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The University of Southern Mississippi

NOVICE AND VETERAN TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF
CRISIS MANAGEMENT TRAINING CONCERNING SCHOOL FIGHTS

by

Heather Ann Chesman

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2016

ABSTRACT

NOVICE AND VETERAN TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT TRAINING CONCERNING SCHOOL FIGHTS

by Heather Ann Chesman

May 2016

The purpose of this study was to examine the data collected from 7-12 grade middle/junior high teachers and high school teachers to determine whether there was a difference between veteran and novice teachers' perceptions that they are adequately trained to respond to student versus student fights. This study included an introduction and a literature review about crisis management training. The study also included methodology, research results, conclusions, recommendations for policy makers and practitioners, and recommendations for future research.

The researcher developed a survey instrument to examine the veteran and novice teachers' perceptions about crisis management training concerning school fights. Data was collected via an on-line survey site from 296 participants, with the majority being female with 1-3 years of teaching experience.

This study specifically examined veteran and novice teachers' perceptions about crisis management training concerning school fights. Results illustrated that there was no difference in the perceptions of veteran and novice teachers in the area of intervention of school fights. This study also examined if there was a difference in perceptions between veteran teachers and novice teachers related to their crisis management training. The results indicated that there was no difference in perceptions. In addition, this study explored if there was a difference of perception between veteran teachers and novice

teachers related to preventative strategies. Once again, the results indicated that there was no difference in perceptions. Finally, this study examined if there was a difference of perception between veteran teachers and novice teachers related to law concerning school fights. The results indicated a significant relationship. Policymakers and practitioners were urged to develop professional development and training related to teachers' knowledge of law concerning school fights.

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CRISIS MANAGEMENT TRAINING CONCERNING SCHOOL FIGHTS

by

Heather Ann Chesman

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
and the Department of Educational Leadership and School Counseling
at The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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DEDICATION

To all of my friends who assisted me along the way, I truly appreciate you. Amy Thibodeaux, thank you for getting me started on this journey. Your guidance was immeasurable. Tess Lawrence, thank you for being my mentor and my best friend. I appreciate you believing in me and giving me opportunities so I could thrive. To Tina Salminen and Mimi Surratt, your friendship keeps me sane. I love you all.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Shootings, bullying, fights, television, radio, and newspapers scream the problem of school violence across the nation. Today's school environment is far different from the environment of only a few years ago. Depending on the schools' ability to keep their children safe under any circumstances, parents across the nation send their children to what should be a safe school environment. Unfortunately, schools have to contend with a myriad of threats ranging from violence to natural disasters. Recently, violent incidents in schools, ranging from mass shootings to bullying, have dominated the headlines. In 2009, Sela-Shayovitz reported in a study that "more than 60% of children surveyed were exposed to violence within the past year, either directly or indirectly" (p. 1061).

The burgeoning number of violent incidents in a school environment has increased public pressure on educational leaders to make certain that schools are adequately equipped to avert or reduce violent incidents. Student fights involve two or more students resolving a conflict with physical force; physical altercations such as these are the most common incidence of school violence (Meese, 1997). In 2013, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2013) surveyed a youth in upper grades 9-12 and found the following:

- 32.8% reported being in a physical fight in the 12 months preceding the survey; the prevalence was higher among males (40.7%) than females (24.4%).

- 16.6% reported carrying a weapon (gun, knife or club) on one or more days in the 30 days preceding the survey; the prevalence was higher among males (25.9%) than females (6.8%)
- 5.1% reported carrying a gun on one or more days in the 30 days preceding the survey; the prevalence was higher among males (8.6%) than females (1.4%)
- 12% reported being in a physical fight on school property in the 12 months preceding the survey
- 16% of male students and 7.8% of female students reported being in a physical fight on school property in the 12 months preceding the survey
- 5.9% did not go to school on one or more days in the 30 days preceding the survey because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school
- 7.4% reported being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property one or more times in the 12 months preceding the survey (p. 6)

Statement of the Problem

Collecting data on the causative factors and basing control efforts on those causative factors is critical to preventing student fighting. In 2004, Resnick, Ireland, and Borowsky (2004) stated, “It is critical that service providers have the training and preparation to screen for violence-related factors as well as knowledge of clinical and community resources to affect an adequate response” (p. 9). Violence prevention programs in schools generate success in communities, including those with lower socioeconomic status and high rates of crime (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013). However, to be effective, the entire staff, as well as the student body, is an

integral part in recognizing factors contributing to violence and in application of corrective measures. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention support this claim stating, “The findings suggest that universal school-based violence prevention programs can be effective in communities with diverse ethnic compositions and in communities whose residents are predominately of lower SES or that have relatively high rates of crime” (2013, n.p.). Students whose teachers were trained to resolve conflict showed less “aggression-related processes” than those students whose teachers were not trained (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006). Ascertaining the abilities and training of teachers will help administrators tailor training programs to actual needs for that institution and conserve valuable training dollars and time. School administrators who conduct an assessment of their school’s safety plan and teacher training are laying the foundation for combating school fights.

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there is a difference between veteran and novice teachers’ perceptions that they are adequately trained to respond to student versus student fights. Surveys and studies have shown that violence prevention programs help teachers build good relationships with students, demonstrate nonviolent behaviors, and lower risk for violent behavior (David-Fernon & Simon, 2012). David-Fernon and Simon (2012) stated “these approaches teach educators effective ways to manage a classroom, resolve conflicts nonviolently, promote positive relationships between students with diverse backgrounds, and create positive student-teacher relationships so that students feel comfortable talking with teachers about violence-related issues” (p. 7). The first and probably most vital cog in handling incidents in

schools is a comprehensive plan covering those events that could reasonably be expected to occur and then training the staff in their roles in implementing the plan. According to Badzmierowski (2011), “emergency plans focus on facilities, hardware, and systems. Staff, not equipment, stops violent incidents” (p. 30).

Historically, schools have plans covering fires, tornados, and other natural events but are lacking when dealing with events such as fights between individual students. Crisis planning is essential and must emphasize the human element in a management approach (Badzmierowski, 2011). Training of staff and students in response procedures is a key to mitigating the effects of violent events. Planning must be detailed enough to address all facets of an incident while retaining enough simplicity to be understood by staff and students. Failure to measure individual teacher preparedness to defuse an individual fight makes it likely that it will escalate to a more serious incident with school-wide implications (U.S Department of Education, 2002). Program interventions, building security, and student interactions are one focus of prevention efforts. However, teachers play a key role in curbing the problems involving violence (Astor, Meyer, & Behre, 1999). Studies, while providing useful information, focus heavily on student characteristics, family, community, and peer groups, but neglect a teachers’ role. The need for teachers’ responses to be defined and expanded in the prevention effort is self-evident. Certainly, the front line teacher must be the primary tool of preventing or reacting to altercations at schools. They are usually the first on the scene and must be well-versed in management of incidents and defusing the tensions which provoke the most school fights.

Parents, politicians, and governmental agencies are putting enormous pressure on educational institutions to produce safer environments in school systems. Incidents of violence have captured most of the headlines. On September 29, 2006, a 15-year-old male youth shot and subsequently killed his building administrator at Weston High School in Cazenovia, Wisconsin; and a one-room Amish schoolhouse in Pennsylvania was the scene of the murder of five girls by a 32-year-old man on October 2, 2006 (Wojcik, 2006). Incidents like these combined with the well-known school shooting in the 1990s at South Jefferson County, Colorado, Jonesboro, Arkansas, and West Paducah, Kentucky highlight the necessity for further inquiries on school violence and the means to prevent these type events and the importance of response planning and including teachers in prevention measures (Daniels, Volungis, Pshenishny, & Winkler, 2010).

Often times, the media focuses on mass shootings, individual killings, and other attention-grabbing, headline material. According to Robers, Snyder, Truman, and Zhang, (2010), deaths that occur at school are extremely rare stating “seventeen homicides of school-age youth ages 5 to 18 years occurred at school during the 2009-2010 school year. Of all youth homicides, less than 2% occur at school, and this percentage has been stable for the past decade” (p. 6). However, a common form of school violence occurs when individuals settle differences with physical altercations and when individuals or groups bully a target student or group of students. Robers et al. (2010) found that “in 2010, there were about 828,000 nonfatal victimizations at school among students 12 to 18 years of age” (p. 10). As can be seen, killings associated with schools are a small part of the problem. Many more students suffer nonfatal injuries such as cuts, bruises, or broken

bones as a result of school violence. There are also invisible damages that result from violent incidents. Being embroiled in school violence can lead to a student suffering a variety of problems including alcohol and drug use, suicide, depression, anxiety, fear and a host of other psychological problems. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, (2013), “Nationwide, 12% of all students reported being in one or more fights at school during 2011 and 7.1% reported not attending school due to fear of their safety. In Mississippi, during the year 2013, 13.6% of all students reported being in a physical fight at school one or more times and 8.3% reported being afraid to go to school as they feared for their safety” (p. 8).

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed throughout this study:

1. Do veteran teachers and novice teachers differ in their beliefs that teachers should be required to intervene in school fights?
2. Do veteran teachers and novice teachers differ in their beliefs that they are adequately trained to effectively control fights between students in schools?
3. Do veteran teachers and novice teachers differ in their beliefs that preventive strategies assist to decrease the number of school fights that occur?
4. Do veteran teachers and novice teachers differ in their beliefs that they are adequately trained in the legal obligations concerning school fights?

Hypotheses

The following related hypotheses were examined in this study:

H1: Veteran teachers and novice teachers do differ in their beliefs that they should intervene in school fights.

H2: Veteran teachers and novice teachers do differ in their beliefs that they are adequately trained to effectively control fights between students in schools.

H3: Veteran teachers and novice teachers do differ in their beliefs that preventive strategies assist to decrease the number of school fights that occur.

H4: Veteran teachers and novice teachers do differ in their beliefs that they are adequately trained in the legal obligations concerning school fights.

Definition of Terms

Crisis Management Training- The policy and procedures of a school district that utilizes strategies when a significant event occurs (Adams & Kritsonis, 2006).

Negligence- Failure exercise care that a reasonable person would exercise in the same situation (Morte, 1982).

Novice Teacher- Teachers with three or fewer years of experience (Kumi-Yeboh & James, 2012).

Self-efficacy- An individual's belief in his/her ability to perform a specific task successfully (Bandura, 1994).

Tort law- A wrongful act, whether intentional or accidental, that causes injury (Morte, 1982).

Veteran Teacher- Teachers who have five or more years of experience (Day & Gu, 2009).

Violence- “Any behavior that violates a school’s educational mission or climate of respect or jeopardizes the intent of the school to be free of aggression against persons or property, drugs, weapons, disruptions, and disorder” (Center for the Prevention of School Violence, 2002).

Delimitations of the Study

The study had certain limitations. The participants in the study were limited to high school and junior high teachers who taught in five districts in the state of Mississippi, and the participants in the study were limited to teachers who completed the survey.

Assumptions of the Study

Several assumptions guided this study. The researcher assumed that the principals gave the survey link to the teachers and that teachers understood the directions of the survey. The researcher also assumed that the teachers answered the questions truthfully.

Justification of the Study

This study is valuable because it will provide insight in determining whether veteran teachers and novice teachers differ in their perceptions of being adequately trained to deal with school fight incidents. Training of staff in response procedures is a key to mitigating the effects of violent events; therefore, this study will provide pertinent

information concerning the adequate or inadequate training provided by the school to teachers.

Summary

Teachers certainly play a vital role in preventing violence at schools serving as an information goldmine of information concerning their students. Studies, while providing useful information, focus heavily on student characteristics, family, community, and peer groups; but teachers' roles need to be defined and expanded in the prevention effort. Certainly, the front line teacher must be the primary tool of preventing or reacting to altercations at schools. They are usually the first on the scene and must be well-versed in management of incidents and defusing the tensions which provoke the most common events. Planning must be detailed enough to address all facets of an incident while retaining enough simplicity to be understood by staff and students. Program interventions, building security, student interactions and staff training/intervention must be the focus of prevention efforts.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Violence in schools generates poor teaching outcomes and being a victim of violence makes student adjust to new schools poorly and prevents them from focusing in the classroom (Wei & Williams, 2004). This generates lower grades and spotty attendance among the victims (Juvonen, Nishina, & Graham, 2000). Barton, Coley, and Wenglisky (1998) found that violence in schools has a cumulative effect among all students lowering their performance. As Lochman, Lampron, Gemmer, and Harris (1987) pointed out, crime and violence in the classroom hamper the teaching and learning process. Per a Harris and Associates national survey, some 25% to 42% of public, parochial, and private 7th to 12th grade said that they felt unsafe in their environment at home, in their schools, and while be transported to school and from school (Bowen & Bowen, 1999). Maslow's basic needs of safety and security are essential to higher-level learning; therefore, having almost half of school students feeling unsafe could be expected to result in underachievement in their school work (Huitt, 2007).

In 2011, the Philadelphia Inquirer conducted an investigation into the conditions in a Philadelphia City High School prompted by an attack on a student. During the investigations, the Inquirer staff interviewed several hundred teachers, parents, student, and educational experts as well as commissioning an exhaustive survey by Temple University which interviewed more than 750 teachers and teachers' aides. Of those

persons interviewed, more than two-thirds said that violence and its disruptions adversely impacted on their student abilities to learn. In addition to attacks on students, there were 690 assaults on teachers that year (Sullivan, Snyder, Graham, & Purcell, 2011). Many studies have been conducted that conclude violence in schools and at home adversely affect the ability of students to learn. According to Kelly (2012), “violence impacts individuals, families, communities, and community institutions (schools and universities) in a manner that disrupts the acquisition of educational skills, thereby impeding success in the academic arena” (p. 1). Research has determined that exposure to violence, especially among disadvantages minorities, leads to feelings of hopelessness for the future, rising substance abuse, and problems with behavior. Violence exposure is likely to result in poor IQ results and substandard reading abilities, lower school performance, lower GPA, more absences, aggressive behaviors, and fewer high school graduations (Kelly, 2012). Another study by Delaney-Black et al. (2002) confirmed the link between violence and poor academic performance. The study revealed that children exposed to or victims of violence scored an average of “7 points lower on IQ and 10 points less in reading achievement” (Delaney-Black et al., 2002, p. 282).

The climate of a school and the students’ perceptions of that climate have a huge impact on academic motivation, achievement, and behavior. Negative behaviors such as fighting, lying, and cheating can be counteracted if the student has a high opinion of a school’s climate. One important factor in creating a high perception of a school’s climate

is student connectedness to the school. A student's inclusiveness in the school setting can offset influences that create undesirable behaviors in students (Loukas, 2007).

Theoretical Foundations

According to Albert Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, "Self-efficacy is defined as people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives," (Bandura, 1994, p. 1). This feeling of competence is vital to a teacher's ability to handle a confrontation between students. Bandura's theory purports four sources of self-efficacy. Mastery of experiences is the first source of self-efficacy and is the most proficient way to create self-efficacy. The second source is seeing a peer succeed at some task which in turn will reinforce the individual's feeling of self-efficacy. The danger of this source is seeing a peer fail at a task will reduce an individual's feeling of efficacy. The third way to develop self-efficacy is by social persuasion. The power of praise from respected peers or superiors can be used to enhance an individual's feelings of self-efficacy. In the same vein, criticizing an individual can reduce his feelings of competency and increase his/her self-doubt (Bandura, 1977).

Bandura (1994) states that self-efficacy is the foundation of skilled performance. In this theory, verbal reinforcement and persuasion is a compelling tool in fostering a feeling of self-efficacy in individuals. An experiment conducted by Stolz (1999) confirmed that positive verbal persuasion increases individual confidence and performance. Thus "pep talks" by authority figures can go a long way in ensuring personnel have a feeling of competency and ability to handle any given situation.

Self-efficacy has a vital role in determining inner behavior and in learning new behavior. A strong sense of self-efficacy boosts an individual's belief in their aptitude. Individuals with a high faith in their capabilities face challenges as problems to be mastered rather than a threat to be evaded (Bandura, 1977). Bandura points out that the people with low opinions of their capabilities are wary of facing problems and tend to magnify their faults and minimize their talents.

Within the school setting, the major authority figure is the principal. These individuals can enhance self-efficacy by strengthening a teacher's sense of competency. By putting teachers in situations in which the teacher will be successful, a principal can raise the teachers' sense of self-efficacy. In the same vein, the good principal avoids placing a teacher in a situation where failure is likely which would destroy the teacher's feelings of competency. Increasing the level of challenge over a period of time will increase the teacher's self-efficacy as coping skills develop. The fourth means to enhance an individual's feeling of self-efficacy is to reduce an individual's stress and negative feelings. Efforts to bolster an individual's self-efficacy should also include training and practice drills. Training teachers in the skills needed to control situations, and then practicing those learned skills will result in individual and group competence. This applies to classroom management as well as controlling violence in hallways and parking lots. An increased self-efficacy improves teacher qualities and makes them a more valuable member of the teaching team (Hakan, 2014).

One of the primary goals of self-efficacy in teachers is producing a safe school environment in which learning is the first objective (Bandura, 1994). In creating self-

efficacy among the teaching staff, their perceptions must be considered and safety measures examined to evaluate school climate. As teachers are in the trenches, they should be consulted when developing safety plans and must be involved in practices and drills. According to Bandura (1994), building a high sense of self-efficacy in the teaching staff is vital to ensure an effective response to a crisis. This sense of competence must be fostered by repetitive training and drilling. The aim is to have emergency response tasks performed without delay because the task has become second nature (Bandura, 1994).

A sense of self-efficacy affects the individual's selection of actions, tenacity in surmounting difficulties, strength of effort, and performance (Hakan, 2014). Both teachers and administrators at all school facilities must be conscientious in preparing for a crisis. Bandura (1977) clearly states that the overall self-efficacy of the school staff is a powerful element of how they will handle themselves in a crisis. The staff's perception of their capabilities will have a significant influence on the outcome of a crisis. The importance of high self-efficacy is not confined to response to crisis situations. A teacher's sense of competence has a direct bearing on their ability to affect student performance, learning outcomes, and their ability to display the behavior to conduct their responsibilities successfully (Hakan, 2014).

Since schools are one of the main foci of where children have violent experiences, successful application of deterrence programs depend on in-depth training of teachers. Teachers and principals deal with school violence on a daily basis and many ask for guidance on intervention techniques and prevention measures (Sela-Shayovitz, 2009).

A teachers' feeling of self-efficacy has been proven to depend on rapport within the organization and by the support received from their peers (Tschannen-Moran & Woofolk-Hoy, 2001). When schools do not provide support for their colleagues, the teaching staff will in turn have a low self-efficacy and will be less willing to deal with problems centered around students (Goodard & Goodard, 2001). Studies have shown that most investigators feel there is a lack of proof in regard to the success of most deterrence programs which makes it hard for schools to choose useful programs (Sela-Shayovitz, 2009). Despite the plethora of prevention programs put forth by various authorities, administrators and teachers are swamped by the tide of school violence and lack the training to deal with a violent situation (Kandakai & King, 2002). One study linked a teacher's sense of self-efficacy in preventing bullying to an improvement in the prevention program. Teachers were trained in prevention techniques, acquired the skills to cope with bullying, and increased their sense of competence in handling bullying which resulted in increased interventions which proved to be effective (Newman-Carlson & Horne, 2004). Kandakai and King (2002) found that the perceived competency of pre-service teachers that had undergone violence prevention training was greater than their non-trained peers. This perceived competency was greater among kindergartens and elementary schools than in secondary education settings.

Despite the evidence that training improves self-efficacy in handling violent events in schools, most teachers are not required to participate in violence prevention training programs, and there has been little research on teacher self-efficacy and violence prevention. Research has verified that training centered on violence prevention has a

substantially affirmative effect on a teacher's competency in dealing with violent incidents. However, since most of the training took place outside the school system and may have been perceived by participants as a lack of support from the school system. Considering the fact the low self-efficacy among high school teachers, it can be gleaned that teachers need additional avenues for training (Sela-Shayovitz, 2009). According to Sela-Shayovitz (2009), including school violence training in the teacher programs of study would be reasonable to assume that a teachers' self-efficacy in handling school violence would be raised and their willingness to intervene in incidents effectively would be increased.

Teacher Readiness to Intervene in Fights

Teachers are usually the first adult authority figure to encounter a violent event. Since many events can be alleviated or the extent decreased by definite control reactions, teachers must be trained in intervention methods. Unfortunately, crisis management training of teachers seems to focus on natural disasters, intruder incidents, and other less frequent events. According to Bauman and Del Rio (2006), student versus student assaults are the most frequent incidents of school violence and yet garner the least amount of training attention. The presence of violence in the school is evident in scales measuring fear, depression, psycho-somatic disorders, and physical complaints, which affects a student's academic performance and mental state (Chambers, Zyromski, Asner-Self, & Kimemia, 2013). Bullying is one of the more notable and commonly occurring incidents of school-related violence, and teachers play a vital role in the recognition and response to bullying (Dake, Price, Telljohann, & Funk, 2003). However, teachers report

only seeing 1 in every 25 bullying incidents. Coloroso (2003) recommends that the teacher training in the recognition and intervention in bullying may provide increased opportunities for intervention. Smith and Shu (2000) suggest that increased training of teachers will enable them to identify signs of victimization in children and break the code of silence that permeates student-teacher relationships. According to Pepler, Smith, and Rigby (2004), the commitment of teachers to reduce violence in the school is critical to controlling both bullying and general violence. This commitment varies widely among teachers. Their attitude toward anti-violence programs and confidence in implanting those programs are directly proportional to the rate of intervening in an incident involving violence (Craig, Bell, & Lescheid, 2011; Dake et al., 2003). Educators who do not identify bullying or other violent behavior as serious are much less likely to intervene (Stankiewicz, 2007). This lack of intervention perpetuates violence continuing it and implies that the school authorities view bullying and minor violence as expected continuing without consequence (Boulton, 1997). Further complicating the role of the teacher in controlling school violence is the perception of who owns the problem and the role of the teacher. This confusion not only afflicts teachers, but it also affects security personnel and the local police. Teachers tend to view their domain as the classroom while school security and the local police handle the halls, buses playgrounds, etc. This produces a “hands-off” attitude by teachers toward events that occur outside the classroom (Behre, Astor, & Meyer, 2001). According to Furlong and Morrison (2000), a rivalry exists between school security and the local police. Local police tend to emphasize the law enforcement aspects of school violence while school security

personnel lean toward support of the educational mission. Furlong and Morrison (2000) further state that if teachers continue to ignore school violence and do not show ownership of the problem, they will miss the chance to intervene in this crucial issue in a child's life. By ignoring the name-calling, shoving, fighting, and harassment, teachers are silently condoning that behavior. Furlong and Morrison (2000) found that adults are present in about 50% of the violent events experienced by students stating that intervention in half the cases might deescalate the incident before real damage is done.

In his 1998 study, Astor found that teachers' reaction to violence is influenced by the physical space in which it occurs (Astor et al., 1999). This was further confirmed in literature about urban planning that stated that the characteristics of an area influenced how people think and act in that space (Newman, 1973, 1995; Newman & Franck, 1982). Newman (1995) found that during urban planning for housing projects areas of a building not felt to be owned by a particular tenant (hallways and lobbies) were more prone to be sites for violent crimes. On the other hand, Newman found that spaces whose ownership is clear are much less likely to be in a place where violent events may occur. Astor et al. (1999) discovered during interviews conducted with high school students and teachers that the locations of violent crimes most frequently in those "unowned" spaces and that those incidents occurred during periods of high traffic such as class transitions, meals, and before and after school. The educators and learners felt that more occurrences happened in these areas at these times because there were not authority figures present to monitor behavior. During their interviews, teachers said, "even those teachers who would intervene in outside of the classroom viewed this behavior as 'above and beyond

the call of duty' and would not necessarily expect their colleagues to intervene in a similar manner" (Astor et al., 1999, p. 134). Most teachers claimed a stronger significance of duty within their own classrooms for a combination of reasons including knowing and caring more about their students within that classroom and a feeling that the classroom was a focal point of professional responsibility (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006).

According to Astor et al. (1999), middle and elementary school educators feel differently about their role of intervention in school fights. The difference in students' ages, the organization of the school, and the feelings of professional responsibilities account for the difference. Some middle school and high school teachers feel a sense of threat and wonder how much they will be supported if they intervene in a fight.

As stated by a male high school physical education teacher:

I can't tell you how many fights I see right outside the school gate here [he points to the school gates], students beating the crap out of each other, just in front of my office. So what am I supposed to do? If I decided to go out there and break it up, will the vice principal and principal support me, or with they [the students] be back out there in 15 minutes after I bring them to the office? If I'm hit when I'm stopping a fight off of school grounds, are they [the administrators] going to tell me I shouldn't be getting into it because it's happening after school or are they going to support me? If a fight happens in the gym, I'd pull the kids apart in two seconds and they'd get suspended. But am I supposed to do it all the time? Even when it is outside of school? Maybe? If I could depend on the principal I'd be

out there every day. Personally, I think students can't do it without the teachers and the teachers can't do it without the support of the principal. (Astor et al., 1999, p. 217)

This teacher is beset by doubts about the administration and the limits to which his authority extends; doubts arising from the lack of defined responsibility and a distrust of administration.

Astor et al. (1999) also interviewed a female high school English teacher who stated:

It's really no mystery. We've got serious hallway problems. Some of the teachers are just too afraid to do anything about fight because if you've taken a look around, some of our students are larger and stronger than we are and who knows maybe they have weapons or friends with weapons. The girls are just as dangerous as the boys—I think. I don't blame the teachers who just won't get involved—you can't mandate to professionals what you feel inside. You see, I don't want to get hurt, but I feel that I have no choice [about stopping a fight]. If I see a fight and someone is getting badly hurt, even if I don't know them, I have to stop it or get someone who can stop it. If I didn't, how can I expect my student stop respect me and how can I look at myself in the mirror the next morning. (p. 217)

This teacher's perspective on intervention comes from a personal fear of being hurt while intervening. Given that the teacher is female, some hesitancy exists when confronting bigger, stronger male students. But, the teacher does feel a sense of responsibility for

stopping a confrontation, particularly as she feels it would affect her standing as an authority figure. Barton and colleagues (1998) suggest that elementary teachers would not feel the same sense of threat to a person since they deal with students considerably smaller than themselves and much less likely to have weapons on them.

Teachers' hesitancy to intervene in school fights stems from a worry about clearly defined guidelines on when and where intervention is required, a fear of bodily injury when the violence involves bigger, stronger children, and the location of the fight of the even. According to Behre and colleagues (2001), a majority of elementary and middle school educators felt intervention was acceptable in the main office, cafeteria, and gymnasium. Fewer than 13% from either group were against intervention in these places. However, the same groups expressed reluctance to intervene when the location was a hallway or not on school grounds. Some 70% of junior high educators and 67% of elementary-school teachers stated they would not intervene in fights if not borne in their classroom. The reasoning against intervention included fear of harm and a sense of decreased responsibility (Behre et al., 2001). The bottom line difference between the middle-school and elementary-school teachers' feelings about intervention rested in size, age, and the maturity of the students. These judgment decisions on whether or not to intervene are heavily influenced by the location of the incident and the age and size of the contending students. Teachers cannot be held responsible for fighting that occurs off-school grounds since guidelines and administrative support are weak while intervening in fighting inside the school campus is determined by teachers' feelings of personal and

professional responsibility and their feelings of ownership of the various spaces in the school (Astor, Meyer, Benhinishty, Marachi, & Rosemond, 2005).

Crisis Management Training and Planning

Almost every year some crisis afflicts a school system that requires administration and the staff to manage an event that threatens the school facility, the students, or the surrounding community. Statistics show that school campuses are increasingly at risk of violent incidents, natural disasters, or other incidents. While some of these incidents are preventable, others are inevitable (Stachowski, Kaplan, & Waller, 2009). According to Decker (1997), evidence points to the fact that there will be a crisis situation at any given school in the next five years. Because necessary decisions to contain the event are hard to make in the middle of the event, preplanning is the greatest asset to management of the event. School shootings and bombings are a wake-up call, but schools need to have a school security plan and prepared plan to deal with crises.

Kibble (1999) noted that local authorities develop plans to prevent and manage crises, but that much more needs to be done. Crisis management planning is on-going and must be reviewed frequently to accommodate changing circumstances and resources. The need for preplanning and preparations has been recognized by the U.S. Government as it has established a \$30,000,000 program providing money for grants to buy equipment and conduct training to include school staff, students, parents (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). This means that local schools do not have to rely on local finances for crisis planning. Since schools are an important component of the community and house the community's children, the impact of any situation at the school or in the community

will affect the school. With the efforts of the administration and teachers, most schools are safe havens; however, the cold reality is that schools may be victims by some crisis at any time (Wojcik, 2006). Pandemics, terrorism, natural disasters can strike without notice. All school employees must be trained in their roles in the various disaster scenarios to the point that their reactions are second nature.

To cope with crisis events, schools establish reliable management plans that are an integral part to school safety. Because The No Child Left Behind Act of 2003 was passed, schools are required to have crisis management plans that describe the ways that schools will ensure students are kept safe and drug free (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). Kenneth Trump, National School and Security Services, asserts that schools are vulnerable for increasing levels of violence (Trump, 2015). This predicted spike in violent events may result from a combination of factors including smaller budgets, reduced training, time spent on prevention measures, and an increasing focus on test scores. However, "whether the crisis involves violence, terrorism, or natural disaster, the lesson remains the same: plan, prepare, and practice" (Lavarello & Trump, 2003, p. 20). The first line of protection in any disaster scenario is a comprehensive and effective management plan. McIntyre and Reid (1989) list hindrances to crisis planning. These hindrances include the feeling that crisis planning is not a specific task in someone's job description, a scarcity of resources, and no staff training in safety and crisis management. Often, a school may duplicate the ideas of other schools without adapting the plan to their own policies, physical plant, and staff. The best written plan does no good if not tested and practiced. A survey of resource officers revealed that their school's plan are not

tested or practiced (Kennedy, 1999). According to Kennedy, a crisis plan is not a dead document. The plan should be reviewed and updated based on increased or reduced resources, changes in staffing, changes in student demographics, and changes in the surrounding community. As stated by Adams and Kritsonis (2006), "schools cannot afford to ignore the necessity of crises preparedness" (p. 2). Failing to test and practice a plan makes the contents a total surprise to the staff and will result in a lack of staff confidence and may make them feel inadequate. As stated by Trump and Lavarrell (2003), "a dusty crisis plan sitting on a shelf is hardly worth the paper it is written on" (p. 21). According to Brock and Sandoval (2001), many crises management plans are outdated, do not match the physical plant that exists, have assignments for personnel long gone from employment rolls, and the contents are not widely known to the staff. Regrettably, crisis plans are often a binder lost on a shelf and are not disturbed until after an incident has occurred.

According to Hull (2001), many schools frequently use codes to alert staff to an impending problem, but some codes are confusing and vague or the staff does not know what they mean. He recommends using simple codes that are universal to the entire school district. Training the staff is crucial and drills must be conducted regularly. Adams and Kritsonis (2006) urge schools to conduct tabletop drills if full-scale drills are not possible. Because "effective crisis planning is made vulnerable by denial, image concerns, and political influence" (Adams & Kritsonis, 2006, p. 3), drilling is the rarity, not the norm.

Using the myriad of available resources, the development of a plan and training procedures for that plan is not difficult (Dufresne, 2005; Education Development Center, 2006). The Director of Communications for a Virginia School System said, "Good crisis preparedness requires a culture shift. It requires leadership from the top, a critical mass of trained staff members, careful planning, and excellent communication" (Padgett, 2006, p. 27). Regrettably, in many cases, planning is done after a traumatic event has occurred (Young, Poland & Griffin, 1996). According to the U. S. Department of Education (2006), there are four phases that must be addressed in emergency plans: prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery. Developing a plan is an on-going activity which is never completed. According to Adams and Kritsonis (2006), if the plan is well put together and addresses all the ramifications of an event, the response will be organized, swift, and successful. The Education Resource Guide for Crisis Management in Schools states, "Boards should establish a policy foundation and framework conveying the seriousness of emergency planning. Policies should stipulate all aspects of crisis management, from designing, updating, and implementing plans to rehearsing drills in the community, district, and school buildings" (Black, 2004, p. 4). The public, fired by the recent rash of violent events, is demanding closer analysis of school's crisis management and planning. Unfortunately, even the best crafted plans are merely pieces of paper without properly trained administration and staff (Hull, 2001).

Because the vast majority of a school's time is concentrated on academics, faculty training time is sparse. However, when a crisis hits, "a lack of preparation may result in greater tragedy and a tarnished reputation for both the principal and the overall school

community... time should be allocated for the training of all staff members for the role of first responder" (Brunner & Lewis, 2005, p. 46). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2007), crisis management planning and training should be conducted by teams comprised of school administrators, medical, mental health, and police.

Professionals from other disciplines should be added as needed. All training and planning must be coordinated with higher levels such as district, regional and state authorities. Teams "coordinate special assignments of school and community personnel in the event of a crisis" (Lichtenstein, Schonfeld, & Kline, 1994, p. 80). According to Poland (1994), all levels of a local school should have a role in crisis response.

Administrators, secretaries, teachers, school nurses, resource officers, janitorial and maintenance workers, and food service personnel must be involved in managing a crisis situation. They must be assigned specific tasks and trained in the mechanics of completing that task. "Lessons learned from high-profile violent incidents and a national survey of school-based police officials reinforces the importance of ongoing staff training, evaluating security measures, and testing school crisis plans to protect schools, students, staff, and facilities" (Lavarello & Trump, 2003, p. 19). "Bender and McLaughlin (1997) confirmed that teacher preparation and in-service have not kept up with national efforts to address school violence" (Graveline, 2003, p. 73). Students must not be left out of training. They must be able to respond promptly to a crisis event. Training is essential to adequate management of an event. Training should be repetitious to instill automatic reactions to various sceneries. As Jon Campbell, Etowah City's Assistant

Superintendent of Schools, said, “When you practice something you don't have to think about it as much... You don't want to be figuring out what to do when it's happening” (Crews, Crews, & Turner, 2008, p. 5). The theme of preparedness is repeated time and time again. As stated by Margaret Spellings, Secretary of the Department of Education in 2007, “Knowing how to respond quickly and efficiently in a crisis is critical to ensuring the safety of our schools and students. The midst of a crisis is not the time to start figuring out who ought to do what. At that moment, everyone involved – from top to bottom – should know the drill and know each other” (U.S. Department of Education, 2007, p. 1). Practicing drills is an imperative part in crisis management. According to Poland (1994), “The school crisis literature is clear that students are not going to do what you need them to do in a moment of crisis unless you have practiced it with them ...” (p. 185). Management is a key factor in containing a crisis. Lichtenstein et al., (1994) believe that “a coordinated district wide crisis response is no accident. It reflects prevention, intervention, and rehearsed reaction” (p. 80).

Preventative Strategies

More than 50 million students attend schools in the United States each and every day. The vast majority of these students are safe while at school. However, violence has grown into a rampant disease and is deteriorating the foundations of education. Each dollar spent to combat school violence is a dollar not spent on books, teachers, teaching aids, and school infrastructure. The Center for the Prevention of School Violence (2002) defined school violence as “any behavior that violates a school’s educational mission or climate of respect or jeopardizes the intent of the school to be free of aggression against

persons or property, drugs, weapons, disruptions, and disorder” (p. 1). According to the Council of Educational Facilities Planners International (2013), every facet of school safety and security is being critically reviewed and schools are formulating the best methods to employ to protect both students and staff. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2013) defined numerous influences that prompt violent acts by students. Among these are low academic achievement, absent behavioral control, defective socialization, belligerent beliefs and attitudes, rejection by their contemporaries, past experience with violence, and an absence of involvement in normal activities. As reported by Harding (2009), while many of these influences can be traced to the school or classroom environment setting, some exist external to the campus and are a product of societal problems. There is little the school can do about the problems which afflict underprivileged neighborhoods where student siblings may be associated with gangs or have family members in prison.

Discipline is a vital component for a successful school and may be an important component of a violence prevention program. According to Fredland (2008), “discipline is training which corrects, molds, and perfects mental outlook and moral character” (p. 32). It emphasizes following rules and listening to authority, consequences for poor behavior, and teaches right choices (Eggleton, 2001). According to many teachers, the main problem facing public schools is a lack of discipline among students. As front line troops, teachers spend the most time with students and consequently deal with discipline and discipline problems more often. Enforcing discipline in the classroom is not an easy task. Class sizes range from 25 to 30 students which means there are that many

discipline variables to deal with. No one discipline tactic will fit all and a teacher must think and act fast to ensure the classroom environment is transformed into one of learning and understanding (Eggleton, 2001).

Many school principals resort to suspension or expulsion to enforce discipline among the student body. While these remedies certainly remove the unruly student from the school environment, evidence shows that they do not appear to be effective measures of dealing with school violence. Over half the expelled or suspended students have a failing grade average, and suspension merely makes it like that these marginal students will eventually drop out (Bock, Tapscott, & Savner, 1998). According to Skirba and Peterson (1999), problem students tend to view suspensions as a vacation. Suspensions may act to speed the process of delinquency as it tends to give a troubled student time to hang with the neighborhood gang.

As an alternate to suspensions, some in-school-suspension programs have been effective. According to Sheets (1996), three elements must be included in the in-school-suspension program to be effective. The in-school-suspension policy must fit the school's educational policy, it must have a clear mission, and it must have consistent and clear rules and processes. The most critical element in an effective ISS program is the instructor. He/she must be trained, supported by the administration, and the program must be adequately funded (Sheets, 1996).

A discipline method of last resort is alternative schooling. Originally started as a school for learners who do not function well in a traditional classroom, alternative schooling has morphed into a program designed to remove violent or discipline students

from the regular school and reeducate them to assimilate back to the regular school (Johnston & Wetherill, 1998). According to Gregg (1999), evidence shows that there are no positive long-term gains from this type of discipline, and it may increase negative outcomes. Corporal punishment has also been proven to be ineffective as it produces negative self-concepts and is largely ineffectual for older students (Hyman, 1996).

While an effectively managed disciplinary system in schools reduces discipline and violence issues, schools implement a zero tolerance policy to eradicate their rampant discipline woes. The NCES has determined that schools that utilize zero-tolerance policies produce a less safe outcome than those without. Almost uniformly, data shows that these policies do not reduce school violence and may encourage student defiance (Eggleton, 2001). The strategy of zero tolerance has turned schools into satellites of the police force with little benefit in return (Skirba & Peterson, 1999).

If discipline programs do not work to reduce school violence, what are other methods that can be used to control what seems to be an ever increasing level of violent events? According to DeJong (1994), a key to violence prevention is schooling youth in controlling conflict and diverting anger into problem resolving. Several violence prevention efforts are underway in many states. Many concentrate on anger management and quarrel resolution. Others try to use role models to teach appropriate behavior. One promising program is called the Resolving Conflict Creatively (RCCP) in use in New York City Schools. Its focus is on school change. RCCP strives to encourage students to find the means to settle disagreements peacefully and give the students a different picture of their world. A key component of the RCCP is teachers implementing new approaches

to classroom management. Teachers are asked to share power in the classroom with the students, which takes a whole new set of teaching skills. This power sharing is intended to instruct students in dealing with their own disputes. The City of New York has created a series of educational classroom visits, peer consultations, and after-school sessions with RCCP staff with the aim of bringing teachers into the program. RCCP's plan for instituting non-violent conflict resolution is creation of a student mediation program. However, the RCCP cautions that mediation is not a substitute for an effective school disciplinary program (DeJong, 1994).

Another effort at curbing the violence in schools is based in Portland. There, schools use a program produced in Seattle Washington called Second Step: A Violence Prevention Curriculum. Lessons are crafted to develop empathy and training to control impulses and anger. At the 6th through 8th grade level, problem-solving is added. Youth tend to see "fight" or "flight" as the only response to arguments. The program attempts to teach alternatives to fighting (Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA., (n.d). In Portland, schools and local business have collaborated to create a jobs program for high-risk youth. Classes prepare youth for interviews and appropriate behavior at work (Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA, n. d).

In spite of well-crafted violence prevention programs, clashes between students are an inescapable part of school society. Teachers can avert many altercations from developing into physical fighting between students (Meese, 1997). According to Callahan (1997), understanding that violent actions between students are caused by mistreatment in the home, privation, substance abuse, exposure to fighting,

dissatisfaction, despair, and despondency, will help teachers apply strategies to defuse violent clashes between students. Despite the best intervention tactics, dangerous battles will break out between pupils. At this point, teachers must understand how to protect themselves and their students (Meese, 1997).

Pupils fight for many reasons; the altercation may be caused by problems within the home or neighborhood, or even a simmering conflict on the school bus. In the tense world of students filled with an aggressive need to maintain a status and fueled by a competitive urges, a wrong look, teasing, racial insult, or an accidental nudge may provoke a fight. Other reasons include saving face, defending status/property/territory, fear, establishing place in the pecking order (Meese, 1997).

Since teachers have greater connection with pupils than any other grown-up in the school setting, they are in an exceptional place to study pupils and can often observe risks that a person may be prone to fighting (Callahan, 1997). Teachers may also be aware of events in a child's life that may make him/her more likely to resort to violence such as a divorce, past suspensions and/or expulsions, a family death, or brushes with the law. (Callahan, 1998). According to Meese (1997), a teacher may remove many of the reasons students fight in the classroom by establishing and teaching rules for appropriate behavior. The consequences of not following the rules must be clearly explained. Proper behavior should be rewarded. Teachers' should avoid the trap of spending most of their effort dealing with the trouble-makers and not enough time reinforcing good behavior. Another means of preventing fights is to establish a culture of safety and respect in the classroom. Goldstein, Palumbo, Striepling, and Voutsinas (1995) state that unsupervised

locations are the areas where fights erupt; areas such as parking lots, halls, playgrounds, stairwells, etc. where supervision is limited. Fights most often occur between classes, at lunch, and before and after school. While rare, fights can occur in the classroom when tempers flare.

In the classroom, fights do not start out as full-fledged wars, but grow from disorderly conduct, horsing around, and regulation breaches into physical combat (Meese, 1997). According to Caplan (1951), when confronted with a perceived challenge, there are commonly two ways in which a person will vent his/her aggression or hostility – verbally or physically. This fact led Caplan to advance a crisis intervention concept that postulated the conclusion of any crisis will be decided by the individual and the main figures in the environment. Those in the area of the fight can decrease or eliminate the occurrence by managing the aggressive behavior (Caplan, 1951). When an individual perceives him/herself to be in a threatened state, he will enter a defensive state which will disrupt his/her ability to hear, think logically, and react normally. He/she may, and probably will not, respond to others and may become unmanageable (Callahan, 1997).

Based on their knowledge of basic human reactions, teachers faced with a classroom event need to conduct a rapid appraisal of the situation and the student's state. According to Goldstein et al. (1995), the teacher must discern the degree of combativeness and agitation of the student and the degree to which the individual is blocking out the surroundings. Having made the evaluation, the teacher must determine whether intervention is possible or whether it is best to protect himself/herself and the remainder of the class. If possible, the teacher should isolate the student from the

classroom and summon help as soon as possible. A predetermined code or signal should be established to alert the administration of the need for help (Callahan, 1998). As stated by Meese (1997), teachers that determine intervention is possible should display an air of calmness and confidence when approaching the disputing students and not enter the students' personal space. According to Trump (2015), teachers should monitor the participants for early warning signs including verbal taunts, posturing, gathering crowd, etc., and try to stop the event before it starts. School districts should publish clear and concise policies and procedures governing teacher use of force against an aggressive student. Policies and protocols must be developed with the guidance by legal counsel, and supported by meaningful training. Trump (2015) further states that policies and procedures must be addressed at staff meetings and in training sessions to assist teachers with the correct protocol.

Knowing the school's policy and procedures is vital when dealing with the teachers' function and obligations in a fight situation. According to Callahan (1998), when intervening in a fight, teachers must stay calm, get help immediately, remove all spectators from the area, get potential weapons out of the area, create a distraction if possible, issue an order to separate and stop the disturbance separate the students if possible without getting in harm's way, and finally always avoid stepping into the danger zone. According to Meese (1997), if teachers observe the student responding to directions, they should encourage deep breathes and walking around to calm down. If there is no response to the intervention and the fighting continues, the teacher should

remove him/herself and the bystanders from the area as soon as possible (Callahan, 1997).

Legal Responsibilities of Teachers

When physical force is used against a student, a possibility of a liability issue will arise. What would be the teacher's legal obligations to intervene in a student fight? In most instances, educators, learners, and parents are not afforded direction about the legal issues produced by school violence (Bailey & Ross, 2001). Teachers who intervene in a fight must be cognizant of some basics concerning the law. According to Morte (1982), "an educator may be liable for an injury to a student, for instance, if it can be shown that the alleged negligent party should have anticipated the possible harmful results of his or her actions or inactions" (p. 423). Therefore, the action or inaction of a teacher may result in a liability claim. The downhill movement in the youth crime rate cannot hide the fact that violence throws a darkness over schools (Bailey & Ross, 2001). State and the Federal governments have a compelling interest in providing a strong, a secure, and a safe education system. This interest was clearly defined in the Supreme Court's 1954 decision when it stated, "Education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments. For this reason, school officials have a strong obligation, both moral and legal, to respond to undisciplined youths whose behavior threatens the welfare and safety of the other children in attendance" (Bailey & Ross, 2001, p. ii). Policies and procedures established to deal with violence in schools must be created with the guidance of legal counsel and supported by meaningful training.

According to Morte (1982), school districts are traditionally responsible under the ideas of an educator's liability to provide for students' safety in school. Bettenhausen (2002) states, "In the absence of immunity, courts have held schools and school personnel liable for personal injury that resulted from negligent failure to provide a reasonably safe environment" (p. 32). School workers including teachers, administrative workers, and members of the governing body often wrestle with the concern of liability for an authorized action or for not taking action (Morte, 1982). One primary liability concern is the responsibility for providing safety on school grounds. This is particularly worrying since school attendance is compulsory. There is a potential for legal claim if the school fails to supervise areas where violence has happened, warn the school population about a known threat or danger, appropriately handle pupils that have violent potential, and creating and following a safe school plan (Bailey & Ross, 2001).

In a school setting, the teaching and administrative staff is required to perform in a reasonable nature as a diligent person, or to face the prospect that civil or criminal prosecution may be brought. Those charged with the care of children may be legally responsible for two important reasons. Peach and Reddick (1987) suggests first, the school is envisioned to be a safe haven; second, the courts have created a legal model which makes educators accountable - the principle of *in loco parentis* (in place of the parent). By law, a person has the right to protection of life and freedom from hurt and other damages. These rights may be granted in some contractual arrangement and when breached, a financial liability may arise. However, liability frequently happens without a

contractual agreement in which case the circumstances may constitute a tort. According to Greene (1998), the classification of the schools employing the teacher determines how the law interprets the cases filed against that teacher. Public school employees have a different set of rules than religious or private schools because they receive funding from Federal sources and they must conform to the guidelines of the Constitution. Students in public school systems have the right to freedom of expression, can refuse to participate in patriotic events, have a right to due process and equal protection, are protected from unlawful search and seizure, and have freedom of dress. Religious and private schools operate under contract law although their students still have the rights protected by the Constitution.

There are commonly two types of torts: intentional and negligent. An intentional tort means that there was an intent to cause harm. A negligent tort means that there was an unintentional accident or injury. Liability for a negligent injury or accident stems from the failure of the causing party to act in a sensible or acceptable manner under the conditions of the situation (Morte, 1982). Educators most commonly become involved in intentional tort cases via assault and battery. Assault constitutes placing someone in fear of immediate injurious or attacking conduct such as keeping a weapon on them or brandishing a fist at them. Teachers are allowed wide leeway in discipline but may be charged with assault if he/she administers punishment in rage or in a malicious or extreme manner. Battery consists of unauthorized contact with another individual such as striking someone. Actual injury is not needed for a suit to be instituted (Morte, 1982).

Negligence is another thorny legal issue faced by school employees. Negligence requires the school system and employees to anticipate potential harm or injury from their actions or inactions. It is different from intentional torts because there is no intent to do harm. The litmus test determining negligence is whether a person acted in a reasonable and prudent manner under the given situation (Morte, 1982). Negligence is created when hurt is caused by an act which should have been predicted by a sensible, careful person in a specific situation. If the harm could not have been averted by competent acumen, then negligence did not occur. Common findings of negligence usually occur when there is a failure to supervise, inadequate protection from known dangers, a failure to properly instruct pupils before they are allowed to handle or use dangerous materials, and the failure to use protective equipment for any activity which could cause injury (Peach & Reddick, 1987). Liability for injuries can face every employee associated with the school system from board members to custodians. The most common tort claim filed in a school setting is negligence. However, the law creates many roadblocks making it hard for a plaintiff to prove a negligence claim. In general, Strobe (1984) suggests to avoid injuries by taking precautions is the best means to avoid negligence claims.

Teachers ponder worriedly about the impact the law might have on their lives. The welfare and safety of the children under the charge of teachers is paramount, and the law is adamant that students under the care of teachers and schools be protected from harm. During a survey of teachers conducted to gather information for an article, teachers in the United Kingdom are calling for lessons in restraining students to help stop fights.

Many of the teachers are afraid they will face assault charges if they use physical force to break up fights. This fear has resulted in increasing numbers of fights and more children being suspended from school (Garner, 2009). A phrase that is repeated over and over is 'duty of care'. Morte (1982) states that duty of care simply means that teachers have a responsibility to guard students from potential harm. It used to be defined as a requirement that a teacher exercise the care that would be exercised by a parent in a family situation (Morte, 1982). However, courts have determined that, given the size of the population under a teacher's control, the standard should be a level of care expected from a professional in the performance of his/her job. In some instances, this care will be more than would be appropriate for a parent and those hazards accepted at home may not be acceptable at school. Teachers are considered to be trained and experienced professionals in dealing with children who are expected to use foresight to anticipate problems and prevent incidents from occurring (Sleigh, 2009). According to Hopkins (2008), the law in Victoria, Canada, is clear in establishing a duty for schools to take reasonable care to prevent student injury. This duty includes protecting students from injury during a fight or resulting from other physical violence. Not only is this duty invoked when a teacher becomes aware of a fight, but it also obliges the teacher to try and prevent fights. The test of whether the responsibility has been met depends on what a reasonable person would have done. This duty of care, while not as clearly stated, is the rule in U.S. schools. In cases where there are violent acts in school, the central question is: Could these incidents have been avoided if officials had exercised the proper standard of care? Essex (2012) reported that the duty care standard requires schools to

act with the same judicious judgement that an ordinary person would use. In cases involving violence, including student fighting, the level of care expected is high, especially if violence has happened in the past. If the school fails to apply a proper measure of care, a negligence liability standard may be violated. According to Morte (1982), the meaning of negligence would appear to be basic and clear. At the core of the idea is the phrase to act which can include both action and non-action. Essex (2012) states that if the action or non-action results in a student injury, the courts will determine whether the teacher acted as a prudent individual.

Whenever force is employed against a student, a liability risk will surface. According to Trump (2015), if use of force is allowed, the use must be timely and reasonable to a thoughtful person. Across the nation, school districts have employed a myriad of methods to try and control the rising tide of violence in schools. Schools have tried zero tolerance policies, random searches, expulsion and suspension, safety plans, and a host of other efforts to stop the violence. Efforts have created a host of legal claims inflicting a heavy burden on schools and school districts as the courts wrestle with due process, constitutional rights, and damage claims. In many states, teachers, students and parents have little information about issues produced by school violence. One primary issue is whether or not teachers should intervene when students resort to physical violence to settle differences. Guidelines are ambiguous, confusing, and varying widely state by state. The Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) has proactively taken a stance on teacher interventions by publishing a series dealing with legal opinions about

intervening in student fights. In this series, MTA emphasizes that teachers that have chosen to intervene sustained serious injuries and some have been charged with assault and battery (MTA Division of Legal Service, n.d.). According to the MTA, teachers are reminded that they are not trained in law enforcement nor the techniques for restraining students involved in an altercation. Existing laws may vaguely mention limiting school violence and the liability of teachers, but detailed directions concerning the appropriateness of intervening are lacking. Protocols for intervening are usually left to the individual school districts (MTA Division of Legal Service, n.d.).

According to the Michigan Teacher Association, the techniques and general standards for intervening combined with a definitions of good judgement and reasonable force plus directions to summon the police whenever a fight occurs should be included in the policy/protocol. The entire issue of intervention should be the subject of intensive training at briefings or in-service sessions. Training must include the circumstances under which the teacher may face discipline, criminal proceedings, and define the support the school and district will provide. A district or school should provide legal assistance and cover costs if a staff member becomes embroiled in a legal complaint (MTA Division of Legal Services, n.d.)

Summary

Physical violence in schools is an epidemic throughout school districts. Physical fights in a school, along with other violent acts, are detrimental to the educational process. The threat of violence affects every student and staff member in the facility.

Students cannot successfully concentrate on academic achievement if they consistently must look over their shoulders or operate in a fear mode.

Crisis management plans address natural disasters, terrorism, major violent acts, intrusions, and shootings in some detail. Most have specific actions to be taken in each of these scenarios. However, few, if any, crisis plans contain protocols and procedures that would guide teachers in responding to physical altercations between students. Not only do plans lack clear guidelines, but seldom are teachers trained in handling student verses student fights. This has a harmful impact on a teacher's sense of self-efficacy. Without the training and clear guidelines, a teacher will inevitably feel insecure in taking actions to stop a fight. The question of whether or not to intervene should not be determined by the teacher, particularly an untrained one. There should be some clear and definitive protocol established that would ensure the teacher support from the facility and district regardless of how he/she decides in the fight situation. The more training and the more drilling the teacher undergoes, the more he/she will feel capable of calming a fight situation.

There are several laws that govern liability of the district, the school, and the teacher when force is used to stop a physical confrontation between students. Tort laws combine with the schools duty to protect students to open a liability morass for an uninformed teacher. Again, training would relieve the teacher of many liability worries. Given the schools duty to protect, intervention in a fight seems to be a logical choice. However, there are also rules that direct a teacher to protect himself/herself and the students in the surrounding area. To the untrained teacher, these conflicting demands

may mean no action is taken. This inaction may make the school and teacher liable through an appearance of negligence.

Handling student violence is a complex and confusing issue. The school and district administration have a responsibility to both the staff and students to develop clear and procedures and protocols for responding to an outbreak of fistcuffs among the student population.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Chapter III provides information on the research design and specific procedures of the study. The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of veteran teachers and novice teachers regarding their training of responding to student verses student fights. Chapter III is organized into different sections. The first of the section includes the research questions and hypotheses statements. The next part of the section includes participant information, data collection information, procedures and data analysis.

Research Questions

The following questions are used to guide the research:

1. Do veteran teachers and novice teachers differ in their beliefs that teachers should be required to intervene in school fights?
2. Do veteran teachers and novice teachers differ in their beliefs that they are adequately trained in crisis management?
3. Do veteran teachers and novice teachers differ in their beliefs that preventive strategies assist to decrease the number of school fights that occur?
4. Do veteran teachers and novice teachers differ in their beliefs that they are adequately trained in the legal obligations concerning school fights?

Hypotheses

The following related hypotheses will be examined in this study:

H1: Veteran teachers and novice teachers do differ in their beliefs that they should intervene in school fights.

H2: Veteran teachers and novice teachers do differ in their beliefs that they are adequately trained in crisis management.

H3: Veteran teachers and novice teachers do differ in their beliefs that preventive strategies assist to decrease the number of school fights that occur.

H4: Veteran teachers and novice teachers do differ in their beliefs that they are adequately trained in the legal obligations concerning school fights.

Participants

Participants in this study included educators who teach in five public school districts in Mississippi. All participants held a current valid teaching license. The sample of participants included both middle/junior high and high school teachers. Including a variety of school districts, varying grade levels, and varying years of experience assisted the researcher with important information regarding teachers' perceptions.

Participants were asked questions based on demographics such as gender, age, years of experience, type of teaching certification, and type of school setting. This necessary information was asked to add to the validity of the study. In order to provide confidentiality, the survey did not contain questions concerning names, specific places of employment, or any other recognizable information.

Methodology

The questionnaire titled, “Novice and Veteran Teachers’ Perceptions of Crisis Management Training Concerning School Fights,” was given to participants in five school districts school ranging from grades seven to twelve. Participants consisted of secondary teachers who taught in a middle school/junior high school setting or at a high school setting. Participants were asked to complete a five-part instrument. Part One consisted of Teacher Characteristics; Part Two focused on teachers’ perceptions about Intervention in Fights; in Part Three of the instrument, participants were asked about their knowledge of Crisis Management Training; Part Four of the instrument focused on the participants’ perceptions about Preventative Strategies; and the last section asked participants their perceptions about Laws Concerning School Fights. Out of the five school districts that participated, 296 surveys were completed.

The methodology of this study was conducted via an online questionnaire hosted by the Qualtrics site. In order to distribute and collect the survey instrument, the researcher followed certain steps. The first step of the procedure sought permission from the superintendents of the participating school districts for their teachers to participate in the study (Appendix B). The researcher contacted principals via cover letter seeking permission to use their schools in the study. Once permission was granted from the superintendents, the researcher asked permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Appendix D).

Once IRB permission was granted, the researcher emailed the Qualtrics survey link to principals of participating schools. Along with the survey, the cover letter contained information explaining the purpose of the study, the anonymity and

confidentiality of the survey, and teachers' voluntary participation in the survey. The cover letter also included a consent form. The researcher made clear through the Informed Consent Letter that participation was voluntary and could be discontinued at any time. The Informed Consent Letter also explained that completion and submission of the survey indicated that the participant agreed with the conditions explained in the letter. If the participants consented, he/she completed the on-line survey; if the participant denied consent, he/she did not complete the on-line survey. Once the surveys were completed, the Qualtrics site was closed.

Instrument

The instrument was a survey that contained no more than 24 questions, including demographic questions. The Crisis Management of School Fights Survey was divided into five sections. The first section titled Teacher Characteristics contained demographic questions regarding gender, age, years of teaching experience, type of school, type of certification, and coaching experience. The next section, which contained five areas, focused on school altercations. The sections included Involvement in Fights, Crisis Management Training, Preventative Strategies, and Laws Concerning School Fights. This section of the survey utilized a five-point Likert-scale focused on teachers' perceptions. The Likert-scale ranged in the choices of (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) neutral, (4) disagree, and (5) strongly disagree.

The section, Involvement in Fights, assisted the researcher in answering questions about teachers' perceptions of the dealing with altercations in school. Questions focused on whether teachers perceived that fights were a problem at their school. Also, this

section concentrated on teachers' perceptions in their ability to deescalate a fight, and if the location of the school fight or the fight's location influenced if they should intervene.

The next section, titled "Crisis Management Training," provided the researcher with important information on teachers' thoughts on their crisis management training on dealing with school fights. Questions concentrated on whether the teachers knew their role if an altercation erupted, or if teachers felt that they were adequately trained to control a school fight.

The fourth section related to teachers' perceptions of preventative strategies. This section examined if teachers believed that they were adequately trained in preventative strategies that decreased school fights. The section also questioned if teachers felt that preventative measures decreased the number of fights at school.

The final section of the survey instrument examined teachers' knowledge of laws concerning their role in school fights. This section will provide the researcher with important information about teachers' perception of the teachers' legal responsibility and the teachers' liability when confronting school fights.

Because the researcher created the survey based on reviewed literature, a panel of experts examined the survey prior to its distribution. The panel of experts were given a cover letter (Appendix G) stating the purpose of the survey, a validity questionnaire (Appendix H), and a copy of the instrument (Appendix A). The panel of experts was chosen based on their educational expertise and their ability to critique the instrument to provide pertinent feedback to the researcher. This pertinent feedback will, hopefully, include clarity of the questions and content validity. The survey included a demographics

section and Likert-scale perception questions. The researcher designed the Crisis Management of School Fights Survey; therefore, the researcher asked a panel of experts questions about the survey to validate the questions on the survey.

The panel of experts included a current high school principal from a Southern Mississippi school district, a current high school teacher from a Southern Mississippi school district, and a current junior high school teacher from a Southern Mississippi school district. The first expert is a former curriculum specialist, a former junior high school principal, and a current high school principal. The next expert is a current graphic design teacher with 28 years of experience in education. The final expert is a junior high teacher and a junior high school football coach with 20 years of teaching experience.

After assembling a panel of experts to test the validity of the questions on the survey, a pilot study was conducted. This pilot study involved twenty-five teachers from one of the approved IRB school districts. After gathering the results from the pilot study, the researcher input the information into SPSS and used a Cronbach's alpha test to check for reliability of the survey. Initially, the overall Cronbach Alpha was .654, which was below the .70 that is generally required. The researcher deleted two questions that had a negative correlation from the survey instrument. Because of the two deletions from the analysis, the Cronbach Alpha yielded a .80 coefficient.

Data Analysis

After gathering the results from the survey, the researcher created a spreadsheet and entered the data into the SPSS program. Data was analyzed using a one-way

ANOVA test and t-tests. The researcher utilized alpha level of .05 to reject or support the hypotheses.

Summary

Because school safety is a priority, crisis management of school personnel is also important. This study aimed to explore novice and veteran teachers' the perceptions of about their crisis management training dealing with school fights. This study is pertinent in ascertaining if teachers feel they receive adequate crisis management training. Data collected from this study could assist school administrators in improving the training of teachers, or the data could reveal that teachers are adequately trained to handle a school fight. There are four research questions and four hypotheses that the researchers analyzed. To ensure the validity of the survey, the researcher used a panel of experts and used a pilot study before completing the actual study. This study included middle/ junior high and high school teachers who work at five different south Mississippi school districts. After the researcher successfully proposed this study, she requested IRB approval. After surveys were collected from participating school districts, the data was analyzed using SPSS.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a difference between the perceptions of veteran teachers and novice teachers regarding whether they have been adequately trained to respond to student versus student fights. The questionnaire titled “Novice and Veteran Teachers’ Perceptions of Crisis Management Training Concerning School Fights” was given to participants in five school districts school ranging from grades 7-12 via an online questionnaire hosted by the Qualtrics site. Participants consisted of secondary teachers who taught in a middle school/junior high school setting or at a high school setting. Participants were asked to complete a five-part instrument. Part One consisted of Teacher Characteristics; Part Two focused on teachers’ perceptions about Intervention in Fights; in Part Three of the instrument, participants were asked about their knowledge of Crisis Management Training; Part Four of the instrument focused on the participants’ perceptions about Preventative Strategies; and the last section asked participants their perceptions about Laws Concerning School Fights. Out of the five school districts that participated, 296 surveys were completed.

Descriptive Data

Descriptive statistics and frequencies for the collected data are presented the table below. Table 1 contains the number of males and females who participated in the survey. There were 87 male participants and 209 female participants. The percentage of males was 29.4% and 70.6% females.

Table 1

Frequencies and Percentages of Gender (N=296)

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	87	29.4
Female	209	70.6

Table 2 contains the frequencies and percentages of the participants' age. The largest portion of participants' age ranged from 40-49 (27.4%), then the next highest portion of participants' age ranged from 20-29 (25.3%), followed by the age range of 30-39 (24.7%), then the age range of 50+ (22%).

Table 2

Frequencies and Percentages of Age (N=296)

Age	Frequency	Percentage
20-29	75	25.3
30-39	73	24.7
40-49	81	27.4
50+	65	22

The participants reported their years of teaching experience. The largest group of teachers had 1-3 years of teaching experience (38.5%), followed by 11-20 years of teaching experience (26.4%), then 21-30 years of teaching experience (16.9%), then 4-10

years of teaching experience (13.5%), and last 30+ years teaching experience (4.7%).

Table 3 presents the frequencies and percentages for this data.

Table 3

Frequencies and Percentages of Teaching Experience (N=296)

Years Teaching	Frequency	Percentage
1-3	114	38.5
4-10	40	13.5
11-20	78	26.4
30+	14	4.7

Participants were asked to identify what type of school they currently taught.

Table 4 illustrates that the majority of participants taught at the high school level (57.8%), and the minority of participants taught at the middle school/junior high level (42.2%). Table 4 presents the frequencies and percentages for this data.

Table 4

Frequencies and Percentages of Types of School (N=296)

Type of School	Frequency	Percentage
Middle School/Junior High	125	42.2
High School	171	57.8

Participants were asked to report their area of certification. The highest percentage of participants held a bachelor's degree (46.6%), followed by a master's degree (43.9%), then a specialist degree (5.1%), and a doctorate degree (4.4%). Table 5 provides the frequencies and percentages of this data.

Table 5

Frequencies and Percentages of Area of Certification (N=296)

Certification	Frequency	Percentage
Bachelors	138	46.6
Masters	130	43.9
Specialist	15	5.1
Doctoral	13	4.4

Participants were also asked to report if they had any coaching experience. The majority of participants answered NO to this question (58.8%), and the minority of participants answered YES (40.5%). Table 6 reflects the frequencies and percentages of this data.

Table 6

Frequencies and Percentages of Coaching Experience (N=296)

Coaching Experience	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	120	40.5
No	174	58.8

Descriptive Statistics for Hypothesis

Following the Teacher Characteristics questions on the first part of the instrument, the survey was divided into four different sections: Intervention in Fights, Crisis Management Training, Preventative Strategies, and Laws Concerning School Fights. These sections of the survey utilized a five-point Likert-scale focused on teachers' perceptions. The Likert-scale ranged in the choices of (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree.

The first section of the instrument consisted of six questions regarding teachers' perceptions about intervention in fights. This section was used to answer the Research Question 1, "Do veteran teachers and novice teachers differ in their beliefs that teachers should be required to intervene in school fights?" The participants were asked to choose the response that best supported their perception about intervening in school fights. The Likert Scale ranged in the choices of (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree. Item 12, "The number of participants in a fight influences my decision to intervene" had the highest mean ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 1.29$) out of the items in

this section. Item 11, “The number of teachers present influences my decision to intervene in a fight” had the second highest mean ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 1.28$). Item 7, “Fights are a problem at my school” had the lowest mean ($M = 2.44$, $SD = 1.10$). Table 7 provides the items, means, and standard deviations for this data.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics for Intervention in Fights Subscale (N=296)

Factors	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
The number of participants in a fight influences my decision to intervene.	12	3.34	1.29
The number of teachers present influences my decision to intervene in a fight.	11	3.01	1.28
I am confident in my ability to break-up a school fight.	9	2.99	1.25
The location of a fight influences my decision to intervene.	10	2.90	1.26
Teachers should be required to intervene in school fights.	8	2.56	1.08
Fights are a problem at my school.	7	2.44	1.10

The next section of the instrument contained five questions related to the teachers’ perceptions about crisis management training. This section of the instrument was utilized

to answer the Research Question 2, “Do veteran teachers and novice teachers differ in their beliefs that they are adequately trained in crisis management?” The participants were asked to choose the response that best supported their perception about crisis management training. The Likert Scale ranged in the choices of (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree. Item 17, “Teachers need more training in the management of school fights” had the highest mean ($M = 3.94$, $SD = .93$) out of the items in this section. Item 13, “I am aware of my school’s crisis plan concerning school fights” had the second highest mean ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 1.26$). Item 14, “I am adequately trained to control school fights” had the lowest mean ($M = 2.38$, $SD = 1.06$). Table 8 provides the items, means, and standard deviations for this data.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics for Crisis Management Training Subscale (N=296)

Factors	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teachers need more training in the management of school fights.	17	3.94	.93
I am aware of my school’s crisis plan concerning fights.	13	3.25	1.26

Table 8 (continued).

Factors	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
The amount of training I receive relates to my ability to effectively respond to school fights.	16	3.18	1.19
I know my role if a fight occurs.	15	3.09	1.18
I am adequately trained to control school fights.	14	2.38	1.06

The next section of the instrument contained three questions related to the teachers' perceptions about preventative strategies. This section of the instrument was utilized to answer the Research Question 3, "Do veteran teachers and novice teachers differ in their beliefs that preventive strategies assist to decrease the number of school fights that occur?" The participants were asked to choose the response that best supported their perception about preventative strategies. The Likert Scale ranged in the choices of (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree. Item 20, "I believe that preventative strategies decrease the number of school fights" had the highest mean ($M = 4.17$, $SD = .85$) out of the items in this section. Item 19, "I believe that teachers on duty decrease the number of school fights" had the second highest mean ($M = 4.09$, $SD = .92$). Item 18, "I have been adequately trained in preventative strategies concerning school fights" had the lowest mean ($M = 2.55$, $SD = 1.13$). Table 9 provides the items, means, and standard deviations for this data.

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics for Preventative Strategies Subscale (N=296)

Factors	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
I believe that preventative strategies decrease the number of school fights.	20	4.17	.85
I believe that teachers on duty decrease the number of school fights.	19	4.09	.92
I have been adequately trained in preventative strategies concerning school fights.	18	2.55	1.13

The final section of the instrument contained four questions related to the teachers' perceptions about the law concerning school fights. This section of the instrument was used to answer the Research Question 4, "Do veteran teachers and novice teachers differ in their beliefs that they are adequately trained in the legal obligations concerning school fights?" The participants were asked to choose the response that best supported their perception about their knowledge of the law concerning school fights. The Likert Scale ranged in the choices of (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree. Item 23, "Teachers can be held liable if they are not at their designated duty post when a fight erupts" had the highest mean ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 1.06$) out of the items in this section. Item 22, "Teachers can be held liable for failing to intervene in a school fight" had the second highest mean ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 1.10$). Item 24,

“I have been appropriately trained in my legal responsibilities concerning school fights” had the lowest mean ($M = 2.38$, $SD = 1.04$). Table 10 provides the items, means, and standard deviations for this data.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics for Laws Concerning School Fights Subscale (N=296)

Factors	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teachers can be held liable if they are not at their designated duty post when a fight erupts.	23	3.78	1.06
Teachers can be held liable for failing to intervene in a school fight.	22	2.94	1.10
I have been appropriately trained in my legal responsibilities concerning school fights.	24	2.38	1.04

Hypotheses Results

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 stated: “Veteran teachers and novice teachers do differ in their beliefs that they should intervene in school fights.” A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference in the perceptions of veteran teachers and novice teachers intervening in school fights. There was not a significant difference in the perceptions of veteran and novice teachers concerning intervention in school fights, $F(1, 294) = .42$, $r = .02$, $p = .52$. A homogeneity of variance was conducted for the

subscale of Intervention in Fights, and it was also non-significant, $F(1, 294) = 2.1, p = .16$. This resulted in the researcher rejecting the hypothesis that stated: “Veteran teachers and novice teachers do differ in their beliefs that they should intervene in school fights.” Table 11 provides the ANOVA results from the first hypothesis.

Table 11

Hypothesis 1

Intervention	Sum of squares	<i>df</i>	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.13	1	.13	.42	.52
Within Groups	86.81	294	.30		
Total	86.94	295			

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 stated: “Veteran teachers and novice teacher do differ in their beliefs that they are adequately trained to effectively control fights between students in schools.” A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference in the perceptions of veteran teachers and novice teachers concerning their crisis management training. Based on the results of the one-way ANOVA, there was not a significant difference in the perceptions of veteran and novice teachers concerning their crisis management training, $F(1, 294) = .00, r = .02, p = .99$. A homogeneity of variance was conducted for the subscale of Crisis Management Training, and it was also non-

significant, $F(1, 294) = 3.6, p = .06$. This resulted in the researcher rejecting the hypothesis that stated: “Veteran teachers and novice teacher do differ in their beliefs that they are adequately trained to effectively control fights between students in schools.”

Table 12 provides the ANOVA results from the second hypothesis.

Table 12

Hypothesis 2

Crisis Management	Sum of squares	<i>df</i>	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.00	1	.00	.00	.99
Within Groups	94.50	294	.32		
Total	94.50	295			

Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 stated: “Veteran teachers and novice teachers do differ in their beliefs that preventative strategies assist to decrease the number of school fights that occur.” A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference in the perceptions of veteran teachers and novice teachers concerning preventative strategies. Based on the results of the one-way ANOVA, there was not a significant difference in the perceptions of veteran and novice teachers concerning preventative strategies, $F(1, 294) = 1.33, r = .26, p = .99$. A homogeneity of variance was conducted for the subscale of Preventative Strategies, and it was also non-significant,

$F(1, 294) = .01, p = .94$. This resulted in the researcher rejecting the hypothesis that stated: “Veteran teachers and novice teachers do differ in their beliefs that preventative strategies assist to decrease the number of school fights that occur.” Table 13 provides the ANOVA results from the second hypothesis.

Table 13

Hypothesis 3

Preventative	Sum of squares	<i>df</i>	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.52	1	.52	.00	.99
Within Groups	115.70	294	.39		
Total	116.23	295			

Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 stated: “Veteran teachers and novice teachers do differ in their beliefs that they are adequately trained in the legal obligation concerning school fights.” Based on the results of the one-way ANOVA, there was a significant difference in the perceptions of veteran and novice teachers regarding laws concerning school fights $F(1, 294) = 29.53, r = .26, p = .02$. Table 14 provides the ANOVA results from the fourth hypothesis.

Table 14

Hypothesis 4

Law	Sum of squares	<i>df</i>	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	14.47	1	14.47	29.53	.02
Within Groups	115.70	294	.39		
Total	116.23	295			

Summary

This study examined if there was a difference between the perceptions of veteran teachers and novice teachers regarding whether they have been adequately trained to respond to student versus student fights. This study involved a range of secondary education teachers from middle/junior high schools to high school teachers in five districts in the state of Mississippi.

The researcher-developed survey instrument, which had an achieved power of .98, included teacher characteristics, intervention in school fights, crisis management training, preventative strategies, and law concerning school fights. The twenty-four Likert-scale questions yielded quantitative data for the research. After gathering the results from the pilot study, the researcher input the data into SPSS and used a Cronbach's alpha test to check for reliability of the survey. Initially, the overall Cronbach Alpha for the pilot study was .65, which is below the .70 that is generally

required for academic research. After deleting items 8 and 24 from the instrument for the pilot study, the Cronbach Alpha rose to .80. However, the same was not true with the actual study. For the actual study, the Cronbach's Alpha for the whole instrument was .60, which is below the recommended .70 for reliability. The subscale Intervention in Fights had a Cronbach's alpha of .44, which is also below the recommended .70 for reliability. The subscale Crisis Management had a Cronbach's alpha of .35, which is below the recommended .70 for reliability. The subscale Preventative Strategies also yielded a low Cronbach's alpha of .22. The subscale Laws Concerning School Fights had a Cronbach's alpha of .57, which is below the recommended .70 for reliability. The data generated from the research were examined, and the researcher recorded the results.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to discover if there was a difference between the opinions of veteran teachers and novice teachers regarding the adequacy of their training to respond to student versus student fights. The questionnaire titled “Novice and Veteran Teachers’ Perceptions of Crisis Management Training Concerning School Fights” was given to participants in five school districts. The schools encompassed grades 7-12. The survey was presented via an online questionnaire hosted by the Qualtrics site. Participants in this study consisted of secondary teachers who taught in a high or middle school/junior high school setting in Mississippi. Chapter V includes a summary of the procedures, major findings and discussion of the results, limitations of the study, recommendations for policy makers and practitioners, and recommendations for future research on this subject.

Summary of Procedures

The data gathered in this study was gleaned from 296 surveys that were completed by secondary teachers who taught in the high and middle/junior high school level in Mississippi. The researcher developed a five-section survey that included teacher characteristics, involvement in fights, crisis management training, preventative strategies, and laws concerning school fights. A panel of experts, comprised of a high school principal, a high school teacher, and a junior high teacher, reviewed the instrument for clearness and validity.

After the panel of experts reviewed the instrument, the researcher sought permission from the superintendents of the participating school districts for their teachers

The researcher contacted principals via a cover letter seeking permission to use their school staffs in the study. Once permission was granted from the superintendents, the researcher asked for approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the University of Southern Mississippi to conduct research in the five Mississippi school districts.

Once IRB permission was granted, the researcher conducted a pilot study that involved 25 participants from an approved school district. The researcher emailed the Qualtrics survey link to principals of participating schools and asked the principal to forward the link to teachers. Along with the survey link, the cover letter contained information explaining the purpose of the study, the anonymity and confidentiality of the survey, and emphasized that teacher's participation in the survey was voluntary. After gathering the results from the pilot study, the researcher input the information into SPSS and used a Cronbach's alpha test to check for reliability of the survey. Initially, the overall Cronbach alpha was .654, which is which is below the .70 that is generally required. The researcher deleted two questions that had a negative correlation from the survey instrument. Because of the two deletions from the analysis, the Cronbach alpha yielded a .80 coefficient, which met the requirement for reliability.

After conducting the pilot study, the researcher emailed a cover letter to the principals of the participating schools. The cover letter contained a consent form and the Qualtrics survey link. The researcher requested the principal to forward the email that included the survey link to teachers in his/her school. Once teachers clicked on the link and completed the survey, their access to the Qualtrics site was restricted.

The researcher received a total of 296 completed surveys from teachers in participating schools. The data from the completed surveys was entered into an Excel spreadsheet. The data was entered into the SPSS program and analyzed using descriptive statistics, a one-way ANOVA, and independent *t*-tests.

Major Findings and Discussion of Results

To fully understand the veteran and novice teachers' perceptions concerning their training and readiness to intervene in physical altercations between students, the researcher collected and analyzed teacher characteristics, intervention in fights, crisis management training, preventative strategies, and law concerning school fights. The participants in this study came from 7-12 grade teachers in public schools in Mississippi. Out of the 296 teachers surveyed, most were female and most ranged in age from 40-49 years. The vast majority had 1-3 years of teaching experience. The majority of teachers taught at the high school level and held a bachelor's degree while 2.7% less held a master's degree.

Research Question 1 asked: Do veteran teachers and novice teachers differ in their beliefs that teachers should be required to intervene in school fights? This research question was addressed by testing Hypothesis 1: Veteran teachers and novice teachers do differ in their beliefs that they should intervene in school fights. By using a one-way ANOVA, Hypothesis 1 showed no statistical difference between veteran teachers' and novice teachers' perceptions related to intervening in school fights. In analyzing the descriptive statistical information for intervention in school fights, veteran teachers and novice teachers did not differ in their beliefs that they should intervene in school fights.

The data indicated that fights were not a problem at school, and the majority of teachers disagreed that teachers should be required to intervene in school fights. These findings could be attributed to teachers lacking the knowledge about their legal roles if a fight occurs in their presence. According to the data, teachers felt neutral about their confidence in their ability to break up school fights. This finding is in keeping with the teachers' beliefs that fights are not a problem at school. Based on this belief, teachers felt that there is no need to be trained in the skills needed to break-up a fight. Although teachers perceive that fights are not a problem at school, fights do detract from the learning environment. According to Sullivan and colleagues (2011), violence and its disruptions adversely impact on student abilities to learn. Bailey and Ross (2001) found that "school violence, teen shootings, and similar tragedies are a chronic problem affecting America's youth, parents, teachers, and communities. The Office of the Surgeon General has identified youth violence as an epidemic, which has diminished in recent years but remains a critical issue for public health" (ii). Perhaps, teachers who felt fights were not a problem failed to realize that the sequela of fights can occur long after the actual physical altercation has ended. Grudges, resentments, choosing sides can lead to outbreaks later and in much more violent a manner and could have a detrimental effect on classroom behavior.

Research Question 2 asked: Do veteran teachers and novice teachers differ in their beliefs that they are adequately trained in crisis management? This research question was addressed by testing Hypothesis 2: Veteran teachers and novice teachers do differ in their beliefs that they are adequately trained in crisis management. A one-way ANOVA

indicated that Hypothesis 2 showed no statistical difference between veteran teachers' and novice teachers' perceptions related to being adequately trained in crisis management. In analyzing the descriptive statistical information for crisis management training, veteran teachers and novice teachers did not differ in their beliefs about being adequately trained in crisis management. According to the data, teachers do not appear to feel that they agree or disagree that they have been trained in crisis management, but they feel neutral about crisis management training. However, on one of the survey questions, "I am adequately trained to control fights," the data showed that teachers disagreed with the statement that they are adequately trained to control fights. The data revealed that teachers do not feel confident in their ability to control school fights. According to Jim Green (1998), teachers assume legal responsibilities when in charge of children. These responsibilities include a legal responsibility to provide for the students' health, safety, and welfare. Failure to fulfill this duty may lead to the teacher being sued in a tort case. According to Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, "self-efficacy is defined as people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives," (Bandura, 1994, p. 1). A teacher's feeling of competence is vital to a teacher's ability to handle a confrontation between students. If teachers have no faith in their training to response to a crisis, then the teacher, administrators, school board, and the state may be exposed to a lawsuit.

Research Question 3 asked: Do veteran teachers and novice teachers differ in their beliefs that preventive strategies assist to decrease the number of school fights that occur?" This research question was addressed by testing Hypothesis 3: Veteran teachers

and novice teachers do differ in their beliefs that preventative strategies assist to decrease the number of school fights that occur. Hypothesis 3 showed no statistical difference between veteran teachers' and novice teachers' perceptions related to their beliefs that preventative strategies assist to decrease the number of school fights that occur. In analyzing the descriptive statistical information for preventative strategies, both veteran and novice teachers agreed that they had not been adequately trained in preventative strategies concerning school fights although both veteran teachers and novice teachers agreed that preventative strategies decreased the number of school fights. The feeling among participants that preventive measures may decrease the number of school fights highlights their feeling that they have not been adequately trained in these measures. As stated by Peach and Reddick (1987), "a faculty member or administrator is expected to act as a reasonable and prudent person just like every other citizen, or to face the possibility that civil or criminal action may be brought" (p. 2). The data revealed that participants felt that preventive measures may decrease the number of school fights; therefore, failure to train them in those measures would expose them to liability and a possible lawsuit. Students have a right to feel safe when attending school, and the school has a legal responsibility to provide a safe environment for the student. According to Bailey and Ross (2001), "since school attendance is compulsory, the legal responsibility to provide a safe environment is a requirement of the school" (p. 8).

Research Question 4 asked: Do veteran teachers and novice teachers differ in their beliefs that they are adequately trained in the legal obligations concerning school fights? This research question was addressed by testing Hypothesis 4: Veteran teachers

and novice teachers do differ in their beliefs that they are adequately trained in the legal obligation concerning school fights. A one-way ANOVA indicated that hypothesis 4 showed a significant difference in the perceptions of veteran and novice teachers regarding laws concerning school fights. When analyzing the descriptive statistics for the subscale law concerning school fights using *t*-tests, the mean scores revealed that veteran and novice teachers disagreed that they knew their legal responsibilities concerning school fights. They also disagreed with the fact that teachers could be held liable for failing to intervene in school fights. According to Mawdsley (1993), the safety of all students cannot be guaranteed. School officials and school personnel, however, may have legal liability when a student is injured either by a deliberate action or negligence by a teacher. Pinnell and Pinnell (1990) stated, “negligence is the failure to act as a reasonable and prudent person in a situation which causes harm to someone” (p.4).

Since there is a responsibility to protect students from injury or harm, failure to intervene in a fight may constitute a failure of duty to protect students from harm. The descriptive data also suggested that teachers disagreed that they had been appropriately trained in legal responsibilities concerning school fights. Based on the data, teachers are obviously confused about their legal responsibilities in the event of a student fight. According to Bettenhausan (2002), “the decision in *Ferraro v. Board of Education* of the City of New York indicated that courts will hold school personnel liable if a student attacks and injures another student and the teacher should have known that such an attack or aggressive behavior was possible and, therefore, could have prevented the injury” (p. 3). Clearly, there is a legal obligation on the part of teachers to intervene in student

altercations. However, since the data indicates that many veteran and novice teachers have not been trained in their legal responsibilities, many may not know of their liability. A teacher should not bear the burden of making an intervention decision. Districts and individual schools should author clear and unambiguous protocols about student fights including guides on intervening. While protocols and procedures cannot cover every conceivable situation, written guidelines should ensure that a teacher knows if intervening or not intervening falls within the scope of his/her employment. Specific direction on the appropriateness of intervention would protect the teacher from personal liability and protect him/her from school disciplinary action as the school's intents will be spelled out. According to Doverpike and Cone (1992), "the duty to intervene, like the school's general duty of care, begins when the student steps onto the school bus and ends when the student effectively leaves the school's property" (p. 15). Even in the best of circumstances, school fights may inevitably erupt. Teachers should be knowledgeable about their legal responsibilities.

Limitations

The study had certain limitations. The participants in the study were limited to high school and junior high teachers who taught in 5 districts in the state of Mississippi, and the participants in the study were limited to teachers who completed the survey.

Another limitation of the study dealt with the survey instrument that the researcher developed. After gathering the results from the pilot study, the researcher input the data into SPSS and used a Cronbach's alpha test to check for reliability of the survey. Initially, the overall Cronbach Alpha for the pilot study was .65, which is below

the .70 that is generally required for academic research. After deleting items 8 and 24 from the instrument for the pilot study, the Cronbach Alpha rose to .80. However, the same was not true with the actual study. For the actual study, the Cronbach's Alpha for the whole instrument was .60, which is below the recommended .70 for reliability. The subscale Intervention in Fights had a Cronbach's alpha of .44, which is also below the recommended .70 for reliability. The subscale Crisis Management had a Cronbach's alpha of .35, which is below the recommended .70 for reliability. The subscale Preventative Strategies also yielded a low Cronbach's alpha of .22. The subscale Laws Concerning School Fights had a Cronbach's alpha of .57, which is below the recommended .70 for reliability. If the researcher deleted certain questions from the survey, the Cronbach alpha would have increased, but the increase would still not have been the recommended .70.

Recommendations for Policymakers and Practitioners

In today's society, creating a safe school climate is of primary importance. Society presumes schools to be safe for the students, where students are protected from harm and injury. Administrators and teachers must do their best to create a safe environment that is conducive to learning. The results from this study will allow policymakers and practitioners to analyze teachers' perceptions related to the crisis management of school fights. Fights that interrupt the learning process will not disappear. As long as children attend schools, conflict between students is bound to occur. Schools and districts must create a comprehensive safe school plan for the district

and each facility. The plan should address procedures for handling with every possible crisis that can be imagined, including school fights.

Policymakers and practitioners could utilize the survey instrument to determine the teachers' perceptions about their legal knowledge involving intervention in school fights. The data illustrated that most novice teachers and veteran teachers were not clear about their legal roles when intervening in a fight. According to Hopkins (2008), "Under the law in force in Victoria, teachers and schools have a well-established duty to take reasonable care to prevent students sustaining injuries, including injury as a result of fights or physical violence" (p. 32). It is imperative that teachers receive the in-depth crisis management training they need. Numerous court decisions have established that schools and their teachers have a legal responsibility to protect students from harm and to use judgment and necessary force to stop student-on-student violence. This duty begins when the student boards a school bus and ends when arrives home. The duty also extends to school-sponsored activities off school property such as football games, band concerts, debates, graduations, etc. Given the legal aspects of this duty, a teacher and a school system are faced with the quandary of deciding whether intervention in a fight is a legal requirement. Teachers confronted with a student vs student altercation have to make a decision whether or not to intervene and whether or not intervention is legally wise.

This instrument, in conjunction with another assessment piece, could assist policymakers and practitioners with ascertaining valuable information about the apparent gaps teachers have concerning their legal responsibilities with school fights. Teachers

have not been trained in their legal responsibilities and liabilities, nor have they been trained in the requirements of the states' education code including negligence. According to Bettenhausan (2002), "the four elements that must be present for negligence to occur are: 1) duty to protect students from unreasonable risks, 2) breach by not exercising a reasonable standard of care, 3) causal connection between breach and injury, and 4) actual physical or mental injury resulting from negligence" (p. 9). The lack of training exposes schools and teachers to lawsuits. Based on the findings in the study, policymakers and practitioners need to train their staff in the legal responsibilities that are essential for successful intervention.

Recommendations for Future Research

For future studies, the researcher suggests the following related topics addressed in this study with regard to crisis management training of school fights:

1. Future studies should explore schools located in areas outside of the confines of Mississippi to include a broader spectrum of schools and include more schools from the lower social-economic strata where fighting may be a severe problem.
2. Future studies should include a qualitative component to the survey instrument.
3. Future studies should include superintendents' and administrators' perspectives.

4. Future studies should examine whether the perspectives of teachers who teach in a rural school district differ from those teachers who teach in an urban school district.
5. Future studies should examine the perspectives of middle/junior high school teachers compared to the perspectives of high school teachers.
6. Future studies should determine the extent of teacher training in the states' education codes and the deficiencies in teacher knowledge of their legal responsibilities and obligations.
7. It is recommended that any future researcher who wishes to use the survey instrument make the necessary revisions to improve the reliability of the instrument.

Recommendations for Improving Teacher Legal Training and In-Service Education

The study showed that teachers have a hazy understanding of their legal responsibilities when confronted with a student altercation and a lack of knowledge concerning their states' legal stance on student fights. In today's litigious climate, this lack of legal knowledge may lead to large damage awards and an increase in schools and teacher exposure to lawsuits. Based on this lack of knowledge, it is recommended that:

1. Teacher educational programs at the college level include training in the state's education code with emphasis on the legal aspects of intervening in student altercations and the liability issues of the school and the individual teacher.

2. Adequate training in the legal concept of a teacher's duty to protect. This training should address the standard of reasonable care as applied to the duty to protect. Not only should this training be a part of the teacher's college courses, but also should be a continuing topic during in-service training.
3. Continuous in-service training in the means of intervention and in the liabilities generated by improper intervention.
4. To assist teachers and school administrators in properly exercising their duty of care toward students, they should be trained in the laws governing education in their state.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the data collected from 7-12 grade middle/junior high teachers and high school teachers to determine whether there was a difference between veteran and novice teachers' perceptions that they are adequately trained to respond to student versus student fights. This study included an introduction and a literature review about crisis management training. The study also included methodology, research results, conclusions, recommendations for policy makers and practitioners, and recommendations for future research.

The researcher developed a survey instrument to examine the veteran and novice teachers' perceptions about crisis management training concerning school fights. Data was collected via an on-line survey site from 296 participants with the majority being female with 1-3 years of teaching experience.

This study specifically examined veteran and novice teachers' perceptions about crisis management training concerning school fights. Results illustrated that there was no difference in the perceptions of veteran and novice teachers in the area of intervention of school fights. This study also examined if there was a difference in perceptions between veteran teachers and novice teachers related to their crisis management training. The results indicated there was no difference in perceptions. In addition, this study explored if there was a difference of perception between veteran teachers and novice teachers related to preventative strategies. Once again, the results indicated that there was no difference in perceptions. Finally, this study examined if there was a difference of perception between veteran teachers and novice teachers related to law concerning school fights. The results indicated a significant relationship was found. Policymakers and practitioners are urged to develop professional development and training related to teachers' knowledge of law concerning school fights.

APPENDIX A

NOVICE AND VETERAN TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT

TRAINING CONCERNING SCHOOL FIGHTS:

Please complete the following survey. This survey is anonymous and will be used for the purpose of the researcher's dissertation. Your input is critical to the validity of the researcher's work. Please be honest in answering all questions.

Before you begin, please answer the consent form below.

Do you voluntarily consent to take this survey and give your permission to the researcher for the use of your answers in her research?

Yes, I voluntarily give my permission to the researcher.

No, I do not give my permission to the researcher.

If you answered NO to this survey, please do not proceed.

Teacher Characteristics	Please answer the following questions by circling the correct response.
1. What is your gender?	(1) Male (2) Female
2. What is your age?	(1) 20-29 (2) 30-39 (3) 40-49 (4) 50+
3. Counting this year, how many years have you been teaching?	(1) 1-3 (2) 4-10 (3) 11-20 (4) 21-30 (5) 30+
4. In what type of school do you teach?	(1) Middle School/Junior High (2) High School
5. What type of certification do you have?	(1) Bachelor's Degree (2) Master's Degree

	(3) Specialist's Degree (4) Doctoral Degree
6. Are you currently or have you ever been a middle school or high school coach?	(1) Yes (2) No

Intervention in Fights	Please indicate the following strategies as: 1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree
7. Fights are a problem at my school.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
8. Teachers should be required to intervene in school fights.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
9. I am confident in my ability to break-up a school fight.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
10. The location of a fight influences my decision to intervene.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
11. The number of teachers present influences my decision to intervene in a fight.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
12. The number of participants in a fight influences my decision to intervene.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

Crisis Management Training	Please indicate the following strategies as: 1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree
13. I am aware of my school's crisis plan concerning fights.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
14. I am adequately trained to control school fights.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

15. I know my role if a fight occurs.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
16. The amount of training I receive relates to my ability to effectively respond to school fights.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
17. Teachers need more training in the management of school fights.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

Preventative Strategies	Please indicate the following strategies as: 1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree
18. I have been adequately trained in preventative strategies concerning school fights.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
19. I believe teachers on duty decrease the number of school fights.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
20. I believe that preventative strategies decrease the number of school fights.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

Law Concerning School Fights	Please indicate the following strategies as: 1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree
21. I know my legal responsibilities concerning school fights.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
22. Teachers can be held liable for failing to intervene in a school fight.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
23. Teachers can be held liable if they are not at their designated duty posts when a fight erupts.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
24. I have been appropriately trained in my legal responsibilities concerning school fights.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

APPENDIX B

LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION FROM SUPERINTENDENTS

Date

Name of Superintendent

Name of School District

District Address

Dear Superintendent:

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study with the teachers in your school district. The information gathered will be used in my dissertation at the University of Southern Mississippi (USM), shared with my dissertation committee.

The research will analyze the perceptions of novice and veteran teachers' crisis management training concerning school fights. The title of my research is *Novice and Veteran Teachers' Perceptions of Crisis Management Training Concerning School Fights*. I am requesting to survey middle/junior high and high schools in your school district.

The electronic survey will be sent to approved schools via email. The data gathered will be kept confidential and password protected with only the researcher and committee members having access to the participants' responses. This research is anonymous and no teacher, school, and/or district will be identified. The time to complete the survey will take less than 15 minutes and will not be a distraction to your teachers. I plan to begin collecting data in August 2015 and be completed by September 2015. Participation is completely voluntary; participation may be discontinued at any time without penalty or prejudice to the participant. Surveys collected will be deleted after the study is completed. There is no inherent risk associated with being a participant of this survey.

I am required to follow all of the ethical guidelines of research as proposed by the Human Subjects Committee at USM. Upon receipt of your consent letter, I will submit my application to this committee for approval.

If it is your decision to grant me permission, please print the attached permission letter on your school letterhead, sign the permission letter, and scan your signed permission letter to me at heather.chesman@eagles.usm.edu. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Heather Chesman

APPENDIX C

SUPERINTENDENT SURVEY PERMISSION FORM

Ms. Heather Chesman has requested permission to administer her survey instrument with certified personnel involved in your school district. The title of her survey instrument is *Novice and Veteran Teachers' Perceptions of Crisis Management Training Concerning School Fights*.

Surveys will be administered in consultation with the middle school principal and high school principal at an agreed upon time. Staff completion of the survey will not interfere with classroom instruction. I understand that no participant, school, or district will be named. I also understand that participation is voluntary and participants may choose to end their participation at any time without penalty.

Superintendent of Education (or Designee)

Date

APPENDIX D

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL FOR STUDY



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Phone: 601.266.5997 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | www.usm.edu/research/institutional.review.board

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.
Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 15081103

PROJECT TITLE: Crisis Management Training of School Fights: Novice and Veteran Teachers' Perceptions

PROJECT TYPE: New Project

RESEARCHER(S): Heather Chesman

COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education and Psychology

DEPARTMENT: Educational Leadership and School Counseling

FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: N/A

IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Expedited Review Approval

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 09/01/2015 to 08/31/2016

Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.

Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX E

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The University of Southern Mississippi Consent Document

Purpose: As educators in the secondary setting in Mississippi, you are being asked to participate in research designed to help us better understand the crisis management training of teachers focusing on school fights. This research is being conducted by Heather A. Chesman, a doctoral student under the direction of Dr. David Lee, at the University of Southern Mississippi.

Direction of the Study: As a participant, you are being asked to complete a survey on your knowledge of crisis management training of teachers focusing on school fights. The survey should take no longer than 5-10 minutes of your time. The results will be shared after study is conducted with interested participants by contacting the researcher using provided contact information.

Benefits: Your input will assist us in studying the training of teachers concerning school fights.

Risks: There are no known risks to participants. The district, as well as the participants, will be kept confidential.

Subject's Assurance: Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. You may refuse to participate in the survey without any punishment. Refusing to participate will not affect your standing as an educator by any means. If you have any questions, you may contact Heather Chesman at 228-669-7898 or Dr. David Lee at 601-266-4580.

This research project has been reviewed and approved by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee. This committee ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal guidelines. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, Box 5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001 or call 601-266-6820.

By completing this electronic survey, you are indicating your consent to participate. The consent form is yours to keep for future reference. Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX F

EMAIL TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear Participant:

I am a graduate student, who is conducting research in pursuit of my doctoral degree. I am attempting to study the differences of perceptions between veteran and novice teachers regarding their training and ability to handle physical altercations between students. Attached to this email you will find an informed consent letter and a link to the questionnaire. Please carefully review the informed consent letter. Completion and return of the questionnaire indicates that you agree with the informed consent letter. I would appreciate the completion of the questionnaire at your earliest convenience.

Please be assured that your anonymity and confidentiality will be protected as all data, emails, and other correspondence connected with this project will be stored via Qualtrics, which is a survey hosting site. Qualtrics restricts access to survey data to the researcher only. Once the survey is complete, the Qualtrics site will be closed.

Thank you for your participation,

Heather Chesman

APPENDIX G

PANEL OF EXPERT LETTER

Dear Participant,

My name is Heather Chesman, and I am completing my dissertation entitled “Novice and Veteran Teachers’ Perceptions of Crisis Management Training Concerning School Fights.”

In order to complete my study, I am asking you to become part of my Panel of Experts. Your expertise in education will provide me with quality feedback on the content validity of my crisis management training survey.

Please read and analyze the attached survey. After analyzing the survey, please complete the validity form that I have attached.

Thank you for participating and assisting me with this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Heather Chesman
Doctoral Candidate, University of Southern Mississippi

APPENDIX H

VALIDITY QUESTIONNAIRE

Novice and Veteran Teachers' Perceptions of Crisis Management Training Concerning School Fights.

Validity Questionnaire

Thank you for volunteering your time to assist me with the development of this survey. Your opinion is important in the designing of my survey and my dissertation overall. Your time and willingness to participate in this validity questionnaire is greatly appreciated.

Please rate the included survey based on the following information:

1. Does the survey contain language that is comprehensible by teachers relative to their knowledge of involvement in school fights, crisis management training, preventative strategies, and school law?

2. Does the survey address specific and appropriate issues in the statements, as it relates to teachers' crisis management training of school fights?

3. Do you find any of the questions offensive or obtrusive?

4. Are there any statements that you would exclude from the survey?

5. Are there any other statements that you would include that are **not** a part of the survey?

6. Please make any other comments or suggestions about the survey below.

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