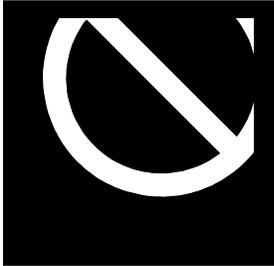




**Getting Tough on Kids:  
A Look at Zero  
Tolerance**



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## Executive Summary

Schools have expelled children for serious rule violations for years. More recently, however, federal, state, and local policymakers have sought to define and strengthen the guidelines governing expulsions in an effort to combat violence and substance abuse in schools.

In 1994 the federal government passed the Gun Free Schools Act of 1994, which required all states to pass laws that would expel for one calendar year any student who brought a weapon to school. Any state failing to enact such legislation would forfeit federal education aid. The law provides, however, that a school system's chief administering officer may modify such expulsion requirements on a case-by-case basis and that the federal definition of weapons be used (which essentially covers guns). Tennessee's General Assembly passed its corresponding statute in 1995, *Tennessee Code Annotated* 49-6-3401(g).<sup>1</sup>

The General Assembly adopted two additional statutory provisions pertaining to zero tolerance in 1996. Public Chapter 888, codified as *Tennessee Code Annotated* §49-6-4216, requires local school boards to file with the Department of Education written policies and procedures annually "to ensure safe and secure learning environments free of drugs, drug paraphernalia, violence and dangerous weapons; and to impose swift, certain and severe disciplinary sanctions" on students who bring drugs or weapons onto school property or assault or threaten others. School boards are encouraged, but not required, to include a zero tolerance policy for possession of drugs, drug paraphernalia, dangerous weapons, influence of drugs, or assault or threatened assault upon a teacher, student, or other person.

Public Chapter 988 of 1996, the Student and Employee Safe Environment Act, provides several general directives pertaining to school discipline codes, including that "a student committing battery upon any teacher, principal, administrator or any other employee of a local education agency or unlawfully possessing any narcotic or stimulant drug shall be expelled for a period of not less than one calendar year." Local school boards may add other offenses as well.

In 1997, Public Chapter 151 requested the Comptroller of the Treasury to conduct a study of the implementation of the policies required by *TCA* §49-6-4216 including: disciplinary policies in effect in all school districts; methods of record keeping used by local education authorities to record violations of zero tolerance; and analysis of disciplinary data for the school years 1994 through 1997, including the age, grade level, gender, and race of the students, the nature of the violations, and the disposition of each case. Based

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<sup>1</sup> Tennessee Code Annotated 49-6-3401(g): "Notwithstanding the foregoing or any other law to the contrary, a pupil determined to have brought to school or to be in unauthorized possession on school property of a firearm, as defined in 18 U.S.C. § 921, shall be expelled for a period of not less than one (1) year, except that the director or superintendent may modify this expulsion on a case-by-case basis. For purposes of this subsection, "expelled" means removed from the pupil's regular school program at the location where the violation occurred or removed from school attendance altogether, as determined by the school official."

on its findings, the Comptroller was asked to make recommendations to the General Assembly and the Governor that would improve Tennessee schools' zero tolerance policies and procedures. To obtain the most current information on zero tolerance, Office of Education Accountability staff surveyed all 139 superintendents in July 1997; 110 returned the survey.<sup>2</sup> The report concludes:

- **Although Tennessee state law identifies three types of behavior commonly referred to as zero tolerance possession of a firearm on school property; committing battery; and unlawful possession of any narcotic or stimulant drug implementation has sparked confusion and controversy.** A review of 130 school system policies submitted to the Office of Education Accountability (OEA) indicates that most local school boards have developed policies that address these three offenses as required by *TCA 49-6-4216*. In addition to the three offenses set forth in law, some school boards have added others, such as possession of alcohol, cellular phones or pagers, and sexual harassment. A few boards set stringent requirements for expelled students to return to school.

The General Assembly sought to recognize local standards in the development of zero tolerance policies and to permit case-by-case judgment by local administrators. Local variability, however, contributes to confusion among school administrators and a perception of unfairness and inconsistency across the state. State officials, either through statute or State Board of Education rules, may need to further clarify zero tolerance policies. Offenses other than those named specifically in state statute might better be addressed by local disciplinary policy not labeled as “zero tolerance.” (See pages 5-6.)

- **Total expulsions for zero-tolerance type offenses reported to the Office of Education Accountability increased from 552 in 1993-94 to 2,365 in 1996-97.** The largest single category of zero-tolerance expulsions (37 percent) for the four-year period was drug-related offenses. Drug-related expulsions increased from 151 in 1993-94 (27.4 percent of expulsions) to 1,030 in 1996-97 (43.6 percent of expulsions). On a positive note, expulsions for firearms decreased from 158 in 1993-94 to 103 in 1996-97 after increasing in the two intervening years. (See pages 6-7.)
- **Students expelled from Tennessee schools during the years 1993-94 through 1996-97 ranged in age from 5 to 22. However, 75 percent of the total were ages 14 through 17.** Nearly 30 percent were in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade at the time of expulsion. The high percentage of students in this age range may indicate a need for drug and violence avoidance and intervention programs targeted at this age and grade group. Although zero tolerance violators are predominately male, the number of females increased at a faster rate than males during the survey period. (See pages 7-9.)

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<sup>2</sup> Eleven school systems returned their surveys but reported no zero tolerance violations for the four-year time frame. Those school systems are included in the total returned.

- **Survey results indicate that African Americans expelled, as a percent of total expulsions, exceeds the percentage of African Americans in the total school population in five of the state s urban systems.** Differences ranged from 8.5 percentage points in the Memphis City School System to 30.9 percentage points in the Chattanooga City system. Public Chapter 988 of 1996 states: “The principal of each school shall apply the code uniformly and fairly to each student at the school without partiality or discrimination.” Policymakers and education officials may need to analyze the circumstances leading to the disproportionately high number of expulsions of African American students to assure the fair application of expulsion policies. Although local school administrators must have the discretion to exercise judgment on a case-by-case basis, it should be used without regard to race or gender. (See pages 9-11.)
- **The number of students reported as placed in alternative schools increased dramatically from 298 in 1993-94 to 1,215 in 1996-97. Survey results indicate that about 55 percent of all reported expelled students were placed in alternative schools.** Fifteen percent of students were not given any placement or the placement was not known. The remainder were home-schooled, moved to another district, or were in other placements, such as the court and juvenile justice system. The OEA survey also found that of the total students reported expelled, about two-thirds returned to the school system. For the total expulsions during the years 1993-94 through 1996-97, at least 228 students were repeat zero tolerance offenders. Educators may need to consider methods to address problem behaviors such as substantive intervention services during the expulsion period and special assistance after students return. Students may need additional social and academic support to make the transition back into their school systems and deter them from repeat offenses. (See page 12.)
- **A few alternative schools appear to offer students the curriculum needed to effectively deter students from zero tolerance offenses. More alternative schools may be needed, particularly in the urban areas.** A 1995 OEA report found that many alternative schools are used for “study hall” rather than providing intensive academic and social intervention. Forty-two percent of the zero tolerance expulsions reported for the period 1993-94 through 1996-97 were for drug and alcohol offenses indicating a possible need for greater drug and alcohol intervention in both regular and alternative schools. Most other zero tolerance expulsions were violence-related, such as possession of weapons or fighting, indicating a potential need for more resources in areas such as anger management and conflict resolution. Many young people sent to alternative schools are also in need of intensive academic help. The State Board of Education states that students attending their “model” alternative school should show academic gains as well as gains in self-concept, social adjustment, and behavior. (See pages 13-14.)
- **Of the students reported expelled in the OEA survey, 15 percent either had no placement or their placement was unknown.** Tennessee does not mandate that expelled students attend alternative school although local boards may adopt a policy mandating attendance for either suspended or expelled students. The high number of

expelled students with no placement or unknown placement, however, raises concerns for the future of these young people as well as their whereabouts while expelled. In at least two systems expelled students are not permitted to attend alternative school. In addition, it seems possible that zero tolerance policies may actually serve as an incentive for students to get expelled from school. (See pages 14-16.)

- **Each school district has its own method and forms for recording violations, making systematic statewide analysis difficult.** Some rural systems have no data on expulsions. Although the school systems submit suspension and expulsion data annually to the Department of Education, it does not include race, gender, which expulsions were for “zero tolerances” violations, and information regarding expulsions that were overruled by the superintendent. Ongoing analysis of zero tolerance violations would require some changes in data collection procedures. (See page 16.)

## **Alternatives**

The U.S. Department of Education indicates that targeting the source of guns and drug dealing, increasing young people’s faith and trust in authority, and teaching conflict resolution skills can encourage a safer school environment. Policymakers should consider the overall balance needed between punitive and rehabilitative strategies, general and specific guidelines, and local autonomy and state oversight.

This report proposes alternatives that might improve the overall system of addressing students expelled for zero tolerance offenses. (See page 17.) The General Assembly may wish to consider:

- Requiring the Department of Education to collect, analyze, and report annually the number of students expelled for zero tolerance violations, including information related to race, gender, grade level, age, offense, disposition of each violation, and any change in penalty allowed by the superintendent.
- Requiring any student expelled from his or her home school to attend alternative school.
- Increasing the number of preventive and rehabilitative programs that could help reduce the number of drug-related and violent offenses in Tennessee’s schools. Systems with high numbers of expulsions may have a greater need for social workers, guidance counselors, parenting classes, drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs, and conflict resolution programs.

The Department of Education should:

- Implement the State Board of Education’s model guidelines for alternative schools to help assure that alternative school students receive specialized help for their particular problems. The guidelines should address the schools’ goals and measures of effectiveness.
- Develop a standard format for reporting statistical information as to the grade level, age, gender, race, offense, and disposition of each zero tolerance violation.
- Report annually to the General Assembly, the Governor, and the State Board of Education a breakdown of zero tolerance violations.

- Analyze circumstances leading to a disproportionately high number of expulsions of African American students to assure that racial discrimination is not occurring.

The State Board of Education should:

- Provide more specific guidelines for local school districts as to offenses that should or should not be included in their zero tolerance policies.
- Provide a curriculum framework for alternative schools.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of alternative schools over time.

Local school officials should:

- Increase efforts to assure that expelled students are supervised during the expulsion period, have opportunities to continue their education in alternative schools, and are encouraged to do so. School officials should coordinate this effort with law enforcement officials.
- Encourage the publication of zero tolerance policies and consequences through school and community newsletters, as well as parent-teacher and parent-student associations.

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# **Introduction**

## **Charge from the General Assembly**

During the 1997 legislative session, the General Assembly passed Public Chapter 151, requiring the Comptroller of the Treasury's Office of Education Accountability to conduct a study on the implementation of Public Chapter 888 of 1996. (See Appendix C.)

As part of the study, the General Assembly requested the Comptroller to study:

- The disciplinary policies in effect in all school districts including those that have adopted a zero tolerance policy.
- The methods of record keeping used by local education authorities to record violations of the zero tolerance policy.
- Disciplinary data for the school years 1994 through 1997 to include the following information:
  1. the specific misconduct that violated the policy;
  2. the age, grade level, sex, and race of the students engaged in the misconduct; and
  3. the action taken by the school board, or its designee, for the misconduct.

## **Methodology**

The conclusions reached and recommendations made in this report are based on the following sources:

1. A review of relevant literature pertaining to zero tolerance policies nationwide and disciplinary procedures for these violations.
2. Interviews with appropriate Tennessee Department of Education and State Board of Education personnel.
3. An August 1997 survey of all school superintendents in the state conducted by the Office of Education Accountability. The survey asked for information indicating the age, grade, gender, and race of children expelled (as mandated by Public Chapter 151 of 1997), as well as indications of where students were placed and whether or not they returned to their home schools. Of the 139 superintendents surveyed, 110 responded, yielding a 79 percent response rate.
4. A review of annual superintendents' reports filed with the Department of Education.
5. Interviews with the legislative sponsors of Public Chapter 151.
6. A review of applicable state and federal statutes.
7. A review of individual school board policies outlining each school district's policy on zero tolerance.
8. Visits to three school systems.
9. Discussions in House and Senate Education meetings during the 1997 legislative session.
10. Participation in the Tennessee Department of Education's workshop, "Student Disciplinary Hearing Authority Training Program."
11. Attorney General Opinion No. 97-142, October 23, 1997.
12. A survey conducted by the Tennessee School Boards Association during its district meetings.

13. A review of a memorandum from J.V. Sailors, Executive Director, State Board of Education, and Commissioner of Education Jane Walters to Superintendents/Directors of Schools and Chairs of Local Boards of Education, May 27, 1997.

## **Background and Overview of Zero Tolerance Policies in Tennessee**

Both the federal and state governments have passed legislation in recent years hoping to reduce violence and substance abuse in schools. The federal government passed the Gun Free Schools Act of 1994, requiring all 50 states to pass legislation that would expel for one calendar year any student who brought a firearm to school. Any state failing to enact legislation would forfeit federal education funding under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The law made provisions for a school system's chief administering officer to modify expulsions on a case-by-case basis. In 1995, the Tennessee General Assembly adopted a statute in compliance with the federal legislation.<sup>1</sup> Local boards of education are allowed to broaden their zero tolerance policies, also mandating a one-year expulsion for the possession of other types of weapons, possession of drugs, or assault of students or teachers.

The General Assembly has given local school districts a great deal of discretion in designing their own zero tolerance policies and carrying out disciplinary procedures for violations of those policies. Additionally, local administrators have the discretion to consider zero tolerance violations on a case-by-case basis, and to adjust disciplinary action accordingly. This discretion has produced a wide variation in zero tolerance policies and disciplinary action among the 139 school districts.

The General Assembly adopted two additional statutory provisions pertaining to zero tolerance in 1996. Public Chapter 888, codified as *Tennessee Code Annotated* §49-6-4216, requires local school boards to file with the Department of Education written policies and procedures annually "to ensure safe and secure learning environments free of drugs, drug paraphernalia, violence and dangerous weapons; and to impose swift, certain and severe disciplinary sanctions" on students who bring drugs or weapons onto school property or assault or threaten others. School boards are encouraged, but not required, to include a zero tolerance policy for possession of drugs, drug paraphernalia, controlled substances, dangerous weapons, influence of drugs, or assault or threatened assault upon a teacher, student, or other person.<sup>2</sup> This legislation sought to discourage students from bringing firearms to school and to physically remove from the normal school setting those students who did. Also passed in the same year, Public Chapter 988, the Student and Employee Safe Environment Act of 1996, addressed certain topics that should be included in each school system's discipline codes. The act also addressed battery of teachers, principals, administrators, or any other employee of a local education agency, or the unlawful possession of any narcotic or stimulant drug—violations for which a student shall be expelled for a period of not less than one calendar year.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Tennessee Code Annotated* 49-6-3401(g).

<sup>2</sup> *Tennessee Code Annotated* 49-6-4216(b), 49-6-3401(g), and 49-6-4018. Public Chapter 326 of 1997 added prescription drug or controlled substance to *T.C.A.* 49-6-4018.

<sup>3</sup> Public Chapter No. 988, Section 4: "Each code shall contain the type of behavior expected from each student, the consequences of failure to obey such standards, and the importance of the standards to the

Both expelled and suspended violators may attend alternative schools. *Tennessee Code Annotated* 49-6-3402 requires the establishment of at least one alternative school per system for students in grades 7 through 12 who have been suspended or expelled, with an alternative school for lower grades being optional. The state board of education is required to promulgate rules and regulations for the operation of alternative schools. Each local system has the flexibility to shape the school and curriculum to fit its specific needs. While attending an alternative school students continue to earn state education funds in their home school system and are counted for all school purposes by that system.<sup>4</sup>

In the years since all states have had to implement zero tolerance policies, concerns have been raised that some school districts have gone beyond the goals of the 1994 Gun-Free Schools Act and subsequent state legislation. Incidents of student expulsions for comparatively minor infractions have been widely reported in newspaper articles, journals, and other publications nationwide. Testimony before the House Education Committee on April 29, 1997, indicates students in some school districts were expelled under zero tolerance policies for possession of pocketknives, kitchen knives in their lunches, beepers, and cellular phones. Some Tennessee legislators have received complaints from constituents whose children have been expelled for similar infractions. Some legislators are also concerned that these children's futures are adversely affected by expulsions that may be unwarranted. One of the purposes of this study, then, is to determine whether or not children have been expelled from Tennessee school districts for behavior that is neither drug-related nor violent.

It would be impossible to formulate a zero tolerance policy that includes an exhaustive list of items that could be construed as dangerous weapons, or what might be considered using these items in "a threatening manner." Requiring administrators to adhere to zero tolerance policies without any discretion seems impractical. However, giving administrators too much discretion could allow them to use zero tolerance policies as a means to remove students with records of disruptive, but not violent behavior. A balance must be sought that will allow administrators to remove dangerous weapons and controlled substances from schools, without unnecessarily harming students.

The adoption of zero tolerance policies in 1995 apparently had an immediate impact on the total expulsions statewide. For the 1993-94 school year, there were 875 expulsions (for all types of offenses) in Tennessee; for 1994-95, there were 1,766 expulsions; for 1995-96, there were 2,088 expulsions; and for 1996-97, there were 3,312 expulsions.<sup>5</sup>

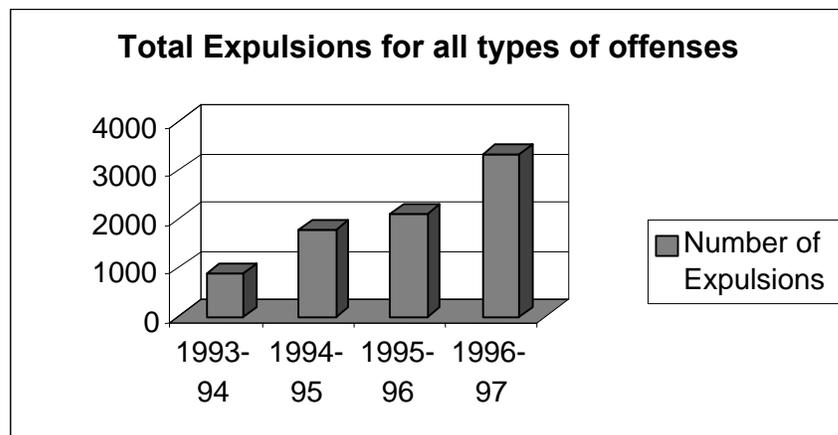
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maintenance of a safe learning environment where orderly learning is possible and encouraged. Each code shall address the topic of language used by students, respect for all school employees, fighting, threats, weapons on school property or at school functions, damage to the school property or person of others, misuse or destruction of school property, drug or alcohol abuse, the sale or distribution of drugs or alcohol, student conduct on school property, conduct in classes and such other subjects as the local governing body shall choose to include."

<sup>4</sup> See *Tennessee's Alternative Schools: Serving Disruptive Students*, September, 1995. (Comptroller of the Treasury, Office of Education Accountability.)

<sup>5</sup> Tennessee Department of Education, *Superintendents Annual Report for 1993-1996*, October 7, 1997.

## Exhibit 1



Source: Tennessee Department of Education's Superintendent's Annual Report.

Currently *Tennessee Code Annotated* does not specifically define zero tolerance. The code, however, does identify three types of behavior that are typically referred to as “zero tolerance” violations: assault, possession of drugs, or weapons. *Tennessee Code Annotated* 49-6-3401 and 49-6-4018 state that students engaging in any of these misbehaviors will be “expelled” for one calendar year. Expulsion is defined in the law as removal from the pupil’s regular school program at the location where the violation occurred or removed from school attendance altogether, as determined by the school official.

Most school systems have adopted policies on drugs, battery, and weapons. However, some school officials are unclear about the provisions of their own policies. According to the Tennessee School Boards Association (TSBA) there is a need for clarification of the offenses that should be classified “zero tolerance” violations. The TSBA is the only body with guidelines for classifying zero tolerance violations, but not all school systems have adopted TSBA’s “model” policy. According to a TSBA survey, many school boards expressed lack of “staff comfort with policy” and “clarification of what falls under zero tolerance” as problems for them.<sup>1</sup> During the OEA study several school officials expressed concern as to which offenses may be classified as “zero tolerance.”

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<sup>1</sup> Survey conducted at Tennessee School Board Associations annual district meetings held throughout Tennessee.

## Analysis and Conclusions

### Variability in zero tolerance policies across the state promotes confusion and controversy.

Tennessee state law identifies three types of behavior commonly referred to as zero tolerance—possessing a firearm on school property; committing battery; and unlawfully possessing any narcotic or stimulant drug.<sup>7</sup> *Tennessee Code Annotated* 49-6-4216 states that “each local and county board of education is encouraged to include within such policies and procedures a zero tolerance policy...” There is no other reference to zero tolerance in state law. A review of discipline policies across the state indicates that local school officials have defined a variety of additional offenses as “zero tolerance.” (See Appendix B.)

*Tennessee Code Annotated* 49-6-4018 states, “...a student committing battery upon any teacher, principal, administrator or any other employee of a local education agency or unlawfully possessing any narcotic or stimulant drug, prescription drug, or any other controlled substance shall be expelled for a period not less than one calendar year, except that the director or superintendent may modify this expulsion on a case-by-case basis.” However, the law does not specifically define these as “zero tolerance” violations.

*Tennessee Code Annotated* also defines weapons by referencing the federal definition. According to Section 921 of Title 18 of the *United States Code*, a firearm is: “any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive....any firearm muffler or firearm silencer....any destructive device...”

According to state education officials, zero tolerance policies should be designed by the individual school system. A memorandum to superintendents and local boards of education from the Commissioner of Education and the Executive Director of the State Board of Education states: “The legislature has given school officials the tools necessary to enforce disciplinary codes and to impose strict sanctions for the breach of such codes and policies. However, school administrators and school boards should exercise their delegated authority judiciously.” It also stated: “...realizing that sound judgement cannot be legislated, local boards and superintendents/directors have the responsibility to ensure that our schools are safe and, at the same time, must make decisions about a student’s future which are logical and efficient.”<sup>8</sup>

The Tennessee General Assembly has allowed local school boards to design their own zero tolerance policies. The General Assembly also gave the local boards flexibility to add other offenses to their zero tolerance policies.<sup>9</sup> As a result, there is considerable variation among school systems. Some systems include only possession of firearms as a violation of their zero tolerance policies. Others include possession of other types of

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<sup>7</sup> Public Chapter No. 326 of 1997 amended Tennessee Code Annotated 49-6-4018 to include “prescription drug or any other controlled substance.”

<sup>8</sup> Memorandum from J.V. Sailors, Executive Director, State Board of Education, and Commissioner of Education Jane Walters to Superintendents/Directors of Schools and Chairs of Local Boards of Education, May 27, 1997.

<sup>9</sup> Public Chapter 988 of 1996.

weapons, as well as acts of violence, electronic pagers, and sexual harassment. (See Appendix B.) It should be noted that in those school districts that include other infractions in their zero tolerance policies, administrators may consider each case separately, and give lighter punishments to students if they believe a one-year expulsion is unwarranted. The Department of Education and the State Board of Education do not provide local boards comprehensive guidelines or standards. The Tennessee School Boards Association promotes a model zero tolerance policy for all school systems.

**Total reported expulsions for zero-tolerance type offenses increased from 552 in 1993-94 to 2,365 in 1996-97.**

The largest single category of zero tolerance expulsions for the four year period was for drug related offenses at 37 percent. According to a 1996 annual survey conducted for the National Parents' Resource Institute for Drug Education,<sup>10</sup> annual use of most drugs was at the highest level since 1987-1988 for grades 6-12. The report states that more than one in four high school seniors (26.5 percent) used an illicit drug once a month or more during the 1995-96 school year.<sup>11</sup>

**Exhibit 2**  
**# Zero Tolerance Violators (Percent of Year)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Immoral Conduct</b>	<b>Personal Violence</b>	<b>Fighting</b>	<b>Alcohol</b>	<b>Drugs</b>	<b>Firearms</b>	<b>Other Weapons</b>	<b>Missing Data</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1993-94</b>	76 (13.8%)	68 (12.3%)	19 (3.4%)	17 (3.1%)	151 (27.4%)	158 (28.6%)	31 (5.6%)	32 (5.8%)	552 (100.0%)
<b>1994-95</b>	115 (11.0%)	184 (17.5%)	57 (5.4%)	111 (10.6%)	335 (32%)	172 (16.4%)	60 (5.7%)	15 (1.4%)	1,049 (100.0%)
<b>1995-96</b>	201 (13.0%)	354 (23.0%)	75 (4.9%)	24 (1.6%)	528 (34.3%)	171 (11.1%)	172 (11.2%)	14 (0.9%)	1,539 (100.0%)
<b>1996-97</b>	263 (11.1%)	469 (19.8%)	46 (1.9%)	135 (5.7%)	1,030 (43.6%)	103 (4.4%)	295 (12.5%)	24 (1.0%)	2,365 (100.0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>655 (12.0%)</b>	<b>1,075 (19.5%)</b>	<b>197 (3.6%)</b>	<b>287 (5.2%)</b>	<b>2,044 (37.1%)</b>	<b>604 (11.0%)</b>	<b>558 (10.1%)</b>	<b>85 (1.5%)</b>	<b>5,505 (100.0%)</b>

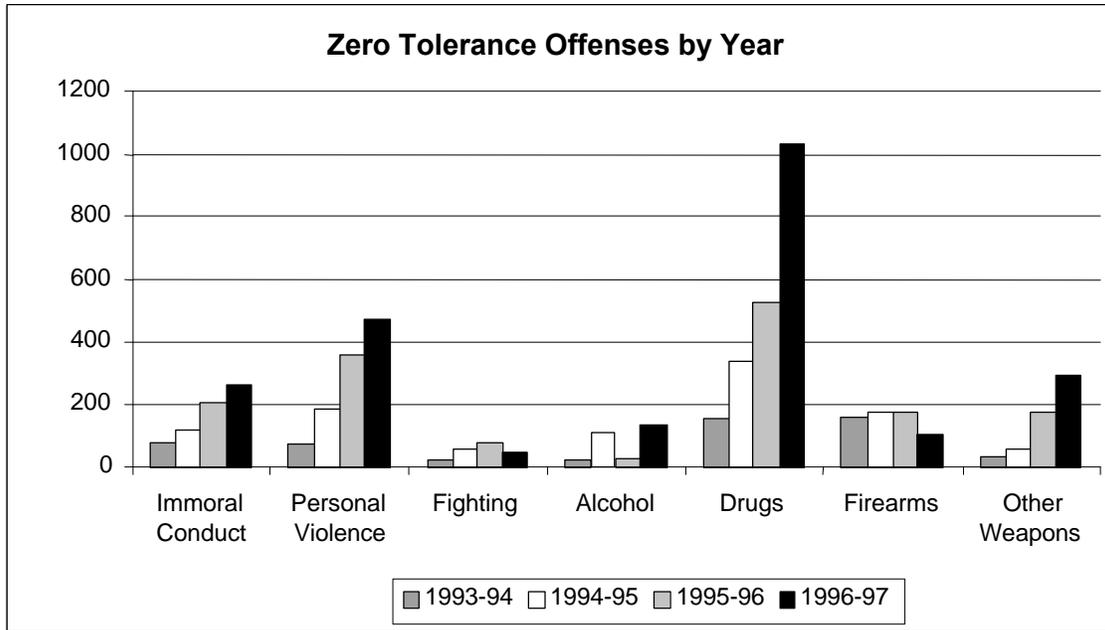
*Source: 1997 Office of Education Accountability zero tolerance survey. Survey categories used here (and in the following graphs and tables) as zero tolerance violations were: immoral disreputable conduct, personal violence, fighting among students, alcohol, drugs, firearms and weapons. See Appendix D for definitions of these terms.*

<sup>10</sup> Information from the PRIDE survey is found in the President's National Drug Control Strategy and the Bureau of Justice Statistics Sourcebook. It is also used by the United States Congress as an indicator of student drug use.

<sup>11</sup> Parents Resource Institute for Drug Education, "Students use of most drugs reaches highest level in nine years," September 25-1996.

The Office of Education Accountability study found drug related expulsions increased from 151 in 1993-1994 (27.4 percent of expulsions) to 1,030 (43.6 percent of expulsions) in 1996-97. On a positive note, expulsions for firearms decreased from 158 in 1993-94 to 103 in 1996-97 after increasing in the two intervening years.

**Exhibit 3**



Source: 1997 Office of Education Accountability zero tolerance survey.

**Students expelled from Tennessee schools during the years 1993-94 through 1996-97 ranged in age from 5 to 22. However, 75 percent of the total were ages 14 through 17.**

Nearly 30 percent were in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade at the time of expulsion. (See Exhibit 5.) This may indicate that high school freshmen need greater assistance and support to make the transition from middle school to high school. In addition, all students may need greater drug and alcohol avoidance and intervention programs. A summary of the August 1997 OEA survey results show that although zero tolerance violators are predominately male, the number of females has increased significantly for each year from 1993-94 through 1996-97. (See Exhibits 6 and 6A.)

**Exhibit 4**

**Zero Tolerance Violations by Age, 1993-94 through 1996-97**

Age	No. of students	Percent
5	1	0
6	6	.1
7	9	.2
8	9	.2
10	33	.6
11	61	1.1
12	144	2.6
13	411	7.5
<b>14</b>	<b>833</b>	<b>15.1</b>

Age	No. of students	Percent	
<b>15</b>	<b>1,110</b>	<b>20.2</b>	
<b>16</b>	<b>1,242</b>	<b>22.6</b>	
<b>17</b>	<b>959</b>	<b>17.4</b>	
18	374	6.8	
19	90	1.6	
20	14	.3	
21	5	.1	
22	1	.0	
<i>Missing Data</i>		203	3.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,505</b>	<b>100</b>	

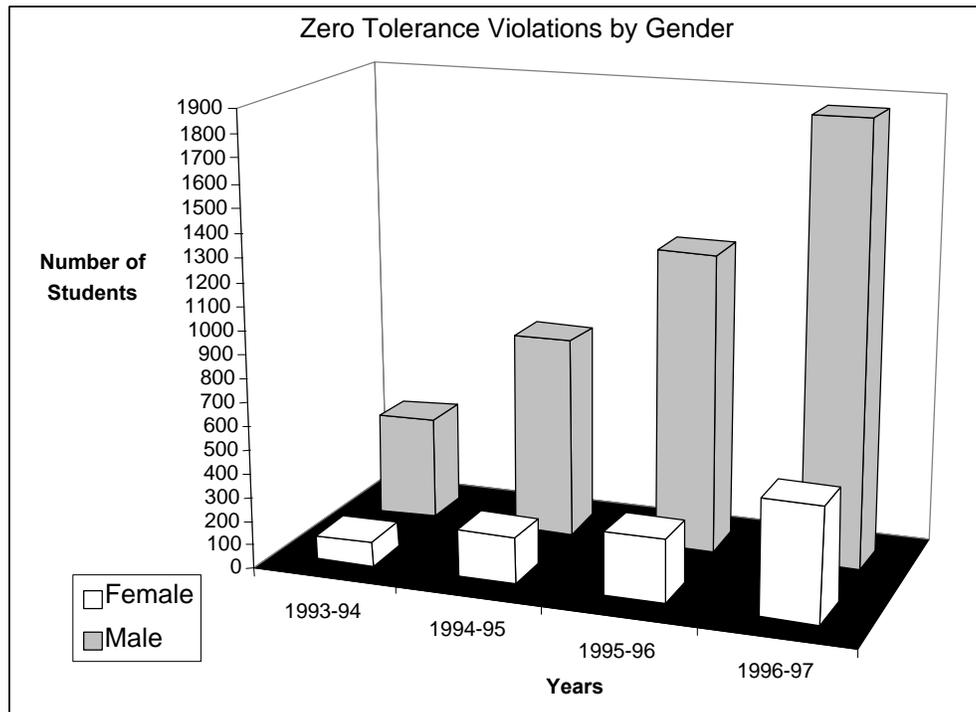
Source: 1997 Office of Education Accountability zero tolerance survey.

**Exhibit 5**  
**Zero Tolerance Violations by Grade for 1993-94 through 1996-97**

Grade	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	Totals
0	0	0	2	11	13
1	0	0	3	4	7
2	3	0	4	6	13
3	2	2	2	5	11
4	1	4	9	13	27
5	6	14	18	22	60
6	17	50	46	85	198
7	74	130	192	289	685
8	102	170	258	406	936
9	154	324	446	684	1608
10	87	184	273	405	949
11	33	98	174	240	545
12	23	55	88	135	301
Missing Data (all years)					152
<b>Total</b>					<b>5,505</b>

*Source: 1997 Office of Education Accountability zero tolerance survey.*

**Exhibit 6**



*Source: 1997 Office of Education Accountability zero tolerance survey.*

**Exhibit 6A**  
**Zero Tolerance Violations by Gender for 1993-94 through 1996-97<sup>14</sup>**

Year	Females	Males
1993-94	98	433
1994-95	198	849
1995-96	265	1268
1996-97	482	1863

*Source: 1997 Office of Education Accountability zero tolerance survey.  
 Note: Gender information not available in 49 cases.*

**Survey results indicate that African Americans expelled, as a percent of total expulsions, exceeds the percentage of African Americans in the total school population in five of the state s urban systems.**

Differences ranged from 8.5 percentage points in the Memphis City School System to 30.9 percentage points in the Chattanooga City system. Public Chapter 988 of 1996 states: “The principal of each school shall apply the code uniformly and fairly to each student at the school without partiality or discrimination.” Policymakers and education officials may need to analyze the underlying reasons for the disproportionately high number of expulsions of African American students to assure the fair application of expulsion policies. Although local school administrators must have the discretion to exercise judgment on a case-by-case basis, it should be used without regard to race or gender. According to the Tennessee School Board Association’s 1996 summer journal, “School boards need to apply zero tolerance measures in an even handed manner. Board members may run into problems legally when they enforce these in an arbitrary way. While the law allows for modification on a case by case basis those modifications need to be made on circumstances and not personalities.”<sup>15</sup> (See Exhibits 7, 7A, and 7B.)

**Exhibit 7**  
**Difference between total population and zero tolerance expulsions for 1996-97**

	% African Americans in total school population	% African American Zero Tolerance Expulsions	Difference	%Caucasian in total school population	%Caucasian Zero Tolerance Expulsions	Difference
Chattanooga	63.0	93.9	-30.9%	35.0	6.0	29.0%
Davidson	42.0	56.0	-14.0%	53.0	40.2	12.8%
Knoxville	13.0	26.7	-13.7%	85.0	73.2	11.8%
Memphis	82.5	91.0	-8.5%	16.1	8.6	7.5%
Shelby	21.0	31.0	-10.0%	76.0	67.3	8.7%

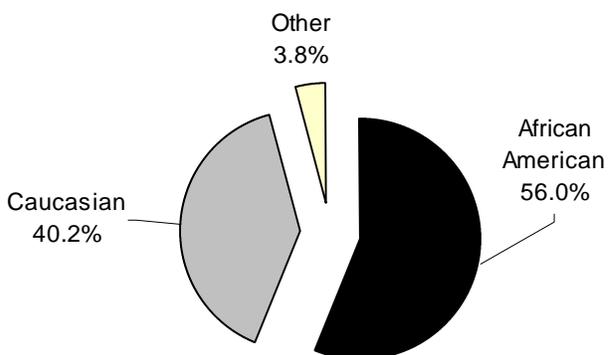
*Source: 1997 Office of Education Accountability zero tolerance survey.*

<sup>14</sup> Survey categories used as zero tolerance violations were: immoral disreputable conduct, personal violence, fighting among students, alcohol, drugs, firearms and weapons.

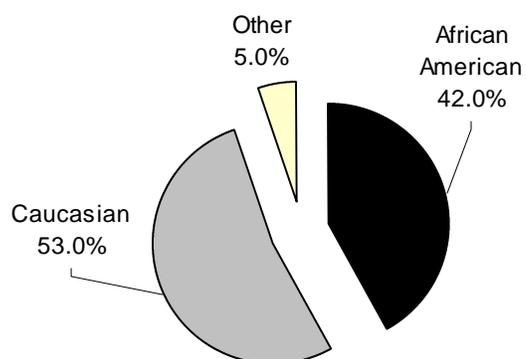
<sup>15</sup> Quoted by TSBA Staff Attorney, Patrick Smith in Tennessee School Board Association’s Summer 1996 Journal, “Zero Tolerance, Zero Consensus,” written by Garfrerick, Beth, p. 21.

## Exhibit 7A

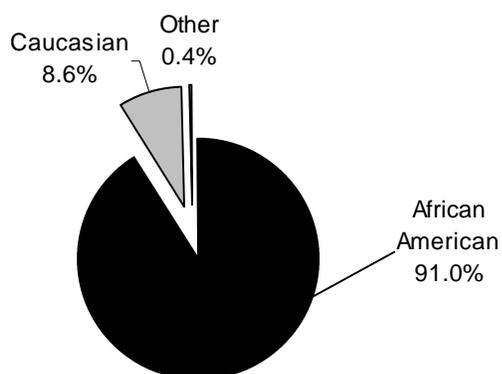
**Zero Tolerance Expulsions by Race  
in Davidson County 1996-97**



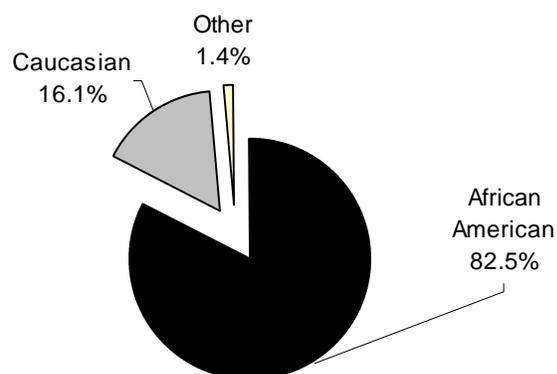
**School Population by Race  
in Davidson County 1996-97**



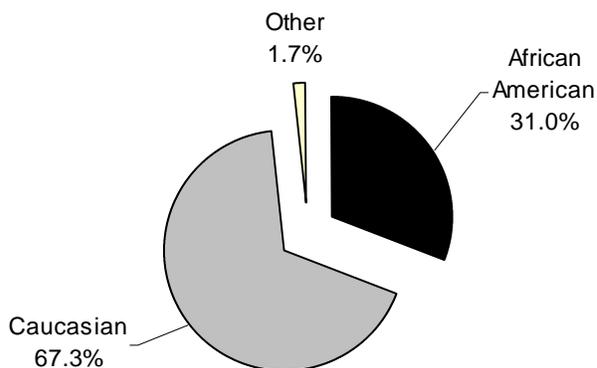
**Zero Tolerance Expulsions by Race  
in Memphis City 1996-97**



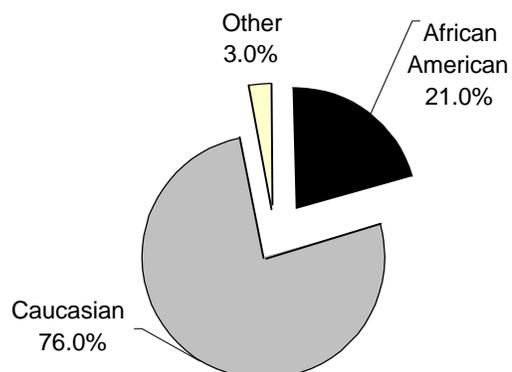
**School Population by Race  
in Memphis City 1996-97**



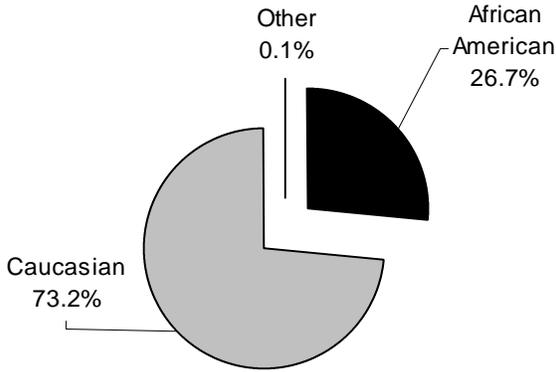
**Zero Tolerance Expulsions by Race  
in Shelby County 1996-97**



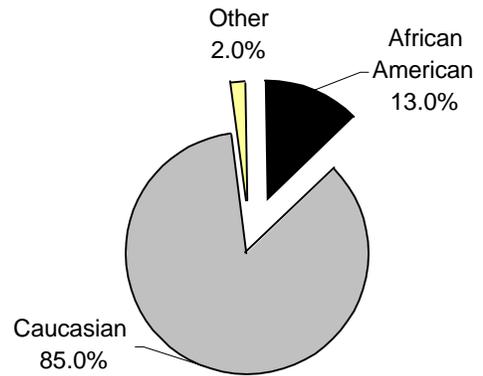
**School Population by Race  
in Shelby County 1996-97**



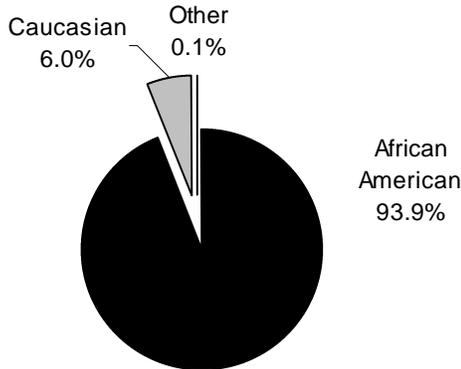
**Zero Tolerance Expulsions by Race in Knox County 1996-97**



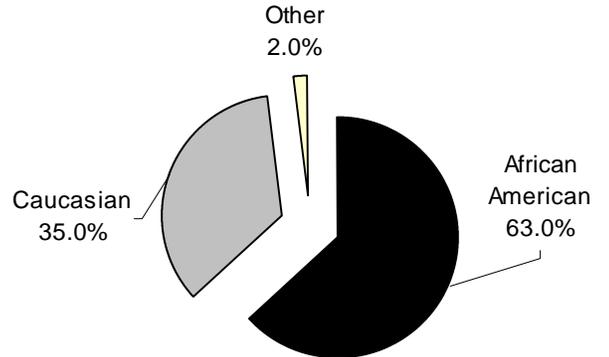
**School Population by Race in Knox County 1996-97**



**Zero Tolerance Expulsions by Race in Chattanooga City 1996-97**



**School Population by Race in Chattanooga City 1996-97**



Source: 1997 Office of Education Accountability zero tolerance survey.  
 Note: Hamilton County did not respond to the OEA survey or follow-up inquiries.

**Exhibit 7B  
 Zero Tolerance Violations by Race**

Years	African American	Caucasian	Other**	Unknown	Total
1993-94	242	264	12	34	<b>552</b>
1994-95	558	459	21	10	<b>1,049</b>
1995-96	807	691	30	11	<b>1,539</b>
1996-97	1,218	1,075	41	31	<b>2,365</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,825</b>	<b>2,490</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>5,505</b>

Source: 1997 Office of Education Accountability zero tolerance survey.

\* Survey categories used as zero tolerance violations were: immoral disreputable conduct, personal violence, fighting among students, alcohol, drugs, firearms and weapons.

\*\* Other category includes: Asian American, Native American, and Hispanic.

**The number of students reported placed in alternative schools increased dramatically from 298 in 1993-94 to 1,215 in 1996-97. Survey results indicate that about 55 percent of all reported expelled students were placed in alternative schools.**

Fifteen percent of students were not given any placement or the placement was not known. The remainder were home-schooled, moved to another district, or were in other placements such as the court and juvenile justice system. For the total expulsions between the years 1993-97, at least 228 students were repeat zero tolerance offenders. Since the majority of expelled students eventually return to school, educators may need to consider methods to address problem behaviors such as substantive intervention services during the expulsion period and special assistance after students return. Students may need additional social and academic support to make the transition back into their school systems and deter them from repeat offenses. Alternative school staff interviewed for the Comptroller's 1995 report on alternative schools stated that home school staff sometimes make the transition for the student more difficult than necessary because of the student's previous history. They stated that even though these students overcame the difficulties that led to their enrollment in an alternative school, the home school staff might still treat them like "troublemakers." Without adequate follow-up procedures, school systems cannot determine the effectiveness of their alternative programs or the needs of students as they make the transition back to their home school.<sup>16</sup>

**Exhibit 8**

**Placement of Zero Tolerance Violators, 1993-94 through 1996-97**

Placement	Frequency	Percent
Alternative School	3,046	55.3%
Other*	1,225	22.2%
Expelled without Placement	811	14.8%
Home Schooled	159	2.9%
Moved	139	2.5%
No Entry	125	2.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,505</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: 1997 Office of Education Accountability zero tolerance survey.*

\*Other includes: students placed in courts, juvenile justice systems, state custody and drug centers.

**Exhibit 8A**

**Zero Tolerance Placement by Year**

Placement	Number of Students Per year				Total per placement
	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	
Alternative School	298	618	915	1,215	<b>3,046</b>
Expelled w/o placement	79	126	242	364	<b>811</b>
Moved	15	18	58	48	<b>139</b>
Home Schooled	14	23	78	44	<b>159</b>
Other	114	251	234	626	<b>1,225</b>
No Entry	32	13	12	68	<b>125</b>
<b>Total per year</b>	<b>552</b>	<b>1,049</b>	<b>1,539</b>	<b>2,365</b>	<b>5,505</b>

*Source: 1997 Office of Education Accountability zero tolerance survey.*

<sup>16</sup> Comptroller of the Treasury, Office of Education Accountability, *Tennessee's Alternative Schools: Serving Disruptive Students*, September 1995.

**A few alternative schools appear to offer the curriculum needed to effectively deter students from zero tolerance offenses. More alternative schools may be needed, particularly in the urban areas.**

An alternative school should seek to effectively deter students from repeat offenses. Effective programs should address young people's access to the use of drugs, alcohol, and weapons. Research indicates that targeting the source of guns and drug dealing, increasing young people's faith and trust in law enforcement and school administrators, teaching conflict resolution skills, and promoting youth to develop positive attitudes about themselves and their peers may assist in creating a safer, violence-free school environment.<sup>17</sup>

*Tennessee Code Annotated* 49-6-3402(b) clearly states that alternative schools shall be operated pursuant to rules of the state board of education and that instruction shall proceed as nearly as practicable in accordance with the instructional programs at the students' home schools. However, the State Board of Education's rules and regulations do not define specific curriculum for alternative schools, the extra services that should be provided, or goals of the program.<sup>18</sup> *Tennessee Code Annotated* 49-6-4216(b) allows local boards to implement conflict prevention and resolution programs and related activities for staff and students.

Forty-two percent of the zero tolerance expulsions reported for the period 1993-94 through 1996-97 were for drug and alcohol offenses indicating a possible need for greater drug and alcohol intervention in both regular and alternative schools. Most other zero tolerance expulsions were violence-related, such as possession of weapons or fighting, indicating a potential need for more resources in areas such as anger management and conflict resolution. Alternative schools should have access to school psychologists and social workers, counselors, nurses, and competent teachers and administrators. They should provide parenting classes for family support, as well as peer counseling, individualized instruction, alcohol rehabilitation, mental health services, and drug treatment.

The State Board of Education provides, as part of its "model" alternative school, guidelines for four essential components: accelerated learning centers, alternative classrooms, alternative schools, and judge's schools.<sup>19</sup> Staff indicated that accelerated learning centers provide remediation to help students become academically successful before having behavior problems. "The accelerated learning center is based on the findings that tendencies for violence and misbehavior are significantly reduced when students view themselves as academically successful."<sup>20</sup> Teachers at the center serve as mentors/facilitators who assist academically at-risk students to form a positive self-concept, develop good attendance history, become successful students, and demonstrate proper behavior. Alternative classrooms help students who exhibit moderate discipline problems to improve their behavior and become academically successful. Board staff indicate that alternative schools would "use interactive technology and integrated, project

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<sup>17</sup> U.S. Department of Education, "Preventing Juvenile Gun Violence in Schools," *Creating Safe and Drug-Free Schools: An Action Guide*, September 1996, <http://www.ed.gov>.

<sup>18</sup> The State Board of Education Policy Guidelines 0520-1-2-.09

<sup>19</sup> The State Board of Education currently has three "model" alternative schools in existence. They have been serving students for only one year. No data is available yet.

<sup>20</sup> Tennessee State Board of Education, "Changing Risk to Resiliency: A Model for Alternative Schools."

based learning to help students to reconnect to the learning experience and advance academically.” And finally, judge’s schools are developed collaboratively by juvenile courts and one or more school systems.

The State Board model states that participating schools and school systems must be primed to dilute hostility and anger using research based strategies. The schools must be able to assess students’ needs, and must create environments of trust and success. Alternative schools must be able to improve a student’s self-esteem and self-confidence. The objective of the State Board’s model alternative schools is: “To provide an alternative schools model which academically advances students and assists students in a successful transition back to their regular classrooms or postsecondary training and/or work following high school graduation.”<sup>21</sup>

Teachers and staff who are properly trained in effective disciplinary and behavioral procedures make schools function more safely and effectively. Motivating students, communicating positive attitudes toward education, using consistent classroom behavior management control, individualized instruction, and cultural sensitivity are some elements necessary to run an effective alternative school.

Educators who teach in an alternative school must be able to respond to troubled students, and should be specialized in behavior modification. Many students who attend an alternative school need special attention. Alternative schools cannot be seen as merely “study halls.” They must continue to provide high quality education. School officials should strive to provide an interesting and relevant curriculum so students choose to stay in school. They should try to motivate distressed students to better themselves and prepare them to be integrated back into their home school system.

**Of the students reported expelled in the OEA survey, 15 percent either had no placement or their placement was unknown.**

State law requires all school systems with grades 7-12 to establish an alternative school. However, the law does not mandate that all expelled students attend alternative school. *Tennessee Code Annotated* 49-6-3402 states: “...at least one alternative school shall be established and available for students in grades seven through twelve who have been suspended or expelled as provided in this part.” In addition *Tennessee Code Annotated* 49-6-4018 further provides that “...nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit assignment of such students to an alternative school.”

Some students opt not to attend an alternative school when expelled, and have no other choices. These students may be more likely to get in trouble with law enforcement officers. Because state law does not require educational services during periods of expulsion, the zero tolerance policy of expelling students for one calendar year may create an incentive for some students to become violators.<sup>22</sup>

The OEA survey found that 15 percent of those expelled for some type of zero tolerance violation did not attend any type of alternative school or other placement. (See Exhibit 8.)

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Tennessee Code Annotated* 49-6-3402(c), however does state, “attendance in an alternative school shall be voluntary unless the local board of education adopts a policy mandating attendance for either suspended or expelled students.”

The high number of expelled students with no placement or unknown placement raises concerns for the future of these young people. In at least two school systems expelled students are not permitted to attend alternative school. (See Appendix B.) The OEA study also found 22 percent of students were classified in the “other” category, which includes students placed in courts, juvenile detention, state custody, and drug centers.

Survey results indicate that of the total students reported expelled, about two-thirds returned to the school system. The study also found that 10.9 percent of students did not return and 13.9 percent of students’ whereabouts were unknown to school officials. (See Exhibit 9.)

Attendance at alternative schools is voluntary for students unless the local school board adopts a policy mandating attendance. Students who want to attend alternative schools may not be able to provide their own transportation, as many school districts require. For many children, failing to attend school means that they lack supervision, education, or beneficial socialization for much of each day. Department of Education staff, alternative school staffs, and many superintendents believe that there are advantages to alternative schools. Research indicates that students placed in alternative schools often have higher rates of attendance than they have at their home schools. In addition, some demonstrate improved academic performance and self-esteem. Perhaps most importantly, some students stay in school who otherwise may have dropped out.<sup>23</sup>

**Exhibit 9**  
**Outcome of zero tolerance expulsions for 1993-97**

Outcome	Number of Students	Percent
Returned to School	2,707	49.2
Graduated immediately after alternative school	48	.9
Still attending alternative school	842	15.3
Did not return	600	10.9
Unknown	768	13.9
Other	305	5.5
Missing Data	235	4.3
Total	5,505	100

*Source: 1997 Office of Education Accountability zero tolerance survey.*

<sup>23</sup> See *Tennessee s Alternative Schools: Serving Disruptive Students*, September, 1995. (Comptroller of the Treasury, Office of Education Accountability.) See also Glass, Roger S., “Alternative Schools Help Kids Succeed,” *American Teacher*, 79 (November 1994), 10:18.

**Exhibit 9A**  
**Expelled students outcome by year**

Outcome		Year			
		1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Returned to school	Expulsions	368	612	959	767
	% of total	66.7%	58.3%	62.3%	32.4%
Graduated from alternative school *	Expulsions	3	3	25	17
	% of total	.5%	.3%	1.6%	.7%
Still attending alternative school	Expulsions	11	8	66	757
	% of total	2%	.8%	4.3%	32%
Did not return	Expulsions	56	120	200	224
	% of total	10%	11.4%	13%	9.5%
Unknown	Expulsions	36	244	221	267
	% of total	6.5%	23.3%	14.4%	11.3%
Other	Expulsions	35	48	52	170
	% of total	6.3%	4.6%	3.4%	7.2%
Missing	Expulsions	43	14	16	163
	% of total	8%	1.3%	1%	6.9%
<b>Total</b>	Expulsions	552	1,049	1,539	2,365
	% of total	100%	100%	100%	100%

*\*Students are prohibited from graduating from an alternative school. These students graduated from their home schools immediately after attending alternative schools.*

**Each school district has its own method and forms for recording violations, making systematic statewide analysis difficult.**

The Department of Education does not mandate that all school systems keep comprehensive data on expulsions. Each school system reports violations in various ways making it difficult to coordinate any form of analysis. The information must be able to be processed easily in order to find problems and formulate possible suggestions. Currently, the Department is not able to produce detailed data about children who are expelled.

The Department of Education requires each school system to file an annual superintendent's report, but it does not indicate race, gender, placement, or outcome of expelled students, nor does it differentiate between "zero tolerance" expulsions or those that were overruled by the superintendent. Many rural school districts indicated that they keep no records because they have a low number of violators. Respondents stated in many cases that it would be too difficult to access the demographic information because the school system is not required to record it. Without adequate data collection, decision-makers lack the information necessary to find solutions to problems.

## **Alternatives**

The members of the General Assembly may wish to consider the following alternatives to improve the overall system of addressing student expulsions for zero tolerance offenses in Tennessee:

- Requiring the Department of Education to collect, analyze, and report annually the number of students expelled for zero tolerance violations, including information related to race, gender, grade level, age, offense, disposition of each violation, and any change in penalty allowed by the superintendent.
- Providing more specific guidelines for local school districts as to offenses that should or should not be included in their zero tolerance policies.
- Requiring local school districts to mandate attendance in alternative schools for all expulsions.
- Increasing the number of preventive and rehabilitative programs that could help reduce the number of drug-related and violent offenses in Tennessee's schools. Systems with high numbers of expulsions may have a greater need for social workers, guidance counselors, parenting classes, drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs, and conflict resolution programs.

The Department of Education should consider the following alternatives to improve the implementation of zero tolerance policies in Tennessee:

- Implementing the State Board of Education's model guidelines for alternative schools to help assure that alternative school students receive specialized help for their particular problems. The guidelines should address goals and measures of effectiveness.
- Developing a standard format for reporting statistical information as to the grade level, age, gender, race, offense, and disposition of each zero tolerance violation.
- Reporting annually to the General Assembly, the Governor, and the State Board of Education a breakdown of zero tolerance violations.
- Analyzing circumstances leading to a disproportionately high number of expulsions of African American students to assure that racial discrimination is not occurring.

The State Board of Education should:

- Provide more specific guidelines for local school districts as to offenses that should or should not be included in their zero tolerance policies.
- Provide a curriculum framework for alternative schools.
- Evaluate success of alternative school programs over time.

Local school officials should:

- Increase efforts to assure that expelled students have opportunities to continue their education and are encouraged to do so.
- Encourage the publication of zero tolerance violations and consequences through school and community newsletters, as well as parent-teacher and parent-student associations.

## Appendix A

### School Systems that responded to the OEA Survey

Alamo City *	Hollow Rock-Bruceton *	Shelby County
Alcoa City	Houston County	Smith County
Anderson County	Humboldt City	South Carroll
Athens City	Humphreys County	Stewart County
Bedford County	Huntingdon Special School District	Sullivan County
Benton County	Jackson-Madison	Sweetwater
Bells City *	Jefferson County	Tipton County
Bledsoe County	Johnson City	Trenton
Blount County	Johnson County	Trousdale County
Campbell County	Kingsport City	Tulahoma
Carter County	Knox County	Unicoi County
Chattanooga City	Lake County	Union City
Cheatham County	Lauderdale County	Union County
Chester County	Lawrence County	Van Buren County
Claiborne County	Lebanon City	Warren County
Clay County	Lewis County *	Washington County
Cleveland City	Lexington City *	Wayne County
Clinton City *	Lincoln County	Weakley County
Cocke County	Loudon County	West Carroll Special School District
Coffee County	Macon County	Williamson County
Covington City	Manchester City *	
Crockett County	Marshall County	
Cumberland County	Maryville City	
Davidson County	Maury County	
Decatur County	McKenzie City	
DeKalb County	McMinn County	
Dickson County *	Meigs County	
Elizabethton City	Memphis City	
Etowah City	Milan City SSP	
Fayette County	Monroe County	
Fentress County	Moore County	
Franklin County	Morgan County	
Gibson County Special School District *	Murfreesboro City	
Giles County	Oak Ridge City	
Greene County	Overton County	
Greeneville City	Perry County	
Grundy County	Pickett County	
Hamblen County	Polk County	
Hardeman County *	Putnam County	
Harriman City	Roane County	
Hawkins County	Robertson County	
Haywood County	Rogersville City *	
Henderson County	Rutherford County	
Henry County	Scott County	
Hickman County	Sequatchie County	

\*Responded to survey but had no zero tolerance violations.

Twenty-nine systems did not respond to the survey. According to the superintendent's annual report filed with the Department of Education, seven of these non-responding school systems had no expulsions.

## Appendix B Offenses Included in School Systems Zero Tolerance Policies

School Systems	Offenses included in the school system s zero tolerance policy:					Comments
	Drugs	Alcohol	Assault/ Battery	Weapons	Additions <sup>24</sup>	
Alamo City	X		X	X		
Alcoa City				X		
Anderson County	X	X	X	X	Marijuana	
Athens City				X	<sup>25</sup>	
Bedford County	X		X	X	<sup>26</sup>	
Bells City						Did not send in a policy
Benton City	X		X	X		
Bledsoe County	X		X	X		
Blount County				X		“Will tolerate no acts of violence”
Campbell County	X	X	X	X	<sup>27</sup>	
Carter County				X		
Chattanooga City						Did not send in a policy
Cheatham County	X		X	X		
Chester County				X		
Claiborne County	X	X	X	X		
Clay County	X	X	X	X		
Cleveland City	X		X	X		
Clinton City	X		X	X		
Cocke County	X		X	X		
Coffee County	X		X	X		
Covington City	X		X	X		
Crockett County	X	X	X	X	<sup>28</sup>	Expelled students are removed from school attendance altogether and cannot attend Alternative School
Cumberland County	X		X	X		
Davidson County	X		X	X		
Decatur County	X		X	X		
DeKalb County	X		X	X		
Dickson County	X		X	X		
Elizabethton City	X		X	X		
Etowah City	X	X	X	X		
Fayette County	X		X	X		
Fentress County	X	X	X	X		
Franklin County	X		X	X		

<sup>24</sup> Public Chapter 326 of 1997 added “prescription drug and or controlled substance” to TCA 49-6-4018. Policies submitted to OEA may or may not have been revised to reflect the addition.

<sup>25</sup> Includes language “students are further forbidden to use any instrumentality or substances such as chemicals, pencils, scissors, razors, or compasses when they are used or attempted to be used in a manner which renders the item dangerous or with the intent to do harm.”

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> “Any student who possess a cellular phone, beeper, two-way radio, or other type of communication device, except as herein provided, shall be deemed to have such device for the purposes of disrupting the orderly education of students at school, and the possession of said devices shall not be permitted. First offense 10 day suspension. Second offense zero tolerance violation.”

<sup>28</sup> Students wishing to re-enter after one year drug-related expulsion must appeal to the Discipline Board and meet the following requirements for probationary admission: 1) students must reveal where and from whom he/she obtained the substance; 2) completion of alcohol and drug rehabilitation program or ten hours of A&D counseling; 3) clean drug screen at time of re-entry; 4) signed parental permission to screen periodically on request.

School Systems	Offenses included in the school system s zero tolerance policy:					Comments
	Drugs	Alcohol	Assault/ Battery	Weapons	Additions <sup>23</sup>	
Gibson County SSD	X		X	X		
Giles County	X		X	X		
Greene County	X	X	X	X		
Greeneville City	X		X	X		
Grundy County	X		X	X		
Hamblen County	X		X	X		
Hardeman County						Have not completed a zero tolerance policy as of August 19, 1997
Harriman City	X		X	X		
Hawkins County				X		
Haywood County	X	X	X	X		
Henderson County	X		X	X		
Henry County	X		X	X		
Hickman County	X	X		X		
Hollow Rock-Bruceton	X		X	X		
Houston County	X	X	X	X		
Humboldt City	X		X	X		
Humphreys County	X	X		X		
Huntingdon SSD	X		X	X		
Jackson-Madison	X		X	X		
Jefferson County				X		
Johnson City	X	X	X	X	X	Bomb threat
Johnson County	X	X		X		
Kingsport City	X		X	X		
Knox County	X		X	X		
Lake County	X	X		X		
Lauderdale County	X	X	X	X		
Lawrence County	X	X	X	X	X	Bomb threat, arson
Lebanon City	X		X	X		
Lewis County	X	X	X	X		
Lexington City	X	X	X	X	Pager <sup>29</sup>	
Lincoln County	X		X	X		
Loudon County						<sup>30</sup>
Macon County	X	X	X	X		
Manchester City	X		X	X		
Marshall County						Did not send in a policy

<sup>29</sup> Zero Tolerance Acts are as follows: 1) Students who bring or possess a drug, drug paraphernalia, a dangerous weapon or a pager onto school property or to any school activity; 2) Any student who while on school property or while attending any school event or activity: a) is under the influence of a drug or alcohol. b) possesses a drug, drug paraphernalia or dangerous weapon. c) has in his possession a pager. d) assaults or threatens to assault teacher, student or other person.

<sup>30</sup> “The Loudon County Board of Education has not adopted a “zero tolerance” policy as encouraged by TCA 49-6-4216(b) since this does not mandate such policy be adopted. The Board has adopted policies dealing with weapons, drugs, and assaults to employees, but does not feel that a “zero tolerance” policy is needed since federal and/or state laws and regulations require certain disciplinary procedures for these offenses.”

School Systems	Offenses included in the school system s zero tolerance policy:					Comments
	Drugs	Alcohol	Assault/ Battery	Weapons	Additions <sup>23</sup>	
Maryville City	X	X	X	X		A student committing battery upon a teacher, principal, administrator or any other employee of the school system shall be expelled for a period of not less than one calendar year, and not be eligible for enrollment in the Alternative School, except that the Director of Schools may modify this expulsion on case-by-case basis
Maury County	X	X	X	X	X	Bomb threat
McKenzie City	X	X	X	X		
McMinn County	X		X	X		
Meigs County	X		X	X		
Memphis City	X	X	X	X		
Milan City SSP	X	X	X	X		
Monroe County	X	X	X	X		
Moore County						No mention of zero tolerance in their school discipline policy
Morgan County	X		X	X		
Murfreesboro City	X		X	X		
Oak Ridge City	X	X	X	X		
Overton County	X		X	X		
Perry County	X		X	X		
Pickett County	X	X		X		
Polk County						No mention of zero tolerance in their school discipline policy
Putnam County						Did not send in a policy
Roane County	X		X	X		
Robertson County	X	X	X	X		
Rogersville City	X		X	X		
Rutherford County	X		X	X		
Scott County	X		X	X		
Sequatchie County	X		X	X		
Shelby County	X		X	X		
Smith County	X		X	X		
South Carroll	X		X	X		
Stewart County	X	X	X	X		
Sweetwater	X		X	X		
Sullivan County	X		X	X		
Tipton County	X		X	X		
Trenton	X	X	X	X		
Trousdale County	X	X		X		
Tullahoma	X		X	X		
Unicoi County	X	X	X	X		
Union City	X	X	X	X		
Union County	X		X	X	X	Destruction of school property
Van Buren County			X	X		
Warren County			X	X		
Washington County						As of November 1997 no zero tolerance policy in place.

School Systems	Offenses included in the school system s zero tolerance policy:					Comments
	Drugs	Alcohol	Assault/ Battery	Weapons	Additions <sup>23</sup>	
Wayne County	X		X	X		
Weakley County	X		X	X		
West Carroll SSD	X		X	X		
Williamson County	X	X	X	X		
<b>School systems that did not respond to survey but submitted a policy</b>						
Bradford City						As of November 1997 no zero tolerance policy in place.
Bradley County	X		X	X		
Bristol City	X		X	X		
Cannon County	X		X	X		
Carroll County	X		X	X		
Claiborne County	X		X	X		
Dayton City	X		X	X		
Dyer County	X	X		X		
Dyersburg City	X		X	X		
Fayetteville City	X		X	X		
Franklin SSD	X	X	X	X		
Grainger County	X		X	X		
Hamilton County	X		X	X	Marijuana	
Hancock County	X		X	X		
Jackson County	X		X	X		
Lenior City	X	X	X	X		
Marion County	X	X	X	X	X	Arson, bomb threats, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, pulling a fire alarm, possession or detonation of an incendiary or explosive material, destruction of school property, inciting school disruption, and repeated violations of school rules
McNairy County	X		X	X		
Montgomery County	X	X	X	X		No mention of zero tolerance or one year expulsion
Obion City	X		X	X		
Oneida City	X		X	X		
Paris City	X		X	X		
Rhea County	X	X	X	X		
Sevier City				X		
Sumner County	X	X	X	X		
White County	X		X	X		

## Appendix C

Public Chapter 151  
HOUSE BILL NO. 204

By Representatives Pruitt, Langster, Brooks, Bowers, John DeBerry, Lois DeBerry, Armstrong, Miller, Towns, Ulysses Jones, Larry Turner, Brown, Cooper  
Substituted for: Senate Bill No. 697  
By Senator Dixon

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-4216, relative to zero tolerance policies.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-4216(b), is amended by designating the present language as subdivision (1), and by adding the following language to be designated as subdivision (2):

(2) The Comptroller of the Treasury, office of education accountability, shall conduct a study regarding the implementation of Public Chapter 888 of 1996. Such study shall include but not be limited to:

1) a determination of disciplinary policies in effect in all school districts including those that have adopted a zero tolerance policy;

2) the methods of record keeping used by local education authorities to record such violations of the zero tolerance policy;

3) an analysis of disciplinary data for the school years 1994 through 1997 to include the following information:

(A) the specific misconduct that violated the policy;

(B) the age, grade level, sex, and race of the students engaged in the misconduct;

(C) the action taken by the school board, or its designee, for the misconduct.

The Department of Education, State Board of Education and the local education authorities shall cooperate with the office of education accountability and provide necessary information and assistance for this study. On or before November 1, 1997, the office of education accountability shall report the findings of the study to the General Assembly and the Governor. Such report shall include any recommendations for changes to the reporting methods used by school districts and the Department of Education in relation to disciplinary record keeping policies and procedures.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.

## Appendix D

### Survey Cover Letter, Instructions, and Survey Categories



STATE OF TENNESSEE  
**COMPTROLLER OF THE TREASURY**  
**OFFICE OF EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY**

1360 Andrew Jackson Building  
500 Deaderick Street  
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0268  
Phone 615/532-1111  
Fax 615/532-9237

July 23, 1997

Dear Superintendent of Schools:

The Office of Education Accountability has been mandated by Public Chapter 151 (1997) to conduct a study for the General Assembly on zero tolerance. We are interested in detailed information on zero tolerance violations and violators. We are seeking your assistance in gathering data that may be used for recommendations to the General Assembly and the Governor.

The attached survey includes separate sheets for each of the four school years between 1993 and 1997. For each expulsion, please indicate on the appropriate sheet the school at which the incident occurred, student name, ID number, age, grade, gender, race, whether or not it was a zero tolerance violation, nature of the incident, number of days of expulsion, and disposition of each individual case. Please also include a copy of your school board's zero tolerance policy. It is important that we have your response by **Friday, August 22, 1997** in order to meet the statutory deadline for our report.

In reporting your responses to these questions, we will not reveal the identity of individual students. Please feel free to attach additional information to the survey if you do not have enough room to answer in the space provided. When you have completed the survey, please return it in the enclosed envelope. **No postage is required.**

If you have any questions regarding the survey, please call Hemal Tailor at (615) 532-1111. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Ethel Detch  
Director, Office of Education Accountability

**Comptroller s Office of Education Accountability Survey on Zero Tolerance  
Instructions for the Attached Survey Forms**

There are four survey forms for school years 1993-94, 1994-95, 1995-96, and 1996-97. If more than 16 students were expelled in your district in a given school year, please make photocopies of the form for that year and indicate on each sheet the page number for a given year (e.g. "Page 1 of 3").

Please include the name and phone number of the person completing these forms so that our office may contact this person should we have any questions about the information provided. Also please include a copy of your school board's official zero tolerance policy.

**Section (1)** The name of the school for each violation that occurred.

**Sections (2) and (3)** The name and student ID numbers are included only to ensure that no student or incident is duplicated when we aggregate the information from all Tennessee school districts. We will not reveal in any way the identities of the students included in your report.

**Section (4) and (5)** The age and grade of the student at the time of the violation.

**Section (6)** The gender of the student.

**Section (7)** If none of the "Race" categories apply to the race of the student involved, please mark "Other" and indicate the race of the student on an attached sheet.

**Section (8)** Please indicate if the student violated your district's official zero tolerance policy. For the years prior to approval of the policy please indicate would it have been a zero tolerance violation.

**Section (9) Explanations of Incidents for Which Students are Expelled:**

The attached sheet includes a section in which you are asked to indicate the nature of the incident for which a student is expelled. Classifying all incidents in these categories will allow us to present concise information about Tennessee disciplinary policies and enforcement of those policies to the General Assembly and Governor. If none of the classifications described below apply to an incident for which a student in your school district was expelled, please mark "Other" and explain the incident on a separate sheet.

**Truancy, absenteeism, tardiness:** This category is to be used if a child has been expelled for repeated attendance violations.

**Immoral, disreputable conduct:** Please include any behavior that is implemented in your school board policy that can be considered disreputable behavior.

**Personal violence:** Please include only those cases in which violence was actually committed, rather than threatened.

**Threat of violence:** The definition of threat is a communicated intent to inflict physical or other harm on any person or on property.

**Fighting among students:** Please note that if a weapon was produced during the fight, and it was the possession of the weapon that caused the expulsion, that the incident should be included in either the "firearms" or "weapons" category.

**Damage to school property:** This may include setting fire to or damaging any school building or property.

**Alcohol:** This category includes both possession of alcohol and being under the influence of alcohol.

**Drugs:** Although your district's policy may classify alcohol and tobacco as drugs, please include only drugs other than alcohol or tobacco in this category.

**Theft, extortion, gambling:** Includes on and off school grounds at a school activity, function, event, or school related circumstance.

**Tobacco products:** May include use or possession.

**Firearms:** Any weapon designed, made or adapted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or any device readily convertible to that use.

**Weapons (non-firearms):** This category excludes firearms. It may include but is not limited to knives, explosions, scissors, razors, or any dangerous instrument or substance which is capable of inflicting any injury on any person.

**Other:** If none of the categories applies to the disposition of a given case, please mark “Other” and indicate what the violation was on a given case on a separate sheet.

**Section (10)** Number of days of expulsion refers to the number of school days. So if a student is expelled for one calendar year for a zero tolerance violation, that is 180 school days.

**Section (11)** Where was the student placed during the expulsion period? If none of the “Placement” categories applies to the disposition of a given case, please mark “Other” and indicate what is known about a given case on a separate sheet.

**Section (12)** What happened to the student after he/she served the expulsion time? If none of the “Outcome” categories applies to the disposition of a given case, please mark “Other” and indicate what is known about a given case on a separate sheet.

## Survey categories

### Gender:

Female  
Male

### Race:

African American  
Asian  
Caucasian  
Hispanic  
Native American  
Other

### Nature of Incident:

Truancy, absenteeism, tardiness  
Immoral, disreputable conduct  
Personal violence  
Fighting among students  
Damage to school property  
Alcohol  
Drugs  
Theft, extortion, gambling  
Tobacco products  
Firearms  
Weapons (non-firearms)  
Other

### Was this a Zero Tolerance Violation?

Yes  
No

### Number of Days Expulsion:

#### Placement:

Alternative School  
Dropped Out  
Moved  
Home Schooled  
Unknown  
Other

#### Outcome:

Returned to School  
Graduated from alternative school  
Alternative school (still attending)  
Did not return  
Unknown  
Other

## Appendix E Individuals Interviewed

Glen Arwood  
Assistant Superintendent  
Sullivan County

Melissa Brown  
Director of Finance Services  
Tennessee Department of Education

June Defoe  
Lewis County school official

Senator Roscoe Dixon  
Senate sponsor of SB 697 (Public Chapter 151)

Mike Herrmann  
Director, Safe-Drug Free Schools  
Tennessee Department of Education

Phil Huddleston  
Rutherford County school official

Carlene Jenkins  
Metro Davidson County Alternative Schools  
Coordinator

Kay Jeter, Director  
Legal Services  
Tennessee Department of Education

Connie Moore  
Metro Davidson County School Board  
Suspensions and Expulsions

George Nerren, Ed.D.  
Deputy Executive Director  
Tennessee School Board Association

Scott Owens  
School Accountability and Attendance  
Administrator  
Tennessee Department of Education

Representative Mary Pruitt  
House sponsor of HB 204 (Public Chapter 151)

Jean Sharp  
Director of Public School  
Tennessee Department of Education

J.V. Sailors  
Executive Director  
State Board of Education

Nancy Stetten  
Research Consultant  
Tennessee Department of Education

Jimmie Thacker, Jr., Ed.S.  
Supervisor of Transfers  
Knox County Schools

Veronica White  
Education Program Research Analyst II  
National Conference of State Legislatures

# **Changing Risk to Resiliency:**

## **A Model for Alternative Schools**

**July 12, 1996**

**State Board of Education  
400 Deaderick Street  
Suite 200 Citizens Plaza  
Nashville, TN 37243-1050  
(615) 741-2966**

## Introduction

In September, 1994 the State Board of Education approved the *School Safety Policy*. This policy called for the Board to establish a School Safety Advisory Council. Members of the School Safety Advisory Council were approved at the December, 1994 Board meeting. This advisory council meets quarterly to address school safety needs. The first issues addressed by the advisory council were violence prevention and alternative schools.

Public Chapter 1045 calls for the Board to define the components of the alternative schools model and to identify the criteria by which each component is to be assessed. The legislation calls for the Department of Education to establish three pilot projects and to assess annually the effectiveness of each. The advisory council had already formed an ad hoc committee to develop a model for alternative schools for Tennessee. Little data were available from which to assess the effectiveness of existing alternative schools. The ad hoc committee developed the concept of an alternative school model.

The project is now titled *Changing Risk to Resiliency: A Model for Alternative Schools* and will serve as an initial model from which to assess the effectiveness of components and strategies for the development of a future policy. The project focuses on two areas. First, the project is designed to provide a learning environment that will effectively assist students to advance academically while in attendance. Second, the project is designed to meet the needs of students who are having serious discipline problems.

Four components comprise the project:

1. The accelerated learning center will assist elementary and secondary students who are at-risk academically before they experience serious discipline problems.
2. The alternative classroom within the school is for elementary and secondary students who have experienced moderate discipline problems and includes placements ranging from 3 to 12 weeks.
3. The alternative school is for elementary and secondary students who have experienced serious discipline problems and includes placements ranging from 12 weeks to 1 year.
4. The judges school is to be developed collaboratively by school systems and the juvenile courts as a last effort to meet the needs of students within the community.

The effectiveness of each project component will be assessed annually. Findings will be reported to the House and Senate Education Committees and to the State Board of Education.

## Changing Risk to Resiliency: a Model for Alternative Schools

### Goal:

*All students and school personnel will have teaching and learning environments that are safe.*

This goal is stated in the Board's *Master Plan* and the Board's *School Safety Policy*. Achieving the goal means that effective measures are taken to ensure that all students are academically successful. Additionally, disruptive students are removed from the traditional classroom setting and placed in an alternative setting in which students advance academically and improve their behavior.

### Need:

*In school year 1993-94 approximately 63,595 students received out-of-school suspensions and 9,476 students were served by an alternative school.*

In September 1995, the Office of Education Accountability presented a report *Tennessee's Alternative Schools: Serving Disruptive Students*. The office reported that in school year 1993-94 approximately 63,595 students received out-of-school suspensions and 9,476 students were served by an alternative school. Furthermore, approximately half of the superintendents responding to a survey indicated that the need for alternative schools exceeds the alternative school capacity in their systems. The report noted that little information was collected by which to measure cost effectiveness or program effectiveness.

### Objective:

*To provide an alternative schools model which academically advances students and assists students in a successful transition back to their regular classrooms or postsecondary training and/or work following high school graduation.*

The report *Tennessee's Alternative Schools: Serving Disruptive Students* states that "all school systems should provide support services to students after they return to their home school." Additionally, it was reported that more guidance counselors and training for counselors already in place are needed to provide the necessary support. Students should advance academically while attending an alternative school.

## How The Project Will Work

The purpose of *Changing Risk to Resiliency: A Model for Alternative Schools* is to establish a model for pilot projects which helps students advance academically and improve their behavior. Students attending a project component should show academic gains as well as gains in self concept, social adjustment, and behavior.

### Project Components

The project includes the following four components:

#### Accelerated Learning Centers

Accelerated learning centers provide remediation to help students become academically successful before experiencing serious discipline problems. The center is based on the findings that tendencies for violence and misbehavior are significantly reduced when students view themselves as academically successful. The center could be located on the school site and serve as a laboratory for the teaching staff.

These are non-traditional learning centers that use interactive technology and integrated, project based learning to help students to reconnect to the learning experience and advance academically. Teachers will serve as mentors/facilitators who assist academically at-risk students to develop a positive self-concept, develop good attendance habits, become academically successful, and display proper behavior.

Elementary and secondary students who have not succeeded to their potential in the regular classroom will be candidates for this center. The school will identify the academically at-risk students and consult with both students and parents before placements are made; both parent and student must agree to placement in the center. Exit points include successful return to the regular classroom or high school graduation linked to work or postsecondary training. Students who are over age are expected to achieve multiple grade level gains and move up to an age appropriate regular classroom.

Students in this setting are expected to conform to standards of behavior. Those students who do not conform to behavior standards will be placed in another setting.

#### Alternative Classrooms

Alternative classrooms help students who are exhibiting moderate discipline problems to improve their behavior and become academically successful. These are on-site placement options for elementary and secondary students who fail to comply with the standards of behavior. Schools will determine the criteria by which students will be placed in alternative classrooms. The duration of placement will be between 3 and 12 weeks.

The alternative classroom will use interactive technology and integrated, project based learning to help students to reconnect to the learning experience and advance academically. While the alternative classroom is academically based and focused, it will be very structured and have the capability to isolate students who continue to refuse to conform to rules. Students with repeated disruptive behaviors in the alternative classroom or with repeated placement in the alternative classroom will be considered for placement in the alternative school.

### **Alternative Schools**

Alternative schools help elementary and secondary students who are exhibiting serious discipline problems to improve their behavior and become academically successful. The duration of placement in the alternative school will be between 12 weeks and 1 year. Students possessing weapons on school grounds may be candidates for placement in these schools. Students failing to comply with the alternative school rules or who have repeated placements may be candidates for juvenile court intervention.

These schools will use interactive technology and integrated, project based learning to help students to reconnect to the learning experience and advance academically. Stringent rules will be in place with absolutely no misbehavior allowed. Transportation to the alternative school may be provided by the school system. Students placed in the alternative school may forfeit all extra curricular activities at their home school. However, students attending the alternative school will be eligible for any extra curricular activities which may be provided at the alternative school.

### **Judge s Schools**

Judges Schools are a last approach for student behavioral remediation following serious discipline problems. These schools are developed collaboratively by juvenile courts and one or more school systems. Placement and duration will be determined jointly by the juvenile courts and the school system. Students possessing weapons on school grounds may be candidates for placement in these schools. These schools are last efforts to address student needs within the community.

## **Component Strategies**

A variety of strategies will be implemented to meet the needs of at-risk students. Participants will have significant flexibility in selecting programs to implement each strategy. Staff development and technical assistance will be required to implement selected programs. It is anticipated that strategies learned through this project will be applied across classrooms throughout the school system.

### **Student Profiles**

Problem students are often angry and do not trust anyone. Participating schools and school systems must be prepared to defuse hostility and anger using research-based strategies. Participating schools and systems must create environments of trust and success. A comprehensive evaluation will be completed when a student enters a project component. The evaluation will focus on such issues as learning styles and adaptive behavior.

### **Behavior**

Specific strategies to address student behavior include peer mediation, conflict resolution, and behavior counseling programs such as the Process Curriculum, the Peaceable School program, the Assertive Discipline, and the Reclaiming Youth At-Risk program. In these programs, students learn successful behaviors and are made aware of problem behaviors.

### **Counseling**

Counseling will be provided while students are attending any of the project components. Community volunteers will assist counselors by serving as mentors for students. Support will be provided for students returning to their regular classrooms by guidance counselors and/or mentors to help ensure successful transitions. Counselors and/or mentors will work closely with classroom teachers to support students returning to the regular classroom.

### **Delivery of Instruction**

Schools participating in the project will maximize the use of technology. In many accelerated learning centers, students have a regular block of time during which core instruction is delivered by computer. The instruction is based on assessments of the students' current performance levels. Instruction is delivered so that sequential objectives are mastered at the students' individual pace. No objectives are skipped, and the student progresses after mastery of each objective.

Alternative school programs have successfully used technology to deliver the bulk of the subject content and to assist students in catching up on basic skills. Participating schools may lease or purchase technologically based instructional programs to deliver content in such areas as basic skills, remediation, vocational instruction, and life skills. Many such alternative schools find that students who could not do well in regular classrooms master content more quickly and retain the content for longer periods using technology. In this way the alternative school becomes an accelerated learning center. Project participants will be introduced to technology based programs such as the Tennessee Skills Net, a segment of the Tennessee Tomorrow Project.

Students will participate in cross-curricular projects and activities beyond the classroom. Students will use technology to access resources in the development of their inquiry. Students will have opportunities to work independently and in groups to produce projects and reports.

When designing the academic delivery system, especially the Accelerated Learning Center, participating school systems will consider the following strategies:

1. Learning is project centered and integrated across the curriculum.
2. Learning is aided by technology, especially through use of the internet.
3. Students of different abilities work together in teams.
4. Students work on significant, real-life community problems.
5. Students explore ideas for the value of learning.
6. Students meet challenging opportunities using basic skills and critical thinking skills.
7. Students learn to become reflective and self monitoring.
8. Student self-esteem is enhanced when tasks that are perceived to be difficult are accomplished; high expectations are established for challenging work.
9. Students see the connection between knowing and doing; they see a connection between education and a career.

### **Family Involvement**

Family involvement will be included in the project design. Programs such as Positive Parent Involvement or other family involvement guides will be implemented. The parents of strong-willed students will receive intensive training in programs such as the Parent Project, the Success is a Thinking Skill program, or the Reality program.

### **Community Engagement**

Community engagement is accomplished by students involved in service learning projects, members of the community interacting with students within the school, in out-of-school settings, and in work-based learning (job shadowing, internships, and apprenticeships). The Office of National and Community Service will be available to provide guidance and technical assistance in establishing service learning projects. Participating school systems will provide venues for community engagement as well as job shadowing, internships and apprenticeships when available.

Community engagement efforts do not necessarily end with the end of the school day or the school session. The successful applicant will include community engagement activities and projects at a variety of instructional levels and at occasions throughout the calendar year.

Career guidance and school-to-work strategies, as appropriate for the grade level, will be integrated throughout each project component. Career guidance strategies will utilize business and industry personnel from a variety of positions to communicate information about the world of work to students. Career guidance strategies will clearly communicate the skill requirements of current jobs as well as those skills projected for future jobs. Students will clearly understand

that people work in order to live and that there is a positive connection between the schooling process and living productive lives.

**Summary of Strategies**

Strategies such as the following may be incorporated in the project components.

Strategy	Acc.LC	Alt.CR	Alt. Sch	J Sch
<b>1. Student Profiles</b>				
Learning style	X	X	X	X
Adaptive behavior		X	X	X
<b>2. Behavior</b>				
Students learn successful behaviors	X	X	X	X
Students are made aware of problem behaviors.		X	X	X
Assertive Discipline	X	X	X	X
Reclaiming Youth At Risk	X	X	X	X
<b>3. Counseling - School/Community provided based on evaluation.</b>				
Support returning to regular classroom	X	X	X	X
Peer mediation	X	X	X	X
Conflict resolution (i.e. Process Curriculum and Peaceable School)	X	X	X	X
Behavior counseling program (i.e. Reality program)		X	X	X
<b>4. Delivery of Instruction</b>				
Technology:				
Catch-up instruction	X	X	X	X
Subject content	X	X	X	X
Integrated/project based learning	X	X	X	X
<b>5. Family Involvement</b>				
Family involvement guide (i.e. Positive Parent Involvement)	X	X	X	X
Programs for intensive parental training (i.e. Parent Project, Success Is a Thinking Skill, and Reality)		X	X	X
<b>6. Community Engagement</b>				
Service learning projects	X	X	X	X
Mentoring				

Within the school	X	X	X	X
Outside the school	X	X	X	X
Work-based learning as appropriate (i.e. job shadowing, internship, and apprenticeship)	X	X	X	X

### **School System Implementation**

Projects will be established in three school systems of less than 7,000 students - one in each grand division - and supported by available state, federal, and local funding through a competitive grant process. Renewal will be based on compliance with the requirements of the *Changing Risk to Resiliency: A Model for Alternative Schools* approved by the State Board of Education. Each project shall consist of the Accelerated Learning Center, the Alternative Classroom, and the Alternative School components with the option of including the Judges School component based on available funds and community needs.

### **Request for Proposals**

The Commissioner of Education will approve grant applications based on the recommendations of a grant review panel. The panel will consist of representatives of the appropriate state agencies and other constituencies appointed by the Commissioner of Education. The following criteria will be used to judge the grant applications:

1. Extent proposed project conforms to the requirements of *Changing Risk to Resiliency: A Model for Alternative Schools*.
2. Extent proposed project assures a high quality academic program.
3. Extent proposed project includes strategies to prevent students placed in the Accelerated Learning Center from being negatively labeled.
4. Extent proposed project assures counseling strategies and mentors from the community to provide support for students.
5. Extent proposed project includes a selection process which is consistent with the requirements of the *Changing Risk to Resiliency: A Model for Alternative Schools*.
6. Extent proposed project is integrated with career guidance and work-based learning strategies.
7. Extent proposed project considers appropriate service delivery options and demonstrates cost effective budgeting and administrative capacity.
8. Extent proposed project identifies procedures for tracking student academic progress.

9. Extent proposed project identifies procedures for tracking improvement in adaptive behavior.
10. Extent proposed project offers potential for replication.
11. Extent proposed project utilizes community resources.
12. Extent proposed project provides local funding in addition to the state grant.

### **Staff Development and Technical Assistance**

When implementing projects, staff development and technical assistance will be needed. The State Department of Education will coordinate staff development and technical assistance activities in the delivery of instruction, community involvement, student management, family involvement, and other appropriate strategies. Research-based programs and other information regarding student management and family involvement appear in Appendix A.

### **Evaluation and Assessment**

The State Department of Education will design a program evaluation and assessment component to commence with the initiation of the projects. The evaluation and assessment of the projects will be designed to provide an initial and long-term student assessment and measure the following:

1. Number and percent of students in a project component who make successful transitions to the regular classroom.
2. Number and percent of students in a project component who successfully complete the grade level or course work.
3. Number and percent of students in a project component who show gains in self concept measures.
4. Number and percent of students in a project component who show improvement in adaptive behavior.
5. Number and percent of students in a project component who show gains in social adjustment measures.
6. Number and percent of students in a project component who maintain satisfactory attendance.
7. Number and percent of students in a project component who drop out of school.
8. Number and percent of students in a project component who are suspended or expelled.
9. Number and percent of students in a project component who become involved in juvenile court.

Survey data on the effectiveness of a project component will be collected from educators who are associated with the project and from students who attend a project component and their parents in the following areas:

1. Academic remediation and advancement
2. Behavior remediation
3. Use of technology
4. Instructional strategies
5. Career guidance strategies
6. Support for students returning to regular classroom
7. Connection of education to life and work
8. Successful student transitions out of the alternative school

Finally, anecdotal data will be collected relating to school climate, school safety, and academic performance across the school system.

## Appendix A

### Student Management

#### General Strategy

Participating school systems will adopt a discipline management system for use in the schools involved in the project. The US Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) will have training materials available for use by schools in September 1996. Participating school systems may choose one of the following or other comparable programs:

**Process Curriculum.** The Process Curriculum teaches conflict resolution principles and processes through a time-limited course or through daily lessons. Typically, time-limited courses include teaching negotiation or mediation over a semester period or in a series of workshops in secondary schools. The Process Curriculum approach is designed to help students better understand and resolve the conflicts they encounter in their lives at school, at home and in the community. Most of the learning takes place through the use of structured activities, such as simulations, group discussions, and cooperative learning activities. The teacher implements the program in short time segments throughout the semester or the school year.

**Peaceable School.** The Peaceable School is a holistic approach to conflict resolution that involves integrating conflict resolution into the curriculum and daily classroom management. The approach uses the instructional methods of cooperative learning and academic controversy. In cooperative learning, students work in small groups with two responsibilities: to learn the assigned material and to ensure that all other group members also learn it. In the academic controversy method, which is contained in the OJJDP training materials, students learn to deal with conflicts that often arise when students work together to design projects. Typically, peaceable classrooms are initiated on a teacher-by-teacher basis and are the building blocks of the peaceable school. Peaceable classrooms encourage learning activities and teachable moments that allow youth to recognize options in conflict situations and to choose those that are nonviolent, meet the needs of all parties to a conflict, and improve relationships.

#### Peer Mediation and Conflict Resolution

Participating school systems will train students in peer mediation and conflict resolution.

**Peer Mediation.** Peer Mediation provides youth and adults with an opportunity to manage conflict and resolve disputes through the assistance of a neutral third party who helps reconcile both substantive issues and relationships. This approach provides mediation services to solve conflicts between youth, conflicts

between youth and adults, and conflicts between adults. Young people trained as peer mediators help resolve youth conflicts involving jealousies, rumors, misunderstanding, bullying and fighting, personal property disputes, and damaged friendships. In addition, young people and adults may serve as co-mediators to resolve disputes between youth and teachers or adult leaders that might involve personality clashes, respect and behavior issues, and other conflicts that diminish student-teacher or mentor-mentee relationships.

**Conflict Resolution.** Conflict Resolution has been an integral tool in juvenile justice facilities and has application in regular and in alternative schools. Conflict Resolution is introduced to supplement existing disciplinary policies and procedures. With opportunity for positive expression and problem resolution, youth in regular and alternative schools learn alternatives to violent and self-defeating behavior.

Youth in alternative placements may lack the foundation skills of conflict resolution, especially those associated with orientation, perception, and emotional capabilities. Many have a sense of personal failure and view success in life as something beyond their ability to achieve. While conflict resolution programs are not personal therapy programs, choosing to offer education in conflict resolution provides a strategy to help address areas of deficiency. The US Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) will have training materials that will prove valuable in implementing conflict resolution.

### **Classroom Management**

Participating school systems will budget for and implement a standard classroom management program that has proven its value in a varied settings. Participating school systems may choose one of the following or other comparable programs. Cooperative purchasing will be utilized in order to take advantage of quantity discounts on the training materials. Assertive Discipline and Reclaiming Youth At Risk are used currently by Tennessee schools which could be available for consultation and technical assistance.

**Assertive Discipline.** Assertive Discipline is available from Lee Cantor and Associates. School systems electing to implement this program will conduct ongoing training in Assertive Discipline, The High Performing Teacher, Positive Parent Involvement, and Succeeding With Difficult Students.

**Reclaiming Youth At Risk.** Reclaiming youth at risk is a program produced by the National Educational Service. School systems electing to implement this program will conduct ongoing training in Reclaiming Youth At Risk, Reconnecting Youth: A Peer Group Approach to Building Life Skills, Safe Schools, and Discipline With Dignity.

NOTE: Each of the suggested classroom management programs (above) has a variety of titles and subsections that may be purchased to support the project.

## **Family Involvement**

Participating school systems will plan for and promote involvement of students' families. Positive Parent Involvement or other family involvement guides may be used as direction for involvement of families. Activities that have previously proven successful within a school may also be utilized.

Involvement of a Family Resource Center, if available, could be used to incorporate home visits and intervention as an option for the project.

Many parents need intense instruction on behavior management of strong-willed children and adolescents who seem intent on engaging in destructive behavior. Training in behavior management for parents will be made available to school representatives involved in parent training and family interaction. Practitioners in these programs are locally available for consultation and technical assistance. Training will be available in the following or comparable programs:

**The Parent Project.** The Parent Project is a weekly (for up to sixteen weeks) training program for parents of strong-willed and out-of-control youth. During the training, parents form support groups to ensure continuing successful use of the behavior management techniques.

**Success Is A Thinking Skill (SIATS).** SIATS is designed to enable students to use effective thinking skills in self evaluation and to set goals that require personal applications. SIATS uses self evaluation skills and helps the student to describe and to view himself positively, think ahead of problems before they happen, think of solutions, and to connect behavior and results.

**Reality.** Reality is an approach to illegal, under-age alcohol and drug use. Youth who have had Juvenile Court involvement because of alcohol and drug use are diverted into the program. The program is provided by trained volunteers with the cooperation of the local sheriff, local clergy, and a local funeral home director.