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# A Study of the Implications of Vandalism with Relationship to Budgeting Costs for Secondary School Buildings in 89 Class III School Districts in 33 Counties, Eastern Nebraska.

Rolland L. Fenster

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A STUDY OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF VANDALISM WITH RELATIONSHIP TO  
BUDGETING COSTS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL BUILDINGS IN 89 CLASS III SCHOOL  
DISTRICTS IN 33 COUNTIES, EASTERN NEBRASKA

---

A Field Study Project

Presented to the

Department of Educational Administration

and the

Graduate Faculty

University of Nebraska at Omaha

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Specialist in Education

---

by

Rolland L. Fenster

November 1975

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FIELD PROJECT ACCEPTANCE

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

Graduate Committee

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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R. L. F.

TO MY CHILDREN

SALLY, WILLIAM AND MICHAEL

That They May Grow to Learn,

Their Father's Discipline is Really Love.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Defense is first in this nation. The highest single cost paid out by the government of the United States is for defense of this country and its many holdings and interests in the world. Therefore, it would appear the peoples of the world are a violent people. Wars have been fought, nations and principalities have been defeated, and a great many lives have been lost in defense of cherished belongings.

The significance of this statement to the topic of this research is that destruction of property, the respect for other person's holdings, and the cost of defense or replacement of property points up the fact that vandalism in the school ascribes to all the factors mentioned.

Why must vandalism occur? What is the cost of vandalism? What type of vandalism seems to occur most? What protective devices and measures must be put into operation to reduce the high loss ratio and the high cost? Are these acts pre-planned or just ready entertainment?

A good deal of maintenance time and materials are spent on multitudinous projects throughout the school year. The time and research, herein presented to determine the amount of vandalism, should prove to be of benefit for developing better methods, materials, and equipment to deter vandals.

Most people especially in smaller communities in Nebraska, take special pride in their school buildings. Most realize the sacrifice on everyone's part to provide the tax monies with which the buildings have been built, and for the high cost of maintenance. Oftentimes,

members of the community tour the buildings and discuss with pride various aspects of the facilities. For these citizens, vandalism is a personal affront--as so it should be to us all.

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study to determine the cost of vandalism, and the protective measures needed to reduce loss to the secondary schools in the Class III school districts in the Eastern one-fourth of the state of Nebraska.

Hypothesis. It was assumed vandalism is on the increase and that the cost for cleanup, replacement, and repair reflect a need for preventative measures. Secondary school buildings are more susceptible to vandalism because some young people of secondary school age develop undesirable attitudes against the authority of administration and faculty, therefore, they lash out with destruction to property and buildings.

It was assumed that very few of the school districts surveyed in this study will have contracted with protective service companies to make routine checks of the building, to have someone on duty during nighttime hours, to have someone on duty during vacation periods, and to have someone on duty during school hours in specific areas of the building which are most vulnerable to vandalism.

Finally, it was assumed that the school districts surveyed in this study will not have exact cost related figures or special provisions in their budget to cover the cost of vandalism cleanup, replacement, and repair.

Importance of the study. In recent years public buildings, and in particular school buildings, are at an all-time low as far as respect for the building is concerned. These edifices represent the so-called "establishment" in that no one person or corporation holds absolute ownership.

Personal observation, made recently, is that there are certain people who commit isolated acts of vandalism to prove a point. A common attitude is that people try to get away with illegal, destructive acts without getting caught or brought to account. This is supported by an article reviewed which indicated that vandalism in schools has been implemented by students who hold ill feelings against certain persons associated with the organization.

Procedure. This study has surveyed the cost of vandalism in the various schools, predominant problems occurring in the schools, protective devices or other security measures used by these schools to protect property from vandals, and the time of day or season vandalism is likely to occur.

1. Literature and writings pertaining to the subject were reviewed.

2. The material used for this study was gathered by means of a questionnaire (See Appendix B). A preliminary form was mailed requesting administrators to participate in the study (See Appendix A). Questionnaires were provided to those who responded favorably. The administrators of the Class III schools in the 33 counties of Eastern Nebraska were asked to assist in the study. These Class III school districts are identified in the Seventy-Seventh Nebraska Educational Directory, 1974-1975, State of Nebraska, Department of Education, Lincoln.

Within the 33 counties identified there are 102 Class III school districts, ranging in secondary school enrollments from 105 to 5,122 students. These 102 school districts are located within close proximity to the two largest cities of Nebraska--Lincoln and Omaha--and in counties having the greatest population of the state. The questionnaire

was returned by 89 of the 102 schools included in the survey.

3. A tabulation of the data received was made and evaluated.

4. The data received from this study was used to formulate this paper.

#### DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Vandal. One who through ignorance and lack of taste and sensibility sweeps away or spoils beautiful things in art or nature.

Vandalism. The characteristic spirit or conduct of the vandals; hostility to things of art, beauty, and culture.

Public buildings. Buildings provided for public use and paid for by general taxation, within certain governmental boundaries.

The "establishment". An organized force for carrying on public or private business, representing authority, firm foundation, and a permanent state of being.

#### GENERAL OVERVIEW

A problem facing the schools of today is how to maintain a learning environment, yet allowing students to be open and progressive toward the development of the youthful mind. The rebellious attitude of the youth in the late sixties and early seventies on college campuses, had an almost immediate effect on the younger elementary and secondary students.

Each year the National Association of Secondary School Principals polls its membership on a number of issues in school administration and curriculum. Responding to the poll of April 1974, the secondary school principals of this nation reported five problems to be of "rising frequency or concern". These were: 1) Student vandalism and violence. 2) Defiance by students, ignoring rules. 3) Lack of time (or wasted time, neglect of studies). 4) Smoking. 5) Absenteeism.<sup>1</sup>

Vandalism is now a very serious problem. The increased criminal incidents noted are not only directed toward the school or faculty but also toward peers. Recent incidents have been reported of doors being pulled from schools, coat hooks being broken beyond repair, student lockers and physical education lockers being vandalized, clothing destroyed, typewriters stolen, office machines being filled with roofing tar to make them unrepairable, musical instruments rendered unplayable by use of a number of materials, and graffiti everywhere with four-letter words expressed boldly on the outside and inside walls of schools.

The school house, once a symbol of beauty and prominence of the community, is now becoming a target for those persons who have lost respect for authority and ownership. A public building is not owned by any one individual, but rather a group of taxpayers, and very often a percentage of those taxpayers who helped pay for that building were against its being built, therefore, they too do not have respect for the structure. Secondary schools are a prime target for vandals in that they represent authority, and "the establishment", to those who hold ill-feelings.

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<sup>1</sup>Owen B. Kiernan, School Violence and Vandalism, (Reston, The National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1975), p. 1.

Most damaged areas of a building will not appear attractive because ordinary repairs can not restore a totally new appearance. This eyesore creates a tendency for more vandalism. One scratch on a desk or locker invites another, and by semester break this scratch has become someone's initials or a four-letter word. A brand new desk can be ruined in one school year.

Let's face it, schools are not extremely popular among many of those who must attend them. Consequently, the trend now among administrators and lawmakers is to find effective deterrents to arson and vandalism without steering schools from their primary task of educating.<sup>2</sup>

Because of the increased incidence of vandalism and the high cost of repair a method of attack needs to be developed to reduce the problem and the loss. Research needs to be conducted to better understand protective and preventative methods which might be employed to reduce damage to schools. We need to enlist the help of the federal government, state and local governments, as well as school boards, administrators, teachers and custodial staffs to reduce vandalism.

When the bill for vandalism of school buildings and grounds reaches into the hundreds of millions of dollars, more than what is being spent yearly for text books in this nation's schools, it seems high time we work toward a solution to a most costly problem.

Graffiti for art's sake is beautiful--but when the canvas is the side of the high school building it becomes vandalism with a price tag to the taxpayers of that school district.

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<sup>2</sup>Henry C. Neville, "School Arson: Is Your Protection Adequate?", American School and University, Volume 47, Number 3. (November 1974), p. 31.



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Vandalism has been on the increase ever since school buildings have existed. An increased number of buildings have been built, older buildings have large additions, and the modern school buildings spread over acres and, as a result, the value of property exposed to vandals has increased.

Whereas our forefathers became disgruntled at the cost of replacing one criminally destroyed window pane per building, we have in some areas become conditioned to spending great sums for replacing dozens of frames per individual classroom. When the financial implications of this waste are examined nationally, they assume astronomical proportions.<sup>3</sup>

For numerous years school enrollments were on the increase and in some instances created overcrowded situations in school buildings and classrooms. This overcrowding has provided an environment which does not allow for proper maintenance and cleanup, consequently it may have been an invitation to vandalism. Locks, door hinges, and broken or cracked windows not replaced or repaired properly represents a defenseless building to the vandal.

Only in the past several years has school enrollment been on the decrease due to post-war students having been graduated, and, in recent years, reduction of the number of children per family. The nation's school systems, because of decreased enrollments, have been forced to

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<sup>3</sup>J. Norbert Weiss, "Vandalism: An Environmental Concern", National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, Volume 58, Number 379. (February 1974) p. 6.

close attendance centers and reduce the work force. These closed buildings are now standing empty and unguarded which places them in jeopardy.

### COSTS

What is the cost which private and public schools of this nation pay to repair the damage caused by vandalism?

Vandalism is a nationwide phenomenon. In 1969, nearly 100,000 persons were arrested and charged with the malicious destruction or mutilation of property. The U. S. Office of Education estimates the annual cost of vandalism to school property approaches \$100 million.<sup>4</sup>

It would be impossible to compute a complete cost for vandalism to the nation's schools, but a number of sources such as the U. S. Office of Education, State Departments of Education, and a number of local and national research organizations have gathered enough data from sampling a cross-section of the nation's schools to support figures as were presented in the previous paragraph. If the figure was \$100 million in 1969, how much has that figure increased or decreased in the past few years? A review of the literature indicates there has been no decrease in the cost to schools for vandalism but rather an astounding increase.

The June 1973 issue of School Product News reported a survey on vandalism, theft, and arson:

Schools with enrollments of 5,000 to 10,000 students showed an average vandalism cost of \$12,415; 10,000 to 25,000 a cost of \$21,417; and those over 25,000 enrollment an average of \$243,952. Distribute these costs among the almost 17,000

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<sup>4</sup>Harold Goldmeier, "Vandalism: The Effect of Unmanageable Confrontations", Adolescence, Volume 9, Number 33. (Spring 1974) p. 49.

school districts and you can appreciate the conservative estimate of half a billion dollars. Fire damage was by far the most expensive. Six years ago 13,200 school fires resulted in damage of \$52 million dollars.<sup>5</sup>

Another more recent report in the NASSP Bulletin makes the following statement about vandalism costs and again this is only an estimate from a few years previous.

How many new programs, additional personnel, and teaching resources could be funded with the hundreds of thousands of dollars spent each year on school vandalism? An Associated Press report, a few years ago, estimated an annual national outlay of \$200 million spent on school vandalism--and vandalism has increased steadily since. To have an expanding school budget stretched still further for this reason is intolerable to school people and taxpayers alike.<sup>6</sup>

The latest report by the United States Senate Juvenile Delinquency Subcommittee, reveals that the cost of violence and vandalism in our nation's schools has reached the half billion dollar figure. Chairman of the subcommittee, Senator Birch Bayh, in his news conference had this to say:

These hallways and playgrounds of fear and terror also account for an estimated \$500 million annual bill for vandalism. This astonishing sum, which is actually a vandalism surtax on the cost of education, is comparable to the cost of the entire investment for textbooks for our nation's schools in 1972.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Joseph I. Grealy, "Criminal Activity in Schools. What's Being Done About It?", National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, Volume 58, Number 382. (May 1974) p. 74.

<sup>6</sup>Stanley L. Clement, "School Vandalism--Causes and Cures", National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, Volume 59, Number 387. (January 1975) p. 17.

<sup>7</sup>Darwin Olofson, "Bayh Says Crisis of Violence and Vandalism Exists in U. S. Schools", World-Herald Washington Bureau, Omaha World-Herald, (Thursday, April 10, 1975). p. 5.

A copy of the Subcommittee report based on investigation of criminal acts, violence, drug abuse, and vandalism has been obtained through the office of Carl T. Curtis, United States Senator from Nebraska, and materials from this report relevant to this study are included as part of this field project (See Appendix C).

Although it has been estimated that national losses from school vandalism, window breakage, theft, and arson run to millions annually, there is no national repository where such losses are recorded. Nor, apparently do most states keep any kind of definite records.<sup>8</sup>

The high cost of vandalism, which runs into the millions of dollars is much more than should have ever been spent to repair schools. The spiraling cost of inflation which has hit us for the past few years, and with little hope of an immediate slow down, may make it too costly to accomplish the needed repairs caused by vandals and, therefore, many schools both public and private may appear deteriorated long before they can be replaced. Most taxpayers are willing to repair normal wear-and-tear, but they do want most of their tax dollars spent on the education of children.

#### TRENDS

There has always been a certain level of violence and vandalism in our nation's public school system. Today, however, the situation has changed and the level of violence and vandalism in our schools is rapidly

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<sup>8</sup>Elmer Wells, Vandalism and Violence: Innovative Strategies Reduce Cost to Schools, (Arlington: National School Public Relations Association, 1971) p. 3.

increasing in both intensity and frequency. Public school vandalism grows as the microbe from an individual carving his own initials on a desk top during class with thoughts wandering--to organized gangs with activities becoming wilder and more daring with each encounter. Ultimately serious injury or even a death may result.

It is alarmingly apparent that student misbehavior and conflict within our school system is no longer limited to a fist fight between individual students or an occasional general disruption resulting from a specific incident. Instead, our schools are experiencing serious crimes of a felonious nature including brutal assaults on teachers and students, as well as rapes, extortions, burglaries, thefts, and an unprecedented wave of wanton destruction and vandalism.<sup>9</sup>

Schools do not perpetrate assault. nor do they teach violence. The ideal of the common good and the rule of law are represented in the administration of the school, in the teacher's classroom, in the content of the curriculum, and in student activities. Why then do we have these problems in schools, and what are the sources of aggression?

The contributing factors to school crime are as complex as society itself. We know them all: 1) Breakdown of the family and family control. 2) Glamorization of violence on television and film. 3) Street crime by youth which spills into the school. 4) Drug abuse. 5) Anonymity in the neighborhood, and school. 6) A philosophy of self-serving expediency with little concern for others. 7) Subgroup solidarity, with no allegiance to the larger society. 8) Contempt for the value of personal and public property.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>U. S. Congress, Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Preliminary Report of the Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency, Based on Investigation, 1971-75, Our Nation's Schools -- A Report Card: "A" In School Violence and Vandalism, 94th Congress, 1st. session, (Washington: Government Printing Office, April 1975) p. 3.

<sup>10</sup>Kiernan, School Violence and Vandalism, op. cit., p. 4.

As a point of comparison, the text of this paper will make a very brief digression from the topic of school vandalism to relate to vandalism as a general topic.

Have you ever had a swastika painted on your house? Or had coke bottles shattered on your front lawn? Or had firecrackers exploded on the front seat of your car? Have you ever returned home from a two-week vacation to find that someone had stuffed a garden hose into your mailbox and turned on the water? These are but a few of the more common malicious acts of vandalism committed by juveniles.<sup>11</sup>

How many times have we heard of such acts of vandalism as were mentioned in the previous quotation? Halloween is a time when a great deal of vandalism occurs--pumpkins smashed, windows soaped, and eggs smashed on windows and cars. The latter is particularly damaging since the acid in an egg will cause the paint to come off an automobile, and the metal will rust almost immediately. We hear of such cases as the destruction or theft of outside Christmas decorations at that time of year when we should be thinking of peace and good will.

Some communities tolerate graffiti or slogans printed on water towers, and most railroad bridges will be painted with the slogan "Class of 1974", assorted initials, and a good number of four-letter words. Fire hydrants turned on, automobile windows smashed, tires slashed, street lights broken by rocks or shot out with BB guns, highway signs damaged by

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<sup>11</sup>Goldmeier, "Vandalism: The Effects of Unmanageable Confrontations"; Adolescence, p. 49.

gun shots, mailboxes blasted from the post, all represent dollars lost to someone. Roadway signs removed or rearranged could cause serious injury or loss of life.

On the evening newscast of KOLN-TV, Lincoln, Nebraska, June 23, 1975, Mr. Mel Mains, reported that vandals had been at work again in the city. Reports from the police department that morning indicated that for the fourth straight night in succession, a parked Volkswagon automobile had been overturned. One on a previous night at the University (UNL) campus, and the other three at different points about the city.

A leading authority on the anatomy of vandalism theorizes that such acts relate to our age of permissiveness. Society's emphasis on violence and aggression, the renunciation of traditional values, and the individual's sense of powerlessness to have an effect on his environment combine to create an attitude that accepts vandalism as an unexceptional part of life. According to Dr. Phillip G. Zimbardo of Stamford University, 'Destructive acts are chosen because they are more readily seen and because they are often more easily accomplished than constructive ones'. However, acts of wanton vandalism may be portents of things to come. What at first appear to be meaningless acts of destruction may be a prelude to continuing and more extensive damage.<sup>12</sup>

The violence in our nation's schools tends to indicate that some type of program must be put into operation to reduce the serious levels which some categories have reached. The Congressional Senate subcommittee in its report to the Congress, indicated that between 1970 and 1973 these criminal acts had shown an increase over that period:

- A) Homocides increased by 18.5 percent.
- B) Rapes and attempted rapes increased by 40.1 percent.
- C) Robberies increased by 36.7 percent.

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

- D) Assaults on students increased by 85.3 percent.
- E) Assaults on teachers increased by 77.4 percent.
- F) Burglaries of school buildings increased by 11.8 percent.
- G) Drugs and alcohol offenses on school property increased by 37.5 percent.
- H) Dropouts increased by 11.7 percent.<sup>13</sup>

Still another statistic stated in the reports was that by the end of the 1973 school term school authorities had, over the past three years, confiscated a variety of weapons from students and this increase amounted to 54.4 percent. Also included in the Senate subcommittee report were findings for specific areas of the United States. The North-central region included Nebraska, and eleven surrounding states to the south, east, and north for the period 1970 through 1973:

- A) Assaults on teachers increased 52.4 percent.
- B) Assaults on students increased 20.5 percent.
- C) Number of weapons found increased 6.7 percent.
- D) Rapes and attempted rapes increased 60.0 percent.
- E) Major acts of vandalism increased 19.5 percent.
- F) Drugs, and alcohol offenses in schools increased 19.5 percent.
- G) Burglaries of school buildings increased 2.1 percent.<sup>14</sup>

A recent survey compared current problems with those of 1970 and revealed the following: School assault and battery cases up 58 percent, school robberies up 117 percent, sex offenses up 62 percent, and drug problems up 81 percent.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>U. S. Congress, Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Preliminary Report of the Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency, Based on Investigation, 1971-75, Our Nation's Schools -- A Report Card: "A" In School Violence and Vandalism, 94th Congress, 1st. session, (Washington: Government Printing Office, April 1975) p. 4.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>15</sup>Grealy, "Criminal Activity in Schools", NASSP Bulletin, op. cit., p. 74.



## CURES

An immediate reaction to the percentages presented previously is that all of us should search for solutions to school vandalism or the schools will not be a safe place for anyone, least of all the students.

The first step toward prevention would be to assess the needs of the community and make changes in the school to meet those needs. This would include such things as curriculum revision, work experience, community help, and a positive attitude toward teaching and learning. The positive approach is probably the most effective way to deter vandalism and appears to be a way to solve the problem.

The positive approach is far more difficult because it involves people and feelings. In this approach emphasis should be on:

- A curriculum continually evaluated and revised to meet student needs.
- Good teaching involving a variety of the most appropriate procedures and materials. Interesting and satisfying presentations produce happy pupils.
- Work experiences where pupils not only learn but earn.
- Appropriate extra-class activity to build individual interest and school spirit.
- Integration of the vandalism problem into regular classes and cultivation by the teacher of a respect for classroom materials and furnishings.
- Stress on parent responsibility laws, although the parents involved are often those with little money.
- Help from community civic groups -- PTA, service clubs, League of Women Voters, for example. The local newspaper could be a medium for exchange of ideas and provide regular reports on the program -- the expense involved and what is being done.
- Emphasis on financial loss -- effect on the tax rate, ways the money could have been spent to better advantage.
- Encouragement of community use of the building and attendant assumption of responsibility for pride in it.
- (and by far the most important and difficult) Cultivation of student and community pride in the building -- a feeling of ownership -- the 'Our' approach.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Clement, "School Vandalism -- Causes and Cures", NASSP Bulletin, op. cit., pp. 19-20.

To introduce the positive attitude program outline in the above quotation, we will need governmental assistance or a grant program. This program should be of interest to all levels of government in that they also must contend with related problems. With governmental help to initiate the program schools will be able to budget and set aside funds to continue independently in a few years.

The Florida legislature faced up to this by enacting a Safe Schools Act. This legislation provides funds for the county school systems to develop programs emphasizing positive educational alternatives for disruptive youngsters, and for protective measures to provide safeguards for students, faculty, and the school property.<sup>17</sup>

During 1973-1974 some 100 pieces of legislation were enacted by individual states relating to student control, school safety, and security. Among those enacted during 1974 was the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (P.L. 93-415), U. S. Congress.

The act is designed to prevent young people from entering our failing juvenile justice system, and to assist communities in creating more sensible and economic approaches for youngsters already in the juvenile justice system.<sup>18</sup>

A good many more ways are suggested in the literature to help with the prevention of vandalism. Some of these topics yet to be discussed in the remainder of this paper will have to do with:

- 1) Keeping money and personal valuables in desks and lockers.
- 2) Stencil or engraving of equipment.
- 3) Blacktopping parking lots.
- 4) Repairing broken equipment and windows.
- 5) Equipping doors, and windows with superior materials, and good locks.

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<sup>17</sup>Grealy, "Criminal Activity in Schools", NASSP Bulletin, op. cit., p.77.

<sup>18</sup>U. S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, Our Nation's Schools -- A Report Card: "A" In School Violence and Vandalism, op. cit., p. 1.

- 6) Carefully charting, and supervising all activities in the building.
- 7) Beefing up the security plan.
- 8) Installing lights around the building.
- 9) Designing the building so it will not look like a fortress.
- 10) Enlist the help of the community as well as those persons who live near the school.<sup>19</sup>

School security should be viewed as an effort to conserve resources, funds, equipment, personnel, and the school's insurability.

There are four basic alternatives from which a school administrator can choose to increase the security of the schools in his district. The first is to have a cooperative agreement with the local police or sheriff. The second alternative to improve school security is for the administrator to make internal security duty assignments among the school staff. The third alternative is to contract security services from an independent company. The fourth alternative is to solicit the help of students, and parents to harden the security of the schools.<sup>20</sup>

An important preventative is to repair the damage as soon as possible so it will not attract more damage. A broken window with a cardboard patch is unsightly and if not repaired soon, will provide the temptation to throw another rock and break a second or third window. A large light colored wall with no real aesthetic value is most inviting to the graffiti artist, and if the marks are not removed promptly will without a doubt attract more very soon.

In conclusion, our citizens and educators, as well as peace officers must be aware of the problem so that they may work together to reduce damages and costs.

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<sup>19</sup>Stanley L. Clement, "School Vandalism--Causes and Cures", National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, Volume 59, Number 387. (January 1975) p. 18.

<sup>20</sup>\_\_\_\_\_, "Four Alternatives for School Security -- A Counterattack on Vandalism", American School and University, Volume 45, Number 10, (June 1973) pp. 43-4.

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD OF RESEARCH

The literature reviewed in the previous chapter indicates that problems with vandalism exist nation-wide. The problems are not isolated to schools and public buildings alone, but also damage to private property has increased. The material to be presented and tables included in this chapter show the present condition of vandalism in the schools involved in the study, i.e. Class III school districts in the Eastern one-fourth of the State of Nebraska (See Appendix D). There are 102 Class III school districts included in the Seventy-Seventh Nebraska Educational Directory, 1974-1975, State of Nebraska, Department of Education, Lincoln for the area under study.

A preliminary letter requesting cooperation in the study was mailed to the 102 school districts (See Appendix A) during the month of February 1975. The administrators of 89 schools responded favorably, and on March 24, 1975 the questionnaires (See Appendix B) were mailed. The last questionnaire was returned on April 25, 1975, giving an 87.25 percent response. The individual school districts will not be identified by name in this report. The data has been compiled and will be discussed in this chapter.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE DATA RECEIVED FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRES  
RETURNED BY 89 CLASS III SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN 33 COUNTIES,  
EASTERN NEBRASKA, 1975.

One of the very real concerns to a family building a new home, a businessman building a new retail store, a community building a new fire house or a school district building a new attendance center is

location. Most buildings provide services to the immediate community and for easy access are located centrally. In order to determine if there were problems associated with the location of the building itself, the questionnaire sought to determine the specific location of the representative building. The responses are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1

LOCATION OF THE BUILDINGS HOUSING SECONDARY GRADES  
(NAME OF CITY, TOWN, OR VILLAGE) OR DISTANCE (MILES)  
FROM CITY LIMITS OF (NAME OF CITY, TOWN, OR VILLAGE).  
A SURVEY OF 89 CLASS III SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN 33 COUNTIES,  
EASTERN NEBRASKA, 1975.

Location of Secondary School Building	Number of Districts Responding
Within the corporate limits of a city, town or village.	83
1/4 mile from corporate limits of a city, town or village.	1
1/2 mile from corporate limits of a city, town, or village.	2
3 miles from corporate limits of a city, town or village.	1
4 miles from corporate limits of a city, town or village.	1
7 miles from corporate limits of a city, town or village	<u>1</u>
Total	89

Analysis of Table 1 shows that 83 schools, or 94.5 percent of those Class III school districts responding, indicated that the secondary

school building is located within the corporate limits of a city, town, or village. Those six schools with secondary buildings not located in a town are a result of school district reorganizations occurring within the last ten years. Surprisingly enough, the findings show that location of the building, whether urban or rural, was not a significant factor relating to vandalism.

Upkeep maintenance and repair of school buildings is a never-ending task, and it is reasonable to assume that the more buildings, or the larger the square footage the school may have, determines the number of custodians needed for cleaning and upkeep. Table 2 gives a breakdown on the custodial staffs in relationship to the number of buildings to be cared for in the various school systems.

TABLE 2

NUMBER OF SECONDARY SCHOOL BUILDINGS TOGETHER WITH THE  
NUMBER OF CUSTODIANS IN THE REPRESENTATIVE BUILDINGS.  
A SURVEY OF 89 CLASS III SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN 33 COUNTIES,  
EASTERN NEBRASKA, 1975.

Number of Secondary School Buildings in the District	Size of the Custodial Staff	Number of Districts Reporting
1	1	11
1	1.2	1
1	1.25	1
1	1.5	1
1	1.6	1
1	2	25
1	2.5	3

TABLE 2 CONTINUED

Number of Secondary School Buildings in the District	Size of the Custodial Staff	Number of Districts Reporting
1	3	9
1	3.6	1
1	3.75	1
1	4	2
1	10	1
1	21	1
2	1	1
2	1.3	1
2	1.5	2
2	2	2
2	2.5	2
2	3	1
2	4	1
2	5	2
2	6	2
2	9	1
3	1	2
3	2	2
3	4	1
3	5	1
3	11	1
4	2	1

TABLE 2 CONTINUED

Number of Secondary School Buildings in the District	Size of the Custodial Staff	Number of Districts Reporting
4	7	1
4	20	<u>1</u>
Total		88

One school district reported 1 secondary school building but did not indicate the size of the custodial staff for that building.

A number of factors are inconstant relative to the number of buildings and the number given for the custodial staffs in the various systems. These are significant and demand explanation: Eleven school districts with one secondary building employ 1 custodian; 25 school districts, also with one secondary building have 2 custodians; 9 school districts reported one secondary building and 3 custodians. Two districts reported unusual ratios; those being 1 secondary building with 10 custodians, and one district reported 21 custodians caring for one building. These facilities provide space for secondary education units which range in enrollment, size, teaching staff, and number of buildings from the smallest to the very largest in the 89 Class III school districts in the 33 counties of Eastern Nebraska.

One of the points not previously brought forth, but which will come as part of the recommendations, is the number of hours the building is occupied by the custodial personnel. Having custodians on duty in the building from the close of school until the late night hours will



allow them to get more work done while the building is unoccupied, and further, having them in and around the building will discourage the vandal from performing his damaging act in the fear of being caught and brought to account.

The data regarding number of hours the custodial staff is on duty in the various schools, the number of days of the week, and the number of months these custodians are in the school, are presented in Tables 3, 4, and 5.

TABLE 3

HOURS CUSTODIANS ARE ON DUTY  
WHEN SCHOOL IS IN SESSION  
A SURVEY OF 89 CLASS III SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN 33 COUNTIES  
EASTERN NEBRASKA, 1975.

Hours Custodians are on Duty	Number of Districts Responding
7:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.	61
6:00 A.M. - 10:30 P.M.	20
6:30 A.M. - 12:00 Noon	5
6:30 A.M. - 1:30 A.M.	1
24 Hours a Day	1
4:30 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.	<u>1</u>
Total	89

TABLE 4

HOURS CUSTODIANS ARE ON DUTY  
DURING VACATION PERIODS  
A SURVEY OF 89 CLASS III SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN 33 COUNTIES  
EASTERN NEBRASKA, 1975.

Hours Custodians are on Duty	Number of Districts Responding
8:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. 5 days/week	32
7:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon 5 days/week	<u>2</u>
Total	34
A total of 55 school districts did not respond.	

Table 3 presented the following information: Sixty-one of the schools employ custodians from the hours of 7:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. when school is in session; 26 schools have custodians on duty to cover into the mid or late evening hours when school is in session. One school reported 24-hour coverage by custodial staff, and one school has custodians on duty from the early morning hours to early evening (4:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.) which demonstrates that two-thirds of the schools surveyed do not have anyone on the grounds after daylight hours (6:00 P.M. to 6:00 A.M.) during the time schools are in session. The summer daylight hours are much longer and may tend to deter the vandal, but Table 4 indicates that during the summer vacation period only 32 schools have custodians on duty from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. There were 2 schools reporting that they had custodial staff members on duty from 8:00 A.M. to 12:00 Noon over the summer months. Most vandals may be asleep or think it too revealing for them to work during these hours. Table 4 also indicates that

none of the school districts have a custodian on duty during night hours or on the weekend when vandals are most likely to be at work. The majority of the schools surveyed employ custodians for only a 5.5 day week during the school term and the vacation period, as shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5

DAYS PER WEEK AND NUMBER OF MONTHS PER YEAR CUSTODIANS ARE ON DUTY  
IN THE REPRESENTATIVE BUILDINGS  
A SURVEY OF 89 CLASS III SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN 33 COUNTIES,  
EASTERN NEBRASKA, 1975.

Days per Week Custodians are on Duty	Number of Months per Year Custodians are on Duty	Number of Districts Responding
5.5 days/week	9	19
5.5 days/week	12	<u>32</u>
Total		51
38 school districts did not respond.		

Many persons have at some time during their lives been placed in the position of a security officer. Those of us who served in the armed forces are familiar with guard duty and other protective services. Many business houses, manufacturing firms, communication centers, and banks make use of security personnel through a commercial protective service. Are security services utilized by schools? The responses are tabulated in Table 6.

TABLE 6

DO YOU HAVE A COMMERCIAL PROTECTIVE SERVICE EMPLOYED:  
 (A) ROUTINELY CHECKING THE BUILDING,  
 (B) HAVE SOMEONE ON DUTY AT ALL TIMES,  
 (C) DURING EVENTS WHEN THE PUBLIC IS PRESENT,  
 (D) NONE OF THESE?  
 A SURVEY OF 89 CLASS III SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN 33 COUNTIES,  
 EASTERN NEBRASKA, 1975.

When are Commercial Protective Services Hired by the Secondary School?	Number of Districts Responding
On duty at all times	2
During sporting events or events involving the public	<u>10</u>
Total	12
No response from 77 schools.	

Only one school reported the utilization of a protective service to check the building on a routine basis. Two schools reported protective service on duty at all times, and 10 schools reported hiring an outside protective service to assist during sporting events or events which would otherwise involve the public in attendance. As suspected commercial protective service fees are minimal expenditures in the districts surveyed (See Table 7).

TABLE 7

TOTAL COST PER YEAR FOR COMMERCIAL PROTECTIVE SERVICE  
A SURVEY OF 89 CLASS III SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN 33 COUNTIES,  
EASTERN NEBRASKA, 1975.

Cost of Commercial Protective Service	Number of Districts Responding
\$3.75/hour plus mileage	1
\$150.00/year	1
\$500.00/year	1
\$9,000.00/year	<u>1</u>
Total	4

6 schools responded with a 'Yes' but no cost figure reported.

79 schools did not respond.

One might conclude that protective service is a low-priority matter, or of no special concern to administrators or boards of education in the 79 schools which did not give a response to the question.

Another type of protective service for the school building and grounds might be the routine, or not so routine, checks made by the local police or sheriff's office. Table 8 presents the findings, with 84 districts reporting.

TABLE 8

DOES THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE ROUTINELY CHECK THE BUILDING?  
 A SURVEY OF 89 CLASS III SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN 33 COUNTIES,  
 EASTERN NEBRASKA, 1975.

Building and Grounds Checked by Sheriff	Number of Districts Responding
Yes	30
No	<u>54</u>
Total	84

4 schools gave no response to this question.

1 school indicated night watchers were used to check buildings.

Table 8 reveals that two-thirds of the schools do not utilize the services of the local police or county sheriff's office. The boards of education and school officials are custodians of the property of the district and must rely heavily on the support of the community to keep a watchful eye out for any unusual activity, and to notify authorities if necessary in order to protect the property. With a little luck no one will do harm to their holdings.

Finally, the surveyed schools were asked a two-fold question regarding whether buildings and grounds were protected by a wall or fence, or had no protection; and if there was a barrier did it deter vandals?

TABLE 9

IS THE BUILDING, OR THE GROUNDS SURROUNDING THE BUILDING, PROTECTED BY  
A WALL, FENCE, OR HAS NO PROTECTION?  
A SURVEY OF 89 CLASS III SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN 33 COUNTIES,  
EASTERN NEBRASKA, 1975.

Is the School Building Protected by - Wall - Fence - No Protection?	Number of Districts Responding
Wall and/or fence around building and grounds	2
Wall and/or fence around bus barn, and bus parking area	1
No protective wall or fence	<u>86</u>
Total	89

TABLE 10

IF THERE IS A WALL OR FENCE DOES IT DETER VANDALS  
WHEN SCHOOL IS NOT IN SESSION?  
A SURVEY OF 89 CLASS III SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN 33 COUNTIES,  
EASTERN NEBRASKA, 1975.

Does the Wall or Fence Deter Vandals when School is not in Session?	Number of Districts Responding
Wall of fence does deter vandals	2
Wall or fence does not deter vandals	<u>6</u>
Total	8
81 schools did not respond	

Only two schools reported having a fence or wall type barrier, and one school reported a fence around the bus barn and bus parking area as its only defense. All of the remaining schools indicated they had no protective barriers, demonstrating that most school buildings are built with walls, doors, and windows being their only defense. It should be noted that three schools have fence around some portion of their property but only two felt that it actually was a deterrent. Perhaps an enclosure is more challenging to the aggressor.

The subjects covered, thus far, can be characterized as preventive measures. The next section of this chapter will deal mostly with what acts of vandalism seem to occur in the schools, insurance rates and coverage for vandalism, and how costs are handled in preparation of a budget for the school.

What acts of vandalism occur in the secondary schools in the State of Nebraska? The U. S. Subcommittee investigation was conducted in only two school districts in Nebraska, the Lincoln and Omaha School Systems, which are Class V (classification determined by resident population of 200,000 and above) and Class IV (resident population of 50,000 to 200,000) respectively. From the standpoint of student population these school districts are the largest in Nebraska. The area of interest included in this report is limited to the Class III (resident population of 1,000 to 50,000) school districts adjacent to these cities. There were as mentioned previously, 89 Class III systems given special interest, and their problems with vandals will constitute the remainder of this chapter. Table 11 demonstrates vandalism activity in the individual districts.



TABLE 11

WHAT IS THE MOST FREQUENT ACT OF VANDALISM TO THE EXTERIOR  
OF THE BUILDING AND TO THE GROUNDS?  
A SURVEY OF 89 CLASS III SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN 33 COUNTIES,  
EASTERN NEBRASKA, 1975.

Type of Damage to the Exterior of the Building and to the Grounds	Number of Districts Responding
Broken windows only	31
Broken windows, lawn and shrub damage	7
Broken windows, paint sprayed on buildings or sidewalks	15
Graffiti (spray paint)	6
Litter on grounds	5
Lawn damage only	3
Lights broken, windows broken, lawn damage	1
Door damage and windows broken	<u>2</u>
Total	70
19 schools gave no response to this question.	

It would appear that the most damage to the exteriors involves window breakage with one-third of the schools researched indicating that this is their only damage, with one-half of the districts reporting broken windows. Spray painting incidents ran next highest. With the advent of the aerosol can, the vandal finds it quick and easy to spray a lot of graffiti on the school building and around the grounds without being discovered. Losses resulting from these two items are supported by reports from a great many sources with windows the biggest single loss.

' Society in its present state of unrest gives birth to stressful situations. When verbal action fails the next is more violent. Just the sound of breaking glass seems to satisfy the violent individual, as well as the person wanting to vandalize for revenge. Table 12 gives a breakdown of vandalism incidents.

TABLE 12

WHAT IS THE MOST FREQUENT ACT OF VANDALISM TO THE  
INTERIOR OF THE BUILDING AND THE EQUIPMENT?  
A SURVEY OF 89 CLASS III SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN 33 COUNTIES,  
EASTERN NEBRASKA, 1975.

Type of Damage to the Interior of the Building and the Equipment	Number of Districts Responding
Graffiti on desks, walls, and doors (restrooms included)	29
Damaged restroom fixtures (lavatory, towel racks, urinals, stools, toilet tissue racks, mirrors)	13
Tile damage (ceiling, floor, ceramic)	3
Theft (from student lockers, lockers in shower rooms, and equipment from classrooms)	8
Damage to plaster	1
Carvings in walls and doors	3
Eggs thrown in buildings	1
Damage during athletic events	1
Fire extinguishers emptied	2
Windows broken	1
Damage to student lounge	<u>1</u>
Total	63
26 Schools gave no response.	

A great deal of vandalism seems to occur at the hands of students during regular schools hours, and during extra-curricular sessions when many people occupy the building. Table 12 shows that the largest single problem facing the schools in the survey was the defacement of interior surfaces, desks, and other equipment with graffiti. The appearance of lettering on desks and similar writings on walls or doors is reported by about one-third of the schools.

Restrooms present many problems (See Item 2, Table 12). Assuming the area is to be used for personal convenience it seems to be in poor taste to station monitors in restrooms. In a very few minutes fixtures are broken or clogged, and graffiti artists have done their work on walls and mirrors.

Some damages are costing taxpayers more than others. Table 13 indicates the most costly type of vandalism occurring to the exteriors of the buildings and grounds.

TABLE 13

WHAT IS THE MOST COSTLY ITEM TO REPAIR WHEN DAMAGE IS DONE  
TO THE EXTERIOR OF THE BUILDING AND TO THE GROUNDS?  
A SURVEY OF 89 CLASS III SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN 33 COUNTIES,  
EASTERN NEBRASKA, 1975.

Most Costly Damage to the Exterior of the Building and to the Grounds	Number of Districts Responding
Broken windows	55
Broken windows and remove paint	3
Remove paint	5
Broken windows and lawn damage	1
Lawn damage (ruts, grass torn out)	3
Doors and glass doors broken	2
Fire	1
Lights	1
Bricks	1
Cost - \$100.00 per year	2
Cost \$100.00 last 5 years	<u>1</u>
Total	74
15 schools gave no response to the question.	

Schools in the State of Nebraska are experiencing the same expenses that occur in schools across the nation, particularly the high cost of replacing broken windows. Unofficial reports have laid claim to schools having to increase budget costs 300 to 500 percent in the category of upkeep and repair, just to cover this single item. Possible

double inflation costs will drive this cost skyrocketing during the ensuing school term.

The costs for repair of the interior of buildings in the Class III schools is increasing with the frequency of losses as shown in Table 14.

TABLE 14

WHAT IS THE MOST COSTLY ITEM TO REPAIR WHEN DAMAGE IS DONE  
TO INTERIOR OF BUILDING AND TO EQUIPMENT?  
A SURVEY OF 89 CLASS III SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN 33 COUNTIES,  
EASTERN NEBRASKA, 1975.

Most Costly Damage to the Interior of Building and to Equipment	Number of Districts Responding
Fixtures (plumbing and bathroom)	11
Windows	5
Desks and furniture broken	8
Graffiti (clean up)	3
Painting clean ups	9
Plaster and painting	2
Repair gym lights	2
Recharge fire extinguishers and replace stolen extinguishers	2
Blackboard damage, replacement	1
Stolen property and equipment and broken items	5
Door replacement or repair	<u>2</u>
Total	50

38 schools gave no response to this question.

1 school indicated a total of \$300.00 per year for repair of vandalism to interior of building and equipment.

Results shown in Table 14 would indicate the highest costs involve painting, cleanup, repair or replacement of broken desks or furniture, and replacing broken plumbing fixtures. No single item stands out as being more costly to repair than the others with relation to the interior of the buildings. One assumes that there does not seem to be a special concern, in this area, with 38 schools not responding.

If vandalism is so costly to schools then it would seem reasonable that the school boards would have insurance coverage to help defray expenses. The next two tables (Table 15 and Table 16) report on insurance coverage and whether or not insurance premiums have risen due to large claims brought against the carriers.

TABLE 15

DOES INSURANCE COVER THE REPAIR CAUSED BY ACTS OF VANDALISM  
WITH FULL COVERAGE, PARTIAL COVERAGE, OR DOES THE SCHOOL  
HAVE NO INSURANCE COVERAGE?  
A SURVEY OF 89 CLASS III SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN 33 COUNTIES,  
EASTERN NEBRASKA, 1975.

Type of Insurance Carried by the School	Number of Districts Responding
Full insurance coverage	11
Glass insurance coverage only	1
Partial insurance coverage	49
No insurance coverage	<u>27</u>
Total	88
1 school gave no response to this question.	

TABLE 16

HAVE INSURANCE PREMIUMS BEEN INCREASED DUE TO LARGE CLAIMS  
FROM ACTS OF VANDALISM?  
A SURVEY OF 89 CLASS III SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN 33 COUNTIES,  
EASTERN NEBRASKA, 1975.

Have Insurance Premiums been increased due to claims made by schools?	Number of Districts Responding
Yes	6
No	<u>77</u>
Total	83
6 schools gave no response to this question.	

Apparently most school boards prefer to have only partial insurance coverage to keep down the cost of premiums. The results of this survey indicate that 27 of the 89 schools have no coverage for vandalism--playing the odds no vandalism will occur, or should it occur it will be so seldom that budgeting a small amount for upkeep and repair will save the taxpayers a great deal in insurance premiums.

TABLE 17

IN YOUR BUDGET DO YOU HAVE A SPECIAL FUND EARMARKED TO COVER  
 COST OF REPAIR DUE TO VANDALISM?  
 A SURVEY OF 89 CLASS III SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN 33 COUNTIES,  
 EASTERN NEBRASKA, 1975.

Response from Schools on Special Fund Earmarked to Cover Cost of Repair	Number of Districts Responding
Yes	9
No	<u>79</u>
Total	88

1 school gave no response to the question.

Budgeting for vandalism loss is necessary when preparing a school budget. Only nine schools reported having a special fund in the upkeep and repair category of the budget in which an amount was set aside exclusively for this type of repair or replacement. One school did not respond, and 79 answered with a definite No.

In contrast the response was considerably different when the schools were asked to estimate the cost for repairs, as demonstrated in Table 18.



TABLE 18

IF YOU DO NOT BUDGET A SPECIAL FUND TO COVER COST OF REPAIR DUE TO VANDALISM DO YOU ESTIMATE A FIGURE OR A PERCENTAGE OF THE 2.5-2.1 UPKEEP OF GROUNDS OR 2.5-2.2 UPKEEP OF BUILDINGS OF THE BUDGET TO COVER SUCH UNEXPECTED COST?  
 A SURVEY OF 89 CLASS III SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN 33 COUNTIES,  
 EASTERN NEBRASKA, 1975.

Is an Estimated Cost Included in the School Budget for Repair Caused by Acts of Vandalism?	Number of Districts Responding
Yes	56
No	<u>25</u>
Total	81
1 school responded that they gave no thought to budgeting cost.	
7 schools gave no response.	

Table 18 clearly shows that at least two-thirds of the school administrators and school boards are aware that damages resulting to the buildings do not occur from normal wear-and-tear, and some funds must be set aside to take care of those damages.

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### SUMMARY

The analysis of the material presented in the review of the literature and the data gleaned by the questionnaires furnish the basis for the following summary.

The writer feels, in his opinion, it would be a rare school system which would experience no vandalism. Most school administrators, although not wanting to admit to a vandalism problem in their school, are certainly aware that some of the maintenance is not just normal wear-and-tear. School administrators spend a great deal of time with the development of programs to help students in the learning process. They also spend a number of hours just being in the building during extra-curricular events--an unarmed policeman of sorts--to ward off trouble and acts of vandalism.

An increasing amount of the custodian's time is spent with clean-ups and repair, with the work becoming so routine that perhaps in many instances he does not report the damage until sometime later. Some acts of vandalism discussed in the literature are more frequent than others, with considerable mention of windows broken, plumbing fixture damage, and graffiti. These damages are listed in Tables 11 and 12 as being most frequently inflicted upon the exterior and interior of the school buildings surveyed. The 89 school districts responding to the questionnaire also mention a number of other acts of vandalism, but these seem to be isolated and only occurring in a few schools.

Although the topic of this paper was directed toward vandalism

to the secondary school buildings of the Class III school districts in 33 counties of Eastern Nebraska the cost figures for vandalism are usually reported in a school budget as being for all the buildings in the school district, therefore only a small number of school districts even made an effort to present definite costs for vandalism to the secondary school buildings. The cost of vandalism, as estimated by a number of research organizations and experts in the field of school security, are presented as a major expenditure item for the nation's public schools. The dollar amount of \$500 million annually for vandalism, arson, and theft has other ramifications. Joseph I. Grearly, President of the National Association of School Security Directors speaks to this point as follows:

The costs cannot be measured in dollars and cents alone. The loss of the use of the facilities and equipment (in a school) is not only depressing but places a great strain on the teachers who must function without them, inevitably vandalized schools suffer a loss in morale.<sup>21</sup>

Also to be noted with grave concern, as reported in the literature, is the very rapid increase of vandalism and crime in the schools. One should consider assault cases to students and faculty. The increased assaults could place teachers in constant fear for their lives and drive good persons away from the teaching profession. An almost unheard of crime (assault to teachers) in years past shows a marked increase in only a few years bringing forth the idea that respect for age and authority

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<sup>21</sup>Myron Brenton, "School Vandalism", Today's Education, Volume 64, Number 2. (March-April 1975). pp. 82.

has declined. The most frequent question being asked today is, "Why this mindless destruction of school property?"

Hostility and revenge obviously account for many especially destructive, large-scale, acts of vandalism. Rage at the world in general or at a school in particular may prompt the act. For instance, Tom, a school dropout, feels a keen sense of failure and blames his teachers; he breaks into the school one night and tears the place apart.<sup>22</sup>

It is of interest to consider that the data gathered by the questionnaires demonstrated a definite lack of schools to have a protective plan in operation. A review of the data from Chapter 3 with reference to Tables 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 give the impression that:

1. Only a few schools hire some law enforcement personnel to be on duty during some sporting events.
2. If protective services are hired they are paid at a low hourly wage.
3. About one-third of the 89 schools reporting do receive the services of the local law enforcement officers to check the building for intruders and breakins.
4. Only three of the 89 schools have any type of protective wall or fence around the building or grounds, and,
5. Only a few school officials feel that a protective fence or wall does any good as a deterrent to keeping vandals from the school building.

Having summarized those incidents of vandalism which are of concern to school officials it would appear the next step is to initiate new techniques toward solving the problem. The positive attitude approach is no doubt the best starting point. After an initial enlightenment program

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid. p. 82.

those persons would be motivated to carry the ball and keep it rolling toward a more healthy atmosphere.

Some solutions which might be of considerable benefit to the secondary schools in the 33 counties of Eastern Nebraska will be presented as recommendations in the remainder of this paper.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations presented will not be in specific order of importance nor will they meet the needs of all school systems, but a number of these could be applied in almost all school systems. The recommendations are those gathered from the literature, the questionnaires, those formed in the mind of the writer as a result of practical experience, and opinions of the writer developed from this project. It is recommended that:

1. The services of a number of persons be solicited to check the school building at frequent intervals. This is especially applicable during summer months, weekends, or at night when the building is empty.
2. A professional protective service be employed to check the interior as well as the exterior of the school building periodically is recommended. Although protective service may not be practical for some of the schools who responded to the questionnaire as it may be more costly than the problem, it is highly recommended for those schools with hostile rivalries or for those few schools adjacent to the metropolitan areas who could easily secure these services.
3. School officials work with the county and city law enforcement agencies and request their checks about the school building and grounds as a regular part of their daily duties.
4. School principals talk with citizens who live near the school

building. Keep them informed of what is going on in the way of activities on a weekly basis and have them report other unusual happenings.

5. School buildings be occupied by the custodial staff, for a longer working day. The custodian serves as a security guard during those critical darkness hours as well as accomplishing the tasks associated with daily cleaning and maintenance.

Myron Brenton in his article entitled, "School Vandalism" which appears in the March-April 1975 issue of Today's Education has some suggestions with reference to the use of security persons:

School 'sitters' are a prime example. Sitters are usually private families who live rent-free in mobile homes on the school grounds. Their very presence is a deterrent to vandals and, of course, they immediately report to police or school security officers any suspicious activities around the schools.<sup>23</sup>

Not every school system can have trailers on its grounds, but it can use other approaches that accomplish the same thing. Several have arranged for at least some of their head custodians to live inside the schools they service. And, in Broward County, Florida, local police are in-and-out of the schools all night long, because the school board has given them permission to use the schools as 'headquarters' to write up routine reports.<sup>24</sup>

6. New buildings under construction incorporate materials which are destruction proof. This will have a tendency to deter vandals.

7. When replacing equipment in an existing building, "heavy duty" materials such as those placed in a new building should be obtained.

8. Windows in buildings be located out of the reach of projectiles hurled by vandals.

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<sup>23</sup>Brenton, "School Vandalism", Today's Education, op. cit., p. 84.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

9. Windows at ground level be closed off using glass block. This will allow some light to enter but will not be so inviting to rock or snowball throwing students.

10. Buildings be equipped with walls, doors, and gates so that only small portions of that building need to be open for night and extra-curricular activities.

11. Keys be safeguarded by checking out only those which are needed by teachers. Those teachers who sponsor activities need more keys but only select personnel and custodians need master keys.

12. All funds be collected through the school office and receipts issued for those monies. Teachers and students should avoid handling money and also should not keep it in their desks or lockers.

13. Large sums of money not be kept in the safe but should be deposited with the bank daily.

14. Expensive equipment be locked in a secure place. On the secondary school level, expensive equipment is made available to both students and teachers, therefore locked cabinets, storage rooms, and closets should always be used to hold equipment when not in use.

15. An accurate inventory of all equipment be kept to discourage the "would be" thief. Equipment should be stenciled or engraved with the school's identifying mark.

16. Repairs to damaged property be made promptly so that more damage is not invited. A broken window not replaced begs another rock to be thrown.

17. Writing (graffiti) on walls and desk tops be removed as soon as possible. Equipping the school with laminated desks, fiberglass chairs,

and painting with oil base paint with a high acrylic or epoxy content will provide surfaces which can be easily cleaned.

18. Lights be left on within the building, when it is vacant, and changing the areas where lights are being left will present an "occupied" appearance to those who come around at night.

19. Trees and shrubs be trimmed so that they can not be used as hiding places.

20. Alarm systems be installed and tied into the local fire department or law enforcement office.

21. School owned vehicles be placed in garages or in fenced areas; in rural areas buses, pickups, and school cars taken to the private home of the drivers are much safer than standing outside the school building, even though they are locked.

22. Good lighting on the outside of the building, on the vehicle parking area, and on the athletic field be available as a deterrent to the vandal.

23. Plastic could be used to repair damage. Although it is more costly initially, the long range repairs will save the district money. Doors laminated with plastic replacing veneer and the use of plexiglass to replace broken windows, as damage is incurred, will gradually remove eyesores.

24. Large wall areas could become areas of beauty, with teacher-supervised murals. The art work done by students.

25. The person(s) who have performed an act of vandalism be held accountable and proper punishment be imposed. If the act of vandalism is minimal, such as lighting matches in the building, perhaps a verbal reprimand only is necessary, however, if a thousand dollars worth of equipment



has been damaged it is necessary that a stiffer penalty be inflicted.

26. The law enforcement authorities be brought into a vandalism case at the discretion of the school officials. From practical experience if the sheriff is involved in the investigation and solution of the crime, it implants a more lasting effect on the criminal(s). If charges are filed the school should have a solid case before proceeding.

27. The school press for an early court proceeding and conviction. If a court case lingers on it usually turns out to be a display of attorney skills or a compromise in which case the school receives little or no settlement to replace or repair the damage.

28. The parents of the persons performing a criminal act, and most of these persons are of minority age, be held accountable and be certain these persons know what trouble they have caused. The individual, not the parent, should be totally responsible for repayment of the damage done to the school.

Relatively few vandals are ever caught. Fewer still are prosecuted (especially if they are minors, as so many are), and juvenile courts tend to be lenient with those who are prosecuted.<sup>25</sup>

29. The community and taxpayers of the district be informed as to how much is spent each year to repair vandalism losses. A positive program designed to educate and inform patrons will oftentimes provide opportunities for involvement which can be helpful.

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<sup>25</sup>Brenton, "School Vandalism", Today's Education, op. cit., p. 84.

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## APPENDIX A

## LETTER TO SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

5310 Holdrege Street  
 Lincoln, Nebraska 68504  
 February 24, 1975

Dear Colleague:

I am acutely aware of the many demands on your time, however, I would appreciate your taking a few minutes to read this letter.

We are all confronted with the problem of Vandalism and the resulting costs of repair in materials as well as services. I am a graduate student in Educational Administration at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and am doing research in the above named area. May I request your participation in this study?

Please be assured the questionnaire will be brief, and take only a few minutes to complete. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,



Rolland L. Fenster

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PLEASE TEAR OFF AND RETURN IN ENCLOSED ENVELOPE.

I (we) will participate in the study. Please mail the questionnaire to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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## APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE TO ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF OF  
CLASS III SCHOOLS

If you have more than one secondary building, please choose one that is representative, and preferably the one that houses the Senior High grade levels (10, 11, and 12).

1. Legal name of school district. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Location of building housing secondary grades. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(name of city, town, or village)

or distance \_\_\_\_\_ from city limits of \_\_\_\_\_  
(miles) (city, town, or village)

3. Number of secondary buildings in the district. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Number of staff in the representative building. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Number of custodians in the representative building. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Custodians are on duty during hours:

\_\_\_\_\_ A.M. to \_\_\_\_\_ P.M.

7. Custodians are on duty in the representative building (circle those applying).
- A. Every day, including weekends, school term.
- B. Every day including weekends, year-around.
- C. School days only \_\_\_\_\_ A.M. to \_\_\_\_\_ P.M.
- D. Vacations \_\_\_\_\_ A.M. to \_\_\_\_\_ P.M.
8. Do you have a Commercial Protective Service employed? (circle those applying).
- A. Routinely checking the building.
- B. Have someone on duty at all times.
- C. During events when the public is present.
- D. None of these.

## APPENDIX B CONTINUED

## QUESTIONNAIRE

9. Total cost per year for commercial protective service as indicated in Question #8 \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Does the Sheriff's office routinely check the building? \_\_\_\_\_.
11. Is the building or the ground surrounding the building protected by (circle)
- A. Wall.
  - B. Fence.
  - C. No protection.
12. If there is a wall or fence does it deter vandals when school is not in session?
13. What is the most frequent act of vandalism?
- A. To exterior of building and grounds? \_\_\_\_\_
- 
- B. To interior of building and equipment? \_\_\_\_\_
- 
14. What is the most costly item to repair when damage is done?
- A. To exterior of building and grounds? \_\_\_\_\_
- 
- B. To interior of building and equipment? \_\_\_\_\_
- 
15. Does insurance cover the repair caused by acts of vandalism? (circle)
- A. Full coverage.
  - B. Partial coverage.
  - C. No coverage at all.

## APPENDIX B CONTINUED

## QUESTIONNAIRE

16. Have insurance premiums been increased due to large claims from acts of vandalism?    Yes        No
17. In your budget do you have a special fund earmarked to cover cost of repair due to vandalism?            Yes        No
18. If you do not budget a special fund to cover cost of repair due to vandalism do you estimate a figure or a percentage of the 2.5-2.1 upkeep of grounds or 2.5-2.2 upkeep of buildings of the budget to cover such unexpected cost?            Yes        No
19. Would you be interested in my findings?    Yes        No

## APPENDIX C

LETTER TO THE HONORABLE CARL T. CURTIS

5310 Holdrege Street  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68504  
April 13, 1975

The Honorable Carl T. Curtis  
United States Senator  
Capitol Building  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator Curtis:

During the past week I read an article in the Omaha World-Herald on the Crisis of Violence and Vandalism in the U. S. schools. This article was based on the Senate Juvenile Delinquency Subcommittee Report released, and on statements on the report made by Senator Birch Bayh of Indiana, Chairman of the Subcommittee.

I am presently doing graduate studies at the University of Nebraska at Omaha in School Administration and have chosen as my research topic Vandalism in the Class III schools in the Eastern 33 counties of the state of Nebraska. My project will be completed in the summer of 1975 with reports from the schools of this state plus research and statistics on vandalism in the schools. My interest in this topic is of great concern, as I see the increase nationwide and on the local level. I am employed as Secondary Principal at Central Public Schools, Raymond, Nebraska.

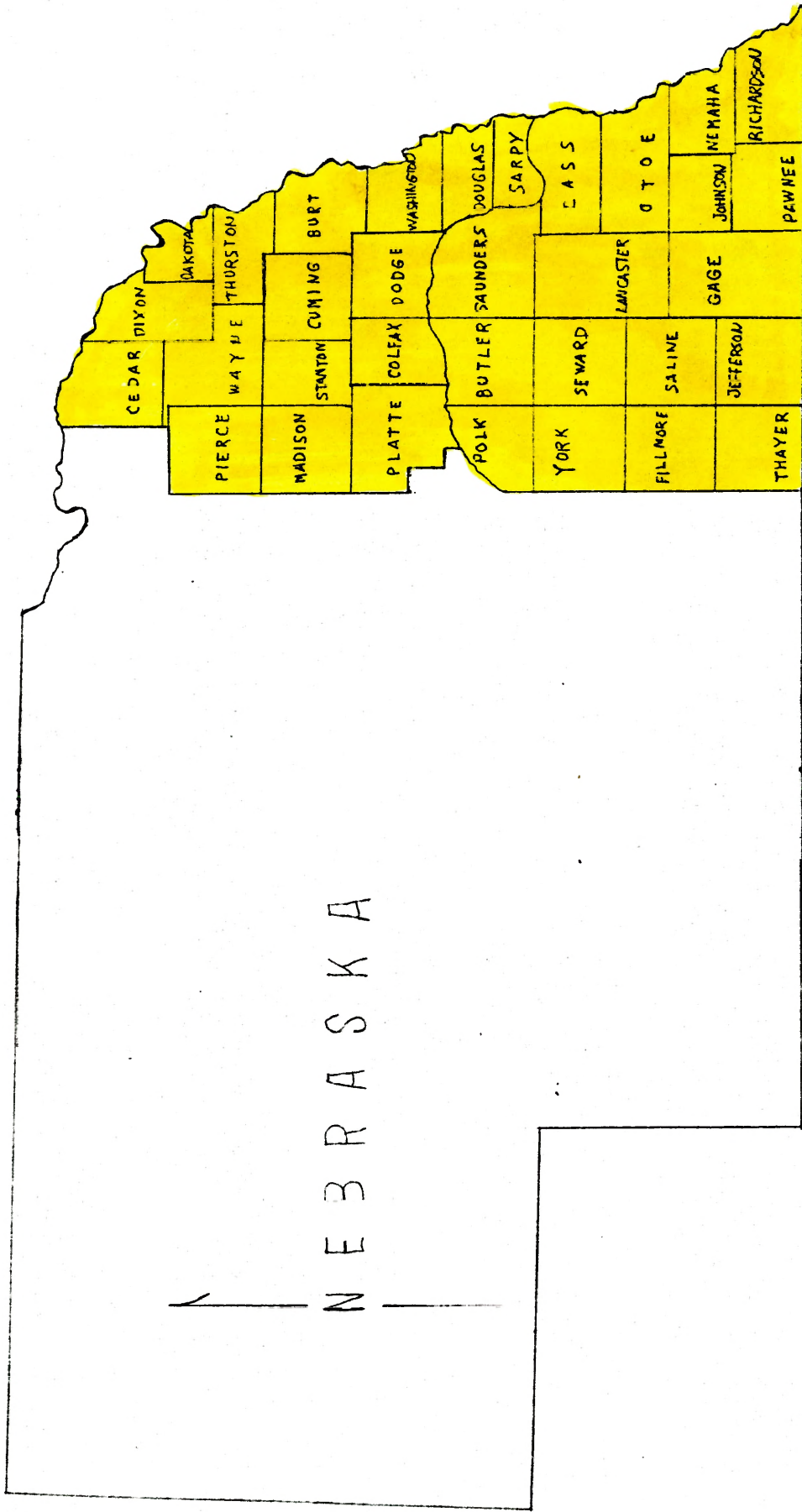
May I impose upon your office to obtain for me a copy of that report so that I might use it for research material? I would need it fairly soon as I am compiling the paper now, also please send me a bill for this material if there is a charge.

I thank you, Mr. Senator, and those concerned for your consideration and help in this matter.

Sincerely,



Rolland L. Fenster



APPENDIX D

MAP OF 33 COUNTY AREA, EASTERN NEBRASKA