THE EFFECTS OF A STATE-WIDE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE IN SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of a grant package designed to assist schools to implement conflict management education programs in effecting lasting change within the schools. Participating schools received $3,000 the first year and $1,450 the second. In addition, schools received four days of training for a core team of school leaders, as well eight hours of follow-up consultation, a mid-year reunion of schools, and a large notebook of curriculum materials and program development resources. Results indicate that teachers perceive a moderate to a great deal of change in their schools and that implementation was positively related to school climate, collective efficacy and faculty trust.

Conflict is an inevitable part of any collective activity or organization, including schools. People are in conflict when the actions of one person are interfering, obstructing or in some other way making another's behavior less effective (Tjosvold, 1997, p. 24). Conflict can emerge when interdependent parties perceive incompatible goals or as the result of competition for scarce resources (Boulding, 1963; Deutsch, 1962, 1973; Hocker & Wilmot, 1991). Two major considerations when disputants face a goal and the value of the relationship (Johnson & Johnson, 1988). Solutions, constructive outcomes depend on the importance of goals and of the relationship and, when conflict management skills tend to resort to conflict. In the "fight" condition, disputants pre-through distributive or "win-lose" solutions that the relationship. These solutions tend to be temporary as redress the loss. In the "fight" condition, disputants the goal nor the relationship, giving up on both options more highly than the goal may engage in to the other's wishes. However, people who value both their goal and the relationship with engage in negotiation toward an integrative options tend to result when integrative strategies (Johnson & Johnson, 1996).

Conflict pervades the lives of adolescents around name calling and disrespect; gossip and erty; and dating or friendships issues (Burrell and Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management, 1995). Conflict has the potential for such positive outcomes as generating interpersonal insight, and clarifying priorities. The time, however, potential positive outcomes sometimes often have poor conflict management skills and their conflicts in destructive ways (Johnson & Frederickson, 1997).

Students with inadequate conflict and anger by out violently have created a crisis for schools and Disease Control found that one in 25 high school (Bodine & Crawford, 1998). The resultant fear is learning process. Teachers also are negatively in management skills. One out of every five teachers physical threats from students in the past twelve months.

In the wake of a series of highly publicized that substantially more security conscious. But metal...
only go so far. They fail to get to the root of the problem. Some educators are coming to question the practice of suspending and expelling students who engage in violent activities as inadequate solutions because those young adults remain in our society and yet have not learned adequate strategies for coping with conflict.

Students can be taught skills to resolve their differences with others in constructive ways. Conflict management programs in schools are providing concrete strategies to help students gain these skills. Conflict management is a philosophy and a set of skills that assist individuals and groups in better understanding and dealing with conflict as it arises in all aspects of their lives. Students are trained in negotiation and mediation skills to enable them to work toward integrative solutions where the needs of both parties are met without damage to the relationship (Johnson & Johnson, 1996).

Although conflict management education has been used in schools since the mid 1970's, there are relatively few studies that examine its effectiveness. Many of those studies that do exist suffer from weak methodologies (Johnson & Johnson, 1996). In the studies that have taken a systematic look at the effects of these programs, the results are promising. In a study of middle school students, 88% of students trained in negotiation techniques listed three or more of the negotiating steps in describing how they would manage a conflict, whereas only 1% of the control group students who did not receive training could do so. When the same students were asked how they would respond to two conflict scenarios, 50% of the trained students indicated they would initiate negotiations to resolve the conflict on both scenarios, while fewer than 10% of the control students indicated they would do so. Thus, there were significant differences in the change scores and in the outcome measures of both knowledge of and intention to use conflict resolution strategies after training (Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, Mitchell & Frederickson, 1997). Similar results were found among elementary school students (Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, & Magnuson, 1995). A 4-week multi-media violence prevention computer program used to teach anger management and conflict resolution skills to seventh grade students indicated that trained students reported greater knowledge of and intention to use prosocial behaviors such as using discussion to de-escalate a conflict. Students also reported a significant increase in use of actual prosocial behaviors such as helping others and a decrease in name-calling (Bosworth, Espelage, & DuBay, 1998).

There is intriguing evidence that teaching conflict management skills not only helps students get along with one another, it also can improve their comprehension of core curriculum subjects. High school English students in one study received conflict training in conjunction with the study of a novel. The control group spent the same two-week period studying the unit the students who had received conflict training students did better on a test over the novel than the students who were not studying the novel. The trained students not only learned the material better but also were better able to interpret the interpersonal interactions (Stevahn, Johnson, Johnson, Green, & Laginski, 1997).

Although there is evidence that conflict training has a positive impact on individual students, school-wide effects have not been examined. Little is known about effective means of cultivating these programs in schools. Through stories and statistics, this section of a grant program that gave 50 high schools access to a curriculum for implementing a program of conflict management instruction. The grant program offered schools a package of services; an initial grant of $3,000 followed by second-year funding to schools that demonstrated sufficient progress toward implementing conflict management instruction in the grant application. In addition, schools received a half-day summer for a core team of 4 school leaders that had to work as a team as well as access to 8 hours of follow-up training with the core team and a second team for the entire school. A school leader was also responsible for coordinating school-wide efforts to integrate the curriculum materials and program development resources into the school's existing curriculum. It is hoped that the delivery method was successful in culturing safe schools beyond the end of funding and the effectiveness of schools safer and improving school climate. The relative, the collective sense of efficacy and the level of faculty support are explored.

**METHOD**

This study utilizes both qualitative and quantitative data to describe the impact of conflict management education in 50 high schools. Both types of data were collected: document analysis, interview data, and surveys.

**THE SAMPLE**

The sample for this study was 50 high schools in Ohio selected based on the following criteria:

- program sponsored by The Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution in Education Management and The Ohio Department of Education
ment programs in their schools. Fifty schools received initial grants of $3,000, and 43 of them received follow-up grants of $1,450. Document analysis was made of the grant applications and action plans from all 50 schools. Schools were asked to complete a Program and Fiscal Report at the end of the first year of funding, and data from 37 of the 50 schools were available for analysis. In addition, interview data were collected from 30 schools. Site visits were made to ten of the recipient schools -3 urban-high schools, 4 suburban schools, and 3 rural schools. Between one and three teachers and administrators were interviewed at each site visit school for a total of 16 interviews. Telephone interviews were conducted with core team members from an additional 20 schools. Interviews were conducted in the spring of the third year after initial funding. These 36 interviews were audio-taped and transcripts were analyzed.

Also during the spring after the end of funding, 452 teachers from 14 schools completed surveys on the implementation and impact of the programs as well as on several school-level variables such as school climate, collective efficacy and faculty trust. These data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlational analysis. The survey instruments are described below, followed by the results of both qualitative and quantitative investigations.

The Survey Instruments
Faculty surveys on the degree of implementation and impact of the conflict management programs were sent to schools to be administered during a regularly scheduled faculty meeting (Lindsay, 1998). Perceptions of school climate (Hoy, Hannum, & Tschannen-Moran, 1998), the collective sense of efficacy among teachers (Goddard, Hoy & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001), and the level of trust in the school (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999) were also assessed.

Implementation and impact. Implementation and impact of the conflict management programs were measured using twelve items. Responses were on a four-point scale with anchors of: To a great degree, To a moderate degree, To a small degree or Not at all (Lindsay, 1998). Sample items include:

- To what degree has the conflict resolution program contributed toward a safer school environment?
- To what degree do you integrate the skills and concepts from the conflict resolution curriculum into the curricula you teach?

School climate. School climate was assessed using the School Climate Index (SCI) that captures important shared perceptions of group functioning (Hoy, Hannum & Tschannen-Moran, 1999). The SCI consists of 62 items including Collegial Leadership, Teacher Professionalism, Academic Pressure. The scale consists of 42 items with responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Sample items include:

- Teachers accomplish their jobs with enthusiasm.
- The school sets high standards for academic performance.
- Collective efficacy. Collective efficacy is the shared belief that they have the capacity to make a positive difference for those students who may be difficult or unmotivated. Efficacy were captured on a 21 item scale with responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Sample items include:

- Teachers in this school are able to get through the day.
- Teachers here are confident they will be able to get through the day.

Faculty trust. The degree of faculty trust was measured through trust in the principal; faculty trust in colleagues; and parents. Faculty trust in students and in parents contributes to the subscale of trust. There were 31 items with responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Sample items include:

- Teachers in this school can rely on the principal.
- Teachers in this school have faith in the integrity of the principal.
- Teachers in this school trust their students.

In the following sections, qualitative and quantitative descriptions of the implementation, impact and implications are reported. This includes a description of the need schools perceive for conflict education, as well as a description of the three conflict management programs to school climate, collective efficacy and faculty trust. Challenges and successes at parent and community meetings that went beyond the initial plans are also discussed. Implications for future research are offered.

Program Implementation
When asked why they had pursued the grant program for conflict education, the school personnel interviewed said the level of fighting and disrespect that they saw in the...
with the traditional means they had at their disposal for addressing these behaviors. The grant program gave them hope that more productive strategies could be found. One teacher aptly expressed the sentiments of many:

Clearly violence has gotten out of control. Kids are scared and our hands are tied. We have to do something as an entire country about violence and certainly we need to take a stand. But just saying we have zero tolerance hardly solves the problem. Kids have to learn better ways to solve problems without knives or fists.

For schools to fulfill their mission of educating young people and preparing them to function effectively in adult society, learners must feel both physically and psychologically safe. Students need to be free from threats and danger. An advisor for a conflict management program in one high school reiterated the urgency he felt to communicate these conflict management skills:

It is a critical part of education. You can’t learn when the environment is conflicted or when there is a lot of hostility and tension. Kids can be present physically here, but that doesn’t mean that education is taking place. I don’t see this as an option. We’ve got to do this program.

There was flexibility within the grant program for schools to select which strategies of conflict education they wanted to implement in their schools.

Three approaches characterized the means schools used to instruct students in conflict management philosophy and skills. Some schools emphasized the infusion of conflict education into the regular curriculum, others chose to train a cohort of students to serve as peer mediators, and still others organized special events to teach and publicize alternative conflict resolution strategies and attitudes. Schools in the grant program often combined two or more of the approaches.

1. **Curriculum Infusion**

   Curriculum infusion is an approach that seeks to make students aware of conflicts and choices for negotiating and resolving conflicts across the curriculum in academic as well as applied classes so that most or all of the students were exposed to conflict management strategies. In this approach, teachers make use of conflict management concepts and strategies to enhance students’ learning of the curricula they teach. They also make use of the conflict management skills to discipline students and to foster their ability to discipline themselves. For this study, 71% said they had integrated the skills of conflict management curriculum into the curricula they taught. Schools were able to train the entire faculty in conflict management that they could use them in their classrooms and schools approach throughout the school.

   About half of the schools reported a school-wide program that they had instituted programs grade-level wide. Of these, to incorporate conflict management training into a high school required for all entering freshmen. Eighty-six percent of their teachers designated class time for special lessons on conflict management. Almost three quarters (73%) of schools indicated that “teachable moments” as a strategy to get across conflict management skills was evident in the lesson they were teaching, in history or from a novel, or when student conflict emerged. Teachers were asked to discuss the relevant concepts of conflict management could be applied to the current situation. A mean of 2.6 of the teachable moments strategy, with a range of between 1 and 15 school during the first year of the program.

   Because of the newness of this approach, schools had to get the message out about their conflict resolution environment. Some reported using posters to encourage the use of conflict management strategies, to advertise the media center, and to remind students about the steps of conflict resolution assemblies to educate students about alternative conflict management. Schools demonstrated the mediation process, and to give testing ideas. One principal described the assembly at his school:

   We have an assembly at the beginning of the year. We talk about accepting people who are different than ourselves. Building for 180 days, there are going to be people who will not agree. And we give them an option for handling those situations. We have seen a reduction in the number of fights. We think this is a nice option.
conflict management concepts and strategies were used by 41% of the schools. Over half of the schools (54%) said that they used school-wide themes, such as Peace Week, to teach and publicize their conflict management initiatives. (See Figure 1.)

Some subject-matter teachers were easily able to see how issues of conflict could be incorporated into their subject matter. English teachers were able to see the connections to literature and writing and were among the early adopters. Almost 75% of the schools reported having at least one English teacher who was using the conflict management curriculum at the end of the first year. Two thirds of the schools reported that Social Studies teachers had made use of the curriculum in their classes. Health and Family and Consumer Science teachers reported that conflict management was already represented in their curriculum to some extent. Some used the materials offered at the grant program training to supplement the curriculum. One teacher particularly liked the introduction of the idea of seeing a situation from different perspectives:

![Figure 1: School-wide Activities](image)

- **School-wide themes**
- **Videos**
- **Announcements**
- **Assemblies**
- **Posters**

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80%

Physical education, math, and science teachers recognized the value of developing skills, because their students were expected to work on teams, doing labs, or challenging one another's cognitive growth. Science teachers were also able to explore ethical issues within science that invite debate and thoughtful examination of the consequences of professional, career, and business courses acknowledged constructive means of dealing with conflicts that inevitably arise as an important skill contributing to student employability. Teachers found it valuable to teach their students skills (Figure 2.).

In addition to using the lessons from the Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and for regular classroom lessons, several schools indicated that school suspensions and Saturday School made use of students who were being punished skills to make better choices. A high school offered a six-week anger management class as an alternative to reduce out-of-school suspension time.

The program described the process:

I have a prevention specialist who comes in and for every classes we have as alternatives to out-of-school suspensions consistently for two groups a week for every week during the school year. The size is generally six to eight people. 75 percent of the kids have not had further difficulties.

This urban high school has instituted a comprehensive program that includes a variety of support groups, seminars, and intervention strategies, including tutoring to assist students to respect their diversity. Not seeing it as something that everybody is different, but seeing how exciting it is an opportunity.

![Figure 2: School-wide Activities](image)
and support groups for a variety of the traumas faced with a drug-addicted parent or being the victim of school violence. The success of a pilot program with one group of ninth grade students was devoted to teaching conflict management skills.

Teachers in these high schools had capitalized on common concepts and skills in their classrooms to increase understanding of the subjects they taught. Teachers perceived that students had made use of the skills they taught and between the students had enhanced students’ negotiation skills and to reinforce constructive conflict management.

2. Peer Mediation

Peer mediation is another strategy that schools employ to manage and prevent violence. Peer mediation is a process in which students who are trained to mediate conflicts among peers are referred to a student who has an unresolved dispute. The mediator's role is to find a mutually acceptable solution to the dispute and to ensure that solutions of conflicts that had been mediated are implemented. Peer mediation can be a powerful tool to reduce intractable problems of violence and fighting in schools. For this study, 86% reported that students had been trained to resolve conflicts to some degree, and 54% stated that conflict mediation had been used. In interviews, most schools reported a reduction in violence as a result of peer mediation and conflict resolution. An exemplary example was provided by a high school principal who described the effect the peer mediation program had on student behavior:

I tell them that this is the last stop before the bus (to mediation), they will get some sort of punishment. The student where we’ve had two kids get into a fight, then some time down the line gotten back into a fight, it does not happen. All the kids have been able to get along and not lose face. ... We just don’t have as many fights as we used to. Now I can count on two hands the number of fights we’ve had this year. That’s easily an all-time low.
the program, you could easily double the number of suspensions this year. It’s been very good.

Peer mediator advisors talked about trying to get a diverse group of students trained as mediators, and making use of that diversity in assigning mediators to disputants. One advisor commented that when he had two students from one peer group fighting he might use a student of a different race or economic level as the mediator. He felt it helped the disputants to gain a new perspective on their dispute. In selecting mediators, advisors also were sensitive to who would have credibility with their peers. One assistant principal explained:

We chose the kids that probably had been in a few fights themselves, instead of taking what some might call “the really good kids” that really don’t understand what it’s like to get in a fight. If we get some kids involved that have a reputation that they’ve been a little bad from time to time, then some of the kids that go in there will be more open to an equal, somebody who understands what they are talking about. And it’s funny how those kids who are now trying to keep peace in the school are taking a different approach to what their role is in the high school.

Sometimes being referred to mediation has turned out to be a life-changing event, a moment of conversion. For one student in an urban high school, this was the case:

One of my peer mediators is just dynamic. She’s a junior this year. I don’t think anybody thought she was going to make it because her behavior was so out of control her freshman and sophomore year. At the very beginning of the year, she was referred to mediation. She and her best friend had separated because her friend, who’s a senior this year, had matured and thought that her behavior was so outrageous that she couldn’t be around her. And that affected her a great deal. We went through the mediation process. This young lady was impressed by that. I invited her to the training and she came. She has been wonderful this year. She doesn’t skip school this year. She’s passing with good grades. There have been no disciplinary actions against this girl this year, which I just find amazing if you could look at her past records. We had a celebration at Christmas before we went on winter break, and she thanked the group for including her. She said, “I never thought I could be a part of a positive group.”

An advisor in a rural school told of another instance where the mediator made a significant difference for a student for whom low expectations. She described this special mediator:

One of my most successful mediators in terms of really helping students work through things, to understand other students’ peripheral problems and work through them, is a Handicapped student. He is very strong in mediation within the state. He was on stage accepting his award, which is the funding scholarships and going off to Harvard and Yale too! The newspaper picked up on that — put his picture and a story on what he was doing. That was very exciting! He is the of eleven children in his family, and he was the first one in school.

Many schools reported that they used peer mediation to reduce time spent in suspension. Most found it to be a useful amount of learning time lost when students missed school. Several administrators and teachers expressed the desire to reduce suspensions altogether, seeing the teaching of conflict resolution as a much more constructive response to student misbehavior.

Mediation services in schools have not been limited to student conflicts. Some schools have used the mediation services between students and teachers. They have also used the approach to resolve conflicts between cafeteria workers and other adult school personnel. There are a few schools have made it a priority to train bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and custodians and other non-certified personnel in these skills.

Peer mediation has proven to be a powerful tool for resolving conflicts within schools. Several factors seem to be of particular importance in making peer mediation programs work. These include administrative support, winning over reluctant faculty, breaking into the existing structure, overexacting logistic challenges, and empowering students to use the skills they have gained. These factors are discussed below.

**Administrative Support.** Advisors repeatedly commented on the importance of having administrative support in order to make a peer mediation program work. They said that it was the principal who set the overall vision for the school, and that if peer mediation was not a part of that vision...
cooperation from other faculty members. To be most effective, conflict management philosophies need to be written into the school discipline code and reinforced through the kinds of disciplinary actions taken. Without administrative support it is very difficult to overcome logistic obstacles such as scheduling, finding space, and facilitating communication. One teacher reiterated the importance of administrative support:

Oh, I think that's the whole issue. If you don't have administrator support, the staff isn't going to buy into it. It's just not going to happen. You have to have some leadership who believes that this has some value. [If not,] you just don't get the referrals. You don't get the buy in from the faculty.

Principals of effective programs talked about the benefit they had felt personally from the success of the peer mediation program. It freed them up from the time consuming task of addressing student disputes themselves. They saw the value of giving students the skills to work through problems on their own as an effective means to prevent violence. A student body that was skilled in positive conflict management strategies made their lives and work easier.

**Winning faculty over.** One challenge to program implementation was to convince faculty members that peer mediation was a realistic approach and to get them to make referrals for mediation. Teams attempted a variety of strategies to get the word out about the value of the services offered. They conducted mock mediation demonstrations at faculty meetings and at school-wide assemblies. One teacher used drama students and student mediators to produce a video tape of the mediation process, so that administrators and teachers could observe the process outside of busy school hours. She also used it as a way to have mediators critique their own performance. One media specialist had teams of students produce public service announcements demonstrating the use of conflict management strategies in realistic conflict situations. These tapes were broadcast as part of the morning announcements to teach and promote the use of conflict management skills. One spot was selected to air on the local public access channel on television. Other schools made announcements and sent memos to continually remind the faculty that their services were still available and to encourage referrals. Despite these efforts, communication to a large faculty was a challenge.

Winning over fellow faculty members can be a slow process, but those schools with an active peer mediation program reported steady progress once teachers and administrators began to see positive results. One teacher told the story of persuading an entire department in one incident:

I'm still lacking in the support of all the faculty. One by one, however, when they've had the opportunity to actually see problems and see what the impact is in their classrooms, they decide mediation of an entire class. The whole class had divided up nothing was getting done because there was this constant stalemate in a class that was dependent on doing projects and work. Each of the groups select a spokesperson and make a case. Then the two spokespersons went to mediation and worked it out. Everyone in the class signed the agreement. And it didn't disappear; the entire department was sold on it. We also mediated the band. They weren't speaking to each other and they reorganized or the band doesn't function. The music reflected the section wasn't together in many ways. We worked that out.

Once teachers made referrals that were successfully resolved, many of them became believers. But this process can take time. The most well established peer mediation programs in the state have been in place for five years or more.

**Peer culture.** Breaking into the youth culture, making it relevant can be one of the most challenging obstacles in implementation program. As more elementary and middle schools begin to implement mediation programs it is in some cases having the unintended consequence of making high school students less willing to make use of the program, a principal explained:

I think the most frustrating thing was that although not a building who have been exposed to mediation from age 3 it's still culturally not acceptable for the high school student. When we have, they have been very satisfied. But it's student into using mediation. What they say, when they can't keep it, is "That's kids' stuff."

Yet, mediators have been able to diffuse some emotionally complex situations. Occasionally, the adult advisors will stay in mediation if they feel that it is a potentially volatile situation. In most
adults are just on call in a nearby office or hallway. That's what mediators and disputants alike seem to like about the process--that it is student led. One student found a creative way to make mediation more acceptable in her school:

One student had the idea to go into the lunch room because that is where the conflict happens. She would start a mediation right there in the lunch room. She began to change the way she thought about it because she was so excited about what she was doing. She started getting it more into the school culture.

Once students experience a successful mediation, they are more willing to use the process again in the future.

Training. Ongoing training is an important part of sustaining a peer mediation program. Many of the schools used the grant money to have students and adult advisors trained in the peer mediation process. Some of the adults received additional training in order to be trainers themselves. Where that hadn't happened, schools experienced difficulty once their trained mediators began to graduate and move on. Finding additional funds to pay for training proved difficult. One advisor spoke in frustration of having made a request for $250 from his district to pay to have more student mediators trained. The request was denied due to serious budget constraints within the district. As a result, the future of a program that this advisor felt had begun to make a significant impact on his school was uncertain. Several schools addressed this issue by incorporating the training into an already established class. One high school developed a semester-long class devoted to conflict management skills. Students who completed the class could be recommended to become peer mediators. Not all the students from the class had the time or were interested in becoming peer mediators. Others who wanted to be mediators and were not able to work the class into their schedules were trained through the more common workshop method. Two schools of the thirty interviewed reported offering students a quarter credit for 30 hours of service in mediation.

Logistic challenges. Schools struggled with a variety of logistic challenges in implementing their peer mediation programs. Even when advisors were committed to making the program work there were a number of obstacles to be overcome. Scheduling was a major problem in some schools. Finding time when a mediator and the disputants could all meet was often difficult. Some teachers were unwilling to have students leave class for mediation. Some schools began by just offering mediation during lunch periods, or sometimes just during the first period of the day. In schools where the advisor was a classroom teacher, it was difficult to work around that teacher's schedule. One school had trained enough teachers to be available throughout the school day during their preparation period but were no longer available for mediation. One faculty advisor recommended that the advisor be someone in the administration, or someone with special training. Otherwise it could be difficult to get the cooperation of others. Finding private space was also a challenge for some schools.

We don't have space for this. You have to have a room, a place for the activity to go on. Because we are saying to the kids that we need someone, that we want you to be at ease and what you say is going to count. The room. We tried to get an old, defunct bathroom, but they said no. So we moved into that. We tried to use the AV room, but then when that didn't work, we tried the stairwell. That was tough.

These challenges hampered programs from being as active as participants would have liked. However, most were struggling with the value they saw the programs bringing to the students and the community.

Probably the biggest obstacle faced by schools was when the core team left the school. Changes in leadership were not always positive, however. In at least two schools, struggling programs might have benefited from a change in leadership. In one case a new principal arrived who was supportive of the idea, but he did not have much experience with mediation. In another school, a new principal, who had been a teacher at the school, was new to the principalship. He was able to maintain their programs to some degree but were struggling with some of the same constraints and had difficulty finding even minimal resources for the program. They had to find ways to make the program work with the resources they had. Other schools, however, were able to maintain their programs. In one case, the school was able to find an alternative program. All of the faculty on the core team had been involved in the program. In another school, the core team maintained their programs with the help of new students. Some schools were able to maintain their programs with the help of new students. They were able to maintain their programs with the help of new students. They were able to maintain their programs with the help of new students. They were able to maintain their programs with the help of new students.

Empowering students to train others. Another stumbling block for some schools was the decision to train students to mediate. In some schools, the decision to train students to mediate was made without input from the students. The decision was made by the adults in charge of the program. In other schools, the decision was made by the students. They were able to make the decision to train students to mediate. In schools where the decision was made by the students, it was often made with the help of the adults in charge of the program. In schools where the decision was made by the adults, it was often made without input from the students. They were able to make the decision to train students to mediate. In schools where the decision was made by the adults, it was often made without input from the students. They were able to make the decision to train students to mediate.
schools found for using their trained mediators was to have them do outreach into the community to teach others the skills they have learned. Several schools began by teaching mediation skills to teachers and students in the elementary schools in their own districts. One suburban high school decided that they could increase their impact by reaching out to the nearby urban school district to train elementary students.

We have been training elementary students as “Playground Pros” and they do mediation on the playground. The young kids really look to our kids as leaders and that really reinforces our kids ... It's the outreach and the helping others that keeps our program going strong. We had a group visiting from Ireland. There was a situation of conflict and we were able to show them how peer mediation worked. It gave our students an opportunity to share and be affirmed. There is nothing more empowering. That experience was so vital for students. At this age, it's important for kids to feel needed and useful. They begin to look at themselves differently.

These students were also asked to do a mock mediation for students at a nearby law school. Outside recognition of their work and of the value of the skills they possessed helped students in several schools to recognize for themselves the power of these processes. Empowering students to reach out to train others in the skills they had gained generated renewed excitement and vigor in the programs. One advisor talked about the dynamic of empowering students through the mediation process:

It's the peer mediation programs that make everything come alive. If you just do infusion into the curriculum and classroom management, these kids aren't empowered to use the skills themselves. It's just “the teachers told me to do it this way,” another adult-to-kid, telling them what to do. It's the peer program that empowers the kids.

Schools that had taken the risk to empower their students to act as peer mediators enthusiastically reported the many positive benefits they had gained.

3. Special Events
A third approach which schools employed to publicize their conflict management programs and to raise awareness of issues of diversity and tolerance was to sponsor special events. These events were used to teach alternative methods of resolving conflicts, to celebrate diversity, to motivate students to make a commitment to choosing peaceful alternatives, and to publicize other conflict resolution initiatives in the school. One high school held a Peace Breakfast at which the school staff, office personnel, and community members who they looked up to were asked to share their work. Another held an annual Multicultural Fair, a day-long event to celebrate different cultural traditions represented in the school. It included food, games, and cultural artifacts from various countries around the world. Among those from the community were a group of students from the elementary school that the high school worked with. This event was successful in promoting peace and understanding among the students.

Several schools designated a whole week of activities for Peace Management Week. During Peace Week at one urban school, students were encouraged to sign a pledge, adapted from Martin Luther King Jr.'s I Have a Dream Pledge, committing themselves to eradicate racism, to use nonviolent techniques in interacting with others, and to promote tolerance and understanding of others. The students then participated in a contest on the theme of peace, diversity, and nonviolence. The winning entries were displayed in the school's corridors and a Peace Rally as well as a door decorating contest were held. Another school designed a “Peace Graffiti Wall” and distributed “Kindness Cards” to students for something they did to make the place. Students were also recognized, during the morning announcements, for contributions to the community.

Another kind of special activity was putting students who had been referred to the school for behavior referrals to work together with a diverse group of students. The school used the grant money, in conjunction with other funds, to take a class of 40 students twice a year for the past three years. They have had a diverse group of students who do not generally have much interaction. The principal explained:

They are forced to work together to solve these problems, and believable things happen. We've seen people who were not friends before that other and it's like an equal partnership by the end of the year; cooperation and trust were important.
The number of fights in this school has declined by more than half. The principal felt that the combination of conflict management training and the campus program had had a significant impact on the school culture.

**PROGRAM IMPACT**

The impact of the conflict management education programs were felt at a variety of levels. Teachers changed the way they taught, and saw changes in student behavior. Schools also witnessed school-wide changes in the level of school safety, as well as school climate, collective efficacy and faculty trust. As the result of the enthusiasm generated among both students and teachers, some schools also experienced a snowball effect.

**PROGRAM ELEMENTS**

The grant program investigated in this study included a four-day training in August, an extensive collection of curriculum activities, grant money that could be spent for the resources the school felt it needed, with the possibility to reapply for a second year as long as progress had been made, and access to eight hours of consultation. It seemed to be an effective combination of resources and services, far more effective than any one component alone. Although a few of the fifty schools already had conflict management programs in place and used the grant to expand or build new facets into the program, for most of schools this program provided an introduction to conflict management skills.

**TRAINING**

Most of the schools found the training to be helpful. When asked how beneficial the training was, the initial training team leaders completing evaluations rated it an average rating of 7.0 on a ten-point scale. For those schools that were new to conflict management concepts, the training provided a good introduction and overview. Others who were already familiar with the concepts felt that it was too much of a review and wished there had been more flexibility in meeting the needs of teams who were at different levels. Participants also reported uneven quality in the break-out sessions. Some were very practical and well-run by presenters whose enthusiasm was contagious. Others were lackluster and disorganized. In general, teams appreciated having time to work together on planning and time to meet with their consultant.

Almost all of the participants gave positive ratings to the follow-up training in which schools shared what progress they had made and what challenges they still faced. The mean rating was 8.4 out of 10. The comments were typical:

> The one-day follow-up training was especially helpful, giving me so many ideas of things they had done throughout the year. It was helpful to see all the resources available. It helped me be more successful and what has not worked very well. It gave me an opportunity to see where we are in comparison to others.

Advisors wished that teams had been asked to bring their best things they had done.

**CONSULTATION**

In general the feedback on the consultation portion of the program was positive. The mean rating for the consultation was 7.3 out of 10. There was a wide discrepancy of opinion. Some found their work with consultants to be very valuable, as was the case for this teacher:

> At least for our school, we found this part of the grant to be very important...perhaps worth more than the money! We worked the full eight hours of consultation hours provided in any renewal grant.

Other schools did not find their consultant as helpful. They mentioned difficulty in access, complaining that they had only had contact with their consultant or no contact at all. On-going technical support of consultants seemed to be a valuable part of the program.

**GRANT MONEY**

Schools used the funds in a variety of ways. The most important use of the grant was time, in terms of stipends and travel costs for administrators to come to the training. It also bought additional training sessions and instructional materials. The money was used to bring outside trainers to train the team leaders, to buy instructional resources such as videotapes, books, and manuals, and to purchase staff development for their peer mediator teams. Peer mediators were sometimes given pencils, with school.
Mediate" or book marks with "Ten ways to effectively resolve disputes nonviolently." Although these items were small, programs that were not able to find the money to continue purchasing these items missed having them after the end of the grant.

The grant program was a positive experience for the schools involved. They were very appreciative of the kinds of resources and support they had received. They were excited by the results they were having with students. Receiving the grant not only provided schools with necessary resources, it also provided legitimacy and prestige. Schools reported that their efforts were taken more seriously because of the grant and because of the sponsorship of the Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management and the Ohio Department of Education. These schools said that receiving the grant was crucial to getting the program underway.

One administrator explained:

The funding was very important for the project. It was the spark, the seed that got this thing going. It gave us a focus, a goal to shoot for to implement something we felt was needed. We felt like our kids were beating up on each other and squabbling all the time. We thought this was something we could use to help us to cut down this problem. If the grant hadn't come along, we probably wouldn't have peer mediation here, I'd almost bet you. I would have to say that it has significantly helped us bring peace to our students and give them a positive way to resolve conflict. This has given us hope that there is a way to deal with our kids other than dealing out punishments, that we can help resolve problems in a positive way.

As the result of the enthusiasm generated by faculty and administrators who were impressed by the results, these programs have grown and flourished. Many of the grant recipients became passionately committed to the conflict management philosophy, provoking teachers and administrators to go well beyond the hours for which they were paid to teach students constructive nonviolent means of resolving conflicts. Summing up her experience with the grant program, one teacher concluded:

It seemed at the time like it was a lot of work, but the students benefitted so much. It was a minimal amount of time for me compared to what we got.

As important as the grant was to getting schools started with implementation, it did not last long enough to get programs solidly established. It felt that two years was too short a time to get a new program to persuade reluctant administrators to come up with the resources to continue the program. A teacher explained:

I don't think that two years is really enough time to institute a program in a building where the whole culture has to change. You have to change the system of beliefs so it takes longer than two years.

The most successful programs had combined the resources of the program with other prevention initiatives such as Safe and Drug Free school money. One overwhelmed guidance counselor expressed a grated approach to funding programs for character education, anger management, drug, alcohol, and tobacco prevention, and procedure because the underlying skills in all these initiatives were the biggest unmet needs schools reported was staff time. Few programs provide release time to teachers for their involvement in this difficult to expect faculty members to sustain a program on voluteer work beyond their regular responsibilities. Most high schools felt that a prevention specialist or coordinator to oversee these programs was a solution to the long haul.

**PROGRAM EFFECTS**

**LONG RANGE EFFECTS**

Results of the survey on the degree of implementation and impact of conflict management programs in schools indicate the ways that these programs were making a discernable difference. A year after the end of the program:

- almost 90% of the teachers surveyed said that the school degree as a result of the implementation of the conflict programs;
- nearly half (47%) said that the conflict management programs to a safer school environment to a moderate or a great deal;
- more than 80% said that the degree of physical fighting in the school to some degree since the start of the conflict management;
- 40% of the teachers saw a decrease of a moderate or a great deal;
Not only were schools safer as a result of the implementation of these conflict management programs, teachers saw benefits extend to their classrooms.

- 70% of the teachers surveyed said that the conflict management program had reduced the amount of time they spent resolving student disputes, and
- 87% said that they had used conflict management techniques for dealing with classroom management and discipline to some degree.

Teachers also witnessed changes in their students as the result of instruction in conflict management.

- 87% saw an increase in students’ willingness to cooperate with each other, thought students had begun to use the skills taught, and observed students begin to use negotiation skills to deal with interpersonal problems to some degree.
- 86% had seen students begin to take responsibility for solving their own problems without asking for adult help.

These are remarkable results given the typically poor track records of programs continuing past the end of funding and the modest size of the initial grant awards.

SCHOOL-WIDE EFFECTS

The degree of implementation and impact of conflict management programs had an impact that was felt schoolwide. It was significantly positively correlated with teachers’ perceptions of a number of important variables such as school climate (Hoy, Hannum, & Tschanne-Moran, 1998), the collective sense of efficacy among teachers (Goddard, 1998), and the level of trust in the school (Tschanne-Moran & Hoy, 1998).

School climate. Teachers who witnessed a greater degree of implementation and impact of conflict management programs also tended to perceive a more positive school climate \( r = .37, p < .01 \). Degree of implementation was also linked to the subscales of school climate, including collegial leadership, teacher professionalism, and academic press. Implementation was significantly positively correlated to the collegial leadership of the principal \( r = .31, p < .01 \), to the degree of teacher professionalism \( r = .30, p < .01 \) and a greater emphasis on academics within the school \( r = .38, p < .01 \).

Collective efficacy. Conflict management implementation was related to the collective sense of efficacy, that is, the degree to which teachers and their colleagues could have a positive impact on student achievement and external environmental factors \( r = .28, p < .01 \). Collective efficacy was shown to have a positive effect on student achievement (Bandura, 1997; Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

Faculty trust. Finally, the degree of implementation was positively linked to level of trust in the principal \( r = .26, p < .01 \), fellow teachers \( r = .19, p < .01 \), and in students and parents \( r = .30, p < .01 \). Faculty trust in school programs was also positively linked to student achievement (Goddard & Tschanne-Moran, 1998). These correlations demonstrate the potentially far reaching impact that school programs may have in contributing to overall school improvement.

COMMUNITY AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Fostering community and parental involvement was a key component of many schools. Some schools included parents and community members in a core team that did the initial planning for the grant, but more than likely they had been more successful at sustaining this kind of involvement in high school initiated a Community Advisory Board for their school. They made it a district-wide, K-12 committee and include community representatives to try to keep the momentum going in the district.

Core Teams made a number of efforts to inform parents and made presentations at the parent association meetings and the school newsletter. A few were successful in getting local articles on their conflict management services. Getting parents more involved was a challenge because parent involvement typically is not a high priority. Many schools offered workshops in conflict management strategies and included parents in the training. Since most of the parents did not come to the workshops, they were made available in the community. One thing that frequently suffered was finding ways to celebrate and with parents. One teacher told the story of a parent who had witnessed his daughter mediating a conflict.

On Saturday we had a big fair at the convention center. We bring down displays. One of my friends who teaches at the school came by, so I gave him one of our [Conflict Management] books. He used it with one of his students with him. When he went out on
I laugh because when we first applied to get the grant for the superintendent and get his approval. He looked at me and said, "How much money?" "Well, we've got enough money. It's a secret pleasure of mine to realize that we've done it."

This school, as many others in the program, was able to make a significant impact in their school. Due to the enthusiasm of the superintendent, this teacher was able to extend the resources of the grant program to create a larger impact than expected.

We've done all that we planned and more.

It was an unusual process because I had to keep filling the budget. At one time I would plan something, I would get too much or too little from the budget. At another time I would plan something, and I'm not going to charge you. Because they believed in the program, the end of the year, I had almost all of that $3,000 left. I could compile a list of resources that we shared with the community.

Not only was a program begun in the high school, but the middle school, and all five elementary schools. The conflict management became a passion for students as well. The handwriting project, on the part of students, the program was then extended to other schools.

We started that [conflict management program], and it's been going strong. The elementary schools. The missing link was the middle school that the five elementary schools come together. We have the cultural background of those five schools is very different, and it's their introduction to diversity. Some of my students now say, "We're sending these letters [explaining the project to the school board and the administration] and some teachers at the middle school, change a word. It was a little rough, but that was the idea. In the last week they went down, all by themselves, and [the program] took off."

SNOWBALL EFFECT

In light of the price tag on other school reform initiatives, the amount of money involved in these programs was small. One teacher had to overcome resistance from district leadership to get started given the limited grant money available:

cante over and said, "I have one of those shirts. I do that." He said, "Well, I have a conflict with this girl. Could you work it out?" So they did this fake conflict for this little girl. She said, "Well, first you have to agree to ground rules." And she went right through the steps. Her father was amazed. He said he had no clue that she knew how to do that.

A few schools sent letters home to parents of peer mediators, and some sent notification to the parents of students who had successfully mediated a conflict.

One way that schools were successful in getting large numbers of parents to return was to invite them to special events. One high school had over three hundred parents and community members attend a Peace Breakfast, while another had over four hundred attend a talk by a guest speaker on "Parenting and Strategies for Saving Your Sanity." Parents may not have been used to finding parenting help at school. One rural high school offered mediation services to parents and teens, and although not many families had utilized the service, those that had were very pleased with the outcomes. Some schools reported that parents had told their children they had noticed a positive change in their children's demeanor at home after training in conflict management skills.

Cultivating positive community involvement is especially important for building community support in the current climate when schools often feel under attack. Teachers and administrators don't always feel like their hard work on behalf of students is appreciated. One administrator expressed his frustration:

We save kids' lives. But then those kids don't necessarily pass the proficiency tests, then that's a black mark on our record. We're working hard, developing relationships, and we keep getting bashed. We get bashed by the media, we get bashed by the legislature.

Letting the community know about the positive efforts that schools are making to teach constructive conflict management strategies may be one means to bridge that gap.
has been convinced. The students have volunteered to spend part of their summer training mediators and doing workshops for the teachers in the middle school. I was really excited that they took that kind of initiative.

Although the superintendent thought the grant was too small, there has been a large impact district-wide. Peer mediation programs are in place in all the schools in the district and at least several departments of the high school have incorporated conflict management strategies and ideas about conflict management into their regular curriculum.

Clearly, these small grants had a positive and lasting impact. Teachers made use of these strategies because they felt a need for help dealing with student conflict in their schools. They continued to use them even after the end of funding because of the positive results they saw in their schools, in their classrooms and in the students.

CONCLUSION
Conflict management education is an important and effective strategy to help schools combat the problems of youth violence and to give students essential skills that they need to be productive citizens. These strategies were effectively disseminated through the grant program. Of the 50 schools that received grants, 48 of them still had programs in place three years later. In some schools, the programs had grown and flourished. Others were limping along, struggling to cope with obstacles and challenges that made implementation difficult. Some schools noticed only modest improvements as a result of these programs, while others experienced dramatic reductions in the number of fights and suspensions.

Providing constructive nonviolent alternatives for students to resolve the conflicts they faced has become an imperative for schools. One administrator commented:

This sort of program is key. It is more effective than trying to lock your school up. It's a people thing. You're a lot better off spending your time trying to get to the root of the kids' problems than you are trying to make the place a prison you really are.

Clearly, conflict management education had the potential to make for positive changes in school safety and climate. The package of services combined with consultation awards was a useful mechanism for initiating these programs in schools. At a time when youth violence is a major concern for school personnel and society at large,

RESOURCES
Magnet Schools:
Desegregation or Resegregation?
Students' Voices from Inside the Classroom

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ABSTRACT

The literature is inconclusive concerning the effectiveness of achieving desegregation, particularly in the case of school-within-school. The uncertainty in this matter is supported by the dearth of beyond the racial make up of an overall school setting to examination of classrooms. Toward this end, this present qualitative student participants to analyze the condition of desegregation school. We used interviews, journals, and throwaway camera short, we found that though the entire school setting is significant, the classes are racially segregated and are maintained structurally, and by the attitudes and behaviors of teachers and students.

Forty-five years after the Brown v. Topeka Board of Education, scholars are still sitting through the pros and cons of this history.