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School-Based Partnerships: A Problem-Solving Strategy



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§ This acronym, formulated by John Eck and Bill Spelman, refers to the four problem-solving stages of Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment.

School-Based Partnerships: An Overview

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) funded the School-Based Partnerships (SBP) grant program for the purpose of partnering law enforcement agencies with schools to address crime and disorder problems in and around middle and high schools. In Fiscal Years 1998 and 1999, the COPS Office awarded 275 law enforcement agencies more than \$30 million to partner with school entities to address crime and disorder in and around schools. These law enforcement agencies were required to attend training in problem-analysis and problem-solving methods, specifically the SARA model,[§] to better understand the causes of identified problems, apply analysis-driven responses, and evaluate their efforts.

The COPS Office funded Justice & Security Strategies, Inc. (formerly 21st Century Solutions, Inc.) to conduct an assessment of the SBP grant program. Dr. Craig D. Uchida, President of Justice & Security Strategies, and his staff, along with consultants from Michigan State University, George Mason University, and Arizona State University West, reviewed the SBP program through surveys and case studies, provided technical assistance, and conducted quasi-experiments in five jurisdictions. The information in this document was gathered from the findings of this assessment, grantee testimonies, progress reports, and COPS staff reports. This report focuses on three SBP sites and their use of the SARA problem-solving process to address specific issues in their schools: students and teachers feeling threatened, illegal drug sales, and truancy.



The Problem-Solving Process

The emphasis on problem-solving as an effective policing strategy stems from pioneering work on problem-oriented policing done by Herman Goldstein in 1979 and from experiments in the early 1980s in Madison, Wisconsin; Baltimore County, Maryland; and Newport News, Virginia.[§] The problem-solving model takes a proactive, comprehensive approach to crime and disorders rather than a traditional reactive approach that stresses handling calls on a case-by-case basis. Goldstein's model emphasizes partnerships among police and non-police groups, analysis of traditional and nontraditional data to clarify problems, solutions that are tailored to the specific problem, and assessments of the overall strategy.

Three elements are generally required to constitute a crime in the community: a victim, an offender, and a crime scene or location. Many problem solvers have found it useful in understanding a problem to visualize a link among the three elements by drawing a problem analysis triangle, also known as the crime triangle.^{§§} When crime is occurring, all inner elements must be present and outer elements weak or absent.



This theory, originally formulated by Cohen and Felson, states that “predatory crime occurs when a *likely offender* and *suitable target* come together in *time* and *place*, without a *capable guardian* present.”^{§§§} The outer triangle describes the “controllers” for the target/victim, offender, and place. The “capable guardian” includes people protecting themselves or others (i.e., family

§ Goldstein, Herman, “Improving Police: A Problem-Oriented Approach.” *Crime and Delinquency* 25, April: 236-258, 1979. See also, Goldstein, Herman, *Problem-Oriented Policing*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1990.

§§ Spelman, William and John E. Eck, “Sitting Ducks, Ravenous Wolves, and Helping Hands: New Approaches to Urban Policing”, *Public Affairs Comment*, Austin, Texas: School of Public Affairs, University of Texas, 1989; and Sampson, Rana, *Neighborhood-Oriented Policing in Rural Communities: A Program Planning Guide*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance, 1994.

§§§ Clarke, Ronald V. and John E. Eck, *Crime Analysis for Problem Solvers in 60 Small Steps*, U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services; 2005.



members or police). The “handler” has the ability to exert some level of control over the offender (i.e., parent, probation officer, or teacher). The “manager” is responsible for the specific locations (i.e., bar owner or landlord).

This crime triangle informs all aspects of the SARA problem solving process.[§] This four-step model offers a framework for approaching crime problems and consists of scanning, analysis, response, and assessment:^{§§}

Scanning

The scanning phase involves problem identification. Its objectives are to define a basic problem, determine the nature of that problem, determine the scope of seriousness of the problem, and establish baseline measures. An inclusive list of stakeholders for the selected problem should be identified in this phase. Stakeholders are private and public organizations and types or groups of people that will benefit if the problem is addressed or may experience negative consequences if the problem is not addressed.^{§§§} Police and stakeholders must be willing to work together to develop effective solutions to the problem. Truly effective problem solvers know how to forge genuine partnerships with others who are prepared to invest considerable effort in making these partnerships work.

Scanning typically involves:^{§§§§}

- Identifying recurring problems of concern to the public and the police.
- Identifying the consequences of the problem for the community and the police.
- Prioritizing those problems.
- Developing broad goals.
- Confirming that the problems exist.
- Determining how frequently the problem occurs and how long it has been taking place.
- Selecting problems for closer examination.

Analysis

Analysis is the heart of the problem-solving process. The objectives of analysis are to develop an understanding of the dynamics of the problem, develop an understanding of the limits of current responses, establish correlation, and develop

§ www.popcenter.org/about-SARA.htm.

§§ Eck, John E. and William Spelman, Problem Solving: Problem-Oriented Policing in Newport News. Washington, D.C.: U.S.

Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice and Police Executive Research Forum, 1987.

§§§ U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, Problem-Solving Tips A Guide to Reducing Crime and Disorder Through Problem-Solving Partnerships. Washington, D.C.: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, April 1998.

§§§§ www.popcenter.org/about-SARA.htm.



§ Spelman and Eck, 1989

§§ [www.popcenter.org/
about-SARA.htm](http://www.popcenter.org/about-SARA.htm).

§§§ U.S. Department
of Justice Office of
Community Oriented
Policing Services, 1998

§§§§ [www.popcenter.org/
about-SARA.htm](http://www.popcenter.org/about-SARA.htm).

an understanding of cause and effect. As part of the analysis phase, it is important to find out as much as possible about each aspect of the crime triangle by asking Who? What? When? Where? How? Why? and Why Not? about the victim, offender, and crime scene.§

The Analysis phase involves:§§

- Identifying and understanding the events and conditions that precede and accompany the problem.
- Identifying relevant data to be collected.
- Researching what is known about the problem type.
- Taking inventory of how the problem is currently addressed and the strengths and limitations of the current response.
- Narrowing the scope of the problem as specifically as possible.
- Identifying a variety of resources that may be of assistance in developing a deeper understanding of the problem.
- Developing a working hypothesis about why the problem is occurring.

Response

The response phase of the SARA model involves the development and implementation of strategies to address an identified crime or problem. This is accomplished by searching for strategic responses that are both broad and uninhibited. The response should follow logically from the knowledge learned during the analysis and it should be tailored to the specific problem. The goals of the response can range between totally eliminating the problem, substantially reducing the problem, reducing the amount of harm caused by the problem, or improving the quality of community cohesion.§§§

Types of activities undertaken in the Response phase include:§§§§

- Brainstorming for new interventions.
- Searching for what other communities with similar problems have done.
- Choosing among the alternative interventions.
- Outlining a response plan and identifying responsible parties.
- Stating the specific objectives for the response plan.
- Carrying out the planned activities.



Assessment

Assessment is the phase that attempts to determine if the response strategies were successful. This information not only assists the current effort but also gathers data that build knowledge for the future. Strategies and programs can be assessed for process, outcomes, or both. If the responses implemented are not effective, the information gathered during analysis should be reviewed. New information may need to be collected before new solutions can be developed and tested.[§]

The Assessment phase includes:^{§§}

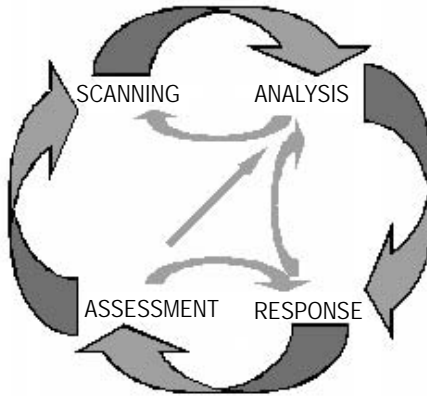
- Determining whether the plan was implemented (a process evaluation).
- Collecting pre- and post-response qualitative and quantitative data.
- Determining whether broad goals and specific objectives were attained.
- Identifying any new strategies needed to augment the original plan.
- Conducting ongoing assessment to ensure continued effectiveness.

It must be noted that these four stages do not always follow one another in a strictly linear fashion from the initial scanning through the final assessment. According to Clarke and Eck (2005), “projects rarely follow a linear path from the initial scanning and analysis stages through the stages of response and assessment. Rather, the process often has loops, so that an unfolding analysis can result in refocusing of the project, and questions about possible responses can lead to the need for fresh analyses.”^{§§§} They designed the figure on page 7 to illustrate the loops that are likely to occur, especially with complex projects. New information obtained during the scanning phase may lead to a revision of the definition of the problem or the discovery of a new problem or problems. In brief, analysis and evaluation are critical components of the problem-solving process and should not be overlooked for a quick fix from scanning to response.

§ Sampson, 1994

§§ www.popcenter.org/about-SARA.htm.

§§§ Clarke, Ronald V. and John E. Eck, *Crime Analysis for Problem Solvers 60 Small Steps*, U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services; 2005.



Through the SBP program, more than 200 law enforcement agencies and schools worked together to address the problems affecting their communities using this model. The following sites were chosen for this report to provide the reader with practical, successful examples of the SARA problem-solving process: Bullhead City Police Department, Hollywood Police Department, and the Miami Police Department.

Complete reports of these and thirteen other sites can be found at www.cops.usdoj.gov.



The Problem-Solving Process in Action – Selected SBP Sites

§ Katz, Charles M.,
“Bullhead City, Arizona
School-Based Partnership
Project: A Case Study,”
unpublished ms., 21st
Century Solutions, Inc.,
2003.

Bullhead City Police Department - Bullhead City Junior High School[§]

Significant and measurable improvements occurred as a result of this project: the SBP team found a decrease in violent incidents and an increase in student perceptions of being protected (safe and cared for) by school staff. Credit justifiably is attributed both to the SBP project participants and to the leadership of the new principal for improving the quality of the educational experience at Bullhead City Junior High School.

Bullhead City, Arizona is located in the northwestern part of the state, and borders Laughlin, Nevada. Bullhead City is the 16th largest city in the state, with a population of about 34,000. In 1999, the year of the SBP project, approximately 86 percent of the city's population was Caucasian, 20 percent Hispanic, 1 percent African-American, and 1 percent American Indian. The city's economic activity centered on tourism, with approximately 6 million people visiting the area each year. The median household income in Bullhead City was \$30,221 compared to \$40,558 for the state. Likewise, 15.1 percent of the city's population lived under the poverty level compared to 13.9 percent for the state. In terms of education, about 72.4 percent of Bullhead City residents were a high school graduate or higher, and 8.6 percent of residents had a bachelor's degree or higher.

The city's crime rate had fallen substantially during the past 5 years (1993–1998). Police officials reported that the city did have a gang problem; however, they stipulated that it was fairly minor in nature and magnitude. For instance, in 2000 the police department reported to the National Youth Gang Center that it had documented seven gangs and 300 gang members. The department also reported that there were no gang homicides during this period; however, police officials did state that motorcycle gangs that frequented the area were responsible for a substantial amount of criminal



activity and drug trafficking. When residents were asked to prioritize their top concerns for the community, crime was mentioned as the problem that the city should most focus its resources, specifically drugs, followed by gangs, traffic, burglary, and thefts.

Bullhead City Junior High was targeted for intervention as part of the School-Based Partnership grant. Bullhead City Junior High School served 660 sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. The majority of the students were white (about 66 percent) and Hispanic (about 33 percent). In terms of student performance, the attendance rate for the school was about 91 percent and the promotion rate was about 99 percent. There was quite a bit of student turnover within the school, with 18.6 percent of the students transferring out of the school during the 2000–01 school year. These indicators suggest that the school was fairly average compared to other junior high schools in Arizona.

PROBLEM: Students and teachers felt threatened and intimidated.

Scanning

To examine the nature and scope of crime and disorder problems within and around Bullhead City Junior High School, the Bullhead City Police Department initially examined its calls for service data. The police found that there was a relatively large volume of assault-related calls originating from the school. To confirm that assaults were a problem, the school resource officer surveyed teachers, staff members, administrators, and students. The survey focused on a wide number of issues in an effort to scan for potential problems related to: (1) attitudes toward teachers and the school, (2) student safety, (3) student victimization, (4) student involvement in assaults, (5) the availability of drugs and the influence of gangs, and (6) the accessibility of guns and knives. The surveys indicated that assault-related problems were the most serious issues facing the school.

The stakeholders involved in the problem-solving process were identified as: Bullhead City school resource officers, Bullhead City Police Department, Bullhead City Junior High School governing board, parents, students, community members, and the media.



Analysis

To analyze the nature of the school's assault problem, the police department triangulated six types of data: official police data, official school data, student interview data, suspect and victim interview data, teacher and staff interview data, and parent survey data. The analysis phase took place between March 1999 and December 2000.

Official Police Data

- Assaults were most likely to occur on Tuesday through Friday either before school, during the lunch hour, or after school.
- From September 1996 to February 1999 there were 37 police reports that involved violence (30 reports of assaults, 4 reports of threats, and 3 reports of disorderly conduct).

Official School Data

- During the 1999–2000 school year, 266 campus violations (22 reported to the police).
- Forty-five percent of the incidents were for disorderly conduct and 43 percent were for violence (e.g., fights, battery, weapons, and threats).
- From August 1999 to March 2000, 99 incidents involving violent acts: 24 percent in classrooms, 23 percent in the hallway, 22 percent on the playground, 11 percent outside the building, 5 percent off-campus, 5 percent in the cafeteria, and 7 percent at other locations.

Student Survey Data

- Sixth, seventh, and eighth graders were surveyed.
- Positive attitudes about the teachers and administrators, believing that they cared about the students and that the teachers wanted to help the students.
- Seriously concerned about school safety: 58 percent said that the teachers are afraid of other students, 50 percent of the students said that they did not feel safe at school, 50 percent had been threatened at school, 27 percent reported that someone had threatened them or used force to take their property, and 66 percent had seen a student threaten a teacher.



- Fifty-one percent admitted that they had threatened another student and 12 percent admitted carrying a gun or knife to school.
- Seventy-seven percent believed that there were too many rules in school and that rules were not applied in a fair and impartial way (60 percent).

Student Offender Interview Data

- Thirteen student offenders interviewed.
- Most of the reasons given for the assaults were related to intimidation/bullying and name-calling.
- All of the students stated that they were punished for the assault, either being suspended from school or serving some jail time.
- Nine of the 13 students reported that their peers either looked up to them after the assault or did not care one way or the other that he or she assaulted another student.

Student Victim Interview Data

- Fourteen students who were victims of school-related assaults were interviewed.
- Many of the victims reported that they either did not know why they were assaulted, were assaulted because the assaulter did not like them, or because of intimidation/ bullying.
- Most of the students expressed that the incident left them feeling emotionally hurt, confused, and mad/ angry.
- Most had not been informed about how the suspect was punished, five victims believed that the assaulter received the proper amount of punishment, and one stated that the suspect was suspended but should have been put in jail.

Teacher and Staff Interview Data

- Twenty-one teachers and staff were interviewed.
- Felt that violent behavior was a problem at the school.
- Seventy percent had personally felt threatened at school.
- Reported that violence was most likely to occur before school, during the lunch period, between class periods, or after school.



Parent Survey Data

- One hundred fifty parents were surveyed.
- Forty percent said that there was a problem with violence in the school and 47 percent said that their child had complained to them about the violence within the school.
- Twelve percent said that their child had been a victim of a violent crime at school and 18 percent said that their child was at times afraid to go to school because of the violence.
- Eighty percent of the parents believed that having a police officer at the school helped reduce the amount of violence.

The above analysis led the police department to three major conclusions:

1. Much of the violent activity was taking place in the lunchroom and during the lunch hour. Because of the physical layout of the school and the large number of students who are free to roam around, it was not possible to maintain supervision over all of the students during the lunch period.
2. Much of the violent activity was taking place in the hallways between classes when the students were not being supervised.
3. Many of the students were not aware of the policies of the school nor did many of the students have an understanding of the criminal law.

Response

The analysis of the assault-related problems within Bullhead City Junior High School led the police department to recommend seven responses. Of the seven, the school implemented five of the responses between January 2000 and August 2001. Before any of the responses were initiated, they were discussed with the teachers, administrators, and representatives from city government. The media were also used to announce the changes that were taking place in the school.



School Lunch Hour Response

In January 2000, school administrators, teachers, and school resource officers worked together to adjust the scheduling of the lunch hour so that it was separated into three 20-minute lunch periods segregated by grade level. Students were required to spend the entire time seated in the lunchroom. After 20 minutes the students were allowed no more than 10 minutes for recess. In August 2001, to supplement the lunch hour response to assaults, the police department assigned one auxiliary police officer to assist with supervision during the lunch hour. At 11:00 AM every school day an auxiliary officer would park his or her patrol vehicle in front of the school to enhance the police department's visibility. The auxiliary officer would then patrol the school hallways until the lunch period, where he or she supervised the lunch room and playground until 1:30 PM.

Increase Adult Supervision in the Hallways

In January 2000 in an effort to increase supervision in the hallways, the school administration adopted a policy in which all teachers were required to monitor the hallways between periods. Interviews with the school resource officer and several school administrators indicated that initially teachers followed the policy; however, periodically there were lapses in supervision. One administrator emphasized that the teachers receive few breaks during the day and that the periods between classes are the few moments they have to prepare for their next class.

School Safety Officer

In August 2001, the school was awarded funding through the safe schools initiative to hire a safe schools officer. The school hired a retired Los Angeles, California police officer who had recently moved to Bullhead City. The school safety officer was responsible for implementing the new law-related education course, patrolling school grounds, and supervising students during the lunch period. He also served as the formal liaison between the school and the county juvenile probation department, counseled parents of truant students, attended school disciplinary hearings, developed safe-school plans, and provided in-service training to teachers. Although the officer was not in uniform, he wore a blue polo shirt and jeans to differentiate him from the other employees at the school.



Law-Related Education

In August 2001, the newly hired school safety officer designed and implemented a class on the law and school policies to increase student awareness about criminal law and school rules. The course was taught for 90 hours each semester during the students' regularly scheduled social studies course. The course focused on various aspects of the law, good citizenship, and school rules and regulations.

The school drama club and a local television station collaborated to create two video productions entitled "Decision," and "Trice Christmas," which were shown to the students at the junior high. About 60 students participated in the productions and many of them, the teacher and school resource officer stated, were considered "problem" students. The videos were created to help the students make the "right" choices about such issues as how to handle bullies, gangs, and those who ask them to use drugs and alcohol. The video productions were also shown several times on the local cable access channel. The teacher who supervised the production stated that many of the parents of the students involved in the project told her that the project had a major impact on their child's life.

Incident-Tracking System

In August 2001, the school resource officer created an incident-tracking system for the school. It consisted of a large map of the school, with colored dots showing where each violent incident took place. Blue dots were used for incidents involving males and pink dots were used for incidents involving females. The tracking system identified hot spot locations.

Assessment

The Bullhead City Police Department School-Based Partnership was assessed in two ways. First, the school resource officer examined pre- and post-intervention arrest data, student survey data, and school resource officer log data. Second, evaluators from 21st Century Solutions gathered official data from the police department and school to examine changes in behavior prior to and after the implementation of the responses and interviewed key stakeholders in the project to examine their perceptions of change.



All of the findings suggested that from the beginning of the 2001–2002 school year there was a substantial change in the number of assaults and related activity at the school and that there was a significant change in student perceptions concerning school safety. These changes coincided with the implementation of several responses developed as part of the School-Based Partnership project. They also took place after a new principal was assigned to the school. While it was not possible to untangle the confounding influences of the responses and administrative changes, interviews suggested that both might have had an impact on reducing assaults and related problems within the school over the period studied.

Hollywood Police Department - Attucks Middle School[§]

The SBP project served as the center of a wider community improvement effort. Before this project was instituted, several officers were needed to police the area when students were arriving at and dismissed from the school. Afterward, one officer was sufficient. The Department's SAVI model has been emulated by other jurisdictions. Most of its components are low-cost activities that can be adopted by any school district in cooperation with its local police department.

Hollywood, Florida covers 28 square miles and is the second-largest city in Broward County. The “Diamond of the Gold Coast” was founded in 1925 by Joseph Young as a tourist mecca and has maintained that image through the years. At the time of the SBP project, the year-round population of 133,000 residents increased to 253,000 during the winter months. Liberia is a 2-square-mile neighborhood located in the northeast side of Hollywood. With the introduction of the railroad, this low-income neighborhood established itself and is now nestled between the freight rail tracks bordering the city edge and a four-block long strip mall containing multiple chain stores such as Home Depot, Kmart, and

§ Solomon, Shellie E. and Uchida, Craig D., “Evaluating the School-Based Partnership Program in Hollywood, Florida,” unpublished ms., 21st Century Solutions, Inc., 2002.



the restaurant/recreation club, Dave and Buster's. In 1999, the neighborhood was home to three community stores, Attucks Middle School, and Flanagan High School. The 2,870-plus residents were predominantly African-American and lived in approximately 500 single-family homes. Apartments, most in significant disrepair, were located on the west and northwest corners of the neighborhood.

Attucks Middle School was one of Broward County's leading magnet schools, with an educational focus on communications and broadcast arts. Studies included newspaper journalism, radio, television, and public speaking. As a magnet school, any student living in the neighborhood or throughout Broward County who wished to study communications and broadcast arts could attend Attucks. In 1999–2000, 1,125 students attended Attucks and in 2000–2001, 1,038 students attended. The ethnic makeup of the student body was diverse. In 2000, the student body was 54 percent African-American, 28 percent Caucasian, and 15 percent Hispanic, with 49.7 percent of all students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches.

The Hollywood Police Department served a community of more than 133,000 residents with 341 officers and 240 non-sworn civilians. The command staff met quarterly with lieutenants to discuss objectives for each neighborhood to address problems at the root level through community interaction. The Department sent officers to every civic meeting and published neighborhood meetings times on its web site. Command staff reported that since 1999 the crime rate has fallen by 12 percent.

PROBLEM: Illegal drug sales.

Scanning

The Hollywood Police Department relied on information collected through calls for service, citizen input during community meetings, a community policing survey conducted by area officers, and an environmental assessment of the Liberia area conducted by the city. Of the 22 Hollywood neighborhoods, Liberia ranked first in felony assaults (82), auto thefts (145), and theft (546) in 2000. During monthly civic meetings and a



survey conducted by the Liberia community policing team, residents stated that their number one concern was street-level drug dealing. During 1998, residents made 297 drug-related calls for service, 60 percent occurring between 6:00 AM and 7:00 PM, with 80 of these calls occurring during the times that children were walking to and from school. Police were particularly concerned because multiple shooting incidents attributed to the drug trade had occurred in the area adjacent to the school in the year prior to the grant.

Concurrently, Hollywood city officials hired an urban planning consulting firm to analyze the Liberia area. The firm discovered that the neighborhood lacked a sound environmental design with its narrow streets and poor lighting conditions, which area officers felt made Liberia attractive for drug dealers. The consulting firm recommended the demolition of the apartments

During interviews with the school resource officers and other Hollywood Police Department staff, it was discovered that Attucks Middle School was well known as a rough school that was often compared to the prison with a somewhat similar name, Attica. Despite its negative reputation, the number of crime and violence incidents was somewhat lower per student than other Broward County schools. Crime and violence incidents ranged from 639 incidents in the 1996–97 school year to 335 in the 1998–99 school year. In the 1996–97 school year, 678 external suspensions were issued and one student was expelled. The numbers dropped to 454 external suspensions and one expulsion during the 1997–1998 school year.

Analysis

Five survey instruments were used with students, faculty and staff, businesses, residents and offenders. Each survey asked approximately 16 questions covering the following issues:

- Perceived safety in school and in the neighborhood, including going to and from school
- Environmental factors such as pay phone usage and lighting
- Criminal activity and illegal drug trade
- Satisfaction with the school resource officer and the neighborhood services officer
- Willingness and ideas to help police address safety issues
- Demographic characteristics.



Resident Survey (571 surveys completed)

- Residents reported feeling safe during the day and in the evening in their homes and neighborhoods, with the majority always feeling safe.
- Half of the residents believed there was inadequate street lighting in the neighborhood.
- Forty-four percent believed that pay phones were being used for drug sales.
- One-third of residents felt crime had increased at Attucks Middle School during the past three years. Eighteen percent felt crime had stayed the same.
- Thirty-five percent were very satisfied with the school resource officer's performance, with another 25 percent being somewhat satisfied.
- Sixty-one percent were satisfied with the neighborhood team leader's performance in Liberia.

Business/Employee Survey (28 surveys completed)

- Half the business employees always felt safe at work, yet 43 percent sometimes felt safe.
- Sixty-four percent believed that there was insufficient street lighting and 63 percent believed that pay phones were used as a tool for drug dealers.
- Seventy-nine percent were very satisfied and 21 percent were somewhat satisfied with the job done by the neighborhood team leader.

Faculty and Staff Survey (37 surveys completed)

- Forty-three percent always felt safe at school or on school property while the remaining 54 percent reported feeling safe sometimes.
- Half of the staff believed that there was inadequate lighting in the neighborhood and half believed that pay phones were used as a tool for drug dealers.
- Thirty-five percent believed that crime had increased at Attucks over the past three years while 32 percent believed that crime had stayed the same.
- Seventy-six percent were very satisfied with the job of the school resource officer was doing.



Student Survey (68 surveys completed)

- The majority of students walked to school. Most sometimes felt safe traveling to and from school. Only three students never felt safe traveling to and from school.
- Fifty-five percent felt that the street lighting in the neighborhood was adequate; 50 percent believed that pay phones were a tool for drug dealers.
- Fifteen percent felt that crime at Attucks had increased, while 19 percent felt it had decreased.
- Fifty-eight percent were very satisfied with the school resource officer's performance while 23 percent were somewhat satisfied.
- The majority was very or somewhat satisfied with the job done by the Liberia neighborhood team leader.

Incident Report Analysis and Public Intersection Survey

During the night survey, a light meter was used to obtain illumination information and calls were reviewed for service and incident data. From January 1, 2001 to May 1, 2001, the Liberia area recorded 326 incidents of the following types: shootings, suspicious persons or incidents, disturbing noise or persons, narcotics, and robbery and/or breaking and entering. A lighting inspection found the following public access areas to lack sufficient lighting:

- A pay phone lacked lighting because the bulb was burned out.
- One corner of a parking lot lacked sufficient lighting because of the location of the city light pole.
- A bus stop lacked lighting because of a low-lumens bulb in the streetlight.
- Tree branches blocked traffic signs and lighting in some areas.
- Crime watch signs, believed to aid in the deterrence of crime, were missing in the area.

Student and Staff Observations at the School

The school resource officer did not find a significant gang problem or group of troublemakers at Attucks. However, there did appear to be a lack of respect for the school itself. Students randomly dropped garbage in the hallways and neither students nor teachers picked it up. Parents did not attend school events as evidenced by only 30 parents attending the back-to-school night.



Response

The Hollywood Police Department employed multiple responses to reduce fear and address crime problems plaguing the area. These efforts ranged from zero tolerance policies in the school to community engagement to code enforcement and police visibility.

At Attucks

Within the school, the school resource officer initially instituted the zero tolerance policy to assert control, including banishing gang color representation in clothes, exposed underwear, and an explanation that verbal and/or physical threats to teachers or students would not be tolerated. The zero tolerance policy applied throughout the school day and began on the school bus where the school resource officer worked with the bus driver to identify and arrest offenders, if necessary. The school resource officer also worked to gain the cooperation of the faculty and staff and introduced a number of crime-prevention programs that were coordinated as part of a larger Hollywood Police Department effort referred to as SAVI, the School Anti-Violence Initiative. Programs under the SAVI umbrella included the Police Referral Outreach Program, Youth Mentoring, D.A.R.E. program, teen court, peer counseling, and truancy prevention alternative suspension programs.

On January 25, 2001, the Attucks School Crime Watch grew from 20 active members to 65. One of the first official activities was the “Give Back to Our Neighborhood” clean-up held on February 17, 2001. More than 40 students from all over Broward County showed up to clean up the campus. Afterwards, the students began to police themselves, which resulted in a reduction in graffiti and cleaner halls. Additional programs included referrals to the Youth Evaluation Service (Y.E.S.), a joint program between the Hollywood Police and Memorial Hospital that provided counseling for children ages 5 to 17 and their families and also the Police Referral Outreach Program (PROP), a program for juveniles with drug problems run by the Hollywood Police and Starting Place.



Outside of Attucks

To address trespassers, the school resource officer began a block-by-block visibility effort to gain control of a four-block perimeter around the school. This included chasing trespassers off school property, working additional shifts after school, and talking with individuals to interrupt their illicit business. The school resource officer worked closely with the neighborhood team leader on truancy problems and in securing the perimeter of the school and continued to build relationships with residents through the Liberia civic meetings, informal discussions, and a coordinated landlord/tenant meeting starting in August 2001. The team also addressed the environmental problems in the area by working with Florida Power and Light to increase the lighting in and around the school. Finally, they created a Critical Incident Plan, a comprehensive security plan designed by the Hollywood Police Department, for Attucks Middle School as part of the larger efforts undertaken under SAVI.

Assessment

At the conclusion of the SBP grant, the Florida State Department of Education statistics indicated that violence and crime in Attucks Middle School dropped from a high of 639 incidents in the 1996–1997 school year to 184 during 2000–2001. An analysis of crime and violence incidents per student showed that one incident for every two students occurred in the 1999–2000 school year and one incident for every six students occurred during the 2000–01 school year. From December 2001 to May 2002, arrests declined from the previous year to only 68 arrests. The school resource officer reported few arrests at the start of the 2002–03 school year, compared to as many as three arrests per day during the project years, with more students, teachers, and parents involved in prevention efforts such as peer mediation, teen court, back-to-school night, and Crime Watch.



Miami Police Department - Booker T. Washington Senior High School[§]

§ Solomon, Shellie E. and Uchida, Craig D., “Working with Truants: The Miami Police Department 1998 School-Based Partnership,” unpublished ms., 21st Century Solutions, Inc., 2002.

The outcome for several targeted middle school students and, therefore, for peers, the school, families, and community was unquestionably positive. One of the more compelling stories from this project, as well, is the change that occurred in the attitudes and lives of some officers, and in their working relationships with their counterparts in the school. The police department, school, and the community will continue to benefit.

In 1999, the Miami (Florida) Police Department served a community of more than 365,000 people with 1,100 officers and 365 civilian employees. Major community policing efforts involved the creation of twelve Neighborhood Enhancement Team Service Areas (NETs) throughout the city. These teams worked with other city agencies to respond to specific problems of residents and businesses in these areas. Miami also served as a Community Policing Demonstration Center to assist other police agencies. Under its “Distressed Neighborhoods” grant, the department targeted Miami’s most disadvantaged areas. Officers formed problem-solving teams with community members to address crime problems, stabilize neighborhoods, and begin the revitalization process.

In 1999, Booker T. Washington Senior High School opened its doors and was referred to as “an all-academy, neighborhood, comprehensive senior high school.” Like most Miami schools, it was an open facility with exposed courtyards and open-air hallways. In the fall of 1999, there were 917 seventh and eighth graders in the school. The school was made up of about 52 percent African-American and 48 percent Hispanic students. Over the last few years, there had been a 52 percent increase in the cultural mix of the school. Most of the school population had limited English skills. Other nationalities included Honduran, Nicaraguan, and Cuban immigrants.



Booker T. Washington was designated a “Title I” school, meaning that 75 percent of the students received free or reduced-cost lunches, the only high school in Miami-Dade County with such a high percentage. The school received additional funding to address social and educational issues connected with this level of poverty. In particular, Booker T. Washington used Title I funding to support additional paraprofessionals to assist with tracking and reporting requirements. Also, a new community involvement specialist was hired to work with the truancy project.

PROBLEM: Truancy

Scanning

Miami-Dade County was the highest-ranking county for juvenile arrests in the state of Florida. Further, the Miami Police Department found that the Overtown area accounted for 60 percent of juvenile arrests in the city during the 1995–96 school year. Based on reports by two Dade County Grand Juries (1991 and 1993), truancy was identified as one of the major causes of juvenile delinquency. A third grand jury report in 1996 revealed that early warning indicators of future criminal behavior included truancy, academic failure, and behavior problems in schools. Students at Booker T. Washington appeared to fit these indicators as the school ranked 48th out of 48 middle schools for attendance. In addition, only 7 percent of the students scored above the national median in reading and 12 percent in math. On an average day, eight students were on internal suspension and 35 on external suspension.

The police department worked with the Miami-Dade School Board and Booker T. Washington Middle School officials, alumni, and students. They reviewed crime data and school data. They also relied on personal observations of officers and school officials. As a result of these reviews and discussions, the police department focused on addressing the problem of chronic truancy (30 or more days of unexcused absences). By concentrating on this problem, they hoped to address juvenile crime issues and fear of crime in and around the school.



Analysis

Calls for Service

The team examined calls for service occurring during the day shift from August 28, 1999 to April 9, 2000. They reviewed where calls were originating, what they reported, and what outcomes resulted. The calls at the school involved assaults, larcenies, and disturbances. A review of all calls in the area indicated that:

- Twenty incidents occurred with no report required.
- Six incidents resulted in arrests related to traffic stops.
- Five incidents resulted in reports but no arrests.
- Four calls were disturbance calls.
- Three calls were motor vehicle larcenies.
- Three calls were assaults on people.
- Three calls were for traffic accidents.

Student Surveys

Ninety-nine student surveys were conducted with 55 obtained from a random sample of students and 44 targeting chronically truant students. Additional demographics of the survey group are as follows:

- Eighty-two percent were 15 or 16 years old.
- Half were in 9th grade and half were in 10th grade.
- Forty were female; 53 were male; 3 were unknown.
- Thirty-five were African-American; 50 were Hispanic.
- Fifty-four percent woke up at 6:00 AM and 6:30 AM to go to school.

From this survey the team learned that the majority of students (68 percent) stated that they go to school to get an education; even the majority of truant students surveyed (54 percent) stated they go to school to get an education. However, one-fifth of truant students stated they go to school because someone makes them. Sixteen (36 percent) of the truant students stated that they skipped school 1 or 2 days per month while 11 (25 percent) said they skipped school 3 to 5 days per month. When asked why they were skipping, the primary reason identified by all students was that they did not like their teachers. Seventeen percent reported individual reasons such as they lacked clothing or were baby-sitting and an additional 17 percent reported they were scared and did not fit in to school.



Attendance Records

Attendance records were reviewed at three different time periods. In each time period the number of students who were considered chronically truant increased. It should be noted that this number may underestimate the problem. Those students who made up the truancy rates in the first and/or second reporting period were not necessarily the same students accounting for the truancy rate in the second and third reporting periods. Some students “disappeared” from the student roster either because they transferred to another school or turned 16 and were classified as a “dropout.” They were administratively removed from the roster. These data show that two students were considered chronically truant at the end of November. A month later, three students met this category. By May 1 the number of chronically truant students rose to 35. A more dramatic rise was seen in the number of students with significant unexcused absences ranging from 15 to 30. These data were useful in determining which students to target in the response phase. Further analysis of the attendance data showed that unexcused absences went up just prior to lunch. The team questioned these data because it did not seem logical that students would come back to school after skipping those periods right around the lunch hour.

Ninth graders accounted for approximately 70 percent of the unexcused absences. Race made no difference. Males skipped 1.7 times more often than females. Using the survey results from the truant students, the majority (27 out of 44) skipped by themselves while 22 usually skipped with two to three friends. Only three skipped with family members. When they skipped, 28 reported going home; nine reported hanging out on the streets and six went to a friend’s house. Thirty-four arrived at their destination by walking. Thirteen rode the bus. Further, the team found from attendance data that the majority of truant students (77 percent) lived within a 2-mile radius of the school.

Environmental Study

A fourth data collection method that proved useful was the environmental survey. In this survey, officers walked around the school noting the physical appearance and general state of the areas as well as the type of building structures. They observed 5 to 6 abandoned buildings,



up to 20 people hanging out, vacant lots or areas suitable for loitering, and trash on each side of the school. They also noted that the school was bordered by residential, commercial, and industrial properties and the transit stop and bus stops were located next to the school.

Parent Interviews

A final data source involved information from officers who contacted the parents of chronically truant students. Although much effort was put into this collection method, it yielded few contacts. Of the 37 attempts made, 23 parents/guardians were reached. About half (18) were aware of the absences and the other half (19) were unaware. The officers were unable to find 21 of the truant students, but they transported nine back to school and learned that five were out sick.

Response

Targeted Interventions

Based on the analysis information about the typical truant student, the team decided to work with incoming ninth graders. Eighth grade attendance records were reviewed for the incoming ninth grade class. Sixty-five students with more than 40 unexcused absences but less than 70 within the previous school year, were targeted for the focused intervention. Forty unexcused absences were double the average number of absences for this incoming ninth grade class. Efforts to contact these students included attempts to call them out of class on different school days at different time periods, home visits by officers, and a home visit by the community involvement specialist. During successful home visits, the police officer and/or the community involvement specialist would advise parents of truancy concerns and request their assistance in addressing the problem with the student. They would also provide information about social services, if needed, and identify what issues were having an impact on the student's attendance at school.

In addition to the home visits, police officers and teachers conducted weekly, then biweekly, and then monthly group and one-on-one discussions with targeted students to mentor them and encourage their attendance at school. Student leaders attended group discussions to



form a bond with truant students and to serve as mentors. Officers and teachers informed the students of their responsibilities, provided detailed information about graduation requirements, discussed the benefits of an education, and explained truancy laws.

For the one-on-one discussions, the officers obtained up-to-date attendance data. During each session, they pinpointed unexcused absences, questioned the cause of the absences, and discussed the impacts of the unexcused absences with truant students. The students were held accountable for their answers and actions about each unexcused absence. Most importantly, officers worked with students to develop a strategy for preventing future unexcused absences.

In many cases, students were simply not waking up in time for school. They did not own alarm clocks. Once they did wake up, these students decided to stay home rather than be tardy. Also, the attendance policy required actions that many were not aware of and were not taking. If a student missed homeroom, he or she was marked absent for the day, unless he or she reported to the Main Office. The school resource officer advised students to come to school and report to the office when they arrived. She also solicited and obtained private funding to purchase alarm clocks for the students as holiday presents.

A second problem was the lack of appropriate school clothing. These students reported having no clean clothing or having clothing that no longer fit their growing bodies. Most students with this problem were female. Again, the school resource officer obtained funding from private donations and purchased clothing for these students. Providing these clothes seemed to aid, although not erase, this issue.

Broad Interventions

Student leaders focused on ensuring that all incoming ninth grade students felt welcome and bonded to Booker T. Washington High School. The entire team worked to explain the policies and procedures of the school. They published information about high school graduation requirements in multiple media forums. Finally, the team briefed teachers on the analysis findings. Administrators and students identified ways for teachers to make better connections with the new students early in



the school year. These efforts responded to discussions with students and findings from the student surveys that some students, especially truant students, did not like school and did not like their teachers.

Specific interventions included providing an introductory/orientation course to high school to all ninth graders during the summer and developing school-planner calendars. The school planners included phone numbers for social services and emergency providers as well as information about school policies and graduation requirements. These attractive calendars were given to every student during the first weeks of school. Student leaders worked with officers to obtain donations from businesses to host a welcome breakfast for incoming ninth graders. During this breakfast, student leaders introduced themselves and school administrators. They recognized and promoted teachers assisting with ninth grade class-specific activities such as spirit week competition. The leaders explained extracurricular activities, discussed how to request assistance with specific courses, and offered their friendship to these students.

Assessment

The Miami School-Based Partnership 1998 grant program was successful on a number of levels. First, it was a key part of a comprehensive effort to improve the educational focus of a school in a poverty stricken, diverse immigrant community. Due to a variety of ongoing projects and other factors—the transition from a middle school to a high school, the designation and resources provided to a Title I high school, the extensive construction, the increasing alumni involvement, and many other factors—it is difficult to distinguish the precise impact of the grant. Even so, these accomplishments are noteworthy:

- Booker T. Washington school officials sought and received assistance from the Miami Police Department.
- The partnership between the school and the police department was strong and continues.
- Team members involved in the project have a better understanding of the truancy problem—who is truant, where they are being truant, and what they are doing when they are truant. It seems clear that truant students are not contributing to the crime problems in the Overtown area.



- The team involved in this effort determined in the analysis phase that they would be successful if they saw a 6- to 10-percent drop in truancy. While the truancy rate did not drop by that percentage, average truancy rates appeared to be dropping. Of the 31 students targeted and contacted, 25 students (80 percent) improved their attendance significantly.
- Those students who participated in the interventions have a clear understanding of the school policies and graduation requirements. These students feel they are more likely to graduate as a result.



Conclusion

Partnerships with key stakeholders were a primary objective of the COPS-sponsored School Based Partnerships program. The most successful partnerships had clear roles among participants with strategic goals and shared priorities. Too many partners, internal or extra-organizational conflicts, competing priorities, and limited resources proved challenging to some grantees. Police indicated that certain partnerships were instrumental in developing a better understanding of problems in and around schools.

Students provided excellent input regarding the problems and they tended to be more successful at retrieving information. School administrators and faculty assisted in policy change, provided program support, and organized programs beneficial to the problem-solving effort. School support personnel (i.e., security staff, cafeteria workers, etc) were key sources of information concerning problem identification (locations/offenders/victims) and response development. Parents completed surveys, provided support, and gave insights on health issues (both physical and mental). And finally, local businesses provided information, financial, and/or political support. Often overlooked partners included bus drivers who provided information for police and school administrators in addition to supporting programs and providing feedback on results.



Recommended Readings

The COPS Office works with some of the most innovative and respected names in law enforcement to develop publications designed to help with many aspects of community policing, as well as specific problem-oriented studies. From enterprise-level organizational issues to problems like stamping out graffiti, COPS publications can offer insights and experiences from others in the field. Visit our Resource Center at www.cops.usdoj.gov or call 800.421.6770.

A Guide to Developing, Maintaining, and Succeeding With Your School Resource Officer Program, by Peter Finn, Meg Townsend, Michael Shively, and Tom Rich, 2005. This report documents promising methods that selected SRO programs have used to address potential problem areas of SRO program operations, such as recruiting, screening, retaining, training, and supervising SROs. www.cops.usdoj.gov/mime/open.pdf?Item=1531.

A Police Guide to Surveying Citizens and Their Environments, Bureau of Justice Assistance, 1993. This guide offers a practical introduction for police practitioners to two types of surveys that police find useful: surveying public opinion and surveying the physical environment. It provides guidance on whether and how to conduct cost-effective surveys. www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/polc.pdf.

Assessing Responses to Problems: An Introductory Guide for Police Problem-Solvers, by John E. Eck (U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2001). This guide is a companion to the Problem-Oriented Guides for Police series. It provides basic guidance for measuring and assessing problem-oriented policing efforts. www.cops.usdoj.gov/mime/open.pdf?Item=585.

Conducting Community Surveys, by Deborah Weisel (Bureau of Justice Statistics and Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 1999). This guide, along with accompanying computer software, provides practical, basic pointers for police in conducting community surveys. www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs.



Crime Analysis for Problem Solving in 60 Small

Steps, by Ronald Clarke and John Eck, 2005. This innovative manual, written by two leading crime-prevention experts, is intended for crime analysts and other police officials working on problem-oriented policing projects. It covers the basics of problem-oriented policing and shows how many new concepts developed to analyze crime patterns can sharpen understanding of crime and disorder problems. www.cops.usdoj.gov/mime/open.pdf?Item=1597.

Guide to Using School COP to Address Student

Discipline Problems, by Tom Rich, Peter Fynn, and Shawn Ward, 2001. This guide is designed to help school administrators, police officers assigned to a school, and nonsworn school security staff reduce student discipline and crime problems using a new software application called the School Crime Operations Package, or School COP. www.cops.usdoj.gov/mime/open.pdf?Item=301.

Problem-Solving: Problem-Oriented Policing in

Newport News, by John E. Eck and William Spelman (Police Executive Research Forum, 1987). Explains the rationale behind problem-oriented policing and the problem-solving process, and provides examples of effective problem-solving in one agency.

Problem-Solving Tips: A Guide to Reducing Crime and Disorder Through Problem-Solving Partnerships, by

Karin Schmerler, Matt Perkins, Scott Phillips, Tammy Rinehart, and Meg Townsend. (U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 1998) (also available at www.cops.usdoj.gov). Provides a brief introduction to problem-solving, basic information on the SARA model, and detailed suggestions about the problem-solving process.

SRO Performance Evaluation: A Guide to Getting

Results, by Tammy Rinehart Kochel, Anna Laaszlo, and Laura Nickles, 2005. This evaluation captures the lessons-learned from a COPS-funded, 2-year pilot project conducted by Circle Solutions, Inc. The result is a step-by-step guide to help law enforcement and school personnel use school resource officers (SRO) effectively. To better address school crime and disorder, it also provides guidance on how to match the SROs' actual performance to their evaluations. www.cops.usdoj.gov/mime/open.pdf?Item=1570.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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COPS Office Response Center at 800.421.6770
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