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DETECTING GANG PARTICIPATION

After school programming and other initiatives are examined as a means to deter successful gang recruitment of NEPA's youth.

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The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development (The Institute) is a partnership of nine colleges and universities in the Scranton/ Wilkes-Barre/ Hazleton Metropolitan Statistical Area. The Institute’s managing partner is Wilkes University.

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Executive Summary

The issue that many communities face is that of juvenile delinquency, in which youth of a certain age commits delinquent behaviors against the community. These may include acts of violence, vandalism, offenses relating to drug abuse, sales, and trafficking, gang affiliation, and much more. Many of these behaviors coincide and result from similar causes, such as a lack of strong social ties, poor familial structure and supervision, feelings of hopelessness and deprivation of resources, and of course the desire to fit in with certain influential groups of youth. These people are at critical stages of development in their lives, with education being one of the most important components to that process. However, some youth do not have the motivation to exhibit punctuality and class attendance, let alone actually developing a strong work ethic for these classes, which then leads children down a different and less productive path. So, with all of these problems facing youth today, what can be done to curve their potentially delinquent patterns of behavior?

Many believe that education and school systems should be the primary target in order to address these problems. But, since one of the main issues concerning delinquent behavior involves poor school attendance and involvement, educational environments should test new approaches. This is where after-school programming comes in as schools institute programs and organizations that facilitate a productive and intuitive environment for students outside of classes. As this document will mention, schools employ all types of programs with the goals of increased adult supervision, building healthy and lasting relationships, developing important skills in both academics and the real world, providing opportunities for sports and recreation, and much more. By implementing after-school programs, youth will become better students and citizens of society with a more productive and healthy lifestyle. The Institute is recommending that the region work to develop and create the SHINE program as a means to address crime deterrence and education enrichment which lead to stronger economic and workforce development outcomes. Below, is information that describes the history of relevant programming, as well as the types and observed effectiveness of certain programs in order to analyze what necessarily works.

Research Methods & Limitations

Research methods for this study involve a process of data collection and “mining,” meaning that data will be taken, analyzed, and synthesized from many sources in order to get a better understanding of the issue. Data was taken from sources including scholarly articles and journals, publications by federal agencies and networks, online bulletins, and various other sites. By collecting and summarizing this data, researchers and viewers will be able to grasp what after-school programs and strategies are effective in preventing youth delinquency. The data mining itself targeted information ideally over the past decade or so (2002-2012) to get the most updated studies on after-school programming.

Some sources included data from even older studies and publications, but there is still plenty of relevance and validity to slightly older findings. Certain studies are cited in this document that provide useful information pertaining to the issue, but may have produced insignificant results. This may be the result of certain prohibiting factors such as unintentional selection biases in administering survey data, failure to identify a strong control group, or even simply not getting enough participants. If these are in fact limitations, then they are mentioned in this study for clarification. Otherwise, various conclusions are drawn from these studies to give readers a general sense on what works and what does not.

Literature Search

After School Programming

After school programming is believed to be an “absolute necessity” in communities (After-School Alliance 2008). The U.S. Department of Education appropriates over a billion dollars each year to fund thousands of after school programs in the nation. Most delinquent behavior stems from a certain interval of peak hours immediately after school, specifically between 2:00 and 6:00 pm. This represents a likely period of time in which there is a lack of parental supervision (Sickmund et al. 1997). Studies indicate that regular monitoring and supervision of youth are less likely to fall into delinquent patterns (Bodilly and Beckett 2005). Thus, after school programs serve as important institutions which provide structure and intimate supervision on youth activity.

After-school programs, although diverse and varies by nature, share common goals in the community. These include the promotion of social bonds and healthy behaviors, improvement in academics, preventing delinquency and substance abuse, and just maintaining a proactive lifestyle (Gottfredson et al. 2004). Many after school programs are not surprisingly offered in low-income neighborhoods, which give children more opportunities for academic and emotional support, as well as recreational events that wealthy children have more access to (Halpern 1999). Particular components of after school programs that were proven to be the most effective include programs that utilize evidence-based practices to promote academic success (Durlak and Weissberg 2007), skill training, and character development (Gottfredson et al. 2004). Research also shows that youth who attend after school programs exhibit better rates of school attendance, higher academic scores, and even greater teacher expectancy of success (Durlak and Weissberg 2007; Fabiano et al. 2005; Fashola and Cooper 1999; LoSciuto et al. 1999; Mahoney et al. 2005).

As many studies and journals indicate, after school programming is in fact effective with regular participation. However, children require a certain level of motivation to participate in these programs and attend them consistently. As the article written by Ashleigh Collins, Jacinta Bronte-Tinkew, and Mary Burkhauser indicate, certain “incentives” can be administered to improve youth attendance in these programs, which are “the various methods used to motivate and/or reward children and youth to participate in out-of-school time programs”. There are

numerous types of incentives that increase participation among the youth, including those that are financial, special art projects and recreational activities, or have academic qualities to them (Eccles, J., & Templeton, J. 2002; Russell, C., Mielke, M., & Reisner, E. 2008). Additionally, incentives that promote a sense of belonging elicit positive responses as children want to feel valued and welcomed in a particular group. These may include leadership opportunities, career development trips, and service projects that promote a level of cooperation with peers (Russell, M., & Reisner 2008). Personal adult attention has also led to increased academic performance and work ethic (Vandell, D., Pierce, K.M., & Dadisman, K. 2005).

There have been numerous classifications of after-school programs, and many different criteria to define them. Experts in the field have varying lists as to what constitutes as after-school programs, differentiating them based on structures and goals. For example, Hofferth, Brayfield, Deich, and Holocomb (1991) utilized the following criteria to group programs: (1) adult supervision and safe environments; (2) flexible and relaxed homelike environments; (3) providing cultural/enrichment opportunities; (4) improving academic skills; (5) preventing certain behavioral issues and delinquency; and (6) instituting recreational activities. However, other experts gave a much broader and simpler definition, like counting a specific program as an after-school program as long as it is operated after dismissal and provided supervision (Scott-Little, Hamann, and Jurs 2002). Others have distinguished programs based on two types; those that are unstructured and offer leisurely recreational events or “hanging out” time, or those that actually promote a positive youth development, whether in terms of academics or physical/emotional improvement (Riggs and Greenberg 2004; Apsler 2009).

Robert Apsler discusses some of the difficulties in researching the effectiveness of after-school programs in the article *After-School Programs For Adolescents: A Review of Evaluation Research*. First, selection bias is prevalent in different ways, in both research design and level of participation. Parents typically must give permission to have their children participate in after-school programs, so there may be differences between children that were permitted into these programs versus those that were denied permission. Additionally, differences may exist between the youth that actually want to be involved in these programs versus those that do not. Another form of selection bias existed in programs that do not have a required attendance policy, so participation among the youth may be “sporadic” and inconsistent. This will then create two groups of children; those who enrolled themselves in the programs, and a “subgroup” of children that would frequently attend the program activities. In other words, even if there was a strong performance in the after-school program, it really only covers the participation of the frequent subgroup and does not consider the students who make occasional appearances (Apsler 2009).

Apsler also cites many different case studies within the past decade on overall program effectiveness...

- Martin and colleagues (2007) were among those to report some of the most impressive findings. This study examined 33 youths in an after-school program at an alternative school setting. This particular program accommodated especially high-risk participants, who had been

suspended or expelled, consistently absent during previous year, exhibited aggressive behavior and failure to strive academically, etc. This “intervention” consisted of tutoring, group counseling, enrichment, and social activities. After two years of participation, the youth reported basic skill level improvement by two grades, attendance increased, discipline referrals decreased, and nobody was suspended or expelled. However, because of a lack of a control group, contributions of the after-school program and from the alternative school itself could not be disentangled.

- Arbreton, Sheldon, and Herrera (2005) collected 20 years of research on the Boys & Girls Clubs, and found no methodologically rigorous evaluations, such as longitudinal research or randomized controlled trials. But, evaluations came out positive with a reduction in delinquency, increased academic success, increased access to and safe utilization of technology, increased career aspirations, improved attitudes toward school, more positive relationships, etc.

These are among some of the studies that yielded relatively positive outcomes; however they are not entirely valid because of some of the methodological flaws, including selection bias and absence of control groups. On the other hand, certain studies of other programs resulted in very few positive outcomes or no appreciable effect. According to Apsler, this particular study is one of the examples and should be weighed heavily for it is the largest, most ambitious, and evaluated rigorously...

- This study assessed the impact of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program (Dynarski et al., 2004, Dynarski et al., 2003; James-Burdumy et al., 2005). Samples of elementary and middle schools were drawn across 3,600 schools, from 903 communities that had been funded by the national 21st Century after-school program grant initiative. One thousand elementary students from 18 “oversubscribed programs were randomly assigned to either an after-school program or a control group in the first year of this evaluation. Sixteen hundred more elementary students were added for the second year. On the middle school level, a final representative sample of 4,300 students across 61 schools from the 21st Century middle school programs was drawn and matched with other students not attending after-school programs.
- The study resulted in both positive and negative outcomes. Positive results included: (1) elementary school students (but not middle school students) felt safer during after-school hours than the non-participants; and (2) the parents of elementary school participants reported greater attendance at school events than parents of non-participating students. Negative results included: (1) after-school programs failed to reduce the number of unsupervised children during after-school hours (one of the

primary goals for most programs of this nature); (2) few academic effects surfaced, despite the program's emphasis on academics; (3) middle school youth exhibited more negative behavior than controls on some measures, and the same amount on others; (4) there is little evidence of developmental improvement; (5) Over half of the middle school students chose not to return for the second year of the program; and (6) attendance was very low for both elementary and middle schools.

Apsler also discusses a study of an unstructured after-school program that has very little positive impact on participants. The issues with this program are that it was not structured in the sense that students had great flexibility on when to show up for activities and it also lacked a real academic component, furthering the claim of experts Durlak and Weissberg (2007) that these unstructured programs simply do not work.

- The Cooke Middle School After-School Recreation Program (CASP), evaluated by Lauver (2002) took place from 5 pm to 7 pm (straying away from typical after school hours of 2-6). Lauver randomly assigned 227 applicants from a disadvantaged, urban middle school to either the program or control group, and analyzed outcomes in academics, achievement test scores, and surveys. Recreational activities such as dance, martial arts, and basketball were offered, but without an emphasis on academics. Although both participants and parents had positive feelings regarding the program, and strong attitudes toward improvement in school, the results showed that there was no impact on school attendance, grades, test scores, behavior, etc.

Case Studies

Weed and Seed Programs

The Weed and Seed program is a joint local, state, and federally administered program that is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice. With about 90 programs instituted throughout the nation, the primary and essential goals of the program are preventative in nature; to control violent crime, drug related offenses, and drug trafficking in certain designated areas and to implement resources and human services to create safer environments. Areas that are targeted for this program are determined by various factors, including higher crime rates in comparison to the surrounding community, presence of larger families with children, signs of deterioration in the community (delinquency, vandalism, and struggling families, prevalence of drug and alcohol dependency), poverty and unemployment rates, structures in need of maintenance, and more (Allentown, PA Weed and Seed).

According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), a branch of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), the three key elements of this program are as follows...

- **Weeding:** Purpose here is for law enforcement to remove or “weed” out criminals, drug related offenders and dealers, and others from the target area in the community. Basically, law enforcement officers focus their efforts within these areas to facilitate higher arrest rates, increase adjudications, prosecutions, and incarcerations of offenders, and ultimately limit crime.
- **Seeding:** Purpose here is for building a strong foundation in the community with neighborhood revitalization efforts. Human service and law enforcement agencies, private sector organizations, and the community team up to create a more stable and secure environment with the goal of deterring crime.
- **Community Policing:** Purpose here is to put more of an emphasis on interpersonal and community-based policing. Police are more likely to be involved with the community through foot patrol and will work closely with community residents to develop successful preventative strategies. By doing so, police can develop a sense of omnipresence in the community in order to slow down crime recurrence and create more positive relationships and atmospheres. Considered “the bridge between weeding and seeding,” community policing will also focus on disproportionately victimized minority communities as well as address the needs and concerns of victims.

The OJJDP also mentions an evaluation of the program effectiveness that has been completed using eight sites and 10 target areas in different regions of the country (two sites had two separate target areas). Although the demographics differed among the designated areas, they were all targeted based on similarities in higher drug related offenses and crime rates, as well as some gang-related issues. Control groups were also selected for comparison in non-targeted areas of each site. Data was collected from automated, incident-level records provided by local police departments on crime and arrests; the trends in crime were analyzed 1-2 years prior to program implementation and 2-5 years afterward (depending on the site). Data collection also occurred through the interviews of researchers with program administrators, senior law enforcement staff, and managers and service providers of seeding organizations. Collection of data also conducted through the interviews of program participants and through surveys in targeted spots.

The results of the evaluation were relatively promising. The number and types of crimes were compared in nine of the target areas (one area had an insufficient amount of data) a year before program implementation and those occurring during the second year of Weed and Seed. There was a decline in crime in six of the areas: Hartford, North Manatee, Pittsburgh, Shreveport, Seattle, and West Las Vegas. During the same time period, seven of the targeted areas – Hartford, North Manatee, Pittsburgh, South Manatee, Shreveport, West Las Vegas, and Salt Lake City – the crime rates either declined or at least increased less compared to the surrounding city or county.

This evaluation also showed an immense amount of drug related arrests in at least four of the six targeted areas with reduced crime rates, which suggests an “initial period of intense weeding activities.” As long as the police presences in these areas were consistent, there was some success with reducing drug activity.

The **Allentown, PA Weed and Seed Program** is one of the closest jurisdictions to the Scranton-Wilkes Barre metropolitan area. According to the official website, Allentown became a Weed and Seed site of PA in July 2002 and a Federal site in October 2003 (<http://www.allentownpa.gov/Government/DepartmentsBureaus/CommunityandEconomicDevelopment/WeedandSeedProgram/WeedSeedAboutUs/tabid/382/Default.aspx>).

The targeted areas are selected based on characteristics including...

- 1) Crime rates as compared with surrounding community, especially in regards to violent and drug offenses;
- 2) Presence of families with children;
- 3) Signs of social deterioration, such as delinquency, vandalism, and drug dependency in a significant amount of others;
- 4) Rates of poverty and unemployment compared to surrounding community;
- 5) Presence of structures, homes, and public spaces in need of cleanup or maintenance;
- 6) Presence of community-based organizations such as schools or churches motivated to improve quality of life.

On January 2004, a six component implementation plan was submitted to and accepted by the community, state, and federal government and consisted of about 48 blocks of targeted areas. The specific geographic area stretches North to South from Tilghman to Hamilton Street and East to West from the Lehigh River to 8th Street. It takes up a large portion of what is known as the 1st Ward and the 4C's community (center city). The components of the designed program are as follows.

- **Assistance for Impact Delegation Team (AID):** Also known as the “Steering Committee,” the AID team is a collaborative group of non-profit, government, and private sector leaders charged to create a revitalization plan and deliver various services and resources to the residents of the targeted community.
- **Resident Team Leaders:** This team is comprised of members from the weed and seed community who obtain leadership training and are constantly engaged in the revitalization of their community. They serve leadership positions on the AID team/Steering Committee and other relevant committees.
- **TALL TEAM:** Another team of resident leaders involved with the improvement and revitalization of the community.
- **After School Program:** Consists of a youth council of individuals 11-15 years old that focuses on revitalization strategies as well as consults with the weed and seed initiative about concerns the youth have about their community. The next

step involves the researched based Student Success Through Prevention program for middle school students and teaches...

- Substance abuse prevention
 - Bullying prevention (also cyber bullying)
 - Violence prevention
 - Empathy and communication
 - Emotion management and coping skills
- **Drug Education for Youth (DEFY):** Consisting of a two-phase prevention program for youth ages 9-12 that emphasizes positive development of mind, body, and spirit. DEFY serves as a deterrent for at-risk behaviors by giving youth the tools they need to resist drugs, gangs, and alcohol. It also provides leadership and life skills that focuses on goal setting, team building, conflict resolution, and decision making in a five day residential camp (Phase 1). Phase 2 is a mentor program that reinforces academic achievement and meets four days a week after school.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeastern Pennsylvania

The Boys & Girls Club of NEPA (<http://www.bgcnepa.org/index.html>) operates by the mission statement, “to enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.” With the main office located in Scranton, PA as well as other connecting locations in Luzerne County, Wilkes Barre, Glen Lyon, and Plymouth, they provide many services and build character for those between the ages of 6-18. These youth learn important life skills and expand their interests in a healthy, nurturing environment through a variety of programs. The many services they administer include:

- Homework Assistance
- Study Skills & Test Preparation
- Educational Games
- Computer Education
- Computer Recreation
- Internet Safety Programs
- Arts & Crafts
- Fine Arts Program
- Health & Life Skills Programs
- Nutrition Education
- Character & Leadership Development Programs
- Youth Recognition Programs
- Youth of the Year Program
- Sports
- Athletic Leagues
- Fitness Programs
- Recreation Programs
- Games Room Activities
- Specialized Clubs
- Day Camp Programs
- Field Trips

(<http://www.bgcnepa.org/whatwedo.html>)

Members of the club learn to:

- Enjoy their interests
- Nurture their talents
- Dissolve their prejudices
- Express their personality
- Develop new friendships
- Build self esteem
- Contribute to society
- Achieve personal success
- Become productive citizens
- Discover hope and opportunity

<http://www.bgcnepa.org/whatwedo.html>)

The core programs administered by the club are based around different principles of development, based on the boy's and girl's physical, emotional, cultural, social needs, and interests (<http://www.bgcnepa.org/programs.html>).

- **Character and Leadership Development:** Youth are encouraged to support their community, sustain relationships, develop a positive self-image, build confidence, participate in the democratic process and have respect of their own as well as other cultures. The "Youth of the Year" program is utilized for those who have the aforementioned characteristics to undergo an application and interview process and compete on a state, regional, and national level for this title. A new Leadership Program now exists for those ages 8-17 years old that serves as a self-esteem enhancer, health, fitness, and educational experience. The goals are to develop decision-making skills, a positive self-concept, and mentor relationships.
- **Education and Career Development:** Enable youth to learn basic educational disciplines, apply knowledge to everyday life, and embrace technology to optimize employability. POWER Hour is an after-school tutoring program where youth may study, complete assignments, and read with the aid of a support staff.
- **Health and Life Skills:** Develop youth's capacity to develop themselves and promoting positive and healthy behaviors. SMART Moves is the primary drug and alcohol prevention education program endorsed in this area. There is also Get Real About Violence (GRAV), implemented by Lackawanna County Commission on Drug and Alcohol and the Wyoming Valley Alcohol and Drug Services, which helps youth maintain self-control when tempted with violence, learn to resolve conflict effectively, and prevent/avoid dangerous situations. Personal hygiene and safety programs, health fairs, and other activities also exist.
- **The Arts:** Development of multicultural appreciation and creativity through visual, tactile, and performing arts. Fine Arts and Digital Photography are among the more popular programs.
- **Sports, Fitness, and Recreation:** By stressing teamwork and cooperation, youth develop fitness skills, positive stress management, and productivity in leisure time, and interpersonal skills.

- **Shuttle Program:** Transportation is provided directly from school to the club, and is available for various planned and unplanned events.

The different service centers at the club facilitate many opportunities and offered programs:

- **Learning Center:** Where members can receive help on academics, tutoring services, test preparation, and develop productive study skills.
- **Arts & Crafts Center:** Consists of fine art instruction, general craft making, art projects and contests.
- **Game Room:** In addition to instructional classes and tournaments, members may enjoy a variety of games in their free time, including arcade games, foosball, a pool and ping pong table, air hockey, and an entertainment center for movies.
- **Computer Lab:** Loaded with computer stations for approved games and completion of homework, with an adult to assist in utilizing the equipment.
- **Gymnasium:** Encourage good health and fitness development through an array of sports, leagues, competitions, and other physical activities.
- **TJX Teen Center:** For members ages 13-18, this center offers home entertainment, a computer lab with internet, a pool table and bumper pool table, and other resource materials. A designated staff may help with projects, searching for opportunities in higher education, and career searches.

SHINE

The SHINE Model provides: 4 days of after-school project based activities founded on state and national standards, individual tutoring, Pre-K- kindergarten weekly home visits, summer home-visits for 1st-5th grade students, summer camps, seamless network from kindergarten home-visits into the middle/high school career academy, a unique curriculum based on high priority occupations with a focus on STEAM, teacher training, pre-service laboratory for education majors, the ability to build a bridge between the school and families, a strong relationship with the local school districts and the Career and Technical Institute, an Instructional Plan for each student based on data that insures effective assessment driven instruction, a rigorous evaluation process and a connection to business and industry.

The education that the students are exposed to during SHINE projects goes beyond the scope of the classroom. At a young age, these students are given the ability to work in labs, on experiments, in groups, as well as in the classroom on assignments and projects that strengthens their intellect. SHINE develops a personalized instruction plan for each student complete with evaluation and outcomes.

After-school programs are extremely helpful for families because it provides a caretaker for students who would otherwise be unmonitored and alone. The SHINE program keeps these

students busy with academic activities and provides a hot meal until a time that is more convenient for parents to pick up their children after work. There is a positive correlation between unmonitored students after-school and a criminal activity. Providing students with this opportunity to learn and be otherwise will decrease the likelihood that they will commit crime. This bodes well for the community.

The school enrichment and care that is provided by the SHINE program benefits the society in general. Because the program channels the students into local universities, the local community benefits from their participation. The simple fact that these students, who are the future of society, are becoming interested in these growing careers also reinforces the benefit that society experiences as a result of the SHINE program.

The summer programs of SHINE are also extremely important. The summer program helps to mitigate summer learning loss by reinforcing concepts from the prior year and introducing new concepts. There are nine home visits per child during the summer home visiting program. Collaboration with the Workforce Investment Board and their Summer Youth programs should be investigated.

SHINE has a 10 year history of documented success. It's outcomes demonstrate stronger school performance in every grade level, improved test scores and increased post secondary education participation, and most importantly – decreased levels of juvenile delinquency.

Another article titled, *A School-Level Analysis of Adolescent Extracurricular Activity, Delinquency, and Depression: The Importance of Situational Context* written by Andrew Guest and Nick McRee also discusses various topics related to delinquency, including extracurricular activities. According to the authors, activity participation shares a “complex” relationship with delinquency and there has been evidence suggesting both decreased and increased amounts of delinquent behavior. *Social Control Theory* (Hirschi 1969) suggests that participation in these after school activities such as sports and other clubs should prevent delinquency as it encourages conformity in the community. These commitments to the social order would theoretically deter delinquent behavior, plus reduce the amount of free time to spend on criminal activity, yet research has been all over the place.

Some research indicates that this relationship may depend on the type of activity (Sokol-Katz et al. 2006), quality of supervision (Mahoney and Stattin 2000), and even the types of peers who also participate (Dodge et al. 2006). For example, as depicted in the article, youth who are engaged in rigorous and competitive academic clubs may indulge in antisocial behavior as a way of reducing strain (Agnew 2007). So, one of the most common elements among research that seems to have a great impact is the social context of participation.

The current case study examined the impact of extracurricular activities on either negative or positive associations with rates on delinquent behavior, as well as depression (however our focus is on delinquency). This is done on a school-level analysis as it serves as a

“nexus” for friendship networks, social statuses, and supervision (Guest and McRee, 2009). The data being analyzed was taken from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health). It is a nationally representative survey for adolescents in grades 7-12, and 80 high schools were randomly selected along with subsequent “feeder” schools (middle schools) to make a total of 132 participating schools (13,466 participants in all). Questionnaires involved asking participant students about delinquent behaviors (a small number of youth consisted of most reported delinquency), and also a separate section for parents in order to obtain information regarding social statuses. Then, certain questions prompted participants to report extracurricular activities they were involved in, out of the areas of sports, arts, and academics. Other contextual variables were taken into consideration in order to get a better understanding of familial socioeconomic status, as well as other organizational and institutional factors.

The results indicate that neither a broader school context nor specific activity impacts the rate of delinquency. Instead, the rates systematically vary within and between schools depending on unique contexts in which the activities are situated (Guest and McRee, 2009). Because there are no appreciable and recognizable patterns on the effects of activity content or community character on delinquency, then the researchers are left with the conclusion that impacts are more likely on the micro-level. Race, gender, and social class may prove to have relevance, but the conclusion is that content of the program may not necessarily be a deciding factor, but rather what social context the program is administered. For example, certain activities could inhibit delinquency through social control and conformity (Agnew and Petersen 1989), while others could amplify it because of peer interaction (Dodge et al. 2006). It comes down to a matter of administering the program well and efficiently for youth, otherwise poor care of the program could lead to issues of delinquency and depression. Social norms, supervision, and characteristics of other participants should be considered and not just the content of the activity, for these are the likely outside influences on behavior.

Does Dropping Out of School Mean Dropping into Delinquency?

In this study conducted by Gary Sweeten, Shawn D. Bushway, and Raymond Paternoster, they attempt to make a connection between dropping out of high school and delinquent/criminal behavior. The current belief is that there is a direct correlation between the two variables that dropping out does in fact increase delinquent activity. However, other views suggest that dropping out is simply the result of a gradual process of disenchantment from schools, and signals of failure and developmental issues are seen years in advance (Sweeten, Bushway, and Paternoster, 49; 2009). Therefore, this contradicting theory implies that delinquent behavior cannot be caused by dropping out necessarily because these school issues have been present for years.

There is empirical evidence supporting many other consequences to dropping out of high school. Research shows that the average annual income for a high school graduate exceeds the income of a dropout by about \$10,000 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2005). High school dropouts are also much more likely to utilize public assistance programs and have

greater chances of teenage pregnancy (Garfinkel, Kelly, and Waldfogel, 2005; Haveman, Wolfe, and Spaulding, 1991; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998; U.S. Department of Education, 1999). Dropouts are also considered a drain on the nation's economy; if the predicted 1.2 million youth at risk of dropping out obtained their high school degrees, more than \$17 billion dollars could be saved over the course of their lives (Muennig, 2005). Although these facts were supported, there is still debate over whether or not delinquent behavior and dropping out have a causal relationship, or if it is consequential.

The authors put emphasis on an "identity theory," which suggests that youth who decide to leave school early and tend to do so to take on other roles or identities, such as "worker" or "parent." In other words, these individuals are taking the next step to adulthood, even if prematurely, and the authors hypothesize then that this youth decision will not be related to increased criminal activity (Sweeten, Bushway, and Paternoster, 51; 2009). They also offer other theories that may potentially link dropping out to delinquent behavior, including a recent "general strain theory" and "social control theory". Strain theory suggests that delinquency results from dissatisfaction and a blockage of goals; youth may use delinquency as a means of coping with hopelessness or to achieve goals that cannot be reached through legitimate means (Sweeten, Bushway, and Paternoster, 52-53; 2009). Social control theory on the other hand (Hirschi, 1969) suggests that delinquency is inhibited by strong social bonds to conventional institutions and people, such as school, teachers, coaches, etc. They are committed to the values and goals of conformity as well as carry strong emotional attachments.

As for past research, studies have come up with mixed results on the relationship between delinquency and dropping out of school. For instance, Jarjoura (1996) concluded from his study that criminal behavior occurring after dropping out may depend on the particular reasons for leaving school early, as well as the social class of the individual. Personal reasons for dropping out in upper class youth was positively related to violent offending, while economic reasons for dropping out in lower class youth had a crime-inhibiting effect.

The methodology for this study in particular involved data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth of 1997. A multi-stage cluster sample with an oversampling of minority youth was administered in waves each subsequent year. The first wave involved 8,984 youths aged 12-17 to be interviewed, and they needed at least three adjacent interviews from each person to be observed. The final working sample size was 8,112 youth, contributing 45,546 person waves (Sweeten, Bushway, and Paternoster, 63-64; 2009). In each wave, the youth are asked about school status, work status, delinquent involvement, and many other topics. Also, they address six different kinds of delinquent offending, including theft of items less or greater than \$50, assaulting, selling drugs, or other property crimes. They were also asked why they left schools that they previously attended for reasons such as school, personal, economic, or other related reasons. In addition to demographics such as sex, age, race, ethnicity, and region of the country, they also have time-stable and time-varying control variables in order to address selection bias (as delinquent behaviors could have started years earlier).

Results show that those who leave early are at no greater risk of subsequent delinquent involvement after dropping out, at least in regards to the variety of behaviors (Sweeten, Bushway, and Paternoster, 70; 2009). The researchers feel that focus on criminal behavior after dropping out is misguided, and instead the emphasis should be placed on the process leading up to dropping out and criminal behavior. In other words, issues develop at earlier ages and carry on through school until point of dropping out, and the actual event of dropping out itself is not a proven cause of delinquency. This study also does not support the prediction about roles and identities that inhibit criminal activity.

Re-examining the Impact of Dropping out on Criminal and Labor Outcomes in Early Adulthood

A discussion paper written by David Bjerck from Claremont McKenna College further examines the particular reasons for dropping out of school. In conjunction with other researchers, he explains that there are “pull factors,” which may suggest that students drop out in order to satisfy other requirements or perform other activities such as working for pay or taking care of family, and “push factors,” which may suggest circumstances that force a student to take other actions, such as expulsion, poor performance, and legal trouble (Stearns and Glennie 2006, McNeal 1997, Mihalic and Elliot 1997, Fine 1986, Jordan et al. 1996).

In his study, through the use of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth of 1997, drop out reasons were divided into four categories: (1) Dropped out to work or take care of family members, (2) Dropped out because respondent didn't like school, (3) Dropped out for behavioral reasons, (4) dropped out for “other passive” reasons (Bjerck, 12). The first category may be considered a “pull” factor as they saw this other activity as a better use of their time and made a conscious choice, while categories 3 and 4 were considered “push” factors because of the absence of active decision making. Category 2 may fall somewhere in between push and pull (Bjerck, 13). These reasons were elicited each year of the survey, and individuals were limited to only selecting one category. Even though students drop out for a number of reasons, these categories often catch the overlapping reasons, such as “low grades” and “suspension.” However, the broad categories may lose some of their significance if individuals cross categories, such as “to work” and “suspension,” one of which is a pull factor and the other a push factor.

An analysis of the results indicates that those who are “pulled” out of school for reasons such as working or supporting family fare end up better off than those who are “pushed.” Although those who are pushed and pulled out of school are missing quality education time and the human capital developed by those who complete high school, the “pulled” individuals do not do appreciably worse than completers (Bjerck, 18-19). These results bring up an issue of “idleness,” which indicates whether or not school drop outs are more or less productive with their time. Those pulled out were typically found to actually be using the time for work and substituting it for school, without staying idle. These activities unsurprisingly build similar skills they would ordinarily practice in school, not just real work experience and skills of a particular trade, but also the essential “soft” skills such as punctuality and respect for rules and authority

(Bjerck, 20-21). Those who were pushed out on the other hand did not develop the same work ethic or productivity as many stayed idle even 3 months after dropping out. This may deteriorate that human capital, and evidence suggests that idle time may lead to more crime involvement and less respect for rules and authority (Jacob and Lefgren 2003).

In conclusion, each individual faces their own issues and acts on differing reasons for leaving school. In order to promote successful long term outcomes in their lives, ensuring that they utilize their time in a productive manner is key. Not all students can be classified as “on the verge of dropping out” for they have different needs and motivations. By removing and replacing idle time with productivity will continue to develop the youth into functioning adults and enhancing human capital and self-worth.

Youth Out Of School: Linking Absence To Delinquency

Published by the Colorado Foundation for Families and Children, this article examines the negative consequences that result from being out of school. The process depicted by the CFFC begins with truancy and ends with delinquency and other severe outcomes, which is then analyzed and explained with the support of other studies and suggestions for best practices and interventions. It is important to note that the relevant issues such as truancy, consistent absenteeism from school, and ultimately dropping out may not necessarily lead immediately to juvenile delinquency and criminal involvement (although delinquent activity may have already existed in many of these youth). But, some of the following research and evidence suggest that if not immediate or proximate, truancy and delinquency are definitely related a little later down the road.

Truancy is considered one of the early warning signs of students heading to education failure via suspension, expulsion, dropping out, or delinquent activity (Bell, et al, 1994; Garry, 1996). Truancy, as defined by Colorado and most likely similar in other states, is a child between 7-16 years of age who has four unexcused absences in one month or ten unexcused absences in a school year. Lack of commitment to school has been proven by many studies as a risk factor for substance abuse, delinquency, teen pregnancy, and dropping out. Several studies link truancy to other negative outcomes...

- St. Louis longitudinal study over a 30-year period showed that early truancy was related to adult criminality, violence, and marital and job problems.
- Study of inmates in 1996 suggested that 89% had a history of school truancy.
- Excessive truancy was found to be one of three common traits among Dade County Florida’s 5,000 most serious juvenile offenders.

In 1998, the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), gave funding to a large group of communities to augment existing programs or build new model programs to combat truancy. Common elements that were encouraged to be consistent among programs include...

- A continuum of services provided to identified truants and their families;

- A community-based collaboration including members from multiple agencies;
- A community-wide public awareness campaign;
- Demonstration of system reform and accountability;
- Participation in a national process evaluation.

The most common reasons for truancy were those that were academic in nature, such as falling behind in lessons or feelings of neglect by teachers who lack enthusiasm and support; approximately 28% reported academic issues (CFFC, 8; 2002). Other issues included emotional health such as depression or acting out behaviors (14%) and familial problems (13%). As a result, many programs utilize tutoring sessions, mental health services, and family counseling and support in order to give youth desired personal attention. Collaboration in the community is often difficult and relationships take time to foster, but are necessary in order to coordinate a wide effort in combating problems such as truancy (CFFC, 9; 2002).

Attendance is often very tough to monitor, especially in schools with large numbers of students, and school staff and faculty do not have the resources to put full attention into it. Some barriers to keeping track of attendance patterns include, slow and inaccurate databases, over-burdened staff with other duties, 'push-out' policies such as suspension (as mentioned in the previous article), and unclear attendance policies for parents and teachers (CFFC, 11; 2002). Once a student is identified as "truant" and everything has been done by the school to correct the issue, juvenile justice agencies and law enforcement may be partnered with to impose different sanctions. Through the use of community police officers, school resource officers, and juvenile judges/magistrates, appropriate sanctions should be implemented and assurances of their use so that youth are encouraged to stay in school.

Certain interventions are used to promote attendance and fall under different categories, including "carrots," which are incentives to improve attendance, and "sticks," which are heavy sanctions to enforce compliance. Case management models imply that somebody will be checking up on students in order to show care and motivate them to attend classes (recommendation 2). Contracts may also be signed between case managers and the family in order to avoid court dates, as long as the student improves attendance. Another strategy involves a Student Attendance Review Board (SARB) that reviews the records of those that are chronically truant (CFFC, 12; 2002). This multi-disciplinary team meets with the student and parents in order to perform risk and needs assessments to fix the problem of truancy. Another mentioned intervention strategy is "teen court," which allows a jury of peers to analyze cases of truancy in first time offenses and possibly assign community service, apologies, jury duty, and other sanctions. This may be favored because of low implementation costs (<http://www.abanet.org>). Awareness campaigns are also emphasized and encouraged, such as Suffolk County in New York and their truancy poster contest (the winner of which will have their poster printed and displayed throughout the community), or Jacksonville, Florida where brochures are handed out during a truancy awareness month at the beginning of the school year (CFFC, 13; 2002).

The CFFC also discusses in-school suspension programs, which are designed to keep students academically engaged and focused in the school setting as well as disciplined. These

types of programs carry two primary components, the first being reintegrating the student into the classroom and providing academic assistance through a variety of means (recommendation 3). The second component involves attention toward social, emotional, and behavioral needs (recommendation 4) as the most frequent reason for suspension was behavioral concerns at 36% (CFFC, 17-18; 2002). “At-risk” programs have also been instituted to identify those at-risk of expulsion or other negative circumstances (directly coinciding with recommendation 1 in following dropout prevention publication).

Expulsion programs exist to monitor infractions such as weapon possessions, constant classroom and behavioral disruption, illegal substances, and much more (CFFC, 19; 2002). Expulsion prevention programs, similar to that of in-school suspensions, focus primarily on academics, as well as emotional health and family issues. Services for mental health needs may include drug/alcohol treatment, family/individual therapy, anger management, character education components, and community service (CFFC, 19; 2002). These programs should be designed to alleviate the everyday pressures on students, and parental involvement is paramount to this goal (CFFC, 21; 2002). The involvement of community agencies is also imperative as they may provide financial support to programs, as well as certain role models, mentors, and counselors that serve a guidance function.

One of the more promising intervention strategies and largest growing approaches is that of restorative justice for dealing with crimes and suspended/expelled students (or those at-risk of any of these sanctions). The emphasis is on the “victim” and “offender” as ties between parties and communities are rebuilt and repairing caused harm (CFFC, 21-22; 2002). The offender takes responsibility for his/her actions and makes amends in the form of service, financial reimbursement, etc. A program that is gaining publicity in schools is Aggression Replacement Training (ART), currently being used in the Denver Public Schools PREP program. This program helps youth identify cues of aggression and anger and helps them to deal with their emotions in a “constructive” manner (Salmon, 1997). Development of character traits such as integrity, support, service, caring, and self-determination are major components, and rewards for good behavior (incentives) are key to this motivation.

Community advocates (recommendation 2) are also being tested in certain school districts that help child and family with concerns impacting school conduct and attendance (CFFC, 22; 2002). These individuals often make daily contact with students and weekly contact with families, investigate absenteeism, and provide tutoring and other forms of academic, social, and emotional support.

In conclusion, encouraging student involvement and improving attendance are highly important to the success of youth. Promoting and encouraging engagement by addressing academic and behavioral issues may turn bad habits into good ones, rather than incompetently removing students from the system. Youth want to feel wanted and they desire social bonds with fellow peers, instructors, and their own families. Many school-related programs and community agencies serve these purposes and should continue to be tested in order to keep society’s youth on track. After researching these preventive programs, CFFC has identified effective solutions and recommendations regarding those out of school, such as...

- Courts, law enforcement, and schools should cooperate in order to improve attendance.
- Parents and schools should intervene early at any first signs of unexcused absences.
- Adopt promising in-school suspension programs.
- Communities work to prevent expulsions and plan to re-engage expelled youth.
- Both parents and students should be involved in prevention program planning and implementation.
- Schools should change “push-out” policies for those at-risk.
- Compulsory attendance age should be 18 years old.
- Schools should be funded on average daily attendance, not a one-day count.

Families Unlocking Futures: Solutions to the Crisis in Juvenile Justice

This report was prepared by the collaborative organization Justice for Families, run by parents and families with experience in the system, and with research support by DataCenter, a grassroots independent research organization. This report, endorsed by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, touches on the juvenile justice system and processes and criticizes methodologies for locking up youth. These organizations support the notion that simply locking up juveniles for common adolescent offenses under the “tough-on-crime” rhetoric will not solve the issues. Rather, they want to work on developing alternative sanctions that will still keep the youth involved, motivated, and ultimately reformed (J4F, 5; 2012).

Justice for Families and DataCenter surveyed more than 1,000 parents and family members from 20 cities across 9 states; conducted 24 focus groups of 152 youth, parents, and family members from 12 cities across 9 states; thoroughly reviewed about 300 articles from 11 metropolitan areas that discussed families of court-involved youth; and completed a literature review on community and governmental alternatives to “zero-tolerance” policies (J4F, 5; 2012). These parents and families were given opportunities to share their thoughts on the justice system and how it has impacted their children; the consensus being that instead of serving as a deterrent, it actually fosters and perpetuates serious structural and emotional issues. There have been complaints of physical maltreatment, aggressive police tactics, and preventing youth from speaking with their families, and ignorant court procedures that feed youth into incarceration (J4F, 7; 2012).

Parents expressed a lot of concern with court proceedings as well. Approximately 91% of family respondents agreed that courts should often include parents on deciding what should happen to children found guilty. However, more than eight in ten family members reported that judges did not consult with parents at all, and instead proceedings were quick, unclear, and impersonal. Additionally, only 18% reported that officials in the system, such as judges, public defenders, probation officers, and other staff were actually helpful (J4F, 8; 2012).

Families are working hard to support their children and create a system that emphasizes productive growth and development versus harsh punishment and even incarceration (J4F, 11; 2012). A first step to facilitate change in the system might be to encourage juvenile courts, probation agencies, and corrections agencies to eliminate policies that tend to exclude and alienate families. Instead, familial rights should be announced at every stage of the process and their participation in decision-making should become a priority. Some ways of increasing family involvement include routinely notifications of court dates, easily accessible court appearances when convenient for families, supporting families' transportation to court, discontinue taking away visitation rights due to misconduct, and more (J4F, 11; 2012). The report also indicates methods of building "family leadership" and integrating that sense of involvement... (J4F, 12; 2012).

1) Ensure Meaningful Parent/Family Participation in Critical Decisions. This reinforces the idea that parents should not only be invited but encouraged to attend disciplinary hearings, juvenile court diversion, detention, and adjudication hearings. An example would be the Case Review Team (CRT) in Connecticut that reviews any possible options before landing on residential custody. These conferences, consisting of family members, youth, and other personnel have been shown to prevent continual involvement in the justice system.

2) Create, Encourage, and Sustain Peer Support Programs for Families of Court-Involved Youth. This suggests that community-based organizations should facilitate parental focus groups so they may share their feelings and experiences with peers in similar situations. One of the issues is that they do not have many others to relate to and express their hardships.

3) Building in Family Leadership: Ensure Parents and Families a Meaningful Voice in Crafting and Reforming Youth Justice Policy. Essentially, this implies that parents could have a role in legislation and the creation of different stipulations.

Most importantly and most relevant to this research are the ways in which we can impose change on the current juvenile justice system. The goal is to move away from heavy incarceration policies that simply exacerbate issues in youth, especially those that lock away youth based on expected misbehavior. Some initial steps that can be taken include eliminating zero tolerance disciplinary policies that result in suspensions, expulsions, and even arrests; ending vaguely defined offenses such as "defiance" that increase racial disparities; and ending "stop-and-frisk" tactics in the community as well as curbing arrests for minor drug possessions and other lower-grade misconduct. Additionally, reliance on confinement should be actively changed through reduction in pretrial detention, closing abusive and dangerous youth prisons, keeping treated youth in small community-based facilities close to home, and even developing restorative justice models (J4F, 13; 2012).

In the end, these programs have been shown to be more effective and less costly than allocating resources to tougher policies of confinement. Intensive wrap-around supervision programs that pair youth to community resources, career and vocation training, and in-home therapy programs are some successful examples of alternative measures (J4F, 14; 2012). Unfortunately, due to increased funding in incarceration policies, there has been a slight

reduction in spending on basic services, including education, housing, job development and drug treatment programs, mental healthcare facilities, and more (J4F, 14; 2012). Instead, investments should be relocated toward building a stronger community and models for programs that encourage youth development and conflict resolution.

Gang Prevention: An Overview of Research and Programs

This publication, in the “Juvenile Justice Bulletin” and endorsed by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, serves as a condensation of research regarding gang formation and prevention methods. First, the author provides an introduction that discusses how gang formation and activity is a growing problem in our nation. More and more states report youth gang activity and higher percentages become members. According to the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, which is a nationally representative sample of 9,000 adolescents, about 8 percent reported that they had belonged to a gang between the ages of 12 and 17 (Snyder and Sickmund, 2006). The author also mentions two different categories of youth decisions in joining a gang: attractions and risk factors (Decker and Van Winkle, 1996). Certain attractions include protection, social needs, entertainment, respect, money, and companionship (Esbensen, Deschenes, and Winfree, 1999). Risk factors on the other hand tend to “push” youth toward gangs, as opposed to the attractive “pulling” nature of the other examples. These risk factors are used to predict criminal behavior and further explain why youth join gangs, including antisocial behavior, alcohol and drug use, mental health problems, victimization from abuse or neglect, and negative life events (Howell, 6-7; 2010).

Family risk factors also exist as parents play critical roles in development (Loeber and Farrington, 2001). These include weaknesses in family structure (such as single-parent households, financial issues and poverty that potentially reduce the development of strong family bonds (Howell and Egley, 2005). Other factors that compromise healthy development include a parent’s lack of education, violence in and outside of the home, and child abuse and neglect (Howell and Egley, 2005). School factors are also prevalent as low academic scores and lack of achievement are strong predictors of crime. Future members of gangs typically performed poorly in elementary school, have a low level of commitment and involvement in school (Hill et al., 1999; Le Blanc and Lanctot, 1998) and have a weak attachment to teachers (Thornberry, Krohn, et al., 2003). According to a French study, these individuals believe that school is wrong, teachers are awful, commit more aggressive acts than others, punished more frequently than others, and have a disregard for order (Debarbieux and Baya, 2008, p. 214). Other research indicates that schools with higher levels of student and teacher victimization, larger student-teacher ratios, poor academic quality, poor school climates, and high rates of sanctions (such as suspensions, expulsions, and juvenile courts) hold more students that get involved with gangs (Bernburg, Krohn, and Rivera, 2006; Debarbieux and Baya, 2008; Gottfredson and Gottfredson, 2001; Morrison and Skiba, 2001; Thornberry, Lizotte, et al., 2003; Weisel and Howell, 2007).

One of the strongest factors is associating with peers who engage in delinquency (Thornberry, Lizotte, et al., 2003). Youth who exhibit aggressive and antisocial behavior tend to affiliate with

one another, and the pattern continues through adolescence (Kupersmidt, Coie, and Howell, 2003; Warr, 2002). Community influences exist as well, especially when youth are exposed to neighborhoods with high-crime and poor economic conditions (Pyrooz, Fox, and Decker, 2010; Thornberry, Krohn, et al., 2003; Valdez, 2007; Vigil, 1988). The clusters of gangs in these neighborhoods bring many negative consequences, including (Howell and Egley, 2005): greater levels of criminal activity, large numbers of neighborhood youth involved in illegal activity, more accessibility of weapons and drugs, and small levels of attachment (Howell, 7-8; 2012).

This bulletin addresses gang intervention strategies and services that may help guide communities into developing a strong proactive stance on the issue. Because every community is different, they must agree on a set definition of the problem that will serve as a good foundation for planning. Widely used criteria for this definition include (Bjerregaard, 2002; Curry and Decker, 2003; Esbensen, Winfree, et al., 2001; Howell, 2009; Klein, 1995; Oehme, 1997; Miller, 1992; Spergel, 1995):

- Three or more members;
- Members share identity and presentation of symbols;
- Views themselves as a gang and others recognize them as a gang;
- Has an established organizational structure;
- Group is involved with serious criminal activity.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention has provided a comprehensive guide that aids communities in assessing their youth gang problem (<http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Content/Documents/Assessment-Guide/Assessment-Guide.pdf>). This guide includes pages of information on data collection, research methodologies, definitions, analyzing data, and much more. The assessment should put the “evolution of gangs in time and space” into perspective (Hughes, 2006) and help communities understand gang levels, activity, and gaps in community services for prevention (Howell, 9; 2010). Also, some basic questions that should be answered include who is involved, what types of crimes, when are they committed, where is the concentration of activity, and why does the activity persist (Howell, 9-10; 2010). The OJJDP’s Gang Model also encourages neighborhoods to address risk factors, schools with known gang activity, hot spots for crime, and serious and violent offenders. The OJJDP Strategic Planning Tool offers assistance in identifying these community factors:

- A list of risk factors organized by age;
- Data indicators for measuring risk;
- Data sources for relevant data;
- Community Resource Inventory to record information on existing programs in order to identify gaps;
- Information on promising youth intervention programs;
- Hyperlinks to connect risk factors with appropriate programs;
- Strategies that target specific risk factors, depending on age.

Based on prior research and a framework for early intervention and delinquency prevention (Howell, 2009, p. 151), there are three distinct strategies that can be used. The first strategy is to intervene at the individual level with at-risk and disruptive children. Secondly, prevention methods at the family level should be utilized; and third, at the community level. By providing the right balance of prevention (targeting youth to reduce number of those who join gangs), intervention (targeting youth by administering different sanctions and services to those who are involved with gang activity), and suppression (targeting most violent gangs and criminally active members by providing rehabilitative services), we can expect to see successful change in the community (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2008; Spergel, Wa, and Sosa, 2006; Wyrick, 2006; Wyrick and Howell, 2004).

A pyramid figure on page 11 illustrates four different groups of individuals and the respective strategies that should be taken (Wyrick, 2006). At the top of the pyramid lie the serious and chronic offenders that make up smallest proportion of population yet commit a disproportionately large share of crime. These individuals should be targeted by strict enforcement and prosecution as they are highly involved in gang activity and there is little probability of other strategies actually curving their behavior. The next level consists of gang involved youth and associates who make up a larger share of population and indulge in significant amounts of illegal activity (ranging 12-24 years of age). These individuals are eligible for intensive treatment and supervision as last resorts of intervention, including group and family therapy, mentoring, cognitive development therapy, and more. The third level includes youth who are at high-risk of joining gangs and show signs of delinquency. Secondary prevention and deterrence strategies should be used that are less intensive than group 2 but more so than those given to youth in community as a whole. Final level simply represents all youth living in a community where gangs are present, and primary prevention strategies should target these children at an early age (Howell, 11-12; 2010).

Primary prevention implies services administered in gang infested communities to the whole population by various government agencies, schools, community organizations, and even faith-based groups (Wyrick, 2006). These programs and services represent the earliest stages of prevention and are seen in the practices of Operation Gang Up. Such examples include public awareness campaigns, improving access to public services, school-based life skills programs (i.e. after-school programs), community cleanup projects, and community organizing efforts. Secondary prevention on the other hand refers to services given to youth who are severely at-risk and have shown early warning signs of delinquency. Secondary strategies typically have a higher priority as they force individuals to confront the decision about whether or not they will join a gang. Many socially rewarding and healthy opportunities may arise from attractive alternatives that fall under secondary prevention. "Effective support systems are necessary to address specific social, emotional, and psychological needs and challenges faced by adolescents," particularly high-risk adolescents (Wyrick, 2006, p. 56).

The bulletin now provides a list of effective and promising programs regarding gang and delinquency prevention; most of the described programs are labeled "promising" as there have been few gang-related programs that have been rigorously tested (Howell, 1998, 2000; Klein

and Maxson, 2006). Mentioned programs are classified as either levels 1, 2, or 3 based on the amount of evidence that supports their effectiveness and how rigorous their research designs were (level 1 being the strongest). Here are a few examples of programs that have received a great deal of attention (Howell, 13-14; 2010):

- The **primary prevention** program Gang Resistance Education And Training (G.R.E.A.T.) offers a school-based gang-prevention curriculum that has demonstrated evidence of effectiveness (Esbensen, Osgood, et al., 2001). This program, classified as L-2, involves law enforcement officers who design a 13-week curriculum particularly for middle school students that describe dangers of gangs. Content includes behavioral training, refusal skills, social skill development, and conflict resolution, and various other curriculums are offered in elementary school settings, during the summer, and training for families (www.great-online.org).
- The Preventive Treatment Program (L-1) in Montreal is a **secondary prevention** program that has reduced gang involvement, even without this being the original intention. This program was designed to prevent anti-social behavior in 7-9 year olds with low socioeconomic status that inevitably improved academic performance, and reduced substance use and delinquency. This showed that a combination of parent training and child skill development can steer youth away from gangs (Tremblay et al., 1996; Gatti et al., 2005).
- Another **secondary prevention** program is Aggression Replacement Training (ART) (L-2) that has proven effective for rehabilitating aggressive and delinquent youth. This 10-week program, administered to groups of 8 to 12 adolescents, provides approximately three 1-hour sessions per week on skill development, anger control, and moral reasoning training. ART showed positive results when tested with gang-involved youth in Brooklyn, NY (Goldstein and Glick, 1994; Goldstein, Glick, and Gibbs, 1998).
- The Boys & Girls Clubs Gang Prevention Through Targeted Outreach is a promising (L-3) **secondary prevention** program that supplements desires and benefits to join a gang (such as sense of belonging or need of supportive adults) with an alternative social activity with reinforced positive behaviors (Arbreton and McClanahan, 2002). Also, there is the Boys & Girls Clubs Gang Intervention Through Targeted Outreach (L-3) that pulls gang-involved youth into club membership in order to reduce contact with gangs, gang-related activity, and juvenile justice system.

In the end, research has not been entirely conclusive as to what actually works in communities because of the many challenges they face. Gangs naturally envelop youth with their promises of better protection, sense of belonging, and various other desirable resources. These gangs already exist and membership thrives in areas of particularly low social and economic statuses. Another issue is the lack of gang awareness in schools and successful programs that promote a better lifestyle; which is exactly the mission of Operation Gang Up. That first step is recognizing that there really is a problem, and then addressing it becomes a

priority. For example, a national study indicated that of the 10 percent of schools with the highest level of gang involvement, only 18 percent of principals actually recognized that gangs were a local problem (Gottfredson and Gottfredson, 2001). The rise of school resource officers and safe and drug-free coordinators luckily have increased recognition of this growing issue (North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and Department of Public Instruction, 2008).

Successful implementation of programs, especially in conjunction with other measures of school safety is important for deterrence and prevention. For effective implementation, delinquency reduction programs that target youth and adolescents should adhere to the structures of the original model, as well as target high-risk offenders (Lipsey, 2009). Some final tips and strategies to combat juvenile delinquency and gang involvement include...

- Addressing the risk factors associated with joining a gang
- Strengthening families and community resources
- Reducing youth conflict
- Increase supervision of youth by community officials and adults
- Providing training for educators, parents, and other administrators
- Softening “zero tolerance” policies with emphasis on rehabilitation
- Gang-related curriculum for students
- Centers for youth recreation, skill development, and other services
- Ensuring that punitive sanctions target gang-related behavior and activity, and not simply clothing, signs, symbols, etc (Howell, 15-16; 2010).

Antidote for Zero Tolerance: Revisiting a “Reclaiming” School

In an article previously mentioned titled, “Re-examining the Impact of Dropping out on Criminal and Labor Outcomes in Early Adulthood,” the issue of idleness was brought up regarding whether or not those who dropped out of school remained productive with their time. Although not entirely related to the concepts of delinquency and gang prevention/intervention, I feel that some information regarding “zero tolerance” policies (particularly in a school setting) is worth analyzing. More specifically, what happens to those who are expelled from school and what is being done with their now free time. This article discusses the criticisms of zero tolerance policies and how depriving students of essential educational and developmental needs has become an acceptable punishment. Some believe that problems with a student are best resolved by removing them from school entirely, when in reality there is a strong chance for these decisions to have permanent negative effects on their lives and development.

The author begins by introducing the Frank Lloyd Wright Middle School, located in West Allis, Wisconsin, and how it had a very large number of disciplinary incidents from 1992-1993. This caused them to reevaluate their practices, and over a four year period the school implemented strategies depicted by the article “Proactive Alternatives to School Suspension” (RCY, 1996) that inevitably led to a decline in disciplinary issues and suspensions (Farner, 2002).

After about six years, the author decided to revisit this school that has now integrated a “reclaiming philosophy” featuring alternatives to zero tolerance.

The primary message, as portrayed in the article, is to make the school setting more proactive and attentive to the needs of students, rather than condemning students and parents for unpreparedness and lack of discipline. Suspensions and expulsions often result in removing those in dire need of academic, social, and emotional support from school; this will then leave them often unsupervised and uncared for. Additionally, these individuals are allowed to sleep in, watch television, and bond with peers in similar situations (Farner, 2002). As author Conrad Farner states, “The reality of exclusionary discipline practices is that they exacerbate the problem by fueling the failure identity, learned irresponsibility, and the other seeds of discouragement that contribute to the poor decision making in the first place.”

Exclusions from essential needs are not the way to go; rather teachers and administrators should strive to create a learning environment that engages the students. In other words, strengthen the learning community in order to accommodate students in better ways that promote a sense of belonging, self-worth, and willingness to fail in order to grow (Farner, 2002). Interpersonal relationships and developing real emotional bonds are instrumental in promoting healthy behaviors. Students who share a common identity with and belong to a particular group, they will feel a sense of commitment to that group (sound familiar?). In this setting, youth will actively look to improve themselves and will share a mutual respect with peers and the adults that serve as role models.

The organizational structure of the school was constantly being modified to adjust to the needs of students. To encourage the growth of these interpersonal relationships, smaller “houses” were established for more personalized learning. This allowed for teachers to teach the same students multiple subjects, which meant much greater time spent together (Farner, 2002). Teachers were then more likely to emphasize their strengths will attempting to diminish weaknesses.

Another structural change was the Multi-Purpose Period (MPP) at the end of every school day. This meant that students were assigned to one of their “house” classrooms where they would meet at the end of the day for various reasons, such as...

- Allowing students to receive extra help.
- Facilitating completion of work.
- Provides access to certain teachers and resources not found at home, like computer labs, art materials, or library media center.
- Creating opportunities to integrate curriculums.
- Fosters relationships and adds stability; spending more quality time with teachers.
- Was adopted after plenty of research on best practices, and is continually modified.

The school environment and houses were often fragmented with a disengaged learning environment and inadequate study time. This led to incomplete assignments and reduction in learning, until MPP was instituted and test scores have increased; as measured by the Wisconsin State Assessment System.

The concept of “looping” was also put into practice at FLWMS as teachers requested to stay with students for more than a single academic year. This continues to build a connection between the student and teacher, and teachers may also integrate curriculum from the previous year rather than it only being conceptual (Farner, 2002). Also by doing so, teachers themselves are constantly learning and expanding their horizons by including different levels of education. Teachers who choose to loop will also avoid introductions and certain expectations, and they will know the weaknesses and strengths of returning students, which allows for the methods to be tailored to their needs. Ultimately, looping ensures a more comfortable and personable environment both for teachers and students and parental relationships with the teachers as well.

These “reclaiming” philosophies and alternative strategies essentially attack the roots of the problems surrounding youth in school. As stated previously, the focus of this article is not directly related to issues of delinquency and gang involvement, but in terms of ensuring success in an academic environment there is some relevance. As demonstrated by the author, “zero tolerance” policies may not be the best course of action. Expulsions from school for instance will not improve childhood development and betterment but rather has the potential of deconstructing any academic, social, and emotional progress. This is about gaining the trust and respect of even the most needy and troubled students by creating a secure and nurturing environment for them to achieve. Some students are sure to be problematic in the school environment, and disciplinary measures are often necessary, but taking the time to truly address the basic needs of youth and encouraging them to strive for more may prove to be beneficial in the long run (Farner, 2002).

Best Practices

IES Dropout Prevention (October 18th, 2012)

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) has deployed a large “practice guide” that lists sets of recommendations and best practices in order to reduce high school dropout rates. Regardless of increased spending in Education, the dropout rate for high school students has consistently been approximately half a million people annually, over the last 30 years (IES, p. 4). These results in failed life expectations, reduced annual incomes, contributing only half as much in taxes compared to graduates, larger government subsidies in food stamps, housing assistance, and welfare programs, increased chances of incarceration, and health issues. In order to potentially reduce these dropout rates and support developing young people, this guide has produced a few recommendations that may catch some issues early on.

Recommendation 1: Utilize data systems that support a realistic diagnosis of the number of students who drop out and that help identify individual students at high risk of dropping out (diagnostic).

- This important first step involves understanding what particular students are at risk of dropping out by implementing certain data systems with the intentions of identifying potential problems. Once these issues are learned, then the appropriate form of intervention can be utilized, instead of simply prolonging the issue. For instance, as the guide depicts, merely instituting harsher attendance policies will not necessarily fix attendance problems, but rather the school should investigate reasons as to why students are not showing up when supposed to.
- Researchers have noted that certain factors such as absences, grade retention, and low academic achievement have some relation to dropout rates. Additionally, the transition from middle school to high school for already struggling students has an impact, and those of low socio-economic status and those with behavioral issues are known to have an influence (IES, p. 13).
- In order to carry out this recommendation, certain designated staff members, counselors, or adult advocates should constantly monitor and review school data of current and incoming students to get a better understanding of those at risk of dropping out. A potential “roadblock” may be the sheer volume of information in school databases and systems, which schools and districts may lack the staff and resources to review it all (IES, p. 15). Possible suggested actions include collecting and disseminating data at regular time periods, such as monthly or quarterly, using integrated, real-time longitudinal data systems, hiring more staff members to monitor information, using automatic electronic systems to identify at-risk students, and more.

Recommendation 2: Assign adult advocates to students at risk of dropping out (targeted intervention).

- Personal and academic needs can be addressed by a trained adult with the development of a meaningful relationship. Academic and social needs, family communication, and advocating for the student are essential functions. The panel at IES examined five experimental studies of four dropout interventions that included an adult advocacy component (IES, p.17). Two of these were actually found to be effective and showed promising results of keeping students in school, while the third showed no discernible effects. The fourth included a case worker with a less substantial role as the other adult advocate components and also did not have any appreciable effect.

- Research indicates that students with strong and consistent relationships with adults tend to feel a greater sense of school membership, attachment, and involvement (Wehlage, 1989). Other benefits include reduced risky behaviors, reduced absentee rates, improved grades, and improved communication and social skills (Pringle et al. 1993; Cragar 1994; Sipe 1996; McPartland and Nettles 1991; Grossman and Garry 1997).
- This recommendation can be carried out by assigning an adult advocate that is trained in their line of work to students who are at risk of dropping out. They should meet regularly and the adult may serve as a resource teacher, community member, social worker, etc. They should offer guidance regarding matters in and out of school, model positive behavior and decision-making skills, and just be a trusted person in the student's life. Certain amounts of time each day should be allocated for these habitual meetings.

Recommendation 3: Provide academic support and enrichment to improve academic performance (targeted intervention).

- Academic support systems such as tutoring and enrichment programs help to improve academic performance and works as a strong supplement to the other recommendations. Research indicates that low academic performance, absenteeism, and grade retention are associated with dropping out (Lee and Burkam 2003; Rumberger 1995; Rumberger and Thomas 2000; Rumberger and Palardy 2005; Rumberger and Larson 1998).
- Positive effects have been reported when mentors provide homework assistance and when adult advocates (recommendation 2) provide academic support.
- There are different approaches to carrying out this recommendation. One way is to provide individual or group support lessons in test-taking skills, study skills, or particular subject areas such as math, reading, and writing. The idea is to provide a comfortable environment to be among peers also struggling with similar material, and enrichment programs (usually 10-12 weeks in length) target subject matter in need of improvement. Also providing extra study time and opportunities to recover credit after school or even on the weekends or during summer months will help strengthen student confidence and skills (Roderick and Engel, 2001). These opportunities should occur at different times from core classes so students do not miss out on material from the curriculum.

Recommendation 4: Implement programs to improve students' classroom behavior and social skills (targeted intervention).

- Schools can help students identify, understand, and self-regulate their emotions and interactions with peers and adults. Doing so will help mitigate

potential problems and disruptive behavior and will help them communicate positively in and out of the classroom (IES, p. 26). Research is limited as many studies conducted did not have a strong component relating to social skill development nor did certain studies have many participants.

- Disruptive behavior is correlated to dropping out, and certain interventions have sought to teach students life development and problem-solving skills to improve behavior. Additionally, the goal is to teach students how to build and maintain positive relationships. Interventions have been relatively successful with groups of students who share personal, family, and social issues with one another (Dynarski et al. 1998) and one-on-one or small group interactions with adult advocates who equip students with behavioral or social skills (recommendation 2).
- This recommendation can be carried out using adult advocates who will establish academic and behavioral goals, both short and long-term. Also, recognizing student accomplishments with positive reinforcement, teaching problem-solving and decision-making skills, and partnering with other outside social and mental health services may lead to strong results.

Recommendation 5: Personalize the learning environment and instructional process (school wide intervention).

- A personalized learning environment offers that sense of belonging and community. It will foster a welcoming climate for students and teachers to get to know one another and ultimately lead to healthy relationships. As for prior research and interventions, the panel was unable to disentangle the effects of these personalization components.
- Students attending large schools may often find themselves alienated and uninterested; they feel little attachment and eventually drop out (Wehlage et al. 1989; National Research Council 2004). Smaller school environments where relationships are more personal and intimate are related to positive student achievement, student attendance, and graduation rates (Lee and Smith 1995; Wasley et al. 2000; McMullan, Sipe, and Wolf 1994; Quint 2006). The National Research Council indicated that student engagement and learning were fostered by caring and supportive relationships, respect, fairness, and trusts; plus, a teacher's sense of shared responsibility and efficacy are related (National Research Council 2004, p. 103).
- This recommendation can be carried out by reforming the structure of high schools into smaller environments. However, if this is too costly and ambitious, other methods of creating the personalized environment may include implementing small learning communities to ease transitions between schools, creating smaller classes and adding more teachers to form a "teaching team" which affords students more access and personal attention, or even extending class periods through a revised schedule (IES, p. 32).

Recommendation 6: Provide rigorous and relevant instruction to better engage students in learning and provide the skills needed to graduate and to serve them after they leave school (school wide intervention).

- Teachers should instruct their students and get them to master the material and knowledge necessary for graduation and post-secondary opportunities. “Multiple pathways” as introduced by career and technical education (CTE) consist of three necessary components; college preparatory core classes, choices of classes with academic and real world application, and field-based learning (Kemple and Snipes 2000; Kemple 2004; Kemple et al. 2005).
- There are some mixed results with either positive or no real appreciable effect on incorporating career-oriented components, as well as challenges on connecting the pathways and newly established curricula to program effectiveness.
- In order to improve rigorous and insightful instruction, teachers themselves must be highly educated and trained while expanding their knowledge. On-site coaching for teachers related to the 9th grade curriculum has received positive feedback, while workshops for teachers on instructional practices (although useful and necessary) has not made an impact on staying/progressing in school or completing school. CTE is one of the primary focuses here and has influenced secondary education to develop ways in which students can choose “majors” (IES, p. 35). This way, students receive the necessary practical and technical skills involved with future careers.
- Carrying out this recommendation can be done in several ways, including constant instruction and training of teachers to expand their knowledge, integrating career-based skills and information with academic material, hosting career days to inspire students, and providing them with extra assistance and information regarding college.

The successful implementation of most or even all of these recommendations may result in a more stable environment for students and inspire them to strive for more. Many of these recommendations overlap and build off of one another; however it all begins with identifying the students that really require the attention and assistance. Schools need to have a professionally trained staff of teachers and other adult advocates that serve as role models for these students. Students do not want to feel disconnected and like another “number” in the system, but rather need the personal attention and positive relationships to give them confidence and motivation to succeed. By creating this welcoming and comfortable environment, students will be more likely to participate and show some enthusiasm in and out of the classroom.

***Whatever It Takes* (October 19th, 2012)**

Whatever It Takes is a publication by the American Youth Policy Forum that considers and analyzes the community issues of student dropouts. Their goal, through comprehensive research, interviews, and site visits, is to reconnect the “out-of-school” youth to mainstream society. This can be achieved through continuous involvement in education and job training, so these individuals can build productive and satisfying lives. In this publication, many committed individuals in the field, including educators, social entrepreneurs and community leaders are documented and commended for their continuing efforts that go unnoticed. Additionally, 12 different communities across the nation are mentioned for their reclamation efforts and serve as stories of success rather than products of analysis. Here are a few of the examples...

- In Montgomery County (Dayton) Ohio, County Administrator Deborah Feldman was convinced by business leader Frederick Smith to attack the dropout issue soon after assuming the post in June 1997 (Martin and Halperin, p. 11; 2006). People were not responsible for these dropouts until crimes were committed or somebody had a baby, according to Feldman. There haven’t been any real attempts at preventing individuals from entering the criminal justice system, and they attributed these issues to the lack of education. This resulted in the creation of the Out-of-School Youth Task Force, whose purpose involved getting these youth (defined as those currently enrolled but do not regularly participate in education programs) a high school diploma, GED, or some sort of economic self-sufficiency (Martin and Halperin, p. 12; 2006).
- In Jefferson County (Louisville) Kentucky, The Louisville Education and Employment Partnership (LEEP) was established in 1987, and is a collaborative effort of the Jefferson County Public Schools, Louisville City Government, and County Government. Its inception was a result of the mayor and city council’s belief that education is the key to economic development. Its primary goal is to assist students who are at risk of dropping out (not unlike IES recommendations) by supporting school-based career planners, keeping them active and motivated, and easing the transitions to adulthood (Martin and Halperin, p. 24; 2006). Their impressive track records and reduced dropout rates can be attributed to their “place for every child and youth” philosophy, and is most evident in their reintegration of those just released from juvenile justice systems. Part of their process involves administering Comprehensive School Surveys annually that measures attitudes by race, school, and district (Martin and Halperin, p. 25; 2006). Funding also helped create up to 50 different after-school programs that utilize the “Kid Trax” system; this involves a programmed plastic card which allows schools to trace certain scores, attendance, truancy, etc.
- In Austin, Texas, there is a very large expansive community that prides itself on its education-oriented environment and successful tech industries. The Austin Independent School District (AISD), approximately containing 107 campuses and

nearly 80,000 students of all ages, has committed to eliminating or sharply reducing dropout rates over the past decade. A 55-member task force composed of educators, community leaders, and parents developed a “Comprehensive Dropout Reduction/Prevention Program” that does just what it says. Their task was to develop a reliable database that carries the capability of allocating essential resources, ensure accountability, install range of preventive services, and improve upon pre-existing youth services (Martin and Halperin, p. 31; 2006). They use a “Solution-Focused Problem-Solving Approach” where a student’s academic, attendance, and behavioral issues are addressed through a variety of interventions (Martin and Halperin, p. 32; 2006). These may include parent-teacher conferences, withdrawal of privileges, crisis interventions, and other various connections to care services. According to statistics, there were improvements in grades, discipline, and attendance in about 80% of cases.

Each one of these programs and cases differ in their methodologies, are funded and initiated by different organizations and agencies, and have different targeted groups of students. However, one of the main ideas they have in common is to institute policies and programs relating to education that serve purposes of lowering dropout rates. In other words, education is the focus in every case as it builds the characters that run our nation and contributes directly to economic growth. At these stages, with interventions and strategies in place, we can continue to motivate the youth into staying in school and developing themselves as productive and efficient members of society.

Conclusion

This compilation of research was originally done to not only shed light on the countless studies regarding topics of dropping out, delinquency, and gang activity, but also in an attempt to make connections. Results of the past literature and case studies vary greatly, and consistent findings were challenging to come by. For instance, after analyzing different publications that discuss the effects of dropping out on delinquent behavior, no significant relationship could be established as some results came out positive, while others not so promising. It may appear to be common sense that dropping out of high school would certainly lead youth down a non-conventional and destructive path, yet not all studies supported this claim. Perhaps researchers, sociologists, and educators have not designed the best methods to test these theories and that could be the reasoning for mixed results, or simply there really is no statistically significant relationship.

Although results seem hazy, research began pointing to other interesting topics that may be promising and worth further investigating. For example, issues of truancy and chronic absenteeism have been brought up and discussed as a potential cause of delinquency. When students stop consistently attending classes that suggests there is a problem that needs to be addressed. Once students leave school permanently, they tend to indulge in unconventional behavior, associating with peers in similar cases, and using their “idle” time in unproductive

ways. Communities, parents, and school systems should work to keep the youth motivated and in school attendance in order to promote a productive and healthy lifestyle. They must create environments that make students feel welcomed, comfortable, and engaged in learning and socializing with peers and adults. Many issues stem from a lack of communication and impersonal environments that foster negative attitudes and behaviors; some youth simply do not feel wanted. Combined with other “push” factors such as low academic achievement and a failing support system will likely drive youth into delinquency as they cope with the real world. As stated previously, the research yields mixed results both in favor and against some of these topics, but there is still a consensus that communities must work harder to provide structure and nurture the talents of youth. It is a necessary first step in order to prevent delinquency and potential gang membership where they follow distorted value systems.

So, what are some effective ways of improving the community and promising intervention strategies that will direct society’s youth to a better future? Weed and Seed programs that target specific geographic areas are often effective in rooting out drug and violent offenders, establishing programs and stability in needy communities, and emphasizing a more interpersonal environment among youth, adults, and law enforcement. Developing after-school programs that keep students productive and occupied during after-school hours when parents and guardians are unable to care for them. These programs, such as the Boys and Girls Clubs serve to further educate, facilitate strong social bonds, entertain, and encourage positive development in youth. Programs such as counseling, tutoring, and even in-school suspensions are certain modes and sanctions of development that continue to promote youth involvement with academics as well as strengthen personal relationships. SHINE, however, stands out as a program that addresses several chronic, regional issues – poor school performance, lower higher education attainment, crime, higher poverty, and workforce development issues (reduced number of skilled, trained, and educated workers). SHINE also addresses the each of the recommendations presented above. Reducing risk factors that lead to negative behaviors such as issues in academics, familial problems and neglect, peer influences, and idle time are also important for delinquency prevention. Utilizing other strategies and concepts such as restorative justice and community service are effective in reintegrating youth back into the community and altering their criminal mentality. Having primary and secondary prevention strategies that offer gang-related curriculum, teach important life skills and conflict resolution, and emphasize rehabilitation as opposed to harsher punitive measures are also key.

All of these are common elements to delinquency and gang deterrence that work to improve youth development at early ages. There are many methods, interventions, and strategies that are appropriate for successful growth for both youth and the communities they reside in, however it is a matter of selecting programs that best suit the needs of these individuals and areas. Rather than focusing on policies of “zero” tolerance and incarceration, perhaps it is time to move toward rehabilitative and restorative measures that attack the problems associated with youth. Local, state, and federal governments, in conjunction with other agencies and non-profit organizations, should work to fund and institute these programs and further research their effectiveness.

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