



International Journal of Sciences: Basic and Applied Research (IJSBAR)

ISSN 2307-4531
(Print & Online)

<http://gssrr.org/index.php?journal=JournalOfBasicAndApplied>



Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Zero Tolerance: Is Zero Tolerance A Failed Policy?

Albert D. Peabody*

7569 Drumheller Drive, Richmond, VA 23225, U.S.A.

Email: noryoucha@aol.com

Abstract

Although, the concept of zero tolerance could result in the expulsion of a student who brought a loaded gun or a pocket knife to school, there are students who continue to bring guns to school. In this case, how has the expulsion of one student serve as a deterrent to other students not to bring a loaded gun or knife to school? Several schools in the United States have adopted the zero tolerance policy in order to deal with juvenile delinquency at school. A positive attribute is that if a potential crime is detected in time could be prevented from occurring. However, if the crime is perfected, creates an absolute new scenario, and the child could be tried and sentenced as an adult. Suffice it to say, when dealing with behavior, it is unrealistic that referring a child to the juvenile court system for an unproductive or long sentence at a juvenile detention center will improve the behavior of that child. As a result of zero tolerance, many children have become lost and fallen deeper through the cracks of society. Some schools have relinquished the zero tolerance policy, while others continue to impose it upon children. Recreational and after school activities have proven to be effective. Nonetheless, this paper will be focusing on other measures that could indeed repeal an outdated zero tolerance policy in the 21st. century.

Keywords: Alternative forms; Alternative hypothesis; Department of education; In forma pauperis; in locoparentis; Null hypothesis; Outlier; Scatter plots; Zero Tolerance.

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: noryoucha@aol.com.

1. Introduction

The subject of this study will be a secondary high school located in a rural county of a southeastern state of the United States where this research will be conducted. This high school has a diverse enrollment of 1,492 students and is an integral part of a larger school division composed of an enrollment of 56,000 students within 59 schools situated in a rural county.

According to a report from the office of student conduct, the high school had a rash of 33 infractions. These violations ranged from Drug Schedule I and II use and possession; assault, battery, and no weapon; and weapon, handgun, and pistol possession. Other infractions included drug violations look-alikes I; threat and intimidation against; assault and battery with firearms, disorderly conduct, fighting--no or minor injury, and other offenses (see Appendix A).

This study will use a quantitative evaluation approach to analyze the effectiveness of a zero tolerance (ZT), teen violence, and safe school policy. The high school's parent handbook information documented a well-defined policy (see Appendix B). The ZT policy has been incorporated into the school's safety plan.

The main challenge for the high school officers is to ensure that the system maintains and enforces its written rules and regulations in support of its standards for student conduct and attendance policy. A continuous need to develop other innovative strategies may play a role in the circumvention of any level of violence. Most of these operational priorities revolving around the basic functions of a safe school policy at the high school are documented in the school handbook.

As suggested by McMillan, "evaluation research is directed toward making decisions about the effectiveness or desirability of a program. The goal is to make judgments about alternatives in decision-making situations." [26]. In particular, this ideology is based upon the philosophy that, if research has proven that a specific program is ineffectively lapsing, that program must be either eliminated or replaced with an effective program.

The data collection initiatives for this study [17: 12-13], was based on the validity of the data supported by facts. The null and alternative hypothesis for this study will be vehemently tested. While it is true that the paradox central to containing the ZT policy at the high school is incumbent upon the teacher's duty as to always avail herself as a role model for corrective interventions for the children, it is equally true that, some teachers have fallen short of this responsibility leaving the children with no apparent role model. In this context, the acceptable, conventional, legal wisdom is for the teacher to stand proxy as the *in loco parentis* for the child while he or she is away from home. On the other hand, this parental assumptive role by the teacher demonstrates to the child that there is someone at the school who cares for him or her. In a preliminary examination of the outcomes of the current ZT policy, weaknesses such as the 33 infractions were observed and documented in the Office of Student Conduct.

As a result of these weaknesses, school leaders must undertake other approaches that will instrument changes to its current strategy. These approaches could result in implementing comprehensive reforms to the current ZT policy. At present, the school safety program includes the following characteristics: (a) a comprehensive safe

school plan that calls for the installation of videotape surveillance cameras in the buildings and on the buses; (b) a system-based program against violence; (c) confidentiality of the students, through surveillance equipment monitored by the delegated authority; (d) the availability of a trained crisis team in case of a chemical emergency; (e) parental safety rules; (f) the availability of radio, a television school Web site, and specific hotlines during emergencies.

Despite the comprehensive nature of the current school safety program, student infractions continue unabated. A number of school leaders suggest that a comprehensive evaluation of the ZT and school safety program is appropriate. The basis of the school safety program is a ZT policy. Curwin and Mendler [11] described ZT as “another example of the road to hell paved with good intentions.”

1.1 Nature of the Problem

The purpose of the project will be to evaluate the value and effectiveness of the current ZT and safe school policy at the high school. An analytical, in-depth assessment of students', administrators', stakeholders', and parents' roles in the program may pave the way to a successful conclusion. This study will address the problem associated with the current ZT and public safety program at the high school.

1.2 Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the project will be to evaluate the effectiveness of the current ZT and safe school policies at the high school to determine if the ZT and safe school program are meeting its established goals. This evaluation will be based on an in-depth assessment of how the current ZT and safe school policies are implemented on a continuing basis and how this implementation impacts the school, students, teachers, administrators, stakeholders and parents.

Peterson, et al.[32,35,45] identified situations in which policies resulting in harmful consequences for students, schools, and educators have occurred. Other researchers argued that ZT policies promote irrational climate of fear and that the first casualty is the student-teacher relationship. [3].

1.3 Background and Significance of the Problem

An assessment of how the current ZT and safe school policy is implemented on a continuous basis and how this implementation impacts the school and students. The current crime wave at the high school is creating a more significant demand for a solution that would replace the current ZT policy. This study will investigate and evaluate teen crimes and the ZT policy at the high school.

This research topic has prompted theories and studies by a number of authors. [Appendix B].Standards for Student Conduct Handbook succinctly spells out the following responsibilities:

The County School Board expects a high standard of student conduct in an effort to ensure an atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning, free of disruption and threat to person or property, and supportive of

individual rights.” These standards will apply to students while on school property, when at school sponsored activities and when going to and returning from school. Students may also be disciplined for acts committed away from school property, when at school-sponsored activities, and when going to and returning from school.

The interpretation of West’s Annotated Code of Virginia (1950) regarding the prosecution of juveniles as adults for certain crimes provides the following: [43] “The code requires that local school boards provide information to students about laws regarding the prosecution of juveniles as adults” Further, the law requires that the Office of the Attorney General develop the information.

The Public School being investigated by this study stated:

The Office of the Attorney General has developed the following information. Essentially the law permits juveniles age 14 years and older under certain circumstances to be prosecuted as adults, this information is provided in question and answer format and is designed to provide the notice required by law as documented below:

West’s Annotated Code of Virginia [43] documented the legal guidelines for school board policies; school board regulations governing student conduct as follows:

The Board of Education shall establish guidelines and develop model student conduct policies to aid local school boards in the implementation of such policies. The guidelines shall include, but not limited to, (i) criteria for the removal of a student from class, the use of suspension and expulsion, and exclusion as disciplinary measures, the grounds for suspension and expulsion and exclusion, and the procedures to be followed in such cases, including proceedings in suspension, expulsion and exclusion decisions and all applicable appeal processes; (ii) standards, consistent with state, federal and case laws for school board policies on alcohol, and drugs, vandalism, trespassing, threats, search and seizure, disciplining of students with disabilities, intentional injury of others and dissemination of such policies to students, their parents, and school personnel.

An insightful report from Indiana University News Room was a formidable challenge to the ZT policy in which Skiba argued: “reliance on suspension does not yield the benefits proponents after claim. It is hard to make a case that ZT sends a clear message to students when its use is associated with increased incarceration.” [21].

1.4 Research Questions

This study will be guided by the following five research questions:

1. What does the literature reveal about safety policies and issues in secondary education?
2. What are the more common safety programs used by schools to defer crime in this educational setting and which of these are effective?

3. Does literature reveal some provisions of their safety policies that defer crime successfully and good be considered as best practices criteria to use as part of an evaluation process?

4. What research instruments could be used effectively to evaluate the school safety program at the high school under investigation?

5. How can the findings of the program evaluation process contribute to improvements in the existing program?

1.5 Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are clarified.

Alternative forms. This is when two or more versions of a test that are considered interchangeably, in that they measure the same constructs in the same ways, are intended for the same purposes and are administered using the same directions.

Alternative hypothesis. This is the statistical symbol used to indicate the alternative hypothesis. In the absence of at least 95% sureness, the null hypothesis within the critical region is rejected for the alternative hypothesis.

Department of education. This is one of the departments composed of the executive branch of the U.S. Government responsible for education.

In forma pauperis. This is a judicial process by the court to give permission for an indigent person who may not be deprived of these rights to legal representation in a criminal matter because of being a pauper.

In loco parentis. This is a Latin maxim that is translated as, in the place of parents.

Null hypothesis. This is used in a statement that there is no difference in the means of two groups, which suggests that two or more groups are related to each other.

Outlier. This is a data point that is 1.5 or greater standard deviations away from the mean.

1.6 Review of the Literature

The purpose of this review of the literature is to explore the effectiveness of the safe school policy at the high school. This policy has never been evaluated since its inception that made it mandatory for the ZT policy to be incorporated into the rules governing public safety at the high school. This policy is predicated upon Virginia ZT Law § 22.1. [43]. Creswell suggested that “the data collection steps include setting boundaries for the study, collecting information through unstructured or (semi-structural observation for observations and interviews, documents, and visual materials as well as establishing the protocol for recording information.” [10]. Mental

Health America [29] reported that “many school districts expanded the scope of ZT policies even further to include various non-violent acts; in addition they also broadened the definition of weapons and drugs to include such things as nail files, plastic knives, and aspirin.”

This study organized a review of the literature for a quantitative study, and, moreover, the model for delimiting the literature to reflect the variables of the study was a critical instrument. According to Creswell, [10] independent variables have been defined as “variables that probably cause influence or affect outcomes. Dependent variables are outcomes or results of the influence of independent variables.”

Mission Statement

The following mission statement is “to provide students with competencies to achieve academic and personal success through the [Expletive] County Public Schools’ core values within a safe and orderly environment.” This mission statement explicates the need for students to learn under only acceptable circumstances. Those conditions under the mission statement guidelines should never be compromised or else the full force of stringent disciplinary measures will be employed for the safety of the high school and all those who reside within its premises.

Price and Everett (as cited in Lyne, [23] wrote,

Principals were queried as to the number of students found carrying a weapon on school property and the number who were injured as a result of weapons during their previous school year (1992-1993). The mean number of students carrying a knife was 1.9 (SD = 0.70). Firearms and other weapons were carried by an average of less than one student (range from 0-10 and 0-21, respectively). The mean number of injuries was less than 1 for firearms, 0-8 for knives, and 0-12 for other weapons.

ZT Evaluation

Traditionally, summative and formative evaluations are needed to evaluate the effectiveness of a program. Fitzpatrick, et al. [16] found that, “when the decision to be made is summative--whether to continue, expand, or drop a program--an external evaluator (also known as a third-party evaluator, independent evaluator, evaluation consultant, or evaluation contractor) may be preferable to an internal evaluator” In this context, summative and formative evaluations will be conducted by the summative and formative committees in collaboration with the researcher.

It is also equally clear that, although an internal evaluation needs assessment is an essential element to be considered on the basis that the evaluators may possess prior

knowledge of the program under evaluation, but, from a broad-based perspective, the assessment of immediate outcomes may significantly be used in the context of formative purposes.

Fitzpatrick et al. [16] found: “The prototypical external evaluator is an independent consultant or an employee of an organization whose function is to conduct evaluations by contract--Nevertheless, the contrasts between internal and external evaluators, as with the distinctions between summative and formative evaluations.”

Virginia ZT Law and Firearms

The Code of Virginia [8] requires that a student who is found with a weapon on school property be expelled. The Code of Virginia law, which was enacted in [8], reads thus, “To parallel the Gun-Free Schools Act of [8] requires school boards to expel for period of not less than one year any student determined to have brought a ‘firearm’ or destructive device onto school property or to a school sponsored activity.”

Application of the ZT Law

Empirical data dating back to the 1990s relating to court cases involving juvenile delinquency and other teen crimes at the high school that required the initial application of the Code of Virginia (1994) suggested that the process begins by an internal investigation and interrogation of the student accused of an offense and the witnesses present at the commission of the offense by the principal or his or her designee. This specific legalistic ramification that involves school law epistemology by school executives who wear the cloak of authority to enforce the rule have been found valuable to the research topic and research questions in that it gives some astounding revelations about how matters involving teens whose identities are preserved until certain records are expunged are initially handled by the school system.

Not all administrators who serve as quasi-judicial officers in these ex parte investigations have the expertise in the school law curriculum. However, from a layman’s perspective, some administrators do have this expertise and have no problem applying the guidelines best appropriate at that basic level.

Following the preliminary examination, the matter is referred to the county police department for their preliminary investigation and subsequent arrest and the reading of the student’s Miranda’s rights. Thereafter, the student is held for further police processing subsequent to appearing before a judge for arraignment and assigned a public defender if the parent is an *informa pauperis*.

Safe School Environment

Additionally, innovative disciplinary guidelines ensure an academic environment of tranquility free from violence where children can learn under safe conditions as outlined in the 2007-2008 student handbook. The guidelines emphatically provide that, if a student is found disrupting the free flow of education, standing in the way of progress by preventing others from obtaining their desired educational goals, or found violating any of the rules contained in the student handbook, 2 days suspension will be applied for the first offense provided that the offense took place in the same school year. For the second offense in the same school year, the student may be suspended for 4 days. In the case of a third offense, in the same school year, a more drastic measure will be applied; the student will be suspended for 10 days, and a conference may be convened by the Office of Student Conduct in order to determine the seriousness of the conduct of the accused student. Based on the veracity and

magnitude of the charge, the Office of Student Conduct may recommend consequences depending on the gravity of the offense.

The high school has a ZT policy that is rigorously enforced in accordance with Virginia ZT laws. This policy regulates that, in addition to the assignment of a county police officer at the high school to monitor and enforce ZT and safe school policy, school security officers, also known as resource officers, have also been deployed to work hand- in-hand with the police to handle safety problems. These resource officers have been issued white shirts at the county's expense with security in bold inscription written on the back of the shirts to ensure visibility and also to serve as a deterrent. This is the first of its kind in this county. Duncan [14] contributed to this literature review in his writings directed toward high school students and school personnel regarding gang activity, violence, and safety in high schools of Hinds County Public School District in Mississippi, Zelman et al. [48] stated, "One such school, Jenner Elementary, has faced threats by Chicago's mayor and the schools' CEO to close it because of gang gunfire; children cling to the empathic principal and ask, Will I get home okay today, Mrs. Satinover?" (p. 281). By the same token, Isom [22], argued that "aggression in children is influenced by the reinforcement of family members, the media, and the environment." Sylwester, [39] did not dispel the Bandura's (1976) theory that found that the brain has an effect on crime. Sylwester's theory, however, suggested that neurotransmitters of serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine play important roles in regulating behavior by inferring that low serotonin levels have been linked to such aggressive behavior such as fighting, arson, and suicide. Hence, both Bandura's and Sylwester's theories, although similar, present results pertinent to this study. [39].

More important, Evans (as cited in Siegel, [33] found that "children learn to act aggressive when they model their behavior after violent acts of adults, especially family members. For example, the boys who witness his father repeatedly strikes his mother will more than likely become an aggressive parent and husband."

The Code of Virginia (1994) provided this research with valid and credible data that provides direct link to the research questions. Concepts in the 2007-2008 Standards for Student Conduct Handbook that entails the basic rules and guidelines governing the conduct of students send a critical message: The targeted problem area and performance gap to ensure public school safety at the high school must be adhered to.

An excerpt from the 2007-2008 Standards for Student Conduct Handbook reads as follows:

The principal or designee shall determine the appropriate disciplinary measures for each case of misconduct by a student, except where consequences are predetermined by specific School Board policy or by law. Determinations of disciplinary measures shall include (a) Consideration of the nature and seriousness of the offense; (b) Degree of danger to the school community; (c) The student's age and grade level; (d) Results of any mental health, substance abuse, or special education assessments (e) Student's attendance and academic records (f) Relative impact of a violation on the entire student body as well as on the individual; (g) School and county-wide regulations and rules; (h) Appropriateness and availability of an alternative education or placement program; (i) Student's cumulative discipline record to include the

seriousness and number of previous infractions; and (j) Such other matters as the principal or designee deems appropriate.

An extensive review of the literature discovered five measures to prevent criminal behavior at the high school. A student may be held culpable for breaching any of these guidelines. In a concerted effort to contain ZT and promoting safe schools in the communities, a new resource officer program has been established by the Chesterfield County Police Department [7] where this study was conducted; the policy of this new program declares that

there will be no exception to the practice of reporting violations to the law. [Expletive] County places of zero tolerance for weapons, drugs, or abuse of any kind. School resource officers and administrators shall take measures to prevent and address all incidents involving

1. Assaults against students or school personnel.
2. Threats against school personnel.
3. Involvement with drugs or alcohol.
4. The possession of contraband or any suspicious substances which may be illegal.
5. The possession of weapons. (Policy section, para. 1)

According to the Advancement Project and Civil Rights Project (as cited in McAndrews, [25], “Most policies, including the Gun Free Schools Act, granted school leaders discretion in applying suspensions and expulsions, but few appeared to be willing to use it, preferring to maintain a ‘tough’ stance and ‘send a message’ to would-be violators [1]. In spite of the many opponents to ZT, 93% of the Gallop/PhiDelta Kappa sample conducted in [18] supported ZT for students who were charged with weapons possession in school. On another pertinent note, Ewing [15] opined that the removal from school for the protection of other students is a justifiable stance, as long as the intent is to protect other individuals who may be in harm’s way.

Suffice it to say, the basic concept grounded in the passage of the Code of Virginia [8] by the Virginia General Assembly was a vibrant approach to the problem of teen violence and, thereby, prescribing punishments for teen offenders who violate school rules. The Code of Virginia stipulated that “the Board of Education shall establish standards to ensure compliance with the federal Improving America’s Schools Act of 1994 (Part F-Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994) in accordance with Section 22.1-277.07, to be effective on July 1, 1995.”

Under the Code of Virginia [8], in an aggressive bid to enforce the maximum penalty, the following law is the prescribed punishment for threats of death or bodily injury to a person or member of his family: certain oral threats communicated to school personnel as follows:

(a) If any person write or compose and also send or procure the sending of any letter or inscribed communication, so written or composed, whether such letter or communication be signed or anonymous, to any person, containing a threat to kill or do bodily injury to any member of his or her family, the person so writing or composing and sending or procuring the sending of such letter or communication shall be guilty of a Class 6 felony and may be prosecuted either in the county, city or town in which the letter or inscribed communication is received. (b) If any person orally makes a threat to any employee of any elementary, middle or secondary school, while on a school bus, or on school property or at a school sponsored activity, to kill or to do bodily injury to such person, he shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

The American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association (as cited in Atkinson, [2] found that “the need for a reexamination of zero tolerance policies that would balance their (rigid) policies with a measure of whether the student wanted to do harm or not.”

It is of vital necessity to interpose that the Code of Virginia [8] ZT laws run parallel to federal laws and the state laws rely direfully on federal legislations when implying the letters of the law relating to the federal interpretation regarding the federal Improving America’s Schools Act of 1994 (Part F-Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994) that includes Section 22.1-277.07 of the Code of Virginia statutes that punishes the child who brings a firearm on school property by expulsion. Excerpts of West’s Annotated Code of Virginia [8] read as follows:

A school board shall expel from school attendance for a period of not less than one year any student whom such school board has determined, in accordance with the rule as set forth in this article, to have brought a firearm onto school property or to a school-sponsored activity as prohibited by Section § 18.2-308.1, or to have brought a firearm as defined in subsection D on school property or to a school sponsored activity.

According to the research done for this study, Virginia ZT laws, also known as Virginia Education law, remain in full force and binding not only on the county and high school where this study will be conducted but also on all kindergarten-Grade 12 learning institutions within the Commonwealth of Virginia. Hence, these laws continue to remain binding and in full force throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia until otherwise ordered revoked by federal or state statutory enactments.

Data from the U.S. Congress, Library of Congress, Virginia Legislature, ERIC, Office of Student Conduct, Court Opinions in specific juvenile court cases, and other case studies that suggest the ineffectiveness of the ZT and safe school policy give a broad, detailed description. These compilations include writings of Sutherland [38] who suggested that individuals learn criminal behavior while in their adolescence stage from family members and peers. These writings contribute significantly to the research topic in an effective way. Other works of secondary, primary and read primary source report is Beckowitz (as cited in Isom, [22] who believed that “children who have a high degree of exposure to the media may exhibit a relatively high incidence of hostility themselves in imitation of the aggression they have witnessed”

As described by Curwin and Mendler, [11] ZT is “another example of the road to hell paved with good intentions.” Curwin et al., wrote,

A young high school student was expelled after bringing a gun to school. Should he have been? That morning, his father in a drunken rage had put a gun down the youngster’s throat and, before passing out, threatened to kill him and his younger brother. The student brought the gun to school to save their lives. Before he could give it to his principal, the gun was discovered. Curwin and Mendler [11] suggested, that to establish as tough as necessary policy, all members of the school community--teachers, administrators, students, professionals, and parents--need to contribute to the general guidelines:

1. School will be safe.
2. We resolve our differences through talking not fighting.
3. We are responsible for preventing violent behavior.
4. We care for and protect one another’s person, property, and feelings.
5. From these guidelines, the school community develops its rules.
6. No weapons allowed in schools.
7. We do not touch one another without permission.
8. We report when we hear of a fight brewing.

Curwin and Mendler [11] wrote, “Zero tolerance was developed in response to legitimate concerns that cannot be ignored. However, when the solution creates more difficulty than the original problem, it is time to abandon it for something better.”

Persuasive evidence from Peterson [32], Skiba and Peterson [35], and Zelman et al. [45] indicated how situations in which policies resulting in harmful consequences for students, schools, and educators have occurred. Ayers et al. [3] argued that ZT policies promote an irrational climate of fear and that the first casualty is the student-teacher relationship.

Pedagogical knowledge underscores the epistemology of violence. As a curriculum, lessons learned can be a magnificent transitional achievement for the child’s development from the adolescence stage to adulthood on the one hand. The establishment of a crime free environment where a child can be receptive of the transfer of uninterrupted knowledge is crucial to violence prevention. This reasoning inculcates the metaphor of planting the child like a seed within a learning environment free from intimidation, bullying, and crime. Gradually, as the

seed begins to sprout, the beautification and blossoming is representative of proper molding, and, thus, the result will be of splendor due to the fertility of the soil.

In this context, teaching the child that violence can be a wrong path to pursue and that the repercussions could be dear is critical. From an andragogical perspective, on the other hand, parents must be educated that it is not alright for a child to bring a weapon to school to protect himself or herself. Most children who bring guns to school give frivolous excuses of having the firearms to protect themselves from bullies. Some students do not recognize that the school is a place for learning and should never be perceived as a battle ground and rivalry.

DeVoe et al. [12] took quite a more liberal view by inferring that some proponents of ZT have credited it with declines in crimes, weapons, and drugs cases. In contrast, other critics disagree (Advancement Project, [1]; Harvard University Civil Rights Project, [19]; Skiba & Knesting, [34] Weissman et al. [42]).

Uniforms as Alternative to ZT Policy

Wilkins, [44] cited the following excerpt she quoted from President Clinton's State of the Union address regarding children wearing uniforms as an alternative to crime prevention initiatives:

If it means that teenagers will stop killing each other over designer jackets, then our public schools should be able to require their students to wear uniforms. But we must do more, and local communities must lead the way I believe we should give strong support to school districts that decide to require young students to wear school uniforms. We've all seen the tragic headlines screaming of the death of a teenager who was killed for a pair of sneakers or jewelry or a designer jacket. In Detroit, a 15-year-old boy was shot for his \$86 basketball shoes. In Fort Lauderdale a 15-year-old student was robbed of his jewelry. Just this past December in Oxon Hill, Maryland, a 17-year-old honor student was killed at a bus stop, caught in the cross fire during the robbery of another student's designer jacket. School uniforms are one step that could be able to help break this cycle of violence, truancy, and disorder by helping young students to understand that what really counts is what kind of people they are what's on the inside. To remember that what they're doing at school is working and not showing off their own clothes envying another student's clothes.

West's Annotated Code of Virginia [43] specifies the wearing of uniforms in public schools as an alternative to the ZT policy reads as follows:

A. The Board of Education shall develop model guidelines for local school boards to utilize when establishing requirements for pupils to wear uniforms. In developing guidelines, the board shall consider (i) ways to promote parental and community involvement, (ii) relevant state and federal constitutional concerns, such as freedom of religion and freedom of speech, and (iii) the ability of pupils to purchase such clothing.

B. Upon approval by the Board of the model guidelines, local school boards may establish requirements consistent with the Board's guidelines, for students enrolled in any of schools to wear uniforms while in attendance at such school during the regular school day. No state funds may be used for the purchase of uniforms.

Financing Safe Schools

The need for safe schools funding initiatives is critical to the improvement of student conduct. Safety concern is a priority in the eyes of the school, parents, and the community, which has prompted the federal government to initiate several federal funding programs that will allow certain troubled schools to stay in business, rather than closing them down.

The customers of these schools are indeed the students, and their presence is needed in order to keep the doors of the schools opened. A school may fall victim of losing federal funds if that school is without a credible, safe school history for a protracted period. Hence, to keep the doors of schools open, millions of dollars have been appropriated for schools across the nation to fight crimes as documented by the U.S. Department of Education [40]. This report cited President Clinton's proposal to include funding for several federal programs at local schools to necessitate their own violence prevention initiatives.

Stetzner [37] stated, "President Clinton announced his intent to place 100,000 teachers in the classrooms during the next 7 years and provide \$600 million to redesign and fund the U.S. Department of Education's Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Community Project." This gesture was geared toward impeding crime growth and enhancing school safety at U.S. schools. According to data, the funds were to be disbursed to the chief executive officers or governors of the states and territories where the schools are located. According to Stetzner, [37], the report includes the following averments:

The funding of several federal programs at local schools to necessitate their own violence prevention initiatives as follows: (a) enforcing ZT for guns on school property by enacting state laws while promoting blended sentencing for juvenile offenders tried as adults, (b) providing support for civic, community and faith-based organizations to initiate a value-based violence preventive initiatives; (c) providing safe afterschool opportunities to half a million children a year; (d) cracking down on truancy; (e) encouraging schools to adopt school uniform policies; (f) supporting curfew at all local level; (g) developing a comprehensive anti-gang effort; (h) supporting stricter enforcement of laws to keep weapons away from children and for legislation that places child safety locking devices on guns; and (i) providing \$143.5 million to help community coalitions rid their streets of drugs and combat youth alcohol and tobacco abuse.

According to the U.S. Department of Education [40], President Clinton had previously requested \$644.2 million for Fiscal Year 2003 but, due to fiscal budget cuts, necessitated a tremendous set back in Fiscal Year 2006 after President Bush vetoed legislation for the slicing of the sum of \$437.4 million appropriated in the federal budget for Fiscal Year 2006.

Gun Violence Prevention

Suffice it to say, in 1994, at a celebration for the authorization of the Gun Free Schools Act, Cooper, [9] inferred: President Clinton made the following argument, "ZT is a common sense policy, why does anybody

need a gun in school?" Cooper concurred with President Clinton's argument and gave a chilling account of what transpired "on the day when hell broke loose in Columbine."

According to the U.S. Department of Education [40] excerpts from the report classified the perpetrator in the following words: "Klebold is every parent's nightmare, not only for what he did but for how well he hid even the slightest indication that he worshiped death and violence." To accomplish an enormous reduction of crime to a minimum, the high school is persistently trying to take every necessary effort to prevent the situation that occurred in Columbine from ever occurring here within its confines.

Children as Victims of ZT

Peterson [32] wrote, Highly publicized arrests in Florida and Nevada in the past two months are among dozens of examples where zero-tolerance policies have gone too far, critics say. In January, two grade school children were arrested in Ocala, Fla., for drawing threatening stick figures in class. A 6-year old in Florida Brevard County was handcuffed and removed from school for hitting his teacher and a police officer with a book. And in Nevada, Clark County School District officials recently tried to expel a student who drew a comic strip depicting the death of his teacher.

In essence, this study will examine these situations aggressively, and many more as the need arises. More important, the arrests of the two grade students for drawing threatening stick figures in class that resulted in the handcuffing of the 6-year-old child in Ocala, Florida, as well as in the Nevada case where a child was on the verge of being expelled because he drew a comic strip depicting the death of his teacher are incidents that could have been detected, prevented, and handled differently if trained staff were available and ready to handle issues expeditiously from a psychological perspective. Early warning precautionary signals may have not been detected by the school psychologist before the problems grew out of proportion or took a turn for the worse. It is emotionally painful to watch children of such tender ages go through such agonizing times. They become innocent victims of such rigid ZT policy while it is incumbent upon the parents and the in loco parentis at the school to prevent children from falling through the cracks.

Academic Contributors to the Literature Review

The review of the literature views in high esteem and respectability, a quantitative research study performed by Nadeau [30] in her doctoral dissertation from Nova Southeastern University, wrote precisely on the research topic, Safe Schools Against Violence in Education: Nadeau stated, "Can New York State's New Safety Legislation Make a Difference?"

Students need a safe environment in which to learn, if they are concerned for their safety while in school, they may be unable to focus on the task at hand. Students cannot learn when they are absent from school, abusing drugs or involved in other antisocial activities. Students who are truant or have a high rate of absenteeism may be afraid to come to school due to in part to personal safety concerns. The same may hold true for faculty. [30] According to the comparative analysis done based on the data retrieved from the Nadeau's research conducted in

the state of New York and this research study, concludes that sufficient similarities are viewed in both studies in that violence and school safety are the essence for the studies and thus, substantiated a premise for replication of both studies.

Blumenson and Nilsen [6] argued in favor of the one strike and you are out stated, John Dilulio of Princeton, James Alan Fox of Northwestern, and other academics confirmed and heightened public anxiety by predicting even more to come. In graphic pronouncements, Dilulio described a juvenile crime a time bomb [that] cannot be diffused. 40 million kids 10 years older and under . . . [growing up] fatherless, godless, and jobless. Many of these children, he claimed would soon become what he labeled super predators.

The review of the literature includes data retrieved from the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Annual Report on Discipline, Crime, and Violence for the 2003-2004 school year, which was released in May 2005. This report highlighted the Code of Virginia [8] as a critical tool necessary in upholding the standards of making Virginia public schools safe and conducive for substantial learning objectives. Consequently, the code makes it mandatory for Virginia's 133 school divisions statewide to submit data annually to the VDOE for the assessment of violent behavior within each school division.

The superintendent of public instruction of the VDOE Annual Report on Discipline, Crime, and Violence for the 2003-2004 school year mandated that the data from participating schools in the state of Virginia must be submitted to that office every 365-day period, which commenced on the 1st day of the 2004-2005 school year. More important, the mandate requests, imperatively, that the data from school divisions must meet the following reporting requirements: (a) No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, (b) standards of accreditation safety indicator for the school report card, (c) state crime and violence report as required in the Code of Virginia [8], (d) federal Individuals With Disabilities Education Act report on suspension and expulsion of students with disabilities, (e) federal Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act, and (f) federal Gun-Free Schools Act.

According to VDOE, the report for the 2006-2007 school year has not yet been submitted. Whenever that report is submitted to the VDOE, this study has been assured that the data will be made available for inclusion in the applied dissertation report. According to Dr. DeMary, the Virginia Superintendent of Public Instruction,

The Discipline, Crime, and Violence Report for 2004-2005 will also include an additional weapon's code. This will be "WPO" specifically for BB guns/rifles. More importantly, this 504 data will satisfy the Performance-Based Data Management Initiative. The 504 data will be placed under the disability data field, but it will not be considered part of the special education count. (para. 5)

An equally comprehensive study conducted by Skiba and Peterson [35] warned the public of the danger of the concept of ZT. Skiba and Peterson [35] wrote, "The Office for Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Education began advocating a less comprehensive interpretation of sexual harassment after the suspension of a 6-year old Jonathan Prevette for kissing a classmate made national headlines."

The punishment obviously was too severe because the concept of ZT had overly extended its boundaries into forbidden territory for the sole purpose of punishing an innocent child. This case not only drew a public outcry but also took a dramatic turn that drew the attention of the Office for Civil Rights in the U.S. Justice Department to take necessary measures to have the decision overturned. Evidently, this move was designed to set a precedent to avoid future escalation and repetition of problems of such insignificant nature.

The Virginia House of Delegates provided some of the most insightful data included in the review of the literature that offered some magnificent incentives to this research. House Bill No. 2202 that was introduced in 2005 was designed as an amendment to the current Code of Virginia regarding weapons found with children at school. According to Atkinson [2], the following wording in the proposed bill was considered harsh:

No disciplinary action shall be imposed students for possession of a bona fide eating utensils or personal grooming device, unless such utensil or device is brandished or employed as a weapon or otherwise to effect or to threaten an act of violence or intimidation against another or against property. (p. 1)

House Bill No. 2202 was killed by opponents of it and did not become law because of the detection of impropriety. However, instead, the Virginia House of Delegates recommended that House Bill No. 2202 be reexamined and that the proponents of the bill report their findings to the General Assembly for the possibility of future consideration.

The introduction of House Bill No. 2202 grew out of a child reporting to the teacher that he had seen a knife in the lunch bag of another child. The principal's reaction seemed to have been unnecessarily harsh because he did not investigate all of the ramifications relating to the incident; instead, he rushed to judgment. The crux of the matter was that the mother of child had placed the knife in her son's bag only as an eating utensil and not to cause harm to anyone. To this end, the VDOE has cautioned school divisions to use a degree of reasonableness when using judgments in such circumstances.

Research Question 1 was addressed in the introduction of the review of the literature.

Protection of Children as Human Subjects

Federal law frowns down on the use of children as human subjects who have not reached the age of maturity. It is incumbent upon this research to request parental consent before certain categories of children can be used as human subjects. Federal law prescribes the age of majority and of legal consent as 18 years. This research will be guided by prevailing rules as stipulated in the Department of Health and Human Services guidelines as they relate to the protection of children as human subjects. More important, when sifting through the process of differentiating between children who may qualify for parental permission from those children for which exemption may be required, the ultimate rule is to discourage the use of minors as human subjects until parental consent is given.

The Belmont Report [5] on the ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects found that respect of persons incorporates at least two ethical convictions: First, that individuals should be treated as

autonomous agents, and second, that persons with diminished autonomy are entitled to protection. The principle of respect for persons thus divides into two separate moral requirements: the requirement to acknowledge autonomy and the requirement to protect those with diminished autonomy.

1.7 Summary

In summary, this review of the literature provided the essential background in understanding the major intricacies involved in understanding the ZT and safe policy at the high school. The research specifically examined the various pros and cons associated with the performance gap and the importance of finding other alternatives to the current ZT policy due to its ineffectiveness as has been proven by the study and by the answers provided in the research questions. Although there is a public outcry against this policy, yet, there are those who support it when it comes to it being applied only against repeat offenders. This notion might not be acceptable to opponents of this policy who want to see its permanent obliteration. The background of this research entails the null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis that will be tested. From comparing and contrasting the data, the evidence presented by this study is conclusive in supporting the theory that the ZT policy at the high school is ineffective. Thus, the application of other viable alternatives would be reasonably viable in closing the existing performance gap.

2. Materials and methods

2.1 Methodology

This study will employ a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental design to determine the degree of association that exists between quantifiable variables and their degree of association. As demonstrated by McMillan & Schumacher, [27,28] found that “the purpose of summative evaluation is to determine the merits of a fully operational program and possibly compare it with a competing program.” An essential element in this context is to the use of the summative evaluation methodology to provide the answers to questions regarding the effectiveness of the program that is being evaluated.

According to [17] required that reasons for conducting an evaluation must not only be clarified, but also an evaluation model must be selected, the stakeholders must be identified, and decisions must be made as to what may merit evaluation. This process also entails the development of an evaluation design, time line, data collection and analysis, and identifying research questions as well as reporting of results of the evaluation.

The purpose of this applied dissertation proposal will be to evaluate the current ZT and teen violence at the high school and to identify performance gaps that are hindering the high school from functioning effectively as an high school free from violence, crimes, and intimidation by potential and deliberate violators of the code of conduct. Interventions to close these gaps will be applied. Based on the assessment of data, the summative evaluation methodology will be used in this study.

This methodology will include the subjects, instrumentation, and the procedures for obtaining data, data analysis, and design limitations. By the same token, the survey will be cross-sectional with the collection of data over a period of time. As suggested by Dillman [13] the social change concept is a guide to improving the response rate of subjects. Suffice it to say, the opinion of people will also warrant measurement and, as such, the study will identify the survey methods as well as the subjects in the population of interest as students, school principals, teachers, and guardian counselors.

Creswell [10] defined “independent variables that probably cause, influence, or affect outcomes [and dependent variables as] “variables that depend on the independent variables; they are the outcomes or results of the influence of the independent variables.” In order to arrive at the result of this process, the two variables were evaluated and tested, and the SPSS findings presented a ratio known as the correlation coefficient, represented by the letter r .

Babbie (as cited in Creswell, [10] argued, “This purpose is to generalize from a sample to a population so that inferences can be made about some characteristics, attitude, or behavior of this population.”

2.2 Samples

Samples collected from the participants who responded to the questions generated in the analysis of the Likert scale questionnaires were used for the testing of the null hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis. The survey from the data analysis was entered into SPSS, Version 13.0 to analyze the research questions. This process was, ultimately, to involve a descriptive analysis in addition to multiple regression equations supported by correlational data. The protection of the integrity and validity of the sampling process was pivotal to the projections tabulated in the outcome of the sampling results in that the results were designed to reduce the possibility of research bias and fraud that would otherwise compromise the results of the study.

Indicative of the representativeness of the sampling, the random sampling initiative were statistically significant based on probability and stratification of the proportional sample. Research Question 4 will be addressed here. This process can be very critical to the validity and reliability of the sample. In this context, Huck [20] explicated that, “whereas the best word for synonym for reliability is consistency, the core essence of validity captured by the word accuracy.”

Huck [20] defined the term reliability as follows: “The basic idea of reliability is summed up by the word consistency.” The evaluation must determine whether the current ZT and safe school policy programs are meeting established goals.

Babbie (as cited in Creswell, [10] found that “a single sampling procedure is one in which the researcher has access to names in the population and can sample the people (or other elements) directly. Correlation analysis to test the appropriateness of the example will be necessary due to its ability to explain the relations between phenomena.”

3. Results ,Procedures, and discussions

The review of the literature will provide answers to the research questions, defining criteria and assessment devices, as well collecting and analyzing data, and the procedures for this study will consist of the following 16 procedures of this applied research that will include methodologies consistent with evaluation and development. Answers to other research questions are found in the procedures of this proposal.

The determination of the effectiveness of the ZT and safe school policy will be based on the developmental methodological theory of Varcoe [41] used in developing the evaluation tools. The procedures will be proposed toward developing systematic models to assess the effectiveness of ZT and safe school policy at the high school. The results from this process will be used to improve safe school standards at the high school. Performance gaps will be identified, and the necessary interventions to close the gaps will be implemented. More important, for advisory purposes central to the investigation, summative and formative methodologies will be used in this study.

The first procedure will be to conduct a preliminary review of the literature to gather additional information relative to ZT and teen violence from the high school's school board; Internet libraries, including Nova Southeastern University; the Library of Congress; the Juvenile Justice System; the courts; and the archives of the Office of Student Conduct of the high school, and ERIC. In order to quantify and explicate the samples expeditiously, statistical measurements instruments such as SPSS, OUTLIERS, and SCATTERPLOTS will be applied to quantify data. A criterion will be developed for an evaluation model to examine current school policies systematically. Data gathered through the literature review will provide the foundation for executing this procedure.

The second procedure will be the establishment of a formative committee (see Appendix C) to review and comment on the proposed evaluation model. The composition of the formative committee will be individuals possessing expert knowledge of safe school policies and the field of social sciences. The composition of the formative committee will be three individuals of the highest caliber (see Appendix D). The formative committee will meet frequently, face-to-face and electronically. Members of the formative committee will act in an advisory capacity throughout the duration of the study.

The third procedure will be to conduct additional review of the literature geared toward the exploration of the validity and reliability of survey formats. This study will need two valid and reliable surveys to be gathered for this study.

Fourth, a summative committee (see Appendix E) will be established to review and provide expert validation of the model criteria. The summative committee will review recommendations from the formative committee. The summative committee will meet when necessary by telephone, e-mail, electronically, or in person. The composition of the summative committee will be external individuals possessing expert knowledge and excellence in safe school policies and the field of social sciences, within and outside secondary education high schools (see Appendix F). The summative committee will act in an advisory capacity throughout the duration of

the study. A balanced mix of experienced high school faculty school board executives, academicians, executives in higher education, and leaders will be selected. The summative committee may be composed of three individuals. Feedback forms will be sent to the formative and summative committees to be completed and returned to the researcher (see Appendix G).

Fifth, the proposed model criteria will be presented by e-mail to the summative committee for review and expert validation. The summative committee will be asked whether the proposed model is appropriate for the design of model criteria to introduce systemically the self-assessment of the ZT and safe school policies to the school board.

Sixth, the researcher will review recommendations for change to the model criteria received from the summative committee. Based on the notes received from the summative committee documenting augmentation to the model criteria, the researcher will act promptly by making the necessary changes to the model criteria as recommended by the summative committee and, thereafter, resubmit the same to the summative committee for expert validation and final comment.

Seventh, the researcher will review recommendations on model form and content revision received from the summative committee. Based on this review, the researcher will make decisions regarding appropriate changes to form and content of the proposed model.

Eighth, revisions to the form and content of the proposed model will be resubmitted to the summative committee for final review and expert validation. The summative committee will, then, be asked to confirm its validation electronically or by fax or e-mail.

Ninth, the researcher will provide the draft model to introduce systematically the evaluation and self-assessment methodology to members of the formative committee for review and recommendations. The formative committee will be asked if the draft model is appropriate in form and content and responsive to the validated model criteria. The formative committee members will be asked to register their response by electronic submission, e-mail, or fax.

Tenth, the researcher will review recommendations on the model form and content revision received from the summative committee. Based on this review, the researcher will make the necessary changes and decisions to the form and content of the proposed model.

Eleventh, revisions to the form and content of the proposed model will be resubmitted to the summative committee for final review and expert validation. The summative committee will be asked to confirm their validation electronically or by e-mail or fax. The 12th procedure will be to distribute, by mail to all participants, questionnaires identified in Appendix D in accordance with the following Likert scale specifications:

strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree, strongly disagree, and somewhat disagree.

Thirteenth, upon receipt of the questionnaires from the participants, hand-written thank you notes will be sent to the participants, thanking them for their responses to the survey and expressing the researcher's thanks and gratitude for their participation in the survey.

The 14th procedure will ensure (a) that the design is correlational, (b) the subjects are identified by describing the population of interest, (c) the sample size is stated, and (d) the rationale for the sampling procedure and the sample size is given, McMillan & Schumacher, [28].

The 15th procedure will be to create a final report based on the evaluation study. Submission of this report will be made to the summative and formative committees for their comments that will be reviewed by the researcher.

Sixteenth, the final report that includes the validated findings will be presented to the superintendent of schools for the school district enumerating recommendations concerning future development and needs. Copies of this report will also be submitted to the school board, and the United States Department of Education and the Library of Congress. The intent of this procedure will be that the superintendent of schools will disseminate the findings and recommendations of this study to state, district, and local school officials for possible future replication if deemed necessary within the premises without reservations. With the consummation of this procedure, the study will be considered concluded. Research Question 5 is addressed here.

Null Hypothesis

The null hypothesis for this study will be, There is no significant difference between ZT and teen crimes in relation to violent behavior.

Alternative Hypothesis

The alternative hypothesis will be, There is a significant difference between ZT and teen crimes in relation to violent behavior.

Assumptions

It is assumed that the review of the literature is complete and accurate. The literature review will contribute significantly to the work of the formative and summative committees in validating the instruments used in this study. It is further assumed that data from the VDOE, the high school, and the Office of Student Conduct are exact. It is also assumed that a high degree of honesty and accuracy will be maintained by individuals who complete surveys.

Limitations

An important limitation is that formative and summative committees have been established by this study to play advisory roles. These committee members have been invited; have voluntarily consented to participate in this study; and have, thus, availed themselves to the study.

The researcher fears, although, that, if any member of either the summative or formative committees withdraws from further participating in the study, this conduct may potentially invalidate and skew the results. Preparedness is a key element to offset any potential harm to the research by having potential committee members in waiting to fill any vacancies.

Thus, the researcher will carefully develop a strategy that will automatically replace any member of either committee with individuals possessing identical high acumen comparable to those in the social sciences and leadership realm to preserve the continuous, uninterrupted, and smooth operation and integrity of the research. Furthermore, due to the fact that data obtained for this research study were collected from resource entities exclusive to this southeastern state, the results of this study may not be applicable to other states.

Delimitations

Data collection for this study will be limited to students, the principal, assistant principals, and staff at the high school as well as central office personnel, stakeholders, guardians and parents. Individuals outside of the parameters of the high school will not be considered.

Potential Outcomes

The interpretation of the five research questions posed in the introduction of this paper and it will form the basis of valid and credible findings. The rationale for the outcomes of this study will establish the validity and reliability associated with this. Findings of this study will be shared with the high school and policy makers to help influence the development and evaluation of regulatory safe practices for educators, students, and schools.

References

- [1] Advancement Project. Education on lockdown: The schoolhouse to jailhouse track. Washington, DC: 2005.
- [2] A. J. Atkinson. Zero tolerance policies and issue brief. Richmond, VA: Policy Works, 2005.
- [3] W. Ayers, B. Dohrn, and R. Ayers, "Zero tolerance: Resisting the drive for punishment in our schools." New York: The New Press, 2001.
- [4] A. Bandura. "Social learning theory." Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1976.
- [5] Belmont Report. "Ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research" (DHEW Publication No. OS 78-0013 and No. OS78-0014). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976.
- [6] E. Blumenson and E. S. Nilsen. "One strike and you're out? Constitutional constraints on zero tolerance in public education." *The Washington University Law Quarterly*, 81, 65-70, 2002.

- [7] Chesterfield County Police Department“Chesterfield County Police Department School Resource Officers.” [Assessed Nov. 11, 2007], from http://www.chesterfield.gov/publicsafety/police/sch_resource.asp, 2008.
- [8] Code of Virginia. Code 1950, “§ 18.1-257; 1960, c. 358; 1973, c. 118; 1975, cc. 14, 15; 1994, c. 2650.”pp. 236, 1994.
- [9] K. J. Cooper.“Clinton toughens ban on guns at school.”Chicago Sun Times, 23rd. Oct. 1999, p.30.
- [10] J. W. Creswell, J. W. “Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches.” (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003, p. 94.
- [11] R. L. Curwin, A. N. Mendler.“Zero tolerance for zero tolerance.”Phi Delta Kappan , 81, 1999, pp. 119-120.
- [12] J. F. DeVoe, K. Peters,P. Kaufman, A. Miller, M. Noonan, T. D. Snyder, et al.“Indicators of schoolcrime and safety:” 2004 (NCES 2005-002/NCJ 205290). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2004.
- [13] D. A. Dillman.“Survey Methods.”Lincoln: University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1995.
- [14] J. E. L. Duncan.“Perceptions of high school students and school personnel toward gang activity, violence, and safety in high schools in Hinds County Public School District in Mississippi,”presented at the annual meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, Biloxi, MS: November, 1995.
- [15] P. C. Ewing.“Sensible zero tolerance protects kids,” [Assessed Jan. 30, 2007, from <http://www.edletter.org/past/issues/2000-jf/zero.shtml>, 2002.
- [16] J.Fitzpatrick, J. Sanders,B. Worthan, B.“Program evaluation: Alternative approaches and practical guidelines.”(3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2004, pp. 187-188.
- [17] M. D.Gall, J. P. Gall, and W. R. Borg,“Educational research: An introduction”(7th ed.). Boston:Allyn& Bacon, 2003.
- [18] Gallop/Phi Delta Kappa.Poll of public attitudes toward the public schools.[Assessed: Nov. 18,2007] from <http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu>, 1997.
- [19] Harvard University Civil Rights Project.“On zero tolerance policies: An issue brief”(Testimony submitted to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights). Cambridge, MA: 1999.
- [20] S. Huck.“Reading statistics and research” (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2004.
- [21] Indiana News Room“Zero tolerance failures cited by IUB educator at Harvard Conference.”[Assessed, Oct. 10, 2007], from <http://www.newsinfo.iu.edu/news/page/normal/979.html>. May 8, 2007.

- [22] M. D. Isom. "The social learning theory," [Assessed, Feb. 18, 2004], from <http://www.criminology.fsu.edu/criminology/bandura.htm>, 1998.
- [22] D. G. Langdom, K. S. Whiteside, M. McKenna. "Intervention resource guide: 50 improvement tools." San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Pfeiffer, 1999.
- [23] L. S. Lyne. "A cross section of educational research: Journal articles for discussion and evaluation." p. 79. (2nd ed.). Los Angeles: Pyrczak, 2003.
- [25] T. McAndrews. "Zero tolerance policies." Eugene: University of Oregon, College of Education, 2002.
- [26] J. H. McMillan, "Educational research: Fundamentals for the consumer." (3rd. ed.). New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 2000, pp. 12-13.
- [27] J. H. McMillan, S. Schumacher, "Research in education" (4th ed.). New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1997.
- [28] J. H. McMillan, S. Schumacher. "Research in education" (5th ed.). New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 2001.
- [29] Mental Health America. "Opposing the blanket application of zero tolerance policies in schools" (Policy Statement 46). [Assessed Oct. 10, 2007], from <http://www.nmha.org/go/position-statement/46.2000>.
- [30] D. E. Nadeau, D. E. "Safe schools against violence in education: Can New York state's new safety legislation make a difference." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale. 2003.
- [31] National Center for Educational Statistics. Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. 1990 K. Street, N.W. Washington, DC: Available at: http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2005/crime_safe04/indicator_01.asp.
- [32] K. Peterson. "Schools rethink post-Columbine discipline." Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2005.
- [33] Rutherford Institute. "Separate Opinion by Judge Clyde Hamilton," 2001 U.S. App. LEXIS 16941 (4th Cir. 2001). 2005.
- [33] L. Seigal. "Criminology." St. Paul, MN: West, p. 170, 1992.
- [34] J. Skiba, K. Knesting, "Zero tolerance: An analysis of school disciplinary practice. In R. J. Skiba & G.G. Noam (Eds.), New directions for youth development." San Francisco Jossey-Bass, 2001, pp. 36-37.
- [35] R. J. Skiba, Peterson, R. "The dark side of zero tolerance: Can punishment lead to safe schools?" Phi Delta Kappan, 80, 1999, pp. 372-381.

- [36] R. J. Skiba, M. K. Rausch, S. Ritter. *Discipline is always teaching: "Effective alternatives to zero tolerance in Indiana's schools."* Bloomington: Indiana University, Center for Evaluation and Policy, 2004.
- [37] K. Stetzner. "How safe are your schools? American Association of School Administrators," [Assessed Sept. 5, 2005], from http://www.aasa.org/Publications/sa/1999_06/stetzner.htm.
- [38] E. Sutherland. *Principles of criminology*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1939.
- [39] R. Sylwester. "School brains, school issues: A collection of articles." Arlington Heights, IL: Skylight Training, 1998.
- [40] U.S. Department of Education. "U.S. federal report on school safety," [Assessed Apr. 23, 2006], from <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/AnnSchoolRept98>.
- [41] K. Varcoe. *Study guide: Research in evaluation methodology*. Fort Lauderdale, FL: Nova Southeastern University, 2002.
- [42] M. Weissman, E. Wolf, K. Sowards, D. Abate, P. Weinburg, C. Marthia, C. "School yard or prison yard: Improving outcomes for marginalized youth" (Justice Strategies Working Paper). Syracuse, NY: Center for Community Alternatives, 2005.
- [43] West's Annotated Code of Virginia. "Title 22.1. Education: Chapter 14. Pupils Article 3. Discipline. Virginia ZT Law." Richmond, VA: Library of Virginia, 1950.
- [44] J. Wilkins. "School uniforms: The answer to violence in American schools or a cheap educational reform?" *The Humanist*, 59(2), pp. 19-22, 1999.
- [45] S. Zelman, H. Daniels, A. Hyde. "Best practice: New standards for teaching and learning in America's schools." Westport, CT: Heinemann, 1998.

Appendix A

Student Conduct Data

Sanction	School Year	High school under study	Infraction Description	No. of Infractions	School Totals
Expulsion	2001-02	High school under study	DRUG SCHD I & II USE/POSSESSIONS	2	2
Expulsion	2001-02	High school under study	ASSULT/BATTERY/NO WEAPON	1	
Expulsion	2001-02	High school under study	DRUG SCHD I & II USE/POSSESSIONS	2	3
Expulsion	2002-03	High school under study	WEAPONS HANDGUN PISTOL	1	1
Expulsion	2003-04	High school under study	DRUG SCHD I & II USE/POSSESSIONS	1	
Expulsion	2003-04	High school under study	DRUG VIOLATIONLOOK-ALIKES, I	2	3
Expulsion	2003-04	High school under study	DRUG SCHD I & II USE/POSSESSION	12	
Expulsion	2003-04	High school under study	DRUG VIOLATION-LOOK ALIKES, I	1	
Expulsion	2003-04	High school under study	OTHER OFFENSES	1	
Expulsion	2003-04	High school under study	TREAT INTIMIDATION AGAINST	1	15
Long Term Susp	2001-02	High school under study	ASSULT BATTERY W/FIREARM/O	1	
Long Term Suspension	2001-02	High school under study	DISORDERLY CONDUCT	1	
Long Term	2001-02	High school	DRUG SCHD I & II	1	

Suspension		under study	USE/POSSESSION		
Long Term Suspension	2001-02	High school under study	FIGHTING/NO MINOR INJURY	1	

Long Term Suspension	2001-02	High school under study	OTHER OFFENSES	1	
Long Term Suspension	2001-02	High school under study	THREATS INTIMIDATION AGAINST	2	7
Long Term Suspension	2002-03	High school under study	DISORDERLY CONDUCT	1	
Long Term Suspension	2002-03	High school under study	FIGHTING/NO OR MINOR INJURY	1	2
			Total	33	33

Appendix B

Safe School Policy

Safe School Policy

Excerpts retrieved from the 2005-2006 Parent Handbook Information of the HIGH SCHOOL outlining the policy of the school board reads:

A high standard of student conduct in an effort to insure that education is provided in an atmosphere conducive to learning, free of disruption and threat to person or property, and supportive of individual rights. Students are responsible with each principal, faculty, and staff member to maintain a school environment in which educational programs can flourish and extracurricular programs can go forward to the pleasure and benefit of all participants.

Students and staff have a primary responsibility for creating a climate of mutual respect and trust in each school in order that the dignity of the individual is protected, and the hopes and ambitions of each student may be realized.

The principal of the school and those to whom they delegate the authority for the discipline of students, including teachers, are responsible for the consistent and uniformed application of all school board policies and regulations and rules of the individual school that, together, set forth the standards for student conduct. The principal of designee shall determine the appropriate disciplinary measures for each case of misconduct by a student except where consequences are predetermined by specific school board policy or by law.

Determinations of disciplinary measures shall include considerations of the relative impact of a violation on the entire student body as well as the individual school and county-wide regulations and rules, the student's cumulative discipline record, and the student's individual needs. To maintain law and order, the county police department assigns a policeman to the school as the school's resource officer whose daily visibility serves as a deterrent to would be juvenile offenders. Principals shall inform, consult with, and refer to the Central Office Administration any discipline matters that involve situations of extreme danger, acts of violence, threats in the school, and any discipline matters that requires unusual circumstances or special handling needs. The principal shall notify the parent for each suspension and may request a parent conference prior to readmission.

Appendix C

Formative Committee Members

Formative Committee Members

Superintendent of a School Division

This participant's primary responsibilities will be to provide support for the political validity of the project and to ensure that the needs of the high schoolare addressed accordingly. This participant is chosen because of terminal degree and his expertise in the context of social science and leadership abilities.

Principal of a High School

This participant's primary responsibilities will be to provide support for the research and to ensure that the concerns of the target group are appropriately addressed. This participant was chosen because he or she has a master's degree in the concentration of education leadership and has a high interest in maintaining the effectiveness of workable policies at thehigh school.

Head, Office of Student Conduct

This participant's primary responsibilities will be to provide the necessary expertise in collection of data and analysis and to ensure that the data collected are valid and credible. This participant is chosen due to terminal degree and expertise with data collection and analysis.

Appendix D

Formative Committee Members' Qualifications

Formative Committee Members Qualifications

Superintendent of a School Division

Qualifications and reasons for the selection of formative committee: doctorate degree in higher education, key decision maker in a high school, and because of the invaluable services rendered not only in a Chesterfield County Public School System but also to educating youths in the Tidewater, Virginia, area prior to coming to the greater Richmond area.

Principal of a High School

Qualifications and reasons for the selection of formative committee: master's degree in education degree and responsible for disciplining and educating Grades 9-12 secondary school students at the school, coupled with high a high degree of intellectual acumen.

Head, Office of Student Conduct

Qualifications and reasons for the selection of formative committee: master's degree in education degree and responsible for keeping the up-to-date records on student behavior in a public school, coupled with a high degree of intellectual acumen. This individual is of strategic importance to the data-collection process of this research.

Appendix E

Summative Committee Members

Summative Committee Members

Principal From High School A

This participant's primary responsibilities are to provide advice to the researcher for the duration of the project. This participant must ensure that the needs of the target group are addressed in its entirety. This participant is chosen due to terminal degree, leadership abilities, and epistemological acumen that will contribute substantially to the fulfillment of the aims and objectives this project.

Principal From High School B

This participant's primary responsibilities are to provide advice to the researcher for the duration of the project. This participant must ensure that the needs of the target group are addressed in its entirety. This participant is chosen due to terminal degree, leadership abilities, and epistemological acumen that will contribute substantially to the fulfillment of the aims and objectives of this project.

Principal From High School C

This participant's primary responsibilities are to provide advice to the researcher for the duration of the project. This participant must ensure that the needs of the target group are addressed in its entirety. This participant is chosen due to terminal degree, leadership abilities, and epistemological acumen that will contribute substantially to the fulfillment of the aims and objectives of this project.

Appendix F

Summative Committee Members' Qualifications

Summative Committee Members' Qualifications

Secondary Principal From High School A

Qualifications and reasons for summative committee selection: doctorate degree in education, administration and supervision in kindergarten-Grade 12. Has the overall responsibility for the academic and discipline programs of the school.

Secondary Principal From High School B

Qualifications and reasons for summative committee selection: doctorate degree in education, administration and supervision in kindergarten-Grade 12. Has the overall responsibility for the academic and discipline programs of the school.

Secondary Principal From High School C

Qualifications and reasons for summative committee selection: doctorate degree in education, administration and supervision in kindergarten-Grade 12. Has the overall responsibility for the academic and discipline programs of the school.

Appendix G

Formative and Summative Committees' Feedback Form

Formative and Summative Committees Feedback Form

Directions:

- Please complete and return form to researcher within five days of receipt.
- Attach additional pages if needed.

Criteria recommendations:

Submitted by: _____ Date _____

I. Criteria recommendations:

II. Comments and suggestions:
