DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 316 146 HE 023 259

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TITLE	The Classroom Management & Discipline Program.
INSTITUTION	American Association of State Colleges and Universities, Washington, D.C.; Southwest Texas State Univ., San Marcos. School of Education.
SPONS AGENCY	Texas Governor's Office, Austin. Criminal Justice Div.
PUB DATE	90
GRANT	JA-88-E01-2402
NOTE	10p.; This report is one of a group gathered by the AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project, funded by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities in collaboration with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education. For related documents see HE 023 199-261.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Classroom Techniques; *Delinquency Prevention; Demonstration Programs; *Discipline; Dropout Prevention; Drug Use; Higher Education; Models; Program Descriptions; School Community Relationship; *School Districts; School Safety; State Programs; State Universities; Summer Programs; *Suspension; Team Training; Truancy
IDENTIFIERS	*AASCU ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project; Classroom Management and Discipline Program; *Southwest Texas State University

ABSTRACT

The Classroom Management and Discipline Program, initiated to assist Texas school districts in improving school discipline and dropout prevention, is a statewide university/school/community partnership. Program goals are to: provide training and technical assistance to help districts maintain and improve discipline; reduce dropout rates, school disruptions, truancy, drug use, and school crime; develop alternatives to school suspensions; and implement programs that enhance the overall learning environment, provide leadership and resources for improved school discipline and academic achievement, and facilitate university/school/community networking. During the summer the program sponsors four intensive, week-long training courses for school teams from either a school district or single campus. The training is action-oriented, with each team developing a plan to improve school discipline or provide alternatives to out-of-school removal. The training's focus is on effective classroom management techniques and strategies to reduce disciplinary problems. Followup technical assistance is available to districts that send teams for training. (Author/MSE)

ED316146

THE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT & DISCIPLINE PROGRAM

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Funded by the Criminal Justice Division,
Office of the Governor: Grant #JA-88-E01-2402
Ongoing since May 1, 1983

HE023 259

AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory is a two-year project seeking to establish and test a model system for collecting and disseminating information on model programs at AASCU-member institutions--375 of the public four-year colleges and universities in the United States.

The four objectives of the project are:

- To increase the information on model programs available to all institutions through the ERIC system
- To encourage the use of the ERIC system by AASCU institutions
- To improve AASCU's ability to know about, and share information on, activities at member institutions, and
- To test a model for collaboration with ERIC that other national organizations might adopt.

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project is funded with a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, in collaboration with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education at The George Washington University.

ABSTRACT

Numerous studies indicate that discipline problems are common in the schools and tend to escalate if not resolved. The Classroom Management and Discipline Program was initiated to assist Texas school districts in improving school discipline. The program is a statewide university-school-community partnership funded by the Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division, and operated by Southwest Texas State University. Because children who have trouble at school so often encounter trouble with the law, criminal justice money is being invested in the schools as an innovative delinquency prevention program.

Program goals are to provide training and technical assistance to help school districts maintain and improve school discipline; to reduce drop-out rates, school disruptions, truancy, drug usage, and school crime; to develop alternatives to school suspensions; and to implement programs that enhance the overall learning environment, provide leadership and resources for improved school discipline and academic achievement, and facilitate university-school-community networking.

During the summer the Classroom Management and Discipline Program sponsors four highly intensive week-long training courses for school teams from either a school district or single campus. The training is action-oriented, with each team developing a plan to improve school discipline or provide alternatives to out-of-school removal. The focus of this training is on effective classroom management techniques and strategies to reduce school disciplinary problems. Follow-up technical assistance is available to school districts which send teams for training.

INTRODUCTION

Lack of discipline in the classroom disrupts learning. Furthermore, a connection exists between children with trouble at school and those in trouble with the law. In an effort to help school districts build positive environments that prevent disruptive and delinquent behaviors, the Criminal Justice Division of the Governor's Office initiated the Classroom Management and Discipline Program to promote effective classroom discipline as a prerequisite to both academic achievement and the development of good citizenship.

Part of the prestigious Lyndon B. Johnson Institute for the Improvement of Teaching and Learning, this university/school/community partnership helps schools prevent problems such as misbehavior, truancy, drug and alcohol abuse, and juvenile delinquency. By encouraging networking between the juvenile justice and school systems, the program emphasizes taking positive steps to prevent disciplinary infractions from escalating into more serious problems and to reduce the number of school drop-outs.

BACKGROUND

Established in 1983, the Classroom Management and Discipline Program addresses many problems clearly identified by research, including the following:

* **Discipline is a common problem** (Gallup, National Education Association, National Association of Secondary School Principals, yearly studies).

* **There is a high correlation between juvenile problems in school and later problems encountered with the law** (Wolfgang, 1972; Elliot and Voss, 1974; Jensen, 1976; Gold, 1978; Gottfredson, 1983; Wayson, 1985).

* **School factors play a direct role in school crime and violence** (Berger, 1974; McPortland and McDill, 1977; Reed, 1981).

* **School experiences are related to delinquent behavior** (Hirschi, 1969; Polk and Schafer, 1972; Linden, 1974; Jensen, 1976; Goffredson and Daigler, 1979).

* **Experience of academic failure or success in school is an independent predictor of delinquency that transcends social class or ethnicity** (Call, 1965; Jensen, 1976; Kelly, 1977; Gold, 1978).

* **If commitment to school is low, problems such as delinquency, truancy, and dropping out are likely** (Hirschi, 1969; Sakumoto, 1978; Gaddy and Kelly, 1984).

* **More than 50 percent of male drop-outs leave school because of school-related reasons** (Morgan, 1984).

* **Alternative education programs and in-school suspension centers are preferable to out-of-school placement** (McClung, 1975; Arnove and Strout, 1978; Ingas and Crosini, 1979; Stallworth and Frechtling, 1983).

Additionally, criminal justice studies reveal that 85 percent of the population within both the adult and juvenile correctional facilities in Texas were either school drop-outs or had achieved academically at less than the ninth grade level.

DESCRIPTION

Focus

At present, the national focus on education is on excellence, but the focus is beginning to shift, out of necessity, toward discipline, and discipline related issues such as dropping out of school and student drug use. None of the recommendations directed toward achievement can be realized unless discipline policies are instituted and upheld. If we are going to expect the best from our students and our schools, a positive school climate is essential. Good discipline, based on many and varied strategies, and involving the entire school community, is a prerequisite to academic achievement.

A variety of Classroom Management and Discipline Program services is available at NO COST to school districts or community agencies. They include:

* regional training and in-service arranged by request;
* consultation services that focus on specific local needs;
* technical assistance for the development and implementation of disciplinary programs and approaches;
* summer training courses for school teams from throughout Texas;
* modular texts developed for use in this program and for practical reference;
* a resource directory of programs, organizations, and individuals which provides assistance to teachers, school districts, and youth service workers; and
* specialized publications on timely issues.

The program's action-oriented summer courses involve four week-long training sessions in which each team develops a plan to improve school discipline or provide alternatives to out-of-school removal.

Target Population

Participation is open to school teams of four or five representatives, including at least one administrator, from either a school district or single campus. Additional members of the team may include school teachers, other school personnel, board members, parents, juvenile or criminal justice professionals, or other involved community members.

Special Projects

Two special projects operated by the Classroom Management and Discipline Program as federally funded demonstration projects, target urgent problems in public education. To recognize and prevent drug abuse, Schools Against Substance Abuse (SASA) provides training and technical assistance to schools and communities. Project XL (Excel), a drop-out

prevention program in an urban district high school and its nine feeder schools, provides assistance to at-risk youth.

Costs

Baseline funding for the Classroom Management and Discipline Program, separate from the demonstration projects, is $245,000 per year. Major costs are for personnel (4 staff positions), and participant's room, board, and materials.

RESULTS

Since the program began in 1983, it has consistently attracted more participants than the number projected. More than 35 percent of the 1,100 school districts in Texas have received training at Southwest Texas State University or in their local district.

The Classroom Management and Discipline Program has had a significant impact on the schools:

* More than 8,000 educators have received on-site training or technical assistance.
* More than 1,200 educators from 288 separate school districts have participated in the summer week-long training courses.

With an astonishing 95 percent response rate from participants evaluating the program, assessments of all aspects have been extremely high. Follow-up surveys report over a 150 percent implementation rate of plans devised through the courses.

In 1988, a 5-year program evaluation was conducted by Bernard Licarione, Ph.D., who found that: the program met all of its indicators of goal achievement and exceeded 65 percent of them.

* The average rating for the discipline courses was 4.67, with 5 representing the highest.

* The course content identified as most valuable was (a) ideas for improving school discipline, (b) legal issues in school discipline, (c) discipline approaches and techniques, (d) action planning.

* The program manual developed by program staff was being used by 92 percent of the participants upon return to their districts.

In addition to the external evaluation, program staff conduct daily and overall course evaluations, plus a follow-up evaluation eight months after the courses are completed. The program's advisory board also monitors the program closely.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The program has been presented as a model project at national conferences sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and the National School Dropout Prevention Network.

In addition, the Classroom Management and Discipline Program has distinguished itself through awards and honors from the:

* American Association of State Colleges and Universities' (Christa McAuliffe Showcase for Excellence Award),

* Council for the Advancement and Support of Education,

* National Association of Secondary School Principals,

* American Association of Higher Education,

* Criminal Justice Division of the Governor's Office, and the

* Texas Legislature.

Based on the program's success, it is reasonable to conclude that programs such as the Classroom Management and Discipline Programs are greatly needed and should be replicated at other colleges or universities. Monies should be made available through either education or juvenile justice sources or both.