STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS TO PREVENT
OR REDUCE GANG-RELATED ACTIVITY AND VIOLENCE IN
SELECTED HIGH SCHOOLS IN A NORTH CENTRAL
TEXAS SCHOOL DISTRICT

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

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Denton, Texas

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This research investigated the strategies used by school administrators in selected high schools to prevent or reduce gang-related activity and violence. Interviews were conducted with six high school principals, six assistant principals, fifteen staff members and eleven students. All of the students were gang members. The results of the study showed that there are gang members in all schools, but that their gang activity at school is curtailed by some specific strategies.

Strategies found to be successful at the six high schools were a zero tolerance policy for gang activity, a well implemented and consistently enforced dress code, student reports of real or expected gang-related activity and violence, security cameras and personnel, visibility of school administrators, conferences with individual students or groups of students, and the removal of students to alternative programs. Strategies that were developed through shared planning activities were found to be more effective, though the principals acknowledged that they bore the ultimate responsibility for developing and implementing those strategies. Most principals used their administrative teams, Site Based Decision Making Teams, Campus Coordinating Committees, individual faculty
members or committees, individual students or parents, and groups of students or parents to provide input. The principals and their administrative teams then screened those strategies and implemented them.

Faculty members expressed concern with the consistency of enforcement of all policies for both students and staff. Students were concerned about consistency, but were also concerned about the lack of effective classroom management strategies of some teachers as well as the lack of caring teachers and administrators.

Gang membership was found to have a relationship to the community, for what takes place in the community spills over into the school. Whatever the strategies the principal has in place, gang activity and violence was not completely excluded from the high school campus. Gang membership is not a phenomenon that that the school can stop alone. Prevention programs must be implemented in the early grades, and coordination with intervention programs in the community must take place.
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I wish to acknowledge the efforts of all those who assisted in making this work possible. Joe Cordova, Executive Director of the Boys' and Girls' Club, expedited finding gang members as interviewees through the Comin' Up program. Individual Comin' Up directors provided access to the gang members. Wendy Tyler transcribed the many hours of audio tapes and provided technical assistance, and David Baulch provided technical assistance. Patricia Martin proofread many drafts and the final copy of the work. I especially want to thank all my friends, coworkers, and supporters who encouraged the completion of this paper and degree. Special thanks go to Shirley Knox-Benton, who allowed me to adjust my work hours in order to do research in the library and conduct interviews, and for her unfailing friendship.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

The day-to-day operation of a school depends, in part, on the safety and security of the faculty, staff and students who work, learn, and study there. The increase of violence on school campuses in the last ten years has had a detrimental effect not only on the processes of teaching and learning, but also on the process of administering the instructional program of the school by both campus and central office administrators.

According to a survey reported in the Texas Association of Secondary School Administrators Highlights, of 65,000 teenagers surveyed, thirty-seven percent reported that they were afraid in school. Forty-three percent said they avoided restrooms, and sixty-three percent said they could learn better if they felt safer. Forty-two percent said they would feel safer if troublemakers were sent to special schools, and twenty-two percent said they would favor extra security guards, anti-violence classes, or metal detectors. Forty-five percent said they avoided school grounds, and twenty percent said they avoided hallways. Sixty-seven percent said lockers were not a safe place to keep valuables ("Survey Reports," 1994).

Violence in schools has seriously jeopardized a successful education for those in school, and caused school staff and the community to work and live in fear. "Learning
cannot take place in an atmosphere of fear or intimidation . . . " (Heller, 1996, p. 1). Gang activity and violence has been rising in schools ("Gangs, violent crime rising," 1998), but research among school administrators showed only a moderate level of concern regarding gang activities, and little consensus on how school officials dealt with the problem. Administrators often failed to acknowledge gang activity in their schools because they feared it would be a reflection on their management skills. Their lack of acknowledgment tended to encourage gang-related activity and implied that gangs could operate in the schools without punishment (Covey, Menard, & Franzese, 1997; Huff, 1989; Kudluboy & Evenrud, 1993; Stephens, 1993). Teachers and administrators who were perceived by gang members as "weak" were often chosen as targets for assaults and other crimes, while those who were seen as tough but fair were rarely, if ever, chosen as targets by gang members. Law enforcement officers have been expected to take the greatest responsibility in controlling gang behavior both in and out of schools (Huff, 1989).

Both perpetrators and victims of violence came from all cultures and classes (Becker, 1998; Cochran, 1998; Dickson, 1998; Rouse & Dickson, 1998; Terry & Bruni, 1998), but children who lived in conditions of poverty were more frequently involved. Much of the violence seen in the schools was a result of a carryover from the weekend, when students in schools continued disruptions with weapons, threats, or intimidation (McGuire, 1980; Mulhern, Dibble, & Berkan, 1994). Schools were often seen as the only haven of safety for children from neighborhoods and homes where violence prevailed. One former student wrote, "Violence surrounds us everywhere: school, work, even in front of
your crib. And this stuff doesn't just go down where I live. In school all the gossip in the hallway is about things happening in the streets. I know lots of people also carry weapons to school but the beef is outside most of the time" (Azize, 1995, p. 263).

The Texas Independent School District Crime Report (1995) disclosed that approximately one-third of the campuses involved in the study reported no crimes, and that crime was actually lower in the largest districts than might have been expected. About one-third of all crimes reported actually occurred after school hours or on days when school was out. Many of the incidents did not occur in the classroom, and most of the offenses involved no weapons. Sixteen percent of the offenders were not authorized to be on campus, and eighty-eight percent of both offenders and victims were students. Most of these crimes occurred in secondary schools, and a higher percentage of crimes in classrooms occurred in suburban schools, while seventy-nine percent of all gang-related crime occurred in urban schools. Fewer than two percent of all crimes occurred at sporting events.

It is essential for principals, other administrators, and all educational practitioners to understand not only that violence and gang-related activity exist on school campuses, but also how to deal successfully with that violence. This research examined how administrators who have demonstrated strategies to deal with gang-related activity and violence have done so, and examined how to implement those strategies. It also examined the perceptions of faculty and other staff members about those strategies and their effectiveness. Students, who have been affected by strategies to deal with gangs that
have been implemented in their schools, were studied to determine their perceptions of the effectiveness of those strategies.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to determine what strategies school administrators at selected high schools in a north central Texas area school district used to prevent or reduce gang-related activity and violence on their campuses.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the strategies administrators used to prevent or reduce gang-related activity and violence on their campuses, who participated in determining those strategies, and how specific students who engaged in such activities were affected by the strategies used. It is essential that both current and future administrators be able to identify gang activity and potential violence, and then have strategies for dealing with them. By examining the responses of administrators who have dealt with gang activity and violence, this study will assist current and aspiring administrators with such problems in the future.

Research Questions

1a. What specific campus or district policies target the prevention or reduction of gang-related activity and violence?

1b. How are the policies determined?

1c. Who implements the policies?

2a. What strategies are employed by school administrators, specifically principals,
to prevent or reduce gang-related activity and violence?

2b. How are these particular strategies determined and implemented?

3. How are students who engage in gang-related activity and violence impacted by the strategies used by school administrators?

4a. Who, other than the principal, is involved in preventing or reducing gang-related activity and violence?

4b. How is each person or group involved, and why?

Significance of the Study

Homicide is the leading cause of death among young black males. The murder rate in Chicago increased eighty percent in the years between 1980 and 1990. In the nation's capital, Washington, D.C., the leading cause of death in male children under the age of fourteen was homicide (Lewis, 1990). The largest rise in violent crime has been in young people under the age of eighteen. Between 1980 and 1989, more than 11,000 homicides were committed by high school aged youth. Seventy-five percent of all boys and ten percent of all girls in the Chicago area schools have witnessed the shooting, stabbing, robbing or killing of another person. Approximately 26.4 violent acts per hour were viewed by children on television (Van Acker, 1993).

There has been a substantial increase in the violence victimization rates for adolescents, particularly for 12-15 year olds. There has been a relatively small increase (8-10%) in the proportion of adolescents involved in some type of serious violent offending. There has been a dramatic increase in adolescent
homicide rates, beginning in 1988. Today's violent acts are more lethal; a larger proportion of these acts result in serious injury or death (Elliott, 1995, p. 2).

Violence and aggression are becoming pressing issues in the schools (Noguera, 1995). Neither teachers nor students have been taught to resolve conflicts in a productive way. Violence is often learned, and indeed sanctioned, at home but acted on at school where it is not acceptable. Weak family bonding, lack of monitoring and supervision by parents, and violence at home were cited as initial causes of violence (Elliott, 1995). The reorganization of the typical family structure and the failure of family, school and community to control deviant behaviors, as well as the need for parents to simply survive economically, left large numbers of children without supervision (Inciardi, Horowitz & Pottieger, 1983; Krawietz, Geer, Jones, Kouki, Lowenberg, Madden, & Roache, 1994). Gang members are often taught to expect to fail both at home and at school. They are pleased at the recognition and the feeling of belonging brought to them by gang membership.

Schools can be very negative places, with adults telling students "Don't" and asking "Why" to all manner of infractions of the rules (Arthur, 1989). Noguera (1995) even suggested that the first school buildings were modeled after asylums and achieved success through "the imposition of a set of rules and regulations that were rigidly enforced" (p. 194). Though students have changed, some teachers remained the same, "with most still relying on methods of control that had proven successful in the past" (Noguera, 1995, p. 196).
While gang membership and activity were once turf-related, busing for the purpose of integration has caused rival gang members to be in the same schools. Schools in Cleveland and Columbus, for example, were not prepared for the security implications of having rival gang members together, and the resulting gang activity in the schools. Additionally, gang recruitment now often crosses turf lines and members of one student body may be recruited as members of gangs traditionally located on the other side of town (Huff, 1989).

With the problems facing students, teachers, and administrators, it is important to discover what is effective in preventing or reducing gang-related behavior and violence on campuses. This study examined a mid-sized school district in the north central Texas area which has twelve traditional high schools and the feeder schools which make up their pyramids in the district. There are also four alternative high schools: one for pregnant and parenting girls, one for students who have not been successful enough in the eighth grade to be promoted to high school, another which meets in the evenings and serves students who have not shown success in traditional day programs, and one for those students who have been removed from traditional high schools for disciplinary reasons. Contracts are made with other facilities when the alternative school for discipline becomes overcrowded.

Research was conducted in this school district that studied the responses of selected high school principals to gang-related activity and violence. The perceptions of other administrators, faculty, staff members and students were gathered which reflected
the success, or lack of success, of each principal's strategies. An analysis of the responses was made, from which conclusions were reached, to assist high school administrators to respond effectively to increasing gang activity and violence. The results of the study will be made available for use in staff development and leadership training for current and aspiring administrators.

Limitations

This study was limited by the small number of high school administrators studied. Because most schools have experienced some level of gang-related activity and violence, it was important that the study be replicable in other school districts. By using a small number of schools, the limitations may be lessened when used by small districts with few schools. Larger districts will also be able to replicate the study, or use it in staff development for administrators, again modifying the limitation caused by small numbers of participants.

This study was also limited by the previous experience of the researcher in dealing with problems of gang-related activity and violence on a high school campus. Due to that experience, the researcher expected to have some preconceived notions of the responses of high school administrators to gang-related activity and violence on school campuses. The methodology, involving interviewing various respondents, including principals, assistant principals, teachers and other staff members and students, was designed to minimize the preconceptions of the researcher. The use of triangulation, a process which includes not only interviews, but also document analysis and field notes, was intended
to make the research more easily replicable, as well as more sound, thus reducing limitations.

**Delimitations**

Due to the expected volume of materials gathered in working with each high school principal and staff involved in the study, the number of participant schools was limited. Each principal, members of the staff, and students were interviewed, each campus was observed, and policies, procedures and methodologies were studied. Only those principals whose high schools have been identified as having specific numbers of central hearings were included in the research. These hearings are held at the request of each school to remove students who have substantially disrupted the school setting, who have engaged in acts of violence at school, or who have committed a felony on or off campus.

**Organization of the Study**

This study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter includes the background of the study, a discussion of the problem and the purpose of the study. The research questions, the significance of the study, and the limitations and delimitations of the study are included in this chapter.

The second chapter includes a review of the literature pertinent to the problem. Included in this chapter is a review of the characteristics of gangs and gang members, some community responses to gangs, followed by a discussion of the response of schools to gang activity and violence.

In the third chapter, the research design is discussed. A discussion of qualitative
research, triangulation, and the interview process is included in this chapter. The procedure used for selecting and interviewing respondents is also included.

The fourth chapter examines the findings of the study, and the fifth chapter presents conclusions, implications, and recommendations for future study.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The literature review revealed that most of the existing work is commentary, is based on anecdotal rather than on empirical data, and is somewhat prescriptive in nature. Much of the work has been done by professionals in the fields of sociology, law enforcement and criminal justice rather than in education. The most significant studies in education are those of Lal (1991) and Melita (1990), both of whom studied gangs in schools. The most significant studies in other areas are those of Spergel (1995) and Spergel & Curry (1993).

Three areas became evident in the review of the literature: the characteristics of gangs and gang members, the response of communities to gangs, and the response of schools to gang-related activity and violence. It was found that gang membership is not a new phenomenon. Not only has it been seen throughout history, but it is also widespread throughout the world. Gang culture may be caused by many factors, especially poverty, which are discussed in the characteristics section of this chapter. Both sociologists and criminologists have offered their reasons that gangs are attractive to youth. Some community intervention strategies are also noted.

Much of the violence in school is attributed to those who belong to gangs or who
are being considered for membership by gangs. Because of the relationship between violence in schools and gang membership, the review of the literature includes the response of schools and school personnel to gang-related activity and violence. The literature reveals that some responses are more effective than others in dealing with gang-related activity and violence on campus.

**Characteristics of Gangs and Gang Members**

Self fulfillment, and the seeking of something more significant than oneself is a natural quest for all humankind. Youths with high levels of self-esteem and a good self-concept are not likely to become gang members (Knox, 1991). "Gang life is a natural mechanism for the fulfillment of this human need. Particularly when avenues to more legitimate sources of fulfillment are either blocked or found wanting" (Knox, 1991, p. 141).

Adolescents value their peers more than they value any other group. The youth who are loners are actually the unusual ones. Some youth go to dances together, some go to parties together and some shop together. Others join groups known as gangs. Membership in gangs is simply a more extreme example of "groupness" and "belonging to something" (Huff, 1992, p. 21) than other group behaviors.

What separates the gang from other youth groups is the gang's involvement in illegal activities and a more deliberate quality to those illegal activities, a greater tendency to claim turf, and better leadership. If it were not for these characteristics, gangs would look a lot like Boy Scouts, athletic teams, or other youth groups (Huff, 1992). "... youth
gangs per se are not the problem; rather, they represent an extreme adolescent subculture, and a symptom of more fundamental, underlying social and economic problems in our society—problems that have been largely ignored, or even exacerbated, by our social policy (or its lack)" (Huff, 1992, p. 20).

Social institutions which work well tend to produce persons who are well-adjusted, positive, well-educated, economically productive and in the social mainstream (Knox, 1991). Social institutions which do not work well tend to produce persons who are self-destructive or addicted to drugs or alcohol, who engage in criminal activities, or are active in gangs (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996; Knox, 1991; Shelden, Tracy, & Brown, 1997).

Those formal social institutions generally regarded as conventional are the family, educational institutions, the government, and religious institutions. When formal institutions do not work as they should, informal institutions such as gangs, organized crime, political extremist groups and cults become attractive to youths (Decker et al., 1996; Knox, 1991). The foundation of gang life depends on three functions which must all be present (Knox, 1991). Those three are as follows: the erosion of social institutions so that they do not provide social control or socialization; complete or relative deprivation, symbolic or perceived, and the lack of hope because of that deprivation; and the lack of or an underdeveloped condition of human capital—you are not important, and "there is no room for you in a productive capacity in America" (Knox, 1991, p. 142). If only one of these factors is abnormal, there is a chance that a child will gravitate toward gang life. If
however, all three are present, gang membership is almost guaranteed (Knox, 1991).

The gang competes with more traditional institutions for the attention of young people (Vigil, 1988). Once in a gang, the young person is shaped, taught what to think of himself and others, and how to look and to react under various circumstances. These are the same kinds of activities a family uses to shape children. Instead of the family providing role clarification, it is provided by the gang; the personal needs of the child become secondary, indeed merged with, those of the gang. The "degree of gang involvement can usually be gauged by how severe and deep-rooted the effects of racial and cultural discrimination and poverty have been on an individual, or how family and school authorities have failed to influence and guide" (Vigil, 1988, p. 422). Early instability in ego formation and lack of clarification of sex and age roles cause gang activity to become important to youth who do not have those needs met by traditional institutions.

Gang members are often raised in poorer homes, with mother-centered families, more siblings, and unstable economic conditions (Covey, et al., 1997; Decker et al., 1996; Huff, 1992; Huff, 1993; Shelden et al., 1997; Spergel, 1995; Spergel et al., 1993; Vigil, 1988; Vigil & Yun, 1996; ). There are some female gangs and gang members, as well as some female groupies of male gangs, but the majority are male, and the nature of the home life of the male gang member is an important one.

Most gang members are from households where the head is a female and there is no male role model present in the home, or indeed, in any facet of their lives. The need for
male bonding is met by membership in the gang, though it should have been met by legitimate, positive, prosocial male role models. This lack of male role models can change the socialization of children, and make it easier for them to become reliant on street role models.

Gangs meet the legitimate needs of their members. For example, protection and male bonding are provided by the gang. But the gang also grieves with the member, especially when a fellow gang member or an intimate dies or is killed. The gang can serve as "a surrogate family for those adolescents whose own families are perceived as not meeting their needs for belonging, nurturance, and acceptance" (Huff, 1992, p. 22). The need of gang leaders to be seen as men may have a direct relationship to feelings of inadequacy in their home situation. Gang members are drawn into more and more gang activity, gaining prestige and status within the gang, even if they have little prestige in those activities outside the gang (Cohen, 1955; Decker et al., 1996; Huff, 1992; Huff, 1993; Huff, 1996; Knox, 1991; Yablonsky, 1962).

Poverty sometimes creates socially disabled youth who are comfortable only with others such as themselves—gang members (Arthur, 1989; Huff, 1989; Ianni & Reuss-Ianni, 1980; Inciardi et al., 1983; Lopez & Mirande, 1990; Van Acker, 1993; Vigil, 1988). Gang members feel that legitimate avenues to success are not open to them, and most do not see the value of an education. They do not see how many of the adults in their lives have been able to benefit from education. They do not see their elders getting better jobs or making progress in current jobs. What they do see, and want, however, is often
characterized by illegitimate material success in the form of $150 sneakers, nice clothes and fancy, expensive cars. The lack of income to buy advertised goods and services may lead youth into the life of crime available through street crime, gangs, and drug sales (Huff, 1989; Huff, 1992).

The underclass created by poverty is unorganized politically and socially, and is powerless to seek changes in the situation in which it exists. The formal organizations which should socialize children often fail for this underclass and informal organizations such as gangs tend to take their places (Knox, 1991; Shelden et al., 1997; Spergel et al., 1993). The prison population is directly related to this underclass population (Knox, 1991). Perhaps it follows that the same is true for juvenile criminals, as many have more contact with the criminal justice system than with any other social institution.

Many gang members have records of discipline referrals in school, have been in juvenile and adult jails, and view violence as an ever-present part of their lives. Gang members expect to go to prison, and youth facilities tend to emphasize that fact (Moore, 1978). It is interesting to note that gang affiliation is one of the criteria considered when placing gang members in California prisons (Noguera, 1995). Of the twenty-six members in one study (Krisberg, 1975), only two had high school educations. Most had very poor performance and skill in reading, math, and writing, with math being the lowest. Most had records of disciplinary referrals throughout their school careers. Twenty had been in juvenile facilities, and five had already been in adult prison. Gang leaders view violence as an ever present part of their lives. They observe it, have been victimized by it, and have
used it. Descriptions of violent death were delivered to Krisberg with coolness, chilling matter-of-factness, and clinical detail.

Four social and demographic characteristics tend to generate gang membership: immigration, urbanization, ethnicity, and poverty (Decker et al., 1996). White immigrants to America in the early part of the twentieth century knew that they had the opportunity to become constructive and successful employees and members of society. They had their common religion, their sense of pride in family, and some social connections to assist them in their move up the ladder of success. Many minority immigrants did not have those expectations (Conant, 1961).

Most gang members now live in areas of high crime, with high levels of violence, poverty, and racial segregation (Shelden et al., 1997). There are changes in urban life conditions, with low employment and single parent homes being the norm (Decker et al., 1996; Spergel et al., 1993). Migration patterns have changed population composition, and urban children often exhibit psychological problems such as the lack of self-esteem and serious pathologies, as well as fear and self-protective tendencies (Spergel et al., 1993). Manufacturers, retailers and service institutions have moved out of the neighborhoods where gang members live. Low level entry jobs have moved with them, and bus service often does not go to areas in the suburbs where employers have relocated.

Gang members lack the skills in employment networking often found in their counterparts who live in areas not high in crime and poverty (Decker et al., 1996). Unskilled laborers were once easily employed, but due to the increase in the use of
technology, that is no longer the case. Uneducated and undereducated youth simply
cannot fit into positions which require advanced technological training. Youth were once
able to enter the military without a high school education, but even that avenue has been
closed due to increased entrance requirements.

Educational attainment is important in keeping children out of gangs. The lack of
education leads to crime, and especially to recidivism (Knox, 1991). Education is
important in obtaining and keeping a good job. The offender population has a significant
lag in educational attainment as compared to the non-offender population (Knox, 1991).
Knox asks, "how are these under-educated persons going to fit into the American economy
in a productive, fulfilling, and integrative capacity?" (p. 70)

Poor youth are as oriented to middle class expectations of economic success as are
middle class youth, but their position in the social arena often makes it difficult for them
to achieve their goals. Inner city children often have families who are unable to meet their
obligations to socialize their children due to "high levels of social responsibility and the
low levels of functional authority" (Knox, 1991, p. 120). Gangs are not the problem;
rather they are a symptom of a society that has failed for some children (Huff, 1992). The
gap between the teenaged community and the constructive forces in the adult community
must be bridged in order to work effectively with teenaged crime and gang membership

Gang members usually know the difference between right and wrong, but either do
not care, enjoy flaunting their behavior, or are not willing to wait on the proceeds of
positive, legal activities (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960). The lack of adequate rites of passage offered children by society may cause adolescents to provide them for themselves. Gangs provide these rites of passage, symbols and rituals which are ignored or are otherwise not provided by societal institutions (Spergel, 1995; Vigil, 1988). Such rites of passage include initiation rituals which range from taking a beating to burglarizing homes, robbing or mugging others, or even drive-by shootings. But if being initiated into (being jumped in) a gang is a difficult process, leaving the gang (being jumped out) is even more difficult. Most gang members report that the beating taken to get out of the gang is much worse than the one taken to get in. One gang member reported that he moved rather than leave the gang because he was told he would have to kill his mother to get out (Decker et al., 1991)

Red and blue are colors which have become symbols of street gangs, particularly the Bloods and the Crips. They can have lethal consequences. Crips developed first, and were made up largely of African-American and Hispanic youth. The Bloods developed as a response to the Crips, but both gangs have various sets within the larger gang. They have traditional attire: red for Bloods and blue for Crips, with rags (bandannas), hats or shoelaces often being the appropriate color. Many gang members are killed or attacked just because of their attire. Many innocent bystanders and youths who are not gang members are also attacked or killed because they were wearing the wrong color (Herrera, 1994). Expensive shoes, beepers, jewelry, fast cars and fashionable clothing also distinguish some gang members (Huff, 1993).
Persons of color have historically experienced disadvantages, and have turned to gangs, crime and violence (Huff, 1992). Gang members are often poor, inner city African-American and Hispanic youths, though some poor white and recent Asian immigrant youths are also gang members. Gangs are not exclusive to any community, are found in all types and sizes of communities, and are diverse ethnically. "While Chicano gangs may have greater visibility, there are also Black, Southeast Asian, and even Anglo gangs" (Lopez et al., 1990, p. 126-7).

Gangs have taken on a different character during the twentieth century than in previous years (Burnett & Walz, 1994). While large urban areas have begun to stabilize their gang problems, edge cities on the outskirts of large urban areas and suburbs are increasing in importance in crime problems in schools and communities. Gangs differ in their numbers, age ranges, and characteristics. For example, black gangs tend to stay generally in their own communities. They fly colors and place graffiti on their territory. Asian gangs, however, may travel over long distances to conduct their activities, and are less likely to fly their colors. Hispanic gangs place graffiti in much larger quantities, and fly colors regularly.

The gang answers the questions for those young Hispanics who have little attachment to home and school. Gang membership does not happen overnight. Children become peripheral and spend a long time learning the culture of the gang. Many of their male relatives are in a gang. They are often victims of violence, and sometimes drop out of school as early as third or fourth grade. The language barrier sometimes prevents them
from ever adapting to school. They seek out others who have similar experiences and find them in a gang (Spergel, 1995).

Whites in gangs have historically been racist as opposed to criminal (Knox, 1991). White gangs are becoming more prevalent, and more and more violent and racist. The White Aryan Resistance, the Northern Hammerskins, and the North (East, West and South)side White Pride gangs are hate gangs in Wisconsin which attract white youth (Mulhern et al., 1994). Whites are often called skinheads, and tend to prefer violence. They often attack gays, lesbians, immigrants, and members of groups or individuals seen as weak (Covey et al., 1997). A recent attack in eastern Texas on a disabled African-American man by youth who have been identified as belonging to white supremacy gangs in prison substantiates this view ("3 Charged," 1998). Skinheads use clothing to express their views: shaved heads, tattoos, heavy boots such as Doc Martens, heavy jeans, leather clothing, and certain colors. Most reject common middle class values such as material wealth and status, or feel they have been excluded from being able to achieve those values (Covey et al., 1997). Though membership in white gangs may be widespread, membership in specific areas is small enough that territory or turf has not been claimed.

Asian gangs are less street oriented than other gangs, and use violence as a means to an end. They generally victimize other Asians in their own communities, and are largely disconnected from the rest of society. They tend to have trouble in school, and many are recent immigrants. They often ally themselves with organized crime, with profit as their main objective. They prey on those who are afraid of, or do not understand how
to use, traditional institutions such as band and who keep their money and valuables at home (Covey et al., 1997).

Gangs are now found in urban, suburban, and rural communities (Burnett et al., 1994; Donahue, 1991; Lopez et al., 1990; Nielsen, 1992). Families move out of the large urban areas to "escape societal ills associated with urban living" and are "distract to learn that youth gangs and drugs are omnipresent" (Lopez et al., 1990, p. 125). Public policy is hampered by the notion that gangs only occur in minority youth in the inner city.

Economically oriented crime is more predominant in areas where adult crime already exists. Boys can be admitted easily to those organizations which are already in place. These organizations emphasize toughness, courage, and other issues giving gang members status. It is in these economically depressed areas where children are taught "local values and traditions" (Inciardi et al., 1983, p. 15) which may differ from middle class values school personnel teach and expect students to follow at school. When children do not meet the expectations set forth by school rules, they are often labeled as criminals and may attempt to live up to those expectations through their behavior (Inciardi et al., 1983).

Historically, gang membership is not a new phenomenon. Gangs were reported as early as the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in England, during the middle ages in France, and during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Germany. Gangs were reported as early as colonial times in the United States, but were first seen in large
numbers during the nineteenth century (Shelden et al., 1997). Gangs are found in other
countries as well, with England, Scotland, Germany, Italy, Russia, Bosnia, Albania,
Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, Mexico, El Salvador, Brazil, Peru, Taiwan, South Korea,
Japan, Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand, China and New Guinea all reporting
problems with gang membership (Spergel, 1995).

A classic study on gangs (Thrasher, 1927) states that "gangs represent the
spontaneous effort of boys to create a society for themselves where none adequate to
their needs exists" (p. 37). The gang was described in this early study as being like the
feudal and medieval baron whose followers became roving, lawless bands prowling over a
large territory and victimizing the community. Thrasher's gang member often began as a
truant, becoming a minor delinquent, a hoodlum, a reckless young sport or daredevil, an
occasional criminal, and finally a seasoned gangster or professional criminal. The child in
the gang learned personal habits which were socially unacceptable, the techniques of
crime, and the philosophy of life of the organization which caused further delinquency of
more serious types. Thrasher recommended the redirection of children into productive
legal activities which allow them to learn what they are capable of as member of
organizations other than gangs. It is interesting to note that, with the exception of the
level of violence in gangs today, not much has changed.

Gangs, historically, were violent only episodically, affecting mostly their own
gang members and families (Klein, 1991). The new gang, however, includes youths who
are involved in more violent and sophisticated crimes (Huff, 1993). "Today's gangs are
better organized, remain active for longer periods, and are much more mobile; they also have access to sophisticated weaponry" (Stephens, 1993, p. 219). Klein, in his introduction to Knox's (1991) textbook on gangs, states:

"The United States is alone in its development of the urban street gang. Our gangs are like no others in the world... more prevalent, permanent in their communities, larger and more complex, and more criminally involved by far... it is a permanent by-product of our inner city enclaves and many of their suburban surroundings. Its members are ruining their own lives, and endangering some others. Our societal response is to rant and rave about this, but not to undertake serious efforts to understand and change the situation." (Klein, 1991, pp. ii-iii)

Outside the gang, the gang member becomes weaker, while inside the gang he becomes more and more dependent on members, but feels stronger and stronger as a result. Gang members are drawn into increasing levels of gang activity, gaining prestige and status within the gang, even if they have few activities outside the gang (Cohen, 1955; Decker et al., 1996; Huff, 1992; Huff, 1993; Knox, 1991; Yablonsky, 1962).

Language has much to do with the problem of gangs. An example is the sensationalized words "gangbanger" and "gangster" (Knox, 1994, p. 3). Gangs may be classified from level zero to level four. A level zero gang is one which is really more like a play group. A level one gang is the first level of the real "gang," while a level four gang is organized crime. The level three gang is what is seen in such gangs as the Bloods and the
Crips, and has many members, both youths and adults (Knox, 1994). Melita (1990) noted five levels of gang participation: the hard-core gang members—those who participate in aggressive, assaultive acts and encourage others to do so; affiliates or associates—those who associate with the gang for recognition and emotional fulfillment; gang hoppers—those who move in and out of gangs on the basis of what is going on in the gang at any given time and their interest in it; cliques—smaller subgroups of gangs determined by geographical area or age; and wannabes—those who hang around with gang members and will probably will be assimilated into the gang when they are older.

Gangs are a national problem, and are seen in all fifty states (Knox, 1991; Knox, 1994; Shelden et al., 1997), but there is no national organization dealing with the problem. In 1994, the Federal Bureau of Investigation reported approximately 400,000 gang members in the United States. Knox (1994) lists 105 known gangs in the county in which the school district being studied is located. In 1998 there are over 300 (J. M. Wood, personal communication, January, 1998) in the city alone (See Appendix A for a listing as of June, 1998). In Texas alone, Knox (1991, p. 416) lists the Banditos, Crips, Latin Kings, Bloods, Bikers, KKK, Death Row Posse, NWA, Hoods, Horsemen, Los Casados, and Skinheads. The school district being studied is in a city listed as having an "emerging gang problem" (Spergel et al., 1993, p. 359). Spergel's study was conducted in forty-five cities in the United States with 254 criminal justice and community-based agencies responding. The study covered every agency which was engaged in an organized response to gang crime problems. This was an intensive, nationwide study of gangs and the
interventions used by various agencies. One of the agencies listed by Spergel as providing intervention is being used in this study to provide gang members as interviewees (H. Rodgers, personal communication, January, 1998).

Shelden et al. (1997) finds a parallel in the literature between gangs and the concept of a war zone or combat mentality. Gang members may even exhibit some symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (Shelden et al., 1997; Spergel, 1995). They join the gang for protection. They praise their fellow gang members for their willingness to engage in violence (Spergel, 1995). In a search conducted during 1995, (Shelden et al., 1997) found a range of from thirty-six articles in newspapers and magazines in 1983 to 1,313 in 1994. Youth gangs now exist in large, small, and mid-size towns, and are entrenched in most urban areas. In years past, youth who joined gangs later became gainfully employed, and settled down with families. Most gang members now have little if any hope for getting or keeping a good job. Many remain in the gang well into their twenties.

Recently, a flurry of research has come from both academic and non-academic settings to study the gang problem. Gangs generally are identified as being groups of youth who have a common purpose (crime, turf, and protection), a set of identifying characteristics (name, colors, signs, dress, and language), and who elicit negative responses from the community (Shelden et al., 1997). Much gang violence is not reported at all. Gang-related activity and crimes are difficult to define because most are reported as crimes, but not as gang crimes. The Chicago Police Department has defined gang activity
to include: representing (saying the actor is a gang member, showing colors, or flashing signs); retaliation; street fighting; vice (narcotics, liquor, gambling, or prostitution); recruitment; turf violations (defacing territory with graffiti or hanging out in a rival gang hangout); and other crimes (extortion or initiation) (Shelden et al., 1997, p. 18).

About ten to fifteen percent of all youth self report that they are in a gang. The youth surveyed were generally in middle and high schools. In Chicago, Spergel (1995) found that five percent of all elementary school students self reported being in a gang, ten percent of all high school students self reported being in a gang, twenty percent of all special education students self reported being in a gang, and thirty-five percent of those 16-19 years old who had dropped out of school self reported being in a gang.

Reasons to join a gang are many and varied. Youth want material wealth, recreation, refuge, and protection. By joining a gang they can express resistance to adult influence and commitment to community. Recruiting tactics by gangs include the feeling of fraternity—it is the "in" thing to do, obligation to a community or family, and coercion. Most who join a gang stay on past their youth, though some move on to other affiliations. Some become part of organized crime, some go to prison or die, but some are able to leave the gang. Some of the values recognized by the gang are honor, respect, pride, reputation, recognition, and self-esteem. The gang culture includes symbols, values and traditions of the gang, but the most critical is the set of values of the gang: violence, loyalty, and autonomy from outside authority. The loyalty of gang members to the gang causes traditional social institutions to be unable to serve gang members effectively. The
lack of relationships and social capital keeps gang members from integrating into the American mainstream. Social capital includes obligations and expectations, the exchange of information between parties, and norms accompanied by sanctions. (Decker et al., 1996)

Gangs have codes of honor and conduct, and are willing to discipline their own members. Those who do not have the attributes encouraged by the gang, or who see disadvantages in joining, tend to avoid gang membership altogether (Spergel, 1995).

The Response of Communities to Gangs

Community reactions to gangs and their violence tempers the perceived presence of gangs. If they are perceived as presenting problems, they are gangs; if they do not seem to present problems, they are groups. Communities deny the existence of gangs, and thereby facilitate gang membership. Communities are afraid that to acknowledge gang problems will mean that business and industry will locate elsewhere, and that local governments will appear to have lost control of the area.

Evidence of gang membership, at least to parents, may be anything unusual: earrings, colored shoelaces, hand signs, clothing brands or colors, or demeanor. Certainty, however, tends to occur when children are arrested, are found carrying weapons, exhibit tattoos, or begin carrying large amounts of money, the source of which parents do not understand (Knox, 1991).

Gangs are different in every neighborhood. Some gangs have crossed into almost all states, and are a greater threat in terms of crime than those which are more loosely organized. Most training about gangs does not include more than cursory awareness,
which does not assist in developing and implementing policy (Knox, 1991). The presence of neighborhood crusades to "run the drug dealers and gangs out of our neighborhoods" tends to, at the very least, run the gangs underground where there is no opportunity for pride in showing colors, graffiti, and membership (Knox, 1991). When gang activity in a community becomes strong, the strongest members in the community often leave. Those who are left behind are "least able to contribute in an economic sense" (Knox, 1991, p. 257). Members of inner city communities become isolated from "mainstream America" (p. 258). Linkages with the larger society must be rebuilt and maintained: health care, education, employment opportunities, family counseling, community-based corrections, positive relationships with government and its services, and even churches (Knox, 1991).

Knox (1991) suggests that one way to prevent or reduce gang activity is to infiltrate the gang from within. He suggests building, or changing the focus of, community centers. Anti-gang activities might go on there in which the leaders of the gang are undermined and new leadership is established. Sting operations might be instituted in which leaders are called to collect on winnings of some kind, such as a lottery. He suggests arresting leaders, getting them out of the community, thus allowing for new leadership which is less gang oriented. He recognizes, however, that it would be "cheaper to send a gang leader on a long ocean cruise than to send them to prison." (p. 319) He even suggests than imprisonment might be a reunion of gang members rather than punishment to leaders who are sent to prison.

Ten different groups must be involved in responding to gangs: the government,
businesses and employers, educational institutions, community groups and associations, religious institutions, health care institutions, the family, the social service industry, unions and volunteer associations, and the military (Knox, 1991). Knox even suggests that gangs have better firearms than the police, with larger numbers of members than sworn officers. He advocates using the military as a training organization for integration of gang members into society.

If informal social controls are stronger, gang membership will be weaker. Beefing up local community social infrastructure is essential. Increasing legitimate opportunities in education, training and employment are necessary to reduce the "you are not important" (Knox, 1991) attitude of youth who join gangs. The attractiveness of criminal behaviors must be decreased by offering better work opportunities in the legitimate work world, and by offering better role models. Association with legitimate organizations must be made more attractive, and association with illegitimate and illegal organizations more unattractive. Self-esteem must be raised, and youth must be welcomed into society rather than into gangs. We must ease the transition from childhood into adulthood, and make more prestigious roles available for youth. We must give the poor and minorities a social structure to allow for their "productive involvement" and develop their human capital. (Knox, 1991, p. 327-328).

The nation has failed to solve its gang problems because of failure to develop a comprehensive gang-control strategy, failure to take a national perspective, failure to insist on a close linkage between theoretical models and program design, failure to evaluate
programs rigorously, failure to provide community resources in keeping with the severity of the gang problem, failure to establish a central clearinghouse with responsibility for gang prevention and control, and failure to recognize the implications of the social context of gang life. (Huff, 1992). That lack of coordination is one of the important reasons for the current research. Most gang researchers come from radically different backgrounds than do gang members. (Covey et al., 1997). That is certainly true of this researcher. But research itself is seen as a worthwhile intervention (Spergel et al., 1993).

At the time they are most vulnerable to gang membership, youths are most dependent on adults. Huff suggests that those that are not in school, in the military, gainfully employed, or severely handicapped should serve at least one year in a national service program. They should be trained to do some meaningful work during this year, and offered a tax incentive during the first year after they complete the program. He also suggests mandatory Head Start programs for all children. (Huff, 1992).

Most services for children and youth are not coordinated. Children are removed from homes which are abusive and neglectful, but are not always counseled or offered preventative family support or mental health services. Children labeled as delinquent are tracked toward correctional institutions rather than modifying their behaviors through counseling for family problems (Soler, 1992).

Most gang members say the best way to stop youth from joining a gang is to talk to them about the dangers of gang membership. They also suggest that parents keep a better eye on their children and discipline them more effectively. The next suggestion was
to offer more activities for children, including sports as well as jobs (Decker et al., 1996).

"Violence is so integral a part of gang culture that gang members' recommendations about ending gangs include elements of violence... Whole lot of machine guns. Kill us all. We just going to multiply anyway cause the Pee Wees gonna take over... Kill us all at once. Put them in one place and blow them up" (Decker et al., 1996, p. 268).

**The Response of Schools to Gang Activity and Violence**

Silberman (1970), in his classic study of schools, *Crisis in the Classroom*, states that there are at least four major characteristics of schools which tend to contribute to the lack of control on campus: compulsory school attendance laws, the long period of time each day attendance is required; the fact that school is a collective experience, not an individual one; and the fact that school is evaluative--everything a child does is graded, criticized or evaluated. Silberman suggests that schools can be oppressive to students, that they function "on the clock," with students moving at the sound of a bell whether or not they are through with an activity, and do not teach students to think, to reason, and to apply ideas. Students learn how to cope with school, even if that means cheating or resorting to other antisocial behaviors. They learn how to suppress their feelings and emotions. They withdraw if they do not get along, and learn that docility and conformity are the strategies which help them do well in school. Girls are often more successful in school than boys. School is not training and preparation for life, but an aspect of life itself for children.

Schools can try to alleviate problems with student behaviors by making school
interesting and informative. In an article regarding excellence for middle school grades, Lewis (1990) states that many middle grade children are bored. He quotes one Boston seventh grader as saying, "We just sit there and do a whole bunch of workbook pages. It's not hard, just boring. The teacher doesn't care. As long as we're quiet, he doesn't care if we do good. If he doesn't care, why should we?" (p. 38)

Gang activity at school is nothing short of community activity that spills onto the campus (Covey et al., 1997; Knox, 1991; Kudluboy et al., 1993; Lal, 1991; Melita, 1990; Spergel, 1995; Spergel et al., 1993; Trump, 1993), and gangs are as diverse as the communities they represent. Schools are generally not prepared to deal with the disruption and violence caused by gangs on campus. Even when they are prepared, the reaction to gangs and violence on campus is as diverse as the campuses. What is successful on one campus may or may not be successful on another. Gang activity that is not dealt with early may lead to further entrenchment of that gang activity not only in the community, but also in the schools.

School gang problems usually involve younger gang members. But schools and communities are so intertwined that it is difficult to separate school incidents from community incidents. Gang members are typically behind in their studies, or may drop out of school altogether. In various studies, from thirty to eighty percent of all gang members either drop out or are removed from school. Many gang members find school to be alien to their needs and seek to get out as quickly as possible. They feel that formal education has little to offer to them, though they do not encourage others to feel the same
way. Some come back to school later, and get either a diploma or a GED, but early school attendance, achievement, student satisfaction and educational climate are relatively predictive of later criminal involvement. Schools and teachers should try to find ways to keep gang members from feeling alienated and isolated and perhaps they will stay in school longer and be more successful (Spergel, 1995).

Schools often take the view that a tougher stance on juvenile crime is the way to keep violence and gangs out of the schools (Mulhern et al., 1994). This kind of response does not take into consideration the causes of that violence, namely social conditions such as lack of sufficient income or housing safety in the neighborhoods from which the children come (Decker et al., 1996; Huff, 1993; Knox, 1991; Kudluboy et al., 1993; Spergel, et al., 1993; Vigil, 1988).

Pillen and Hoewing-Roberson (1992) developed the "Gang Membership Inventory" which resulted in findings not altogether surprising. Seventh and eighth graders are more likely than fifth graders to participate in gang activity, and boys are more likely than girls to be involved. Students with higher grades are less gang involved than those with lower grades, and those who reported using drugs and alcohol are more likely than non-users to be involved. Youth with high or moderate acting out behaviors score higher on the Inventory (indicating gang membership) than do those who describe themselves as low in acting out behaviors. Very shy and very outgoing youth are more likely to be involved in gang activity than those who are moderately shy. Those who feel they can be themselves around gang members are more likely to be gang involved than those who feel
they can be themselves more easily around family members.

Potential warning signs of gang membership may be: poor progress and/or achievement in school, truancy, lack of outside interests and freetime consuming activity, frequent negative contact with law enforcement, graffiti, problems at home, residence in a neighborhood where gangs exist, friendship with other gang members, tattoos, and dressing in traditional gang attire (Melita, 1990). The grapevine at school is a relatively good source of who is and is not a gang member (Knox, 1991). Children who are in a gang are more likely to report on the activities of their friends—gang membership, past arrests, prison records, or hustling to make a living (Knox, 1991).

Most gang training for school personnel includes only an awareness program during which faculty and staff may receive current information regarding colors, hand signs, and graffiti. The development and implementation of policy, however, is not included in this training for school personnel. Teachers and other staff may not be taught how to talk one-on-one with individual gang members in order to make a difference in their lives (Knox, 1991).

Schools must be included, along with other community agencies, in the fight against gang membership and activity. Knox (1991) advocates using the Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC) as an alternative for training gang members in acceptable group activity while they are still enrolled in school. JROTC would take the place of the military, which was once used as an alternative for those who could not, or would not, complete their education. That military alternative no longer exists, as a high
school education is required for enlistment. If such formal and informal social controls are stronger, Knox proposes, gang membership will be weaker.

Some community members advocate returning to the old adage of "Spare the rod, spoil the child." Former gang members and community activists write:

When the discipline was cut out, the children went out of control. When we were in school, the teachers could swat you, and that was one of the best things we had going, because that child realized that if he messed up, the teacher would swat him. Then they would call home and he'd get another whipping when he got home. They took that power from the school, and they're trying to take that power away from the parent too. . . . Then we also have to teach the adults how to respect the children. A lot of adults don't know how to respect the children, or even communicate with them. We have to first educate a lot of parents so they can help educate their children, because a lot of the parents aren't educated enough to be able to give their children that extra boost. The child's homework may be over the parent's head, the parent may not even know what to do. So some parents need to get back into schooling so they can learn and be right there to help their children (Jah & Shah'Keya, 1995, p. 269).

Most schools and school districts, however, including the one being studied, do not advocate the use of corporal punishment.

The gang, through its power over members, tends to lessen the effects of traditional socializing institutions such as the schools. Decker et al. (1996) reports that of
ninety-nine subjects in a study of gang members, sixteen were employed, while thirty-nine were still in school. Thirty-four of those were under the age of compulsory school attendance, and thus were obligated to be in school. Only eighteen had successfully completed high school and earned a diploma. Eighty percent had been arrested one or more times.

When asked what they did in school, members of Decker's study replied:

We skip classes, roam the halls. Look for girls. We just hung out and skipped most of the time. We walked around, go in the bathroom and smoke weed, get high and everything, drink a beer or something. We stuck together. Too busy going after girls. Chill out, do a little Crab shooting, watching each other's back. Yeah, we get high and shit, get drunk, gamble in the bathroom and shit (Decker et al., 1996, p. 199).

Participation in extracurricular activities was minimal. Of the ninety-nine subjects, only thirty-nine were in school, and only five participated in sports or other programs. Before joining the gang, fifty-five reported that they had participated in extracurricular activities. About forty-four percent of the study group reported that they were recruited at school. Many of the group reported that the adults in their school knew they were in a gang. Most said that the adults, however, did not make a big deal out of gang membership, and only told them not to do it at school. Most reported that antigang intervention was minimal and did not have much of an impact on the study group (Decker et al., 1996).

Most reported that gang-related violence occurred in their school. That violence
ranged from fights to weapons and near-lethal violence (Decker et al., 1996). The presence of gangs tended to escalate the number of incidents and the level of seriousness of those that did occur. Many of the fights and other violent acts began as disputes between individuals and escalated to disputes between gangs. Eighty-three of ninety-nine study group members said that weapons were brought to their schools. Guns and other weapons, though brought to school often, were usually used on the streets instead. Many of the study group members expected to go to prison (Decker et al., 1996).

Five approaches to gangs and violence were documented on Los Angeles school campuses in a 1991 study: the hardware approach involving such devices as metal detectors, designed to capture perpetrators, who should then be treated as criminals; the preventive approach involving the high visibility of school and other security personnel and administrators, block watch programs, community action programs, and the close supervision of school property during and after school hours; the corrective approach in which schools work to correct the climate of adverse behaviors with clearly defined rules, consistent discipline for all students, and the revision of rules that are not working; the interagency approach which involves the partnership between schools and outside agencies to identify those students in need of assistance, and to cross interagency lines to provide that assistance to both students and their families; and the integrative approach which utilizes the students themselves to resolve conflict in the classroom and the school by analyzing potential conflicts and avoid possible crime and gang-related behaviors (Lal, 1991).
Lai (1991) studied only those junior high schools in Los Angeles where the same principal and other administrators in charge of discipline had been in place for at least two years, where the same strategies had been in place for at least one year, and where district statistics indicated an increase or decrease in gang-related crime in the past five years. That yielded six schools to study, but she was advised to stay away from one campus, as it was too dangerous. She found a sort of ostrich syndrome toward the problems by many school administrators. The strategy of ignoring of gang problems and potential gang problems is a common one (Covey et al., 1997; Lai, 1991; Melita, 1990).

Six elements appear to be successful in controlling gangs and the violence they cause in the schools: a common philosophy and teamwork; strategies specific to that campus; the dissemination of information to parents, students, and staff members; parent and community involvement; proactive rather than reactive approaches; and a positive environment on campus (Lal, 1991). Melita (1990) made additional recommendations: schools and law enforcement officers should work together to find solutions to gang problems; staff development and training which includes graffiti, gang hand signs and attire, turf issues, and member identification should be provided to all school personnel and police officers; regular staff meetings should be held for the purpose of updating information; schools and community agencies should share information, and should network to assess and monitor gang activity and growth; and statewide studies should be done.

Gang activity and violence has a profound detrimental effect on the classroom and
the learning process. Gang members often lack the incentive to perform well in traditional school programs, and contribute only minimally in the classroom (Melita, 1990). Melita studied twenty high school principals, one hundred ten assistant principals, thirty-one school security officers, eleven county security officers, and twenty-two resource officers. He found a significant lack of agreement that a gang problem even existed in the schools. He determined that administrative denial and disharmony among officials is the greatest ally of gangs and violence in the schools.

Handbooks that are carefully written, and staff development at the building and district level, as well as community programs and the media, all play a part in controlling unwanted activity in the schools. A dress code, a set of rules and consequences, training in gang prevention for staff, and help from specialists are all necessary in controlling gang activity on the campus (Trump, 1993).

School administrators can identify schools as neutral territory, learn to distinguish between youthful misbehavior and crime, train staff members to recognize and handle gang members, create a program to mediate student conflicts, establish cooperative efforts between the schools and the community, especially with the police and social agencies, and institute anti-gang and anti-drug educational programs in the schools. Teachers can treat all students fairly, firmly, and consistently, as well as incorporate gang education into the curriculum, report suspicious activities, communicate effectively with parents, and be aware of community resources which meet the needs of children with problems (Trump, 1993).
Parents need access to knowledge of gangs and violence in schools. They need help in determining what causes their children to be drawn into gangs. Parents should be told that all those things that they believe they provide for their children are also provided by gangs: a sense of belonging, fellowship, security, excitement, money, and self-esteem. Tips should be given to parents to identify gang membership: changing patterns of dress, abnormal secretiveness about activities, unusual or unexplained sources of income, abrupt changes in behavior, and/or a diminishing interest in family and school activities. They should be told to spend more time with their children in positive ways, to talk with their children about outside influences, to keep in touch with the child's school to find out if there is a problem with gangs and violence, to look for changes in the community such as graffiti or hanging out, and to volunteer to help with information on gangs, or cleaning up graffiti (PTA Communicator, 1991).

Schools gangs often tend to overreact when they do recognize gangs are present. Instead of reacting harshly and punitively, or failing to take any action at all, schools should try to treat the reasons for gang membership by using full community resources to meet the need to belong, the sense of powerlessness, and low self-esteem. Peer counselors, support groups, mentoring, conflict resolution programs, and tutorials are ways to assist young people in meeting the needs often met by gang membership. Moral and ethical education components in the curriculum, an inviting school climate, and adults who are well trained in gang membership and how to respond to gang members are helpful in the educational setting. Parent education is also important in response to gangs and
violence, as is a program of education for the students themselves, both in and out of
school. Students should have the opportunity to work in groups to express their hopes
and fears, as well as to prepare for the future.

One teacher incorporates these ideas in her English classes (Hudson, 1995). One
of her students, in a unit on values and beliefs, wrote:

People join gangs because they are confused or need someone to care about them,
give 'em loving. When times are bad like at my home or your peers they turn on
you because of some reason, then you get lonely and then you turn to a gang and
then all of your g's will give you some lovin'. The main thing they get out of it is
love. Some gangs they give you a gun when you join and I know some people who
did it just for that purpose. When you belong to a gang you got to really worry of
being faded in the territories you don't control. Also your fellow gang members can
turn on you and you are nuttin' left but memories. Once you are in a gang the only
way out for good is to die out (p. 66).

Hudson writes that the "transformative power of writing and the importance of
respecting our students' voices" help her students "recognize and examine the violence in
their lives, an essential first step in turning their lives around" (Hudson, 1995, p. 69).

In a review of current literature on violence in the schools, Walker (1994)
highlights the need for schools to provide support for students in regard to self-
awareness, social relationships, and personal development. Students need to feel
important and a part of the school, and need to be recognized when they succeed in
academics, sports, or other activities.

Administrators must provide an atmosphere in which both employees and students feel safe, where staff is cohesive, and where the focus is on academics, and the needs of students. Classrooms must emphasize cooperation rather than competition, and students must feel safe to take academic risks. Curriculum must include cross-cultural understanding and confrontation of stereotyping and prejudice. High expectations for both academic and personal behaviors must be the norm, with adequate supervision for all activities. Smaller schools or schools within schools are advised, as are rules that are consistent, firm and fairly administered. Firm policies regarding weapons must be in place, and teachers must be trained to deal effectively with dangerous situations. Effective discipline which includes emphasis on the causes rather than the symptoms, as well as consequences that are helpful rather than just punitive and short term, must be part of the atmosphere of the successful school. Fairness, equity and justice, not only in violence prevention, but also in the prevention of sexual harassment and abuse, must be in place. Bullying must not be accepted in any form, and ability grouping should be avoided. The principal and other administrators should walk the halls and the grounds regularly, and regular visitation in the classrooms is essential. Parent and community involvement are encouraged (Walker, 1994).

Huff (1989) recommends primary prevention to keep gang membership from occurring, but states that it is usually the most neglected form of prevention. He quotes one police officer as saying, "Simply arresting them and locking them up is not the whole
answer. We have to figure out a way to reach young kids before they get involved with these gangs" (p. 533). He also recommends that teacher and administrator preparation programs should focus on methods to help work with children in ways that assist them in making better choices. These training programs should include assertiveness training, and assistance to teachers and administrators in helping students to accept responsibility for their own behaviors.

He recommends that school boards adopt clear policies that forbid weapons at school, that facilitate working closely with the local law enforcement agencies, and that focus on environments conducive to learning. The image of some schools and school administrators takes precedence over the safety of children, but it must be the safety of children which comes first (Huff, 1989; Wheeler, 1979). School boards and administrators "struggle to suppress the truth about violent disruptions, they attempt to disguise their mediocre results as excellence and they seem to resist creative and effective approaches to the issue" (Wheeler, 1979, p. 22.) School districts should refocus the school as a neighborhood center which offers not only daytime classes for children, but also offers parent classes, as well as classes in continuing education, GED preparation, and jobs skills training. The first order of priority must be safe buildings for children and their teachers. An uncompromising policy regarding violence and outsiders must be developed and implemented by school districts and schools (Huff, 1989; Wheeler, 1979).

Children should be placed with teachers they like, and who like them (Cole, 1977; Tursman, 1989). Teachers who are not liked by students tend to rely on fear tactics to
intimidate and control children. Children sense the distrust and fear felt by school administrators and other school personnel and use it to make power gains against the adults in schools. Incidents of violence are minimal when the school environment and the home environment of the students are similar. When there is a vast difference, however, the reverse is true. Parents who come to understand that their behavior at home affects their children's behavior at school tend to diminish their violent behavior at home. When school officials and parents are in agreement with punishment for various acts, there is usually a low repeat rate for those offenses (Cole, 1977).

School authorities must punish children quickly after an offense. Paranoia on the part of those to be punished that not all students are treated alike for the same behaviors tends to cause potential problems. Instances of expulsion have become rarer due to recent court rulings, and school personnel must learn to deal with more disruptive behaviors in the traditional school setting (Cole, 1977; Tursman, 1989). Acts of violence publicized are acts of violence repeated. There should be no publicity, if possible, regarding violence in the schools. We know from experience however, that the likelihood that no media attention will be given a violent act is minimal to nonexistent. Examples of media attention are seen in the recent school shootings in Arkansas and Oregon (Barnard, 1998; Dickson, 1998; Rouse et al., 1998; Terry, et al., 1998).

Areas in schools where violent acts occur or might occur should be remodeled or eliminated. When this is accomplished, violence is usually diminished (Cole, 1977). The school building should be checked for security and dangerous places. Hiding places should
be eliminated, security monitors should be installed, and every room should have a two-way public address system or other means of communication. All visitors should be escorted to and from their destinations. Adults should be visible throughout the school (Tursman, 1989).

Children, parents, teachers, and administrators should all work together on the student code of conduct and the dress code. When all groups participate together, violence and other acts of misbehavior tend to diminish (Cole, 1977; Tursman, 1989). The school should work closely with the community and law enforcement agencies to provide training beyond the awareness level for staff members (Tursman, 1989). A security plan should be developed and updated. It should be kept readily available should a situation occur. It should not be left on the shelf in the principal's office, but should be available to all staff members when needed. This plan should include not only what to do in emergency situations at school, but also what to do if a child or staff member is killed or injured seriously off campus. Selected staff members should be trained on how to deal with situations involving firearms and other deadly weapons. Gang activity should be stopped immediately. This includes, but is not limited to, colors, bandannas, and certain types of clothing and jewelry. Graffiti should be removed or painted over within twenty-four hours (Tursman, 1989).

Solving problems around the conference table rather than the conventional approach of removing students from school is by far the better approach (Schreck, Harper, & Goroff, 1975; Smith, 1993). There are numerous reasons to use mediation or
some other form of solving problems rather than just to remove students. Many students have never had the opportunity for any methods of solving problems other than violence. All stakeholders have an opportunity to participate in solving problems through mediation and conflict resolution. Issues which may not have, as yet, reached the surface, may be discussed. Schools and community groups can work together and share resources to improve conditions for children. Violence can be decreased, and safety increased in the school setting. The behavior of children can be permanently impacted.

The leadership style of the administrator is a primary factor in violence in the schools (Ianni et al., 1980). Training at the university level, and placement procedures by central administration must "locate, prepare, develop, and support suitable leaders" (p. 23G). The climate of the school, and the principal's ability to create a structure of order, to be firm, fair and consistent, and the responsiveness of the principal to staff and student opinions regarding school policy are important factors in keeping violence, aggression, and gang activity out of the schools.

**Summary**

It is important to note that the literature search yielded no seminal quantitative studies, but did yield several major qualitative ones. One in particular, (Spergel et al., 1993; Spergel, 1995) conducted what is called "the first comprehensive national survey of organized agency and community group responses to gang problems in the United States. Their study is the only national assessment of efforts to combat gangs" (Wilson, 1995). Most of the research in law enforcement and criminal justice had studied gangs much as
this research has proposed, with interviews and personal observations, in addition to case studies, being the preferred modes. Most were largely commentary, with anecdotal rather than empirical data as the basis of study. Only a few small studies have used empirical data to study gang activity.

The literature review was both surprising and frightening in many ways. For example, the notion that poverty and the flight of non-minorities from the inner city could encourage gang membership leads the researcher to the inevitable conclusion that something must be done for these areas of cities. Upon driving through the inner city areas of the school district being studied, or for that matter, inner cities anywhere, the pockets of poverty seen there lead the reader to be frightened by the numbers of potential gang members. The literature does not mention the relationship between poverty and gang membership only once or twice, but repeatedly throughout the review, and from much earlier years to the present. It certainly follows, then, that if gangs are in the community, gang members must also be present in the schools, perhaps in increasing numbers.

Because the researcher has had an opportunity to deal with gangs and gang members in a school for many years, the credibility of the literature has been substantiated. While gang membership is not seen only in areas of poverty, it is certainly seen more in such areas. It is interesting to note that the agency which provided gang members as participants in this study did not have a unit in the more affluent areas of the city whose schools are being studied. It is also interesting that the one area of the city, which includes both poverty and affluence, from which it should have been simple to
obtain interviewees, was one from which only one subject was found. It was this
interviewee who came as a bodyguard for the subject from the more affluent area in which
the agency had no unit.

It was also of interest to note that from studies prior to the 1990s, the youth in
gangs today have changed very little, except for the firepower they are able to obtain and
use. Gangs are growing in numbers in many areas of the country, and youth who once
would not be thought of as potential gang members are now prime recruits.

The literature review contained here is of great value to those who work with
gangs and gang members in schools. Effective schools must be safe places to study and
work. Gangs and violence, while controlled in some schools, create the atmosphere in
others that make students, teachers, and administrators feel unsafe. This study will
identify the policies, procedures, and strategies used by administrators and others who
have implemented programs that have reduced or eliminated gang-related activity and
violence in their schools. It will examine the effect these policies, procedures and
strategies have on the students who are impacted by their use, as well as the process used
by administrators and others to develop, implement, and employ these policies,
procedures, and strategies.

This study is significant in that it will add to the body of knowledge regarding
gangs in schools. By interviewing practicing administrators, teachers and other staff
members, and balancing their responses with those of the students who are affected by
the strategies used in their schools, current and future administrators will be able to
respond more effectively to gang problems in the future. Gangs and gang membership is not declining, but increasing. There are now over three hundred identified gangs in the city whose high schools are included in this study.

As has been seen in the review of the literature, the study of gangs and schools is sorely needed. Stopping gang membership from becoming a way of life for the youth of the inner city is critical. The study will identify for aspiring administrators those strategies which may prove helpful in attaining this goal as they begin their tenure as administrators. It will also provide information to those administrators who have not yet been successful in identifying and dealing with problems in their schools, as well as strategies for their use. As Lawrence Baines, an English teacher, writes in *The English Journal*:

Perhaps the most pressing dilemma for educators today is balancing the success of the potentially dangerous student against the welfare of the great majority of other students in school. Whether a school decides to help students through specially designed classes, to train teachers in nonviolent intervention techniques, or to expel and prosecute perpetrators of violence, the gravest danger is in doing nothing at all (1995, p. 64).

Clements (1995), a student, reminds the reader that:

Education is the solution to the problem of violence. If the student population were better educated their perception of life, motivation, and sense of destination would be generated toward success. . . . Further steps need to be taken in order to
thoroughly supply schools with proper materials, effectively keep . . . weapons out of the school, productively decrease the student drop-out rate . . . Education is and will ultimately be the solution to the existing problem (p. 269-70).

Too many young people in our schools are being lost to gang-related activity and violence. A way must be found for school administrators to deal effectively with the problems caused by gangs and gang members. It is because of the researcher's concern with the numbers of children who are affected by gang-related activity and violence, both as victims and as perpetrators, that this research is being done.
CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

The primary method for this research is qualitative, using interviewing, document analysis and site visits as the basis for determining the strategies used by administrators to deal with gang-related activity and violence in their schools. The results are reported in tabular form, giving the reader an opportunity to review the findings in minimal time, and in narrative form as well.

The two main sections of this chapter deal with the methodology and the procedures used in the research. The methodology section includes a discussion of qualitative research, the process of interviewing, and the technique of triangulation. The procedure section deals with the specific procedures to be employed during the research, including how the respondent administrators were chosen, the solicitation of additional interviewees, and a summary of site visit expectations.

Methodology

Qualitative Research

The primary method for this study involved interviews with selected building administrators, teachers, other professionals and support staff members as appropriate, liaison officers if possible, and students. The study was designed to determine not only
what selected administrators have found to be successful in preventing or reducing gang-related activity and violence on their campuses, but also what planning steps were taken to arrive at those strategies. It studied what those with whom the administrators work closely have done to support them. In addition, interviews were conducted with students who have been directly involved in gang-related activity and violence to determine what, if any, part they had in planning and implementing the strategies, and how they have been impacted by the strategies employed by school administrators. The determination of the impact of strategies on students will assist the researcher in assessing the success of strategies employed by the selected administrators.

The process of interviewing is classified as non-experimental or qualitative. Kerlinger (1986) defines non-experimental research as "systematic inquiry in which the scientist does not have direct control of independent variables because their manifestations have already occurred or because they are inherently not manipulable" (p. 348). Qualitative research is interpretative but increasingly sophisticated. Such research focuses on problems of social and human importance, and involves the relationships between variables that already exist. It involves observation, interviewing, and document analysis, and establishes a close relationship between the researcher and those being observed, interviewed and documented (Punch, 1986). It seeks to "describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world" (Van Maanen, 1983, p. 9). Qualitative data are "rich, full, earth, holistic, and 'real', and tend to lend
themselves to serendipitous findings" (Miles, 1983, p. 117).

Interviews

The interview process is most often used for obtaining information in qualitative research. The interview can obtain a great deal of information, is flexible and adaptable to individual situations, and can be used when no other method is possible or adequate. The use of the interview requires that the researcher be the direct instrument of data collection (Hockey, 1996; Kerlinger, 1986; Owens, 1996; Punch, 1986; Williamson, 1996). The interviewer can know whether the respondent understands the questions asked, and can, within limits, rephrase or repeat them. Probing can be done within the context of the questions and answers.

There are two types of interviews: structured and unstructured. Kerlinger (1986) describes the unstructured interview as one that is more flexible and open than a structured interview. The interviewer asks questions in the context of the research questions, and determines on the basis of the answers, their sequence and wording. There may be no specific interview schedule used and the situation is open to alternative questions which are particular to each respondent and his or her situation. This research used an interview schedule for principals, one for teachers and other staff members, and one for students, all based on the research questions. All questions were open ended, and the researcher asked additional questions when the respondents led the discussion in other directions.

Open-ended questions which supply a framework for answers are usually used in
unstructured interviews (Light, 1983; Piore, 1983). Such questions "put a minimum of restraint on the answers used--their expression" (Kerlinger, 1986, p. 442). The advantages of open-ended questions are: they clear up misunderstandings and allow for the detection of lack of knowledge or ambiguity in the respondent's answers, they allow for encouragement of cooperation and achievement of rapport between the interviewer and the respondent; the interviewer is better able to determine the intentions, beliefs and attitudes of the respondent; and the interviewer is able to develop relationships and hypotheses regarding the research (Kerlinger, 1986).

In order to gain the maximum amount of information and value from the interview, the researcher was sociable and provided opportunities for the interviewer and the respondents to build trust. It was suggested in the literature that the researcher, at times, appear "dense" and ask that responses be explained or repeated. First impressions must be recorded and kept as a baseline in order to compare them with information gained throughout the study. Only the most central issues deserve intensive study using triangulation efforts (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Wolcott, 1990).

Triangulation

The interview itself is not enough for thorough qualitative research (Glesne et al., 1992). Hockey (1996) states that observations and the keeping of accurate field notes assist the researcher in maintaining a sense of equilibrium. The information and feelings expressed in field notes act as the engine for the development of questions and how they are asked. In addition to field notes, interviews with participating respondents tends to
lead the researcher to other sources of information and pertinent documents. The analysis of such documents as district policies and procedures, campus policies and procedures, handbooks and other documents, and related newspaper articles is essential to the understanding of how respondents use these documents and are affected by them. Additionally, respondents are encouraged to suggest other persons the researcher may wish to interview. This method of seeking out further data or respondents is sometimes called network or snowball sampling (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997).

The process of using and analyzing related documents and additional sources is called triangulation, and is described by Miles and Huberman (1984) as the validation of a finding by subjecting it to "the onslaught of a series of imperfect measures" (p. 234). Triangulation allows researchers to be more confident of their results, to uncover different viewpoints, and to reach an interpretation of theories (Glesne et al., 1992). It provides for holistic work or thick descriptions, requires creativity from the researcher and leads to insight into the data collected (Jick, 1983).

Sample Selection

Six schools were identified for participation in this study. Each of those schools had seventy or more removal hearings during the 1995-96 school year, and ninety or more removal hearings during the 1996-97 school year. These figures were obtained from the Student Affairs Department of the school district being studied. One of the top six schools was the researcher's school, and one principal declined to participate, so the researcher proceeded to the seventh and eighth schools in terms of numbers of removal
hearings. The reader will recall that removal hearings were defined in Chapter I as central hearings requested by the school to remove students who have substantially disrupted the school, who have engaged in violence at school, or who have committed a felony on or off the campus. Staff members, including teachers, other professionals, or support staff, were recommended by their principals, and access to students was provided through the Comin' Up program of the Boys' and Girls' Clubs in the city whose schools were studied.

**Procedure**

The procedure of this study involved interviews, document analysis, and site visits. Permission to proceed with the study was sought from and granted by the research department of the school district being studied, and permission for the use of human subjects was sought from and granted by the University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. Principals of six high schools were interviewed. In addition to interviewing principals, the researcher asked principals to recommend one assistant principal, three teachers or other professional or support staff members, and, if possible, the campus police officer or the school district liaison officer. Interviews were recorded on tape and transcribed. The transcriptions are included in Appendix B.

The researcher spent one day at each selected site in order to make observations and field notes regarding specific policies and procedures noted by selected principals. These site visits provided an additional source of information for the triangulation process and lent credence to the information obtained through interviews and document analysis. Each site was observed by the researcher at critical times of the day, especially lunch
periods, passing periods, and before and after school. Critical areas of each building were observed: areas on the grounds where gang members could gather, hallways and other areas which are not well lighted, parking lots, and cafeterias and other common areas. Field notes were taken and recorded during each site visit. Those were transcribed and included in Appendix B.

The triangulation process requires that many and varied sources of information are gathered and studied. The researcher established this process by interviewing not only adults, but also students who have been directly affected by the strategies employed by adults in their schools. Due to concerns of safety in the schools, the district required that students be interviewed outside the school setting. The Boys' and Girls' Club in the city whose schools were being studied is currently providing a gang awareness and prevention program called Comin' Up. This program is cited as an intervention for gang members in an earlier chapter (see page 26). The program provided the researcher access to two students, if possible, from each high school being studied. At least one student from each school was interviewed. The interviews took place outside the school setting, with no identification of student respondents. The researcher did not know the names of the students unless they chose to share that information. Provisions were made for students to decline to answer questions they did not choose to answer, and if any circumstances had occurred to make them feel unsafe, the researcher would have allowed students to deline to continue. While it was ideal to include them, the researcher was cognizant of their safety and did not put any children in jeopardy.
Each school was assigned a letter: A, B, C, D, E, and F. Each respondent was assigned a letter or letter/number combination to ensure anonymity. For example, the principal of school A was called PA, the assistant principal of school A was called APA, the staff members from school A were called TA1, TA2, TA3, and the students were called SA1 and SA2. While permission forms were completed, the names of those who agreed to participate were not included in the study. Permission from the parents or other responsible adults were given for children under the age of eighteen years. A copy of the permission for Human Subject participation is included in Appendix C.

In addition to interviews, the district policy handbook, campus handbooks for teachers and students, the district Code of Conduct for students, and other pertinent information were studied as another means of triangulation. Research Question 1a was addressed by this research. Newspaper articles and other printed materials suggested by the respondents were also analyzed. These printed materials served to substantiate the policies, procedures, and strategies mentioned by respondents during the interview process.

The school district required that a specific interview schedule be developed before consent was given to proceed with the research. The University Institutional Review Board and the school district approved the questionnaires prior to their use. Interview questions were developed using the Research Questions enumerated in Chapter I. One set of questions was developed for the principal, another for staff members, and a third for students. The interview schedules for staff members and students were aligned with the
interview schedule for the principal, and the results were tabulated and analyzed based on the principals' interview questions. The principals were asked questions regarding their strategies, while staff members and students were asked to describe strategies the principals employed and how they responded to the implementation of those strategies. They were asked to describe how those strategies were developed, including who assisted and how they helped.

In order to add depth and meaning to the interviews, the researcher used questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 9 and 10 in addition to the questions which directly addressed the Research Questions. These questions were asked to establish the perceived climate of the school, the perceptions of the respondents with regard to the presence of gangs and violence, and to give the respondents an opportunity to suggest issues the interview questions did not raise. Copies of the interview schedules are included in Appendix D.

**Summary**

It was expected that, because the school district studied has a zero tolerance policy against gangs and violence, most respondents would express that philosophy. It was also expected that not all staff members would agree with the principal's strategies and their implementation of those strategies. Students, especially, were expected to be critical of the principal's strategies.

It was expected that some clear similarities and differences would emerge between schools. What was effective for one principal may not be effective for all principals. It was expected that principals would find some strategies which had not been helpful, and
some which will be tried in place of those which had not been successful. One of the questions asked of all respondents was "If you could change anything you (or your principal) have done to prevent or reduce gang-related activity and violence, what would you change and why?" The answers were interesting and will be instructive for other principals and aspiring administrators. Many administrators try to re-invent the wheel when they take on a new position. Perhaps the changes principals recommended will allow new principals the opportunity to build on what others have done as opposed to beginning anew.

Interviews and field notes were recorded and transcribed, and other information gained by site visits, document analysis, and observations was studied. The data was then organized, and comparisons and contrasts were made between responses by principals, assistant principals, teachers and other staff members and students from the six high schools. Those central issues common to all administrators who have been successful in preventing or reducing gang activity and violence were identified. Likewise, those issues which appear to be very different, but still successful, were identified. Those strategies which have not proved to be successful were identified as well.

Results were presented in tabular form using all respondents, and in narrative form by school in Chapter IV. Conclusions, implications and recommendations for future study were made and presented in Chapter V.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

The principal of one school declined to participate in the study, so it became necessary for the researcher to add the school with the next highest removal rate. The original School A was removed from the list of schools studied, and a new School A was added to the study.

Interviews were scheduled with each of the six principals whose schools were included in the study. Once those interviews were conducted, principals recommended teachers and staff members to be interviewed. They were contacted individually, and interviews were conducted. Comin' Up, the outside agency which was to provide gang youths, set up interviews at recreation centers around the city, and those interviews were conducted.

One school, School E, has no program through Comin' Up, and the police officer assigned to that school provided the name of a young man in a gang who was willing to be interviewed. Another school, School B, had no students in the Comin' Up program who were willing to participate in the study. In an interesting twist of fate, the School E gang member brought a bodyguard-lookout with him to the interview. That young man was a former student at School B, and is now enrolled at an alternative school in the district.
being studied. All six schools included in the study thus had one or more gang member-student participants.

Due to scheduling problems, and to avoid interruption of instruction, only two faculty/staff interviews were done at four of the schools. That, however, did not appear to disrupt the interview process, as respondents who did participate were well informed and willing to share information. The use of assistant principals, teachers and staff members, and students balanced the findings from principals, and made the findings more valid.

Results of Interviews

Schools A and C have largely Hispanic student populations; School A has a white principal, while School C has an Hispanic principal. Schools B and D have largely African-American populations, and both have African-American principals. Schools E and F have largely white student populations, and both have white principals.

Most of the staff members interviewed were white, with only three being African-American. No Hispanic staff members were interviewed. All students interviewed were African-American with the exception of three: Student C1, Student B1, and Student E1. Students B1 and C1 were Hispanic, and Student E1 was Hispanic/African-American.

Following are the results of the questions posed to principals, their staff members, and students. Note that only the principal's questionnaire was reported, as there was a direct relationship between that questionnaire and those for staff and students (See Appendix D).
The tabulation of responses from the principals' interview schedule is followed for each questions by an analysis of that questions. Please note that each respondent was free to give as many pertinent answers as he or she chose to give. The numbers, therefore, do not reflect the total number of respondents, but reflect the number of responses given.

Tabulations and Analysis of Interview Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons Interviewed</th>
<th>Prin (6)</th>
<th>AP (6)</th>
<th>Staff (15)</th>
<th>Students (11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
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<td>B H W</td>
<td>B H W</td>
<td>B H W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents</td>
<td>2 1 3</td>
<td>3 1 2</td>
<td>4 0 11</td>
<td>8 3 0</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
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<td>Drugs</td>
<td>1 1 1</td>
<td>1 2 2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fights</td>
<td>1 1 1 1 1</td>
<td>1 3 1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gangs</td>
<td>2 1 1</td>
<td>1 5 1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside Areas</td>
<td>1 1 1 1 1</td>
<td>1 3 1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outsiders</td>
<td>1 1 2 1 1</td>
<td>1 2 1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Skills to Deal With Violence</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society/TV</td>
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<td>1 2 2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Population</td>
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<td>Unexpected Events</td>
<td>1 1 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1

**Question 2: Reasons Safety is a Concern (N = 38)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons Interviewed</th>
<th>Prin (6)</th>
<th>AP (6)</th>
<th>Staff (15)</th>
<th>Students (11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>B H W</td>
<td>B H W</td>
<td>B H W</td>
<td>B H W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents</td>
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<td>Weapons</td>
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<td>2 2</td>
<td>2 2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Analysis of Safety Issues**

Based on the tabulation of responses, outsiders and outside areas (19), gangs (11), and fights (9) caused most of the concern for safety at the selected school sites. Principals and staff members were more concerned about gangs than were the students, with four of six principals and six of fifteen staff members mentioning that concern. No assistant principals mentioned gangs as a threat to safety. Fights, outsiders, and outside areas, were a concern to all respondents across the board. Students appeared to be more concerned about weapons and drugs than did the adults in their buildings, with four of eleven students mentioning weapons, as opposed to four of twenty-seven adults, and only two of six assistant principals. No principals mentioned weapons as a concern for safety.

Drugs were mentioned by four of eleven student respondents as a safety issue, while the same issue was mentioned by only four of twenty-seven adult respondents. Society, which included television, movies or video games, was mentioned seven times by
respondents, an interesting observation which came only from adults. That response came from all ethnic groups, and all respondent groups except students, and was seen throughout this study.

Table 2

Question 3: Reasons Gangs are Present (N = 38)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons Interviewed</th>
<th>Prin (6)</th>
<th>AP (6)</th>
<th>Staff (15)</th>
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<td>8 3 0</td>
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</table>

Behaviors: 1 2 1 2 6

Community: 1 1 2 1 1 2 2 1 11

Fights: 1 2 2 1 3 3 1 13

Gang Colors/Dress: 1 2 1 5 5 2 17

Gang Signs: 1 1 2 4

Graffiti: 4 1 5

I am One: 1 1

Gang Members Are Known: 1 1 1 1 4 3 1 12

We Remove Them: 1 1 1 3

Society/TV: 1 1 1 2 1 1 8
Analysis of the Presence of Gangs

Most principals, staff members and students indicated that gang members are well known to the staff (12). Gang members were recognized by their colors and dress (17), by their fighting (13), gang behaviors (6), graffiti (5), and throwing gang signs (4). The community in which the school is located was mentioned by eleven respondents as contributing to gang problems in schools, a theme which the reader will recognize from the literature review. The issue of society and television (8) arose as an issue again in this set of responses, and the reader will see it repeated again throughout the study.

Table 3

Question 4: Reasons Violence is Present (N = 38)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons Interviewed</th>
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<td>After School/ Supervision</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fights</td>
<td>1 1 3</td>
<td>1 6 4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gangs</td>
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<td>4 3</td>
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<td>Inability to Deal with Violence</td>
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### Table 3 Continued

**Question 4: Reasons Violence is Present (N = 38)**

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<td>W</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| No Violence         | 1       | 1      | 2          |
| Outside Areas/      | 1       | 1      | 3          |
| Not Class Time      | 1       | 1      | 3          |
| Outsiders           | 2       | 1      | 3          |
| Shooting Off Campus | 2       | 1      | 3          |
| Society             | 1       | 1      | 1          |
| Staring/Mad-dogging | 1       | 1      | 2          |
| Weapons             | 1       | 2      | 1          | 4              |

**Analysis of the Presence of Violence**

Most principals, assistant principals, staff members and students recognized fighting (19) as violent behavior. Again, the respondents identified society (11) as a reason for violence in the schools. Many interviewees, across all respondent groups mentioned that violence is a problem in society. TC3 stated that kids have many
problems in their lives today. But TCI stated that there is no more violence in schools than there is in any other large group of people. TF3 stated "Oh, it is partly societal... you watch TV and it is in the movies... the video games they play, ... music and lot of the stuff they listen to..." TE1 stated, "If there is one act of violence, I consider that a problem... they see a lot of movies about violence... it tends to be on the rise with so many students that it is acceptable behavior." Gangs and gang behavior, particularly maddogging (staring), was identified as an issue in determining whether violence was recognized on campus, with a total of six responses.

Table 4

Question 5: Strategies Employed by Principals (N = 38)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons Interviewed</th>
<th>Prin (6)</th>
<th>AP (6)</th>
<th>Staff (15)</th>
<th>Students (11)</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>4 0 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrators are Visible</td>
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<td>Dogs/Police</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group/Individual Conferences</td>
<td>1 1 1 2 1</td>
<td>2</td>
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Table 4 Continued

**Question 5: Strategies Employed by Principals (N = 38)**

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<table>
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<td>Parent Conferences</td>
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<td>Remove Graffiti</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remove Students</td>
<td>2 3</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>Security Cameras</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff Development</td>
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<td>Staff Participation</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>Student Reports</td>
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<td>Teacher/Student Handbooks</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tickets/Fines</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truce Between Gangs</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zero Tolerance</td>
<td>2 1 1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysis of Strategies Employed by Principals

The number one strategy mentioned as a deterrent of gang activity was the use of a dress code (24). An effective dress code was one seen by administrators and staff as banning certain colors, accessories, and styles of dress. Most often mentioned were red, blue, bandannas, and IN MEMORY OF T-shirts. Two schools (B) and (D) mentioned braids or plaits for boys as indicating gang membership. Those two schools were majority African-American, and banned that hairstyle. Most schools mentioned sagging pants, revealing outfits for girls, and other inappropriate modes of dress. All schools maintained a disclaimer that anything that could be construed to be gang-related was prohibited and the administrators retained the right to decide the issue.

The next most often mentioned strategy was to remove disruptive and violent students (19) followed by zero tolerance (11) and staff participation in implementing rules (10). The reader will be reminded that zero tolerance was an expected response as the district has a zero tolerance policy. Removal hearings are initiated at the school and are heard by a central office administrator. Students whose removals are upheld are placed in alternative schools.

Group or individual conferences and staff development were named as strategies nine (9) times each, and visibility of administrators was next with eight (8) responses. Surprisingly, five respondents said that their principals had no strategies to deal with gang-related activity and violence, and only one respondent said that consistency was used to prevent gang activity.
Dogs and police officers, metal detectors, and teacher and student handbooks were also low in responses. The low number of responses in these areas may be accounted for by the fact that the district is using these strategies across the board. They may be seen as part of a district protocol rather than a campus strategy.

Table 5

Questions 6 and 7: Participants in Developing Policy (N = 38)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons Interviewed</th>
<th>Prin (6)</th>
<th>AP (6)</th>
<th>Staff (15)</th>
<th>Students (11)</th>
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</table>

Adminstrative Team
- 1

CCC
- 1

Campus Monitors
- 1

Class Officers
- 1

Custodians
- 1

Do Not Know
- 5

Liaison Team
- 2

PTA
- 1

Parents
- 1

Principal Only
- 2

Planning Committee
- 1
Table 5

Questions 6 and 7: Participants in Developing Policy (N = 38)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons Interviewed</th>
<th>Prin (6)</th>
<th>AP (6)</th>
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<th>Students (11)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
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</table>

**Analysis of Participants in Developing and Implementing Policies**

Administrative teams (9), Site Based Decision Making Teams (12), and teachers (8) were listed as the persons or groups who most often assisted principals in developing and implementing the policies. Surprisingly, six respondents said that they did not know who the principal asked to help develop and implement policies. Most students said they did not participate in developing and implementing policies, but a six respondents indicated that students had assisted. Only three students said that they (SF1 and SC1) or other students had helped develop or implement strategies.
Table 6

**Question 8: Impact on Students (N = 38)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons Interviewed</th>
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<th>AP (6)</th>
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<th>Students (11)</th>
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<td>B  H  W</td>
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<td>Don't Care</td>
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<td>Feel Safe</td>
<td>1  1  1</td>
<td>3  1  1</td>
<td>3  6</td>
<td>5  1</td>
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<td>Gang Members</td>
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<td>Keep a Low Profile</td>
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<td>Policy is Not Effective/Consistent</td>
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<td>Relax Dress Code (Students Would)</td>
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<td>Students Can Use the Policy as an Out</td>
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<td>They Stay in School</td>
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<td>2  1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
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</table>

**Analysis of Impact on Students**

Half of all principals, five of six assistant principals, and nine of fifteen staff members said they believed students felt safe in school. Only six of eleven students, however, said they felt safe in school. Most students expressed concerns about their safety wherever they were, and often said that rival gang members could get them...
anywhere. Interestingly, however, most said they felt as safe or safer in school than they did anywhere other than their homes. Twelve respondents, including three students, stated that gang members kept a low profile at school due to the strategies the principals employed. Thirteen respondents indicated that students stayed in school as a result of these strategies. Interestingly, only one student responded in the same way.

Table 7

**Question 9 Suggested Changes (N = 38)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons Interviewed</th>
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<th>AP (6)</th>
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<th>Students (11)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</table>

- Be Consistent: 4 1 2 7
- Better Communication Between Staff Members: 3 3
- Change Focus of School to Vocational: 1 1 2
- Change Lunch Periods: 1 1
- Change Nothing: 2 2
- Develop Personal Relationships with Students: 1 1 2
- Gang Intervention Programs: 1 1 2
Table 7 Continued

**Question 9 Suggested Changes (N = 38)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons Interviewed</th>
<th>Prin (6)</th>
<th>AP (6)</th>
<th>Staff (15)</th>
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<td>B H W</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
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</table>

|                       |         |        |            |               |
|                       |         |        |            |               |
| Have Grade Level      | 1 1     |        |            | 2             |
| Orientation          |         |        |            |               |
| Have Structured      |         |        |            |               |
| Activities/Grounds/  |         |        |            |               |
| Lunch                | 1       |        |            | 1             |
| Involve Staff More   | 1 1     | 1 1    | 1 1        | 4             |
| Leave Students at    |         |        |            |               |
| Alternative Schools  |         |        |            |               |
| Longer               | 1 1 1 1 |        | 1 1 1      | 4             |
| Make Staff More      |         |        |            |               |
| Responsible          | 1 3 2 2 |        |            | 8             |
| Metal Detectors/      |         |        |            |               |
| Better Security      | 2 1 1   | 1 2 2  |            | 7             |
| Meet with Gangs      |         |        |            | 1             |
| Parental Involvement | 1 1 1   |        |            | 3             |
| Peer Mediation       | 1       |        |            | 1             |
| Positive Community   |         |        |            |               |
| Communication        | 1 1     |        |            | 1             |
Table 7 Continued

**Question 9 Suggested Changes (N = 38)**

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</table>

Relax Dress Code  
(Gang Members Would)  
1 2 1 4 4

Smaller Schools  
1

Staff Development  
4 5

Stricter Dress Code/ Rules  
1 1 3 1 5 5

Tell Gang Members to Leave it Outside  
1 1

**Analysis of Suggested Changes**

The responses to questions regarding changes respondents would make were both expected and unexpected. The answer given most often was to make staff members more responsible for implementing policy (8). The next was consistency (7) and the use of metal detectors (7). Metal detectors and better security were expected answers. Consistency and staff responsibility were unexpected. Four teachers and three students said administrators and staff need to be more consistent in their dealings with students.
Students and staff alike said that teachers need to teach, and that administrators need to monitor to make sure they do. Students recognized those teachers who made them do their work, behave in class, and were consistent and fair. Teachers who performed their jobs expected those who did not do so to be disciplined in some way. One teacher said she wished they would move on to other jobs outside of education. Surprisingly, four staff members recommended updating staff development regarding gang-related activity and violence, wanting to know more to be able to help their students and make the school safer as a result of being better informed. Four students recommended making the dress code stricter. Not surprisingly, three students recommended making the dress code less strict, a response expected by at least one administrator.

Table 8

Question 10 Other Issues (N = 38)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons Interviewed</th>
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<th>Students (11)</th>
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<tr>
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<td>3 1 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Admit There is A Gang Problem</td>
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<td>Be Consistent</td>
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<td>Better Parental Involvement</td>
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<td>Develop/Use Community Resources</td>
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Table 8 Continued

Question 10 Other Issues (N = 38)

<table>
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<th>Students (11)</th>
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<td>W</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
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</table>

- Develop Personal Relationships with Students: 1 1 1
- Gang Activity is Moving to Lower Grades/Growing: 1 1 1
- Gang Intervention/Peer Mentoring: 1 1 1
- Improve Classroom Management: 2 2
- Incorporate Gang Awareness into the Curriculum: 1
- Keep Alternative Students Out Longer: 1 1
- Keep Outsiders Out: 2 2
- Kids are More Involved at School: 1
- Kids Fight at School Because it is Safe: 1 1
Table 8 Continued

**Question 10 Other Issues (N = 38)**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons Interviewed</th>
<th>Prin (6)</th>
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<th>Staff (15)</th>
<th>Students (11)</th>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kids want Immediate Gratification/Find in Gangs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning Styles Are Important</td>
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<td>Low Reading Skills/Performance in School</td>
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<td>Peer Mediation/Conflict Resolution</td>
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<td>Remain on a Professional Level with Students</td>
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<td>Remove Graffiti/It is Removed Immediately</td>
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<td>Restrooms are Locked Due to Graffiti</td>
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<td>Schools Have Taken on Too Many Responsibilities</td>
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<td>Separate Freshmen from Upper Classmen</td>
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Analysis of Other Issues

Consistency arose again in this area as one about which principals and staff members have concerns. Six respondents, including one student, expressed the need for staff to be more consistent. Two staff members and two students stated that classroom management needed to be improved. In three responses, each mentioned gang activity was growing or moving to lower age groups, and the need to provide intervention for children who are involved with gangs.

This question which addressed other issues was designed to elicit responses which might have been overlooked in previous responses to interview questions, and gave each respondent an opportunity to air concerns no covered elsewhere during the interview. These issues are not directly related to the Research Questions, but proved to be instructive as to the climate of individual buildings and the interaction of administrators, staff and students.

Responses by School

School A

School A was made up largely of Hispanic students, though there were some African-American and white students enrolled. It was located in an older section of the city, surrounded by older homes, businesses and health care facilities. It housed both a traditional daytime school and an alternative evening school. A program for students who are new to the United States was also housed there. The principal of the school was white, and her administrative team was made up of white, African-American and Hispanic
assistant principals. Most of the students were bused into the area. One of the teachers who consented to be interviewed was white and the other was African-American.

The principal and the assistant principal disagreed somewhat on the issue of safety. The principal stated that safety was not an issue, while the assistant principal indicated his concerns about outsiders and the inability of students to solve their problems in non-violent ways. Staff members agreed with the principal, and students agreed with the assistant principal. In addition, the students saw smoking marijuana as a problem with safety.

Gangs were not a problem at School A, according to both the principal and the assistant principal. The assistant principal indicated that there are many gang members, but very little gang activity. Staff members saw the problem as improving, stating that the number of fights and the amount of graffiti has decreased. Students said there is always gang activity anywhere there are gang members, but conceded that most of the blatant activity took place off campus at Jack in the Box.

The principal recognized that the number of fights indicated some level of violence. The assistant principal indicated that there was a lot of staring, and many more girls fought than boys. He felt that girl fights were not gang-related, but the list of identified gangs in the city (See Appendix A) indicates that there are a number of girl gang members and girls' gangs. In addition, he indicated that most of the violence stemmed from activities off campus, and for the most part, stayed off campus. The staff did not see a problem with violence at all, while the students indicated that there was not much
violence, but that there was an occasional weapon. They were quick to state that the adults take care of problems expeditiously.

Strategies employed by the principal include banning colored shoelaces, removing graffiti, and having conferences between gangs. The assistant principal indicated a zero tolerance policy, and said that students are encouraged to report problems to the administration or the police immediately. The staff members interviewed indicated the aforementioned strategies, but also listed staff development, ticketing by police and removal as additional strategies used by the principal. Students reported the same strategies, and one (SA3) reported that the principal "knows us that well" to know who is and is not in a gang.

As to involvement in planning and implementing the strategies used in School A, the principal indicated that the administrative team, made up of the principal and all the assistant principals; the liaison team, made up of a police officer and a school employee; and the student council all made recommendations, but that the administrative team developed the rules after input. The assistant principal and staff members agreed with that assessment, but the assistant principal and staff members indicated that the Site Based Decision Making Team (SBDM), teachers, individual students, and parents all had input as well. Students agreed that the student council and the PTA assisted in developing strategies. One staff member stated that the principal accepted input, retained the right to review, and delegated to accomplish what was necessary.

The principal, the assistant principal and staff members all felt that gang members
kept a low profile at school due to the strategies that have been put into place. They all indicated that students appreciated the efforts of adults to keep the school safe, and stayed in school as a result. The principal stated, "The students that don't participate in gangs see that we don't tolerate it and they are very appreciative. Very appreciative of it. The ones that are in the gangs have a real low profile and tend to keep their activity outside" (PA). One student stated, however, that he never really felt safe. "They'll [rival gang members] get you," he said. "In the streets, the principal ain't going to be out there in the streets." When asked if he felt safe at school, however, he replied, "I do" (SA3).

When asked what they would change if they had the opportunity, the responses from administrators and students were very different. Administrators indicated that they would have orientation meetings at the beginning of the school year to "put [rules] fresh on their minds at the beginning of the year. Go over the procedures to let them know where we stand" (APA). Students, on the other hand, while they agreed that meeting with individuals and groups is appropriate, they also indicated that metal detectors are needed. "We have the hand things," the big ones they have to walk through "really don't work" (SA2).

Each respondent was then given an opportunity to indicate any other issues which might be of value to the research. The principal said that "Saying it [gang-related behavior] is not tolerated and standing behind what you say" (PA) is important. The assistant principal, on the other hand, would set up a neutral zone with the help of an outside agency, would develop a peer mentor group to speak to younger students, and...
would teach students non-violent ways of dealing with problems. One teacher indicated that there needed to be uniformity between administrators in dealing with children in trouble, whether or not it was gang-related. She stated that some teachers needed to improve their classroom management skills or get out of education, and that parents needed to be more involved in the education of their high school youth. "They are great in elementary school, OK in middle school, but in high school, forget it" (TA1). She further indicated that parents deny that their children are in gangs. "... it wasn't because I was involved in the conference because of gangs. It was just a progress conference. And the parents came and you could just tell by the shocked look, and in their case ... They just absolutely did not know" (TA1). The other teacher stated that it is important for staff members to be on the lookout for gang members. "I get involved because if I see a kid scribbling on his notebook gang signs and stuff, then I tell them 'You need to gang up on your education. That's the only thing you need to gang up on.'" (TA2). Students echoed some of the concerns of the staff. They indicated that consistency is important. "Yeah, we have that [rules], but some people do not go by the rules" (SA2). When asked if the rules were not enforced by some staff members, she said, "Some of them don't see it" (SA2).

The student handbook stated that "gang or drug-related apparel, logos, handkerchiefs, bandannas, or other items not approved by the administration (notebooks, shoes, books, shoestrings, etc.)" were not allowed. It was made very clear in the student handbook that administrators retained the right to determine what was inappropriate. The
teacher handbook stated that "students are to refrain from fighting, rowdy behavior, and
gang activity of any type."

Some gang graffiti was present, both inside and outside the building, and there were
many places students could go to hide or engage in activities which were harmful,
destructive, or illegal. Several hallways would be very difficult to supervise, and the
lighting was not bright enough in some hallways to discourage inappropriate activity. One
of the campus monitors moved students out of the hall when he saw me approaching.
Another stopped me to ask what I was doing in the building. Still a third campus monitor
indicated that he is not notified when students have a particular activity, so he was not
aware of whether students should or should not be in the halls.

School B

School B served an area made up of housing projects, affluent neighborhoods, and
businesses. It was made up largely of African-American students, though there were some
Hispanic and white students enrolled. It was located on two main thoroughfares, and
traffic could have been a problem, especially if someone had wanted to do a drive-by
shooting. There was a large apartment complex directly across the street from the school,
and both teachers and students mentioned that students often went there instead of to
classes. A local college was near the school.

The school has had three principals in the past five years, and both teachers and
students were feeling the strain of inconsistent management. Both of the teachers who
were interviewed mentioned that lack of consistency was a real problem in discipline of
the students, that the dress code was inconsistently enforced. The site visit yielded a distinct support for these views.

The principal stated that safety is an issue in every school, especially from outsiders. He noted that the parking lot was a particular area of concern, where "We have outsiders driving in on the parking lot, trying to mix it up with our children" (PB). He stated that gang activity has to be kept away from the school, and the main problem with gang-related activity was the number of fights caused. The assistant principal indicated that the provoking of fights and the presence of drugs cause safety problems, but that weapons have not been much of a concern this school year. The teachers indicated that students go to fights rather than staying away from them, that the outside doors were now locked to prevent problems with outsiders, and that safety was not just a school problem, but a societal one. The student who was interviewed indicated that he had seen guns and knives in cars on the parking lots, as well as drugs on campus.

There is a gang presence in School B, according to the principal, as evidenced by gang colors and fights. He, like School A's staff, mentioned that girls were fighting as much or more than are the boys. Likewise, he stated that he does not believe girl fights are gang-related. The assistant principal indicated that he knew there were gang problems in the community, due to working with some of the students in church as well as at school. He did note, however, that gang activity was not as bad this year as it had been in previous years. Perhaps, he noted, they "realize that we are not going to tolerate it, any type of gang-related activity. We don't tolerate the clothing or any type of gang-related
attire" (APB). The teachers, too, indicated that gang-related activity has improved over past years, but it is still seen from time to time. Both mentioned a big gang fight. "We had a horrible one the day before yesterday" (TB1). "We had a fight on Tuesday, it was gang-related" (TB2). One teacher indicated that her students talked to her all the time about their involvement in gangs. "Oh, sure, and the kids will tell you that. My first period is pretty much Crip controlled . . . they don't hide the fact that they are involved or have been involved and that is a trust factor that they have with me" (TB2). She indicated that anti-gang activities should be incorporated into the curriculum because there was so much activity in the school. The student who was interviewed said, "There's a lot of Crips. It's like mostly Crips. There's a few Bloods, but don't nobody mess with the Bloods because the Bloods, well, be like strong to go to that school. Don't nobody mess with them because they know that they're crazy" (SB1).

When asked about violence in the school, the principal said there was a real potential for violence if the administrators and campus monitors were not visible, especially during passing periods, during lunches, and before and after school. The assistant principal said there was not a problem with violence in the school, and that there has been only one major fight this year. The staff members indicated that there were not more problems in their school than there were at other schools. One teacher said that students did not bring weapons on campus. "Their weapons are their hands" (TB2). Teachers did express concern, however, that students have been allowed to get away with too much. The student said most of the violence took place after school rather than on
campus during the school day.

The strategies used to prevent gang-related activity and violence were described by the principal as being a no tolerance policy, a dress code prohibiting the wearing of IN MEMORY OF T-shirts, plaits or braids for boys, and colored shoelaces. He said that teachers needed to be at their doors, and that staff development activities dealing with gang-related issues were provided. The assistant principal echoed the zero tolerance policy and the dress code. Teachers indicated that they had had staff development in past years, but not recently, that there was a dress code, but it was not consistently enforced, and that removal was a strategy for blatant gang activity. The student indicated that the "principals are scared. They try to fit in with the kids too much" (SB1).

Participation by various stakeholders was described by the principal, with the SBDM, the CCC, teacher committees, parents and students all having been involved in developing and implementing the strategies used at School B. The assistant principal indicated that most of the strategies in place were carried over from the previous administration, and that he was not a part of developing the strategies. He indicated that the principal had brought some strategies from his previous assignment. Teachers indicated that there was a lot of planning, but very little of the planning was put into place by the principal. There was, according to the teachers, no community input. The student indicated that the police were involved in the planning and implementation of strategies to prevent or reduce gang-related activity and violence.

When asked how students were impacted by the strategies used to prevent or
reduce gang-related activity and violence, the principal said that students liked having structure and feeling safe. The assistant principal said students felt safe, and that having personal relationships with students helped achieve that end. According to teachers, those students who were not involved in gang activity liked the strategies, but all students were adversely affected due to the lack of consistency in the enforcement of rules. The student indicated that there did not appear to be much of a strategy. He said that kids who were "kicked out of" school for gang activity were back there soon after being removed. He did not say if they came on their own or were trespassing.

The principal indicated that he would make the dress code stricter, especially the ban on certain colors. The assistant principal indicated that he would make the teachers more responsible, and let them have a greater influence in the planning of strategies. He also said he would have better security and be stricter. The lack of consistency in enforcing the rules was a real concern for teachers, with better communication and enforcement of rules for teachers also among the areas they would change. They indicated that teachers had asked in September for outside doors to be locked, and that it was spring before that occurred. They said they would remove those staff members who are not willing to uphold the rules and regulations set for them and the students, they would do a better job in keeping outsiders out of the building, and they would change their alternative learning center. One teacher said she would provide structured activities during the lunch periods to prevent problems during that time period, and she would keep the known gang leaders out of the school. The student echoed some of the teachers' concerns.
He said that he would hire all new staff and security. He said that most teachers did not care about the students. He said he would want teachers who could handle their classes.

Other concerns which arose during interviews included the statement from the principal that principals must admit there is a gang problem on campus. He indicated that they used a CrimeStoppers program which provided rewards for tips. He indicated that students would turn in gang activity for $25. He also said that there were some real concerns about the use of marijuana. The assistant principal said he did not know of anything he would change. One teacher indicated that he had been told not to ask what happened when he sent a student to the office. He reiterated that policies were in place, but were not consistently enforced, and another teacher was concerned about the movement of gang activity into younger children's lives. The student made an interesting observation. He stated that kids fight at school because they want someone to be there to break them up. He added, "I wish I'd never gotten in trouble in school" (SB1).

The student handbook stated very clearly that certain kinds of activities were prohibited. Fighting, disruptive activities, assaults, possession of drugs or alcohol, smoking, profanity, obscence gestures, abusive language, violation of the dress code, violation of school rules, stealing, extortion, demonstrations, vandalism, gambling and gang-related activities were among those activities which were prohibited. The dress code very clearly prohibited hats or other headgear, alcohol or tobacco ads on clothing items, clothing that was suggestive or abusive, anything which could be disruptive to the classroom, jewelry that related to gangs or violence, and any colors or combinations of
colors which symbolize gang membership. The teacher handbook did not address gang activity in any form.

During the site visit to School B, it was simple to see the inconsistency of which the teachers spoke. Not only was the dress code not being enforced, the language in the cafeteria was terrible. No adults made an effort to stop or reduce it. Students did not seem to be interested in getting to classes on time, and though teachers were at their duty stations, they did not say anything to most of the students as they ambled to class. One student came up to the researcher in the hallway and asked "Are you trying to get us a new principal?" It was not clear whether he wanted a new principal or if he was afraid he might get one. Many gang signs were thrown during the lunch period, both African-American and Hispanic. The whole situation looked like a situation out of control.

School C

School C was a large school, with over two thousand students enrolled. It had changed over the past few years from a largely white community to one which was largely Hispanic, though there were some African-American and white students who attended. The school was located on two major streets, close to a major university. Some of the students who should have enrolled in School C opted to attend the technical school which served the whole city. The area surrounding the school was both residential and business oriented, with some of the more affluent areas in the city feeding its enrollment. The principal was assigned only this year, and did not come into the school planning to make major changes.
There was a strong academic program at the school, as well as a large language center which served immigrants new to the United States. There was recruiting done to encourage the attendance of students who would be strong academically, and the program competed successfully with those schools which had magnet programs.

The grounds had obviously been marked regularly by graffiti, but the school and the district had worked to keep the graffiti removed or painted over. Students had been marking their turf, and there were two gangs predominant. It was interesting to note, however, that the gangs had not crossed out the graffiti of the rival gangs, perhaps because the school district had acted quickly to remove all graffiti.

Safety, to the principal of School C, was just a matter of numbers. He also stated that because of the large number of outside doors, it was hard to know who was on campus. The assistant principal also said that safety was a problem. He stated that he depended, in part, on the reports of students regarding gang activity in order to "beef up security" (APC). All three staff members indicated that safety was a concern, but not a big problem, with most of the fights and other activities taking place off campus. Students, however, indicated that safety was a real concern to them. When asked why, they said they feared the rival gangs.

The principal stated that while there were many gangs at his school, they had no more than any other inner city high school. He said that society was that way, and that Hispanic and African-American youth were expected to join gangs. The assistant principal indicated that he knew there were gangs at school because of the initiations, the
intimidating, and the maddogging (staring). He further indicated that he believed there was no one else kids could turn to for the satisfaction they needed. The teachers indicated that gang activity was a reality at School C for several reasons. One said "tagging" (TC3), one said white caps were indications of white supremacy (TC2), and one said that he had been to the gang fights at night as a volunteer in the Comin' Up program (TC1). Students, too, indicated they recognized gang activity at school due to fights. One stated he both heard and saw gang activity at school because "Well, I am one. I'm in a gang" (SC2).

As to violence in School C, the principal recounted a shooting near the campus. He did say, however, that the district was willing to send extra security when it was needed. The police department was also willing, he indicated. The assistant principal said that fights were an indicator of violence at school, while the teachers indicated that violence was not always gang-related. They also said that there was probably no more violence in the school than there was in society. Students agreed that fights were an indicator of violence. One student stated regarding the presence of violence, "I mean, I guess there is because of the things that I've seen. You know, things that have happened around me" (SC1).

When asked about the strategies employed by the principal to prevent or reduce gang-related activity and violence, the principal said he would not discuss gangs with his kids. He said he provided education for his staff, but not too much, because he did not want staff members picking on kids who wore blue or had a tattoo. He said gang clothing was banned, but not specific colors. He indicated that colored shoelaces, bandannas, rags,
towels, and headbands were confiscated. He also indicated that he held parent conferences to discuss the actions, activities, and clothing of students who got into trouble. The dress code was mentioned by the assistant principal as well, with zero tolerance as the cornerstone of the policy. He said specific items banned included colored shoelaces, IN MEMORY OF T-shirts, and other gang attire. He indicated that the monitors were in the halls, in the community during lunch, and noted the Comin' Up program. One staff member indicated that students would tell him when anything gang-related was about to occur, and he passed it on to the administration. One of the teachers indicated visibility of administrators as a key strategy to prevent unwanted occurrences of gang activity and violence. She indicated that the principal stated at the beginning of the year (his first year) that he would just stand back one year and watch how the school worked. Then he would decide what rules to put into place. The other teacher said she did not know what the strategies were, but that she felt he had tried to address problems with the dress code. Her concern, however, was that it was not consistently enforced. One student indicated that he had helped the principal broker a truce between gangs, while the other indicated that the main strategy was to "Try to get all the gang members out of school. Try to kick us out and stuff" (SC2).

Participation in developing policy, according to the principal, was led by the administrative team. He indicated that he would take suggestions from other groups, especially the SBDM, the CCC, and the liaison team, but the community and the teachers were involved only if they complained. The assistant principal agreed that regular
meetings were held to discuss policy, and that participation came from all administrators, the safety committee, the campus monitors and the SBDM. One staff member indicated that he had been involved in the planning of strategies in previous years, but that he had been excluded this year. Another indicated that the principal had used the SBDM and the administrative team, while the third said "I have no clue" (TC3). One student, as indicated above, said that he had assisted in brokering a truce between gangs. The other student said that he did not know who helped develop and implement strategies, but he assumed the other administrators and the campus monitors were involved. He said the truce did not work.

As to how students have been impacted by the strategies employed to prevent or reduce gang-related activity and violence, the principal indicated that students trusted him enough to report situations to him. The assistant principal agreed, and added that kids felt safe, and they had an environment conducive to learning. Teachers indicated that gang members as well as non-gang members felt safe and stayed in school as a result. Students said they stayed in school because they felt safe. One said, "I mean, yeah, it makes me feel good that someone actually listened to us, you know. Especially gang members. People just look at you and think, oh, you're a gang member. That's it. They don't care, but once they get to know you as a person, it is a different story" (SC1).

If he could change anything he has done, the principal stated that he would have had an orientation meeting with small groups of students at the beginning of the year, to explain the rules to and set the expectations for students. The assistant principal, on the
other hand, said he would be stricter, while he believed that the students would have more metal detectors. He said that about two percent of all the kids in school caused most of the problems, and the rest were in school to get an education. Staff members had still a different view on what should be changed. They indicated that the students needed genuine, caring individuals who had the best interest of the students at heart. One said "I think that whatever personal issues may be involved, I think that you should set them aside because we are here to educate our kids and I know for sure that you've got to have a safe school. If there are people who are willing and genuinely care about those kids, I think that they should be listened to" (TC1.) Another said that they needed more positive communication with the community, and the other said that consistency is a real need. She stated, "What I would change the most is for him to have in place a really clearly communicated, and by all the teachers, where there is a real teacher committment of where I will do my best to follow through with this. Consistent . . . And for him to model enforcement" (TC3). One student said he did not know what he would change, while the other said he would put more rules in, but he would relax the dress code. He said that he would allow the colored shoelaces, allow shirts to be worn outside the pants, but he added, "Probably ain't no way to control it [gang activity]" (SC2).

As to other issues of concern to School C, the principal stated that duplicating the efforts already available in the community were needless. He indicated that school personnel should take advantage of the services available rather than starting over each year. He was concerned about the home lives of his children, with weapons, drugs and
other issues making their lives difficult. He stated that school administrators need to be sincere, because gang members, as well as children in general, knew when adults were sincere. He said to remain professional with them, and not get on their level or be like them. He stressed that school personnel needed to model the alternatives, not the observed behaviors. The principal specifically stated that young male administrators too often "get down" with students, and that such behavior should be avoided. The assistant principal feared that students were watching too much television and think they, too will be able to get up and return after having been shot. He said that an after school program, ACCESS, is effective. He stressed that immediate gratification was important to children, and that they receive that from the gang. He also said "Pray to God" (APC). Staff members expressed concerns that gang membership is growing, and that students needed adult mentors and role models.

The student code of conduct at School C prohibited clothing that displayed vulgar or obscene gestures or pictures, sex, drugs, alcohol, violence or derogatory symbols directed at ethnic, racial or religious groups. It also prohibited wearing gang-related attire, as well as symbols that might be gang-related on personal items. The teacher handbook added that the personal appearance/dress may not disrupt the educational process or call undue attention to the individual. Students were expected to make adjustments, or the school may confiscate the items, send students home, or ask parents to bring appropriate clothing. Administrators retained the right of review.

During the site visit, a lot of gang graffiti was found. One particularly interesting
finding was made while there. The administration had evidently done a good job in painting over graffiti on the outside of the building. As a result, the students had started writing gang graffiti in pencil, so that it could not be seen from afar. It was very obvious from the amount and nature of the graffiti that there are rival gangs on campus. One comment the principal made, however, made an impression on the researcher. He had stated that the rival gangs used different parts of the campus as their turf. There was no overwriting of graffiti. It appeared that the graffiti was painted by school personnel, but was never marked out by rival gangs. That is highly unusual when there are rival gangs in the same vicinity.

School D

School D was located in an older area of town, with buildings that were boarded shut, and structures that were crumbling. The school building itself was a beautiful old building that appeared to be well maintained. The population of the area was largely African-American, but the neighborhood was seeing a rapid influx of Hispanics. With those Hispanics were coming Hispanic gangs and Hispanic gang members, and a large number of Hispanic gang members met at a house only a block or so from the school. A university is near the school.

The principal of the school was African-American, and had been assigned to the school several years. He was described by his staff members as a good communicator. The school was not recognized for its academic program, and had been low performing prior to the assignment of the principal. A language center which served immigrants new
to the United States was also housed in the school.

When asked to respond whether safety was an issue in his school, the principal replied "Safety is the number one priority" (PD). He indicated that he had taken a no-tolerance approach to gangs, and that the administrators stayed on top of situations as they arose, so safety was not a big problem on campus. The assistant principal, however, stated that safety was not only an issue in every school, but also in the home, the shopping center, and in society in general. He said that he worried about students breaking a leg in PE or on the stairs. He listed weapons as a safety issue, as well as the outside areas, especially the parking lots. He was concerned about outsiders, and said that his first act on seeing someone he did not know was to "when I see them . . . to make a quick evaluation, is this a safety issue or not" (APD). One teacher said that students had expressed fear off campus on the way to and from school, but felt safe generally at school. She added that she had not seen as much evidence of gang activity during this school year as she had in the past. Another teacher said that the administration was proactive in dealing with safety issues, and was good at communicating to teachers what they should do in certain situations. One student said she had not seen evidence of activity that would make her feel unsafe, but the other student, upon being asked "Do you feel safe there?" replied, "No. Because it ain't safe" (SD2).

When asked if he perceived there was a gang problem at his school, the principal said there was. When I asked him why he believed that to be true, he said, "We're in an era when gangs are a popular thing now. Where kids don't necessarily feel that their families
are meeting their needs so oftentimes they simply turn to gangs, you know, just to
provide them with that family atmosphere" (PD). The assistant principal said almost the
same thing when he replied, "Well, I'm not going to say we have a gang problem in the
school, we have a gang problem in the community. What gang members are represented in
the community are represented in the school in some form or fashion" (APD). One staff
member said that she had heard the kids talking about gangs, and had seen graffiti around,
but that it did not affect her personally. The other staff member agreed. He stated that he
saw evidence in the dress of gang members and in graffiti. He agreed, however, that it did
not cause a problem at school. One student said she saw gang colors and gang signs, and
the other said he also saw gang signs and colors being flashed at school.

As to violence, the principal said that fights were an indicator of violence, with
which the assistant principal agreed. He added, however, that girls were now fighting
more than boys. He also stated that there had been a gun in the building this year, though
it was unloaded. It had been found on a special education student in a restricted
environment. He added that fifteen knives, some illegal, had been found this year. One
teacher reiterated an incident at the bus stop in which a girl had had a rock thrown at her
by a boy who attended the school, while the second recalled a shooting incident which
had occurred off campus. Both students agreed with the principal that fights were the
major indicator of violence.

Strategies listed by the principal were zero tolerance, a dress code,
communication, staff development, and CrimeStoppers. The assistant principal also
mentioned a dress code, but added that the police gang unit was effective. He mentioned enforcing the rules that were in place. "And of course," he said, "the key is to back up what you say" (APD). Additionally, he mentioned parent conferences and removal.

Teachers cited the visibility of administrators and campus monitors, the police presence, duty stations for teachers, a community program, staff development and surveying the students as additional strategies. The students said that a dress code was in place.

When asked who participated in developing and implementing the policies, the principal said he just carried on the strategies that were already in place when he arrived, making sure that teachers knew they needed to follow those rules. He said he imagined that the SBDM and other teacher committees had been active in developing the strategies, but he was not sure. He did say that last year he had involved teachers in brainstorming activities when they prepared for developing their student and teacher handbooks for this year. The assistant principal echoed the principal's recollection of groups who assisted in developing strategies. He added that the administrative team had also assisted, and cited his input as the assistant principal with the most experience with gangs. One teacher said she did not know who assisted the principal, but knew that she did not. She said she assumed that the administrative team had assisted him. She added that the principal was a good communicator, and involved the staff in many efforts on campus. She said that before he implemented a decision, he usually allowed the faculty to see his thoughts, and that teacher committees were active in the life of the school. The other teacher stated that he had been a part of the planning in previous years, and was now on the safety
committee again. Students said they did not know who assisted the principal in making his decision, but knew they had not been involved. One said, "It was just here when I got here" (SD2).

The principal felt that kids want to do what was right because they reported gang activity. He felt that students at School D felt safe, though from time to time there was resistance from students to the dress code. The assistant principal repeated those sentiments, stating that the last thing kids wanted was to get hurt at school. Students felt good about reporting problems, he said, though "it's not an overt expression of gratitude or thanks or anything, but most of the time, when a major incident occurs or is going to occur, they, somebody always comes and lets us know" (APD). One teacher stated that she felt safe at school and felt that the students did as well. She said the kids knew who the gang members were even if the teachers did not. The other teacher said that they had given the students a set of expectations, and that they were generally followed. He said students felt safe, and knew that inappropriate behavior simply did not belong at school. One student stated that she had just recently moved from New York, and she felt much safer in Texas. The other student said he did not feel safe anywhere because gangs would do whatever they were going to do when they got ready to do it. He also said he really didn't care about school.

When asked if they could change anything the principal had done to prevent or reduce gang-related activity and violence, staff members varied in their responses. The principal said he would involve the parents more in decision making. The assistant
principal said that because the school is in a low socioeconomic area, he would change the focus of the school more toward the vocational. He said that he felt students needed more training toward getting and keeping jobs which would allow them to support themselves. He said that, if possible, he would like to have more monetary resources for the community. One teacher stated that the kids would probably have speakers in to discuss gang activity, but that she would not change anything. The other teacher said he would like to have some refresher staff development meetings on gangs and gang activity. One student said she would not change anything. "It is well taken care of and makes it have a low profile and many people don't know what's going on with gangs" (SD2). The other student said he would put in better metal detectors and use them randomly, and make students wear belts so he could see if they were strapped (wearing guns).

The principal, when asked if there was anything else he would like to add to the information he had already given, added that teachers need to understand that students have different learning styles. Kids have to be kept in school, he said. He added that the school needed to be the child's family. "If we say to the kid, this is my family, and this family is going to provide me with the success to go way beyond what the gang is going to give me. I think that's what's going to make the difference. But I think kids have to have somewhere there is going to be success. They feel success with the gang, so if we can do that . . ." (PD). The assistant principal noted that students did not read very well, and that hampered their success in school. He said that the families of some of the gang children have never worked, and some of their parents were in jail. He related that some of
the parents were also in the gang and often came to school for a conference and got into
confrontations with the parents of other children. He said the community needed a
"jumpstart" to help them solve these and other problems which lead youths into gangs.
Both teachers said that they had covered all their concerns. One teacher then suggested
removing graffiti promptly. One student said she would ask the police to patrol more
often, and the other said that principals needed to listen to kids more. Teachers were not
always right, he said. He added,

"It takes two to fight. Sometimes the kids say things that makes the teachers mad.

... The students aren't right all the time. I mean the teacher ain't wrong all the
time. ... Well, I'd tell the teacher to quit bringing their problems to school. I
mean quit bringing their home problems to school. They got a death in the family
or something. ... they want you to be in the mood they in. ... Y'all say
something and both of y'all are going to talk. See what I'm saying?" (SD2).

The student code of conduct prohibited clothing with pictures, logos, phrases, or
words that were obscene, suggestive, crude, racially insensitive or immoral. It also banned
clothing which contained gang symbols or colors, gang paraphernalia, plaits or braids for
boys, derogatory language, weapons, narcotics, alcohol, inhalants, or related
paraphernalia, and gang-related behavior of any kind. The teacher handbook prohibited
the same items, and asked teachers to report such activities. In addition, the teacher
handbook gives pointers to teachers on how to handle certain situations and to collect
certain items from the students. School D's teacher handbook was the most complete.
The site visit yielded much gang graffiti. Some fresh graffiti was painted on an out-
building near the football field, as well as on the field house. There was also graffiti on the 
concrete sidewalk leading from the student parking lot. One of the concerns noted during 
the site visit was that students did not move on to class when the bell sounded. Several 
students, particularly boys, stood around waiting for the tardy bell to ring. This loitering 
appeared to happen mostly on the upper floors. When one teacher was asked why that 
was true, he said it depended on whose class the students were supposed to be attending. 

School E

School E was located in a rapidly-growing, relatively affluent neighborhood, where 
parents are actively involved with their children. The principal has been at the school for a 
number of years, and is a strong leader. His staff described him as being in charge, as being 
willing to accept input from others, but able and ready to make the hard decisions as they 
became necessary. The school is mixed ethnically, with white, African-American and 
Hispanic students.

The area surrounding the school is made up of largely single-family homes, though 
there are some apartment complexes. Many businesses are in the area, and traffic is 
monumental. There are certainly some students bused into the school, but the parking lot 
is full of students' cars. There is a magnet program, and the principal described the school 
as one where students were highly motivated, performed well on standardized tests, and 
where high expectations are modeled. There was very little evidence of gang membership 
on campus, and the Comin' Up program had no community center site in the area.
The principal, when asked if there were safety issues in his school, replied, "Is our school safe? Yes. Could it be safer? I don't know how much safer you can be. . . . I don't think that a school can prepare for everything our residents are potentially capable of" (PE). The assistant principal mirrored the principal's statements, but added, "Safety is an ongoing thing because it could happen anywhere. . . . A safe school doesn't mean that it can't become unsafe instantly. And so it is a constant vigil. . . . there are some things we'd like to see better" (APE). One teacher said he heard no complaints about safety, though he knew it to be important. The other teacher said that she knew the administrators were worried about having a safe school. The student who was interviewed said that the school is safe "to an extent. Not really, though, I mean . . . most of the kids keep their p's and q's while they're there, and yeah, there's little skirmishes, but I think that there's more girl fights than there are guy fights" (SE1). He added that he had been involved in a gun incident on the campus in past years, but drugs were a bigger problem than guns.

The principal said that when he arrived several years ago, there was a gang presence in the school. He said, however that there was no clear-cut policy or enforcement of policy to prevent gang activity. He said that there was graffiti, but it was everybody’s responsibility, and that it was removed within twenty-four hours. He said there were gangs, but the activity was not tolerated. The assistant principal said there were gang members in the school, but not gang activity. He told a story about sending some of his students to a program for gang intervention. When they returned, the students "came back and said 'Man, those guys were throwing colors!' and they were scared to
death" (APE). He said some of them wanted to be bad, but "they aren't near as bad as some of them" (APE). He said if you had gang members you had gang problems, but at this school, it was not as bad as some schools. One staff member said he was ignorant or naive about gang activity. He said he believed that there probably were gang members in the school, but that he did not notice anything unusual himself. The one student that he had become aware of was pointed out to him by another staff member. Another teacher said that the announcements at the beginning of the year told her there were potential problems, but that she saw no evidence of gangs in the building. She added that there were some fights, and that an occasional item, which could be used as a weapon, was taken away from students. The student said, "but what he doesn't understand is even if you took a Blood or a Crip or a Southside Sur or whatever, you can dress him however you want. He's still going to be what he is" (SE1). He added that Bloods go to school in red Polos and "look pretty as a bud, but they are obviously slamming it [gang banging]" (SE1). He said he could go to school wearing his colors, and no one knew it, because his colors are black and brown.

With regard to violence, the principal reminded the researcher that violence was everywhere, but it was not specific to the school. He reiterated that those who engage in violence should not plan to attend his school. The assistant principal said "just read the paper about the things that are happening. I mean, we've got a lot of violence in our society. . . . you see violence on the TV. . . . so you see violence everywhere" (APE). He said he hoped that someone at the school would pick up on some young person who may
go off prior to it (shootings at schools recently) happening at his school, but that random violence could happen anywhere. "If there is one act of violence, I consider that a problem," responded one staff member (TE1). He did mention that there is too much violence in society, and especially in the movies. Violence was too acceptable to some students in his opinion. One teacher said that she was concerned that students did not know how to solve problems non-violently. She said she saw more and more evidence of kids hitting others, boy-to-boy, boy-to-girl and girl-to boy. She said there was an occasional girl fight, but they were rare. The student who was interviewed recounted going to different schools and getting in fights with students there. He was proud that he could get on other campuses undetected. He did note, however, that most of the real violence took place away from school. This student's response reminds the reader that, as most administrators have noted, outsiders can be a real source of potential violence.

When asked about the strategies he employed to prevent or reduce gang-related activity and violence, the principal said he made it very clear that his school was not the place to be if students intended to engage in such activity. He said that he removed those students who were blatant gang members or engaged in blatant gang-related activity. He said he had implemented an enforceable dress code and removed graffiti immediately. He had expectations that his students would act like adults at school if they intended to be treated as such, but that they liked testing the limits of the rules. He used security cameras, some of which were not working, and his administrators and campus monitors were visible. The assistant principal said that the very strict dress code they employed
took away the identity of the gang member, that they used zero tolerance for all gang activity, that they had security cameras, and that parent conferences were used as tools to prevent problems. Zero tolerance was the strategy noted by one teacher, who added that if students engaged in gang activity, they were removed from school. Another teacher noted the dress code, the training of teachers, the visibility of administrators, and the police liaison team as strategies she had seen in the school. The student said the principal did nothing, that "he thinks gang banging is dead or something like that... He doesn't have to live it every day. He doesn't go through having shotgun holes in your house and this and that" (SE1).

The principal stated that he was the leader of the school, and as such, would be held responsible for the actions he implemented. He stated that, while he took input from a wide variety of staff members, and specifically from the liaison team and the administrative team, he made the final decisions. When asked if he used the Site Based Decision Making Team to assist him in developing the strategies he implemented, he replied, "God so loved the world, he didn't send a committee. No if you don't know what you want, you don't need to be running a school. If you need to generate people to tell you what to do, it's not going to work. You never get anything done, because you have... agendas" (PE). The assistant principal felt that the stakeholders had a bit more input than did the principal. He did say, however, that the principal retained the right to make the final decision. He said that they had discussed uniforms, but there had to be eighty percent of the school community voting and eighty percent of that population voting yes.
He said he did not look for uniforms to come in due to that high requirement from the
district. One teacher said he expected that the downtown administration had some input
in the development of strategies, particularly the removal of students, and that the police
liaison team was there to help. Another said the principal was open to suggestions, but
was a very strong leader who made the final decision. The student said he felt that parents
had had some input into the strategies used by the principal, but they did not know what
they were doing. He said they should have talked with gang members. They just tried to
"suffocate the gang problem" (SE1).

When asked how students were impacted by the strategies he used, the principal
replied that his fundamental charge was to educate children: teach them to "read, write,
speak, and communicate" (PE) and that is what he intended to do. He said they felt safer
at school than they did anywhere in the community and he was proud of that. The
assistant principal said that kids wanted discipline. He said they had to get used to
following rules so they could hold a job and perform in society. He added that the
students felt safe at school. Some of them, he said, were treated better at school than they
were at home. Students, according to one teacher, were afraid to talk about how they felt
regarding the principal's strategies. He said they were afraid it would ruin their macho
image. He added that he thought students felt safe because he never heard students say
otherwise. As a teacher, he felt safe, and could focus more on the job at hand. Another
staff member said, "Gosh, I hope positively" when asked how students were impacted by
the strategies the principal used. She said she never heard a student say he or she is afraid.
The student told me that he felt they did not do anything, so he did not know how to feel about what they did. He did say it was quieter after the principal removed all the gang members.

The principal said that he never made a point of second guessing himself. He said that he made the best decision he could make at the time and then had to live with the results of that decision. He reiterated that the superintendent was going to ask him to justify what he did and why, and he had to be able to do that. The assistant principal said he would implement some intervention programs, and perhaps implement peer mediation. He said in either case, he would involve the parents. One teacher suggested that he would implement more staff development for teachers. The student said he would like to see a gang intervention program in his school like many of the other schools have in place now. (He was referring to Comin' Up, the program which provided all the gang members for the research.) In addition, he said he would tighten security.

As to other issues, the principal said that students that were removed from his school have no business returning. He said that there were some people who had been identified as criminals by their behaviors. They wore collars (he was referring to electronic monitors), did not want to be in school but were forced to be there, and probably should be in the penitentiary. He said these youth had total disregard for consequences, whether from school authorities or law enforcement authorities. He also said that the schools had been given far too much responsibility for society. "... where we've gotten into trouble is that we're taking on all these responsibilities to feed, to clothe, to take care of unborn
The assistant principal said that he would involve more people in decision making, and he would make the teachers more consistent in enforcing the rules. The student said that younger gang members were inexperienced and they brought guns to school, while the older ones knew that they would get into trouble for bringing the guns. He added, 
"...why take a gun to school? If you're going to shoot somebody, do it where nobody is around and no witnesses or nothing. You know... If you shoot somebody at school, you've got 2,500 witnesses that can point the finger at you and say that you were the trigger man" (SE1). Additionally, according to the student, he played mind games.

The student code of conduct prohibited classroom disturbances, using profanity or vulgar language, physically or verbally abusing another person, extortion, possessing a weapon, inappropriate sexual behaviors, inciting a riot, possessing alcohol or drugs, and persistent violation of school rules. The consequences for violation of the rules were very specific. A specific section of the student handbook forbade all gang activity, gang attire, and gang speech which might be viewed as evidence of membership or affiliation with any gang. The dress code was specific regarding gang clothing. Students may not wear drooping pants, or pants with large outer pockets. No gang-related clothing, accessories or jewelry were allowed. The teacher handbook, in addition to repeating the student dress code, contained a dress code for teachers as well.

The site visit yielded no evidence of gang activity. The halls were clear, clean, and
well kept. Many trophies and other evidence of student achievement were posted.

Students were pleasant, well mannered, and relatively quiet in the halls. It appeared that the strategies the principal used were working, at least on the surface.

School F

School F was large white, though there were some African-American and Hispanic students. The principal was white as well. Both students interviewed were African-American, while two teachers were white and one was African-American. The area surrounding the school was largely residential and businesses, with the school being located close to two major highways. An area close to the school was recently turned into government subsidized housing, and staff members tied that area to most of the gang problems experienced by the school.

The staff described the principal as being actively involved in the life of the school. He described himself as being actively involved in discipline. Both he and they said he was seldom in his office, and that he was constantly monitoring instruction and safety. The building was clean and well-maintained. Only a few references were seen which would lead the researcher to believe there was a gang presence in the school, though the principal described having several different gangs in place. He said that he respected them as long as they respected him and the school enough to go to classes and not engage in gang activity during school on the campus.

The principal at School F said safety was an issue to him. He indicated that there were some drug problems, and there were felonies that students committed off campus
which required removal. The assistant principal said that safety is "paramount" (APF).
She added that campus monitors were on a regular rotation schedule, that the parking lots
have been locked, and that lunch passes were checked when students left at lunch time.
Maintenance was done regularly so that no areas were left unlit or unsafe. Safety was the
number one priority of the principal, according to two teachers. A third staff member
indicated that the feeling of safety has become more elusive over the past few years. One
teacher indicated that the principal told everyone there were gangs in the building, but that
she did not see any problems. A second teacher said that the principal did not tolerate
anything that interrupts instruction. A third teacher said he felt that the problem of safety
was a societal one. "They are rude, and they don't know they are rude. . . Frankly, I think
this is probably a less disciplined school than it was five years ago. . . more situations in
the halls, more fights, obvious, major school problems" (TF3). One student said "You
know, you look for trouble, you're going to get trouble. You see and you don't see. That is
all I'm saying" (SF1). The other student said he felt safe because he stayed to himself.

When asked about gang activity, the principal said that he had four gangs in the
building: two sets of Crips, one set of Bloods, and the Latin Kings. In addition, he said
there were some from Varrio Diamond Hill, a group called the Hogs, as well as skinheads
and rednecks. He said that whatever was represented in the city, it was also represented
in the school. He added that one who knew could probably identify gang members, but
that the gang members did not bother each other. He indicated that that did not come
about accidentally, but that they had learned to tolerate each other. Out in the
neighborhood, on the other hand, a gang member had to be very careful of what he wore, as he knew what would happen to him there. The assistant principal said there were gang members in the school, but no gang problems. They waited until they got off campus to engage in overt gang behaviors. Both teachers TF1 and TF2 said there were gang members, but not gang problems. TF3 said that they now brought it to school to a greater degree, but it was still not evident in anything other than dress. He said that there had been some gang violence off campus. The students said there was graffiti in the restrooms, but there was not much gang activity at school. "They leave it and go back home. They wake up in the morning and go to school. They do whatever in school. Then after school they just talk all they know on the street" (SF2).

Regarding violence in the school, the principal said, "There's more violence than we want. But there hadn't been a real good fight around here until yesterday. There was an outsider on campus. He came up here looking for a fight and he got it" (PF). He added that there wass a difference between a fight and an assault, and that he will remove a student who assaults someone. The assistant principal noted fights as the only violence which occurs on campus. One teacher said that the only violence is fighting, another said there was only a low level of violence, nothing really bad, and the third said fights, but his real concern was girl fights. He said that he did not understand the violence. When asked if he believed that television or the movies contributed to the level of violence, he said that he grew up playing violence, like World War II and cowboys and Indians, and he did not grow up to be violent. He said he was concerned about violent video games and the music
kids listened to now. Neither of the students felt that violence was a problem at school.

The strategies he had were well-known to the students, the principal said, but he added that teachers would tell the researcher there was no strategy. He said that was because the students knew what he would tolerate and what he would not tolerate. He said he did have a dress code, but it was not very strict. He indicated that he could use it if he had to do so, but he seldom depended on that alone to remove students. He added that he dealt with children individually, met with parents often, and expected them to meet him halfway. He told students, "And if you're going to be leaders, be leaders in here, getting an education. Help me out, just do what I ask you to do. They know they need an education, so they make me look good, and I make them look good" (PF). The assistant principal added that the principal received known gang members' names from the police, had conferences with those individuals, and expected them to follow the rules. The teachers said that staff development activities had been provided to them, that there was a dress code, and the police were there to help if there were problems. Teachers had duty stations, and some had walkie-talkies. One teacher, however, said he did not know what the strategy was. "I don't know if there is one" (TF3). He added that there might be a strategy, but if so, it was not enforced. The students said the principal approaches students who were wearing specific colors, especially shoelaces, and had conferences with them.

The principal indicated that no one helped him develop his strategies. He said that he brought them with him from his previous assignments. The assistant principal agreed
that she did not assist, nor did she know who did, if anyone. One teacher said that a committee of parents, community people, and teachers had assisted, and that the principal did not mind taking input from others. She added that he was really good about telling them that "it is your school. You make me as good as I am. It is your school. You run it" (TF1). Another teacher said the SBDM and the PTSA had offered input, but "He [the principal] is the type of person that if he foresees that this is not going to work, he doesn't go with it just because you have suggested it" (TF2). The third teacher reiterated that, not only did he not know who helped, but he did not know whether there was a strategy at all. The students said the principal had used some student surveys, but they were not aware of any input to strategies beyond that.

When asked how children were affected by his strategies, the principal said he hoped they were. He added that if he had to remove them, he had failed them and the parents. He said that they knew he had done everything he could do before he took them for a removal hearing. The assistant principal noted that the community had many problems, but that youth felt safe at the school. One teacher said the kids understood how things were done at the school, and they felt safer as a result. Another said students were pleased with the strategies as they had been implemented, and felt safe. The third teacher said he had never heard any students expressing concerns about safety. The students said that their participation in the student surveys had made the school safer for everyone.

As to changes he would make, the principal indicated that he would change only
the lunch period. But, he said, then no one would get tutoring. All the tutoring took place
during the lunch time. The assistant principal was not willing to change anything at all, as
it seemed to be working. One teacher said she would like to see more staff development
activities to explain gang-related activity and how to handle it. She also thought that the
students might relax the dress code. Another teacher said she believed that students would
not want gang members wearing their colors to school at all. She added that not
only would she make the dress code stricter, she would stop a lot of students from
leaving campus at lunch. The third teacher echoed making the dress code stricter. He
added that sending students back to school too soon after removal was a real problem.
"I just feel that there is a tolerance for, and it is not a bad thing, it is just this attitude that
we have got to help every single kid regardless of however disruptive he may be to the
rest of them. And I think it is to the point of which you have to sacrifice one of the less
interested ones for the well-being of everybody else" (TF3). The students both centered
their talk of change around the dress code. One said that the administrators get tired of
trying to enforce the old one, so they don't need a new one. Both said it just needed to be
clear and well enforced. One student said "I'd just tell them that if they wear all red or
blue, sorry you gotta go home, son. You gotta come back with your parents, if you don't,
just don't come back to my school until they get right" (SF1).

The principal said that he had nothing to add, then changed his mind. He said that
he would never have dreamed it could be this easy. He added, "Around here we take a lot
of things for granted. Sometimes I have to slap myself on the back of the head, and say I
take a lot of things for granted" (PF). The assistant principal noted that graffiti was
sometimes seen in the neighborhood, but it was removed quickly. One teacher said that as
long as the kids did not flaunt their gang activity at school, the principal would leave them
alone. She added, "If it becomes an issue then he follows through and does whatever he
needs to do" (TF1). She said that the principal was not a man who sat in his office, but
was visible, out and about, seeing what was going on. The students talked about their
concerns if their school is redistricted. One said that he just wanted to graduate, and
another talked about wanting to stay at school F because of his track coach.

The student code of conduct prohibited the wearing of clothing that was racially
insensitive, satanic, violent, or offensive. Students were not to wear clothing, accessories,
symbols, jewelry or other paraphernalia that depict or suggest association with a gang.
The teacher handbook is fairly consistent with the student handbook, but added that
students could not bring items that could jeopardize safety, health, order, well-being or
general welfare of the students in general.

The site visit to school F took place during the lunch period, which the principal
spoke of changing. He was correct, there were students everywhere, but they were
generally quiet and orderly. There was some gang graffiti on an outside dumpster, and
some on an inside locker. It was not pervasive. It was interesting that no campus
monitors or administrators stopped to ask the purpose of the visit. (Note: The principal
and two of the assistant principals know the researcher personally, so their lack of asking
the reason for the visit is clear. A stop by the office to check in was all that was needed.)
Two teachers' doors were passed, and the statements on the doors caught the eye. One read, "The use of obscenities shows a lack of intelligence" and the other read, "Responsibility is not blaming others for your mistakes." That seemed to sum up the philosophy of the principal.

**Summary**

Following is a series of tables which summarize the issues covered in this study.

Climate encompassed Questions 1, 2, and 3 on the Interview Schedule for Principals. Those questions dealt with safety, the presence of gangs, and violence. Climate issues were not covered specifically in the Research Questions, but they were important to determine how the administrators, staff members and students saw their school. Notice that the person or persons who gave each response is in parenthesis following the response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School A</th>
<th>Outsiders (AP)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students did not have the skills to deal with problems non-violently (AP)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Drugs (Students)</td>
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<td>Gangs members, but not gang activity (AP)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fights (P)</td>
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Table 9 Summary of Research Continued

Issue: Climate

School A  Fights and graffiti were decreasing (Staff)
          Maddogging (staring) (AP)
          Weapons (Students)

School B  Outsiders, outside areas (P)
          Fights (P, AP, Staff)
          Weapons (Students)
          Gang activity (P)
          Community (AP)
          Safety issues if administrators were not visible (P)
          Consistency important (P, Staff)

School C  Number of students (P)
          Outside doors, outsiders (P)
          Fear of rival gangs (Students)
          Society (P, Staff)
          Gang activities (AP)
Table 9 Summary of Research Continued

Issue: Climate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Issue</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>School D</strong></td>
<td>Fights (AP)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Society/community (P, AP, Staff)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Weapons (AP)</td>
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<td>Outsiders (AP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good communication (Staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gang activities (Staff, Students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fights (P, AP, Students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girl fights (AP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School E</strong></td>
<td>Could not plan for unexpected events (P, AP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fights (Students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girl fights (Students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gang members but not gang activity (P, AP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Could not prevent gang activity (Students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Society (P, AP, Staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outsiders (Students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School F</strong></td>
<td>Drugs (P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Safety is important (P, AP, Staff)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9 Summary of Research Continued

Issue: Climate

School F  Gang members but not gang activity (Staff, Students)
          Society/community (P, Staff, Students)
          Graffiti (Students)
          Fights (P, AP, Staff)
          Girl fights (Staff)

Notice that at all schools except School A, administrators, staff, and some students noted society or the community as being important as a safety issue. Fights were mentioned as a safety issue at all six schools, and outsiders or outside areas were mentioned by four of the six schools. Girls' fights were noted by four of the six schools, though most respondents who gave this answer did not see girls as gang members.

All schools had respondents who were concerned about gangs or gang activities, though most said there was not a lot of gang activity in the school itself. During the site visit to School B, however, there were obvious gang signs being thrown during lunch and passing periods. All campuses had some graffiti, but it was removed in a timely manner by the district maintenance office. Gang activity was controlled to some degree in most schools. It appeared from the research that students may have grown to understand how
important an education is to them, and they have conformed to what schools expect of them during school hours.

The following table documents the strategies, real or perceived, used by each school. Research Question 2a is addressed in this table.

Table 10 Summary of Research Questions

Issue: Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School A</th>
<th>Dress Code (P)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Remove graffiti (P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zero tolerance (AP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff development (Staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Police/ticketing offenses (Staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Removal of students (Staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal relationships (Staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student reports of potential violence/gang activity to administrators (AP)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School B</th>
<th>Zero tolerance (P, AP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dress code (AP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administrator/teacher/staff visibility (P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff development (P, Staff)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| School C | Staff development (P) |
Table 10 Summary of Research Questions Continued

Issue: Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School C</th>
<th>Dress code (P, AP, Staff)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parent conferences (P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intervention programs such as Comin' Up (AP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visibility (AP, Staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student reports of potential problems (P, AP, Staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Truce (Students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Removal (Students)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School D</th>
<th>Zero tolerance (P)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dress code (P, AP, Students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consistency (AP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parent conferences (AP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Removal (AP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visibility (Staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher duty (Staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff development (Staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Campus monitors/police (Staff)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| School E | Removal (P, AP, Staff) |
Table 10 Summary of Research Questions Continued

Issue: Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School E</strong></td>
<td>Dress Code (P, AP, Staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Remove graffiti (P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Security cameras (P, AP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visibility (P, Staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zero tolerance (AP, Staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parent conferences (AP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff development (Staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Police (Staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School F</strong></td>
<td>High expectations (P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dress code (P, Staff, Students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gang members identified by police officers (AP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conferences (AP)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reader will note that a dress code was cited as a strategy to prevent or reduce gang-related activity and violence by every school. Four of the six schools listed zero tolerance as a strategy, though zero tolerance is a district policy, and should have been mentioned by all schools in the study. Staff development was used as a strategy by five
of the six schools, and four of the schools used removal of students for gang activity or violence. Four of the schools mentioned visibility as a key strategy, though one of the schools listed visibility in the responses to Questions 9 and 10, covered in a later table called Other.

The table which follows summarizes the persons who assisted the principal in developing and implementing the policies he or she put into place. Research Questions 1c, 2b, 4a, and 4b are included in the responses found here.

Table 11 Summary of Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue: Who Helped?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative team (P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police liaison team (P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student council (P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBDM (AP, Staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers (AP, Staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students (AP, Staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTA, parents (Students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBDM (P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCC (P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers (P, Staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| School B | Students (P)  
Police (Students) |
| School C | Principal (P)  
Administrative team (P, AP)  
SBDM (P, Staff)  
CCC (P)  
Police liaison team (P)  
Safety committee (AP)  
Campus monitors (AP)  
Students (Students) |
| School D | SBDM (P)  
Teacher committees (P)  
Administrative team (AP)  
Safety committee (Staff) |
| School E | Principal (P, Staff)  
Input from stakeholders, but principal made decisions (AP, Staff)  
Downtown (Staff) |
Table 11 Summary of Research Questions Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue: Who Helped?</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents (Students)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School F</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal only (P, AP)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents (Staff)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committees (Staff)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students (Staff)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBDM (Staff)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTSA (Staff)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No strategies (Staff)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys (Students)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The principal or the administrative team was responsible for developing policies in five of six schools. Note School B, which has previously been described as "out of control," a finding substantiated by this research, did not list the principal as part of the team or group which planned and implemented the strategies. The Site Based Decision Making Team was listed by all six schools as having input in developing policies to prevent or reduce gang-related activity and violence. Selected students and teachers had a part in the planning through committee work, student council or PTA in every school.
studied. Notice that School E, whose principal said he would be ultimately responsible, and therefore took input but made the final decisions, had the fewest number of participant stakeholders involved in the process.

The following table is a summary of the perceived impact on students by the strategies listed above. Research Question 4 was addressed by this table.

Table 12 Summary of Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue: Impact on Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School A</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students appreciated efforts of adults to keep school safe (P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gang members kept a low profile (P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gang activity was kept outside the school setting (AP, Staff)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **School B**              |
| Students liked structure and feeling safe (P) |
| Personal relationships were important to students (AP) |
| Students were adversely affected due to inconsistency (Staff) |

| **School C**              |
| Students trusted administrators enough to report incidents (P, AP) |
| Students felt safe (P, AP, Staff, Students) |

| **School D**              |
| Students wanted to follow the rules (P, AP) |
| There was resistance to the dress code (P, AP) |
| Students felt safe enough to report incidents (AP) |
| Students felt safe (Staff) |
Note that most respondents felt safe, and thought that students felt safe. It was perceived that gang activity was kept out of the school, or at least in a low profile state. Three schools reported that students wanted discipline or structure, and felt safe when it was provided to them. Students felt as safe at school as they did anywhere, but a recurring theme throughout the interviews with student gang members was that they are never truly safe.

The following table addressed Questions 9 and 10 on the Interview Schedule for Principals. The researcher was concerned about leaving out issues that respondents felt might be important. Question 9 asked "If you could change anything you have (or your principal has) done to prevent or reduce gang-related activity and violence, what would you change, and why?" Question 10 asked "Is there anything I haven't asked you about
gang-related activity and violence in your school that you want me to know?" It was expected that a few answers would be given, but many came to mind as respondents thought carefully about what they would change.

Questions 9 and 10 on the Interview Schedule for Principals addressed what changes respondents would make and other concerns, and are covered under the following table, called Other Concerns.

---

### Table 13 Summary of Research

**Issue: Other Concerns**

**School A**

- Consistency was important, but not always present (P, Staff, Students)
- Cooperation with outside agencies was needed (AP)
- Peer mentoring was needed within the school and the pyramid (AP)
- Constant vigilance was necessary to prevent problems (Staff)
- Parent involvement was needed (Staff)
- Orientation at the beginning of the year was needed (P, AP)
- Metal detectors were needed (Students)

**School B**

- Dress code needed to be stricter (P)
- Teachers needed to be more responsible (AP, Staff)
- There was a lack of consistency (Staff)
- Better communication with the administration was needed (Staff)
Table 13 Summary of Research Continued

Issue: Other Concerns

Outsiders needed to be kept out of the school (Staff)

New staff was needed (Students)

Teachers needed to follow the rules, care about students (Staff, Students)

**School C**  
Orientation was needed at the beginning of the year (P)

Stricter rules were needed (AP)

Personal relationships with students were needed (Staff)

Consistency was needed (Staff)

The dress code needed to be relaxed (Students)

Schools needed to work with outside agencies (P)

Adults needed to be sincere with gang members (P)

Adults needed to remain professional with children (P)

Society, television were a problem with violence and gangs (AP)

**School D**  
Parents needed to be involved more actively (P)

The focus of the school needed to be changed to vocational (AP)

Staff development regarding gangs was needed (Staff)

Motivational speakers/Gang prevention speakers were needed (Staff)
### Table 13 Summary of Research Continued

**Issue: Other Concerns**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School D</th>
<th>Metal detectors needed to be used (Students)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The dress code needed to be enforced (Students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students had different learning styles (P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students had poor reading levels (AP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gangs and violence were a societal problem (AP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graffiti needed to be removed immediately (Staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caring teachers were needed (Students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School E</td>
<td>Gang intervention programs were needed (AP, Students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff development was needed (Staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parental involvement was needed (AP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students removed for disruptive activities returned too soon (P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More stakeholders needed to be involved in planning (AP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consistency was important (AP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School F</td>
<td>The lunch period needed changes (P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff development was needed (Staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The dress code needed to be enforced (Staff, Students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students removed for disruptive activities returned too soon (Staff)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Consistency was needed in enforcing rules (Students)

Visibility of administrators was essential (Staff)

There were three strains of responses which were seen repeatedly in the research. Consistency was mentioned by five schools. In the five schools which included consistency in their responses, consistency was present and needed, or was not present and was needed. In either case, it was seen as essential to the rules, policies and strategies used to prevent or reduce gang-related activity and violence, as well as discipline in general. The dress code was addressed by respondents in four schools. Again, it was seen as too lenient or too strict. For the most part, however, it needed to be enforced. This group of responses echoes the consistency issue above.

Staff members in three of the schools wanted more staff development activities which addressed safety, gangs, and discipline problems. They felt they knew too little, and were not as current on gangs as they needed to be. Most staff members had mentioned staff development activities that had occurred previously, but they felt they needed periodic updates.

Research Question 1a was addressed by document analysis. The district had a
policy and procedures handbook available to all administrators and staff members, and policies were in place to prohibit gang activity, disruptive activities, and violence. Various levels of offenses existed, and penalties for violations existed for each level of offense (See Appendix B for a complete listing by school and for the district). Each school had policies in place, ranging from very general to very specific, prohibiting gang activity and violence. Teacher handbooks were also in place in every school. School E had the most comprehensive student handbook, and School D had the most comprehensive teacher handbook. All staff members, administrators, teachers, and other professionals were expected to assist in implementing the policies and procedures enumerated in the student, teacher and district policies. The district provided security cameras, campus monitors, police liaison teams and visits by drug dogs to every school as a part of the district safety plan. All staff administrators, teachers and other staff, and support personnel were expected to follow the district and campus policies and assist in implementing them.

Gang-related activity and violence cannot be stopped, this research shows, but it can be reduced. The findings of this research led the researcher to some conclusions about individual schools, about the principals of those schools and their staff members, and about schools in general. In Chapter V, those conclusions will be enumerated and implications which follow directly from those conclusions will be discussed. Based on the conclusions and implications, the researcher will then suggest recommendations for future study.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR FUTURE STUDY

Introduction

This problem of this study was to determine what strategies school administrators use to prevent or reduce gang-related activity and violence on their campuses. It also examined who participated in developing and implementing those strategies, and how the gang member students at each school were affected by their implementation of those strategies. Violence and aggression are becoming pressing issues in schools, and this study was designed to study ways that school administrators may deal with those issues more effectively.

The literature review revealed that much work has been done by law enforcement, sociologists, and criminologists, but little data is available from schools themselves. Lal (1991) and Melita (1990) both studied gangs in schools, but their work needed to be updated. Their work was done in California and Florida. No major work on gangs in schools has been done in Texas.

This research was developed around research questions which were enumerated in Chapter I. The study participants were from six high schools in a north central Texas
school district, and included six principals, six assistant principals, fifteen faculty or staff members and eleven gang member students. Interviews were conducted with each respondent, faculty and student handbooks from each school were studied, as were the Student Code of Conduct and the Board Policies of the district. Site visits to each school at critical times of the day provided another source of data. Local newspapers provided additional information regarding gangs and violence in schools of the district, as well as those of the nation, during the period of the study. Following is a summary of the conclusions, their implications, and recommendations for further study.

Conclusions

Every school's student handbook prohibited the wearing of gang-related dress, accessories, and other related items, or engaging in activities which might promote gang activity or gang membership. The teacher handbooks of all the schools except one also prohibit the wearing of such items. The teacher handbook of School B mentioned nothing about gang activity. The student code of conduct of each school prohibited items which might promote violence or acts of violence, weapons, and other nuisance items. These nuisance items ranged from radios and tape players to pagers and cellular telephones and included weapons such as firecrackers, mace, knives, and guns. Penalties for each offense were not necessarily documented in the student or teacher handbooks, though at School E, both offenses and penalties were well-documented in both the student and teacher handbooks. Gang activity of any type, including membership in secret organizations, was prohibited in the district Student Code of Conduct. Violence ranging from verbal assault
of a student or teacher to murder and capital murder were documented, and the consequences were enumerated in the district Student Code of Conduct. Campus policies were determined by various entities at the individual schools, using the district Student Code of Conduct as a model, and the needs of the specific campus. The policies of the individual schools were implemented most often by the administrators at the schools, and by the Student Affairs Department of the school district.

Strategies employed by the various schools to prevent or reduce gang-related activity and violence included a dress code which ranged from the very general to the very specific. Two schools mentioned specific hairstyles for boys as being gang-related, and therefore prohibited. Most schools' dress codes mentioned gang clothing and colors, some mentioned jewelry, and others were very general. All schools used the strategy of administrator visibility, and all had police officers and security monitors on campus. All schools used security cameras, had drug dogs, and could call on the police gang unit if necessary. The school district being studied had a zero tolerance policy against gangs and violence, and every school had a similar policy. Two schools in particular, School C and School F, used individual and group conferences to prevent or reduce gang-related activity and violence. Most schools could depend on students to report suspicious activities, dangerous situations, and weapons to the administration.

The strategies mentioned above were determined and implemented by various entities in each building. One principal said he took input from interested parties, but retained the right to make the final decisions himself. In most schools, however,
stakeholders were involved in the development and implementation of the policies. Those stakeholders ranged from the administrative team to Site Based Decision Making Teams, teacher committees, parent organizations and students themselves.

Students were impacted in various ways by the strategies implemented in various schools. For example, most students said they felt safe at school, but that the zero tolerance and similar strategies simply ran gang-related activity underground. Teachers felt safe, and stated that they believed students felt safe. Most students said the dress code, though in place and appropriate, was not followed, and that gang colors could be worn, except in the case of shoelaces, almost without incident. Teachers and students expressed concern that the implementation of strategies was not consistent, and was therefore not effective.

Those involved in the implementation of strategies at all schools were the principal, the administrative teams, and the police liaison officers. Teachers were involved in that they were expected to be visible, on duty, and were to report suspicious or gang-related activities. Most respondents, however, said that staff members were not consistent in the implementation of the strategies, and that all did not carry an equal burden for making the school safe for themselves and the children.

Several questions were asked of respondents that allowed them the opportunity to expand on the research questions. One such question was "Do you perceive that safety is an issue in your school? Describe your concerns." Most respondents documented that fights were a prime concern for them. This result was found across respondent groups,
and across ethnic groups. The presence of outsiders was also a concern, and in conjunction with that concern, the number of outside doors was mentioned often. Most adult respondents were not overly concerned about weapons, but student respondents were very concerned about them. One student said that no one was ever searched, and he was always concerned about someone bringing a weapon. Several students said they had seen weapons on occasion, and some had had direct dealings with weapons on campus.

Another related question was "If you could change anything you have (or the principal has) done to respond to gang-related activity and violence, what would you change and why?" Two principals said they would meet with small groups of students to make their expectations clearer. Most respondents, however, were concerned with consistency. They felt that the administrators were not consistent in their dealings with children, nor were they consistent in their dealings with teachers. Teachers, likewise, were not seen as being consistent in following the rules. And in one of the most surprising findings, teachers and students were upset and concerned about those teachers whose classroom management was poor. Several students said they perceived that some of their teachers came to school to get a paycheck, not to teach. At least two said that it took the major part of the period to get classes under control prior to beginning the class, and that very little teaching could go on for the disruptions. One student said that teachers were dumber now than they were when he was younger. Many respondents felt that gang-related activity and violence were directly related to societal influences, particularly violence on television and in the movies, and violent video games. These responses were
particularly linked to the literature review regarding violence and the lack of role models for youth in today's society.

Implications

With the findings of this study in mind, some implications for practice became clear. School principals must be given adequate training, whether by the district, by the Education Service Center in the region, or by the colleges and universities from which they graduate. That training must include how to develop a safety plan, how to develop an administrative team, how to train staff, and how to effectively use community resources. Principals must develop a good working relationship with the central office staff, particularly that staff responsible for assisting with safety issues, the removal of students, and maintenance. Principals must also cultivate a working relationship with the law enforcement agencies in the area. The police department at large, the police department gang unit, if there is one, and the adult and juvenile probation departments in the area must be tapped for their expertise in various areas. Community agencies, such as the Boys' and Girls' Club Comin' Up program were willing to assist principals and other administrators in developing and implementing gang awareness and intervention programs. The school district in which this research was conducted was fortunate to have such a program.

Teacher education institutions must spend more time working with prospective teachers to assist them in classroom control, defusing of potentially violent situations, and developing relationships with children. A theme throughout the research, especially
from students and staff, was that teachers did not care enough about their students.

A strong dress code must be developed. By working with the gang unit or with agencies such as Comin' Up, an update of gang colors, signs, logos, and other pertinent information may be obtained during the principal's planning for the next year. There can never be a truly updated list, however, for gang members will change as soon as they see that the principal is privy to certain information. But the principal must not carry the dress code over from year to year without monitoring and adjusting it. For example, one of the students in the study who attends an alternative school, said that they were allowed to wear only black and white to school. But black and white are the colors of six gangs in this city! Many college and professional sports teams' jerseys have been adopted by gangs as their logos. For example, the Chicago Bulls' logo has been adopted by Bloods. Gang jewelry was mentioned in some of the schools' dress codes. But what some students wear as jewlery may be their statement of gang affiliation. Marijuana leaves as earrings or pendants, guns as pendants and some nickname jewelry may all be indicative of gang membership.

Gang intervention programs must be in place in the community, and gang prevention programs must be in place in the school. Training must be given to those teachers who will provide gang prevention. Ideally, such programs would be an integral part of the curriculum. Gang prevention programs cannot be an afterthought, and must be vertical in nature, beginning early, and continuing into high school, if the cycle of gang membership is to be changed. Some intervention programs actually send representatives
to schools to work with gang youth in that setting. But the ideal is for the children to have access to programs at school as well as in the community.

The researcher conducted all but one of the gang member interviews at Comin' Up sites. First hand experience with such an intervention program allows the researcher to recommend it highly. Children, some of whom are brothers and sisters of gang members, as well as gang members themselves, came to the centers and had an opportunity to talk with a responsible adult, play basketball or engage in other time-consuming activities. They were off the streets, out of potentially dangerous situations, and gaining social skills. Jobs were posted, rules had to be followed, and searches were conducted for weapons. They had to take off their caps, and they could not go in and out. If they did not conduct themselves in accordance with the rules, they were told to leave.

Most juvenile crime occurs between the time school is dismissed and eight in the evening (J. M. Wood, personal communication, June, 1998), so this type of intervention program is essential. Much was made of "midnight basketball" in the crime prevention program presented to Congress. While the hour of midnight is not magic, the programs which were intended in the program can mean "magic" to children who are facing almost insurmountable odds of becoming gang members and criminals. At the risk of seeming to advertise a program such as Comin' Up, let the reader be reminded that many of the respondents stated that violence and gang behaviors were based in the community and carried over into the school. Prevention and intervention programs should be based in both settings as well.
Persons who have certain skills and areas of expertise should be used as community members of the Site Based Decision Making Team as appropriate. For example, a representative from a program such as Comin' Up would be a valuable asset to a SBDM if a school perceived that it had a gang presence. A member of the police department, a member of the gang unit, or a juvenile or adult probation officer might provide helpful input as a consultant to the SBDM, even if he or she did not serve on the committee.

All schools in the city of this study had security cameras and campus monitors who patrolled the campus. If they are not already in place, security cameras can be a resource which can be invaluable to a principal. Not only can they be used to see where no one is currently available, but also they can be effective in preventing crimes on campus after school hours. Though they are initially expensive, they are effective, and should be used.

Campus monitors were school employees who patrolled the campus to prevent problems. They were not police officers, trained social workers, or teachers. They had a role in the safety and security of the campus, but must be screened, trained, and used effectively. They should be able to recognize and react to dangerous situations. The district should employ persons who are interested in working hard, for security work is hard work. The district and the principal should share the responsibility of training campus monitors.

The principal should not be in his or her office all day long. There are certainly
times when it is appropriate, but the focus of the principal's duties should be instruction and safety. The assistant principals should do likewise. Visibility was a key issue in this research. It was mentioned by administrators and staff members from five of the six schools involved in the study. By being out of the office, the principal can also become aware of situations in which teachers are not managing classroom behaviors well. Teachers in this study indicated that it was of concern to them that their coworkers do their duties and manage their classrooms well. The principal and the administrative team must be available to document good work as well as poor work by faculty and staff. One of the principals in the study said that if he could change anything, he would have changed his teaching staff more quickly. A principal must have staff members who are loyal, hard working, and capable. The principal must have some input in choosing quality people to deliver the instructional program to students.

The removal of students to alternative settings was a strategy mentioned by most school administrators, staff and students. Students who were removed due to gang activity and violence should not have been returned to the home school during that school year. They should be retained at the alternative sites until such time as they have demonstrated that they are capable of following rules and engaging actively in their own education. The instructional program at alternative schools should include making good choices, understanding the relationship between actions and consequences, and violence prevention. Intervention programs for violent children may be able to break the cycle of violence in the community, and indeed, in society. But it must be taught. It will not occur
naturally. Parents should be strongly encouraged to involve themselves in training at the alternative school as well. Too many times, parents will say they cannot do anything with their children. Schools, while they may very well have taken on more than they should, are the agencies, the socializing influences, most likely to be able to make a difference in the lives of children. Schools and parents should be partners in this effort.

**Recommendations for Future Study**

This research studied strategies used by principals to prevent or reduce gang-related activity and violence in selected high schools. Based on concerns of administrators, staff members, and students that gang activity is growing and moving into younger children, it is recommended that this study or a similar one be done in elementary and middle grades.

Parental involvement in high schools should also be studied to develop an effective program for encouraging and increasing parents' involvement in the high school years. One school in this study had a Parent Center. It is recommended that such a concept be studied and a plan developed and implemented in other high schools.

Gang youth should be studied to evaluate whether intervention and prevention programs work best in early grades or in high school years. A longitudinal study might be required to accomplish this task, but it would be well worth the time and effort needed to try to break the cycle of gang membership. A study to determine the relationship between mentoring groups in the high school and the reduction of behavior problems would also be worthwhile.
With the current upsurge in violence in schools, it is necessary to study the warning signs of youth who may potentially perpetrate such acts of violence on their schools. Perhaps such a study could be done by law enforcement and school administrators together. It is certainly necessary.

**Summary**

This study concluded that there were various strategies in place in every school in the district, with some schools' policies being very specific, while some were very general. Principals reacted differently to the presence of gangs in their schools, but they needed to communicate openly with the community, the school, and the students in order to constructively address their problems with gangs. Providing opportunities for stakeholders to be a part of the process of development and implementation of strategies was important, as was consistency in enforcement.

The literature review cited problems in society as causing a great number of problems youths faced, including gang membership. Those youth who joined gangs were less likely to complete their educations, less likely to be productive citizens of their communities, and more likely to spend time in correctional institutions. Schools can be one, and sometimes the only socializing influence in the lives of such youth. It is important that school administrators, teachers and staff, communities and students work together to provide prevention and intervention programs which will allow students to develop into productive citizens. This study has provided an insight into the strategies principals have found to be successful, or less than successful, in combatting gang activity.
in schools. By interviewing gang youth, this study has provided an opportunity for school employees to envision what their students are thinking, what they are hoping their lives might be like. These eleven gang youth were all polite, some were articulate, and all expressed concern that their lives had been affected by their gang membership.

Deborah Prothrow-Stith is one of the leading researchers of juvenile violence. It is appropriate to end this study with her comments on why children join gangs and participate in violence, and what needs to be done to help them.

What separates armed teenagers in inner city neighborhoods from their more affluent peers are the choices that are available to them. Most teenagers understand and respond to real opportunity when it is offered. But when there is no real opportunity available, adolescents by default choose what make them feel better, what the media portrays as glamorous and exciting, what counteracts the grinding boredom of poverty. Our poorest adolescents have armed themselves and become guerrilla fighters in a war against each other that has no name, no political ideology, and no end in sight. We can . . . provide them with better choices (Prothrow-Stith & Weissman, 1991, p. 186).

School administrators can, and must, offer those choices. That was the motivation, and the researcher hopes, the outcome of this research.
APPENDIX A

LIST OF KNOWN GANGS IN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT BEING STUDIED
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1532 Maldonado Gang</td>
<td>817 Methods Tagging Crew</td>
<td>Bloods: Truman Street Bloods</td>
<td>Bloods: Villa Supreme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28th Street Hoods</td>
<td>-A-</td>
<td>Born to Kill</td>
<td>Bowdy Gang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>357 Posse</td>
<td>Addicted to Krime/Krack</td>
<td>Boys of the Corner</td>
<td>Boys of the Hood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600 Freeks</td>
<td>Addidas Boys</td>
<td>Boys of the Corner</td>
<td>Bozo Gang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Ball Posse</td>
<td>All in the Family</td>
<td>Brew Crew</td>
<td>Bright Street Thugs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-A-</td>
<td>Alpha Omega</td>
<td>Bud Club, The</td>
<td>Bud Club, The</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Nazi Party</td>
<td>Ambrose</td>
<td>Built to Last</td>
<td>Build to Last</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Street Taggers</td>
<td>American Street Taggers</td>
<td>Centros Most Wanted</td>
<td>Centros Most Wanted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America's Most Wanted</td>
<td>Angel Boys</td>
<td>Christian Guard</td>
<td>Christian Guard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angel Boys</td>
<td>Areosol Artist Kings/Krew</td>
<td>Cold Blooded Cambodians</td>
<td>Cold Blooded Cambodians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Areosol Mind Control</td>
<td>Ayran Brotherhood of Texas</td>
<td>Como Gang</td>
<td>Como Gang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayran Legion</td>
<td>Asian Brotherhood</td>
<td>Como Original Gangsters</td>
<td>Como Original Gangsters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aztlan 13</td>
<td>Aztlan 13</td>
<td>Confederate Fanatics</td>
<td>Confederate Fanatics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-B-</td>
<td>Bad Boys Club</td>
<td>Confederate Hammerskins</td>
<td>Confederate Hammerskins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandidos</td>
<td>Barboza</td>
<td>Confederate Knights of the KKK</td>
<td>Confederate Knights of the KKK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrio Azteca</td>
<td>Barrio Benito Juarez</td>
<td>Confederate Strike Force</td>
<td>Confederate Strike Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basse De Bonbarde</td>
<td>Baylor Boys</td>
<td>Corner Boys</td>
<td>Corner Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beat Down Posse</td>
<td>Berry Town Rollers</td>
<td>Counter Attacks</td>
<td>Counter Attacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berryhill Gang</td>
<td>Bideker Boys</td>
<td>Crazy Ass Gangsters</td>
<td>Crazy Ass Gangsters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bitches with an Attitude</td>
<td>Birdow Gang</td>
<td>Creekwood Boys</td>
<td>Creekwood Boys</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black Cobra Clan</td>
<td>Black Eagles</td>
<td>Criminal Deviant Movement</td>
<td>Criminal Deviant Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Gangster Disciples 6 x 3 Folks</td>
<td>Black Gangster Disciples 6 x 3 Folks</td>
<td>Criminal Mischief Lords</td>
<td>Criminal Mischief Lords</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black Guerrilla Family</td>
<td>Black Knights</td>
<td>Criminals Running Loose</td>
<td>Criminals Running Loose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Black Villains</td>
<td>Crip: Allen Street Crip</td>
<td>Crip: Allen Street Crip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Villain Assassins</td>
<td>Blood: Dalous 23rd Street</td>
<td>Crip: Unknown Set</td>
<td>Crip: Unknown Set</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blood: Dalous 23rd Street</td>
<td>Blood: Dalous 23rd Street</td>
<td>Crip: 103 &amp; Grape Street Crips</td>
<td>Crip: 103 &amp; Grape Street Crips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blood: Dquiry City</td>
<td>Bloods: Unknown Set</td>
<td>Crip: 20 x 4 107 Polywood Crip</td>
<td>Crip: 20 x 4 107 Polywood Crip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloods: Unknown Set</td>
<td>Bloods: 21st Street</td>
<td>Crip: 817 Southside Crip Cartel</td>
<td>Crip: 817 Southside Crip Cartel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloods: Ace</td>
<td>Bloods: Browning Street</td>
<td>Crip: Agg Land</td>
<td>Crip: Agg Land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloods: Browning Street</td>
<td>Bloods: Creek</td>
<td>Crip: Castleman Street Crip</td>
<td>Crip: Castleman Street Crip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloods: Creek</td>
<td>Bloods: Debbie Street Blood</td>
<td>Crips: Crippets</td>
<td>Crips: Crippets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloods: Norris Street Bloods</td>
<td>Bloods: Hilleyde Crips (Hispanic)</td>
<td>Crips: Four Trey Gangsta Crips</td>
<td>Crips: Four Trey Gangsta Crips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloods: Regency Oaks Piru Bloods</td>
<td>Crips: Lake Como Crips</td>
<td>Crips: Lincoln Terrace</td>
<td>Crips: Lincoln Terrace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloods: Regency Oaks Piru Bloods</td>
<td>Crips: Northside Husslers</td>
<td>Crips: Rolling 60's Crips</td>
<td>Crips: Rolling 60's Crips</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bloods: Regency Oaks Piru Bloods</td>
<td>Crips: Stop Six Crips</td>
<td>Crips: Rolling 60's Crips</td>
<td>Crips: Rolling 60's Crips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloods: Regency Oaks Piru Bloods</td>
<td>Crips: Westside Crips</td>
<td>Dawgs</td>
<td>Dawgs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloods: Regency Oaks Piru Bloods</td>
<td>Crips: Westside Crips</td>
<td>-D-</td>
<td>-D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloods: Regency Oaks Piru Bloods</td>
<td>Dallas Skull Boys</td>
<td>Dare to Compare</td>
<td>Dare to Compare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloods: Regency Oaks Piru Bloods</td>
<td>Dark Side Gents</td>
<td>Dawgs</td>
<td>Dawgs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Death Babies
Demons/Satans Warriors
Diablos
Diamond Hill Players
Diamond Hill Scorpions
Dope Art Style Mob
Douglas Crime Family

-E-
Eastside Locos
Eastside Thirteen
Echo Heights Boys
El Locos
Espinosa Crime Syndicate

-F-
Fantasmas
Fire It Up
Flyboys
Flying Dragons
Fort Worth Posse
Four Corner Gang
Freaky Dawgs
French Quarter Girls
French Quarter Posse
Frogs
Fuakadelic Technic Gods
Fukieness
Funky Town Players

-G-
G Street Thugs
Gangsters of Society
Garden Grove Boys
Ghost Riders
Ghost Shadow
Glen Garden Upsetters
Group I

-H-
Hard Heads
Hard to Overcome
Hells Angels
Hermandad De Pistoleros Latino
Hill Top Hustlers
Hood Pack Boys
Horse
Indo Love Posse

-J-
Juaritos

-K-
K Crew, The
K9 Posse
Kings

-L-
Knew Skool Aces
Ku Klux Klan

-L. A. Connection
La Familia
La Hermandad De Pistoleros
La Loma
La Masa 13
La Raza Unita
Lady Diamond Hill
Lancaster Posse
Las Locas
Latin Kings
Latin Kings, Eastside
Latin Kings, Southwest
Latin Lynch Mob
Latinos in Full Effect (LIFE)
LCN
Lebow
Legion of Doom
Lincoln Gang, The
Littlejohn
Lomas 36
Los Carnales De Nuestro Chocanos
Los Chigones
Los Cochinos
Los Cool Ones
Los Crazy Boys
Los Homeboys
Los Locos
Los Locos Chicanos
Los Meadowbrook Gangsters
Los Players Locos
Lunatics Take Over

-M-
Mandingo Warriors
Meadowbrook Group
Mexican Cartel
Mexican Mafia (Non Prison)
Mexicans Taking Over
Midnite Chucas
Midnite Cruisers
Mixed Mafia
Mob, The

-N-
National Socialist Skinheads
Niggers with Power
Non Stop Action
Northside I
Northside Cholas
Northside White Boys
Nuestra Familia
-O-
On Leong Tong
On the Run/Obsessed Texas Writers
Only Ones Too II, The
Oriental Killer Boys
Out Cast Crew
Outlaws

-P-
Pecan Street Players
Phy Quy
Pink Ladies
Players in Effect
Pocos Pero Locos
Polo Boys
Polo Crew
Poly Brotherhood
Poly Untouchables
Pretty Boys
Puro Little Mafia
Puro Varrio Pobra
Prud Vatos Locos
Purom Chicanos Locos

-R-
Raze 13 (Race)
Raza Unida (Race United)
Ready and Willing
Red Dragons
Richardson Crime Family
Rolling Hills Players

-S-
Satan Midnight Locos
Scorpions (Asian)
Scorpions (Motorcycle)
Self Defense Family
Shadow Boys
Sheep
Skaters
Skull, The
South Suicide Locos
Southside Artists
Southside Hoods
Southwest Centros Locos
Stober's Group
Stoners
Straight Kins/Krylon Shit
Suicide Kids
Sur 13

-T-
Tagger: Generic
Texas Syndicate
Texas White Students Confederacy
Thu Ngoc Ngo

Thugs
Thugs for Life

-U-
Ultra Breakers
Undefined
United Bamboo
United Brothers

-V-
Vagos
Vajitos
Ratio 18th Street
Ratio 15th Street
Ratio Calhoun Street
Ratio Carter Riverside
Ratio Centro
Ratio Diamond Hill
Ratio Distrito Federales
Ratio Eastside
Ratio Eastside Krips
Ratio Elm Street
Ratio Estrella Primera
Ratio Fifteenth Street
Ratio Gran Norte
Ratio Gran Raza
Ratio Malone Street
Ratio Midnite Locos
Ratio Norwalk
Ratio Primos Locos
Ratio Quien Sabe
Ratio Refugio Street
Ratio Rock Island
Ratio Southside
Ratio Texas Pacific
Ratio Westside 6th Street
Vatos de Juarez
Vatos Locos
Vatos of Destruction
VGN Jrs.
VNW 27 St Locos
VRU

-W-
WAK
Webster Brothers
Wedgewood Boys
Westside Killers
Westside Tribe
White American Freedom Fighters
White Dragons
Woodhaven Boys
Wu-Tang Tagging Crew

-X-
X-Men

-Y-
Young Urban Knights

-Z-
Zingarros
APPENDIX B

RAW DATA FROM INTERVIEWS
School A

Principal

R: First, tell me about your school.

P: What kinds of things do you want to know?

R: Well, tell me about your school in general.

P: My school is a vocational/technical school, but stresses academics as well. I have been here two years. When they leave here, most of my students are employable, and about twenty percent or so go on to college. It is a school of choice, with students having to apply to come here. We have a large Hispanic population, but we also have students of other ethnic groups. We have a night program which allows students to return to school, or to work and go to school at night.

R: Do you perceive that safety is a problem at your school, and if so, what are your concerns?

P: Safety is not as big a problem here this year as it was last year. Of course, safety is an issue at every school, but we really have not had a lot of problems. Last year, we had a big fight at school, but since then, not much has caused a concern for us.

R: Do you perceive that gang-related activity and violence are a problem at your school? If so, why do you believe that is so?

P: We know we have gang members, but they do not usually cause us a lot of problems at school. We make a point of removing students for blatant gang activity, and so they don’t really do it much here at school. We have occasional problems, but we don’t have a community, so it really doesn’t happen here like it does at some schools. We read about some of our kids in the paper, and hear about it when they get into trouble, but we really don’t have a lot of problems at school. We haven’t had weapons at school, and the biggest problem we usually have is fighting.

R: What specific strategies have you used to stop gang-related activity and violence on your campus and how were those strategies determined?

P: Well, we don’t allow gang colors and shoelaces. We remove gang members that engage in that kind of activity. We remove graffiti, and we have a dress code in the student handbook. The code in the student handbook states there are no gang related colors at all. We have, interesting enough, a school here at my school made up of a lot of Hispanic students that are new to this country that are low-level in their own language. Our gang problems have come up this year between that group of kids at that school and some of the Hispanics at my school. I am not sure if there are true “gangs” or if they are a “gang of kids.” We have some conflicts between the two Hispanic groups with calling each other names. So we have had to have the gang unit in or the liaison team to pull those two groups into the conference center several times this year.

R: What about participation as far as teachers or site-based decision making? Did anybody else assist in developing those strategies that you used to combat gang activity and violence?

P: The assistant principals as an administrative team, along with the liaison team.

R: OK, so the community does not participate because you really don’t have a community?
P: The community is citywide. We've looked at a little more global issues. As long as parents are not being informed that there is a lot of gang activities going on at school, that doesn't seem to be a concern.

R: OK. What about, and you kind of answered it, who besides yourself was involved in determining and implementing this strategy? Now you said that the assistant principals kind of help determine those strategies. Who else assisted?

P: The assistant principals along with the liaison team and the student council.

R: OK, and what about your teachers. Do they understand through staff development what kinds of things to look for?

P: We cover it at faculty meetings. We tell them the shoelaces, the rubber bands, and the T-shirts. So I guess we cover this in faculty meetings.

R: Are they concerned at all about reporting it?

P: No.

R: They don't seem to be afraid?

P: No, as a matter of fact, they bring them to the office.

R: So see, what we have had to do with our people was to tell them if these children make you afraid, write us a note, and let us know. We will go and find the children if they make you afraid to bring them down and address the problems. But you don't see that?

P: No.

R: You kind of addressed this one, too. How did each person or group agree to help you develop this strategy involved? Did they just sit down and talk together, or did they sit down and talk with you?

P: I think that the liaison team worked with the assistant principals and then they came to me and said that this is what we are going to do. I said that's great.

R: Do you believe that students are impacted by the implementation of these strategies and if so, how?

P: Sure, they are impacted. The students that don't participate in gangs see that we don't tolerate it and they are appreciative. Very appreciative of it. The ones that are in gangs have a real low profile and tend to keep their activity outside.

R: Do you think that they stay in school as a result of feeling safe as opposed to, if it weren't a safe environment they might not?

P: I don't know about staying in school. I don't think that they would stay at this school. They would go back to their neighborhood school.

R: OK. All right. If you could change anything that you have done thus far in responding to gang-related activity and violence, what specific changes would you make and why?

P: I think that I would talk about it to my students more in the beginning of the year. I would have grade level meetings and pull them in and talk about how gangs negatively impact the school, what is going to be appropriate and inappropriate, and let them know from the beginning that this will not be tolerated. Set the guidelines in the beginning.
R: And this is something you haven't done?

P: Not at this point.

R: OK. Is there anything else about safety and gang-related activity or violence in your school that you feel that I ought to know in order to be able to talk to people about this problem?

P: No. I think that saying it is not tolerated and standing behind what you say.

Assistant Principal

R: Tell me about your position and your responsibilities in the school.

AP: I am one of the assistant principals at this school. Want a listing of them?

R: Oh, just kind of general.

AP: Responsible for twenty percent of staff for evaluation purposes. Handle students that are listed last name S through Z. Textbook custodian. Work with the PTSA. Assigned to the science department, work with them according to instruction and any concerns they have, I am the liaison between them and the principal. Hall monitor. I am also over safety.

R: OK. Do you perceive that there is a safety issue in your school, and if so, describe your concerns?

AP: Safety involving what specific reasons?

R: Well, anything in general because I am going to get more specific in a minute. Looking at safety, do you have any particular concerns? I mean, for example, is it outsiders, weapons, or . . . ?

AP: At this time, my primary concern is with outsiders. We had some on campus today, for example. But the campus monitors, they know our students. They pick up on them real quick because it could be at lunch time and they still pick them up.

R: OK.

AP: And usually they call us and catch up with them and find out what is going on.

R: Do you have any other safety issues that bug you on a regular basis? Or any areas that are of concern to you or just anything to do with safety and security?

AP: I would say having students get specific with mediation. We are there to help them with their concerns. How to handle a situation without resorting to physical confrontation and show them the skills to do that.

R: Do you perceive that there is a gang problem in your school and if so, why do you believe that?

AP: We do have gangs in this school, but I don't see that it is a safety issue. They are here, we know they are here, they know that we know that they are here, but we don't get that concerned about every second that something could occur. We've done things to address that.

R: Why do you believe that you do have gang members or gang problems at your school?

AP: The kids will tell you who they associate with. Some of them might not actually be within the group itself, but that is who they associate with. And so the kids actually assume if you hang out with them then you're part of them.
R: If it walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, then it must be a duck?

AP: Yeah.

R: Do you perceive that there is a problem with violence in your school, and if so, what are your concerns about that?

AP: Are we still talking about gangs?

R: Yes.

AP: No, not with the violence part. We have some minor altercations sometimes where they stare at each other. Looking at me and looking at you. They perceive that as a violation. As far as the gang members themselves fighting, it's very, very limited. In fact if you look at the record, I think it is safe to say that there are more girls involved in violence. Boys, especially in gangs, we haven't had that this year. We have had some, but it not a gang thing. But when I talk to them, this one is in a gang and the other isn't even scared of this one.

R: Do you find that your girls are gang members?

AP: No, not generally, it is just a disagreement.

R: Over a boy?

AP: Oh, it could be over a boy, it could be over a phone call; it could be over something last year or two years ago. I've had that happen. They were friends at one time and someone said something to somebody else and they got upset and confronted one another.

R: What specific strategies does your principal employ to keep your school safe from gang-related activity and violence?

AP: Well, first of all, she sends a message to kids over the loud speaker and in individual groups that meet that this place is a safe place for everybody and violence, we're not going to tolerate any gang activity. We are not going to tolerate young kids who get themselves in fights and the kids get the message that it will not be tolerated. If you have a problem come to the office see the police liaison team, counselor, or an adult, so the message has been sent out by her first of all. Secondly, the liaison team works very closely with her. If there is a concern it is brought to them up at the office. If this kids is upset at this one and we hearing grumbling in the background of stuff that occurred, bring them in right away and squash it. If the child doesn't cooperate, get on the phone with mom and say, "Mom, look got a problem, he/she has got a problem", send him home and come back with 'em.

R: Were you a part of the planning of these strategies?

AP: Yes, all the assistants are. As far as the safety issue is concerned.

R: So you all formed an administrative team. How about anybody else? Were teachers involved? CCC or Site Based Team?

AP: Site-based team was kept informed as to what the planning committee was doing. We asked the office, the custodian, and the campus monitors about what their concerns were and come up with a plan from that.

R: So basically, the administrative team formulates the plan.
AP: After we get the feedback from others, then we sit down and then we take it around and say this is what is going to take place. Have it in a forum.

R: Right. Who besides yourself and your principals were involved? And you kind of answered that by saying you get input before you sit down and actually plan so that maybe a question that we may not need to deal with. And you've answered how each group was involved. How do you believe students are impacted by these particular strategies that you and the principal use?

AP: I think that kids want to feel like school is a safe place for them to be. They know a lot of folks in the school, but personally they want to feel safe here. They come to school and most of them get an education, they don't want a place where they have to look over their shoulder, watch their back and worry about what is going to happen tomorrow. I think that the kids want it to be a safe place. I've had kids come up to me and say a problem is about to happen or I heard this. They want it to be safe so they come forward with that information.

R: So you feel like the kids are willing to share information with you that helps them feel safe?

AP: Right.

R: Do you feel like they stay in school longer? Now I know the age has gone up to the age of 18, it really isn't as big of an issue as it once was. Back when the age was 16, it was a lot easier for kids to drop out of school than it is now. Are the kids more than likely to stay in school as a result of feeling safe?

AP: Yeah. They could be out in the street but this is where their friends are at. I think they're feeling safe; they know it is not going to be tolerated from that perspective instead of I don't want to go to school because they know it is going to be squashed, we can handle it.

R: They feel comfortable coming in and asking for help?

AP: Liaison. They are very good about going to the liaison team and getting some assistance from them.

R: If you could change the way your principal has responded to gang-related activity and violence, what changes would you make?

AP: I guess one thing that comes to mind and this is the only thing I can think of is, and this is a personal approach, to meet with individual groups, gangs within the school on a small basis.

R: Students? OK.

AP: Mainly for the safety issue. And just meet with them at the beginning of the year as an administrator, meet the group.

R: Gang groups? Ninth graders?

AP: Oh, with all the 9th through 12th classes, but stay in the individual small groups. So they know where we stand up front every year. To put fresh on their minds at the beginning of the year. Go over the procedures to let them know where we stand.

R: Do you specifically address anything in your student handbook or teacher handbook about gangs or violence?

AP: Yes. The handbook prohibits any headbands, flying of colors...
R: Bandannas?

AP: They have to wear a T-shirt underneath the shirt, but they know what to wear.

R: OK. Like can they wear a white T-shirt under something or can they just not wear red, blue or green?

AP: As long as it is not a problem. As long as it is concealed.

R: But a red T-shirt underneath and red shoelaces then there may be a problem?

AP: Yes. They know that they have to wear white, brown or black shoelaces.

R: OK.

AP: If they have them on then they know that they are going to be removed.

R: Do you keep white with you?

AP: Usually they have them. If not, I'll find some.

R: Is there anything that I haven't asked you that you think is important for me to know so that I'll understand better about what your safety and security issues are with relation to gang-related activity and violence?

AP: Well, there's a program and I was talking about it right before you came in. The liaison team works with a gentlemen. I can't think of his last name, but his name is ______. He is a former gang member up in Chicago. We had the gang representatives here and are to meet with them on a regular basis. In fact, we are meeting them tomorrow to discuss issues about kids being in school and this is sort of a neutral zone for them. They are going to meet tomorrow, I think that that is helpful. Get the kids' input and to know what I can't say to you and what you can't say to me and those issues.

R: So it is like a forum sort of.

AP: They bring up issues, but they also work out differences without it going to violence. Which is really helpful. As far as gang activity, we have it. Fifteen against fifteen, we haven't had that at all. Even four against four. I think that with the liaison teams working with them, campus monitors are really good here. They watch for any activity and anything that doesn't look right, especially with people coming off the campus. Counselors talk to them and they can talk to someone who has been there. Boys' and Girls' Clubs person was the one telling me about that program. She was telling me that the older ones are the ones that come and talk to the kids. They even talk to the kids in elementary.

R: So it is kind of a peer mentor group.

AP: Yes. I asked what's the bottom line here and she well, we try to get to kids that you don't have to be violent to. She said that there are schools that have that and I asked well why don't we have that in our school. I think that it will really gives kids a voice so that they don't feel so inhibited.

R: Can you think of anything else that you want me to know that I haven't asked you?

AP: No.
Teacher 1

R: Tell me about your position and your responsibilities in this school.

T1: Well, first and foremost, I am a classroom teacher. I teach seniors and I teach advanced placement English and in addition, I do the school budget.

R: Oh, my. What a trip.

T1: I am Chairman of the CCC and . . .

R: And other duties as assigned?

T1: National Honor Society. Those are all the official duties.

R: You get to do everything else?

T1: As far as being Chairman of the CCC, yes I do.

R: Do you perceive that safety is an issue in your school, and if so, tell me about your concerns?

T1: No, it is not. I think we have one of the best schools in the state of Texas. And I don’t believe it is with the kids, in my talking with them.

R: OK. Do you perceive that there is a gang problem in your school, and if so, why do you believe that’s true?

T1: I think there used to be because we used to have more gang fights. I think that there was a lot more graffiti. Many of the typical signs, you know that.

R: Yes.

T1: Last spring there was quite a large gang fight that took place off the school grounds at Jack in the Box, but a number of students, close to a hundred students were put out of the school. They were 3rd parted, and since then . . .

R: No, problems?

T1: I mean minor. I also know that our liaison team, they have worked inseparably with the gang members. They tell them, "Leave it at home". You know, in the neighborhood.

R: OK. So you're not saying that you don't have gang members, you're saying that they don't cause you problems.

T1: That's exactly right.

R: Do you perceive that there is a problem with violence in your school, and if so, what kinds of problems are you having?

T1: No, I really do not.
R: OK. All right. What specific strategies does your principal enforce to prevent or reduce gang activity in your school?

Tl: We have a no tolerance policy.

R: None?

Tl: Absolutely none. Also in the student handbook in the dress code it specifically states no gang-related attire in the campus.

R: And they know what that is?

Tl: Yes. It is bandannas, any of those physical things. Um, as far as teacher responsibility, in our teacher handbook, it speaks of gang writing on notebooks, desks, whatever, you know. If we see students in the hall tagging anywhere. Basically, I mean the teachers and the administrators know, it is no tolerance.

R: What happens if, for example, someone wears red shoelaces or a red bandanna or a blue bandanna.

Tl: They are usually sent to the office and the vice principals make them take them off. They confiscate. In some cases the parents are called. And I think when that happens, it is amazing how people outside the school perceive that teachers and all the administrators and definitely, moms and dads, that they know when their kids are in gangs. And more parents do not know when their kids are in gangs.

R: Than do?

Tl: Yeah. It is amazing, I mean I have been on several conferences and the parents absolutely have no idea.

R: Or they deny it because they just don't...?

Tl: Yeah. It could be. I mean the couple that I can really think about, um and it wasn't because I was involved in the conference because of gangs. It was just a progress conference. And the parents came and you could just tell by the shocked look and in their case...

R: They just didn't know?

Tl: They just absolutely did not know. And I guess it started maybe six years ago, we began to have some inservices, you know. Sometimes it was just an hour or so in the faculty meeting and then they began to be half a day kind of thing, you know. I mean, you know, at that point with the faculty, you, though you knew gang signs, I mean as far as the attire and different things. We did not, and I am including myself, we, the faculty had no idea of the large numbers of gangs.

R: Over three hundred.

Tl: Yeah. Yeah. And it has gone up since. I don't think that a lot of us thought about the shoelaces, I mean, we though its cute, you know. It wasn't that we didn't want to believe it was gang members, it was just, you know, ignorance. And I believe it is that way with parents. I mean, you know, the parents don't know until they are arrested.

R: So they don't know what to look for?

Tl: Uh, uh. Uh, uh.
R: So what I hear you saying is that you have a strict no tolerance policy. That you have a dress code in place; strategies in the teacher handbook, and that you have staff development. Is that right?

T1: Yes.

R: Were you a part of the planning of these strategies and if so, how?

T1: Yes, in that on the Site Based Decision Team, we have input. They even ask the faculty for their input. It will usually come from the CCC. Sometimes the Chairman of the Site Based Decision Making, so that it is kind of a group effort.

R: So the roster that you have is a committee where you all get to offer your suggestions?

T1: Very, very definitely.

R: OK.

T1: Yeah, that's one of our main functions of our CCC and they are kind of a liaison committee between faculty and administration. And because of our enrollment we have nine members that are elected each year. One person is elected by the CCC and as a parent and that person along with the CCC member and a couple of teachers they get Adopt-a-School works with several parents and the decision making team. You know, it is a group effort. There are times I know, that when she had been hired, I mean this is an example of kind of how she works with kids. She knew that there was a need to change the student handbook, so she called in the individual classes, like the freshman class officers, sophomore, junior, and senior student council. She talked to the kids about making a student handbook and asked what do you like and what do you suggest, you know.

R: So they were given an opportunity for input. Did she do that during the summer?

T1: Yes. And in fact our CCC meeting got to redo the teacher handbook by revising it.

R: And you all made suggestions about that, too. Does she retain the ultimate final say?

T1: Basically, she does, but as long as it fits within the parameters of public school and school district policy, she's very good about, you know, she'll go with what the majority of the faculty what they want to do. Like on the student handbook, she usually has the assistant principal in charge and various members of faculty. OK, you be responsible for making sure that there is a TV and VCR in the foyer and you be responsible for going after the donuts. So she's very good, very structured, very organized in that way, but yet she has no problems delegating the stuff.

R: And you've basically answered this question, but I want to see if you have anything to add. Who besides yourself and your principal was involved in determining these strategies that you've talked about? I think you've really answered it. The CCC, students, . . .

T1: Let me add this because I do believe that she did go to the PTSA, but like the president of the PTSA. So really it is the parents, students, the faculty.

R: Good, well that's good. And you've told me how each of the groups were involved. How do you believe that students are impacted by the implementation of these strategies?

T1: They know that if they are here there is zero tolerance and they are gone. I mean they are out of here.
R: They understand and they are willing to abide by the rules and are willing to suffer the consequences?

T1: Yes.

R: If you could change the way that your principal has responded to gang-related activity and violence, what would you change and why?

T1: I don't think that I would change anything.

R: So you approve and are pleased with what she's done?

T1: Yeah. I know how it was before she came we had more problems and it was not the principal, I mean, not that they did nothing. It became very evident that we had a problem, but we had kids coming from all over town and kind of as they are reverting to now in that. And then what once the policy was zero tolerance. I mean, it really began to get better.

R: If students could change the way that she has responded to gang activity and violence, what would they change, and why?

T1: I imagine that they would like to see her get rid of the whole policy.

R: So you don't think that they would make it stricter; they would make it more lax?

T1: Now are talking about the gang members or the overall students?

R: I am talking about all students and how do they feel about her policies?

T1: OK. All of the students.

R: On a general basis.

T1: OK. They definitely approve of it. I am sure the difference of thinking of an adult and student would probably would make it much stricter.

R: Oh, OK. You think that they would make it more strict?

T1: They probably really would. Because they want to feel safe. Our kids, they tell me day in and day out, and these are not bad kids; they just come from neighborhood where . . .

R: There is activity?

T1: There's a lot of violence, I mean, they hear gunshots all night long. They see drug dealers. This is really a safe haven. A lot of them feel safer here than even in their own neighborhood.

R: Do you think more students are staying in school now because of they feel safer than used to be the case?

T1: Probably, but I don't know if it is credited to the safety factor or not.

R: Or the raising of the compulsory attendance age. Or maybe a little bit of this and a little bit of that. And people can't get a job, not without an education.

T1: That's true. If they aren't in school, they can't get a driver's license.
R: Right. Big problem.

Tl: And of course, a lot of them drive without the driver’s license. But in many cases that it. I mean, education is changing and our school is. Um. I think our kids are enjoying learning and I think that’s part of it.

R: Well, tell me this. I am going to open it up wide. Is there anything thing that I haven’t asked you that you think I ought to know about? About your school, or about your policies for gang activity and violence or anything that you feel like would be beneficial to say, like a new principal.

Tl: Probably, the only thing would be you need more uniformity among administration.

R: Like more consistency?

Tl: Yes, more consistency. We have certain policies that target the third time the teacher does this. The first time you go to the office and this is what is supposed to happen. And . . .

R: Sometimes that doesn’t occur? And is that because the administration plays favorites or because the numbers are so big or both?

Tl: Probably because we are too big. Some will look up, you know, and have weak disciplinarians in our system.

R: Are there in the teachers as well?

Tl: Yes. We have some teachers that have zero management skills.

R: You know one of the children that I interviewed and I’ve interviewed I believe, ten children so far. I am interviewing two out of each school. Several of the children have been very open and honest with me and have told me that some of their teachers come to school to get a paycheck; not to teach children.

Tl: Yes. That’s correct.

R: Um. Think that that is a universal problem?

Tl: I think so.

R: And I don’t think that there is anything you can do to legislate that out of the . . .

Tl: You can’t. And the only thing is, and I’ve been teaching a number of years, and I see the wheels beginning to turn in education. One of the biggest gripes was getting effective teachers.

R: Is it better now than it was?

Tl: And I think that it is going to continue. We’re all held accountable and if people can not do their job . . .

R: If you can’t stand the heat; get out of the fire?

Tl: Yeah, because they are the ones that are making it difficult for those that I think got their education because that they thought they wanted to do. I never thought that I would be here almost 30 years after graduating college. Because I started and stopped and started and stopped. You know, having kids. I mean, you talk about some changes I have seen them, even at this school. They have made it too difficult to get rid of ineffective teachers.
R: Or administrators?

T1: In _________, they have a thing if you're a bad administrator, they move you downtown and give you another title, and maybe more salary.

R: And you think that that would really the only thing that you would improve on? Consistency among the administrators?

T1: And another thing, I think that this would be universal high school problem, is lack of parental involvement. They are great in elementary school. OK in middle school, but in high school; forget it. If my daughter didn't tell me, I didn't know. My boys never would.

R: OK. Well, you have been wonderful.

Teacher 2

R: Tell me about your position and your responsibilities in the school.

T2: I am a freshman English teacher. I also teach eleventh and twelfth grades. I teach a major subject and an elective.

R: Do you perceive that safety is an issue in your school and if so, what are you concerns?

T2: With me it is a little different because all the kids know me and they know what I am going to tolerate and not tolerate. From my perspective everything here works fine. I don't know about the other teachers, some of them feel that it is not safe, but I think the kids think that it is pretty safe.

R: Is that because they work hard at it or because it is something that the principal has done?

T2: Well, I believe that it is something that the principal has done because we have zero tolerance meaning that gangs will not be tolerated. And anytime that they find that someone is affiliated with a gang that person is called in and they talk to them. And they tell them, you know, that they are not going to have that. If they wear different colored shoestrings, they are called in. They may not be in a gang, but if they look gang-related, then they try to get on top of it.

R: Sure.

T2: And find out if they are affiliated with a gang or why are you wearing the red shoe laces or whatever.

R: So they're active?

T2: Yeah.

R: Do you perceive that there is a gang problem in your school, and if so, why do you say that?

T2: There are gangs here, but I don't feel that it is a problem.

R: So there are gang members, but they don't bring it to school for the most part?

T2: No, because this year we've had meetings with the kids. This year it is mostly Hispanic kids.
And you know you can tell what gang they belong to because of the colors. And I don't know if you talked to ________ or not, but we have police officers come and they took them down to the conference room and sat them all in there together. And they tried to talk to them about having a truce at school, and evidently it is working because I don't see where we have had a lot of fights with the gangs.

R: Do you perceive that there is a problem with violence at your school and if so, what kinds of problems are arising?

T2: No.

R: No. OK. What specific strategies does your principal employ to stay safe from gang activity and violence?

T2: Well, she lets them know that it will not be tolerated. It is just that simple. And if there is a fight then the kids are fined and depending on whether it is there first or second time they are third partyed and they are expelled from school period.

R: What about dress code? Do you have a dress code that addresses gang activity?

T2: Well, not this year. In the past, we did, but things have really worked out quite well. Before, I guess maybe it was the year before last, the kids couldn't wear their shirt tails tucked out. They had to wear them in. Their pants had to be pulled up to their waist because if they had on their oversized clothes then they could hide a weapon, but last year things ran smoothly, so this year she did away with the dress code. And we really haven't had a problem.

R: OK. Were you a part of the planning of these strategies?

T2: I wasn't per se, but she did have a planning committee, but I wasn't on it.

R: OK. So there was a committee that helped to devise those strategies or at least had input in it? Do you know who was on the committee? I am not looking for specific names. I am looking for whether it was parents, students . . .

T2: It was a combination of all of them. Parents, teachers, students.

R: So there was a wide variety of input?

T2: Yes.

R: OK. How was each person or group involved. Do you know?

T2: They would meet in the afternoons in the conference room. And they all had a chance to voice their opinions in there with the parents and students. Especially when they were addressing the dress code. They all gave their input and then it was put to a vote. The student body voted and the parents voted, too.

R: OK. So they really had not only some input, but some approval.

T2: Yes. And so did the parents because when they . . . we had the voting booths, the whole nine yards.

R: Oh.
T2: It was in the auditorium. The kids voted during the day and the parents, I think the parents had like a week during different hours to come up and vote.

R: OK. Did they approve what she had presented?

T2: Yes.

R: And the kids did, too?

T2: Well, some of them did, but after voting their plans got kind of shot down. But it was under the democratic vote, you know.

R: Yes. Is that because they didn't want it as strict as she wanted it to be or what? Or do you know?

T2: The kids are the ones that didn't want it at all.

R: They didn't want it at all?

T2: No. The kids these days are into fashion, you know.

R: And their own thing?

T2: Yeah, their own thing. You know, Guess and Tommy Hilfiger. They just didn't want the uniforms, but I liked the way it was presented. You know, the parents, some of the teachers, and the students got together and formulated a plan. They presented it to the student body and the kids had a chance to vote and so did the parents. And when it was over no one could complain.

R: OK. So it was democratic all the way around. How do you believe the students are impacted by the implementation of these strategies? I mean like zero tolerance, for example. Sending kids home if they find out they are gang-related incident. How do you feel like they feel about that?

T2: I think that they can appreciate that because years ago, I guess maybe five years ago, when the gang problem was really a problem, some of the kids didn't want to come to school. They didn't know if they had on this color, if they were going to be approached or whatever, but after she took over and she talked to the kids. She went to each class and talked to them and let them know that if they had a problem they could come to her. One on one. I think that they can respect that.

R: So even if they may not like it, they have respect for it.

T2: Yeah.

R: If you could change the way that your principal has responded to gang activity and violence, what would you change and why?

T2: Really nothing.

R: So you're happy with what is going on?

T2: Yeah, because it works.

R: OK. If students could change the way that she has responded to gang activity and violence, what do you think that they would change and why?
T2: I don't think they would because after they had the meeting with the two Hispanic gangs and they made the truce, there hasn't been a problem.

R: Do you know what gangs they are?

T2: No. I am not familiar with that. All I know is that one wears red, but to me all of them wear red. Within that red set, is two different kinds. Like the Latin Kings and I don't know what the other ones are. Little Mafia or something like that. But I though that is was real nice to get them all in one room and that showed that she wasn't afraid to attack it head on because I don't know if I would have had all of them in one room together.

R: Especially the opposing . . . ?

T2: Yeah, but she put both of them together. I saw it with my own eyes. It was the cop that we have on campus and I think one came from downtown. Someone from the gang unit. And they had them all in there.

R: That's great!

T2: And we haven't had a problem.

R: Now here's where I am going to open it up to you. Is there anything that I haven't asked you that you feel would be helpful to me. For example, if I were teaching new principals how to deal with this problem, or what would you feel like was important for a new principal to know about devising a strategy?

T2: Huh? I don't know. So far like I said everything that she has implemented dealing with the gangs has worked. The only thing that a new administrator would tell the teachers probably would be to be on the lookout for gangs. If they can and they have a good rapport with the kids, talk to the kids you know. Why are you in a gang? You know, get the teachers involved. I get involved because if I see a kid scribbling on his notebook gang signs and stuff, then I tell them you need to gang up on your education. That's the only thing you need to gang up on. So you could tell the principal to tell the staff to be more conscientious or aware of the kids that want to be in gangs or are in gangs. And talk to them and let them know that we know where they are coming from and show them that an education is the best way. So that is the only thing I can see.

R: So really just the educational approach.

T2: Yes.

R: All right.

Student 1

R: First of all, I would like both of you to tell me something about your school. Just tell me something about how you feel about your school, or anything that you feel I would like to know.

S1: I like it because it is a trade school. It helps us to get a job and an education. It helps to learn more about the real world and how to help people and all that.

S2: I like it, too, because we have more classes to choose from, like cosmetology, and we can get more, what is that called?

R: More electives?
S1: Yeah.

S2: More electives.

R: Anything else that you would like me to know about your school before we start?

S1: I think it is a good school.

R: OK, what I need to know next is if you believe that there is a safety issue at your school and if so, what do you see the problems being?

S1: I see a problem.

R: Do you ever see a situation that you didn't like to be into or other people doing things that you did, like, that you avoid?

S1: Smoking.

R: OK, smoking cigarettes or funny cigarettes?

S1: Marijuana. What about you?

S2: Some people they smoke marijuana.

R: OK, so are you telling me that if you kinda stay to yourself that nobody bothers you?

S2: Yeah, right.

R: Do you believe that there is a gang problem in your school and if so, what makes you say that?

S1: Not any more.

S2: Well, it is not really a gang problem. People just, you know, be hanging out in all kinds of places. We stay on the westside. They stay on the southside, eastside, you know, southside, eastside, you know.

R: So there is some gang activity, but there isn't, like signs, it is more verbal?

S2: Yeah.

R: OK, do you believe that there is a problem with violence, and if so, what kinds of problems do you think there are?

S2: No, not really.

R: So no guns or knives, or fights, or anything like that?

S2: Oh, we have some every now and then, but the hall monitors . . .

R: OK, do you have a police officer that is stationed at your school?

S2: Yeah.

R: Tell me what your principal does that makes you feel safe in your school from gang-related activity and violence?
S1: He brings the police out. (Note: The principal is a female.)

R: OK, he brings in the police?

S2: Dogs . . .

S1: Every now and then.

R: So the dogs come. What about rules that she's made or maybe that the assistant principals have made or anything like that? Are there any types of rules that you can think of that would make you feel safer?

S2: You know, if something is going to happen, come and tell them, and they'll take care of the problem.

R: So they are willing to listen?

S2: Yeah.

R: What about specific rules like no gang colors, or no shoelaces, or things like that?

S2: Yeah, we have that, but some people do not go by the rules.

R: So does that mean that they don't enforce the rules they set, or perhaps that the administrators just don't see?

S1: Some of them don't see it.

R: OK, all right. Who do you believe helped your principal devise these rules that you have? Did you have any part in it? Either one of you? Do you think students did, or do you think teachers did?

S1: Some students did.

R: Like who?

S1: The student council.

R: OK, the student council probably helped with that. What about adults, like teachers, or counselors, or somebody like that?

S1: I think at the PTA meetings and all that.

R: So the adults in the community did have input in the PTA meetings. OK. How do you feel about what your principal or other adults do to prevent gangs and violence from being a problem at your school? How does that make you feel?

S1: Can you repeat that?

R: Sure. How do you feel about what your principal or other adults do to prevent gangs and violence from being a problem at your school?

S1: I feel great about it.

R: You told me earlier that you feel safe.

S1: Yes, ma'am.
R: Is there anything in particular that makes you feel safe?
S1: Just a whole bunch of hall monitors and police that are just walking around the building.
R: Do agree with that?
S2: Yeah.
R: So do you feel safer than before your principal came?
S1: Yes.
R: OK, what is the difference between before she got here and now?
S1: Gangs.
R: So there used to be a lot of gang activity?
S1: Yeah.
R: Do you know what she did to stop that besides bringing in the police?
S1: Get rid of most of the bad kids.
R: So what she did was remove the bad guys? Is that right?
S2: Yes, ma'am.
R: Tell me how you feel safer.
S1: They ain't no gangs anymore.
R: So because your school draws from all over town, was that a problem?
S1: Yes.
R: OK, with having a lot of different rivalries and that sort of thing to speak of at school, do you see it happening around the campus instead of on the campus?
S2: Well, it be when night school be coming at our school. There is a lot of writing on the walls.
R: So you still see some of that?
S1: From the night school.
S2: Yeah, from the night school.
R: The alternative program or the adult education?
S1: Alternative.
S2: Alternative.
R: OK, so the alternative program with people from all over. So they don't like your school as well as you do and they don't take as good care of it? Is that what you are telling me?
S2: Yeah.
R: OK, if you could go back, and this gives you to opportunity to be the principal for a moment, if you could change anything your principal has done in reaction to gang-related activity and violence, what would it be and why?

S1: I like it the way it is.
R: You wouldn't change anything at all? You are so easy!
S2: I would like to change the detector methods. That's about it.
R: The metal detectors?
S2: But they really don't work.
R: You mean the ones at your school don't work or . . .
S2: We have the hand things.
R: So you don't have the big ones that people walk through? Would that help if you did?
S1: They started it for the night school, but then they stopped.
R: Is if a different principal?
S1: The night school?
R: Yes.
S1: Yeah.
R: Does he do something different that you see?
S1: I don't know.
R: If you were deciding how to control gang activity and violence at your school, who would you ask to help you?
S1: I'd talk to gang members.
R: You'd ask them for their ideas?
S1: Yes.
R: Do you agree with that?
S2: No, I would not ask the gang members.
R: Who would you ask?
S2: Counselors, teachers . . .
R: So you'd ask adults?
S2: Yes.
R: What would be your primary concern if you were the principal of the school?
S1: The kids.

R: The kids? You'd look for what the kids are wearing, or what they were doing, or what they were saying? Or what?

S2: Yeah, most of the time they talk. They probably telling the truth about being gang members. You know.

R: Do you hear people say that all the time, is that something people talk about, but they just don't flaunt it?

S2: Yeah.

R: Is that what you mean? They just don't make a big deal about it?

S2: Yeah.

R: And you think that is because your principal has been so strict on it?

S1: Yeah.

R: So you appreciate that? Now here is your opportunity to tell me anything you want to tell me. Is there anything else that you want to tell me about gangs and violence at your school that I haven't asked you? Open it up, whatever you want to tell me.

S2: Well, now. What happened to those two boys? You know that you all can't go without signing a sign-in sheet because of graffiti all over the walls.

R: What happened? The restrooms?

S2: They have to sign in.

R: Did the principal put somebody outside with a sign-up sheet or something?

S2: Yeah, hall monitors have to be there all the time.

R: Is that one particular restroom or is that every restroom?

S1: It is just that one that is unlocked.

R: So all the others are locked? So during class time everyone has to go to that one restroom?

S2: The boys.

R: So the girls didn't do it?

S2: No.

R: So you are better than the guys? So you have all your restrooms open?

S2: Yeah.

R: You know what one youngster told me the other day? I asked him what he would change if he could change anything his principal had done, and he told me he'd be a lot tougher than his principal.

S1: I'd be a little bit stricter.
R: In what way?
S1: Gang members.
R: In what way?
S1: I would not let people come up here during lunches and all that.
R: Do outsiders come up at lunch? How do you recognize an outsider when they come up?
S2: They've never been here before.
R: So you just don't recognize their faces? Do you have a dress code or anything that would tell you if you that somebody was wrong on campus? Like a cap or a lot of red or blue or anything like that?
S1: Some of them come up here like that.
S2: Well, they can't wear caps up here anyway.
R: So that is what I mean. If you had someone with a hat on, you'd know he was an outside guy. So that helps you identify?
S2: Yeah.
R: Does your principal let you wear like all red, or blue, or green?
S2: People be wearing what they want to wear.
R: So you an identify the gang members by what they wear?
S1: Yeah.
R: So you know that they are there, but that doesn't frighten you?
S2: Yeah.
R: You just get used to it, or you just know that that's not going to cause you a problem as long as you keep to yourself? Which way?
S2: I keep to myself.
R: Ok, so you keep to yourself and if you don't bother them, they won't bother you?
S2: Right.
R: Is that it? Anything else you want me to know?
S1: Not that I can think of right now.
R: Well, you must really have a safe school then. Good.

**Student 3**
R: So tell me a little bit about your school.
S3: It's pretty nice. It's good. They teach well here. It is not that big, but it is pretty big. Everybody at the school knows each other. It's not big like, where you did not know half the kids.

R: So have you been to School C before?

S3: Um, when I was at ________ Middle School, they took me there as a tour.

R: But then you chose School A instead? Do you believe that safety is a problem at your school, and if so, why?

S3: Yeah, cause a lot of the back doors, they don't have a lot of people watching them and they don't see nothing until it happens.

R: So wherever the security guard is, someone comes in another door?

S3: Yeah, there's a lot of doors.

R: And they face on a lot of streets, don't they?

S3: Yeah, like there's one on and like the street's right there, and you can like walk right in.

R: Do you have a lot of outsiders in your building?

S3: No, no outsiders.

R: Can you recognize an outsider?

S3: Yeah, you can recognize them fast.

R: How do you recognize an outsider?

S3: Just cause we ain't ever seen them. You can tell right away if he is new, he's an outsider.

R: So it is just a matter of looking at his face and the way he's dressed? OK. Do you believe that there is a gang problem in your school, and if so, what makes you say that?

S3: I don't really think that there is a gang problem. I think that there is a group of people that think that they're bad.

R: Are there a lot of gang member that go there?

S3: Yeah.

R: But they don't engage in a lot of activity at school?

S3: A lot of times they do.

R: What kinds of activities?

S3: They'll fight wherever. Like most of the times, they'll fight at Jack in the Box.

R: So not on campus, but kind of across the street?

S3: Yeah. Most of the times, they'll be around the school.

R: But not on campus?
S3: No.

R: Why is that?

S3: Well, most of the time, they will fight in the school. If it gets serious, they'll fight in the school.

R: OK, is there a problem with violence in your school? Like weapons, or anything like that?

S3: No, it never get like that. You'll hear people getting stabbed by a pencil or something like that in a fight. I remember there's this one guy that got cut by a razor blade and stabbed by a pencil.

R: Somebody had a razor blade at school? But no guns? Just razor blades?

S3: Razor blades, or a lock or something.

R: Like when they hit someone with a lock in their hand and it hurts someone? All right. What do you think your principal does to make your school safe from gang activity and violence?

S3: Are you talking like getting people to talk to the gang bangers or something? Like try to get them to sign peace treaties or something like that?

R: Between different gangs? Does she bring in like speakers to speak to the whole school?

S3: Sometimes, but most of the time, it'll be for those certain ones that are in the gang bang.

R: How does she pick you out? How does she know?

S3: Because she knows.

R: So she knows who is in it?

S3: Yeah.

R: Which gangs? Can she tell by the way you dress?

S3: Yeah.

R: Or does she know you well enough?

S3: Yeah, she knows us that well.

R: Is she a neat lady?

S3: Yeah, she's cool.

R: What do you believe or who do you believe helped her to decide on those rules for gang activity and violence? Like, did parents, or students, or was it only administrators, or were teachers involved, perhaps?

S3: I don't really know, we just know that people just wanted to talk to people who were gang bangers and that's it. We really don't know who got . . .

R: How long have you been there?

S3: Three years.
R: So were you there before she came?
S3: I've been there since she been there.
R: So she's been there the whole time you've been there?
S3: Not the freshman year. It been two years, two years.
P: Well, the reason I'm asking that question is, was there a different principal there when you were a freshman?
S3: Yeah.
R: How does it compare?
S3: Made a big difference on that one. There was a lot more fights my freshman year. A lot more fights. Like this year, or last year, the new principal, she's really changing a lot.
R: So do you think that what she's doing is effective?
S3: Yeah.
R: OK, good. Were you involved at all, involved in helping to decide what rules you have?
S3: No.
R: OK, how do you feel about what your principal does to prevent gangs and violence from being a problem? Now, you've said she's cool. How does it make you feel that she's trying to control gangs and violence?
S3: Like who, the principal?
R: All the adults. How does it make you feel? How they handle their business? Does it make you feel safe?
S3: No.
R: You don't ever really feel safe?
S3: They'll get you.
R: If they want to get you?
S3: They'll get you. In the streets, the principal ain't going to be out there in the streets.
R: So whether it is at school or whether it is not, do you feel safe at school?
S3: I do.
R: Most of the time? All right. If you could go back and change anything at all that the adults do at your school about gang-related activity and violence, what would you change and why?
S3: Huh? Not much.
R: Would you institute any kind of a dress code or anything like that that is not already in place?
S3: No.
R: So you think it is pretty good now?

S3: Yeah. I like it better than last year.

R: Good, all right now tell me, is there anything at all that I haven't asked you that you think I ought to know about your school in order to make some decisions on how well it is managed as far as gangs and violence?

S3: I think I told you everything about the school.

Site Visit

I'm on a site visit at School A. I do see some kids in the hall without passes, or what appear to be passes. I can't tell whether the dress code is being violated, or perhaps there is not one, but it is kind of interesting. A lot of the shirtails are out. I see a lot of red and a lot of blue, but it does not seem to bother the students.

I see a number of students standing in the doorways of classrooms. Perhaps these are some different kinds of programs or classes, but I don't see any instruction going on. The campus monitor just got up and asked the students to move on. I am wondering if that is because I am here.

I see graffiti scratched in the concrete outside one of the entrances. I see that there has been some writing on the outside of the building, but it has been sandblasted off. I do see some gang writing on some stickers on one of the outside doors.

One of the campus monitors just stopped me. I told him I was doing some research on safety. He gave me his name. Lots and lots of kids in the hallways. Evidently, the yearbooks just recently came out, and perhaps students are signing them. The campus monitor was just sending them back to class. There are still many students in the halls.

In the Newcomer Academy (the sign is on the wall), this particular group of students does not appear to be having classes. They are out in the halls. Some of them are eating ice cream or snowcones.

It appears that they are repainting the entire building inside. It is hard to tell if it is for a particular reason, or if it just needs to be done.

I just spoke with one of the campus monitors to ask about why so many students are in the halls. He said that teachers often just let them out. "Teachers let them out." I asked if something particular was going on today, but he said they don't normally tell him. So, he said, he would not know if that was it or not. He also showed me the security cameras. There are 32--16 for the day school and 16 for the night alternative school.

Student Code of Conduct

The following items are prohibited:

Radios, tape players, fireworks, electronic toys, games, sound producing devices, communications devices, guns, knives, felt tip or other markers, beepers, and other nuisance articles;

Any item which has the potential of distracting the student or others;

Gang or drug related apparel, logos, handkerchiefs, bandannas, or other items not approved by administration (notebooks, shoes, books, shoestrings, etc.);
Other dress deemed inappropriate by administration.

Visitors are prohibited unless they have legitimate business at school, and must report directly to the office. Students may not bring a guest to school unless they are approved by the principal in advance. Visitors are expected to leave promptly when their business is concluded, and students from School A may not visit other campuses without prior approval from both principals.

Teacher Handbook

The teacher handbook lists the following items in its Student Behavior Policy section. Students are to refrain from:

- Smoking in the building or on school property;
- Fighting on or near school property;
- Insolence or disrespect to fellow students, teachers, etc.,
- Possessing inappropriate reading materials;
- Wearing sunglasses unless they are prescribed;
- Rowdy behavior;
- Leaving school without permission;
- Visiting parking lots or cars during school hours;
- Possession of alcohol or drugs;
- Vandalism;
- Possession of radios, beepers, phones, or other electronic devices;
- Distribution of non-school related handouts;
- Gang activity of any type.

Dress code items contained in the teacher handbook are the same as those contained in the Student Code of Conduct.

School B

Principal

R: Tell me about your school.

P: We have 1700 students, and we're 95% African American, and 5% Anglo and Hispanic. We're on the ______ side of ______. Our school mascot is the _________. Our motto is Think You Can, and our theme is Totally Focused.

R: On?

P: Academics.
R: So whatever you're doing at that time, if it's TAAS, you're totally focused on that, and if it's ... 

P: Academics, totally focused, SAT, totally focused. . . .

R: OK. Tell me if you perceive that safety is an issue at your school.

P: Yeah, safety is a definite issue.

R: And could you describe your concerns?

P: Well, with such a large student population, it's very easy that somebody could easily walk on and blend in without our knowing exactly who they are at first. Also with our large population, metal detectors are very important, cause we're not allowed to search . . .

R: Without probable cause or at least reasonable suspicion?

P: Reasonable suspicion.

R: Any other safety concerns?

P: Yeah, gangs, and you know right now we tell them that if they're a Crip or a Blood, or a Hispanic gang, keep their gang activity away from school. Sometimes it could occur at school, and that's when we have a problem.

R: OK. Any other safety concerns that you deal with either regularly or occasionally?

P: Those are the only ones. No, the parking lot. We have outsiders driving in on the parking lot, trying to mix it up with our children.

R: Well, you've already answered part of this next question. You told me that you do have some gangs. Tell me what kinds of problems you have as a result of gangs.

P: Well, basically the kind of problems we have is fights. Normally it is brought in from the community, where they had a problem in the community, and then they bring it to school and they fight.

R: Do you have any other kinds of problems? Like with colors or signing, or . . .

P: No, we haven't had a lot of signing this year. In the past we have, but not this year. You understand that there is no tolerance here. Even if it looks like a fight, we take it to Officer ______ and they get a ticket. As far as colors, unless it's a blue and gold combination or all red combination, we don't care what color they wear.

R: Do you perceive that there is a problem with violence in your school?

P: Yes, I mean, at times there can be violence if you're not visible. It's very important in a high school like ______ that the administrators and the campus monitors are visible during passing periods and especially during lunch, and at the end of the day. Those are the times you have your biggest problems.

R: What kinds of problems are you having as far as violence? You mentioned fights brought in from the community.

P: Those are the main ones. We haven't had any weapons, we haven't had any guns, we haven't even had any razor blades. Just fights. They'll fight if you don't watch it.

R: Have you had more trouble with boys or girls?
R: Girls. Now I don't believe girls are gang related. They just fight.

P: They fight over little boys?

R: OK. What specific strategies are you employing to keep your school safe from gang activity and violence and how were they determined?

P: Well, the first thing we did is no tolerance for gang-related activity. We don't allow them to wear memory shirts, we don't allow them to wear braids or plaits, we don't allow them to wear blue or red or gold shoestrings. It's very important that again, campus monitors must be visible (principal hits the desk to emphasize "must be visible."). But a lot of times the administrators can't be visible. We're in conference, but campus monitors must be visible at all times. We all must be out during passing periods and lunchtimes. It is also important that teachers are out at their doors during passing periods. They can keep future problems, they can stop it or at least get one of us where we can come and get control.

R: Have your teachers had any staff development or anything with regard to gangs?

P: We had the gang unit out to show them the new gang signs, the new gang clothing, and the gang terminology that the kids are using now. We had that during one of our staff developments

R: Early in the year?

P: Yes.

R: How were those strategies determined?

P: Well, what we did was teacher committees developed strategies, Site Based Decision Making developed strategies, the administrative team, we developed some, and the Site Based and the CCC voted on something that will be workable here.

R: So they voted and you included what they voted on in your handbook?

P: Yes.

R: Who, besides yourself, was involved in determining and implementing these strategies? You mentioned Site Based team, teachers, administrative team, did you ever have any parents or students?

P: Yes, we have parents on our Site Based team, and we also have student representatives.

R: Now you've kind of answered this one. How was each person or group involved? Did they develop it on their own and bring it together? Or?

P: They developed what they wanted to see accomplished as far as violence in the school and they brought it together and we voted on it.

R: How do you believe students are impacted by the implementation of these strategies? For example, do you think some kids stay in school because they feel safer? Because they know there's not going to be a lot of gang violence?

P: Yeah, I feel like a lot of kids stay in school because they know there's not going to be a lot of gang violence. We had an incident Friday before last that we hadn't had in a long time and they came to me to let me know they're not used to the gang activity and they don't want it to take place in our school.

R: Is that the one where you had a student killed?

P: No, the student was killed on Saturday, but we had a fight here on Friday.
R: But the kids didn't like it?

P: No. They said, Mr. _____ we can't start back having this kind of thing.

R: So they're comfortable with the kinds of strategies you have put into place?

P: There's always a few that are going to cause you problems. But they like having structure.

R: If you could change anything about the way you've handled gang activity and violence up to this point, what specific changes would you make and why?

P: Uh, probably the only change I would make, uh good question. What would I change and why? I would probably be a little more stricter in some of the colors kids wear. We're just tough on the blue and gold combination, but I'd probably put in the one where you couldn't wear any T-shirts, just collared shirts. Overall, you give a kid some expression in high school, but at the same time, you make sure he understands what the rules are.

R: Is there anything I haven't asked you that you believe academics could learn from, or that new principals could learn from? I hope to develop some things that can be used for staff development.

P: One thing you have to do is you have to identify that you have a gang problem.

R: You have to admit it?

P: You've got a lot of principals that say we don't have a gang problem. We tell parents, students, we tell anybody: We have a gang problem. We move quickly and effectively, and we try to be consistent. If they violate those rules we have for gangs, that they cannot stay. There is no tolerance. We do not tolerate it. If you do it today, and don't do it tomorrow, you have a problem. The same rules apply to everybody. It could be my daughter or the school board member's daughter.

R: Anything else you can think of that those who read this paper will benefit from reading?

P: We have CrimeStoppers. They're trying to take that away from us, but we really use our CrimeStoppers. We reward students who turn in students smoking weed or whatever. We really try to give these kids their money when they turn in a tip. Kids need to know that people are watching. It don't take but one person to see, and . . . they'll turn people in for $25.

R: You mentioned marijuana. Do you have a lot of problems with drugs?

P: We have a lot of problems with marijuana. It seems to be coming back on the rise. We don't get much crack any more.

R: You did for a while?

P: My first year here, but now it's just marijuana.

R: Do you find it in amounts that would indicate someone is selling?

P: No, just to use.

R: Do you have any problem areas in the building?

P: Yes, we have one hall that's a problem, and back behind the cafeteria. That's where we find drug use and gambling.
Assistant Principal

R: First, tell me about your position and your responsibilities in your school.

AP: OK, I am the assistant principal as far as responsibility goes, I have got A - G as far as discipline. All grades. I am over the special education department, ESL department, vocational, athletics, and textbooks as well as radios, campus monitors, school safety, and security.

R: Do you perceive that safety is an issue in your school?

AP: It is something that we have to keep in mind every day. Everyday. We haven't had the problems this year as we had just last year.

R: Can you tell me the concerns that you have regarding safety? Can you tell the kinds of problems you have had in the past or the problems that you are dealing with now?

AP: Our main concern in the past was the kids harassing each other as far as antagonizing them and getting ready to fight other kids or provoking the fight. We have had more of that this year. We have not had the weapon problem. We had drug issues, being in possession of or under the influence. As far as weapons, we have some, but not as much as in the past. We have not had the gang-related activity this year.

R: Well, that was my next question. Do you perceive that there is a gang problem and if so, tell me about what your concerns are.

AP: My concerns are we do have young men who want to hang around with their groups. I don't see us having a major gang problem. We have people coming along that are into the gang-related activity, a lot of wannabes. Crip gang members and Blood members, we have both here. We have the Sur thirteen group, our population has increased with Hispanic students for the past two year. Majority of them are the Crip gang members because it is their territory. I guess a couple of years ago, we had more problems with it. The kids are just phasing it out.

R: So your kids are choosing to leave it now?

AP: I believe my kids are choosing to leave it now they are still hanging out with the group, but we don't have them throwing the gang signs or using the language. We do have some, but not as much as there has been in the past.

R: Well, let me ask you this. This is kind of aside from that question, which you responded to, do you think they are leaving it alone only at school, or do you think that they are leaving it alone outside of school as well?

AP: Well, the parents feel like they are not doing anything outside of school. I feel like they are leaving it alone more in school. It is more of a social thing with more socializing in school. Some of our more serious gang members are doing that outside of school.

R: So you think that they are leaving it outside. Do you feel that it is out of respect for the rules here or something that you all have done, or do they just realize that they are not going to be able to stay in school?

AP: They realize that we are not going to tolerate it any type of gang-related activity. We don't tolerate the clothing or any type of gang-related attire. It is a combination of each. We do send them home and have the parent come back or we take them to a hearing depending on how severe the situation is. Also, the past few years, I have worked with some of the kids during the weekend. I have a group of them through my church. It is a youth group called "Nothing But the Brothers." I work with a lot of the gang
members from _________. I think it has helped some because it keeps them busy weekends when they
really get involved in their activity. They spend most of the day with me from 10 AM to 2 PM.

R: Do you think they perceive you then as somebody that recognizes that they can not do it at
school because Mr. ______ will get us?

AP: Yes, that is part of it. I really believe that. And the fact that they feel that I know them and I
know the situations that they are going through and we discuss that in our group discussion. It is like
every topic I come up with it may not be related to gangs, but that comes out in our discussions. It is what
they know about and it is what they are used to. Like I said, on the weekends our church is right across the
street with the youth group and we do bring in the Bible. Fortunately, we take scripture and related that to
to their life and hope to turn someone's life around. And we have turned some, but there is a lot that still have
not.

R: OK. Do you think that there is a problem with violence in your school, and if so, tell me how
you perceive that as true?

AP: I do not feel that we have a problem with violence.

R: So you feel that this has pretty much settled down?

AP: Yes, we had one gang fight this year.

R: OK. One major fight and it was gang-related?

AP: One fight, and yes, it was gang-related. And all those kids were immediately removed.

R: And were there outsiders that were involved in this?

AP: Yes, there were outsiders that came in.

R: And that's a big problem, isn't it, when people from outside come in?

AP: Yes, it really creates problems. We have some new kids that came in January that were
involved. We ended up suspending about three of those kids because they came in with their gang colors.
And they came back with their parents and were made aware that they cannot wear that type of clothing to
school and made sure that they understood the dress code.

R: Let me ask this, then. What specific strategies do you think your principal has put into place
or the school has put into place that helps keep your school safe from gang activity and violence?

AP: Zero tolerance.

R: So you think that is the biggest thing?

AP: Yes, zero tolerance.

R: I have looked at your teacher handbook and your student handbook and if you had to point to
some policies there, if you were dealing with a gang child and say this, this, this, and this are against the
rules. What kinds of things would you point to that you think have been effective?

AP: First of all, just where it talks about gang-related attire, combination of clothing. It is up to
our discretion. I would say these are our discussion about gang-related attire. We are able to explain to the
kids about that. We meet with the kids before every semester and they go over that particular policy. They
are told that they cannot wear clothing that is a combination that would be gang-related.
R: Your principal mentioned that blue, gold, and all red . . .

AP: Or all green. Green also. We have come to the point we make them take out shoestrings. If you wear red/green or blue/gold shoe strings, we take those up as well as the T-shirt and Dickies type pants, we make them go home and change clothes. Or we suspend them. It depends on . . .

R: Any color Dickies or the combination?

AP: No, just the combination. If someone comes in with a gray shirt and blue Dickies, we don't make them, but if they come in with a gold shirt and blue, green, or red Dickies.

R: Or red Dickies, and a red shirt? Were you a part of planning those strategies?

AP: Well, when I first came Mr. had already put in and I just carried it over. Mr. had some ideas from the school that he previously was at. Now something that we also put in was the hair, wearing the plaits or braids in the hair. They cannot do that. At one time, we were letting them wear the braids, but not the plaits. Then we decided not to do any of it. I think that is a good rule instead of trying to determine what is a braid and plait, let's just not have it at all. So the boys cannot have them.

R: Are they adjusting to that pretty well?

AP: Oh, yeah. It took a little at the first semester, but now they can either take it down or go home and come back the next day with the parents.

R: And you mentioned Mr. . Do you think that the faculty, parents, or the students had anything to do with these rules? Did you perceive that this was collaborative in any way?

AP: It was just kinda put into place.

R: So really a principal directed issue? If you had to say how students are impacted by those strategies that have been put into place, for example, tell me how you feel the kids are impacted by the rules that you have in place that deal specifically with gangs and violence.

AP: I think the majority of the kids feel safer with the rules that are in place. If you let them know that you are sincere about them and the importance of them coming into the building and getting their education. There are some that want to argue the point with arguing about the braids by saying, "Well, why do the girls get to wear braids?" and stuff like that. But the majority of the kids feel good about it. I mean you can walk down the hall sometimes and kids say, "Mr. , why do you let that homeboy in the building?" because of the way they are dressed. They you say, "Oh, let me get that kid in so we can talk about the way he is dressed. A lot of kids appreciate the rules.

R: So they feel like they are a part of helping sustain those rules?

AP: Uh huh.

R: That's good. That's good. OK. If you could change anything regarding the strategies that your principal has put into place, what would you change and why?

AP: Due to gangs and violence?

R: Yes, things that specifically address gangs and violence.

AP: Making the teachers more responsible as well.

R: OK. Responsible? So you think that they are not aware?
AP: I think that they need to be more a part of it. They are aware, but making them more a part of it. And also making them put more directives together. Having the teachers have more input.

R: So they should be part of the planning?

AP: Part of the planning and also making sure that they are enforcing it as well. Because you find not all of the teachers are doing that.

R: Do you think that, I don't want to use the word aware, but do you think that some of them just don't know what constitutes gang costuming? Ignorance? It isn't a case of them not being aware; they just don't realize?

AP: We have some because of ignorance of the policy that they are not aware of it, but then you have fear or don't want to deal with it.

R: They think it's a hassle?

AP: Don't want to deal with it. Exactly. I was trying to think of a way I wanted to say it.

R: It is just easier to ignore as opposed to having to bring them down to the office or whatever? One of the things we told our teachers is that if they don't want to handle the situation, put it in writing, send a child to the office that you trust with it in an envelope, or something where the kid can't read it. And let us be aware of your concern of how a certain child is dressed or something he is saying or even if he is only imitating the gang signs. He needs to know that is an invitation to being killed. That is one thing that we say, you know, if you don't want the hassle, write it down and let us know. Give us the kid's name, let us know what he is doing, wearing, and that sort of thing, and then that way, you don't have to address it specifically with that child and put themselves in the line of fire, so to speak. So they can kind of go in the back door as opposed to the front door.

AP: Good idea! I think that is the problem with us.

R: He didn't say that the teachers weren't cooperative. I think he indicated that most everybody was aware and most everybody cooperative. I don't think he mentioned that. That is the reason I said I don't want you all to agree on everything necessarily. I think it is good to get information from several different sources. Then you can get a clearer picture of what the school is really like. If a student could change the way the school has responded or the principal has responded about gang activity and violence, what do you think they would change and why? What do you think they would say?

AP: I never thought of that.

R: What do you hear them say?

AP: I can go by the majority. They don't like the situation of kids coming into school and bothering them with gangs. You know, it is making our school bad. Sometimes I think that a kid can get paranoid. Like the situation that occurred last month with gangbangers, kids were calling their parents and wanting to go home. They were not used to it. They were afraid. We have not had that problem. I think that change they would make would be probably more security, which I hate having that much security in schools.

R: Would they put up more metal detectors, for example? Is that what you hear?

AP: No. More people, more bodies. More campus monitors trained to deal with that type of situation.

R: Do they like having the police officer on campus? Yes and no? (Laughter)
AP: Yeah, well, they do, they do. Especially the kids who come from the background where they want to get the most out of their education and not worry about other situations, but I really feel like they want more people monitoring.

R: So you don't feel like they would change your rules? They might make them more strict? But you don't think that they would make them less restrictive?

AP: I feel like that.

R: So just in chatting with them, the ones that don't like it are probably the gang kids and the ones that do like it are the ones who come up here to feel safe?

AP: Yes, exactly. And we do have some of the gang kids that feel like we are harassing them by enforcing the rules. In fact, that is the first thing that they say about the police officers is, "Why are you picking on me?" Then they tell the parents, and the parents support the kids, and they say, "Why?"

Anytime a kid breaks the rules that is the police officer's job to issue tickets and correct the behavior. It is our job as well if they don't follow our rules. But the majority of the kids really don't need it.

R: It is just a kid thing to complain about the rules. So you really feel like they like feeling safe? Do you feel like they are actually more likely to stay in school as a result?

AP: Yes.

R: Tell me what you think about the eighteen year olds, you know, where they stay in school until they are eighteen instead of seventeen? I mean do you have more trouble keeping them in school?

AP: Yes, we do. I mean it wouldn't be as high if we really tried to work with those kids. There are some eighteen year olds that probably need to go on and work.

Liaison Team Member

R: First of all, tell me about your responsibilities in this school.

L: Well, first of my area is violence.

R: So you are like . . .

L: I work with the police officers called the liaison team.

R: So you are a school employee.

L: I am a school employee, I am housed here at ________ as an officer there. We have ten schools, elementary, middle and the high school. So we have quite a few school that we have the responsibility of and that we have to look at.

R: So they might call you from here to have you go to an elementary school or a middle school?

L: That is correct.

R: Do you perceive that safety is an issue in your school and if so, tell me your concerns.

L: Well, I think first of all the way the district has the liaison team set up in all the schools, I think that this is one of the largest districts across the United States. Because you probably know that since we've been doing this we haven't had anybody get killed in the schools. Probably because of the police
officers being in the schools. And I think that that is a big plus I guess percentage wise we have the lowest that anybody can get in the schools.

R: So as a result of your being here, it is safer?

L: Yes, definitely.

R: OK, do you perceive that there is a gang problem in your school, and if so, why do you believe that this is true?

L: Gang problems. Oh, I would say that it is not as bad as it used to be. We've had people who were Crips and Bloods and we are still working on it. And it is coming along pretty good.

R: So it is better than it was?

L: It is better than it was.

R: Do you believe that it is because they are in the community or do you believe it is because they can do it in the school or what?

L: Because of having a liaison team here. They know that they, the police officer, and they know everybody know what they are going to do. And we have everybody's names. We know the Bloods and the Crips and if they do something that they haven't been doing, they know that they are going to the detention center or going to jail.

R: So they know that you're here and you'll deal with them appropriately if they bring it to school.

L: Definitely.

R: Most of the gang problems that you have here, does it come from the community rather than from the school?

L: Community.

R: Do you perceive that there is a problem with violence in your school and if so, what kinds of problems?

L: Violence in the schools. First of all, you have to look at the set-up in the schools first. Anytime you have a school that is close to apartments, like you have here you are definitely going to have problems. You see you have kids living in the apartment. They see everything or do everything. They come to school, they bring the same problems to school, so whatever happened at home, they try to bring it to school. Most likely that's what we deal here with at school. Cause something happen at home or something happened on the street, or something happened and they bring it to school.

R: Do you have a lot of weapons or things like that?

L: No, we have metal detectors and I guess it has been about two months now . . .

R: Since you've had a weapon?

L: Uh huh.

R: So you've had one this year?

L: We've had one.
R: What specific strategies does your principal employ that keep your school safe from gang-related activity and violence?

L: He mostly leave it up to the liaison team. We touch base with him and he touch base with us. He mostly leave it up to the team.

R: For example, does he use a dress code that addresses that, or does he say you can't flash gang signs?

L: Dress code and flashing gang signs. They know that that is a no-no that they can't do.

R: And it is written down?

L: It is written down.

R: OK, were you a part of planning those policies and strategies?

L: Um, yes.

R: So he did approach you about them?

L: He approached me and we talked about them.

R: How were you involved?

L: Be sitting in the meetings with him.

R: So you and the police officer went in and sat down with him and the other assistant principals?

L: Right, right.

R: Who, besides yourself and the principal was involved and we're talking about besides the police officer and other assistant principals.

L: Well, he probably talked with other people. He just wanted us in first so we could talk and that's why we were there.

R: So you don't know who else was involved?

L: No.

R: How do you believe students are impacted by the implementation of these strategies?

L: Well, I have, once you tell them what you are going to do and you follow through with that and you make an example out of one, then those students see that you are not playing.

R: So you think that they feel better because you are willing to get rid of a gang kids?

L: I think so.

R: Most of the kids feel safe?

L: Feel safe. Because they realize what a gun or knife can do, or a razor blade.

R: Sure. If you could change the way that your principal has responded to gang-related activity and violence, what would you change and why?
L: First of all, I think that the kids that we have tried to work with as far as gang-related and violence, once they was suspended and went to a third-party hearing, and was put out of school and had to go down and have to deal with the people downtown, then they went to an alternative school and came back to this school, a lot of them didn't come back to the same school.

R: That may or may not be controllable by your principal, but you think that it is a policy with the district?

L: Correct, correct.

R: That ought to be the case?

L: Yes, I think so; you're right.

R: So you think that the principal or administrator should not ever send the same kid back to the school if he was involved in gang-related activity or violence?

L: Depending on how bad the situation was because sometime people have a kid, sometime you can have a kid, I realize that, but sometime that kid can't get any help. But by work, working with these kids everyday and getting to know them, you just about know who you can help and who you can't.

R: So you think that the principal ought to have veto power about sending kids back? He ought to be able to say "No, I don't want that one."

L: I think so, I think so.

R: And where would they go? Would they be in an alternative school?

L: Well, that would be the . . .

R: For the rest of the year?

L: For the rest of the year.

R: If students could change the way the principal has reacted to gang-related activity and violence, what do you think that they would change?

L: If the students could change?

L: The majority of the kids realize that the danger of the gangs and what could happen.

R: You think that they would leave it alone?

L: I think that they would leave it alone?

R: Do you think that they would make it stricter?

L: I don't think that they would make it stricter.

R: Or do you think they would ease it up?

L: I think that they would leave the policy the way it is.

R: OK. Now I am going to open it wide up. Is there anything that you want me to know about gang-related activity and violence in this school that I haven't asked you?
L: I think, like I said, the gang problems that we are having in the school that they are pretty much on top of it. We know pretty much what can happen and what will happen with our students involved in gangs.

R: You know who they are?

L: I know who they are, yes. We know most of them.

R: So you can monitor them?

L: We can monitor them pretty closely. As long as they know that you are around watching them and monitoring them, we don’t have any problems from them.

R: Because you are watching?

L: They know you’re watching and we don’t have any problem with them. As far as outsiders coming on the campus, that is something we try to watch very closely. I think with the monitors on the outside watching and the fellow officers and myself patrolling around, that helps a lot. All it takes is someone throwing a hand sign up while someone is driving down the street.

R: Or driving by and somebody is out there or whatever?

L: That is correct.

R: Now I understand that just recently the rules have been changed where the kids can’t go out toward the parking lot. Is that correct?

L: That is correct.

R: Can you tell me how that has helped?

L: The last three days real well.

R: But now they are going out to the back?

L: They’ve been going out the westside, but so far we’ve been staying on top of it pretty good because by being on the westside of the parking lot, this is where the kids park their cars. You keep them back inside the building in the cafeteria and the back side of the building, you have campus monitors, vice principals, principal. Everybody pretty much patrolling the watch. Now how long it is going to be like this, I don’t know, but so far, it is working pretty good.

R: OK. So if you could make some other rule changes like that, would you change anything else? I mean, I know that happens often because a teacher I spoke to told me that. I just wondered if there is anything else that might help control maybe not gang-related activity, but just fights?

L: Well, let me tell you what I think about the situation. Having a school real close to apartments that are right across the street and all those kids come from over there. You see that a lot of them haven’t been trained, a lot of them haven’t had any type of training. They see everything like selling dope, prostitution, and gang fights. They see a little bit of everything. Now you have a policy from the central office downtown that says this. Well, we are dealing with different type of kids and different type of parent. These parents are used to profanity, cussing each other, doing this and doing that. I think when it comes to the school trying to be nice to them, they’ll run over you. Because their way of communicating is that way. If their way of communicating is profanity, well, baby, you got to come back the same way, because they won’t know what you’re talking about. And I think that this is very, very important in the community that you’re in so that’s why I say you’ve got to have a principal who is able to deal with that type of problem. Otherwise, we are going to get ate up by the sharks.
Teacher 1

R: First of all just tell me a little about your position and your responsibilities at this school.

T1: Well, I am a US Government teacher, I am also a co-chair of the Social Studies department. I teach three classes a day. They are 90-minute classes. That is probably about it.

R: Ok. So you are on an accelerated block schedule? All right do you believe that safety is an issue in your school, if so describe your concerns?

T1: I am sure it is something that we all worry about. Um, I mean it is real hard to figure it all out. I think that they are trying to do things. Sometimes it is later than sooner. Like for instance, we just started locking certain doors from the outside so that they have less number of ways in which the people can get into the building.

R: So outsiders can't get in?

T1: Right. And of course, we have the liaison team, which helps out. We have campus monitors, which are sometimes they are there and sometimes they are not.

R: OK. Has safety been an issue?

T1: I think that it was more of an issue about three or four years ago when we really had a lot of gangs. I know we still have some, but it is not quite as bad. You got to remember something, being at this end of this building, I am not privy all of the times to the other since this place is so big.

R: And where your classroom is located can make a big difference on how much you know about the building?

T1: Absolutely, absolutely.

R: Do you perceive that there is a gang problem at your school and if so, why do you believe that this true?

T1: Like I was saying, I don't think it is as bad as it was a few years back. Mainly because they have tried to first of all get rid of those that were here just to cause problems. They have tried to make sure they weren't wearing their colors, and controlling the signs and so forth. Does it break out every once in awhile? Yes, it does. But it is no way near what it used to be.

R: How long have you been here?

T1: Twenty-seven years.

R: OK. So you have seen a change. Up, down, level off and then back down and so forth?

T1: Oh, yes.

R: Do you perceive that there is a problem with violence in your school and if so, what problems are arising?

T1: Probably the worst violence is the fights and again, this is where you need to talk to the vice-principal about numbers. I don't think that it is as bad this year as it was last year. I say that and we had a horrible one the day before yesterday, but I don't see the number like I did before.
R: OK. I have spoken with the vice-principal and the principal, by the way and the number from downtown for the last two years . . .

Tl: Am I correct?

R: Actually, the removal rate went up from two years ago to last year. Now I don't have them for this year, they will summarize them until the school is over. What specific strategies does your principal employ to make your school safe from gang-related activity and violence?

Tl: Specific activities? Help me out. We have them in the past. But we had someone come out and talk about gangs.

R: Was it staff development?

Tl: But that is about three years ago. Yeah, I mean the vice-principals and the campus monitors are watching, observing.

R: Visible.

Tl: Yeah.

R: What about the dress code?

Tl: Yeah, the dress code, definitely, it is printed. They do have a copy of the dress code.

R: Do they enforce?

Tl: Parts of it, they enforce it without fail. Things like tucking shirt-tails in is like trying to capture water with a jug. Sometimes you do and sometimes you don't.

R: OK. Were you a part of the planning of these strategies that your principal uses and if so, how?

Tl: I don't remember being, I don't think that was in the committee that I was on. We did all the campus improvement program. I don't think.

R: So you weren't on the committee that did that? OK. Do you know who besides the principal was involved?

Tl: I would assume like for the dress code and so forth that it went through the faculty. I mean we probably got to see it. I know it had to go through the Site Based Decision Making Team.

R: What about the CCC?

Tl: I would assume that they saw it, too.

R: And perhaps a safety committee?

Tl: I think that they do have a safety committee. It was one of the things that the campus improvement things. I can't tell you who it is.

R: Right. And I don't need to know a name. What I am wondering is if the principal came in and said we are going to do this, this, this or did he give the teachers, faculty, staff an opportunity to participate.
T1: He gave the staff a chance to participate.

R: That is really the question.

T1: Yeah, I think so.

R: And so they participated as a committee? Some various committees did various things? How do you believe students are impacted by the implementation of these strategies?

T1: Impacted. Well, I am not sure I know exactly what you want.

R: What is your perception of how the kids feel about what the principal is doing?

T1: Oh, I think other than gang members on the gang colors, so forth, I think that the other kids are quite happy about it. But I am sure, like wearing caps, shirts out, you know they are not very thrilled about that. And that is why we have so much trouble. And again, it just kind of wears you down. They keep saying it and saying it and nothing really happens if they are caught.

R: So do you think that that is an issue where you have a code, but it is not enforced very well?

T1: So far that is what it is. So on the gang thing it is pretty much no tolerance and I think that they do, because I think that they realize that if they don't, and on this other I can't, you know the reasoning behind having shirt tails in, is so that they can't carry weapons underneath them, but for some reason I guess it gets lax in it because they don't think they are going to. I don't know what the thing it, but I honestly don't know of anyone being punished for having their shirt tail out. The worst punishment is for them to tell you to do it. Even if they refused to do it and were sent to the office and the punishment would be that they would have to tuck the shirt in.

R: Have you ever sent anyone to the office for that?

T1: For the shirt tail out? Not from my classroom. I think we have from the halls, we have. Usually though, it is more to get them to tuck it in.

R: But you don't know if anything happens to them?

T1: No, we have been told that once we write an infraction or whatever then that is the offices' business and there is no responsibility back to us.

R: Oh, so you don't even get a pink slip back if you write an infraction?

T1: Sometimes we do, but I am just saying that the point is once you turn those forms in, whatever they do, that is it. You are not supposed to say, "Now wait a minute, that is not hard enough or you should have done this. Why did you do that?"

R: So if you wanted a particular thing to happen to somebody as a result of something that they did in your class perhaps, could you write a recommendation on there?

T1: You're not supposed to.

R: OK.

T1: Now you might verbally talk to them and they might. I don't write very many infractions because I have seniors and I don't really...
R: It is really not a thing that comes up that often?

T1: I think maybe I have written one this year. Yeah. I think all the others are . . . Well, I try to handle it myself.

R: I understand. If you could change the way that your principal has responded to gang-related activity and violence, what would you change and why?

T1: Actually, the only thing that I know would be if we are going to have the dress code, then we need to really enforce it. Totally.

R: So be consistent?

T1: That would be about it. I think we are consistent, like I said, in certain areas. And a part of it is the teacher's part because not all of them are enforcing it. You know and that may be partially the problem why they have problems in the office about it. So it just like we were talking about me writing infractions, I know that when I write an infraction then something is going to happen, because I don't write very many and when I write one its . . .

R: It's really big?

T1: I don't know, I think maybe it is a dual thing on that between the administration and the teachers. I don't know, you may talk to them they may say that they always enforce it, and well, to me, I don't, I am not sure if they do.

R: That's why I said you don't have to agree with the principal because I know that many times the teacher and the principals, and assistants do not agree on something and what I am trying to do is get an accurate picture here. Not a "Yes, man" philosophy here.

T1: That's good.

R: If your students could change the way your principal has responded to gang-related activity and violence, what do you believe that they would change and why? And I realize that this is a perception on your part.

T1: Like I said with the exception of those that are gang members, I believe that the students feel like they are doing a good job on it. If you consider the shirt tails out to be part of a gang situation, I think that they would still perceive that it is no danger and they would drop that part of it.

R: Do you think that they would relax the dress code?

T1: Oh, I think that they would, yeah. They have.

R: Anything else that you think that they would change?

T1: About the dress code?

R: No about anything about the administration has done to address gang-related activity and violence?

T1: Not that I know of. I have not heard them, you know most of the ones that aren't in the gangs, they feel that it is stupid. And they appreciate that they're, I guess you'd say protected. So I haven't heard. all I have heard the things that have happened are good. I never heard them talk about they wish they would or would do this.
R: Let the gang members in or something?

Tl: Well, or change the way things are handled.

R: But you think that they would relax the dress code?

Tl: They'd relax the dress code. Let me point out real quick. When I say that they would be thinking about does this have to do with gangs?

R: Or safety?

Tl: They would do it because it is more relaxing and cooler.

R: And because that is what they want to do. If there anything that I haven't asked you that you think I ought to know so that I can include it in my study?

Tl: Well, I think that we touched on this about, there has still got to be better communication between the administration and the teachers. I think that administration is going to have to work with some teachers that aren't upholding their end. And therefore, if they do that, then it should go the other way too, and that is if they aren't upholding it down there and doing punishment, whatever that is, then they need to change that so, you know we come in the fall and we all start out really enforcing it and then it is like you get worn out.

R: And that the kids bank on that, you're going to get worn out.

Tl: Absolutely. I don't know what the answer is, I really don't. I talk about communication. I guess what it comes down to is that somebody is going to have to kick the teachers to keep them doing it, maybe one way to kick them is through enforcing it down in the office. And it is just like with the tardies, maybe we have to start chewing some people out for awhile and getting their attention. The big complaint around here is that we send kids to ALC and it is joke. So if you're going have a punishment it has got to be something that is . . .

R: Punishable?

Tl: Well, that really does the job and get their attention.

R: As opposed to a place to go play or whatever?

Tl: I guess I am beating around the bush on all this, but I guess you can see where I am going.

R: No, I understand what you are saying. And that is the reason that I feel that is so important to not just talk to the principal and the administration, but also to make sure that I have, in order to have a clearer picture, I have to talk to teachers, kids, I am going to talk to your police officers.

Tl: Good.

R: And see what he/she thinks.

Tl: These people, the administration, the police officer, the campus monitors, they get into the middle of all these fights. I don't know if one question might be if teacher worked harder on keeping the dress code would that make a difference, I don't know.

R: And if the teachers had something to do at the beginning of the period, would the students get to class on time?
T1: That's true.

R: And you can ask questions on every issue there.

T1: Just like the idea of the tardies, you know you follow the procedures after two you write this and you do that and then you send them down there.

R: Then what happens? And then you write 27 infractions a day.

T1: And most teachers are concerned about have the kids in class in the first place and if they are coming in tardy and the punishment is that you are send them out, that doesn't make much sense.

R: Anything else that you want to tell me?

T1: I think that that is it. I hope that I helped.

R: Well, you have. Anyone that I can get to get a clearer picture. What I've got is I've got the principal up here. I've got the assistant principal that is kind of up there. I've got teachers here and I've got students and what they need to give me an idea of how this all works together. It is kind of a method of triangulating between those people and then in the middle of all that I've got a copy of the teacher and student handbooks from each school that I am researching so I can actually see on paper what policies are in place. You're not the only person who has told me that the policies are not enforced, so that perception seems to persist.

T1: Whether it is true or not the perception is there?

R: The perception seems to persist across the board. And that's what I need to know, because if that perception is true, the three teachers that the administration recommends, it is probably true. I mean ninety percent of your teachers will probably tell you, if they recommend that I talk to you and you tell me that it is not working, probably it is not working. This is a mean of triangulating between and not just listening to the principal all the time, as an administrator I know that my perception is not the whole picture and is very different from a classroom teacher's perspective.

T1: And they may think that they are actually, I don't know, vice-principals really work hard and they try to do their job. I don't know whether there is a lack of communication some place or whatever. But when you look in there and see the stack of infractions, you know that they are overwhelmed. Now how many of those are tardy and how many are gang-related . . .

**Teacher 2**

R: Tell me about your position and responsibilities in the school.

T2: My position. I do senior honors AP English, regular English, and yearbook, newspaper, and also department chair. I am also involved in Natural Helpers and TT Leadership.

R: OK. So you're very active in the life of the school. Do you perceive that safety is an issue in your school, and if so, describe your concerns.

T2: Um. It depends on. I don't feel afraid to be here. Yes, sometimes safety is a concern. For example, we had a fight on Tuesday. It was gang-related. I wasn't concerned for myself, but I know that they have carried a boy to the nurse's office because he was hurt. And the other kids crowd around so desperately, that somebody is going to get hurt just . . .
R: By being there?

T2: Just by being an innocent bystander. The coaches were trying to get everybody back and their adrenaline was really going and they looked at me and asked what I was doing there. And I said you don't understand, they won't hurt me. I may be naive in thinking that they won't hurt me and when I ask them to leave the nurse's office they will. I don't know if they would have done that for a coach. But the fight was pretty intense in that we had one kid throw a trash can and someone had him on the ground kicking him. At the beginning of the year, we had a problem because one boy brushed another boy. They got him down on the ground and started kicking him and, yes that is a problem. What could they do about it? I don't know if they would have done anything about it. And I told Mr. ________ about this, it is a societal problem. I don't know if I say that right.

R: Yes.

T2: In that it is OK to fight and if you don't fight you are considered weak-minded or just period weak. Everybody has to, and the kids glamorize it and run to it and you can't prevent that. What are you going to do, suspend 250 kids because they went to go watch a fight? The only thing I can do is say is that's stupid and the next day say, "What are you guys doing? You are going to get hurt doing that".

R: Did this fight, did you perceive that this fight was gang-related? From colors or something that made you believe that it was.

T2: Oh, sure and the kids will tell you that. My first period is pretty much Crip controlled, I don't know. I have very many Crip members and they don't hide the fact that they are involved or have been involved and that is a trust factor that they have with me. They will write it in their journals or whatever. The problem was on Tuesday, when we had the fight, two Bloods came up and School B is predominately Crip, I mean you can tell by the colors and it is easy to be a Crip because the two colors closely relate and the little boy they were carrying down the hall, "No that is my boy, I got to take care of my boy. He's my cuz", the language . . .

R: Gang-related.

T2: Oh, you bet.

R: OK. And you really just answered my next question. Do you think that there is a gang problem in your school? And you told me yes.

T2: Sure there is. Yes! And let me talk to you about my class. I tell my kids, you know, if you've never read. Do you teach?

R: I am an assistant principal.

T2: OK. Well you need to read Entertaining an Elephant It is for an English teacher, but the reason why I say that is because it is about learning how to perceive children. My kids had to write on this quote, "Do not entertain an elephant keeper if you have no room for an elephant" is pretty much the gist of the quote. And it was in reference to gang activity. If you have no room for those people in your life or if you don't want to be associated with them, don't hang around them and they talked about it. And I said gangs have always been around. I have my buds, you guys know that. I hang with a group of teachers and yes, you can call that a gang. Forming a gang to fight over a block, or to fight over a color is stupid. And they just looked at me. And one little boy said, "Yeah, but I joined because my cousin got killed and I had to take care of that. I had to retaliate". And I said, "Did it bring him back?", and he just looked at me and it made a big impression on that.

R: Good.
T2: They are not afraid to talk about it.

R: Most of them are not. I talked to the young lady one day who said she had been jumped into a
gang recently. And I asked her if she realized that she brought her whole family in that when she joined.
She said no. So what if the gang told you you had to kill your mother as part of your initiation? And she
looked off for a minute and she said, "I guess I would just have to do it because they are my boss." I said,
"You mean, you would kill your mother?" and she said, "I guess I'd have to." And I said, "You said you
didn't bring your mother along. I bet she doesn't want to go on that ride".

T2: Because I have so many in my first period, I have been working on that like how strong
minded are you? Who has control over you? That was journal topic and you can read some of them. They
are really interesting. How do you get power? What is the difference between knowledge and wisdom? I
mean and they are just like "What?" I am getting knowledge from this book and I read in the chapter before
that the little boy who carried that quote around in his pocket about, "For those who do good to me, I do
good. For those who do bad to me, I do good also. In doing so, I gain forgiveness." I said you guys need
to think about that and I said retaliating doesn't mean anything. The reason why he carries it around is
because his little sister, they had a first floor apartment, and his little sister stuck her head out the window
and got her head shot off. He wanted to join a gang and he wanted to retaliate, but he said no, I don't want
to bring my mother, my grandmother, my little brother, I don't want to bring all that in there. And he
carried those quotes with him to remind him. I don't have room in my house for all those elephants.

R: So I better not entertain the elephants? Good.

T2: So it was pretty good. So we got to think about that. And now we are reading Out of the
Madness.

R: Out of the Madness OK.

T2: Which is about, he's from Dallas. He grew up in the projects of west Dallas...and how to get
cut and how not to join a gang, and how not to get into the cycle of selling drugs or getting hooked on
drugs or whatever.

R: So not only are you recognizing that there is a problem, but you really try very hard to address
it? On your own, in your own classroom regardless of what the school does?

T2: Sure.

R: Do you perceive that there is a problem with violence in your school, and if so, what kinds of
problems have you been having?

T2: I do not see that we have anymore problems than any other school.

R: So not a lot of weapons or anything like that.

T2: No, I don't think so. Our problem right now is marijuana, kids who want to smoke pot. I
think that we maybe had one incident this year with weapons. The first semester and it was with a razor
blade or something. Not the way it could be. And I am usually pretty much there. Their weapons are their
hands.

R: Their feet and trash cans and...?

T2: Trash cans on the parking lot.

R: Whatever else is handy?
T2: For the most part it is safe here. They try to keep it that way. Now you can tell when it won't be safe. Please don't let the weather change.

R: Yeah. Because they get worse when the weather changes?

T2: It is obvious. You can tell moods change and everything.

R: The first time it is rainy or the first time it get sunny or gets cold?

T2: And what would normally not bother them, bothers them. Like we had a problem with the talent show, I had a problem, but I don't see that as a violent problem. I see it as an attitude problem and what kinds of things kids have been allowed to get a way with.

R: At home?

T2: At home or here. Like the way that they speak to adults and you'll know that, the way they address their mother perhaps. You'll know when a kid is disrespectful. Like in my classroom if they are disrespectful in the classroom, they are disrespectful at home.

R: Because you create the environment for them?

T2: Yeah, so I know if you are bad in my class, then you're bad at home or someplace after here or you are mad at. Like period, and everybody, you know, can forget it.

R: What specific strategies is your principal employing to keep your school safe from gang-related activity and violence?

T2: They are pretty quick to third party anybody they think, and they get them out of here. I mean, there is no messin' around. I mean we don't say, Oh, yeah, but, we're talking about the heavy-duty, hard-hitting recruiters, you know what I'm talking about. They'll come blatantly flying their colors, hair-braided back, although what I have a problem with is, we expect anyone and everyone, and I mean, I know we don't have to do that. Kids that don't necessarily live in our district and are unable to transfer for whatever, they come in and he accepts them and two-days later we begin the process or try to do the process of a third party hearing because they have had a huge fight in the cafeteria, or something stupid like that. Or we could go, maybe two weeks ago, we had the talent show, or the day before the talent show, there was a gang fight where they jumped a little freshman boy back in the back during lunch, and they have tried to do that. They have taken the kids out of the front of the building and on the side of the building they used to hang. They have free access to their cars and everywhere else during lunch, and that was not good. But it isn't necessary right now, because, have you been back there?

R: I am going to go back there in a little while.

T2: During second lunch, go back there. There is 500,000 kids playing basketball or whatever, which is good, I am glad that they are playing ball, but there is a lot of them just hanging out. And that leads to...

R: Recruiting and that leads to gang relationships?

T2: The other thing is, and they can't do anything about it, I mean you have to have a place where kids can go, but still, I wish we had a little more structured activity for them. I mean like even real basketball teams during lunch or they had stuff for them to do besides just hang out there, because, which is subsidized government housing, that's another problem, we can't do anything about it. And you'll watch them, soup or wash their car, they are over there or Mom will drop them off first
thing in the morning and they won't even walk onto our campus, they walk over there. And it's just
teeming with all sort of stuff. . . . Like if they wear colors in their shoes, we take them out. We try to give
them the benefit of the doubt the first time. We will take them out. We will make them take their hair out,
but if that is a perpetual problem, they go, they are gone.

R: You've addressed the dress code or the hair, do you have any other strategies that you could
point to?

T2: That our dress code was enforced by getting with _________ or other places, but it is not
enforced here and I perceive that as a problem, or it could be a problem. I think we are very lucky because
we have a lot of good kids, but they are allowed to wear clothes that are 9,000 times too big, they could
have anything in those clothes.

R: Or too short or too skimpy?

T2: Oh, yes, ma'am.

R: I just saw one a while ago.

T2: Well, now I have a short skirt on, too, and they are supposed to be going home, you know.
Like mine is, I didn't feel like coming today, so I have sandals, but you see that they are over there. If their
fingertips are longer than their skirts, then their skirt is too short, and send them home, but we don't send
them home. If their shirt is hanging out, we don't send, I tell my kids to tuck in their shirts. I have even
learned how to say it in Spanish.

R: Oh.

T2: But it's got to be consistent. Cause I mean, I'll tell them to tuck it in here and then they'll go
to the next corridor and nothing happens, nobody does anything about it. So our dress code, it would help
if it were enforced.

R: So it is not so much that you don't have one; you have one, but it is not consistently
enforced?

T2: By anyone. For example, there was a little girl yesterday had a dress on and it was spaghetti
strapped and the checks of her butt, that's what we told her, were hanging out. She walked by two assistant
principals, who looked like, now . . .

R: A man and a woman or two men?

T2: Two men. And what I tried to explain to a teacher who was with me, who was incensed by
it, I said they don't even see that, they are not even looking at her. They are so busy handling everything
else what is going on right now. And what is bad about it is that we react. We don't . . .

R: Proact, as opposed to react?

T2: We are so busy reacting here a lot of the things . . . But this is a prime example, a little boy
was walking down the hall and I met up with him and I said, "Baby, you need to go to the office", his
shirt said, "If you don't like my attitude...Dial 1-800-EAT-SHIT." His momma let him leave home with
that on.

R: I had on one that said yesterday, "OG Ron."

T2: Oh, my.
R: And I said, "Uh, Uh, we're not gonna do it."

T2: Now we get a lot of stuff and we won't let them wear it IN MEMORY OF T-shirts.

R: We don't allow that.

T2: Because it is gang activity and gang-related. The blue shirts that have the white lettering right here on the collar, we try to take that, it is hard, very hard. I can't do it if there is not support.

R: Right. You can't do it alone. Tell me this, were you a part of planning these strategies that the principal either uses or is supposed to use?

T2: OK. We planned a lot. He doesn't use a lot. And I am going to be real honest with you. OK?

R: And that is what I want you to do.

T2: We had a CCC on campus and I am not a member of the CCC, but I am a member of the Strategic Planning Committee, that we are working on trying to get our building better. In September, we had recommended that our doors be locked. We had outsiders come in.

R: You mean the outside doors?

T2: Outside doors be locked be locked at 8:00.

R: Yes.

T2: Two weeks ago, it was implemented.

R: In September, you recommended that? So what you are trying to say is that you want all the outsiders to come to the front?

T2: So we can have a little bit of control. Anybody could come to my door, anybody could show up in the halls. The hall monitors were so ineffective because they may be one place, but there is so much traffic from kids coming.

R: And there are so many doors?

T2: And just like I said to Mr. ________, I said I am not doing my hall duty anymore. Period. I refuse to do it. I tell the kids to go one way, a hall monitor tells them to go another. They are coming from all directions at me. Uh, uh, I am not going to do it. I'd be writing 15 infractions a day and I don't write infractions. I don't like this. You are giving me stress. I have almost used all of my sick days this year. I am not doing it anymore.

R: What did he say?

T2: Nothing. What could he say? I mean. He said, "Yeah, it is a problem." I said when you figure out a plan as to where they are going to go for lunch, as to what halls they are supposed to be in, I'll be out here and I will do my hall duty for you. But it makes no sense for me to stand here and have kids coming at me from all directions. And I don't know where they are supposed to go. I don't have a clue.

R: So there are some strategies and there was some planning, but they weren't, either they were implemented poorly, or . . .
T2: They are not effectively enforced.

R: Enforced. OK. Who besides yourself and your principal were involved in determining these, for example, Site Based Decision Making Team, CCC, Strategic Planning, people, community, students?

T2: I don't know of any community that has been involved because we have very little community support.

R: Did the Site Based Decision Making Team help?

T2: I don't know what goes on there. I know I have been twice, just to see what is going on, just to see what was happening. Um, our Site Based Decision Team has taken like four months to decide whether we are going to have Coke or Pepsi in our machine.

R: OK.

T2: The CCC has stopped meeting.

R: Is that because they feel like they are not being listened to?

T2: Right. And the committee I am on, we have been meeting with Ms. ______ and Ms. ______ since December to try to get some thing straightened out because it has been pretty bad, but not with kids.

R: Not with kids, but with the adults.

T2: Right. Well, I'll give you an example. We have a problem with kids being tardy, which could lead to a discipline problem. The tardy problem is not just for kids, it is for teachers. We are supposed to be here at 7:15, the first bell is at 7:45, that gives us 30 minutes before the first bell. Before December, I could get here at 7:50 and my door would not be unlocked and the students would be in the hall and nobody would say anything. And I am a very conscientious teacher and I want to do what I am supposed to do and I worry about not getting kids what they need. And I thought if I am driving in here late . . .

R: What is everybody else doing who is not conscientious?

T2: What, what is going on here? So it doesn't matter if anybody is going to yell at me or not, I have to take control of that, and figure out. And so now I walk in with the custodian and get here at 7:00. So I am here way early. It like the problem, it is just not the kids, it is with the adults. We have become very lax. We've tried to tighten up the reins.

R: It is much more difficult to do?

T2: The last few weeks. I mean that is like me not giving any assignments until the last month of school and just piling it on kids who don't know.

R: And the adults are going to know . . .

T2: Some of them are.

R: And you kind of answered the next questions, which was how was each person or group involved? You said how you were involved in and perhaps you don't know how others were involved in it.
T2: I don't know. The CCC, they met every month. They took their recommendations and nothing was every done about it.

R: They just got sick of it and quit?

T2: Right. We have a little more influence because we have downtown pushing the way through.

R: The Strategic Planning Committee.

T2: Yes. But the only reason that they are here is because of the magnet committee. If the approval wasn't happening, I don't think that they would care. I think it is sad, but it is true.

R: So they haven't been here before now, to speak of?

T2: Oh, not really. This year has been really messed up because we had three administrators out, disciplinary action, three teachers like three weeks later along the same lines, a transfer of an assistant principal, and so it has been messy. Last downtown influence was probably '91.

R: And who was here then?

T2: Mr. _________

R: Oh, OK.

T2: And we had Southern Association that said if we don't do something we are going to lock the doors or chain them.

R: Yeah.

T2: And I saw a lot of improvements and I've seen a lot of improvements go poof!

R: OK. So you went from, how long have you been here?

T2: Since '90.

R: OK. So you were here under _________, _________, _________ and now _________ Did it kind of peak and then valley? Is that what it did?

T2: What do you mean? _________ is a very effectual leader in that, I'll explain why. The kids knew that he cared about them. I think that is the key no matter if you are in the classroom. If kids know that you have their best interest at heart, they are going to do whatever they can for you. Those years were pretty serious. I don't know that staff morale was, because he was like a little Hitler.

R: And that's fine. Your name's not going to be anywhere. You can say whatever you want to say.

T2: I used to call him God. That was his nickname. That is how he perceived himself. Well, this is my decision now stand by it and the teachers who worked the hardest for him were the ones getting chewed out all the time. But he was also very good at getting rid of the teachers that weren't doing what they were supposed to do. Documenting what they were supposed to document, taking care of. Although he had a misconception of what gang activity. We had the gang officers come out and talk to us and everything, and they have been here since, but I didn't get to met with them because I was planning other stuff. But he always said that kids that joined gangs were in special ed.
R: Well, a lot of them are, but they are the kids that are used to do the grunt work, because they want to be a part of something. The leaders tend to pick on those kids because they are going to get caught.

T2: Because they can like you. A lot of them are highly intelligent, pretty bright.

R: They use the special ed kids for the grunt work.

T2: I'm sure. And I used to tell him that there is a little bid of both. Just like I got a letter the other day from the kid that was of the four little boys that shot the two year old, killed him in the drive-by. And he's down in . . .

R: Huntsville?

T2: Well, he's not in Huntsville. He's in somewhere close to San Angelo. He got eleven years. He wrote in there, "I pray to God everyday that life will get better and that God made this happen for a reason." He said, "This is a good thing that happened because I needed to stop and take a look at my life." I thought wow, that is real interesting perspective here, and I am really glad.

R: Maybe you had a little part in helping him do that.

T2: Well, I had him in freshman English, and he was a good kid anyway.

R: So it sounds like you helped him learned to do some of that.

T2: But see, he's real smart, he's brilliant, most of those students are. I taught technical writing that year and we went and interviewed a known Blood from LA. I took my kids down there and he wouldn't go.

R: Because he was a Crip?

T2: No, he was a Blood, but he wouldn't go talk to this guy. That didn't have anything to do with it. I think cause he thought we were going on a tour of the jail.

R: He didn't want to see it first hand, huh? OK. Tell me how you think students are impacted by the implementations of the strategies you've used, or the lack of the implementation of those strategies?

T2: In our school?

R: Yes.

T2: Oh, I think that they are adversely affected right now. They have free will.

R: So they know what the rules are and they know that they can get by without following them?

T2: Correct. In any one of these classrooms they are in. They know that. And they know that they can push the limit. In fact, they know that those doors are locked down here, they will pop them open.

R: Well, I came in down there and the police officer and the campus monitor were out there, and they said, "Just wait a minute. We'll get in. Somebody will open that door." And they did and they pushed them back inside and shut the doors and stood there. You're right.

T2: They are not, there is still a lot of things that need to be worked through. And in a lot of
cases they are not getting the education they deserve. Just because we have five permanent subs or something in math. Scary.

R: Yes. There's math TAAS.

T2: Well, they did really well. And that's because ______ and ______ helped out.

R: Um, now. You have kind of hinted at, this is your opportunity to tell me anything else you want to tell me. If you could change the way your principal has responded to gang-related activity and violence, what specific changes would you make and why?

T2: Here in our building?

R: Yes.

T2: One thing is that there needs to be more control at lunch. And control doesn't mean lock-down. It means constructive activities for those children or more . . .

R: Supervision?

T2: That sort of thing. Also, there needs to be more opportunities. You would have less sneaking off campus and sneaking to do other bad things, if the opportunities were here. Other campuses have various fast foods available. We don't.

R: At all?

T2: We have Papa John's Pizza. I think a month ago they started having Subway Sandwiches, but I am not sure. If they had organized opportunities back there in the back. They need some place to go. For example, our ALC center is a joke so going to an alternative learning place wherever it may be inside the campus is not effective. They go there to have fun. You can't send them somewhere else in isolation if their behavior is inappropriate. If you think that they are going to fight, but everything needs to be acted upon, instead of ignored. And we do a lot of ignoring, maybe if we don't look at it will go away.

R: And you can't do that.

T2: Um. Discipline needs to be consistent for all children. I told one of my students the other day. I call him my BB. He doesn't like that because he is a Crip. And he is my Blue Boy. I said you've got on a blue shirt, blue undershirt, blue tennis shoes and blue shoestrings. You think that I am going to let you get away with that?

R: He said, "Ya man, they're not going to do anything about it down there".

T2: That's right, and all of that needs to be acted upon. I don't even know where to start.

R: But what I hear you saying is that you would do something about lunch time and that you would consistently enforce the rules. It isn't that you have bad rules, it's just not enforced?

T2: I really think that our kids are good here. I know for a fact that a known gang leader was allowed in our school because he can play basketball. He was allowed to play basketball. He was allowed to stay on campus even though he wasn't going to half of his classes. He wasn't doing anything, except for recruiting. And not until five teachers wrote various statements. He was threatening teachers. And I love the kids to death, you know that, but he was allowed to remain on campus because he could play basketball.

R: That shouldn't be the sole deciding factor.
T2: If you associate, you know, yes, if you came to class, I don't discriminate. If you are a gang member so be it. I don't like it and I'm going to tell you I don't like it, but you're in my class to learn and I'm going to love you anyway.

R: And you need to come to class and do your work?

T2: You gotta do you work and you gotta come to class. Anybody can do that, like a Mafia, we talk about the Mafia a lot. They are obsessed with them. But they are a respectable member of society for the most part.

R: On the outside at least?

T2: Yeah. Well, you need to do that as well. You can't flaunt what you have or flaunt your illegal behaviors.

R: In public.

T2: Right. I hate to say that.

R: Well, but I understand what you're saying.

T2: Once it came out I thought . . .

R: If your students could change the way that your principal has responded to gang-related activity and violence, what do you believe that they would change, and why?

T2: They want those rules enforced as well. More strict. I mean senior administration day when they get to take over. But they did not let them take over for the administrators.

R: So they are harder on the other kids.

T2: You bet. "Get to class, what are you doing in this hallway?" And they get mad, if they are in a class and where they are learning, they get mad at too many interruptions. They told the drama teacher, she's a friend of mine, she has first period off and so one of the students said, "Don't come back down here. You are making too many interruptions."

R: Now this is your opportunity to tell me anything that you want to tell me that I haven't asked you.

T2: In relation to . . .

R: Gang-related activity and violence.

T2: I have been around a lot of it and I don't know if you have noticed it, but in 90-91 gang activity was high, extremely high. And I had some bad children, I know that they were bad. They came to school with gunshot wounds.

R: We had some of that.

T2: They'd say we were going to ________ and our bus got shot at. But then I think it went down. I still think it is down. It is lower now than it was in 90-91. But I think that there are more younger kids involved now than there were two years ago. Which is sad.

R: You think perhaps the activity is now in middle school more than in high school.
T2: Yes. Have you looked at that?

R: No.

T2: I think that is where it starts.

R: Well, it starts in elementary school because those kids have big brothers and big sisters who are in it. They emulate as young as three, four or five years old. But they wear the colors, they wear bandannas, flash, and they do all of that sort of thing to be like big brother or sister and then it becomes a habit. They are sucked into it even though they don't make a conscious decision, necessarily. They are just emulating. They become part of it because they know nothing else.

T2: Yeah. But they are doing it earlier.

R: Yeah, younger and younger. Like those kids in Dallas.

T2: And it used to be my kids were very calloused when it came to death. It is not quite that way, which I hate to say that, I am glad to see that, but they are not as accepting when somebody dies. They get upset and I want to see them get upset because if they get hardened to do it.

R: Then it is easier to do it.

T2: It is acceptable then.

R: Anything else?

T2: I don't think so.

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Student 1 may be found in School E, as he came to El's interview as a bodyguard-lookout.

Site Visit

This is lunch time. I was unable to get into the building from the outside parking lot. Several people told me that was a result of a recent change in policy. The parking lot doors had been locked to prevent the students from going outside to areas anywhere but the back of the building during lunch. A student was leaving through those doors, and the campus monitor stopped him. I was able to get into the building as a result. The campus monitor did not ask who I was, but did offer his assistance. I told him I was going to the office, and he directed me that way.

In the cafeteria, there was a lot of profanity. I also saw a lot of violation of the printed dress code. Many of the students did not have their shirts tucked in, nor did they have their pants pulled up around their waists. Many of the young ladies had on spaghetti strap outfits, bare midriffs, and other things specifically prohibited in the dress code. In the cafeteria, several adults were on duty.

The young man with a radio, perhaps an assistant principal has not asked why I am there. Perhaps he saw me earlier with the principal or one of the central administrators I saw in the building. One girl near the cafeteria just flashed a gang sign. I am not sure, but I believe it is a Lake Como Crips sign. I have never seen that one before, but it strongly resembled an L and a C. There are a lot of trays left on the tables in the cafeteria. It appears there is not very much pride on the part of the students.

One of the Coke machines has gang graffiti on it. While in that hallway, I spoke with another
administrator. I had been out in the back to see where the students are going during lunch time, and had seen a number of cars out behind the cafeteria. I asked her why they were parked there, and if they were often vandalized by the students. She did not seem to know, or care, why they were there. I asked if perhaps it was due to teachers running late in the mornings. She did not seem interested. I asked if the administration held the teachers responsible if they were late. She said the principal wanted that reported to him. I then asked her if she had the power to write the teacher a note if he/she was late. She repeated that the principal wanted to know first. I then asked her if she had ever documented a teacher who was late, and she said she had never seen one late.

I returned to the cafeteria. The young man I assumed was an assistant principal finally came over and asked what I had in my hand. I told him that I was doing some research, and that it was a tape recorder. He said that my having something in my hand had made him nervous. I was pleased he finally asked.

The language in really, truly profane. It appears no one seems to care, and no one is doing anything to stop it, even though there are several adults in the area. Perhaps it is because it is lunch time rather than class time. I walked back outside in the back of the cafeteria. Many students are there, playing basketball and hanging around. There do not seem to be a lot of colors or groups of students appearing to be related to gangs.

The bell just rang for the students to go to class. They do not seem to be in any hurry. The courtyard area cleared out quickly, but the cafeteria is slow to clear, and the students do not seem at all interested in making it to class on time. Some Hispanic gang signs were just flashed, and really inappropriate dress code violations are evident.

Most of the students have now cleared the back of the building, and some teachers are at their doors, but students are still in the halls. Teachers are on duty, but do not seem too quick to correct student tardiness. It appears that students are not at all concerned with consequences.

**Student Code of Conduct**

The following items are prohibited in its Student Code of Conduct:

- Fighting, disruption, or interference with curricular or extracurricular activities;
- Inciting, encouraging or participating in attempts to interfere with the normal educational process;
- Assaulting or any action which intimidates, threatens, degrades or disgraces another person;
- Damaging or destroying school property;
- Possessing, using, or selling weapons, illegal drugs, alcoholic beverages, abusable glue or aerosol paint;
- Smoking or possessing tobacco products;
- Using any form of profanity, verbal or written, obscene gestures, abusive language which is offensive due to racial, ethnic, religious, social, sexual, moral or physical limitations;
- Violating the dress code;
Stealing;

Extorting or trying to obtain something from an unwilling person by physical force, threat or intimidation;

Staging a demonstration;

Vandalizing or arson;

Gang related activities.

Students are asked to carry ID cards at all times. Seniors are asked to carry them when they leave campus for lunch. Prohibited items include radios, tape decks, skateboards, headphones, beepers, cellular phones. They are not allowed on school property or at school activities or school sponsored activities.

Physical appearance should not disrupt the educational process, call undue attention to the individual, or violate federal, state or local health and obscenity laws. Offenders will be instructed to make the proper adjustments in attire or call parents for additional clothing. The code was devised by students, parents, teachers, and administrators.

No hats, related to gangs, rollers or sunglasses are to be worn in the building. All advertisements for items that are prohibited by the school district will not be worn by students. This includes alcohol and tobacco ads. Clothing that is suggestive or has an abusive theme is also prohibited. Any style of dress or grooming which serves as a disruptive factor in the classroom will not be permitted. Jewelry that relates to violence, gangs or drugs will not be worn at school. Any combination of colors that promotes gang activities or symbolizes gang membership will be prohibited at school or at any school-related activity. This will be subject to judgment by the facility and the administrators.

Teacher Handbook

Nothing in the teacher handbook specifically addresses gang-related activity and violence.

Principal

R: The first thing I need to know is a little something about your school.

P: _______ as far as demographically?

R: Just whatever you want me to know.

P: _______ is the largest high school in _________, ranging around 2,700 students. It is a minority school now with a little over 55% Hispanics, with the rest Anglo and about 15% blacks. It is a very diverse population with the fact that we go all the way from honors programs to special education, including the language center. So, it is probably the most diverse in the community. I am trying to talk about students. These students come from three feeder schools. The majority of the Hispanic population comes from _________, _________, and _________.

R: Do you perceive that safety is an issue in your school, and if so, what are your concerns?

P: Safety is always an issue in every school and it is not because of the gang situation or diverse population, but basically the numbers. This school is really built to hold about 2,000 students and we are getting pretty close to 3,000. That in itself causes a concern for safety. It also causes a concern in that it is
very open in this neighborhood due to several main streets. It is just a high access area. That within itself is a concern. And we are not that far from _______ and _________ High Schools. So that within itself puts safety in priority, but it is no different than any other school. It is just that we have to keep it clear. I heard that there are something like eighty-five exterior doors here. We are just open for problems if we don't monitor it constantly.

R: You have a lot of problems with outsiders?

P: Well, yes for the fact that in most buildings an outsider comes in and walks through the front. Well, here there are so many outside areas it is hard to monitor who is on campus. And because of the numbers it is always hard to monitor who belongs and who doesn't. So yes, we have a lot of outsiders, but not like you would think. They are pretty peaceful and usually walk in the campus and they go to the front office. There is always that danger of those who walk on campus and you never know it. We are very limited in parking so a person could park two blocks away and walk. It is a constant concern.

R: Do you have any other safety issues besides numbers and outsiders?

P: No. Considering the fact that the school and the numbers which we have it is a very safe campus. We have not had any major problems other than the typical problems with kids. At the beginning of every year, I think _______ has a history of having a few gang problems with freshmen. It is the first time on campus together and a lot of the gangs are from _______ and _________. And it is not on campus it is more across the street during lunch on ________ Street. So that is where we see a lot of our concern. And of course if you don't monitor that area then you have it in your campus. As far as in the hallways, it is pretty peaceful. As I recall, _______ is pretty peaceful. I am amazed. It could get way out of hand if you weren't careful.

R: Do you perceive that there is a gang problem in your school, and if so, why do you think that this is true?

P: I do not perceive it as a gang problem. I perceive it as no different than any other inner city school. There is a gang situation in our society. I feel it is a way of life for many of our Hispanic and African-American kids. Therefore, yes we have gangs. Gang problem visibility, no. The history of _______ has been pretty firm on gang-related activity. The school district is supportive. Now if it is gang-related they pretty well know that they will be expelled. And the district has always been pretty supportive. Now if we did not have this power, I could see a lot of problems.

R: Do you find that a lot of the problems come from out of the neighborhood?

P: Yes, 100%. They come from weekend parties and from drive-bys. If you've read the paper this year with some of the incidents. When all that happens in the neighborhood it escalates the concern on campus. Yes.

R: Extra vigilance when that happens?

P: Very much. For example, when all of that drive-by incidents happened during the Christmas holidays, the central office gave us extra officers. The _______ Street store fronts were more visible. They stopped a lot of traffic. They stopped a lot of pedestrians. They were visible. Visibility helped us maintain better safety. I guess if it were another campus, it would have been different.

R: So it seems to rotate from campus to campus, year by year? If it is a problem over here, then next year it is over there?

P: Yes it is. It seems to be which gang is the most active. At one time I know that _______ and ________ had a lot of problems when the Latin Kings were real strong. Then it died down. Right now the Sur Trece is the hot Hispanic gang. The Crips and the Bloods were always going, but it is basically on the eastside.
R: And the southside.

P: Far southside. Yeah, but we don't get much in the downtown area. You do in the ________ area, but not in the ________ area. Five deuce is not as active as they used to be.

R: Some schools have a lot of problems with Bloods.

P: Right, that's ________. That is the area you are right. See ________ has a lot of problems with . . .

R: ________

P: Yeah, that's them.

R: But they have a large contingent of Hispanics.

P: Yes, they do. Now the VC Hispanic gang has a lot of blacks in it. You find a lot of that now. A lot of your Hispanic gangs are going to the Crips. A lot of your Asian gangs are going to the Bloods.

R: You see, I have not heard so much about that association. Now I am more familiar with the Asian gangs through the crimes they commit rather than through the schools.

P: And that's because a lot of the Asian gangs are more violent.

R: They come from the outside, too.

P: Yes, and they pretty well stay to themselves. We have a big community in northeast ________ County in two or three small towns in the strips where you have a lot of Asian grocery and convenience stores. But something we don't do here at ________ or at any school that I have been at, is that we do not discuss gangs. We don't talk about it. It is like the more you talk about them, the more they glorify. You know, if you ignore them and don't actually acknowledge their acts that they do, nothing happens. But if you spend time really address the problem, they would say, hey, we're getting more attention.

R: That really leads into my next question. What specific strategies do you employ to keep your school safe from gang-related activity and violence, and who helped you determine those strategies?

P: Well, one of the things that is already in place is that we make sure that we have campus monitors and administrators who have to make sure that they understand what is going on with gang situations. They understand that anytime you see more than four or five kids getting together, you need to at least walk through the area or be in the area. We don't ever try to stop problems, we just want to be visible. And it is just a given, that anytime you see more than four or five kids heading in one direction, we are going to get nosy.

P: And one of the things that we've done that I know of here on campus is that they are real big into turf. Most of the time they establish their turf on opposite ends of the campus, and if you respect that and leave them alone, it helps in monitoring them. On the southside of campus is where the Sur Trece hangs out and on the northside is where VC hangs out. Which is nice for us because we want to make sure that they stay that way because if we see them coming toward one another, . . .

R: Then you've got a problem.

P: Exactly.

R: What is Sur Trece? I mean I know it is thirteen.
P: Sur Trece is a gang on the southside. Unlucky thirteen or something. That comes from anywhere from the southside of downtown to ______ Street. And anything ______ Street north is called VC. And those are the two main gangs that fight each other all the time. I mean years and years and it goes on. Just like our Crips and Bloods.

R: Do you have any real specific policies as far as student handbooks or teacher handbooks?

P: Well, our student handbooks we just put things like gang clothing is not allowed, we don't ban colors. We didn't want to get into the issues of I can't wear brown, green, or blue, and that helps us identify. Anytime there is a fight, it helps us to identify what color they were wearing and if they belong to a gang. We don't ban colors. We try to take up shoelaces or any kind of fad that the kids use like bandannas, towels, rags, or the head bands. You know things like that color and identifying themselves with a particular group. Yes, we don't make it a big issue, but we pick them up. We don't every say anything about colored shoes, but they are in trouble when they walk in with blue shoelaces. We'll pick them up and call the parents. We tell them, it isn't a big deal, you know, if you look like a gang member and we try to get the parents to quit denying that their kid is in a gang. We use that all the time. We don't accuse the kids of being in a gang ever, but we'll tell them, you know, if you look like a duck, walk like a duck, then . . .

R: Someone is going to think you're a duck.

P: Exactly. The parents are the first ones to deny by saying "My boy, he never goes out. He is always home." Yes, I know, but guess what. When he is at school, he pulls his britches down and sags and hangs with those kids. So tell me, and we don't ever say well how come it looks like you are, are you a wannabe? I ask my parents sometimes. "Do they have any brown shirts or white shirts at home?" "Well, he won't wear them." And you try to do a real quick orientation with them.

R: What about teachers? Do you do any staff development with them?

P: We do very little.

R: On gangs?

P: On gangs. For the simple fact that many times I think if you do a lot of awareness with teachers, I think sometimes it can go to extremes and they pick on kids as well as frighten a lot of teachers. I feel like you really focus in on gang activity people aren't really familiar with what is going on, they can go to extremes. And really worry about it instead of living with it and understanding it and become a poor disciplinarian. Because they are not going to look at any Hispanic male that has on blue or brown without thinking that they are in a gang. Or the first person who comes in with a tattoo, without thinking that he's in a gang. Well, not all of them are. And we stereotype. It is very easy to do. Yes, we do staff orientations and bring in the police department has a good program with Comin' Up. We do not focus, three or four a year, we have a small awareness.

R: What about determining whatever policies you use? Is it something you brought with you, or does your Site Based Decision Making Team help?

P: Our policies? That is basically done by the assistant principals and myself. We feel that it is a security issue when it comes to gangs, guns and weapons. This is an administrative function and we feel that we have to provide that. And we put those into place and they can be revised, monitored or adjusted by suggestions from CCC or Site Based. But usually, that is the number one thing that we do when we start the school year. We evaluate what we need to do, get another campus monitor, add metal detectors, whatever.

P: The bottom line is that it is usually an issue of every administrative team and therefore, every week we may bring the liaison team in and see what is going on. Yes, we discuss that weekly.
R: So basically your teachers and your community is not particularly involved in advice?

P: No, the only time that they are involved is when they start complaining. Then we start listening and trying to find policies.

R: So there isn’t any advice? It is when someone has a beef?

P: Sometimes we get calls from parents who call about skateboarders.

R: So how many administrators do you have?

P: We have five assistant principals.

R: And do you feel that they are really well informed as far as security, gangs, and safety?

P: Yes, I can say that all of these people are.

R: How do you believe that students are impacted by what you do here? For example, one of the issues that you might want to look at is are students more likely to stay in school as a result of feeling safe?

P: Yes, they are and the way I evaluate programs in my school as the principal is by the number of kids that come forth to discuss situations that are fixing to happen and ask me to intervene. Or the number of kids turning in gang kids. I would really feel uncomfortable if I never had any kids come to me. I can truly say that the kids monitor the campus. They want this campus. I’m talking gang kids, they are the first to come by and say, “You better watch the ‘wannabes’.” They tell you which group, where it is going to happen and you need to take them seriously. They prevent so much.

R: So you think that they feel safe and are willing to give up a little bit?

P: You know good and well that all these kids in the street, where is the safest place for them?

R: It is the schools.

P: They know they are secure, and they know that if a kid harasses them or hurts them on campus that they can go to somebody, but the day they step off this campus they fall target to any group. My kids know, and it really bothers a lot of other people, my kids know that they have permission to walk in if they have a problem, they have permission to walk through. Because that is why we are here, to help them. And if they don’t feel like an administrator will help them, then you are exactly right. You never know they could have been given drugs, never know they might have overdosed, and now they are crying for help. To me it is not an everyday thing. You know which kids, too. You know which kids they are. Once again, that is loyalty and earning trust and is something you can't teach. It can't be explained. You can't teach it. It is a gift. It is something that is rare and people look at you and feel there is trust. And some people have it, you know. And that is sort of the way I evaluate programs. Kids come to me and they use their class hours or the hotline. We use it a lot.

R: Tell me, if you could change anything that you have done to control gang-related activity and violence, what would you do differently, and why?

P: My being the first year here, I had a lot to learn. If I had anything to do differently this year, it would be I wish I could go back to June. You have to have a strong orientation at the beginning of the year.

P: Per student. You have to give the expectations and stick with it. Kids need to know what you want and what you are going to do.
R: How would you do that?

P: How would I do that? Well, I did it my second semester, but it was too late. And that is just to have a heart-to-heart with kids. I didn't bring anymore than 250 kids at a time for the orientation.

R: In by class?

P: I started with the seniors and brought them in about 250 at a time. And went over senior issues, discipline, dress code, and my expectations, so forth. You know about attitude. Just have a good hear-to-heart talk at orientation. That helped a lot. For the fact that you want to help them understand that the teachers aren't bad people and not out to get them. It helped. I didn't do that at the beginning of the year for the fact that I didn't know what to expect.

R: Well, and you were named relatively late in the school year.

P: It was really late. I only had three weeks to prepare for the school. Kids weren't my primary concern at that point because I was short staffed down about 17 teachers and we had 30 teachers floating. It took about nine to twelve weeks to get the school under control. And by then there were so many different things going on that by the time we finally got things together and came in the second semester and we hit it hard.

R: It makes a difference. There are a lot of kids in the hall, and they are very nice, pleasant.

P: Very low-key, not loud, no running. Halls are crowded.

R: I'll bet they are.

P: These halls are so crowded you couldn't even walk. These kids have an understanding. Coping skills, especially freshmen.

R: If you tell me anything that I haven't asked you about gang-related activity and violence or safety issues, anything like that, is there anything that I haven't asked you that you think is important? Nobody else has mentioned orientation, so that is good. I appreciate that.

P: I think something if you are in a building that has gangs you need to know what is community efforts are around there is no need to duplicate efforts. When I was at _________, I realized there are a lot of community gangs around or advocate programs available. Comin' Up, TYC has programs, and the Detention Center has programs. It is like everyone is focusing in on these kids. There is no reason for a principal and assistant principal to start over. They need a good orientation. I think that it should be done district wide where you provide a flip chart on the agencies. Wouldn't it be nice to know that if I had a problem with a kid over in the __________ area, and I could call the person who works at the center there and find out what programs are available? There are a lot of people in churches that work with kids. And sometimes you don't find out until you try to third-party these kids. And all of a sudden you find out that there is an advocate who has been working with this kid and his family for three years. Well, where have you been? Kids don't tell you these things because they don't want you to know. That would be something that I think there should be some type of resource manual or something to help the principal.

R: See, that is something else no one else mentioned earlier.

P: It would really help. See that is something that I compiled on my own when I was in the alternative program because you always had to look for case management, assistance for families and psychologists. You know there is so much.

R: And children are just not the young people they used to be. They are very complex humans.

P: Their minds and their lifestyles. I mean they do things that I didn't do, well, I still haven't
done. They talk about having weapons at home, their families are on drugs, they live next door to crack houses, prostitution. You cannot teach people what you know from experience. I have got to be honest with you, when you are working with the high at-risk kids and gang kids, you better be sincere.

R: Because they know when you are not. They can tell.

P: Yes, ma'am. And if you play that game with them, they are going to hang around you and will embarrass you and put you in a position that you will not be able to win. If you are always sincere with those kids and you have their trust, I mean, you can't even explain how deep that trust goes. Loyalty. These kids are loyal. I mean, people say how can you really trust them, you really can. I mean, how do people survive in prisons, how do they survive in those gangs? The trust level there is so strong. They really truly believe in their cause and one of the things we as administrators, we can't talk about getting kids out of gangs. You can't. I mean you can provide alternatives, but you should never try to talk a kid out of a gang because that is their lifestyle.

R: And it may be the only place that they get the motivation that they need.

P: That's right and it might be the only way they feel secure. What you try to do is acknowledge the fact they are in a gang, but at the same time you better try to find alternatives for that student whether it be athletics, music, or after school programs. Comin' Up, Boys and Girls Clubs, in other words, find an activity that will interfere with that gang relation.

R: Is there something else you would like to add?

P: Yes. Something else as an administrator. Never try to be like them. Kids in gangs won't let you into that part of because they still respect you and they see your level, but if you try to stay on their level then you have lost total control. And a lot of people are just the opposite when it comes to administration, especially young men. They get down and talk with them. Hey, I can speak their language too, but that is not what we are about. That isn't the alternative that we are trying to teach these kids. We are trying to show them that they can be somebody else. You never try to tell them to be that somebody else, but you have to model the alternative and they respect that.

Assistant Principal

R: Tell me about your position and responsibilities in the school.

AP: I am the vice-principal here at School C. I am over safety and security, discipline, and that is about it.

R: OK.

AP: And I am also involved with the other aspects of the curriculum. The planning and stuff, but my main thing is safety and security.

R: And you do a section of the discipline by alphabet?

AP: Yes.

R: Do you perceive that safety is an issue in your school, and if so, describe what your concerns are.

AP: Safety is an issue here and we are doing everything we can with safety, like we take the metal detectors around. What we are doing is that we have one upstairs and one downstairs. We'll put the room numbers in a hat and draw the numbers out and we'll have those people walk through the detectors. And we get tips of stuff that is going on. And we do have gangs here. The two primary gangs that we have here
are SUR and Vario Central "VC". Most of the activity is across the street. VC territory is Taco Bell and SUR territory is McDonald's. And they do all their dirt over there. The reason they do all their dirt over there is because when I first got here we had lots of problems with gangs' initiations. They would be initiating kids out in the hallway or down by the deal, but the police officers stopped that because they gave out about 300+ tickets. What we try to do here is keep the gang members out. But we still have gang members.

R: OK. You have still have gang members here, but you keep the gang activity out?

AP: Yeah, it is across the street at lunch time.

R: OK.

AP: We keep it to a minimum here. I am not saying that we stop all of it, but we get most of it.

R: OK. What kinds of activities were you finding occurred on campus and how did you keep it . . .?

AP: Gang initiation and jumping on other gang members or maddogging each other.

R: Initiating and . . .?

AP: Just intimidating the other gangs. Rival gangs.

R: I'll have to remember to define maddogging.

AP: Maddogging is staring.

R: Oh, I know what it is.

AP: I didn't know what it was either. They would say well, he's maddogging.

R: I'll have to remember to define that. I appreciate you saying that because the girl who is translating it will be able to put it in there. You've kind of answered this question. Do you perceive that there is a gang problem in your school and if so, why do you believe that this is true?

AP: Because kids don't have anybody else to turn to. They turn to the gang. The gang acts as their mother and father. The gangs accept them with open arms. That's the reason they like them to join the gang.

R: And that's what the literature says..

AP: And that is true because I have seen it with my own eyes.

R: But one of the things the literature says that if there was a strong male role model in children's lives, for the most part if they would not turn to gangs because that is one of the issues that the gang addresses.

AP: If they are in a gang they have something to look up to and they have someone look up to them. You know, they are in a member or something although it is the wrong thing to be in.

R: One of the other things that a lot of the reading that I have done says is that the gang will actually act as a family. They will go to the cemetery with you when you loose somebody. They celebrate a wedding with you.
AP: They only thing about a gang is that some of the kids are in gangs here, but when they get home they don't do that activity. And you can talk to the parents and they swear to God that they are not in gangs. You can tell them over and over that they are in a gang and they say not they're not because they don't do the activity at home. But what the kids don't understand is that if something happens, that stuff goes home with them. Everybody could end up getting shot in the house once the rival gangs know where you live.

R: I once had a young lady that told me that she had been jumped into a gang and I asked if she realized that she brought her family in with her and I don't know what you mean. Well, for example, what if the gang told you that you had to kill your mother she said I guess I'd just have to do it then. And I mean she was very up front about it. If they told me I'd have to do it, I guess I'd just have to do it.

AP: Some of them are pretty loyal to the gangs. They won't snitch on them. But we have a good rapport with them, so some of this don't go on. We usually have someone come by and tell us and we'll beef up security. Most of the time, it is just dirt will happen across the street at lunch time, not here on campus. Every once in awhile we will have a fight here that is gang-related, but we get rid of it quick.

R: And do you find that most of the problems the gangs bring is from the neighborhood?

AP: Yeah, and sometime they will bring some old OG "Old Gangs" because they'll be riding around, but we'll have the police out and be watching, writing the tag numbers down. They'll bring some older guys over there to whip the guys over at Taco Bell and McDonald's that nobody knows. That's the way they do that. They'll bring them from the neighborhood gangsters. And they'll fight over there and the kids that got beat up won't know who it is because they've never seen them before.

R: What specific strategies does your principal employ which helps to keep your school safe from gang-related activity and violence?

AP: Zero, zero tolerance. Can't flash your colors. Like you can't wear red and red and can't wear blue and blue and colored shoestrings. They can't wear those shirts that say in memory of this guy and immediately they have to take their shirt off and turn their shirt over. We don't let you flash colors and we don't let you throw gang signs.

R: So you don't let them wear bandannas.

AP: Oh, no. No bandannas. No strings that is related to a gang. You can wear red, but you can't wear the red strings. If you wear, then you can't wear the red strings anymore, but you can wear a different color you just can't wear those colors at night. But then lots of them have gone to Adidas now, they used to be Nike's, but it is Adidas now. I don't know. Everybody is wearing Adidas. And we just don't let them do gang activity with the gang attire.

R: Do you have all this written down somewhere? Do you have it in your student handbook?

AP: Dress code yeah.

R: Before I leave I would like to get a copy of your student and teacher handbooks.

AP: I'll have to get that from somebody.

R: OK. Were you a part of the planning of these strategies and if so, how?

AP: Well the strategies was in place when Mrs. ______ came. We had zero tolerance on gang members when I first got into security that was the deal. None of the gang activity. Take the bandannas, no colored strings if they gonna be a gang banger they have got to go.
R: OK. So Mr. ________ just picked up and supported what was being done before? Were you or the other assistant principals part of that plan when she was here?

AP: Yes.

R: OK. Who besides yourself and the principal was involved in determining and implementing these strategies? For example, CCC or . . . ?

AP: Yes, safety committee, yeah. And we also had the campus monitors involved. The safety committee did.

R: OK. What about your Site Based Decision Making Team?

AP: Yes. They did, too.

R: Did they approve it?

AP: Dress code. Yes.

R: OK. All right. How do you believe that students are impacted by the implementation of these strategies? For example, do they stay in school longer because they feel safe?

AP: The thing is if you got a safe environment then the teachers are going to feel better and the students are going to feel better. They'll be able to learn and not worry about a fight breaking out in class or that they are going to be shot walking to their car. If you got a safer environment it is conducive to learning. If you have a safe environment, then all the other stuff is going to fall into place.

R: Do you think that they stay in school longer? For example, I know that . . .

AP: You wouldn't want to come to a school that wasn't safe because you wouldn't know if you were going to walk out that evening or day. If you got safety everything else will fall.

R: OK.

AP: Even the teachers will feel better. We also have teachers supervising in the hallways.

R: Good. All right. If you could change the way that your principal has responded to gang-related activity and violence, what changes would you make and why?

AP: He's done a pretty good job about it and, um I could say anything I would change because he has done a good job. There wouldn't be anything that I would change because he is right on target with the violence prevention. We keep intervention and we watch out and if something come up and you're gang banging you got to go. Then we third party youth, and we have the parent with you and we conference and no matter if they do deny it. Sooner or later you are going to bring the gang stuff home with you.

R: If you, I don't know whether you have an opinion on this or not, but if students could change the way you all have responded to gang-related activity and violence what would they change and why?

AP: Oh, the students probably would want to have the metal detectors at the front door, but that is not feasible at this time because we have too many ways to get in and out.

R: I think Mr. ________ said you had something like 84 doors.
AP: Or they would want more monitors or more metal detectors. They would probably want the ones that you could walk through, but it is not feasible at this time.

R: So you think that they would want it more strict as opposed to more lenient?

AP: I think that they would want it more strict. There is about one or two percent of the students that's here to raise havoc and the rest are here to go to school. About two percent, and we try to get rid of the ones that don't want to go to school.

R: And if you had to put a number on that . . .?

AP: It would be a better school because we had about 50 and we third partied most of those and the gang activity stopped. See most of those things happen over the weekend and they'll get all riled up and they'll go to McDonald's or Taco Bell and now they are hanging out at Jack in the Box way down there. But the thing about hanging at Jack-in-the-Box is what they don't understand is that there is a police storefront right there and they can see everything that they are doing. So they've been hanging at Jack in the Box and it's been pretty quiet here. We've got cars that we ride around in at lunch time and Mr. ________, he has a car, and we just keep circling together. We monitor each day. We try to watch it pretty close. And there is always someone that comes up and tells us what is going on. Even the guy and the girl that comes from the Boys' and Girls' Clubs comes over and talks to us. They tell us all the time. Mr. ________ has zero tolerance on the gangs.

R: He seems so easy-going.

AP: He is easy-going, but he can put his foot down, too.

R: OK.

AP: I've seen him put his foot down on these gangs. He's came in here and told me to third party about ten of them for gang activity.

R: OK. And you as an administrator appreciated that?

AP: Oh, yeah. The teachers do, too.

R: Well, is there anything else about gang activity and violence or safety that I have not asked you that you think I ought to know.

AP: You know too many of them watch TV and they think if they get shot that they can get up and come in the next day, but that's not true, not true. I had one gang member tell me he wanted to get shot. He is the head of the VC gang here and we finally got him to admit to his brother that he was head of the gang. And so he finally admitted that. And it was a guy named ______ that is working with the ACCESS program that we have here. He is a psychologist. He is really does a good job of working with the students. He got him to admit to his brother that he was head of the gang. And he said that I wished I could get shot so that I could be out of my parent's way. I said well you might not come back if you get shot. They have the mentality like it is on TV.

R: They don't realize?

AP: No. We had one little boy that was in a gang, you know, he was so tough, and he went to California and he cried for his mother to bring him back because he said that they nearly killed him. They do some shooting and stuff around here, but like I said that most of the dirt is done across the street. At lunch time, like I said they'll bring the old gangsters in. The police are over there watching and they have arrested a bunch of them. They'll have people driving by.
R: So you think that the ACCESS program has been real effective in dealing with it, too?

AP: Oh, yeah. Then our liaison team has been the most effective thing because it has been zero tolerance. They will enforce the law on you.

R: Do they give a lot of tickets?

AP: The first year they gave about 300 tickets for disorderly conduct and fighting for about 75 or 80.

R: So they ticket fights and they ticket...?

AP: Yeah, zero tolerance.

R: Well is there anything else that would be helpful? What I hope to do is to write some staff development programs that would help people that are moving into administration or principalships.

AP: You just have to be visible and you just have to pray to God because this is a whole different generation of kids. Their mentality is so different. They want immediate gratification and they don't care how they get it. Joining a gang gives them immediate gratification and they have something to look up to. When I bring one in here, I ask them, well I need to see your gang rule book and your paystub where they are paying you. Because I want to know how much they are paying you and where it says you've got to this and this. They won't snitch. They'll go down for their homeys, but they won't snitch. Once in awhile someone will come and tell us when something is up and get the word out like this gang said to keep a close eye out and we called in extra police officers and alert them. So our problem is those places, businesses across the street, it is hard to control those kids that go over there. That is one of the biggest problems because it is hard to control by stopping everybody and ID. You know everybody can go off campus if they have a note from their parents, except for the freshman. There are too many places that they could run and hide.

R: How do you identify those kids, do you have something on their ID cards?

AP: You have to have this sticker right here on the ID card and you have to have it on file, an application signed by their parents. The police will bring them back.

R: Because then they don't get an opportunity to participate in that?

AP: No, they, police won't let them off campus at lunch time. Their parents have to sign.

R: For somebody to be off. OK.

Teacher 1

R: Tell me a little about your position and your responsibilities here at the school.

T1: OK. I am a staff member here at School C. My job is to keep a secure safe environment here on campus. I have been here, this is my eleventh year.

R: Wow! Do you perceive that safety is an issue at your school and if so, describe your concerns?

T1: I think not as much as in the past, when I first started.
R: What kind of things are you experiencing as far as safety is concerned or security, because I am looking mainly at gang-related activity and violence? What kinds of issues do you address with that?

T1: For the most part the fighting part of it doesn't occur here on the campus. My only concern is when they do go off campus that they don't bring it back, because a lot of times things can happen. It might not get finished so when they come back some of them may still be angry. Some of them it is peer pressure because some guy goes to McDonald's or somewhere and he gets whipped and then his friends are going to say something to him. You know, like you shouldn't let it end like that. The kids might have it in their mind that well, when I get back to the campus and I find him, I'm gonna take care of it then. That is probably my main concern. And the total involvement because some of those gangs started being ten or twelve kids initially and then the next thing you know it is forty or fifty. 'Cause you get a lot of wannabes or borderline and they find that gang activity to be somewhat...

R: Attractive?

T1: Yeah.

R: Um. You've kind of answered this question, but let me ask it anyway. Do you perceive that there is a gang problem in your school and if so, why do you believe that this is true?

T1: I do believe that there is a problem. Probably because I have worked with them. I am involved on a volunteer basis with the Comin' Up Program with the City of _______ and I've been to the fights some nights. So I know the things that these kids are involved in, but by the same token, because I do work with them at night hopefully we do have respect for each other to keep...

R: It's under control during school?

T1: Yeah.

R: Do you believe that there is a problem with violence in your school and if so, what kinds of problems are you experiencing?

T1: I think that there will always be a problem with violence. And sometimes it is just not always with gang activity. Sometimes it could be problems that are going on in the students' personal life. Whatever it is they could be frustrated when they get here and the slightest thing they might act out against somebody probably not even involved with what's going on in their lives.

R: So do you experience a lot of weapons or anything that shows violence here at the school or is it mostly out in the street and in the neighborhoods?

T1: Not really, although I do hear rumors sometimes that there are weapons involved, but I think that with the dogs and the random metal detectors, that is what keeps those weapons off campus now. But from time to time, things might go on across the street, and some of the kids may go. I think they may have had a gun in their car, but as far as here on campus it has been pretty under control.

R: Good. What strategies does your principal or the other administrators use to keep your school safe from gang activity and violence?

T1: Probably the involvement in the... from time to time I get together and talk about the gang activity and concern. In the administrative level, Mr. _______ and Mr. ________, I think that they have confidence in some of the things that I tell them. Because I get my information from the kids and concerned students that really don't want the activity. They will find a way to come to me say something is going on.
R: So do you think that that kind of keeps the violence level down?

Tl: I think so.

R: OK. Were you a part of planning the strategies that you all use here, and if so, how were you involved?

Tl: This year?

R: Or any year.

Tl: Up until this year, I had been.

R: Has anything changed this year or are they pretty much using the same strategies?

Tl: I really can't say because I haven't really been involved.

R: Is that because of the principal change or was that a part of the planning?

Tl: I would imagine all of the administrators.

R: OK. And that answered my next question which was who beside yourself and the principal was involved in determining and implementing the strategies. You really don't know for sure because you weren't a part of it. And that takes out my next question, which was how was each person or group involved? How do you believe that the students are impacted by the strategies the school uses? For example, one of the things that I usually address is do you think that kids stay in school because they feel safe?

Tl: That, that is possible, I think has a lot to do with it for the simple fact that up until this year I had the mentoring group and every year that I had the mentoring group, we discussed was safety on the campus and if that had anything to do with them being here. The kids that I had at that time were pretty much in tune to what was going on and most of them said that they felt safe here on campus. Although their concern was the same as mine that if something started at lunch or before school that it might come back here, but for the most part, they felt safe.

R: Do you think that they are more likely to stay in school as a result?

Tl: I think so.

R: Are you noticing a lot more kids that . . . I know in years past with the mandatory attendance age at 16; then at 17; and now at 18, you are going to see some older children here. Do you think that some of those kids would have gone on and gotten their GEDs or done something else as opposed to staying in school if they hadn't felt safe?

Tl: That is a possibility because some of those kids that have stayed were probably gang members themselves. During the course of conversations that we have had and part of that was because of the things that would happen as far as them being in a gang. One of the things that I pointed out to them was the impact that they would have on some of the other students because of the fact that they were gang members and they did decide to continue their education. I think that that probably had a lot to do with them staying.

R: And others, too?

Tl: And others, too.
R: OK. If you could change the way that your principal has responded to gang-related activity and violence, what specific changes would you make and why? Let me say to you that your name will not be used. Your school name will not be used and that is the reason I had you sign that paper because it does assure you anonymity. One of the things that I am trying make sure of is that we get the very best strategies that are being used in all the schools, combine those, and try to come up with some staff development for new administrators and new principals for new ways to come up with some ways to deal with gang-related activity and violence effectively. So I need to get your honest opinion, but the lady who types this for me has been told to put a blank where your name is. I am the only one who will keep the tapes, no one else will have access to them, but me. So please feel free to say whatever you want to say.

Tl: OK. My honest opinion is that I think when you have genuine, caring workers who have these students' concerns at heart and are willing to work to keep this school safe that administrators listen. I think that they should not shut these people up because a lot of times they're going to be the heart and soul of your school and do everything possible to . . .

R: And you think that there are people that are not being listened to that do have some suggestions that could be valid?

Tl: Yes.

R: OK. So that is what you would change? You would make it more open to other people to help with the planning?

Tl: I think that whatever personal issues may be involved I think that you should set them aside because we are here to educate our kids and I know for sure that you've got to have a safe school. If there are people who are willing and genuinely care about those kids, I think that they should be listened to. In some cases listen to the suggestions because a lot of times they have first hand knowledge, more so than anybody else in the school.

R: If the students could change the way your principal has responded to gang-related activity and violence, what do you believe that they would change, and why?

Tl: They would probably want a principal that is more involved to get out to with them and talk to them and listen to them and be genuine about it.

R: OK. Now let me tell you what Mr. ______ said and I want you to respond to that. What he said was I believe that they would want us to do more not less. They would want us to put up the metal detectors more often and to bring in the dogs more often. If they had a choice of what to do, they would want to ensure that they are more safe as opposed to making it more lenient. Do you agree with that?

Tl: Oh, I agree with him. I don't think that it would less lenient, I just don't think that it would work. One thing that I have seen is that if you respect these young people, we can learn a lot from our young people. I think that if you show them respect, make them feel like they are a part of your school, I think that sometimes instead of them acting out in a negative way, I think that you would get some positive results.

R: Now this is the big question. Is there anything that I have not asked you that you would like for me to know about gang-related activity and violence on you campus? Now this is wide-open, anything that you want to talk about.

Tl: It's growing.

R: OK.
T1: Now I think that we should look at that for the simple fact that it is not so much the activity, but the numbers. Those numbers can intimidate people. We have one group here that has grown. I've noticed it. Some of those kids were borderline and they've gotten involved in the gang activity. Fortunately, we just haven't had activity here on the campus.

R: Or a big blow-up?

T1: Yeah a blow-up. Several years ago, not a big group, but one of the original gangs that we had on campus, we sat down and we talked to them. This is the thing that I came to them personally. They promised me that anytime that they had a problem with each other, they would try their best to take it off-campus. And so as the years go by, I relay that message on to the next group. That is what we try to do to keep it down.

R: So is there anything else that perhaps administrators would find helpful to know from different point of view? One of the things that I want to do is to try is to make this as comprehensive as possible. I have talked with principals, and one assistant principal from each school, three teachers or other staff members from that school, the police liaison officer, and then through the Comin' Up program I am going to talk with two students from each school.

R: Can you think of anything else that you would like to share with me?

T1: No, no.

R: OK. Well, I really appreciate your being willing to sit down and talk with me.

Teacher 2

R: Tell me about your position and your responsibilities in the school.

T2: I am hired to be a professional educator. I teach in the social studies department of School C. I teach sociology, psychology, and U. S. Government and AP U. S. Government. My responsibilities are those.

R: Oh, good. OK. Do you perceive that safety is an issue in your school, and if so, describe your concerns.

T2: I feel that safety is an issue, perhaps no more than in any other school in America. I feel that in light of the physical plant itself, its many outside entrances, its exposure to the public, its physical location as far as being on two major streets, it is relatively, very safe, and has very few incidents, compared to what it could have because of its physical location. The possibility can easily, that any gang-related activity and any violent person who, it must be much broader than people are aware or else we would have people wandering through the building that are outsiders.

R: Do you perceive that there is a gang problem in your school, and if so, why do you believe that is true?

T2: First we need to identify a gang problem. What constitutes a gang?

R: Well, kids that say they're in a gang and do any kind of gang-related activity at school.
T2: I feel we have a white supremacy problem out here more than, I know there are members of
typical Latin American, or Hispanic type gangs, I am not sure of African-American gangs because for one it
is such a minute population. But I do feel like there is a surge of white supremacy.

R: And now I would consider that a gang.

T2: And I consider that a gang, so I would say that yes, although it has not been ignored and it
has been addressed.

R: So they may be members of gangs, but they don't create a lot problems at school? Is that what
you are saying?

T2: No. I think they create a lot of problems. It is all, like I said, in that perspective of the
student that you are working with. I see the word prep, and the school has gone from a child who wore
very tailored dress, very defined haircut, defined style, to a derogatory term of someone who shows
prejudice towards minorities. My minority students use the word prep not a means of dress or as a college-
bound student any longer.

R: OK. So this is now almost a gang term?

T2: A gang term with some of the kids. And it is not exclusive to any particular ethnic or racial
group, it is just "Oh, well that's a real prep!" And I hear the terminology as in what they would see them,
now I am not sure that they are organized as a gang. Their organization and affiliation might not be as
such, but students see them.

R: But they act as a gang . . .?

T2: They act as a gang with their white caps on. You have an identifiable garment, whether it be a
bandanna or a white baseball cap, and that has been true by the administration.

R: So are you still having problems with it.

T2: I have, I have never seen, I have brought but you have to remember that I am somewhat
isolated to the situation. I don't really see much. I don't see the action that you have in the other parts of
the building, but I know that anytime I ask them to please remove their hat, they always do. I can pick out
white hats, because it is a vivid, and I think that is a symbol. I know students have been called in and try
to get them not to do that and I am not sure. In line with the history of the school, I know that there was a
big surgency in my classroom or two or three kids would tell me about the Legion of Doom. I said I don't
talk about gangs in my classroom. That doesn't fit well with them that was a gang as far as your definition.

R: Do you perceive that there is a problem with violence in your school, and if so, what kinds of
incidents are occurring?

T2: No, I really don't think that there is anymore so than, I think there are, yes, you have a
violent activity as far as carrying guns, threatening people, I don't think, I really think that if you did a
total statistical survey, I don't think that it is anymore than any community of 2,500 people.

R: OK. There probably are some, but . . .

T2: Yes, I would be unrealistic to say that there is not. You've got 2,500 kids, you have a total of
3,000 individuals that come through this structure everyday, when you consider the clerical help, and
teachers, staff, faculty, students and parents. So therefore, I would say that you probably do have some
violent actions, some that are detected and some that we maybe don't see as violence, but are intended to be that way. I mean, you see a lot more verbal assaults on students and teachers, than adults. And that is to be considered as violent.

R: Sure. Do you perceive that you have a problem with weapons?

T2: I don't agree with that.

R: To your knowledge?

T2: To my knowledge.

R: OK.

T2: OK. This year we had not used much this year, I don't think, but we have in years past. I don't know what the board policy is, so it could have changed, but years past we have used effectively, the metal search detector at random different places.

R: Do you see the dogs come through periodically?

T2: We try not to use the dogs, but the dogs are here periodically. We try to keep it a secret. No, I mean that is a problem. Like last year, I had a student come to the window and knock on the window and say, start going. "Woof, Woof, Woof." and I went, and then he said, "I need to go to the restroom," I said no, huh uh. And we have had, I know of one incident of a student I had this semester that there were drugs or whatever, something was found in her automobile. And her parents dressed her up as though she came from Nieman Marcus and called the people downtown and said it didn't happen. And since that time she has been a model. And this child has literally walked into my room and was six feet from me and I didn't recognize her until she opened her mouth. I said, it's not appropriate, I didn't say it, but what I wanted to say was you clean up real nice, but I knew that wasn't appropriate. But I did not, but when she started talking she said well, my mother took me shopping, had her totally redone, total makeover, went downtown and said this child would never do this. And so they believed it so therefore, they did her a tremendous injustice. Because they could have turned her around and she got by with it once and now maybe she won't ever do it again. I don't know.

R: Well, then you could end up with a Plano style incident where you start having a rash of deaths. Tell me what specific kinds of strategies that your principal has employed to make your school safe from gang-related activity and violence?

T2: Visibility. He is very visible on campus. He gets out. One little thing I noticed and I don't know if you know rather than carrying a radio, he doesn't do that. He has a beeper. And I noticed like yesterday, he came in here to talk to me, and he had the vibrator on. And then, I've been upstairs, too, and any place in the building, he can be and I can use a code or something. He could be out and aware and yet be in contact, but yet it doesn't look like he out and aware or in contact. Most of us who have gotten to know him, know that he is in touch. I had a student the other day start out the door and I said do you need a pass and he said, "Oops, there's Mr. , I guess I need one." Sometimes he is stopping kids which is a real new thing around here, but not a fearful type thing. I think he is much more intuitive that most people realize he is. I was at the faculty meeting the other day, and I noticed like there were two doors open and he was doing something and while someone was doing there in the middle part, he goes and shuts all the doors. Didn't want someone else to do it and it wasn't like he was cutting out the students. And another thing that I think that he has, as far as you're talking about perception, twice this year he was wanting to do stuff with me about grades, he comes right in the classroom, and we'll talk about right in front of the kid, I don't care if he listens. And so therefore, I think he has drawn a fine line because this person is not in trouble because I am talking to him, this person may be in trouble when I am talking to
him, so he has drawn a this, I think, kids are able, it's not like oh, here's the principal you're in trouble, it's not that kind of thing, but it is like the principal is a part of the overall system.

R: So he is real into instruction and visibility.

T2: I think he probably is. He's, I think the visibility of just making it around the building.

R: And that's hard sometimes.

T2: You never know where you are going to pop into him.

R: And that's real hard sometimes to . . .

T2: But almost impossible in this building. But I think that is a real interesting thing because the kids do not perceive . . .

R: Does he have any specific rules or strategies or policies that address gang activity and violence?

T2: Not at this time. Now I think on the first day of school this man stood up and said, I am here this year to see how this school runs. And as you know as an administrator, and I've heard administrators, all of them say you've got to sit back and watch the first year. He said I do not intend to change any policies, write any policies, the first year. I mean we have written, we've gone to two lunches, well that would be one thing I would say, he did realize immediately at one lunch, and at the end of six weeks he said I can not handle this, we have too many kids, it causes too much conflict. We've got too many young kids and too many old kids and so he did make that structural change, which I think, of something that would not make it possible for some of the older kids and gang members or being put, try to separate it if they could.

R: Now according to what I hear both children and other adults that I have talked to most of the gang activity takes place at the Jack in the Box or the McDonalds. And one gang uses Jack in the Box and the other uses McDonalds. Do you ever see any of that stuff?

T2: No because basically what happens is by the time I have the students, that type of child is already gone.

R: Gone out of the . . .?

T2: No we have a tremendous drop-out rate. There is not even 400 kids in our senior class. There were 1,200 when they were freshman. So this school has a horrendous drop-out rate. Now not the way the state figures it, but we do. It is like right now, we had five kids, I am sure two of them are gang members, they I have never seen, never seen . . .

R: Never attend?

T2: Their names are on the rolls for some purpose, one young man I called his mother and she said, "Oh."

R: And that was the extent of it?

T2: And that was the extent of it. He came the next day and I visibly saw him. He had stereotypical indications....

R: Tattoos....
T2: Tattoos, blonde hair on one side, one earring, big necklace, cross, you know, everything that we have seen in movies and we're taught. He came that one day.

R: Then disappeared?

T2: I have never seen him since. But he did want a book

R: Sure. So he has one of your books.

T2: But I think that's true because unfortunately they've bitten the dust or gone to jail because they've turned 17 or 18. So I think the high drop-out rate, I think a freshman teacher would see much more activity.

R: I see.

T2: There is a freshman class in this room. First period. There is not much problems now, but I mean, in years past there have been several freshman here with the gang graffiti, and I mean . . .

R: And so you know it's not your kids.

T2: I know it's not my kids because, you know, I've left a book on my desk and I come back and it has gang graffiti on it. I think they are basically still looking for their thing. But I think that by the time they are at the age of 18 and 19 they are out of public school.

R: Were you a part of the planning of any strategies that your principal does?

T2: No.

R: Do you know who was and how they participated?

T2: I think that this principal used a management team.

R: And the administrative team and the other administrators?

T2: Perhaps. They all have different things and like Mr. _______ is in charge of safety. Mr. _______ has the cameras in his office. You know, the kids kind of look to go to Mr. _______.

R: Well, he is the one that Mr. _______ asked me to speak to as far as another administrator is concerned. Do you believe that students are impacted by whatever it is that Mr. _______ does to prevent or reduce gang-related activity and violence?

T2: Of course.

R: OK. How?

T2: I think that they are impacted by leadership type things and saying somebody does care. Either if they want to use it as a scapegoat and say I can't do this because the principal is going to get me. And that can be a good scapegoat for kids who are wanting out.

R: Sure.

T2: Or they feel safe because of the image and you have to be able to know who that principal is, you have to identify with him. In fact, now a lot of the students that I have, like those kids that you saw go
in there, two of those boys went to _______. They call him Mr. _______. And that was one of the things, you know, I think he has made it around to all the classes, not just the AP classes. Other principals have come to my class I am sure it was for evaluation purposes, but I think you know, you've got to be inclusive.

R: Sure. If you could change the way that your principal has responded to gang-related activity and violence, what would you change and why?

T2: My response, I know one of the major problems with public school is a question of public safety and we play too much. If there was some way that you could get a memo to the Doubting Thomas that something is being done, but say that this is not to be spread around the community. See you're in a real fine mode, if you tell people that we do not have, say we don't go to Minyards and say, boy the ten gangs that the activities at ________ were controlled this month, plus the fact that we did do it. I don't know how you would let the public be aware, I don't think we need to know everything about life, in general. But I do think that a communique, I think a lot of people don't think anything is going on. But there has to do because we are too big not to have major incidents.

R: You're almost like your a small city.

T2: You, I mean we have fights and stuff, but they stopped. If they were all the time, it would be worth running down the hall for. But yesterday there was a fight in the Coke room in fifth period, and I'm in here teaching, I hear this coming down the hall, "There's a fight," and I thought, you know if it still wasn't an instant, it would be like "Oh, there's a fight". So there's still that, but I don't know because several years ago, I was on the Grand Jury. And when I was on the Grand Jury, I was totally appalled by all these things that was coming across, Burglary School C, Coke machines, and at that time there wasn't any of that I was on the management team. I mean I don't think that everybody, if you knew everything about everything you would be pretty unhappy.

R: Well, or scared?

T2: Or scared, so I am sure that, but, I think that is it, I think we all feel safe. I think the students basically feel safe. I think it speaks well at our senior celebration activity this year, they sold almost 300 tickets. They have never had that many. You know at Project Graduation, ours is the night after graduation, and they worked real hard, but for some reason, all those kids going up there can get together. You saw students that did not look like the classical School C students, who were from the ESL Center. They're going. Um, you know, so kids have to got to feel like there is a blend and they work together or they would go "We're not going," so I think that speaks highly.

R: And if you sell 300 tickets out of 400 kids.

T2: Yeah.

R: Seventy-five percent is a pretty good turnout.

T2: I am not sure if it was quite that much. I think that is was 250 before noon today. It was $15 per person. Now what we did, I say it was we, but PTA, but what I suggested to them and they took it up on is school scholarships. Teachers paid for some and parents for some of the kids to go that didn't have $15 and then it just kind of starting everything going. "We can go, we don't have to work, we can go". So you know, If you can build that up you can get rid of some of that gang thing and they may think, "Oh, I have a place in this school." And I have seen a number of things that we have had happen like in this year that have been much more inclusive.

R: So you think that is one of his strategies to be more inclusive as opposed to exclusive?
T2: Right.

R: If students could change the way that your principal has responded to gang activity and violence, what do you think they would change and why?

T2: Well, I think one stem of the population would like to be real tough and kick everyone out in their way of thinking and I think the other group, especially Hispanics, would like to say, I think you have a real problem here when your Hispanics and those that are gangs, they keep saying you're a traitor, the Uncle Tom bit, whatever it is called. So I think once again.

R: You mean because the principal is Hispanic?

T2: Uh, huh. Now I think that those are the only two gang members I have. I am serious. I am pretty sure that the guy in the green shirt has been, if not, and because his attendance is real irregular, and they kind of look the part. But yet they are real respectful, now the thing about a gang member in your classroom is that they are the ones that are respectful to the teachers because they are not going to get into any trouble.

R: I can tell you from the experience that I have had with interviewing kids from six schools that everyone of them say "Yes, Ma'am, and No, Ma'am", everyone of them are very, very low-key with me and some of them are very articulate, obviously bright kids.

T2: Exactly. Like those two young men, I am pretty sure one of them, in the green shirt, I am pretty sure would be at one time or another, he may not be involved now, but he still keeps on plugging, still has passed all the TAAS now, and is real respectful, like "We're here to look for our keys" and you didn't get that "Why do you need to know," and I don't know how, if you could just get these gang kids to think that there is life after eighth grade, not after high school, after eighth grade. And if we could push the more things as a teacher that you can go to school and you can do this. Some of the kids that we get in the school, they come here and life is over. Now this is not a gang student, but I spent forty minutes a while ago, while they were watching TV, telling this little girl, who is brilliant, but she is not legal.

R: And so she does not really have ...?

T2: A future. She has no future. And I said you can, like Texas ________, go a private school you can go to. She said, "I don't think so."

R: Because she is illegal?

T2: She's illegal. And the reason she is illegal is because her parents came to this country so that she could get a better education, she and her sister.

R: So you don't think that the kids would be stricter or less strict necessarily. You just think it is a perception on their part.

T2: I think that you have got to perceive that somebody cares about you. Somebody wants to help you. I think it seems to me that gangs are just wanting to belong. They just want to belong.

R: That is what the research says.

T2: That's what the research says. And this experiment where the teacher takes a student and turns them into Nazi and he doesn't mean to. Then they start worshipping and denouncing their other friends. In sociology, we just used it. A boyfriend would say, "I'm not going to have anything to do with you because you won't do what I say," and the girlfriend's saying, "But, I can think for myself." It is called Individuality.
R: So this is like the blue-eyed, brown-eyed experiment?

T2: Exactly, it is real similar to that experiment, except that is on prejudice and this is on how you build fanatics. Take an individual and turn them into a fanatic.

R: Well, tell me is there anything that I haven't asked you that you can think of that would be beneficial to a first-year principal.

T2: Yes, I think that one of the things in looking at gangs. I just think if a principal could find a way that every student could be in some high-profile position and have a good reputation among some group of kids.

R: You mean student council, or band, or whatever . . . ?

T2: Just a reputation as a great artist, a great this, if you can make real pride and a reputation positive in this school room, I think you will have more success in bringing that person out of a gang. But, our in the classroom, or football field, its hard for me to think. I know it there are kids in all these teamsters and gangs, but it's hard for me to believe that. But I know that you've got to go to school, but see you've got your faculty, and I'm sorry, but I think some of them are racist. And I don't necessarily think that they are old, I think that there are a lot of young ones. See I think it would be wonderful to have like a car show.

R: Like a low-rider show?

T2: Well, no just a car show, whether you have a 1998 Corvette or you have a car that does a lot of the gyrations, or you have the best truck on campus. A lot of things that, the reason that these kids are interested in senior celebrations is because they are going to have carnival rides, casino, dancing, things like that and so there is something that gets like "Oooo, you mean I get to gamble?" well yeah, cause it is phony money and it is legal or "You know I love these rides at Northside," and so you gotta have all that, you know there are some common threads whether you are headed for Princeton or whether you are headed to Huntsville. Also, whether your parents live in west or live in Huntsville. You know there are some common threads and if kids start to understand this that is just common among them.

R: The Human Factor?

T2: The Human Factor who are all teenagers and who all love fast life. You know, we all love to make fun of each other.

R: Or we all want a nice car or we want a this car or a that car?

T2: What they are, we all want. That kind of thing. I think that anything that they could do to break down, but, then you also, if I were principal, the first thing I would do is I would never have a teacher, I don't care what their qualms were, I would never have a teacher that only taught one type of student. That is what has happened to this school. We have the option of checking period by period attendance and that has helped a whole lot where he said I cannot stand when somebody would call me and I can't tell whether they have been there in Period 1 or not. They do it two or three periods a day, but so what they have done is that the ROTC, they go and get to pick it up.

R: Well, that's what ours do, too.

T2: Yeah, well I knew that they got somebody else. But see, you knew that we haven't had stuff like that in this building.

R: For how long?
T2: About seven years. We've used the scan in third period, but we didn't use it in the other classes and so there's no . . .

R: So when I did period attendance that was the last time it was done? Hmm, isn't that interesting. What goes around comes around.

T2: We catch too many kids that way.

R: And then you have problems?

T2: We might catch too many and we might catch the wrong ones.

R: Oh, OK. So you think that if you were the principal the main thing is to be inclusive of all children?

T2: And to, like this attendance thing, to make every child feel like he is important to us every day.

R: Uh, huh. And we have something for you, if you go to class we have something for you.

T2: If you go to class, I also if we would return to, and I understand, I wish we would return to homeroom because I thing kids need a place to go to talk to a person.

R: A homebase?

T2: A homebase that they are there for three or four years. I think that is very important, a homebase, a person who is not judgmental, who does not give them grades. I am not sure if it wouldn't be good to not have kids in a different year that you teach because then they would say, "Oh, my best friend has her and she's terrible." or "She gave my sister an F." You know that kind of thing. Mentoring has been a total dismal hell of a failure.

R: In what way?

T2: It did nothing except you didn't check roll, so therefore, nobody cut. A lot of kids felt like they were too far above it. This year we worked to put age groups together and I had like, another teacher and I had a pair, a buddy, but I didn't like that, I mean I liked her and we got along fine and everything, but we had like thirty kids, we can't mentor thirty kids. We each had 15 and we drew their names out of a bucket and I had nothing in common with them. My suggestion was, but nobody listened, was that we make a list of about twenty different things. You put down Ms. Smith sings in the church choir, Mr. Jones plays baseball, Mr. Lopez does something, whatever . . .

R: And then let the kids pick?

T2: And then the kids don't know which teachers, but they OK you sing in a church choir, do you like baseball, do you like hockey, you don't like to dad gum thing, well, you like shop and you go to be shoppette, you know that kind of thing. They gotta, they gotta have some kind of thing to, you can't just say this is your leader. But back to the homeroom, I felt like when I taught in this school and we had homeroom, but I still might have, the last time I had homeroom, I had five or ten kids named Minyard and five Nguyens in that room, too. Well, one Nguyen might be an AP and the other might be in ESL, but they were all united, then you realize that there are some words. Right now, my students have no idea who the other students are. They wouldn't no more recognize anybody in my sixth period ESL class, and yet, these are some of the finest kids I have every worked with because we have got them so segregated and I think that leads to gangs.
Teacher 3

R: Tell me about your responsibilities and your position in the school.

T3: I am a physical science teacher. Teaching five sections of physical science which are generally 14 - 15 year old maybe some 16 year old freshman. And that's what I am supposed to do.

R: Do you perceive that safety is an issue in your school and if so, what are your concerns?

T3: Safety is always an issue in any school. Up until probably this year, I did not feel like it was a strong issue and I have not been afraid except for about four or five occasions. Part of the reason is that I am isolated in the location of my classroom is a little bit from the school because I am down around down near the gym. I perceive this freshman class as having some elements in it that could grow to be dangerous. This goes back to my philosophy that freshman should be kept separated from sophomores, juniors and seniors which would go a long way toward addressing that.

R: OK. Do you perceive that there is a gang problem in your school, and if so why do you believe that?

T3: Yes, I believe that is true because of the tagging. Because of the perception by some students that there is danger for them. Mostly outside the school.

R: OK. When you say outside the school, on the grounds or out in the neighborhood?

T3: Out in the neighborhood. But I do think that they try to the younger student that can be intimidated are intimidated. Or the kids that are street smart have a real advantage over the kids that are not.

R: OK. Do you perceive that there is a problem with violence in your school and if so, what kinds of problems are you seeing?

T3: I don't see anymore problems with violence in this school than you would in any urban, inner city school, with 2,800 students. I think it is more a fact of intimidation, signing, territorial, this is my territory and you don't come.

R: Do you see a lot of gangs?

T3: If I knew them all, then I probably would see a whole lot more than I see.

R: What specific strategies is your principal employing to make your school safe from gang activity and violence?

T3: Don't know.

R: And I have already spoken with him and you don't have to agree with him.

T3: I think that he tried to address it with the dress code, but there has been a lack of consistency, a lack of the whole building being together on the same page. His philosophy is that the teacher takes care of the problem in the classroom, the monitors and the vice principals take care of it in the hall. He specifically told me that I did not need to be wasting my time trying to correct all the kids about their shirts, colors, things of that nature. Things that I saw that I had no control, which he is correct. I don't know what the specific policy is that he has. I feel like it is a lack of communication probably between him and the rest of the faculty. His plan is to control or to have some say over the problem, I do feel like that is not entirely his fault. He came into a school as a new school principal, from dealing with 11, 12, 13, and 14 year olds
in to a school where you are dealing with 14 to 19 year olds. It is a completely different animal, uh excuse me, student. And you can't be a mother to them or a good uncle to them. Maybe there needs to be a harder stand, a hard line taken from the beginning so that they understand that nothing is tolerated. Nothing that is dangerous or nothing that is questionable is tolerated.

R: You said something about consistency. Are you talking about consistency among assistant principals, consistency among the teachers, or consistency among the whole staff?

T3: All three. Not everybody does the same thing. I do believe that an effort is being made to address that for next year.

R: Were you a part of the planning of these strategies that the principal is using?

T3: I've only been on staff here two years. I was a parent part, oh, some things that we did back in 1993 and 1994.

R: OK. So you've been a part, but not with this principal.

T3: No.

R: Do you know who was involved in developing the policy.

T3: I have no clue.

R: OK. How do you believe students are impacted by the implementation of the strategies that your principal uses?

T3: I feel that these students do not see a clear message. The freshman. I'm speaking from the perspective of being primarily a teacher of freshman. I also am a parent of a senior and I have heard what she has said about things and she has made comments that these freshman just act horribly wrong. I kept arguing with her about thinking that my strategies would overcome a lot of things and they didn't until mid-term or semester break when we swapped some students among the physical science teachers. We changed some of the chemistry of our rooms. I have been much more successful with my students in this second semester than I was in the first semester. I've been a lot harder than in the beginning. I have given them one and a half times more work than I did in the first semester. They've grown. They've matured during this time. But there is in this freshman class there are a lot of kids that don't want to do anything but disrupt. In their own way. One of the major ways of doing it is to not do anything.

R: Do you think a part of that is lack of the strategy or do you think it is the lack of maturity?

T3: Oh, no. It is the lack of the consistent strategy. The immaturity just feeds into it and background and where they've come from. We need to as a school system, I think we need to take some freshman out of the high school campuses. Teach them some manners. Teach them some basic character traits that they'll need to have.

R: So do they need things like study skills and behavior modification?

T3: Understanding just plain, simple, good manners would help. I mean there is a whole, I mean the education system has become a facility for treating all society's ills. We may argue with that, but we are, and so we've got to address it. Whether we want to or not.

R: If you could change the way your principal has responded to gang activity and violence, what would you change and why?
T3: What I would change the most is for him to have in place a really clearly communicated and 
by all the teachers where there is a real teacher commitment of where I will do my best to follow through 
with this. Consistent discipline policy that will address tardiness, behavior of students in the classroom, 
how we respond to different levels of a problem. To know what I am doing in my classroom that this 
particular child that I am working with doesn’t go to five other classrooms and doesn’t get five other 
treatments so that he gets mixed messages. And then he is in the hall and he gets a third message.

R: So what I am hearing you saying is that you want some specific rules and then you want the 
principal to enforce those.

T3: And for him to model enforcement of them. Maybe teachers can’t do things out in the hall, 
but he can. And being nice about and talking politically correct is not what he needs to do. He needs to be 
a hard liner. He needs to be a player also. He’s the player that the kids seem to respect.

R: Or fear?

T3: And frankly, there’s nothing bad about that because there’s got to be somebody. And yet he is 
also the one that kids will go to

R: If they have a problem?

T3: If they have a problem. And the other principals are just, Mr. ______ is sort of off to the 
side with what he does. Other vice-principals just don’t have enough. Mr. ______ is new and just away 
up there. He may know how to work with them, but he is new on staff. That’s three of them that is new to 
our staff. I think Ms. ______, in her way, is good at times and she has responded with kids I have sent 
her. But there is an inconsistency. One part of the alphabet goes here and the way they are treated. The 
response.

R: So the whole key is consistency?

T3: Yeah. The thing is consistency.

R: Well let me ask you this. I haven’t really given you an opportunity to just open up. Do you 
have anything that you feel like I should know that I haven’t asked you about gang activity and violence. Is 
there anything that is going on that hasn’t been addressed by my questions?

T3: Frankly, I don’t see anything, but I am a pretty Polyanna person, so I am more positive 
person. I don’t fear of being here. Like I said I have had about five or six incidents where things have 
happened and I have been afraid and I have run out to try to get some help with my classroom.

R: Where is your classroom? Is it down in the science hall?

T3: That’s where it is. In my seventh period, I had two different members of two different gangs 
have a problem. And one of the kids have not been back to school, since I called about it.

R: Do you think he was removed or is he . . . ?

T3: He’s just not coming back.

R: OK. Was he removed or did he choose not to come back?

T3: He chose not to come back. I don’t know where he is and I don’t know what they have done 
to address that.

R: Because he was intimidated?
T3: I think he was afraid that he got in trouble because of the way he acted.

R: OK.

T3: And um...

R: Because he might get hurt if he came back?

T3: Probably, or that he might get into trouble or he might hurt somebody. The other two kids that were involved in it were problems in the class and have quit attending and are failing, too. All three of them were failing.

Student 1

R: Tell me about your school.

SI: My school? Well, to me everything looks fine. Go to my classes daily, do my work and go home. You know.

R: So you pretty much stay out of trouble at school?

SI: Yes.

R: A lot of the guys, do they stay out of trouble or...

SI: A lot of them, they'll go, but they won't go to class. They'll leave. They'll skip. I don't see them that often.

R: These are your friends? You buddies, your running mates?

SI: Yeah.

R: Do you believe that safety is a problem at your school, and if so, why?

SI: Yes.

R: From the rival gang members?

SI: Yes.

R: Do you believe that there is a gang problem in your school?

SI: Pretty much, yes.

R: What kinds of things do you see happening as a result of the gangs?

SI: Fights mostly. Gangs will happen out in the street. Other than that, that's about it.

R: So they bring stuff in that happens out in the street?

SI: Yeah, usually it breaks out on campus or off campus in the street, wherever, but now nothing really happens, everything's been calm for a while.

R: Do you have any idea what has caused that?
S1: The calm down? I don't know, but I think it is nothing happens for a long time and I mean, yeah, small fights happen and words between people out in the street, but that's about it. Then sometimes it escalates into a fight between two people.

R: Not rival gangs necessarily?

S1: Sometimes, yeah, but most of the time, it is really the gangs.

R: Are a lot of the people that are in gangs kicked out of school right now? Is that the reason it is quiet, you think?

S1: I don't know. A lot of them are enrolled, some of them are kicked out, a lot of them are in jail, some of them just don't go. So I believe that is the deal.

R: So some of them just don't show up?

S1: Or some of them are at the point where they were about to get kicked out and they don't want to get kicked out, so they just go to school and mind their business, you know. If something happens and somebody comes up to them and hits them, of course they are going to do something. But . . .

R: But they don't start something?

S1: No.

R: Do you believe that there is a problem with violence in your school, and if so, what makes you say that?

S1: I mean, I guess there is because of things that I've seen. You now, things that have happened around me.

R: Like what?

S1: Like fights, you know, and stuff that happens, people get hurt really bad.

R: Any weapons or anything?

S1: Not that I've seen.

R: So it is mostly just fist fights? Do several people get on one person sometimes?

S1: Yeah.

R: So really it is a beating as opposed to a fight?

S1: Sometimes, everybody gets into a big fight and you can't tell who is beating who.

R: What is your principal doing to make your school safe from gang-related activity and violence?

S1: I don't know. I mean, I guess the principal you know, I have spoken to the principal or four or five of us have spoken to him and we try to stop the violence between us and between both gangs, but it has to be done, not by the principal, but by the gang members themselves.

R: You don't think that the principal has been that active in stopping it?

S1: Oh, they have tried, but it is hard to try to stop a lot of people from fighting. Either wys they try, but somewhere it is going to break out. You know.
R: So the two gangs have kind of arrived at a truce, sort of.

SI: Somewhat.

R: For school purposes? What do you believe helped him make the decisions on how to react to gang-related activity and violence?

SI: Oh, I don't know, I can't really say. Well, I guess it is that he say like both gangs want to do something instead of fight. Go to school and, you know, take care of our school business and whatever happen on the street, let it happen on the street. Well, I think that is what he saw, I mean in most people.

R: So he saw a willingness?

SI: Yeah, to try to stop it.

R: What kind of rules did he institute? Like did he put in dress code rules, or zero tolerance or?

SI: Well, it would have to be zero tolerance. If anything happens, it is like scoped.

R: So do you have any other rules in your school that directly relate to gang-related activity?

SI: Things like, don't wear your gang colors, everything, you know.

R: It kind of depends on who you are, depends on what you wear?

SI: Not really, I mean, cause I don't wear my colors.

R: What are your colors?

SI: Mine are brown and black. I don't wear them.

R: So you don't wear them to school?

SI: No, I wear the other colors, like now.

R: Yeah, you've got on blue.

SI: I don't bother with it because my mind is set on getting into school. The past is in the past.

R: And you're ready to get on with your life?

SI: I mean gang banging gets old. I mean grow up. Cause if I keep gang banging one day if I have kids and someone comes up and because of something that happened years ago, you know, someone could drive by shooting and they shoot like my daughter or son. I ain't gonna like that because of something I did a long time ago. That is not fair.

R: It is not fair.

SI: No, the way I look at is that I might as well, you know, take care of my business at school, graduate, and show them that you can do something in this world instead of just gang bang.

R: Now I had a young person the other day tell me that gang banging was out of style.

SI: Out of style? I don't know.

R: Is that true?
SI: I don't know you could say that, you know. Gangs have been around for a long time.

R: And they are still pretty active in this area. Were you involved or were other students involved in the planning of whatever the principal did to prevent gang-related activity and violence?

SI: Yes, I was involved in that.

R: So what did you do?

SI: Well, when we started, we were like I guess, at first one of my homeboys was in one of the rival gangs members. They would talk like let's keep it cool. And somebody else that is not in that gang but hangs around 'em started a fight. My homeboy broke it off. So both sides got upset. And I talked to one of 'em like the main one to be around and he's been there for a while. I talked to him alone, me and him alone. And I told him that I hear he wanted to do this and this for these reasons. And they were like, yeah, I want to do these things. Because it is all the younger ones that are going around and starting all these fights for both sides. So we said, look, it depends on you if you want to do this, do it. And he said if you want to do it, well, let's do it.

R: So he's real interested in helping?

SI: He was. Like the same thing I told you I want to get out of school and that is same thing he repeated to me and that's what I want to do. He said, well, let's see if this works. And we tried it. I mean a lot of people, I can't sit here and speak for my friends, because everybody has a different idea. Most of 'em want to keep a truce between them because I can't stand 'em. And that's understandable, but it has been hard and some of or most of the fights have happened have been between two people where words were said.

R: So it has helped some.

SI: Yeah, I guess it has, you know, to me it has.

R: You think that it is your principal's willingness to try to listen to both sides and then try to get you all together rather than school rules so much?

SI: Yeah. Cause if you apply school rules to a gang, you know it is going to be like whatever, you know. We ain't going to listen to school rules. It has to depend on the people in the gang, members, you know. Because if they're going to do something like that, it has to come from them. Or somebody talking to them about having a peace treaty here on the school.

R: So it's going to happen out there, but not in here?

SI: Yeah, that's how it was put.

R: Good. That's really enlightening and I appreciate your saying that. How do you feel about what your principal and the other adults in your school do to prevent gang activity and violence?

SI: I don't know the answer to that.

R: I mean does it make you feel safe or does it make you feel good that he wants to try to help?

SI: I mean, yeah, it makes me feel good that someone actually listened to us, you know. Especially gang members. People just look at you and think, oh, you're a gang member. That's it. They don't care, but once they get to know you as a person, it is a different story.

R: You are still in school, right?
SI: Yes, ma'am.

R: Do you feel safer than you did before your principal did whatever he did to with this peace treaty?

SI: Yeah, I guess.

R: If you could go back and change anything that your principal has done to prevent or reduce gang-related activity and violence, what would you do differently and why?

SI: I don't know.

R: Now I know you had another principal before this.

SI: Yeah, it was different with that other principal.

R: How were things different?

SI: Gangs, I mean before they would never talk about stopping. They would never stop talking about war and fighting. They were always like that. I guess they never wanted to hear it or it was just that we were never interested in having peace. It was like peace was not the answer.

R: Is it because of something that he or she did or didn't do that made you all feel like that?

SI: I guess it was because that principal didn't care as far as just gang members.

R: And seeing them as real people?

SI: Real people. Because there is people like that. And they sit there and say that, that is all you are, you know. They don't talk to you like you're a person, you know.

R: Does it make any difference that your principal is Hispanic?

SI: I don't know, I guess so. To me, it doesn't.

R: OK, so another person of any . . .

SI: I guess it just depends on the person.

R: So another person might have come in and done the same thing that he did?

SI: Yeah.

R: If you were deciding on how to control gang-related activity and violence at your school, who would you ask to help you?

SI: I guess I would go to the principal.

R: So if you were the principal, who would you go to?

SI: I don't know. I guess I would sit down with both sides and hear both sides' stories on how gangs starts. And try to help both sides stop gangs and violence on the campus.

R: Would you talk to any adults?
S1: Um, I would try to talk to the Comin' Up, the coordinators and all that. I would talk to them about it.

R: What about your teachers?

S1: Teachers, too. I mean they have to be a part of it because they are there when things happen. Teachers should be informed about those things.

R: What about your police officer there on campus? Is your police officer a male or a female?

S1: Male.

R: How would that be? Would that work well to talk with them? Do you ever do that?

S1: I have before and they seem like, well, that's their job is to try to stop the violence, but every now and then they seem helpful.

R: Is there anything that I haven't asked you that you feel like I should know and if so, what would you tell me?

S1: I guess not, I mean everything that you asked me.

R: So I've asked you the right questions, you think?

S1: Yeah.

Student 2

R: Tell me about your school. Just anything you want me to know about your school. Tell me a little bit about the gang activity in your school and how your principal deals with it.

S2: Well, if we get into trouble and stuff, like wearing blue shoelaces. He'll like kick us out for wearing that.

R: He'll kick you out for wearing blue shoelaces?

S2: If he catch you twice, he'll kick you out. If he catch you the first time, you're suspended.

R: What about your school, in general. Is it pretty safe?

S2: Not really.

R: Tell me about that.

S2: Well, they should have metal detectors.

R: They should? But they don't?

S2: No.

R: Do you think that safety is a problem in your school? (Head nod from S2). What kinds of problems do you have with safety? Like do people bring weapons? Do you have a lot of fights?

S2: There's not that much fights, but people bring knives to school.
R: Have you seen a lot of weapons or have you just heard about it?

S2: I hear about it and see.

R: So both. Both hear and see. Do you believe that there is a gang problem in your school?

S2: Yes.

R: What makes you say that?

S2: Well, I am one. I'm in a gang.

R: Do you have a lot of disagreements with other gangs?

S2: Yes.

R: Does it happen at school or does it mostly happen off the grounds?

S2: Well, like both.

R: So sometimes you all have disagreements?

S2: Yeah.

R: Do you all argue or do you actually fight or threaten each other or what goes on?

S2: Yeah, we like fight off campus at McDonalds, or at Taco Bell.

R: So you mostly go off campus? So you won't get kicked out of school, is that what I am hearing you say?

S2: Yes.

R: Is there a problem with violence in your school?

S2: Yes.

R: What kinds of violence?

S2: We fight.

R: What do people mostly fight over? Do they fight over gang stuff, or girls?

S2: Anything.

R: Anything? So it doesn't matter what it is? What ever happens, you fight about it?

S2: Yeah.

R: What does your principal do to make your school safe from gang-related activity and violence? Tell me what he does. You mentioned the shoelaces.

S2: Try to get all the gang members out of school. Try to kick us out and stuff.

R: And how does he do that?
S2: Like catching anybody that gets into a fight and asking them if it is gang-related. If so, you're kicked out.

R: When you say kicked out, does that mean the third party hearing?
S2: Yeah.

R: So it is gang-related, that means you are automatically gone?
S2: Yep.

R: Is that on the first time or on the second?
S2: First.

R: The first time for a fight? The second time for blue shoelaces?
S2: Yeah.

R: What about dress code? Does he enforce the dress code or does he have one?
S2: Well, we got one, but we don't follow it. They just have us tuck our shirts in.

R: Tell me about that. You don't follow it how?
S2: Nobody tucks their shirt in.

R: So you don't tuck your shirts in. Does he have a rule about not wearing a lot of gang colors?
S2: Yeah, but it's just the shoelaces.

R: You can't wear red or blue shoestrings?
S2: Like most people do.

R: So most of your school is blue?
S2: Yep.

R: Is it mostly Crips, or is it mostly . . .
S2: Crips and VCs.

R: So you don't have any Bloods at your school?
S2: No.

R: So you don't have a lot of red then?
S2: No.

R: Do you have any idea who helped your principal make the decisions on what kinds of actions to take against gangs?
S2: No.
R: So you don't know if adults helped? Or if children helped? What grade are you in?
S2: I'm in the tenth.
R: So did any children help to decide this, that you are aware of? Or campus monitors, or . . . ?
S2: No. Well, probably campus monitors, and the vice principals.
R: So probably the administrators and the campus monitors were the ones that helped?
S2: Yeah.
R: So you were not involved in the planning of the decisions on how to handle gangs?
S2: No.
R: Another young man from ________ that I spoke with told me that your principal arranged some sort of a gang truce.
S2: Yeah, last semester.
R: Tell me about that.
S2: It really didn't work out.
R: Tell me about it.
S2: Well, it was with different gangs and stuff and nobody didn't want to get along. So more fights occurred and stuff.
R: So the truce wasn't much of a truce?
S2: No.
R: How do you feel about what your principal and other adults do to prevent or reduce gang activity and violence at your school? How do you feel about that?
S2: I don't know.
R: I mean, do you think it is funny? Do you think it is terrible of them trying to do something? How does it make you feel?
S2: Well, it is all right. It makes me feel all right.
R: It makes you feel all right? I'm not trying to put words in your mouth. I am just trying to read your thoughts as you talk. Do you feel any safer now than you did before your principal started these rules or these strategies?
S2: No.
R: So you don't feel particularly safe at school?
S2: No. Just at my house.
R: So if somebody wanted to get you they could get you whether it is at school or at home?
S2: Maybe, yeah.

R: I am just asking. That's kind of what I hear you saying. That you don't really feel safe at school.

S2: Well, it's not too safe up there.

R: So, you're afraid of fights or being approached by a rival gang member or what are you afraid of?

S2: I am afraid of that.

R: What are you afraid of?

S2: I'd probably get shot.

R: You're afraid somebody will do a drive by shooting?

S2: Yeah.

R: Have you had a lot of problems with that sort of thing? But, it's always in the back of your mind? It's a concern?

S2: Yeah.

R: If you could go back and change anything that your principal has done to prevent gang-related activity and violence, what would you change and why? (Silence) What kind of rules would you put in or what kinds of rules would you not put in that he's put in?

S2: Put more rules in.

R: So he really hasn't done that much in terms of rules?

S2: No, I would take out the shoestrings.

R: So you'd let people wear the shoestrings that they want to wear?

S2: Yeah.

R: What else?

S2: About tucking in their shirts. They can wear 'em out if they want to.

R: Is that kind of your persona, to wear your shirt tail out?

S2: Well, if they're gonna wear 'em out, they're gonna wear 'em out. Ain't no problem.

R: So you think that you might relax the dress code a little bit?

S2: Yeah.

R: Anything else you might change? Do you have any thoughts about how you might control gang activity if you were the principal? Or is there a way to control it?

S2: Probably ain't no way to control it.
R: You don't think that if you were the principal, you could think of some ways that might help students get out of gangs or stop gang activity at school? If you were deciding how to control gang activity at school, who would you ask for help and why?

S2: Maybe the principal.

R: Anybody else?

S2: No.

R: If that was your job and you'd been assigned to prevent or reduce gang activity and violence, who else would you ask besides the principal?

S2: Well, like the monitors and stuff like that.

R: What about any of your teachers? Are there any teachers that you would feel like you would want to ask?

S2: Yes.

R: Do you think all of them would be willing to help or do you think some of them would?

S2: Probably some.

R: OK, so not everybody. Tell me anything else that you think would be helpful to me. Can you think of anything that would be helpful for me to understand the situation at your school? This is your chance to tell me anything you want to tell me.

S2: No.

R: You can't think of anything at all? Do you go to school pretty regularly?

S2: Yeah.

R: Do you stay out of trouble at school?

S2: Sometimes.

R: Do you engage in a lot of gang activity at school?

S2: No, not really.

R: When you do, what do you do? Hang around or what do you do?

S2: Well, we sit around, that all we do.

R: Just kind of hang together?

S2: Yes, that's about it.

R: So does the gang that you belong to engage in a lot of violence in school? Or is it somebody else?

S2: Most of the other gangs. They like start and we stop it.
R: You all just have to respond when they do something?
S2: Yeah.
R: Anything else that you want me to know?
S2: No.
GEX1995 or 1998, then like 11OFCVISXW. Obvious spray painting in the language center. Doesn't spell anything. It is painted over well enough so I can't read it. Here is one on the right TRBO=CK. Here's another VC.

One of the things that I noticed is that there is a lot of writing done on little visitors' tags and then they stick them on the doors. It appears there is writing on some of the lockers and scratching on some of the lockers, but it doesn't appear that all of it is gang-related.

**Student Code of Conduct**

The Student Code of Conduct includes the following:

Clothing that contains vulgar words, obscene gestures or pictures, sex, drugs, alcohol, violence or derogatory symbols directed at ethnic, racial, or religious groups are not permitted.

Symbols that are gang-related or attire that can be construed to be gang-related are not permitted on clothing or other personal items.

Students must carry ID and must have an off-campus lunch pass to leave campus for lunch.

Radios, tape decks, CD players, skateboards, headphones, pagers, beepers, and telephones are not permitted.

All visitors must report to the main office and must receive permission to be on campus.

Lockers are subject to inspection at any time.

**Teacher Handbook**

The teacher handbook reiterates the dress code in the student handbook, mentioning:

Clothing that is vulgar, obscene, or suggestive of sex, drugs, alcohol, violence, or slurs aimed at any racial, ethnic, or religious group may not be worn;

Clothing and symbols that are gang-related may not be worn or be seen on personal items;

Personal dress/appearance may not disrupt the educational process, call undue attention to the individual, violate federal, state, or local health and obscenity laws. Students must make adjustments, or the school may confiscate the items, send students home to change, or have a parent bring appropriate clothing to the student at school. The handbook specifically states that the student council, the parents, teachers and administrators have developed the dress code. It also states that administrators have the right to review any items that are not specifically mentioned in the dress code.
School D

Principal

R: First of all, what I'd like you to do is to tell me about your school.

P: We have an enrollment of possibly 1031 students. We have a variety of ethnic groups consisting of about 40% black, no, about 50% black, 40% Hispanic, and about 10% other.

R: So other includes whites, Asians, and...

P: Whites, Asians, and etc. Academically, I want to say that math has been a problem with us. Academically, we seem a little bit stronger in writing, and our scores are fairly average in reading. At one time we had a, there was a transiency rate as far as our Hispanic population. That's been a concern.

R: Is that still true?

P: That's still true.

R: So mostly it's the Hispanic population?

P: Mostly it's the Hispanic population. Also our staff, when we look at our staff, there was a problem as far as staff, there's no stability as far as staff is concerned. But I think that's been addressed.

R: So you feel like you've got that taken care of.

P: I feel like that's taken care of.

R: OK. Do you perceive that safety is an issue in your school, and if so, tell me what your concerns are.

P: Safety has been our number one priority. One of the things that gangs have there were some real problems at the beginning of the year on last year. As far as our gangs are concerned, we feel like we've taken on the no tolerance view that any time that there are, that there are any kind of gang signs, any time that there are, that kids have been involved in any kind of gang activity, we've always addressed it and we've always tried to address it as quickly as we could. We basically here we have maybe we have the Crip gang, we have very few Bloods. We also a couple of Hispanic gangs but this year, we haven't had as much gang problem as we've had in the past. And I want to say that comes from just the idea that we say to our kids that gang-related activity won't be tolerated here. Also, my assistant principals are exceptionally strong, and I think that's a part of the success we've had, too, is that they've addressed it as quickly as possible. And it's kinda gotten, the word has kinda gotten around that we're just not going to tolerate it. And usually it's at the beginning of the year, and it's usually when the semester's changing and the number of kids that are coming from alternative schools, you know, when we usually have our problems.

R: And you've kind of addressed the second part of the next question which is Do you perceive that there is a gang problem in your school, and if so, why do you believe this is true? You've answered the first part of the question, that yes, you do have some problems with gangs. Do you believe that comes from the neighborhood, or from some other source?

P: We're in an era when gangs are a popular thing now. Where kids don't necessarily feel that their families are meeting their needs so oftentimes they simply turn to gangs, you know, just to provide them with that family atmosphere. We try to as much as possible to try to find as many other alternatives the kids, the kids can become involved in. We encourage them to take part in athletics, we encourage them to take part in other UIL activities, we have a number of Hispanic organizations that we try to get the kids
involved in. But mostly letting them know that we have things here that they can become involved in that it's not necessary that they be in a gang. Now grant you, not all the time is that successful. Even with those, with them becoming involved in the gangs, even if they are in those other activities, they still have the relationship with the gangs. But again, we try to let them know that that won't be tolerated. And that there are other alternatives.

R: Tell me what specific strategies you employ to make your school safe from gang-related activity and violence and how those were determined.

P: First of all, we communicate throughout that academics is our number one priority. We also communicate to our staff and our parents that we're here to get an education, and to give an education. And we have rules and regulations and we clearly let them know what our expectations are. We try to make them aware that there are alternatives to their behaviors, and oftentimes it's just that we try to say that this is just not going to be tolerated. And we try to be consistent with dealing with the different discipline problems. When a kid throws a gang sign, he knows that that is an automatic suspension. He knows that he's involved in some kind of gang-related activity, he knows again, that's an automatic suspension, and possible a third party hearing. We also try to be as consistent as we can in letting them know that there are some things that just won't be tolerated. The one thing we are going to have here is a safe and orderly environment.

R: Have you addressed some real specific strategies in your teacher or student handbook? Written rules or anything like that?

P: No. We've tried to be con ... we've tried to be as far as attire, we're not going to accept braids, for example, beads, different things like that, and we specifically try as we look at our handbook, we try to identify things like that are gang-related, that are gang-related paraphernalia, then we try to communicate to them that these are things that are just not going to be acceptable. That may be one of the strategies that we try to put into place.

R: And those are specifically spelled out in your student handbook, and your teachers have received staff development for example . . . ?

P: Going back to staff development, we have people who come in to discuss with our teachers trying to familiarize them with things that they can identify as far as gangs and try to educate them where they are a little bit wiser. So they're making decisions about kids. They're aware of gang-related things that could happen.

R: How were those strategies determined?

P: Simply communication, talking with others. You know, discovering what our needs were, and having outside people come in and then also looking at the different things that we were saying as far as the things the kids were wearing, as far as overcoming the reasons for some of our discipline problems. Things like that.

R: Did you involve the teachers in determining those policies? Did you involve the Site Based Decision Making Team?

P: Some things were already in place when I came here. Specifically what we did was just simply took those things that were already in place and we just followed through with those things that were already there. One of the things I did was just communicate with the staff that we are going to have a safe and orderly environment. We have a handbook, we have rules and regulations, and expectations. Everybody needs to know what they are, and everybody needs to know that whatever those rules are, everybody is going to follow those rules, and there are going to be consequences to those rules.

R: You've kind of addressed the next question, but I want you to think real specifically who, besides yourself, was involved in determining and implementing the strategies you've described.
P: Probably the teachers, assistant principals and the SBDM before hand. Now what we did do, as we attempted to put our handbook together this year, the Site-Based Decision Making people were involved, so let me say the Site-Based people they were involved because there were some things that they had to approve before we finished the handbook.

R: How about students?

P: We have students on our Site-Based team.

R: So you did have some representation.

P: Yes.

R: How was each person or group involved? For example, did they have committee meetings? Or did you just sit down with different groups, or were did they voice concerns in writing to you, or how did that happen?

P: I think we just simply talked to groups, and I think there was just some brainstorming about concerns they had based on experiences they've had. And from that, that's where we came up with some of the rules and regulations we came up with based on some of the experiences they had prior to this year.

R: Did that occur in departments, or in faculty meetings?

P: In faculty meetings and meeting with different groups.

R: OK. How do you believe that students are impacted by these strategies?

P: I think kids basically want to do what's right. I think because we've set an atmosphere that kids know there are some things that are not going to be tolerated, I think the majority of those kids, our kids, are doing what they're supposed to do. The majority of the kids feel good about some of the rules that we have. Though there are some times that there is some resistance to the braids, we have some staff members that usually get on top of it pretty quick. I think our staff as well as our students have been very receptive to the things that we've tried to put in place.

R: Are there some kids who are still in school as a result of some of the strategies as opposed to before the rules, maybe having dropped out?

P: I don't have that data. I believe that there are a lot more kids in school now, but I don't have the data to support that. But I want to believe that a lot more kids want to go to school and that understand that there are rules and regulations, things that I'm going to have to do, there are regulations there. So I want to believe that, but to say that I have the data, I don't have the data to support that.

R: What about this--do you ever overhear the kids talking about if there were a bunch of gang problems in this school, I wouldn't be here.

P: I never hear that. One of the things that I do hear is that we have a number of kids who report to us if there is some kind of gang-related activity, there are a number of kids who will report to us if someone has a knife or if someone has a gun. If you call it a strategy, we've put into place a CrimeStoppers and I would say that you have a number of kids who, I won't say it's just because of CrimeStoppers, but because they want a safe school, they will let us know if a kid has a weapon. The kids here are very, very interested in being safe.

R: If you could change anything about what you've done so far in response to gang-related activity and violence, what would you change and why?
P: I don't want to say change. If there's one thing that I would try to improve, it would be the parents being involved, and educate the parents so they can educate their children. We just got a parent center. The parent center is not where I want it to go, we've got the furniture there, but the idea of having more parents here and actively involved and having ways of getting different programs, that's not there. It's not where I want it to be. That's one of the things that I'm real cognizant of, is that I want to educate the parents. You know, the parents are the ones who are going to help us with what we need to do.

Change . . .

R: If you were going to rewrite your student handbook tomorrow, is there anything that perhaps you would put in or leave out?

P: I'd have to think about it. We've talked about some of the things we'd like to change or do a little differently.

R: Would it be anything to do with gang-related activity and violence, or would it just be general changes?

P: Probably just general changes. We've discussed them, both the other administrators and myself, but I can't think of anything specific right off the top of my head.

R: Is there anything I haven't asked you about that you could shed some light on regarding gang-related activity and violence?

P: I think educating parents and getting parent involved, and educating staff and also getting people to understand that if kids are going to be successful, that success is going to come through the classroom. Teachers need to understand that kids have different learning styles, and you have to find ways to keep kids in school. We have an hour and a half of instruction and I think instructionally if teachers understand that success builds on success and if you want that gang member, that gang member wants to be successful. If the teachers, and all of us, including myself, find ways to make that kid feel like this is a family. Because outside, in that kid's mind, that gang is his family. And if we say to the kid, this is my family, and this family is going to provide me with the success to go way beyond what the gang is going to give me. I think that's what is going to make the difference. But I think kids have to have somewhere where there is going to be success. They feel successful with that gang, so if we can do that . . .

Assistant Principal

R: Tell me about your responsibilities and your position in this school.

AP: I'm the assistant principal here at this school. I, my duties and responsibilities vary, but are ongoing and continuing like working with instruction with the teachers as well as discipline with the students, as well as campus safety for all individuals involved, counseling, we have a special counseling group that I'm responsible for. I do a lot of things in school.

R: OK. Do you perceive that safety is an issue in your school?

AP: Safety is an issue in every school. It's becoming that safety is an issue in every part of your life any more for school, city, community, shopping center, where you go to workout, especially school. My concerns are always a lot when it comes to safety with school. That's generally because a mass schedule, or a global schedule, you know, a global viewpoint, anything that happens to a kid if he's in PE class and he's on the stairs and he falls and breaks his leg, you know, that's a safety issue. A safety issue also involves how well they get along with each other. It also includes checking for weapons that they may bring to school. Or checking the parking lot, checking to outsiders, people who don't belong to school yet want to be on campus, people who are cruising the campus. You know, anyone who walks...
into the building, my first issue when I see them is to make a quick evaluation is this a safety issue or not. You know, no matter who it is.

R: Do you perceive that there is a gang problem in your school?

AP: Well, I'm not going to say we have a gang problem in the school, we have a gang problem in the community. What gang members are represented in the community are represented in the school in some form or fashion.

R: And you've just answered the next part of my question--why do you believe this is true? You're telling me that when the community comes to school, they bring their problems with them.

AP: Yes, that's one of the biggest areas in safety we have is things that happen out in the area, at home, past or present, that causes us problems.

R: Do you perceive that there is a problem with violence in your school?

AP: Well, we're lucky this year, we I think, think we haven't had a lot of fights this year, some fights. This month, for example, we haven't had any fights with the boys, and I'm going back to February, we had maybe one fight with the boys. The main problem we're having now with violence is the girls. They're at it. The girls are not getting along very well. Overall this year, we haven't had a real violent problem. We've had some fights, and we did take a weapon from a kid. We did take a gun from a kid, a special ed kid. He was in the BIC room self-contained class and it was unloaded. Well, I said BIC, he was EDT. One of the aides saw it and told us about it and then we went down there and got it from him. And so that's the scariest incident. One thing that has helped us this year, and I don't know if it has helped other campuses, that when the search dogs come up and they do the parking lot and the cars themselves I know that we have gotten at least 15 knives. And some of them have been real long. And of course, what the kids claim, and almost every one of them has claimed, that they didn't know it was there. And so we still had to take them to third party hearings and let the arbitrators decide. That really worried me for a while. We've only had one gang fight up here between gangs. We have a Hispanic gang up here called the FMS, that stands for Fantasmas. You may have some, there are some over at . But they're mainly just in the area. Between them and the East Side Latin Kings. Ironically, the East Side Latin Kings have a house right down from the student parking lot. So when the parking lot empties out onto , about two houses down, there is a Latin King house where some Latin King gang members live with their mother. There's usually about 70 to 80 of them down there every day.

R: Well, you've answered the second part of my question, which is tell me what kinds of problems have been arising. What specific strategies is your principal in particular employing to make your school safe from gang-related activity and violence?

AP: We came up with Mr. 's supervision and approval, we came up with pretty much kind of a dress code. And if anyone for instance, like a lot of the kids were wearing blue and yellow and red shoestrings, and black shoestrings, as many as we caught, we would have them take out their shoestrings, and then we would give them white ones and do our best to notify the parents. We made part of our dress code that anyone who wore a T-shirt with the "Olde English", we had to have that removed from them. They would have to take it off and if they didn't take it off, then of course we would have to notify their parents and that type of thing. Also if there was, we let the students know that if there was any type of gang violence, what the consequences would be if there was a gang fight. Of course, they would be immediately removed through Student Affairs and the police would be notified. And one extra thing that we have is we have some people who sit in the neighborhood are with the gang unit. They don't want the gang unit to get their names, and I couldn't blame them and so they know if they're gang related, we tell them on a continuous basis, well, we're going to give your name to the gang unit. And that's it, and they're gone. And they don't want that. And we tell the same thing to the parents when we're talking with them, and so that's another strategy that we use with just blunt information about the consequences. And back it up.

R: And are all those strategies in writing?
AP: Yes, they're in the student handbook.

R: I want to make sure I get a copy of that before I leave, and also need a teacher handbook.

AP: I can give you a student handbook, it's in a folder, and you can have one. I can't give you a teacher handbook, but...

R: If I could just have access to it, I will copy it and return it to you.

AP: Uh, OK.

R: Were you a part of these planning strategies?

AP: Yes, we all were.

R: And how did you participate?

AP: Well, I probably had the most experience of the assistant principals. With gang-related kids, and I think I've been to at least two different seminars on gang behaviors that's gang-related incidents or characteristics. One was in Dallas and the other was in Houston. So the information I got I shared on a gradual basis. So I didn't have the lead role, but I had the unofficial lead role.

R: Who, besides yourself and your principal were involved in determining and implementing the strategies you've described?

AP: The two other assistant principals, Mrs. ________, she works in the vocational department, and we did have some input that was received from teachers. In their requests, they had told me some things that they needed help with.

R: What about Site-Based Decision Making team or CCC or . . .

AP: All of that was approved for this year, when we were ready to proceed, it was approved by the CCC, and then it would move forward. Mr. ________ is the chairperson of the CCC and I talked with him about the dress code and the student behavior code.

R: How was each person or group involved? For example, was it committee work, or just write down your concerns and give them to me, or how did that happen?

AP: Last year sometime, we had, it was done in several forms, but the one I thought was most important was the discipline. And we asked the teachers to get in certain groups by departments and work on what their concerns were. Out of what their concerns were in a general group, list like 4 or 5, like what you do with Assertive Discipline. We did it using like that type of . . .

R: So brainstorming?

AP: Yeah, and then we implemented it. And I don't know, I'm not sure why we don't have gang fights this year, but I don't know because we do have at least 4 or 5 different types of gangs here.

R: So you have Bloods and Crips and . . .

AP: And three different, at least three, four different Mexican and then we have the Vietnamese gang. So far, they're doing what they're supposed to do. We've had conflicts between the FMS and the Latin Kings, and one conflict between one of the new Mexican gangs and one student who was supposed to be associated in some form or fashion with the Crip gangs. And of course, we took immediate action. We were there at the scene, and took immediate action that particular day, and the parents and the third party
hearing, and so those are the only two I'm aware of. We really haven't had any real confrontation between
the Bloods and the Crips so far. (he knocked on the table), you know we get some of those little things
that you hear.

R: How do you believe that students are impacted by the implementation of these strategies?

AP: Oh, I, let me have that question again.

R: How do you believe that students are impacted by the implementation of these strategies?

AP: I think that they are positively impacted. Because most of the kids who come to school, the
last thing they want really want to do is get hurt, the last thing they want to do is see one of their friends
get hurt or participate in what could happen or what is going to happen. Once you know that, that they
know that there are strategies or consequences that are going to happen, they take part in them, and most of
those kids know that, they know those strategies and consequences before they know their new home room
and the name of their schedules and their grades and everything else. It's important to them. Here at this
school, it's not an overt expression of gratitude or thanks or anything, but most of the time when a major
incident occurs or is going to occur, they, somebody always comes and lets us know. And so that's one of
the ways that they do it.

R: I guess one of the things I'm looking for is, if we implement strategies in schools that make
kids feel safer, do you think more kids stay in school?

AP: Oh, yeah, they do. More kids stay in school. I know especially, I don't know about other
schools, but they do at this school. Because when they're feeling good about themselves or school, they
always want their cousins or their friends or someone else that goes to ______ High School or you
know, from out of town or something, and most of those kids do stay in school. When they don't know
the strategies, or they don't feel safe or the parents don't feel safe, then you have not only a dropout, but a
attendance problem, oh, almost at the 50th percentile mark. You know, because, . . .

R: What is your attendance rate now?

AP: Ours is around 89, historically, anyway, because I've been here for the past three years. This
school has a, attendance has always been a problem. It has a large migratory enrollment, you know they
come and enroll their kids, and then they leave and never tell anybody. Or they go to Mexico and they
come back and we say why didn't you withdraw them we didn't know or something. But we have that type
of problem. That's hurt us quite a bit. But generally speaking, though, the kids in this school do feel safe
and about the strategies, and about what's going to happen with their discipline when they come to the
office. It doesn't depend on what mood you're in or who you talk to and so they give warnings to their
friends. But 90% of the student body does come to school, they do come to school on a regular basis, and
so we feel good about that. It seems like it's not reflected very well, but that's been the historical thing
about it, attendance here, since I've been here in three years.

R: If you could change the way that your principal has responded to gang-related activity and
violence, what specific changes would you make and why?

AP: If I were king of the world, one of the things that I would change is that our kids come from
such a low economic background. I know that everyone says that this and, but it's more evident with our
kids. And so they don't have anything to do, particularly, except go home and sleep and get with their
friends and those who use alcohol and are the gang bangers, you know, that's what they do as soon as they
get home. This school needs a, needs two things. We have to change the educational focus of ______
High School. We are still with the focus that all the kids who enter high school go on to college. And that
is true in some stage of the game, and you want to encourage higher education, but while we're doing that,
skills, after they go through our school, after that it's over for 90% of those who are in that position. The 10% who have skills and work with their parents or, but the others don't have anything. So all they'll do is get back with their buddies, staying out late and partying and doing all this stuff. You know, they're with their group of friends, the Crips here or the _______ over here and you know, they're involved in that type of thing. So with that focus, we also need the resources, the material resources, you know, and that's going to be. Those are the two biggest things that could or would, I'm almost positive that, I've only been in this community for three years, but that would not only change the outlook of the students, it will also change the outlook of the parents. And then the whole _______ community in general, because this is something good here at ________, we want our kids to go there, and it's not just because we live here. And perhaps those kids who are migratory, perhaps they would settle down. Why would a kid go back to Mexico when he could learn this trade right here? Once he finishes, you know change the focus, because 25% of our kids may go to college, but the other 75, and out of that 75 maybe another 20 go out and get real nice jobs and, I've got a kid who graduated and has got a job in the warehouse at Albertson's. Well, you know, that's a good job, because he can grow with that. But most of the time, the kids are not working, or they're working at McDonald's or something.

R: Well, let me ask you this. The research I've been reading says that a large part of the basis of gang activity and violence deals with poverty, and dealing with poverty, and for the most part, coming from single parent homes, and no entry level jobs, could you just kind of respond to that, because you're the first one who has really mentioned that....

AP: I know that it's true. I'd say that there's a large percentage of that statement that's true. For instance, over here in the _______ community, that is true of a lot of kids who are gang-related or supposed to be gang-related. The thing that gets me is that they say they are, and I don't know because I'm not out there, but you have to take their word for it, and certain other things that you could look at, but I know that that's true. I know that a lot of these kids can't read very well. High school kids that are reading on a 6th or 7th grade level. Well, they go to class and they're asked to read something, and even if they're not asked to read something, how can they interpret the overhead or the book if they can't read it, and they don't know the words. And they're not going to try real hard, and if they can't do it, they're not going to let their friends do it. One of the things that has disappointed me with a lot of these gang-related kids who come from the families, you know their families haven't even worked. Or they have people in their families who were working, but they aren't working now. Their parents are incarcerated themselves. I was with a kid, sharp as a whip, passed TAAS, all three parts, the first time, going to graduate this year, her mom's been in prison, or jail for a year. She lives with her boyfriend over in the ________. She's had one abortion, now she's two months pregnant again, and all she's ever seen, though, was her mom unemployed, hustling out on the street, and that type of thing. Is she gang-related? Yeah! and so is her boyfriend. Her boyfriend was, at one time, a highly successful athlete. She's going to finish high school, but he's not and he's the breadwinner. He may be in jail for being with his gang members selling crack. Or he may get hurt for some things that he, and she will be alone, and her mother will still be in jail. And then she'll be stuck with his family members and we have a lot of kids and they come to school and they don't have any money for lunch and I can't afford to give them all money, and some of them are too proud to ask and they're sick. And then, on the other hand, we have kids who come in with the brand new Polos and stuff all the time. We have a good percentage of kids like that. And their parents are middle class parents. However, even though they are from middle class homes, they have sent their daughters and sons to the _______ area to live with grandma, and so even though they support them financially, they don't emotionally, and a lot of those kids are gang-related, and go out with a lot of kids who are gang-related. And they all know the same things. And we even have some parents who have come down for a real gang fight. These kids are real gang members. They're the real thing and they get into a fight with some of these middle class kids, we have a mom who came in talking the gang language, and threatened to kill these gang members and this is the middle class family that's got all the money. And it's just amazing that they don't have anything active to turn to. And I know that if you could get them focused on college or the vocational, then we could get them an opportunity to be successful in an area or, and once that happens, it improves not only their own self-esteem, but their little brothers and sisters, instead of having the tradition of coming to school and dropping out, not passing the TAAS and going nowhere, they could come to school to learn to be an electrician or a mason, or, and if they still can't pass the TAAS test, and they've
done their four years, they still have an avenue that they can support themselves. But we don't have that and that's why we lose them, and we need a really massive type of thing, someone to really look into it and be serious and give it to them. And the reason I say that it is the school's responsibility, is because over here this community needs a jumpstart and this type of program would be a jumpstart not only for the community but for the school. So it stands to reason that both groups, both the school and the community would reap the rewards.

Teacher 1

R: OK. First of all, if you would tell me about your position and responsibilities in your school.

T1: OK. I am the department chair for the language center, and I am also the language center reading teacher.

R: Do you perceive that safety is an issue in your school, and if so, describe your concerns.

T1: Um. Yes, it is an issue. A lot of the kids have expressed fear of, um, I don't know if you would call it gangs, anyway, like walking home from school, they will encounter a problem. Or, we had one student that had some rocks thrown at her while waiting at the bus stop. I have no idea if it was gang-related, but anyway, we had several children who didn't want to ride the bus because they were scared that it might happen to them. One of the students here was the one that threw the rock. It was one ethnic group against another ethnic group. I don't have any idea if it was gang-related at all, but some of the students did express fear.

R: What about here at school? I know that that is on the way to or from school, but do you hear any of the kids, or perhaps any of the teachers, say that safety is an issue here at school?

T1: Not this year, I haven't heard it. In the past, I have. I'd say when I first came seven years ago, it was much more of an issue, but they really work to take care of the problems. We had a couple of programs to address gang-related issues. It doesn't seem to be that much of a problem. We still have a lot of graffiti around, though. As far as it impacting in the classroom, I don't find that anymore. I don't see gang signs being thrown the way they were before. It may still be happening, but I am not seeing it.

R: So it may be happening at lunch, for example, or out on the grounds, but not in the classroom or in the halls?

T1: At least not in my classroom. I'd say five years ago, I did see it a lot. And I used to see graffiti in my classroom, but now I don't.

R: All right, good. Do you perceive that there is a gang problem in your school, and if so, why do you believe that to be true?

T1: Huh. I hear kids talking about gangs and I see the graffiti around, but I don't, as far as impacting me, it hasn't this year.

R: Now you said it had in the past, tell me what you feel, think, is different between then and now.

T1: What's been done, or what?

R: Well, or what do you think makes the difference between then and now? You said that there had been some program and that there had been some ways to address it. Tell me how you think that's been done.

T1: Well, I know in the Language Center, I think teachers are addressing it more. I think before,
we didn't talk about it and thinking it would go away. But now, we are addressing it more and talking about it. Trying to encourage kids to stay in school and explain to them that this is their future and this is what is going to make a difference. Joining a gang is going to, you know, be a dead end. I think we are addressing it more in the classroom. I think we haven't had a program this year, but in past several years, we have had programs for like the whole school.

R: In the auditorium?

T1: Yeah. About four years ago, we had a man come to talk to the Hispanic kids who was a former gang member. And that really had a big impact on the kids. I don't really know. A lot of the kids that are in gangs are just not coming to school, perhaps. But, the kids that I have in my class, if they are in a gang I don't know about it.

R: So there are keeping it quiet at school?

T1: Yeah.

R: Or they may be doing it in the neighborhood. Do you perceive that there is a problem with violence in your school, and if so, what kinds of problems are arising?

T1: I maybe be isolated, because I know on the outside, the students that I teach in the Language Center. The Language Center teachers are really work on trying to, we do a lot of cooperative learning to try to bring all of our groups or ethnicities together.

R: Uh, huh.

T1: And the kids out there really support each other and get along well. Tell me the question again.

R: OK. Is there a problem with violence and if so, what kinds of problems are you seeing?

T1: OK. I don't see any problem out there with violence or any kinds of incidents as far as fighting or any kind of thing like that. The only thing I know is the incident at the bus stop. Like I said it didn't happen at school, but it did involve kids from our school. And I don't know what precipitated it.

R: But you don't have a lot of guns or knives that you're aware of.

T1: If we do I don't know about it. Like I said I am kind of isolated out there. I like it because it is quiet out there. So if there is stuff going on in the building, I don't know about it.

R: And that is one of the reasons I want to talk to a variety of people because some people see one thing and another person sees another. Tell me what specific strategies that your principal or other administrators are employing to make your school safe from gang-related activity and violence?

T1: Well, let's see. Of course, we have our campus monitors and all teachers have duty everyday. They are there in case there is a potential problem and stop it before it starts. Um, the principal is real visible. He is always walking around. I don't know if there has been anything. We have, you know, the police on our campus also.

R: How about your student handbook or your teacher handbook, are there specific things listed in there?

T1: Well, yeah as far as like they can't wear gang colors and there are specific things about dress.
R: Would you know how to identify a gang member if you saw one by color?

T1: We have someone come to talk to us about three years ago, and I don't know if that sort of thing has changed or not. I am sure now that there are other gangs that have specific colors, but I would say three years ago I could have identified them by their color. But now, now I can't say that I could.

R: So you wouldn't necessarily know what to do to enforce that policy if it arose because you might not know what you are looking at.

T1: I just know that several times on the PA that there are no braids, because the African-American guys can't wear braids, whether it is gang-related or not. I think that if there was something that was going on. If kids were starting to wear colors that were related to a gang then he would probably let us know.

R: OK. So does he do a pretty good job of keeping you informed.

T1: Yeah. He really does.

R: Do you all study that in faculty meetings and that sort of thing?

T1: Gang-related things. I can't say that we have.

R: Safety issues?

T1: We do have that kind of stuff, but we haven't had any incidents. In the past when I first came here, my husband was real nervous of me being here because there were a lot of incidents happening. In fact we had like we had a drive-by shooting around the corner . . . right outside there, but about the past three or so years, I feel perfectly safe here. I have no qualms about being here at all.

R: These strategies that your principal has employed, like the dress code, and the no braids for boys, were you a part of the planning of those strategies? If not, do you know who was?

T1: No, I was not, and I don't know who was.

R: OK.

T1: I assume that the Administrative Leadership Team was.

R: But as far as you know there was not a teacher committee.

T1: I can't really say. He is real good about involving. We have department chair meetings every other week. He pretty much brings everything before the department chairs there. You know, before he makes a decision. And if he has made a decision he will bring it before us to see whether and go over it with the faculty. He is the best communicator I have ever worked under and I have worked in a district since 1972. I don't know, I am really impressed with him.

R: OK. So he has not asked for volunteers to serve on like a safety committee, or like a drug or safety committee?

T1: Well, we have committees and all our teachers choose what teams they want to be a part of. So I am sure if a teacher wanted to be on that committee . . .

R: OK. So there may very well be some teacher participation that you are not aware of. OK. How
do you believe that students are impacted by the implementation of these strategies that the principal uses here?

T1: Well. If they don't feel threatened by gangs I feel like they feel safer when they come to school. They also feel safer in the classroom. When I first came, I noticed that a lot of the kids were nervous to come to school, walk to school, and they were even nervous in the classroom because they know who the gang people . . . the kids know who the gang people are even though the teachers may not.

R: Right.

T1: Like I say, I may be the wrong person to be asking all this stuff because I just feel really safe out there. If there are kids in gangs . . .

R: So either they are keeping a really low profile or the administration has done a really good job. Right.

T1: And it is when the police came into this area and implemented all the gang stuff you know, that is really I think ever since then it has really toned down a lot. Now we have lost some kids that we knew were in gangs. Some of them have tried to come back to school. It could be that they know if they come they have to follow the rules and you know they can't do that so . . .

R: Are the police pretty visible?

T1: Yeah, they are.

R: Is the gang unit pretty visible?

T1: I don't know.

R: You would know because they wear black shirts with white letters.

T1: Well, now, they are not visible this year. We had some out in front several years ago.

R: And they make unscheduled appearances from time to time.

T1: I don't know because this is the only incident that I have seen them. If they are around I don't know about it. Now I have seen the police riding their bikes around the neighborhood, but . . .

R: So they might very well be gang unit people . . .

T1: It is possible.

R: If you change the way that your principal and other administrators have responded to gang-related activity and violence, what changes would you make and why?

T1: I guess I wouldn't make any changes because it seems to be working.

R: And that is good. That's fine. If you were to ask a student what changes that they would make, what do you think that they would say?

T1: I don't know that they would make any either. I know that whenever we had the gang person come speak to the kids that made a big impact. They might enjoy hearing someone come to speak.
R: To support the non-gang involvement. Is there anything that I haven't asked you about your school, that you feel is important for me to know this research?

T1: No. It is a safe place for me. I see a lot of learning going on. I feel real good about it this year. I have been here seven years and this is the best . . .

R: So it has improved consistently.

T1: Oh, yes.

R: And how long has Mr. ______ been here?

T1: Let's see. Second or third.

R: But you see instruction going on and kids in the classroom.

T1: Yeah.

R: And you don't see as much graffiti as you used to.

T1: Yes. Now there is still some, but not like it used to be. It used to be every other weekend you'd see . . .

R: Is it all over the campus or just on the outside buildings, restrooms?

T1: I don't see it in the building and I don't go into the student's restrooms, but I don't see it on the walls on the building. Where I see it is in the gym and sometimes the portable buildings. But they are real prompt in cleaning it up. They won't let it go for more than a day or two. They report it and they take care of it. I have been to other schools were it is a lot worse than that. I am real pleased at what they are doing over here.

R: Good.

Teacher 2

R: Tell me about your position and your responsibilities in the school.

T2: Well, I am chairman in the English department. I also serve on the Site Based Decision Making Team. In those two capacities, I end up making decisions that affect the whole student population.

R: And the school?

T2: Exactly. Exactly.

R: Do you perceive that safety is an issue in your school, and if so, describe your concerns.

T2: I don't know exactly about concerns, but safety needs to be an issue in every school in this day and time, and it certainly is here. There is a safety committee in place and has ben as long as I have been here. Our administrators have kept us up to date on the various procedures of what to do when certain issues arise and how to communicate effectively with the students as to not panic students. For instance, we had a bomb threat a number of months ago and it was handled very quickly and very effectively, without panic, and we went on with instruction, because it was a false alarm. So it was very well laid out with administration and how to handle the situation.
R: So the safety committee had it pretty well laid out if a then b kind of thing?

T2: Right.

R: Do you perceive that there is a gang problem in your school and if so, why do you believe that that is true?

T2: I wouldn't say that there is a gang problem, but there certainly is gang activity. You can see it around the school with the graffiti. We have noticed it in the mode of dress with some of the students.

R: Would you describe what you perceive as gang dress?

T2: Well, there are many types of gang dress. There are with those involved. We've seen and it is within ethnic groups, different types of dress with the African-American students, we see a lot of different colors. The main is red and blue. Different Starter jackets and that sort of thing. And of course, with certain discipline problems you concentrate more on a certain group of students. But we see with the Hispanic students, we see the head gear. Again, we see some colors we see a lot more symbolism on T-shirts, that sort of thing. With the Asian students, we have been told that we should look for designer clothing, in some cases as their trademark. But we are told immediately if we see any of that if the student is to be referred to the proper administrator immediately.

R: OK. When you say referred do you mean writing an infraction or just handing the administrator a note?

T2: That's right.

R: OK. So you don't confront the child necessarily?

T2: Right. Well we do that with the dress code whether it is a violation, if the shorts are too short or whether we believe it to be something gang-related or T-shirts with alcohol or drug paraphernalia.

R: Or sex or whatever? So you don't have to confront the child then and write a note to the assistant principal and say check Johnny Jones and so on?

T2: Right. We have been instructed to not be confrontational about it and handle it very, very discretely.

R: Do you perceive that there is a problem with violence in your school, and if so, what kinds of problems are you seeing?

T2: We have been very fortunate here, we have not seen other than what I consider to be very typical, you know, you have fights that break out. But as far as things that you can trace to gang activity in my recollection very, very few. We have had a couple, and those were basically altercations that occurred further on down the line that happened outside the building, very few that we could perceive as gang activity. We have been very, very fortunate here.

R: So you're saying that the things that happen at school that may be gang-related are usually as a result of something that happened in the neighborhood?

T2: Right. It is not, we have not had a lot of major gang altercation here that I know of.

R: This year or previous years?

T2: We've been very fortunate in that respect.
R: Tell me what specific strategies that your principal or the other administrators employ to make your school safe from gang-related activity and violence.

T2: If a student is identified in a mode of dress that might be inappropriate, we are told to refer that student to the appropriate vice principal. Discretely, that way you avoid confrontation as much as possible. We have duty stations in place at key times of the day where they might be a lull in the day where students might be, for lack of a better word, loose. We have monitors that patrol the entire campus. We have a security camera system in place that covers the entire campus.

R: Do you have police officers on campus?

T2: Yes we do, we have two police officers on campus.

R: OK. Do you have two police officers or a police office and liaison officer?

T2: We had a police officer well, I think that we are back to the police officers because the liaison officer is in training so much. We did at one point two police officers, but I think that is for a short period of time and we are back having our original police officer back and our regular liaison officer at this point that I have seen in the last week.

R: OK. Were you a part of the planning of these strategies?

T2: At one time I was.

R: How long ago was that?

T2: That has been a few years ago. As far as being actually on the safety committee now of course, anything that involves safety or anything that involves implementation of procedures goes before the management team. So in that respect, yes I have had some.

R: OK. Has administration brought that before you all to talk about safety issues, dress code, and that sort of thing?

T2: Yes.

R: OK. I've got a copy of your student handbook, so I'll be comparing that to what I see. Who besides yourself and your principal was involved in determining and implementing the strategies, and how?

T2: On our safety plan?

R: Or any other issues like dress code, and any other issues that involve safety and gang-related activity and violence?

T2: We have a specific assistant principal who is in charge of safety in this building and that is the administrator. And of course, these guidelines were developed to help the student, in talking with the counselors. We have a community program here. We have a Because We Care counselor on campus. We have conducted surveys with the students for the exact purpose of determining what type of safety issues that they have. And the teachers have been involved in the administrative surveys.

R: Is that implemented during homeroom or...
T2: Yes. We have homeroom now, which serves to conduct all the surveys and all other types of business that doesn't interfere with classroom instruction.

R: Do you have homeroom everyday?

T2: Yes, we do.

R: How do you like that?

T2: I would rather have it once a week.

R: Could you do all the business that you would need to do once a week?

T2: I think so.

R: OK. And you could just collect it and do it all at one time?

T2: Right. Now for in my homeroom it is a little bit different. I have seniors, so there is a consistent barrage of things coming. Now seeing seniors everyday it is not bad.

R: Now with freshman . . .

T2: Yeah, with freshman, it is a little bad.

R: I understand. Um. How do you believe that the students are impacted by the implementation of all these strategies?

T2: I really believe that the students feel safe in this school. Like I said we have had no major incidents. To my knowledge, students are not fearful about coming to school. I think we have fostered a very good climate at school or the main ingredients in an effective school. I think students have been given a set of expectations that they know they are to follow. One of the things that we are very proud of in this school is that we have different types of programs and different field trips, when we conduct different activities, we are very much set on giving the students a set of expectations. For the most part, we find that our students follow those expectations.

R: So when you go out on a field trip, for example, you have very few problems. The students generally behave and that sort of thing?

T2: Yes.

R: Good.

T2: And like I said I think that transfers to the safety issue. Students know what is expected. Mr. has told the students constantly, I may be redundant, but and he has drilled into the students the expectation that our number one priority here is the academic achievement, everything else is secondary. And everything inappropriate does not belong at all. So I think he has done a great deal to foster that kind of behavior.

R: So you think that he had taken the lead or set the tone?

T2: He and the administrators and the teachers in this building.

R: So everybody has worked together as a team?
T2: Oh, yes.

R: And do you think that that is important?

T2: Absolutely.

R: What about the student staying in school? Do you think that most students have stayed in school because they feel safer.

T2: I think we have had our attention. About three years we have a problem, with our drop out rate, but that is steadily declining. I think that has something to with it. But again, I think, our expectations have something to do with it. We expect students to come to school, and we expect students to graduate. We expect students to get an education. And I think, as I said before and it is redundant, but it is a team effort, and everybody has that mentality and it transfers to the students.

R: If you could change the way the principal and the administrators have reacted to or responded to gang-related activity and violence, what would you change and why?

T2: I don't know that I would change anything. We have a very full, active administration here. And that has helped to deter some very potential problems because students know that we have an administrative team that will act upon anything immediately. Even if it is a hint of something that might arise, the administrative leadership team will act upon it. As far as changing, I don't think that I would change how we have handled the situation. Perhaps, the only thing that we might want to do is have a refresher course as far as what to look for or types of things that we might not actually be aware of.

R: Another teacher mentioned that same thing that you haven't done it in about three years.

T2: It has been awhile since we have done that. And at that time we had gone back to our administrator at the time, that has now gone back to Student Affairs but it is a very long process with it, about what to look for. As I said earlier with the first question about the different groups to look for, and they actually key into what they, as he said. These students will change rapidly at that point. He went through everything that we would need to look for. And I think that we might want to do again.

R: Do you think it needs to be done every year?

T2: It could not hurt.

R: So even if it is just a very small part, just having someone from the gang unit come in or maybe having your own police officer just set the tone...

T2: I think that it would be a rough job staff development activity. Especially at the beginning of the school.

R: Since this research is aimed at developing a staff development module for gang-related activity and violence, that is real important for me to know and I believe that you're the first person who has said that so that is important. From time to time you talk with different people and they tell you something that perhaps you haven't thought of or I'll tell them something that they perhaps haven't thought of. I think that it really helps to have that interaction.

T2: Yes, it does.

R: If the students could change anything the principal has done to prevent gang-related activity and violence, what do you think that they would change, and why?
T2: I don't know if they actually change anything. Interesting question. Like I said students feel safe. The only thing that I could think of if there is some underlying problem that we are not aware of and of course, we have gone to various meetings to try to get students to, if you know something to report back. And that is a difficult situation, it is difficult to do, especially at this age. In elementary school, kids are bluntly honest, so if you ask a child something they are likely to give a very straight answer. Here students, for one reason or another, friendship violation, peer pressure or whatever, students are reluctant to give that type of information.

R: Do you ever hear kids talk about what they would change? Would they make the dress code more strict or anything like that?

T2: Yeah, they are things that they would change. In fact, we write about that every year and are real sensitive of what should be changed. And we get things like longer lunches, more pep rallies.

R: Later school opening, earlier dismissal?

T2: Yeah, things like that, but you don't get answers about in fact, I'm glad you brought that up. You don't get issues about safety or I think that the principal needs to cut out all the gang members running the halls. So we really don't get that so, if there is something the students aren't, aren't saying anything about it.

R: How long is your passing period?

T2: Five minutes.

R: OK. Now, I noticed some kids. I finished with an interview early, and so I just wandered a little bit. I stood around and watched passing period, up at the top of the stairs on the third floor. This group of boys just hung around for a long, long time. Is that pretty common?

T2: We have pockets of kids it just depends on where you are.

R: Now down here, I see the kids in the door of their classroom, they were not hanging in the middle of the hall, or by a stairwell or that sort of thing.

T2: It depends on where you are, during which passing period...

R: And which teacher's rooms you're close to?

T2: Right.

R: Yeah, OK. So that's not a consistent problem with the kids that are hanging around?

T2: No, and in fact, we are instructed to be at our doors, in the hallway, during passing period, you know, getting kids to class, and the administrators are very proactive in that.

R: And so you see them often. They are pretty visible?

T2: Yeah. The administrators are visible in the building.

R: OK. Is there anything that you would like for me to know about your school as far as safety is concerned, that I haven't asked you?

T2: Not that I can think of. As I said before and I know I may be harping on this, um, in the twelve years that I have been at School D, I have never felt afraid to come to work, nor from any particular
student. There were some that I really didn't want to see on certain days, but nothing to do with, with the fear factor. In twelve years, we have had a few incidents, but we have been very, very fortunate. We have not had a stabbing. We have not had a shooting. We'll we did have one, but it was . . .

R: Down around the corner or something?

T2: It was off campus and it was when somebody from, it wasn't even a student that held-up a convenience store and apparently concealed a weapon under the counter somebody picked that up and you know but, as far as a campus situation, we have our share of fights. It is just the typical kid fights

R: You couldn't point it out as being gang-related. You don't see all the red fighting all the blues?

T2: Like I said, this administration and the administration previous have been proactive about making sure that, you know, we eliminate, we know we can't eliminate it from necessarily outside the school, but they have done an admirable job making sure that it hasn't penetrated within the school.

R: If you had a child who does something really terrible or they pretty quick to remove that child?

T2: Yes.

R: So like if you have an assault of some sort, that child is gone pretty quickly?

T2: Yes. It happens immediately.

Student 1

R: OK. What I need to know from you is something about your school.

S1: It's a good school.

R: So you don't believe that there are a lot of problems in your school? Do you believe that safety is an issue in your school, and if so, what are your problems?

S1: I don't think that safety is a big concern in my school. There is not that many people that get hurt or caught up in gang violence.

R: Do you believe that there is a gang problem in your school, and if so, what makes you say that?

S1: I do, because of the type of people who wear gang-related colors and they might throw signs and things like that.

R: So you know that all goes on?

S1: Uh huh.

R: Does it create a problem at your school?

S1: No.

R: OK. Is there a problem with violence at your school, and if so, what kinds of problems are there?
SI: It is just the typical fights. It is not really gang fights.

R: And not really weapons or things like that.

SI: No weapons.

R: So just fights over girls or fights over what happened in the neighborhood. What is your principal doing to make your school safe from gang activity and violence? Like what rules address gang activity and violence?

SI: Certain colors that they can't wear. The principal doesn't have a rule about what people can wear. All they have is the way you dress.

R: Like what?

SI: The shorts or skirts or how your shirts are made.

R: So you can't wear spaghetti straps or real short-shorts or something like that. But they don't have rules against all blue or all red.

SI: No they don't.

R: So that's not in the dress code anywhere. Do they reserve the right to decide if something is offensive?

SI: Um, well I really haven't heard them call anybody in the office because they had all blue or all red on.

R: So if they had something on that said "In memory of" or "OG" would they send them home, do you think?

SI: Um. I don't know I really haven't seen students that wear something like that. I see students that wear blue shirts that have like their nick-name on the back.

R: Like Lil Red?

SI: Yeah, there's this one girl that has a shirt that says "I'm lady-like" on the back of her shirt.

R: But that is the biggest problem you seem to have.

SI: Uh, huh.

R: Who do you think helped your principal make the decisions about what to do about gang-related activity and violence?

SI: I think it is mostly principals and the school board.

R: OK.

SI: They really don't ask the students anything.

R: What about parents?

SI: No.
R: No, not to your knowledge?

S1: No.

R: OK. What about teachers?

S1: Oh, some teachers are there to teach and some are there to get paid. It is not necessary thing that they do.

R: So you don't think that the principal asked them what they thought?

S1: No.

R: OK. Were you involved in whatever decisions he made?

S1: No.

R: No. OK. And no other students were either?

S1: Not to my knowledge.

R: OK. Not that you are aware of. How do you feel about what your principal has done about gangs and violence being a problem at your school?

S1: I am not sure that he did anything. Like I said before it is not really a big problem. They might dispute each other, but I haven't seen just a big gang fight or anything like that.

R: You don't really see anything because you don't know if anything has been done.

S1: Right.

R: Is that right? OK. Do you feel safer than you did before your principal started any of these rules or anything. Or can you tell any difference?

S1: I haven't been here that long.

R: How long have you been here?

S1: I'd say three to four months.

R: So you haven't been here all year?

S1: No.

R: Where did you come from?

S1: I came from New York.

R: Was there a lot of problem there?

S1: No not really. Well, sort of. Well, in the middle of the year there was a lot of gangs that were just coming out. And they would be slashing people and they would take their razors.
R: So you can tell a big difference here then. Is it a lot safer here?

S1: Oh, yeah. I feel a lot safer here. Anything can happen anywhere.

R: You're right about that. But you don't see the problems in your school that you saw there. Is that what I hear?

S1: I didn't see the problems in school. It was outside of school.

R: In the neighborhood. So in New York it was in the neighborhood and here you don't see it in the neighborhood either?

S1: It is in the neighborhood. It is in every neighborhood, but I just don't see it on school campus.

R: OK. Whatever they are doing they must be doing it right to keep it off the school campus. Is that what you're saying?

S1: Uh, huh.

R: If they are doing something it is right. If you could go back and change all that your principal has done about gang-related activity and violence, what would you change and why?

S1: It is well taken care of and makes it have a low profile and many people don't know what's going on with gangs.

R: So you don't see very many problems, so therefore, you don't think that you need to do anything in particular. Is that you're saying?

S1: Yes.

R: OK. If you were in charge of deciding how to control gang-related activity and violence in school, who would you ask to help you and why?

S1: The person I would ask to help me?

R: Or the group or . . .

S1: Um, mostly teachers because they know more about the students. They are in their classrooms, so they would know more about what is going on. I would get the teachers to help.

R: OK. What about students? Would you ask them for their input?

S1: Yeah. I would ask students, but it would be a chosen few because some just really don't care unless it involves them in a physical way.

R: OK. Anybody else like the principal or anybody like that you might ask?

S1: I'd ask the police officers to patrol around the school and make sure that no gang activity was happening.

R: But really your source would be the teachers. OK. Is there anything that I haven't asked you about gang activity and violence in your that you would like for me to know?
R: So I've pretty much covered it all?
S1: Yeah.

Student 2

R: What I'd like for you to do is tell me a little bit about School D. Just whatever you want me to know.

S2: I went there one day. That's all I know.

R: You went there one day and then you got kicked out? What happened?

S2: This lady in the high school, in the library on the lower level, and these two or three other ladies, teachers, I went into the library and I asked them if this was my class and I guess she got all in a funk and then she start to say I got to go and she start pushing me and I called her black B.

R: I've heard the word. So they kicked you out of school for that. So they called it what, verbal assault? Do you believe that safety is a problem at School D or at the alternative school? Safety? Do you feel safe there?

S2: No.

R: Tell me why you don't feel safe?

S2: Because it ain't safe.

R: Like how? Do people bring knives or guns?

S2: They can. They don't search.

R: You mean at the alternative school they don't search or anything? Were they at School D?

S2: I don't know.

R: Were you? I mean were you searched?

S2: No.

R: OK. Do you believe that there is a gang problem in your school?

S2: Yes.

R: And if you looked at School D or at the alternative school that's fine, so you think that there is a gang problem?

S2: Yes.
R: Lots of gang presence?
S2: Yes.
R: Do you see a lot of gang signs being flashed or colors or anything like that?
S2: Yes.
R: So you see a lot of that stuff going on?
S2: Yes.
R: OK. Is there a problem with violence in your school? A lot of fights anything like that that is real violent?
S2: Yeah.
R: How?
S2: I don't know. They leave.
R: Oh, so it happens in your neighborhood, not in your school.
S2: Yeah.
R: So something doesn't happen at the school, it happens out in the neighborhood?
S2: Yeah.
R: Do they ever bring it to school?
S2: It depends.
R: On what?
S2: I don't know. It depends on whatever, whatever it is.
R: OK.
S2: I mean I can't answer for them.
R: Well, I understand, but I am just asking what you see happen. Like if somebody says something about somebody's girlfriend. Are they likely to bring that to school?
S2: Yeah, well I really can't say, 'cause if it happens at school, that's all I know it happened at school.
R: OK. Have you seen a lot of violence at school? Fights or stuff like that?
S2: Fights.
R: What other kinds of things?
S2: Fights.
R: Just fights, OK. Can you tell me what your principal does to prevent that kind of thing going on, gang activity and violence? Can you point to anything that he does or she does that tells.
S2: At what?
R: Either place at School D or the alternative school?
S2: I don't know, can't wear colors, I guess.
R: Do you have to dress a certain way at the alternative school?
S2: Black and white.
R: Black and white that's it? OK. Does that keep activity from going on?
S2: No.
R: Any gang signs from being flashed?
S2: Yes.
R: You hear them talking? OK. So you don't know what the principal does other than the dress code?
S2: No.
R: Do you have any idea who help develop that policy was it just the principal, students?
S2: It was there when I got there.
R: OK. So you don't know what happened. OK.
S2: They just said wear black and white.
R: OK. So they just said this is what you were, no questions asked, just do this. How do you feel about that? How does that make you feel?
S2: I don't mind. I don't really care.
R: It doesn't matter to you or what?
S2: I said I don't be caring.
R: Oh, OK. It really doesn't make any difference to you since you don't care. OK.
S2: I don't care what they do.
R: All you want them to do is leave you alone?
S2: No, they don't mess with me.
R: Oh, OK. Why don't they mess with you?
S2: 'Cause they know I ain't going to mess with them.
R: OK. You're a tough guy?
S2: No.
S2: Yeah.
R: So they know that you're not somebody to be messed with?
S2: No. I don't think they know like that. I ain't going to mess with them, if they don't mess with me.
R: So basically, it's if you leave me alone, I'll leave you alone. Is that what it is?
S2: Yeah.
R: OK. This might not make any difference as far as because you're not in the same school as you started out at being, I was going to ask you if you felt any safer as a result of what your principal does, but you really don't know what your principal did.
S2: No.
R: Do you feel any safer wearing black and white as opposed to colors?
S2: No.
R: Is that because they're going to do what they're going to do regardless?
S2: Yes.
R: OK. Now, this is your opportunity to be the principal for a moment. OK. If you could go back and change anything that the administrators in your school were doing to prevent gang-related activity and violence, what would you change and why?
S2: Say that?
R: OK. If you were gonna go back and you were in charge what would you change about what the principal has done about gang-related activity and violence?
S2: Silence.
R: Or if you were "king of the world", what would you do?
S2: I guess, I don't know.
R: You don't know what you'd do?
S2: I don't know what I would do.
R: If you were an adult in charge of these children, what do you think would be important?
S2: I don't know there is too many options.

R: OK. What kinds of things?

S2: Better metal detectors in the halls.

R: How would you address the dress code? Would you change the dress code in some way?

S2: No, you'd keep those belts on so you could see what they got.

R: So you could see if their carrying anything or not.

S2: You know what I'm saying a belt tied around the waist so you could see if anyone has anything strapped around them or in their pockets. That's all you gotta do.

R: OK, So you'd put up the metal detectors up occasionally, at least.

S2: Yeah.

R: Would you put them up everyday?

S2: No, I'd do it randomly.

R: OK. Try to surprise people. OK. And then you would make them wear belts. Boys and girls so you could tell whether their strapped or not?

S2: Yep.

R: OK. Is there anything that I haven't asked you about gang activity and violence that you think I ought to know?

S2: I don't know too much about gang activity. I do know about violence.

R: Well, tell me what you think I ought to know. Because what I am doing is I am studying it so that I know how to tell principals or adults how to deal with it better Tell me what I would need to know.

S2: I don't know because that is a question that . . .

R: OK.

S2: I mean you tell the principal that the teacher's right. So then they listen to the teachers and nobody else.

R: So they ought to listen to the kids more?

S2: Yeah listen to the kids. It takes two to fight. Sometimes the kids say things that makes the teachers mad.

R: And the same thing is true with adults and kids. Sometimes the teacher says something to upset the kids.

S2: Yeah.
R: And everybody blows up and everyone thinks that it is the kid's fault when sometimes it is not. Is that what I hear you saying?

S2: Yeah,

R: But the kid gets all the blame.

S2: The students aren't right all the time. I mean the teacher ain't wrong all the time.

R: Well, the teacher's not right all the time either, right? So if you were teaching principals how to handle kids, what would you tell them besides that? Besides that it takes two to cause an argument?

S2: Well, I'd tell the teacher to quit bring their problems to school. I mean quit bringing their home problems to school. They got a death in the family or something . . .

R: And that causes them to get mad at kids?

S2: They do. If they come in happy, then they want you to be happy. If they come in smiling then they want you to smile.

R: If they are sad, then they want you to be sad.

S2: Yeah, they want you to be in the mood that they in. Sometimes you got a problem at home and they know the problem and they in a good mood and you're not.

R: And they kind of mess you up on account of them being messed up themselves?

S2: Like you got a problem at home and you're the student and the teacher comes to school with a problem, too. Both of y'all got a problem.

R: And you take it out on each other.

S2: Y'all say something and both of y'all are going to talk. See what I'm saying.

R: I see what you're saying.

S2: I don't know. I was tripping. I don't know. School is crazy. It is too easy. The teachers are getting dumber.

R: OK. The teachers are getting dumber?

S2: Yeah.

R: OK. In what way? You mean that they are just not teaching as much?

S2: Yeah. And then they not using common sense no more. Back in middle school and elementary, teachers used common sense. Like the way they talk or teach. I don't know.

R: Is it the way they teach? Like elementary school teachers allow you to use your hands sometimes? Be busy and stuff and the high school teachers just talk too much?

S2: School teachers do this. Like you'll catch one teacher that tell you the wrong answer. They don't know what they doing . . .
R: So you don't think that they are as smart as they were when you were younger?

S2: Yeah. Back then they used to be smarter and I could learn something. I ain't learning nothing no more. You know what I'm saying. They are too worried about whose business that they're going to get into today than who they are going to teach and what they are going to learn. They ain't worried about that because I can tell by the way they talk.

R: Are they worried about getting a paycheck? Is that it?

S2: I mean some of them.

R: Other kids have told me that they don't come to school to teach kids, they come to school to draw a paycheck.

S2: And then there are some teachers that won't let you mess up. Like those teachers that make you stay out the classroom. You know what I'm saying.

R: And make you learn something, whether you like it or not.

S2: Yeah.

R: Are they afraid of them?

S2: I guess.

R: You think that that's it?

S2: Yeah. They blow up on them too much. A student just say one thing to them, joking or not, and then they take it serious. And then the day before they was joking on each other. So I don't know teachers just do weird things. They just be tripping. I don't know.

R: See that makes sense to me, but see I understand what you're talking about. Your doing a pretty good job. I understand what you're talking about. Anything else you want to tell me?

S2: Uh . . .

R: Do you feel like you learn anything in school?

S2: No. Sometimes. Last year I had a teacher at School D I learned. I mean she was a good teacher.

R: So you were at School D last year?

S2: Yeah.

R: What was different about her?

S2: She would be talking and then we'd be reading it in the book.

R: And it's right.

S2: Yeah.
R: Did that make you respect her?

S2: Yeah. I don't know it was just the way she would teach.

R: Well, that makes good sense.

Site Visit

I am at School D High School. I've noticed that the shirt tails are all out. There are quite a few kids with midriffs outfits with outfits that do not appear to meet the dress code. I see some caps on heads. I do not see a lot of graffiti and that sort of thing at this time.

Lockers were painted over as though there were some type of graffiti on the lockers. The halls are generally clean. It appears that the most of the teachers appear to be teaching. An adult just directed a student for having a cap on.

Graffiti has been painted on one step with liquid paper. It appears to be gang-related. The classrooms are quiet. The teachers appear to be teaching and the students appear to be learning. Most of them are sitting down. Quiet. Appear to be cooperative.

At this particular time, I have been told is homeroom. So there is not any instruction going on, but everyone is out of the hall and in the classrooms. The teachers seem to be doing what needs to be done.

There is gang graffiti on the door. This is a passing period. I do see some gathering at the top of the stairs here during passing period. I also see some horse playing in the halls that appears to be not fighting. There continues to be a group that are hanging in the hall during passing period.

They are continuing to hang on. They're occupying a particular space. Students do not seem to be moving on as they should. There is a group of students hanging out in the front of the lobby area. These same students are continuing to horse around and clown around.

I am outside now behind the building. The areas, the common eating areas clean. I see some children out of class. I see graffiti on what appears to be the field house. I can't tell what it is. FMFXFKK Chicano. I can't tell what the other one is, but it is pretty evident. It is written in black on the white field house. So it is very evident. There does not appear to be any other graffiti on the outside that I can see, but I am getting ready to go around behind the gate behind the field house where it does not appear where people can get to it. So the back park would probably not be a problem as far as graffiti is concerned. It only appears to be on the front part.

Some additional students outside. They all appear to be Hispanic. Now they appear to be with a class. Again the outside eating areas clean. There appears to be a lot of scratching in the new concrete out in front. Big D 211. Some of it is unintelligible. Some gang graffiti scratched in the paint on a front window and some additional drawing in the concrete. Some of it appears to be student's initials. Some of it appears to be gang related. There is one that says FARRO and then there is a 5 Duece, a KO and a KD. Several, what appear to be, carvings in the concrete.

I believe that this must be Freshman orientation. Have a whole bunch of cheerleaders leading this group of students. Students in the hall are throwing gang-related hand signs. Perhaps they are gang-related. Perhaps they are not, but they definitely have a pattern to them.
There is some relatively fresh gang writing on white paint. MFKK. It looks like it might be KK, but I think it might be VSK or VS1 perhaps on the steps leading up to the school. Everything else is pretty clean.

Now I see some gang writing on an out building. Outside the field. I am going to drive around the campus and see if I see anything else, but there does appear to be writing on that outside building.

The community around this school appears to be shutting down in many regards for disrepair. There are lots of boarded up places. There are some areas for sale. It is real difficult to tell what the population is. I see several signs in Spanish. I see lots of African American folks in yards. It is difficult to tell what the community is largely as a result of just looking. There is an apartment complex directly across the street from the school. There is a city park right across the street from the school. I am driving around behind that field house building now. The interesting thing is that the building where there is graffiti there is graffiti on the school side, but not on the street side, which I think is rather interesting. This is a beautiful old building and it appears that it is pretty well kept.

**Student Code of Conduct**

The Student Code of Conduct includes the following dress code items which are prohibited:

Clothing items with pictures, logos, phrases, letters or words that are obscene, suggestive, crude, racially insensitive or immoral;

Clothing items which contain gang symbols or colors;

Gang paraphernalia of any kind, including jewelry, beads, shoelaces;

Plaits, braids, twigs for boys;

Beepers, cellular phones.

It also addresses the following behaviors which are prohibited:

Derogatory language including name calling and racial slurs;

Profane language, obscene speech, literature, or gestures, and written or verbal threats;

Weapons, replicas, mace, pepper spray;

Narcotics, alcoholic beverages, inhalants, and related paraphernalia;

Paging devices, cellular phones, radios, tape players, CD players, and computerized games;

Theft, damage or destruction of school or private property;

Gang-related activity of any kind.
Teacher Handbook

The teacher handbook asks students to do the following:

Report suspicious activities;

Report illegal activities such as gambling, possession of weapons, the use or sale of drugs;

Inform administrators of unresolved conflicts and current feuds;

Avoid verbal encounters which could lead to physical confrontations, and refrain from instigation/agitation in other students’ disputes;

Avoid gathering around a fight;

Choose friends carefully and avoid large crowds at school.

The teacher handbook asks teachers to do the following:

Give students an opportunity to discuss safety issues;

Give students specific strategies on how to avoid threatening situations;

Intervene immediately in confrontations;

Collect items which could be used as weapons and give them to the administration;

Check all suspicious persons for visitors’ passes, and report those without passes to the administration;

Remove all items which could be used as weapons from easy access to students;

Intervene in suspicious activities or report them to the office;

Stand at the classroom doors during passing periods;

Be aware of all events both in and out of the classroom in the immediate area of the classroom;

Supervise nearby restrooms;

Avoid physical/verbal confrontations with students;

Enforce the dress code.

The teacher handbook also lists the persons/positions on the safety committee:

Administrators, teachers, custodial and cafeteria personnel, parents, students.

The safety committee is anxious to have input from interested parties, and will evaluate the plan regularly to implement modifications as necessary.
School E

Principal and Liaison Officer

Note: The police liaison officer sat in the office with me and the principal during our interview. I was concerned about the validity of his interview, as his employer was in the room with him at the time.

R: OK, tell me a little bit about your school.

P: In terms of what, demographics, what?

R: Demographics, issues, whatever it is you want me to know about your school.

P: Well, currently we have approximately 2,000 students. The students are broken down into 55% Anglo, 24% black, and the rest Hispanic and other.

R: Do you have a lot of Asians?

P: No, we have a small Asian population. Those are mostly Hispanic. Academically, a lot of students do well across the board. Average SAT score is 1150. We have the highest percentage of minorities passing the math, lowest discipline problems. We rank in the bottom third of the senior high schools even though we're the second largest. We rank 9th out of 12. Senior staff, but because of retirement and attrition, that staff is changing. We're starting to have that mix where we have middle level experience, new teachers, and the staff at the far end. That's changed over the last three years. The community is relatively stable and in general are very supportive of School E. There is a strong identity between the school and the community of the school. There's, you know, three generations that have gone through School E.

R: So some strong traditions?

P: Yeah, in the past there were some unhappy traditions in celebrating the confederacy and those kinds of things. Sort of unhealthy. But there are some traditions that have carried on. And that can have its downside, especially staff wise because many of the senior staff have not made the adjustments to the kinds of kids that come through the school now as compared to the ones who came through the school before. The stable family, the identifiable guardian is not the norm any more. The better kids, the choices of expression. Now to discuss your topic. When I came here in 1994, there was a gang presence. There were large numbers of students in the assistant principals' offices. Average SAT score is 1150. We have the highest percentage of minorities passing the math, lowest discipline problems. We rank in the bottom third of the senior high schools even though we're the second largest. We rank 9th out of 12. Senior staff, but because of retirement and attrition, that staff is changing. We're starting to have that mix where we have middle level experience, new teachers, and the staff at the far end. That's changed over the last three years. The community is relatively stable and in general are very supportive of School E. There is a strong identity between the school and the community of the school. There's, you know, three generations that have gone through School E.

R: So some strong traditions?

P: Yeah, in the past there were some unhappy traditions in celebrating the confederacy and those kinds of things. Sort of unhealthy. But there are some traditions that have carried on. And that can have its downside, especially staff wise because many of the senior staff have not made the adjustments to the kinds of kids that come through the school now as compared to the ones who came through the school before. The stable family, the identifiable guardian is not the norm any more. The better kids, the choices of expression. Now to discuss your topic. When I came here in 1994, there was a gang presence. There were large numbers of students in the assistant principals' offices. I mean long lines of students. The in house detention room was overflowing out into the hallway and there is a perception in the faculty that nothing was done up here. There was an absence of leadership, too. The principal was never here most of the time, which in fairness to him, he was sort of put in a position where he had to be two places at once, and when you do that, you don't do a good job either place. So, you cannot discuss academics until you deal with order, cleanliness, and just the basic routines of doing business. Because if you discuss academics, it is precisely that, simply an academic discussion. I made it clear, when I met with the parents at open house, that, I don't recall my exact words, but something to the effect of, if you intended to be engaged in that kind of activity, this was not the school to come to, and that I would use everything available to me by law to see that you would be removed. So I kept my word. I think any discussion about what we should do with gangs is first of all, is a policy in place that is enforceable. And you will have to be prepared to follow through, and if you're not, you're just wasting paper and people's time. And so throughout the school, and Dan and John, they're an important part of our team, just as I am. I think that's another issue, the liaison people and the police people and the principal need to work together that these guys here are not somebody's lackey and they're not substitutes for the assistant principals. They do their work and the assistant principals do their work. If you suck them into that, then they become ineffective. Kids don't see them anymore as, coming here is not
as meaningful as you want it to be. And the people in, from the top down, if you engage in that stuff, you're gone. All the other stuff about sending them here, sending them there, that makes for good press, but those people who are not down here everyday on a daily basis have no idea that, or if they do, they fail to acknowledge that we have some hard-core criminals. Besides, it doesn't make a difference if they're sixteen or seventeen, they have been adjudicated as such. They have been forced to wear collars and all kinds of stuff, so they are criminals. The position that the school must take is that our overall responsibility is to the majority of children who want to come here to get an education. And we cannot, and it's even literal in the inner city, we cannot tolerate these people in these schools who are not here to do that, who are here to sell drugs and recruit. You simply cannot. It's sending, it's sort of like sending John Dillinger to Little Sisters of the Poor for counseling. It's not gonna help. They're that hard-core. What we have done with some of these programs is we've just delayed removing them from the schools, we've added another step which gives them more time to be here and more time to create problems. And I'm as sympathetic as anyone that children should be given an education, I've devoted my whole career to inner city kids, but I'm also not naive to think that some of them don't belong here and some of them can't be saved and I'm not willing to risk the education of, it's not so much the good kids who will succeed in spite of some of this stuff, it's the marginal kid who's trying to find his way. He or she is in the least tenable position to have these kinds of folks around. The other issue, of course, is the dress code. You simply cannot allow them, and it's a game because you change whatever, and they'll find something, but you as a staff, and that's everybody, you have to stay on top of that. You cannot allow them to come to some sort of identification point, whether it be a spot in the building or an outfit. And the kids will bank on you getting tired, for example, of tucking in your shirt. There are schools that have dress codes but they're not enforced. Meaningless. We here make an effort to enforce our dress code. The other issue is graffiti. Graffiti is everybody's responsibility, not the custodian's, whoever sees it reports it and it's critical that it gets off within, well, as soon as you see it, and even if it's the kind that takes a little longer, it should be off within twenty-four hours. It simply invites, once again, a section of the building is my turf and I'll write on it. And it's our position that there is no turf that belongs to them. I don't have any problem with making gang members' lives miserable. The other thing they prey on is, or they bank on is that they can intimidate. And if you allow that to happen, now that doesn't mean that you become physical or threaten, all you simply do is to be unafraid to apply what your policy is regardless of what they say or do. Because if you don't, it's like hot air. The word on the street actually is don't come up here, don't go to ________, they don't play. Kids'll say that and this is what we want them to say. Now does that mean that we have an oppressive environment? Of course not. We have standards of behavior, standards of dress, expectations in terms of your relationships with all the adults you come into contact with, not just teachers, not just principals, but food service, custodians, and in return, the respect is reciprocated to you. And what we tell the kids, what I tell the kids, if you want to be treated like an adult, behave like an adult. But if you don't behave like an adult, you're going to take some of the consequences that adults have to accept for their behaviors. And the kids respond to that, and teenagers, it's not very complex, teenagers want to know what are my limits. And like teenagers anywhere, you'll have some that'll just see how far I can push you. When they push you and they see the consequences, they don't do it again. We have some that might do it more than once. But then you have others for whom consequences are irrelevant. Authority is irrelevant. Well, those people do not fit into a traditional setting. They need to be somewhere else. And those people who consistently perpetuate this myth that you can send some of these people to counseling and then send them back into a traditional high school with two thousand people, it doesn't work. Simply, all it serves to do is exacerbate their behavior. There's so much going on and they're so undisciplined in the first place that all the changing of classes, all the activities, all the energy in a big setting just simply serves to set them off. And I don't think school districts or school personnel, school districts first of all shouldn't be spending time and money chasing seventeen and eighteen year olds who don't want to come to school. It's an absolute waste of time. You bring someone here who doesn't want to be here, force him to sit someplace he doesn't want to be, he's going to create trouble, or he's going to go and cut school, and then when he cuts school, you file on him as truant, and then the courts file on the parents who have no control over him anyway. It's a vicious circle because we simply don't want to face up to the notion that some of these people are going to wind up in the penitentiary and we should not be sort of a holding pen until that happens. If that's what they're bent on doing then an early experience with the penitentiary might eliminate a longer term down the road. I don't know. I'm not a criminologist. I do know that since I've been doing this I've seen the behavior become more violent, I've seen the people who commit those crimes to have total disregard for any authority, to have total disregard for consequences, and if they're not afraid of the
police who are armed and carry badges and a confrontation with a police officer can potentially put you in jail, and that doesn't bother them, they could care less about somebody in a school. Me or anyone else. And to put them in the mix with these good kids is doing a great disservice to these good kids.

R: I think you've answered most of my questions. Let me just go over my questions and see if you have anything that you'd like to add to what you've already told me, because you've already been very, very helpful so far. [The researcher then read all the questions.]

P: Is our school safe? Yes. Could it be safer? I don't know how much safer you can be. I think that a good response to that is the Israeli model. The Israelis are probably one of the most security-conscious countries in the world. The Israelis say that there is no way you can prepare for someone who is going to walk into a restaurant wired to explode. And I don't think that a school can prepare for everything our residents are potentially capable of. And certainly when you consider the mix we deal with on a daily basis, and all that they bring with them, so would I like our school to be safer? Of course. What efforts have we made? We have cameras all over, some are not real, but they don't know that. Our monitors are very visible, and all of us are out all the time, I think that's important. Principals who spend time in their offices, that's not being a principal. Is there gangs? Any principal that would tell you there are not gangs would be lying to you. There are people who belong to gangs, but they don't bring their stuff here. Because if they do, they pay the price. Would we prefer they don't do that in the community? Of course, but that's not our responsibility. Our fundamental charge, which has historically been to educate them to read, write, speak, and communicate, and where we've gotten in trouble is that we're taking on all these responsibilities to feed, to clothe, to take care of unborn children, to born children, and now to engage as sort of surrogate policemen, we don't have the money and we don't have the personnel or the training to do that. We have kids here who certainly do belong to gangs but it is neutral ground. In fact kids here feel safer here than they do anywhere in the community. That we're proud of. Would I do anything different? A practice I try to make is never to second guess myself. I make the best decision I can make and sometimes I don't always make the right decision, I think maybe if I could have gotten rid of personnel more quickly than I did, it probably would have given me some additional time to focus on some other issues, but that is a district issue over which I have no control. Personnel impact anything you try to do. I think schools, high schools, should not be more than 1,200. I think once you get into 2,000 and above, you're just warehousing kids and you're looking for potential problems. What were some of your other questions?

R: One of my big questions, and I'm going to be talking with some of your children through an outside agency. Are you familiar with Comin' Up through the Boys and Girls Club?

P: No.

R: They work specifically with gang youth. They're going to provide me with some children to speak with. But what I'm interested in finding out is whether you believe that because the children do feel safer are they more likely to stay in school? Now you mentioned about the children who are seventeen and eighteen years old that we have to chase down, but the children who might have historically dropped out, the children that are kind of marginal, perhaps, do you feel like because you've made it a safe environment they're more likely to stay?

P: I would like to think so. We see the numbers going up between grade levels. But I think a lot of the legislation and a lot of things going on in the are impacting that environment. For the longest time, many of the kids who come to a school, this would be the only place where someone would genuinely care about them. Put them on the back, give them a hug. I think staff, in general, are totally reluctant to touch any child. And that sort of one human being reaching out to another human being in that sort of way is gone. The environment is now becoming very sterile. I don't think with the kinds of nurture these kids need at this vulnerable stage of their lives, people will think twice before giving a hug anyway. I think they stay. If you come here, you see that they stay as long as they can, and we have to shoo them away. Where they have to go to is not very attractive. In fact, up here, they're even protected from those who would prey on them out there. I think any school, you can have problems without having gangs. It just has to be a consistent approach and they have to buy into that.
R: What about the people who were involved in determining the strategies you use? Did you employ the faculty as a group or the SBDM, your CCC, or did you just come in and see what the problems were and just say this is what we need to try?

P: I don't know how much you know about me. I don't do that. Let me see if I can give you my version. It's sort of the Coca Cola theory. Very few people know the ingredients in Coca Cola. And no one was asked what do you think the ingredients ought to be. But everyone in the company had a part in what the outside looked like. The Coke bottle or can would look like. Then everyone else in the company spends all their time trying to sell you Coke. And the state or whoever decides you are qualified to be the principal, you are going to be held accountable for whatever goes on in your building. Then, from my point of view, I'm not acquiescing to someone else. That's not exercising leadership. I will elicit their opinion, of course, but I will say, this is what I want to do, this is what I want it to look like, what do you think? And people can have their input, but ultimately I will decide. Decide already, and everyone else... I'm not going to ask a committee to devise a plan to discipline children when no one on that committee is going to be accountable for their implementation of that discipline. No one on that committee will have to face a legal issue should something in there be inappropriate. That's not the way it works. Those people are not qualified to do that. It doesn't mean I don't have good people, it's so rare when they do that. The superintendent and the school board do not call up here and say get the committee together please. They call and say you fix it. And until the legislature fixes that so that everybody can go up there and say what goes on, I am in charge. I am responsible, and I am accountable. If something goes wrong here, I don't say, well, that was her fault. It's mine, cause I'm in charge and I have the responsibility. I draft it, this is what we want to do, and if they want to fine tune something, that's ok. Site based committees of parents are looking to you, they don't want you to look to them for leadership. You're the principal of the school. You provide the leadership. If you can't do that, then they should be looking for someone who can. And most committee members have their own agendas. And their agendas may not be consistent with what your policy is. What you believe is right for kids. But you need to allow them a forum for them to say what they need to say. But that doesn't mean that you have to change what you're going to do or say. In fact, the commissioner and the legislature feel that the language in that whole part of the legislation that deals with site based to advisory, because many people were deceived into believing that they were actually going to be making decisions. Now in some places, some people have made decisions which have caused serious problems. And that's because whoever is in charge acquiesced to the committee, and they are essentially an advisory group. A sounding board if you will.

R: So if you don't know what you want before you go in there, you're likely to get something you don't want.

P: Yeah, God so loved the world, he didn't send a committee. No if you don't know what you want, you don't need to be running a school. If you need to generate people to tell you what to do, it's not going to work. You never get anything done, because you have eight or nine or fifteen agendas. I've been very fortunate when I initially made that clear, that this is how we work, there were some people that felt they were a decision making body. And they're not, they're an advisory body. That is different, and my response is that you make decisions when you are accountable, and since you're not, and I am, not just me but any principal, it's my call.

R: Well, ________, based on what ________ has said, do you have something that you feel you could add to what he has said or what we've talked about so far? Gang activity and violence and the strategies that the school uses?

L: I can say that if I do have any type of suggestion or input, ________ is more than willing to entertain it. He is very supportive and very open. I can tell you for sure that he does run the show. None of us here are naive enough to think we don't have gang members, but we certainly don't think we have a gang problem. We don't allow them to flourish.

R: What do you and your police officer partner do to support what ________ has talked about?
L: This might sound trite, but we do what we can to be visible and I think the fact that we are visible we notice say an outsider. It all goes back to our obvious dress code, because I've been in virtually every school and we can readily identify an outsider, if not physically, by the way they dress, and we can deal with the situation as quickly as possible. We can address the individual perhaps, and say where do you belong? You don't belong to us. But we try to act in a support capacity and try to do whatever we can to him and his staff.

P: Let me say something about the decision making. There's a difference between them and that. With them, and some others like my lead counselor, I will go to them because they will have an expertise that I don't have. Principals that delve themselves into believing that they know everything, they're on the short end of a long stick. I will go to them and ask them and get their opinions. And then I will weigh their advice, and I may act on something that they've told me. In one instance, he made a suggestion that... It's not that I don't take suggestions or advice. It's just that I solicit that advice and ultimately I have to say, let's do it. Because I have to answer for whatever it is. I may not know what you're doing, but I have to answer for that. And so those people who simply let these committees run amuck, and that's not good, you just cannot let people go off. I have told my assistant principals, one of the things that principals have to do, among many things, is to identify the strengths you have in your assistants. And then get them out of here, let them go on and be principals. You shouldn't be holding people back just because you want to use their talents. I give my assistants a lot of autonomy. If you don't, they'll never do anything if they constantly have to be micromanaged by you. That's not how you get, I don't really slam dunk anyone. I was in a meeting the other day when an assistant superintendent said it's either your assistant principals or you to this group. That's really irresponsible. But all I tell them is I don't want to hear about it on the five o'clock news. Just let me know what's going on. So if someone calls me, and I don't know, I can't defend you. So just tell me so I know, and if it's something serious, then I can get more background, or if it's potentially legal I can get with them and I can help you. You just have to have that sense of collegiality among your team members. But sometimes And sometimes you don't have it and you just do the best you can to balance. Then that's another leadership issue, you've got to get rid of that. Otherwise you have a cancer that spreads.

R: Now I'll be speaking to some of your children through a program called Comin' Up. It's through the Boys and Girls Club and they deal only with gang behaviors and offer positive alternatives.

P: Now that's a good expression you used there. Gang behaviors. What we have is people who view ethnicity with behavior. It has nothing to do with black, white, brown, it has to do with your behavior, your inability to follow standardized rules of behavior. Behavior, that's the issue. And no matter how you try to do it, you're not going to get to work out unless you address that it is a fundamental behavior. It is not a cultural problem, and it's unfair to the culture to say that it's a cultural problem with thugs. It's a behavioral issue. And if you ignore that and try to make it some sort of ethnic issue, you're going to miss the boat and we'll be having this same discussion twenty years down the road. It is a behavioral issue that people do not take responsibility for the children that they bring into the world. It is a behavioral issue that they don't teach their children before they come to school how they are to say yes ma'am, yes sir and to deal with other people. It's bogus and bankrupt to say it is ethnic.

R: Well, let me ask you this, then. A lot of the research that I've been reading centers in on the inner city and poverty and lack of employment opportunities and lack of training opportunities as a reason for the creation of some of the behaviors. Could you just respond to that?

P: Here's the classic answer. All ethnic groups that have come to this country have suffered poverty, discrimination, in employment, in universities, I mean you couldn't get into Harvard if you were Jewish or Italian. And all of those ethnic groups, by generations, have overcome all of that and have on to be very successful. Hispanics are interesting, if you look at Florida, you look at all the refugees who come up from Nicaragua and Costa Rica, and take any jobs, dishwashing, and their children go on to be very successful. One of the reasons they had the riots in Freedom City was the Hispanics worked in the kitchens, then they suddenly became the doorman and then the managers of the restaurants and the hotels and the blacks became very upset, disregarding the initiative and the motivation of these people. Poverty is certainly an obstacle, but research is also rich with examples of people who have gone on to become very
successful. They are using poverty as an excuse. Poverty is not an excuse to go out and rob a bank, and poverty is not an excuse to go out and shoot people sitting on their doorstep. Poverty is not an excuse to come into a school building and destroy a restroom and be disrespectful, especially if you're coming to a place that is providing you with breakfast, lunch, and someone up in front who is trying to educate you despite the fact that you may not want to be educated. That's not an excuse. I disagree that since 1965 with the passage of all the Civil Rights legislation and the beginning of the Great Society there's been ample opportunity available to anyone who wants to take advantage of it. To a fault, we are institutions who have discarded any kind of standards in order to provide these opportunities, and we've gotten mediocrity everywhere. I don't find that as an excuse. I don't think poverty is a reason that you drive by your schools and you break all the windows, that's your behavior. I have lived in countries where there is extremely poor conditions, where people have lived in huts, people who have drive and dignity and will not take a handout and they are clean even though they have very little and they make sure their children go to school and then they go home and they work, they respect their elders, they have extended families. Poverty is not an excuse. What happened in this country is that we created this big sort of sugar daddy and generations have become so used to this and we have never asked for any reciprocal, we simply reward don't do anything. Just make a lot of noise, and we'll sort of placate you.

R: Do you think that the change in welfare—workfare—will make a difference?

P: I think when you starts to make people responsible, and that if you're not going to do anything, you're not going to get anything. I think you will see a change, but I don't think you'll see it in our lifetime. Most of the countries I've lived in do not have welfare. And most of the people will survive. And they don't have anywhere near the crime rate. We have the highest prison population in the civilized world. So I disagree. I agree with the Governor. If you don't make the grade, keep them back. We're not doing the kid any service. We're just handing out diplomas. What we are doing is penalizing those kids who do work because we lump them all together and make their diploma less valuable.

L: Case in point, the young man who got shot, he was one of ours. When he is here, we monitor him both collectively and individually, but we cannot control what he does on the outside.

P: It's kind of like Tombstone. When you come into Tombstone, you check your guns at the edge of town. There was a principal recently who said he had no problem with gang members as long as they followed the rules. That's terribly irresponsible. Gang members have the notion that they don't follow rules. They have their own rules. The message you should be giving these kids is that this is a no-way lifestyle. Those of us who should know better should not be getting up there and saying it's ok if you belong to a gang. There's all sorts of reasons you shouldn't be in a gang. We do not negotiate with gangs here. That suggests we are equals. I don't mean that in an arrogant way. I am a person in moral authority here. You have broken the law, and will continue to break the law. Me sitting down with you legitimizes your behavior. If you do this, we're going to do this. There is not negotiating with these folks. We have the authority and power we need, we just have to have the courage to apply it.

Assistant Principal

R: First of all, tell me about your responsibilities and your position in the school.

AP: OK. I am the assistant principal at School E. I take care of S through Z. I work with personnel, hiring. Personnel is part of my job. I am the senior assistant principal under ________, so I take care of things when he is not here. Right now, he has a problem, so I'm signing everything for him. I work with a lot of different functions that are going on. I am on the banquet circle, he turned that over to me. So I am getting a lot of that. Actually right now, because I am doing those things, Mr. ________ has taken over some other stuff, so I don't work with that anymore. I am evaluating some teachers he worked with this year. We do evaluations. I work with the other VPs and kind of make sure everything gets taken care of that needs to.
R: Do you do the assigning of duties to Assistant Principals or does he?

AP: He really does that pretty well. The only thing I do is check with him and if something comes up that might fit in their realm of what they expect me to keep up with then I'll address it with them. I am doing a lot of the things that he has done.

R: Does he go on your experience of having been a principal?

AP: Yes, he does. We talk a lot and I appreciate that. He asks me about, since I have been in the district so long, he asks me a lot of things when it comes to district things. How did people used to do this? You know. Sometimes I know, sometimes I don't. It all depends on what he is asking. We have a pretty good rapport with each other.

R: What about safety? Do you perceive that safety is a concern in your school, and if so, what are your concerns?

AP: Actually I think we have a safe school, but it is always something you have to watch for. Safety is an on going thing because it could happen anywhere. I mean, drive-by shootings, those things you really can't prevent. You can certainly discourage it and make it where it is difficult. But safety is something that is on going all the time. A safe school doesn't mean that it can't become unsafe instantly. And so it is a constant vigil. I think we have a safe school, and there are some things that we'd like to see to make it better. I'd like to have another set of cameras. One set of cameras is just not enough to cover this place, like it needs to be covered. I think we need more campus monitors and because we have four right now. Even with four this a big campus and it is hard to get it covered. Of course, my idea on security would be to have 32 cameras and have one campus monitor sitting there watching them. Have enough screens to watch it all at the same time and have someone sitting there with a radio and have the others spread out and we could cover this building pretty good I think. Of course, our cameras are not what they need to be either. It is better than nothing, but the way they skip time and they don't cover every second and they rotate around. But I think that security is, you got to have safe school and safe environment and everybody knows that. That takes a lot of work all the time, you can't let up. Even when I do cafeteria duty, it is a breeze here compared to other places I've been.

R: Just don't have any problems?

AP: Really, I don't have any problem with being there by myself. If it was any other place, I bet I would not be in there by myself. I would have other people in there helping me keep an eye on everything. I just don't really have, you know, I think it comes from back from set guidelines and having people know that if you mess up that you're just going to suffer the consequences. And if they choose to mess up then we go through process and of course, we are having a problem a little bit with people coming back sooner than they should now. And I know that they are worried about kids not being in their regular school and then they go to the alternative setting. In society, you have those types of things. I am a firm believer in the getting rid of the bad apples and I am going to take care of the good ones, that is what I am going to do. I know that we are supposed to educate everybody, but some people we just can't educate in this setting. And in fact, a lot of the students in the alternative school do quite well.

R: Ours do too.

AP: When they are in a strict environment, they do well. A lot of them want to stay. I think when you do that, I think a lot of them need that special help. They just need it in a different way. Not coded, but ...
AP: But benefit from that restrictive environment, I kind got off of the subject.

R: No, actually you didn't because all of that has to do with school safety. Do you believe that there is a gang problem in your school, and if so, why do you believe that that's true?

AP: Depends on how you determine gang problems. We have gang members, but as far as gang problems, we don't have much of that because we don't allow it. We have those that will from time to time wear clothing that will tell you that they are a gang member. It is very rigid because we don't allow things that shows what they are, but it is real hard if they don't wear the, a certain color. Now the beads, we don't allow the beads, the obvious things, but as far as control over now you can't wear blue or you can't wear red; our colors are blue and red. So it is real difficult to do that anyway. So yeah, we have gang members. However, our gang members aren't near as bad as they'd like to be. And I don't care if you put this in there and you can scratch it if you don't want to. There are retreats that you can send kids to all the time. We sent some of our kids, and some of these kids are gang members and that type of thing. They came back and said, "Man, those guys were throwing colors!" and they were scared to death. I think what it is that some of them think that they are bad, but they aren't near as bad as some of them. But you know, anytime you have gang members, outside gang members can come by and cause serious problems. And we stay pretty hard on that and we just don't allow. Yeah, we got gang members and we let them wear gang clothes sometimes. Yes, but problems outside, not that much. Yes, we have gang problems, if you have gang members, you got a gang problem. You got to stay on top of it. Not as bad as some schools. Why that is, I don't know.

R: Do you think it is the neighborhood?

AP: I think the parental involvement. We have a lot more parental involvement than I have been at with other schools. I think that that is one of the keys. It keeps down a lot of problems. I think its a key to the number of fights we have. We don't have anything like I have been at in the past. Yes, kids are going to do that, but nothing, nothing like I have had experience with. I think if you look back, parents are getting involved. And generally, they sometimes say how can administrators do this, but you need their overall control of the kids. And in the long run, the kids are going to act better and they know that parents are going to be up here and we don't mind contacting parents. The parents really are involved in their kids more. I think that says a lot. I think the kids are showing what's going on more.

R: Do you perceive that there is a problem with violence in your school, and if so, what kinds of problems are arising?

AP: There's violence everywhere in schools. Just read the paper about the things that are happening. I mean, we've got a lot of violence in our society. I have to agree with a lot of people, you see violence on the TV. Late last night on the news, they were talking about violence in the home. So you see violence everywhere. More so now than used to, or maybe things were more discrete in the older days. I don't know. We have kids that place no value in their life and any others. We have violence, and again, when you stay on top of it you cut that down. Cause that can blow up suddenly. And without warning, you never know what is boiling inside a young person. You hope that the teachers and others pick it up before it overflows and maybe we can diffuse it. And a lot of times, we have no arguments and are able to stop the violence, because we stop it by sitting them down and explaining the responsibilities, that type of thing. And you can head off some of that violence. And also random violence can occur anywhere. That is the scary part about it.

R: You can't predict it?

AP: You can't predict it. You can try to keep the drive-by from happening, but it can certainly happen. Like some of the kids shooting out of the woods, and shot at that school. You have some kids cry out and people need to make sure that they listen, but if not the kid could go off the deep end and do that.
anywhere. And there is not much that can prevent it from happening. But that is the scary part about it because it could happen at your house, in your neighborhood, or anywhere.

R: You mentioned sitting the kids down and talking with them, do you have a peer mediation group?

AP: No, we don't, but I would to see it at school, that is something that I would like to see us do. I think some students have to be trained, like a teen court and they decided the punishment and those types of things or they give them community service type punishment, and stuff like that, which also helps out the community and hopefully, helps the kid understand.

R: Do you as the assistant principal or the other assistant principals kind of employ some of those strategies, even though you may not call it that?

AP: Well, not really a whole lot, I'd like to, but you have to get something set up for those kind of goals and those types of things, like anything else you'd have to get a little out of the norm of, if a parent had chores, I think that is a little better choice than spending thirty or forty years in Huntsville. Without the access it is going to be hard, but that is something that it would be helpful. It would help some kids.

R: What specific strategies does your principal employ to keep your school safe from gang-related activity and violence? And when I say your principal I mean as a director?

AP: The big part of the dress code is gangs so if you take their identity away they are not near as visible. I think the dress code is a big part it because they tie in their identity, like if anything we see that is inappropriate, because there is, there are changes in gangs, there is always changes, new ways of identifying each others' changes. We don't like to mess with hair, but then again it can become gang-related if you're not careful. So all those things you need to address and make sure.

R: Is that the main strategy, the dress code?

AP: Part of it is and making sure that everyone understands that gang-related activity will not be tolerated.

R: Zero tolerance?

AP: Zero tolerance that kind of thing and that way gang signs, that kind of thing, try to stop them. Not to say that it doesn't still occur some, but we can keep it to a minimum. But again, to me, when you take away the identity by getting away with the dress code. And without the identity they are just another kid. Although they know each other, and they know who is on what and who, it still cuts down quite a bit on that.

R: Were you a part of planning of those strategies and if so, how?

AP: Well, yeah, and I worked a little bit on the dress code because I took into effect last year, which was my first year here. We met with the Site Based Decision Making Team and went over the dress code. We tried to, in fact, to get uniforms of the people that voted and eighty percent of the people wanted the uniforms, but only had about ten percent voted. But for some reason the school board wants you to have eighty percent of the people vote and to have eighty percent of the people vote for it. Well, that is never going to happen. You can't even get that many people to vote in an important bond election. They just don't do it. Unless they change, I just don't see ever occurring. I don't see how we will ever get uniforms in. And I really think that that would really help a lot. If we don't get the uniforms then we will have a more restrictive dress code, you know, no college shirts, no shorts, no baggy pants, no T-shirts,
then we tried that, stop them and we would send them home and get them to change clothes, that kind of thing. Our kids do pretty good. We still have some that fight it, but most of the kids abide by the dress code. They act like they dress. We give them a dress down day, and they think that that means where we throw the dress code out the window, and they act like they dress. They really do. I mean they act like they dress. We have had a couple of dress-down days and without fail we have...

R: There’s problems?

AP: Yeah. They get into fights, cause problems, there is just complete havoc. You know, when people dress up they act nicer, and when you dress like a heathen, then you are going to act like one.

R: So you would have a dress up day instead of a dress down day?

AP: Well, yeah or they can call it short day and it has to be knee length because if we call it dress down day, then they think it is not a big deal. We've had those days about two or three times this year, and we are not going to have anymore this year. We had one here the other day, last week. It is just a mind boggling in the difference of the kids, the way they act.

R: What does your dress code say about how girls dress?

AP: Basically, no tank tops, or crop tops, or spaghetti straps. They are supposed to have sleeves basically. They are not supposed to have T-shirts or shorts either. No scooter shorts, or culottes, or whatever. Although in the hot weather we might back off on that a little bit on the shorts, but maybe not. The only trouble with shorts is boys don't have a problem with shorts, it is the girls that have the problem with shorts. All of a sudden they want to wear them with their backside hanging out. But they don't understand if they would wear long shorts, then we would probably let them wear them all the time, but because they won't do that, they want to wear the Daisy Dukes and all that type of stuff and it is just ridiculous.

R: What about the skirts, do you have a problem with the skirts being too short?

AP: A few. And our policy states that they have to be within three inches of the knee. And there is a few of them that break that pretty good. There is a couple of them that are real tall and lanky, and I don't know if they can find a skirt. A normal skirt would be up still be pretty high on their thigh because they are so tall and long-legged. We've got a lot of short-legged ones that still get them pretty high up there. We still try to stay on top of it. Some of them get by without a little closer than others. The teachers and the staff you know we don't allow them, with the tank tops a lot of them wear them with a blouse under a tank top, which is fine. We don't mind that. A true blouse, not a T-shirt, we let them wear that without a problem. If they've got a sweater on, they can wear that without a problem. Tucking their shirts in, that is a big problem. I mean that is a rule, and most of them do it, but we have a few that constantly, you know.

R: What do you do if they don't?

AP: Oh, there is several things. Most of the time we tell them to get them in. Most of the kids do, but there are a few that don't. We haven't had a detention hall, because we haven't had a person to run it, and we've got to get back into running it, but hopefully we will get a person for that. But we need that so we will have a place to put those kids. What you do is put them in there for one period, and then let them out and try again, you know and get their attention that way.

R: And then just get progressively more strict.

AP: Well, it one of those things that you hate to kick a kid out of school because his shirt tail is not tucked in, but some of them just really are not even trying because it they constantly, it is a constant
battle. But the want you to give up, but the teacher can't give up, you continue to make them do what they should and they think that you are going to give eventually. We just sent a letter out the other day notifying everyone that we are cracking down again on the dress code. It is a constant, that is, ninety-five percent of your kids do what they are supposed to do and the five percent is the ones that cause you problems.

R: How were you a part of the planning strategies? Did you help devise that plan or . . . ?

AP: The principal did quite a bit of that. We got ideas from the Site Based Decision Making Team team, which is composed of teachers, parents, and students. They were involved in the uniforms, the campaign for that. We wrote a basic policy and then took it to him and we hashed out things, well what about this, what about that? That is how we came about it. I was on the Site Based Decision Making Team, but he was the main one involved in that.

R: Who besides yourself and your principal was involved in determining and implementing these strategies? Now you said that the Site Based Decision Making Team, the administrative team, the principal, what about student council or . . . ?

AP: What he did he did get this year, he didn't have it last year though, he did bring in the student council and talk about the dress code with them about the students, school, and how it will impact, delivered it that way. But also, he sent out questionnaires and had several forms and had parents and students come up and talk.

R: So there really was an open discussion about it.

AP: Yeah, an open discussion about it. The uniforms in particular and then the dress code was discussed mostly by the administrators. More became involved in the uniforms, you know, that's the way all the good things happen.

R: And you kind of explained how each person or group was involved, so we will move on. How do you believe that students are impacted by the implementation of the strategies of the dress code and the no gang clothes and the sort of thing?

AP: Personally, I think most kids want discipline. They really do. A lot of them get it at home and some of them don't get it at home. Most of them are raised fairly right by their parents and know what is to be expected, but if they can get away with something. Because they are teenagers, and once you're out of school you can't do that anymore. You've got to abide by the rules or you are going to be suspended. I think most of them have conformed to the dress code and I have some start dressing a lot nicer, and when I see them I give them a compliment, because they do look better and generally they act better than they did.

R: Yeah, I agree.

AP: I think if we make them do these things, that's part of our job getting them ready for the real world. In the real world they are going to have to wear some type of uniform, probably. It may be working with food, food uniform, certain types of codes, and in most instances they are going to have to some type, and also, they are going to have other type of regulations that go along with the job that they are going to have to abide by if they are going to keep their job. And the bottom line is that we've got to make them aware of that situation. I think most of them accept it and like some groups are going to fight it tooth and nail down the line. The bottom line is that if they are the ones that are going to pay if they don't learn the lesson, they are going to take the consequences later on in life. They get mad about doing things like that and in reality, they are the ones that are going to pay that price.
R: Do you think that when you provide a safe situation for kids through these strategies they are more likely to stay in school?

AP: Oh, I think so. We've got kids that we can't run off from here. They want to stay here all the time because it is probably safer here than at home. I'll always say that a school this size and in number of people around, etc., it is safe even when their home might not be. Homes are not necessarily safe and neighborhoods aren't necessarily safe, but the school is. Because we are aware of the problem and a lot of people are watching out for us. It is just a habit. Your chances of it happening at home are just about as bad, either from parents or outside people because you know, family violence is part of the problem. And you know, we treat some of them probably better than they get treated at home, even though we may be on their case most of the time.

R: Do you think that kids are more likely, you know back in the old days, when we were in school, kids could drop out after junior high school and go onto work or whatever. Do you think our mandatory attendance laws and combined with the strategies that we use to prevent gang-related activity and violence keep kids more toward graduation?

AP: Comparing back when we went to school and all it was more acceptable for kids to drop out of school. If you couldn't quite cut it grade wise, you'd go ahead and get a job and earn a living.

R: And now they just can't survive that way?

AP: They can't survive that way and the problem is I think, although I think here again, we there are a lot of kids that need some type of vocational training. A normal high school curriculum doesn't help them in that respect. The only thing that would help them is some type of ITC or work program because if you get out there with just a high school diploma and you've never worked at a job and you get out of high school and you don't go to college, you're going to start at the bottom, bottom and there's not very many good jobs to go to even with a high school diploma.

R: Without some training?

AP: Without some kind of skills or training. So many of them once they get out of high school, what do I do now? I think we do so many of them a disservice because again, they are not all going to college. Sure we would like them all to go to college, but let's face it that's not going to happen. A lot of them are going to have a hard time because they have for one reason or another, they haven't got the grades or whatever, but a lot of them won't be back and they'll be in the work force. They'll be at the bottom of the work force. They are going to have a hard time working and making a living. And even if they are minimum wage, they are going to have to have two jobs to survive. So we should develop more work programs, some people want to be in them and some people want to get an education, but some kids if you look at their school work and they are not lazy, we got some people that is just lazy and don't do it, they just cannot do their work, well, they need to learn some kind of skills, because technology is a big thing. Technology is behind every job, every job. And if they don't learn the technology, I don't care what they do, they are going to in trouble. It is going to be strictly manual labor.

R: Well, you can't even dig ditches anymore without computers.

AP: Most of those, yeah, they use computers on the site, and make blueprints and do all those stuff, all the siding that is needed is all calibrated with the computers and all. You've got to have a little bit of skills of anything.

R: I was out looking at some land the other day and the surveyor had a computer right there on whatever you call it...
AP: Oh, it's cool. It does distance, height, and prints it out for them and lets them know what they need to write down. You've got to know how to operate that stuff. You've got to have a few skills, you know to, where it is not that hard. Well . . .

R: You've got to have the skills to be trained.

AP: And you've got to be credible. I guess a high school diploma, I suppose, one I tell kids is that, what that does for you is it shows that you can be taught. And you'll work through it until you get your diploma. Then, you got to get on the job and you've got to do the work and then learn the work and you have a work ethic.

R: All right now let me ask you . . .

AP: Where'd we start on that, I don't know . . . I hope I am staying on key.

R: No. That is fine because everybody that I have talked to has kind of slipped of track from time to time and that is fine, that's no problem. What I am trying to do is find those strategies that are effective and in my opinion, if you can keep these kids in school and get them some training, get them in a job and according to the research, that makes them less likely to be violent as adults. So you know, that's true. Now let me ask you this. Now this is a question, now let me assure you unless somebody can figure out by reading through the whole thing nobody would ever know who said this. They'd have to read hundreds of pages to find out. If you could change the way your principal has responded to gang-related activity and violence, how would you change it and why? Is it tough?

AP: Boy that's tough. I mean, I think that we are doing what we need to do. The only thing that I could say that we need to do more of is some intervention for after-school stuff and the peer stuff, maybe identify specific kids and try to get them and their parents, that sort of thing and try to get them out of it, that sort of thing. I think the big problem is that they need to get out of gangs when they get out of high school they've got to be get out of that atmosphere, too. And again, it goes back to being in the neighborhoods, the hood as they call it. They can't stay in the hood. I hate to tell this, but when I was at we had three kids that came back from the summer. One of them got killed on the corner. They graduated and were successful. They come back to the hood and it sucks them back in. And I told the guy I really cared about, go out there and don't go to another hood, no, don't go back and live in the hood because it sucks them back in. Even if they go away and become successful, go back just for a weekend, it sucks them back in. I understand that they can get shot and killed somewhere else, but the risk just skyrocket.

R: So what you're saying is that you do a pretty good job at what you do?

AP: I think that we do and there are some things that we could do more of. Again, I think you'd have to set up an access, you'd set up real program and identify the, of course, the big thing is that the parents are in denial. Even if they blatantly know that he is in a gang, but they will still say no he is not in a gang, and . . .

R: Not my child?

AP: And how do you get over, overcome their denial because once you get the parents involved, you can turn that kid around. Or you've got to turn the kid around yourself. Get them involved in some sort of after school intervention and anything like that. Again, you'd have to look at clientele and we've got some kids that want to be bad and can be bad, but are not as bad as some of these kids that are in other schools.

R: Some of them don't even know what bad is.
AP: As it turns out, I think some of them come here so they can be bad. Cause in most schools, they are lightweights and somebody is going to a hurt them. I swear. You know, I've been to School A, and I don't work at School B and that kind of thing and our kids couldn't survive there. They come here and they can be semi-bad and they don't want to go over there and that is why.

R: And they are safe here?

AP: You bet. Over there they would be in trouble.

R: OK. Now let me ask you this. This is another real pointed question. If the kids could change what you all, the principal and the administrators do to respond to gang-related activity and violence, what would they change and why?

AP: Well, I am sure that they would change the dress code, but that would be a reverse. It would be good for the gangs. They could wear their colors and beads, and shoestrings, and their rubber bands.

R: So you think that the kids would want to go back to that?

AP: Well, not, the students would. Now overall no, no. I think most of the kids like the dress code. That is why most of the kids conform and do it. You look at our kids and most of the kids are dressing pretty good. Now yeah, you're going to have that five percent out there fighting the battle. But most of our kids like the dress code.

R: So some of them would make it stricter rather than more lenient.

AP: Because they feel safer. Our kids don't want the gang kids. The majority. I am sorry, are not in gangs. They have there little cliques, and so on, but not what we call true gang members. Probably we have very few of the real gang members. We have a lot of wannabes. But again, our bunch is different and that makes a difference, I mean, just the way they react.

R: Now, one more question, and then I promise I will leave you alone. Is there anything else that I haven't asked you that you think I ought to know about how you deal with gang-related activity and violence, or any thoughts that you have. Say perhaps a new principal coming in and he has to devise a strategy.

AP: Of course, I think it is important that you get all the people involved. Like everybody knows that anyway. You really do have to get, or no one is going to buy into it. You've got to get your parents, even then it is hard sometimes to get with your parents and students. You got to get a lot of people involved in the decision making process. There is still some things that you have to sit down and say that "OK, this is the way it is going to be." It's just like redistricting. You're not going to make everybody happy. There are some guidelines that have got to be in there and restrictions on gang attire and that sort of thing. It is just like dress code. If you didn't have a dress code then what? One time he wanted to show the faculty this film, but it was too violent. But they need to see it. When you have a school with no discipline, that's where it goes and that's it showed kids in tank tops and so administration was afraid of being sued they wouldn't do anything at all. And that is what you get. You just can't have that and have a school.

R: Did he show it?

AP: No, he was afraid that some people... well, he did show the administrators. Instead he showed Stand and Deliver. But he's been to schools like that. Now, I wouldn't work in a school like that, I mean if you couldn't clean it up.
R: And most of your teachers wouldn't either.

AP: But there are schools like that in Texas. Like when he worked in Houston, it was like that and I took about four years to turn it around. You just can't have that, you've got to have rules. You've got to have regulations. You've got to, you know, the bad guys have got to go. You just can't allow true bad guys to stay. Otherwise, you're going to lose the cream of the crop.

R: So the primary characteristics of having a safe school is having a dress code, having a set of rules that everybody understands and are fairly implemented.

AP: And fair and rational and makes sense.

R: And consistency?

AP: Right.

R: And having everyone involved?

AP: And then again, here comes the hard part, having everyone enforce them. When you have 100 and something teachers, you don't get one hundred percent compliance off of them.

R: And the chain is only as strong as the weakest link?

AP: And you always always have a few weak link in there. Those always hurt you some, but if the majority of the people do what they are supposed to, then it will work. Again, as you well know you have some teachers that when you say "No Tardies," and if they go to the Right Place, they don't let them in and then you got some that if they drag in ten minutes late, they won't report them.

Teacher 1

R: Tell me about your position and your responsibilities in your school.

T1: OK. I am a classroom teacher. I teach economics.

R: Do you perceive that safety is an issue in your school, and if so, what are your concerns?

T1: I think that safety is always an issue. As far as it being an issue, I don't hear it being talked about a lot. We are quite a secure school, I think.

R: Do you believe that there is a gang problem in your school, and if so, why do you believe that is true?

T1: Well, I am fairly naive or ignorant about gang activity. Partly because I teach seniors, and it may be in the younger grades. Um, I don't see, I would be less than honest if I thought that there weren't some gangs here. I mean, I never had any personal experience with it other than I had a student that always wore a certain color. Now a liaison officer mentioned that to me or I wouldn't have got that.

R: Do you perceive that there is a problem with violence in your school, and if so, what kinds of problems are arising?
T1: If there is one act of violence, I consider that a problem. Occasionally from time to time, students have altercations where they get actually get into physical violence. I am only concerned about it because, it is just my perception, that through the movies they see a lot of movies about violence. They tend to, it tends to be on the rise with some students that it is acceptable behavior. Of course, the majority of the students are always good and you don't have that.

R: What strategies has your principal employed to keep your school safe from gang-related activity and violence?

T1: Um, in my opinion, first he told us about it, there will be zero tolerance of that activity. At the beginning of every school year there is some new students and fights and those students are out the door immediately. The word is out if you are in a gang, don't come here. We have cameras up all around the school. won't stand for it. You're not allowed to wear gang-related clothing. He just has zero tolerance and he backs it by throwing them out and they are out. That is why I feel fairly safe here.

R: Well, your removal rate is very high and that is one of the reasons your school was chosen.

T1: Good, well, not good that we have to remove so many. You can't teach if it is not safe.

R: What I was saying is that your school has a high removal rate and I took the top six schools that have the highest removal rates and I am studying those now. I hear from some of the teachers and students that they don't believe that there is a gang problem here. tells me that they ought to be removed immediately and what you're telling me supports what he said. Who besides the principal participated in deciding what needed to be done to prevent gang-related activity and violence?

T1: Gee, I'm not really sure on that question. I just know the word's out from at the beginning of the year that he's the principal now. I do know that there's got to be some work done by the admin office downtown and we're assigned a patrol officer full-time here.

R: I guess what I am asking is, do you know if anybody else besides your principal decided, for example, did any parents participate in determining these strategies, any students, teachers, or do you even know?

T1: I do know for certain . . .I don't remember that specific issue. We have PTA groups that talk to the principal and they set policies and with the vice-principal, but this particular issue I don't remember any one specific issue on it.

R: OK. How do you believe that students are impacted by the implementation of these strategies. For example, do they feel safer, stay in school longer, that sort of thing?

T1: Some of these students don't like to talk about much. I am afraid that they will ruin their macho image or something, but I think it is very positive. I think that all students feel safe here. I never hear any students say they didn't. I think it has a very positive impact. I know it does as a teacher. And students don't talk about them feeling unsafe, so I am sure that it is positive for them. I am sure it has all kinds of ancillary benefits, I mean if you feel safe, you can focus more on your studies. If you are teacher, you can focus more on teaching. All sorts of ancillary things like that.

R: OK. If you could change the way that your principal has responded to gang-related activity and violence, what would you change and why?

T1: I might, I'm real ignorant on what goes on with gang, so perhaps, I might have an awareness workshop for teachers. Although I don't see much evidence of gangs, I wouldn't know if there was except for the negative image. I might implement something like that.
R: So perhaps included in the beginning staff development each year just for teachers?

T1: Yeah. The latest, and maybe as a teacher I don't see the big picture, maybe there is a reason that they chose not to do that. By my perspective it would be nice to have one. I think we had one a couple of years ago. We had an officer come in and talk to us, but that's, that's what I'd change. Anything else, I think the proof's in the pudding, we don't seem to have any real gang problems.

R: You may have some gang members, but not necessarily a gang problem?

T1: I would be naive to say that I am sure that we don't have any, yes, there may be some, but I don't see any.

R: OK. So they don't allow kids to fly colors or flash bandanas, or . . .?

T1: Oh, no.

R: If your students had an opportunity to change what he has done, what do you think that they would change and why?

T1: I am not trying to be avoid your question, but I can't speak for the students. I have never really heard them say anything about it. I really don't know.

R: OK. Is there anything that I haven't asked you about your school and how it responds to gang-related activity and violence, that you think I ought to know?

T1: No.

Teacher 2

R: Tell me about your position and your responsibilities here at the school.

T2: I am a teacher and the special education resource math teacher. I teach special ed and resource math regardless of subject area or grade level.

R: Is it all mixed together? Like the algebra kids are with the geometry kids?

T2: Well, we try and keep it as clean as we can. First period I do have primarily geometry and I have one student doing Mathematics of Money and I have five students under the title of Algebra, but are truly doing fourth grade math. Second period, is truly Algebra, fourth period is, I forgot to mention that is Spanish.

R: Oh. To special ed kids are just generally?

T2: No. Special ed kids.

R: Do you perceive that safety is an issue in your school and if so, tell me about your concerns?

T2: Safety is an issue to the extent that it is primary to the administrators. In other words, they want a safe school. And that is known to everybody in the building. To that end, there are policies about what you can wear, what you can bring to school, etc. that mirror I think district policy and I don't know if it goes above and beyond that. We periodically see evidence of that going on throughout the school.
Teachers report kids that have like chains, one time I reported a kid that had like an old rusty railroad tie, anything that might be a weapon is confiscated and reported here.

R: Tell me about gangs in your schools. Do you feel like there is a gang problem, and if so, tell me why you think that is true?

T2: I do not because I don't see any evidence of any activity. You hear sometimes about fights. I don't ever hear anything about, usually Bloods or Crips or so forth. I know that _______ has taken a strong policy on that and he has done a clean-up of any overt gang activity. Clothing that identifies gang members or known clothing is not allowed. Gang signs if there is any evidence of flashing of signs and it is quickly reported and they are out of here. He comes on the PA and says things that about at the beginning of the school year. We had an influx of transfers from another particular school, he warned us about potential for that. You don't hear the kids talking or wondering about that sort of thing. If I ever see doodling that I am suspicious of I take it to the police who will call the student in affected and have a counseling statement about that issue.

R: So you really don't think that there is a problem?

T2: No, because I think that they deal with it very strongly.

R: Do you perceive that there is a problem with violence in your school, and if so, what kinds of problems are you seeing?

T2: I think that there is a concern for violence. It has been my experience over the past twelve years for more and more kids tending to try to respond in a violent way. I don't think that they know how to resolve their conflict in any other manner.

R: In a productive way?

T2: Right. They don't have the training and experience in dealing with conflict resolution. I see kids positioning for that verbally if not physically. And I see and hear fights throughout the school. Male to male, male to female. Sometimes you see a guy punching on a female or a female punching on a male. All of which I perceive is a problem.

R: Do you have a lot of girl - girl fights?

T2: Yesterday, I had heard I had a couple of students involved in a girl - girl fights. I would not say that it is proportionately the same, but . . .

R: Occasionally?

T2: Yes.

R: Since you work with mostly special ed children, do you find that their violence is higher because their skills in dealing with it are lower?

T2: I wish I could tell you that and I would, my supposition is probably, but I don't have any statistics on that. I would have to get that from the vice-principal in terms of a break-down like that. The propensity of these kids, I would think, to not be able to handle that, yes.

R: Do you see that student to student in your classroom, sometimes the verbal confrontation?

T2: Oh, very much so. I had one yesterday.
R: OK. What specific strategies is your principal employing to make your school safe from gang-related activity and violence?

T2: He designs the handbook and the policies of the school to be very strict against that. The dress code, the training of teachers, or the notification of teachers, the prevalence of the vice principals to take quick action when anything is identified. The police liaison being alert to that. They know just about everybody. You can call them up and they know the name.

R: I just spoke with them a while ago. OK. Were you a part of the planning of these strategies, and if so, how?

T2: No, this is the second year to teach in this school, and the policy was in place before I got here. But I have seen it consistently enforced.

R: What about other people that might have been involved? Are you familiar with how it was developed. Perhaps Site Based Decision Making Team or . . .

T2: Don't know, but there is a very active Site Based team here. I am now on it. I am sure that would have brought that to them.

R: Perhaps the CCC or the Student Council or the Site Based?

T2: He does include the student council a lot on things and sometimes the student council representatives will come the Site Based Team.

R: So he at least is open to, perhaps not direction, but input?

T2: Input. Yeah, he options all the groups. He'll ask teachers, too, depending on the question. Parent input, kid input, faculty input.

R: I know enough about him from my small dealing with him to know that he is a very opinionated person that likes to direct what goes on, but I did not know whether he allowed for input or at least survey, this is what I plan to do, how do you feel about it kind of thing.

T2: Um. Yeah, you are right he is a real strong leader. I can say that much about him. My dealings with him have been when I have an issue and I wanted to go to him and talk, he is always receptive to listen to me. Now he might not change his opinion, but he is always receptive to listening. In fact, I have heard him in front of a faculty meeting talk about another teacher, one of the department chairs, and how many times she had come to him and how they had been very productive going through opposing view points. So he has complimented her publicly on that ability to bring to him things and go through the process.

R: And hash out whatever difference that there were. How so you believe that students are impacted by the implementation of these strategies?

T2: Gosh, I hope, positively. It is my firm belief that you have to feel safe before you can learn. I do not perceive that the kids of being fearful of that. On occasion, we had a guy who was a gang wannabe, and we went through a long process with and we were trying to help him. I think he was fearful, but we were trying to help him through that process. But as a whole, I don't view kids as saying I can't go to my locker, I can't do this, or you know.

R: Or I am afraid to go to school? This is where you get to be king of the world for a minute. If
you could change the way that your principal has responded to gang-related activity and violence, what would you change and why?

T2: I am really not sure. Clothing, gang signals, fights, I am trying to think of the gang, um. With all the problems with a school this size, I think that you probably targeted the right amount of attention and the right amount of focus to gangs. You know, as opposed to drugs and all the perils that kids can fall into, you know, being here. Safer to being here than being on the streets or whatever. Truly, I don't think that I would have anything to offer up on that, that we are not doing.

R: But see there are people that have real distinct opinions on what they would change. So that is the reason that that question is asked.

T2: I can't . . .

R: And a lot of it depends on the principal as well.

T2: Truly, Truly, I could name a few schools.

R: If students could change the way the principal has responded to gang-related activity and violence, what do you think that they would change and why?

T2: Well, for gang members, I am sure that they think he is absolutely absurd, wrong, with their being and their dealings, and their sick activity. For the other kids, I think that it is a sense of in general teenagers that is being more involved with each other than they are with administration. Unconsciously, they are probably OK, with it, but consciously, they probably say, "Oh, man, you're too much, just leave them alone."

R: I had a student from another school and I asked him that question, and he looked at me and said "Without a doubt, I'd be tougher".

T2: Oh, I am delighted to hear that.

R: See he's a gang member. He said without a doubt they come up here dressed in all in red or all in blue. He said that he would send them home and not let them come back until their momma came back.

T2: Wow, I am impressed. I would have pegged that wrong. Another thing that I was thinking of as we are talking about that gangs are associated with drive-by shootings. I have been aware that when it is a trafficy time, like during lunch or usually after school, and the police liaison, and the monitors are out there, and once my students said that they shoved them, or got them back into the building because they were suspicious or worried about cars driving by. So there's an active attempt to make sure that our kids are safe from that activity. Next year it is going to be a closed-campus and that probably won't happen.

R: Is there anything that I haven't asked you that you think that you think I ought to know about your school with relation to gang-related activity and violence?

T2: No, the only thing is that my supposition is that we are the least likely to have gang presence and any gang activity of any district school. Just because of our policy.

R: And you've already run them all off?

T2: No, No, no. I am advised that there are some gang members here, but they do not show their presence here.
Student 1

R: What I need first of all for you to do is to tell me a little bit about your school. Let's start with you since you're from School E and then move over to you since you're from School B.

SE1: Are you wanting to hear what it is like?

R: Yes. Just tell me a little bit about your school.

SE1: I think that they make it too easy for the kids to skip. Most of the kids don't even go to class. You'll see 'em hanging out on the steps. The security, they don't really care. I mean, just between us they don't. I mean I heard them talking about it. All we have to do is come up here before lunch. I can even go home at lunch and the security won't even say anything.

R: So are you telling me that when you're there as long as you go to class that's fine and if you're not there, then that's fine, too?

SE1: It basically seems like that. I mean it is easy to skip class. They make it too easy, like they don't even mind. Like it doesn't matter one way or another. If you care about your education, you'll take yourself to class and if you don't...

R: Then forget it?

SE1: Yeah.

R: So you can kind of do what you want to do?

SE1: Yeah, basically it is up to your conscience. If your conscience says do it, then do it and you don't really mind what your teacher's going to be like. If you do mind what it is going to be like, then you go to class.

R: How about anything else you want to tell me? What is it like when you go? I mean is it a good school?

SE1: OK. The classes are about an hour and a half. By the time the teachers get most of the behavior problems settled down there is about forty-five minutes left. I don't know it is just like a big mess. It is like one circumstance after another. You don't even have to misbehave you can just watch everybody else misbehave. By the time the teacher gets them settled down, checks roll and everything, it is about thirty good minutes left to learn. Most of the time those kids spend time drawing attention to themselves. I don't even see why they go to class. They go to class just so their parents don't find out that...
they are skipping. That is the only reason.

R: So they don’t really go to school to learn?

SE1: A lot of them don’t. I mean you can tell the ones that do, I mean School E has a good reputation because there is core students that work hard at what they do. I mean they go to school, you can tell they walk around with their books and then there is some that walk around with no books all day. Like my homeboys at School C all day. The strip on ______ Street, they sit out there all day when they are supposed to be at school in class, but they sit out there all day. So it is like, I mean, that is how it is my school though. You can tell the slackers from the real kids that are there to work.

R: What about you at School B? When was the last time you were there?

SB1: The beginning of the year.

R: OK. So how long were you there? Like six or . . .

SB1: Probably two six weeks.

R: Tell me about School B.

SB1: Loud.

R: Loud? OK.

SB1: Like I don’t know what to tell you. Like if you ask me some questions

R: Just tell me what the school is like. The teachers, the principals, what you know about the school.

SB1: To me it seems like a real basic school.

R: In what way?

SB1: Well, I guess because the majority of the kids are all black.

R: Do they kind of pick on you as a result?

SB1: They didn’t mess with me. It was just that the teachers and the principals, if I did something like they would take it to the fullest to punish me.

R: Because you’re Hispanic?

SB1: Yeah. One of the Black kids do something wrong they’d sign their stuff and go back to class. But me, I’d go to in-house or get suspended. And like I got kicked out of there because a girl tried to say I was stealing from the principal’s office. She was a black girl. Some black guys were there and they were stealing and they all agreed to blame it on me.

R: You just happened to be the fall guy, huh?

SB1: Yeah. I was the only Hispanic guy in there so I guess they blamed it on me because the principal just walked in and looked at me and said I bet it was him.
R: So you were it, huh?

SE1: Yeah.

R: Well, tell me this do you believe safety is a problem in you school at School E?

SE1: To an extent. Not really though, I mean I've been going there and he's (SB1) been up there with me. The one time he came up to with me I almost got into a fight. We were just walking inside and this fool just starts talking noise around the corner. I mean it usually doesn't happen. There isn't too many fights that happen at School E. I mean most of the kids keep their p's and q's while they're there and yeah, there's little skirmishes, but I think that there's more girl fights than there are guy fights.

R: The reason this guy was picking on you was because you had your friend with you?

SE1: No. He told me I was trying to act big because I had my friend with me.

R: Oh, OK, because you had your homeboy with you?

SE1: He said your trying to act big because you have your homeboy with you now and this and that. One time the same guy started talking noise to me again and I had another friend with me. Now this friend that I was with happened to be friends with him also, right. This fool starts talking noise to me and my friend says "What is his problem, what is he doing?" So my friend got mad and he starts talking noise back to him and they almost got into a fight. And they used to actually be friends. So I bet anything the guy who started talking noise just wanted to start a fight. You know, either way it went. He started telling me why did I come to him gang-related and this and that. And I was like if I remember right, you're the one coming to me incorrect in the first place. When you're put in that position, you really don't have a choice what to do sometimes.

R: Well, so you don't think safety is a problem as far as guns or weapons or anything like that? It is mostly fights?

SE1: Well, it's there. Don't get me wrong. 'Cause I've seen guns. The drugs, they are there. I think School E has a bigger drug problem, than they do a gun problem.

R: So they try to keep it quiet?

SE1: Yeah, they try to keep it quiet under the table. Everybody's all scared. They've got everybody pretty much scared. I think the beginning, the first year I came to School E, I was hanging with a bunch of Crips. We were walking to the football field and the next thing I know I seen some Bloods stand right there blocking our way to get back into the door. Well, we were walking back. And they were like "you're gonna fight," and I was like yeah, why not. OK, I'll fight. So we were walking back there to fight and all of a sudden I heard this click and I looked and homeboy's got a pistol in his hand pointing it right at 'em.

R: The other guy?

SE1: No. One of my homeboys had a pistol. I mean I really didn't know the guy.

R: But he knows you.

SE1: Yeah. He pulled a gun out of his backpack and I heard click and all of a sudden I seen somebody rush behind me and it was one of the security. He threw him on the ground and took the gun out of his hand.
R: Did the Bloods leave?

SE1: Yeah, they left. Everybody started breaking. Everybody was gone. As soon as they saw the gun, the Bloods were gone. And all of us were like All right, all right. They're gone. Cool. But like he said, I'm like half Mexican and half black. I'm like the only one in my school. I'm the only one from my gang in my school. They never mess with me. The Bloods or the Crips. They don't have anything.

R: What do you claim?

SE1: Southside SUR.

R: Oh.

SE1: Yeah, and they don't say nothing to me.

R: How about you at School B? Do you consider that safety is a problem there?

SB1: No. I see knives and stuff, but no guns. Only in the car.

R: Oh, OK. Did you feel safe when you went there?

SB1: Yeah.

R: So that's not a big problem.

SB1: No. There is a big drug problem.

R: Oh, OK. So the drugs are there, too. You don't see guns in the school, just in the car?

SB1: Yeah. I don't know 'cause I ain't never seen nobody with a gun at school.

R: But you know that they are in the car.

SB1: I've seen 'em in the trunk. At lunch we'd go outside to the parking lot and they'd pop the trunk and the guys would show everybody their speakers and you'd see them sitting on top of the box. In the school I'm in you'd see all the school-aged kids outside of school with 'em. I mean you ask them, I'll have to tell you about all of the stuff you see. Everybody is scared because the dogs are coming and they're afraid of getting caught.

R: Well, tell me this then, is there a gang problem at your school? I mean you've (SE1) told me that you're in a gang and that there is some Bloods and Crips. Do you think that there is a gang problem? Do they act out at school? Do they claim at school?

SE1: School E has been taken down to a level and see he[(the principal)] thinks that he can solve the problem by instituting like a dress code. Making them tuck in their shirts, but what he doesn't understand is even if you took a Blood or a Crip or a Southside SUR or whatever, you can dress him however you want. He's still going to be what he is. He can address the problem however he wants.

R: Just like if you're a ..., you can dress in a fur coat.

SE1: You're still going to be the same. Your still going to have the same habits. Sometimes I go to school dripping in brown and he won't know what that means. And like he doesn't know that some of the guys wear nice, red polo shirts, or red starter hats, red Nike, or red Jordan's.
R: And they're all just Blood all over the place.

SE1: Right. They look pretty as a bud, but they are obviously slamming it.

R: He doesn't know that black and brown are SUR?

SE1: No, they don't pay attention to that that much.

R: How about you at School B, is there a problem there?

SB1: There's a lot of Crips. It's like mostly Crips. There's a few Bloods, but don't nobody mess with the Bloods because the Bloods will be like strong to go to that school. Don't nobody mess with them because they know that they're crazy.

R: What about violence in the school. You kind of addressed that with the fights, but what about violence in your school. Do you have a big problem with that?

SE1: Yeah, at School E. Yeah, there's been a few fights, but like I said it's between more girls than guys. But at other school, I've been up to School C a lot lately. And we been getting into a lot of fights.

R: Yeah, there's a lot of SUR there.

SE1: Yeah, we've been getting into a lot of fights with like the people we don't get along with. The other side we don't get along with.

R: Yes?

SE1: It's because they start it.

R: The SUR?

SE1: Well, no. There's this other neighborhood over by JPS called VC. It's been like a hatred between us and them. Like the Bloods and Crips. Like a Mexican version of the Bloods and Crips.

R: Yeah, the VC, sometimes . . .

SE1: It's been like that lately and things have been getting hot. They put a bullet in one of my homeboy's head and ever since that happened it's been like pure hatred on sight. Everybody knows automatically.

R: 'Um. But you don't really feel like there is a lot of problems with violence at school. It usually happens away from school. Is that what your saying?

SE1: Yeah. That's the way people are trying to keep it right now. Sometimes if it happens, sometimes you try to keep it away from school, but sometimes you run into somebody at school. There's a guy at my school along time ago, but not a lot of people know this, but he stabbed one of my homeboys.

R: Did it take all you could take to keep from hurting him?

SE1: His brother went to jail for it, but like he's the one that really did it. And like everyday I go to school and look at him. And he doesn't really know who I am, you know.
R: But it takes everything you have to keep from hurting him?

SE1: Yes. And today I think he finally figured it out that I was his homeboy because he kept
looking at me at lunch and looking at me at lunch and looking at me lunch, and I was just sitting there
just thinking about all the consequences about what would happen if I went over there and knocked the
mess out of him, you know. And finally I decided that it wasn't really worth it, you know. He wouldn't
know what I was doing it for.

R: Are you a senior?

SE1: Yeah.

R: And you don't need that a week before graduation?

SE1: Yeah, a week before graduation. And I'm fixing to be out of here and I was like I'm going to
let it go right now, but a lot of people are trying to take care of things outside of school grounds. Because
once the cops pick you up on school grounds, that's an even bigger fine.

R: What about School B? Is there a problem with violence at your school there?

SB1: Not really. Like everybody gets along with each other. They know that if they do anything
at school they are going to get into trouble for it. So most of the time, any type of violence happens after
school.

R: So they save it for off school grounds?

SB1: Around the corner or something.

R: So there's a lot of it, but it just doesn't take place on the school grounds.

SB1: Yeah.

R: Is that because . . .

SB1: Or if it does, there's a whole lot of places at School B where people go to skip.

R: Like out back? I was out there the other day.

SB1: Like behind the bleachers or at the bus stop by the portables, people just sit there.

R: Kind of right across the street from the apartments?

SB1: Yeah, that little bus stop. That's where I used to go to school and whoever don't go to
school, they'd just sit at the bus stop right there on school campus and smoke and do whatever you want.

R: Do whatever you want to do. And nobody says anything to you?

SB1: Cops drive by and . . .

R: Is it because they don't want the hassle?

SB1: I don't know. I don't know if they don't notice or what. I used to drive through there and
there would be a string of kids just hanging back, doing whatever they want. And there's like a jail or
something. Before you get there is a like a whole bunch of trees and if people have a problem they'll say let's go to the trees. And then they go to the trees and fight or something.

R: OK. So they do it, but they do it out of sight.

SB1: Yeah, where nobody can see them.

R: OK. What about... I'm going to talk about the principal for a minute. At School E what does your principal do to prevent gang-related activity and violence?

SE1: He doesn't do anything. In my mind I think that he thinks that gang banging is dead or something like that. People think it is uncool and this and that or it's over. He doesn't have to live it everyday. He doesn't go through having shotgun holes in your house and this and that.

R: There's some kids out there the other day. I talked to some kids in a classroom and they told me that it was not cool to be in a gang.

SE1: The kids are saying that, but I'm telling you that they are doing that for a cover-up.

R: And I hear that because I know what's going on.

SE1: At first when he asked me to come with him, I said well who is it, do you know this lady? Like some people, you can't trust people. So that's why when you went into the classroom and asked if they were in a gang. They were like . . .

R: No, I didn't ask them that. The teacher just told them that I was studying gangs.

SE1: It's like a turn-off.

R: And so they want to deny that it even exists.

SE1: People asks you if you smoke and they say no man, I don't smoke. And inside it is like, yeah, I want one.

R: What about School B, what does your principal do over there?

SB1: To me I think the principals are scared.

R: Of you? I mean not of you, but . . .

SB1: Of everybody.

R: What do you mean?

SB1: They try to enforce us, but it don't happen. Like you said, they tried to enforce the dress code, but . . .

R: But people just do what they want to?

SB1: Yeah, it doesn't matter what you wear, if you don't like somebody you're going to fight them no matter what. Like when I go to the alternative school, you've gotta wear black and white. And there's two Mexicans, me and another Mexican guy.
R: Do y'all hang together or . . . ?

SB1: Yeah. We hang with a lot of black guys, too.

R: Are y'all in the same gang?

SB1: No, he's from eastside. Like the principals at the alternative school, they are the same way. They're like they try to fit in with the kids.

R: As opposed to rule. Rule is not the right word. As opposed to direct the kids.

SB1: They are supposed to be the adult and there trying to be on the kids level.

R: Is that the way you feel about it?

SB1: I mean it's OK to be cool, you know what I'm saying there's a time to act adult and a time to act like a kid. The principals at School B, all they are worried about is their reputation. 'Cause like if a principal is real strict on kids, like the kids won't like him and stuff. If they talk like "Wow, what's up?" and talk slang and that stuff to the kids you know and act cool with them. Like if they do something wrong, like me, they kicked me out. That's why I don't like them.

R: OK. Who do you believe helped you principal make the decisions about gang-related activity and violence?

SE1: I think that parents had a lot to do with it. The problems with that is that I don't think they actually know what they are doing. They should probably talk to some of the gang members and I don't know that they did. I don't think that they did any background research or nothing. I think that they tried to make the rules and try to suffocate the gang problem.

R: And what it does is just run them in the ground.

SE1: They can't do that. 'Cause they don't think that a lot of innocent kids are in gangs. Like me. I used to go to a Catholic high school for two years. I mean I was straight as a board. Never had thoughts about smoking weed, drinking, going out, especially not being in a gang. When I started meeting certain people, I mean, they didn't influence me, but at that time in my life I didn't have a direction. I mean, I cared about my mom and dad, but I didn't think that they cared about me, so to me it was all about myself. At that point, I didn't care which way it fell so that's when I got in. So what the principal doesn't understand is that he thinks that the way of gang activity is gone so I think he is relaxing back too much. But what he doesn't understand is that it can build up that quick, that quick (snapped fingers).

R: So it can come up from under ground real fast. So do you believe that he asked any students or teachers or parents.

SE1: I think that he asked parents and teachers. What we think will work, I mean, he's using methods back with my dad.

R: What about you at School B?

SB1: Can you repeat the question?

R: Sure, who do you believe helped your principal decide what to do about gang-related activity and violence?
SB1: Yeah, well mostly the people who control the gang violence at School B is the cops that work there.

R: The liaison team?

SB1: There are two police officers that come dressed in uniforms.

R: Do they dress that way everyday?

SB1: Yeah. I think that they are the only ones that enforce any kind of gang activity. The two cops that work there they are black. They are like the principal, they like try to fit in with the students.

R: So you don’t think that anybody is real effective?

SB1: Not really.

R: And you told me that you were not involved in the planning?

SE1: No. The person that they probably talked to is Officer _______. He is probably the best person to talk to because he is cool with the students, but he doesn’t try too hard to be cool. Like he was saying a lot of the people try too hard. He’s real cool like I mean you can trust him because you know that he’s not going to say anything about it.

R: So you see, he told me about you, but he was very careful to say that you tried to stay above-board at school.

SE1: When I’m in school, I don’t try to act like a gangster or nothing. I dress nice when I go to school. I don’t go with my pants sagging, well, yeah sometimes I go with my pants sagging. But most of the time I try to act right in school. I never been to the office you know. I don’t have office problems or nothing like that.

R: How do you feel about what your principal or other adults do at school to prevent gang-related activity and violence from being a problem?

SE1: Um. It makes me feel like . . . the problem is that they really don’t do that much stuff. I mean if they did then that would be different. It would make it seem like they actually cared or actually even acknowledged that they had a gang problem. I think that School E, their solution to their gang problem is by ignoring it.

R: The research shows that.

SE1: Right. Try to ignore it and that’s not going to work. Sweep it under the table.

R: So you don’t really feel that they do much?

SE1: They don’t.

R: What about you at School B? How does it make you feel what they do about gang activity and violence?

SB1: Really, I don’t feel like they do nothing.

R: OK. So you really don’t feel like they do much.
SE1: School E was the school that last year a senior got killed over Bloods and Crips. It was stupid man, he was like a class act. The top of his class, senior.

R: And I read about that. Do you feel safer than you did before your principal instituted some of these things? At school, I mean.

SE1: Yeah. I think that School E has calmed down because there was more. I don't know, I don't know what he did 'cause I really never say anything.

R: He put everybody out is what he did and he'll tell you that.

SE1: Yeah, he did kick a lot of people out. I mean a lot of faces that you saw last year that was causing problems. I mean, one problem and it's like . . .

R: Out you go. If it even vaguely resembles gang activity, you are gone. Or violence, you're gone.

SE1: Yeah. I mean they take things that aren't even gang-related...

R: Or make it seem like that even though it's not. Is that because somebody has on a red shirt?

SE1: If you have a cousin that is in it that is an acknowledged gang member, then you are automatically in it.

R: Whether you are or not?

SE1: I mean if he (SB1) went to school here, they would say OK, that's your brother OK, whatever. He's definitely in it, so well go ahead and expel him, too. OK, but what they don't understand is that he may have different plans. He may say, I don't want to be like him. I want go to college. And if your in my set, my set doesn't like that they say if you want to go get a high education, do what you gotta do. Our set don't have no leaders because they don't want nobody to be commanding anybody.

R: What about at School B, do you feel safer than you did before? I mean, I know the principal hasn't been over there a long, long time, but do you feel safer than you did before he got there?

SB1: No, it's pretty much the same.

R: OK. So you feel like it is pretty much the same.

SB1: Like they do the same thing at School B like you walking down the hall and you see someone throwing gang signs, then they take them to the office and they get third partied for it gang violence or trying to promote gang activity and stuff. And like two days later you'd see those same people be at the school walking the halls.

R: Do they see them?

SB1: They see them. I don't know what is going on. I guess they don't worry about them. They don't have, what they called, no kind of rules or nothing.

R: Or at least they don't enforce the rules that they have? If you could go back and change anything at all that your principal has done about gang-related activity and violence, what would you change and why?

SE1: I was thinking like they have the gang intervention program. That would probably be good.
Cause I know we have one gang in our school called Thug Right. They could probably help a lot of them. They seem like wannabes to me. I think that that would work more than anything. 'Cause we've got a lot of wannabes comin' up at our school. I think what he needs to do is have an intervention program at the school.

R: So you think that Comin' Up would be a good program at School E? Because they don't have a program over here at all.

SE1: See that's what I saying you can tell, you can tell just like an outsider looking in you can see. The principal is kinda like you go on and do this to the side and he doesn't make like a big deal out of it.

R: See when I got in touch with Comin' Up that's where I got most of the people that I am interviewing. 'Cause they said that they didn't have anything at School E. And I said excuse me. OK. If you were king of the world and you were going to prevent gang activity at your school, what would you do?

SE1: They'd have to um first of all tighten security up and probably get some people in there that are doing. I mean, security, they are all cool and everything. That's the problem. They are all cool.

R: They're cool with everybody?

SE1: I don't get stopped. I don't get asked about nothing.

R: Is that because you keep a low profile?

SE1: Maybe, but I don't see them stop a lot of people. You know the problem kids and they don't mess with the problem kids. They don't mess with anybody so probably they need to tighten security and I don't know.

R: What about a dress code would that make any difference?

SE1: Like I was saying we have a dress code and nobody cares. Who cares. Like I can go to school dressed like this and I don't know if it is just me, but I don't get messed with.

R: Even though you're not supposed to wear T-shirts?

SE1: Most of these people don't even know I am in a gang. They'd be like oh, you're in a gang? Well we didn't even know that.

R: So you don't make a big deal out of it.

SE1: I don't make a big deal out of it.

R: What about you? If you were in charge of preventing or reducing gang activity and violence at School B, what would you change and why? Or tell me what you would do?

SB1: I don't know. Hire new security and all new staff.

R: Like people who know what they are doing? Is that what you're saying?

SB1: Yeah. Like people who could enforce and care about trying to teach students. Not just caring about getting their paycheck.
R: I think I've heard that before.

SB1: Most of these teachers, they don't really care.

R: Whether you learn anything or not?

SB1: Yeah, some teachers they go to class and it takes 20 minutes to settle my class down and by the time we settle them down, everybody got to get up and sharpen their pencil or somebody doesn't have a pencil or somebody's got to go to the restroom. And there is always someone to cause interruptions, you know like class clowns or somebody like that. Like me, I try to waste time.

R: Cause you don't want to do the work?

SB1: Yeah.

R: Is that the reason you're at the alternative school?

SB1: 'Cause I skip a lot, too. I don't know, probably.

R: So you'd hire new staff. People that cared. How would you get those people?

SB1: Very carefully.

R: OK. So . . .

SB1: I'd go out and look for them. It would probably be hard. You'd say you know, I'm looking for a teacher . . .

R: That cares about kids?

SB1: That enforce the rules and take possession of the classroom. I don't think that there are too many teachers like that. 'Cause when a new class comes in, too many teachers just sit there.

R: So are there very many teachers at either of your schools that do a good job?

SE1: I have one teacher, she's real good, I mean she's real good. Every time I've gotten into a fight before and she went to the office for me to get ice because she didn't want me to go to the office. Because she knew if I went to the office then they'd say oh, you got into a fight. Yeah, you're in a gang, OK. Therefore, this and that.

R: Therefore . . .

SE1: Next thing I'd know it would be a big mess and a $500.00 fine.

R: So she kind of toned it down for you?

SE1: And one time me and my homeboys went into her class high one time and like she didn't tell on us. She could have.

R: But does she teach you when you're there though?

SE1: Yes.
R: She cares about teaching you, but she also cares enough to keep your profile low?

SB1: I had a teacher at School B called Ms. ________.

R: You'll be glad to know she was one of the ones I interviewed over there.

SB1: She was?

R: She was recommended to me by the principal.

SB1: Like she would tell people like if you're not going to come to my class to learn don't come at all. Most of the people who would usually skip, they would come to school just to go to her class.

R: They used to do that for me, too.

SB1: It is like not fun for kids like us, but the way she would teach class. It made it interesting.

R: And you'd go to her class when you wouldn't go to anybody else's? See that is a big tribute to her.

SB1: See I'd have her third or fourth period. The last period. And I'd skip the morning and then come to school to go to her class.

R: That's a big tribute to her. It really is because now when I was in the classroom I had kids who would come to my classroom. I taught _____ and I had kids who didn't like ____. I had kids who wouldn't go to anybody else's class because they knew that they were going to have to do what they were supposed to do and they needed my class to get them there. Now I am going to open it wide up and you all tell me whatever it is you want to tell me about gang-related activity in your school. Anything you want to tell that I haven't asked. Wide open. First of all have I asked you good questions?

SE1: They've been pretty thorough. Some things you'd have to think about. When I think about it, gang activity is mostly outside the school.

R: So basically there is a lot of nonsense going on. A lot of disruptions.

SE1: I mean sometimes some of the problems start at school and it escalates, but it will happen outside the school. Like I got into it with some people here at school and we said all right, we'll go ahead and take care of this outside of school. And we have. I mean I duke it out with people in these apartments across the street we'll get it on and we'll see each other at school and we'll leave it alone.

R: Yeah, well, it can work the other way around where it starts outside and comes to school, can't it?

SE1: Yeah. We've had that, too.

R: And that's even worse. Then you get in trouble at school as well as with the police.

SE1: It all depends on how old you are. I mean you can talk to the young kids and they'll tell you like a whole different story on the weekends.

R: Why is that?

SE1: Like most of them are inexperienced. Like most people now that are older, they're not going to take the a gun to school.
R: Cause they know better?

SE1: 'Cause if you think about it, why take a gun to school if you're going to shoot somebody do it where nobody is around and no witnesses or nothing. You know.

SE1: If you shoot somebody at school, you've got 2,500 witnesses that can point the finger at you and say that you were the trigger man. I mean... .

R: And then you'd go to jail, for sure.

SE1: I mean when I first got in. I just wanted to start stuff and then as you get older you get tired of it.

R: Do you learn to pick your fights better? Is that what you do?

SE1: No, I don't start anything. I let them start it. I never approach them first, I mean, if they want to play it cool like we be doin' in school, with other members that I don't like at VC, they be sitting right over there and we won't say nothing. If they don't come at me crazy. I won't say nothing to them.

R: You'll leave them alone?

SE1: I have one that leaves up the street from me, but I don't go shoot up his house because I know I have my son at my house and if he comes down there and messes with my son, . . .

R: And you all have a healthy respect for each other?

SB1: Yeah.

SE1: Yeah, because his little sister and my little sister play with each other and we don't... .

R: And they don't know the difference?

SE1/SB1: Yeah, they don't know the difference.

SE1: That's how we try to keep it at school. We keep it cool at school, and if we are outside of school we can do that.

R: What if you don't ask for it I won't give it to you?

SE1: Yeah, but like some people who are at school, they'll be like let's go out here on the street. I don't want to be getting in trouble at school. Like they do it at school because they know that there is security at school.

SB1: Yeah, they want to get the fight broke up.

R: And then you'll get kicked out.

SE1: They know that there is someone there to stop the fight in case they get beat up or something. So like if they see you on the street they don't want to look at you.

R: Tell me this then, if they are that afraid of you, for example, that they need the security guards to break it up, are they real gang members or are they just wannabes?
SE1: Well, they could be real gang members, but they are like ... 

R: Maybe not as tough?

SE1: Sometimes it is a mind game you gotta play with each other. We've always told each other. Like the older OG's have always told us that is like being in the mind of a gangster. Sometimes you have to portray the role of a punk, like act like a punk when you are in front of this person. Like sometimes I'll be at school this fool will be talking punk to me and I'll be backing down. I'll be like OK, all right. OK, all right in front of everybody. Let him punk me in front of everybody, but when we get outside. I am going to beat the mess out of him. You know what I am saying? Or if I catch him walking down the street or something. I be like Hey, Snoop, ain't that the so and so, so and so. Yep, that's him, Go. You see what I'm saying. You get caught.

SE1: Like a lot of people, I know, some my friends that are from the Southside, some of them are punks, they talk noise when there's a lot of them.

R: When you have a back-up?

SE1: When they are by themselves. They're like we are from the southside with all the homeboys and then you see them by themselves somewhere and somebody go up to them with all their boys with them and they be like where you from. And they start being scared.

SB1: Me and him were like up at School A one day and there was only five of us and ... 

R: How do you go to so many schools? Do you just go?

SB1: Yeah.

R: Just to see if you can do it?

SB: I wish, right now, that I never would have got into trouble with skipping school, walking out of classes and all that. The school I go to there are two Hispanics in the whole school. When I go to School A, or go to School C, I see all of the nice-looking school girls and all that.

R: So if you had your choice where would you go to school? Would you go to School A or would you go back to School B?

SB1: I'd go to School A.

R: So now where all have you been in school?

SB1: ________

R: And we'll take all these names out, so that not a problem ... 

SB1: I've went to ________, one alternative school, another alternative school, a third alternative school, a fourth alternative school. I went there for one day.

R: Then you got kicked out?

SB1: Yeah, I was there 30 minutes, I hadn't even got my schedule, I barely walked into the school.
R: So your at an alternative school now?

SB1: Ya, I go to ________ now because I got kicked out of ________ and it was my first day of school. They told me to come in the office and get my schedule and there was this kid that came into the office and I was waiting for them to turn out my schedule and I almost got jumped.

SE1: Then we had to go pick him up.

SB1: The office was saying well it seems like you're going to be a problem, because they hadn't had any fight in the last three months or something. And it was my first day.

R: And they picked on . . .

SB1: Everybody was already hyped up, ready to fight.

SE1: They already seen what was going to happen. And they were like there may be a time when he'll walk into a place that and fools just try to start messing with him. Cause I mean, I got to save my butt when fools start looking cocky. I mean they just want to start messing with me and they be like no no, I wouldn't start messing with him 'cause his brother-in-law bangs.

SB1: Yeah, and I went to the skating rink one time and I don't like when people be maddogging me and so we walked by and he was maddogging me, so I was maddogging him. This other I guy I know, _____, said, "Hey, I'm going to go up there and hit him, and jump him," and I was like no don't mess with him, 'cause his brother-in-law's crazy, . . . he'll come and kill everybody. And he was talking about him 'cause I know him and he'll come up here and kill everybody. And the gang banger he did look at me anymore after that, we sat there the whole time and . . .

R: Now you're married to his sister?

SE1: No, we're going to get married next month. I mean just take a look at this picture, I am supposed to be in school, you know what I am saying. You can see the adolescents. It starts out. It starts out. I mean there are a lot of older guys, but . . . (He showed a picture of some boys who are now dead or in jail.)

R: And I can't see a lot of this, but I can see that . . .

SE1: That was after our homeboy's funeral. Everybody had shirts and that said "Rest in Peace"

R: Is that what it said?

SE1: Yeah. Like when we were trying at the mall, a lot of the malls wouldn't let us put it what we wanted on there. They were like nope. Can't put "13" and we can't put this and we can't put that.

SB1: Like if we are paying for it what's the problem?

SE1: The school is the one's putting those notices out. The schools say don't put this one there and don't do that.

R: Because we can't allow them to wear it at school.

SE1: We can not wear it at school. A girl told me the other day because I was wearing my "Rest In Peace" shirt and she was like "How did you get to wear that because I was wearing mine the other day and they threw me out of class and made me go home", she had to miss a whole day of school because she
wore her shirt because one of her friends is dead. And that is messed up.

R: Is there anything else that you two want to tell me?

SE1/SB1: No.

Note: We talked a long time off the record about gangs in general and what they mean. I was told that Sur Trece means South Thirteen, but it also mean Southern Unified Race. I was given the gang sign, a sort of inverted three, and was told that the colors were black and brown. The black is for the heart, and the brown is for the skin. The thirteen stands for the thirteenth letter of the alphabet - M, which stands for Murder, Mafia, Marijuana, and Mexican. SE1 told me his interpretation of Crips and Bloods. He said Crips is an acronym for California (or perhaps Colored) Revolution in Progress. Bloods is an acronym for Brothers Living on Others' Deaths.

Student Code of Conduct

The following items are in the Student Code of Conduct:

The school administration reserves the right to open a locker at any time they have reason to believe a locker contains illegal items, such as drugs, weapons, alcohol, etc.

Students should conduct themselves in a manner that contributes to an orderly atmosphere and ensures the rights of all individuals within the school.

Students are prohibited from:

Creating or attempting to create a classroom disturbance;

Using profanity or vulgar language or expressions;

Engaging in verbal or physical abuse of another person;

Committing extortion, coercion, blackmail, robbery or theft;

Possession of a weapon, any article used as a weapon, dangerous toys or fireworks;

Inappropriate sexual behavior;

Inciting, encouraging, prompting or participating in attempts to interfere with the normal educational process;

Possession or use of tobacco, narcotic drugs, hallucinogens, or other intoxicants;

Persistent violation of the policies, rules and regulations of the school district or of the school.

Articles prohibited at school are:

Weapons, toy guns, water pistols, knives, radios, tape recorders, video games, curling irons, fireworks, skateboards, or any items which interfere with the educational process. Students who bring these or other nuisance items to school are in violation of policy and are subject to school discipline;

Beepers or other paging devices, cellular phones or replicas;

Paraphernalia associated with illegal drugs;

Obscene or libelous materials.
Cars and lockers may be searched for alcohol and drugs.

Student involvement in gangs or gang-related activities on school grounds or at school-related events is strictly prohibited. Specific items prohibited are:

Clothing, jewelry, emblems, badges, symbols, signs which may be viewed as evidence of membership or affiliation with any gang.

Speech, verbal or non-verbal (gestures or handshakes, etc.,) showing membership or affiliation with a gang;

Any act in furtherance of a gang such as solicitation of membership, asking any person to engage in payment of protection fees, committing illegal acts, or inciting others to act with physical violence on other students.

Gang incidents will result in severe consequences which will include, but not be limited to, long term suspensions, third party hearings, expulsion, and will be referred to the police department for further action.

Fights are prohibited, as is hazing, and loitering in the restrooms.

The following items are included in the dress code:

Logos on outerwear may not have been altered to reflect other than its original intent;

Hair is to be of appropriate natural color;

No large outer pockets are allowed on jeans/pants;

No garments or accessories which depict beer, alcohol, liquor or drugs, inappropriate language, sexual actions, death, or satanism is allowed;

No gang-related clothing, accessories or jewelry are allowed;

No accessories which could be considered dangerous or as a potential weapon may be worn (chains, etc.).

Students who do not adhere to the policies may be asked to change clothes, go home to change, or have a parent bring a change of clothes.

Teacher Handbook

The teacher handbook contains the same information regarding dress code as does the Student Code of Conduct. It also includes a dress code for teachers which reasonably mirrors that for students.

School F

Principal

R: What I'd like you to do to start out with is to tell me just a little bit about your school.

P: It's a 4A high school with about 1,483 students, with about 66% Anglo, 22% African American, and 8% Hispanic. The Hispanic population is growing. Asians and others make up about 7%,
and that's off a little bit because I'm rounding this stuff. Two years ago, there was 72% Anglo. The population of the community is changing. The apartments over on _____ and ____ have all become government subsidized. So the population is changing, and the economic and ethnic base of the school is slowly changing. We have 80+ teachers, and a rounded curriculum. We have AP classes, and 250 special education students, with a wide variety.

R: So you've got all the way from minimally handicapped to multi-handicapped?

P: Yes, we have deaf ed program from _____ High School, so we have all those kids. So it's more of a blue collar neighborhood, with a lot of upper middle class, and an ROTC program that's maybe a little different than other high school. I can't think of anything else in particular.

R: Do you perceive that safety is an issue in your school?

P: It is to me.

R: I know it is to the principal, because research shows that if you don't have a safe and secure environment for your children, they don't get an education. But what I'm specifically asking about is have you had enough problems with safety that you've had to spend more time than you normally would on safety? Do you have, perhaps, some areas or groups that have cause problems?

P: Well, we've got 4 gangs in the building. There's two sets of Crips, there's a set of Bloods, and the Latin Kings. Then we have some people from Diamond Hill, I don't know what you call them.

R: Varrio Diamond Hill?

P: Yeah. We have a new bunch called the Hogs. And I think that's a wannabe type thing.

R: Is that a white group?

P: No, it's a black group. We've got our skinheads and our rednecks.

R: So you've got your white stuff, too.

P: Yeah, it's all here. What ever you think this city would have, we've got. Is that what you want?

R: That's what I want.

P: They pretty much tolerate each other. You don't have a lot of blacks and whites fighting each other, but if you walk in the building today, you're going to find some red T-shirts, and nobody's going to bother them. And you'll find some Crips here with the khakis and the blue stuff on and they're not going to be bothering a bunch of people. Now that didn't come by accident. I want to say they tolerate each other. We've got some kids who wear the confederate flag on their caps, and are what you call "headbangers", and just come through here at lunch...

R: And you'll see some of everything?

P: Yeah. They tolerate each other here at school. But if you go out in the neighborhood, the kid's not going to be wearing a red T-shirt around here because he knows what's going to happen, or the blue or whatever. We get kids in here from _____ and that's where the two sets of Bloods are coming from. And they tolerate each other.

R: Is this because of something you've done here?
P: I'm speaking for me. Some of these teachers, some of these teachers don't even know they have
gang members in the building.

R: I'm speaking specifically of the students. Do they know they have to do that because they know
they have to be in school, or have you done something to make them understand what they have to do?

P: I guess I'm kinda tolerant. They don't get problems if they're not causing problems. Sometimes
that's all you got. And if that's all you got in the neighborhood, and you give that up, you give up your
position. I don't know if I understand that or if I tolerate that. But that's important: I'm going to leave you
alone if you come in here and you get your education. But if you come in here and start gang banging, I'm
going to have to pull you out and . . . they know that.

R: That's what I'm asking: Do they react to something you do, or do they . . .

P: I won't react if you have red on if you don't come in here and start claiming.

R: What I want to know is if you don't do anything specific, do you think that just your attitude
. . . that's what I need to know.

P: I treat them like they ought to be treated.

R: So you're fair with them?

P: Yeah, and they know where I'm coming from. If they're going to act like an asshole, then I can
do that, too; but if they come in here and take care of business, they know I'm going to leave them alone.

R: Then you've answered my next question: Do you perceive there is a gang problem in your
school and why? So do you think there's a problem with violence in your school?

P: Well, you've pulled all our hearings, and we've got a lot of assaults.

R: Well, actually what I did was pull all the hearings for the last two years, and your school was
in the top six in removal hearings. Now there is no discussion about what those removals are for. They
could have all been fights, or they could have all been FOABS. I just don't have any record of that.

P: Violence in the building: There's more violence than we want. But there hadn't been a real
good fight around here until yesterday. There was an outsider on campus. He came up here looking for it
and he got it. Now if you and I have a fight, and it's just a fight, then it's not an assault. But if you come
up and hit me, unprovoked, and it's just he said, she said, then that's an assault, and we're going to address
it. Now if you have a fight, we'll deal with it here, but if you get in a fight and try to hurt somebody, then
we treat it as an assault, and you've stepped over the line, and we're going to take care of that. Now if we're
in a fight, and once you stop, I can't throw you down and stomp your teeth in. But if somebody just comes
up and hits you for no reason, and you defend yourself, then I might suspend you, but I'd rather talk to
your mom about suspending you than talking to her about you standing there and letting somebody beat
you up. But an assault is somewhere else. And if you step over that line, you're going downtown. I sent
one down for an assault just after Christmas, and they sent the damn kid back, and he's already hit another
one. It wasn't an assault, but he's already been in another one, so I'm going to take him back down. But if
we've had a disagreement over a girlfriend, and I'm cussing you and you're cussing me, that's a fight. And
usually we get there before there's any blood. That's what happened yesterday, and the damn kids were all
standing around and one encouraged it. And I'll deal with him. But the rest all did what I asked them to
do. And I wish the rest of them had stopped it, but at least they didn't edge it up.

R: So basically what you're saying is that most of the problems you have are with fights, or
assaults . . .

P: If we have an assault, we take it to a third party hearing, and they can send it back if they want
to. I took one down the other day for truancy. You cut class, and you continue to cut, and I suspend you till I get your mom up here, and you continue to cut, and I get your mom back up here again, I have a hard time saying that's truancy and not insubordination. And when I got down there with a hearing, it turns out he was a special ed kid, then . . . And he was at another high school and they ARDed him out, and he moved to Oklahoma for a year, and had family problems, and they had family problems here and they sent him to Oklahoma, and when they had family problems there, they sent him back. And then they put him in regular classes, so I took him to the hearing. I can't help it. He's not going to do what I tell him. He's not going to do what his mother tells him. Now I'll help you, but y'all better help me solve this problem. And the only alternative I have left is an alternative school. So we get him back and we'll get him ARDed and with the understanding that we're going to do our part. But if he continues to cut, it's not truancy anymore, it's insubordination and we're going back down.

R: Do you perceive that you have any problems with safety issues that are not related to fighting or assaults?

P: Sure, there are drug problems. There's marijuana. There's felonies, people sell it, we have people steal stuff around here . . .

R: So you have the same problems everyone else has.

P: There's no difference between here and ____ High School, except we're a lot whiter.

R: What strategies do you employ as a principal to help keep your school safe from gang related activity and violence?

P: No . . .

R: So you don't have anything written down . . .

P: Well, there's a thing in the handbook that says if you wear gang clothes, you can't wear that, so if I want to enforce that law, you're gang banging and you have on all this red stuff, I've got a right to come get you.

R: So . . .

P: The first year I got here, they were gang banging. You ain't doing it. You're going home. And then they were dumb enough to take a picture, and I got the picture, and I suspended those ____ and you ain't getting back without your mother. And they come back in and say they're not gang banging. And I say that's fine, here's a picture. You explain that to your momma.

R: They were wearing and signing, and . . . So do you have any policies that deal with gangs and violence in particular? You just say follow the rules, and they understand where you're coming from and they pretty much abide by your rules?

P: Uh . . .

R: I guess what I'm saying is do you have any rules in particular that you've instituted other than your handbook or policy?

P: You go out and ask what we do to stop gangs in this building and they'll tell you "nothing." And you ask the teachers what you're doing specifically in this building and they'll tell you "nothing." Some know a little bit more than others, but if you have trouble with me, you're in here with me, and nobody knows anything about what we talk about. So these teachers don't know what I've done with these kids. Now they don't like . . . I don't care if your pants are down below your waist, but if you start going around saying, "I'm going to whip you 'cause you got red on," then I'm going to get on you about
whipping them, I'm going to get on you about your pants, about your shirt, and . . .

R: So basically what you do is deal with it individual by individual, or if you see a group then you deal with that, but you don't have any specific strategies.

P: There's nothing in the handbook that you can put your finger on "that's what they're doing" or anything like that. I don't know if that's good or bad, but . . .

R: Well, let me ask you this then. Do you perceive that the way you deal with children tells them a lot about what you'll tolerate and what you don't?

P: Yep.

R: That's what I hear you saying.

P: They know where I'm coming from. They come in here to get an education.

R: And even if they're gangbanging outside they still come here to get an . . .

P: There's a natural bond there. They expect their kids to come here to get an education. And if you're going to be leaders, be leaders in here, getting an education--help me out, just do what I ask you to do. They know they need an education, so they make me look good, and I make them look good.

R: Do you have any problems with outsiders? Most of us do, but . . .

P: Once in a while. This one yesterday was unusual.

R: Did anybody assist you in planning what you do with gangs? Or do you just . . .

P: No, . . .

R: So basically what you did was bring in a set of policies? A set of ideas you expected to have to implement, and they've worked?

P: Oh, I don't know if they've worked. We're in the top six in hearings.

R: But that may not tell me anything. It may be that the hearings come from what you talked about.

P: If you go pull the records, you'll find mostly FNCIs. That's what I usually take.

R: Just general disruption?

P: Disruption. And we've got tutoring, and we create some of our own problems. We've got tutoring at lunch around here. And it's a tossup every year if we're going to keep it. We've knocked out suspensions down. I mean our failures down about six percent, and it's been consistent. We've got six percent fewer Fs, that's about 5,000 fewer Fs each six weeks. But we got tutoring at lunch. We got an hour and twelve minutes for lunch, which creates a problem. Too much free time, and they can sneak off campus and go smoke, and most of them stay, which means we have the halls full. And it's crowded and if an adult walks in they think it's a damn zoo.

R: And if an outsider walked in and he was the right age, you might not recognize him . . .

P: Yeah, but we're out there and we pick up on them, some of them. Yesterday we did, but after a while you get the feel—this kid don't belong here. But that creates part of our problem. And as long as they go to tutoring, they go to tutoring for twenty-five minutes, and then they've got thirty-five minutes for
lunch. And the kid who cuts tutoring, he's got an hour for lunch, but if you cut tutoring, I'm gonna come find you. And if you're cutting class, that all adds up and we'll go to a third party hearing.

R: And that's insubordination.

P: Yep.

R: So you do a lot of insubordinations.

P: Yeah. A lot of hearings will be an accumulation of all this stuff. Cut classes, cut tutoring, disrupting the class, stuff like that. You know, you throw in every once in a while you smell like marijuana, and I may not find anything on you, but you smell like it, so I'm taking you. I'll take you home and let your mom smell you, and if it happens again, we're going downtown. And in the process, hell, I talk to more parents here now than any teacher in this building. Before I take you to a third party, the mom is to the point (throws hands up in the air)... mom is going to say, that's it, whatever you need to do.

R: Whatever you need to do.

P: Yeah, cause they're tired of me jacking with them. I've called you at home, and I've called you at work and before you can get back in, you got to be here. So come up here, you got to help me. And I mean this: I help you, and you help me, and some say...

R: Let me see your board?

P: No they want me to use it. And I have one kid I did that with, and I just love him. He's a gang banger, and now he's back on the football team, and he's playing basketball, but he's OK.

R: Now let me ask you this. Do you feel that the kids at large are impacted as a result of what you do?

P: Because of third parties? I hope so. Because if you're the momma, I've failed you and him. I can let it go on and ignore it, and usually they're failing classes, and it's not just I don't like you, but you got six infractions, and you can show them. You tell me what you want me to do.

R: OK, could you point to ten or twelve kids right now that you could pick out and say, because of what you've done, these kids are still in school?

P: I hope there's more than that. But you may never know. And I do my discipline. I do my tenth graders. These twelfth graders, I've jacked with them for two years, and if you're a troublemaker, I know you.

R: What group do you do?

P: All tenth graders, boys and girls. That helps with the TAAS test. Now you know what I know, they're not getting much of an education. Now how do we help them, and some of them get turned around. Very few of them go down to the hearing and say, "I don't belong here." Most of them go down there and say I've bent over backwards. We're hoping the alternative placement will help

R: And they truly believe that you've done everything that you can do. If you could change anything that you've done in responding to gang activity and violence, what would you change and why?

P: I'd change the tutoring. And I'd change the lunchtime. But if I do that, I've got thirteen buses that take them away from here, and I'd have kids off this campus that never get any tutoring. And I just can't have it. And we had some people tutoring after school where we had two or three people coming, and we were just wasting money. So now what we spent for tutoring, we now spend for departments. $8,000 to $9,000 and say here it is. And the departments, science, math, and all divide that money up. Every teacher
in this building tutors two days a week. And six weeks out of each semester you get a duty. So three days of every week for twelve weeks, you get an hour and fifteen minutes for lunch.

R: So is there anything you'd like to tell me that we've not discussed? That I have not asked you?

P: No . . . Around here we take a lot of things for granted. Sometimes I have to slap myself on the back of the head, and say I take a lot of things for granted. At everything is a threat, everything has potential . . .

R: Do you think that makes it easier for you over here?

P: It's easier than I ever thought could have happened. Ninety-nine percent of the kids behave here and do what you ask them to do. There are some fools everywhere, but for the most part the kids here come to school, get an education and go home.

Assistant Principal

R: I'd like to ask you a few questions that parallel the questions I asked the principal. And it doesn't even matter if your answers agree with the principal's answers. First of all, tell me a little bit about your school and your responsibilities in the school.

AP: I'm an assistant principal. I've been here 10 years and my responsibilities are as follows: I am in charge of all the secretarial staff, which includes the main office, attendance, nurse, data, and counseling. I also am in charge of the four counselors in the sense that I write their evaluations. I am responsible for the discipline of 9th grade girls and 12th grade girls. I'm the chief scheduler for here at the school, the chief responsibility for building the master schedule and seeing that all the children are scheduled, the approximately 1,450 students. I am also a senior class sponsor and the advisor on the Jump Start program. I am in charge of the Ann Brannon Awards and all programs that go on here at school. I am responsible for 22 of the evaluations of the approximately 85 teachers, and other duties as assigned.

R: Tell me if you perceive that safety is an issue in your school, and if it is, describe what your concerns are.

AP: It's paramount since Mr. arrived, and this is his third year, he has stated 3 goals that are embedded in everyone's mind. Number 1 is that you will have a safe and secure school, Number 2 is to raise test scores and Number 3 is to improve instruction, and he actively works on that. We have put crash bars on our doors, we have teachers so that the doors are locked in a different way than they were originally. We have 4 active campus monitors who are around the school all the time, and they are assigned parking lot duties at certain times, and certain hallways. We have our campus monitors picking up attendance for us so they are able to be in and out of the classrooms and around all the time instead of being at one station. They have set routines where they are to be. We have locked our parking lots so that there's only when the students come in at 8:00 there's only one entrance and one exit. There is a campus monitor who checks passes to see that the students are qualified one to have a car and one to have a lunch pass. The all students are assigned a locker and this is handled by a homeroom teacher and students are required to have a parking pass and they go through one of the assistant principals. At lunchtime, our campus is closed for 9th and 10th graders so only 11th and 12th graders are allowed off which is a safety factor because it doesn't put 1,400 students on the streets at the same time in the community doing things at the same time. That is a problem for us. We have a very, very fine staff of custodians both day and night and at any time if security lights are out or anything, they will be repaired. A top priority is maintenance around here. They're always checking and double checking. Our custodians are quite capable of making work orders on the computer so it isn't necessary for the secretary to have to do it, and that saves a lot of time and expedites the repairs that need to be done. Our school is left half lit at nighttime so that the lights are on every other light setting is left on so that there isn't any really dark areas. The security lights are always maintained on the outside property also.
R: Well, let me ask you this, then. Do you perceive that there is a gang problem at your school?

AP: No, we have gangs, but they don't bring their gang activity to our school. We ask the kids not to wear their gang colors to school, and most of them do not wear any gang colors. We have told the kids up front to don't bring it to school or else we are going to take severe action and we do and we will take it to a third party hearing. We are not going to tolerate that. We do have a liaison team here, and they have their own office here and they are at our beck and call. They're just wonderful, and we're blessed to have the _______ Police Department. Because we reside on _______ property, we call them and they're here in less than five minutes and they're always patrolling the streets. They see kids out on the street during school hours and will pick them up and bring them back to school. Unlike the _______ Police Department that are overwhelmed, they still have the luxury of doing that. I can honestly say that I cannot identify gang members. I am aware that they are there, because I have been told, but we have not had to, in my discipline area, I have not heard of a gang problem on campus.

R: So basically what you're saying is that it may be here but the kids keep it quiet.

AP: It is here, but it's because we know it is, but they don't bring the negative side of gang problems into the school area. They wait until they get off campus.

R: OK, do you perceive that there is a problem with violence at school, and if so, what kinds of problems do you see?

AP: The violence that occurs that I see is usually from in my situation, from two girls who are fighting over a boy. They can kick and scratch and scream, but I don't think of that as violence. Now the men may see other things at lunchtime, because I hang around the halls and stay in the general office area so there's always one administrator around all the time. We all have our duties. One has the cafeteria, one has the other halls, and one has the outside perimeter. So we all have our duties. If there's a fight out there, the guys handle it. The administrators have no lunch time.

R: OK, what specific strategies does your principal employ to make your school safe from gang-related activity and violence?

AP: He finds out from the police the known gang people, he calls those people into his office, sits down and has discussions with them about what he expects them to do at this school. He's up front about it and once they are identified either by other students or by the police, or by other parties, teacher or parent, he calls them in and deals with it.

R: OK, were you a part of planning these strategies, or was anyone else?

AP: No, but I can't answer for anyone else. That's something that he brought with him because he is very safety conscious, and he doesn't want any gang problems.

R: Do you think anyone helped the principal develop these ideas, or do you think he's building on ideas . . .

AP: He's building on what he did at ________.

R: And the teachers were not involved, and

AP: To my knowledge, the teachers were not involved in that strategy.

R: So that makes the next question unimportant—how were these persons involved? How do you believe students are impacted by whatever the principal does to prevent gang-related activity and violence?
AP: Uh . . .

R: For example, would it keep them in school, perhaps?

AP: My best guess is that is why they do come to school, because they're not afraid here. My goodness, down here on ________ Trail, there's all sorts of problems, and that's where our kids live. But they come to school here each day. They see that they can come here and be safe versus being down in their own apartments.

R: So you believe that they do come here because they feel safe.

AP: Yes, I believe that.

R: If you could change the way that the principal has responded to gang-related activity and violence, what specific changes would you make and why?

AP: Well, you see, I'm not aware of gang-related activity, so I'm not in a position to say what he does or how I could change it. Because in my peripheral position, my 9th grade girls are not in gangs. They come in and tell me that they've been in a gang, and they've got out of them, but I don't see them as members, or at least the girls that I'm seeing. All the seniors want to do is get out of here. They're going to keep out of trouble and maintain the status quo. So, to me I would do what he was doing if I was in his position. I'd go in with them and say, "You're gonna be what you're gonna be, I can't change it. I don't agree with it, but I can't change it. Just don't bring it here. I'll have to take action. And that's the only way I think you can deal with it. They're gonna do what they're gonna do, but if they realize that you are trying to provide something for not only them but also everybody else, but you're not going to do this to them, they're going to keep it up.

R: If students could change the way Mr. ______ approaches or has responded to gang activity and violence, what do you believe they might change and why?

AP: I couldn't speak for them, I don't know. Gangs are something we don't talk about. Not a major part of our lives When we sit down and have conversations, we don't talk about gangs. We talk about instruction and tutoring, or we talk about how we're going to get these kids out of the halls, that's what our infractions are about. We don't get infractions about gangs. We don't talk about gangs.

R: Is there anything about safety issues or gang-related activity that I haven't asked you that you think I need to know?

AP: You know, I live in the area, and every once in a while, I'll see the graffiti on the walls.

R: Is it ever crossed out?

AP: Immediately. Within a week.

R: No, I'm not talking about removing it. Is it ever crossed out and written over?

AP: I can't tell you that, because there's not that much of it. But it's whitewashed out immediately. It's usually on the businesses.

Teacher 1

R: Tell me about your position and your responsibilities in the school.
T1: I am the department chair for physical education, acting athletic coordinator, at this time for both boys and girls, I teach physical education and health. I am on the Site Based Decision Making Team, and other than that . . . And other duties as assigned.

R: Do you perceive that safety is an issue in your school? If so, describe your concerns.

T1: The only reason safety is an issue in our school is because from the very beginning, the present principal has had three rules to live by. First, we will have a safe and orderly environment. Second, we will raise our TAAS scores. Third, teachers will become better teachers. And those are his top three things, in that order. He makes no bones about the fact that there are four gangs in our school. But you can walk down the hall and they are all walking down the hall together. And we have very little, if any type of problems with that type of activity.

R: And you have kind of addressed the next question. Do you perceive that you have a gang problem or any kind of problems with gangs at your school?

T1: From where I am at, my perspective, I don't see it. I think part of that has to do with the fact that it is addressed early on in the year. And administrators, to my knowledge, do not allow it.

R: So it is just not tolerated?

T1: Right. They are arrested. Now they may wear the colors, but that is as far as it goes. If you didn't know that red was Crips and blue was Bloods, or whatever it is . . .

R: Backwards. You might have just gotten shot!

T1: Well, that is probably true. Of course, I was a lot further than that part. If you didn't know which colors which gang dressed in, you probably wouldn't notice it.

R: So you've got gang members, but not gang problems?

T1: Right.

R: Is there a problem with violence in your school, and if so, what kinds of problems are there?

T1: As far as the violence issue, I think an occasional fight, every now and then. Many of them that I have stepped in on have been over a girl or a boy. It really doesn't have anything to do with the issues of outside, the gang area, or whatever. Most of them are just disagreement type things that are handled very quickly, very efficiently.

R: So you don't see a bunch of red fighting a bunch of blue?

T1: No.

R: What specific strategies does your principal employ to make your school safe from gang-related activity and violence?

T1: I don't know. In the beginning, when he came in, we have had officers come in and clue us in on what to look for, be aware of, and told us which gangs we do have in our building. Where they come from, what the nature of their activities are, just things of that nature. He has been very open about it. It has not been a hidden thing. And apparently, whatever transpires, he will tell us. He is very open and I think that is part of being able to address it or handle it. But he is on top of it quite frequently. He is not a man that sits in his office. He is out and about in the school seeing what really goes on.

T3: No
R: Does he address it with a dress code? Do you have anything in your student handbook about overt gang behavior and that sort of thing?

T1: Yes. We do have a dress code as far as, you know, the alcohol shirts. Basic things that probably other schools have, short-shorts, etc. Just wearing things that are inappropriate for school.

R: Were you a part of planning for those strategies and if so, how?

T1: I was not. No. That was before I became a member of the management team. The management team does address these issues continually and we are now talking about the dress code and dealing with the changes.

R: Then that sort of answers my next question and you might want to expand on it a little bit. Who besides yourself and your principal was involved in that decision and how were they involved?

T1: It was, I believe what they did was they got parents, community people, and teachers. And all of those people sat down and made-up the current dress code that we now have.

R: So he doesn't mind taking input from outside himself?

T1: Not at all.

R: And you have told me how each person or group was involved. It is mainly just listening and then he comes up with a decision based on all the recommendations.

T1: He is real good about telling us that it is your school. You make me as good as I am. It is your school. You run it. We have a meeting with the department chairs and he says this is on the table and this is what needs to be done. Can we do it? Do we need to accept it?

R: And then does he take all that input and finalize the information?

T1: He puts together a plan and then he comes back with the plan and says with what I heard you say, is this now acceptable.

R: So he doesn't just say OK I am God and I am going to do this and now you can give me input if you want to.

T1: No. No. He goes to the people that would have to be working it to the end result.

R: OK. How do you believe that students are impacted by the strategies that this school employs against gang-related activity and violence?

T1: I think that the kids probably know how things are handled. They feel safer. I know that this is probably bad for me to say, but right now in my position, I have been in several schools and graduated from a _______ one. I would not be anywhere else, but here. To me it is very safe and I think a lot of it has to do with the way we perceive how he is handling and how all the other administrators are handling it. And we are continuing that to our student body. It is openly discussed with them you know that these are the things that you need to do.

R: And they don't have a problem with that?

T1: The parents have been told in our Freshman orientation that we have gangs in this building, but they are not active in this building. They keep it in the community. They don't do it at school.
R: OK.

T1: They know before they even get here that they are here, but it is not a number one criteria that we even address.

R: OK. If you could change thing that your principal has done in response to gang-related activity and violence, what would you change and why?

T1: I am not sure that I would do anything different than what is happening now. Maybe just continue to bring in maybe the ________ Police Department and continue to make the teachers aware.

R: More staff development?

T1: Staff development. More what to look for to help and continue to broaden the area in which we are looking at. Standing at the doors and doing some things that we are supposed to be doing. Those things. Just to continue some of what we did earlier on.

R: OK. And if students could change the way that you all respond to gang-related activity and violence, what would they change and why?

T1: As related to gang-related violence, not necessarily the dress code and things of that nature, but . . .?

R: Well, perhaps some of that is the dress code.

T1: I think all the kids feel like our dress code is pretty strict here. They would like to have a little bit more flexibility, but I think the kids probably. I really don't know because I don't really have a lot of kids ask me how many gang kids you know.

R: And your kids don't even fall under the dress code because they are in the PE class.

T1: They have uniforms for PE.

R: OK.

T1: We do have a uniform policy that Mr. ________ wanted us to do.

R: Well, let me tell you what one of your kids told me and this was one of the gang members. He told me that if it were up to him that anytime a kid came flying his colors he would call their parents and send them home. He didn't think Mr. ________ was strict like that.

R: So I thought that that was interesting.

T1: That is interesting. A lot of the things that we as teachers know even though we are maybe site-based management department chairs, he doesn't always share what he probably does with a lot of those kids.

R: OK. Now is there anything that I haven't asked you that you think is important for me to know so that I understand how your school responds to gang-related activity and violence?

T1: Other than the fact that I think feeling secure here and a lot of that has to do with our security personnel and the way they do their job in our parking lots and things. The fact that every school does have a police officer on duty and an office and a liaison person, I think, shows that we know things are out
there. We are prepared to handle them should that come up. The way people do their jobs here, I think that helps. To my knowledge and I am in the halls quite frequently, I think the way Mr. ______ may look at it is the kids may have on their reds, blues, greens, and purples, but you have a right to wear basically what you want. We have kids that are not involved in gangs that wear those colors. If they are willing to wear them, but they don't shoot the signs or they don't flaunt the fact that they are in a gang, and they are sitting down, he's going to leave it be. If it becomes an issue then he follows through and does whatever he needs to do.

R: Well, he told me that they had a healthy respect for each other.

T1: And they really do. A lot of them participate in the same athletic team. We've got that involvement. And they are doing what they need to do in school and the rest is outside in the community. He is very open and I think that is part of being able to address it or handle it. But he is on top of it. He is not a man that sits in his office. He is out and about in the school seeing what really goes on.

Teacher 2.

R: Tell me about your responsibilities and your position in the school.

T2: I am a biology teacher. I teach regular classes. My responsibility is to teach the students

R: OK. Do you have other responsibilities that you do, like for Student Council, or cheerleaders, or anything like that?

T2: I am a department chair.

R: I see. OK. Do you perceive that safety is an issue in your school, and if so, tell me about your concerns.

T2: Well, safety is one of our top priorities at the school, and we have good administrators. And that is his top priority, and he asks all of us to help this be a safe place. With the students, he does not tolerate anyone that interrupts instruction.

R: Do you perceive that there is a gang problem in your school, and why do you believe this is true?

T2: We have gang members in the school, but there is not a gang problem in this school. Because our students know that we do not tolerate gang activity at school.

R: So they come to school, but they are not active?

T1: Right, they are not active at this school.

R: Do you perceive that there is a problem with violence in your school, and if so, what kinds of problems are arising?

T1: Oh, as far as violence, on a small scale. We do not have a high type of violence?

R: So no AK47s?
T2: Now I am not going to say that they don't have them here, they may have them here. But as far as people in authority, we don't know about it. We have fights, like in all other schools.

R: So if your kids knew that there was a gun, would they come tell you or would they tell someone?

T2: Yes. And I have some students that would tell me. And I think we have students that would tell because the majority of our students here love this school because it's considered a safe school. Because they feel safe here.

R: I was over at Como Comin' Up the other night, and the kids told me that, too. You are not telling me something that the kids have not already told me. And they told me that Mr. ______ was cool.

T2: Oh, yeah, you know he's a people person and you know, like I said, he talks with them, he laughs with them, he does for them, but he also lets them know exactly what he expects and when they do wrong, then they suffer consequences and they know that.

R: And the consequences are set out for them so they know up front what the problem is going to be?

T2: And they know that he is not going to tolerate them if they are not here to learn. And he is not going to tolerate teachers . . .

R: That are not here to teach?

T2: That are not here to teach.

R: Well, I think that is wonderful.

T2: So you know, the teachers are here to teach and the students are here to learn.

R: What specific strategies does your principal employ to make your school safe from gang-related activity and violence?

T2: We have three, I know, four liaison officers, and he makes sure that they have their designated areas. And they all have their little spots. They have their own certain areas, certain times of the day. Where they secure all these little spots and corners. We have a full-time cop here during lunch. You probably saw teachers standing at certain spots in the halls and even outside on the patio, or whatever. We have teachers on duty.

R: Does that rotate every so often?

T2: Yes, every six weeks we change. And there are teachers on duty in every area within the school and outside.

R: Good.

T2: And we have the walkie-talkies.

R: Does every teacher have one?

T2: No, we have them in only certain parts of the school, like in each end of the school and in
every temporary building, they have walkie-talkies.

R: He gives them to people that he know that he can trust to handle them wisely?

T2: Well, that is one thing to handle them wisely, and out in the temporary building, I think most people out there have them.

R: So the places that problems could occur?

T2: Right, right. So they could get out there should something occur.

R: This way you can see all the way down this hall and you could report it.

T2: Like if I see somebody walking in who should not . . .

R: You can report it?

T2: And usually when you call on these and you can stand there and look and see someone in authority. They know that no matter where they are there is somebody with one of these and it is not going to take long very long.

R: For somebody in authority to get there. Well, good. Were you about of the planning of these strategies and if so, how?

T2: No. I was not.

R: OK. Were other people like teacher, parents, or students involved?

T2: Well, they had a committee that, well, Site Based Decision Making Team was the committee that really did a lot of the planning.

R: So that has committee members, and parents, students, as well as teachers on it?

T2: Well, it doesn't have students on it, but on the management team, it has the parents and teachers and all on it. Then we have the Parent-Teacher-Student Organization and they kind of have input, too.

R: Does the student council or . . . ?

T2: Well, the PTSO has members from the student council on it and the student body.

R: OK. They do get an opportunity for input. Has Mr. ______ been pretty open for suggestions from other sources as opposed to just coming in and saying this is the way it is going to be?

T2: OK. What do you mean other sources?

R: Like teachers or parents.

T2: Yeah, he is receptive. He is the type of person that if he foresees that this is not going to work he doesn't go with it just because you have suggested it.

R: Oh, OK. He takes input, but he makes the final decision. How do believe that students are impacted by the implementation of these strategies here?

T2: Repeat the question.
R: How you think students are impacted, how do they feel, about the strategies you that you use here to prevent gang-related activity and violence?

T2: I think that they are pleased with it.

R: Do they feel safe?

T2: Yeah, for the most part.

R: Do you think that because they feel safe students are more likely to stay in school?

T2: Yeah.

R: One of your kids told me the other night when I went over to the Como Center, I asked him if you could change anything at all about what Mr. _______ does against gang-related activity and violence, what would you change and why? And he said anybody that comes up here in all red or all blue has to go home until their momma comes back with them. He was tougher than what you all would be. And see I think that is interesting because . . .

T2: Oh, he was saying that that is what he would do . . .

R: He would be tougher with the dress code. I thought it was interesting because sometimes you expect kids to say the dress code is too strict.

T2: Well, our dress code is very, very lenient, and that is because with Mr. _______ the dress code doesn't bother him. He'll tell you in a minute dress code doesn't really mean a lot to him. As long as it is not way, way, way off base.

R. I saw Mr. _______ in the office earlier, and I said, "You let your student's shirt tail be out?" because his student assistant was there and his shirt-tail was out. He said, "They need to give me their brains, not their shirt tails".

T2: And that comes from when Mr. _______ came here you know that was one of our policies. Shirt tails tucked in and it is even still in the dress code.

R: But it is not enforced because it is not as important.

T2: No. It is a problem for me in my classroom. I run my classroom. A student comes into my classroom and I say for him to tuck his shirt in, and if he doesn't, and I send him down to Mr. _______ and Mr. _______ is going to deal with him.

R: Because he broke a class rule.

T2: But as far as him walking down the hall and telling them to tuck their shirt tails in or sending them home because they don't have it you know down the halls and all. That doesn't bother him. He is like, instruction, education, and learning are the most important.

R: OK. Fine with me you know that is a good policy. Um. If you could change the way your principal has responded to gang-related activity and violence, what would you change and why?

T2: Oh, probably prohibit colors. I think I would prohibit . . .

R: Certain combinations?
T2: Certain attire from being worn. Now the bandannas and all those are forbidden. He does not allow that. But when they wear their reds and their blues or whatever. And so many people wear those colors and not all of us are not in gangs, so I guess that would be hard. But those that you know. . .

R: Or that flaunt it?

T2: Yeah, but some students you know who they are. And when you see them walking in and, I think I am going to say something, or if I would just say no red, blue. . .

R: Or all red or blue?

T2: And I know that that would be hard. Like I say, lots of people have those colors in their wardrobe who don't even have gang on their mind to implement. So I really don't know what to do to be fair to everyone. And just like there are certain other things, like they wear the pants leg up and pants hanging down. You know, I would definitely forbid that.

R: Or make them wear belts or something.

T2: I would definitely do that. Make sure that they didn't walk around with their pants leg up to their knees like some of the gang members. People used to say oh, that is just a fad, but I said nope.

R: Yes, you've got to put them both up or both down.

T2: And they say, "I'll put them down, I'll put them down", you know. And I'll get a belt.

R: I am going to start keeping twine in my drawer to tie up their britches when they don't wear a belt.

T2: I do. I have some right here.

R: Do you?

T2: And all over the building and even the assistant principals when they see them with their pants hanging, they send them to me.

R: To get some twine?

T2: And they walk in and they know that if they send 'em to me they are going to put it in and tie it while I look at them.

R: That's good. If your students could change the way that your principal has responded to gang-related activity and violence, what do you think that they would change, and why?

T2: The majority of the students would probably along the same lines, anything that is pertaining to gang attire or whatever, they would probably not want them to wear it to school. The majority of the students.

R: You think that most of the changes that they would be made would be center around the dress code?

T2: Yeah.

R: OK. Is there anything that I haven't asked you that you feel like is important for me to know for my research about gang-related activity and violence. Anything about your school?
T2: No. Because if you start singling out everything then you start possibly causing other problems. Racial problems. It's just like with certain music and things that kids and one thing that I would change and be more stricter with the kids is going off campus for lunch. Because we have an open campus for juniors and seniors that have parent permission, but we don't have enough people to get out and patrol to make sure that the freshman and sophomores aren't going out. You know when we catch them then, they have to suffer the consequences, but so many of them get by.

R: So many of them at least in our building get in the cars with upper classman.

T2: Right.

R: Now if our kids, if an upper classman takes a younger kid off, he loses his lunch pass as well.

T2: OK. See we have a campus monitor one on each parking lot, but when they can walk out the door, you know like this one is, with everybody else, you have nobody there to watch and see and sometimes you'll stand out and catch them when they coming in.

R: You know one of the things that is across the distance that I have been hearing is the large number of doors in the buildings and that seems to be and you mentioned that, but you didn't specifically mention it up until then, but you mentioned that that seems to be a problem. How many ways that have to get out of the building and how difficult it is to supervise.

T2: Right and you don't have people posted all over because I don't know if it is a teacher shortage or what. I remember when I first started teaching, we used to have people with supervision duty, you know period. Where they could be at certain areas and supervise and have . . .

R: I had restroom duty one year.

T2: But now everyone has got to be in class and teach, you know here, all day long and just have that planning period.

R: Do you all have duty during your planning period?

T2: We have duty during lunch.

R: So everybody has some kind of duty during lunch, but you get the entire hour and a half.

T2: Right.

R: For your planning? You see that is one of the things that we are doing, our teachers, we are going back to a traditional schedule, seven periods.

T2: Seven classes?

R: Yes, we are going back to seven periods instead of six.

T2: Where you'll see the kids everyday.

R: Yes. And they are going to have a planning period, which will be 50 minutes, but they will have to have a professional development period where have to be available for us.

T2: So they would have two like free periods.

R: Well one of them would be our free period and the other is their free period.
T2: Never thought of that.

R: So we have tried to think through how not only to get them the planning time, but how to make the school safe as well.

Teacher 3

R: Tell me about your position and your responsibilities in your school.

T3: Well, let's see. I have been here 28 years. I teach U. S. Government, AP U. S. Government, AP Economics and some American history. I was a department head for 20 years and I got tired of that so I quit. I sponsored the National Honor Society for the past 15 years and sponsored the Student Council.

R: So you are pretty active in the life of the school.

T3: Yes.

R: Do you perceive that safety is an issue in your school and if so, what are your concerns?

T3: I think it is now. It wasn't as recently as two years ago, but is one of those things that has changed and changed pretty quickly. I have never personally been threatened that I know of. I am not sure that there is any particular place that is unsafe for teacher to walk down the halls, but there is a different atmosphere than there used to be. I would be reluctant to go into some groups of students and I wouldn't want to go into the students' restrooms by myself anymore. You used to go in there by yourself and scatter them, you can't do that anymore.

R: Do you think that it is a societal thing or is it a school thing?

T3: Oh, partly it is societal. Young people are just less respectful, in general, to everybody. Authority figures, each other. It is not particularly a pleasant thing. I mean, you watch TV and it is in movies. They are rude, and they don't know that they are rude. Unfortunately. Some of it is the school. Frankly, I think there is probably this is a less disciplined school than it was five years ago. I don't know how to make any comparison. I guess it is one of those gradual things, but it just seems more noticeable year. More noise in the hall, more people in the halls, more situations in the halls, uh, more fights obvious, major school problems. It is just a different atmosphere.

R: So if you had to compare your previous principal with this principal, strategy wise, does this one or did the last one have better strategies for dealing with behavior?

T3: I think the previous one was a little less tolerant of disruptive behavior.

R: OK.

T3: I thought at the time that he was a little soft on some things, but at the same time I thought he was too conscious of every little detail and he wasn't any kind of dictator at all, he was hung-up on just nitpicky little stuff that I think in the long-run paid off. I mean there were rules for awhile that they couldn't bring backpacks into the classroom. We had a fairly strict dress code. I mean, sometimes to enforce a dress code it is more hassle than it is worth. There is some aspect to the dress code that contributes to the overall atmosphere of the school. Frankly, I don't guess there is a dress code now.

R: Even though it is written it is not enforced?
R: Do you perceive that there is a gang problem in your school and if so, why do you believe that this is true?

T3: Yeah, I do. I recall a faculty meeting about sometime in the 92-93 school year, where we had the gang liaison team from the _______ police department and they specifically told us then that we were the only school in _________ that had a gang problem. And we knew that, we talked about it. There was a sense that it was not here, although you read about it in the school and talked to parents about it at the school. And that's changed, I'm not saying that there aren't gangs, if they do stuff, they do it in the neighborhood. Now to some degree they bring it to school. I don't think that there is any violence that is gang-related, that I can tell, you know we've had some killings and stuff, thank God, they do it off campus, but there is just a sense, and once you get over your naivete and think well, they really are a North Carolina fan, and then you realize that they don't even know where the state is, much less, the college. That's a gang, they wear North Carolina jerseys and stuff, that's kind of disillusioning to realize that that's what that stuff is, but you know right now that certain shirts mean certain things and we have even been told that some of the Disney character shirts are gangs. You'll see kids with Mickey Mouse shirts on and they perhaps turn into a gang thing. Basically, I teach all the kids, and for whatever reason there is not much gang activity manifested among them because I think if you are into that world you probably aren't going to make it to be a senior in high school.

R: Either because you drop out or because you get killed?

T3: Yeah, or in jail or something.

R: Or something.

T3: So I don't see much of that in my classes because of the kids who I teach and you can tell. Every now and then a story will break in the paper, so that's why I know. Now I can tell you partly why there are more gangs here now than there used to be, that part of the neighborhood's changed a great deal.

R: Mr. _______ said that there are some apartments down at the other end there.

T3: Yeah, Yes. That's really, frankly, for a long time out here, this was essentially a middle-class school, edging certain upper-class neighborhoods and all that and then we had the kids from _________ and there was obviously a different socio-economic factor and people said that there were some problems. And there are, but there is a difference in them and _________, you've got business, churches, families that have been there forever as long as I've been here at this point now, every class I teach I have three or four kids of parents I have taught. White kids, black kids. These kids in these apartments, I didn't teach any of their parents; they are transient kids unfortunately, too bad for them, it's not their fault in most cases. And I guess that is why the gangs are a family to them. And I would guess that that is probably the largest source of it up there. As I recall, oh goodness, it must be about five years ago when _________ was mayor and she asked every government teacher of every high school to send a government teacher and five or six kids down to city hall for some forum of young people's problems and outlooks and stuff like that. And one of the kids I picked was a black kid that lived over in the residential part; there's a lot of houses over there. And I guess there is some pretty nice homes over there. And one of the things that I realized was, and one of the things that he wanted to talk to her about was a proposal of governmental subsidized housing over here; that that was going to wreck that neighborhood.

R: And sure enough it has?

T3: Yeah, and that kid was 17 and he impressed me because he knew that and he was aware of it long before we were.
R: And you think that that is where a lot of the problems are?

T3: Yeah, I think so. We have had too many situations over the last two or three years that have involved kids from over there and so fortunately you are not going to get much gang stuff out of

R: What about violence? Do you perceive that there is a violence problem in your school, and if so, what kinds of problems are arising?

T3: You know fortunately, all the violence is still fist-fights and stuff. No occasions of that I know of any weapons that has ever been brought out here. Other than some off-campus. In fact, one of the biggest changes that I have seen is the people being violent are the girls. Earlier this year, one of the coaches whose room is right there and used to be one of my students, we broke up a fight between two girls and almost got killed. Just breaking the thing up. And it was serious. And there was another one recently within the last couple of weeks some place else, I didn't see it. I think there is a slight increase and I think that that is a disturbing thought. There seems to be more involvement with females.

R: Do you think that this violence, whether it is male or female, comes from seeing it from the TV and the movies?

T3: I don't know, you know, I read a lot of that, particularly in the paper. I just don't know, I grew up playing violence in a form of World War II in my front yard up and down my neighborhood.

R: And cowboys and Indians?

T3: I had a box full of toy guns in my closet so did my friends and we did that kind of violence. Um. I don't know if it is the TV, you know one of the things that they said was the video games they play maybe that's it. It is hard to say. I mean, I am appalled by what's on TV and I am no prude by any means, I don't like a lot of the stuff that is on TV and the movies. Talking to kids, now my kids they were raised by a different standard. But I don't know, I hate to say it, but I think music and a lot of the stuff they listen to . . .

R: Advocates violence?

T3: It does a whole lot more than the stuff we grew up listening to.

R: What about the strategies that your principal is employing to make your school safe from gang-related activity and violence? What specific strategies does he use and were you a part of the planning of that?

T3: No, I wasn't part of the planning, and to tell you the truth I don't know what the strategy is. I don't know if there is one. I know we have police officers in the hall full-time but that has been going on for about four years. I think that is city-wide and I think that's it. Otherwise, I don't know what the strategy is. I don't to my knowledge, that's why I said about what they wear, I don't think that there is any rule about not wearing gang colors, not that I know of.

R: So you're not, it's not so much that there may not be any strategies, but you don't see that they are enforced if there are some. Is that what you're saying?

T3: I think so. Frankly, at this school we are totally geared toward passing the TAAS test and we do, we beat every school in the city. We've always done well. Part of it is the socio-economic thing, but even the groups that don't do well, they do well here.

R: And that is because you spend so much time concentrating on it?
T3: Yeah, that's it. Which as an old teacher, I don't like them, I think it distracts from what we do. But we emphasize it on that more than we do a lot of the social things. That's my opinion.

R: OK. Do you know who was involved in some of the strategies that were used?

T3: No. Since I am not a department head, I don't go to the meetings anymore. I have just taken myself out of the loop to tell you the truth.

R: How do you believe the students are impacted by whatever is done to keep your school safe?

T3: I think just kids just don't ever show me that they are fearful of going any place. If they're in class, they go to the restroom, nurse, water fountain, locker.

R: So they don't seem afraid?

T3: No.

R: And that tells you that they feel safe coming to school? Once they get here they feel safe moving about?

T3: Yeah.

R: If you could change the way that your principal has, and you've kind of touched on this, done to prevent gang-related activity and violence, what specific changes would you make and why?

T3: Oh, goodness. I guess I would do what I could to eliminate the colors or whatever they are called. I am sure that they have to identify themselves. And just have less tolerance. I am sure that they are limited to what they can do as far as discipline goes. I know of kids that have been third partyed twice on drug business and then they are right back in school.

R: Do you think it is a school problem or a district problem?

T3: I don't care, I don't know, anymore, I don't know. I just feel that there is a tolerance for, and it is not a bad thing, it is just this attitude that we have got to help every single kid regardless of however disruptive he may be to the rest of them. And I think it is to the point of which you have to sacrifice one of the less interested ones for the well-being of everybody else.

R: So you would be stricter about removal for violation of rules?

T3: Yeah, I would.

R: A stronger dress policy?

T3: Yeah, I would. It is a crazy thing, we had a kid about a month ago or so, but we had a drug dog and there was a kid in one of my classes who was a senior and he had two shotguns under the seat of his truck. He was a kid who hunted and for whatever reason, stupid reason, but, he had left his guns in his truck and came to school. The dogs sniffed those and found them. He's been removed from school, and he was a smart kid. He cared about his grades and he wasn't a rowdy kid or anything like that. He might not have went to college, but he was going to get into a trade and be good at it and he probably still will. There are other kids that could have been removed before him, but he violated a clear rule that they could deal with and he's gone.

R: What I think that I hear you saying is that there are not enough clear rules that kids, when they violate them, that they could be removed?
T3: To show that typically they are doing their job.

R: What do you think the students would change about what your principal does and why?

T3: I don't know that answer. Frankly, I don't hear my kids talk about school too much. I just really don't. And I am going to tell you this, frankly I don't care if this is confidential or not because I am retiring in eleven days anyway, but I think Mr. ____ is a fine person who really prefers working with the problem kids more so than with the achievers. I just really think that he feels comfortable with them. He sees that as his mission to help those kids and maybe the others can get along OK and they don't need as much help. But he doesn't interact a lot, frankly, with the National Honor Society, Student Council or Key Club or the groups like that.

R: So you think that he is not as active in the total program as he should be?

T3: Probably. Yeah, I know that. I mean he doesn't interact with the faculty. I have worked with five principals, and he is the only one that I haven't had a conversation with other than the ordinary run-of-the-mill stuff. And it is not me, he is like that with everybody. Goodness gracious, he works all the time, he is always running around here with his sleeves rolled up and doing something. And that is his approach to things. Old teachers like me or you used to would shoot the bull with the principal once in a while...

R: Do you think that is good or do you think that a principal needs to be more active?

T3: I think that a principal needs to interact with teachers and staff and the whole school.

R: And not just the children who cause problems?

T3: Right.

R: Is there anything that I haven't asked you that you think is important for my research that would help me understand your school better about gang-related activity and violence? Just anything I haven't asked you about?

T3: I'll think of something about five minutes after you've gone. I am not thinking of anything. We are lucky that nothing has happened here, but it is the most serious problem that we have had in the facility and I don't know what to do with it. It is a society problem. It is a saying that is sort of glorified, I think by the culture.

R: And by the media?

T3: Yeah. You know I do know that I had a junior class of American history kids and I know some girls in there that are really neat girls that they are juniors know and they told me that when they were younger like ninth grade, they were in a gang, but they have out grown it. And you wonder these are nice girls and they are pretty smart, why on earth would you have ever done it even at fourteen years old. And I just don't understand that, but it is a pretty common thing. I don't know how to deal with that. Frankly, there are some problems we just can't solve here at the school. I just think there really are. We have been given a lot of things to solve in the decades that have past. Some of the problems you just can't fix.

R: The home is partially responsible?

T3: Oh, absolutely. And gee whiz, some of these kids come from such screwed-up families and I don't want to know what kind of home life they have 'cause it is just too sad. I would rather not know.

R: Anything else you can think of?
**Student 1 and Student 2**

R: I appreciate your being willing to talk with me. What I'd like to know first is for you to tell me a little bit about your school.

SI: __________ is all around a great school, but the only problem I seem to have is that it isn't gang-related, but the principal seem to think it is. It is not that violent. I don't have a problem with people trying to fight me or whatever. Only problems I seem to have is with the administrators.

R: OK. When you say that you have problems with the administrators, do you think they pick on you because they think you're gang-related?

SI: No, that's not it at all. I know when you come to work you are supposed to leave your problems at the door, and like in the attendance office there are these ladies that work in there. They are always rude to parents because my mom had had problems with trying to get me out of school or whatever or just with their attitude.

R: So you think it is just with the adults' attitudes as opposed to them thinking that you are in a gang?

SI: Yeah. And they also take things too far.

R: OK. Like how?

SI: Um. Say there is a student walking down the hall, they won't just stop and ask to see a pass. They will stop and call for extra help on the walkie-talkie and just go through the whole ... 

R: So make it feel like somebody is dangerous or something?

SI: Yes, make you feel very uncomfortable. I have a problem with our assistant principal, __________. In a way, he threatens me, but he doesn't. I am not saying that he picks on me. I don't go into the office for anything right. It is disciplinary, but it's just the way he talks to me and looks at me. That is the only problems I have.

R: How about you?

S2: I don't have any problems because I hardly ever get into trouble.

R: OK.

S2: It is just my uh English teacher. I don't think she likes black people. I ain't trying to say she don't, cause one of my friends, we'll be over there doing our work or we will talking when we get through, she'll just criticize us for no reason. She'll say "You don't need to be over there talking because your grades are so far down. You need to do this or do that." We just doing it because we'd be finish with our work. That's all I have. I am not against any of my teachers. Another thing is that she'd come out of class busting out about you. I like for my business to be my business. I don't want her blabbing it all around class that she called my mom for this and I going to get into trouble for this. Can't we do that in private between me and you and just step out in the hallway and do such and such. I did not like it when you did this. They, they, they don't. They sometimes tell us to shut up, ya know, sit down and shut up. They could tell us to be quiet. They act like we don't understand what sit down and shut up. I understand what it means, it is just some other students might not understand. Some students may even have a disability where they don't understand how to sit down and be quiet. And they don't understand that. They talk to us wrong. Sometimes I wish I had a tape recorder in class so you could just hear some of the stuff they say to us.

R: Let me ask you this. Do you believe that there is a problem with safety in your school?
S1: As far as drugs, guns or violence?

R: Drugs, guns, violence, or gangs. Just anything in terms of safety. Do you feel unsafe at your school, ever?

S1: Our school is basically pretty safe. We come from ________ and everybody that we know from elementary school goes to school with us and we probably don't have any trouble. Ya know, you look for trouble, you're going to get trouble. You see and you don't see. That is all I'm saying.

R: Have either of you ever felt unsafe at school?

S1: We had a bomb threat not too long ago, but they checked it out and found out it was just a prank.

R: What about you?

S2: No, I feel safe at school because people don't mess with me. Ya know, they don't come up to me and say do you want this and do you want that or do you want to go beat up these people. Ya know, they don't tell me that. I just go on with my business.

R: So you stay pretty much to yourself?

S2: Yes, ma'am.

R: And so they leave you alone?

S2: Yeah. Or sometimes because it was the beginning of the year and they would mess with us because we were freshmen and they would just beat us up for no reason. And my friends are just like that so we starting messing them back. They they would quit because we starting fighting back.

R: So you don't see that safety is a big issue?

SI: No.

R: What about gangs in your school? Do you see any evidence of gangs at your school?

S1: Well, in the restroom there is always some type of writing, but basically I know, ya know, what I'm saying, I am not the coolest kid in school but I am pretty popular. I know what is going on. Anything that happens is going to come through me. I am going to know, ya know what I'm saying? Uh, as far as I know there is not any gangs, but there are groups that hang with each other. But see, we've got this group called the Hall. OK. That's just a little group that hangs together. When a person gets into a fight. They are there to make sure don't nobody else jumps in. It is kinda like a gang, but it's like a crew. They don't kill nobody, or jump anybody. They are just there to back each other up. The majority are there to kill each other. You know what I'm saying. Me. I've got a crew called the Final Point. It's a rap group. I'm into rap. I rap.

R: So what is it called?

S1: Final Point. FPC.

R: OK.

S1: It's never tagged up or anything like that. We are know around the school. That is probably why I don't get bothered with around the school. If I would get bothered, I would fight. And if I, there'd be more than one on me, then I wouldn't worry getting jumped on because they'd be there to back me up. We don't kill anybody or anything like that, ya know, we just there, ya know?
R: Do you ever see anybody at school that claims or flies colors or?
S1: See them everywhere.
R: So you know that they are there?
S1: Yes, but we look at them like they are stupid because ain't nobody in gangs no more. I am not saying that gangs are just totally gone, but they are not as popular as they were back in the early 90s.
R: OK. Thank you. How about you?
S2: No. Me, my brother who used to be in a gang but then he got out because he met this nice looking, nice young lady. He got this gang thing on his arm called LTC. He says he is in it for good, but my mom keep telling him "You're not in it for good. You can get out of it. Just walk away from it." He's like "I don't want to walk away from it." Until he met this girl named Tasha. He's still selling and I don't like that because that is my brother. I want to look up to him when I do something. And if I do something wrong, I want to go to him and ask him what can I do. But like with me, I can't do that because he is out on the streets or he at home or he doing this, or smoking marijuana. I don't like. That's all I ask because at ____________, I go to this teachers call Ms. __________ or Mrs. __________. I like Ms. __________ because she's nice. And I look up to her. And we talk everyday. I also talk to Ms. __________.
R: So do you see any evidence of gangs at school or a lot of colors?
S2: No, they don't do that.
R: So you don't think that they bring it to school very much?
S2: No. They leave it and go back home. They wake up in the morning go to school. They they do whatever in school. Then after school they just talk all they know on the street.
R: So they do their own thing outside but not so much at school? What about a problem with violence at your school? Do you think there is a problem with violence there?
S1: No, not to me.
R: So you haven't seen much of that at all? Tell me what you feel like your principal does to make it safe from gang activity and violence?
S1: Well, I am going to tell you like this. We have, I think one of the best principals in __________. He don't, like Mr. __________ can come up to you and his attitude will just grab you man and you don't want to be around him. Ya know, you don't want to hear what he got to say. And Mr. __________ will come up to you and say what he got to say and be through with it. Mr. __________ will stick with it and you get into trouble for something, and he'll bring it back up and keep bringing it back up until you just don't want to hear no more. I don't get into a lot of trouble, but I've been suspended a lot. And every time I go into his office, he'll throw something else up in my face. He'll say "Well, that's why your mom had to come up here." And that when I retaliate, you know what I'm saying?
R: So you lose your temper?
S1: Yeah. Well, when I had Mr. __________ my tenth grade year, I had a couple of infractions. He said "I don't want you back in here. I think you're a great student and I want you to do this and this." And I did it. With Mr. __________ it is a whole different thing.
R: What about you?
S2: Well, I hardly ever get into no trouble, so I don't know about the principals, but Mr. __________, he is kinda nice, like he was saying. And he'll let you sometimes slide with things like . . .

R: Like what kinds of things will he let you slide with?

S2: Like if we miss lunch detention or tutorials or something like that., He'll give you another day of like lunch detention, or like if you miss tutorials and if you like miss so many of those. Say you miss three tutorials in a row and I got suspended for one day. Then I can come back up here. But if you miss any more, then he'll say "I am sorry, you'll have to be suspended for these how many days," or he'll say "you got lunch detention or you got OCS."

R: Do you feel like he had some strategies in mind that keep down the violence and the gang activities?

S1: Yeah, he pretty much knows what is going on. He know the colors. Red and blue. He feel like a gang person with a lot of red. He just come right out. Are you a Blood? Are you in a gang? Nowadays, back in the early 90s like when I was a freshman, when the gang bang started coming out, you couldn't wear red to school without getting jumped on. Now people just say "I wear what I want because that's what I can afford." People just look at it like that ya know. You see, with Mr. __________, the only way he really ask you if you are in a gang is if you really just wear certain colors everyday.

R: Everyday, or the same color all over?

S1: Yeah, just red shoestrings or red jacket and all of that everyday. Constantly. You know, twice a week or three times a week, he'll really get on you. Sometimes he'll call you into the office and explain to you that you've got to quit doing this, you know. Because there is too much violence and he don't let us sit up at the school, because I get out of school at twelve o'clock. And sometime somebody drive by and he'd think of it like what if somebody would ride by and want to shoot somebody? He won't let us sit up here and I understand that.

R: That's good to keep you safe. So you think that he has taken a lot of time to think through with what he does?

S1: Really good amount of time.

R: What do you believe led him to make those decisions on how to react to gang activity and violence? Do you have any idea of what made him devise those particular strategies?

S1: I think it is the amount of experience he's had. I mean, he worked at ________ and ________ and I think that he worked at ________. So the majority of the population is black, so he know, you know, how we think, what is on my mind, pretty much. He probably know my parents. It's the great deal of respect that he give us. He treats us like we just young adults instead of kids like Mr. ________ treat us. Like we just kids and Mr. ________ treats us like adults. He respect that we just trying to get out of high school and do this.

R: How about you?

S2: I don't know cause this is the first year up at ________. I don't know too much about Mr. ________ or Mr. ________.

R: So you really don't know what led him to make those kinds of decisions?

S2: No.

R: OK, well, that's all right. Were you involved in determining those types of decisions on how to prevent certain kinds of things taking place?
S1: I remember my freshman year there were these little surveys going around and it was about you know how to avoid gangs. You know different ways to say "No thank you" on joining a gang. We had one about drugs. Every day, I'd always see him walking around with the dogs smelling out drugs. They're always there. He's making sure there're no drugs in school. You know, I have a car. I always see them in the parking lot. I see them when I'm leaving. I don't worry about it because I don't do drugs. You know, if someone does do drugs and they find it, they are out of the school because that could bring trouble you know. Who knows, they might be selling drugs, or owe someone for drugs and they'd come up to the school, you know, shooting someone and someone could really get hurt. So he look at it like that. He take care of it. And that is his motto.

R: OK. You feel like you were a part due to these surveys that he passed out?

S1: I feel like I made it a whole lot more safer for the freshmen.

R: Oh, OK.

S1: Us doing that made it a whole lot safer for the freshmen.

R: Has he done that since you've been there? Has he put out the surveys?

S2: Yeah, we had something like that cause when we there and the teachers be telling us, like Mr. or somebody get in trouble. He say, "See, when you become a senior, those freshmen and sophomores are going to come looking for you. So I want you to do the same for me and look up at those seniors and look what they be doing." Some of the freshmen be changing their attitude and be looking all right.

R: So in some schools the principal just totally ignores the children, but you don't feel like he's done that?

S2: No.

R: That's good. How do you feel about what your principal and other adults at your school do to prevent gang activity and violence from being a problem at your school? You've told me you like what he does. Do you have anything else that you want to tell me about what he does or what he doesn't do or the other assistant principals or campus monitors, perhaps?

S1: Well, a lot of people will stop you in the hallway if they see you sagging your pants. They'll either tell you to pull them up or call for help from the office you know. Especially if they come down and you act like you have an attitude, they'll start asking you questions like if you are in a gang or any type of gang activity. The majority of the time they relieve all the problems that we have.

R: So at this point, you feel pretty good about what is going on?

S1: Yeah.

R: Since you are still in school, do you feel safer than you did? Has Mr. been there longer than you have?

S1: He was there my freshman year.

R: So he was there your freshman year. Perhaps this question then doesn't relate to you. Do you feel any safer than you did before he started these rules or strategies? Or did he start them when you first began?

S1: I think he started them when I first began. He may have been there a year before or a couple of years, I don't know. But I know he been there since I been there.
R: OK. Good. If you could go back and change anything at all, this is your opportunity to shine. If you could go back and change anything at all that your principal or the other adults in your building do about gang-related activity and violence, what would you change, and why?

S1: Like in our community or school?

R: Your school.

S1: I would go back and change . . . I'd probably change you know the dress code.

R: Right now you know feel like you have a dress code?

S2: Yeah. Well, they say we got one but some people don't go by it. They say if our shirt is too long that we got to tuck them in, but people be wearing long shirts and they tell them to tuck it in and they pull it back out. So the principal doesn't say anything since because nobody don't do it. They say you can't wear short shorts or you can't you gotta change clothes. They say you can't wear this short shorts no more, then the short skirts, then they'll just keep on wearing it until they say forget it. The principal say well we can't do nothing about it. They won't listen to us about the dress code so we just let them wear what they want to wear. If it were up to me, I'd ask them to stop wearing all that red and blue because people be getting shot over the gang violence. Like my brother, we were on the westside and he had went over to the southside with his homeboys. They had ran away and these dudes had went over there and started beating them up for no reason. I don't know. I guess they was from the westside and they was from the southside. And my brother and my cousin, he keeps preaching to him and telling him why he needs to get out of a gang because it ain't no good. Because him homeboys ain't doing nothing. My mama tries to tell him about gangs and stuff. He needs to listen to my mama because my mama she was getting tired of it. She keep talking to him and he won't listen. So my mama go to her room and start crying for no reason. That really hurts me because I love my mama and I love my brother too. I want to go to school and get into books, get good grades, and make it to the NFL. Say if I go to school and a boy don't like the colors I got on and he just say something to me. I hope it don't be like that. I hope to go to school and wear the colors that they want to wear and live they life.

R: So what you're saying then is that you would like to have a dress code?

S2: Yes. Like Tommy Hilfiger. They got all different colors. I would like to see something like that, but I just don't want to see you wearing just all blue or red or anything.

S1: All I'm asking is just to cut down on some of that stuff.

R: Like what?

S1: Like say a student could wear such a color on a certain day. That would be a challenge for a student for those who want to go into you know clothing design. That would be a whole nother challenge trying to change their thing. You know, because we have "Wacky Day". Like you know, you can wear a hat, sunglasses, you could only wear green that day, or something like that. You know, that is cool, that's what keeps the peace. You know what I'm saying? So I think we don't really need to enforce a new dress code because the old one kind of didn't hurt.

R: So if you were going to have a dress code you would want it to be stricter or not as strict or just enforced?

S1: Just enforced, you know. You see somebody in all red. Mr. _____ do it where they grab them and talking to them. If you see somebody in all red or all blue, you need to send them home. Or if you see them in all red or all blue, you need to grab them and send them home because they're probably in a gang or something.
R: How would you handle that if you were the principal? Would you have them bring their parents back or would you send them home until they changed clothes? Or what would you do?

S1: No. I'd have them bring their parents back.

S2: Yeah.

S1: Because some people don't like to bring their parents up here because they be embarrassed, you know.

S1: I'd just tell them that if they wear all red or blue, sorry you gotta go home, son. You gotta come back with your parents, if you don't just don't come back to my school until they get right.

R: So you really want to feel like you don't have to deal with that at school? If you were deciding how to control gang activity and violence, who would you ask to help you and why?

S2: Mr. __________, Ms. __________, and Ms. __________.

R: So those are two teachers, right?

S2: Yes, ma'am. Because they know what is going on. If they don't know, they act like they really do know.

R: Well, let me tell you what Mr. _____ told me. He told me that as long as people follow the rules and keep a low profile, that he is not going to give them a bad time. Now if they start flashing colors or flashing signs or if they start doing a lot of stuff, doing a lot of stuff openly, then he will deal with that. Now is that pretty accurate?

S1: Yep.

R: So that is pretty much right as far as you've seen? Is that right?

S2: That's right.

R: This is your time to just open up and tell me anything else you want to tell me about gangs and violence or just about your school.

S1: I have been at __________ for three years, and I just basically would like to stay out of trouble with administration at the school.

S2: Well, it is my first year here at ______ and I want to stay here, but they talk about changing it. They talk about changing it to ______, where ______ people can't go here no more. And they're trying to take all the people at ______ and make them go to _______. I don't want to do that because I want to stay at ________, because I got a track coach. Oh, he gives me everything. I don't believe him. I mean I believe him cause he treats me like a son. You know, we got this other boy, you know he likes to talk and stuff. And one day we was at a track meet and this boy embarrassed him cause he wanted to go up to him cause this lady had jerked on him. He yanked off and started cussing at him so Coach _______ had to go off on him.

R: The lady jerked on one of the kids?

S2: Yeah, she tried to tell him to come here to tell him a time and a place and he wouldn't come. So she went up to him and grabbed his arm and he yanked away. He had to tell him the "Man, you really embarrassed us." I think he did, people say he did that though.

S1: I think __________ is a pretty good school, but if they change it, I'll just go to ______ not
I am really not going to put up a big fight. You know, I've been here for three years. I want to graduate.

Student Code of Conduct

The Student Code of Conduct includes the following:

Clothing is not to be worn that contain, advertise, promote or depict racially insensitive, satanic, violent or offensive material. Students are not to wear any clothing accessories, symbols, jewelry or other paraphernalia that depict or suggest association with a gang. They are also not to be brought to school, displayed at school, or to be present at any school related activity.

Pagers and mobile telephones are not permitted at school.

Drug dogs may search lockers and cars for drugs and weapons.

Students may be removed from school due to the commission of a felony.

Teacher Handbook

The teacher handbook lists punishment for various offenses. For fights, a students may be removed from a school activity and/or arrested. For fights at school, the third offense automatically requires that a student be removed from school by a central hearing. It also prohibits the following:

Visiting another school without the permission of both principals;

Possession of alcohol, tobacco or drugs;

Possession of dangerous toys or fireworks;

Possession of weapons or chemical expellents;

Assault, extortion, vandalism, theft, illegal entry, hazing;

Any form of violence or the use of abusive language;

Hats, headbands, bandannas, or clothing that is obscene or offensive;

Clothing that depicts alcohol, tobacco or drugs, or material that is offensive or vulgar;

Clothing, accessories, symbols, jewelry or other paraphernalia that depict or suggest association with a gang;

Other items that are deemed to be in violation because of safety, health, order, well-being, and general welfare of the students in general.
Site Visit

The site visit for School F was an interesting one. Teachers were interviewed and the observation period was during lunch time. Students were everywhere, but they were quiet and orderly. Very little graffiti was seen on the lockers or on the grounds. It appeared that one small area was gang writing in liquid paper in one of the lockers. There was also one area that appeared to be in blue paint.

The dumpster outside had some gang graffiti on it, though I do not readily recognize it. Only one teacher stopped me as an outsider and asked if she could help me. No campus monitors stopped me, nor did any administrators. I did, however, check into the office before beginning my site visit.

In walking around the building, I see some rather profound statements on teachers' doors: "The use of obscenities shows a lack of intelligence." and "Responsibility is not blaming others for your mistakes."

While walking in the halls, a young lady was talking to a group of boys about someone in jail. They talked to her about it, but as she walked away, they made rude, obscene comments about her shorts. As I watched her walk away, they were very short. They were in obvious violation of the published dress code. I spoke to the assistant principal regarding the lack of adherence to the dress code, and he told me that he preferred to have their brains as opposed to their following the dress code. I noticed several other violations as well, so that does not seem to be a high priority with the administration.

School District

Student Code of Conduct

The district Student Code of Conduct includes the following student expectations:

- Demonstrate courtesy and respect for others;
- Behave in a responsible manner;
- Attend classes on time with appropriate materials and completed assignments;
- Be well-groomed and dressed appropriately;
- Demonstrate personal integrity in all work and behavior;
- Contribute to creating and maintaining a safe, orderly learning environment;
- Respect the rights, feelings, and property of self and others;
- Obey all campus and classroom rules.

Consequences for failing to follow those expectations range from oral correction to referral to outside agencies for criminal prosecution.

Level One offenses include:

- Throwing items which can cause bodily injury or property damage;
- Directing profanity, vulgarity or obscene gestures toward other students or school employees;
- Fighting
Theft;
Vandalism;
Hazing;
Failing to follow school rules;
Assault;
Blackmail or extortion;
Committing a felony;
Verbal abuse which disrupts the educational process;
Inappropriate sexual or physical contact;
Sexual harassment;
Possession or using matches or a lighter, smoking or use of tobacco products;
Possession or use of drugs or other contraband;
Possession of a paging device or cellular telephone;
Violating computer use rules,
Disrupting the educational process or school environment;
Violation of safety rules;
Violating dress codes;
Repeated violation of classroom standards of behavior, campus rules, or district policies.

Consequences for these violations range from conferences to formal classroom removal or removal to an alternative education placement.

Level Two offenses include:
Conduct punishable as a felony;
Assault;
Terroristic threat;
Sells, gives, or delivers, uses, or is under the influence of drugs or alcohol not constituting a felony offense;
Behaves in a manner that contains the elements of the offense relating to glue or aerosol paint or other volatile chemicals;
Public lewdness;
Indecent exposure;
Expellable conduct for students under the age of ten;

Retaliation against a school employee, regardless of where the offense occurs;

Engages in a felony and has received adjudication or deferred adjudication, or school personnel has reason to believe that the student has engaged in such conduct. Students engaging in such acts may be punished by suspension or placement in an alternative educational setting.

Level Two offenses which result in the automatic removal of students to an alternative setting include the following:

Engaging in conduct punishable as a felony for which the administration believes that the student's presence threatens the safety of students, teachers, or will hinder the education of students;

Involvement in gang activity;

Involvement in a public school fraternity or sorority or other secret society;

Criminal mischief;

Bringing a weapon to school.

Level Three offenses which result in expulsion include:

Bringing a firearm to school or to a school-related activity on or off campus;

Use, exhibition or possession of a firearm, illegal knife, club, prohibited weapon such as an explosive weapon, machine gun, short-barrel firearm, silencer, switchblade knife, knuckles, armor-piercing ammunition, chemical dispensing device, or zip gun;

Aggravated assault, sexual assault, aggravated sexual assault, arson, murder, capital murder, criminal attempt murder, indecency with a child, aggravated kidnapping, felony drug offenses, retaliation against a school employee combined with any of the other offenses in this section.

Students may be expelled for the following offenses:

Drug offenses on campus or at school-related events on or off school property;

Alcohol offenses on campus or at school-related events on or off school property;

Offenses involving glue, aerosol paint or volatile chemicals;

Criminal mischief;

Serious or persistent misbehaviors while in an alternative educational setting including vandalism, robbery or theft, aggressive, disruptive action or group demonstration, hazing, insubordination, profanity, vulgar language or obscene gestures toward school employees, fighting, physical abuse or threats of physical abuse, possession or distribution of pornographic materials, leaving school grounds without permission, sexual harassment of a student or school employee, falsifying school records or documents, refusing to accept disciplinary measures, or possession of a knife less than illegal length.

These policies are also included in the Policies and Procedures Manual for the district, though the manual does go into more detail regarding offenses and punishments. It also deals with school employees who commit offenses for which they may be disciplined.
USE OF HUMAN SUBJECT
INFORMED CONSENT

NAME OF SUBJECT:

I hereby give consent to Sherree F. Wood, to interview me as part of her doctoral dissertation in order to determine the success of strategies used by the school principal in preventing or reducing gang-related activity and violence on the school campus. I understand the nature of the procedure will include answering interview questions for approximately 60 minutes and clarifying those questions which may occur as a result of my answers. I understand that I may decline to answer any question which I find offensive or feel is intrusive. I understand that I may terminate the interview at any time without prejudice or penalty.

I understand that the interview questions I will be asked will benefit me or my school by determining which strategies are found to be effective in dealing with gang-related activity and violence on campus, thereby making my school a safer, more secure place to work or study. I understand the risks of participating in this study are minimal or zero, and that I will remain anonymous.

Having had the opportunity to read (or have read to me) the above conditions, I voluntarily consent to participate in the study described.

______________________________ Date
Signature

If the person to be interviewed is a child under eighteen (18) years of age, both child and the person responsible for the child must give consent for him or her to participate in the study.

______________________________ Date
Signature, Child Under 18 Years of Age

______________________________ Date
Signature, Person Responsible

Witness Witness

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of North Texas Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research 940/565-3940. The principal investigator in this research is Sherree F. Wood, doctoral student at the University of North Texas. She may be reached at 817/218-3167 or 817/496-7426.
APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW SCHEDULES
STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS TO PREVENT OR REDUCE
GANG-RELATED ACTIVITY AND VIOLENCE IN SELECTED HIGH SCHOOLS IN A
NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS SCHOOL DISTRICT

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRINCIPALS

1. Tell me about your school.

2. Do you perceive that safety is an issue in your school? Describe your concerns.

3. Do you perceive that there is a gang problem in your school? Why do you believe this to be true?

4. Do you perceive that there is a problem with violence in your school? Tell me what kinds of problems are arising.

5. What specific strategies are you employing to make your school safe from gang-related activity and violence? How were they determined?

6. Who, besides yourself, was involved in determining and implementing the strategies you described?

7. How was each person or group involved?

8. How do you believe students are impacted by the implementation of these strategies?

9. If you could change anything about what you have done thus far in responding to gang-related activity and violence, what specific changes would you make, and why?

10. Is there anything else you would like me to know about the issues of safety, gang-related activity and violence in your school that I have not asked you?

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NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS SCHOOL DISTRICT

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR STAFF MEMBERS

1. Tell me about your position and responsibilities in the school.
2. Do you perceive that safety is an issue in your school? Describe your concerns.
3. Do you perceive that there is a gang problem in your school? Why do you believe this to be true?
4. Do you perceive that there is a problem with violence in your school? Tell me what kinds of problems are arising.
5. What specific strategies is your principal employing to make your school safe from gang-related activity and violence?
6. Were you a part of the planning of these strategies? How?
7. Who, besides yourself and your principal, was involved in determining and implementing the strategies you described?
8. How was each person or group involved?
9. How do you believe students are impacted by the implementation of these strategies?
10. If you could change the ways your principal has responded to gang-related activity and violence, what specific changes would you make, and why?
11. If students could change the ways your principal has responded to gang-related activity and violence, what do you believe they would change, and why?
12. Is there anything else you would like me to know about the issues of safety, gang-related activity or violence in your school that I have not asked you?

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INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR STUDENTS

1. Tell me about your school.

2. Do you believe that safety is a problem in your school? Why?

3. Do you believe there is a gang problem in your school? What makes you say that?

4. Do you believe there is a problem with violence in your school? What make you say that?

5. What is your principal doing to make your school safe from gang-related activity and violence?

6. Who do you believe helped him or her make the decisions on how to react to gang-related activity and violence?

7. Were you involved in the planning of the decisions? If so, how?

8. How do you feel about what your principal (or other adults) does to prevent gangs and violence from being a problem in your school?

9. If you are still in school, do you feel safer than you did before your principal started these rules or strategies to prevent gang-related activity and violence? How do you feel safer?

10. If you are not in school now, why not? Did the principal’s rules have anything to do with your decision not to return to school? How?

11. If you could go back and change anything your principal (or other adults) does in your school about gang-related activity and violence, what would you change, and why?

12. If you were deciding how to control gang-related activity and violence at your school, who would you ask to help you, and why?

13. Is there anything else you want to tell me about gangs and violence at your school that I have not asked you?

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REFERENCES


