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ALTERNATIVE BEHAVIOR PROGRAMS TO BE EFFECTIVELY
IMPLEMENTED IN MIDDLE SCHOOLS
I am submitting a thesis entitled "Alternative Behavior Programs to be Effectively Implemented in Middle Schools." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master, with a major in Educational Administration.



Dr. Lloyd Davis, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance.

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Education Administration

Degree

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Accepted for the Council:



Dr. Deborah Arfken
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Suzanne G. Carlson

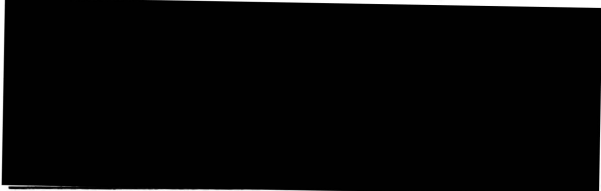
August 1992

To the Graduate Council:


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ABSTRACT

Discipline in public schools tends to be the primary concern of people today. Disciplinary problems are not necessarily the school's fault. Many of the responsibilities traditionally assigned to the home are now assumed by the schools. Transportation, feeding, child care, substance abuse education, and sex education are just a few responsibilities now initiated by the public school system.

Funding for public education has also declined in the past ten years. Because of this, new facilities are not being built to handle overcrowding, more teachers can not be hired to lower student/teacher ratios, and alternative methods of discipline are not being implemented. With these funding problems, it is easy to see why disciplinary problems in schools are not declining.

One of the most commonly used methods of discipline is out-of-school suspensions. A student may be removed from the building anywhere from three to ten days. Yet, out-of-school suspensions cause the student to miss learning opportunities that he/she deserves. The fact that the child is often unsupervised at home leaves open numerous possibilities to continue these same misbehaviors. Also,

the child may consider out-of-school suspension as a reward rather than punishment.

The purpose of this study was to test this hypothesis: correctly implemented, alternative behavior management methods can be more beneficial than out-of-school suspensions.

During the 1990-1991 school year, Ooltewah Middle School in Chattanooga, Tennessee documented the use results of alternative discipline methods.

The majority of students, 318 students out of 374, given an alternative discipline plan received the discipline only once. The students receiving the alternatives were kept within the school environment where learning was not interrupted.

Since 47 out of 65 students disciplined through the use of out-of-school suspensions were suspended more than once, this alternative method seems to be ineffective in modifying student behavior.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This paper is intended to assist readers in determining which discipline strategies are best suited for middle schools. Alternative behavior programs are described in terms of goals and objectives, characteristics, and future plans.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to investigate the magnitude and effectiveness of out-of-school suspensions, as well as other disciplinary actions. Several alternative behavior programs are described.

A South Eastern Tennessee middle school will be examined in detail. The school represents the "typical" middle school. Suggestions are given for the alternative methods of discipline for this age group as discipline continues to be the public's primary concern. Discipline problems are not, however, totally the school's fault. Many of the responsibilities assigned to the home and community in the past are now assumed by schools, including transportation, feeding, child care, substance abuse education, and sex education (Georgiady & Lazares, 1987). During adolescence and preadolescence, which coincide with the middle school age level, discipline issues can be

particularly perplexing to administrators, educators, and parents (Huber, 1984).

As a disciplinary procedure, suspension of students from school has major deficiencies. It is usually used as a last resort and most often occurs in middle and high school. Suspension is often abused and its use deprives students of needed educational services (Comerford & Jacobson, 1987). In recent years, suspension has been considered an inadequate method of discipline because of negative side effects. According to Grice (1986), suspension causes students to miss school which interrupts the learning sequence. Students who are already having difficulty in school are thus deprived of much needed educational services. Suspension also increases the risk of students becoming truant or dropping out and increases tension between school and home. Unsupervised students are also exposed to the perils of the streets. A disproportionate number of minority students are suspended. While literature on school suspension focuses mainly on inner-city students, there is an increasing number of middle class, suburban students who are denied educational benefits through suspension (Comerford & Jacobson, 1987). Leatt (1987) reported that the relationships between unacceptable student behavior, inadequate disciplinary methods, and dropout rates are no longer questioned.

Traditional methods of dealing with disruptive behavior, such as detention, suspension, expulsion, and corporal punishment, have proven to be time consuming, costly, and ineffective (Children's Defense Fund, 1975). Keeping students in school, rather than excluding them for disciplinary reasons, has gained wide support (Comerford & Jacobson, 1987). A variety of alternatives to standard school suspension has been successfully implemented in school systems across the country. These intervention strategies have distinct advantages and make school discipline policy more effective by adding flexibility and demonstrated concern for student welfare (Grice, 1986).

Limitations

This study was limited to 1,200, sixth through eighth grade students at Ooltewah Middle School in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The study was conducted during the 1990-1991 school year. Although the findings, conclusions, and recommendations may be useful to similar schools, careful consideration must be taken before implementation in other schools.

Statement of Hypothesis

Correctly implemented, alternative behavior management methods can be more beneficial than out of school suspensions. Below are reasons that out-of-school suspen-

sion seems ineffective and alternative solutions would be beneficial to those involved:

1. Students with multiple out-of-school suspensions have lower academic achievement.

2. Students suspended out-of-school fail more than those not suspended.

3. Students suspended out-of-school are likely to be suspended again.

4. Male middle school students are suspended out-of-school more often than females.

By incorporating an alternative disciplinary program students remain in school, and their learning is not interrupted.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to identify, investigate, and describe alternative behavior management programs, and the implications for their utilization in middle schools. The following questions guided the study:

1. What types of programs are schools using for behavior management and to what extent are these programs effective?

2. What are the common characteristics shared by effective behavior management programs?

3. To what extent do programs deemed "effective" have implications for incorporation into the middle school setting?

4. What recent developments in behavior management are appropriate for middle school utilization?

Definition of Terms

A series of terms were defined and used in this study.

Alternative. A disciplinary method that does not exclude the student from school.

At-Risk Student. A student who has behavioral, attendance, or academic problems.

Behavior Management Program. The total disciplinary plan a school utilizes to effect change in student behavior.

Effective Programs. Programs which change student behavior in a positive manner, while continuing to provide educational benefits.

Expulsion. A method of punishment which excludes the student from the school setting for the remainder of the school year.

Intervention. Techniques used to change inappropriate behavior and prevent it from recurring.

Middle School. A school organized into grade levels of 5-8, 6-8, 7-8, or 7-9.

Prevention. Techniques used to keep inappropriate behavior from occurring.

Suspension. A method of punishment which excludes the student from the school setting for a length of time.

Traditional Methods. Methods of discipline including detention, suspension, expulsion, and corporal punishment.

Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter I includes a statement of the problem, purpose, definition of terms, and organization of the study. A review of related literature is presented in Chapter II. Included in the review is an introduction to alternative discipline methods, a summary of behavior programs currently used, characteristics of effective discipline programs, implications for their use in the middle schools, and recent developments in behavior management. Chapter III presents the research methodology including the subjects sampled, instruments used, design of the study, procedure, and data analysis. The research findings are provided in Chapter IV. Finally, in Chapter V a summary is given, conclusions cited, and recommendations provided.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

In this study, current research and literature were reviewed in an attempt to assess the various behavior management programs used in schools. This review is divided as follows: (1) What types of programs are being used for behavior management and to what extent are they effective? (2) What common characteristics are shared by effective behavior management programs? (3) To what extent can middle schools incorporate effective behavior management programs? and (4) What recent developments in behavior management are appropriate to middle schools?

Types of Effective Programs Being

Used for Behavior Management

Schools need alternatives to suspension for disciplining problem students -- alternatives which keep students in school rather than excluding them. A review of literature yields a number of substitutes to out-of-school suspension, ranging from corporal punishment to school jobs for disruptive students. Financially, they vary from no-cost for school written assignments to fully funded separate programs. In their report "Suspension --

Capital Punishment for Misdemeanors", Comerford and Jacobson (1987) discuss a variety of alternative educational programs and special classes for students with discipline problems. Alternative schools for dropouts and disruptive students are used as a substitute for suspension from school, and additionally present a new and innovative way to learn. But many school systems find the concept of alternative schools financially unfeasible, even when operating costs are shared by the state (Wooten, 1988).

There are many in-school programs utilizing a variety of techniques as alternatives to suspension. One of the simplest and least radical approaches is an in-school suspension program. In-school suspension (ISS) removes a student from regular academic classes but keeps the student in an isolated, separate, and restricted environment where, in most cases, academic work continues (Foster & Kight, 1988). Such programs have increased rapidly in American secondary schools. Comerford and Jacobson (1987) finds many advantages to this type of program, including:

1. Students do not miss assignments.
2. Students are in school rather than roaming the community.
3. Reinstatement requires no formal procedure.
4. Suspension may be from several or all classes.
5. Suspension is not viewed as a reward.
6. Support services are not interrupted.

7. No permanent conduct record is necessary.
8. Alienation is lessened.
9. State aid continues.

Kent County High School with an enrollment of 850 students in grades nine through twelve, is located in rural Maryland. Kergaard (1985) reported that school administrators here found that out-of-school suspension did little to positively modify the behavior of misbehaving students. Suspended students slept late, loitered, watched television, or went shopping while classmates attended school. An alternative classroom for in-school suspension was developed. The class was managed by a special education teacher who volunteered for the job. The room contained study carrels, reference texts, and a lavatory. Students were isolated from the general school population, even during lunch. In-school suspensions ranged from five to twenty days and assignments were coordinated with classroom teachers. Counseling opportunities were provided and a parent conference was required before a student could return to regular classes. Since the initiation of this program discipline referrals over a three-year period decreased by 25%.

Another type of in-school suspension program, the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), can best be described as a student imposed suspension room. Located near the administrative or guidance offices, students have the

option to request placement in ICU if they are experiencing social, emotional, attitudinal, or academic problems. Someone is available to talk with the student if and when the student is willing. The ICU serves as a time-out place for students, thus, it is a preventative program and very different from the school-imposed, in-school suspension room. The success of the ICU program depends upon the willingness and ability of the administration to anticipate discipline problems and listen to students with an empathetic attitude. The program attempts to correct the underlying causes of misbehavior rather than punish the misbehavior. Administrators continue, however, to remove disruptive students from the classrooms and hallways when necessary and place them in school-imposed suspension programs (Meyers, 1985).

A behavior management program similar to the ICU program is called Suspension Team Outreach Program -- Guidance, Administration, Pupils (STOP-GAP). A Florida guidance counselor implemented a 10-week practicum intervention designed to reduce the number of suspensions and repeat offenses among 9th and 10th graders. A team approach was used to implement a discipline and counseling model that incorporated guidance services as a routine intervention strategy with repeat offenders. Each pupil suspended by the assistant principal met with the guidance counselor at least once to develop a plan for alternative

behavior and to complete a self-esteem inventory. At the end of ten weeks, teachers completed academic and social rating scales for each participant. Program evaluation data indicated fewer suspensions and repeat offenses among participants during the intervention. At least half of the target group demonstrated improvement in the following areas: self-concept, class participation, social interaction, emotional control, adaptability, and attitude. It was concluded that a team discipline approach can reduce suspensions and repeat offenses and promote improved self-concept (Martin-Hollings, 1989).

In Westfield, Indiana, the district discipline policy was built around a program known as the Saturday School Model (Cooley & Thompson, 1988). The program was not limited to Saturdays and was inexpensive to implement. The Saturday School Model focused on causes, rather than symptoms, of misbehavior. It attempted to modify student behavior by subjecting students to experiences that built positive self-concepts. Behavior was the full responsibility of the student, who was provided counseling in areas of need, as well as a support person to assist in building positive behavioral patterns. The curriculum could be expanded to address any problem facing students such as drug abuse, peer conflicts or poor study skills. This Saturday School is an effective method used for behavior modification. This intervention program consists

of two hours of supervised study in a structured environment. Students must report on time with appropriate materials. Talking or leaving the room is not allowed. Uncooperative students are told to leave and must attend another session. During the session, community leaders discuss the ramifications of problem behavior and how it is managed in the business world. Students complete worksheets to analyze personal behavior and indicate personal goals for the next five to eight years. A behavioral contract is then signed. Counseling and support follow the Saturday School experience and serve as monitors for the students' progress. Students are recognized for upholding behavior contracts and modifying problem behavior. Rewards may be certificates, a short field experience at the end of the grading period, or another type of positive reinforcement. While Saturday School is a comprehensive effort to keep students in school, it must be recognized that not all students can function in a traditional school environment (Cooley & Thompson, 1988).

Wilson Junior High in Hamilton, Ohio, initiated an innovative behavior management program that was founded on the belief that parents play a crucial role in student behavior. A punishment of three days out-of-school suspension was waived for a two day parental visitation. This alternative affected all students and served as a strong deterrent to misbehavior. The principal called the

parents when a student began to behave constructively. Each week, teachers would send names of students demonstrating excellent work or achieving worthwhile accomplishments to the principal's office. The principal then telephoned the parents to congratulate them. The school also sponsored in-school homework sessions for parents and students from 5:00-7:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday for help with assignments. The school's public address system was used to recognize good students and the local McDonald's restaurant provided gift certificates as awards for good grades and good behavior (Georgiady & Lazares, 1987).

At suburban Eisenhower Junior High in Darien, Illinois, an individual behavior management plan was in operation for five years. At the beginning of the school year each student received ten points. Points were subtracted for tardiness, disruptive behavior, or incomplete assignments. For initial, minor infractions the student called a parent at once and discussed what happened, in addition to serving a half-hour detention. Serious infractions, such as drug use or possession of firearms, result in a five to ten point loss at the discretion of the principal. At the end of a grading period (nine weeks), students with a "Perfect 10" received a certificate of recognition (Thomason & Pederson, 1985).

A behavior management plan was initiated for students losing all ten points. Students with discipline problems were referred to the Student Support Team (SST) which included the principal, assistant principal, guidance counselor, social worker, psychologist, teacher, parent, or other staff members. Intervention strategies were varied. A homework monitoring sheet and a structured resource study hall were available for students with academic problems. Students unable to complete homework in the monitoring or resource study hall programs attended a special class after school for one and one-half hours of tutoring. The school activity bus ran at the conclusion of the tutorial session to transport students home. Students with difficulties adjusting to the junior high setting, either academic or social, met with a social worker one to three times a week in seminar sessions. According to Thomason and Pederson (1985), the positive points of the Perfect Ten Program were: special education did not become a dumping ground for behavior problem students, there was considerable documentation of problems and effort to accommodate students, 83% of students had a Perfect Ten, there was a less than 17% recidivism. Support from parents also indicated success.

School districts nationwide utilize a model for in-school suspension known as PASS, an acronym for Positive Alternatives to School Suspension. Developed in

St. Petersburg, Florida, between 1972 and 1974, PASS provides a sequence of intervention strategies focusing on reduction of out-of-school suspensions at the secondary level.

Grice (1986) and Leatt (1987) describe the various strategies utilized in the PASS program by public schools in Portland, Oregon:

1. Isolation from regular classes for varying time periods. "Time Out" is a brief cooling off period, usually for one or two class periods, which reorients, a student rather than punishes.

2. In-house suspension where the student is isolated from regular activities for an extended period, not exceeding five days, as a consequence for rules violation. The student is kept on site to minimize loss of contact with the learning environment.

3. Preventive counseling or conferencing gives students an opportunity to describe potential problems with teachers, peers, or academics. Students thus learn to anticipate difficulties and how to avoid or resolve them.

4. Parental contact by staff members to share information regarding student progress and activities.

In Portland, the PASS program was operated by the Department of Student Services and had a full time director. In each school where PASS was operational, the

program was managed by a full time coordinator and an adult paraprofessional. A self-contained classroom was utilized for primary delivery of program services and worked in cooperation with the vice principal in charge of discipline.

Other schools using the PASS Program in the Portland area had after-school detention and Saturday School as components. Detentions were 35-minutes and were assigned on a daily basis by teachers and administrators. Saturday School required students to spend four-and-one-half hours at school on a Saturday morning under strictly controlled conditions (Leatt, 1987).

According to Grice (1986) PASS schools typically have declining suspension rates. Even during periods when suspensions are not reduced, violent behavior such as fighting and assaults were significantly reduced. PASS provides support for students having difficulty and the intervention strategies fortify existing discipline policies. Administrators in charge of discipline support the additional options in effecting appropriate consequences for misbehavior. The disproportionate number of minority students suspended was also reduced in PASS schools. The evidence recommends the implementation of the PASS program for schools where suspensions are high. The main emphasis of the PASS program has been preventive action and

conflict resolution in order to help the student return to their regular classroom as soon as possible (Leatt, 1987).

In 1986, McKnight Middle School in Renton, Washington, instituted a new discipline policy. The policy featured new attendance rules, a new code of conduct, the use of in-school suspensions, and a vandalism prevention program. After years with a reputation for student misbehavior, McKnight achieved the lowest suspension rate in the district and vandalism costs were substantially reduced. The study skills program included school-wide formats for assignments, rules for keeping school notebooks organized, and training in listening, note taking, reading, and writing skills. Curricular improvements included block teaching of social studies and language arts, a reading program, and a special math program placing students according to individual achievement level. Recognition was provided through awards assemblies, special honors for students completing assignments, and broadcast acknowledgement of special efforts by students or staff members (Foster & Kight, 1988).

Among the alternatives to suspension listed by the Children's Defense Fund (1975) are: (1) behavior contracts, (2) peer group counseling, (3) a buddy system which pairs troublesome students with "normal" students throughout their daily schedules, (4) career study centers, (5) special education programs for diagnosis of

discipline problems, (6) home visits, and (7) adoption by a teacher to give the problem student at least one teacher in which to confide. With all of these alternatives to suspension readily available, it is ironic that many of the most progressive school districts in the United States continue to use one of the most educationally detrimental forms of discipline; that is, suspension from school (Comerford & Jacobson, 1987).

Characteristics Shared by Effective Behavior Management Programs

The word discipline is derived from the Latin word "discere", which means to learn, to perceive, to understand, and to teach. Discipline is a total process of learning our mutual rights and responsibilities as they relate to living and working together. Effective school behavior management programs for discipline involve three phases: prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation. Most schools address intervention and rehabilitation but ignore prevention. "The true measure of success in any program is when the individual is willing to make a commitment and be responsible for his or her future behavior" (Guerry, 1987, p. 121).

Students who are candidates for suspension are more likely to have poor attitudes towards academic coursework. To change these attitudes, programs must address learning

handicaps, inadequate preparation in lower grades, and lack of basic skills. Helping students stay on task and understand the need for regular school attendance is an essential feature of programs aimed at improving at-risk students' academic skills (Leatt, 1987).

The lifestyle of an at-risk student is frequently characterized by inappropriate behavior, suspension, failing grades, and a generally negative direction. Therefore, alternatives to out-of-school suspension should incorporate several different components ranging from one-to-one counseling on a daily basis to semester-long courses offered to students in tandem with the current curriculum. Programs should be flexible and individualized. According to Leatt (1987) it is critical that programs provide students with opportunities to experience success instead of failure at school. Although everyone seems to agree that in-school suspension programs should help students succeed academically, nine of the ten so-called "good" programs studied were essentially punitive and had weak academic components. Programs that attempt to break the negative cycle of at-risk students require the students to accept responsibility for individual actions and start the process of resolving personal problems, usually with behavior contracts (Leatt, 1987).

Paula Short (1988), in research of effectively disciplined schools, found that building-level factors are

important in explaining and dealing with discipline in the schools as classroom techniques. She lists the following characteristics of well-disciplined schools:

1. Training in cooperative problem-solving.
3. Decentralized decision-making authority.
3. Student involvement and ownership of problems.
4. Rules and procedures that foster responsibility.
5. Individualized instruction.
6. Awareness and consideration of personal characteristics and problems affecting behavior in students and staff.
7. School/home cooperation.
8. Physical facilities that facilitate the above.
9. It is important that schools project a unified approach to establishing discipline.
10. There should be a working document to guide behavior and staff decisions.
11. Expectations for behavior are part of the school goals and known to all.
12. Teachers are responsible for handling routine problems.
13. An environment which promotes good behavior is student-centered.
14. Schools should focus on discovering causes of behavior problems rather than reacting to symptoms (Short, 1988; Cooley & Thompson, 1988).

15. The curriculum and instructional practices are designed to reach, interest, and challenge the majority of students.

16. Teachers should use a behavior to increase on-task behavior, and timely, specific feedback on assignments motivates students to complete classwork (Short, 1988).

17. Principals of well-disciplined schools retain a high degree of visibility, while relying on teachers to handle routine problems.

18. The role of the principal is to serve as a facilitator for student-teacher problem-solving (Short, 1988).

Jones (1984) estimates that three out of every four schools have some form of printed disciplinary code. According to Lescault (1988), a discipline code is necessary for an effective learning environment. Student behavior tends to fulfill expectations, so expectations must be outlined and communicated. The development process should include a committee composed of faculty, staff, parents, and students. A sense of ownership is important and invites acceptance and assumption of responsibility. Students must view a discipline code as a means of creating a safe, orderly environment for learning, not as a list of rules and regulations for the benefit of administration. All policies and rules should be examined by

the committee. Written policy should be kept as short as possible (Lescault, 1988). Faculty and students alike should receive a copy of the code book and undergo orientation (Wagner, 1987; Lescault, 1988). The handbook should serve as a blueprint for desired behavior (Lescault, 1988).

Jill Wagner (1987) reported that the discipline policy of her Arizona high school worked 95% of the time. The success of the policy was attributed to consistency in rule enforcement, continuous recordkeeping, communication with parents, on-campus suspension, and positive reinforcement activities on a monthly basis.

Programs Deemed Effective

Desmond Leatt (1987) of the Portland, Oregon, public school system confirmed that designing positive alternative programs to replace ineffective out-of-school suspension strategies has become a high priority for many school districts. In-school suspension programs are also being installed at the middle school level as school systems see the need to begin intervention procedures as early as possible to keep potential dropouts in school.

Journalist Cindy Wooten (1988) of the Chattanooga News-Free Press, reported that in 1987 Chattanooga City School officials suspended 3,300 students out of an enrollment of approximately 22,000. Sixty-two percent of

the suspensions involved junior high schools (2,043 of 3,300). Seventh grade students received the highest number of suspensions by grade level, 761 of the total suspended. The number one reason for suspension was fighting (1,017), closely followed by the use of profanity or vulgar language (951). The racial breakdown of suspended students was 2,237 black, 1,057 white, five Hispanic and one Asian. Six students were expelled from school in 1987. All were males; five of the six were junior high students. Four were expelled for possession of firearms; two were expelled for immoral, disreputable conduct. Five of the students were black and one was Hispanic.

The statistics reported by Wooten (1988) certainly support the need for behavior management programs at the middle school level. In their research on the use of suspension at four suburban junior high schools and viable alternatives, Comerford and Jacobson (1987) made recommendations based upon the characteristics of individual schools. They found however, that some general comments about suspension applied to all the schools they examined:

1. Suspension was ineffective in changing disruptive behavior.
2. The frequency of suspension as a disciplinary technique was underestimated by those enforcing its use and overestimated by those receiving it.
3. Boys were suspended far more often than girls.

4. Students from low-income families were suspended at a much higher rate than students whose family income is above \$20,000 per year.

One of the schools in the Comerford & Jacobson (1987) study lacked clearly defined disciplinary rules and procedures. In addition to the absence of a written discipline code, the disproportionate number of suspensions and the absence of parental involvement contributed to feelings of confusion, frustration, and anger by students and teachers. Committees were formed which included students (both suspended and non-suspended), teachers, parents, and administrators. Clear, well-defined rules and procedures with specifically defined penalties for infractions were written. A positive variety of rewards and privileges for good behavior was developed. Rewards included: field trips, assemblies, dances, pep rallies, field days, camping trips, student-faculty athletic contests, movies, and a student lounge. The Parent-Teacher Organization was revitalized through a program of increased involvement in a variety of school activities.

Another school in the Comerford & Jacobson (1987) study had a clear, precise discipline code and the number of suspensions was low. But the students who were suspended were primarily from low-income families and were not a part of the mainstream in the school. Therefore, any alternative to suspension that would isolate these

students from the rest of the student body and further stigmatize them was not viable. Whereas many students have the active participation of parents in school affairs, suspended students were neglected by parents in school-related matters. To involve parents in a cooperative effort in disciplining children, several strategies were utilized to bring students into the mainstream of school life. A concerted, sustained effort and personal contact were initiated by teachers and parents. Parenting workshops and seminars on adolescent problems were instituted. Positive programs to involve suspended students in school activities were developed. Adoption by a teacher, buddy system, peer group counseling, and social exchanges (athletic teams, dances, trips, clubs, and plays) were used to bring students into the mainstream. Behavior contracts and counseling helped to change disruptive behavior patterns and satisfy the need for attention. For students who continued to exhibit disruptive behavior, punishment in the form of after-school detention, overnight suspension from school activities, and short-term suspension rooms were found to be effective.

For a behavior management program to be effective in the middle school setting, Comerford and Jacobson (1987) states that several elements must be present. A clear, well-defined set of rules and procedures must be consistently and equitably applied. There must be a variety of

punitive and therapeutic alternatives to suspension from which to select. The active concern and involvement of parents is essential, as is the dedication of fair, caring, and involved teachers and administrators. A diversity of options achieves optimum results. The key to motivating a student to positively change his/her behavior is to select the best disciplinary alternative from a variety of options.

Suspension will be eliminated only by defending the right of each student to a full education and developing and implementing viable alternatives to suspension in all schools. Failure to reject suspension as a systematic denial of education may result in long-term social costs that we are unwilling or unable to pay (Comerford & Jacobson, 1987).

A preventive program such as the Positive Alternative to School Suspension (PASS) Program offers the variety and flexibility of strategies deemed necessary at the middle school level. Leatt (1987) commends the sequential approach of PASS in preventing inappropriate student behavior from developing into a pattern of conduct that could lead to out-of-school suspension. This middle school program encourages students to make appropriate behavior choices at an early age and helps them to form positive attitudes toward school work.

According to Leatt (1987), the time required to design and implement a PASS Program could be as long as one year. If preliminary planning begins before spring, allowing much of the preparation to be done in the summer, a shorter period is possible. If a school district plans to implement such a program district-wide, it may be wise to begin with a pilot before expanding to all schools.

Recent Developments in Behavior Management

Appropriate for Middle School Utilization

In an effort to provide a community response and focus community resources on school discipline problems, an in-school alternative to court called FIRM was developed. FIRM (Framingham Interagency Rehabilitation Model) was a program for first-time offenders that deals informally, but legally with such problems as truancy, vandalism, drugs, alcohol, fighting, and disruption. Implemented in Framingham, Massachusetts high schools, FIRM created awareness of serious school and legal infractions, and helped to alleviate some backlog in court proceedings.

As described by Gallagher, Flaherty, and Westcott (1987), once the school administration determined that a student offense could be best settled at the school level rather than within the legal system, necessary parties were contacted. If both the parents and student accepted

the program, then the probation department was contacted and a hearing officer scheduled to hear the situation and render a decision. The option to the in-school FIRM process was almost always a "show cause" hearing.

The administrator handled the preliminaries of the hearing, and explained the quasi-judicial nature of the hearing to parents and the student. If the recommendations presented by the hearing officer were not accepted the case was presented to the court. During the hearing, other participants such as involved teachers added pertinent information. The student was then allowed to respond to the information presented. The hearing officer made a recommendation and explained any requirements expected of the student, parents and school. If needed the student was recommended for outpatient or inpatient treatment in such programs as Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous.

The student was also recommended for a work detail in the school or community. The student was expected to contribute to an insurance program for the duration of the work phase. After the work period was completed, a hearing with school officials was held to determine if the student had fully met his obligations.

The most important aspect of the FIRM program was the cooperation between the court, police, and parents. The program generated good public relations for the school.

FIRM set an example for students, especially the close friends of those involved in the program. Administrative time was spent in the schoolhouse, not the courthouse (Gallagher, Flaherty, & Westcott, 1987).

Summary and Analysis of the Literature

The literature reveals a wide range of alternative forms of discipline which have proven more effective than out-of-school suspension. Out-of-school suspensions have been viewed as a reward rather than a punishment. Jacobson (1987) concedes that in-school suspension provides a more positive setting for students and allows greater opportunity to experience success.

Current literature also stresses the need for a team approach, rather than the single faceted isolation required by out-of-school suspension. Parental involvement is a key feature of the team approach. Jones (1984) takes this one step further, by stressing the need for parents, students, faculty and staff to be involved in the development of the disciplinary code. The PASS program which is being used nationwide, implements several of the alternative methods discussed. Grice (1986) stated that PASS schools typically have declining suspension rates. Administrators in charge of discipline support the additional options in effecting appropriate consequences for misbehavior. With interest, time, and money the Chattanooga

community could implement many of these ideas into the school systems.

METHODOLOGY

Sampling and Subjects

Subjects were selected from a population of 1,200 students grades 6-8. The students were enrolled at Colman Middle School. For purposes of determining the scope of discipline problems within a middle school, Colman Middle School was selected. The school was selected by availability, availability rather than by choice, however, it is relatively large and representative. Because of this availability, the researcher had access to building level records containing data on actions taken by administrators.

Colman students are from homes whose income sources range from agricultural to professional, with income levels ranging from middle to upper, as well as, some lower income level students. Hence, discipline problems at Colman are typical of other middle schools.

Colman Middle School is a part of the Hamilton County School System which operates public schooling for residents within Hamilton County but outside the city of Chattanooga. Any discipline problems too severe for individual schools are referred to the Hamilton County

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Sampling and Subjects

Subjects were selected from a population of 1,200 students grades 6-8. The students were enrolled at Ooltewah Middle School. For purposes of determining the scope of disciplinary problems and actions within a middle school, typical of others within Southeastern Tennessee, Ooltewah Middle School was selected. The school was selected by availability considerations rather than random choice, however, it is reasonably large and multi-racial. Because of this availability, the researcher had access to building level records containing data on actions taken by administrators.

Ooltewah students are from homes whose income sources range from agricultural to professional, with income levels ranging from middle to upper, as well as, some lower income level students. Hence, discipline problems at Ooltewah are typical of other middle schools.

Ooltewah Middle School is a part of the Hamilton County School System which operates public schooling for residents inside Hamilton County but outside the city of Chattanooga. Any discipline problems too severe for individual schools are referred to the Hamilton County

School Board. At the time of the study the assistant superintendent and a discipline committee consisting of school administrators and board members met periodically to discuss the student's referral. Disciplinary action is decided upon by the committee. Finally, the students, parents, and committee meet to discuss the necessary implementation. Any disagreements are then voiced, and a plan is agreed upon.

Instruments

Throughout the school year, documentation was kept on each student who received disciplinary action (see Appendix A, p. 77). Gender, race, and age data were included. The causes leading to the discipline, actions taken, and recurrences were also recorded.

Design

The design of this study is an action descriptive research study with limited implications for other middle schools. The setting was a suburban, public middle school located near Chattanooga, Tennessee. The average class consisted of 30-35 students. A school day consisted of seven forty-five minute periods. Discipline problems that were unable to be handled by the classroom teacher were referred to the school office to be handled by either the assistant principal or principal. In most cases the

classroom teacher attended to normal negative behaviors such as cheating, gum chewing, paper throwing, tardies, and failure to complete assignments. However, building administrators dispensed discipline for cases of extreme misbehavior such as cursing, fighting, or disrespect.

Data Analysis

The primary descriptive Procedure statistics to be used in this

Those students attending Ooltewah Middle School who were assigned detentions, Saturday School, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or alternative school participated in this study. The data for this were from the 1990-1991 school year.

Throughout the research period students with specific types of discipline problems were referred to the administration by teachers and staff. A referral form documenting the time, place, infraction, and any previous disciplinary action accompanied each student. During the disciplinary conference with the administrator, notes were made and any administrative actions taken were included. Action ranged from detention to suspension. Copies of the forms were then filed in the assistant principal's office.

At the end of the school year, the records from the assistant principal's office were examined to determine the primary causes of office referral. The reasons, recurrences and resultant disciplinary actions were tallied and tables formulated this research. These tables

and analysis concerning them can be found in Chapter 4. Examination of the data enabled the researcher to make comparisons and draw conclusions about the effectiveness of suspensions and other behavior management techniques.

Data Analysis

The primary descriptive statistics to be used in this analysis are frequency distribution and appropriate cross-tabulations. In order for the data to be collected properly, the administrator in charge of discipline must document each infraction. The time, date, and explanation of the event was documented for each incident.

In Chapter 4, disciplinary cases, the frequency of various offenses, and disciplinary actions taken is analyzed. Also specific information about various alternative behavior programs are discussed. The major characteristics of each program are listed and ways of implementing each are discussed.

CHAPTER IV

SUSPENSIONS FOR 1980-1981 SCHOOL YEAR

ANALYSIS

Chapter 4 presents data gathered in the study and formulated into various tables, and discussed where important. The tables show frequency distributions and percentiles. Statistics of out-of-school suspension, in-school suspension, and Saturday School are represented.

There are three types of suspensions, seen in Table 1, administered at Ooltewah Middle School. The first and most severe is out-of-school suspension where a child is removed from the school from 3-10 days, depending upon the severity of the offense. Next is in-school suspension where the child is removed from the regular classroom and placed in a closely monitored room away from the student population. Here, learning still takes place but social privileges once enjoyed are taken away. This lasts from one to five days. Finally, there is Saturday School, a full day of school held on a Saturday. Parents must provide transportation to and from school on this day.

Suspension	Percentage
One time only	65.1
Two times only	10.8
Three times only	7.7
Four times	15.4
TOTAL	100.0

TABLE 1
 SUSPENSIONS FOR 1990-1991 SCHOOL YEAR
 BY GENDER AND RACE

	Out-of-School	In-School	Saturday School
Black male	15	8	7
White male	29	49	176
Black female	2	10	10
White female	19	12	46
TOTAL	<u>65</u>	<u>79</u>	<u>239</u>

Sixty-five students were suspended out-of-school from Ooltewah Middle School during the 1990-1991 school year (See Table 2). During the time period observed, some students were suspended from one to four times. The modal number of suspensions was one, with 76.9 percent with students having one or two suspensions only.

TABLE 2
 FREQUENCY OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS
 SCHOOL YEAR 1990-1991

Suspensions	Frequency	Percentage
One time only	43	66.1
Two times only	7	10.8
Three times only	5	7.7
Four times	10	15.4
TOTAL	<u>65</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Table 3 represents the students who were suspended once during the 1990-91 school year. There were 43 students suspended one time, with the most common reason for out of school suspension being fighting, 13 out of 43, for a 30 percent relative frequency. The next most frequent reason was disrespect to teachers, with 10 out of 43, for a 23 percent relative frequency.

The statistics seem encouraging since these students seemed to have learned from their mistakes as shown by the fact that they were not suspended again during the year.

TABLE 3
REASONS FOR SUSPENSION OF STUDENTS
ONE TIME ONLY OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS

SCHOOL YEAR 1990-1991

Reasons for Suspensions	Frequency	Percentage
Fighting	13	30.2
Disrespect to teacher	10	23.2
Classroom misconduct	6	13.9
Bus problems	3	7.0
Alcohol	3	7.0
Skipping	2	4.7
Other misconduct	2	4.7
Vandalism	2	4.7
Forgery	1	2.3
Weapons	1	2.3
TOTAL	43	100.0

Table 4 displays the reasons for suspensions for those students suspended twice. The most common reason for suspension was fighting, with five out of seven students, for a 71 percent relative frequency. The second most common reason was smoking, with three out of seven students, for a 43 percent relative frequency. There was a total of seven students suspended twice which made a total of fourteen reasons for suspensions.

TABLE 4
 REASONS FOR STUDENTS BEING SUSPENDED
 OUT-OF-SCHOOL TWICE
 SCHOOL YEAR 1990-1991

Reasons for Suspensions	Frequency	Percentage
Fighting	5	35.7
Smoking	3	21.5
Disrespect to teachers	2	14.3
Skipping	2	14.3
Bad language	1	7.1
Bus problems	1	7.1
TOTAL: Seven suspended twice =	14	100.0

There were five students, as shown in Table 5, suspended three times during the 1990-1991 school year. Each student was suspended three different times, which made a total of 15 reasons for out-of-school suspensions. This statistic demonstrates that out-of-school suspensions may not be the best method for discipline. The most common reasons were disrespect to teachers and behavior problems on the bus, each with three out of fifteen, for a 20 percent relative frequency.

TABLE 5
 REASONS FOR STUDENTS BEING SUSPENDED
 OUT-OF-SCHOOL THREE TIMES
 SCHOOL YEAR 1990-1991

Reasons for Suspensions	Frequency	Percentage
Disrespect to teachers	3	20.0
Bus problems	3	20.0
Fighting	2	13.3
Skiping	2	13.3
Vandalism	2	13.3
Smoking	1	6.7
Stealing	1	6.7
Other misconduct	1	6.7
TOTAL: Five suspended three times	<u>15</u>	<u>100.0</u>

There were ten students, as shown in Table 6, suspended four times during the 1990-1991 school year. Because each student was suspended four times, a total of 40 reasons were given. The most common reason for suspension was disrespect to the teacher. This occurred in thirteen out of forty suspensions for a 32.5 percent relative frequency. This statistic represents the ineffectiveness of out-of-school suspension. Most out-of-school suspensions are at the least 3 days and can be in length of 10 days. Thus a student with four suspensions can miss from 12 to 40 days during the school year. The learning process is interrupted for entirely too long.

TABLE 6
REASONS FOR STUDENTS BEING SUSPENDED
OUT-OF-SCHOOL FOUR TIMES
SCHOOL YEAR 1990-1991

Reasons for Suspensions	Frequency	Percentage
Disrespect to teacher	13	32.5
Fighting	7	17.5
Bad language	5	12.5
Drugs	5	12.5
Class misconduct	4	10.0
Skiping	3	7.5
Conduct	2	5.0
Stealing	1	2.5
TOTAL: Ten suspended four times =	<u>40</u>	<u>100.0</u>

There were twice as many 8th graders suspended out-of-school as either 6th or 7th graders. Disrespect to teachers was the most common reason for suspension and was proportionate across the three grades with 8, 8, and 13. Fighting, which was the next most frequent infraction, showed grades 6 and 8 with incidents totaling 10 and 11 respectively. Grades 6 and 8 were most affected by this behavior. (See Table 7).

TABLE 7
REASONS FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS BY GRADE
ONE TO FOUR SUSPENSIONS PER STUDENT

Reasons	6th	7th	8th	TOTAL
Disrespect to teachers	8	8	13	29
Fighting	10	6	11	27
Classroom conduct	2	4	4	10
Skipping	2	3	4	9
Bus problems	1	1	5	7
Bad language	0	1	5	6
Drugs	1	0	4	5
Misconduct	1	3	1	5
Smoking	0	2	2	4
Vandalism	0	2	2	4
Alcohol	1	0	2	3
Stealing	0	1	1	2
Forgery	0	0	1	1
Weapons	1	0	0	1
TOTAL	16	17	32	65
TOTAL PERCENT	24.6	26.2	49.2	100

Showing disrespect to teachers was overall the most frequent reason for suspension of students, with 29 out of 113 total incidents, or 25.7 percent relative frequency. Fighting was close behind with 27 out of 113, or 23.9 percent relative frequency. Classroom misconduct was the third most frequent behavior problem having 10 cases out of 113, or 8.8 percent relative frequency. Skipping school was next, with 9 out of 113, or 8.0 percent relative frequency (See Table 8).

TABLE 8
 OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS BY REASONS
 SCHOOL YEAR 1990-1991

Reason	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Cases
Disrespect to teachers	29	25.7	44.6
Fighting	27	23.9	41.5
Classroom misconduct	10	8.8	15.4
Skipping	9	8.0	13.8
Bus problems	7	6.2	10.8
Bad language	6	5.3	9.2
Misconduct	5	4.4	7.7
Drugs	5	4.4	7.7
Smoking	4	3.5	6.2
Vandalism	4	3.5	6.2
Alcohol	3	2.7	4.6
Stealing	2	1.8	3.1
Forgery	1	.9	1.5
Weapons	1	.9	1.5
TOTAL	113	100.0	

There was a proportionate distribution of suspensions of both black and white students for disrespect to teachers and fighting. However, the students suspended for classroom misconduct were 90 percent white and students suspended for vandalism were 100 percent white. Blacks were the most frequent offenders for bad language as seen by a 83.3 percent suspension rate. (See Table 9).

TABLE 9
REASONS FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS BY RACE
SCHOOL YEAR 1990-1991

Reason	White	Black	TOTAL
Disrespect to teacher	22	7	29
Fighting	21	6	27
Class misconduct	9	1	10
Skiping	5	4	9
Bus problems	4	3	7
Bad language	1	5	6
Misconduct	4	1	5
Drugs	3	2	5
Smoking	2	2	4
Vandalism	4	0	4
Alcohol	3	0	3
Stealing	2	0	2
Forgery	1	0	1
Weapons	0	1	1
TOTAL	48	17	65
PERCENT TOTAL	73.8	26.2	

There were twice as many boys suspended as girls during the 1990-1991 school year, with 44 boys versus 21 girls, or 67.7 percent versus 32.3 percent. Boys overwhelmingly led in disrespect to teachers, with 21 boys to 8 girls, or 72.4 percent to 27.6 percent of the cases; fighting with 25 boys to 2 girls, or 92.6 percent to 7.4 percent; and bad language with 5 boys to 1 girl or 83.3 percent to 16.7 percent. The girls were suspended more frequently for skipping school with 6 cases for girls to 3 for boys, or 66.7 percent to 33.3 percent; and alcohol related reasons, with 3 cases to none or 100 percent to 0 percent. (See Table 10).

TABLE 10
 REASONS FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS BY GENDER
 SCHOOL YEAR 1990-1991

Reasons	Male	Female	TOTAL
Disrespect to teacher	21	8	29
Fighting	25	2	27
Classroom misconduct	7	3	10
Skipping	3	6	9
Bus	4	3	7
Bad language	5	1	6
Drugs	5	0	5
Misconduct	2	3	5
Smoking	2	2	4
Vandalism	2	2	4
Alcohol	0	3	3
Stealing	1	1	2
Forgery	1	0	1
Weapons	1	0	1
TOTAL	44	21	65

6th	29	3	32
7th	11	6	17
8th	14	2	16
TOTAL	54	11	65

Table 11, shows that more than half of all failures among those suspended were in 7th grade, with 6 failing and 11 passing, or 35 percent to 65 percent. However, 7th graders were only 26.2 percent of those suspended, with 8th graders being 49.2 percent of those students suspended.

TABLE 11
 FAILURE BY GRADE LEVEL FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS
 SCHOOL YEAR 1990-1991

Grade	Passed	Failed	TOTAL
8th	29	3	32
7th	11	6	17
6th	14	2	16
TOTAL	54	11	65

The major reasons found in the analysis associated with those failing were disrespect to teachers, with 24 passing to 5 failing or 86 percent to 17 percent; fighting, with 21 passing to 6 failing, or 77 percent to 22 percent; and bad language, with 1 passing to 5 failing, or 17 percent to 83 percent. Each of the statistics below were for out-of-school suspensions during the 1990-1991 school year. (See Table 12).

TABLE 12
 PASS VS. FAILURE FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENDED
 STUDENTS BY REASONS
 SCHOOL YEAR 1990-1991

Reason	Passed	Failed	TOTAL
Disrespect to teachers	24	5	29
Fighting	21	6	27
Class misconduct	8	2	10
Skipping	9	0	9
Bus problems	7	0	7
Bad language	1	5	6
Drugs	3	2	5
Misconduct	4	1	5
Smoking	4	0	4
Vandalism	4	0	4
Alcohol	3	0	3
Stealing	2	0	2
Forgery	1	0	1
Weapons	1	0	1
TOTAL	54	11	65
PERCENT OF TOTAL	83.1	16.0	

In Table 13, the frequency of in-school suspensions assigned by grade are shown. Eighth graders were assigned in-school suspensions almost twice as frequently as sixth graders during the 1990-1991 school year. The most common reason for in-school suspension was fighting. There were 105 cases documented, for an 80 percent relative frequency. Although 79 students were suspended, some of those students were suspended multiple times. This explains the 132 total in-school suspensions.

TABLE 13
IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS BY REASON AND GRADE
SCHOOL YEAR 1990-1991

Student Suspensions for 1990-1991	Frequency
8th grade	58
7th grade	44
6th grade	30
TOTAL	132
<u>Reasons for Suspensions</u>	
Fighting	105
Absenteeism and tardiness	11
Misconduct and language	8
Possession of Barbitol or legend drug	4
Alcohol	3
Tobacco products	1
TOTAL	132

In-school suspension was most often imposed on seventh graders. (See Table 14). It was used 18 percent more often with seventh graders than with sixth or eighth grade students. This method of discipline proved to be most effective in preventing students from failing due to the fact that the learning process was not interrupted by removing the student from the school environment.

TABLE 14
 IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS PASS/FAIL RATE BY GRADE
 SCHOOL YEAR 1990-1991

Grade	Passed	Failed	Percentage of Frequency
8th	17	4	26.6
7th	29	7	45.6
6th	16	6	27.8
TOTAL	<u>62</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Over 50 percent of the students that attended in-school suspension were sent only once. (See Table 15). Students attending twice accounted for 30.4 percent of the total. The failure rate was 2 to 1 for those who attended in-school suspension three or more times, while the success rate for the other two groups was 8 to 1. These statistics indicate that in-school suspension is a successful method of student discipline and does not hinder their chance to succeed academically.

TABLE 15

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION PASS/FAIL RATE BY

NUMBER OF TIMES SUSPENDED

SCHOOL YEAR 1990-1991

Frequency	Passed	Failed	Percentage of TOTAL
1	38	2	50.6
2	19	5	30.4
3+	5	10	19.1
TOTAL	<u>62</u>	<u>17</u>	

In-school suspensions were assigned more frequently to males; however, in grade 6, the statistics were more proportional. (See Table 16). Grades 7 and 8 saw 44 males to 13 females suspended in-school or 72.2 percent to 27.8 percent respectively.

TABLE 16
 IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS BY GENDER AND GRADE
 SCHOOL YEAR 1990-1991

Gender	Grade			Percent
	6	7	8	
Male	13	27	17	72.2
Female	9	9	4	27.8
TOTAL	22	36	21	100.0

White males were given in-school suspension as behavior modifications at a much higher rate than any other combination of gender and race. (See Table 17). Statistics show 49 white males out of 79 students suspended, or 62 percent of the total were white males.

TABLE 17
 IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS BY GENDER AND RACE
 SCHOOL YEAR 1990-1991

Race	Gender	
	Male	Female
White	49	12
Black	8	10
TOTAL	<u>57</u>	<u>22</u>

The Saturday School method of discipline was rarely used more than once, with only 2 cases out of 237, or 0.8 percent. (See Table 18). It was most often used for 8th grade students, which had 45.2 percent of Saturday School suspensions. Grades 6 and 7 had an average of 27.4 percent of Saturday School use.

TABLE 18
SATURDAY SCHOOL SUSPENSION BY GRADE AND FREQUENCY
SCHOOL YEAR 1990-1991

Grade	Once Frequency	Twice Frequency
8th	107	1
7th	59	1
6th	71	0
TOTAL	<u>237</u>	<u>2</u>

The failure rate was extremely low for Saturday School suspensions. (See Table 19). Only six out of 233 failed for a rate of 2.5 percent. These statistics indicate that Saturday School is an effective form of alternative discipline, due to the low failure rate.

TABLE 19
SATURDAY SCHOOL PASS/FAIL RATE BY GRADE
SCHOOL YEAR 1990-1991

Grade	Pass	Gender Fail	Percentage of Frequency
8th	105	3	108
7th	58	2	60
6th	70	1	71
TOTAL	<u>233</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>239</u>

White males were given Saturday School as a discipline method at a rate of 4 to 1 over other students. (See Table 20). Black females had a rate of about 3 to 2 over black males for being suspended to Saturday School.

TABLE 20
 SATURDAY SCHOOL BY GENDER AND RACE
 SCHOOL YEAR 1990-1991

Race	Gender	
	Male	Female
White	176	46
Black	7	10
TOTAL	<u>183</u>	<u>56</u>

There were 1072 total office referrals during the 1990-1991 school year. As displayed in Table 21, disrespect to teachers led as a reason with 196 out of 1072, or 18.4 percent. Fighting accounted for 155 out of 1072 cases, or 14.5 percent. There were 153 incidents out of 1072, or 14.3 percent, that occurred on the bus. Demerits were reasons for referrals 105 out of 1072 times, or 9.8 percent. The next most common reason for referrals was student tardies, 96 out of 1072, or 9.0 percent.

General classroom misbehavior was the largest category of office referrals. Six hundred and thirty-one students misbehaved during instruction time. (See Table 22). Disrespect to teachers accounted for 196 cases, or 31.1 percent, and demerits 105, or 16.6 percent. Closely following demerits were tardies, with 96 cases, or 15.2 percent. There were 90 cases of skipping class, or 14.3 percent. This statistic is extremely high and should be monitored closely by the administration.

TABLE 21
 SUMMARY OF MIDDLE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE STATISTICS
 REASONS FOR OFFICE REFERRALS
 SCHOOL YEAR 1990-1991

Reason for Office Referrals	Frequency
Disrespect to teacher	196
Fighting	155
Bus problems	153
Demerits	105
Tardies	96
Skipping class	90
Class misconduct	78
Bad language	66
Improper boy/girl conduct	34
Vandalism	26
Cafeteria misbehavior	23
Smoking/tobacco use	16
Other*	19
Stealing	7
Drugs	5
Alcohol	3
TOTAL	1072

TABLE 22
 OFFICE REFERRALS FOR DISCIPLINE BY TYPE
 GENERAL CLASSROOM MISBEHAVIOR
 1990-1991 SCHOOL YEAR

Classroom Disciplinary Problems	Frequency	Percentage
Disrespect to the teacher	196	31.0
Demerits	105	16.6
Tardies	96	15.2
Skiping class	90	14.3
Class misconduct	78	12.4
Bad language	66	10.5
TOTAL	631	100

There were three hundred and ninety-one incidents of misbehavior outside of the classroom. Fighting and problems on the school bus overwhelmingly led this category with 155, or 39.6 percent, and 153, or 39.1 percent, respectively. (See Table 23).

TABLE 23
OFFICE REFERRALS FOR DISCIPLINE BY TYPE
MISBEHAVIOR OUTSIDE SCHOOLROOM
1990-1991 SCHOOL YEAR

Outside Classroom Disciplinary Problems	Frequency	Percentage
Fighting	155	39.6
Bus problems	153	39.1
Improper girl/boy conduct	34	8.7
Vandalism	26	6.7
Cafeteria misbehavior	23	5.9
TOTAL	391	100.0

The thirty-one infractions listed in Table 24 led to immediate suspension. In the majority of behaviors a law was broken as well as school policies. There were 16 students suspended for smoking, or 51.6 percent. Stealing, drugs, and alcohol followed next. Each of these behaviors led to a 10-day suspension.

TABLE 24
 OFFICE REFERRALS BY OFFENSE
 IMMEDIATE SUSPENSIONS
 1990-1991 SCHOOL YEAR

Immediate Suspension Disciplinary Problems	Frequency	Percentage
Smoking/tobacco use	16	51.6
Stealing	7	22.6
Drugs	5	16.1
Alcohol	3	9.7
TOTAL	31	100.0

Throughout the school year situations will arise that are not specifically addressed in the school handbook. Further these situations are not appropriate or are dangerous for the school environment. During the year there were 5 out of 19, or 26.3 percent, of students who were disciplined for carrying weapons. Gum chewing also had the same number of referrals, 5. Three out of 19 suspensions, or 15.7 percent, were for forgery and mooning had 2 out of 19, or 10.5 percent. The remainder of discipline problems were for possession of fireworks, spitting, selling condoms, and harassment; each accounted for 1 out of 19 cases, or 5 percent. (See Table 25).

TABLE 25
OFFICE REFERRALS BY TYPE
MISCELLANEOUS NOT SPECIFICALLY
1990-91 SCHOOL YEAR

Other Disciplinary Problems Defined	Frequency	Percentage
Gum	5	26.3
Weapons	5	26.3
Forgery	3	15.7
Mooning	2	10.5
Firecrackers	1	5.3
Spitting	1	5.3
Selling condoms	1	5.3
Harassment	1	5.3
TOTAL	19	100.0

Detentions are another alternative form of discipline used in middle schools. Minor infractions such as continued talking during class or throwing paper constitute a detention. There were fifty-two students who attended detention hall during the 1990-1991 school year. About 97 percent of those given detention were white. Detention is held immediately after school for an extra hour. It is to act as a study hall for the student and no talking is permitted. (See Table 26).

TABLE 26
DETENTIONS BY GENDER AND RACE
1990-1991 SCHOOL YEAR

Black male	2
White male	30
Black female	1
White female	19
	—
TOTAL	52

Throughout Chapter 4, alternative discipline records and their effectiveness were provided. In-school suspension, Saturday School, and detention statistics were given to support their use in the schools, as opposed to out-of-school suspension. The major reasons for these alternatives to out-of-school suspensions were to keep students within the school environment and to provide them with learning opportunities they deserve.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DATA INTERPRETATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

School systems nationwide use a great variety of behavior management programs. Alternatives to out-of-school suspension include imposed in-school suspension, student elected "time-out" centers, Saturday School, parental visitation, behavior contracts, and point systems. Programs may focus on the prevention, intervention, or rehabilitation of student problem behavior. Behavior management programs which incorporate counseling, individualization, and opportunities to help students develop positive self-concepts are most effective.

Effectively disciplined schools have a published handbook containing discipline policy constructed by a committee which includes students, teachers, parents, and administrators. This handbook is the blueprint for maintaining a safe, orderly environment that is conducive to learning.

In-school suspension programs, long a fixture at the secondary level, have also been utilized at the middle school level so that intervention begins as early as possible. Effective middle school behavior management

programs achieve optimum results when a variety of alternatives to suspension are available.

A recent development in behavior management appropriate to middle school utilization is a quasi-judicial in-school alternative to the judicial system. The program deals informally but legally with students who are first-time offenders, and helps alleviate the back-log of court proceedings. In summary, successful schools exhibit the following characteristics consistently:

1. Training in cooperative problem-solving.
3. Decentralized decision-making authority.
3. Student involvement and ownership of problems.
4. Rules and procedures that foster responsibility.
5. Individualized instruction.
6. Awareness and consideration of personal characteristics and problems affecting behavior in students and staff.
7. School/home cooperation.
8. Physical facilities that facilitate the above.
9. It is important that schools project a unified approach to establishing discipline.
10. There should be a working document to guide behavior and staff decisions.
11. Expectations for behavior are part of the school goals and known to all.

12. Teachers are responsible for handling routine problems.

13. When principals are involved in routine discipline matters, the incidence of suspension is higher.

14. An environment which promotes good behavior is student-centered.

15. Schools should focus on discovering causes of behavior problems rather than reacting to symptoms of problems (Short, 1988; Cooley & Thompson, 1988).

16. The curriculum and instructional practices are designed to reach, interest, and challenge the majority of students.

17. Teachers use a powerful behavior for increasing on-task behavior, and timely, specific feedback on assignments motivates students to complete classwork (Short, 1988).

18. Principals of well-disciplined schools retain a high degree of visibility, while relying on teachers to handle routine problems.

19. The role of the principal is to serve as a facilitator for student-teacher problem-solving (Short, 1988).

Data Interpretations

From the data gathered at Ooltewah Middle School and with implications to other schools nationwide, the

following interpretations relating to suspension and alternative behavior management programs may be made.

1. Since 22 out of 65 students disciplined through the use of out-of-school suspension were suspended more than once, out-of-school suspensions seem to be ineffective in modifying repeated suspensions. These 22 students were suspended a total of 69 additional times.

2. In-school suspension was assigned to 79 students. Forty-nine percent of those students, (39 students), were repeat offenders.

3. Of the students receiving in-school suspension, 21 percent failed. Only 16 percent of the students receiving out-of-school suspension failed.

4. With the exception of in-school suspensions for fighting (105), the most frequent causes of in-school suspensions and their numbers were as follows:

a. Attendance-related absenteeism, tardiness and truancy, (11); immoral, disreputable conduct: vulgar, profane language, (8); and fighting, (105).

b. Possession, use or sale of any barbitol or legend drug as defined in Tennessee Code Annotated 52-1201, 52-1401, (4).

c. Drinking, possession, or distributing an alcoholic beverage, (3).

5. Only two out of 239 students were given Saturday School.

6. More suspensions occur in the 8th grade than 6th or 7th.

Conclusions

The literature suggests that as a disciplinary tool, out-of-school suspension of students is often ineffective. Additionally it denies students educational benefits. In-school suspension is the primary method for discipline at most secondary and many middle schools. The majority of school behavior management programs focus on the punishment of misbehavior and ignore the prevention strategies suggested by research.

A review of literature also reveals the most effective programs discipline students within the school setting utilizing a variety of techniques ranging from peer counseling to parental visitation. Alternatives to out-of-school suspension should be varied and flexible to allow for individual differences. Discipline must be administered fairly and consistently within the guidelines of the school discipline plan.

A total behavior management program such as Positive Alternatives to School Suspension (PASS) incorporates a variety of disciplinary strategies such as "time out centers", in-house suspension, counseling, detention, tutorial assistance, and increased parental involvement.

This type of program has proven to be effective in high schools and middle schools.

Although the data is inconclusive with regards to the benefits of in-school versus out-of-school suspension at Ooltewah Middle School, it seems appropriate that students should be kept within the learning environment even as they are disciplined. Often the most common causes of suspension involved activities which students would only be more easily engaged in while out of school, a program such as the PASS program should have merit in its ability to restrain students from participating in these behaviors.

Implications

Most schools ignore research when developing a behavior management program. Research suggests schools would benefit from programs that address the prevention of problem student behavior rather than punishing misbehavior. At-risk students, in particular, need counseling, tutorial assistance, and opportunities which develop positive self concepts. As long as schools continue to concentrate on the punishment of problem behavior, the more likely the behavior will continue. Administrators and teachers should be concerned with the causes of misbehavior if the cycle is to stop. As previously stated, Ooltewah Middle School is no exception. Since middle

school students are so impressionable, any program which focuses upon modification of problem behavior rather than merely its punishment is worth trying.

Once a written discipline policy and behavior management program have been developed, the curriculum and instruction should be examined. Students are motivated by a realistic curriculum presented by competent, caring teachers both of which are available at Ooltewah Middle School.

Recommendations

The primary considerations in implementing alternatives to suspension are financial and philosophical. The recommendations suggested from the research are for Ooltewah Middle School as well as other middle schools similar in demographics. School systems have limited funds, therefore the strategies selected for behavior management must be affordable. Second, the program must be philosophically attuned with the administration, faculty, students, and community. Changes in disciplinary procedures must evolve over time.

Schools are suggested to:

1. Increased use of in-school suspension and Saturday School would prove to be beneficial in modifying student behavior.

2. Develop a written discipline policy which is distributed and explained to every person affected by the rules and procedures set forth.
3. The behavior management program should have components which address prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation.
4. The program should attempt to remedy not punish problem behavior.
5. School guidance counselors should be freed of clerical duties in order to counsel students who need them. Ideally, teachers would have time and opportunity to become more personally involved with the students they teach.
6. Smaller teacher-pupil ratios increase the amount of personalization a teacher is able to give.
7. Behavior management must be consistently and fairly administered in a timely manner.
8. Each school should have a location on campus for in-school suspension.
9. Punishment imposed by school officials should be administered quickly, and then the student returned to the regular classroom.

While maintaining a safe environment that is conducive to learning, schools must have a sense of "owning" all students in order to achieve the goal of education. Specific recommendations for Ooltewah Middle School,

attainable within present limitations due to funding, space available and staffing, would be as follows:

1. Development of a task force composed of parents, teachers, and administrators to survey and evaluate alternative behavior management models.

2. Evaluation and revision of the current written discipline policy.

3. Greater use of parent volunteers to release guidance counselors from clerical duties in order to counsel students.

Additional research in the field of behavior management in schools is necessary to keep in step with societal changes that influence education. As custodial keepers of children for one-third of each day school is in session, educators must respond to factors that affect student behavior before learning can occur. Ooltewah Middle School can take a step in this direction by concentrating on the recommendations made.

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DISCIPLINARY REFERRAL

NOTICE TO STUDENT

The enclosed is the report to be referred to in reports you or a different student receives from this student. You are asked to appreciate the action taken by the faculty and to cooperate with the appropriate person indicated below.

- LACK OF CLASS PREPARATION
- LACK OF CLASS PARTICIPATION
- LACK OF ATTENDANCE
- LACK OF RESPONSIBILITY
- LACK OF COURTESY
- LACK OF RESPECT
- LACK OF ETHICS
- LACK OF INTEGRITY
- LACK OF HONESTY
- LACK OF DEDICATION
- LACK OF COMMITMENT
- LACK OF MOTIVATION
- LACK OF INTEREST
- LACK OF ENTHUSIASM
- LACK OF INITIATIVE
- LACK OF CREATIVITY
- LACK OF ORIGINALITY
- LACK OF INDEPENDENT THINKING
- LACK OF PROBLEM SOLVING
- LACK OF TEAMWORK
- LACK OF COMMUNICATION
- LACK OF LISTENING
- LACK OF EMPATHY
- LACK OF RESPECT FOR OTHERS
- LACK OF RESPECT FOR PROPERTY
- LACK OF RESPECT FOR ENVIRONMENT
- LACK OF RESPECT FOR SAFETY
- LACK OF RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY
- LACK OF RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY
- LACK OF RESPECT FOR CULTURE
- LACK OF RESPECT FOR RELIGION
- LACK OF RESPECT FOR GENDER
- LACK OF RESPECT FOR AGE
- LACK OF RESPECT FOR ABILITY
- LACK OF RESPECT FOR SEXUAL ORIENTATION
- LACK OF RESPECT FOR MARITAL STATUS
- LACK OF RESPECT FOR PARENTS
- LACK OF RESPECT FOR TEACHERS
- LACK OF RESPECT FOR PEERS
- LACK OF RESPECT FOR SELF

APPENDIX
DISCIPLINARY REFERRAL FORM

NAME: _____

CLASS: _____

SECTION: _____

DATE: _____

REFERRAL BY: _____

REASON: _____

APPROVAL: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DISCIPLINARY REFERRAL

STUDENT'S NAME		CLASS - GRADE	DATE
TIME	DATE OF INCIDENT	TEACHER	

NOTICE TO PARENTS

1. The purpose of this report is to inform you of a disciplinary incident involving the student.
2. You are urged to appreciate the action taken by the teacher and to cooperate with the corrective action initiated today.

REASON(S) FOR REFERRAL:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> CUTTING CLASS | <input type="checkbox"/> LACK OF CLASS MATERIALS | <input type="checkbox"/> RESTLESS, INATTENTIVE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXCESSIVE TARDINESS | <input type="checkbox"/> LACK OF COOPERATION | <input type="checkbox"/> EXCESSIVE TALKING |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ANNOYING CLASSMATES | <input type="checkbox"/> RUDE, DISCOURTEOUS | <input type="checkbox"/> MISCHIEF |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DESTRUCTION OF SCHOOL PROPERTY | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | |

ACTION TAKEN PRIOR TO REFERRAL:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> CHECKED STUDENT'S FOLDER | <input type="checkbox"/> DETAINED STUDENT AFTER SCHOOL | <input type="checkbox"/> HELD CONFERENCE WITH PARENT |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HELD CONFERENCE WITH STUDENT | <input type="checkbox"/> CHANGED STUDENT'S SEAT | <input type="checkbox"/> SENT PREVIOUS REPORT HOME |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CONSULTED COUNSELOR | <input type="checkbox"/> TELEPHONED PARENT | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

PRESENT ACTION AND RECOMMENDATION (S):

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> STUDENT REGRETS INCIDENT, COOPERATIVE | <input type="checkbox"/> STUDENT WILL MAKE UP TIME | <input type="checkbox"/> STUDENT SUSPENDED |
| <input type="checkbox"/> RECURRING INCIDENTS WILL BE REPORTED | <input type="checkbox"/> STUDENT PLACED ON PROBATION | <input type="checkbox"/> CASE REFERRED TO: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | | |

VITA

Suzanne Gail Carlson was born in Memphis, Tennessee on May 22, 1968. She is the only daughter of Richard W. and Theresa Mae Carlson. She attended various public schools throughout the Southeast. In May, 1986, she graduated from Hixson High School, in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Following a semester at Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, she received her Bachelor of Science degree in Education in May, 1990, from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. She was a member of Alpha Delta Pi sorority and Tennessee Young Republicans. In September, 1990, she enrolled in the graduate program at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. During this time she was inducted into Kappa Delta Pi educational sorority. She finished the masters program in August, 1992 with a major in Educational Administration and Supervision. She is currently teaching eighth grade English at Ooltewah Middle School, in Chattanooga, Tennessee.