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RESEARCH BRIEF #1

Center For The Prevention Of School Violence

THE NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY SURVEY

The Center for the Prevention of School Violence conducted a telephone survey of all high schools in North Carolina during Spring, 1997, to determine which safety and security strategies are being used in these schools. The strategies in the Center's Safe Schools Pyramid formed the survey questionnaire's framework. The extent these strategies are being employed in the schools was measured. Estimates of the effectiveness of the strategies were obtained from school personnel as was information about strategies being employed in the schools other than those found in the Pyramid. This research brief describes the survey's intent, the questionnaire which was used, participation in the survey, and results which reflect upon what the Pyramid emphasizes. Subsequent briefs will reveal survey findings, including information about the perceived effectiveness of the Pyramid's strategies.

As described above, the survey's intent was to determine what high schools are doing to ensure safety and security. Questions about the strategies that are being used were asked as were questions about the perceived effectiveness of these strategies. School personnel were asked to respond to a seven-point effectiveness scale which was utilized to measure how effective the strategies are at "helping to keep [the] school safe and secure."

The six strategies which comprise the Center's Safe Schools Pyramid were focused upon in the survey's questionnaire. School personnel responded to questions about: physical design and technology application; School Resource Officers (SROs); Students Against Violence Everywhere (S.A.V.E.) chapters; conflict management and peer mediation programs; law-related education; and Teen Court and Student Court. In addition to questions which focused upon the Center's Safe Schools Pyramid, responding schools were able to provide information about strategies other than Pyramid strategies which are in place.



The Center's Safe Schools Pyramid was developed from work the Center has done since its establishment in 1993. The Pyramid has components which address what the Center describes as the three "P's" of school violence prevention: place, people, and purpose. "Place," or the school setting itself, needs attention paid to it so that a secure environment exists. "People," students, teachers, and staff, must be given consideration in efforts to ensure safety and security. And "purpose," or the reason why schools exist - education, needs to be kept in mind so that efforts to ensure safety and security fit with the schools' educational missions.

Two-hundred-and-fifteen of three hundred and seven high schools, grades nine through twelve, responded to questions about what they are doing to make themselves safe and secure, a response rate of just over seventy percent. Almost sixty-seven percent of the responses were obtained from school principals; another twenty-nine percent were obtained from assistant principals.

The survey revealed that participating schools are attending in varying degrees to the three "P's" of the Center's Safe Schools Pyramid. Through efforts directed at physical design and the application of technology, almost all of the schools are addressing safety and security concerns which fall into the category of "place." Where available, School Resource Officers are often playing a role in this as well. These officers, along with conflict management, peer mediation, and Students Against Violence Everywhere, characterize efforts directed at the "people" aspects of safety and security. And, in lesser degrees, those strategies which have "purpose" or education at their core, law-related education, Teen Court, and Student Court, are being employed to enhance safety and security in the high schools that participated in the survey.

Additional research briefs as well as research bulletins will be available in the near future and will reveal other findings obtained from the Center's high school strategy survey. To see the in-depth research bulletin about the high school strategy survey, [follow this link](#).

For more information about the Center, call:
Center for the Prevention of School Violence
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