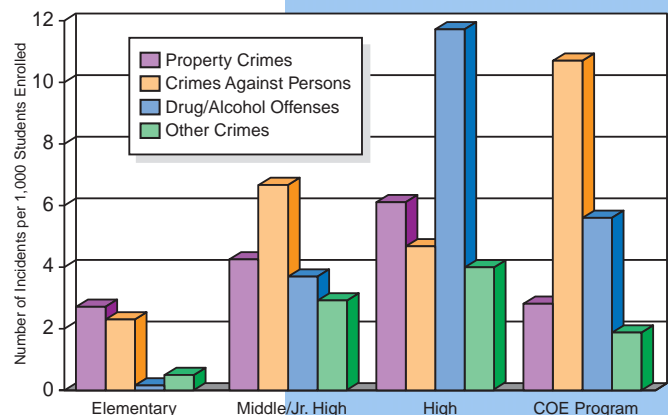
Partnership between Law Enforcement and Schools

Members of law enforcement are often the first point of contact between troubled youth and the community. Therefore, law enforcement officials have a unique opportunity to take a leadership role in forging relationships between parents, educators, community organizations and others to identify at-risk youth and prevent them from committing crimes or graduating to more serious offenses. As demonstrated in Chart 2, the use of alcohol and drugs, often seen as "gateway offenses," was the most common type of offense reported at the high school level.


California is entering its third decade of leadership in creating a successful partnership between education and law enforcement to ensure safe, orderly school campuses and communities. In 1982 California voters passed Proposition 8 amending California Constitution Article I, Section 28 to provide all students and staff ... the inalienable right to attend campuses which are safe, secure and peaceful. To this end, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Attorney General formed the School/Law Enforcement Partnership in 1983. The concept acknowledged the need for combined authority and leadership and was codified in 1985 with the passage of the Interagency School Safety Demonstration Act (Education Code Sections 32260-32296).

Through its volunteer cadre of education and law enforcement specialists, the School/Law Enforcement Partnership has provided information, training and technical assistance to schools throughout the state on school safety issues. The Partnership sponsors numerous grant programs

Chart 2: Crime Rates in California Public Schools for the 1998-99 School Year (by Type of Crime and School Level)



Source: *California Safe Schools Assessment, 1998-99*
California Department of Education



which emphasize safe school planning, conflict resolution, school community policing partnerships and gang violence reduction. The purpose of the Partnership is to encourage schools and law enforcement agencies to develop and implement interagency partnerships, programs, strategies and activities that improve school attendance, encourage good citizenship and promote safe schools. The Task Force focused part of its efforts on suggestions on how the Partnership can be strengthened to meet today's most pressing school safety challenges.

Summary of Recommendations

The Task Force worked diligently to develop recommendations and strategies that are reasonable, realistic and attainable. The resulting recommendations center on three overall goals: (1) to develop strategies to prevent behavior problems from escalating into violence and to inspire youth with educational, school and community service activities; (2) to assure that California schools are prepared for a crisis and to prevent that crisis from turning into a catastrophe; and, (3) to develop and strengthen partnerships between schools, school communities and law enforcement to ensure campus and community safety.

The report promotes building positive relationships between teachers and students and between students and each other; expanding safe school planning efforts; increasing the presence of law enforcement on school campuses and integrating Community Oriented Policing and Problem Solving (COPPS) strategies with school communities; strengthen the capacity of the School/Law Enforcement Partnership Program; promoting positive youth development; establishing strong accountability measures; using research-based practices and model programs; and increasing professional development training of educators and school staff to include school safety skills. The report acknowledges the work schools, legislators and community leaders have already accomplished and supports the continuation and expansion of existing resources.

In-depth discussion regarding school crime and violence issues helped the Task Force formulate eight key policy recommendation areas which include 46 strategies to strengthen school safety in California.

Safe Schools Task Force Recommendations

1 Recommendation

Strengthen and expand resources to promote building strong, positive relationships between teachers and students and between students and each other.

Discussion: Task Force members have heard repeatedly from youth that they don't feel they are being listened to, that their voice is often not heard until situations culminate in a tragic event. Schools must be safe havens where students have a strong voice in planning and problem solving, and where every student knows at least one caring adult to whom they can go for support or help.

Task Force members agreed that teachers and administrators who project a caring attitude toward students and focus on the assets of each student, help those students believe in their capacity to be successful. In turn, this belief contributes to the students' power to make decisions, plan, solve problems and work with others in their school and community.

In the discussions on the development of caring relationships, schoolyard bullying was identified as a significant and pervasive obstacle. Youth who eventually exhibit extreme violence have often been harassed or bullied by other youth. When we attribute children's behavior problems to the fact that they are *aggressive*, we are overlooking the deeper understanding that aggressive behaviors such as kicking, hitting and biting, are *learned behaviors* and that children identify situations where these behaviors will have rewarding results. A pattern of misdirected frustration, aggression and intimidation can be easily ingrained and early intervention by caring and attentive adults is crucial. "It's harder and harder for kids to change once the pattern is set and time goes on," according to Dr. Leonard Eron, Psychologist at the University of Illinois - Chicago.

Currently, California schools average only one counselor for more than 1,000 students ranking last among states (*On Youth Violence*, Bipartisan Working Group, U.S. House of Representatives, 1999; and *Digest of Education Statistics 1998*, U.S. Department of Education). Additional student support services staff (school counselors, psychologists, nurses and social workers) are needed to address the personal, family, peer, emotional and developmental needs of students. By focusing on these mental health needs, these staff will be able to pick up early warning signs of troubled youth and identify appropriate actions and services, thereby improving student behavior, performance and school safety.

"School teachers, administrators and students must practice the "three R's - Respect, Relationships and Responsibility."


**Stephen Thom, Mediator/Trainer
Community Relations Services
U.S. Department of Justice, Los Angeles
Member, Safe Schools Task Force**

"The transformative power of teachers and schools can tip the scale from risk to resilience when they provide three protective factors: caring relationships; high expectation messages; and opportunities for participation and contribution."

**Bonnie Benard
Violence Prevention Researcher in
"For Want of Connectedness:
The Tragedy of Columbine" (1999)**

"It's not just about money. It's about teachers who care, have passion. It's about students who have pride and respect for their school."

**John Dawkins, Student
Yolo High School, West Sacramento
Member, Safe Schools Task Force**



Task Force members agreed that school communities are complex social settings. While the first reaction to crises like school campus shootings may be to buy and install security technology, achieving safe schools over the long term requires an investment in building relationships, student support services and positive adult interaction with youth. Members also agreed that there should be incentives for teachers and law enforcement officers to live in neighborhoods where they work.

Strategies

1. Support strategies in schools for teaching self respect, respect for others and appreciation for diverse cultures and lifestyles.
2. Support youth-to-youth peer programs in which youth are given on-going opportunities to be resources to each other, to develop helping skills, counteract youth's "code of silence" and build connectedness among students.
3. Support legislation to establish bullying prevention programs for elementary and middle grades, and advocate implementation of bullying prevention and intervention programs at *all* California schools.
4. Incorporate conflict resolution/peer mediation program training for students and staff as an integral component of school discipline programs.
5. Support systems that emphasize caring relationships, high expectations, asset development, and provide opportunities for interaction between teachers, other school staff and students.
6. Increase the availability of guidance, student support and counseling services on campuses to strengthen student connectedness and improve student success.
7. Support legislation to provide incentives for teachers, administrators, counselors and law enforcement to live in neighborhoods where they work.
8. Promote parental involvement in student activities and in all safe school program development.
9. Include youth members on all boards, task forces and committees dealing with youth issues.

"Bullying is a range of behaviors, both verbal and physical, that intimidate others and often lead to antisocial and unlawful acts. Staff, students and parents/guardians need to understand that bullying is a pervasive problem that leads to violence. Bullying should neither be thought of as a 'kids will be kids' occurrence nor accepted as a way of life."

Guide for Preventing and Responding to School Violence, International Association of Chiefs of Police, 1999.

Recommendation

Reinforce the comprehensive safe school planning process, including effective crisis response preparation and procedures.

Discussion: In 1997, the California Legislature enacted Senate Bill 187 (Chapter 736, Hughes) requiring all schools to develop comprehensive safe school plans. Safe school plans are the basis for all school crime and violence prevention strategies. The Task Force members underscored the need for schools to involve law enforcement, emergency responders and the entire school community in the development of the plan. Members emphasized that good planning and strong partnerships can prevent many school safety problems. However, in their experience, preparation for dealing quickly and effectively with crises that do happen on school campuses should be an essential component of the safe school plan.

The School/Law Enforcement Partnership Program, administered by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the California Attorney General since the mid-1980s, has advocated comprehensive safe school planning and offered safe school plan development training and \$5,000 safe school implementation grants. According to Task Force members, many schools have strong safe school plans, but some schools do not. Safe school plans are intended to be collaborative and inclusive. In addition, the law requires that schools complete a review of the plan at least once a year, and amend it if necessary.

Task Force members underscored the need for schools to take a comprehensive approach to this important effort. They agreed that even the most effective family, education, law enforcement and government agency collaboration may not fully prevent youth violence. However, the partnership can work to overcome technological and legal barriers that prevent information sharing. The critical advantage will be a school/community ability to ensure collaboration in addressing the needs of children at risk before they commit crimes, as well as to develop a multi-incident emergency plan to effectively react in times of crisis.

Strategies

1. Provide school communities with a guide that includes the most up-to-date lessons learned from recent school crises in the nation, to assist them in developing crisis response plans as an essential element of the safe school planning process. The guide should show how to involve law enforcement in all steps of the process.



“Comprehensive plans are the basis for campus safety strategies. Communication is key between schools and law enforcement. We need a protocol that details who does what during a major critical incident and spells out the expectations of each agency. You need to take the time to think through who takes the lead under what set of circumstances.”

Nancy Goodrich
Assistant Chief of Police
San Diego Police Department
Member, Safe Schools Task Force



“Probation departments already supervise delinquent, violent and disturbed youth in a variety of settings: institutions; group and family homes; schools; day treatment centers; and in the community. In addition, probation is an integral part of the juvenile justice system once a minor has crossed the line by committing a law violation. Given our experience in providing structure, guidance and accountability to youth, we can contribute greatly to the prevention and intervention activities related to school safety.”

**Michael Schumacher, Former Chief
Orange County Probation Department
Member, Safe Schools Task Force**

2. Advocate for legislation to provide discretionary funding to all school districts (K-12) to address needs identified in their safe school plans.
3. Support efforts of the School/Law Enforcement Partnership Cadre to increase training and technical assistance on the safe school planning process and assistance with the mandated annual review of the plans.
4. Support the integration of research-based crime and violence prevention programs in the development of safe school plans by developing a clearinghouse of programs which have been evaluated and proven to be successful.
5. Advise and support schools in building accountability standards into their safe school plans so that partners have shared responsibility.
6. Encourage the appointment of a School Safety Program Director at each school district and county office of education.

3 Recommendation

Support strategies, including community oriented policing and problem solving, to increase law enforcement and probation officers as partners on school campuses.

Discussion: Law enforcement officials are often the first point of contact between troubled youth and the community. This places them in a position to provide leadership and support to community-wide collaborative efforts. Many youthful offenders suffer from multiple risk factors that, if not discovered and addressed, remove them from schools and place them into the juvenile justice system. Therefore, law enforcement agencies have a vital role in building school/law enforcement partnerships that bring to bear the full resources of the community for youth at risk. The connection between problem solving and creating partnerships is a primary focus of community oriented policing.

School-based partnerships between law enforcement, families and the school community address problems such as drug dealing or use on school grounds, problems experienced by students on the way to and from school, vandalism and graffiti, disputes that pose a threat to student safety and loitering and disorderly conduct. Partnerships can make further inroads with youth by involving teachers, parents and

friends. Police and probation officers can link families to appropriate counseling services and provide a social safety net for children at risk of delinquency. Additionally, the Department of Justice and the California Department of Education, through the School/Law Enforcement Partnership Program, administer the School Community Policing Partnership program established by Assembly Bill 1756 (Havice, Chapter 317, 1998). This \$10 million per year competitive grant program provides funding to school districts and county offices of education to develop and implement community oriented policing strategies for school communities.

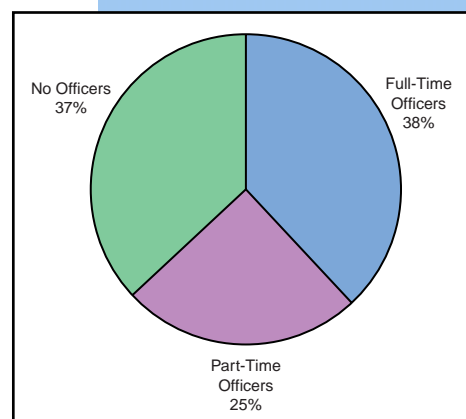
School officials report that on-campus officers are effective in guiding relationships with students and acting as deterrents to truancy. According to the recent California Attorney General's "Survey of Sworn Peace Officers on California High and Middle School Campuses," 37% of high schools have no full or part-time officers on campus (Chart 3).

Probation officers can provide intensive supervision for students on probation who attend school. School officials report that probation officers are very successful in reducing truancy and intervening with at-risk youth. They cite the probation officers' ability to work with juvenile offenders through the entire justice system.

Currently, there are approximately 5,500 probation officers in California, representing a large pool of positive resources for guiding at-risk youth. However, the majority of schools statewide do not have probation officers regularly assigned on campus. The recent California Attorney General's survey found that only 197 out of the 2030 middle and high schools have a probation officer who works regularly with students on campus. At many small, rural schools, the probation officer acts as a school resource officer. In the majority of these schools, probation officers are responsible for truancy reduction programs; working closely with at risk juveniles, including those not formally on probation; and conducting home visits.

At larger schools, probation officers often work with other law enforcement or school district officers. There are currently innovative programs in schools that link a probation officer and a police officer on each campus and include interagency coordination with school officials, counselors and parents. The teams are located by the district at high schools and also serve juvenile offenders attending feeder elementary and middle schools. In addition to working with students on formal and informal probation, the teams provide prevention and early intervention services. The teams have the authority to respond to problems ranging from truancy to minor criminal offenses.

Chart 3: Officers on High School Campuses



Source: *Sworn Peace Officers on California High and Middle School Campuses*, April 2000
Attorney General's Office



Strategies

1. Integrate Community Oriented Policing and Problem Solving (COPPS) strategies in safe schools plan development.
2. Support legislation to provide funding for additional law enforcement and probation officers on school campuses.
3. Include probation departments in any proposed legislation defining partners in local school safety efforts and include probation officers on school safety related commissions and task forces.
4. Promote information sharing among school/law enforcement/probation agencies, including computer system compatibility to access appropriate and pertinent information.
5. Encourage school communities to contact the School/Law Enforcement Partnership Cadre for technical assistance on forming partnerships with law enforcement and on the implementation of COPPS strategies.
6. Require evidence of sustainable collaboration among the school community and law enforcement on all school safety related grant applications and entitlement funding.
7. Encourage schools to review the annual *California Safe Schools Assessment Report* with local law enforcement and probation departments and develop a collaborative plan for improvement of school climate.
8. Build linkages between regional School/Law Enforcement Partnership Cadre teams and networks such as Healthy Start and the After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods partnerships.

4 Recommendation

Strengthen the capacity of the Attorney General and State Superintendent of Public Instruction's School/Law Enforcement Partnership Cadre to provide training, resources and technical assistance to California schools.

Discussion: Since 1983, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Attorney General have unified their efforts and resources through the School/Law Enforcement Partnership to promote programs that enhance the school learning environment, reduce school and community youth violence and ensure the safety of students and teachers.

“The School/Law Enforcement Partnership Cadre is already in place and can be used for any proposed safe school training.”

**Wesley Mitchell, Chief
Los Angeles Unified School District
Police Department
Member, Safe Schools Task Force**

The Partnership administers a number of grant programs which emphasize safe school planning, conflict resolution, school community policing partnerships and gang violence reduction. Additionally, this volunteer cadre of law enforcement and education specialists is the foundation for the leadership of local schools and communities in California on planning and implementing school safety strategies. The Partnership plays a key role in making schools safer and promotes positive activities for youth.

In the early 1980s, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Attorney General launched the concept of connecting schools and law enforcement with youth and in collaborations for safety on school campuses. The Cadre has worked diligently to make school communities safe. They have provided more than 200,000 personal contacts for assistance and resources. The specialized, diverse skills of this volunteer group have played a large part in the promotion of school safety practices in California. The State Department of Education and the Attorney General's Office have depended on the Cadre to spread a message of interagency collaboration while providing technical assistance to school communities. The Cadre is a well established, competent group of experts willing and able to assist schools in implementation of safe schools strategies. Task Force members, having discussed the work of the School Law Enforcement Partnership, noted that this Cadre possesses vast experience and expertise in providing students and staff with training in critical safe school strategies, such as (1) anger management, (2) conflict resolution and (3) other services. Along with training and technical assistance, the Cadre provides personal contact and direct services.

However, Task Force members also expressed frustration that the Cadre is limited in size and funding by statute. Task Force members also stated that those engaged in school safety efforts missed the opportunity of people coming together to discuss school safety needs that was made available during the annual regional training conferences sponsored in the past by the School/Law Enforcement Partnership.

Strategies

- 1.** Amend the California Education Code to allow for expansion of the 100-member limit to the School/Law Enforcement Partnership Cadre and to increase sponsoring agency staff to ensure statewide delivery of technical assistance and training for California schools.
- 2.** Support training and funding for the Partnership to meet current legislative mandates to develop, amend and review safe school plans for California schools.



**SCHOOL • LAW ENFORCEMENT
PARTNERSHIP**

Free technical assistance and resource materials are available to schools, law enforcement organizations and other youth-serving agencies. To obtain assistance, contact the Crime and Violence Prevention Center, Office of the Attorney General at (916) 324-7863 or the Safe Schools and Violence Prevention Office, California Department of Education at (916) 323-2183.

3. Provide additional training to the Cadre relative to current and best practice model programs and promising innovations in school safety.
4. Provide funding and staff to reinstate regional training conferences for educators, law enforcement, probation, social service agencies and community representatives to learn about current school safety strategies and issues.

5 Recommendation

Provide positive youth development activities that challenge students academically and provide real-world community service opportunities for students to contribute to the improvement of their schools and communities.

Discussion: Task Force members discussed the disconnection between communities and families and the absence of strong role models for youth. Mentors can play a key role, especially for at-risk youth whose family situations can significantly contribute to the propensity for violence. Law enforcement officers can assist in mentoring and guiding youth. Community-based organizations can help assess family and community needs and augment services provided to students and their families. It was agreed that community initiatives that help families and students develop healthy relationships, encourage parental participation and increase support through adult role models (e.g., Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, sports booster clubs, Boys and Girls Clubs, Big Brothers/Big Sisters) are necessary for healthy growth and positive development of youth.

Recognizing that the highest rates of juvenile crime occur between the hours of 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., Task Force members emphasized the importance of providing well-supervised, positive activities for the after-school hours. Law enforcement and community-based organization partners can assist in all aspects of positive after-school programs. Youth should be involved in developing concepts for meaningful involvement in after-school activities.

Strategies

1. Support national and statewide campaigns to raise the awareness of the importance of raising healthy and emotionally secure children.
2. Support teaching parenting skills as part of personal health skills or life sciences at the secondary level.

“The investment in after-school programming is the best deterrent against juvenile crime and victimization.”

Patricia Huerta
Community Concerns Commissioner
California State PTA
Member, Safe Schools Task Force

“We need more school/community projects that build school pride and spirit. These would create ways for the students, parents, teachers and community to better communicate.”

Aron Kwong, Student
John F. Kennedy High School,
Sacramento
Member, Safe Schools Task Force

3. Promote after-school programs as a safety strategy and provide consultation through school community partnerships.
4. Advocate partnerships with community-based organizations to keep schools open after hours for academic enrichment, tutoring, mentoring, extra curricular activities, athletics, school and community service projects.

6 Recommendation

Establish strong accountability measures for school safety community partnership programs.

Discussion: As recently as June 1998, the U.S. Department of Education published the *Safe and Drug Free Schools Principles of Effectiveness* and stated that future funding appropriated to states for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Title IV - Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act, would be predicated on local education agencies implementing programs that meet four basic principles: conduct a needs assessment, set measurable goals and objectives, implement effective research-based programs and conduct evaluation. In order to continue uninterrupted funding and to maintain local flexibility and implementation of locally developed programs that may not have been rigorously evaluated, local education agencies may choose to implement programs that show promise of being effective.

Researchers have developed an increasing body of knowledge about promising and proven methods for reducing youth violence. The Task Force agrees that support should continue to be directed to programs that work, and that ongoing evaluation be a condition of ongoing support. It is also agreed that, as with the design of a program, the evaluation should be developed jointly in order that all anticipated outcome information is included in the monitoring and reporting phases of the evaluation process.

Schools need the support of community-wide organizations and agencies to develop strategies for effective crime and violence reduction programs. Strategies which strengthen and sustain partnerships and collaboration among schools, parents, law enforcement, probation departments, local government, social services and other community groups are the most successful and demonstrate shared responsibility for the assessment of needs, setting goals and objectives, program operation and performance measurement.

“Communication lines must be open between schools and community agencies-between city councils, elected officials, school boards, law enforcement and probation departments.”

**Joe Santoro, Chief
Monrovia Police Department
Member, Safe Schools Task Force**

“Link funding opportunities to partnerships. Allow for a custom approach, since one size does not fit all, but require collaboration.”

**Steven Staveley, Chief
Division of Law Enforcement
California Department of Justice
Member, Safe Schools Task Force**



Strategies

1. Require and fund evaluation measurement plans that demonstrate sustained collaboration in grant and entitlement funding applications.
2. Publicize results, lessons learned and successes in collaborative efforts.
3. Encourage school administrators to develop policies in conjunction with their school safety site committee that clearly communicate to parents, students and staff that violence is unacceptable and preventable.
4. Support violence prevention and intervention training for all students, school employees and volunteers (including school bus drivers, cafeteria personnel, janitorial staff).
5. Involve the California School Boards Association to provide training to board members and community partners in the development and benefit of collaboration in the safe school planning process.

7 Recommendation

Identify, fund and disseminate information about best practices and model programs for safe schools.

Discussion: California has implemented many strategies to promote school safety. These include school resource officers on campus; awareness training for tolerance, respect and inter-cultural communication; probation officers on campus; school community policing partnerships; safety strategies for travel to and from school; effective emergency response and notification procedures; parenting classes; juvenile diversion programs; truancy and dropout prevention; gang prevention; victim/offender mediation; after-school academic enrichment, character education and peer mediation. Programs with demonstrated effectiveness and ongoing evaluation should be made available for replication and consideration by other school communities.

Researchers agree that an important step in ending school violence is to break through the impersonal atmosphere of larger secondary schools and create smaller communities of learning within larger structures. Behavioral problems, including truancy, classroom disruption, vandalism, aggressive behavior, theft, substance abuse and gang participation are greater in larger schools. School size also plays an important role in shaping the kinds of social relationships that form. Smaller schools reduce the isolation that causes violence, create a

“The media is very influential. School crime should not be glamorized. We should give more publicity to schools with strong safety records.”

**Steven Goldsmith, Director
Centinela Valley Juvenile
Diversion Project, Inglewood
Member, Safe Schools Task Force**

sense of ownership and belonging to school and allow students to form closer relationships with teachers. In addition, as yet, California has not established a model infrastructure of assistance for students in the areas of counseling, student support or mental health services.

Strategies

1. Establish a clearinghouse for research, development and technical assistance on violence prevention programs.
2. Develop and disseminate a resource document of proven and promising models and strategies for school safety to schools throughout California.
3. Support class size and school size reduction as a safety and academic model.
4. Involve the media in promoting the benefits of school safety events and programs.
5. Seek increased funding at the federal, state and local level to replicate and enhance comprehensive safe school programs.

Recommendation


Work with institutions of higher education, the California Commission for Teacher Credentialing (CTC), and providers of professional development to include school safety knowledge and skills development in pre-service and in-service programs for teachers, school administrators and student support services personnel.

Discussion: In February 1992, (in response to Senate Bill 2460, Cecil Green, 1990) the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) appointed a statewide advisory panel of K-12 educators, school board members, community volunteers, credential candidates, law enforcement and liaisons from government agencies to develop and recommend strategies to create a positive school environment free from violence. After completing an extensive review of research and conducting focus groups, CTC issued its report which included recommendations for pre-service and in-service training.

CTC is currently revising the standards governing the credentials for teachers, school administrators and student support services personnel, and will consider the inclusion of the recommendations from the 1995

“Most educators report feeling inadequately prepared to address school violence, and the vast majority say there should be such training. Research has shown a direct connection between serious acts of violence and the more subtle forms of ‘harm’ such as pushing, shoving, name calling and various other forms of harassment and neglect. Educators and other school personnel can do a lot about ‘nipping in the bud’ these more subtle forms of harm before they grow into serious violent acts.”

**CTC Advisory Panel in
Creating Caring Relationships
to Foster Academic Excellence:
Recommendations for Reducing
Violence in California Schools (1995)**



report in those revisions. Task Force members reiterated the importance of providing credentialed teachers, school administrators and student support services personnel with information and training on effective strategies for the prevention or reduction of violence on school campuses. Some topics which should be considered for integration in the training and information provided to school personnel include developmental risk factors and assets, resources for at-risk students, conflict resolution and peer mediation, interpersonal and communication skills with youth and classroom management. Topics should also include creating positive classroom environments that are conducive to learning, personal and social responsibility skills, multi-cultural sensitivity, character education and parent involvement. Recognizing the existing requirements and constrictions on credential programs, it will be necessary to cover some topics at an awareness level, others through field-work experience, as well as other strategies.

Strategies

- 1.** Initiate dialogue with CTC regarding strategies to ensure that knowledge and skills related to school safety and violence prevention are integrated in pre-service programs for teachers, administrators and student support services personnel.
- 2.** Promote and support mechanisms to utilize in pre-service training programs school site personnel who have exceptional expertise in school violence issues and working with at-risk students.
- 3.** Encourage college and university credential programs to help candidates build an understanding of comprehensive school violence prevention strategies that link activities to the differing needs of students and staff at school sites.
- 4.** Work with the California School Boards Association, California Teachers Association, California Federation of Teachers, Association of California School Administrators, CTC and institutions of higher education to advocate support for demonstration sites in which an institution of higher education would “adopt” local schools to demonstrate the use of violence prevention curriculum or strategies that have been developed. The results of such demonstration sites would contribute to the database on promising practices.
- 5.** Encourage providers of in-service professional development to include skill development training in conflict resolution and peer mediation, which includes strategies for integrating conflict resolution education across the curriculum and for involving parents and community members to reinforce the skills.

SAFE SCHOOLS TASK FORCE MEMBERS



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APPENDIX A

SYNOPSIS, CURRENT EFFORTS



Comprehensive Safe School Plans

Senate Bill 187 (Chapter 736, Statutes of 1997, Hughes)

In 1997, the Legislature passed and the Governor signed into law a landmark bill on school safety which requires every school site to have a comprehensive school safety plan. Senate Bill 187 requires schools to identify appropriate safety strategies and programs that are relevant to the needs and resources of the school. The law requires schools to include specific representatives of several disciplines in the planning process; to adopt policies and procedures in the event of an emergency or a disaster; to solicit community input on the plan and to conduct annual reviews and updates of the plan.

School/Law Enforcement Partnership

Since 1983, the Attorney General and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction have unified their efforts and resources through the School/Law Enforcement Partnership to promote programs that enhance the school learning environment, reduce school and community youth crime and ensure the safety of students. Partnership programs emphasize conflict resolution and youth mediation training; school community policing partnerships and grants; truancy prevention efforts and gang violence prevention. The Partnership encourages schools and law enforcement agencies to develop and implement interagency relationships, strategies and activities to improve school attendance, encourage good citizenship and promote safe schools. To achieve these goals, the Partnership established a 100-person statewide cadre of professionals and technical assistance facilitators from education, law enforcement and youth-serving organizations to provide assistance to local entities. Assistance may be in the form of a telephone consultation, a training workshop or in the provision of materials. The Partnership Cadre is represented on the Task Force and the role of the Cadre may be strengthened through many of the recommendations of the group.

Carl Washington School Safety and Violence Prevention Act of 1999

In June 1999, the Governor signed Assembly Bill 1113 (Chapter 51, Statutes of 1999, Florez) to provide \$100 million for school safety programs. In October 1999, the Governor signed Assembly Bill 658 (Chapter 645, Statutes of 1999, Washington) to provide \$1 million to county offices of education for participation in the School Safety and Violence Prevention Act of 1999. The funds have been allocated based on prior year enrollment figures to school districts and county offices of education serving grades 8 through 12. Districts and county offices received a minimum of \$10,000. The funding may be used for hiring personnel trained in conflict resolution, school safety infrastructure needs (such as communication systems), establishment of staff in-service training programs, establishment of cooperative relationships with law enforcement agencies and other purposes that contribute to the reduction of violence on school campuses. Additional information about the Act is available on the California Department of Education web site at www.cde.ca.gov/spbranch/safety/.

Governor's School Violence Prevention and Response Task Force

Assembly Bill 1113 also established the Governor's School Violence Prevention and Response Task Force to evaluate existing school safety programs and to make policy recommendations to the Governor and Legislature specific to early warning indicators and crisis response management. The Task Force, co-chaired by the Attorney General and the State Superintendent of Instruction, held public hearings and issued a formal report with recommendations in April 2000.

Guidance and Counseling Support Systems for Youth and Families

The California Department of Education is strengthening their role in guidance and counseling services and building support systems for students and families. Through programs such as Healthy Start and the After-School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships, many districts are working to ensure that every school has the services of a counselor or other support service personnel. This effort received increased impetus after recent school site tragedies. The Carl Washington School Safety and Violence Prevention Act funding may be used for the provision of these services.

APPENDIX B

OVERVIEW: WHAT CALIFORNIA IS DOING TO KEEP SCHOOLS SAFE



- California is one of only a few states that **require schools to compile and report school crime**.
- Under state law, schools are required to develop comprehensive **school safety plans** (SB 187, Hughes, 1997).
- Teachers must receive **training on how to handle and prevent violence in the classroom** (AB 2264, Andal, 1993).
- No school district may employ a person until a **background check** is conducted by the Department of Justice (AB 1610, Ortiz, 1997). The law also eliminates a loophole that had exempted substitute and temporary workers from background checks.
- **Schools are prohibited from hiring or retaining school employees who have been convicted of serious or violent felonies** (AB 1612, Alby, 1997). This law also authorized an electronic fingerprinting system for the Department of Justice that reduces the turnaround time for criminal background checks.
- Under state law it is a **felony to illegally possess a firearm within 1,000 feet of a school** (AB 645, Allen, 1995). This law also provides an increased felony penalty for using a firearm within this zone.
- **\$100 million in state block grant** funds (AB 1113, Flores, 1999) provides funding for local schools for school safety, including hiring personnel trained in conflict resolution, school safety infrastructure needs (such as communication systems), training programs, establishment of cooperative relationships with law enforcement agencies and other purposes that contribute to the reduction of violence on school campuses.
- The **School/Law Enforcement Partnership**, administered by the California Department of Justice and Department of Education, provides support to schools, law enforcement and community agencies for collaboratively developing and implementing strategies that create safe schools and promote positive youth development. Partnership programs emphasize conflict resolution and youth mediation training, truancy prevention and gang violence prevention.
- The Partnership also provides **local assistance grant funding** to schools, in collaboration with law enforcement agencies and the community, including the **School Community Policing Partnership Program, Safe Schools Implementation Program, the Conflict Resolution and Youth Mediation Program** and the **Student Leadership Program**.
- California authorized **\$50 million in new funds for after-school programs in 1998**, administered by the California Department of Education. (AB 1428, Ortiz; AB 2284, Torlakson; SB 1756, Lockyer).

- The state, schools and local communities administer a wide range of additional programs designed to **prevent gangs, alcohol and drug abuse and other efforts to reduce youth violence in schools and throughout our communities**. In Fresno, for example, campus-based police/probation teams work with the Fresno Unified School District to reduce juvenile crime and improve campus safety.
- **The Governor's School Violence Prevention and Response Task Force**, established under AB 1113, examined current school safety laws and procedures, held public hearings and issued a report with recommendations in April 2000.

APPENDIX C

HISTORY OF SCHOOL/ LAW ENFORCEMENT PARTNERSHIP



- 1983 School/Law Enforcement Partnership initiated.
- 1985 School/Law Enforcement Partnership codified (Education Code §32260 et seq.).
- 1989 School/Law Enforcement Partnership's *Safe Schools: A Planning Guide for Action* published and distributed to all California schools; Safe School Implementation Grant program enacted (Education Code §35294.5).
- 1996 School/Law Enforcement Partnership added School/Community Violence Prevention and Conflict Resolution/Youth Mediation Grants for school districts.
- 1997 Safe School Plans required for all schools (Education Code § 35294).
- 1999 School Community Policing Partnership Grants awarded through School/Law Enforcement Partnership (Education Code § 32296).
- 2000 – 2001 School/Law Enforcement Partnership's *Safe Schools: A Planning Guide for Action* updated and distributed to all California schools

**California Department of Education (CDE)
Safe Schools and Violence Prevention Office
Safe Schools Grant Programs, 1999-2000**

APPENDIX D

Grant	Amount of Funding	Purpose	Who's Eligible	Applications Available	Contact
School Safety & Violence Prevention Act of 1999 (entitlement)	\$101m statewide in 1999-2000. Entitlement based on enrollment in grades 8-12, with guaranteed minimum for small districts and counties.	To provide for safe schools and violence prevention among pupils	School districts and county offices of education maintaining any of the grades 8-12	Fall	Safe Schools and Violence Prevention Office (SSVPO) (916) 323-2183
Safe School Plan Implementation Grants (Requires a Safe School Plan)	Up to \$5,000 each (plus district matching fund); up to 100 issued each year	To assist schools in implementing a portion of their Safe School Plan	Schools	Fall	Steve Schwendimann (SSVPO) (916) 323-5277
Conflict Resolution & Youth Mediation Grant Program	\$10,000 per school \$280,000 available per year (K-12)	To implement a conflict resolution and youth mediation program through onsite training, integrated curriculum and school community involvement	Schools	Fall	Bonnie Williamson (SSVPO) (916) 324-6159 Arlene Shea Attorney General's Office (916) 324-7863
School Community Policing Partnership Grant Program	Up to \$325,000 each over a 3-year period. \$10,000,000 available per year.	To implement a school/community/police collaborative to deal with school crime and safety issues	School districts and county offices of education	November 2000	Chuck Nichols (SSVPO) (916) 323-1026 Steve Jefferies Attorney General's Office (916) 324-7863
GRIP (Gang Risk Intervention Program)	Grants of \$100,000 per year. \$3 million available statewide each year.	To intervene and prevent gang violence	County offices of education	November	Chuck Nichols (SSVPO) (916) 323-1026
SB 1095: High-Risk First-Time Offender and Transitioning High-Risk Youth Programs	\$18 million for 1999-00 (5-year projects)	To design and implement early interventions to prevent chronic juvenile delinquency	School districts and county offices of education	To be announced	Bill Lane (SSVPO) (916) 323-5721
Student Leadership Grant Program	Up to \$5,000 per grant. \$120,000 each year.	To implement safe/healthy school projects that are designed and led by students	High schools	September	Bonnie Williamson (SSVPO) (916) 324-6159
Title IV (IASA) Safe & Drug Free Schools & Communities (This is not a competitive grant)	Approximately \$4.02 per pupil (federal fund entitlement)	To initiate and maintain alcohol/drug/tobacco and violence prevention programs in schools	County offices of education and school districts receive entitlements	June and October	Jerry Hardenburg (SSVPO) (916) 323-1025 Greg Wolfe Healthy Kids Program Office (916) 657-3040

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE ON THE SSVPO HOMEPAGE at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sbbranch/safety/>

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This document can be obtained by writing:

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