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The Status of Violence Prevention in West Virginia Elementary Schools : A Case Study

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THE STATUS OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION IN WEST VIRGINIA ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY

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In

Educational Leadership

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ABSTRACT

The Status of Violence Prevention in West Virginia Elementary Schools: A Case Study

While there is no absolute deterrent of school violence, West Virginia has taken definitive steps to try to ensure safety in our public schools. Since the launch of the Safe School initiative in 1995, training for principals, teachers and school personnel on crisis intervention and management plans have been ongoing. Students have undergone training in programs such as Peer Mediation, Natural Helpers, Life Skills, Bullying Prevention, Positive Behavior Support (PBS), and Respect to Protect. In addition, encouragement, mandating and providing funds for school safety and violence/crime prevention and intervention programs have been enacted legislatively. With the school security hardware, safety procedures and violence prevention programs in place, the question then becomes whether elementary schools are safer in West Virginia.

The purpose of this mixed methods case study was to determine what are the specific school security hardware, safety procedures and violence prevention programs, how they are perceived by principals as effective and what are the perceptions of principals' unmet needs addressing school safety.

Elementary school principals in West Virginia were surveyed using the *Principal Survey: Violence Prevention in West Virginia Elementary Schools* utilizing a quantitative descriptive design, arranged to obtain numerical data and related demographical information from the respondents. The targeted population for this study was West Virginia elementary principals which accounted for a population of 336 (n=336). From this population of 336 (n= 336), 167 surveys were returned for a response rate of 50%.

The West Virginia and national data compare very favorably. A valid conclusion would be that the West Virginia School Access Act (WVC§18F-9F-1) and Fund (WVC§18F-9F-3) of 2007 and the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Community Act (SDFSCA) of 1994 (Title IV, § 41114116, 20 U.S.C. 71117116) have accomplished its goals related to security hardware, safety procedures and violence prevention programs in West Virginia elementary schools.

DEDICATION

My dissertation and pursuit of this doctoral degree are dedicated with love and respect, to my family and friends. I would like to express my greatest appreciation and love to my husband Mike. His support, encouragement, quite patience and love were undeniably the core upon which of the last decade of my life has been built. I cannot imagine that I could have completed this work without his support.

To my parents, Pete and Bertha Pentasuglia, for instilling in me the knowledge that I can do anything that I set my mind to do. Through their parental guidance and modeled lives, I learned that hard work, dedication, and determination are priceless life skills that have helped me through this doctoral process. Last but not least, my brother Tony who always said, "You can do it Sis!" I love you all.

I would also like to thank several friends that have helped me along the way. First of all, Sue "Momma" Mattox, who spent countless hours editing and making suggestions to make this dissertation better. She's one of the strongest women I know and I will be forever grateful to her for her love, ongoing support and expertise. Secondly, to Jackie, Donna, and Debbie I will be forever thankful for the required shopping trips and the "girl's night out" adventures. You all mean the world to me. I also would like to thank the many friends that I have made along the way at Marshall. Without these fellow students I would never have made it- Ernie, Bill, Lisa, Annie and Suzette – thank you all for inspiring me to be the best I can be through your example. Last but not least, my beautiful Labradors, Sydney and Sagie, who were always by my side.

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allow thoughts of not attaining our goal to ever be entertained. Thanks for everything Big

Ern!

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction and Rationale

Schools are generally regarded to be microcosms of the societies which they serve, reflecting both the positive and negative facets. This phenomenon is perhaps nowhere more evident than with the increasing violence in modern schools, which has become one of the most pressing educational issues in the United States (Noguera, 1995; Stephens, 1998). Many of our public schools, once considered safe, are being plagued by violence.

School violence has been defined as deliberate aggression or activity intended to cause physical or emotional harm, injury, or damage to person(s) or property while at school or when attending school functions. Children are effected in many ways by school violence, both globally and locally (Zeira, Astor, & Benbenishty, 2004). Acts of violence threatens the security of schools and attacks the core value of our societal system (Furlong & Morrison, 2000). With the variety of ethnicities in American schools, students who walk through the hallways, sit in classrooms and eat in cafeterias come together from various cultures, backgrounds and families. Students at a young age develop values and beliefs that are often challenged by other students at schools. Therefore, schools must constantly deal with the variety of students with the hope and goal of producing productive members of society by providing them with opportunities for a good education. Epp and Watkinson (1997) expressed how violence affect children: "School violence is an important component of the daily lives of children in schools… it affect where they walk, where they go, how they dress, and who their friends are at

school" (p.24). The problem of school violence is noteworthy to both schools and society in general because violent behavior, which has traditionally been confined to the realm of older students, is becoming more evident in students in the fifth grade and younger (Sauerwein, 1995).

Contrary to popular belief, violent victimization and fear of violence are not limited to secondary schools but are also becoming a growing issue at all school levels–elementary, junior high and high school (Howard, Flora, & Griffin, 1999; Petersen, 1997). The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company conducted a study in 1999 that surveyed three groups who were directly affected by the issue of school violence: public school students, public school teachers and law enforcement officials. This study suggested that elementary schools students may be at as great of a risk for being a victim of violence or aggression as a high school student.

Even though most elementary schools throughout the nation provide a safe environment for learning, the literature confirms that elementary schools are not exempt from an increase of school violence (Met Life, 1994; Petersen, 1997, Sauerwein, 1995). Internal acts of violence can take on many forms at elementary schools which may include a combination of some or all of the following: verbal threats to students (Johnson, Johnson, Mitchell, Cotten, Harris, & Louison, 1996), student-to-student physical contact (Peterson, Pietrzak, & Speaker, 1998), the presence of weapons (Peterson et al., 1998), and bullying (Johnson & Johnson et al., 1996). Furthermore, occasional violent acts come in the form of firearms used against students and staff either by disaffected students or persons external to an education site, who gain entrance to what, is often an unprotected

area. The evidence from the literature clearly delineates that it is imperative for elementary principals to examine school security hardware, safety procedures, and violence prevention programs to help assure an environment which is safe and conducive to learning. The purpose of this study is to determine what are the specific school security hardware, safety procedures and violence prevention programs, how they are perceived by principals as effective and what are the principal's perceptions regarding unmet needs addressing school safety in West Virginia elementary schools.

Background

Throughout history, public schooling has changed dramatically in the type, frequency, and degree of disciplinary problems (Warner, Weist, & Krulak, 1999). According to a 1949 survey, school principals noted that there were no problems with interpersonal violence or destruction of property. A survey by Volokh and Snell (1998) illustrated the results of the top discipline problems in the 1940s in comparison to the 1990s. During the 1940s, the top disciplinary problems were talking out of turn, chewing gum, making noise, running in the hall, cutting in line, dress code violations, and littering. This survey also indicated that the most serious problems were lying and disrespect to teachers (Hennings, 1949). In the 1990s the top disciplinary problems were drug abuse, alcohol abuse, pregnancy, suicide, rape, robbery and assault. The National Education Association (NEA) in 1956 released a study that revealed that violence was beginning to become a concern in schools. A particular concern, from the evidence was the violence against teachers, particularly in the inner-city areas. Racially motivated

confrontations escalated in the 1960s, which was a direct outcome of integration of public schools (Jaslow, 1978) and accounted for the crime rate increase during that period.

School violence in the 1970s began to escalate quickly. Gallup polls that were conducted from 1969 to 1975 revealed that there was a great concern for discipline in the schools among the public's opinion (Eric Clearinghouse on Educational Management, 1981), with documented increases in unsanctioned behavior by students in school.

As a result of the Gallup polls and other similar surveys, congressional action was taken to investigate the problem of increasing school violence (Warner, Weist, & Krulak, 1999). The Bayh Report and the Safe Schools Study were two landmark studies that were initiated in the United States in the 1970s.

The Bayh Report studied vandalism and school violence in 759 U.S. school districts from 1970-1973 (Bayh, 1975). The preliminary subcommittee found that in the three years between 1970-1973 homicides, rapes and attempted rapes, robberies, assaults on students and teachers, vandalism of school buildings, drug and alcohol offenses on school property had tremendously increased. One ominous statistic for the course of school safety was the fact that by the end of the 1973 school year, the number of weapons confiscated by school authorities had risen 54.4 % in 3 years (Bayh, 1975). As evaluated, the trend in school violence over the last decade in America has been, and continues to be, alarming and dramatically increasing.

The Safe Schools Study, conducted by the National Institute of Education (NIE, 1978) surveyed 31,373 students, 23,895 teachers, and 15,894 principals in the United

States in 1976-1977. The Safe Schools Study was mandated by the United States

Congress under Public Law 93-380 in response to the growing public concern of violence

and vandalism occurring in the schools. The objectives of this study were to determine

the frequency and seriousness of crime in elementary and secondary schools in the

United States, the number and location of schools affected by crime, the cost of

replacement or repair of objects damaged by school crime, and possible methods of

prevention. The Safe School Study Report (1978) concluded that schools could do more

to reduce violence and disruption through policies such as: (a) increasing efforts in

student governance and rule enforcement; (b) treating students fairly and equally; (c)

improving the relevance of subject matter to suit students' interests and needs; and (d)

having smaller classes, with teachers instructing a smaller number of students (Lawrence,

2003). These early reports set a precedent for the increasingly important role of the

federal government in assessing school crime and violence and in developing

recommendations, resources, funding, and technical assistance for local schools and

justice agencies to use as they respond to growing concerns about juvenile crime in

communities and schools (Lawrence, 2003). The student's survey of this study reported

one-fifth of secondary school students said that they were afraid at school at least

sometimes, although only 3% said they were afraid most of the time (Ross & Roth,

1994).

With the reported conclusions of these studies in combination with the heightened

awareness and other factors that are ambiguous, there was a leveling off of school

violence in the 1980s. However, the National Goals Panel 2000, an independent agency

of the executive branch of the federal government, proposed the following in 1989: every

local educational agency will develop and implement a policy to ensure that all schools are free of violence and the unauthorized presence of weapons. In response to this goal, Congress passed the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1994, (GovTrack.us. H.R. 6--103rd Congress, 1993), previously known as the Drug-Free Schools and Community Act, which provides support for drug and violence prevention programs.

Disparities then appeared in the 1990s literature; some report increases, whereas others cite decreases. A survey in 1993 by the National School Board Association (NSBA) of 2000 urban, suburban, and rural school districts in the United States revealed that the majority of districts reported that school violence had increased over the 5 years prior to the study. With the survey results, the NSBA (1993) made the diminution of school violence a top priority.

Unfortunately, today's schools are vulnerable to a range of threats that are different from the earlier ones described. Threats today include random shootings, natural disasters, accidents and catastrophic terrorism incidents which could have a profound effect on the community or region where all schools may be at risk. Public schools in big cities and large suburbs face threats of violence, accidents and emergencies every day. Principals need to be cognizant of the issues that face schools in the 21st century in order to provide an environment that is safe and conducive to learning.

Addressing Violence in Schools

The response to the federal and state legislation has prompted the private sector security businesses to develop tools that address areas of safety in schools; this has resulted in an increase in security sales revenue to over $300 million enterprise in the United States (Stefkvich & O'Brien, 1997). This increase in attention has led to the development of tools that tend to fall into 3 distinct categories: (a) security hardware, (b) safety procedures, and (c) violence prevention programs for many types of institutions. Choosing the efficient and effective security measure from this barrage of new school tools can be a daunting task, especially for principals that are charged with maintaining extremely high levels of security with minimal financial resources. Determining a school's security needs requires an assessment of the school's circumstances, student body and physical resources.

Security Hardware

One possible way to address acts of violence is the use of security hardware. Security hardware is defined as any mechanism used to monitor and address internal or external acts of school violence. This may include video surveillance or security cameras, metal detectors, telephones in classrooms, intercoms in classrooms, two-way communication devices, electronic locks, upgrading lighting, concrete barriers, entrance buzzers with intercom system for entrance into buildings and convex mirrors. Elementary schools use a variety of these security measures to promote the safety of students ranging from surveillance cameras to metal detectors. Effective deterrents to acts of violence on school campuses include the presence of uniformed security guards or resource officers,

metal detectors and surveillance cameras (Thompkins, 2000). According to Skiba (2000), metal detectors are considered by many school principals to be a viable solution for deterring violence in schools. Between the 1999-2000 and 2005-06 school years, the percentage of schools using one or more surveillance cameras increased from 19% to 43%. Furthermore, the percentage of public schools providing telephones in most classrooms increased from 45% in 1999-2000 to 67% in 2005-2006 (Skiba, 2000).

Safety Procedures

Throughout the country schools have found successful approaches, used innovative strategies and perfected techniques to provide a safe and stimulating environment for students (Hill & Hill, 1994). The second method of addressing school violence is safety procedures. Safety procedures are any code of behavior performed by school officials or security/law enforcement officers/resource officers to monitor internal and external acts of violence. This may include locker searches, identification cards worn by officials and visitors, emergency communication procedures, visitor sign-ins, lock-down drills, bomb searches using employees and dogs, numbering of doors and areas, safe schools hotline, school uniforms and hall passes. Other features include principals limiting access to school buildings and campuses by implementing such practices as locked gates or doors to control who comes in and out of the school facility or grounds. According to the tenth annual report of School Crime and Safety from the Bureau of Justice and Statistics (BJS) and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), *Indicator of School Crime and Safety 2007*, elementary principals responded that during the 2005-2006 school year 87.9% locked or monitored the doors to the school building

during the school day. Metal detectors were utilized 0.6% of the time at elementary schools. As with any safety procedure, consistency and knowledge should be coordinated with the principals, teachers, and students in order for the procedure to work effectively.

Violence Prevention Programs

Another viable way to address internal acts of violence in schools is to provide violence prevention programs in elementary schools. Violence prevention programs are designed to address acts of school violence among students or against staff members. This may include Peer Mediation Programs, Bullying Prevention Programs (BPP), Conflict Resolution Programs, Student Assistance Programs/Teams (SAT), Character Education Programs, Natural Helpers/Mentoring Programs, Second Step, Get Real about Violence, Staff Development related to Safe and Drug-Free Schools Programs, Teaching Materials and Resource Materials for supporting Safe and Drug-Free Schools, Before and After School Programs that address tobacco, drug, alcohol or violence issues, Parent Programs/Family Nights and Responsible Students Programs using Positive Behavior Supports (PBS). With such programs, creating a school environment that is free of violence has become a public priority. Currently there are hundreds of violence prevention programs on the market for schools to choose which one best fits their school environment. Some focus on working with individual children identified by teachers or peers as aggressive or at-risk for school failure (Flannery, 1998). Others combine a focus on individual students and family risks by integrating school based programs and work with parents, peers or community members. Additionally, some programs work with individual students to help make a positive difference in the school climate. However,

according to the United States Department of Education article, *Safeguarding Our Children: An Action Guide*, there are three main elements to effective violence prevention programs. One of these elements is schools must provide a school-wide program for all students. This means that schools must have promote positive discipline, academic success, mental and emotional support through a caring environment. The second element of effective programs is schools must identify students that may be a potential candidate for severe academic or behavioral and create programs to address these issues. The third element of effective violence prevention programs is schools must identify the most severe cases of mental and emotional difficulties with students and solicit help from outside agency to help with the interventions. Elementary schools need to explore the various programs in order to find a violence prevention program that would best suit the type of school environment that exists in their school.

Influence on West Virginia Schools

With federal and state legislative policies implemented, school entry access points were investigated in West Virginia schools. This included entry doors, windows, walls and roofs that may jeopardize the safety and security of the school. In March 2007, West Virginia promulgated a law directing its state-wide School Building Authority (SBA) to facilitate and provide funding for enhancement of school access safety, requiring county school boards to develop and submit to the authority school access safety plans and establishing funding for the plans through the creation of the West Virginia School Access Safety Fund (WVC §18-9F-3). Additionally, in the fall of 2007, West Virginia Governor Manchin established an initiative to examine the level of

security at school access points throughout the state. A school access safety audit questionnaire was sent to each county school superintendent to investigate five key areas of access to school buildings. These five areas were planning, deterrence, detection, delay and communication. With the results of this audit, Governor Manchin directed $10 million to the West Virginia School Building Authority (SBA) as part of the School Safety Act. According to Governor Manchin's office, research shows that school unity is one of the most important factors preventing school violence (Curriculum Review, 2007). Furthermore, creating positive relationships between teachers and students provides a strong foundation for at-risk students which help to address acts of violence.

West Virginia School Climate Study

An additional survey was developed in December 2007 by The West Virginia Department of Education, Office of Healthy Schools to solicit information for a better picture of the school climate in schools across the state (West Virginia Department of Education, 2008). The survey was sent out to all West Virginia Principals, Superintendents, Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) Directors, Safety Directors, and Safe and Drug-Free School Coordinators. The survey was administered to identify needs for training and resources, and development of consistent processes beneficial to counties and local schools (West Virginia Department of Education, 2008). Comments that were noted on the survey were access control issues, hardware issues (security systems, two-way communication, improved lighting, and visual contact with main office before visitors enter the building), and lack of adequate staff. The respondents also indicated that in order for their schools to be safe 47% indicated security

system improvements would be needed along with 26% total changes to the facility, and 14% indicated training. In other comments, 13% indicated that there was a need for additional training and planning, upgrade to the public address system, funding for resource officers, and more administrative staff. However, the most frequent emergencies that occurred were medical/injuries (70%), bomb threats (5%), student threats (4%), and intruders (2%). Other results for a total of 19% were parents entering the building without checking in at the office, bullying/fighting, behavior issues with students, false fire alarms, and building evacuations from threats. The survey results also indicated that 87% of the population felt that their schools were safe; however, 13% responded that they felt that their schools were unsafe.

West Virginia Student Code of Conduct

The establishment of the Safe and Drug- Free Schools and Community Act, provides districts a policy for student conduct that will ensure an "orderly and safe environment that is conducive to learning" (p.2). This policy requires public schools to "respond immediately and consistently to incidents of harassment, intimidation, bullying… or violence in a manner that effectively deters future incidents and affirms respect for individuals" (Recent State Policies/Activities West Virginia, p. 1). In essence the West Virginia Student Code of Conduct was developed to give principals guidelines to follow when discipline procedures need to be enforced. Violations of the Student Code of Conduct are broken into Level I , II, III and IV violations based on severity.

In response to addressing school violence in West Virginia, Governor Manchin awarded $687,286 in Safe and Drug-Free Communities grants to 21 projects across West

Virginia in 2007. Governor Joe Manchin stated that the funds will assist public and private non-profit agencies with drug and violence prevention efforts, after school prevention programs, and family-focused violence prevention and drug education programs.

Purpose and Significance of Study

While there is no absolute deterrent of school violence, West Virginia has taken definitive steps to try to ensure safety in our public schools. Since the launch of the Safe School initiative in 1995, training for principals, teachers and school personnel on crisis intervention and management plans has been ongoing. Students have undergone training in programs such as Peer Mediation, Natural Helpers, Life Skills, Bullying Prevention, Positive Behavior Support (PBS), and Respect to Protect. In addition, encouragement, mandating and providing funds for school safety and violence/crime prevention and intervention programs have been enacted legislatively. With the school security hardware, safety procedures and violence prevention programs in place, the question then becomes whether elementary schools are safer in West Virginia.

The purpose of this study was to determine what are the specific school security hardware, safety procedures and violence prevention programs, how they are perceived by principals as effective and what are the principals' perceptions of principals unmet needs addressing school safety in West Virginia. This study analyzed the school security hardware, safety procedures and violence prevention programs in preventing or reducing violent acts from occurring.

The findings of this study are useful to principals, superintendents, board members, and legislators because of the concern of violence in schools. With the increase of violence in schools, security measures are at the forefront of school district concerns. As elementary schools experience violent and aggressive behavior principals are left to decide what security measures would be the most beneficial for their school according to the behaviors present. Most security measures have major financial implications for schools that represent additional costs for taxpayers. School boards now have to decide whether these additional costs will be balanced by raising taxes or simply taking away from the educational budget across the district. These decisions are ultimately impacted by the communication process in place from principals justifying their security needs and how these needs will ultimately affect the overall learning environment in schools once properly addressed. In essence, it is essential that school principals find ways that reduce and prevent violence in schools. In this pursuit of safe schools, principals need to be aware of the school security hardware, safety procedures, and violence prevention programs in combination that may provide an environment that would deter violent attacks from occurring.

Research Questions

The following research questions will be examined in this study:

1. What school security hardware is present in elementary schools in West Virginia?
2. What are the *perceptions of West Virginia elementary school principals related to the effectiveness* to the specific pieces of the school security hardware they currently have in place?

3. What do West Virginia *elementary school principals perceive as being unmet needs* related to school security hardware designed to address school violence?

4. What school safety procedures are present in elementary schools in West Virginia?

5. What are the *perceptions of West Virginia elementary principals regarding the effectiveness* of the specific pieces of the school safety procedures they have in addressing school violence?

6. What do West Virginia *elementary principals perceive as being unmet needs* related to safety procedures designed to address school safety?

7. What school violence prevention programs are present in elementary schools in West Virginia?

8. What are the *perceptions of West Virginia elementary principals regarding the effectiveness* of the specific pieces of the school violence prevention programs they have in addressing school violence?

9. What do West Virginia *elementary principals perceive as being unmet needs* related to violence prevention programs designed to address school safety?

Operational Definitions

Elementary school principal's perception of unmet security hardware **needs**: Security hardware identified as needed in schools by survey participants in response to item on the *Principal Survey: Violence Prevention in West Virginia Elementary Schools*.

Elementary school principal's perceptions related to the **effectiveness** of specific pieces of security hardware: The benefits of school security hardware at deterring school

violence as rated by survey respondents on the *Principal Survey: Violence Prevention in West Virginia Elementary Schools*

Elementary school principal's perception of unmet safety procedure **needs**: safety procedures identified as needed in schools by survey participants in response to item on the *Principal Survey: Violence Prevention in West Virginia Elementary Schools*.

Elementary school principal's perceptions related to the **effectiveness** of specific pieces of school safety procedures: The benefit of school security hardware at addressing school violence as rated by survey respondents on the *Principal Survey: Violence Prevention in West Virginia Elementary Schools.*

Elementary school principal's perception of unmet violence prevention program **needs**: violence prevention programs identified as needed in schools by survey participants in response to item on the *Principal Survey: Violence Prevention in West Virginia Elementary Schools*.

Elementary school principal's perceptions related to the **effectiveness** of specific pieces of violence prevention programs: The benefit of violence prevention programs at deterring school violence as rated by survey respondents on the *Principal Survey: Violence Prevention in West Virginia Elementary Schools.*

Definitions of Essential Terms

For the purpose of this study the following definitions apply:

1. <u>Elementary school</u> is a school which has any grade configuration grades K-7, but not grade 8.

2. <u>Security Hardware</u> is any mechanism used to monitor and address internal or external acts of school violence. This may include video surveillance or security cameras, metal detectors, telephones in classrooms, intercoms in classrooms, two-way communication devices, electronic locks, upgrading lighting, concrete barriers, entrance buzzers with intercom system for entrance into buildings and convex mirrors.

3. <u>Safety Procedures</u> are any codes of behavior performed by school officials or security/law enforcement officers/resource officers to monitor internal and external acts of violence. This may include locker searches, identification cards worn by officials and visitors, emergency communication procedures, locked windows and exterior doors, visitor sign-ins, teacher supervision, lock-down drills, bomb searches using employees, numbering of doors and stairways, safe schools hotline, school uniforms and hall passes.

4. <u>Violence Prevention Programs</u> are programs delivered to deter internal acts of school violence among students or against staff members. This may include Peer Mediation Programs, Bullying Prevention Programs (BPP), Conflict Resolution Programs, Student Assistance Programs/Teams (SAT), Character Education Programs, Natural Helpers/Mentoring Programs, Second Step, Get Real about

Violence, Staff Development related to Safe and Drug-Free Schools Programs, Teaching Materials & Resource Materials for supporting Safe and Drug-Free Schools, Before and After School Programs that address tobacco, drug, alcohol or violence issues, Parent Programs/Family Nights and Responsible Students Programs using Positive Behavior Supports (PBS).

5. <u>Level I Violations</u> is a violation that is observed by a school employee or by students that is less severe than a Level II, III, and IV. Level I violations may include: anti-social conduct, cheating/academic misconduct, disorderly conduct (talking, making noises throwing objects), improper operation of a motor vehicle, inappropriate displays of affection, inappropriate dress and grooming, leaving school without permission, possession of inappropriate personal property, tardiness, technology abuse, tobacco, trespassing, or truancy.

6. <u>Level II Violations</u> is a violation that is observed by a school employee or by students that is more severe than a Level I but less severe than a Level III or IV. Level II violations may include: bullying/harassment/intimidation, failure to serve assigned detention, false identification, forgery, fraud, gambling, gang activity, insubordination/unruly conduct, loitering, or theft or possession of stolen property.

7. <u>Level III Violations</u> is a violation that is observed by a school employee or by students that is more severe than a Level I or II violation but less severe that a Level IV violation. Level III violations are consistent with those addressed in the West Virginia Code. Level III violations are use of alcohol, defacing school property, disobeying a teacher in a willful manner, hazing, improper or negligent

operation of a motor vehicle, use of marijuana, physical altercation, profane

language, and theft, threat of injury/injury or violation of school rules or policies.

8. <u>Level IV Violations</u> is a violation that is observed by a school employee or by

   students that is more severe than a Level I, II or III violation. Level IV violations

   are consistent with those addressed in the West Virginia Code. Level IV

   violations are battery on a school employee, felony, possession of a controlled

   substance, possession of a firearm or deadly weapon, or the sale of a narcotic

   drug.

Limitations

This study generated data that are applicable to the current school security

measures that are present in West Virginia elementary schools. While comparisons may

be made with the results found in other states, generalizations of West Virginia results to

other states and other school security measures are not intended.

Another potential limitation often found in self-report surveys is the tendency of

the participants to report in a way that they would feel would represent compliance and

implementation of the Student Code of Conduct (4373). Many administrators have, since

the policy's adoption in 2003, attended workshops or trainings emphasizing the need to

implement the policy.

Summary of the Study

The problem of elementary school violence is noteworthy to both schools and

society in general because aggressive behavior, which has traditionally been confined to

the realm of older students, is becoming more evident in students in the fifth grade and younger (Sauerwein, 1995). As school violence occurs in elementary schools, administrators need to be cognizant of security hardware, safety procedures and violence prevention programs that are available to help minimize the likelihood that violence will occur in their schools.

Since school safety is at the forefront of West Virginia initiatives, it is imperative that principals evaluate what school security hardware, safety procedures and violence prevention programs that West Virginia has in place, what works, and what features need to be placed in elementary schools in order for a safer environment to exist for our young students.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

During the past several years, concerns over school violence in public schools have increased greatly. Young children often have front –row seats to violence-experiencing it themselves or witnessing it in their neighborhoods and homes and on their television and movie-theater screens (Sauerwein, 1995). Although, most violence occurs in children's neighborhoods, a significant proportion takes place in schools (Howard, et al., 1999). With violence being immersed into children's lives every day, violence then tends to be the norm and children no longer believe violence at school is deviant. However, students who are victims of violence or witness violent attacks at school experience aggression towards other students demonstrate poor school performance and are usually worried about their safety at school which affects their overall academic achievement and the school's climate (Furlong & Morrison, 2000).

The majority of research on school safety and violence has focused on older students, primarily high school students. While these are the most identified cases of school-based crime occurring there is a growing concern about school safety and violence in younger children (Carney, Shannon, & Murphy, 2005). Violent victimization and fear of violence occur at all school levels-elementary, junior high and high school (Howard et.al., 1999). Violence in elementary schools, regardless of fluctuations, incidence, and categories, continues to create an ongoing challenge to the nation's educational environment.

The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company conducted a study in 1999 that surveyed three groups who were directly affected by the issue of school violence: public school students, public school teachers and law enforcement officials. This study

suggested that elementary schools students may be at as great of a risk for being a victim of violence or aggression as a high school student. The results of the current study indicate a perception among teachers, students and law enforcement officials that levels of violence in schools are decreasing and those teachers and students feel safe at school. In contrast, the results also demonstrate that teachers' and students' personal experiences with school violence have not improved over the past five years. While some factors, such as school location and school grade level do not distinguish students' experiences with school violence, gender does have an effect (Metropolitan Life, 1994). Boys are more likely than girls to be victims of violence or to have carried a weapon to school. The experiences of students and teachers in America's public schools demonstrate that at a time when national crime statistics are decreasing, violence in schools remains an important issue for principals, teachers, students and law enforcement officials (Metropolitan Life, 1994).

School violence can be defined as deliberate aggression or activity intending to cause physical or emotional harm, injury, or damage to person(s) or property while at school or when attending school functions. This may be caused from internal threats of violence from student to student; teacher to student; or student to teacher. Other factors may be external which would result from an outsider coming in to a school campus or school function intending to cause physical or emotional harm, injury or damage to person(s). Therefore, principals and teachers need a way to ensure that security measures are in place to promote a safe and orderly learning environment. Violence in schools requires educators, students, parents, social service organizations, and concerned

individuals are informed about the security hardware, safety procedures, and violence prevention programs that help address acts of violence.

The need to decrease school violence has been at the forefront of educators concerns for several decades. The search for solutions to the problems of school violence has generated a collection of approaches that parallel those used by law enforcement personnel to combat violence and crime in the United States (Petersen, 1997). These measures consist of the use of security cameras, metal detectors, and procedures that help address acts of violence. Yet, budgetary, scheduling and resource constraints on American Education force schools to deal with violence gradually.

Background

Throughout history, public schooling has changed dramatically in the type, frequency, and degree of disciplinary problems (Warner, Weist, & Krulak, 1999). Volokh and Snell (1998) have written about the different problems facing today's schools versus those of the 1940s, it is clear to see that we are dealing with an entirely different group of problems. Students in the 1940s were demonstrating behaviors such as talking out of turn, gum chewing, making noise, running in the hallway, cutting in line, dress code violations and littering. Today's students are more involved in drug and alcohol abuse, pregnancy, suicide, rape, robbery and assault. Volokh and Snell reported that since the behaviors are more serious than in 1940s we must discipline the students in a different way. It is hard to imagine that for many decades preceding the second half of the 20th century that school based violence was apparently infrequent in occurrence and low in intensity. The misbehaviors and bad conduct, in the form of getting out of one's seat,

refusing to obey the teacher, dipping a girl's pigtail into an inkwell, or even rarely breaking a window, seem like, and truly are, the events of another era (Goldstein & Conoley, 1997).

School violence compels principals to find ways to monitor student's behaviors. Volokh and Snell's survey also reported the following school districts responses to violence: (a) school board policies, (b) expulsion, (c) staff development, (d) conflict resolution/mediation training/peer mediation, (e) dress codes, (f) locker searches, (g) search and seizures, (h) telephones in classrooms, (i) gun-free zones, (j) specialized curriculum, (k) drug-sniffing dogs, (l) metal detectors, (m) closed-circuit televisions, (n) security personnel in schools, and (o) establishing a Safe Haven for students. This list of school districts responses to school violence is common among schools across the nation.

In 1975, a U.S. Senate subcommittee headed by Bayh issued a report of the safety in schools. During the six years that Bayh served on the Senate subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency, there were many hearings and testimony was reviewed of over 500 witnesses on a variety of topics, including the cause and extent of drug abuse, runaway youths, school drop-outs and the confinement of youths in detention facilities. The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act were enacted to try to deal with the alarming rate of juvenile delinquency. This act was intended to thwart young people from entering the failed juvenile justice system and to assist communities in creating more sensible and economic approaches for youngsters already in the system (1975).

Throughout the Senate Committee meetings on dealing with the problems of juveniles, increased concerns from educators and others, report the rising level of violence and vandalism in the nation's school systems. Bayh (1975) reported:

> Because many of the underlying problems of delinquency, as well their prevention and control, are intimately connected with nature and the quality of the school experience it became apparent that to the extent that schools were being subjected to an increasing trend of violence and vandalism, they would necessarily become a factor in the escalating rate of juvenile crime and delinquency (p.299).

Therefore the Senate Subcommittee did an in-depth investigation on school violence and what programs could be implemented to address these acts. A survey of 759 U.S. school districts was sent out to gauge the extent and trend of violence, vandalism and related problems of elementary and secondary schools. This survey not only gave insight to violence and vandalism but also produced a number of ways to prevent and address acts of violence within the school system.

In 1975, the Bayh Report, also known as *Our Nation's Schools – A Report Card: "A" In School Violence and Vandalism*, found that in three years between 1970 and 1973: (a) homicides increased by 18.5%, (b) rapes and attempted rapes increased by 40.1%, (c) robberies increased by 36.7%, (d) assaults on students increased by 77.4%, (e) assaults on teachers increased by 85.3%, (f) burglaries of school buildings increased by 11.8%, and (g) drug and alcohol offenses on school property increased 37.5%.

Although the level of violence directed against teachers revealed by these statistics, is indeed alarming, the principle victims of this rising tide of crime in our schools are not the teachers, but the students. The Subcommittee survey found that violent assaults on students increased by 85.3% over a three year period and the use of drugs and alcohol offenses on school property increased 37.5%. These trends in increased violence cannot be ignored because they are a contributing factor to the problems facing schools with violence and vandalism.

The Safe School Study was mandated by the United States Congress under Public Law 93-380 (Section 825) in response to growing public concern regarding incidents of violence and vandalism occurring in the nation's schools. The objectives of this study were to determine the frequency and seriousness of crime in elementary and secondary schools in the United States, the number and location of schools affected by crime, the cost of replacement or repair of objects damaged by school crime, and possible methods of prevention. The legislation specified that the study was to be conducted by the National Institute of Education (NIE). The study was designed by NIE in three phases. In Phase I, a mail survey, asked more than 4,000 elementary and secondary school principals to report in detail on the incidence of illegal or disruptive activities in their schools (National Institute of Education, 1978). Nine 1-month reporting periods between February 1976 and January 1977--excluding summer months--were assigned to participating schools on a random basis. In Phase II, field representatives conducted on-site surveys of a nationally representative cluster sample of 642 junior and senior high schools (National Institute of Education, 1978). Phase III involved a more intensive qualitative study of 10 schools. Most of the Phase III schools had a history of problems

with crime and violence, but had improved dramatically in a short time (National Institute of Education, 1978).

The Safe School Study found the following:

More than 25% of all schools were subject to vandalism in a given

month. The average cost of vandalism was $81.00 and the average

cost of burglary was $183.00. Current students committed most offenses

that took place on school campuses. Approximately 2.4 million students

had something stolen from them each month. Approximately 282,000

students were physically attacked in schools each month. Additionally,

112,000 students and 600 teachers were robbed at school. Over 25% of

schools were vandalized, costing approximately six million dollars per

year. Over 28% of teachers hesitated in a month to confront misbehaving

students for the fear of their own safety (p.2).

The National Goals Panel (2000), an independent agency of the Executive Branch, is a bipartisan and intergovernmental body established in 1990 to assess and report on state and national progress toward achieving the National Education Goals. One particular goal that pertains to this study on school violence is goal number seven. It states, "Every school in America will be free of drugs, violence and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning" (National Goals Panel, Sec. 102. National Education Goals ¶7).

Without a safe environment in which to learn, teachers, students, and parents have little chance to meet the other National Education Goals (Pape, 1999). According to

results of The National Education Goals Report (1999) on the National Goals, State

Indicator 24, Marijuana Use, stated that between 1991 and 1997 no state (out of 27)

significantly reduced the percentage of students who reported using marijuana at least

once in the last 30 days. State Indicator 25, Student Alcohol Use stated that between 1991

and 1997 no state (out of 28) significantly reduced the percentage of students who

reported having five or more drinks in a row at least once during the last 30 days. State

Indicator 26, Availability of Drugs on School Property stated that between 1993 and 1997

one state (out of 23) significantly reduced the percentage of students reporting that

someone offered, sold or gave them an illegal drug on school property during the past

twelve months. The United States Scorecard from the National Education Goals Panel

research indicates that students have fallen further behind overall in illicit drug use and

alcohol abuse and the sale of drugs at school.

Furthermore, State Indicator 27, Student Victimization, research stated that only

one state reduced the percentage of students reporting that they were threatened or

injured with a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property in the last twelve

months. Twenty-three indicted there was no change in their statistics however; no states

reported an increase in violent incidences. State Indicator 28, Physical Fights stated

between 1993 and 1997 one state (out of 24) significantly reduced the percentage of

students reporting that they were in a physical fight on school property in the last twelve

months. Again 23 states indicated no change in the number of incidences however; no

state reported that physical fights were any worse from the previous years.

Additionally, the United States Scorecard from the National Educational Goals

Panel indicates that student victimization has improved overall. State Indicator 29,

Carrying a Weapon stated that between 1993 and 1997, four states (out of 24) significantly reduced the percentage of students reporting that they carried a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property at least once during the past 30 days. State Indicator 30, Student Safety, stated between 1993 and 1997, one state (out of 24) significantly reduced the percentage of students reporting that they did not go to school at least once during the last 30 days because they did not feel safe. State Indicator 31, Teacher Victimization, stated that improvement over time cannot be determined yet because this information has been collected only once at the state level since 1990.

Even though, the United States Report Card from the National Education Goals Panel indicated that student victimization has improved overall, but teacher victimizations indicates that we have fallen behind in this category. State Indicator 32, Disruptions in Class by Students, stated between 1991 and 1994, no state (out of 51) significantly reduced the percentage of public secondary school teachers reporting that student disruptions interfere with teaching. In addition, according to the United States Report Card from the National Education Goals Panel shows those disruptions that interfere with teaching and learning exemplify that performance has not changed over time (National Education Goals Panel, 1999). However, what the report shows us is that now, more than ever, the topic of violence in America's schools is one that needs to be addressed further in order to deter acts of violence from taking place in schools.

In response to the National Education Goal number seven, Congress passed the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Community Act (SDFSCA) of 1994 (Title IV, § 41114116, 20 U.S.C. 71117116), previously known as the Drug-Free Schools and Community Act of 1987, which provides support for drug and violence prevention programs (National

Center for Education Statistics, 2000). The SDFSCA of 1994 (Title IV, § 41114116, 20 U.S.C. 71117116) is a part of the Federal government's effort to encourage the creation of safe, disciplined and drug-free learning environments that will help all children meet the challenging academic standards (Bilchik, 1999). The program provides support for school and community-based programs to prevent youth violence and alcohol and other drug use. Title IV of the Improving Schools Act, which is part of the SDFSCA, provides for Federal assistance to support programs to meet Goal 7 of Goals 2000 by preventing violence in and around schools and by strengthening programs that prevent the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, involve parents, and are coordinated with related Federal, State, and community efforts and resources (Safe and Drug Free Schools : Federal Legislation and Initiatives).

As part of the SDFSCA of 1994, Section 4002 findings indicated the widespread illegal use of alcohol and other drugs among the Nation's secondary school students, and increasingly by students in elementary schools as well, constitutes a grave threat to such students' physical and mental well-being, and significantly impedes the learning process. Additionally, Section 4003 indicated the purpose of the SDFSCA of 1994 is to have Federal assistance to states for (a) grants to local educational agencies and educational service agencies and consortia of such agencies to establish, operate, and improve local programs of school drug and violence prevention, early intervention, rehabilitation referral, and education in elementary and secondary schools (including intermediate and junior high schools); (b) grants to, and contracts with, community-based organizations and other public and private nonprofit agencies and organizations for programs of drug and violence prevention, early intervention, rehabilitation referral, and education; (c)

30

development, training, technical assistance, and coordination activities; (d) public and private nonprofit organizations to conduct training, demonstrations, and evaluation, and to provide supplementary services for the prevention of drug use and violence among students and youth; and (e) institutions of higher education to establish, operate, expand, and improve programs of school drug and violence prevention, education, and rehabilitation referral for students enrolled in colleges and universities.

There were few evaluations of the program under prior law, however; the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University concluded that a year past the year 2000 deadline and $4.3 billion Title IV federal dollars later, drugs still infest our nation's schools and rates of parental involvement in their children's education remain abysmally low. Efforts to attain Goal 7 *Safe, Disciplined and Alcohol - and Drug-Free Schools* – have failed and millions of children at schools where drugs are available are in danger of being left behind (Cooper, 2003).

Since violence remains a significant issue for principals, teachers, students, and law enforcement officials it is imperative that society learn what forms of violence take place in elementary schools. Elementary students are likely to encounter acts of violence in the form of bullying, or verbal teasing and harassment (Metropolitan Life, 1994; Johnson & Johnson,et al., 1994; Johnson & Johnson, et al., 1996, Peterson, Pietrzak, & Speaker, 1998). Araki (1990) found that the highest occurrences of conflicts in elementary school concerned harassment in the form of verbal threats, bullying, and name calling. Other frequently occurring conflicts included gossip and rumors, interpersonal disagreements and misunderstandings, broken friendships, teasing, playground disagreements, access or possession conflicts, jealousy, invasion of privacy,

and annoying forms of nonverbal communication such as "dirty looks" (Araki, 1990; Johnson & Johnson et al., 1994; Johnson & Johnson et.al, 1996). In many instances, these types of aggressive behavior are not classified as criminal, but they have detrimental effects on development of the child (Carney, Shannon, & Murphy, 2005). These effects may negatively impact a child psychologically, academically or socially (National School Safety Center, 1998; Goldstein & Conoley, 1997).

Research indicates that once a child has become a victim to violence then they are at a greater risk of becoming aggressive themselves (Flannery & Singer, 1999). According to the National Center for Clinical Infant Programs in Arlington, Virginia, the effects of violence in children under the age of three are highly susceptible to storing violent memories and interpret the world based on those memories. The continuum of behaviors and memories can cause fear, confusion or acceptance of violence as normal which triggers aggression in children 10 and under (Sauerwein, 1995). Therefore this cyclic pattern of memories and behaviors results in violence in many different students and in many different forms.

According to an analysis from a report, *Violence in Schools: How America's School Boards are Safeguarding Your Children*, from the National School Board Assosciation (1993), elementary school students accounted for one-fourth of all suspensions nationwide and the report also indicates that 13% of incidents involving guns on school property involve elementary school students (National School Board Association, 1993). When violence erupts at school, this keeps schools from functioning, students from learning, and teachers from teaching. Violence degrades the quality of life

for students, and it forces some schools to devote many of their already scarce resources to security measures (Berliner & Biddle, 1995).

Addressing Violence in Schools

Schools nationwide are responding to the challenge of creating and maintaining a safe environment in numerous ways, ranging from increased school security hardware, safety procedures to violence prevention programs. The SDFSCA of 1994 has provided funds to many schools for the purchase of metal detectors and has paid the salary of security guards/resource officers as protective strategies in response to heightened concerns about school violence (Schreck, Miller, & Gibson, 2003). Metal detectors and hired law enforcement/security guards/resource officers are common in most schools across the nation (Welsh, 2000). According to Schreck et.al, 2003, the assertion that by hiring security guards/resource officers and installing metal detectors on school campuses, students will be less likely to commit crimes of violence. Law enforcement/security guards/resources officers have been the most prominent solution to school-based violence (Caulfield, 2000).

Security Hardware

Schools are taking a variety of measures to improve school safety. According to the first annual report on school crime and safety from the Bureau of Justice and Statistics and the National Center for Education Statistics, *Indicators of School Crime and Safety* (1998), public elementary school principals responded that during the 1996-1997 school year they had put into place security hardware to address the possibility of violence in their schools. Over half of the elementary principals polled stated that they had controlled access to school buildings through the utilization of locked doors and by

maintaining one main entrance to the school building. Random checks of students for weapons through the use of metal detectors had only been used in 1% of the elementary schools surveyed, and less than 1% of the students enters or exit through areas where metal detectors would be present. One of the most effective security measures that an elementary school can institute is environmental security, or adult supervision, throughout the building and on school grounds (Quarles, 1993). This will help monitor bullying and aggression towards students and staff. However, student reports of experiencing bullying at school were similar regardless of the presence of security measures such as security guards, staff hallway monitors, security cameras, and metal detectors at the school. (National School Safety Center, 1998).

The percentage of students who observed the use of security cameras at their schools increased from 39% in 2001 to 58% in 2005. At the same time, 90% of all students reported seeing school staff members or other adult supervisors in the hallway, and 68% of students reported the presence of security guards or assigned police officers at their school (National School Safety Statistics, 2006). The following is a list of the most common security hardware in elementary schools: (a) *video surveillance/security camera* refers to an ongoing or intermittent feed that records video of an area of interest; (b) *metal detector* which is an electronic device for detecting the presence of metal objects, as one used as a portable sweeping unit or one emplaced in an archway to detect concealed weapons; (c) *telephones in classrooms* which are an apparatus, system, or process for transmission of sound or speech to a distant point located in a school classroom; (d) *intercoms in classrooms* – an intercommunication system that is used by teachers or principals to relay sound to and from a classroom; (e) *two-way*

communication - a combined transmitter and receiver light enough to be carried by one person; (f) *electronic locks* – keyless locks; (g) *upgrade in lighting* – lighting that is suitable to the environment in which it exists; (h) *concrete barriers* - precast concrete safety - shaped section joined together to form a continuous longitudinal barrier to protect areas from vehicles; (i) *entrance buzzers* – an apparatus that is used to signal that someone needs in an area that is only accessible by acknowledging that a person needs acceptance of entering an area; and (j) *convex mirrors* – mirrors used in areas that are hard to see directly.

Safety Procedures

Throughout the country schools have found successful approaches, used innovative strategies and perfected techniques to provide a safe and stimulating environment for students (Hill & Hill, 1994). These successful strategies and techniques may include some of the following: (a) *locker searches* which are the acts of opening a locker and looking through its contents, (b) *identification cards worn by school officials* include badges that are worn by any school official at all times which identifies the person by a picture and states their name, (c) *emergency communication procedures* which are a written procedure school officials practice in order to communicate effectively when and if an emergency happens, (d) *locked windows and exterior doors* are utilized in areas that are to be locked according to the safe school procedures at any school, (e) *visitor sign-ins* are required by any person who visits a school must sign-in with the main office , (f) *lock-down drills* are procedures may be issued in situations involving dangerous intruders or other incidents that may result in harm to persons inside school building, (g) *bomb searches* are utilized when a school official searches the school

premises in order to look for a bomb, (h) *numbering of doors and areas* require each door and stairway would have numbers located on the outside of door in order to identify specific areas, (i) *safe schools hotline* is a confidential hotline that permits any student, school official or community member to call and give information that may be harmful or hurtful to students at a particular school, (j) *uniforms* are a certain type of clothing that students are required to wear during the school day, and (k) *hall passes* are a certain object that is used to signify that a student has permission to be out of the classroom.

Violence Prevention Programs

In recognition of the problems associated with drugs and violence in schools and supported, in part, by national initiatives and federal laws, many districts have established programs to address these issues (Stefkvich & O'Brien, 1997). Recent research suggests that some of the most promising prevention strategies involve education and skills training - things schools are uniquely qualified to do, both because they have young people as a captive audience, and because teachers know how to educate students. The U.S. Department of Education supports a variety of anti-drug and violence education and prevention efforts including the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program, and Peer Mediation, and Conflict Resolution initiatives. In addition, it has issued Truancy Prevention, and School Uniform Manuals, and enforces Zero-Tolerance Policies for weapons in schools. The U.S. Departments of Education and Justice are collaborating on a number of efforts to help principals, school administrators, teachers and parents address problems of safety and violence in their schools and communities.

There is a plethora of violence prevention programs on the market for educators to choose the program that best fits the needs of their school. Several prevention

programs addressing conflict in schools are called prosocial strategies while other prevention programs are designed specifically to deal with bullies.

Prosocial strategies focus primarily on teaching students the appropriate methods in dealing with conflict. Conflict resolution, peer mediation and peaceable schools are the three most common prosocial approaches (Creto, Bosworth, & Sailes, 1993). Conflict resolution generally refers to strategies that enable students to handle conflicts in a peaceable and cooperative manner. Peer mediation is a specific form of conflict resolution, whereby trained students act as neutral third parties in the settling of non-physical disputes between other students. Traditionally, peer mediation has involved a selected group of students (cadre) who are trained in mediation skills and then offer their services in the playground or lunchroom. More recently, peer mediators have been students who volunteer for this service after everyone in the school has participated in the conflict resolution skill building. A peaceable school results when the values and skills of cooperation, communication, tolerance, positive emotional expression, and conflict resolution are taught and supported throughout the culture of the school. The following is a list of common elementary school prevention programs that address conflict resolution, peer mediation and bullying:

1. *Second Step Program*-A conflict resolution teacher-led curriculum that is for students in grades PK-9, which was developed to meet two primary objectives: to reduce aggression and increase pro-social behaviors. The program consists of approximately 20 lessons for each grade level that build sequentially as the grade level increases. The formal lessons vary in length from 20 minutes at preschool to 50 minutes in junior/middle school. The skills taught are empathy, impulse control,

problem solving and anger management. Teachers and other staff members model these behaviors in interaction with students. Role-plays and other program aspects can be integrated into the regular curriculum. Training is often provided by the school boards by facilitators trained by the Committee for Children (Committee for Children, 2007).

2. *Get Real* – Get Real is a research-based prevention program that addresses a wide range of violent behavior in students from bullying and verbal aggression at early grades through fighting and social exclusion at middle grades to relationship abuse and assaults that can occur in later grades. This program is a teacher offered curriculum for grades kindergarten through twelfth grade (Baseline Research, LLC, 2000).

3. *Peacemakers* - This conflict resolution and peer mediation program is a teacher-offered curriculum or a training cadre of peer mediators for grades kindergarten through twelfth grade. The objective of this program is to teach students how to negotiate constructive resolution to interpersonal conflicts and to help classmates do likewise through peer mediation. The program includes enhancing classroom learning, improving the quality of school life, and learning non-violent conflict resolution skills. (Johnson & Johnson, 1996).

4. *Peacebuilders* – This teasing and bullying program is a teacher-offered curriculum for grades four and five. The objective of the program is to reduce bullying behavior. (Placeholder2)

5. *Reach/Challenge* – This is conflict resolution and self-esteem program is a teacher-offered curriculum for grades 1 through 3. The program objectives are to introduce

life skills that enable insight into emotions and experiences; and promote self-esteem and competency. (Kraizer, Witte, & Fryer, 2000).

6. *Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP)* – This is a conflict resolution program that is a teacher-offered classroom curriculum plus peer mediation training for select students. The objectives of this program are to help teachers and students to become aware of choices for dealing with conflict, recognize and oppose prejudice, decrease violence and increase understanding among different cultures and transform school culture into one that models values and principles of non-conflict resolution and respect for diversity (Aber, Brown, & Henrich, 1999).

7. *Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways (RIPP)* – This is a conflict resolution program that is a teacher-offered classroom curriculum for grade 6 students. The objectives of this program are to include increasing the knowledge of violence; changing violence-oriented attitudes; developing skills to reduce students' involvement in violence (Farrell, Meyer, & Dahlberg, 1996).

8. *Smart Team* – This is a conflict resolution program that is a computer-based, multi-media violence prevention program for students in grades 5 through 9. The objectives for this computer program include: learning about non-violent conflict, resolution strategies, and anger triggers, increasing intentions to use non-violent strategies and prosocial behaviors and decrease incidents of violent behavior (Bosworth, Espelage, DuBay, Dahlberg, & Daytner, 1996).

9. *Teasing and Bullying: Unacceptable Behavior Program (TAB)* – This is a teasing and bullying program that is a teacher-offered curriculum for grades 3 through 6. The objectives for this program are to promote children taking responsible action

through changing attitudes towards teasing and bullying and toward children with differences, mobilizing peers to become active, encourage those who bully to change their behavior and teaching a problem-solving approach that uses conflict resolution strategies (Langevin, 1998).

10. *Bullying Prevention Program (BPP)* – This program is a bullying program that uses a school-wide approach to change culture along with a teacher-offered curriculum plus an individual student kit for students who bully. This program is designed for kindergarten through twelfth grade. The program objectives are to increase knowledge and awareness of bullying, achieve active involvement on the part of the teachers and parents, and develop clear rules against bullying behavior (Olweus, 1994).

11. *Conflict Managers* – This program is a peer mediation program that uses a school-wide approach through a teacher-offered curriculum for grades 4 through 6. The programs objective is to increase the number of peer conflicts resolved through non-violence means. This increases student and teacher understanding of conflict, responses to conflict and communication skills, and use of peer mediation to resolve conflicts (Gentry & Benenson, 1993).

12. *BeCool* – This is a bullying program that uses a teacher-offered curriculum for grades kindergarten through twelfth grade. The programs objective is to cultivate impulse control, empathy and self-awareness in students throughout their school experience (O'Connell, 2001).

13. QUIT IT! – This is a bullying program that uses a teacher-offered curriculum for grades kindergarten through third grade. The programs objective is to reduce the amount of bullying a student demonstrates (Froschl & Sprung, 2001).

14. Motivational Magic – This is a bullying program that uses an externally facilitated instruction to school assembly for grades kindergarten to sixth grade. The programs objectives are to increase awareness of bullying behavior, children's sense of safety in the school environment; and children's understanding of how to respond to being bullied or see another child being bullied (Harmer, 2001).

Concerns about school violence have been increasing, and, correspondingly, conflict resolution, peer mediation and bullying programs have been proliferating. As illustrated above, there are a number of violence prevention programs that are on the market. Each program is designed to address issues of violence among students. It is imperative that principals take a good look at the plethora of prevention programs and determine which would be most effective type for the educational environment that exists within their school.

Influence on West Virginia Schools

Across the nation, communities have been shattered and lives have been lost because of the recent breakouts of school violence. Fortunately, West Virginia public schools have dodged the breakouts and remain some of the safest in the country, according to a report presented to the West Virginia Board of Education in 1999. However, West Virginia's Governor Manchin in his State of-the-State address in January 2007 asked the legislature to dedicate $10 million towards the creation of a School Access Safety matching grant initiative to help county school boards of education better

secure and monitor access to our public schools. In response to this initiative, West

Virginia promulgated a law in March 2007, directing its state-wide School Building

Authority (SBA) to facilitate and provide funding for enhancement of school access

safety; requiring county school boards to develop and submit to the authority school

access safety plans through the creation of the West Virginia School Access Safety Act

(WVC§18-9F-1) and Fund (WVC §18-9F-3). This initiative, which was spearheaded by

the School Building Authority (SBA), provided funding to local boards for security

upgrades, so that when an unknown person approaches a school, the appropriate people

know about it and are prepared for it. The SBA has been working closely with the West

Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) on safety upgrades. Dr. Steve Paine, West

Virginia's Superintendent of Schools in October 2007 stated:

> The health and safety of our students has always been a top priority but it is
>
> spotlighted even more so when tragedies happen, like the recent school shooting
>
> in Cleveland. When school violence occurs anywhere in the nation, it serves as a
>
> reminder that we cannot be complacent (¶3).

Additionally in the fall of 2007, Governor Joe Manchin established an initiative to

examine the school access points throughout the State. In collaboration with the WVDE,

each county superintendent received a school access safety audit questionnaire that

investigated five key areas of access to the school buildings. These five areas included

planning, deterrence, detection, delay and communication. The following information is

based on the planning part of the questionnaire: (a) establishment of safety committees,

(b) closed campus procedures, (c) lock-down procedures, (d) visitor and school official,

(e) badges, (f) comprehensive crisis plans, (g) evacuation maps, and (h) Chain-of-command type questions.

The first section of the questionnaire was planning. Planning according to the WV School Safety Audit (2007) is to monitor school safety needs for the purpose if identifying problems and recommending solutions for school safety. The questionnaire states "written policies to communicate responsibilities for preventing, managing and responding to violence or crisis." These topics were the issues raised in this section of the questionnaire: (a) school safety committee, (b) closed campus, (c) lock-downs, (d) identification, (e) comprehensive plan, (f) evacuation maps, and (g) chain of command structure.

The second section of the questionnaire was deterrence. Deterrence was defined as any preemptive action, reaction, administrative capability, or design which moderates a threat or act. According to the questionnaire it "reduces the motivation for advisories (i.e. discourages, hinders, impedes or restrains (RETA Security Inc., 2007). These topics were the type of issues raised in this section of the questionnaire: (a) signs and postings prohibiting contraband, (b) signs posted on each door designating what that area was used for, (c) signs posted on exterior doors for emergency responders, (d) room numbers on all interior doors, (e) fixed or movable barriers to prevent vehicles from accessing areas, (f) shrubbery near entrances, (g) trees near entry, windows and pathways, (h) measure to prevent unauthorized access to roof, and (i) exterior lighting appropriate for school grounds.

The third part of the questionnaire was detection. Detection according to the School Access Audit questionnaire (2007) was sensing and assessing unauthorized acts in

43

a timely manner. This detection may be accomplished by school officials or hardware. The following information is based on the detection portion of the questionnaire: (a) all persons on school grounds wear identification, (b) staff are trained and review security procedures, (c) schools have closed circuit televisions that include cameras and recordings, (d) school has alarm system, (e) school utilizes hand-held equipment to detect contraband, (f) entries are monitored for access control, and (g) entries have control devices for visitors.

The fourth part of the questionnaire was delay. Delay, according to the School Access Audit questionnaire (2007) was a physical barrier that slows or impedes an unauthorized act after it occurs. The following information is based on the delay portion of the questionnaire: (a) all classrooms and doors are equipped with locking mechanisms (b) locking mechanisms can be locked from inside the room, (c) windows and offices are reinforced to prevent access, (d) windows adjacent to classrooms and offices are reinforced to prevent access, (e) the main entrance has a vestibule for visitor authorization, (f) all entrances are monitored, (g) access to sensitive areas have restricted access, and (h) the school has written key control practices.

The last part of the School Access Audit (2007) questionnaire is communication. Communication is defined as the equipment and procedures used by school officials for sending and receiving messages, both internally and externally. The following information is based on the communication part of the questionnaire: (a)intercoms are utilized , (b) public address (PA) is utilized , (c) telephone system is used to reach school personnel in case of an emergency, (d) school has dedicated a phone line for emergency

responders, (e) two-way radios are utilized with emergency responders, and (f) panic

 devices are available throughout campus.

West Virginia School Climate Study

An additional survey was developed in December 2007 by The West Virginia

Department of Education, Office of Healthy Schools to solicit information for a better

picture of the School Climate in schools across the state (West Virginia Department of

Education, 2008). The survey was sent out to all West Virginia Principals,

Superintendents, Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) Directors, Safety

Directors, and Safe and Drug-Free School Coordinators. A total of 345 individual

responses were collected with the total number of responses to have totaled 828. The

response rate was 41%. However, 53 out of the 55 counties had one or more of the above

positions who responded to the survey. The survey was administered to identify needs for

training and resources, and developments of consistent processes were beneficial to

counties and local schools (West Virginia Department of Education, 2008).

The first question on the survey discussed whether or not your school uses a

common county template for the Comprehensive Crisis Plan. Eighty-two percent of the

respondents answered that they do use a county template for the Comprehensive Crisis

Plan however, there were some disparity in the answers because 18% of those who

answered no they do not use a county template were from the same county of those who

said they did use a county template. Moreover, this indicates that some of the respondents

were unaware that their schools plan was adapted from the county template. The second

question on the survey discusses what are the most frequent emergencies with which you

are involved. The majority of the responses (70%) indicated that student threats were the

most frequent emergencies. The next most frequent emergencies were other (19%) which included weather related emergencies, parents entering the building without checking in at the office, students getting on and off buses, bullying and fighting, behavioral issues with students, weapons, false fire alarms, water problems, power failure, notifying parents when students are sent home early and building evacuation from threats. Total Bomb threats (5%), medical injuries (4%) and intruders (2%) were emergencies that were less frequent however were significant for the responders.

The next question on the survey dealt with safety at school. Eighty-seven percent of the respondents felt that their school was safe however, 13% felt that their school was unsafe. Some of the respondents concerns of their school being unsafe were (a) access to the school building was not consistent by all school personnel, (b) schools are old and need upgraded security, (c) most of the schools have the potential for being entered by non-approved visitors, and (d) more school personnel are needed (assistant principals).

Additionally respondents were asked what they would need to be safe in their schools. The respondents answered with 47% of them wanting security system improvements (i.e., vestibule, cameras, improved lighting, reliable two-way communication, visual contact with main entrance prior to visitors entering the area). Twenty-six percent of the respondents stated there needed to be changes made to the facilities to promote a safe school setting. Fourteen percent of the respondents stated that they would need training in order for their schools to be safe. In addition, 13% stated that they need upgrades in the public address system, state-wide training for all school employees, funding for resource officers and more administrative staff in order for their schools to be safer.

The next question required the respondents to write on what types of training you need in order to make the school a safer place. Some of the responses were at polar positions concerning state initiated training. For example, some of the responses were (a) crisis response procedures need to be trained and practiced; (b) parent reunification, (c) dealing with parents in emergency situations; (d) more realistic emergency on-site practice with staff and students; (e) we have a very detailed Emergency Plan in place, the (my) county does a great job of training and providing for school safety; (f) more training that involves our local authorities responding to various crisis emergencies; (g) how to deal with difficult students and adults; (h) a stronger directive to the general school population, employees, students and parents, as to the need for increased school security and backing for employees who have to enforce the increased security measures; (i) shelter in place; (j) constant reviews and drills of existing plans established by the county and school; (k) incident command system, dealing with intruders; (l) training for all staff in safety procedures and getting them to realize important signs for potential problems - I think too many staff members ignore things that are important that could have been helpful in preventing problems but only share after the fact; (m) response to bomb threats, student threats, intruder threats; (n) intruder, evacuation plan, lock down procedures for classrooms with windows; and (o) all personnel should be certified in CPR, or at least basic first aid.

Several questions on the School Climate Survey required the respondents to answer with a yes or no answer. These were the questions asked:

1. Does your school have an identified emergency/crisis team? 98% responded that yes they had an identified team whereas, 2% noted that they did not have an identified emergency/crisis team.

2. Do you practice response scenarios in exercises or drills? 89% responded that they practice response scenarios in exercise or drills and 11% indicated that they did not practice any scenarios.

3. Does your school have an automated warning system? 44% of the respondents said they do have an automated warning system and 56% responded that they do not have an automated warning system.

The information gathered from this survey has been a guideline to principals to understand the general tone and prevailing attitude within the school system. With this information, principals can better understand the environment that exists within their school building and provide security features that will assist in promoting a positive and safe environment.

West Virginia Student Code of Conduct

Many of the practices of discipline in West Virginia elementary schools follow the West Virginia Code of Conduct recommendations such as detention, in-school suspension, out of school suspension or expulsion from school. The Student Code of Conduct classifies student violations in four levels. County policies may reclassify specific violations as Level I, II, or III, depending on the severity of the violations and provided this reclassification assures that the treatment of the violations are consistent with the West Virginia Code. According to the West Virginia Code the principal must suspend a student who commits a Level IV violation which is serious and unlawful. If the

student conduct is detrimental to the progress and general conduct of the school a principal must recommend expulsion for the student to the county board of education.

Principals must make school violence a top priority. They have a responsibility to maintain a safe environment conducive to learning. In order to achieve this goal, security hardware, safety procedures and violence prevention programs must be developed in place. School security measures are to be approached from an immediate and long-term perspective and incorporate prevention as well as intervention strategies. Safe school planning is an ongoing process, not something that is created then forgotten over time. Plans need to be updated periodically in order to maintain the safe orderly environment that is necessary for academic success.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Purposes and Overview of Study

Due to the perception and realities of violence in public schools, the safety of children at school has surfaced as one of the greatest concerns among America in the past decade (Phi Delta Kappan, 1998). In response to recent events, demands from the public for safer schools have resulted in school principals quickly implementing safety measures in hopes of curbing community concerns and averting fatal events. Schools have installed security hardware to address school violence issues. Schools have also integrated safety procedures that requires school personnel to work together to address school violence. Schools have also instituted violence prevention programs that include: conflict resolution, peer mediation and peaceable schools that are the most common prosocial approaches. While these measures may alleviate the concerns of the general public, temporarily, the issue remains whether or not these security measures are truly effective in reducing incidents of school violence in elementary schools in West Virginia.

Research Methods

As a mixed methods case study, this inquiry endeavored to bring into sharp focus the issues and variables attendant to school safety from the principal's perspective. Yin (2003) stated "case studies are the preferred strategy when *how* and *why* questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over the events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real life context" (p.25). From a methodological standpoint, the study demonstrated the usefulness of a mixed-methods approach for inquiry from principals about what school security measures are in place, in

general and the perceived effectiveness of those security measures in West Virginia elementary schools. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected to address the research questions. According to Nau (1995), "blending qualitative and quantitative methods of research can produce a final product which can highlight the significant contributions of both."

The nature of this mixed-method integrated design was iterative and holistic. The use of different methods provided the opportunity for several iterations of interpretation and approaches to the data. Holistic designs in mixed-method approaches "highlight the necessary interdependence of different methods for understanding complex phenomenon fully" according to Caracelli and Greene (1997). A researcher-developed survey titled, *Principal Survey: Violence Prevention in West Virginia Elementary Schools* was used to gain insight on the variables and to describe the relationships that may exist among the variables (Johnson & Christenson, 2000). Quantitative research uses surveys to gather information and the end result is to describe or understand the characteristics of the population (Johnson & Christenson, 2000).

In combination with quantitative aspects of this study, qualitative aspects were incorporated through individual interviews based on the questions that arose from reviewing the literature. Participants were chosen by convenience sampling. The phenomenon of school violence and the concomitant necessity of providing safe schools are certainly complex and thus it is logical to take a holistic approach to the topic in order to capture its components as fully as possible.

The focus of this study was to analyze the nature of school violence when security hardware, safety procedures and violence prevention programs are utilized at elementary

schools throughout West Virginia. The presence of these various security measures are studied to see if they in fact address safety and security in West Virginia elementary schools; what are the perceived unmet needs of principals related to school safety in West Virginia elementary schools; what security measures are in place; and how principals perceive the effectiveness of these security measures in elementary schools throughout West Virginia.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed within the context of the study:

1. What school security hardware is present in elementary schools in West Virginia?

2. What are the *perceptions of West Virginia elementary school principals related to the effectiveness* to the specific pieces of the school security hardware they currently have in place?

3. What do West Virginia *elementary school principals perceive as being unmet needs* related to school security hardware designed to address school violence?

4. What school safety procedures are present in elementary schools in West Virginia?

5. What are the *perceptions of West Virginia elementary principal regarding the effectiveness* of the specific pieces of the school safety procedures they have in addressing school violence?

6. What do West Virginia *elementary principals perceive as being unmet needs* related to safety procedures designed to address school safety?

7. What school violence prevention programs are present in elementary schools in West Virginia?

8. What are the *perceptions of West Virginia elementary principals regarding the effectiveness* of the specific pieces of the school violence prevention programs they have in addressing school violence?

9. What do West Virginia *elementary principals perceive as being unmet needs* related to violence prevention programs designed to address school safety?

Participants

This study was conducted using a multiple-site, case study design with two phases. The initial phase of the case study included surveying elementary school principals in all school districts in West Virginia. A total of 364 elementary principals received a survey and electronic cover letter emailed to them in November 2008.

The electronic cover letter explained the purpose of the study, institutional review board (IRB) approval, and voluntary participation in the study. One week later a follow-up email containing the cover letter and link to the survey were sent. Three weeks after the initial email, a third email containing the cover letter and link to the survey were sent. Three weeks after the initial email, a paper cover letter and survey was mailed through the United States Postal Service (USPS). The cover letter explained the purpose of the study, institutional review board (IRB) approval, and voluntary participation in the study. A self-addressed, stamped envelope was included with the cover letter and survey.

The second phase of this case study was interview sessions with convenience sampling of ten elementary school principals throughout West Virginia. Interview sessions were audio taped for qualitative analysis.

Instrumentation

According to the research, funds for security measures have been allocated for schools throughout West Virginia. Therefore, county school systems have taken definitive steps to add various types of security measures. What is not clear is the types of security hardware, safety procedures and violence prevention programs that elementary schools have chosen to address their security needs. Therefore the *Principal Survey: Violence Prevention in West Virginia Elementary Schools* was developed to see what security measures are in place, how effective they are and do principals in fact, perceive they are needed.

For this mixed method case study, elementary school principals in West Virginia were surveyed using the *Principal Survey: Violence Prevention in West Virginia Elementary Schools* (Appendix C) utilizing a quantitative descriptive design, arranged to obtain numerical data and related demographical information from the respondents. Numerical data were obtained from the presence of security measures, their effectiveness and the need for these measures.

1. The first section consisted of questions related to the safety hardware that are present in their school, how effective principals believe they are and the need for the security hardware at their school. This was measured on a Likert scale from 1-10, one being the least effective or least needed; ten being the highly effective or the highly needed.

2. The second section consisted of questions related to the safety procedures that are present in their school, how effective principals believe they are and the need of

these safety procedures at their school. This was measured on a Likert scale from 1-10, one being the least effective or least needed; ten being the highly effective or the highly needed.

3. The third section consisted of questions related to the violence prevention programs that are present in their school, how effective principals believe they are and the need of these programs at their school. This was measured on a Likert scale from 1-10, one being the least effective or least needed; ten being the highly effective or the highly needed.

4. The last section gathered demographic information (age, sex, number of years in education, number of years in administration, and number of years at current elementary school). Demographic questions were written as fill in the blank answers. A practice used by many researchers, included demographic information which investigated how attitudes and behavior differ for people with various attributes (Dillman, 1978).

Validation of Instrument

Once the *Principal Survey: Violence Prevention in West Virginia Elementary Schools* was developed, the instrument was pilot tested for content and validity. Five experts in the field of educational leadership with an employment setting in middle school, high school environment, or central office staff were asked to respond to each question of the survey, providing feedback and clarity of each item. Experts included middle and high school principals and central office staff who had previously been principals and who had at least five years experience in a public school setting.

Data Collection and Analysis

The first phase of the *Principal Survey: Violence Prevention in West Virginia Elementary Schools* used an electronic mail message containing the link to access the website SurveyMonkey.com to all public school elementary principals in West Virginia notifying them of the opportunity to participate in the state-wide study. For the quantitative portion of the study, a self-reported questionnaire was used. Data from each of the four sections of the *Principal Survey: Violence Prevention in West Virginia Elementary Schools* were entered into the SPSS data analysis software for each participant.

The statistical method used for first phase of this case study was descriptive statistics. Therefore the study utilized means, frequencies, and percentages to report results.

The second phase of the case study design, described by Bogdan and Biklen (1998) as a *micro-ethnography* which analyzes a very small unit of the organization such as an activity or event, was used for this study in order to determine the effectiveness and perceived unmet needs of the security measures in place in elementary schools of this convenience sample of principals through interviews. Pre-assigned coding categories, as discussed by Bogdan and Biklen, were utilized to evaluate the answers to the effectiveness and unmet needs of security features of West Virginia elementary school principals. These coding categories that Bogdan and Biklen recommended were used in this case study: (a) *setting/context codes* provide background information on the setting, topic, or subjects; (b) *defining the situation codes* categorizes the world view of respondents and how they see themselves in relation to a setting or your topic; (c)

respondents' ways of thinking about people and objects codes capture how they

categorize and view each other, outsiders, and objects; (d) *process codes* categorize

sequences of events and changes over times; (e) *activity codes* identify recurring informal

and formal types of behavior; (f) *event codes,* in contrast, are directed at infrequent or

unique happenings in the setting or lives of respondents; (g) *strategy codes* relate to ways

people accomplish things; and (h) *method codes* identify your research approaches,

procedures, dilemmas, and breakthroughs.

In summary, chapter three introduced the purpose and overview of the study, the

research methods research questions, participants, instrumentation, validation of

instrument, and data collection and analysis were presented. Details about the participants

were described. A description of the data collection procedures, the intended statistical

method, and their rationale for their use was included.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine: (a) what are the specific school security hardware, safety procedures and violence prevention programs; (b) how they are perceived by principals as effective; and (c) what are the perceptions of principals unmet needs addressing school safety in West Virginia elementary schools. Data were gathered in a quantitative process using a researcher-developed instrument, *Principal Survey: Violence Prevention in West Virginia Elementary Schools* and in a qualitative process utilizing one-to-one interviews.

Instrumentation

The quantitative instrument consisted of four sections. The first section contained 12 items related to the perceived effectiveness and perceived essentiality of security hardware. The second section contained 12 items related to the perceived effectiveness and perceived essentiality of safety procedures. The third section contained 15 items related to the perceived effectiveness and perceived essentiality of violence prevention programs. The last section consisted of demographic questions. The *Principal Survey: Violence Prevention in West Virginia Elementary Schools* was sent electronically to participants whose email addresses were publically available and a paper mailing of the survey was sent to the remainder of elementary schools. Participants were asked to complete the survey and from those survey results, a convenience sampling was done for the in-depth interview. The interviews were conducted to capture a complete

understanding of the security in elementary schools. Participation in the survey and the interview was completely voluntary.

The survey instrument was pilot tested for content, or face, validity. Five experts in the field of educational leadership with an employment setting in middle school, high school environment, or central office staff were asked to respond to each question of the survey, providing feedback and clarity of each item. Experts included middle and high school principals and central office staff who had previously been principals and who had at least five years experience in a public school setting.

Population and Sample

The data presented in this study were collected from a population of 364 elementary school principals (N=364) in West Virginia. The schools in which these principals are located are configured to house any combination of grade levels from preschool to seventh grade but not to include eighth grade. The *Principal Survey: Violence Prevention in West Virginia Elementary Schools* was sent electronically to 258 participants whose email addresses were publically available and 106 paper mailing of the survey were mailed to the elementary school where email addresses were not obtained. Of the 364 (N= 364) participants, 28 participants were excluded; 10 declined to participate, 18 instruments were returned due to insufficient or incorrect address. From this population size of 336 (n= 336), 167 surveys were returned for a response rate of 50 % which is an acceptable return rate when collecting data (Dillman, 1978). A total of 115 surveys were returned electronically and 52 responses were returned via USPS.

Part I of the *Principal Survey: Violence Prevention in West Virginia Elementary Schools* was divided into four sections. Section one surveyed the participants to identify if the participants had a particular security hardware unit in their school. The number of sub-questions the participants would answer in subsequent sections was contingent upon how the participants answered the questions in the first section. Section two asked the participants to identify the perceived effectiveness of the security hardware. Section three asked the participants to indicate their perception of the essentiality of particular security hardware. Section four asked the participant to indicate their perception of the essentiality of particular security hardware, if it was not present in the elementary school. A Likert scale was used to record the perceived effectiveness and how principals perceived and item to be essential to the security of the school. The rating scale was as follows: 1 = "least effective or least essential" and 10 = "highly effective or highly essential."

Results

Data were analyzed using the SPSS ® version 17.0. Descriptive statistics were calculated for each of the questions on the *Principal Survey: Violence Prevention in Elementary Schools* for each of the sections of security measures presented. Part A of each survey section asked whether or not an elementary school had a particular security hardware, safety procedure, or violence prevention program. Participants could answer the question with a "yes" or "no". Part B of each survey section asked for the participant to identify their perception of the effectiveness of a particular security hardware, safety procedure, or violence prevention program. Part C of each survey section asked for the participant their perception of essentiality of particular security hardware, safety

60

procedure, or violence prevention program was during the school year. Part D of each

survey section asked the participant to identify the essentiality of a particular security

hardware, safety procedure, or violence prevention program that they did not have during

the school year. A mean and standard deviation was calculated for each question from

each section. Qualitative analysis of interviews was used to find West Virginia

principals' perceptions of effectiveness, how essential are the security measures, and how

essential would it be to have these security measures to address school violence.

Qualitative data and analysis from the interviews are presented where applicable. The

following data illustrated the findings of the research.

Demographics

Participants in this study had a mean of 10 years of certification as an elementary

principal, with a range of 0 to 35 years. The mean number of years in the current school

was 6.35 with a range of 1 to 32 years. In their current employment setting, elementary

principals have a range of student enrollments in their school of 72 to 750 students. The

demographic data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Information about Participants

	N	Min	Max	M	SD
Student Population	151	72	750	293	44.298
Free/Reduced Lunch	108	5	96	57	17.938
Years as Principal	144	0	35	10	8.186
Years as Principal at Current School	144	1	32	6	5.929
Years in Education	147	7	43	27	8.010

Security Hardware

A list of security hardware in West Virginia elementary schools, compiled from a survey of 10 Safe and Drug-Free Coordinators in the state, was used as a basis for the items in Part 1, Section 1 of the *Principal Survey: Violence Prevention in West Virginia Elementary School*. The security hardware identified were (a) security camera (no video recording), (b) metal detector, (c) telephone in the classrooms, (d) electronic locks, (e) entrance buzzers, (f) lighting upgrade for facility, (g) surveillance video (video recording), (h) alarm system, (i) intercoms in classroom, (j) concrete barriers, (k) convex mirrors, and (l) 2-way hand-held communication. The research questions dealt with determining security hardware's level of use in West Virginia elementary schools, its perceived effectiveness and how essential it is to school safety.

Research Question #1: What school security hardware was present in elementary schools in West Virginia?

West Virginia Elementary School Principals were asked if their schools have security cameras, metal detectors, telephone in classrooms, electronic locks, entrance buzzers, lighting upgrade for facility, surveillance video, alarm system, intercom in classrooms, concrete barriers, convex mirrors and 2-way hand-held communication. Analysis of the returned questionnaires revealed that 143 of the 157 respondents to this item (91%) had an intercom system, 123 of the 155 respondents to this item (79%) had 2-way hand-held communication, 92 of the 158 respondents to this item (58%) had an alarm system, 81 of the 165 respondents to this item (49%) had security cameras, 58 of the 157 respondents to this item (37%) had surveillance video, 51 of the 156 respondents

62

to this item (33%) had entrance buzzers, 45 of the 157 respondents to this item (29%) had

telephones in the classrooms, 36 of the 157 respondents to this item (23%) had lighting

upgrades, 31 of the 156 respondents to this item (20%) had electronic door locks, 18 of

158 (11%) reported metal detectors, 10 of the 158 respondents to this item (6%) had

convex mirrors, and 4 of the 158 respondents to this item (3%) had concrete barriers,

In summary, intercom systems were the most prevalent (91%) security hardware

located in West Virginia elementary schools. Nearly three-fourths of the respondents

indicated that 2 way-hand-held communications were widely utilized (79%) in

elementary schools. Concrete barriers were the least prevalent security hardware in

elementary schools in West Virginia. The summary data is displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

Summary of Security Hardware Presence in West Virginia Elementary Schools

Security Hardware	Respondents (N)	Number Reporting Use	%
Intercom System	157	143	91
2-Way Hand-Held Communication	155	123	79
Alarm System	158	92	58
Security Camera(s)	165	81	49
Surveillance Video	157	58	37
Entrance Buzzers	156	51	33
Telephone in Classroom(s)	157	45	29
Lighting Upgrade	157	36	23
Electronic Locks	156	31	20
Metal Detector(s)	158	18	11
Convex Mirrors	158	10	6
Concrete Barrier(s)	158	4	3

The West Virginia School Access Audit was given to each county superintendent

in 2007 to investigate access points in West Virginia schools. There were five main

components to the Audit: planning, deterrence, delay, detection and communication. Four

components of the West Virginia School Access Audit (2007) were identified in the

Principal Survey security hardware section: deterrence, detection, delay, and communication. These components were found in the responses of principals according to the security hardware found in West Virginia elementary schools. According to the questions on the audit, planning components were not addressed in the security hardware section of the *Principal Survey* however they are addressed in the safety procedure section of the *Principal Survey*.

Communication systems are the equipment and procedures used by school personnel for sending and receiving messages, both internally and externally (WV School Safety Audit, 2007). The most prevalent security hardware related to *communication system* which included intercom systems (91%), 2-way hand-held communication (79%), and telephones in the classrooms (29%) ranked toward the bottom half of Table 2. The second most prevalent security hardware related to *detection. Detection* according to the WV School Safety Audit (2007) is sensing and assessing unauthorized acts in a timely manner. *Detection* devices found in West Virginia elementary schools were the use of an alarm system (58%), security cameras (49%), surveillance video (37%). Metal detectors (11%) and convex mirrors (6%) fell in the bottom portion of Table 2. The third most prevalent security hardware related to *delay mechanisms. Delay mechanisms* according to the WV School Safety Audit (2007) are a physical barrier that slows or impedes an authorized act after it has been detected. *Delay mechanisms* that were found in West Virginia elementary schools were entrance buzzers (33%) and electronic locks (20%). The fourth most prevalent security hardware was related to *deterrence. Deterrence* according to the WV School Safety Audit (2007) is any preemptive action, reaction, administrative capability, or design which moderates a threat or act. *Deterrence devices*

that were found in West Virginia elementary schools were upgrades to exterior lighting (23%) and concrete barriers (3%).

Research Question #2: What are the perceptions of West Virginia elementary school principals related to the effectiveness to the specific pieces of the school security hardware that they currently have in place?

West Virginia Elementary School Principals were asked to rate the effectiveness of the security hardware they had in place at their school on a ten point Likert scale with 1 being the least effective and 10 being the most effective. Using the values assigned to each response a score was determined and descriptive statistics were calculated. Analysis of the returned questionnaire revealed the mean effectiveness score calculated from the respondents resulted in the following: security camera 7 (n=78), metal detectors 3 (n=19), telephones in classrooms 8 (n=47), electronic locks 8 (n=31), entrance buzzers 8 (n=50), lighting upgrade 7 (n=36), surveillance video 7 (n=58), alarm system 6 (n=93), intercom system 8 (n=140), concrete barriers 5 (n=4), convex mirrors 4 (n=10), and 2-way hand-held communication 3 (n=122).

The qualitative data gathered from the elementary principals found that they on average most used security camera(s) on a daily basis. Most stated that the security camera(s) were not only effective in addressing school violence among students but also to monitor who was entering and leaving the building throughout the day. One principal responded saying, "Security cameras and other safe school apparatuses have a wider range of uses than just school violence." Some principals indicated that students' wave and smile at the cameras while others actually forgot that the cameras

were in place. Principals also expressed their belief that although cameras were helpful, but they were not remedies for safety and discipline issues facing them today. Additionally, school building principals must now include security hardware in the early stages of facility design to include security cameras in areas that are more difficult to monitor (Ahmed & Kosar, 2000).

Secondly, the interviewed elementary principals on average used metal detectors(s) very rarely. Most stated that they were glad that they had a metal detector in case of incidences that would require assistance of a metal detector. An elementary principal interviewed indicated, "Our school received a metal detector wand two years ago and fortunately we have not had to use it but I am glad it is available if needed." According to Skiba (2000), metal detectors are considered by many principals to be a viable solution for deterring weapons in schools. Furthermore, metal detectors reduce the likelihood that weapons will be brought into school campus; however, school violence may still occur outside the school building.

The interviewed elementary principals on an average used surveillance video daily ranked third. All of the elementary principals who participated in the interview said that surveillance video had been installed in their school and most indicated they were happy with the equipment. All agreed that they felt better adept at addressing school violence issues with the installation of the surveillance video. Some principals however indicated that they would like more surveillance video cameras throughout their building. "At our school we have used the surveillance video for a number of incidences not related to school violence. We caught a child stuffing toilet paper down

the toilet by reviewing the tapes to see who went into the bathroom. The video came in handy and the student was surprised when we questioned him about it." Ahmed and Kosar (2000) agree that school architects and principals should include surveillance video systems during the planning stages of educational buildings to provide a more secure building.

Furthermore, the security hardware that elementary principals used was an alarm system. Most principals indicated that their school is located in rural areas in which students frequent the areas for recreational purposes after the school day. Most principals felt that the alarm system helped with protecting the school facility from vandalism. One principal indicated that the alarm system was very valuable however when there are false alarms after hours it cost the county system money for someone to come check it out."

In addition, the interviewed elementary principals on an average used an intercom system several times daily. Principals discussed that intercom systems were very important in their emergency procedures plan and vital to preparing for the possibility of school violence occurring in their school. One principal indicated, "Our school has an intercom system however we only have one way communication from the office to the classrooms and I see this as a major safety issue not just from a violence standpoint." Ahmed and Kosar (2000) suggested that when designing a new school facility that school entrances and doorways must create a welcoming and nurturing environment, while appropriately including security devices that help

address acts of school violence. Intercoms are a vital component in creating a safe and nurturing school environment (Ahmed & Kosar, 2000).

Last, the interviewed elementary principals on an average used 2-way hand-held communication throughout the school day. Most principals indicated that this was not only used as a mechanism to address school violence but also a vital component in communicating with school employees throughout the day. In summary, Table 3 indicates how elementary principals perceive the effectiveness of the security hardware in their school. As illustrated, principals perceive electronic buzzers as the most effective security hardware in their building with a mean of 8.16. The least effective security hardware principals identified was metal detectors with a mean of 3.11.

Table 3

Rank Order of Security Hardware Effectiveness According to Principals

	M	N	Min.	Max.	SD
Entrance Buzzers	8.16	50	1	10	2.590
Electronic Locks	8.16	31	1	10	2.660
Telephone in Classroom(s)	7.83	47	1	10	2.769
Intercom System	7.75	140	1	10	2.749
Surveillance Video	7.09	58	1	10	2.910
2-Way Hand-Held Communication	7.01	122	1	10	2.821
Lighting Upgrade	6.81	36	1	10	2.994
Security Camera(s)	6.56	78	1	10	2.817
Alarm System	6.15	93	1	10	3.365
Concrete Barriers	5.25	4	1	10	4.031
Convex Mirror	3.50	10	1	8	2.369
Metal Detector(s)	3.11	19	1	8	2.378

Four components of the West Virginia School Access Audit (2007) were identified in the *Principal Survey* security hardware section: deterrence, detection, delay,

and communication. These components were found in the responses of principals according to the security hardware found in West Virginia elementary schools.

Communication systems according to the WV School Safety Audit (2007) are the equipment and procedures used by school personnel for sending and receiving messages, both internally and externally. The largest percentages of perceived effectiveness by principals of security hardware related to *communication systems* included intercom systems (83.8%), 2-way hand-held communication (73.1%), and telephones in the classrooms (28.1%). The second most prevalent security hardware that is perceived effective by principals is related to *detection.* This according to the WV School Safety Audit (2007) is sensing and assessing unauthorized acts in a timely manner. *Detection* devices found in West Virginia elementary schools were the use of an alarm system (55.7%), security cameras (46.7%), surveillance video (34.7%), metal detectors (11.4%) and convex mirrors (6%). The third most prevalent security hardware that are perceived effective by principals are related to *delay mechanisms.* This according to the WV School Safety Audit (2007) is a physical barrier that slows or impedes an authorized act after it has been detected. *Delay mechanisms* that were found in West Virginia elementary schools were entrance buzzers (29.9%) and exterior door locks (18.6%). The fourth most prevalent security hardware that is perceived effective by principals is related to *deterrence.* This according to the WV School Safety Audit (2007) is any preemptive action, reaction, administrative capability, or design which moderates a threat or act. Deterrence devices that were found in West Virginia elementary schools were upgrades to lighting (21.6%) and concrete barriers (2.4%).

Research Question #3: What do West Virginia elementary principals perceive as being unmet needs related to school security hardware designed to address school violence?

West Virginia Elementary School Principals were asked to rate how essential would it have been to have the security hardware that was not present at his/her school on a ten point Likert scale with 1 being the least effective and 10 being the most effective. Using the values assigned to each response, descriptive statistics were calculated. Analysis of the returned questionnaire revealed the mean essential score calculated from the respondents on a 10 point Likert scale resulted in the following: intercom system 9 (n=15), 2-way hand-held communication 7 (n=32), electronic locks 7 (n=119), entrance buzzers 7 (n=99), surveillance video 6 (n=95), alarm system 6 (n=63), telephone in classrooms 5 (n=106), lighting upgrade 5 (n=114), security camera 5 (n=78), convex mirrors 3 (n=141), concrete barriers 3 (n=148), and metal detectors 2 (n=134).

Qualitative Data

The qualitative data gathered from the elementary principals found that telephones in classrooms were not available in the schools which participated in the interview. Most principals stated that this would be an added benefit to the safety and communication of their schools. One principal stated, "Our school doesn't have telephones in the classroom. We have looked at ways to improve communication in our school and wondered if we could receive funds to have them installed." The elementary principals also indicated that electronic locks and entrance buzzers were not available in the schools however most principals stated that this would be an added benefit to the safety of their schools. Most responded that because of the time period in which the

facility was built (early to mid 1900s) that the front office was not located in an area where the front entrance door is visible from their office. One principal reported, "My school was built in the 1950s and there is no clear view of the front entrance. People can come through the front door and either go upstairs toward the office and other classrooms or they can go downstairs undetected." Unfortunately, this would allow people to enter the building without anyone seeing them. Additionally, the poor physical design may not allow school staff to properly supervise students and intruders and may also hamper internal communication in the school (Morrison & Furlong, 1994). Furthermore, the elementary principals indicated lighting upgrades were not an issue at their elementary schools. Most indicated that the lighting was sufficient and conducive to a positive learning environment and a safe school environment. None of the elementary principals interviewed reported having concrete barriers or convex mirrors located on the school grounds. Principals indicated that there was not a need for this type of security hardware on their school grounds.

In summary, Table 4 indicates the rank order that elementary principals perceive as being the most essential security hardware unmet need in their elementary school. Elementary principals indicated that the intercom system was the most essential unmet need security hardware feature that principals perceive would be the most essential in addressing school violence with a mean of 8.80. Principals perceived metal detector(s) were the least essential unmet need security hardware feature in addressing school violence with a mean of 2.49.

Table 4

Rank Order of Essential Security Hardware Unmet Need According to Principals

	M	N	Min	Max	SD
Intercom System	8.80	15	4	10	1.935
2-Way Hand-Held Comm.	7.16	32	3	10	2.516
Electronic Locks	6.61	119	1	10	3.092
Entrance Buzzers	6.61	99	1	10	3.010
Surveillance Video	6.38	95	1	10	2.969
Alarm System	5.52	63	1	10	3.110
Telephone in Classroom	5.49	106	1	10	3.040
Lighting Upgrade	4.93	114	1	10	3.315
Security Camera	4.91	78	1	10	3.105
Convex Mirror	3.13	141	1	10	2.409
Concrete Barrier	2.89	148	1	10	2.533
Metal Detector	2.49	134	1	10	2.080

Four components of the West Virginia School Access Audit (2007) were identified in the *Principal Survey* security hardware section: deterrence, detection, delay, and communication. These components were found in the responses of principals according to the security hardware found in West Virginia elementary schools.

Deterrence mechanisms that were not found in West Virginia elementary schools were concrete barriers (88.6%) and upgrades to lighting (68.3%). The second most prevalent security hardware that was perceived essential by principals related to *delay mechanisms.* These according to the WV School Safety Audit (2007) are a physical barrier that slows or impedes an authorized act after it has been detected. *Delay mechanisms* that were not found in West Virginia elementary schools were exterior door locks (71.3%) and entrance buzzers (59.3%). The third most prevalent security hardware that was perceived essential by principals that did not have the security hardware in his/her school is related to *detection.* These according to the WV School Safety Audit (2007) are sensing and assessing unauthorized acts in a timely manner. *Detection* devices

not found in West Virginia elementary schools were the use of convex mirrors (84.4%), metal detectors (80.2%), surveillance video (56.9%), security cameras (46.7%) and an alarm system (37.7%). The least prevalent security hardware that was perceived essential by principals that did not have the security hardware in his/her school is related to *communication systems*. These according to the WV School Safety Audit (2007) are the equipment and procedures used by school personnel for sending and receiving messages, both internally and externally. The largest percentages perceived essential in unmet needs by principals of security hardware related to *communication* included telephones in the classrooms (63.5%), 2-way hand-held communication (19.2%) and intercom systems (9%).

Safety Procedures

A list of safety procedures in West Virginia elementary schools, compiled from a survey of 10 Safe and Drug-Free Coordinators in the state, was used as a basis for the items in Part 2, Section 2 of the *Principal Survey: Violence Prevention in West Virginia Elementary School.* The safety procedures identified were (a) locker searches, (b) locked windows, (c) locked exterior doors, (d) bomb searches, (e) Safe School Hotline, (f) uniforms, (g) identification cards worn by school officials, (h) emergency communication procedures, (i) visitor sign-in, (j) lock-down drills, (k) numbering of doors and areas and (l) hall passes for students. The research questions dealt with determining each section will report on the safety procedure's pervasiveness of use in West Virginia elementary schools, its perceived effectiveness and how essential it is to school safety.

Research Question #4: What school safety procedures are present in elementary

schools in West Virginia?

West Virginia Elementary School Principals were asked if their school has locker searches, locked windows, locked exterior doors, bomb searches, Safe School Hotline, uniforms, identification cards worn by school officials, emergency communication procedures, visitor sign-ins, lock-down drills, numbering of doors and areas, and hall passes for students. Analysis of the returned questionnaires revealed that 154 of the 155 of the respondents to this item (99%) had visitor sign-ins, 150 of the 155 respondents to this item (97%) had emergency communication procedures, 142 of the 155 respondents to this item (92%) had locked exterior doors, 139 of 155 (90%) reported locked windows, 124 of the 154 respondents to this item (81%) had lock-down drills, 123 of the 154 respondents to this item (80%) had identification cards worn by school officials, 114 of the 154 respondents to this item (74%) had numbering of doors and areas, 105 of the 155 respondents to this item (68%) had Safe School Hotline, 55 of the 154 respondents to this item (36%) had hall passes for students, 15 of the 155 respondents to this item (10%) had locker searches, 8 of the 154 respondents to this item (5%) had bomb searches, and 1 of the 154 respondents to this item (<1%) had uniforms.

In summary, Table 5 identified safety procedures that were present in West Virginia elementary schools by principals. Respondents indicated that visitor sign-ins were the most prevalent (99%) safety procedure located in West Virginia elementary schools. Moreover the respondents indicated that emergency communication procedures were widely utilized (97%) in elementary schools to prepare for addressing school

violence. The safety procedure that was the least prevalent in elementary schools in West

Virginia was uniforms (<1%).

Table 5

Summary of Safety Procedures that are Present in West Virginia Elementary Schools

Safety Procedure	Respondents	Number Reporting Use	%
Visitor Sign-in	155	154	99
Emergency Communication Procedures	155	150	97
Locked Exterior Doors	155	142	92
Locked Windows	155	139	90
Lock-Down Drills	154	124	81
ID Cards Worn by School Officials	154	123	80
Numbering of Doors and Areas	154	114	74
Safe School Hotline	155	105	68
Hall Passes	154	55	36
Locker Searches	155	15	10
Bomb Searches	154	8	5
Uniforms	154	1	<1

Four components of the West Virginia School Access Audit (2007) were

identified in the *Principal Survey*: *deterrence, detection, planning and communication*.

These components were found in the responses of principals according to the safety

procedures found in West Virginia elementary schools. According to the questions on

the audit, delay components were not addressed in the safety procedures section of the

Principal Survey; however, they are addressed in the previous section, security hardware,

of the *Principal Survey*.

Delay mechanisms according to the WV School Safety Audit (2007) are a

physical barrier that slows or impedes an authorized act after it has been detected. *Delay*

mechanisms that were found in West Virginia elementary schools were locked exterior

doors (92%). The second most prevalent safety procedures related to *deterrence.* This

according to the WV School Safety Audit (2007) is any preemptive action, reaction,

administrative capability, or design which moderates a threat or act. *Deterrence devices* that were found in West Virginia elementary schools were locked windows (90%) and numbering of doors and areas (74%). The third most prevalent group of safety procedures related to *communication systems.* These are the equipment and procedures used by school personnel for sending and receiving messages, both internally and externally (WV School Safety Audit, 2007). The safety procedure that related to *communication system* included the Safe School Hotline (68%). The fourth most prevalent safety procedure related to *planning*. This according to the WV School Safety Audit (2007) is to monitor school safety needs for the purpose of identifying problems and recommending solutions for school safety. *Planning* devices found in West Virginia elementary schools were visitor sign-ins (99%), emergency communication procedures (97%), lock-down procedures (81%), locker searches (10%) and bomb searches (5%). The least prevalent safety procedure related to *detection.* This according to the WV School Safety Audit (2007) is sensing and assessing unauthorized acts in a timely manner. *Detection* devices found in West Virginia elementary schools were the use of identification cards worn by school officials (80%); hall passes (36%) and uniforms (<1%),

Research Question #5: What are the perceptions of West Virginia elementary school principals related to the effectiveness to the specific pieces of the school safety procedures that they currently have in place?

West Virginia Elementary School Principals were asked to rate the effectiveness of the safety procedures they had in place at their school on a ten point Likert scale with 1 being the least effective and 10 being the most effective. Using the values assigned to

each response a score was determined and descriptive statistics were calculated. Analysis of the returned questionnaire revealed the mean effectiveness score calculated from the respondents on a 10 point Likert scale resulted in the following: visitor sign-ins 8 (n=153), emergency communication procedures 8 (n=150), locked exterior doors 8 (n=142), lock-down drills 8 (n=124), identification cards worn by school officials 7 (n=124), numbering of doors and areas 7 (n=114), locked windows 7 (n=19), bomb searches 7 (n=8), hall passes 6 (n=55), locker searches 6 (n=15), Safe School Hotline (n=105), and uniforms 1 (n=2).

Qualitative Data

The qualitative data gathered from the elementary principals found that visitor sign-ins were present in all schools which participated in the interview. Most principals stated that this helps the office staff and others keep track of who is in the building. Once the visitor has signed in to the building, the visitor is then given a badge to wear that states that they are a visitor in the school. Most of the schools require the visitor and staff/personnel to sign in and out indicating the time. All school personnel are required to wear a picture identification card at all times when entering a facility. The elementary principals also indicated that emergency communication procedures were available in the schools and practiced on a random basis to ensure that everyone in the building is aware of what to do in times of a crisis. Lock-down drills were practiced at several of the schools but most principals responded that this is something that is new and have not been practiced on a regular basis although it is included in their emergency communication procedures. Some principals expressed concerns of staff and students

becoming complacent in the drills. All elementary principals stated that locked exterior

doors, locked windows and numbering of doors and areas are present in their schools.

Each principal indicated that a memo was sent out by the Central Office stating that each

door and area in their school needed to have a number visible in case of emergencies.

This would help outside agencies to identify the location of the emergency.

In summary, Table 6 indicates how elementary principals perceive the

effectiveness of the safety procedures in their school. As illustrated in Table 6, principals

perceive exterior doors as the most effective safety procedures in their building with a

mean of 8.24. The least effective safety procedure principals identified was uniforms with

a mean of 1.00.

Table 6

Rank Order of Safety Procedure Effectiveness According to Principals

	M	N	Min	Max	SD
Locked Exterior Doors	8.24	142	1	10	2.529
Visitor Sign-in	7.95	153	1	10	2.660
Lock-Down Drills	7.89	124	1	10	2.769
Emergency Communication Procedures	7.75	150	1	10	2.749
Numbering of Doors and Areas	7.18	114	1	10	2.910
Locked Windows	6.94	140	1	10	2.821
ID Cards Worn by School Officials	6.75	124	1	10	2.994
Bomb Searches	6.50	8	3	10	3.365
Hall Passes	6.38	55	1	10	2.817
Locker Searches	6.07	15	2	10	4.031
Safe School Hotline	4.97	104	1	8	2.369
Uniforms	1.00	2	1	1	2.378

Deterrence according to the WV School Safety Audit (2007) is any preemptive

action, reaction, administrative capability, or design which moderates a threat or act.

Deterrence devices that were found in West Virginia elementary schools were exterior

door locks (92%), locked windows (90%) and numbering of doors and areas (74%).The

communication system was the second most prevalent safety procedure. *Communication systems* are the equipment and procedures used by school personnel for sending and receiving messages, both internally and externally (WV School Safety Audit, 2007). The safety procedure related to *communication system* which included the Safe School Hotline (68%). The third most prevalent safety procedure related to *planning*. This according to the WV School Safety Audit is to monitor school safety needs for the purpose if identifying problems and recommending solutions for school safety. *Planning* devices found in West Virginia elementary schools were visitor sign-ins (99%), emergency communication procedures (97%), lock-down procedures (81%), locker searches (10%) and bomb searches (5%). The least prevalent safety procedure related to *detection.* This according to the WV School Safety Audit (2007) is sensing and assessing unauthorized acts in a timely manner. *Detection* devices found in West Virginia elementary schools were the use of identification cards worn by school officials (80%); hall passes (36%) and uniforms (<1%).

Research Question #6: What do West Virginia elementary principals perceive as being unmet needs related to school safety procedures designed to address school violence?

West Virginia Elementary School Principals were asked to rate how essential would it have been to have the safety procedures that were not present at their schools on a ten point Likert scale with 1 being the least effective and 10 being the most effective. Using the values assigned to each response a score was determined and descriptive statistics were calculated. Analysis of the returned questionnaire revealed the mean essential score calculated from the respondents on a 10 point Likert scale resulted in the

following: locked exterior doors 7 (n=12), numbering of doors and areas 6 (n=40), lock-down drills 6 (n=29), emergency communication procedures 6 (n=5), Safe School Hotline 5 (n=47), identification worn by school officials 5 (n=31), locked windows 5 (n=11), uniforms 3 (n=144), bomb searches 3 (n=128), hall passes 3 (n=95), visitor sign-ins 3 (n=1), and locker searches 2 (n=115).

Qualitative Data

The qualitative data gathered from the elementary principals found that the elementary principals indicated hall passes, locker searches, bomb searches and uniforms were not present at their elementary schools. Most indicated that there are emergency communication procedures for locker and bomb searches however there has not been a need for these types of searches. Furthermore, principals were aware of the Safe School Hotline, but have not had any reports of incidences that needed attention at their school.

In summary, Table 7 indicates the rank order that elementary principals rated how essential would it have been to have the safety procedures that were not present in their school. According to the data, elementary principals indicated that the locked exterior doors was the most important safety procedure that principals perceive would be the most essential in addressing school violence with a mean of 7.08. Locker searches were the least essential safety procedure that principals perceive would address school violence with a mean of 2.37.

Table 7

Summary of Essential Safety Procedure Unmet Need According to Principals

	M	N	Min	Max	SD
Locked Exterior Doors	7.08	12	2	10	3.029
Emergency Communication Procedures	6.20	5	2	9	2.775
Numbering of Doors and Areas	6.00	40	1	10	2.900
Lock-Down Drills	5.69	29	1	10	2.634
ID Cards worn by Officials	5.42	31	1	10	2.997
Safe School Hotline	4.68	47	1	10	2.935
Locked Windows	4.64	11	1	10	3.641
Bomb Searches	3.24	128	1	10	2.791
Hall Passes	3.18	95	1	10	2.401
Uniforms	3.09	144	1	10	2.803
Visitor Sign-ins	3.00	1	3	3	-
Locker Searches	2.37	115	1	10	2.129

Examination of the data indicated that principals emphasized how essential it

would be to have the safety procedures related to *detection*. This according to the WV

School Safety Audit is sensing and assessing unauthorized acts in a timely manner.

Detection devices not found in West Virginia elementary schools were uniforms (86.2%),

hall passes (56.9%) and the use of identification cards worn by school officials (18.6%).

The second most prevalent safety procedure related to *planning*. This according to the

WV School Safety Audit (2007) is to monitor school safety needs for the purpose if

identifying problems and recommending solutions for school safety. *Planning* devices

not found in West Virginia elementary schools were bomb searches (76.6%), locker

searches (68.9%), lock-down procedures (17.4%), emergency communication procedures

(3%) and visitor sign-ins (1%). The *communication system* was the third most prevalent

safety procedure reported. *Communication systems* are the equipment and procedures

used by school personnel for sending and receiving messages, both internally and

externally (WV School Safety Audit). The safety procedure related to *communication*

system included the Safe School Hotline (28.1%). The least prevalent safety procedure

related to *deterrence* with an average of 13%. *Deterrence* according to the WV School Safety Audit is any preemptive action, reaction, administrative capability, or design which moderates a threat or act. Deterrence devices that were not found in West Virginia elementary schools were numbering of doors and areas (24%), locked windows (7.6%) and exterior door locks (7.2%).

Violence Prevention Programs

A list of violence prevention programs in West Virginia elementary schools, compiled from a survey of 10 Safe and Drug-Free Coordinators in the state, was used as a basis for the items in Part 3, Section 3 of the *Principal Survey: Violence Prevention in West Virginia Elementary School*. The violence prevention programs identified were (a) *Second Step*, (b) *Peacebuilders*, (c) *Reach/Challenge*, (d) *Smart Team*, (e) *Conflict Manager*s, (f) *Teasing and Bullying: Unacceptable Behavior Program (TAB)*, (g) *Get Real*, (h) *Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP)*, (i) *Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways (RIPP)*, (j) *Peacemakers*, (k) *Bullying Prevention Program*, (l) *BE COOL*, (m) *Motivational Magic*, and (n) *QUIT IT* violence prevention program for students. The research questions attempt to identify violence prevention program pervasiveness of use in West Virginia elementary schools, their perceived effectiveness and how essential they are to school safety.

Research Question #7: What school violence prevention programs are present in elementary schools in West Virginia?

West Virginia Elementary School Principals were asked if their schools has the *Second Step* program*, Peacebuilders*, *Reach/Challenge* program, *Smart Team* program, *Conflict Managers* program, *Teasing and Bullying: Unacceptable Behavior Program (TAB)* , *Get Real* program, *Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP), Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways (RIPP)*, *Peacemakers*, *Bullying Prevention Program (BPP)*, *BECOOL* program, *Motivational Magic* and *QUIT IT* program. Analysis of the returned questionnaires revealed that 69 of the 153 respondents to this item (45%) had *Bullying Prevention Program (BPP),* 57 of the 153 respondents to this item (37%) had *Teasing and Bullying: Unacceptable Behavior Program*, 28 of the 151 respondents to this item (18%) had *Conflict Managers* program, 14 of the 154 respondents to this item (9%) had *Second Step* program, 13 of the 153 respondents to this item (9%) had the *Get Real* program, 6 of the 153 respondents to this item (4%) had *BECOOL* program, 3 of the 153 respondents to this item (2%) had the *Peacemakers* program, 2 of 154 respondents to this item (1%) reported *Peacebuilders* program, 2 of the 152 respondents to this item (1%) had *Reach/Challenge* program, 2 of the 152 respondents to this item (1%) had *Motivational Magic* program, 2 of the 152 of the respondents to this item (1%) had *Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways (RIPP)*, 1 of the 152 respondents to this item (<1%) had the *Smart Team* program, 1 of the 152 respondents to this item (<1%) had *Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP)* and 1 of the 152 respondents to this item (<1%) had the *QUIT IT* program.

In summary, Table 8 indicates principal identified violence prevention programs that were present in West Virginia elementary schools. Respondents indicated that *Bullying Prevention Program (BPP)* was the most prevalent (45%) violence prevention programs located in West Virginia elementary schools. More than one-third of the respondents indicated that *Teasing and Bullying: Unacceptable Behavior Program (TAB)* was widely utilized (37%) in elementary schools to prepare for addressing school violence. The violence prevention program that was the least prevalent in elementary schools in West Virginia was *QUIT IT* program (<1%).

Table 8

Summary of Violence Prevention Programs Present in West Virginia Elementary Schools

	N	Number Reporting Use	%
BPP	153	69	45
Teasing and Bullying	153	57	37
Conflict Managers	152	28	18
Second Step	154	14	9
Get Real	153	13	9
BECOOL	153	6	4
Peacemakers	153	3	2
Peacebuilders	154	2	1
Reach/Challenge	152	2	1
Motivational Magic	152	2	1
RIPP	153	2	1
Smart Team	152	1	<1
RCCP	153	1	<1
QUIT IT	152	1	<1

Research Question #8: What are the perceptions of West Virginia elementary school principals related to the effectiveness to the specific pieces of violence prevention programs that they currently have in place?

West Virginia Elementary School Principals were asked to rate the effectiveness of the violence prevention programs they had in place at their school on a ten point Likert scale with 1 being the least effective and 10 being the most effective. Using the values assigned to each response a score was determined and descriptive statistics were calculated. Analysis of the returned questionnaire revealed the mean effectiveness score calculated from the respondents on a 10 point Likert scale resulted in the following: *Second Step* 8 (n=13), *Reach/Challenge* 8 (n=2), *Teasing and Bullying: Unacceptable Behavior Program (TAB)* 7 (n=56), *Behavior Prevention Program (BPP)* 7 (n=68), *BECOOL* program 7 (n=6), *Resolving in Positive Peaceful Ways (RIPP)* 7 (n=3), *Peacemaker* program 7 (n=3), *Get Real* program 7 (n=13), *Conflict Managers* 7 (n=29), *Motivational Magic* 5 (n=2), *Peacebuilders* 5 (n=2), *QUIT IT* program 4 (n=2), *Responding Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP)* 0 (n=0) and *Smart Team* program 0 (n=0).

In summary, Table 9 indicates how elementary principals perceive the effectiveness of violence prevention programs in their school. As illustrated, principals perceive *Second Step* as the most effective violence prevention program in their building with a mean of 7.62. The least effective violence prevention program principals identified was *RCCP* and *Smart Team* programs with a mean of 0.00.

Table 9

Rank Order of Violence Prevention Program Effectiveness According to Principals

Violence Prevention Program	M	N	Min	Max	SD
Second Step	7.62	13	3	10	2.142
Reach/Challenge	7.50	2	7	8	.707
Teasing and Bullying	7.41	56	2	10	2.206
BPP	7.34	68	1	10	2.092
BECOOL	7.33	6	4	10	2.160
RIPP	7.00	3	5	8	1.732
Peacemakers	6.67	3	5	8	1.528
Get Real	6.62	13	1	10	2.959
Conflict Managers	6.55	29	1	10	2.369
Motivational Magic	5.00	2	4	6	1.414
Peacebuilders	5.00	2	5	5	0
QUIT IT	3.50	2	3	4	.707
RCCP	-	0	-	-	-
Smart Team	-	0	-	-	-

Research Question #9: What do West Virginia elementary principals perceive as being unmet needs related to violence prevention programs designed to address school violence?

West Virginia Elementary School Principals were asked to rate how essential would it have been to have the violence prevention programs that was not present at their school on a ten point Likert scale with 1 being the least effective and 10 being the most effective. Using the values assigned to each response a score was determined and descriptive statistics were calculated. Analysis of the returned questionnaire revealed the mean essential score calculated from the respondents on a 10 point Likert scale resulted in the following: *Teasing and Bullying: Unacceptable Behavior Program* 5 (n=75), *Bullying Prevention Program (BPP)* 5 (n=69), *Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP)* 4 (n=118), *Peacemaker* program 4 (n=116), *Responding in Peaceful Positive Ways (RCCP)* 4 (n=115), , *Get Real* program 4 (n=104), *Conflict Managers* 4 (n=95),

Motivational Magic 4 (n=114)*, BECOOL* program 4 (n=113)*, QUIT IT* program 4

(n=114)*, Peacebuilders* program 3 (n=117)*, Smart Team* program 3 (n=115)*,*

Reach/Challenge program 3 (n=114) and *Second Step* program 3 (n=104).

In summary, Table 10 indicates the rank order that elementary principals perceive

as being the most essential violence prevention program unmet need at their particular

elementary school. According to the data, elementary principals indicated that the

Teasing and Bullying: Unacceptable Bullying Behavior (TAB) program was the most

essential violence prevention program unmet need feature that principals perceive would

be the most essential in addressing school violence with a mean of 5.17. *Reach/Challenge*

program was the least essential violence prevention program feature that principals

perceive would be the least essential in addressing school violence with a mean of 3.18.

Table 10

Summary of Essential Violence Prevention Program Unmet Need According to
Principals

Violence Prevention Program	M	N	Min	Max	SD
Teasing and Bullying	5.17	75	1	10	3.002
BPP	5.00	69	1	10	2.990
RCCP	4.09	118	1	10	2.795
RIPP	4.08	115	1	10	2.835
Peacemakers	3.97	116	1	10	2.757
Get Real	3.89	104	1	10	2.773
Conflict Managers	3.80	95	1	10	2.789
Motivational Magic	3.66	114	1	10	2.492
BECOOL	3.66	113	1	10	2.520
QUIT IT	3.52	114	1	10	2.475
Peacebuilders	3.30	117	3	3	2.461
Smart Team	3.30	115	1	10	2.503
Second Step	3.24	104	1	10	2.420
Reach/Challenge	3.18	114	1	10	2.429

Summary

Table 11 (Appendix F) provides a combined summary of the rank orders of the results of security hardware, safety procedures and violence prevention programs that are present in West Virginia elementary schools. According to the data, elementary principals indicated that visitor sign-ins (99%) and emergency communication procedures (97%) ranked at the top of the list. They also indicated that the QUIT IT program (<1%), RCCP (<1%), Smart Team (<1%) and uniforms (<1%) were the least prevalent items in West Virginia elementary schools.

Table 12 (Appendix G) provides a combined summary of the rank orders of the results of effectiveness that elementary principal's reported security hardware, safety procedures and violence prevention programs that are present in West Virginia elementary schools. According to the data, elementary principals indicated that exterior door locks (8.24) and entrance buzzers (8.16) ranked at the top of the list. Elementary principals indicated that the Smart Team program (0) and RCCP (0) were the least prevalent items in West Virginia elementary schools.

Table 13 (Appendix H) provides a combined summary of the rank orders of the results elementary principal's reported how essential security hardware, safety procedures and violence prevention programs unmet needs are in West Virginia elementary schools. According to the data, elementary principals indicated that intercom system (8.80) and 2-way hand-held communication (7.16) ranked at the top of the list. Elementary principals indicated that the locker searches (2.37) and metal detectors (2.49) were the least essential unmet needs in West Virginia elementary schools.

Security measures in elementary schools are particularly a troublesome concern. Solutions are challenging because of the wide variety of students West Virginia elementary schools serve and with the current economic status of the world. The listings in Tables 12, 13 and 14 may serve as a guide for principals, county administrators, superintendents and legislators that may want to purchase items that are the most beneficial, cost effective security measures that best fit the needs of addressing school violence.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Purpose

While there is no absolute deterrent of school violence, West Virginia has taken definitive steps to try to ensure safety in our public schools. Since the launch of the Safe School initiative in 1995, training for principals, teachers and school personnel on crisis intervention and management plans has been ongoing. Students have undergone training in programs such as Peer Mediation, Natural Helpers, Life Skills, Bullying Prevention, Positive Behavior Support (PBS), and Respect to Protect. In addition, encouragement, mandating and providing funds for school safety and violence/crime prevention and intervention programs have been enacted legislatively. With the school security hardware, safety procedures and violence prevention programs in place, the question then becomes whether elementary schools are safer in West Virginia.

The purpose of this study was to determine if the specific school security hardware, safety procedures and violence prevention programs were present and perceived by principals as effective in addressing school safety in West Virginia elementary schools. This study analyzed the school security hardware, safety procedures and violence prevention programs in preventing or reducing violent acts from occurring.

This study addressed the following research questions related to the presence, perceived effectiveness and unmet needs of security hardware, safety procedures and violence prevention programs in West Virginia elementary schools:

1. What school security hardware is present in elementary schools in West Virginia?

2. What are the *perceptions of West Virginia elementary school principals related to the effectiveness* to the specific pieces of the school security hardware they currently have in place?

3. What do West Virginia *elementary school principals perceive as being unmet needs* related to school security hardware designed to address school violence?

4. What school safety procedures are present in elementary schools in West Virginia?

5. What are the *perceptions of West Virginia elementary principal regarding the effectiveness* of the specific pieces of the school safety procedures they have in addressing school violence?

6. What do West Virginia *elementary principals perceive as being unmet needs* related to school safety procedures designed to address school safety?

7. What school violence prevention programs are present in elementary schools in West Virginia?

8. What are the *perceptions of West Virginia elementary principals regarding the effectiveness* of the specific pieces of the school violence prevention programs they have in addressing school violence?

9. What do West Virginia *elementary principals perceive as being unmet needs* related to school violence prevention programs designed to address school safety?

Summary of the Study Methods

This mixed methods case study endeavored to bring into sharp focus the issues and variables attendant to school safety from the principals' perspective. The targeted

group for this study were West Virginia elementary principals which resulted in a population of 336 (n=336). From this population of 336 (n= 336), 167 surveys were returned for a response rate of 49.7%.

After the email addresses were organized on a spreadsheet, an email containing the electronic cover letter and link to the survey was dispersed to the elementary school principals. The electronic cover letter explained the purpose of the study, institutional review board approval, and voluntary participation in the study. One week later, a follow-up email containing the cover letter and link to the survey was sent to the participants. Three weeks after the initial email, a third email containing the cover letter and link to the survey was sent to the participants. Three weeks after the initial email, a paper cover letter and survey were mailed through the United States Postal Service (USPS). A self-addressed, stamped envelope was included with the cover letter and survey.

Discussions and Conclusions of the Findings

Research Question #1: What school security hardware are present in elementary schools in West Virginia?

This study revealed that there are a variety of security hardware features in West Virginia elementary schools. According to principals, more than half of the schools indicated intercom systems (91%), 2-way hand-held communications (79%), and alarm systems (58%) were in place. These findings suggest that West Virginia has taken definitive steps to ensure the safety of elementary students and that the creation of the West Virginia School Access Safety Fund (WVC§18-9F-3) in 2007 provided the

enhancement of school entry access safety. Furthermore, the list of the most commonly used security hardware in West Virginia elementary schools and across the nation was consistent with the national list comprised by the National School Safety Statistics (2006). West Virginia elementary schools most common security hardware are: (a) intercom systems, (b) 2-way hand-held communication, (c) alarm systems, (d) surveillance video/security cameras, (e) entrance buzzers, (f) telephones in the classrooms, (g) lighting upgrades, (h) electronic locks, (i) metal detectors, (j) convex mirrors and (k) concrete barriers.

Nationally, according to *Indicators of School Crime and Safety* (1998), public elementary school principals responded that during the 1996-1997 school year, security hardware had been installed to address the possibility of violence in their schools. The most common security hardware in elementary schools reported were: (a) video surveillance/security camera, (b) metal detector, (c) telephones in classrooms, (d) intercoms, (e) two-way communication, (f) electronic locks, (g) upgrade in lighting, (h) concrete barriers, (i) entrance buzzers, and (j) convex mirrors.

Since the West Virginia and national data compare very favorably it is plausible to conclude that the West Virginia School Access Safety Fund (WVC§18-9F-3) of 2007 has accomplished its goals related to security hardware in West Virginia elementary schools.

Research Question #2: *What are the perceptions of West Virginia elementary school principals related to the effectiveness to the specific pieces of the school security hardware they currently have in place?*

The current study revealed that entrance buzzers and electronic locks were perceived to be the most effective security hardware in place in West Virginia elementary schools. These measures reduced unauthorized access during the school day and improved student, staff and visitor safety which also reassured parents that their children were safe throughout the school day. While measures to prevent unauthorized access to the school building contributed to promoting safety and security for students, staff and visitors, a series of more specific personal measures were also considered to be effective. The use of telephones in classrooms and 2-way communications were beneficial to principals and staff because of the layout of the buildings. Some schools have more than one building and communication was a concern in addressing safety.

Nationally, the effectiveness of school security hardware was reported in a study for the CDW-G School Safety Index (2008); 70% of principals surveyed indicated that security cameras were the most effective device to improve safety. Furthermore, 29% reported that security cameras have made a positive impact on security and an additional 24% of those districts are considering adding security cameras in their district. The same study reported that only half of all public schools claim to control access to the physical school facility.

Contrary to this national finding, West Virginia principals participating in this study did not agree that security cameras are the most effective security hardware to

address school violence. West Virginia principals indicated that entrance buzzers and electronic locks were the first and second most effective security hardware to address school violence. It is probable that this is the difference arise from the facts that the incidences of school violence in West Virginia elementary schools is low and the need for security cameras has been of little value to principals. Controlling the access, however, provide security that does not require constant monitoring and serves to deter both serious and minor access incidents to buildings from undesirables.

Research Question #3: *What do West Virginia elementary school principals perceive as being unmet needs related to school security hardware designed to address school violence?*

In the current study, principals responded that intercom systems were the number one ranked security hardware item that was an unmet need in West Virginia elementary schools. One principal indicated that an intercom system was present in her school; however, it needed to be upgraded. She stated that the intercom was a one-way communication and the teachers in the classrooms could not communicate with the office. The second most unmet need perceived by principals was 2-way hand-held communications. This allows the faculty and staff to be in constant contact with each other in case of an emergency. By providing key staff members with 2-way hand-held communication, schools can provide proactive supervision in an effort to address acts of violence. Electronic locks ranked third according to the unmet needs of principals for security hardware.

In a West Virginia study of school climate which surveyed principals, district superintendents, WVRESA (West Virginia Regional Education Service Agency) Directors, and District Safety Directors, 47% of the respondents wanted security systems or improvements to security systems. Furthermore, 13% indicated they wanted an intercom system or an upgrade in the system (West Virginia Department of Education, Office of Healthy Schools, 2008) . She stated that the intercom was a 2-way communication but some communication was difficult because of the poor quality of sound. The need for intercom systems was also reaffirmed by the current study as the number one security hardware item that was an unmet need in West Virginia elementary schools.

The second most unmet need perceived by principals was 2-way hand-held communications. This allows the faculty and staff to be in constant contact with each other in case of an emergency. By providing key staff members with 2-way hand-held communication, schools can provide proactive supervision in an effort to address acts of violence. It is important to understand that while these communication devices are essential during safety emergency issues, part of their popularity may be that they also provide communication for management of the school.

Electronic locks ranked third according to the unmet needs of principals for security hardware. With the cost associated with installing electronic locks on buildings this is and will continue to be an issue with schools trying to provide safety and security to the students they serve.

Research Question #4: *What school safety procedures are present in elementary schools in West Virginia?*

This study revealed that there are a variety of safety procedures in West Virginia elementary schools. The majority of the safety procedures had at least 50% of the principals indicating that the particular safety procedure was being utilized to some degree in their elementary schools. Visitor sign-ins (99%) was the most readily utilized safety procedure used in elementary schools, and emergency communication procedures (97%) was the second most utilized safety procedure according to principals. These findings suggest that West Virginia has taken definitive steps to ensure safety of elementary students through a variety of safety procedures. The safety procedures that have been proven by principals to address acts of violence have been implemented in West Virginia elementary schools. West Virginia elementary schools most common safety procedures are: (a) visitor sign-ins, (b) emergency communication procedures, (c) locked exterior doors, (d) locked windows, (e) lock-down drills, (f) identification cards worn by school officials, (g) numbering of doors and areas, (h) Safe School Hotline, (i) hall passes, (j) locker searches, (k) bomb searches, and (l) uniforms. The safety procedures that are listed above are common nationally; however, uniforms were only worn in one elementary school in West Virginia.

Nationally, schools have found successful approaches, used innovative strategies and perfected techniques to provide a safe and stimulating environment for students (Hill & Hill, 1994). These successful strategies and techniques found nationally included some of the following: (a) locker searches, (b) identification cards worn by school officials, (c) emergency communication procedures, (d) locked windows and exterior doors, (e) visitor

sign-ins, (f) lock-down drills, (g) bomb searches, (h) numbering of doors and areas require, (i) safe schools hotline, (j) uniforms, and (k) hall passes. According to the CDW-G School Safety Index (2008), CDW-Government, Inc., over 400 school districts were surveyed and found that 32% utilized identifications cards worn by school officials. According to the *Indicators of School Crime and Safety 2007*, elementary principals responded that during the 2005-2006 school year 87.9% locked or monitored the doors to the school building during the school day.

The West Virginia and national data compare very favorably. This comparison would indicate that the West Virginia School Access Safety Act (WVC§18-9F-1) and Fund (WVC§18-9F-3) of 2007 has accomplished the goals related to safety procedures in West Virginia elementary school.

Research Question #5: *What are the perceptions of West Virginia elementary principal have regarding the effectiveness of the specific pieces of the school safety procedures they have in addressing school violence?*

This study revealed that there are a variety of effective safety procedures in West Virginia elementary schools. According to principals, locked exterior doors, visitor sign-ins were considered the most effective safety procedures in place in West Virginia elementary schools. These findings suggest that West Virginia has taken definitive steps to ensure the safety of elementary students and that the creation of the West Virginia School Access Safety Act (WVC§18-9F-1) and Fund (WVC§18-9F-3) of 2007 has accomplished its goals related to safety procedures in West Virginia elementary schools.

Nationally, principals perceive it effective of safety procedures may include: (a) locker searches, (b) identification cards worn by officials and visitors, (c) emergency communication procedures, (d) visitor sign-ins, (e) lock-down drills, (f) bomb searches using employees and dogs, (g) numbering of doors and areas, (h) safe schools hotline,(i) school uniforms, and (j) hall passes. Other features include principals limiting access to school buildings and campuses by implementing such practices as locked gates or doors to control who comes in and out of the school facility or grounds. Even though these safety procedures are found throughout the nation, some states may solicit information from their districts in order to find out what the most effective safety procedures are in place.

The West Virginia and national data compare very favorably which, again, suggests that the West Virginia School Access Act (WVC§18F-9F-1) and Fund (WVC§18F-9F-3) of 2007 have accomplished its goals related to safety procedures in West Virginia elementary schools.

Research Question #6: *What do West Virginia elementary principals perceive as being unmet needs related to school safety procedures designed to address school safety?*

The current study revealed that West Virginia elementary principals indicated that locked exterior doors was an unmet need in their elementary schools. The principals polled said they do not have controlled access through locked exterior doors. This prevents unauthorized entry into the school and promotes an environment that is conducive to learning. The second most unmet need for principals was the utilization of emergency communication procedures. Emergency communication procedures enable all

staff members and surrounding emergency services what to do in case an emergency would arise. The third unmet need according to principals is numbering of doors and areas. This helps emergency personnel to act quickly in a building that may not be familiar to all people involved in the emergency.

In a West Virginia School Climate survey which surveyed principals, district superintendents, WVRESA (West Virginia Regional Education Service Agency) Directors and District Safety Directors reported that one of the most frequent emergencies were parents entering the building without checking in to the office. Some respondents had concerns about their school being unsafe because access to the building did not have consistent procedures by all school personnel and most of the schools have the potential for being entered by non-approved visitors (West Virginia Department of Education, Office of Healthy Schools, 2008). With the financial concerns of most schools, the issue of having enough school personnel to help maintain a secure environment comes into question.

Nationally, the first annual report on school crime and safety from the Bureau of Justice and Statistics (1998) indicated that over half the principals polled said that they needed access control to the school building through the utilization of locked exterior doors. Locked exterior doors help maintain security throughout the building and keep unwanted visitors outside the school building.

Once more, the West Virginia and national data compare very favorably enforcing the conclusion that the West Virginia School Access Act (WVC§18-9F-1) and Fund

(WVC§18-9F-3) of 2007 has accomplished its goals related to safety procedures in West Virginia elementary schools.

Research Question #7: *What school violence prevention programs are present in West Virginia elementary schools?*

This study revealed that there are only three violence prevention programs that are frequently used by principals in West Virginia elementary schools. The *Bullying Prevention Program* (41%)*, Teasing and Bullying: Unacceptable Behavior Program* (34%*) and Conflict Managers* (17%) which all focused on conflict resolution based on bullying, teasing or peer mediation. Schools provided violence prevention programs that are relevant to the students they serve. These findings suggest that West Virginia has taken definitive steps to ensure the safety in West Virginia elementary schools. The study's findings supported the conclusion that the three most popular types of violence prevention programs bullying, teasing and peer mediation programs are the most used in West Virginia elementary schools. These types of programs reduce the negative behaviors that students might run into during the school day. With combined efforts and a school-wide approach, bullying and teasing can be reduced in elementary schools. Moreover, since violence prevention program research is sparse and mixed it should be left up to the principal and staff to determine what type of violence prevention program would best fit the needs of the students involved. Since some violence prevention programs work in some schools and not in others it is essential that principals experiment with a variety of violence prevention programs and find what "works" in their particular circumstances.

Nationally, in recognition of the problems associated with drugs and violence in schools and supported, in part, by national initiatives and federal laws, many districts have established programs to address these issues (Stefkvich & O'Brien, 1997). Recent research suggests that some of the most promising prevention strategies involve education and skills training - things schools are uniquely qualified to do, both because they have young people as a captive audience and because teachers know how to educate students. Furthermore, elementary students are likely to encounter acts of violence in the form of bullying, or verbal teasing and harassment (Johnson & Johnson, et al., 1994; Johnson & Johnson, et al., 1996, Metropolitan Life, 1994; Peterson, Pietrzak, & Speaker, 1998). Araki (1990) found that the highest occurrences of conflicts in elementary school concerned harassment in the form of verbal threats, bullying, and name calling. Concerns about school violence have been increasing, and, correspondingly, conflict resolution, peer mediation and bullying programs have been proliferating.

The West Virginia and national data on the presence of violence prevention programs compare very favorably. This similarity is largely because these violence prevention programs are developed from the national research and disseminated across the country, either commercially or by school-related organizations. It is no surprise that the most used prevention programs involve teasing and bullying strategies since these are the most frequently and universally occurring acts of aggression in our schools.

Research Question #8: *What are the perceptions of West Virginia elementary principals have regarding the effectiveness of the specific pieces of the school violence prevention programs they have in addressing school violence?*

The current study revealed that the *Second Step, Reach/Challenge, Teasing and Bullying: Unacceptable Behavior Program and Bullying Prevention Program* were perceived to be the most effective violence prevention programs in place in West Virginia elementary schools. These are teacher-led approaches to teasing and bullying behaviors. Bullying and teasing can be effectively reduced when there is little time for students to be unsupervised during the school day, when teachers and students clearly understand what are unacceptable behaviors, and where rules are consistently enforced. When there is a school-wide approach to bullying and teasing and not just punishment of the bully, then improvements in bullying and teasing will diminish.

Currently there are hundreds of violence prevention programs on the market for schools to choose which one best fits the needs of the students served. From the research, no particular program has been proven to be the most effective; however, programs that work with students in bullying, teasing and peer mediation are the most effective types of violence prevention programs according to principals in West Virginia.

Nationally, according to the United States Department of Education article, *Safeguarding Our Children: An Action Guide*, there are three main elements to effective violence prevention programs. One of these elements is schools must provide a school-wide program for all students. This means that schools must have promote positive discipline, academic success, mental and emotional support through a caring

environment. The second element of effective programs is schools must identify students that may be a potential candidate for severe academic or behavioral problems and create programs to address these issues. The third element of effective violence prevention programs is schools must identify the most severe cases of mental, emotional or behavioral difficulties with students and solicit help from outside agencies to help with the interventions. Moreover, in response to the National Education Goal number seven, "Every school in America will be free of drugs, violence and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning" (National Goals Panel, Sec. 102. National Education Goals ¶7), Congress passed the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Community Act (SDFSCA) of 1994 (Title IV, § 41114116, 20 U.S.C. 71117116), previously known as the Drug-Free Schools and Community Act of 1987. This provides support for drug and violence prevention programs (National Center for Education Statistics, 2000) and provides support for school and community-based programs to prevent youth violence and alcohol and other drug use. Title IV of the Improving Schools Act, which is part of the SDFSCA, provides for Federal assistance to support programs to meet Goal 7 of Goals 2000 by preventing violence in and around schools and by strengthening programs that prevent the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, involve parents, and are coordinated with related Federal, State, and community efforts and resources.

Evidence from the research suggests that a school wide approach is more effective in addressing teasing and bullying than a teacher-led program. Problems with following the curriculum for violence prevention programs may vary from classroom to classroom. Teachers that do not value the importance of having these types of programs

may not effectively teach the curriculum therefore negative behaviors do not improve. Norguera (1995) provided insight into the manner in which teachers handle situations in the classrooms and in the halls, the influence teachers assert when they handle situations, and how this plays an important role in the effectiveness and prevention of violence. The implication is that those teachers' attitudes and perceptions toward their students can lead to a situation in which violence is common. Perceptions made by teachers can greatly affect how they see themselves and others. Another area of concern is that interventions must begin at the elementary level in order to break the cycle of school violence during middle and high school years (Leff, Manz, Costigan, & Nabors, 2001). The majority of the violence preventions programs that were identified in the study are found in elementary schools but are rarely found in secondary schools. (Juvonen, 2001). Moreover, the interventions must begin at the elementary level in order to break the cycle of school violence during middle and high school years (Leff, Manz, Costigan, & Nabors, 2001).The most highly profiled cases of school violence have occurred in secondary schools; therefore, it is essential that secondary principals continue providing programs that address acts of violence.

The West Virginia and national data compare very favorably. Teasing and bullying prevention programs that are teacher-led are effective in West Virginia elementary schools. A reasonable conclusion would be that the Title IV of the Improving Schools Act (§ 41114116, 20 U.S.C. 71117116) of 1994 has accomplished its goals related to violence prevention programs in West Virginia Elementary Schools.

Research Question #9: *What do West Virginia elementary principals perceive as being*

unmet needs related to violence prevention programs designed to address school safety?

The current study revealed that principals unmet needs for violence prevention

programs are *Teasing and Bullying: Unacceptable Bullying Behavior, Bullying*

Prevention Program and *Responding to Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP)*. All three

of these programs are a teacher–led approach to bullying, teasing and peer mediation.

Teachers and staff are primarily responsible for implementing the programs which

increases efforts towards improving student relations and eliminates opportunities and

incentives for bullying behavior. These primary responsibilities of the teachers, staff and

students create a safe and positive learning environment. Even though principals perceive

that *Teasing and Bullying: Unacceptable Bullying Behavior, Bullying Prevention*

Programs and Responding to Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP) appear to be unmet

needs, principals may be making choices based on the availability of the program

materials and training costs and the ease of implementation. Most of the violence

prevention programs that were chosen as unmet needs have a very descriptive title;

therefore principals may be simply choosing the program by name verses knowing what

the curriculum is for the program. In addition, most of the violence prevention programs

must be used consistently and consecutively each year in order to see the gains in

improved behaviors. The programs are intended to be taught explicitly and systematically

with little variation from the curriculum. This can be an obstacle because of the time

constraints, lack of staff, and mobility of students affects the staff's ability to meet the

procedural safeguards contained within the programs curriculum.

Nationally, there is a plethora of violence prevention programs on the market for educators to choose the program that best fits the needs of their school. Since violence remains a significant issue for principals, teachers, students, and law enforcement officials it is imperative that principals learn what forms of violence take place in elementary schools. From this assessment, principals can evaluate the violence prevention plan that best fits the needs of their school environment.

Again the West Virginia and national data compare very favorably which affirms the conclusion that the Title IV of the Improving Schools Act (§ 41114116, 20 U.S.C. 71117116) of 1994 has accomplished its goals related to violence prevention programs in West Virginia Elementary Schools. However, the purchasing of the right kind of violence prevention program for a school, financial implications, and the implementation may contribute to the unmet needs of principals in addressing acts of violence.

Implications and Discussion

The security measures that were in place in 2007-2008 school year were reported by West Virginia elementary principals were similar to the responses of national elementary school principals responding to the *Indicators of School Crime and Safety* survey (2007). Visitor sign-ins were almost equally required by West Virginia elementary principals and national principals. Locked exterior doors were equally utilized to control access by West Virginia elementary principals as principals nationally. Uniforms in West Virginia elementary schools as principals reported were higher nationally than in West Virginia. Security cameras were more prevalent in West Virginia elementary schools than those nationally as reported by principals.

The West Virginia School Safety Audit had five different sections that principals would respond to the certain types of questions that were asked pertaining to *planning, communication, deterrence, delay* and *detection*. Evidence from the principals' responses on security hardware presence and effectiveness illustrated that *communication systems, detection, delay mechanisms* and *deterrence* were highlighted in the respondent's answers; however, the fifth component, *planning*, was not addressed. This meant that questions related to *planning* were not asked on the audit for security hardware. Furthermore, principals perceived unmet needs of security hardware were just the opposite. Principals perceived unmet needs were related to *deterrence, delay, detection* and *communication* were identified for each item. *Planning* was not addressed in this section of the audit. In essence, principal's needs are in the areas of *deterrence* and *planning*.

The results of this study indicate that safety procedures are a viable way according to principals to address or deter acts of violence from occurring in schools. Most items that are determined by the principal seem to be utilized on a regular basis. For instance, locked exterior doors, visitor sign-ins, lock-down drills, emergency communication procedures, numbering of doors and areas, locked windows, and identification cards worn by school officials are all implemented by the principal or staff, rated high on the effectiveness scale. Items that were driven by outside agencies and not controlled by the principal were rated as not as effective. Bomb searches, locker searches, Safe School Hotline and uniforms are either politically or financially determined.

The West Virginia School Safety Audit had five different sections that principals would respond to the certain types of questions that were asked pertaining to *deterrence,*

communication system, planning, and detection were highlighted in the current study's answers however the fifth component, *delay mechanisms* were not addressed. Evidence from the principals' responses on safety procedure presence and effectiveness illustrated that *deterrence, communication system, planning, and detection* were identified for each item. *Delay mechanisms* were not addressed in this section of the audit. In essence, principal's needs are in the areas of *detection* and *delay.*

Violence prevention programs fell into three distinct categories: bullying, teasing and peer mediation programs. Less than one-third of the principals responded that they have a violence prevention program in their school. Nationally, the concern for school violence is evident in the studies that have been done and the money that has been allocated to improve the safety of schools. Principals in West Virginia need to take a closer look into violence prevention programs and take a school-wide approach in order to keep violence from seeping into our elementary schools. As the National School Board Association stated (1998), school violence is not solely a school problem, but it is also a community problem, and all stakeholders share the responsibility of working together to ensure that all schools are safe environments in which our students are challenged to grow socially, emotionally, and academically.

Recommendations

Specifically West Virginia has taken definitive measures to ensure safety in West Virginia elementary schools. With the installation of security hardware, the utilization of safety procedures and violence prevention programs being implemented, West Virginia elementary schools are safer because of the continuous effort of principals, central office

staff, superintendents and the School Building Authority allocating money to each county office. It is imperative, however, that school leaders and those that provide resources remain vigilant and continue to seek improvements for the safety of our children.

The creation of the West Virginia Access Safety Act (WVC§18-9F-1) which includes numerous provisions to secure school facilities, reduce school violence and bullying and involve school principals in making their schools safer for their students and staff in West Virginia was a significant effort. Passage of this legislation provided a first step toward making our schools safer in West Virginia. In order for elementary schools to continue to be safe, upgrades need to be made periodically to the security hardware put into place that have been proven by principals as effective in addressing issues of school violence. These items are exterior door locks (85%), entrance buzzers (30.5%), electronic locks (18.6%), telephones in classrooms (26.9%) and uniforms (.6%) for students. The focus should be on security hardware that has been rated effective and has not been installed in the majority of elementary schools. The installation of entrance buzzers, electronic locks, telephones in classrooms and the requirement for students to wear uniforms would provide an environment that would address acts of violence from happening in schools.

Another facet in addressing acts of school violence would be to ensure that safety procedures are implemented and consistently practiced and utilized by staff and students. Safety procedures that principals perceive as effective in addressing issues of school violence are visitor sign-ins (92.2%), emergency communication procedures (89.9%), locked windows (83.2%), lock-down drills (74.3%), identification cards worn by school

officials (73.7%), and numbering of doors and areas (68.3%). These safety procedures cost very little, can be fully implemented in a short amount of time and provide safety and security for the staff and students in elementary schools.

In order to promote safety and security within the schools, principals must be cognizant of violence prevention programs that are on the market and best fits the needs of their students. Information from the *Principal Survey* indicated that the most effective programs according to principals were school-wide bullying, teasing and peer mediation programs. Principals need to research the various violence prevention programs however these are the programs that were most effective according to principals: Bullying Prevention Program (41.3%), Teasing and Bullying: Unacceptable Behavior Program (34.1%), Second Step program (9%) and the Reach/Challenge Program (1.2%). As illustrated by the data, most elementary school principals indicated that the programs that they thought were the most effective are in less than half the schools surveyed. In order to continue to maintain a safe school environment, money needs to be allocated to county school system to implement programs that will address acts of violence and teach students how to handle situations when faced with issues of violence in schools.

Suggestions to Elementary Principals

An elementary principal can secure the school environment immediately by reviewing the emergency communication procedures that are in place at the school and updating those on a yearly basis. As the staff, students, and emergency responders may change over time, everyone needs to make sure that they understand the procedures that have been put into place to provide a safe and secure environment. Staff development

should be provided to all members of the school to promote an understanding of the procedures and the importance of having these emergency communication procedures in place. The review of these emergency communication procedures does not take any money to implement and can be a life saving process if in fact an emergency occurs where people need to react quickly.

Once emergency communication procedures are communicated to the staff, students and emergency responders then the elementary principals need to make sure that the security hardware and violence prevention programs that are in place are being utilized as effectively as possible. If in fact, the security hardware needs to be upgraded or repaired or violence prevention programs need to be purchased or utilized effectively assistance for funding could be provided from business partners in the community or by other financial means. In order for business partners or other financial means to be given to elementary schools, communication to these providers is important in order to secure funding for these security measures. These providers need to understand the security measures that are already in place and what the principals can do to promote a safer environment with their help.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. A follow-up study should be replicated at a future date to determine how security hardware, safety procedures and violence prevention programs have changed.

2. Bullying and teasing are at the forefront of principals concerns; however there are very few elementary schools that have programs that address these issues. A

qualitative study could be designed to investigate why there is not more emphasis on violence prevention programs.

3. A qualitative study on the school counselor's role in violence prevention program delivery in elementary schools.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Cover Letter (Institutional Review Board Approval)

Appendix B: Institutional Review Board

Appendix C: Principal Survey: Violence Prevention in West Virginia Elementary School (Paper Version)

Appendix D: Letter of Consent

Appendix E: Cover Letter

Appendix F: Table 11: Rank Order of Security Hardware, Safety Procedures and Violence Prevention Programs

Appendix G: Table 12: Rank Order of Effectiveness of Security Hardware, Safety Procedures and Violence Prevention Programs

Appendix H: Table 13: Rank Order of Unmet Needs of Security Hardware, Safety Procedures and Violence Prevention Programs

APPENDIX A: COVER LETTER

November 11, 2008

Dear Principal,

       Please accept this invitation to participate in an important research study. This research study will analyze the school security hardware, safety procedures and violence prevention programs in preventing or reducing violent acts from occurring.

       Your participation is vital to the success of this research study and is entirely voluntary. If you do not wish to participate, simply discard the questionnaire. You have a right not to respond to every question. You have the right to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. All individual responses will be kept anonymous. Completing and returning the questionnaire constitutes your consent to participate.

       Please complete the front and back of this survey which should take approximately 15 minutes. The completed survey can be returned using the self-addressed stamped envelope that I have provided.

       Keep this letter for your records. If you have any questions regarding this research, feel free to contact Dr. Mike Cunningham in the Leadership Studies Program at Marshall University by calling 800.642.9842 ext. 1912 or by emailing to mcunningham@marshall.edu, or Kristal Filipek at 304.384.7441 or kfilipek@access.k12.wv.us.

       If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the Office of Research Integrity at Marshall University at 304.696.7320. Thank you again for your participation.

       Sincerely,

       Kristal Filipek

MU IRB
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APPROVED

IRB APPROVAL EXPIRES
NOV 19 2009

APPENDIX B: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

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Office of Research Integrity
Institutional Review Board

Thursday, November 20, 2008

Michael Cunningham, Ed.D.
Leadership Studies
MU Grad. School

RE: IRB Study # EX09-0040   At: Marshall IRB 2

Dear Dr. Cunningham:

Protocol Title:
The Status of Violence Prevention in West Virginia Elementary Schools: A Case Study

Expiration Date:	11/19/2009	
Our Internal #:	5412	
Type of Change:	(Other)	Exempted
Expedited ?:	☐	
Date of Change:	11/21/2008	
Date Received:	11/21/2008	
On Meeting Date:		

Description: In accordance with 45CFR46.101(b)(2), the above study and informed consent were granted Exempted approval today by the Marshall University IRB#2 for the period of 12 months. The approval will expire 11/19/09. A continuing review request for this study must be submitted no later than 30 days prior to the expiration date. This study is for student Kristal Filipek.

The purpose of this anonymous survey study is to determine if the specific school security hardware, safety procedures and violence prevention programs are perceived by principals as effective in addressing school safety in West Virginia elementary schools.

Respectfully yours,

Christopher W. LeGrow, Ph.D.
Marshall University IRB #2 Vice Chair

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127

APPENDIX C: PRINCIPAL SURVEY: VIOLENCE PREVENTION IN WEST

VIRGINIA ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

PRINCIPAL SURVEY: VIOLENCE PREVENTION IN WEST VIRGINIA ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Your response if very important in creating a profile of the implementation and utilization of security measures in West Virginia elementary schools. Please respond to each survey item by marking the measure which represents your school.

Security Hardware

1. During the 2007-2008 school year, which of the following <u>security hardware</u> were present in your school, how effective was it, how essential was it and how essential would it be to have, to address school violence? Please mark all that apply.

Hardware	**Present** (If you answer <u>no</u> skip to last column) (If you answer <u>yes</u> go to column *B* and *C* and <u>skip D</u>) **A**	**Effective** 1 = least effective 10 = highly effective *(Circle One)* **B**	**Essential** 1= least essential 10= highly essential *(Circle One)* **C**	*How essential would it have been to have?* 1= least essential 10= highly essential *(Circle One)* **D**
a. Security Camera (No video recording)	☐ Yes ☐No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Hardware	Present (If you answer *no* skip to last column) (If you answer *yes* go to column *B* and *C* and *skip D*) A	Effective 1 = least effective 10 = highly effective *(Circle One)* B	Essential 1= least essential 10= highly essential *(Circle One)* C	*How essential would it have been to have?* 1= least essential 10= highly essential *(Circle One)* D
b. Metal Detector	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
c. Telephone in Classroom	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
d. Electronic Locks	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
e. Entrance Buzzers	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
f. Lighting Upgrade for Facility	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
g. Surveillance Video (Video Recording)	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
h. Alarm System	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Hardware	Present (If you answer *no* skip to last column) (If you answer *yes* go to column *B* and *C* and *skip D*) **A**	Effective 1 = least effective 10 = highly effective *(Circle One)* **B**	Essential 1= least essential 10= highly essential *(Circle One)* **C**	*How essential would it have been to have?* 1= least essential 10= highly essential *(Circle One)* **D**
i. Intercom in Classroom	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
j. Concrete Barriers	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
k. Convex Mirror	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
l. 2-Way Hand-Held Communication	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Safety Procedures

2. During the 2007-2008 school year, which of the following safety procedures were in place in your school, how effective they are, how essential are they and how essential would it be to have, to address school violence. Please mark all that apply.

Procedure	Present (If you answer _no_ skip to last column) (If you answer _yes_ go to column _B_ and _C_ and _skip D_) **A**	Effective 1 = least effective 10 = highly effective *(Circle One)* **B**	Essential 1= least essential 10= highly essential *(Circle One)* **C**	*How essential would it have been to have?* 1= least essential 10= highly essential *(Circle One)* **D**
a. Locker Searches	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
b. Locked Windows	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
c. Locked Exterior Doors	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
d. Bomb Searches	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
e. Safe School Hotline	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Procedure	Present (If you answer _no_ skip to column _D_) (If you answer _yes_ go to column _B_ and _C_ and _skip D_) **A**	Effective 1 = least effective 10 = highly effective *(Circle One)* **B**	Essential 1= least essential 10= highly essential *(Circle One)* **C**	*How essential would it have been to have?* 1= least essential 10= highly essential *(Circle One)* **D**
f. Uniforms	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
g. Identification Cards worn by School Officials	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
h. Emergency Communication Procedures	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
i. Visitor Sign-in	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
j. Lock-Down Drills	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
k. Numbering of Doors and Areas	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
l. Hall Passes for Students	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. ***Violence Prevention Programs*** During the 2007-2008 school year, which of the following <u>violence prevention programs</u> that were present in your school, how effective is it, how essential is it and how essential would it be to have, to address school violence. Please mark all that apply.

Program Title	**Present** **(If you answer _no_ skip to column _D_)** **(If you answer _yes_ go to column _B_ and _C_ and _skip D_)** **A**	**Effective** **1 = least effective** **10 = highly effective** *(Circle One)* **B**	**Essential** **1= least essential** **10= highly essential** *(Circle One)* **C**	*How essential would it have been to have?* **1= least essential** **10= highly essential** *(Circle One)* **D**
a. Second Step Program	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
b. Peacebuilders	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
c. Reach/Challenge	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
d. Smart Team	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
e. Conflict Managers	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
f. Teasing and Bullying	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Program Title	Present (If you answer _no_ skip to column _D_) (If you answer _yes_ go to column _B_ and _C and skip D_) **A**	Effective 1 = least effective 10 = highly effective _(Circle One)_ **B**	Essential 1= least essential 10= highly essential _(Circle One)_ **C**	_How essential would it have been to have?_ 1= least essential 10= highly essential _(Circle One)_ **D**
g. Get Real About Violence	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
h. Teaching Students to be Peacebuilders	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
i. Resolving Conflict Creatively (RCCP)	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
j. Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways (RIPP)	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
k. Peacemakers	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
l. Bullying Prevention	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
m. BeCool	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Program Title	Present (If you answer *no* skip to column *D*) (If you answer *yes* go to column *B* and *C and skip D*) **A**	Effective 1 = least effective 10 = highly effective *(Circle One)* **B**	Essential 1= least essential 10= highly essential *(Circle One)* **C**	*How essential would it have been to have?* 1= least essential 10= highly essential *(Circle One)* **D**
n. Motivational Magic	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
o. QUIT IT!	☐ Yes ☐ No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. What is the approximate size of your student population? _____

5. During the 2007-2008 school year, what was the percentage of students in your school who qualified for free or reduced lunch? _____

6. What grade levels are housed at your school? _____

7. How many total years have you been a principal? _____

8. How many years have you been a principal at this school? _____

9. What is the total number of years you have been in education? _____

Thank you for your thoughtful response to this survey!

APPENDIX D: LETTER OF CONSENT

Letter of Consent: Participants

Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study of Violence Prevention in West Virginia Elementary Schools. You were chosen for this research study because you are a principal in a West Virginia Elementary School. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be part of this research study.

The research study is being conducted by a researcher, Kristal Pentasuglia- Filipek, who is a doctoral student at Marshall University.

Background Information:
 The purpose of this research study is to determine what security measures are in place, if they are perceived effective by principals in addressing school violence, and what are the principals perceived unmet needs in security measures addressing school violence.

Procedure:
If you agree to be in this research study, you will be asked to:

- Read the cover letter
- Answer the questions relating to security measures at your school for the 2007-2008 school year
- Answer the demographic questions

Voluntary Nature of the Research Study:
Your participation in this study is voluntary. This means that everyone will respect your decision if whether or not you want to participate in this study.

Risks and benefits of being in the Research Study:
The information will be anonymous and confidential. No names will be used during or after the study is completed. I will maintain confidentiality at all times to keep risks at a minimum level. The benefits of this study could help principals, superintendents, and legislators determine what security measures are most beneficial in elementary schools and how to provide for such measures.

Confidentiality:
Any information you provide will be kept anonymous. The researcher will not use your information for any purposes outside the research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in any reports of the study.

Contacts and Questions:
The researchers name is Kristal Pentasuglia-Filipek. My dissertation chair is Dr. Michael Cunningham. If you have questions, you may contact me via 304-384-7441 or by email at kfilipek@access.k12.wv.us or Dr. Cunningham's email address is mcunningham@marshall.edu.

APPENDIX E: COVER LETTER

November 21, 2008

Dear Principal,

Please accept this invitation to participate in an important research study. This research study will analyze the school security hardware, safety procedures and violence prevention programs in preventing or reducing violent acts from occurring.

Your participation is vital to the success of this research study and is entirely voluntary. If you do not wish to participate, simply discard the questionnaire. You have a right not to respond to every question. You have the right to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. All individual responses will be kept anonymous. Completing and returning the questionnaire constitutes your consent to participate.

Please complete the survey which should take approximately 15 minutes. Please click on the following link to access this research study.

 http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=zI96WdfNtZpUFPmwE3kTlw_3d_3d.

Keep this letter for your records. If you have any questions regarding this research, feel free to contact Dr. Mike Cunningham in the Leadership Studies Program at Marshall University by calling 800.642.9842 ext. 1912 or by emailing to mcunningham@marshall.edu, or Kristal Filipek at 304.384.7441 or kfilipek@access.k12.wv.us. If you gave questions regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact the Office of Research Integrity at Marshall University at 304.696.7320. Thank you again for your participation.

Sincerely,

Kristal Filipek

APPENDIX F: RANK ORDER OF PRESENCE OF SECURITY HARDWARE, SAFETY PROCEDURES AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Table 11

Rank Order of Presence of Security Hardware, Safety Procedures and Violence Prevention Programs

Item	Rank	%
Visitor Sign-ins	1	99
Emergency Communication Procedures	2	97
Intercoms	3	91
Exterior Door Locks	4	92
Locked Windows	5	90
Lock-Down Drills	6	81
2-Way Hand-Held Communication	7	79
Identification Cards worn by School Officials	8	80
Numbering of Doors and Areas	9	74
Safe School Hotline	10	68
Alarm System	11	58
Security Camera	12	49
Bullying Prevention Program	13	45
Surveillance Video	14	37
Teasing and Bullying	15	37
Hall Passes	16	36
Entrance Buzzers	17	33
Telephone in Classrooms	18	29
Lighting Upgrade	19	23
Electronic Locks	20	20
Conflict Managers	21	18
Metal Detectors	22	11
Locker Searches	23	10
Second Step	24	9
Get Real	25	9
Convex Mirrors	26	6
Bomb Searches	27	5
BECOOL	28	4
Concrete Barriers	29	3
Peacemakers	30	2
Responding in Positive Peaceful Ways	31	1
Motivational Magic	32	1
Peacebuilders	33	1
Reach/Challenge	34	1
QUIT IT	35	<1
Resolving Conflict Creatively Program	36	<1
Smart Team	37	<1
Uniforms	38	<1

APPENDIX G: RANK ORDER OF EFFECTIVENESS OF SECURITY HARDWARE, SAFETY PROCEDURES AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Table 12

Rank Order of Effectiveness of Security Hardware, Safety Procedures and Violence Prevention Programs

Item	Rank	M
Exterior Door Locks	1	8.24
Entrance Buzzers	2	8.16
Electronic Locks	3	8.16
Visitor Sign-ins	4	7.95
Lock-Down Drills	5	7.89
Telephone in Classrooms	6	7.83
Uniforms	7	7.75
Emergency Communication Procedures	8	7.75
Second Step	9	7.62
Reach/Challenge	10	7.50
Teasing and Bullying	11	7.41
Bullying Prevention Program	12	7.34
BECOOL	13	7.33
Numbering of Doors and Areas	14	7.18
Surveillance Video	15	7.09
2-Way Hand-Held Communication	16	7.01
Responding in Peaceful Positive Ways	17	7.00
Locked Windows	18	6.94
Lighting Upgrade	19	6.81
Identification Cards worn by School Officials	20	6.75
Peacemakers	21	6.67
Get Real	22	6.62
Security Camera	23	6.56
Conflict Managers	24	6.55
Bomb Searches	25	6.50
Hall Passes	26	6.38
Alarm System	27	6.15
Locker Searches	28	6.07
Concrete Barriers	29	5.25
Motivational Magic	30	5.00
Peacebuilders	31	5.00
Safe School Hotline	32	4.97
Convex Mirrors	33	3.78
QUIT IT	34	3.50
Metal Detectors	35	3.11
Uniforms	36	1.00
Smart Team	37	0
Resolving Conflict Creatively Program	38	0

APPENDIX H: RANK ORDER OF UNMET NEEDS FOR SECURITY HARDWARE, SAFETY PROCEDURES AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Table 13

Rank Order of Essential Unmet Need in Security Hardware, Safety Procedures and Violence Prevention Programs

Item	Rank	M
Intercom System	1	8.80
2-Way Hand-Held Communication	2	7.16
Exterior Door Locks	3	7.08
Electronic Locks	4	6.61
Entrance Buzzers	5	6.61
Surveillance Video	6	6.38
Emergency Communication Procedures	7	6.20
Numbering of Doors and Areas	8	6.00
Lock-Down Drills	9	5.69
Alarm System	10	5.52
Telephone in Classrooms	11	5.49
Identification Cards worn by School Officials	12	5.42
Teasing and Bullying	13	5.17
Bullying Prevention Program	14	5.00
Lighting Upgrade	15	4.93
Security Camera	16	4.91
Safe School Hotline	17	4.68
Locked Windows	18	4.64
Resolving Conflict Creatively Program	19	4.09
Responding in Peaceful Positive Ways	20	4.08
Peacemakers	21	3.97
Get Real	22	3.89
Conflict Managers	23	3.80
BECOOL	24	3.66
Motivational Magic	25	3.66
QUIT IT	26	3.52
Smart Team	27	3.30
Peacebuilders	28	3.30
Bomb Searches	29	3.24
Second Step	30	3.24
Hall Passes	31	3.18
Reach/Challenge	32	3.18
Convex Mirrors	33	3.13
Uniforms	34	3.09
Visitor Sign-ins	35	3.00
Concrete Barriers	36	2.89
Metal Detectors	37	2.49
Locker Searches	38	2.37

CURRICULUM VITAE

KRISTAL PENTASUGLIA-FILIPEK
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Education

Marshall University Graduate College, South Charleston, WV
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership, 2009

Marshall University Graduate College, South Charleston, WV
Master of Arts in Reading Education, 2003

Salem International University, Salem, WV
Certificate in Educational Administration, 2003

Concord University, Athens, WV
Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education, 2000

Princeton Senior High School, Princeton, WV, 1990

Experience

2005 – Present	Principal, Sun Valley Elementary School, Lerona, WV
2004-2005	Dean of Students, Athens School Athens, WV Lashmeet/Matoaka School, Lashmeet, WV
2003-2004	Science Teacher, Bluefield Middle School, Bluefield, WV
2002-2003	5th Grade Teacher, Spanishburg School, Spanishburg, WV
2001-2002	3rd Grade Teacher, Mercer Elementary, Princeton, WV
2000-2001	Substitute Teacher at Various Locations