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An Analysis of a Mandated District-Wide Discipline Policy

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AN ANALYSIS OF A MANDATED

DISTRICT-WIDE DISCIPLINE POLICY

A Field Study

Presented to the

Graduate Faculty

University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Specialist in Education

University of Nebraska at Omaha

By

Ronald D. Townsend

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FIELD PROJECT ACCEPTANCE

Accepted for the Graduate Faculty, University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Specialist in Education, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Supervisory Committee

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Chairman

April 12, 1983
Date

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CHAPTER 1

THE PROJECT

INTRODUCTION

The American public continues to regard discipline as the most important problem facing the public schools. Americans, as they have done consistently for more than a decade, in the 16th Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools cited discipline as the predominant problem in schools today.[1] The attention given by the mass media to this finding each year is a mixed blessing, illuminating a national concern but also engendering a harmful over reaction.

Politicians, the media, and special interest groups - all of whom benefit from the myth that U.S. schools are in chaos - foster a "get tough" response. President Reagan suggested that we solve the problem of U.S. education, without spending more money, simply by a return to "to good, old-fashioned discipline."[2]

Valid interpretation of data on school crime is difficult. For example, a National Education Association poll shows there was a 53 percent increase in the number of incidents of school violence directed at teachers between 1977 and 1983. However the National Education Association revised its poll questions twice during that interval to make them more inclusive. These revisions make it impossible to determine whether violence directed against teachers actually increased - or perhaps even decreased - between 1977 and 1983.[3] Additionally, according to National Education Association research, school discipline/violence problems have declined in recent years: "In 1979, over 74 percent of teachers said discipline problems impaired their effectiveness to teach. In 1983, the figure had dropped to 45 percent."

The American Federation of Teachers tells a somewhat different story: Teachers are plagued considerably by discipline problems that interfere with classroom efficiency.[4]

Valid comparisons of school violence from one year to another are further hampered by the vagaries of classifying offenses.[5] In actuality, crime rates may vary in a school district simply because of a change in a school's chief disciplinarian; differing definitions of offenses can also cause discipline offense rates to fluctuate across districts.

Given the complexity of the problem of school discipline and the difficulties of interpreting the data, what can be validly deduced?[6] From an analysis of the data available it is apparent that the American public thinks there is a school discipline problem. The task then for school administrators is to develop a discipline program that is acceptable to the public.

Discipline is a word soaked with negative connotations - of harsh words and harsher actions, of birch rods and paddles reserved for the backsides of insolent youth. Those images haunt today's educators. What the majority understand - and struggle to make the public understand - is that discipline has little, if anything, to do with punishment.[7]

When school policies emphasize punishment, the unsuccessful student often is treated harshly and the popular or academically superior student escapes with a slap on the hand for a similar offense. Some administrators and teachers, as a result, try to rectify this unequal treatment of students by devising standard consequences for specific offenses - automatic suspension for ten unexcused absences, for example.

But this approach eliminates the opportunity to personalize discipline, which means defining reasonable consequences that fit the misbehavior and the misbehaver.[8] Standard consequences also rob an administrator of opportunities to use his interpersonal skills in more creative ways - ways that would also encourage students to improve their behavior.

An important aspect of setting limits for student behavior (and encouraging correct behavior) is letting kids know the consequences of breaking the rules and the making sure transgressions are not ignored. "Remember that the more rules you have, the more infractions you are likely to encounter."[9] The goal of a good discipline program should be to simplify discipline policies and to change student attitudes, thereby reducing the number of discipline infractions.[10]

Although the causes for the apparent escalation of school conflict and violence are not clear, the major responsibility for management of these situations resides with the principal and assistant principal. Traditionally, they must develop and implement policies and programs that will reduce conflict and resultant violence on their school campus.[11]

The recent shift to a strict district-wide discipline code in one midwest urban school district may have taken some of the initiative away from the local building administrators. It is therefore imperative that this type of approach to the discipline problems facing American schools today be evaluated to determine whether or not it can reduce conflict and violence.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the extent to which a single comprehensive, district-wide discipline policy has affected the frequency of discipline problems in a major metropolitan school district.

Significance of the Problem

The shift to a district-wide discipline code is a major policy change in a school system where the local building principal was responsible for developing a discipline code for his or her building. One of the factors which determine the success or failure of a district-wide discipline policy is the willingness of local building administrators to enforce the district's policy.

Although this study was conducted in only one large urban school district the questions raised and the results obtained will undoubtedly be of use for other urban school districts.

Delimitations

This study focused upon a single metropolitan school district. No attempt was made to separate the student discipline problems by inner city verses suburban school, socio-economic background, single versus two parent home, or social class standing. No attempt was made to examine to what extent teacher attitude, classroom strategies or teacher inservice had on student conflict and violence.

Methodology Employed

Procedure: In order to determine the magnitude and the extent of the discipline problem in American schools today a review of pertinent literature was conducted. Through a series of personal interviews and a formal survey instrument the secondary building assistant principals will be asked to evaluate the effect of the shift from local building discipline codes to a single standardized district discipline code. A questionnaire was developed to assess:

1. The differences, if any, in conflict and violence under the district-wide code versus the previous discipline system.

2. The administrators attitudes toward the solutions offered by the discipline code.

Population: The sample group included the 41 secondary assistant principals who comprise the metropolitan school district surveyed. These building administrators have put the district's unified discipline code to work in their respective building.

Definition of Terms

Control. When there is sufficient order in the classroom to conduct planned activities without undue interference or disruption.

Discipline. The display of orderly behavior that leads to better learning.

District-Wide Discipline Code. Those rules adopted by a school board which define standard punishments for unacceptable behavior.

Punishment. The infliction of pain or some kind of unpleasantness, by
someone in authority, as a consequence of violating a rule.

Assistant Principal. The person in a school responsible for the
efficient operation and good order of a school.

Rule. A generalization used to prescribe conduct, action, or usage.

School. An educational institution comprising several grades or classes
in one building.

Organization of the Study

The report of the study is organized in the following manner:

Chapter I   is an introduction to the field project. It presents
background information, a statement of the problem,
discussion of the problem and major steps in the procedure
of the study.

Chapter II   presents a review of the related literature concerning this
problem.

Chapter III   is devoted to the administrators and procedures used in
this study.

Chapter IV   is devoted to the presentation and analysis of the data.

Chapter V   includes a summary of the findings of this study as well as
the conclusions and recommendations.

FOOTNOTES

1. George H. Gallup, "The 16th Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools," <u>Phi Delta Kappan</u> September, pp 23-38

2. Irwin A. Hyman and John D'Alessandro, "Good, Old-Fashioned Discipline: The Politics of Punitiveness," <u>Phi Delta Kappan</u>, September, 1984, pp 39-45

3. Hyman and D'Alessandro, pp 39-45

4. "Classroom Chaos Isn't What It Used To Be," <u>The American School Board Journal</u>, June, 1983, pp 18-20.

5. Hyman and D'Alessandro, pp 39-45

6. Hyman and D'Alessandro, pp 29-45

7. National Education Association, "Discipline the Sate of the Art," <u>Today's Education</u>, 1983-1984, pp 44-45

8. Bill Maynard, "Is Your Discipline Policy Part of Your Discipline Problem?" <u>The Executive Educator</u>, March, 1983, pp 26-27

9. Maynard, pp 26-27

10. Maynard, pp 26-27

11. Rodney J. Reed, "Administrator's Advice: Causes and Remedies of School Conflict and Violence," <u>NASSP Bulletin</u>, April,1983, pp 75-79

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Discipline

If there is a bottom line in education, it must be, "How much learning is taking place?" Most educators agree that the behavior students bring into the classroom has a profound effect on their achievement.[1]

To be successful, today's educator must maintain discipline in schools characterized by diversity, while simultaneously providing the best possible learning environment for every child. Public school classrooms of the Eighties commonly serve heterogeneous groups of youngsters who exhibit an array of learning styles, ability levels, talents, attitudes, levels of physical development, personality traits, behavioral patterns, and language skills. The students come from a variety of home environments, and they bring to school diverse ethnic identities and coping styles.[2]

Citing the need for "good, old-fashioned" discipline in schools, President Reagan called for a return to stricter discipline codes in a speech to the closing session of the National Forum on Excellence in Education in December 1983. The Administration's report "Disorder in Our Public Schools" say, the problem of school disorder "is among the most significant, and perhaps the most overlooked, civil rights issues of the 1980s." The report cites Gallup polls from the past ten years, which consistently show discipline as the top problem in schools.

Americans tend to turn reflexively to punishment as a solution for behavioral problems. Indeed, most Americans view punishment and discipline as synonymous.[3] Punishment has been used in schools from ancient times to the present. But discipline in a democracy should spring from internal controls, not from fear of punishment. Effective

disciplinary techniques in a democracy also incorporate respect for the rights of individuals.

Before turning to the research on discipline, it is first necessary to distinguish among discipline, control, and punishment. Punishment involves some kind of unpleasantness or the infliction of pain; it is imposed as a consequence of violating rules; and it is imposed by someone in authority.[4]

Punishment seems to contribute more directly to classroom control than to discipline. Control is found when there is sufficient order in the classroom for teachers to conduct planned activities without undue interference or disruption.[5]

Discipline, however, differs from control. A student who displays good discipline has orderly habits and is able to observe rules of conduct, follow-instructions properly, and exercise self-control in learning tasks.[6]

The word "discipline" is derived from the Latin cognate "discipline" meaning "instruction" or "tuition" and is equivalent to "discipulus" meaning "disciple". A disciple is one who receives instruction from another and learns to respect those guidelines and restraints designed to maximize personal growth and develop a genuine concern for others. To discipline then is to educate.[7]

Discipline is the display of behavior that is socially agreed upon as appropriate in a particular situation.[8] In the "Handbook of Educational Administration," Stoops, Rafferty and Johnson define discipline in a school as ordered behavior that leads to better learning. The goal of a good school discipline program then is to teach students to behave properly without direct supervision.

Is School Discipline A Problem

Parents and the public at large consistently name discipline as a major problem for education, but President Reagan's recent interest in the subject has given the issue more currency than at any time in recent memory. President Reagan's recent statement, "We can't get learning back into our schools until we get the crime and violence out," implies that most school districts do have serious problems with physical assaults and armed robberies. The administration study, "Disorder in Our Public Schools," is designed to prod states and local school districts into action, much as the report, "A Nation at Risk," focused attention on school improvement.[9]

Conflict and violence has become a major problem in urban public schools nationwide. In 1976 the National Education Association reported that American school children committed 100 murders, 12,000 armed robberies, 9,000 rapes, and 204,000 aggravated assaults against teachers and each other. They were also responsible for 270,000 school burglaries and vandalized over $600 million worth of property.[10]

Gary D. Gottfredson in testimony before the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime, reported that approximately 11 percent of secondary school students experience at least one theft of one dollar or more in a typical month; 1 percent are attacked at school; and one-half of 1 percent are robbed. In any given month almost 17,000 students are injured badly enough to seek medical attention as a result of robberies or attacks at school. In a typical month, an estimated 6,000 teachers in junior and senior high schools experience at least one robbery; 128,000 have something worth more than one dollar stolen; and 5,200 are physically attacked.[11]

A report complied by the California State Department of Education announced that "two dozen California school teachers were assaulted every day, usually by their students , during the first half of the 1980-81 school year," and that each day an average of 215 California youngsters were attacked while on public school grounds. In all, 17,145 students were assaulted from Sept. 1, 1980 to Jan. 31, 1981."[12]

On his nationally syndicated radio broadcast of 28 September 1984, Paul Harvey stated that the number one problem facing American schools today was, "Discipline." He went on to say that problems of school discipline included, "rape, murder, assault, robbery, and vandalism." The reason behind this national broadcast on the lack of school discipline was 15 to 20 Junior High School students who claimed exemption from school discipline codes for conducting, "group orgies and satanical" acts on school property. The group claimed exemption based on their right to religious freedom, as they are Devil worshipers the acts are part of their religion.

Thus encouraged, the public calls on school leaders and legislators to resolve the discipline problem with a haste that precludes careful planning, execution, and evaluation of potential solutions. The President's report "Disorder in Our Public Schools" suggests that problems of discipline really began when students gained the protection of due process against arbitrary actions by school officials. The report asserts that the extension of constitutional rights to students has tied the hands of school administrators who must deal with troublemakers - and has thereby increased substantially the number of episodes of classroom disruption and violence.[13]

Legal Basis for School Discipline

Student discipline refers to the system of rules and regulations governing the conduct and behavior of students enrolled in and attending school. This system of governance extends to the students' participation and involvement within the school as well as to those activities they engage in outside of school that may directly affect the order and discipline of the school.[14] The extent to which the schools are able to exercise this authority is dependent upon constitutional and legislative directives.

The source of state power in regard to education is found in the absence of the treatment of this function in the United States Constitution. The Tenth Amendment to the Constitution which states:

The powers not delegated to the United States by the

Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved

to the States respectively, or to the people.

has been accepted as the foundation upon which it has been declared that states are responsible for education. Each state then has, through their statutes, to establish a system of schools and provide for their management and regulation.

The Nebraska state statutes provide specifically for student discipline in section 79-4, 170 to 79-4, 205 of the Revised Statues of Nebraska 1943. The purpose of these sections is to assure the protection of all elementary and secondary school students' constitutional right to due process and fundamental fairness within the context of an orderly and effective educational process. The statutes direct:

(1) The school board or board of education shall establish and promulgate rules and standards concerning student conduct which are reasonably necessary to carry out, or to prevent interference with carrying out, any educational function, if such rules and standards are clear and definite so as to provide clear notice to students as to the conduct prescribed thereunder.

(2) All rules and standards established by school officials, other than the board, applicable to students shall not conflict with rules and standards adopted by the board. The board may change any rule or standard in accordance with policies which it may from time to time adopt.

(3) Rules or standards which form the basis for the discipline shall be distributed to students and their parents at the beginning of each school year, and shall be posted in conspicuous places in each school during the school year. Changes in rules and standards shall not take effect until reasonable effort has been made to distribute such changes to all students and parents.[15]

The statutes state that the school board or board of education may authorize the emergency exclusion, short-term or long-term suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment of any pupil from school for conduct prohibited by the board's rules or standards established pursuant to these sections. The statutes also state that administrative and teaching personal may take actions regarding student behavior, other than those specifically provided for by statute, which are reasonably necessary to aid the student, further school purposes, or

prevent interference with the educational process. Such actions may include counseling of students, parent conferences, rearrangement of schedules, requirements that a student remain in school after regular hours to do additional work, requirements that a student receive counseling, or restriction of extracurricular activity.

The statutes define the terms long-term suspension, expulsion, and mandatory reassignment as follows:

> (1) Long-term suspension shall mean the exclusion of a student from attendance in all schools within the system for a period exceeding five school days but less than twenty school days;
>
> (2) Expulsion shall mean exclusion from attendance in all schools within the system for a period not to exceed the remainder of the semester in which it took effect; and
>
> (3) Mandatory reassignment shall mean the involuntary transfer of a student to another school within the system in connection with any disciplinary action.[16]

Inherent in the right to establish schools and the duty to provide for the health, safety, and general welfare of the school population is the power to establish reasonable rules and regulations. Either explicitly or implicitly, the state constitution usually thrusts the major responsibility for the establishment of a system of student discipline upon the state legislature and boards of education, both state and local. Broad discretionary authority is given to these bodies in enacting rules and regulations. It is within their purview to enact any reasonable regulation that is considered essential to maintain order and discipline on school property and that measurably contributes to maintenance of order and decorum within the educational system.

Inherent in the power to establish reasonable rules and regulations is the authority to enforce the same. This responsibility rests basically with the professional personnel of the school. Historically, school officials have enjoyed great freedom in the exercise of this authority.[17]

Disciplinary Systems

The cry for more discipline is heard in and out of the school building. But, disciplinary practices are slow to change because of ignorance of the causes of student misbehavior. Disciplinary problems in a school can be caused by many things, among them:

(1) inadequate parenting,

(2) ineffective teacher training,

(3) poor school organization,

(4) inadequate administrative leadership,

(5) inappropriate curricula,

(6) the overuse of suspensions and other punishments,

(7) inborn traits of individual students that may interact with certain environments to cause severe behavioral or learning disorders,

(8) poor self-esteem and frustration with learning,

(9) overexposure to violence through television and the other mass media,

(10) racism,

(11) lack of employment opportunities,

(12) peer pressures,

(13) overcrowding, and

(14) specific social, political, and bureaucratic factors that ignore the needs of the young.[18]

There are two basis beliefs about the nature and character of

children.   Each point of view has assumed the credibility of a well articulated mythology accepted by a substantial number of educators. One central belief presents children as innately good, a view that contends that students develop to their full potential if left free to grow in a supportive and nonrestrictive learning environment.   The contradictory view presents children as innately flawed.   This view contends that students need the judicious supervision of well-intentioned and competent teachers if they are to develop habits of self-discipline and responsible learning.   Although each of these beliefs contains elements of truth and has its advocates, any one of them taken to the extreme or applied as an overriding principle of procedure does not do justice to the range of possible ways to handle difficult student behaviour or to encourage students to make the most of their learning opportunities.[19]

Historically, the latter view has been the premise underlying the formulation of educational legislation, the legal framework within which all principals must work.   These precise statements defining the basis for school discipline establish the respective responsibilities of principals, teachers and students in clear, unambiguous terms.   If educators agreed to implement the legislation as written in a straightforward manner, then consistency of disciplinary action throughout a school system would naturally follow.   The problem, however, stems from the contradictory philosophy asserting that children are innately good.[20]

There are many remedies to disciplinary problems, and no single approach will be universally successful.   But our handling of disciplinary problems in the schools can be improved in many ways.[21]

The best way to improve school discipline is to improve school climate. However, many facets of school climate are easily measured but hard to change. To be effective, improvement efforts require the support, understanding, and commitment of the school board, the district administrators, the building administrators, the teaching staff, the support staff, parents, and last but not least the students.[22]

System-wide change is difficult, but individual principals have great latitude. "The Safe School Study" clearly indicates that building administrators set the disciplinary tone for their schools.[23] Most data indicate that punitive administrators merely cause students to suppress their anger and hostility until the inevitable moment when it erupts against people and property. Research also shows that school vandalism is dramatically reduced when students view their schools positively as places of learning. By fostering an appropriate climate for learning, each principal has the power to help his or her students view their school in this light.[24] Secretary of Education Bell, appearing on CBS News' "Face the Nation," said "brute force and enforcement" would not solve school crime and discipline problems. "What we need is a more attractive school environment, more motivation."

Although discipline codes may be helpful, they are not panaceas. Too often administrators use them rigidly, without regard for extenuating circumstances. Other effective strategies to promote good discipline include well-planned alternative school programs, in-school suspensions, and automatic calling machines that relay recorded messages to parents of truant children. Time-out is a helpful discipline technique, if like the others it is not over used. In cases of theft or vandalism, schools have used restitution programs successfully. Peer and cross-age counseling have proven helpful to youngsters with

behavioral problems. Special after-school programs have benefited latchkey children. Last but not least, caring, enthusiastic, and masterful teachers go a long way toward preventing serious discipline problems from arising in the first place.[25]

Clearly, behavior problems in the classroom create a tremendous challenge to educators. Unfortunately this challenge tends to evoke responses from educators that exacerbate the problem. In the use of punishment, educators want to avoid inculcating feelings of failure and inadequacy. Additionally, adverse outcomes are reduced by the ways that punishment is administered. It should be clear to the student that a specific behavior is being punished.[26]

Punishment should not be harsh or excessive; however, educators who punish in fits of anger or resentment are likely to succumb to such temptations; thus punishment needs to be administered calmly and deliberately and as briefly and mildly as the infraction and situation permit. It is desirable to combine punishment with positive statements of expectations which point out what the offender should be doing rather than what the offender should not do.[27]

Some research evidence regarding the effectiveness of discipline programs indicate that social learning techniques are more effective than traditional punitive actions for helping students acquire more positive behaviors. One such technique, the Interpersonal Cognitive Problem Solving Program, teaches students to generate different options or solutions to problems, to consider the consequences of their actions on other people and themselves, and to engage in causal thinking. Causal thinking involves the ability to understand why one behaves in a specific way. Students are also taught how to inoculate themselves against stress in the classroom by practicing relaxation and self-

control techniques.[28]   However, social skills training programs are not
a panacea for controlling students who act in disruptive or aggressive
ways.   They do, however, offer other types of intervention at an
individual and group level which may be more effective than punishment
or other disciplinary action.

Student Misbehavior

The single greatest disciplinary problem confronting a school today occurs when insolent and defiant students sense the success of their disruptive tactics, and motivated by a perverse sense of satisfaction or revenge become caught in a vicious cycle of escalating disruptiveness. Disruptive behavior takes many forms, and each student and each circumstance surrounding an infraction requiring disciplinary action is unique and needs to be dealt with according to the specific circumstances.[29]

When asked what they thought were the causes of deterioration in student behavior, a cross-section of concerned individuals mentioned the following factors.

<u>Parents Identified</u>: increased disrespect for authority, excessive permissiveness, inadequate communication between teachers and parents, intimidating pressures from fellow students, premature awareness of and easy access to drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and sex, obsessive pursuit of self-interest and instant gratification without regard for others, society's self-indulgence, and the accelerating breakdown of the family.

<u>Teachers Identified</u>: increased disrespect for teachers and schools, insufficient parental interest and support, conflicting relationships within the family, excessive permissiveness, overbearing pressures from defiant classmates, inadequate administrative support, limited options for dealing with recurring misbehavior, increasing emotional disturbances among students, and decreased emphasis on academic achievement.

<u>Students Identified</u>: incredible easiness in getting away with things, disruptive examples of other students and the pressure to be accepted, decreased respect for authority, excessive emphasis on violence in the media, increasing inability of school authorities to handle recurring misbehavior, tempting desire to show off and impress classmates, the seducing impact of drugs, alcohol and tobacco, disillusioning boredom with school and classes, and lowered expectations for academic achievement and responsible behavior.[30]

In coming to terms with a discipline program, teachers and administrators need to ask some of the following questions:

(1) What methods do teachers find effective in motivating students to accept responsibility for their behavior and achievement?

(2) How can staff prevent a credibility gap about the ability of the school authorities to establish and maintain rules for appropriate behavior?

(3) What methods of handling students who repeatedly misbehave and disrupt the work of others need to be developed for use when conventional practices fail to have the desired effect?

(4) What measures need to be taken to shore up the eroding authority of teachers and administrators?

(5) What relationship between discipline and freedom in the classroom needs to be established to ensure responsible student behavior and positive learning attitudes?

(6) What are effective ways of increasing communication an co-operation between the home and school?

(7) What specific steps can the school take to discourage and curb vandalism?

(8) What are appropriate sequences of disciplinary measures for long term assistance to students in changing unacceptable attitudes and behavior?[31]

In developing a school discipline policy based on fairness, firmness and consistency, the wise principal will engage all school staff in sharing their opinions on legislation, problems and potential solutions to student misbehavior. Unless the theory of discipline adopted by a school clearly outlines and justifies a particular course of action, it is extremely difficult for teachers to make use of that course of action.[32]

Students have a right to know what is expected of them, and administrators have an obligation to communicate those expectations, those rules to students, parents, and teachers. The student handbook has become a popular vehicle to fulfill this obligation. The handbook should express the discipline philosophy of the administrators, teachers, and community within the parameters of local law and constitutions. When the policies of the school are in harmony with the expectations of the community, problems are minimized.[33]

Schools with Good Discipline

The reasons some schools succeeded in handling discipline problems while others fail are often elusive. The research of the Phi Delta Kappa Commission on Discipline suggests, success is simply the result of teachers and administrators using what they already know. The Commission found several distinguishing features of schools with effective discipline practices. The five most salient characteristics are:

Characteristic 1 - All faculty members and students are involved in problem solving.

Characteristic 2 - The school is viewed as a place to experience success.

Characteristic 3 - Problem solving focuses on causes rather than symptoms.

Characteristic 4 - Emphasis is on positive behaviors and preventive measures.

Characteristic 5 - The principal is a strong leader.[34]

These five characteristics only partially represent the findings of the Commission. Numerous other factors and concepts emerged and are discussed in the "Handbook for Developing Schools with Good Discipline.[6] Perhaps the most significant finding emerging from this and other studies, into what characteristics make up a school with good discipline, is that there is no single recipe for success. Exemplary schools are successful because teachers, administrators, and students put all of their energy into creating a positive atmosphere.

Some of the factors that the Phi Delta Kappa study found to be necessary to create a positive atmosphere included:

(1) Creating student belongingness and responsibility.

(2) Pursuing superordinate school goals.

(3) Creating symbols of identity and excellence.

(4) Fostering leadership to sustain positive school values.

(5) Creating clear formal and informal rules.[35]

Schools with effective discipline reduce behavior problems by establishing a behavior code for students. Behavioral expectations are explicitly delineated. Poorly developed rules and weak enforcement procedures cause discipline problems. Rules for student behavior should be carefully developed, clearly stated, and systematically explained. Rules must be taught; they cannot merely be announced or published.

A rule is a type of generalization used to prescribe conduct, action, or usage. Rules should not violate student rights. It would also be wise to have as few rules as possible and eliminate those which fail to contribute to educational objectives. Students should understand the reasons for rules and each rule should be stated positively, clearly, and precisely. Rules should be enforced promptly, firmly, and fairly.[36]

In order that teachers and administrators not seem arbitrary, capricious, or unfair, rules need to be clearly stated and understood and the penalties clearly indicated for violating them. Otherwise, if the school is not rule-governed, the educator may be inconsistent in administering punishment by either imposing a particular punishment one day for a misbehavior and ignoring it the next or deviating in the penalty chosen for the same infraction.[37]

Some of the most effective school discipline programs are preventive, simple, and take into account the differences in specific situations. A discipline program might start with three basic rules:

(1) Everyone has the right to learn (and no one has the right to interfere).

(2) Respect everyone's dignity, welfare, and material possessions.

(3) Attend all classes.[38]

These three rules are simple, understandable, and make the program's expectations clear.

Inconsistency in policies and approaches to dealing with discipline problems, in expectations by teachers from one room to another, in interpretation of rules and policies, and in types of punishment used, is the most serious detriment to a good school discipline system. Again it comes down to a question of expectations. If the students know what the school expects from them - and what to expect if they do not conform - most of them will fall into line.[39]

When asked, in a recent survey, if they agreed with the statement "Discipline action should be enforced consistently regardless of who it is being discipline," eighty percent of the students surveyed agreed. Those who disagreed seem to believe that there are always special circumstances surrounding disciplinary action against students, and that these circumstances ought to be considered.[40]

Careful wording of discipline codes and careful attention to due process procedures are imperative to successful discipline programs. Three key features of the discipline program contribute to its effectiveness:

(1) A philosophy of discipline clearly stated in the student handbook;

(2) Visible authority figures;

(3) Suitable punishments and consistent application of school rules.[41]

Assuming that the goal of the discipline program is to engender student self-discipline, a few simple rules that are understood and enforced will contribute to a more effective discipline program than numerous, poorly understood rules that are neither adequately communicated nor consistently applied. Don't make a rule that you can't enforce.[42]

A well-developed discipline philosophy should include consistent application of school rules and appropriate punishments for various offenses. Congruency also requires that a hierarchy of infractions is established so that the most severe offense(s) receive the most severe punishments.[43] Make certain, too, that behavior-related punishments are clearly separated from academic performance. And as you ensure that rules are clear, firmly enforced, and equitably administered, make certain that students understand this as well.[44]

Respect is the basis of discipline, of course but it is earned -not created by demand, force, or fear. And to earn students' respect, we must show by our words and actions that we are worthy of respect and that we will, in turn respect students.[45]

The way to accomplish this is to revise discipline policies with the goal of changing student attitudes. The much-heralded get-tough policies and assertive discipline techniques do not help in this regard because they are not positive solutions to discipline problems; they

merely are negative methods by which we threaten or cajole students without ever really changing their behavior. Such techniques simply are another way of doing the same old thing - giving ultimatums. Such rules and policies accomplish little; in fact, they might even contribute to misbehavior in school.[46] Administrators have to face the fact that how they run their schools could be part of the discipline problem.

Methods for dealing with student conflict vary somewhat between schools, but most research agrees that principals, vice principals and teachers who are sensitive, fair, who have high standards, and who have a good rapport with students are most able to work with disruptive students. Panaceas for disciplinary problems, which appear on the horizon with the regularity of a new moon, need to be replaced by ideas and practices that have been tested through long-standing experience, knowledge and wisdom.

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CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

Many characteristics and philosophies dealing with discipline systems in secondary schools are discussed in Chapter Two. To gather further information on this subject, the first objective of this study was to survey and analyze the Omaha Public School District's discipline policy.

A survey was sent to the forty-one assistant principals employed by the Omaha Public School District. Twenty-two of the forty-one assistance principals are assigned to the seven high schools in the district. The remaining nineteen assistant principals are assigned to the ten junior high schools in the district. In this survey the assistant principals were asked in a questionnaire to indicate, through the use of a Likert type scale, their perceptions of the district's mandated discipline code. In addition, it was the intent of this study to receive input directly from school building administrators through personal interviews. Therefore, four interviews were conducted divided between senior high and junior high school administrators.

To establish an adequate data base, it was decided that at least sixty percent of the assistant principals must return completed questionnaires. Based on the advice of Dr. Young only the assistant principals were surveyed as the assistant principals are responsible for the day-to-day administration of the districts discipline policy. A total of forty-one questionnaires were mailed, and twenty-eight were returned for a sixty-eight percent rate of return. One of the twenty-

eight returned had not been answered. Therefore, a total of twenty-seven questionnaires were used to complete data for this study.

Before distributing the questionnaires approval, for the survey and the actual questions used in the questionnaire, was granted by Dr. Irving Young from the Department of Research and by Dr. Rene E. Hlavac from the Department of Student Personnel Services. A letter from Dr. Young was sent to all secondary school assistant principals in the Omaha Public School District explaining the nature of the survey. His approval was stated and the assistant principals were reminded that their participation was voluntary. A cover letter was mailed along with the questionnaire to introduce this writer and explain the nature of the project.

The questionnaires were collected and tallies were taken on the responses. The response counts were converted to percentages and tables were developed to show the findings. The data were analyzed to see what this sample of assistant principals perceived of the ability of the district's discipline code to deal with the various types of discipline problems that occur in the district's secondary schools. The sample questionnaire and cover letter can be found in the Appendixes.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The major purpose of this study was to evaluate the extent to which a single comprehensive, district-wide discipline policy has affected the frequency of discipline problems in a major metropolitan school district. This task was accomplished by obtaining the perceptions of the secondary assistant principals in the Omaha Public School District through interviews and responses to a questionnaire. The responses to the questionnaire have been converted to percentages. These percentages can be found in the tables at the end of this chapter. The overall responses to the individual questions are reported in Table 1. The responses of the Senior High School Assistant Principals are reported in Table 2. The responses of the Junior High School Assistant Principals are reported in Table 3. The findings from the responses will be presented by these three areas.

The interviews served to give the writer some personal insight into the perceptions of the assistant principals. The one significant item from the interviews was that junior high assistant principals expressed a stronger desire for a meeting to discuss possible changes to the district policy then did their senior high counterparts. This perception was substantiated in the results of the survey.

District-wide Responses

In the survey, three items stood out with single entry responses exceeding the fifty percent level. First, assistant principals responding, to the survey, did not perceive a reduction in the frequency of discipline cases seen by their offices after the shift to the district-wide discipline policy. Second, the assistant principals who responded perceived the in-school suspension program as being effective. Last, the majority of the assistant principals felt that they are being adequately supported by the central office staff when the district code mandates the suspension or expulsion of a student and the student appeals the decision.

In addition to the three items with significant single entry responses there were six questions where adjacent entry responses showed a significant trend in the assistant principals' perceptions. The first three questions dealt with attitudes of parents and harmony with publics. Of those responding seventy percent of the assistant principals perceived changes in parent attitudes as a direct result of the shift to the district-wide code. Seventy-seven percent of the assistant principals felt the changes in parent attitudes had been positive. Along these same lines, seventy-seven percent of the assistant principals perceived the district-wide discipline code to be in harmony with the expectations of their publics.

The last three questions with significant adjacent entry responses cover a wide range of topics. Asked if the district-wide discipline policy provides long term assistance in helping students change unacceptable attitudes and behaviors, sixty-three percent of the assistant principals responded in the affirmative. Sixty-three percent

of those responding felt the need for a meeting of the district's administrators to discuss/recommend changes to the current district-wide discipline policy. Finally, fifty-five percent of the secondary assistant principals answered that it was easier to deal with discipline problems under the district-wide system.

Senior High School Responses

Sixteen of the twenty-two senior high assistant principals responded to the questionnaire. Both the single entry and the adjacent entry responses at the senior high school level paralleled the overall responses of assistant principals with one notable exception. While overall more than fifty percent of the assistant principals responded that the shift to the district-wide policy had no effect on the number of discipline cases seen by their offices, forty-four percent of the senior high assistant principals perceived some reduction in the number of cases seen by their offices.

Junior High School Responses

Eleven of the nineteen junior high assistant principals responded to the questionnaire. Although the respondents at the junior high level tended to respond more definitely one way of the other, both the single entry and the adjacent entry responses paralleled the overall responses of assistant principals in the district with one exception. At the junior high level seventy-three percent of those responding perceived the district-wide policy to be flexible enough to allow for their unique situations.

District Statistics

The Omaha Public School District Office of Research indicated that the year preceding the implementation of the district-wide discipline policy total secondary withdrawals were 1222. The total secondary withdrawals after a full year under the district-wide policy were 1351. Although this is a 129 increase in withdrawals the percentage increase is not significant. What is significant is that expulsions the year before implementation were 276 and after a full year under the new policy there were 212 expulsions. This indicates a reduction in expulsions by 64 and this is a significant percentage. However, while these are interesting figures there is no statistical base to show that either the increase in withdrawals or the decrease in expulsions was the direct result of the implementation of the district-wide discipline policy.

The following tables reveal the information which was discussed in this chapter.

TABLE I

OVERALL PERCENTAGES OF ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS RESPONDING TO DISCIPLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTION	5	4	3	2	1	UNDECIDED
1. Has the shift to a district-wide discipline code reduced the frequency of discipline cases seen by your office?	3.7	0	29.6	11.1	51.9	3.7
2. Have you observed any change in student attitudes which could be related to the OPS discipline code?	7.4	18.5	33.3	22.2	14.8	3.7
3. The changes I have observed in student attitudes have been positive.	7.4	22.2	37.0	11.1	14.8	7.4
4. Have you observed any change in parent attitudes, which could be related to the OPS discipline code?	14.8	37.0	33.3	3.7	7.4	3.7
5. The changes I have observed in parent attitudes have been positive.	7.4	33.3	44.4	0	7.4	7.4
6. Is the current OPS discipline code in harmony with the expectations of your publics?	18.5	44.4	33.3	3.7	0	0
7. Are the mandatory (policy) portions of the OPS discipline code compatible with your personal philosophy of discipline?	29.6	25.9	23.1	7.4	14.8	0
8. Has the OPS discipline code increased the number of out of school suspensions in your school?	18.5	11.1	25.9	13.5	22.2	3.7

5 - To a great extent/very important ----- 1 - No effect/unimportant

TABLE I

OVERALL PERCENTAGES OF ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS RESPONDING TO DISCIPLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTION	5	4	3	2	1	UNDECIDED
9. Are the guideline portions of the OPS discipline code flexible enough to allow for your unique situation?	25.9	29.6	18.5	18.5	7.4	0
10. Has the OPS discipline code increased the number of out-of-school suspension in OPS?	7.4	11.1	22.2	18.5	22.2	18.5
11. Do you feel the in-school suspension program has been effective?	51.9	18.5	14.8	3.7	11.1	0
12. Has the shift to mandatory disciplinary actions affected your dealing with first time offenders?	22.2	29.6	18.5	11.1	14.8	3.7
13. Are the current disciplinary measures appropriate for long term assistance in helping students change unacceptable attitudes and behaviors?	14.8	29.6	33.3	11.1	11.1	0
14. Do you feel you are adequately supported by central staff when the district code mandates the expulsion of a student?	55.5	25.9	18.5	0	0	0
15. Do you feel you are adequately supported by central staff when the district code mandates the expulsion of a student and the decision is appealed?	44.4	14.8	22.2	3.7	3.7	0

5 - To a great extent/very important ----- 1 - No effect/unimportant

TABLE I

OVERALL PERCENTAGES OF ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS RESPONDING TO DISCIPLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTION	5	4	3	2	1	UNDECIDED
16. Has the OPS discipline code affected the manner in which you treat behaviorally/emotionally impaired students?	22.2	25.9	18.5	7.4	25.9	0
17. Do you feel you had a voice in the adopted discipline code?	22.2	25.9	29.6	0	14.8	7.4
18. Do you perceive a loss of autonomy in dealing with discipline problems?	7.4	11.1	29.6	13.5	33.3	0
19. Do you feel the policy section of the OPS discipline code needs to be rewritten?	22.2	18.5	18.5	14.8	25.9	0
20. Do you feel the need for a meeting of OPS administrators to discuss/recommend changes to the OPS discipline policy?	33.3	29.6	7.4	11.1	18.5	0
21. Do you find it easier to deal with discipline problems under the OPS mandated system versus the system in existence before the mandated system?	33.3	22.2	22.2	7.4	11.1	3.7

5 - To a great extent/very important ----- 1 - No effect/unimportant

TABLE II

PERCENTAGES OF SENIOR HIGH ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS RESPONDING TO DISCIPLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTION	5	4	3	2	1	UNDECIDED
1. Has the shift to a district-wide discipline code reduced the frequency of discipline cases seen by your office?	0	0	43.8	18.8	31.1	6.3
2. Have you observed any change in student attitudes which could be related to the OPS discipline code?	0	18.8	31.3	25.0	18.8	6.3
3. The changes I have observed in student attitudes have been positive.	0	25.0	37.5	6.3	18.8	12.5
4. Have you observed any change in parent attitudes, which could be related to the OPS discipline code?	0	43.8	50.0	0	0	6.3
5. The changes I have observed in parent attitudes have been positive.	6.3	37.5	43.8	0	0	12.5
6. Is the current OPS discipline code in harmony with the expectations of your publics?	18.8	31.3	434.8	6.3	0	0
7. Are the mandatory (policy) portions of the OPS discipline code compatible with your personal philosophy of discipline?	31.3	25.0	25.0	0	18.8	0
8. Has the OPS discipline code increased the number of out of school suspensions in your school?	12.5	12.5	37.5	12.5	18.8	6.3

5 - To a great extent/very important ----- 1 - No effect/unimportant

TABLE II

PERCENTAGES OF SENIOR HIGH ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS RESPONDING TO DISCIPLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTION	5	4	3	2	1	UNDECIDED
9. Are the guideline portions of the OPS discipline code flexible enough to allow for your unique situation?	25.0	18.8	18.8	31.3	6.3	0
10. Has the OPS discipline code increased the number of out-of-school suspension in OPS?	6.3	18.8	25.0	13.8	18.8	12.5
11. Do you feel the in-school suspension program has been effective?	50.0	18.8	6.3	6.3	18.8	0
12. Has the shift to mandatory disciplinary actions affected your dealing with first time offenders?	25.0	18.8	25.0	121.5	12.5	6.3
13. Are the current disciplinary measures appropriate for long term assistance in helping students change unacceptable attitudes and behaviors?	12.5	37.5	43.8	0	6.3	0
14. Do you feel you are adequately supported by central staff when the district code mandates the expulsion of a student?	43.8	31.3	25.0	0	0	0
15. Do you feel you are adequately supported by central staff when the district code mandates the expulsion of a student and the decision is appealed?	43.3	25.0	31.3	0	0	0

5 - To a great extent/very important ----- 1 - No effect/unimportant

TABLE II

PERCENTAGES OF SENIOR HIGH ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS RESPONDING TO DISCIPLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTION	5	4	3	2	1	UNDECIDED
16. Has the OPS discipline code affected the manner in which you treat behaviorally/emotionally impaired students?	18.8	31.3	18.8	12.5	18.8	0
17. Do you feel you had a voice in the adopted discipline code?	25.0	18.8	31.3	0	18.8	6.3
18. Do you perceive a loss of autonomy in dealing with discipline problems?	12.5	12.5	31.3	18.8	25.0	0
19. Do you feel the policy section of the OPS discipline code needs to be rewritten?	31.3	18.8	18.8	13.8	12.5	0
20. Do you feel the need for a meeting of OPS administrators to discuss/recommend changes to the OPS discipline policy?	31.3	37.5	6.3	12.5	12.5	0
21. Do you find it easier to deal with discipline problems under the OPS mandated system versus the system in existence before the mandated system?	31.3	25.0	37.5	0	0	6.3

5 - To a great extent/very important ----- 1 - No effect/unimportant

TABLE III

PERCENTAGES OF JUNIOR HIGH ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS RESPONDING TO DISCIPLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTION	5	4	3	2	1	UNDECIDED
1. Has the shift to a district-wide discipline code reduced the frequency of discipline cases seen by your office?	9.1	0	9.1	0	81.9	0
2. Have you observed any change in student attitudes which could be related to the OPS discipline code?	18.2	18.2	36.4	18.2	9.1	0
3. The changes I have observed in student attitudes have been positive.	18.2	18.2	36.4	18.2	9.1	0
4. Have you observed any change in parent attitudes, which could be related to the OPS discipline code?	36.4	27.3	9.1	9.1	18.2	0
5. The changes I have observed in parent attitudes have been positive.	9.1	27.3	45.5	0	18.2	0
6. Is the current OPS discipline code in harmony with the expectations of your publics?	18.2	63.7	18.2	0	0	0
7. Are the mandatory (policy) portions of the OPS discipline code compatible with your personal philosophy of discipline?	27.3	27.3	18.2	18.2	9.1	0
8. Has the OPS discipline code increased the number of out of school suspensions in your school?	27.3	9.1	9.1	27.3	27.3	0

5 - To a great extent/very important ----- 1 - No effect/unimportant

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TABLE III

PERCENTAGES OF JUNIOR HIGH ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS RESPONDING TO DISCIPLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTION	5	4	3	2	1	UNDECIDED
9. Are the guideline portions of the OPS discipline code flexible enough to allow for your unique situation?	27.3	45.5	18.2	0	9.1	0
10. Has the OPS discipline code increased the number of out-of-school suspension in OPS?	9.1	0	18.2	18.2	27.3	27.3
11. Do you feel the in-school suspension program has been effective?	54.6	18.2	27.3	0	0	0
12. Has the shift to mandatory disciplinary actions affected your dealing with first time offenders?	18.2	45.5	9.1	9.1	18.2	0
13. Are the current disciplinary measures appropriate for long term assistance in helping students change unacceptable attitudes and behaviors?	18.2	18.2	18.2	27.3	18.2	0
14. Do you feel you are adequately supported by central staff when the district code mandates the expulsion of a student?	72.8	18.2	9.1	0	0	0
15. Do you feel you are adequately supported by central staff when the district code mandates the expulsion of a student and the decision is appealed?	45.5	0	9.1	9.1	9.1	27.3

5 - To a great extent/very important ----- 1 - No effect/unimportant

TABLE III

PERCENTAGES OF JUNIOR HIGH ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS RESPONDING TO DISCIPLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTION	5	4	3	2	1	UNDECIDED
16. Has the OPS discipline code affected the manner in which you treat behaviorally/emotionally impaired students?	27.3	18.2	18.2	0	36.4	0
17. Do you feel you had a voice in the adopted discipline code?	18.2	36.4	27.3	0	9.1	9.1
18. Do you perceive a loss of autonomy in dealing with discipline problems?	0	9.1	27.3	13.2	45.5	0
19. Do you feel the policy section of the OPS discipline code needs to be rewritten?	9.1	18.2	18.2	9.1	45.5	0
20. Do you feel the need for a meeting of OPS administrators to discuss/recommend changes to the OPS discipline policy?	36.4	18.2	9.1	9.1	27.3	0
21. Do you find it easier to deal with discipline problems under the OPS mandated system versus the system in existence before the mandated system?	36.6	18.2	0	18.2	27.3	0

5 - To a great extent/very important ----- 1 - No effect/unimportant

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

The role of a school assistant principal is a complex combination of duties, tasks, and expectations. One of the most demanding roles of an assistant principal is that of student disciplinarian. When an assistant principal, acting within established policies and guidelines, uses his/her own discretion in deciding a discipline case he/she is often accused of prejudice or bias. Some assistant principals tried to rectify this judgmental treatment of students by devising standard consequences for specific offenses. But this approach does not standardize the treatment of students within a school district made-up of several schools.

An important aspect of setting district-wide discipline policy is letting students and parents know the consequences of breaking school rules. The goal of a district-wide discipline code should be to simplify the discipline decisions an assistant principal must make and to alleviate the charge of prejudice or bias in a discipline decision.

The purpose of this study was to gather information on the effectiveness of a district-wide discipline code. The information gathered from this project may be of interest to large school districts whose discipline policies are being attacked as bias or prejudicial against minority groups. This information may also be of interest to patrons of the school district or others with special interests who are interested in equal treatment of students throughout the district.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the related literature and the information gathered from the survey, several conclusions can be drawn:

1. A shift to a district-wide discipline code will not reduce the frequency of discipline cases seen by the assistant principal.

2. A shift to a district-wide discipline code should generate a positive attitude, toward school discipline, in parents.

3. An in-school suspension program can be a positive alternative to harsher punishment.

4. A shift to a district-wide discipline code does not equate to a loss of autonomy, by assistant principals, in dealing with discipline cases.

5. One-forth of the district's assistant principals did not feel the district-wide discipline policy was compatible with their personal philosophies of discipline.

6. One-forth of the district's assistant principals did not feel the district-wide discipline policy was flexible enough to allow for their unique situations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The area of school discipline has been researched on a wide scale. However, no single set of rules have been advanced as a panacea for use by all schools to solve their discipline problems. Each school district must establish its own discipline policy. A district's discipline policy should advance its educational goals to the maximum extent possible, yet still be accepted by the various publics the district serves. To accomplish this task a school board must receive inputs from all those who will be affected by a new discipline policy.

Two of the most important groups that a school board should query, when establishing a new discipline policy, are parents and assistant principals. A school district should involve parents with any proposed change to the district's discipline policy because research shows that if the district's parents are supportive of the new discipline policy then they are more willing to accept their children's consequences of the disciplinary action. This is especially true if parents think their child is being treated the same as other children. It is equally important to get the support of the people responsible for implementing a discipline policy, the district's assistant principals. The assistant principals' insights and practical experience in dealing with discipline cases can take the formation of a discipline policy from words on a paper to a workable program.

Based on both the responses to the questionnaire and the personal interviews conducted, it is recommended:

1. That the Omaha Public School District Central Administration hold a meeting of secondary school assistant principals. This meeting should provide a forum for the assistant principals to discuss/recommend changes to the district-wide discipline policy.

2. The secondary school assistant principals should meet in three sessions. The junior high and senior high assistant principals should meet separately before a joint meeting of all assistant principals is held.

3. Meetings of this type be scheduled every two years to revise/update the district-wide discipline policy.

4. The district-wide discipline policy be revised as one-forth of the responding assistant principals felt the policy is too arbitrary to fit their unique situations and personal philosophies of discipline.

APPENDIX A

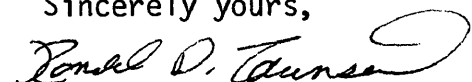**LETTER TO ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**

1 March 1985

Dear Assistant Principal,

One of the functions of a school administrator is in the area of discipline and because the Omaha Public School District has recently revised its discipline code, I am conducting a study of the effects of the new discipline code on both school administrators and the school's publics. This study is being conducted as part of the requirements for my Specialist Degree in Educational Administration at the University of Nebraska at Omaha under the direction of Dr. Paul Kennedy.

Dr. Irv Young has reviewed my proposal and he has given me permission to send questionnaires to the administrators in the Omaha Public Schools. Through a review of the research and the information gathered through this questionnaire and a series of personal interviews, I will try to determine the effectiveness of the Omaha Public School discipline code and whether or not there is a need to change/revise portions of the code.

I would deeply appreciate your taking the time to complete the attached questionnaire. No respondents or schools will be identified in the paper. Your responses will be anonymous, as no names or identifying marks are used. Please use the stamped envelope that is enclosed for your reply. A copy of the survey will be provided Dr. Young, if you are interested in obtaining a copy please contact him. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Ronald D. Townsend
12910 South 38th Street
Omaha, NE 68123

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOL DISCIPLINE CODE QUESTIONNAIRE

The goal of a good discipline program should be to simplify discipline policies and to enhance student attitudes, thereby reducing the number of discipline infractions. The purpose of this study is to secure the opinions of the administrators who implement the Omaha discipline code in an effort to determine whether or not it has reduced conflict in the school system. Please rate the importance of each question on the following pages using a scale from "5" for "to a great extent/very important" to "1" for "no effect/unimportant."

1. Has the shift to a district-wide discipline code reduced the frequency of discipline cases seen by your office?　　5 4 3 2 1

2. Have you observed any change in student attitudes which could be related to the OPS discipline code?　　5 4 3 2 1

3. The changes I have observed in student attitudes have been positive.　　5 4 3 2 1

4. Have you observed any change in parent attitudes, which could be related to the OPS discipline code?　　5 4 3 2 1

5. The changes I have observed in parent attitudes have been positive.　　5 4 3 2 1

6. Is the current OPS discipline code in harmony with the expectations of your publics?　　5 4 3 2 1

7. Are the mandatory (policy) portions of the OPS discipline code compatible with your personal philosophy of discipline?　　5 4 3 2 1

8. Has the OPS discipline code increased the number of out of school suspensions in your school?　　5 4 3 2 1

9. Are the guideline portions of the OPS discipline code flexible enough to allow for your unique situation?　　5 4 3 2 1

10. Has the OPS discipline code increased the number of out-of-school suspension in OPS?   5 4 3 2 1

11. Do you feel the in-school suspension program has been effective?   5 4 3 2 1

12. Has the shift to mandatory disciplinary actions affected your dealing with first time offenders?   5 4 3 2 1

13. Are the current disciplinary measures appropriate for long term assistance in helping students change unacceptable attitudes and behaviors?   5 4 3 2 1

14. Do you feel you are adequately supported by central staff when the district code mandates the expulsion of a student?   5 4 3 2 1

15. Do you feel you are adequately supported by central staff when the district code mandates the expulsion of a student and the decision is appealed?   5 4 3 2 1

16. Has the OPS discipline code affected the manner in which you treat behaviorally/emotionally impaired students?   5 4 3 2 1

17. Do you feel you had a voice in the adopted discipline code?   5 4 3 2 1

18. Do you perceive a loss of autonomy in dealing with discipline problems?   5 4 3 2 1

19. Do you feel the policy section of the OPS discipline code needs to be rewritten?   5 4 3 2 1

20. Do you feel the need for a meeting of OPS administrators to discuss/recommend changes to the OPS discipline policy?   5 4 3 2 1

21. Do you find it easier to deal with discipline problems under the OPS mandated system versus the system in existence before the mandated system?   5 4 3 2 1

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