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Effective discipline and contingency management systems in an urban junior high/middle school with an emphasis on developmental needs of young adolescents.

Cynthia D. McMullen  
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# FIVE COLLEGE DEPOSITORY

EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINE AND CONTINGENCY MANAGEMENT  
SYSTEMS IN AN URBAN JUNIOR HIGH/MIDDLE SCHOOL WITH AN  
EMPHASIS ON DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS OF YOUNG ADOLESCENTS

A Dissertation Presented

By

CYNTHIA MASSINGILL MCMULLEN

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

February 1985

Education

Cynthia Massingill McMullen



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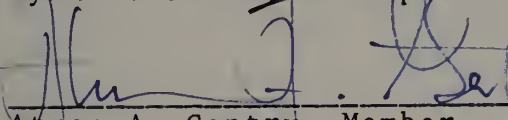
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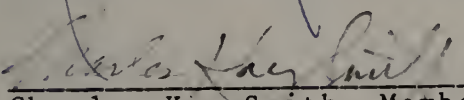
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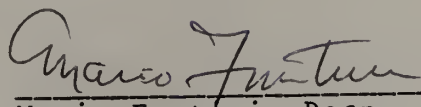
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D E D I C A T I O N

To Ed, Bryan, and Meredith who gave me inspiration

## A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

I am grateful to many who helped make this possible:

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Effective Discipline and Contingency Management  
Systems in an Urban Junior High/Middle School with an  
Emphasis on Developmental Needs of Young Adolescents

(February 1985)

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ABSTRACT

This study of discipline in an urban middle school focused on the nature and patterns of problems that existed in that setting in order to suggest possible systemic improvements. The study considered nine questions: (1) What constitutes a creative learning environment for poor, urban, middle school children? (2) What developmental characteristics should be considered in their discipline? (3) What kinds of discipline problems occur most frequently? (4) Are some students referred more frequently than others? (5) Do some teachers refer students more often than others? (6) Are there some days or periods during which more referrals are made?



(7) Are there some places where discipline problems are more likely to originate? (8) What action is most often taken by the assistant principal? (9) What relationships exist among the above questions?

The study examined 539 discipline referrals, grouped into categories according to the nature of the offense. The data disclosed that the greatest discipline problems were truancy from and tardiness to classes, followed by habitually disturbing a class.

Teachers referred boys more often than girls and seventh graders more often than eighth graders. Special needs students were referred disproportionately high. Inexperienced teachers made the greatest number of referrals.

The number of referrals received on various days of the week was consistent, however, problems were more likely to be reported after 11:00 A.M. than before. With the exception of class cuts, most problems originated in the classroom. The most frequent administrative responses were: overnight suspensions, assigning demerits, and communicating with parents.

Discipline problems often stem from ordinary school behaviors. Students need an environment that is learner-centered, flexible, dynamic, exploratory, organized, caring, and disciplined. Because serious discipline problems emanate primarily from students with poor self-concepts, improving students' self-images is a major goal in reducing problems. Additionally, research supports: (1) training teachers in establishing creative learning environments, particularly for seventh grade boys and special needs students; (2) building supportive relationships and creating schools within schools; (3) revising discipline codes limiting violations requiring suspension; (4) exploring programs to combat truancy and tardiness; (5) redefining proper responses to problems to include counseling and behavior contracts; (6) creating in-school suspension programs; (7) planning individual programs for repeaters; (8) involving parents.

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## C H A P T E R I

### SCHOOL DISCIPLINE AS A PUBLIC ISSUE

#### Introduction

Statement of Problem. In 11 of the last 12 annual Gallup surveys of attitudes toward public education, the public has perceived discipline as the most important problem facing schools today. Not surprisingly, school personnel share this perception, as evidenced by a tremendous volume of literature on the subject, the responses to teacher polls, and the results of studies of discipline in public schools across the nation.

Despite wide discrepancies and different concepts concerning both what constitutes a disciplinary problem and what corrective techniques are appropriate, the consensus is that something must be done. When the issue of discipline is not properly addressed, the effect on students, teachers, and the climate of the school is terribly destructive. The National Institute of Education's study on safe and violent schools (1978) cited a variety of problems. In general, it focused on violence and disruptive behavior; more specifically, it focused on acts such as assault on other students,



stealing, destruction of property, class cutting, persistent or excessive truancy, tardiness to classes and school, use of profanity, insubordination, smoking, drug use, threatening and intimidating, and fighting.

Because school discipline is such a critical and pervasive issue, sporadic, independent action must be supplanted with concentrated, cooperative efforts. Educational personnel and researchers must develop more effective methods of dealing with the issue. Models of action and management must be examined which integrate the most effective components for the circumstances of a specific school.

First, educators should determine the nature of major discipline problems in a given school. The circumstances surrounding the problems must be analyzed and conclusions drawn about their underlying causes. Finally, some ways of decreasing the problems should be examined. Such an inquiry will be the focus of this study.

Purpose. This study will analyze discipline in an urban middle school setting; it will focus on the nature and patterns of problems that occur. To provide a frame for examining the subject on a local level, the researcher will, in a broad scope, review

effective approaches for maintaining discipline in the classroom. Most of these can be categorized under three major headings: (1) techniques of modifying behavior shaped by principles of positive and negative reinforcement, (2) strategies that supersede punishment which rest on a human relations perspective, emphasizing communication, democratic processes, and personal interaction in the classroom, and (3) instructional practices and interaction patterns among students and teachers that prevent or decrease discipline problems. The researcher will also review effective approaches for dealing with discipline from an administrative perspective. She will focus on administrative responses which provide alternatives to traditional suspensions.

Scope. The sample for the study will be drawn from the student population of Worcester East Middle School, an urban multi-ethnic school in Worcester, Massachusetts. The sample will consist of 285 seventh, eighth, and ninth grade students selected on the basis of teacher referrals to the assistant principal for disciplinary action. All referrals occurred during the first quarter of the 1978-79 and the 1979-80 school

years.

The data will be analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The researcher will examine findings and report patterns that exist among students and teachers. Statistical procedures will be employed to determine if significant relationships exist between selected demographic information and selected variables.

The procedures to be followed will begin with the investigator logging and compiling the Discipline Referral Cards for the time periods indicated. The cards will be organized and analyzed in terms of the nature of the problem, the circumstances (when and where the problem occurred), and the subjects (the individuals involved). The researcher will develop profiles of the students who were referred and of the teachers referring them. Finally, the researcher will examine the action taken by the assistant principal in resolving or dealing with the problem.

Overview. The first chapter will introduce the subject and provide an overview of the dissertation. It will present a rationale for examining classroom discipline and management. Finally, it will describe

the setting in which the study was conducted.

Chapter II will present a review of related literature. The review will concentrate on the nature of schools and self-concept as they relate to discipline. Effective classroom strategies and approaches, as well as practical suggestions for improving management will also be examined. A third area of the review will deal with creative administrative programs and responses for dealing with discipline. The review will encompass a broad scope of concepts, studies, programs, models, and designs.

Chapter III will describe the methodology employed in conducting the study. The researcher will review the major research questions. She will describe the research population. She will also describe the instrument used to collect the data and the data collection techniques employed. The researcher will identify the variables measured and review the procedures applied in processing the data. The chapter will conclude with an operational statement regarding the research.

The findings of the study will be reported in Chapter IV. The presentation and analyses of the data

will include an examination of the distributional characteristics of individual variables. The researcher will investigate relationships among variables and provide crosstabulation analyses with accompanying tables.

Chapter V will contain a brief summary of previous chapters and present some generalizations regarding the findings of the data. The researcher will draw conclusions and propose specific responses that are achievable and practical within the context of urban middle schools with characteristics like those of Worcester East Middle.

#### Rationale for Examining Classroom Discipline and Management

The issue of school discipline is a complex subject. For more than a decade it has been a concern of parents, students, teachers, and administrators on a national scale. When this writer assumed the position of assistant principal at an urban middle school, school discipline no longer remained a distant, national concern; instead, it became a daily reality that produced an intimate and profound awareness of both its scope and complexity.

Handling discipline referrals not only consumed a disproportionate amount of time and energy among the various duties of the assistant principal, but frequently, the efforts were piecemeal and frustrating. For everyone involved, decrease of productive school time and poor morale were apparent. Typically, confrontations occurred between teachers and students that led to teacher complaints which translated into, "I want that kid out of my class!" The pattern repeated itself: managing, controlling, and punishing.

The frustration associated with handling the discipline referrals occurred, in part, because of the writer's awareness that underlying the discipline referrals were serious, multi-dimensional problems which probably required serious, multi-dimensional solutions. Most of the disciplinary actions taken were, in fact, responses not to the problems themselves but rather to the symptoms. The prerequisite to finding serious solutions to problems generally entails understanding the problem and its scope; thus, the most logical beginning seemed to be to identify the kinds of discipline problems that were occurring and to analyze systematically their nature and the

circumstances surrounding them.

The most basic question to be dealt with concerned the reasons for student misbehavior. Both the literature and the writer's personal experiences strongly suggest that individual reasons for misconduct are often interconnected. In general, the reasons for student misconduct fall into three categories. The problems may be community related, emotionally based, or related to the educational environment itself. Your Schools (January 1976) catalogued an extensive list of the most frequent causes of discipline problems. They are:

1. The principal or other head administrator who provides poor leadership to a school
2. Children with specific learning problems who are going unattended or untreated by the school
3. Poor school-community relations which evidence little effort being made to communicate with parents and to involve them in school affairs
4. An outmoded or ineffective curriculum which fails to provide for the educational interests and needs of all types of students
5. Extremely large schools where students feel alienated and anonymous
6. Little effort by the school to recognize, respect, and educate the student body about the various cultural and class orientations to which different groups of students within the school belong
7. Teachers who fail to recognize, understand, and respond to the emotional needs of various students

8. The lack of standards and expectations which are consistently and equitably communicated and applied
9. The presence and manifestation, overt or subtle, of racism or prejudiced attitudes
10. Students whose behavior stems from real problems, either at home or in the community, which are unknown or unattended by the school and community agencies
11. Actions and attitudes on the part of teachers and administrators who believe some students are more deserving of educational opportunities than are others.<sup>1</sup>

Concentrating on aspects of the educational environment, Johnson (1979) noted four basic causes of classroom disruption: (1) ineffective leadership, (2) poor teacher organization, (3) a lack of basic operational principles, and (4) failure to recognize characteristics of potentially disruptive problems.

Addressing the issue from the student perspective, Kindsvatter (1978) identified three major sources of student misbehavior: (1) students' chronic and possibly serious emotional and adjustment problems, (2) students' negative opinion of the teacher or the classroom activities, and (3) the tendency of young persons to engage in unpremeditated, capricious, temporarily disruptive behavior.

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<sup>1</sup>"A Guide to Community Leadership on the Discipline Suspension Issue," Your Schools 8 (January 1976): 1-10.



The complexity of the discipline issue is undeniable. Indeed, one might ask, "Are there any simple solutions to the discipline problems?" There are those who answer affirmatively; they believe the answer lies in enforcement of stricter discipline. They suggest harsher rules, detention centers, and more severe punishment. Often suspension is considered a feasible solution; certainly it is the most immediately available administrative response to seriously disruptive behavior.

Depending upon one's philosophical perspective and dispositions, suspension may appear to be the most logical solution to discipline problems. Consider that with the "undesirable elements" absent from the classroom, teachers who want to teach can now teach, and children who want to learn can now learn. Administrators harried with students waiting outside their offices for discipline might undertake other responsibilities.

This approach, however, assumes that all is well with the school, with its organizational structure and climate, and with its teachers. In essence, it misplaces responsibility and conveys the notion

that children who have not learned to conform to the school are responsible for their failure. The writer's view is that schools must share responsibility and respond to children's needs rather than require children to respond to the school's needs.

Because of its scope and the consequences of its use, suspension, in and of itself, has become a problem. First, a brief analysis of the consequences of suspension puts the issue in perspective. From the student's perspective, a suspension conveys a message of personal rejection which leads to added frustration. Students who are repeatedly suspended are labelled troublemakers and are referred for discipline more quickly than other students. Suspensions exacerbate pre-existing academic problems and may often propel students to dropout.

From the classroom teacher's perspective, the suspended student predictably returns in one to five days harboring more intense feelings of hostility, anger, and resentment. Teachers must also spend additional time repeating and reviewing work completed during the student's absence.

From the administrator's perspective, excessive

time is required for hearings, elaborate record keeping, letters, meetings, and conferences. Even if one is predisposed to blame or punish students who have not yet learned to conform, these added dimensions, coupled with the simple ineffectiveness of suspension, signify the decreasing efficiency of exercising this disciplinary option. Moreover, it seems inherently illogical to suspend students for such things as class cutting, tardiness, and truancy. Clearly, suspension is not a solution. In fact, wholesale suspensions are a symptom of disorder, not a cure for it.

Given that suspension is usually a poor and ineffective response to a discipline problem, the implication is clear that its use as a disciplinary measure must be judicious and employed only in circumstances that represent a serious breach of conduct.

Thus, to return to the original question, "Are there indeed simple solutions to the discipline problem?" the answer is an obvious one. Simplistic solutions for complex problems do not exist. The solutions are as complex as the problems and must

include strategies that focus on a number of elements.

Any serious discussion of discipline in urban middle schools must address, in a general sense, and among other issues, a theoretical framework; secondly, it must assess the nature of schools in relation to realistic expectations of adolescents; and finally, it must emphasize the creation of better learning environments. Such issues will provide a focus for a subsequent section in the dissertation.

#### A Description of Worcester East Middle School

Worcester, Massachusetts provides the setting for the study. It is the central city of an urbanized area with a population of more than 172,000. Politically, it is governed by an elected nine member, non-partisan City Council. Educational policy is set by a six member elected School Committee.

The pattern of Worcester's physical development is typical of older industrial cities. Its central business district is surrounded by high density residential structures typified by "three deckers." Historically, Worcester developed as a highly diversified industrial city; its economic base has remained diversified with more than 800 area industrial firms

concentrating in the production of durable goods.

In the area of social services, the city provides a wide range of facilities and services. They are delivered through a complex network of over 350 agencies and organizations.

Education is prominent in Worcester where ten major institutions of higher learning exist. In addition to a separate Vocational School, the city operates a 51 million dollar public school system which maintains four senior highs, five junior high/middle schools, and forty-eight elementary schools which serve approximately 23,000 students.

The Community. The study on discipline was conducted at Worcester East Middle School which is located in the Grafton Hill section of Worcester. Worcester East's students reside mainly in the immediate neighborhood within walking distance. In 1979, however, some travelled across the city from up to five miles away. Because Grafton Hill is the primary identifiable neighborhood for the student body, a descriptive analysis of that area is included to provide a framework for the study.

The Grafton Hill community is located on the east side of the city. Historically, a predominance of Irish immigrant families settled the area and it developed as a factory and blue-collar neighborhood. Its residents typically valued home ownership and consequently bought, lived in, and maintained homes from one generation to the next. The area's main tract of housing is dominated by towering "three decker" units in close proximity to a limited number of single family residences which line nearby side streets.

Currently, shifting patterns are occurring in the population of Grafton Hill as more low income families move into the neighborhood. Owner-occupied houses are decreasing in number and mobility in the neighborhood has been increasing. This is, of course, characteristic of inner city neighborhoods. At the same time, the power base of the neighborhood is declining and noticeable physical changes are occurring. These are evidenced by sprawling shopping centers and huge apartment complexes.

One indicator of the economic changes taking place in the neighborhood is the number of free lunches

provided to students. For example, during the 1979-80 school year, among a student population of 1100, 600 students at Worcester East qualified for and received free lunches in a program which determined eligibility based on a family of four earning a maximum yearly income of \$10,250. In 1975-76, 450 students among a 1300 student population were eligible.

The educational levels of parents of students at Worcester East Middle are relatively consistent with those of similar neighborhoods: 2.9% have advanced degrees; 8.9% have bachelor's degrees; 4.1% have some college education; 8.1% have some formal education beyond high school other than college; 40.2% have completed high school; 22.8% have some high school; and 12.6% have completed elementary school.

The occupational levels of parents of the students encompass a wide range with clustering in certain areas. Among fathers, the areas representing the greatest percentages are skilled and semi-skilled; among mothers, housewife, clerical, and service occupations combine to represent more than 74%.

An analysis of the areas of employment and percentages of fathers and mothers respectively, in each area reveals the following: agricultural .57, .78; clerical 2.66, 11.81; at home .38, 52.13; managerial 12.17, 1.89; military .76, 0; professional 6.46, 4.25; semi-skilled 23.57, 5.93; service occupations 8.55, 10.08; skilled 23.76, 2.52; unskilled 10.46, 6.61; unemployed 8.36, 2.52; other areas 2.28, 1.42.

Ethnically and racially, the community is characterized as diverse. White, Irish families still comprise the largest single ethnic group along with smaller percentages of Polish, Italian, Lithuanian, and French. Minorities comprise a fairly small percentage of the total community. While accurate current statistics are unavailable, Spanish speaking and black families represent the largest minority groups in the neighborhood.

A description of the kinds of services that impact on the neighborhood includes a fairly wide range of programs, facilities, and agencies. While these facilities have no formal ties with Worcester East Middle, their services are available to students and their families.



Library facilities include the city's main building, two branch libraries, a bookmobile, and Clark University's Goddard Library. Recreational facilities and opportunities include the YMCA, YWCA, roller skating and ice skating arenas, girls' and boys' clubs, a disco club, gym facilities at two colleges, and four neighborhood centers at Friendly House, Prospect House, Main South Neighborhood, and Piedmont. Fifteen city parks are located in the area; organizations and programs focusing on dramatics, choral and instrumental music, and arts and crafts are accessible; at least twenty-three churches exist. A zoo and museums are in close proximity. Additionally, there are little league baseball groups, girl and boy scouts, 4-H clubs, and hockey clubs. Finally, there are various other city, church and privately organized activities.

The neighborhood centers cited earlier which provide recreation for adolescents also provide basic services such as referrals to other agencies; they focus on alcoholism, employment, welfare advocacy, food stamps, headstart, child care, and elderly nutrition. There are several agencies which provide

mental health family services such as Catholic Charities, Family Service Organization, Worcester Youth Guidance, and Worcester Vocational Adjustment Center.

Public and private hospitals and clinics are located throughout the area and offer services in the major health areas. Child care services are available through several sources and often include transportation, food, sleeping facilities, and medical service. Legal and consumer services are available through legal societies and paralegal groups. Major banking institutions in the city maintain branches in the area and are either in walking distance or easily accessible through the city's bus service.

Post high school educational institutions such as colleges, vocational, technical, nursing, and other specialized schools are all available to residents of the neighborhood, though access to many requires the use of mass transit or private transportation.

Measurement of the degree to which students and their families utilize the services or the quality of the service here described is difficult to assess. However, the range of programs, facilities, and services is varied.

The School. Worcester East Middle is a large urban inner city school. It was erected in 1924 as the city's first junior high school and initially operated under the name Worcester Junior High School. Its name was subsequently changed to Grafton Street Junior High and remained so until 1969 when it was closed for major rehabilitation. In 1971, with the completion of a two million dollar renovation project, the school reopened as Worcester East Middle School, the city's first middle school.

To describe the school within the context of student life, visualize a student's perspective. Imagine that you have just celebrated your twelfth birthday and it is the Wednesday after Labor Day. School bells ring, signalling the first day of school. Imagine entering along with 1,139 other students, a colossal, three-story brick, columned, fifty year old building. Imagine that you are coming from a one story grammar school with 350 students where you are known as "Johnny" and recognized by the principal and 12 of the 14 teachers. Especially imagine that their ability to identify you was unrelated to behavioral deviancy. Imagine that

you are coming from a school where teachers smiled and talked with you about your new puppy or hobby, where corridors displayed colorful pictures, book reports, and science projects, and where windows were decorated with holiday and seasonal hangings.

You suddenly encounter the shock of impersonal education; you feel that you are just a face in an assigned seat determined by alphabetical sequence. You are not sure what your teachers will expect of you or what you should expect of them. Corridors are lined with rows of dull gray lockers and there are so many rules to follow, you are not certain you will remember them all. Misbehavior, as best you can ascertain from opening remarks by administrators and teachers, is viewed as a moral transgression.

After spending 30 minutes with first your math and next your science teachers, you are experiencing anxiety attacks over tests and grades that are ten weeks away. More immediately, you must read and interpret something called a computerized schedule with eight different subjects that do not all meet on consecutive days or during both semesters. Bells go off and someone mentions "module 6"; you have

never heard the word "module". Finally, at 2:20 P.M. thirteen busses line up on the four sides of the school; you do not know which one goes to your neighborhood. You cannot remember the number in the window of the bus you took at 7 A.M. and you could not hear the announcements on the intercom at the end of the day. From the view of a twelve year old, this environment may be traumatic or exhilarating or both.

For a different and a more impersonal description of the school, its plant, and its facility, this writer offers the following details. Modern changes are incorporated into classic architecture in this three story brick structure. It evokes for most adults a nostalgic memory, but for many youngsters the overpowering physical structure may appear threatening. Its entrance is a six-column portico with massive iron doors leading to a foyer which contains marble floors and staircases and wall murals depicting early American classrooms. The original satin hardwood floors have been retained in corridors, while classrooms and offices are carpeted in subdued earth tones. Glass cases display students' work in the various subject areas. Although the plant is large,

it is compact and laid out in a fairly easy to follow sequential square-shaped pattern. It contains sixty classrooms or teaching areas and many small conference rooms, offices, and storage areas. Classrooms are grouped for teamed instruction with adjoining teacher work areas.

The facility also includes a library media center with a collection of over 20,000 printed volumes, audio-visual equipment, study carrels, and non-print materials. The bright, muraled student cafeteria accomodates 250 pupils. The gymnasium is equipped with work areas, offices, shower and locker areas, laundry facilities and a special weight room. An auditorium contains a balcony and has seating capacity of 825. An administrative office suite is comprised of individual offices for a principal and two assistants, clerical areas, lavatories, visitors' waiting area and a conference room. There is a lounge and cafeteria for teachers. A guidance suite provides individual offices for counselors, clerical space and a library/conference room. The health suite contains three offices and the dental clinic serves students from nearby elementary schools. Separate industrial arts

and home economics areas, a darkroom, and a greenhouse on the roof complete the school plant.

In 1979-80 over 1100 students were enrolled at Worcester East Middle in the seventh, eighth and ninth grades. A profile of those attending during that year indicates that seventh graders comprised the largest group with 433 students. In the eighth and ninth grades there were 409 and 185 students, respectively. Another 85 students were identified as special needs. A balance of boys and girls in the regular program existed with boys totaling 536 and girls 491. The average age was 13 years.

Pupils entered as seventh graders from eleven different feeder schools: New Ludlow, Gates Lane, Freeland Street, Canterbury, Woodland Street, Downing Street, Columbus Park, Chandler Community, Union Hill, Rice Square, Roosevelt, and Grafton Street Elementary. Approximately 31% of the students walked to school, slightly more than 48% were transported by bus, and 21% were transported by parents. The ethnic and racial composition of the student population was diverse. Approximately 13% were minority students; ethnic groups were representative of the community.

Taken as a whole, the reading levels of the student population at Worcester East Middle reflected deficiencies with no significant differences among boys and girls. According to 1979 scores on the Stanford Diagnostic and the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, 44.8% of all girls and 43.9% of all boys read at grade level or above; 40.9% of girls and 41% of boys read at one to three years below grade level; and 14.1% of girls and 14.9% of boys read four or more years below grade level. More recent testing, however, has revealed improvement in the reading ability of students. This trend is significant in light of the shifts in population in the neighborhood.

The dropout rate for students at Worcester East Middle was low at .46%, a condition attributable primarily to compulsory attendance laws. The percentage of students transferring out during the school year was considerably higher with over 19% moving to another school in the city or to another school district. Absenteeism and habitual truancy prevailed as perennially unresolved problems.

The written philosophy of Worcester East Middle encompassed the needs of the whole child and, in principle,



considered developmental patterns of the middle school child and their inner city environment. There was an emphasis on instruction in basic skills and the development of life skills with regard to such fundamental qualities as self-reliance, creativity, self-motivation and self-discipline. The administration supported a basic assumption that every child could learn and that nothing we teach is too difficult to learn, given appropriate instruction. The philosophy recognized that the single most important factor affecting a person's academic success or failure had to do with the notion of how s/he perceives her/himself. High expectations, therefore, were fundamental to the program and experiences. In reality, however, not all teachers enthusiastically supported this philosophy.

The school was organized for team teaching for seventh and eighth grade students. Its basic aim was to provide instruction in mathematics, science, English, social studies, and reading through an interdisciplinary team approach and in a more personalized manner. Students spent half the day

in teams. Each student elected a fifth major in foreign languages, home economics, or industrial arts and was assigned developmental or remedial reading, physical education, and subjects from the enrichment areas. There were four programs which addressed needs characteristic of low income students. ORB was a Title I program for students reading two or more years below grade level. PACE, a program for potential dropouts, stressed social interaction and provided support, academic tutoring, alternative learning experiences, and instruction in enrichments. English as a Second Language facilitated gradual intergration of non-English speaking students into the regular program. Finally, the special needs program focused on individualized learning in academic instruction and basic survival skills.

The ninth grade curriculum resembled the traditional high school design where students were scheduled for individual classes and acquired units necessary for completing a high school diploma. In addition, the curriculum emphasized basic skills through required short, intensive, practice periods

in mathematics, reading, writing, typing, and vocabulary skills centers.

Student services at Worcester East Middle encompassed areas of guidance, health, special education, transportation and food. Four full-time guidance counselors focused on intellectual, psychological, and emotional growth in students. This was done through individual and group counseling, team conferences, parent conferences, testing, and interaction with social agencies, school administrators, and child study personnel.

Health services included a health clinic staffed by a full-time nurse and two part-time doctors; students received care in emergency injury and illness, identification of communicable diseases, referrals, hearing and vision testing, complete physical examinations, and immunizations. Part-time dentists and two full-time hygienists performed routine dentistry and offered cleanings and flouride treatment.

Hot lunches were served daily. At least 600 students received free lunches with many others receiving a reduced rate because of family income level.

Buses provided transportation for students who lived outside the two mile limit. Special mini-buses transported some handicapped students.

Students participated in recreational activities through clubs, intramurals, interscholastic athletics, music, drama, and special seasonal activities. Scheduled as part of the regular school day, the mini-course program was held one hour per week for 10 weeks in the spring. All activities were sponsored and supervised by teachers. Among approximately forty different activities, sports were the most popular choices. A list of typical offerings would include the following categories: (1) arts and crafts (wood and metals refinishing, embroidery, animation art typing, doll making, model cars, audio-visual productions, puppetry, needlepoint, multi-cultural crafts, experimental wood instruments, crocheting, felt craft, making artificial flowers, jewelry design, rock band); (2) sports (sailing, backgammon, basketball, ping pong, dancing, weight training, gymnastics, volleyball, sports corner, slimnastics and street hockey); (3) games (chess, cribbage, checkers, monopoly, and bridge); (4) academic clubs and activities (Spanish,

French, multiplying math skills, word theatre, solar energy, and planetarium construction); (5) general entertainment (movie showcase); and (6) drama. More than half the faculty and four-fifths of the students participated in the program. A survey of the other fifth of students revealed that most had attempted to sign up for activities over-subscribed. Their expressed preferences, however, overwhelmingly involved sports. Only 12 students said they preferred a study hall.

For ongoing activities which required greater and more sustained commitment, students chose chorus, band, orchestra, cheerleading, library aide, greenhouse, and interscholastic boys varsity and touch football, boys and girls basketball, and boys baseball. Interscholastic activities occurred after school and transportation was provided for participants. Because competition was an issue, however, only the most talented were selected and the numbers participating were limited.

The intramural program was held in three phases and involved a significant portion of students. In the fall, the activities were touch football, whiffle ball,

and volleyball; winter activities included basketball, volleyball, ping pong, and weight room; spring activities included girls softball and boys baseball. In addition to these activities, students participated in organizations such as student council and the National Junior Honor Society.

Having described the Worcester East school community, it is also pertinent to cite the policy of the Worcester Public School system as a whole with regard to suspension and discipline. The Code of Conduct (See Appendix B) for all students addresses general violations which are considered serious and may result in a suspension. They are: disruption of school; damage or destruction of school or private property; physical or verbal assault on a school employee, student, or non-employee; possession or use of weapons, dangerous instruments, narcotics, alcoholic beverages or stimulants; sounding false alarms; truancy; and repeated school violations.

At Worcester East Middle, a set of rules which detailed violations and the penalties they incurred was printed and distributed to all students in the beginning of the school year. Developed by a committee

of teachers, the rules represented the philosophies of a large portion of the teaching staff. The list was specific and addressed scores of violations such as class cuts, smoking, leaving class without permission, fighting, threatening another student, refusing to dress for gym, visiting lavatory or corridor without permission, failure to keep a detention, running or yelling in corridors, disturbing a class, visiting lockers between classes, verbally and physically assaulting someone, throwing food in the cafeteria, using obscene language in a classroom, displaying insolence, insubordination, disturbing a school assembly, using abusive language to a school employee, throwing ice or dangerous objects, chronic tardiness to class, unexcused tardiness to school, and defacing or destroying school property (See Appendix C).

The established procedures for dealing with infractions of these rules involved demerits (awarding points which accumulated and eventually resulted in a suspension), conduct letters, phone calls to parents, teacher-pupil conferences, parent conferences, referrals to child study, guidance counselor, or

outside agency, work duty, temporary loss of cafeteria privileges, restitution, and suspension from school.

The stated philosophy of discipline at Worcester East addressed the school's responsibility to provide a safe and stable environment, and to help students understand rights and duties, privileges and responsibilities, wants and needs. Teachers were reminded that classroom behavior is often symptomatic of community, economic, social, and emotional problems, as well as elements of the educational environment itself. The administration stressed the importance of identifying and addressing underlying causes of behavior problems. In theory, then, each classroom teacher set appropriate behavior standards for her/his class based on these issues and on an awareness of adolescent development and the middle school philosophy.

In practice, however, the standards set were frequently unrealistic and helped to create greater conflict. In the same context, teachers' handling of student conflict often did not reflect an understanding of or commitment to the stated philosophy.



It is obvious that school climate is pertinent to this study. In 1979, Teacher Corps, a federally funded joint project of the University of Massachusetts' School of Education and the Worcester Public Schools, began at Worcester East Middle. Teacher Corps set goals which involved improving basic skills, multicultural education, greater community participation, and staff development. Later, Teacher Corps outlined specific objectives for improving school climate. First, they advised improving communication, cooperation and mutual support between parent/community and school staff in order to enhance responsiveness to diverse student needs. Secondly, they suggested improving instructional competencies in specific areas. The areas were basic skills, bilingual education, multicultural education, individualization and team teaching. These improvements in instructional competencies were to be achieved through flexible, appropriate, inservice and academic offerings.

In its continuing effort to assess and improve school climate, Teacher Corps administered a questionnaire to the entire student population on their perceptions about what things should happen

in the school and what things really do happen (See Appendix D). The results revealed that a majority of students chose "often" and "sometimes" as the categories which most accurately described what should and what does happen; there were no significant discrepancies between the two. Some of the indicators of school climate measured involved student-teacher relations, students' knowledge of rules, teacher commitment (innovative teaching), race relations, students' rights, and fairness. On student discipline items, students said the rules were almost always clear, and they received basic students' rights.

In 1979, Teacher Corps conducted a smaller survey on the importance of meeting specific social, emotional, physical and academic needs (See Appendix E). Students expressed attitudes in terms of the degree of importance placed on meeting these needs. The sample included 85 seventh, 69 eighth, and 92 ninth graders.

The overall conclusions derived were that in terms of social needs, at least 80% of the students regarded it important to have a good relationship with their mother, father, and family members; to have friends; to be grown up; to have clean clothes; and to feel good about themselves. Emotionally, at least 80%

thought it was important to be honest, to be respectful, to expect fairness, and to show self-control. Physically, at least 80% felt it was important to have a balanced diet, to eat properly, to be healthy, and to be able to protect oneself. Academically, at least 80% deemed it important to be able to read, to follow directions, and to know how to study.

Most of the items in the survey did not specifically relate to discipline. Moreover, had such items been included, no definitive conclusions could likely be drawn since serious discipline issues, admittedly, at a given point, affect mainly a small segment of the population. However, the profile has relevance as it addressed a general question about what needs were considered important among a representative sample. Clearly, some items addressed affective dimensions of school life and school climate. The findings suggested that students valued friendships, high self-esteem, fairness, and self-control. Teachers can use this information to motivate students by stressing experiences that are rewarding. This suggests that peer group interaction, activities nurturing self-esteem, a prevailing sense of fairness, and emphasis on individual responsibility can all serve to motivate students.

A profile of the staff at Worcester East Middle revealed that it was composed of a large percentage of young teachers. Sixty-four of the ninety-four regular instructional staff were forty years old or under. This younger than average staff was explicable due to the initial self-selection process when the school opened as a middle school.

Men outnumbered women by 53 to 41. The distribution of their teaching experience showed that more than three-fourths (70) had taught less than fifteen years. An equally significant percentage had completed graduate degrees.

The ethnic-racial composition of the faculty lacked diversity and did not reflect the population it served. In a school with a student population of which minorities comprised approximately 13%, minorities represented 6.4% of the professional staff. Among the six minorities, three were black, two were Hispanic, and one was Greek; the last three were bilingual transitional teachers. Thus, they interacted exclusively with non-English speaking and very limited English speaking students.

In general, the staff focused on students' behavior and fell into a "blaming the victim" syndrome. Typically, teachers cited students' lack of motivation, respect, and interest as valid explanations for their failure. Few acknowledged a need to expand and vary their own motivation techniques to accommodate the diverse population.

Teachers ranged from over-empathetic, to caring, to indifferent, to cruelly insensitive. Some were rigorous. Some were more flexible but unskilled in management techniques. Some were imaginative and enterprising. Some were disillusioned and complained continually about the custodial functions and paperwork connected with teaching. Some were authoritarian and demanded passivity in students. Some did not know how to set limits. Some believed that repetition and rote memory were the ideal methods of learning for everyone. Some valued inquiry, problem solving, and exploring significance. Some began their classes in September with the assumption that all children could learn. Others began with the assumption that some could not.

In conclusion, Worcester East Middle was a school in which the residual effects of poverty, diverse cultures, and ethnic differences were apparent. There, students were striving to meet basic needs that exceeded academic requirements. They were striving to develop an identity which Glasser (1969) defined as the belief that we are someone in distinction to others, and that the someone is important and worthwhile.

For most children, there are two primary places from which they may derive their identity. These places are the home and the school. The school is second only to the family as a primary socializing institution. From a sociological point of view, the school is primarily geared to maintaining and reinforcing the social-economic structure of our society. Leacock (1969) noted that schools prepare children to fit rungs on the occupational ladder more or less equivalent to those occupied by their parents. Schools train and select children for higher education and, hence, status. So while the school ideally should be a place where students gain healthy

identities, in too many instances, a hierachical screening precludes a healthy identity for a majority of students whose parents predominately come from poor working class backgrounds. This theoretical framework has relevance for the situation at Worcester East Middle.

First, the neighborhood is one in which old family customs prevailed. While younger families recognized differences, both these parents and students saw a reason to be socialized. Consequently, the parents expected students to conform and obey rules, no matter how oppressive they were. Parents were concerned with social needs rather than self-worth. Therefore, students who chose not to conform received little reinforcement from parents.

Secondly, as is the case in most traditional schools, Worcester East encouraged mindless conformity to school rules and considered the conforming child "responsible." This kind of conformity, however, does not necessarily represent responsible behavior. Responsibility is learned by evaluating a situation and then choosing a path that one thinks will be more

helpful to her/himself and to others (Glasser, 1969).  
When young people experience this responsible  
decision making at an early age, they can and do  
become responsible and socially aware. It is then  
that the need for rules and punishment diminishes  
and a healthy school climate--one which not only  
tolerates differences but also provides for them--  
prevails.



## C H A P T E R   I I

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter II summarizes a survey of literature completed in conjunction with this study. The search focused on three general areas: (1) the nature of schools and self-concept; (2) effective classroom strategies and approaches which improve classroom management and discipline; and (3) responsive administrative programs which enhance discipline and school climate.

The first section will discuss school conditions and self-concept as they relate to discipline. Next, the writer will review effective classroom strategies focusing on specific teacher behavior. This section will also examine methods of fostering individual responsibility in students. The review will conclude with a section on the principal's leadership, alternatives to suspension, and community group involvement in reducing discipline problems.

## The Nature of Schools and Self-Concept

Discipline problems are often rooted in the nature of schools since certain conditions create and exacerbate discipline problems. The consensus among researchers is that irrelevant curriculum, poor teacher management skills, and weak administrative leadership clearly contribute to discipline problems.<sup>2</sup>

Generally, school administrators and teachers use two basic approaches in solving discipline problems and combatting vandalism and violence in schools: (1) force and (2) improvement of school climate.<sup>3</sup> The "force"

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<sup>2</sup>Eleanor Leacock, Teaching and Learning in City Schools (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1969); William Glasser, Schools Without Failure (New York: Harper and Row, 1969); Laurel N. Tanner, Classroom Discipline for Effective Teaching and Learning (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1978); Charles Silberman, Crisis in the Classroom (New York: Random House, 1970); Eugene Howard, School Discipline Desk Book (West Nyack, New York: Parker Publishing Company, Inc., 1978); Alfred S. Alschuler, School Discipline: A Socially Literate Solution (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1980); Henry Lufner, "Debating with Untested Assumptions: The Need to Understand School Discipline," Education and Urban Society 11 (August 1979): 450-464; David H. Moyer, "Discipline in the Urban Middle School: A Rehabilitative Process," NASSP Bulletin 62 (March 1978): 68-74.

<sup>3</sup>William Maynard, "Basic Approaches to Violence and Vandalism," Phi Delta Kappan 59 (January 1978): 359-60.

schools are highly structured schools with strictly enforced rules. The primary punishment for dissidents or nonconformists is suspension. Characteristically, these schools have detailed dress codes, attendance policies, and behavior policies. Predictably, they have lower than average absenteeism and often higher than average achievement levels. Admittedly, these goals are fairly easy to achieve once students who dislike school are eliminated.

Curriculum changes and school rules in "force" schools are developed exclusively by the administration. Among both staff and students, feelings of distrust, animosity, and frustration prevail and are often directed toward the most immediate authority figure. Teachers and administrators typically contribute to student discipline problems for a variety of reasons. They tend to talk more than listen. They force students to meet the needs of the school rather than requiring the school to meet the needs of the students. In addition, they see students not as individuals but as groups, lock students into a particular category of ability or aptitude, maintain irrelevant curricula, and establish a level of expectations that is

inappropriate.

Conversely, the approach which stresses the improvement of the school climate emphasizes critical elements that are diametrically opposed to the force model. This climate model emphasizes trust, open and honest communication, educational quality and individual self-worth, shared leadership, high involvement of staff and students, and skills acquisition.

Edmonds, a proponent of the improvement of school climate concept, believes that children respond to unstimulating learning experiences predictably. He states that they are either apathetic, disruptive, or absent.<sup>4</sup>

Numerous articles appear in the literature on the subject of self-concept as it relates to discipline. Glasser (1969) and Canfield and Wells (1976) view serious discipline problems as emanating from students who usually resent schools and have poor self-images.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Ronald Edmonds, "Effective Schools for the Urban Poor," Educational Leadership (October 1979): 15-23.

<sup>5</sup>Glasser, pp. 25-26; Jack Canfield and Harold C. Wells, 100 Ways to Enhance Self-Concept in the Classroom (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1976), pp. 6-7.

Overman's key to managing student behavior is enhancing a student's self-concept through effective communication skills.<sup>6</sup> He analyzes four well-known models of communication: Transactional Analysis, Teacher Effectiveness Training, Reality Therapy, and Logical Consequences. He also identifies common elements and skills which are all necessary for effective management of student behavior. These are confronting misbehavior rather than ignoring it, being nonjudgmental, encouraging student participation in problem-solving, and obtaining a commitment for improved behavior.

One middle school principal attacks discipline problems through a program which also emphasizes positive self-image in students.<sup>7</sup> One component of her program involves staff development; however, the main thrust is directly related to students. They are given recognition through happygrams and a principal's Honor Board. The principal also utilizes monthly

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<sup>6</sup>William Overman, "Effective Communication: The Key to Student Management," NASSP Bulletin 63 (September 1979): 34-39.

<sup>7</sup>"Smoke! Smoke! Smoke!" Creative Discipline 1 (August 1977): 1-2.

contracts with students as well as small group work. Violations of rules have automatic consequences. For example, tardiness to class by five minutes results either in staying ten minutes after school or forfeiting recess. She emphasizes a warm atmosphere and active parent involvement in the school through a parent center. Teachers handle problems through behavior modification or corrective measures; concomitantly, the principal counsels parents and establishes child study teams.

Frey's and Young's approach to dealing with discipline is based on Glasser's psychological needs of loving and being loved and having self-worth.<sup>8</sup> They suggest that students' basic psychological needs are best met in an effective organizational setting in which the principal demonstrates by his or her behavior that the administration is caring, understanding, concerned with establishing student identity, and interested in providing for positive recognition. The authors provide scores of simple and obvious ideas to accomplish these goals. These include greeting

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<sup>8</sup>Diane Frey and Joseph A. Young, "Self-Concept Continuum for Understanding Student Behavior," NASSP Bulletin 63 (September 1979): 27-33.

students by name, giving students the opportunity to air their views or share hidden agendas, having lower ability students tutor lower grade children, displaying student work, and sending positive notes home particularly to parents of "problem" students.

A concept called Positive Peer Culture (PPC) also emphasizes self-concept and self-reliance.<sup>9</sup> Basically, peer groups are formed which consist of seven to eleven students per group. Members discuss personal problems, misbehavior and school rules. PPC is designed to promote socially acceptable behavior and prevent disruption and discipline problems. An advisory group, composed of representatives from the peer groups, offers to help students with attendance and behavior problems prior to referral to an administrator for disciplinary action.

Another school addresses self-concept as it relates specifically to the discipline of special education students.<sup>10</sup> The program includes general

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<sup>9</sup>"Positive Peer Culture," Creative Discipline 1 (November 1977): 1-6.

<sup>10</sup>"Rx of the Special Ed Room," Creative Discipline 1 (February 1978): 1-2.

suggestions about self-worth and positive reinforcement, appropriate level of instruction, emphasis on making expectations and explanations clear and detailed, and stress on reading and math skills. Students formulate class rules and suggest the consequences of violations.

A communication network through an advisor-advisee program is the focus of one school.<sup>11</sup> The advisors increase staff awareness and understanding of the students and their needs. They assist students in self-awareness and positive self-images. Students are grouped according to grade level and each grade focuses on general objectives.

In a similar program, students choose and meet with a faculty advisor on a bi-weekly schedule. Their sessions focus on human relations activities that emphasize self-concept, acceptance of responsibility, and personal and group dynamics.<sup>12</sup> Each grade level works on specific areas of development such as

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<sup>11</sup>"Marancook Students Discover One Another in the Advisor-Advisee System," Creative Discipline I (December 1978): 8.

<sup>12</sup>"Canyon Middle School - A Successful Team Effort," Creative Discipline I (February 1978): 3-4.



communication skills, decision-making, and values clarification. Other areas of the program include team teaching and individual instruction, expansion of electives, and a consistent approach to discipline based on Glasser's Reality Therapy.

### Effective Classroom Strategies and Approaches

Specific strategies have been developed to provide teachers with better classroom management skills. While many appeared in the literature, this review will present a few that were representative of those found. Johnson, in his discussion of ways to create better learning climates for middle school students, underscores the relationship between teacher organizational characteristics and effective discipline. He stresses organization of classroom materials, planning short and long range objectives, and especially providing immediate feedback for pupils who need such.<sup>13</sup>

Shrigley's strategy urges teachers to deal with student misbehavior by emphasizing coping skills.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Simon O. Johnson, "Better Discipline for Middle School Students," Clearing House 53 (October 1979): 86-89.

<sup>14</sup>Robert L. Shrigley, "Strategies in Classroom Management," NASSP Bulletin 63 (September 1979): 1-9.

His list of deliberately designed coping skills includes such basic suggestions as ignoring behavior, touching, using facial signals, proximity control, changing pace, logical consequences, and non-punitive time-out. Acknowledging that coping skills focus mainly on symptoms, he also stresses excellent teaching and a knowledge of human development patterns for the age group taught in preventing problems.

Specific suggestions for classroom teachers have included the following recommendations:

1. Do not overreact and thus escalate a minor incident into a major confrontation. Do not make threats.
2. When establishing class rules, keep them to approximately five; specify rules in a positive way.
3. Post rules and review them often.
4. Praise students when they follow rules.
5. Do not ask rhetorical questions.
6. When verbally reprimanding, express displeasure with the behavior, not the student as a person.
7. When using a "time-out" area of the room to temporarily remove a disruptive student, place student so that the class cannot be seen.
8. Be knowledgeable and sensitive to the physical and psychological changes which may precipitate discipline incidents.
9. Reinforce positive behavior rather than always punishing negative behavior.
10. Apply rules consistently.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>"Georgia Tips for Teachers," Creative Discipline 1 (August 1977): 6.

Fostering social and individual responsibility in students is a theme explored by several writers as they addressed effective classroom strategies and approaches for dealing with discipline. Teachers need to understand the difference between self-discipline based on freedom with responsibility and imposed obedience to authority based on force, power, and fear.<sup>16</sup> In developing self-discipline in students, teachers must start with pupils where they are. Sensitive teachers must adjust methods of control so that self-control is achieved gradually through a developmental process.<sup>17</sup>

Jones and Tanner (1981) continue the theme of responsibility and self-direction. They define discipline as development toward self-direction and social responsibility. They argue that in the historical context of progressive education, discipline is a part of everyone's education. Self-direction, interest, and motivation are the three leading concepts relative to classroom discipline. The researchers maintain

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<sup>16</sup>Rudolph Dreikurs, et al., Maintaining Sanity in the Classroom (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp.21-24; Glasser, p. 201; Tanner, pp. 33-34.

<sup>17</sup>Regina Jones and Laurel N. Tanner, "Classroom Discipline: The Unclaimed Legacy," Phi Delta Kappan 62 (March 1981): 494-97.

that the fundamental basis of good discipline in schools is a curriculum in which appropriate recognition is given to the interests, needs, and status of the pupils to be taught. Principally, they conclude that discipline should be viewed as an educational problem, not just an administrative or managerial problem.<sup>18</sup>

Logical consequences that permit students to learn from the reality of the social order is a continuation of the theme of responsibility. Dinkmeyer and Dinkmeyer suggest that teachers and administrators (1) avoid reinforcing or provoking misbehavior; (2) develop a relationship of mutual respect through kindness and firmness; (3) look for assets in each student; and (4) be flexible in their attitudes toward the student.<sup>19</sup>

Dreikurs believes that all behavior is purposeful; he says that all misbehavior serves to satisfy a desire for attention, power, or revenge or to draw attention to an inadequacy. His approach is a democratic one which uses group dynamics and also teaches responsibility.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Don Dinkmeyer and Don Dinkmeyer, Jr., "Logical Consequences: A Key to the Reduction of Disciplinary Problems," Phi Delta Kappan 57 (June 1976): 665-66.

<sup>20</sup>Rudolph Dreikurs and Pearl Cassel, Discipline Without Tears (New York: Hawthorn Press, 1973), p. 18.

### Responsive Administrative Programs

The principal's leadership is viewed by many as the strongest factor in reducing disciplinary problems in schools. Research confirms the importance of firm, fair, and consistent policies and practices. In addition, great availability and visibility of the principal to both students and staff are necessary to promote good discipline and a safe and effective school environment.<sup>21</sup> Not only must school policies be firm, fair, and applied consistently, but students should also participate in the formation of those policies by which they are governed.<sup>22</sup>

Teacher in-service programs represent one way administrators can reduce discipline problems and improve school climate. Kersten describes an Illinois

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<sup>21</sup>Robert J. Rubel, "Violence in Public Schools: HEW's Safe School Study." NASSP Bulletin 62 (March 1978): 75-83.

<sup>22</sup>William H. Clune, III, "Evaluating School Discipline Through Empirical Research," Education and Urban Society 11 (August 1979): 465-484; Mark Chesler et al., "Organizational Context of School Discipline: Analytical Models and Policy Options," Education and Urban Society 11 (August 1979): 496-510; Glasser, p. 193; Dreikurs, Maintaining Sanity in the Classroom, p. 26.

junior high school's program.<sup>23</sup> Essentially, the administrators recorded and later disclosed the total referrals for each teacher. In departmental meetings, teachers held discussions on their role and that of the administrator in discipline. They reviewed their problems and probable causes for them and they analyzed the specific management techniques they were using and the effectiveness of those techniques. Teachers evaluated their own efforts. Administrators asked probing questions, suggested disciplinary techniques, and stressed their role. Cooperatively, both administrators and faculty developed plans. As a result, staff members analyzed their own efforts, shared successful techniques, began anticipating behavior problems rather than reacting to them, and showed more patience and creativity in handling problems.

Grantham and Harris describe another year-long staff development plan which began with a series of

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<sup>23</sup>Thomas A. Kersten, "Focus on Discipline: An Inservice Program," NASSP Bulletin 63 (September 1979): 59-62.

sessions in which teachers and administrators reviewed the literature on discipline and classroom management.<sup>24</sup> They identified and interpreted the effect of teacher behavior upon the learning climate for pupils, explored classroom management techniques, and identified individual pupil learning styles and needs. After prescribing appropriate learning experiences, they implemented a plan of action and evaluated its effectiveness based on academic achievement and disciplinary responses for the respective students.

A major feature of this plan included a focus on teacher behavior. Using an interaction analysis system for measurement, the researchers reported a marked increase in the teacher's self-perception of his or her ability to deal with pupil needs and to manage the classroom. The number of referrals decreased and numerous disciplinary alternatives were used. These included: more school-sponsored activities before and after school, periodic group

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<sup>24</sup>Marvin Grantham and Clifton S. Harris, Jr., "A Faculty Trains Itself to Improve Student Discipline," Phi Delta Kappan 57 (June 1976): 661-63.

guidance, daily reinforcement of positive behavior via the public address system, increased tutorial efforts, telephone contact with parents, peer pressure by class decisions about what constituted unacceptable behavior, time-out sessions, teacher attendance at extracurricular activities, and informal "getting to know you" conferences between teachers and pupils.

Administrative programs reviewed in the literature include a collaborative effort of an assistant principal and three psychiatrists from a local mental health center.<sup>25</sup> Its basic components were an individualized curriculum and a contingency management program based on an agreement between teacher and students. The center provided consultation for the program's design, conducted achievement testing, and provided counseling for families of the students. The fifteen most seriously misbehaving students were grouped for instruction in core curriculum subjects. Parents were given daily

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<sup>25</sup>"Alternative Classes for Deviant Students," Creative Discipline 1 (August 1977): 3-4.



progress reports and were encouraged to implement contingency management at home.

The literature contains several references to administrative programs which address attendance problems and truancy. The improvement of the curriculum and school climate are generally considered the most important areas on which administrators should focus to reduce absenteeism.

Howard suggests that truancy may be reduced through a task force which focuses on such activities as improving supervision of halls and lavatories. He recommends initiating peer and group counseling as well as calling parents in the evening.<sup>26</sup>

Often simple and inexpensive procedures can improve the attendance of students with moderate absentee problems. One such procedure is consistent notification of parents. In addition, the immediacy with which parents are notified by telephone or letter can result in improvement of attendance for many students.

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<sup>26</sup>Howard, pp. 62-66.

The most frequently used administrative device for dealing with student disruption is suspension. In general, writers agree that suspensions create more problems than they solve. Secondly, suspensions deal with the symptoms without addressing the underlying causes of the problems. Thirdly, minorities tend to be suspended disproportionately to other students. Authors cite differential treatment by race and status, the unevenness and arbitrariness of the system, and discriminatory application, in general, as a source of further discipline problems.<sup>27</sup>

The literature suggests several nonexclusionary discipline alternatives and programs for administrators. One such program is In-School Suspension. In-school suspension programs generally involve removing students from their regularly scheduled classes and assigning them to a supervised room for a specific number of days. Usually, the number of students in the room at

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<sup>27</sup>Susan Kaeser, "Suspensions in School Discipline," Education and Urban Society 11 (August 1979): 465-484; Joe Larkin, "School Desegregation and Student Suspension: A Look at One School System," Education and Urban Society 11 (August 1979): 485-495; Clune, p. 443; Lufner, pp. 457-459; Chesler, p. 507.

one time is limited. There is little or no social interaction; students complete academic work, receive assistance, counseling, and follow-up.

The literature proposes other alternatives to traditional suspension. One middle school utilizes a combination of demerits and in-school suspension.<sup>28</sup> Demerits, which are issued by both teachers and administrators for infractions, are cumulative and result in (1) a letter inviting a parent to visit the school; (2) in school suspension; and (3) out-of-school suspension for varying numbers of days. The program also provides for removal of demerits through a contract whereby the student performs assigned duties. A Merit certificate also removes demerits if the student completes ten consecutive days without receiving additional demerits. Students who do not receive demerits are given congratulatory letters at the end of the semester.

A program which temporarily excludes students from their regular school but provides a short term, alternative, educational program for students stresses

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<sup>28</sup>"Mountain View Proves the Merits of the Demerits," Creative Discipline 1 (February 1978): 5-6.

self-discipline.<sup>29</sup> It operates on a behavior management or logical consequences system in which daily certificates and weekly letters are awarded for good work and proper behavior. The parents' role requires that they implement a reward system at home as they receive daily information on their child's progress.

In-school suspension programs appear under other titles in the literature. Called Alternative Learning Center in one school, the program is structured primarily punitively, emphasizing social isolation.<sup>30</sup> Students commute to school and eat lunch alone. Parents concur with student placement in the program in lieu of an out-of-school suspension. Students and parents sign a contract stating the nature of the disciplinary problem. The length of suspension varies from three to ten days. Re-entry to the regular program is based on the student's meeting specific requirements and completing work assignments. Counselors

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<sup>29</sup>"The Learning Center: A Viable Alternative," Creative Discipline 1 (November 1977): 7-10.

<sup>30</sup>"An Inside Look at the Alternative Learning Center," Creative Discipline 1 (October 1977): 1-2.

and teachers supervise the students. Students are evaluated hourly and earn merits as they complete assignments. Parents are given progress reports and accompany students for an exit interview.

An administrative program which specifically addresses special needs students contains several alternatives to suspension.<sup>31</sup> In addition to a "time-out" program, the plan includes a half-way program for students moving from special education into mainstreamed classes, an after-hours program, a self-contained classroom to which teachers come, a work-study program, and arrangement for potentially disruptive students to withdraw from a situation without penalty.

A "cooling-off" time during a classroom period was implemented in one school with a unique provision.<sup>32</sup> The program allowed students to leave the building and school grounds to think through the problem. The student could also ask an ombudsperson to accompany

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<sup>31</sup>Edward Lichtenstein, "Suspension, Expulsion and the Special Education Student," Phi Delta Kappan 61 (March 1980): 459-61.

<sup>32</sup>"Discipline As A Multi-Colored Art," Creative Discipline 1 (October 1977): 2-4.

him/her to talk through the problem.

Administrative programs which involve outside and community groups are considered essential by some writers in the improvement of discipline. Lay citizens and parents should be actively involved in planning and monitoring discipline policies and their implementation.<sup>33</sup>

In establishing accountability in disciplinary programs, Mizell suggests that cumulative, comprehensive data on school discipline be maintained and published in a format understandable to the public.<sup>34</sup> Such data would include essentially what types of students have been disciplined, why they have been disciplined, how frequently such discipline has taken place, and whether such discipline has prevented the recurrence of inappropriate behavior or deterred others from manifesting similar behavior.

Mizell also suggests that an important step in

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<sup>33</sup>M. Hayes Mizell, "Improving School Disciplinary Practices: Community Strategies," Education and Urban Society 11 (August 1979): 547-566; Eric Haralson, "Advocacy Groups and School Discipline," Education and Urban Society 11 (August 1979): 527-546; Chesler, p. 508.

<sup>34</sup>Mizell, pp. 552-556.

altering how schools deal with discipline involves altering the community's philosophy about and expectations of school discipline. <sup>35</sup> Parents' demands for school officials to use more punitive practices, for example, are rooted in their own personal experiences of power and domination. Educating parents through workshops and discussion groups, challenging their assumptions and helping them understand the fundamentals of nonpunitive alternative disciplinary models is suggested as a logical place to begin.

In conjunction with the theme of community involvement, one school published a list of suggestions to increase home-school cooperation. <sup>36</sup> The list includes such things as creating a handbook for parents which gives practical suggestions for home activities, publishing a school newsletter, using parents as tutors and field trip helpers, holding staff workshops on communication skills, and sending

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 549.

<sup>36</sup>"50 Ways to Increase Home School Cooperation," Creative Discipline 1 (December 1978): 9.

home good news notes about accomplishments and achievements.

In conclusion, the review of the literature focused on the nature of the school and self-concept as they relate to discipline, on specific classroom strategies and concepts, and on numerous administrative programs responsive to discipline problems. Authors strongly encouraged the retraining of administrators in organizational management and leadership. They suggested building more supportive relationships and creating schools within schools. They supported expanding the curriculum and extracurricular programs. In general, the researchers offered a wide variety of suggestions for creating more responsive programs and improving discipline and the school climate.



## C H A P T E R   I I I

### DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

This study examined discipline in an urban middle school. The researcher focused on the nature and pattern of problems that existed. More specifically, the researcher developed a profile of the students who were referred for disciplinary action and examined major patterns which emerged from the referrals. The goal was to decrease the amount of mutual victimization and disciplinary activity. Accordingly, the major questions dealt with in this study derived from two major sources. They were both theoretical and empirical. The questions from within a theoretical framework were:

- (1) What constitutes a creative learning environment for poor, urban, middle school children?
- (2) What developmental characteristics are significant and must therefore be considered in their discipline?

The questions from the empirical data collected and analyzed were:

- (3) What kinds of discipline problems occur most frequently in an urban middle school?
- (4) Are some students referred more frequently for discipline than others?
- (5) Do some teachers refer students more often than others?
- (6) Are there some days or periods during which more referrals are made?
- (7) Are there some places where discipline problems are more likely to originate?
- (8) What action is most often taken by the assistant principal to resolve the problem?
- (9) What relationships exist among the above questions?

This chapter contains a brief description of the research population and the instrument used to collect the data. In subsequent sections of the chapter, the researcher reviews the data collection techniques that were employed. The writer will also identify the variables measured and describe the procedures applied in processing and analyzing the data. The chapter concludes with some operational statements regarding the research.

### Research Population

The subjects of this study consisted of 285 seventh, eighth, and ninth grade students at an urban middle school in Massachusetts. All were included either because they were referred by a teacher for disciplinary action or because they violated the school's code of conduct.

Some of the students were repeated offenders with multiple entries recorded. Therefore, the resulting data yielded 539 different incidents or cases. Because the writer's purpose was to analyze the nature of problems and their circumstances, the incidents became the focal point and, hence, served as the basic unit of measurement.

An analysis of the principal characteristics of the subjects reflected in the research (See Table 1) revealed that the study involved 539 discipline referrals. All students attended Worcester East Middle School and all referrals occurred during the first quarter of the 1978-79 and 1979-80 school years. All of the subjects were referred to the same assistant principal.

Ethnically, the referrals included white (84.5%), black (4.6%), Hispanic (9.6%) and Greek (1.3%) students. A grade analysis indicated that 46.6% of the discipline referrals involved students in the seventh grade, 35.1% involved students in the eighth grade, and 18.4% involved students in the ninth grade. An analysis by sex revealed that male students constituted 64.6% of the referrals for discipline and females 35.4%.

#### Description of the Instrument

A Discipline Referral Card (See Appendix A) was used to collect data. It contained several sections which identified the student, teacher, problem, and resolution. The first section focused primarily on demographic data: student's name, homeroom, team, grade, and date of referral.

The next section required the teacher to describe the incident or problem. It concluded with the teacher's signature, period or time of the incident, and the room number or location.

The final section of the Discipline Referral Card disclosed the administrative action taken in the case. If referrals were made to other individuals, departments,

TABLE 1

## PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS REFLECTED IN RESEARCH POPULATION

Breakdown of 539 Referrals by Race, Grade, and Sex Classifications

RACE	Sex of Referrals		Grade of Referrals						TOTAL		
	Male	Female	Total	%	Seventh	%	Eighth	%		Ninth	%
White	284	171	455	84.5	213	46.8	164	36.4	78	17.1	455
Black	19	6	25	4.6	15	60.0	9	36.0	1	4.0	25
Hispanic	38	14	52	9.6	22	42.3	16	30.8	14	26.9	52
Greek	7	0	7	1.3	1	14.3	0	0	6	85.7	7
TOTAL	348	191	539		251		189		99		539

or outside agencies, the administrator noted such. When a suspension was imposed, the administrator recorded the number of days.

### Data Collection

The data gathered from the instrument were logged. From a variety of sources, the researcher supplemented additional essential information. One source was the school's formal regional evaluation report, from which the researcher obtained teacher's age and number of year's teaching experience.

Another source was the researcher's general knowledge of the students referred and teachers referring. This supplied information on race and sex of student and sex and subject area of teacher.

Another source was collaboration. The researcher and members of the special education staff worked jointly to identify all students who maintained special needs classification. Finally, a simple check of the calendar verified the day of the week on which the incident occurred.

The researcher recorded the data on op scan sheets. She sought the opinions of computer programming specialists at the University of Massachusetts, and

implementing their suggestions, assigned an arbitrary coding scheme to identify the various conditions.

A subsequent section of this chapter presents the variables measured and their sequence for processing.

### Variables Measured

The study contained 14 different variables which were assessed for distributional frequency. They were as follows: the incident, student's sex, student's grade, student's race, student's program classification, month of the incident, time of the incident, weekday of the incident, referring teacher's department, referring teacher's teaching experience, referring teacher's sex classification, where incident occurred, action taken by the administrator to resolve the problem, and length of suspension when one was imposed.

### Method of Analysis

At the Data Processing Center of the University of Massachusetts, the data from the op scan sheets were processed. All statistical treatment of this data was accomplished through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Frequency distribution

tables were used to analyze the data and describe the patterns that appeared. Crosstabulation analyses were performed and Chi Square analysis statistical procedure was employed to determine if significant relationships existed between selected demographic information and remaining variables. Using Chi Square to test significance at .05 level of significance, analysis revealed little significant differences in the responses.

#### Operational Statement

Operationally, the study contained limitations involving primarily the recording of certain data. One such area was action taken by the administrator. Although in practice multiple actions were frequently taken, the coding conversion allowed for one action to be recorded. The researcher chose to code the strongest action.

Also among the alternatives employed were behavior contracts collaboratively prepared and signed by student, teacher, counselor, and assistant principal. In addition, informal "Cool-off" and "Time-out" measures were used by the administrator, particularly when special needs students were involved. These



actions did not appear in the data because other actions that were deemed stronger were coded for these offenses.

The results obtained in this study are presented and analyzed in Chapter IV. Within the context of this study, the writer will present findings from which some generalizations may be made.

## C H A P T E R I V

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSES

This chapter presents and analyses data obtained from 539 discipline referrals involving urban middle school students. The referrals were generated by 285 pupils in the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades.

The ethnic composition of the students referred included white, black, Hispanic, and Greek students. All referrals occurred during the first quarter of two consecutive school years. No significant differences existed for the two separate periods during which data were collected. Hence, the researcher combined the frequency distributions from the two terms and used the aggregate in all statistical analyses.

Some tables summarize frequency distribution and their correlating percentages. Other tables provide crosstabulation of variables with more detailed analyses of percentages.

#### Analysis of Table 2: Summary of Demographic Information

The study of the nature of discipline problems focused on 539 discipline referrals. Of the 539

incidents, males were reported in a greater percentage of problems than females. They accounted for 64.6% of all referrals while females were responsible for 35.4%. Among the student body, there were 536 boys (52.2%) and 491 girls (47.8%). Hence, girls were not reported proportionate to their numbers in the general population and boys were generally considered more likely to be reported for discipline than girls.

The grade distribution analysis disclosed a similar disproportion. Seventh graders generated 46.6% of all referrals, while eighth graders accounted for 35.1%, and ninth graders for 18.3%. The student body consisted of 433 seventh graders (42.2%), 409 eighth graders (39.8%) and 185 ninth graders (18.0%). The sharp decline of referrals by grade is consistent with the decline of students by grade.

An ethnic analysis revealed that whites accounted for 84.5% of all referrals. This percentage is similar to the general school makeup where whites constituted 87% (893), and minorities 13% (134). Blacks were responsible for 4.6%, Hispanics for 9.6%, and Greeks for 1.3% of the referrals.

An examination of the referrals according to the

classification of student programs revealed that 73.6% of all referrals involved students who were enrolled in the regular program of studies. Special needs students accounted for 23.6% of all referrals. Bilingual students accounted for 2.8%. The bilingual program was included as a special program classification because most bilingual students were not mainstreamed for any great portion of the school day. There were 942 students enrolled in the regular program, representing 91.7% of students. Another 85 students were identified as special needs, or 8.3% of the school population. Clearly, the referral of special needs students was disproportionate to their numbers in the student body.

#### Analysis of Table 3: The Nature of Discipline Problems Referred

The researcher arranged offenses of a similar nature into a single category and grouped the 539 discipline referrals into ten general categories. The classifications coincided with the school's discipline code. Classifications were as follows:

- (1) Cutting class, truancy from school, and cumulative tardiness to school

TABLE 2

## SUMMARY OF DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON SUBJECTS

Variable	Response Category	Frequency	Percent
Sex	Male	348	64.6
	Female	191	35.4
Grade	7	251	46.6
	8	189	35.1
	9	99	18.3
Race	White	455	84.5
	Black	25	4.6
	Hispanic	52	9.6
	Greek	7	1.3
Student Program Classification	Regular Program	397	73.6
	Special Education	127	23.6
	Bilingual Program	15	2.8

- (2) Fighting, arguing, slapping, hitting,  
using abusive language
- (3) Running, screaming, shoving and namecalling
- (4) Disobeying general rules
- (5) Throwing food in the cafeteria or throwing  
ice or snow in the schoolyard, at other  
students or toward vehicles
- (6) Smoking in the building or on the school grounds
- (7) Habitually disturbing a class
- (8) Being in the corridor, bathroom or at a  
locker without a pass
- (9) Vandalism
- (10) Failing to report to a detention after school,  
assigned for such reasons as failing to com-  
plete homework, talking in class, not possess-  
ing books and writing materials, and throwing  
spitballs.

Table 3 summarizes the discipline referrals by frequency and percent. Students were referred most often for cutting classes, habitual tardiness to school, and truancy from school (See Table 3 for summary).

The second category for which teachers most often referred students was habitually disturbing a class.

This was followed by fighting, arguing, slapping, hitting and using abusive language. These three categories combined to account for more than 72% of all referrals. Throwing food, smoking and vandalism constituted less than 5% of the referrals. That there were so few incidents involving serious vandalism and creation of danger to others seems to confirm that students did respond to the staff's effort to maintain control by maintaining a generally orderly demeanor.

Analysis of Table 4: The Relationship of the Nature of the Problem to the Sex of the Student

Males were referred more frequently than females in nine of the ten offense categories. The makeup of the school population did not show such a disparity since boys comprised 52.2% and girls 47.8%.

In the class cut, tardiness, truancy category, males accounted for 63.7% of the 193 referrals, while females accounted for only 36.3%. In the category of fighting, arguing, and using abusive language, males represented 68.4% of the 79 referrals, while females accounted for 31.6%.

Males were involved in 66.7% and females 33.3% of all reported incidents of running, screaming, shoving

TABLE 3

## THE NATURE OF DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS REFERRED

Offense Category	Frequency	Percent
Class Cuts, Habitual Tardiness, Truancy	193	35.8
Fighting, Arguing, Slapping Hitting, Using Abusive Language	79	14.7
Running, Screaming, Shoving, Namecalling	30	5.6
Disobeying General Rules	68	12.5
Throwing Food in Cafeteria or Ice and Snow in Schoolyard	8	1.5
Smoking	7	1.3
Habitually Disturbing a Class	118	21.9
Being in Corridor, Bathroom, or at Locker without a Pass	11	2.0
Vandalism	7	1.3
Failure to Report to a Detention	18	3.4



and namecalling. Males were reported more than twice as often as females for disobeying general rules; they were reported at 70.6% and 29.4%, respectively.

While the number of students referred for throwing food and ice was very small, boys were referred almost twice as often as girls. Habitually disturbing a class, the second greatest offense category, reflected a consistently disproportionate number of male to female referrals (62.7% and 37.3%, respectively).

Of the 348 referrals involving males, the categories receiving the greatest percentages, in rank order, were class cuts, tardiness, and truancy; habitually disturbing a class; fighting, arguing, using abusive language; and disobeying general rules. Among the 191 referrals involving females, the rank order of categories was identical. Of the 539 teacher initiated referrals, boys' class cuts and classroom disturbances occurred more often than any other offense. This was followed by females cutting class, males fighting, and males disobeying general rules.

Analysis of Table 5: The Relationship of the Nature of the Problem to the Grade of the Student

Profiles of the referrals by grade revealed that



slightly more than one third (38.9%) of all class cuts, tardiness, and truancies were committed by seventh graders. Eighth graders accounted for 32.1% and ninth graders were responsible for 29.0%.

The general pattern of grade distribution continued to exist in the habitually disturbing a class category. Seventh graders accounted for the greatest percentage of offenders followed by eighth and ninth graders.

A sizable decrease in teacher referrals occurred as the grade level increased with regard to incidents involving fighting, arguing, slapping, hitting, and using abusive language. More than half of the referrals for that category involved seventh graders. Perhaps the sharp decline can be attributed to the learning process students experienced. As they matured and assumed greater responsibility for their behavior, they adopted more acceptable and less physical ways of dealing with frustration. In addition, eighth and ninth graders were less impulsive than seventh graders.

Another factor contributing to the decrease was the severity of the punishment. The school's Code of Conduct required an immediate suspension for fighting. Parents were also required to accompany students for

readmission. This process stimulated additional pressure for both students and parents; few students were prepared to accept the consequences of parental involvement.

Of the 251 referrals involving seventh graders, the categories receiving the greatest percentages were: class cuts, tardiness, truancies (29.9%); habitually disturbing a class (23.1%); fighting, arguing, slapping, hitting, using abusive language (18.7%); and disobeying general rules (13.9%).

There were 198 referrals for eighth graders. The categories corresponded in rank order with the seventh graders. Ninth graders were involved in 99 referrals and did not differ greatly from seventh and eighth graders in the rank order of categories referred most frequently. However, ninth graders were not reported nearly as often for fighting, arguing, slapping, hitting, and using abusive language as were students in other grades.

Of the 539 referrals in the study, class cuts, tardiness, and truancies by seventh, eighth, and ninth graders, habitually disturbing a class by seventh graders, and fighting, arguing, slapping, hitting,

using abusive language by seventh graders accounted for more than half of all offenses (See Table 5 for summary).

Analysis of Table 6: The Relationship of the Nature of the Problem to the Race of the Student

Teachers referred white students more frequently than blacks, Hispanics, or Greeks in each offense category. Since whites constituted 87% of the student population and minorities 13%, the referrals pattern correlated closely with the existing student population.

In the class cuts, tardiness, truancy category, whites were responsible for 83.4% of referrals, blacks for 5.2%, Hispanics for 8.8%, and Greeks for 2.6%. When fighting, arguing, slapping, hitting, using abusive language occurred, whites were involved in 88.6% of the referrals, blacks in 3.8%, Hispanics in 5.1%, and Greeks in 2.5%.

Among reported incidents of running, screaming, shoving and namecalling, whites were responsible for 83.3%, and Hispanics for 16.7%. No blacks were involved in this category.

Of the 118 incidents involving habitually disturbing a class, whites represented 83.9%, blacks 3.4%, and Hispanics 12.7%. Of the 68 referrals for disobeying

TABLE 5  
THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM TO THE GRADE OF THE STUDENT

OFFENSE CATEGORY	SEVENTH GRADERS						EIGHTH GRADERS						NINTH GRADERS							
	Frequency	% Offense Category	% 7th Gr. Referrals	% Total Referrals	Frequency	% Offense Category	% 8th Gr. Referrals	% Total Referrals	Frequency	% Offense Category	% 9th Gr. Referrals	% Total Referrals	Frequency	% Offense Category	% 9th Gr. Referrals	% Total Referrals	Frequency	% Offense Category	% 9th Gr. Referrals	% Total Referrals
Class Cut, Tardiness, Truancy	75	38.9	29.9	13.9	62	32.1	32.8	11.5	56	29.0	56.6	10.4	193							
Fighting, Arguing, Using Abusive Language	47	59.5	18.7	8.7	26	32.9	13.8	4.8	6	7.6	6.1	1.1	79							
Running, Screaming, Shoving, Namecalling	16	53.3	6.4	3.0	12	40.0	6.3	2.2	2	6.7	2.0	.4	30							
Disobeying General Rules	35	51.5	13.9	6.5	21	30.9	11.1	3.9	12	17.6	12.1	2.2	68							
Throwing Food or Snow	3	37.5	1.2	.6	3	37.5	1.6	.6	2	25.0	2.0	.4	8							
Smoking	2	28.6	.8	.4	4	57.1	2.1	.7	1	14.3	1.0	.2	7							
Habitually Disturbing a Class	58	49.2	23.1	10.8	43	36.4	22.8	8.0	17	14.6	17.2	3.2	118							
Being in Corridor without a Pass	4	36.4	1.6	.7	7	63.6	3.7	1.3	0	0	0	0	11							
Vandalism	5	71.4	2.0	.9	1	14.3	.5	.2	1	14.3	1.0	.2	7							
Failure to Report to a Detention	6	33.3	2.4	1.1	10	55.6	5.3	1.9	2	11.1	2.0	.4	18							
TOTAL	251		100.0	46.6	189		100.0	35.1	99		100.0	18.5	539							

general rules, 80.8% involved whites, 5.9% involved blacks, and 13.3% involved Hispanics.

Of the 455 referrals involving whites, the offenses for which they were most often referred were class cuts, tardiness, truancy (35.4%); habitually disturbing a class (21.7%); fighting, arguing, slapping, hitting, using abusive language (15.4%); and disobeying general rules (12.1%).

The referrals involving blacks were few. Most dealt with class cuts, tardiness, and truancy. The same was true for Hispanics. Greeks were rarely reported for disciplinary action.

Analysis of Table 7: The Relationship of the Nature of the Problem to the Student Program Classification

A profile of the referrals according to student program classification disclosed that in all but one offense category, students in the regular program were responsible for more than two-thirds of the referrals. Given the small numbers of bilingual students referred, none of the differences were statistically significant. In the class cuts, tardiness, truancy category, regular students accounted for 80.3% and special needs students accounted for 17.6% of referrals.

TABLE 6

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM TO THE RACE OF THE STUDENT

OFFENSE CATEGORY	WHITE					BLACK					HISPANIC					GREEK					
	Frequency	% Offense Category	% White Referrals	% Total Referrals	Frequency	% Offense Category	% Black Referrals	% Total Referrals	Frequency	% Offense Category	% Hispanic Referrals	% Total Referrals	Frequency	% Offense Category	% Greek Referrals	% Total Referrals	Frequency	% Offense Category	% Greek Referrals	% Total Referrals	
Class Cut, Tardiness, Truancy	161	83.4	35.4	29.9	10	5.2	40.0	1.8	17	8.8	32.7	3.1	5	2.6	71.4	.9	193	5	2.6	71.4	.9
Fighting, Arguing, Using Abusive Language	70	88.6	15.4	13.0	3	3.8	12.0	.5	4	5.1	7.7	.7	2	2.5	28.6	.4	79	2	2.5	28.6	.4
Running, Screaming, Shoving, Namecalling	25	83.3	5.5	4.6	0	0	0	0	5	16.7	9.6	.9	0	0	0	0	30	0	0	0	0
Disobeying General Rules	55	80.8	12.1	10.2	4	5.9	16.0	.7	9	13.3	17.3	1.7	0	0	0	0	68	0	0	0	0
Throwing Food and Snow	8	100.0	1.7	1.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0
Smoking	6	85.7	1.3	1.1	1	14.3	4.0	.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0
Habitually Disturbing a Class	99	83.9	21.7	18.4	4	3.4	16.0	.7	15	12.7	28.8	2.8	0	0	0	0	118	0	0	0	0
Being in Corridor without a Pass	8	72.7	1.7	1.5	3	27.3	12.0	.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	0
Vandalism	6	85.7	1.3	1.1	0	0	0	0	1	14.3	1.9	.2	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0
Failure to Report to a Detention	17	94.4	3.7	3.1	0	0	0	0	1	5.6	1.9	.2	0	0	0	0	18	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	455		100.0	84.4	25		100.0	4.5	52		100.0	9.6	7		100.0	1.3	539	7		100.0	1.3



Among reported incidents of fighting, arguing, slapping, hitting, and using abusive language, students in the regular program accounted for 70.9% and special needs students for 27.8% of referrals. Teachers reported special needs students in almost half of all incidents involving running, screaming, shoving, and namecalling.

Of the reported offenses involving disobeying general rules, regular students were responsible for 66.2% of the referrals and special needs students for 27.9%. In the habitually disturbing the class category, the second largest offense category in terms of frequency distribution, students in the regular program committed 72.9% of the offenses, while those in special needs committed 26.3%. The high proportion of special needs students referred in the categories cited above was inconsistent with their representation in the student body (8.3%). This pattern suggests that special needs students need help in learning or applying appropriate behavior responses when provoked or antagonized by other students. When dealing with teachers, they need to know when the best response is no response. They also need help in judging potential

explosiveness in other individuals and situations. The researcher also suggests that teachers who deal with special needs students need help in avoiding and managing conflict and in creating classrooms that provide for their needs in effective and creative ways.

Of the 397 incidents involving students in the regular program, teachers referred them most often for class cuts, tardiness, truancy (39.0%); habitually disturbing a class (21.7%); fighting, arguing, slapping, hitting, using abusive language (14.1%); and disobeying general rules (11.3%). Of the 127 incidents involving special needs students, teachers referred students most often for the same reasons.

#### Analysis of Table 8: When Incidents Occurred

The variables which described when an incident occurred were year, month, time of day, and day of week. The years of the incidents reported in the study were the first quarter of 1978-79 and first quarter of 1979-80. Nineteen seventy-eight showed a frequency of 277 which represented 51.4% of all referrals in the study. In 1979, the frequency count was 262 for the same time frame. This represented 48.6% of the referrals. There were 116 referrals during the months of

TABLE 7  
THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM TO THE STUDENT PROGRAM CLASSIFICATION

OFFENSE CATEGORY	REGULAR PROGRAM						SPECIAL NEEDS						BILINGUAL					
	Frequency	% Offense Category	% Regular Referrals	% Total Referrals	Frequency	% Offense Category	% Sp. Nds. Referrals	% Total Referrals	Frequency	% Offense Category	% Bilingual Referrals	% Total Referrals	Frequency	% Offense Category	% Bilingual Referrals	% Total Referrals	Frequency Totals	
Class Cut, Tardiness, Truancy	155	80.3	39.0	28.8	34	17.6	26.8	6.3	4	2.1	26.7	.7	193					
Fighting, Arguing, Using Abusive Language	56	70.9	14.1	10.4	22	27.8	17.3	4.1	1	1.3	6.7	.2	79					
Running, Screaming, Shoving, Namecalling	14	46.7	3.5	2.6	13	43.3	10.2	2.4	3	10.0	20.0	.6	30					
Disobeying General Rules	45	66.2	11.3	8.3	19	27.9	15.0	3.5	4	5.9	26.7	.7	68					
Throwing Food and Snow	6	75.0	1.5	1.1	2	25.0	1.6	.4	0	0	0	0	8					
Smoking	6	85.7	1.5	1.1	1	14.3	.8	.2	0	0	0	0	7					
Habitually Disturbing a Class	86	72.9	21.7	16.0	31	26.3	24.4	5.8	1	.8	6.7	.2	118					
Being in Corridor without a Pass	8	72.7	2.0	1.5	3	27.3	2.4	.6	0	0	0	0	11					
Vandalism	5	71.4	1.3	.9	1	14.3	.8	.2	1	14.3	6.7	.2	7					
Failure to Report to a Detention	16	88.9	4.0	3.0	1	5.6	.8	.2	1	5.6	6.7	.2	18					
TOTAL	397		100.0	73.7	127		100.0	23.7	15		100.0	2.8	539					

September, 239 in October, and 184 in November. The average number of incidents per day was highest in the month of November when there were 14.2 incidents daily. This disproportionately high number resulted, in part, from the cycle of referrals for cumulative tardiness. Students who violated the tardiness policy five times within a five-week period received an automatic referral and an automatic suspension pending conference. Students were more likely to accumulate the fifth tardy during the last week of the cycle.

The response categories indicating the time of day reflected the sixteen modules of the school day. In addition, the researcher included a before school and a homeroom time period. In 35.8% of the referrals, there was no specific time designation because the offenses consisted of truancies, cumulative tardiness to school, and multiple class cuts. Most referrals occurred during modules nine through sixteen which coincided with the time period 11:24 A.M. to 2:20 P.M. and represented 38.4% of the total offenses.

The study included referrals for Monday through Friday. There were no significant differences between days of the week on which offenses were reported (See Table 8). This pattern verifies consistency in

student behavior and teacher response.

Analysis of Table 9: The Relationship of the Nature of the Problem to the Day of Week It Occurred

When the researcher took into consideration the average number of incidents per day, no significant differences existed between the relationship of the nature of the offense and the day of week on which it occurred (See Table 9 for summary). The offenses for which most students were daily reported were: class cuts, tardiness, truancy; fighting, arguing, slapping, hitting, using abusive language; and habitually disturbing a class. These three categories each day of the week accounted for more than two-thirds of all referrals for that day.

Analyses of Tables 10 and 11: Places Where Referrals Are Most Likely to Originate and Location of Incidents Involving Fighting, Arguing, Slapping, Hitting, and Using Abusive Language

A majority of all offenses (46.2%) occurred in the classroom. This is not a surprising outcome since the classroom is where students spend most of their time. Other places where referrals occurred, though they were few in number, were hallway and lavatory (8.3%), schoolyard (5.0%), and lunchroom (4.6%).

TABLE 8

WHEN INCIDENTS OCCURRED

Variable	Response Category	Frequency	Number of Days	Percent	Incidents per Day
Year of Incident	1st Qt. 78-79	277	46	51.4	
	1st Qt. 79-80	262	46	48.6	
Month	September	116	36		3.2
	October	239	43		5.6
	November	184	13		14.2

TABLE 8--Continued

Variable	Response Category	7:30 - 8:00	Frequency	Relative Frequency Percent
Time of Day	Before School		32	5.9
	Homeroom	8:00 - 8:20	2	.4
	1/2	8:24 - 9:05	22	4.1
	3/4	8:09 - 9:50	19	3.5
	5/6	9:54 - 10:35	33	6.1
	7/8	10:39 - 11:20	31	5.8
	9/10	11:24 - 12:05	52	9.6
	11/12	12:09 - 12:50	68	12.6
	13/14	12:54 - 1:35	49	9.1
	15/16	1:39 - 2:20	38	7.1
	0 Module*		193	35.8

\* Class cuts, cumulative tardiness, and truancies throughout the school day with no specific time designation.

TABLE 8--Continued

Variable	Response Category	Frequency	Number of Days in Sample	Average Number Incidents per Day
Day of Week	Monday	84	16	5.3
	Tuesday	99	18	5.5
	Wednesday	127	20	6.4
	Thursday	121	20	6.1
	Friday	108	18	6.0



TABLE 9

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM TO THE DAY OF WEEK IT OCCURRED

OFFENSE CATEGORY	MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		Totals Frequency				
	Frequency	% Monday Referrals	Frequency	% Tuesday Referrals	Frequency	% Wednesday Referrals	Frequency	% Thursday Referrals	Frequency	% Friday Referrals					
Class Cut, Tardiness, Truancy	31	36.9	5.8	35.4	6.5	52	40.9	9.6	41	33.9	7.5	34	31.5	6.3	193
Fighting, Arguing, Using Abusive Language	16	19.0	3.0	16.2	3.0	11	8.7	2.0	17	14.0	3.2	19	17.6	3.5	79
Running, Screaming, Shoving, Namecalling	5	6.0	.9	5.1	.9	2	1.6	.4	10	8.3	1.9	8	7.4	1.5	30
Disobeying General Rules	13	15.5	2.4	12.1	2.2	13	10.2	2.4	16	13.2	3.0	14	13.0	2.6	68
Throwing Food and Snow	1	1.2	.2	0	0	3	2.4	.5	2	1.7	.4	2	1.9	.4	8
Smoking	3	3.6	.5	0	0	1	.8	.2	2	1.7	.4	1	.9	.2	7
Habitually Disturbing a Class	11	13.1	2.0	19.2	3.5	38	29.9	7.1	25	20.7	4.6	25	23.1	4.6	118
Being in Corridor without a Pass	1	1.2	.2	2.0	.4	3	2.4	.5	2	1.7	.4	3	2.8	.5	11
Vandalism	1	1.2	.2	2.0	.4	1	.8	.2	3	2.5	.5	0	0	0	7
Failure to Report to a Detention	2	2.4	.4	8.1	1.5	3	2.4	.5	3	2.5	.5	2	1.9	.4	18
TOTAL	84	100.0	15.6	99	100.0	18.4	127	100.0	23.6	121	100.0	22.4	108	100.0	539

Incidents which involved fighting, arguing, slapping, hitting, or using abusive language produced the same order of places. Most fights were reported as beginning in the classroom. The researcher suggests, however, that often initial conflicts begin in areas other than where they ultimately culminate. The first punch may be thrown in a classroom, thus this is the location from which it is reported.

Analysis of Table 12: Teacher Referrals According to Sex Classification and Years of Teaching Experience

There were slightly more referrals by female teachers than male teachers (See Table 12 for summary). Of the seven teachers who were responsible for more than 30% of all referrals, four were female. Three of them had three or fewer years of teaching experience.

The researcher grouped teachers according to the number of years of teaching experience on a scale of five year intervals (See Table 12 for summary). Teachers who had 0-5 and 6-10 years of experience referred more than 64% of all offenses. This group also comprised slightly more than 51% of the staff. The 0-5 year group also contained four of the seven teachers who were responsible for reporting almost a

TABLE 10

PLACES WHERE REFERRALS ARE MOST LIKELY TO ORIGINATE

Response Category	Frequency	Percent
Classroom	249	46.2
Hallway/Lavatory	45	8.3
Lunchroom/Cafeteria	25	4.6
School Yard	27	5.0
Tardiness/No Designation	80	14.8
Truancy/No Designation	81	15.0
Class Cut/No Designation	32	5.9
TOTAL	539	100.0

TABLE 11

LOCATION OF INCIDENTS INVOLVING A FIGHT, ARGUMENT, OR USE OF ABUSIVE LANGUAGE

	Frequency	Percent
Classroom	32	40.5
Hallway/Lavatory	27	34.2
Lunchroom/Cafeteria	6	7.6
School Yard	14	17.7
TOTAL	79	100.0

third of all referrals.

There was a proportionate decline of referrals after the tenth year with the number of years of teaching experience. The exception was the 36-40 year category where one teacher accounted for all referrals.

With the exception of the class cuts, tardiness, truancy category to which the administrator contributed the most referrals, the single largest offense category for which teachers alone referred students was disturbing the class. In the groupings of experience, this offense was also the most frequently reported.

#### Analysis of Table 13: Referring Teachers' Departments

Table 13 summarizes referrals from each department. With the exception of administration, the distribution of the referrals was fairly closely grouped. Special education and reading recorded the highest percentages in the study. The administration accounted for 41.4% of all referrals, special education for 7.8%, and reading, 7.2%. Several factors help to explain this pattern.

In the special education department, for example, four of the five teachers had taught three or fewer years. One teacher was responsible for a third of the

TABLE 12  
TEACHER REFERRALS ACCORDING TO SEX CLASSIFICATION AND YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Variable	Response Category	Frequency	Percent	% of Teachers on Staff
Sex	Male	148	46.8	56.4
	Female	168*	53.2	43.6
Experience in Years	0 - 5	67	21.2	17.6
	6 - 10	136	43.0	33.7
	11 - 15	77*	24.4	22.7
	16 - 20	16	5.1	16.0
	21 - 25	2	.6	2.5
	31 - 35	1	.3	4.2
	36 - 40	17	5.8	.8

\* The 223 referrals in the 11-15 year category by a female administrator have been deleted from this table in the frequency distributions and percents in order to present a more accurate picture of the female teaching staff and years of experience breakdown.

42 referrals. The limited teaching experience coupled with the typically high incidence of behavior problems associated with special needs students explains, in part, the disproportionately high number of referrals. A similar pattern existed in the reading department where two of four teachers were responsible for three-fourths of the 39 referrals. One teacher had two years and the other six years of experience.

In the mathematics department, one teacher with two years of experience was responsible for more than a third of the referrals for that nine member department. One of seven industrial arts teachers made all 29 referrals credited to that department. Inexperience does not explain what happened in that department. Instead, the researcher suggests that unreasonable expectations and unduly rigid teacher standards contributed greatly to the number of referrals. Clearly, the inexperienced teachers need help in developing more effective classroom management skills and the experienced teacher needs assistance in becoming more reasonable and flexible.

TABLE 13

REFERRING TEACHERS' DEPARTMENTS

	Frequency	Percent
Administration	223	41.4
English	22	3.9
Special Education	42	7.8
Mathematics	29	5.4
Social Studies	26	4.8
Science	31	5.8
Physical Education	32	5.9
Art	22	4.1
Music	13	2.4
Typing	9	1.7
Home Economics	12	2.2
Industrial Arts	29	5.4
Reading	39	7.2
Health	2	.4
Foreign Languages	3	.6
English as a Second Language	5	1.0
TOTAL	539	100.0



Analyses of Tables 14 and 15: The Action Taken by the Administrator and the Relationship of the Nature of the Problem to the Action Taken by the Administrator

In the disposition of the 539 referrals, the response which the discipline code required and which the administrator consequently most frequently chose was suspension. This disciplinary measure was invoked in 45.5% of the cases. This category included overnight suspensions; they were considered conferences rather than suspensions in the traditional sense of the word. They required a conference with a parent as a condition of the student's return to school the following day. The suspension category also included the traditional two, three, four, and five day suspensions.

As second and third most frequent recourses, the administrator chose to assign demerits and communicate with a parent by phone, letter, or conference. The remaining categories of action taken included student conferences and discussions, verbal reprimands, referrals to guidance or child study, assignment to after school detention, reassignment of seating or teacher of student, student behavior contracts, and informal cooling-off time.

An analysis of the relationship between the nature of the problem and the action taken by the administrator indicated that the assigning of demerits and suspension occurred in each category. Demerits were cumulative so that when a student acquired twenty-five, s/he received a suspension. Of the 193 class cuts, tardiness, and truancy referrals, the actions most frequently taken were suspension, assigning demerits, and communicating with parents (See Table 15 for summary). When fighting, arguing, slapping, hitting, or using abusive language occurred, suspensions were most often invoked (48.1%). The administrator also assigned demerits, communicated with parents, and simply held conferences with students.

Of the 118 referrals for disturbing the class, the administrator selected the following responses: assignment of demerits, suspension, and communication with parents. The frequency of referrals in the remaining categories was low; however, the actions taken included all of the responses cited earlier.

Analyses of Tables 16 and 17: Length of Suspension and the Relationship of the Nature of the Problem to the Number of Day Suspended

Of the 539 offenses referred, 300 did not result

TABLE 14

## ACTION TAKEN BY ADMINISTRATOR

Response Category	Frequency	Percent
Assigned Demerits	129	23.9
Student Conference/ Verbal Reprimand	29	5.4
Reassigned Seating or Teacher	6	1.1
Communicated with Parent by Phone, Letter or Conference	70	13.0
Assigned Detention After School	11	2.0
Suspension	239	44.5
Referred to Guidance/ Child Study	16	2.9
Multiple Action	39	7.2

TABLE 15  
THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM TO THE ACTION TAKEN BY ADMINISTRATOR

OFFENSE CATEGORY	Assigned			Student			Commun.			Susp.			Ref. to			Multi.
	Demerits	Conf./ Reprimand	Chng. Seat	Chng. with Parent	Assgn. Deten.	0 - 5 Days	Guid./ Chld. St.	Action	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
Class Cut, Tardiness, Truancy	34 17.6	3 1.6	0 0	12 6.2	0 0	132 68.4	4 2.1	8 4.1	193							
Fighting, Arguing, Using Abusive Language	13 16.5	10 12.6	0 0	11 13.9	0 0	38 48.1	1 1.3	6 7.6	79							
Running, Screaming, Shoving, Namecalling	7 23.3	2 6.7	1 3.3	3 10.0	0 0	15 50.0	2 6.7	0 0	30							
Disobeying General Rules	19 28.0	6 8.8	2 2.9	21 30.9	0 0	8 11.8	5 7.4	7 10.3	68							
Throwing Food and Snow	2 25.0	0 0	0 0	1 12.5	0 0	3 37.5	0 0	2 25.0	8							
Smoking	3 42.9	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	4 57.1	0 0	0 0	7							
Habitually Disturbing a Class	38 32.2	6 5.1	3 2.5	20 16.9	3 2.5	31 26.3	3 2.5	14 11.9	118							
Being in Corridor without a Pass	7 63.6	1 9.1	0 0	0 0	0 0	2 18.2	0 0	1 9.1	11							
Vandalism	1 14.3	1 14.3	0 0	1 14.3	0 0	3 42.8	1 14.3	0 0	7							
Failure to Report to a Detention	5 27.8	0 0	0 0	1 5.6	8 44.4	3 16.7	0 0	1 5.6	18							
TOTAL	129	29	6	70	11	239	16	39	539							

in a suspension. Of those that did involve a suspension, 148 resulted in an overnight suspension pending conference, 57 were two-day suspensions, and 23 were three-day suspensions. Four and five-day suspensions were given least frequently.

An investigation of the relationship between the nature of the problem and the number of days suspended revealed that with the exception of the failure to report to detention category, an overnight pending conference suspension was used in each offense category. Overnight suspensions were used most frequently when the following offenses were reported: class cuts, tardiness, truancy; fighting, arguing, slapping, hitting, or using abusive language; and habitually disturbing a class. Two-day suspensions followed the same frequency pattern.

Three-day suspensions were assigned most often in incidents involving fighting, arguing, slapping, hitting, using abusive language and habitually disturbing a class. Four five-day suspensions were assigned for habitually disturbing a class.

TABLE 16

LENGTH OF SUSPENSION

Response Category	Frequency	Percent
No Suspension Given	300	55.6
Pending Conference/Overnight	148	27.4
Two Days	57	10.6
Three Days	23	4.3
Four Days	2	.4
Five Days	9	1.7

TABLE 17  
THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM TO THE NUMBER OF DAYS SUSPENDED

OFFENSE CATEGORY	No Susp.		Overnight/ Pending Conference		Two Days		Three Days		Four Days		Five Days		Totals Frequency
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
Class Cut, Tardiness, Truancy	57	29.5	103	53.4	30	15.5	3	1.6	0	0	0	0	193
Fighting, Arguing, Using Abusive Language	42	53.1	16	20.3	12	15.2	7	8.9	0	0	2	2.5	79
Running, Screaming, Shoving, Namecalling	16	53.3	7	23.3	3	10.0	2	6.7	0	0	2	6.7	30
Disobeying General Rules	60	88.2	6	8.8	2	2.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	68
Throwing Food and Snow	3	37.5	2	25.0	0	0	3	37.5	0	0	0	0	8
Smoking	3	42.9	2	28.6	0	0	1	14.3	0	0	1	14.3	7
Habitually Disturbing a Class	91	77.1	9	7.6	7	5.9	6	5.1	1	.8	4	3.4	118
Being in Corridor without a Pass	9	81.8	1	9.1	1	9.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
Vandalism	4	57.1	2	28.6	0	0	1	14.3	0	0	0	0	7
Failure to Report to a Detention	15	83.3	0	0	2	11.1	0	0	1	5.6	0	0	18
TOTAL	300		148		57		23		2		9		539

## Conclusions

The study examined 539 discipline referrals which the researcher grouped into ten categories according to the nature of the offense. She analyzed the referrals by the student's sex, grade, race, program classification, month, day of week, and time of occurrence, location of the incident, referring teacher's experience, sex, and subject area, action taken by the administrator, and length of suspensions.

The identification of the kinds of problems referred was critical in a study on discipline. Principally, the findings proved that some areas of school discipline receive significantly more attention and concern than other areas. The analysis of data enabled the researcher to discern the source of most of the problems in terms of students being referred, the teachers making the referrals, and the circumstances surrounding the reporting of the incident. In addition, the researcher paralleled offense categories with specific variables, thus confirming the existence of relationships between certain variables. Finally, the data showed how the administrator responded to discipline referrals within the context of the code of conduct of the school in which the study was conducted.



The data revealed that the three categories generating the most referrals were class cuts, tardiness, truancy; disturbing a class; and fighting, arguing, slapping, hitting, or using abusive language. The study also identified male seventh graders as the group most often referred. Additionally, the results showed that teachers disproportionately referred special needs students for certain offenses.

The data disclosed that teachers with few years of experience referred students more frequently than did experienced teachers. The researcher also confirmed that a majority of the incidents reported occurred in the classroom.

The findings of this study provide a convincing argument for the need to develop strategies to combat truancy and class cutting. This requires a closer examination of the climate of the school. The findings provide a mandate for dealing with students' passive, avoidance techniques. The findings also clearly signal the need to reduce the disruptions in classes and minimize the impact of those disruptions on the victims. The findings suggest a need for more creative alternatives and administrative responses.

## C H A P T E R V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Overview

Chapter I presented an overview of the dissertation and a rationale for examining classroom discipline and management. It described the setting in which the study was conducted.

Chapter II reviewed the literature. It concentrated on the nature of schools and self-concept as they relate to discipline. It discussed effective classroom strategies and successful administrative programs that dealt with discipline.

Chapter III described the methodology that was employed in conducting the study and outlined major research questions. It described the research population and identified the variables that were measured. In addition, it presented the procedures for data collection and data analyses.

Chapter IV presented the data and statistical analyses of the findings. It investigated relationships among variables and provided crosstabulation

analyses.

Chapter V contains a summary and conclusions. It reviews the major research questions and the significance of the findings. Finally, it proposes specific responses for teachers and administrators. The approach and method were straightforward enough for other administrators or teams of teachers to conduct a survey in their school. Some findings and conclusions will no doubt apply to most urban middle school settings.

#### Summary

The notion that discipline is embedded in the school's climate and that it varies with such factors as student, time, personalities, general environment, and group processes among teachers is fundamental to this study. Extensive evidence shows that the primary causes of discipline problems are deeply rooted in the nature of the school itself. Thus, when educators consider ways to reduce the causes of discipline problems, they must seek practical ways to modify the institution. Edmonds (1979) in an exhaustive analysis of studies dealing with

school climate summarized six characteristics that are indispensable for effective schools: (1) strong administrative leadership; (2) a climate of high expectations; (3) an atmosphere that is orderly without being rigid, quiet without being oppressive, and generally conducive to the instructional business at hand; (4) an emphasis on students' acquiring basic skills; (5) flexibility in diverting energy and resources to fundamental objectives when necessary; and (6) frequent monitoring of the progress of students.

Adolescents deserve creative learning school environments. Classroom designs that require middle school students to remain seated for long periods of time, for example, are unrealistic in terms of what is known about adolescent growth and development (Jones and McEwin, 1980). Adolescents need to explore and manipulate. They need an environment that is learner-centered, creative, industrious, flexible, dynamic, friendly, exploratory, caring and disciplined.

Teachers need a certain level of competence in classroom organization and management. It is vital that they recognize and avoid conditions which provoke

or reinforce classroom disruption. Both teachers and students benefit when teachers analyze their philosophies and understand their own behavior. Such reflection on the part of teachers might lead them to new insights concerning the deterioration of classroom interaction, insufficient rapport, and conflict in attitude and purpose between themselves and students. Teachers might then view these areas as critical elements in the total discipline picture.

Teachers who are serious about helping students reduce discipline problems should teach problem solving, encourage resourcefulness, and develop a relationship of mutual respect. Teachers should stress democratic process and the need to accept the logical consequences of one's behavior. The classroom atmosphere and total school environment should be geared toward convincing students of the necessity of shared human value in regulations. Creation of a healthy school environment demands that rules be clear, rational, cross-culturally relevant, enforceable, and few in number (Bloom, 1980). Similarly, consistent and equitable administration of the rules is essential to effective discipline.

A survey of literature completed in conjunction with this study revealed general agreement among authors that a focus on rule breakers deflects consideration of other factors inherent within the education system which not only cause but also accentuate problems. Such conditions as irrelevant classes, memory-fact education, inept school administrators, poor classroom management skills, and weak leadership create discipline problems (Leacock, 1969; Glasser, 1969; Moyer, 1978; Lufler, 1979; Kaeser, 1979; Howard, 1978; Alshuler, 1980; Tanner, 1978). Edmonds (1979) articulated the theme clearly when he wrote that children respond to unstimulating learning experiences predictably: They are apathetic, disruptive, or absent.

Some writers, convinced that self-concept in teaching and learning was the key to achieving an emotionally healthy individual and environment, developed and provided stimulating classroom activities that enhance self-concept. The theme prevailed that serious discipline problems emanate from students who usually resent school and have poor self-images (Glasser, 1969; Canfield and Wells, 1976).

Many writers echoed a theme of fostering individual

responsibility in teachers and students. They supported the notion that teachers need to discover the difference between self-discipline based on freedom with responsibility and imposed obedience to authority based on force, power, and fear (Dreikurs, 1971; Glasser, 1969; Alshuler, 1980). They noted the importance of democratic problem solving.

Studies focusing on school violence found that the principal's leadership is the strongest factor in reducing school violence. The presence of firm, fair, and consistent policies and practices in addition to a principal's visibility and availability to students and staff are elements which differentiated safe schools from those which were not (Rubel, 1978).

Some literature focused on the formation of policies and rules. These authors emphasized the importance of student input into the formation of those rules by which they must abide (Clune, 1979; Chesler et al., 1979; Glasser, 1969; Dreikurs, 1971).

The literature also explored teachers' theoretical assumptions about the nature of children in terms of their development, personality, and behavior. Writers viewed life in the classroom as a function

of what and how teachers think about children. Logically, these perceptions about children are reflected in the teacher's concept of his/her own role (Leacock, 1969; Sarason, 1971; Levine and Kindsvatter, 1980).

Some researchers considered outside and community groups as the essential ingredient to institutional improvement. They suggested that lay citizens and parents become actively involved in planning and monitoring (Mizell, 1979; Chesler et al., 1979; Haralson, 1979).

On the issue of suspension, many writers argued that suspensions create more problems than they solve. The critics of suspension argued that suspensions not only have negative effects on individual students, but also that they are merely symptomatic of deeper issues. Authors cited differential treatment by race and status, the unevenness and arbitrariness of the system, and discriminatory application in general as causing further discipline problems (Kaeser, 1979; Larkin, 1979; Clune, 1979; Lufner, 1979; Chesler et al., 1979).

Finally, much of the literature stressed the importance of retraining administrators in the skills



of organizational management and leadership. They suggested building more supportive relationships and creating schools within schools. They supported expanding the curriculum and extracurricular programs and generally improving the school climate. Some authors provided a wide variety of suggestions and instruments for creating more responsive programs (Howard, 1978; Krumboltz and Krumboltz, 1972). A few dealt specifically with attendance problems and truancy; these offenses represent the greatest discipline problem both on a national level and in the local setting in which this study was conducted.

In general, the literature described many programs in secondary settings. In schools where disruption and violence have provided a focus for educational reform, experiments have taken on wide variety. Among the alternatives were increased school sponsored activities before and after regular school hours, group guidance sessions, daily reinforcement of positive behavior, increased tutorial help, student committees formally involved in setting and explaining rules, more conferences between parents and school personnel, more telephone conferences with parents,

peer counseling, and in-school suspension.

### Conclusions

The study of discipline focused on the nature and pattern of problems that occur in an urban middle school. Theoretical and investigative analyses were designed to provide data on the following major questions:

- (1) What constitutes a creative learning environment for poor, urban, middle school children?
- (2) What developmental characteristics are significant and must therefore be considered in their discipline?
- (3) What kinds of discipline problems occur most frequently in an urban middle school?
- (4) Are some students referred more frequently for discipline than others?
- (5) So some teachers refer students more often than others?
- (6) Are there some days or periods during which more referrals are made?
- (7) Are there some places where discipline problems are more likely to originate?
- (8) What action is most often taken by the

assistant principal to resolve the problem?

- (9) What relationships, if any, exist among the above questions?

Some conclusions have been derived from the study. The researcher has addressed the first two questions within a theoretical context through the literature review. For the remaining questions, she will summarize the findings based on the empirical data and discuss some implications.

A school can learn something about itself through fairly accessible information. Within data collection systems, administrators can spot disproportion among groups, review types of punishments, and diagnose patterns of student and teacher behavior.

The data revealed that the greatest discipline problem is truancy from classes and tardiness to classes. This problem is followed in frequency by reports of habitually disturbing a class.

Boys are more likely to be referred for discipline than girls. Boys are referred for disturbing classes almost twice as often as girls. Seventh graders are more likely to be involved in incidents of fighting, in hitting, and using abusive language than are eighth

or ninth graders. Such incidents clearly decreased as grade levels increased.

One of the major conclusions of the study is that special needs students are referred in great disproportion to their makeup in the school population. This finding suggests, first, that those students need help in improving coping skills and, second, that teachers who work with them need training in handling conflict.

Inexperienced teachers made the greatest number of referrals. This pattern indicated a need for more assistance in classroom management skills and organization. Most displayed an earnest desire to decrease the number and kinds of problems, but simply lacked the knowledge they needed.

The pattern of referrals in terms of days of week revealed consistency in students' behavior and in teachers' reporting. When time of day was analyzed, the data showed that problems were more likely to be reported after 11:00 A.M. than before.

School size is an important factor in the incidence of serious disruption and violence. While a middle school population exceeding 1100 may be considered large by some standards, it is not unreasonably

large where certain structural and organizational conditions exist. The organization of Worcester East Middle into teams contributed to a lower than expected incidence of disruption and violence. Thus, school size as it relates to where problems originate, becomes an issue of concern to administrators and researchers.

The data disclosed that most student referrals originated in classrooms. Given that this is where students spend most of their time, this finding is a reasonable one. In normally crowded hallways, stairways and cafeterias where opportunities exist for large numbers of student conflicts, disruptions were, in fact, minimal. This was due to the organization of time blocks where students changed classes without regard to the ringing of a bell.

Another contributing factor was the presence of teachers on hall duty as classes changed. In addition, students ate lunch with their team members and were supervised by team teachers.

Administrator action most often involved suspension pending conference, assignment of demerits, and communicating with parents. Clearly, there is a need to (1) revise the discipline code limiting the

violations for which suspension is required; (2) find other ways of getting parents involved in the discipline of their children in school; (3) explore other programs to combat truancy and tardiness, as these two violations comprised the greatest number of suspensions.

In general, a firm, fair, and consistent structure of order seemed to prevail in the school. It was a safe school where almost no vandalism occurred. There were no reports of use of possession of weapons nor were there any police arrests. In fact, Worcester East displayed many of the characteristics of an improving school (Edmonds, 1979). The principal was self-consciously assertive in her instructional leadership. She enthusiastically assumed responsibility for the evaluation of the achievement of basic objectives.

The researcher observed changes occurring in the school climate at Worcester East. Many teachers involved in the Teacher Corps project were acquiring more skills. Inexperienced teachers who lacked knowledge of management skills, for example, were beginning to learn and use more effective strategies. Experienced teachers began revising curriculum which resulted in more stimulating and relevant learning

experiences. Teachers were collaborating more and developing relationships that helped to create better learning environments. Some were initiating and implementing methods of clinical supervision. Many teachers seemed to gain a more positive view of others.

Parent participation increased and there was a greater awareness in the community of how the school functioned. Teacher Corps projects such as the establishment of the School/Community Resource Center, preparation of a school handbook, funding of mini-projects, and sponsoring of parent seminars like "How to Help Your Child Study" all began to improve school climate.

Had the Teacher Corps project not terminated prematurely, and had lay-offs and involuntary transfers of teachers due to fiscal restraints not occurred, presumably the trend toward improvement of school climate would have continued. Thus, since discipline is deeply embedded in the school climate, it is reasonable to assume that these changes were becoming a significant and compelling force in the overall improvement of discipline in the school.

## Implications

One of the major implications of the study is the need to continue to find ways of improving school climate. Efforts toward acquiring the characteristics of effective schools must be ongoing.

A code of rights and responsibilities for everyone should be developed. Student participation in the development of the code is a requisite to its success.

The offenses for which a student may be suspended should be limited. Only misbehavior which is threatening and very serious should result in suspension.

Ways must be found to determine a meaningful punishment or define a proper response to a problem. Such methods should include counseling, lectures, warnings, and discussions.

Serious student problems necessitate that staff members probe for the source of the difficulty. Repeaters should be flagged and individual programs constructed. Such measures as alternative programs, behavior modification, and student contracts with support services should be explored.

Particularly for the repeaters in classes which emphasize reading skills, the curriculum should be



examined for its appropriateness. Objectives which are geared too high for students who have deficiencies in reading skills can guarantee failure, frustration, and discipline problems.

Classes should be singled out and examined for imbalances in terms of student skills and behavior. Standard class sizes based on head count should be adjusted when the composition of the group discloses a high percentage of students with reading deficiencies or emotional problems.

The researcher suggests retraining for teachers to provide them with skills for handling conflict. Through clinical supervision, teachers can identify organizational procedures and teacher characteristics that need improvement.

Arrangements should be made for potentially disruptive students to withdraw from a situation without penalty in order to avoid a confrontation. S/he may report to a counselor or an administrator.

In-school suspension programs should be created. They guarantee a continuation of school work and also provide opportunities to improve coping skills and educational deficiencies.

## POSTSCRIPT

Since completing the research, the Worcester Public School system has sustained major cuts due to Proposition 2½. Worcester East Middle School has undergone many personnel changes and teams have been eliminated due to budget restraints. Morale has suffered greatly among staff. The school's enrollment has declined and ninth graders no longer attend. There have also been changes in redistricting. Nonetheless, some positive ideas and programs have been introduced. For example, a successful volunteer tutoring program with Holy Cross College students now exists. In addition, an in-school suspension program has been instituted. In some instances, recommendations made by the researcher may not be specifically applicable.

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A P P E N D I X A



A P P E N D I X    B

# CODE of CONDUCT for STUDENTS in Worcester Public Schools

## RULE 8. – Weapons and Dangerous Instruments

A student shall not possess, handle, transmit or improperly use any object that can reasonably be considered a weapon.  
(School sites in Rule 4)

## RULE 9. – Narcotics, Alcoholic Beverages and Stimulant Drugs

A student shall not possess, use, transmit, or be under the influence of a narcotic or hallucinogenic drug,\* alcoholic beverage or illicit substance of any kind.  
(School sites in Rule 4)

\*Authorized medical prescriptions are not in violation.  
Smoking of cigarettes should be in designated areas of Senior High Schools.

## RULE 10. – Sounding False Alarms

A student shall not, without reasonable cause by outcry, bells or otherwise cause a false alarm of fire. (Such action reported under G.L. Ch. 269, Sec. 13)

## RULE 11. – Truancy

A student shall not be repeatedly absent from class or tardy without legitimate cause.

## RULE 12. – Repeated School Violations

A student shall not repeatedly fail to comply with directions and reasonable requests of any authorized school personnel during any period of time he/she is under such authority.

Philosophy of Discipline  
Due Process Rights of Students  
Code Prohibiting Student Misconduct

"In accordance with Federal and State laws (including Title IX and Chapter 622), the Worcester Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin or handicap."

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Mayor Jordan Levy – *Chairman*  
John F. Doherty – *Vice Chairman*  
Arthur E. Chase  
Konstantina Lukes  
Raymond V. Mariano  
Philip J. Niddrie  
Edmund J. Tierney

Dr. John E. Durkin  
*Interim Superintendent of Schools*

PHILOSOPHY OF DISCIPLINE

A key aspect of a student's education is the acquisition of social and behavioral skills since effective learning can only occur when students obey basic rules of conduct.

This means that:

- Students have a responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner that is in the best interest of the school and its students.
- Parents have a responsibility to develop positive attitudes toward study and behavior.
- Teachers have a responsibility to continue behavior development through teaching and discipline in the classroom.
- The Administration and Board of Education have a responsibility to support and maintain the enforcement of discipline within the school buildings.

DUE PROCESS RIGHTS

1. The exercise of any of the student's rights ceases when it infringes upon the rights of another individual or group.
2. No student has the right to disrupt the educational process within a school.
3. All students will have the rights to due process procedures including notice and the right to a hearing where required in matters of suspension, transfer and expulsion.

CODE PROHIBITING STUDENT MISCONDUCT

Violation of any of the following rules is grounds for suspension.

RULE 1. - Disruption of School

A student shall not by use of violence, force, threat, fear, passive resistance or any other conduct cause the disruption or obstruction of any lawful mission, process, or function of the school.

RULE 2. - Damage or Destruction of School Property

A student shall not steal or cause damage to school property, nor make such attempts.

RULE 3. - Damage or Destruction of Private Property

A student shall not steal or cause damage to private property nor make such attempts, during school activities on or off school grounds.

RULE 4. - Physical Assault on a School Employee

A student shall not cause or attempt to cause physical injury to a school employee:

- a) on school grounds during, or immediately before or after school hours.
  - b) on school grounds at any time when the school is being used by a school group.
  - c) off the school grounds at any school event.
- (Sites a-c also apply to Rules 5-9)

RULE 5. - Physical Assault on a Student or Other Person Not Employed by the School

A student shall not do serious bodily injury to another student or any other person.  
(School sites in Rule 4)

RULE 6. - Verbal Assault on a School Employee

A student shall not assault verbally any school employee. Verbal assault means defiance, insolence, rudeness, obscenity, or abusive language  
(School sites in Rule 4)

RULE 7. - Verbal Assault on a Student or Non-employee of School

A student shall not assault verbally any person.  
(School sites in Rule 4)



A P P E N D I X C

**WORCESTER EAST MIDDLE SCHOOL  
CONDUCT VIOLATION POLICIES**

146

It shall be the policy of Worcester East Middle School to protect first the rights of all students to learn in a safe and peaceful environment. No individual student may endanger the safety of others nor may that student infringe upon the rights of other students to learn. Any student who disrupts the orderly conduct of school procedures or classrooms shall be responsible for his/her actions. We believe it is important that members of our school community understand the rules and regulations of a school. Students who violate rules which help ensure the safety and learning of others can know what action follows. A wise person who understands the consequences of his/her actions can prevent misconduct and strive to do better. The result for all members of the school will be a better learning environment.

Mary Batchelder Koch  
*Principal*

A student who accumulates 10 demerits for school violations will be suspended pending a conference with a parent/guardian.

Class cut	1st time	2 demerits and conduct letter
	2nd time	Suspension pending conference
Smoking	1st time	Suspension pending conference
	2nd time	Suspension 2 days
Leaving class without permission		Warning and 2 demerits
Fighting		Suspension 3 days (all parties)
Threatening another student		1 demerit and conduct letter
Refusing to dress for gym	1st time	Warning
	2nd time	2 demerits and conduct letter
	3rd time	Suspension
In lavatory or corridors without permission slip	1st time	1 demerit
	2nd time	2 demerits and conduct letter
	3rd time	Suspension
Skiping a detention		Talk to parent and/or 2 demerits/and make up
Horseplay with other students, pushing.		2 demerits and conduct letter
Running, yelling in corridors		1 demerit
Disturbing a class	1st time	1 demerit
	2nd time	2 demerits
	3rd time	Suspension pending conference
Going to locker between classes		1 demerit
Name calling – (verbal assaults on another student)		Suspension
Throwing food or improper behavior in cafeteria		Student cleans up cafeteria, brings lunch and eats in detention room for one week.
Obscene, vulgar language in classroom		Suspension pending conference
Insolence, insubordination (refusal to obey teacher)		Suspension 3 days
Disturbing school assembly		3 demerits and conduct letter
Abusive /obscene language to teacher or school employee.		Suspension 3 days
Throwing snow, ice, or other dangerous objects.		Suspension 1 day
Tardiness to class (chronic – 3 or more times)		1 demerit
Unexcused tardiness to school (more than 5 times each quarter)		Suspension pending conference
Destroying /defacing school property, books, etc.		Pay for/ and suspension, pending conference if necessary

A P P E N D I X D

WORCESTER STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE  
 WORCESTER/UMASS TEACHER CORPS PROJECT

THIS IS NOT A TEST

148

This is a questionnaire to find out how students feel about certain things in this school. Your answers and the answers of all other students in this school will help us discover WHAT REALLY HAPPENS and WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN in this school. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers to this questionnaire. The best answers are the ones which TELL YOUR HONEST OPINION. You should NOT put your name on this questionnaire.

Circle the number in this column which shows how often the sentence REALLY HAPPENS in your school.

Circle the number in this column which shows how often the sentence SHOULD HAPPEN IN YOUR SCHOOL.

<u>Almost Always</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Almost Never</u>		<u>Almost Always</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Almost Never</u>
1	2	3	4	Teachers in this school listen to the students' side of the story.	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	Teachers in this school are friendly and easy to talk to.	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	Students in this school get along well with each other.	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	There is a clear set of rules for students to follow.	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	The teachers really help the students to learn.	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	Teachers give extra help to students who ask for help.	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	Students pay attention to what the teachers say.	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	Teachers in this school are fair to students.	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	Teachers in this school understand what students are like.	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	Students in this school know what will happen to them if they break the rules.	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	Students of different races, religions, or backgrounds get along well with each other.	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	All of the students are treated alike.	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	When students have problems in school, they can talk with their teachers.	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	Students can count on the principal and assistant principal(s) to listen to their side of the story.	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	Teachers try out new ways of teaching.	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	Teachers and students get along well in this school.	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	Teachers explain why they do things.	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	The principal and assistant principal(s) explain why they do things.	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	In this school, students' opinions count.	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	We learn about different races and cultures in this school.	1	2	3	4

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP

A P P E N D I X    E

## The Importance of Needs Among Students at Worcester East

Students at Worcester East Middle School expressed the importance (80% or more) of their needs in the following areas:

### Socially:

- To have a good relationship with their mother, father, and family
- To have friends
- To be grown up
- To have clean clothes
- To feel good about oneself

### Emotionally:

- To be honest
- To be respectful
- To expect fairness
- To show self-control

### Physically:

- To have a balanced diet
- To eat properly
- To be healthy
- To be able to protect oneself

### Academically:

- To be able to read
- To follow directions
- To know how to study

The following statistics will illustrate more completely the degree of importance by grade and area (social, emotional, physical, academic) of the needs of the 7th, 8th, and 9th grade students. The sampling included 92 ninth graders, 69 eighth graders, and 85 seventh graders.

## 7th Grade % by Area

## Social

Have a father	92%
Have police protection	90%
Have a mother and father	87%
Grow up	84%
Get along with my family	82%
Have clean clothes	78%
Have someone to do things with	77%
Have a mother	76%
Feel good about self	73%
Have more time for self	58%
Have a paying job	57%
Have a friend	54%
Have a teacher to talk with	53%
Have parents visit school	50%

## Emotional

Be honest	84%
Have people be honest with me	83%
Have respect	82%
Have fair parents	81%
Have fair teachers	80%
Improve relationship with family	75%
Have self-control	74%
Be successful	71%
Have others respect me	70%
Make my own decisions	58%
Freedom to choose	56%

## 7th Grade % by Area (Cont.)

## Physical

Be healthy	86%
See a doctor yearly	82%
Know about child abuse	80%
Hear well	79%
Eat good food	79%
Help others	75%
Sleep in a warm bed	71%
Look my best	64%
Exercise daily	57%
Learn about sex	57%
Play sports	53%

## Academic

Read well	83%
Follow directions	81%
Know math	76%
Study for a test	75%
Spell well	74%
Work things with my hands	65%
Do word problems in math	65%
Know music	63%
Understand charts and graphs	62%
Find information in the library	60%
Use a dictionary	59%
Read a map	59%
Read the newspaper	56%
Figure out money change	56%
Figure out discounts	56%
Know the metric system	50%



## 8th Grade % by Area

## Social

Have a mother	90%
Grow up	87%
Have clean clothes	85%
Get along with my family	84%
Have a father	83%
Have someone to do things with	83%
Have a paying job	82%
Feel good about self	81%
Have police protection	80%
Have a mother and father	77%
Have a friend	60%
Have a teacher to talk to	55%
Have more time for myself	55%

## Emotional

Have people be honest with me	90%
Improve relationship with family	90%
Have fair parents	85%
Have respect	84%
Be honest	83%
Freedom to choose	81%
Have fair teachers	81%
Have self-control	81%
Have others respect me	78%
Be successful	76%
Make my own decisions	74%
Have someone to talk to	56%

## 8th Grade % by Area (Cont.)

## Physical

Eat good food	87%
Be healthy	86%
See a doctor yearly	82%
Hear well	80%
Know about child abuse	78%
Help others	74%
Look my best	74%
Sleep in a warm bed	73%
Exercise daily	64%
Play sports	58%
Learn about sex	54%

## Academic

Study for a test	84%
Figure out money change	82%
Read well	78%
Follow directions	76%
Know math	73%
Spell well	69%
Fill out an application form	68%
Have extra help	67%
Work things with my hands	61%
Read labels	61%
Do word problems in math	59%
Know science	58%
Enjoy gym	57%
Figure out discounts	56%
Enjoy music	53%
Use the telephone book	53%
Read the newspaper	52%
Find information in the library	50%

## 9th Grade % by Area

## Social .

Have a mother	94%
Get along with my family	92%
Feel good about self	92%
Have clean clothes	92%
Have police protection	91%
Have a father	90%
Have a mother and father	90%
Have someone to do things with	85%
Grow up	84%
Have a paying job	78%
Have more time for myself	63%
Have recess period	52%

## Emotional

Have people be honest with me	95%
Improve relationship with family	94%
Have fair teachers	89%
Be honest	89%
Have others respect me	89%
Have respect	85%
Have self-control	84%
Freedom to choose	81%
Be successful	81%
Make my own decisions	80%
Have someone to talk to	69%
Offer praise	54%

## 9th Grade % by Area (Cont.)

## Physical

Know about child abuse	88%
Eat good foods	86%
Be healthy	83%
Help others	83%
Look my best	83%
Sleep in a warm bed	81%
See a doctor yearly	76%
Exercise daily	64%
Be able to protect myself	59%
Play sports	57%
Have chores to do at home	52%
Learn about sex	51%

## Academic

Read well	89%
Follow directions	88%
Study for a test	85%
Spell well	81%
Figure out money change	78%
Know math	76%
Fill out an application form	73%
Enjoy gym	65%
Work things with my hands	63%
Do word problems in math	62%
Figure out discounts	61%
Read labels	57%
Read the newspaper	52%
Use a dictionary	51%
Have extra help	50%

