

SCOMM

125:31

Alaska State Legislature

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Chair, House Special Committee
on Economic Development, Trade
and Tourism

Chair, Joint House and Senate
Administrative Regulation and
Review Committee

Member
Resources Committee
Rules Committee

Representative Lesil McGuire *House District 17*

SPONSOR STATEMENT

HB 99 **School Discipline and Safety**

HB 99, "An Act relating to school discipline and safety programs; and providing for an effective date," seeks to address ways to mitigate violence in Alaska's schools.

Violence in Alaska's schools has recently been brought into the community spotlight as a result of serious physical altercations between students. These particular fights have been extremely violent resulting in severe bodily harm and even leaving one student comatose. These cannot be considered isolated incidents from those that are never reported. Education requires our children to learn how to live in society through the acceptance of rules and community values. Those values need to be taught by parents, teachers and peers. But somewhere we lost that process in our schools.

HB 99 will be another tool available to schools to help confront both violent and non-violent conflicts. It amends Title 14 of Alaska Statutes to include policies that will seek to initiate a student conflict-resolution curriculum that will provide methods of nonviolent resolution and mediations of conflicts to students, teachers and associated persons. HB 99 seeks to recognize and enforce existing behavior standards by giving students alternatives for solving problems besides the use of violence. Students will learn valuable lessons that will hopefully result in a safer education environment for all of our children. By integrating this way of learning into schools' core curriculum, these policies are targeted at helping students resolve problems before they escalate.



Alaska State Legislature

House Special Committee on Education Representative Con Bunde, Chair

State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
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Representative_Con_Bunde@legis.state.ak.us

Brian Porter
Joe Green
Peggy Wilson
Gary Stevens
Reggie Joule
Gretchen Guess

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 15, 2001

TO: Members of the House Special Committee on Education

CC: Representative Lesil McGuire

FROM: Representative Con Bunde, Chair *CBunde*

RE: Waiver Request for HB 99, "An Act relating to school discipline and safety programs; and providing for an effective date."

HB 99, "School Discipline and Safety" has been referred to the committee and received one hearing. As our priority at this time is the Competency Test bill, we will not be able to schedule HB 99 until April 11, 2001 at the earliest. The bill's sponsor, Representative McGuire, has asked that we waive this bill, as it is her priority bill. I have no objection to that request.

If you have no objections to waiving this bill, please sign below.

Brian Porter
Representative Brian Porter

Gary Stevens
Representative Gary Stevens

Joe Green
Representative Joe Green

Reggie Joule
Representative Reggie Joule

Peggy Wilson
Representative Peggy Wilson

Gretchen Guess
Representative Gretchen Guess

BILL ANALYSIS -- HB 99
2nd Hearing March 7, 2001

Sponsor: Rep. Lesil McGuire

Bill Title: "An Act relating to school discipline and safety programs; and providing for an effective date."

Last Hearing:

- 1) Rep. McGuire's amendment was adopted by the committee on February 28th. See penciled in changes on the bill.
- 2) Program co-facilitators from Chugiak High School provided comments about conflict resolution programs.
- 3) Larry Wiget from Anchorage School District is still reviewing the bill as of Monday, March 05, 2001. He will get us any comments they may have. *included.*
- 4) I requested that Rep. McGuire's office provide us with any additional information they had by Monday at noon so that it could be added to packets. No information was provided.

Questions:

- 1) Subsection 7, on page 2, lines 14-17 requires that school districts have plans that provide procedures for reporting and resolving conflicts. To whom would these reports be made, and why?
- 2) An *Anchorage Daily News* article on March 5th quotes Anchorage School District Superintendent as saying, "The worst thing you can do is mandate a program like this, which takes a buy-in by the staff".
- 3) Also, a "new study", referred to in the article, "didn't find hard evidence the program has reduced discipline problems in Anchorage schools", and that school officials are looking at what changes or re-evaluations may be needed.
- 4) Given those two quotes, do you think this bill will help reduce violence in Alaska's schools?

Fiscal Note: \$0 cost to the state. However, DoE estimates that costs to school districts (under the original version of the bill) would be as follows:

- a) \$20-100 per set of conflict resolution program materials x the number of teachers in a district
- b) \$30,000 per year for staff to conduct the program (per school) for staff training and peer mediation training.
- c) Unknown amount to pay for a minimum of two in-service days for teachers and staff.
- d) Time and space to conduct training and conflict resolution activities
- e) **DoE does not estimate any significant change in their fiscal note due to the amendment.**

Teleconference Sites: Anchorage (Listen Only.)

**People Testifying on Wednesday, February 28 in support of
HB 99** *for Rep. McGuire*

affnet

Judy Mathewson, Co-facilitator of Conflict Resolution at Chugiak High School

affnet

Sandy Anderson, Co-facilitator of Conflict Resolution at Chugiak High School

L10

Michael Kerosky, Supervisor, Safe & Drug Free Schools, Anchorage School District

adn.com

Anchorage Daily News

School fighting District hunts ways to cut violence

**By Lisa Demer
Anchorage Daily News**

(Published March 5, 2001)

A disturbing rise in fights involving Anchorage high school students -- including one that put a 16-year-old Dimond student in a coma this year -- has school leaders searching for new ways to address student conflict and is putting new energy into efforts already begun.

Private psychologists have offered to visit high school health classes. Schools are holding forums on violence and communication. The Anchorage School District may fine-tune a conflict resolution program entrenched in many elementary schools and just getting started in middle and high schools.

The need is intense.

After holding steady or dropping in recent years, suspensions for fights, threats and assaults at Anchorage's six comprehensive high schools went up 34 percent the first quarter of this school year compared to the same period the year before, from 111 to 149.

"What I'm seeing is an escalation in fighting and violence," said school superintendent Carol Comeau.

The situation got worse in the second quarter with a string of sensational fights. Service High administrators suspended 134 students for watching or participating in a Dec. 5 fight between two boys that was captured on videotape and set to music. Chugiak made headlines after it suspended 40 students after a Jan. 6 fight between two girls on the popular Chaparrals dance/drill team. A Dimond High junior was comatose for days after he was struck in the head with a baseball bat on Jan. 14. An East High student was stabbed in the arm on Jan. 23 in an after-school fight.

What's causing the violence?

Influences from the Worldwide Wrestling Federation, the new XFL and violent video games are partly to blame, Comeau said.

So are the size and shape of Anchorage high schools: big and impersonal. Just bumping into a stranger in crowded halls can be taken the wrong way. They call it hall rage. At Dimond High, students scurry down one narrow corridor single file and shoulder-to-shoulder. East High long ago banned backpacks in part to reduce student collisions.

The climate at high schools needs to change, said teachers and principals.

All six of Anchorage's comprehensive high schools are looking at ways to create smaller environments for learning to better connect students to one another and their schools. Maybe more schools within schools like at East. Or old-fashioned home rooms. Or teams of teachers, as in middle schools. When the new South Anchorage high school opens in 2004, it will be designed with four distinct teaching "houses," each for no more than 400 students.

Dimond High has planned an off-campus retreat for the most disenfranchised youths -- those who dropped out, flunked out or are close to it -- to find out what the school could do differently, principal Guy Okada said.

Dimond senior Erin Bennett organized a student forum on violence in January that included a panel of school administrators and Anchorage Deputy Police Chief Mark Mew.

"It was right after three of the schools had gotten into fights. I realized it would be a good thing to have all the kids talk about it," said Bennett, 17, a member of student government and president of Z Club, a service organization. The message: Tell an adult when you hear of trouble.

The Dec. 5 off-campus fight that drew about 150 Service students as spectators was planned and promoted at school. But no one alerted teachers or administrators, not even to leave an anonymous message on the safe hotline each high school has.

Acting principal Pat Podvin said he is trying to open up communications. He recently held a full day of meetings with teachers and then with students.

"I have felt there was a real gulf between the adults and the students in the building," Podvin said. At the forums, students and teachers gave ideas as simple as installing suggestion boxes, which the school is doing. Students also said they wanted to hook up with an adult advocate at school.

"They want a way to have a relationship with a teacher or another adult," Podvin said.

Service also launched a new elective course this semester in student leadership that is covering topics such as violence, respect and harassment. Podvin said he hopes the lessons ripple throughout the school so that student disputes are settled more peacefully.

After the recent fights, the district began working with Cathy von Hippel, an Anchorage psychologist who volunteered to bring colleagues into health classes for an anti-violence campaign. The program will include a video developed by the American Psychological Association and MTV to alert teens to warning signs for violence. It features three real life stories, including that of Evan Ramsey, who was 16 when he killed a student and the principal at Bethel Regional High School.

"We want to decrease the amount of violence and help kids get mental health services when they are distressed," von Hippel said.

In Connecticut, fights at Martin Kellogg Middle School dropped from 40 to 50 a year to fewer than 10 through a workshop-based program called Help Increase the Peace, as well as other conflict resolution efforts. Then-principal Amzie Brown brought in the program seven years ago because her school was being terrorized by a group of 15 bullies. The bullies were the first ones to go through a three-day workshop created by the American Friends Service Committee. More than 150 students have done so since. They learned self-control and how to walk away from tense situations.

Thirteen years ago, Anchorage was on the cutting edge. In 1988, five Anchorage elementary schools tapped into a new program out of New York City to bolster students' social and emotional skills. Special training for teachers in conflict resolution, bias awareness and communication -- plus peer mediation -- are main components.

Dozens of Anchorage elementary schools now use at least some principles of the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program, and suspensions for fighting in elementary schools are dropping. It's the School District's main effort to reduce student violence, part of nearly \$1 million worth of programs to combat problem behaviors from drug abuse to racial discrimination.

The secondary school version, Partners in Learning, is entrenched in only one high school, Chugiak. The recent increase in high school fights shows that other schools need it too, said Michael Kerosky, the district's coordinator of safe and drug free schools.

The district would like to see it spread, but won't require it in every school -- teachers and principals must want it, Comeau said.

Some schools are reluctant to take on a social program, especially with the new pressure of the exit exam. Some teachers are skeptical that it will make a difference.

"The worst thing you can do is mandate a program like this, which takes a buy-in by the staff," Comeau said.

The push now is in the middle schools. Wendler, Mirror Lake, Clark and Hanshew have full-time coordinators for the program who work alongside teachers. Two others, Mears and Central, have applied for a coordinator, too.

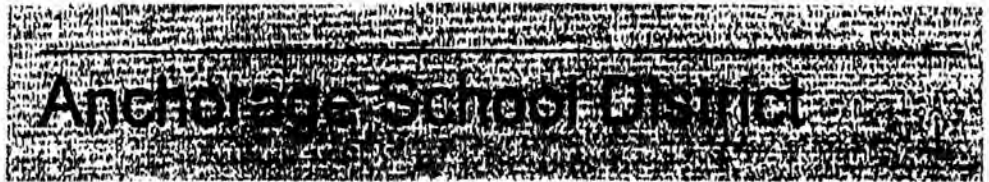
A new study didn't find hard evidence the program has reduced discipline problems in Anchorage schools. Anchorage officials are looking at whether the program simply needs to be intensified or expanded to have more effect, or whether other changes are needed.

"I do think it is time to take a second look at it or maybe to re-evaluate if it is working," said Cynthia McCray, the district's supervisor of high schools.

Reporter Lisa Demer can be reached at ldemer@adn.com and 257-4390.

Close Window

March 6, 2001



Larry Wiget, Executive Director, Public Affairs

(W) 907-742-4322 (F) 907-742-4175

HB 99: School Discipline and Safety Programs

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the House Special Committee on Education with written testimony on HB 99.

The Anchorage School District supports changes to statute that require a governing body to adopt a written school disciplinary and safety program that includes, as stated in section seven of the CS for HB 99, **written policies for implementing student conflict resolution strategies that include the nonviolent resolution or mediation of conflict.**

The Anchorage School District has concerns, however, that the written policy **must provide procedures for reporting and resolving conflicts.** Our concern is not unlike our concern with the original version of HB 99 that required a governing body to adopt a program that included training for teachers, staff and students. Requiring procedures for reporting and resolving conflict constitutes an **unfunded mandate.** Decisions such as these should be made at the local level and not mandated by statute.

Currently, the Anchorage School District has in place a program called Resolving Conflict Creatively in number of elementary schools. This program is the district's primary effort to prevent violence in our elementary schools. Dozens of Anchorage elementary schools now use at least some principles of the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program and suspensions for fighting in elementary schools are dropping. The program is also in four of our middle schools, with two others applying for grants to implement the program next year.

Partners in Learning, a similar approach to Resolving Conflict Creatively, is being piloted at Chugiak High. According to superintendent Carol Comeau, "the district would like to see it spread, but won't require it in every school - teachers and principals must want it. The worst thing you can do is mandate a program like this, which takes buy-in by the staff."

To date, the Anchorage School District has invested through grants and operating funds over \$1 million worth of programs to combat problem behaviors from drug abuse to racial discrimination. Expanding the programs will take additional dollars that the district is currently seeking through grants.

In summary, the Anchorage School District supports a written school disciplinary and safety program that includes, as stated in section seven of the CS for HB 99, **written policies for implementing student conflict resolution strategies that include the nonviolent resolution or mediation of conflict.** Our concern, however, is that this requirement not become an unfunded mandate. Eliminating language within the bill that the written policy **must provide procedures for reporting and resolving conflicts** would go a long way in alleviating our fear.

adn.com

Anchorage Daily News

School fighting

District hunts ways to cut violence

By Lisa Demer
Anchorage Daily News

(Published March 5, 2001)

A disturbing rise in fights involving Anchorage high school students -- including one that put a 16-year-old Dimond student in a coma this year -- has school leaders searching for new ways to address student conflict and is putting new energy into efforts already begun.

Private psychologists have offered to visit high school health classes. Schools are holding forums on violence and communication. The Anchorage School District may fine-tune a conflict resolution program entrenched in many elementary schools and just getting started in middle and high schools.

The need is intense.

After holding steady or dropping in recent years, suspensions for fights, threats and assaults at Anchorage's six comprehensive high schools went up 34 percent the first quarter of this school year compared to the same period the year before, from 111 to 149.

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The situation got worse in the second quarter with a string of sensational fights. Service High administrators suspended 134 students for watching or participating in a Dec. 5 fight between two boys that was captured on videotape and set to music. Chugiak made headlines after it suspended 40 students after a Jan. 6 fight between two girls on the popular Chaparrals dance/drill team. A Dimond High junior was comatose for days after he was struck in the head with a baseball bat on Jan. 14. An East High student was stabbed in the arm on Jan. 23 in an after-school fight.

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The climate at high schools needs to change, said teachers and principals.

Con- Harry Wiget
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article. Especially
the last page. K.

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Reporter Lisa Demer can be reached at ldemer@adn.com and 257-4390.

Close Window

BILL ANALYSIS -- HB 99
1st Hearing February 28, 2001

Sponsor: Rep. Lesil McGuire

Bill Title: "An Act relating to school discipline and safety programs; and providing for an effective date."

Synopsis:

Background: AS 14.33.120 (a) requires school districts to adopt written school disciplinary and safety programs that provide for standards of student behavior, when teachers are authorized to remove a student from the classroom, procedures for notifying teachers of dangerous students, standards relating to use of appropriate force by school personnel, policies to comply with federal law, and to address students with mental health or substance abuse issues may impact their behavior.

Section 1: Adds language to AS 14.33.120 (a) to require districts to adopt "policies for implementing a student conflict resolution program; the program must include training for teachers, staff and students in the nonviolent resolution or mediation of conflicts and must provide procedures for reporting and resolving conflicts between students.

Section 2: The governing body of the school district must amend their school disciplinary and safety program by January 1, 2002.

Section 3: Effective date (July 1, 2001).

Sponsor's Proposed CS Language (in the packets)

- 1) Replaces Section 1 of the bill to require school districts to adopt "policies for implementing student conflict resolution strategies that include nonviolent resolution or mediation and conflict and must provide procedures for reporting and resolving conflicts."
- 2) This change is in response to the fiscal note from DoE.

Fiscal Note: \$0 cost to the state. However, DoE estimates that costs to school districts would be as follows:

- a) \$20-100 per set of conflict resolution program materials x the number of teachers in a district
- b) \$30,000 per year for staff to conduct the program (per school) for staff training and peer mediation training.
- c) Unknown amount to pay for a minimum of two inservice days for teachers and staff.
- d) Time and space to conduct training and conflict resolution activities

Committee Member Information:

Rep. Guess will be participating via offnet from Washington, D.C.

Available to Testify For Representative McGuire:

- 1) Judy Matthewson, Co-Facilitator of Conflict Resolution at Chugiak High School (via offnet)
- 2) Sandy Anderson, Co-Facilitator of Conflict Resolution at Chugiak High School (via offnet)
- 3) Michael Kerosky, Supervisor, Safe & Drug-Free Schools, Anchorage School District

Larry Wiget is reviewing this bill for the Anchorage School District. He does not know at this time if A.S.D. will be testifying one way or the other on this bill.

Teleconference Sites: Anchorage, Barrow, Valdez and Tok.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2001 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
Bill Version: HB 99
() Publish Date: _____

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____
Title: An Act relating to school discipline and safety
programs; and providing for an effective date.
Sponsor: Representative McGuire
Requester: House Special Committee on Education

Dept. Affected: Education & Early Development
BRU: Teaching & Learning Support
Component: Special & Supplemental Services
Component Number: 166

Expenditures/Revenues

(Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
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FUND SOURCE

(Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type)						
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2001) cost: 0.0

Check this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2002 budget proposal: ☐

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This fiscal note represents zero cost to the department, but there will be costs at the district and school level to adopt a student conflict resolution program. At a minimum level, every teacher would need to receive two inservice days of training in order to implement a conflict resolution program. Each teacher would also need to receive the conflict resolution program materials for use in each classroom. Costs of programs are between about \$20 and \$100 per set, with each teacher needing a set. At the minimum level of \$20, multiplied by 8,000 teachers, the cost would be \$160,000 for materials only. At a more comprehensive level, paid staff would need to be hired to conduct ongoing training for teachers and provide technical assistance for those teachers experiencing difficulties. This staff person would also train peer mediators and provide opportunities for these children to get together and practice their mediation skills. Also at the more comprehensive level, separate school space would be secured to conduct the activities of the conflict resolution program; a place where children and mediators go to work out problems. An average cost for hiring staff to conduct a comprehensive level conflict resolution program at a school the size of Riverbend, in the Juneau School District, would alone be approximately \$30,000 per year.

Prepared by: Barbara Thompson
Division: Teaching & Learning Support
Approved by: Bruce Johnson, Deputy Commissioner of Education
Agency: Department of Education & Early Development

Phone 465-8727
Date/Time 2/26/01 12:00 AM
Date 2/27/01

For distribution information, call the Governor's Legislative Office

CS for HB 99, "An Act relating to school discipline and safety programs; and providing for an effective date."

(7) policies for implementing student conflict resolution strategies that include the nonviolent resolution or mediation of conflict and must provide procedures for reporting and resolving conflicts.

The New York Times

Study Finds Programs in Schools Can Curb Violence Among Young

By RANDY BANNER

School-based programs can help reduce violence at an early age, according to a study being released today by Columbia University.

A two-year evaluation of the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program, a violence-prevention program in New York City public schools, found that students in the program tended to be less hostile, were less likely to resort to aggression and more likely to choose verbal rather than physical strategies to resolve conflicts.

The study, by the National Center for Children in Poverty at Columbia's Joseph L. Mailman School of Public Health, tracked 5,000 students in grades two through five from 15 New York City elementary schools that took part in the program in 1994 and 1995. The center surveyed teachers and students, who ranked incidents of aggressive behavior. Students who took the most classes in conflict resolution, on average 25 over the school year, had no increase in incidents, while others, on a scale of 1 to 5, had an increase of almost 2. Aggression and violent behavior naturally increase as children mature, said J. Lawrence Aber, principal investigator of the study and director of the Center for Children in Poverty.

The study also found that students taking 25 lessons in conflict resolution improved academically faster than those with less exposure to the program. The program, initiated in 1985, teaches students techniques to



Lorrie Mann gives a lesson in conflict resolution at Public School 15 in Red Hook, Brooklyn.

control potentially violent situations through negotiation and reasoning. It includes classroom instruction, a student peer mediation program, teacher training and a series of workshops for parents. The program is used in 60 primary and secondary schools in New York City and taught to 9,000 students in kindergarten through the 12th grade. For the youngest students, puppets and other playthings are used to illustrate how conflicts can be resolved by talking rather than hitting.

Violence prevention initiatives have become common throughout the country. Boston public schools have a program called Voices of Love

and Freedom, and there are many local initiatives in New York City itself. The Resolving Conflict Creatively Program, however, is the only systemwide initiative financed by New York City's Board of Education, which administers the program with the non-profit group Educators for Social Responsibility.

The study of New York's program was financed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and private foundations.

Ellen Icolari, the program's director for the Board of Education, said the report validated what was already a widely held view by those involved with it. "It's something

we've known all along from working in the schools but never had hard data to back up," she said.

Dr. Aber said the study was conducted at the elementary level to determine if the program succeeded in early childhood — which is deemed to be a critical time in the formation of attitudes and behaviors — and then to follow the student into junior high and high school in subsequent studies. A report examining the program from 1995-1996 will be issued next year.



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ALASKA

East High student stabs another in fight

WITNESSES: Fifteen to 20 attended the after-school brawl in which one boy was injured.

By Molly Brown And Rosemary Shinohara
Anchorage Daily News

(Published January 24, 2001)

An East High School student was stabbed in the arm by another student in an after-school fight on Tuesday, Anchorage police said.

The student, a 16-year-old boy, was taken to Alaska Regional Hospital. He was treated for an injury to the right bicep and released, police spokesman Ron McGee said.

Police have a suspect in the fight but had not arrested him Tuesday night.

The fight took place about 2:20 p.m., just after school ended, said Jim Taylor, Anchorage School District's director of schools. Security officers saw 15 to 20 students walk toward a neighborhood off East 20th Avenue, he said.

A resident reported the fight to police, who arrived at the scene before school security officers, McGee said.

The boy who allegedly did the stabbing fled, and students watching the fight also scattered. Authorities know the identity of the main players and think they know who the spectators were, Taylor said.

The school will investigate and suspend the participants in the fight and possibly others, he said.

School administrators have suspended about 200 students for fighting or for watching fights over the past two months. A Dec. 5 fight that was planned and promoted at Service High School and then videotaped at a nearby park led to the suspension of 134 students. One boy was briefly knocked unconscious in that fight. Administrators suspended 40 Chugiak High School students after a Jan. 6 fight between two members of the school's dance/drill team at a private home after a hockey game.

A 15-year-old Diamond High School student remains in critical condition

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A 10-year-old Dimond High School student remains in critical condition at Providence Alaska Medical Center after being hit in the head with a bat in an early morning fight Jan. 14. Another Dimond student, 16-year-old Tad Joseph Sheffield, was charged as an adult with felony assault.

Despite the serious injuries and the School District's zero tolerance for violence, students continue to fight.

"Well. . . some kids are always going to resort to that and that is the one kernel of truth," Taylor said. "We want to keep the number of people who resort to (fighting) as low as possible."

Students have peer counselors, administrators and teachers available if they need help, he said. Students also have the support of their family, their church and their other outside activities, he said.

"Sometimes it is just more than a teenage ego can do, to walk away," Taylor said.

Reporter Molly Brown can be reached at mbrown@adn.com and 257-4343. Reporter Rosemary Shinohara can be reached at rshinohara@adn.com and 257-4340.

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January 17, 2001

ALASKA'S NEWSPAPER

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Dimond student in coma after being hit with baseball



Tad Joseph Sheffield, 16, was charged as an adult.

■ **FIGHT:** A 16-year-old boy is charged with first-degree assault.

By LISA DEMER
Anchorage Daily News

A 16-year-old Dimond High School student is comatose after a weekend fight in which another student hit him on the head with a baseball bat, Anchorage police said Tuesday.

Neither police nor Anchorage School District officials would identify the injured

student, who was in critical condition Tuesday in the intensive care unit at Providence Alaska Medical Center.

Tad Joseph Sheffield, 16, was charged as an adult with first-degree assault, a felony. A charging document filed in court Tuesday lists an extensive criminal history for the teenager: burglary, criminal mischief, criminal trespass and two prior assaults, the first one when he was 12 years old.

The incident is the latest in a string of sensational fights involving Anchorage students.

The two boys, who had a long-running dispute, spotted each other in separate cars on Dimond Boulevard after midnight Saturday and agreed to meet for a fight behind the Fred Meyer store, Anchorage police said. Sheffield brought an aluminum baseball bat, but he set it down after the group of 10 or so onlookers told him he couldn't use it, police said.

They wrestled and exchanged blows. When the fight appeared to be over, witnesses later told police, Sheffield had gotten the worst of it. But then he retrieved

the bat and struck the other side of the head, police Lofthouse said.

The injured boy managed to get home over the next three hot house, he complained of said he felt nauseous. A friend drove him home, where he was taken to Providence before walking through I took him to Providence vealed a baseball-sized l

Se

WHERE DIVOTS MELT



Ashcroft showdo in Sena

FIGHT: Two teens had a long-running dispute, Dimond principal

Continued from A-1

required emergency brain surgery to remove.

The youth's mother told police that his eyes reacted to light on Monday, which is a favorable sign, Lofthouse said. Doctors won't know his prognosis for another day or more, the detective said.

"This young man was very lucky. A bleed inside of the head can be very serious," the detective said.

Sheffield was arrested Monday afternoon at his workplace, the Carrs Quality Center at Dimond and Jewel Lake Road. He was booked Tuesday at Cook Inlet Pre-Trial Facility.

Dimond High School principal Guy Okada said the school is investigating but as of Tues-

day afternoon hadn't established that the fight was planned at school or a school event. If it was, the school would consider disciplining the students.

The two boys have been in conflict since fall, when the injured boy's car was broken into at Dimond High, Okada said. The boy reported to police that a CD player, a cell phone and 88 CDs were stolen on Sept. 22. Rumors circulated at school that Sheffield was responsible, Lofthouse said.

"We know there were some ill feelings between the two boys. The school took appropriate action at that point," Okada said. He would not go into specifics. Jim Taylor, the district's acting executive director of high school educa-

tion, said the boys' parents were alerted about the conflict. The injured boy's mother works at Dimond High as a secretary.

Police and Anchorage school officials have warned since early December that a student could be seriously hurt in a fight. School administrators this school year have cracked down on fighting, Taylor said. Kids have been suspended for pushing or just for watching fights, if that contributed to the violence.

A videotaped fight between two Service High School students at a nearby park on Dec. 5 led to suspensions of 134 students, most of them for watching a fight that was planned and promoted at school, Service officials said. One boy was briefly knocked unconscious in that

fight. A Jan. 6 fight between Chugiak High School's private home after a resulted in suspensions of.

Anchorage schools h grams to deal with confidation. Most of Anchorage students don't get into trouble some "just do not understand the consequences of their actions themselves, on showing."

"At some point you healthy. It will keep you."

Reporter Lisa Dwyer can be reached at 257-4390.



KABILA: Congo reported killed

Continued from A-1

confused to know more."

"There are credible reports that Kabila was killed in a shootout at his residence," said a U.S. official in Washington. "We are monitoring the situation closely."

A U.S. spokesman for Kabila's government, John Aycoth, also said Kabila was dead, according to the Associated Press. Aycoth said he had spoken with Congolese officials who confirmed Kabila's death.

The death of Kabila, 61, who took power in May 1997 after toppling longtime dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, would mark the beginning of yet another phase in the tumultuous history of Congo, one of Africa's largest and richest countries.

A rebellion against Kabila

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continu
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Kabila

PEACEABLE SCHOOL PILOT



CHUGIAK
HIGH SCHOOL

Chugiak High School

Roles and Functions of Key Peaceable School Partners

Peaceable School Steering Committee

- Oversight of annual review and planning process
- Coordination of specific activities that promote peaceable school goals
- Oversight and allocation of violence Prevention Funds from Safe & Drug Free Schools
- Communicates annual goals and activities to school staff, parents, and community
- Works with PAC, Student Forum, Peer Mediation groups and other community groups to organize programs and workshops to address issues of concern

Student Forum

- Addresses issues of concern and makes recommendations for action
- Communication link to homerooms through student representatives
- Meets bi-monthly on school business meeting days
- Longer gatherings of forum at beginning of school year, change of semesters, and end of year

(PAC) Positive Action Committee

- Link of communication between school administration, clubs, and student body
- Clearinghouse for sharing and passing on information related to rumors and incidents that impact the school community
- Quarterly gatherings to identify annual theme, clarify roles and responsibilities, and share how clubs are carrying out annual theme
- PAC can make recommendations Student Forum to address issues of concern

Peer Mediation

- Offer peer mediation between students and students and staff to work out interpersonal conflicts and differences
- Provide annual training for students and staff

Chugiak High School Peaceable School Pilot Goal for School Report Card

Goal: Continue building a peaceable school and more personalized learning environment by:

- ***Increasing student participation in clubs and activities by 10% this school year***
- ***Increasing student voice and leadership through participation in the Student Forum, the Positive Action Committee, and representation on school committees***
- ***Building capacity to institutionalize Peaceable School activities by establishing stipended positions to co-coordinate Peaceable School Pilot***
- ***Broadening public awareness, student awareness, faculty awareness, and parent awareness of Peaceable School activities through tangible events, presentations, and written documents***
- ***Deepening awareness and widening support for "best practices" that help all students at Chugiak to be academically successful and socially competent and responsible. This will be accomplished by documenting teaching practices that personalize learning and working with department chairs to identify the best ways to support these practices and activities in their departments***
- ***Double the number of staff who participate in peer mediation trainings or observe mediations from last year (five participated last year)***
- ***Securing participation from faculty in the Peaceable School Pilot by asking each faculty member to identify one way that they can support this effort during the year (Peaceable School Pilot Participation Options will be handed out at next all staff meeting or in-service day)***

***Chugiak High School
Peaceable School Pilot Steering Committee
Summary Notes and Agreements***

Positive Action Committee Action Steps

1. Top has agreed to sponsor PAC and facilitate October 19 meeting. Vernon has agreed to help facilitate the meeting.
2. Prepare a flyer to be disseminated to clubs, school organizations, and sports teams on October 11. The flyer should include the following:
 - Purposes of Positive Action Committee
 - Announcement of PAC meeting on afternoon of October 19, 11 to 2 p.m.
 - Call for 1 to 3 representatives of each club, organization, and sports team to attend meeting
 - A form for writing name of club, organization, or sports team, names of students who will attend meeting, and adult sponsors who would be interested in attending meeting
 - Purpose of the meeting will include choosing the PAC theme for this year and deciding date of three other quarterly meetings
3. Prepare agenda for October 19 PAC meeting. Agenda to include:
 - Clarification of purposes of PAC, how often it will meet, follow-up check-in's to support club and sports involvement in theme
 - Trust building activities and discussion between students and administrators
 - Discuss vandalism and graffiti incidents as test cases for how PAC can intervene
 - Brainstorm and reach consensus for PAC theme for this year
 - Decide on other dates for quarterly meetings
4. Make arrangements for space, reminders to students, and food for October 19 meeting
5. Create paper passes that can be disseminated to PAC members when students need to be notified and gathered for a quick emergency meeting

***Chugiak High School
Peaceable School Pilot
Announcement for Stipended Co-Coordinator Positions at
Chugiak High School, 2000-2001***

As part of the Chugiak Peaceable School Pilot, ASD Safe & Drug Free Schools is able to award up to three \$700 (40 hour) stipends to each of two co-coordinators at Chugiak HS for the period from October 1, 2000 to June 30, 2001. Both of these positions will involve 2 to 3 hours a week to coordinate Peaceable School activities. It is agreed that two staff members can negotiate how they divide up roles and responsibilities described in the description below. Please submit the form below to the principal if you are interested in one of these positions.

Roles and responsibilities for Peaceable School Pilot Co-Coordinators:

1. Collate staff responses to Peaceable School Pilot Participation Options and support implementation of activities that promote faculty participation.
2. Serve as a liaison between Safe & Drug Free Schools and CHS.
3. Coordinate and help facilitate quarterly Steering Committee meetings.
4. Set up on-site schedule for consultant visits with Carol Lieber including focus groups, steering committee meetings, trainings, securing rooms, gathering people by personally inviting them, talking to principal about schedule and food, talking to administrative assistant about substitute needs.
5. Communicate to school leaders about status of Peaceable School activities during the year.
6. Communicate to school staff and community about Peaceable School activities.
7. Support the efforts of Positive Action Committee and attend the quarterly meetings.
8. Serve as the on-site instructor for one-credit class, "Strategies for Personalizing the Classroom", a class offered to staff designed to learn a strategy, try it out, discuss outcomes with colleagues, and explore how strategies for personalization can be used in different academic disciplines.

9. *Oversee coordination of national RCCP site visit to Chugiak in February. Educators from RCCP sites around the country will be participating in a national gathering here in Anchorage.*
10. *Connect with other teachers who have participated in Partners in Learning course to compile strategies, activities, and practices that help create more peaceable, collaborative, and respectful classrooms. These ideas will go on the national ESR web site.*
11. *Help recruit staff for High School course in February.*
12. *Organize and help facilitate Peaceable School Pilot assessment and planning meeting in late Spring, 2001.*
13. *Participate in meetings with other Peaceable School coordinators and Safe & Drug Free Schools staff.*
14. *Be an advocate for efforts to personalize the learning environment, especially related to developing structural and program options for new "houses" at Chugiak.*
15. *Help write and monitor mini-grants from Safe & Drug Free Schools.*

Peaceable School Co-Coordinator Positions at CHS

(Please submit this form to Jan)

Name: _____ ext. _____

Present Position at Chugiak HS _____

Three reasons why I would be a good candidate for this position:

1.

2.

3.

***Chugiak High School
Supporting the Peaceable School Pilot
Participation Options***

Name _____

We would like to invite all staff to identify at least one way that each of us can contribute to making Chugiak a more peaceable, welcoming, and respectful community where every student can be successful by

- ***Providing a Safe Environment***
- ***Personalizing Education***
- ***Meeting Developmental Needs of Diverse Adolescents***
- ***Building Students' Emotional Resilience and Social Competency***
- ***Promoting Collaboration among Colleagues***
- ***Improving Student Performance***

- ☐ I would like to participate on the Peaceable School Steering Committee that will have oversight of Year Three of the pilot. This group will probably meet or phone conference every two months.
- ☐ I would like to work with students from the Positive Action Committee and other faculty to brainstorm ways to support the Peaceable School theme that students have chosen for this year.
- ☐ As a club sponsor or coach I will support efforts of my club or team to promote the Positive Action Committee theme for this school year.
- ☐ I would like to help support the Positive Action Committee them by teaching a lesson in class that addresses the theme.
- ☐ I would like to attend at least one Student Forum meeting this year on business meeting days.
- ☐ I would like to participate in Faculty Forum and other discussions about the internal structures, scheduling, and program options for establishing positive, personalizes learning environments in the new "houses" at Chugiak.

- ☐ I would like to attend the peer mediation training on Friday, November 3. (Stipends will be available.)
- ☐ I would like to observe a peer mediation this year.
- ☐ I will encourage the use of mediation as an early intervention when I see students having a problem with each other.
- ☐ I would like to discuss with Judy and Sandy how I might take on a support role with the mediation program in the future to ensure that the program will continue for years to come.
- ☐ I would like to participate in a planning committee with upper class students to develop a more personalized orientation program for in-coming students next year.
- ☐ I would like to help support student participation in school governance, curriculum, and task force committees. We agreed to create a process where students will participate on all standing school committees. This will also include establishing a selection process for students and creating a brief orientation for students who are on committees.
- ☐ I would be willing to document at least one idea, strategy, or practice that supports a peaceable and personalized classroom. We will place these ideas on the ESR national web site.
- ☐ I would be willing to briefly describe Partners in Learning goals and practices with colleagues in my department.
- ☐ I would like to work with my department chair to identify opportunities to share practices and strategies that create a more peaceable and personalized classroom.
- ☐ I would like to help identify courses within my department that are the best fit for establishing practices and activities that promote social and emotional competencies and conflict resolution and develop greater appreciation for diversity.
- ☐ I would like to meet with staff from "feeder" middle schools to discuss the kinds of middle school expectations and skill mastery that make the transition to high school a smoother experience for in-coming 9th graders.

- ☐ I would like to discuss the 9th grade transition with other faculty who teach 9th grade (thinking about some common goals, expectations, activities, and experiences that can help 9th graders be more successful here at Chugiak).
- ☐ I would like to participate in a discussion with sophomores to get an idea of the kinds of support, skills, learning activities, and encouragement are most helpful to be successful in 9th grade.
- ☐ I would like to sponsor a new activity this year (could run for 4 or 5 sessions or longer) in an effort to increase participation of students in Wednesday activities.
- ☐ I would like to use release time or a prep period to observe another teacher or team teach a class that reinforces social and emotional learning/conflict/diversity in the classroom.
- ☐ I would like to work with art students to create a Peaceable School banner that can hang in a prominent place in the school.
- ☐ Here's another way I'd like to make a contribution to the Peaceable School pilot here at Chugiak.



The Need

Conflict is a normal and essential part of life. The way we deal with differences and conflict, however, often divides us and inhibits our ability to confront common problems. Complex social issues and increasing global interdependence place new demands on our capacities to work together.

Many young people are not learning to deal constructively with differences that they face daily. They see few alternatives to either fleeing from conflict or fighting.

Violence has become a social problem of epidemic proportions that especially affects young people. The messages that society conveys about violence are at best confusing, and often encourage violence. Many young people do not believe that they can make a difference and improve the world in which they live.

Key Concepts

ESR conflict resolution programs reflect the following principles and understandings about conflict:

1. Conflict is a part of life. When handled constructively, conflict presents opportunities for growth and progress. People of any age can acquire skills and understandings that will help them deal with conflict in constructive ways.
2. There are many conflict situations where "win-win" solutions—those that meet the underlying interests and needs of the parties to the dispute—can be achieved. Too often we assume that one person must win and the other must lose in a conflict, or that both must give up something, and thus neither get what they need or want.
3. While the win-win approach can be helpful in many situations, resolution of a conflict is not always possible. In some cases, the best outcome in a conflict-laden situation might stem from a strategy that prevents the outbreak of physical violence or the rupture of a relationship. Conflict can even be an important resource in the effort to bring about constructive change. The primary goal is to be creative and resourceful in the face of conflict.
4. Conflict resolution is best taught in the context of a caring community characterized by cooperation, effective communication, emotional strength, appreciation of differences, recognition of common purposes, and shared decision making.

A singular focus on conflict resolution knowledge and skills without attention to creating community may miss underlying causes of problems. Caring and empathy are as important as knowing how to negotiate.

5. The ability to enter others' perspectives, to see and feel problems as others do, and to identify their needs and interests is central to dealing constructively with differences.
6. Dialogue is an effective form for discussing controversial issues. Dialogue, as contrasted with debate, emphasizes seeking common ground rather than polarizing differences. It encourages empathy with other points of view and toleration for ambiguity and the uncertainty of knowledge. Debate is characterized by confrontation, a contest between right and wrong in which each side believes it is right. The typical goal of debate is to win the argument and end the discussion. Dialogue encourages people with differences to keep talking and increases the chances of creative responses to conflict.
7. While the interventions used in interpersonal conflicts are often quite different from those used in larger social conflicts, the study of each helps students begin to understand the underlying dynamics of conflict and further develop a positive attitude toward it. The development of interpersonal conflict skills, principles, experience, and concepts sets the foundation for effective responses to conflict in social and political spheres.
8. It is important to cultivate awareness of and appreciation for differences—individual, ethnic, cultural, and national. Commonly, the perception of difference leads to separation and distancing. However, given an emerging understanding of the world's interdependent character, differences must be understood in their interrelatedness, and in the opportunities they often present for creating new, more inclusive and adaptive relationships. Responding effectively to conflict necessitates learning to balance respect for differences with the ability to make informed judgments.
9. The roots of violence and social conflict often lie in inequality and injustice. It is important to help students understand and confront such deeply rooted problems as racism and sexism. In part, this takes place through examination and, where needed, transformation of existing power relationships in social conflicts.

Conflict has many dimensions. While physical violence is the most obvious, other forms of structural and institutional violence are also pernicious and equally demand our attention.

ESR/RCCP's approach to conflict resolution and intergroup relations is based on the following principles which are rooted in beliefs about effective teaching and learning:

- 1. To see conflict as presenting opportunities for growth requires a significant shift in attitude and world view. Adults as well as students must examine and seek to change their own attitudes about conflict. This process requires time and patience. It also necessitates support for those teachers who are involved. Significant behavioral change in the classroom does not result from a "quick fix."**
- 2. Effective teaching about conflict is student-centered—that is, it begins with students' experiences of conflict and their own questions. It addresses the conflict and violence in young people's lives. It helps young people make connections between their lives and the larger world and apply new understandings to conflicts outside of their immediate experience.**
- 3. ESR/RCCP encourages young people to think about why there are different kinds of conflict, to explore a repertoire of effective responses to conflict, to pose problems and generate good questions, to recognize that society is created by people, and to believe that they can make a difference.**
- 4. ESR encourages inquiry and exploration of complex issues that lead to the discovery of underlying assumptions, root causes, and internal contradictions. Thoughtful inquiry involves risk taking, for it may raise fundamental questions about the way we live and how our society is structured.**
- 5. A comprehensive approach to conflict resolution education involves teachers in the application of understanding and skills at five levels: through core practices and routines that help create a peaceable classroom community; through modeling and teaching core conflict resolution skills; through the use of teaching strategies that promote cooperation, effective communication, and problem solving; through WIN-WIN approaches to classroom management and handling student problems; and through infusion of conflict resolution skills and concepts into academic subject areas such as literature, social studies, and science.**
- 6. Many programs teach conflict resolution as a set of isolated skills. Although individual skills are useful, the practice of creative response to conflict entails more than a collection of isolated skills; it is an integrative process that happens when one is confronted with a real problem. It also involves a systematic way of thinking about how to handle differences.**

7. **ESR/RCCP helps teachers create structured learning environments characterized by: a willingness to embrace and use conflict for learning; a sense of being safe to express feelings and different opinions, and to change one's mind and behavior; a commitment to share power and control so that students are partners with teachers in creating knowledge and making decisions; reflection about self and others; and connection between adults and the formation of relationships.**
8. **Other programs focus on stopping-fighting and physical violence and on controlling behavior. ESR/RCCP believes that conflict resolution in education is not simply another form of discipline. ESR/RCCP's goal involves going deeper. It includes empowering young people by providing them with a repertoire of skills and nurturing new ways of thinking about dealing with differences and conflict.**
9. **Based on our experience working with schools across the United States, we recommend several components for the successful implementation of a conflict resolution education program: in-depth introductory staff training, use of exemplary curriculum, follow-up classroom visits by staff development specialists, periodic meetings of all involved staff, and leadership development programs for qualified participants. Training support is central—ESR/RCCP's approach is as much about process and practice as curriculum. ESR structures participatory learning experiences for adults that mirror the empowering methodology we recommend for young people.**
10. **Conflict resolution in the schools often takes the form of mediation programs. ESR/RCCP believes that school mediation programs are best implemented as part of a larger effort to train staff and students in conflict resolution. While mediation programs are valuable for many young people, they often are separate from the cultures of classrooms and the school at large, where prevailing norms among students and teachers do not support the goals of the mediation program. Also, while third party intervention (mediation) is an important form of dispute resolution, it does not necessarily help individuals develop abilities to manage and resolve differences on their own.**
11. **ESR/RCCP frames its conflict resolution and intergroup relations work as central to the process by which young people become responsible decision makers and active participants in our democracy. Students need skills, understanding, and opportunities to make a difference in the world. The ability to deal constructively with differences is a fundamental part of effective citizenship.**

Conflict Resolution and intergroup relations are essential components integrated into a larger framework of social responsibility. ESR/RCCP is dedicated to deepening our own and our fellow educators' understanding of each of these activities cited below that we believe constitute important perspectives of social responsibility.

Controversial Issues - The significant issues of our times are controversial. Therefore, it is vital that these issues be considered in schools, so that students can practice learning how to decide what to do in complex, emotion-laden situations. Without such practice, they are left with the models they see around them, which tend to encourage polarizing and oversimplifying.

Dialogue - In dialogue the effort is to understand each other's position—not only the intellectual content, but also the history and emotions tied to the position. Done well, this approach leads to an increased understanding of a given situation that permits a partnership approach in critical thinking and an attempt to collaborate in devising a "win-win" solution to the conflict. In debate, by contrast, the emphasis is on attacking the intellectual content of an opponent's position to achieve a "win" at the opponent's expense.

Multiple Perspectives - There are typically more than "two sides to every story." One of the most important means of helping students reflect on their thinking is to help them reach beyond the limits of their own experience and to enter the experience of others.

Interconnectedness - Preparing young people for the twenty-first century means helping them to develop an understanding of how to live in an interdependent world. Students need to be encouraged to view situations holistically, examining the interconnections of parts of a system rather than focusing on one cause and one effect.

Opportunities for Participation - Learning is strengthened when it is embodied in action, so it is vital to give students opportunities to contribute to the lives of others and to improve the world around them. Depending on their maturity, students can be appropriately involved in taking action on classroom, school, community, national, or global problems. Providing such opportunities helps students to improve the quality of their thinking and to build self-esteem and a sense of connection with the world.

Community - Developing a sense of community—a consciousness of the group of which one is a part—means acknowledging our interconnectedness, having a sense of common purpose, respecting difference, sharing in decision making, and supporting each other's growth. To enable young people to acquire this perspective, we must be willing and able to create classrooms and schools that function as communities.

ESR/RCCP seeks to make social responsibility an integral part of education. It perceives social responsibility to be an integrating framework for a variety of activities that will help young people learn how to participate in shaping a better world.

These ideas were forged through years of ESR leaders' experience in helping educators introduce creative and effective ways of dealing with conflict into their classrooms and schools. ESR/RCCP's approach to conflict resolution has many roots. While it is not possible to trace all of these roots, certain key contributions and bench-marks are worth noting.

Early in the 1980s, our experience teaching the skills of critical analysis for examining the arms race led quickly to the realization that students needed to understand the process for peacemaking. The curriculum guide, *Perspectives: A Teaching Guide to Concepts of Peace*, compiled by over thirty educators, was published in 1983. It included a section designed to help students learn conflict resolution skills for helping to create a more peaceful world.

Also during the 1980s, a group of ESR leaders adapted Peter Elbow's technique for teaching writing, called methodological belief, to develop a process for more deeply understanding different perspectives on emotion-laden, controversial topics. This process helps people listen and talk about conflict in new ways.

During this period ESR reached teachers with its ideas in two ways. It developed a wealth of practical activities which it introduced to teachers through printed materials and workshops, and it enabled teachers to gain a deeper understanding of conflict resolution through weeklong institutes. Both activities enriched our own understanding of the varied dimensions of conflict resolution work.

Another major source of ESR's approach to conflict resolution began in 1985 when New York Metro ESR and the New York City Public Schools launched a project in one school district in Brooklyn to prepare elementary teachers in conflict resolution. This project, now a national demonstration project named the "Resolving Conflict Creatively Program," has grown to encompass over 300 schools and involve 120,000 students in New York City, other sites around the country including Anchorage (AK), Vista (CA), New Orleans, and South Orange-Maplewood (NJ). This comprehensive program involves school districts that make a long term commitment to integrate conflict resolution and intergroup relations into the heart of the school culture. To accomplish this, RCCP involves all staff, administrators, and parents in intensive training and leadership development, provides extensive staff development for participating teachers, and involves students in school wide projects and leadership programs.

Whole Schools Conflict Resolution Project

**A Joint Project of San Francisco Peer Resources
and the Community Board Program**

Evaluation Report

Prepared by

Harder+Company Community Research

August 1997

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Executive Summary

The social problems faced by children and youth, including teen pregnancy, drug use, violence, and gang involvement, are very different from generations past. Concern over youth violence, in particular, has moved to the forefront of the national health and education agendas. In 1990, 1 in 24 high school students reported having carried a weapon for self-defense and this increased to 1 in 12 students in 1995 (CDC, 1991; Kann, 1996).

Reducing school violence and increasing school safety have the benefit of supporting educational environments that are conducive to learning. Managing student problem behaviors through suspensions, expulsions, and other disciplinary actions decreases the amount of time available for instruction and may negatively impact academic performance.

This report presents results from the evaluation of the Whole Schools Conflict Resolution Project (WSCR), a school-based model for reducing student conflict and improving school safety, implemented as a collaborative effort between the San Francisco Peer Resources Program and The Community Board Program of San Francisco. San Francisco Peer Resources, in its second decade, is a school-based peer education and counseling program which trains and supports students to provide peer tutoring, conflict mediation, mentoring, and peer education on a wide range of topics from HIV/AIDS prevention to gang diversion. The Community Board Program of San Francisco, founded in 1976, is a well known provider of conflict resolution services, trainings, materials, and technical assistance in schools and communities. The WSCR, a Model developed by The Community Board Program, is based on the philosophy that the most effective way to reduce student violence and improve the overall school environment is to engage the entire school community: students, teachers, administrators, and parents. The WSCR Model includes as components: a peer mediation program, parental involvement and support, school staff involvement and support, implementation of conflict resolution curriculum, and a conflict resolution program for adults.

This Project was conceived as a demonstration, to be implemented in several schools across the district, at different grade levels, over a three year period. The Project began its first year in three high schools, expanded into three middle schools in its second year, and added an elementary school in the third year. This report provides an evaluation of the impacts of the Whole Schools Conflict Resolution Project in two of these schools: A.P. Giannini Middle School and Mission High School.

A key purpose of this evaluation was to examine the WSCR approach, first in theory, by reviewing the literature on peer mediation and conflict resolution, then in practice. The evaluation sought to assess what impacts the Model had in terms of school safety and culture as reported by students, faculty and administration of each school. It also sought to assess the keys and challenges to successful program implementation as experienced by program staff and school faculty. Methods used in this evaluation

included key informant interviews with administrators and staff, focus groups with students and faculty, student surveys, and a literature review.

Perceived Impact on Students and Schools

Impact on Prevalence of Student Violence

- 56% of Giannini and 48% of Mission students surveyed reported finding it easier than before to talk things out instead of fighting.
- 56% of students at each school felt that the amount of the time spent handling fights between students in class had not increased.
- One school administrator felt that the WSCRП had a positive impact on student violence, noting, "*If it wasn't here, the level of violence and conflict would be higher.*"
- Student Conflict Managers at both schools felt the Project reduced fights and suspensions by providing students with an additional option for resolving disputes.

Impact on General School Environment

- 41% of Giannini and 36% of Mission students surveyed reported feeling *safer* while at school than before.
- 80% of Giannini and 64% of Mission students surveyed had favorable opinions of their school.
- As described by teachers and administrators, the WSCRП made significant contributions to creating and supporting positive school environments. Teachers and students had begun to use a common vocabulary and had a shared understanding of more effective strategies for handling conflicts.
- Faculty and staff at each school agreed that teaching students conflict management techniques gave students essential social skills which they could use in their daily lives and into adulthood.
- Faculty and staff at each school felt the Project had enormous potential for improving student attitudes, conduct and school safety. Teaching conflict resolution in the classroom gave students the skills to communicate as an alternative to fighting.

Awareness and Acceptance of WSCRП Strategies

- School administrators expressed strong support for the conflict resolution curriculum and peer mediation strategies, with one noting, "*If the program were not here, it would be a detriment to this school and the student body.*"
- 82% of Giannini and 41% of Mission students reported that they were aware of the conflict management program at their school.
- 46% of Giannini students and 45% of Mission students agreed that, should such a program be available, they would take their conflicts to peer mediation.

Implementation of Project

Progress Toward Goals

- Neither Giannini nor Mission had reached the level of full implementation of the Model by the end of the 1996-97 school year. Faculty and administrative involvement were somewhat limited at each site and neither had reached the stage of developing parent involvement components. However, each had made significant progress in their first few years. Faculty Site Leadership Teams and student peer mediation programs were in place and integration of conflict resolution curricula in the classroom was well underway.
- To the extent that a program achieves full implementation, school-based conflict management programs can have an impact at the school-wide level. As reported by a school in La Habra Unified School District in Southern California, faculty, students and administration were aware of the program, used the concepts of conflict management, and referred conflicts to peer mediation, and a school was transformed. The process takes a commitment of time, support, and resources, and schools implementing the WSCRП have begun to see the benefits of the Model.

Keys and Challenges to Implementation

- ***Administrative and faculty support and commitment to carrying out the Project were key factors associated with the successful implementation of the WSCRП.*** Our research findings, as well as the literature, show that the greater the administrative investment, the greater the overall impact of a school-based conflict management program.
- ***The primary challenges to implementation were limitations on staff time and program resources.*** Learning and integrating new concepts into the classroom takes time in already full schedules; yet, faculty believed the investment was well worth the effort.

Impact of Similar Programs in Other Districts

Findings from the Literature

- ***Fighting and violence decrease:*** Numerous evaluations show less violence and harmful behavior, especially marked decreases in physical fighting.
- ***Integrated conflict resolution curriculum enhanced academic learning outcomes:*** Two studies which examined the impact of integrating conflict management into other academic curriculum demonstrated increased learning of other academic content, such as English and Social Studies.
- ***Student misconduct and school suspensions decrease:*** Numerous studies have demonstrated significant decreases in fighting, name-calling, and other disruptive behavior in the classroom. Further, detention and suspension rates for fighting were significantly reduced. Studies have shown 45% to 70% reductions in suspension rates in schools with conflict management programs.
- ***School climates improve:*** Teachers in several studies reported an increased level of cooperation among students and improved overall school environment.

Reports from Other School Districts

- ***Other cities using these strategies reported significantly decreased student violence and increased school safety.*** A Southern California middle school program credited their peer mediation program with significantly decreasing the amount of student violence on campus in the nine years since its inception. The peer mediation program was believed to have de-escalated serious undercurrents in the high school within its first two years.

Conclusion

When fully implemented, WSCRП has the potential to have significant positive impact on the school environment, reducing suspensions, improving the school climate, and enhancing student social and conflict resolution skills. Both schools implementing the WSCRП Model have the opportunity to effect greater impacts at the whole school level through increased adult involvement in the program, including greater teacher and parent participation. Further, a District-level commitment to support, promote and fund these strategies will contribute to the increased success of the WSCRП in San Francisco schools.

Chapter 1: Introduction

THE PROBLEM OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE

The social problems faced by children and youth today are very different from previous generations. Teen pregnancy, drug use, violence, and gang involvement are becoming more common-place. The resulting stresses and challenges outside school are having increasingly negative effects on the learning environment *inside* school. These problems are compounded in urban school districts, such as San Francisco, where the stresses are great and the resources limited. Nationally, the number of students in urban schools has remained the same from 1980 to 1990, but the proportion of students in these schools living in poverty and with limited English skills has increased over the decade. In a recent report, students attending urban schools were found to be more likely to live in poverty, to possess limited English proficiency, and to face health and safety risks than students attending rural or suburban schools. The prevalence of discipline problems, including absenteeism, classroom disruption, weapons possession and teen pregnancy is also greater in urban schools (Lippman, et al., 1996).

Concern over violence among youth, particularly in schools, has moved to the forefront of the national health and education agendas. In a national survey assessing the incidence of exposure to violence among students grades 6 through 12, 71% of students reported having been exposed to harassment/bullying, physical assault, or robbery at their school during that school year. In this same study, elementary and middle school students were more likely to worry about their safety at school than high school students, and they were also more likely to have been a victim of harassment, assault or theft (17% and 8%, respectively). School size appears to correlate with the incidence of violence. Students at larger schools (enrollment of 600 or greater) were more likely to have been exposed to harassment, assault or theft; boys were also more likely than girls to have been victimized (Chandler, et al., 1995).

—There is other evidence that the nation is facing an epidemic of violence in the lives of youth. Annual

firearm homicide rates for young people aged 15-19 increased 155% between 1987 and 1994 (CDC, 1996). In 1990, 1 in 24 high school students reported having carried a weapon for self-defense and this increased to 1 in 12 students in 1995 (CDC, 1991; Kann, 1996).

The San Francisco Unified School District is facing problems similar to those confronted by other urban school districts across the nation. In the spring of 1995, the San Francisco Unified School District participated in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Survey. It was administered to a random sample of 1,236 students in grades 9 through 12. According to the report prepared by the District's School Health Programs Department, students reported the following:

- 10% reported carrying a knife, 5% carried a club, and 4% carried a gun at some point during the previous month;
- 7% reported not going to school out of fear for their safety either in school, or on the way to and from school;
- 8% reported being either threatened or injured by someone with a weapon while at school; and,
- 28% had been in a physical fight in the past year.

THE EFFECT ON SCHOOLS

Many schools are seeking methods to respond to the increase in violence among in-school youth. School budgets are now including allocations for security guards, even metal detectors. Traditional methods of student discipline, which include school suspension or expulsion, are not proving fully effective by themselves in curbing the problem of youth violence. High rates of suspensions and expulsions are red flags for schools in trouble. In San Francisco, the district now requires schools to implement additional interventions to reduce suspension and expulsion rates. In general, increased fighting and violence have profound and costly consequences for schools:

- Teachers have less time to teach;
- Teachers and administration spend increasingly more time managing disciplinary problems and student conflicts;
- Suspensions, expulsions and discipline problems encroach on hours of instruction;
- Lost instructional time results in decreased opportunities for learning and negatively impacts academic performance;
- School environments erode and an overall sense of safety is lost; and,
- Drop-out and truancy rates are connected to students' histories of behavioral problems.

RESPONSES TO THE INCREASING PROBLEM

San Francisco Safe Schools Planning

The San Francisco Unified School District has recently initiated a comprehensive assessment and planning effort to improve school safety district-wide. Building on the work of the federal Safe and Drug Free Communities program in San Francisco, the district Superintendent established safe schools as a priority,

as reflected in one of the District's six goals: "To maintain environments that are safe, secure, and attractive." Guided by the District's Safe Schools Coordinator, many schools in the district (pre-kindergarten through high school) established a Safe School Planning Team to develop and implement a safe school plan. During the 1996-1997 school year, each school-based team conducted a needs assessment, set and prioritized goals, and formulated strategies to meet its objectives. Funding will be made available on a competitive basis to implement these plans next year.

Whole Schools Conflict Resolution Project

Preceding implementation of the district-wide Safe Schools Planning process, two organizations, the San Francisco Peer Resource Programs and The Community Board Program, sought to improve school safety by collaborating on the implementation of a school-based model for reducing student conflict and improving safety and overall school environment. The Whole Schools Conflict Resolution Project was conceived as a demonstration, to be implemented in several schools across the district, at different grade levels, over a three year period.

San Francisco Peer Resources, in its second decade of existence, is a school-based peer education and counseling program which trains and supports students to provide peer education, tutoring, conflict mediation, and mentoring on a wide range of topics from HIV/AIDS prevention to gang diversion. The Community Board Program of San Francisco, founded in 1976, is a well recognized and highly regarded national provider of conflict resolution services, trainings, materials, and technical assistance to a wide range of audiences. In San Francisco, the Community Board Program provides free neighborhood and family mediation services, as well as supports the development of conflict resolution programming in public school. The Whole Schools Conflict Resolution Project uses a Model developed by The Community Board Program, and built on the philosophy that the most effective way to improve the school environment and reduce the prevalence of student and adult conflict is to implement programs which engage the entire school community: students, teachers, administrators, and parents.

The Whole Schools Conflict Resolution Project combines traditional **peer mediation** and **conflict resolution curricula** for students, and goes further to include training and mediation services for adults as well. The Model is designed to give students and adult influencers (teachers, administrators, and parents) conflict management skills and to increase young people's sense of control over resolving their own problems. Conceptually, this Model includes the following elements:

- a site leadership team composed of teachers, parents, and students responsible for planning, promoting, and implementing the components;
- a peer mediation program which addresses conflicts between students, between students and adults, and between adults;
- school staff who accept the program, use the skills and approaches, implement the curriculum, and refer conflicts to peer mediation;
- implementing conflict resolution curriculum in the classroom to teach students conflict management skills, effective communication, and problem-solving skills;
- a conflict resolution program by and for adults for conflicts that arise between teachers, between teachers and parents, etc; and,
- parents who accept the program, use the skills at home, and provide support.

What is Peer Mediation?

Mediation involves consent between individuals in disagreement to find a solution to their problem with the assistance of a third party. In peer mediation programs, in general, and the Whole Schools Conflict Resolution Project, specifically, disputant parties agree to resolve their conflict with the assistance of two or more trained peer Conflict Managers. Peers can be either youth or adults, as appropriate. In high school and middle school programs, Conflict Managers sit down with opposing parties, establish ground rules, and provide a safe, structured environment in which to talk. They guide the discussion, providing the disputants with insight and skills along the way, until a mutually agreed-upon solution is reached. If discussions get stalled, high school Conflict Managers may call an adult into the mediation room for assistance and support. In middle school mediations, an adult is usually present. In elementary schools, as most conflicts occur on the playground, peer mediators are on patrol during recess to intervene in disputes they observe.

What is Conflict Resolution Curricula?

In general, introduction of conflict resolution curricula in the classroom is designed to teach students communication and negotiation to help them to handle their own conflict without fighting. In some programs, conflict management lessons are integrated into classes, such as social studies, history or English, while in other programs, conflict management is taught as stand-alone curriculum or "unit." Teachers can receive training in conflict management and may work with a set curriculum, such as the curricula developed by The Community Board Program, or develop their own lesson plans and activities.

Peer mediation and conflict resolution curricula programs are designed to intervene more effectively and efficiently with student conflicts than traditional school discipline approaches. Classroom curricula and peer mediation programs have been developed and implemented in schools all over the nation. In the last two decades, a growing number of schools around the country have been experimenting with, adopting, and institutionalizing these approaches. Programs can be found in urban, rural, and suburban school districts from Florida to Alaska. Interviews from staff of two such programs from districts outside of San Francisco are included later in this report.

BACKGROUND ON THE REPORT

In the Spring of 1997, Harder+Company Community Research entered into a contract with the San Francisco Peer Resources Program and The Community Board Program to evaluate the Whole Schools Conflict Resolution Project (WSCR), launched three years ago in San Francisco. The WSCR began its first year in three high schools, expanded to three middle schools in its the second year, and added an elementary school in the third year. This evaluation focuses on two of these schools: A. P. Giannini Middle School and Mission High School.

FOCUS AND METHODS

In the first two years of the Project (school years 1994-95 and 1995-96), yearly assessments were conducted by researchers at Stanford University School of Education. These assessments focused on the overall implementation of the Project in each school, providing an analysis of the factors affecting implementation in each site, and recommendations for continued implementation.

A key purpose of the Harder+Company evaluation has been to examine the WSCR approach, first in theory, by reviewing the literature on peer mediation and conflict resolution curricula, then in practice. The

evaluation focuses on what effect the Project has had on students and the school environment in San Francisco by asking the following questions:

- What are the perceived impacts of the Whole Schools Conflict Resolution Project in terms of school safety and culture as reported by students, faculty and administration in the two schools?
- What are the "keys" and barriers to successful program implementation as perceived by program staff and school faculty who have been involved in implementing both peer mediation and the conflict resolution curriculum?

METHODS OVERVIEW

The evaluation design relies on a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The primary sources of information included:

- A *student survey*, developed in consultation with staff from Peer Resources and Community Board and approved by both school principals, was conducted with a sample of over 300 students in May 1997. A stratified, although non-random, sample of students was collected by surveying students in core classes at each grade level in both schools. The survey includes questions on perceptions of conflict and conflict resolution strategies within school, exposure to conflict resolution and peer mediation, as well as general demographic information.
- Harder+Company staff facilitated *focus groups* with sixteen student Conflict Managers from each school. A focus group was also conducted with six Core Faculty—also called the Leadership Team—and three parents of students of Giannini Middle School. At Mission High School, an interview was conducted with the one teacher implementing the conflict resolution curriculum during this school year (1996-97). These groups were conducted during the months of March and April 1997 and scheduled with the assistance of the school-site Peer Resources staff. Focus group protocols were developed in consultation with and approval of staff from San Francisco Peer Resources and The Community Board Program.
- *Key informant interviews* were conducted at both schools with the Peer Resources staff, Principal and Dean of Students. At Mission High School an interview was also conducted with the sole faculty using the curriculum (in lieu of the proposed focus group). Also interviewed were two district-level personnel, two trainers from The Community Board Program, and two individuals from programs outside of the San Francisco school district.

In addition, the site-specific information is set in the context of a review of the national literature on the effectiveness of similar program approaches.

LIMITATIONS OF THE EVALUATION

- Due to cost and time considerations, only two of the seven schools at which the program has been implemented were included in this assessment. These schools were chosen as each had made the most progress in implementing program components by the end of the 1995-96 school year, and therefore, had the greatest potential for having achieved desired outcomes (i.e., increased school safety and reduced student violence). The results, including observations, are meant to be suggestive of what could be happening in the balance of the sites.
- While an effort was made to survey a cross section of the students from each grade level in each

school, it was not possible to randomly sample students. The sample may not, in fact, be representative of the school population. This survey was conducted only once, at the end of the school year. Therefore, it was not possible to document changes in students' attitudes and behavior over time.

- Information from focus groups and interviews are qualitative, and therefore, descriptive in nature. These qualitative findings are not presented to be representative or generalizable to larger populations, as a whole.
- While the results of this assessment can not be generalized to all schools, each program presents an interesting case study in the implementation of a multi-faceted program in a complex urban school district.

Chapter 2: Impact of the WSCR Model on Schools

This section of the report provides process and outcome evaluation findings from surveys, interviews and focus groups conducted with students, school faculty and staff, administration, district staff, parents, and program staff from other school districts. As the school environment can have an influence on the effectiveness of any school-based program, to set the context for our examination of each school's progress in implementing and achieving the goals of the Whole Schools Conflict Resolution Project (WSCR), background information on each school is provided.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This section begins with an overview of the implementation of the WSCR at both schools and external factors which influenced the level and quality of implementation, and a brief description of each school. A detailed summary of information on each school (i.e., demographic information and suspension rates) is available in Appendix A. Outcome evaluation findings are then presented. The chapter is organized according to the following outline. Please refer to the Table of Content for details and page numbering.

I. Overview of WSCR Implementation

1. Giannini Middle School

2. Mission High School

II. Outcome Evaluation Findings

1. School Faculty and Staff Perspectives

2. Student Conflict Manager Perspectives

3. General Student Population Survey

years with changes in administration. Students of Mission High School, on average, are not performing as well academically as high school students district-wide, as assessed by Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS) scores—standardized testing used by the District. Mission, like Giannini, has a large, ethnically diverse student body.

Mission High School was among one of the first three schools to implement the WSCRП in the spring of 1993-94. During the first two years, the school made significant progress in program implementation. Staff trainings were provided to the entire faculty. The Core Faculty, or Leadership Team, was formed and the Conflict Resolution curriculum was implemented in 9th grade Study Skills classes. Three teachers assumed responsibility for integrating conflict management into their curriculum and by the second program year, the curriculum was fully implemented. Peer mediation was implemented during the second half of the first year and continued to move forward during the second year, but like other elements of the program, has suffered setbacks during this third program year.

During its third year, the Project has encountered challenges outside its control. At the start of this program year, the entire administration of the school was replaced. In addition, Mission was on the District's CSIP list. Under CSIP, schools that fail to perform are given time to make improvements and develop future plans for success. If they fail to make significant improvements—particularly academic—these schools are reorganized, with faculty and staff changes. There was tension at Mission High School about the possibility of Reconstitution, with faculty facing the prospect of losing their positions at the end of the school year; morale has been undermined, and from the standpoint of the WSCRП, program progress has diminished.

Due to staffing changes this year, only one trained teacher continued to use the Conflict Management curriculum that was adopted three years back. Because of competing priorities and pressure, even this faculty member admits that her commitment to the program had diminished during this year.

While Mission High School has a written policy for the handling of serious discipline problems that incorporates Peer Resources staff and peer mediators, for much of the year, that policy was inconsistently followed. Peer mediation continued to be used by students, faculty and administration, but key informant interviews revealed confusion about how and when it is used. Additional community-based agencies were brought into the school to help with discipline problems, creating overlap in "jurisdiction." Despite these challenges, the key informant interviews and focus groups revealed an awareness of the WSCRП, in particular the peer mediation component, and an appreciation for the contributions the Model made to improved school safety.

Staffing

As at Giannini, San Francisco Peer Resources Program provides one half-time, on-site staff responsible for supporting WSCRП and other Peer Resource activities. Arising out of growing student needs, Mission High School had already designated their own full-time, staff person (a former classroom teacher) to oversee the Peer Resources Program, working with the Site Coordinator. These two work together to oversee the on-site Peer Resources Program. A third staff person, officially a security guard and community outreach worker at Mission, collaborates with Peer Resources staff on discipline issues and oversees a gang-diversion program. This highly-regarded individual has a long history at Mission, and his involvement complements the work of Peer Resources. A Core Faculty, a.k.a. Site Leadership Team, was convened in the first two years to work on implementing the conflict resolution curriculum. As mentioned, during the third year, only one Core Faculty member from a team of three remained actively involved, due to staffing changes. The Community Board Program staff, as at Giannini and other schools implementing the WSCRП Model, provided trainings to faculty and students in mediation, and trainings and technical

support to faculty in curriculum integration.

II. OUTCOME EVALUATION FINDINGS

The following section summarizes the outcome findings of the evaluation of the WSCR. Focus groups, key informant interviews, and a student survey were conducted at both schools. At Giannini Middle School, qualitative evaluation findings were gathered through three focus groups: one with eight student Conflict Managers, one with six Core Faculty Leadership Team members, and one with three parents of Giannini students. Interviews with the Peer Resource Coordinator, Dean of Students and the Middle School Principal were also conducted. And finally, a survey was conducted with a sample of 171 students, grades 6-8. At Mission, a focus group was conducted with eight of the 16 Conflict Managers and an interview was conducted with the one teacher implementing the curriculum. Interviews were conducted with the Principal, Dean of Students, and Peer Resource staff. Finally, a survey was administered to a sample of 139 students, grades 9-12.

The protocol used with adult informants covered the following topics: general school environment, including level of conflict/violence as well as teacher satisfaction, critical issues facing youth today and how or whether the WSCR relates to those issues, program goals and the degree to which the program is meeting its goals, level of acceptance of the program by other faculty and administrators, and barriers to program implementation. Student Conflict Managers were asked why they became involved in the Project, what difficult issues they and their peers face, prevalence of student conflict or youth violence, whether and how conflict resolution is handled differently as a result of the Project and whether and how the Project has influenced their lives, perspectives or behavior. The student population survey covered similar issues as the conflict manager protocol. The protocol used with parents asked them to discuss what issues they think are critically important to youth, what issues they want their children's school to focus on, and their awareness of and perception, in theory, of the value of conflict management in the schools. The findings are organized to reflect these emphases.

II.1. School Faculty And Staff Perspectives

Impact on School Environment and Prevalence of Student Violence

Giannini Middle School

Faculty and administrators noted the contribution to a positive school environment that was made by such programs as WSCR. Student violence and school conflict were not perceived to be pressing issues for the school, and WSCR was credited by one administrator for its contributions in maintaining this environment. In general, Giannini was perceived to be a high functioning, orderly school, with a high level of teacher satisfaction, serving high academic achievers in a relatively low incidence environment. In recent years, Giannini has revised its disciplinary guidelines and procedures, and faculty and administrators concurred that discipline is handled better now than in the past.

School administrators expressed strong support for the conflict resolution curriculum and peer mediation strategies, and described them as consistent with the school's overall philosophy. As described by the administration, the school practices a "Positive School Environment Policy," which seeks to provide incentives and rewards to students for good behavior instead of simply punishing bad behavior. Counseling is provided and described as a preventive rather than a punitive measure.

Mission High School

In general both the community and the school were described as environments "charged" with cultural tensions. The potential for violence in the community is sometimes brought into the school, including gangs and racial conflict. Compounding these community/school tensions, the prospect of Mission High School's "Reconstitution" led to low morale among some faculty and staff during the 1996-97 school year. In light of these external factors, adults had difficulty attributing changes in student conflict to the WSCR, although all agreed that the Project had the potential to improve student conduct and school safety. According to key informants, in recent years there have been large scale student conflicts that have received media attention, making the situation at Mission appear to the world at large worse than it really is. Peer Conflict Managers were integrally involved in the successful resolution of these complicated, large scale conflicts, de-escalated tensions between groups of students directly involved, and diffused rumors and tensions among the general student body. Interviewees felt that conflicts had gone up during the year, but the increased violence was described as primarily "one-on-one" conflicts, rather than gang related incidents.

Level of Awareness and Acceptance of the Program

Giannini Middle School

In general, faculty and administrators believed that there was a growing student awareness of conflict resolution and peer mediation strategies. Faculty reported other positive trends in the school, including an increasing level of interest in program strategies among faculty and the use of conflict management techniques and vocabulary in student interactions. With time, they felt the Project had great potential for significant impacts on school safety and a positive school environment. Awareness of the WSCR was high, as in the Fall of 1996 the entire school staff had participated in a staff development day on conflict management conducted by the Community Board Program.

Faculty, through their involvement in the Leadership Team, were knowledgeable of the conflict resolution curriculum component of the WSCR, but knew less about peer mediation. In general, the adults noted that the program helps students deal with conflicts, manage conflicts more effectively, and that over time, if the curriculum continues to be taught, more students will learn and incorporate these skills.

Administration expressed support for the Program, citing it as a contributor to school safety and security.

Faculty perceived students as learning how to communicate as an alternative to fighting. Some teachers expressed their appreciation of the conflict management skills they had personally acquired, with one teacher noting,

"I am out of sorts on how to deal with the conflict. My first instinct is to not deal with it and refer them to the Dean. Then I decided to work it out. (Getting involved is) to have the skills to have the option to work out the problem."

The faculty of the Leadership Team described the program as having "enormous benefits" for students. There was unanimous support expressed for the conflict resolution curriculum which "teaches students essential skills for everyday life." Some adults urged that conflict resolution and peer mediation skills be taught to students even earlier, by integrating it into 6th grade lessons, with reinforcement offered to students again in 7th and 8th grades.

Some faculty suggested that teachers should be offered bi-annual trainings, and several made recommendations for ways to increase the interest and commitment of other faculty, including demonstrations of classroom lessons and other skill-building activities.

Mission High School

One informant speculated that 90% of the faculty were aware of the Project, but that only 30-40% actually rely on it. In the previous school year, research conducted by Stanford estimated that 100% of faculty responding to a survey were aware of the WSCR, 74% believed mediation to be an effective way to handle student conflicts, 69% had made a referral to mediation, and 88% of those faculty who had referred would do so again. One administrator described peer mediation and conflict resolution strategies as "useful," but that student discipline problems could be better managed with a clearer process and practice for referrals, dispute resolution and follow-up. Peer Resources staff also noted that the general faculty and administration were more aware and supportive earlier in the program.

Impact of Program on General Student Attitudes and Behavior

Giannini Middle School

Faculty and staff agreed that the Project has enormous potential for improving student attitudes and conduct in school. In addition to reducing student violence, the Leadership team staff noted that the conflict resolution curriculum taught students skills essential to their everyday lives. Students learn to listen, communicate, and develop empathy for fellow students.

Mission High School

Adults noted that learning conflict management skills and participating in the classroom activities develops social skills and other skills that are useful in other classes and areas of instructing. One faculty noted, *"It's very rewarding to students. (It's) a chance to grow socially and emotionally and to take power. Conflict resolution is a form of empowerment."*

Progress in Meeting Program Goals

Giannini Middle School

Faculty noted that students were beginning to request conflict management services on their own when they have a dispute, or even use the strategies they learned to resolve their own conflicts. It was reported that students were "using the mediation vocabulary," and teachers were expressing more interest in having classroom demonstrations of conflict resolution techniques. In general, the Leadership Team believed that the program was beginning to "sink in" at the school, noting how teachers other than members of the Leadership Team have begun to refer students for mediation.

Mission High School

Despite Project setbacks experienced at Mission during the 1996-97 school year, the staff involved in implementing the WSCR saw great potential. They felt it would be very beneficial to expand the Project by increasing the opportunities for students to come in contact with the conflict resolution curriculum and by training more Conflict Managers. The faculty person interviewed spoke of an enormous personal investment in the process. She felt the school should commit to making conflict resolution a 6 week or even semester long, required course for Freshmen, and offered to assume a significant role in providing training and support to other teachers.

From the perspective of the faculty and staff at Mission, the benefits to students were enormous. They describe improvements in student social and emotional skills, including communication and self-esteem,

among both students in the classroom and among Conflict Managers. One faculty stated, "*The students...even the quiet ones that never talk, wind up talking, and the ones that talk all the time, wind up learning to listen.*"

Staff working with Conflict Managers were able to describe important changes in the young people, ways that they had grown, as a result of their participation in the program, as reflected in this quote, "*I am very pleased with the Conflict Managers. I would give the actual process an "A." We could use them more often. I see a lot of potential still in training more students.*"

II.2. Student Conflict Manager Perspectives

As described previously, focus groups were conducted with trained student Conflict Managers from each school. Conflict Managers were asked to report their perceptions of student conflict and youth violence, whether and how conflict resolution is handled as a result of the Project, and whether and how the Project had impacted their own lives.

Impact on Prevalence of Student Violence and School Environment

Giannini Middle School

The students were reluctant to relate any changes to the overall school environment to WSCR, though they did say that students were using the peer mediation services on their own, and there were fewer physical fights between students, albeit, physical fights were already rare. When asked whether school faculty or administrators were using the program, students said that they do "sometimes," but for serious problems, the Dean or the Principal deals with the problem, which the Model advocates as appropriate.

The student Conflict Managers described Giannini as a relatively safe school environment but agreed that minor verbal conflicts were a daily occurrence. These conflicts, according to the youth, result from rumors and jostling or collisions in school hallways. These altercations were most likely to occur in the school yard, or in the hallways between classes, before and after lunch.

Student Conflict Managers also had positive impressions of their school environment, describing Giannini as a "friendly and clean place" where students had many activities available. In general, students obey the rules while at school, and if they do fight, it tended to happen outside of school. Students nevertheless cited "gangs, peer pressure and drugs" as the most pressing issues young people confront in their lives.

Mission High School

Conflict Managers felt that the level of physical fighting was low, but that it did occur in school. Conflict Managers believed that peer mediation had reduced the amount of fighting in their school, and that students were aware of and referred themselves to peer mediation.

Conflict Managers made comments similar to those of Giannini Conflict Managers related to where and when conflict occurred. They felt most conflicts between students happened daily, usually in between classes during passing period or lunch. Most conflict occurred over rumors, gossip or accidental jostling that escalated to a fight. Gang violence was mentioned, but it was not perceived to be a significant problem at their school. Unlike the middle school students, high school Conflict Managers mentioned problems related to girl/boy relationships as another cause of conflict.

Conflict Managers, when asked to comment on the school environment at Mission, noted, as did the

adults, the increased tension during the year between faculty and administration, as well as a greater level of alienation from administration on the part of students. They identified particular programs like Peer Resources and the Student Health Center as positive aspects of their school. Conflict Managers described the school as diverse, with students coming from different cultural backgrounds. This diversity was expressed in positive terms by one student who noted, "...you get to learn a lot about people and things that you wouldn't learn otherwise." Gangs was on the list of pressures and problems facing young people today, along with sex, peer pressure and drugs.

How Conflict is Handled Since the Program's Inception

Giannini Middle School

In general students noted that the Project did not change the prevalence of general conflict, but did have an impact on how conflicts in school were addressed or resolved. It was clear from their comments that peer mediation was increasingly viewed by students and staff as a viable option for handling disputes. Whereas before the program, students would be referred to teachers or administrators, students now had the option of going to peer mediators, and airing their side of the story. Further, students were voluntarily exercising this option by seeking out peer mediation on their own. Conflict Managers described how students were intimidated by adult authorities but with student Conflict Managers, students could speak their minds more freely without fear of reprisal. Conflict Managers noted that, unlike adults, they do not expect students to resolve their problems right away. They could take time, if needed, to come to a solution. Conflict Managers stated the belief that when students were sent to adults their disputes were not resolved; but when students were the mediators, or the Conflict Managers, they were better able to understand the problems and address them. With respect to the Project's impact, some students had the sense that physical fights were on the decline, but they did not believe that anything had changed in terms of conflicts between students and adults or between adults and adults. Students did not perceive that teachers followed a consistent policy for handling student conflicts, stating the use of peer mediation vs. making a referral to administration depended on the teacher.

Mission High School

Student to student conflicts were handled differently with the program in place, according to the Conflict Managers. The program helped, from the perspective of these students, by showing young people how to solve their own problems, and talk through differences. From the standpoint of these young people, the Project helps in communication, and shows adults how young people can take care of things themselves. Students felt strongly that fighting in their school had decreased as a result of the program. However, they had difficulty attributing any change in terms of conflicts between students and adults or between adults and adults, noting that tensions between adults had actually increased this school year.

Impact of Program on Student and Conflict Managers Attitudes and Behavior

Giannini Middle School

Student Conflict Managers described a sense of personal investment in the conflict management process beyond having gained an ability to successfully resolve individual disputes and took their positions seriously. Conflict Managers described themselves as role models for other students, noting that "*You have to set an example for other students by staying out of fights.*" They stated that they felt more respected by other students, as one noted, "*some people look up to you, like the little kids.*" One student noted that he felt better about himself since becoming a Conflict Manager and that being a Conflict Manager was a kind of "community service." Another student stated that becoming a Conflict Manager increases one's sense of

responsibility and increases one's ability to problem-solve and focus on tasks. Student Conflict Managers said they enjoyed the process of helping other students resolve conflicts and often used their skills in helping their friends with disputes. Students were unanimous in agreeing that they would be Conflict Managers again, given the opportunity.

Mission High School

Despite other problems occurring within the school, Conflict Managers perceived a positive change among students which they attributed to the WSCR. They felt that peer mediation increased students' assertiveness and sense of control over their own situations. As one Conflict Manager noted, *"You learn that the solutions don't always lie in the grown-ups, but in the disputants themselves. This gives them a chance to bring that about."* A key challenge in using conflict resolution strategies according to the young people involved is building trust between students, and keeping communication open and confidentiality protected, which Conflict Managers felt they had successfully done.

Conflict Managers noted students who go through peer mediation gain lasting benefits from the process. They felt that through the conflict management process students gained social skills that could help them in their classes and in their every day lives. In addition, they noted that students could come to conflict management and resolve their problems, avoiding suspension from school.

In addition to helping those in conflict, the student Conflict Managers described the benefits of their own participation. As reported by one student, *"You gain a lot of respect from the two disputants. They might have seen you around school and now they can respect you because they see you're out there trying to help one another."*

Conflict Managers reported other personal gains. Several Conflict Managers noted significant increases in their self confidence and communication skills. Two young women stated that prior to the program they had been shy, but were now comfortable speaking in front of groups. Students also felt that as a Conflict Manager they had grown more mature and possessed a sense of responsibility they previously lacked. Conflict Managers believed they now possessed skills which transferred beyond the school—skills essential to their daily lives. Many of the Conflict Managers at Mission reported that they used their conflict management skills in settings other than the mediation room—at home, on the street, and with their friends.

II.3. General Student Population Survey

As described earlier in the report, surveys were administered with samples of the general student populations in both schools in May 1997. This survey was designed to be a brief assessment of students' attitudes and behaviors toward conflicts and their perceptions of the level and types of conflicts at their school, how these conflicts are handled, and whether they have perceived any change over time. At Giannini Middle School, the survey was administered in 6-8th grade core studies classes (two classrooms per grade). At Mission High School, the survey was administered in 9th grade studies skills classes, and 10-12th grade social studies classes (two classrooms per grade). A total of 139 and 171 surveys were completed at Mission and Giannini, respectively. Chi-squared analysis were used to examine differences between subgroups of youth. Where statistically significant differences were found, the level of significance, also known as the p-value, was reported.

What Student Survey Participants Looked Like

The demographics of students surveyed (shown in Exhibit 1 below) were similar to those of the total

student populations in each school (see Appendix A for Student Demographics). Among the 171 survey respondents at Giannini Middle School, 70 were male and 85 were female. Asian/SE Asians represented 47% of the sample, followed by Others at 18% and students identifying as multi-racial at 11%. Among the 139 survey respondents at Mission High School, 70 were male and 66 were female. Latinos represented 40% of the sample, followed by Asian/SE Asians at 39%.

Exhibit 1: Demographics of Survey Respondents

		Mission	Giannini
Ethnicity		No. (%) n=132	No. (%) n=149
African American		9 (7%)	9 (6%)
Latino		53 (40%)	13 (9%)
White		2 (2%)	12 (8%)
Asian/Pacific Islander		57 (43%)	72 (48%)
Multi-racial		3 (2%)	16 (11%)
Other		8 (6%)	27 (18%)
Gender		No. (%) n=136	No. (%) n=155
Male			70 (55%)

		70 (51%)	
Female			85 (45%)
		66 (49%)	
Grade Level	No. (%) n=134	Grade Level	No. (%) n=161
9th	33 (25%)	6th	55 (34%)
10th	28 (21%)	7th	53 (33%)
11th	22 (16%)	8th	53 (33%)
12th	51 (38%)		--

The aim was to collect a stratified sample of equal proportions for each grade level. As shown in Exhibit 1, the sample came close to equal proportions for 9th and 10th graders (25% and 21%, respectively), 12th graders were over-represented at 38% and 11th graders were under-represented at 16%. Equal proportions of 6th, 7th and 8th graders were sampled at Giannini. Equal proportions of male and females were surveyed at each school, as well.

Students' Attitudes Toward Their School

To place evaluation findings related to student fighting and other conflicts and conflict management into a context, students were asked to rate how well they liked their school. Overall, students reported favorable opinions.

Giannini Middle School

- Overall, students' attitudes toward their school were favorable, with over 80% of students reported they either like school "somewhat" or "a lot." Sixteen percent of students indicated they liked school only "a little" and 3% said they liked school "not at all."
- Sixth graders were slightly more likely than 7th and 8th graders to report liking school "a lot," while 8th graders were more likely than other grades to like school "somewhat." No significant differences were found based on gender, ethnicity, academic grades, or level of personal conflict.

Mission High School

- Students' attitudes toward school were favorable, with 64% of students reporting that they either liked their school "somewhat" or "a lot." Twenty-six percent of students liked Mission "a little" and 10% indicated they did not like Mission at all.
- Students in grades 11 and 12 were more likely to report liking school a lot. Ninth graders were more likely than other grades to report liking school only "a little." Unlike Giannini, there was a statistically significant association between academic grades and liking school. As one would

expect, students with high grades (A's and B's) were more likely than "C" students to report liking school "a lot." There were no associations between gender, ethnicity, or level of personal conflict.

Perceived Level of Conflict in School

Conflicts were defined in the survey as problems, such as arguments or fights occurring with other students. Students were asked to report, in general, how often they perceived conflicts to occur between other students, how often they felt they had conflicts with other students, and the most commonly-occurring types of conflicts.

In general, middle school students were significantly more likely than high school students to report experiencing conflicts on a daily or weekly basis ($p=.0000$). Middle school students were also more likely to report conflicts as a daily occurrence in school.

Giannini Middle School

- **A significant number of students (40%) felt they experienced conflicts either daily or weekly, 33% reported monthly conflicts, and 28% reported never having conflicts.**
- **Frequency of conflict varied among some groups of students.** Boys were significantly more likely than girls to report having conflicts either daily or weekly. Academic grades and conflict, although not statistically significant, were associated. Students with high grades were more likely to report never having conflicts. There was no association between reported frequency of personal conflicts and ethnicity or grade level.
- **The majority of Giannini students (54%) felt that general conflicts were a daily occurrence in school.** Eighteen percent of students felt conflicts occurred on a weekly or monthly basis, and 28% of students felt unable to determine how often conflicts occurred. Sixth graders were more likely than other grades to feel conflicts occur on a daily basis in school. No differences were found based on ethnicity, gender, or academic grades.
- **There was a significant association between students' own reported level of conflict and their perception of the level of conflict in school.** Students reporting frequent conflict (daily or weekly) were more likely to feel that conflicts also occurred on a daily basis in school than student reporting never having conflicts (73% vs. 44%). Students who reported never having conflicts were more likely to report not knowing how often conflicts occurred in school than students in frequent conflict (37% vs. 14%).

Mission High School

- **When asked how often they had problems with other students, 62% of students reported never having problems, and 18% reported only having problems once or twice a month.** Twenty percent of students reported that they had problems either weekly or daily.
- **Frequency of conflict varied among some groups of students.** Girls were more likely than boys to report never having conflicts (73% vs 52%). Latinos were more likely, and conversely, Asians were less likely to report having conflicts on a daily or weekly basis. Grade level was significantly associated with conflict. Ninth graders were most likely to report daily or weekly conflicts (40%), followed by 12th graders (16%). Only 15% of 10th graders and 5% of 11th graders reported conflicts as frequent. Academic grades and conflict, although not statistically significant, were

associated. Academic achievement correlates with frequency of conflict. Students with high grades were more likely to report never having conflicts.

- **Many students reported conflicts as a common occurrence in their school: 25% felt they happen daily and 33% felt conflicts occurred weekly or monthly.** Forty-two percent reported that they did not know how often fights and other problems between students happen at their school. Females were more likely to feel conflicts occurred on a daily basis. There were no significant differences in perceived level of conflict based on ethnicity, grade level, or academic grades.
- **As with Giannini, there was a significant association between students' own reported level of conflict and their perception of the level of conflict in school.** Students reporting frequent conflict (daily or weekly) were more likely to feel that conflicts also occurred on a daily basis in school than students reporting never having conflicts (56% vs. 19%). Students who reported never having conflicts were more likely to report not knowing how often conflicts occurred in school than students in frequent conflict (55% vs. 22%).

Commonly-Occurring Conflicts

Students were also asked to indicate what they thought were the most commonly occurring types of conflicts at their school, and were asked to indicate all those they felt applied.

Exhibit 2: Commonly-Occurring Conflicts in School



Giannini Middle School

- **Physical fighting was mentioned by 41 % of student as a common problem at their school.** Seventy-six percent of students mentioned name calling as a common problem at Giannini, followed by gossip and rumors (53%). "Mugging" or looking at another student in an antagonizing way was mentioned as a problem by 28% of students.
- **Sixth graders were slightly more likely to mention fighting as a common problem in school than students in other grades.** Girls were more likely than boys to feel rumors were a problem at school.

Mission High School

- **Forty-nine percent of students mentioned physical fighting as one of the most commonly occurring problems in their school.** Sixty percent of students mentioned name calling, 41% mentioned rumors, and 39% mentioned "mugging" (looking at someone in an antagonizing way).
- **Boys were no more likely than girls to mention fighting as a problem.** Ninth and 10th graders were more likely than 11th and 12th graders to feel fighting was a common problem.
- **Ninth graders were significantly more likely to mention name calling as a problem than other student in other grades.**
- **A slight association was found with ethnicity, with more Latinos and African Americans mentioning rumors as a problem than those of other groups.** Girls were only slightly more likely than boys to mention rumors. Though not statistically significant, more 9th and 10th graders mentioned rumors as a problem than 11th and 12th graders.

How Conflicts are Handled in School

Students were asked how they thought most conflicts at school are handled, and how they usually handle their own conflicts.

Giannini Middle School

- **Twelve percent indicated that problems get handled through the conflict management program.** Thirty-three percent of students reported that conflicts are handled by referrals to administration, 21% felt that students handle problems on their own, 21% didn't know, and 12% said that teachers deal with problems.

- **The majority of students (68%) reported that they usually work out their problems on their own, and 4% said they usually take their problems to conflict management.** Sixteen percent felt they had no problems or didn't know. Twelve percent said they would go to a teacher or administration for help.

Mission High School

- **Many students (34%) didn't have an opinion on how conflicts are usually handled, 7% of students felt conflicts get handled through the conflict management program.** Twenty-six percent felt that teachers refer students to administration, 17% said that students handle the problems on their own, and another 14% said that teachers will deal with the problem.
- **Four percent of students reported using the conflict management program to handle their conflicts.** Many students (44%) reported that they had no problems or couldn't say how they usually handle conflicts. Thirty-eight percent said they handled their problems on their own. Thirteen percent said they would go to an adult for help.

Level of Awareness and Acceptance of Conflict Management and the WSCR

Students were asked to respond to a series of questions related to their level of awareness and acceptance of conflict management, in concept, and of the WSCR, specifically. Significant numbers of students at both schools reported they were aware of the conflict management program at their school.

Giannini Middle School

- **Eighty-two percent of students reported that they had heard about the conflict management program at their school.** Students with high grades were more likely to report that they knew about WSCR, as were students in the 7th and 8th grade. Most students (87%) reported hearing about the program by knowing conflict managers, 73% also reported they had just heard about the program around school. Nineteen students reported that they had been through conflict management, and 25 students had a friend who had gone through conflict management.
- **Most students referred to conflict management found it valuable.** Among the 34 (20%) students who reported being referred, 76% agreed they felt respected, 82% felt they were heard, 85% felt the process was fair, 56% would go again, and 76% felt they were helped.
- **Forty-six percent of students said, given such a place, it was very to somewhat likely that they would "go to get help from other students in solving a conflict."**
- **Sixty-five (41%) students could correctly identify a step used in the conflict management process ("Use 'I' statements when describing the problem"),** while only five student felt they knew what the concept of conflict management was. Girls were slightly more likely than boys to identify the correct conflict management statement.

Mission High School

- **Forty-one percent of students reported that they had heard about the conflict management program at their school.** Unlike Giannini, students with lower grades were more likely to have heard of the WSCR, as were students in the 9th grade. Seventy-six percent of students reported that they had heard about it around school, and 41% knew a conflict manager. Twelve youth had been

through conflict management, and 17 students had friends who had gone through conflict management.

- **Students who reported being referred to conflict management found it useful and would go again.** Among these 13 (9%) students, most reported feeling respected, listened to, treated fairly, and helped.
- **Forty-five percent of Mission students felt it was somewhat to very likely that they would "go to a place where they could get help from other students in solving problems."**
- **Twenty-three students (17%) reported that they knew what conflict management was, and 34 students (24%) could identify the correct conflict management step.** Ninth graders—who were likely to have received conflict resolution lessons during the year—were more likely to correctly identify the step.

Impact of WSCR on School Environment and Student Conduct

Students were asked to indicate whether they had perceived any change since they have been at the school in the level of fighting, how conflicts are handled by teachers and students, involvement of teachers in conflict management, and overall sense of safety. Students rated their level of agreement with ten statements using a 5-point likert scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. It should be noted that the lack of repeated survey measures limits these findings. Real changes in school climate and culture not due to the WSCR and other factors such as students' social and emotional maturation may confound the following findings.

Giannini Middle School

Overall, positive trends emerge from the survey findings. Forty-one percent of students reported feeling safer while at school. The majority of students (56%) felt that time spent handling fights in class had not increased. Many students (41%) reported that students were more likely to handle their own conflicts and 56% found it easier to talk things out instead of fighting since they had been at the school. While some students (33%) felt that fights had increased over time, half the students (50%) had no real opinion.

Some impacts were found regarding teacher involvement in conflict management. Opinions varied regarding whether teachers had gotten better at helping students handle conflicts, with 48% having no opinion, 29% agreeing, and 23% disagreeing. Forty-four percent of students reported that teachers were instructing them in conflict management in the classroom. Fifty-two percent felt that teachers were more likely than before to listen to both sides of a conflict between students.

Mission High School

Like Giannini, overall, students reported positive trends in terms of changes in conflicts and how they are being handled "since they have been at school." Thirty-six percent of students reported that they felt safer at school than before. The majority of students (56%) disagreed that time spent handling fights in class had increased. Most students (53%) agreed that they saw their friends and other students solving more of their own conflicts and 48% of students felt it easier now than before to talk things out instead of fighting. While some students (35%) felt that fights had decreased over time, many students (44%) had no real opinion. It should be noted that the proportion of students reporting frequent (daily or weekly) conflicts was high among 9th graders and dropped significantly among 10th through 12th graders. The changes reported by students related to conflicts may very well be due to a natural maturation factor. Students may

also find themselves experiencing conflicts during the 9th grade which ease as they make the adjustment to high school.

As at Giannini, student opinions varied regarding teacher involvement in conflict management. As might be expected, the impacts on teacher involvement were more limited at Mission than Giannini. Thirty-four percent of students felt that teachers had gotten better at helping students handle conflicts, while 41% had no opinion and 26% disagreed. Thirty-four percent of students reported that teachers were instructing them in conflict management in the classroom, while 43% disagreed with this statement. Forty-one percent of students felt that teachers were more likely to listen to both sides in conflicts between students, while 42% had no opinion.

II.4. Parent Perspectives

Parents are important influencers of youth and have an interest in their children's education. Often though, teachers and administrators have difficulty actively involving parents with the school, as parents work (at times long hours or more than one job), and find it difficult to attend meetings or functions during school hours. Yet, parent involvement is an important component of the WSCR Model, as by design it seeks to reduce conflicts in the community as well as in the school. Gaining a parental perspective on the value of the WSCR approach was important to the evaluation of this Model. The following summarizes comments from a focus group conducted with three parents of students at Giannini Middle School. Several attempts were made to conduct a focus group with parents of Mission High School students, however, it was not possible to do so. While only three parents participated in the focus group at Giannini, their comments are included to provide some idea of what issues are of concern to parents, in general, and how they perceive the value of the WSCR Model.

Issues of Highest Concern for Parents

One parent was most concerned about the education being provided by the school, and wanted assurance that his child receive the best education possible. The other two parents were concerned that the school provide a supportive environment to students, focusing on both the social and emotional growth of children. One parent, in particular, was concerned about violent incidents occurring recently in and around the school, and both linked students' lack of social and emotional well-being with the incidence of violence.

Perceived Value of the WSCR Model

The two parents citing the importance of students' social and emotional growth felt that the school should be doing more to teach children social skills (how to be empathic, how to interact) and provide mental health support through counseling. They felt it was important that school staff role-model positive social interactions, controlling students' conduct through mutual respect and incentives instead of punitive disciplinary actions.

None of the parents were familiar with the WSCR. When described to them, parents supported the concepts of WSCR, in theory, agreeing that the Project seemed like a good idea. One parent stressed the importance of training teachers in conflict resolution, noting that teachers need to listen to children more and be able to identify when they are experiencing emotional problems. Parents seemed to think this would go a long way toward improving the overall school environment.

II.5. District Perspectives

To gain a perspective on the potential value of peer mediation and conflict resolution programs as viewed from the district-level, two San Francisco Unified School District department heads providing student services were interviewed. Both were familiar with the concepts of peer mediation and conflict resolution and the WSCRCP, specifically.

Perceived Value of WSCRCP Model

Both individuals interviewed viewed the concepts embodied in peer mediation and conflict resolution to fit well within their philosophy of best practice in helping students of the District. They considered violence to be a key issue affecting youth. They felt that the "Whole Schools" approach to conflict management had much to contribute to the well-being of students and the safety and security of schools. Further, they noted that dealing with student conflicts takes time away from instruction, decreasing opportunities for learning. *"This piece (conflict resolution) is critical in supporting and creating a safe environment where students can learn and teachers can teach."*

In addition to decreasing violence, they felt that the WSCRCP Model could contribute to enhancing student social skills. They felt strongly that students today come to school lacking basic social skills, such as the ability to communicate effectively, and felt it was important for schools to assume a role in providing instruction in these skills to students.

In addition to working with students, they felt it was vitally important that teachers receive training in conflict management in order to model appropriate behavior to students. They felt that student peer mediation and conflict resolution curricula were necessary but not sufficient to effect school-wide change. They believed the WSCRCP Model could be effective as it incorporates a role for all those involved with the school: teachers, administrators, students and parents.

Conflict resolution was felt to have a role to contribute in the Safe Schools Planning process. These staff felt all schools should be given the opportunity to adopt conflict resolution programs.

II.6. Perspectives of Programs in Other School Districts

To place the impacts of the WSCRCP into a larger context, managers of peer mediation programs in two other urban school districts were interviewed (one middle school and one high school). Like Giannini Middle School and Mission High School, both of these schools have large, ethnically and socio-economically diverse student bodies (see Appendix A for Giannini and Mission student demographics). The middle school, located in a Southern California city, had a diverse student body of just over 900 students in grades 6-8. The staff person interviewed reported that the majority of students were Latino, with some African-Americans and Asians. The school was reported to be predominantly comprised of students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Gangs were perceived to be a significant problem in the surrounding neighborhoods. Unlike in years past, the school was now stable and secure, with well-regarded administration. The high school program, located in a comprehensive school in downtown Albuquerque, New Mexico, also had a large, diverse student body. Among the estimated 2,200 students, approximately half were reported to be Latino, a third African American, 15% White, and the remainder of other ethnic backgrounds. Students were reported to come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. Peer mediation programs were well in place at each school—nine years at the middle school and two at the high school. Neither of these schools had implemented conflict resolution in the classroom; however, the middle school program was seeking funding to do so in the next school year. The middle school program had been trained by and used the peer mediation model developed by The Community Boards Program. The high school program received training and support for the New Mexico Center for Dispute Resolution.

Though neither of these schools used a whole schools approach, implementing only student peer mediation programs, each experienced significant success in reducing student violence and other conflicts.

Impact on School Environment and Prevalence of Student Violence

Middle School Program

The middle school peer mediation project was perceived to have had a significant, positive impact on the school environment and student behavior. The individual interviewed had been the program administrator since its inception and felt that fighting had significantly decreased as a result of the program, noting *"When I started at this campus, it was a mess. There is a different feeling now."* She remarked that visitors touring the campus have been amazed by the peaceful way the students conduct themselves on campus, noting that students voluntarily stop and speak with visitors about the school. With the significant decrease in fighting, student Conflict Managers complained that they were not being kept busy enough. Therefore, in the next school year, Conflict Managers would be adding classroom presentations to their duties. The program administrator estimated that 25 to 30 Conflict Managers mediate approximately 100 to 150 conflicts a year.

As a result of the school's transformation, it has become highly regarded by its own county department of education and by national institutions such as Carnegie, earning awards of distinction from both.

The interviewee noted that students who have served as Conflict Managers benefit from their participation in the program, as well. Students experience social and emotional growth and gain skills that they use later in life. *"They will tell you that they are getting so much more out of the program than those using it. Of course, that's not true."* Being a conflict manager was a popular and respected position among students. She estimated that approximately 100 students apply each year for 30 spots.

High School Program

Although only two years old, the peer mediation program at the high school was believed to have already had important impacts on student violence and school safety. The interviewee felt that the level of conflict in her school was typical of that found in any large, urban high school. While physical fights were not perceived to be a problem, the interviewee felt that the peer mediation project contributed significantly by de-escalating existing "undercurrents." Conflicts that might have lingered on needlessly were easily resolved. She felt that, with time, the program had the potential to create greater school-wide changes in school climate and safety. Twelve Conflict Managers were trained in the 1996-97 school year, and while unable to estimate how many conflicts were mediated, the informant noted, *"we had lots of business this year."*

Level of Acceptance and Awareness of Program

Middle School Program

Overall, faculty and administration were reported to be well aware of the peer mediation project. As a reflection of the school's commitment to create a "safe haven" for students, peer mediation, along with other student programs, were started nearly a decade ago to impact the level of violence being brought into the school from the outside.

The program was reported to be well supported by school staff, especially administration. It was felt that the program reduces the amount of conflicts started by rumors or gossip that get referred to administration.

The interviewee felt that faculty and administration view the peer mediation program as having enormous benefit to the school and as integral to its smooth functioning. Administration provides funding, when requested, for materials, trainings, and release time.

The interviewee felt that the way that conflicts were handled has changed significantly due to the program. She felt the majority of mediated conflicts were self-referred. Students request mediation confidentially by filling out a slip and placing it in a box in the main office. Adults refer students to mediation, as well, but it's not as common a practice. Fights were reported to be rare, having decreased significantly over the year, but still earned a student a suspension from school. As policy, students returning from a suspension for fighting were required to meet with conflict managers to ensure resolution of the problem.

High School Program

Faculty, administration and students were aware and supportive of the peer mediation program at the high school program interviewed. Faculty and administration were interested in developing a peer mediation program at the school and when a new staff person was hired who had experience with peer mediation and conflict management, he/she was given the responsibility of developing a program. So far, the program was reportedly viewed by faculty and administration as a positive and worthwhile effort. Teachers have been willing to release students from their classes for mediation.

While the program was relatively new (in its second year), it was already impacting on how student conflicts were being addressed. Students, teachers, and administration were reported to be referring conflicts to mediation, however, it was felt that the program could be used even more often. The program was felt to have value by providing youth an additional option for resolving disputes.

Chapter 3: Peer Mediation and Conflict Resolution: A Review of the Literature

In order to contextualize San Francisco's experience with the Whole Schools Conflict Resolution Project, we have included a review of the literature regarding programs in other communities that used peer mediation and conflict resolution curricula, and evaluations that have been conducted. To focus our review, we relied on the resources available at The Community Board Program. With the assistance of Terry Amsler, Executive Director of The Community Board Program, we identified a number of articles and reports on conflict management programs implemented around the nation and in Canada. There are other studies which have been conducted that are not reflected in this review. In addition, several federally funded, large scale evaluations are currently underway assessing the impact of peer mediation and school-based conflict resolution programs, the results of which may be relevance to this Project. We recommend that the school district and the program sponsors continue to monitor that research and apply the lessons learned to the Whole Schools Model.

With the proliferation of peer mediation models and conflict resolution curricula in the last two decades, the body of information on program effectiveness is growing. Most evaluations have focused on small, single program or school site assessments of the impact on students, faculty, school environment. Some

evaluations rely on small samples and most lack a comparison group. Despite their limitations, these evaluations are consistent in showing promising, at times, even dramatic impacts on such things as students' attitudes toward conflict, the level of conflict in the school, and school suspension rates.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM LITERATURE REVIEW

- ***School are Safer and Function Better:***

In a study conducted in five New York City schools where a combined peer mediation and conflict resolution program was implemented, 60% of teachers reported observing positive changes in school climate attributable to the teaching of conflict resolution in their school (Metis Associates, 1990). Teachers also reported an increased level of cooperation among students and an increased sense of unity and common purpose with other faculty and administrators as a result of their work in the program. Similarly, an evaluation of middle school programs in central New York found significant change over time in teacher attitudes and beliefs regarding school climate. Teachers felt students were assuming more responsibility in creating a more orderly school environment by taking part in enforcing rules, having positive views of discipline, and working with staff in solving school problems (Lam, 1988).

- ***Student Misconduct and School Suspensions Decrease:***

In one study, 71% of teachers reported observing decreased physical fighting in the classroom and 66% reported less name-calling and other verbal put-downs (Metis Associates, 1990). A study in Ohio schools saw a drop in detention rates in some schools as well as reductions in fighting, misconduct and truancy. One middle school experienced a reduction in suspensions from 166 to 63 in a single year. The causes for suspension—fighting, truancy, and unruliness—all declined as well (Stephens, 1993). An evaluation of programs in six New York City high schools found 45% to 70% reductions in suspensions for fighting in five of the six schools (Lam, 1988). Programs appear to be equally effective in elementary schools. A program implemented in Ontario, Canada elementary schools documented significant decreases in playground fighting over the course of the year as a result of playground peer mediation, as did an evaluation of a program conducted in two Nevada elementary schools (Carpenter, 1993-94; Streich, 1995). Other studies show drops in school suspension rates (Johnson, 1995; Hanson, 1994, Powell, 1995).

- ***Fighting and Violence Decrease:***

In New Mexico schools, teachers reported less violence and harmful behavior among elementary school students compared to schools without a conflict resolution program (from approximately 150 to 10 incidents monthly) (Smith, 1996). Program administrators noted that peer mediators were doing such a good job that they were "at risk of working themselves out of a job." Similarly, an evaluation of a program implemented in several Maryland schools showed a marked decrease from the previous year in student fighting (from 52 to 9), along with decreased administrative referrals (384 to 67) and suspensions (54 to 14) (Dabson, 1994).

- ***Integrated Conflict Resolution Curriculum Enhances Academic Learning Outcomes:***

A study examining the effects of integrating conflict resolution techniques and concepts into

English literature classes found that students who participated in the integrated lessons had higher test scores on the English material than students who were taught the same material without conflict management lessons (Stevahn, 1994). The authors felt that conflict resolution techniques facilitated better retention and a deeper analysis of the curriculum material. Increased academic achievement was also found in a study conducted with students attending an alternative high school (Deutsch, 1992).

- ***Students Use Conflict Management Skills and Demonstrate More Caring Attitudes:***

Teachers using conflict resolution curriculum have observed more caring behavior, an increased willingness to cooperate, and increased skills in understanding other points of view among their students. Student self-assessments confirm these observations (Metis Associates, 1990). In a study of a peer mediation and conflict resolution program in Florida, students who participated in classroom instruction on conflict management demonstrated an increased willingness to resolve problems through means other than violence (Hanson, 1994). In a recent evaluation of the same program implemented in seven alternative and two middle schools, students, again, showed improved attitudes toward the use of non-violence in resolving conflicts.

- ***Peer Mediators Show Improved Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking Skills:***

The authors of an Ohio study also reported that mediators demonstrated improved analytic and communication skills, while in the Nevada study, mediators showed increased assertiveness. Peer mediation programs also have a maturing effect on participants. In an evaluation of a middle school program in central New York, Conflict Managers reported a significantly increased sense of duty, responsibility, and concern for others by the end of the program (Carpenter, 1993-94).

- ***Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Enhance Student Self Esteem & Conduct:***

In a study conducted in 1988 in an alternative high school in New York, students who were trained in conflict resolution and cooperative learning reported increases in their ability to manage conflicts, increases in social support and decreased victimization, increased self-esteem, feelings of well-being and control over their own fate, as well as decreased depression and anxiety (Deutsch, 1992). Another study confirmed these results, showing increases in self-esteem, sense of empowerment, and articulation of feelings (Metis Associates, 1990).

Indeed, reports of increased self-esteem are numerous in the literature. Conflict Managers experienced increases in their sense of self-esteem as reported by their teachers in a study in New York schools (Metis Associates, 1990). Students felt they gained a great deal from their participation. Eighty-four percent felt they had gained a better understanding of different points of view and the same number felt they had learned skills they could use in their every-day lives. An evaluation of peer mediation programs implemented in seventeen Ohio schools showed similar results, as did an evaluation of programs in two Nevada elementary schools and New Mexico (Lam, 1988; Stephens, 1993; Smith, 1996).

- ***Reduced Staff Time is Devoted to Handling Student Conflicts:***

Recently, a series of evaluations were conducted in schools around the country with conflict

resolution and peer mediation programs. The authors found that the number of discipline problems requiring the intervention of a teacher or administration were reduced by approximately 80% (Johnson, 1995). In a study in Nevada, the authors reported that the number of teachers who spent less than 20% of their time on discipline increased by 18% (Carpenter, 1993-94). Other evaluations show decreases in disciplinary referrals to administration (Hanson, 1994; Powell, 1995; Harris, 1994).

- ***Teachers Trained Report High Levels of Satisfaction:***

Numerous reports cite teacher satisfaction with conflict resolution curricula and improvements in conflict management skills among teachers. In one study, teachers who had been exposed to conflict resolution through staff development trainings reported an increased willingness to teach conflict resolution techniques in their course material, they felt they were better listeners, and were more confident in their ability to handle conflicts effectively (Metis Associates, 1990).

- ***Curriculum-based Programs Enhance Student Grasp of Conflict Management Skills and Concepts:***

An evaluation of a program in New York City demonstrated that students who participated in the classroom lessons improved their understanding of the concepts of conflict resolution and were better able to apply them to hypothetical situations (as assessed by responses to a series of true/false statements) than a control group, (Metis Associates, 1990). Other studies confirm that students are able to understand and use the conflict resolution concepts and techniques (Stephens, 1993; Johnson, 1995; Stevahn 1994; Deutsch, 1992).

Other Research

Although the studies that have been done to date are relatively small scale and sometimes lack comparison groups, in the aggregate, the data suggest the effectiveness of these programs at reducing school conflict and violence, improving student attitudes, and enhancing school safety. The federal government has taken an interest in the promise of these programs and is providing funding for larger-scale, comprehensive evaluations.

An evaluation of the nationally recognized Resolving Conflicts Creatively Program (RCCP) is, perhaps, the largest evaluation of its kind. RCCP, similar to the WSCRCP, utilizes a combination of peer mediation and conflict resolution curricula, which involves the active engagement of students, teachers, and parents in all stages of the program. Funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly 10,000 elementary students (first through 5th grade) and 2,000 teachers from 15 schools around the country participated in this two-year study. Data collection was completed in 1996, though findings are not yet available. The investigators believe that the study is already showing promising trends in curbing the development of aggressive behavior in students (Aber, 1996). The study is also beginning to demonstrate that the more exposure students have to conflict resolution lessons, the greater the positive impact on aggressive behavior.

The United States Department of Education is funding a four year study out of the University of Florida on peer mediation and conflict resolution programs implemented in four middle schools in Florida. Both of these evaluations promise to increase our understanding of the impacts of conflict resolution and peer mediation on student behaviors and school environments and contribute significant evidence in support of the effectiveness of these programs.

NATIONAL RECOGNITION OF THESE PROGRAMS

National organizations have recognized the value of peer mediation and conflict resolution programs and the roles that schools can play in curbing youth violence. The United States General Accounting Office published a report entitled *School Safety: Promising Initiatives for Addressing School Violence* highlighting the successes of various violence prevention programs around the country. The Department of Education and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention also recognize the importance of these programs in promoting and enhancing school safety and school climate, thus, having an impact on creating an environment more favorable to learning. They recommend the use of peer mediation and conflict resolution as a strategy for improving school safety. These organizations jointly published a guide entitled *Conflict Resolution Education: A Guide to Implementing Programs in Schools, Youth-Serving Organizations, and Community and Juvenile Justice Settings*, which offers recommendations and strategies for implementing conflict resolution programs in these settings.

Chapter 4: Getting These Programs Going: The Keys and Challenges to Implementation

In the previous chapters, we presented evaluation findings on the impact of the WSCR, and a review of the evaluations on peer mediation and conflict resolution programs from the literature. This chapter examines the factors associated with successful implementation of the program and those that present challenges. These findings are based on key informant interviews with WSCR staff and program staff from other cities, focus groups with faculty and Conflict Managers, and the literature.

KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM

Administrative and Faculty Support

Overall, as reported by all sources, the most important variable effecting the successful implementation of a peer mediation and conflict resolution curriculum program is *administrative* and *faculty* support. In general, the importance lies in an understanding of the basic concepts of the program and a perceived benefit to the school. Administration must provide support to faculty and staff implementing the program. They must take part in the process, minimally, by allowing appropriate conflicts to go to peer mediation, and, when possible, release time or funds for teachers to attend trainings. Faculty must understand the concepts of conflict management, have an appreciation of the program strategies being employed, and view them as contributing to the process of teaching and learning at their school. Not only must teachers be willing to teach the concepts of conflict management, they must provide role models to students, and refer conflicts arising in their classes for resolution through peer mediation. These evaluation findings and other research suggest that the greater the faculty and administrative involvement in the program, the greater the overall impact on the school as a whole.

- ***Faculty and program staff at both Giannini Middle School and Mission High School overwhelmingly viewed administrative support as the primary factor contributing to the successful implementation of the WSCR. At Giannini Middle School, while neither the Dean nor the Principal took an overtly active role in the Project, they were highly supportive of the approaches and strategies of the WSCR. The program was perceived by them to have significant benefit to the overall school environment. This school has had the most success implementing the curriculum and developing their peer mediation program. While in no small part due to the hard work of the on-site Peer Resources Coordinator and the Community Board Program trainers, all agreed that it would not have been as successful without support "from the top." At Mission High School, administration has taken less interest in the WSCR. Administration had other important priorities and limited time to address all of them. WSCR received less attention and was perceived to have a lesser role in meeting the urgent needs of student. Lacking active administrative support, progress made in the Project's first two years was slowed. Faculty's focus had shifted away from the WSCR due to the CSIP process, which resulted in faculty spending less time on WSCR. During the 1996-97 school year, only one faculty member continued to implement the conflict resolution curriculum in the classroom, out of a team of three from the previous year.***
- ***Findings from the literature also indicate that the greater the administrative investment, the greater the overall impact of the program on student violence and school safety.***
- ***Other cities credit the successful implementation of their school-based conflict management programs to strong faculty and administrative support.*** In a Southern California middle school with a nine-year history of using peer mediation, administration had grown to view the program as integral to the smooth operations of the school. In a high school with only two years of experience implementing their peer mediation program, the program would not have been possible without strong faculty and administration support from the start.
- ***Peer Resource Coordinators from both schools noted the importance of building a cadre of faculty who support the program.*** For the program to have an impact at the whole school level, students and faculty alike must be learning and using the same skills and vocabulary. Further, the WSCR Model seeks to influence the safety and security of the school as a whole and has multiple components. This requires a team of faculty to aid in implementing these various components. Members of the Site Leadership Team at Giannini noted that support from other faculty was important. They felt that more teachers should be reached by and trained in conflict management. Not only would teachers acquire skills which they can use (altering their own behavior), but more students would be reached by conflict management, creating a "ripple effect" in the school.

_ Congruence with School Mission and Goals

Along with increasing the commitment and support of faculty and administration, further success is gained when a school-based program is viewed as consistent with the mission and goals of the school. Implementing a school-based conflict management program in an environment where a school has different priorities can be difficult.

- ***Programs lacking a "fit" with school priorities can experience difficulties with implementation.*** Administration at Mission High School expressed a strong commitment to improving the lives of students. The challenge for WSCR staff was to frame the goals of WSCR for administration in a way that would be viewed as consistent with the school's mission. At Giannini Middle School, conflict management was viewed as complementary to the administration's "Positive School Environment Policy" and the work of peer mediators was, for the most part, supported by referrals

from teachers and administration.

- ***Violence prevention and improving school safety were central to their school's mission in the programs from other school districts.*** In each program interviewed, the peer mediation program was begun at the request of faculty and administration as a strategy for decreasing student fighting and increasing overall school safety and security. From the beginning, the goals of the program were viewed as contributing to the overall mission of the school. The middle school program, in place for nine years, reported overwhelming success. Student mediation, as one of several peer programs aimed at reducing student violence on campus, was believed to have played a significant role in turning around a school in crisis.

_ Training and Technical Assistance

- ***Faculty and staff at each school felt the training and technical assistance they received from The Community Board Program was instrumental in their ability to effectively integrate conflict resolution lessons and techniques into their teaching plans.*** Faculty felt they needed support and skills to develop the confidence to use conflict management techniques in their classes. As noted by one faculty person, these techniques run counter to traditional classroom discipline as it requires a lot of motivation and energy to learn and experiment with new concepts and methods.
- ***Faculty at Giannini and Mission felt they needed ongoing training and technical assistance, particularly in the form of classroom demonstrations, easy to use, quick mini-lessons with activities, videos, and other teaching aids.***

CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENTATION

_ Limitations on Staff Time

Nearly all adult staff at both schools noted the biggest challenge to implementing the WSCRП was the time and energy it required given other priorities. This did not dampen their commitment to the overall Project. Faculty, instead, were looking for ways to make the curriculum component easier to implement in the classroom. Further, Peer Resources Coordinators at each school felt there was too much involved in implementing this program for one person. One Peer Resource Coordinator felt an additional staff person to oversee and schedule mediations would allow time to concentrate on developing other components of the Project, such as the curriculum component.

- As the faculty person at Mission said: ***"You have to be motivated to want to do this curriculum. It requires a lot of energy on the part of the teacher, a lot of patience, and a willingness to take a chance."***
- A member of the Core Faculty team at Giannini said, ***"We all have about ten balls in the air that we have to keep in balance."***

_ Developing School-Wide Trust in Program Strategies

A core principle of the WSCRП is to influence conflicts and how they are managed on a school-wide basis. Yet, it is challenging to revise traditional ways of handling conflicts. Veteran teachers and administrators have long established their own way to deal with conflicts they encounter. In order to try a new approach, staff must "take a leap" or trust that a new process may work better. As has been seen in the WSCRП and other peer mediation and conflict resolution programs, trust in the strategies grows with experience.

Students must also have the confidence in the peer mediation process, knowing that their problems will be aired in a confidential setting.

- As the principal at Giannini said, referring to the underutilization of Conflict Managers at his school: *"For some teachers, it is just not their style to refer problems out. When I was teaching, I probably would have been reluctant to refer out, but I see now that this can be a real support and it can be an important educational experience (for the youth)."*

Limited Resources and Funding

From the perspective of administration, faculty and staff, the level of funding available inhibited implementation of this Project at both schools. Additional resources were needed to pay for materials, trainings and release time for teachers. Resources must be designated and set aside to support this effort. This Model is intended to create systemic change, and change at this level take time, commitment, and resources. Lacking funds, faculty were known to pay for classroom materials out of their own pockets. Limited funds for teacher release time was a significant factor constraining the program as well. Factors such as varying levels of commitment, the lack of parent involvement, and limited resources all lessened the overall impact this Project could have had at each school site.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In focus groups and interviews with faculty and administration, strong support was expressed for the WSCR Model and confidence in its strategies. At Giannini, they felt that the program had made significant contributions to creating and supporting a safe school environment and reducing student violence. Despite setbacks, faculty and staff at Mission felt the Project continued to have enormous potential for improving student attitudes, behaviors, and overall school safety. Staff at both schools felt that more teachers and students should be trained in conflict management.

District staff interviewed were aware of the WSCR Model and supported its strategies. They each felt strongly that schools should take the role of providing students with social skills such as communication. They noted that for a conflict management program to be effective, teachers must also be trained in the techniques in order to model appropriate behavior, both adult to adult and adult to student. Parents echoed these same beliefs, wanting teachers to be better trained to manage student problem behavior in the classroom with less punitive measures. They also wanted schools to do more to help students develop socially and emotionally.

As seen in the results from student surveys, impacts were found related to the prevalence of student violence. Overall, the impacts were somewhat greater at Giannini than Mission, although some differences relate to the grade levels of each school; middle school and high school students and environments are quite different. Students reported feeling safer, with 41% of Giannini and 36% of Mission students reported feeling safer at school than before. Many also reported feeling better able to handle their own conflicts, and felt that the amount of time spent handling fights in class had not increased. Fifty-six percent of Giannini students and 48% of Mission students reported finding it easier to talk things out instead of

fighting. Many students reported a high level of awareness and acceptance of program strategies. The vast majority of Giannini students (82%) and many of the Mission students (41%) were aware of the peer mediation program. Further, many of the students (46% at Giannini and 45% at Mission) were willing to use it. Student Conflict Managers also felt that the Project had reduced fights by providing students with an additional option for resolving disputes.

Findings from the student surveys and focus groups with Student Conflict Managers at both schools revealed a perception that adults are only moderately involved in utilizing conflict management strategies. Forty-four percent of Giannini students and 34% of Mission students reported that teachers were instructing them in conflict management. 34% of Mission students and 29% of Giannini students felt that teachers had gotten better at helping students handle conflicts. Conflict Managers at both schools stated that adults were not as likely to refer students to peer mediation as students were to refer themselves. Overall, they felt that the WSCRП had had an impact on the management of student conflicts, had some impact on adult usage of conflict management techniques (including referrals to peer mediation), and had lesser impact on conflicts directly involving adults.

Research and evaluations of peer mediation and conflict resolution curricula programs have demonstrated that these strategies can significantly improve school safety. Studies have shown improvements in overall school climates, decreases in student fighting, violence and other misconduct, and reduced suspension and detention rates. And integration of conflict management lessons into other curricula (e.g., English literature and Social Studies) enhanced academic learning.

The evaluation showed that Giannini Middle School and Mission High School had implemented strong student peer mediation programs. Integration of conflict resolution lessons in the classroom had begun at both schools, as well. The other components of the Model were less fully implemented. Other than the Site Leadership Teams, adults were less actively involved. Both schools had yet to implement a parent component or adult mediation. Other faculty were moderately involved, having participated in staff development trainings conducted by The Community Board Program and referring students to peer mediation; involvement had yet to reach the level of "whole school" participation, however. This is not atypical, as Community Board trainers estimate it can take a program many years at a given school to reach a level of maturation. Giannini had more involvement and support on the part of faculty and administration than Mission. At each school, peer mediation and the integration of conflict resolution curricula were operating as parallel strategies with some cross-component integration. For example, the Peer Resource Coordinator and Conflict Managers at Giannini were requested by teachers to conduct classroom presentations on conflict resolution, increasing the visibility of the Peer Mediation Program and supporting conflict resolution lessons. Overall, Giannini and Mission had made similar progress in implementing the WSCRП. However, given the external factors discussed, including participation in the CSIP process and staff changes, Mission was not able to sustain the same level of implementation through the 1996-97 school year.

A key factor related to the degree of successful implementation of the Model was the degree of administrative and faculty support. Administration at Giannini Middle School demonstrated a high level of commitment to the philosophy, approaches and strategies embodied in the WSCRП. Peer mediation was beginning to be recognized and used by teachers and students as an effective strategy for dealing with fights between students, as well as conflicts between students and teachers. Teachers implementing the curricula maintained a desire to continue doing so in the following school year. Administration, in their first year at Mission High School, were not as familiar or comfortable with the strategies embodied in the WSCRП Model. Time is another important factor in the whole school approach to conflict management. Teachers and staff have limitations on the amount of time they can devote to new activities and its their confidence that these strategies work and their commitment to students that drives them to make the extra

effort. Moreover, the process of an entire school becoming familiar with program strategies, learning the skills involved in conflict management, and using them consistently can not happen all at once. And with limited support from faculty and administration, it can take even longer to implement these strategies.

A fully-implemented school-based conflict resolution program using a whole school approach can have a significant impact on student fighting, school suspensions, and overall school environment. San Francisco schools can be encouraged by the experience of other school districts where, in fact, well administered programs with adequate resources and district level commitment have had a positive, transformative effect on the schools. To the extent that the Model was implemented, our evaluation of the WSCRП revealed positive impacts on many levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our understanding of what constitutes effective school-based conflict management programs as gathered from the literature and our research, the following are a series of recommendations to program staff, school administrators, and District-level staff regarding actions and considerations to be made when implementing and adopting the WSCRП Model.

- **Increased commitment needs to be made by the District in terms of resources, support and promotion of the WSCRП strategies.** WSCRП was designed as a demonstration project by San Francisco Peer Resources and the Community Board Program. The District has at its disposal their knowledge and expertise to provide training and technical assistance to schools interested in adopting the WSCRП Model. The District should take a role in compiling district-wide information on its school-based conflict management programs; for example, the number of programs in schools, the annual number of conflicts managed, and the number of trained student Conflict Managers. Further, as faculty can shift from one school to another, the District could maximize its available resources by keeping track of the location of faculty capable of conducting trainings in conflict management. District-sponsored newsletters, program meetings, and other means of sharing information could further promote and coordinate conflict management programs district-wide.
- **Implementation of the WSCRП should begin with a foundation of support for the Model.** One should assess the level of existing faculty and administrative support in a school for the strategies embodied in the WSCRП Model before implementation. If support is limited, efforts should begin early to increase the level of support. One should also consider what external factors may effect implementation of the WSCRП Model at a given school. Are other programs such as Healthy Start on-site? How will that effect faculty participation in WSCRП? Does this Model fit into the school's Safe Schools Planning process? How can one get WSCRП strategies incorporated in the school's plan?
- **Student peer mediators should be utilized by administration and faculty as alternatives to disciplinary strategies which is reflected in school policies and procedures that are adhered to.** Peer mediation should be promoted as a part of standard practice for handling student conflicts. As found in the Southern California middle school program, establishing a clear, school-wide policy for the use of peer mediation increased the consistent use of this strategy by administration and faculty.
- **A "whole school" approach requires coordination across program components and a real commitment to involving parents in the school.** Efforts should be made to increase the inter-dependence of program strategies and increase the understanding of other strategies among persons involved in implementing individual components. As Site Leadership Team faculty have been involved in training Conflict Managers, Conflict Managers should be drawn on for the conflict

resolution curriculum lessons, when possible, to both support and enhance the lessons and promote the peer mediation services. Further, a real commitment should be made to involving parents in the program.

- **Teachers need to be well trained in principles of conflict resolution and continuing efforts need to be made to increase teacher participation.** A backbone of support, awareness and use of conflict management techniques by teachers school-wide is needed to create a "whole school" effort. Ongoing activities should be conducted to promote the strategies among staff (as well as students), train teachers in conflict management and the WSCR, and recruit new teachers to teach the curriculum.

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Appendix A:

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS AND SUSPENSION RATES

Student demographics and Suspension rates

To provide background on each school, a brief overview of relevant information related to students and suspensions rates has been included. Demographic information is for students enrolled at the beginning of the 1996-1997 school year.

Giannini Middle School

In general, Giannini Middle School is performing well in comparison with other middle schools in the District. It has a diverse student population, with stable faculty and administration and a reputation of being a well-run, orderly school.

Demographics

In the Fall of 1996, Giannini Middle School had an enrollment of 1,251 students in its 6th through 8th grade classes. Giannini is the second largest middle school in the district. Seventeen percent are Limited English Proficient (LEP)/Non English Proficient (NEP) compared to 26% of the students in all middle

schools. Forty-seven percent of the school's students, as compared with 56% of the district's middle school population in general, were enrolled in the free or reduced lunch program—often considered an indicator of the level of poverty in the school. Nine percent of the school's students, as compared with 13% of the district's middle school population, were enrolled in Special Education. Thirty-one percent of Giannini's students, as compared with 50% of the district wide middle school population, were classified as Educationally Disadvantaged Youth, meaning they have deficiencies (falling below the 40% percentile) in reading, math or both according to their Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CABS) scores—standardized testing used by the District. Eighteen percent of Giannini's students attend from outside of the school's designated zone. District wide, 27% of all middle school students attend other than their "zoned" middle school.

According to District statistics, at Giannini Middle School the largest proportion of students across grade levels were Chinese at 38%, followed by Whites at 22%. African Americans comprised 10% of students, and Latinos represented an additional 8%. In comparison to District middle school, as a whole, Giannini has fewer African-American and Latino students and more White and Asian students. There is a difference between the ethnic make up of the students and that of the faculty at Giannini, with a significantly larger proportion of the faculty being White as compared with the students. Among certified teaching staff, 79% were White, 12% were Chinese, 3% were African American and 3% were Latino.

Student Achievement

Academic Achievement is monitored by the District through the use of the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS). Based on testing conducted in the Spring of 1995, Giannini students had scores, on average, above those of the District as a whole. Overall, in the areas of both reading and math, the majority of Giannini students scored in the upper two quartiles.

Suspensions

The Office of Pupil Services of the San Francisco Unified School District maintains the District's records on suspensions and expulsions. Giannini has significantly lower suspension rates as compared with the rates of middle schools across the District (See Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1: Suspension Rates for Giannini Middle School and District

School Year	A. P. Giannini Middle School % (No)	District Middle Schools %
1993-1994	5.6% (67)	8.6%
1994-1995	6.4% (76)	9.1%
1995-1996	4.2% (52)	7.5%
1996-1997	2% (23)	6%

Mission High School

Demographics

Mission High School is comparable in size to Giannini Middle School, with an enrollment at the beginning of the 1996-1997 school year of 1,113 students, grades 9-12. In comparison to District high school students as a whole, Mission High School has a significantly larger percentage of students with Limited English Proficiency (23% and 45%, respectively). Slightly more Mission students (37%) are enrolled in the free or reduced lunch program compared to all high school students (32%). Enrollment in school free lunch programs is typically used as a good indicator of the level of poverty among students. In comparison to all high school students, Mission has more students in Special Education (9% and 16%, respectively) and more students who are considered "Educationally Disadvantaged Youth" (44% and 63%, respectively) which means that they scored below the 40th percentile on routinely administered standardized reading and math tests. While 54% of all students are optionally enrolled in high schools across the City, only 16% of Mission students are optionally enrolled, meaning they come from outside of the school's zoned attendance area. Given that substantially fewer students choose to enroll at Mission High School compared to the number of students optionally enrolled across the entire District, this may be an indicator of the level of desirability to attend Mission.

At Mission High School, Latinos students constitute the largest ethnic group at 42%, followed by Chinese students at 19% and African American students at 14.5%. There are substantially more Latino students and fewer White students at Mission as compared to students in the District, as a whole. The diversity among certified staff at Mission is closer to that of the students than it is at Giannini Middle School. It is as follows: 51% White, 14% Chinese, 12% African American, 14% Latino, 3% American Indian, and 2% Filipino.

Suspensions

The Office of Pupil Services of the San Francisco Unified School District maintains the District's records on suspensions and expulsions. For a comparison of Mission High School's suspension rate with District high schools overall, see Exhibit 2.

Exhibit 2: Suspension Rates for Mission High School and District

School Year	Mission High School % (No)	District High Schools %
1993-1994	5.6% (74)	3.5%
1994-1995	5.7% (74)	3.9%
1995-1996	2.9% (35)	3.9%
1996-1997	3.1% (34)	2.4%

While decreases in suspension rates at Mission seem to coincide with the implementation of the WSCR, given the numerous other programs and prevention efforts on-site, it is not possible to attribute this decline to the Project's presence.

Appendix B:

EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

CONFLICT RESOLUTION/PEER MEDIATION CHUGIAK HIGH SCHOOL

HISTORY OF PEER MEDIATION AT CHS

- 1997-98** -13 mediators and 2 staff trained in the traditional 2-day pull out method by outside presenters
 -Total: 46 mediations completed
- 1998-99** -16 mediators trained by CHS staff members
 -Training was done in an after school workshop (2:30 p.m. Friday - noon on Saturday)
 -Presented workshop at Statewide Special Education Conference about benefits of conflict resolution/peer mediation
 -Total: 80 mediations completed
 -Recognized by TV station's Spirit of Youth Award for innovative program
- 1999-2000** -23 mediators trained (overnight, after school extended workshop) 2:30 p.m. Friday - noon Saturday
 -Included 3 students from Steller, Service and Bartlett High Schools
 -7 CHS/ASD staff trained
 -4 CHS staff trained OJT/post workshop follow-up
 -Total: 74 mediations completed
 -5 presentations made to groups, organizations other workshops in the community and School District
 -Received Legislative Proclamation from the AK Legislature for program
 -One CHS mediator receives scholarship from APU due to her mediation efforts
- 2000-2001** -Training done all day, 7:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. at CHS
 -25 mediators trained (all grades - 9th through 12th)
 -2 outside agencies/schools trained (Youth Corps, AVAIL program)
 -Professional mediator - guest speaker for students
 -Eagle River Star article about mediation process
 -Presentations to Highway Safety Conference, PTSA, National RCCP Conference
-

- More mediations requested by teachers and students than Admin/Security**
 - 2 elementary schools trained in mediation process by high school students**
 - Eagle River Boys and Girls Club youth trained by 2 male senior mediators (for Senior Project – volunteer work)**
 - Total mediations since Sept 2000: 70**
 - Club sponsors will offer training through UAA in April 2001 for teachers to create their own mediation programs at various high schools**
-

Peer Mediation at CHS

Chugiak High School has had an active Peer Mediation program for the past 3 years. It has had a very positive impact in the number of suspensions we have had decreasing them by 50 %. Our Peer Mediation program is entering its 4th year and just completed its annual training workshop on Nov. 3. Over 20 students completed a 12 hour training process in order to learn the skills to help their peers solve conflicts in a positive, peaceable way.

Peer mediators have helped their fellow students with more than two hundred mediations, giving students the opportunity to problem solve rather than get into trouble. The peer mediators help disputing students agree on how to resolve their conflicts. In the mediation, the students involved in a conflict work out their differences together and come up with positive solutions they can both agree to.

Rumors, name-calling, threats, harassment and issues dealing with personal property are some of the common causes of conflict among students. Without the skills to resolve these kinds of issues, conflicts often build, causing fights, classroom disruptions and sometimes more serious violence. Peer mediation provides our students an option to deal with those differences or conflicts before they get out of hand.

Students involved in a conflict may sign up for a mediation session themselves or be referred by a teacher, counselor, the discipline office or a concerned friend. Occasionally, parents have called the school requesting mediation as an option to help their student resolve a conflict with a peer.

The goals of mediation are: (1) to give students a peaceful way to resolve a dispute; (2) to help build self respect and respect of others; (3) to improve communication; (4) to give students who disagree an opportunity to listen calmly to each other's points of view; and (5) to promote the peace by developing effective problem solving and decision making skills.

The ultimate goal of mediation is to help students who disagree find a way to resolve their differences in a way that satisfies both sides.

CHS is very fortunate to have such a dedicated group of Peer Mediators who volunteer their lunch hour to help their fellow students. Without these mediators, we could not have this extremely successful support program in our school. A big thank you goes out to all the students who went through the training workshop and those who have been serving as mediators this year. You do make a difference!

For more information about this process, please call Sandy Anderson at 742-3206 or Judy Mathewson at 742-3059, sponsors of Peer Mediation.

New student mediators: Laura Egbert, Jason Burnett, Talisa Cullen, Amanda Smith, Tia Powell, Rusti Darnell, Giana Jordan, Kelsey Alexander, Annie Whitters, Tami Stephan, Sasha John, Katie Reed, Jenni Colman, Devon Morse, Amanda Barbeau, Amy Wilkes, Nicole Donahoo, Rachael Nixa.

Returning mediators include: Rosie Humphery, Lindsey Wagner, Sarah Powell, Koji Gailey, James Hendley, Jennifer Roan, Krystin Willburn, Christin Garner.

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43 more kids suspended

Students scatter as police break up 2nd fight near Dimond

By LISA DEMER
Daily News reporter

Forty-three more students were suspended Wednesday from Service High School for their role in a fight — caught on videotape last week — that left a boy unconscious and bruised.

That brings the suspensions to 75. More are likely today, school officials said.

School and police officials say the spectator aspect of the Dec. 5 fight — and others like it — marks a new and

disturbing trend.

A crowd estimated at 150 yelled and cheered as two boys punched it out until the younger and smaller one was knocked out. The video, aired Tuesday on KTUU-TV, Channel 2, showed the boy lying still in the snow. No one made an effort to stop the fight; someone helped him when it was over.

Meanwhile Wednesday, near Dimond High just before noon, a police

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SUSPEND: Three students appeal punishment; district re-evaluates policies

Continued from Page A 1

officer found a crowd of 50 students watching a fight. The kids scattered but police were able to nab the two fighters, who were charged with disorderly conduct. One, a 16-year-old on probation, was taken to McLaughlin Youth Center, said Sgt. Gary Apperson.

Police also are investigating at least two other spectator fights involving students caught on video, Apperson said.

Fights at school are nothing new. But planned fights with big crowds are, police and school officials said. Their message to students: Don't go, and tell an adult. A child could be permanently injured or killed, police say.

The crowd's jeers may prompt a fight or force it to happen even if the combatants want to walk away. "I'll let him off," someone in the crowd yelled at Birch Park, where the Service High freshman and senior fought last week.

"We are in new territory here. This is planned and the people know," said Apperson, southside patrol supervisor for the Anchorage



The Dec. 5 fight, captured on videotape, between two Service High School students at Birch Park resulted in 75 suspensions, with more expected today.

Police Department.

"My point is, if nobody came to watch it they wouldn't have fought," the sergeant said, referring to the Service High fight.

Suspensions for fighting are up dramatically in Anchorage high schools this year. For the first quarter, which ended Oct. 27, long before the Service episode, 129 high school

students were suspended for fighting or making threats. During the same period last school year, 47 were suspended. Two years ago it was 82.

District officials haven't been able to pinpoint a reason. No discipline policies have changed. But four of the six assistant principals for discipline are new. Maybe students are testing them, said Cynthia McCray, acting secondary education supervisor and a former East High principal.

"All we can do is wonder why it is happening," McCray said.

"Something is going on."

The district is re-evaluating programs designed to teach students how to resolve conflict without blows, she said.

So far, only three students are appealing the suspensions, said Pat Halvin, acting principal at the 2,400-student high school.

Service High hockey coach Lars

Swensen said after Wednesday night's game against Dimond that at least six of his varsity players had been suspended, but he did not know how many more will be. He said it was frustrating. "It's been a tough day. It has been hard to prepare." All the same, Service beat Dimond 4-2.

Administrators identified students from the videotape. It had been edited like a music video and was confiscated when a student tried to copy it at King Career Center. Now those students are naming others who were there.

Calls about the suspensions and the fight club angle poured into school offices and radio talk shows on Wednesday. The public generally seems to support the disciplinary actions, said Jim Taylor, the district's executive director for high school education.

But some callers question how the district can extend its authority to kids just watching a fight, after school and off school grounds.

Taylor answers that, to stop fights, schools must get tough with kids watching. The conflict between the Service boys started at school and the fight was planned there, he said. Under district policy, the

school claims the right to take disciplinary action, as it would for any trouble that starts on campus. In this case, that extends to the spectators, who are considered an accessory, he said.

Some parents wonder whether an out of school suspension is a punishment or amounts to a vacation. Students can make up the work if suspended for five days or less, as most of these were, and it doesn't go on their permanent record.

In-school suspensions are an alternative, but Anchorage high schools have no budget for them, said Halvin, the principal.

Anchorage parents must figure out how to use the suspension time to teach a lesson, Taylor said. Have kids move the windpile or clean the house.

Some Service parents report that their kids will be doing community service at Heen's Cafe, the Salvation Army or their church while out of school, Podvin said.

Lisa Demer reporter Doug O'Hara contributed to this story. Reporter Lisa Demer can be reached at ldemer@adn.com or 357-4388.

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32 Service students suspended after fight

Videotape shows 150 kids watched brawl

By LISA DEMER
Daily News reporter

Thirty-two Service High School students who officials say were videotaped watching or participating in an after-school fight at a nearby park have been suspended. School officials say the number could grow. Police estimate the Dec. 5 fight, which students promoted at school, drew about 150 kids. Several students videotaped it or took still pictures as others yelled and cheered.

School officials described the fight between a freshman and a senior as "vicious and

brutal." It didn't last much longer than a minute. The younger and smaller boy was briefly knocked unconscious and suffered bruises and knots on his face.

"The bizarre and scary piece is that it was videotaped and there were that many people there," said acting Service High principal Pat Podvin.

A tape ended up in the hands of school administrators after a student was caught trying to copy it at King Career Center. The videotape had voice-overs and

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FIGHT: Mother says son shouldn't be punished for being bystander

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was set to music. School officials are using it to identify and suspend students who attended the fight.

Officials are disturbed a fight was used as an entertainment event.

"It's kind of like the movie 'Fight Club,' where you see who can take the biggest licking or who can dish out the biggest licking," said Jim Taylor, acting executive director for high school education for the Anchorage School District.

The boys shown on the tape punching each other have been suspended for nine days, Podvin said. Anchorage police also referred the boys to juvenile authorities on charges of disorderly conduct.

School officials had been hearing rumors this year of organized fights with specta-



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two other videotaped fights involving four more boys, said detective Dennis Allen.

Every student at the Birch Park fight is subject to suspension for being an accessory to the act and for disruptive behavior, Podvin said.

"I believe most of our fights would not occur if there were not kids egging them on, encouraging them," the principal said.

Although the fight was off school grounds and after school hours, it was promoted and planned at school, officials said. That distracts students from classes and could bring problems onto school grounds, Podvin said.

Service's four assistant principals spent most of Tuesday interviewing students and informing parents of the suspensions.

Kathleen Johnson, whose son C.J. was suspended for

five days, said she agrees the matter is serious. C.J. told her about the fight after it happened and about rumors beforehand. She said she told him the fight sounded like trouble and it was wrong for him to have gone. But she said five days out of school just before winter break isn't the right punishment.

"I was in the wrong place at the wrong time, but to suspend that many students," Johnson said. The family told the school that C.J. would appeal, but they haven't decided how far to pursue it, she said.

C.J., a junior, said he heard about the fight at school and pulled over when he saw cars parked at Birch Park. So many kids were standing in a circle that his view was blocked, he said.

"I don't feel they have a right to suspend me just for

being there. I didn't even see anything," C.J. said.

At Service on Tuesday, the suspensions were being debated in the hallways.

"It's all over the school today," said senior Ken Kulavanyr. "I think the guys who were fighting maybe should have gotten suspended, but nobody else."

Suspensions are in order because what happened is serious, the school district's Taylor said. The school must get the kids' and the parents' attention, he said.

Suspensions of five days or less are appealed directly to the school. By mid-afternoon, Podvin said, it didn't appear many parents were appealing.

No one seemed to know what the boys were fighting over, other than a conflict that arose in gym class.

The school has five securi-

ty workers, seven counselors, five administrators and a peer mediation program to help students settle disputes, Podvin said.

If students hear a fight is going to happen, they shouldn't go, and they should tell an adult, the principal said.

Authorities did not release a copy of the videotape. KTUU TV showed a copy, and aired it Tuesday evening, with a parental advisory about the graphic violence. Allen said he was glad the tape aired so parents can see how serious fights can be.

"When you hit somebody in the temple area, somebody could be killed," Allen said. "I will take parent pressure I get this stuff stopped."

Reporter Lisa Demer can be reached at ldemer@adn.com or 481-4000.

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3 charged over fight by teens

More Service students suspended amid inquiry

By LISA DEMER
Daily News reporter

The Service High School fight phenomenon that came into public view this week has led to charges against two youths and an adult who acted as a referee in a videotaped fight last year, police said.

That raises the number of people charged in connection with various spectator fights to seven, and police say charges are pending against at least one other youth.

Also, Service High officials Thursday suspended another 42 students, bringing the total to 117 punished as a result of a Dec. 5 videotaped fight.

"I think these kids have been desensitized to violence. They watch so much stuff on TV," Anchorage police Detective Dennis Allen said. "They don't know how easily a sharp blow to the temple can kill, he said.

Police began focusing on the spectator
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SERVICE: More students suspended over teens' fistfight in park

Continued from Page A-1

Fighters after school officials confiscated a videotape of the Dec. 5 incident from a student at King Career Center. The tape had been set to music and included freeze frames of the blows.

The freshman and senior fighters were suspended for nine days and charged as juveniles with disorderly conduct. The younger one was knocked unconscious.

Police have since obtained videotapes of two earlier incidents involving Service students and are investigating those fights.

The dates and locations of the earlier fights are unclear, Allen said. Students mentioned both Oceanview Park and the Hilltop Ski Area park.

ing last. The crowds numbered 20 to 40 kids, much smaller than the recent incident, Allen said.

One fight had a referee, 21-year-old Jules K. Dudoit, said police spokesman Ron McGee.

But he wasn't a referee in the usual sense, Allen said. Dudoit encouraged the fight to go on after one kid was delayed from blows, Allen said. Thursday evening, Dudoit was cited on misdemeanor charges of disorderly conduct, contributing to the delinquency of a minor and soliciting, McGee said. The latter refers to his role as referee, McGee said.

One of the youths, now 18, has been charged with felony assault and misdemeanor disorderly conduct. He knocked

the other boy unconscious and then kicked him twice in the head when he was down, Allen said. Dudoit stopped the fight at that point, he added. The other boy has been charged with disorderly conduct.

A youth will be cited in the other 1999 case as seen as the paperwork can be transferred from Anchorage to Palmer, where he lives, Allen said. Police are trying to confirm the identity of the youth he was fighting.

Two Diamond High students have been charged with disorderly conduct in a separate incident.

A fourth videotaped fight resulted in two suspensions last school year, Allen said. Thursday he hadn't been aware of it and will look into it. The kids watching that

fight were talked to but not suspended, according to Steve Cline, Service High principal, who is on medical leave.

Three Service High students are appealing their suspensions. A few more suspensions are coming, said acting principal Pat Rodvin.

Most students were suspended for five days and can make up missed work. The discipline doesn't go on their permanent record, prompting some critics to wonder whether it amounts to just extra vacation. School officials are urging parents to make the time count.

One boy volunteered that he had been at the fight when he hadn't in the hope of getting time off since his friends were suspended, said Cynthia

McCray, the district's acting secondary education supervisor. He dropped it when officials told him he would be in more trouble if he was lying.

Juvenile authorities are trying to figure out how to handle the cases, said Linda Moffitt, juvenile probation supervisor in Anchorage. Disorderly conduct and minor assault cases typically go to Youth Court or are otherwise handled informally, she said.

Kids might be told to write an apology or an essay or to do community service, she said. They might be sent to anger management training or to a victim impact class, which is new.

Middle schools are using the fights to teach students about how to handle dangerous situations, McCray said.

At Goldenview Middle School, principal Connie Bensler gave a 10-minute talk over the intercom on the consequences and risks. The fighters generally get nine-day suspensions, she told the students, and that work can't be made up. Grades can drop. College choices can shrink. And suspended students can't play sports. The Service High varsity hockey team has lost at least six players.

"Once you get the reputation for being a fighter and a bully, no matter how much you don't want that reputation, it is going to stay with you," Bensler said.

Reporter Lisa Demer can be reached at ldemer@adn.com or 257-4390.

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