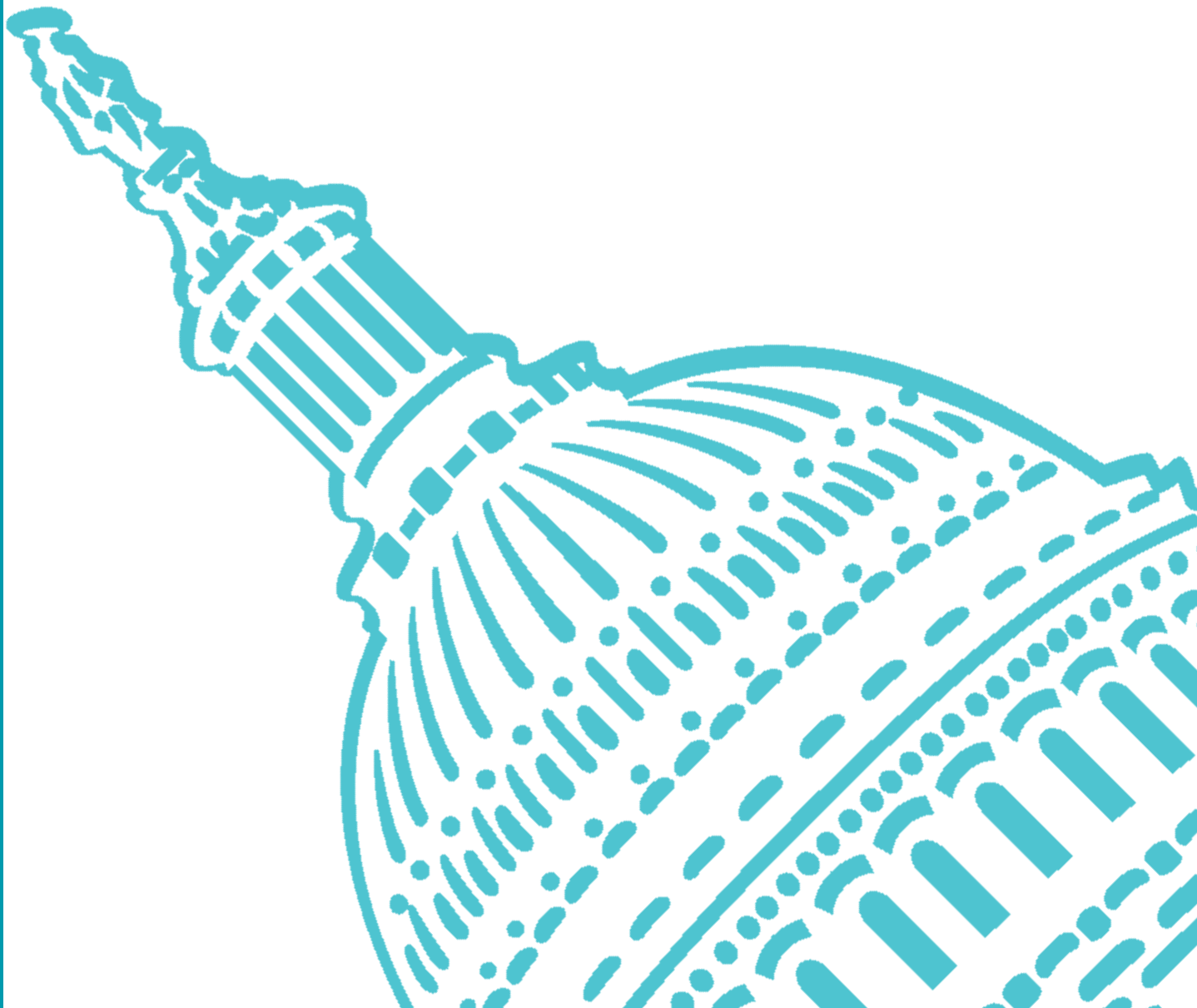**Family Impact Seminars**

Indiana

Growing Indiana's Human Capital: Assuring Positive Futures for Youth

Briefing Report
January 2005

Growing Indiana's Human Capital: Assuring Positive Futures for Youth

Indiana Family Impact Seminars

Briefing Report

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Sponsoring Organizations

Purpose, Presenters and Publications

Growing Indiana's Human Capital: Assuring Positive Futures for Youth is seventh in a continuing series designed to bring a family focus to policymaking. The legislators for whom these seminars are designed selected this years' topic – and chose to focus on three policy approaches – challenges facing youth, educational policies, and civic engagement. This seventh seminar features the following speakers:

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Family Impact Seminars have been well received by federal policymakers in Washington, DC, and Indiana is one of several states to sponsor such seminars for state policymakers. Family Impact Seminars provide state-of-the-art research on current family issues for state legislators and their aides, Governor's Office staff, state agency representatives, educators, and service providers. Since one of the best ways to help individuals is by strengthening their families, the Family Impact Seminars provide a means for speakers to analyze the consequences an issue, policy or program may have for families.

Whereas the seminars do not lobby for particular policies, we strive to present objective, nonpartisan information on current issues, thereby allowing seminar participants to discuss policy options and identify common ground where it exists.

For further information on the seminar contact Karen DeZarn, Purdue Extension Administration, Purdue University, 812 West State Street, Matthews Hall 110, West Lafayette, IN 47907-2060, Phone: (765) 494-8252 FAX: (765) 496-1947 e-mail: kdezarn@purdue.edu

We hope this information will be useful to you in your deliberations, and we look forward to providing educational seminars and briefing reports in the future.

A Checklist for Assessing the Impact of Policies and Programs on Families

The first step in developing family-friendly policies is to ask the right questions:

- What can government and community institutions do to enhance the family's capacity to help itself and others?

- What effect does (or will) this policy (or proposed program) have for families? Will it help or hurt, strengthen or weaken family life?

These questions sound simple, but they can be difficult to answer.

The Family Criteria (Ad Hoc) Task Force of the Consortium of Family Organizations (COFO) developed a checklist to assess the intended and unintended consequences of policies and programs on family stability, family relationships, and family responsibilities. The checklist includes six basic principles, which serve as the criteria for evaluating policies and programs for sensitivity to and support of families. Each principle is accompanied by a series of family impact questions.

The principles are not rank ordered and sometimes they conflict with each other, requiring trade-offs. Cost-effectiveness is also a consideration. Some questions are value-neutral while others incorporate specific values. People may not always agree on these values, so at times the questions will require rephrasing. This tool, however, reflects a broad nonpartisan consensus, and it can be useful to people across the political spectrum.

For the questions that apply to your policy or program, record the impact on family well-being.

Principle 1. Family support and responsibilities

Policies and programs should aim to support and supplement family functioning and provide substitute services only as a last resort.

Does the proposal or program:

- support and supplement parents' and other family members' ability to carry out their responsibilities?

- provide incentives for other persons to take over family functioning when doing so may not be necessary?

- set unrealistic expectations for families to assume financial and/or caregiving responsibilities for dependent, seriously ill, or disabled family members?

- enforce absent parents' obligations to provide financial support for their children?

Principle 2. Family membership and stability

Whenever possible, policies and programs should encourage and reinforce marital, parental, and family commitment and stability, especially when children are involved. Intervention in family membership and living arrangements is usually justified only to protect family members from serious harm or at the request of the family itself.

Does the policy or program:

- provide incentives or disincentives to marry, separate, or divorce?

- provide incentives or disincentives to give birth to, foster, or adopt children?

- strengthen marital commitment or parental obligations?

- use appropriate criteria to justify removal of a child or adult from the family?

- allocate resources to help keep the marriage or family together when this is the appropriate goal?

- recognize that major changes in family relationships such as divorce or adoption are processes that extend over time and require continuing support and attention?

Principle 3. Family involvement and interdependence

Policies and programs must recognize the interdependence of family relationships, the strength and persistence of family ties and obligations, and the wealth of resources that families can mobilize to help its members.

To what extent does the policy or program:

- recognize the reciprocal influence of family needs on individual needs, and the influence of individual needs on family needs?

- recognize the complexity and responsibilities involved in caring for family members with special needs (e.g., physical or mental disabilities or chronic illnesses)?

- involve immediate and extended family members in working toward a solution?

- acknowledge the power and persistence of family ties, even when they are problematic or destructive?

- build on informal social support networks (such as community/neighborhood organizations, religious communities) that are essential to families' lives?

- respect family decisions about the division of labor?

- address issues of power inequity in families?

- ensure perspectives of all family members are represented?

- assess and balance the competing needs, rights, and interests of various family members?

- protect the rights and safety of families while respecting parents' rights and family integrity?

Principle 4. Family partnership and empowerment

Policies and programs must encourage individuals and their close family members to collaborate as partners with program professionals in delivery of services to an individual. Additionally, parent and family representatives are an essential resource in policy development, program planning, and evaluation.

In what specific ways does the policy or program:

- provide full information and a range of choices to families?

- respect family autonomy and allow families to make its own decisions? On what principles are family autonomy breached and program staff allowed to intervene and make decisions?

- encourage professionals to work in collaboration with the families of their clients, patients, or students?

- take into account the family's need to coordinate the multiple services it may require and integrate well with other programs and services the family uses?

- make services easily accessible to families in terms of location, operating hours, and easy-to-use application and intake forms?

- prevent participating families from being devalued, stigmatized, or subjected to humiliating circumstances?

- involve parents and family representatives in policy and program development, implementation, and evaluation?

Principle 5. Family diversity

Families come in many forms and configurations, and policies and programs must take into account their varying effects on different types of families. Policies and programs must acknowledge and value the diversity of family life and not discriminate against or penalize families solely for reasons of structure, roles, cultural values, or life stage.

How does the policy or program:

- affect various types of families?

- acknowledge intergenerational relationships and responsibilities among family members?

- provide good justification for targeting only certain family types, for example, only employed parents or single parents? Does it discriminate against or penalize other types of families for insufficient reason?

- identify and respect the different values, attitudes, and behavior of families from various racial, ethnic, religious, cultural, and geographic backgrounds that are relevant to program effectiveness?

Principle 6. Support of vulnerable families

Families in greatest economic and social need, as well as those determined to be most vulnerable to breakdown, should be included in government policies and programs.
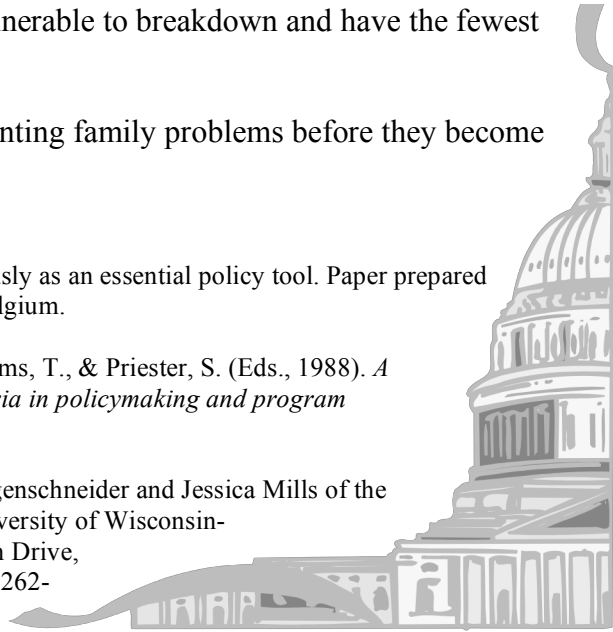
Does the policy or program:

- identify and publicly support services for families with the most extreme economic or social need?

- give support to families that are most vulnerable to breakdown and have the fewest resources?

- target efforts and resources toward preventing family problems before they become serious crises or chronic situations?

Growing Indiana's Capital: Assuring Positive Futures for Youth

Executive Summary

In 2003, 56,206 Indiana students graduated from public high school. Some of these young people will enter college, attend vocational training, find employment, or start families. However, for the 6,769 students who dropped out of school that same year, or the 1,561 youth who were committed to the Department of Corrections, or the students who comprised the 326,808 incidences of expulsions and suspensions, outcomes may be drastically different.

The transition from adolescence to adulthood is a period during which enormous change and experimentation take place, where young people try out alternative paths before settling on long-term commitments. As youth transition to adulthood, they face many decisions regarding educational opportunities, career paths, job prospects, and childbearing. For some youth, however, the transition to adulthood does not go smoothly. Many are confronted with extraordinary challenges because of the environments in which they were raised; others because of bad decisions that led to adult consequences. Still others face difficulties when their opportunities to learn become disrupted as a result of disciplinary problems at school, leading to expulsion or out-of-school suspensions.

Despite the struggles that some young people endure, positive opportunities exist for them to become involved with their communities. Many Hoosier youth engage in volunteer work, providing them a feeling of connectedness to their communities and allowing them to identify with a common good. By presenting and promoting opportunities for youth, Indiana residents can help lay the groundwork for the next generation of leaders within our state. And by recognizing the different paths youth take to adulthood, our efforts can also focus on providing opportunities for those who need more assistance so that they too may become productive citizens of our state.

In order for Indiana to move forward in assuring that all youth have the possibility of a positive future, policymakers and practitioners must be aware of the challenges that young people tackle as they move from adolescence to adulthood. The *2005 Indiana Family Impact Seminar Briefing Report* addresses important issues facing some young Hoosiers as they make that critical transition and outlines the current knowledge surrounding these topics from national and state perspectives.

Educational Policies that Impact Youth

by Russell Skiba, Ph.D.
Indiana University

With the increasing attention on school violence, school districts around the country have adopted zero tolerance policies aimed at preventing school violence and promoting effective school learning climates. There seems to be little doubt that schools need the discretion to implement policies that protect its students and maintain a productive learning environment. However, the debate regarding how to keep schools and students safe and productive remains controversial.

The Indiana data on suspension and expulsion present a mixed picture. Negative outcomes associated with suspension and expulsion, such as minority disproportionality and a negative relationship with ISTEP scores, are of concern. Yet the fact that the high rates of out-of-school suspension and expulsion may be limited to a relatively small percentage of Indiana's schools suggests that many of Indiana's schools are using proactive alternatives that maintain safety without removing students from the opportunity to learn.

What types of effective programs and strategies are currently being implemented in Indiana schools that promote school safety and a climate that is conducive to learning? Interviews conducted with Indiana principals offered innovative programs for maintaining both school discipline and maximizing educational opportunity. These principals maintained high academic and behavioral expectations and were not afraid to remove a student if safety demanded it. But they also:

- *clarified expectations regarding office referrals and train staff in classroom management strategies,*
- *actively taught appropriate behavior through school philosophy and preventive programs,*
- *communicated and collaborated with parents,*
- *sought to reconnect alienated students through mentoring and anger management, and*
- *developed creative options in the school and community to keep even those students who are suspended and expelled engaged in learning,*

The following summary offers recommendations from the Center for Evaluation and Education Policy and the Indiana Youth Services Association. They have produced a series of policy briefs on the issues of zero tolerance policies, expulsions and out of school suspensions in Indiana, and innovative programs that some Indiana schools have adopted in an attempt to balance school discipline and educational opportunity. For further information, please see the Center's website, http://ceep.indiana.edu/ChildrenLeftBehind/.

Children Left Behind:
Series Summary and Recommendations
By Russell Skiba, M. Karega Rausch, and Shana Ritter

To create a dialogue between the education and juvenile justice communities on effective methods of school discipline, the Center for Evaluation and Education Policy and the Indiana Youth Services Association have collaborated on a series of three briefing papers on the topic, released concurrently with this summary.

The complete series and supplemental Children Left Behind materials may be found on the project website:

ceep.indiana.edu/ ChildrenLeftBehind

In the face of serious incidents of violence in our schools in the last decade, the prevention of school disruption and violence has become a central and pressing concern. Beyond the prevention of deadly violence, we know that teachers cannot teach and students cannot learn in a school climate characterized by disruption. Clearly, schools have the right and responsibility to use all effective means at their disposal to maintain the integrity, productivity, and safety of the learning climate.

Yet schools also face a mandate under No Child Left Behind to maximize the opportunity to learn for all students. Students who are removed from school are students at increased risk for delinquency in the community. Further, NCLB also emphasizes accountability of educational practice. Schools are increasingly under a mandate to use only those educational practices that have demonstrated solid evidence of effectiveness.

Given that removing students from school through suspension and expulsion is one of the most common disciplinary practices in schools today, we are faced with what appears to be a profound contradiction. Educators seemed to be forced into a difficult choice pitting the needs of many students to a safe educational environment against the rights of some children to educational opportunity.

The Children Left Behind Project is a collaboration of the Indiana Youth Services Association and the Center for Evaluation and Education Policy, whose purpose is to share data on the use and effect of school suspension and expulsion with policymakers, educators, and community members in the state. Our goals are to create a meaningful dialogue about suspension, expulsion, and their alternatives, and in particular to improve communication between education and juvenile justice. A series of three briefing papers explored these apparent contradictions, addressing three questions about out-of-school suspension and expulsion:

- *Does the literature support the need for and effectiveness of zero tolerance suspensions and expulsions? (Briefing Paper 1)*
- *What is the status of suspension and expulsion in Indiana? (Briefing Paper 2)*
- *Are there alternatives that can maintain safe and productive school climates while preserving students' opportunity to learn? (Briefing Paper 3)*

Briefing Paper 1. Zero Tolerance: The Assumptions and the Facts

The use of zero tolerance in schools is predicated upon a number of assumptions about school violence and the types of responses necessary to address it. In this paper, we examined available national data to assess how well these assumptions hold up.[1] That review shows that:

- Violence and disruption are extremely important concerns that must be addressed, but there is no evidence that violence in America's public schools is out-of-control, nor that school violence is worsening.
- The inconsistency with which zero tolerance is implemented makes it highly unlikely that it could function effectively to improve school safety.
- Higher rates of out-of-school suspension are associated with poorer school climate, higher dropout rates, and lower achievement, making it difficult to argue that zero tolerance is an important tool for creating effective school climates.
- Despite claims that zero tolerance sends an important deterrent message to students, there is no credible evidence that either out-of-school suspension or expulsion are effective methods for changing student behavior.
- Minority disproportionality in suspension and expulsion has been consistently documented and seems to be increasing with the use of zero tolerance.
- A wide range of alternatives to zero tolerance has emerged and is available to promote a productive learning climate and address disruptive behavior.

We must all be concerned about the safety of students and the ability of teachers to teach them in a climate free of disruption. Schools have the right and responsibility to use effective tools that enable them to reach that goal. Yet, No Child Left Behind mandates that we use only those educational interventions that provide evidence of effectiveness. The national data raise serious questions about whether the philosophy of zero tolerance in general, or the use of school suspension and expulsion in particular, can be considered to be effective interventions for maintaining school safety.

Briefing Paper 2. Unplanned Outcomes: Suspensions and Expulsions in Indiana

National-level data may be insufficient to describe the status of school discipline in Indiana. Thus, the second briefing paper specifically presented data and perspectives on discipline from Indiana schools and Indiana principals. A number of findings emerged:

- Rates of expulsion appear to be decreasing, but out-of-school suspension is increasing.
- Over 90% of out-of-school suspensions were accounted for by infractions in the categories Disruptive Behavior and Other.
- Schools in urban locales have significantly higher rates of out-of-school suspension. Secondary schools have higher rates of both out-of-school suspension and expulsion than elementary schools.
- Rates of out-of-school suspension are not distributed evenly across schools: The top 10% of schools in terms of rate of suspensions account for over 50% of Indiana's out-of-school suspensions.
- African Americans are four times as likely to be suspended out of school and about two and a half times as likely to be expelled as White students. Hispanics are about twice as likely to be suspended or expelled as White students (see Figure 1).
- In the most recent available national data, Indiana ranks first in the nation in its rate of school expulsion, and ninth in out-of-school suspensions. This finding cannot be accounted for by the length of expulsion as defined in Indiana statute.
- Indiana principals are sharply divided over the use of out-of-school suspension and expulsion. Attitudes about the willingness to use suspension and expulsion are related to attitudes towards parents and students with disabilities, and are also associated with school rates of suspension.
- Regardless of demographic factors, schools with higher rates of out-of-school suspension have lower average passing rates on ISTEP+ (see Figure 2).

In summary, the Indiana data on suspension and expulsion present a mixed picture. On the one hand, the negative outcomes associated with suspension and expulsion, such as minority disproportionality and a negative relationship with ISTEP scores, are of concern. Yet the fact that the extensive use of out-of-school suspension and expulsion may be limited to a relatively small percentage of Indiana's schools suggests that many of Indiana's schools are using proactive alternatives that maintain safety without removing students from the opportunity to learn.

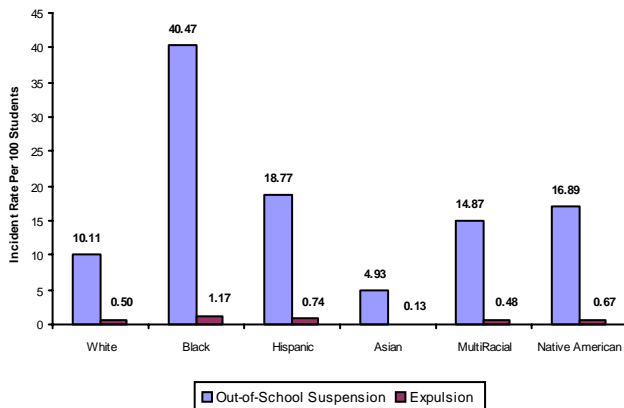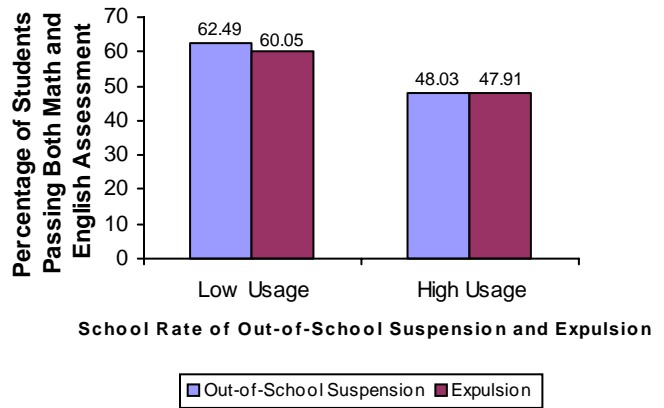## Figure 1. Discipline Rates by Race

Figure 2. Percent Passing ISTEP by School Disciplinary Use

Briefing Paper 3. "Discipline is Always Teaching": Effective Alternatives

A number of programs and interventions have been identified as effective or promising for reducing the threat of youth violence and promoting safe school climates. But the presence of available research does not guarantee that those approaches can be used effectively at the local level. For the third briefing paper, we spoke with Indiana principals about innovative programs both for maintaining school discipline and maximizing educational opportunity. We found no hint of compromise in the approach used by these principals. They maintain high academic and behavioral expectations and are not afraid to remove a student if safety demands it. But they also:

- Clarify expectations regarding office referrals and train staff in classroom management strategies.
- Actively teach appropriate behavior through school philosophy and preventive programs.
- Communicate and collaborate with parents.
- Seek to reconnect alienated students through mentoring and anger management.
- Develop creative options in the school and community to keep even those students who are suspended or expelled engaged in learning.

Such efforts are not free; they may require significant commitments of time and resources. Recent efforts to pass a statewide bullying bill suggest, however, that Indiana is prepared to make a commitment to support the state's schools in promoting school climates that are safe and conducive to learning for all children.

Students removed from an educational environment and placed unsupervised in the community are children at grave risk.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The only system that touches every Indiana child is education. When the critical relationship between the child and school is disrupted, the probability of adverse outcomes is multiplied. Criminologists have found that one of the strongest predictors of juvenile delinquency is poor school attachment.[2] Many of the interventions that have been found to be most effective in reducing youth violence and delinquency work because they re-integrate children and youth with their schools and communities. In contrast, out-of-school suspension and expulsion actively and purposely break that bond.

The primary focus of the Children Left Behind Project has been to document the use and effects of school exclusion for students in Indiana's schools. Beyond the schoolhouse doors, however, removing students from the opportunity for an education also creates a host of negative effects for the community. Emerging findings from the study of what has come to be called the school-to-prison pipeline have found that the increasing tendency to criminalize school behavior is associated with increased school dropout, higher levels of incarceration, and minority over-representation in juvenile detention.[3]

> *These results show that it is possible to maintain a safe and productive school climate without removing a large number of students from the opportunity to learn.*

Students removed from an educational environment and placed unsupervised in communities for days, weeks, or months at a time are children at grave risk. Psychologists have shown that a critical moment in the development of delinquency comes in the middle school years when a child who has become alienated from school begins to connect instead with gangs or antisocial youth in the community.[4] Removing students from school for disciplinary infractions gives them the time, and in many communities the opportunity, to spend time with and learn from negative role models. Many communities are coming to the realization that suspension and expulsion simply shift the location of the problem—from disruptions in the school to crime in the streets.

Over the course of the past year, the Indiana Juvenile Law Study Commission has met to examine the strengths and weaknesses of Indiana's juvenile justice system and the laws that drive that system. The Commission has heard from a spectrum of leaders in the juvenile justice system. They were unanimously concerned about the increasing numbers of children that appear before their benches who share one thing in common: Whether because of disciplinary practices, truancy, or dropout, these youth were somewhere other than in the classroom.

The findings of this project suggest that there can be a different way. National reports have identified a variety of proactive strategies, resources, and interventions that can reduce the threat of school violence and improve student outcomes. Here in Indiana, innovative programs described by principals and Youth Service Bureaus suggest that schools can maintain orderly environments with high expectations, while at the same time making an active commitment to the continuing education of all children. Together these results show that it is possible to maintain a safe and productive school climate without removing a large number of students from the opportunity to learn, and suggest a number of recommendations:

1. **Reserve zero tolerance disciplinary removals for only the most serious and severe of disruptive behaviors, and define those behaviors explicitly.**
2. **Replace one-size-fits-all disciplinary strategies with graduated systems of discipline, wherein consequences are geared to the seriousness of the infraction.**
3. **Improve data collection strategies on school discipline at the state level and assist educators in using disciplinary data to better understand and address safety and disciplinary concerns at their school.**
4. **Improve collaboration and communication among schools, parents, juvenile justice, and mental health to develop an array of alternatives for challenging youth.**
5. **Implement preventive measures that can improve school climate and reconnect alienated students.**
6. **Expand the array of options available to schools for dealing with disruptive or violent behavior and, in particular, ensure that teachers have the resources they need to solve disciplinary problems at the classroom level.**
7. **Evaluate school discipline or school violence prevention strategies to ensure that all disciplinary interventions, programs, or strategies are truly having an effect on student behavior and school safety.**

As our knowledge increases, it becomes apparent that there is no inherent contradiction between school safety and educational opportunity for all children. The good news is that effective strategies have been validated at the national level that can help schools reach both goals. The better news is that courageous and innovative Indiana educators have begun to demonstrate success in creating safe and effective learning climates for all of Indiana's children. Our schools and our children deserve nothing less than full support for those efforts.

Endnotes

1. In the interest of space and readability, citations for data represented in summaries of the three briefing papers are not presented here, but may be found in the three briefing papers (ceep.indiana.edu/ChildrenLeftBehind).

2. Hawkins, J.D., Guo, J., Hill, K.G., Battin-Person, S., & Abbott, R.D. (2001). Long-term effects of the Seattle Social Development Intervention on school bonding trajectories. *Applied Developmental Science, 5*, 225-236.

3. Wald, J,. & Losen, D. (2003). Defining and redirecting a school-to-prison pipeline. *New Directions in Youth Development, 99*, 9-15.

4. Patterson, G. R. (1992). Developmental changes in antisocial behavior. In R.D. Peters, R.J. McMahon, & V.L. Quinsey (Eds.), *Aggression and violence throughout the life span* (pp. 52-82). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Russell Skiba is Director of the Initiative on Equity and Opportunity at the Center for Evaluation and Education Policy.

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Russell Skiba, Ph.D. Biography

Dr. Skiba is an Associate Professor in the Counseling and Educational Psychology Department at Indiana University Bloomington. He is currently Co-Director of the Safe and Responsive Schools Project, a U.S. Department of Education Projects of National Significance grant working with eleven schools in two states to develop comprehensive and preventive approaches to ensuring school safety.

He has presented on school violence prevention for professional associations and school districts throughout the country, and recently received the Operation PUSH/Rainbow Coalition Push for Excellence award for his research in minority disproportionality in school suspension. He has been called upon as an expert on zero tolerance by both the United States Senate and the United States Commission on Civil Rights, and has been cited as an expert on school violence and minority disproportionality in a number of national media, including the Los Angeles Times, USA Today, Chicago Sun-Times, Philadelphia Inquirer, Washington Post, and ABC's news program, Nightline.

Relevant Publications

Skiba, R. J., Michael, R. S., Nardo, A. C., & Peterson, R. (in press). The color of discipline: Sources of racial and gender disproportionality in school punishment. Urban Review.

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Peterson, R. L., & Skiba, R. J. (2001). Creating school climates that prevent violence. *Clearing House, 74(3)*, 155-63.

Peterson, R. L., Larson, J., & Skiba, R. (2001). School violence prevention: Current status and policy recommendations. *Law & Policy, 23*(3), 345-371.

Skiba, R. J., & Leone, P. E. (2001). Zero tolerance and school security measures: A failed experiment. In T. Johnson, J. E. Boyden, & W. J. Pittz (Eds.), *Racial profiling and punishment in U. S. public schools: How zero tolerance policies and high stakes testing subvert academic excellence and racial equity* (pp. 34-38). Oakland, CA: Applied Research Center.

Challenges Facing Youth

by Edward P. Mulvey, Ph.D.
University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine

With the increased attention on the rates of serious juvenile crime in the late 1980s and early 1990s, legislatures around the country passed new laws making it easier to transfer youth to adult courts. Many argued that the juvenile justice system, with its focus on treatment and rehabilitation, was not equipped to handle serious violent juvenile offenders.

Little is known about the youth who are deeply entrenched in our juvenile justice system. Why do some violent juvenile offenders alter their lives in a more positive direction after committing serious crimes? Why do some violent juvenile offenders continue to commit crimes? If research finds that there are different pathways that violent juvenile offenders take, then perhaps interventions used within the juvenile justice system could influence the pathways of some youth. What role do social, contextual, and developmental factors play in the decision making processes of youth who choose to continue to commit crimes and vice versa? For example, if family relationships are an important predictor of desistance, can interventions be designed to improve those relationships? Current research focused on these questions will help policymakers make more informed decisions regarding juvenile justice policy and allocate resources more effectively and efficiently.

One of Dr. Mulvey's current projects, Pathways to Desistance, is a prospective longitudinal study of 1,200 serious offenders age 16-24 transitioning from late adolescence into adulthood. Relatively little is known about the patterns of escalation to serious offending among youth. Similarly, we know even less is known about the patterns of desistance from offending among serious juvenile offenders. By focusing on "deep end" offenders – those youth who have penetrated the juvenile justice system deeply – the research team hopes to study the criminal careers and desistance from such activities. The goal of the study is to improve policymakers' decision-making within the juvenile justice system.

The research is examining three issues. First, the study will attempt to identify distinct pathways out of involvement with the juvenile justice system, as well as characteristics of youth who fall into the different patterns. Second, researchers will examine the role of several social, contextual, and developmental factors theorized to promote either the continuation or desistance of offending. Finally, researchers will study whether various sanctions and juvenile justice system interventions alter pathways out of involvement with the juvenile justice system.

Using Research to Improve the Juvenile Justice System

How can research be useful in the juvenile justice system? In the past, the system has been ruled more by fads than empirical findings. At times, it seems as though the right approach has been discovered to deal with juvenile crime, but the realization hits after a few years that the latest solution to address juvenile crime does not work. Although frustrating, we must use this opportunity to examine what questions are being asked and frame better ones. By pursuing sound empirical research, we can begin to move toward a more just and effective system.

One way research can make a clear contribution is by testing the assumptions underpinning broad policy positions in this area. There are, for example, three assumptions that support the logic of having the juvenile justice system as a separate structure from the adult justice system. Research on each of these assumptions has, and will, improve practice and inform policy debate about methods for handling juvenile crime.

Assumption 1: *Adolescents are different from adults in ways that make it reasonable to consider their cases in a more individualistic fashion.*

At the heart of our commitment to a separate juvenile court is the idea that not only do adolescents think differently from adults, but their actions are also determined more by transitory social situations than their adult counterparts. We have long thought that adolescents have limited competency compared with adults and we should therefore examine the actor rather than the act is managing adolescent offenders.

Some work supports this assumption, but there is much more to consider. For example, the MacArthur Foundation Network on Adolescent Development and Juvenile Justice examined the specific question of how to assess the competence of adolescents who stand trial as adults. Over 1,400 males and females between the ages of 11 and 24 participated in the study. Half the participants were in jail or detained in juvenile detention centers at the time of the study, and half were individuals of similar age, gender, ethnicity, and social class but residing in the community.

Standardized assessments were administered to these individuals to determine their knowledge and abilities relevant to competency for standing trial and legal decision-making in various hypothetical situations (such as whether to confess to a crime to the police, share information with one's attorney, or accept a plea agreement). Other measures that might influence these capacities were also examined, such as intelligence, symptoms of mental health problems, and prior experience with the juvenile justice system.

The study found that juveniles ages 11 to 13 were *more than three times as likely* as young adults (individuals aged 18 to 24) to be "seriously impaired" with regard to competence-related abilities. Juveniles ages 14 to 15 were twice as likely as young adults to be "seriously impaired." Individuals ages 15 and younger also differed from young adults in their legal decision-making skills. For example, younger individuals were less likely to recognize the risks inherent in different choices and less likely to think about the long-term consequences of their choices.

Juveniles with below-average intelligence (IQ scores less than 85) were more likely to be "significantly impaired" in abilities relevant for competence to stand trial than juveniles of average intelligence (IQs scores of 85 and higher). A greater proportion of youths in the juvenile justice system were found to have below-average intelligence than youth in the community. Because lower intelligence is related to poorer performance on abilities associated with competence to stand trial, the risk for incompetence to stand trial is even greater among adolescents who are in the justice system than it is among adolescents in the community. In fact, more than half of all below-average 11 to 13 year-olds and more than 40% of all below-average 14 and 15 years-olds were in the "significantly impaired" range on abilities related to competence.

The results of this study indicate that when compared with adults, a significantly greater proportion of juveniles in the community ages 15 and younger, and an even larger proportion of juvenile offenders of the same age, are probably not competent to stand trial in a criminal proceeding. Juveniles of below-average intelligence are especially at-risk of being incompetent to stand trial.

Findings from this type of research can inform guideline setting, clinical practice, and judicial decision making about when to consider an adolescent an adult for purposes of court processing. Knowing more about what distinguishes an adolescent's judgment from an adult's can provide the groundwork for reasoned approaches regarding the use of individual assessment.

Assumption 2: *We can identify adolescents who are most at risk for future offending and provide services or sanctions to them selectively.*

Through longitudinal research, we have learned much about what increases the likelihood that an adolescent will become involved in delinquency. This information has been used to develop and refine prevention programs for adolescents likely to commit criminal acts. However, we know far less about the factors that lead a juvenile out of committing crimes, although we do know that a large proportion of these adolescents make relatively successful transitions to adulthood. We need to understand more about this process in order to determine the best way to manage serious adolescent offenders found in the juvenile justice system.

Rather than looking at what gets juveniles into trouble, researchers are documenting what leads them out of trouble. The Pathways to Desistance Project is currently following 1,200 serious adolescent offenders to ascertain factors contributing to their successful adjustment to adulthood. Current evidence is sketchy on the relative influences of interventions, sanctions, and developmental events on outcomes for serious adolescent offenders. Although a significant percentage of adolescent offenders decrease or stop antisocial activity in late adolescence, it is unclear exactly how such desistance occurs or what factors influence the process.

The goals of the Pathways to Desistance study are to describe patterns of desistance from delinquent and criminal behavior, identify key developmental events related to desistance, and compare the effects of different interventions and sanctions on desistance. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- determine whether there are distinct pathways out of involvement with juvenile crime and, if so, identify such pathways,

- identify the characteristics of adolescents who progress along each of these pathways,

- identify the types of life events or influences that appear to promote desistance from criminal activity among adolescents, and

- determine the type and magnitude of the effect researchers can expect from the intervention strategies most commonly used with serious adolescent offenders.

Findings from the study will provide policymakers with evidence regarding the utility of different processing and sanctioning options, a topic widely discussed at the state and national levels. Findings will also be valuable to practitioners who need direction regarding what factors to consider during risk assessments and what indicators to monitor or assess on an ongoing basis when working with serious adolescent offenders. This type of information is necessary to help the courts in their efforts to distinguish which serious offenders are likely to progress to serious crime and which ones are likely to "straighten out" in that critical period of transition during late adolescence.

Assumption 3: *We have some approaches that work with adolescent offenders.*

The final assumption behind a separate juvenile justice system is that we can have a positive effect on adolescents through some form of intervention. We hope that adolescents can be affected positively by efforts to structure their lives and their thinking. In short, we believe that involvement with certain types of programs can make a positive difference.

A number of general conclusions can be drawn from the research on prevention programs for adolescent offenders. First, the earlier the better. Preventive intervention with families with young children can show positive effects on the occurrence of later delinquency. Second, different interventions work at different times during a child's development. There is no magic approach that works at all ages. For example, changing the way adolescents think about the role of violence in social interactions is more effective with young adolescents than older adolescents. This phenomenon simply reflects the fact that factors contributing to risk change over time and must be addressed in differently throughout a child's life. This means that juvenile crime can be addressed effectively only by having a balanced portfolio of approaches to prevention and intervention. Third, the most effective programs with adolescent offenders are comprehensive, theory-based, and use structured methods for building skills. Comprehensive programs that take families and communities into account and are flexible to local conditions have a higher likelihood of continued success. Well-designed programs based on a broad view of theories of how change occurs in the adolescent consistently outperform approaches that attempt to change one aspect of an adolescent's thinking or situation, with a vague notion that "this will make things better."

Pursuit of research as outlined above will help refine juvenile justice policy and practice. It points the way toward methods for assessing and intervening in the lives of adolescent offenders

with less vindictiveness than many of our current policies and more realistic concern for public safety than some of our former policies. Such an informed middle ground can only be achieved, however, by systematically developing a strategy for pursuing useful research. It does not come from asking repeatedly if we have found the magic bullet.

A coherent strategy for research requires a central body overseeing and promoting work in juvenile justice that contributes to a balanced portfolio of approaches to dealing with juvenile offenders. It means that empirical investigations in this area must be viewed as legitimate activities in their own right, not simply as add-ons to well meaning social service efforts meant either to justify further funding or to scuttle future attempts at similar work. Too often, research and evaluation in this area are seen as proving whether something works or not in the short run, with little regard for accumulating a systematic body of knowledge about how adolescents change and how the juvenile justice system really works. In short, empirical work can be, but usually is not, used effectively in juvenile justice.

The challenge is to build a body of useful knowledge about serious adolescent offenders and the juvenile justice system. This can be done with some vision and patience; expecting good science and pragmatic answers over time, much as we do with medical research. We do not and would not expect to generate knowledge about treating complicated medical disorders piecemeal or in a time frame that serves our immediate funding cycle. Yet we somehow think this can be done with the complicated processes underlying antisocial and violent behavior in adolescence.

The point here is simply that much can and should be expected of research. These expectations will only be met, however, if the agencies funding that research can operate as independent, professional organizations charged with developing a coherent, integrated set of studies aimed at answering broad questions about how adolescents develop and how the juvenile justice system affects them. Taking this approach, there is great potential for research to provide empirical information to guide incremental improvements in policy and practice. Without it, we will continue to follow the newest fad and become disappointed when it goes out of style.

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Grisso, S., Steinberg, L., Wollard, J., Cauffman, E., Scott, E., & Graham, S. et al. (2003). Juveniles' competence to stand trial: A comparison of adolescents' and adults' capacities as trial defendants. *Law and Human Behavior, 27,* 333-363.

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Mulvey et al. (2004). Desistance from antisocial activity. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice, 2,* 213-236.

Edward Mulvey, Ph.D. Biography

Edward P. Mulvey is a Professor of Psychiatry and Director of the Law and Psychiatry Program at Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. He received his B.A. in psychology from Yale University in 1973, and his Ph.D. in Community/Clinical Psychology from the University of Virginia in 1982. After his graduate education, he spent a year as a postdoctoral fellow training in quantitative methods in criminal justice at the Urban Systems Institute at Carnegie-Mellon University. He has been at the University of Pittsburgh since 1983.

Dr. Mulvey is a Fellow of both the American Psychological Association and the American Psychological Society, a recipient of a Faculty Scholar's Award from the William T. Grant Foundation, a member of two MacArthur Foundation Research Networks (one on Mental Health and the Law and another on Adolescent Development and Juvenile Justice), and a member of the steering committee for the National Science Foundation-funded National Consortium on Violence Research. In addition to his academic publishing, he has consulted on and/or authored reports on policy issues for several government agencies, including the United States Surgeon General's Office, the National Institute of Mental Health, the Office of Technology Assessment, and the United States Secret Service (where he serves on their Research Advisory Committee).

His research has centered on issues related to the use of mental health treatment as a method of social control. He has primarily focused on determining how clinicians make judgments regarding the type of risk posed by adult mental patients and juvenile offenders, and how these decisions might be improved. He also has an interest in the competency of adolescents involved in decision-making about treatment alternatives, and how the decision is made to place a child out of the home.

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Mulvey, E., Steinberg, L, Fagan, J, Cauffman, E, Piquero, A, Chassin, L, Knight, G, Brame, R, Schubert, C, Hecker, T, & Losoya, S. (2004). Theory and research on desistance from antisocial activity in serious juvenile offenders. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice, 2*, 213-236.

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Positive Opportunities for Youth: Engagement for the Future

by Connie Flanagan, Ph.D.
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The values emphasized in education and child rearing will affect the types of citizens our younger generation will become, as well as the kind of society they will create. To the extent that values focus on enhancing the self rather than connecting individual interests to those of a larger public, young people may be less oriented to the needs of the common good. To promote a deep democracy, young people need to know the full story of history and be encouraged to become engaged in and take a stand on issues of concern to their communities.

The leadership of adults (teachers, principals, sports coaches, mentors of non-formal youth groups) is essential in communicating the principles of tolerance that bind democratic societies together. This means that adults must insist on inclusion where membership transcends social cliques. It suggests that public programs must provide all young people with practice in working as teams toward mutually defined goals and in resolving differences that may divide them. Finally, it indicates that conflict resolution programs should focus on universal efforts that have the potential to shift the norms of group interaction rather than target specific individuals to change.

Youth Civic Development: Implications of Research for Social Policy and Programs

Why is youth civic development important? Schools, non-formal youth organizations such as the Boy and Girl Scouts, 4-H, and the Boys and Girls Clubs identify civic values such as leadership, responsibility, and patriotism as objectives in their programs. Yet we know very little known about program effectiveness in these areas because civic goals have rarely been evaluated.

Developing civic literacy, skills, and attachments of the younger generation are prominent goals of virtually every public school in the United States.

What are civic literacy, skills and attachments? *Civic literacy* is the knowledge about community affairs, political issues, and the processes whereby citizens effect change, and how one becomes informed on these matters. *Civic skills* include competencies in achieving group goals, such as leadership, public speaking, active listening, and perspective taking. *Civic attachment* is an affective or emotional connection to the community; it implies that one matters, has a voice and a stake in public affairs.

Why promote civic literacy, skills, and attachment? Among adults, civic literacy is positively related to social tolerance and engagement in community affairs. However, national assessments of high school students' knowledge indicate that they know most about issues that matter to them such as a citizen's right to due process and which level of government issues a driver's license.

Family communication styles that engage their children in discussions of controversial issues and encourage them to hold their own opinions are related to greater civic knowledge, interest, and exposure to political information (Chaffee & Yang, 1990; McLeod, 2000; Niemi & Junn, 1998) as well as to their tolerance (Owen & Dennis, 1987), and the ability to see political issues from more than one perspective (Santolupo & Pratt, 1994).

Trust plays a key role in developing civic attachment. Social trust is defined as a belief that most people are generally fair and helpful rather than merely out for their own gain (Smith, 1997). Between 1973 and 1997, there was a decline among younger generations in their beliefs that most people are trustworthy, helpful, and fair (Smith, 2000).

Trends in Voting

In many Western democracies, including the United States, young adults are typically less likely than any other age group to vote. Although young people feel as if they cannot affect political outcomes, they do feel they can make a difference in their local communities through volunteering. Though the voting aspect of civic engagement remains low, volunteerism has become the norm among young adults. In a 1997 survey of college freshman nationwide, 73% of incoming students reported performing community service during their senior year in high school, an increase of 11% from 1989 (Astin & Sax, 1998). If youth are willing to volunteer but less likely to engage in other forms of civic engagement, the question becomes how to link their volunteering to larger civic issues.

Youth need opportunities to engage in local civic opportunities that connect to their everyday lives, such as participating in forums with local citizens who are running for elected office.

Encouraging Civic Engagement through a Civil Society

Adults other than parents who interact regularly with youth are in powerful positions to help shape as adolescent's level of civic commitment. Schools are a natural place to build and encourage civic engagement through classroom practices. Teachers' insistence upon civility in the classroom impacts the level of civic engagement among students. Young people with teachers who insure all students are treated equally, show respect to students and their ideas, and demand that students listen to and respect one another, tend to have higher levels of civic commitments.

In order for youth to have a commitment to civic engagement, they need to feel as if they can trust the government. Disparities exist among youth regarding the level of trust they feel for their government. Minority youth are more likely to feel politically dissatisfied and distrust government more than their white peers (Niemi & Junn, 1998). This has not always been the case. Prior to 1967, similar feelings of political trust were reported by African-American and white youth. Since 1967, however, most surveys find lower levels of political trust among African-Americans.

Similarly, it is questionable whether figures such as the president or police still carry the same authority as they once did. In the aftermath of Watergate, research indicated that support for

leaders from young people is not unconditional (Dennis & Webster, 1975; Greenstein & Polsby, 1975; Sigel & Hoskin, 1981). Once civic trust has been broken, it is difficult to recover.

If traditional, symbolic figures such as the president and police cannot garner support from young people, then other authority figures may need to fill the gap. Teachers, school administrators, coaches, or the staff at a local community youth agency may play important roles in helping young people realize the importance of civic engagement.

School administrators can model a civic ethic by setting and enforcing policies concerning intolerance and bullying. Schools that adopt laissez-faire policies regarding bullying and intolerance do not teach students to settle differences in a civil fashion. Some school administrators may feel that students need to learn to handle disagreements "on their own". However, this form of hands-off policy tells young people that there are no principles governing social interactions, and that the rules are simply whatever you can get away with. If schools genuinely want young people to "work it out", administrators can enable them by providing training in conflict resolution.

The topic of bullying in the United States has neither received the scientific nor the policy attention it has had in other nations (Smith et al., 1999). Although bullying has received attention in the U.S., educational programs and scientific literature tend to subsume bullying within issues of school safety or violence (Harachi, Catalano, & Hawkins, 1999).

Youth programs and extra-curricular activities are examples of institutions that promote peer solidarity and pride. As members of youth programs or school-sponsored programs, adolescents help define the groups' meaning and have a say in defining group goals. Participation in such activities and organizations offers young people opportunities to explore what it means to be a member of 'the public' and to work out the reciprocity between rights and obligations in the meaning of citizenship. By having a voice, youth exercise the citizen's right to self-determination. But self-determination is not enough. Democratic societies rely on persons with democratic dispositions, i.e., "a preparedness to work with others different from oneself toward a shared end; a combination of strong convictions with a readiness to compromise in the recognition that one can't always get everything one wants; and a sense of individuality and a commitment to civic goods that are not the possession of one person or one small group alone" (Elshtain, 1995, p. 2).

In our research, we have conceived of young people's experiences of membership in institutions and organizations as the developmental foundation for a political community and for the ties that bind members of that community together. The importance of student solidarity as a factor in developing identification with the common good emerged in a comparative study in which adolescents from four fledgling democracies and three stable democracies participated. Across countries, youth were more likely to commit to public interest goals such as serving their communities and country if they felt a solidarity with peers at school and if they felt that most students in the school were proud to be part of an institution where caring transcended the borders of social cliques (Flanagan, Bowes, Jonsson, Csapo, & Sheblanova, 1998). Student solidarity is a student's perception of the collective properties of the school. Similar to the 'collective efficacy' of neighborhoods where residents act in the public interest (Sampson,

Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997), ours is a measure of the collective properties of the student body. As such, it taps an inclusive climate in which students generally feel they and their fellow students matter to one another and to the institution.

This does not suggest that social cliques did not exist in these schools. Rather, cliques do not override the broader climate of inclusiveness in the school.

Tolerance and interdependence are essential aspects of a democratic identity and participation in extra curricular activities and youth organizations play a role in building these qualities in young people. Participation in such activities is associated with higher involvement in civic and political activity in adulthood (Verba et al., 1995; Youniss et al., 1997). Even when socioeconomic status and academic achievement are controlled, involvement in extracurricular activities is related to later involvement in organizations such as the PTA, communities of faith, or labor unions (Hanks & Eckland, 1978; Otto, 1975) as well as to political action such as voting, writing letters to the editor, or contacting local officials (Otto, 1975).

Policy Implications

The issue of equal opportunity for youth to participate in extracurricular and community organizations is a policy question that has received little attention. The fact that involvement in such organizations seems to protect young people from health-compromising behaviors (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2000) is reason alone to raise the issue of equal access. Besides keeping youth out of trouble, these institutions connect young people to the broader polity and foster their commitment to its service. Thus, if access to community clubs and extracurricular activities is unevenly distributed, we should not be surprised if those youth who have few opportunities to connect are disaffected politically and disengaged from civic activity as well.

According to analyses of national longitudinal data, youth from more advantaged families are more likely to be involved in community clubs, teams or organizations and involvement in such groups is highly related to the likelihood of being engaged in community service (Hart, Atkins, & Ford, 1998). Connell and Halpern-Felsher (1997) have observed the institutions that provide primary services to youth – Little League, YMCA, 4-H, Boys and Girls Clubs, etc. – are typically less represented, with fewer resources, in poorer neighborhoods. Taken together, these studies suggest that there are multiple ways in which socioeconomic advantages in families and in neighborhoods afford children opportunities for civic connection and practice.

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Flanagan, C.A., & Faison, N. (2001). Youth civic development: Implications of research for social policy and programs. *Social Policy Report, 15*, 3-15.

Connie Flanagan, Ph.D. Biography

Dr. Flanagan completed her Ph.D. in developmental psychology at the University of Michigan and is currently a professor of youth civic development at Pennsylvania State University. Her program of work, "Adolescents and the social contract," concerns the factors in families, schools, and communities that promote civic values and competencies in young people. She directed a seven-nation study on this topic as well as a study of inter-group relations and beliefs about justice among youth from different racial/ethnic backgrounds in the United States.

Two new projects include: a longitudinal study of peer loyalty and social responsibility as it relates to young people's views about health as a public or private issue and to their inclinations to intervene to prevent harm to one another and a study of the developmental correlates of social trust. Flanagan co-chairs the Society for Research in Child Development's Committee on Public Policy, and Public Information. She is a William T. Grant Faculty Scholar and a member of the MacArthur Foundation's Network on the Transition to Adulthood and Public Policy. She is on the editorial boards of three journals and on the advisory boards of Health!Rocks, Student Voices, and CIRCLE (the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement).

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