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ABSTRACT

Forty-four percent of teachers in public schools reported that there was more disruptive classroom behavior in their schools in 1986-87 than 5 years before. Almost one-third (29 percent) indicated that they had seriously considered leaving teaching because of student misbehavior; and on the average, teachers estimated that about 7 percent of the students they taught had habitual behavior problems. These are some of the findings of a recent survey designed to obtain the views of a nationally representative sample of public elementary and secondary school teachers on discipline problems in schools and to replicate certain questions asked on previous surveys of teachers and administrators. Data reported in this survey were collected by means of a mail survey with telephone followup from a stratified national sample of 1,547 teachers. An overall response rate of 94 percent was attained. This bulletin presents a summary of major survey results. It also includes comparisons with a Fast Response Survey System (FRSS) survey of principals conducted in 1985, and with National Education Association (NEA) Teacher Opinion Polls conducted between 1980 and 1982. Four figures and nine tables accompany the text. Two tables of standard errors for key statistics are appended along with the survey form. (MLF)

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BULLETIN OERI

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PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHER PERSPECTIVES ON SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

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Forty-four percent of teachers in public schools reported there was more disruptive classroom behavior in their schools in 1986-87 than 5 years before. Almost one-third (29 percent) indicated that they had seriously considered leaving teaching because of student misbehavior; and on the average, teachers estimated that about 7 percent of the students they taught were habitual behavior problems.

These are some of the findings of a recent survey performed under contract with Westat, Inc., for the Center for Education Statistics (CES), U.S. Department of Education, through its Fast Response Survey System (FRSS). The survey was requested by the Office of the General Counsel of the Department of Education.

The survey was designed to obtain the views of a nationally representative sample of public elementary and secondary school teachers on discipline problems in schools and to replicate certain questions asked on previous surveys of teachers and administrators. This bulletin presents a summary of major survey results. It also includes comparisons with an FRSS survey of principals conducted in 1985, and with National Education Association (NEA) Teacher Opinion Polls conducted between 1980 and 1982.¹

Comparison of the Current Amount of Disruptive Behavior With That of 5 Years Ago

Overall, 44 percent of teachers in public elementary and secondary schools indicated that the amount of disruptive classroom behavior had increased compared with 5 years before (table 1). Twenty-eight percent stated it was about the same, and 27 percent indicated it was less. Teachers in elementary (53 percent) more frequently reported that disruptive behavior had increased than did teachers from middle-junior high schools² (42 percent) or from senior high schools (34 percent) (table 1).³

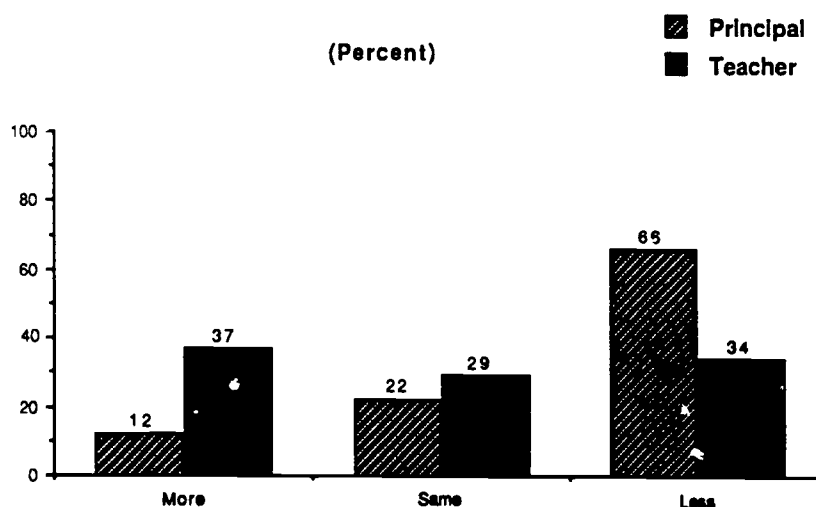
* CES's Fast Response Survey System is a special service that, upon request, quickly obtains nationally representative, policy-relevant data from short surveys to meet the needs of the U.S. Department of Education policy officials.

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Results of this study reveal differences between teachers' and principals' views on the extent of change in classroom discipline problems. The 1985 FRSS principal survey found that 66 percent of junior and senior high school principals indicated the amount of disruptive behavior in their schools had decreased over the last 5 years, and only 12 percent perceived an increase. In contrast, 2 years later, only 34 percent of junior and senior high school teachers reported a decrease, and 37 percent reported an increase (figure 1).⁴ There may be several reasons for this difference. Teachers experience classroom discipline problems first hand, and many disruptions can occur that never come to the principal's attention. Another reason for the difference in response may be that the question had elements of self-evaluation for the principals that were not present for the teachers. Both the teachers and principals were asked to evaluate the trend in disruptive classroom behavior in the school as a whole. Since each principal's responsibility extends over the entire school, while teachers are primarily responsible only for their own classes, principals may have felt that a perception of a worsening disciplinary trend reflected adversely on their own performance. It is also possible that some of the difference in teachers' and principals' responses reflects changes during the two years that passed between the two surveys.

Figure 1.--Perceived amount of current disruptive classroom behavior in public junior and senior high schools compared to 5 years ago: Comparison of principals in 1985 and teachers in 1986-87



Note.-- Junior and senior high school teachers and administrators compared the amount of current disruptive behavior with that of 5 years ago on a 5-point scale from "much less now" to "much more now." Both principals and teachers were to base the evaluation on their schools as a whole.

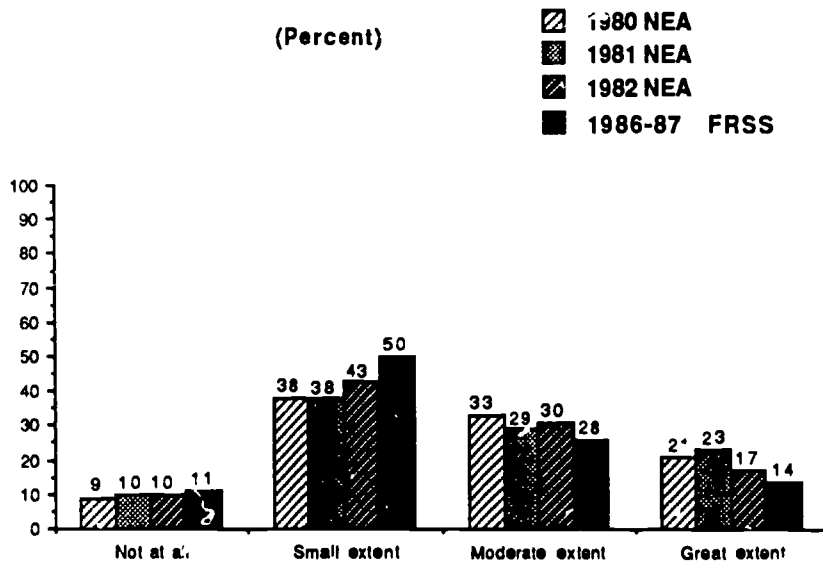
Impact of Student Behavior on Teaching and Learning

Almost one-third (29 percent) of all public school teachers indicated that they had seriously considered leaving teaching because of student misbehavior, and 17 percent reported they had seriously considered leaving in the last 12 months (table 2). The FRSS study respondents were also asked to evaluate the extent to which student behavior interfered with their own teaching and also with effective learning. Most teachers reported that student behavior interfered with their teaching to a small extent (50 percent) or a moderate extent (26 percent). Only 11 percent indicated that it did not interfere at all, and 14 percent indicated that it interfered to a great extent (table 2). Teachers in urban schools more frequently reported that student behavior interfered with their teaching to a great extent (24 percent) than did teachers in rural schools (8 percent).

A number of teachers distinguished between the impact of student behavior on their teaching and its impact on learning. While only 14 percent of teachers stated that student behavior greatly interfered with their teaching, 27 percent stated that student behavior greatly interfered with effective learning (table 2). Teachers were also asked about interference from drug or alcohol use. Eight percent of senior high teachers and 3 percent of junior high teachers indicated that drug or alcohol use interfered with learning to a great extent; 24 percent of senior high and 8 percent of junior high teachers indicated it interfered to a moderate extent (table 2).

The question of the extent to which student behavior interferes with teaching has been asked on teacher opinion surveys in the past. Figure 2 compares the 1986-87 FRSS responses with those obtained from National Education Association (NEA) Teacher Opinion Polls from 1980 to 1982. These data suggest a downward trend in the percent of teachers indicating that

Figure 2.--Teachers' evaluation of the extent to which student behavior interferes with their teaching: Comparison of National Education Association (NEA) Teacher Opinion Polls from 1980 to 1982 and the 1986-87 FRSS teacher discipline survey



student behavior interfered with their teaching. In 1980, 21 percent of teachers in the NEA poll reported that student behavior interfered with their teaching to a great extent. Although the percent rose to 23 percent in 1981, it had declined to 17 percent in 1982 and was 14 percent in the 1986-87 FRSS study (figure 2). If the percents reporting that student behavior interfered to a great extent are combined with those indicating moderate interference, the percentages were 54 percent in 1980, 52 percent in 1981, 47 percent in 1982, and 40 percent in 1986-87. Some caution is needed in interpreting these figures, however, as the differences may be due in part to methodological variations between the studies.⁵

Incidence of Discipline Infractions

To obtain estimates of the incidence of classroom disruption, the survey asked teachers to report the number of times selected minor infractions had occurred in their own classrooms in the last full week, and the number of times more major infractions had been observed or had been reported to them in the last full month. Infractions ranged from minor ones, such as passing a note or whispering, to serious ones, such as displaying or using a weapon. Teachers were asked to report the number of occurrences, so that if one student talked back 5 times, this would be reported as 5 occurrences.

Minor Infractions Occurring in the Classroom in the Last Week

The percent of teachers reporting at least one occurrence of the minor infractions per week ranged from 85 percent for whispering or note passing to 32 percent for a student being absent without permission (table 3). On the average, for the last full week prior to survey completion, teachers reported: 17.3 instances of disruptive whispering or note passing, 5.3 instances of a student being late, 2.9 instances of a student talking back, 1.9 instances of a student throwing something, and 1.6 instances of a student being absent without permission (table 3).⁶

Considered nationally, these numbers total per week to: 33.3 million instances of whispering or note passing, 10.2 million instances of students being late for class, 5.6 million instances of students talking back, 3.7 million instances of students throwing something, and 3.0 million instances of students being absent without permission. To put these numbers in perspective, about 40 million students are enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools.

Although the rank order frequency of instances of the different types of minor infractions was the same across school levels, several infractions occurred more frequently at the junior and senior high levels. For example, unexcused absenteeism occurred most frequently in senior high schools where teachers reported an average of 3.6 absences without permission per week, compared with 1.1 in junior high schools and .4 in elementary schools (table 3).

Major Infractions Observed or Reported in the Last Month

Teachers were asked to report instances of more serious infractions per month, rather than per week, and to report the number of occurrences they observed or had reported to them, rather than instances occurring in their own classrooms.⁷ The percent of teachers reporting or observing at least one occurrence in the last full month ranged from 42 percent for a physical fight between students to 5 percent both for students displaying or using a weapon, and for students threatening the teacher. The mean number of occurrences per month per teacher ranged from .07 for displaying or using a weapon, to 1.3 for a physical fight between students and for students seeming to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol (table 3). An average of 1 occurrence per month of intentional damage to property was reported.

Teachers in urban schools more frequently observed, or had reported to them, physical fights between students than did teachers in suburban or rural schools (table 4). An average of 2.1 fights per month were reported by urban teachers compared with 1.1 for rural and 1.0 for suburban teachers.

Threats and Physical Attacks to Teachers

Teachers were also asked whether they had ever been threatened by a student and whether they had ever been physically attacked by a student in their school. Almost 20 percent of teachers indicated that they had been threatened at some time, and 8 percent had been threatened in the last 12 months. Eight percent indicated that they had been physically attacked by students in their schools at some time, and 2 percent had been attacked in the last 12 months (table 5).⁸ It should be noted that the types of behaviors included under physical attack may range widely, from being kicked in anger by a first grader to more serious physical attacks by students.

Percent of Students Considered Habitual Behavior Problems

Overall, teachers reported that about 7 percent of the students they taught were habitual behavior problems. Estimates did not vary significantly by school level; however, estimates for urban teachers (8.1 percent) were slightly higher than those of rural teachers (6.1 percent) (table 5).

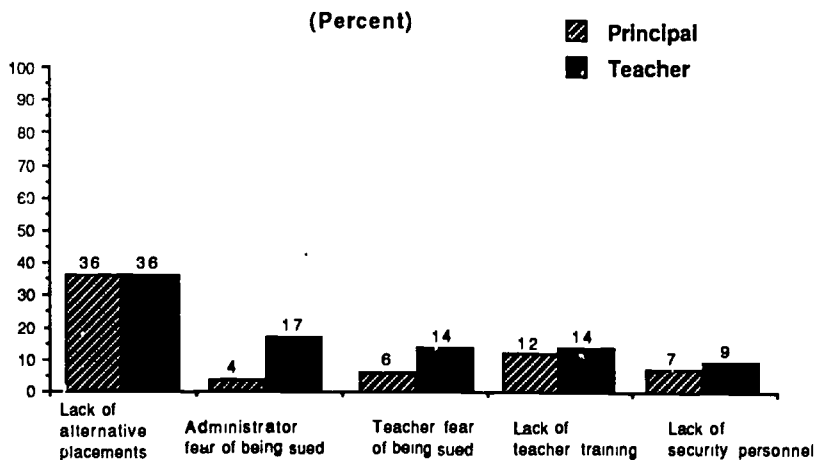
Ratings of Factors Limiting Discipline in Their Schools

Teachers were asked the extent to which 13 specified factors limited the ability of teachers to maintain order within their schools. These factors are listed in tables 6 and 7 by frequency of being ranked as a serious limitation. As a whole, teachers did not consider most of the specified factors as greatly limiting the efforts of teachers in their school to maintain order and discipline students. For all factors listed, the majority of teachers chose ratings below 3 on a 0-5 scale.⁹ The factors most frequently rated as limiting teachers in discipline either "much" or "very much" (ratings of 4 or 5) were: lack of alternative placements (32 percent) and lack of student interest in learning (38 percent).

A number of the factors included in the teacher survey had also been rated by principals in the 1985 FRSS principal survey. Figure 3 compares the results of junior and senior high school teacher and principal ratings.¹⁰ Of the factors included on both surveys, both teachers and principals most frequently rated the lack of alternative placements as a factor greatly limiting efforts to maintain discipline. Only 9 percent of teachers and 7 percent of principals rated the lack of or inadequate number of security guards as a factor greatly limiting efforts to maintain order.

Teachers and principals differed notably only on the two items relating to fear of being sued. Teachers rated both teacher and principal or administrator fear of being sued as a major factor limiting their efforts to maintain order more frequently than principals. Only 6 percent of principals, compared with 14 percent of teachers, rated teacher fear of being sued as a factor greatly limiting discipline (figure 3). Similarly, only 4 percent of the principals, compared with 17 percent of teachers, rated administrator fear of being sued as greatly limiting their efforts.¹¹

Figure 3.--Percent of respondents rating each factor as greatly limiting the ability to maintain order in their school: Comparison of junior and senior high school principals in 1985 and teachers in 1986-87



Note.--Based on respondents that indicated the factor limited them "much" or "very much," i.e., ratings of 4 or 5.

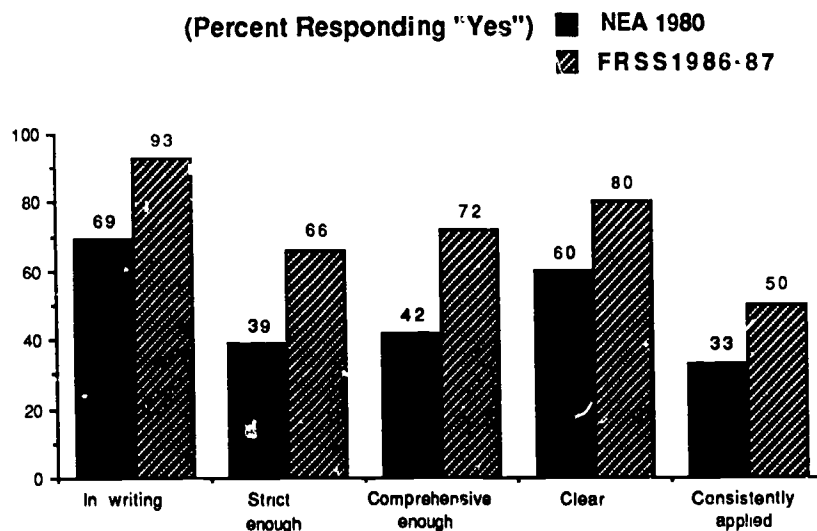
Teachers' Evaluation of the Discipline Policy of Their Schools

The 1986-87 FRSS study replicated a series of questions included on the 1980 NEA Teacher Opinion Poll on dimensions of school discipline policy. Comparison of the responses indicates that, in the teachers' view, school discipline policies have improved significantly (figure 4). This development may be one reason that, while teachers clearly did not view discipline problems as declining, somewhat fewer teachers than in 1980 indicated that student behavior interfered to a great extent with their teaching (table 1 and figure 2).

Ninety-three percent of the teachers in the FRSS study reported that the discipline policy of their school was in writing (table 8), compared with only 69 percent in the 1980 NEA survey (figure 4). Two-thirds of teachers indicated it was strict enough, compared with 39 percent in 1980, and 72 percent indicated it was comprehensive enough, compared with 42 percent in 1980. Similarly, 80 percent in 1986-87 indicated the policy was clear, compared with 60 percent in 1980, and 50 percent indicated that the policy was consistently applied, compared with 33 percent in 1980.

While these differences clearly indicate that teachers viewed their schools' discipline policy more favorably in 1986-87 than they did in 1980, 34 percent of teachers in 1986-87 still regarded their schools' discipline policy as not strict enough; 28 percent regarded the policy as not comprehensive enough; and 50 percent indicated it was not consistently applied.

Figure 4.--Teachers' evaluation of the discipline policy of their schools: Comparison of National Education Association (NEA) teacher opinion poll results in 1980 with 1986-87 FRSS results



Actions of Use in Improving Discipline

Teachers were asked to evaluate how productive specified actions would be in improving discipline in their school. The actions included student, parent, school, principal, and teacher-related actions. Teachers rated most of the actions very positively (table 9). Those actions rated as "very productive" in improving school discipline by a majority of respondents were: increased student self-discipline developed at home (74 percent), smaller classes (63 percent), and increased parental support (62 percent).¹² Other actions, such as the principal making discipline a higher priority, increased use of positive reinforcement, and stricter enforcement of rules were rated "very productive" by about 40 to 45 percent of the teachers. Teachers in elementary schools more frequently than those in senior high schools rated positive reinforcement as very productive (50 percent elementary, and 34 percent senior). Increased teacher autonomy and easier procedures for suspension or expulsion (27 percent) were least frequently rated as "very productive."

Survey Methodology and Data Reliability

Data reported in this survey were collected by means of a mail survey with telephone followup between October of 1986 and January 1987. In September of 1986 a two-stage stratified national sample of 1,547 teachers was selected to represent 1.9 million regular classroom teachers in the United States. In the first stage, 850 elementary and secondary schools were selected from the CES 1984-85 listing of public schools. Schools were stratified by level and metropolitan status and then sequenced by geographic region and enrollment. Within each stratum, the specified number of schools was selected with a probability proportionate to the number of FTE teachers. At the next stage, an average of two teachers from each school was randomly selected by telephone from lists of teachers provided by the school. Questionnaires were mailed to the selected teachers in late October of 1986, and telephone followup continued through January of 1987. A 96 percent school participation rate and a 98 percent teacher participation rate were attained, for an overall response rate of 94 percent. Responses were adjusted for nonresponse and weighted to national totals.

Since the estimates were obtained from a sample of teachers, they are subject to sampling variability. The standard error of an estimate is a measure of the variability between the values of the estimate calculated from different samples and the value of the statistic in the population. Standard errors can be used to examine the precision obtained in a particular sample. If all possible samples were surveyed under similar conditions, intervals of 1.645 standard errors below, to 1.645 standard errors above, a particular statistic would include the average result of these samples in approximately 90 percent of the cases. For example, the first statistic in the standard error table (percent of total teachers indicating that disruptive behavior was much less now) has an estimate of 10.36 percent and a standard error of .95. The 90 percent confidence interval is therefore from 8.80 to 11.92 ($10.36 \pm 1.645 \times .95$).

Estimates of standard errors were computed using a jackknife replication technique. Estimated standard errors for key statistics are included in tables A and B. Statements of comparison made in this report were tested by use of t-tests and are significant at the 90 percent confidence level or better. Confidence levels apply to a single test of significance and were not adjusted for multiple comparison. For multiple comparisons involving the same

questionnaire item or related items, the overall confidence level for the family of comparisons would be lower. This is the case because when repeated statistical tests are made, the probability of a significant result occurring by chance is increased.

Survey estimates are also subject to errors of reporting and errors made in the collection of the data. These errors, called nonsampling errors, can sometimes bias the data. While general sampling theory can be used to determine how to estimate the sampling variability of a statistic, nonsampling errors are not easy to measure and usually require an experiment as part of the data collection procedures, or the use of data external to the study.

Nonsampling errors may include such things as differences in the interpretation of the meaning of the questions by the respondents, differences related to the particular time the survey was conducted, or errors in sampling or data preparation. During the design of the survey and survey pretest, an effort was made to check for consistency of interpretation of questions and to eliminate ambiguous items. Manual and machine editing of the forms were conducted to check the data for accuracy and consistency. For those items that involved inconsistencies or omissions, clarification was obtained by telephone.

The survey was requested by the Office of the General Counsel of the Department of Education. The survey was performed under contract to Westat, Inc., using the Fast Response Survey System (FRSS). Westat's Project Director was Elizabeth Farris, and the Survey Manager was Margaret Cahalan. Helen Ashwick was the CES Project Officer for this survey. FRSS was established by CES to collect quickly, and with minimum burden on respondents, small quantities of data needed for educational planning and policy.

For More Information

For information about this survey or the Fast Response Survey System, contact Helen Ashwick, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Center for Education Statistics, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20208, telephone (202) 357-6761.

NOTES

- ¹Other recent studies covering similar issues include: the Phi Delta Kappa, "The Gallup Poll of Teacher's Attitudes Toward Public Schools, Part 2," January 1985; Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, The American Teacher, 1986; National Education Association (NEA), Status of the American Public School Teacher, 1986. After 1982, respondents for the NEA polls have included members of NEA only.
- ²Throughout the remainder of this bulletin, the term "junior high" is used to refer to a category of schools that also includes middle schools.
- ³The text of this report does not discuss all differences significant at the 90 percent confidence level; however, statements of comparisons made in the report were tested by use of t-tests and are significant at the 90 percent confidence level or better. Confidence levels apply to a single test of significance and were not adjusted for multiple comparisons. For multiple comparisons involving the same questionnaire item or related items, the overall confidence level for the family of comparisons would be lower. This is the case because when repeated statistical tests are made the probability of a significant result occurring by chance is increased.
- ⁴The 1985 principal survey of discipline policies and practices included principals from middle-junior and senior high schools only. For this comparison, only teachers from junior and senior high schools have been included. The standard errors for the percent of principals indicating that disruptive behavior was "less than 5 years ago" was 1.6; for the percent indicating it was "more than 5 years ago," the standard error was 1.3. Results of the 1985 FRSS principal survey are available in the OERI Bulletin, "Discipline in Public Secondary Schools," September 1986, CS 86-224b.
- ⁵The NEA results were based on a two-stage probability sample of about 2,000 teachers randomly selected from lists of teachers provided by school districts. Response rates for the years included in this report ranged from 75 to 80 percent. The standard errors for the population estimates were reported to be less than 3 percent of the estimates. Differences of 5 percent or more between percentages were reported significant at the 95 percent level. Some differences between the NEA results and FRSS results may be partially due to survey procedures. National Education Association, "Nationwide Teacher Opinion Poll, 1980," Bernard Bartholomew, Washington, D.C., p. 3.
- ⁶Means for minor and major infractions include those teachers reporting "0" occurrences.
- ⁷Since the sample included an average of 2 teachers per school, the potential exists for multiple counting of these major infractions. The statistics reported must be interpreted as the number observed or reported to the teacher, rather than the actual number of occurrences in the school.
- ⁸The NEA Teacher Opinion Poll of 1980 found that 5 percent of teachers indicated they had been physically attacked by a student in the last 12 months. This is somewhat higher than the percent obtained in the FRSS study (2 percent). The difference may be related to the fact that the NEA teachers were not first asked if they had ever been attacked. Some portion of teachers responding to the NEA survey may actually have been reporting attacks that occurred earlier. Differences may also be related to the fact that FRSS respondents were asked only about students from their own schools.
- ⁹The percent rating a factor as limiting them much or very much (4 or 5) ranged from 39 percent to 6 percent. The percent rating a factor as limiting them little or somewhat (2 or 3) ranged from 38 percent to 11 percent, and the percent rating a factor as limiting them not at all or very little ranged from 83 percent to 24 percent.
- ¹⁰For this comparison, only junior and senior high teachers are included, since the 1985 principal survey included only junior and senior high schools.

¹¹The standard errors for principals are: .9 for the rating of administrator fear of being sued and .7 for the rating of teacher fear of being sued. Appendix tables A and B present standard errors for the teacher data.

¹²Teachers responded on a 7-point bipolar scale with 1 = "very counterproductive," 4 = "no effect," and 7 = "very productive." Percents are based on teachers who indicated the action would be "very productive," i.e., a rating of 7.

Table 1.--Total number of teachers and teacher evaluation of the change in disruptive student behavior, by school characteristics: 50 States and D.C., 1986-87

School characteristic	Total teachers (in thousands) ¹	Percent of teachers indicating that compared to 5 years ago disruptive student behavior is				
		Much less now	Somewhat less now	About the same	Somewhat more now	Much more now
All teachers.....	1,932	10	17	28	25	19
School level²						
Elementary	941	8	12	27	29	24
Middle-junior high ..	310	13	22	24	22	20
Senior high.....	647	12	23	32	22	12
School size						
Less than 400.....	465	11	16	28	25	21
400 to 999 ..	985	10	17	28	26	19
1,000 or more.....	482	10	19	30	24	17
Metropolitan status						
Urban (within SMSA, central city).....	405	15	16	20	23	26
Suburban (within SMSA, outside central city) ..	888	8	16	32	26	18
Rural (outside SMSA).....	640	11	19	28	26	16

¹Includes regular classroom teachers only; excludes librarians, special education teachers, and guidance counselors.

²Elementary schools include all schools in which the lowest grade is less than 6 and the highest grade is less than 9; middle-junior high schools include all schools in which the lowest grade is greater than 5 and the highest grade is less than 10; senior high schools include all schools in which the lowest grade is greater than 6 and the highest grade is greater than 9; combined schools include those schools in which the lowest grade is less than 6 and the highest grade is greater than 9. Combined schools are not listed as a separate school level, because their number is so small; they are included in the totals and in analyses with other school characteristics. There were about 34,000 teachers in combined schools.

Note.--Details may not add to totals because of rounding.

Table 2.--Percent of teachers indicating they had seriously considered leaving teaching because of student misbehavior, and teacher evaluation of the extent to which student behavior and drug or alcohol use interferes with teaching and learning, by school level and metropolitan status: 50 States and D.C., 1986-87

Item	Total	School level*			Metropolitan status		
		Elementary	Middle-junior high	Senior high	Urban	Suburban	Rural

Percent of teachers indicating they had seriously considered leaving because of student misbehavior:

Ever considered leaving	29	28	33	29	33	29	27
Considered leaving in last 12 months	17	15	19	19	19	17	16

Extent to which student behavior interferes with:

Their teaching

To a great extent	14	16	14	11	24	14	8
To a moderate extent	26	26	26	24	20	27	27
To a small extent	50	48	52	50	47	49	52
Not at all	1	9	8	15	8	11	13

Effective learning

To a great extent	27	28	28	24	34	28	20
To a moderate extent	27	26	25	30	25	27	29
To a small extent	38	39	43	35	33	38	42
Not at all	8	7	4	11	8	7	9

Extent to which student drug or alcohol use interferes with learning:

To a great extent	4	2	3	8	6	4	4
To a moderate extent	10	1	8	24	14	10	8
To a small extent	39	20	59	57	37	38	42
Not at all	46	76	30	11	43	48	47

* Elementary schools include all schools in which the lowest grade is less than 6 and the highest grade is less than 9; middle-junior high schools include all schools in which the lowest grade is greater than 5 and the highest grade is less than 10; senior high schools include all schools in which the lowest grade is greater than 6 and the highest grade is greater than 9; combined schools include those schools in which the lowest grade is less than 6 and the highest grade is greater than 9. Combined schools are not listed as a separate school level, because their number is so small; they are included in the totals and in analyses with other school characteristics. There were about 34,000 teachers in combined schools.

Note.--Percents may not add to 100 because of rounding

Table 3.--Percent of teachers reporting occurrences and mean occurrences per teacher of minor and major classroom disruptions, by school level: 50 States and D.C., 1986-87

Infraction	Percent of teachers reporting occurrences				Mean occurrences per teacher ²			
	Total	School level ¹			Total	School level ¹		
		Elementary	Middle-junior-high	Senior high		Elementary	Middle-junior high	Senior high

Minor infractions: Occurrences in teachers' classroom in last full week

(In last week)

Student passed note or whispered	85	84	89	86	17.25	17.13	20.30	16.02
Student was late for class	82	74	88	91	5.30	2.95	5.65	8.60
Student talked back	55	52	66	74	2.92	2.92	3.66	2.62
Student threw something.....	44	40	55	43	1.92	1.37	3.44	1.93
Student was absent without permission	32	16	35	56	1.57	.41	1.12	3.56
Other minor disruptions	62	68	66	51	7.39	8.66	7.91	5.26

Major infractions: Teachers observed or had reported to them over the last full month

(In last month)

Physical fight occurred among students.....	42	45	48	35	1.30	1.42	1.56	1.04
Student intentionally damaged property	33	29	39	37	1.01	.64	1.42	1.39
Item over \$1.00 stolen from teacher or student	23	20	27	26	.63	.46	.70	.90
Student seemed under influence of drugs or alcohol.....	22	5	28	45	1.30	.17	1.08	3.07
Student threatened you	5	5	6	5	.08	.08	.11	.08
Student displayed and or used weapon.....	5	5	5	4	.07	.07	.11	.06
Other major infractions	11	9	14	12	.39	.24	.57	.40

¹Elementary schools include all schools in which the lowest grade is less than 6 and the highest grade is less than 9; middle-junior high schools include all schools in which the lowest grade is greater than 5 and the highest grade is less than 10; senior high schools include all schools in which the lowest grade is greater than 8 and the highest grade is greater than 9; combined schools include those schools in which the lowest grade is less than 6 and the highest grade is greater than 9. Combined schools are not listed as a separate school level, because their number is so small; they are included in the totals and in analyses with other school characteristics. There were about 34,000 teachers in combined schools.

²Includes those having "0" occurrences.

Table 4.--Percent of teachers reporting occurrences and mean occurrences per teacher of minor and major classroom disruptions, by metropolitan status: 50 States and D.C., 1986-87

Infraction	Percent of teachers reporting occurrences				Mean occurrences per teacher *			
	Total	Metropolitan status			Total	Metropolitan status		
		Urban	Suburban	Rural		Urban	Suburban	Rural
Minor infractions: Occurrences in teachers' classroom in last full week								
					(In last week)			
Student passed note or whispered ...	85	84	85	86	17.25	21.30	18.49	12.98
Student was late for class	82	89	83	78	5.30	7.92	5.35	3.56
Student talked back	55	53	57	54	2.92	4.39	2.86	2.06
Student threw something.....	44	47	45	39	1.92	2.53	2.03	1.36
Student was absent without permission	32	42	33	26	1.57	2.82	1.46	.94
Other minor disruptions	62	60	62	63	7.39	8.64	7.45	6.52
Major infractions: Teachers observed or had reported to them over the last full month								
					(In last month)			
Physical fight occurred among students.....	42	50	38	42	1.30	2.11	1.04	1.14
Student intentionally damaged property	33	39	34	29	1.01	1.19	.89	1.07
Item over \$1.00 stolen from teacher or student	23	27	21	23	.63	.82	.47	.77
Student seemed under influence of drugs or alcohol.....	22	25	22	21	1.30	1.27	1.57	.93
Student threatened you.....	5	10	4	3	.08	.19	.05	.07
Student displayed or used weapon...	5	9	3	3	.07	.16	.05	.05
Other major infractions.....	11	12	11	11	.39	.35	.38	.43

* Includes those having "0" occurrences.

Table 5.--Mean percent of students considered habitual behavior problems, percent of teachers threatened, and percent physically attacked by students, by school characteristics: 50 States and D.C., 1986-87

School characteristic	Mean percent of students considered habitual behavior problems	Percent of teachers			
		Ever threatened by student	Threatened in last 12 months	Ever physically attacked by student	Attacked physically in last 12 months
All teachers	7.0	19	8	8	2
School level *					
Elementary	7.4	14	7	9	3
Middle-junior high	6.6	26	9	7	2
Senior high	6.7	21	9	7	2
School size					
Less than 400	7.0	18	6	8	2
400 to 999	6.9	17	8	7	2
1,000 or more	7.1	23	11	10	3
Metropolitan status					
Urban (within SMSA, central city)	8.1	25	14	11	3
Suburban (within SMSA, outside central city)	7.1	17	7	8	3
Rural (outside SMSA)	6.1	17	6	6	2

* Elementary schools include all schools in which the lowest grade is less than 6 and the highest grade is less than 9; middle-junior high schools include all schools in which the lowest grade is greater than 5 and the highest grade is less than 10; senior high schools include all schools in which the lowest grade is greater than 6 and the highest grade is greater than 9; combined schools include those schools in which the lowest grade is less than 6 and the highest grade is greater than 9. Combined schools are not listed as a separate school level, because their number is so small; they are included in the totals and in analyses with other school characteristics. There were about 34,000 teachers in combined schools.

Table 6.--Teacher ratings of the extent to which selected factors limited their ability to maintain order and discipline at their school: 50 States and D.C., 1986-87

Factor	Much or very much *	Little or somewhat *	Very little or not at all *
(Percent)			
Lack of or inadequate alternative placements/programs for disruptive students	39	26	35
Lack of student interest in learning ..	38	38	24
School or district restrictions on use of strict penalties	22	28	49
Lack of administrative support	20	23	57
Likelihood of complaint from parents	19	37	44
Principal/administrator fear of being sued for disciplining students	18	25	57
Teacher fear of being sued for disciplining students	18	26	56
Lack of or inadequate teacher training in discipline procedures and school law	15	31	54
Court decisions on student misconduct	15	24	61
Teachers' fear of being viewed as unable to control students	15	31	54
Fear of student reprisal	6	21	74
Lack of or inadequate security personnel	6	11	83

* Teachers responded on a 6-point scale with 0 = "not at all," 1 = "very little," and 5 = "very much."

Note.--Percents may not total to 100 due to rounding.

Table 7.--Percent of teachers rating a factor as greatly limiting ability of teachers in their school to maintain order, by school level and metropolitan status: 50 States and D.C., 1986-87

Factor	Total	School-level ¹			Metropolitan status		
		Elementary	Middle-junior high	Senior high	Urban	Suburban	Rural
(Percent)							
Lack of or inadequate alternative placements/programs for disruptive students.....	39	43	39	35	52	36	36
Lack of student interest in learning.....	38	31	43	47	45	37	36
School or district restrictions on use of strict penalties.....	22	21	25	23	34	21	17
Lack of administrative support.....	20	19	20	23	26	18	19
Likelihood of complaint from parents.....	19	23	17	14	23	18	18
Principal/administrator fear of being sued for disciplining students.....	18	19	15	18	21	17	18
Teacher fear of being sued for disciplining students.....	18	22	14	14	21	15	21
Lack or inadequate teacher training in discipline procedures and school law.....	15	15	17	13	20	13	13
Court decisions on student misconduct.....	15	13	19	17	24	14	11
Teacher fear of being viewed as unable to control students.....	15	15	16	15	22	12	13
Fear of student reprisal.....	6	5	5	6	11	3	5
Lack of or inadequate security personnel.....	6	3	7	10	14	5	4

¹Elementary schools include all schools in which the lowest grade is less than 6 and the highest grade is less than 9; middle-junior high schools include all schools in which the lowest grade is greater than 5 and the highest grade is less than 10; senior high schools include all schools in which the lowest grade is greater than 6 and the highest grade is greater than 9; combined schools include those schools in which the lowest grade is less than 6 and the highest grade is greater than 9. Combined schools are not listed as a separate school level, because their number is so small; they are included in the totals and in analyses with other school characteristics. There were about 34,000 teachers in combined schools.

²Teachers responded on a 6-point scale with 0 = "not at all," 1 = "very little," and 5 = "very much." Percents are based on teachers who indicated the factor limited them "much" or "very much," i.e., ratings of 4 or 5.

Table 8.--Teacher evaluation of the discipline policy of their school, by school characteristics:
50 States and D.C., 1986-87

School characteristic	Percent of teachers indicating that the discipline policy of their school was					
	In writing	Strict enough	Comprehensive enough	Clear	Consistently applied	Publicized enough
All teachers	93	66	72	80	50	60
School level*						
Elementary	91	69	69	78	55	59
Middle-junior high	96	65	76	83	45	60
Senior high	96	61	72	82	45	59
School size						
Less than 400	89	65	71	77	54	58
400 to 999	95	70	73	83	54	62
1,000 or more	94	58	70	78	40	56
Metropolitan status						
Urban (within SMSA, central city)	91	65	69	79	48	57
Suburban (within SMSA, outside central city)	93	65	72	80	51	62
Rural (outside SMSA)	95	69	73	82	50	58

* Elementary schools include all schools in which the lowest grade is less than 6 and the highest grade is less than 3; middle-junior high schools include all schools in which the lowest grade is greater than 5 and the highest grade is less than 10, senior high schools include all schools in which the lowest grade is greater than 6 and the highest grade is greater than 9; combined schools include those schools in which the lowest grade is less than 6 and the highest grade is greater than 9. Combined schools are not listed as a separate school level, because their number is so small; they are included in the totals and in analyses with other school characteristics. There were about 34,000 teachers in combined schools.

Table 9.--Percent of teachers indicating that action would be very productive in improving discipline, by school level and metropolitan status: 50 States and D.C., 1986-87

Item	Total	School-level ¹			Metropolitan status		
		Elementary	Middle-junior high	Senior high	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Actions rated as very productive²							
(Percent)							
Increased student self discipline developed at home.....	74	76	75	70	72	73	76
Smaller classes.....	63	67	66	56	70	63	57
Increased parental support for discipline.....	62	62	68	60	66	60	63
Stricter enforcement of rules against misconduct generally.....	45	47	50	42	56	43	42
Increased followup by principal on disciplinary referrals.....	44	46	48	39	48	42	43
Immunity from lawsuits when discipline is enforced well within guidelines.....	44	49	42	38	46	43	44
Increased use of positive reinforcement for good behavior.....	43	50	42	34	47	42	42
Principal making discipline higher priority at school.....	43	44	48	42	50	40	41
Increased informing of parents of student misconduct.....	39	41	40	38	47	37	38
Stricter enforcement of rules against drug and alcohol use.....	38	36	39	41	44	36	37
Increased training in classroom management	33	38	33	27	39	32	31
Easier procedures for suspension/expulsion....	27	25	28	31	37	24	27
Increased teacher autonomy in disciplining students.....	27	32	22	20	32	23	28

¹Elementary schools include all schools in which the lowest grade is less than 6 and the highest grade is less than 9; middle-junior high schools include all schools in which the lowest grade is greater than 5 and the highest grade is less than 10; senior high schools include all schools in which the lowest grade is greater than 6 and the highest grade is greater than 9; combined schools include those schools in which the lowest grade is less than 6 and the highest grade is greater than 9. Combined schools are not listed as a separate school level, because their number is so small; they are included in the totals and in analyses with other school characteristics. There were about 34,000 teachers in combined schools.

²Teachers responded on a 7-point bipolar scale with 1 = "very counterproductive," 4 = "no effect," and 7 = "very productive." Percents are based on teachers who indicated the action would be "very productive," i.e., a rating of 7.

Table A.--Standard errors for key statistics

Item	Total	School level*			Metro status		
		Elementary	Middle-junior high	Senior high	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Percent indicating disruptive student behavior compared to 5 years ago is:							
(table 1)							
Much less now.....	0.95	0.99	1.87	1.44	2.25	1.23	1.15
Somewhat less now.....	0.69	0.87	1.82	1.43	1.84	1.22	1.18
About the same.....	0.97	1.74	1.82	1.54	2.14	1.48	1.67
Somewhat more now.....	1.23	1.89	2.55	1.85	2.25	2.03	1.57
Much more now.....	0.79	1.52	1.28	1.20	2.26	1.26	1.55
Percent considered leaving:							
(table 2)							
Ever.....	0.85	1.43	2.05	1.47	2.32	1.04	1.18
In the last 12 months.....	0.76	1.37	2.07	1.30	1.68	1.24	1.28
Percent indicating disruptive behavior interferes with their teaching:							
To a great extent.....	0.71	1.39	1.28	1.11	1.04	1.18	0.83
To a moderate extent.....	1.13	2.10	1.60	1.41	2.60	1.64	1.49
To a small extent.....	0.87	1.93	1.73	1.50	2.92	1.39	1.62
Not at all.....	0.56	0.76	0.76	0.90	1.43	0.97	1.22
Percent indicating disruptive behavior interferes with effective learning:							
To a great extent.....	1.01	1.54	2.24	1.67	2.05	1.48	1.35
To a moderate extent.....	1.01	1.66	1.73	2.02	2.06	1.62	1.54
To a small extent.....	0.98	1.76	1.69	1.54	1.95	1.56	1.66
Not at all.....	0.48	0.64	0.62	0.71	1.23	0.79	0.96
Percent indicating drugs or alcohol interferes with effective learning:							
To a great extent.....	0.43	0.40	0.77	0.95	1.12	0.74	0.57
To a moderate extent.....	0.52	0.35	1.00	1.51	1.60	0.75	0.88
To a small extent.....	1.19	1.35	2.68	1.87	2.60	1.47	1.68
Not at all.....	0.96	1.31	2.71	0.81	2.95	1.48	1.70
Percent having occurrence in class in last week:							
(tables 3 and 4)							
Note passing or whispering.....	0.48	1.00	1.04	0.91	1.45	1.03	1.03
Student late for class.....	0.81	1.68	1.03	0.92	1.52	1.31	1.56
Student talked back.....	0.97	1.66	1.83	1.78	2.38	1.01	2.07
Student threw something.....	1.10	2.00	1.88	1.97	2.97	1.36	1.71
Student absent without permission....	0.74	1.14	1.78	1.45	2.62	0.85	1.43
Other minor infraction.....	1.30	1.80	1.97	1.81	1.92	1.26	1.88

*Elementary schools include all schools in which the lowest grade is less than 6 and the highest grade is less than 9; middle-junior high schools include all schools in which the lowest grade is greater than 5 and the highest grade is less than 10; senior high schools include all schools in which the lowest grade is greater than 6 and the highest grade is greater than 9; combined schools include those schools in which the lowest grade is less than 6 and the highest grade is greater than 9. Combined schools are not listed as a separate school level, because their number is so small; they are included in the totals and in analyses with other school characteristics. There were about 34,000 teachers in combined schools.



Table A.--Standard errors for key statistics (continued)

Item	Total	School level			Metro status		
		Elementary	Middle-junior high	Senior high	Urban	Suburban	Rural

Percent having occurrence reported in last month: (tables 3 and 4)

Physical fight between students.....	1.08	1.43	2.06	2.24	2.50	1.52	1.95
Intentional damage to property.....	1.04	1.56	1.90	1.37	2.99	1.06	1.72
Item over \$1 stolen.....	0.70	1.32	1.58	1.60	1.83	1.36	1.18
Student seemed under influence of drugs or alcohol.....	0.83	0.80	1.83	1.87	2.18	1.39	1.20
Teacher threatened.....	0.47	0.75	1.31	0.88	1.18	0.71	0.66
Weapon used or displayed.....	0.57	0.83	0.77	0.71	1.78	0.70	0.50
Other major infraction.....	0.80	1.04	1.65	1.20	1.52	0.99	1.51

Average number of occurrences in class in last week:

Note passing or whispering.....	0.67	0.99	1.25	1.50	2.29	0.72	0.65
Student late for class.....	0.20	0.16	0.29	0.52	0.58	0.40	0.18
Student talked back.....	0.21	0.38	0.29	0.27	0.67	0.38	0.14
Student threw something.....	0.15	0.17	0.35	0.21	0.59	0.15	0.10
Student absent without permission....	0.14	0.06	0.07	0.42	0.38	0.31	0.11
Other minor infraction.....	0.43	0.59	0.68	0.88	1.26	0.47	0.46

Average number of occurrences in last month:

Physical fight between students.....	0.07	0.14	0.19	0.09	0.33	0.08	0.08
Intentional damage to property.....	0.08	0.06	0.26	0.20	0.14	0.09	0.21
Item over \$1 stolen.....	0.06	0.08	0.13	0.14	0.18	0.06	0.12
Student seemed under influence of drugs or alcohol.....	0.20	0.03	0.15	0.56	0.23	0.45	0.14
Teacher threatened.....	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.05	0.01	0.01
Weapon used or displayed.....	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.01
Other major infraction.....	0.05	0.04	0.10	0.09	0.06	0.05	0.10

(table 5)

Average percent of students considered habitual behavior problems.....	0.28	0.45	0.38	0.43	0.47	0.37	0.40
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Percent threatened by students:

Ever.....	0.98	1.03	2.34	1.39	2.75	1.23	1.14
In the last 12 months.....	0.65	0.69	1.21	1.22	1.72	0.87	0.77

Percent physically attacked:

Ever.....	0.64	0.93	1.13	0.54	1.29	1.06	0.66
In the last 12 months.....	0.30	0.54	0.53	0.36	0.84	0.59	0.31

Table A.--Standard errors for key statistics (continued)

Item	Total	School level			Metro status		
		Elementary	Middle-junior high	Senior high	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Percent of teachers rating factor as limiting efforts to discipline such or very much:							
(table 7)							
Lack of or inadequate alternative placement/programs for disruptive students.....	1.62	2.19	2.31	2.07	2.49	1.67	2.87
Lack of student interest in learning. School or district restrictions on use of strict penalties.....	0.95	1.46	1.50	1.56	2.52	1.70	1.39
Lack of administrative support.....	1.22	1.56	2.07	2.24	2.78	1.33	1.37
Likelihood of complaint from parents. Principal fear of being sued for disciplining students.....	0.79	1.41	2.18	1.53	2.68	1.36	1.01
Principal fear of being sued for disciplining students.....	0.88	1.49	1.57	1.40	1.80	1.0	1.65
Teacher fear of being sued for disciplining students.....	0.69	1.27	1.54	1.30	2.39	1.21	1.01
Lack of teacher training in discipline procedures and school law....	0.79	1.21	1.58	1.04	1.56	1.13	1.33
Court decisions on student misconduct	0.84	1.57	1.74	1.31	2.18	1.17	1.21
Teacher fear of being viewed as unable to control students.....	0.72	1.21	1.75	1.55	2.44	1.06	1.07
Fear of student reprisal.....	0.58	0.99	1.40	1.05	1.56	1.20	1.12
Lack of or inadequate number of security personnel.....	0.52	0.81	0.85	0.85	1.52	0.73	0.94
	0.58	0.78	1.04	1.01	2.05	0.71	0.72
Percent of teachers indicating that the discipline policy of their school is:							
(table 8)							
In writing.....	0.68	1.13	0.90	0.73	2.29	0.86	1.11
Strict enough.....	0.94	1.26	2.09	1.90	3.10	1.26	1.85
Comprehensive enough.....	1.16	1.80	1.85	1.85	2.39	1.20	1.74
Clear.....	1.31	1.70	1.86	1.86	2.98	1.57	1.46
Consistently applied.....	1.04	1.57	2.28	2.10	3.21	1.75	1.56
Publicized enough.....	0.88	1.86	1.76	1.95	3.12	1.49	1.35
Percent of teachers rating factor as very productive:							
(table 9)							
Increased student self-discipline developed at home.....	1.19	1.60	2.02	1.76	2.32	0.98	2.48
Smaller classes.....	0.88	1.35	1.98	2.23	1.78	1.00	2.08
Increased parental support for school discipline decisions.....	1.02	1.51	1.98	2.27	3.07	1.41	1.81
Stricter enforcement of rules against misconduct generally.....	1.25	1.85	2.14	1.91	2.37	1.60	1.93
Increased followup by principal on discipline referrals.....	0.96	1.85	1.83	2.21	2.85	1.39	2.00
Immunity from lawsuits when discipline is enforced well within school guidelines.....	1.16	2.35	2.12	2.24	2.18	1.77	2.32
Increased use of positive reinforcement.....	1.22	1.80	2.28	2.11	2.48	1.72	1.59
Principal making discipline a higher priority.....	1.54	2.08	2.14	2.33	2.78	1.88	2.32
Increased informing of parents of student misconduct.....	1.48	2.43	2.18	1.80	2.87	1.62	1.77
Stricter enforcement of the rules against drugs and alcohol.....	1.13	1.56	1.76	2.33	2.81	1.76	1.79
Increased training in classroom management.....	1.24	2.11	2.47	1.76	2.99	1.62	1.95
Easier procedures for suspension/expulsion.....	1.02	1.18	1.89	2.58	2.87	1.18	1.89
Increased teacher autonomy.....	0.86	1.26	1.27	1.65	2.06	1.19	1.54

Table B.--Standard errors for key statistics (table 6)

Factor	Percent of teachers rating factors as limiting efforts to discipline		
	Much or very much	Little or somewhat	Very little or not at all

(table 6)

Lack of or inadequate alternative placement/programs for disruptive students.....	1.32	1.03	1.49
Lack of student interest in learning.	0.95	0.98	0.73
School or district restrictions on use of strict penalties.....	1.22	1.02	1.31
Lack of administrative support.....	0.79	0.84	1.19
Likelihood of complaint from parents	0.88	1.23	1.35
Principal fear of being sued for disciplining students.....	0.69	1.07	1.07
Teacher fear of being sued for disciplining students.....	0.79	1.17	0.96
Lack of teacher training in discipline procedures and school law....	0.84	1.07	1.15
Court decisions on student misconduct	0.72	0.85	0.93
Teacher fear of being viewed as unable to control students.....	0.58	1.34	1.22
Fear of student reprisal.....	0.52	0.84	0.72
Lack of or inadequate number of security personnel.....	0.58	0.50	0.77

SURVEY OF SCHOOL DISCIPLINE This report is authorized by law (20 U.S.C. 1221a-1). While you are not required to respond, your cooperation is needed to make the results of this survey comprehensive, accurate, and timely.

I. About how many students do you teach in one class? In one day? How many hours a day do you usually teach classes?

II In Column A enter the number of times each of the following happened in your classes during the last full week. In Column B enter the number of times you observed each of the following or had them reported to you during the last full month. (Count occurrences not students. If one student talked back 5 times, count as 5 separate occurrences. Enter "0" if none occurred.)

Table with 2 columns: MINOR INFRACTIONS (A IN LAST FULL WEEK) and MAJOR INFRACTIONS (B IN LAST FULL MONTH). Rows include items like 'Student talked back to you', 'Student displayed or used weapon', etc.

III. On a scale of 0 to 5 (0 = not at all, 1 = very little, 5 = very much), indicate how much each of the following limits the ability of teachers to maintain order and discipline students in your school.

Table with 2 columns: A (Lack of or inadequate number of security personnel, Teacher fear of being sued, etc.) and G (Lack of or inadequate alternative placements/programs, School or district restrictions, etc.).

IV. A What percent of the students you teach would you consider habitual behavior problems? B Has a student from your school ever threatened to injure you? C Have you ever been physically attacked by a student from your school? D Have you ever seriously considered leaving the teaching profession because of student behavior?

V. On a scale of 1 to 7 (1 = very counterproductive, 4 = no effect, 7 = very productive), indicate how productive each of the following would be in your efforts to maintain order and discipline in your school.

Table with 2 columns: A (Principal making discipline a higher priority, Increased followup by principal, etc.) and G (Increased use of positive reinforcement, Stricter enforcement of rules, etc.).

VI. Have you changed in classroom management or discipline management techniques in the last 2 years? Yes; No.

VII. Is the discipline policy at your school:

Table with 2 columns: A (In writing?, Strict enough?, Comprehensive enough?) and D (Clear?, Consistently applied?, Publicized enough?).

VIII. A. In general, to what extent does student behavior interfere with:

Your teaching? Effectiva learning? B. To what extent does drug and alcohol use by students interfere with learning in your school? C. Compared with 5 years ago, is the amount of disruptive student classroom behavior at your school?

IX. A. What is the average daily rate of absenteeism in your classes? B. How many years have you been teaching? C. What grades are you currently teaching? (list all)

If you primarily teach certain subjects, list the subjects.

Person completing this form: Phone () School

Please give the best day/time to call you, just in case we have any questions: Day Time. CES 2379-26, 11/86

