

A STUDY OF SELECTED DISCIPLINARY REFERRALS
AND A REPORT OF DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES
IN THREE PUBLIC JUNIOR HIGH
SCHOOLS IN PORTSMOUTH, VIRGINIA,

by

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DEDICATED

TO

and

(My wife and two sons)

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Disciplinary practices and methods of student control have been and continue to be prevailing issues in the recurring criticism of public schools. For the last twelve years, discipline and control practices in education were a major concern of citizens across the United States, according to Gallup's "Survey of Public Attitudes Toward Education".¹

In 1973, for the fourth time in five years, a Gallup Poll revealed that the public cites lack of discipline as the greatest problem in the schools in their own communities. Those school districts which are seeking public support of schools should be mindful of this criticism. Lack of proper discipline is often associated with "poor education." If school officials cannot keep students in line, then the school, in the eyes of the public is a "poor" one.²

¹George Gallup, "Twelveth Annual Survey of the Public's Attitudes Toward Education," Phi Delta Kappan, September 1981, p. 34.

²George Gallup, "Fifth Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Education," Phi Delta Kappan, VL (1973), pp. 14-15.

The public awareness of school disciplinary problems seems to have really surfaced in the last decade and a half; however, the existence of disciplinary problems is of long standing. These problems have been a challenge to educators ever since students were organized in groups for instructional purposes.

Again in 1977, the Gallup Poll cited discipline in public schools as the most pressing concern of educators and society. Parents and teachers expressed deep concern about the need for emphasis on discipline in schools.³

The prevalent theme throughout the writings on discipline is that the most effective type is that which is self-imposed. Self discipline must be learned, not only from teachers, but also from parents and other responsible people in the community. There are, however, students in the public schools who are not self-disciplined; it is foolish to insist that all discipline in the modern school is self-discipline.⁴ LaGrand agreed with Holton when he stated:

While self-imposed discipline is the ideal of professional educators for their students, we must be quick to recognize that such discipline is learned behavior. Students must learn from parents, teachers, and other adults the need for discipline. Usually, for self-discipline to take

³George Gallup, "The Ninth Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Education," Phi Delta Kappan, LIX (1977), p. 34.

⁴Samuel Holton, Understanding the American Public High School (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1969), p. 15.

root and grow, it must be preceded by the example of self-discipline in adults.

Teachers are responsible for conducting their classes in such a way as to point out the necessity for controls, both for individual and collective benefit. Physical, social and intellectual changes in adolescence bring with them adjustment which jar the emotional roots of many. But it is through these very experiences that a considerable amount of self-discipline can be forged.⁵

The intensity of disciplinary problems varies from county to county and from city to city throughout the United States. Our society expresses a concern about some effective type of discipline in schools.⁶

Teachers and school administrators are charged with the duty of teaching youngsters to obey and respect those in authority, but at the same time they are expected to be considerate and lenient. School personnel are highly concerned but quite confused about steps that can be taken to improve discipline in schools. Some disciplinary measures used in the past are no longer in common practice. Courts have given cognizance to students' constitutional rights in disciplinary matters.⁷

Teachers are constantly in contact with students during the course of a school day. Therefore, when students

⁵Louis E. LaGrand, Discipline in the Secondary School (West Nyack: Parker Publishing Company, 1969), p. 2.

⁶Leslie J. Chamberlin, Effective Instruction Through Dynamic Discipline (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1971), p. 24.

⁷Ibid., pp. 17-19.

are involved in acts of misconduct, teachers usually are the first school officials to decide which disciplinary measure they will employ to correct the offenders. They also make decisions concerning the referral of the more severe cases of misconduct to the appropriate school administrator.⁸

This administrator is responsible for making decisions about disciplinary matters which are necessary to maintain the proper teaching-learning atmosphere in the building. This person must endeavor to act in the best interest of all concerned.irate parents will sometimes initiate adverse publicity for the school when they feel certain decisions are too harsh or unfair. On many occasions - regardless of the decision - the administrator will be criticized. In making decisions about measures to be taken to correct certain offenses, the administrator must strive for fair decisions rather than popular ones.⁹

An awareness of teacher and student choices concerning the treatment of disciplinary offenses may help an administrator in decision-making. Today's administrator faces a growing number of complex problems and he/she needs

⁸Naomi Faust, Discipline and the Classroom Teacher (Post Washington, NY: Dunellen Publishing Co.), p. 143.

⁹Arthur J. Niewiadoski, "Student Perception of Secondary School, Discipline Practices" (Unpublished Doctor's Dissertation, Fordham University, 1975), p. 96.

all possible help in making the wisest decisions.¹⁰

The Setting

The study was conducted at the three public junior high schools in Portsmouth, Virginia. The schools involved in this study are Churchland Junior High, A. J. Mapp Junior High, and W. E. Waters Junior High. Portsmouth is located on the banks of the Elizabeth River in the Tidewater section of Virginia. The population of Portsmouth is approximately 106,000 with a racial composition of approximately 52 percent white, 47 percent black, and 1 percent other. Portsmouth has a public school enrollment of a little over 18,000 students with a professional staff of approximately 1,150. There has been a noticeable decline in the city's population and public school enrollment in the last twelve years (approximately 25,000 people left the city and 8,000 students left the school system).¹¹ The decline was due to the flight to the suburbs and the enrollment of students in four newly formed parochial and private schools. There was a rapid decline in enrollment when desegregation of the races in public schools was initiated about twelve years ago. A few students have returned to the system, yet the decline

¹⁰Samuel Kostman, "Shared Problem Solving Decision Making," National Association of School Principals Bulletin, Vol. 62, p. 64.

¹¹Portsmouth Public Schools Educational Data Processing Center.

in city population and school enrollment continues at a slow pace.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this investigation was to determine the ten most common disciplinary offenses referred to the administrators for disciplinary action, to examine selected disciplinary referrals, and to report the practices employed to correct them in three junior high schools in Portsmouth, Virginia.

The investigator endeavored to determine the students' and teachers' points of view concerning the severity of three of the ten most common offenses and also their choices of disciplinary measures to correct the ten offenses.

The writer also investigated the possible influence of certain variables on disciplinary referrals such as:

- 1) a written code of conduct issued to the students,
- 2) sex,
- 3) ethnic origin,
- 4) economic status,
- 5) and one-parent or guardian family.

Teachers and students were requested to respond to a Survey for the Improvement of Discipline in the Junior High School (See Appendix II).

Hypotheses

Four hypotheses were formulated, which are as follows:

1. The more frequently students are penalized according to their choice of extinguishing punishment, the lower the rate of repeat violations.
2. The greater disparity between teachers' and students' points of view regarding the severity of an offense, the greater the number of students referred for disciplinary action.
3. Students who have written codes of conduct issued to them as opposed to those who do not, will receive:
 - a) A lower percentage of non-repeat referrals;
 - b) A lower percentage of repeat referrals;
 - c) A lower percentage of habitual offender referrals.
4. For offenses examined, there will be a disproportionate percentage of non-repeat, repeat, and habitual offender referrals;
 - a) Among boys than girls;
 - b) Among minority than non-minority group students;
 - c) Among economically disadvantaged students than among economically advantaged students; and
 - d) Among the one-parent or guardian family than among the two-parent or guardian family.

Definition of Terms

1. Discipline: It is the imposition of order of control that attempts to correct misconduct. Discipline is usually imposed by teachers or administrators, singularly or collectively. Local school boards, state legislative bodies, and student-faculty committees are also involved in imposing discipline by codes or rules. Regardless of the nature of the regulations and the person or persons who enforce them, there is a common goal for all school discipline. The goal is to assist the individual in obtaining a desirable level of self-discipline that will enable him/her to function within the framework and regulations of the school.

2. Non-Repeat Referral: The only recorded offense on a student in an academic school year for an infraction of rules or regulations that was directed to an administrator for corrective action.

3. Repeat Referral: The second recorded offense in a school year for which the same student was directed to an administrator for corrective action.

4. Habitual Offender Referral: The repetition of numerous recorded offenses by the same student which previously resulted in his/her being directed to an

administrator for corrective action.

5. External Suspension: A temporary separation from school for a period of one to ten days.

6. In-School Suspension: A temporary forced prohibition from attending regular classes, but a student is allowed to come to school. In-School Suspension students are separated from the rest of the student body and are controlled by an In-School Suspension Coordinator.

7. Minority Group Students: This term is used to refer to non-white students.

8. Economically Disadvantaged Students: This group consists of students who, because of their family economic status, were eligible for free lunches under provisions of United States Department of Agriculture's National School Lunch Act.

9. A Written Code of Conduct: This is a printed set of rules and regulations for the control of student behavior.

There was a consensus of opinion among administrators from each school about the definitions of the ten common offenses; the operational definitions agreed upon by the administrators for this study are as follows:

1. Disruptive Classroom Behavior - acts of misconduct (other than the ones in this list) that interfere with the teaching-learning process, such as the following: talking across the room, playing with a classmate, joking, moving around the room without permission, making distracting noises, vandalizing school property, throwing objects across the room, and arguing with others.
2. Disrespectful Speech To Staff Members - the expression of thoughts in an unacceptable manner (rudeness, impudence, and sarcasm) to administrators, teachers, nurses, custodial workers and cafeteria employees.
3. Persistent Disobedience - acts of misconduct that are consistently committed against the expressed desires of staff members.
4. Use of Indecent Language - utterances that are offensive against unrecognized standards, unseemly remarks, and cursing.
5. Habitual Tardiness - being late for class more than one tenth of the time (three for each six-weeks period).
6. Smoking On School Premises - use of tobacco with the aid of fire in the school building, on school grounds, or on school buses.
7. Fighting - acts of physical aggression of one

student toward another resulting in physical contact.

8. Threatening Or Intimidating Others - harrassing, bullying, making promises or stating intention of doing bodily harm.

9. Truancy - being absent without an excusable reason such as personal illness, death in the immediate family, medical appointment that can't be made after school hours.

10. Substance Abuse - using or having possession of illicit drugs or alcoholic beverages.

Limitations

The sample used in this study was limited to three junior high schools in the City of Portsmouth, Virginia. The writer limited record examination to disciplinary referral records and distributed questionnaires to students in grades seven and eight. All disciplinary referral records examined were from the entire 1978-79 school year only. The questionnaires were distributed during the 1979-80 school year and were only given to those students who were enrolled in junior high school during the previous year.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Historical Overview of Discipline In Public Schools In The United States

As we go back to the origin of public schools in our nation, Hart and Lordon states that the first public schools were founded in the New England area, and the concepts which governed schools were basically concepts of the Puritan religion. The Puritans believed in the concept of original sin and the concept of the intervention of the spirits, both good and evil, in human affairs. A rigid heirarchical structure was adhered to in their family lives and their religious lives.¹² Hart and Lordon summerized some of their early concepts of discipline in public schools as follows:

1. Human nature is basically tainted and inclined toward evil (the influence of original sin); therefore, good behavior must be enforced through rigid standards, and punishment (the

¹²James Hart and John Lordon, "School Discipline: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," Clearing House, Vol. 52, October, 1978, pp. 68-69.

natural consequence of sin) must immediately follow inappropriate behavior.

Because of the hierarchial structure of the community and family (based on familiar biblical references), the school is composed of those in authority and those who must obey. The authority is unquestionable and must be obeyed to the letter. Non-conformity brings immediate corrective action, usually in the form of punishment.¹³

Channing concurred and stated that early discipline in the United States' school was rigid and to the extreme. He goes on to say this was a continuation of English traditions and the Puritan spirit had no softening effect.¹⁴ His writings of life in Newport, Rhode Island, around the turn of the nineteenth century has a passage which gives a vivid description of school discipline then.

During my nonage the Puritan spirit did not die out. It was an age of force. Punishment was deemed necessary. Exhibition of authority constituted day by day a series of domestic tableaux. The discipline of the school was in accordance with the government of the home. It was arbitrary, with rare exceptions, in the extreme. Children were required to bow and kiss the hand when entering or leaving either home or school.¹⁵

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Herbert Small, Early New England Schools (New York Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969), p. 384.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Around the middle of the nineteenth century a number of educators began to raise questions about corporal punishment; among them was Horace Mann. It was drawn to the attention of the Boston School Board, and the Boston Survey Committee was appointed to investigate the matter. The committee found the floggings to average sixty-five (65) per day for four hundred children; this was an average of one every six minutes during the six-hour session.¹⁶ The committee continued with its report.

We are forced to believe that there has been gross abuse of the power of corporal punishment. Undoubtedly there are some persons who look upon the rod as if it had a magic power, as if chaos must come again if it were abandoned and forgotten. They quote the saying of Solomon as if it contains all his wisdom and regard the rod as if it must be the chief instrument of education. We hope the regulations of the committee and the power of public opinion will break the force of the blows and save the little victims from outrage.¹⁷

Even after the expressions of many concerns, the manner of disciplinary control in schools remained basically the same. It was the duty of the teacher "to keep strict rules and good order," and the ability to discipline the pupils was an important part of the teacher's qualifications. Sometimes the teacher had to fight the larger

¹⁶Otis Caldwell and Stuart Courtis, Then and Now In Education (Yonkers, New York: World Book Co., 1925), p. 20.

¹⁷Ibid.

boys for mastery, while the "turning-out" of the teacher was a test in school control.¹⁸ This approach to school discipline prevailed throughout the nineteenth century.

Case For Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment has prevailed during the twentieth century. As recent as 1977 there was a Supreme Court decision upholding corporal punishment. There have been many arguments used to defend it.¹⁹

It has been noted that the Bible advocates corporal punishment of children. The Book of Proverbs contains several references. In Proverbs 13:24, King James version, appears the frequently quoted "He that spareth the rod hateth the son; he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."²⁰

In a news feature from the Associated Press appeared quotations from a set of rules in effect in a North Carolina school in 1910: "For blotting copy book,

¹⁸Ellwood Cubberley, The Public Education In The United States (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin Co., Riverside Press, 1924), p. 328.

¹⁹Helen Puner, "Should We Go Back To The Woodshed?" Parents Magazine, XXIX (November 1954), pp. 40-41

²⁰Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testament Authorized King James Version (New York and London: Collins Clear Type Press).

two lashes." "For giving each other ill names, three lashes." The reporter went on to say there were few who wish to have those rules revived, but there were many who wonder if we had not swung too far to the other extreme.²¹

John Dewey took a firm position on corporal punishment in 1921. When criticizing a teacher who complained students did not want to listen or learn, he declared that corporal punishment for inattention was one way to make a child realize the importance of the subject. It was also a way to arouse interest or point out the connection between himself and what was being taught.²²

Werner, who studied the problem in 1933, concluded that corporal punishment would have been useful in cases of tardiness, truancy, and the use of profanity.²³

In 1955, Hymes said that there was nothing wrong with corporal punishment in and of itself. If it has to be used, it should be used according to the following formula: (1) only on stable sturdy healthy youngsters, (2) only when

²¹Herman R. Allen, "Hickory Stick Still Echoes," Independent-Press Telegram, Long Beach, California, May 5, 1957, p. 8.

²²John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921), p. 27.

²³William F. Werner, "A Manual of Methods For The Prevention and Treatment of School Discipline Problems" (Unpublished Master's Thesis, The University of Southern California, 1933), p. 101.

the subjects were innocent of the law, (3) only when they had to learn the rule quickly, and (4) only when the rule was a specific one and applicable to some definite, clearly defined situation.²⁴

During 1950 Allen submitted a thesis which contained the following pertinent items: (1) a large number of children were sent to school with ill-regulated and immature habit development; (2) those who misused freedom should not be allowed to persist in such a misunderstanding; (3) the knowledge that a whipping might follow some contemplated act held more than one child back from its performance; (4) if and when it was used, the corporal punishment should be sharp enough and severe enough so there would be no desire on the part of the subject to have it repeated; and (5) it was far better to suffer slight temporary pain at the hands of a well-meaning teacher, than to suffer severe injury through first-hand experience.²⁵

In November 1954, Columbia University conferred upon Field Marshall Viscount Montgomery an honorary degree of laws degree. In his remarks accepting the honor, he was

²⁴James Hymes, Behavior and Misbehavior -- A Teacher's Guide To Action (New York: Prentice Hall Inc., 1955), pp. 71-72.

²⁵Harlan K. Allen, "How Can The School Meet Increasing Disciplinary Problems?" (Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Southern California at Los Angeles, 1950), p. 201.

reported to have said, "A good beating with a cane can have a remarkable sense of awakening on the mind and conscience of a boy."²⁶ During that same month, the American Institute of Public Opinion took a poll of public opinion on corporal punishment. Their findings indicated that persons who had children of school age were more commonly in favor of corporal punishment than were persons who had no children. Seven out of ten adults favored it, according to Brickman.²⁷

In an article with an intriguing title "Klobber Method," Stylites stated that statistics on juvenile delinquency made some people feel that a few spankings might be in order.²⁸

According to Foymier, psychological force could be a far more destructive force than physical force to a child, for the physical force was something the child could understand. He wrote, "If we feel we have to mutilate them some way, better it should be their bodies than their minds. Minds can create but bodies can only produce."²⁹

²⁶Charles Simmons, "To Spank Or Not," New York Times Magazine, December 5, 1954, p. 22.

²⁷W. W. Brickman, "Leadership, The Rod and Education," School and Society, February 5, 1955, pp. 43-44.

²⁸Simeon Stylites, "Klobber Method," Christian Century, LXII (February 16, 1955), p. 201.

²⁹Jack R. Foymier, "I'm Not In Favor Of Spanking, But...", Understanding the Child, January, 1956, p. 28.

In late April, 1957, Eugene S. Lyall, age thirty-one, male, went on trial in Huntington Beach, California, charged with the violation of Section 273a, Penal Code of the State of California. It was charged that he had caused unjustifiable physical pain and mental suffering to Floyd Garrett, a boy, age twelve, who attended a school where the defendant was the principal. The complainant charged that the defendant caused numerous bruises and contusions on the body of the child. Colored slides were introduced as evidence to support the claim. Defense admitted the charges but claimed the punishment had been inflicted in the hope of correcting the boy's conduct in the classroom. The jury brought in a verdict of not guilty as charged.³⁰

A witness who was present when the jury brought in the verdict reported the following incident. After reading their decision, the spokesman remained standing and asked permission to make additional remarks. The judge agreed reluctantly, but stipulated that no such statement would be permitted to appear in the record. The spokesman agreed to the conditions, then stated, "In our opinion Mr. Lyall is a competent administrator."³¹

³⁰"School Principal Freed In Spanking Case," Santa Anna, California Register, May 3, 1957, p. 2.

³¹"School Principal On Trial For Paddling Boy," Los Angeles Times, May 2, 1957, p. 8.

School Discipline: An Ongoing Problem

The problem of discipline is an incendiary issue in many American schools. For eight consecutive years, a public opinion poll found that discipline headed the list of concerns about United States education.³²

There are some proponents of strict discipline who want more stringent measures of control; on the other hand, there are some individuals and groups urging greater permissiveness and more self-regulation.³³

Corporal punishment is permitted in various shapes and forms in most English speaking countries.³⁴ Variouslly called caning, thrashing, flogging, or any other words to that effect, it is under scrutiny in several countries.³⁵ In the United States there are no federal laws that deal with corporal punishment; however, each individual state has the power to make such laws. Only three states have laws forbidding corporal punishment, although many school

³²George H. Gallup, "The Eleventh Annual Gallop Poll of the Publics Attitudes Toward The Public Schools," Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 62, 1979, pp. 33-45.

³³John B. Boyd and Rolland A. Bowers, "Behavioral Analysis: The Principal and Discipline," Clearing House Vol. 48, 1974, pp. 420-426.

³⁴Paul Nash, "Corporal Punishment In An Age Of Violence," Educational Theory, Vol. 13, October, 1963, p. 296.

³⁵Barry Hill, "Seventy-three Percent Want To Ban Cane," Times Educational Supplement, Vol. 2340, July 1971, p. 5.

districts have banned it.³⁶

Corporal punishment continues to be a controversial topic in education. Much of the debate, however, centers only the morality of its use rather than the effectiveness of its use.

The National Education Association established a Task Force at the beginning of the school year 1973-74, to conduct a survey concerning corporal punishment. That Task Force came up with seventeen reasons why corporal punishment should be abolished. Some of the reasons are as follows:

1. Physical punishment is an effective way to maintain order and usually has to be repeated over and over.
2. It increases disruptive behavior, hinders learning, and teaches that "might is right."
3. It does not strengthen self-discipline.
4. It develops aggressive hostility. It is most often used on students who are physically weaker and smaller than the teacher.
5. Its availability discourages teachers from seeking more effective means of discipline.
6. Its use inclines everyone in the school community to regard students as less than human and the school as dehumanizing.³⁷

Even though these apparent persuasive reasons were manifested for exclusion of corporal punishment, there was

³⁶James Hart and John Lordon, p. 70.

³⁷Ibid.

still a demand for its continued use from the public and from teachers. The same survey indicated that sixty-five percent (65%) of all elementary teachers and fifty-five percent (55%) of high school teachers favored corporal punishment. The Gallup Poll in 1978 also showed that sixty-two percent (62%) of the public favored corporal punishment.³⁸

Koslofsky stated that the use of corporal punishment is counter-productive. He recalled several cases of paddling where troubled children were turned into angry ones, and his description was "powder kegs were lit that continually blew up all over the school." Surely, he continued, these were not unique incidents; corporal punishment may result in a delayed reaction and hostility will in many cases erupt later. He believes that too many educators mistakenly think they have taught students a lesson by momentarily silencing them.³⁹

Corporal punishment makes some positive contributions, according to proponents of stricter classroom discipline. It immediately terminates undesirable behavior and may reduce the recurrence of that behavior for some time. More important, it provides a hiatus during which a

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Norman Koslofsky, "Paddling Doesn't Work," Clearing House, Vol. 52, January 1979, p. 233.

youngster may be taught more appropriate conduct.⁴⁰ Punishment is also instructive to other students, who are unlikely to model censured conduct.⁴¹

Classroom discipline is one of the most crucial issues in modern public school education; it is also one of the most complex. The word itself encompasses a broad spectrum of behaviors. A punishing teacher may be one who administers corporal punishment, or he/she may be one who raises an eyebrow slightly and corrects his/her pupil with a finely horned remark. The more compassionate a teacher is the more effective his punishment is likely to be.⁴² Students are prone to be sensitive to disapproval expressed by a teacher who has previously manifested a genuine concern about their well-being.

Punishment is also more likely to be effective if an alternative behavior is available to replace the censured activity and if the new behavior is positively reinforced.⁴³ A teacher may find it necessary to express displeasure over Rod's obstreperous efforts to gain attention; but if soon after the scolding, he asks Rod to perform in a class skit,

⁴⁰Donald MacMillan, Steven Forness, and Barbara Trumbull, "The Role of Punishment in the Classroom," Exceptional Children, Vol. 40, 1973, pp. 85-96.

⁴¹G. R. Mayer, B. Sulzer and J. Cody, "The Use of Punishment in Modifying Student Behavior," Journal of Special Education, Vol. 2, 1968, pp. 323-328.

⁴²MacMillan, Forness, and Trumbull, loc. cit.

⁴³Ibid.

this student may discover that he has found a new, more satisfying way of expressing his emotional needs.

Discipline problems sometimes exist more in the minds of teachers than in the realities of a situation. This is especially true of new and very anxious teachers. Administrators, to counteract this phenomenon, should require their faculty to be specific in reporting discipline problems and to avoid embellishments. Written reports should include the time, place, frequency of the misconduct, and teacher's attempts to help the disruptive student.⁴⁴

A provocative fact of life is that some teachers have very few disciplinary problems, and yet they do not use any real punishment. Researchers who have tried to ferret out the characteristics of these remarkable individuals have found that teachers with relaxed, problem-free classes, generally have the following qualities in common:

1. They are highly knowledgeable about their teaching field and are able to communicate this knowledge to their students.

2. They understand the physical, emotional, and sociological traits of the age group they are teaching.

3. They feel secure in their work and in their relationship with the school administration.

4. Their conduct and appearance are professional. They have mastered the subtle art of

⁴⁴Boyd and Bowers, loc. cit.

detached attachment.

5. They are genuinely interested in both their students and their subject matter.⁴⁵

In a serious effort to improve pupil's attitudes, the administrators at W. F. West High School in Chehalis, Washington, decided to spend more time at school activities, in the halls, the lunchroom, and in classes. Their initial goal was to learn as many names as possible and something about that person. After announcements of this effort, responses were so enthusiastic that counselors, teachers, and students soon became involved.⁴⁶

The project was known as the "Kid-A-Day," and participants made an effort to talk daily with one person whom they had not known previously. Results at the Chehalis experiment have included better communications among administrators, teachers, and students than could have ever been imagined. Discipline problems have truly declined.⁴⁷

Points of View Concerning Discipline In The Public School

Teachers' Points of View: According to a Teacher-

⁴⁵George Sheviakov and Fritz Redl, "Discipline For Today's Children and Youth." Washington, D.C. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, HEW, 1956, p. 54.

⁴⁶George E. Parsons, "Devaluating Characteristics of the Disciplinary Problem Pupil In Two Selected Junior High Schools" (Unpublished Doctor's Dissertation, University of Northern Colorado, 1972), p. 32.

⁴⁷Ibid.

Opinion Poll conducted by the National Education Association Research Division in 1964, maintaining school discipline was one of the most important problems facing teachers in the process of carrying out their professional responsibilities. There was evidence that maintaining order in the classroom had become a greater problem than in previous years.⁴⁸

The Teacher-Opinion Poll previously mentioned asked a national sample of teachers in public schools with five or more years of teaching experience the following questions and received the answers that follow:

Basing your answers on your personal experience, do you believe that maintaining pupil discipline has become more difficult than when you first started teaching? A breakdown of the respondents showed that 45 percent indicated "More Difficulty," 20 percent "Less Difficulty," 34 percent "About The Same," and one percent "Undecided."⁴⁹

The opinions were analyzed by the number of years of teaching experience, and the results were as follows:

Those teachers who had taught 5 to 9 years resulted in a breakdown of 25 percent choosing "More Difficulty," 31 percent "Less Difficult," 43 percent "About The Same," and one percent "Undecided." For respondents with 10 to 19 years of experience the breakdown was 44 percent "More Difficult," 21 percent "Less Difficult," and 35 percent "About The Same." The final breakdown was for teachers with more than 20 years of experience. The results showed 62

⁴⁸ National Education Association Research Division Survey, N.E.A. Journal, September 1964, p. 25.

⁴⁹ National Education Association Research Division Survey, 1964.

percent choosing "more difficult," 12 percent "Less Difficult," 25 percent "About The Same," and one percent "Undecided."⁵⁰

Under the category of "More Difficult," the percentage of teachers with twenty years or more experience was more than double the percentage of teachers with five to nine years of experience.

It can be clearly seen that a substantial proportion of experienced teachers felt in 1964 that their problems in maintaining discipline had increased since they entered the profession.⁵¹

Again in 1976 the National Education Association Research Bureau collected data from a random sample of public school teachers. It was again established that discipline was the number one problem in our nation's schools.

Two specific questions asked and the results of the polling are as follows:

1. Is student violence a problem in your school? Only 4.3 percent of the teachers said it was a major problem. Twenty-eight percent said that it was a minor one, and 67.7 percent reported that it was not a problem. As might be expected, proportionately more urban teachers said violence was a major or a minor problem (47.3 percent) than did suburban (29.5 percent) or rural teachers (22.8 percent).

2. Have you been physically attacked or has your personal property been maliciously damaged by a student this school year? Only 2.9 percent said they had been physically

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹National Education Association Research Division Survey, N.E.A. Journal, September 1964, p. 25.

attacked, and 8.9 percent said their property had been damaged. Differences between urban, suburban and rural teachers were not so marked on this question as on the previous one.⁵²

Teachers overwhelmingly agreed that irresponsible parents and unsatisfactory home conditions were responsible to a great extent for misbehavior in school. The response was 85.8 and 80.0 percent respectively for each factor. Following these two factors were overcrowded classes, 55.9 percent; need for school curriculum improvement, 45.7 percent; lack of attention on part of student, 45.5 percent; and the lack of authority by teachers to determine and mete out punishment, 45.5 percent.⁵³

Teachers indicated strongly (67.6 percent) that "they should have the authority to suspend unruly students from their classes (not from school) without the approval of the principal."⁵⁴ Secondary teachers expressed this more vehemently than elementary teachers.

Students' Points of View: In a study made in 1959, involving students in two Georgia high schools, Garrison found that consistency of discipline enforcement is more important than the intensity of the disciplinary action

⁵²Division Survey, Today's Education, September-October 1976, pp. 20-24.

⁵³Division Survey, loc. cit., pp. 20-24.

⁵⁴Ibid.

taken to correct the problem.⁵⁵ In another study conducted in 1973, Goldstein concurred with Garrison; he confirmed the importance of fairness and consistency when dealing with junior high school youngsters.⁵⁶

Children in general will accept disciplinary practices as established by school personnel, according to Sylvester. He also encouraged teachers to use pupils' points of view to gain better insight into the effectiveness of their procedure in dealing with misconduct.⁵⁷

In Henson's study on students' points of view, he cited that today's students are more outspoken. With the increase of adolescent responsibilities, students have insisted on making suggestions and being involved in decision making. It is not surprising that the contemporary students want their points of view to be known. They not only wish to share them, but they feel obligated to share them. Henson went on to say that teachers must adjust to the new style and begin to seriously listen to students

⁵⁵Karl C. Garrison, p. 40.

⁵⁶William Goldstein, "Discipline Is For Someone Else," Clearing House, 47:457-458, April 1973.

⁵⁷Robert A. Sylvester, "Intermediate Grade Pupils' Opinion About Disciplinary Practices Teachers Commonly Employ In Meeting Classroom Behavior Annoyances" (Unpublished Doctor's Dissertation, University of Oregon, 1961), p. 29.

and consider their points of view.⁵⁸

In his publication, Drayer stated that whenever a rule is broken, we should want to know why the students chose to violate it. Only then can we hope to find a real solution to the problem. When a person misbehaves, he probably chooses the type of behavior that seems best to him in that situation. There is some reason(s) why the student didn't follow the rule(s). One of the better approaches to finding this reason is through a private discussion between the teacher and the student. According to Drayer, the private conference is by far the most effective way of dealing with disciplinary problems.⁵⁹ He goes on to say that in a private conference the teacher should never take an opposing (you-against-me) stand. Rather, the teacher should state that both parties concerned are in conflict which needs to be resolved. The teacher should always be willing to listen to the student's point of view and remain open for suggestions.⁶⁰

In Burton and Pruchard study involving 815 high school students in rural, urban, and suburban areas in three

⁵⁸Kenneth T. Henson, Secondary Teaching: A Personal Approach (Itasca, Ill.: F. E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., 1974), p. 22.

⁵⁹Thomas H. Burton and Keith W. Pruchard, "Violations of Human Rights By Teachers," Phi Delta Kappan, LV (September 1973), pp. 66-69.

⁶⁰Adam Drayer, Problems and Methods In High School Teaching (Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1963), p. 8.

states, they found out that eighty-one percent (81%) of those questioned felt that their most violated right was their "teachers' lack of respect for student opinions."⁶¹

Classroom Discipline: Discipline in the classroom is fundamental to learning, but coercion is undesirable and rarely works. It is the responsibility of the teacher to assist students in achieving self-discipline, writes Abrell.⁶²

Abrell included in his article a list of personal and environmental factors that should be cultivated in order to minimize disciplinary problems. The method of correction he proposed places ultimate responsibility for behavior on the student: no detentions, no isolation, no suspensions, or any other types of negative disciplinary measures are to be used. The first time a student misbehaves, the teacher corrects him/her in an unobtrusive way. If another incident occurs, the teacher reminds the student that his behavior is unacceptable and that the rules must be obeyed. Following subsequent acts of misconduct, the teacher and the student meet with an administrator.⁶³

Abrell suggested that if the student believes he/she cannot function productively under existing conditions, a

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ronald Abrell, "Classroom Discipline Without Punishment," Clearing House, Vol. 50, December 1976, pp. 171-173.

⁶³Ibid.

change of teachers or school may be in order. If this change fails to work, the student is directed to leave school and to seek another institution that will meet his/her needs more satisfactorily.⁶⁴

Unlike many prevailing plans for dealing with discordant behavior, this system is future oriented, said Abrell. Before attempting to implement this plan, school personnel should carefully examine the legal ramifications.⁶⁵

Many beginning teachers encounter difficulty managing their classes. To some extent there are some problems that were not rectified during student teaching, so supervisory personnel in the schools should offer first-year teachers the needed training, Doyle contends.⁶⁶

Doyle explains the work of Jacob S. Kounin, whose research has substantiated the connection between discipline and general classroom management skills. Kounin's findings indicated that what a teacher does before misbehavior takes place is crucial in determining overall disciplinary success. In refining his concepts Kounin was able to identify four dimensions of managerial skill: "withitness," which refers to the teacher's ability to communicate to students his/her awareness of what is happening in the classroom; "overlap," the ability of the teacher to perform two or more activities

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Walter Doyle, "Helping Beginning Teachers Manage Classrooms," NASSP Bulletin, December 1975, pp. 38-41.

at one time; "movement management," the teacher's skill in maintaining momentum; and "group focus," the teacher's competence in involving all class members in each classroom event.⁶⁷

Doyle believes that Kounin's framework can be helpful in identifying the source of classroom management problems and provides a practical illustration dealing with the concept of group focus.⁶⁸

In their efforts to improve both discipline and the quality of education, behavioral scientists have suggested a variety of procedures designed to reduce unwanted behaviors. Contingency management involves rewarding good behavior and ignoring inappropriate behavior, according to George.⁶⁹ He outlined how this technique works and how it can be used by the school principal.

When educational researchers study the task performed by school administrators, they find that administrators spend a disproportionate amount of their time trying to change the behavior of teachers and students. George believes contingency management provides a positive approach to the problem. He continued by saying that based on the law of association

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Paul George, "Changing Classroom Behavior: The School Principal and Contingency Management," NASSP Bulletin, December 1972, pp. 31-36.

and the fact that behavior seems to be more affected by what follows it than by what precedes it, the technique requires three essential steps.⁷⁰ First, select the behavior to be changed. For a student, the target behavior might be the extinction of fighting with other pupils. Second, study the behavior and record the number of times it occurs. Third, choose an appropriate reward and use it immediately following the presents of the desired behavior or the absence of behavior that now occurs to see if the strategy is working.

The article by Drabman and his associates focused on one aspect of contingency management, the use of extinction, or contingent ignoring, in the classroom. They believe the technique can be effective if properly implemented, but cautioned that it must be taken step by step.⁷¹

"Because of the ease of initiating the extinction procedure, it is tempting to skip the baseline phase," but it is essential that the teacher first determine who presently is reinforcing the negative behavior, wrote the authors.⁷² If the other students are the sources of reinforcement, the teacher might choose instead to reward them for ignoring it. Once the process has begun, the teacher must be committed to

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ronald Drabman, Gregory Jarvie, and James Archbold, "The Use and Misuse of Extinction in Classroom Behavioral Programs," Psychology in the Schools, October 1976, pp. 470-475.

⁷²Ibid.

ignoring the behavior each time it occurs and must be prepared to see a temporary increase or possibly the substitution of another inappropriate form of behavior.⁷³ For this reason, it is critical that the teacher make acceptable alternatives available to the student. For example, if the target behavior involves talking in class without permission, the teacher should instruct the child that the correct way to communicate is by raising one's hand, and then reinforce the child with immediate attention when he/she remembers to do this.⁷⁴

In contemporary educational circles in the early seventies, there was much discussion about "the open classroom." Harris pointed out that no classrooms are open in the sense that they have no restrictions. As he continued, he stated that every aggregation of people will have some structure, even if it consisted only of the individual likes and dislikes.⁷⁵ The important thing is that these behaviors be made explicit from the beginning, so that individuals within the group may know what is expected of them.

Harris advocated a system in which students participate in the formation of rules: In this article he outlines

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ian Harris, "Boundaries, Set Theory, and Structure in the Classroom," Education, February-March 1973, pp. 285-291.

a three-step process: 1) identifying areas of concern, 2) establishing limits, and 3) negotiating the actual rules. Once the rules have been set, they should be posted in some prominent place for all to see. With such a reminder, disciplinary problems should be negligible, he said. "If they should occur, the rules are clearly out in the open, and the students prove that they are excellent enforcers of rules they accept and understand."⁷⁶

Harris' article focused on the setting of boundaries within the classroom, but he believes the same approach may be used in any reasonably small educational setting. The school where he teaches used the process to structure behavior for the entire school. Even in large schools, he concluded, codes of conduct containing rules and regulations can be issued to students so that all students will know what is expected of them.⁷⁷

Concerned about the growing problem of school discipline, the National School Boards Associations' Council of Big City Boards of Education appointed an Ad Hoc Committee to take a look at some of the nation's largest school districts. The committee contacted more than 100 districts and in a report outlined its findings and recommendations.

The committee had anticipated the large majority of schools contacted would report that incidents of disruptive

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

behavior were increasing in frequency. Disruptive behavior seemed most prevalent among students in junior high or in their early high school years. Approximately 75 percent of the districts surveyed reported non-attendance (tardiness, truancy, and class cutting) as the most frequent causes for disciplinary action. Other often cited problems were violations of school regulations such as: assaults, verbal abuse of teachers, theft, and vandalism.⁷⁸

Data submitted to the committee did not indicate whether disruptive classroom behavior occurred more frequently among minority students. It is apparently true that many disciplinary problems are acute in large urban areas, concluded the committee.⁷⁹

One of a series of publications put out by the Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation presents a clear and concise introduction to the subject of school discipline. The authors began with a general discussion of the concept of discipline and followed it with a section on discipline policies, "To avoid anarchy and disaster in a school situation, there must be positive regulations and standards for student behavior," wrote the authors. "These policies should be

⁷⁸ National School Boards Association. Report: "Discipline In Our Big City Schools," Ad Hoc Committee On Discipline, Council of Big City Boards of Education, Washington, D.C., 1977, pp. 40-45.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

expressed in writing for the district, the building, and the classroom."⁸⁰

The last two sections of this booklet dealt with classroom discipline and how to set classroom standards. The authors described how to handle specific types of behavior problems and listed tips on classroom control. For example, a teacher should be in the classroom ahead of the students and start class promptly; learn and use students' names as soon as possible. Be prepared; be consistent; when challenged by a student, do not take it personally; confer often with parents. Employ the three F's: be friendly, fair, and firm.⁸¹

Olivero began his report by citing some pretty grim statistics about the increasing incidences of violence and other serious disciplinary problems in schools. However, his central premise was a positive one. He firmly believed these problems can be overcome if teachers, students, and parents work together, and he included numerous examples of how this can be done.⁸²

⁸⁰Emery Stoops and Joyce King-Stoops, "Discipline or Disaster?" Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1975, pp. 30-38.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²James Olivero, "Discipline... Number One Problem in the Schools." Positive Preventative Prescription for Those Who Care. Operations Notebook 17. ACSA, 1977, pp. 50-61.

The first part of the report is devoted to a discussion of causes at school and at home. "Having been in numerous schools the past decade," he stated, "I've been amazed at the number of parents who have indicated they teach their children to fight."⁸³

In the remainder of the report he outlined some forty innovative ideas that have been tried by various schools across the country. Involving students, faculty, and parents, these ideas include a rumor committee that was initiated by students at a Seattle junior high to avert misunderstandings between students. Personalized approaches to counselling, ways to alleviate stress among teachers, and the scheduling of field trips so parents could participate were also initiated.⁸⁴

"Neither parents nor staff can attack the problem of discipline independently and be effective," says Olivero. "Both parties must team with students to establish and maintain a positive learning climate."⁸⁵

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

Legality

Legislators, school boards, and school officials recognize the necessity for maintaining proper control of students in order to accomplish the goals of education.⁸⁶ The need for control is realized by the courts, as is evidenced by decisions favorably decided concerning litigated rules and regulations governing student control. Many court decisions serve as precedents for rulings on subsequent cases.⁸⁷ The judicial precedents constitute legal principles which should aid school officials in handling problems of student control.⁸⁸

Individual states derived their authority over education from the Tenth Amendment of the United States Constitution which states:

The power not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.⁸⁹

In the United States education operates within a well-defined legal structure, and each unit of government performs designated functions. Peterson, Rossmiller, and Volz drew certain conclusions from Cooper v. Aaron which are as follows:

⁸⁶ Anne Flowers and Edward Bolmeier, Law and Pupil Control (Cincinnati, Ohio: The W. H. Anderson Company, 1964), p. 1.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ M. Chester Nolte, Nolte's School Law Desk Book (West Nyack, NY: Parker Publishing Company, 1980), p. 257.

In overall authority and direction the United States Constitution is the supreme law of the land. It is superior to the states and superior to federal and/or state legislative enactments. Although legally education is the responsibility and primary concern of the individual states, such responsibility must be exercised in a manner consistent with the federal constitutional requirements.⁹⁰

Peterson, Rossmiller, and Volz made an additional comment:

In the interpretation of the United States Constitution and the guarantees contained therein and in the interpretation of legislation enacted by the Congress, the United States Supreme Court is the highest authority. Decisions of the United States Supreme Court concerning the provisions of the Constitution must be followed by federal and state courts regardless of whether they concur in the correctness of the decision.⁹¹

The State of Virginia derived its authority in education from Article VIII, Section I, of the Constitution of Virginia. Section I states:

The General Assembly shall provide for a system of free public elementary and secondary schools for all children of school age throughout the Commonwealth and shall seek to ensure that an educational program of high quality is established and continually maintained.⁹²

Portsmouth Public School Board obtained its authority from Article VIII, Section 7 of the Constitution of Virginia, which states:

⁹⁰ Leroy Peterson, Richard Rossmiller, and Marlin Volz, The Law and Public School Operation (New York, Hagerstown, San Francisco, London: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1978), p. 2.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Constitution of Virginia, Article VIII, Section 1.

The supervision of schools in each school division shall be vested in a school board, to be composed of members selected in the manner, for the term, possessing the qualifications, and to the number provided by law.⁹³

According to Newell, school board policy has the status of law and statute.⁹⁴

Excerpts from the Portsmouth School Board Policy Handbook concerning discipline of students are in Appendix C.

Bolmeier drew certain conclusions concerning the judiciary.

In recent years the courts have been the main target of blame for the laxity of student discipline, by restricting school officials in the enforcement of their rules and regulations concerning conduct. Judges have occasionally been described as being 'soft hearted and soft headed' in their obligatory judicial acts of upholding students' rights. Even though it would be administratively expedient to permit school authorities to impulsive punitive action for violation of school board rules and regulations, the constitutional rights of all individuals -- including students must be protected.⁹⁵

A number of writers look at the Gault decision in 1967 as the turning point of judicial concern and attitude toward the constitutional rights of students.

⁹³Constitution of Virginia, Article VIII, Section 7.

⁹⁴Dwight H. Newell, An Individual Conference With the Researcher. Constance and Colgate Darden, Professor of Education at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, December, 1981.

⁹⁵Edward C. Bolmeier, Legality of Student Disciplinary Practices (Charlottesville, Virginia: The Michie Co., 1976), p. 2.

The basic right of the juvenile is not to liberty but to custody. He has the right to have someone take care of him... in doing so it (the State) does not deprive the child of any rights, because he has none... The constitutional and theoretical basis for this peculiar system (Juvenile is to say the least -- debatable) The absence of procedural rules based on constitutional principles has not always produced fair efficient and effective procedures. There is evidence... that there may be grounds for concern that the child receives the worst of both worlds. That he gets neither the protections accorded adults nor the solicitous care and regenerative treatment for children.⁹⁶

In 1969 the United States Supreme Court issued an opinion involving student discipline in the Tinker case.⁹⁷ The case concerned the prohibition by the school board of wearing the black armbands by students desiring to protest hostilities in Vietnam and to support a truce. Being aware that certain students were planning to wear armbands, the principals of the Des Moines, Iowa, Public Schools adopted policies declaring that any student wearing an armband would be asked to remove it, and if he refused, he would be suspended until he agreed to remove the armband. The Supreme Court stated:

The wearing of armbands in the circumstances of this case was entirely divorced from actually or potentially disruptive conduct by those participating in it. It was closely akin to "pure speech" which we have repeatedly held is entitled to comprehensive protection under the First Amendment...

⁹⁶In re Gault, 387 US, 875 Ct. 1428 (1967).

⁹⁷Tinker v. Des Moines Indep. Comm. Sch. Dist., 896, Ct. 733 (1969).

First Amendment rights, applied in light of the special characteristics of the school environment, are available to teachers and students. It can hardly be argued that either student or teacher shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the school house gate.⁹⁸

A landmark decision was made by the United States Supreme Court in Goss v. Lopez, 95 S. Ct. 729 (Ohio 1975), holding that students suspended for short periods of time were entitled to minimal due process under the Fourteenth Amendment.⁹⁹ This ruling struck down a law in Ohio that authorized school administrators to suspend a student fourteen days or less without presenting a child with an advanced notice of charges against him without giving him a chance to defend himself.

Dwight Lopez was suspended for being accused of causing a disruption in the cafeteria, involving some damage to school property. Lopez, however, stated that he was not involved in the disruptive conduct, but was, instead, an innocent bystander. There was no conclusive evidence in the record indicating otherwise. Lopez was never given a hearing.

Justice White, the writer of the majority opinion, described a proper hearing in a suspension case which is as follows:

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Goss v. Lopez, 95 S. Ct. 729 (Ohio 1975).

The difficulty is that our schools are vast and complex. Some modicum of discipline and order is essential if the educational function is to be performed. Events calling for discipline are frequent occurrences and sometimes require immediate, and effective action. Suspension is considered not only to be a necessary tool to maintain order but a valuable educational device. The prospect of imposing elaborate hearing requirements in every suspension case is viewed with great concern, and many school authorities may well prefer the untrammelled power to act unilaterally, unhampered by rules about notice and hearings. But it would be a strange disciplinary system in an educational institution if no communication was sought by the disciplinarian with the student in an effort to inform him of his defalcation and to let him tell his side of the story in order to make sure than an injustice is not done.¹⁰⁰

In summary, the court made it clear that the decision rendered in this case would not apply to long term suspensions only to those 10 days or less. The court continued by saying:

We should also make it clear that we have addressed ourselves solely to the short suspension, not exceeding 10 days. Longer suspension or expulsions for the remainder of the school term or permanently may require more formal procedures. Nor do we put aside the possibility that in unusual situations, although involving only a short suspension, something more than the rudimentary procedure will be required.¹⁰¹

The discordant behavior of some students is so intolerant and dangerous that school boards are justified by expulsion. However, the student is entitled to some appropriate educational alternatives, proposed Bolmeier.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 732.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Bolmeier, p. 136.

In upholding expulsions, some courts have recommended that effort be made to find suitable alternatives for regular school attendance. In the case of Lee v. Mason County Board 490 F. 2d 458 (5th Cir. 1974) the federal court stated:

We do not minimize the children's misbehavior. They are undisciplined, defiant, and abusive, and their mother was uncooperative with school officials in attempting to deal with them. Nor are we insensitive to the difficulties faced by school officials in attempting to curb disorderly interference with the primary task of the school, which is education. But a sentence of banishment from the educational system is insofar as the institution has power to act, the extreme penalty, the ultimate punishment. In our increasingly technological society, getting at least a high school education is almost necessary for survival. Stripping a child of access to educational opportunity is a life sentence to second-rate citizenship, unless the child has the financial ability to migrate to another school system or enter private school.¹⁰³

Several important cases concerning corporal punishment in the 1970's were summarized by Nolte, three of which are as follows:¹⁰⁴

So long as the child knows beforehand what misconduct will result in physical punishment, and is told why he or she is being punished, school officials may corporally punish pupils in the absence of state law to the contrary. In addition, corporal punishment should never be employed as the first line of punishment for misbehavior. There must be an adult witness present, and if the parents request it, a written explanation of the reasons for the punishment and the name of the second official present. The parent may not veto corporal punishment of his own child. Baker v. Owen, 395 F. Supp. 294,

¹⁰³Lee v. Mason County Board of Education, 490 F. 2d 458, 5th Cir. 1974.

¹⁰⁴Nolte, p. 184.

U. S. Supreme Court affirmed, 44 L.W. 3235 (N.C. 1975).

The Eighth Amendment's prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment applies to criminals only and does not apply to children in school. Even though there may be a charge that the corporal punishment administered to a child in school is excessive, the proper relief is to be found in a state court for assault and battery. The rights of the individual against invasion of privacy are to be balanced against the state's interest in a peaceful, ongoing school system. So long as the rules are not arbitrary or capricious, and are aimed at attaining a valid state purpose, corporal punishment is not illegal. Ingraham v. Wright, 97 S. Ct. 1401, (Fla. 1977).

The Court suggests that individual teachers and/or administrators may be held personally liable for negligence in the administration of corporal punishment, but a child may be awarded nominal damages for violation of his due process rights in cases where a student is illegally suspended without a full hearing on the merits. Carey v. Piphus, 95 S. Ct. 1042, 1978.

One of the most recent cases on search and seizure was reported in the School Law Reporter of the National Organization of Legal Problems of Education which is as follows:¹⁰⁵

Junior high school students filed a civil rights action against school officials and others as a result of being sniffed by police dogs during school hours and having their pockets searched if a dog alerted them in order to determine whether they possessed controlled substances or contraband. As a part of the drug investigation the plaintiff alleged that she and three other students were compelled to remove their clothing and submit to visual inspection by school officials. The trial court granted school officials summary judgment on the issue of monetary damages for the body search

¹⁰⁵School Law Reporter of the National Organization On Legal Problems In Education, February 1981.

on Diane Doe. The Court of Appeals affirmed the trial court's judgment except with respect to the portion of the decision that school officials are immune from liability arising out of the nude search because they had a good faith defense. "It does not require a constitutional scholar to conclude that a nude search of a thirteen year-old child is an invasion of constitutional rights of some magnitude. More than that: it is a violation of any known principle of human decency... We suggest as strongly as possible that the conduct herein described exceeded the bounds of reason by two and one-half country miles... We return the matter to the trial court of determination of damages stemming from body search." Doe v. Renfrow, 631 F. 2d 91 (7th Cir. 1980).

Many questions have been raised concerning the expulsion of students who are included under P. L. 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. The Supreme Court of the United States has refused to review many of these cases, included is the case of S-1 v. Turlington. An account of this case is given by the National Association of Secondary School Principals in the News Leader of December 1981, which is as follows:¹⁰⁶

The case involved the expulsion of seven handicapped students by the Hendry County School Board for a variety of serious acts of misconduct, including sexual abuse of other students, defiance of authority, and vandalism. Because the students enjoined the original action of the board, the Supreme Court refusal to review the case at this stage of the litigation may be only temporary, but the school board expressed concern that in interim the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals that will require the school system to maintain a dual disciplinary system for handicapped students.

The appellate decision virtually prohibits expulsion, because it requires the maintenance of

¹⁰⁶ National Association of Secondary School Principals, News Leader, December 1981, Vol. 29, No. 4, p. 5.

educational services to the handicapped during any period that they are removed from regular instruction.

Counsel for the school board predicts that parents of a non-handicapped student are now likely to sue if their child is expelled under the school's usual procedure, alleging violation of their constitutional right to equal protection of the law.

Certain conclusions have been drawn concerning student discipline and legality.

The ultimate solution to the problem of whether students are "persons" in school is to conclude that they are, and take them in as junior partners. In this way, they learn not only how the system works, but also how they can live harmoniously on a day-to-day basis with it.¹⁰⁷

Students may exceed their constitutional limitations when they do one or more of the following:

- * They substantially disrupt the on-going problem of the schools for any length of time;
- * They become a clear and present danger to the peace and good order of the community, such as during a riot when they may destroy property or harm others bodily;
- * They invade the rights of others;
- * They pose a real threat to the governance of the schools when they exhibit take-over tendencies.¹⁰⁸

It is the duty of every principal or teacher to maintain discipline, good order, and to require of all pupils faithful performance of their duties. When there is an infraction of a rule, appropriate action should be taken within the limits of the law.

¹⁰⁷Nolte, p. 206.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

Summary of the Literature

In this chapter of the study a historical overview of discipline in public schools in the United States was reviewed. Second, a case for corporal punishment was reviewed. Third, school discipline as an ongoing problem was reviewed. Fourth, points of view concerning discipline in school as viewed by teachers and students were reviewed. Fifth, classroom discipline was reviewed, and sixth, legality of discipline was reviewed.

Review of the literature disclosed the following:

1. Public schools were started by the Puritans in the New England States with boys in attendance. Corporal punishment was the dominant form of discipline in schools. It was noted that even the Bible condones this form of punishment in the Book of Proverbs. This form of discipline was questioned as early as the middle of the 19th century by the Boston School Board. This form of discipline prevailed throughout the first half of the 19th century and was strongly prevalent the first half of the 20th century. At the present time there is no federal law against it, but three states by law, and many school districts prohibit its use. Surveys within the last ten years revealed that there was still a demand for its continued use from the public and from teachers.
2. The problem of discipline is still an incendiary issue in many American schools. There are some proponents of

strict discipline who want more stringent measures of control; on the other hand, there are some individuals and groups urging greater permissiveness and more self-regulation.

3. According to a Teacher-Opinion Poll conducted by the NEA Research Division, maintaining school discipline was one of the most important problems facing teachers in the process of carrying out their professional responsibilities. Teachers indicated strongly that they should have the authority to suspend unruly students from their classes without the approval of the principal.

4. A recent study showed that students felt that consistency of discipline enforcement is more important than the intensity of the disciplinary action taken to correct the problem. Students have insisted on making suggestions and being involved in decision making. Students have stated that their most violated right was their teachers' lack of respect for students' points of view. Above all, students expect teachers and administrators to be firm, fair, and consistent.

5. Discipline in the classroom is fundamental to learning, but coercion is undesirable and rarely works. Disruptive classroom behavior seemed to be the most prevalent among students in the junior high school. Many school districts reported that tardiness, truancy, and class cutting were most frequently causes for disciplinary action. Teachers should: be on time, start class promptly, be

prepared, be consistent, be friendly, be fair, and be firm.

6. The need for proper legal control is realized by the court, as is evidenced by many decisions favorably decided concerning litigated rules and regulations governing student control. The judicial precedents constitute legal principles which should aid school officials in handling problems of student control. In maintaining discipline, there is the presumption of reasonableness of punishment. This presumption applies to both the rules and their enforcement. The school official usually gets the benefit of the doubt. The authority of school personnel to maintain order and control in schools has been clearly affirmed by the courts. Students have the obligation of obedience to lawful commands, subordinate and civil deportment, and respect for the rights of others in the school and in the community.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study involved three junior high schools in Portsmouth, Virginia. In the summer of 1979, the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction of Portsmouth's Public School System was contacted, and he granted the writer permission to conduct research in three junior high schools in that school division. A letter of permission was sent by him to each of the junior high school principals involved. Two of these principals and the designee of the third, who was on vacation, were contacted and they pledged their cooperation. There was a total of five assistant principals, all of whom were involved in disciplinary procedures at those schools during the 1978-79 school year.

Sample

There were three samples used in this study, a teacher sample, a student sample, and a referral sample. Due to the relatively small enrollment in each school, all teachers employed at the three schools during the 1979-80 school year were asked to participate in the study. A random sample of students was chosen by utilizing a formula

for sample size and a table of random digits by Jessen.¹⁰⁹ The names were obtained from the 1979-80 enrollment print-outs from the three schools. Only students who had been exposed to at least one full year of the junior high experience were used in this sample. A random sample of disciplinary referrals was drawn from the disciplinary files at each school, using the same method listed above. Only referrals from the school year 1978-79 were included in this sample.

Instruments and Collection of Data

Two instruments were developed by the researcher. The first, Student-Teacher Questionnaire (See Appendix 1), was designed to determine the views of students and teachers concerning the three most severe offenses and their preferred courses of action in dealing with the ten most common disciplinary offenses. The second instrument was the Survey for the Improvement of Discipline in the Junior High School (See Appendix 2).

Both instruments were field tested. A sample consisting of five junior high school administrators and five junior high school teachers was selected to review the instruments. They were requested to make comments concerning the content and the clarity of the statements. Ten junior high school

¹⁰⁹ Raymond Jessen, Statistical Survey Techniques (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1978), pp. 64, 65, and 511.

students were questioned about clarity and meaning of the statements. This tryout was followed by a readability test. The readability test was conducted by Dr. Carmelita Williams at Norfolk State University. Dr. Williams comments were: (1) "The Fry Method was employed to determine the readability of the instruments, which gave special attention to the length of sentences and the number of syllables in the words." (2) "The only change that might be considered would be in semantics, which would be a matter of choice of words."

The collection of data for this study was conducted in four phases. The phases and methods of implementation were as follows:

1. The assistant principals, who were involved with handling discipline at each school during the 1978-79 school year, after examining records mutually agreed on the ten most common disciplinary offenses committed at their schools during the 1978-79 school year. They also indicated the disciplinary practices that were used to deal with the mentioned offenses. They responded to the question "Were codes of conduct issued to the students at your school?" This information was gathered by personal interviews with the assistant principals. These administrators gave the writer full access to all recorded disciplinary referrals for the

school year 1978-79.

A data recording form was prepared for the administrators to facilitate the collection of data on students whose referrals had been randomly selected. This information was used to treat the fourth hypothesis. Specific attention was focused on sex, ethnic origin, economic status, and one-parent or guardian family.

2. The nature and frequency of disciplinary referrals were identified at each school. This information was collected by direct examination of the 1978-79 school year referral files at each school.

3. Faculty and student views relative to the severity of offenses and preferred courses of disciplinary action were requested. These data were collected by means of a questionnaire distributed to faculty members and a randomly selected sample of students at each school. Faculty and student groups at each school were also asked to complete the Survey For The Improvement of Discipline in the Junior High School.

4. If a student chosen in the random sample refused to respond to the questionnaire or survey, the investigator attempted to discover the reason and encourage the person to respond. If the student still refused, another student who had a similar demographic background was selected as a

replacement. If a student who had been randomly selected from the school's printout of enrollment had been dropped from the roll or was absent, one with a similar demographic background was also chosen.

Treatment of Data

Hypothesis I involved the percentages of non-repeat referrals and repeat referrals after the students had been penalized according to their choice of extinguishing punishment. The offenses on the student-teacher questionnaires were used to compile these results. The percentages of those who were non-repeat referrals and repeat referrals were treated statistically by using the t-test for differences in percentages.

Hypothesis II involved the disparity between students' and teachers' views concerning the severity of offenses. The correlation of the disparity was determined by the use of Pearson r correlation coefficient, a measure that expresses the extent to which two variables are related. The t-test for correlation difference from zero was also used.

Hypothesis III dealt with the influence of issuing codes of conduct to the students on the percentage of non-repeat referrals, repeat referrals and habitual offender referrals. The t-test for differences in percentages was applied to test the significance of the findings.

Hypothesis IV dealt with the influence of sex, ethnic origin, economic status and one-parent or guardian family on the percentage of non-repeat referrals, repeat referrals and habitual offender referrals. Percentages were determined for the stated categories, and the t-test for differences in proportion was applied to test the significance of these findings.

Chapter 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

This study was designed to investigate the ten most common disciplinary offenses referred to the administrators and report the practices employed to correct them in three junior high schools in Portsmouth, Virginia.

The ten most common disciplinary problems referred during the school year 1978-79, as determined by assistant principals for discipline, were as follows:

1. Disruptive Classroom Behavior,
2. Disrespective Speech to Staff Members,
3. Persistent Disobedience,
4. Use of Indecent Language,
5. Habitual Tardiness,
6. Smoking on School Premises,
7. Fighting,
8. Threatening and Intimidating Others,
9. Truancy, and
10. Substance Abuse

The investigator endeavored to determine the students' and teachers' points of view concerning the severity of these offenses and also their choices of disciplinary measures to correct the offenses.

The writer also investigated the influence of certain variables on disciplinary referrals such as: 1) a written code of conduct issued to the students, 2) sex, 3) ethnic origin, 4) economic status, and 5) one-parent or guardian family.

Students and teachers responded to a Survey for the Improvement of Discipline in the Junior High School.

In this chapter the findings of this study are reported. The responses of the assistant principals who handled discipline are reported with respect to the ten most frequent offenses occurring in their schools. Responses from the students are reported relative to the severity of offenses, most effective courses of action, and possible disciplinary measures that could improve discipline in the junior high school. Responses from teachers are reported concerning the severity of offenses, most effective course of action, and possible measures that could be used to improve discipline.

The percentages of student non-repeat referrals and all repeat referrals (including habitual offender referrals) are reported relative to the choices of extinguishing punishment selected by the students. The disparity between teachers' and students' view concerning the severity of offenses is reported. The percentages of student non-repeat referrals, repeat referrals and habitual offender referrals are analyzed and reported in terms of whether or not a code

of conduct was issued to students. A random sample of referrals is analyzed considering sex, non-minority and minority group membership, economic advantage and economic disadvantage, and one or two-parent or guardian families.

Report of Interview With Assistant Principals

The writer conducted personal interviews with all assistant principals who were involved with discipline at their schools the 1978-79 school year. Prior to this time, they had been contacted by telephone and they had already determined the ten most common offenses that occurred in their schools during the 1978-79 school year by direct inspection of their referral files. All of these administrators had determined the same ten offenses which were:

- 1) Disruptive Classroom Behavior, 2) Disrespectful Speech to Staff Members, 3) Persistent Disobedience, 4) Use of Indecent Language, 5) Habitual Tardiness, 6) Smoking On School Premises, 7) Fighting, 8) Threatening or Intimidating Others, 9) Truancy, and 10) Substance Abuse. These assistant principals also indicated the disciplinary measures that were employed to correct those offenses, and they are: 1) Conferences involving the student, teacher, and an administrator, 2) Detentions given by an administrator, 3) Home contacts by phone or letter executed by an administrator, 4) Conferences involving the student, a parent or guardian, the teacher, and an administrator, 5) In-school suspension from regular classes,

6) External suspension from school, 7) Recommend for enrollment in the Alternative School, and 8) Recommend expulsion from the school system for the remainder of the school year.

The assistant principals expressed a willingness to supply the information requested on a data collection form concerning sex, race, economic status, and one or two-parent family. This information was collected on a random sample of students from the referral files. The administrators responded to the question "Was a code of conduct issued to the students in your school?" The researcher was given unprohibited access to their referral files.

Students' Points Of View - Severity Of Offenses

Students' views regarding the severity of offenses were compiled from the Student-Teacher Questionnaire. A list of the ten most common offenses committed by students during the school year 1978-79 was presented to a random sample of students. The sample consisted of 171 students; however, four of the questionnaires had to be discarded due to multiple responses to the same question, leaving a response of 167. Students were requested to rank from one to three the offenses they considered as being most severe. The first represented the severest offense.

The top three choices under Rank One were: 1) Substance Abuse - 103 or 61.7 percent, 2) Fighting - 16 or 9.6 percent, and 3) Disruptive Classroom Behavior - 12 or 7.2

percent. The top three choices under Rank Two were: 1) Smoking on School Premises - 45 or 26.9 percent; 2) Fighting - 25 or 14.9 percent; and 3) Truancy - 23 or 13.8 percent. The top three choices under Rank Three were: 1) Fighting - 33 or 19.8 percent; 2) Smoking On School Premises - 26 or 15.6 percent; and 3) Truancy - 23 or 13.8 percent). (See Table 1)

According to the students' responses, substance abuse is viewed as being the most severe offense by a wide margin. Fighting was number two in two rankings and number one in the third ranking. Smoking on school premises was first and second respectively in the last two rankings. Truancy did not show in Rank One; however, it was number three in the other two rankings. Disruptive classroom behavior was number three under Rank One with the smallest number of students choosing it.

Most Effective Disciplinary Measures

Students' choices of the most effective disciplinary measure for each of the ten offenses are reported in Table 2. The ten offenses along with the students' first preference of extinguishing punishment for each are presented in this section. For the student respondents, response rate was 167.

For the offense of (1) Disruptive Classroom Behavior, 52 or 31.1 percent selected conferences involving the student, a parent or guardian, the teacher, and an administrator as

Table 1

TOP THREE STUDENT CHOICES UNDER EACH RANK FOR THE SEVERITY OF AN OFFENSE

N = 167*

RANK ONE			RANK TWO			RANK THREE		
	Number of Students	Percent Students		Number of Students	Percent Students		Number of Students	Percent Students
Substance Abuse	103	61.7	Smoking On School Premises	45	26.9	Fighting	33	19.8
Fighting	16	9.6	Fighting	25	14.9	Smoking On School Premises	26	15.6
Disruptive Classroom Behavior	12	7.2	Truancy	23	13.8	Truancy	23	13.8

*The original sample N = 171, but four questionnaires were discarded due to multiple responses to the same question.

being most effective. For the offense of (2) Disrespectful Speech to a Staff Member of an Administrator, 53 or 31.7 percent selected in-school suspension from regular classes as the most effective disciplinary measure. For the offense of (3) Persistent Disobedience, 46 or 27.5 percent selected in-school suspension from regular classes as most effective disciplinary measure. For the offense (4) Using Indecent Language, 44 or 26.3 percent selected conference involving the student, a parent or guardian, the teacher, and an administrator as the most effective disciplinary measure. For the offense of (5) Habitual Tardiness, 42 or 25.1 percent selected detention to be given by an administrator as the most effective disciplinary measure. For the offense of (6) Smoking on School Premises, 47 or 28.1 percent selected external suspension from school as the most effective disciplinary measure. For the offense of (7) Fighting, 50 or 29.9 percent selected external suspension from school as the most effective disciplinary measure. For the offense (8) Threatening or Intimidating Other Students, 46 or 27.5 percent selected external suspension from school as the most effective disciplinary measure. For the offense of (9) Truancy, 43 or 25.7 percent selected in-school suspension from regular classes as the most effective disciplinary measure. For the offense of (10) Substance Abuse, 56 or 33.5 percent selected exclusion from school for the remainder of the school year as

the most effective disciplinary measure.

Overall, students' points of view varied in agreement with respect to disciplinary measures selected as being most effective. For two offenses, disruptive classroom behavior and use of indecent language, they chose a conference involving the student, a parent or guardian, and an administrator as most effective. For disrespectful speech, persistent disobedience, and truancy they suggested in-school suspension as the most effective measure. For smoking, fighting, and threatening or intimidating others, they indicated that temporary separation from school as being most effective. Students have strong feelings about the offense of substance abuse, and this was made manifest by the selection of exclusion from school for the remainder of the school year as being the most effective disciplinary measure.

The students were requested to indicate if the stated disciplinary measures were "Not Severe Enough" or "Too Severe" for given offenses. The first three choices for "Not Severe Enough" are reported in rank order. The same three disciplinary measures were selected for the first nine reported offenses, but they were in different rank order under "Not Severe Enough." Those measures were:

1. Conference involving the student, teacher and an administrator;
2. Detention to be given by an administrator; and
3. Contact of home by phone or letter by an administrator.

Table 2

MOST EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINARY MEASURES
CHOSEN BY STUDENTS

N = 167

Offenses	Most Effective Disciplinary Measures	Number of Students	Percent Students
Disruptive Classroom Behavior	Conference involving the student, a parent or guardian, the teachers, and an administrator	52	31.1
Disrespectful Speech To a Staff Member or an Administrator	In-school suspension from regular classes	53	31.7
Persistent Disobedience	In-school suspension from regular classes	46	27.5
Using Indecent Language	Conference involving the student, a parent or guardian, the teacher, and an administrator	44	26.3
Habitual Tardiness	Detention to be given by an administrator	42	25.1
Smoking on School Premises	External suspension from school	47	28.1
Fighting	External suspension from school	50	29.9
Threatening or Intimidating Other Students	External suspension from school	46	27.5
Truancy	In-school suspension from regular classes	43	25.7
Substance Abuse	Exclusion from school for the remainder of the school year	56	33.5

*The original sample N = 171, but four questionnaires were discarded due to multiple responses to the same question.

For the last offense, substance abuse, the choices in rank order for "Not Severe Enough" were:

1. Conference involving the student, a parent or guardian, and an administrator;
2. In-school suspension; and
3. External suspension from school.

(See Table 3)

The first two choices under "Too Severe" are reported in rank order. The same two disciplinary measures were selected for the first nine offenses but in different rank order. Those measures were:

1. In-school suspension from regular classes, and
2. External suspension from school.

For the last offense, substance abuse, the choices in rank order for "Too Severe" were: (1) Exclusion from school for the remainder of the school year and (2) Recommend for enrollment in the Alternative School. (See Table 3)

Students' Responses To Survey For The Improvement Of Discipline In The Junior High School

Students' points of view regarding the effectiveness of certain measures for the improvement of discipline resulted in the majority of students choosing six measures as "Effective" and four measures as "Not Effective". The effective measures followed by the number and percentages of students selecting them were: (1) As much as possible

Table 3

STUDENTS' RESPONSE TO DISCIPLINARY
MEASURES NOT SEVERE ENOUGH OR TOO
SEVERE FOR A GIVEN OFFENSE

N = 167

OFFENSES	DISCIPLINARY MEASURES	RESPONSES			
		NOT SEVERE ENOUGH		TOO SEVERE	
		No. of Students	%	No. of Students	%
Disruptive Classroom Behavior	Conference involving the student, teacher, and an administrator	117	70.1		
	Detention to be given by an administrator	101	60.5		
	Contact of the home by phone or letter by an administrator	85	50.8		
	External Suspension from school			133	73.6
	In-school suspension from regular classes			92	55.1
Disrespectful Speech to Staff Member	Conference involving the student, teacher, and an administrator	120	71.9		
	Detention to be given by an administrator	109	65.3		
	Contact of home by phone or letter by an administrator	98	58.7		
	External suspension from school			124	74.3
	In-school suspension from regular classes			75	44.9

OFFENSES	DISCIPLINARY MEASURES	RESPONSES			
		NOT SEVERE ENOUGH		TOO SEVERE	
		No. of Students	%	No. of Students	%
Persistent Disobedience	Conference involving the student, teacher, and an administrator	123	73.7		
	Detention to be given by an administrator	105	62.9		
	Contact of the home by phone or letter by an administrator	103	61.7		
	External suspension from school			115	68.9
	In-school suspension from regular classes			65	38.9
Habitual Tardiness	Conference involving the student, teacher, and an administrator	101	60.5		
	Detention to be given by an administrator	79	47.3		
	Contact of the home by phone or letter by an administrator	64	38.3		
	External suspension from school			143	85.6
	In-school suspension from regular classes			111	66.5
Smoking on School Premises	Conference involving the student, teacher, and an administrator	119	71.3		
	Detention to be given by an administrator	111	66.5		
	Contact of the home by phone or letter by an administrator	98	58.7		

OFFENSES	DISCIPLINARY MEASURES	RESPONSES			
		NOT SEVERE ENOUGH		TOO SEVERE	
		No. of Students	%	No. of Students	%
Smoking on School Premises (Continued)	External suspension from school			116	69.5
	In-school suspension from regular classes			81	48.5
Fighting	Conference involving the student, teacher, and an administrator	130	77.8		
	Contact of the home by phone or letter by an administrator	129	77.2		
	Contact of the home by phone or letter by an administrator	120	71.9		
	External suspension from school			106	63.5
	In-school suspension from regular classes			56	33.5
Threatening or Intimidating Others	Conference involving the student, teacher, and an administrator	133	79.6		
	Contact of the home by phone or letter by an administrator	121	72.5		
	Detention to be given by administrator	119	71.3		
	External suspension from school			99	59.3
	In-school suspension from regular classes			65	38.9

OFFENSES	DISCIPLINARY MEASURES	RESPONSES			
		NOT SEVERE ENOUGH		TOO SEVERE	
		No. of Students	%	No. of Students	%
Truancy	Conference involving the student, teacher, and an administrator	130	77.8		
	Detention to be given by an administrator	121	72.5		
	Contact of the home by phone or letter by an administrator	81	48.5		
	External suspension from school			121	72.5
	In-school suspension from regular classes			87	52.1
Substance Abuse	Conference involving the student, a parent, and an administrator	131	78.4		
	In-school suspension from regular classes	119	71.3		
	External suspension from school	87	52.1		
	Exclusion from school for the remainder of the school year			74	44.3
	Recommend for enrollment in the Alternative School.			63	37.7

allow students to select courses and activities (125, 73.1%); (2) Staff-Pupil Counseling System (120, 70.2%) (3) In-School Suspension Programs In All Schools (109, 63.7%); (4) More Involvement of Students In Developing Rules and Regulations (97, 56.7%); (5) Imposing a Probation Period for Suspended Students (87, 50.9%); and (6) Referring Students to the Alternative School After A Specific Number of Suspensions (86, 50.3%). The measures that were chosen as "Not Effective" followed by the number and percentage of students having chosen them were: (1) Corporal Punishment (114, 66.7%); (2) Stricter Requirements by Teachers (97, 56.7%); (3) Stricter Demands By Parents (71, 41.5%); and (4) Allow Problem Students to Leave School Before The Age of Sixteen (45, 26.3%).

The first three choices of students with "No Opinion" were: (1) Imposing A Probation Period For Suspended Students (33, 19.3%); (2) Allow Problem Students To Leave School Before the Age of Sixteen (32, 18.7%); and (3) Corporal Punishment (26, 15.2%).

The majority of the students in the sample selected "Yes" for four measures in answer to this question, "Could this occur in your school?" These measures were: (1) As Much As Possible Allow Students To Select Courses and Activities (128, 74.9%); (2) Staff-Pupil Counseling (115, 67.3%); (3) In-school Suspension Program in All Schools (108, 63.2%); and (4) Referring Students to the Alternative School After A Specified Number of Suspensions (103, 60.2%). The top five

measures to which the students responded "No" in answer to the question "Could this occur in your school?" were: (1) Corporal Punishment (81, 47.4%); (2) Allow Problem Students To Leave School Before The Age of Sixteen (76, 44.4%); (3) Imposing A Probation Period For Suspended Students (62, 36.3%); (4) Stricter Requirements By Teachers (58, 33.9%); and (5) Stricter Demands By Parents (57, 33.3%).

Teachers' Points Of View - Severity of Offenses

Teachers' points of view regarding the severity of offenses were compiled from the Student-Teacher Questionnaire. A list of the ten most common offenses committed by students during the school year 1978-79 was presented to all teachers that were present at that time. This sample included forty-four (44) teachers from Churchland Junior High School, forty-two (42) teachers from Mapp Junior High School, and forty-seven (47) teachers from Waters Junior High School. They were requested to rank from one to three the offenses they considered as being most severe. Rank One was to be the most severe offenses.

The top three choices under Rank One in rank order were: (1) Disruptive Classroom Behavior (52 or 39.1%); (2) Substance Abuse (21 or 15.8%); and (3) Fighting (13 or 9.8%). The top three choices under Rank Three in rank order were: (1) Persistent Disobedience (24 or 18.0%); (2) Disrespectful

Table 4

STUDENT RESPONSE ON THE SURVEY OF THE IMPROVEMENT
OF DISCIPLINE IN THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

N = 171

MEASURES	EFFECTIVE	NOT EFFECTIVE	NO OPINION	COULD THIS OCCUR IN YOUR SCHOOL?	
				Yes	No
1. Corporal Punishment	19	114	26	73	81
2. More Involvement of Students in Developing Rules and Regulations	97	37	20	65	30
3. Allow Problem Students to Leave School Before The Age of Sixteen	80	45	32	74	76
4. As Much As Possible Allow Students to Select Courses and Activities	125	24	7	128	26
5. Stricter Requirements by Teachers	46	97	15	81	58
6. Stricter Demands by Parents	64	71	18	80	57
7. In-school Suspension Programs in All Schools	109	37	10	108	44
8. Referring Students to the Alternative School After Specific Number of Suspensions	86	43	24	103	41
9. Imposing a Probation Period for Suspended Students	87	35	33	72	62
10. Staff-Pupil Counseling System	120	29	8	115	39

Speech to Staff Member (23 or 17.3%); and (3) Threatening or Intimidating Others (19 or 14.3%). (Table 5)

According to the teachers' responses, disruptive classroom behavior was number one under Rank One and number one under Rank Two. Substance abuse only surfaced once, number two under Rank One. Persistent disobedience surfaced under all three Ranks, number three under Rank One, number two under Rank Two, and number one under Rank Three. Fighting made the list only once, number three under Rank Two. Disrespectful speech appeared as number two under Rank Three, and threatening or intimidating others appeared as number three under Rank Three.

Most Effective Disciplinary Measures

Teachers' choices of the most effective disciplinary measures for each of the ten offenses are reported in Table 6. The ten offenses along with the teachers' first preference of disciplinary action to correct the stated offense are presented in this section. For the teacher respondents, N is still equal to 133.

For the offense of (1) disruptive classroom behavior, 64 or 48.1 percent selected conference involving the student, a parent or guardian, the teacher, and an administrator as being most effective. For the offense of (2) disrespectful speech to faculty members of an administrator, 51 or 38.3 percent selected conference involving the student, a parent

Table 5

TOP THREE TEACHER CHOICES UNDER EACH RANK FOR THE
SEVERITY OF AN OFFENSE

N = 133

RANK ONE			RANK TWO			RANK THREE		
	Number of Teachers	Percent Teachers		Number of Teachers	Percent Teachers		Number of Teachers	Percent Teachers
Disruptive Classroom Behavior	52	39.1	Disruptive Classroom Behavior	35	26.3	Persistent Disobedience	24	18.0
Substance Abuse	21	15.8	Persistent Disobedience	34	25.6	Disrespectful Speech to Staff Member	23	17.3
Persistent Disobedience	19	14.3	Fighting	13	9.8	Threatening or Intimidating Others	19	14.3

or guardian, the teacher, and an administrator as being most effective. For the offense of (3) Persistent Disobedience, 53 or 39.8 percent selected external suspension from school as being most effective. For the offense of (4) Using Indecent Language, 45 or 39.8 percent selected conference involving the student, a parent or guardian, the teacher, and an administrator as being most effective. For the offense of (5) Habitual Tardiness, 49 or 36.8 percent selected conference involving the student, a parent or guardian, the teacher, and an administrator as being most effective. For the offense of (6) Smoking On School Premises, 46 or 34.6 percent selected external suspension from school as being most effective. For the offense of (7) Fighting, 90 or 67.7 percent selected external suspension from school as being most effective. For the offense of (8) Threatening or Intimidating Others, 60 or 45.1 percent selected external suspension from school as being most effective. For the offense of (9) Truancy, 56 or 42.1 percent selected conference involving the student, a parent or guardian, the teacher, and an administrator as being the most effective. For the offense of (10) Forty-two (42) or 31.6 percent selected recommend for enrollment in the Alternative School as being most effective.

(Table 6)

On five occasions teachers selected conference involving the student, a parent or guardian, the teacher, and an administrator as being the most effective disciplinary action.

Table 6

MOST EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINARY MEASURES
CHOSEN BY TEACHERS

N = 133

Offenses	Most Effective Disciplinary Measures	Number of Students	Percent Students
Disruptive Classroom Behavior	Conference involving the student, a parent or guardian, the teacher, and an administrator	64	48.1
Disrespectful Speech to a Staff Member or an Administrator	Conference involving the student, a parent or guardian, the teacher, and an administrator	51	38.3
Persistent Disobedience	External suspension from school	53	39.8
Using Indecent Language	Conference involving the student, a parent or guardian, the teacher, and an administrator	45	33.8
Habitual Tardiness	Conference involving the student, a parent or guardian, the teacher, and an administrator	49	36.8
Smoking on School Premises	External suspension from school	46	34.6
Fighting	External suspension from school	90	67.7
Threatening or Intimidating Other Students	External suspension from school	60	45.1
Truancy	Conference involving the student, a parent or guardian, the teacher, and an administrator	56	42.1
Substance Abuse	Recommend for enrollment in the Alternative School	42	31.6

On four occasions the teachers chose external suspension from school as being the most effective disciplinary measure. Teachers indicated that students guilty of substance abuse should be placed in another educational setting (enrolled in the Alternative School) as the most effective disciplinary measure.

The teachers were requested to indicate which measures were "Not Severe Enough" or "Too Severe" for the given offenses. The first three choices for "Not Severe Enough" are reported in rank order. The same three disciplinary measures chosen for the first nine reported offenses but in different rank order under "Not Severe Enough". Those measures were: (1) Conference involving the student, teacher, and an administrator; (2) Detention to be given by an administrator; and (3) Contact of home by phone or letter by an administrator. For the last offense, substance abuse, the choices in rank order for "Not Severe Enough" were: (1) In-school suspension from regular classes; (2) Conference involving the student, a parent or guardian, and an administrator; and (3) External suspension from school. (Table 7)

The first two choices under "Too Severe" are reported in rank order. The same two disciplinary measures were chosen for the first nine offenses in the same rank order. Those disciplinary measures in rank order were: (1) External Suspension from school and (2) In-school suspension from regular classes. For the last offense, substance abuse, the choices

Table 7

TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO DISCIPLINARY
MEASURES NOT SEVERE ENOUGH OR TOO
SEVERE FOR A GIVEN OFFENSE

N = 33		RESPONSES			
Offenses	Disciplinary Measures	NOT SEVERE ENOUGH		TOO SEVERE	
		No. of Teachers	%	No. of Teachers	%
Disruptive Classroom Behavior	Conference involving the student, teacher, and an administrator	120	90.2		
	Detention to be given by an administrator	116	87.2		
	Contact of the home by phone or letter by an administrator	99	74.4		
	External suspension from school			100	75.2
	In-school suspension from regular classes			58	43.6
Disrespectful Speech to a Staff Member	Detention to be given by an administrator	115	86.5		
	Conference involving the student, teacher, and an administrator	112	84.2		
	Contact of the home by phone or letter by an administrator	111	83.5		
	External suspension from school			78	58.6
	In-school suspension from regular classes			34	25.6
Persistent Disobedience	Conference involving the student, teacher, and an administrator	122	91.7		
	Contact of the home by phone or letter by an administrator	122	91.7		
	Detention to be given by an administrator	120	90.2		
	External suspension from school			75	56.4
	In-school suspension from regular classes			34	25.6

N = 35

Offenses	Disciplinary Measures	RESPONSES			
		NOT SEVERE ENOUGH		TOO SEVERE	
		No. of Teachers	%	No. of Teachers	%
Fighting	Conference involving the student, teacher, and an administrator	126	94.7		
	Contact of the home by phone or letter by an administrator	124	93.1		
	Detention to be given by an administration	118	88.7		
	External suspension from school			52	39.1
	In-school suspension from regular classes			10	7.5
Threatening Or Intimidating Others	Detention to be given by an administrator	124	93.2		
	Conference involving the student, teacher, and an administrator	118	88.7		
	Contact of the home by phone or letter by an administrator	117	87.9		
	External suspension from school			99	74.4
	In-school suspension from regular classes			60	45.1
Truancy	Conference involving the student, teacher, and an administrator	123	92.5		
	Detention to be given by an administrator	121	90.9		
	Contact of the home by phone or letter by an administrator	103	77.4		
	External suspension from school			99	74.4
	In-school suspension from regular classes			60	45.1

N = 53					
Offenses	Disciplinary Measures	RESPONSES			
		NOT SEVERE ENOUGH		TOO SEVERE	
		No. of Teachers	%	No. of Teachers	%
Use of Indecent Language	Conference involving the student, teacher, and an administrator	103	77.4		
	Detention to be given by an administrator	95	71.4		
	Letter by an administrator	91	68.4		
	External suspension from school			94	70.7
	In-school suspension from regular classes			55	41.4
Habitual Tardiness	Conference involving the student, teacher, and an administrator	111	83.5		
	Detention to be given by an administrator	82	61.7		
	Contact of the home by phone or letter by an administrator	69	51.9		
	External suspension from school			114	85.7
	In-school suspension from regular classes			95	71.4
Smoking On School Premises	Conference involving the student, teacher, and an administrator	116	87.2		
	Detention to be given by an administrator	116	87.2		
	Contact of the home by phone or letter by an administrator	106	79.7		
	External suspension from school			79	59.4
	In-school suspension from regular classes			43	32.3

N = 33

Offenses	Disciplinary Measures	RESPONSES			
		NOT SEVERE ENOUGH		TOO SEVERE	
		No. of Teachers	%	No. of Teachers	%
Substance Abuse	In-school suspension from regular classes	101	75.9		
	Conference involving the student, a parent, and an administrator	99	74.4		
	External suspension from school	65	48.9		
	Exclusion from school for the remainder of the school year			75	56.3
	Recommend for enrollment in the Alternative School			43	32.2

in rank order for "Too Severe" were: (1) Exclusion from school for the remainder of the school year and (2) Recommend for enrollment in the alternative school. (Table 7)

Teachers' Responses To Survey For The Improvement Of
Discipline In The Junior High School

Teachers' points of view concerning the effectiveness of certain measures for the improvement of discipline resulted in the majority of the teachers choosing nine out of ten measures as being "Effective". One measure was chosen for being "Not Effective". The effective measures followed by the number and percentages of teachers selecting them in rank order were: (1) Referring student to the alternative school after a specific number of suspensions (117, 87.9%); (2) Stricter requirements by teachers (113, 84.9%); (3) Imposing a probation period for suspended student (113, 94.9%); (4) Stricter demands by parents (111, 83.5%); (5) Staff-Pupil counseling system (94, 70.7%); (6) In-school suspension program in all schools (93, 69.9%); (7) More involvement of students in developing rules and regulations (84, 63.2%); (8) Allow problem students to leave school before the age of sixteen (80, 60.2%); and (9) Corporal punishment (69, 51.9%). The one most outstanding measure that was chosen as being "Not Effective" was as much as possible allow students to select courses and activities (60, 45.1%).

The first three choices of teachers with "No Opinion" were: (1) Corporal Punishment (17, 12.8%); (2) Staff-Pupil Counseling System (17, 12.8%); and (3) In-school Suspension Programs in All Schools (15, 11.3%).

The majority of the teachers in the sample indicated "Yes" for eight out of ten measures in answer to the question "Could this occur in your school?". The measures were: (1) Referring Students To The Alternative School After A Specific Number Of Suspensions (121, 70.8%); (2) Stricter Requirements By Teachers (120, 70.2%); (3) Stricter Demands By Parents (94, 54.8%); (4) Imposing A Probation Period For Suspended Students (101, 59.1%); (5) Corporal Punishment (94, 54.5%); (6) In-school Suspension Programs in All Schools (88, 51.5%); and (7) As Much As Possible Allow Students To Select Courses and Activities (82, 47.9%). The first three measures to which the teachers responded "No" to the question "Could this occur in your school?" were: (1) Allow Problem Students To Leave School Before The Age Of Sixteen (80, 46.8%); (2) Staff-Pupil Counseling System (42, 24.6%); and (3) As Much As Possible Allow Students To Select Courses and Activities (38, 22.2%). (Table 8)

Table 8

TEACHER REPORT ON THE SURVEY FOR THE IMPROVEMENT
OF DISCIPLINE IN THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

N = 155

MEASURES	EFFECTIVE	NOT EFFECTIVE	NO OPINION	COULD THIS OCCUR IN YOUR SCHOOL:	
				Yes	No
1. Corporal Punishment	69	41	17	94	36
2. More Involvement of Students in Developing Rules and Regulations	84	43	5	93	30
3. Allow Problem Students to Leave School Before The Age of Sixteen	80	39	11	42	80
4. As Much As Possible Allow Students to Select Courses and Activities	65	60	8	82	38
5. Stricter Requirements by Teachers	113	8	5	120	4
6. Stricter Demands by Parents	111	9	6	105	14
7. In-school Suspension Programs in All Schools	93	22	15	88	28
8. Referring Student to the Alternative School After a Specific Number of Suspensions	117	11	3	121	4
9. Imposing a Probation Period for Suspended Students	113	9	10	101	18
10. Staff-Pupil Counseling System	94	19	17	73	42

Hypothesis One

The more frequently students are penalized according to their choice of extinguishing punishment, the lower the rate of repeat violations.

The most effective disciplinary measures that were chosen by the students on the student-teacher questionnaire were used as extinguishing punishments. The number of offenses that were treated according to student choice was determined by direct inspection of the random sample of referrals.

Disruptive classroom behavior was treated separately using a conference with the student, a parent or guardian, the teacher, and an administrator as the extinguishing punishment. The remaining nine offenses were grouped according to related incidents. Disrespectful speech to staff member, persistent disobedience, and use of decent language were grouped, using in-school suspension as the extinguishing punishment. Fighting and threatening or intimidating others were grouped, using external suspension from school as the extinguishing punishment. Smoking on school premises and substance abuse were grouped, using external suspension from school as the extinguishing punishment.

The t-test for differences in percentages was used to determine the significance between single offenses treated according to student choices and repeat offenses treated according to student choices. The results of the t-test for

differences in percentages revealed that treating offenses according to student choices appears to lower the rate of repeat violations at the .05 level of confidence for disruptive classroom behavior only ($t = 1.317$). For the other groups of offenses the t-test for differences in percentages showed no significant differences in the rate of repeat violations, when offenses were treated according to student choices of extinguishing punishments. A report of this t-test for the remaining four groups (Table 9) is as follows:

{	*Disrespectful Speech	}	(t = -.413)
	*Persistent Disobedience		
	*Using Indecent Language		
{	*Habitual Tardiness	}	(t = -1.260)
	*Truancy		
{	*Fighting	}	(t = .312)
	*Threatening or Intimidating Others		
{	*Smoking On School Premises	}	(t = -.118)
	*Substance Abuse		

The sample size of the four groups for treatments was very small due to the lack of similar occurring violations. Hence, over a large group validation of the projected effects may be possible. Student perceptions of reactions to certain penalties may be biased due to their lack of experiences with the offenses or due to the usual differences between thought-out behavior and spontaneous behavior. Choice of appropriate

penalties was made upon frequency of responses from the group and may not apply for a single individual offender.

Hypothesis Two

The greater the disparity between teacher's and students' points of view regarding the severity of an offense, the greater the number of students referred for disciplinary action.

The correlation of the disparity was determined by the use of Pearson r correlation coefficient, a measure that expresses the extent to which two variables are related. The responses of the teachers, the responses of the students, the disparity between the two groups and the number of referrals reported of given offenses are reported in Table 10. The data were treated by the use of a computerized program called Statistical Package in the Social Sciences (SPSS). The calculation of the correlation yielded $r = .46$. The test of significance used was the t-test for difference of correlation from zero ($t = 1.50$).

This is a moderate correlation but not large enough due to sample size to have a .05 level of confidence to indicate that the variables are related.

Hypothesis Three

There will be a lower percentage of non-repeat referrals, repeat referrals, and habitual offender referrals for

Table 9

GROUPING OF RELATED OFFENSES AND AN ACCOUNT OF
EXTINGUISHING PUNISHMENT CHOSEN BY STUDENTS

Offenses	Extinguishing Punishment	Single Offenses	Treated According To Student Choices	Repeated Offenses	Treated According To Student Choices
Disruptive Classroom Behavior	Conference with student, parent, teacher, and an administrator	54	10	24	2
Disrespectful Speech Persistent Disobedience Using Indecent Language	In-school suspension	27	3	5	1
Habitual Tardiness Truancy	Contact of home by an administrator	21	9	5	4
Fighting Threatening or Intimidating Others	External suspension	29	24	4	3
Smoking on School Premises Substance Abuse	External suspension	17	9	6	5

Table 10

REPORT OF DISPARITY AND NUMBER OF REFERRALS FOR OFFENSES

TEACHERS N = 135		STUDENTS N = 167		
Offenses	Teachers	Students	Disparity	Referrals
Disruptive Classroom Behavior	101	22	79	105
Disrespectful Speech To Staff Members	48	28	20	16
Persistent Disobedience	77	16	61	10
Use of Indecent Language	19	45	26	10
Habitual Tardiness	20	11	9	25
Smoking On School Premises	10	82	72	16
Fighting	35	84	49	34
Threatening or Intimidating Others	37	44	7	4
Truancy	14	50	36	2
Substance Abuse	33	126	93	6

disciplinary action, when codes of conduct are issued to students in the junior high schools involved in this study.

At Churchland Junior High School and at Mapp Junior High School, codes of conduct were issued to the students. At Waters Junior High School, a code of conduct was not issued to the students during the school year 1978-79. Inspections of these codes of conduct revealed that they were quite similar in content.

The t-test for differences in percentages was used to compare Waters' percentages of non-repeat referrals, repeat referrals, and habitual offender referrals with the same indicated referrals from Churchland and Mapp combined. This t-test revealed that there is a significant difference in the percentages of non-repeat referrals at the .05 level of confidence ($t = 2.72$). According to the same t-test for differences in percentages, there is no significant difference in the percentages of repeat referrals ($t = 1.37$) or habitual offender referrals ($t = 1.56$), when codes of conduct are issued to students.

Hypothesis IV

For offenses examined there will be a disproportionate percentage of non-repeat, repeat, and habitual offender referrals:

- (a) Among boys than girls;
 $t = 2.16$ (Yes)

- (b) Among minority than non-minority group students;
t = 1.35 (No)
- (c) Among economically disadvantaged students than among economically advantaged students; and
t = 3.51 (Yes)
- (d) Among the one-parent or guardian family than among the two-parent or guardian family.
t = 4.86 (Yes)

Hypothesis IV dealt with the influences of sex, ethnic origin, economic status, and one-parent or guardian family on the percentage of non-repeat referrals, repeat referrals, and habitual offender referrals. Percentages were determined for the stated categories and the t-test for differences in proportions was applied to test the significance of the findings.

The t-test for proportions showed that a, c, and d under Hypothesis IV were accepted, but b under the same hypothesis was rejected.

Table 11

THE RANDOM SAMPLE OF REFERRALS AS TO SEX, ETHNIC ORIGIN,
ECONOMIC STATUS AND TWO OR ONE PARENT FAMILY

N = 173

	Boys	Girls	Non Minority	Minority	Economic Advantaged	Economic Disadvantaged	Two Parent Family	One Parent Family
Non-Repeat Referrals	31	28	25	34	28	30	39	20
Repeat Referrals	24	19	18	25	24	18	25	18
Habitual Offender Referrals	48	23	28	43	26	47	35	36
TOTALS	103	70	71	102	78	95	99	74

Table 12

TOTAL STUDENTS ENROLLED AS TO SEX, ETHNIC ORIGIN,
ECONOMIC STATUS AND TWO OR ONE PARENT FAMILY

N = 2206

	Boys	Girls	Non Minority	Minority	Economic Advantaged	Economic Disadvantaged	Two Parent Family	One Parent Family
Churchland Junior High	375	352	438	289	421	306	529	198
Mapp Junior High	299	285	241	343	310	274	328	256
Waters Junior High	444	451	295	600	549	346	793	102
TOTALS	1118	1088	974	1232	1280	926	1650	556

Chapter 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Purpose of the Study

This study sought to determine the ten most common disciplinary offenses referred to administrators for disciplinary action and the practices employed to correct them in three junior high schools in Portsmouth, Virginia, during the 1978-79 school year. The investigator endeavored to determine the teachers' and students' points of view concerning the severity of these offenses and their choices of disciplinary measures to correct the offenses. The writer also investigated the possible influence of certain variables on disciplinary referrals such as: 1) a written code of conduct issued to the students, 2) sex, 3) ethnic origin, 4) economic status, and 5) a one-parent or guardian family.

Students and teachers responded to a Survey for the Improvement of Discipline in the Junior High School.

Sample

The sample for the study was composed of 133 teachers, and two samples of students (167 to respond to the

questionnaire and survey and 173 random selected referrals).

Procedure

Personal interviews were held with administrators who handled discipline at each of the cooperating junior high schools during the summer of 1979. They had been previously contacted by phone, and they had already determined the ten most common disciplinary offenses committed during the school year 1978-79, by direct inspection of their referral files. They were given a data collection form and later provided information concerning certain variables (sex, ethnic origin, economic status, and one parent or guardian family) for a selected random sample of students from referral files. The administrators responded to the question "Were codes of conduct issued to your students the school year in question?"

The nature and frequency of disciplinary referrals were identified at each school. This information was collected by direct examination of the 1978-79 school year referral files.

The teachers and a randomly selected sample of students from each school responded to two instruments (A Student-Teacher Questionnaire and A Survey for the Improvement of Discipline in the Junior High School).

Statistical Techniques

The following statistical techniques were employed in the analysis of data: 1) t-test for differences in percentages, 2) Pearson r Correlation Coefficient, 3) t-test for correlation difference from zero, and 4) t-test for differences in proportions.

Findings

Findings that emerged from the investigation are as follows:

1. The ten most common disciplinary offenses referred during the school year 1978-79, to administrators for disciplinary action were: disruptive classroom behavior, disrespectful speech to staff member, persistent disobedience, use of indecent language, habitual tardiness, smoking on school premises, fighting, threatening and intimidating others, truancy, and substance abuse.
2. Most students (103 or 61.7 percent) identified substance abuse as the most severe of the ten offenses.
3. Teachers cited classroom disruption (52 or 39.1 percent) as the most severe of the ten offenses.

4. The students selected in-school suspension as the most effective course of disciplinary action for three of the ten offenses. External suspension from school was chosen as most effective for three offenses, and a conference involving the student, a parent or guardian, the teacher, and an administrator was chosen as most effective for two offenses. Detention to be given by an administrator was chosen for one offense as being most effective. Students indicated that exclusion from school for the remainder of the school year was most effective for substance abuse.
5. Teachers selected a conference involving the student, a parent or guardian, the teacher, and an administrator as the most effective course of disciplinary action for five of the ten offenses. External suspension from school was chosen for four offenses. Recommend for enrollment in the alternative school was chosen for substance abuse as the most effective disciplinary action.

6. The majority of students in the sample selected three measures as "Not Severe Enough" for the first nine offenses which were: 1) a conference involving the student, teacher, and an administrator. 2) detention to be given by an administrator, and 3) contact of the home by phone or letter by an administrator. They selected two measures as being "Too Severe" for the first nine offenses which were: 1) external suspension from school and 2) in-school suspension. Most students in the sample selected 1) a conference involving the student, a parent, and an administrator, 2) in-school suspension from regular classes, and 3) external suspension from school as being "Not Severe Enough" for the offense of substance abuse. They selected 1) exclusion from school for the remainder of the school year and 2) recommend for enrollment in the alternative school as "Too Severe" for substance abuse.
7. An overwhelming majority of teachers selected three measures as "Not Severe Enough" for the first nine offenses which were: 1) conference

involving the student, teacher, and an administrator, 2) detention to be given by an administrator, and 3) contact of the home by phone or letter by an administrator. Most teachers chose 1) in-school suspension and 2) conference involving the student, a parent, and an administrator as "Not Severe Enough" for substance abuse. For "Too Severe" concerning the first nine offenses, teachers selected "external suspension from regular classes. Teachers selected exclusion from school for the remainder of the school year as being "Too Severe" for substance abuse.

8. Both students and teachers agreed that these measures would be effective in improving discipline in the junior high school:
 - 1) More involvement of students in developing rules and regulations, 2) In-school suspension in all schools, 3) Referring students to the alternative school after specific number of suspensions, imposing a probation period for suspended students, and staff-pupil counseling system.

9. Students and teachers did not agree on measures that were not effective in improving discipline in the junior high school. Students indicated that three measures would not be effective: 1) Corporal Punishment, 2) Stricter Requirements by Teachers, and 3) Stricter Demands by Parents. The only measure really questioned by teachers was As Much As Possible Allow Students To Select Courses and Activities.
10. Students and teachers were somewhat in agreement on their selection of "No Opinion" for the measure of Corporal Punishment to improve discipline in the junior high school.
11. Both students and teachers agreed that certain measures could be executed in their schools: 1) More Involvement of Students Developing Rules and Regulations, 2) As Much As Possible Allow Students to Select Courses and Activities, 3) Stricter Requirements By Parents, 5) In-school Suspension Programs in All Schools, 6) Referring Students to the Alternative School After a Specific Number of Suspensions, 7) Imposing a Probation Period for Suspended Students,

and Staff-Pupil Counseling System.

12. There was joint agreement between students and teachers that one particular disciplinary measure could not occur in their school, which was allow problem students to leave school before the age of sixteen.
13. Treating disruptive classroom behavior according to students' choice of extinguishing punishment resulted in a lower rate of repeat violations.
14. Treatment of offenses two through ten according to students' choice of extinguishing punishment was difficult to measure due to sample size.
15. There is a moderate correlation between student and teacher disparity concerning the severity of an offense and the number of students referred for disciplinary action for the offenses.
16. There is a lower percentage of non-repeat referrals when students are issued a code of conduct.
17. There is no significant difference in the percentages of repeat referrals or habitual offender referrals when students are issued

a code of conduct.

18. Sex of the offender made a significant difference in the percentage of students referred for disciplinary action.
19. There was not a disproportionate number of minority group students being referred.
20. There was a disproportionate percentage of referrals being made on economically disadvantaged students.
21. Students from one parent or guardian families did receive a disproportionate percentage of referrals.

Conclusions

The conclusions formulated here were based on findings during the study. They are:

1. Variables which significantly affect disciplinary referrals in this study are initially beyond the control of the school. These variables are sex of the student, family economic status, and one parent or guardian family. School personnel cannot modify the fact that an individual belongs to one or more of these groups. However, school authorities can deal with these students fairly, understandingly, and consistently, in order to help them overcome what appears to be disadvantages.

2. There is a moderate correlation between the disparity of students' points of view and the teachers' points of view and the number of referrals for disciplinary action. The greatest disparities exist between the way the two groups view the severity of disruptive classroom behavior, smoking on school premises and substance abuse. This may account for the reasons there was an overwhelming number of referrals for disruptive classroom behavior.

3. Issuing codes of conduct to the students appears to reduce the percentage of non-repeat referrals, but it does not appear to affect the percentage of repeat referrals or habitual offender referrals. Students at one school were requested to sign their names as an indication that the codes of conduct were received. At another school the social studies teachers devoted five to ten minutes each class period the first two weeks of the first semester, reviewing parts of the code with students. This still appears not to affect the percentage of repeat referrals or habitual offender referrals.

4. Penalizing students according to their choice of extinguishing punishment appeared to lower the rate of repeat violations for disruptive classroom behavior only. The sample size of the other four groups for treatments was very small due to the lack of similar occurring violations. A larger sample may produce different results. Students

perceptions of reactions to certain penalties may be biased due to the usual difference between thought out behavior and spontaneous behavior. Choice of appropriate penalties was made upon frequency of responses from the group and may not apply for a single individual offender selected in the sample.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were submitted based on the findings of this investigation.

1. The student choice of extinguishing punishment was determined after the offense had been committed and treated in several ways. A study should be made treating offenses only according to student choices to determine the rate of repeat violations for more realistic results.
2. To reduce repeat offenses, school personnel should issue codes of conduct to all students.
3. School administrators should devise some plan to assist teachers in dealing with the problems of boys, economically disadvantaged, and one-parent family students in an attempt to reduce their number of referrals.

Professional Commentary

1. Usually the academically weak are the ones who are suspended. Can they afford not to be in school? Strategies should be aimed at curtailing their misbehavior rather than external suspensions when it is feasible, because their absence from school adds to their existing backwardness. In-school suspension programs are being eliminated due to a lack of funds to finance them. The writer recommends reinstituting these programs in all schools as soon as possible. They should not be used as "baby sitting" service, but students should be allowed to receive credit for assignments completed while being disciplined by in-school suspension.
2. In-service training should be fostered to assist staff members to better deal with male students, minority group students, economically disadvantaged students, and students from one-parent or guardian families.
3. Appropriate attention should be given to the failure to recognize characteristics

of potentially disruptive problems. Students' home environments, their reading levels, peer pressure and moral convictions are definite causes of classroom disciplinary problems. Because there are so many causes of these problems, the teacher should be prepared to meet challenges daily. Today educators know there are many factors that contribute to one's becoming a "good" teacher. One factor is the teacher's ability to identify a student with potentially disruptive characteristics and to plan appropriate activities for preventing this student from becoming a perpetrator of discordant behavior.

4. In dealing with discipline always gather complete information on the problem. If you are not sure of all circumstances avoid making a decision immediately. When more than one student is involved, question each student separately. You may obtain several versions of what has occurred. Try not to use the words "next time". This type of threat can easily be forgotten, and a student may feel he/she has gotten away with

something if you fail to back up what you've said. Try to anticipate problems, and keep your eyes and ears open for potential areas of concern. Be humanistic; an occasional smile, or pat on the back can work wonders.

5. School personnel and parents or guardians should undertake joint efforts to identify disciplinary issues and work together to find a solution. School authorities need to find more effective ways of involving parents or guardians in the educational process with respect to school discipline. There must be good home-school communications and coordination of endeavors.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

STUDENT - TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

STUDENT-TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Please supply the information requested in the blank spaces and then proceed to the next set of instructions.

STUDENT INFORMATION

Name of School _____ Grade _____

Male or Female _____

FACULTY INFORMATION

Name of School _____ Grade Taught _____

Listed below are ten disciplinary offenses which occurred most frequently in the Portsmouth Public School System in the junior high schools during the 1978-79 school year. Please rank from one to three the offenses you consider as being most severe. Rank one is the most severe, number two the next severe, and number three the third most severe. Use the numbers 1, 2, & 3 in the spaces across from the offense.

OFFENSE

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Disruptive Classroom Behavior | _____ |
| 2. Disrespectful Speech to Staff Members | _____ |
| 3. Persistent Disobedience | _____ |
| 4. Use of Indecent Language | _____ |
| 5. Habitual Tardiness | _____ |
| 6. Smoking On School Premises | _____ |
| 7. Fighting | _____ |
| 8. Threatening or Intimidating Others | _____ |
| 9. Truancy (Skipping School) | _____ |
| 10. Substance Abuse | _____ |

Listed below are various disciplinary offenses which might occur in your school. Each offense is followed by a listing of courses of action currently being used. Take in consideration that the teacher has already attempted to correct most of the offenses.

Please follow these directions.

1. Check one action you feel would be most effective for you in dealing with the offense.
2. Check the actions under column two that you feel are not severe enough for the offense.
3. Check the actions under column three that you feel are too severe for the offense.
4. If you feel a particular offense is not severe enough for action to be taken, check G under that offense except for offense number ten.
5. If you feel that a different course of action would be more effective than those listed, write it following the last choice for that offense.
6. In this questionnaire external suspension means that a student may not attend school for a specified length of time; in-school suspension means that a student may attend school but may not attend regular classes.

	<u>Most Effective For The Offense</u>	<u>Not Severe Enough For The Offense</u>	<u>Too Severe For The Offense</u>
--	---	--	---------------------------------------

1. OFFENSE - DISRUPTIVE
CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

A. Conference involving the student, teacher and an administrator

--	--	--

B. Detention to be given by an administrator

--	--	--

C. Contact of the home by phone or letter by an administrator

--	--	--

	<u>Most Effective For The Offense</u>	<u>Not Severe Enough For The Offense</u>	<u>Too Severe For The Offense</u>
D. Conference involving the student, a parent or guardian, the teacher, and an administrator	_____	_____	_____
E. In-school suspension from regular classes	_____	_____	_____
F. External suspension from school	_____	_____	_____
G. Not severe enough for disciplinary action	_____	_____	_____

If none of the above are satisfactory, please describe what would be effective.

2. OFFENSE - DISRESPECTFUL SPEECH TO A FACULTY MEMBER OR AN ADMINISTRATOR

A. Conference involving the student, teacher and an administrator	_____	_____	_____
B. Detention to be given by an administrator	_____	_____	_____
C. Contact of the home by phone or letter by an administrator	_____	_____	_____
D. Conference involving the student, a parent or guardian, the teacher, and an administrator	_____	_____	_____
E. In-school suspension from regular classes	_____	_____	_____
F. External suspension from school	_____	_____	_____
G. Not severe enough for disciplinary action	_____	_____	_____

If none of the above are satisfactory, please describe what would be effective.

	<u>Most Effective For The Offense</u>	<u>Not Severe Enough For The Offense</u>	<u>Too Severe For The Offense</u>
--	---	--	---------------------------------------

3. OFFENSE - PERSISTENT DISOBEDIENCE

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| A. Conference involving the student, teacher and an administrator | | | |
| B. Detention to be given by an administrator | | | |
| C. Contact of the home by phone or letter by an administrator | | | |
| D. Conference involving the student, a parent or guardian, the teacher, and an administrator | | | |
| E. In-school suspension from regular classes | | | |
| F. External suspension from school | | | |
| G. Not severe enough for disciplinary action | | | |

If none of the above are satisfactory, please describe what would be effective.

4. OFFENSE - USING INDECENT LANGUAGE

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| A. Conference involving the student, teacher and an administrator | | | |
| B. Detention to be given by an administrator | | | |
| C. Contact of the home by phone or letter by an administrator | | | |
| D. Conference involving the student, a parent or guardian, the teacher, and an administrator | | | |

	<u>Most Effective For The Offense</u>	<u>Not Severe Enough For The Offense</u>	<u>Too Severe For The Offense</u>
E. In-school suspension for regular classes	_____	_____	_____
F. External suspension from school	_____	_____	_____
G. Not severe enough for disciplinary action	_____	_____	_____

If none of the above are satisfactory, please describe what would be effective.

5. OFFENSE - HABITUAL TARDINESS

A. Conference involving the student, teacher and an administrator	_____	_____	_____
B. Detention to be given by an adminis- trator	_____	_____	_____
C. Contact of the home by phone or letter by an administrator	_____	_____	_____
D. Conference involving the student, a parent or guardian, the teacher, and an administrator	_____	_____	_____
E. In-school suspension from regular classes	_____	_____	_____
F. External suspension from school	_____	_____	_____
G. Not severe enough for disciplinary action	_____	_____	_____

If none of the above are satisfactory, please describe what would be effective.

6. OFFENSE - SMOKING ON SCHOOL PREMISES

A. Conference involving the student, teacher and an administrator	_____	_____	_____
---	-------	-------	-------

	<u>Most Effective For The Offense</u>	<u>Not Severe Enough For The Offense</u>	<u>Too Severe For The Offense</u>
B. Detention to be given by an administrator	_____	_____	_____
C. Contact of the home by phone or letter by an administrator	_____	_____	_____
D. Conference involving the student, a parent or guardian, the teacher, and an administrator	_____	_____	_____
E. In-school suspension from regular classes	_____	_____	_____
F. External suspension from school	_____	_____	_____
G. Not severe enough for disciplinary action	_____	_____	_____

If none of the above are satisfactory, please describe what would be effective.

7. OFFENSE - FIGHTING

A. Conference involving the student, teacher and an administrator	_____	_____	_____
B. Detention to be given by an administrator	_____	_____	_____
C. Contact of the home by phone or letter by an administrator	_____	_____	_____
D. Conference involving the student, a parent or guardian, the teacher, and an administrator	_____	_____	_____
E. In-school suspension from regular classes	_____	_____	_____
F. External suspension from school	_____	_____	_____
G. Not severe enough for disciplinary action	_____	_____	_____

If none of the above are satisfactory, please describe what would be effective.

	<u>Most Effective For The Offense</u>	<u>Not Severe Enough For The Offense</u>	<u>Too Severe For The Offense</u>
8. OFFENSE - THREATENING OR INTIMIDATING OTHER STUDENTS			
A. Conference involving the student, teacher and an administrator	_____	_____	_____
B. Detention to be given by an administrator	_____	_____	_____
C. Contact of the home by phone or letter by an administrator	_____	_____	_____
D. Conference involving the student, a parent or guardian, the teacher, and an administrator	_____	_____	_____
E. In-school suspension from regular classes	_____	_____	_____
F. External suspension from school	_____	_____	_____
G. Not severe enough for disciplinary action	_____	_____	_____

If none of the above are satisfactory, please describe what would be effective.

9. OFFENSE - TRUANCY (Skipping School)			
A. Conference involving the student, teacher and an administrator	_____	_____	_____
B. Detention to be given by an administrator	_____	_____	_____
C. Contact of the home by phone or letter by an administrator	_____	_____	_____
D. Conference involving the student, a parent or guardian, the teacher, and an administrator	_____	_____	_____
E. In-school suspension from regular classes	_____	_____	_____

	<u>Most Effective For The Offense</u>	<u>Not Severe Enough For The Offense</u>	<u>Too Severe For The Offense</u>
F. External suspension from school	_____	_____	_____
G. Not severe enough for disciplinary action	_____	_____	_____

If none of the above are satisfactory, please describe what would be effective.

10. OFFENSE - SUBSTANCE ABUSE (THE SELL OF SUBSTANCES IS NOT INCLUDED)

A. Conference involving the student, a parent or guardian, and an administrator	_____	_____	_____
B. In-school suspension from regular classes	_____	_____	_____
C. External suspension from school	_____	_____	_____
D. Recommend for enrollment in the Alternative School	_____	_____	_____
E. Exclusion from school for the remainder of the school year	_____	_____	_____

If none of the above are satisfactory, please describe what would be effective.

APPENDIX II

SURVEY FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF
DISCIPLINE IN THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

SURVEY FOR THE IMPROVEMENT
OF DISCIPLINE IN THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Please express your opinion as to the effectiveness of each of the following measures in reducing the occurrence of disciplinary problems in your school. If you have no opinion, check the column that is labeled "no opinion". Check only one of the three columns, and check either "yes" or "no" in the last two columns.

	<u>EFFECTIVE</u>	<u>NOT EFFECTIVE</u>	<u>NO OPINION</u>	<u>COULD THIS OCCUR IN YOUR SCHOOL?</u>	
				<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
1. Corporal Punishment	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. More Involvement of Students in Develop- ing Rules and Regula- tions	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Allow Problem Students to Leave School Before The Age of Sixteen	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. As Much As Possible Allow Students To Select Courses and Activities	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Stricter Require- ments by Teachers	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Stricter Demands by Parents	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. In-school Suspension Programs in all Schools	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Referring Students To the Alternative School After A Specific Number of Suspensions	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

	<u>EFFECTIVE</u>	<u>NOT EFFECTIVE</u>	<u>NO OPINION</u>	<u>COULD THIS OCCUR IN YOUR SCHOOL?</u>	
				<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
9. Imposing a Probation Period for Suspended Students	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Staff-Pupil Counsel- ing System (A student is allowed to select a staff member for personal counseling for the dura- tion of his enrollment	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

APPENDIX III

PORTSMOUTH SCHOOL BOARD POLICY HANDBOOK

APPENDIX III

Portsmouth School Board Policy Handbook

Policies on DisciplineSchool Board

The School Board delegates to the Superintendent to school personnel the responsibility and authority of effective discipline within the school, but the Board's responsibility does not stop here. The Board must insure that "due process and reasonableness" are the cornerstones whenever it is necessary to apply disciplinary measures.

Superintendent

The superintendent executes the Board's policy. He shall establish rules and regulations needed to implement the policy, but his responsibility does not stop here. He must provide the opportunities necessary for educational leaders to understand the purposes of discipline and to acquire the skills in administering discipline. He must encourage the educational leaders to be living models of self-discipline for the students to emulate.

Principals and Assistant Principals

The principal and assistant principal are responsible for the discipline in their school. They shall be given the authority to develop and execute school rules and regulations in accordance with Board policy and the Superintendent's rules and regulations, but their responsibility does not stop here. They must coordinate the efforts of the professional personnel, the parents and the students in establishing an atmosphere that leads to discipline compatible with the goals and aspirations of self-government.

Teacher

The teacher is responsible for maintaining discipline that is conducive to learning. He has the responsibility and authority for maintaining discipline in his classroom.

When required, he should not hesitate to confer with the principal or his designee regarding additional means for maintaining appropriate student behavior. In accordance with these regulations, he is the Board's representative in the classroom. He may request a conference with the parent or guardian regarding the conduct of the child. Likewise, he shall make himself available to meet with parents upon their request. It is essential regarding the types of discipline required for students to reap maximum benefit from school experiences.

Student

The student is responsible for his conduct. He is subject to the rules and regulations established by the principal of the school. Should he object to any rules or regulations or the application thereof, he must still obey the rule. However, he may appeal to the principal for a change in the rule. If the request for change is denied, he may appeal to the appropriate Director for an administrative hearing regarding his concern.

Board's Discipline Policy

The School Board of the City of Portsmouth expects and requires proper standards of discipline and behavior in the public schools.

Board's Rights

In order to maintain good order and insure an environment conducive to learning, the Board considers behavioral or conduct which interferes with the above as offenses. Such offenses include by are not limited to the following:

- Disrespect or insubordination toward teachers, teachers, principals, or others
- Immoral conduct
- Indecent language or behavior
- Violence or the threat of violence directed toward other students, teachers, or designated authorities
- Persistent disobedience or disorder
- Habitual tardiness or unexcused absenteeism
- Vandalism
- Use of tobacco, alcohol or drugs.

The Board delegates to the Superintendent and Principals the responsibility to develop and enforce the necessary rules and regulations in accordance with School Board Policy and the laws of the City, Commonwealth, and Nation to assure a proper standard of behavior.

Punishment

Corporal Punishment

A teacher or principal may administer reasonable corporal punishment on a pupil, provided he acts in good faith and the punishment is not excessive. (Code of Virginia, Section 22231.1) The punishment shall be commensurate with the offense and shall be administered in the presence of a responsible witness.

Detention

Children may be required to serve in supervised detention as punishment provided the parent is notified.

Suspension

Students may be suspended from school for sufficient cause by principals or assistant principals not to exceed ten (10) consecutive school days provided:

1. The principal or assistant principal advises the student that he is suspended;
2. The principal or assistant principal within twenty-four (24) hours advises the student and his parent or guardian in writing the basis upon which the student is suspended; and,
3. The principal or assistant principal offers the student and his parent or guardian the opportunity for an informal hearing whereas the student may explain his conduct.

Expulsion

Students may be expelled permanently or for extended periods by the School Board. A principal or assistant principal may suspend and recommend expulsion of a student from school for sufficient cause.

The superintendent, within ten (10) school days of the suspension, shall review the recommendation of expulsion by the principal with a committee of the School Board, who shall determine whether to expel the student.

Student Rights

Students not only have responsibilities regarding discipline in the school, they also have all the rights guaranteed to them by the constitution and the law. However, in exercising these rights, students must not interfere with the rights of others; disrupt the educational process; or violate laws of the federal, state, or local government; or the policies of the School Board of the City of Portsmouth.

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A STUDY OF SELECTED DISCIPLINARY
REFERRALS AND A REPORT OF DISCIPLINARY
PRACTICES IN THREE PORTSMOUTH, VIRGINIA,
PUBLIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

by

Theodore W. Owens, Jr.

(Abstract)

The purpose of this study was to determine the ten most common disciplinary offenses, examine selected disciplinary referrals, and report disciplinary practices in three public junior high schools in Portsmouth, Virginia, during the 1978-79 school year. The writer also investigated the possible influence of certain variables on disciplinary referrals such as sex, a written Code of Conduct issued to the students, ethnic origin, economic status, and the one-parent or guardian family.

The following statistical techniques were employed in the analysis of data: 1) t-test for differences in percentages, 2) Pearson r Correlation Coefficient, 3) t-test for correlation difference from zero, and 4) t-test for differences in proportion.

Results suggest: 1) Treating Disruptive Classroom Behavior according to student choice of extinguishing punishment appeared to lower the rate of repeat violations.

2) When there is a great disparity between teachers' and students' points of view regarding the severity of an offense, there is a moderate correlation with the increased number of students referred for disciplinary action.

3) Issuing a Code of Conduct to students appeared to reduce the number of non-repeat referrals. 4) The boys, economically disadvantaged students, and one-parent family students received a disproportionate number of referrals. Minority group member students did not receive a disproportionate number of referrals.