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# School Safety



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**NATIONAL  
SCHOOL  
SAFETY  
CENTER**



Pepperdine University's National School Safety Center is a partnership of the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education. NSSC's goal is to promote school safety, improve discipline, increase attendance, and suppress drug traffic and abuse in all our nation's schools.

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## School Safety

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**About the cover:**

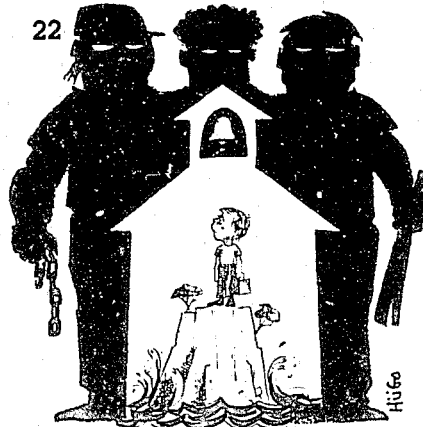
This statue in front of the Philadelphia Police Administration Building exemplifies the positive relationship needed between law enforcers and youth. Photograph by Greg Lanier.

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ACQUISITIONS

BY LARRY BURGAN

*It is essential to school administrators, teachers, other staff and students to accept responsibility and participate in providing for their own safety.*

## Share responsibility or share frustration

Safety and security in our schools is the business of everyone involved with education. This is a position that I and several colleagues have preached for a number of years.

It is generally recognized that in

*Larry Burgan is chief of School Police in Baltimore and vice president of the National Alliance for Safe Schools.*

today's society there is at least an occasional need for law enforcement services on school sites. At some secondary schools, in fact, a preventive law enforcement presence might well be required on an on-going basis. Such a presence, however, simply cannot absolve the others at those schools of their responsibility to participate actively in common sense safety and

security programs.

No school district I know has the resources to provide sufficient law enforcement personnel to assure complete safety for those working and learning at its schools. Even if resources are available, the oppressive presence of large numbers of enforcers would be harmful to the educational atmosphere.

the PTA.

One of the officers' major responsibilities is to counsel students involved in disruptive activities, ranging from truancy and fights to gang disputes. In the first year of the program, school liaison officers counseled 188 students. Only eight of these students - four percent - had to be counseled again. Recent statistics demonstrate similar success.

**Superior, Wisconsin** - The City of Superior was the first Wisconsin municipality to establish formal school-police links that went beyond the traditional request for police assistance when a disturbance or violation occurred on campus. The program, established during the 1971-72 school year, has since been emulated by more than a dozen cities in the state.

The project's elements have been condensed into a program development manual prepared by the Wisconsin

Juvenile Officers' Association. The manual discusses goals and objectives, officer training, financing, advisory groups, interagency relationships and program evaluation. It also provides sample guidelines for police conduct in the school setting and record keeping. The Juvenile Officers' Association says it hopes the manual will "serve as a catalyst" for police-school program development.

**Lake Oswego, Oregon** - Police Detective Bill Cross doesn't do locker checks. However, he does move from school to school, educating youngsters from the elementary grades through high school on the role of police in society. He also helps children understand how they can fight child abuse and reduce drug offenses. In the lower grades, a hand puppet helps him deliver his message.

Cross, honored for his work by the Oregon Association for the Advance-

ment of Health Education, also counsels students who come to him with problems and works with parents. When discussing law enforcement, he emphasizes the need for education. "I'm asked what tools I use the most," he says. "It's a notebook and pen, not the gun and baton."

**Gainesville, Florida** - On-campus police officers in Alachua County will do anything from chaperoning dances and parties to accompanying middle school and high school students on field trips. This doesn't mean they won't respond to criminal activity, but they view development of a camaraderie with students as the most important element in establishing respect for the law and combating drug abuse.

Officers assigned to high schools spend most of their time dealing with the "big three" of substance abuse - beer, marijuana and cocaine. Although the program costs at least \$150,000 per

The need for all to participate in providing for their own safety is not restricted to school districts, of course. As public concern over crime and demands for police services have increased, budgetary considerations have limited or eliminated growth in many law enforcement agencies. Enlightened police administrators have found new ways to meet their community's growing needs for services.

In some areas traditional police functions, such as enforcing parking laws or investigating minor accidents, have been turned over to other agencies or eliminated. In many communities programs emphasizing increased citizen involvement are proliferating.

Neighborhood watch programs, civilian patrol groups, volunteer auxiliary police units, and drug and weapons "hot lines" are some of the efforts bringing the entire community into the business of crime prevention and to the assistance of professional law enforcers.

Since schools are reflections of the communities in which they exist, it

seems logical that some of the community approaches to crime prevention would be successful on campuses. The experience in the Baltimore City Public Schools strongly supports this.

The Baltimore school system has a centrally controlled internal school police force. The unit began in the fall of 1967 as a security division with a chief and 19 commissioned officers. From that nucleus the force expanded and today includes 117 commissioned officers, supervisors and command staff. This force has full police powers on school campuses and in the vicinity.

The unit's growth brought not only more people, but also increased its responsibility and professional organization. Reporting mechanisms were developed, training programs which met state standards were implemented, and specialized service units were established.

By 1975 the unit was able to provide service to all schools in the city and maintained on-site assignments at virtually all secondary schools. In 1976 the

unit was given the responsibility for after hours property protection and a night patrol unit was developed.

Obviously, this growth was not without cost. Salary levels over the past 19 years have tripled. The unit operates a vehicle fleet and a radio communications network which must be serviced, maintained and replaced at scheduled intervals. Baltimore's school police force budget for this year, not including the cost of alarm system and hardware, is in excess of \$2.5 million. At this point it might be appropriate to see what these dollars provide the Baltimore City Public Schools.

Almost everyone's first concern, of course, is for safety and security in schools when they are occupied by students and staff. Total violations of the law reported during the school day have declined by over 52 percent during the past 10 years. Enrollment has declined only 30 percent during the same period, so it would appear a significant benefit has accrued.

From the time the school police force began until June 1984, this decline in law infractions was spread fairly evenly through the categories reported, from the most minor to the most serious. In the two school years since then, however, this has changed. Crimes against persons in the most serious categories fell more than 46 percent. Robberies and attempts, assaults with weapons and felony sex offenses reported in or around our schools dropped from 217 incidents during 1983-84 to 101 for 1985-86.

Of particular concern are crimes involving firearms, acts which have the greatest potential for tragedy. After several years of decline in such incidents, 1980-81 saw the numbers begin to rise alarmingly. From 34 incidents involving handguns in or around schools during 1979-80, the number climbed to 58 the following year and then to a high of 122 in 1983-84.

While all other types of offenses were declining or remaining stable, the increasing presence of firearms was

year in salaries, training and equipment, officials believe the investment is worthwhile. Lt. Ron Perkins of the Gainesville Police Department says, "I can't tell you whether we're catching 10 percent, 20 percent or 50 percent (of abusers), but we're making an impact because the streets are getting cleaner."

**Mineola, New York** - Former vandals counsel perpetrators of vandalism in the Police Anti-Vandalism Education (PAVE) program of the Nassau County Police Department. Officers in civilian clothes work with the peer counselors, ages 14 to 16, in a 2½ hour program which tells teens, "Vandalism hurts people, not just property." Movies, lectures and discussions cover possible motivations for vandalism, legal penalties and social costs - both in dollars and ill feelings.

The program began in 1980 in response to statistics showing vandalism in the county had risen 81 percent dur-

ing the previous decade. The police department reports only one-half of one percent of PAVE participants become repeat offenders. PAVE is viewed as being directly responsible for a decrease in vandalism in the county.

**Bensenville/Wood Dale, Illinois** - Police officers, serving as counselors and confidants, are helping reduce illegal activities in Illinois' High School District 211. Plain-clothes officers, assigned to schools as "consultants," are on hand to keep potential delinquents out of trouble by monitoring anti-social behavior and intervening through meetings with students and their parents. The police "consultants" keep track of drug activity, traffic accidents, auto thefts and car break-ins, truants and runaways. In the process, they show students that police officers are human beings and help young people understand the legal limits on their activities. □

# Educating minors is a major league concern.



Youngsters need positive guidance and support – at home *and in school* – to achieve their maximum potential.

They're looking for *role models*. It's our responsibility to show them the benefits of good health and quality education.

Share some time and energy with your neighborhood school. This will send an important message to students and staff. And it just may be the best education you ever received.

*Dave Winfield*  
Major Leaguer



A public service message of Pepperdine University's National School Safety Center and The David M. Winfield Foundation.

## BURGAN

causing deep and urgent concern. In 1984-85, however, incidents involving guns around schools dropped 46 percent down to 66 incidents, a level which was maintained during the past school year.

What had been a singular lack of success in reducing school crime losses made a dramatic improvement. Reported illegal entries and theft declined more than 20 percent in just one year from 1984-85 to 1985-86. The dollar loss in those reported incidents declined by 57 percent from over \$200,000 to under \$100,000. Statistics indicate serious losses are being prevented.

It seems fair to say from this data that Baltimore's school police force has contributed to helping provide a suitable learning environment in this school system. It would be nice if full credit for the remarkable improvements over the past two years could go to the school police force. Certainly the force instituted several changes and new procedures which contributed to the recent successes. But honesty dictates that much of the credit go to other institutions and individuals.

The first of those contributing factors is the leadership of the Baltimore City Public Schools. Strong support for the school police force has come from Superintendent of Public Instruction Alice Pinderhughes and her predecessor, Dr. John L. Crew.

Directives were sent to all building administrators restating and requiring adherence to policies and procedures related to safety for school buildings and those in them. These directives are reissued periodically. Several years ago the district initiated yearly inspections by school police personnel to insure policies and procedures are being followed at school sites.

Of equal importance has been a process of crime prevention training. Attendance at presentations by school police, offered for years on a voluntary basis, became mandatory two years ago. The management team at every school is required to attend workshops which

describe in detail basic, common-sense methods of reducing the likelihood of a crime being committed.

Virtually every secondary school and a significant percentage of the elementary schools have elected to have presentations repeated for site staff. In addition, a pilot safety program was developed and presented to the entire student body at one of our high schools on a class-by-class basis.

Other factors outside the school system also have contributed to the improved educational atmosphere. The mayor, police commissioner, states attorney and other city officials have gone out into the communities and schools strongly urging citizen cooperation in law enforcement efforts.

At many schools parents have volunteered to serve as entrance and hall monitors, an effort which helps not only with prompt identification of trespassers but also with student discipline control. Additionally, some community groups have established young citizens' organizations aimed at promoting obedience to law and identification of those who refuse to do so.

Baltimore's experience seems to demonstrate clearly the earlier statement that safety and security in our schools is the responsibility of everyone involved with education. Baltimore is not, perhaps, an educational utopia. Crime affects and likely will continue to affect our schools just as it does our communities. Still, there is no question that Baltimore's schools are safer today than they were two years ago.

Other school districts might learn from Baltimore's experience and realize it is essential to motivate administrators, school staff and students to participate actively in and to accept some responsibility for providing for their own safety.

Whatever a district's source of police service, whether it focuses on prevention or response, whether it is provided on-site or by random patrols, law enforcement alone is not enough to ensure safe and secure campuses. □