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# User Report

SCHOOL-BASED VIOLENCE  
PREVENTION IN CANADA:  
RESULTS OF A NATIONAL SURVEY  
OF POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

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PREVENTION IN CANADA:  
RESULTS OF A NATIONAL SURVEY  
OF POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine the nature of school-based violence prevention policies and programs in Canada. The study included the following methods of inquiry: a literature review and systematic analysis of a national sample of 116 school boards' violence prevention policies and programs. The results indicated that there is a tremendous amount of activity within the education community to understand and come to terms with the issue of school-based violence and to identify and implement effective solutions. With regard to specific components, nearly all the school boards in the survey included a statement concerning suspension and expulsion of students. Other areas that school boards are addressing include delegating administrative responsibilities, communicating policy information to stakeholders, and promoting a positive school climate. As well, most of the documents we reviewed consisted of policy statements concerning some of the specific infractions included in our content analysis categories. Typically, these included physical assault, verbal harassment, intimidation/bullying/threats, and the presence of weapons. At the same time, there was an identified need for (a) more staff training opportunities in the areas of school violence and violence prevention and (b) high quality evaluations of policies and programs and good methods to report incidents of school-based violence. In conclusion, six general points emerged from the study. First, school board policy should be internally consistent, that is, each of the violence prevention policy statements should be logically related to one another. Second, board policies should be congruent with the violence prevention programs that are operating within each of the boards' schools. Third, policies should be comprehensive, incorporating as many of the 35 policy components identified in this report as feasible. As well, programs should be multifaceted. Fourth, board policies should have a community focus. The causes of youth violence are many and often lie outside the purview of the school system. Partnerships between schools and community groups must be developed for concerted, sustained, and comprehensive violence prevention efforts to occur. Fifth, school boards should have supplemental programs for students who are aggressive and violent. These programs must be supportive and corrective rather than punitive, demoralizing, and inflexible. Lastly, violence prevention solutions must address the root causes of violence, that is, the biological, familial, environmental, social, and academic factors that place a child at risk.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Objectives of the Research

The objective of the current study was to address two questions: What is the nature of school-based violence in Canada? and How are school boards responding to the issue? This study was undertaken in an effort to understand the state of the art of school-based violence prevention in Canada and to highlight some of the critical issues to help ameliorate this social problem. The study is a descriptive analysis of the policy documents and programs that school boards across the country have developed to deal with violence in schools. Compiling and summarizing the extant literature and available materials was seen as a first step in understanding, in an organized and systematic manner and on a national level, the scope of the problem and range of potential solutions.

### Organization of the Research

The study's objective was achieved through a (a) review of the Canadian and American literature on school-based violence and (b) content analysis of a national sample of school boards' violence prevention policies and programs. Letters were sent to 210 school boards across Canada requesting (a) policy statements about student behaviour, school discipline, and violent incidents as well as (b) descriptions of specific programs developed or implemented at schools within that board and any relevant evaluative data. A systematic analysis of the submissions of the responding school

boards was subsequently undertaken to identify and analyze the main themes that were addressed in the policies and program descriptions. A total of 35 discrete content analysis categories was developed for this purpose.

### Findings

A total of 126 school boards responded to the survey, a response rate of 60%. The response rate ranged by province from 29.9% in Quebec (20 out of 67) to 100% in New Brunswick (4 out of 4) and Prince Edward Island (1 out of 1). Of the 126 respondents, 116 submitted policy and/or program materials. Eighty-two of the 126 boards submitted policy materials that were subjected to the content analysis. Thirty-four boards were involved in promoting programs or establishing safe school task forces or committees and 10 indicated that they had neither policies nor programs.

The policy materials varied in comprehensiveness across the provinces and even within provinces. A large majority of the school boards included a statement concerning suspension/expulsion. Other frequently occurring components defined in Appendix E included delegating administrative responsibilities, communicating policy information to stakeholders, promoting a positive school climate, physical assault, defining a code of conduct, intimidation/bullying/threats, verbal harassment, weapons, police liaison, fighting, and reporting violent incidents.

Components that occurred infrequently were aftermath support services for victims, responding to emergencies, early and ongoing

identification of antisocial students, provisions for policy/program evaluation, involving committees for policy development, site security, dealing with school gangs, conducting incidence surveys, and screening curricula for violent content.

Subsequent to the content analysis procedure, each of the boards' entire policy submission was classified into one of four general philosophical orientations or types identified as follows: (a) Response/Sanctions, (b) Expectations for Behaviour, (c) Identification/Prevention, and (d) Community Focus. These four types are conceptualized as philosophical or ideological underpinnings of the policy documents. Each classification, building on the previous type, represents a stage in the progression towards a more comprehensive (and presumably more effective) policy. The results indicated that the majority of boards were identified as having a Response/Sanctions focus (48.8%), popularly characterized as a "zero tolerance" policy. Thirty percent of the boards were classified as having an Expectations for Behaviour approach, 18.3% as an Intervention/Prevention model, and 3.7% as having a Community Focus.

### **Discussion and Conclusions**

Clearly, there is a tremendous amount of activity within the education community to understand and come to terms with the issue of school-based violence and to identify and implement effective solutions. Moreover, through various channels including national and regional conferences, teachers' organizations, and university



institutions, a great deal of information is currently available for policymakers.

Within particular school boards, a large majority of boards have policies and/or programs to address the issue of violence and violent incidents. With regard to specific components, nearly all the school boards in the survey included a statement concerning suspension and expulsion of students. While having a long tradition in history, however, we believe that this approach serves only as a "quick-fix" solution by removing the offending student from the immediate environment and fails to address the long-term problem. In this regard, we recommend the development of alternative-to-suspension programs. Interestingly, such programs were identified as a relatively strong area in only one province and as a weak area in four.

Other areas that school boards were addressing include delegating administrative responsibilities, communicating policy information to stakeholders, and promoting a positive school climate. The former two components indicate that school boards are proactively taking steps to ensure that the process of implementing policies is successful. With regard to the latter component, a positive classroom and school environment is essential as a "macro-level" strategy for addressing school-based violence and has the potential to deal with a wide range of related issues on a very broad level. Of course, it is also important to address these issues at the "micro-level," for example, implementing policies and

programs to deal with specific incidents, aggressive individuals, and victims of violence.

Most of the documents we reviewed consisted of policy statements concerning some of the specific infractions included in our content analysis categories. Typically, these were physical assault, verbal harassment, intimidation/bullying/threats, and the presence of weapons. It would seem that the next step in developing a comprehensive violence prevention policy is to implement procedures for responding to emergency situations such as serious assaults involving a weapon, arson, and gang-related activity. Perhaps a crisis intervention team could be developed. As well, measures could be taken to ensure that moderate levels of site security are maintained (e.g., adequate lighting, limited access to isolated stairwells, and increased adult supervision on the school playground) and to foster relations with the local police. Trespassers are another concern related to the security of schools (Symons, 1993). Most schools have signs posted prohibiting trespassers and some use two-way communication devices and senior students to monitor halls and lock external doors (Gentile, 1992).

Another area for which there was a paucity of policy statements concerned staff development. The low frequency of this component would indicate that many school boards are missing the consensus-building opportunities that exist when staff are provided with the support needed to familiarize themselves with their board's policies and programs. Also, once staff clearly understand the relations among a student's developmental history, family

background and circumstances, academic performance, and disruptive behaviour they may become more committed to the success of a prevention strategy.

Lastly, there is an obvious need for evaluations of policies and programs as well as good methods to record incidents of violence in schools. All policies should contain a specific statement for self-evaluation, indicating the frequency and method of the evaluation. This ensures a procedure for monitoring policy and program impact and identifying areas for further development.

In conclusion, six general points emerged from the study. First, school board policy should be internally consistent, that is, each of the violence prevention policy statements should be logically related to one another. Second, board policies should be congruent with the violence prevention programs that are operating within each of the boards' schools. Third, policies should be comprehensive, incorporating as many of the 35 policy components identified in this report as feasible. As well, programs should be multifaceted. Fourth, board policies should have a community focus. The causes of youth violence are many and often lie outside the purview of the school system. Partnerships between schools and community groups must be developed for concerted, sustained, and comprehensive violence prevention efforts to occur. Fifth, school boards should have supplemental programs for students who are aggressive and violent. These programs should be supportive and corrective rather than punitive, demoralizing, and inflexible. Lastly, violence prevention solutions must address the root causes

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report is the result of a distillation process to yield the essence from reams of school board policies, reports, documents, handbooks, pamphlets, and letters that we received as part of the study. We gratefully acknowledge the cooperation of the school board representatives who responded to our request for information. We are also grateful for the support of Corrections Research, Ministry Secretariat, Solicitor General Canada which made this study possible, in particular, Dr. James Bonta for his helpful comments and guidance throughout.

## INTRODUCTION

"Kids will be kids" is a common phrase often invoked to account for the overt aggressiveness and bullying behaviour among children. Somehow, however, over the years, this quaint adage has lost its presumption of boisterous innocence and youthful exuberance in reference to the aggressive and antisocial behaviour of some of today's youth.

There is a growing perception in our society that aggressive and antisocial behaviour among children and youth has become more confrontative, violent, and commonplace. Youth violence is also seen as more likely to involve weapons and gangs, to be more destructive, more virulent, and to involve more females and children of younger ages than ever before. While there is a lack of hard evidence to support an actual increase in the prevalence and severity of youth violence, there is, nonetheless, a growing sense of urgency to address the many facets related to this complex social issue. As Bala (1994) has noted, "Although one can ask how much of this increase is due to heightened sensitivity to violence and an increase in reporting rates, it is apparent that the public and professionals are increasingly concerned about youth violence" (p. 1). Clearly, violence among children and youth is an issue that needs to be examined, understood, and ameliorated through effective, concerted, and sustained efforts.

The present study is concerned with school-based violence and the school board's response to violence involving children

and youth. The heightened awareness and sensitivity to this issue over the past several years has led to concerted activity to confront and prevent the problem. Within the domain of the legal system, for example, we have heard calls for reforms to the ways with which adolescent offenders are dealt. Demands to change the current Young Offenders Act (YOA) have been made, to which the current Minister of Justice, Alan Rock, has responded. Planned changes to the YOA include increasing the maximum sentence for juvenile murderers from five to ten years and making it easier for young offenders to be tried in adult court.

Likewise, we have heard demands for tighter controls and stricter measures for dealing with youth violence within the school system. An issue many school boards across the country are now facing is how best to respond to school violence. Other questions with which school officials are grappling as we move into the middle of the 1990's and towards the second millennium include: What is the nature and extent of youth violence in schools?; Are students becoming more aggressive and violent or are apparent increases due to differences in reporting and a greater sensitivity to and awareness of the issue?; Are stricter, more severe, "law-and-order" responses the best methods for dealing with school violence or would other approaches be more effective?; Should school boards be revamping their policies and practices concerning student behaviour and student discipline, implementing conflict resolution programs, modifying curriculum

to promote anti-violence messages and themes, and developing specialized programs for offending individuals?

### **The Present Study**

It is widely accepted that the school system plays a pivotal role in addressing the issue of youth violence because of the potential for reaching a large number of children throughout childhood for early intervention and prevention (American Psychological Association [APA], 1993; Caputo & Ryan, 1991; Coie, Underwood, & Lochman, 1991; Matthews, 1993) and because teachers are ideally positioned to identify children who have social, emotional, behavioural, and academic problems that may require special assistance (Sandford, Offord, Boyle, Peace, & Racine, 1992). Children spend the better part of their formative years in school. While at school, they learn self-discipline, respect for others, and sociomoral reasoning. Much can be done within the school system to reduce aggressive and violent behaviour among children and youth and to increase and promote prosocial responses to conflict (Deutsch, 1993). The APA's report, Response to youth violence (1993), suggests that:

On the one hand, schools provide multiple opportunities for bullying, harassment, intimidation, fights and other forms of violence to occur....On the other hand, schools can also provide children with repeated and developmentally appropriate opportunities to follow sound principles of personal safety, strengthen academic and social skills, develop sound peer relationships, and learn effective

nonviolent solutions to social conflict (p. 74).

Presently, school boards across the country are developing and revising policies to curb student violence. While addressing the same mandate of reducing the prevalence and incidence of school violence, however, there are vast differences in the comprehensiveness of board policies in terms of the range of unacceptable behaviours with which the policies deal and the array of suggested consequences that may be imposed.

Moreover, it appears that the development and implementation of violence prevention policies and programs in Canada is haphazard and sporadic. Indeed, a concerted effort on the national level is only now beginning to emerge. The Safe School Task Force in Ontario has led to the development of an umbrella organization, the Canadian Association for Safe Schools, which recently held its third conference in Toronto.

At present, there is no single resource or directory that describes the range of school-based violence prevention policies and programs in Canada. Thus, the objectives of the present study were to: (a) review the literature on youth violence and school-based violence in Canada and the United States in an attempt to discern the scope and extent of the problem and range of potential solutions; (b) describe the nature of school-based policies concerning student behaviour, student discipline, and school-based violence in terms of their extensiveness and comprehensiveness, based on the results of a national survey; (c) describe the range of school-based programs implemented across

Canada in terms of the population served, specific program activities, and overall goals and objectives; and (d) examine the available data concerning evaluations of school-based programs to identify those programs that show promise in reducing or preventing school violence.

This report will be organized into the following sections. First, current data regarding youth involvement in crime, in general, are considered to provide a context for the issue of school violence. Second, the literature on school violence both in Canada and the United States is reviewed. Third, the causes of violence in our society are presented. This section will be brief as a comprehensive review of the literature is beyond the scope of this study. Some excellent sources are available for the interested reader (e.g., Kazdin, 1987; Loeber, 1990). Fourth, the relevant literature is reviewed for suggested strategies to deal with school violence. Fifth, the results of a national survey of 126 school boards, concerning their policies and programs about school violence, are presented. Lastly, conclusions are drawn about the state of the art of school-based violence prevention in Canada.

Such a review was seen as important given the current climate of increasing violence in our society, in general, which appears to be reflected in an increase in violence among our youth. Compiling and summarizing the extant literature and available resources is a first step in understanding, in an organized and systematic manner and on a national level, the

scope of the problem and range of potential solutions. This report was prepared to assist policymakers to develop what we believe are comprehensive school-based violence prevention strategies. The report will also enable school administrators to identify gaps in their existing policy documents and begin the process of informed decision-making and priority-setting as a step towards developing effective, long-range strategies.

This report is not meant as a handbook on how to deal with school violence. There is already a plethora of excellent books, manuals, and other resource materials available. Although much of the information emanates from the United States (e.g., American Association of School Administrators, 1981; Curcio & First, 1993; Simpson, Miles, Walker, Ornsbee, & Downing, 1991; Vestermark & Blauvelt, 1978), some comprehensive materials have been developed in Canada and can be found, for example, in Leading the way to violence-free schools: Conference handbook, (British Columbia School Trustees' Association [BCSTA] & British Columbia Teachers' Association [BCTA], 1993), Violence prevention manual, (Greater Victoria School District, no date), Violence prevention materials in the schools (Manitoba Women's Directorate, 1992), Working it out together: A behavioral handbook for teachers (St. James-Assiniboia School Division No. 2, no date), The Safe School Task Force resource kit (Safe School Task Force, 1994a), and Prevention of violence in the school (Lapointe & Laurendeau, 1989).



## YOUTH AND VIOLENCE

### Youth Crime in Canada

Many adolescents commit antisocial and delinquent acts at some time during their adolescence. Such manifestations of risk-taking, rebellion, and rejection of traditional values are a part of normal development. Atwater (1983), for example, reported that 75% of American youth admitted to committing one or more delinquent behaviours during adolescence. This figure is likely an underestimate as West (1984) reported that over 90% of Canadian high school boys reported committing some delinquent acts, based on self-reports. Typical behaviours include swearing, fighting, shoplifting, truancy, drinking, and experimentation with drugs.

Prevalence rates for delinquent behaviour have also been reported for school-aged children. LeBlanc, McDuff, Charlebois, Gagnon, Larrivee, and Tremblay (1991), for example, found that 21.8% of their sample of disadvantaged Canadian youth had committed at least one of three serious delinquent offences (fighting with a weapon, entering and stealing, or stealing goods worth more than \$100) between the age of 4 and 9 years. In his review of the literature, Loeber (1987) reported that as many as 50% of elementary-school children have engaged in theft and as many as 37% of boys have been involved in physical assault. Based on self-report data from an American sample of 748 children aged 11 to 12 years Richards, Berk, and Forster (1979) found that 22% had defaced property, 9% had damaged property, 5% had been

truant, 3.9% had used marijuana, and 1.5% had stolen a bicycle.

In most cases, however, the incidence of delinquent behaviours diminishes as the youth enters early adulthood. This transition comes about as a result of the individual assuming greater responsibility for his or her own behaviour, making decisions about what is socially appropriate and acceptable, demonstrating the necessary self-control skills to conduct oneself as a responsible individual, and showing empathy towards others and establishing healthy relationships with adults and peers. It is generally accepted that the school system can help foster and promote these skills and build self-esteem by conveying the message, through policy and programming, that students are valued and respected rather than feared, dismissed, or held in contempt.

Indeed, only a small percentage of adolescents become identified as "offenders" in a legal sense, as determined by the YOA. The YOA, which came into effect in 1984, "applies to all offences in the Criminal Code committed by a person between the age of 12 and 17 years" (Roher, 1993, p. 1). Children under the age of 12 years cannot be criminally charged but are covered under provincial child welfare legislation such as the Child and Family Services Act (1984) in Ontario.

Within the general community, criminal behaviour resulting in an arrest occurs among a small percentage of youth. Based on court records, only 3% of the Canadian population of adolescents aged 12 to 17 years were seen in youth court in 1992-1993

(Statistics Canada, 1993). Across the country, this figure ranged from 1.2% in Quebec to 6.6% in the Yukon. In most cases, the charges involved property crimes (e.g., theft under \$1,000, break and enter), accounting for 54% of the cases heard in youth court in 1992-1993. In the same period, violent offences accounted for 19% of the cases (Statistics Canada, 1993).

At the same time, recent police data from the Uniform Crime Report (UCR), indicated that the number of youths aged 12 to 17 years who were arrested by the police in Canada, rose 18% between 1986 and 1992. Moreover, in the same period, the number of charged youths who were charged with a violent crime rose 75%, from 8% to 14%. Indeed, the rate of increase for violent crimes was 2.3 times faster for young offenders than for adult offenders. Most of this increase was due to a greater number of minor assault cases (Statistics Canada, 1993). Interestingly, the number of charged youths who were charged with a property crime decreased 14% between 1986 and 1992. However, this figure was less than the change rate for adult offenders which showed a decrease of 33% (Hung & Lipinski, 1994). More recently, an article in The Globe and Mail ("Crime rate," 1994) reported that, while the crime rate, in general, decreased by 5%, the rate for violent crimes among young offenders increased by 13% in 1993.

It should also be noted that a relatively small percentage of offenders account for much of the criminal charges, particularly violent crimes. Day, Minevich, Hunt, and Hrynkiw-Augimeri (1994) reported that 21% of a sample of young offenders

in Toronto accounted for 65% of the total number of charges incurred by the sample. This finding is consistent with other studies conducted in the United States and England (Farrington, 1983; Shannon, 1980; Tracy, Wolfgang, & Figlio, 1990). Within the general population, only 6-7% of adolescents are responsible for committing the majority of officially-recorded crimes (Shannon, 1980; Tracy et al., 1990).

Youth involvement in criminal behaviour is also reflected in victimization rates. According to Statistics Canada (1992a) "23% of all violent crime victims were teenagers between 12 and 19 years, double their representation in the 1990 Canadian population" (p. 1). Particularly disconcerting is the finding that "23% of those accused of crimes against younger teen victims were 12-15 themselves and a further 23% were 16-19" (p. 1). Lastly, 30% of those accused of violent crimes against older teens were 16-19 years themselves.

With regard to the use of guns, firearms are not as significant a problem in youth crime in Canada as they are in the United States. "In 1990 there were 276 firearm deaths among 15-24 year olds in Canada" (Leonard, 1994, p. 128), or approximately 7.2 firearm related deaths per 100,000 population. Firearm deaths were "the third leading cause of death in this age group, ranking below motor vehicle accidents (997) and non-firearm suicides (358)" (p. 128). It should be noted that these figures included both accidental deaths and suicides.

In comparison, the data for the United States paint a more

grim picture. Yoshikawa (1994) reported that arrests for those under the age of 18 years for murder and nonnegligent manslaughter rose an astonishing 60.1% between 1981 and 1990, compared with an increase of only 5.2% for those over the age of 18. McDonald (1992) noted that "homicide is the second leading cause of death among young people aged 15-24 years...and the leading cause of death for blacks aged 15 to 24" (p. 1-2). In 1987, in the United States, the homicide rate for youth was 21.9 per 100,000 (Prothrow-Stith, 1991) and 84.6 per 100,000 for African American males in the same age group (Wilson-Brewer, Cohen, O'Donnell, & Goodman, 1991). Lastly, "youth age 16-19 have the highest rates of victimization for rape, robbery, and assault and most are victims of their own age group" (McDonald, 1992, p. 5).

In summary, while milder forms of delinquent behaviour are considered normal among adolescents, only a small percentage of youth in Canada is charged with criminal offences. Most of these are for property offences. At the same time, relative to the adult crime rate which is decreasing, violent criminal offences among adolescents are increasing. Finally, adolescents are becoming the victims of violent crime at an increasing rate, and often at the hands of other adolescents. These findings are of concern to school officials as violence spills over into the school setting, giving rise to the growing sense of urgency of how to deal with antisocial and aggressive behaviour among children and youth. In comparison, data collected in the United

States clearly indicate that the scope of youth violence is much larger and more severe in nature than in Canada.

The next section reviews the literature on violence in schools. There is no shortage of information concerning school violence. Much of the available literature, however, is based on American data, reflecting the American situation vis a vis the proliferation of guns and weapons, heightened racial tensions, and the escalation of gang activity and protection of turf. The Canadian literature is not as prolific and the data are based largely on impressionistic reports and formal and informal surveys of school personnel.

Nonetheless, however sparse, the Canadian literature will be reviewed separately from the American literature. This will serve both to highlight the differences in the scope and extent of the problem between Canada and the United States and to point out some of the possibilities that may be lying ahead for us in Canada (rather than what is de facto awaiting us). Moreover, while the American literature is valuable in furthering our knowledge and understanding of the issues, there is a danger of "fuelling the flames of fear" and creating an illusory portrayal of school violence in Canada by focusing on the American-based data which, although, readily available, are a reflection of a social, political, economic, and cultural situation that is not our own.

## **School-based Violence**

Over the past several years, violence within our schools has been seen as an increasingly serious problem. Incidents range from minor discipline problems such as disobedience, teasing, and taunting, to obscene gesturing, verbal and physical threats, aggression, bullying, assault (with and without a weapon), vandalism, extortion, and gang-related activities. School violence affects not only the perpetrator and the victim, but the entire student body, the staff, and the community as a whole, as well.

Moreover, school violence is not a recent phenomenon. Events of violence can be traced historically over the existence of schools. Cusson (1990) relates an incident in which the students of le Collège de La Flèche, during the Mardi Gras festival in 1646, attacked their school armed "jusqu'aux dents" requiring their teachers and servants to resort to the use of firearms to resist them. Throughout the history of education, events such as this are commonplace and well-documented in the annals and minutes of the administration of these institutions (du Boulay, 1673). Fortunately, today, students are not mounting mass attacks against their schools. Nonetheless, there is a growing concern with the violence that takes place on or around the school premises.

### **(a) Canada**

Surveys of teachers in British Columbia (British Columbia Teachers' Federation [BCTF], 1993), Ontario (Roher, 1993; Ontario

Teachers' Federation [OTF], 1991); Alberta ("Teacher associations," 1992), Manitoba (The Manitoba Teachers' Society [MTS], 1993), and Nova Scotia (Robb, 1993) indicate that violence is of increasing concern in Canadian schools. Indeed, an Environics poll conducted in April, 1993, revealed that violence is the top educational concern, even surpassing academic standards (MacDougall, 1993).

A survey of 2,286 teachers in Manitoba reported that 47% had been subjected to abuse (MTS, 1993). This represents a 37% increase from a previous survey conducted in 1990. As well, 45% of the teachers reported being verbally abused and 10% had been physically abused. Only 7% of teachers reported being physically abused in 1990. Moreover, 72% of the teachers and 42% of the administrators agreed with the statement, "Abuse is on the increase." An interesting finding is that only 12% of the teachers reported that there was any support available for abused teachers from either the school division or the MTS. Moreover, in a survey conducted in Alberta, 50% of teachers reported that physical and emotional abuse is on the increase. However, when asked if their school had a policy or procedure to deal with abuse, 19% said "no" and 62% reported that they "didn't know" ("Teacher associations," 1992).

Another survey of 1,440 principals, teachers, and caretakers at 700 schools in Ontario found that, while 95% of the respondents reported feeling safe in their school, only 67.8% indicated that they felt as safe now as they did five years ago



(Safe School Task Force, 1994b). This result was particularly evident among staff at large urban secondary schools. In descending order, the concerns that these school personnel had that made them feel less safe at work were trespassers, verbal assaults, working alone, school architecture, physical assaults, weapons, lack of personal alarms, and a lack of two-way portable communicators.

According to Roher (1993), the results of a survey of 881 responding schools conducted by the OTF (1991), revealed a 150% increase in major incidents such as biting, kicking, punching, and the use of weapons, and a 50% increase in minor incidents such as verbal abuse over a three-year period, between 1987 and 1990. Much of this aggression was reported to have been perpetrated against other students, although teachers and other school personnel were also victims. The study also found that an increasing number of teachers were assaulted while breaking up fights; the incidence of trespassers had increased, as did the reported consumption of alcohol on field trips and athletic activities held outside the school; and the possession of weapons had become a serious problem.

The results of the OTF survey must be interpreted with caution, however, as the number of schools that provided data for the three time periods (1987-88, 1988-89, and 1989-90) varied. For example, data were provided by 454 schools for the baseline year, 881 schools for the second year, and 561 schools for the third year. The study's findings, therefore, were based on the

number of incidents reported by nearly half the number of schools for the first year as for the second year. The fact that more schools contributed data for the second and third years would artificially increase the incremental values across time. Moreover, in a cautionary note, the OTF report noted that "a significant number of schools did not record any incidents of assault" (1991, p. 14-15).

Lastly, a survey of 177 elementary and 173 secondary separate schools, conducted by the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA, 1992) indicated that, between 1990-91 and 1991-92, the reported number of verbal assaults increased 6.1% and 20.5% in elementary and secondary schools, respectively. The reported number of physical assaults increased 3.2% and 2.4% in elementary and secondary schools, respectively. Some regional differences were observed as were differences across elementary and secondary grade levels and in schools of different size. With respect to student-teacher incidents, verbal assaults were more likely to occur with less experienced teachers whereas the reverse was true for physical assaults: more experienced teachers were more likely to have been subjected to physical assaults. Many teachers attributed student violence to societal factors such as the economy, the pervasiveness of violence in our society and the media, an overemphasis on individual rights with an underemphasis on individual responsibility, a perceived lack of sanctions in the YOA, and lack of religion and general moral decay of society.

At the same time, an informal survey of 700 teachers in British Columbia revealed that teachers felt a greater sense of fear for the safety of their students than for their own safety (BCTF, 1994). Indeed, surveys of students indicate that school-based violence affects a large number of children and youth. In a recent study of 850 Ontario students in grades 6-9, 45% reported that there was "some" to "a lot" of violence in their schools and 29% said that they felt safe "sometimes" or "not at all" while at school (Ryan, Matthews, & Banner, 1993). However, this finding is in contrast to a survey completed by students in the Niagara Region of Ontario which found that a "vast majority... feel safe at school, and are not particularly concerned about their safety while at school" (Rodgers, 1993, p. 12). The disparity in findings is likely due to regional differences.

In another survey of 146 children in grades 3-8, in two inner-city Toronto schools, Pal and Day (1991) found that 20% of the respondents had experienced bullying "now and then" or "more frequently." This rate of one child in five is comparable to the figure reported in a similar survey of 211 students in 17 schools (which included both inner-city and non-inner-city schools), grades 4-8, by the Toronto Board of Education (Zeigler & Rosenstein-Manner, 1991). Moreover, while the number of students who had ever been subjected to milder forms of bullying (e.g., teasing) was comparable in the two studies (37% and 33% in the Pal and Day and Zeigler and Rosenstein-Manner studies,

respectively), the rate for violent bullying (e.g., hitting, kicking) was found to be higher in the two inner-city schools reported in the Pal and Day survey (34%) than in the Toronto Board of Education's sample (21%).

Pal and Day (1991) also found that, when asked why students bully, the two most popular responses were "to be cool" (63%) and "to feel powerful" (58%). In this regard, bullying appears to be a means by which children attempt to fit in with or impress their peers or to enhance their reputation as "tough." Interestingly, this response pattern did not differ for children who were self-identified as bullies. Note that these responses are the same reasons given to account for why youth in Canada carry guns, with the exception of "for protection" (Walker, 1994). The response "low self-esteem" was endorsed by only 16% of the respondents and slightly fewer of the self-identified bullies. Lastly, an important finding that is often overlooked when considering aggressive behaviour was that bullies were often found to be victims of bullying themselves, usually at the hands of a group of children who were older than they.

Self-report surveys such as the one used by Pal and Day (1991) and Zeigler and Rosenstein-Manner (1991), developed originally by Dan Olweus (1991), may provide more accurate data on the prevalence of school-based violence than those based on teacher reports (Bonta & Hanson, 1994). Students may be more aware than teachers of aggressive incidents in the schools, particularly if there is a high degree of underreporting. In

addition, self-report surveys provide valuable insights into the nature of bullies and victims that cannot be obtained by other measures. Lastly, self-report surveys have been used to evaluate the effectiveness of school-based violence prevention programs (Day & Hartley, unpublished data, 1994; Olweus, 1991; Pepler, Craig, Zeigler, & Charach, 1993).

In the absence of good data collected over multiple time periods, it is difficult to determine, with any certainty, the level of school violence in Canada. With the exception of the few student surveys, much of the available data are based on the perceptions of a single source, teachers. The difficulty with this is that, teachers' views, just like any other source, are not based on an unbiased assessment of the situation. Moreover, we believe that the perceived level of school violence by teachers is inextricably tied to (a) their sense of personal confidence or self-efficacy to manage discipline problems, both in the classroom and the schoolyard and (b) the level of support they perceive to be available from the school administration. This support is in the form of clear, concise policies that adequately address the range of unacceptable behaviours and delineate an appropriate array of consequences and corrective measures that are implemented and followed through in a firm, fair, and consistent manner. The greater the sense of personal self-efficacy to manage behaviour problems and the higher the perceived support from the school and the school board, the lower the level of perceived violence. In this way, we believe that

school boards may achieve a reduction in the level of school violence, as reported by teachers, by establishing and enforcing policies and programs of which teachers are aware and providing training workshops to enhance teachers' level of knowledge and understanding of aggression in children and youth and their personal skills to prevent and manage behavioural problems in the classroom.

It is interesting to note that some authors, like Rodgers (1993), have contested the reported increase in school violence in Canada, claiming that the prevalence has actually declined (Fitzpatrick, 1994; J. Newman & G. Newman, 1980; West, 1993). Cusson (1990) noted that the rate of violent acts committed by students of the Montreal Catholic School Commission was the same in 1985 as it was in 1974, with the exception of gang activity which involved 10.3% of the students in 1974 and 17.5% in 1985.

In terms of discerning what is reality and what is perception vis a vis the incidence and prevalence of school-based violence, there seems to have emerged two distinct camps. On the one hand, there are those who appear to "hard sell" youth violence, claiming that youth violence is virtually rampant on our streets and in schools and that the face of youth violence in Canada has changed so dramatically that, if nothing is done now, we will invariably meet with the same destiny as seen in the United States. As Auty noted, "the kids in our schools are moving to the beat of a different drum, a rhythm foreign to the experience of many educational decision-makers. We could no

longer afford the luxury of being out of touch" (p. 9). Note that this is the image that is perpetuated through the media (Schmidt, Paquette, & Dickinson, 1990).

On the other hand, there are those who tend to downplay the reported levels of youth violence, dismissing increasing trends as differences in definitions used, awareness, and methods of reporting (Cusson, 1990; West, 1993). As West (1993) admonishes, "[v]iolence in Canadian schools is comparatively low key and we need to beware of simply assuming our schools are going the way of American ones" (p. 7).

As noted previously, these conflicting views may be attributed, in part, to regional differences. For example, Rodgers (1993) noted that students in the Niagara region, a predominantly rural area of Ontario, claimed that, aside from some mention of weapons in school, most notably knives, school violence was a "non-issue" (p. 12). As well, Robb (1993) reported that weapons were not a problem in Nova Scotia, although they are seen as a problem in other provinces. A similar conclusion was drawn in separate reports on the low incidence of youth crime and school violence in Kelowna, British Columbia (Child and Youth Committee, 1994) and Newfoundland (Fitzpatrick, 1994).

One thing on which we can agree is that there is an increasing concern for violence among children and youth. Aggression is no longer something that can be easily dismissed as "kids will be kids." There appears to be a growing sensitivity

to and public abhorrence for violence, in spite of its greater acceptance in society; violence appears to be almost ubiquitous as it pervades the media. So whether we are just "seeing" more children and youth engage in violence, where we did not "see" it before, is the result of greater awareness or sensitivity, or whether the numbers are actually growing, is debatable. The reality is that school violence is a social problem, reflecting the violence in society, in general. As such, it is difficult to ignore when a knife is pulled on the schoolgrounds. While the use of weapons is not proliferating in the schoolyards across Canada (Walker, 1994), they are seen with greater frequency by both school personnel and students. This can and does lead to more serious outcomes in schoolyard altercations. Moreover, teachers would agree that they are spending more of their time having to discipline students and this takes time away from their teaching.

**(b) United States**

According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (1991), half of all crimes against teenagers occurred in school buildings, on school property, or on the street. Moreover, "44% of teachers in the United States reported that student misbehaviour interfered substantially with their teaching" (Aleem & Moles, 1993, p. 5). Another survey found that school principals considered physical student conflicts (76%), vandalism of school property (53%), and verbal abuse of teachers



(55%) to be as serious a problem as student and staff absenteeism, tobacco-related offences, and lateness. Other serious problems were theft over \$10 (38%), trespassing (34%), racism (26%), and weapons (20%) (Mansfield & Farris, 1992).

Although Mansfield and Farris (1992) found that only 20% of principals indicated that weapons were a problem, it is estimated that 568,000 teens or about 5% of the student population of American schools are in possession of a firearm--about half as many as carry pocket video games (Harrington-Lueker, 1992). The weapons policy of the City School District of the City of New York enumerates the following items as weapons: (a) pistol, handgun, firearm silencer, electronic dart gun; (b) shotgun, rifle, machinegun, or any weapon that simulates or is adaptable for use as a machine gun; (c) switchblade knife, gravity knife, cane sword; (d) billy club, blackjack, bludgeon, chucka stick, metal knuckles; (e) sandbag and sandclub; (f) slingshot; (g) explosive, incendiary bomb, bombshell; and (h) airgun or spring gun (e.g., a BB gun). Other items considered weapons include acid or other dangerous chemicals, imitation pistols, loaded or blank cartridges and ammunition, and sharp, pointed objects such as broken glass, chains, wire, and nailfiles (Butterfield & Turner, 1989).

Statistics on the prevalence of school-based violence in the United States are astonishing. Violent assaults in schools are reported to have escalated 14% in the years between 1987 and 1990 (Landen, 1992). Approximately 28,200 students are physically

attacked in schools each month (Hranitz & Eddowes, 1990). Approximately 21% of students, ranging in age from 12 to 19 years, fear an attack at school (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1991). Assaults on teachers have increased at a steady rate from 41,000 to 110,000, between 1971 and 1979 (Goldstein, Apter, & Harootunian, 1984). "The National Association of School Security Directors estimates that each year there are 9,000 rapes, 12,000 armed robberies, 270,000 burglaries, and 204,000 aggravated assaults in schools. Moreover, an estimated 70,000 serious physical assaults each year are made on teachers" (Rich, 1992, p. 35; see also Gorski & Pilotto, 1993; Roper, 1991). As a national goal, the United States is committed to the attainment of the sixth National Education Goal which states that "[b]y the year 2000, every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning" (Aleem & Moles, 1993, p. 1)

In summary, there is an emerging perception that violence has become more pervasive in society, including our schools. School violence is reported to be on the rise and increasing in intensity, particularly in the form of verbal assault, as teachers see students becoming more confrontative. In the main, violence is still perpetrated against other students (i.e., teasing, bullying, assault), although teachers can also be victims. Some teachers in Canada reported that they have become more hesitant to break up fights in the fear that they may become

seriously injured, particularly in the event that a weapon is used (Robb, 1993). By and large, however, despite regional differences, occasional serious occurrences, and sensational and anecdotal reports, the data indicate that Canadian schools are safe places for students and staff.

The next section examines some of the causal factors associated with the development of aggressive and antisocial behaviour in children and youth. The development of associated features or correlates of aggression in children such as impulsivity, poor self-control, hyperactivity, and noncompliance are also considered. As Landen (1992) noted, "[u]nderstanding the causes [of violence] is crucial to determining appropriate solutions" (p. 3; see also Crux, 1993).

## THE ROOT CAUSES OF VIOLENCE

Much of the aggressive behaviour we observe among children and youth is sufficiently mild to be no cause for alarm or concern. For some children, displays of aggression are low level, infrequent, and more likely reactive (i.e., responding to others' aggression) than proactive (i.e., provoking aggression in others). Sometimes, a child's aggressive behaviour will be accompanied by other disruptive behaviours such as inattentiveness, noncompliance, defiance, and poor self-control.

For other children, however, the level of aggression will be more extreme, persistent, involve groups of children, and occur across multiple settings (i.e., home, school, community). Children with serious behaviour problems may meet the criteria for conduct disorder, a psychiatric diagnosis given for "a repetitive and persistent pattern of behavior in which the basic rights of others or major age-appropriate societal norms or rules are violated" (American Psychiatric Association, 1994, p. 85). According to the Ontario Child Health Study (OCHS), 5.5% of the general population of children in Ontario, between the ages of 4 and 16 years, meet the criteria for conduct disorder (Offord, Alder, & Boyle, 1986). The OCHS also found that while many cases come to the attention of mental health centres and other social service agencies, a large number of children with severe conduct problems goes undetected.

In terms of its causal factors, aggression may be understood as multiply determined, having determinants in both biological

and environmental factors. As well, it is important to understand aggression and violence as having a developmental progression or trajectory. In this regard, strategic prevention and intervention efforts must be both multifaceted and developmentally appropriate.

### **Biological Factors**

Research on the biological bases of aggressive behaviour has examined a range of factors. Studies on genetic influences, for example, have noted a greater preponderance of criminals among sons whose biological parents were also criminals (Lytton, 1990). The well-documented finding that males have a greater propensity for aggression than girls has been attributed to higher levels of testosterone and the presence of the Y chromosome. Indeed, some research examining the incidence of aggression among males with an extra Y chromosome (XYY) has found higher rates of criminal convictions than among XY males (Crowell, 1987), although the findings of these studies have been disputed (Mednick, Moffitt, Gabrielli, & Hutchings, 1986). For girls, early onset of menarche has been associated with higher rates of antisocial behaviour (Caspi & Moffitt, 1991; Magnusson, Stattin, & Allen, 1986). However, the observed delinquency among early maturing girls occurred only when they also associated more with older girls (Loeber, 1991). Nevertheless, while the specific causal factors remain undiscovered, a biological basis of aggression relating to gender differences appears to hold even beyond the effects due to sex-specific socialization practices (Eme, 1979).

In addition to these inherited biological characteristics, acquired biological deficits can also influence the child's behaviour patterns. Even before birth, factors may conspire against the developing fetus, predisposing it towards impulsive, hyperactive, and aggressive behaviour. A lack of proper nutrients during critical periods of development or pre- or postnatal exposure to toxic agents (e.g., fetal alcohol, lead, drugs) may result in mild or severe deficits in cognition and behaviour. These deficits may lead to a wide range of conditions such as poor motor coordination, low intelligence, hyperactivity, language impairment, impulsivity, self-control problems, poor frustration tolerance, social information-processing deficits, and learning disabilities. These features are known to be markers of aggressive behaviour in children.

Moffitt (1993) has shown how early neurological abnormalities, giving rise to later verbal deficits, may lead to the development of aggression, antisocial behaviour, and conduct disorder.

[A] preschooler who has difficulty understanding language may resist his mother's efforts to read to him, which delays his school readiness. When he enters school, the modal curriculum may not allow for teaching that is tailored to his readiness level....After a few years of school failure, he will be chronologically older than his classmates and, thus, socially rejected....He may be tracked into a remedial class, containing pupils who have behavioral disorders as

well as learning disabilities. Daily association with conduct disordered pupils brings familiarity with delinquent behaviors, and he adopts delinquent ways to gain acceptance by peers (p. 138).

It is generally acknowledged that "children with verbal deficits rely more on physical modes of self-expression; resorting to hitting rather than discussion" (Moffitt, 1993, p. 137). Wilson and Herrnstein (1985) have also suggested that:

low verbal intelligence contributes to a present-oriented cognitive style which, in turn, fosters irresponsible and exploitative behavior....Normal language development is thus an essential ingredient in prosocial processes such as delay of gratification, anticipating consequences, and linking belated punishments with earlier transgressions" (Moffitt, 1993, p. 142).

As can be seen, a relatively minor neurological problem resulting in a verbal deficit may lead a child into a potentially negative spiral of academic failure and peer rejection, on a pathway towards delinquency. Moffitt's scenario also emphasizes the role of labeling, leading to special class placement and association with a deviant group in the development of antisocial behaviour.

Child temperament has also been identified as a contributing factor in the development of childhood aggression. Some infants may be described as fussy or having a "difficult" temperament. These infants are not easily soothed and cry often. Many parents

of such infants come to experience difficulties in the caregiving role, feeling unable or incapable of providing for their child. As a result, disruptions may arise in an effort to socialize their child, as the parent becomes increasingly less involved in directing the child's behaviour and in the teaching process. This could have long-term implications leading to poor social functioning at school. For example, in a study conducted by Buss, Block, and Block (1980), at seven years old, children identified as highly active three-year olds, were rated by their teachers, as "aggressive, manipulative, noncompliant, and more likely to push limits and stretch the rules in many social situations" (Moffitt, 1993, p. 140).

### **Environmental Factors**

#### **(a) The Parent-Child Relationship**

While the presence of certain biological deficits may place a child at risk for aggressiveness, environmental factors may mitigate these negative influences. For example, a child with a serious language deficit who receives special attention, guidance, and support from his or her family may learn to cope with and compensate for the effects of the condition. Indeed, it is well known that a caring, loving, attentive, supportive upbringing during infancy provides the foundation for a secure attachment throughout one's life. Children who are securely attached to a primary caregiver are less likely to develop behaviour and social problems such as aggression and poor peer relations and are better able to regulate their negative



emotional states (e.g., anger) than their insecurely attached counterparts (Greenberg, Speltz, & DeKlyen, 1993). Sroufe (1988) posited that a secure attachment relates to "the child's developing sense of inner confidence, efficacy, and self-worth and aspects of intimate personal relationship (the capacity to be emotionally close, to seek and receive care, and to give care to others)" (p. 26).

At the same time, however, numerous forces external to the child (i.e., social and environmental factors) have been identified as contributing to the development of maladaptive outcomes such as academic, social, and behavioural problems. Considerable attention has been given to the quality of the parent-child interaction, for example, as contributing to the development of childhood aggression. As noted previously, the affective quality of the parent-child relationship in early infancy, as reflected by the parent's ability to be attentive, responsive, sensitive, and reinforce positive social interactions with his or her child relate to the healthy social, emotional, and physical development of the child. However, in the absence of an early supportive parent-child relation, such as one characterized by a neglectful, unresponsive, inattentive, or overly protective parent, maladaptive child outcomes are likely to ensue. Factors that could adversely affect the early attachment process include life stress, family hardship, lack of parental social support, parental psychopathology, and child health problems (Greenberg et al., 1993).

As the child matures and becomes more independent, the nature of the parent-child relationship takes on a new dimension as the parent spends considerably more time attempting to guide and control or manage his or her child's actions and behaviours. For the parent, noncompliance and the use of effective disciplinary responses become critical issues during this period. The extent to which the parent's discipline style yields compliance and also fosters growth and independence in the child, the more positive the parent-child interaction. Moreover, the degree to which parents feel successful (i.e., high perceived self-efficacy) in managing their child's behaviour, the more positive the parent-child relationship. In a study conducted by Day, Factor, and Szkiba-Day (1994), for example, it was found that parents who felt effective in managing their child's behaviour, that is experienced a high degree of self-efficacy in the caregiver role, were less likely to use coercive discipline techniques such as hitting, spanking, slapping, and yelling in response to child misbehaviour and also rated their child as having fewer behaviour problems than parents who perceived themselves as having a low degree of self-efficacy. In this way, the quality of the parent-child interaction was enhanced by both the parents' feelings of self-efficacy and their use of non-coercive discipline techniques.

Extensive research has also shown that an ineffective parenting style, particularly the use of harsh and inconsistent discipline techniques are good predictors of aggression and

conduct problem behaviours (Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1986). Based on a decade of research, Patterson (1982) has developed a model of parent-child interactions that lead to the development of childhood aggression. The typical scenario described by Patterson begins with the parent asking the child to do (or not do) something. The child responds by ignoring the parent's command. The parent responds by increasing the intensity of the command and begins yelling at the child. The child responds in kind by yelling back. The parent, feeling frustrated by the lack of compliance, escalates the interchange by physically grabbing the child, to which the child responds, increasing the intensity further, by hitting and kicking the beleaguered parent. At this point, feeling frustrated and defeated, the parent withdraws from the situation as the child returns to his or her previous activity.

In this scenario, the parent's feelings of ineffectiveness as a caregiver are positively reinforced while the child's use of aversive behaviours in response to the parent's request for compliance is negatively reinforced as a result of the parent's ultimate termination of the initial request. As well, the child learns to control other people's behaviour through coercive means and to use yelling, grabbing, and other aggressive tactics to deal with conflict situations. Furthermore, as Patterson et al. (1989) noted, "[t]he training for deviant behavior is paralleled by a lack of training for many prosocial skills" (p. 330).

**(b) From the Family Environment to the School Setting**

It is also well documented that the early training the child receives in the home for aggressive behaviour carries over into the school setting in the form of comparable coercive interactions with teachers and peers (Ramsey, Bank, Patterson, & Walker, 1990). It is not a far leap to recognize that the escalations in aversive behaviours described in Patterson's coercive family process model are equally applicable to many encounters experienced by some teachers with students in the classroom or on the playground. As we have seen for parents, it is obviously important that teachers refrain from entering into a power struggle (i.e., coercive process) with students as this invariably leads to an escalation in "control tactics" from which neither the teacher nor the student comes out a winner. Many effective techniques for dealing with conflict situations with children and youth are available, some of which are described in the teacher manuals and handbooks referred to previously.

**(c) Personal Identity**

In late childhood and early adolescence, the influence of the family diminishes as the peer group and school environment play a larger role in the adolescent's life. Peer pressure becomes a significant factor as the search for an identity and a desire to fit in looms large. As well, various patterns of thinking such as a heightened self-consciousness or egocentrism, characteristic of adolescents, become prominent. This can become manifested as two beliefs about the self: (a) that everyone is

looking at them, that is, that others are as preoccupied with their behaviour as they are, known as the "imaginary audience" and (b) that they are virtually impervious to harm, that is, that nothing bad will happen to them and that they are so unique that no one can understand how they really feel, known as the "personal fable" (Santrock, 1981). The imaginary audience belief leads to attention-getting behaviour and a desire to be visible and "on stage." The personal fable construction leads one to engage in risk-taking behaviour such as experimentation with alcohol and drugs, having sex without birth control, even engaging in petty crimes such as shoplifting. While these thought patterns, in themselves, do not lead to aggressive and antisocial behaviour, they may be contributing factors for those adolescents whose developmental history carries with it problems of academic and social competence, peer rejection, poor self-concept, low self-worth, and early aggressive behaviour. This may hold particularly for those adolescents who, due to disruptions in their family, home, and school life (due to factors reviewed above) experience a lack of ties to conventional social bonds, hold antisocial attitudes, and develop an outward appearance of tough, anti-authority posturing.

**(d) Contextual Factors**

Canada is a country with a changing demographic profile. The median age of the population is rising and is expected to continue to rise until the year 2036 (McKie, 1993). Over the past several decades, many changes have resulted in threats to

our social and economic security: increased rate of divorce, more single-parent families, particularly female-led, more dual-income households, wage freezes, and job losses. Eighty-two percent of lone-parent households were mothers who tend to be younger than their male counterparts (La Novara, 1993). Changes in the workforce have led to hundreds of thousands of full time employment positions lost since 1990 and an unemployment rate of 9.6% in November, 1994, (Statistics Canada, 1994). In 1966, a typical unemployment figure was 3.4% (Forum Directors Group, 1993).

One of the most significant changes observed over the past two decades is the increasing number of people living in poverty. What is most disturbing is the trend towards more younger people, under the age of 25 years, and particularly young families, living in poverty with the concomitant number of children living under the poverty line. "The rate of poverty among young families has grown from 21% in 1981 to 37% in 1991, while the poverty rate for elderly families (65 years and over) decreased from 13% to 8% during the same timespan....In 1992, approximately 40% of all welfare beneficiaries were dependent children" (Forum Directors Group, 1993, p. 8). The Canadian Institute of Child Health (CICH; 1994) reported a number of negative outcomes for poor children including more health, mental health, and academic problems. The results of these sweeping changes are that, for a growing number of children, their primary needs are not being met and, as a result, "their development, prospects, and future

productiveness are being seriously undermined" (Steinhauer, 1994, p. 15).

A number of longitudinal studies has examined the effects of these environmental risk factors on developmental outcomes in children and youth (e.g., Offord et al., 1986; Offord, Boyle, Racine, Fleming, et al., 1992; Werner, 1985). A risk factor is defined as a variable that "increases the likelihood that a subsequent negative outcome will occur (such as delinquency)" (Loeber, 1990, p. 4). In Canada, the OCHS examined the effects of a variety of environmental risk factors on school and social impairments and on the presence of a diagnosable psychiatric disorder in several thousand children aged 4 to 16 years over a four-year period, between 1983 and 1987.

According to the OCHS, there was a high degree of overlap among risk factors in families that were studied. For example, the rate of social assistance among single-parent families was 41.1%. The rate for two-parent families was 2.2%. Fifty percent of children living in subsidized housing were living in families on social assistance (Offord, Boyle, & Racine, 1989).

"Obviously, children who are environmentally disadvantaged in one sociodemographic area are at great risk of being disadvantaged in another" (p. ii).

With regard to the prevalence of a psychiatric disorder, 18.1% of children aged 4-16 years met the criteria for at least one psychiatric diagnosis. The most prevalent disorders among boys were hyperactivity (8.9%) and conduct disorder (8.1%). The

comparable rates for girls were 2.7% and 3.3%, respectively. In contrast, the prevalence rate for an emotional disorder among girls was 11.9%; the rate for boys was 7.9%. As with risk factors, the rate of overlap among disorders, referred to as comorbidity, was also high. The largest overlap was between hyperactivity and conduct disorder in the 4-11 year old group, at almost 60%. In the 12-16 year old group, about 33% of the conduct disordered youths were seen as hyperactive (Offord et al., 1986). Lastly, "23.7% of the children with psychiatric disorder also perform poorly at school; the rate of poor school performance among those without psychiatric disorder was 13.0%" (Offord et al., 1989, p. ii).

Risk factors were also examined in terms of their relation to aggressive behaviour (i.e., a conduct disorder diagnosis). It was found that being on welfare and living in subsidized housing were most strongly related to the presence of conduct disorder in children. However, the authors noted that the relationship between the disorder and low socioeconomic status is likely not a direct one but is mediated by other variables such as marital discord and disturbed family functioning. In addition, low income was found to be the single best predictor in the development of conduct disorder in children over the study's four year duration. Again, the casual relation between economic disadvantage and conduct problems remains unclear and is probably due to the presence of other mediating factors (Offord et al., 1992).



What is clear, however, is that as we continue to experience an increase in the number of children growing up in situations characterized by economic privation, inadequate housing, and lack of parental supervision we will continue to see more children coming to school who are ill-prepared to deal with the social, emotional, behavioural, and academic demands placed on them by the rigours of the school setting. We know that as the number of risk factors increases, so do the negative outcomes that children experience. While studies have shown that most children are able to cope with up to four risk factors, beyond that, the chance of developing serious learning and behavioural problems increases dramatically (Werner, 1985). At the same time, as stated previously, the presence of protective factors (e.g., social and academic competence, large support network) serves to reduce or nullify the person's response to environmental conditions that predispose to a maladaptive outcome. In somewhat simplistic terms, the aim of long-term prevention is to reduce the number of risk factors in a child's environment and to increase or strengthen the presence of protective factors.

A number of other contextual factors have been implicated in the development of aggression and violence in children. These include parental criminality, parental stress, family discord and violence in the home, child abuse and neglect, alcoholism and psychiatric problems such as depression, living in high crime neighbourhoods, the lack of a large social network of friends and family from which children can draw for emotional support, and

the ubiquitous nature of violence in both the entertainment and news media.

With regard to the media, research conducted over the last 40 years indicates that young children and teenagers in the United States spend 28 and 23 hours each week, respectively, watching television (APA, 1993). During the last 20 years, "the level of violence on prime-time television has remained constant at five to six violent acts per hour; there are 20 to 25 violent acts per hour on Saturday morning children's programs" (p. 32). Canadian research indicates that, by the time children graduate from elementary school, each one will have witnessed in excess of 8,000 murders and over 100,000 miscellaneous acts of violence (Campbell, 1993), and that, although they will spend a total of 12,000 hours attending elementary school, as average viewers, they will watch 18,000 hours of television over the same period (Manley-Casimir, 1992). Films that are popular with young people and are readily available on videocassette add many more violent acts; "Die Hard 2 (264 violent deaths), Robocop (81 deaths) and Total Recall (74 deaths) are part of children's culture" (Campbell, 1993, p. 13).

As early as 1969, Dr. Milton Eisenhower, Chairman of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence in the United States, suggested that "a constant diet of violent behavior on television has an adverse effect on human character and attitudes....It encourages violent forms of behaviour, and fosters moral and social values about violence in daily life

which are unacceptable in a civilized society" (Hammonds, 1984, p. 16). The undesirable effects of television have been confirmed in a series of three major studies conducted in the United States in 1972, 1982, and 1992 which led to the "irrefutable conclusion that viewing television increases violence" (APA, 1993, p. 33).

Two additional concerns about media violence are first, through media violence, children learn to value rather than devalue the use of violence to solve conflicts. Second, children will not learn, through mass media viewing, to use alternative, prosocial responses to express intense feelings and deal with conflict. The vocabulary and language skills needed to enact these behaviours are learned from parents and other significant adult role models in the child's life.

The popularity of video games has also helped to compound the negative effects of television. Children spend an estimated two hours a day playing video games, in addition to the time spent watching television. In many of these games, the player is allowed to participate in the violent activity portrayed on the screen. Although the themes of these games are most frequently the triumph of good over evil, the way to success often involves highly violent means, death, and destruction (Provenzo, 1992). As well, the effect of visual images lasts a lifetime; "Images have great power to evoke feeling, shape beliefs, and inform behaviour" (Campbell, 1993, p. 12). Lastly, Provenzo (1992) suggests that the sex-role stereotyping in video games is

distorted and unacceptable, as women are usually portrayed as victims, dependent upon the actions of the games' male heroes.

Drugs and alcohol also contribute to school-related violence. Gaustad (1991) suggests that, aside from the harmful mental and physiological effects of narcotics on the individual user, the vast amounts of money that illegal substances generate has resulted in an increase in the size and influence of youth gangs. In the United States, the average "crack" user needs over \$250 per week to support his or her habit, amounting to over \$13,000 a year. Many of these users come from families with an average income of less than \$11,000 per year (Donaldson, 1993). Pre-teenagers are often used by gangs to serve as lookouts and couriers for the gangs' illicit drug activity, since children of a young age (under 12 years in Canada) cannot be subjected to criminal prosecution (Gaustad, 1991; Prothrow-Stith, 1991). Eventually, some of these children may become "user-dealers" and are absorbed by the gang for which they work. Although not all teenage users of drugs are members of a gang and, in fact, most are not (Knox, Laske, & Tromanhauser, 1992), it is wise to remember that all drug activity in Canada and the United States is illegal and that any use of drugs will enhance the activity and strength of criminal organizations.

As can be seen from this brief review, the causes of violence are many and complex and the task facing educators a challenging one. The search for general laws leads to the identification of countless causal factors that are complexly

related to aggression and other maladaptive outcomes. Both biological and environmental factors transposed over a developmental paradigm are seen as contributing to the development of (a) markers of aggressive behaviour such as impulsivity and poor self-control, (b) aggressive behavior itself, and (c) delinquent and antisocial tendencies, characteristics associated with the conduct disorder diagnosis. Moreover, as Loeber (1990, p. 31) noted, children and youth who act aggressively do not just "spring out of the cabbage" when they commit their first aggressive or antisocial act. Such children bring with them a developmental history of risk factors, as they display a progression from mild to more serious disruptive behaviour patterns.

Lastly, much of the literature is based on research conducted with boys. Although there are relatively few published studies on conduct problems in girls, the extant literature indicates that different correlates and predictors come into play, suggesting a need for gender-specific models and developmental pathways (Keenan & Shaw, 1994; Zoccolillo, 1993).

The next section reviews the literature concerning models for dealing with violence in schools. Descriptions of specific school-based programs that have been implemented in Canada and the United States are presented in Appendix A. Where available, evaluative data are integrated into the discussion of the programs.

## THE SCHOOL BOARD'S RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE

Violence among children and youth is a social problem not just a school problem (Auty, 1993; Guetzloe, 1992; Landen, 1992; Robb, 1993). As Berger (1974) noted, "school violence is simply one manifestation of the modern violent urban society" (cited in Newman & G. Newman, 1980, p. 3). Schools cannot be expected to act alone to reduce the prevalence of youth violence and prevent its future occurrence. As we have seen, the sources of the problem often lie outside the domain of the school. Paraphrasing Matthews (1992 cited in Riddle, 1993), mobilizing resources to meet the needs of "at risk" youth, families, and communities will have a more permanent impact on the problem of school violence than simply a punishment-focused, "law-and-order" response by school boards.

Moreover, youth violence is multiply determined and so requires a multifaceted approach to be effectively reduced. A long-term solution will involve a broad-based effort involving partnerships with many community groups including parents or guardians, government agencies, the juvenile justice system, the police, children's mental health centres, racial and ethnocultural minority organizations, the local business community, and industry. According to Bala (1994), "there is no single, simple philosophy and no single type of program which will 'solve' the problem of youthful criminality" (p. 7). Moreover, the school board's response to youth violence must itself be multifaceted. Developing discipline policies is only

one part of the solution.

It should be emphasized, however, that, within any violence prevention strategy, it is just as important to attempt to increase alternate, prosocial behaviours as it is to reduce the offending behaviour. Replacing one behaviour for another is a much better approach for long-term change than simply eliminating the single behaviour. In this regard, school-based efforts need to be as comprehensive as they are concerted and sustained.

#### **The Role of the School Board's Policies and Programs**

It is axiomatic to state that every student has the right to attend school and feel safe from harm or danger. Basic to this right is the right to study in surroundings that encourage the learning process. School boards have a responsibility to ensure that the school environment is conducive to learning. Related to this issue of safety, some of the critical questions facing school boards today are: How is the right to feel safe maintained and enforced at school?; What should the school do in the event that a student's right to feel safe has been violated?; How should board policies balance the protection of the school community with the rehabilitation of the offender?; What are effective deterrents for different types of disciplinary problems?; and How can a school board be seen as acting proactively in response to violence in schools?

A school boards' response to school-based violence, in terms of its policies and programs, may be conceptualized on a number of overlapping dimensions. Policies and programs may be reactive

or proactive. They may be targeted toward identified, aggressive students, the entire student body, or staff. Policies and programs may be directed toward younger children or older children and adolescents. They may be single-focused or involve a wide range of outcomes. Lastly, they may be designed to achieve decreases in children's aggressive behaviour or increases in prosocial behaviour. In developing a comprehensive, coordinated, multifaceted approach to deal with school violence, a school board should consider where on these dimensions their violence prevention strategy can be placed. Ideally, a school board will have policies and programs to address the full spectrum of each of these continua.

#### **The Public Health Model**

In Schools under seige (1992), Knox, Laske, and Tromanhauser present a bleak vision of the future of the United States. They suggest that America has already lost the wars on drugs, poverty, and illiteracy and that if the attempt to reduce the effects of violence and gangs do not succeed they propose that (a) America will be relegated to a back seat in the international science community as colleges and universities come under the sway of gangs; (b) social strife and racial conflict will proliferate; (c) American children will be adopted by more humane citizens of European countries as Americans now adopt child victims of conflict in places such as Lebanon and Yugoslavia; (d) gangs will infiltrate local, state, and federal administrations and even the armed forces; (e) schools may well be considered "war zones" and



come under the authority of the judiciary; and (f) public nuisance laws will be used to close schools as being facilities in which repeated criminal offences are allowed to happen. In order to prevent this pessimistic vision from becoming reality, the authors suggest that it is imperative to develop strategies to counteract the violence and antisocial behaviour that will lead to such an end.

The dominant approach for dealing with juvenile delinquency and school violence in the United States is to conceptualize the problem and potential solutions within a public health model (Coie & Jacobs, 1993; Guetzloe, 1992; Hawkins & Weis, 1985; Mercy & O'Carroll, 1988; Page, Kitchin-Becker, Solovan, Golec, & Hebert, 1992; Prothrow-Stith, Spivak, & Hausman, 1987). This approach emphasizes the need for a long-term, concerted, multifaceted, community-based approach for dealing with this complex social problem.

The public health model conceptualizes violence and aggression as a "disease" and identifies three major foci in the violence prevention process, primary, secondary, and tertiary, "depending upon the stage to which the disease has progressed when the activity is initiated" (Guetzloe, 1992, p. 5). Each focus has its own strategy for addressing the problem. Primary prevention involves "the alteration of one of the essential components of disease/disorder occurrence" (p. 5) which is ideally achieved by eliminating the cause, immunizing the victim, and changing the environment or conditions that encourage the

disorder. Secondary prevention is concerned with the early identification of those who show symptoms of the disease and corrective intervention. Tertiary prevention involves more intensive treatment of those with the disorder with the goal being rehabilitation.

According to Guetzloe (1992), primary prevention of violence consists of (a) public education as to the origins and preventions of violence; (b) providing food, jobs, child-care and medical care for all; (c) providing for the basic needs of all young children; (d) encouraging prosocial behaviour in all children; (e) regulation of the media to reduce or eliminate the representation of violence; (f) reducing the availability of illegal drugs; and (g) gun control. Secondary prevention is seen as one of the responsibilities of the school system, with collaboration from parents and other stakeholders. Within the schools, provisions could be made for (a) an environment with logical, clearly stated, and consistently enforced rules; (b) opportunities for children and youth to learn non-violent means of resolving conflict; (c) opportunities to develop prosocial behaviours such as empathy, co-operation, and sharing (d) fewer competitive games and activities; (e) opportunities for vigorous exercise; and (f) opportunities to help others and to feel success in this endeavour. Tertiary prevention involves punishment, incarceration, and rehabilitation, and, in some respects, may be beyond the scope of the school's domain with the exception of the use of "time out," detentions, suspensions, and

alternative programs to suspension and expulsion (Guetzloe, 1992). Although Guetzloe has served as the main source for the above discussion, similar ideas are presented and developed by Prothrow-Stith (1991) in Deadly consequences.

Further to the public health model, Weissberg and Elias (1993) argue for the development of a comprehensive approach to school-based health promotion and prevention. Their recommended approach targets multiple outcomes and addresses a range of issues, in addition to violence and delinquency, including AIDS, drug, sex, career education, nutrition, cardiovascular fitness, and self-esteem enhancement. Weissberg and Elias believe that health promotion programming in schools cannot effectively deal with these issues in piecemeal fashion, that is, using a variety of "well-marketed packaged programs" (p. 180). Rather, a comprehensive program tailored to the needs of the school setting must be in place. This program would involve:

a broad spectrum of activities and services that intersect to provide students and perhaps their families with exposure to a range of cognitive, affective, and skill development opportunities that contribute to overall competence with respect to [physical, mental-emotional, and social] health (p. 180).

In order to provide direction for achieving this aim, Weissberg and Elias (1993) have developed the Comprehensive Social-Competence and Health-Education (C-SCAHE) programming model. Their model involves (a) a broad conceptualization of

health rather than a focus on one categorical outcome; (b) developmentally appropriate, planned, sequential K-12 classroom instruction; (c) a focus on cognitive, affective, and behavioural skills, attitudes, values, and perceptions of norms, and domain-specific information about target social and health domains; (d) teaching methods that ensure active student engagement, emphasize positive change, and change the ways in which children and adults communicate about problem situations; (e) multilevel, multicomponent interventions to effectively address the widespread social and health problems of children and adolescents; (f) programs that are designed and delivered in ways that are acceptable to and reach populations at risk; and (g) systems-level policies, practices, and infrastructure. Moreover, Weissberg and Elias argue that effective school-based prevention must become institutionalized within the infrastructure of the school system and seen as integral to the curriculum in the same way that academic curricula like reading, writing, and arithmetic are integral to the school system. In order for the C-SCAHE program to be effective, teachers must understand, accept, and endorse the need for a school-based, health promotion and social competence intervention.

Lastly, the American Psychological Association (APA; 1993) has articulated an approach for dealing with the problem of school violence. Although, developed as a response to the American situation, the report makes a number of recommendations that are equally applicable to the Canadian scene. First, the

report suggests that the school's role in counteracting violence should be to provide the educational programs by which children can learn to reduce and prevent violence and promote the use of prosocial skills and behaviour. Schools and the government should be involved in:

efforts to develop, implement, and evaluate violence prevention and aggression reduction curricula for use in schools from childhood through the teen years. Such efforts would involve teacher training, training for other school personnel, curricular activities, coordinated parental support activities, and technical assistance in implementing programs that apply techniques known to be effective in reducing aggression and preventing violence (p. 75).

Second, the report recommends that "schools take a long view of children's education regarding violence" by developing and implementing programs that are "coordinated, systematic, and developmentally and culturally appropriate" (p. 75) and begin in the earliest grades and continue until adolescence. Professional organizations should become involved with schools in the preparation, dissemination, evaluation, and development of assessment tools on an ongoing basis. The report also encourages "schools to engage in the early identification of children who show emotional or behavioural problems related to violence and to provide for them or refer them for appropriate educational experiences and psychological interventions" (p. 75). Schools should provide after-school programs and recreational activities

as an alternative to gang membership, prohibit the use of corporal punishment in the schools and encourage parents to do likewise, and make violence-reduction training a part of preservice and inservice training for staff. Lastly, the report urges schools to become involved in prevention and treatment programs for alcohol and drug use that focus on the links between substance abuse and violence and to develop programs and interventions designed to eliminate hate crimes and dispel stereotypes that are physical, racial, or sexual.

In summary, conceptualizing the problem of and potential solutions to school-based and youth violence within a public health model (i.e., primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention) has framed much of the American prevention literature. This model, exemplified by the work of Guetzloe, Prothrow-Stith, and Weissberg and Elias, advocates for large-scale, comprehensive, multifaceted, and sustained community-based efforts. As an observation, the Canadian literature which is much more recent and smaller in sheer quantity of published articles has not followed suit in embracing this model. This may be due to the smaller scope of the problem and lack of a perceived urgency or immediacy to find a solution, which only recently has emerged. Indeed, whether the situation in Canada merits adopting such a comprehensive, broad-based approach to deal with school-based violence remains a question that has yet to be examined. The

next two sections present the methodology and findings of a nation-wide survey conducted to investigate the range of school-based, violence-prevention policies and programs in Canada.

## METHODOLOGY

### The Sample

In order to achieve the study's objectives, we attempted to conduct a survey of 210 school boards across Canada. As a survey of every school board in Canada was seen as impractical, we decided to limit ourselves to school boards in larger urban areas. While it is recognized that violence among children and youth is not limited by particular geographical regions, population densities, and so forth, there is a perception that the rate of increase of youth violence is greater in urban than rural areas.

For the purpose of this study, we adopted the Statistics Canada (1992b) definition of an urban centre as "an area which has attained a population of at least 1,000 and a population density of at least 400 per square kilometre....Urban areas separated by gaps less than two kilometres are combined to form a single area" (p. 178). Subsequently, we identified the 65 largest urban areas in Canada as the targets of the study. These urban areas ranged in population size from Toronto (Greater Toronto Area), with 3,550,733 people, to Charlottetown, with 33,153 people (see Appendix B for a list of the urban areas included in the survey).

According to the Canadian Educational Association (CEA) Handbook (1994), these 65 urban areas are served by a total of 210 school boards. In this way, we selected for survey the total population of school boards serving these 65 centres rather than



taking a randomly selected sample. The population included public, separate, and French language boards, as well as English boards in the province of Quebec. Table 1 presents the percentage of school boards surveyed in each province. As indicated in Table 1, 28.4% or 210 out of 740 school boards in Canada were surveyed. Table 2 presents the percentage of French school boards surveyed in each province.

### **Survey Method**

In March, 1994, a letter was sent to a representative of each of the 210 targeted school boards describing the objectives of the study and requesting policy, program, and evaluative information. The name of the person who appeared at the top of the list in the CEA Handbook (1994), for a given school board, was selected as that school board's representative. The position of this person was, typically identified as the Superintendent of Schools or Education, Director of Education, Director General, or Directeur général or Directrice générale. While the letter was addressed to this person, in many cases, the task of responding to the survey was delegated to another person, as indicated by the name on the cover letter accompanying the school board's response. The deadline for responding was either May 6 (English version) or April 29 (French version). However, submissions received after that were included in our analyses. Indeed, as a result of followup telephone calls to increase our sample size, submissions were received late in July.

TABLE 1

**Sampling Distributions and Response Rates of School Boards Across Canada**

Province	Total No. Boards	Contacted	Responded	Response Rate
British Columbia	75	21 (28%)	17	81.0%
Alberta	134	23 (17.2%)	14	60.9%
Saskatchewan	101	13 (12.9%)	7	53.8%
Manitoba	56	12 (21.4%)	11	91.7%
Ontario	147	62 (42.2%)	47	75.8%
Quebec	155	67 (43.2%)	20	29.9%
New Brunswick	18	4 (22.2%)	4	100%
Nova Scotia	22	4 (18.2%)	3	75.0%
Prince Ed. Isle.	5	1 (20%)	1	100%
Newfoundland	27	3 (11.1%)	2	66.7%
Total	740	210 (28.4%)	126	60.0%

In addition to surveying school boards, several other methods were used to gather information. First, a brief article was included in Data Based EduTrends, a national newsletter about issues in education. The article described the study and requested information about school-based policies and programs. Second, individuals at school boards with particularly unique policies or programs, with which the researchers were already familiar, were contacted. Third, considerable effort was made to contact school-based and university-based researchers who may have been involved in evaluations of violence-prevention programs. Indeed, this proved to be a highly successful technique for gathering available evaluative information and we are particularly grateful for those individuals who supplied us with reports of completed work and works-in-progress.

#### **Content Analysis Procedure**

The policy submissions provided by school boards were subjected to a content analysis. This process began with the development of a series of categories to describe the content of the policy statements. In order to develop the categories, the first two authors perused the submissions, noting the various aspects of school-based violence to which the policies applied, general themes, range of consequences, and so forth. Categories were then developed in conjunction with the relevant literature to reflect a broad range of areas related to the issue of school-based violence.

TABLE 2

**Sampling Distributions and Response Rates of French-Language School Boards Across Canada**

Province	Total No. Boards	Contacted	Responded	Response Rate
Quebec	143	57 (39.9%)	15	26.3%
Ontario	12	4 (33.3%)	1	25.0%
Nova Scotia	1	1 (100%)	1	100%
Total	151	62 (41.1%)	17	27.4%

Once the list of categories was developed, a coding sheet (see Appendix C) was prepared with which the second and third authors used to code the submissions. The codesheet was divided into three sections. The first section (items a-n) included those specific items that the policy was designed to counteract (i.e., infractions). The second section (items o-aa) referred to practices involved in the implementation of policies within relevant systems and in particular schools. The third section (items bb-ii) referred to various outcomes or responses stated as expectations for students' violations of policy statements and several miscellaneous categories. Definitions of the categories are provided in Appendix D. Subsequently, the school boards' policy documents were examined for statements, pronouncements, provisions, procedures, guidelines, and so forth, that reflected the different content analysis categories. These policy statements, guidelines, etc. were then coded into the appropriate categories.

The categories were conceptualized as policy components. It was expected that the greater the number of categories into which a school board's policy could be coded, the more comprehensive that board's policy. For example, if a policy consisted of statements that could be coded into 25 of the 35 (71.4%) categories, this policy was considered to be relatively comprehensive. A 50% cutoff was used as an indication of a policy's relative comprehensiveness. Note that equal weight was given to each of the categories such that no one category or

policy component was viewed as more important or essential than another.

In addition, within provinces (and nationally), we examined the percentage of boards that included in their policy documents, statements that could be coded into a given category. This was used as an indication of the degree of strength or focus within the province for a given policy component. For example, if 95% of the boards' policies in Manitoba included a statement that was coded into the category "fighting," then fighting-related policy was considered an area of strength or focus in that province. For ease of interpretation, we examined the categories for which there was an 80% or greater representation across the school boards as an indication of the areas of strength and 20% or less for areas of relative weakness.

In conducting the content analysis, we confined ourselves to the policy documents, that is, the "raw data," as it were, that were received from school boards as a result of our requests for information. As well, we did not differentiate between draft and existing policies. Lastly, we maintained a literal stance in the interpretation of the data, making no attempt to imply or extrapolate policy that was not explicitly identified as such. In some cases, this meant that a board which sent information about violence prevention programs but none about policy was treated as having no policy in place. Rather, the program descriptions provided by the board were summarized in the

Directory, included as Appendix E of this report.<sup>1</sup> Confining ourselves in the content analysis to the "data at hand" also meant that many innovative programs that are undoubtedly operating in schools across Canada might not have been represented in this study as they might not have been included in their board's submission.

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<sup>1</sup>Prior to preparing the Directory, consent was requested from each of the responding school boards to include a summary of their submission in the Directory. The submissions from the boards that declined to be included or that responded with no policies or programs were omitted. Two boards declined to be included in the Directory.

## RESULTS

As indicated in Table 1, the overall response rate for the survey was 60% (126 out of 210 boards). Response rates ranged by province from 29.9% in Quebec to 100% in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. The response rates for French-language school boards are presented in Table 2.

### **Policies and Programs**

In our request for information, we asked for policies, programs, and evaluations that were extant in school boards. Some respondents returned large packages containing extensive policies and programs. Some sent policies only; some programs only; and some sent good intentions. Of the 126 responding school boards, 116 (92.1%) were involved in some manner of counteracting school-based violence through either existing policies and/or programs, the development of policies and/or programs, or some other related activity such as establishing a safe school task force or committee. Eighty-two of these boards had some form of policy in place. Thirty-four boards were actively engaged in promoting programs or some other activity such as a task force or committee while still in the process of developing policies. Ten boards reported that they had neither policies nor programs. Lastly, systematic program evaluation was the exception than the rule with only five boards (4.3%) submitting a completed evaluation of a program currently in use. At the same time, additional evaluation reports were obtained for this study as a result of further contact with particular



researchers or school boards. The results of these evaluations are presented in Appendix A.

With respect to policies only, 82 of the 126 responding school boards (65.1%) submitted policies that were currently in use or in the development stage (see Table 3). These "codeable" policies were subjected to the content analysis.

As the sample selection for the survey was based on population size, the number of submissions received by province was skewed, with a greater number of policy statements received from Ontario. These submissions comprised 45% of the policies obtained in the study. British Columbia followed next with 14 policies received from the 17 respondents. The number of boards from Quebec that contributed policy documents was very small relative to the total number of responses received from that province.

#### **Content Analysis of School Boards' Policies**

The results of the survey are presented first for each of the provinces then for Canada, overall. In presenting the results, we examined (a) the number of school boards that responded in each province, (b) the percentage of boards that were represented in at least half of the 35 policy components, (c) the areas of relative strength, and (d) the areas that were underrepresented in the province's policy documents.

##### **(a) British Columbia**

We received responses from a total of 17 school boards of which 3 provided no policy materials. Therefore, the analyses

**TABLE 3**

**Responding Boards Submitting "Codeable" Policies**

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Province	Responded	Policy Received
British Columbia	17	14 (82.3%)
Alberta	14	10 (71.4%)
Saskatchewan	7	3 (42.8%)
Manitoba	11	10 (90.9%)
Ontario	47	37 (82.2%)
Quebec	20	3 (15.0%)
New Brunswick	4	2 (50.0%)
Nova Scotia	3	2 (66.7%)
Prince Ed. Isle.	1	0 (0.0%)
Newfoundland	2	1 (50.0%)
Total	126	82 (65.1%)

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were based on the responses of 14 school boards. With respect to the 35 categories, the policy statements of only two of the school boards were represented in over 50% of the policy components.

Seven areas of strength were identified among the policies in British Columbia, that is, seven policy components were found to be represented in most of the board policies. These included provisions for suspension/expulsion (represented in 14 out of 14 boards or 100%), substance abuse (93%), physical assault (93%), defining a code of conduct (93%), dealing with trespassers (86%), intimidation/bullying/threats (86%), and reporting violent incidents (86%). Other relatively strong areas covered in the policy statements were delegating administrative responsibilities (79%), communicating policy information to stakeholders (79%), verbal harassment (64%), providing alternative-to-suspension programs (64%), police liaison (57%), involving committees for policy development (57%), and promoting a positive school climate (50%).

We also identified nine areas which were represented in less than 20% of the school boards' policy documents. These included aftermath services (14%), staff development (14%), gangs (14%), site security (7%), sexual assault (7%), procedures for program/policy evaluation (7%), responding to emergencies such as bomb threats and arson (7%), provisions for conducting incidence surveys (0%), and early/ongoing identification of aggressive students (0%).

**(b) Alberta**

A total of 14 school boards responded from Alberta of which 10 submitted policy materials. Only one school board's policy statements was represented in more than 50% of the content analysis categories. Among the codeable submissions, a strong focus was observed in three policy areas, delegating administrative responsibility (100%), suspension/expulsion (90%), and communicating policy information to stakeholders (80%). Other relatively strong areas were code of behaviour (70%), reporting violent incidents (70%), promoting a positive school climate (60%), delineating a range of consequences (50%), substance abuse (50%), and verbal harassment (50%).

Less than 20% of the school boards included information that could be classified into 11 of the categories including alternative-to-suspension programs (20%), trespassers (10%), sexual assault, (10%), gangs (10%), site security (10%), staff development (10%), early/ongoing identification (10%), aftermath programs (10%), procedures for policy/program evaluation (10%), responding to emergencies (0%), involving committees in policy development (0%), conducting incidence surveys (0%), and screening curricula for violent content (0%).

**(c) Saskatchewan**

The results from Saskatchewan are less clearly defined due to the relatively low number of policy materials submitted (3 out of 7). None of the three submissions had statements that were represented in at least 50% of the 35 categories. Two policies

had statements that were represented in 34% and one included statements that were represented in 31% of the content analysis codes.

All three policy submissions had statements concerning suspension/expulsion and delegating administrative responsibilities. Two of three submissions were represented in nine of the categories including weapons, sexual harassment, communicating policy information to stakeholders, promoting a positive school climate, and delineating a range of consequences. Eleven of the categories were reflected in one of the boards' policy documents and 13 categories were reflected in none of the policies including trespassers, discrimination, gangs, site security, recording violent incidents, staff development, police liaison, involving committees, conducting incidence surveys, early/ongoing identification, screening curricula for violent content, intervention/prevention programs, and aftermath services.

**(d) Manitoba**

We received responses from 11 school boards of which 10 provided policy statements. Four of the policies were represented in more than 50% of the content analysis categories. Among the submissions, a strong focus was observed in six areas, physical assault (90%), suspension/expulsion (90%), weapons (80%), fighting (80%), promoting a positive school climate (80%), and reporting violent incidents (80%). Between 60% and 70% of

the boards provided statements concerning intimidation/ bullying/threats (70%), delegating administrators responsibilities (60%), and police liaison (60%). Half of the boards provided information on sexual assault, sexual harassment, code of conduct, communicating policy information to stakeholders, screening curricula for violent content, and evaluation.

Twenty percent of the boards provided statements on robbery/extortion/theft, substance abuse, emergency situations, recording violent incidents, and alternative-to-suspension programs. Ten percent of the boards included information concerning gangs, involvement of committees, and early/ongoing identification of aggressive students. None of the policies included procedures for site security, incidence surveys, or screening curricula for violent content.

**(e) Ontario**

Thirty-seven policies were provided by the 47 responding school boards. Twenty-eight of the policies (75.7%) were represented in more than 50% of the policy components. A strong focus was observed in ten areas including physical assault (95%), suspension/expulsion (95%), weapons (89%), verbal harassment (89%), communicating policy information to stakeholders (86%), sexual assault (84%), promoting a positive school climate (84%), trespassers (81%), intimidation/bullying/threats (81%), and fighting (81%). Components that were found in 50-70% of the boards' policies were sexual harassment (78%), delegating

administrative responsibilities (78%), police liaison (78%), committee involvement (70%), reporting violent incidents (70%), discrimination (70%), intervention/prevention (68%), code of conduct (65%), vandalism (59%), and delineating a range of consequences (57%). On the other hand, only 16% of the policies included statements on responding to emergencies, 8% on screening curricula for violent content and early/ongoing identification of aggressive students, and 5% on conducting incidence surveys.

**(f) Quebec**

Although we received 20 responses from Quebec, only three included policy materials. Thus, the data representative of Quebec was limited and not necessarily generalizable to the province. Of the responding boards, only one was represented in more than 50% of the policy categories. All three of the boards included policy statements concerning substance abuse and promoting a positive school climate. Two of the boards included information on 14 categories including weapons, intimidation/bullying/threats, robbery/extortion/theft, discrimination, fighting, physical assault, sexual harassment, delegating administrative responsibilities, code of conduct, communicating policy information to stakeholders, intervention/prevention, police liaison, and suspension/expulsion. Policy categories that were represented in none of the board materials included gangs, staff development, screening curricula for violent content, delineating a range of consequences, and alternative-to-suspension programs.

**(g) New Brunswick**

Two of the four responding school boards provided policy materials. Neither of the materials was represented in more than 50% of the categories. One was represented in 43% and the other in 29% of the categories. The two boards provided statements concerning seven of the categories including delegating administrative responsibilities, code of conduct, communicating policy information to stakeholders, involvement of stakeholders, promoting a positive school climate, and suspension/expulsion. One board provided information concerning an additional eleven categories including trespassers, intimidation/bullying/threats, robbery/extortion/theft/ fighting, physical assaults, intervention/prevention programs, and alternative-to-suspension programs. None of the two boards could be classified into the remaining 17 categories.

**(h) Nova Scotia**

Two of the three responding boards submitted policy materials. One of the boards included information that was classified into 29% and one in 26% of the categories. Four categories were reflected in both of the school boards' policies including vandalism, verbal harassment, delegating administrative responsibilities, and suspension/expulsion. Half of the boards were represented in 11 categories including weapons, trespassers, physical assault, reporting violent incidents, police liaison, and delineating a range of consequences. None of the boards included information that could be classified into 20 of the



categories including discrimination, gangs, substance abuse, staff development, early/ongoing identification, and evaluation.

**(i) Prince Edward Island**

While our single response from PEI did not provide a specific violence prevention policy, it did include an extensive policy concerning child abuse and family violence. It is our understanding that in this administration it is the responsibility of individual schools to provide policies for discipline and matters concerning aggressive and antisocial behaviour.

**(j) Newfoundland**

One of the two responding boards provided policy materials. The board's policy document was represented in 19 or 54% of the categories including weapons, intimidation/bullying/threats, vandalism, robbery/extortion/theft, fighting, physical assault, sexual harassment, gangs, delegating administrative responsibilities, promoting a positive school climate, and suspension/expulsion. Policy statements were absent in the areas of trespassers, discrimination, gangs, bomb threats, involvement of stakeholders, conducting incidence surveys, early/ongoing identification, delineating a range of consequences, alternative-to-suspension programs, and procedures for evaluation.

**(k) Canada**

Given the wide range in the number of school boards across the provinces that submitted policy statements, the results for Canada were determined by taking an average of the percentage of

**TABLE 4**

An Example of How the Results for Canada were Determined: The Number and Percentage of Boards in Each Province that Included the Policy Component, "Fighting," in their Policy Document

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<u>Province</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
British Columbia	6/14	43
Alberta	4/10	40
Saskatchewan	2/3	67
Manitoba	8/10	80
Ontario	30/37	81
Quebec	2/3	67
New Brunswick	1/2	50
Nova Scotia	0/2	0
Newfoundland	1/1	100
Mean for Canada <sup>a</sup>		58.7
Range Across the Nine Provinces		0-100

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<sup>a</sup>Note: Prince Edward Island was omitted from these analysis as no "codeable" policy documents were submitted.

boards within each province that included a policy statement reflecting a given policy component. In other words, for each policy component, the percentage of boards in each province that submitted a policy statement was summed and averaged to yield the rate for Canada (see Table 4). This procedure also gave each province an equal weight in contributing to the nation-wide statistics. Note that these Canada-wide results do not include Prince Edward Island as the one responding board from this province did not submit a policy document that could be coded.

The results indicated that 13 of the 35 policy components (37.1%) were observed in at least half of the 82 submitted policy documents. The most frequently occurring component was the almost universal presence of a policy for suspension/expulsion, recorded in an average of 93.6% of the school boards in each of the nine provinces (range=67-100% across the nine provinces). This was followed by delegating administrative responsibilities ( $\bar{M}$ =87.1%, range=60-100%) and communicating policy information to stakeholders ( $\bar{M}$ =77.7%, range=50-100%). Other frequently occurring policy components included promoting a positive school climate ( $\bar{M}$ =76.8%, range=50-100%), physical assault ( $\bar{M}$ =72.4%, range=40-100%), defining a code of conduct ( $\bar{M}$ =69.8%, range=33-100%), intimidation/bullying/threats ( $\bar{M}$ =66.8%, range=30-100%), verbal harassment ( $\bar{M}$ =65.4%, range=33-100%), weapons ( $\bar{M}$ =63.2%, range=0-100%), police liaison ( $\bar{M}$ =61.3%, range=0-100%), fighting ( $\bar{M}$ =58.7%, range=0-100%), reporting violent incidents ( $\bar{M}$ =58.1%, range=0-100%), substance abuse ( $\bar{M}$ =55.0%, range=0-100%), and

involvement of stakeholders ( $\underline{M}$ =52.1%, range=0-100%).

Components that occurred infrequently (i.e., an average of less than 20% representation in each of the provinces) were aftermath support services for victims ( $\underline{M}$ =19.8%, range=0-100%), responding to emergencies ( $\underline{M}$ =19.6%, range=0-100%), early and ongoing identification of aggressive students ( $\underline{M}$ =14.2%, range=0-100%), procedures for policy/program evaluation ( $\underline{M}$ =14.1%, range=0-50%), involving committees for policy development ( $\underline{M}$ =13.6%, range=0-57%), site security ( $\underline{M}$ =8.8%, range=0-33%), dealing with school gangs ( $\underline{M}$ =7.7%, range=0-35%), conducting incidence surveys ( $\underline{M}$ =4.2%, range=0-33%), and screening curricula for violent content ( $\underline{M}$ =3.2%, range=0-21%).

The results for the remaining 12 items were as follows: vandalism ( $\underline{M}$ =50.0%, range=0-100%), sexual harassment ( $\underline{M}$ =47.6%, range=0-100%), intervention/prevention procedures ( $\underline{M}$ =47.4%, range=0-100%), robbery/extortion/theft ( $\underline{M}$ =39.9%, range=0-100%), sexual assault ( $\underline{M}$ =35.2%, range=0-100%), delineating a range of consequences ( $\underline{M}$ =37.2%, range=0-67%), intervention/prevention programs ( $\underline{M}$ =32.4%, range=0-100%), trespassers ( $\underline{M}$ =31.4%, range=0-81%), recording violent incidents ( $\underline{M}$ =29.2%, range=0-100%), staff development ( $\underline{M}$ =28.1%, range=0-100%), discrimination ( $\underline{M}$ =26.2%, range=0-70%), and alternative-to suspension programs ( $\underline{M}$ =24.7%, range=0-64%).

#### **Classification of Policies into Types**

Subsequent to the content analysis procedure, it became apparent that each of the board's entire policy submission could

**TABLE 5**

**A Comparison of the Content of the Four Policy Types**

Provisions of Policy	Type I	Type II	Type III	Type IV
Definition of Infractions	yes	yes	yes	yes
Specific Sanctions	yes	yes	yes	yes
Models for Behaviour	no	yes	yes	yes
Focus on Discipline	no	yes	yes	yes
Identification of Potential Problems <sup>a</sup>	no	no	yes	yes
Programs to Prevent and Counteract Problems	no	no	yes	yes
Identification of Non-School Sources of Problem Behaviour	no	no	no	yes
Partnership with Community Agencies	no	no	no	yes

<sup>a</sup> Refers to in-school identification of potential antisocial behaviour problems.

be classified into one of four general philosophical orientations or types identified as follows: (a) Response/Sanctions, (b) Expectations for Behaviour (c) Identification/Prevention, and (d) Community Focus. These four types were conceptualized as philosophical or ideological underpinnings of the policy documents. Each classification, building on the previous type, represents a stage in the progression towards a more comprehensive (and presumably more effective) policy. The basic principles underlying the four types are (see also Table 5):

Type I     Response/Sanctions - punishment for misbehaviour.

Type II    Expectations for Behaviour - development of a model for appropriate behaviour with expectations for students to follow it.

Type III   Identification/Prevention - strategies and programs to inhibit antisocial behaviour.

Type IV    Community Focus - inclusion of community groups in initiatives to address the problem of school-based violence.

The first level of policy (Response/Sanctions) focuses on the belief that a clear message of "consequences will follow unacceptable behaviour" is the best deterrent for aggression. Thus, policies delineate infractions and consequences. This type of policy is essentially reactive in nature in that it makes provisions for dealing with violent behaviour after it has occurred. Note that this should not necessarily be labeled a "zero tolerance" position as several consequences or a range of

consequences may be identified for a specific infraction.<sup>2</sup>

The second level of policy (Expectations for Behaviour) focuses on the idea that fair, clear, and equitable rules will prevent the further incidence of inappropriate behaviour. These policies contain the provision for consequences but do not focus on these as the main element of policy. Rather, the development of acceptable behavioural patterns and the establishment of appropriate models to emulate in order to promote prosocial behaviour take precedence over punishment. Policies of this type recognize a need to act before violence occurs.

Policies at the third level (Identification/Prevention) focus on the identification and reduction of student behaviour problems. Attention is directed towards activities designed to reduce violence such as through promoting positive interpersonal relations. Peacemakers, conflict management, and peer counselling are policy/program initiatives characteristic of this type. Adherents of this policy type recognize that interpersonal conflict does arise and believe in the notion of preparing students to deal with its inevitability (i.e., inoculation

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<sup>2</sup>Note on Zero Tolerance: In our view, zero tolerance is neither a policy nor a program, but a practice. It is the establishment of a specific consequence (or range of consequences) for a specific infraction and the consistent application of that consequence. In other words, in any disciplinary situation, if an act has a specific and inevitable consequence, then zero tolerance is being practised. For example, possession of a knife in school results in a five-day suspension. If this act is always treated in the same way, zero tolerance is being practised. No deviation in consequence is allowed. Zero tolerance has recently come to be interpreted as a policy which provides a suspension/expulsion consequence in response to violations of the policy, i.e., absolute disciplinary outcomes. We take the position that zero tolerance is practised when the absolute inevitability of a consequence is present, irrespective of what that consequence may be.

theory).

The fourth level (Community Focus) is characterized by the recognition that the root causes of school-based violence go beyond the borders of the school grounds. This type of policy, most closely aligned with the public health model, acknowledges the importance of working outside the school system with community agencies. In adopting this type of policy, school boards recognize that violence, in itself, is not a problem of the school but a problem that students (and staff) bring with them to school. As well, particularly central to this orientation is the involvement of community-based agencies in the development of strategies to address a range of issues that are related to school-based violence including child abuse and family violence (MacNeil, 1993).

With respect to classifying the policies, the majority of boards were identified as having a Response/Sanctions focus (48.8%), popularly characterized as a "zero tolerance" policy. Nearly 30% of the boards were classified as having an Expectations for Behaviour approach, 18.3% as an Intervention/Prevention model, and 3.7% as having a Community Focus.

With regard to the small number of boards that were classified as having a Community Focus, we recognize that many school boards have adopted community-based programs to deal with related issues such as domestic violence. However, in classifying the policy documents, we were looking for this



community focus to be pervasive in both the policy statements and programming efforts. Therefore, only a few school boards met our stringent criterion.

Interestingly, a progression along the continuum from Type I to Type IV orientations was found to correspond to an increase in the number of policy components each type represented (Figure 1). Therefore, it would appear that the philosophical position that leads policymakers to involve external agencies also leads them to include a greater number of policy components.

#### **A Brief Historical Comparison**

In many respects, policies have not changed a great deal over time. Consider the policy statements presented in Table 6 concerning duties of pupils and discipline. These statements delineate the expectations for students' behaviour while at school, e.g., to be attentive, quiet, and orderly, as well as the consequences for the policies' violation. In this case, the consequences referred to are suspension and expulsion.

This policy was, in fact, adopted by the Toronto Public School Board in 1893. Indeed, a cursory examination of school policies of today reveals that, in some respects, surprisingly little has changed in 100 years. In comparison, consider the current policy statements presented in Table 7 from three school boards in three different provinces. Aside from wording, the assumptions and expectations for student behaviour of these policies appear to be identical to the Toronto Board's policy of 1893. Perhaps we need to examine whether these assumptions are

still tenable today given the shifting social and economic situation which many families are confronting (Edwards & Young, 1992; Steinhauer, 1994).

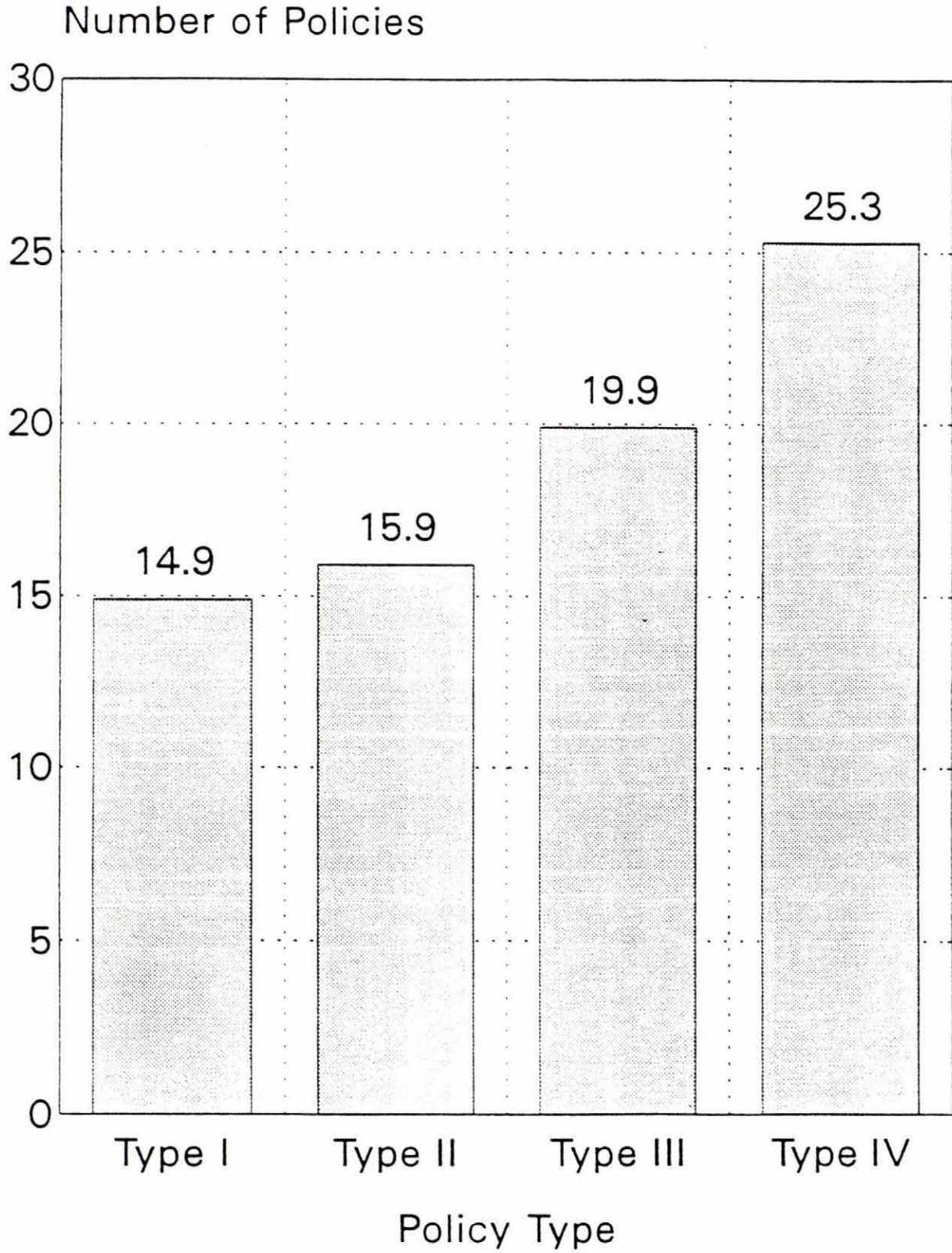


Figure 1. Policy Components: Average Number per Policy Type

## TABLE 6

### A School Board's Policy Relating to Expectations for Student Behaviour and Student Suspensions

#### III. DUTIES OF PUPILS

All pupils shall--

1. Obey their teachers.
2. Conform to the regulations of the Board.
3. Be attentive, quiet, and orderly in school.
4. Be respectful to their teachers and all persons in authority, and kind and obliging to each other.
5. Promote, as far as possible, the comfort and improvement of others.
6. Speak the truth on all occasions.
7. Refrain from playing games, likely to excite ill feeling.
8. Refrain from indelicate or profane language, from mocking or nick-naming their school-fellows or others; from chewing or spitting in school, and from other improper practices.

#### IV. DISCIPLINE

1. Pupils may be suspended for any of the following reasons:
  - (1) Truancy, persisted in.
  - (2) Absence for six half-days in four consecutive weeks without a reason satisfactory to the Principal, showing that the absence was caused by the sickness of the pupil, sickness in the family, or other urgent reason.
  - (3) Lateness, if repeated after four notifications have been sent to the parent or guardian in a session.
  - (4) Leaving school without permission.
  - (5) Determined opposition to authority.
  - (6) Repetition of any offence after notice.
  - (7) Habitual neglect of duty.
  - (8) The use of profane, obscene or other improper language.
  - (9) General bad conduct, and bad example to the injury of the school.
  - (10) Writing any obscene or improper words on the fences, out-buildings, or any part of the school premises.
  - (11) Bad conduct on the way to or from school.
  - (12) Throwing stones or other dangerous missiles while under school control.
  - (13) Bringing tobacco, lucifer matches, firearms, fireworks, or any explosives to school, or having them in possession there.
  - (14) Destroying or injuring school property, if their parents or guardians refuse to repair or make good the damage.
  - (15) Pupils may be suspended for a first offence under sub-sections 5, 12, 13, or 14 above, but in other cases parents or guardians shall be notified on the proper form concerning the misconduct of their children before suspension.
2. Principals may re-admit pupils suspended for the first time. Pupils who have been previously suspended shall be re-admitted by one of the Inspectors. Suspended pupils shall be re-admitted only on the personal application of the parent or guardian. Pupils who have been suspended for misconduct shall not receive medals, prizes, or honor certificates.
3. Any pupil adjudged so refractory by the Board that his presence in school is considered injurious to the other pupils, or who has been convicted of crime by the Police Magistrate, or in any Court, may be expelled from school, and sent to an Industrial School or other special school.

## TABLE 7

### **Three School Boards' Policies Relating to Expectations for Student Behaviour and Student Suspensions**

#### School Board A

This Code of Conduct is intended to encourage students to:

- conduct themselves in a polite, responsible and considerate manner in class, on school property, travelling to and from school, and when attending school related activities away from campus.
- respect the property of others.
- attend classes regularly and punctually.
- dress in an acceptable manner.
- be considerate of others - their thoughts, feelings and background
- use appropriate language
- be sensitive to and contribute to the maintenance of a positive school environment.
- be free of illegal drugs, and other substances than can be abused, alcohol, and weapons while under the jurisdiction of the school.
- be aware of their own rights and responsibilities and to exercise these in a positive manner.

#### School Board B

##### 1. Suspension by a Teacher and Teacher's Reports Relating to Suspension:

A teacher may suspend a student from class period where a student is guilty of:

- (1) Open opposition to authority
- (2) Wilful disobedience
- (3) Habitual neglect of duty
- (4) The use of improper or profane language, or
- (5) Other conduct injurious to the moral tone or well-being of the school.

#### School Board C

### **DUTIES OF A STUDENT**

Under the Education Act, Regulation 262: Schools General, Section 23(1) states:

"A pupil shall:

- a) be diligent in attempting to master such studies as are part of the program in which the pupil is enrolled;
- b) exercise self-discipline;
- c) accept such discipline as would be exercised by a kind, firm and judicious parent;
- d) attend classes punctually and regularly;
- e) be courteous to fellow pupils and obedient and courteous to teachers;
- f) be clean in person and habits;
- g) take such tests and examinations as are required by or under the Act or as may be directed by the Minister;
- h) show respect for property."

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this report indicate that there is a tremendous amount of activity within the education community to understand and come to terms with the issue of school-based violence and to identify and implement effective solutions. Indeed, recent conferences sponsored by the Canadian Association for Safe Schools, British Columbia School Trustees' Association/British Columbia Teachers' Association and British Columbia Teachers' Federation, catalogues of violence prevention materials such as that prepared by the Manitoba Women's Directorate, and publications from educational institutions such as the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) and Brock University are acting as national clearinghouses for information for those involved in policymaking.

Within particular school boards, a large majority have policies and/or programs to address the issue of violence and violent incidents. With regard to specific components, nearly all the school boards in the survey included a statement concerning suspension and expulsion. While having a long tradition in history, however, we believe that this approach serves only as a "quick-fix" solution by removing the offending student from the immediate environment and fails to address the long-term problem. Indeed, the long-term implications of suspending and expelling students, some of which are discussed in Appendix A, need to be carefully examined. For example, the practice likely contributes to the further marginalization of students who are already at risk for school failure.

In this regard, the development of alternative-to-suspension programs is encouraged. Interestingly, such programs were identified as a relatively strong area in only one province and as a weak area in four. Further discussion of alternative-to-suspension programs is provided in Appendix A.

Other areas which school boards in Canada were addressing include delegating administrative responsibilities, communicating policy information to stakeholders, and promoting a positive school climate. The former two components indicate that school boards are proactively taking steps to ensure that the process of implementing policies is successful. It is essential that members of the school administration are made aware of their roles and responsibilities for violence prevention policy. However, it is also important that all stakeholders including students, parents or guardians, and others with a vested interest in the school be aware of both the content of the policy documents (e.g., code of conduct, range of consequences, etc.) and the procedures, regulations, and guidelines for implementing board policy (e.g., protocols for responding to violent situations or students).

With regard to the latter component, a positive classroom and school environment is essential as a "macro-level" strategy for addressing school-based violence and has the potential to deal with a wide range of related issues on a very broad level. Of course, it is also important to address these issues at the "micro-level," for example, implementing policies and programs to

deal with specific incidents and aggressive individuals.

Most of the documents we reviewed consisted of policy statements concerning some of the specific infractions included in our content analysis categories. Typically, these were physical assault, verbal harassment, intimidation/bullying/threats, and the presence of weapons. It would seem that the next step in developing comprehensive violence prevention policies is to implement procedures for responding to emergency situations such as serious assaults involving a weapon, arson, and gang-related activity. Perhaps a crisis intervention team could be established. While a school may never have to respond to an emergency situation, it is best to be prepared with a clear policy statement.

As well, measures could be taken to ensure that moderate levels of site security are maintained (e.g., adequate lighting, limited access to isolated stairwells, and increased adult supervision on the school playground) and to foster relations with the local police (Riddle, 1993; Ryan, Matthews, & Banner, 1994). Community policing initiatives such as police liaison programs appear to hold some promise (Ryan et al., 1994).

Trespassers and gang activity are another concern related to the security of schools (Symons, 1993). Many schools have signs posted prohibiting trespassers and some schools use senior students to monitor halls and lock external doors. Other schools use two-way communication devices for security purposes (Gentile, 1992).



Another area for which there was a paucity of policy statements concerned staff development. The relatively low frequency of this component suggests that many school boards are missing the consensus-building opportunities that exist when staff are provided with the support needed to familiarize themselves with their board's policies and programs. Also, once staff clearly understand the relationship among a student's developmental history, household circumstances, poor academic performance, and disruptive behaviour they may become more committed to the success of a prevention strategy.

Lastly, there is an obvious need for evaluation of policies and programs as well good methods to record incidents of violence in schools. The ongoing evaluation of policy is an essential component in the policy process (Golench, 1992). All policies should contain a specific statement for self-evaluation, indicating the frequency and method of the evaluation. This ensures a procedure for monitoring policy and program impact and identifying areas for further development.

At the same time, the overwhelming evidence based on a review of the literature is that evaluations of school-based violence prevention programs are rare (Aleem & Moles, 1993; Gaustad, 1991, Wilson-Brewer et al., 1991). In a survey of 51 school-based violence prevention programs in the United States, 30% were found to have no evaluation or had outdated or unavailable data (Wilson-Brewer et al., 1991). Programs that did have an evaluation typically only monitored program

implementation (referred to as "process" evaluation) and not program impact (referred to as "outcome" evaluation). Moreover, difficulties with interpreting evaluation results of school-based interventions resulted from considerable theoretical, methodological, and pragmatic limitations of the research. Cohen and Wilson-Brewer (1991) reported that most evaluation studies of school-based violence prevention interventions used nonexperimental and correlational designs which make cause and effect statements difficult. As well, because of the ease of measurement, the primary findings reported in most evaluations are short-term changes in knowledge, attitudes, and self-reported behaviours.

We suggest that, where it cannot be done internally, school boards develop relations with community- or university-based researchers to conduct high quality evaluations of policies and programs. This type of partnership has been successfully achieved in a number of school boards in Manitoba, Ontario, and New Brunswick. As well, government could become involved in devising and implementing systems for collecting and reporting incident data, as is currently being done in Ontario.

#### **Barriers to Implementation**

We recognize that there are a number of barriers to the implementation of a concerted, sustained violence prevention strategy. Primary among these is the lack of funding to support such an effort. Second a lack of funding for staff development often undermines the effective implementation of a violence

prevention policy or program. Providing opportunities for staff training to upgrade their knowledge and skills serve to optimize the success of a program. Lastly, the cost of program evaluation, in both time and money, hinders the examination of policy and program effectiveness. Frequently, programs are initiated with adequate funding and good intentions, but the long-term view does not include provision for a comprehensive evaluation with sufficient follow-up to assess the program's impact. Certainly, an infusion of funding demonstrates a commitment from government and administration to violence prevention that is not lost on school personnel.

#### **Limitations**

While the intent of this study was to develop a comprehensive overview of existing policies and programs in Canada designed to counteract school-based violence, we realize that the findings are limited by our response rate and the nature of the responses we received. As a result, no attempt was made to generalize these results to rural areas in Canada or beyond the material we used as data. We also recognize that the issue of school-based violence does not manifest itself in the same form and to the same degree throughout the country and that these regional differences will necessitate developing policies that are individualized to the needs of the particular school board.

With regard to programs, we recognize that we were limited by the nature of information we received in that, in many cases,

programs were not described fully but were briefly mentioned in accompanying ~~correspondence~~ or were included in listings of school-based programs operating within individual schools. We speculate that the prevalence of violence prevention programming within school boards is higher than our data would indicate. We also recognize that school-based violence prevention programs are a relatively recent practice and, as such, available evaluation data are rather scant. It is also too early to evaluate the true impact of these programs as they have not been in place long enough.

Lastly, a survey such as this must be considered within its historical context. Conducted at another time, the study's findings could be vastly different. In Ontario, for example, shortly after this study began, the Minister of Education and Training issued a directive mandating that each school board in the province have in place a violence prevention policy by September, 1995 and that the process for developing these policies begin no later than September, 1994 (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1994a). The results presented here, therefore, are essentially a "snapshot" of the country's school-based violence prevention efforts as of July, 1994.

### **Conclusions**

Six general points emerged from this study. First, a school board's violence prevention policy should be internally consistent, that is, the various statements, procedures, and provisions should relate to each other to form a unified

document. For example, if a school board has an elaborately detailed policy concerning weapons, e.g., defining what constitutes a weapon, outlining the consequences for an infraction, and so forth, it goes without saying that the board should also have a policy concerning less severe behaviours such as intimidation/bullying/threats, harassment, and fighting. Policies should build up from the less to more serious behaviours, otherwise, the policy as a whole appears disjointed.

Second, in addition to being internally consistent, policies should be congruent with programs. For example, if a conflict resolution program is implemented within a board's schools, this preventative approach to dealing with school violence and promoting prosocial skills should be reflected within the board's policy documents.

Third, policies should be comprehensive. In our view, policy documents should incorporate as many of the 35 components identified in this report as feasible. In addition, violence prevention programs should be multifaceted in order to address the various aspects of this issue. For example, programs could be targeted toward (a) the school "community" and student body as a whole (e.g., conflict resolution, curriculum-based programs, promoting a positive school climate and academic excellence), (b) teachers (e.g., staff development), (c) identified children and youth (counselling and support services, social skills training, alternative-to-suspension programs), (d) victims of violence (e.g., aftermath services, protocols for responding to emergency

situations), and (e) the community outside the school (e.g., police liaison programs, involvement of community groups in the development of violence prevention policy). The public health model serves as an example of a comprehensive approach to school-based violence prevention that addresses a wide range of related issues.

Fourth, board policies should have a community focus. The causes of youth violence are many and often lie outside the purview of the school system. Partnerships between schools and community groups must be developed for concerted, sustained, and comprehensive violence prevention efforts to occur. Certainly, schools need to forge working relationships with parents or guardians, as well as the juvenile justice system, police, children's mental health centres, social service agencies, government agencies, racial and ethnocultural minority organizations, local business, and industry to address the problem jointly. However, government agencies and community groups should also take the initiative to develop partnerships with school boards. As well, as we have seen, having a community focus was associated with a more comprehensive violence prevention policy.

Fifth, school boards should have supplemental programs for students who are disruptive, aggressive, and violent. These programs should be supportive and corrective rather than punitive, demoralizing, and inflexible. There will always be a group of children and youth who require specialized services such

as social skills, self-control and anger management training, and individual counselling and therapy. Placing students in special education and behaviour classrooms is often not sufficient to address the range of needs for some students or for behaviours to generalize to the regular classroom setting. As well, programs targeted to the entire school community may not be effective with an aggressive population (Day & Hartley, 1993).

Supplemental programs may be provided either internally, using the school board's own resources, or through the services of a community-based social service agency that specializes in difficult children and youth. A collaborative community-based program that has had considerable success in providing a range services to schools is the Earls court School-based Program (ESP; Hartley & Levene, 1994) offered by Earls court Child and Family Centre in Toronto.

The ESP (see also Appendix A) is a multifaceted program for children between the age of 6 and 12 years. The program is staffed by a psychologist, who is the Program Manager, two social skills group facilitators, and a family worker. A range of services is offered including prevention-oriented classroom-wide and school-wide activities, intensive intervention for identified aggressive children and their families, and teacher support and training. The prevention components, designed to promote a positive school culture and prevent the escalation of behaviour problems, include peer mediation, social skills training in the classroom, and school-wide prosocial theme weeks. Select

students are trained as peer mediators to provide conflict resolution services in the playground. Prosocial theme weeks highlight and reinforce prosocial behaviour through special school-wide activities and, as well, the themes are integrated into the classroom curriculum. The core program component is the half-hour weekly classroom-based social skills training sessions that are co-led by the ESP staff and classroom teachers. These sessions enable all students to learn and practise social skills (e.g., problem solving, making and maintaining friendships, and dealing with bullying). The intervention components for identified aggressive children, i.e., remedial social skills training and parent outreach, build on the classroom-based social skills training. Teacher-identified aggressive children receive remedial cognitive-behavioural social skills training which is done either individually, in pairs, or small groups. Each identified aggressive child has an individualized behavioural goal and is withdrawn from the classroom on a weekly basis to receive intensive practise to facilitate the achievement of this goal. Progress is regularly evaluated by the ESP staff with the child, teacher, and parents. The nature of the family outreach services varies from information-sharing about the child's progress to helping parents get their child involved in age appropriate community recreational activities, to parent management training. Finally, teacher training services are offered to enhance teachers' competence and confidence in dealing with aggressive behaviour problems and in continuing some of the



program components once the ESP staff leave the school. Given limited mental health resources , the ESP operates on the "train-the-trainer" model that aims to increase teachers' skills to continue with this prevention/intervention model. Future program developments involve increasing parental involvement in school activities. Forming partnerships between parents and school is important not only to ensure the academic success of the children, but also as a key factor in violence prevention initiatives. The ESP exemplifies a successful partnership between a community agency and school setting in the provision of a range of violence prevention and intervention services.

Sixth, violence prevention solutions must address the root causes of violence, that is, the biological, familial, environmental, social, and academic factors that place a child at risk. Moreover, prevention and intervention strategies (including consequences for inappropriate and aggressive behaviour) must be appropriate to the developmental level of the target population and be consonant with psychological principles of personal growth. For some children, biological deficits which contribute to or exacerbate some of the marker variables of aggression such as speech and language problems, learning disabilities, poor attention, or hyperactivity could be addressed through medication or specialized support services. Providing child caregiving experiences to high school students and prenatal classes for pregnant teenagers is an effective preventative measure.

Family factors associated with the development of aggression such as insecure attachment, harsh and abusive discipline, and lack of parental monitoring could be addressed through parent management training provided by staff from a children's mental health centre or child welfare agency. Within the school setting, a relationship could be established with high-risk families to maintain regular contact and support between the parent or guardian and the teacher, guidance counsellor, and principal. As well, the school could be opened up to the community to provide drop-in centres or parent relief programs.

Programs to address the environmental and social risk factors could include social skills training, enhancing awareness about related issues such as teen pregnancy, birth control, and drug and alcohol abuse, and promoting good peer relations, prosocial behaviour, and nonaggressive responses to conflict situations. After-school programs could be provided as opportunities for children to build friendships and develop outside activities and hobbies (Grizenko & Pawliuk, 1994). To address the specific risk factor of a lack of positive relationships that some children experience, teacher- and peer-mentoring programs could be implemented. Lastly, academic risk factors are a prime target for schools in that a range of specialized learning opportunities and support services could be made available for identified children. As well, identification and remediation of academic problems as early as kindergarten and grade 1 may lower the risk of children falling behind in school.

In conclusion, we believe that a school boards' response to school violence must address children's and adolescents' need to feel valued and respected. Students, for example, should have a role in the development of violence prevention policies. In this way, they will come to feel that the rules are theirs. This will enable them to feel empowered, to have a stake in the system, and to take ownership and responsibility for the problem of school violence and the solutions (Berger, 1974; Brooks, 1994; Rodger, 1993). While this may seem antithetical to the popular belief that youth have too much independence, it is through empowerment that young people learn how to make responsible decisions as they move into adulthood.

Second, school boards must not succumb to the populist view that youth are a threat and to be feared; that they are "out-of-hand" and need to be controlled. This perspective leads to the perceived need for stricter and harsher law-and-order responses. Schools need to promote a healthy, prosocial environment, have clear, comprehensive policies, a range of developmentally appropriate consequences for inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour, and multifaceted violence prevention programming. School boards' policies and programs must be imbued with an attitude that the school system is not one to give up on difficult students but is willing to work with all students on an equal partnership in order to reduce the prevalence of school-based violence and facilitate the development of prosocial skills and behaviours. At the same time, we know that youth violence is

not a school's problem, it is a social problem and, as such, members of the education, mental health, welfare, and legal systems must work together in a concerted fashion to develop a viable solution.

### **Recommendations**

As a result of this study we are able to make a number of recommendations for policymaking at school boards across Canada. These recommendations fall into four areas: (a) the actual expression of written policy, (b) the content of policy, (c) programs, and (d) general recommendations.

#### **(a) The Expression of Written Policy**

Policy documents, like course outlines and other school board documents are in the public domain. It is advisable that these documents be written using language that makes them accessible to the general public. In conducting the content analysis, we found that the policy statements were written in a variety of formats. Without implying that every school board follow an identical format for writing policy, we would like to make a number of suggestions to enable boards to develop clearer violence prevention policies.

1. Policy should be specific. Policy statements can generally be short and to the point. Definitions and explanations can be contained in the operating procedures and regulations which are attached to the policy and form an integral part of the policy document. Many policies we received lacked a specific focus. Others were more direct and to the point.

2. The language of policy should be the language of common speech. Any use of jargon or of complex legal terminology should either be eliminated or clearly defined. In these litigious times it is essential that all parties affected by policy be absolutely clear about the exact meaning of all terms used in documents.

3. Policy should be clearly identified as to content. In conducting the content analysis, we found it misleading that there were numerous applications for what school boards considered to be violence prevention policies. We recommend that all elements of policy that refer in any way to the philosophy or practice related to violence prevention be clearly labeled as such.

4. In writing policies to reduce school-based violence, it is necessary to remember that, while we typically identify violence as either weapons-related or overt behaviour, violence can be covert, subtle, and insidious appearing as discrimination, harassment, and intimidation. School administrators should ensure that all forms of violence are addressed in policy.

5. Education authorities should more closely examine the process of policymaking so that policies are thorough, comprehensive, and effective. The process of policymaking is complex, involving more than the simple process of decision-making by a board committee. Policymakers should seek advice and involvement from representatives of all groups affected by a specific policy. Violence prevention policy is no different in

this respect. The process of developing policy to counteract violence should involve as many different viewpoints as possible for a comprehensive strategy.

**(b) The Content of Policy**

6. The provision for developmentally appropriate and age-specific consequences with escalating repercussions that are also consonant with psychological principles of personal growth is essential to the development of a violence prevention strategy.

7. Policy statements should be all-inclusive. For example, there is no need to write separate policy statements to deal with the violent behaviour of students and staff. All acts of violence should be treated consistently. If it is necessary to establish different consequences for student-staff violence than student-student violence, include this difference as part of the range of consequences rather than drafting separate policy statements. Similarly, violent acts committed by staff against students should also be included in this policy statement.

8. Policy documents should be comprehensive. More specifically, we recommend that policies and programs be developed for alternative-to-suspension, intervention/prevention, and aftermath support services, staff development, stakeholder participation, early and ongoing identification of potential antisocial and aggressive behaviour, and responding with emergency situations.

9. Policymakers should strive for Type IV (Community Focus) policies. Policies with this orientation were found to be the

most proactive.

10. Some legal concepts, such as the ideas of "search and seizure" and arrest are more properly the realm of the law and should be left to the discretion of law enforcement officers. Policy should clearly indicate the boundaries between the influence of the school authority and that of civil authorities.

11. There needs to be congruence between a school board's violence prevention policies and the array of programs that are implemented within that school board.

12. More consideration in policy should be given to the physically and mentally challenged members of the school community. In our examination of Canada-wide policies, only two documents made provision for these students. For example, a perfectly reasonable evacuation plan might not consider the evacuation of students in wheelchairs.

13. School boards should engage in ongoing evaluation of their policies. Documents should contain the provision for a regular review and evaluation process of violence prevention policy.

**(c) Programs**

14. Strong administrative support is a basic element in the implementation of violence prevention programs. Without this support, staff efforts will be undermined; with it, a positive school climate can be fostered.

15. It has been observed that programs frequently do not reach the students who are most in need. Programs such as peer

counselling and conflict mediation are generally aimed at the general population, embraced by those students who, for the most part, do not require this form of intervention, while the potentially difficult students remain unaffected. It is our recommendation that high risk students receive the benefit of more intensive services. Moreover, fostering partnerships with outside agencies that specialize in services for aggressive children and youth may serve school boards well.

16. Students should be involved in the development, implementation, and evaluation of programs.

17. Implemented programs should be appropriate to the situation within the specific school community. Prepackaged programs may be useful for increasing student awareness, but frequently do not address local needs and situations beyond that. Therefore, school boards should remain flexible in terms of implementing a violence prevention program. This was best described by some school board officials as having a program "dropped in" fully formed from the outside. Needs assessments were identified in some board materials as an important first step in program implementation.

18. As with policy, evaluation is essential to the ongoing effectiveness of anti-violence programs. All those individuals affected by the program including staff, students, parents or guardians, and community groups, should be involved in the evaluation process and this process should be ongoing.

19. School boards should keep a central registry of the



programs that are operated in the schools of their jurisdiction. The results from program evaluations should also be kept with the registry.

**(d) General Comments**

20. When dealing with representatives of the media, it is wise to rely on one spokesperson. While this is not a preventative issue per se, the use of a media resource person ensures that all information released to the media is consistent. Some school boards have included in their policies, procedures for communicating with reporters.

21. School boards should make it a priority to build school playgrounds that accommodate the needs of children. Barren school grounds, lacking in playground equipment and poured in asphalt and concrete do not promote the kinds of play activity that facilitate cooperative, prosocial behaviour and foster creativity. Moreover, injuries resulting from aggressive incidents may be more serious on surfaces of gravel than grass.

22. School boards should ensure that teachers are committed, enthusiastic, and comfortable with a particular program to facilitate its successful implementation. A teacher's enthusiasm, coupled with solid knowledge of and skills in the issues presented, are necessary for students to deal with topics that can be difficult, complex, and challenging.

23. Teacher training at Faculties of Education should address the entire issue of school-based violence prevention by teaching about conflict resolution, methods for working

collaboratively with community agencies, and the need to include violent prevention information in the course curriculum.

24. School boards should develop relations with community- or university-based researchers to conduct or collaborate on high quality evaluations of policies and programs.

25. Collaborative efforts involving school personnel, students, parents or guardians, community agencies, local business, and the police should be involved in the ongoing process of identifying and addressing the roots causes of violence behaviour in their community.

26. With respect to the previous recommendation, in order to carry out this form of policy and program development, expenses will be incurred. Governments, school boards, social service agencies, local business and industry should be encouraged to contribute funds to develop and sustain violence prevention programming.

#### **A Final Word About Policy**

Policy is the official public face of an organization. It is the way in which those who interact with the organization come to know the organization and the way in which those who are employed by the organization are directed to develop procedures and programs for the dissemination and promulgation of the business of that organization.

Policies within school systems have a variety of layers. First, there is the actual policy statement which represents the

official position of the school board on a specific issue. Second, there are the regulations which are the definitions and specific requirements that the board sees as necessary to implementing the policy. Third, there are the operating procedures and guidelines for those who must actually make the policy work in day-to-day activity. Finally, there exist programs--the tools of policy, the blueprints for building the outcomes of policy.

An analogy can be seen in a developer who wishes to build a housing project. Analogous to the policy would be the intent to build a specific number of houses. Regulations would conform to the decision to build houses of a certain size on certain sized lots. Operating procedures would dictate the materials used, the designs of the houses and the layout of the subdivision and programs would be the actual plans given to the builders to build the houses. As anyone in the housing industry knows, the original planning stage involves municipal utilities, planning committees, and many other interested parties. It should be so with violence prevention policy, as well.

"The development of clear, concise policies and procedures with widely known and accepted definitions...can serve as powerful...preventive interventions" (Roark, 1987, p. 369). This, in itself, implies that policies themselves, stated clearly, and widely advertised, can be the first step in a prevention strategy. Gottfredson and Gottfredson (1985), offer advice to the policymaker, recommending mechanisms to monitor the

implementation of programs, plans to evaluate the programs and perseverance.

Based on the work of Golench (1992) and Musella (1987), good policy should contain (a) an exhaustive policy development process that focuses on the desired outcomes and involves input from all parties in any way affected by the policy; (b) a concise, clear policy statement; (c) strategies for policy implementation; (d) a monitoring process to note the achievement of outcomes; and (e) a review and evaluation process to ensure the policy is appropriate and effective.

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APPENDIX A

Programs for Addressing School Violence



## PROGRAMS FOR ADDRESSING SCHOOL VIOLENCE

### Index of Programs

#### (A) Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation

#### (B) Curriculum-Based Programs

- (i) Anti-Racism Programs
- (ii) A School-Based Anti-Violence Program (ASAP)
- (iii) Creating Peaceful Learning Environments
- (iv) Global Education
- (v) Lions-Quest
- (vi) Media Programs
- (vii) The Mountain and Beyond
- (viii) Prevention of Violence in the School
- (ix) Response by Schools to Violence Prevention (RSVP)
- (x) Second Step
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- (xii) Values, Influences, and Peers (VIP)
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#### (C) Discipline Policies

#### (D) Interventions for Aggressive Children

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#### (E) Miscellaneous Programs

- (i) Aftermath Support Services

- (ii) The Kindergarten Intervention Project (KIP)
- (iii) Projet d'une école pacifique (PEP)
- (iv) Retreat for the Future: An Anti-Sexism Workshop for Adolescents
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**(F) The School Environment**

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- (ii) School Watch Program
- (iii) Classroom Environment
- (iv) G. D. Gottfredson, D. C. Gottfredson, and Hybl Intervention Study
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**(G) Schools and the Community**

- (i) Earls court School-based Program (ESP)
- (ii) Youth Leadership Challenge Project

**(H) Staff Development**

- (i) Les "petite violences" à lécole primaire, Éduquer et prévenir

**(I) Site Security Programs**

**(J) Student Suspensions and Expulsions**

## (A) Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation

### Program Description

A wide range of techniques has been developed for teaching children and youth cooperative strategies to deal with conflict as a means of counteracting school-based violence (Deutsch, 1993; D. W. Johnson & R. J. Johnson, 1991; Mattingley & Lennon, 1990; Willis, 1993). Many of these programs are curriculum-based for skills development such as peer-helping, negotiating, and conflict and anger management. As well, it has been suggested that teachers receive conflict resolution and verbal de-escalation training in order to learn how to defuse violent situations and deal with aggressive students (Houston & Grubaugh, 1989).

Conflict resolution covers a range of activities from teaching specific skills, techniques, strategies, and language to deal with specific conflict situations to more general activities and curriculum-based topics that address related issues (e.g., Toronto Board of Education, 1994a). Some of the issues are relationship-building, sharing feelings, good listening, self-discipline, effective decision-making, and exploration of nonviolent responses to conflict. Programs focus on the acquisition of strategies and skills that enable students to resolve disputes before they escalate to a physical level, to intervene when someone is being victimized, and to help find "win-win" solutions to conflicts.

Conflict resolution programs may be implemented in either elementary or secondary grade levels. With young children, one first defines the problem at the level appropriate for the age group. This involves trying to see the problem from the others' perspective. Second, the children learn to find a solution on which everyone can agree. This is achieved by generating a range of possible solutions, both positive and negative, and discussing the advantages and disadvantages of each while taking into account the views of all sides. Once students have tried out the winning solution, teachers can help evaluate how well it worked. With young children, it is important that teachers be involved in developing sharing, perspective-taking, and negotiation skills, showing students the results of implementing good conflict resolution strategies, and giving students multiple opportunities to practice their conflict resolution skills in many different contexts (Carlsson-Paige & Levin, 1992).

At the secondary level, the focus is more on conflict resolution, anger management, and social decision-making skills (Elias & Clabby, 1988) at the both group (James, 1993; Rodgers, 1993) and individual level (Patus, 1993). Essentially, conflict resolution programs in the senior grades focus on the promotion of social competence (Weissberg, Caplan, & Sivo, 1989) designed to reconcile value differentials (Druckman, Broome, & Korper, 1988). Peacemaker or peer mediation programs have been established in many elementary schools in Canada (Baer, 1993;

E. S. Fine, 1993; Franklin, 1991; Hutchins, 1993; Murdoch-Morris, 1993; Roy, 1993). In such programs, students trained in the basics of conflict mediation attempt to defuse conflict situations in the schoolyard by offering mediation services to those involved. The procedures followed by peer mediators are quite simple. First, those involved must agree to mediation with a neutral mediator. Second, they must agree to six conditions: (a) solve the problem; (b) do not resort to name calling; (c) do not interrupt; (d) be as honest as you can; (e) if you agree to a solution you must do what you agreed to do; and (f) anything said in mediation is confidential (D. W. Johnson, R. J. Johnson, Dudley, & Burnett, 1992). In some American schools, the peer mediation process is accompanied by the use of awareness-heightening videos (S. J. Smith, 1992).

### **Evaluation**

With regard to the effectiveness of conflict resolution and peer mediation programs, Deutsch (1993) noted that there was little systematic research but that anecdotal evidence suggests positive benefits for student mediators and the school. This sentiment is supported by Lam (1989) who reported that the results of evaluations of peer mediation programs were generally positive. For example, students, teachers, peer mediators, school administrators, health providers, and volunteers reported that they liked the programs in which they were involved and

frequently perceived positive changes in individual behaviour and school climate.

D. W. Johnson, R. J. Johnson and Dudley (1992) evaluated a conflict resolution program in the United States involving elementary school students in the 3rd grade. The purpose of the study was to determine (a) the number and nature of conflicts, (b) the initial strategies used by the students to avoid conflict, and (c) the effect of mediation training on the resolution of the conflicts. Relative to the comparison groups, conflict training was found to be successful in teaching negotiating skills and mediation techniques to children.

A number of evaluation studies has been conducted in Canada. A six-month study of a Peer Mediator/Peacemaker program in six schools, conducted by the Metropolitan Separate School Board in Toronto (1994), found that staff and students were positive about the program and that peer mediators showed a slight increase in self-esteem.

As well, a study of the Conflict Busters program, implemented in elementary schools in London, Ontario, was conducted by Robinson and Killip (1992). The evaluation was based on a survey of students in grades 1-5. The results indicated that all the mediators enjoyed the responsibility of being a mediator initially, although fewer reported this at the end of the school year. For example, just under one half of the respondents agreed with the statement "I like being a Conflict Buster" in June compared with three quarters who agreed with the

statement the previous January. The Conflict Busters were generally accepted by the other students, although 31% reported being teased. The program also succeeded in improving the quality of the school environment as reported by a large majority of the students in grades 1-5. This was seen as very encouraging. One cautionary note was that conflict mediation programs might not be as successful with older students. As well, the lack of a control group limits the conclusions that may be drawn from this study. In summary, many of the evaluation studies focused on positive results in the areas of self-esteem and satisfaction as a peer mediator but relied on weak research designs, results that were often based on anecdotal reports, and no long-term followup assessments.

#### **(B) Curriculum-Based Programs**

Tremendous advances have been made in the development of curriculum-based programs for dealing with a wide range of issues related to school-based violence such as domestic violence, bullying, conflict resolution, and interpersonal relationships. Curriculum-based programs are incorporated into the classroom lessons by the teacher. They reach a large number of students and are developed to be consistent with the basic aims and objectives of the school environment. They also incorporate strategies that enhance learning such as story-telling for younger ages, role-playing, classroom exercises, and homework assignments. A number of the main programs in Canada and the United States are discussed below.

### **(i) Anti-Racism Programs**

#### **Program Description**

Racism can be a major factor in school violence, particularly in the United States (LaPoint, 1992). As a result, several recent programs have been designed specifically to address racism. Holt (1991) advocates for the development of African-American immersion schools. Asante (1991) urges the inclusion of an Afrocentric curriculum in schools in order to empower African-American children who are suffering with a predominately "white self-esteem curriculum" (p. 28). Adopting multiracial curricula (Hilliard, 1991; Power & Lapsley, 1994; Reissman, 1991) and revised history curricula (M. Fine, 1991) are suggested in order to accommodate students from a variety of cultures. In one predominantly white school students are being taught the restrictions placed on them by their cultural past and experiences (S. Adams, Pardo, & Schniedewind, 1991).

### **(ii) A School-Based Anti-Violence Program (ASAP)**

#### **Program Description**

A School-Based Anti-Violence Program (ASAP), developed by the London Family Court Clinic (Sudermann, Jaffe, & Hastings, 1993), is a comprehensive, detailed violence prevention manual for teachers to help plan violence prevention programming. Towards this end, ASAP contains a wealth of information. It covers ways to build a safe school climate, to handle disclosures of family violence and violence in dating relationships, and provides a range of strategies to alter attitudes and behaviours



that contribute to violence. Strategies are tailored to all grade levels, elementary, middle, and secondary. The manual's extensive resource list includes video resources, curriculum resources, curriculum-based manuals for teachers, and plays and theatrical resources. Strategies are provided for program development directed at a range of issues including children who witness violence at home, wife assault, sex role stereotyping, dating violence, harassment, the nature of violence in relationships, and media violence.

The ASAP materials include Sixty-five Friendly Lessons on Violence Prevention and a resource document for students in grades 7-10, developed by the Board of Education for the City of London. Six colour-coded theme areas, introductory lessons, stereotyping, violence in relationships, society and violence, social skills, and safety in our society, provide information for a violence prevention curriculum. For example, an introductory lesson that aims to teach students ways to stand up for their rights uses a video entitled No Means No. ASAP also provides information for program evaluation and includes a student and a group facilitator's feedback form. This allows teachers/schools to monitor and assess their anti-violence programming and enables students to become involved in planning anti-violence interventions.

### **(iii) Creating Peaceful Learning Environments**

#### **Program Description**

Creating Peaceful Learning Environments is an intervention

developed as part of a research project initiated by the Muriel McQueen Centre for Family Violence Research at the University of New Brunswick. Four school districts participated in 1993-94. Additional districts will be joining over the next five years.

The project is collaborative. The research team has representatives from the provincial Department of Education, University of New Brunswick, school districts, and teachers' associations. Within the school, a school-based team follows a four-step sequential process: (a) assessment, (b) intervention, (c) evaluation, and (d) dissemination.

A strong feature of Creating Peaceful Learning Environments is that the projects are "locally relevant." A statement from the centre's materials reads: "we are committed to developing processes and supporting initiatives appropriate to our local contexts that will assist efforts to create positive learning environments." Similar to other violence prevention initiatives developed in Canada, such as ASAP and RSVP, the Centre's main goal is to eventually eliminate the problem of family violence and violence against women.

#### **(iv) Global Education**

##### **Program Description**

An interesting and unique approach to violence prevention is presented in a book by Reardon (1988). This series of curriculum-based programs, designed for use from grades K-12, is based on the notion that students can learn about managing their

own hostility through the study of global issues, literature, and world peace studies. This volume contains topics such as developing concepts of peace through children's literature, international relations, immigrant literature, the social responsibility of science, and the United Nations.

**(v) Lions-Quest**

**Program Description**

Lions-Quest Skills for Adolescence (SFA; Lions Clubs International and Quest International, 1992) is a comprehensive, educational initiative to combat drug use in grades 6-8, first developed in 1984 as a co-operative effort between Lions Club International and Quest International. Currently, the recent addition of new Lions-Quest resource materials provides continuous curriculum for grades K-12.

Program content and materials have been created by more than 80 professionals including educators, researchers, psychologists, curriculum developers and other experts in drug and alcohol abuse. Drug abuse prevention remains a main focus of the program which now also addresses other issues such as building school communities and developing students' personal and social skills in the areas of self confidence, healthy relationships, anger management and conflict resolution.

Skills for Growing (SFG) is for students in grades k-5. Its five units can be implemented as a separate skills course or integrated as part of the curriculum. SFG promotes a strong school community and encourages parental involvement, teaches

life skills, and encourages healthy drug-free lifestyles.

SFA has ~~seven~~ units and focuses on communication skills, decision-making, healthy relations, self confidence, and drug-free lifestyles. An SFA supplement, Working Toward Peace, was published in 1994. Its focus is violence prevention and teaches students how to manage anger and resolve conflict.

### **Evaluation**

An evaluation of Lions-Quest Skills for Adolescence Program in the Detroit Public Schools, conducted in 1991 by Quest International, examined the impact on middle school students' academic achievement using the California Achievement Test and attitudes towards school using the School Attitude Measure. The study showed that students who participated in SFA showed markedly improved scores on the California Achievement Test and noteworthy improvements on two subscales of the School Attitude Measure.

A study of SFG, conducted in 1991 at Bala Avenue Community School in Ontario (Hutchins, 1993), revealed that parent interest in the program was high, discipline problems were reduced, and school climate was improved. The implementation of SFG was complemented by a Peacemaker program, double recesses, and regular recognition awards. Two areas identified as enhancing the program's implementation were strong support from administrators and teachers and financial commitment by the Board.

## **(vi) Media Programs**

### **Program Description**

The undesirable effects of television, music videos, video games, and films have been previously discussed. Adding fuel to the media fire are the violent and sexist lyrics that comprise a good number of popular songs. Several school-based programs have been devised to counteract the effects that these pervasive forms of violence. YTV has developed a short in-class series of lessons that are designed to develop critical viewing skills in high-school aged students (Andersen & Ventura, 1994). TVO published a handbook linking the role of educational television to school violence prevention in which are listed programs and videotapes that are available for school violence prevention initiatives (Sharon, 1991). Under the auspices of the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario (FWTAO), an extensive elementary curriculum has been developed that examines the nature, effect, and technology of television in order to promote critical viewing skills (Verrall, 1994). A further source of information and ideas for curriculum-based programming for media violence can be found in the news bulletin of C-CAVE (Canadians Concerned About Violence in Entertainment) in Toronto.

## **(vii) The Mountain and Beyond**

### **Program Description**

The Mountain and Beyond (Health and Welfare Canada, 1993) is a collaborative program developed with the support of Health and Welfare Canada by a number of public service organizations

including the Canadian Teachers' Federation, the Canadian Bar Association, the Canadian Council of Churches, the Canadian Psychological Association, the Canadian Association of Social Workers, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Nurses Association, and the Canadian Medical Association. This program addresses domestic violence in an interdisciplinary manner through a kit containing a videotape, activities, fact sheets, and resources.

#### **(viii) Prevention of Violence in the School**

##### **Program Description**

The Prevention of Violence in the School program was developed by the Department of Community Health at The Montreal General Hospital in 1989 for students in grade 4. The goal of this program is to make students aware of their capacity to reduce violence in themselves and in their environment.

Four key objectives repeated throughout the program's nine 50-minute weekly sessions are designed to enable students to identify different forms of violence in themselves and others, develop empathy for the victim, predict and comprehend the consequences of a violent act, and explore and practice non-violent alternatives. The teacher's manual states that "[t]he following points must constantly be driven home: effect of violence on the victim, consequences of violence for the aggressor, and peaceful alternatives to be used in resolving conflicts" (p. ii).

Violence and its various forms, fighting, stealing,

vandalism, intimidation, racism, contempt, and verbal abuse are the issues the program addresses. The teacher's manual, Prevention of Violence in the School, and a corresponding student's workbook contain a host of theme-related activities, exercises, videos, and stories. Additional materials include activities on feelings, self-concept, and tolerance.

Fifty-minute lesson plans provided in the teachers' manual describe the activities for the leader and students. For example, the lesson plan for the issue of fighting instructs the leader to spend five minutes reviewing the preceding session and introducing the theme for the day. Twenty-five minutes are spent on activities which explore the meaning of conflict, causes of and factors leading to the escalation of conflict, and ways of resolving conflicts before they become violent. In the next 15-minute block, the leader uses the learning scenario as a concrete illustration of fighting. Students participate by working through the regular learning sequence. They explore the possible consequences for the aggressor, the impact on the victim, and the non-violent alternatives to the studied scenario. Using their new vocabulary, they summarize their chosen method of conflict resolution. Finally, the leader uses the last five minutes to emphasize the session's main points and students record their theme-related thoughts. Each of the nine themes follows a similar format.

**(ix) Response by Schools to Violence Prevention (RSVP)**

**Program Description**

Response by Schools to Violence Prevention (RSVP; Community Child Abuse Council of Hamilton-Wentworth, 1993) was developed by a tri-board partnership involving the Board of Education for the City of Hamilton, Wentworth County Board of Education, Hamilton-Wentworth Roman Catholic School Board, as well as representatives from 25 community agencies and services for children and youth. RSVP focuses on family violence prevention and training in conflict management.

RSVP was developed for elementary, middle, and secondary levels and provides continuous training from kindergarten to Ontario Academic Credits (OAC). The model teaches life and social skills, promotes team-teaching, involves parents, and is easily integrated into the curriculum. The empowerment of children to act in positive ways is a main program goal. Towards this end, six critical teachings, the centrepiece of RSVP, are woven into curriculum: Healthy Relationships, Communication, Self Esteem, Personal Safety, Prevention of Stereotyping, and Family Violence Awareness. Key concepts of RSVP are understanding healthy relations, developing communication and problem-solving skills (including conflict resolution skills), building self esteem, learning to recognize stereotyping, increasing knowledge of personal safety issues, and gaining awareness about family violence, cohesively combine to empower children to act in positive ways. Gaining strengths in these areas is believed to



help students deal with family violence, a root cause of violent behaviour. --

The three RSVP manuals, RSVP Planning Guide for the Transition Years (1993), The Elementary Experience (1994), and The Secondary Experience (1994), are tailored for age-related and optimum implementation of the model and follow a "how to" format. The RSVP material covers cross-disciplinary theme planners, staff in-service, outlines for parent in-service sessions, fact sheets, and annotated bibliographies.

### **Evaluation**

Pre-and post-surveys are an integral part of program implementation. A number of school-based evaluation studies involving formative and summative designs are available. Anecdotal evidence has demonstrated that learning and change do occur. Short-term results are both tangible (e.g., fewer fights on the playground, improved school climate, less teaching time spent on disruptions in the classroom) and subtle (e.g., attitudinal changes). On the other hand, long-term benefits have not been assessed although the development of a formal evaluation is currently underway. Factors identified as contributing to program success were a needs assessment that clearly reflected the school community, support and leadership from school administrators, commitment of staff, and staff awareness of the relations among family violence, emotional problems, and maladaptive classroom outcomes such as disruptive behaviour problems and poor academic work.

**(x) Second Step**

**Program Description**

Second Step is a widely-used violence prevention program developed by the Seattle-based Committee for Children (1990). This curriculum is designed to provide students in grades K-8 with opportunities to learn and execute skills in empathy, impulse control, and anger management. The purpose of the program is to "reduce impulsive and aggressive behavior in children and increase their level of social competency" (Committee for Children, 1987-1988, p. 1).

Pro-social skills are taught sequentially and are tailored to specific grade levels (i.e., preschool-kindergarten, grades 1-3, 4-5, and 6-8). The first unit covers a range of empathy-related skills. Students learn to recognize other people's feelings, to view situations from different perspectives, and to respond empathetically. Empathy provides a foundation upon which other skills are built.

The second unit helps students develop impulse control. This involves the strengthening of problem-solving skills (students learn to solve conflicts in non-violent ways) and behavioural skills (students learn to join in, share, interrupt politely, take turns, and resist the temptation to steal). The third unit teaches anger management whereby students learn specific techniques to identify and deal with feelings of anger.

**Evaluation**

A number of evaluations of the Second Step program has been

reported. A series of early studies, conducted when the program was in the development stage (referred to as "formative" evaluation), examined the program's impact on children in grades 1-3 (Committee for Children, 1987-1988), 4-5 (Committee for Children, 1988-1989), and 6-8 (Committee for Children, 1989-1990). In these studies, the curriculum was taught for students in select classes in one or more schools. Classes for which the curriculum was not provided served as comparison groups. Using interviews with students conducted before and after the program, it was found that students' knowledge and skills on violence prevention increased significantly at all three grade levels for those classes which received the program relative to the comparison groups. More specifically, significant differences were observed on interview items pertaining to predicting consequences, anger management, and students' brainstorming solutions to interpersonal problems. Moreover, teachers felt comfortable with the lessons and reported that students were involved in the curriculum. A formative evaluation study of the program's effectiveness with preschool-kindergarten level children (Moore & Beland, 1992) revealed significant effects on the same skill areas noted above for the treatment group, relative to the comparison sample. Interpretation of these studies' findings, however, is hampered by numerous methodological shortcomings including very small sample sizes, a lack of indicators for students' behaviour, the use of the relatively weak quasi-experimental research design, and a focus

on short-term results.

In a doctoral thesis, Orpinas (1993) evaluated the effectiveness of Second Step in grade 6 classes in Houston, Texas. Her findings indicated that the program was successful in reducing aggression among boys in two of the six targeted classes. There was an overall increase in both knowledge about violence and skills to reduce violence, but the intervention did not affect students' attitudes toward aggression. Moreover, teachers identified the following problems with the implementation of the program: (a) lack of time allotted for lessons; (b) lessons were too infrequent; (c) curriculum was too complex for students; (d) students became bored with the role-playing, a major component of the curriculum; and (e) violence training should have begun at a younger age.

Another study evaluating the implementation of Second Step in grades K-6 was undertaken in western Canada by Madak and Bravi (1992). This study focused on the use of the program in an elementary school over a six-month period. Using behaviour incident reports over a two-year period and surveys with teachers, the findings indicated a 20.4% increase in behavioural incidents after the program was implemented than before. Teachers rated the overall quality of the program as either "average" or "very good" but also indicated that the program had little effect on the students' behaviour. At the same time, some teachers indicated that they became better able to manage student misbehaviour. The authors concluded that "the program had no

effect, or even a negative effect on student behaviour" (p. 1). Several limitations of this study were the lack of a comparison school and small sample size.

**(xi) Thumbs-Down: A Classroom Response to Violence Towards Women  
Program Description**

Thumbs-Down: A Classroom Response to Violence Towards Women was developed in 1990 by the Canadian Teachers' Federation to help prevent violence against women and children. This resource manual and bibliography, written in both English and French, covers a range of issues including wife assault awareness, children who witness family violence, conflict resolution skills, dating violence, and bullying. Classroom discussion and activities are the vehicles for achieving the program's objective of increasing awareness. The manual includes age-appropriate activities for students in grades k-12 as well as ways to integrate themes into the language arts and visual arts curricula. Lessons identify objectives and provide a list of sample activities. For example, a lesson for children in grades k-3 is entitled "People aren't for hitting." The lesson is to reinforce the importance of non-violence in relationships.

The issue of conflict is then introduced through a familiar resource such as story telling or Magic Circle. The teacher encourages students' to talk about their experience with conflict and to verbalize their feelings. They are challenged to identify "helpful and "not helpful" ways of dealing with conflict. Additionally, students are asked to define a bully and bullying

and to explore and discuss related issues. Finally, students might create a poster or button with the theme "people are not for hitting." A list of titles for subject-related read-aloud books is provided.

**(xii) Values, Influences, and Peers (VIP)**

**Program Description**

Values, Influences, and Peers (VIP; Ontario Ministry of Education and Ministry of the Solicitor General, 1984) is a prevention program for grade 6 students. VIP assists students to deal with transition periods, preparing them for new life situations and choices. VIP's thrust is to (a) raise students' awareness of values considered fundamental to the well-being of society, (b) scrutinize the influence and power of peer pressure, and (c) help develop skills which lead to healthy relationships. Topics include From Values to Standards, Creating Impressions, Belittling Others, Peer Pressure, Decision-Making, Authority and Authority Figures, Being Truthful, The Dangers of Drugs, Vandalism and Destructive Behaviour, Shoplifting is Stealing, Youth and the Law, and Friends and Friendships.

The recommended 30 to 40 minute sessions are normally presented on a continuous basis several times a week. The program format is activity-oriented and participatory. It is advised that the VIP schedule includes a minimum of three meetings with parents. An additional recommendation is that police are involved in the program delivery.

Field trips are also encouraged to heighten a topic's impact. Consequently, students might visit a police station and take part in a mock arrest or talk to a judge in a court setting. Such field trip experiences give students a realistic, first-hand look at the consequences of breaking the law.

**(xiii) Violence dans les relations amoureuses chez les jeunes  
(VIRAJ)**

**Program Description**

The Violence dans les relations amoureuses chez les jeunes (VIRAJ) program aims to reduce and prevent violence in dating relationships. Developed in Quebec and adopted by Quebec's Ministry of Education, this innovative program serves secondary students in school boards across Quebec. Piloted in 10 secondary schools in 1992, VIRAJ examines and challenges the role that male peer pressure plays in promoting violence in adolescent relationships. Students learn behaviours that promote healthier lifestyles and relationships. There are two central areas of focus, understanding of how a need to assume "control" in a relationship often leads to violence and the qualities of an egalitarian, healthy dating/love relationship.

Presently, all Quebec secondary schools have the option to offer VIRAJ. The ministry provides inservice training for teachers and social workers who work with students. A participants' guide to classroom activities and a guide that examines causes of and issues related to dating violence are two available resources.

## **(C) Discipline Policies**

### **Program Description**

As long as there have been schools, there have been policies governing student behaviour and student discipline. These policies establish and maintain the necessary rules and expectations for what constitutes acceptable student behaviour. The long-term purpose of developing and promoting Code of Conduct policies is to teach self-discipline and self-control and foster a sense of responsibility of one's own actions.

Moreover, there has also been a need for special provisions for a small number of students who display a flagrant disregard for rules; students who are disruptive, disobedient, aggressive, and violent. For these students, policies are required which stipulate the consequences to the student who is in violation of the school's code of conduct. These policies must be seen as (a) a reasonable consequence for the perpetrator, (b) sufficient to satisfy the victim's need for retribution, (c) an effective deterrent to committing the transgression again and/or be appropriately rehabilitative, and (d) setting an example for the rest of the student body.

It is widely recognized that developing an appropriate code of behaviour and student discipline policy that establishes achievable goals, clear rules and procedures, fosters a positive school climate (Aleem & Moles, 1993; Landen, 1992), is communicated clearly to students (Alschuler, 1980; Hébert, 1991), and is implemented in a fair, just, and consistent manner



(Alschuler, 1980; Mendler, 1993; Schostak, 1986) is a major step in the prevention of school violence (Alschuler, 1980; Duke & Meckel, 1980; Duke & Canady, 1991; Gaustad, 1991; B. Johnson, Whittington, & Oswald, 1994; La Rose, 1993; Olweus, 1991; D. D. Smith, 1984; Williams, 1993). Such a code of behaviour should be developed through democratic principles that are agreed upon by all stakeholders such as administrators, teachers, support staff, parents, and students (Alschuler, 1980; Hawkins & Weis, 1985), have high expectations (Williams, 1993), always preserve the dignity of its participants (Mendler, 1993), and be universal in application (MacKechnie, 1967). Other factors that are conducive to the promotion of good discipline are smaller schools, self-contained classrooms, and extended roles for teachers (Aleem & Moles, 1993). Leithwood and Montgomery (1982) suggest that principals who pay considerable attention to school discipline and interpersonal relationships are more effective educational leaders.

Effective discipline policies also need to have specific consequences for violations of the expected behaviour. Students need to know that they will be held accountable for their behaviour if they commit an offence. Policies and programs must be implemented in a firm, fair, and consistent manner so that students know that consequences will follow inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour. "Although well grounded in the history of educational practices, punishment should be used only rarely in school settings" (D. D. Smith, 1984, p. 90). At the same

time, consequences should be both commensurate with the infraction committed (Oppenheimer & Ziegler, 1990; Slee, 1988; Wilson & Cowell, 1990) and developmentally appropriate (e.g., Waterloo County Board of Education, no date).

**(D) Interventions for Aggressive Children**

**(i) The Montréal Longitudinal Study of Disruptive Boys**

The Montréal Longitudinal Study of Disruptive Boys (Tremblay, McCord, Boileau, Charlebois, Gagnon, LeBlanc, & Larivée, 1991; Tremblay, Vitaro, Bertrand, LeBlanc, Beauchesne, Boileau, & David, 1992) is a large-scale multifaceted prevention program involving a community sample of boys living in low socioeconomic areas of Montreal identified in kindergarten as disruptive. As part of this long-term research project, affiliated with the University of Montreal, the boys were assessed and randomly assigned to either a treatment group or one of two no-treatment control groups. The participants in the treatment condition subsequently received various services including parent management training (training parents to give positive reinforcement for prosocial behaviour, punish effectively without being abusive, manage family crises, and generalize learned skills) and social skills, play fantasy, and television viewing training for the children. The services were provided by five university-trained staff over a period of two years when the boys were between seven and nine years of age.

## **Evaluation**

The program's impact has been extensively evaluated over a period of five years when the boys were between 10 and 15 years old. Follow-up assessments gathered from teachers, peers, mothers, and the participating children indicated that the program was highly effective to reduce the long-term negative outcomes associated with aggression and delinquency. In the area of school achievements, by age 12, children in the treatment group were significantly more likely to be in an age-appropriate regular class and had less serious school adjustment problems than the control condition boys. However, these differences levelled off by age 15 (Vitaro & Tremblay, 1994). As well, teacher-rated aggressive behaviour while the boys were aged 6 to 12 was significantly lower among the treated than the nontreated condition samples. In general, the program "succeeded in altering the course that generally characterizes disruptive boys from disadvantaged backgrounds" (Vitaro & Tremblay, 1994, p. 2). This was particularly evident within the school setting, based on teachers' perceptions.

### **(ii) Ontario Tri-Ministry Project**

#### **Program Description**

The Ontario Tri-Ministry Project (Offord & Boyle, 1993), supported by the Ontario Ministries of Education and Training, Health, and Community and Social Services has three major components, parent management training, social skills/behaviour management training, and academic tutoring that are offered to

students in the participating schools from grades K-3. This project is a six-year intervention provided in 60 schools at 11 school boards across the province. An extensive research design has been incorporated into the implementation of this intervention in order to evaluate its effects on children identified as at-risk and not at-risk for maladjustment. However, no results are available, to date.

### **(iii) Pairing and Pair Counselling**

#### **Program Description**

A study by Selman, Schultz, Nakkula, Barr, Watts, and Richmond (1992) indicates that pairing and pair counselling provide opportunities for isolated or rejected children to learn and practice skills in playground interaction. The authors suggest that the use of pairing could also be applied in the classroom to promote critical thinking skills and to engage children in the learning process.

### **(E) Miscellaneous Programs**

#### **(i) Aftermath Support Services**

#### **Program Description**

In the process of coping with violence in schools, there is an additional issue: What happens to the victim? The necessity for providing relief for posttraumatic stress disorder (Hayman, Sommers-Flanagan, & Parsons, 1987) became evident after the Vietnam War in the suffering of returned military personnel. Victims of lesser violence such as bullying and assaults on teachers may also suffer long-term effects which must be a target

of violence prevention programming (Collison, Bowden, Patterson, Snyder, Sandall, & Wellman, 1987).

Aside from the development of a crisis response team (Collison et al., 1987), a school or a district should develop trauma counselling and therapy procedures to deal with injured and dying victims, or the terminally ill, their friends, associates, and witnesses. This stage in the violence prevention process has been called "postvention" (S. Braaten & B. Braaten, 1988) and is a necessary consideration of great complexity since it involves many different procedures, decisions, and actions and the effects of which can persist for long periods (O'Neill, 1992). Violence-prevention programs are available for dealing with victims such as those that focus on family violence and child abuse.

**(ii) The Kindergarten Intervention Project (KIP)**

**Program Description**

The Kindergarten Intervention Program (KIP) is a school-based program for Junior and Senior kindergarten children developed by the Peel Board of Education (Lennox, Gotlieb, Kronitz, Hart, Allan, & Read, 1991). KIP, developed as an initiative from teachers, promotes the development of children's prosocial behaviours and seeks to reduce aggressive and acting-out behaviours. The program is described as a preventative, ecologically-based, multimodal, and multidisciplinary approach that helps children adapt to the classroom and helps reduce the incidence and gravity of behavioral problems in the target

population.

KIP has three main components, teacher support, parent involvement, and direct service to children. Each component has its own set of objectives and corresponding strategies. For example, within the teacher component, a goal is to foster an increased awareness of child development. Strategies include collaborative support provided by resource staff, and classroom visits and modelling by team resource staff. Strategies for the parent-component goal of promoting parent involvement as "equal partners" include parenting workshops, parent visits to classrooms, a book bag program, and classroom newsletters. Classroom-wide social skills training is a student-component strategy which helps meet the goals of promoting prosocial behaviours and preventing the development of aggressive behaviour patterns.

### **Evaluation**

An evaluation using a treatment and control group and a range of measures indicated that involvement in KIP had a positive effect on teachers' skill level and knowledge base, home-school partnerships, and children's social and problem behaviours in the classroom (Gotlieb, Lennox, Kronitz, Allan, Hart, & Read, 1994).

### **(iii) Projet d'une école pacifique (PEP)**

#### **Program Description**

The Projet d'une école pacifique is a collaborative effort of an individual primary school in the Ville d'Anjou (École

primaire St-Joseph) and Opération surveillance - ANJOU (OSA). This intervention was structured around the needs of the school in response to an administrative request from the subject school. This school was seen as neither more nor less violent than others.

There are three strands to the program addressing students, teachers, and parents. The students' program consists of six workshops focusing on (a) the many faces of violence, (b) human responses to violence (e.g., use role-playing to understand the positive and negative reactions of one person on another), (c) the relationship between dimensions of personality and prosocial behaviour, (d) conflict resolution training, and (e) the use of a mock trial in which the concepts of violence and non-violence become issues before the "court." Teachers attend two half-day workshops examining intervention strategies. Parents are invited to attend a series of workshops addressing violence in the media and the phenomenon of "petites violences" (rude and inappropriate behaviours).

#### **Evaluation**

A formal evaluation, conducted after one school year, had students from the subject school and students from a similar school that did not participate in the program complete a survey. The results indicated that students in both schools tended to have peaceful values, with girls having more peaceful values than boys. As well, compared to students in the non-participating school, students in the subject school were better able to

recognize the disadvantages of violent solutions and the advantages of non-violent solutions.

**(iv) Retreat for the Future: An Anti-Sexism Workshop for Adolescents**

**Program Description**

The Parallel Retreats on Gender Issues is a retreat program developed by the Toronto Board of Education. While many school boards have equity-building efforts in place such as inclusionary curricula and teaching practices which encourage greater female participation and success in math, science, and technology, this model appears unique. The program presents students with the "big picture" on gender issues. It provides a clear focus on the self-perpetuating constructs of gender roles in society, revealing how sexism is a natural by-product of inequality between the sexes. It also raises awareness of how forms of male violence, sexual harassment, date rape, and wife assault are extreme manifestations of sexism. Workshops, dramatic arts, and discussions enable students to see how inequality and sexism hurt both young men and women. For example, students look at the ways in which sexual harassment negatively impacts both females (who may feel intimidated, demeaned) and males (who may feel the heavy weight of male peer pressure to make sexist comments and gestures). The retreats offer both sexes the opportunity to challenge the limitations of traditional gender roles and to explore healthier ones. Participants are expected to share material with students in their home schools.



Representatives from 14 Ontario boards attended a training session in 1994. The Toronto Board model involved 80 secondary school students 40 females and 40 males from eight secondary schools. A male and female staff member from each school also participated. The young men and women attend separate retreats for the first three days. Program officials believe that this is a pivotal project component. Sex-segregated groups can provide a sense of safety and security that is sometimes not initially possible in mixed groups. Participants come together on the program's final day.

Students work through course material continuously over a four-day period rather than in traditional 40-minute segments. Students step out of the classroom and into a retreat environment which encourages a more relaxed atmosphere and greater openness. This also allows students and staff to step outside of the hierarchical structure of the teacher-student relationship. Teachers participate as facilitators, resource people, and "fellow human beings" in a situation of mutual respect.

The model distinguishes itself in other ways. It presents students with materials that they have often not encountered, delving into difficult and complex concepts. Discussions, exercises, and personal exploration carry the material. Issues that affect participants' lives include sexism, sexuality, violence, male-female relations, and changing expectations about what it means to be women and men. Another component involves whole group activities. Drama, role playing, skits, and soliloquy

are used to help students share feelings and use newly learned knowledge in a safe, active, and creative way.

### **Evaluation**

Project officials have found the model to be effective. Anecdotal reports indicate that, by the retreat's end, a majority of participants discovered that they had gained the individual and collective strength to challenge sexism.

### **(v) Programme de sensibilisation à la non-violence**

#### **Program Description**

Programme de sensibilisation à la non-violence was developed by Regroup'Elles inc. and used extensively by the Commission scolaire des Manoirs in 1993-1994. Designed for use in elementary schools, the program is activity-based, comprised of four hour-long sessions entitled les sentiments, l'estime de soi, la modification de comportement, and la négociation (or la résolution de conflit). The sessions are led by non-school personnel.

#### **Evaluation**

Two evaluations of this program were conducted. The first involved a teacher-completed questionnaire concerning session content and length. Generally, a high percentage of the teachers found the content of the program favourable, while the length of the program was met with varying levels of approval; some teachers found the sessions too long. As well, teachers were asked to rate the program in terms of changes in student behaviour, support materials, and overall quality of the

presentation. No results were provided for these items, however. A second evaluation conducted by the workshop leaders contained several general recommendations.

#### **(F) The School Environment**

Just as a disorganized home environment promotes disruptive behaviour among children, so too does a disorderly school environment contribute to the level of disruptive behaviour among students. G. D. Gottfredson, D. C. Gottfredson, and Hybl (1993), for example, noted that a disorderly school is characterized by (a) teachers who hold punitive attitudes, (b) rules that are not perceived as firm and clear and are not enforced, (c) poorly defined consequences for student misbehaviour, (d) students with low levels of beliefs in conventional rules, (e) disagreements between teachers and administrators over students' codes of conduct and appropriate responses to misbehaviour, and (f) a lack of resources for teaching. They argue that modifying the school environment to bring discipline policies, clearly defined responses to student misbehaviour, and teachers' attitudes and skill levels to manage classroom behaviour problems into alignment will have a positive impact on the rate of disruptive behaviours in the school.

As well, in a review of the literature, Aleem and Moles (1993) summarized the body of research on creating safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools. Three aspects of schools were identified as contributing to a disciplined environment: (a) emphasis on academics; (b) firm, fair, and consistent standards;

and (c) an ethic of caring in staff-student relationships. Aleem and Moles concluded by stating that "schools may do more to reduce student violence by creating a nurturing environment than by placing primary emphasis on trying to control student behavior" (p. 50).

**(i) Anti-Bullying Program**

**Program Description**

The Toronto Board of Education has developed a comprehensive anti-bullying program (1994b). The program reflects more than a decade of research that shows bullying negatively impacts both students and school climate and that interventions are possible and effective. Olweus (1993) noted that a national anti-bullying intervention implemented in Norway reduced bully/victim problems by 50%. Based on the Norwegian intervention, the Toronto board's program is an attempt to modify school climate by promoting a clear message that (a) violence is unacceptable, (b) sanctions will be applied for students who act in an aggressive and violent manner, and (c) "all members acknowledge responsibility to act in a way that encourages the participation and inclusion of all members" (1994b, p. 4) of the school community. The program has four levels of intervention.

(a) **School level** initiatives such as increased adult supervision in the halls and playgrounds and bully-themed conference days for teachers.

(b) **Parent level** efforts encourage parental involvement through meetings and newsletters which inform parents about issues

related to bullying and encourage them to talk with their children about this problem.

(c) **Classroom level** initiatives include curriculum units in drama and language arts which focus on bullying and exclusion, Learning Circle discussions which enable students to openly express their views and experiences, a mentoring program for students in senior grades, and peacemaker and conflict mediation programs which promote peer intervention in mediating conflicts.

(d) **Individual level** program components result in teachers talking to bullies and victims individually and students collectively. Talks with parents inform them of bully/victim-related problems and of their role in disciplining aggressive behaviour.

#### **Evaluation**

Evaluation is an ongoing part of the program implementation process. A number of evaluation studies are available on the Anti-Bullying programs (Pepler et al., 1993; Zeigler & Pepler, 1993). In one evaluation, data were collected at 6 (Zeigler & Pepler, 1993) and 18 months postintervention (Pepler et al., 1993). The results at both time periods were equivocal as to the program's effectiveness, indicating that bullying was a "pervasive and stable problem" (Zeigler & Pepler, 1993, p. 30). After 18 months, there was a 44% decrease in the number of children who reported bullying other children in the past five days, based on student self-reports. However, there was an increase in the number of children who reported being bullied

because of race and no change in the number of children who reported being bullied in a five day period. There was also a decrease in the number of children who felt uncomfortable watching an incident of bullying. The authors pointed out that "licking" a problem as common as bullying will not occur as a result of a brief intervention. "Behavioural change must be accompanied by attitudinal change" (Pepler et al., p. 8) which takes time. However, important strides were observed in self-reported bullying behaviour in the schools receiving treatment.

#### **(ii) School Watch Program**

##### **Program Description**

Initiated by the Calgary Board of Education, the premise of the School Watch Program is similar to a Neighbourhood Watch or Block Watch program which promotes community members' involvement in crime prevention. Within the milieu of the school, students are encouraged to participate in crime prevention within their "community." With student support, the School Watch program aims to reduce thefts, gang activity, drug abuse, and help identify intruders/unauthorized persons. Concurrently, as students assume greater responsibility in making their school a safer place, increased school pride and caring for each other and their school is presumed to occur.

The program has several key components including a student leadership team, School Resource Officer, and mail boxes for incident reports. Eight students selected by the assistant principal and Resource Officer sit on the Crime Prevention Board

and act as student leaders for the program. These students meet weekly to discuss crime-related incidents and produce a monthly newsletter highlighting particular incidents and crime prevention tips.

If a student is aware a crime has occurred or will occur, he or she is expected to complete an incident report form and deposit it in one of several special mail boxes located around the school. It is the Resource Officer's responsibility to collect the reports and take appropriate action.

### **Evaluation**

The School Watch program at John G. Diefenbaker High School in Calgary was evaluated in 1994. Four data-gathering methods were used. First, the School Watch student leadership team was interviewed. Second, a John Diefenbaker-School administration questionnaire was developed and administered. Third, a statistical report prepared by the Resource Officer compared numbers of reported infractions over a three-year period. Lastly, a student-staff questionnaire was completed by 679 students and teachers. The results indicated that the program was not well known or understood by students. The need for more information was underscored by the vast majority. At the same time, a majority of the staff and students reported that they supported the concept of a School Watch program.

### **(iii) Classroom Environment Program**

#### **Program Description**

Supportive teacher-student relationships and providing opportunities for students to interact and collaborate in cooperative groups were the focus of a five-year study conducted in three elementary schools in the United States (Solomon, Watson, Delucchi, Schaps, & Battisch, 1988). This longitudinal study followed a single cohort of students from grades k-4 and was replicated with a second cohort. The program, implemented by teachers within the classroom setting as a means of changing the class environment, consisted of cooperative activities that promote prosocial values and a child-centred approach to classroom management.

#### **Evaluation**

The results of the study indicated that, at the end of the fourth grade, children involved in the program were "more supportive, friendly, and helpful [and displayed] more spontaneous prosocial behaviour toward one another than children in a comparison class" (p. 545). The investigators also reported that participation in the program "did not undermine students' academic achievement" (p. 545). This study reinforces Dewey (1916) in the belief that engaged participation in classroom activities will prepare children for the democratic responsibilities of adulthood.



(iv) G. D. Gottfredson, D. C. Gottfredson, and Hybl (1993)

### Intervention Study

#### **Program Description**

A three-year longitudinal study was undertaken by G. D. Gottfredson et al. (1993) to assess the effects of a school environment program on conduct behaviour problems among children in eight middle schools in South Carolina. Six schools served as treatment groups and two schools were the control conditions. The program consisted of four components: (a) review and revision of school discipline policy; (b) institution of a behaviour tracking system; (c) implementation of teacher training on classroom organization and management; and (d) use of positive reinforcement by teachers.

#### **Evaluation**

The results indicated that the level of program implementation varied across the six treatment schools from moderate to high. In several schools, the principal was replaced shortly after program implementation severely limiting the schools' involvement and enthusiasm. Teachers in the high implementation schools were found to be more favourable to the program than teachers in the moderate implementation schools. Positive effects on student-reported classroom order and organization, rule clarity, and student misbehaviour and teacher-reported student attentiveness and disruptive behaviour were observed, which were most evident in the high implementation schools. In conclusion, "[c]hanges from pre- to posttreatment on

measures of program outcomes generally indicated a positive change for high implementation schools only" (p. 204). It was also noted that the positive effects were made as a result of a considerable expenditure of time and money, although this was judged to be reasonable given the seriousness of student misbehaviour. The authors reported that the most effective school-based programming efforts would combine a behaviour-management for identified aggressive students with procedures for environmental change. This study emphasizes the point that much can be gained from a school-based program when all stakeholders fully endorse the program, leading to its full implementation.

**(v) Positively Proactive**

**Program Description**

Positively Proactive is an holistic approach to school and schoolyard behavioural management developed by the Ottawa Roman Catholic Separate School Board (Pankow & Iozzo, 1994). It promotes prosocial skills and aims to reduce the number of conflicts in the classroom and schoolyard for students in grades k-6. A cornerstone of the program is the promotion and recognition of appropriate student behaviour. Prosocial behaviours receive positive reinforcement both within and outside of the classroom. Program implementation, presented in a comprehensive manual, involves raising awareness of what is meant by appropriate behaviour, specifically, the consistent use of strategies to acknowledge prosocial behaviour and conflict

resolution/peer mediation techniques. An integral aspect of the program involves integrating prosocial themes into the classroom curriculum.

An equally explicit system exists for responding to inappropriate behaviour on the schoolyard. Consequences for infractions are clearly posted so that students are aware of them. Responses to minor and major infractions follow a four-step sequence.

### **Evaluation**

The results of an evaluation study in one of the pilot schools located in a community that suffers from a high rate of unemployment and the accompanying stressors clearly show the program to be well accepted and effective in curbing inappropriate schoolyard behaviour. Findings were tallied in five categories including total number of incidents, interventions as a function of the day of the week, interventions as a function of the time of day, and students' and teachers' opinions. Results showed that incidents decreased markedly after the program was introduced. Warnings were down from 30 to 4 each week. As well, an overwhelming majority of participants supported the program. In an opinionnaire, students showed enthusiasm for the program's use of coupons. Ninety-two percent of teachers found integrating the program into curriculum to be "very effective."

### **(G) Schools and the Community**

Schools alone cannot provide all the help that is needed for

children with behavioural, social, and emotional problems as the complex sources of these problems often lie outside the purview of the school (Allen-Meares, 1990; Edwards & Young, 1992; Kazdin, 1987; Theilheimer, 1992). It is suggested that schools enlist the assistance and cooperation of community-based agencies in order to provide a multidisciplinary approach to violence prevention and management (Simpson et al., 1991). In fact, some schools in the United States have established clinics within their walls for social service organizations (McDonald, 1992).

There are many different problems that can be addressed through school-community-service collaborations including sexual abuse (Peterson, 1993, Quast-Wheatley, 1988), child abuse and neglect (Howorko & Johnson, 1993), witnesses of women abuse (Jaffe, Hastings, & Reitzel, 1992), poverty (Connell, 1994), relationship violence (Jaffe, Sudermann, Reitzel, & Killip, 1992), and general crime and weapons violations (Makin, 1994).

Family violence is another concern for schools to address collaboratively with community groups (Lystad, 1982; Mulligan & Mitchell, 1992; Piccoli, 1987; Tucker, 1991). In an analysis of the support that institutions can offer to victims of family violence in a collaborative fashion, Lystad (1982) suggests that schools provide socialization, non-violent role models, curriculum-based non-violent instruction and, for teenagers and young adults, instruction in family functioning, and child care. Tucker suggests activities that teachers of primary (grades K-3), junior (grades 4-6), and intermediate (grades 7-10) students can

use in the classroom to provide an understanding of the effects of family violence.

(i) Earls court School-based Program (ESP)

**Program Description**

According to the Ontario Child Health Study (OCHS; Offord et al., 1986), children attending schools in "high-risk" areas of a city, characterized by subsidized housing and low income, are the most at risk for conduct problems. An example of a school/community-based agency collaboration is the Earls court School-Based Programme (ESP) offered by Earls court Child and Family Centre in Toronto. The ESP is a multifaceted intervention conducted within local inner-city schools which incorporates both prevention and intensive intervention components for the needs of high-risk children. Prevention components are offered school-wide to create a more positive school culture and to prevent the escalation of behavior problems. Prevention components include (a) social skills training in the classroom, (b) prosocial theme weeks, and (c) peer mediation. ESP staff and teachers co-lead half-hour, weekly social skills training sessions. Prosocial theme weeks highlight and reinforce prosocial behavior through special activities and integration of the theme into regular curriculum instruction. Peer mediation involves training a select group of students in mediation skills that they apply during lunch and recess to help students resolve conflicts peacefully.

Intervention components are designed to decrease aggressive, antisocial behavior and increase prosocial behavior in targeted children. These components include cognitive-behavioural social skills training and family outreach. Social skills training occurs in one of three formats, individually, in pairs, or small groups, depending on the needs and strengths of the child. Each child has an individualized goal to work on that is regularly evaluated with the child, teacher, and parents. The nature of the family outreach varies from information-sharing about the child's progress to helping parents get involved in community recreational programs and family counselling. The targeted children also benefit from the school-wide activities by facilitating the generalization and maintenance of their newly learned prosocial skills.

### **Evaluation**

A recent evaluation study of the ESP was conducted to examine the relative effectiveness of a school-based prevention-only program with an intervention-with-prevention program for teacher-identified aggressive children (Day & Hartley, 1993). The results indicated that the ESP was effective in decreasing the problem behaviors and enhancing the social skills of the treatment group. Indeed, comparisons with a group of nonaggressive children indicated that the treatment group's scores on measures of behaviour problems were not significantly different at discharge. These findings support the clinical

utility of this multifaceted approach to treatment with this population. At the same time, the study failed to provide support for a prevention-only program for identified aggressive children.

#### **(ii) Youth Leadership Challenge Project**

##### **Program Description**

Hickcox and Bedard (1994), at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), evaluated the Youth Leadership Challenge Project of the Safe School Task Force, a program designed to give at-risk students an opportunity to experience a different kind of learning and leadership practice at Bark Lake, a wilderness camp north-east of Toronto. In an experience similar to "Outward Bound," 260 students and more than 60 teachers/mentors spent five days engaged in outdoor activities designed to supplement leadership skills training, team building, group training skills, outdoor adventure skills, student teacher relationships and stay-in-school project planning. This program ran for eight weeks with 36 students, four to six teachers and six Bark Lake staff each week.

##### **Evaluation**

The evaluation was ethnographic in methodology and the results were generally positive.

##### **(H) Staff Development**

The provision of inservice staff development is essential to all change in the school system. This activity operates on two

levels. On one level, it prepares and equips staff with strategies and responses to a new initiative. On a second level, it reflects an administrative commitment to the program or policy that is being promoted.

(i) Les "petite violences" à l'école primaire, Éduquer et prévenir

#### Program Description

Les "petite violences," developed by the Commission scolaire Jérôme-Le Royer (Leroux, & Mantha, no date), is based on the premise that, in the daily exchanges between individuals, "petite violences" (rude and inappropriate behaviours) are committed that may or may not affect the relationship between the individuals. The program assumes that each individual possesses certain "powers" which can be abused or abusive. In effect, the concept of "powers" relates to the balance of self-esteem and respect for others that all persons should have. The developers of this program assume that the net result obtained through ignoring these acts can lead to an increase in the level of existing violence in both schools and society.

This program is designed for children from ages 5 to 12 years, on the assumption that it is in this age range that children become less egocentric and more empathic towards others. The program takes the form of a workshop for elementary teachers and is structured around four themes: comprendre, se connaître, agir, and faire agir, offering 32 activities sequenced to develop skills to enable them to assist their students. The program



provides teachers with strategies for developing in-class and in-school activities to improve relationships between children and between children and adults. Sufficient activities are provided for a three-day workshop which may be reduced to one day.

#### **(I) Site Security Programs**

##### **Program Description**

The implementation of security procedures was one of the earliest attempts to create violence-free schools. Advocates of this type of program encourage (a) the use of metal detectors to reduce the number of weapons brought into the building (Harrington-Lueker, 1992; Kongslem, 1992), (b) sweeping searches of students' desks and lockers (Gaustad, 1991), (c) a survey of the school architecture to determine "danger zones" (areas with inadequate lighting that are difficult to supervise) (Kneedler, 1990; Murdick & Gartin, 1993), and (d) the establishment of in-school security force (Grealy, 1979). Some schools report the success of a School Liaison Officer program in creating a school atmosphere in which police and students can cooperate in contributing to safety (Kneedler, 1990; LaLonde, 1993). As well, increased adult monitoring and surveillance in the school playground may serve to decrease aggressive incidents (Olweus, 1991).

Trespassers are another concern related to the security of schools (Symons, 1993). In Canada, most provincial Education and School Acts indicate that the presence of persons in a school other than students, school board employees, and parents on

school business is an offence punishable by fine and/or imprisonment. Most schools have signs posted indicating this fact and some schools use senior students to monitor halls and lock external doors some schools use two-way communication devices for security purposes (Gentile, 1992). However, as Landen (1992) has noted:

Metal detectors, drug and weapon-sniffing dogs, security personnel, and restrictive rules and regulations are not solutions--they are techniques to handle the problem on an ad hoc basis. School boards may have to employ some, or all, of these measures to regain control, but they also need to develop an overall plan for school discipline and safety....Choosing curricula, providing staff training, and planning for crisis management are integral components of a school violence program. And, in the end, sound policy development is a school system's best prevention and control mechanism (p. 4-5).

Moreover, one student in Ontario remarked that, "[m]etal detectors and locker searches would simply turn schools into prisons....I don't think that's a good learning atmosphere" (Polanyi, 1994, p. 11).

#### **(J) Suspension and Expulsion**

##### **Program Description**

Suspension and expulsion, usually considered a last resort measure for dealing with serious misbehaviour, involves prohibiting a student from entering the school premises for a

certain amount of time. A suspension may be in-school (ISS) or out of school and for a definite, set period of time (e.g., 5 to 30 days) or indefinite. Expulsion involves prohibiting the student from ever enrolling back into that school or to a school within that school board. In some school boards, students have the right to appeal their case for re-admission. Sampling board policies from several provinces across Canada and some boards in the United States, O'Reilly and Sargent (1994) reported the following types misbehaviours for which suspension/expulsion are applied: possession, threat of use, or use of a weapon (prohibited or non-prohibited), violence against person or property, use of alcohol or drugs on school premises, habitual truancy, neglect of duty, tardiness, persistent and wilful disobedience, and smoking.

According to O'Reilly and Sargent (1994) suspension/expulsion serves to (a) remove the offending student from the environment, (b) protect the rights of the other students and staff to a safe school environment, (c) provide a consequence to the misbehaviour, (d) send a message to the students and parents of the serious nature of the behaviour, (e) act as a deterrent to other students for the same misbehaviour, and (f) acknowledge that the student has forfeited his or her right to formal instruction for a period or time or indefinitely. The disadvantages are that suspension/expulsion (a) "fails to provide the student with alternate methods for dealing with situations in the future," (b) "jeopardizes the student's progress in

education," (c) offers the chance for the student who dislikes school to avoid it, and (d) "in rare cases may jeopardize members of society at large as an unsupervised, potentially violent young person roams a neighbourhood" (p. 4).

Slee (1988) has noted a tendency in Australia, Britain, and the United States to overuse suspension as a response to student misbehaviour. Similar observations have been made about the use of suspension in Canadian schools (Oppenheimer & Zeigler). Furthermore, the suitability of suspension as a form of punishment is questionable on educational grounds and on the grounds that suspension often casts the offending student into the community without adequate supports (A. T. Adams, 1992; Aleem & Moles, 1993; Ferrone & Piraino, 1990; Hochman & Worner, 1987; Moles, 1990; Oppenheimer & Zeigler; D. D. Smith, 1984). At the same time, the practice is often justified (perhaps with the same good intention as time-outs) for certain serious behaviours and for individuals whose behaviour is so refractory that their presence in the school is a threat to the safety of others.

#### **Evaluation**

With regard to the effectiveness of suspension and expulsion practices, O'Reilly and Sargent (1994), concluded that "[t]here is consensus in the literature that a sense of self-discipline cannot be developed by the use of student exclusion alone. Authors...have little faith that suspension alone is effective in either reforming a misbehaving student or in shaping an entire student culture" (p. 15). Indeed, suspensions are often applied

to repeat offenders.

Clearly, there is a need for alternative-to-suspension programs with an aim towards rehabilitation (Aleem & Moles, 1993; Duke & Meckel, 1980; G. D. Gottfredson & D. C. Gottfredson, 1985; Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1994b; Tattum, 1989). Alternate programs may be conducted on- or off-site and operated by the school board itself or in collaboration with community agencies which specialize in conduct problem children and youth. Examples of alternate to suspension programs include anger-management (Whittington & Moran, 1990), behaviour modification (O'Reilly & Sargent, 1994), and peer counselling (La Rose, 1993; D. D. Smith, 1984). Interventions are usually developed as a range or hierarchy of consequences (Curwin & Mendler, 1980; D. D. Smith, 1984), moving from "time out," to a special cool-off room, office referrals, detentions, in-school suspensions, and counselling sessions. Hochman and Worner (1987), for example, reported on a successful six-week program for ISS students involving group counselling.

In spite of the evidence against their effectiveness, the use of suspension and expulsion appears to be waxing, carried along by the tide of "zero tolerance" and a desire to apply harsher consequences in response to student violence. At the same time, school boards need to make available additional support services and alternative-to-suspension programs for suspended and expelled students.

APPENDIX B

Urban Areas Included in the Survey

## URBAN AREAS

Area	Population
<b>BRITISH COLUMBIA</b>	
Vancouver	1,409,361
Victoria	262,223
Matsqui	92,975
Nanaimo	62,731
Prince George	62,713
Kelowna	57,945
Kamloops	57,466
White Rock	51,712
Port Hammond-Haney	43,223
Chilliwack	37,942
<b>ALBERTA</b>	
Calgary	710,677
Edmonton	703,066
Lethbridge	60,974
Red Deer	58,134
Medicine Hat	47,393
Fort McMurray	34,706
<b>SASKATCHEWAN</b>	
Saskatoon	186,058
Regina	179,178
Moose Jaw	34,644
Prince Albert	34,219
<b>MANITOBA</b>	
Winnipeg	612,769
Brandon	38,565

## URBAN AREAS (cont'd)

Area	Population
<b>ONTARIO</b>	
Toronto	3,550,733
Ottawa	572,215
Hamilton	553,679
Kitchener	332,235
London	310,585
St. Catherines-Niagara	290,336
Windsor	223,242
Oshawa	174,014
Sudbury	110,666
Thunder Bay	109,333
Kingston	94,710
Guelph	87,976
Brantford	81,997
Sarnia-Clearwater	79,900
Barrie	78,477
Sault Ste. Marie	72,822
Peterborough	69,530
Belleville	62,687
North Bay	54,396
Cornwall	47,137
Chatham	43,557
<b>QUEBEC</b>	
Montreal	2,905,995
Quebec City	574,397
Hull	178,495
Chicoutimi-Jonquière	112,500
Sherbrooke	112,365
Trois-Rivières	111,393
Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu	60,960
Châteauguay	60,492
Shawinigan	48,240
Drummondville	47,956



## URBAN AREAS (cont'd)

Area	Population
<b>QUEBEC (cont'd)</b>	
Granby	46,255
Saint-Hyacinthe	45,119
Saint-Jérôme	43,696
Sorel	40,387
Salaberry-de-Valleyfield	38,970
Beloeil	38,334
<b>NEW BRUNSWICK</b>	
Saint John	90,457
Moncton	80,744
Fredericton	45,364
<b>PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND</b>	
Charlottetown	33,153
<b>NOVA SCOTIA</b>	
Halifax	253,704
<b>NEWFOUNDLAND</b>	
St. John's	121,027

(All population statistics are from Statistics Canada - Census, 1992.)

APPENDIX C

Codesheet

PROVINCE \_\_\_\_\_

POLICY TYPES \_\_\_\_\_  
COMPONENTS \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL BOARD	
	Community Focus
	Intervention/Prevention
	Behaviour/Discipline
	Response/Consequences
	Weapons
	Trespassers
	Intimidation/Bullying/Threats
	Vandalism
	Robbery/Extortion/Theft
	Discrimination
	Fighting
	Physical Assault
	Sexual Assault
	Verbal Harassment
	Sexual Harassment
	Gangs
	Substance Abuse (Drugs/Alcohol)
	Responding to Emergencies
	Site Security
	Delegating Administrative Responsibilities
	Defining a Code of Conduct
	Communicating to Stakeholders
	Involvement of Stakeholders
	Promoting a Positive School Climate
	Intervention/Prevention Procedures
	Reporting Violent Incidents
	Recording Violent Incidents
	Staff Development
	Police Liaison
	Involving Committees in Policy Development
	Conducting Incident Surveys
	Early/Ongoing Identification
	Screening Curriculum for Violent Content
	Intervention/Prevention Programs
	Delineating a Range of Consequences
	Suspension/Expulsion
	Alternative to Suspension Programs
	Aftermath Support Services
	Evaluation

APPENDIX D

Definitions of Content Analysis Categories

## DEFINITIONS OF CONTENT ANALYSIS CATEGORIES

(a) **Weapons** - possession, threat, or use of any object or replica of an object designed to cause bodily harm, including firearms, knives, explosives, or any other item that could be used to cause injury to an individual.

(b) **Trespassers** - the presence of unauthorized person(s) on school grounds or in buildings.

(c) **Intimidation/Bullying/Threats** - the act of using strength, power, or other dominant position to injure another or to obtain goods from weaker individuals.

(d) **Vandalism** - the wilful destruction or defacement of property.

(e) **Robbery/Extortion/Theft** - stealing or otherwise depriving a person of the use of his/her property either clandestinely or through the use of violence or intimidation.

(f) **Discrimination** - the act of harassing or intentional devaluation of an individual based on age, sex, race, culture, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or physical characteristics.

(g) **Fighting** - physical conflict between two or more individuals.

(h) **Physical Assault** - the malicious attack of one person on another including that of a child by an adult.

(i) **Sexual Assault** - an attack of one person on another for sexual purposes including that of a child by an adult.

(j) **Verbal Harassment** - the use of oral or written means including the use of profanity to persecute or intimidate another.

(k) **Sexual Harassment** - the use of persistent unwanted physical contact, unwelcome remarks, jokes, gestures, leering, innuendo of a sexual nature, or unwelcome displays of pornography or other offensive, exploitive materials.

(l) **Gangs** - the gathering of individuals into groups for illegal purposes usually identified by a central theme such as allegiance to a racial stereotype, style of clothing, or other bonding factor.

(m) **Substance Abuse** - the possession, use, and/or trafficking of drugs, alcohol, or other materials prohibited by legislation.

(n) **Responding to Emergencies** - unforeseen events that relate to antisocial or violent activity such as bomb threats, arson, or serious assaults that require immediate response.

(o) **Site Security** - the provision in policy for surveillance, regulation of access, and supervision of school buildings and grounds. Included in this component are items such as photo identification and the use of personal communication devices.

(p) **Administrative Responsibilities** - delegating responsibilities to administrative personnel with respect to developing and implementing school practices.

(q) **Defining a Code of Conduct** - a public set of rules governing the actions of students and staff of a school that is based on the concepts of orderly conduct and respect for others. Usually developed within a school, but occasionally board-wide.

(r) **Communicating Policy Information to Stakeholders** - provision that school policy and policy changes be made known to students,

parents, staff, and all others who have a vested interest in the school.

(s) **Involvement of Stakeholders** - provision for the participation of all who have a vested interest in the development and implementation of school policy and programs.

(t) **Promoting a Positive School Climate** - the affirmation in policy that the social, physical, and educational atmosphere in the school promotes a safe and positive learning experience.

(u) **Intervention/Prevention Procedures** - protocols and practices devised to terminate incidents of antisocial behaviour, rehabilitate the perpetrator, and reduce the further occurrence of antisocial behaviour.

(v) **Reporting Violent Incidents** - the establishment of a process for reporting violent incidents to senior officials or authorities.

(w) **Recording Violent Incidents** - the establishment of a process for administrators of schools to retain written records of antisocial behaviour for statistical and informational purposes for a period of time.

(x) **Staff Development** - the provision in policy for the training of personnel in methods and techniques of safe school promotion and violence prevention.

(y) **Police Liaison** - the provision for the involvement of local police organizations in programs, policy development, and as community service officers in schools.

**(z) Involving Committees in Policy Development** - committees mandated by policy to serve as ongoing participants in the development, implementation, and evaluation of policy and programs.

**(aa) Conducting Incidence Surveys** - assessment of the incidence of violence through the use of questionnaires, interviews, or other data gathering methods such as for the purpose of a needs assessment.

**(bb) Early/Ongoing Identification** - provision of strategies and policy to encourage action to prevent aggressive and antisocial behaviour and continue to monitor this action over time.

**(cc) Screening Curricula for Violent Content** - provision for the examination and possible elimination of violent and discriminatory materials from the curriculum and the development of techniques to enable students to determine that violence in course materials and the media has little bearing on daily life.

**(dd) Intervention/Prevention Programs** - the mandate of policy to provide curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular strategies for the elimination of violence.

**(ee) Delineating a Range of Consequences** - the provision in policy for an escalating series of consequences for a given offence which is chosen depending upon the (a) nature of the offence, (b) developmental level of the individual, and (c) number of transgressions for that individual.

**(ff) Suspension/Expulsion** - suspension refers to the practice of removing a malefactor from the school for a specified or



unspecified period of time. Expulsion refers to the permanent removal of a malefactor from the school and sometimes all schools in that board.

(gg) **Alternative-to-Suspension Programs** - refers to (a) a provision in policy for a suspended student to continue with educational activities during the period of suspension, e.g., a substitute learning experience or (b) an option for the administration to provide some other meaningful sanction for a student who commits an act that would normally require suspension.

(hh) **Aftermath Support Services** - strategies designed to (a) address the trauma experienced by victims and witnesses of violent acts.

(ii) **Evaluation** - the provision in policy for ongoing review of policies and including programs. May include the administration of assessment instruments and protocols.

APPENDIX E

Directory of School Boards' Policies and Programs

DIRECTORY OF SCHOOL BOARDS' POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

BRITISH COLUMBIA

1. Burnaby School District No. 41 Enrolment - 20,300

Policy provided addresses positive school climate, portrayal of violence in the media, intimidation (includes mentally challenged or psychiatrically disturbed students), and weapons.

Consequences include suspension, home stay, and referral to student conduct review committee. Programs include Second Step, RCMP liaison, and conflict resolution. A board-produced comprehensive resource catalogue, Youth violence project (1992), Youth pages, a self-referral directory for youth compiled by the Burnaby Information and Community Services, and a brochure for students and parents, Keeping our schools safe, were included.

2. Central Okanagan School District No. 23 Enrolment - 20,450

Policy provided for discipline addresses attendance, code of conduct, and violations of the code. Consequences include suspension. Programs include Lions-Quest. Inservice training has been provided. A safe schools committee is currently addressing the issue of school-based violence prevention. A statistical analysis of selected youth involvement in statutory agencies in Kelowna (Child and Youth Committee, 1994) details youth crime in the area.

3. Chilliwack School District No. 33 Enrolment - 10,200

A violence prevention committee is currently addressing all aspects of this issue.

**4. Coquitlam School District No. 43      Enrolment - 27,599**

Policy provided addresses district code of conduct/school rules, violence, intimidation, weapons, and suspension. Programs include Second Step, peer counselling, peer mediation, conflict resolution, police liaison, and parent awareness. A brochure for students and parents, Keeping our schools safe for our children, and the Report of the youth issues committee (1993), detailing recommendations on policy, programs, and services were included.

**5. Greater Victoria School District No. 61      Enrolment - 23,000**

Policy provided addresses personal safety and security, discipline, multiculturalism, smoking, and substance abuse. Consequences include suspension. Programs include Peacemakers, Second Step, peer mediation, conflict resolution, peer counselling, anger management, buddies, BCTF Against Racism, BCTF Family Violence Prevention, and parent support. A district resource team ensures inservice training in violence prevention and intervention. A pamphlet for parents and students and a comprehensive violence prevention manual were included.

**6. Kamloops School District No. 24      Enrolment - 16,605**

A safe schools committee is currently preparing a report. A pamphlet, Inter-ministerial quick response team, detailed support available for at-risk students.

**7. Langley School District No. 35      Enrolment - 18,062**

Policy provided for student discipline addresses jurisdiction, disruptive behaviour, school rules, intimidation, property offences, alcohol, drugs, assault, weapons, suspension, and

refusal of an educational program. Programs include RCMP liaison and Parents as Partners. **8. Mission School District No. 75**

Enrolment - 7,000

Policy provided for standards of student conduct addresses guidelines, suspension, and conduct while on buses and at school bus stops. Consequences include rehabilitation programs.

**9. Nanaimo School District No. 68** Enrolment - 15,774

Procedures provided for suspension address breaches of school discipline, false alarms, drugs, alcohol, and assault. Expulsion may be an alternative for those 16 years or older.

**10. New Westminster School District No. 40** Enrolment - 4,945

Policy provided addresses code of conduct. Consequences include suspension.

**11. North Vancouver School District No. 44** Enrolment - 16,400

Programs include Second Step and peer counselling. Inservice training has been provided.

**12. Prince George School District No. 57** Enrolment - 19,500

Safe schools committee report (March 1994) and an implementation plan for its recommendations were included.

**13. Saanich School District No. 63** Enrolment - 8,377

Policy provided addresses intimidation, violence, weapons, and school critical response teams. Consequences include suspension.

**14. Sooke School District No. 62** Enrolment - 8,500

Policy provided addresses student behaviour, intimidation, violence, and weapons. Consequences include school-based corrective action, counselling, suspension, and expulsion.

Programs include Decisions, Second Step, peer counselling, Kiwanis project, Learning for Living, Project DAD, Ready or Not, peer counselling, life skills and anger management training, family life and management, counter-attack, mutual respect, and self-esteem seminars, conflict resolution, and the Sidylle Artz study on violence among teenage girls.

**15. Surrey School District No. 36**    Enrolment - 48,354

Policy provided addresses student conduct, discipline, and safety. Consequences include suspension and alternative school placement. Programs include Second Step, Lions-Quest, I Care, Fighting Fair, Safe Teens, conflict resolution, peer mediation, and RCMP liaison.

**16. Vancouver School District No. 39**    Enrolment - 54,546

Policy provided addresses student rights and responsibilities, conduct, safety, weapons, interrogation and searches, suspension/exclusion, and discipline review committee. Programs include Second Step, In Step (for parents), peer counselling, sexual abuse prevention, Inner City Schools Project, school liaison officers, and an ID Badge program for employees.

**17. West Vancouver School District No. 45**    Enrolment - 6,180

Policy provided for discipline addresses expectations, principal's responsibilities, alcohol, drugs, suspension procedures, and appeals. Programs include CARE Kit and Second Step.

## ALBERTA

### **1. Calgary Board of Education** Enrolment - 98,398

Policy provided addresses safe and secure environments, discipline, violence, weapons, and criminal offences.

Consequences include suspension and expulsion. Programs include Second Step, School Watch, and Crime Stoppers. A task force is investigating safety and security of staff and students.

### **2. Calgary Roman Catholic Separate School District No. 1**

Enrolment - 33,624

Policy provided addresses suspension and expulsion. The district is revising current policies and regulation handbook, based on the recommendations of a safety and security commission.

### **3. Edmonton Catholic School District No. 7** Enrolment - 32,436

Policy provided addresses suspension and expulsion. The board is developing a district-wide student conduct policy. Programs include Lions-Quest, peer mediation, and conflict resolution.

### **4. Edmonton Public School Board** Enrolment - 78,871

Policy provided addresses behaviour, conduct, discipline, rights and responsibilities. Consequences range from problem solving to parental involvement, suspension, police involvement, and expulsion. Programs include Lions-Quest, Second Step, conflict management/resolution, peer support groups, Partners for Youth (community outreach), and school resource officers. Extensive inservice training activities are provided. A task force report on student conduct and discipline (1994) suggested eight ways to reduce violence.

**7. Fort McMurray Catholic Board of Education, School Division**

**No.32** Enrolment - 3,632

Schools within this district have identified violence prevention as an area of interest for future program and policy development.

**6. Fort McMurray School District No. 2833** Enrolment - 4,714

Policy provided addresses behaviour and attitude of students, and home/parent responsibility. School policy is developed in individual "positive behaviour plans" that link specific antisocial behaviour to specific ranges of consequences.

Consequences include counselling, suspension and expulsion.

Programs include Lions-Quest, time-out, and interpersonal skills.

**7. Lethbridge School District No. 51** Enrolment - 8,195

Policy provided for student discipline addresses behavioural expectations, weapons, use of physical restraints, suspension and expulsion. A committee of stakeholders is currently developing recommendations for future violence prevention policy.

**8. Red Deer Catholic Board of Education No. 17** Enrolment - 3,200

Policy provided addresses discipline, interrogation of students, suspension, and expulsion. Superintendents are instructed to ensure that expelled students have access to alternative education.

**9. Red Deer Public School District No. 104** Enrolment - 8,949

Policy provided addresses discipline, suspension, and expulsion. District supports American-based Dr. Michael Valentine's program that addresses discipline problems through special communication



techniques.

**10. Rocky View School Division No. 41** Enrolment - 10,513

Administrators and staff are involved in developing violence prevention strategies.

**11. St. Albert Protestant Separate School District No. 6**

Enrolment - 6,400

Policy provided addresses conduct, suspension, and expulsion. Programs include Pull-Out Alternative Centre Teaching (PACT). Violence prevention activity is ongoing with the goal of developing a formal board policy.

**12. St. Albert School District No. 3** Enrolment - 4,318

Policy provided addresses harassment. District is in the process of developing policy and procedures to address other issues.

#### SASKATCHEWAN

**1. Moose Jaw Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 22**

Enrolment - 1,745

Policy provided addresses student discipline and sexual harassment for staff and students. Consequences range from detention to exclusion from class, parental involvement, and suspension.

**2. Moose Jaw School Division No. 1** Enrolment - 5,093

Policy provided addresses general discipline. A range of consequences provide for 17 stages from warning through expulsion.

**3. Prince Albert Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 6**

Enrolment - 2,630

Policy provided for discipline addresses expectations, definitions, and guidelines for the development of individual school policy. Draft flowchart indicates a range of consequences that extends from detention to counselling, suspension, and expulsion. Programs include Lions-Quest and a peer conflict management implementation proposal.

**4. Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 81**

Enrolment - 10,729

The board participates jointly with Regina School Division No. 4 and representatives from community agencies in the Community Committee for Safe Schools. Policies and safe school initiatives are being developed through the committee's work. Four high schools began a student Crime Stopper pilot program in the fall of 1994.

**5. Regina School Division No. 4      Enrolment - 24,441**

Policy provided addresses human rights equity. Programs include playground conflict managers, mediation training, conflict resolution, Second Step, Crisis Prevention and Intervention Training (CPI), and resource officers. The Community Committee for Safe Schools, comprised of members of the school community, Regina Catholic Schools and community agencies, has planned to present recommendations for safe schools policy in a report slated for December, 1994.

6. **Saskatoon (East) School Division No. 41** Enrolment - 2,004

District has developed a school-based plan for behaviourally disordered students. Strategies include congregated classroom/pull-out program, social services support, and parental involvement.

7. **Saskatoon School Division No. 13** Enrolment - 22,323

Programs include student mediation. A resource activity booklet, Mediation in schools: It works (1993), was included.

#### MANITOBA

1. **Assiniboine South Division No. 3** Enrolment - 6,798

Draft paper provided, Students with challenging behaviour: System expectations and supports K-12, addresses student responsibilities, interventions, and support options. Programs include Second Step, conflict mediation, conflict management for parents and teens, peacemaking skills curricula, and non-violent crisis intervention (a training program for staff). Community agencies offer support.

2. **Brandon School Division No. 40** Enrolment - 7,661

Draft policy provided for school safety addresses stakeholder responsibilities, prevention activities, and intervention procedures. Consequences include suspension and expulsion. Programs include violence prevention in the curriculum and student awareness training.

3. **Fort Garry School Division No. 5** Enrolment - 7,130

Policy provided addresses behaviour, violence, weapons, and

suspension. Consequences include interviews, behavioural contracts, ssuspension, and expulsion. A brochure for students and parents, outlining stakeholder responsibilities, was included.

**4. Frontier School Division No. 48** Enrolment - 5,423

Policy provided for a safe learning and working environment addresses verbal and emotional abuse, harassment, assault, and weapons. Consequences include suspension and expulsion.

**5. Norwood School Division No. 8** Enrolment - 1,400

Policy provided for safety in the schools addresses trespassers, intimidation, abuse, sexual harassment, assault, and weapons. Consequences include suspension and expulsion. Programs include staff and student training in the recognition and resolution of abusive situations.

**6. St. James-Assiniboia School Division No. 2** Enrolment - 9,795

Policy provided addresses discipline, disruptive behaviour, violence, and weapons. Consequences include suspension and expulsion. Programs include Peaceworks, Second Step, conflict resolution, mediation, and cooperative learning. A teacher handbook covering prevention, intervention, and postvention strategies, was included.

**7. St. Vital School Division No. 6** Enrolment - 10,150

Draft policy provided addresses personal safety and response to violence. Programs include Peacemakers, Second Step, peer counselling, and Negative Impact of Gangs for students, parenting and staff development. Draft of an emergency response guide was

included.

**8. South Winnipeg Technical Centre** Enrolment - 976

Policy statements provided for secondary students and adults address harassment, potentially violent persons, and suspension.

**9. Transcona-Springfield School Division No.12** Enrolment - 8,365

Policy provided addresses freedom from violence. Draft policy provided addresses freedom from abuse/harassment.

Developmentally appropriate consequences include conferences, individualized educational plan, suspension, and expulsion.

**10. Winnipeg School Division No. 1** Enrolment - 34,651

Draft policies provided for suspension and expulsion address misconduct, assault, chemical abuse, and weapons. Programs include social skills development, peer helping, buddies, time-out, conflict resolution, non-violent crisis intervention, in-school contracts, alternatives, and professional development. A handbook, Student behaviour management: A guide for teachers, on proactive strategies and responses to disruptive behaviour, was included.

**ONTARIO**

**1. Brant County Board of Education** Enrolment - 17,696

Policy provided addresses trespassers, threats, intimidation, discrimination, assault, drugs, abuse, and weapons. Consequences range from informal counselling to in-school suspension, police

action, suspension, home study program, and expulsion.

**2. Carleton Board of Education** Enrolment - 46,700

Policy provided for safe schools addresses trespassers, vandalism, theft, intimidation, harassment, assault, and weapons. Consequences range from home contact to counselling, in-school sanction, suspension, police involvement, alternate learning placement, and expulsion. Programs include Peacemakers, Second Step, Quest, VIP, early intervention, peer mediation, conflict resolution, and liaison officers.

**3. Carleton Roman Catholic School Board** Enrolment - 21,024

Policy provided for safe schools addresses trespassers, vandalism, theft, intimidation, assault, and weapons. Consequences include warning, in-school sanction, and suspension. Programs include Peacemakers, social skills training, peer mediation, conflict resolution, Ontario Students Against Drinking and Driving, non-violent crisis intervention for administrators, and support groups for parents. An evaluation of the effectiveness of violence prevention policies is in development.

**4. Conseil scolaire de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton**

Enrolment - 20,574

Policy provided, Violence en milieu scolaire, addresses intimidation, harassment, physical and sexual violence, and weapons. Policy contains provision for developing conflict resolution and violence awareness programs. Consequences include suspension and expulsion.

**5. Durham Board of Education** Enrolment - 57,353

Policy provided addresses security and safety, rewards for information on vandalism, and unauthorized use of school property. Consequences include suspension and expulsion. A report, Security and safety in Durham schools 1993-1994, was included.

**6. Durham Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board**

Enrolment - 22,783

Policy provided for a safe environment addresses threats, /assault, and weapons and responses for such behaviours. Consequences include suspension and alternate placement.

**7. East York Board of Education** Enrolment - 14,479

Policy provided addresses behaviour, trespassers, intimidation, harassment, violence, child abuse, assault, weapons, suspension, expulsion, and the selection of curricular materials. The use of Peaceworks and San Francisco community-based programs led to a board-developed curriculum. The community is extensively involved in violence prevention programs.

**8. Etobicoke Board of Education** Enrolment - 35,584

Policy provided addresses discipline, race and ethnic relations, drug education, sexual harassment, trespassers, vandalism, violence, and weapons. Consequences include suspension and expulsion.

**9. Frontenac County Board of Education** Enrolment - 19,740

Programs include Lions-Quest, Future Aces, Tribes, Magic Circle, Living Colours, Learning and Growing Together, Impulse Control, Red Lights-Green Lights, Sunburst, Feeling Yes-Feeling No, VIP,

School Wide Assistance (SWAP), Fit For Life and Alternative Fitness, peacemaking and creative conflict resolution, and police liaison.

**10. Halton Roman Catholic School Board** Enrolment - 18,760

Programs include Second Step. A safe school report is available as of October 1994. An evaluation of the Second Step program is currently underway by Dr. Bruce Linder.

**11. Hamilton Board of Education** Enrolment - 40,840

Policy provided for discipline addresses expectations for pupils, attendance, parental involvement, harassment, suspension, and expulsion. Programs include Second Step, RSVP, peer counselling, conflict management, social skills training, peacekeepers, dating violence, Go away-Stop and talk-Tell a teacher (GST), and the Turtle technique.

**12. Hamilton-Wentworth Roman Catholic Separate School Board**

Enrolment - 26,716

A safe schools manual was in preparation. Programs include RSVP.

**13. Kent County Board of Education** Enrolment - 16,153

Policy provided addresses violence in schools. Consequences range from parental contact to counselling, police contact, suspension, alternative learning placement, and expulsion.

Programs include Sunshine Program for Positive Behaviour and family violence prevention.

**14. Kent County Roman Catholic School Board** Enrolment - 7,545

Policy provided for behaviour management and violence addresses harassment and weapons.



**15. Lakehead Board of Education** Enrolment - 17,380

Policy provided addresses trespassers and the development of student behaviour codes in individual schools. Consequences include counselling, suspension, and expulsion. Programs include conflict management.

**16. Lakehead District Roman Catholic School Board** Enrolment - 8,870

Policy concerning suspension and expulsion is undergoing revision. A behaviour manual for the elementary level, Pulling together, outlines several steps to good class management including the use of escalating consequences from classroom interventions and time-out centres, to suspension, adjustment class, and home instruction.

**17. Lambton County Board of Education** Enrolment - 19,000

Policy provided for safe education addresses prevention, early intervention, threats, harassment, intruders, assault, and weapons. Consequences include suspension, alternative learning environment, and expulsion. Programs include Just Say No, Lions-Quest, Living Colours, Good Manners, Helping Hands, Conflict Busters, Let's Talk About It, Students Needing Alternative Programming (SNAP), peer counselling, and police liaison. A report on violence and youth in the 1990's was included.

**18. Lambton County Roman Catholic Separate School Board**

Enrolment - 7,969

Policy provided for a safe learning environment addresses discipline and code of behaviour, trespassers, intimidation,

harassment, assault, and weapons. Consequences range from student interviews to suspension, alternative placement, and expulsion. Programs include violence prevention and conflict mediation in the curriculum.

**19. London Board of Education** Enrolment - 48,560

Policy provided addresses behaviour, vandalism, harassment, abuse, alcohol, drugs, fighting, assault, weapons, and emergency situations. Consequences include suspension, alternative placement, and expulsion. Programs include curriculum-based drug and alcohol prevention. Safe schools committee report and a report on violence in relationships were included.

**20. London and Middlesex County Roman Catholic School Board**

Enrolment - 16,995

Policy provided addresses student discipline. Consequences include suspension and expulsion. For the good of all, a brochure for parents and students outlining behavioural expectations, was included.

**21. Metropolitan Separate School Board (Toronto)** Enrolment - 103,363

Programs include peer mediation and conflict resolution at the elementary level.

**22. Middlesex County Board of Education** Enrolment - 11,700

A Director's study committee is coordinating the board's plan for violence prevention. Programs include peer mediation and violence prevention in teen relationships.

**23. North York Board of Education** Enrolment - 62,551

Policy provided for safe schools addresses assault, threats, intimidation, and weapons. Schools develop codes of behaviour. Consequences include time-out and suspension. Programs include board-sponsored alternatives. A task force report, Safe schools-1993, indicated the current status of violence and prevention in schools, effective initiatives, and future directions.

**24. Ottawa Board of Education** Enrolment - 33,447

Policy provided addresses trespassers and weapons. Consequences include suspension and expulsion. A safe schools committee report, the Violence & Youth Summary Report (1993), and a preliminary draft of the community response to youth and violence in Ottawa-Carleton were included.

**25. Ottawa Roman Catholic Separate School Board**

Enrolment - 10,318

Policy provided addresses safe schools, discipline, and reporting child abuse. Consequences include suspension and expulsion. Programs include Positively Proactive, dating relationships, and peer mediation.

**26. Peel Board of Education** Enrolment - 93,196

Policy provided addresses trespassers, vandalism, harassment, drugs, fighting, assault, and weapons. Consequences include in-school sanction, counselling, suspension and expulsion. Programs include Peacekeepers, Positive Alternative for Student Suspension (PASS), Alternative Co-op, Kindergarten Intervention Project (KIP), Attitude Plus, One Step at a Time, Skills for Growing,

Movers, and conflict mediation and resolution.

**27. Peterborough County Board of Education** Enrolment - 18,502  
Policy provided addresses discipline, safe schools, suspension, expulsion and interrogation of students by police. Consequences include suspension and expulsion. Programs include Peacemakers, time-out, and family violence prevention.

**28. Peterborough-Victoria-Northumberland and Newcastle Roman Catholic Separate School Board** Enrolment - 11,634  
Policy provided addresses child abuse reporting. Comprehensive draft policy development plan addresses issues, reporting, communication, promotion, committee membership, and budget. Programs include Lions-Quest, Yard Buddies, conflict resolution, peer counselling, and crisis intervention.

**29. Sault Ste. Marie Board of Education** Enrolment - 11,877  
Policy provided for safe schools addresses harassment, assault, and weapons. Consequences include suspension, alternative placement, and expulsion.

**30. Sault Ste. Marie District Roman Catholic Separate School Board** Enrolment - 7,162  
Policy is developed in conjunction with the Sault Ste. Marie Board of Education.

**31. Scarborough Board of Education** Enrolment - 78,000  
Policy provided for safe schools addresses fighting, threats, abuse, assault, and weapons. Consequences include suspension and expulsion.

**32. Simcoe County Roman Catholic Separate School Board**

Enrolment - 16,302

An overview of family violence, wife and sexual assault prevention initiatives, and family violence school-based projects were included.

**33. Stormont, Dundas, and Glengarry County Board of Education**

Enrolment - 12,510

Policy provided addresses trespassers, threats, harassment, and weapons. Consequences include suspension, alternate learning placement, and expulsion. Programs include Primarily Me, Safe Child, healthy lifestyles curriculum, Lions-Quest, VIP, Peacemakers, self-esteem training, WENDO, and peer helpers. A family violence committee, including staff and community members, focuses on prevention of child and sexual abuse.

**34. Sudbury Board of Education** Enrolment - 20,368

Draft policy provided for safe schools addresses theft, physical altercations, harassment, intimidation, extortion, vandalism, assault, drugs, and weapons. Consequences include suspension and expulsion.

**35. Toronto Board of Education** Enrolment - 76,083

Draft policy provided, Safety and security policy for schools and workplaces, outlines a two-part framework, prevention and intervention. Consequences include suspension, exclusion, expulsion, and a wide range of alternatives for each of these.

Titles of programs include Conflict resolution programs at the Toronto Board of Education (1994), The Anti-bullying book: Towards an inclusive school, and Retreat for the future: An anti-sexism workshop for high school students. Brochures concerning sexual harassment policy and homophobic harassment and a booklet on student's rights and responsibilities were included. Evaluations of the conflict resolution program and interim results of the anti-bullying program were also provided.

**36. Waterloo County Board of Education** Enrolment - 54,888

Policy provided addresses intimidation, discrimination, harassment, alcohol, drugs, assault, gangs, and weapons. A range of 16 possible consequences was provided to address specific offences at several grade levels. Programs include VIP, Kids Helping Kids, and social skills training. A draft document, Safety and security in the school setting, outlined prevention, intervention and postvention techniques. A booklet developed by a task force detailed issues and recommendations for stakeholders and contained a listing of community agency involvement.

**37. Waterloo Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board**

Enrolment - 22,844

Policy provided for safe and secure schools addresses intimidation, abuse, alcohol, drugs, assault, and weapons. Consequences include suspension. Programs include conflict mediation. A brochure, Code of student behaviour, for secondary schools and a resource document, For the safety of all, were included.

**38. Welland County Roman Catholic Separate School Board**

Enrolment - 14,362

Policy provided for safe school addresses intimidation, abuse, fighting, and violence.

**39. Wellington County Board of Education** Enrolment - 24,437

Policy provided addresses verbal threats, harassment, abuse, and weapons. Consequences include suspension, alternative learning placement and expulsion. Programs include Adopt-a-Cop, VIP, Quest, Second Step, Fighting Fair, Coping for Kids, creative conflict solving for kids, and anger management. Recommendations from a task force were included.

**40. Wellington County Roman Catholic Separate School Board**

Enrolment - 6,347

Policy provided addresses threats, bullying, abuse, harassment, and weapons. Policy is intended for secondary schools but may be adapted for the elementary level. Consequences include suspension and alternative programs. Programs include curriculum-based initiatives and inservice training.

**41. Wentworth County Board of Education** Enrolment - 17,479

Programs include RSVP.

**42. Windsor Board of Education** Enrolment - 18,837

Policy provided for a safe school environment addresses inappropriate language and behaviour, trespassers, intimidation, harassment, abuse, drugs, violence, and weapons. Consequences include suspension, alternative learning placement, and expulsion. Programs include VIP, Peacemakers, and conflict

resolution.

**43. York Region Board of Education** Enrolment - 71,543

Policy provided for safe schools addresses intimidation, extortion, drugs, assault, and weapons. Consequences include suspension and expulsion. Programs include VIP, Living Colours, Last Alternatives for Students (LAST), Operation Cooperation, conflict management and resolution, and behavioural management and tracking. A report, Making our schools safer in a violent society, was provided. A safe schools brochure for students and parents was included.

**QUEBEC**

**1. Commission des écoles catholiques de Montréal** Enrolment - 88,197

A listing of programs and activities currently in use in schools is available.

**2. Commission des écoles catholiques de Québec** Enrolment - 11,691

Draft procedures provided address restitution for incidents of theft and vandalism. Details of a student poster contest to publicize theft and vandalism prevention were included.

**3. Commission des écoles protestantes du Grand Montréal/Greater Montreal Protestant School Board** Enrolment - 31,349

A program entitled, Project Harbour, funded by the Quebec Ministry of Education, involves collaboration between staff and social workers to bring about behavioural changes in students who



demonstrate antisocial behaviour. Inservice training was provided.

**4. Commission scolaire Baldwin-Cartier** Enrolment - 18,000

Action plan provided addresses sensitizing administration through violence prevention conferences, provision of inservice training, development of a brochure for secondary students, and professional assistance for schools. A brochure prohibiting verbal and sexual abuse was included.

**5. Commission scolaire Centre-de-la-Mauricie** Enrolment - 6,000

A program addressing self-esteem is used in one of the area elementary schools. This program includes in-class, out-of-class, and home activities.

**6. Commission scolaire d'Iberville** Enrolment - 4,779

This board has experimented with les enfants désobéissants, a seven-unit program led by a social worker and a psychologist, designed to provide parents with intervention strategies. The board is currently experimenting with Les petites violences, a program developed by the Commission scolaire Jérôme-Le Royer.

**7. Commission scolaire de Châteauguay** Enrolment - 7,050

Each school develops its own disciplinary code.

**8. Commission scolaire de Chicoutimi** Enrolment - 7,950

A booklet, Bonne entente et harmonie (1993), reported on a collaborative violence prevention project involving 11 school boards in the Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean-Chapais-Chibougamou area. The description of this project included planning, activities, recommendations, and media response.

**9. Commission scolaire de la Jeune-Lorette** Enrolment - 11,963

Survey and evaluation tools provided by the board enable each school to tailor its own response to violence. Procedures involve inventory, elementary student, staff, and parent questionnaires, analysis, and evaluation processes. One elementary school's action plan for violence prevention was included.

**10. Commission scolaire des Chênes** Enrolment - 15,500

Policy provided addresses trespassers, vandalism, break and enter, alcohol, drugs, and theft. Consequences include restitution, compensatory work, suspension, and expulsion. Dress and hair-styles associated with movements or groups prone to hate or violence are prohibited. Proceedings and related material from a conference, Prévenir la violence à l'école (1993), were included.

**11. Commission scolaire des Chutes-de-la-Chaudière** Enrolment - 11,200

Each school prepares its own code of behaviour including consequences. Schools and parent committees collaborate on this process.

**12. Commission scolaire des Manoirs** Enrolment - 16,000

A report provided addresses violence prevention activities and indicates future directions in this area including policy development. A violence prevention program for elementary students, Regroup'Elles inc., including an evaluation, were provided.

**13. Commission scolaire Lakeshore/Lakeshore School Board**

Enrolment - 13,528

This board is currently studying the issue of violence and its effects.

**14. Commission scolaire protestante de Châteauguay**

**Valley/Protestant School Board of Châteauguay Valley** Enrolment-  
3,714

According to the information provided, a peer mediation program is implemented in one high school.

**15. Commission scolaire Saint-Hyacinthe-Val-Monts** Enrolment -  
1,350

Educational officials and resource personnel are currently discussing the issue of violence prevention.

**16. Commission scolaire Sainte-Croix** Enrolment - 8,647

Policy provided addresses threats, fraud, vandalism, harassment, racism, extortion, violence, theft, assault, prostitution, and drugs.

**17. Commission scolaire South Shore/South Shore School Board**

Enrolment - 11,815

Policy provided addresses intimidation, threats of violence, drugs, weapons, and violence. Consequences include notification of parents of minors and expulsion.

**18. Commission scolaire Val-Maurice** Enrolment - 4,862

Schools include violence prevention content in social development curricula.

## NEW BRUNSWICK

**1. School District No. 2**    Enrolment - 14,546

Guidelines provided address safe school environment and student expectations.

**2. School District No. 6**    Enrolment - 8,705

Policy provided addresses the maintenance of orderly environments. Programs include conflict resolution and peer mediation.

**3. School District No. 8**    Enrolment - 15,533

District schools, in conjunction with the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Research Centre, participated in a project to address violence. Three schools were involved in staff conflict resolution training, a fourth school acted as a control, and a fifth completed a violence survey.

**4. School District No. 18**    Enrolment - 13,593

A committee is presently working on policies for discipline, classroom management, and orderly conduct.

## NOVA SCOTIA

**1. Halifax County-Bedford District School Board**    Enrolment - 31,524

Policy provided addresses discipline, disturbance, loitering,

weapons, detention of students, suspension, probation, and police interviews. Violence prevention is presently under review through the board's strategic planning process.

**2. Halifax District School Board**    Enrolment - 14,620

Policy provided for order and discipline addresses specific expectations and suspension. Programs include Second Step. Evaluation of the inservice training has been completed. Discipline committee's report includes recommendations. A Department of Education document, Discipline handbook for Nova Scotia schools (1993), establishes procedures and content areas for individual schools and boards to develop policy in these areas.

**PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND**

**1. Regional Administrative School Unit 3**    Enrolment - 10,984

Policy provided addresses child abuse and relations with police authorities.

**NEWFOUNDLAND**

**1. Avalon Consolidated School Board**    Enrolment - 10,624

A draft paper, Violence prevention: A working paper and proposal for action, addresses non-violent crisis intervention, cooperative discipline, and educational therapy initiatives. A committee, in liaison with the justice system, has been valuable in increasing mutual understanding relative to young offenders in

the school system.

**2. St. John's Roman Catholic School Board**    Enrolment - 19,269

Policy provided addresses discipline, involvement with police, and child protection. Consequences include suspension and expulsion.

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Note: Of the 126 school boards that responded to the survey, policy and program submissions are described here for 116. Contact information for each of the school boards is available from the Canadian Education Association (CEA) Handbook (1994) which may be obtained from the CEA at 252 Bloor St. West, Suite 8-200, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1V5, telephone (416) 924-7721, fax (416) 924-3188.



