

THE FIVE MOST DANGEROUS SCHOOL DISCIPLINE TRENDS

**Solving School Discipline Problems
One Intervention at a Time**



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CHALLENGE:

SOLVING THE DIFFICULT SCHOOL DISCIPLINE TRENDS REQUIRES ONE INTERVENTION AT A TIME

Educators and students today have to deal with many difficult discipline problems such as gangs, guns, vandalism, disrespect, bullying, sexting, tardiness, drop outs and drugs. What comes with these problems are some alarming statistics, which point to the following:

- 25% of schools reported illegal drug use
- 46% of schools reported student threat of physical attack
- 10% of city schools reported gang related crime
- 39% of middle schools reported school bullying occurred at least once weekly.

The three major factors limiting the efforts of the school to reduce crime include lack of funds, inadequate placement

programs and government policies for disciplining students. This information points to the notion that school discipline problems are severe and something must be done about to combat it (Crime, Violence, Discipline, and Safety in U.S. Public Schools 2009-2010 IES National Center for Education Statistics).

Unfortunately, with the growing discipline problems, it poses the questions of where the fault lies and how can it be fixed. Before the plaguing issues can be addressed, one must ask whether or not anyone is truly at fault. Of course it is easy to question the parents, students or teachers. But realistically, school administration and teachers always end up taking the blame for the discipline infractions that

are occurring. Surprisingly, the blame comes from many angles such as PTA, the media, parents and the students. What makes the blaming even worse? Some of the school staff tend to be quick to place blame on their counterparts! It is important to understand that it is not the fault of the school, parents or students. So, where does the fault originate?

To be able to fully understand where the fault originates, there are some important points to ponder. First, school discipline problems are not caused by the lack of caring parents and students. Secondly, school discipline problems are not caused by the lack of effort of teachers and school administrators. Lastly, the true causes of discipline problems/infractions are beyond the control of everyone.

While it is agreed upon that the problems/infractions are rising, outside factors are coming into play that are beyond the control of school administration, teachers, parents, students and PTA. There are five major factors that contribute to the increase of discipline problems; which will be discussed in the next paragraphs.



TREND ONE: THE BREAKDOWN OF FAMILY

The traditional family structure has vanished between 1980 and 2000. Recent statistics show that there's a 48% increase in Grandparents having to raise their children and a 20% increase in unmarried fathers having to rear their children alone (<http://childstats.gov/americaschildren/famsoc2.asp>). As a result, the family support is lost; and it causes our youth to find other means of entertainment and ways to fit in with society.

TREND TWO: THE ECONOMY

In addition, the sagging economy has forced many parents to leave their children home alone. 15.3 million children are latch key kids; with 4% of elementary students being unsupervised after school and 30% of middle school students being unsupervised after school. However, on the high school level, there are too many to count.

TREND THREE: GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

In 2001, the No-Child-Left-Behind Act was enacted as a means to ensure that all children received equal access to education. What seemed like a great idea to strengthen education actually penalized urban and rural districts, added additional workloads to overworked teachers/administrators, and left troubled districts in worse shape than before.

TREND FOUR: WALL STREET

Before schools could fully recover from the government intervention program, the Wall Street Mortgage Meltdown of 2008 put millions out of work, which caused a reduction in real estate taxes-the main financial support of most public schools in America. As a result, hiring freezes and layoffs on the school level occurred. Many of these layoff and freezes occurred in areas that were essential and critical to the structure of the school.



TREND FIVE: VIOLENCE IN THE MEDIA

What is alarming is that 11 million people in the US cannot read a bus schedule, 33% of high school graduates never read a book after high school and 80% of U.S. families did not buy or read a book last year. So, where are 80% of these families' kids spending their time? Violent video games, music videos and movies produced by the media are definitely the sources of that are helping to contribute to the increase of discipline problems within the school.

SOLUTION

There is one thought that can be unanimously agreed upon: We need to fix the discipline problems! True, we did not cause them, but in a perfect world, we should be able to pass the responsibility of dealing with the infractions to the teachers. After all, they are always the one to catch the blame, right? As teachers, school administrators and parents, we must all work together as a team to fix the discipline problems that are in our schools. By doing this, not only will it lead to a harmonious accord amongst the team, but it will also quickly fix the problems that are increasing.

Most educators question how to accomplish the task of fixing the increasing problems, as previous methods in the past have not worked. What's most important to remember is this: "It is not your fault!" However, your staff can be trained to fix the discipline problems of the school. A

different approach just needs to be taken. Here are some steps to take in order to conquer the task of fixing the problems:

STEP ONE:

Realizing that teachers are not trained to be psychologists or disciplinarians, they may be very well fearful while in the school setting and administrators are not trained to be intervention specialists. In a nutshell, your staff has not been trained to solve discipline problems.

STEP TWO:

You cannot do it alone. Learning how to ride a bike does not come from reading a book. And you also cannot learn how to solve your discipline problems by watching a seminar on a DVD.

STEP THREE:

Capturing a professional, experienced person in solving discipline problems to help guide your staff in decision making. A one on one interview to determine true needs of your school should occur and a priority list be created. A comprehensive, systematic discipline training program should be introduced to educate you about best practices for the program. This person should also help you identify key team players to help with implementation as well as determine a budget.

STEP FOUR:

Understanding that solving your school's discipline problems requires all faculty and staff to be on the same page. Teachers will now be trained to deal with 90% of class incidents that currently are sent to the principal's office. All staff should be willing to use proactive researched-based strategies regardless of what the student says or does. Lastly, students are treated fairly and consistently in terms of behavioral expectations and consequences.

STEP FIVE:

Understanding that implementing a systematic approach is not a one-time event. Training is an ongoing process; which can include a series of seminars, group meetings and one-on-one training. By doing this, this ensures that ongoing observations from the trainer and strategy repetition will become a sustainable "tool" in teachers' "toolboxes." This can be accomplished by revisiting the school over a period of months for progress monitoring.



STEP SIX:

Knowing what to look for when interviewing school discipline professional development firms. You should be able to know how long they have been in business, be able to speak with the owner and contact references and the testimonial personnel, obtain a customer list, determine if they offer onsite, ongoing training to ensure proper program implementation or just a one-time seminar as well as determine if their trainers are current or former school administrators, and lastly, be offered an option to be provided with a free phone assessment of your current situation and be given an opportunity to interview the trainer prior to contracting.

The Education Company is here to make your school a positive place to work and learn! Please give us a call or visit our website to schedule a free, confidential discipline review. Our company is an educational, professional development service provider. Our trainers work directly with school administrators, teachers, support staff, parents and students to help them solve the most pressing discipline problems within their schools.

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