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Patterns of Safety Issues found at Western Branch High School, Chesapeake, Virginia

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APPROVAL PAGE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In today's society, many are concerned about school safety. It seems that when school districts prepare for a new year, the topic of safety within the school becomes a popular issue. Many parents shop for schools that are surrounded by the better neighborhoods. With all the violence occurring in the schools, safety measures have increased. School districts have been forced to make safety a priority. Districts are adding security monitors, security cameras, metal detectors, and crime lines for schools. Administrators are attending more workshops dealing with programs to promote safe schools. Some school districts have developed their own security firms. Others are working closely with local level enforcement agencies where the police officer's primary duty is to work within the schools daily.

Providing safe schools for our children has become a top priority regardless of the school's size, location, or demographics. The concern expressed by students for safety from verbal harassment and being picked on suggests that feeling safe in school extends beyond keeping guns, gangs, and drugs out of schools. We need to ask our communities, and especially our students, to identify what needs to be changed in our schools to make them safer.

This paper will reflect on the concept of a safe school from the prospectives of those most immediately involved in schools: teachers, principals, parents, the community and most importantly, the students themselves. Besides looking at the characteristics that make up a safe school, this paper will identify how to maintain a safe school climate to keep a school safe.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of this study was to determine patterns of typical safety issues found at Western Branch High School, Chesapeake, Virginia.

RESEARCH GOALS

The following questions need to be answered in order to solve the research problem.

1.   What were the most prevalent crimes that have occurred at the school.

2.   Which crimes pose the greatest threat to students and staff.

3.   What procedures can be implemented to reduce threatening crimes.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Our society places great value upon the rights and responsibilities of each individual. Reflecting this emphasis, the Chesapeake School Board believes that one of its most important goals is to provide a safe and comfortable learning environment. Students, staff, and parents share this responsibility. Such an environment may be achieved through appropriate education, teamwork, policies, and disciplinary actions. (Chesapeake Public Schools Philosophy, 1995) Chesapeake Public Schools have a comprehensive Safe School Plan currently in place.

However, Chesapeake Schools are implementing new curriculum and program initiatives to address safe school issues. Therefore, the Chesapeake Schools Safe School

Plan should be reviewed and revised each year.

Recent studies demonstrate the necessity of crime fighting in schools. A 1995 study conducted by the Justice Department found an estimated two million teenagers are victims of violent crime annually. About nine percent of inner-city school students were victims of an incident involving a gun, knife or other weapon at least once. (Newsbank Inc., 1996)

Another recent study with the Escambia County Schools, Florida, showed 50 percent of high schools and 25 percent of middle schools have dealt with gang-related problems. All administrators surveyed said gang activity is a growing problem. (Newsbank Inc., 1996)

This study was based on information gathered about the safety concerns at Western Branch High School in Chesapeake, Virginia. The results of the study will assist administrators of the school, as well as the administrators of the Chesapeake Public School System, as they plan in the future for the overall safety of all persons within the school system.

LIMITATIONS

The research was limited to Western Branch High School in Chesapeake, Virginia. The research was restricted to information obtained from surveys of students, staff and parents within the school. Also past school records were used to determine any change in the safety of the school and its students and staff.

ASSUMPTION

The following assumptions were applied to the study:

1. The survey questions will be responded to based on true or real feelings.

2. The information obtained would assist in the development of future safety needs and concerns.

3. Students, staff and the community would benefit from initiatives that administrators would consider in the future.

PROCEDURES

The method for collecting data consisted of research from professional educational journals, input from administrators and surveys given to a sample of students, staff, and parents. The results of this survey were compiled, analyzed and used to enhance our security and safe school program.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms are found in the study:

School Safety- is one in which both students and teachers feel free of physical, psychological, and emotional abuse.

Gangs- a group of persons associated together for unlawful or antisocial purposes.

Weapons-   something (as a gun, knife, or club) that may be used to fight with.

Fighting-   to contend against another in battle or physical combat.

Tarties-   being late to class or school without permission.

OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

Chapter I provided background about school safety and stated the research problem which was to inspect areas of safety concerns at Western Branch High School. Chapter I also stated the goals of the research, background and significance, assumptions and limitations that were involved with the topic. Chapter II contains the review of literature for the study, Chapter III outlines the methods and procedures used in the study, Chapter IV contains the findings and Chapter V includes the conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter provides an overview of literature on the degree of school violence

and the steps other schools have taken in order to improve school safety. It includes

information about school crimes and violence, approaches to make school safer and

taking action.

Local communities and state and federal policy makers have responded to

increasing school violence with policies and programs to eliminate specific conditions.

No one can argue with the importance of removing guns, drug trafficking, or gang

activity from our schools, but few of these policies ask what elements of school safety

most concern students, parents and teachers.

Few would argue with the fact that we want our schools to be safe for our

children, providing them with the physical, psychological and emotional security

necessary for learning. Policy makers and practitioners at the local, state and national

levels have responded to the well-documented increases in school violence with policies

intended to either create safe schools or to maintain schools that already are safe.

(Harrington-Lueker, 1992) Many of these policies react to specific types of unsafe

conditions (weapons in schools, wearing gang apparel, drug abuse, etc.) that have already

occurred in the school or that are feared by the local community. Many existing

programs have involved members of local schools and communities to respond to

deteriorating school safety. (Malesich, 1994)

The School Safety Program in Charlotte was designed to implement community

policing and problem-solving techniques in a high school setting. The program's goal

was to create an environment in which students, working in cooperation with teachers,

administrators and police officers, could identify and attempt to reduce problems of

crime, delinquency and disorder in a Charlotte public high school. As a result, the

program sought to produce a number of other desirable outcomes for the entire school.

(Education and Urban Society, August 1996)

Citizens often recognize that schools are microcosms of society, reflecting the

larger communities in which they are located. Threats to school safety may arise as the

spillover effects from external circumstances, such as neighborhood drug and gang

activities. Nevertheless, the public expects schools somehow to be more exemplary than

other social institutions. Thus schools are expected to not only ensure students'

academic achievement, but also to impart socially appropriate values, attitudes, and

behavior. In addition, Americans, and members of many other societies as well, expect

that schools will function as safe havens--protecting youth from and inoculating them

against the adverse conditions of the larger environment, such as poverty and crimes.

(Education and Urban Society, August, 1996)

Increasingly, more attention has been focused on disorder, crime, and violence in

school setting. The media limelight, for example, has frequently fallen on particularly

violent acts that occur in schools, such as fatal arguments, incidents involving guns or

other weapons and assaults on teachers. In addition, numerous headlines and cover

stories increase the visibility of school safety issues in the course of reporting on such

topics as juvenile delinquency, youth violence or crime and urban decay. (Education and

Urban Society, August, 1996)

National surveys of attitudes to school violence show contradictory perceptions.

One prevalent theme is that school violence is pervasive. For example, The Safe

Schools, Violent Schools study, an early survey commissioned by the National Institute

of Education (1978), reported widespread violence throughout the nation's schools. The

National Association of School Security Directors which makes yearly reports of

widespread physical and property violence indicated that thirty- two percent of schools

affected by serious crimes are not in urban areas. (Rich, 1992) These and other reports

show that teachers and students alike fear for their personal safety. On the other hand, a

recent national survey shows a departure from the perception that violence exists in most

of our schools. In the Leitman (1994) Metropolitan Life Survey, Violence in America's

Public Schools: The Family Perspective, parents and public school students agreed that

schools offer a safe, secure environment. Furthermore, a majority of students reported

that they have not been victims of violence (Leitman, 1994). School board members who

responded to the annual survey of The American School Board Journal agreed that

although school violence is a concern; it is not an issue in every community. Indeed,

respondents felt that schools are safe for students and staff. (Weisenburger, Underwood

and Fortune, 1995) Schools in communities with rapid growth, poverty, minority

families, working parents, single parents, and unsupervised adolescents are more often

thought to be unsafe. (Harrington-Lueker, 1991) Program and policy efforts have

attempted to curb school violence and create safe schools. Successful programs have

been implemented at the building, district, and community levels. For example, crime

rates have dropped in half at Bassett High School in La Puente, California, because

parents began patrolling the cafeteria and hallways. (Gest, 1989) Similarly, formal

action teams of students, teachers, parents, and administrators at Lake County

Intermediate School in Leadville, Colorado, have developed and implemented action

plans that have virtually eliminated fighting and dropped discipline referrals by two

thirds. (Malesich, 1994) The Federal Safe School Act of 1993 recognized the importance

of including all segments of the local community in safe schools initiatives. (United

States Senate Subcommittee on Education, Arts and Humanities, 1993)

SCHOOL CRIMES AND VIOLENCE

Approximately one million crimes annually occur in American workplaces; in

excess of three million crimes of various types are conservatively estimated to occur in

the nation's 85,000 public schools. (Sautter, 1995) Some school crimes and violence

derive from carefully constructed samples with high response rates, whereas others are

clearly more circumscribed in their scientific rigor. Thus the figures vary substantially in

terms of their validity and reliability. Some experts have suggested that the problem may

even be greater than various reports reveal, because (a) school crimes are often handled

as disciplinary offenses, which are poorly tracked; and (b) students and teachers may

underreport incidents due to fear of reprisals or to avoid casting their schools in negative

light. Nonetheless, taken together, the data on the national and local trends provide

considerable evidence of the widespread presence of crime, including serious violent

crime, in our nation's schools. (Education and Urban Society, August, 1996)

Bastion and Taylor (1991) reported that six percent of the students said they

avoided some place in their school because they feared attack. Two percent of the students said they took some weapon (a gun, knife, brass knuckles, razor blades, or other object) to school to protect themselves. Sixteen percent of the respondents reported that a teacher had been threatened or attacked at their school. Fifteen percent reported gang presence in their school. The Youth Risk Surveillance System found the following findings based on the 1993 nationwide school based survey conducted by the Center for Disease Control (1995). Four and four-tenths of the ninth through twelfth graders reportedly missed at least one day of school because they felt too unsafe on school premisses or in route to or from school. Eleven percent reported carrying a weapon to school at least once during the 30 days preceding the survey. Males carried more weapons than did the females. Sixteen percent reported having been involved in at least one physical fight on school property in the year preceding the survey. Thirty-two and seven tenths percent reported having property (such as books, clothing, or vehicle) deliberately damaged or stolen while on school premises during the twelve months preceding the survey. School crimes in earlier decades were depicted as relatively isolated events, virtually limited to troubled urban environments. Such difficulties are currently acknowledged including urban, suburban and rural school districts-- regardless of demographic conditions, such as population size, ethnic or racial diversity, economic or regional location.

A recent National League of Cities survey found that thirty-eight percent of the 700 responding cities reported noticeable increases in school violence within their jurisdiction during the preceding five years, and only eleven percent reported that school

violence was not a problem in their locale. (National League of Cities, 1994) School

factors that are conducive to disorder, crime, and violence include (a) overcrowding; (b)

high student/teacher ratios; (c) insufficient curricular relevance, combined with (d) low

student academic achievement and apathy, which give rise to disruptiveness; (e) poor

facilities design and portable buildings that both increase isolation and hamper internal

communication; and (f) adult failure to act because leaders are reluctant to admit a

problem, believing nothing will work, or simply do not know what to do. (Sautter,1995)

Crimes and violence contribute to a climate of fear in many schools that makes it

difficult to attract and retain good teachers, further impeding educational objectives.

School discipline may suffer as teachers hesitate to confront misbehaving students due to

concerns for their own safety. Some students may perceive the need to carry weapons for

self-defense and the presence of weapons may permit disagreements among students to

escalate into serious assaults. (Gaustad, 1991)

<div align="center">APPROACHES TO MAKING SCHOOLS SAFER</div>

Given the rapid changing conditions in many of our communities, criteria need to

be identified that will measure changes in the safety of the local school. Indicators of

potentially unsafe conditions need to be determined and monitored in a consistent matter.

For example, increased absenteeism within a group of friends may indicate inappropriate

unsupervised activities that could lead to more serious problems. Monitoring the

absentees of student groups would help account for the nature of activities and identify

problems more quickly than the traditional monitoring of attendance of individual

students. Keeping track of changes in school through simple measures like absentee

patterns and discipline referrals may prevent having to document and address more serious problems later.

Schools have instituted a wide range of programs and policies in the hopes of improving school safety. These strategies can be viewed as falling into four categories: (a) Modifications to the physical environment or security, (b) modifications to the organizational environment, (c) introduction of curricular enhancements, and (d) creation of community collaboratives for problem solving provision. (Brendtro and Long, 1995) Schools have increased security staff using school district personnel employed for that purpose and sometimes have local police officers on the school premise to respond rapidly to any major situation that may occur. In addition to such practices, schools have modified their physical plants by limiting entry points to a single visitor entrance, with required sign-in and identification procedures; installing security fences, repositioning landscaping and added lighting to enhance visibility of locations that might encourage crime or violence; and closing remote or low trafficked school areas when adults cannot be present to monitor activities. Also a range of technological devices have been used, including stationary and hand-held metal detectors, security cameras, panic alarms, and television cameras. In recent years from 1990 through 1992, eleven federal agencies were supporting more than one hundred programs at an annual costs ranging from $108 to $133 million dollars designed to reduce youth violence in general. (Government Accounting Office, 1995) In addition, school-based violence prevention efforts have been supported by a variety of federal agencies, including the National Institute of Justice and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Given the state of society as a whole,

ending school violence may not be possible. But a necessary first step in that direction is the implementation of a reasonable standard of care for security similar to that already in place for other public institutions such as hospitals, courtrooms and airports. The result will be safer schools today and more educated citizens for tomorrow.

TAKING ACTION

Taking action depends on eight key factors. These include: establish clear behavior standards; provide adequate adult presence and supervision; enforce rules fairly and consistently; supervise closely and sanction offenders consistently; gain parental support; control campus access; create partnerships with outside agencies; and believe you can make a difference. Key characteristics that have been associated with strategies that appear promising include the following:

- strong leadership by school administrators, and school-based team efforts that support stable funding, staffing and programming.

- clear policies and procedures that are applied consistently.

- parental involvement to support and reinforce school-based crime/violence prevention efforts.

- have school safety top the educational agenda on each campus and within the community.

- develop a comprehensive district wide safe school plan.

- implement a peer counseling program at every school. Students are some of the best agents for a safe campus.

- establish a vibrant system of extracurricular programs. Without positive

challenging activities, students tend to fill the void with negative activities.

- ensure that behavior expectations are clearly communicated, consistently enforced, and fairy applied.

- carefully screen and select new employees. Every school system should have clear policy guidelines to weed out a criminal background of misbehavior involving students.

- provide adequate adult supervision.

- identify specifically assigned roles and responsibilities.

- identify and track repeat offenders.

- expand alternative placement options for troubled youth.

- consider a probation officer on campus for more intensive supervision for students on probation.

- control campus access. Minimize the number of entrance and exit points used daily.

- require pictured ID cards for students and staff.

- review discipline and weapon possession policies to ensure they attack the problem.

- establish a state of the art emergency communication center; i.e., hand held radios.

- establish a parent/volunteer center on each campus to recruit, coordinate, and encourage parent participation.

- provide teacher training programs.

- conduct an annual review, because safe school planning is ongoing.

These are just some of the strategies that are the beginning of a continuing process to create safe schools for students. Making schools safe requires an ongoing commitment. (Educational Digest, September, 1996)

What constitutes a safe school is a local issue determined by existing levels of safety, the demographics of the population and shared values of community groups. The local context may change rapidly with increased mobility in the community. A stable, safe community may find itself dealing with increasingly unsafe conditions in a relatively short period of time. As the demographics of the community become more diverse, the community values also will include more complex, often contradictory viewpoints.

Prior to development of policies or programs to increase school safety, the local community must first identify what constitutes a safe school climate. A safe school climate entails freedom from physical harm, substance abuse, and emotional harassment. Those best qualified to describe what will make a school safe are those who study and work there and who send their children there. Therefore, the entire school community, students, teachers, administrators, parents and the community at large should identify the type of school they want to have. A process needs to be developed to include all segments of the community in identifying the conditions necessary for a safe school. This process may include, but not be limited to, involvement of all groups on planning teams and advisory councils. (Journal for a Just and Caring Education, April, 1996)

SUMMARY

This chapter has emphasized that school safety interest remains an important

issue even though there are differences of opinion as to how widespread school violence exists. The chapter also has reflected some of the diverse approaches currently in use in certain committees to address concerns about school safety and has touched on various aspects of the problems associated with crime and violence in the schools. In Chapter III, the methods and procedures used will be discussed.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The problem of the study was to determine patterns of typical safety issues found at Western Branch High School, Chesapeake, Virginia. In order to obtain relevant, clear, decisive data about the problem, it was necessary to conduct a survey. The following topics will be discussed in Chapter III: the populations, instrument design, methods of data collection, statistical analysis and the summary.

POPULATION

The population of this study consisted of students, staff and parents from within the school. To ensure the reliability of the research, a sample of each was taken. The total number of surveys issued were as follows: students- 60, parents- 143 and staff- 68.

INSTRUMENT DESIGN

The survey questionnaire consisted of questions that asked for two different types of answers. The first group of questions asked respondents to circle a letter or letters in response to each question. The second group of questions asked respondents to provide a rating on a scale of one to five by circling the appropriate number. The question topics were drugs sold in school, school safety, and weapons in school. The survey for students can be found in Appendix A, staff survey in Appendix B and parents survey in Appendix C. The surveys were developed from a handbook for practitioners on safe schools from the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The surveys were distributed as follows. The student survey was distributed to a sample of the student body including all grade levels, while the parents survey was done by Mrs. Rhodes' government classes. The students surveyed parents, neighbors, and business persons who live and work in the community, and the staff was surveyed to get their perception of the students' safety and of our school as a safe place to work.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The survey was designed to gather data that would help answer the research goals. The percentage and mean score was also tabulated for each question on the survey.

SUMMARY

The methods and procedures for the research study were discussed in this chapter. The survey was given to a sample of students, parents, and staff of the school. The survey data will be analyzed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The problem of this study was to determine patterns of typical safety issues found at Western Branch High School, Chesapeake, Virginia. This chapter presents findings in table and narrative form. These findings were taken from a survey of 60 students, 68 staff, and 143 parents of the school.

STUDENT SURVEY

Of the 60 students surveyed, 90% responded (54). The results of the survey questions follows. Question 1, During the past year, did anyone take money or things directly from you at school, using force, weapons, or threats? No students responded yes to the question. 54 students responded no to the question, which was 100%. Zero students answered with no opinion. This question had a mean of 1. This indicates that no was the most answered to the question. See Table 4-1.

Question 2, During the past year, did anyone steal from your desk, locker, or other place at school? 21 students responded yes to the question, making up 35% of the responses. 32 students answered no to this question, equaling 53%. Of the 54 students polled, 4 had no opinion. The overall mean for this question was 1.4. This means that most were leaning to yes but some answered no. See Table 4-1.

Question 3, Were you bullied? 2 of the students polled answered yes which was 3 percentage. 82% or 49 of the students polled said in fact that they had not been bullied. There were zero students that had no opinion, giving this question a mean of 1. This indicates that almost everyone answered no. See Table 4-1.

Student Survey Results

RESPONSES

Survey Topics	YES	NO	N/A
Question 1	0	54	0
Question 2	21	32	4
Question 3	2	49	0
Question 4	5	51	1
Question 5	4	47	8
Question 6	2	47	0
Question 7	36	14	4
Question 9	9	38	4
Question 10	2	30	0

Table 4-1

Question 4, Did anyone physically attack you at school during the last six months? 5 students claimed that they had been physically attacked, (8%). 51 students polled said that they had never been attacked, (85%). 1 student held no opinion. The mean for this question was 1.1. This indicates the answers were no to the question. See Table 4-1.

Question 5, Do you fear for your physical safety at school? Of the 54 students polled, 4 or 6% feared for their safety at school. 47 students or 78% said that they did not fear for their safety at school. 8 students or 12% of those polled, had no opinion. The mean for this question was 1.1. This indicates the answers were no to the question. See Table 4-1.

Question 6, Did you stay at home during the past year because you were afraid that another student would harm you? 3% or 2 students said yes, that they did say home because of fear. 78% or 47 students said no, they did not stay home for fear of harm. Zero students had no opinion, giving this question a mean of 1. This indicates the answers to the question were no. See Table 4-1.

Question 7, Are drugs sold at our school? 36 students said that they thought drugs were sold in school, equaling 60%. 14 students claimed that they thought that drugs were not sold in school, equaling 23%. 4 students or 6% had no opinion on the matter giving this question a mean of 1.4. This indicates that the answers were mostly yes but some responded no. See Table 4-1.

Question 8, If drugs are at our school, where do you think they are sold? (Please circle all that apply) 68% of those polled or 41 students believed that drugs were sold before school. 53% of those polled or 32 students said that drugs were sold during school. 60% of those polled or 36 students thought that drugs were sold after school. 55% of those polled or 33 students claimed that drugs were sold during school related activities. 58% of those polled or 35 students said that they thought drugs were being sold during school events. Most students felt that drugs were sold before, during and after school.

Question 9, During the last year, did you carry a weapon to school? 9 of the students that responded said that they had carried a weapon to school, equaling 15% of those polled. 38 students or 63% of those polled said that they had never carried a weapon to school. 4 students which totaled 6% of those polled had no opinion. This

question had a mean of 1.1. This indicates that the answers were no to the question. See Table 4-1.

Question 10, Are you a member of a gang? 2 students or 3% of those polled said that they belonged to a gang. 30 students or 55% of those polled said that they had no gang affiliation. The mean for this question was 1. This indicates the answers were no to the question. See Table 4-1.

Question 11, On a scale of 1 to 5 - 1 being very safe and 5 being not safe at all-please rate the overall safety of our school by circling the appropriate number from 1 to 5. (See Table 4-2) 15% of those polled or 9 felt that their school was very safe. 35% of those polled or 21 students felt that the school was safe. 28% or 17 of the students polled were undecided on the safety of the school. 8% of the student polled or 5 claimed that the school was unsafe. 3% or 2 students felt that the school was very unsafe. The mean for this question was 3 which means that for the most part, the students were undecided.

Question 12, On a scale of 1 to 5 -1 being little fear and 5 being significant fear-please rate your level of fear regarding the incidents that could occur at our school by circling the appropriate number from 1 to 5. (See Table 4-2) 66% or 40 students felt little fear of being shot or stabbed at school, 11% or 7 students felt significant fear. 70% or 42 students did not fear being raped at school, 14% or 8 students said that they felt significant fear. 32% or 25 students felt little fear of other sex offenses being committed towards them. 11% or 7 students claimed that they held significant fear of other sex offenses being committed against them. 36% or 22 students had little fear of being assaulted in school. 15% or 10 students held significant fear of being assaulted while at

school. 47% or 28 students had little fear of being robbed at school. 25% or 15 students

had significant fear of being robbed while at school. 64% or 38 students felt little fear of

extortion at school, while 13% or 8 students claimed to have significant fear of extortion

at school. 58% or 35 students held little fear of bullying while at school. 11% or 7

students had significant fear of being bullied while at school.

Incidents Committed at School

1 being very safe- 5 not safe at all

	1	2	3	4	5	MEAN
Overall Safety						
Question 11	9	21	17	5	2	1.4
	1= little fear				5= significant fear	
Incidents Question 12						
Shooting/stabbing	34	6	6	6	1	3.2
Rape	37	5	1	4	4	3.3
Other sex offenses	18	7	8	5	2	2.9
Assault	14	8	8	4	6	2.5
Robbery	18	10	13	12	3	2.5
Extortion	28	10	8	6	2	2.0
Bullying	23	12	10	3	4	2.9

TABLE 4-2

STAFF SURVEY

Of the 68 staff surveyed 98% or 67 responded. The results of the study were as

follows. Question 1, During the past year, did anyone take money or things directly

from you at school, using force, weapons, or threats? Of the 68 surveyed, zero said yes, all respondents said no and zero had no opinion. This question had a mean of 1. This indicates that the answer to the question was no. See Table 4-3.

STAFF SURVEY RESPONSES

Theft at school	YES	NO	N/A
Question 1	0	63	0
Question 2	26	39	4
Question 3	1	67	15
Drugs			
Question 4	54	0	14

Table 4-3

Question 2, During the past year, did anyone steal from your desk or other place at school? 17% or 26 staff members said yes. 26% or 39 staff members answered no and 3% or 4 staff members had no opinion. The mean for this question was 1.3. This indicates that most answered no but some answered yes. See Table 4-3.

Question 3, Did anyone physically attack you at school during the last six months? 1% or 1 staff members said that they had been attacked in the last six months. 80% or 67 staff members said that they had not been attacked. 22% or 15 staff members had no opinion which gave this question a mean of .8. This indicates that most said no but some had no opinion. See Table 4-3.

Question 4, Do you think drugs are sold at our school? 54% or 36 respondents said yes. None of the respondents said no and 14% or 9 had no opinion. The mean for this question was 1.5. This indicates that most answered yes to the question but some

answered no. See Table 4-3.

Question 5, What percentage of your student, do you think, is involved in a gang? 10% or 7 staff members said that there was zero gang involvement in their school. 52% or 35 staff members said that they believe the percentage is less than 5%. 18% or 13 said that the percentages were between 5-10%. 1% or 1 staff member felt that the percentages were between 10-20%. 1% or 1 staff member felt that the percentage was greater than 20% gang involvement in the school. Fifty-five out of the 67 that responded said that there was little gang involvment.

Question 6, On a scale of 1 to 5 - 1 being little fear and 5 being significant fear- please rate the level of fear regarding the incidents that could occur at our school by circling the appropriate number from 1 to 5. Seventy-seven percent or 52 of the staff members polled felt little fear of being shot or stabbed at school. 4% or 3 staff members claimed significant fear. 66% or 64 staff members felt little fear of being raped while at school. 2% or 2 staff members had significant fear. 79% or 54 staff members had little fear of other sex offenses being committed towards them while at school. 11% or 8 staff members felt significant fear. 59% or 40 of those polled had little fear of assault while at school. 11% or 7 of those polled stated significant fear. 62% or 42 of the staff polled had little fear of robbery while 13% or 9 held significant fear. 70% or 48 of those polled had no fear of extortion, but 9% or 7 had significant fear. Most of the staff rated the level of fear, regarding the incidents at school, as being very low.

Question 7, On a scale of 1 to 5 -1 being little fear and 5 being significant fear- please rate your fear of the following groups committing a crime against you by circling

the appropriate from 1 to 5. Sixty-four percent or 42 staff members said that they had little fear of crimes being committed by students against them. 8% or 6 had significant fear. 66% or 45 staff members polled said that they had little fear of crimes being committed by non-school personnel towards them. 8% or 8 claimed significant fear. 61% or 42 staff members claim little fear of gang crimes being committed against them. 13% or 10 stated significant fear. Most of the staff members indicated having little fear of the groups committing a crime against them.

Question 8, On a scale of 1 to 5-1 being very safe and 5 being not safe at all-please rate the overall safety of our school by circling the appropriate number from 1 to 5. See Table 4-4. 56% or 38 staff members felt that the school was very safe. 7% or 5 of the staff polled felt that the school was unsafe. Most of the staff members rated the school has being very safe.

Incidents Committed at School

1 being very safe 5 not safe at all

	1	2	3	4	5	MEAN
Question 6						
Shooting/stabbing	29	23	14	0	3	3.1
Rape	45	19	3	1	1	3.5
Other sex offenses	39	15	7	7	1	3.2
Assault	16	24	21	6	2	2.7
Robbery	21	21	18	7	2	2.8
Extortion	35	13	12	3	4	3.0
Bullying	6	4	5	0	1	2.9

	1	2	3	4	5	MEAN
Question 8	15	23	13	4	1	2.8

Table 4-4

PARENT SURVEY

Of the 143 parents surveyed, 92% responded which equals 132. The results of the study were as follows. Question 1, During the past year, did anyone take money or things from your child at school, using force, weapons, or threats? 5% or 7 of the parents surveyed answered yes. 95% or 125 parents answered no. This question had a mean of 1. This indicates most answered no to the question. See Table 4-5.

Question 2, During the past year, did anyone steal from your child's desk, locker, or other place at school? 4% or 6 parents felt that theft had occurred from their child's desk, locker or other place at school. 87% or 125 felt that this had not happened. The mean for this question was 1. This indicates most answered no to the question. See Table 4-5.

Question 3. Was your child bullied at school? 13% or 18 parents felt that their child had been bullied at school. 88% or 114 parents felt that their child had not been bullied. The mean for this question was 1.1. See Table 4-5.

Question 4. Did anyone physically attack your child at school during the past year? 4% or 5 parents felt that their child had been attacked while at school. 96% or 127

parents felt that their child had not been attacked while at school which gave this

question a mean of 1. See Table 4-5.

PARENT

Parent Survey Responses

Survey Questions	YES	NO	N/A
Question 1	7	136	0
Question 2	6	125	0
Question 3	18	125	0
Question 4	5	138	0
Question 5	38	26	48
Question 6	20	142	13
Question 7	0	137	1
Question 8	112	20	0
Question 9	102	17	17
Question 10	69	89	0
Question 11	50	89	0

TABLE 4-5

Question 5, If your child was physically attacked do you think it was racially or

ethnically motivated? 14% or 20 parents felt that an attack on their child was racially

motivated. 85% or 112 parents did not feel that an attack was racially motivated. This

gave mean of 1.2. This indicates that most answered no to the question. See Table 4-5.

Question 6, Do you fear for your child's safety at school? 14% or 20 parents

stated that they feared for their child's safety at school. 75% or 99 parents did not fear

for their child's safety at school. 10% or 13 parents had no opinion on the matter. This gave a mean of 1. This indicates that most answered no to the question. See Table 4-5.

Question 7, Did your child stay home during the past year because they were afraid that another student would harm them? 5% or 3 parents stated that their child stayed home from school due to fear of harm. 96% or 128 parents that their child did not stay home from school because of fear. 1% or 1 parent had no opinion. This question had a mean of 1. This indicates that most answered no to the question. See Table 4-5.

Question 8, Do you think drugs are being sold at our school? 78% or 112 parents felt that drugs were being sold at school. 14% or 20 parents felt that drugs were not being sold at school. This gave a mean of 2. This indicates that most answered yes to the question. See Table 4-5.

Question 9, During the last school year, do you think weapons have been carried to school by students? 71% or 102 parents felt that weapons were being carried to school. 12% or 17 parents felt that weapons were not being carried to school. 12% or 17 parents had no opinion. This gave a mean of 2. This indicates most answered yes to the question. See Table 4-5.

Question 10, Do you think carrying a weapon to school makes students feel safer? 48% or 69 parents felt tat carrying a weapon makes a student feel safer. 62% or 89 parents said that carrying a weapon does not make a student feel safer. This gave a mean of 1.4. This indicates that most answered no but that some answered yes to the question. See Table 4-5.

Question 11, Is your child a member of a gang? 35% or 50 parents said that their

child was a gang member. 62% or 89 parents said that their child was not a gang member. This gives a mean of 1.2. This indicates that most answered no to the question but some answered yes. See Table 4-5.

SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the findings of the research study. The data showed how the respondents answered the questionnaire. In the chapter that follows the data gathered will be summarized, conclusions will be drawn and recommendations made.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a summation of the four previous chapters. Conclusions were drawn according to the answers to the research goals found in Chapter I. Recommendations are made based in the data collected.

SUMMARY

The problem of the study was to determine patterns of typical safety issues found at Western Branch High School, Chesapeake, Virginia. The following questions needed to be answered in order to solve the research goals: What were the most prevalent crimes that have occurred at the school, which crimes pose the greatest threat to students and staff and what procedures can be implemented to reduce threatening crimes.

Our society places great value upon the rights and responsibilities of each individual. Reflecting this emphasis, the Chesapeake School Board believes that one of its most important goals is to provide a safe and comfortable learning environment. Students, staff, and parents share this responsibility. Chesapeake Public Schools have a comprehensive Safe School Plan currently in place. However, Chesapeake Schools are implementing new curriculum and program initiatives to address safe school issues. Therefore, the Chesapeake Schools Safe School Plan should be reviewed and revised each year.

This research was limited to Western Branch High School in Chesapeake, Virginia. The research was restricted to information obtained from surveys of students, staff, and parents within the school. To ensure the reliability of the research, a sample of

each was taken. The total number surveyed were as follows: students-60 surveyed, 90% or 54 responded, parents-143 surveyed, 92% or 132 responded, and staff-68 surveyed, 98% or 67 responded. The student survey was distributed to a sample of the student body including all grade levels. The parents survey was conducted by Mrs. Rhodes' government classes. The staff was surveyed to get their perception of the students' safety and of our school as a safe place to work. The survey questionnaire consisted of questions that asked for two different types of answers. The first group of questions asked respondents to circle a letter in response to each question. The second group of questions asked respondents to provide a rating on a scale of one to five by circling the appropriate number according to the levels of fear or safety. The question topics included drugs sold in school, school safety, and weapons in school. The surveys were developed from a handbook for practitioners on safe schools from the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

<div align="center">CONCLUSIONS</div>

The following conclusions were reached by means of the data that was collected and tabulated from the respondents.

1. What were the most prevalent crimes that have occurred at the school? The most prevalent crimes the student survey showed were that of locker theft (35%). Also students indicated a fear of personal attack in the parking lots, athletic fields, and areas outside school building (6%). The faculty crimes were reported from teachers who had items stolen from their desks or another place in the building (26%). The parent survey indicated that 9% of children had their locker broken into and 71% think that

some students are carrying weapons to school.

2. Which crimes pose the greatest threat to students and staff?

The students indicated a fear of personal attack (8%), and robbery were their major

concern (25%). The faculty indicated that they believed drugs were being sold during

and after school (54%). The parent survey indicated that their major concern was that

some of their children belonged to a gang or had gang connections (35%). Parents rated

the security at the school as excellent to good (85%).

3. What procedures can be implemented to reduce threatening crimes?

The procedures that can be implemented to reduce threatening crimes are as follows:

-to have the cameras record twenty-four hours a day and to keep used tapes on

file for two weeks, then reused.

-make students and faculty aware that the cameras are recording all the time so

all personel will think twice about doing something wrong.

-have teachers keep their doors in the classrooms locked when not in use to

reduce the number of thefts from desks.

-require all students to have a lock on their lockers to prevent theft.

-have the drug dogs come in more often to look for drugs and weapons in the

school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are suggested to the principal for consideration

to further enhance the safety program at Western Branch High School:

1. With the expansion of the school, including additional halls, classrooms and other

areas, it is recommended that another set of security cameras be added to cover the additional areas.

2. Purchase additional hand held radios for the security staff for good communication between them and administrators.

3. Schedule security monitors to remain at the school until 6:00 PM each day. This will allow supervision of the students who stay after for sports and other activities to be monitored.

4. Continue teacher monitoring of the halls and restrooms.

5. Establish a program to be added for all students on street safety and common sense safety for life. Our world is not like it used to be and all of us need upgraded safety skills. This program should be offered by the security division and the local law enforcement organizations.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE OF STUDENT SURVEY

STUDENT SURVEY

The school is conducting a survey to solicit student opinions about our school's safety and overall security. Your opinions on these issues are very important and will be kept entirely confidential.

1. During the past year, did anyone take money or things directly from you at school, using force, weapons, or threats?

    a. Yes

    b. No

    c. No opinion

2. During the past year, did anyone steal from your desk, locker, or other place at school?

    a. Yes

    b. No

    c. No opinion

3. Were you bullied?

    a. Yes

    b. No

    c. No opinion

4. Did anyone physically attack you at school during the last six months?

    a. Yes

    b. No

    c. No opinion

5. Do you fear for your physical safety at school?

    a. Yes

    b. No

    c. No opinion

6. Did you stay at home during the past year because you were afraid that another student would harm you?

    a. Yes

    b. No

    c. No opinion

7. Are drugs sold at our school?

    a. Yes

    b. No

    c. No opinion

8. If drugs are at our school, where do you think they are sold? (Please circle all that apply)

    a. Before school

    b. During school

    c. After school

    d. During school activities

    e. During school events

9. During the last year, did you carry a weapon to school?

    a. Yes

    b. No

c. No opinion

10. Are you a member of a gang?

    a. Yes

    b. No

    c. No opinion

11. On a scale of 1 to 5 - 1 being very safe and 5 being not safe at all- please rate the overall safety of our school by circling the appropriate number from 1 to 5

    1   2   3   4   5

12. On a scale of 1 to 5 -1 being little fear and 5 being significant fear- please rate your level of fear regarding the incidents that could occur at our school by circling the appropriate number from 1 to 5 .

Shooting/stabbing	1	2	3	4	5
Rape	1	2	3	4	5
Other sex offenses	1	2	3	4	5
Assault (physical attack)	1	2	3	4	5
Robbery	1	2	3	4	5
Extortion (threatened use of force)	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE OF STAFF SURVEY

STAFF SURVEY

The questions in this survey ask for two different types of answers. Questions 1 through 4 ask you to circle the appropriate letter in response to each question. In questions 5 through 7 you are asked to provide a rating on a scale of 1 to 5 by circling the appropriate number.

1. During the past year, did anyone take money or things directly from you at school, using force, weapons, or threats?

    a. Yes

    b. No

2. During the past year, did anyone steal from your desk or other place at school?

    a. Yes

    b. No

    c. No opinion

3. Did anyone physically attack you at school during the last six months?

    a. Yes

    b. No

    c. No opinion

4. Do you think drugs are sold at our school?

    a. Yes

    b. No

    c. No opinion

5. What percentage of your student, do you think, is involved in a gang?

a. Zero

b. Less than 5 percent

c. Between 5 and 10 percent

d. Between 10 and 20 percent

e. Greater than 20 percent

6. On a scale of 1 to 5 - 1 being little fear and 5 being significant fear- please rate the level of fear regarding the incidents that could occur at our school by circling the appropriate number from 1 to 5.

Shooting/stabbing	1	2	3	4	5
Rape	1	2	3	4	5
Other sex offenses	1	2	3	4	5
Assault (physical attack)	1	2	3	4	5
Robbery	1	2	3	4	5
Extortion	1	2	3	4	5

7. On a scale of 1 to 5 -1 being little fear and 5 being significant fear- please rate your fear of the following groups committing a crime against you by circling the appropriate from 1 to 5.

Students	1	2	3	4	5
Non-school personnel	1	2	3	4	5
Gangs	1	2	3	4	5

8. On a scale of 1 to 5-1 being very safe and 5 being not safe at all-please rate the overall safety of our school by circling the appropriate number from 1 to 5.

<div align="center">

1   2   3   4   5

</div>

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE OF PARENT SURVEY

PARENT SURVEY

Answers to the following questions will help us make the school safer for everyone and will remain confidential.

1. During the past year, did anyone take money or things from your child at school, using force, weapons, or threats?

      a. Yes

      b. No

2. During the past year, did anyone steal from your child's desk, locker, or other place at school?

      a. Yes

      b. No

3. Was your child bullied at school?

      a. Yes

      b. No

4. Did anyone physically attack your child at school during the past year?

      a. Yes

      b. No

5. If your child was physically attacked do you think it was racially or ethnically motivated?

      a. Yes

      b. No

      c. No opinion

6. Do you fear for your child's safety at school?

   a. Yes

   b. No

   c. No opinion

7. Did your child stay home during the past year because they were afraid that another student would harm them?

   a. Yes

   b. No

   c. No opinion

8. Do you think drugs are being sold at our school?

   a. Yes

   b. No

   c. No opinion

9. During the last school year, do you think weapons have been carried to school by students?

   a. Yes

   b. No

   c. No opinion

10. Do you think carrying a weapon to school makes students feel safer?

    a. Yes

    b. No

11. Is your child a member of a gang?

    a. Yes   b. No