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It has been said that those who do not remember the past are doomed to repeat it. This may be no truer than when one examines the history of school violence and disturbance in K-12 American schools. The following chapters examine various historical aspects of this issue to offer area for further consideration as preventive measures are sought.

The first chapter is, “A Brief History of School Violence in America”, Drs. Sheri Jenkins Keenan and Jeffrey P. Rush.

George Santayana said, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” The first chapter of this work gives an overview of many historical issues when it comes to examining K-12 school violence in the United States. The intent of the authors is to help readers understand school violence from an historical context in hopes that a better understanding of what has happened will help inform attempts at reducing school violence in the future.


The authors of this chapter discuss the fact that over the course of time America has experienced a dramatic shift in the protection and security of its school systems. With the increasing media coverage of school violence the general public has responded with a demand and a push for a safer educational environment for K-12 children. In this chapter the authors address the movement from very limited school security through full time armed police officers responsible for the school campus. The chapter ends with a detailed focus on policy response to school shootings and covers a wide range of police and school response.

The final chapter in this section is, “The Historical Impact of Mass Incarceration and Social Issues of Institutionalization on School Violence in Youths”, by Mr. Stephen C. Stanko and Dr. Gordon A. Crews.

In this chapter the authors examine the impact that mass incarceration has had upon children in the United States over the last several decades. Inherent in this examination is to discuss the impact of institutionalization on the propensity of committing violent acts by children. The authors also discuss the impact of these American phenomena on many aspects of juvenile delinquency and violence.

There are myriad perspectives on the current issues facing all aspects of K-12 Education in the United States. The following two chapters attempt to expose the reader to many of these topics and to offer new perspectives on how they should be addressed in American Education.

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In this chapter the authors discuss how school shootings have redefined perceptions and definitions of school violence in America thereby elevating incidences of misbehaviors and rule infractions to being seen as consistent violent threats. They argue that even though school shootings are rare this important fact is often lost in the debate and political rhetoric which occurs after any major tragic event. Moreover, what is also atypical are school shootings involving minority students and even more uncommon school shootings at minority schools. However, they point out, minority students have disproportionately experienced the latent effects of these policies. Also, few studies have offered systematic theoretical explanations for racial disciplinary disproportionality in such situations. The authors outline a theoretical argument using the “focal concerns” perspective to link the latent impact of the politicization of school shootings to continued racial disproportionality in school discipline. The discussion and analysis attempts to show what role the politicization of school shootings has played in redefining and expanding the definition of school violence or school misbehaviors. They end by offering suggestions for changes based in socio-political and psychological frameworks.


The authors define Cyberbullying as the use of information technology to deliberately hurt, taunt, threaten or intimidate someone. As they state, currently there are no federal statutes in the United States which directly address this problem. The response of the states has varied from attempting to use existing anti-bullying laws to limit cyberbullying to passing new laws that specifically target cyberbullying behavior. Thus, the authors pose an important question, “why are some states taking a lead in combating this cybercrime through new laws while others are relying on existing laws?” The authors argue that the literature on policy adoption suggests politics, resources and public need are important factors in predicting why certain states are more likely to enact government policies. The focus of this chapter is to analyze the impact of these factors and other on policy adoption by exploring the level of legislative action to update existing cyberbullying laws for 2007 through 2014.

It is common knowledge that there have been cliques and sets in American schools since their invention. The following chapters examines school violence and disturbance from the perspective of examining various types of offenders and groups.

The first chapter in Section 3 is, “The Characteristics and Typologies of School Violence Perpetrators”, by Dr. Patricia Goforth.

In this chapter the author argues that incidents of school related shootings have been intensely studied, particularly since the Columbine shooting on April 20, 1999, with the goal of creating a profile of school shooter. Although, in light of the intense media frenzy created by school shootings and the shooters information as to cause and motivations of these events have not been accurately conveyed. The author argues that what is known thus far is violent video games as a cause of school shootings is a myth. Moreover, despite the fear of a school shooting, these are statistically rare events with perpetrators rarely surviving the attacks. The author focuses on the fact that most studies are based on a limited number of perpetrators, but that common psychological characteristics have been linked to those that have committed these acts.

The next chapter is, “Analyzing the Impact of LGBTQ Lifestyles Amongst School-Aged Youth in America”, by Dr. Erica Hutton.

In this chapter the author seeks to address and explicate the various dynamics associated to the alternative belief systems and lifestyles of youth in grades K-12. Youth that embrace an alternative lifestyle...
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populate American public school systems more than ever and likewise, there is an influx of mixed feelings and ostracism directly affecting the youth of America adversely. Therefore, the author offers, these types of behaviors warrant additional attention in comprehensively addressing the demeanor, dynamic, and outreach services that may be rather advantageous in addressing such measures.

The final chapter in this section is, “Sometimes They Come Back: Examining the Threat of Associated and Non-Associated and/or Mentally Ill School Violence Perpetrators”, by Dr. Gordon A. Crews.

In this chapter it is argued that school violence and its potential in K-12 schools cannot be dealt with by simply removing the troublesome/problematic students from classrooms and/or school grounds. The expelling, suspending, incarcerating, or placing of a juvenile in an alternative school setting may only increase their anger against their former school and teachers. An anger which may continue to grow throughout their lives. Moreover, there is a growing trend of students who have failed to achieve in life returning to their former school and committing acts of violence. The author focuses on two types of these perpetrators. First, associated and/or mentally Ill perpetrators who target a school of which they have negative past or current involvement, and, second, non-associated and/or mentally ill perpetrators who target a school of which they had no direct past or current involvement but instead see the school as a “symbol of innocence” or something missing in their lives.

Unfortunately, the term “Zero tolerance” has been a political buzzword for the last several decades that it has more meaning in the minds of academicians and politicians than it does in day-to-day practice by school administrators. In general, across the United States, most have consistently tried to establish firm, fair, and consistent discipline policies. And, such policies applied through a common sense base. The problem becomes when example after example occurs where these polices are being applied in an unrealistic manner or one which gives the impression of selective enforcement against certain students. The follow chapters examine this issue from many different perspectives to offer a very strong overview for the reader.

The first chapter in Section 4 is, “Impact of Zero Tolerance Policies on American K-12 Education and Alternative School Models”, by Dr. Margaret Tseng, and Mr. Corey Alexander Becker.

In this chapter the authors argue that despite the original intent of zero tolerance policies in schools (to ensure guns and other dangerous weapons were kept out of schools), these policies have instead grown to encompass an endless variety of minor infractions that would, in previous generations, not necessarily result in the immediate removal of the student from the classroom. Zero tolerance policies do not proportionately discipline students and, instead, treats every child and situation the same. Further, the authors examine studies which confirm that as suspension, expulsion, and school-based arrests have increased since the mid-1990’s, the majority of students being suspended, expelled, or arrested are predominately minority students. The goal of this chapter is to examine the application of zero tolerance policy in K-12 public schools and offer administrators and educators alternative school discipline models.

The next chapter is, “Racial Disproportionalities in Discipline: The Role of Zero Tolerance Policies”, by Dr. F. Chris Curran.

The author begins with a discussion of how student safety represents an important goal for schools; however, policies designed to facilitate school safety may have unintended negative consequences. Zero tolerance policies, those that mandate severe punitive measures, have been widely implemented by school leaders over the last several decades; however, recent research suggests that such policies may contribute to racial disparities in the use of discipline. The author reviews the history of zero tolerance policies in schools and, through descriptive analysis of data from the Civil Rights Data Collection of 2011-2012,
documents racial disparities in the use of expulsions. The findings of the author suggest that while zero
tolerance policies may contribute to such disparities, the racial disparities are more pronounced for non-
zero tolerance expulsions. Implications for policy and practice are discussed.

The final chapter in this section is, “Stolen Voices: Freirean and Foucauldian Critical Perspective on
School Violence”, by Dr. Icarbord Tshabangu.

In this chapter, the author posits a view that while adults’ freedom and liberty is much talked about
and advanced in almost every sphere of life, particularly in America, freedom and social justice for the
young has lagged behind especially in schools. Violence within schools continues to manifest in vari-
ous forms. The author explores some critical theoretical perspectives to shed light on the depth of the
crisis through the lens of the child and those advocating children’s rights as embodied in the universal
laws of social justice and also expressed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child,
Article 19 (Protection from all forms of violence), where children are seen as having distinct set of rights
and not mere objects of care and charity. The author argues that the United States domestic law allows
corporal punishment in the home and also by extension to willing districts and schools, through the
‘loco parentis’ rule, where teachers act in place of parents. Based on a broader notion and meanings of
violence, critical theoretical narratives from Freire, Dahl, Foucault, Weber, Michels among others have
been used to establish a deeper understanding. It is noted by the author that despite empirical evidence
to the contrary, violent means of managing students’ behavior continue to be practiced as a panacea to
earnest effect the nation’s liberal democratic ideals with violence suffered in schools by some children
particularly in those states and districts where corporal punishment is legitimate.

As with the number of possible “causes” of school violence, there are a million different views on
possible solutions. The following section examines four different areas of potential solutions to the
problem of school violence and disruption in American K-12 schools.

The first chapter in Section 5 is, “Plausible Solutions to School Violence and Disturbance in America”,
by Dr. Peter A. Barone.

In this chapter the author discusses the overall reduction of crime in America, but the rise of violence
in schools across America to include activities from bullying to school shootings. He also provides a
definition of school violence along with the most common reasons why bullying occurs. The importance
of warning signs is addressed and the significance of having key individuals such as teachers, coaches,
counselors, SRO’s, parents and family members trained in recognizing these signs. It is argued that this
is necessary so that some type of orchestrated intervention can be applied to the situation and the children
being bullied and those performing the bullying can be addressed. The fact of why many children do
not report being bullied or ask for help and how it is connected to the issues of power was provided and
information regarding teachers who would rather ignore bullying in their classrooms than to address it
and be in a confrontational situation was examined. The author focuses on four prominent theories which
relate directly to learned behavior and violence, such as social learning theory, differential association,
rational choice theory and violentization are discussed. It is argued that these are the foundation for rec-
ognizing, understanding and effectively dealing with bullying and school violence for school officials,
parents and SRO’s.

The next chapter is, “Law Enforcement Response to School Violence”, by Drs. Roger Neal McIntyre,
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The authors argue that school violence has quickly risen to be one of the most pressing concerns for educational systems in the United States. The goal of this chapter is to discuss some of the various forms of violence and aggression commonly found within educational institutions. The authors discuss how there are two primary forms of violence frequently encountered within schools: interpersonal and institutional violence. The common response to these issues along with recent policy initiatives designed to reduce the perpetration of violence on school grounds is examined as well as the unintentional reactions that these policies and practices may create, namely the replication of further acts of aggression. The chapter concludes with some suggestions as to how school systems and law enforcement organizations can be better prepared to reduce and respond to acts of violence on school property.

The third chapter in this section is, “The RSVP Model: Lifting the Veil on School Violence”, by Dr. Jayne M. Leh.

In this chapter, the author examines the theoretical underpinnings of the Response to School Vulnerability Plan (RSVP) project model which are grounded in the trauma and school violence research literature and to also offer a 3-phase comprehensive plan to address school violence. Findings suggest the need for a model that is strategic and comprehensive in scope; yet basic in terms of interlocking phases (Preparation, Response, and Long-Term Recovery) with each phase articulating critical and practical components supported in the research. Phase I is characterized by school-wide screening to identify deficiencies and provide support in socio-emotional skills, protective factors toward resiliency, and emotional and psychological wellness to prepare for and prevent violence. Phase II addresses the logistics of emergency response efforts, and Phase III addresses long-term recovery through uniquely tailored research-based interventions and continued implementation of the Phase I components. The chapter also offers additional recommendations include (1) daily classroom reflective discussions to foster skills that build resilience, (2) uniquely tailored intervention strategies following a 3-tier response framework, (3) ongoing progress monitoring, data-driven decision-making, and data sharing among service providers (4) trainings to avoid over-identification, (5) promoting strong interconnectedness among community, school and home.

The final chapter in this section is, “A Second Chance Delinquency Prevention among Special Education Students”, by Dr. Christine S. Barrow.

The author offers a qualitative analysis of special education youth who attended school at a recreation center in Brooklyn NY to help provide an understanding of the relationship between alternative high school education and offending. The author argues that interventions that aim to improve school engagement may promote positive youth development, including reducing involvement in problem behaviors. This study focuses on youth who were at risk for offending due to poor academic performance and previous delinquent involvement. Prior to attending school at this facility, the individuals were previously exposed to an environment that put them at risk for delinquency. Through this discussion, the author provides support for preventative measures to youth conflict and delinquency by placing them in an environment that promotes pro-social behavior.