Youth Gangs and Schools

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Preface

It is common to look at psychosocial, mental health, and educational concerns related to children and youth as separate and discrete problems, such as truancy, substance abuse, bullying, gangs, dropouts, and so forth. As a result, it is not surprising that policy makers and professionals establish practices in terms of specific problems. Indeed, our Center often focuses on one or another of these problems in discussing policy and practice.

However, in most cases, the reality is that the problems are symptoms of underlying primary and secondary instigating factors. And, from a school's perspective, concern about such matters stems mainly from the fact that they interfere with a student's ability to profit from good instruction and from the school's ability to provide an equal opportunity for every student to succeed. That is, they represent barriers to learning and teaching and result in students who disengage from learning at school and who do not achieve academically. As such, the school's focus is on addressing these barriers in order to ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to succeed at school.

In focusing on youth gangs and schools, this policy and practice analysis brief complements other documents from our Center that are designed to encourage placing specific problems in broad perspective. The intent is to provide those focusing specifically on youth gangs to consider opportunities for working broadly with the range of resources (personnel and programs) in schools, district, and the community to enhance our collective efforts to benefit children and youth and their families.

As will be evident, this document draws heavily on reports from those with expertise in this policy and practice arena. Besides highlighting major concerns, we provide a sampling of references and resources for those who are ready and interested in going into greater depth. And, of course, we suggest ways to move forward based on our Center's work.

> "The school is the main secular institution aside from the family involved with the socialization of the young. Not only do young people spend a great deal of time in school, but until the ages at which chronic truancy and dropout become problems nearly all young people are actively enrolled in school. The school therefore is in a better position than any institution other than the family to influence the behavior of young people. To the extent to which schools provide successful instruction in social competencies and develop attitudes and beliefs that are not conducive to problem behavior or involvement with gangs, gang involvement may be reduced. ... Young people who do not like school, whose school performance is poor, and who are not committed to education are more likely to engage in a variety of problem behavior – and they are more likely than other youths to become involved with gangs. Preventive interventions in school that keep youths attached to school, committed to education, achieving, and attending school may thereby reduce the likelihood of gang participation. "
>
> Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 2001

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Prolonged gang involvement is likely to take a heavy toll on youths' social development and life-course experiences. The gang acts as "a powerful social network" in constraining the behavior of members, limiting access to prosocial networks and cutting individuals off from conventional pursuits. These effects of the gang tend to produce precocious, off-time, and unsuccessful transitions that bring disorder to the life course in a cascading series of difficulties, including school dropout, early parenthood, and unstable employment. For some gang members, the end result of this foreclosure of future opportunities is continued involvement in criminal activity throughout adolescence and into adulthood.

Despite the apparent popular belief among youth that joining a gang will afford protection, in reality the opposite is true. Youth are far more likely to be violently victimized while in a gang than when they are not. This relationship holds irrespective of the primary reason for joining a gang (i.e., whether for protection or not). Furthermore, in two studies, involvement in gang fights more than doubled or tripled the odds of serious injury.

National Youth Gang Center
http://www.iir.com/nygc/faq.htm

About the Problem of Gangs and Schools

Few schools escape dynamics and behaviors that are associated with gangs. Think, for example, about bullying, disruptive intergroup conflicts, drug sales and abuse, and vandalism such as theft, graffiti, and other forms of property damage.

From both a policy and practice perspective, it is essential for schools to understand and address gang-related problems that interfere with productive schooling. Fortunately, there are many useful resources on the topic (see Appendix A).

Drawing on recent documents from authoritative resources, we organize the first section of this brief around answers to the following set of basic questions:

What is a youth gang?
What are the numbers?
Why do young people join gangs?
What are the trends in school policy and practice related to gangs?

Then, we discuss the need to rethink the problem in order move policy and practice forward.

What is a youth gang?

As the National Youth Gang Center stresses:

> "There is no single, accepted nationwide definition of youth gangs. It has been firmly established that the characteristics and behaviors of gangs are exceptionally varied within and across geographical areas (Egley, Howell, and Major, 2006; Klein, 2002; Weisel, 2002) and that a community's gang problem – however affected...from other areas – is primarily and inherently homegrown. Thus, state and local jurisdictions tend to develop their own definitions. The terms 'youth gang' and 'street gang' are often used interchangeably, but use of the latter label can result in the confusion of youth gangs with adult criminal organizations. A youth gang is commonly thought of as a self-formed association of peers having the following characteristics: three or more members, generally ages 12 to 24; a name and some sense of identity, generally indicated by such symbols as style of clothing, graffiti, and hand signs; some degree of permanence and organization; and an elevated level of involvement in delinquent or criminal activity...." (http://www.iir.com/NYGC/faq.htm)

What are the numbers?

It is difficult to summarize and provide a big picture of gang membership and demographics as related to school concerns. Clearly, schools and communities vary in the degree to which gangs are experienced as a pressing and daily concern. A reasonable perspective of the numbers as related to youth gangs can be gleaned from recent reports.

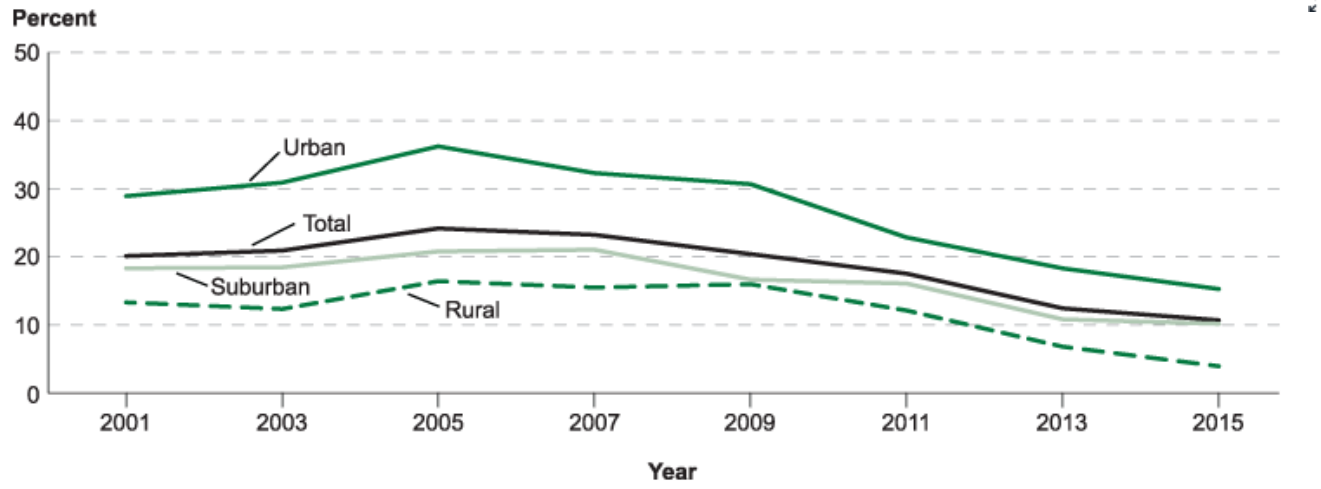
Indicator 8: Students' Reports of Gangs at School

(Last Updated: May 2017) https://nces.ed.gov/programs/crimeindicators//ind_08.asp

Between 2001 and 2015, the percentage of students ages 12–18 who reported that gangs were present at their school decreased from 20 to 11 percent. The percentage who reported gangs were present at their school was also lower in 2015 than in 2013 (12 percent). A higher percentage of students from urban areas (15 percent) reported a gang presence than of students from suburban (10 percent) and rural areas (4 percent) in 2015.

In order to assess gang activity in and around the vicinity of schools, the School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey asked students ages 12–18 if gangs were present at their school[49] during the school year. All gangs, whether or not they are involved in violent or illegal activity, are included. Between 2001 and 2015, the percentage of students ages 12–18 who reported that gangs were present at their school decreased from 20 to 11 percent. The percentage who reported gangs were present at their school was also lower in 2015 than in 2013 (12 percent; figure 8.1 and table 8.1).

Figure 8.1. Percentage of students ages 12–18 who reported that gangs were present at school during the school year, by urbanicity: Selected years, 2001 through 2015



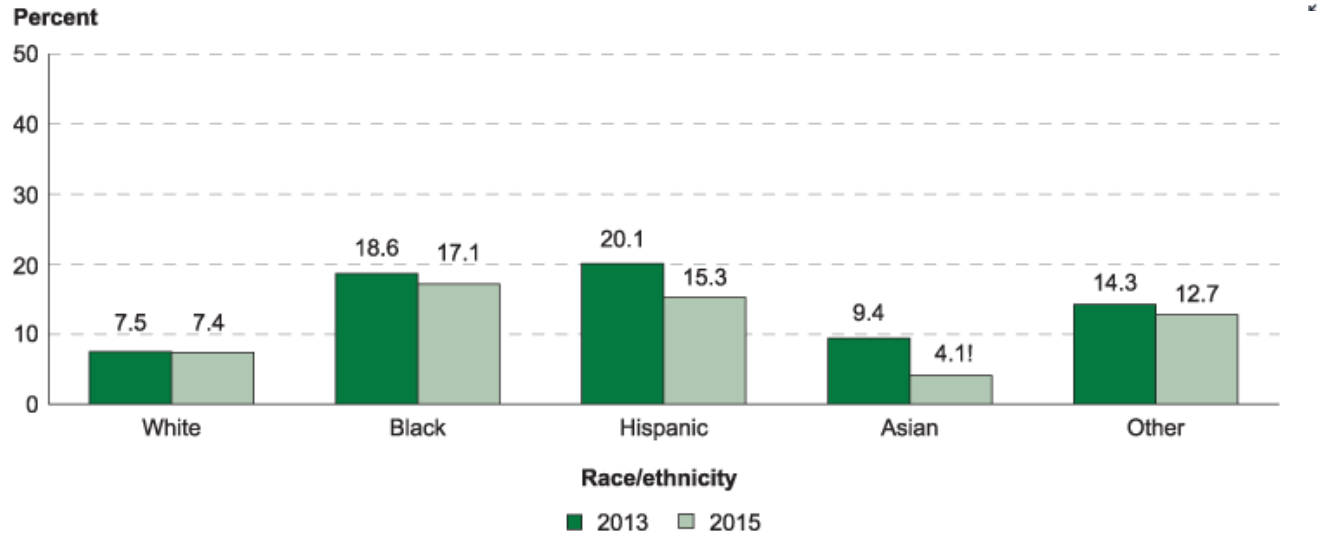
NOTE: "Urbanicity" refers to the Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) status of the respondent's household as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. Categories include "central city of an MSA (Urban)," "in MSA but not in central city (Suburban)," and "not MSA (Rural)." All gangs, whether or not they are involved in violent or illegal activity, are included. "At school" includes in the school building, on school property, on a school bus, and going to and from school.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey, 2001 through 2015.

In 2015, a higher percentage of students from urban areas (15 percent) reported a gang presence at their school than of students from suburban (10 percent) and rural areas (4 percent). The percentage of students from urban areas who reported a gang presence at their school was lower in 2015 than in every survey year between 2001 (29 percent) and 2011 (23 percent). However, there was no measurable change in this percentage between 2013 and 2015. The same pattern was observed for students from suburban and rural areas, with lower percentages of students reporting a gang presence in 2015 than in all years from 2001 to 2011, but no measurable change between 2013 and 2015.

A higher percentage of students attending public schools (11 percent) than of students attending private schools (2 percent) reported that gangs were present at their school in 2015. The percentage of public school students who reported a gang presence was lower in 2015 than in 2013 (13 percent). However, the percentage of private school students reporting a gang presence at their school in 2015 was not measurably different from the percentage in 2013.

In 2015, higher percentages of Black (17 percent) and Hispanic (15 percent) students reported the presence of gangs at their school than of White (7 percent) and Asian (4 percent) students (figure 8.2 and table 8.1). In addition, a higher percentage of White students than of Asian students reported a gang presence. The percentage of students who reported a gang presence was lower in 2015 than in 2013 for both Hispanic (15 vs. 20 percent) and Asian (4 vs. 9 percent) students, while the percentages reported in 2015 by White and Black students and students of other racial/ethnic groups were not measurably different from the percentages reported in 2013.

Figure 8.2. Percentage of students ages 12–18 who reported that gangs were present at school during the school year, by race/ethnicity: 2013 and 2015



! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.
NOTE: Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. "Other" includes American Indians/Alaska Natives, Pacific Islanders, and persons of Two or more races. All gangs, whether or not they are involved in violent or illegal activity, are included. "At school" includes in the school building, on school property, on a school bus, and going to and from school.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey, 2013 and 2015.

The percentages of students in 9th through 12th grade who reported a gang presence at their school were higher than the percentages for students in 6th through 8th grade in 2015. About 13 percent each of 9th-, 10th-, 11th-, and 12th-graders reported the presence of gangs, compared with 7 percent each of 7th- and 8th-graders and 6 percent of 6th-graders.

This indicator repeats information from the *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2016* report. For more information: Table 8.1, and https://nces.ed.gov/programs/crime/.

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[49] "At school" includes in the school building, on school property, on a school bus, and going to and from school.

Reference Tables

Table 8.1. (Digest Table 230.20) Percentage of students ages 12–18 who reported that gangs were present at school during the school year, by selected student and school characteristics and urbanicity: Selected years, 2001 through 2015

Click on the URLs in this document for more on *What are the Numbers?*

NATIONAL YOUTH GANG SURVEY ANALYSIS

https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/survey-analysis

Introduction

The National Gang Center (NGC) conducted an annual survey of law enforcement agencies between 1996–2012 to assess the extent of gang problems by measuring the presence, characteristics, and behaviors of local gangs in jurisdictions throughout the United States. This Web resource contains analysis and findings from the National Youth Gang Surveys. Numerous charts and descriptions are provided as a resource for understanding gang problems.

Defining "Gang"

There is no widely or universally accepted definition of a "gang" among law enforcement agencies — see NGC's compilation of gang-related legislation (/Legislation).

https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Legislation

To capture the varying yet largely overlapping definitional criteria across jurisdictions, the NYGS requests recipients to report information for youth gangs, defined as "a group of youths or young adults in your jurisdiction that you or other responsible persons in your agency or community are willing to identify as a 'gang.'" Respondents are requested to exclude motorcycle gangs, hate or ideology groups, prison gangs, and exclusively adult gangs from survey responses since these latter groups are characteristically distinct from youth gangs. In addition, the terms "youth" and "juvenile" are **not** synonymous. The term "youth" is more general than the term "juvenile," which is a legal designation statutorily defined within each state.

For further discussion of the definitional considerations pertaining to "youth" and "street" gangs, see "What is a gang? (/About/FAQ#q1)" in NGC's Frequently Asked Questions section.

https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/About/FAQ#q1

Survey Sample and Methodology

The National Youth Gang Survey (NYGS) is based on a nationally representative sample of more than 2,500 law enforcement agencies serving larger cities, suburban counties, smaller cities, and rural counties. The average annual response rate was approximately 85 percent for the entire sample, as well as within each area type. More than 95 percent of the agencies have reported gang-related survey data at least once over the previous three survey cycles.

▶Link to FURTHER DISCUSSION OF THE NYGS METHODOLOGY

Survey Results

Prevalence of Gang Problems (/Survey-Analysis/Prevalence-of-Gang-Problems) https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Survey-Analysis/Prevalence-of-Gang-Problems

- Prevalence of Gang Problems in Study Population (/Survey-Analysis/Prevalence-of-Gang-Problems#prevalenceyouthgang)
- Prevalence of Gang Problems by Area Type (/Survey-Analysis/Prevalence-of-Gang-Problems#prevalenceyouthgangstudy)
- Percent Change in Estimated Number of Gang-Problem Jurisdictions (/Survey-Analysis/Prevalence-of-Gang-Problems#percentgangjurisdictions)
- Consistency of Gang Problems by Area Type (/Survey-Analysis/Prevalence-of-Gang-Problems#Consistency)

Defining Gangs and Designating Gang Membership (/Survey-Analysis/Defining-Gangs)

https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Survey-Analysis/Defining-Gangs

- Definitional Characteristics of Gangs (/Survey-Analysis/Defining-Gangs#anchordcog)
- Designating Gang Membership (/Survey-Analysis/Defining-Gangs#anchordgm)

Gang-Problem Onset (/Survey-Analysis/Gang-Problem-Onset)

https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Survey-Analysis/Gang-Problem-Onset

Gang-Problem Assessment Trend (/Survey-Analysis/Gang-Problem-Assessment-Trend)

https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Survey-Analysis/Gang-Problem-Assessment-Trend

Measuring the Extent of Hang Problems (/Survey-Analysis/Measuring-the-Extent-of-Gang-Problems)

https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Survey-Analysis/Measuring-the-Extent-of-Gang-Problems

- Estimated Number of Gangs (/Survey-Analysis/Measuring-the-Extent-of-Gang-Problems#estimatednumbergangs)
- Distribution of Gangs by Area Type (/Survey-Analysis/Measuring-the-Extent-of-Gang-Problems#distributiongangsarea)
- Number of Gangs by Area Type (/Survey-Analysis/Measuring-the-Extent-of-Gang-Problems#numberofgangsbyareatype)
- Estimated Number of Gang Members (/Survey-Analysis/Measuring-the-Extent-of-Gang-Problems#estimatedgangmembers)
- Distribution of Gang Members by Area Type (/Survey-Analysis/Measuring-the-Extent-of-Gang-Problems#distributionofgangmembers)
- Number of Gang Members by Area Type (/Survey-Analysis/Measuring-the-Extent-of-Gang-Problems#numberofgangmembersbyareatype)
- Number of Gang-Related Homicides (/Survey-Analysis/Measuring-the-Extent-of-Gang-Problems#homicidesnumber)

Gang Member Migration (/Survey-Analysis/Gang-Member-Migration) https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Survey-Analysis/Gang-Member-Migration

- Prevalence of Gang Member Migration (/Survey-Analysis/Gang-Member-Migration#anchorgmmp)
- Likelihood of Gang Member Migration in Nonmetropolitan Areas (/Survey-Analysis/Gang-Member-Migration#anchorlikelihood)
- Influential Factors on Gang Member Migration (/Survey-Analysis/Gang-Member-Migration#anchorfactors)

Demographics (/Survey-Analysis/Demographics)

https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Survey-Analysis/Demographics

- Age of Gang Members (/Survey-Analysis/Demographics#anchorage)
- Age of Gang Members by Area Type (/Survey-Analysis/Demographics#anchoragebyareatype)
- Gender of Gang Members (/Survey-Analysis/Demographics#anchorgender)
- Gangs With Female Members (/Survey-Analysis/Demographics#anchorgangswithfemalemembers)
- Race/Ethnicity of Gang Members (/Survey-Analysis/Demographics#anchorregm)
- Race/Ethnicity of Gang Members by Area Type (/Survey-Analysis/Demographics#anchorregmat)

Gang-Related Offenses (/Survey-Analysis/Gang-Related-Offenses) https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Survey-Analysis/Gang-Related-Offenses

- Gang-Related Crime (/Survey-Analysis/Gang-Related-Offenses#crime)
- Factors Influencing Gang-Related Violence (/Survey-Analysis/Gang-Related-Offenses#related)
- Regularly Record Any Criminal Offense as "Gang-Related" (/Survey-Analysis/Gang-Related-Offenses#gangrelated)

Gang Units (/Survey-Analysis/Gang-Units)

https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Survey-Analysis/Gang-Units

Suggested citation: National Gang Center. *National Youth Gang Survey Analysis*. Retrieved [date] from http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Survey-Analysis (http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Survey-Analysis).

Why do Young People Join Gangs?

It is commonplace to hear that youngsters mainly join because they are recruited by the gang. There are, however, many predisposing factors that precede recruitment.

In general, researchers have explored a range of related community, family, school, peer, and individual factors as precursors to joining gangs.

Social conditions and community and family factors. The National Youth Gang Center notes that, when asked, gang members say that the most common reasons for joining are: (1) social – "youth join to be around friends and family members (especially siblings or cousins) already part of the gang" and (2) protection – "youth join for the presumed safety they believe the gang can afford."
(http://www.iir.com/NYGC/faq.htm)

In 1998, Moore described the transition from typical adolescent groupings to established youth gangs in terms of four preceding community conditions: a neighborhood where (1) there is lack of effective adult supervision (e.g., conventional socializing agents are largely ineffective and/or alienating), (2) youngsters have considerable free time that is not devoted to prosocial activity, (3) there is little opportunity for moving on into a good adult job, and (4) gang members can congregate and operate.

As Wyrick and Howell (2004) comment: "Gangs tend to cluster in high-crime, socially disorganized neighborhoods. The clustering of gangs in such high-crime communities has a negative influence and provides ample opportunity for recruitment of at-risk youth into gangs."

Howell's (2003) review stresses that "longitudinal studies have identified the availability of drugs, the presence of many neighborhood youth who are in trouble, youth's feelings of being unsafe in the neighborhood, low neighborhood attachment, low levels of neighborhood integration, area poverty, and neighborhood disorganization (i.e., low informal social control) as the strongest community risk factors for gang membership.

Gary and Denise Gottfredson (2001) conclude that

> "... gang development and gang involvement is a *social* phenomenon. Certain conditions – social disorganization, a population of poorly socialized youths, and group diversity – make the development of gangs in a community more likely much as fertile soil and plenty of water foster the development of agricultural crops. But gangs do not develop and persist everywhere these conditions are found. In some places groups form and come to define themselves in a special way in relation to other groups in the community. These definitions often seem to relate to status, defense against other groups, or retaliation. These *group self-definitions* seem to be much like an infectious agent that promotes gang propagation...."

School and peer factors. Poor school performance, feeling unsafe on the way to and at school, and association with peers who engage in delinquency are among the strongest correlates found in research on factors related to gang membership.

As summarized by Wyrick and Howell (2004):

> "One of the strongest school-related risk factors for gang membership is low achievement in school, particularly at the elementary level (Hill et al., 1999; Le Blanc and Lanctot, 1998; Thornberry et al., 2003). This in turn is related to low academic aspirations, a low degree of commitment to school, and teachers' negative labeling of youth (Howell, 2003). ... Many future gang members also have problems with truancy (Lahey et al., 1999).

The accumulation of risk factors greatly increases the likelihood of gang involvement, just as it does for other problem behaviors.
National Youth Gang Center

In recent years, a great deal of attention has been paid to the problem of safe passage to and from school and the fact that so many students feel unsafe at school (e.g., Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 2001). This probably plays a significant role in pushing some youngsters to gravitate toward the aggressors and associating with peers who engage in delinquency (Thornberry et al., 2003).

Individual factors. Many in the field argue that youth join gangs because gangs meet important personal needs. For example, Deborah Prothrow-Stith and Michaele Weissman in their 1991 book, *Deadly Consequences*, suggest that gang membership stems from the need for

(1) a sense of community, (2) self-esteem, (3) recognition, (4) sexual identity, and (5) a moral code.

The work that has focused on intrinsic motivation (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 1985; Deci & Flaste, 1995) has application here. This psychological focus emphasizes the role of individual needs, thoughts, and feelings. It stresses that individuals move toward circumstance that meet their need to *feel* (1) competent, (2) self-determining, and (3) related to significant others. And, they move away from circumstances that threaten those feelings.

From an observable behavioral perspective, Gottfredson and Gottfredson (2001) note that:

> "...*individuals* who become involved in gangs tend to be distinguished from other youths by a set of personal characteristics that distinguish youths who engage in more delinquent behavior in general from youths who engage in less delinquent behavior. Thornberry (1998) summarized results from studies of youth development in Rochester and Seattle showing that low attachment and commitment to school, school antisocial behavior, low achievement, poor grades, association with delinquent peers, little belief in conventional rules, and positive attitudes towards drugs were associated with the probability of joining a gang. These risk factors resemble predictors of general delinquency, violence, or serious delinquency (Farrington, 1998; Hawkins, et al., 1998; Lipsey & Derzon, 1998), which have been more extensively studied than has gang participation...."

A Few Articles Discussing Why Young People Join Gangs

Prevalence, Risk Factors, and Pathways to Gang Violence (2017)
Dena C. Carson & Finn-Aage Esbensen Wiley Online Library
https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119057574.whbva101

Abstract: Gangs and gang members are responsible for a disproportionate amount of violence, which makes it especially important to understand the prevalence of gangs and risk factors associated with gang joining. This chapter first discusses the prevalence of gang members across various locations in the United States as well as internationally and provides a synopsis of their demographic characteristics. Next, we review risk factors for gang involvement across five domains: community, family, school, peers, and the individual. Research suggests that the accumulation of multiple risk factors in multiple domains increases the probability of gang joining. However, a number of youth who experience these risk factors will not become gang involved, which indicates other factors influence gang joining. This chapter discusses pushes and pulls that have been linked to decisions to both join and leave a gang. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of policy implications associated with this literature.

Developmental pathways of youth gang membership: a structural test of the social development model (2017) Asia S. Bishop, Karl G. Hill, Amanda B. Gilman, James C. Howell, Richard F. Catalano & J. David Hawkins. *Journal of Crime and Justice, 40:3,* 275-296, DOI: 10.1080/0735648X.2017.1329781

Abstract: As a result of nearly 40 years of research using a risk and protective factor approach, much is known about the predictors of gang onset. Little theoretical work, however, has been done to situate this approach to studying gang membership within a more comprehensive developmental model. Using structural equation modeling techniques, the current study is the first to test the capacity of the social development model (SDM) to predict the developmental pathways that increase and decrease the likelihood of gang membership. Results suggest that the SDM provides a good accounting of the social developmental processes at age 13 that are predictive of later gang membership. These findings support the promotion of a theoretical understanding of gang membership that specifies both pro- and antisocial developmental pathways. Additionally, as the SDM is intended as a model that can guide preventive intervention, results also hold practical utility for designing strategies that can be implemented in early adolescence to address the likelihood of later gang involvement. Three key preventive intervention points to address gang membership are discussed, including promoting efforts to enhance social skills, increasing the availability of prosocial opportunities and rewarding engagement in these opportunities, and reducing antisocial socialization experiences throughout the middle- and high school years.

Comprehensive Gang Models (2017) Kathryn Van Eck, Jill Haak Bohnenkamp, Prerna Arora, & Nicole Evangelista Brandt. Wiley Online Library
https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118524275.ejdj0076Abstract

Abstract: A youth gang is defined as a group of three or more juveniles or young adults who share a sense of identity, engage in criminal activity, identify themselves as gang members, and are perceived by others as gang members. This entry focuses on comprehensive models of juvenile or youth gangs. A brief review of individual and environmental risk factors for gangs is presented, followed by an overview of prevention and intervention strategies for working with youth in gangs. The entry concludes with a discussion of future areas of research that are warranted to aid youth in finding support and belonging to prosocial groups.

Review of Risk and Protective Factors for Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Gang Involvement
From the National Gang Center (Retrieved 2018)
https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/SPT/Risk-Factors/ResearchReview-Criteria

The following discussion of risk factors for gang involvement first addresses why youth join gangs. This choice is influenced by factors that attract youth to gangs and also forces that push youth toward gangs. Protective factors either buffer youth from exposure to risk factors or diminish their harmful effects.

Why Youth Join Gangs – When youth make a conscious choice to join a gang during childhood or adolescence, multiple personal and environmental factors typically influence this decision (for a broad overview of this process, view the NGC online video at www.nationalgangcenter.gov, "Why Youth Join Gangs"). Factors that contribute to a youth's decision to join a gang fall into two categories: Youth may be "pulled" and/or "pushed" into gang membership (see FAQ number 13 at www.nationalgangcenter.gov, What are risk factors for gang membership?). Pulls are features that attract youth. Gangs are often at the center of appealing social action—parties, hanging out, music, drugs, and opportunities to socialize with members of the opposite sex. In other words, a gang may be appealing because it meets a youth's social needs.

Risk Factors for Gang Joining – Risk factors predict increased risk for developing a problem or disorder. In the context of gangs, risk factors are forces that push youth toward gangs or increase the likelihood that affected youth will join a gang. Researchers cannot predict whether a particular individual will join a gang. Rather, research shows that individuals who possess certain risk factors have an elevated chance of joining a gang. Gang research has identified several ways in which risk factors increase the likelihood of gang membership.

- These risk factors span all five social development sectors (family, peer group, school, individual characteristics, and community conditions) (Howell and Egley, 2005).
- There are no risk factors that uniquely predict a high probability of gang membership (Decker, Melde, and Pyrooz, 2013; Krohn and Thornberry, 2008). The same factors that predict gang membership also predict other problem behaviors (see Esbensen, Peterson, Taylor, and Freng, 2009).
- The greater the number of risk factors that youth experience, the greater the likelihood of gang involvement. In a Seattle study, elementary school children exposed to 7 or more of 19 measured risk factors were 13 times more likely to join a gang than children exposed to none or to only one risk factor (Hill, Howell, Hawkins et al., 1999).
- The presence of risk factors in multiple developmental domains produces the greatest risk of gang membership (Thornberry, Krohn, Lizotte et al., 2003).
- Key risk factors remain potent throughout adolescence (Gilman, Hill, Hawkins et al., 2014).

Risk Factors for Various Demographic Groups – As a general rule, risk factors apply to minorities and nonminorities alike and to both girls and boys. However, far more research has been conducted on males than on females, and females evidence several unique risk factors (Chesney-Lind, 2013; Petersen and Howell, 2013; Peterson, 2012; Peterson and Morgan, 2014). See FAQ number 12 at www.nationalgangcenter.gov on the topic of increasing female gang involvement.

- Violent family environments have been consistently identified among predictors of female gang involvement, including parental substance use, domestic violence, and child physical and sexual abuse (Peterson, 2012).
- Early dating is a key risk factor for gang joining among girls (Thornberry, et al., 2003).
- School-related problems such as academic failure, low educational aspirations, negative labeling, and trouble at school are key risk factors for gang joining among girls, and these may be more influential for them than for boys (Peterson, 2012; Thornberry, et al., 2003).
- In addition, school safety concerns are a major factor leading to gang involvement among youth of both genders (Gottfredson, 2013), perhaps particularly for girls (Bell, 2009).

Protective Factors – A key finding is that youth need more than a simple majority of protective factors to overcome multiple risk factors (Stouthamer-Loeber, Loeber, Stallings, and Lacourse, 2008). Just one longitudinal study has been conducted to date on protective factors for gang involvement. This study found research support for protective factors in each of the five major developmental sectors of youths' lives, from the 5th to 12th grades: prosocial family, school, neighborhood, and peer environments, and individual characteristics (Gilman, Hill, Hawkins, et al., 2014). Positive family and school environments appeared to operate through other domains, mainly peers and neighborhoods. In the family context, not living with a gang member was a key protective factor. Interestingly, these protective factors did not lose potency with age. There is some evidence that from mid-adolescence onward, broad categories of protective factors can reduce the incidence of violence (including gang fighting and gun carrying):

- Cumulative protection across domains
- Cumulative protection in the family domain
- Educational aspirations and self-esteem in the individual domain
- Parental supervision and parent/partner status in the family domain

Notably, the research suggested that increasing the level of positive feelings youth have for themselves and their parents, and empowering parents to better supervise teenagers' behavior and choice of friends, are important protective factors (Krohn, Lizotte, Bushway, et al., 2014). There also is strong research support for other protective factors that buffer youth against overall violence that have been identified for the five developmental sectors of adolescents (Howell, Lipsey, and Wilson, 2014, pp. 21–22). For example, in the school domain, key protective factors are school achievement, bonding to school, a positive school climate, and others. In general, the wide array of research-supported protective factors against violence likely applies to gang members because this group and violent adolescents have many risk factors in common.

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About Gangs in Schools

Here are some recent articles and chapters:

Gangs in School, Exploring the Experiences of Gang-Involved Youth (2017) Dena C. Carson, Finn-Aage Esbensen, *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*. 1-21. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1541204017739678

Abstract: This study explores three questions: (1) What are the criteria that current or formerly gang-involved youth use to identify the presence of gangs in school? (2) Do gang activities produce incivilities and victimizations within the school context? and (3) What is the impact of a gang presence on youth in the school, specifically with respect to the presence or absence of fear? We examine the influence of gangs in schools through qualitative analysis of 180 in-depth semistructured interviews. The sample includes youth with varying levels of gang involvement who attended schools across the United States. Youth relied on personal knowledge and visual cues to identify gangs in their school. Despite the occurrence of vicarious victimizations and incivilities at the hands of gang youth, respondents indicated that gangs did not impact their school life. These youth frequently used normalization and delimitation processes to deal with gangs in their school.

Social Network Position of Gang Members in Schools: Implications for Recruitment and Gang Prevention (2018) ,Owen Gallupe & Jason Gravel, *Justice Quarterly, 35*:3, 505-525. DOI: 10.1080/07418825.2017.1323114

Abstract: Schools are venues in which gang and non-gang involved youth converge. It is therefore a likely venue for gang recruitment. The extent to which this occurs depends upon the ability of gang members to connect with non-gang members. In this study, we compare the social network positions of high social status gang members who are well integrated into school networks with low status members who are not. Using network data from the Add Health study (n = 1,822), we find that not only are high status gang members strongly embedded within school networks, but that this status is driven by their ability to connect with non-gang members rather than other gang members (indicated by the high number of friendship nominations they receive from non-gang members). These gang members are potentially in optimal positions to influence others to join gangs. The implications of these results for school-based gang prevention programs are discussed.

Gangs, Schools, and Social Change: An Institutional Analysis (2017) John M. Hagedorn *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0002716217726965

Abstract: Understanding gangs and schools requires us to go beyond neighborhood-level analysis because spatial analyses tend to downplay or ignore social movements as key to fundamental change. This article supplements a traditional ecological approach with an institutional analysis of both schools and gangs. A history of Chicago gangs reveals that gangs are not one thing; at times they have played positive roles within schools and taken part in social movements. The author's personal experiences with gangs and schools in Milwaukee and Chicago are presented as evidence documenting the mutability of gangs, the damaging consequences of some educational policies, and the importance of including gang members in social movements. The current Black Lives Matter movement presents opportunities for nonincremental, disruptive change and the potential inclusion of gangs and gang members in a broader strategy to create a better society.

From *The Wiley Handbook on Violence in Education: Forms, Factors, and Preventions* (2018), Harvey Shapiro (Ed).

When Gangs Are in Schools: Expectations for Administration and Challenges for Youth (2018) Lisa De La Rue & Anjali J. Forber-Pratt. |https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118966709.ch14

Chapter Summary: A gang presence in schools undoubtedly requires a response from school staff and administrators, including addressing violence that some students are engaged in. However, the traditional reaction has been to implement swift and harsh disciplinary responses in the form of zero tolerance policies and school-based law enforcement officers – this despite research that shows these punitive responses are not only ineffective but also can have a disparate impact on students of color and contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline. There is a growing recognition that schools should strive to be less punitive in their responses to violence, and should move toward supportive interventions. Such a shift requires schools to challenge ingrained stereotypes of what gang involvement looks like, and to find ways to address the contextual factors that may be contributing to these behaviors. Administrators, teachers, and students would all benefit from a reformed policy that favors treatment before punishment when addressing gang-related behaviors in schools.

School of Hard Knocks: Gangs, Schools, and Education in the United States (2018) Kendra J. Clark, David C. Pyrooz, & Ryan Randa |https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118966709.ch10

Chapter Summary: This chapter reviews the relationship between gangs, schools, and violence in the United States. The first section examines the scope of the problem by situating gang membership in the life course. The second identifies the extent to which gangs and gang members are present in schools, and the effects of this presence on schools and the consequences of gang membership for educational attainment. The third section of the chapter reviews what is known about gangs and violence in schools, emphasizing the implications of gangs on fear of victimization. The last two sections review responses to gangs in schools. First, data on gang-related legislation from the National Gang Center are reviewed and synthesized by policy, programming, punishment, training, and discretion-based legislation. Second, existing evaluation research on gang programming are reviewed. This chapter concludes by identifying directions for further program development and research.

School Surveillance and Gang Violence: Deterrent, Criminalizing, or Context-Specific Effects (2018) Lynn A. Addington & Emily E. Tanner-Smith https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118966709.ch13

Chapter Summary: The presence of gangs in schools is a perennial concern for educators and parents. One approach to address the perceived relationship between gangs and school violence is to employ security measures such as surveillance cameras, metal detectors, and security personnel. Despite the increased use of security measures, little evidence has documented their relationship with gang-related crime in schools. This study explores the relationships between security and gang-related crime at schools, and looks at variability in these associations across school contexts by examining national data from the School Survey on Crime and Safety. Overall, the level of gang-related crime was low, especially as compared to school crime overall. The authors of this chapter found little evidence that school security measures were related to gang-related crime rates. Their findings highlight the need for a better understanding of the relationship between gang-related violence and school security, especially with regard to the specific roles played by security personnel.

What are the trends in school policy and practice related to gangs?

Appendix B offers examples of district policies and state legislation related to gangs in schools. (The National Association of State Boards of Education provides a state-by-state look at policies related to gangs in their Safe, Orderly, and Drug-Free Schools compendium – http://www.nasbe.org/healthyschools/states/topics.asp?category=C&Topic=3).

While many states have policies that include a focus on educational programs for prevention and early intervention related to gangs and other safe school concerns (e.g., conflict resolution strategies), it is clear that the primary focus of state level policies is on the suppression of gang activity through dress codes/school uniforms, discipline related to bullying/fighting, collaboration with law enforcement, zero tolerance, comprehensive school safety plans.

Some states provide exemplars of efforts to support rather than just mandate systemic changes. For example, Connecticut policy supports a move from the emphasis on suppression to a focus on enhancing a positive school climate so individuals can feel safe, supported and connected. California has established statewide interagency coordination and collaboration to address such problems as gang membership. Indiana is funding pilot programs in targeted districts.

In practice, school policy focused on suppressing gang activity has had limited impact. Schools located in neighborhoods where gangs are a significant force find that school programs are insufficient to address the potency of gang culture. It is evident in such neighborhoods that school programs must be embedded in comprehensive and cohesive school and community approaches.

School prevention and intervention programs. Gottfredson and Gottfredson (2001) estimate that there are 803,000 programs, activities, or arrangements operating in the nation's schools that are intended to reduce or prevent gang participation. Of these, 782,000 were identified as prevention-oriented. A program was designated as a gang prevention or intervention activity based on principals' identification that it was "intended to reduce or prevent problem behavior or to promote a safe and orderly environment *and* ... that it had the specific objective of reducing or preventing gang participation or that it was targeted at gang members" (see Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1

Some School-based Program Data from *Gang Problems and Gang Programs in a National Sample of Schools*

http://www.gottfredson.com/gang.htm

"Almost half of the [school-based] gang prevention programs (49%) involve direct services to students and families. The most common kind of gang prevention program involves prevention curriculum, instruction or training, with an estimated 115,000 such programs in the nation's schools or about 15% of all gang prevention programs. Other common direct service approaches to gang prevention are counseling (78,000 programs or 10% of all gang prevention programs) and recreation, enrichment or leisure programs (60,000 programs or 8% of all gang prevention programs). Behavioral programming or behavior modification, services or programs for family members, and individual attention activities such as mentoring, tutoring, or coaching are less common types of direct service programs.

... The most common type of organizational or environmental program involves efforts to develop or maintain a distinctive culture or climate for interpersonal exchanges. There are an estimated 84,500 such programs or 11% of all gang prevention programs. The next most common organizational or environmental gang prevention program type entails the use of external personnel resources in classrooms, with 69,000 such programs or 9% of all gang prevention programs. About 51,000 programs involve activity to improve intergroup relations or interactions between the school and the community (about 7% of all gang prevention programs). The use of a school planning structure or a process for the management of change, improved classroom organization and management practices, and improved instructional practices are additional organizational or environmental approaches for preventing gang participation that are used less frequently than other types.

Ten percent of gang prevention programs involve discipline or safety management activities. Security or surveillance programs are common, with about 60,000 such programs (about 8% of all gang prevention programs). Youth roles in regulating and responding to student conduct (e.g., peer mediation) are relatively uncommon, with about 20,000 such programs (3% of all gang prevention programs).

... The distribution of gang intervention program types differs from that for gang prevention programs. Almost two thirds of gang intervention programs (66%) involve direct services to students or families. ... Counseling, social work, psychological or therapeutic interventions are the most common type of gang intervention program, with about 33,000 such programs or 20% of all gang intervention programs. About 20,000 gang intervention programs involve curriculum, instruction, or training (13% of all gang intervention programs). Almost as many – 19,000 gang intervention programs or 12% of programs – involve services for family members. Almost 17,000 school-based gang intervention programs involve behavioral programming or behavior modification (10% of intervention programs). Individual attention activities (such as mentoring, tutoring, or coaching) and recreation, enrichment or leisure activities are used less often as gang intervention approaches.

About a third (33%) of school-based gang intervention programs involve organizational or environmental arrangements. The most common of these are programs that develop or maintain a distinctive culture or climate for interpersonal exchanges – about 17,000 programs or 10% of all gang intervention programs. Programs that involve improving intergroup relations or interaction between the school and the community are also common with about 16,000 programs of this type (10% of all intervention programs).

Few programs fall in the final group of program types – discipline and safety management activities. The creation of youth roles in regulating or responding to student conduct (such as peer mediation programs) as an approach to gang intervention are the basis for an estimated 2,600 school based gang intervention programs (about 2% of all intervention programs)."

Evaluation findings indicate that "secondary school students who report being involved in gangs are less exposed to many prevention activities than are students who are not involved in gangs. This suggests the potential for including more of the highest risk youths by actively seeking ways to include them." This, of course, assumes that such youngsters are or can be motivated to participate.

In analyzing program quality, the Gottfredsons conclude that there is great variability, and even those that have been evaluated and found effective need improvement. This includes modifications in content and methodology and increases in the extent of application and how long and how frequent programs are operated.

Embedding the Work in a Comprehensive Community Approach. As is evident in dealing with most serious and complex psychosocial problems, school-based efforts are insufficient. So are approaches that use only one or a few strategies. Much more sophisticated and qualitatively better approaches are needed. And, schools and communities must work together to address the gang problem within the context of a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive framework.

Schools and communities must work together to address the gang problem within the context of a comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive framework

While this reality still is not widely reflected in policy and practice, most experts in this arena agree on the need for a comprehensive, multifaceted approach that targets individual youth, peer groups, families, and the community. Some movement in this direction is seen in various reports, application guidelines for grant funds, and training guides. For example, in an online training resource entitled *Youth Gangs: Going Beyond the Myths to Address a Critical Problem,* the U.S. Department of Education states:

> "For decades, police and communities have tried to address gang problems in their areas, with often disappointing results. Like many other attempts to solve deep-rooted problems, there has been a swing from one approach to another. Early on, programs emphasized prevention in an attempt to keep youth from joining gangs. Later on, perhaps as gangs grew more violent, the focus shifted to police suppression. Neither approach, at least alone, has demonstrated much effectiveness in addressing gang problems. In response to these findings,

and work with gangs, many communities have begun to adopt a more comprehensive approach to dealing with gang problems....[which includes a focus on providing safe, gang-free schools by involving both the schools and communities]:

- Community Mobilization: Involvement of local citizens, including former gang youth, community groups and agencies, and the coordination of programs and staff functions within and across agencies.
- Opportunities Provision: The development of a variety of specific education, training, and employment programs targeting gang-involved youth.
- Social Intervention: Involving youth-serving agencies, schools, grass roots groups, faith-based organizations, police and other juvenile/criminal justice organizations in "reaching out" to gang-involved youth and their families, and linking them with the conventional world and needed services.
- Suppression: Formal and informal social control procedures, including close supervision and monitoring of gang-involved youth by agencies of the juvenile/criminal justice system and also by community-based agencies, schools, and grass roots groups.
- Organizational Change and Development: Development and implementation of policies and procedures that result in the most effective use of available and potential resources, within and across agencies, to better address the gang problem."

(http://www.ed.gov/print/admins/lead/safety/training/gangs/problem.html)

The *Comprehensive Gang Prevention, Intervention, and Suppression Model* (Spergel and colleagues, 1995, 2004) offers a framework to guide communities in developing and organizing a continuum of programs and strategies. And, the National Youth Gang Center (NYGC) offers a *Gang Strategic Planning Tool* for a community to use in assessing its gang problem and to guide development of a comprehensive, community-wide plan of gang prevention, intervention, and suppression (National Youth Gang Center, 2002a). NYGC also provides resource aids and information on promising and effective gang programs and strategies (National Youth Gang Center, 2002b; http://www.iir.com/nygc/tool/).

There is no one "magic bullet" . . . The youth gang problem . . . will be best addressed through a comprehensive strategy that incorporates primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention
U.S. Dept. of Justice, 2000

As emphasized by the U. S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the problem of gangs is complex and "there is no one 'magic bullet' program or 'best practice' for preventing gang affiliation and gang-associated violence. The youth gang problem is one that will be best addressed through a comprehensive strategy that incorporates primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention approaches" (U.S. Department of Justice, 2000).

Some Conclusions about Gang Prevention Strategies

From: Preventing Adolescent Gang Involvement (2000), U. S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
(http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/ojjdp/182210.pdf)

"In regard to primary prevention, three facts are particularly salient. First, gang formation is not restricted to urban, underclass areas. Second, gang members come from a variety of backgrounds; they are not exclusively male, urban, poor, minority, or from single-parent households. Third, once juveniles join a gang, they engage in high levels of criminal activity. Therefore, it is appropriate to formulate primary gang prevention efforts that target the entire adolescent population.

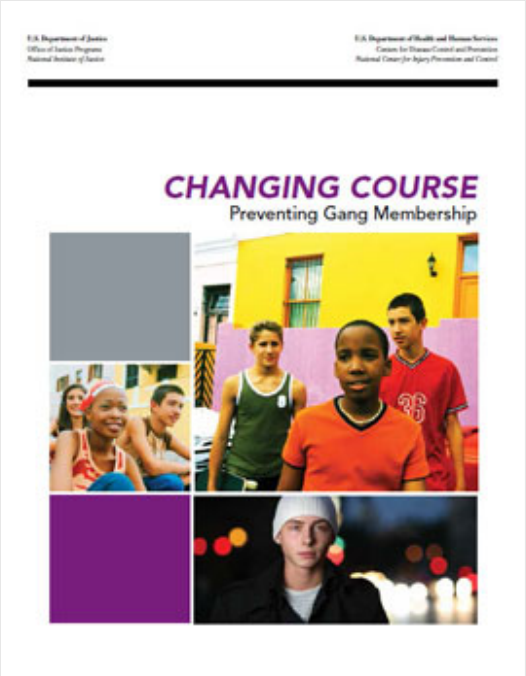
In terms of secondary prevention approaches, some youth are at higher risk of joining gangs. Although social structural conditions associated with gang formation and demographic characteristics attributed to gang members are diverse (and despite the facts stated above), youth gangs are still more likely to be found in socially disorganized or marginalized communities.
Secondary prevention strategies should, therefore, focus on communities and youth exposed to these greater risk factors. Community-level gang problem assessments may help guide prevention strategies by identifying areas and groups of youth that are most at risk for gang activity.

Tertiary prevention programs [e.g., law enforcement crackdowns gang suppression approaches] have shown little promise. Some detached worker programs produced the unintended consequence of increasing gang cohesion (Klein, 1995).
...
[And] ... prevention efforts that concentrate only on individual characteristics will fail to address the underlying problems. As Short (1997:181–194) states:

> 'Effective interventions at the individual level that seek to control violence thus require that macro-level factors . . . be taken into consideration. . . . Absent change in the macro-level forces associated with these conditions, vulnerable individuals will continue to be produced. It follows that . . . to be effective in reducing overall levels of violent crime, interventions directed primarily at the individual level must address the macro-level as well. . . . A substantial body of research demonstrates . . .that single approaches, whether based on prevention, suppression, coordination of agency programs, community change, or law enforcement, are unlikely to prevent gang formation or to be successful in stopping their criminal behavior.'"

Prevent Gang Membership

https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/preventgangmembership/index.html



The consequences of gangs — and their burden on law enforcement and public health systems in our communities — are significant. Law enforcement intervention and suppression efforts alone are not sufficient to solve the youth gang problem in the United States.

Preventing young people from joining gangs in the first place is crucial to realizing a significant and lasting reduction in youth gang activity.

Changing the Course of Young People's Future

Changing Course explores the important relationship between public safety and public health in preventing kids from joining gangs. Community leaders and practitioners are invited to engage in a new way of thinking about this relationship and to put into practice evidence-based principles and practices that can halt the cascading impact of gangs on kids, families, neighborhoods, and society.

The book's goal is to help community leaders, police officers, teachers, and community services providers better understand what research says about keeping kids out of gangs and to make informed decisions about how to best use limited resources to prevent joining a gang.

It is important to look beyond individual-level risk factors to consider factors within families, schools, and communities that influence joining a gang. Opportunities and principles for prevention are described at each level.

Get the Book and Supporting Materials

Download *Changing Course*, an executive summary and individual chapters for free from the National Institute of Justice (http://nij.gov/topics/crime/gangs-organized/gangs/youth-gangs/welcome.htm) .

Help Spread the Word.

Download a flyer https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/preventgangmembership/Changing-Course-Flyer-508.pdf about the book to print and share.

Additional Resources

- Preventing Youth Violence https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/yv-factsheet508.pdf
- Striving to Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere (https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/stryve/)
- Youth.gov (http://youth.gov/)
- Gang Prevention: An Overview of Research and Programs (https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/231116.pdf)
- National Gang Center (http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/)
- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (http://www.ojjdp.gov/)

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Moving Forward: Rethinking the Problem

Youth gangs are one of many overlapping psychosocial and mental health problems confronting schools and communities. The extensive list of problems includes violence, abuse, bullying, sexual harassment, interracial conflict, substance abuse, oppositional behavior, vandalism, truancy, dropouts, and many others that have been identified as interfering with school performance and community well-being.

The trends in policy and practice have been to deal with each as a separate entity. This is reflected in a host of school and community programs and services that are implemented in fragmented and marginalized ways and that have generated considerable counterproductive competition for sparse resources.

Over time the complexity and the ineffectiveness of efforts to address problems such as youth gangs has led to calls for more comprehensive approaches. In doing so, however, too little attention continues to be paid to:

Overlapping problems. Youth problems rarely are discrete entities. A gang member may be involved in delinquent behavior, substance abuse, teen sex, interracial conflict, and manifest symptoms of various mental health problems. Given this, schools and communities must address a full range of problems.

Underlying commonality of cause. Many youth problems are symptoms stemming from the same underlying causes. It is well documented that common to the development of such problems are (1) chronic exposure to common risk factors and (2) the failure of protective buffers to compensate for such exposure. Of particular concern is the impact of factors that lead to lack of success in and disengagement from school learning. Given all this, schools and communities must address the many problems they encounter in ways that account for the underlying causes and secondary instigating factors.

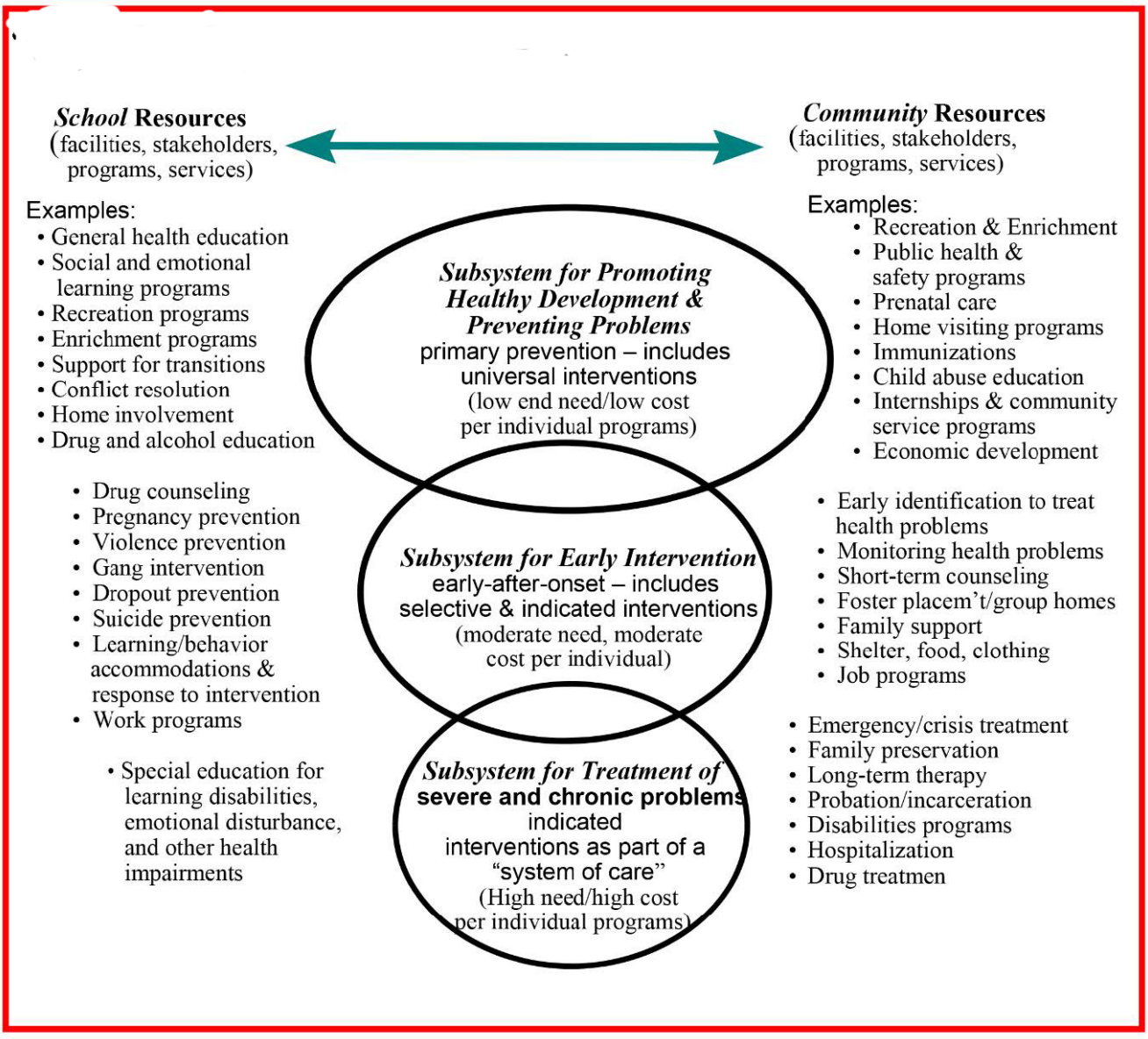
Developing a systemic approach. While current categorical and fragmented policies and practices contain essential building blocks, they are insufficient to the task. Moving forward will require a focus on (1) addressing barriers, (2) promoting protective buffers, (3) integrating programs and services into an overall system, and (4) fully integrating the system into the improvement agenda for schools and communities.

To guide development of a systemic approach, we have suggested that a continuum of integrated school-community intervention systems be used as a unifying framework (e.g., Adelman & Taylor, 2006; Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2006). The intent, over time, is for schools to play a major role in establishing a full range of integrated intervention *subsystems*, including school-community systems for

- promoting healthy development and preventing problems
- intervening early to address problems as soon after onset as is feasible
- assisting with chronic and severe problems.

As illustrated in Exhibit 2, the desired intervention subsystems can be conceived along a continuum. In keeping with public education and public health perspectives, such a continuum encompasses efforts to enable academic, social, emotional, and physical development and address behavior, learning, and emotional problems at every school.

Exhibit 2. Interconnected Subystems of Intervention.



Most schools and communities have some programs and services that fit along the entire continuum. However, as stressed, the interventions are not coalesced into integrated systems. Moreover, the tendency to focus mainly on the most severe problems has skewed the process so that too little is done to prevent and intervene early after the onset of a problem. As a result, public programs and services have been characterized as institutions that "wait for failure."

The continuum spans the full spectrum of prevention efforts and incorporates a holistic and developmental emphasis that envelops individuals, families, and the contexts in which they live, work, and play. The continuum also provides a framework for adhering to the principle of using the least restrictive and nonintrusive forms of intervention required to appropriately respond to problems and accommodate diversity.

Moreover, given the likelihood that many problems are not discrete, the continuum can be designed to address root causes, thereby minimizing tendencies to develop separate programs for each observed problem. In turn, this enables increased coordination and integration of resources which can increase impact and cost-effectiveness. To ensure the continuum fits with school improvement efforts, it has been conceptualized and operationalized as an enabling or learning supports component (e.g., Adelman & Taylor, 2006; Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2006).

Policy that helps schools and communities develop the full continuum of interventions is essential to moving forward. Such policy must effectively establish a *comprehensive intervention framework* that can be used to map, analyze, and set priorities. It must guide fundamental *rethinking of infrastructure* so that there is leadership and mechanisms for building integrated systems of interventions at schools and for connecting school and community resources. And, it must provide guidance for the difficulties inherent in facilitating major *systemic changes*.

What the best and wisest parent wants for his [or her] own child,
that must the community want for all of its children.
Any other ideal for our schools is narrow and unlovely;
acted upon, it destroys our democracy.

John Dewey, The School and Society, 1907

Appendix A

Resource and References

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Also, on the next page see the online clearinghouse Quick Find on Gangs on the website for the Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p3009_01.htm

National Youth Gang Center

As part of its comprehensive, coordinated response to America's gang problem, OJJDP funds the National Youth Gang Center. NYGC assists State and local jurisdictions in the collection, analysis, and exchange of information on gang-related demographics, legislation, literature, research, and promising program strategies. NYGC coordinates activities of the OJJDP Gang Consortium, a group of Federal agencies, gang program representatives, and service providers that works to coordinate gang information and programs.

The Center provides resource aids and information on promising and effective gang programs and strategies and has online a *Gang Strategic Planning Tool* for a community to use in assessing its gang problem and to guide development of a comprehensive, community-wide plan of gang prevention, intervention, and suppression. (See http://www.iir.com/nygc/tool/).

NYGC also provides training and technical assistance for OJJDP's Rural Gang, Gang-Free Schools, and Gang-Free Communities Initiatives.

For more information, contact:
National Youth Gang Center, P.O. Box 12729, Tallahassee, FL 32317
800–446–0912 850–386–5356 (fax) nygc@iir.com
www.iir.com/nygc

Quick Find On-line Clearinghouse

TOPIC: Gangs http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p3009_01.htm

The following represents a sample of information to get you started and is not meant to be exhaustive. (Note: Clicking on the following links causes a new window to be opened. To return to this window, close the newly opened one.)

Center Developed Documents, Resources, and Tools

Introductory Packet
- Violence Prevention and Safe Schools

Policy & Practice Analysis
- Youth Gangs and Schools

Practice Notes
- Addressing Neighborhood Problems that Affect the School

Fact & Information Resources
- About Youth Gangs
- Gang Affiliation: Personal Academic and Mental Health Impact

Relevant Documents, Resources, and Tools on the Internet

Facts/Statistics
- Highlights of the 2007 National Youth Gang Survey
- Highlights of the 2008 National Youth Gang Survey
- Highlights of the 2011 National Youth Gang Survey

General
- Comprehensive Gang Model Program
- Gangs and At-Risk Kids
- Latino High School Students' Perception of Gang and Crews
- Publications Recommended by the Youth Gang Consortium
- Violent Youth Gangs
- Why Youth Join Gangs Video

Guides
- Addressing Community Gang Problems Implementation Manual
- A Guide to Assessing Your Community's Youth Gang Problem
- Parent's Guide to Gangs
- Preventing Adolescent Gang Involvement
- School Gang Training: School Gang Prevention and Intervention

Studies

- Comparing the Criminal Behavior of Gang Members and At-Risk Youths
- Early Precursors of Gang membership: A Study of Seattle Youth
- Gangs Prevention: An Overview of Research and Programs
- Positive Individual and Social Behavior among Gang and Nongang African American Male Adolescents
- Perceptions of Gangs and Crews by Justice-Involved Youth and Implications for Best Practice Work
- The prevalence, predictors, and criminogenic effect of joining a gang among urban, suburban, and rural youth

Support

- Gang Resistance Education and Training
- National Youth Gang Center
- Strategic Planning Tool

Related Agencies and Websites

- Best Practices to Address Community Gang Problems
- Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence
- Gang Resistance, Education and Training Program
- The National Alliance of Gang Investigators Associations
- Promote Prevent (Education Development Center)
- National Youth Gang Center

For updated references to this topic, go to Google Scholar

We hope these resources met your needs. If not, feel free to contact us for further assistance. For additional resources related to this topic, use our search page to find organizations, websites and documents. You may also go to our technical assistance page or contact ltaylor@ucla.edu for more specific technical assistance requests.

If our website has been helpful, we are pleased and encourage you to use our site or contact our Center in the future.

Appendix B

Examples of State and District Policies regarding Gangs in Schools

1. Examples of district policy

Rio Rancho Public Schools – http://www.rrps.net/board/policies/346.htm

The Board recognizes that the harm done by the presence and activities of gangs in the public schools exceeds the immediate consequences of such activities such as violence and destruction of property. Gang activities also create an atmosphere of intimidation in the entire school community. Both the immediate consequences of gang activity and the secondary effects are disruptive and obstructive of the process of education and school activities.

It is therefore the policy of the Board of Education that gangs and gang activities are prohibited in the Rio Rancho Public Schools, according to the following:

A. Definition: For purposes of this policy a "gang" is any group of two or more persons whose purposes include the commission of illegal acts, or acts in violation of disciplinary rules of the school district. ""Gang related activity"" includes but is not limited to the prohibited conduct set forth below.

B. Prohibitions: No student on or about school property or at any school activity shall:

1. Wear, possess, use, distribute, display, or sell any clothing, jewelry, emblem, badge, symbol, sign or other items that evidences or reflects membership in or affiliation with any gang;
2. Engage in any act, either verbal or nonverbal, including gestures or handshakes, showing membership or affiliation with any gang.
3. Engage in any act in furtherance of the interests of any gang or gang activity, including, but not limited to:
   a. soliciting membership in, or affiliation with, any gang;
   b. soliciting any person to pay for "protection," or threatening any person, explicitly or implicitly, with violence or with any other illegal or prohibited act;
   c. painting, writing, or otherwise inscribing gang-related graffiti, messages, symbols, or signs, on school property;
   d. engaging in violence, extortion, or any other illegal act or other violation of school policy;
   e. soliciting any person to engage in physical violence against any other person.

C. Application and Enforcement:

1. In determining, as part of the application and enforcement of this policy, whether acts, conduct, or activities are gang related, school officials are encouraged to exercise discretion and judgment based upon current circumstances in their schools, neighborhoods, and areas.
2. The removal of gang-related graffiti shall be a priority in maintenance of school property. All such graffiti on school property shall be removed or covered within twenty-four (24) hours of its first appearance to school officials, or as soon thereafter as possible, unless additional time is needed to obtain replacements for damaged items.
3. School officials should also encourage private property owners to promptly remove or cover gang-related graffiti on private property in school neighborhoods.
4. School officials are strongly encouraged to work closely with local law enforcement officials in controlling gang-related activities. Local law enforcement can provide school officials with information regarding gang-related activities in the area, including names and characteristics of local gangs.

5. The superintendent, in consultation with the appropriate building principals, should report instances of gang-related criminal acts or acts of serious disruption to local law-enforcement authorities for further action.

D. Violations of Policy: Students who violate this policy shall be subject to the full range of school disciplinary measures, in addition to applicable criminal and civil penalties.

Wake County Schools – http://www.wcpss.net/policy-files/series/policies/6424-bp.html

Gang and Gang Related Activities – The WCPSS does not support or condone gang membership or gang activity. The Superintendent/designee shall regularly consult with law enforcement officials to identify gang-related items, symbols and behaviors, and provide each principal with this information.

No student shall commit any act that furthers gangs or gang-related activities. A gang is any ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal, having as one of its primary activities the commission of criminal acts, or the purposeful violation of any WCPSS policy, and having a common name or common identifying sign, colors or symbols. Conduct prohibited by this policy includes:

A. Wearing, possessing, using, distributing, displaying, or selling any clothing, jewelry, emblems, badges, symbols, signs, visible tattoos and body markings, or other items, or being in possession of literature that shows affiliation with a gang, or is evidence of membership or affiliation in any gang or that promotes gang affiliation;
B. Communicating either verbally or non-verbally (gestures, handshakes, slogans, drawings, etc.), to convey membership affiliation in any gang or that promotes gang affiliation;
C. Tagging, or otherwise defacing school or personal property with gang or gang-related symbols or slogans;
D. Requiring payment of protection, money or insurance, or otherwise intimidating or threatening any person related to gang activity;
E. Inciting other students to intimidate or to act with physical violence upon any other person related to gang activity;
F. Soliciting others for gang membership;
G. Conspiring to commit any violation of this policy or committing or conspiring to commit any other illegal act or other violation of school district policies that relates to gang activity.

Before being suspended for a first offense of wearing gang-related attire (when not involved in any other kind of gang-related activity or behavior), a student may receive a warning and be allowed to immediately change or remove the attire if the school administration determines that the student did not intend the attire to show gang affiliation. Reference policy 6400 for disciplinary action.

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2. Examples of state legislation related to gangs and schools
[from http://www.iir.com/nygc/gang-legis/gangs_and_schools.htm]

>**California 51264.** Guidelines for Incorporating In-Service Training in Gang Violence and Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention; Assistance in Developing In-Service Training Programs and Qualifying for Funding; Encouragement to Develop Single Plan; Consultation With Office of Criminal Justice Planning

(a) The State Department of Education shall prepare and distribute to school districts and

county offices of education guidelines for incorporating in-service training in gang violence and drug and alcohol abuse prevention for teachers, counselors, athletic directors, school board members, and other educational personnel into the staff development plans of all school districts and county offices of education.

(b) The department shall, upon request, assist school districts and county offices of education in developing comprehensive gang violence and drug and alcohol abuse prevention in-service training programs. The department's information and guidelines, to the maximum extent possible, shall encourage school districts and county offices of education to avoid duplication of effort by sharing resources; adapting or adopting model in-service training programs; developing joint and collaborative programs; and coordinating efforts with existing state staff development programs, county gang violence and drug and alcohol staff development programs, county health departments, county and city law enforcement agencies, and other public and private agencies providing health, drug, alcohol, gang violence prevention, or other related services at the local level.

(c) The department shall assist school districts and county offices of education in qualifying for the receipt of federal and state funds to support their gang violence and drug and alcohol abuse prevention in-service training programs.

(d) Each school that chooses to utilize the provisions of this article related to in-service training in gang violence and drug and alcohol abuse prevention, is encouraged to develop a single plan to strengthen its gang violence and drug and alcohol abuse prevention efforts. If a school develops or has developed a school improvement plan pursuant to Article 2 (commencing with Section 52010) of Chapter 6 of Part 28, or a school safety plan pursuant to Article 5 (commencing with Section 32280) of Chapter 2.5 of Part 19, it is encouraged to incorporate into that plan, where appropriate, the gang violence and drug and alcohol prevention plan that it has developed.

(e) The department shall consult with the Office of Criminal Justice Planning regarding gang violence.

>California 51265. Priority to Be Given to Gang Violence and Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention In-Service Training Programs

It is the intent of the Legislature that school districts and county offices of education give high priority to gang violence and drug and alcohol abuse prevention in-service training programs, which shall be part of the overall strategy for comprehensive gang violence and drug and alcohol abuse prevention education.

"Gang violence and drug and alcohol abuse prevention in-service training" for purposes of this article means the presentation of programs, instruction, and curricula that will help educators develop competencies in interacting in a positive manner with children and youth to assist them in developing the positive values, self-esteem, knowledge, and skills to lead productive, gang-free, and drug-free lives; develop knowledge of the causes of gang violence and substance abuse, and the properties and effects of tobacco, alcohol, narcotics, and dangerous drugs, including the risk of contracting acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) associated with intravenous drug use; receive training regarding available information and resources concerning gang violence and drug and alcohol abuse prevention as well as antigang and antisubstance abuse crime trends; develop familiarity with teaching social skills and resistance skills to children and youth; and develop skills in conducting effective education, which includes methods and techniques for helping children and youth to freely express ideas and opinions in a responsible manner and to understand the nature and consequences of their decisions as they relate to gang involvement and drug and alcohol abuse.

>**California 51266.** (Operation Contingent) Model Gang Violence Suppression and Substance Abuse Prevention Curriculum

(a The Office of Criminal Justice Planning, in collaboration with the State Department of Education, shall develop a model gang violence suppression and substance abuse prevention curriculum for grades 2, 4, and 6. The curriculum for grades 2, 4, and 6 shall be modeled after a similar curriculum that has been developed by the Orange County Office of Education for grades 3, 5, and 7. The Office of Criminal Justice Planning, in collaboration with the State Department of Education, may contract with a county office of education for the development of the model curriculum. The model curriculum shall be made available to school districts and county offices of education and shall, at a minimum, provide for each of the following:

(1) Lessons for grades 2, 4, and 6 that are aligned with the state curriculum frameworks for history, social science, and English and language arts.
(2) Instructional resources that address issues of ethnic diversity and at-risk pupils.
(3) The integration of the instructional resources of the Office of Criminal Justice Planning and the School/Law Enforcement Partnership in order to support the school curriculum and assist in the alignment of the state curriculum framework.

(b) The Office of Criminal Justice Planning shall develop an independent evaluation of the pupil outcomes of the model gang violence suppression and substance abuse prevention curriculum program.

>**Indiana 20-10.1-27-8**. Sec. 8. The department shall establish the anti-gang counseling pilot program to provide financial assistance to participating school corporations to establish pilot projects designed to do the following:

(1) Educate students and parents:
(A) of the extent to which criminal gang activity exists in the school corporation''s community;
(B) on the negative societal impact that criminal gangs have on the community; and
(C) on methods to discourage participation in criminal gangs.
(2) Encourage the use of community resources not directly affiliated with the school corporation, including law enforcement officials, to participate in the particular pilot project.
(3) Enable the participating school corporations on a case-by-case basis and with the prior written approval of the student''s parent or guardian to contract with community mental health centers to provide appropriate anti-gang counseling to a student identified by the student''s school guidance counselor as being at risk of becoming a member of a criminal gang or at risk of engaging in criminal gang activity.

>Nevada 392.4635. Policy for Prohibition of Activities of Criminal Gangs on School Property.
1. The board of trustees of each school district may establish a policy that prohibits the activities of criminal gangs on school property. The policy may prohibit:
(1) A pupil from wearing any clothing or carrying any symbol on school property that denotes membership in or an affiliation with a criminal gang; and
(a) Any activity that encourages participation in a criminal gang or facilitates illegal acts of a criminal gang.
2. Each policy that prohibits the activities of criminal gangs on school property may provide for the suspension or expulsion of pupils who violate the policy.
3. As used in this section, "criminal gang" has the meaning ascribed to it in NRS 213.1263.

>Oregon 336.109. Policy to Reduce Gang Involvement, Violent Activities and Drug Abuse

(1) After consultation with appropriate agencies and officials, including the Department of Education, each school district is encouraged to develop and adopt a comprehensive policy to reduce gang involvement, violent activities, and drug abuse by public school students in the school district, including but not limited to:
   (a)A statement that evaluates: (A) The nature and extent of gang involvement, violent activities, and drug abuse by public school students of the school district and (B) The impact of gang involvement, violent activities and drug abuse on the ability of public schools in the school district to meet curriculum requirements and improve the attendance of public school students.
   (b) A statement that emphasizes the need to reduce gang involvement, violent activities, and drug abuse by public school students.
   (c) Strategies to reduce gang involvement, violent activities, and drug abuse by students of the school district considering the needs of the public school students.
   (d) Methods to communicate conflict resolution skills to the teachers and public school students of the school district.
   (e) Strategies to inform the teachers of the school district, the parents of public school students, and the public about the policy the school district developed pursuant to this section.

(2) As used in this section, "gang" means a group that identifies itself through the use of a name; unique appearance or language, including hand signs; the claiming of geographical territory; or the espousing of a distinctive belief system that frequently results in criminal activity.

Appendix C

Examples of "Model" Programs

Comprehensive Gang Model

– The OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model is a set of five core strategies—community mobilization, opportunities provision, social intervention, suppression, and organizational change and development—that offer a comprehensive, collaborative approach designed to prevent and reduce gang violence.

https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/comprehensive-gang-model*:*

National Gange Center Program Matrix

This resource lists all programs in the National Gang Center's Strategic Planning Tool database alphabetically. The matrix indicates whether the program is viewed as effective or promising and the age range of clients served by each program. The program names are linked to pages describing the programs; these pages include references and contact information. https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/spt/Program-Matrix