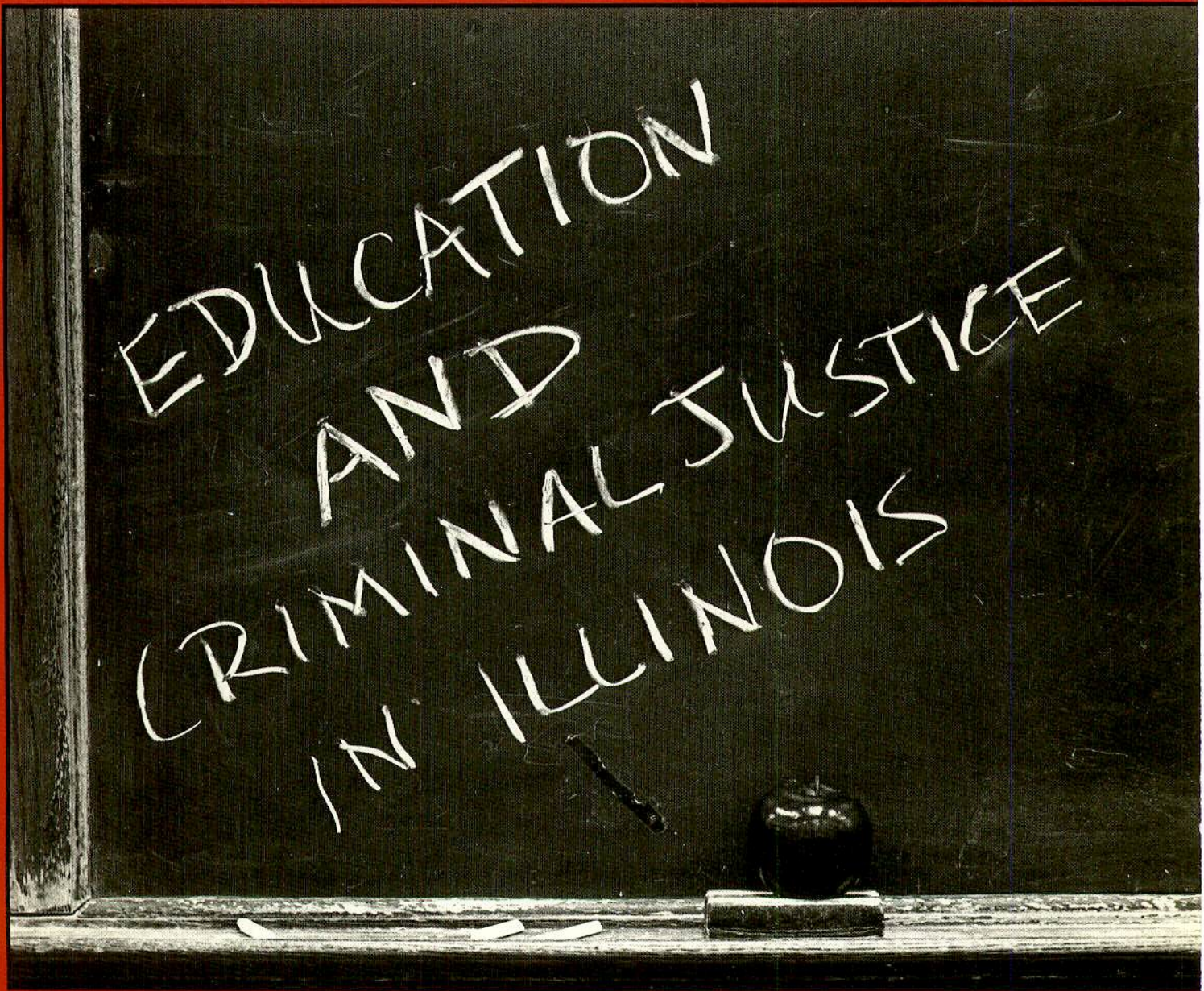


# Trends and Issues 91



ILLINOIS CRIMINAL JUSTICE INFORMATION AUTHORITY



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# **Trends and Issues 91**

Education and Criminal Justice  
in Illinois

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## Acknowledgments

The Authority would like to thank the students, teachers, and administrators who participated in the Illinois High School Survey; the inmates and staff of the Illinois Department of Corrections and the Cook County Jail; the staffs of the Illinois State Board of Education, the Chicago Board of Education, and the Illinois Department of Corrections' School District 428; Evanston Township High School; Roberto Clemente High School in Chicago; Brooke Whitted of Whitted & Kraning P.C.; and the participants in the following groups: the Roundtable Discussion of Juvenile Court Services and Educational Placement, the Illinois Juvenile Officers' Association Roundtable Discussion on Juvenile Policing, the Legal and Psychiatric Panel, and the Roundtable Discussion on Adult Education Needs of Probationers. In particular, the Authority acknowledges the tremendous contribution of the Educational Advisory Panel, the members of which are listed below.

This third printing of *Trends and Issues 91: Education and Criminal Justice in Illinois* has been made possible by the assistance of the Illinois State Police. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the positions of the Illinois State Police.

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## To the People of Illinois



Fiscal responsibility, efficiency, and effectiveness. Those must be the watchwords for Illinois in the future. We must be sure we direct our limited resources to areas where they will have the most impact.

Part of that effort means we have to stop playing catch-up. We all know it takes more money and effort to fix a problem that has been neglected over time than to prevent the problem from occurring in the first place.

As last year's edition of *Trends and Issues* showed, spending on the criminal justice system in Illinois has increased faster than the rate of inflation over the past several years, yet has still failed to keep pace with increases in the system's workload. As far as crime is concerned, we are still playing catch-up.

In *Trends and Issues 91*, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority suggests a way that we can begin to address the problem of crime, up front.

More than 70 percent of the Illinois prison inmates surveyed by the Authority for this report did not graduate from high school. Almost one-quarter of those who had dropped out left school before the 10th grade. Clearly, there is a strong correlation between educational failure and crime.

The average annual cost of keeping a student in school in Illinois is approximately \$4,200, while the average annual cost of incarcerating an adult in a state prison is \$16,200. Ensuring that Illinois students are well educated is obviously the more cost-effective measure.

However, if the schools themselves are not safe, ensuring an education for our students is impossible. In this report, the Authority documents alarmingly high rates of crime in and around Illinois public high schools—not just those in large urban areas, but in suburban and rural schools as well. Teachers cannot work and students cannot learn in an atmosphere of fear. If Illinois schools are to become second to none in the nation, they must be made safe.

*Trends and Issues 91* has attempted to illustrate to leaders in education, criminal justice, child welfare, and government the importance of crossing the boundaries of their separate agencies and disciplines. They must work together to make Illinois schools safer and to make education a key element in preventing crime.

I congratulate the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, Chairman Peter B. Bensinger, Executive Director J. David Coldren, and the staff for their insight in presenting these issues in *Trends and Issues 91*.

Sincerely,

A large, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Edgar". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

Jim Edgar  
Governor

## Message from the Executive Director

Over the past decade-and-a-half, the Illinois criminal justice system has investigated record numbers of crimes, seized increasingly large amounts of illegal drugs, and prosecuted and imprisoned more offenders each year than the year before. Yet, even with more personnel, new prisons, and better techniques and technology, the number of reported crimes has continued to increase.

How do we stem the tide? It's become a truism: the roots of crime are in poverty, joblessness, and lack of education. It's not the job of those of us who work in criminal justice to solve those problems directly, but it is our job to understand those problems, to work with those trying to solve them, and to use our understanding of them in fighting crime at its roots.

To that end, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority embarked on two related surveys, which form the basis of *Trends and Issues 91: Education and Criminal Justice in Illinois*. In the first, we asked Illinois public high school students and teachers about crime in their schools. In the second, we asked offenders in Illinois prisons about their educations.

We found some sobering news. One in 12 of the students we surveyed had been physically attacked in or around their schools in the past school year, and almost a third of the students said they had brought a weapon to school at least once in order to protect themselves. Seventy-two percent of the inmates we interviewed said they were high school dropouts. Many of those inmates said they believed they had been forced out of their schools by administrators who didn't want "troublemakers" around.

In addition to laying out the problem, *Trends and Issues* explores some of the ways Illinois is responding to crime in the schools, the causes and effects of student dropout, and the educational needs of offenders and other adults who were unable to get a complete education when they were young. It also describes, however, many areas in which much more needs to be done.

Criminal justice and social service agencies, schools, and other institutions must address the factors, such as learning disabilities and behavior disorders, that place some children at high risk of dropping out and criminal behavior, before they either make their schools too violent to learn in or drop out and wind up in court, juvenile detention, or prison. We must make sure that adult dropouts and ex-offenders get enough education to function in today's workplace, to prevent them from becoming a financial burden on an already strained

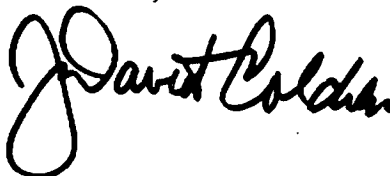
state economy. And we must make sure that Illinois employers, including criminal justice agencies, are guaranteed the skilled workers they will need to function effectively and competitively in the global marketplace of the 21st century.

With caseloads of all human service agencies, including criminal justice agencies, expanding at the same time budgets are being cut back, the temptation is for agencies to narrowly interpret their institutional mandates in order to limit their workloads. But we must look beyond the boundaries of institutions to identify common goals and devise strategies that can achieve them, by creating partnerships among institutions and among the people of different disciplines who operate them.

Juvenile officers and juvenile court officials can help educators learn how to prevent crime in their schools and how to help ensure that youngsters at risk of getting in trouble with the law are identified and helped early on. Correctional officials can work with educators to develop programs for adult and juvenile offenders that will enable them to get jobs, and well-paid jobs, upon release. Educators can help criminal justice officials learn to recognize learning problems among the defendants and offenders they work with. And the list goes on.

An important step toward that kind of cooperation was taken when the Authority convened a special committee of Illinois educators to advise us on this report. The Educational Advisory Panel's advice and criticism were vital in making sure this report accurately reflects the state of education in Illinois.

The public education and criminal justice systems share a common interest in seeing that young people are equipped with the skills they need to become productive citizens. Without the skills to earn enough at legitimate jobs to maintain a decent standard of living for themselves and their families, young people are faced with either living in poverty and dependency or entering an underground economy that offers illegitimate means to meet basic needs and increase their income. The cost to society of the second alternative is crime, and the cost to the individual is frequently loss of freedom, addiction, or death by violence.



J. David Coldren  
Executive Director

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# Introduction



When Illinois residents are asked to identify the most serious issues facing the state, education and crime are consistently at the top of the list.<sup>1</sup> Public education and criminal justice are not just important but separate issues; they are often intimately related in a variety of ways. Two aspects of this complicated relationship are pivotal: crime and violence in schools keep students from learning, and, too often, students who fail in the educational system and drop out become involved as adults in criminal activity, get arrested, and end up in prison.

### **WHAT IS THE EFFECT OF CRIME AND VIOLENCE IN THE SCHOOLS?**

When crime and violence reach into the classroom, the safety of the learning environment is diminished, and the ability of teachers to teach and of students to learn is diminished as well.

Although, nationally, crime in the schools appears to be not much worse than it was 10 years ago, schools are by no means safe sanctuaries of learning. One in four public high school teachers in Illinois and one in five students had property stolen from them during the 1989–1990 school year. One in 12 students statewide were physically attacked, and almost twice as many escaped an attempted attack in school or while traveling to or from school.<sup>2</sup>

The victims of crime and violence in the schools are not just those students and teachers who are attacked or robbed. Fear of violence changes the behavior of other students and teachers, in ways that reduce the effectiveness of the school as a learning environment. Many teachers are reluctant to remain alone after school hours, making them less available to students and parents, and some students stay home from school because they are afraid of being hurt.<sup>3</sup>

Fears for their own safety prompted one-third of the public high school students in Illinois to carry a weapon to school during the 1989–1990 school year, and one in 20 students reported they had taken a gun to school during the school year.<sup>4</sup>

During the first five months of the 1990–1991 school year, police assigned to school patrols in the 64 Chicago public high schools seized 282 guns and 85 other weapons.<sup>5</sup>

Although, in many cases, schools work closely with the criminal justice system to fight criminal behavior on their campuses, too often students, teachers, and administrators treat police and other officials as adversaries rather than partners. Many crime incidents go unreported in schools, because teachers and students say they lack confidence in the ability of school officials and the police to respond effectively. Many of those who do report being victimized say they are dissatisfied with the results.<sup>6</sup> Police officers working in schools in all parts of the state report that some administrators and teachers have failed to report seizures of weapons and drugs, have obstructed police investigations, and suppressed the reporting of serious crimes in their schools.<sup>7</sup>

Crime in the schools is one extreme of a behavioral spectrum. Misbehavior in the schools, although not necessarily criminal, can cause equally serious disruption to learning. For example, a veteran science teacher in a suburban school district reported that she is reluctant to plan any lab demonstrations that involve heat, strong chemicals, or materials that can splinter or break, because she cannot rely on all of her students to behave responsibly, even under close supervision.<sup>8</sup> Many teachers say the measures they must take every day to control a few disruptive students diminish their ability to teach.

According to a 1987 survey by the U.S. Department of Education, many teachers feel that disruptive classroom behavior has increased. Forty-four percent of the elementary and secondary teachers in a national poll said there was more disruptive behavior in classrooms than there was five years earlier, and 29 percent said they had seriously considered leaving teaching because of student misbehavior.<sup>9</sup>

### **WHAT CAUSES MISBEHAVIOR?**

Social changes in the structure of families, dramatic shifts in the demographics of poverty, and increasing incidence of drug-exposed, abused, and neglected children may be producing new generations of children who are poorly equipped to perform successfully in a traditional classroom setting. Such children may be less socialized.

---

*“A lot of behavior problems are related to missing values. I’m talking about things like honesty, politeness, respect, and responsibility. As institutions, schools are not presently equipped to teach them, and working parents don’t seem to have the time anymore. Teaching values is an important function that has become nobody’s job.”*

Arlene Kanno  
Teacher  
Elementary School District 97, Oak Park

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may have shorter attention spans, and may be more likely to have physical, emotional, and learning disabilities that affect their behavior and learning styles. Finally, children who are disruptive and who have problems mastering learning skills or responding to conventional teaching methods are at very high risk of dropping out of school, or of being pushed out of the educational system by the schools' inability to cope with those students' needs or their behavior. As new generations of troubled children reach school age, the impact of those younger students on the schools may be one reason why teachers of elementary students were most likely to report increases in misbehavior in the 1987 survey. It is likely that the most unruly students drop out before ever reaching high school.<sup>10</sup>

A 1990 study by the National Center for Health Statistics reported that developmental delays, learning difficulties, and emotional and behavioral problems were becoming more prevalent among American children. Based on an epidemiological survey of more than 17,000 children under age 17, the study found that one in every five American children has had a developmental delay, learning disability, or emotional problem. According to the authors, "... these kinds of conditions appear to be quite prevalent and may be becoming more so."<sup>11</sup> Increases in psychological disorders are attributed to growing numbers of children exposed to parental divorce, born out of wedlock, or raised in conflict-ridden, low-income, low-education, and single-parent households.<sup>12</sup> Other studies have shown that learning and behavior problems may be on the rise as a result of the increased survival rate of very low birth-weight babies, the possible effects of environmental contamination, and the increased numbers of drug-exposed infants, especially babies exposed to crack cocaine.<sup>13</sup> These and other factors can seriously affect children's ability to do well in school:

- *Drug-exposed infants.* Statewide, the number of babies born with cocaine in their urine increased tenfold between 1986 and 1989.<sup>14</sup> Although that number fell 15 percent in 1990, 1,712 babies were verified as having cocaine in their systems that year. Some officials of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) say it is too early to tell if the decline constitutes a trend. They point to fiscal

1991 reports that show verified cases during the first eight months of fiscal 1991 running far ahead of 1990 totals. By the end of February, 1,311 cocaine babies had been reported—a rate that could result in more than 2,000 by the end of fiscal 1991.<sup>15</sup> Such drug-exposed infants suffer high rates of birth defects, including neurological damage that can lead to severe attention deficit disorders and other learning and physical disabilities. Those disabilities can require years of therapy and special education services, at a cost to the public that will strain school and social service budgets.<sup>16</sup> The drug-abusing parents of these children are often unable to provide the level of special care such damaged children require, and many of these children end up in the foster care system.<sup>17</sup>

- *Changes in family structure.* Since 1965, the divorce rate in the United States has doubled, and approximately half of all first marriages now end in divorce. One-third of the children born in the last decade will live in a stepfamily before they are 18, and one-quarter of all children are currently being raised in single-parent families. Twenty-two percent of American children are born to an unwed mother, and a third of those mothers are teenagers.<sup>18</sup> Many studies have shown that children raised in single-parent families and stepfamilies are two to three times more likely to have emotional or behavioral problems than those with two biological parents in the home.<sup>19</sup>
- *Teenage mothers.* A 17-year study of more than 300 teen mothers in the United States found that their children are more likely to be high school dropouts, be prematurely sexually active, and have trouble with the law than are children in the general population. These negative outcomes persisted even for the children of teenage mothers who had succeeded in improving their socioeconomic and employment status through education or marriage.<sup>20</sup> Teenage motherhood is not exclusively an urban problem. In 1989, more than one-third of the live births in Pulaski County were to mothers under the age of 20, compared to almost one-fifth of the births in the City of Chicago.<sup>21</sup>
- *The changing demographics of poverty.* The number of children living in poverty in the



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**Orr High School's Infant and Family Development Center:  
an innovative program that helps teenage mothers**

The Infant and Family Development Center at Orr Community Academy, a public high school on Chicago's West Side, is an award-winning program that helps young mothers to stay in school while providing a comprehensive child development program for their children.<sup>1</sup> Young mothers learn child development and parenting skills, and their children attend a child development center for infants or a Head Start program for older children, both on the campus of the high school.

The program also provides a free maternal and child health-care program, staffed by a physician, a nurse, and a counselor from Mount Sinai Hospital. The child development specialists who work with the infants, toddlers, and their mothers are staff from Jane Addams Hull House. The Lecotech Institute of Evanston, a firm that designs toys that help children overcome developmental delays, provides developmental play therapy, utilizing the firm's specialized toys.

The program, fully implemented in May 1991 with the opening of the infant center, presently serves 24 mothers and 64 children, including 24 infants and young children and 40 older children in the Head Start program. Public-sector program partners include the Chicago Board of Education, the Illinois Department of Public Aid, and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. The long list of private-sector partners includes the Harris Foundation, Continental Bank, the Ounce of Prevention Fund, and Helene Curtis Corporation. Only Orr high school students are eligible for the program, but according to principal Kenneth Van Spankeren, the program is not large enough to meet even the need within this school of approximately 1,600 students. "There are currently 65 girls in this school who need this service, but we can only accommodate 24," Mr. Van Spankeren said. "The program tries to assist others in finding private day care in the community."<sup>2</sup>

1. The program received the 1991 School Innovation Award from the Illinois Caucus on Teenage Pregnancy.

2. Site visit, September, 1990 and Kenneth Van Spankeren, interview: April 2, 1991.

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United States is steadily increasing. In 1969, 11 percent of American children lived in families with cash incomes below the poverty line. By 1990, that figure had almost doubled—20 percent of American children under 18 and 23 percent of children under age 5 resided with families living in poverty.<sup>22</sup> Children now make up 40 percent of the poor people in America.<sup>23</sup> An even higher percentage of Illinois children live in poverty than the national average—28 percent of the children enrolled in public schools come from low-income families. In Chicago, the percentage is dramatically higher—66 percent of public school students live in poverty.<sup>24</sup>

- *Neglected and abused children.* Neglected and abused children frequently suffer developmental delays, as well as emotional and physical damage that impairs their ability to concentrate and to relate to teachers and classmates. Abusive families rarely provide

the encouragement and support children need to succeed in school. In Illinois, the number of cases of child neglect and abuse investigated and substantiated by DCFS rose from 33,857 in 1986 to a high of 40,932 in 1989—an increase of more than 20 percent in just four years. In 1990, the number of substantiated cases declined slightly to 38,530.<sup>25</sup>

- *Wards of the state.* The physical and developmental problems of abused and neglected children are often complicated by emotional problems that directly result from their experiences as wards of the state. According to a panel of experts convened by a federal judge in a class action suit brought against the Department of Children and Family Services, "While in DCFS custody these children manifest an increase in chronic medical, developmental, educational, and emotional problems. . . . It is the consensus of the panel that the risk to these children's health, development and well-being is not significantly diminished, and is many times aggravated while in DCFS custody."<sup>26</sup> An investigation of the educational opportunities of the 24,686 children in the care of DCFS faulted the agency for failing to give sufficient priority to the education of these children. DCFS records showed that 18 percent of the children were not in school. Investigators also found children were frequently moved "without apparent regard for where they have been attending school." According to DCFS records, schools in communities to which children have been moved often do not accept children, due to missing health and academic records or challenges to their residency. Despite their higher risk of having conditions requiring special education services, only 7 percent of DCFS wards were enrolled in special education, yet children placed in shelters and certain other programs automatically receive special education, whether or not they require it.<sup>27</sup>
- *Violent entertainment.* A study of children in five different countries found that children—especially those younger than 9 years of age—who watched violent television programs exhibited more aggressive behavior than children not exposed to such programs.<sup>28</sup> By age 18, an average American teenager has wit-

nessed 200,000 acts of violence on television, including 40,000 murders.<sup>29</sup> Violence is not limited to films shown on TV and at the movies. In the last few years, increasingly graphic themes of violence are portrayed in best-selling books, in popular music, and on the stage.<sup>30</sup>

Individually, each of these factors—the physical and mental consequences of drug exposure, the psychological traumas of divorce, under-educated teenage mothers, families living in poverty, physical abuse and neglect, and the impact of violence in the mass media—can put children at risk for immediate difficulty in school and for later difficulty in life. Many children are exposed to not just one but several of these factors, and the addition of each new risk factor multiplies the chances that a child will have the kind of difficulty in school that can lead to dropout and trouble with the law.

A 1990 study of almost 25,000 eighth graders nationwide found that 47 percent of the children had experienced one or more of the following six risk factors for poor school performance:

- Single-parent family (22 percent)
- Family income less than \$15,000 (21 percent)
- Home alone more than three hours a day (14 percent)
- Parents without a high school diploma (11 percent)
- A brother or sister who dropped out of high school (10 percent)
- Limited English proficiency (2 percent)

The study found that eighth graders who have experienced two or more of these risk factors are twice as likely as children without any risk factors to have the lowest grades and score among the lowest one-quarter of students on math and reading tests. Twenty-six percent of the students reported one risk factor, and 21 percent reported two or more.<sup>31</sup>

### **HOW DO THESE RISK FACTORS AFFECT CHILDREN IN SCHOOL?**

Children with behavior problems resulting from these factors not only have trouble succeeding in school, but their behavior problems may lead to disruptions, and even crime and violence, that prevent others from learning. Children exposed to drugs, poverty, abuse, broken families, and

violence require educational planning and services that will address their individual needs and help them overcome their difficulties (see Chapter 5, Special Education).

When their problems are not correctly identified and they don't get special assistance, such children often become frustrated and disruptive. They are likely to be ejected from the classroom for disciplinary purposes. Children who fail in school, whether because of behavioral problems, learning disabilities, or other reasons, are likely to drop out. Chronic truancy and dropout, in turn, have been shown to be associated with criminal activity.

Rates of delinquency are far higher among adolescents who drop out (especially male dropouts) than among teenagers who stay in school, and the association between dropping out and later criminal behavior has been shown to persist into early adulthood.<sup>32</sup> Male adolescents with learning disabilities run a high risk of both dropping out and engaging in delinquent behavior (see Chapter 5, Special Education). A major longitudinal study of the links between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency found that, regardless of race or socioeconomic status,

youngsters with learning disabilities are more than twice as likely to be delinquent as adolescents without learning disabilities.<sup>33</sup>

Among Illinois prison inmates, 72 percent of the men and women in the Authority's 1990 Survey of Educational Experiences and Attitudes of Inmates in the Illinois Department of Corrections had not graduated from high school (see Chapter 7, School Experiences of Inmates). Inmates were more likely to have dropped out than the general population. While only 16 percent of white male high school students in Illinois drop out, 71.5 percent of the white male inmates surveyed had failed to complete high school. Forty-two percent of black male students and 43 percent of Hispanic male students drop out statewide, but more than 72 percent of black male inmates and almost 77 percent of Hispanic male inmates had left

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*“American society has moved into a period in which it contains many of what could be called ‘new age’ families, while schools continue to function as if they were serving children from traditional families. Schools have to create more involvement by parents, and they need to involve children in school activities outside the classroom.”*

*Professor James S. Coleman  
University of Chicago  
Quoted in the Chicago Tribune  
(April 4, 1990)*

---

school without completing their high school education.<sup>34</sup>

Statewide averages do not convey the seriousness of the dropout problem among young urban males (see Chapter 6, Truancy and Dropout). Although the graduation rate statewide was 78 percent in 1990, 39 public high schools in Illinois had graduation rates lower than 50 percent—38 of them Cook County schools with high minority enrollments.<sup>35</sup> A Chicago Board of Education study found that almost half of young Hispanic and black males and more than two-thirds of the Native Americans who entered Chi-

cago public high schools as freshmen had failed to graduate four years later in 1988. Not all minority groups have high dropout rates, however. The dropout rate for Asian students in Chicago, for example, is only 15.3 percent—less than half the rate for white students, almost one-third the rate for black and Hispanic students, and less than one-fourth the rate for Native American students. The dropout rate for Asians is low despite the fact that many Asians, like many Hispanics, are recent immigrants with language and cultural differences that must be overcome in order to succeed in school.<sup>36</sup>

High dropout rates among black male students may contribute to the disproportionately

high numbers of black men who become criminal offenders. While black men aged 15 and older make up 4.9 percent of Illinois' population,<sup>37</sup> they constitute 57.4 percent of persons arrested for serious (index) crimes,<sup>38</sup> approximately 34 percent of offenders sentenced to probation, and 61 percent of those sentenced to prison. Hispanic men aged 15 and older make up 2.9 percent of the population, but only 1 percent of those arrested for index crimes, 7 percent of probationers, and 9 percent of prison inmates.<sup>39</sup>

Simply counting the number of dropouts does not adequately measure educational failure. Graduation is no guarantee of educational skills. The Authority's survey of prison inmates found that inmates who had graduated from high school

were almost as likely as inmates who had dropped out to report they had serious reading problems. Inmates' performance on standardized tests of basic skills showed that, on the average, the inmates' skills were almost three years behind the grade level they had completed in school. Many inmates reported that they had been repeatedly promoted to higher grades in school, even though it was obvious to them and to their teachers that they were not mastering the curriculum.<sup>40</sup>

This problem seems to be especially acute among minority and low-income public school students, who are likely to receive lower-quality educations. Minority students are far more likely than white students to be living in poverty and to attend a public school with lower-than-average test scores, lower teacher salaries and per-pupil expenditures, and higher-than-average class sizes and dropout rates (see Chapter 2, Education in Illinois).<sup>41</sup>

In the 1971–1972 school year, minority students constituted 22 percent of the state's total enrollment.<sup>42</sup> By the 1988–1989 school year, that percentage had increased to 33.4 percent, and, by the year 2000, minority enrollment is projected to reach 42 percent of the school population.<sup>43</sup>

Because many minority students are likely to experience risk factors for poor school performance, these projections mean that an increasing proportion of Illinois' public school enrollment may require special services to succeed educationally and must be considered at high risk for dropping out of school.

But the inequities in educational quality in schools with high minority enrollment and the high dropout rates of minority children suggest that the system of public education has not succeeded in meeting the educational needs of a growing segment of the state's public school population.

## **MINORITIES IN THE WORK FORCE: NOW AND IN THE YEAR 2000**

Although minorities are becoming a greater percentage of the population, and therefore constitute an increasing proportion of the new workers poised to enter the labor force, employment prospects for minorities, given present trends in education, are not bright. A 1987 study by the Hudson Institute of demographic trends and their expected outcomes, *Workforce 2000*, found that

### **Educate now or incarcerate later?**

The average annual cost of keeping a student in school in Illinois is approximately \$4,200, but the average annual cost of incarcerating an adult in a state prison is \$16,200.<sup>1</sup> The costs of incarceration are only a small fraction of the toll that has been extracted from society by the criminal acts, arrest, prosecution, and conviction of an offender. Every child who is retained in school represents an enormous potential savings to the state, by increasing the chances of producing a productive citizen and diminishing the risk of an outcome that includes arrest and incarceration.

1. Data from the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Department of Corrections.



the U.S. work force is becoming older, more female, and more disadvantaged. In 1987, 47 percent of the labor force consisted of native-born white males, but in the closing years of the 20th century, only 15 percent of new workers entering the labor force will be in that category. The majority of new workers will be some combination of female, ethnic minority, and recent immigrant.<sup>44</sup> According to the study, the future is not rosy for many of these new workers, especially minorities, or for their employers:

- The skills of new workers entering the labor force do not match the demands of the kinds of jobs the changing economy is creating, and the skill gap is particularly severe among minority workers.
- Blacks and Hispanics are overrepresented in declining job sectors, such as manufacturing, which are projected to lose the highest numbers of workers. Most job growth in higher-paying occupations will occur in fields requiring high-technology skills and postsecondary education.

The nationwide trends found by the *Workforce 2000* study hold true even more strongly in Illinois (Figure 1.1). Between 1980 and 1985, Illinois lost 227,000 manufacturing jobs and was one of only two major industrial states that suffered a net loss of jobs during that period (Figure 1.2).<sup>45</sup>

The economic shift from manufacturing to service industries will create some new jobs, but many of them will be low-paying service jobs that cannot replace the high salaries lost by factory workers.<sup>46</sup> If black men and Hispanics fail to obtain the necessary education to move out of declining job sectors and into the new, higher-skill occupations, economic and social conditions for those workers will decline even further.

The prospects for very low-skilled workers are particularly bleak. Although the number of jobs in all occupations is expected to increase by 16.3 percent between 1986 and the year 2000,

jobs in the six occupational groupings most likely to employ marginally skilled workers will decline.<sup>47</sup> Job growth will be greatest in white-collar and service occupations, many of which require some college or specialized training, and, in many cases, graduate degrees. Competition for limited numbers of low-skilled jobs will increase.<sup>48</sup> It is estimated that, of every 100 new jobs in Illinois, 57 will require a high school diploma, and 35 others will require at least some college training. That leaves only eight jobs available for individuals lacking a high school diploma.<sup>49</sup>

If Illinois does not educate all of its children for the jobs of the future, the consequences, social and economic, could be serious on a number of fronts:

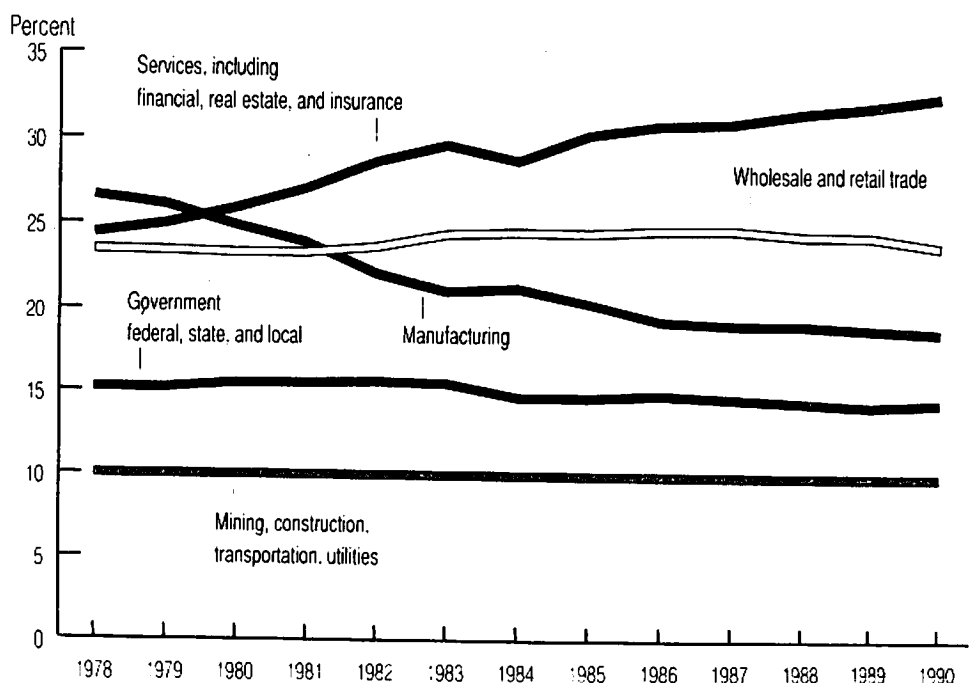
- Increasing unemployment and replacement of full-time work with part-time and temporary employment among a growing minority population will exacerbate social problems in Illinois' inner cities, strengthening the cycle of poverty, lack of education, and crime. The criminal justice and other

Figure 1.1  
**Demographic changes in the Illinois work force from 1980 to 2000**

| Age group           | Size of labor force in 2000 (thousands) | Percent change from 1980 |
|---------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 16-19               | 386                                     | -13                      |
| 20-24               | 607                                     | -25                      |
| 25-34               | 1,367                                   | -5                       |
| 35-44               | 1,650                                   | +61                      |
| 45-64               | 1,908                                   | +23                      |
| 65+                 | 222                                     | +20                      |
| <b>Ethnic group</b> |   |                          |
| White               | 4,640                                   | +3                       |
| Black               | 868                                     | +31                      |
| Hispanic            | 587                                     | +108                     |
| <b>Sex</b>          |   |                          |
| Male                | 3,486                                   | +11                      |
| Female              | 2,759                                   | +19                      |

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security

Figure 1.2  
**Changes in job market share for selected non-agricultural job categories**



Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security

agencies that will have to cope with these rising problems will themselves be facing a shortage of skilled labor.

- The generation of young people entering the work force is smaller than the “baby boom” generation that preceded it, and increasing proportions of these new workers lack the skills needed for the jobs being created. The convergence of these two trends could result in serious shortages of skilled labor that not only

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*“The lesson is plain. If people have nothing to lose by committing violent crime, some are likely to prey upon their neighbors, and, occasionally, upon the rest of us. Acting on this lesson is far more difficult. If we are to deal with crime in the long term, we must ensure that the people in our inner cities have a stake in this society, that they have too much to lose to make crime a worthwhile proposition.”*

*Professor James F. Fyfe  
American University  
Washington Post (March 17, 1991)*

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could hamper Illinois’ economic competitiveness but also increase the social burden on productive workers. If these young people remain unemployed, a smaller number of workers will be footing the bill for government services—for themselves, for the growing number of needy unemployed, and for the growing number of retired workers.

- A University of Illinois study has found that there is a direct link between educational attainment of the work force and the ability of states to attract industries that will provide new jobs. According to the study, a 10-percent increase in the median years of school completed by adults increases the rate of a state’s employment growth by 17 percent to 19 percent.<sup>50</sup> As Illinois

competes with other states and countries for new industry, especially in the high-technology arena, the education level of the work force will become an important factor in the state’s future economic development or failure.

## **THE ROLE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION**

Although the educational system is charged with producing well-educated, employable adults, in fact more than 2 million adults in Illinois are estimated to be functionally illiterate.<sup>51</sup> No matter what efforts are made to educate the children of the future, without equally vigorous efforts in adult education, the undereducated adults of the present will continue to be a drain on Illinois’ social services and criminal justice agencies for

their lifetimes (see Chapter 9, Adult Education). Correctional education programs in jails and prisons provide literacy, basic education, GED, and higher education programs to inmates. Public school districts, community colleges, and many community-based organizations provide academic and vocational programs to adult learners in the community. Many corporations have directly confronted the skill gap among their workers by providing on-the-job training and workplace education programs.

Many of these programs suffer, however, from problems that hamper their effectiveness:

- Prison crowding, mandatory education requirements, and “good time” incentives for completing educational programs have combined to create long waiting lists for many educational programs in Illinois prisons.
- Budget cutbacks threaten correctional education and job-training and -placement programs at a time when the correctional system is experiencing its fastest population growth in history.
- Cutbacks of state and federal support for vocational and educational training in work release and community-based programs for offenders threaten the existence of programs that have served thousands of released offenders every year.
- The number of students taking and passing GED tests in Illinois is declining, and the percentage of students tested is well below the averages of other states.
- Adult basic education and literacy programs in some community colleges have been criticized for their high dropout rates, failure to tailor programs to the needs of their students, lack of measurements demonstrating their effectiveness, and low hiring standards for teachers.
- Community-based programs that have had success in working with adults with very low skill levels are prevented from competing directly for federal funds for adult education. Instead, they must obtain scarce state and private funds that are a less certain resource.
- Guidelines that require vocational training programs to show quick success in job training and placement discourage programs from working with adults with very poor skills.

All of these problems threaten the last chance many adults and young people have to equip themselves with skills that can lead to independence and a productive role in society.

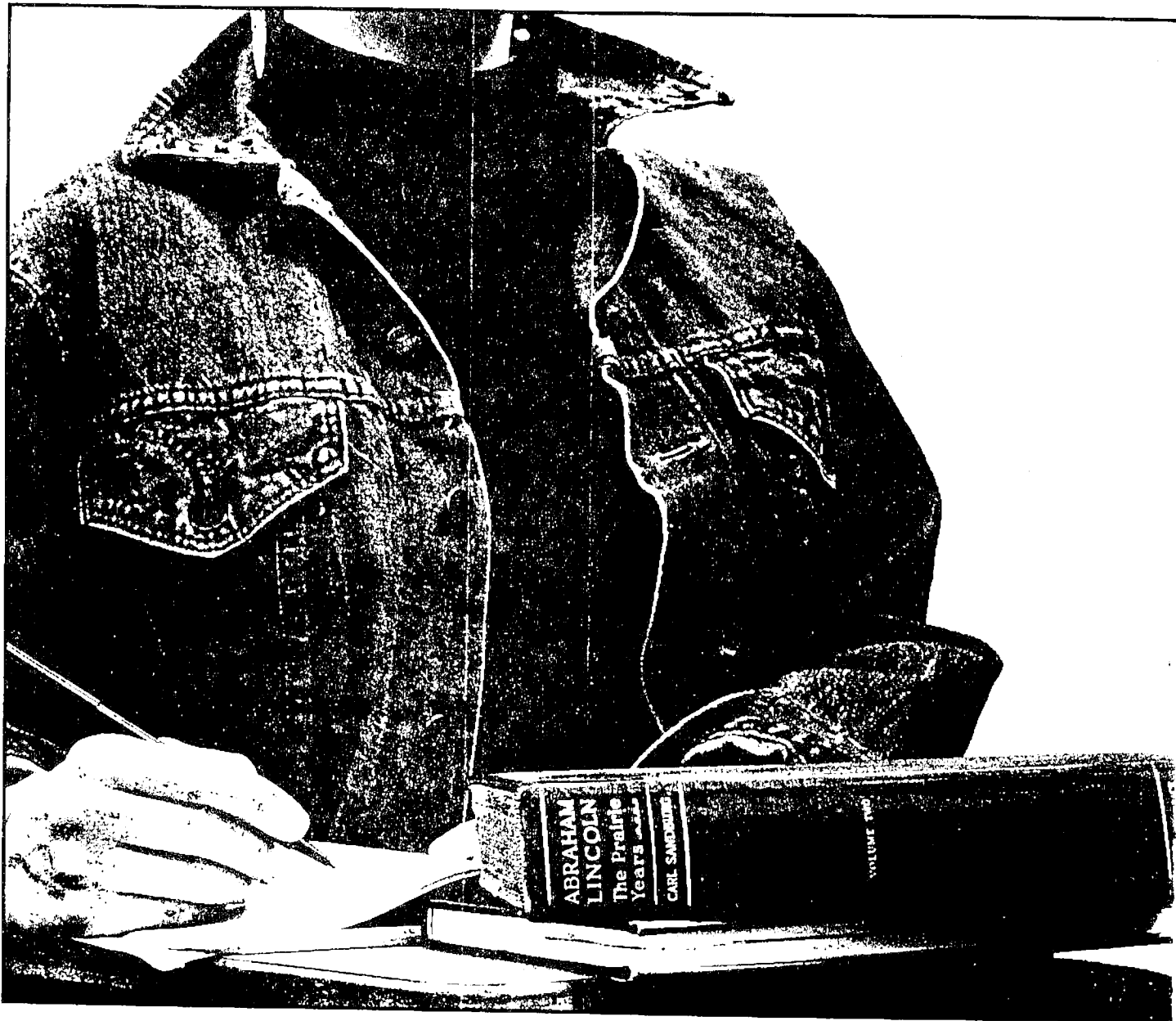
## Notes

1. In a random sample of 800 registered voters in Illinois polled by Coldwater Corporation for the Illinois State Medical Society in August 1990, 36 percent said education was the most serious issue facing the state; drugs and drug-related crimes were selected by 30 percent. These two choices were selected approximately three times as often as the next most popular choice: a concern about taxes (12 percent). A Northern Illinois University survey that also polled 800 adults found that education was the top concern. Illegal drugs were the second most pressing concern, and the percentage of respondents selecting drugs as their first choice had climbed from less than 1 percent in 1987 to 14 percent in 1990. Ellen M. Dran, *1990 Illinois Policy Survey* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Studies, 1990).
2. Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority's Student and Teacher Surveys of Safety and Discipline in Illinois High Schools (1990). See also Chapter 3, Crime in the Schools.
3. The Authority's Illinois High School Survey (1990).
4. The Authority's Illinois High School Survey (1990).
5. George Sams, Director of Safety and Security, Chicago Board of Education, interview: March 6, 1991.
6. The Authority's Illinois High School Survey (1990).
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8. Arlene Kanno, Oak Park Elementary School District 97, interview: March 19, 1991.
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14. Betsy Burkhard, "Coke Kids to Strain School Services" *Rockford Register-Star* (January 21, 1990): 1.
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16. Districts that have designed programs to cope with the special education needs of premature and drug-exposed children in other parts of the country report a cost of between \$15,000 and \$18,000 per pupil per year, compared to the current average per-pupil expenditure in Illinois of \$4,215 (Burkhard (1990)).
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18. Jerrold K. Footlick, "What Happened to the Family?" *Newsweek, Special Edition: The 21st Century Family* (Winter/Spring 1990): 16.
19. Zill and Schoenborn, "Health of Our Nation's Children" (1990): 8; R.F. Emery, "Marriage, Divorce, and Children's Adjustment" *Developmental Clinical Psychology and Psychiatry* 14 (1988): 325-344; and S. McLanahan, "The Consequences of Single Parenthood for Subsequent Generations" *Focus* 23 (1988): 16-21.
20. Frank F. Furstenberg, Gunn J. Brooks, and S.P. Morgan, *Adolescent Mothers in Later Life* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1987).
21. Ray Long and Peggy Boyer, "Teen Pregnancies: More Than a Chicago Problem" *Illinois Issues* (March 1990): 21.
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28. L. Rowell Huesmann and Leonard Eron, *Television and the Aggressive Child: A Cross-national Perspective* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1986). The three-year cross-cultural study of the effects of violent television on children was conducted in Australia, Finland, Israel, Poland, and the United States. A causal relationship between exposure to violent programming and aggressive behavior was found in children up to age 9. An earlier 22-year study by two of the same researchers on the impact of media violence on three generations (L. Rowell Huesmann, Leonard Eron, Monroe Lefkowitz, and Leopold Walder, "Stability of Aggression over Time and Generations" *Developmental Psychology* 20, no. 6 (1984)) found that children who watched significant amounts of television violence at age 8 were more likely to commit violent crimes or engage in spousal and child abuse at age 30 (Arnoldo Zelli, assistant to Leonard Eron, interview: February 28, 1991).
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30. "Violence in Our Culture," (1991): 48-52.
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36. Chicago Board of Education, *Chicago Public High School Dropout Profile: Report on the Class of 1988* (Chicago, 1990)
37. Data are from the 1990 Census.
38. Index crimes are serious crimes—murder, aggravated assault, sexual assault, robbery, theft, motor vehicle theft, burglary, and arson—selected for use in measuring crime statistics nationwide in the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reports.
39. Arrest statistics are from Illinois State Police, *Crime in Illinois* (Springfield, Ill., 1989). Statewide data on the racial characteristics of probationers are not available. Probation statistics used here are based on the racial characteristics of a total one-month sample of all offenders sentenced to probation during January 1990, conducted by the Administrative Office of Illinois Courts (Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, *Adult Probation Population Survey* (Springfield, Ill., 1990)). Prison statistics are from the Illinois Department of Corrections.
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42. Illinois State Board of Education, *Illinois School Enrollment Now and in the Year 2000* (Springfield, Ill., 1988): iii.
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44. William B. Johnston and Arnold H. Packer, *Workforce 2000: Work and Workers for the 21st Century* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hudson Institute, 1987): 1-117.
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# Public Education in Illinois



Much of Illinois' uniqueness as a state lies in its great diversity. As demographer Harold Hodgkinson observed, "Although the 'Heartland' is very difficult to define, Illinois is the only state that combines the aspects of the Great Lakes—manufacturing, ethnic diversity, unions, large urban centers—with those of the Great Plains—rural agricultural, small town, low diversity."<sup>1</sup>

This wide-ranging diversity may be the source of one of the most distinguishing characteristics of public education in Illinois—decentralization. In many other large states, including California and Florida, school systems are centralized at the county level. In such states, policies, curriculum planning, and many other important administrative decisions are made by county administrators, providing a measure of uniformity lacking in a highly decentralized system like that in Illinois.

Local autonomy in Illinois extends beyond even the level of the 955 school districts to afford individual principals decision making authority within their own school buildings. In Chicago, school reform has put decision making power into the hands of parents, teachers, and citizens elected to more than 500 local school councils.<sup>2</sup>

Decentralized, local control allows schools to tailor their programs and policies to the individual needs of their local communities. Local control also gives parents an opportunity to become involved in decisions that affect their children's education. Increased local control of schools has been the goal of school reform efforts in Chicago and in many other districts across the nation. But there are disadvantages to such decentralization.

In a decentralized system, it is difficult to make sure widely dispersed decision makers have the information and expertise they need. A 1990 poll of local school council members in Chicago found the central administration did not respond to their questions quickly and accurately, and did not give them enough assistance on such issues as school implementation plans and budget preparation.<sup>3</sup>

Because each district and, sometimes, each principal are free to set priorities different from those in other schools and districts, the net effect of decentralization is often inequity in certain services and in the amount of attention that is paid to specific issues from district to district or school

to school. Other difficulties, including several that affect school safety and the relationship with the criminal justice system, arise from decentralization:

- Juvenile police officers assigned to work with more than one school report that the level of cooperation and the quality of the relationship between each school and the police department can vary widely, even in the same community. There is little conformity even in such basic elements of school-police rapport as school authorities' understanding of juvenile law and police powers.<sup>4</sup>
- It is difficult to use the court system in Illinois to achieve statewide educational reforms. For example, in disputes over the rights of special education students, successful suits in behalf of students and parents rarely have impact beyond the district in which the case arose, due to differences in the way special education services are implemented in each district.<sup>5</sup>
- Methods for dealing with truancy and the priority assigned to it vary widely across the state. Some districts intervene effectively with truants and their families, but in many parts of the state, districts may not even maintain accurate records of the numbers of chronic truants and provide only minimal intervention (see Chapter 6, Truancy and Dropout). A major disparity in handling truancy arises from the Juvenile Court Act: in the 101 counties outside Cook, truants may be brought before the juvenile court when school interventions have been exhausted, but the Cook County Juvenile Court is specifically exempted from this provision of the act.
- Each district is free to establish its own discipline code. There are no uniform statewide standards for disciplinary procedures, including corporal punishment, suspension, and expulsion.<sup>6</sup>
- Differences in curriculum and in readmission policies among various schools make it difficult for detention centers and correctional facilities to coordinate their programs with local schools, making it harder for students to return to those schools.
- The responsibility for funding and managing schools in special categories, such as those in detention centers, is murky. Resulting disputes between counties and school districts can

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## Illinois schools

In 1990-91, Illinois' 4,181 public elementary and secondary schools included:

- 2,672 elementary schools
  - 576 junior high schools
  - 673 high schools
  - 260 special education and other special schools, which include schools in state correctional facilities and state schools for special populations, such as deaf and blind students.
- 

harm programs and disrupt staffing in the facilities.<sup>8</sup>

School financing, like decision making, is more decentralized in Illinois than in many other states. Because the state's contribution toward funding for the schools—40 percent—is lower than in many other states, schools depend more on local property taxes to support the quality of education provided. Wealthy districts have more resources to contribute to their schools and can provide better education to their students than poor districts.

## HOW BIG IS ILLINOIS' EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM?

During the 1990-1991 school year, Illinois ranked third in the nation in number of school districts, after Texas and California, with 955.<sup>9</sup> Although the 1985 School District Reorganization Act was intended to encourage small districts, especially in sparsely populated, rural areas, to consolidate in order to boost cost savings and efficiency and to enhance educational opportunities for rural children, only 21 school districts were eliminated through consolidation between 1985 and 1990. Twenty-five more were eliminated for other reasons.

During the 1990-1991 school year, there were more than 1.8 million public school students in Illinois, of whom 1.3 million were kindergarten and elementary students and 516,500 were secondary students.<sup>10</sup> Total public school enrollment in Illinois increased 1.5 percent between the 1988-1989 school year and the 1990-1991 school year. This growth reversed a decline that had lasted since the peak enrollment year of 1971-1972, when nearly 2.4 million students were enrolled.<sup>11</sup>

In 1986-1987 (the last year for which figures are available) more than 169,000 students—approximately 15 percent of the school-age chil-

dren in Illinois—were enrolled in private schools.<sup>12</sup>

Illinois also has 191 colleges, universities, and other post-secondary institutions. The public system includes 12 public universities and 50 community colleges. There are also 106 private colleges and universities and 23 proprietary insti-

tutions (private professional and trade schools) in Illinois.<sup>13</sup> Chicago alone has 25 public and 34 private colleges and universities. Twenty-five percent of householders in the Chicago metropolitan area hold college degrees, making the region one of the best-educated labor markets in the United States.<sup>14</sup>

## THE STRUCTURE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN ILLINOIS

Public education in Illinois resembles a layered pyramid, with the State Board of Education at the administrative pinnacle, 57 educational regions forming an intermediate layer, and the local school districts as the broad base of the structure. Each layer has distinct mandates as well as shared responsibilities to provide for public education within the state.

### State Board of Education

The Illinois State Board of Education, in its present form, was created by the 1970 Illinois Constitution to serve as the state's main educational policy making and administrative body, with responsibility for all public primary and secondary education in Illinois. The State Board of Education consists of 17 members, appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Illinois Senate. This board is authorized to hire and supervise a state superintendent of schools, who serves as the chief administrative officer.<sup>15</sup> Collectively, the board, the superintendent, and the administrative staff are responsible for monitoring the compliance of schools with statewide policies, rules, and regulations; administering state and federal funds for education; regulating the teacher certification process; and providing technical assistance to school districts.

### Educational regions

The state is divided into 57 educational regions,



each presided over by an elected regional superintendent of schools. The size of these regions varies, to ensure that each regional superintendent serves an approximately equivalent population. Thirty of the educational regions are individual counties, and the remaining 27 regions are made up of two or more counties.<sup>16</sup>

Many of the duties of the regional superintendents are specified in the State School Code. By statute, they serve as the chief truant officers for their region, a duty which they sometimes delegate to one or more full-time truant officers.<sup>17</sup> Regional superintendents conduct all GED testing within their region, and they inspect building plans and schools for safety. Regional superintendents also distribute state funds and perform

a wide range of financial and electoral duties.

#### **Local school districts**

Local school districts sometimes have boundaries identical to those of a township or village, but school districts in Illinois are very often made up in ways that don't conform to the geographic boundaries of local communities.

They may cover only a portion of a larger city, or they may combine to serve two or more villages or portions of unincorporated areas. School districts may be organized as elementary districts, high school districts, or unit (K-12) districts. The 1985 School District Reorganization Act identified unit districts as the preferred organizational structure. Restructuring along those lines has met with some resistance because elementary teachers' salaries would have to be brought up to the higher levels of teachers in high school districts, and school boards and superintendents concerned solely with elementary education would cease operating.<sup>18</sup>

Most districts have an elected school board which selects a superintendent of schools. Superintendents set policies and curricula within their districts, and, in most districts, they hire and fire both teachers and principals.<sup>19</sup>

The structure of the educational system provides the framework for the delivery of educational services. Along with many other factors, such as teacher training, administrative leadership, parental involvement, adequate funding,

and curriculum design, the structure of a system can influence the quality of education children receive. A variety of indicators suggest that the educational systems in Illinois and in the nation as a whole fall short of excellence.

### **THE QUALITY OF AMERICAN PUBLIC EDUCATION**

American students fare poorly when compared to their counterparts in Western Europe and industrialized Asian nations on indicators ranging from the amount of time spent in school and doing homework to performance on standardized tests.<sup>20</sup>

During 1990, U.S. Department of Education researchers studied more than 200 reports of student performance over the last 20 years and concluded that, while some progress was being made in the attainment of basic skills, today fewer American students than in 1970 could demonstrate advanced applications of those skills.<sup>21</sup> A 1990 report by the Educational Testing Service found that the percentage of American students with the best scores on state assessment tests peaks in the fourth grade and steadily declines through the end of high school, suggesting that bright students are not encouraged to maintain superior performance. The study also found that only half of the top-performing students who entered college in 1980 had graduated by 1987.<sup>22</sup>

Business leaders have also consistently expressed concern that job applicants do not possess the skills needed to perform increasingly sophisticated jobs in industry and business. According to Arthur Gottschalk, former president of the Illinois Manufacturers' Association, many applicants for jobs in Illinois industries are unable to read the application form or perform simple mathematical calculations. The problem is affecting employers in the criminal justice system as well. When a new prison opened in Mt. Sterling in 1989, 309 people with a high school diploma or equivalency certificate applied for positions with the Illinois Department of Corrections. Twenty-one percent of these applicants failed a reading test geared to only a 10th-grade reading level.<sup>23</sup>

In a nationwide assessment of math skills among eighth graders, the U.S. Department of Education reported in June 1991 that only one in seven eighth-grade students had math skills appropriate to their grade level. Illinois students performed slightly worse than average (260 points

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*"Some of the most affluent kids who walk on the face of the earth are not learning on a world standard."*

Albert Shanker

President of the American Federation of Teachers

Quoted in the Chicago Tribune (August 20, 1990)

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out of a possible 350, with a nationwide average of 261), ranking the state 23rd among U.S. states and territories.<sup>24</sup>

## EVALUATING EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE

There is little consensus on the best way to measure the effectiveness of schools, although almost everyone agrees that schools should be held accountable for their performance. In the past, student performance on standardized tests has been the principal means of measuring a school system's effectiveness. Two of the most common standardized tests are the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the American College Test (ACT).<sup>25</sup>

Many critics say these test scores are not an accurate measure of a school's effectiveness, because they fail to take into account any performance measures for the almost 40 percent of students who do not plan to go to college and do not take the tests.<sup>26</sup> The students who do take the test are likely to be the most successful students, further distorting test scores as a performance criterion for the whole school.

Nevertheless, students' performance on standardized tests continues to be used as one way to assess how well college-bound students perform, compared to their peers in other states. With 63 percent of the Illinois public and private high school seniors taking the test in 1990, the state's average score on the ACT test was 20.9 (a perfect score is 36), slightly higher than the national average of 20.6 (Figure 2.1).

### Accountability beyond testing

In addition to student scores on standardized tests, evaluation of an educational system could include the following:

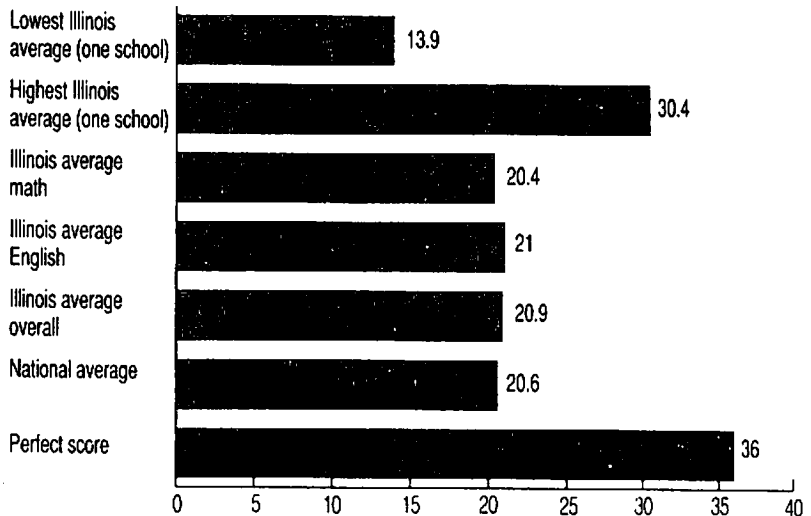
1. How well does the system meet the broad goals and fulfill the fundamental purpose of public education in the state?
2. How closely does the system conform to its specific legislative mandate?
3. How well does the system prepare students to function in society?

#### *Meeting the goals and purpose*

Few would argue that the primary function of a system of universal, compulsory education is to

Figure 2.1

### Illinois students' performance on ACT tests in 1990



Source: *Chicago Tribune* (September 11, 1990)

### Diploma with a money-back guarantee

In an innovative attempt to solve the problem of employers who find high school graduates deficient in skills and lacking in the work ethic, Harlem Consolidated District 122 in Winnebago County, which includes the communities of Machesney Park and Loves Park, is equipping qualified graduates with what amounts to a money-back guarantee. To qualify for the special certificate, a graduate must maintain at least a 4.0 grade average (on a scale of 5) over four years, must average fewer than seven days absent per year, and must be judged by teachers to possess such qualities as honesty, promptness, initiative, and pride in the quality of work.

Graduates who qualify receive a wallet-sized guarantee that they can present to prospective employers. The guarantee promises that the school district will send tutors, hired at school district expense, to the workplace to retrain any graduate who proves to be deficient in the basic skills needed to succeed on the job.

According to Superintendent Irving Miller, about 70 percent of the district's 350-400 graduating seniors plan to immediately enter the job market. "The world of work and the world of schooling have been artificially separated," he said. "What our programs do is reintegrate these experiences." According to Superintendent Miller, the graduate guarantee is only the final step in the district's Education for Employment programs. In the lower grades, children are taken on field trips to familiarize them with what people, including their own parents, do to make a living. In junior high school, students are taught about a variety of career options and the kinds of training needed to qualify for them. At the high school level, students "shadow" an employee in a participating firm during an eight-hour work day to see first-hand what it means to perform a full day's work in various occupations. At all levels of the program there is a concentrated effort to relate good work habits needed to succeed in school to what is required of employees on the job.

So far, 22 firms in the Rockford area, mainly aerospace and small machine parts industries, are participating in the district's programs. Firms also consult with the district's curriculum planners about the skills that are required in the modern work force. The corporate response has been enthusiastic. In 1990, participating firms raised \$63,000 to install a computerized drafting system in the high school to give students the opportunity to train on state-of-the-art equipment.

provide children with the basic knowledge and skills that will equip them to assume productive adult roles. In a participatory democracy such as ours, education also plays a central role in binding together a diverse society. The system of education in the United States has long been the

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*"Having a child too soon, abusing drugs and alcohol, criminal behavior, and ultimately violence are formidable barriers in the path to adulthood. But the comparisons [to other countries] suggest strongly, even if they do not prove, that others may be doing a better job than we with the transition to work aspects of youth's development and preparation for responsible adulthood. We know for certain that a variety of countries have more extensive policies than does the United States to help their young people make the move from school to promising careers."*

Rosemary George

William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family, and Citizenship (1987)

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primary tool for promoting social equality, lawful behavior, and responsible citizenship.<sup>27</sup>

In 1989, approximately half (49.2 percent) of the graduating seniors in Illinois said they planned to enroll in higher education.<sup>28</sup> While not all of these students may be admitted to colleges or universities and still others may not complete an undergraduate education, this figure nevertheless suggests about half of the state's students set out on a path to adult careers that leads to better paying jobs and a margin of financial security.<sup>29</sup> The economic and social prospects of students not headed for college are far less certain, and students who drop out—more than 35,000 each year—face even bleaker prospects.

A national study of mean annual earnings for men aged 20–24 found that, between 1973 and 1986, high school dropouts' earnings fell 42.1 percent in constant 1985 dollars. High school graduates' wages dropped by 28.3 percent. The mean income for college graduates, however,

dropped only 6 percent. The greatest loss was suffered by black high school dropouts, who saw their average earnings fall by 60.6 percent during the period.<sup>30</sup>

A 1987 study of the school-to-work transition for American youth found that students moving directly from high school into jobs are typically unable to obtain career-ladder positions, even at the entry level.<sup>31</sup> Citing a lack of work-study, apprenticeship, and other vocational training programs, the study called for the creation of a clear alternative path to useful employment for youth who are not planning to go to college.

The difficulty many non-college bound young people have in finding well-paying, career-oriented jobs may contribute to higher U.S. rates for teenage pregnancies, drug abuse, juvenile crime, and juvenile deaths by homicide and automobile accidents. Stephen Hamilton of Cornell University has compared the work histories and life experiences of West German and American youth and concluded that "the absence of a clear, direct path from school to work contributed to much problematic behavior among American youth."<sup>32</sup>

As the gap between predominantly middle-class, college-bound "haves" and mostly minority "have-nots" widens, the educational system may also be failing in its secondary goal of bridging the divisions in society and promoting equal opportunity. According to Illinois State Board of Education enrollment projections, the percentage of low-income students in the state's public schools will increase from its present 30 percent to 43 percent by the end of the decade. Minority enrollment will increase from 33 percent to 42 percent in the same period. This growing population of poor and minority students may be at risk of educational failure, due to their higher likelihood of requiring special education services and of attending schools with lower-than-average reading and math scores and higher-than-average truancy and dropout rates.<sup>33</sup>

#### *Fulfilling the state's educational mandate*

Article X, Section 1 of the Illinois Constitution spells out the goals for public education in Illinois:

- A fundamental goal of the people of the State is the educational development of all persons to the limits of their capacities.
- The State shall provide for an efficient system of high quality public education institutions and services. Education in public schools through the secondary level shall be free. There may be such other free education as the General Assembly provides by law.
- The State has the primary responsibility for financing the system of public education.<sup>34</sup>

The first goal, to educate all persons to the limits of their capacities, would require that teaching be tailored to the different learning styles of students, a difficult task. Students who succeed best in the present system tend to be those who

can conform to the common teaching style and method of instruction used in their classrooms. Many students cannot conform to that system, because of learning disabilities or behavior disorders, or because their culture and language differ from those of educators. Such children are not always educated to the limits of their capacities and frequently drop out, or are pushed out, of the educational system and end up as clients of the criminal justice system (see Chapter 5, Special Education, and Chapter 6, Truancy and Dropout).

The second part of the mandate decrees that public education in Illinois will be free, efficient, and of high quality. But a suit filed in November 1990, in the Circuit Court of Cook County on behalf of 54 schools districts across the state asserts that school financing in Illinois is so inequitable that the public school system is neither efficient, nor of consistently high quality.<sup>35</sup>

School financing in Illinois depends heavily on local property taxes. The assessed valuation of property in a district is the basis upon which a local taxing body decides how much tax money can be levied to pay for the local schools. Districts that have high average home values or contain major industrial or commercial complexes within their boundaries—a regional shopping mall, for example—have more money to spend on schools than those lacking major commercial or industrial developments and with low average property values.

The Illinois State Board of Education has defined Illinois school districts with an equalized assessed valuation per pupil in the top 25 percent as "rich" districts and those in the bottom 25 percent as "poor" districts. In rich districts, on the average, \$159,000 worth of property supports each elementary student, and \$222,000 stands behind every high school student. In poor districts, each elementary student is supported by only \$28,000 in property value, and each high school student by only \$26,000 (Figure 2.2).<sup>36</sup>

One effect of this disparity is that taxpayers in poor districts often pay property taxes at a higher rate than those in rich districts, but still generate less total revenue to support the schools. Taxpayers in the poorest suburbs in Chicago pay as much as \$16.67 for every \$100 in assessed property value, while homeowners in wealthy suburbs pay as little as \$5.55 for every \$100 the assessor says their property is worth.<sup>37</sup>

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### **Tech Prep educates students for technical jobs**

Tech Prep, an educational program designed to better equip Illinois students to fill technical jobs in the 1990s and beyond, will be launched in 45 high schools across the state in the fall of 1991. Tech Prep pairs community colleges with local high schools to create six-year vocational programs that award both a high school diploma and an associate's degree. Community colleges add new vocational courses to existing high school vocational programs, which are then integrated with advanced vocational programs leading to associate's degrees at the college level. In addition to creating new vocational opportunities within the high school curriculum, Tech Prep also includes an infusion of applied learning and vocational perspectives into regular high school courses. A close relationship between participating schools and the private sector is a key component of the program. Local businesses and industries consult with the schools and colleges on curriculum development and provide internships and summer jobs for Tech Prep students.

The Illinois State Board of Education began the program in state fiscal year 1991, using \$650,000 in federal vocational education funds. Seventeen community colleges were approved for participation in the program during 1991, and the board plans to add 10–12 more colleges to the program during fiscal 1992.

Tech Prep will not replace college preparatory courses, but will provide a more intensive and goal-directed academic education for vocational students.<sup>1</sup> The program is aimed at students whose grades place them in the 25th to 75th percentile of their classes, but, according to State Board of Education administrators for the program, all students in participating schools will benefit from a teaching approach that introduces practical applications for math, science, and other subjects students are learning in their regular classes. Jerry O'Hare, contract administrator and one of the developers of the program, said, "Tech Prep will take the place of general education courses that don't presently give students a clear purpose."<sup>2</sup>

The initial phase of the program has emphasized vocational programs in technical and industrial occupations, and will expand in some areas to include programs in fields such as financial services and communications.<sup>3</sup>

1. Charles Baldwin, associate vice-president, Parkland College, Champaign, interview: June 7, 1991.

2. Jerry O'Hare, Illinois State Board of Education, interview: June 6, 1991.

3. Sharon Wheeler, City Colleges of Chicago, interview: June 6, 1991.

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This type of disparity occurs in all parts of the state, often in neighboring districts. For example, Seneca High School District in LaSalle County has one of the lowest tax rates in the state—only 0.6581—but the district is so wealthy that this low tax rate still allows it to spend \$9,403 in operating expenditures per pupil. Next door, in the LaSalle-Peru High School district, the tax rate is more than twice as high (1.4389), but this higher rate generates only \$3,891 per pupil.<sup>38</sup> The average operating expenditure for all students statewide is \$4,215, but the amount spent in individual districts ranges from a low of \$2,085 to \$12,866. Eight districts in the state spent more than \$8,000 per pupil, while 100 districts spent less than \$2,804.<sup>39</sup>

Using the State Board of Education's definition of rich and poor districts, there are 450,000 students in rich districts and 290,000 students in poor districts in Illinois. A 1990 State Board of Education study suggests that the quality of a student's education in Illinois is directly determined by the wealth of the district where that student resides:<sup>40</sup>

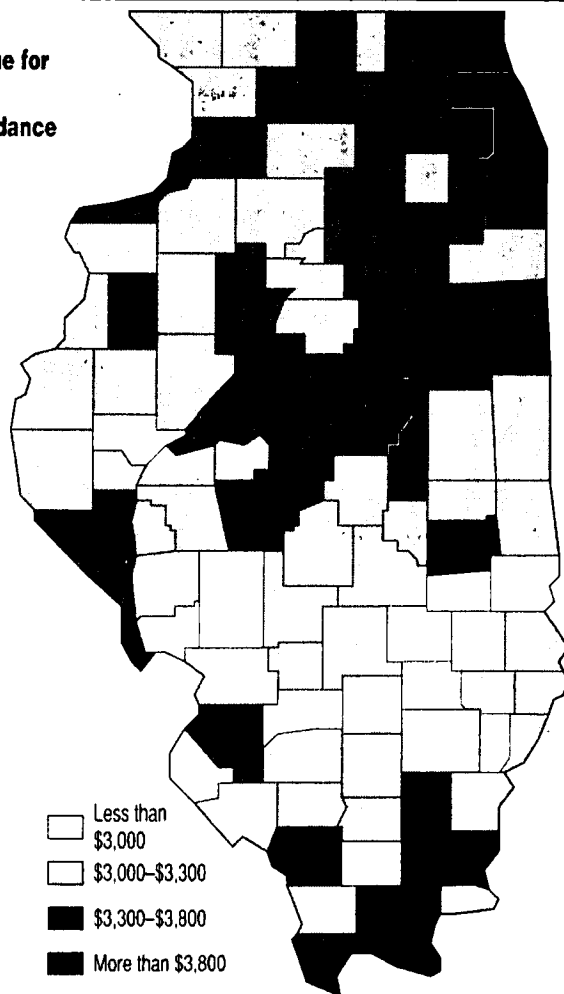
- Elementary school children in rich districts scored an average of 33.5 points higher on reading tests and 48 points higher on math tests given in grades 3, 6, and 8 than those in poor districts.
- ACT composite scores for high school students in rich districts were higher—19.9, compared to 18.2 in poor districts. In mathematics, rich districts scored 2.7 points higher—19.1, compared to 16.4.

*"The greater the percentage of low-income children, the lower the expected test scores in the district. This is not a hypothesis; it is far more like an empirical law, albeit a very cruel law."*

Professor G. Alan Hickrod  
Center for the Study of Educational Finance, Illinois State University (1989)

- Average class sizes are smaller in rich districts at the elementary level.
- Rich districts employed more teachers with advanced degrees. At the high school level, 69 percent of teachers in rich districts had advanced degrees, compared to 38 percent in poor districts.
- On the average, teachers' salaries were substantially higher in rich districts. For elementary teachers in rich districts, annual salaries were \$5,800 higher than in poor districts, and high school teachers earned \$12,000 more per year than their counterparts earned in poor districts.
- Operating expenditures per pupil were 31 percent higher at the elementary level and 69 percent higher at the high school level in rich districts.
- The proportion of students from low income families was only 6.7 percent in rich districts, compared to 30.9 percent in poor districts.

Figure 2.2  
Unrestricted revenue for public schools per average daily attendance in 1991



Note: Unrestricted revenue equals revenues locally raised plus general state aid.  
Source: G. Alan Hickrod, *The Long March to Educational Inequality in Illinois* (Illinois State University, in press)

The final portion of the constitutional mandate, the state's "primary responsibility for financing the system of public education" is the only section of Illinois' educational mandate that has been interpreted by the Illinois Supreme Court.<sup>41</sup> In *Blase v. State of Illinois*,<sup>42</sup> the Court ruled that the wording of this mandate did not mean that the state had to provide more than 50 percent of the funding for schools, describing primary responsibility for financing as a goal toward which the state should be working.<sup>43</sup>

Instead of carrying an increasing share of the burden for funding the schools, however, the state's share has generally declined over the past 20 years. When the new Illinois Constitution was ratified in 1970, the state provided 48 percent of the schools' operating expenses per pupil; in school year 1988-1989, the state's share of local school finances had dropped to less than 38 percent. In the 1989-1990 school year, partly due to the effects of a two-year income tax surcharge that devotes approximately half of the additional revenue to education, the state's share rose to almost 40 percent (Figure 2.3).<sup>44</sup>

In fiscal year 1978, Illinois ranked fourth in the nation in terms of state expenditures per pupil for grades K-12. Ten years later, in constant dollars, Illinois had fallen to the 28th position—a

drop of 24 ranks and the biggest drop in the nation.<sup>45</sup> The amount spent on schools per capita is one indication of a state's willingness to invest in its human resources. In state fiscal year 1978, Illinois ranked seventh in the nation in per-capita spending on education. By fiscal 1988, Illinois ranked 44th—by far the worst decline in rank nationwide.<sup>46</sup>

The decline in Illinois' relative spending for education has occurred at the same time that expenditures in constant dollars have increased and total public school enrollment has declined. In constant 1982 dollars, per-pupil spending in Illinois increased by 6.5 percent between the 1979–1980 and 1989–1990 school years, while enrollment declined by 12 percent—almost one-quarter of a million students.<sup>47</sup>

While per-pupil expenditures may give some indication of the level of services provided to students, they are not necessarily a measure of educational quality. According to researchers in educational finance at Illinois State University, it is not the overall level of funding that is important, but rather how the money is spent and what educational outcomes it produces.<sup>48</sup> Equalized assessed valuations, district cost per pupil, and districtwide percentages of low-income families were compared to average scores on ACT tests. The research group identified 21 Illinois high school districts that produced higher-than-expected test scores at lower-than-expected expenditures in both 1986 and 1988, demonstrating that educational performance can be independent of funding levels.<sup>49</sup>

### SCHOOL REFORM IN ILLINOIS

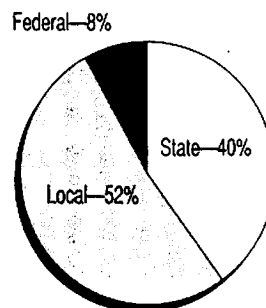
In spite of the relative decline in state financial support for education, and the funding inequities that result in unequal services to children, educational reform has been a high priority across the state since 1985.

In 1985, the Illinois General Assembly passed a package of educational reform bills designed to improve the accountability of public schools. The Legislative Reform Act of 1985 required the establishment of state goals for learning and mandated all schools to issue report cards that assess student performance and school characteristics. These reports are intended to make schools more accountable to parents and the public. Schools were also required to develop

local student learning objectives, assessment strategies, and improvement plans. The law also mandated annual tests of all Illinois school children in grades 3, 6, 8, and 11—the Illinois Goal Assessment Program (IGAP)—on the same scale as other tests administered nationwide.<sup>50</sup>

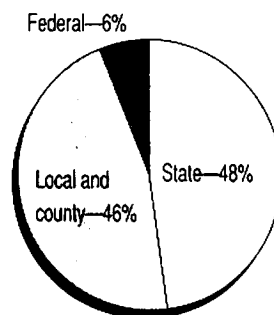
From 1989 to 1990, Illinois students' scores remained roughly the same, although math scores declined slightly in the third and eighth grades (Figure 2.4). National averages on the same scale, however, increased across the board, except for eighth-grade reading scores, and the percentage of Illinois third-graders scoring in the top 25 percent in reading dropped dramatically. Thus, although Illinois scores are still above the national

Figure 2.3  
Illinois school funding sources, 1989–1990 school year



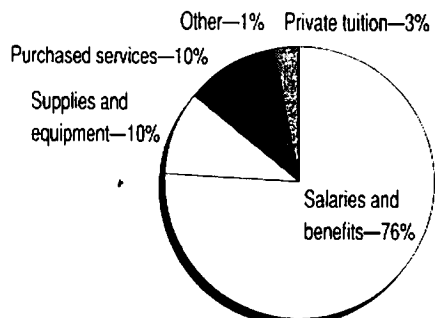
Source: Illinois State Board of Education

National average school funding sources, 1991



Source: U.S. Department of Education

Illinois education expenditures, state fiscal year 1989



Note: "Purchased services" includes contract services; "supplies and equipment" includes supplies, building modifications, and equipment purchases; "other" includes fees, dues, debt services, judgments, and transfers to other districts; and "private tuition" includes tuition payments to private institutions for special education students.  
Source: Illinois State Board of Education



Figure 2.4

**State and national performance on reading and math tests, 1989**

|                | Illinois average |      | National average |      | % Illinois students scoring in top 25% |       |
|----------------|------------------|------|------------------|------|--|-------|
|                | 1989             | 1990 | 1989             | 1990 | 1989                                   | 1990  |
| <b>Reading</b> |                  |      |                  |      |  |       |
| Grade 3        | 254              | 257  | 230              | 250  | 35.2%                                  | 28.8% |
| Grade 6        | 249              | 249  | 240              | 250  | 29.2%                                  | 25.7% |
| Grade 8        | 255              | 254  | 252              | 249  | 26.3%                                  | 29.9% |
| Grade 11       | NA*              | 250  | NA               | 230  | NA                                     | 33    |
| <b>Math</b>    |                  |      |                  |      |  |       |
| Grade 3        | 250              | 249  | 218              | 235  | 36.5%                                  | 38.2% |
| Grade 6        | 250              | 252  | 231              | 238  | 32.7%                                  | 31.2% |
| Grade 8        | 250              | 248  | 218              | 231  | 34.4%                                  | 34.3% |
| Grade 11       | NA               | NA   | NA               | NA   | NA                                     | NA    |

Note: Illinois Goal Assessment Program scores have a range of 1-500. The full IGAP testing program is not yet implemented. In 1990 language arts testing was added for grades 3, 6, and 8, as were reading tests for the 11th grade. Language arts scores (writing skills) were slightly higher than the national average (4 points) only for eighth graders, and the percentage of students scoring in the top 25 percent was only very slightly higher (maximum 2 points for eighth graders) than the national norm (25 percent). Average reading scores for 11th graders were 20 points higher than the national average (250, compared to 230), and 33 percent of the students scored in the top 25 percent nationally.

Source: Illinois State Board of Education

average, Illinois students are showing no significant gains, and, in the case of the youngest readers, may be falling behind.

State Board of Education officials acknowledge that the testing program alone has not succeeded in improving the quality of education in some Illinois schools. Reforms proposed in 1991 by the state superintendent of schools and a committee of educators would make local schools far more accountable for how well their students learn.

"To restructure the schools, we have to change the way we do business," said Robert Leininger, state superintendent of schools. "It's time to look at our results and give the responsibility for outcomes to the local schools."<sup>51</sup>

Proposed changes in the school accreditation process would allow state evaluators to look at student performance profiles based on test results, but also at four other factors:

- Student attendance rate (average daily attendance)
- Student retention rate (year-end total enrollment as a percentage of beginning enrollment)
- High school graduation rate (of entering freshmen, how many graduate in four years)
- Post-graduation placement (how many graduates go on for post-secondary training or education, how many enter the military, how many get jobs, and how many have other outcomes)<sup>52</sup>.

Schools that meet or exceed requirements could be rewarded with less frequent inspections. But if a troubled school continues to fall below standards "... the State Board will arrange for the operation of the school and/or the placement of students in the best interest of the children."<sup>53</sup> In other words, for the first time the State Board of Education would have authority to intervene directly to control the quality of education in local schools or school districts that have defaulted in their responsibility to make needed improvements.

In order for school reforms to succeed, however, safety and discipline in the schools must be ensured. Learning cannot take place unless the classroom is secure and orderly, but this condition is not being met in all Illinois schools.

**Notes**

1. Harold L. Hodgkinson, *Illinois: The State and Its Educational System* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Educational Leadership, Center for Demographic Policy, 1989): 1.

2. "With the advent of the LSCs [local school councils], Chicago became the testing ground for what has been called 'a radical experiment' in public education." Dan Baron, "Sullivan High School: An Interim Report on Chicago's Local School Councils" *Illinois Issues* (August/September 1990): 35.

3. Richard Day, "Chicago's New Local School Councils: Will the Central Administration Cooperate?" *Illinois Issues* (March, 1990): 32. Chicago Schools Superintendent Ted Kimbrough's plan to create district service centers was an attempt to overcome the problem by providing a source of information and technical support to the members of the local school councils. He was careful to note that the centers existed "to serve and not to supervise neighborhood schools." Jean Davidson, "Kimbrough Plans Help for Councils" *Chicago Tribune* (July 11, 1990): sec. 2: 2.

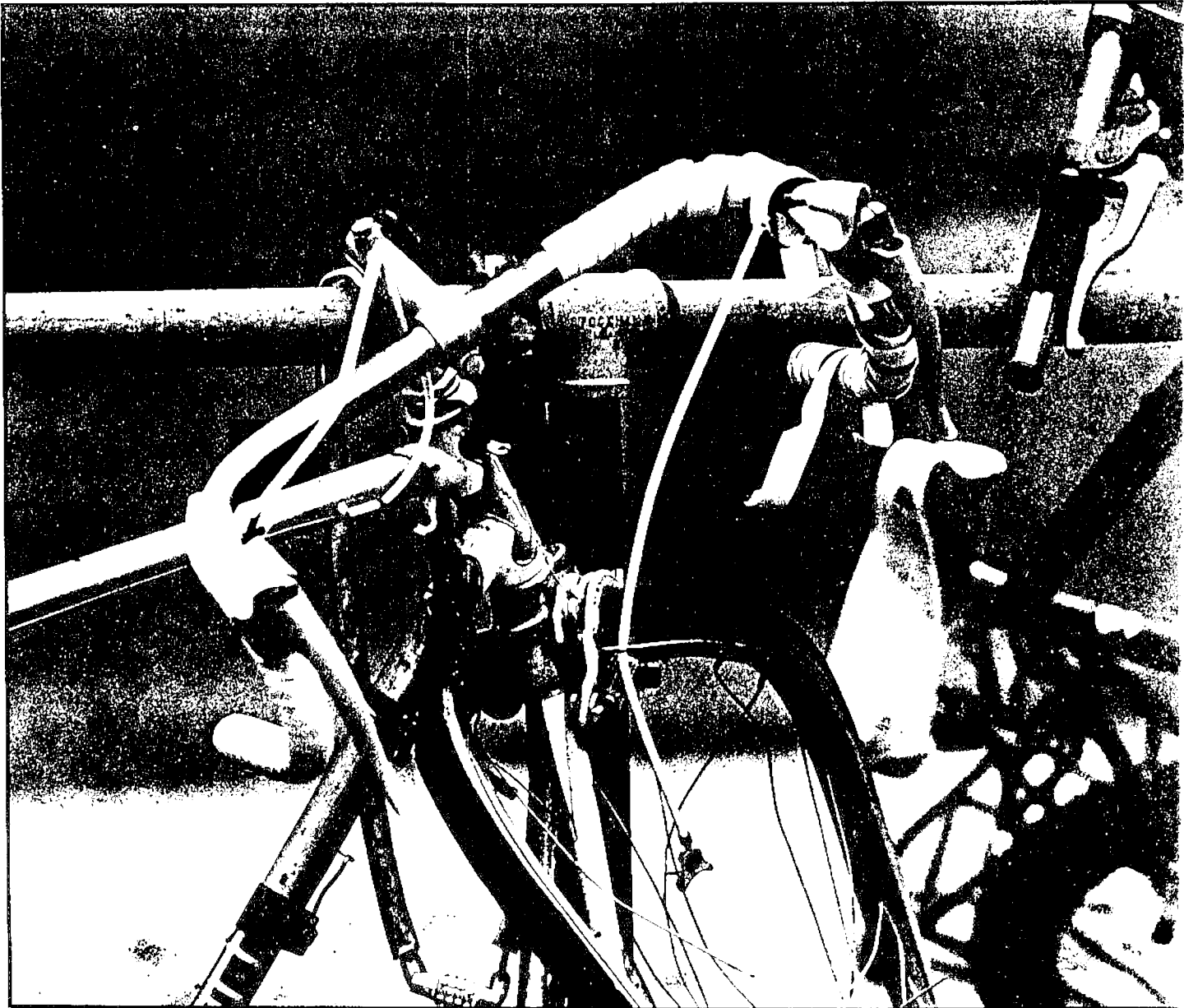
4. The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority's Illinois Juvenile Officers Association Roundtable Discussion of Juvenile Policing (June 29, 1990).

5. The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority's Legal and Psychiatric Panel (June 26, 1990). See also Appendix A, Project Methodology.

6. Federal civil rights legislation, special education laws, and the Illinois School Code establish some guidelines for handling disciplinary situations, but within the broad parameters set by these limitations, schools are free to set local policy.
7. The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority's Court Services Panel (August 13, 1990).
8. Benjamin K. Miller, Chief Justice, *The Supreme Court Annual Report to the General Assembly* (January 31, 1991).
9. Hawaii has the smallest number of districts—the entire state is a single unit district. Kim Knauer, Public Information Officer, Illinois State Board of Education, interview: April 5, 1991.
10. Karol Chaska, Research and Evaluation, Illinois State Board of Education, interview: April 5, 1991.
11. Chaska (April 5, 1991) and Illinois State Board of Education, *Illinois School Enrollment Now and in the Year 2000* (Springfield, Ill., March 1988): 32.
12. Illinois State Board of Education, *Illinois School Enrollment* (1988): 7, 13. The Authority's analysis of the relationship between education and criminal justice has been limited to the public educational system.
13. "Higher Education: Americans Earn Degrees" *Illinois Issues* (January 1990): 6.
14. This is a higher percentage than is found in many other cities, including Los Angeles and New York. Hodgkinson, *Illinois: The State and Its Educational System* (1989): 3.
15. Prior to 1970, the State Superintendent of Education was an elected office. The new constitution made this office a contract position, responsible to an appointed board in order to depoliticize the administration of the educational system. Knauer (April 5, 1991).
16. The largest number of counties is combined in Region 11, which includes Clark, Cumberland, Edgar, Moultrie, and Shelby counties in southeastern Illinois. Chaska (April 5, 1991).
17. Ill. Rev. Stat., ch. 37, par. 803-33.
18. Illinois State Board of Education, *Reassessment and Status of School District Reorganization in Illinois, A Report to the General Assembly and Governor* (Springfield, Ill., October 1989): ii.
19. In Chicago, these procedures are slightly different. The School Reform Act of 1989 created a new method for selecting school board members for the Chicago public schools that is different from the method used in other communities. In Chicago, local school councils from each of 11 districts select a representative to serve on a nominating commission. The commission reviews applications from aspiring candidates for the school board and prepares a list from which the mayor selects 15 who must then be confirmed by the City Council. The school board selects a superintendent of schools, but his or her powers differ from those of superintendents in other school districts.
20. School reform in Chicago created elected local school councils which were given the authority to hire and fire principals. Principals discharged by the councils filed suit against the Board of Education in a case known as *Fumarolo v. Board of Education* (142 Ill. 2d 54, 566 N.E. 2d 1283 (1990)). In November 1990, the Illinois Appellate Court found the Chicago school reform statute unconstitutional, because it violated the one man, one vote rule in the way the members of the local school councils were elected. (Under the original statute, council members were not elected at large, but rather by a formula for their specific constituencies within the community, that is, teacher representatives were elected by teachers, parent representatives by parents and community representatives by the community.) The Supreme Court of Illinois agreed to hear the case on appeal on January 2, 1991. While the high court considers this matter, emergency legislation passed by the General Assembly on January 6, 1991, ratified the past actions of the local school councils, but deferred the restructuring of the selection process for council members to a later date. This action was necessary to legitimize the decisions of the councils, pending the ruling of the Supreme Court which will be rendered later this year. Without this legislative remedy, all decisions of the councils would have been invalidated, leaving Chicago schools in a state of chaos (William Quinlan, Legal Department, Chicago Board of Education, interview: April 12, 1991).
21. "Do U.S. Schools Make the Grade?" *Fortune* (April 1990): 50.
22. Casey Banas, "Education in U.S. Not Improving" *Chicago Tribune* (September 27, 1990): 4.
23. Gregory Anrig, *Performance at the Top* (Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service, 1991).
24. Doug Finke, "The Crisis in Competence" *Springfield State Journal-Register* (May 11, 1989): 3.
25. U.S. Department of Education, *National Assessment of Educational Progress* (Washington, D.C., 1991).
26. Scores from one of these tests are required of students seeking admission to many colleges and universities. The SAT is required by many eastern and California universities and colleges, while the ACT is the preferred test of many Midwestern universities.
27. In Illinois in 1990, 63 percent of high school students took the ACT test. "New Illinois ACT Test Scores" *Chicago Tribune* (September 11, 1990): 6.
28. Richard M. Eglert, "Preparing for Our Future: Dealing with the Crisis in American Education" *Temple Review* (Spring 1990): 8.

28. Illinois State Board of Education, *Performance Profiles: Illinois Schools Report to the Public* (Springfield, Ill., 1990): v.
29. The percentage of students who complete undergraduate degrees may be far lower than 50 percent, however. The *Chicago Tribune* reported, "State education officials estimate that fewer than 20 percent of Illinois high school students go on to earn bachelor's degrees within eight years, if ever." Marja Mills, "Tech Prep Programs Point Students at Jobs" *Chicago Tribune* (April 21, 1991): sec. 2: 1.
30. Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, Boston, Mass., March, 1987, as cited in The William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family, and Citizenship, *The Forgotten Half: Non-College Youth in America* (January 1988): 21.
31. *The Forgotten Half* (1988): 26-27.
32. Stephen F. Hamilton, "Adolescent Problem Behavior in the United States and West Germany: Implications for Intervention" in *Social Intervention: Chances and Constraints*, edited by Klaus Hurrelmann, Franz-Xavier Kaufmann, and Friedrich Loesel (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1987), as quoted by The William T. Grant Foundation Commission (1988): 27.
33. Doug Pokorski, "Among the Pupils—A Growing Gap Between 'Haves' and 'Have-Nots'" *Springfield State Journal-Register* (May 11, 1989).
34. Ill. Const. 1970, art. X, s. 1.
35. *Committee for Educational Rights v. Thompson* (90 CH 11097). Plaintiffs include districts in all parts of the state, as well as 10 school children and their parents. Mark Mathewson "Lawsuit Challenges State Financing of Public Schools" *Illinois Issues* (February 1991): 19-21. Since 1973, state school financing systems in 26 states have been overturned by judicial action similar to the Illinois suit. G. Alan Hickrod and Lawrence Frank, *The Forgotten Illinois: Witnesses for the Prosecution* (Testimony Presented at the Voice of the Prairie Conference, Galesburg, Ill., October 28, 1989): 10-13.
36. Illinois State Board of Education, *Performance Profiles* (1990): vii.
37. Blair Kamin, "Poor Towns Paying High Taxes for Less" *Chicago Tribune* (July 22, 1990): 1.
38. Hickrod and Frank, *The Forgotten Illinois* (1989): 2.
39. Illinois State Board of Education, *Performance Profiles* (1990): vi, 10.
40. Illinois State Board of Education, *Performance Profiles* (1990): vi.
41. The 1990 class action suit challenging the equity of the school financing formula will submit the entire mandate for court review for the first time. See note 35.
42. *Blase v. State of Illinois*, 55 Ill.2d 94, 302 N.E.2d 46 (1973).
43. David Franklin, *Constitutional Challenges to Educational Funding Systems* (testimony presented at the Voice of the Prairie Conference, 1989): 15.
44. Illinois State Board of Education, *State, Local, and Federal Financing for Illinois Public Schools, 1989-90* (Springfield, Ill., 1991). Data provided by Karen Becker, Finance Department, Illinois State Board of Education, April 16, 1991.
45. G. Alan Hickrod, David L. Franklin, Ben C. Hubbard, Edward R. Hines, Mary M. Polite, Gwen B. Pruyne, *Guilty Governments: The Problem of Inadequate Educational Funding in Illinois and Other States*, MacArthur/Spencer Series No. 8 (Normal, Ill.: Center for the Study of Educational Finance, Illinois State University, 1989): 17.
46. Hickrod, et al., *Guilty Governments* (1989): 19.
47. Michael D. Klemens, "State School Spending: Measuring Change Over Two Decades" *Illinois Issues* (January 1991): 10. Statistics compiled from Illinois State Board of Education Data.
48. G. Alan Hickrod, Ching-Chung Liu, Robert Arnold, Ramesh Chaudari, Larry Frank, David Franklin, Mary Polite, Gwen Pruyne and James Gordon Ward, *The Biggest Bang for the Buck: An Initial Report on Technical Economic Efficiency in Illinois K-12 Schools with a Comment on Rose v. the Council* (Normal, Ill.: Center for the Study of Educational Finance, Illinois State University, July 1989): 4.
49. Hickrod, et al., *The Biggest Bang* (1989).
50. Ill.Rev.Stat., ch. 22, par. 2-3.64.
51. Robert Leininger, interview: April 25, 1991.
52. Illinois State Board of Education, *Linking Accountability to Student Performance and School Improvement in Illinois*, Regulatory Process Committee executive summary (Springfield, Ill., 1991): 2.
53. Illinois State Board of Education, *Linking Accountability* (1991): 3.

# Crime in the Schools



A safe, orderly, and predictable school environment is a necessary prerequisite to learning. But student misbehavior, disrespect for teachers or rules, and actual delinquent or criminal behavior have increasingly been documented as serious disruptions to the educational process in the nation's schools.<sup>1</sup> Also being called into question is the ability of teachers and principals to maintain order in the classrooms.<sup>2</sup> A nationwide 1985 Gallup survey indicated that up to one-quarter of students in secondary schools feared for their safety, in both junior and senior high schools.<sup>3</sup>

Serious and violent crime in the schools has drawn particular attention in large urban areas: During the 1988–1989 school year in Chicago,

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*“When confronted with questions of right and wrong, many more youngsters are guided by what gets them ahead or what makes them feel good than by what their parents or religious authorities say.”*

*Robert Coles, Harvard University*

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1,680 serious disciplinary incidents were reported to the Chicago Board of Education's Bureau of Safety and Security. These included more than 650 physical attacks and sex offenses, more than 200 weapons violations, and more than 800 attacks on teachers (including nearly 250 with injuries).<sup>4</sup>

To what extent are Illinois students and teachers victimized by various crimes in and around their schools? How do students and teachers feel about safety and discipline in their schools and neighborhoods? To answer these questions, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority conducted the Survey of Safety and Discipline in Illinois High Schools, administered to students and teachers in 31 public high schools across the state at the end of the 1989–1990 school year.

In addition to specific questions about crime victimization, the survey asked about the impact crime and other disruptive behaviors have on the learning environment. Teachers and students were asked, for example, about the kinds of precautionary or self-defense measures they may take and how safe they believed themselves to be in their schools. The survey also explored perceptions of race relations, the extent of parental involvement in their children's educations, and the impact of drugs and street-gang activity on the school.

One of the most important factors investigated was the influence of the surrounding community on student and teacher perceptions of

crime and safety in the school environment.<sup>5</sup> Community characteristics include geographical and population size; the amount of crime in the community; economic, social, and racial and ethnic composition of the neighborhood area; family stability; and population concentration around the school. Factors involving community-school relations include support of the school from parents, police, community agencies, and the local boards of education.

To examine the effects of community characteristics, the Authority drew student and teacher samples from schools of varying sizes in four types of Illinois communities, based on U.S. Census Bureau designations: central city, suburban, small city, and rural. (See Appendix B, High School Survey Methodology, for documentation of the sampling strategy.) In addition, the survey analysis searched for any statistically significant differences in responses between Chicago and other large Illinois cities, and among suburban respondents from Cook County, the collar counties (DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will), and suburbs of other metropolitan centers in Illinois.

## **HOW SAFE ARE OUR SCHOOLS?**

Schools are not all sanctuaries from crime and violence. When asked to compare the safety of their school to the safety of their neighborhoods, 44 percent of students and one-fourth of the teachers in the Illinois High School Survey indicated that their school was as *unsafe* as the neighborhood in which it was located, or even less safe.

### **Student and teacher victimization**

Theft was the most common crime reported in the Illinois High School Survey (Figure 3.1). More than one-fifth of the students and more than one-fourth of the teachers reported that they had been victims of a theft at some time during the 1989–1990 school year—either on the way to or from school, while attending school, or at a school event. Four percent of students and 6 percent of teachers reported that they had been victims of theft at least three times during the school year, and 10 percent of the students and 14.5 percent of the teachers reported having been a victim of theft during the last two months.

In 44 percent of the reported thefts and



Figure 3.1

**Percentage of Illinois public high school students and teachers who said they had been the victim of a crime in the 1989-1990 school year**

|                   | Students | Teachers |
|-------------------|----------|----------|
| Theft             | 22.6%    | 28.5%    |
| Physical attack   | 8.5%     | 3.6%     |
| Attempted attack  | 16.2%    | 15.3%    |
| Robbery           | 4.7%     | 2.4%     |
| Attempted robbery | 8%       | 2.5%     |

Source: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

attempted thefts from students and in 47.5 percent of those reported by teachers, the value of property or money taken was or would have been less than \$10. Seventy-one percent of the incidents reported by students and 72 percent of those reported by teachers involved losses of \$25 or less. In only 7 percent of the thefts did students report actual or possible losses of more than \$100 (Figure 3.2).

Of the students, 8.5 percent indicated that they had been physically attacked, and almost twice that many had escaped an attempted attack during the school year. A relatively small percentage (less than 3 percent) indicated that they had been attacked more than three times. Slightly more than 3 percent of the students (6 percent of the female students) also indicated that they had been forced to have sexual contact they did not want. Four percent of the students indicated that they been victims of an attack or attempted attack during the past two months.

In 28 percent of the reported attacks, the student victims reported that an argument had

precipitated the attack or attempt. Smaller percentages of students reported the attack had stemmed from "boy/girl relationships" (17 percent), was street-gang related (14 percent), or had racial or ethnic causes (14 percent). More than one-quarter of the respondents indicated that they were not sure of the reason for the attack.

Most of the attacks reported by students did not involve extreme violence or result in serious injury (Figure 3.3). More than 60 percent of the students reported no weapon had been used in the incident and that the most serious thing the attacker did was to either grab or shove them. Nevertheless, the outcome of the attack was

Figure 3.3

**Types of attacks on students, weapons used, and seriousness of injury**

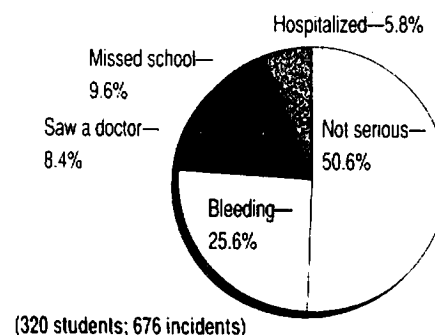
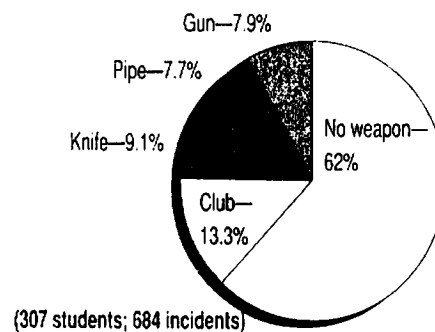
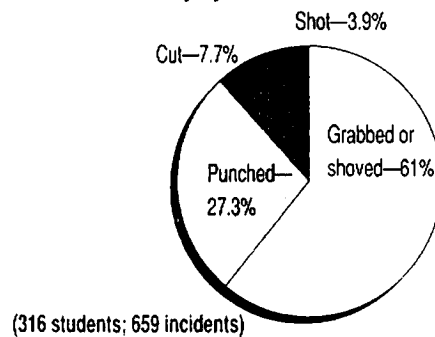
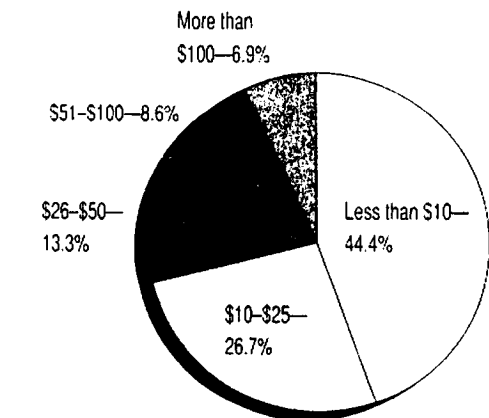


Figure 3.2

**Actual and possible losses from student thefts and attempted thefts**

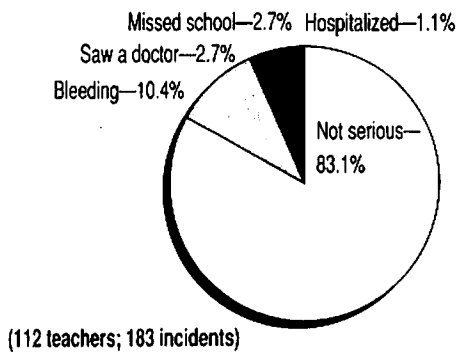
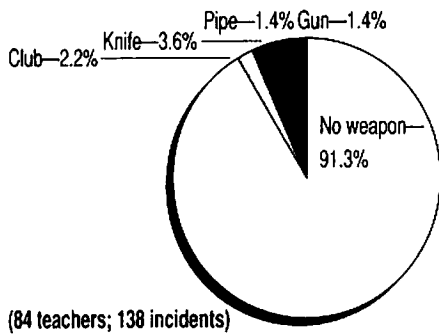
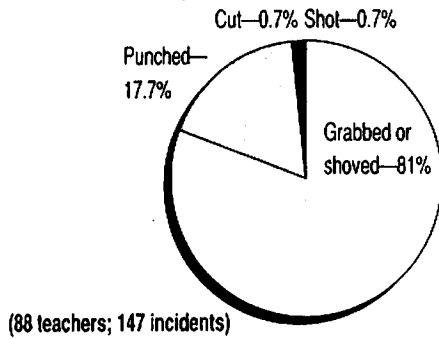


Source: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

Source: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

Figure 3.4

**Types of attacks on teachers, weapons used, and seriousness of injury**



Source: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

more serious for many victims—more than one-quarter of the victims reported that they had been punched, nearly 8 percent had been cut, and 4 percent had been shot during the attack.

Weapons that students said were used in the attacks on them included clubs, knives, pipes, and, in almost 8 percent of the attacks, guns. Slightly more than half of all student attack victims indicated that their injuries from the attacks had not been serious. Another quarter of these students reported "bleeding" as the worst injury they had suffered. However, 24 percent indicated more serious consequences—they were required to see a doctor or nurse, they had been forced to miss school as a result of injuries, or they had required hospitalization.

Far fewer attacks on teachers were reported (4 percent said they had been attacked during

the school year) than on students. As was the case with students, a fairly large percentage of teachers (15 percent) reported having been the target of an attempted attack at some time during the 1989–1990 school year. Fewer than 1 percent of the teachers indicated that they had been the victims of an attack or attempted attack more than three times. Among teachers, 1.5 percent reported that they had been attack victims within the previous two months. Unwanted sexual contact was reported by an extremely small percentage (0.1 percent) of teachers.

Unlike students, who often reported their attacks as stemming simply from an argument, more than two-thirds of victimized teachers identified the attacks and attempted attacks on them as street-gang related. Other reasons given for attacks on teachers included "racially or ethnically based" (10 percent), an argument (10 percent), or unknown reasons (10 percent).

Teachers reported serious violence in attacks and attempts even less frequently than student victims (Figure 3.4). More than 80 percent of the teacher victims reported that the most serious thing their attacker had done was to either grab or shove them. Another 18 percent reported that they had been punched. Being cut or shot was far more rare for teachers than for students.

Weapons were used in fewer than 10 percent of the attacks and attempted attacks on teachers, and guns were reported as the most serious weapon in only 1.4 percent of the attacks. Finally, more than 83 percent of the teachers who had been attacked reported that their worst injury had not been serious. Fewer than 3 percent had been forced to miss any school as a result of injuries, and 1 percent required hospitalization.

Robbery was defined in the survey as incidents in which "someone took something away from you, using force against you or threats of force." Among the students surveyed, 5 percent reported that they had been victims of a robbery at some time during the school year. Also, 8 percent reported having experienced an attempted robbery.

Slightly more than 3 percent of the students reported that they had been victims of a robbery during the previous two months. This figure is very close to the percentage who had been victimized during the entire school year. This may have occurred because people both tend to forget

events over time (known as a “forgetting curve”) and tend to remember important events as having occurred more recently than they actually did (“telescoping”).<sup>6</sup>

In almost half of the robberies and attempted robberies reported by students, the value of the property or money involved was or would have been less than \$10. More than two-thirds of the robberies resulted in actual or potential losses of \$25 or less (Figure 3.5).

Teachers reported fewer robbery victimizations than students. Among the teachers surveyed, only 2 percent indicated that they had been victims of a robbery at some time during the school year. An additional 2.5 percent of teachers reported an attempted robbery—much lower than the 8 percent rate reported by the students. Only slightly more than 1 percent of the teachers indicated that they had been victims of robbery during the past two months. As with student victims, the value of property or money stolen during the robberies and attempted robberies was or would have been relatively low. More than 61 percent of the teacher incidents involved losses of \$25 or less.

### Disrespect, threats, and disorder in the classroom

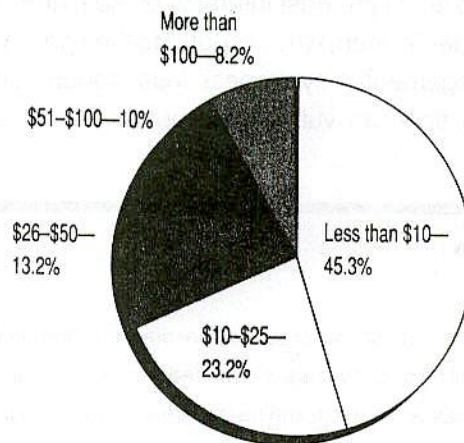
Teachers reported many disciplinary problems with their students that could be considered threatening or disrespectful. Nine percent reported that a student had threatened to hurt them during the past month. More than half reported that in the past month a student had directed an obscenity at them, and about one-third reported that a student had made an obscene gesture at them.

Certain factors may explain why some teachers are more prone to threats. Suburban teachers reported significantly fewer threats from students than did those from other types of communities. Also, teachers in all types of schools who said they had been victims of a robbery, theft, or an attack at school during the school year reported more threats by students than did non-victims. Teachers whom students see as vulnerable may be prone to both threats and actual offenses by perpetrators.

Threats and disrespect toward teachers may also reflect a general lack of discipline in schools. Students and teachers were asked how often teachers maintain order in the classroom.

Figure 3.5

### Actual and possible losses from student robberies and attempted robberies



Source: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

Almost a third of the students reported that this was true only “some of the time,” while another 10 percent said that it was “hardly ever” or “never” true. Even among the teachers surveyed, about 20 percent reported that order was kept in the classroom only “some of the time.”

Teachers were also asked how many times they had broken up both physical and verbal fights during the past month. Forty-one percent reported that they had broken up a physical fight at least once, and 14 percent had broken up two or more fights. An even higher number, 76 percent, indicated they had broken up at least one verbal fight during the month, and half had broken up two or more. Teachers who broke up more of these physical and verbal fights were more likely to have been threatened by students than those who did not. Teachers who involve themselves in such altercations may invite threats.

### Who is victimized in and around school?

In Illinois public high schools, student victims of robbery, theft, and attempted robbery and theft are likely to be ninth and 10th graders and are more likely to be victimized by older students. Student robbery, attack, and attempted robbery and attack victims are likely to be male.<sup>7</sup>

Student robbery, theft, and attempted robbery and theft victims reported that their parents are more involved in educational support activities, but less involved when school disputes take place. Although this seems somewhat contradictory, there may be a logical explanation. While



encouraging their children to pursue traditional societal goals, such as academic success, those parents may be reluctant to challenge the school when disputes take place, and trust the school's ability to act in the best interests of the students. The students, then, who respond to their parents' encouragement may appear less "tough" and may be seen as vulnerable robbery and theft targets.

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### **The typical student victim**

#### **Robbery**

The typical student robbery victim is a freshman or sophomore boy who is frequently absent from school and is unwilling to obey rules. Compared with nonvictims, he doesn't think teachers strictly enforce the rules, and he is more likely to take active measures to avoid victimization, including bringing a weapon to school. His parents are less likely to intervene when he gets in trouble in school, but they do provide educational support by helping with homework, attending school functions and parent-teacher conferences, and reviewing report cards. He is more likely to know someone who dropped out of school.

#### **Theft**

The typical student theft victim is a freshman or sophomore boy or girl. He or she is more likely to know someone who has dropped out of school and to believe drugs are readily available to students. Like the typical robbery victim, the typical theft victim is more apt to take measures to avoid victimization, including bringing a weapon to school, and, like the robbery victim, has parents less likely to get involved when there's trouble at school, but who do get involved academically.

#### **Physical attack**

The typical student victim of an attack is a white, Asian, or Native American boy with a relatively low overall grade average. He is more likely to believe drugs are readily available to students and to see signs of street-gang activity in the school. Like the typical robbery victim, he's less likely to think teachers strictly enforce the rules and more likely to take steps to avoid victimization, including bringing a weapon to school. The parents of a typical victim of a physical attack are less likely to intervene when he gets in trouble in school.

### **The typical teacher victim**

#### **Robbery**

The typical teacher robbery victim is a white, black, or Native American man or woman who is more likely to be absent from school, to see signs of gang activity in the school, and to be threatened by students.

#### **Theft**

The typical teacher theft victim is a non-black man who is threatened by students more frequently, is less satisfied with the school administration, and is less likely to feel that the parents of his students are involved in their children's education.

#### **Physical attack**

The typical teacher attack victim is more likely to be threatened by students, to see signs of gang activity, and to be dissatisfied with the school administration.

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Student attack and attempted attack victims were likely to have a lower self-reported grade average than non-victims. Unlike robbery and theft victims, students who were attacked were not more likely than other students to have parents who get involved in educational support activities. Attack victims may fit a different "vulnerability" profile than students who are victims of crimes that involve property loss.

Hispanic students were proportionally less likely to be victims of attacks and attempts than black students, and both were less likely to be attacked than students of other races (white, Asian, Native American, and other) combined. Comparisons by race for other crimes were not statistically significant.

Teachers who had been victims of attacks and attempted attacks were much more apt than students who had been attacked to believe that their attacks were street-gang related. They also perceived more signs of gang activity in the school than teachers who had not been victimized. Although there may, indeed, be greater gang awareness on the part of teachers than students, teachers' heightened awareness may also be due to the differing racial composition of Illinois student and teacher populations, especially in the central cities. Whites constitute a higher percentage of the teacher population than the student population, but street-gang membership is largely made up of minority youth. Teachers may therefore feel more culturally alienated, and thus more personally intimidated by the threat of street-gang violence than students.

Asian and Hispanic teachers were proportionally victims of robbery and attempted robbery less frequently than whites, blacks, or Native Americans. As with the students, comparisons by race for other crimes against teachers were not statistically significant. Male teachers were more likely than females to be theft victims, and black teachers were less likely than teachers of other races to be theft victims.

### **Who attacks students and teachers in and around schools?**

Nearly 60 percent of the student victims of attacks and attempted attacks reported that only one *attacker had been involved. Two, three, and four* or more attackers were each reported by about 10 percent of the student victims. Generally, the

attackers were from the same school as the victim—in more than 85 percent of the attacks and attempts, students were absolutely or relatively sure that all or some of the attackers had been from their school. Almost three-fourths of the attackers were reported to be the same sex as the victim. Fifty-eight percent of the attackers were of the same race as the victim, and 77 percent were the same age as or older than their victims.

More than 85 percent of the teacher victims reported that they had been victims of attacks or attempted attacks by a single assailant. In 95 percent of the incidents, teachers identified their attackers as a student in their school. In more than 60 percent of the attacks, teachers perceived the attacker to be aged 15 or 16, and aged 17 or 18 in 23 percent of the incidents. Older students may make up a smaller percentage of the attackers because they may have learned more mature ways of expressing disagreements with teachers, or because students who attack teachers may be expelled or drop out from school before attaining higher grade status. While most attackers are male, about half the teachers are female, and nearly half of the attackers were of a different sex from the teacher victim. In only about one-third of the incidents were attackers of the same race as the teachers who were attacked, reflecting differences in the racial makeup of teacher and student populations.

### Where do school crimes take place?

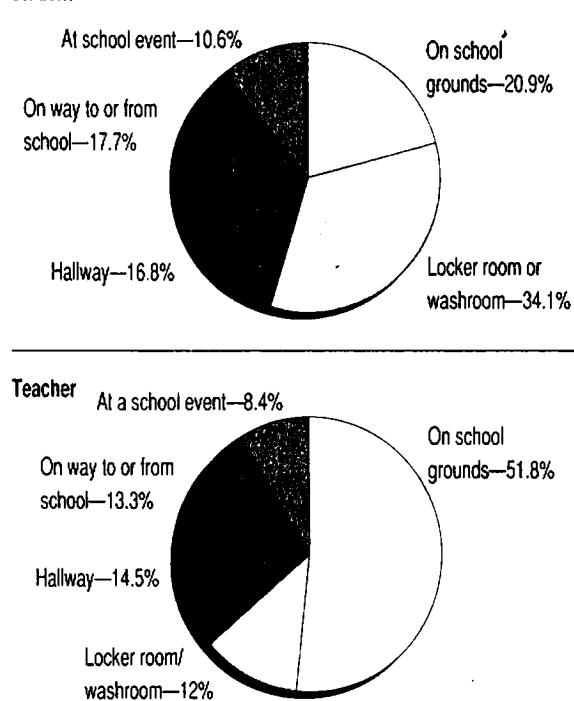
The most common locations for student robberies (and attempts) were a locker room or washroom (Figure 3.6). Most robbery incidents reported by teachers took place somewhere on school grounds, rather than inside the school building itself. Teachers were robbed less frequently than students in washrooms, perhaps because of students' lack of access to faculty washrooms.

In more than half of student thefts (and attempts), the theft was reported to have taken place from the student's locker, but one in five theft incidents took place in the classroom (Figure 3.7). Almost 84 percent of victimized teachers reported the classroom as the most common location of their thefts.

Attacks on students occurred most frequently in open areas where students interact

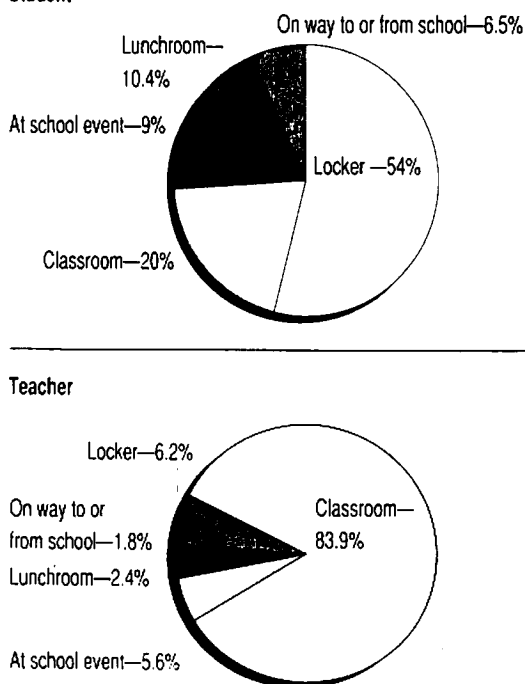
most often, such as hallways and, surprisingly, classrooms. More than one-quarter of the students who were victims of attacks or attempted attacks, however, cited other locations in and around the school (Figure 3.8).

Figure 3.6  
**Locations of student and teacher robberies**



Source: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

Figure 3.7  
**Locations of student and teacher thefts**

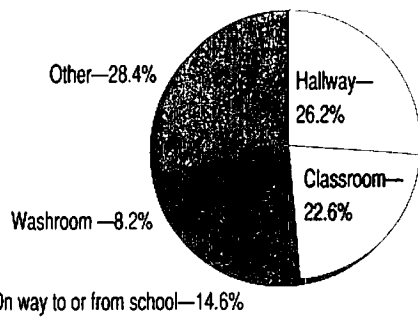


Source: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

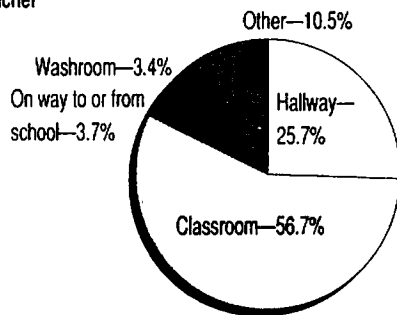
Figure 3.8

**Locations of attacks on students and teachers**

**Student**



**Teacher**



Source: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

More than half of the teachers who had been attacked during the school year reported the attack had occurred in the classroom. Approximately one-fourth of the attacks on teachers had taken place in the halls. As with the students, teacher attacks take place in areas where teachers and students interact most—not in secluded areas.

**In what type of community is school crime most likely to take place?**

The survey revealed crime problems in schools in all types of communities, not just in large urban areas. Suburban students, in fact, reported more thefts and attacks, and attempted thefts and attacks, than students from other community types, while students in rural areas reported fewer robberies and attempted robberies than all other students.

This finding contradicts the commonly held assumption that suburban schools are safer than those in central cities. In discussions with educators, students, probation officers, and others familiar with both city and suburban schools, several theories have been proposed to explain the higher attack and theft rates among suburban students.<sup>9</sup>

- The image of a suburban community may be somewhat skewed—the suburban schools in the survey included several in municipalities that are less than affluent and that have experienced many of the same social and criminal problems often associated with large urban areas. Seen in this light, comparatively high levels of certain crimes come as no surprise. In addition, more affluent suburban students may experience more theft because they bring more valuable items and cash to school than less affluent students.
- On the other hand, central-city students may be less sensitive to violence and theft. Physical attacks and thefts may be more common in the experience of central-city students, and their "reporting threshold" may be higher. Central-city students may consider only the most serious incidents worth reporting, while suburban students might also report relatively minor incidents.
- Central-city students may be reluctant to report what happens to them to an authority—even on a confidential survey.

The survey found that teachers in rural schools were significantly more likely to experience a theft or attempted theft than those in other community types, although the percentage was about 30 percent in both suburbs and in rural areas.<sup>9</sup> A little more than 27 percent of teachers in central-city and small-city schools reported thefts or attempted thefts during the school year.

There was no statistically significant difference in robbery and attack rates for teachers across different community types. Again, the fact that rural teachers in Illinois are about as likely as central-city teachers to be attacked or robbed, contradicts a commonly held assumption—that large urban areas are more dangerous for teachers than other kinds of communities.

**IS SCHOOL CRIME GETTING WORSE?**

The problem of school crime in Illinois does not seem to have worsened appreciably in the last decade. Comparisons of the Authority's survey to similar studies carried out by the National Institute of Education in 1978 and by the Chicago Board of Education in 1981 do not indicate increases in most types of school crime against students and teachers. In many cases, in fact, reported victim-



ization levels were lower in the Authority's survey.

Congress in 1974 instructed the secretary of what was then the Department of Health, Education and Welfare to conduct a study to determine the incidence and seriousness of school crime.<sup>10</sup> The Safe School Study was carried out by the National Institute of Education (NIE), and released to Congress and the public in 1978.<sup>11</sup> Three years after the NIE study, the Chicago Board of Education released the results of a similar survey modeled after the NIE prototype.<sup>12</sup>

The national study was based on responses to questionnaires by thousands of principals, teachers, and students in 642 public junior and senior high schools across the country during the 1975–1976 school year. The Chicago study was based on samples of principals, teachers, and seventh through 12th grade students from throughout the Chicago public school system. Although some significant differences exist between the Authority's Illinois High School Survey and these earlier efforts (for example, our survey targeted only ninth through 12th graders), the two earlier projects established baseline indicators for some of our inquiries, thus enabling a rough comparison of results over time.

It has been 13 years since the NIE study was

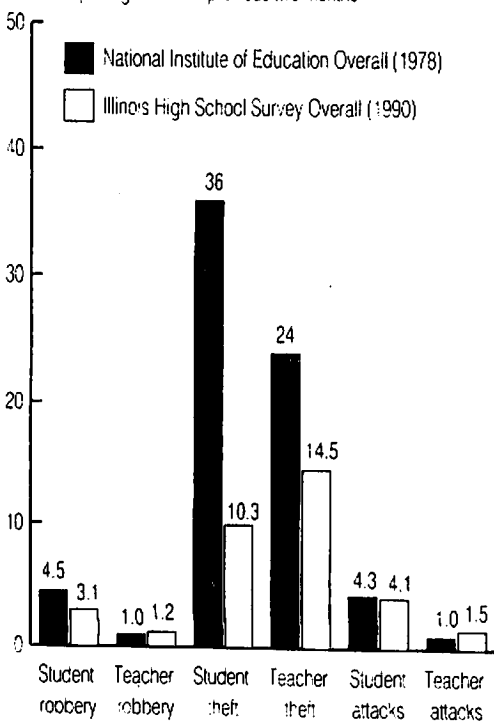
released, and 10 years since the Chicago survey. Those years have been characterized by increased public awareness of street-gang crime, availability of firearms, and a surge in arrests for drug crimes. Are these concerns reflected in the level of crime in Illinois schools?

Comparisons of the NIE study to the 1981 Chicago study are difficult to interpret. By and large, the Chicago victimization rates for both students and teachers in 1981 were well below the national averages for large metropolitan cities (over 250,000 population) found by the 1978 national study. Robbery incidents, for example, were reported by only 2.5 percent of the Chicago students in seventh through 12th grade, while the NIE survey obtained an average response rate of 10 percent from students at the same grade level in large metropolitan cities (Figure 3.9). These differences are not readily explainable, and are surprising in light of the mere three-year time span between the two surveys and the supposed similarities in methodologies. It is important to note, however, that in its report to Congress, NIE used interview data in reporting student victimization rates for robbery, theft, and attack, because it believed the rates obtained from the questionnaires were too high.

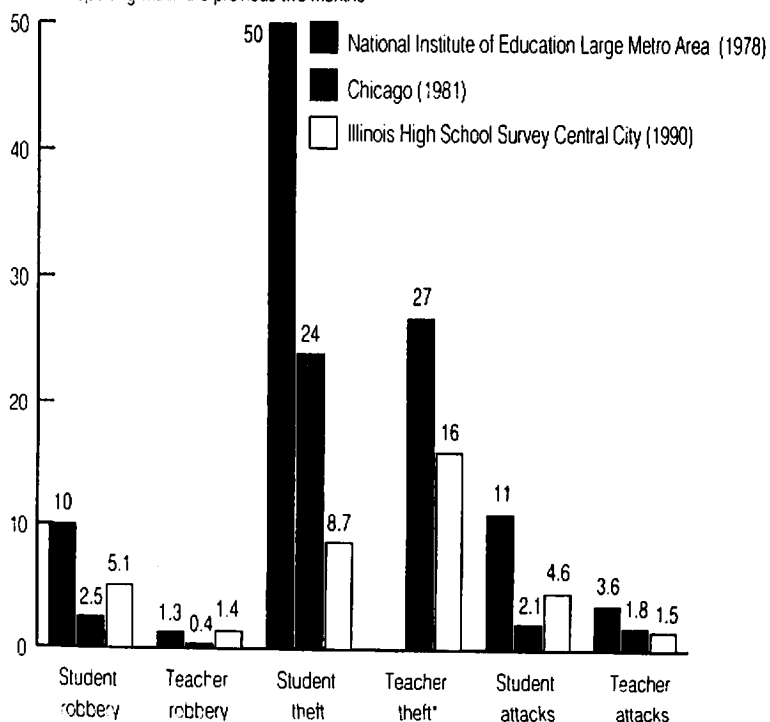
Figure 3.9

**School crime as reported in 1978, 1981, and 1990**

Percent reporting within the previous two months



Percent reporting within the previous two months



\*No data is available from the NIE study on teacher theft.

Source: National Institute of Education; Chicago Board of Education; Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.

To investigate changes in school crime over time, the overall results of the Authority's Illinois High School Survey can be compared to the nationwide results of the 1978 NIE study, since both included respondents from all community types. Results of the 1981 Chicago study, however, should be compared only to responses from Illinois High School Survey "central city" respondents and NIE "large metro city" respondents.

Students responding to the Illinois High School Survey reported lower victimization levels for all three crime types—robbery, theft, and attack—than those surveyed by NIE more than a decade ago. For teachers, the picture is somewhat different. Although Illinois teachers reported significantly lower theft levels than those found by NIE, robbery rates were about equal, and attack levels were about 50 percent higher. This may signal an actual increase in teacher attacks, may reflect differences between Illinois and the national average, or may indicate a greater willingness by teachers today to report such incidents.

The low victimization levels found by the Chicago study, compared to the earlier NIE study, may indicate that Chicago had (and perhaps still has) fewer serious school crime problems than other U.S. cities of comparable size. On the other hand, although the Chicago study attempted to duplicate the NIE survey procedure, the differ-

ence may be a result of differences in the actual survey implementation. Respondents to the Chicago survey may also have been skeptical or unsure of the outcome of their reporting and reluctant to fully reveal their experiences.

The only overall increases in school crime found in comparisons between the NIE study and the Illinois High School Survey were among teachers reporting an attack. These comparisons are limited because methodological uniformity is lacking between the three studies and because the NIE study and the Illinois High School Survey covered different geographical areas.<sup>13</sup>

Time-series data collected through a single methodology provide a better measure of change than separate studies carried out by different research groups at different times. Time-series studies conducted by the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research, which has conducted annual national surveys of high school seniors that include victimization data, suggest that there has been little change in crime against students during the past 12 years nationwide.<sup>14</sup> According to that survey, victimization of high school seniors, at least, has changed little during the past 12 years, with the exception of thefts of more than \$50 (Figure 3.10).

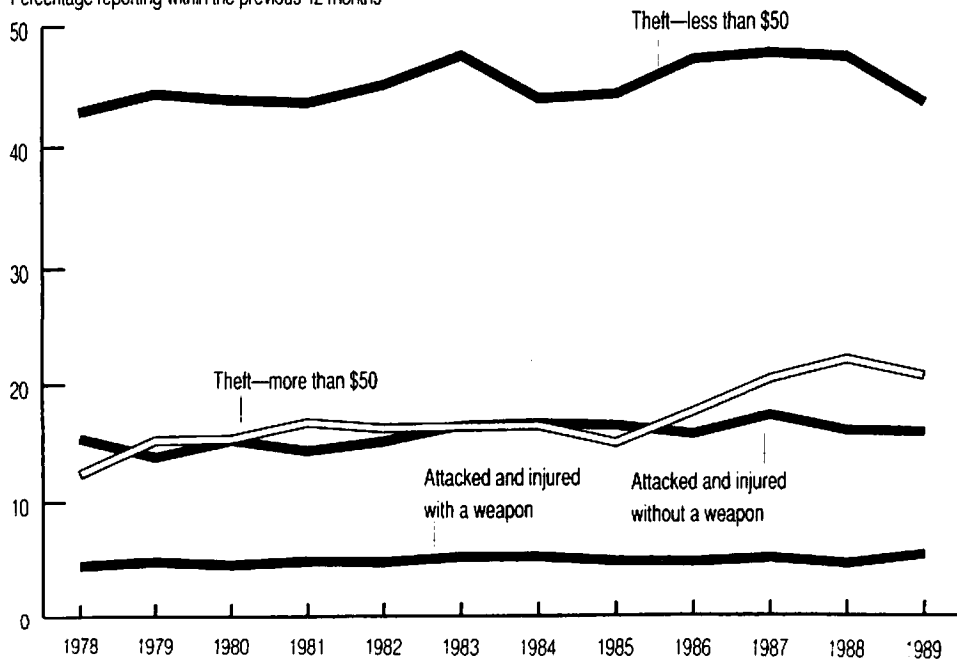
## DRUG ABUSE IN SCHOOLS

More than half the teachers and about one-third of the students responding to the Illinois High School Survey reported that illegal drugs are a serious problem in their schools' neighborhoods. While the extent of the drug problem inside Illinois schools is not easy to measure, the survey responses do make clear that certain substances are relatively easy for students to obtain, particularly alcohol and marijuana:

- Nearly three-quarters of students and 60 percent of teachers reported that alcohol is "very" or "somewhat" easy for students to obtain.
- More than half of both students and teachers reported that for marijuana.

Figure 3.10  
**Attacks on and thefts from high school seniors nationwide**

Percentage reporting within the previous 12 months



Source: University of Michigan, Institute for Social Research

- About 40 percent of both teachers and students reported that pharmaceutical pills were “very” or “somewhat” easy to obtain.
- Approximately one-quarter of both teachers and students reported cocaine, including crack cocaine, was easy to obtain.
- About one-third of both students and teachers reported that it is easy for students to obtain other types of drugs, such as inhalants, PCP, or heroin.

Few students and teachers said that drugs were difficult to obtain—most of those who did not say drugs were easy to obtain said they did not know whether or not drugs were available in their schools.

Questions about students' drug use were not included on the Illinois High School Survey, but a school survey conducted at approximately the same time by the Illinois Department of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (DASA) did address this issue.<sup>15</sup> The DASA survey, which targeted a sample of 15,000 seventh- through 12th-graders in public schools throughout the state, found that, at some time in their lives, 65 percent of the students had tried alcohol and 22 percent had tried marijuana—the most frequently used substances besides tobacco. In general, students in higher grades have higher usage rates than younger students. Marijuana use increased abruptly in high school (grades nine through 12), where about one in five reported that they had used it in the past 30 days.

The study also revealed that 13 percent of Illinois junior high and high school students—almost 18 percent of high school students alone—could be classified as high-risk substance abusers because of their heavy use of marijuana and/or other drugs, including cocaine, stimulants, sedatives, hallucinogens, or heroin. More than 72 percent of the students fell into the low-risk category, reporting no alcohol or drug use or only light use of alcohol and no drug use. The remaining 15 percent were classified as moderate risks, reporting frequent use of alcohol and light use of marijuana.

Drug availability was reported to be slightly higher in Cook County schools, but usage rates for alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, inhalants, and stimulants were higher in schools outside Cook County. Outside Cook County, very similar usage

rates were reported by both urban and rural students. Only cocaine, crack, and PCP were used slightly more frequently (the maximum difference is less than 1 percent) by Cook County students than by students in other areas of the state, and the percentages of students abusing these drugs in Cook County is very low—fewer than 6 percent reported ever using cocaine, 2 percent said they had used crack, and 2 percent had used PCP.

The lower drug usage rates in Cook County are mainly due to very low drug use, in almost every category, reported by black students, especially black female students. Hispanic students report the highest rates of use for marijuana, cocaine, crack, PCP, heroin, and other injectable drugs. Whites have the highest usage rates for alcohol, cigarettes, inhalants, stimulants, and sedatives.<sup>16</sup>

The DASA survey also found that Illinois high school seniors reported lower usage rates for most drugs, compared to national statistics reported annually by the National Institute on Drug Abuse. One explanation may be that Chicago public schools, which were solidly represented in the DASA

study, have a higher percentage of dropouts than the national average (see Chapter 6, Truancy and Dropout).<sup>17</sup> Drug-using students may be more likely to drop out before the end of their senior year, and therefore would not be included in the surveys.

### **Drug use and dropout**

A 1984 study found that dropouts and chronic absentees nationwide were more likely to be involved in certain types of drug use after leaving school. Students who had dropped out were more than 50 percent more likely to use marijuana almost daily than the non-dropouts.<sup>18</sup> In addition, a 1974 study found that the earlier an individual drops out, the more likely he or she is to have used drugs.<sup>19</sup>

Although these studies show drug use is associated with dropping out, a causal relationship between the two has not been clearly docu-

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*“The predominant finding of NIDA-sponsored studies on drugs and dropouts is delinquent behavior and drug abuse are often correlated, and both, along with family problems and dissatisfaction with school, are involved in dropping out, especially among males.”*

*Jerome Jaffe, former director,  
National Institute on Drug Abuse*

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mented.<sup>20</sup> A 1985 study by the National Institute on Drug Abuse appears, however, to have found that drug abuse did contribute to dropping out even when researchers controlled for other factors.<sup>21</sup>

At least some connection between drug use and dropping out was reported by respondents to the Authority's Illinois High School Survey. More than half of both teachers and students reported that they knew of someone at the school who had dropped out because of drug involvement. In a separate survey (see Chapter 7, School Experiences of Inmates), the Authority found that about 10 percent of prison inmates who had dropped out said they had left school because of substance abuse problems.

### **School prevention programs**

Much of the funding for school-based drug prevention programs operating in Illinois comes from the 1986 federal Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act. The federal contribution to school-based drug prevention programs in Illinois has risen dramatically from \$189 million in federal fiscal year 1989 to \$354 million in fiscal 1990. This figure is projected to rise to \$462 million in fiscal 1991.

#### *DARE*

The most extensive drug education program operating in Illinois schools is DARE—Drug Abuse Resistance Education—which is a cooperative effort between education and law enforcement. It was created in 1983 in Los Angeles, and is now well-established in most states. The Illinois State Police (ISP) began the Illinois DARE program in 1986, with assistance from the Illinois State Board of Education and DASA. The program originally began in 46 school districts across the state and has grown to approximately 600 school districts during the 1990-1991 school year.

DARE uses police officers to deliver its 17-week curriculum to fifth- and sixth-grade students. The DARE curriculum is designed to teach students to resist peer pressure to use drugs. Other objectives include enhancing students' self-esteem, increasing their knowledge about drugs, changing student perceptions about peers' use of and attitudes toward drugs, and promoting positive attitudes toward law enforcement.

A recent evaluation of DARE in Illinois found

that DARE students differed from students in control groups, in the 30 days immediately following completion of the DARE course, in several ways:<sup>22</sup>

- Students exposed to DARE were less likely to have smoked cigarettes during the past 30 days.
- They reported more negative attitudes toward illegal drugs.
- They were more likely to report negative peer attitudes toward drug use.
- They were more aware of media influences concerning beer and cigarettes.
- They reported more positive changes in self-esteem.
- They reported more assertiveness.
- They reported more positive attitudes toward police.

These results are preliminary. ISP plans to measure longer-term maintenance of DARE benefits in the future. The success of DARE cannot be fully measured until a few classes of DARE students have become teens and young adults.

#### *DASA-funded programs*

A number of drug education programs are funded by DASA. One such program is InTouch, which focuses on community-based comprehensive prevention programming. DASA provides funding to develop "community teams" made up of schools, police and other justice system members, representatives from business, churches, elected officials, and other community groups. Community teams set up in-school drug education programs, parent education programs, youth development programs, after-school programs, and counseling resources.

To help community groups develop these programs, DASA funds the Prevention Resource Center. The center provides drug education training and seminars to groups, regardless of whether they are DASA funding recipients. It also houses a library of resources on drug abuse prevention programming.

DASA also funds the Illinois Teenage Institute, a program of the Illinois Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Association. Not directly a school-based program, the institute holds a summer camp for high school students, and trains them to

organize drug abuse prevention programs in their individual schools. The institute is an offshoot of another DASA-funded program called Operation Snowball, an alcohol and drug use prevention program focusing on developing leadership in youth. Local community chapters accredited by Operation Snowball provide young people with information about drugs, opportunities to develop and enhance leadership skills, drug-free alternatives, and strategies to improve their school and community. As of March 1991, approximately half the accredited chapters were school-based.

### TASC

TASC (Treatment Alternatives for Special Clients) has also recently expanded its substance abuse treatment services to include school-based programs. The School Intervention Program (SciP) currently operates in five Illinois public schools and one private school: Cahokia High School and Wirth Junior High School in Cahokia, and Schubert Elementary School, Kenwood Academy, Hyde Park Career Academy, and the University of Chicago Lab School, a private school, in Chicago. The program works cooperatively with parents, teachers, school administrators, and the students themselves to create an awareness of drug and alcohol abuse among students, to develop activities to discourage the potential for substance abuse, and provide intervention services for those who have already encountered substance abuse problems. A student caught in possession or under the influence of drugs is referred to the school's SciP coordinator, who assesses the extent of the student's drug abuse problem and refers him or her to a drug education or treatment program. The SciP coordinator monitors the student's progress in the program.

Many researchers argue that school-based prevention efforts have yet to prove their worth, in that they have failed to demonstrate a long-term reduction in drug use.<sup>23</sup> Many program evaluations, like the evaluation of Illinois DARE, have been short-term in nature, and they have generally been unable to detect any reductions in drug use that may become apparent over a longer time period.

*Assessing the need for drug education programs*  
Drug abuse prevention programs, however suc-

cessful, are established only in schools where teachers, administrators, and community members see a need for such programs. In some cases, teachers and administrators may be reluctant to admit that drugs are a problem in their schools and neighborhoods.

The Authority's High School Survey asked students and teachers about the availability of drugs in their schools. Awareness of drug availability varied significantly among teachers in urban, suburban, and rural schools. Teachers were less aware of the availability of pills, crack, and other forms of cocaine in their schools than they were of alcohol and marijuana. While only 30 percent did not know if alcohol was available and 37 percent had no information about marijuana, 54 percent were unaware of whether illegal drugs in pill form could be found in the school, and 62 percent had no knowledge of whether crack and other forms of cocaine were available. Awareness of drug availability also varied significantly among teachers in urban, suburban, and rural schools. Central-city teachers were significantly more likely than counterparts in suburban, small-city, and rural schools to choose the response "don't know" when asked to rate how available certain drugs are to students in their schools. Statewide, between 30 percent

and 62 percent of teachers reported they did not know how available various kinds of drugs were in their schools, and teachers consistently gave this response more frequently than students for each type of drug. It seems likely that teachers who report not knowing about drug availability, especially in central-city schools or where students report drugs are widely available, reflect a lack of awareness of a drug problem, rather than a lack of a drug problem.

### REPORTING SCHOOL CRIME TO AUTHORITIES

School crimes against students and teachers are often not reported by victims to any authorities or even to family or friends. Among students responding to the Illinois High School Survey, 40

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#### Tougher drug laws

At the same time that drug education and treatment programs have been established in Illinois' schools, drug laws in Illinois—particularly those involving schools—have become tougher. A 1988 Illinois law created "drug-free zones," and substantially increased the penalty for delivery (or manufacture) of a controlled substance on or within 1,000 feet of school property (Ill. Rev. Stat., ch. 56 1/2, par. 1407). To deter drug dealers and users from engaging in drug-related crime around schools, some communities have posted "drug-free school zone" signs.

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percent of the attacks, nearly one-third of the robberies, and one-quarter of the thefts were not reported. Among teachers, 25 percent of the attacks, 16 percent of the robberies, and 40 percent of the thefts were not reported (Figure 3.11).<sup>24</sup> Victims who did not report incidents said they preferred to handle it themselves or that they felt nothing would result from their reporting it. Both students and teachers also frequently said that they were dissatisfied with outcomes when crime incidents were reported.

"I handled it myself" was the reason most frequently given by students for not reporting an attack or a robbery, given by 44 percent of students who did not report an attack and 35 percent of those who did not report a robbery. The most frequent reasons given by students for not reporting a theft, however, were "it was not important" and "nothing would be done," each given by 32 percent of the students. More than half of all students who were theft victims indicated dissatisfaction with the outcome of reporting the incident to someone.

Eleven percent of the students who did not report an attack and 10 percent of those who did not report a robbery gave being afraid as a reason for not reporting the incidents. Only 4 percent gave being afraid as a reason for not

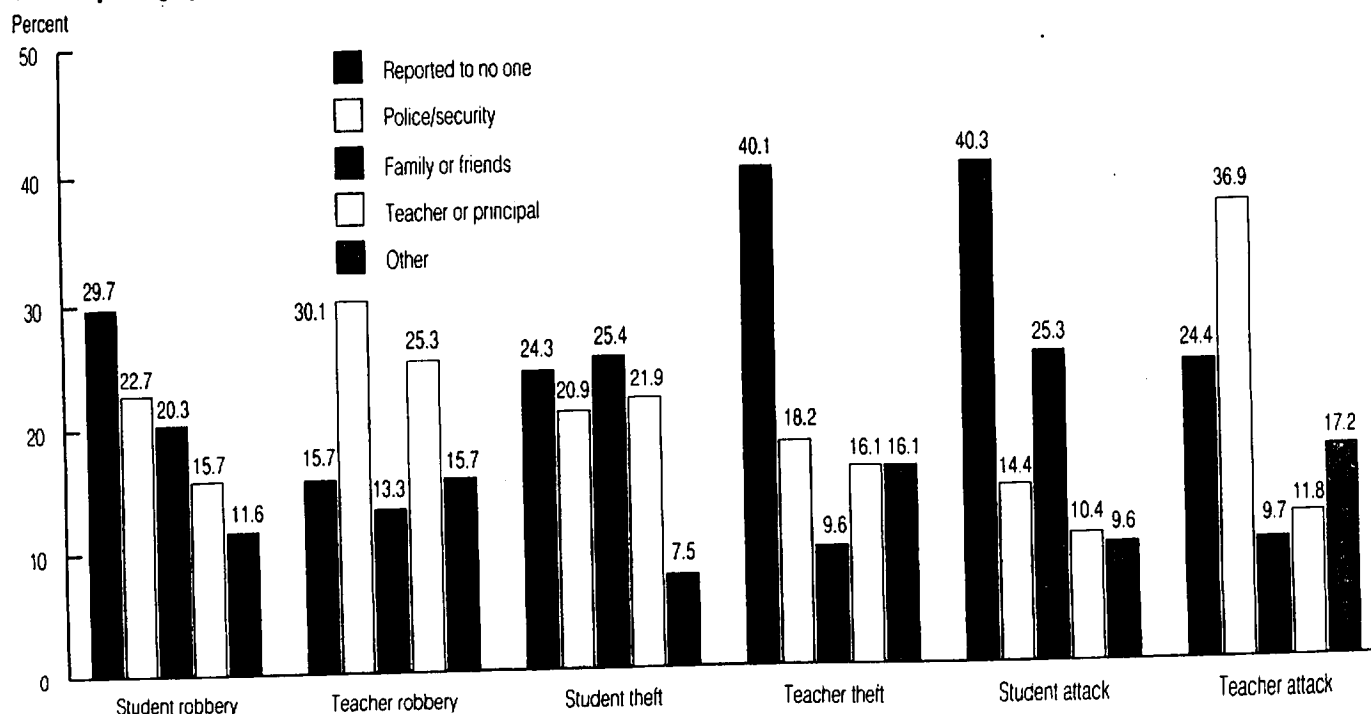
reporting a theft. Students involved in a non-confrontational crime such as theft may be less fearful about reporting the crime than they are when the crime is more serious and the identity of the perpetrator is known, as in robberies and attacks.

"I handled it myself" was also the reason teachers most frequently gave for not reporting an attack, given by 54 percent. "I handled it myself" and "nothing would be done" were the most frequently given reasons for not reporting a robbery, each given by 29 percent of the teachers. And "nothing would be done" was the reason teachers gave most frequently for not reporting a theft, given by 39 percent. Almost two-thirds of teachers who had reported robberies and nearly half of those who had reported thefts had been dissatisfied with the outcome of reporting the incidents.

Four percent of teachers who did not report a robbery gave being afraid as a reason for not reporting. Just over 1 percent said they were afraid to report an assault, and less than 1 percent were afraid to report a theft.

Attacks that were reported by students were reported more often to family or friends than to police or teachers. When teachers reported an attack, it was most often to the police.

Figure 3.11  
Crime reporting by students and teachers



Source: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority



Students who reported robberies were most likely to report them to either the police or security force, or to family or friends. Only about one in six student robberies were reported to a teacher. Teacher victims who reported robberies were most likely to report the incident to the police, the security force, or the principal.

When thefts were reported by students, they were somewhat more likely than robberies to be reported to family or friends. Theft was almost equally as likely to be reported to teachers as to police. When teachers reported a theft, they reported it to police, principals, and others with nearly equal frequency.

### **FEAR OF SCHOOL CRIME**

Students responding to the Illinois High School Survey consistently showed more apprehension about their safety than teachers, perhaps reflecting an accurate perception that they are more likely than teachers to become victims of crime. One-quarter of the students and 18 percent of the teachers reported that at least part of the time they were in school they felt someone would hurt or bother them. Many reported that, as a result, they avoided certain parts of the school. Nearly one in five teachers reported that they avoid being alone in the school after hours.

Just over 19 percent of the students and 15 percent of the teachers reported that they sometimes felt that someone would hurt or bother them on the way to or from school. Nineteen percent of the students reported that they avoid certain routes to or from school, and more than a third reported that they travel in groups to reduce risk. Among teachers, 15 percent indicated that they avoid certain places in the school, but only 5 percent travel in groups for protection.

No single location within the school stood out as being largely avoided by students and teachers for self-protection. About 10 percent of the students avoided the school parking lot, parts of the lunchroom, certain rest rooms, certain hallways or stairs, or a locker room. About 7 percent of teachers avoided certain rest rooms, parts of the lunchroom, certain hallways or stairs, the school parking lot, or a locker room. The irony is that when students and teachers avoid certain areas, those areas may become even less protected, thus exacerbating the problem.

Student victims of robbery, theft, or attack

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### **Fear of crime**

Among students responding to the Authority's Illinois High School Survey, males were less fearful than females, blacks less fearful than students of other races, and older students less fearful than younger students. Not surprisingly, students who reported that they had been victims of robbery were more fearful than non-victims. Similar findings were found for students who had been victims of assault and theft. Also, students who indicated greater levels of fear were more likely to dislike school, to perceive serious problems in their neighborhood, and to perceive more evidence of street-gang activity in the schools. Finally, although the more fearful students reported having parents who were less involved when disputes take place at school, they also reported having parents who are more involved in educational support activities such as helping with homework, attending school functions and parent-teacher conferences, and reviewing report cards.

Among teachers, fewer factors were found to be correlated with fear of victimization than for students. Although robbery victims were found to be significantly more fearful than non-victims, teachers who were victims of assaults or thefts were no more fearful of victimization than non-victims. For theft victims, the non-confrontational, anonymous nature of the crime may have failed to provoke a fearful response. In the case of assault, unlike robbery, the crime may have been seen by victims as isolated and related to a specific interpersonal situation, and the likelihood of re-occurrence too remote to create a generalized fear of victimization. As was true with students, the more fearful teachers perceived more signs of street-gang activity in the school and perceived more serious problems in the neighborhood surrounding the school. The more fearful teachers also had received more threats from students than those who were less fearful.

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avoided places (such as certain areas of the school) and situations (such as walking alone) that they thought were dangerous more than non-victims. Female students avoided such places and situations more than male students, and younger students more than older students.

Black students reported less fear of victimization than students of other races, but black students also avoided situations and places they thought were dangerous more than students of other races. White and Native American students avoided such places and situations least often. Avoiding places and situations thought to be dangerous was correlated with having a higher overall grade average, perceiving more signs of street-gang activity in the school, and perceiving more serious problems in the neighborhood.

Female teachers avoided places and situations they thought were dangerous more than male teachers. White teachers avoided dangerous places and situations more than non-whites. This may again be related to the greater racial diversity among students than among teachers.

In the urban areas, where this diversity among students is greatest, street-gang prob-

lems are also most prevalent. Teachers are more likely than students to perceive attacks as street-gang related, and white teachers may exercise more caution where they perceive gang-related danger to be connected to the racial makeup of the school. As may also be the case with differing perceptions of street-gang activity in the school, the difference between students and teachers in avoiding places and situations may be due to the white teachers' feelings of cultural alienation and personal intimidation when they are among minority youth.

### **The impact of street gangs**

Limited research, as well as a lack of consensus on what constitutes a street gang or street-gang incident, makes it difficult to measure the scope and seriousness of the gang problem in Illinois schools. It is known, however, that criminal street gangs or their members are found in almost all 50 states and are found in many school systems.<sup>25</sup> Nearly one-fourth of the students and one-third of the teachers participating in the Illinois High School Survey reported that gangs posed a serious prob-

lem in their schools' neighborhoods.

In a recent study of street-gang activity in two predominantly Hispanic Chicago public high schools, researchers identified several significant consequences of gang activity that influenced the quality of school life:<sup>26</sup>

- Street gangs exercised control over individual schools, areas of the school buildings, and/or particular classrooms within the school.
- Gangs controlled the extensive and lucrative drug trafficking that openly took place within the school.
- Students were actively recruited for street-gang membership within the school building and/or on their way to or from school.
- Students were intimidated and physically attacked by gang members within the school buildings, on the school grounds, or on their way to or from school.
- Students listed street-gang activity as the most frequent reason for dropping out of school.

Responses to the Illinois High School Survey support the association of street gangs with dropping out. More than one-third of both students and teachers reported that they knew someone who dropped out of school because of gang involvement or intimidation. In the Authority's Inmate Survey, nearly 12 percent of the male inmates who had dropped out of school said they had dropped out because of gang-related problems.

Students and teachers were also asked about street-gang presence and activities in their schools. About 60 percent of students and 75 percent of teachers indicated that gang members attend their schools. In addition, more than 40 percent of students and about half the teachers reported that street-gang members wear their gang colors to school. There is also evidence from the survey that schools do, in fact, provide opportunities for street-gang recruitment. About one-quarter of students and more than half the teachers reported that street-gang members try to recruit members in their schools. The responses to these questions on street-gang activity were affected by the type of community the school was in. Students and teachers in small cities and rural areas reported fewer signs of street-gang activity in the school than those from large cities and

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### **Perceptions of street gangs in schools**

Among students interviewed in the Authority's Illinois High School Survey, Hispanics perceived more signs of street-gang activity than blacks, both of whom perceived more signs than whites, Asians, and other students. Students who perceived more signs of street-gang activity also had a lower self-reported grade average. Perhaps as a consequence of their street-gang perceptions, these students also feared crime victimization more, and engaged in more crime avoidance behaviors than the others.

Students who perceived more signs of street-gang activity were also more likely to report other kinds of school problems. They perceived a greater dropout problem, more racial discrimination in the school, more serious problems in the school neighborhood, and that drugs were more accessible than the students who perceived fewer street-gang signs. It is not clear whether the association between a heightened perception of street-gang activity and perception of other school problems is due to the type of student making the response or to the type of school. Students who are more easily frightened or intimidated, or students with greater direct involvement in street gangs, might perceive more street-gang activity and more of other types of problems. On the other hand, schools with more street-gang activity probably have increased levels of other problems as well, and that may be perceptible to any student.

Like students, teachers who perceived more signs of street-gang activity also perceived or experienced other types of school problems. They had broken up more physical fights among students, were threatened more often by students, perceived more serious problems in the school neighborhood, and perceived that parents were less involved in students' education than those teachers who perceived fewer signs of street-gang activity.

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suburbs. There was no significant difference in reported gang activity, however, between large cities and suburbs.

Estimating the amount of gang-related crime taking place in Illinois schools is nearly impossible, since state and federal Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) programs do not distinguish such offenses.<sup>27</sup> Most researchers have concluded, however, that street-gang crime is predominantly street crime, and that its most serious manifestation, violence, tends to occur outdoors away from schools and school property.<sup>28</sup> In Chicago, police have estimated that about 11 percent of all citywide gang crime incidents in 1985 occurred on school property.<sup>29</sup> And, according to the Chicago Board of Education, about 7 percent of all serious disciplinary incidents in the 1988–1989 school year in Chicago were street-gang related.<sup>30</sup>

It is not the Chicago Board of Education's official policy to set attendance boundaries to conform to gang territories. But according to one study, Chicago school administrators sometimes transfer students to different schools to ensure their physical safety from street-gang violence, effectively acquiescing to control of their schools by street gangs.<sup>31</sup> In addition, interviews with juvenile officers, court services staff, and inmates indicate that many transfers of this type are made in order to get rid of trouble-makers, pushing the problem over to another school.<sup>32</sup> One district administrator approved 12 transfers out of the district in a single year. In each instance, the transfer occurred because the student was a street-gang member whose safety was threatened because he attended a school controlled by a rival street gang. Such actions may be viewed as an admission that street gangs actually exercise control of administrative decisions.<sup>33</sup>

### **Weapons in school**

For some students, the response to fear of victimization goes beyond avoiding situations to include more aggressive self-protection. The National School Safety Center (NSSC) estimates that in 1987 almost 1 million school-age boys in the United States carried a knife to school daily, 135,000 boys carried a gun to school daily, and 270,000 boys carried guns to school at least once a year. Students carry weapons to school for a variety of reasons. A recent study by the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Pre-

vention reports that while many students carry weapons to school because of participation in street gangs and illegal drug activity, others arm themselves out of fear.<sup>34</sup> The Center to Prevent Handgun Violence (CPHV) estimates that 70 percent of students who carry guns say they do so to protect themselves.<sup>35</sup>

Although knives are the most common weapons found in schools, handguns and increasingly sophisticated firearms are readily available to students—greatly multiplying the potential for serious injury or death. The NSSC estimates that

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### **School strategies for combatting street-gang problems**

A long-range, community-wide strategy to deal with the juvenile street-gang problem must include a targeted school intervention component, according to findings and recommendations of the National Youth Gang Suppression and Intervention program, a research and development project of the University of Chicago. With funding from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of the U.S. Department of Justice, Irving A. Spergel and his associates are engaged in a four-stage process of assessment, model development, technical assistance, and testing of promising model projects.

The researchers have found that, although there are limits to what a school can do to affect the basic family and community causes of street-gang problems, schools can do much, in conjunction with criminal justice and community agencies, to control or reduce street-gang activity. The researchers recommend that schools develop strategies based on providing youth with "social opportunities," by developing a structure and curriculum to facilitate academic competence and employment preparedness. Specific recommendations include the following.

- Special remedial programs, appropriate pre-vocational training, and flexibility in school curriculum must be provided to street-gang youth and those at high risk of street-gang involvement.
- Social support must be demonstrated through faculty and staff respect for youth, whether they are identified as street-gang members or not, particularly as youth try to achieve success through legitimate means.
- While formal counseling of street-gang students is important, a more general climate of positive relationships must be built by teachers and administrators toward these youth.
- Since street-gang youth are, by definition, in conflict with the established norms of society, the school must directly impose fair and strong controls, and not hesitate to enlist outside forces from both criminal justice and grass-roots organizations to assist in their supervision, while also protecting non-gang youth.
- Since the street-gang problem arises and is sustained through weaknesses of family structures, the school should provide families with street-gang awareness training and mobilize parents to deal with the school-related street-gang problem.
- Schools may require a special curricular and disciplinary mechanism for handling street-gang youth problems, such as special training for teachers and staff, or mechanisms to integrate community and school efforts toward street-gang youth

more than 5.5 million boys and 3.2 million girls nationwide have access to handguns. In the Illinois High School Survey, approximately one-third of the students and one-quarter of the teachers reported that it was either "somewhat" or "very" easy for students to buy or obtain guns. Nearly 800 weapons were confiscated in Chicago public schools between January 1987 and October 1990. From September 1990 through January 1991, 282 guns and 85 other weapons were confiscated.<sup>36</sup>

The recent CPHV report documented 71 deaths in American schools—65 students and six school employees—by gunshot between Sep-

tember 1986 and June 1990. Another 201 people were wounded by guns and 242 people were held hostage in schools during that same period. The study also found that males made up 93 percent of the offenders and 76 percent of the victims in violence involving guns in schools.

Almost one-third of the students in the Illinois High School Survey said they had brought a weapon to school for self-protection during the 1989–1990 school year. Five percent said they had brought a gun. If 5 percent of all Illinois public high school students brought a gun to school, approximately

26,000 would have been carried into high schools that year. Students who had been victims of theft, robbery, or attack brought weapons to school more than students who had not been victims of those crimes. Older students reported having brought a weapon to school more than younger students (perhaps as a result of exposure over time to certain crime situations). Students who reported having brought a weapon to school were also less willing to follow school rules and more likely to dislike school. They also said drugs were more accessible, saw more signs of street-gang activity in the school, and saw more serious problems in the neighborhood. There were no statistically significant differences between community types in how frequently students brought weapons to school. This, again, may contradict

the commonly held assumption that the risk of violence is greater in urban areas.

The large number of weapons in schools has led school officials to try a variety of strategies for confiscating weapons, from searching lockers to using metal detectors. The Chicago Board of Education, in fact, has begun to experiment with the use of portable walk-through metal detectors in schools where the greatest street-gang and drug-related violence occurs. The detectors travel as needed, at the request of the local school council and the principal. Previously, some Chicago schools had used hand-held detectors on a random basis to detect weapons.

Many states, including Illinois, have enacted laws to create gun-free school zones, following the passage of similar legislation at the federal level.<sup>37</sup> The Illinois Safe School Zone Act has been in effect since January 1, 1990.<sup>38</sup> The act stipulates that penalties for weapons violations (involving any weapon from a slingshot to a firearm) committed within 1,000 feet of a school are raised in seriousness by one level (for example, from a Class 4 to a Class 3 felony). Use or sale of weapons is elevated from a misdemeanor to a felony. In addition, 15- and 16-year-olds found with a weapon in school are prosecuted as adults in Illinois.<sup>39</sup>

### **Effect of fear on education**

Perceptions of crime in school could affect the behavior of students and teachers in numerous ways, with detrimental impact on the school learning environment. In the Illinois High School Survey, students and teachers who had been victims of robbery were absent from school more often than non-victims. Eight percent of all students surveyed said they sometimes stay home from school for fear that someone would hurt or bother them. Teachers who avoid dangerous places and situations were also absent more often than those who don't. And because 19 percent of teachers avoid being in school after hours, those teachers are less available to students who need after-school help.

The stress associated with fear of victimization could have other detrimental effects as well. Students who brought weapons to school to protect themselves also disliked school more and were less willing to follow school rules than those who did not.

### **Weapons in school**

The problem of weapons in schools is not limited to urban centers. In the Illinois High School Survey, the percentages of urban, suburban, small town, and rural students who reported bringing a weapon to school for self-protection were not significantly different. Almost a third statewide said they had done so during the 1989–1990 school year. A knife or razor was the most common weapon (carried to school by 12.5 percent of the students), followed in popularity by a belt buckle or key chain used as protection (11.5 percent of the students). A chemical spray had been carried by 6 percent, and a gun or brass knuckles had each been brought to school by 5 percent.

When students and teachers stay away from schools because they fear crime, and when students mistrust the ability of the school to protect them to the extent of bringing their own weapons to school, the school's position as an orderly, rule-governed place is undermined. This in turn may feed the cycle of disrespectful behavior that again may escalate into violence and crime.

### **DISCIPLINARY RULES IN ILLINOIS SCHOOLS**

In Illinois, the administrative rules established by the State Board of Education require each local school board to establish and maintain a parent-teacher advisory committee to develop, with the board, policy guidelines on pupil discipline. The rules also require the local boards to furnish a copy of the policy to the parents or guardian of each pupil and to inform its pupils of the contents of its policy. Each local board's discipline policy must provide that a teacher may remove a student from the classroom for disruptive behavior, and must include provisions that provide due process to students.<sup>40</sup>

In the Illinois High School Survey, both students and teachers were asked their perceptions about the fairness of school rules and their enforcement. Fewer than half the students agreed with the statement that the rules are fair in their school, although more than three-quarters of the teachers agreed with that statement. Both groups perceived problems, however, in the actual enforcement of the rules—62 percent of the students and 61.5 percent of the teachers did not agree with the statement that "regardless of who you are, punishment is the same." Of the students, 62.5 percent reported that rules are strictly enforced all or most of the time, while 45 percent of the teachers responded this way. Thirty-one percent of the students and 39 percent of the teachers reported that strict enforcement occurred only some of the time.

School principals may be a source of some of the lack of consistency in rule enforcement. When asked about the frequency with which the principal "is fair, consistent, and firm," 58 percent of the students and 57 percent of the teachers responded that this was true either most or all of the time; 29 percent of the students and 30 percent of the teachers said this was true only

some of the time.

Although school disciplinary policies allow for various sanctions in response to rules infractions, the limits of those sanctions have often been debated.

### **How much discipline may schools exercise?**

In Illinois, the State School Code states that "teachers and other certified educational employees shall maintain discipline in the schools."<sup>41</sup> To prevent misuse of this broad language, the administrative rules established by the State Board of Education require public schools that permit corporal punishment to notify parents upon initial enrollment of a student that the parents may submit a written request that corporal punishment not be administered to their child or children.<sup>42</sup> Private schools in Illinois are not under the jurisdiction of the State Board of Education, and are permitted to formulate their own discipline policies.

In recent years, the number of states that have banned corporal punishment has nearly doubled. According to the National Coalition to Abolish Corporal Punishment in Schools, it is now outlawed in 22 states, up from 11 states in 1987. One reason for this trend, according to the National School Boards Association, is that a number of lawsuits have been filed across the United States by parents of students who were paddled. Findings from a 1986 U.S. Department of Education survey also indicate that corporal punishment has been applied disproportionately to minority students and children with behavioral and learning disabilities.<sup>43</sup>

Some schools are now using police officers to help enforce rules and prevent crime. Besides adding security, officers who work inside the schools may increase the number of crimes that are reported. According to some juvenile officers and school security officials, students may be more likely to believe that some action will result from their reporting an incident if police are on-site to immediately respond. In addition, a police presence in the school may lessen students' fear of retaliation if they report crimes.<sup>44</sup> Juvenile officers in the schools and in communities bear the responsibility for working with youths whose behavior has brought them—or is likely to bring them—into conflict with the law.

## Notes

1. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Our Nation's Schools—A Report Card: "A" in School Violence and Vandalism* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1975); National Institute of Education, *Violent Schools—Safe Schools: The Safe School Study Report to the Congress*, vol. 1 (Washington, D.C., 1978); and U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Public School Teacher Perspectives on School Discipline* (Washington, D.C., 1987).

2. W.G. Hapkiewicz, *Research on Corporal Punishment Effectiveness: Contributions and Limitations* (Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Washington, D.C., 1975); J.E. Brophy, "Classroom Organization and Management" *Elementary School Journal* 83 (1983): 265-286; D.L. Duke and A.M. Meckel, "Student Attendance Problems and School Organization: A Case Study" *Urban Education* 15 (October 1980): 325-358; A.M. Garibaldi, "In-school Alternatives to Suspension: Trendy Educational Innovations" *Urban Review* 11 (1979): 97-103; and P.M. Short and G.W. Noblit, "Missing the Mark in In-school Suspension: An Explanation and Proposal" *NASSP Bulletin* 69, no. 484 (1985): 112-116.

3. George Gallup, *The Gallup Youth Survey: Violence in the School Persists* (Princeton, N.J.: The Gallup Organization, 1985).

4. These totals, in fact, may be subject to significant undercounting. A more detailed and comprehensive reporting system has been installed for Chicago public schools beginning with the 1990-1991 school year, coinciding with an expansion of security measures. The effect of these new measures can be seen in the increased school crime statistics for the first four months of the 1990-1991 school year. From September through December 1990, more than 800 incidents were reported to the Bureau of Safety and Security, resulting in 4,306 student arrests—including 1,023 for simple and aggravated battery, 229 for unlawful use of a weapon, and 116 for criminal damage to property.

5. In its 1978 study of school crime, the National Institute of Education noted the importance of community influence in its survey design. NIE researchers noted two kinds of community factors that they expected to affect the incidence of crime in schools: community characteristics and school-community relations.

6. A time-dependent forgetting curve can be drawn for any retrospective survey (see discussion in Appendix B). In the Authority's Illinois High School Survey, the item which asked respondents about incidents occurring during the school year required a recall period of almost nine months (the survey was administered at the end of the term). Therefore,

forgetting would have been a more acute problem for that time frame than when recalling incidents occurring within the past two months.

A second problem is termed "telescoping"—remembering incidents as occurring more recently than they actually occurred. Survey respondents often inaccurately draw victimization incidents occurring at an earlier time into the time frame referred to in the survey item. The time frame of the school year was a concrete reference period for students and teachers, while the two-month period was somewhat arbitrary. The two-month time frame was therefore subject to greater telescoping, and thus should contain a more inflated crime incident total. The forgetting curve and telescoping factors, then, help explain the small variance between robbery incidents reported for the two-month time frame and for the entire school year.

Telescoping and forgetting apply in all the types of crime discussed in this chapter, but are most noticeable in the case of robbery. See Appendix B for more information.

7. Although demographic factors such as gender and age probably do affect the likelihood of victimization, the relationship between other statistically significant characteristics of victims and their victimization is less clear. For example, robbery victimization was found to be significantly correlated with "number of days absent from school." It is not clear if victimization causes the student to be absent more often, if it is somehow a consequence of those absences, or if both robbery victimization and absences are consequences of some other unidentified variable, such as low socioeconomic status.

8. Based on discussions from the following meetings: Illinois Correctional Association meeting (October 24, 1990); Illinois Juvenile Officers Association meeting (June 29, 1990); meetings of the Trends and Issues Educational Advisory Panel (February 23 and November 7, 1990); and focus group discussions with students at Roberto Clemente High School in Chicago (April 12, 1990). See appendixes A and B for explanations of how the advisory panels were formed and used.

9. Although the respective percentages of rural and suburban teachers in the survey sample reporting thefts and attempted thefts were nearly equivalent, the teacher populations they represent are not. In other words, the relative proportions of rural and suburban Illinois teachers represented in the survey sample are not the same.

10. The Safe School Study Act, introduced as part of the Education Amendments of 1974 (Public Law 93-380), mandated that the secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) conduct the study.

11. National Institute of Education, *Violent Schools—Safe Schools* (1978)



12. *The Chicago Safe School Study: A Report to the General Superintendent of Schools* (Chicago: Center for Urban Education, 1981).
13. Another reason for the lower crime levels found in the Illinois High School Survey may be that the National Institute of Education survey may have suffered from more telescoping. In the NIE survey, the two-month time frame was the only parameter employed. As a result, respondents might tend to view earlier victimizations as significant and applicable to the survey, and worthy of mention even though they occurred outside the two-month time frame of the survey question. Respondents to the Illinois High School Survey, on the other hand, were allowed to report such incidents in questions concerning events that occurred during the entire school year.
14. Data are collected as part of the Monitoring the Future Project with the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan. Ann Arbor; Lloyd D. Johnston, Jerald G. Bachman, and Patrick M. O'Malley researchers. Survey results are presented in U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics 1989* (Washington, D.C., 1990).
15. Illinois Department of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, Addictions Research Institute, *DASA Youth Survey 1990: Main Findings*, report prepared by Mark E. Barrett (Springfield, Ill., November 1990).
16. Illinois Department of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, *Youth Survey* (1990): 5.
17. The dropout rates in Chicago public schools, by race, are as follows: whites—37 percent, blacks—41.2 percent, Hispanics—43.5 percent, Asians—15.3 percent, Native Americans—68 percent. The rate is 47.2 percent among black males and 49.3 percent for Hispanic males. These 1988 statistics are from an interview with Bill Rice, director of the Chicago Board of Education's Bureau of Management, Information, and Analysis, December 5, 1990.
18. D.B. Kandel and J.A. Logan, "Patterns of Drug Use from Adolescence to Young Adulthood: I. Periods of Risk for Initiation, Continued Use, and Discontinuation" *American Journal of Public Health* 74 (July 1984).
19. G.M. Winburn and J.R. Hays, "Dropouts: A Study of Drug Use" *Journal of Drug Education* 4, no. 2 (Summer 1974): 249-254.
20. U.S. Congress, *Report of the Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control: 1987 Update on Drugs and Dropouts* (Washington, D.C., 1987).
21. National Institute on Drug Abuse, *Final Report: Drug Use as Cause of School Dropout and Treatment Need*, report prepared by A.S. Friedman (Washington, D.C., April 1985).
22. Illinois State Police, *A First-Year Evaluation of D.A.R.E. in Illinois*, report prepared by C. Ringwalt, T.R. Curtin, and D. Rosenbaum (Springfield, Ill., August 1990).
23. G. Botvin, "Substance Abuse Prevention Research: Recent Developments and Future Directions" *Journal of School Health* 56 (1986): 369-374; W.H. Bruvold and T.G. Rundall, "A Meta-analysis and Theoretical Review of School Based Tobacco and Alcohol Intervention Programs" *Psychology and Health* 2 (1988): 53-78; J. Howard, J. Taylor, M. Ganikos, H.D. Holder, D.F. Godwin, and E.D. Taylor, "An Overview of Prevention Research: Issues, Answers, and New Agendas" *Public Health Reports* 103 (1988): 674-683; and J.M. Moskowitz, "The Primary Prevention of Alcohol Problems: A Critical Review of the Research Literature" *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 50 (1989): 54-88.
24. Low rates of reporting theft incidents to authorities have been documented by the Bureau of Justice Statistics among the general population in its study of reporting behavior within the National Crime Survey. In that study, respondents often did not report thefts to police when the value of the stolen item was low. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Reporting Crimes to the Police*, report prepared by Caroline Wolf Harlow (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1985).
25. Irving A. Spergel, *Youth Gangs: Problem and Response* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1990).
26. R. Hutchison and C. Kyle, "Hispanic Street Gangs in the Chicago Public Schools" in *Gangs: The Origins and Impact of Contemporary Youth Gangs in the United States*, edited by Scott Cummings and Daniel Monti (Albany, N.Y.: State University New York Press, 1990).
27. This will change, however, under the redesigned UCR system, which is being implemented in Illinois and across the nation over the next several years. Under the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), special codes will allow law enforcement agencies to designate which offense incidents are street-gang related, and which of those took place in a school.
28. Irving A. Spergel, "The Violent Gang Problem in Chicago: A Local Community Approach" *Social Service Review* 60 (1986): 94-131; and C.L. Maxson, M.A. Gordon, and M.W. Klein, "Difference Between Gang and Non-gang Homicides" *Criminology* 23 (1985): 209-222.
29. 1985 total provided by Chicago Police Department's Gang Crime Unit; reported in Irving A. Spergel and G.D. Curry, *Gangs, Schools, and Communities* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1987).
30. 1988-1989 school year data were provided by the Chicago Board of Education's Bureau of Public Safety. The figures are based on conclusive evidence that incidents were

actually "gang-related," and may therefore be somewhat conservative.

31. Hutchison and Kyle, "Hispanic Street Gangs" (1990).

32. Interviews with inmates were held in conjunction with the Authority's Survey of the Educational Experiences and Attitudes of Inmates in the Illinois Department of Corrections. Other interviews were in conjunction with the Illinois Juvenile Officers Association meeting held June 29, 1990, and a meeting with statewide representatives of juvenile court services, held August 14, 1990.

33. Hutchison and Kyle, "Hispanic Street Gangs" (1990).

34. "Weapons in School" *Juvenile Justice Bulletin* (October 1989).

35. *Caught in the Crossfire: A Report on Gun Violence in Our Nation's Schools* (Washington, D.C.: Center to Prevent Handgun Violence, November 1990).

36. Statistics are from the Chicago Board of Education, Bureau of Public Safety.

37. The Gun-Free Zones Act of 1990 (HR 3757) is directly tied to the National Goals in Education, endorsed by President Bush and the nation's governors. It passed the Senate as part of the omnibus crime bill, S. 1970.

38. Ill.Rev.Stat., ch. 38, par. 24-3.3, and ch. 38, par. 24-1(c).

39. Ill.Rev.Stat., ch. 37, par. 805-4(6)(a).

40. 23 Ill.Adm.Code, 1.280. See also Ill.Rev.Stat., ch. 122, par. 24-24.

The Chicago Board of Education, one of the largest school districts in the nation, adopted in 1981 a comprehensive Uniform Discipline Code, which is revised on a regular basis. In addition to a general policy statement, the code contains specific documentation of responsibilities and rights of students, parents, teachers, and principals, as well as the responsibilities of the local school councils and the district superintendent. A disciplinary procedural guide pertaining specifically to special education students is also included.

Chicago's Uniform Discipline Code classifies 50 acts of misconduct into five seriousness categories according to the degree to which they "disrupt the orderly educational process in the classroom, in the school, and/or on the school grounds" and also whether they constitute a legal violation. Minimum and maximum disciplinary actions are then prescribed for each category. For the three least serious categories, a range of actions are provided for both first-time violations and for repeated or flagrant violations. The code, however, also contains a list of mitigating factors which may be considered by school staff members. (A copy of the Uniform Discipline Code is included as Appendix D of this report.)

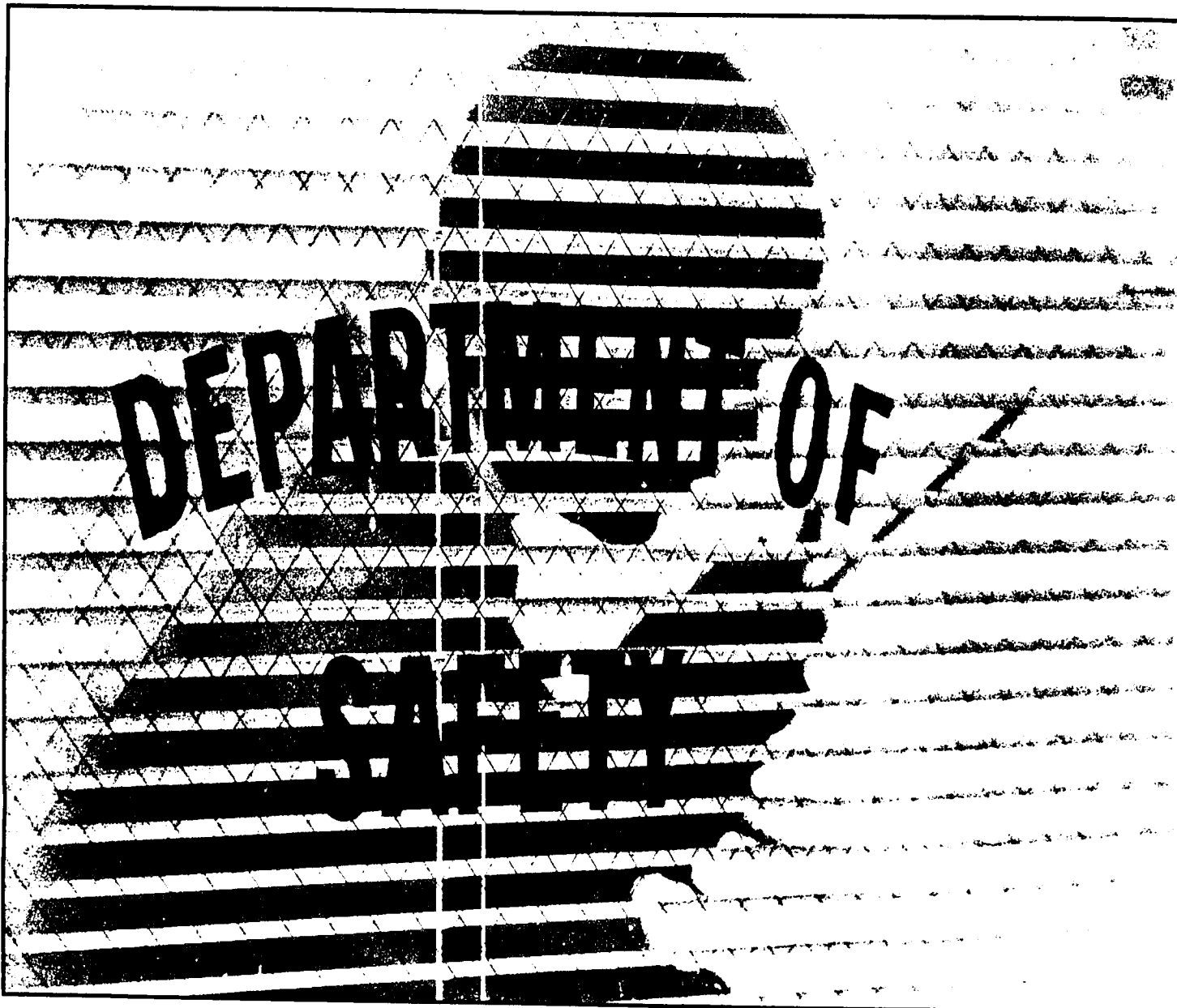
41. Ill.Rev.Stat., ch. 122, par. 24-24.

42. 23 Ill.Adm.Code, 1.280.

43. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, *School Discipline Policies and Practices* (Washington, D.C., September 1986).

44. George Sams, Director of Safety and Security, Chicago Board of Education, and Richard Walsh, Illinois Juvenile Officers Association (and Matteson Police Department), interviews: May 22, 1991.

# Law Enforcement in the Schools



Juveniles who are suspected of committing delinquent offenses may be taken into custody by the police. Juveniles may also be taken into police custody for protective purposes or for actions that are violations only because of the age of the person committing them (status offenses).<sup>1</sup> The Juvenile Court Act spells out very specific duties for police officers in their handling of minors,<sup>2</sup> and any minor taken into custody must be turned over to a juvenile police officer without delay.<sup>3</sup> By statute, the chief of police is the designated juvenile officer in each law enforcement jurisdiction. No more specific mandate exists for police departments to designate juvenile officers, and nowhere in the statute are the qualifications of a juvenile officer specifically defined. In most departments, the chief delegates this official responsibility to one or more detectives on the force. Officers specifically assigned as juvenile officers work

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*"Schools are a sacred place where children should feel safe. Security is a top priority."*

*Ted Kimbrough  
Chicago Superintendent of Schools  
Quoted in the Chicago Sun-Times  
(February 1, 1990)*

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with youth in the community and often in the schools themselves.

The duties assigned to the juvenile officer by the Juvenile Court Act go beyond traditional policing. The officer's effectiveness often depends on being skilled at counseling youth and their families and on good communication and collaboration with

a variety of community services, including schools and mental health and social service agencies. A youth officer must be effective not only with children and adolescents who have committed criminal offenses, but with many other youngsters who are beyond the control of their families, who are neglected or have run away from abusive situations, or who are abusing drugs and alcohol.

Exercising this expanded law enforcement role calls not only for different methods and skills, but for adjustments in the officer's own thinking about the job.<sup>4</sup> Although in many departments juvenile officers are considered specialists and volunteer for youth assignments on a permanent basis, in others juvenile officer assignments are rotated through the department or assigned to the newest detectives, making it difficult for officers to meet the special requirements of this role. For juvenile officers to perform their expanded policing role effectively, it is important for that role to be understood within their departments and by the schools and social service agencies that

participate in joint interventions with youth.

This chapter is based largely on first-hand accounts of situations and problems police officers encounter in their work with juveniles, especially in school settings. They were raised at a special roundtable discussion on juvenile policing convened by the Authority in June 1990. The executive board and members of the Illinois Juvenile Officers Association met with Authority researchers at this roundtable to discuss their work.<sup>5</sup>

## **POLICE OFFICERS IN SCHOOL BUILDINGS**

The assignment of juvenile police officers to work in public schools is one of the most direct links between the criminal justice and educational systems. The president of the Illinois Juvenile Officers Association estimates that, while fewer than one-fourth of all law enforcement jurisdictions in Illinois assign officers to work inside the public schools, in urban areas the percentage is far higher.<sup>6</sup>

Juvenile officers are assigned to schools to curb crime and violence in the school environment. The officers are empowered to make arrests for violations of the law that occur in their presence or are witnessed by staff and students willing to sign a written complaint. The handling of routine discipline problems remains the responsibility of school staff.

In some areas of the state, police officers have been working inside schools for many years. In Kane County, for example, the Aurora Police Department has had juvenile officers working in local high schools in three separate school districts for more than 15 years. As in most programs in which police are assigned within school buildings, the officers are considered joint employees of the school district and the police department, with the costs of their salaries and benefits evenly shared by the city and the school district.

In Chicago, uniformed police officers have patrolled school buildings for more than 40 years, but such assignments dramatically increased in the 1990–1991 school year, in response to heightened community concern over a number of violent incidents that occurred during the previous school year.<sup>7</sup> An agreement in June 1990 between the Chicago Police Department and the Chicago Board of Education resulted in the assignment of 150 sworn officers to a school patrol

unit, tripling the number of officers assigned to such duties in the 1989–1990 school year. Officers of the school patrol unit report to the Youth Division of the Chicago Police Department, but are not officially designated as juvenile officers.

In addition to the 150 members of the school patrol unit, 94 regular officers have been assigned to a tactical patrol unit to maintain crime-free zones in the neighborhoods around schools, providing coverage for elementary and junior high schools in Chicago that have no police presence in their buildings.

Under the terms of the cooperative agreement between the Chicago Police Department and the Chicago Board of Education, the 150 officers of the school patrol unit report to both agencies. All officers of the unit are regularly sworn officers, hired and trained by the Chicago Police Department. The department is reimbursed monthly by the Chicago Board of Education for the cost of their salaries and benefits. The salaries of the 94 officers of the tactical patrol unit operating outside of the schools are paid solely by the Chicago Police Department.<sup>9</sup> At least two officers have been assigned to each of Chicago's 71 regular and special high schools since September 1990. In some schools, as many as four officers currently patrol the hallways and control

access to the buildings.<sup>9</sup> The annual cost of the program has been estimated at \$4 million.<sup>10</sup>

During the first eight months of the 1990–1991 school year (September through April), the 150 police officers assigned to duty in Chicago high schools made a total of 8,503 arrests on school grounds or in school buildings, including 677 arrests for serious felonies (Figure 4.1). During the eight-month period, officers also seized 158 guns and 357 other weapons.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to the Chicago police school patrol officers the Chicago public schools also employ 445 monitors and 49 security aides to increase the security of their hallways and grounds. These employees are not trained law enforcement officers, but they do receive in-service training provided by the Board of Education to improve their security skills.<sup>12</sup>

In some other areas of the state, police presence in school buildings is a very recent development. Not all programs involve cooperative agreements between police departments and school officials. Sometimes off-duty officers, both juvenile officers and regular patrol officers or detectives, are individually hired by school boards for specific purposes, and in such circumstances officers may or may not have special training to work with juveniles.

Such efforts appear to lack the stability of more formal cooperative agreements. In East St. Louis, for example, seven off-duty police officers were hired by the East St. Louis School Board in November and December 1990, using federal grant funds from the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act, to increase police patrols and reduce drug trafficking in the district's five junior high schools and three high schools. School district officials said that increased police patrols and the installation of metal-detecting gates at school entrances are needed to eliminate weapons and curb drug dealing and gang activities in the schools.<sup>13</sup> The officers were withdrawn from the schools in January 1991 in a reordering of funding priorities. The program was reinstated in the spring, but according to Joyce Williams, an East St. Louis school board administrator, the future of continued police patrols in the schools was uncertain.<sup>14</sup>

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*"The best ally a school can have is a cop that works with them."*

*Lieutenant Gary Wigman  
McHenry Police Department  
(June 29, 1990)*

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Figure 4.1

**Number of arrests for selected offenses in Chicago public high schools (September 1990 through April 1991)**

| Serious felonies  | Number of arrests |
|---|-------------------|
| Murder  | 9                 |
| Aggravated battery  | 201               |
| Aggravated assault  | 199               |
| Aggravated criminal sexual assault                                | 17                |
| Robbery   | 183               |
| Burglary  | 41                |
| Arson   | 3                 |
| Other   | 24                |
| <b>Less-serious felonies and misdemeanors</b>                     |                   |
| Simple battery  | 1,851             |
| Simple assault  | 301               |
| Unlawful use of a weapon<br>(including 134 for firearm violation) | 468               |
| Felony theft  | 9                 |
| Theft   | 442               |
| Possession of unlawful drugs                                      | 272               |
| Delivery of controlled substances and marijuana                   | 15                |
| Criminal trespass   | 1,324             |
| Disorderly conduct  | 1,790             |

Source: George Sams, Safety and Security Division, Chicago Board of Education

## A BROADER ROLE FOR JUVENILE OFFICERS IN SCHOOLS

For many juvenile officers working in the schools, their job descriptions go far beyond a narrowly defined law enforcement role. But some juvenile officers report that schools do not always appreciate the kinds of services that a juvenile officer can provide them and, in some ways, are underutilizing a valuable resource. One veteran juvenile officer said, "I've worked a lot of years in a lot of police departments, and I've never been approached by an educator and asked, 'What can

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*"I've had calls from parents who say, 'I just can't handle him. He's staying out at night, and he won't go to school.' Then I ask them, 'How old is your son?' And they'll say, 'He's 8.' Now what the hell do they expect us to do? They can't even discipline a little kid."*

*Detective Richard Walsh  
Matteson Police Department  
(June 29, 1990)*

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you guys do for us?"<sup>15</sup> At the opposite extreme, sometimes parents and school officials attempt to involve officers in matters of routine discipline that are not appropriately police matters.

In many schools, police access to information about students is often limited by school officials' responsibility to protect the confidentiality of student records. Many officers say that, in their efforts to protect student privacy, school administrators often fail to recognize how youth officers can use information about minor incidents at school to determine the need

for early intervention with a young person headed for serious trouble. "If we can grab a kid quick enough, when he's just starting to become delinquent, a lot of times we can stop him from repeating," said South Holland Police Sgt. Warren DeGraff, president of the Illinois Juvenile Officers Association. "Too often we aren't able to intervene in time, because we don't get the information. If you wait until they're freshmen or sophomores, it's too late."<sup>16</sup>

According to Michael Roman, a juvenile officer from Moline, school authorities sometimes feel that they have to protect younger children from the police. "It appears that younger and younger kids are doing more violent crime, and this is increasing," he said. "It's difficult to work with schools on these cases, because they feel they have to shield these kids from police contact. There's a real lack of understanding of what their responsibilities are, and they're afraid of the liability issues that may be involved."<sup>17</sup>

In many schools, however, communication

between juvenile officers and the school officials and students they work with is very effective. According to an officer in the Aurora Police Department's program in the schools, one benefit of the 15-year association between the police and the school districts has been the trust that has developed between school officials and the police, allowing very open sharing of information.<sup>18</sup>

In some schools, juvenile officers serve as student resource officers who are assigned to an office within the school (usually associated with the dean's office) where they are available to students and staff during school hours. One such program has been in place for more than 15 years in the school district that includes Wheeling High School and five other high schools in northwest suburban Cook County. Officers in this program volunteer for the position as a permanent assignment and must be approved by the principal of the high school. Once selected, patrol officers undergo special youth officer training from the Illinois Local Governmental Law Enforcement Officers Training Board. They work in plain clothes without weapons from an office in the school. This approach allows officers to get to know the students and the staff in a friendly context, outside their role as law enforcement agents. Trust developed in this way enables an officer to make more effective interventions when a problem arises.<sup>19</sup>

When there is good communication with school personnel, juvenile officers can help identify problem youngsters and help them get the special attention and services they need. As schools have had to face tight budgets, some districts have had to reduce their special services, including counseling staff. According to some juvenile officers, student resource officers, appropriately used, can pick up some of the pieces of these programs that have been reduced or eliminated.<sup>20</sup>

For example, according to Joy Gottlinger, a juvenile officer with the Oak Park Police Department, after cutbacks in supportive services at the local high school, the police department held a series of meetings with school officials. "We let them know very clearly what their mandate was in terms of reporting abuse and dealing with runaways," Officer Gottlinger said. "But we also let them know what services were available in the department and in the community that they didn't have to be responsible for."<sup>21</sup>



Juvenile officers may assist in training both teachers and students in subjects that fall within their law enforcement expertise, such as security measures within the school. They also may assist in school drug abuse prevention programs, helping identify drugs and drug paraphernalia, and helping teachers and administrators identify the symptoms of substance abuse in students. The apprehension of drug distributors and users is an important law enforcement function for juvenile officers working in schools. Juvenile officers can also provide training in identifying and intervening in instances of suspected child abuse, which teachers and other school staff are required by law to report.<sup>22</sup>

The relationships that juvenile officers develop within the school can provide a good source of information in investigating and solving crimes. From their vantage point in the schools, juvenile officers are particularly well placed to provide police officers on other assignments with accurate information on gangs and gang operations. When officers remain in youth division assignments over long periods of time, they can assist other detectives by drawing on intelligence they have gathered through years of association with those juveniles who go on to become adult offenders.

### **COMMUNICATION WITH SCHOOL AUTHORITIES**

While juvenile officers can play a vital role in investigating and solving crimes in the schools and communities they serve, juvenile officers say that, in some cases, misunderstanding of their appropriate role by school authorities hampers their effectiveness. Juvenile officers from across the state report that the quality of their relationships with principals and other school staff can vary enormously. When officers are assigned to more than one school within the jurisdiction of their department, it is common to have excellent working relationships with one school in their community and very poor relationships with another school only a few miles away. The officers participating in the Authority's roundtable agreed that the personalities and philosophy of individual principals and other school administrators seemed to be a key factor in how effectively they work with schools.<sup>23</sup>

Cooperation is best when school authorities

and police officials collaborate to spell out their respective responsibilities as a set of specific operating procedures. Rich East High School in Park Forest has worked with the local police department to produce a manual of operating procedures that guides their School-Police Liaison Program. The manual explicitly recognizes the importance of school security as a prerequisite to learning, and lists the specific duties of officers. These range from security tasks, such as monitoring traffic and supervising washrooms and lunchrooms, to making classroom presentations on law enforcement and related issues, to specific crisis- and emergency-related duties.<sup>24</sup> Rich East's manual was recognized as a model for cooperative school-police liaison programs at the International and Illinois Juvenile Officers Joint 1991 Training Conference in Matteson.

Many officers believe that the level of cooperation they receive is tied to the affluence of the school community. Officers who work in suburban departments noted that more affluent schools in their communities tend to be the most reluctant to face crime problems in their schools. (See Chapter 3, Crime in the Schools, for more information on crime perceptions and reporting.)

According to officers who work in Chicago and in inner-city neighborhoods in other cities, the more serious the crime problem in the school, the *less* cooperation they tended to receive from school authorities. In both cases, the reluctance of school administrators to cooperate in reporting crimes, according to the officers, is related to their desire to protect the reputations of their schools. In affluent suburban schools, administrators are unwilling to admit that serious crimes can occur in their community. In inner-city schools, administrators are more concerned about maintaining their reputation for being able to keep their school safe and orderly in spite of the school's location in a high-crime area.<sup>25</sup>

As is often the case when two different systems must interact, police departments and

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*"Our school solves a lot of crimes for us. When I come in on Monday, a kid or a teacher will call me and ask: 'Did you get some burglaries over on the west side of town last night? Well, here's who did it.' This kind of assistance is the result of all the information sharing we do with them."*

*Detective Richard Walsh  
Matteson Police Department  
(July 29, 1990)*

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schools often have different expectations and operating rules. Police departments tend to be quite standardized in their approach to problems, and they are governed by explicit statutes and policies to guide their behavior. Schools, on the other hand, often operate with relative autonomy within the general framework of each district's policies and the regulations of the Illinois School Code. Schools may interpret these guidelines differently and each may develop its own style in dealing with law enforcement, maintaining discipline, and coping with troublesome students.

discipline, and coping with troublesome students.

Juvenile officers reported that some teachers and administrators were not knowledgeable about laws concerning student rights, their own reporting responsibilities, and the nature of police powers.<sup>26</sup> Juvenile officers recounted that this lack of information sometimes led to situations in which attempts to protect students obstructed the officers in the performance of their duties.

While juvenile officers generally agreed that good interactions with school officials outnumbered negative experiences, the exceptions often involved serious violations of the law. Juvenile officers from around the state have reported that school administrators and teachers have frequently failed to handle drug and weapon seizures correctly and have even obstructed police in the performance of their duties. The following incidents are reported from their caseloads:

- "An officer went down to the school to pick up a runaway. He wanted to get the boy and his family into some crisis intervention. The teacher told the cop to wait in the office and then ran down to tip off the kid, so he could slip out the back door."
- "We were called in on a serious assault with injuries to a teacher. The principal discouraged the teacher from pressing an assault charge against the student who attacked her. I told him that, in preventing charges [from being filed], he was sending a message to students that teachers in his school could be assaulted without any consequences. The prin-

icipal wasn't buying. He said it was his job to protect the reputation of the school."

- "A counselor brought me into his office at the end of the year. He opened up a drawer that was full of hash pipes, pot, you name it—works-in-a-drawer. He said to me, 'We want you guys to take this stuff off our hands. It's stuff we've accumulated throughout the year.' This school teacher is in possession [of drugs and drug paraphernalia]. He should be going in with the cop [to be booked]."
- "We had an incident on the last day of school. The principal called us into his office and said, 'Here, I want to turn this in.' He handed me a .38 revolver. When I asked him where he got it, he said he took it off a kid two or three months earlier, but he didn't want to do anything about it at the time. I told him, 'If I take this gun, I'm taking you too.' That's the kind of mentality that prevails in some of these schools. They consider themselves a complete separate entity from the state or from law enforcement."<sup>27</sup>

Enno Lietz, who is in charge of public school approval, the department of the Illinois State Board of Education that deals with school accreditation, student rights, and other legal issues, acknowledged that teachers may be poorly informed of their legal responsibilities in situations calling for police involvement. The appropriate relationship between law enforcement and school authorities, the rights of students charged with offenses, juvenile law, and the nature of police powers are not a part of teacher training curricula. Except for the Illinois Student Records Act, which sets guidelines for the release of student records, no official guidelines or statutes instruct school authorities in their proper responsibilities in dealing with the police.

According to Mr. Lietz, most large, urban districts have dealt with these issues through districtwide uniform codes of discipline, but it is also possible that many principals exercise autonomy in such situations.<sup>28</sup> (See Chapter 3, Crime in the Schools; the Chicago Board of Education Uniform Code of Discipline is reproduced as Appendix D.)

## **DEALING WITH DELINQUENT MINORS IN THE COMMUNITY**

Many of the interactions that occur between law

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*"Schools don't want to admit to parents—or to their bosses at the school board—that there's a drug problem in their school. If they find drugs, they'll take them, but they won't report it to the police."*

*Officer Ken Griffin  
Champaign Police Department  
(June 29, 1990)*

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enforcement officers and delinquent youth do not take place in the schools, but in the community. State law provides juvenile officers with a great deal of discretion and flexibility in handling cases involving allegedly delinquent minors.

Whenever a minor is taken into custody and not released immediately, the juvenile must be turned over to a juvenile officer.<sup>29</sup> In many cases, the officer may decide not to take a youngster into custody and press charges, but rather may make a "station adjustment," handling the incident informally. In making a station adjustment, a juvenile law enforcement officer recognizes that not every problem that brings a youth to the attention of the police is best handled by referral to the courts. When there is no previous history of delinquency or the offense is minor, less serious sanctions are usually warranted. Particularly when family conflict, neighborhood disputes, or trouble at school play an important part in a youngster's misbehavior, crisis intervention, family counseling, or the temporary involvement of an objective third party may be the best way to resolve the situation.

Prior to making a station adjustment, juvenile officers must obtain and consider extensive background information, including the nature of the allegations against the youth, as well as the attitudes of the complainant and the community toward the minor. The previous history of the youth and his family, as well as their current situation, must be examined, including educational and employment status. The officer must also consider the availability of community resources that could be called upon to intervene in the situation, and, if such services were used in the past, how well the youth responded to them. Finally, the general attitude displayed by the youth and the family members in the current situation is an important consideration in determining the best method of handling the incident.<sup>30</sup>

The terms of a station adjustment may include continued supervision by a juvenile officer or referral to a community social service organization, such as a mental health or family counseling agency. With written consent from the minor or parent, release may be conditional upon payment of restitution for damages or performance of some public or community service.

If station adjustments are to be effective tools to intervene with troubled youth, two key

### Station adjustments

The extent to which station adjustments are used to resolve certain juvenile incidents is illustrated by 1989 statistics from the Chicago Police Department.

| Type of juvenile disposition | Number of juveniles | Disposition type as percent of total |
|------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Station Adjustments          | 24,006              | 55.6                                 |
| Detained/referred to court   | 17,370              | 40.0                                 |
| Released w/o charges         | 1,903               | 4.4                                  |

Source: Chicago Police Department, Youth Division, Annual Statistical Report, 1989.

While comprehensive figures for other departments across Illinois are not available, it is clear from research by the Authority and information provided by the Illinois Juvenile Officers Association that station adjustments are a common law enforcement practice throughout the state.

elements must be in place.<sup>31</sup>

First, the juvenile officer must have immediate and full access to a wide range of information that will permit the officer to make an informed decision and establish the best conditions for the release of the juvenile. At present, officers face serious difficulty obtaining information about a minor's background, for a number of reasons.<sup>32</sup>

Records of social services provided to juveniles are protected by state law and may be disclosed to police and court officials only after a great deal of paperwork and court intervention. In addition, juvenile records of prior police involvement or station adjustments are not part of the statewide Computerized Criminal History System and are maintained only at the local level, if at all.<sup>33</sup> This situation has persisted since 1983, even though state law has charged the Illinois State Police with the responsibility of developing a statewide central adjudicatory and dispositional records system for persons younger than 19 years old, specifically to enable juvenile officers to make appropriate dispositions.<sup>34</sup>

Barriers to a complete flow of information about a juvenile can also hamper planning by social service agencies. Such agencies are not permitted access to law enforcement or juvenile court records without a court order,<sup>35</sup> making it difficult for different agencies providing services to the same youth to exchange information. These records cannot be disclosed otherwise, even with the minor's or his or her parents' permission.

Second, a wide array of programs and social services must be available to provide support to the troubled youth. Station adjustments consisting solely of required contact with a parent or law enforcement officer are not typically success-

ful with severely troubled youngsters with previous delinquent behavior. Yet, in the absence of well coordinated community programs, this limited approach is frequently employed.<sup>36</sup> (For more information about the availability of social services for juveniles, see Appendix E.)

### **STATUS AND ROLE OF JUVENILE OFFICERS IN THEIR DEPARTMENTS**

The complexity of the kinds of decisions juvenile

*"We used to have time to get to know the kids—to shoot a few baskets and listen to their troubles. We were the role models for some of these young boys. All that is out now. We don't have the money, and we don't have the men. As a consequence, the department is losing a lot of good information, and this community is losing a lot of kids."*

*Sgt. Gregory Cox  
East St. Louis Police Department  
(October 29, 1990)*

officers must make, especially when making station adjustments, combined with the scarcity of hard information on juveniles' delinquency histories, makes personal relationships with individual youth and intimate knowledge of youth activities in the community very important. The officer's own knowledge of the history of the situation may be the best data source available. Yet there is little stability in most juvenile officer assignments. Many officers are regularly transferred in and out of this designation to fulfill other departmental duties.<sup>37</sup>

The chief of police, as the officially designated juvenile officer for a jurisdiction, usually authorizes one or more detectives

within the department to serve as juvenile officers on permanent, part-time, temporary, or ad hoc assignment. Even though many career juvenile officers believe that special skills are required to work effectively with juveniles, no specific training or qualifications are required for this assignment in many departments. Assignments to this role may be entirely random, or, in many cases, they may fall to the lowest ranking detectives on the force. Ken Griffin, a juvenile officer from Champaign, said, "Too often, juvenile is a dumping ground. It's where detectives first get assigned."<sup>38</sup>

Career juvenile officers who choose youth work find that their most effective colleagues demonstrate a real vocation for the job. Officers whose assignment to juvenile work is transitory are rarely able to exploit all the possibilities of this role, and the practice of making such temporary and part-time assignments can reduce the pro-

fessional status of officers who have chosen this career assignment within their departments.<sup>39</sup>

For several years, the Illinois Juvenile Officers Association has lobbied the Illinois General Assembly to mandate training for juvenile officers. The association has argued that training is necessary for officers to successfully fulfill the duties prescribed for them in the Juvenile Court Act. According to the association's president, many departments provide between 40 and 62 hours of training for juvenile officers, but there is no statutory requirement that juvenile officers receive special training.<sup>40</sup> The Illinois Local Governmental Law Enforcement Officers Training Board has adopted training standards and provides accredited training for juvenile officers, but local police departments may choose to send or not to send officers for training. According to some officers, many chiefs of police oppose the effort to set training requirements, because they fear it would limit their ability to shift manpower into or away from juvenile units.<sup>41</sup>

Nevertheless, many juvenile officers maintain that their job requires skills that are not usually part of standard police training. Juvenile officers must not only relate well to youth, they also need some knowledge of adolescent development and family dynamics, as well as skills in counseling and mediation, to work effectively with teenagers and their families. These officers are required by the Juvenile Court Act to refer youth taken into custody to appropriate social service providers in the community. This aspect of the job requires a good knowledge of community resources.

In addition, many of the officers interviewed by Authority researchers feel their work is in many ways more difficult than that of officers in other police assignments. While in many larger departments, detectives are assigned to specialized crime units, such as burglary or sex crime units, juvenile officers remain generalists. They handle offenses that range from vandalism to homicide, and they must deal with many types of non-delinquent juvenile behavior as well. They are required to adopt a more problem-oriented approach to policing, requiring a broader range of analytic and interpersonal skills. In most police work, success should lead to a reduction in workload, but for juvenile officers, the opposite is true. The more successful they are with their clients, the more likely they will be called upon to

help solve problems for other families in their community, thus increasing their workload.

Working with youth, these officers report, is far more time-consuming than working with adults. When officers have dual assignments, working with both adults and juveniles, they quickly find the youth work will consume much of their time. The assignment of caseloads for juvenile officers does not always take this added time factor into account. Juvenile officers report they often handle 350-400 cases per year, compared to an average caseload of 50-125 cases per year for other detectives.<sup>42</sup>

Resource allocation for juvenile officers does not always match their caseloads. A survey of four metropolitan police forces in different areas of the state indicated that, in each department, the share of budget and manpower resources allocated to the youth division was substantially smaller than the percentage of total arrests accounted for by juveniles taken into custody (Figure 4.2). Resource allocations for juvenile policing in smaller departments are impossible to document, since such departments do not have fully separated youth divisions and costs for juvenile officers are subsumed in the departments' overall budgets.

While these comparisons convey some information about the relationship of resources to

Figure 4.2

**Resources allocated to juvenile policing**

| Police department | Percentage of budget for juveniles | Percentage of personnel for juveniles | Juveniles taken into custody as a percentage of all arrests |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Chicago           | 3                                  | 3.9                                   | 20  |
| Springfield       | <3.5                               | 3.6                                   | 30.6  |
| Rockford          | 5.8                                | 7.7                                   | 19.1  |
| East St. Louis    | 4.9                                | 6.3                                   | 36  |

Sources: Chicago: *Command Facts Handbook 1990*, Chicago Police Department, and *Juvenile Justice Financing, Trends and Issues 90*, p. 241-242; Springfield: Office of the Director of Public Safety and Deputy Chief Charles Palazolko, Springfield Police Department; Rockford: Rockford Police Department, Youth Division (Lt. Joseph Walker), Budget & Planning (Detective Jeffrey Morris); East St. Louis: East St. Louis Police Department (Sgt. Gregory Cox, Youth Division, Sue Pittman, Records Division).

juvenile police activity, the number of juveniles taken into custody is not an accurate measure of the workload of juvenile officers. Juvenile officers see prevention as the most important focus of their work. They would prefer their success to be measured, not by how many juveniles they take into custody, but by how many crimes and arrests they prevent through early intervention work with youngsters, yet when resources are tight, this preventive work is often the first casualty of budget cutbacks

When prevention suffers, troubled youngsters are at higher risk of dropping out and engaging in delinquent behavior. Those at highest risk of conflict with the law are often students with learning disabilities and behavior disorders.

**Notes**

1. Such circumstances include, but are not limited to, juveniles who have run away from home or from a court-ordered placement, who are beyond parental control, or who are neglected or abused (Ill. Rev. Stat., ch. 37, par. 802-805).

2. Ill. Rev. Stat., ch. 37, par. 801. The act recognizes four classes of minors that can be taken into custody: abused, neglected, or dependent minors (ch. 37, par. 802); minors requiring authoritative intervention (ch. 37, par. 803); addicted minors (ch. 37, par. 804); and delinquent minors (ch. 37, par. 805).

3. Ill. Rev. Stat., ch. 37, par. 802-6.

4. The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority's Illinois Juvenile Officers Association Roundtable Discussion on Juvenile Policing (June 29, 1990). See also Appendix A, Project Methodology.

5. Additional telephone interviews were conducted with juvenile officers and school officials throughout the state to expand on the perspectives of the juvenile officers roundtable.

6. Warren DeGraff, South Holland Police Department, Juvenile Officers Roundtable (June 29, 1990).

7. For example, on January 19, 1990, 13-year-old Charles Thompson was killed in crossfire between rival gangs while walking home from school in a South Side neighborhood. Earlier in the school year, a high school student was stabbed to death in his classroom. *Chicago Sun-Times* (February 1, 1990).

8. George Sams, Director of Safety and Security, Chicago Board of Education, interview: October 29, 1990.

9. Sams (October 29, 1990).

10. Karen M. Thomas, "Kimbrough Offers \$4 Million Police Security Plan for Schools" *Chicago Tribune* (June 6, 1990): sec. 2: 3.

11. Gary Gunther, Safety and Security Division, Chicago Board of Education.

12. Sams (October 29, 1990).

13. Lorraine Kee Montre, "East St. Louis Schools Seek Security Help" *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (August 16, 1990).

14. Joyce Williams, East St. Louis Board of Education, interview: February 27, 1991.

15. Richard Blisko, Investigative Division, Lake County

- Sheriff's Police, Juvenile Officers Roundtable (June 29, 1990).
16. DeGraff, Juvenile Officers Roundtable (June 29, 1990).
  17. Michael Roman, interview: May 10, 1991.
  18. Ed Sweeney, Aurora Police Department, interview: October 25, 1990.
  19. Assistant Principal James Whittington, Wheeling High School and Dexter Gorski, Wheeling Police Department, interviews: October 30, 1990.
  20. Juvenile Officers Roundtable (June 29, 1990). See also Appendix A.
  21. Joy Gottlinger, Oak Park Police Department, Juvenile Officers Roundtable (June 29, 1990).
  22. Juvenile Officers Roundtable (June 29, 1990).
  23. Juvenile Officers Roundtable (June 29, 1990).
  24. *Rich East Manual of Operating Procedures* (Park Forest, Ill.: Rich East High School, 1990).
  25. Juvenile Officers Roundtable (June 29, 1990).
  26. Juvenile Officers Roundtable (June 29, 1990).
  27. These incidents were reported at the Juvenile Officers Roundtable, June 29, 1990 (see also Appendix A), by Richard Walsh, juvenile officer, Matteson Police Department (first incident); Dick Norris, Chicago Police Department, Area 2 School Patrol (second and fourth incidents); and George Hanley, Lake County Sheriff's Office (third incident).
  28. Enno Lietz, Manager of Public School Approval, Department of Recognition and Supervision, Illinois State Board of Education, interview: October 25, 1990.
  29. Ill.Rev.Stat., ch. 37, par. 805-6.
  30. Ill.Rev.Stat., ch. 37, par. 805-6(4).
  31. Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, *Juvenile Justice Information Policies in Illinois* (Chicago, 1985).
  32. Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, *Juvenile Justice Information* (1985).
  33. Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, *Juvenile Justice Information* (1985). If minors are taken into custody for offenses that, if committed by an adult, would constitute unlawful use of a weapon or a forcible felony, their records do become a part of the CCH system (Ill.Rev.Stat., ch. 38, par. 206-5.). The records of juveniles charged as adults are also entered in the system (Ill.Rev.Stat., ch. 38, par. 801-7 (b)(2)).
  34. Ill.Rev.Stat., ch. 157, par. 551-19. The records of juveniles bound over to the court as adults are contained in the centralized database maintained by the Illinois State Police on adult offenders.
  35. Ill.Rev.Stat., ch. 37, par. 801-7.
  36. Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, *Juvenile Justice Information* (1985).
  37. Juvenile Officers Roundtable (June 29, 1990).
  38. Juvenile Officers Roundtable (June 29, 1990).
  39. Juvenile Officers Roundtable (June 29, 1990).
  40. DeGraff, Juvenile Officers Roundtable (June 29, 1990).
  41. Juvenile Officers Roundtable (June 29, 1990).
  42. Juvenile Officers Roundtable (June 29, 1990).



# Special Education



In any examination of the relationships between education and criminal justice, special education plays a significant role. All of the social, environmental, and genetic factors that may put children at risk for later involvement in the criminal justice system also increase the chances that, at some earlier stage in their lives, these children will require special education services.

For some children, no amount of specialized educational services, therapy, or family counseling will be enough to help them overcome the many problems that impede their educational progress and also put them at risk for later delinquent or criminal behavior. But, for the vast majority of children, the quality of their educational experience can set the pattern for adult successes or failures. When problems in relating to others or in learning and communicating are identified at an early age, and children receive expert help in overcoming these difficulties, their chances for educational success and stable, productive lives as adults may be improved.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

More than 213,000 Illinois children between the ages of 6 and 21 received special education services in the 1989–1990 school year.<sup>1</sup> Students with learning disabilities make up approximately 48 percent of all special education students in Illinois, lower than the national average of 56 percent.<sup>2</sup> Officials in the Department of Special Education of the Illinois State Board of Education attributed this difference to improved screening procedures which they say have reduced incorrect diagnoses of learning disabilities in Illinois.<sup>3</sup>

Other special education experts take issue with this explanation. According to Brooke Whitted, an attorney specializing in special education law, the lower percentage of Illinois students identified as having learning disabilities may not be due to increased efficiency in screening mechanisms, but to categorization of a large proportion of learning disabled students as merely “unmotivated,” “discipline problems,” or “slow learners,” when in fact they have real information processing problems. “When school authorities get one of these students, not only do they not know how to serve him, they do not know how to test him in order to determine the extent and nature of his handicaps,” Mr. Whitted said.<sup>4</sup>

Slightly more than 11 percent of special education students in Illinois have a behavior disorder, compared to the national average of 10 percent.<sup>5</sup> Students with educational handicaps—a special education category that has been unique to Illinois and will have been abolished September 1, 1991—constitute fewer than 1 percent of all special education students in the state. The remaining 40 percent of special education students in Illinois have a physical or developmental disability of some kind. Not all special education students have a higher-than-normal risk of engaging in behavior that could get them in trouble with the law, but children with behavior and learning disorders are more likely than their peers to become clients of the criminal justice system.

It has long been observed that juvenile delinquents have high rates of learning disabilities. One study found that 50 percent of juvenile delinquents showed evidence of learning disabilities that preceded their delinquency.<sup>6</sup> Studies of adjudicated delinquents have found a prevalence of learning disabilities ranging from 26 percent to 73 percent among institutional populations.<sup>7</sup> Behavior disorders, which are often symptomatic of serious emotional disturbances, have also been found to be prevalent among juvenile delinquents.<sup>8</sup>

A federally supported series of studies examining the connection between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency was conducted between 1976 and 1983 by the National Center for State Courts and the Association for Children with Learning Disabilities. Three studies that make up the Learning Disability/Juvenile Delinquency Project established the first direct link between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency and measured the impact of educational tutoring on the recidivism rates of delinquents with learning disabilities. Researchers found that approximately 5 percent of all public school students of both sexes in kindergarten through 12th grade had learning disabilities. When only males between 12 and 15 years old were examined, the percentage of students with learning disabilities increased to 18 percent, and learning disabilities were diagnosed in 34 percent of the delinquent males in this age group.<sup>9</sup>

In the first study, researchers compared two groups of boys in Phoenix, Baltimore, and Indianapolis. They matched 937 boys from public

schools and with no previous history of delinquency with 970 delinquent boys selected from juvenile courts and correctional facilities in the same three cities. All the boys in both groups were tested for learning disabilities. Researchers discovered that the odds of being taken into custody by police and adjudicated delinquent were 220 percent greater for boys with learning disabilities than for their peers without learning disabilities. These differences could not be explained by socioeconomic factors, age, ethnicity, or the frequency or seriousness of delinquent behavior.

The second study traced what happened after one- and two-year intervals to 351 nondelinquents—including 16 percent who had learning disabilities—from the first study. Researchers confirmed that the 220 percent increased probability of delinquent activities resulting in police contact and adjudication persisted over time. The increased delinquency was not explainable by either social-demographic factors or school failure, indicating that "the intellectual and personality impairments associated with learning disabilities played an important role in producing delinquent behavior."<sup>10</sup>

In the final phase of the study, the boys with learning disabilities from the delinquent group who participated in the first study were randomly assigned to two equal-sized groups. The study group received special academic tutoring, while the control group received no special tutoring services. In every other respect—age, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, and seriousness of delinquency—the groups were similar and were treated alike. With 55–60 hours per year of tutoring help, the delinquent boys with learning disabilities in the study group showed academic improvement. And with as little as 38–40 hours of special academic tutoring during the school year, their incidence of delinquent acts was significantly reduced.

Researchers concluded that the bonding that occurred between the boys and their tutors was solely responsible for the initial reduction in delinquent acts. In other words, individual attention from a caring teacher reduced their delinquency even before they began to benefit academically from the tutoring. When the number of tutoring hours was increased to 100 hours per school year, delinquency among the boys of the

study group with learning disabilities was reduced to zero. Delinquent students with learning disabilities who had not received academic help continued to become more seriously and violently delinquent. According to Dorothy Crawford, the principal researcher, this study demonstrated

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### Special education categories

To qualify for special education services, a child must be formally evaluated and found to have one or more specifically defined disorders. Studies have shown that children with disabilities in three of the categories for special education services used in Illinois run a significantly higher risk for teenage delinquency and adult criminal behavior than their classmates who are not disabled.

**Specific learning disability:** A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language. Such a disorder can impair the ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. Some learning disabilities may be related to perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, or other physiological problems, but the exact causes of such disorders are unknown and probably differ widely from case to case. This category does not include learning problems due to visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage. Unlike mental retardation, learning disabilities are unrelated to basic intelligence, although they usually interfere with the ability to measure intelligence, since intelligence tests often depend on language ability.

**Education handicap:** Educational maladjustment related to social or cultural circumstances. This category has been used to obtain special education services for children whose social and cultural backgrounds have not equipped them to cope with an educational system based on mainstream American cultural values. During 1990, the Illinois State Board of Education eliminated this category in a set of new procedural guidelines effective September 1, 1991. This change brings Illinois' administrative guidelines into better compliance with federal categories for special education eligibility. No federal money was ever available to support special services to children with an education handicap, and few children were ever classified in this category. Children who had received services under this classification must be re-evaluated to determine if they are eligible for continued special education under either the learning disability category or the new behavior disorder/emotional disorder category created in the same revision.

**Behavior disorder:** An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, health, cultural, or linguistic factors. Behavior disorders are characterized by a persistent inability to develop or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers or adults. Such students often display inappropriate behavior or feelings in response to normal circumstances. They are likely to be depressed, anxious, or unhappy and often develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. Under the old guidelines, Illinois children with emotional disorders and mental illnesses were also placed in the behavior disorder category. The new guidelines officially recognize the inclusion of these students in the new category behavior disorder/emotional disorder.<sup>11</sup>

1. Definitions are based on the language of 23 Illinois Administrative Code 226.

2. Definition is based on 23 Illinois Administrative Code 226, as amended December 24, 1990.

that academic remedies alone could have an enormously significant impact on reducing the delinquency of boys with learning disabilities.<sup>11</sup>

Students with learning disabilities are often disruptive, impulsive, and lacking in social perception. Their difficulty in interpreting social cues and in mastering other social skills often cause interpersonal and communication problems that can impair relationships with parents, peers, teachers, and other authority figures.<sup>12</sup> However, it is not known if the causes of the learning disability also produce the impulsivity and social deficits, or if those problems are a secondary response to the many frustrations of learning failures. Children with learning disabilities begin to experience such failures very early in life, and they often persist into adulthood. According to Ms. Crawford, such students have adapted to failure, but have great difficulty coping with success.<sup>13</sup>

Any failure of school districts to identify the problems of troubled students and help them stay in school and successfully prepare for adult roles increases the chances that such students will drop out, abuse drugs and alcohol, fall prey to street-gang recruitment, or engage in other types of delinquent behavior. The U.S. Congress and state and federal courts have been unambiguous in identifying schools as the agencies in society primarily responsible for identifying children and adolescents with a wide range of problems and for providing special training to help them. When schools do not fulfill that responsibility, criminal justice agencies often become the human services provider of last resort. Criminal justice agencies must then bear the costs for treating and placing many of the most dysfunctional youth. Juvenile court judges and probation officers report that, the more difficult the case, the more likely it will become the responsibility of court services departments or the Department of Corrections.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the criminal justice system has a major stake in seeing that special education laws are enforced and that troubled youngsters receive the educational assistance to which they are entitled.

### **THE SPECIAL EDUCATION MANDATE**

Prior to 1973, disabled children in the United States did not enjoy a guaranteed right to a free public education. In fact, many children who suffered physical, emotional, and mental disabili-

ties were systematically excluded from public schools.<sup>15</sup> Two major federal laws—Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)—created a new “bill of rights” for disabled students by mandating that school districts provide a wide range of services that ensure that disabled children receive a “free and appropriate education.”<sup>16</sup>

Since the passage of these two federal acts, states receiving federal funds for education of disabled children must create programs and provide services for all children who suffer from visual, hearing, speech/language, mental, and various other physical handicaps, including those with multiple impairments.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, and of particular significance for the risk of involvement with the criminal justice system, there are two other federal categories of eligibility for special education services: specific learning disability and behavior disorder.

Section 504 and the IDEA contain many overlapping provisions, but also some important differences. The IDEA is an education law with funding provisions attached to assist school districts in paying for mandated services. Section 504 is a civil rights law, prohibiting discrimination against disabled persons. Section 504 is very comprehensive, extending protection from discrimination to disabled people in many areas of life. This law also expands the categories of eligibility for education-related services to students with disabling conditions not specifically included under the IDEA, such as AIDS, substance abuse problems, and attention deficit disorders not covered under learning disabilities. Such students may need some special accommodations or services within their school settings, but generally do not need to be in special education classes. In authorizing services for such students, Section 504 goes beyond what would be required under the IDEA.

### **What special education services must be provided?**

Under the IDEA, schools are required to identify and evaluate children with special needs or problems. Most referrals for evaluation come from classroom teachers who observe that a child is having difficulties. Parents, principals, social

workers, probation officers, and other professionals involved with the child may also request evaluations.

A key provision of both federal statutes is that, to the maximum extent possible, disabled children should be educated with children who are not disabled. To meet its requirement to educate children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, a school may provide the needed services by mainstreaming (teaching children with disabilities in the same classrooms as children without disabilities), placement in segregated classrooms or schools, or in specialized institutional settings. States must provide a continuum of services for each type of disabled child they serve, to ensure that the intensity of service matches the needs of each child in the least restrictive environment possible.

If residential placement is required, the costs may be shared with other agencies involved with the child, such as the Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities or the Department of Children and Family Services. School districts have the ultimate responsibility to provide the service, however, and must pay as the agency of last resort, if it is determined that a residential program is necessary for a child to receive an appropriate education. No part of the costs may be passed on to the parents of the child.

Under the IDEA, school districts are also required to pay for "related services" that are needed to help a child benefit from special education. Related services can include recreation, transportation, psychological and rehabilitation counseling, and parent training, as well as speech, physical, and occupational therapy. While schools are not required to pay for medical treatment as such, a 1984 U.S. Supreme Court decision found that certain kinds of medical procedures that must be performed periodically during the day to enable a child to stay in school are covered by the act.<sup>18</sup>

A series of federal court cases have spelled out both the extent and the limits of this responsibility. In *in re Rowley*, for example, the U.S. Supreme Court relieved schools of the responsibility to provide the "best" education, ruling that the education need only be "minimally appropriate and available." This case is usually cited by school districts involved in legal disputes over

provision of services.<sup>19</sup>

On the other hand, another significant case made clear that, no matter how severe the disability, school districts have the obligation to provide an education for *all* children, even those whose disabilities are so profound that their capacity for education is severely limited. In *in re Timothy W.*, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal of a federal appellate court's decision requiring a New Hampshire school district to provide related services to a profoundly mentally disabled child. The school district had contended that the child's disability was so severe that it was unlikely he could receive any benefit. The appellate court's ruling indicated that no children can be exempted from services, even if their ability to improve educationally is doubtful.<sup>20</sup>

#### *Suspension and expulsion of special education students*

The unambiguous mandate to educate all children, regardless of the severity of their disabilities, can create problems for teachers and principals dealing with the disruptive and dangerous behavior exhibited by some students with learning disabilities or emotional or behavior disorders. Under federal law, students in special education programs may not be suspended or expelled from school for more than a cumulative total of 10 days per year for behavior that stems from their disability. Serious misbehavior is often an indication that the student is inappropriately placed—for example, that more intensive services in a more restrictive environment are needed. Rather than suspend the student for more than 10 days, the school district must re-evaluate him or her to determine a more appropriate level of services.

Children in special education programs are also protected from expulsion. In a 1981 Florida case, a federal appellate court ruled that the burden lies with the school district to determine if behavior leading to an expulsion is related to the student's disability.<sup>21</sup> If the expulsion is related to the disability, the school district may not expel the student. This case also reaffirmed the right of the suspended student to receive interim services while suspended from school. In 1988, the Su-

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*"Congress very much meant to strip schools of the unilateral authority they had traditionally employed to exclude disabled students, particularly emotionally disturbed students, from school."*

*U.S. Supreme Court in Honig v. Doe (1988)*

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preme Court, in *Honig v. Doe*, extended protection to disabled children against indefinite suspensions and expulsions, even when students had been violently assaultive.<sup>22</sup>

#### *Settlement of disputes about placements*

Each state receiving federal education funds must develop and publish administrative guidelines specifying details of how the IDEA will be procedurally implemented within the state. The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative

Services within the U.S. Department of Education monitors compliance of state guidelines with the IDEA. The Office of Civil Rights within the U.S. Department of Education monitors compliance of individual school districts with the broader protections provided by Section 504. Federal agencies have the authority to withhold federal funds if violations are found and states are slow to remedy them.

In Illinois, when a dispute arises between parents and a school district about a child's special education program, it is handled in one of two ways. Procedural issues—the failure of a school district to implement an educational plan once it has been made, for example—may be handled by filing a complaint with

the State Board of Education. The state superintendent of schools rules on such complaints.

Parents who disagree with the content of a school's special education plan for their child or with some other substantive issue may request a due process hearing by writing a letter to the superintendent of their school district. According to an administrator in the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, which reviews such hearings, it is not unusual for Illinois parents to wait six months or longer to be granted a hearing after filing such a request. The Office of Civil Rights issued a letter to the State Board of Education in 1989 citing a violation of Section 504 for extensive delays that the office discovered in the hearing process.<sup>23</sup>

If the school or the parents are not satisfied

with the outcome of a due process hearing, either party may request a second-level review with a specially appointed hearing officer. If the school does not implement a decision made at either one of these administrative hearings, parents may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education or with the Illinois State Board of Education. Usually the procedural mechanisms for complaint or administrative hearing must be exhausted before parents may resort to a civil action brought against the school district in a state or federal court.

Probation officers report that bringing a case to an administrative hearing can promote better relationships between school districts and other parties in subsequent negotiations. A juvenile probation officer from Macomb reported that two years ago she had a case that went to due process and resulted in a ruling that the school district fully fund a placement. Since that time, the district has been far more cooperative in negotiating placement decisions—especially if only co-funding is being sought.<sup>24</sup>

#### **Services to substance-abusing students**

Under Section 504, school districts are obliged to identify substance-addicted students and determine if their educational needs are being met to the same extent as are the needs of non-disabled students in the district. The district may be required to make accommodations to the educational programs of substance-addicted students to enable them to benefit from their education. According to the juvenile services coordinator for Treatment Alternatives for Special Clients, a private not-for-profit agency that specializes in coordinating drug treatment programs for criminal offenders and others, the most obvious accommodation in such a circumstance would begin with a thorough assessment of the student's needs. If a substance abuse problem is identified, a referral would be made for services, ranging from in-school support groups, such as those operated by TASC in some Chicago high schools, to residential treatment or hospitalization.<sup>25</sup>

The Office of Civil Rights reports, however, that in some school districts in Illinois, students with substance-abuse problems are presently evaluated and placed in programs for students with behavior disorders. Such programs do not address substance abuse directly, dealing in-

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*"Ambiguity in federal language affords states considerable flexibility in choosing various paths to implementation. Consequently, states and school districts, lacking clear substantive direction and a strong commitment to the handicapped, can reach any preferred result while still following 'proper procedure.'"*

Daniel H. Cline

*"A Legal Analysis of Policy Initiatives to Exclude Handicapped/Disruptive Students from Special Education"*  
(1990)



stead only with behavior that may be caused by the substance abuse.

The federal mandate is not clear in defining what is required of school districts in such cases. Ambiguity in the federal statute leaves open the issue of whether drug treatment should be considered "rehabilitation counseling"—a required service—or "medical treatment," which school districts are not required to provide. If a school district claimed that drug treatment is a medical service, and the parents of a drug-addicted child argued that drug treatment is a counseling service covered under the provisions of Section 504, such a dispute would be likely to end up in a civil court for a final ruling.

The Office of Civil Rights' records indicate that no Illinois case regarding a failure to provide services to a substance-addicted youth has ever been brought to the level of an administrative hearing. Therefore, the right to drug treatment for substance-addicted youth under Section 504 has never been tested in this state. As in many other areas of civil rights legislation, it may require a court challenge to establish rights that have been legislatively granted.<sup>26</sup>

In 1986, the State Advisory Council on Handicapped Children considered the possibility of creating a separate category of special education services for substance-abusing students. While the council agreed that the need for services for these students was not being met, it agreed to the objections of the State Board of Education, which said that such services were medical and were exempt from the IDEA, and decided not to recommend creating such a category. The council called instead for the State Board of Education to study possible resources available and develop a statewide plan to provide assessment and treatment services for substance-abusing students. The TASC representative to the council reported that, to the best of her knowledge, no action was ever taken on this proposal.<sup>27</sup> The current representative of the State Board of Education to the council was unable to track the outcome of the proposal.<sup>28</sup>

Although Section 504 includes no federal funding provisions, this lack has never been allowed in previous cases to excuse schools from providing mandated services.<sup>29</sup> Few parents and students may be aware that Section 504 defines substance abusers as disabled students eligible

for related services; this may be why these services have never been demanded and the issue has never been brought to an administrative hearing or circuit court judge. While the Office of Civil Rights continues to investigate specific complaints, budgetary constraints in federal agencies have severely limited the office's ability to conduct compliance reviews within individual states, making it unlikely that it would challenge the state's failure to provide services of this kind.<sup>30</sup>

There may be other reasons that the provisions of Section 504 have never been used as a means of obtaining treatment services for substance-abusing students in Illinois. Some students with drug abuse problems may never be identified, because teachers fail to recognize and interpret their symptoms. A panel of juvenile officers from the Illinois Juvenile Officers Association reported that teachers and administrators seem to lack training in drug awareness and often overlook evidence of drug abuse and drug trafficking in their schools. They also seem poorly informed about legal aspects of police enforcement, especially the recent changes to the law involving drug distribution around schools and to minors.<sup>31</sup>

As with other kinds of crime in the schools, teachers and administrators may also be reluctant to admit that drugs are a problem in their schools and neighborhoods. The Authority's survey of public high school teachers in Illinois found that between 30 percent and 62 percent of teachers statewide reported they did not know how available various kinds of drugs were in their schools (see Chapter 3, *Crime in the Schools*).<sup>32</sup>

### **The cost of special education placements**

When children have learning disabilities or behavior disorders that are so severe, profound, complex, or otherwise unique that no program available in the local school district can meet their needs, then the local school district must fully fund placement in an appropriate residential or day facility. Funding disputes can delay placements, and any delay in the appropriate treatment of children with severe disabilities can allow their problems to escalate to the point where the criminal justice system must become involved. Even though the number of special education cases that result in serious funding disputes may

be small relative to the total number of special education students served, these cases are important for two reasons:

- The cost of specialized placements—up to 30 times the average annual per-pupil cost—can have a major impact on the budgets of districts or agencies that must pay for them.
- Such disputes serve to define the parameters of special education services and may even be responsible for creating new local programs as an alternative to the expense of purchased care.

The issue of who pays the costs of these placements for special education students is exceedingly complex. If the educational plan developed by the school district recommends residential placement and no other agency is involved in the child's care, the local school district and the State Board of Education are responsible for the entire cost. The Illinois School Code requires local school districts to pay no more than twice their per capita tuition rate toward the cost of such placements. The State Board of Education is supposed to pay for all placement costs that exceed that amount.<sup>33</sup> However, during 1990, state funding for this budget line item ran short, and the state paid a smaller share toward the total, leaving some local districts with heavy unexpected burdens for the additional costs.<sup>34</sup>

When school districts are in conflict with one another, the basic dispute is usually over which district should pick up the educational costs of a residential placement: the district in which the child lived prior to placement or the district in which the treatment center is located. This kind of dispute becomes even more complex when parents are divorced and share custody or when the child was living with the non-custodial parent at the time of placement. When two or more districts are in dispute over the cost, delays are virtually

guaranteed. These problems do not occur when the child involved is a ward of the state (a Department of Children and Family Services [DCFS] ward), since such children are covered under the Orphanage Act.<sup>35</sup> The state pays the total costs of educational placements for these children, and local school districts are absolved of responsibility for them (Figure 5.1).

If more than one agency or level of government is involved in a placement case—as a result, for example, of a change in the child's residence—even more complicated issues of accountability arise. For example, when a recommendation for placement comes from the local district's special education plan, but the child is living in a DCFS group home and also has a pending delinquency petition in a county court, no less than six major parties may be involved in funding disputes: the parents, the school district that wrote the educational plan, the school district in which the detention center is located, the school district where the proposed placement center is located, DCFS, and the county government represented by juvenile court services personnel.

Prior to 1989, the school districts argued that they should be absolved of any payment responsibility when a placement order was made by a juvenile court judge, even if the original recommendation for residential treatment was part of a school district's special education plan. In 1989, however, in the *William P.* case, two parents of a delinquent child successfully challenged the Illinois State Board of Education's practice of charging the costs of educational services for delinquents in residential placement to the youth's parents. The Office of Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education found that the State Board of Education had violated Section 504 by refusing to pay for the educational services for an adjudicated ward of the juvenile court system placed in a residential facility. The state superintendent of schools agreed that parents of such minors would no longer be required to pay for the educational component of such placement.<sup>36</sup>

Funding disputes also occur between the courts and DCFS. By statute, delinquent children are an optional service category for the Department of Children and Family Services. The department often declines to continue to provide

Figure 5.1  
**How expensive is residential care for special education students?**

Figures from DuPage County are typical of statewide costs.

| Setting               | Per diem cost per student | Range of stay       | Total annual cost |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Foster home           | \$15-25                   | 3 days - 18 years   | \$45 - 9,125      |
| Group home            | \$50-75                   | 8 months - 1+ years | \$12,000- 27,375  |
| Residential treatment | \$50-150                  | 8 months - 1+ years | \$18,250- 54,750  |
| Hospital              | \$280-400                 | 3 months - 9 months | \$25,200- 108,000 |

Source: Sue Howard, Chief Probation Officer, DuPage County Juvenile Court. Costs are for services used by that office. She reports the average placement for a delinquent child lasts over 100 days in a facility costing \$125/day or more.



services to its wards once they enter the custody of the juvenile court, even though DCFS wardship has not been vacated by a delinquency finding.<sup>37</sup> If a civil suit is filed by a county probation department in a state or federal court challenging the refusal of a school district to continue to fund services, the school district can still be forced to contribute toward the educational component of the placement. With potentially enormous sums at stake in each case, all involved parties have some financial motivation for dispute.

When school districts and state agencies all deny responsibility for a child's placement, the county government may be left to pay the entire bill. Although state law provides for this option,<sup>38</sup> and the provision that juvenile courts may assess the costs of placements to county governments has been upheld by the Illinois Supreme Court, this provision has rarely been invoked. Cook County has allocated no funds for the residential placement of state wards.<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, DuPage County has budgeted for such costs.<sup>40</sup>

In 1990, DuPage County budgeted \$1.2 million for child welfare costs. Most of this line item was earmarked for residential placement costs for juvenile court cases. By September 1, those funds had been spent, and the County Probation Office had to request additional allotments from the County Board each month to cover continuing expenditures. In September, \$120,000 was needed; in October, an additional \$60,000, with at least a \$60,000 shortfall expected in November. To combat these escalating costs, the Probation Department has granted \$100,000 in funding to begin a new, extended day-care program for court clients. This new service will allow juvenile court clients to receive intensive treatment in the community, while they continue to live with their families. Savings to the county in residential treatment costs after the first year are expected to reach \$200,000 annually.<sup>41</sup>

Some counties report that they are at a disadvantage in negotiating with treatment facilities for the cost of services. When DCFS or the State Board of Education licenses a facility to serve their clients, these state agencies may set their own rate, based on services provided by the facility. Counties do not have that authorization. For example, a probation officer from Rock Island County reported that a residential treatment facility for students with behavior disorders in his

county that was licensed by both DCFS and the State Board of Education had four different per diem rates for the same services: \$46.97 per day for the State Board of Education, \$48.42 per day for DCFS, \$50.25 per day for Rock Island County Juvenile Court, and \$52 per day for other county courts. These differing rates were confirmed by officials in the respective agencies.<sup>42</sup> This practice has persisted even though, by statute, counties are not supposed to pay more for residential treatment services than the rate assessed for DCFS wards.<sup>43</sup> The ability of a county to negotiate for this rate may be limited by the need to maintain a good relationship with a local treatment facility for which the county has no cheaper alternative.

### **Fitting special education into the classroom**

Some lawyers who frequently plead cases brought against school districts over special education services for children are convinced that the underlying motivations for extended legal battles over placement are as much philosophical as fiscal. They point out that many special education students, including those most likely to become clients of the criminal justice system, are extremely troublesome and difficult students to teach. In spite of an educator's best efforts, gains may be limited and gratitude unexpressed. Many principals and superintendents would rather see the burden of working with these children pass to another agency.<sup>44</sup>

Despite educational goals to provide individualized instruction, most teaching is standardized for the average student. Children whose special needs place them outside of the mainstream, either because they are particularly gifted or because they have disabilities that affect their ability to learn, challenge their teachers in ways that render customary approaches ineffective. Teachers may feel isolated within their schools, perceiving that there is little internal support for their efforts to instruct these youth. When this happens, it is extremely frustrating for teachers, and this frustration can cause many teachers to pull away from the needs of the unique learner.<sup>45</sup>

Neglect of the needs of special education students occurs not only on the individual level of a single teacher and student but can spread to become a pattern of systemic neglect within a school district. For example, an important 1989

Illinois case involved a finding by the Office of Civil Rights that schools in Chicago had been "notoriously slow" in performing evaluations and in making appropriate placements for children needing special education services.<sup>46</sup> Following investigation, the judge in the case ruled that the delays had been egregious and the treatment of special education students in the city "woefully neglectful." In response to the judge's ruling, the district submitted a plan to eliminate delay and provide timely evaluation and placement. After more than a year of negotiations, the judge still found the plans submitted by the district to be inadequate. With the appointment of a new permanent associate superintendent for special edu-

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*"I can't ignore cultural behavior in this school system that abuses the rights of kids. We will no longer tolerate the abuse of students' civil rights in Chicago schools."*

*Thomas Hehir  
Associate Superintendent for Special Education, Chicago Public Schools  
(September 27, 1990)*

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cation for the Chicago schools at the beginning of the 1990-1991 school year, federal authorities now hope that a resolution can be found for these long standing problems.

The new associate superintendent, Thomas Hehir, has said the delays and other abuses in Chicago are caused by an "institutional culture" in which accountability for disabled students has become diffuse, and student rights have often been flouted. He admitted that the defects in the

system are very severe and cannot be corrected overnight. Chicago's school system, according to Mr. Hehir, is characterized by extremes in uneven resource allocation and leadership talent. He has criticized the practice in the Chicago system of segregating special education students in separate classrooms and schools, and has instructed the 18 special schools in the district to present plans for reintegrating their students into regular programs. "Every school," he said, "should have the ability to serve mildly to moderately disabled students."<sup>47</sup>

Professionals working with juveniles have reported that the most significant factor in determining the quality and extent of services appears to be the leadership of individual principals and school superintendents. Where a commitment has been made to retain difficult and troubled students, excellent programs can arise, even in poorly funded school districts.<sup>48</sup>

Different school districts interpret guide-

lines and statutes differently. They assign different priorities to special education within their overall educational strategies, and they give different priorities to different components of special education services within their districts. This situation makes it difficult to improve the level of services on a statewide scale. If an attorney succeeds in establishing the rights of a child to special education services in certain circumstances, it is difficult to establish a precedent that could apply to other cases. The only future benefit of a success for a child advocate or defense attorney in a given case would be in a virtually identical case with the same school district.<sup>49</sup>

### **HOW SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS CAN FAIL TO MEET STUDENTS' NEEDS**

Students whose needs are not being met by the special education programs in Illinois' schools—and who are therefore at higher risk for getting in trouble with the law—can be divided into five categories:

- Unidentified as needing services
- Identified, but underserved by existing services
- Referred, but awaiting evaluation or services
- Push-outs
- Dropouts (see Chapter 6, Truancy and Dropout)

#### **The unidentified**

Perhaps the most serious problem in special education is that many students who potentially meet the criteria for services are never identified. One reason these children's learning problems go unnoticed may lie in teacher-training curricula. In Illinois and many other states, family consultation methods and behavior management techniques, which had frequently been a part of teacher training in the 1950s and the 1960s, are no longer required for teacher certification.

Since 1981, however, teachers in Illinois who are seeking certification in early childhood, elementary, high school, or special education have been required to complete courses in the psychology and identification of exceptional children, including those with learning disabilities. Teachers are also required to study methods appropriate for instructing children with disabilities. Nevertheless, according to educators who

have taught these courses in teacher training programs, an introductory course in the exceptional child does not equip teachers to identify all of the characteristics of special populations.<sup>50</sup>

According to James Ysseldyke, former director of the Institute of Research on Learning Disabilities at the University of Minnesota, misidentification of special education students is a very serious problem. "There are lots of kids who are placed in special education who don't need it, and many others who need it but are never placed," he said. "Over the past 10 years, we've seen a 143-percent increase in the numbers of children identified with learning disabilities. Placing a kid in special education can be an act of desperation—there's simply no other way to get them services they need for learning and social problems."<sup>51</sup>

According to Mr. Ysseldyke, mislabeling children can be as damaging as failing to provide services: "Once a child has been identified as emotionally disturbed or behavior disordered, there is an 80 percent probability that child is not going to finish school and a very high probability that he will end up in criminal activity."<sup>52</sup>

In fact, the national movement to raise educational standards for teachers may actually have lowered competence levels in teaching methods and assessment. In 1983, the Educational Testing Service, which administers the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), published statistics showing that, among students who wanted to become education majors in college, 40 percent scored in the lowest 20 percent on college placement tests and ranked at the bottom of their high school graduating classes. Even though organizations doing research on teacher education, such as the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, have disputed these statistics as inaccurate and misleading, many colleges of education revised degree requirements to upgrade teacher competence by increasing the number of required courses in content areas.<sup>53</sup> Aspiring teachers were required to take more courses in basic subject areas to complete their teaching degrees. Courses in teaching methods were criticized by some educational reformers as being "empty credits," devoid of any useful learning. Schools of education that joined this reform movement maintained that classroom management techniques could be learned by student teachers

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### **Inmate profile**

Michael (fictitious name) is a 23-year-old white Department of Corrections inmate from a small town in northern Illinois. He reports he has always had trouble in school, because he "just wasn't as quick as the others." He admits to having serious reading problems, but said he was never tested for special education or held back until high school. "I really wanted to learn," he said, "but I was embarrassed and frustrated. I didn't want anybody to know that I couldn't read. I did everything I could to hide my problems. The teachers knew, but they were really no help." Michael dropped out of high school in the 10th grade after being suspended for hanging out in the halls. He believes some special help would have kept him in school. (Case histories are taken from interviews with inmates at the Joliet Reception Center. Names are invented, but the facts of the case and quotations are based on actual interviews.)

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on the job.<sup>54</sup>

Catherine Trapani, a specialist in learning disabilities and behavior disorders who directs an assessment clinic at the University of Chicago, maintains that, as a consequence of these policies, poorly trained teachers may not realize that disruptive behavior in the classroom can have serious underlying causes. In not correctly recognizing the symptoms of learning disabilities or serious emotional disturbance, teachers may interpret students' disruptive behavior as a challenge to their control and respond by becoming more authoritarian. Lacking an effective repertoire of techniques for dealing with student misbehavior, such teachers are more likely to simply eject the offending student from the classroom. A better-trained or more experienced teacher might find creative ways to draw the student into the learning process, as well as to work with the parents and student to uncover underlying causes for the behavior.<sup>55</sup>

Another reason that some children with learning disabilities and behavior disorders go unidentified is that they may lack effective advocates. Especially in areas where resources are scarce, it is the child whose parent is the fiercest advocate who is most likely to be helped. If parents are unsophisticated about the nature of their child's problem, intimidated by the evaluation process, or are not accustomed to challenging school authorities, there may be no one to prod the school into providing mandated services.<sup>56</sup>

### **The underserved**

Despite state and federal mandates, certain special education populations in Illinois are chronically underserved. As with other educational services, wealthier districts are likely to have both a

higher quality of special education services and a wider range of program and placement options than poorer districts.

#### *Rural students*

Very few options exist for rural youngsters who have special education needs beyond what local schools provide in their regular programs. In those areas, even more than in urban areas, students who can't fit into the regular program may be pushed to quit. There may also be fewer advocates for students in rural settings.<sup>57</sup>

A 1988 study of 52 unit (K-12) school districts in a nine-county region in east central Illinois examined various characteristics of small rural schools. According to the study, small rural districts in the area spent less on special needs programs and devoted a larger proportion of their resources to the core educational program than did larger rural or urban schools in the same region of the state. In these school districts, special education was not de-emphasized out of economic necessity. Small rural districts proved to be wealthier on the average than other types of school districts, including urban districts. According to the study, "Equalized assessed valuation per pupil was \$71,200 for small, rural districts, compared with the [overall] mean of \$56,200. The average property wealth per pupil for urban districts was \$48,000. . . . This gives the small, rural districts the ability to raise more local funds for schools."<sup>58</sup> The study noted, however, that the districts surveyed were located in an affluent agricultural area and may not be comparable to some other farming areas of the state where poor tax bases may play a larger role in special education decisions. This study illustrates how districts decide about serving or not serving special education needs independently of financial con-

straints. Probation officers from rural central and southern Illinois districts also reported that many of their school districts have little or no money in their budgets for residential placements.<sup>59</sup>

#### *Girls*

Girls who need intensive treatment are more poorly served than boys. Out-of-school placements for boys are inadequate, but there are even fewer residential placement options for girls.<sup>60</sup>

The Center for the Study of Youth Policy reported in 1991 that a nationwide study of programming for girls in the juvenile justice system found a pervasive pattern of neglect stemming from a lack of community-based programs for delinquent and troubled girls. Among the special needs of young women, the researchers gave high priority to programs for young victims of sexual abuse and for pregnant and parenting teenagers. The report said, "Girls are being inappropriately institutionalized, largely because community-based alternatives are unavailable."<sup>61</sup>

#### *Students in need of drug treatment*

Probation officers from several different areas of the state report that there are very few residential drug treatment slots for children and adolescents of either sex. A recent report by the Department of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (DASA) showed that in fiscal year 1989 almost 6,500 children and adolescents up to age 17 were admitted to treatment services statewide. This figure included almost 1,200 admitted to residential services, and more than 5,200 admitted to outpatient services.<sup>62</sup> These figures can be misleading, according to some probation officers. Outpatient admissions can include screening and assessment services and should not be used as an estimate of the availability of actual outpatient treatment. They also point out that many of the services included as inpatient services are in private psychiatric hospitals, which are not generally available for clients without private insurance. Based on difficulties they have in finding treatment for substance-abusing clients in many parts of the state, these officers maintain that non-residential drug treatment slots for children and youth continue to be scarce.<sup>63</sup>

#### **Students awaiting evaluation**

Specific timetables, mandated by the Individuals

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#### **Inmate profile**

Tom, a 23-year-old white man entering the Department of Corrections on his first felony conviction, grew up in a small rural community. He was assigned to special education classes in the first grade. Even though, by his own account, he was not learning, his teachers continued to promote him. He was in junior high before he began to learn to read. "I'll never forget my teacher, because she proved that I could learn with the right help." No special education was available in his high school. After his father died, Tom began getting into fights at school and was often truant. He was repeatedly suspended and finally expelled. When he attempted to return to school, the principal threatened to arrest him for criminal trespass. Tom was 16 and still dyslexic. Tom plans to complete a GED while in prison.

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with Disabilities Education Act, are intended to provide for timely evaluation and placement of children whose learning and behavior problems may be due to specific disorders. Under Illinois law, evaluation is supposed to be completed within 60 days of a referral, and other deadlines are attached to each stage of the process. These deadlines are rarely met. Delays as long as three years were documented in the 1989 complaint brought against the Chicago Board of Education by the Office of Civil Rights, for example. The Office of Civil Rights found that fewer than 30 percent of the students referred were evaluated within the 60-day federal time limit.<sup>64</sup> Officials in the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts say their investigations indicate that timely evaluation is a problem in many parts of the state.<sup>65</sup>

A scarcity of evaluation specialists can lead to lengthy delays that exceed federal deadlines. School vacations—especially the summer recess—frequently interrupt evaluation schedules for several months.<sup>66</sup> Some critics also charge that school districts deliberately delay the process of evaluation, because they know they will be required to provide services.<sup>67</sup>

Juvenile court judges and juvenile probation officers frequently request educational evaluations in order to make appropriate dispositional decisions. When evaluations are delayed, the court's ability to dispose juvenile cases is severely affected. By statute, juvenile cases must be brought to trial within 10 days, with an additional 10 days allowed to make a disposition. A Cook County Juvenile Court judge pointed out that this time frame is far too short, not only to accommodate the schools' more leisurely timetable, but even to allow a realistic amount of time to evaluate and place a student. The search for a treatment facility cannot begin as soon as a juvenile is detained; the evaluation must be completed and treatment determined to be necessary before the search for a treatment facility can begin. The judge and her colleagues often find that appropriate facilities are scarce and crowded, resulting in lengthy waiting lists that further extend placement delays, while the youth remains in detention.<sup>68</sup>

Some juvenile court judges avoid the deadline by persuading the defense attorney to file repeated continuances so they can wait out the school's delays, in order to extend the time frame

long enough to perform the needed evaluations and locate appropriate placements. Guilty pleas, however, can cut into these extensions and force the court's hand. In those cases, some judges feel it may be better to put the youth into an IDOC facility than to leave him or her in the community without any services.<sup>69</sup>

While waiting for an evaluation, a troubled youth may be expelled from school and be at home with minimal supervision, or may be in a detention center. Usually during this interim the youth is not getting needed treatment, and delinquent behavior may escalate—often to the point of committing another offense. A school district may use such an event as further evidence that a child is delinquent and is therefore the court's—not the school's—responsibility.<sup>70</sup>

### **Push-outs**

The primary business of schools is to educate youth. Many educators object to expectations that they should also remedy all the problems of their young charges. Should schools be held accountable for the failure of parents to provide basic care and instill proper values, the failure of social service agencies to provide adequate support to poor families, or the failure of law enforcement to maintain safety in the community? Many of these larger social problems are brought into the classroom and result in behavior that disrupts the learning environment and threatens the ability of teachers to carry out their primary mission.

Under these circumstances, it is understandable that removing the offending student from the classroom or school may seem the best immediate solution to a serious behavior management problem. However, numerous incidents reported by education lawyers, juvenile court services personnel and judges, assessment experts, inmates, educators, and school administrators suggest that many difficult students are being permanently pushed out of the educational system. Many of these youngsters do not leave school by choice, but because they have been suspended, expelled, or forced out by other school policies.

In the Authority's survey of more than 500 IDOC inmates who failed to graduate, many denied that they were dropouts. They gave accounts of principals and high school deans who had actively encouraged them to leave or set up

impossible conditions for their return. Some inmates who reported such experiences also said they had been in special education programs at the time of their expulsion or suspension, even though expulsion of a special education student under most circumstances would violate federal and state guidelines.<sup>71</sup> Probation officers cited examples from their caseloads confirming that some school districts encourage troublesome students to drop out, or persuade their parents to withdraw them from school if they are under 16. If the student is underage or has been identified as a special education student, formal expulsion is legally more difficult. Informal practices offer the most expedient way for a school to rid itself of a problem student.<sup>72</sup>

Many different types of school policies can have the effect of increasing dropout among special education students. Probation officers report, for example, that the conditions of programs for students with behavior disorders in many schools are very unappealing for the type of student who is normally assigned there. Some programs institute very restrictive discipline and confinement rules, against which these students can be expected to rebel. One probation officer described such a program as "a little prison within the school."<sup>73</sup>

According to Bernard Karlin, principal of the Montefiore Special School in Chicago, a school for boys with behavior disorders, the problem with many programs for students with behavior disorders is one of attitude. When teachers and administrators focus on a student's past "bad" behaviors, and label youngsters as "problem students," there is no expectation for the youngster to do well. Negative labels and expectations can become self-fulfilling prophecies.<sup>74</sup>

The negative effects of labeling for some children may be compounded when programs

combine instruction for students with learning disabilities, behavior disorders, and educable mental handicaps in the same class. Since the needs of each category of special education student are unique and require differently trained teaching specialists, such generic special education programs may fail to meet federal program requirements. Such groupings also maximize the stigma of being different from students in regular classes. According to specialists in behavior disorders, students with behavior disorders who are segregated in this way are cut off from peer models with different values and behavior. Their associations become limited to other youth with similar problems.<sup>75</sup>

Probation officers also report that there are very few alternatives available for students with behavior disorders outside of school programs. Hospitals and residential treatment programs are seldom designed to accommodate these students, whose needs are different from those of students with mental illnesses.<sup>76</sup>

Students with behavior disorders who are in segregated programs are often separated from opportunities for extracurricular and other non-academic programs, reducing their curricula to "the basics."<sup>77</sup> Some special education experts argue that, particularly for students with emotional disturbances and behavior disorders, it is important to view their educational needs broadly, in ways that address their need for improved social skills and motivational experiences. Without this type of support, such students are likely to drop out.<sup>78</sup> Because programs for students with behavior disorders concentrate on behavior management, some students with behavior disorders may not even receive adequate training in the basic academic subjects. Some probation officers report that their clients have been placed in programs for students with behavior disorders that lasted only a half day, in spite of state requirements governing hours of instruction, and the high potential for students with behavior disorders to get into trouble during unstructured time.<sup>79</sup>

Schools may not expel or suspend special education students for more than 10 days without conducting a new evaluation of placement needs, but repeated short suspensions can become, in effect, an expulsion. Each interruption to the educational process increases the chances that a suspended student will not return to school.

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#### **Inmate profile**

Anthony is an 18-year-old black man recently convicted of his first felony offense. When he was 14, serious family problems began. Although he had been a good student, he began getting into trouble at school. He was evaluated and placed in a program for students with behavior disorders. He disliked the program because he felt confined and was not allowed to be around other students. Nevertheless, he did well until he got into an argument with his teacher and swore at her. "My time was almost up, and I blew it by swearing at her. She said that, after that, they'd never let me out, so I just quit." Anthony equated his time in the program with a term of punishment.

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Schools can also avoid limitations on “changes of placement” and expel special education students by asserting that the behavior triggering the expulsion did not arise from the disability, although the burden of proof lies with the school district if parents challenge this claim.

According to juvenile officers, deals are sometimes struck to get rid of an unwanted student. A student may be told, for example, that the school will not press assault charges arising from an incident at school, if the student agrees to withdraw permanently. Juvenile officers have reported that schools sometimes threaten students with arrest if they return, even though real grounds for arrest may be lacking.<sup>80</sup>

Suspensions are not always triggered by serious or violent misbehavior. Such infractions as repeated tardiness, truancy, and swearing are also frequently disciplined by suspensions. Suspending a student who is already experiencing some academic problems—especially for minor infractions—may be counterproductive. A 10-day absence from school can put a marginal student so far behind that it is almost impossible to catch up, leading to the child dropping out.<sup>81</sup>

In addition, when a student is suspended for behavior that is dangerous or violent, the student is removed from a controlled setting under adult supervision to the home or the streets, where supervision is often lacking. Experienced juvenile officers report that, unless the problems that caused the misbehavior in school are resolved, they are likely to escalate once the youth is expelled, often bringing these youngsters into conflict with the law.<sup>82</sup> Schools also lose money when a student is suspended, since state educational reimbursements are based on the numbers of students in average daily attendance.

### **The divided child**

Several major reports that have studied the status of child welfare in Illinois have concluded that the problem of major gaps in the continuum of social, mental health, child welfare, juvenile probation, and other services is further complicated by the failure of the state agencies mandated to serve specific categories of clients to coordinate their programs and work together in assisting clients eligible for multiple services.<sup>83</sup> Agencies working with children and youth often segment the child's problems in order to limit their responsibilities to

those issues or aspects of the problem specifically covered in each agency's mandate. These artificial distinctions take the child's problems out of the proper context of housing issues, custody issues, school problems, and delinquency, all of which may contribute to a child's behavior and performance. In addition, when agencies create these divisions, parents or custodians must deal with a multitude of agencies, each with its own eligibility requirements and application process, in order to obtain needed services.

Sometimes ambiguities in state law create opportunities for state agencies to shift responsibility for troubled children to other units of government (see also Appendix E, Social Service Availability for Juveniles). For example, a 1990 report by the Criminal Justice Project of Cook County and the Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research of Northwestern University states that children suffer when they are “suspended between warring agencies”—particularly juvenile justice agencies and DCFS—in conflicts over who should serve neglected and abused children who commit delinquent acts and end up in juvenile court.<sup>84</sup>

Probation officers report that it is common for DCFS to close a case on any of their wards for whom a delinquency petition or a minor requiring authoritative intervention petition was filed.<sup>85</sup> The Illinois statute used to support DCFS's action states that DCFS “may, at its discretion . . . accept for care and training” youth who are found to be delinquent, addicted, or truant, or who require authoritative intervention. The statute prohibits any court from committing children above the age of 12 in these categories to DCFS without the department's approval.<sup>86</sup> DCFS may, therefore, voluntarily extend its services to any court-involved youth. The statute is silent, however, on whether DCFS can terminate services to one of its wards who subsequently becomes involved with the juvenile court. This ambiguity in the statute increases the chances that the courts and DCFS will become embroiled in conflict over which agency should be responsible for the child.

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*“Correctional facilities and public schools must work together to design and provide services to assist delinquent youths in the transition from correctional facilities to public school settings once their detention has been completed.”*

Catherine Trapani  
Transition Goals for Adolescents with  
Learning Disabilities  
(1990)

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The courts have traditionally tended to see the child as a whole person, examining the total context of delinquent behavior. The schools, on the other hand, like other state agencies mandated to serve certain categories of people, generally maintain that their mandate extends only to the "educational component" of a child's needs, even though, under the IDEA, an individual education plan for a special-needs student must

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*"It is difficult for social agencies or the court system to coordinate services internally, but even more difficult when the service settings and professionals are relative strangers to each other. The tendency is to 'pass the buck' for coordination and financial responsibility to some 'other' categorical agency whenever possible and to argue that an array of services should be available within the responsible agency to meet all (or most) of the child's needs."*

Joan Castello  
Mental Health Planning for Emotionally Handicapped Children in Illinois (1989)

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include psychological and social history components that may contribute to the disability.

Schools sometimes argue that the programs for children with behavior disorders or learning disabilities in the local school meets their full responsibility. According to this argument, if other social, psychological, or behavioral factors prevent a child with a learning disability or behavior disorder from functioning at home or in the community, some other agency should be responsible for treating them. A probation officer was told, for example, "If you can get this (truant) student here, we'll teach him." The school in this case was unwilling to explore or address the issues that contributed to the truancy.<sup>87</sup>

But Section 504 extends protection to persons whose impairment "limits substantially one or more major life activities."<sup>88</sup> And, according to Daniel H. Cline, an expert in special education law, "For behaviorally disordered stu-

dents, a 'major life activity' includes the ability to be present in a classroom." Since truancy is one type of behavior often displayed by students with behavior disorders, schools could be cited for a violation of Section 504 if they refuse to address the problems of students with learning disabilities or behavior disorders who are truant, according to Mr. Cline.<sup>89</sup>

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#### Notes

1. Illinois State Board of Education, May 1990.
2. Paul Butler-Malin and Christine Padilla, "Dropouts:

The Relationship of Student Characteristics, Behaviors, and Performance for Special Education Students" *SRI International* (March 1989): 3.

3. Terry David, Supervisor of Procedural Safeguards, and Cindy Terry, Learning Disability Specialist, Illinois State Board of Education, interviews: November 16, 1990.

4. Brooke Whitted, Whitted & Associates, P.C., letter: February 4, 1991.

5. Butler-Malin and Padilla, "Dropouts" (1989).

6. C. Poremba, "Learning Disabilities, Youth, and Delinquency" in *Progress in Learning Disabilities* 3, edited by H.R. Myklebust (New York: Grune & Stratton, 1976): 123-149.

7. K. Larson, "A Research Review and Alternative Hypothesis Explaining the Link Between Learning Disability and Delinquency" *Journal of Learning Disabilities* (1988): 21:357-363.

8. J.E. Slenkovich, *PL 94-142 as Applied to DSM III Diagnosis* (Cupertino, Calif.: Kinghorn Press, 1983); and A. Lamson, *The Psychology of Juvenile Crime* (New York: Human Sciences, 1983).

9. U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Juvenile Delinquency Prevention, *American Council on Learning Disabilities Research and Development Project: A Study Investigating the Link Between Learning Disabilities and Juvenile Delinquency*, report prepared by Dorothy Crawford (Washington, D.C., 1981).

10. Ingo Keilitz and Noel Duvivant, "The Relationship Between Learning Disability and Juvenile Delinquency: Current State of Knowledge" *RASE* no. 3 (1986): 22.

11. Dorothy Crawford, Life Development Institute, Phoenix Ariz., interview: November 21, 1990.

12. Catherine Trapani, *Transition Goals for Adolescents with Learning Disabilities* (Boston: College-Hill Press, 1990): 56.

13. Crawford (1990).

14. The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority's Roundtable Discussion of Juvenile Court Services and Educational Placement (August 13, 1990).

15. Brooke Whitted, *Education and Law: Working with Educational Institutions* (Chicago: Whitted and Associates, 1990): 10; and Daniel H. Cline, "A Legal Analysis of Policy Initiatives to Exclude Handicapped/Disruptive Students from Special Education" *Behavior Disorders* 15, no. 3 (May 1990): 159.

16. 20 U.S.C. 1412, and 29 U.S.C. 794 S. 504.

17. A federal bill reauthorizing the Education of all Handicapped Children Act changed the title of the legislation to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, effective October 30, 1990.

18. *Amber Tatro et al. v. Irving (Tex.) Independent*

- School District et al.*, 468 U.S. 883 (1984).
19. *Hendrick Hudson Board of Education v. Rowley*, 458 U.S. 176 (1982).
  20. *Timothy W. and Cynthia W. v. Rochester, N.H. School District*, 875 F.2d 954 (1st Cir., 1989).
  21. *S-1 v. Turlington, Fla.*, 635 F.2d 342 (5th Cir., 1981).
  22. *Honig v. Doe*, 484 U.S. 305, 108 S.Ct. 592 (1988).
  23. Interview with official in the Elementary and Secondary Education Division, Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Chicago, November 19, 1990.
  24. Lorrie Chaplin, McDonough County Juvenile Court Services, Court Services Roundtable (August 13, 1990).
  25. Laura Nutini, Juvenile Services Coordinator, Treatment Alternatives for Special Clients, interview: January 10, 1991.
  26. Interview with official in the Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Chicago, September 24, 1990.
  27. Nutini (1991).
  28. Mary Jo Mattern-Jenkins, State Board of Education, Division of Special Education, interview: January 10, 1991.
  29. Interviews with official in the Elementary and Secondary Education Division, Office of Civil Rights, and with Brooke Whitted, November 28, 1990.
  30. Interview with official in the Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Chicago, September 24, 1990.
- Michael L. Williams, the assistant secretary of education for civil rights, has listed six priority issues that will dominate the discretionary enforcement strategy (issues not generated by specific complaints) of the Office of Civil Rights in fiscal 1991:
1. Services to students with limited English proficiency
  2. Title VI discrimination—investigation of discriminatory patterns of assignment to ability groupings, such as the exclusion of minority students from gifted and honors programs and disproportionate assignment to remedial groupings
  3. Racial harassment in post-secondary settings
  4. Title IX enforcement—services to pregnant teenagers
  5. Title IX enforcement, scholastic athletics—equal opportunity for girls' athletic programs.
  6. Section 504 enforcement—identification and educational services to homeless children and to children born to substance-abusing parents
- (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, *National Enforcement Strategies for Fiscal Year 1991: Priority Issues* (Washington, D.C., 1990)).
31. The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority's Illinois Juvenile Officers Association Roundtable Discussion of Juvenile Policing (June 29, 1990).
  32. The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority's Student and Teacher Survey of Safety and Discipline in Illinois High Schools (1990).
  33. Ill.Rev.Stat., ch. 122, par. 14-7.02.
  34. In December 1990, a supplemental appropriation for placement costs made up the shortfall and payments by the State Board of Education were resumed (letter to Brooke Whitted from D. Dennis Powell, Manager of Data Management, Illinois State Board of Education, January 16, 1991).
  35. The protection of the Orphanage Act may be extended to wards of the Juvenile Court who are not DCFS wards, if they are placed in residential treatment by a school district and the district claims reimbursement (Ill.Rev.Stat., ch. 122, par. 14-7.03).
  36. *In re Illinois State Board of Education*, Docket No. 86-504-8.
  37. Ill.Rev.Stat., ch. 23, par. 5005-6. According to Julia Dempsey, a juvenile court judge in Cook County, judges in that jurisdiction frequently force the Department of Children and Family Services to provide services to their delinquent wards (Julia Dempsey, letter, January 25, 1991).
  38. Ill.Rev.Stat. ch. 37, par. 806-7 and 806-8.
  39. Brooke Whitted, letter: February 4, 1991.
  40. Dempsey (1991).
  41. Sue Howard, Chief Probation Officer, DuPage County Juvenile Court, interview: October 22, 1990.
  42. Terry Lynch, Rock Island Juvenile Court Services, interview: October 10, 1990. Rates assessed by state agencies for state fiscal year 1990 room and board costs at Arrowhead Ranch, Galesburg, Ill., were confirmed by Loree Riggs, Governor's Purchase of Care Review Board (State Board of Education rate for fiscal 1990) and Bob Trainer, DCFS Division of Contracts and Grants (DCFS rate for fiscal 1990).
  43. Ill.Rev.Stat. ch. 37, par. 806-8.
  44. The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority's Legal and Psychiatric Panel (June 26, 1990).
  45. Rae Lynne Toperoff, Executive Director of Literacy Volunteers of Illinois and member of the Educational Advisory Panel, interview: October 5, 1990.
  46. *In re Illinois State Board of Education*, Docket No. 87-504-2.
  47. Thomas Hehir, interview: September 27, 1990.
  48. The Authority's Legal and Psychiatric and Court Services panels (June 26 and August 13, 1990).
  49. The Authority's Legal and Psychiatric Panel (June 26, 1990).
  50. Catherine Trapani, Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychiatry, Director, Academic and Social Skills Evaluation and Tutoring Service, University of Chicago, interview: May 26, 1991.
  51. James Ysseldyke, interview: May 27, 1991.

52. Ysseldyke (May 27, 1991).
53. "Research About Teacher Education Project III," *Teaching Teachers: Facts and Figures* (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1989).
54. *Newsweek* (October 1, 1990): 58-90.
55. Catherine Trapani, interview: September 24, 1990.
56. The Authority's Legal and Psychiatric Panel (June 26, 1990).
57. A national study of at-risk students conducted by the National Rural and Small Schools Consortium and the American Council on Rural Special Education found a lack of social, psychological, and family counseling services in rural areas. According to the study, "many rural communities have inadequate . . . special education . . . and instruction designed to prevent drug and alcohol abuse." Doris Helge, *A National Study Regarding At-Risk Students* (Bellingham, Wash.: Western Washington University, 1990): 1-23; the Authority's Court Services Panel (August 13, 1990).
58. James Gordon Ward, *City Schools, Rural Schools*, MacArthur/Spencer Series Number 6 (Normal, Ill.: Illinois State University, Center for the Study of Educational Finance, 1988): 5.
59. The Authority's Court Services Panel (August 13, 1990). See also "Push-outs," below.
60. The Authority's Court Services Panel (August 13, 1990).
61. Ira M. Schwartz and Frank Orlando, *Programming for Young Women in the Juvenile Justice System* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Center for the Study of Youth Policy, 1991).
62. Illinois Department of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, *FY 91 Update: A Comprehensive Plan for Alcohol/Other Drug Services* (Springfield, Ill., 1991) sec. V: 8-10.
63. The Authority's Court Services Panel (August 13, 1990).
64. *In re Illinois State Board of Education*, Docket No. 86-504-8.
65. Ken Klimusko and Nancy Filson, the Authority's Court Services Panel (August 13, 1990).
66. Interview with official in the Elementary and Secondary Education Division, Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, November 28, 1990.
67. The Authority's Legal and Psychiatric and Court Services panels (June 26 and August 13, 1990).
68. Judge Julia Dempsey, the Authority's Court Services Panel (August 13, 1990).
69. The Authority's Court Services Panel (August 13, 1990).
70. The Authority's Court Services Panel (August 13, 1990) and the Juvenile Officers Roundtable (June 29, 1990).
71. Under new guidelines for special education passed in January 1991 and effective September 1, 1991, "all equivocal language [from the old Illinois guidelines] which previously allowed exclusion for certain specific reasons has been removed [paragraph 226.40(b)]. Of note is the part of [the preceding] paragraph that prohibits exclusion even via 'informal agreements between parents and the school district.' For example, 'If you quietly withdraw Donnie we won't take you through the unpleasant experience of expulsion . . .'" Brooke Whitted, *Special Education in Illinois: Outline of New Rule Changes and Federal Amendment Highlights* (Chicago: Whitted and Associates, 1991): 1.
72. The Authority's Court Services Panel (August 13, 1990) and the Juvenile Officers Roundtable (June 29, 1990).
73. The Authority's Court Services Panel (August 13, 1990).
74. Bernard Karlin, Principal, Montefiore Special School, Chicago, interview: November 28, 1990.
75. Karlin (November 28, 1990), and John Stephens, Illinois Association for At-Risk Youth.
76. The Authority's Court Services Panel (August 13, 1990).
77. In *Hollenbeck v. Board of Education* (694F. Supp. 658, 1988), a federal appeals court found that otherwise qualified students with disabilities have the same privilege of extracurricular participation as nondisabled students.
78. Cline, "A Legal Analysis" (1990).
79. The Authority's Court Services Panel (August 13, 1990).
80. Juvenile Officers Roundtable (June 29, 1990).
81. Juvenile Officers Roundtable (June 29, 1990).
82. Juvenile Officers Roundtable (June 29, 1990).
83. *Report of the Survey of Agencies Providing Community-Based Mental Health Services to Children and Adolescents* (Coalition for Child Mental Health Services in Illinois, August 1989); and Joan Costello, *Mental Health Planning for Emotionally Handicapped Children in Illinois* (Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children, University of Chicago, 1989).
84. *Criminal Justice Policy Making: Boundaries and Borderlines* (Evanston, Ill.: Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, 1990).
85. The Authority's Court Services Panel (August 13, 1990).
86. Ill.Rev.Stat. ch. 23, par. 5005-6.
87. The Authority's Court Services Panel (August 13, 1990).
88. 34 C.F.R. 104.3(J).
89. Cline, "A Legal Analysis" (1990): 169.



# Truancy and Dropout



If schools do not meet the needs of students, there is a good chance those students will become truant and drop out. Keeping children in school is a major concern for many school districts in Illinois. But truants and dropouts create problems for more than just the schools; they also create problems for other systems—such as the courts and corrections—that may ultimately have to deal with these students.

## TRUANCY

Truancy is usually viewed as a precursor to the more serious problem of dropping out, but it is also a concern to school systems in its own right. Truancy creates administrative tasks, and it burdens teachers with providing review and makeup work for students who have returned from

unexcused absences. By decreasing the average daily attendance in schools, truancy can also result in expensive reductions in state reimbursement payments to school districts.

A high correlation has been found between truancy and juvenile crime. A 1985 study of 127 chronic truants in Kane County indicated that “. . . 76 percent [of truants] were caught in non-school-related crimes within two years of their truancy violation.”<sup>1</sup>

### Defining and assessing truancy

According to the Illinois School Code, a truant is a child under age 16 who is subject to compulsory school attendance and who

is absent without valid cause during a full school day or some portion of it. A chronic or habitual truant is a student who has been absent without valid cause for 10 percent or more of the previous 180 regular attendance days. The line that separates the chronic truant from the dropout is not distinct and may shift from district to district. Nevertheless, without aggressive intervention, most chronic truants become dropouts.

The definition of truancy is subject to different interpretations at the local district level, which makes comparing truancy rates across the state difficult. For example, some schools will mark a

## The cost of truancy

Every school day, an average of approximately 120,000 students are missing from Illinois classrooms due to truancy. The cost to Illinois public schools in lost state reimbursement due to truancy (based on average daily attendance) in the 1989–1990 school year was \$142.6 million.

Source: Computed from Illinois State Board of Education data

student as truant after an absence of one hour without a valid excuse, while others will wait until midday before the student is recorded as officially truant.

In the 1988–1989 school year, about 7 percent of Illinois public school students—or almost 120,000—were truant on any given day, ranging from 0.5 percent truant to 39 percent truant in various schools. The 1988–1989 average truancy rate is 13 percent higher than the 1984–1985 rate. In Illinois public high schools, the number of chronic truants also rose sharply. Almost 21,000 chronic truants were identified in all Illinois public schools in 1984–1985. By the 1988–1989 school year, that figure had risen to more than 31,000. More than 1,500 chronic truants were identified during the 1988–1989 school year in elementary districts (grades 1–8), more than 3,000 in high school districts, and almost 27,000 in unit (K–12) districts.<sup>2</sup> During the 1989–1990 school year, the number of chronic truants increased once again to a record level of almost 34,000 students—a 7-percent increase over the previous year and a staggering 61-percent increase since 1985.<sup>3</sup> These increases have taken place despite the Illinois General Assembly's passage in 1985 of a major package of school reform initiatives, including several proposals aimed at reducing truancy and preventing dropout.

Annual counts of truants and chronic truants collected by the State Board of Education reveal that truancy tends to be concentrated in certain school districts and schools and remains consistent over time.<sup>4</sup> Districts with the highest numbers of chronic truants have remained nearly the same from 1982 to 1990. While there have been some changes within rank order for the 10 school districts with the highest numbers of chronic truants, only one school district—Thornton Township High School in southern Cook County—has been dropped from the list since 1982, and the Alton Community School District moved from 12th place to fifth place (Figure 6.1).

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*“The ultimate [truancy prevention] program is to recognize the differences in kids at the preschool age and attack these problems early. In all probability, you wouldn't need preventive programs for many high school kids if you attended to their problems at an early age.”*

Andy Bitta, Dean  
Maine South High School  
Past President of the Illinois Deans' Association  
(February 8, 1991)

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While the size of the district influences the numbers of chronic truants, districts with high enrollments are not the only ones with large numbers of chronic truants. Two districts (Aurora East and Alton Community), with fewer than 9,000 students, and the Proviso Township High School District (in two suburbs in western Cook County), with 4,300 students, also appear on the 1989–1990 list of schools with the highest numbers of students who are chronically truant.

Truancy and dropout are statewide problems, and they both can be concentrated in city districts of varying sizes, as well as suburban communities. Districts with high numbers of chronic truants characteristically are those with high percentages of enrollment by minority and low-income students and with low educational attainment of parents in the district.<sup>5</sup>

### How do we know who's truant?

Without good procedures for identifying truant students, those students cannot be helped. The amount of effort expended on identifying and working with chronically truant youngsters usually depends on the priority assigned to them by the district superintendent, or, in some cases, by the individual principal. In some areas, however, officials have few resources available for tracking down missing students and returning them to school.

James Deets of the Office of the County Superintendent of Schools in St. Clair County reported that a special effort was made at the beginning of the 1990–1991 school year to trace and identify truant and other “missing” students. It was expected that no more than a few dozen students would be found to be truant. By October 1, more than 400 students who had been on the 1989–1990 enrollment lists were reported as missing from the 1990–1991 lists, and the names were still coming in. While some of these students may be receiving home schooling or may have transferred to schools that are slow in requesting old records, the majority are undoubtedly truants and dropouts. Mr. Deets admitted his office lacks the resources to properly investigate such a large volume of cases. “If you want an answer to the question: ‘Can downstate counties adequately track truancy?’, the simple answer is no,” he said.<sup>6</sup>

John Stephens, an administrator in the Jefferson County superintendent's office, ob-

Figure 6.1

### School districts with the most chronic truants

|  | Rank<br>1989–1990 | Rank<br>1982–1983 | Number of<br>chronic<br>truants<br>1989–1990 | Truants as<br>percent of<br>enrollment<br>1989–1990 | Rank: truants<br>as percent<br>of enrollment<br>1989–1990 |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|--|---|---|
| Chicago ( District 299)  | 1                 | 1                 | 15,992                                       | 3.92  | 7   |
| Rockford (District 205)  | 2                 | 3                 | 2,117  | 7.91  | 4   |
| East St. Louis (District 189)  | 3                 | 4                 | 758  | 4.73  | 5   |
| Aurora East (District 131)   | 4                 | 10                | 729  | 8.22  | 3   |
| Alton Community (District 11)  | 5                 | 12                | 617  | 8.47  | 2   |
| Elgin (Unit District 46)   | 6                 | 9                 | 547  | 2.04  | 10  |
| Waukegan Community (District 60)                                     | 7                 | 7                 | 488  | 4.23  | 6   |
| Springfield (District 186)   | 8                 | 5                 | 464  | 2.98  | 8   |
| Proviso Township High School<br>(Maywood and Hillside, District 209) | 9                 | 2                 | 457  | 10.53   | 1   |
| Peoria (District 150)  | 10                | 6                 | 438  | 2.56  | 9   |

*Note: Proviso is a high school district. All of the other districts are unit (K–12) districts. Also, the districts listed are of vastly differing sizes.*

*Source: Illinois State Board of Education*

served that human nature often enters into enforcement policies. “If a child is a troublemaker, and there's no substantial parental involvement,” he said, “you can expect that not much effort is going to be made to retrieve that child.”<sup>7</sup>

From 1984 through 1989, truancy rates in Chicago exceeded the statewide average by an average of 4 percent.<sup>8</sup> With 155 truant officers to serve Chicago's 604 public schools, school officials argue that little real investigation of truancy cases is possible.<sup>9</sup> According to a 1986 study of eight Chicago public schools, some school administrators do not monitor truancy in their schools at all and fail to maintain good records of students' attendance. The same study showed that schools with lower dropout rates also had the best attendance records.<sup>10</sup>

### What disciplinary measures do schools use with truants?

Truancy is most often punished with in-school suspension (ISS), a type of supervised study hall. Although perhaps better than out-of-school suspension for truants, like out-of-school suspension, ISS can compound the effects of the unexcused absence, causing students to fall even further behind in their studies.<sup>11</sup> Under optimal conditions, a conscientious teacher will provide students with study assignments to make up the missed classroom time while under ISS, and the supervisor of the study hall will be available to assist with assignments. Too often, though, a

group of loosely supervised and unmotivated students are confined without much useful occupation or direction.<sup>12</sup>

In some school districts, three unexcused absences from a class result in a student being dropped from class enrollment altogether, making it impossible for the student to rejoin the class after a brief unexcused absence. When this occurs, students may be subject to in-school sus-

pension, may be assigned to study hall for the rest of the term, or may leave school until they can re-enroll at the beginning of the next term.

Some educators, as well as truancy program directors, probation officers, and parents, have questioned the rationale of punishing students who cut school with further enforced absences from the regular instructional program, whether in or out of school. Advocates for students at risk of dropout have complained that truancy is often used by some principals as a reason to suggest a transfer to another school. This practice, they say, avoids responsibility for addressing the student's problems and increases the chances that a marginal student will drop out.<sup>13</sup>

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*"Sometimes we see a case of a kid who is running out of control. We can see a disaster coming, and we know that other agencies are not going to step in until the worst has happened. I'll admit that when I'm doing a parent interview in this kind of case I will sometimes say, 'Surely he must have taken something from you....' It troubles me, but I know if we can come in with a delinquent petition, we may be able to get the court involved before it's too late."*

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*Juvenile Probation Officer*

### **When and how does the juvenile justice system step in?**

Many court services personnel and juvenile court judges say that schools throughout the state fail to provide truants with services mandated by the Illinois Juvenile Court Act.<sup>14</sup> According to these judges and other court workers, schools, by not recording and investigating chronic truants, are trying to avoid providing the evaluation and other services specified in the act. Judges report that a series of statutory changes to the act made during the 1980s have made it much more difficult for them to intervene with most truant youths. Not all members of the judiciary share those views, however. Some judges continue to feel that truancy cases would further overload dockets crowded with delinquency petitions. This concern is shared by some juvenile probation officers, who do not

believe they can take on increased responsibility for handling truants.<sup>15</sup>

Restrictions imposed on the court by changes to the act have caused some juvenile officers and court services personnel to intentionally "criminalize" non-delinquent children in order to qualify them for services from the court. For example, because services for status offenders and truant youths are difficult to obtain, juvenile officers and court services personnel sometimes coach parents to declare their child delinquent in order to give the court jurisdiction.<sup>16</sup>

Juvenile officers working in the schools confirmed that such practices occur. For example, one officer described a youth offender program, funded by the Illinois State Police, in a suburb of Chicago. Intended for delinquent youngsters who are not serious offenders, the program works with a family services agency to provide crisis intervention and family counseling to head off more serious problems. Pre-court probation officers are also assigned to youths in this program. Juvenile officers reported that they often try to get non-delinquent minors requiring authoritative intervention into the youth offender program, because this gives them a stronger vehicle for intervention.<sup>17</sup>

Many police and court personnel say that the advantages of obtaining services outweigh the disadvantages of labeling a troubled but non-delinquent youth as "delinquent." Since the network of supportive services envisioned in the changes to the Juvenile Court Act has not materialized, declaring a youth delinquent is often the only way timely and appropriate interventions can be made.<sup>18</sup> Judges and juvenile officers say it is more cost-effective to intervene forcefully at early signs of trouble than to wait until a delinquent pattern is fully entrenched.<sup>19</sup>

### **Laws and procedures pertaining to truants**

In 1983, changes to Illinois' Juvenile Court Act removed a category of juveniles from the jurisdiction of the court (see Appendix E, Social Service Availability for Juveniles, and Chapter 4, Law Enforcement in the Schools). That category, known as minor in need of supervision (MINS), had allowed the courts to intervene directly with run-aways, truants, and youngsters judged beyond parental control. In the case of truants, a com-

plaint of educational neglect could also be filed against parents. Proponents of these changes had successfully argued that non-delinquent youth should be referred to community-based mental health, social, and remedial services—they should not be criminalized by being brought before the court. Under the revised act, for example, chronic truants identified by a regional superintendent of schools are supposed to receive an array of services stipulated in the law, including prevention, diagnostic, intervention, and remedial services; alternative school programs; and referral to other school and community resources.<sup>20</sup>

Under the former version of the law, juvenile courts in all districts of the state were authorized to intervene immediately in cases of chronic truancy. Under the revised law in counties except Cook, a chronic truant may be declared a truant minor in need of supervision (TINS) by the court, but only after resources in the local school district have been refused or tried without success.

Cook County was exempted from the TINS section of the act, and the juvenile court there is prohibited from hearing cases of minors who are truant. The reason for this exemption was that, given the volume of truancy in Cook County, the courts could become swamped with such cases, diverting the court's time and attention from more serious juvenile crime. In Cook County, the court may intervene in matters of truancy only when a minor is already under court jurisdiction for delinquency or some other matter. Cook County Juvenile Court, which used to handle hundreds of truancy hearings every year, received only about 25 referrals for truancy in 1989. All other cases of truancy are handled by the Chicago school district and the regional superintendent of schools.

In those counties where the court is permitted to intervene, the court has several options to deal with chronic truants in need of supervision:

- Commitment to the regional superintendent for services or referral
- An individualized educational or service plan provided by the regional superintendent
- Counseling or other support services
- A \$5–\$100 fine for each day of truancy
- Public service work
- Suspension of driving privileges by revocation of license or learner's permit.

The first three options open to the court have usually been tried unsuccessfully by school authorities, but plans that formerly relied on voluntary cooperation can be made mandatory by the court.

The effectiveness of the changes to the Juvenile Court Act in reducing chronic truancy and preventing students from dropping out depends on numerous school, district, and regional procedures and programs. Under the revised act, to serve chronic truants, school systems must provide the following:

- Accurate records of absences in each local school to determine which students are chronically truant
- Adequate numbers of truant officers to investigate truancy cases
- Timely academic and vocational assessments resulting in individual educational or service plans
- Educational and social skills intervention programs to help truants make up academic deficiencies and cope with problems with peers and peer pressure
- Alternative school programs designed for dropout prevention
- Accurate reporting to the regional superintendent of truants who fail to respond to local interventions
- Effective monitoring of truancy cases by the regional superintendent.<sup>21</sup>

To determine the effectiveness of the revised act, Authority researchers investigated the 10 Illinois districts reporting the highest number of chronic truants, according to the State Board of Education (see Figure 6.1).<sup>22</sup> To find out how well chronic truants are tracked and reported and how many are receiving the school-based services mentioned in the law, which must be exhausted before court referrals can occur, district superintendents or their representatives were asked the following questions:

- How is truancy defined in your district?
- How many of the chronic truants listed by the State Board of Education in your district were reported to the regional superintendent?

- How many chronic truants received each type of designated service?
- What sorts of records are kept to document the handling of cases?

While these 10 districts may not be representative of Illinois districts as a whole, the survey suggests that procedures for handling chronic truancy cases are not standardized and reporting discrepancies are frequent. The 10 districts produced four distinctly different definitions of truancy, and only three reported that a single definition was in use throughout the district. In the other districts, truancy was defined differently by each individual school.

Procedures and intervals for reporting chronic truancy cases to regional superintendents varied widely from district to district. In some cases, individual schools reported their totals to the district superintendent, who, in turn, relayed the information to the regional superintendent. In other districts, schools reported the information directly to regional superintendents in intervals varying from monthly to semiannually.

The number of truants recorded by the State Board of Education (as reported by local districts) and the number reported to regional superintendents was identical in only two of the 10 districts surveyed. In six districts the number of truants reported to regional superintendents was smaller than the total number recorded by the State Board of Education. Discrepancies ranged from approximately 12 percent in Chicago to more than 98 percent in Proviso Township High School, with an average for the six districts of 46.3 percent. No explanation was provided for these discrepancies, and several of the districts were surprised to learn that they had been ranked among districts with the highest number of truants. One district official in Alton reported that principals in his area did not adhere to the state's definition for chronic truancy and did not separate truants into different categories, making any reporting on chronic truancy impossible. Two districts were unable to determine how many chronic truants had been reported to their regional superintendent.

None of the districts polled was able to provide information about how many chronic truants were receiving the various types of services listed in the Juvenile Court Act. According to most

of these district officials, truancy cases are handled on an individual basis, and either no records are kept of how individual cases are handled (two districts) or truancy is seen as only one aspect of student's problems and is not tracked or recorded separately (six districts). In one district (East St. Louis), the regional superintendent is notified of only those truancy cases that are to be referred to the juvenile court.

Very few truants in any of these districts are referred to the courts on TINS petitions. The largest number of court referrals was reported in Waukegan, where 12 of the 86 students referred to the regional superintendent for special services were sent on to the court. Officials in four districts said they had no idea how many truants were sent to the court and had no way of finding out.

Many of these school officials were unaware of the legal remedies open to them in pursuing truancy cases, such as prosecution of parents under the Illinois School Code. Truancy is a violation of Section 26-1 of the code, a Class C misdemeanor, carrying a penalty for parents of a \$500 fine or 30 days in jail. Truancy prevention program directors note that this charge is far easier to prove against parents than the previously used charge of educational neglect. Truancy is established simply by showing that unexcused absences occurred, while educational neglect was vague and open to broad interpretation.<sup>23</sup>

As indicated by the Authority's informal survey and by other research, methods of coping with truancy vary from region to region. Below are two examples of different effective programs operating in different parts of the state. In both cases, success depends on close cooperation between individual school and court authorities. Such informal arrangements can be threatened by changes in key personnel within either the schools or the courts.

#### *Southern Illinois*

Three educational service regions serving 51 school districts in southern Illinois have banded together under the auspices of a statewide program to provide services to truant children and their families.

When a principal in this five-county region (Clinton, Hamilton, Jefferson, Marion, and Washington counties) becomes aware that a child is



truant, the principal, a nurse, a counselor, or other staff member is assigned to investigate the cause of the child's absence. If the problem cannot be resolved by any of those local school officials, the child may be referred to the Truants' Alternative and Optional Education Program (TAOEP).<sup>24</sup> A caseworker assesses the family's situation and determines what types of services are needed to return the child to school, including tutorial services,<sup>25</sup> visits by a home health nurse, or visits by a counselor. When problems are more severe, an individual education plan is developed, following a meeting of the parents and all of the school personnel who have been involved with the case. Options for a student may include referral to one of three accredited alternative schools that offer a variety of day and evening programs.

If none of these measures resolves the problem, the matter is referred to the regional superintendent of schools, who serves as the chief truant officer in many regions. Only very large districts assign additional staff to these duties. The superintendent may issue a first legal notice warning the parents that the matter will be brought to court, if not corrected. If there is no response, a second notice may be issued and a truancy petition may be filed against the parents in adult court.

Once school district resources have been exhausted, a TINS petition may also be filed against the child in juvenile court.<sup>26</sup> If the child is found by the court to be beyond the parents' control, a minor requiring authoritative intervention petition may also be filed.<sup>27</sup> If the parents or child fail to abide by the court's ruling that the child return to school, they can be found in contempt of court.

Matters rarely go to court, however. Fewer than a dozen truancy cases were brought before the juvenile court in Jefferson County in the 1989–1990 school year, for example.<sup>28</sup> While no separate effectiveness measures were available for the five-county program, the 54 to 60 TAOEP programs statewide successfully helped 76 percent of the students they served in fiscal year 1989. During that year, 26,573 students received services and 52 percent were subsequently promoted to a higher grade, 11 percent received academic credit without promotion, 6 percent received a high school diploma or GED, and 8 percent returned to regular school. Twenty-six

percent of the 4,000 who returned to regular school dropped out again, however. More than 14,000 students were on TAOEP waiting lists that year.<sup>29</sup>

#### *Collar counties*

A truancy prevention program, started more than 16 years ago in Kane County, expanded in 1986 to provide services in DeKalb County and in 1988 extended its services to students in McHenry County. In the 1989–1990 school year, more than 1,500 referrals were made to the program.

Schools must have attempted to resolve a truancy problem through home visits, testing, or counseling before the problem can be referred to the program. A family outreach counselor or truant officer will then make a home visit within 72 hours of referral.

Clem Mejia, director of the Kane County Truancy Prevention Program, reports that, especially in cases involving younger children, inadequate parenting skills are usually at fault in a pattern of persistent truancy, and such parents are often eager to shift responsibility for their child's truancy to the program. Family counselors work with the family to help parents accept responsibility for

ending the truancy. If this is unsuccessful, the next steps increase the pressure on the parents to cooperate with the program. The final step, before bringing the parents to court, is a contract specifying what the parents must do to ensure their child returns to school. In some cases, parents have been required to accompany the child throughout the school day to insure that each class is attended.

If the contract is refused or violated, a truancy charge will be filed against the parents. During the 1989–1990 school year, program administrators brought approximately 150 cases to court under this charge. Several parents were sent to jail, and many others were heavily fined. Jail terms for parents ranged from weekend incarcerations to 30 days in the county jail. "We always exhaust the adult route first," Mr. Mejia said, "because we believe it was not the child who

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*"Truancy is just the tip of the iceberg. It is usually a symptom of something going on in the family. That is why we target our interventions to the whole family. We put the responsibility for solving the problem back on parents."*

*Clem Mejia  
Director, Kane County Truancy  
Prevention Program  
(October 3, 1990)*

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created this problem, but the parents." Only when all efforts with parents have failed will the program file a TINS petition against the child. Mr. Mejia reports that judges in the area have been cooperative and supportive of the program's methods. "Judges have recognized that dealing firmly with these parents and kids now is preferable to dealing with an adult offender later," he said.<sup>30</sup>

Before the program began in Kane County in 1975, the truancy rate for the county was 6.5 percent, 0.5 percent higher than the state average. In the first year of the program the county's truancy rate fell to 6.4 percent, 0.75 percent *lower* than the state average. In subsequent years the county's truancy rate continued to fall, and in the 1989–1990 school year, truancy in Kane County was 1.7 percent lower than the state average.<sup>31</sup>

## **DROPOUTS AND THEIR COST TO SOCIETY**

While some children may commit delinquent acts

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### **Does dropout begin in kindergarten?**

A small pilot study of the attendance records of students in kindergarten through third grade in Kane County found that student absenteeism in early grades is related to later school success and failure. Douglas Hoeft, superintendent of the Kane County Educational Service Region, looked at the attendance records of 75 high school graduates and 25 high school dropouts and found that the average number of school absences during the first four years of school was closely associated with school performance among students ranking in the top, middle, and bottom of their graduating classes. The 25 students ranking at the bottom of their graduating class had 86 percent more absences during their elementary years than the 25 students at the top of their class (an average of 10.7 days per year, compared with an average of 5.8 days). Students who had dropped out before completing high school had 120 percent more absences than the top-ranking students and 84 percent more absences than the average students.

By the time they reached high school, the dropouts had missed 62 more days of school than their peers who graduated—the equivalent of almost a full semester of school. According to Mr. Hoeft, every day of absence is the equivalent of two days of lost schooling, because of the difficulty in making up missed work while keeping up with current assignments. Moreover, the attendance patterns associated with dropout become apparent as early as kindergarten, where the top group missed an average of only 6 days, but the group that eventually dropped out of high school missed 15.25 days. Because young children do not control their own absenteeism, the important question, Mr. Hoeft said, is to find out what is going on in the homes of kindergartners to cause excessive absenteeism.

"The home environment and the parents' attitude are critical to the eventual success or failure of the high school student," Mr. Hoeft said. "This is a message we have to communicate to parents."

Source: Douglas Hoeft. "The Importance of Attendance on the Success of Students in Three Kane County High Schools" *County to County* (Winter 1991): 15.

while truant from school, truancy's greatest impact is its role as a prelude to school dropout, which in turn is often a prelude to crime.

The cost to society of truants and dropouts can be tallied in many different ways. A 1989 study found that the correlation between high school dropout rates and incarceration rates among adults is higher than the correlation between smoking and lung cancer. States with the highest graduation rates tend to have the lowest rates of prisoners per 100,000 population, and conversely, those with the highest incarceration rates also have the highest dropout rates.<sup>32</sup>

In Minnesota in 1987, for example, 90.6 percent of high school students achieved graduation, the highest rate in the nation. The number of prisoners per 100,000 population in Minnesota was only 60, the second-lowest rate in the nation. Florida, on the other hand, has the highest number of prisoners per 100,000 population and the lowest graduation rate of any state.<sup>33</sup> In Illinois in 1989, the graduation rate was 78 percent, down from 82.6 percent in 1987. During the same period, the incarceration rate climbed 13 percent, from 172 per 100,000 in 1987 to 194 per 100,000 in 1989.

Both national and local statistics show that very high percentages of offenders are high school dropouts. A 1989 report by the National Institute of Justice on people arrested in 1988 in 20 major U.S. cities indicated that more than 50 percent of the people arrested in Chicago had not completed high school.<sup>34</sup> A 1987 study found that 71 percent of all prison inmates nationwide never completed high school.<sup>35</sup>

The Authority's Survey of Educational Experiences and Attitudes of Inmates in the Illinois Department of Corrections, of 693 male and female inmates admitted to IDOC during two weeks in the summer of 1990, found that 72.3 percent had not graduated from high school (see Chapter 7, Educational Experiences of Inmates, and Appendix C, Inmate Survey Methodology).

Studies recently cited by a Congressional committee show that dropouts and truants tend to abuse drugs more frequently than their peers who attend high school, and they appear more often in treatment centers. The Select Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives on Narcotics Abuse and Control, which investigated the links between dropouts and drug abuse, found "a



serious drug abuse problem among dropouts" and concluded that "drugs and dropping out are clearly associated; not only are they associated with each other, but with a variety of other behaviors and characteristics, including low self-esteem and poor school performance. Minorities are impacted more severely by these problems. Drug use is greater among dropouts than other students, and those most in need of assistance may be those most difficult to reach."<sup>36</sup>

Further evidence suggests that dropouts consume more public services of all types than do graduates.<sup>37</sup> Individuals without a high school education tend to be relatively unproductive members of the work force, earning significantly less than high school graduates and contributing less to the tax base. Approximately 1 million young people drop out of school in the United States each year. Over a lifetime, each individual dropout earns \$200,000 to \$260,000 less than the average high school graduate. For each additional year of secondary education completed, there is a 35-percent decrease in the probability of welfare dependency. Each year's class of dropouts, over their lifetimes, represents about \$260 billion in lost earnings. The cost to the country must be counted in terms of lost productivity, forgone taxes, and increased welfare dependency, as well as increased criminal justice costs created by those dropouts who become criminal offenders.<sup>38</sup>

An analysis of student outcomes in Chicago found that dropouts tend to be far more dependent on welfare and unemployment assistance, and are more likely to live a life of poverty.<sup>39</sup> The association between dropouts and criminality, coupled with the dismal economic future for the dropout (and society), make the dropout rate a serious problem.

### **Dropout rates**

In the long term, high school dropout rates in the United States have fallen dramatically. According to the Bureau of the Census, in 1940 more than 60 percent of persons 25 to 29 years old had not completed high school. By 1980, that proportion had dropped to 16 percent. While the long-term trend is encouraging, increases in dropout rates in recent years, especially among certain minority groups, are cause for continuing concern, especially since such minority groups constitute a

growing segment of total school enrollment.<sup>40</sup>

The educational demands of the workplace have also increased since the 1940s, and very few jobs in the present economy are open to job applicants without high school diplomas, compared to 40 years ago. Dropping out today is far more likely to result in joblessness.

Dropout rates can be measured in a number of ways. School districts in Illinois generally count as dropouts those students in a given year whose names had initially appeared on enrollment rosters, but were subsequently removed for any reason other than transfer to another school, death, illness or, in the case of high school students, graduation.

According to this method of measurement, the dropout rate for Illinois public high schools was 6.5 percent for the 1988–1989 school year, an increase from 5.1 percent in 1984–1985.<sup>41</sup> According to Harold L. Hodgkinson, director of the Center for Demographic Policy at the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, D.C., Illinois has a lower high school dropout rate than other states of comparable size.

The state rate may be deceptive, however, because of the high concentration of dropouts in the central cities, especially among some minorities in Chicago.<sup>42</sup>

Almost 10,000 students who entered Chicago public high schools in 1984 failed to complete their secondary education. A study of the 1984 freshman class found that almost 37 percent of the white students dropped out before graduation in 1988 (1,354 students). Asian students had the lowest dropout rates—15.3 percent (118 students) failed to graduate. Dropout rates for other minorities were significantly higher: 41.2 percent of black students (6,222), 43.5 percent of Hispanics (1,873), and 68 percent of Native Americans (17) left school without graduating. The overall dropout rate for Chicago students of all ethnic groups is dramatically higher than the statewide dropout rate of 6.5 percent.<sup>43</sup>

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*"The GED is the gateway to educational and economic opportunity for millions of Americans. It's a matter of national concern that too many adults who would benefit from these opportunities find their paths blocked by obstacles that could be removed by more enlightened policies and programs to facilitate their participation."*

*Douglas Whitney  
Director, GED Testing Service of the  
American Council on Education  
Quoted in the Springfield (Ill.) State  
Journal-Register  
(October 18, 1990)*

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Dropout rates are particularly high for certain subgroups of students in Chicago. For example, 69 percent of all black public high school students who have been held back in school and are older than their classmates drop out. The dropout rate for black males of all ages is 47.2 percent, and 49.3 percent of Hispanic males leave high school without graduating.

And while the numbers seem high already, official statewide and local high school dropout rates may seriously undercount the actual number of students in Illinois who do not complete high school. First, they count only those who dropped out after starting high school in the first place, without counting those who may have dropped out in elementary or junior high school. Second, the criteria for considering a student a dropout vary from district to district. In Chicago, for example, students who leave school due to pregnancy are excluded from dropout totals and are counted in separate categories.<sup>44</sup> Finally, students who transfer are not counted as dropouts unless there is evidence that the transfer was

never completed. A study commissioned by the Chicago Board of Education, however, determined that one-half of student "transfers" in 63 Chicago public high schools were improperly recorded and should be considered as dropouts. According to William Rice, the principal statistician for the Chicago Board of Education, the city's methods of counting dropouts have improved since these studies were made. But, he said, "the degree of success has not been high" in verifying the completion of student transfers, and many dropouts continue to be counted as student transfers.<sup>45</sup>

Another way of counting dropouts is to compare the number of students who begin school as freshmen with the number who graduate four years later. This graduation rate, in effect, incorporates a four-year cumulative dropout rate.

The statewide public high school graduation rate for 1989 was 78 percent, down from 82.6 percent in 1987. But 39 high schools in the state had graduation rates lower than 50 percent, 38 of them in Cook County.<sup>46</sup> In the 1989–1990 school

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### High school equivalency testing

The long-term consequences of dropping out are more severe when equivalency testing declines.

For the past several decades, many dropouts have earned a high school diploma through equivalency testing. The General Educational Development (GED) test has been recognized by many employers and colleges since 1942 as an acceptable alternative to high school graduation. Almost one out of every five (18 percent) students in the United States who completed their secondary educations in 1989 did it through the GED.<sup>1</sup> The equivalency certificates received by these students qualify them for college enrollment, training programs, jobs, and job advancement.

A study by the American Council on Education reported that in 1989, 683,000 students nationwide took the GED test—7 percent fewer than in 1988. This represented only about 1.3 percent of adults aged 19 or older in the United States without a high school diploma.<sup>2</sup> In Illinois, the decline in GED testing between 1988 and 1989 was almost three times the national average for that year. In 1988, more than 30,000 Illinois students were tested. In 1989, that figure dropped to approximately 24,000, a 20-percent decline.<sup>3</sup>

The national researchers noted that the number of people between 18 and 24—the age group that makes up the majority of candidates for testing—has declined as a percentage of the U.S. population as a whole. The shrinking size of this age group, however, accounted for only about half of the

26-percent decline nationwide in the number of GED candidates since 1980.<sup>4</sup> Some decline may have been due to the increasing difficulty of the test, including the addition of an essay section. Additional causes for the decline are unknown. Demographic changes in Illinois mirror this national trend and likewise fail to fully explain the drop in GED testing. In Illinois, the population in the age range 15 to 20 has declined only about 10 percent since 1980.<sup>5</sup>

Fewer students in Illinois are taking the GED test than in other states of comparable population size. Florida, for example, with a population only 3 percent larger than that of Illinois, tested 58 percent more students in 1989. Michigan, with 20 percent fewer residents, tested approximately the same number of students in 1989 as Illinois. The percentage of students passing the test in Illinois is also lower than the national average. Nationally, 68.5 percent of students tested in 1989 received their equivalency diplomas, while in Illinois, 64.2 percent of students passed the test.<sup>6</sup>

1. *Chicago Tribune* (October 22, 1990): 12.

2. Douglas Whitney and Janet Baldwin, "GED Candidates: A Decade of Change" *GED Profiles: Adults in Transition*, vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: GED Testing Service, American Council on Education, October 1990).

3. Roz Petrilli, State Administrator for GED Testing, Illinois State Board of Education, interview: October 22, 1990.

4. Whitney and Baldwin (1990).

5. *Illinois Population Projections Revised: 1970-2025* (Springfield, Ill.: Bureau of the Budget, June 1981).

6. Petrilli (October 22, 1990).



year, 40 of Chicago's 63 public high schools had graduation rates lower than 50 percent.<sup>47</sup> In Illinois in 1990, about 16 percent of white students left high school without graduating. Among black students, 42 percent failed to graduate, and among Hispanics, 43 percent never completed high school.<sup>48</sup> Statewide, these percentages translate into more than 35,000 public school students who fail to complete their high school education each year.<sup>49</sup>

### WHY DO STUDENTS DROP OUT?

Many factors can contribute to a student's decision to drop out of school. The typical dropout is a minority male (especially a language minority), who had been held back at least once in a previous grade and who drops out in 10th grade. The typical dropout is also likely to come from a low-income, single-parent household.

Pregnancy, marriage, or holding a job outside of school also increases the risk of an individual leaving school. Poor academic performance—particularly low verbal ability—and truancy are also attributes of many dropouts. Special education students drop out at a higher rate than the regular education population, but unlike regular education dropouts, special education students who drop out have no distinguishing gender, racial, or ethnic characteristics.<sup>50</sup> This indicates that status as a special education student is more important than any demographic characteristic in its relationship to dropping out.

Delinquency is another important factor in dropping out (see also Chapter 7, Educational Experiences of Inmates). Juvenile police officers have reported that many schools are not interested in readmitting a youngster who has committed an offense serious enough to result in detention or placement in the Youth Division of IDOC. The juvenile officers say that school administrators often expect such a youth will be a disruptive influence in the school.<sup>51</sup> However, unless detention was caused by a delinquent act in the school that also resulted in formal school expulsion proceedings, schools are *required* to readmit the student or find an appropriate alternative placement.<sup>52</sup>

Some schools drop a student from class enrollment after three unexcused absences. The school may not be aware that the student is in juvenile detention or has had to make court ap-

pearances, or may even have a policy that time spent in court is considered an unexcused absence.<sup>53</sup> Students who do return after being dropped from classes often must spend the school day in extended study hall for the remainder of the term, without useful scholastic activity or any progress toward graduation. Additional disciplinary restrictions, such as exclusion from extracurricular activities or sports programs, may be placed on the student.

Even if the student is readmitted to classes after detention, the conditions of readmission may promote dropping out. Most schools do not award credit for schoolwork done in the county juvenile detention programs, and there may be little continuity between the school program and the classes held in the detention center. When students return to school from detention, they may find the transition difficult both academically and socially. Without support from school personnel to overcome those difficulties, they frequently drop out.

In a 1990 survey of county juvenile detention administrators, the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts found a wide disparity between educa-

tional programs from one jurisdiction to another. The survey found inconsistencies in funding, level of staffing, class size, number of hours of instruction, and availability of special education services. In the worst cases, students were found to be in class only a few hours a day. The survey found few follow-up services to help juveniles make the transition back to a community school.

The study found no clear lines of responsibility for providing educational services to detainees. In some cases the program was provided by the local school district, in some by the regional superintendent's office, and in at least one program the teacher was an employee of the court, with a salary paid with a combination of state and county funds.<sup>54</sup>

While many urban children of most ethnic groups have very high dropout rates, the growing

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*"There's no question that the education system impacts on criminal justice—the failure of our system is adding to the number of clients in the judicial system and in corrections. Kids drop out of school because it's boring, and teachers don't make learning interesting. Money alone won't change the system. It's attitudinal change that's needed."*

*Robert Leiminger  
Illinois State Superintendent of Schools  
(April 25, 1991)*

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segment of minority students in Illinois is most at risk of leaving school before graduation. In 1971, minority students made up 22 percent of Illinois public school enrollment—18 percent were black; 3.5 percent were Hispanic, 0.4 percent were Asian or Pacific Islander; and 0.1 percent were Native American. By 1987, minority enrollment had increased to 33 percent of the total public school population, reflecting dramatic increases in several ethnic categories. Asian enrollment increased by 407 percent and Hispanic enrollment by 79 percent. Black enrollment had declined by almost 9 percent, although black students as a percentage of total enrollment had increased 4 percent. Native American enrollment fell by 26 percent but remained stable as percentage of total enrollment (Figure 6.2).<sup>55</sup>

The state's total minority enrollment in public schools rose from 22 percent in 1971 to 33.4 percent in 1989, and is expected to rise to 40 percent during the 1990s. The growth of minority students as a percentage of total enrollment is paralleled by a related growth in the percentage of students coming from low-income families. In the 1988–1989 school year, 28 percent of public school students in Illinois lived in families with incomes below the poverty line. By the year 2000, the percentage of low-income students is expected to reach 43 percent.<sup>56</sup> In Chicago, the percentage of public school students living in poverty is already at 66 percent, with the percentage in the Kenwood-Hyde Park district of Chicago as high as 79 percent.<sup>57</sup>

Most schools with high dropout rates have a high percentage of low-income students.<sup>58</sup> Chicago public schools with high dropout rates have been found to have physical facilities in poorer condition than schools with low dropout rates, and with lower standards for general appearance and maintenance.<sup>59</sup>

Dropout rates vary widely across school districts and even among schools within the same district.<sup>60</sup> For example, dropout rates for the 63 Chicago public high schools range from 1.5 percent to 32.5 percent.<sup>61</sup>

High dropout rates are also found in schools with disproportionate percentages of students with low scores on the reading component of the Illinois Goal Assessment Program (IGAP). In an analysis of the graduating class of 1982, a Chicago panel found that in the high schools with the highest dropout rates, 70 percent of the students scored below normal on reading tests or had missing reading scores (probably because they were absent on the day of the test). In two of those schools, more than 80 percent of the students fit that category.<sup>62</sup>

Dropout rates decrease in schools where teachers devote more time to active classroom instruction, and engage in more interactive teaching. In Chicago schools with high dropout rates, students spent more time in supervised work at their seats and in unsupervised individual study. A strong leadership style among principals has also been correlated to lower dropout rates. The strong leaders conveyed a clear set of expectations to teachers and students and strictly enforced discipline with both teachers and students, ensuring an orderly atmosphere in the school.<sup>63</sup>

## Notes

1. Illinois State Task Force on Hispanic Dropouts, *A Generation Too Precious to Waste: An Investigative Report Submitted to the Illinois General Assembly* (Springfield, Ill., 1985): 3–11.

2. Illinois State Board of Education, *Annual Report, 1988* (Springfield, Ill., 1988); Illinois State Board of Education, *Performance Profiles: Illinois Schools Report to the Public* (Springfield, Ill., 1990).

3. Lou Audi, Finance Section, Illinois State Board of Education, interview: June 5, 1991.

4. Donald G. Gill, *Truancy in Illinois Public Schools: A Policy Report Prepared for the Illinois State Board of Education* (Springfield, Ill.: Illinois State Board of Education, April, 1984): 12.

5. Karol Chaska, Research and Evaluation, Illinois State Board of Education, interview: December 10, 1990.

6. James Deets, Office of the County Superintendent of Schools, St. Clair County, interview: October 4, 1990.

7. John Stephens, Illinois Association for At-Risk Youth,

Figure 6.2

### Minority enrollment in Illinois schools

|                        | 1971      | 1987      | Percent change | Percent of total |      |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|------------------|------|
|                        |           |           |                | 1971             | 1987 |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 8,576     | 43,449    | +406.6         | 0.4              | 2.4  |
| Hispanic               | 83,767    | 150,315   | +79.4          | 3.5              | 8.4  |
| Black                  | 429,329   | 391,193   | -8.9           | 18.0             | 22.0 |
| Native American        | 2,831     | 2,088     | -26.2          | 0.1              | 0.1  |
| Total minority         | 524,503   | 587,045   | +11.9          | 22.0             | 32.9 |
| White                  | 1,855,362 | 1,194,771 | -35.6          | 78.0             | 67.1 |

Source: Illinois State Board of Education



Office of the Regional Superintendent, Jefferson County, interview: October 3, 1990.

8. 1984–1987 data from Illinois State Board of Education *Annual Report, 1988* (1988); 1988–1989 data from Illinois State Board of Education sources.

9. "Truancy Crackdown" *Chicago Sun-Times* (May 30, 1990): 1.

10. G. Alfred Hess Jr., Emily Wells, Carol Prindle, Paul Liffman, and Beatrice Kaplan, *Where's Room 185? How Schools Can Reduce Their Dropout Problem* (Chicago: Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance, December 1986): iv-v.

11. Clem Mejia, Director, Kane County Truancy Prevention Program, interview: October 2, 1990.

12. The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority's Illinois Juvenile Officers Association Roundtable Discussion of Juvenile Policing (June 29, 1990). See also Appendix A, Project Methodology.

13. The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority's Roundtable Discussion of Juvenile Court Services and Educational Placement (August 13, 1990).

14. Ill.Rev.Stat., ch. 37, par. 803.33. Services mentioned to be provided before a regional superintendent may refer a juvenile to the court as a truant minor in need of supervision include prevention, diagnostic, intervention and remedial services, alternative school programs, and referral to other school and community resources.

15. Anne Studzinski, Juvenile Justice Administrator, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, June 27, 1991.

16. Court Services Panel (August 13, 1990).

17. The Authority's Juvenile Officers Roundtable (June 29, 1990).

18. According to a 1989 report prepared for the Office of the Governor, "the Illinois Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities' mandate to serve children is weak and reflects the vagueness of federal child mental health mandates." Joan Costello, *Mental Health Planning for Emotionally Handicapped Children in Illinois* (Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago, 1989): 4. (See Appendix E, Social Service Availability for Juveniles, for more information.)

19. The Authority's Juvenile Officers Roundtable (June 29, 1990); and the Authority's Court Services Panel (August 13, 1990). See also Appendix A, Project Methodology.

20. Ill.Rev.Stat., ch. 37, par. 803-33.

21. Each of these components is specifically mentioned in the Juvenile Court Act (Ill.Rev.Stat., ch. 37, par. 803-33).

22. Between December 12 and December 18, 1990, Authority researchers conducted telephone interviews with the following officials (as referred by the office of the superintendent of schools) in nine of the 10 school districts with the

highest number of chronic truants:

- East St. Louis, District 189: Rosella Wamser and Joyce Williams of County School Services
  - Proviso Township High School, District 209: Wendy Muller, secretary to the principal
  - Rockford, District 205: William Trapp, acting director of planning and attendance
  - Chicago, District 299: William Rice, Research and Planning Department
  - Springfield, District 186: Richard Chaney, Research and Evaluation Department
  - Alton, District 11: Gene Alston, Research Department
  - Peoria, District 150: Ed Griffith, executive director of research, planning, and computers
  - Waukegan, District 60: Janice Meyer, Office of the Regional Superintendent, and Lawrence Pekoe, associate superintendent of administration
  - Elgin, Unit District 46: Wayne Erck, area superintendent
- No information was available from Aurora East, District 131.

23. Mejia (October 2, 1990).

24. This program was authorized by the General Assembly as part of the Educational Reform Package of 1985 (PA 84-126), also known as An Act in Relation to Educational Reform and the Financing Thereof, Amending Acts Therein Named. This act consists of 169 separate initiatives entered as changes to chapter 122 and other chapters of the Illinois Revised Statutes.

25. The three regional superintendents in this area have a pool of 55 tutors at their disposal in such cases. Operating with the support of federal dropout prevention funds, a tutor may be assigned to work with a truant student. Supporters of the program feel that, if a student can experience some educational success, the student's desire to go to school will improve. Tutors may also be used preventively and are often assigned to students with school problems before they begin a cycle of truancy. More than 355 students received tutoring in the five-county area in the 1989–1990 school year.

26. Ill.Rev.Stat., ch. 37, par. 803.33.

27. Ill.Rev.Stat., ch. 37, par. 803.3.

28. Stephens (October 3, 1990).

29. *Truants Alternative and Optional Education Program Briefing Paper* Illinois Association for At-Risk Youth, August 10, 1990. Number of programs in Illinois given by John Stephens, Illinois Association for At-Risk Youth, interview: June 12, 1991.

30. Mejia (October 2, 1990).

31. Kane County Attendance Records, 1988–1990. James L. Hanson and Douglas L. Hoeft "A School District Fights the Battle of Truancy with Some Success," in *Prototypes: An Anthology of School Improvement Ideas that Work* (Bloomington, Ind.: Phi Delta Kappa, 1989): 10–13.

32. Harold Hodgkinson, *The Same Client: The Demo-*

- graphics of Education and Service Delivery Systems* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Educational Leadership, Center for Demographic Policy, 1989): 15.
33. Graduation rates from Illinois State Board of Education, *Performance Profiles: Illinois Schools Report to the Public* (Springfield, Ill., 1990). Incarceration rates from George M. Camp and Camille Graham, *Corrections Yearbook* (South Salem, N.Y.: Criminal Justice Institute, 1987 and 1989 editions).
  34. National Institute of Justice, "Drug Use Forecasting: Cocaine Use: Arrestees in Washington, D.C.," *Research in Action* (Washington, D.C., December 1989): 7.
  35. *Dealing with Dropouts: The Urban Superintendents' Call to Action* (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, November 1987): 2.
  36. U.S. Congress, *Report of the Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, 1987. Update on Drugs and Dropouts* (100th Congress, 2nd Session, 1987): 11 .
  37. U.S. Congress, *Report of the Select Committee* (1987).
  38. *A Report Card on American Youth, Making the Grade Project* (Washington, D.C.: National Collaboration for Youth, 1989): 3.
  39. G. Alfred Hess Jr. and Diana Lauber, *Dropouts from the Chicago Public Schools. Analysis of the Classes of 1982-1984* (Chicago: Chicago Panel on Public School Finances, 1985): 17.
  40. Russell W. Rumberger, "High School Dropouts: A Review of Issues and Evidence" *Review of Educational Research* 57 (2, 1987): 101-103.
  41. Bill Humm, Research and Evaluation, State Board of Education, interview: August 1990.
  42. "In Illinois, State Has Lower Dropout Rate" *Juvenile Justice Digest* (December 6, 1989): 8.
  43. Chicago Board of Education statistics for 1988 from William Rice, December 5, 1990. Since an earlier study completed in 1986, Chicago dropout rates for white, Hispanic, and Native American students declined by 4.7 percent, 4.5 percent, and 3 percent, respectively. The rate for black students rose by 0.7 percent, and the rate for Asian students remained unchanged. According to Mr. Rice, the principal statistician for the Chicago Board of Education, changes in school board policies regarding graduation requirements and other standards frequently cause small fluctuations in dropout statistics.
  44. Hess and Lauber, *Dropouts from the Chicago Public Schools* (1985): 5.
  45. William Rice, interview: December 5, 1990.
  46. Illinois State Board of Education, *Performance Profiles* (1990).
  47. *Chicago Sun-Times* (November 1, 1990): 5.
  48. Illinois State Board of Education, *1989-1990 Dropouts by Grade, Sex, and Racial/Ethnic Category, Illinois* (Springfield, Ill., 1991).
  49. Illinois State Board of Education, *Annual Report 1988* (1988).
  50. Paul Butler-Malin and Christine Paudilla, "Dropouts: The Relationship of Student Characteristics, Behaviors, and Performance for Special Education Students" *SRI International* (March 1989): 1.
  51. The Authority's Juvenile Officers Roundtable (June 29, 1990). See also Appendix A, Project Methodology.
  52. This is required under the Illinois School Code, district disciplinary codes and guidelines, and, in some cases, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504.
  53. The Authority's Court Services Panel (August 13, 1990). See also Appendix A, Project Methodology.
  54. Ken Klimusko, Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, January 31, 1991. In January 1991, Benjamin K. Miller, chief justice of the Supreme Court of Illinois, reported to the Illinois General Assembly that "there is currently no clear delineation of responsibility as to which agency or level of government is responsible for assuring that educational resources are provided to minors who are held in juvenile detention facilities within the state." *The Supreme Court Annual Report to the General Assembly* (January 31, 1991).
  55. Illinois State Board of Education, *Illinois School Enrollment Now and in the Year 2000* (Springfield, Ill., 1988). See also Rumberger, "High School Dropouts" (1987): 101-121.
  56. Illinois State Board of Education, *Illinois School Enrollment* (1988).
  57. Chicago Board of Education, *Fall 1989 Test Scores & Selected School Characteristics: High Schools* (Chicago, 1990); Chicago Board of Education, June 1991.
  58. Ronald Toles, E. Matthew Schultz, and William K. Rice Jr., "A Study of Variation in Dropout Rates Attributable to Effects of High Schools" *Metropolitan Education*: 35.
  59. Hess, et al., *Where's Room 185?* (1986): vi.
  60. Rumberger, "High School Dropouts" (1987): 108.
  61. Statistics for the 1988-1989 school year provided by William Rice, Research and Planning Department, Chicago Board of Education on October 1, 1990. The 63 schools include magnet schools, general high schools, and such schools as Lane Technical High School that admit students only on the basis of competitive examinations. Some of the variation in dropout is due to the differences in the populations being served with different instructional programs.
  62. Hess and Lauber, *Dropouts from the Chicago Public Schools* (1985): 9.
  63. Hess, et al., *Where's Room 185?* (1986).

# **Educational Experiences of Inmates**



More than 70 percent of the inmates of jails and prisons in the United States have not completed a high school education.<sup>1</sup> Does dropping out of school often lead directly to crime? Some researchers have found what they believe is a positive correlation—a strong link—between dropping out and later criminal behavior. This positive correlation persisted even when factors such as age, employment, and marital status were taken into account.<sup>2</sup> Many other studies have shown a strong connection between poor school performance and later criminal careers.<sup>3</sup>

According to other writers, however, criminal behavior is more complexly determined, and both crime and school failure may arise from a variety of economic and social factors.<sup>4</sup> All of these studies have tended to focus on the impact

of gender, marital status, and unemployment on the dropout's probability of engaging in delinquent and aggressive behavior.<sup>5</sup>

Whatever the causal links may be between failing to complete a high school education and criminal behavior, the strong correlation between dropping out of school and criminality documented in these studies prompts

two practical questions: What causes dropout among men and women who commit crimes? And, Can these educational failures be prevented?

To answer these questions, Authority researchers interviewed almost 700 inmates being admitted to the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) during a two-week period in the summer of 1990. The Survey of Educational Experiences and Attitudes of Inmates in the Illinois Department of Corrections was designed to find out from inmates themselves what had happened to them in school and how those experiences had affected their attitudes toward education. The survey investigated not only whether inmates had completed high school, but, if they had not, what had caused them to drop out and what might have been effective in helping them stay in school.<sup>6</sup> Inmates were asked about earlier school failures and present reading problems. The Authority's Inmate Survey also investigated school completion rates for inmates' parents and siblings<sup>7</sup> to see if patterns of school failure existed in the families of these felons. The inmates were asked about

their educational plans during incarceration, and previously incarcerated inmates were asked about their past participation in IDOC educational programs.

A second component of the study was conducted using the educational records of more than 28,700 inmates drawn from IDOC's Offender Tracking System (OTS) as of June 1991. Items examined included the inmate's age, race, sex, basic education test and IQ scores, and the last grade completed. These data provided an additional inmate sample of educational variables to compare with the findings of the inmate survey.

## INMATE DROPOUT RATES

A large majority of male inmates in the Authority's survey, like the subjects in national studies of dropouts among prison inmates, had failed to graduate from high school—72.3 percent. The dropout rate for the 42 female inmates was lower

### Who participated in the survey?

More than 87 percent of the inmates admitted to IDOC at the Joliet, Graham, Menard, and Dwight reception centers during a two-week period in the summer of 1990 participated in the inmate survey (N=693). Not participating were inmates who declined and those deemed unfit by prison administrators due to physical and mental health problems or high security risk.

|                            | Survey sample | IDOC population<br>July 1990 | OTS sample<br>June 1991 |
|----------------------------|---------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Racial distribution</b> |               |                              |                         |
| Black                      | (N=424) 61%   | (N=15,799) 61%               | 62%                     |
| White                      | (N=195) 28%   | (N=7,537) 29%                | 27%                     |
| Hispanic                   | (N=69) 10%    | (N=2,331) 9%                 | 9%                      |
| Other                      | (N=5) 0.7%    | NA                           | 0.3%                    |
| <b>Gender distribution</b> |               |                              |                         |
| Males                      | (N=651) 94%   | (N=24,864) 96%               | 96%                     |
| Females                    | (N=42) 6%     | (N=1,036) 4%                 | 4%                      |
| <b>Average age</b>         |               |                              |                         |
| Male                       | 29            | 29                           | 30                      |
| Female                     | 31            | 31                           | 30                      |
| <b>Admission status</b>    |               |                              |                         |
| First                      | 55%           | NA                           | 56%                     |
| Repeat*                    | 45%           | NA                           | 44%                     |

\*Inmates were asked: "Have you been in IDOC before?" Those who had been previously admitted to IDOC included parole violators, offenders who had been convicted of new crimes (recidivists), work release violators, and inmates returning on a writ. A writ is issued when an inmate must appear before a court for any reason, ranging from standing trial for a new offense committed while incarcerated to attending a divorce or child custody hearing. These inmates must be processed through reception centers before returning to their institutional assignments.

Source: End of fiscal 1990 IDOC data. Nola Joyce, IDOC Division of Planning and Budget, December 21, 1990

*"It becomes clear that the low achievers who are incarcerated are truly the failures of our public schools."*

Ray Quick, Superintendent  
IDOC School District 428  
(July 1990)

than for male inmates, but still far higher than the statewide four-year cumulative dropout rate of 22 percent. Twenty-five out of 42 (approximately 60 percent) of the women had dropped out. (Because only 42 female inmates participated in the study, it was not feasible to perform the same level of analysis using their responses as with the larger male sample. Thus, the number of comparisons using the female sample is small.)

Gender was more than twice as important as ethnicity in the patterns of dropout among inmates. Dropout rates for male inmates of different ethnic groups varied by only slightly more than 5 percent, while the difference between dropout rates for male inmates and female inmates was more than 12 percent. Female inmates were almost one and one-half times more likely to have graduated than the male inmates.

Dropouts and graduates proved to be remarkably similar in terms of what they liked and disliked about school, in their strong interest in continuing education, and even in their incidence rates for early school failures and continued problems in reading.

The link between dropping out and later criminal behavior is suggested by the finding that black, white, and Hispanic inmates drop out more frequently than members of those ethnic groups in the general population. Black male inmates dropped out 30 percent more frequently than the average black male student in Illinois in 1990. Hispanic male inmates dropped out 34 percent more often than Hispanic male students in the 1989-1990 school year. The dropout rate for black male inmates was 72 percent, compared to a 42 percent dropout rate for all black male students in Illinois; 77 percent of Hispanic male inmates dropped out, compared to 43 percent of Hispanic male students statewide.<sup>8</sup>

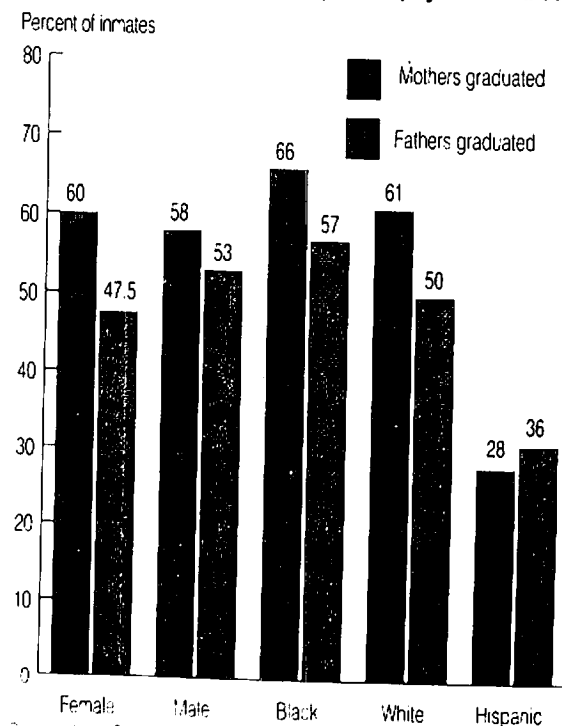
For whites, dropout rates among male inmates were 4.5 times higher than for white male students in the general population, indicating that the association between dropping out and later criminal behavior is far stronger for whites than for other ethnic groups. While only 16 percent of the general white male student population drops out in Illinois, fully 72 percent of the white male inmates had dropped out. Classic sociological theories of how social stigma operates in different groups may offer an explanation of this phenomenon. In a society with many inequalities based

on race, the expectations for achievement are highest for whites, and particularly for white males. The social penalties for white males who do not live up to those expectations may also be greater. This means that a white male who has failed to graduate from high school may have deviated more from what is expected in his group than a black or Hispanic male. Furthermore, according to some sociologists, when expectations remain high, but legitimate channels to achievement are blocked, individuals may be more likely to turn to illegitimate means to achieve their goals.<sup>9</sup>

### PARENTS' EDUCATIONAL LEVELS AND INMATE DROPOUT

Overall, although dropout rates for blacks are historically higher than for other groups, black male inmates were significantly *less* likely than white or Hispanic inmates to have had a father who dropped out of high school.<sup>10</sup> Among male inmates who knew the educational history of their fathers, 43 percent of the black fathers had not graduated, compared to 50 percent of white fathers and 64 percent of Hispanic fathers (Figure 7.1). However, while all of the male inmates were more likely to have dropped out than their fathers, the black inmates were more than twice as likely to have failed to graduate than their fathers.

Figure 7.1  
Graduation rates of inmates' parents, by race and sex



Source: Illinois Commission on Corrections, *Illinois Inmate Survey*.

dropping out almost 30 percent more often. The siblings of black male inmates also drop out more frequently than their fathers, suggesting that the current generation of young black males may be experiencing less educational success than their parents' generation. White male inmates had dropped out of high school almost 22 percent more often than their fathers, while Hispanic male inmates had dropped out 12 percent more often.<sup>11</sup>

Inmates were more than four times as likely as high school students in the general population to have two parents who had not graduated—33 percent of the inmates surveyed said both their mother and father were high school dropouts. In a survey of more than 15,000 Illinois high school students, the Department of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse found that only 8 percent of the students reported that neither of their parents had graduated.<sup>12</sup>

The parents' level of education differed for male and female inmates. The mothers of male inmates were only slightly (5 percent) more likely than the fathers to have completed high school, but the mothers of female inmates were 13 percent more likely to have graduated than the female inmates' fathers.

Having a parent of either sex who had dropped out was associated with inmates' failure to graduate, but the strength of the correlation with inmate dropout varied by the sex of the parent and the ethnic group of the inmate.<sup>13</sup>

The dropout rate for Hispanic male inmates was only slightly associated with their parents' educational level. For Hispanic inmates whose mothers had failed to graduate, the dropout rate was only 2 percent higher than for Hispanic inmates whose mothers completed high school. Hispanic male inmates with fathers who had dropped out were 5 percent more likely to have dropped out themselves. The relatively low association of parents' educational level with Hispanic male inmates' dropping out may be attributable to the fact that many Hispanic parents in Illinois are recent immigrants from countries where opportunities for secondary education are limited, reducing the numbers of high school graduates among the parents' generation.<sup>14</sup> The high dropout rate for Hispanic inmates and their parents may also be influenced by language and cultural difficulties in adapting to a school system based on the mainstream Anglo culture.

The educational level of black and white parents was more than twice as strongly associated with dropout for both black and white male inmates than was the case with Hispanic parents and their inmate sons. Black male inmates were approximately 10 percent more likely to have dropped out if either their mother or their father had not graduated. Parents' educational level was most strongly associated with inmates' failure to graduate among whites—white male inmates whose fathers had dropped out were 11 percent more likely to have dropped out than male inmates whose fathers had graduated, and if a white male inmate's mother had dropped out, her son's chance of having dropped out increased by 15 percent.<sup>15</sup>

### **DROPOUT RATES FOR INMATES AND THEIR SIBLINGS**

For black and white male inmates, having a sibling who dropped out was even more strongly associated with an inmate's own failure to graduate than having a parent who didn't graduate. More than 52 percent of all inmates reported that at least one child in their family had dropped out of school.

It was very common for male inmates of all ethnic groups to report that their sisters had finished school, while at least one brother had dropped out. This trend is also reflected in statewide statistics indicating that males generally drop out more often than females.

More than 55 percent of all white inmates and 50 percent of all black inmates said at least one of the children raised with them had failed to graduate. White male inmates who had dropped out were 20 percent more likely than those who had graduated to have at least one sibling who failed to graduate.<sup>16</sup> This finding corresponds to the disproportionately high percentage of white dropouts in the inmate sample and suggests that a family characteristic—such as lower socioeconomic status or mother's educational level—increases the probability both that family members will drop out and that they will become incarcerated.<sup>17</sup> More than half of Hispanic male inmates said one or more of their siblings had dropped out. The siblings of Hispanic male inmates dropped out only 11 percent less frequently than had Hispanic fathers. This finding provides further evidence of the seriousness of dropout among



Hispanic males. This effect is also seen in the very high dropout rate for the mothers of Hispanic inmates—71 percent of whom had dropped out (see Figure 7.1).

## **DROPOUT AMONG INMATES RETURNING TO PRISON**

A previous incarceration was not as strongly associated with the dropout rate of male inmates as was the educational attainment of parents and siblings.<sup>18</sup> Male inmates who were returning to prison, either because they had been convicted of a new crime or for parole violations or other administrative reasons, were only 7 percent more likely to have dropped out of high school than male inmates who were first offenders. However, the returning male inmates had left school earlier than first offenders—having dropped out 58 percent more often in the sixth grade or lower, 100 percent more often in the seventh grade, and 71 percent more often in the eighth grade. In all, returning males were 27 percent more likely than male first offenders to have dropped out of school in junior high school or earlier. Male inmates with the lowest educational skill levels are likely to have more difficulty finding and maintaining jobs in the community and may be more likely than more employable inmates to commit a new criminal offense or to be unsuccessful in meeting the conditions of parole or work release.

Only seven of the female inmates were returning to IDOC for a second time, precluding analysis of returning female inmates.

## **WHY DID PRISON INMATES WHO HAD DROPPED OUT LEAVE SCHOOL?**

Each inmate who dropped out was asked, "Why did you leave school?" Up to three responses per inmate were recorded, allowing respondents to give more detailed accounts than just one response would permit. Responses were divided into four main groups and 20 subgroups, for purposes of analysis.<sup>19</sup>

### **Delinquency and violence**

Among male inmates, the predominant reason given for leaving school was involvement in the criminal justice system or in some problem related to drug abuse, violence, and street gangs in the schools. Approximately 34 percent reported that they had left school because they were

detained for a juvenile offense, expelled for fighting, involved in substance abuse, or were either perpetrators or victims of gang violence. Only three of the 25 women (12 percent) gave one of these reasons for dropping out.

### *Juvenile detention*

Youths detained for juvenile offenses are often unable to return to their old school settings. In the Authority's survey, 13.5 percent of male inmates cited juvenile detention as the principal reason their school career was interrupted. Some inmates had been continually incarcerated since initially being taken into custody as juveniles. But many other inmates said that, when they returned to school from detention or the Youth Division of the Department of Corrections, they were refused readmission.

### *Fighting and other violence*

Six percent of the male inmates were expelled from school for fighting. Juvenile officers report that, when dealing with a serious incident of fighting, school officials often do not attempt to ascertain the rights and wrongs of a case, but simply suspend or expel all parties involved.<sup>20</sup> Administrators say it is often impossible for them to sort out aggressors from victims in such incidents, and they maintain that such expulsions are necessary to eliminate violence in the school and protect other students.<sup>21</sup>

Schools often recommend a school transfer after an incident of this kind, and such transfers often result in dropout. A 19-year-old inmate told the interviewer that he was expelled for fighting following an attack by street-gang members, even though he had been in no previous trouble with the school. He said that, three years after the incident, he was still upset and bitter about the expulsion that culminated with him dropping out of school. He showed the interviewer the unused transfer document that he still carries in his wallet.

### *Drug and alcohol abuse*

Students who regularly abuse alcohol and drugs are at high risk of dropping out of school. Approximately 10 percent of the male inmates who had not completed high school specifically cited drug or alcohol abuse as one of the reasons that they had dropped out of school. Many said their addictions should have been obvious to teachers and

their parents. Some said that placement in a substance abuse program or counseling for the personal problems that led to their addictions could have helped them stay in school, while other inmates said that drug treatment programs had not helped them.

### *Street gang violence*

About 9 percent of the male inmates reported that street gang violence in their schools caused them to drop out. When inmates who listed gang activity as a second or third reason for dropping out are included, the total rises to about 12 percent. Of these, most said that they were not street gang members, but that fear of victimization by gangs drove them to drop out. Unlike the students expelled for fighting, these men left school voluntarily.

Some inmates who said they were not in-

involved in gangs requested transfers in order to resist the pressures of gang recruitment, but the transfers were denied. Others said they dropped out rather than accept a transfer to a school they believed was dominated by a rival street gang. In some cases, a transfer was never completed because the cost of a monthly transit pass was beyond the means of an inmate's welfare-dependent family.

Other inmates said that their street gang membership took up most of their time and interest, causing poor attendance and eventual drop-out. Among inmates who said they were gang members, gang turf issues were often involved in an inmate's decision to leave school rather than accept a transfer. Often a transfer means a student must attend a school or pass through a neighborhood controlled by a rival gang—a situ-

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### **Why some inmates dropped out**

Many inmates told Authority interviewers their own version of why they left school.

A 23-year-old black inmate who had attended an inner-city school reported he was expelled for fighting. School authorities accused him of gang membership, since others involved in the fight were known gang members. He adamantly denied the charge, claiming he was defending himself against an unprovoked attack. He pointed to his good record of grades and attendance but was refused readmittance. A transfer was offered, but he refused. He faulted school officials for not taking his background into account and said a fair resolution of the problem would have kept him in school. He said he was within a year of graduation when expelled.

An 18-year-old white inmate said he dropped out in the ninth grade after being held back five times in the eighth grade. He had trouble keeping up and lost interest once all of his friends had dropped out. He began skipping school and was expelled after 14 unexcused absences. A counselor had tried to persuade him to stay in school, but he felt nothing could have kept him from leaving. "The only thing I liked about school was lunch," he laughed, but on closer consideration said he enjoyed math and science. The worst thing about school, he said, was the teachers: "Once you get a bad reputation, you have no chance."

An 18-year-old white inmate from a central Illinois city said he had been in special education programs since third grade. His violent behavior triggered suspensions and expulsions during every school year. He once attacked and struck a principal who was suspending him, and was violent with teachers and other students on many occasions. Drug and

alcohol abuse complicated his emotional problems. He was expelled from his school district and placed in a special residential school for students with behavior disorders. Even this special facility was unable to contain him. He was arrested for arson in the ninth grade and has been confined in the Youth Division of IDOC ever since. He admitted that he was lazy and unmotivated, and that only an attitude change on his part could have turned things around.

A 20-year-old black man from Chicago, convicted of his first felony offense, was attending ninth grade at a South Side high school when his mother died suddenly. His father had been paralyzed in an accident several years earlier and was bedridden. As the only child, the inmate, 14 at the time, felt a responsibility to care for his father. He told the principal of his predicament and asked for help to stay in school. He said that instead of offers of assistance, he was given an ultimatum. He was warned that if his repeated absences from school continued, he would be expelled. He believes that adjustments to his schedule, home tutoring, or help finding someone to care for his father would have enabled him to stay in school.

A 23-year-old inmate said, "When I got back from juvenile detention, the principal told me, 'We don't want troublemakers like you here. We know that you are going to screw up again. It's just a matter of time.' Then he told me that, if I insisted on enrolling, he was going to assign this guy to follow me around. He had a little notebook and wrote down everything I did. He said he was just waiting for me to make a mistake. He was right—I didn't even last through the first day I got so mad, I threatened to stab the guy, and they expelled me."

ation inmates described as life-threatening.

Inmates said school administrators did not use information about street gang territories when establishing attendance boundaries for schools (see Chapter 3, *Crime in the Schools*). Some inmates said principals were reluctant to admit that gangs were operating within their schools. In some cities, such as Los Angeles, street gang maps are consulted in setting school district boundaries and making transfers, but in Chicago, it is not the school board's policy to take gang turf boundaries into account when planning school district boundaries or making routine transfers. Principals may be aware of how their districts cut across gang turf, but say that, except in unusual circumstances when a student's safety is clearly at stake, there is little they can do to accommodate student transfers for gang-related reasons. School administrators say that if they allow one such transfer they would open the door to a flood of requests they could not possibly meet.<sup>22</sup>

### **Economic reasons**

Twenty-four percent of male inmates surveyed reported they had left school to work full-time. For female inmates, economic need accounted for 16 percent of the responses. Oldest sons were often called upon to help a single mother support younger siblings. Others quit school to support a pregnant girlfriend, a wife, or the unwed mother of their children. Typical of these young men was one who commented, "When I saw how she just wasn't making it on welfare, I knew I had to do something." In other cases, family problems had driven them out on their own, and work was necessary to support themselves. Women usually quit school to support an out-of-wedlock child.

Some said that they tried at first to stay in school, while holding down a full-time job, but discovered that they had no time to do homework or fell asleep in class and finally decided to drop out. Many in this category said a work/study program might have enabled them to stay in school. For the most part, inmates in this group were reluctant to leave school. They were also motivated to continue their education in IDOC.

### **School adjustment reasons**

Approximately 22 percent of the male inmates, but only one of the 25 women (4 percent), dropped

out because they couldn't adjust to school schedule and other requirements or because they disliked their school assignment. These inmates are, in many ways, more diverse in their orientation to school than those clustered in the other groups. They include those who were chronically tardy or truant, those with problems keeping up with school work, those who simply lost interest, and those who had continual problems with teachers. To an even greater degree than those who left school due to arrest, street gangs, or drug abuse, this group includes more inmates who disliked their school experience. They were more likely to say they liked nothing about school and to recall a specific teacher as what they most disliked. Also included in this group, however, are those who left school because a change in program or school assignment was denied them or was forced upon them, such as students who resisted assignment to a special education class.<sup>23</sup> These inmates did not share the overwhelmingly negative school orientation of others in the category.

One attitude shared by the group as a whole was self-identification as a victim of the system. These respondents commonly voiced the opinion that once they had been labeled by teachers as "slow" or "lazy" or "bad," that was the only behavior teachers expected of them or were able to see. Some of the inmates had been placed in special programs for students with learning disabilities and behavior disorders and said that students outside the programs shunned them as "weirdos" or "dummies." They said they couldn't identify with the other students in the special programs, whose problems they saw as different from their own. Feeling isolated and stigmatized, they dropped out.

### **Emotional, social, and family reasons**

Twenty percent of male inmates and 17 of the 25 female inmates (68 percent) said they left school because of emotional or family problems or because of the negative influence of their friends.<sup>24</sup> The men in this group could be divided into those who blamed others for their problems or saw themselves as victims of some circumstance beyond their control, and those who readily admitted they played an active part in the failure of their school career.

Only 3 percent of all male respondents took full blame for their problems, saying that it was

their own attitude that caused them to drop out or that dropping out was a mistake. They often added that special services had been offered them, but nothing at that time in their lives could have kept them in school. Some thought firmer parental discipline or stronger male role models might have helped to keep them on the right track.

A larger subset, 12 percent of all male respondents, blamed their difficulties on negative peer pressure or "hanging with the wrong crowd." These inmates indicated that the attitudes and actions of their friends had influenced them both in dropping out and in engaging in criminal activities. Studies have shown, in fact, that very strong attachment to peers is directly related to increased delinquency, drug possession, and juvenile misbehavior.<sup>25</sup>

The remainder of this group dropped out because of an overwhelming personal or family problem related to their own health, the illness or death of a family member, or the birth of a child. Their cases suggest that counseling or social service intervention might have prevented the chain of circumstances that led them to drop out. Several reported suffering a physical illness or injury that made them feel like outcasts among their peers. For one, it was a disfiguring facial scar suffered in an auto accident.

For others, such as an inmate who had suffered undiagnosed diabetes or one who had developed pneumonia, it was the symptoms of the untreated illness itself that caused their school performance to drop through frequent absences. Without tutoring support at home, once they fell behind, it became impossible to catch up, and they dropped out rather than re-enter school a year behind their friends.

For female inmates, social and family reasons were more than twice as important as all other categories combined in explaining drop-out. For most women, pregnancy and parenting led to the interruption of their school careers. Like some of the men, a few women also left school to care for ailing parents or other family members. Even though the number of female respondents is small, the strength of this category as an explanatory factor must be considered.

#### WHEN DID THE AVERAGE INMATE DROP OUT?

Male white, black, and Hispanic inmates are less

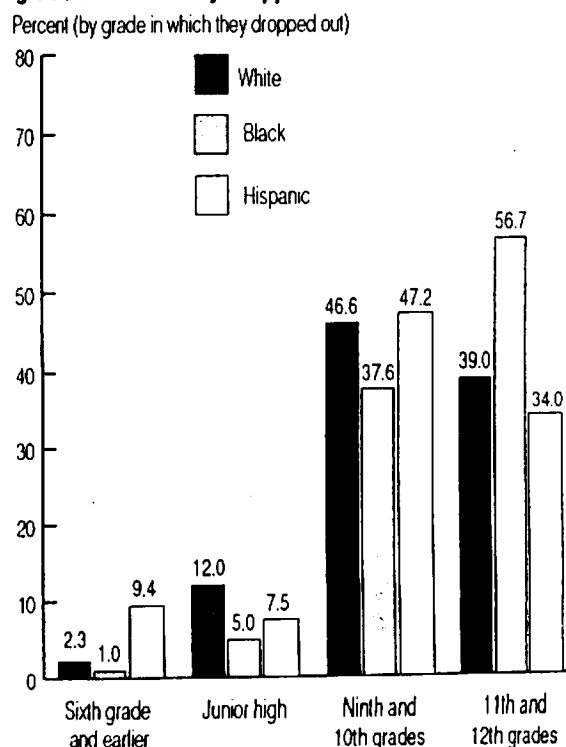
likely to leave school before completing the sixth grade than are male students of those same ethnic groups in the general population. Almost 14 percent of Hispanic, 8 percent of black, and 3.5 percent of white male dropouts leave school during grades one through six, compared to 9.4 percent of Hispanic, 1 percent of black, and 2.3 percent of white male inmate dropouts (Figure 7.2).

While there was little difference in the overall dropout rates among inmates of different ethnic groups, the patterns of *when* these inmates dropped out were quite different.

Like the majority of dropouts in the general population (Figure 7.3), most dropouts in the Inmate Survey made it to high school before dropping out. However, white and Hispanic male inmates were more likely to have dropped out earlier in their school careers than black male inmates, often in junior high school.

More than 14 percent of white male inmate dropouts surveyed had left school before reaching the ninth grade. For Hispanic male inmate dropouts, an even higher percentage—16.9 percent—didn't make it to high school; 9.4 percent had left school in the sixth grade or earlier.

Figure 7.2  
Percent of male inmate dropouts of different races, by grade in which they dropped out



Source: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

Among black male inmates who dropped out, only 6 percent had quit before high school. Close to 57 percent of this group had made it to their last two years of high school before dropping out.

Most Hispanic and white male inmate dropouts—about 47 percent in each instance—had left in the first two years of high school. Presumably, many of these dropouts had not reached age 16, at which school attendance is no longer compulsory in Illinois, before they dropped out.

In addition:

- White male inmate dropouts left school six times more frequently in grades seven and eight than did white male students in the general population. The percentages of black and Hispanic male inmate dropouts who left school during junior high were very similar to the percentages in the general population.
- Among white male students in the general population, dropout peaked in the 11th and 12th grades at 56.8 percent. White male inmate dropouts, however, left school most frequently (46.6 percent) during the

ninth and 10th grades. More than 60 percent of white male inmates, compared to 43.2 percent of white male students in general, left school without completing the 10th grade.

- More than 56 percent of black male inmate dropouts left school in 11th or 12th grade, compared to 33 percent of black dropouts in the general population. Thirty-four percent of Hispanic male inmate dropouts left school in the last two years of high school, compared to just 5.1 percent of Hispanic male dropouts in the general population.

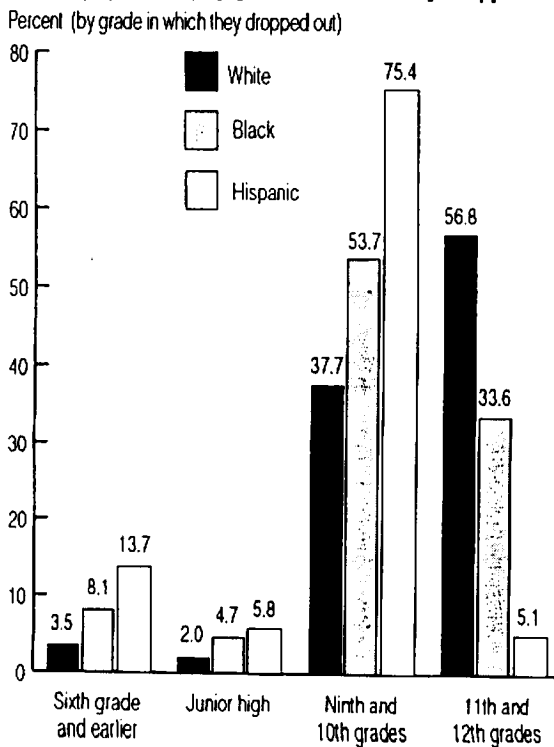
### WHO TRIED TO PREVENT INMATES FROM DROPPING OUT?

Slightly less than half (46 percent) of the inmates who had dropped out said no one had ever tried to talk them out of leaving school. When someone had tried to intervene to avert dropout, it had usually been the inmate's mother—62 percent of the male inmates and 50 percent of the female inmates said their mothers had tried to keep them in school. For male inmates who had been forced to leave the school system by expulsion, suspension, or mandatory transfers, maternal efforts to keep them in school had often been quite extensive.<sup>27</sup> Some of these inmates reported that their mothers had unsuccessfully tried to persuade school officials to readmit them.

According to the inmates, their fathers had rarely made independent efforts to keep their sons and daughters in school. Only 3 percent of the male inmates and none of the female inmates who had eventually dropped out said their fathers, acting alone, had tried to persuade them not to leave school. Twenty-five percent of the male and approximately 24 percent of the female respondents (6 of 25) to this question said, however, that their fathers had been one among several persons who attempted to influence their decision. Fathers and mothers acted together to try to persuade their children to stay in school for approximately 12 percent of the the male inmates and for six of the female inmates (24 percent) who had dropped out.

School personnel, including teachers, counselors, and principals, had counseled against leaving school in only one out of eight of the cases in which inmates had dropped out. This finding

Figure 7.3  
Percent of male dropouts of different races in the Illinois population, by grade in which they dropped out



Source: Illinois State Board of Education



provides further evidence that dropout prevention and retrieval programs are not reaching many of the youngsters among their intended target population.

Friends had tried to influence these inmates to stay in school almost as frequently as school personnel—girlfriends and other friends are mentioned by 12 percent of the male inmates who had dropped out. According to these inmates, proba-

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#### **What might have kept some inmates in school**

Many inmate dropouts told Authority interviewers about interventions they thought could have kept them in school, and about attempted interventions that failed to work.

A 19-year-old black inmate from Chicago said that in the seventh grade he began getting into fights at school. He was suspended for more than 10 days on three occasions during the fall term. By the middle of the year, he was so far behind he couldn't catch up. "When they suspended me the last time, my mother went to school and argued with them. She asked them why they were giving me such long suspensions, and why they didn't test me to find out why I was getting into so much trouble. They didn't listen to her, and I never went back." The inmate said that if he had been given in-school suspensions with some academic help, he probably would have stayed in school.

A 20-year-old black inmate from Chicago's West Side said he was expelled for stealing when he was in the 10th grade. "I was ashamed of my clothes and how I looked. My mother bought all our clothes at thrift shops. I never had any bus fare or lunch money. I didn't know what else to do but steal." He tried to get back into school at the beginning of the next term, but the school wanted him to enroll as a freshman, and he refused. "I think if there had been some kind of special program where I could have worked part-time and gone to school part-time, I could have made it."

A 19-year-old white inmate from a small town in northern Illinois, convicted of his first felony offense, said the last full year of school he completed was the seventh grade. He didn't like school, frequently cut classes, and was often suspended for fighting. He complained that he was restless and had a hard time sitting still in school. He became chronically truant during junior high school. "The truant officer used to come around, but he never followed through with anything, and I just drifted in and out of school." The inmate entered the ninth grade and got into a fight on the first day of school. "After the fight, they were going to have me arrested, but they said they wouldn't press charges if I just left and didn't come back. I was glad to be out. Nothing could have kept me in school back then." He was 14 at the time.

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tion and parole officers had played a negligible role in trying to keep them in school, intervening with fewer than 2 percent of the men and none of the women.

#### **WHAT COULD HAVE PREVENTED INMATE DROPOUT?**

When asked about what types of interventions might have kept them in school, 35 percent of male inmates said that help with family and personal problems might have prevented them from dropping out. Ten of the 25 female dropouts (40 percent) also said help with family problems could have kept them in school.<sup>29</sup> Personal and family problems mentioned by respondents included the lack of family support to stay in school, the influences of a dysfunctional home environment or neighborhood, the lack of discipline or a male role model in the family, and the need for change in the inmate's own attitude. Approximately half of the male inmates who said help with personal and family problems might have kept them in school said someone in their families had tried to persuade them to stay in school, and 14 percent of them said greater family support might have succeeded in keeping them in school.

Thirty-four percent of the male inmates said they would have stayed in school if their classes had been more interesting or if they had been allowed to transfer to the school or program of their choice. Only 3 of the female dropouts (12 percent) thought such changes could have kept them in school. The school-related problems that caused them to drop out included mandatory transfers, an unmet need for tutoring or other special help, and lack of opportunity for vocational education and child care. Other inmates said they would have stayed in school if the subjects had held their interest or if the teaching had been better. Inmates in this category frequently complained that they were being promoted without learning anything. One reported that his teacher let him know she would leave the room so he could cheat on the American Constitution test he had to pass for promotion to ninth grade, because "she didn't want to see me back in her class the next year."

Slightly more than 23 percent of the inmate dropouts said that a better source of income for their families or the opportunity for part-time work or a work-study program would have kept them in



school. Several mentioned that they were ashamed to go to school because they couldn't afford the clothing items popular with classmates, or that they had to hold down a full-time job to help support the family. Some inmates in this category reported that their families had tried to talk them out of leaving school, but they knew the family needed their earnings, so they didn't listen.

Slightly more than 17 percent of the male and four of the 25 female dropouts (16 percent) said nothing could have kept them in school. Inmates in this category typically reported that they disliked school or that their own attitude or behavior at the time was so bad that no one and nothing could have kept them from dropping out.

Approximately 12 percent of the male inmates who had dropped out said help for problems with drugs, street gangs, or the handling of their cases before the juvenile court could have saved their school careers. Approximately 5 percent of the male inmate dropouts said that if school officials had controlled street gang activities in their school, they would never have dropped out. A similar percentage said help with a drug or alcohol abuse problem might have kept them in school.

Some of the remaining 2 percent of respondents in this category had dropped out within weeks of graduation because they had to attend delinquency hearings or were otherwise involved in the juvenile court system. These inmates felt that closer cooperation between juvenile court and school officials could have enabled them to complete high school in spite of pending delinquency charges. Typical of these men was one who was within three weeks of graduation at the time he was sent to IDOC's Juvenile Division. A postponement of his dispositional hearing, he said, would have given him the time to complete his requirements for graduation.

### **EARLY SCHOOL FAILURES AND LATER DROPOUT**

More than 37 percent of all inmates who participated in the Authority's survey reported that they had failed a grade in school and had to repeat a year at least once during their school careers. Almost twice as many inmates who had dropped out reported a prior school failure as did the inmates who graduated; 23 percent of the graduates and 43 percent of the dropouts had been

retained at least once in an earlier grade. Male inmates were more than 14 percent more likely than females to have been held back in school—38 percent of the men and 10 of the 42 women (24 percent) said they had failed a grade. Twenty-three percent of the inmates had experienced more than one grade failure.

Almost 40 percent of the male inmates questioned were able to recall when their school failures had occurred. Of these, more than 57 percent were held back in an elementary grade, and 11 percent had failed more than one early grade. Graduates and dropouts among these inmates experienced these early school failures with approximately the same frequency—55 percent of the graduates and 59 percent of the dropouts failed at least one grade between kindergarten and sixth grade. Six of the female inmates (14 percent) had failed an early grade.

Six of the 19 primary reasons given by male inmate dropouts for leaving school were strongly associated with an early failure in school. All of the inmates who said they had dropped out of school because they felt they had been mistreated by teachers or who had had other serious problems relating to teachers had experienced at least one failure in an early grade. More than 70 percent of the inmates who had left school because they were detained by juvenile authorities, 67 percent of those with family and personal problems, 57 percent of those who said they had trouble keeping up, 56 percent of those reporting drug and alcohol abuse problems, and 50 percent of those who were illiterate because of dyslexia had failed one or more elementary grades. This cluster of findings suggests that an early pattern of emotional, behavioral, and learning problems resulting in failure in elementary school is a common experience for adult felons.

### **INMATES WITH READING PROBLEMS**

Inmates were asked if they currently experienced any problems reading. Almost 20 percent of the men and four of the 42 women admitted they had difficulty reading. An additional 0.5 percent of the men (4 percent of the Hispanic inmates) said they could read Spanish but were not literate in English.

The percentage of inmates who reported themselves to be marginally literate or functionally illiterate is far lower than the percentage of IDOC inmates who fail to meet the minimum

literacy standards of the department. Due to embarrassment and, in some settings, fear of repercussions such as the loss of a job, adults with deficient reading skills are usually reluctant to disclose their problems.<sup>29</sup> Since January 1987, inmates who fail to score at least a sixth-grade level of reading and math skills on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)—a standardized test that measures the basic educational skills of adults and reports the score as a grade-level equivalent—must attend a 90-day basic education program. During fiscal year 1990, almost 14,000 inmates were tested, and approximately 4,000 (29 percent) failed to score at the minimum sixth-grade level and were required to enter the

basic education program (see Chapter 8, Correctional Education, for more information about this program).<sup>30</sup>

It would be reasonable to expect that inmates who had graduated from high school would report no serious problems with literacy, but graduates and non-graduates among the inmates showed remarkably little difference—less than 10 percent—in their self-reported reading problems. Slightly more than 13 percent of the graduates and 23 percent of the dropouts said they had difficulty reading.

Further evidence that inmates with serious reading problems and other educational deficits had been promoted in school while performing

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### **Does holding children back in school lead to dropout?**

When teachers and principals require students who don't perform at grade level to repeat a grade, they may increase the risk of later academic failures and dropout, according to a 1990 University of Michigan study of more than 16,000 students. The study found that holding children of any age back a grade did not promote better academic performance, and the practice often led to a loss of confidence and self-esteem that further damaged the child's chances of academic success. In their comparisons of children with similar academic performance problems, two University of Michigan education professors found that the academic progress of children who were not retained was as good, and in many cases, was better than that of children who were held back.<sup>1</sup> Bud Howlett, principal of a California school that has adopted a "no retention" policy, said that the decision to retain a child is usually made with the best of intentions. "The commonly held belief by both parents and teachers is that retained students will benefit from the additional year of schooling. However, the child will probably be exposed to the same material and same educational methods that were unsuccessful the first time. More of the same doesn't increase achievement."<sup>2</sup>

A number of alternatives to retention have been suggested by educators. Early identification of learning problems is regarded as the essential first step. An increased recognition of children's different learning styles and adoption of a wider range of teaching methods are two additional components of a more constructive educational strategy for children not performing at grade level. According to many educators, the development of individualized education plans should not be limited to special education students, but must be incorporated into the learning plan of all children, especially when social, emotional, or academic problems are identified.<sup>3</sup>

In April 1991, the National Association of Elementary School Principals adopted a policy that opposed the practice of making children repeat a grade. According to Frank Llano, a senior administrator, the Illinois State Board of Education will not support the "no retention" policy, because it is in conflict with the board's recommendation that schools adopt outcome-based measures of accountability that ensure students have mastered certain skills before promotion to a higher grade. "There is a certain amount of knowledge and learning that each child should have in every grade, and meeting these standards should determine whether the child passes and moves on," Mr. Llano said.<sup>4</sup>

Robert Saddler, deputy superintendent in charge of school operations for Chicago Public Schools, supports a no-retention policy and has urged Chicago teachers to seek alternatives to requiring students to repeat a grade. In a May 1991 memorandum to the city's schools, Saddler urged educators to examine alternatives to flunking students for the sake of both the student's self-esteem and the school system's budget. The failure of students in nearly 259,000 courses last year cost an estimated \$68.7 million in salaries for extra teachers. "Our emphasis should be on identifying those alternatives that would aid a student's grasp of concepts and skills, maintain self-esteem, and increase self-confidence," Mr. Saddler said.<sup>5</sup>

1. Samuel J. Meisels and Fung-ruey Liaw. *Does Early Retention in Grade School Reduce the Risk of Later Academic Failure?* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: School of Education, Center for Human Growth and Development, University of Michigan, January 1991).

2. Bud Howlett. "Why Flunking Kids is a Failure" *Chicago Tribune* (May 22, 1991): sec. 1: 17.

3. Howlett (1991).

4. Frank Llano, Illinois State Board of Education, interview, May 22, 1991.

5. Robert Saddler, Deputy Superintendent, Chicago Public Schools, interview, June 13, 1991.

far below their grade level is found in the difference of almost three years between the last grade they completed and their scores on the TABE test. The average last grade actually completed by more than 28,000 inmates was 10th grade, ninth month, but their average TABE score was only eighth grade, first month.<sup>31</sup>

### WHAT INMATES LIKED ABOUT SCHOOL

The number of academic setbacks and unpleasant experiences inmates reported having had as elementary and high school students might be expected to result in a negative attitude toward education in general. But, overwhelmingly, these inmates could identify something they had liked about being in school—96 percent reported one or more things about school that they enjoyed, and there was surprising consensus in the choice. Approximately 25 percent of the men and 13 out of the 42 women (31 percent) said mathematics was what they had liked best about school. For both men and women, no other choice among the 15 categories into which their free responses were sorted came close to the popularity of math as the favorite school experience. Math, for example, was named by male inmates 83 percent more often than the category of school activities that included sports, gym, and extra-curricular events—the second most popular group of choices for men. Math was almost three times more frequently cited by male inmates than “the challenge of learning,” which was the third most popular choice among male inmates. Women preferred math twice as often as either social studies or English, the second- and third-ranking choices among women. Of the 42 female inmates, seven (17 percent) said they liked social studies, and six (14 percent) said they liked English.

As this pattern of choice began to emerge during interviews, researchers probed for some explanation of this preference. The comments of one inmate were typical of explanations offered by this group concerning their strong liking for math. “With math, you always know that, if you do the problem correctly, you’ll always get a right answer.” From this and similar comments, researchers concluded that it was the concreteness and certainty of mathematics that held appeal for these inmates.

This finding may be related to the high percentage of learning disabilities that have been found among inmates.<sup>32</sup> Learning disabilities most frequently involve speech and language and affect the ability to analyze and interpret social behavior and cues. Students with learning disabilities of this type would be expected to find courses like English more difficult and frustrating than mathematics, because such courses require language and interpretive skills affected by the learning disability and rarely produce the clarity of a single right answer. In fact, the inmates who had liked math named English more frequently than any other item as the aspect of school they disliked most. Inmates who had liked math best were almost three times as likely as those who had preferred something else about school to say that what they had disliked most about school was English. Nineteen percent of male inmates who had liked math disliked English, while only 6.5 percent of male inmates who had liked something other than math also disliked English.

The responses made by inmates to an open-

#### What inmates liked most about school

The top 10 choices by inmates of what they liked about school are given, with the percentages of inmates who chose each item as one of their maximum of three responses. Since each inmate could respond up to three times, the totals do not add to 100 percent. When only first responses are tabulated, the rank order of items on the list changes: 1=Math, 2=Sports/gym/extra-curricular, 3=Personal challenge/learning, 4=English, 5=Everything, 6=Social studies, 7=Shop, vocational education, 8=Science, 9=Being with friends, 10=Art. However, the order of response may not necessarily equal the order of choice. Sometimes respondents gave a quick and flippant answer as a first response, then became more thoughtful when responding a second or third time.

N=684: males=642; females=42

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| 1. Math                                     | 30% |
| 2. Sports, gym, extra-curricular activities | 18% |
| 3. English                                  | 14% |
| 4. Social studies                           | 13% |
| 5. Science                                  | 11% |
| 6. Personal challenge/learning              | 10% |
| 7. Shop, vocational education               | 9%  |
| 8. Everything about school                  | 8%  |
| 9. Other classes                            | 7%  |
| 10. Being with friends                      | 6%  |

ended question about what they had liked best about school reflect a strongly positive attitude toward academic learning. Four of the five top choices are academic core subjects, including math and science. The personal challenge of learning, the sixth most popular response, was given by more than 10 percent of the inmates. These results suggest that whatever learning failures these inmates have experienced are not due to a lack of interest in education. Only 3.5 percent of the inmates said there was nothing they had liked about school.

While several academic subjects were popular with inmates, the teachers who taught them did not fare as well. Only 5 percent of the inmates mentioned something about teachers as what they liked best about school. Some inmates recalled their relationship with a particular teacher as the best thing that happened to them in school, but this response was not very common.

### **WHAT INMATES DISLIKED ABOUT SCHOOL**

When inmates were asked what they had disliked about school, almost two-thirds of the response categories dealt with some abstract characteristic of their educational experience, such as something about their relationship to their teachers, their reactions to specific instructional methods, or the way the school day was organized. In listing things they had liked about school, almost 60 percent of the categories were concrete—a specific subject, for example. Thinking abstractly

#### **What inmates disliked most about school**

The top 10 choices by inmates of what they disliked about school are given, with the percentages of inmates who chose each item as one of their maximum of three responses. Since each inmate could respond up to three times, the totals do not add to 100 percent.

N=683; Males=641; Females=42

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| 1. Nothing—I liked school                          | 22%   |
| 2. Math  | 12.5% |
| 3. Something about teachers/principals/deans       | 11%   |
| 4. English   | 10%   |
| 5. Schedule, long hours, getting up, sitting still | 9%    |
| 6. Science   | 8%    |
| 7. System structure, type or quality of classes    | 6%    |
| 8. Social studies                                  | 5%    |
| 9. Violence, gangs, neighborhood crime             | 5%    |
| 10. Gym, sports                                    | 4.5%  |

indicates reflection and analysis at a higher level of intellectual functioning than concrete thinking requires. This suggests that inmates have spent some time thinking about their negative school experiences and putting them into perspective prior to the survey interviews.

While inmates frequently remembered several things they had liked about school, negative feelings about school tended to focus around a single factor—inmates were more than five times as likely to give multiple responses to the question about what they had liked about school than to the question about what they had disliked. The rank order of their choices confirms that many of these men and women have positive attitudes towards school and learning. Only 2 percent of the inmates said they disliked everything about school, but 22 percent said there was nothing they disliked about school. This positive response occurred 75 percent more frequently than the second-ranking choice—a dislike of mathematics.

Mathematics emerged as a very polarizing subject, provoking intense positive or negative feelings among large percentages of inmates. The polarization effect was strongest for females, who said they had liked math almost 8 percent more frequently than males, but also had disliked math 20 percent more frequently than males. Inmates who had liked math tended to have disliked English and vice versa, suggesting two different clusters of personality and learning styles.

Teachers' low popularity among inmates, shown by their 11th-place standing on the list of things most liked about school, is confirmed in their third-place rank among what was most disliked in the school experience. More than twice as many inmates said that what they had disliked most was something about teachers, principals, or deans, compared to the number who chose them as the best thing they remembered about school. Many inmates cited specific interactions with school personnel in which they felt they had been unfairly treated or discriminated against as the reason for their choice.

Almost 10 percent of the inmates reported they had had a hard time getting up in the morning, sitting still in class, or coping with long hours and moving from class to class. These problems are closely associated with learning disabilities, and underscore the need for alternative education programs with more flexible scheduling. This

category of responses was fifth on the list of things inmates had disliked about school and almost three times more frequently cited than problems keeping up with the rest of the class. It was mentioned more than three times more frequently than problems with rules and discipline.

More than 6 percent of the inmates were critical of the quality of instruction they had received, often complaining that classes had been overcrowded and that they had continually been promoted in spite of the fact that both they and their teachers had known they weren't learning anything. Almost 5 percent said what they had disliked most about school was violence and street gang activities they encountered on the way to and from school and in the school itself.

### **INMATE EDUCATIONAL PLANS WHILE IN IDOC**

The positive attitudes toward education held by the majority of inmates are seen most strongly in their plans to enroll in IDOC educational programs. More than 82 percent of all inmates (82 percent of the male inmates and 83 percent—35 of the 42—female inmates) indicated plans to take one or more courses during their incarceration. Some inmates questioned interviewers about the kinds of courses that were available through IDOC. Two-thirds of those not planning to enroll said they didn't have enough time remaining on their sentence to complete an educational program.<sup>33</sup> Approximately 14 percent said they preferred to work or already had a vocational skill they could put to use in the department. Only 5 percent of those with no plans to enroll said they had no interest in education.

Graduates showed slightly less interest in IDOC educational programs than did inmates who had dropped out—79 percent of graduates, compared to 83 percent of non-graduates, said they planned to enroll in a course. This difference is expectable, since a high school diploma or GED is a prerequisite for many types of jobs in the prisons, as they are in the community, and inmates in job assignments earn more money than those attending classes. Graduates were more likely to tell interviewers that they already had a job skill and preferred to work while incarcerated. Graduates who planned to enroll in a program were almost 20 percent more likely to be interested in vocational training than non-graduates.

Almost two-thirds of the inmates who had dropped out were interested in completing a GED, and more than half of them wanted to continue with vocational training or college courses after earning their GED.

Inmates who said they had no educational plans were asked if the chance to learn a job skill, good-time credit for completing a program, tutoring by other inmates, or the chance to study a subject of their choice would encourage them to change their minds. Good-time credit (an earned reduction in the length of sentence) proved to be the strongest incentive for enrollment in an educational program—more than 77 percent of the inmates said they would enroll if successful completion would reduce time on their sentences. Most inmates were surprised to learn that such a measure—which became effective December 1, 1990—was being considered by the Illinois General Assembly at the time of the survey.<sup>34</sup>

The opportunity to select a course of their choice was also a strong incentive to enrollment—72 percent said they would change their minds if they could choose their own course. The most popular types of courses mentioned were automotive, including body and fender, auto maintenance and repair, and diesel mechanics. These were chosen by about 20 percent of the inmates. Computer courses, construction trades, and business and accounting were also popular—each selected by about 12 percent of the inmates.

The chance to earn a job skill was an incentive for 66 percent of the inmates. Many inmates who said learning a job skill wouldn't affect their decision not to enroll in educational programming said they already had a trade or profession. Tutoring by other inmates was not a popular incentive. Only 38 percent of the men and none of the women said they would enroll in a course if they knew other inmates would be tutoring them.

Inmates with plans to enroll in educational

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*"In 20 years, I haven't had one guy on my caseload actually get a GED. When they come in saying, 'I want to get my GED,' I say to myself, 'It'll never happen.' I had one guy I had been personally driving to GED class every day for two months. Then I found out from the program director that every day after I dropped him off, he would split instead of going to class."*

*Howard Courtney  
Correctional Parole Agent, Peoria  
(February 7, 1991)*

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programs were fairly evenly divided among those interested in basic education leading to a GED (25 percent), those seeking vocational training (24 percent), those interested in college-level courses (19 percent), and those who wanted to complete a GED and then apply for vocational training (21 percent). The remaining 11 percent expressed interest in various combinations of programs.

### **WHY DON'T MORE INMATES ENROLL IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS?**

#### **Factors associated with an interest in IDOC education**

Certain inmate characteristics are strongly associated with an interest in correctional education. The typical inmate most likely to express interest in enrolling in an educational program is a black man in his mid-20s who dropped out of school to support himself or his family. He had never been expelled or suspended from school and had never failed a grade and been held back. There was nothing he had disliked about school, and he had liked his math courses better than anything else about school. His mother was a high school graduate, and he is interested in getting his GED.

While more than four out of every five inmates surveyed said they wanted to enroll in an educational program, only about one in three adult inmates actually enrolls.<sup>35</sup> Do inmates fail to carry through with their educational ambitions once they reach an institution? Or do other factors intervene to lower their enrollment?

Conversations with male inmates held during a series of focus groups at Cook County Jail and during field trials of the survey at the Graham and Menard correctional centers, and with female inmates at Dwight Correctional Center, shed some light on this problem from the inmates' perspective.

- Inmates said that orientation programs at institutions within IDOC vary considerably. Inmates reported the orientation in some of the newer institutions is excellent, but where orientation is minimal, it can take a new inmate a long time to figure out what is going on in the facility and what opportunities are available.
- Waiting lists for popular courses can further delay an inmate's entry into a program. For example, the introduction of the mandatory educational program for inmates testing below the sixth-grade skill level has created a long waiting list for the 90-day basic education programs—more than 1,200 inmates as of May 1991. The expected popularity of the new program to award good-time credit for completion of educational programs will probably create waiting lists for many other courses as

well. Such delays can leave an inmate with no time to complete a full course of training. The expansion of educational services and staff in past years has not been able to keep pace with the recent dramatic increase in the state prison population and will be further challenged by the anticipated increase in demand prompted by the new law. Cutbacks in educational services prompted by recent reductions in funding for correctional education are expected to further increase demand on remaining programs.<sup>36</sup>

- Inmates are frequently subject to transfers within the state prison system. Transfers can be used to protect or discipline inmates, to meet institutional space and programming requirements, or to meet an inmate's need for a different security level. Such transfers can interrupt an inmate's educational program.
- Inmates also claimed there is a serious lack of coordination in educational programming—not only within IDOC, but also between county jails, IDOC, and community-based programs available following release. Inmates said it was a common experience to begin a program in one location, be moved on to the next and have to start all over, all the while losing ground and becoming discouraged. They felt it should be possible to test into a higher-level program at the new location, even if they had failed to obtain a credential from the previous program. They said it was particularly hard to find comparable educational programs in the community to continue work begun in prison (see Chapter 9, Adult Education).
- Not all institutions offer a complete range of programs. Inmates are sometimes transferred into an institution where they cannot complete training begun in another setting, or they may be assigned to a facility that does not offer the course that interests them.<sup>37</sup> For example, the popular auto body and mechanics courses are not offered in the Danville, Dixon, East Moline, Hill, Lincoln, Shawnee, and Western Illinois correctional centers.<sup>38</sup>

Some enrollment problems are unique to the penal setting:

- Lockdowns can interrupt programming for extended periods of time.



- Women at Dwight Correctional Center, the state's only all-female prison, said that staff vacancies were often unfilled for months at a time, interrupting programming until a replacement could be found.
- Women at Dwight were critical of what they called "a lack of good education programs." One woman said that she had taken a data entry course that was taught from a textbook without hands-on computer experience, because no computers were available in the program. The women also said that the vocational training available to them did not equip them for jobs that paid adequate salaries in the community. Of the 40 women receiving vocational training at Dwight in November 1990, three were being trained for work in food service industries (baker, cook), eight were being trained in cosmetology, nine were training as secretaries, 10 as maintenance workers, eight in commercial art and photography, and two in water and waste water treatment (see Chapter 8, Correctional Education, for a discussion of vocational education opportunities for female inmates).
- Inmates may change their minds about enrolling, once they understand the economics of prison life. Inmates can earn varying amounts of money, depending on their job assignments in the institution. Inmates working in certain skilled jobs in prison industries, such as asbestos abatement (Lincoln Correctional Center) or optics (Dixon Correctional Center) can earn as much as \$1,000 a month if a project goes into overtime. Piecework, such as sewing uniform shirts, generally averages out to about \$3.25 an hour. Based on an average work week of approximately 22 hours, pieceworkers can earn about \$300 a month. Inmates enrolled in educational programs, on the other hand, are paid only \$15 per month, considerably less than they can earn in job assignments. Only unassigned inmates earn less (\$10 per month). Inmates use this money to make commissary purchases and, in some cases, to supplement the incomes of their families at home.<sup>39</sup>

## RETURNING INMATES' PREVIOUS ENROLLMENT IN IDOC PROGRAMS

Slightly less than half of the male and female

inmates who participated in the Authority's survey were being readmitted to IDOC—47 percent of the men and seven of the 42 women (17 percent) were returning to prison. Some of these inmates had committed new offenses, while others had violated the terms of their parole or work-release programs, or had been temporarily released in order to appear in court. Graduates were less likely than dropouts to have been previously admitted to IDOC—41 percent of graduates and 49 percent of the inmates who had dropped out had prior admissions to the department.

Among returning inmates, more than 50 percent of the male graduates and 73 percent of the male dropouts had been enrolled in educational programs during a previous period of incarceration. Of those with previous IDOC educational training, almost 40 percent of the male inmates had been in vocational courses, 32 percent had been in GED programs, and approximately 15 percent had taken college courses.<sup>40</sup> Only four of the seven returning female inmates had taken academic courses in IDOC, including two who had taken GED courses, one who had taken college courses, and one who did not specify the type of program she had attended. Only one female inmate had taken vocational training.<sup>41</sup> Male dropouts were approximately 20 percent less likely to have had vocational training in the department than those who had completed high school, since a high school diploma or GED is a prerequisite for many of the vocational programs.

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### What do correctional officials and officers think about offender education?

The superintendent of IDOC's School District 428 emphasized the value of correctional education, explaining, "The bottom line is this: We know inmates returning to the free world are less likely to return to the prison system when they have been involved in the correctional school program and leave with job skills and a better education. It is a true bargain as far as the expenditure of state funds is concerned. Education programs pay for themselves in reduced recidivism and by limiting the crimes committed by parolees and others."<sup>1</sup>

But some correctional officers resent the opportunities afforded to offenders. One officer said, "These guys have committed a crime and are rewarded with a chance for an education. A guy on the street can bust his butt and still not get the same opportunity these guys get for free. Then they don't even take advantage of it. They go into classes and terrorize the teacher. Now they're talking about giving them a master's degree program."<sup>2</sup>

1. Ray Quick in *Insight into Corrections* (July 1990)

2. Correctional officer at Joliet Reception Center (July 1990).

## WHAT DO INMATES THINK OF CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS?

The vast majority of returning inmates who had been enrolled in educational programs during a previous incarceration liked both the academic and vocational courses they had taken in IDOC, but they showed the greatest enthusiasm for vocational courses (Figure 7.4). Among academic courses, the inmates liked their college courses best. Almost 96 percent of the inmates who had taken college courses said they liked them very well or pretty well, compared to the 92-percent favorable rating for academic courses in general.

The majority of returning inmates not only liked the courses they had taken, but they found them useful when they returned to the community. Adult basic education (ABE) courses got the highest marks from inmates for their usefulness. More than 83 percent of the inmates enrolled in ABE found these courses somewhat or very useful. However, 22 percent of the participants in academic programs and 24 percent of the participants in vocational programs reported the training they received was not useful.

Inmates who didn't find their correctional-based vocational training useful gave a variety of reasons why they didn't. Some said the stigma of being an ex-offender outweighed the value of skill training with many of the employers who interviewed them. Others said they had not been able to find a job in the fields they had studied in IDOC, or they found a job in another field first and never

used the skills learned in IDOC. Still others reported that they were released before they could complete their training and had not been able to find a program in the community to resume their studies. The pressure to get a job after release was so great, they said, it was almost impossible to continue training (see Chapter 8, Correctional Education). In particular, inmates who had been in basic education courses but had failed to get a GED had difficulty identifying any way these courses had benefitted them. Inmates who had been incarcerated at more than one institution who were interviewed during the survey field trials often reported a great deal of variability in educational opportunities from one institution to the next. For example, it was reported that at one location most of the job training was oriented toward making the institution self-sustaining, such as grounds maintenance, and did not provide inmates with usable job skills.

IDOC training programs must be relevant to the needs of the job market, while continuing to serve institutions as a control mechanism, by keeping the maximum number of inmates usefully occupied. Training programs in such fields as asbestos abatement and data processing have been added to the curriculum in response to job market factors. But the top priority in planning new prison industries is not meeting private sector demand for certain job skills, but rather maximizing the number of new inmate job assignments.<sup>42</sup> The tension between these two potentially conflicting goals sets correctional education apart from educational programs in other settings.

Figure 7.4

### Percentage of inmates who like IDOC courses and who find them useful

|                            | Academic | Vocational |
|----------------------------|----------|------------|
| <b>Like</b>                |          |            |
| Very well                  | 51%      | 73.5%      |
| Pretty well                | 41%      | 19.5%      |
| Neither liked nor disliked | 1%       | 5%         |
| Not too well               | 3.5%     | 2%         |
| Not at all                 | 3.5%     | 0%         |
| <b>Useful</b>              |          |            |
| Very useful                | 48%      | 50%        |
| Somewhat useful            | 27%      | 23%        |
| Don't know                 | 3.5%     | 3%         |
| Not very useful            | 11%      | 8%         |
| Not at all useful          | 12%      | 17%        |

Respondents were limited to the 170 male and four female inmates being readmitted to the department. Their views may not be representative of all inmates who enroll in educational programs.

Source: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

### Notes

1. Stephen Steurer, Executive Director of the Correctional Education Association, as quoted by George Nicholson, "Reading, 'Riting or Doing Time'" *ABA Journal* (June 1990): 66.

2. T. Thornberry, M. Moore, and R.L. Christenson, "The Effect of Dropping Out of High School on Subsequent Criminal Behavior" *Criminology* 23 (1985): 3-18.

3. In a review of published research, nine out of 10 recent studies examined showed a high correlation between poor school performance, low scores on intelligence tests, and higher participation in delinquent and criminal behavior. Alfred Blumstein, Jacqueline Cohen, Jeffrey Roth, and Christy A. Visher, eds., *Criminal Careers and Career Criminals* 1 (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1986) 252-291

4. See also Chapter 1, Introduction, for further discussion. William J. Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy* (Chicago: University of

Chicago Press, 1987); and Timothy F. Hartnagel and Harvey Krahn, "High School Dropouts, Labor Market Success, and Criminal Behavior" *Youth and Society* 20 (4, 1989): 416-444.

5. D.S. Elliot and H.L. Voss, *Delinquency and Dropout* (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath Publishers, 1974); J.G. Bachman, S. Green, and I.D. Wirtanen, *Youth in Transition*, vol. 3, *Dropping Out: Problem or Symptom?* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Institute for Social Research, 1971); J.G. Bachman, P.M. O'Malley, and J. Johnson, *Youth in Transition*, vol. 6, *Adolescence to Adulthood* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Institute for Social Research, 1978); and Thornberry, Moore, and Christenson, "The Effect of Dropping Out" (1985).

6. Reasons for dropping out are also discussed in Chapter 6, Truancy and Dropout.

7. "Siblings" includes all children of the inmate's own generation who were raised in the same family as the inmate, allowing for extended family patterns such as cousins all being raised together.

8. Illinois State Board of Education, *1989-90 Dropouts by Grade, Sex, and Racial/Ethnic Category* (Springfield, Ill., 1991). See also Chapter 6, Truancy and Dropout.

9. Robert K. Merton, "Social Structure and Anomie" *American Sociological Review* (October 1938); "Social Conformity, Deviation, and Opportunity Structures" *American Sociological Review* (April 1959); and *Social Theory and Social Structure* (New York: Free Press, 1968).

10. Using chi square,  $p < .01$ .

11. The percentages of respondents in the different ethnic categories who reported they didn't know whether their fathers or mothers graduated was virtually identical to the ethnic distribution of the sample as a whole. For example, 61 percent of the inmates who didn't know their parents' educational history were black, while black inmates are 61 percent of the sample. This indicates that knowing or not knowing about the parents' education was not related to the ethnically based differences of dropout rates for fathers and sons.

12. Illinois Department of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, Addictions Research Institute, *DASA Youth Survey 1990: Main Findings*, prepared by Mark E. Barrett. (Springfield, Ill., 1990): 18. This characteristic, which was used by DASA as an indirect measure of lower socio-economic status, would indicate that the families of inmates are far more likely than the average Illinois resident to be living in conditions of poverty.

13. For differences in the mothers' mean graduation rate by ethnic group of the inmate, in tests of significance using chi square  $p < .0001$

14. 1990 Census data indicating the percentage of Hispanic residents in Illinois who are not native-born were not available at the time of this printing. However, the extent of Hispanic immigration into Illinois in the last 20 years is reflected in the growth of the Hispanic minority in public school enrollment. In 1971, approximately 84,000 Hispanic children were enrolled in Illinois schools, representing 3.5 percent of

the total enrollment. By the fall of 1990, Hispanic enrollment in Illinois public schools had increased to almost 180,000, an increase of 114 percent since 1971. Hispanics now make up 9.8 percent of Illinois public school students. Karol Chaska, Research and Evaluation, Illinois State Board of Education, Interview: June 12, 1991.

15. A 1979 study of the impact of parental status and educational attainment on children's educational aspirations found that "Among lower-SES (socio-economic status) males of either race, it is the influence of mother's rather than the father's educational attainment that is dominant. For high status white males, educational decisions are more responsive to the previous achievements of the head of the household (predominantly fathers). . . ." (Frank Howell and Wolfgang Frese "Race, Sex, and Aspirations: Evidence for the 'Race Convergence' Hypothesis" *Sociology of Education* 52(1979): 43). However, this study was conducted in small cities and rural areas in the South where minority populations may not exhibit the same family structure as minorities in northern cities such as Chicago. Studies of black inner-city youth in households headed by women have shown that, in order to strengthen their male identity, adolescent boys may reject the influence of their mothers and look to male peers for social role modeling. (Walter B. Miller, "Lower Class Culture as a Generating Milieu of Gang Delinquency" *Journal of Social Issues* 14 (3, 1958): 5-19). This would explain why the influence of black mothers is not greater than for black fathers in the IDOC study. The greater influence of white mothers on their inmate sons would fit the pattern for lower socio-economic status whites found in the Howell and Frese study.

16. For observed differences in the mean graduation rates of inmates who had at least one sibling who failed to graduate and those whose siblings graduated  $p = < .001$ , using chi square.

17. Inmates were not asked whether any of their siblings had been incarcerated, although at least two sets of brothers were included in the survey sample.

18. Previously incarcerated inmates included some inmates who were being readmitted to the Department of Corrections but had not received a new felony conviction. These inmates were being returned for technical parole violations and other reasons.

19. When the subcategories were collapsed into the four main groups, a few categories with marginal response frequencies were eliminated. The percentage breakdowns for large categories include a larger number of responses than make up the sum of the responses in the small categories (different N). This means that percentage responses for the subcategories, when added together, will not equal the percentage breakdown for the "umbrella" category. Only 25 women in the study had dropped out of school, rendering a sample population too low for useful comparative analysis. The major categories of reasons for leaving school for women inmates will be given with percentages, but the reader is

cautioned that the sample size is too small to be representative of female inmates as a class. Subcategories for women will not be discussed.

20. The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority's Illinois Juvenile Officers Association Roundtable Discussion of Juvenile Policing (June 29, 1990). See also Appendix A, Project Methodology.

21. LaVerne Davis-Sams, Law Department, and Siegfried Mueller, Research and Evaluation Department, Chicago Board of Education, interviews: August 7, 1990.

22. Davis-Sams and Mueller (August 7, 1990). In Los Angeles County, school district boundaries are drawn to avoid incorporating neighborhoods controlled by rival gangs. Gang turf maps are also consulted when student transfers are made. Conference on Adjudicated, Incarcerated, and At-Risk Youth. Palm Springs, Calif., January 16, 1991.

23. Not included in this group are those (already included in other groups) who were expelled and refused transfers to other schools for gang-related or other reasons.

24. Not included in this group are those (already included in other groups) who cited gang influence as a reason for dropping out.

25. In a 1989 study of more than 700 students nationwide in the eighth through 12th grades, researchers found that youth whose strongest personal attachments were to parents, teachers, church, or community had the lowest rates of delinquent behavior. The opposite was true for teenagers whose strongest attachments were to peers, and the strength of the attachment was positively correlated to the extent of the delinquency. LeGrand Gardner and Donald Shoemaker, "Social Bonding and Delinquency: A Comparative Analysis" *The Sociological Quarterly* 30 (3, 1989): 481-500.

26. Ethnic differences for years of school completed were significant ( $p < .001$ ) using chi square.

27. See also Chapter 6, Truancy and Dropout.

28. Inmates were asked, "What might have helped to keep you in school at that time?" Up to three responses were recorded for each inmate. Responses were grouped into five major clusters for analysis. All responses were tabulated in calculating percentages. Percentages given for the five categories do not total 100 percent but instead reflect the percentage of all inmates responding to the question who gave a particular response as a first, second, or third response.

29. "Many adults develop strategies to conceal their lack of education." *Characteristics of Adult Learners, Training Materials for Tutor Trainers*. Literacy Volunteers of America.

30. Ray Quick, Superintendent of the Illinois Department of Corrections School District 428, quoted in Illinois Department of Corrections, "The Cost Savings in Educating Inmates," report by Brian Fairchild, *Insight into Corrections* (July 1990): 5.

31. The average last grade completed was computed from 28,744 inmate educational records in the Offender

Tracking System in June 1991. Average TABE scores among this sample were computed for 10,128 inmates whose educational records were complete. According to Superintendent Quick, the TABE scores were missing for almost two-thirds of inmate records due to a conversion of records to a new management information system, which was in progress at the time of the Authority's study. While TABE scores for incoming inmates were being entered into the new OTS system, data on inmates admitted before the new system was in place were being transferred from manual files.

32. See also Chapter 5, Special Education.

33. Some of the inmates surveyed had been returned to IDOC on parole violations, work release violations, and writs. These inmates had already served significant portions of their sentences. Others had served six months or more in a county jail prior to their sentencing, and had only a few months remaining in their sentence.

34. PA 86-1373 amended Chapter 38, par. 1003-6-3 of the Illinois Revised Statutes. The revised statute provides that inmates who enroll full-time in correctional education programs and who meet certain educational goals within a specified time frame may earn 0.25 days of credit toward early release for every day of program participation. Such good-time credits are not available to offenders convicted of a Class X felony or murder or to any offender convicted of a felony after a previous award of educational good-time credits.

35. The number of non-duplicated students (some students take more than one course) served by educational and vocational programs in the Illinois Department of Corrections as of May 31, 1990 was 8,630. This represents approximately 33 percent of the IDOC population at that time Illinois Department of Corrections, *Insight into Corrections* (July 1990): 23.

36. Ray Quick, Superintendent of the Illinois Department of Corrections School District 428, interview: January 7, 1991. For further discussion of the impact of funding cutbacks, see Chapter 8, Correctional Education.

37. Basic education, GED, and two-year college programs are available in all facilities.

38. Illinois Department of Corrections, *Insight into Corrections* (July 1990): 22.

39. Information provided by Superintendent Ray Quick (January 2, 1990) and by Barbara Kearns, Office of the Chief Administrator, Illinois Department of Corrections Prison Industries (June 11, 1991).

40. Some of the community college courses taken by inmates were vocational courses.

41. These numbers were too small to use in additional analysis.

42. Kearns (June 11, 1991).

# Correctional Education



When public schools fail to educate and offenders end up behind bars, responsibility for education shifts to correctional institutions. The task they face is formidable: approximately 72 percent of adult inmates in Illinois correctional institutions in 1990 were high school dropouts, and the average inmate's reading and math scores are two or more years behind the latest grade level attained in school before entering prison.<sup>1</sup>

A number of factors have brought correctional education to the nation's attention in recent years. First, the total number of individuals under correctional supervision has grown dramatically: the adult prison population increased 115 percent nationally during the past decade and 119 percent in Illinois.<sup>2</sup> Second, the movement away from rehabilitation toward a punitive response to crime has left education as the primary formal opportunity for self-improvement available to many individuals under correctional supervision in many jurisdictions. Third, federal and state court intervention into the administration and operation of correctional facilities has repeatedly resulted in calls for improved educational programs.

A 1988 Illinois study found that inmates who received vocational and basic academic education while in prison had higher rates of employment and lower criminal activity after release than inmates who weren't enrolled in any educational program.<sup>3</sup>

Correctional education can serve a number of functions:<sup>4</sup>

- Control inmates by keeping them usefully occupied
- Teach inmates basic academic and vocational skills
- Reduce recidivism
- Give inmates an opportunity to change their personal behavior and values
- Train inmates to work in operational areas that maintain the correctional institutions themselves
- Provide institutional work assignments for inmate tutors

Experts do not agree, however, on how correctional education programs should be structured.<sup>5</sup> Some argue that correctional educators should concentrate on remedying basic educational deficits—providing educational opportunities to inmates who have had difficulty learning, including literacy training and vocational skills.<sup>6</sup> Others believe, however, that general life skills or competency-based education, as opposed to strictly academic or vocational programs, may be more useful.<sup>7</sup> According to this view, basic literacy and vocational skills should be taught in the context of their real-world applications. Competency-based programs are being used more frequently in correctional settings.

Nine of Illinois' 23 adult prisons and all seven juvenile institutions use a cooperative work training program, which emphasizes both classroom and work-related skills, to prepare inmates for getting and keeping a job. In addition, at some Illinois institutions, offender reintegration programs play an active role in helping inmates develop their ability to return to the community and lead productive lives.

Educational programs for adult and juvenile offenders in Illinois take place in state correctional institutions, county jails, and community-based programs. Educational programs for adults and juveniles in state-run institutions and programs are operated by the Illinois Department of Corrections School District 428. Other programs in the prison system are run by community colleges, private universities, and community-based organizations. Programs in some county jails and in county juvenile detention centers are operated by local school districts, community colleges, and community-based agencies. Programs for

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### Standards for correctional education

There are at present two separate sets of standards for the administration and operation of correctional education in the United States. The American Correctional Association (ACA) has provided standards and accreditation procedures for adult and juvenile institutions, detention facilities, community residential services, probation and parole services, and other correctional service providers since the late 1800s. ACA standards address the need for educational services in these settings, but they are not specific or stringent and are not mandatory for adult clients.

The Correctional Education Association (CEA) is an international organization that provides support services to correctional education professionals through publications, workshops, and an annual conference. The CEA has developed 31 standards covering four general areas of correctional education—administration, staff, students, and programs.<sup>1</sup>

The ACA has approved the CEA standards but has not adopted them into its accreditation program. If the ACA officially adopts the CEA standards, they will carry the backing of the ACA's accreditation program as incentive for agencies to comply

1. Standards for adult and juvenile correctional education programs. Correctional Education Association, March 1988.



ex-offenders are sponsored by community-based organizations, such as the Safer Foundation.

### SCHOOL DISTRICT 428

In 1972, the Illinois General Assembly created School District 428,<sup>9</sup> making Illinois one of only 12 states whose correctional departments have their own school districts. This organizational structure allows the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) to qualify for federal assistance programs for school districts.<sup>9</sup> School District 428 has the authority to establish primary, secondary, vocational, special, and post-secondary educational programs in both the Adult and Juvenile divisions of IDOC.

School District 428 began operations in 1973 in five institutions—Dwight, Menard, Pontiac, and Stateville correctional centers and the Menard Psychiatric Center. In 1975, career and occupational programs and community college associate degree programs were made available to inmates through contracts with local community colleges. In 1976, Juvenile Division facilities became part of School District 428, and the statewide GED testing program, begun in adult institutions the previous year, was extended into juvenile centers. In 1977, School District 428 expanded to cover all adult and juvenile institutions in Illinois. By the 1990–1991 school year, School District 428 offered 88 vocational courses for adult inmates and 24 for juvenile inmates, although the number actually available at any institution is much smaller. Academic courses ranging from basic education to degree-oriented college and university programs are also available at nearly all adult and juvenile facilities.

The total operating budget of School District 428 has increased steadily each year since state fiscal year 1987 (Figures 8.1 and 8.2). The fiscal 1991 budget increased about \$2.7 million, or 9.3 percent over the previous year. From 1987 to 1991, the budget increased a total of about 40 percent. Adjusted for inflation, the total increase, in constant 1989 dollars, was nearly 18 percent.

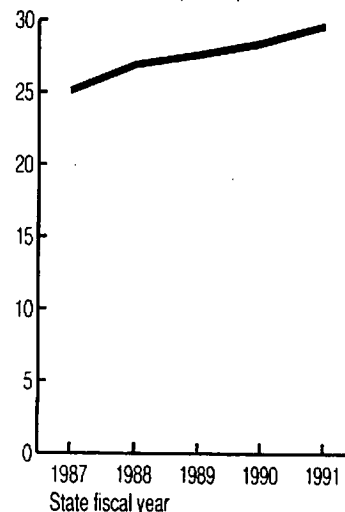
Although School District 428 expenditures have risen steadily in recent years, that rise has not quite been matched by course enrollments. The combined total of academic and vocational enrollments in the Adult and Juvenile divisions rose 8 percent between fiscal years 1987 and 1990, while total expenditures, in constant 1989

dollars, rose about 13 percent during that four-year period. This translates into an overall 4.4-percent constant-dollar increase in expenditures per enrollment, from \$878 in fiscal 1987 to \$917 in 1990, although the 1990 expenditure rate decreased by 8.1 percent from the previous year (Figure 8.3).

A 1990 analysis conducted by IDOC measured the cost of educating inmates against the costs incurred when a person is sent back to prison in Illinois, based on criminal justice system expenses for arrest, jail time, trial, conviction, prison time, lost taxes because the person is in prison instead of at work, and the supervision of the offender once released to parole. The total bill for criminal justice expenses came to about \$36,775 for an inmate's stay. IDOC officials estimate that if education programs kept only 5.5 percent of releasees from returning to prison, the programs would completely pay for themselves.

Future budgets for School District 428 are likely to be much tighter. State budget cutbacks have been compounded by the loss of federal money that supports vocational and educational programs. In 1991, the Illinois State Board of Education determined that, due to changes in federal law, IDOC was no longer eligible for more than \$750,000 in vocational education funds annually. Programs for ex-offenders in the community lost more than 25 percent of their operating bud-

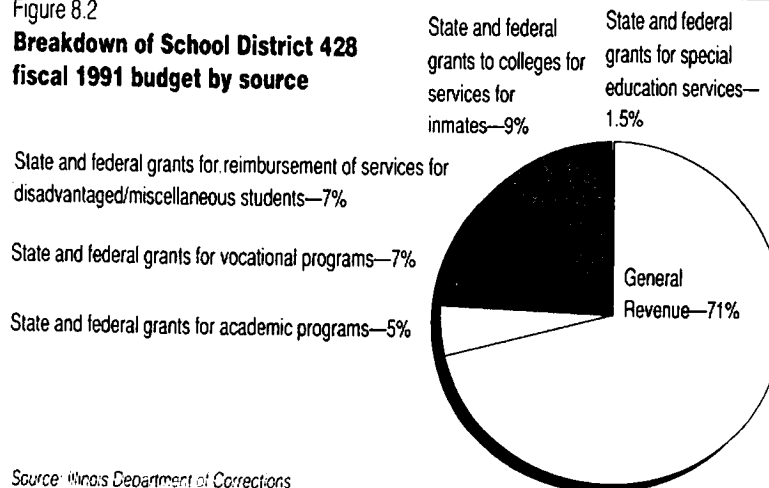
Figure 8.1  
**School District 428 expenditures**  
Constant 1989 dollars (millions)



Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

Figure 8.2

### Breakdown of School District 428 fiscal 1991 budget by source



Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

gets when the Illinois Department of Public Aid decided to use for other purposes federal Title XX funds that have supported those programs. Inmates are also no longer eligible for scholarships from the Illinois Student Assistance Commission.

Illinois General Revenue funding cutbacks also affected IDOC generally, and School District 428 specifically. The School District lost about \$1.4 million of its planned fiscal year 1991 General Revenue funding. Several adult and juvenile academic and vocational programs provided by

community colleges and private universities were shut down as a result.

Specifically, the colleges and universities that contract with IDOC were cut back to a maximum of 20 courses during the school year, compared to up to 45 courses offered by some institutions before the fiscal 1991 budget cutback. Inmates pursuing associate's or bachelor's degrees now have a smaller range of courses to choose from. As a result, achievement of a degree may take longer, because prerequisite courses may be harder to schedule.

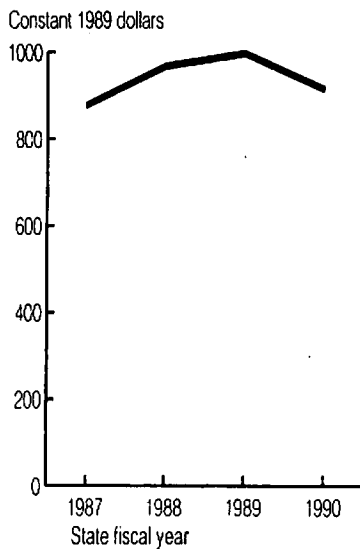
(ABE) programs for inmates, supported in part by federal funding through the Adult Education Act, have been developed in nearly all correctional facilities nationwide. These programs, which are generally viewed as feeders for GED preparatory classes, often employ computerized learning materials and allow students to proceed at their own pace rather than having to compete with others in a standard classroom setting. Nine of Illinois' 23 adult institutions use computer resources that have been developed by the University of Illinois for their ABE programs.<sup>10</sup> In all Illinois institutions, however, ABE courses are classroom-based, with open enrollment and individualized instruction based on standard core curricula and learning objectives. Each classroom teacher, together with the institution's education administrator, determines what specific learning materials and teaching method will be used. Inmate tutors assist individual students.

All Illinois inmates who score below the sixth-grade level at intake are required to remain in the ABE program for 90 days, unless, after 45 days, they take the TABE and place out of the program by scoring at the sixth-grade level or higher on the test.

During state fiscal year 1990, 13,803 adult inmates took the TABE upon intake. Of those, 9,848 (71.3 percent) scored at a sixth-grade level or better and 3,955 (28.7 percent) scored below that level and were required to enroll in the ABE program. Those who elected to re-take the TABE after 45 days in the program passed the test with a higher frequency than those who did so after completing the 90-day course. During fiscal 1990, 54.7 percent of the inmates who took the test again after 45 days scored at or above the sixth-grade level, while only 32.1 percent of those re-taking the test at the end of 90 days scored that well (Figure 8.4). This may be because many of those who take the test after 45 days may have come close to passing it at intake, while a large number of those remaining for the full 90 days may have entered the program with a very low level of basic skills accompanied by very serious deficiencies. Under these circumstances, three months is not enough time to raise their skills to a sixth-grade level. Overall, of the 1,228 who retook the test at any time during fiscal 1990, fewer than half scored at or above the sixth-grade level.

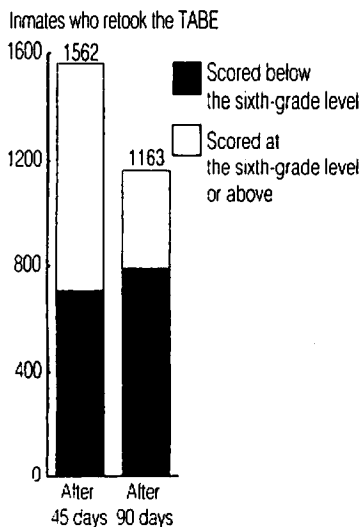
Refusal to attend the ABE program after

Figure 8.3  
**School District 428 expenditures per adult and juvenile enrollment, 1987 through 1990**



Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

Figure 8.4  
**IDOC inmates taking the TABE after 45 and after 90 days in an ABE program in fiscal 1990**



Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

## EDUCATION IN IDOC'S ADULT DIVISION

Adult IDOC inmates are enrolled in a variety of educational programs at various levels.

### Adult basic education

Inmates who score below the sixth-grade level on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) are required to participate in an Adult Basic Education program. Since January 1, 1987, inmates committed to the Adult Division for two or more years (except those serving a life sentence or given the death penalty) are administered the TABE achievement test.

Adult Basic Education

scoring lower than the sixth-grade level at intake constitutes grounds for disciplinary action against the inmate, such as assignment to less-desirable work details, withholding good-time credits, and possible transfer to a higher-security facility. As an additional incentive to continue in the program, inmates who have not attained the sixth-grade level are paid only at the same low rate they would receive while attending school for any job they do while in prison, until they achieve the sixth-grade level.

Although strict, these educational standards are not nearly as stringent as those initiated in 1991 by the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Federal inmates are now required to attend classes until they can read at the 12th-grade level and complete a high school equivalency degree. The Bureau of Prisons began its mandatory literacy program in 1982 with the same sixth-grade achievement requirement now used in Illinois. In 1986, that standard was raised to require mastery of eighth-grade level skills. The new 12th-grade standard requires inmates to attend classes for 90 days. Federal prisoners who do not achieve the 12th-grade level after 90 days and do not continue with the educational program are consigned to earning the lowest wages in prison jobs and are also subject to disciplinary action—such as loss of privileges, additional work hours, and possible transfer to an institution with a higher level of security. The federal eighth-grade standard seems to have been successful. In 1989, 10,546 federal inmates completed eighth-grade requirements, a 300-percent increase from 1986. In addition, 3,100 inmates finished high school equivalency programs that year.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to the regular basic education programming, literacy programs using specially trained inmate tutors have recently gained increased acceptance and popularity in Illinois prisons. Using trained volunteers makes literacy programs cost-effective. Literacy programs were operating in 19 of the 23 adult prisons at the beginning of 1991.

One such program, run by Literacy Volunteers of America and started in 1989, operates in four Illinois prisons—Dwight, Pontiac, Sheridan, and Vandalia. LVA staff provide training to the existing education staff and to inmates who volunteer and have been approved by staff to be tutors. Education staff learn program manage-

ment and promotion and how to support the tutors. The tutors are trained in basic literacy issues, adult learning theory, and student assessment. Tutors are trained to use different teaching strategies—including computer programs and audio-visual materials—to fit the learning styles of people who have typically experienced some failure with the traditional teaching methods employed in public schools. LVA also provides in-service training to education staff and tutors, and other program support.

### **GED training**

Inmates at all Illinois adult prisons may enter GED training if they test at the 10th-grade level or above on the TABE and do not have a verified GED certificate or a high school diploma.

A GED is a valuable and universally accepted alternative for students who have dropped out of school before achieving a high school diploma. The GED completion program in Illinois provides a tangible goal for inmates to pursue while incarcerated, and the GED is commonly recognized and accepted outside prison. For inmates with some educational skills who are serving relatively short sentences, a GED can be useful. But for many prisoners who lack basic literacy skills, the GED is at best a long-term goal, often beyond their reach.<sup>12</sup>

GED classes in Illinois prisons are similar to ABE classes, in that they are taught in classrooms with open enrollment (for those who qualify). The GED classes involve more group instruction than the ABE classes because all the students are pursuing the common goal of a GED certificate. In the weeks immediately prior to the test, instructors provide more individualized attention to students.

### **Vocational education**

In Illinois and nationwide, vocational programs in adult institutions provide both pre-apprenticeship and certificate programs as well as on-the-job training. Correctional vocational education teaches basic skills, specific occupational skills, and how to keep a job, focusing on such things as motivation for work and positive work habits.<sup>13</sup>

Vocational education programs in IDOC's adult institutions are taught in prison classrooms and workshops by School District 428 staff or by faculty from one of 18 community colleges. School

District 428 classes are at the high school level and do not require a GED or a high school diploma. Classes taught by college faculty, which are extensions of college vocational courses, have more stringent prerequisites. Satisfactory completion of School District 428 classes results in a certificate of completion; completion of classes taught by college faculty results in college credit and may lead to formal licensing in a particular field.

School District 428 offered from one to 28 vocational courses at each adult institution during the academic quarter ending February 28, 1991—a total of 88 programs. Space for vocational programs is severely limited in the very old maximum-security facilities, reducing the availability of vocational programs there. When these facilities were built—Joliet, Menard, and Pontiac were constructed during the 19th century—prisoners were confined to their cells for most of the day, and no space was allocated for classrooms and workshops.<sup>14</sup> In addition, lockdowns (restriction of inmates to their cells) occur more frequently in maximum-security facilities and can make the operation of educational programs much more difficult.<sup>15</sup>

Most of the vocational courses concentrate on blue-collar industries and trades. For example, 10 separate courses in automobile-related trades were offered at 15 of the 23 adult institutions in fiscal year 1991.

### College academic courses

In addition to college vocational programs, inmates may also enroll in two-year academic associate's degree programs if they have a verified GED certificate or high school diploma. They may enroll in four-year college degree academic programs if they have a verified GED certificate or high school diploma and 30 hours of college transfer credit. The classes are taught by instructors from 18 community colleges, one state university, and two private universities that provide courses for adult and juvenile institu-

tions.<sup>16</sup> Instruction is provided in prison classrooms.

### EDUCATIONAL GOOD-TIME CREDITS FOR ADULT INMATES

Under a state law that took effect in September 1990, inmates who enroll in academic or vocational programs and meet specific educational goals are eligible to receive time off their sentences.<sup>17</sup> Inmates who committed first- or second-degree murder or a Class X felony are not eligible for the program, nor are those who were readmitted to prison after having previously received educational good-time credits.

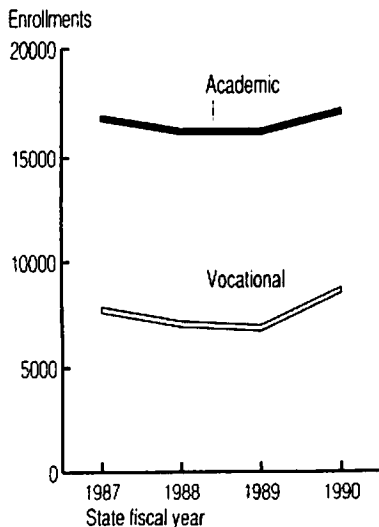
Educational goals are established in writing after the inmate's initial achievement test, including the amount of time the inmate is allowed to attain the goal, attendance requirements, and the specific educational goals expected of the inmate. Thereafter, for every day of attendance in the program, the inmate receives one-quarter of a day off his or her incarceration time (the portion of the sentence that is actually served in the institution). No time is awarded if the goals are not met.

Educational goals can include the following:

- Achievement of a specified grade level
- Attainment of a GED certificate
- Attainment of a specific number of high school or college credits
- Achievement of specific skills
- Maintaining a grade of "C" or better in each class or maintaining a passing grade where a pass/fail grading system is used.

The educational good-time credits, along with mandatory attendance requirements for those testing below the sixth-grade level, have helped create long waiting lists of inmates wishing to enroll in education programs. Large increases in the prison population in recent years have also contributed. As of April 1991, 3,958 of the 28,000 inmates in Illinois were waiting to be placed in some type of educational program—1,249 were waiting for openings in ABE programs, 783 for GED programs, 183 for college academic and 1,294 for college vocational courses, and 449 for non-college vocational courses. Ray Quick, superintendent of School District 428, has expressed concern that waiting lists will grow even longer.

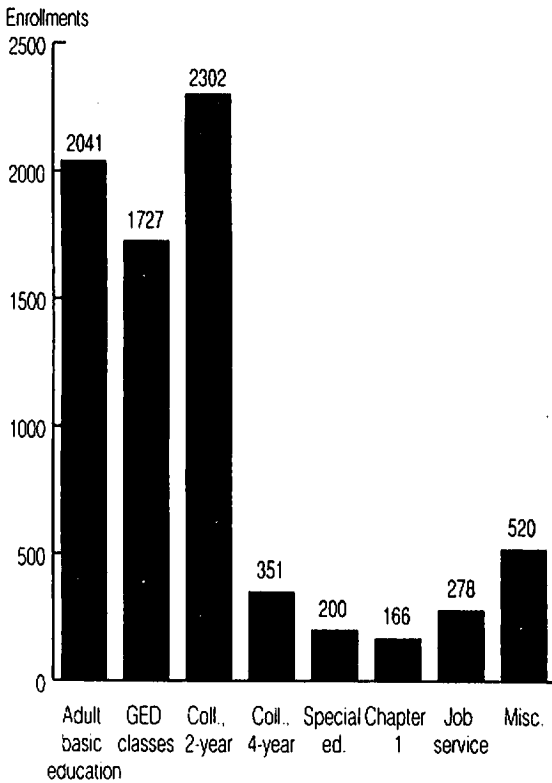
Figure 8.5  
Adult enrollments in IDOC academic and vocational programs



Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

Figure 8.6

**Adult inmate enrollment in academic programs, by program type, on February 28, 1991**



Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

should inmates' achievement requirements be raised from the sixth- to the 12th-grade level (as in federal prisons).<sup>19</sup>

Although educational good-time credits were intended to help reduce prison crowding by granting some prisoners early release, some criminal justice officials doubt that they will have much impact.<sup>19</sup> Although inmates who have committed first- or second-degree murder or a Class X felony are not eligible for the program, those inmates make up about half the current IDOC adult institutional population.<sup>20</sup>

**ADULT PARTICIPATION IN IDOC EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

School District 428 currently provides academic and vocational services to approximately one-third of the adult inmate population. During state fiscal year 1990, 21,985 adult inmates participated in these programs. Enrollment trends had declined slightly from fiscal 1987 to 1989, then increased again in fiscal 1990, reaching a total of 17,140 enrollments in academic programs and 8,665 enrollments in vocational programs (Figure 8.5).<sup>21</sup> The increases were due to a number of factors. The Western Illinois Correctional Center

in Mount Sterling opened at the start of fiscal 1990, with 471 inmate enrollments in academic and vocational programs. In addition, a new pre-release vocational training project, Community Networking for Offender Reintegration, began at the Vienna and Shawnee correctional centers that year. It was responsible for most of the 135 percent increase over fiscal 1989 in vocational enrollments at that prison. Finally, by shortening class hours, School District 428 increased the number of adult basic education classes available, to reduce the waiting lists.

On February 28, 1991, a total of 8,518 adult inmates were enrolled in various academic and vocational courses.<sup>22</sup> Academic courses drew 7,585 enrollments; 80 percent of these were in basic education courses, GED preparatory courses, and college associate's degree programs (Figure 8.6). Associate's degree programs drew the largest enrollment—2,302—followed by basic education, with 2,041, and GED courses with 1,727. Job service courses drew 278 enrollments. Although job service courses, which teach employability skills such as proper conduct in the workplace, may be seen as vocational training, School District 428 classifies them as academic courses. An additional 520 enrollments were in miscellaneous academic courses, such as English as a second language, music, and driver's education.

Vocational courses, provided by School District 428 faculty and by community colleges that contract to serve inmate populations, attracted 2,914 adult inmate enrollments.

School District 428's emphasis on blue-collar trades in its vocational course offerings is reflected in enrollment. The top 10 courses during the winter 1991 quarter included two automotive-related courses—auto body and auto mechanics, as well as building maintenance, drafting, electronics, and, the number-one choice, welding (Figure 8.7). Where other types of courses are available, enrollment is high. Data processing had the second-highest enrollment of any vocational course systemwide. Similarly, horticulture was the

Figure 8.7

**Top 10 high-enrollment vocational courses for adult inmates**

|                      | Enrollment | Institutions offering |
|----------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Welding              | 231        | 11                    |
| Data processing      | 153        | 10                    |
| Building maintenance | 151        | 11                    |
| Cooperative          |            |                       |
| Work Training        | 146        | 9                     |
| Horticulture         | 139        | 10                    |
| Electronics          | 130        | 9                     |
| Auto mechanics       | 129        | 8                     |
| Career orientation   | 128        | 1                     |
| Auto body            | 125        | 7                     |
| Drafting             | 109        | 9                     |

Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

fifth most popular program. Cooperative Work Training, which emphasizes both classroom and work-related skills, and the career orientation course, which is available at only Vienna Correctional Center, both ranked in the top 10 as well.

### **CERTIFICATES AND DEGREES EARNED BY ADULT INMATES**

Between state fiscal years 1987 and 1990, 5,458 adult inmates received GED certificates from School District 428, approximately 10 percent of all the GED certificates awarded in the state during that period.<sup>23</sup> The fiscal 1989 total of 1,057 was down 32 percent from 1988, largely because of the introduction in July 1988 of a new, more rigorous, GED test (Figure 8.8). Failure rates for the test increased all across the country—among both offenders and non-offenders—with the introduction of the new test.<sup>24</sup> The number of GED certificates earned by Illinois adult inmates rose, however, in fiscal 1990 to 1,227, partly because School District 428 adjusted its teaching strategy to the requirements of the new GED test.

Inmates with a GED or a high school diploma may enroll in academic college courses. Because many inmates must first complete a GED, which may take up all the time they have to spend on education while incarcerated, far fewer adult inmates completed associate's degrees in Illinois prisons during the past four years—1,454—than completed GEDs. The number receiving associate's degrees rose 28 percent, from 308 in

fiscal 1987 to 393 in fiscal 1988, but has since leveled off to a fiscal 1990 total of 376 (Figure 8.9). This leveling off may be due, in part, to a shift in focus to the mandatory basic education courses for those testing below the sixth-grade level at intake.

Bachelor's degrees, which have the additional prerequisite of 30 hours of college transfer credit, and which have been granted at only nine of the 23 adult institutions, were completed by 67 adults during the past four years.

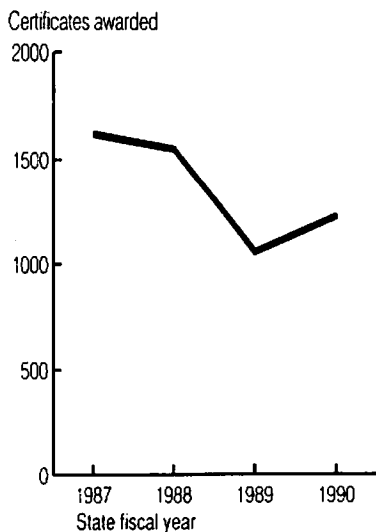
Besides academic certificates, inmates can also earn certification in specific vocational areas. A total of 8,637 such certificates were awarded from fiscal 1987 through 1990, in such areas as welding, auto mechanics, drafting, and data processing. The annual trends are similar to those found for college degrees, with a 24-percent increase in fiscal 1988 (Figure 8.10). Since 1988, the number of certificates awarded decreased almost 11 percent to a fiscal 1990 total of 2,132.

### **VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR FEMALE INMATES**

As of November 1990, fewer than 6 percent of the women at Dwight Correctional Center were enrolled in any type of vocational training, a smaller percentage than at any other institution in the state system, except for three maximum-security male facilities—the Joliet, Menard, and Pontiac correctional centers.

Figure 8.8

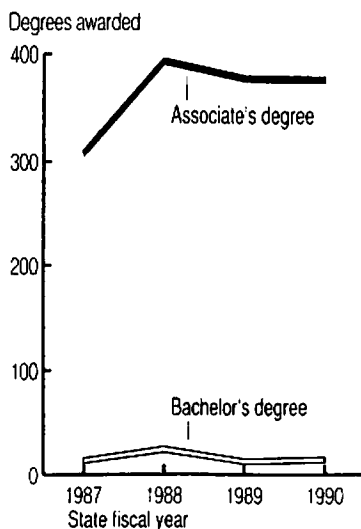
#### **Adult inmates receiving GED certificates**



Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

Figure 8.9

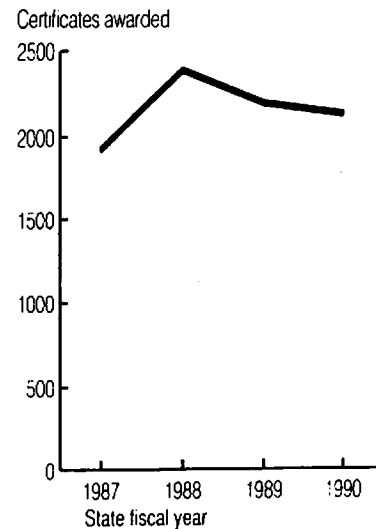
#### **Adult inmates receiving college degrees**



Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

Figure 8.10

#### **Adult inmates receiving vocational certificates**



Source: Illinois Department of Corrections



Lower vocational enrollment at Dwight may be attributable to the limited variety of vocational courses at the institution. Vocational options are predominantly “pink-collar” trades, such as food service, secretarial work, and cosmetology. In *Moorehead v. McGinnis*, a class action lawsuit brought against the Illinois Director of Corrections on behalf of female inmates at Dwight Correctional Center, female inmates charged that they did not have access to as many academic and vocational programs as male inmates; that the programs offered for women contained inferior courses, instructors, and facilities; that they were concentrated in fields that were stereotypically female, rather than in vocational areas that yield satisfactory income levels; and that the courses were offered only during the day, forcing women to choose between classes and income-producing prison jobs. Under a consent decree approved in May 1991, IDOC agreed to survey the educational and vocational needs of female inmates at Dwight and to implement programs where needs are not being met. As part of the decree, IDOC also agreed to build a separate, 200-bed minimum-security institution for women by 1993. Currently, most of the state’s female inmates—regardless of security classification—are imprisoned at Dwight, a maximum-security facility.<sup>25</sup>

Women who are highly motivated toward other types of vocational training that are not offered at Dwight are often transferred to the co-ed facilities at the Logan and Dixon correctional centers. Women at the co-ed facilities enroll more frequently in vocational courses—vocational enrollment among female inmates is approximately 3 percent higher at Dixon and 16 percent higher at Logan than it is at Dwight. Female inmates in the co-ed facilities often opt to enroll for training in trades that have been non-traditional for women, even when they are competing directly with male inmates in courses in which they are outnumbered by men by as much as 15 to 1. In fact, when vocational enrollment is examined as a percentage of the total number of male and female inmates in each of these institutions, proportionally more women than men enroll in the majority of vocational education courses, including traditionally male fields.

At Logan, 22 percent of the female inmates and 12 percent of the male inmates were enrolled

in vocational courses during November 1990, while at Dixon, 9 percent of the women and 8 percent of the men participated in vocational training during that month.<sup>26</sup> At Dixon, a higher percentage of women than men enroll in such courses as small engines, construction technology, and horticulture. This pattern is even stronger at Logan, where the relative percentage of female inmate enrollment exceeded that of male inmates in such courses as auto body, commercial art and photography, energy technology, and industrial maintenance. These figures imply that, when women are offered the option to train for jobs in higher-paying trades and professions, many take advantage of the opportunity.

### **EDUCATION IN IDOC’S JUVENILE DIVISION**

Juveniles entering IDOC are tested to determine their present level of educational attainment. These tests provide a baseline for educational programming during their incarceration. Education within the Juvenile Division is mandatory for any person who has not received a high school diploma or GED certificate. In 1981, School District 428 began using a uniform curriculum through 12th grade for juvenile educational programs in all institutions. Students who transfer from one facility to another have their records transferred with them so they can continue at their educational level without having to be re-evaluated.

In the Juvenile Division, incarcerated youth may be required to enroll in one or more of the following mandatory programs:

- Basic education, if they test below the sixth-grade level
- GED training or high school courses if they test at the sixth-grade level or above and they do not have a GED certificate or high school diploma
- Special education or Chapter 1 programs if necessary

Juveniles may also enroll in the following optional programs:

- School District 428 vocational education if they test at the third-grade level or above
- College vocational programs, taught within the institution, if they test at the sixth-grade level or above and the college policy permits admission

- Two-year college academic programs leading to an associate's degree (at the Illinois Youth Center-Joliet only), if they have a GED certificate or high school diploma.

Each juvenile facility has a range of programs, from basic literacy to advanced vocational training. From three to 11 vocational courses were offered at the juvenile institutions, a total of 24 programs statewide. Juvenile vocational course offerings were concentrated in blue-collar industries and trades, but there were several more courses that involve career planning than in the Adult Division. All facilities have special education and Chapter 1 programs for disabled and disadvantaged learners and all facilities also offer Cooperative Work Training, stressing both classroom skills and work skills.

### PROGRAM PARTICIPATION BY JUVENILES

The educational programs for juveniles who have not yet obtained a GED or high school diploma are mandatory, and generally contain the same core curricula found in public schools. Juvenile correctional facilities, however, generally do not have large enough populations to justify the establishment of separate grade levels from kindergarten through 12th grade. IDOC's School District 428 generally groups juvenile students into four broader, more flexible, instructional levels.

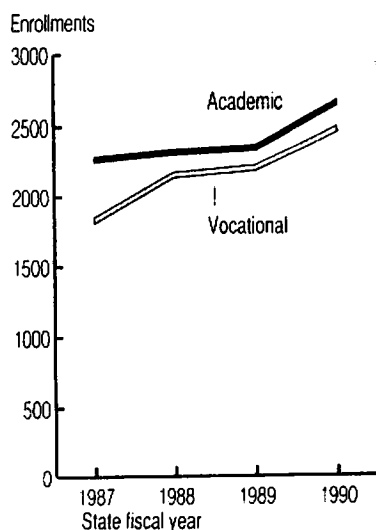
School District 428 provides academic and vocational services to the more than 95 percent of

the incarcerated juvenile population in Illinois that does not already have a high school diploma or GED. During state fiscal year 1990, 2,627 juvenile inmates participated in these programs. Enrollment in both academic and vocational programs has risen in each of the past four years (Figure 8.11). The sharpest increase took place between 1989 and 1990, when there were 2,663 enrollments in academic courses, a 13-percent increase, and 2,479 enrollments in vocational courses, a 12-percent increase. On February 28, 1991, 1,241 juvenile inmates were enrolled in various programs, 1,145 of whom were enrolled in mandatory academic courses.<sup>27</sup>

The Juvenile Division's core curriculum includes communication skills, mathematics, social studies, science, health, physical education, and pre-vocational skills. At the one facility offering college academic courses, the Illinois Youth Center-Joliet, 20 students were enrolled in college courses provided by Lewis University.

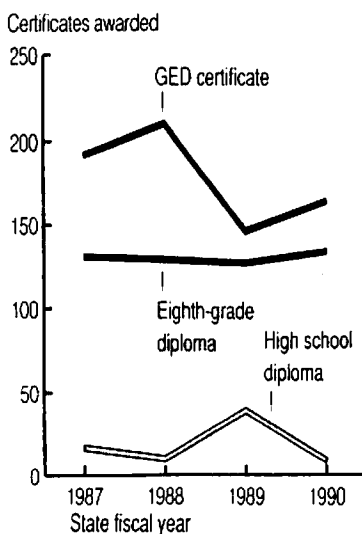
At the same time, 950 juveniles were enrolled in one or more vocational courses taught by School District 428 faculty and by community colleges that contract to serve juvenile correctional institutions. Three of the top four vocational courses for juveniles specifically address career planning—the two-course Cooperative Work Training program, offered at all seven juvenile correctional institutions, and the career counseling course, offered at four. Industrial building maintenance, offered at four institutions, ranked

Figure 8.11  
**Juvenile enrollments in IDOC academic and vocational programs**



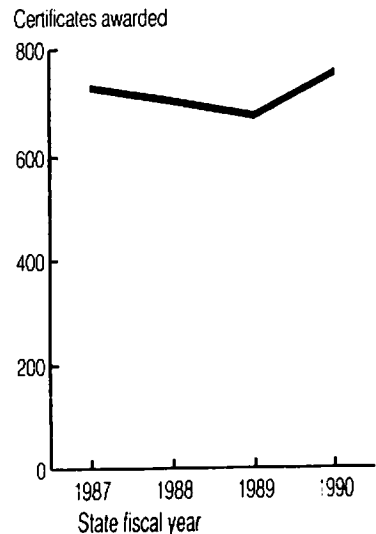
Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

Figure 8.12  
**Juvenile inmates receiving academic certificates**



Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

Figure 8.13  
**Juvenile inmates receiving vocational certificates**



Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

second, and data processing, offered at three institutions, ranked fifth. The enrollment levels for juvenile vocational courses may reflect the availability of those courses more than actual interest in the courses.

### **CERTIFICATES AND DEGREES EARNED BY JUVENILE INMATES**

Students in juvenile correctional centers can earn eighth-grade diplomas, GED certificates, high school diplomas, and even associate's degrees.

From fiscal 1987 through 1990, 712 juveniles received eighth-grade diplomas from School District 428. Juveniles testing below the sixth-grade level on the Stanford Test for Academic Skills (TASK), regardless of age, are required to enroll in basic education and work toward an eighth-grade diploma, rather than GED preparation or high school level classes. The annual number of eighth-grade diplomas awarded has remained stable from fiscal 1987 through 1990, ranging from a low of 127 in 1989 to a high of 134 in 1990 (Figure 8.12).

Fewer GED certificates and high school diplomas combined were awarded in 1990 than in previous years—164 GEDs and nine high school diplomas in 1990, compared to 210 GEDs and 10 high school diplomas in 1988. As with adult inmates, the decrease in GEDs is largely due to the new version of the test. High school diplomas are not frequently earned by juvenile inmates because they usually require a substantial number of prior high school credits, along with sufficient time in the institution to complete the necessary course work.

The associate's degree program offered by Lewis University at the Illinois Youth Center—Joliet has awarded 26 degrees between fiscal 1987 and 1990—15 of them in 1990.

Many more juveniles in custody receive vocational certificates than receive academic diplomas and certificates. A total of 2,866 vocational certificates were awarded during the last four years in such areas as auto mechanics, industrial building maintenance, landscaping, and data processing. The number of vocational certificates earned by juveniles declined slightly in state fiscal years 1988 and 1989, but increased 12 percent, to 757, in fiscal 1990 (Figure 8.13).

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION AND CHAPTER 1 SERVICES**

All juvenile inmates aged 21 and under are interviewed and tested at intake to determine whether they might have developmental or other disabilities. The education administrator and the staff of the institution to which the juvenile is assigned identify any possible disabilities, based on the

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### **Special education in correctional institutions**

Since 1978, special education services have been available for all IDOC inmates and juvenile detainees through the age of 21 who are identified as disabled. The funding for the program is provided through a contractual line item in the IDOC budget as well as by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and by state reimbursement for the salaries of special education teachers (see Chapter 5, Special Education). Students over the age of 21 can also be served at the discretion of the department, but IDEA and personnel reimbursement funds may not be used.

The entire range of learning, developmental, and behavioral disabilities is usually not found in correctional programs. Persons with severe and profound developmental disabilities, for example, are not as likely to commit criminal offenses, nor are they likely to be incarcerated.<sup>1</sup> Criminal justice clients with special education needs are predominantly those with mild to moderate disabilities.

Nationally, fewer than 10 percent of inmates who have been identified at some time in their lives as learning disabled are receiving special education services. Special education programs are generally not as readily available, nor do they offer the same quality of services in correctional institutions as in public schools, even though education is mandatory in most juvenile correctional programs.<sup>2</sup>

Correctional institutions suffer from a shortage of qualified special education personnel. A recent study reported that, nationally, 28 percent of juvenile correctional education teachers are certified in special education—the percent reported for individual states ranged from 4 percent to 100 percent.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, some states have designated 80 percent or more of their juvenile correctional population as handicapped, a much higher proportion than in the public schools, requiring a higher percentage of special education teachers. In adult correctional education programs, only 9 percent of teachers nationally are certified for special education. In Illinois at the end of March 1991, 42 teachers in IDOC's School District 428 (16 percent) were certified in special education, 24 of them in the Juvenile Division and 18 in the Adult Division.

Finally, it is difficult to implement the IDEA in correctional settings. When parental permission is required for testing or placing juvenile offenders, it is frequently impossible to locate the parents or to obtain their cooperation; therefore, surrogate parents are used. Locating surrogate parents imposes an additional burden on correctional education staff. In 1988, IDOC instituted a special parent surrogate program in all of its juvenile facilities.

1 C.M. Wilson, "Handicapped Offenders in the Criminal Justice System" in *Special Education in the Criminal Justice System*, edited by C. Michael Nelson, Robert B. Rutherford Jr., and Bruce I. Wolford (Columbus, Ohio: Merrill Publishing Co., 1987).

2 R.B. Rutherford Jr., C.M. Nelson, and Bruce I. Wolford, "Special Education in the Most Restrictive Environment: Correctional Special Education" *Journal of Special Education* 19 (1985): 59-71.

3 Rutherford, Nelson, and Wolford, (1985): 59-71

tests and on observation of the juvenile's performance. The school psychologist then begins a process of assessment and educational plan development, similar to that used in public schools, with the participation of the institution's regular and special education instructors and the youth's parents. If parents are unable or do not wish to participate, a surrogate parent is assigned by the state superintendent of education.

Surrogate parents are volunteers who are specially trained by the State Board of Education. They cannot be employees of IDOC and must pass both a drug test and a criminal history background check. IDOC currently has approximately 75 surrogate parents upon whom it can call.

Special education is provided for adult inmates at 14 of Illinois' 23 adult correctional institutions. There is no formal screening process for adult inmates. Inmates under 21 years of age, who are covered by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (see Chapter 5, Special Education), receive special education services if a regular classroom teacher discovers that they may be disabled. Older students are sometimes placed in special education classes, but only if there is space available.

Surveys of correctional populations have found that inmates with learning disabilities, developmental disabilities, and behavior disorders are significantly overrepresented in correctional institutions nationwide, compared to the general

population. Studies have also reported that the prevalence of mental retardation and learning disabilities among correctional clients is three times that found in the general population.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to general special education services, since 1968, IDOC has offered Chapter 1 (formerly Title I) special remedial classes to neglected or delinquent offenders under 21 years of age who have been identified as "educationally disadvantaged." Chapter 1 classes, provided in all juvenile and in 12 adult institutions, use specialized audio-visual learning materials and concentrate on basic reading and math skills to help overcome the effects of prior academic failure. Students are targeted for participation in the Chapter 1 program through a systematic needs assessment. An individualized plan is then developed for each inmate who qualifies for Chapter 1 classes.

Records are kept of average daily attendance and of all phases of Chapter 1 services statewide, including those in IDOC facilities. A statewide Chapter 1 coordinator and two regional resource specialists provide support services directly to the classroom teachers.

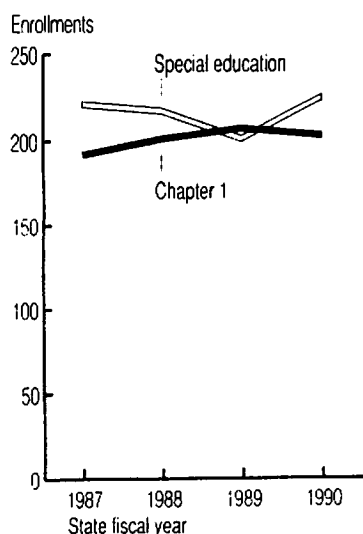
Adult enrollments in IDOC's Chapter 1 and special education programs have remained generally unchanged over the past four years, except for a slight drop in special education enrollments in 1989 (Figure 8.14). Adult Chapter 1 enrollments ranged from 192 in state fiscal year 1987 to 203 in 1990. Special education enrollments increased only slightly, from 221 in fiscal 1987 to 225 in 1990.

Among juveniles, there has been a moderate decrease in Chapter 1 and special education enrollments over the past four years (Figure 8.15). Chapter 1 juvenile enrollments went from 550 in fiscal 1987 to 500 in 1990—a 9-percent decline. An almost identical enrollment pattern is found for special education. The juvenile enrollment total decreased by 11 percent over the four-year period—to a total of 530 for fiscal 1990.

### JAIL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

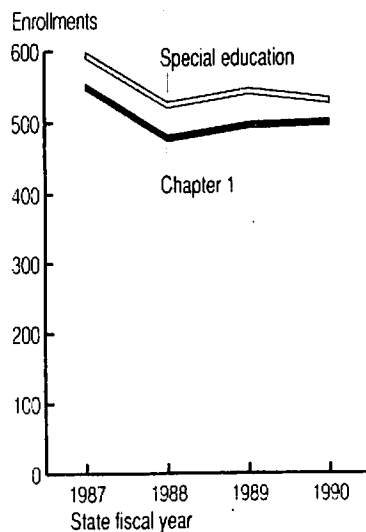
Jail education programs are available in fewer than half of the nation's short-term detention facilities.<sup>29</sup> Most inmates are held for relatively short periods (in most jails the average is less than 72 hours), most jails are small, and there is limited funding for jail education.

Figure 8.14  
**Adult enrollments in IDOC Chapter 1 and special education programs**



Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

Figure 8.15  
**Juvenile enrollments in IDOC Chapter 1 and special education**



Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

In Illinois, IDOC's Detention Standards and Services Unit monitors county jails to ensure that all services that are required by law are being provided. Educational programs are not, however, required by law, and the bureau does not maintain any statistics on such programs. The bureau estimates, however, that while 50 percent to 60 percent of the jails offer occasional courses to inmates (usually GED preparation), only about 10 percent of them provide a consistent and well-planned program.<sup>30</sup>

Most jail education programs are found in larger urban facilities. The most extensive education program among Illinois jails is found at the Cook County Department of Corrections, which has a population capacity of 6,217, more than 17 times greater than the next largest jail in the state, and a population that typically exceeds 7,400.

Cook County Jail has three separate educational programs for inmates:

- GED preparation classes provided by Malcolm X College, with funding from the federal Adult Basic Education Act.
- Special education services provided to inmates 18 years old and younger by the Chicago Board of Education, under provisions of the State School Code.<sup>31</sup>
- The PACE (Programmed Activities for Correctional Education) Institute, a private non-profit program administered by the Safer Foundation and funded through corporate and private contributions, foundations, trusts, and Adult Basic Education Act grants, which has been providing volunteer-based literacy programs since 1985. More than 180 volunteers are trained annually as literacy tutors, and these tutors serve about 170 adult learners a year. In addition, PACE provides intensive ABE and adult secondary education for inmates. Students also receive training in self-esteem development, AIDS awareness, and career awareness.

Educational programs have been established in several metropolitan county jails outside Cook County. County jails that have educational programming for inmates generally offer ABE and GED preparation classes, provided through an agreement with a local community college. An informal telephone survey of Illinois jails in large

counties outside of Cook found the following programs:

- DuPage County Jail offers a GED preparatory class, as well as access to certain college courses through the College of DuPage. All costs for the GED program are paid by the sheriff's office. Inmates wishing to take college courses, however, must pay the full costs themselves. The GED program is managed and taught by an officer who is also a certified teacher. This program serves approximately 100 inmates per quarter. An average of 15 inmates per quarter actually receive a GED.
- Lake County Jail has four separate GED and ABE classes, which are provided by staff from the Community College of Lake County. The program serves approximately 125 inmates per year, with only a fraction of this number actually completing a GED.
- ABE and GED classes at Kane County Jail are provided by Waubensee Community College. Funding is split between the inmate services portion of the sheriff's budget and grant funds from the Illinois Community College Board to Waubensee. The program serves 30 to 40 inmates per year.
- GED classes at the Winnebago County Jail are provided by Rock Valley College. The program is funded through an Illinois Community College Board grant received by the college. Classes are held twice a week, but are self-paced. Students may take the GED test whenever they feel prepared.
- St. Clair County Jail offers basic education literacy courses, which are run by the Belleville Area College. The program is paid for by literacy funds from the Illinois Secretary of State's Office. The program serves approximately 100 inmates per year.
- Madison County Jail offers ABE and GED classes provided by two part-time professors from Lewis and Clark Community College. The program is funded through an Illinois Community College Board grant to the college.

## **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN LOCAL JUVENILE DETENTION CENTERS**

There are currently 15 county-run juvenile detention centers in Illinois for juveniles aged 10 or

older who have been accused of committing delinquent or criminal acts, and for those with shorter sentences who have been adjudicated delinquent. Within 36 hours of admission to one of these county facilities, juveniles who are awaiting adjudication must have a detention hearing to determine whether further detention is warranted.<sup>32</sup> Juveniles who are awaiting court proceedings and who remain in the county center less than 36 hours may or may not be placed in an educational program, depending on the policy of the center. All other detainees are generally placed in classroom programs.

Because most juveniles are held in county detention centers for relatively short periods, the educational programs offered have less continuity than those found in the Juvenile Division of IDOC. Typically, only one or two instructors in the detention center provide instruction to youths ranging in age from 10 to 17. Instruction, generally only in core subjects such as English, math, and history, is one-to-one or in small groups.

Many of the juvenile detention centers in Illinois do provide special education programs for students with learning disabilities. Nine of the 15 centers have at least one teacher certified in special education, often the only instructor in the program.<sup>33</sup>

Education programs in juvenile detention centers vary in size across the state (Figure 8.16).

The program at the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center is the most extensive, with separate programming for elementary (fifth through eighth grade) and high school students, and is part of the Chicago public school system. Because many detainees at that center are held for long periods, serving 30-, 60-, and 90-day delinquency dispositions or awaiting trial in adult criminal court, the program has incorporated elements generally found more often in IDOC, such as vocational and occupational courses and drug education.

Because juveniles transfer frequently between detention center programs and local schools, detention center teachers often prefer that, whenever possible, students work on course work from their own school while in detention, particularly when the length of stay will not extend past a few days. Since the detention center instructors are hired from and are a part of the local school district, cooperation between school and detention center staff exists in some of the detention center programs. Many school districts, however, provide very little support to juvenile detainees. Many juvenile detainees are the chronic "failures" of the school, and schools may not only deny support services to enable the juvenile to continue his or her education in detention (by, for example, failing to communicate course work information to the detention center teacher), but may also impede, or refuse, the youth's return to school after release from the detention center. In many cases, these youth have no one to act as an educational advocate on their behalf. Parents may be unaware of their child's educational rights, and juvenile probation officers, who serve as the juvenile's advocates in other areas, may not understand the educational system well enough to help.<sup>34</sup>

According to court services personnel, local school districts often provide only minimal support to the juvenile center, assigning just one teacher from the district. If that teacher becomes ill or otherwise misses school, either no substitute is designated as a replacement—meaning no classes take place that day—or a substitute with little or no experience in working with detainee populations is sent, thus disrupting the class.<sup>35</sup>

Local school districts, which operate their regular schools on a nine-month school year, may fail to assign a teacher for the 12-month year used

Figure 8.16

**Education in county juvenile detention centers**

| Location  | Average daily population<br>FY 1989 | Teachers  |           | Aids      |           | Special education certified |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------------|
|           |                                     | Full-time | Part-time | Full-time | Part-time |                             |
| Adams     | 7                                   | 2         | 0         | 1         | 0         | Yes                         |
| Champaign | 8                                   | 0         | 2         | 0         | 0         | Yes                         |
| Cook      | 382                                 | 41        | 0         | 3         | 0         | Yes                         |
| DuPage    | 24                                  | 1         | 2         | 2         | 0         | Yes                         |
| Kane      | 17                                  | 2         | 0         | 0         | 0         | Yes                         |
| Knox      | 21                                  | 1         | 0         | 1         | 0         | No                          |
| Lake      | 11                                  | 1         | 0         | 1         | 0         | Yes                         |
| LaSalle   | 12                                  | 1         | 0         | 0         | 0         | No                          |
| Macon     | 10                                  | 1         | 0         | 0         | 0         | No                          |
| Madison   | 19                                  | 2         | 0         | 1         | 0         | Yes                         |
| Peoria    | 14                                  | 1         | 0         | 0         | 0         | No                          |
| Sangamon  | 11                                  | 1         | 0         | 0         | 0         | No                          |
| St. Clair | 38                                  | 1         | 1         | 1         | 0         | Yes                         |
| Will      | N.A.*                               | 2         | 0         | 0         | 0         | No                          |
| Winnebago | 40                                  | 2         | 0         | 0         | 0         | Yes                         |

\*Opened in fiscal 1991

Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts



by juvenile detention centers, which provide no summer, winter, or spring vacations for students. Detention center administrators must choose between hiring the regular teacher, or another teacher, on a contractual basis during the vacation periods, which costs more, or reducing or eliminating educational services during those periods.<sup>36</sup>

Funding for educational programs in detention centers is not uniform. Although a detention center resides in a particular school district, many of the center's residents may be from outside that district. Eleven centers are, in fact, regional, and serve juveniles from more than one county. Funding can be provided either by the local school district, the county superintendent, other parts of the county budget, the State Orphanage Act,<sup>37</sup> or a combination of those sources. A number of center administrators believe that future state budget cuts will tighten funding for these education programs.

An analysis and recommendations for funding of detention center education programs, called for by a 1990 Illinois House Resolution, will be issued in a joint study by the Illinois Conference of Chief Judges' Committee on Juvenile Detention and the Illinois State Board of Education later in 1991.<sup>38</sup>

## **PROGRAMS FOR COMMUNITY REINTEGRATION OF ADULT INMATES**

In state fiscal year 1990, 11,800 inmates were released from Illinois prisons after completing the incarceration portion of their sentences. This number is expected to reach 14,000 in fiscal 1991.

For an inmate who has completed a prison term, returning to the community is often a difficult transition. In field trials of the Authority's Survey of Educational Experiences and Attitudes of Inmates in the Illinois Department of Corrections, many inmates said little support is available to an offender coming out of prison. While many inmates are able to return to their families, for others ties to family and friends have been weakened or broken during incarceration, leaving newly released offenders without an effective support network, if they had ever had one. In prison, all the inmate's basic needs have been met; following release, obtaining housing, food, and clothing is often an ex-offender's most immediate challenge. Institutional restrictions on an inmate's freedom typi-

cally limit the scope for individual decision making, but on returning to the community, the newly released inmate must immediately begin to make important decisions in a world that may seem quite unfamiliar after a long absence.

Lack of preparation for a return to society may result in a return to prison. In Illinois, studies have found that 32 percent of prison releasees are reincarcerated within the first 20 months of release, and that most of those who are arrested again are arrested in the second and third months following release.<sup>39</sup>

According to Hartzel Black, dean of correctional education at Southeastern Illinois College, the first 90 days following release are the most critical. "If we can get an inmate into a job within 30 days and continue support through mentoring and aftercare services for 90 days, we believe we'll be able to prevent recidivism in about 90 percent of the cases. When you consider that about 60 percent of the inmates released without aftercare will return to prison, that's a very good success rate."<sup>40</sup>

In the past several years, educational and correctional officials have become concerned that the academic and vocational programs in correctional institutions may not sufficiently prepare inmates for independent living upon their return to the community. Inmates themselves have said that they need better coordination between the educational services they receive in prison and community-based services they receive upon release. In the field trials for the Authority's Inmate Survey, inmates reported that there was a serious lack of coordination among education programs found in county jails, IDOC, and community-based programs. Starting and stopping programs caused many inmates to waste any progress that they achieved, and they became discouraged. The inmates also said they were denied the chance to test into a higher level program at the next location, unless they had actually received a diploma, certificate, or other credential. They found it particularly difficult to find community programs to continue work begun in prison.

Some community-based programs and community colleges in Illinois work to create a coordinated continuum of educational services for offenders that includes both pre- and post-release reintegration programs. A pre-release

training project at the Vienna and Shawnee correctional centers was expanded in 1990 to include intensive community and volunteer efforts. The project, known as Community Networking for Offender Reintegration (CNOR), is managed by the Correctional Division of Southeastern Illinois College and is supported by funds from the Job Training Partnership Act and the Illinois Community College Board.

To be eligible for the project, an inmate must have completed a vocational training program in IDOC, must be within two months of release, and must have a good conduct record in the department. Phase one of the project begins while the

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### Project PreStart

Concerns about the costs of placing unemployed ex-offenders on public assistance rolls, the costs to society of crime committed by ex-offenders, and the costs of incarcerating ex-offenders who recidivate led to an Illinois Senate Joint Resolution in 1987, calling for a response to the problems released inmates face in reintegrating into society.<sup>1</sup>

An Illinois Department of Corrections task force appointed to study the problems faced by released inmates made recommendations in 14 areas, including the recommendation that IDOC develop a standard, comprehensive pre-release school program.<sup>2</sup> While virtually all releasees now participate in some pre-release orientation, the task force found the intensity of this class to vary considerably across institutions, and to be too brief. They recommended that the program help inmates obtain the necessary documentation, such as social security cards, to enter the work force and help inmates develop employment histories and job-finding skills, such as filling out applications.

A pilot version of the program, called Project PreStart, was tested in IDOC's East Moline Correctional Center during fiscal year 1991. A program coordinator develops, implements, and coordinates the various facets of the program at the institution, the parole district, and in work-release centers. Before leaving the institution, PreStart clients are trained in areas that will help them make the transition to the outside world—self-esteem training, job-seeking and -retention techniques, life and survival skills, accessing community resources, parole rules and expectations, and post-release goals.

Once they are released, high-risk offenders will receive intensive supervision, including drug testing, frequent contact with their parole officers, and drug treatment or counseling. Other offenders may choose to participate in a less-intensive, community-based counseling program. The Illinois Department of Employment Security will assign representatives to prisons, helping offenders find jobs before and after they are released.

Governor Jim Edgar has called for systemwide implementation, with the help of federal Anti-Drug Abuse Act funds from the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, of PreStart as an alternative to traditional parole.

1. 85th Illinois General Assembly, Senate Joint Resolution 83 offered by Senators William Marovitz and John D'Arco, adopted October 22, 1987.

2. *Task Force on Released Inmates*, prepared by the Task Force on Released Inmates, published by Illinois Department of Corrections, January 1990.

inmate is still incarcerated. Intensive training begins in the institution to help the inmates prepare for a job search and develop a release plan. Each inmate assembles a portfolio of training credentials, identification papers, sample job application letters, and documents, such as a social security card.

Prior to release, contact is established between each inmate and a parole officer working exclusively with graduates of the program, with a coach-mentor from Project LEAP (Lifeskills Awareness Employment Program) who serves as a case coordinator for community-based services, and with a citizen advocate—a citizen volunteer who has agreed to provide encouragement and advice to the inmate and to represent his interests with the agencies in the community network. (Because Vienna and Shawnee are male-only institutions, no female inmates are involved in the project.)

The community-based phase of the project supports the ex-offender's job search by providing additional training and support groups and assists participants with housing and social service needs. Participants in the program receive a small weekly stipend to help defray the immediate costs of a job search, and receive a \$200 bonus payment when they succeed in finding employment.

Companies that hire CNOR participants can take advantage of several incentives provided by federal and state agencies, as well as by the CNOR project itself. Employers who hire ex-offenders are eligible for a corporate income tax reduction of up to 40 percent of the first \$6,000 of the employee's first-year salary.<sup>41</sup> For positions that require the bonding of employees, the Illinois Department of Employment Security will secure up to \$10,000 in bonds for program participants at no cost to the employer. Employers also receive a \$100 cash bonus for any program participant hired who remains employed for more than six months.

In 1990 the Safer Foundation in Chicago, with funding from the National Institute of Corrections, developed plans for coordinating the educational programs provided to state prisoners with those provided by Safer following an inmate's release.<sup>42</sup> The plans include recommendations that School District 428 provide an overview of its educational and vocational education programs

### Safer cuts

The Safer Foundation currently has seven programs in Chicago and Rock Island that receive Donated Funds Initiative (DFI) funds, derived from federal Title XX money and state matching funds. Under the proposed state budget for state fiscal year 1992, DFI funds will be removed from correctional programs and reallocated to other Department of Public Aid services. Elimination of DFI funds will result in the following cuts in Safer's services:

- 2,500 prison releasees will not be placed in private industry jobs.
- All intensive counseling services for at-risk offenders will cease.
- More than 4,000 referrals for supportive services—including food, housing, clothing, medical/psychiatric, and substance abuse intervention—will stop.

Because Safer is the primary service provider to released prisoners in Chicago and Rock Island, the cuts will, in effect, do away with all services to releasees in those communities.

Source: Letter from Raymond Curran, executive director, Safer Foundation, to Senator Howard W. Carroll, March 22, 1991

to the Safer Foundation so that foundation staff can make more informed decisions when placing parolees in educational, vocational, and work situations. In return, the Safer Foundation will provide School District 428 with information on job placement trends and other information that will help the district tailor its courses to the job market.

### DOES CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION WORK?

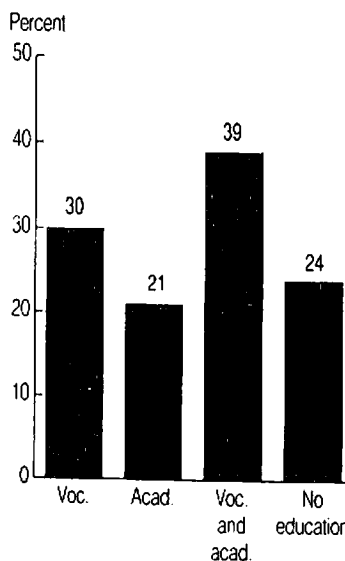
A 1979 national study by the federal General Accounting Office found that offenders were not adequately prepared by educational and other correctional programs to live and work in free society. The study found that inmates need basic education, social skills, and marketable job skills if they are to enter the work force and lead a crime-free life.<sup>43</sup> Other studies have also identified the shortcomings of corrections in providing adequate educational opportunity for offenders.<sup>44</sup>

A 1988 Illinois study sponsored by the State Board of Education, IDOC, and the Illinois Council on Vocational Education (ICOVE) compared releasees who had had vocational education only, academic education only (from literacy training to college-level courses), and both vocational and academic education to a control group of

releasees who had received neither type of education.<sup>45</sup> The study tracked the progress of 760 releasees from all Illinois adult correctional institutions and parole districts for 12 months. The study generally found positive outcomes associated with vocational education for inmates. The outcomes from academic programs were less clear:

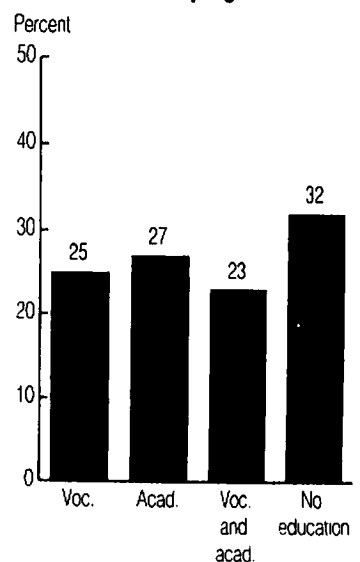
- The vocational and vocational/academic groups combined had the highest rates of employment and a slightly lower unemployment rate across the 12-month tracking period. Those who were employed initially tended to stay employed (Figure 8.17).
- The control group of inmates who had received no education in prison had the highest criminal activity rate during the 12 months (Figure 8.18).
- Within the vocational group, those who completed their programs had a higher employment rate and fewer arrests than non-completers. The non-completers, however, still had higher employment and fewer arrests than the control group.
- The academic group, which included many of the inmates with very low skill levels, had the lowest employment rate, highest unemployment, and second-highest criminal activity rate,

Figure 8.17  
Percent of Illinois releasees employed 12 months after release, by type of correctional education program in 1988



Source: State Board of Education, Illinois Department of Corrections, and Illinois Council on Vocational Education

Figure 8.18  
Percent of Illinois releasees who had been rearrested 12 months after release, by type of correctional education program in 1988



Source: State Board of Education, Illinois Department of Corrections, and Illinois Council on Vocational Education

compared to all groups including the control group, after 12 months. Among the academic group, those with a GED certificate, high school diploma, or college degree upon release had a higher employment rate, lower unemployment rate, and lower criminal activity rate at 12 months than those who had less than a GED.

The study concluded that an inmate who completes a vocational program and has at least a GED or high school level of education has a greater chance of securing employment and avoiding criminal activity.

The study did not, however, address the question of whether Illinois prison inmates are being trained for jobs that will be available during the next decade. According to the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), white-collar and service industry occupations will add the most *new* jobs by the year 2000, with most new jobs in administrative and clerical work. Blue-collar jobs and those in agriculture, forestry, and fishery industries will decline.<sup>46</sup>

Most employment opportunities, however, are not newly created jobs but jobs left open by workers who have left the labor force—workers who are laid off or fired, return to school, leave work for childbirth or family responsibilities, or retire. Even so, IDES estimates that 59 percent of the annual job openings—including both old and new jobs—will be white-collar jobs and 18 percent service jobs. Nearly 20 percent will be blue-collar jobs; these are mainly old jobs that have become vacant, not newly created jobs, however.

School District 428 appears to be having some success in steering inmates toward vocations with projected openings. All vocational courses must be approved by the Illinois State Board of Education, and that approval is based, in part, on evidence of usefulness to the students, based on IDES statistics.

Very few of the most popular courses are geared toward white-collar professions (and, in fact, white-collar courses are not as available as courses in the trades), but those professions increasingly require post-secondary education that, realistically, is beyond the reach of most inmates. Still, the data processing course, one of the few white-collar courses IDOC offers, has the second highest adult enrollment of any vocational course. And the third most popular course, build-

ing maintenance, is among the service professions for which annual job openings are expected to be high. Automobile mechanics and automobile body repair are service professions that are expected to grow, as well.

Although blue-collar fields are generally not expected to produce many new jobs in this decade, any new jobs that do develop will probably be in the non-manufacturing sector. The drafting course, which has the 10th-highest adult inmate enrollment, may result in employment in the construction industry, for which job openings are predicted.

The prognosis is not as good for three other popular vocational courses. Welding has the highest enrollment of any course and electronics is sixth; although both of these courses have some application in construction, they would appear to apply primarily to the manufacturing industry, expected to have few job openings throughout the 1990s. Horticulture, another of the top 10 courses, may be of questionable utility. The agricultural and forestry industries have the bleakest outlook of any of the major occupational groups, although gardeners, grounds keepers, and lawn service workers should have more job openings available than others in this field.

Of adult inmates interviewed for the Authority's Inmate Survey who had previously enrolled in IDOC education programs, the overwhelming majority reported that they liked the courses and found the programs useful when they had returned to the community (see Chapter 7. Educational Experiences of Inmates).

More in-depth analysis is required before a comprehensive evaluation can be made of the effectiveness of institutional education programs and in-house and after-care education and transitional programs. Several questions still need to be answered:

- What percentage of releasees are able to secure and retain employment after participating in specific kinds of academic and vocational programs?
- Are the vocational programs contracted to community colleges more or less effective than those taught by School District 428 staff?
- Are releasees able to secure employment in the same areas for which they received vocational training in prison?

- How difficult is it for ex-offenders to obtain union membership?
- What types of additional support are needed by releasees once they are released into the community to help them survive and succeed?

These questions can be addressed only through an extensive offender database which includes post-release tracking information. IDOC has recently developed an Offender Tracking System with comprehensive inmate data, but the tracking ends when the offender leaves parole.<sup>47</sup>

Even so, while it is difficult to prove directly beneficial effects of correctional education on recidivism, positive educational gains can be clearly demonstrated. In a 1990 study of educational improvement in 493 youth incarcerated in the Juvenile Division, IDOC found that, in 16 weeks, an average student showed a grade-level gain of 1.5 years—from about the fourth grade to halfway through the fifth-grade level. When those students who made no progress at all during the 16 weeks were factored out of the database, even more dramatic results were documented. The remaining students increased an average of 2.05 grade levels, from an average grade level of 3.84 to 5.9, during an average 79.7 days of classroom work. Almost one-fourth of these students increased their grade level by more than three levels.

The success of the correctional education programs for these young offenders suggests that specialized educational programs can work for students who were unable to succeed in regular school. Such programs can be provided not only for criminal offenders, but for adults whose low educational skills place them at risk of becoming criminal offenders.

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#### Notes

1. Data from the Illinois Department of Corrections' Offender Tracking System.
2. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Prisoners in 1989* (Washington, D.C., May 1990).
3. "Monitoring and Evaluating the Services for Correctional Inmates" in *Correctional Education: A Way to Stay Out* (Springfield, Ill.: Illinois Council on Vocational Education, 1988).
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5. Bruce I. Wolford, "Balancing the Educational and Custodial Functions of the Correctional Educator" in *Education Training Handbook*, edited by T. Appoloni (Sacramento, Calif.: Department of Corrections, 1985): 129-163.

6. R. Bell, E.H. Conrad, and R.J. Suppa, "The Findings and Recommendations of the National Study on Learning Deficiencies in Adult Inmates" *Journal of Correctional Education* 35 (1984): 129-137.

7. E. Shelton, "The Implementation of a Life Coping Skills Program Within a Correctional Setting" *Journal of Correctional Education* 36 (1985): 41-45.

8. Ill.Rev.Stat., ch. 122, par. 13-40 to 13-45.

9. Jeanne Lyman, Business Manager, Illinois Department of Corrections School District 428.

10. Computers are used in ABE courses at the Centralia, Danville, Graham, Joliet, Menard, Pontiac, Sheridan, Shawnee, and Vienna correctional centers.

11. "U.S. Boosts Academics in Prisons" *Chicago Sun-Times* (October 18, 1990): 6; "Inmates' Literacy Targeted So They Won't Return to Life of Crime" *Chicago Tribune* (October 18, 1990): sec. 1: 24.

12. Wolford, "Correctional Education" (1987).

13. S.R. Day and M.R. McCane, *Vocational Education in Corrections* (Columbus, Ohio: National Center for Research in Vocational Education, 1982).

14. Nic Howell, Office of Public Information, Illinois Department of Corrections, interview: January 25, 1991.

15. John Castro, Associate Superintendent, Adult Division, School District 428, interview: April 2, 1991.

16. Educational programs in adult and juvenile facilities are provided by Black Hawk College in East Moline, Carl Sandburg College in Galesburg, College of DuPage in Glen Ellyn, Danville Area Community College, Elgin Community College, Illinois Valley Community College in Oglesby, John Wood Community College in Quincy, Kankakee Community College, Kaskaskia College in Centralia, Lake Land College in Mattoon, Lewis and Clark Community College in Godfrey, Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield, Lincoln Trail College in Robinson, MacMurray College in Jacksonville, Rend Lake College in Ina, Sauk Valley College in Dixon, Southeastern Illinois College in Harrisburg, Spoon River Community College in Canton, Illinois State University in Bloomington-Normal, Lewis University in Romeoville, and Roosevelt University in Chicago.

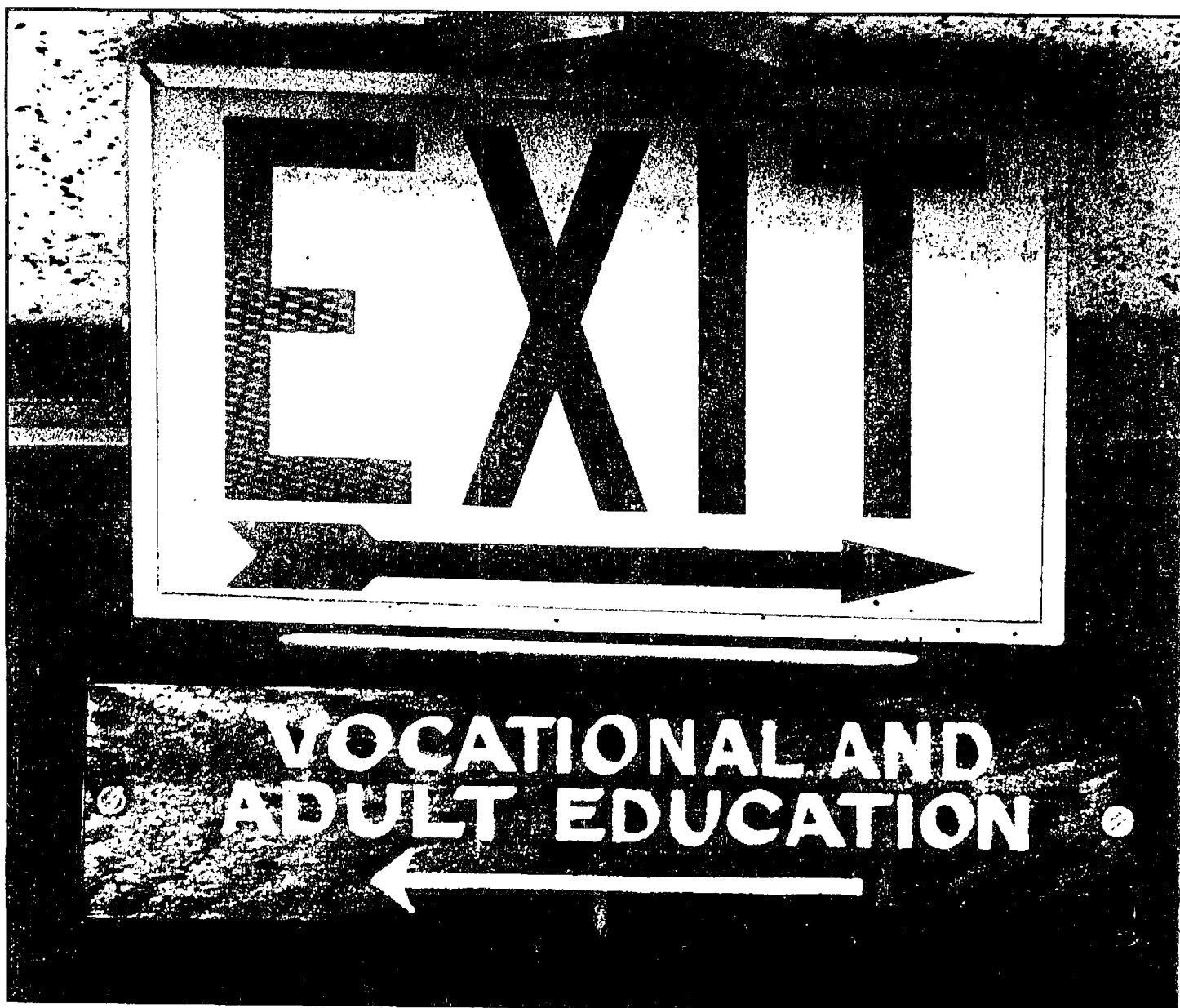
17. PA 86-1373.

18. "Prison Schooling Waiting List is Long" *Belleville News-Democrat* (January 24, 1991).

19. Ruthann DeWolf, Staff Attorney, Legal Assistance Foundation, interview: March 27, 1991.
20. Illinois Department of Corrections, *Insight into Corrections* (April 1991).
21. Because inmates may enroll in more than one course over the course of the year, or even simultaneously, the total number of enrollments may exceed the total number of participants.
22. The total number of inmates participating in individual academic and vocational programs is not tabulated by School District 428 personnel; only periodic enrollment figures at a given time are published.
23. Roz Petrelli, Adult Education, Illinois State Board of Education, interview: July 3, 1991.
24. John Castro (April 2, 1991).
25. *Moorehead v. McGinnis*, Central District, 86-C-202. *Belleville News-Democrat* (May 1, 1991); *Danville Commercial News* (May 2, 1991); and *Champaign News-Gazette* (May 3, 1991).
26. Enrollment figures provided by Nic Howell, Illinois Department of Corrections, January 28, 1991. Female inmates constitute 9 percent of the total inmate population at Logan and 19 percent at Dixon.
27. Total juveniles participating in individual academic and vocational programs are not tabulated by School District 428 personnel. Only periodic enrollment figures are tabulated at a given time. The number of enrollments over the course of a year can exceed the number of juveniles served because one juvenile can enroll in more than one academic and/or vocational programs during the year.
28. M.B. Santamour and B. West, *Retardation and Criminal Justice: A Training Manual for Criminal Justice Personnel* (Washington, D.C.: President's Committee on Mental Retardation, 1979); O.D. Coffey, "Meeting the Needs of Youth from a Corrections Viewpoint" in *Programming for Adolescents with Behavioral Disorders* vol. 1, edited by S. Braaten, R.B. Rutherford Jr., and C.A. Kardash (Reston, Va.: Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders, 1983): 79-84.
29. Steve Ingley, American Jail Association, interview: March 19, 1991.
30. George Troike, Chief, Detention Standards and Services Unit, Illinois Department of Corrections, interview: April 17, 1991.
31. Ill.Rev.Stat., ch. 122, par. 14.703.
32. According to Ill.Rev.Stat., ch. 37, par. 805-10(2), the youth may be further detained for his or her own protection, to protect the person or property of another, or to prevent the juvenile from fleeing the jurisdiction of the court.
33. Peg Robertson, Probation Division, Administrative Office of Illinois Courts interview: April 3, 1991.
34. Robertson (April 3, 1991).
35. Ken Klimusko, Probation Division, Administrative Office of Illinois Courts, interview: March 25, 1991.
36. Klimusko (March 25, 1991).
37. Ill.Rev.Stat., ch. 122, par. 14-7.03.
38. Illinois House Resolution 1514, passed June 1990, sponsored by Representatives Michael Curran and Karen Hasara.
39. Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, *The Pace of Recidivism in Illinois*, prepared by John Markovic (Chicago, April 1986).
40. Hartzel Black, Southeastern Illinois College, interview: February 11, 1991.
41. The Federal Targeted Jobs Tax Credit was enacted as part of the original Community Employment Training Act (CETA) to encourage firms to hire individuals from targeted groups, including ex-offenders, that have historically had trouble finding employment.
42. National Institute of Corrections, *Centralized Educational Administration for Private Sector Community Based Corrections*, report prepared by the Safer Foundation (Washington, D.C., 1990).
43. R. Bell, *Report to Congress: Correctional Institutions Can Do More to Improve the Employability of Offenders* (Washington, D.C.: General Accounting Office, 1979)
44. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Correctional Education Programs for Inmates*, report prepared by J.P. Conrad (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981); U.S. Department of Education, *Adult Offender Education Programs*, report prepared by G.J. Horvath (Washington, D.C., 1982); and "Issues in Correctional Education: A Conundrum of Conflict" *Journal of Correctional Education* 33 (1982): 8-15.
45. "Monitoring and Evaluating the Services for Correctional Inmates" (1988).
46. Illinois Department of Employment Security, *Target: 1999—A Preliminary Look at the Composition of the Illinois Labor Force in the Year 2000* (Springfield, Ill., 1986).
47. "Monitoring and Evaluating the Services for Correctional Inmates" (1988).



# Adult Education



When young people drop out of school or when they graduate without marketable skills, their chances of becoming functional, productive citizens are usually low. As a result, the risk of criminal involvement, arrest, and incarceration increases.<sup>1</sup> An adult without the ability to read, write, and perform simple mathematical calculations cannot fill out a job application, use a map to locate an address, decipher a bus schedule, order food from a menu, interpret operating instructions on a piece of equipment in the workplace, open and manage a checking account, or read a bedtime story to a three-year-old. The personal obstacles in the life of the individual unable to read have social consequences that exact a great cost to society.

The Authority's Survey of Educational Expe-

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### Defining literacy

In 19th century America, as well as in some presently developing nations, the simple ability to write one's name was considered the minimum standard for literacy. But with the advance of universal public education and the increasing demands of an industrial society, this limited standard has been gradually replaced in the United States by a definition of literacy based on the attainment of at least a sixth-grade reading level.<sup>1</sup> This standard is still applied in assessing the scope of literacy problems, and persons below this skill level are commonly considered illiterate. Inmates in Illinois prisons who read below the sixth-grade level are required to enroll in mandatory education programs.<sup>2</sup>

The term "functionally illiterate" is sometimes used to describe a person who has some basic literacy skills but whose deficiencies hinder on-the-job performance and interfere in coping with other demands of daily living. Many educators argue that functional literacy is relative to the demands of a specific situation, such as a work setting, and may require not only reading skills above the sixth-grade level but also math and information-processing skills. A 1985 nationwide study of literacy among young adults, for example, rejected arbitrary standards such as reading achievement levels. Instead, the study defined literacy as a set of information processing skills that included reading and interpreting prose; identifying and using information in tables, charts, and indexes; and performing numerical operations.<sup>3</sup> Marginal literacy is a term often applied to persons who have attained educational credentials, such as a GED or a high school diploma, but who have not sufficiently mastered skills that equip them for entry-level positions in business and industry.

Different types of programs for adult learners are designed for students at different levels of literacy. Basic literacy programs are aimed at persons whose reading skills are below sixth-grade level. Adult basic education programs serve adults who have not attained a GED or high school diploma and include a broader range of skills training.

1. Irwin S. Kirsch and Ann Jungeblut. *Literacy Profiles of America's Young Adults* (Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service, 1986): 2.

2. Early in 1991, the federal prison system raised the educational standard for its inmates to a 12th-grade reading level. The educational programs for federal inmates are not mandatory, but inmates who refuse to attend educational programs to improve their reading skills are assigned to the lowest-paying prison jobs and could be subject to disciplinary action. "Federal Prison System Raises Inmate Education Standards" *Corrections Digest* (October 31, 1990): 8.

3. Kirsch and Jungeblut (1986).

riences and Attitudes of Inmates in the Illinois Department of Corrections found that almost three-quarters of the inmates surveyed had dropped out of high school, and that repeat offenders were far more likely than first offenders to have left school without completing even an elementary education. This finding suggests that offenders who have the lowest level of educational skills, and are therefore less employable, are also the most likely to return to prison time and time again. Such very low educational skill levels are common among inmates. The Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) reports that almost one in three adult inmates has a combined reading and math score below the sixth-grade level.<sup>2</sup>

Poor educational skills are also common among offenders sentenced to probation, although their dropout rates appear to be less severe than prison inmates'. A 1990 study of adult probationers in Illinois conducted by the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts found that 45 percent of the male and female adults who received a probation sentence had not graduated from high school—27 percent fewer dropouts than were found among prison inmates. The prison population also had a higher percentage of persons who had dropped out in junior high school or earlier—9 percent of male and female inmates had left school before ninth grade, compared to 7 percent of the probationers.<sup>3</sup> In other words, offenders eligible for probation who have committed lesser offenses and whose criminal history records are presumably not very extensive have lower rates for both high school dropout and earlier dropout than felons sentenced to prison. Among prison inmates, felons who had been previously admitted to IDOC had the lowest high school completion rates and had left school with the least education completed.

Two competing theories offer possible explanations for these findings. One theory suggests that offenders who had dropped out of school and have serious educational deficits are more likely to end up in prison because they are treated more harshly by the courts. The differential treatment they receive, according to this theory, could be the direct result of their poor education—for example, inability to mount an adequate defense. Some other factor associated with their lack of education, such as low socioeconomic status, attitudes toward authority, or higher rates

of learning disabilities that affect an offender's ability to relate and communicate effectively, might also place them at a disadvantage or create some bias in the handling and outcome of their case.<sup>4</sup>

The second theory assumes a more direct link between dropping out of school and committing crime that leads to a prison sentence. According to this theory, the outcome—the prison sentence—could be either a direct result of a chain of events that leads from educational failure to unemployment, poverty, and crime, or it could be the result of some other predisposing factor that caused both dropout and criminal behavior. More focused research would be required to establish which theory provides the more likely explanation, but the fact that repeat offenders have the poorest educational skills suggests that some sort of connection can be made between educational failure, unemployment, and serious criminal behavior.<sup>5</sup>

Poor educational skills are also associated with many other social problems. Nationwide, 68 percent of those arrested, 85 percent of unwed mothers, 70 percent of welfare dependents, 85 percent of dropouts, and 72 percent of the unemployed are estimated to be functionally illiterate—to have serious problems with basic reading, writing, and math skills needed to function in today's society.<sup>6</sup> Without adequate job skills, there is little hope that the cycles of poverty, dependency, and crime can be broken.

How can recent dropouts and older people obtain these skills once they have left the public school system? Adult education—in correctional facilities, in community-based programs, in the workplace, in community colleges, and in high school extension programs—can play a vital role in giving a second chance to adults seeking to improve their literacy and job skills.

By combating illiteracy and improving job readiness, successful adult education programs may reduce the workload of criminal justice agencies by eliminating some of the risk factors most highly associated with increased criminal behavior. Increasing the employability of under-skilled adults in the general population may reduce their risk of future arrest and incarceration. And programs serving ex-offenders may reduce recidivism by helping releasees continue educational training begun in prison and by providing job placement and job retention services.<sup>7</sup>

According to the Safer Foundation, a private non-profit agency that provides services for ex-offenders, approximately two-thirds of the ex-offenders who complete Safer's basic education and job skills programs have not been arrested for a new crime for up to two years following program completion.<sup>8</sup>

## ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN ILLINOIS

Adult literacy and basic education programs in Illinois include literacy and basic skill programs, job training and job retention programs, and adult vocational education. In Chicago alone, more than a quarter of a billion dollars is spent on these programs each year. Yet, many experts in adult education believe that, despite the large number of programs and the large sums of money spent on them, only a small minority of adults with serious educational deficits actually receive services.

In Chicago in 1987, fewer than one-half of 1 percent of adults with less than a sixth-grade education and fewer than 5 percent of those with education above the sixth-grade level actually

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### How extensive is illiteracy in Illinois?

According to the U.S. Department of Education, one in five American adults is functionally illiterate, and more than one out of every three is only marginally literate.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, it is estimated that the number of adult illiterates nationwide is growing by 1.5 million each year because of high school dropout and young people graduating from high school without basic skills.<sup>2</sup>

Illinois ranks 34th in literacy ratings among the 50 states, making it the 16th most illiterate state in the nation. The Illinois Secretary of State Literacy Office estimates there are more than 2 million functionally illiterate adults in Illinois—a number equivalent to the combined population of DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will counties (2.1 million, according to the 1990 Census).

A survey conducted by the National Education Association reported that 51 percent of illiterate adults live in small towns and suburbs, 41 percent live in urban areas, and 8 percent live in rural areas.<sup>3</sup> Although literacy is not just an urban problem, literacy problems in Chicago have been well documented, but no extensive studies have been done in smaller towns and rural areas in Illinois. According to a 1989 report by the Chicago Council on Urban Affairs, approximately 750,000 adults in Chicago have educational levels below the sixth grade, including 300,000 for whom English is a second language.<sup>4</sup>

1. U.S. Department of Education, Statistical Digest, 1975, cited in *40 Facts About Adult Illiteracy in the United States* (Literacy Volunteers of America, 1989).

2. *The Illinois Literacy Fact Sheet # 1* (Illinois Secretary of State Literacy Office, September 1989).

3. *40 Facts About Adult Illiteracy*, (1989): 2.

4. Day Piercy, *Workforce Literacy: A Chicago Initiative* (Council on Urban Affairs, October 1989) 6.



received services.<sup>9</sup> And in fiscal year 1990, the Illinois State Board of Education reported that only 5.4 percent of functionally illiterate adults statewide were served by literacy programs.<sup>10</sup>

Some experts have suggested that problems in adult literacy education programs—duplicated effort, gaps in services, and a lack of accountability—may be the result of fragmentation in how these programs are organized and carried out.<sup>11</sup> Federal funding for adult literacy and basic education services is mandated by 10 separate federal statutes, with funds administered by 11 state agencies and channeled to more than 20 separate programs in Chicago alone.<sup>12</sup> According to an analysis of adult education programs throughout the state, this lack of coordination, resulting in a confusing array of funding sources, sponsoring agencies, and program types, is not limited to Chicago.<sup>13</sup>

### **Illinois State Board of Education programs**

The source of the largest amount of federal funds, and a major source of support for adult basic education and literacy programs in Illinois, is the Adult Education Act of 1966. Under Illinois law, these federal funds are channeled through the

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#### **Private industry literacy programs**

Educational institutions and community-based organizations are not the only providers of adult education programs. Many major corporations and smaller businesses in Illinois have instituted literacy programs for their employees in the workplace. According to George Kelm, president of the Sahara Coal Company, "There has been a great awakening of corporations in America to their role in education."<sup>1</sup> The workplace literacy movement has been inspired by employers' concerns about a growing gap between the actual skills of their employees and the skills demanded of workers in order to keep American businesses competitive in the world market.

- In 1987, New York Telephone had to process 57,000 applications to find 2,000 workers qualified for entry-level positions.
- Motorola estimates it will spend \$35 million over three years to bring the reading and math skills of its workers up to the sixth- or seventh-grade level.<sup>2</sup>

To overcome the problem of an undereducated work force, many businesses have brought educational training programs directly to their workers. Such programs may narrowly focus on job-related skills, but, more often, they offer general education classes. Dave Cox, literacy manager for IBM in Illinois, said, "The real need is to build the partnerships needed to make these programs work. That means involving the students, the corporations, the communities, and educators."<sup>3</sup>

1. George Kelm, opening address to the Illinois Work Force Education Conference, May 16, 1990.

2. Edward Gordon, Judith Ponticelli, and Ronald Morgan, "Back to Basics" *Training Today* (February 1990): 9.

3. Dave Cox, Illinois Work Force Education Conference, Chicago, May 17, 1990.

Illinois State Board of Education to one of three eligible types of service providers: public community colleges, educational service regions headed by regional or county superintendents of schools, and local school districts, including the Illinois Department of Corrections' School District 428.<sup>14</sup>

The programs supported by these federal funds served more than 108,000 students in state fiscal year 1990. Of the \$6.3 million in federal Adult Education Act funds provided to Illinois in fiscal 1990—a 32-percent increase over fiscal 1988—the State Board of Education awarded almost 60 percent to community colleges, 25 percent to public schools, and 10 percent to educational service regions. Another 5 percent of the funds went to community-based organizations that provided services under a subcontract with one of the three main types of institutions.<sup>15</sup>

Illinois is one of only five states that do not allow community-based, volunteer, and grassroots literacy programs to freely compete for federal Adult Education Act funds.<sup>16</sup> In order to have access to these funds, community and other organizations must subcontract with one of the types of institutions specified in the state statute—which takes place only when those institutions determine that they are unable to deliver the services themselves. While some educators believe this practice puts Illinois out of compliance with federal regulations,<sup>17</sup> other observers fault the federal legislation for an ambiguity that makes the state's obligation to community-based service providers unclear.<sup>18</sup>

Adult educators working in community-based organizations say the methods used in Illinois to channel federal money to literacy programs has seriously affected the ability of programs to reach the neediest citizens. According to Elio DeArrudah of the Hispanic Literacy Council, "The major problem in Illinois is that the main thrust of literacy work is done by community-based organizations, but the State Board of Education only works with public schools and community colleges."<sup>19</sup> Noreen Lopez, director of adult education for the Illinois State Board of Education maintains, however, that programs funded by the State Board of Education have been effective in reaching adults with the lowest level of skills. "We have programs in more than



2,000 sites across the state, and hundreds of them are operating in community-based organizations, such as schools, churches, community agencies, and storefront learning centers," she said.<sup>20</sup>

Critics of the present funding formula point out that, while community-based organizations have limited sources of funding, the community colleges are independent taxing bodies that have the authority to levy property taxes to support their programs. Advocates of community-based organizations, including literacy volunteer programs and other private non-profit groups, say their programs are better designed to meet the needs of the most educationally disadvantaged clients. Nearly all of their clients fall into one or more of the groups, such as economically disadvantaged and minority clients, that the federal funds are earmarked to serve. Educational programs sponsored by these groups rely principally on one-to-one tutoring methods to match the needs of the individual learner. Programs are located in the neighborhoods where the students live or in institutions, such as prisons and jails. The instructional materials such programs use are specially geared to the interests and ethnic backgrounds of their clientele.

Supporters say that these methods allow such programs to be far more effective than the traditional classroom approaches often used by community college programs in reaching the very target groups identified in federal legislation (educationally disadvantaged, minority, special needs, chronically unemployed, homeless, incarcerated, and immigrant students).<sup>21</sup>

Community organizations that are allowed to subcontract with school districts or community colleges to provide adult literacy services to clients must pay the primary contractor an administrative fee for managing the funds received from the State Board of Education. The administrative fee reduces by about 5 percent a year the federal funds that go to the community programs that actually provide services to clients. Since the majority of community-based organizations involved in literacy and adult basic education are located in the Chicago area, the impact of the state funding formula on community-based programs is greater there than in other areas of the state. At the same time, adult education programs run by the City Colleges of Chicago that

receive federal funding directly through the Illinois State Board of Education have been sharply criticized by researchers who have documented serious deficiencies.

According to a 1991 study by Maria Langan and Gary Orfield of the University of Chicago, the City Colleges of Chicago community college system had failed to adjust its priorities to reflect a change in student enrollment away from associate's degree programs and courses that prepare students to transfer into the state university system and toward adults seeking basic skills. In 1989, although more than half of the students enrolled in the Chicago city college system participated in literacy and basic skills courses, the literacy programs received only 4 percent of the college system's instructional budget. Fewer than 3 percent of all the students received any type of diploma or completion certificate. In addition, while enrollment declined 30 percent between 1984 and 1989, the per-student cost more than doubled—from \$771 to \$1,641. The report criticizes the City Colleges of Chicago for failing to promote a better progression of adult basic learners from one level of education to the next (Figure 9.1). It also found that, of the more than 40,000 students enrolled in occupational and vocational programs in 1989, fewer than 3 percent achieved certification for a trade.<sup>22</sup>

The problems in literacy programs in the City Colleges of Chicago may not be representative of community college programs in other parts

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*"Why has the Illinois State Board of Education shied away from open competition among adult education providers? Free market policies would force the public community colleges and public schools to shape themselves up. As long as they have hegemony or monopoly in the field, why should they change what they do and how they do it?"*

*Elio DeArrudah  
Director, Hispanic Literacy Council  
(March 29, 1991)*

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Figure 9.1  
**City Colleges of Chicago enrollment, fiscal year 1989**

|                                    |  |                |
|------------------------------------|--|----------------|
| Adult basic education enrollment   | Adult secondary education enrollment         | GED completers |
| 76,346                             | 9,809  | 2,690          |
| Occupational/vocational enrollment | Occupational/vocational certificates awarded |                |
| 40,486                             | 1,108  |                |

Source: Maria Langan and Gary Orfield, *The Revolving Door* City Colleges of Chicago 1980-1989

of the state. According to Hartzel Black, dean of correctional education at Southeastern Illinois College, "In small towns and rural areas in Illinois, the local community college is a focal point for the community. It's the most natural place for adult educational programs to be located."<sup>23</sup>

### **Illinois Secretary of State programs**

Most community-based literacy programs in Illinois receive their funding support not from federal grants administered by the State Board of Education, but from General Revenue funds administered by the Literacy Office of the Illinois Secretary of State's Office. Since its establish-

ment in 1985, the office's Literacy Grant Program has awarded more than \$24 million in direct grant awards and has served more than 60,000 students. In state fiscal year 1990, the Secretary of State's Office awarded \$5 million to 83 programs, serving more than 25,000 students. Community-based organizations received approximately 37 percent of that amount, and literacy volunteer organizations accounted for an additional 7 percent. The remaining funds were distributed to programs run by community colleges and universities (35 percent), regional offices of education (8 percent), library systems (7 percent), public schools (3 percent), and

other institutions, including jails and literacy consortiums and councils (4 percent).<sup>24</sup>

Unlike programs sponsored by the State Board of Education, these programs primarily serve adults whose reading and computation skills are below the sixth-grade level. A special initiative has targeted the inmates of county and state correctional facilities.<sup>25</sup> Almost two-thirds of the programs work in conjunction with preschools, Head Start programs, and elementary schools to deliver literacy services to the parents of young students, in order to break intergenerational patterns of illiteracy.<sup>26</sup>

### **Program cost-effectiveness**

The Authority examined cost-effectiveness and accountability measures from the two major fund-

ing sources for adult education programs in Illinois from 1986 through 1988, comparing enrollment cost per student and educational results, such as test scores, when available. Enrollment in State Board of Education programs has been declining, while enrollment in programs funded by the Secretary of State's Literacy Office has increased. While more students are consistently enrolled in State Board of Education adult literacy programs—in state fiscal year 1990, 108,209 students were enrolled in these programs, compared to 25,268 students in Literacy Office programs—enrollment figures for State Board of Education programs have declined 9 percent since the peak year of 1987. Enrollment in Literacy Office programs increased by 76 percent during the same period. The enrollment decline in State Board of Education programs has been accompanied by an increase in annual per-capita student costs, while the cost of literacy training in Literacy Office programs has steadily declined since 1987 (Figure 9.2).

State Board of Education officials report that per-student costs for their programs have risen due to a reduction in class size from more than 30 students per class in 1986 to fewer than 25 per class in 1990 and due to the addition of counseling services to the programs.<sup>27</sup> Most experts, however, maintain that class sizes of even 25 are too large and contribute to high dropout rates.<sup>28</sup> A *Chicago Tribune* survey of nine City Colleges of Chicago literacy programs also found that "there is no regular monitoring of the classes by college campuses, no counselors or tutors for students, and no specialists to work with students with learning disabilities."<sup>29</sup>

Most Literacy Office programs are less expensive to run because they rely, not on traditional classroom instruction, but on trained volunteer literacy tutors using one-to-one instructional methods. In 1990, almost 14,000 volunteers participated in 83 Literacy Office programs located in more than 2,000 community sites throughout Illinois.<sup>30</sup>

Because the goal of adult literacy and education programs is to improve literacy and other basic academic skills, the best measure of a program's success is how much progress is made by its students. Such indicators of student performance are not readily available, however. According to one study, most adult literacy and

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*"Illinois is not reaching the adult education potential it could, because it does not open up the competition for funds. Illinois has that stupid law that monies must go to traditional schools. The law totally excludes not-for-profits and other organizations which can best serve low skilled individuals."*

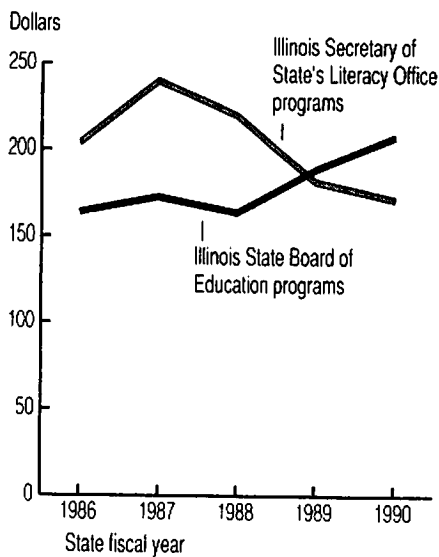
Mary Degonia  
President, Capitol Perspectives Newsletter,  
focusing on adult education and  
literacy legislation  
(February 5, 1991)

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Figure 9.2

**Cost per student per year of Literacy Office and State Board of Education adult education programs**



Source: Illinois State Board of Education; Illinois Secretary of State

vocational education programs provide only enrollment data, with no accurate measurement of results.<sup>31</sup> Both the Literacy Office and the State Board of Education compile some statistics on student achievement, but they are not extensive and cannot be compared with each other.

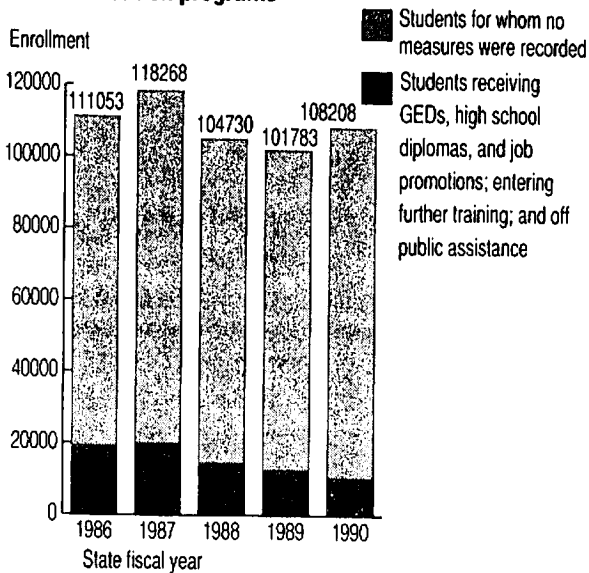
Literacy Office programs compile test scores and other measures of progress from all students enrolled in their programs to calculate an average rate of progress. With regular attendance (at least two hours of instruction per week), the average student in 1989 gained one reading grade level for every six months of study.<sup>32</sup>

The State Board of Education does not test students' progress, but it does compile statistics on certain outcomes. Of the students enrolled in State Board of Education adult education programs in state fiscal year 1990, 5 percent received a GED, 0.8 percent were awarded a high school diploma, 1 percent received a job promotion, 1 percent enrolled in further training, and 1.5 percent were removed from public assistance as a result of their training. While a total of 10,429 students showed one of these signs of educational progress or benefit, such accountability measures were lacking for the remaining 97,780 students who had enrolled.

Despite this lack of accurate statistics showing how many students in State Board of Education programs achieve some measurable goal, it is possible to examine the effectiveness of the

Figure 9.3

**Enrollment in Illinois State Board of Education adult basic education programs**



Source: Illinois State Board of Education

programs by comparing the numbers of students who have achieved measurable success over time. Even though indicators such as earning a GED, receiving a job promotion, or discontinuing public assistance may be fragmented measures of a program's success, the data collection methods have remained the same in every year.

The number of GEDs and high school diplomas awarded in 1990 was 37 percent lower than it had been in 1987, while the number of students removed from public assistance was 38 percent lower, indicating that fewer students in these programs are achieving measurable goals. Enrollment had dropped by only 8.5 percent in the same period (Figure 9.3). The number of students for whom accountability measures were available was 41 percent lower in 1990 than it had been in 1987.<sup>33</sup>

According to Andrea Berryman, a member of the Illinois Community College Board, open enrollment policies in basic education programs make it impossible to maintain accurate statistics on how many students achieve significant progress. Open enrollment allows students to enter or leave a program at any time. Ms. Berryman said many students enter the programs to achieve some personal goal that does not include earning a GED. Many students leave due to a change in work schedule or personal problems, and return later.<sup>34</sup>

Open enrollment and other characteristics

of the programs make it impossible to accurately reflect the numbers of students who benefit from services.<sup>35</sup> For example, the number of students receiving GEDs may be underreported, since figures are maintained only for students who return to the programs to report their success in passing the GED test, and many fail to do this. Also, more than 44,000 of the students in State Board of Education programs are in English-as-a-second-language classes and more than 38,000 are in adult basic education programs. These students are by definition not ready to test for the

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### **A pilot project in southern Illinois helps probationers develop career plans**

While in many parts of the state, probation officers, job trainers, and others who work with criminal justice clients have criticized the lack of coordination among adult basic education, vocational skills, and job placement programs,<sup>1</sup> a pilot project for probationers in the 1st Judicial Circuit has tied all of these elements together since July 1990. Denise Orso, chief managing officer for court services in Williamson County, said, "Education is a big issue for court clients anywhere—our problems are just on a smaller scale than they are in the big cities."<sup>2</sup>

With \$20,000 in funding from the Illinois State Board of Education, court services personnel, the Administrative Office of Illinois Courts, local community colleges in the three participating counties, and Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) programs worked together to establish a career planning program for 20 clients from each county. Participants in the program receive a battery of assessment tests to establish their educational needs. Using the assessment results, they are helped by counselors in the community colleges to develop a career plan, which may include referral to a literacy program, GED class, job training program, or associate's degree program. JTPA programs work with graduates to provide job readiness skills and job placement assistance. "Even though the program has only been operating since January 1990, we have already succeeded in placing some people in jobs. It's a very cost-effective program, considering we're only spending \$6,000 for training 20 people," Ms. Orso said.

The three counties involved in the program—Johnson, Pope, and Williamson—have chosen different incentives for program participation, ranging from the carrot to the stick. Ms. Orso explained, "The circuit judge in Pope County has a very strong commitment to the program. He mandates probationers into the program and will violate them if they don't comply. We chose not to do that in Williamson County, because we wanted people to be self-motivated." Probationers who comply with all probation requirements, complete one-half of their term of probation, and follow their career plan become eligible for early discharge.

June 1991 may have been the last month of operation for the projects. The State Board of Education did not renew their funding, and by the end of that month court services personnel had been unable to locate an alternative source of funds.

1 *Centralized Education Administration for Private Sector Community Based Corrections: Final Report to the National Institute of Corrections* (Chicago: Safer Foundation, 1990); Darrell McGibany, Associate Director of Court Services, Madison County, interview, February 15, 1991; the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority's Roundtable Discussion of Juvenile Court Services and Educational Placement (August 13, 1990)

2 Denise Orso, interview, February 15, 1991

GED. It is not clear, however, that these circumstances would account for all of the 90 percent of students who lack indications of progress.

Some of the shortfall in accountability figures may be due to very high dropout rates for students in community college programs. According to an official who helps draft federal literacy legislation, GED programs at the community colleges have only a 1-percent to 2-percent completion rate in Illinois.<sup>36</sup> The U.S. Department of Education estimates that one-half to three-quarters of all students who enroll in literacy programs nationwide drop out.<sup>37</sup> The Illinois Community College Board has no dropout statistics for its programs. Board member Andrea Berryman said, "It would take a special study, and that has never been done."<sup>38</sup>

High dropout rates in some community college programs may be related to poor staff training.<sup>39</sup> According to Ms. Berryman, more than 80 percent of the teachers of adult education in Illinois community colleges are part-time employees, and a bachelor's degree in any field is the only requirement needed to teach adult education at a community college. No teaching certification or special training in adult education or learning disabilities is required.<sup>40</sup>

According to trainers who instruct teachers in adult literacy programs, adults require both more individualized and more participatory teaching methods than do younger students. Without previous teaching experience or special training, instructors are likely to fall back on traditional approaches that are most familiar to them, but that may not succeed with adults.<sup>41</sup>

### **ADULT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE CLIENTS**

According to experienced parole and probation officers, job training and vocational education programs play a particularly critical role for clients of the criminal justice system. Darrell McGibany, associate director of court services for Madison County and past president of the Illinois Probation and Court Services Association, explains: "A good percentage of the folks we deal with can't get through a job interview, stay in a job once they get one, and don't know how to hook up with social service agencies to get help. These things require a level of social and job skills they don't have. What's needed to give these people a

possible future is a continuum of programs that lead to a job. You have to start with assessment, move on to educational skills, job training and job readiness, and finally go on to job placement. What's missing in all parts of the state is the coordination between all these programs."<sup>42</sup>

A 1990 investigation of educational opportunities for offenders and ex-offenders in Illinois and Iowa, conducted under the auspices of the National Institute of Corrections, substantiated reports of inadequate coordination of educational programs for this population. Investigators reported, "Equally evident is the lack of interagency coordination of resources in many areas of the states of Illinois and Iowa. Model programs coordinating resources exist in Illinois but need to be replicated throughout the state, including the Chicago area."<sup>43</sup>

The lack of coordination among programs is not the only problem that can prevent criminal justice clients from getting the job training they need to be successful in finding and keeping a job. According to vocational trainers who work with offenders and ex-offenders, programs funded by the federal Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) are judged by the numbers of successful job placements they make and by how high wages are at placement. Speedy job placement and high initial wages are often unrealistic goals for ex-offenders and other hard-to-place clients. These programs may be discouraged from serving clients with the most serious skill deficits, such as many ex-offenders, in order to demonstrate success in placing students in jobs.<sup>44</sup>

On the other hand, some argue that, given limited resources, it is important to concentrate first on those people who stand the best chance of succeeding. The assistant labor secretary for employment, Robert T. Jones, has defended performance criteria for JTPA programs: "It's not good enough to just serve people and even do it well. The only thing that is really valid is, does it move them to employment?"<sup>45</sup>

The changing nature of the American economy has also dramatically affected job training, particularly for many criminal justice clients who not only lack skills but must overcome the reluctance of employers to hire ex-offenders. Prior to the recession of 1982, a strong economy had produced a large number of low-skilled jobs that paid adequate wages. By 1982, however, job

openings of this kind had become scarce. Acknowledging this fact, JTPA inserted program requirements that shifted the focus away from basic job training skills to enhanced educational programs, in order to qualify workers for better paying jobs with more demanding educational requirements.

"This looks good on paper, but it is very unrealistic to try to put these ideas into practice with the kind of clients Safer serves," said Ron Tonn, director of basic skills for the Safer Foundation. "It's all very well to say these workers need better salaries and benefits and the opportunity for promotion, but it's a totally different matter to get them these types of positions when they lack real-world work experience, and when programs do not have the resources to remain involved with participants beyond initial placement."<sup>46</sup>

According to probation officers, not only do

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### **Lake County vocational services**

In Lake County, a program begun in June 1990 is attempting to provide transitional vocational services to probation clients and inmates of the Lake County Jail Work Release Program. Using \$18,000 in federal Carl Perkins Vocational Training Act funds as seed money for the start-up program, a coalition of criminal justice and educational agencies, including adult probation, the county jail work release program, the Northern Illinois Halfway House, the College of Lake County, the Lake County Area Vocational Center, and the Private Industry Council, have formed the Lake County Vocational Networking Committee in order to coordinate and expand vocational opportunities for offenders.

The program begins with 24 hours of job enhancement training provided by College of Lake County instructors, while the offenders are still incarcerated, in the work release program, or living in the halfway house following release. Offenders learn how to prepare a resume and fill out a job application, as well as interviewing skills, other job search skills, and job retention and promotion strategies. The Private Industry Council assists graduates in job placement and provides additional vocational training for some participants. Highly motivated students are sent for intensive two-day vocational aptitude testing, followed by placement in appropriate vocational training programs. Participants in the program are tracked at three-month, six-month, and one-year intervals, to measure the effects of the training and assistance on their employment status.

According to Debbie Hoem, community resource liaison for the Lake County Adult Probation Department and a member of the networking committee, the initial response to the program from both the educational and criminal justice participants has been enthusiastic. The College of Lake County is training volunteers to continue the job enhancement training component, and the superintendent of the Lake County Jail has allocated funds from the jail's budget to provide continued support for the project. During the first year of operation, the program has provided job services to 80 offenders.

Source: Debbie Hoem, community resource liaison, Lake County Adult Probation Department, interview May 29, 1991

programs based on performance contracts avoid serving the lowest level of clients in order to be able to make good progress reports, good programs are often overwhelmed by their own success.<sup>47</sup> "If a program is good—if you can see it's successful—it will be inundated," said Karl Gudenberg, a probation officer from Cook County. "If you set up a program that's working well with a small number of special clients, people will come in and say, 'Why aren't you dealing with more people from the projects?' Pretty soon they will get swamped, and another good program is lost."<sup>48</sup>

### **ARE THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF EX-OFFENDERS BEING MET?**

Even good programs are sometimes inaccessible to criminal justice clients. In some cases, eligibility requirements are a barrier. The director of probation services in Will County, Michael Costigan, said the majority of court clients his department serves are in their early 20s, yet the maximum age for the one basic learning center available in his area is 21. Many of his clients don't qualify for the program because they are too old, but lack the basic skills necessary to enter the GED program at the local junior college.<sup>49</sup> According to Ron Marra of the Cook County Adult Probation Department, whether they are high school graduates or not, the clients he sees are often seriously deficient in basic skills.<sup>50</sup>

When he was president of the Illinois Probation and Court Services Association, Darrell McGibany traveled to probation departments throughout the state. He said that many areas he visited lack sufficient educational services, especially the counties in western Illinois south of the Quad Cities area, the central part of the state below Springfield, and some areas of southeastern and southern Illinois.<sup>51</sup> According to probation officers from several counties, some types of services, especially assessment for adults with learning disabilities and educational services for adult mentally retarded clients, are virtually unavailable in some parts of the state.<sup>52</sup>

Regions that do provide some programs may have long waiting lists for enrollment. For example, Leigh Engh of the DuPage County Probation Department said that long waiting lists for enrollment in the GED programs at Waubensee Community College in Aurora discourage clients

whose motivation may be tenuous to begin with. And, Ms. Engh said, "When people have a long wait before they can even enroll, they get frustrated and often fail to follow through."<sup>53</sup>

Probation and parole officers agreed that a lack of motivation is a major stumbling block for many criminal justice clients. Jim Woolford, a probation officer in McHenry County, said, "My area is not hurting for jobs. We have a very low unemployment rate. The majority of my clients are high school educated. The problem for them is not so much education as it is motivation."<sup>54</sup> According to these officers, it is uncommon for judges to make enrollment in an educational program a condition of probation, and if such an order is made, the failure of the probationer to complete or even to enroll in a program is not often used as a reason to revoke probation.<sup>55</sup>

Any assessment of adult educational and vocational training programs in Illinois reveals numerous problems in the systems that provide education to poorly skilled adults. Many adults with serious educational deficits have been or may yet become clients of criminal justice agencies. The costs of the educational deficiencies of a growing percentage of Illinois' residents continue to fall heavily on those who are caught in a cycle of poverty and dependence and on the taxpayers who fund all the services that the state provides. Yet, the practical experience of teachers, probation and parole officers, and community volunteers who find that lack of motivation is a major stumbling block to educational improvement must be taken into account. The challenge for these practitioners, and for the educational system as a whole, is to find a way to encourage adults who are scarred by past failures to seize control of their lives and commit themselves to change. Pouring funds into new programs or dramatically reforming the system will not address this more fundamental human dilemma.

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#### **Notes**

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  13. Elio DeArrudah and Gabriele Stroschen, *On the Governance and Planning of Adult Education in Illinois. Occasional Paper No. 1* (Chicago: Reading Coordinating Council, 1988): 29-30 and *Chicago Challenge* (1991): 25.
  14. Ill.Rev.Stat., ch. 122, par. 10-22.20.
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  16. The others are Georgia, Nebraska, Tennessee, and Texas. DeArrudah and Stroschen, *On the Governance and Planning of Adult Education* (1988): 2.
  17. DeArrudah and Stroschen, *On the Governance and Planning of Adult Education* (1988): 2.
  18. Pat Fahy, Legislative Assistant to U.S. Senator Paul Simon, interview: February 8, 1991.
  19. Elio DeArrudah, interview: February 8, 1991.
  20. Noreen Lopez, interview: February 13, 1991.
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  23. Hartzel Black, Southeastern Illinois College, interview: February 15, 1991.
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  25. See also Chapter 8, Correctional Education.
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50. Adult Education Roundtable (February 8, 1991).

51. McGibany (February 15, 1991).

52. Adult Education Roundtable (February 8, 1991).

53. Adult Education Roundtable (February 8, 1991).

54. Adult Education Roundtable (February 8, 1991).

55. Adult Education Roundtable (February 8, 1991).



# Appendix A

## PROJECT METHODOLOGY

*Trends and Issues 91* is based on a comprehensive review of education and criminal justice studies, original research, and interviews, focus groups, and discussions with various experts in education, child welfare, and criminal justice.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Authority staff compiled an extensive library of studies, reports, and other information produced by educators, academics, and other researchers, both in Illinois and in the nation. Based on this information, a conceptual outline for the project was developed.

Several publications were instrumental in organizing the major issues into a working framework for this project:

- *Violent Schools— Safe Schools: The Safe School Study Report to the Congress*, vol. 1, published by the National Institute of Education in 1978. This landmark study first addressed the problem of school crime on a nationwide scale during the late 1970s.
- *Performance Profiles: Illinois Schools Report to the Public*, published by the Illinois State Board of Education in 1987, 1988, 1989, and 1990. These documents provided an overview of such Illinois public schools data as class sizes, test scores, absences, graduation rates, promotion rates, and finance data.
- *Workforce 2000: Work and Workers for the 21st Century*, published by the Hudson Institute in 1987, and *The Same Client: The Demographics of Education and Service Delivery Systems*, published by the Institute for Educational Leadership's Center for Demographic Policy in 1989. These landmark reports discuss the demographic and economic changes taking place in the United States, how these changes are affecting our position in the world marketplace, and the implications for education and training.
- *The Forgotten Half*, published by Northeastern University in 1988. This study discusses the

failure of the American educational system to adequately train youth who are not headed to college to enter meaningful careers.

- The MacArthur/Spencer Special Series on Illinois School Finance, published by the Illinois State University Center for the Study of School Finance in Normal, including *A Brief History of K-12 Finance in Illinois, or, 162 Years in Search of the Perfect Formula* (no. 2, 1987); *Documenting a Disaster: Equity and Adequacy in Illinois School Finance, 1973 through 1988* (no. 4, 1987); *The Concept of Adequacy in Illinois School Finance* (no. 5, 1987); *City Schools, Rural Schools* (no. 6, 1988); *Guilty Governments: The Problem of Inadequate Educational Funding in Illinois and Other States* (no. 8, 1989); *The Biggest Bang for the Buck: An Initial Report on Technical Economic Efficiency in Illinois K-12 Schools with a Comment on Rose v. The Council* (no. 11., 1989); *The Long March to Educational Inequality in Illinois* (in press). These publications outline the disparity across Illinois in the per pupil school spending, and its effect on academic performance.
- *Education and Law: Working with Educational Institutions* by Brooke R. Whitted, 1990. This document discusses the legal framework and procedural issues guiding school administrators, the courts, and service providers in serving the needs of special education populations.

### EDUCATIONAL ADVISORY PANEL

The Authority convened a 27-member panel of Illinois education experts, consisting of high school and junior high school teachers and administrators; regional and district superintendents and administrators; representatives from the State and Chicago Boards of Education and from several education and teacher associations; people working in correctional education and literacy programs; and criminal justice personnel who interact with students and school administrators. The panel met several times during the project, and panel members were consulted individually

throughout the project. The panel served several purposes:

- Discussion and modification of conceptual issues
- Information and resource sharing
- Technical assistance on specific research activities
- Review and criticism of *Trends and Issues 91* prior to publication

The panel also formulated a separate set of recommendations addressing the problems and issues raised in *Trends and Issues 91* that have been published as a separate document.

### **DATA COLLECTION**

Authority staff undertook two original field studies to obtain information not readily available from other agencies or organizations. The Student and Teacher Survey of Safety and Discipline in Illinois High Schools and the Survey of Educational Experiences and Attitudes of Inmates in the Illinois Department of Corrections are described more fully in Appendix B and Appendix C, respectively.

This survey information was supplemented by two other data sets. Educational records from the Illinois Department of Corrections Offender Tracking System (OTS) for 28,744 inmates provided additional information on educational attainment and test scores. For information about probationers, the Authority used the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts' *Adult Probation Population Survey* (Springfield, Ill., 1990).

### **OTHER RESEARCH**

With these data in place, Authority staff explored the two pivotal issues at the interface of the educational and criminal justice systems: (1) the impact of crime and violence on the learning environment, and (2) the risk factors affecting children who fall out of the educational system due to emotional, behavioral, and social problems that increase their likelihood of becoming future clients of the criminal justice system. To complete the research, Authority staff used published research reports, transcripts of court cases and judicial findings, program evaluation reports, state and federal agency documents, the reports of special investigative task forces, and other sources.

The Authority also convened several special panels, forums, and roundtable discussions to obtain the perspectives of practitioners working in a variety of criminal justice and education fields:

- Roundtable Discussion of Juvenile Court Services and Educational Placement. The members of this panel included administrators from the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, juvenile probation officers, juvenile court youth advocates, and a juvenile court judge. Their discussion addressed the educational problems of delinquent and other youth brought before the courts and the difficulties of the courts in making timely interventions and locating appropriate services for troubled youth and their families.
- Illinois Juvenile Officers Association Roundtable Discussion on Juvenile Policing. The executive board and members of the Illinois Juvenile Officers Association met with research staff to discuss the role of juvenile officers working in the schools and in the community.
- The Legal and Psychiatric Panel. Authority staff were briefed by a panel of experts in special education law, including those who represent parents and students and those who defend the interests of school districts. Psychiatric experts in the diagnosis and treatment of learning and behavior disorders outlined some of the more important issues involving identification and appropriate placement of special education students. Two members of this panel continued to serve as legal and psychiatric consultants throughout the project.
- Roundtable Discussion on Adult Education Needs of Probationers. Probation officers from several northern Illinois counties met with research staff to discuss the educational problems of their adult probation clients. In addition, Authority staff conducted telephone interviews with the chief probation officers in central and southern Illinois counties in order to survey conditions in those areas of the state.

To obtain information on special research topics, Authority staff also conducted telephone and in-person interviews with district superintendents and other educators, program directors, juvenile and adult probation officers, juvenile

police officers, and administrators of state and federal agencies. Authority staff also conducted informal telephone surveys to examine such topics as the reporting of chronic truancy, statewide social service access for juveniles, gaps in educational services for adult probationers, and the allocation of manpower and funding for juvenile policing.

Authority staff visited a public school for boys with behavior disorders; a high school program for teen mothers and their children; and correctional education programs in six prisons, including maximum-, medium-, and minimum-security facilities. Authority staff also attended conferences and workshops dealing with topics in correctional education, workplace literacy, and juvenile delinquency, and participated in task forces and advisory panels studying a variety of issues related to *Trends and Issues 91*.

An advisory panel of the Residential Services Authority assisted in drafting a grant proposal to study contrasting methods of resolving disputes over placement and other services to youth. An interagency curriculum task force jointly sponsored by the Safer Foundation and the National Institute of Corrections studied the educational needs of offenders and ex-offenders. The Community Networking for Offender Reintegration advisory panel planned an integrated program of transitional social service, housing, educational, mentoring, and job placement support for newly released inmates.

## HIGH SCHOOL SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The Authority's Student Survey of Safety and Discipline in Illinois High Schools was completed by 2,693 ninth through 12th graders in 31 public high schools across Illinois. Twenty-eight of those schools also administered the Teacher Survey of Safety and Discipline in Illinois High Schools to a total of 1,379 faculty members.

### THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The student and teacher survey instruments were inspired by, and partly based on, the National Institute of Education's 1976–1977 survey of more than 30,000 high school students in 642 schools nationwide.<sup>1</sup> The Illinois High School Survey also drew upon the Chicago Board of Education's 1979 survey of school-related crime and violence in Chicago schools, which was also modeled largely after the NIE national survey.<sup>2</sup> Although many of the Authority's survey questions differed from those in the previous studies, some of the questions were worded identically. Those questions served as quasi-baseline indicators to which responses to our survey could be compared.

### Victimization questions

The Illinois High School Survey examined four types of incidents that correspond to the offenses of: robbery, assault, sexual assault, and theft. Students and teachers were asked to limit their victimization reporting to specific parameters:

- Only those victimizations that took place on the way to or from school, while attending school, or at a school event
- Only those victimizations occurring during the 1989–1990 school year (and specify which of those took place in the past two months)

The Illinois High School Survey was administered during the final weeks of the 1989–1990 school year and used that school year as the recall period. This allowed for a near-complete encapsulation of that year and created a meaningful time frame for understanding patterns of victimization in the school environment. Because the NIE and Chicago studies used a recall period of two months, the Illinois High School Survey

included the two-month time frame as an additional question to allow comparison with those surveys.

### Other survey questions

Other questions addressed the following areas:

- Gangs in the schools
- Attitudes, perceptions, and feelings of students and teachers about their personal safety in school and the adjacent neighborhood
- Measures taken for self-protection, including carrying weapons to school
- The availability of illegal substances at the school
- Satisfaction with school, school responsiveness to students' and teachers' needs, racial and ethnic harmony in school, treatment of minorities, and parental involvement in school
- Students' self-reported absenteeism, length of attendance at their current school, and their likelihood of committing certain rule violations

### Testing the survey instrument

The Illinois High School Survey was pre-tested in a Chicago high school classroom. Responses to the pre-test, in general, reflected a good distribution of responses on almost all questions, indicating the structure and categories were effective and the instructions were not too difficult to follow. Informal discussions with these students following their completion of the survey prompted us to make some minor changes in wording and question order.

During the pre-test, as well as during the actual survey process, the student questionnaires were administered in the classrooms, with a set of instructions read aloud by the teacher.

### THE SAMPLING STRATEGY

The annual National Crime Survey, as well as the NIE study, have found victimization levels in schools to be strongly correlated with community type. The Illinois High School Survey employed a quota sampling process to ensure that the stu-

dent and teacher sample distributions approximated the actual population distributions (among all Illinois high school students and teachers) with respect to various kinds of communities across the state. The Illinois State Board of Education classifies all public high schools according to four community type categories. These categories are based on the U.S. Census Bureau's Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSA).

An SMSA consists of a city of more than 50,000, other cities that exhibit strong ties with that "central city," and the counties in which those cities are located. The four community type groups are the following:

- SMSA central city (the large metropolitan center of an SMSA)
- Suburban SMSA (all cities and unincorporated areas outside the central city within an SMSA)
- Small cities (cities and towns outside an SMSA)
- Rural areas (unincorporated areas outside an SMSA)

For the Illinois High School Survey, the SMSA central city category was divided into two subgroups, Chicago and other central cities. The suburban SMSA category was divided into three subgroups: Cook County, collar counties (DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will counties), and suburbs in other Illinois counties. To assess the actual population distribution of students, statewide enrollment totals for each of the seven groups and subgroups were calculated and converted to a percentage of the total high school enrollment.

All Chicago public high schools were invited to participate in the survey. Four high schools volunteered, and additional schools were recruited to create representational balance in terms of demographic composition, location, average test scores, mobility rates, enrollment size, and percentage of low-income students. Elsewhere in the state, schools within each group were recruited to create a student sample with relative enrollment sizes in each community type corresponding to the total statewide enrollment distribution.

After the sample schools were selected, each school was asked to select four English, physical education, or homeroom classes at random for survey participation (a multi-stage cluster sampling strategy). These classes are required

for all students, eliminating any selection bias associated with elective classes. One classroom was selected from each grade level (ninth through 12th grades), to control for strong correlations between victimization and grade level found in the NIE and Chicago studies.

Each participating school was asked to distribute the teacher survey to its entire faculty, except administrators. An effort was also made to sample from all geographic sections of the state, and from schools of varying sizes within each group and subgroup.

### RESPONSE RATE/SAMPLING ERROR

Two schools—one in Chicago and one in a rural area—requested a 100-percent sample of their students and faculty. A comparison of the data from the 100-percent sample to four classrooms chosen at random from the same school provided an accuracy test of the sampling strategy. For the statewide analysis, however, only the sample responses were considered (Figure B.1).

The final number of analyzable student and teacher responses was actually slightly lower, because some questionnaires were missing so many responses that they were unusable.

For students, the variance between the percentage of the final sample representing each community type and the percentage of the Illinois population representing each community type was fairly low (Figure B.2).

Differences in student-to-teacher ratios across the state contributed to higher variances for teachers than for students. In addition, fewer schools administered the teacher survey than administered the student survey (Figure B.3).

### Sampling error

Sampling error with respect to the selection of schools from various community type groups and subgroups is discussed above. Because the

Figure B.1

#### Summary of survey response rates for students and teachers (not including the 100-percent samples)

|                        |                            |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Student returns</b> |                            |                      |
| <b>Actual returns</b>  | <b>Anticipated returns</b> | <b>Response rate</b> |
| 2,693                  | 3,650                      | 73.8%                |
| <b>Teacher returns</b> |                            |                      |
| <b>Actual returns</b>  | <b>Anticipated returns</b> | <b>Response rate</b> |
| 1,379                  | 2,381                      | 57.9%                |

sample was selected to control for community type and student age and grade level, the survey sample was not randomly drawn and a specific quantified measurement of sampling error cannot be calculated.

In addition, although school administrators received suggestions of techniques to use to ensure a random selection of students within each school, bias may have entered into the selection when individual schools administered the survey.

### Distribution across grade levels

The final sample distribution contained slightly different percentages of ninth through 12th graders because of variations in class size and indi-

vidual absences. In addition, one of the participating schools served only 11th and 12th graders.

Because students drop out of high school at each level, however, the number of students enrolled in Illinois high schools generally tapers off from ninth grade until 12th grade. The Illinois High School Survey student sample (particularly in central cities) thus overrepresented juniors and seniors, and underrepresented sophomores and freshmen (Figure B.4).

To make the survey sample reflect the actual distribution of students across different grades, the analysis introduced a weighting factor, based on population parameters provided by the Illinois State Board of Education. For each of the four community types, the actual population of each grade level was divided by the total population of high school students. That percentage was then multiplied by the total sample size of each community type. That result was then divided by the sample size of the same grade level, yielding the multiplier that was used. By using this method, the original sample size was retained, but the distribution of students among grade levels within each district was adjusted. Because some students did not indicate their year in school, the total weighted sample was 2,653.

Figure B.2

#### Variations for all group and subgroup percentages of the total student sample

| School type         | Number of responses | Percentage of sample (survey) | Percentage of statewide enrollment (target) | Variance |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|---|----------|
| <b>Central city</b> |                     |                               |   |          |
| Chicago             | 606                 | 22.5%                         | 20.3%                                       | +2.2%    |
| Other               | 199                 | 7.4%                          | 6.9%  | +0.5%    |
| All central city    | 805                 | 29.9%                         | 27.2%                                       | +2.7%    |
| <b>Suburban</b>     |                     |                               |   |          |
| Cook County         | 318                 | 11.8%                         | 19.0%                                       | -7.2%    |
| Collar              | 394                 | 14.6%                         | 19.3%                                       | -4.7%    |
| Other               | 337                 | 12.5%                         | 8.0%  | +4.5%    |
| All suburban        | 1,049               | 39.0%                         | 46.4%                                       | -7.4%    |
| <b>Small city</b>   |                     |                               |   |          |
|                     | 385                 | 14.3%                         | 11.3%                                       | +3.0%    |
| <b>Rural</b>        |                     |                               |   |          |
|                     | 454                 | 16.9%                         | 14.8%                                       | +2.1%    |

Figure B.3

#### Variations for all group and subgroup percentages of the total teacher sample

| School type         | Number of responses | Percentage of sample (survey) | Percentage of statewide enrollment (target) | Variance |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|---|----------|
| <b>Central city</b> |                     |                               |   |          |
| Chicago             | 346                 | 25.1%                         | 20.3%                                       | +4.8%    |
| Other               | 158                 | 11.5%                         | 6.9%  | +4.6%    |
| All central city    | 504                 | 36.5%                         | 27.2%                                       | +9.3%    |
| <b>Suburban</b>     |                     |                               |   |          |
| Cook County         | 204                 | 14.8%                         | 19.0%                                       | -4.2%    |
| Collar              | 244                 | 17.7%                         | 19.3%                                       | -1.6%    |
| Other               | 130                 | 9.4%                          | 8.0%  | +1.4%    |
| All suburban        | 578                 | 41.9%                         | 46.4%                                       | -4.5%    |
| <b>Small city</b>   |                     |                               |   |          |
|                     | 148                 | 10.7%                         | 11.3%                                       | -0.6%    |
| <b>Rural</b>        |                     |                               |   |          |
|                     | 149                 | 10.8%                         | 14.8%                                       | -4.0%    |

### Factor analysis

Factor analysis is the generic term for a variety of procedures developed for analyzing the intercorrelations within a set of variables. For this project, it was used as an analytical tool for data management during the survey analysis. Many of

Figure B.4

#### Percentage of the high school population and of the unweighted survey sample made up of each grade level in each community type

|              | Central city        |                 | Suburban            |                 |
|--------------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------|
|              | % of the population | % of the sample | % of the population | % of the sample |
| 9th graders  | 30.3%               | 20.6%           | 23.3%               | 26.8%           |
| 10th graders | 28.8%               | 20.8%           | 25.9%               | 24.6%           |
| 11th graders | 22.3%               | 22.8%           | 25.4%               | 22.7%           |
| 12th graders | 18.6%               | 35.8%           | 25.4%               | 25.9%           |
|              | Small city          |                 | Rural               |                 |
|              | % of the population | % of the sample | % of the population | % of the sample |
| 9th graders  | 25.6%               | 20.8%           | 26.3%               | 31.5%           |
| 10th graders | 25.4%               | 15.0%           | 25.2%               | 28.9%           |
| 11th graders | 24.2%               | 30.6%           | 24.0%               | 23.7%           |
| 12th graders | 24.7%               | 33.5%           | 24.4%               | 15.9%           |



the questionnaire items on the student and teacher surveys were included on the assumption that, when taken together, they would describe a common dimension or construct about the respondents. Factor analysis was used to confirm whether those items did in fact measure a common dimension, by combining the findings of separate correlational analyses among the questions that were presumed to be related.

Factor analysis measures the percentage of variance among responses that can be explained by a particular construct or set of constructs. This makes it possible to determine which items go together and which do not, without having to calculate and compare coefficients measuring the actual correlation between each individual pair of survey items.

For example, students were asked 14 questions about their perceptions and attitudes toward the school system. A factor analysis on those 14 items revealed four factors that accounted for 52 percent of the variance among the students' responses to those items. Factor one consisted of five items: how much they liked the principal; whether the rules are fair; whether, regardless of who you are, punishment is consistent; whether minorities are treated fairly; and whether the principal is fair, consistent, and firm. The construct was labeled "attitudes toward the system." Factor two consisted of three items assessing how often students of the same race, different races, and different nationalities get along, and was labeled "discrimination by students." Factor three consisted of four items: how often parents and teachers get along; how often students and teachers get along; how often the rules are strictly enforced; and how often teachers keep order in the classroom. This construct was labeled "enforcement of rules." Factor four consisted of two items that students indicated their agreement with: if I study hard, I will get good grades; and if I plan things right, they will come out okay. This construct was labeled "locus of control" (students' sense of personal effectiveness in controlling various aspects of their lives).

Other constructs formulated from students' responses to individual survey items included willingness to obey rules, parental involvement in disputes, parental involvement in education, accessibility of drugs, presence of gangs, acquaintance with dropouts, seriousness of neighbor-

hood problems, theft victimization, robbery victimization, assault victimization, fear of victimization, frequency of avoidance behaviors, and frequency of self-protection behaviors.

Constructs formulated from teachers' responses to individual survey items were the same, except they were not asked questions about locus of control, willingness to obey rules, parental involvement in disputes, and frequency of self-protective behaviors. They did answer items, however, which formulated the constructs "satisfaction with teaching" and "discrimination by teachers."

### **Regression analysis**

Separate logistic regressions were employed to determine the predictors of each type of victimization (theft, robbery, and physical attack). The more commonly used ordinary least squares (OLS) regression is not appropriate for dichotomous dependent variables resulting from the factor analysis (for example, being a victim or not) because its assumptions of normality are violated. A logistic analysis was used because it makes fewer assumptions about the distribution of the variables and produces unbiased estimates for a dichotomous dependent variable. The interpretation of logistic regression is similar to OLS regression. A larger magnitude means a stronger effect; stronger effects, however, may occur because the predictor is more reliably measured than another measure.

The analysis was carried out in two stages. First, separately for the teacher and student sample, OLS step-wise regression equations were employed to determine the predictors of fear of crime, frequency of avoidance behaviors, and frequency of self-protection behaviors. The predictors include demographics, perceptions of the school environment, psychological variables, and prior victimization. The second stage of the analysis was to determine whether teachers and students differed in their fear of crime, frequency of avoidance behaviors, and frequency of self-protection behaviors. In this second step, only those predictors measured in both the student and teacher sample were used.

### **OTHER METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES**

Victimization surveys are not without certain risks of error. Some studies have found that respon-

dents fail to indicate on surveys victimizations that have occurred in the past, even though the crimes were reported to the police. Another source of error is "time telescoping"—when respondents report victimizations that are outside of the specified recall period. This problem was addressed in the Illinois High School Survey by shortening the recall period to an easy frame of reference, the current school year.

A number of factors may contribute to over-reporting on victimization surveys. Some respondents may, for a variety of reasons, fabricate crimes. A number of factors may produce under-reporting, as well. Minor crimes which had no lasting traumatic effect on the victim are easily forgotten. Victims may also be unaware that a crime has occurred, such as the student who thinks a stolen item was simply misplaced. Victimization by a friend or relative may not be viewed as a crime by a respondent. Finally, some victims will not report an incident on a survey out of embarrassment or fear that someone they know will discover what they reported.

The young age of the student respondents to the Illinois High School Survey may have exacerbated many of these factors. For example, since a large percentage of crime against young people is committed by other young people that they know or recognize, there is a greater element of fear of reprisal. There is also a tendency among youth to keep such information from the adult world, due perhaps to either distrust of adults or to peer pressure.

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#### **Notes**

1. National Institute of Education. *Violent Schools—Safe Schools: The Safe School Study Report to the Congress* vol. 1 (Washington, D.C., 1978).

2. *The Chicago Safe School Study: A Report to the General Superintendent of Schools* (Chicago: Center for Urban Education, 1981).

# INMATE SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The Survey of Educational Experiences and Attitudes of Inmates in the Illinois Department of Corrections was designed to explore various aspects of the educational history of inmates in the Illinois Department of Corrections, their attitudes toward education, and their motivation to improve their educational skills while incarcerated. The survey questionnaire was verbally administered to 693 inmates being admitted to IDOC during the last week of July and first week of August, 1990. In addition, educational variables were collected and analyzed from the 28,744 inmate records contained in the IDOC Offender Tracking System database.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

### Ethnic and gender distribution

Of the inmates participating in the survey, 651 (96 percent) were men and 42 (4 percent) were women. This breakdown corresponds to the gender distribution of the prison system. While the female sample was representative, it was not adequate to conduct a full analysis of female responses. To provide a sample large enough for comparative analysis with male responses, it would have been necessary to significantly oversample among females by extending the survey period to a minimum eight weeks. This condition could not be met by the Dwight Reception Center where the survey was administered to female inmates.

Blacks accounted for 61.3 percent (N=425) of the sample population, whites constituted 28.1 percent (N=195), and Hispanics made up 10 percent (N=69). Inmates who identified themselves as belonging to other ethnic categories represented less than 1 percent of the sample. This breakdown corresponds within 1 percent to the racial distributions in the IDOC population as a whole. In July 1990, blacks were 61 percent, whites 29 percent, and Hispanics 9 percent of all IDOC adult inmates.

### Age distribution

The average age of inmates participating in the

survey was 29 for the men and 31 for the women—identical to that of the IDOC population as a whole at that time. Participating inmates ranged in age from 17 to 68, while the age range for all inmates was 16 to 91. The sample included fewer older inmates than are found in the prison system because the inmates were interviewed for the survey when they were entering prison. Most elderly inmates in IDOC were committed when they were younger and are serving life terms or very lengthy sentences. It is rare for an elderly person to be sentenced or returned to prison, and it is not surprising that few were found in a two-week sample of prison admissions.

### First offenders and returning inmates

Approximately 47 percent of the male inmates and 17 percent of the female inmates sampled had been previously admitted to IDOC. The remaining 53 percent of the men and 83 percent of the women were newly convicted felons. Comparable data for the total IDOC population was not available. Many of the returning inmates had not committed a new felony offense. Some had committed technical violations of work release, parole, and electronic detention programs. Others were returning to IDOC from a court appearance on a writ. This can occur when an inmate is called to appear in court on a civil matter, such as a child custody or divorce case, or when an inmate is tried for a new offense committed while he or she was in prison.

### Geographic distribution

Of the 693 respondents, 79.9 percent (N=554) were interviewed by Authority staff at the Joliet Reception Center, which receives male inmates from Cook and other counties in northern Illinois. IDOC staff at the Graham Reception Center, which receives felons convicted in central Illinois, interviewed 65 inmates (9.4 percent). All female offenders are processed at the Dwight Reception Center, where IDOC staff obtained responses to 42 surveys (6 percent). Offenders convicted in southern Illinois counties are sent to the Menard



Reception Center, where IDOC staff obtained 32 responses (4.6 percent) to the sample.

The fact that the gender, ethnic, and age distributions of the sample so closely matched those of the IDOC population suggests that the geographic distribution was represented as well. In addition, IDOC reports that the percentage of admissions to each of the reception centers remains fairly steady over time.

### **Participation rates**

Approximately 3 percent of the inmates admitted to IDOC during the two-week period were withheld from the survey pool by correctional officials because their physical or mental health made it impossible for them to participate, or because high escape risk necessitated their transfer out of the reception centers before the interviews could take place. Approximately 10 percent of the inmates declined to participate in the voluntary survey. Refusal rates were lowest at Joliet, where Authority staff conducted the interviews, and were highest at Graham. The 693 inmates who consented to the study constituted 87.4 percent of inmates admitted to IDOC statewide during that time period.

### **SURVEY DESIGN**

Due to the known educational deficiencies of many offenders, it was necessary to plan for a verbally administered survey. A self-administered written survey would have been easier to conduct, but would have excluded many inmates with limited literacy skills. Field tests of the survey among inmate populations also made it clear that personal interviews enabled the researcher to establish a level of rapport with respondents that produced thoughtful and complete answers.

A random selection of inmates within IDOC was not feasible for this type of study. The logistics of attempting to personally interview hundreds of inmates in facilities widely scattered across the state would have placed an impossible burden on researchers and correctional facilities alike. The flow of inmates through the state prison system from admission to release was examined to determine the optimal point in this process for conducting the survey. It was quickly determined that interviews would have to be conducted at the time of admission to the department in the four central reception centers,

before the inmates were dispersed throughout the system.

Convicted felons who receive a state prison sentence are transported from county jails to one of four reception centers operated by IDOC. These reception centers are adjacent to or on the campus of correctional institutions, but are operated as separate facilities. At these centers inmates are processed through several phases of identification, intake, and security classification procedures. They receive physical, dental, and mental health examinations and undergo educational testing. Interviews by counselors and a review of criminal history records help to determine the level of security each inmate will require. Institutional assignments are made on the basis of all of these individual considerations, including security and programming needs and the availability of space in correctional facilities.

One disadvantage of conducting the survey as part of the reception process is that this is a stressful time for inmates. The interviews often occurred within hours of their arrival, while inmates were adjusting to their new surroundings, and many were anxiously awaiting the decision on their institutional assignments. The inmates' states of mind during this period may account for some of the refusals to participate in the survey. On the other hand, during this entry period, inmates are not yet acculturated to the prison dynamic in which cooperation with a project of this kind could be seen as currying favor with institutional administrators.

The decision to conduct the surveys at reception centers also entailed some serious logistical problems. Research conducted in penal settings must take into account the priorities of the host facility. Security considerations, the additional burden on correctional staff of moving inmates within a facility, and interruptions to institutional scheduling are primary concerns of correctional facilities. At the time of the study, IDOC was experiencing the most drastic increase in admissions in its history and one of the highest rates of prison population growth in the United States.<sup>1</sup> The pressure of the increasing inmate volume at the reception centers made it more difficult to devise a research strategy that would have a minimal impact on facilities and staff that were already experiencing a high level of stress.

The solution was to tailor the procedures for administering the survey to the conditions at each of the four sites. Since the survey could not be randomized, it was decided that a 100-percent sample would be drawn consisting of all inmates newly admitted or returned to the department during a specified sample period. A two-week period for the study was selected because it was expected to generate an adequate sample size and would reasonably limit the intrusion of the study on the admission process. It was assumed that the characteristics of inmates would not change significantly from week to week, so each facility was allowed to select a two-week period during late July or early August to conduct the survey. This allowed facilities to select a survey period that was most compatible with their own staffing schedules.

In the two facilities where the volume of weekly intake was relatively low (Graham and Menard), the surveys were administered by IDOC counseling staff, prior to the regular classification interview. At Dwight, IDOC personnel also administered the surveys, but Authority staff were on call to assist. At Joliet, with more than 300 admissions expected per week, it was necessary for Authority staff to conduct all of the interviews. In that facility, the survey was totally separate from the classification interview. Authority staff were trained in survey administration during field trials at Cook County Jail, and at Dwight, Menard, and Graham correctional centers. Based on this experience, written instructions for obtaining consent and administering the survey were developed for IDOC personnel and the Authority researchers who conducted the interviews. The design of the survey, results of the field trials, and other documentation, were submitted to IDOC, where the study was approved by the Committee on Human Research and by the director of the department.

### **Development of the survey instrument**

Many studies have looked at the educational achievement levels of inmates, based on test scores and information about the last grade completed.<sup>2</sup> The first part of the Authority's study was designed to find out from inmates themselves what kinds of things had happened to them in school and how those experiences had affected their general orientation toward education. The

purpose was to discover not only whether they had completed high school, but what had caused them to drop out and what kinds of intervention they felt might have been effective in helping them stay in school. Inmates were asked about earlier school failures, suspensions, and expulsions, as well as present reading problems. To generate some details about school experience and general attitudes toward education, inmates were also asked what they had liked best and least about school.

Previous research has indicated that the educational level of parents is a significant predictor of children's educational achievement. Studies have shown, for example, that more educated parents tend to spend more time with their children stimulating learning and producing more educated offspring.<sup>3</sup> Other studies have shown even more direct effects of parental education on children's achievement levels.<sup>4</sup> To examine this factor in an inmate population, respondents were asked whether father, mother, and other children raised in the family had graduated from high school.

The second half of the survey focused on correctional education. Inmates were asked about their specific plans to enroll in academic or vocational education programs within IDOC. Those who had no plans to enroll were asked to explain that decision. To test the strength of various kinds of motivational factors, those respondents with no educational plans were asked whether the chance to learn a job skill, good-time credit for program completion, tutoring by other inmates, or the opportunity to take a particular class would encourage them to enroll. Finally, inmates being readmitted to IDOC who had previously taken academic or vocational courses in the department were asked to evaluate how well they had liked these programs, and how useful they had been after release from prison.

The questionnaire was designed to gather both quantitative and qualitative information. The initial part of the survey collected such demographic information as age, sex, race, and last grade completed upon leaving school. Responses using a Likert-type scale were solicited for the evaluations of IDOC educational programs.<sup>5</sup> Most of the questions pertaining to educational experiences were open-ended, to ensure that the range of possible answers would fully capture inmate



experiences and not be limited to choices devised by researchers. This decision was made on the basis of the results of extensive field testing when it became obvious that researchers had not correctly anticipated the full range of possible inmate responses.

### **Field testing of the survey instrument**

The survey instrument was prepared with advice from consultants working in the field of offender education, including members of the Educational Advisory Panel. Early drafts of the instrument were field tested on inmates at the Graham, Menard, and Dwight reception centers. One purpose of the field trials was to demonstrate to correctional administrators that the survey interviews could be completed within an average time limit of no more than six minutes per inmate, a requirement necessary to avoid delaying the classification process of the inmates. Based on experience gained in these interviews, the survey was revised to improve response options, ease of administration, and clarity in the consent process. Field tests of revised surveys were held at Cook County Jail, using two seven-member groups of male inmates who had received one previous state prison sentence and were awaiting disposition on a second charge.

Each of the Cook County inmates individually received an explanation of the project and survey and was asked to sign a research consent form. Assurances were given that all information was confidential and that no names or inmate identification numbers would be used to identify respondents to the survey. It was also made clear that participation was purely voluntary, and would have no repercussions for the handling of a case or classification process. The consent procedures developed in these interviews were duplicated in the actual survey.

The survey was administered individually to each consenting inmate in the field trial. After all inmates had completed the survey, each group was brought together for a discussion of the survey and project as a whole. Inmates were asked about the consent procedure, as well as the questionnaire itself. Both groups agreed that they had understood the project before beginning the survey. Most participants agreed that they had believed assurances that their participation did not affect the disposition of their case, but

some expressed concern about the specific wording of the consent form. The form was revised to eliminate this problem. This was important feedback for researchers, since the validity of the survey could be challenged if inmates thought they stood to gain some advantage by fabricating responses.

### **SURVEY ANALYSIS**

All responses on approximately 150 completed surveys were studied to create response categories for the six open-ended questions contained in the questionnaire. In order to capture the maximum amount of detail, up to 20 categories of response types for each of these questions were initially created. These categories were later collapsed into four or five major headings. Up to three responses to the open-ended questions were recorded for each inmate. It was not assumed that these responses were given in order of their importance. In fact, interviewers observed that the first response was often more flippant or shallow, while the second and third responses tended to be more substantive or introspective. Responses on all surveys were coded and entered in SPSS-X systems files for analysis.

Very few questions on the survey produced interval level data. Only responses on the Likert-scaled questions and questions concerning respondent age and last grade completed contained interval level data. The response categories for open-ended questions, which contained the richest data on the survey, produced nominal level data and were subject only to a basic analysis of variables, expressed in percentages of responses. It was possible, however, to analyze the response patterns to open-ended questions, according to respondent variables such as race, educational level completed, history of early school retention, and first offender status. Chi square tests of significance were performed in the analysis of these variables.

The disadvantage of the limits imposed by largely qualitative data is balanced by two potential advantages. This type of survey is useful in exploratory studies to discover valid response types that can be scaled in subsequent studies. When subjects are allowed to give unstructured responses, researcher bias is reduced, and unanticipated responses can emerge that suggest fruitful new areas for continued research.



## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OTS SAMPLE

Educational data were collected from 28,744 inmate records on IDOC's Offender Tracking System as of June 1991, representing the entire IDOC population at that time. Of this population, 62 percent were black (N=17,858), 29 percent were white (N=8,220), and 9 percent were Hispanic (N=2,584). The average age of this population was 30.3 years, with an age range of 16 to 91.

Since the sample size was 100 percent of the total inmate population, a 100-percent confidence level was achieved.

Data retrieved for the study included basic demographic characteristics, last grade completed, I.Q. scores (Beta II, basic screening test), and scores from the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). Additional data fields relating to employment and educational assignment history within IDOC were incomplete for the majority of cases and were not used in the study.

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### Notes

1. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Prisoners in 1990* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991).
2. See Frank Garfunkel, "The Condition of Correctional Education," *The Journal of Correctional Education* 37 (4, 1986): 157-160; Dora B. Schriro, "What Makes Correctional Education Educational," *The Journal of Correctional Education* 37 (3, 1986): 110-112; Hans Toch, "Regenerating Prisoners Through Education," *Federal Probation* 51 (3, 1987): 61-66; and Thom Gehring, "Five Principals of Correctional Education," *The Journal of Correctional Education* 39 (4, 1988): 164-169.
3. C. Russell Hill and Frank Stafford, "Parental Care of Children: The Diary Estimates of Quantity, Predictability, and Variety," *The Journal of Human Resources* 15 (2, 1980): 219-39.
4. Linda Datcher-Loury, "Family Background and School Achievement Among Low Income Blacks," *The Journal of Human Resources* 24 (3, 1989): 528-44.
5. The Likert scale is a type of composite measure developed by Rensis Likert. This scale improves the levels of measurement through the use of standardized categories in survey questionnaires. Earl Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research*, 3rd ed (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1983), 536.

## Appendix D

# CHICAGO UNIFORM DISCIPLINE CODE

The following is reprinted verbatim from the Chicago Board of Education's *Uniform Discipline Code*, 1990.

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

The Board of Education, the governing body of the Chicago Public Schools, is responsible for establishing policies under which schools operate. To promote desirable student conduct and behavior, a Uniform Discipline Code has been adopted. Consistent with The School Code of Illinois, the Rules of the Board of Education of the City of Chicago, and negotiated agreements with employee groups, the Board has established the following goals in regard to a Uniform Discipline Code:

- Develop in concert with administrators, teachers, students, and citizens a systemwide Uniform Discipline Code.
- Codify the penalties that shall be applicable systemwide, yet retain administrative flexibility in application.
- Enforce in a uniform and equitable manner the new code of student conduct in each Chicago public school.
- Permit individual schools to adopt additional regulations governing actions not covered by the new code of conduct. However, such additional regulations may neither substitute for nor negate any of the provisions or the spirit or intent of the new conduct code and must be approved in writing by the General Superintendent of Schools.
- Disseminate copies of the Uniform Discipline Code to each principal, faculty member, and student so that they may become familiar with its contents.
- Analyze and review the Uniform Discipline Code on an annual basis.

### **PROCEDURAL GUIDE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Suspension of special education students *may not exceed* 10 days in any one school year.

### **Suspension—**

- may be imposed without prior determination as to whether the act of misconduct is related to the student's handicap when it is a Group 4 or 5 offense dealing with a situation that is potentially life threatening to the student and/or staff. Group 4 or 5 acts of misconduct often require police notification and/or arrest. This action requires a multidisciplinary staff conference to be convened with the new Individual Education Plan (IEP) available before the student's return to school to determine appropriate management techniques and to review the appropriateness of the placement.
- may not be imposed if the act of misconduct is related to the student's handicap when it is a Group 1, 2, or 3 offense dealing with situations that are not life threatening. If the current multidisciplinary conference (MDC) has addressed the issue of discipline, the recommendations should be implemented. If the current multidisciplinary conference does not address the issue of discipline, a multidisciplinary conference must be convened to determine appropriate management techniques and to consider alternate programs and/or services, when appropriate.
- requires that the student be suspended *directly* into the custody of the parent or guardian. This requirement *may not* be waived. If the parent refuses to come to the school to accept the child, the school has the right to call the local police department to request a youth officer. The youth officer must be notified, *in writing*, of the child's handicapping condition.
- *must* be accompanied by provision of appropriate interim services based on the student's IEP.

Expulsion of special education students requires action by the Board of Education.

### **Expulsion—**

- *must* be accompanied by provision of interim services, including the provision of any related services.

## **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Attendance**

- Be punctual and attend every class
- Present a written excuse when absent or tardy
- Provide proper identification when requested

### **Dress and Grooming**

- Observe the basic standards of cleanliness, modesty and good grooming
- Dress in a manner that is neither disruptive to the educational program nor poses a safety hazard

### **Citizenship**

- Do not take or damage property of other students, school personnel, or the Board of Education
- Return in the best condition possible any books, equipment, and other school materials
- Know and follow school rules and procedures
- Have pride in your school
- Be honest and courteous
- Refrain from drug abuse and alcohol use
- Respect the rights of fellow students, school personnel, and others, while setting a good example

### **Academic**

- Do your best to achieve excellence in personal conduct and academics
- Make every effort to graduate
- Contribute to a good learning climate
- Improve your performance upon notice of unsatisfactory progress.

### **Extracurricular Activities**

#### *Behave in an Exemplary Manner*

- Misconduct at school-sponsored events is subject to code sanctions

#### *Show Good Sportsmanship*

- Students or teams violating the ethics of competition or principles of good sportsmanship during a sporting event may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action that can include barring from future participation as spectators, or participants or both (details in the

constitution and bylaws of the Board of Athletics Control)

## **STUDENT RIGHTS**

### **A Free and Appropriate Public School Education**

- Graded on their academic performance
- Given explanation of basis for any marks received
- Allowed to make up class work after excused absence
- Given right to appeal decision regarding an absence

### **Equal Treatment in all Aspects of the Education Systems**

- Due process in disciplinary reassignment, in-school suspension, or suspension for 10 days or less
- Educational services, when married and/or pregnant, under the same conditions afforded other students
- Privacy in personal possessions (subject to school officials' rights to conduct searches when there are reasonable grounds)
- Liberty to distribute independent publications in school without substantial or material disruption to the educational process

### **Free and Appropriate Counseling Services**

- Information about guidance services and cocurricular activities
- Help for an alcohol or drug-related problem

## **PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

- In the best interest of the students, work with the school on disciplinary matters
- Visit the school regularly; obtain a visitor's pass in the principal's office
- Plan the time and place for homework assignments and provide necessary supervision
- Talk with your child about school activities and expected behavior
- Assume responsibility for your child's prompt and regular compliance with attendance rules and procedures

- Recognize the authority of the teacher in the classroom
- Instill in the student respect for the law, including the rights of others
- Be responsible for the periodic student health examinations required by law
- Work to represent students' interests through the PTA, Local School Council, other school organizations, and volunteer activities
- Attend all requested parent-teacher conferences

### **PARENT RIGHTS**

- Receive regular official reports of the student's academic progress
- Inspect, copy, and challenge according to the appropriate guidelines any and all information contained in the student's records (students 18 years old or older may also exercise these rights)
- Receive an explanation of the basis for any mark given by the teacher
- Receive a prompt report of the student's tardiness and absence from one or more classes
- Receive information concerning the complete program offered in the school
- Participate in local school organizations and volunteer activities
- Receive, as requested, a conference with the teacher and/or the principal

### **TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Use professional ethics in relationships with students, parents, community, and other school personnel
- Devotes school hours exclusively to official duties
- Inform parents about the academic progress and conduct of their children, using established citywide criteria
- Inform parents with a prompt report of students' tardiness and absence from one or more classes
- Demonstrate by attitude and actions genuine concern and respect for each student
- Plan and conduct a program of instruction that captures the interest and meets the needs of each student

- Be sensitive to the behavior of each student, and work with student assistance personnel
- Know and enforce school rules courteously, consistently, and fairly, dealing with misconduct quickly, firmly, and impartially
- Manage classroom routines to contribute to the program of instruction and the development of civic responsibility
- Attend class on a regular basis and be punctual
- Observe the basic standards of cleanliness, modesty, and good grooming

### **TEACHER RIGHTS**

- Be present at any disciplinary conference concerning serious classroom disruption
- Be free from any physical or verbal threats while carrying out their teaching and other duties
- Guarantees as cited in the Agreement between the Board of Education of the City of Chicago and the Chicago Teachers Union

### **LOCAL SCHOOL COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Advise the principal concerning the attendance and disciplinary policy for the school
- Monitor and evaluate the implementation of that policy

### **PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Use professional ethics in relationships with staff, students, parents, and the community
- Provide orientation for new teachers and continuing assistance to all school personnel to resolve problems as they arise
- Review, monitor, and evaluate the program of instruction and articulate the program to parents and the community-at-large on an ongoing basis
- Involve the teacher and auxiliary staff and, when appropriate, the staff of public and private agencies, with parents and students to identify problems and to seek resolutions
- Establish a discipline committee and work with the staff to develop and enforce school regulations, relating them to systemwide policies

- Seek the assistance of the district superintendent, parents, and community agencies as needed to provide for the welfare of the students
- Demonstrate by attitude and actions genuine concern and respect for all
- Confer with school personnel, parents, students, and, appropriate community agencies to formulate procedures and programs that will ensure socially acceptable student conduct

### **PRINCIPAL RIGHTS**

- Cited in The School Code of Illinois, Section 34-8.1, Board of Education Rule 6-12 and the uniform principal performance contract

### **DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Provide professional leadership for school personnel in the sub-district
- Monitor and assess the program of instruction implemented as per the school improvement plan
- Monitor the implementation of misconduct prevention and the safety/security program in each school
- Systematically monitor suspension, expulsion, and other disciplinary data by race, ethnicity, and sex of student, and prepare recommendations for improvement of school discipline

### **STUDENT MISCONDUCT**

This section describes a broad range of misconduct that is prohibited in school. Because the following charts do not include all types of misconduct, the student who commits an act of misconduct not listed on the charts shall be subjected to the discretionary authority of the classroom teacher and the principal or his/her designee.

All disciplinary actions for misconduct should include a conference between the teacher and/or principal and the student, followed by notification to parent(s) or guardian. The student, parent, or guardian who feels that the disciplinary action taken is unwarranted has the right to appeal to the principal. The next level of appeal is the district superintendent. This process is intended to be instructional and corrective, not punitive.

The policies and administrative procedures

apply to actions of students during school hours, before and after school, while on school property, while traveling on vehicles funded by the Board of Education, at all school-sponsored events, and when the actions affect the mission or operation of the Chicago Public Schools.

This Uniform Discipline Code shall be followed and enforced in the same spirit and manner throughout the school system. Alternative courses of action are listed, from the least severe to the most severe. Staff members shall consider all mitigating circumstances prior to disciplinary action and ensure due process for each student. Mitigating circumstances include, but are not limited to, the following factors:

- age, health, maturity, and academic placement of student
- willingness to make restitution
- prior conduct
- seriousness of offense
- attitude of student
- willingness to enroll in a student assistance program
- cooperation of parents

### **GROUP 1 ACTS OF MISCONDUCT**

These acts of misconduct include *inappropriate* student behaviors in the classroom or on the school grounds, such as the following:

- 1-1 Running and/or making excessive noise in the hall or building
- 1-2 Cheating and/or copying the work of another student
- 1-3 Leaving the classroom without permission
- 1-4 Being improperly dressed
- 1-5 Initiating or participating in any unacceptable physical contact
- 1-6 Displaying any behavior that is disruptive to the orderly process of classroom instruction
- 1-7 Loitering
- 1-8 Failing to attend class without a valid excuse
- 1-9 Persistent tardiness to school or class

### **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

#### **First Violation**

*Minimum*

Teacher-Student Conference

*Maximum*

Teacher-Student-Parent Conference

**Repeated or Flagrant Violation**

*Minimum*

Teacher-Student-Parent-Resource Person-Administrator Conference

*Maximum*

In-School Suspension

**GROUP 2 ACTS OF MISCONDUCT**

These acts of misconduct include those student behaviors that *disrupt* the orderly educational process in the school or on the school grounds, such as the following:

- 2-1 Posting or distributing unauthorized or other written materials on school grounds
- 2-2 Leaving the school grounds without permission
- 2-3 Interfering with school authorities and programs through walkouts or sit-ins
- 2-4 Exhibiting any hostile physical actions
- 2-5 Failing to abide by school rules and regulations
- 2-6 Using or publishing profane, obscene, indecent, immoral, libelous, or offensive language and/or gestures
- 2-7 Smoking
- 2-8 Defying (disobeying) the authority of school personnel
- 2-9 Failing to provide proper identification

**DISCIPLINARY ACTION\***

**First Violation**

*Minimum*

Teacher-Student Conference

*Maximum*

Teacher-Student-Parent-Resource Person-Administrator Conference

**Repeated or Flagrant Violation**

*Minimum*

In-School Suspension

*Maximum*

Suspension (one to five days) or Disciplinary Reassignment

**GROUP 3 ACTS OF MISCONDUCT**

These acts of misconduct include those student behaviors that *seriously disrupt* the orderly educational process in the classroom, in the school,

and/or on the school grounds, such as the following:

- 3-1 Disruptive behavior on the school bus
- 3-2 Gambling
- 3-3 Fighting—two people, no injuries
- 3-4 Profane, obscene, indecent, immoral, or seriously offensive language and gestures, propositions, or exhibitings
- 3-5 Persisting in serious acts of disobedience or misconduct
- 3-6 Any behavior that is seriously disruptive
- 3-7 Forgery

**DISCIPLINARY ACTION\***

**First Violation**

*Minimum*

Teacher-Student-Parent-Resource Person-Administrator Conference

*Maximum*

Suspension (one to five days)

**Repeated or Flagrant Violation**

*Minimum*

In-School Suspension

*Maximum*

Suspension (one to five days) or Disciplinary Reassignment

**GROUP 4 ACTS OF MISCONDUCT**

These acts of misconduct include those student behaviors that *very seriously disrupt* the orderly educational process in the classroom, in the school, and/or on the school ground. In most cases, these behaviors are also illegal, such as the following:

- 4-1 False activation of fire alarm
- 4-2 Extortion
- 4-3 Assault
- 4-4 Use of alcohol, illegal drugs, narcotics, controlled substance, or contraband
- 4-5 Vandalism/criminal damage to property
- 4-6 Battery
- 4-7 Fighting—more than two people and/or injury or injuries
- 4-8 Theft or possession of stolen property exceeding \$150 in value
- 4-9 Bomb threat



4-10 Possession, use, or delivery of fireworks

### **DISCIPLINARY ACTION\***

*Minimum*

Teacher-Student-Parent-Resource Person-Administrator Conference and/or Suspension

*Maximum*

Suspension (six to 10 days), Disciplinary Reassignment, and Police Notification

### **GROUP 5 ACTS OF MISCONDUCT**

These acts of misconduct include those illegal student behaviors that *most seriously disrupt* the orderly educational process in the classroom and the school and/or on the school grounds, such as the following:

- 5-1 Aggravated assault
- 5-2 Arson
- 5-3 Use, possession, and/or concealing of a weapon
- 5-4 Robbery
- 5-5 Burglary
- 5-6 Theft or possession of stolen property exceeding \$150 in value
- 5-7 Possession or delivery of alcohol, illegal drugs, narcotics, controlled substance, or contraband
- 5-8 Sex violations
- 5-9 Use of intimidation, coercion, or force
- 5-10 Aggravated battery
- 5-11 Disorderly conduct
- 5-12 Trespassing
- 5-13 Engaging in any other illegal behavior
- 5-14 Gang activity
- 5-15 Gross disobedience

### **DISCIPLINARY ACTION\***

*Minimum*

Suspension (six to 10 days) and/or Disciplinary Reassignment and/or Police Notification

*Maximum*

Both Arrest and Expulsion by Board Action

\*In addition to these penalties, provisions of the Illinois Criminal Code are applicable to illegal behavior. Principals are required to report all illegal activities to the police and serious disruptive or criminal actions to the Bureau of Safety and Security - 650-5990

## **GLOSSARY**

**Aggravated assault**—Any threat of bodily harm done with a deadly weapon or done by a person who conceals his/her identity, or any threat of bodily harm against school personnel on school grounds.

**Aggravated battery**—Any unlawful injury to another that either causes great harm, is done with a deadly weapon, or is done by a person who conceals his/her identity. Any intentional bodily harm against school personnel on school grounds.

**Arrest**—A complaint is filed with the police by the school. The principal or administrator must swear out a complaint if arrest is warranted.

**Arson**—The act of knowingly, by means of fire or explosive, damaging a building and/or the personal property of others.

**Assault**—Intentionally engaging in conduct (without physical contact) that places another in reasonable apprehension of bodily harm; includes threats and verbal assaults.

**Battery**—Intentionally causing bodily harm to another.

**Burglary**—Knowingly and without authority entering or remaining without authority within a building or vehicle with intent to commit therein a felony or theft.

**Corporal punishment**—Board of Education Rule 6-21 states, "No employee of the Board of Education may inflict corporal punishment of any kind upon persons attending the public schools of the City of Chicago."

**Delivery**—The act of selling or distributing fireworks, alcohol, illegal drugs, narcotics, controlled substances, or contraband to others.

**Disciplinary reassignment**—Disciplinary action can include transfer to another room or school or alternative school placement for a specified period of time.

**Due process**—The notification to the student and the parent concerning an alleged act(s) of misconduct, the right to appeal, the opportunity to answer the charge(s), and why the disciplinary action is necessary.

**Expulsion**—The removal of a student from school for 11 days or more, not to extend beyond the balance of the current school year. (This requires a formal due process hearing including written notification of charges.) The student may apply for readmission the next school year. The

student and parent are informed by registered or certified mail of a hearing for the purpose of expulsion through the due process procedure. This requires action by the Board of Education. This definition does not apply to exclusion of student from school for failure to comply with immunization requirements.

**Extortion**—The obtaining of money or information from another by coercion or intimidation.

**Fighting**—Physical conflict between two or more individuals. (It is not an act of misconduct to defend oneself as provided by the law.)

**Forgery**—The false and fraudulent making or altering of a document or the use of such a document.

**Gambling**—Participation in games of chance or skill for money and/or things of value.

**Indecent proposition**—An unsolicited sexual proposal.

**In-school suspension**—The student remains in school. All privileges are suspended; classes are not attended. The action is recorded in the student's folder. If resources are not available to initiate this provision, the school may exclude the student until such time as the parents return the student to school and participate in a formal conference with the principal or a designee. This exclusion shall not exceed three days.

**Intimidation**—Engaging in behavior that prevents or discourages another student from exercising his/her right to education; for example, preventing a student from attending classes or authorized school activities. Such prohibited behavior includes the use of threats, coercion, or force (to prevent another student from attending school or to recruit another student for membership in any organization or group not authorized by the principal). This act also includes the wearing of gang clothing or paraphernalia and the use of gang signs and signals.

**Leaving the school grounds without permission**—"School grounds" refers to the school and the school property adjacent to the building.

**Loitering**—Occupying an unauthorized place in the school or on school grounds.

**Police notification**—An incident report is filed with police department. The action is recorded in the student's folder. Police make the determination as to whether arrest is warranted.

The principal or administrator has the discretion whether to sign a complaint for offenses that do not warrant arrest.

**Possession**—The mere fact of physical control over real or personal property, such as clothing, lockers or bags.

**Robbery**—The taking of personal property in the possession of another by the use of force or by threatening the imminent use of force.

**Sex violations**—Offenses such as public indecency, deviate sexual contact, rape, indecent liberties with a child, and contributing to the sexual delinquency of a child.

**Smoking**—Holding a lighted cigarette, cigar, or pipe and/or drawing in and exhaling the smoke of legally or illegally sold tobacco in unauthorized areas.

**Student assistance program**—A comprehensive and integrated program to provide students with prevention, intervention, referral, and support services for amelioration of alcohol and drug-related problems. Conferences are intended to intervene into observed student behaviors that are suspected of being alcohol and other-drug related. The patterns of student behaviors that may lead to scheduling of a conference may or may not involve acts of misconduct.

**Suspension**—The involuntary removal of a student from class attendance or school attendance for 10 days or less. (Any such removal requires minimal due process, including parental notification.) Suspension may not be used serially for a single act of misconduct. A student may be considered as trespassing if present on school grounds during the period of suspension.

**Theft**—The obtaining or exerting of unauthorized control over the personal property of another.

**Vandalism**—The willful or malicious destruction or defacing of school property or the property of others.

It is the policy of the Board of Education of the City of Chicago not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, age, handicap unrelated to ability, or sex in its educational program or employment policies or practices.

Inquiries concerning the application of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the regulations promulgated thereunder concerning sex discrimination should be referred to the Title IX Coordinator, Board of Education of the City of Chicago, 1819 West Pershing Road, Chicago, Illinois 60609. Telephone: 890-8560

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Adopted—October 14, 1981

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# SOCIAL SERVICES FOR JUVENILES

During the 1980s, the Illinois Juvenile Court Act underwent several revisions intended to divert children and adolescents from law enforcement and the juvenile court and to steer them toward community-based services that provide crisis intervention, family counseling, and substance-abuse treatment. Children affected by different provisions of these changes include runaways and other children beyond parental control, truants, and children taken into police custody for minor delinquent offenses.

One change severely restricted the ability of the juvenile court to intervene with status offenders. Another change authorized juvenile police officers to refer to community-based services juveniles who formerly would have been sent to court on minor delinquency charges. Other changes diverted various categories of young people from the juvenile justice system at different points and under different circumstances.

## **MRAI: DEALING WITH THE PROBLEMS OF STATUS OFFENDERS**

One of the first changes to the Juvenile Court Act in 1981 replaced the old juvenile category of minor in need of supervision (MINS) with a new classification—minor requiring authoritative intervention (MRAI). Before 1981, the juvenile court could immediately intervene when a juvenile ran away or was beyond parental control. Now, however, the first time a juvenile is taken into custody for such an offense, the court must wait 21 days for social services to work before intervening. The second through fourth time the juvenile is taken into custody, the court must wait five days. Only after the fifth time the youth runs away or is reported to be beyond the control of parents can the court intervene immediately.<sup>1</sup>

This change to the Juvenile Court Act was accompanied by revisions to the mandate governing the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).<sup>2</sup> One goal of these changes was to shift youth programs that had been operated by a number of state agencies to DCFS, consolidating a range of services within

that agency and identifying DCFS as the state agency with primary responsibility for non-delinquent youth.<sup>3</sup> All of the changes to state law at the time emphasized efforts to preserve or reunify families and to serve youth in their own communities. The shift toward community services was to be accomplished by means of contracts with local social service providers throughout the state. DCFS supports the MRAI law with a statewide crisis intervention system, capable of responding within 60–90 minutes to any police call involving a juvenile who meets the MRAI criteria.

The reorganization has diverted many children experiencing a family crisis from the juvenile justice system. In state fiscal year 1990, 4,823 children received crisis intervention services statewide. Only 57 were later adjudicated as MRAI.<sup>4</sup> The changes have also been effective in reducing the total number of status offenders petitioned and adjudicated by the juvenile court. In 1982, before the MRAI change, more than 3,000 MINS petitions were filed statewide, and almost 1,000 of those were adjudicated. In 1988, only 172 MRAI petitions were filed, and only 86 of those juveniles were adjudicated as MRAI.<sup>5</sup>

Some juvenile court judges say, however, that for those young people who are eventually adjudicated as MRAI because social service interventions failed to work, the delay in bringing them to court is detrimental. A Cook County Juvenile Court judge said, "By the time we finally get the chance to intervene, the problems have become far more serious and usually are totally out of hand."<sup>6</sup> Testimony from agencies working with status offenders delivered at Chicago Bar Association hearings held as part of the association's intensive investigation of status offenders and other juveniles brought before the court, "overwhelmingly criticized the law and the current delivery system for its failure to serve the best interests of the youth who are in need of help."<sup>7</sup>

## **TRUANTS**

In 1983, a second round of revisions to the Juve-

nile Court Act shifted responsibility for truants from the juvenile court to the regional superintendent of schools, who is instructed to provide "prevention, diagnostic, intervention, and remedial services," using community resources.<sup>8</sup> Cook County, however, was specifically exempted from this provision of the act. In Cook County, truants were removed from the jurisdiction of the juvenile court, but responsibility for them was not transferred to another agency, leaving accountability for truants in Cook County in limbo. Outside Cook County, truants must receive a wide range of community-based intervention services and alternative educational options before they may be referred to the juvenile court as a truant in need of supervision (TINS).

In May 1989, the Special Committee to Study the Juvenile Justice System in Cook County recommended that the Chicago Bar Association propose that the Illinois General Assembly amend the Juvenile Court Act once again to return jurisdiction over truant minors in Cook County to the juvenile court.<sup>9</sup> Many probation officers, judges, and school administrators believe that in many educational service regions, including Cook County, truants are not receiving all of the intensive services mandated by the act. A juvenile police officer from Champaign County said, "Before the changes to the Juvenile Court Act, the judge in our county would court-order truant kids to attend school. Everybody was scared of the judge. Now the judge has no teeth. It's too bad, because we were really making some inroads on truancy."<sup>10</sup> (See also Chapter 6, Truancy and Dropout.)

### **DIVERTING YOUTH FROM THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM**

Delinquent youth may be diverted from the criminal justice system at several points between the time of initial police custody and the eventual disposition of a delinquency petition. Typically, fewer than half of the juveniles brought into police custody are referred to the courts. In Chicago in 1989, for example, only 40 percent of the juvenile cases handled by the police were forwarded to the courts for further action. The remainder received station adjustments or were dismissed after investigation.<sup>11</sup>

When a youth is referred to the court, probation and court services personnel and assistant

state's attorneys may also decide to informally dispose of the delinquency case without bringing the youth before the judge. These court officials often form an intake screening unit that studies background information, meets with the youth and the family, and writes a nonjudicial adjustment plan that may include informal supervision or referral to a social service agency or treatment program. Juvenile judges may divert youngsters from youth correctional facilities by formulating dispositions that call for community-based interventions. The Unified Delinquency Intervention Service offers a final community-based alternative to some seriously delinquent youth who are about to be placed in IDOC custody. Juveniles in this DCFS program must voluntarily participate in a recommended treatment program or other placement in lieu of being sent to a youth correctional facility.

### **ARE SOCIAL SERVICES MEETING JUVENILES' NEEDS?**

To be a viable alternative to immediate law enforcement and court intervention, the social services that provide alternatives for truants, status offenders, and delinquent youth must be available to serve their needs promptly. To assess the statewide availability of social services for juveniles, Authority researchers conducted an informal telephone poll of court services personnel in 13 counties representing 10 of the 22 judicial circuits.<sup>12</sup> Chief juvenile probation officers in each district were asked about the average waiting times for various kinds of services, such as mental health or drug and alcohol treatment services. They were also asked to identify any particular service delivery problems in their jurisdictions.

Waiting periods for program placement varied widely, depending on the geographic region and the type of service involved. No waiting was reported only for outpatient substance abuse treatment in Champaign County in the 6th Circuit. The shortest wait in the 12 other counties was the typical two-week wait for all types of services reported in Peoria County in the 10th Circuit.

The longest waits for all types of programs were reported in several collar counties, including Lake County in the 19th and Will County in the 12th judicial circuits and in DeKalb, Kane, and Kendall counties, which make up the 16th Circuit. In the 16th Circuit, four- to six-month delays in

drug and alcohol treatment and mental health placements were reported, and youngsters could reportedly wait up to two years for a treatment bed in a residential facility. Probation officers in this area said these long delays made placement so difficult that they often sent youngsters out of state to receive needed services.<sup>13</sup>

Two rural counties (Brown and Schulyer in the 8th Circuit) reported that no social service agencies of any kind operated within a 60-80 mile radius of their courts. In the 9th Circuit, Knox County reported there was no money budgeted for specialized services, but mental health practitioners from local agencies sometimes treated youngsters in detention. Youth needing more intensive treatment services were sent to the Department of Corrections. Effingham County, in the 4th Circuit, reported that social service and rehabilitation programs were not frequently used for juveniles and that the county lacked services for juveniles taken into custody for status offenses. For most cases, Effingham County relied on detention in dealing with delinquent youth. The county does not have its own juvenile detention center, and it contracts for detention services from neighboring Madison County. If that facility has no room juvenile detainees from Effingham are transported as far away as DuPage County (a four-hour ride by car) for overnight lock-up prior to court appearances.

The shortest wait for placement in an in-patient substance abuse program was two weeks, reported by Peoria County. The longest wait reported for this type of service was six months in the 16th Circuit. Effingham, Brown, and Schulyer counties had no substance abuse programs available and no funds for placement outside of their area. In Saline County, in the 1st Circuit, a new juvenile outreach initiative sponsored by TASC has increased the area's resources for dealing with troubled youth and has expedited admissions to other types of programs.

Ten of the 13 counties polled reported difficulties and delays in arranging for mental health services, especially in-patient services, in their districts. Complaints ranged from lack of availability and crowding of facilities to high refusal rates for youngsters who had been professionally assessed as needing in-patient services. Even when a county has formally contracted for services, there still is no guarantee they will be

delivered on demand. An officer from Will County reported that, in spite of a contractual agreement with a local facility to accept county youth, as many as 90 percent of the clients referred there were refused.<sup>14</sup>

In many areas of the state there are no programs available for youth with special treatment needs, such as juvenile sex offenders, arsonists, and the mentally retarded. Funding such services for all types of youth was a major stumbling block to many mental health admissions. Youngsters without private funding or insurance often face very lengthy waits for publicly funded treatment beds. An officer in Champaign County in the 6th Circuit said, "I've had cases of suicidal kids who had to wait more than two months for a hospital bed because there was no insurance to pay for it. Yet others kids, not nearly as disturbed, but with parents who had insurance, were admitted immediately."<sup>15</sup>

The availability of mental health services for children is a statewide problem, partly because the only state mental health facilities available to children are psychiatric hospitals that admit only children who are an imminent danger to themselves or others. There is no statewide public network of mental health services for children and adolescents who need less intensive care. According to a report prepared for the Office of the Governor in 1989, "The Illinois Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities' mandate to serve children is weak and reflects the vagueness of federal child mental health mandates."<sup>16</sup>

Community mental health centers and other mental health providers receiving state funding are supposed to allocate 10 percent of their resources to child and adolescent services. However, according to Joan Costello of the Chapin Hall Center for Children, a research facility associated with the University of Chicago, poor record keeping and monitoring limits the ability of the Illinois Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities to enforce this regulation. A statewide plan for mental health services to children and adolescents filed with the federal government in 1990 would require the department to provide outpatient services to children, but the plan is not yet implemented, and no funding has been appropriated.<sup>17</sup>

A 1989 survey by the Coalition for Child

Mental Health Services in Illinois of 474 agencies providing community-based mental health services to children and adolescents concluded that community-based services are inadequate in most Illinois communities and that gaps in services occur in all communities, with some types of services more adequately funded than others.<sup>18</sup>

The changes to the law that were intended to remove such troubled youngsters from the juvenile justice system appear to have had the opposite effect. The Chicago Bar Association study of the effects of changes in the Juvenile Court Act found, "Many cases need to have court involvement but cannot meet the MRAI requirements, so the minor is charged with delinquency or the parents with neglect, even though these latter charges are not appropriate."<sup>19</sup>

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### Notes

1. Ill.Rev.Stat., ch. 37, par. 803-33.
2. Ill.Rev.Stat., ch. 23, par. 5017.
3. Delinquents older than 13 are an optional service category for DCFS: the agency may initiate services but cannot be required to provide them. However, since 1982, DCFS has been responsible for the Unified Delinquency Intervention Service (UDIS), formerly an Illinois Department of Corrections program, which provides community-based programs to divert juveniles with two or more delinquency petitions or a very serious pending offense from the Juvenile Division of IDOC.
4. Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, *Division of Youth and Community Services, Overview of Administration and Programs* (Springfield, Ill., 1991).
5. Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, Division of Youth and Community Services, *Statewide Program Data* (Springfield, Ill., June 28, 1991).
6. Judge Julia Dempsey, Roundtable Discussion of Juvenile Court Services and Educational Placement (August 13, 1990).
7. *A Report to the President of the Chicago Bar Association* (Chicago: Special Committee to Study the Juvenile Justice System in Cook County, 1989): 18.
8. Ill.Rev.Stat., ch. 37, par. 803-3.
9. *Report to the President* (1989).
10. Ken Griffin, Champaign Police Department, Illinois Juvenile Officers' Association Roundtable Discussion on Juvenile Policing (June 29, 1990).
11. Statistics provided by the Chicago Police Department. For more information about station adjustments, see Chapter 4, *Law Enforcement in the Schools*.
12. Court services personnel deal with the same social service agencies as juvenile officers, but also are more likely than the police to know about the full range of treatment facilities in their districts. Juvenile officers are more likely to deal only with outpatient and short-term facilities, while court services personnel also make referrals to inpatient and residential treatment facilities. Authority staff polled court workers in 13 counties representing 10 circuits: Champaign in the 6th; DeKalb, Kane, and Kendall in the 16th; Effingham in the 4th; Will in the 12th; Brown and Schuyler in the 8th; Knox in the 9th; Sangamon in the 7th; Lake in the 19th; Peoria in the 10th; and Saline in the 1st.
13. James Mueller, Director of Court Services, 16th Judicial Circuit, interview: October 23, 1990.
14. Doug Wilson, Chief Juvenile Probation Officer, Will County, interview.
15. Joe Gordon, Chief Probation Officer, Champaign County.
16. Joan Costello, *Mental Health Planning for Emotionally Handicapped Children in Illinois* (Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children, University of Chicago, 1989): 4.
17. Joan Costello, interview: December 10, 1990.
18. Jerome Blakemore, Steve Cordogan, Donna Simonson, and Robert Skrocki, *Report of the Survey of Agencies Providing Community-Based Mental Health Services to Children and Adolescents* (Springfield, Ill.: Coalition for Child Mental Health Services in Illinois, August 1989).
19. *Report to the President* (1989): 19.



# Appendix F

## GLOSSARY

**ABE** (see *adult basic education program*)

**ACT** (see *American College Test*)

**addicted minor** Anyone under the age of 21 who is an addict or alcoholic as defined in the Illinois Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependency Act (Ill.Rev.Stat., ch. 111 1/2, par. 6351-1 et seq.).

**adjudicate** To decide, settle, or decree judicially.

**adult basic education (ABE) program** An adult skills development program, including basic literacy and math skills. ABE programs are used to prepare adults to enter a GED program. Also refers to educational program required by the Illinois Department of Corrections for those inmates who score below the sixth-grade level on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE).

**Adult Education Act of 1966** The largest source of federal adult education funds and a major support for adult basic education and literacy programs in Illinois. These funds are channeled through the Illinois State Board of Education to one of the three eligible types of service providers: public community colleges, educational service regions headed by regional or county superintendents of schools, and local school districts, including the Illinois Department of Correction's School District 428.

**American College Test (ACT)** A standardized test taken in the junior or senior year of high school as a qualifying test for college entrance. Aggregate test scores are sometime used as a means of measuring a school system's effectiveness.

**automatic transfer** The automatic movement of a suspected juvenile offender to adult court for prosecution. In Illinois, any juvenile offender charged with first-degree murder, aggravated criminal sexual assault, armed robbery with a firearm, or certain drug or weapons violations committed in or near a school, who was at least 15 years old at the time of the offense, must be tried as an adult.

**behavior disorder** An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, health, cultural, or linguistic factors. Behavior disorders are characterized by a persistent inability to develop or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and adults.

**behavior disorder/emotional disorder** Children with emotional disorders and mental illness. One of the four categories of children with disabilities.

**Chapter 1 programs** Special remedial classes federally funded for economically disadvantaged students. Eligible students come from families with incomes below the federal poverty line. To determine the number of Chapter 1 eligible students, school districts use lists of students qualified to participate in the free school lunch program.

**chronic/habitual truant** A student who has been absent without valid cause for 10 percent or more of the previous 180 regular attendance days.

**collar counties** Generally, the six counties in the immediate Chicago area: DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, Will, and suburban Cook.

**delinquent minor** A person under the age of 17, but at least 13, who has attempted or committed a delinquent act—an action for which an adult could be tried in criminal court.

**dependent minor** A person under the age of 18 whose parents or guardians are deceased, disabled, negligent or, through no fault of the parents or guardians, unable to provide basic care, including medical or other remedial care.

**detention** The temporary care of a minor alleged or adjudicated as a person who requires secure custody for his or her own protection or that of the community in a facility designed to physically restrict his or her movements pending disposition by the court or execution of an order of the court for placement or commitment.

**discretionary transfer** The optional movement of a suspected juvenile offender to adult court for prosecution. In Illinois, a state's attorney may ask a juvenile court judge to transfer to adult court any juvenile aged 13 or older who has been charged with an offense that would be a criminal act if committed by an adult. The discretionary transfer occurs only after a transfer hearing has been conducted. State law also provides for the automatic transfer of juveniles accused of certain very serious crimes (see *automatic transfer*).

**disposition** Generally, an action by a criminal or juvenile justice agency that signifies that a portion of the justice process is complete and jurisdiction is terminated or transferred to another agency.

**dropout rate** The difference between fall and spring enrollment in a given school year that is not attributable to death, illness, graduation, or transfer to another school district.

**Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act** Federal legislation that provides funding for school-based drug prevention programs.

**educational good-time credits** As a result of a 1991 amendment to the correctional code inmates who enroll in academic or vocational programs and meet specific educational goals are eligible for an earned reduction in the length of their sentence under this program. For every day in the program, the inmate receives one-quarter of a day off his or her incarceration time.

**educational handicap** A special education category that has been unique to Illinois, but will be abolished September 1, 1991. An educational maladjustment related to social or cultural circumstances. This category was used to obtain special education services for children whose social and cultural backgrounds have not equipped them to cope with an educational system based on mainstream American cultural values.

**Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975** Now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). (See *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*.)

**felony** A criminal offense that is punishable by a sentence in state prison of one year or more, or

by a sentence of death.

**functionally illiterate** A term used to describe an individual who has some basic literacy skills, but whose deficiencies hinder on-the-job performance and interfere in coping with other demands of daily living.

**GED (General Education Development)**

A widely accepted alternative to high school graduation that certifies students who pass a battery of tests covering subjects taught in secondary education. The equivalency certificates received by these students qualify them for college enrollment, training programs, jobs, and job advancement.

**IDEA** (see *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*)

**Illinois State Board of Education** Created in 1972 by the Illinois Constitution to serve as the state's main educational policy making and administrative body with responsibility for all public primary and secondary education in Illinois.

**illiteracy** The inability to read, at least, at a sixth-grade level.

**Individuals with Disabilities Education**

**Act (IDEA)** An educational law with funding provisions attached to assist school districts in paying mandated special education services for children with designated categories of disabilities including visual, hearing, developmental, orthopedic, multiple handicaps, speech/language impairment, emotional disturbance/behavior disorder, learning disability and health impairment. Formerly known as the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975.

**in-school suspension (ISS)** A typical punishment for truancy and other school infractions which consists of a supervised study hall.

**intake screening** The process administered jointly by probation and state's attorney's personnel in a county to initially determine what should be done in a juvenile case referred by the police. Intake screening personnel have four options: recommend that a delinquency petition be filed in juvenile court, make an informal adjustment, place the juvenile under supervision, or move to have the case transferred to adult court through a transfer hearing.

**jail** A confinement facility, usually operated by a county or municipality, that detains suspects awaiting trial, offenders sentenced to less than a year of incarceration, and offenders awaiting transfer to the state prison system.

**Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA)** This act provides funding for vocational training programs for adults in specially targeted populations, including offenders and ex-offenders.

**juvenile** Generally, anyone under the age of 17 at the time he or she is accused of a criminal offense.

**juvenile detention center** A public facility, with specially trained staff, that conforms to the county juvenile detention standards promulgated by the Illinois Department of Corrections for the placement of juveniles who are accused or have been adjudicated as delinquent minors.

**learning disabilities** Children with specific learning disabilities exhibit a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using spoken or written language, including listening, thinking, talking, reading, writing, spelling, or arithmetic. They include conditions which have been referred to as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, developmental aphasia, etc. They do not include learning problems which are due primarily to visual disabilities, emotional disturbance, or to environmental disadvantage.

**literacy** The attainment of at least a sixth-grade reading level.

**marginal literacy** A term often applied to persons some of whom may have attained educational credentials, such as a GED or high school diploma, but who have not sufficiently mastered the skills that equip them for entry-level employment.

**minor** Any person under the age of 21 who is subject to juvenile court proceedings because of a statutorily defined event or condition caused by or affecting the person.

**minor in need of supervision (MINS)** A category of juveniles that in 1983 was removed from the jurisdiction of the court by the changes made to the Illinois Juvenile Court Act. This category allowed the courts to intervene di-

rectly with runaways, truants, and youngsters judged beyond parental control.

**minor requiring authoritative intervention (MRAI)** A person under age 18 who has run away from home or who is so far beyond the control of parents or guardians that the young person's physical safety is in danger. An MRAI has refused to return home and cannot agree with parents or guardians on alternative, voluntary, residential placement.

**offender tracking system (OTS)** A computerized information management system developed for the Illinois Department of Corrections that contains comprehensive inmate data.

**offense** An act committed or omitted in violation of a law forbidding or commanding such an act.

**Orphanage Act** This act, which outlines the state's obligations for the care and education of orphans and other dependent minors, requires the State Board of Education to reimburse school districts for the costs of the educational component of the residential placements of children with disabilities who are dependent wards of the state. Such reimbursements are made to school districts that maintain special education classes on the site of orphanages and children's homes, or children from orphanages, children's homes, foster family homes, other state agencies, or state residential units for children who attend classes for children with disabilities.

**OTS** (see *offender tracking system*)

**parole** The system under which offenders who serve indeterminate sentences in Illinois are conditionally released from prison. Under indeterminate sentencing, offenders are given parole hearings every few years to determine their eligibility for release. Once released, these offenders are supervised in the community by the Illinois Department of Corrections parole officers. Parole for adults was replaced by mandatory supervised release for all new cases when determinate sentencing was implemented in Illinois in 1978, although persons on mandatory supervised release are still supervised by parole officers. Parole remains in effect for the release of juvenile delinquents.

**prison** A state confinement facility operated for

the incarceration and correction of adjudicated felons in Illinois.

**probation** A court disposition in which the offender is allowed to remain in the community under the supervision of a probation officer for a specific time period and under certain conditions, as set forth by law and/or by the court. If the person fails to meet the conditions, the court may revoke probation and order another sanction.

**proprietary institution** A private professional or trade school.

**push-outs** Youngsters who do not leave school by choice, but because they have been suspended, expelled, or forced out by other school policies.

**Safer Foundation** A private non-profit agency that provides services for ex-offenders.

**Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)** A standardized test taken in the junior or senior year of high school as a qualifying test for college entrance. Aggregate test scores are sometimes used as a means of measuring a school system's effectiveness.

**School District 428** The Illinois Department of Corrections' school district that runs educational programs for adults and juveniles in state-run institutions and programs.

**Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973** A civil rights law prohibiting discrimination against disabled persons. Section 504 extends protection from discrimination to disabled people in many areas of life. This law also expands the categories of eligibility for education-related services to students with disabling conditions not specifically included under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, such as AIDS, substance abuse problems, and attention deficit disorders not covered under learning disabilities.

**specific learning disability** A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language. Such a disorder can impair the ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations, but is unrelated to basic intelligence.

**Stanford Test for Academic Skills (TASK)** A standardized test that measures the aca-

ademic skill level of children and reports the score as a grade-level equivalent.

**station adjustment** An informal disposition in a juvenile case issued by law enforcement officers in lieu of proceeding with formal court action. Station adjustments can be simple (requiring a juvenile to cooperate more closely with parents or guardians) or detailed (assigning a juvenile to a structured rehabilitation or counseling program), and they are not legally binding.

**status offender** A juvenile whose behavior violates the law only because of his or her status as a juvenile. For example, running away is a status offense because the status of the perpetrator—that of the juvenile—is a necessary element of the offense, since the same behavior by an adult would not violate the law.

**street gang** While even among experts no consensus has been reached on the definition of a street gang, there is some agreement on certain elements of a basic definition. A gang is a group with a characteristic organizational structure that affords its members the benefits of status and affiliation, as well as economic gain. It is identified by certain symbols, signs, and dress, and often engages in criminal activities, especially violence, drug use, and drug trafficking. It should be noted that gangs may include both male and female members, ranging in age from adolescents to adults.

**TABE** (see *Test of Adult Basic Education*)

**taken into custody** The events leading to a juvenile either receiving a station adjustment, being referred to juvenile court, or being transferred to adult court. Technically, juveniles are not "arrested," they are taken into custody.

**TASK** (see *Stanford Test for Academic Skills*)

**Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)** A standardized test that measures the basic educational skills of adults and reports the score as a grade-level equivalent.

**TINS** (see *truant in need of supervision*)

**truant** A child under 16 who is subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent without valid cause during a full school day or some portion of it.

**truant in need of supervision (TINS)** A minor under age 21 residing outside of Cook County who is reported by a regional superintendent of schools (in a county of fewer than 2 million people) to be a chronic truant, for whom all other preventive and remedial school and community resources have failed or who refused such services, may be adjudged a truant in need of supervision.

**ward of the court** A minor who is so adjudged after a finding of requisite jurisdictional facts, and thus is subject to the dispositional powers of the court under the Juvenile Court Act, including minors requiring authoritative intervention, delinquent, dependent, abused, neglected, and addicted minors.

**work release** A correctional program in which incarcerated offenders are allowed to leave a correctional institution or facility during reasonable hours to work, attend school, obtain treatment, or pursue other goals identified by correctional officials. Work release is meant to assist the offender's rehabilitation without causing undue risk to public safety.

**youth center** Generally, any facility used for juvenile housing and programs. In this report, an Illinois Department of Corrections Juvenile Division facility for the care and custody of youths committed by the courts.

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## Trends and Issues

# CRIME IN ILLINOIS

Between 1988 and 1989, the number of reported index crimes in Illinois increased 1.5 percent, from 654,229 to a record high of 664,042. Total index crimes have increased more than 7 percent since 1984.

Statewide, six of the eight index crime offenses increased between 1988 and 1989, burglary and arson registering the only declines (Figure A.1). The

biggest increases in reported index offenses were in robbery, up 8.7 percent, and murder, up 7.3 percent. Arrests for index crimes climbed as well. Police in Illinois recorded 143,020 arrests in 1989, a 7.1-percent increase over the 133,581 recorded in 1988. Crime trends were very different, however, for different crimes, and for different areas of the state.

an assault or a robbery, increased 12 percent in 1989 to 742, and another 14 percent in 1990, to 849. However, the number of reported criminal sexual assaults in Chicago declined more than 4 percent between 1988 and 1989. Since 1986, when 3,627 offenses were reported, reported criminal sexual assaults have declined 8 percent in Chicago (Figure A.2).

Of the four property crime offenses in Chicago, burglary and arson decreased in 1989. Recorded larceny/theft offenses increased 1 percent to an all-time high of 130,000, and motor vehicle thefts rose 2 percent to more than 46,000.

### Collar counties

While the number of murders reported to police in the collar counties (DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, Will, and suburban Cook) declined between 1988 and 1989, reports of other violent index offenses increased. Murder in the collar counties declined 9 percent, from 130 to 118. Criminal sexual assaults in the collar counties rose more than 5 percent in 1989, and have increased nearly 50 percent since 1985 (see Figure A.2). Robbery offenses increased nearly 15 percent and aggravated assaults increased more than 10 percent in 1989, both reaching their highest levels in the collar counties since 1981.

Among property index crimes, burglaries in the collar counties declined nearly 5 per-

Figure A.1  
Index offenses in Illinois

|                         | 1988    | 1989    | Percent change |
|-------------------------|---------|---------|----------------|
| Murder                  | 989     | 1,061   | 7.2            |
| Criminal sexual assault | 6,086   | 6,149   | 1.0            |
| Robbery                 | 36,095  | 39,231  | 8.7            |
| Aggravated assault      | 51,978  | 54,311  | 4.5            |
| Burglary                | 129,974 | 125,431 | -3.5           |
| Theft                   | 353,826 | 361,708 | 2.2            |
| Motor vehicle theft     | 70,039  | 71,278  | 1.8            |
| Arson                   | 5,242   | 4,873   | -7.0           |

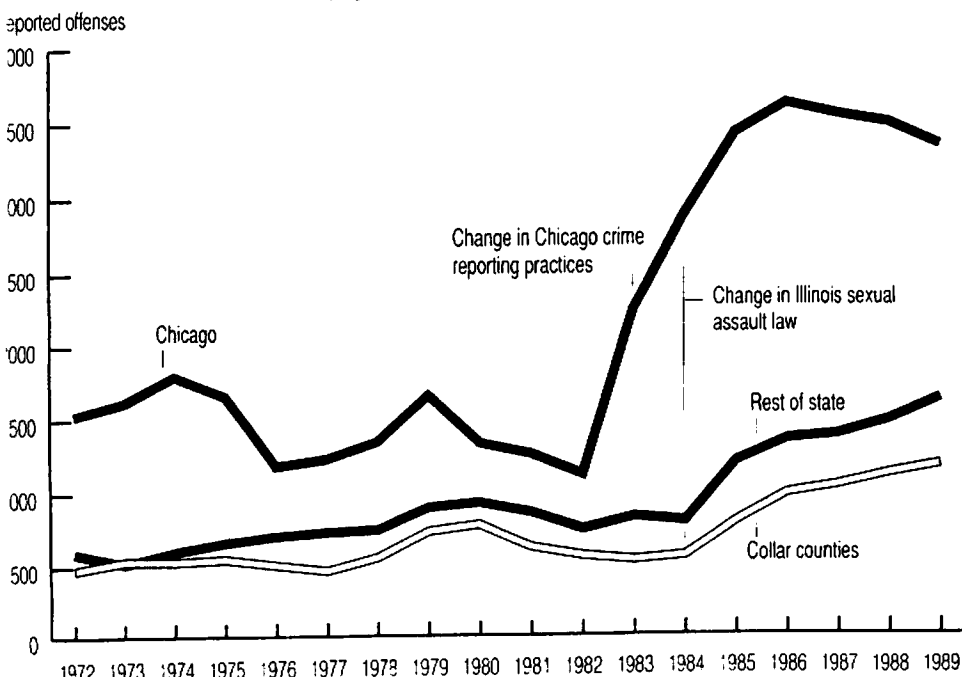
Source: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority and Illinois State Police

### OFFENSES

#### Chicago

Three of the four violent index crimes increased in Chicago during 1989. The number of reported aggravated assaults rose nearly 5 percent and robbery offenses rose 9 percent, continuing an upward trend that has persisted since 1984. Murders, many of which begin as

Figure A.2  
Criminal sexual assault offenses, by area of the state



Source: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority and Illinois State Police

cent between 1988 and 1989, and have dropped more than 33 percent since peaking in 1980 (Figure A.3). The 18,155 motor vehicle theft offenses in 1989 equaled the 1988 number, and arson offenses were also stable. On the other hand, larceny/theft offenses have, in recent years, risen faster in the collar counties (19 percent since 1984) than in Chicago (10 percent since 1984), surpassing the Chicago total.

### Rest of Illinois

In Illinois outside of Chicago and the collar counties, the number of index murder offenses was 201 during 1989 after having increased 29 percent between 1985 and 1988. Criminal sexual assaults and motor vehicle thefts also increased during the last several years, and other offenses either remained stable or declined slightly.

As in most years, the murder rate in 1989 was higher in the rest of Illinois than in the collar counties. There were nearly three index murders per 100,000 population in the collar counties versus nearly five in the rest of Illinois in 1989. However, the Chicago murder rate was much higher, with nearly 25 per 100,000 population.

Reported criminal sexual assaults in the rest of Illinois increased more than 10 percent to 1,629 in 1989—36 percent more than the offenses reported in 1985 (see Figure A.2). At 38 per 100,000 population, the rate of reported criminal sexual assaults was higher in the rest of Illinois than in the collar counties (27), though still lower than in Chicago (111).

Reported motor vehicle

thefts in the rest of Illinois increased nearly 4 percent between 1988 and 1989 to 6,927, the most since 1981. The number of larceny/theft offenses increased slightly, but was still below the 1987 level.

Reported burglaries and arson offenses both declined in the rest of Illinois between 1988 and 1989: burglaries by nearly 6 percent and arson offenses by 9 percent (Figure A.3). The 929 arson offenses reported was the lowest annual total ever recorded.

The burglary rate, however, was higher in the rest of Illinois than in the collar counties. There were 902 reported burglaries per 100,000 population in the rest of Illinois in 1989, compared to 807 in the collar counties and 1,703 in Chicago.

### ARRESTS

#### Chicago

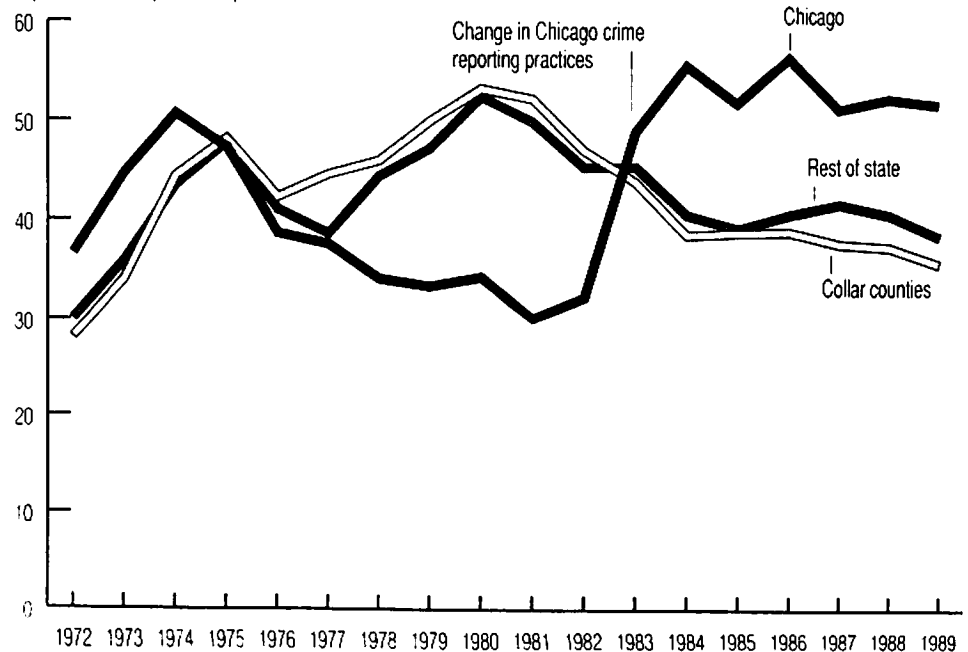
While the number of arrests for index murder in Chicago in-

creased during 1989, the increase was particularly high among young adults. The total number of adults arrested for murder in Chicago increased nearly 12 percent between 1988 and 1989, from 782 to 875; 26 percent of arrestees were aged 17 to 19. The arrest rate for 17- to 19-year-olds in Chicago rose 58 percent from 117 to 185 per 100,000 between 1988 and 1989, the highest arrest rate of any age group since 1972.

Although adult arrests for criminal sexual assault increased 15 percent in Chicago between 1988 and 1989, from 502 to 579, arrests remain well below the previous peak of 996 in 1980. Adult arrests for robbery increased as well, from 2,847 in 1988 to 3,426 in 1989, but this increase followed a decline that had persisted since the mid-1970s (Figure A.4).

Although the number of reported burglary offenses in Chicago declined in 1989, the

Figure A.3  
Burglary offenses, by area of the state  
Reported offenses (thousands)



Source: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority and Illinois State Police

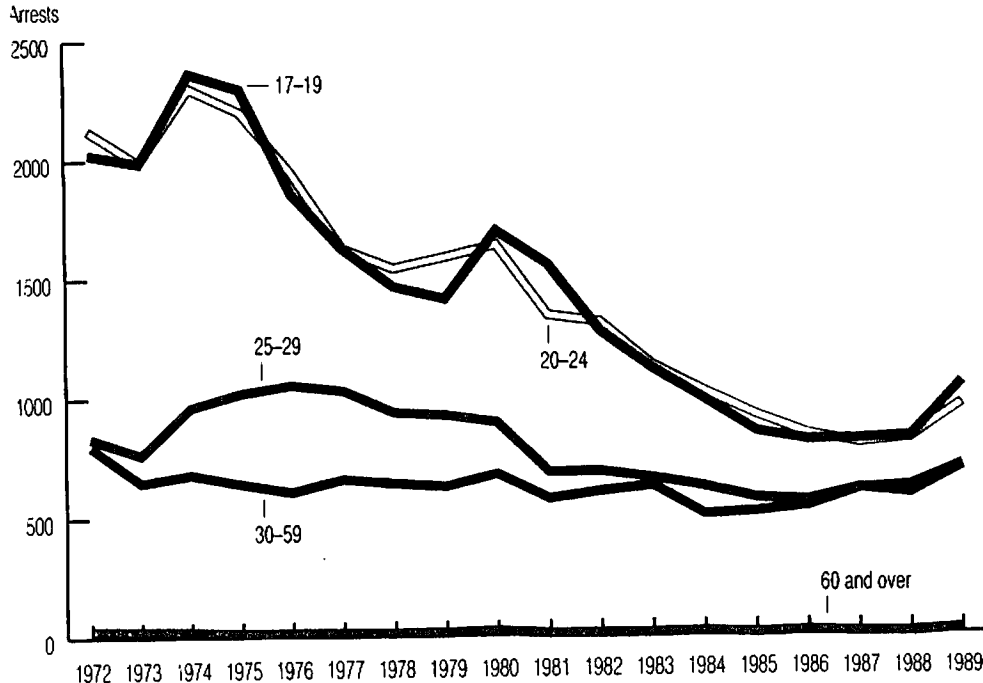
number of adults arrested for burglary increased more than 28 percent, to 5,873. Arrests of 30- to 59-year-olds were especially high, jumping more than 43 percent to 1,742.

The number of 30- to 59-year-olds arrested for larceny/

theft increased 22 percent, from 13,314 in 1988 to 16,243 in 1989. Although the number of reported larceny/thefts increased only 1 percent between 1988 and 1989, total adult larceny/theft arrests increased 13 percent, from 31,628 to 35,715.

Figure A.4

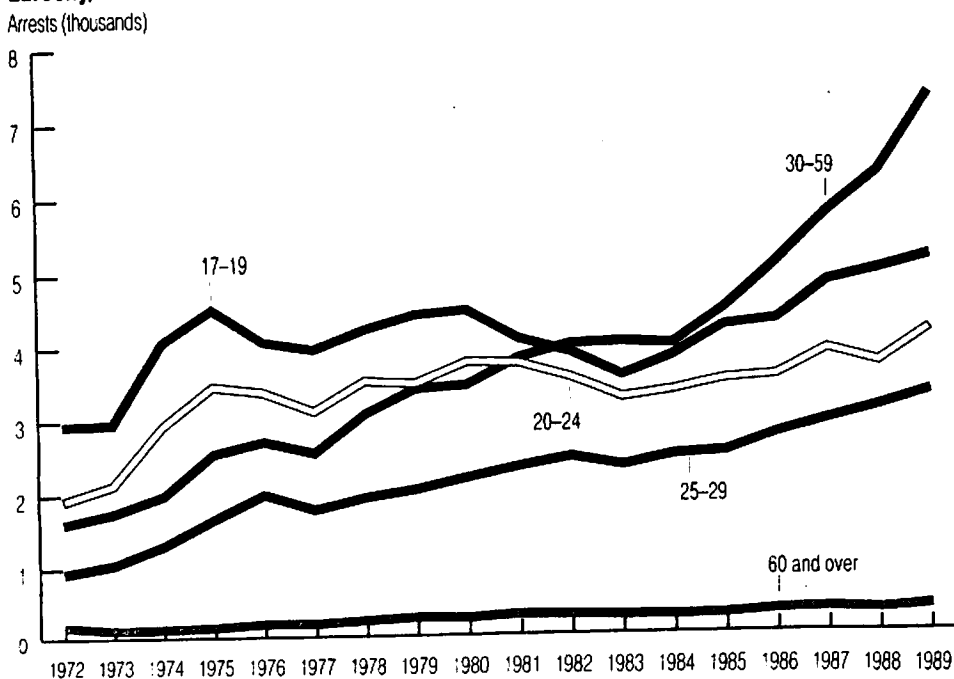
**Robbery arrests in Chicago, by age**



Source: Chicago Police Department

Figure A.5

**Larceny/theft arrests in the collar counties, by age**



Source: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority and Illinois State Police

Similarly, although the number of reported motor vehicle thefts in Chicago was relatively stable (an increase of 2 percent), the number of adults arrested for motor vehicle theft increased more than 21 percent to 7,013 in 1989. For every adult age group, the motor vehicle theft arrest rate in 1989 was the highest ever recorded in Chicago.

Adult arrests for arson, on the other hand, declined from 238 in 1988 to 152 in 1989, a trend reflected in the 8-percent drop in reported arson offenses.

**Collar counties**

In the collar counties, adult arrests for every index crime except criminal sexual assault increased in 1989, although criminal sexual assault offenses increased sharply. Arrests of 30- to 59-year-olds in particular have increased rapidly, resulting in a higher average age for people handled by the criminal justice system.

Adult arrests for robbery in the collar counties increased 28 percent to 913 in 1989, the highest level since 1980. Similarly, adult arrests for index aggravated assault increased 19 percent, to 2,493 in 1989. The increase in robbery arrests reflects a 15-percent increase in reported robbery offenses during 1989.

Adult arrests for larceny/theft in the collar counties rose 11 percent to 20,349 in 1989, with the greatest increases occurring in older adults. In fact, since 1984, arrests of 30- to 59-year-olds have increased more than 84 percent (Figure A.5).

Although reported burglaries have been declining in

the collar counties throughout the 1980s, the number of arrests for burglary has recently begun to increase. Arrests increased to 2,557 in 1989 for all adult age groups, but the sharpest increases were for those aged 25–29 (47 percent) and 30–59 (33 percent).

While reported motor vehicle theft offenses were stable in the collar counties, adult arrests rose 26 percent to a record high of 759 in 1989. The fastest increase in arrests for motor vehicle theft since 1985 was among 30- to 59-year-olds, an increase of more than 43 percent.

And although arson offenses declined, adult arrests rose 44 percent to 102 in 1989.

The number of reported murders in the collar counties declined from 130 in 1988 to 118 in 1989, but the number of adult arrests increased 14 percent, from 109 to 124.

In contrast, the number of reported criminal sexual assaults increased more than 5 percent in the collar counties in 1989, while the number of adult arrests for criminal sexual assault fell 11 percent from 358 in 1988 to 319 in 1989.

### Rest of Illinois

In the rest of Illinois, adult arrests for index murder declined from 147 in 1988 to 122 in 1989. However, both arrests and reported offenses for criminal sexual assault increased in 1989. Adult arrests rose 12 percent to 507, the most on record. The 1989 adult arrest rate per 100,000 was 16, compared to 10 in the collar counties and 26 in Chicago. Most of the increase in arrests for criminal sexual

assault involved adults aged 30–59 (Figure A.6).

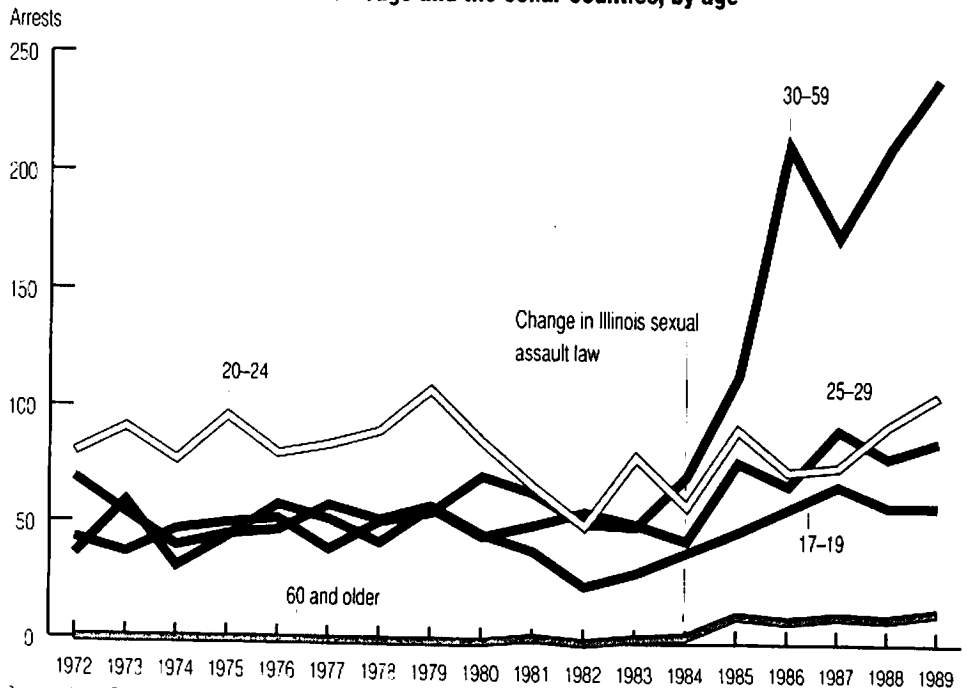
Eventhoughreportedrobbery and aggravated assault offenses were stable in the rest of Illinois in 1989, arrests—especially among older adults—increased. Total adult arrests for robbery increased 14 percent to 703, and adult arrests for aggravated assault increased 7 percent to 4,010. Arrests of people aged 25–29 for robbery have increased rapidly since 1985 (97 percent), while arrests of people aged 30–59 for aggravated assault increased 30 percent during the same period.

Although offenses have declined, adult arrests for burglary have been stable since 1987 in the rest of Illinois. Arrests for larceny/theft increased only 3 percent in 1989, with arrests of 30- to 59-year-olds increasing 6 percent, continuing a steady climb that began in the early 1970s.

Adult arrests for index motor vehicle theft have been increasing gradually since 1981, but are still well below the level of the late 1970s. Arrests for arson, which have been available for the rest of Illinois only since 1986, declined 8 percent, from 136 in 1988 to 125 in 1989.

Figure A.6

### Sexual assault arrests outside Chicago and the collar counties, by age



Source: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority and Illinois State Police

# Trends and Issues

## HOMICIDE

The number of murders in Illinois reached the highest level in eight years in 1989, with even more increases possible in the next few years. The 1,057 murders recorded statewide during 1989 was 7 percent higher than the 1988 total of 988 and 13.5 percent higher than the 1985 total of 931, the lowest level in the last two decades.<sup>1</sup>

Increases were particularly sharp in Chicago and in Illinois outside of Chicago and the collar counties (Figure B.1).<sup>2</sup> The Chicago Police Department recorded 849 index murders in 1990, at least 100 more than in each year since 1981. In the rest of Illinois outside the collar counties, first-degree murders reached 198 in both 1988 and 1989, the most since 1976. Only in the collar counties (DuPage,

Kane, Lake, McHenry, Will, and suburban Cook), which recorded 117 murders in 1989, has the number of murders been relatively low in recent years.

The recent surge in murders in much of Illinois is in stark contrast to the situation in the mid-1980s. Murder rates throughout Illinois were relatively low during this period, even as they were reaching record levels in Washington, D.C., New York City, Miami, and other large cities. In fact, Chicago's 1988 murder rate of 21.8 per 100,000 people was the city's lowest since 1972.

Interestingly, between 1985 and 1989, the risk of murder was higher in some communities outside Chicago than in the city. In East St. Louis, for example, the average annual

murder rate during this five-year period was 112 per 100,000 people, or more than four times Chicago's average rate of 25 (Figure B.2).<sup>3</sup> In Harvey, in south suburban Cook County, the average annual murder rate of 26 per 100,000 was also slightly higher than Chicago's.

By 1990, however, Chicago's murder rate was back up to 28 per 100,000, while preliminary data suggest the murder toll will be higher still in 1991. And in Illinois outside the collar counties, the murder rate is approaching 5 per 100,000 for the first time since the mid-1970s.

How can Illinois prevent a repeat of the murder waves of the mid-1970s and early 1980s?

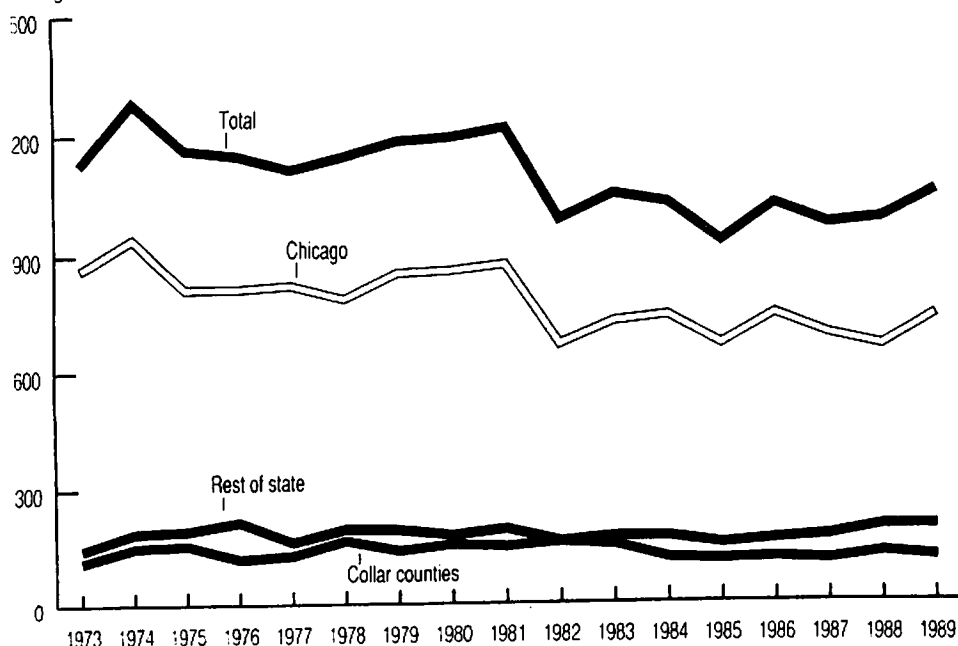
The common assumption is that homicide cannot be prevented. But a growing body of research—much of it based on a unique 25-year-long Chicago homicide dataset maintained by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority—suggests that many homicides *can* be prevented.

The key to prevention is to focus on three areas:

- Specific homicide syndromes that are the most dangerous and have the highest chance of successful prevention<sup>4</sup>
- Specific geographic areas in which the risk of being murdered is especially high
- Specific ethnic, gender, and age groups that are most at risk of victimization

Figure B.1  
Illinois murders, by area of the state

First-degree murders



Source: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority and Illinois State Police



In Chicago, Hispanic and black men suffer the highest murder rates among all ethnic groups, although the rates vary from year to year (Figure B.3). Future prevention strategy should target these two groups. In 1989, the homicide rate for both Hispanic and black men aged 15-19 was 126 per 100,000 population, compared to 30 per 100,000 for white men of the same age. Black men up to age 39 had even higher homicide rates (153 at 20-24; 130 at 35-39). Although murder rates are much lower for women than for men, black women are at a much higher risk than white or Hispanic women.

Between 1982 and 1989, 34 percent of Hispanic male homicide victims in Chicago were killed in street-gang related violence, compared to 10 percent among black males during the same period (Figure B.4). Nearly half of the murders of Hispanic males in Chicago in 1989 were street-gang related, and another third of the victims were killed in a fight, brawl, or argument with someone outside the immediate family. The confrontations were usually male-on-male, occurring on the street, concentrated in a few neighborhoods, and often involving alcohol but not drugs. More than two-thirds of Hispanic murder victims aged 15 to 19 were killed in street-gang confrontations.

Among black male victims in Chicago during 1989, few (6 percent) were killed in a street-gang related confrontation, but more than half (63 percent) were killed as a result of expressive violence outside the immediate family. In expressive violence, the primary goal is to hurt, kill, or

maim, not to acquire money or property. These murders are similar in many ways to His-

panic expressive homicides—they occur in tightly clustered areas of the city, for example.

Figure B.2

**First-degree murders and murder rates in Illinois, 1985-1989**

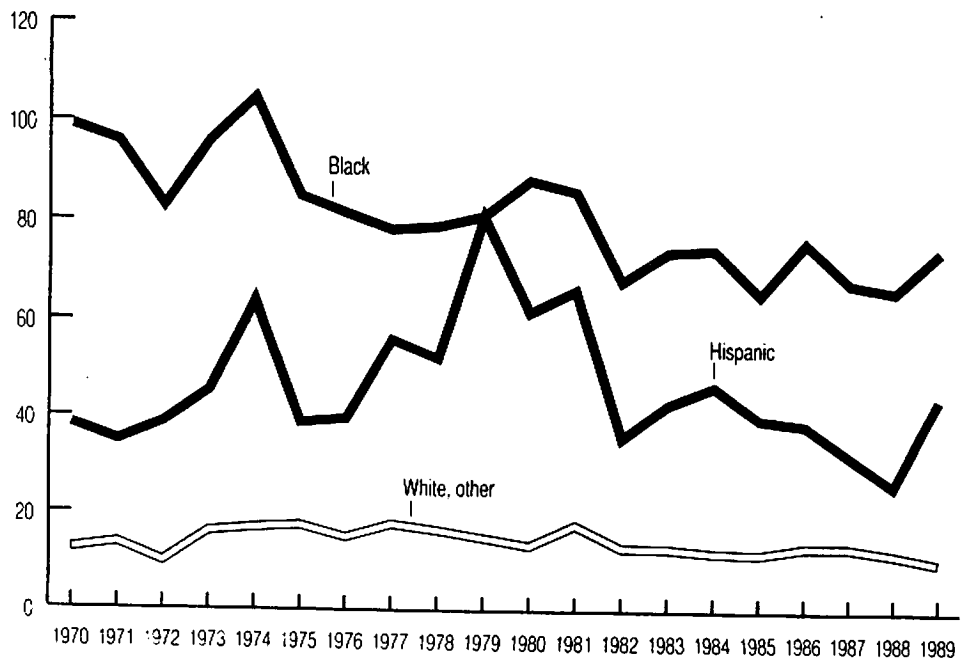
|                         | 1990 population  | 5-year avg. murders | 5-year avg. murder rate |                            | 1990 population   | 5-year avg. murders | 5-year avg. murder rate |
|-------------------------|------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| St. Clair County        | 262,852          | 61                  | 23.2                    | Sangamon County            | 178,386           | 10                  | 5.6                     |
| East St. Louis          | 40,944           | 46                  | 112.3                   | Springfield                | 105,227           | 8.4                 | 8.0                     |
| Rest of St. Clair       | 221,908          | 15                  | 6.8                     | Rest of Sangamon           | 73,159            | 1.6                 | 2.2                     |
| <b>Cook County</b>      | <b>5,105,067</b> | <b>768</b>          | <b>15.0</b>             | <b>Will County</b>         | <b>357,313</b>    | <b>19</b>           | <b>5.3</b>              |
| Chicago                 | 2,783,726        | 701                 | 25.2                    | Joliet                     | 76,836            | 11                  | 14.3                    |
| Harvey                  | 29,771           | 7.8                 | 26.2                    | Rest of Will               | 280,477           | 8                   | 2.9                     |
| Chicago Heights         | 33,072           | 5.6                 | 16.9                    | <b>Madison County</b>      | <b>249,238</b>    | <b>12</b>           | <b>4.8</b>              |
| Maywood                 | 27,139           | 4                   | 14.7                    | <b>Kane County</b>         | <b>317,471</b>    | <b>13</b>           | <b>4.1</b>              |
| Cicero                  | 67,436           | 6.6                 | 9.8                     | Elgin                      | 77,010            | 5.2                 | 6.8                     |
| Rest of Cook            | 2,163,923        | 43                  | 2.0                     | Aurora                     | 99,581            | 7                   | 7.0                     |
| <b>Kankakee County</b>  | <b>96,255</b>    | <b>7</b>            | <b>7.3</b>              | Rest of Kane               | 140,880           | 0.8                 | 0.6                     |
| Kankakee City           | 27,575           | 4                   | 14.5                    | <b>Lake County</b>         | <b>516,418</b>    | <b>12</b>           | <b>2.3</b>              |
| Rest of Kankakee        | 68,680           | 3                   | 4.4                     | Waukegan                   | 69,392            | 5                   | 7.2                     |
| <b>Peoria County</b>    | <b>182,827</b>   | <b>11</b>           | <b>6.0</b>              | Rest of Lake               | 447,026           | 7                   | 1.6                     |
| Peoria City             | 113,504          | 9                   | 7.9                     | <b>DuPage County</b>       | <b>781,666</b>    | <b>5</b>            | <b>0.6</b>              |
| Rest of Peoria          | 69,323           | 2                   | 2.9                     | <b>Total of above</b>      | <b>8,417,612</b>  | <b>940</b>          | <b>11.2</b>             |
| <b>Macon County</b>     | <b>117,206</b>   | <b>7</b>            | <b>6.0</b>              | <b>Total rest of state</b> | <b>3,012,990</b>  | <b>55.2</b>         | <b>1.8</b>              |
| Decatur                 | 83,885           | 6                   | 7.2                     | <b>Total Illinois</b>      | <b>11,430,602</b> | <b>995.2</b>        | <b>8.7</b>              |
| Rest of Macon           | 33,321           | 1                   | 3.0                     |                            |                   |                     |                         |
| <b>Winnebago County</b> | <b>252,913</b>   | <b>15</b>           | <b>5.9</b>              |                            |                   |                     |                         |
| Rockford                | 139,426          | 10                  | 7.2                     |                            |                   |                     |                         |
| Rest of Winnebago       | 113,487          | 5                   | 4.4                     |                            |                   |                     |                         |

Source: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority and Illinois State Police

Figure B.3

**Chicago murder victimization rates for men, by ethnicity**

Murders per 100,000



Source: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority and Chicago Police Department

But a higher percentage of black expressive murders (20 percent) are drug-related, and a majority (62 percent) of victims had a violent arrest record.

A second, often over-

looked, type of expressive violence—assault by a spouse, ex-spouse, or lover—accounted for 300 deaths among men, compared to 280 among women in Chicago between 1982 and

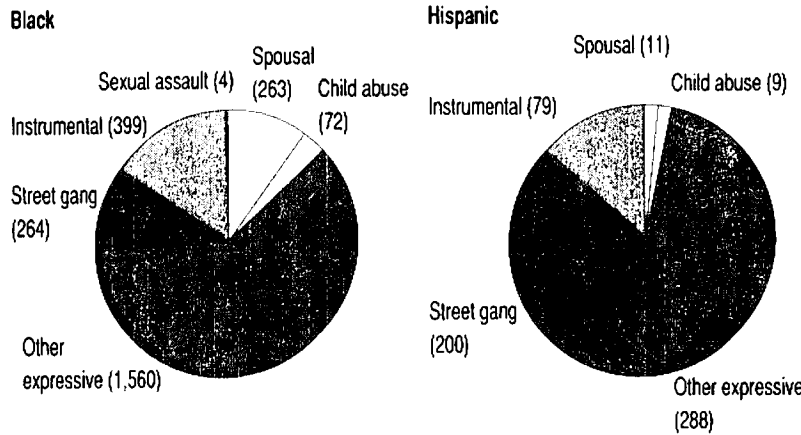
1989 (Figure B.5). In contrast, more than twice as many women (263) than men (118) were victims of spousal homicide outside Chicago during the same period (Figure B.6).

Although more men than women were victims of spousal homicide in Chicago between 1982 and 1989, spousal homicide accounted for the greatest percentage (34 percent) of female homicide victims in Chicago during this period. Outside Chicago, 43 percent of all female homicide victims were killed in spousal homicides.

Death rates from spousal violence between 1982 and 1989 were highest among black men in Chicago. Like all expressive violence, however, it is often difficult to discern who is the offender and who is the victim at the outset of the confrontation. In fact, extensive research in spousal violence shows that it tends to escalate over time and to spread from one victim to another in the family.

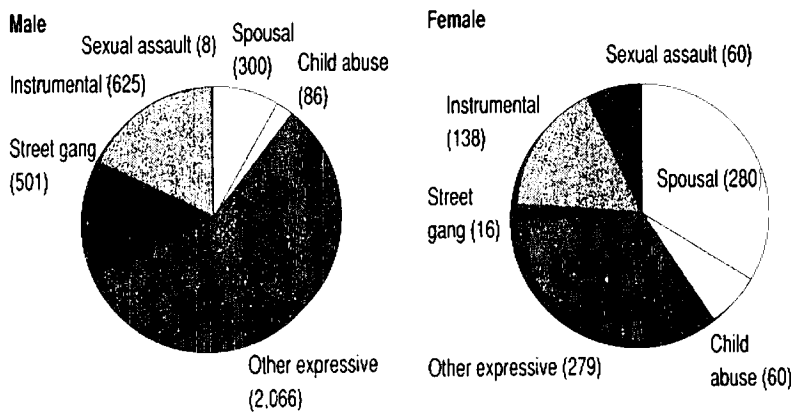
Another type of violence threatening women, as well as senior citizens, is instrumental homicide—homicides that begin as robbery or burglary, in which the primary goal was to gain money or property. More than one-quarter of the white female homicide victims in Chicago between 1982 and 1989 were killed in instrumental homicides, compared to 14 percent among black female victims and 12 percent among Hispanic female victims. The number of victims, and the risk of being a victim, of instrumental homicide increases with age. Elderly men and women are more at risk of instrumental ho-

Figure B.4  
**Homicide syndromes for male victims in Chicago 1982-1989**



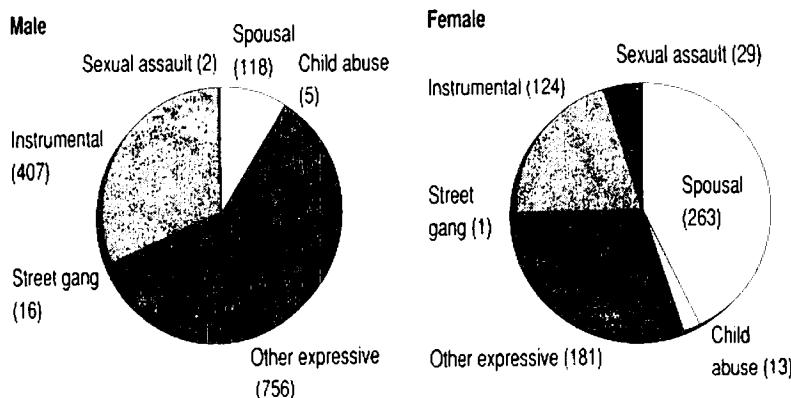
Source: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

Figure B.5  
**Homicide syndromes for male and female victims in Chicago, 1982-1989**



Source: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

Figure B.6  
**Homicide syndromes for victims outside Chicago, 1982-1989**



Source: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

micide, and a high proportion of elderly homicides are instrumental in nature.

A number of possible causes have been suggested for the recent increase in homicides. The availability of weapons may be important, especially in expressive confrontations, in which people tend to use whatever weapon happens to be available. If a firearm is readily at hand, the chance of a fatal outcome is much higher than if no weapon (or even only a club or a knife) is available. While the overall percentage of homicides committed with firearms in Chicago has not changed much in recent years, murders committed with automatic firearms increased nearly 50 percent between 1988 and 1989 (Figure B.7).

Similarly, drug use, alcohol use, and drug-related motives are often implicated in the increase in homicides. Drug-related motives include murders connected to drug trafficking, robbery murders to acquire drugs or the money to buy drugs, fights and arguments over drug use, and "other" drug-related murders (such as a case in which a child's death from abuse or neglect is connected to the parents' drug use).

The proportion of drug-related homicides in Chicago has increased in recent years, from less than 10 percent in 1987 to nearly 20 percent in 1989. However, preliminary analysis indicates that the proportion of drug-related homicides did not increase in 1990. The use of drugs by either the victim or the offender also increased slightly in 1988 and 1989, but is still much less fre-

quent than the use of alcohol.

Many people think drug-related homicides are also street-gang related homicides, and vice versa. However, only 2 percent to 3 percent of street-gang related homicides in Chicago between 1982 and 1989 involved a drug-related motive. Instrumental homicides and other expressive homicides are much more likely to involve a drug-related motive. And alcohol use is far more frequently involved in homicide than illegal drug use.

1. Murder data used in this section include only first-degree murders, and therefore are *not* equivalent to UCR index murder data, which also include second-degree murders. However, the difference is very small. In 1989, for example, there were 1,061 index murder offenses in Illinois, compared to 1,057 first-degree murders.

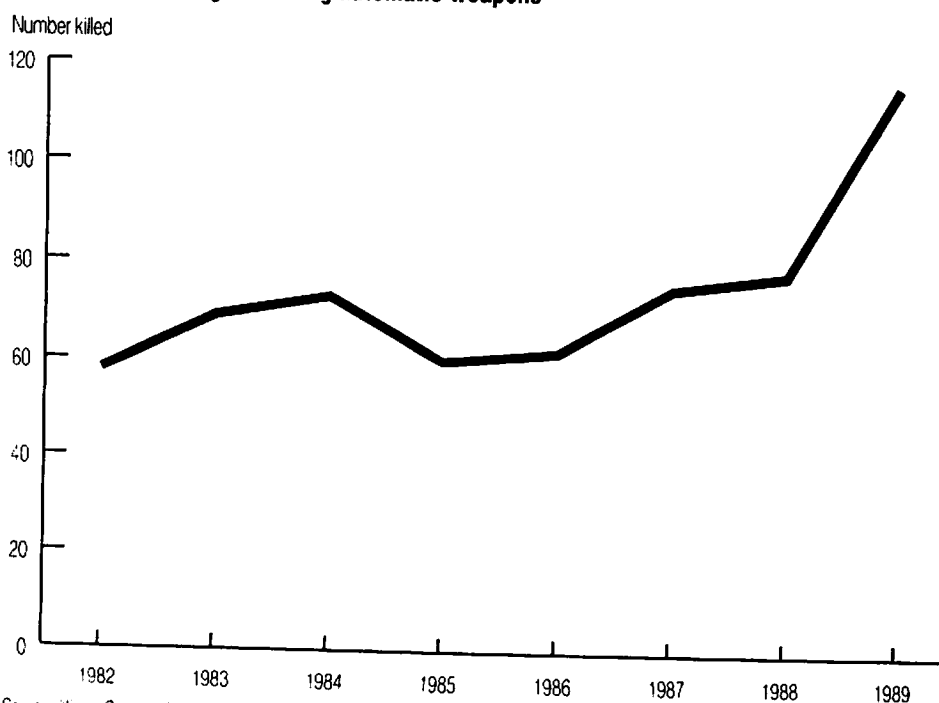
2. Because of the scale, the recent increase in homicides in Illinois outside Chicago and the collar counties is difficult to detect in Figure B.1. Between 1985 and 1989, however, murders there rose 29 percent from 153 to 198. By comparison, murders in Chicago rose by 11 percent during this period.

3. Average murders over a six-year

period were used here in order to minimize the bias that would result from choosing one particular year. The population figures are from preliminary 1990 Census data.

4. Contrary to popular belief, homicide is not one type of event but many. Almost all acts of lethal violence begin as another confrontation. While lethal violence is statistically rare, these non-fatal violent confrontations are not. Only some street fights end in murder; only some robberies end in murder. Spousal arguments, acts of child abuse, fights between acquaintances, robberies, acts of sexual violence, or street-gang confrontations are each different "homicide syndromes" when they escalate to lethal violence. Homicides that begin as various different confrontations have different characteristics and require different strategies for prevention.

Figure B.7  
**Homicides in Chicago involving automatic weapons**



Source: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority and Chicago Police Department

# PRISON CROWDING

Crowding continues to be the most urgent problem facing the Illinois prison system. During state fiscal year 1990 alone, Illinois' adult prison population soared 21 percent, the largest increase of any state in the nation during that period (Figure C.1). On June 30, 1991, Illinois had 28,941 inmates in a prison system designed to hold 19,975.

Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) projections show no end in sight for the problem either. By the end of the decade, IDOC estimates there will be approximately 55,000 inmates in Illinois prisons, nearly double the June 1991 population. Record-high admissions of the last few years will likely be surpassed during the next several years, reach-

ing nearly 38,000 by the year 2000. IDOC projects that releases from prison will also continue to climb from 12,068 in 1990 to 36,701 in 2000. Still, IDOC predicts that admissions to prison will exceed releases throughout the 1990s.

The gap between prison population and capacity has been growing since the end of fiscal year 1987.<sup>1</sup> This disparity grew to 5,292 by the end of fiscal 1989. By the end of fiscal 1990, the state's prison population exceeded the system's capacity by 44 percent.<sup>2</sup>

Although 1,077 prison beds were added between July 1, 1990, and June 30, 1991, Illinois' prison population (nearly 29,000 inmates) still exceeded the prison system's capacity by

nearly 9,000.

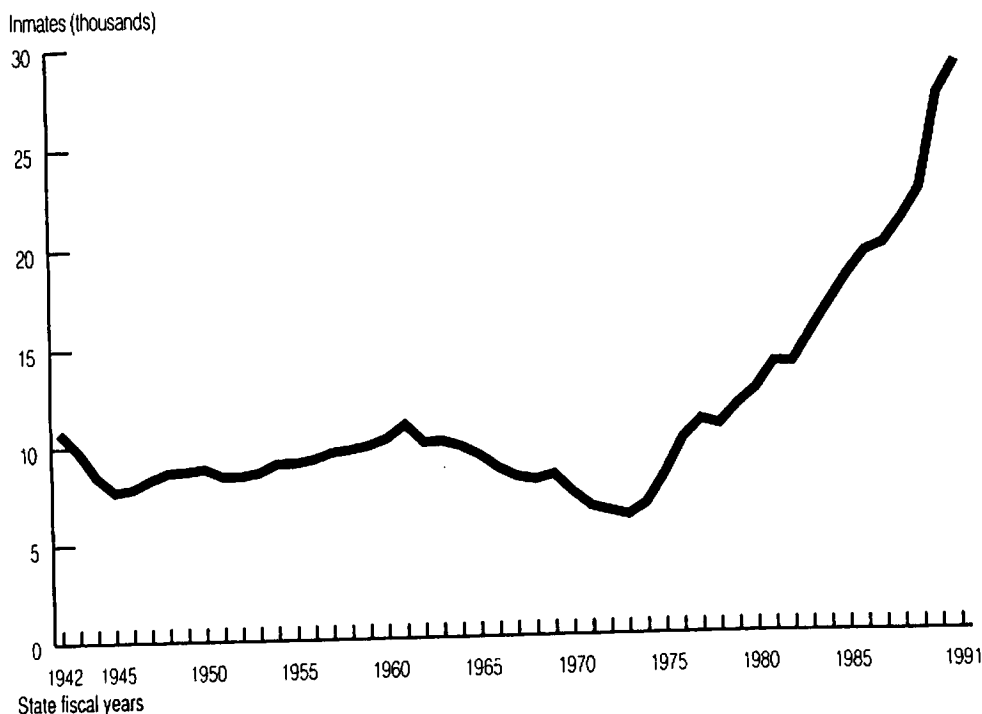
## CONSEQUENCES OF PRISON CROWDING

Prison crowding in Illinois creates not only spatial and fiscal dilemmas, but also hampers security. As the number of inmates entering the system increases, increased demands on prison staff make it harder to correctly classify inmates by security designation (maximum, medium, and minimum). Crowding also means that educational, medical, and psychiatric services must be stretched even further. Waiting lists have increased, and inmates incarcerated for a short time may never receive necessary services. At the end of March 1991, for example, 3,958 inmates were on waiting lists for various types of educational programs.

Prison crowding also causes increased tension and frustration among inmates, which, in turn, often leads to more violence. Between fiscal years 1985 and 1990, the prison population increased by 45 percent, while assaults on guards increased 109 percent.<sup>3</sup> Attacks on IDOC personnel increased from 809 incidents in fiscal year 1989 to 876 in fiscal 1990. Inmate-on-inmate violence increased from 537 incidents in fiscal 1989 to 603 in fiscal 1990.

Increases in the inmate population have not been matched by increases in prison staff, making it difficult for staff to adequately do their jobs. In

Figure C.1  
Illinois prison population



Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

1986, IDOC employed 5,526 security personnel to monitor 17,692 inmates—about one employee for every three prisoners. In February 1991, 6,789 security personnel were supervising 28,056 inmates, an employee-to-inmate ratio of 1 to 4.

## **SOLUTIONS TO CROWDING**

Most criminal justice officials concede that building new prisons is not the only answer to prison crowding. According to conservative estimates by IDOC, the state would need 26 more prisons, at a cost of \$1.4 billion, to keep pace with the rising inmate population during the next five years.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, alternatives to incarceration, such as fines and community service, will continue to be used for many first-time and non-violent offenders. For more serious offenders, intermediate sanctions—including home confinement, electronic monitoring, intensive probation, and “boot camps”—are expected to be an important component of the correctional system in the future.

Illinois' first “boot camp” (officially, the Impact Incarceration Program) opened in Dixon Springs in 1990. Currently, 23 states have some version of boot camps, an increase from 11 states in May 1989. Participants in the 120-day Illinois program must be first-time felony offenders between the ages of 18 and 29 who volunteer to participate and who are deemed suitable by judges and correctional officials. The military-style facility combines hard physical labor with educational programs, including substance abuse

classes.

IDOC estimates that the program should cut the state's prison population by the equivalent of 750 beds, or about the size of one medium-security prison. As of May 1991, 447 offenders had entered the program: 109 had graduated and 113 were returned to prison. Boot camp “graduates” served an average of 134 days in prison compared to what would have been an average prison stay of 603 without the program. As a result, the approximate cost reductions to the state have already reached \$1.7 million.

Also during fiscal year 1990, IDOC implemented house arrest through electronic monitoring as another means to ease prison crowding. At the end of May 1991, 291 offenders were in electronic detention, at much less expense than traditional imprisonment. Each inmate in the program must meet certain requirements—an acceptable home and job, a good disciplinary record, and no pattern of psychological problems, violent behavior, or escapes. Radio transmitter bracelets or, in some cases, a visual telephone system, are used to ensure that an inmate is present in his or her home during restricted hours.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to these IDOC programs, state lawmakers during 1990 passed several bills designed to ease prison crowding by increasing meritorious good time—the amount of time deducted from a prison inmate's court-ordered period of incarceration—and thereby releasing selected inmates sooner. One new law (PA 86-1090) doubles the amount of time that a prisoner's sentence can be

reduced from 90 days to 180 days. Another law (PA 86-1373) rewards inmates with additional good time for participating in educational programs and improving their reading scores. (See the Legislation section for more information on these and other new laws affecting corrections in Illinois.)

1. The Illinois Department of Corrections uses a measure of capacity known as “ideal capacity,” which takes into account the physical attributes of each facility (such as design and age), attributes of the inmate population (security designations), and the availability of support facilities and programs. (*Adult Correctional Center Capacity Survey II* (Springfield, Ill., 1989), 11).

2. Ideal capacity figures obtained from Sheila Urbas of IDOC on March 5, 1991.

3. Original numbers published in *Adult Correctional Center Capacity II* (1989), 9. Updated numbers provided by IDOC.

4. “Prison chief says state must revamp sentencing” *Chicago Tribune*, May 16, 1991.

5. Illinois Department of Corrections, *Human Services Plan, Fiscal Years 1989-1991* (Springfield, Ill., 1989), 11-13.

## Trends and Issues

# DRUG ABUSE

Recent data on drug use and availability offer some encouraging news on efforts to control illegal drugs both nationally and in Illinois. Surveys of households nationwide conducted every three years for the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) indicate that 44 percent fewer Americans were regular drug users in 1990 than in 1985. Based on the responses of 9,259 people surveyed in 1990, NIDA estimates that 12.9 million Americans had used some type of illegal drug within the previous 30 days, compared to 14.5 million in 1988 and 23 million in 1985.

Another NIDA survey, this one of more than 15,000 high school seniors across the country, offers further evidence of the overall decline in drug abuse. Of the seniors surveyed in 1990, 17.2 percent said they were regular drug users, compared to 19.7 percent in 1989 and 29.7 percent in 1985.

In Illinois, a 1989 Department of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (DASA) survey of more than 15,000 seventh through 12th graders across the state suggests that few Illinois students are currently involved with illicit drugs other than marijuana. About one in five 12th graders reported having used marijuana within the past month, but far fewer reported having used other drugs during that period—from 5.6 percent for stimulants to about 1 percent for several other types of drugs.

### DRUG AVAILABILITY

Still, high percentages of students surveyed by DASA reported that illicit substances would be easy to obtain. For example, one in five seventh through 12th graders reported that it would be easy to obtain heroin, and one in four said the same for crack (cocaine marketed in its freebase form). A 1990 Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority survey of nearly 2,700 public high school students in Illinois found that 56 percent said that it would be easy to obtain marijuana, 41 percent pharmaceutical pills, 26 percent crack, and 28 percent other types of cocaine. When teachers were asked about drug availability, their responses generally paralleled the students' in proportion. Teachers in central-city schools were significantly more likely than teachers in suburban, small-city, and rural schools to respond "don't know" when asked about the availability of certain drugs.

Statistics on the price and purity of illegal drugs provide additional information about the availability of drugs on the street. The higher the price and the lower the purity, the more likely it is that the drug is in short supply.

Price and purity data for cocaine in Illinois suggest that for the first time in nearly a decade, supplies may be beginning to dwindle. Wholesale cocaine prices have increased from an all-time low of \$18,000

per kilogram in 1988 to \$25,000–\$30,000 per kilogram by the end of 1990. And, based on cocaine analyzed by Illinois State Police crime labs, the average purity of cocaine seizures weighing 2.1–24.9 grams fell from 69 percent in August 1989 to 50 percent in December 1990. During the same time period, seizures weighing 25–35 grams decreased from an average purity of 76 percent to 60 percent.

Crack cocaine still has not shown as significant an impact in Illinois as it has in other parts of the country, but it is much more prevalent than in past years. Since the first evidence of crack use in Illinois in 1988, it has remained concentrated in Chicago and its southern suburbs, and in the greater East St. Louis area. Seizure statistics suggest that crack activity is increasing in Chicago, but decreasing in other areas. More than 4,000 grams of crack were seized statewide in 1990, compared to about 1,600 in 1989. During 1990, Cook and St. Clair counties accounted for about 95 percent of all crack seized statewide.

Ice, the crystalline form of methamphetamine which is smoked, has not established a presence in Illinois. When arrestees participating in the National Institute of Justice's Drug Use Forecasting (DUF) program in Chicago were asked about ice, 50 percent said they had heard of the drug, but nearly two-thirds of them said they had



heard about it from the media. None of the arrestees reported hearing about ice from a drug dealer.

Despite rising wholesale prices, heroin is still readily available (the Chicago area is considered the largest consumer of Mexican brown heroin in the nation), and its purity is rising to unprecedented levels. While the purity of samples obtained during 1988 ranged from 0.6 percent to 24.5 percent (with an average purity of 3.6 percent), 1989 samples ranged from 1.7 percent to 65.7 percent (with an average purity of 14.2 percent). This is a dramatic shift from the typically low-purity heroin (1 percent to 2 percent) found in Illinois in previous years.

Marijuana prices have soared during the past few years, with commercial grades now selling for about \$1,400 per pound and top-quality grades bringing as much as \$4,000 per pound. But the reduced availability of imported marijuana has contributed to an increase in domestic marijuana cultivation. Some estimates of Illinois' leading agricultural commodities rank marijuana just below soybeans and corn.

### DRUG-RELATED HEALTH PROBLEMS

There are recent signs that as drug use itself tapers off, drug-related health problems are beginning to decline as well. Among 38 Chicago-area emergency rooms that reported to NIDA's Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) during a five-year period, cocaine-related emergency room admissions surged from 130 in the second quarter of 1985 to a high of

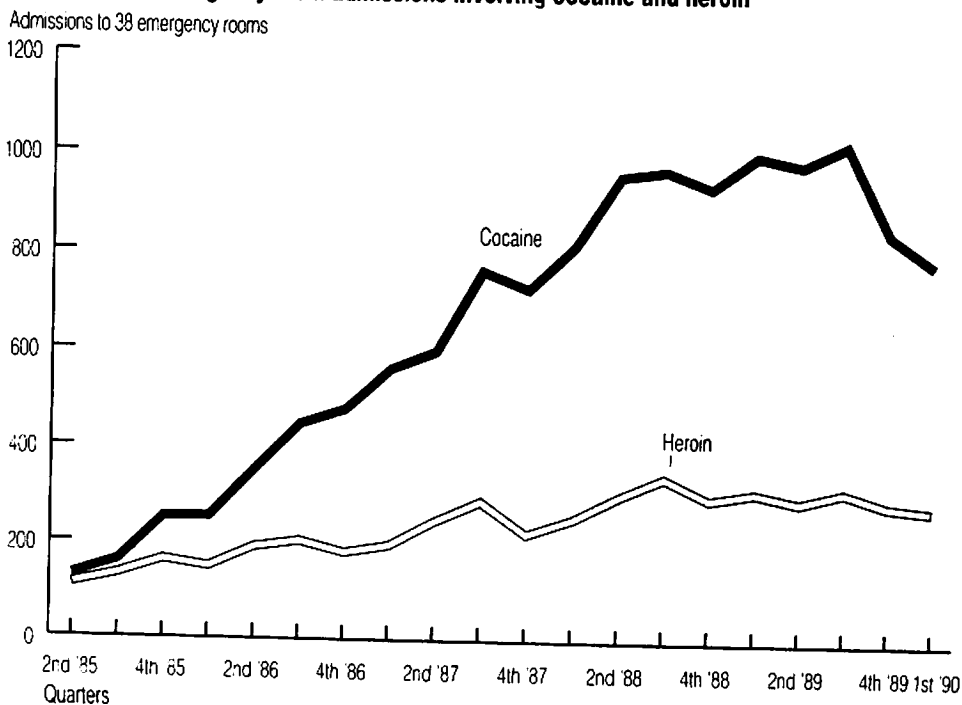
1,021 in the third quarter of 1989, but then fell 23.5 percent to 781 during the first quarter of 1990 (Figure D.1). Heroin-related emergency room episodes have also begun to decline. After climbing from 111 during the second quarter of 1985 to 317 during the third quarter of 1989, they fell 12 percent to 280 during the first quarter of 1990.

Deaths from illegal drugs are following a similar pattern. Data reported to DAWN by medical examiners in four counties in the Chicago area reveal that 31 cocaine-related deaths were reported during the first half of 1990, or about one-quarter of the total reported during the first half of 1989. Deaths attributed to heroin have declined as well: 29 heroin-related deaths were reported during the first six months of 1990, also about one-quarter of the number reported during the first half of 1989.

And, after several years of increases, the number of babies born with illegal drugs in their systems is also beginning to decline. The verified number of drug-exposed births in Illinois increased from 122 in state fiscal year 1985 to 2,009 in fiscal 1989, but then fell 15 percent in fiscal 1990 to 1,716. Although most cases of drug-exposed births in Illinois are reported from Chicago and Cook County, drug-exposed births have been reported in 72 of Illinois' 102 counties.

But even as it declines among the general population, drug abuse among criminal offenders remains extremely high. The DUF program, a national data system for tracking drug use trends among arrestees, reports that among 217 male arrestees tested in Chicago during February 1991, 77 percent tested positive for any drug, 53 percent tested positive for

Figure D.1  
**Chicago-area emergency room admissions involving cocaine and heroin**



Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse, Drug Abuse Warning Network

cocaine, and 16 percent tested positive for heroin and other opiates. Between October 1987 and February 1991, the percentage of arrestees in Chicago testing positive for any drug has ranged from 71 percent to 85 percent, 49 percent to 64 percent for cocaine, and 12 percent to 31 percent for heroin and other opiates.

In September 1990, Illinois expanded the DUF system to Jackson, Lake, Macon, Madison, Sangamon, St. Clair, Williamson, and Winnebago counties. Of the 1,076 arrestees tested in these counties between September 1990 and March 1991, 36 percent tested positive for any drug, 22 percent tested positive for cocaine, and only 2 percent tested positive for opiates.

## DRUG ARRESTS AND PROSECUTIONS

A record 51,662 people were

arrested for drug offenses (defined as violations of the Cannabis Control Act, Controlled Substances Act, and Hypodermic Syringes and Needles Act) in Illinois in 1989, 10 percent more than in 1988 and 67 percent more than in 1985 (Figure D.2). Between 1988 and 1989, the number of drug arrests increased 5 percent in Chicago (from 33,034 to 34,546), 6 percent in the collar counties of DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, Will, and suburban Cook (from 8,401 to 8,941), and 50 percent in the remainder of the state (from 5,466 to 8,175). During 1989, arrests for violations of the Controlled Substances Act accounted for a record 65 percent of all drug arrests in the state.

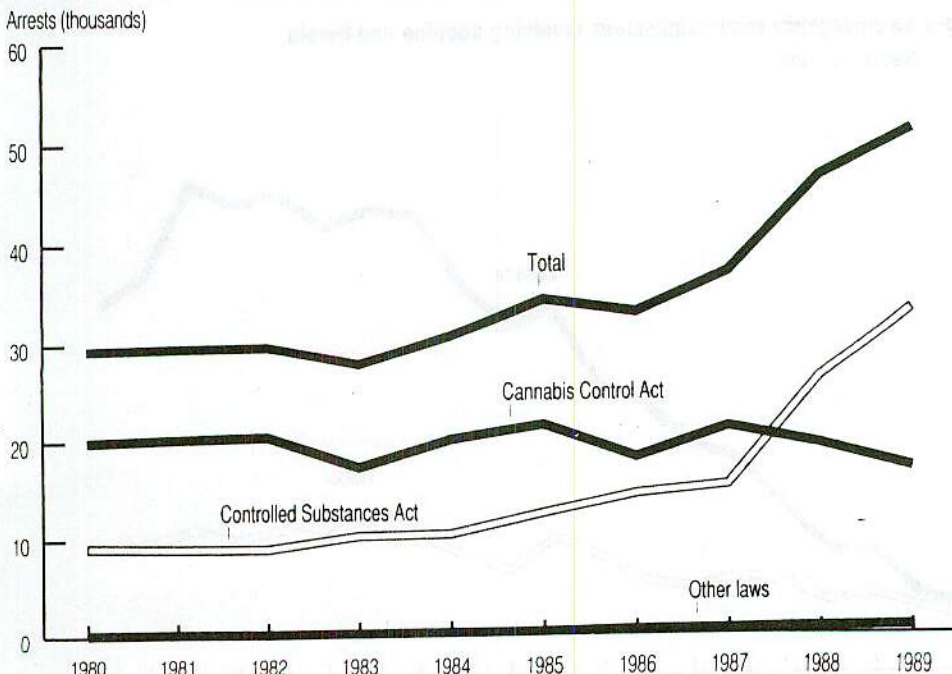
As the number of drug arrests increases, the number of drug prosecutions continues to increase as well. In the felony trial courts of Cook County, for

example, the number of defendants charged with drug offenses increased 46 percent between 1988 and 1989 (from 9,615 to about 14,000) and has tripled since 1984. In 1989, 44 percent of all defendants entering the felony trial courts in Cook County were charged with drug offenses, compared to 32 percent in 1988 and about 20 percent in 1984. In 45 counties outside of Cook that responded to a 1990 survey by the Authority, nearly one out of every three felony defendants prosecuted in 1989 was charged with a drug offense.

One of the newest, and potentially potent, tools now available to police and prosecutors is the ability to seize real property of drug offenders using Illinois law. Illinois' Drug Asset Forfeiture Procedures Act establishes uniform procedures for asset seizure and forfeiture in drug cases, allows for the forfeiture of real estate for the first time under state law, and creates a uniform formula for distributing the proceeds of asset forfeiture. The law took effect in September 1990. Even before then, however, assets in the Illinois State Police Forfeiture Fund were on the rise. Between fiscal years 1988 and 1990, they increased 84 percent, from \$3.7 million to \$6.9 million. Forfeiture fund expenditures, which reflect the disbursement of forfeited assets to Illinois agencies for drug control activities, more than doubled during this same period, from \$3.4 million in fiscal 1988 to \$6.9 million in fiscal 1990.

The increases in drug arrests and prosecutions are, in turn, affecting correctional pro-

Figure D.2  
Arrests for drug offenses in Illinois, by type of law



Source: Illinois Uniform Crime Reports, Metropolitan Enforcement Groups

grams in the state. An Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts study of 4,281 adult offenders placed on probation during January and September 1990 found that 22 percent were convicted of a drug offense. The study also found that 63 percent of the individuals convicted of a drug offense received probation sentences of 24 months or longer, compared with 39 percent of the total probation population. This suggests that over time the proportion of individuals on probation for drug offenses will increase.

Drug offenders continue to swell the ranks of Illinois' prison population as well (Figure D.3). In 1990, 4,094 drug offenders were admitted to the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC), or 65 percent more than the number admitted in 1989 and more than seven times the number admitted in 1983. In 1983, drug offenders made up fewer than 6 percent of all prison admissions by the courts in Illinois, but in 1990 they accounted for more than 27 percent.

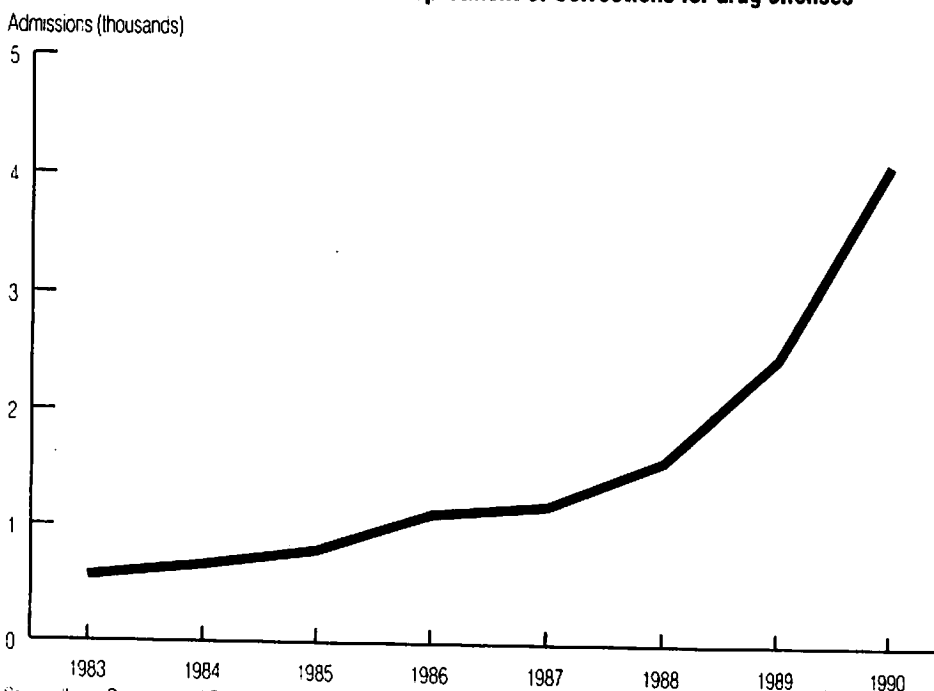
Increasing drug offender admissions, coupled with longer sentences and lengths of stay, are major reasons for the unprecedented growth of Illinois' prison population. Drug offenders made up 19 percent of the total prison population on June 30, 1990, compared to 9 percent on June 30, 1988, and less than 3 percent at the end of 1983.

Although treatment resources for criminal offenders remain in short supply in Illinois, more offenders are receiving treatment services and waiting lists are being shortened. Among substance-abusing of-

fenders handled by Treatment Alternatives for Special Clients (TASC), for example, screenings have increased 63 percent, and placements 57 percent, since fiscal year 1988. TASC has also been able to reduce its waiting list from 376 in February 1989 to 201 in October 1990, its lowest point since 1985.

Figure D.3

**Adult inmates admitted to the Illinois Department of Corrections for drug offenses**



Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

## Trends and Issues

# COOK COUNTY

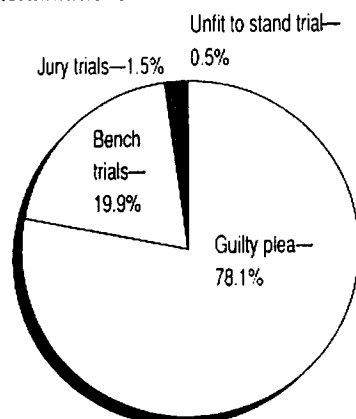
The already steep demands on the criminal justice system in Cook County continued to increase during 1989 and 1990. The situation also received greater scrutiny than ever before, with the release of several major studies on the problems of criminal justice in Cook County, particularly within corrections.

But the problems facing the Cook County Jail are just part of the overall picture. Criminal justice policy decisions, made largely in response to public demands for tougher enforcement of drug laws, have affected not only corrections, but every component of the county's criminal justice system. The certainty of apprehension, adjudication, and punishment is the underpinning of the criminal justice system. When those components are undermined, the system suffers.

**Law enforcement**—During 1989, two out of every three

Figure E.1

### Cook County felony case terminations in 1990



Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

drug arrests in Illinois were made in Chicago. Between 1988 and 1989, the number of drug arrests in Chicago increased 5 percent, from 33,034 to 34,546. In suburban Cook County, the number of drug arrests increased 14 percent during the same period (from 4,815 to 5,491).

**Courts**—The number of felony cases filed in the Cook County Circuit Court increased 21 percent between 1989 and 1990, from 32,545 to 39,447.<sup>1</sup> The number of felony drug cases alone increased nearly 15 percent during this period, from 14,867 to 17,068. Drug cases made up 46 percent of all cases that entered the county's felony trial courts in 1989, and 43 percent in 1990.

The Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts reported that 20 percent of the 38,704 felony cases terminated by Cook County courts in 1990 were tried before the bench (Figure E.1). Bench trials require more court time than guilty pleas because evidence and witnesses must be gathered, and defense and prosecution attorneys must have time to present their cases. Although jury trials take even more time, they made up fewer than 2 percent of the terminations.

**Corrections**—The strain on Cook County's criminal justice system is most obvious at the county jail. At the end of February 1991, the jail's population

stood at 7,296, 117 percent of its 6,217 bed capacity—which has not increased since January 1990.

During 1990, 21,044 offenders were booked on drug charges at the Cook County Jail. Bookings on drug charges accounted for 29.5 percent of all bookings at the jail during both 1989 and 1990.

In 1982, a U.S. District Court consent decree was issued requiring the jail to provide each inmate with a bed in a cell (in other words, inmates could not be required to sleep on mattresses on the floor). In 1983, the jail was found to have violated the consent decree, and was ordered to release on their own recognizance inmates with the lowest bond amounts when the jail population reached its court-ordered limit. Jail officials responded by issuing administrative mandatory furlough releases—called I-bonds—to certain misdemeanor offenders, and, as the jail population continued to climb, eventually to accused felons. In February 1989, a federal judge began fining the county \$1,000 per day, retroactive to mid-December 1988, for every day the inmate population exceeded the jail's capacity. By September 1989, the county had paid more than \$200,000 in fines. The fines were lifted in December 1989.

From January to August 1990, an average of 2,598 inmates were released on I-bonds each month, and a total of 94,771 were released from the



time the program began until August 1990 (Figure E.2).

The correctional crisis is not limited to the adult system. Crowding continues at the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center, where the average end-of-month population in 1990 exceeded by 20 the rated capacity of 432.<sup>2</sup> In January 1991, the center's capacity increased to 498. However, the population, at 501, continued to exceed capacity.

### CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

In the wake of federal investigations of corruption in Cook County courts, the Criminal Justice Project of Cook County was formed as part of an ongoing examination of the county's criminal justice system.

According to the project's 1989 report, *Crime and Criminal Justice in Cook County*, "the Cook County criminal justice system has made a series of unplanned and uncoordinated policy responses . . . responding to the public's concern/fear of crime by enacting dozens of new criminal statutes since 1986 that created new offenses and enhanced the penalties for existing crimes. Policy responses in the past few years have especially emphasized the problem of drug-related crime. Because of the crackdown on illegal drugs, virtually every component of the criminal justice system is experiencing rapidly expanding caseloads."

Jerold S. Solovy, chairman of the project, said, "One of our major findings is that criminal justice in Cook County is a non-system. No one is in charge of setting priorities and planning.

There is neither central direction, nor a shared purpose, among the agencies—such as the courts, police and corrections—that are involved in the criminal process."<sup>3</sup>

A 1989 report prepared by The American University's Adjudication Technical Assistance Project declared that the lack of comprehensive criminal justice system planning in Cook County hinders the achievement of cost-effective criminal justice spending and discourages coordinated efforts at system improvement.<sup>4</sup>

The project also reported that the adjudication process itself was the principal contributor to crowding at Cook County Jail. Overly long case processing times have resulted in long lengths of stay for pretrial detainees.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, the adjudication project found several other fac-

tors that have combined to worsen the situation in Cook County.<sup>6</sup>

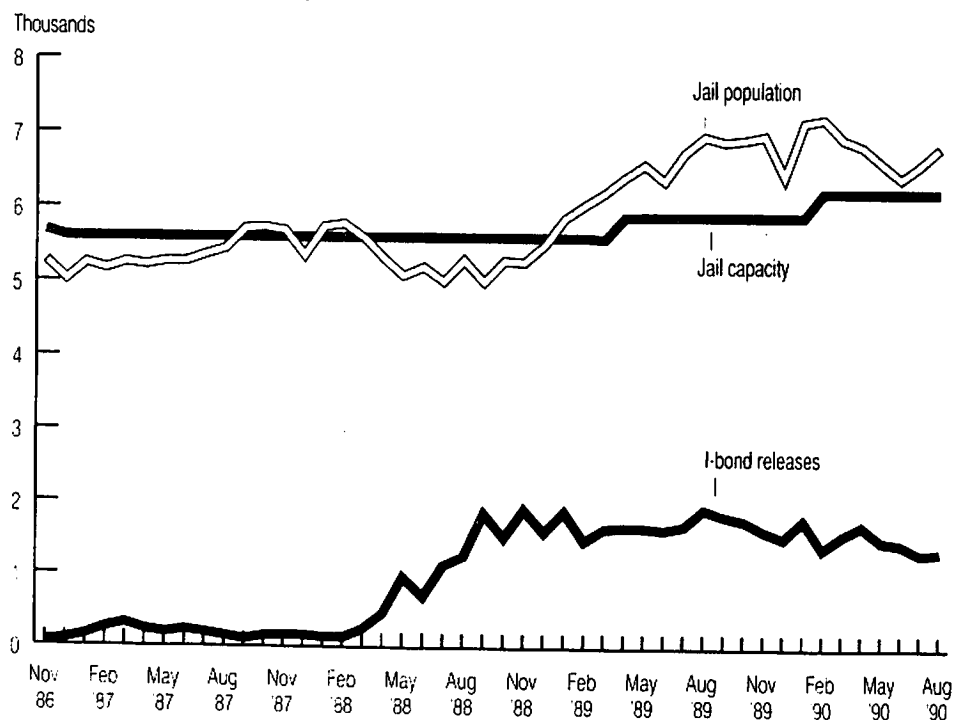
- The absence of a county mechanism for comprehensive planning for drug abuse prevention and treatment, and inadequate programs and resources for these needs
- The absence of coordinated criminal justice planning
- The tendency for criminal justice agencies to focus on increasing personnel and improving equipment instead of examining internal inefficiencies, or the impact various agencies have on one another.

### RECENT CHANGES

In response to these and other critical reports, Cook County officials have instituted some reforms:

Figure E.2

**Cook County Jail population and capacity, and number of inmates released on administrative mandatory furlough (I-bonds)**



Source: Cook County Sheriff's Department

- Law enforcement authorities have formed regional and metropolitan enforcement groups in recognition of the need to share information, and cooperate on investigations.
- The Cook County Circuit Court opened five evening narcotics courts in October 1989. These new night courts handle only felony drug cases that have progressed from the preliminary hearing level to the criminal division. Due to the success of the additional courts in improving disposition rates, the circuit court opened three more night drug courts in March 1991. These new night courts are an attempt to alleviate excessive caseloads in the day courts. About 1,500 cases were disposed through the evening narcotics courts during the six weeks they operated in 1989, and just under 10,000 were disposed in 1990.
- A Cook County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council has been established to deal with crowding at the Cook County Jail, and a subcommittee was formed to manage and develop methods of sharing information throughout the county. The committee is working on ways of linking the circuit clerk's preliminary municipal and felony systems. This will provide a way of tracking a defendant throughout the court system, from entrance at the preliminary level to adjudication at the felony level.
- A Pretrial Services Program has been established to assist judges in making better-informed pretrial release decisions by providing detailed information about defendants at their bail hearings.
- The jail has responded to the crisis by increasing its capacity. A 750-bed facility and a 1,080-bed facility are scheduled to open by 1992. In May 1989, the jail started an electronically monitored home confinement program for property crime defendants with bonds greater than \$50,000. In November 1989, more than 1,300 offenders were in the electronic monitoring program.

1. Figures for 1990 are estimates provided by the Office of the Clerk of the Cook County Circuit Court.

2. Rated capacity refers to an assessment made by the Detention Standards and Services Unit of the Illinois Department of Corrections. The unit establishes a maximum capacity for housing juveniles based on funding and available staff as opposed to physical space.

3. *Crime and Criminal Justice in Cook County*. The Criminal Justice Project of Cook County (Chicago, 1989).

4. *Adjudication Technical Assistance Project*. The American University and the Bureau of Justice Assistance (Washington, D.C., 1989), 2.

5. *Adjudication Technical Assistance Project* (1989), 1.

6. *Adjudication Technical Assistance Project* (1989), 3-4.



# Trends and Issues

## JUSTICE FINANCING

State, county, and municipal governments in Illinois together spent more than \$2.6 billion to operate the criminal justice system during 1989. When measured in constant 1989 dollars, 1989 spending was 0.5 percent less than in 1988 but 16 percent more than in 1980 (Figure F.1).

Law enforcement activities, at a cost of \$1.4 billion, accounted for 54.8 percent of criminal justice expenditures statewide in 1989. Illinois Department of Corrections expenditures, at more than \$529 million, accounted for 20.5 percent.<sup>1</sup> County jail expenditures, at \$118 million, accounted for 4.5 percent. Expenditures for Illinois' Circuit, Appellate, and Supreme court activities totaled more than \$349 million, or 13.2 percent of the total. Prosecution expenditures, including both trial and appellate activities, totaled \$75.4 million in 1989, accounting for 2.8 percent, while public defense expenditures for trial and appellate activities totaled \$39.4 million, or 1.5 percent. Probation activities, at almost \$71 million, accounted for 2.7 percent.

The 1989 figures reflect the shift during the past two decades from a concentration on law enforcement spending to a focus on corrections. Law enforcement's share of total criminal justice spending in Illinois fell from 58 percent in 1988 to 55 percent in 1989. In 1974, by contrast, law enforcement accounted for nearly 70 percent of all justice expenditures

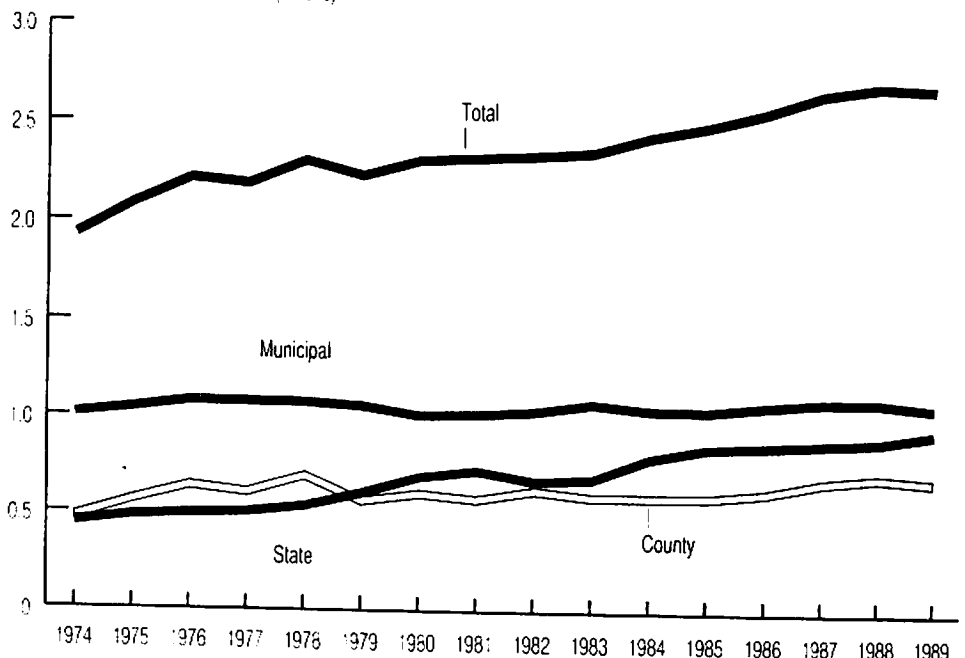
in Illinois (Figure F.2). State and local corrections' share of total criminal justice spending increased from 14 percent in 1974 to nearly 23 percent in 1988 and 25 percent in 1989. Since 1974, constant-dollar spending on corrections by state and county government in Illinois has more than doubled.

Meanwhile, the percentage of expenditures devoted to court-related activities (including the Circuit, Appellate, and Supreme courts; prosecution and defense activities; and probation) increased slightly from 19 percent in 1988 to 20 percent in 1989. In 1974, courts received 17 percent of total statewide criminal justice expenditures. Although the share of total criminal justice resources devoted to all court activities

has not changed significantly since 1974, the portion of these expenditures supported by the state government has, increasing from about 35 percent in 1974 to almost 50 percent in the past few years.

This shift in who pays for criminal justice is part of a larger trend dating back to 1974. Since that time, state government's share of total criminal justice spending has increased sharply, while municipal governments' share has decreased. This trend continued in 1989. In constant 1989 dollars, municipal governments' share of total criminal justice spending in Illinois declined to 40 percent in 1989, down from 41 percent in 1988 and 53 percent in 1974 (Figure F.3). The percentage of total criminal justice expenses

Figure F.1  
**Combined spending on criminal justice in Illinois, by level of government**  
 Expenditures, constant 1989 dollars (billions)



Source: Office of the Illinois Comptroller, Cook County Comptroller

paid for by state government rose from 33 percent in 1988 to 34 percent in 1989; in 1974, it was just 22 percent. Spending by county government accounted for about the same proportion of total criminal justice

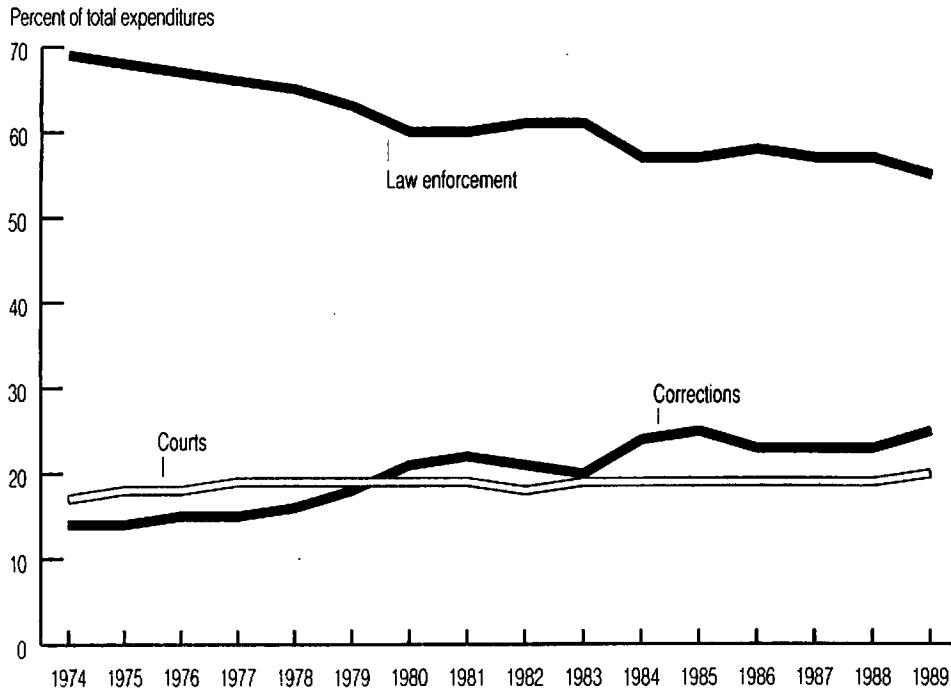
spending—25 percent in 1974, and 26 percent in both 1988 and 1989.

Other important changes in criminal justice financing during the past year include the following:

- In 1989, expenditures by Illinois' state, county, and municipal governments for law enforcement activities totaled more than \$1.4 billion, 0.6 percent less than in 1988 but 9 percent more than in 1980, in constant dollars.
- In 1989, municipal police departments were responsible for more than 73 percent of all law enforcement expenditures in Illinois, while county sheriffs' departments accounted for 15 percent and the Illinois State Police for 12 percent of the statewide total.
- Combined state and county expenditures for all court activities (courts, prosecution, defense, and probation) increased nearly 72 percent in constant 1989 dollars between fiscal years 1974 and 1989—mostly through increases in state expenditures.
- In 1989, expenditures for Illinois' Circuit, Appellate, and Supreme courts totaled more than \$349 million, almost 8 percent more than in 1988, and 26 percent more than in 1980, in constant dollars.
- In 1989, corrections expenditures in Illinois (including the Illinois Department of Corrections and county jails) totaled more than \$648 million, 8 percent more than 1988 and 40 percent more than in 1980, in constant dollars.

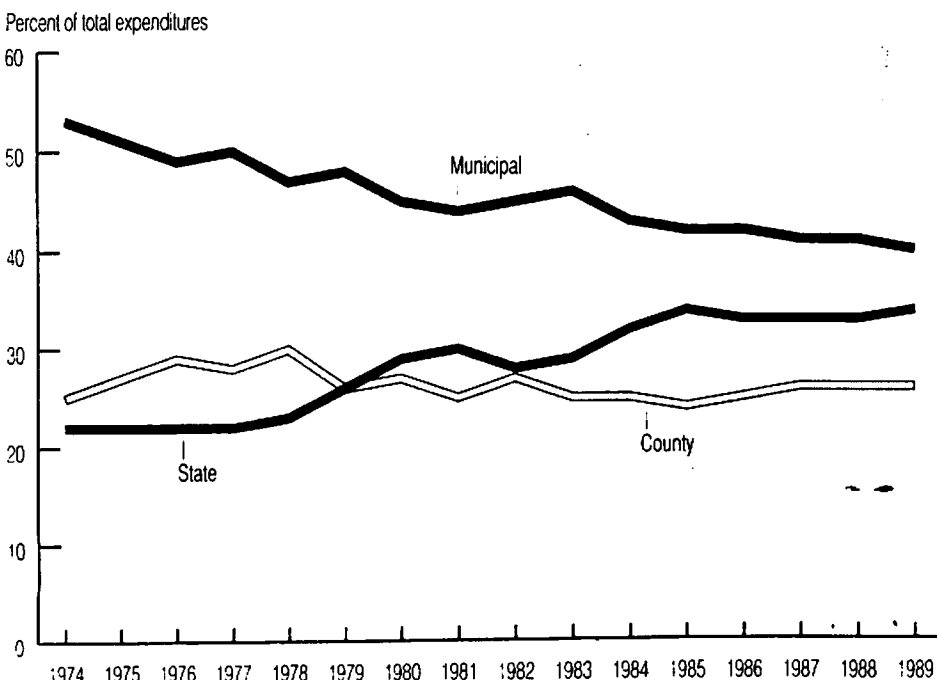
1. Illinois Department of Corrections expenditures include both operational and capital costs.

Figure F.2  
Share of criminal justice spending in Illinois, by function



Source: Office of the Illinois Comptroller

Figure F.3  
Share of criminal justice spending in Illinois, by level of government



Source: Office of the Illinois Comptroller

# FIREARMS AND CRIME

In 1989, as in previous years, firearms were much less likely to be used in violent crimes in which the victim survived than in homicides. Firearms were used that year in 57 percent of the murders reported in Illinois, but in approximately 29 percent of the robberies, 28 percent of the aggravated assaults, and 16 percent of the criminal sexual assaults.

In most of the robberies and sexual assaults occurring in 1989, no weapons other than the offender's hands, feet, and fists were used. The weapons used in aggravated assaults in 1989 were split almost evenly among firearms (29 percent), knives (25 percent), and other weapons (38 percent), with hands, feet, and fists accounting for the remaining 8 percent of these crimes. (By definition, however, the index crime of aggravated assault excludes most assaults and batteries in which no weapon was used.)

Most murders begin as another crime, such as assault or robbery, and then escalate into murder. During years in which the number of murders is high, the percentage involving firearms is also high. In 1981, for example, when there were

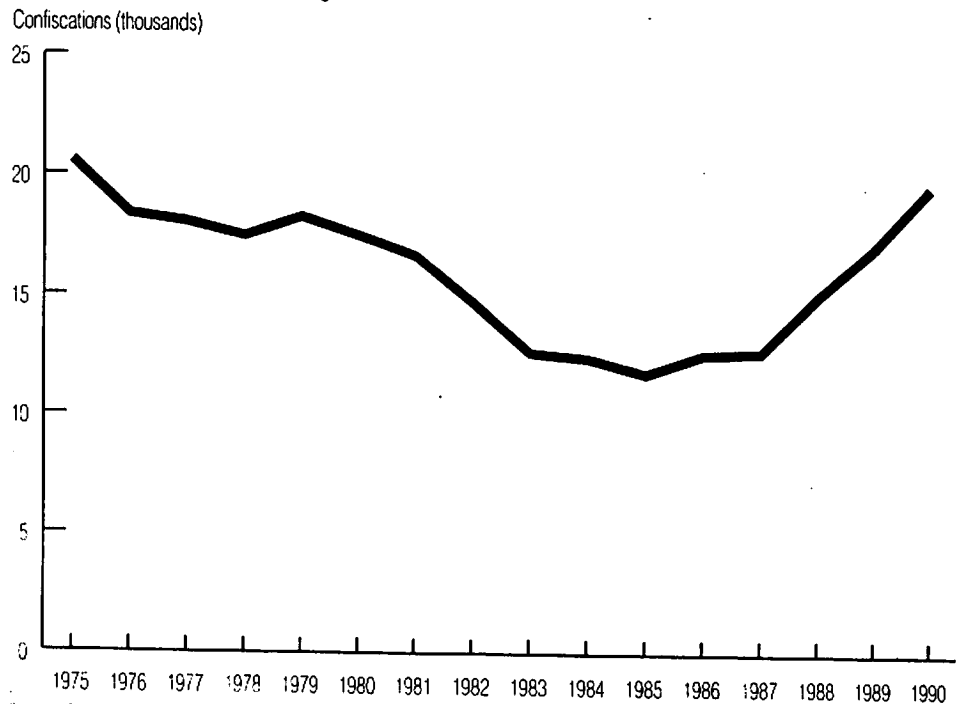
1,232 murders in Illinois, the most since 1975, 61 percent involved firearms.

During years in which the total number of murders has been relatively low, the percentage involving firearms has also been lower—about 56 percent between 1985 and 1989. A knife was the murder weapon in about one-fourth of the index murders in recent years—22 percent in 1989.

Even as firearm usage in violent crime remains high, law

enforcement efforts to reduce their availability have been stepped up, particularly in Chicago. Between 1985 and 1990, the number of firearms seized by the Chicago Police Department increased 66 percent, from 11,713 to 19,473 (Figure G.1). The 1990 total exceeded the number of firearms seized by the New York City police by almost 2,000. Between 1989 and 1990 alone, the number of firearms seized in Chicago rose 15 percent.

Figure G.1  
**Firearms confiscated in Chicago**



## DEATH PENALTY

The execution of convicted murderer Charles Walker on September 12, 1990, was the first in Illinois since 1962, and thus far the only since the state reinstated capital punishment in 1977. Mr. Walker was put to death by lethal injection for the 1983 robbery and murder of a Mascoutah, Illinois, couple. The U.S. Supreme Court in August 1990 used the Walker case as the basis for deciding that outside parties do not have the right to raise appeals for death-row inmates who do not seek their own appeal. Mr. Walker on numerous occasions declined the right to appeal for himself.

Experts remain uncertain, however, whether the Walker execution will open the flood-

gates for more executions in the state. The nine-stage appeals process in death penalty cases remains long and complicated, and most inmates, unlike Mr. Walker, do challenge either their sentence or the state's death penalty law in general.

The man most likely to follow Mr. Walker to the execution chamber is Charles Silagy, convicted in the 1980 deaths of his girlfriend and his sister in Danville. Mr. Silagy has challenged the constitutionality of Illinois' capital punishment law, saying that it gives prosecutors too much discretion in whether to seek the death penalty against individual defendants and that it does not give defendants sufficient notice that they face the

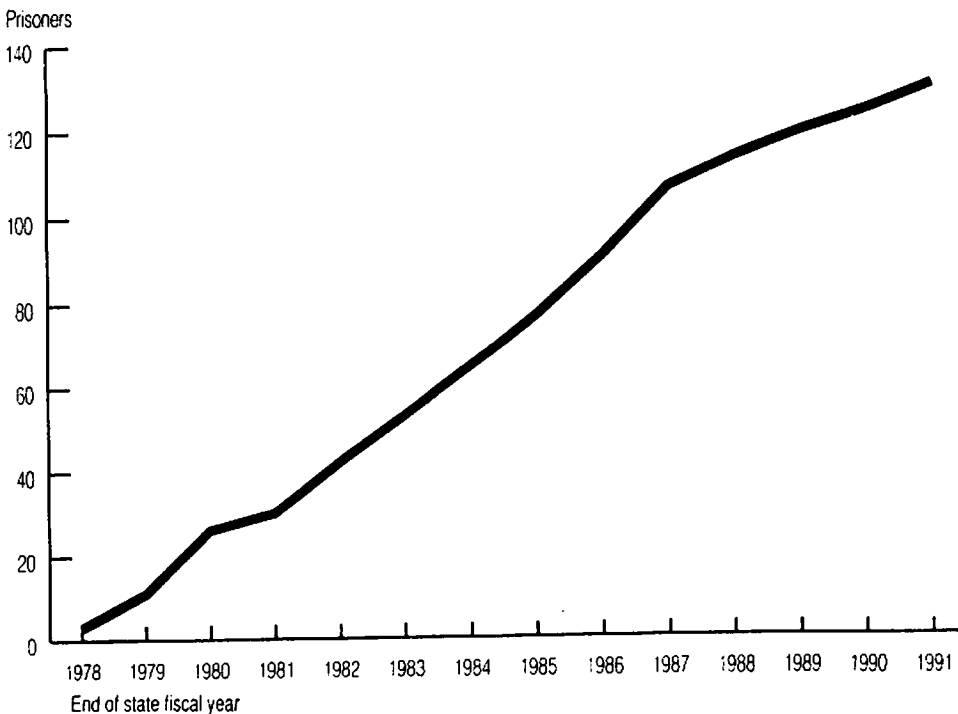
death penalty.

In 1990, a U.S. District Court judge agreed with Mr. Silagy and ruled the death penalty statute unconstitutional. However, the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals reversed that ruling that same year. And in February 1991, the U.S. Supreme Court declined to review the appeals court decision. While the Supreme Court's refusal to review the case does not constitute an approval of the Illinois statute, some officials have suggested the Court's action represents a "silent imprimatur" on the often-challenged, 14-year-old law.

Also in February 1991, Geraldine Smith became the first woman in Illinois to receive the death penalty since the state's 1977 reinstatement of capital punishment. Ms. Smith is the only inmate to occupy one of four cells assigned specifically for condemned female inmates at the Dwight Correctional Center, the state's only all-female prison. Because Ms. Smith is the only inmate on Dwight's death row, she will be housed largely in solitary confinement. Ms. Smith was convicted for the 1987 contract murder of Valerie McDonald, the wife of Ms. Smith's boyfriend. If her sentence is carried out, she will be the first woman executed in Illinois since 1938.

During fiscal 1991, five inmates were added to Illinois' death row. By June 30, 1991, 131 inmates were awaiting execution in Illinois (Figure H.1).

Figure H.1  
Prisoners on death row in Illinois



Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

In September 1990, there were 2,350 inmates on death row awaiting execution in 37 states. Illinois, with 127 at that point, ranked fourth in the number of inmates on death row—behind Texas (304), Florida (289), and California (254). Illinois' male inmates on death row are housed at either the Menard or Pontiac correctional centers.

A new state law that will take effect in January 1992 will bring a change to the appeals process for those defendants sentenced to death. The new law will reduce the statute of limitations for filing post-conviction motions from 10 years to three years. Post-conviction motions are arguments brought out by the appellant which relate only to constitutional issues, not to technical issues. Post-conviction motions can also raise arguments not brought out during the original defense.

There is no limit to the number of post-convictions motions an appellant may file.

The Office of the State Appellate Defender argued against the change, maintaining that the new law would double their caseloads. For most capital punishment appeals, the appellate defender's office first files direct appeal motions with the court. These appeals are related only to issues and objections which were raised during the original trial. Many post-conviction motions are not filed until the appellate defender's office feels the direct appeals process has been exhausted. The state's appellate defenders maintain that the change will mean overlapping the post-conviction motions with the direct appeals process, a process which in many cases is not completed within a three-year period.

## Trends and Issues

# DRUNKEN DRIVING

After declining between 1986 and 1988, the number of people arrested in Illinois for driving under the influence (DUI) increased slightly during the next two years, while the number of people killed in alcohol-related traffic accidents continued to decline.

According to Illinois Department of Transportation figures, the number of traffic fatalities due to accidents in which alcohol was present at the scene declined 14 percent, from 872 in 1989 to 747 in 1990.<sup>1</sup> The number of fatalities from accidents in which the driver tested positive for any amount of alcohol declined nearly 15 percent, from 659 in 1989 to 563 in 1990. The number of drivers with positive blood alcohol content (BAC) test results who were killed declined 9 percent between 1989 and 1990, from 576 to 525. But because not all drivers who lose their lives in accidents are

tested, the figures for drivers are considered undercounts.

Figures from the Illinois Secretary of State's Office also illustrate the persistence of the state's DUI problem. DUI arrests increased statewide 1.5 percent between 1988 and 1990, after decreasing nearly 12 percent between 1986 and 1988 (Figure I.1). Approximately 64 percent of the arrests in 1990 involved drivers who failed a BAC test (registering a blood alcohol content of .10 or higher) rather than those who refused the test.

The average DUI offender in Illinois is 33 years old; 64 percent of all DUI offenders are younger than 35. Although the DUI arrest rate for men aged 21 to 24 has declined from 28 per 1,000 licensed drivers in 1986 to 21 per 1,000 in 1990, this group continues to have the highest DUI arrest rate.

The percentage of women arrested for DUI increased from 12 percent of all DUI arrests in 1986 to 19 percent in 1989 and 20 percent a year later.

Total DUI arrests among drivers of all ages decreased 10 percent overall between 1986 and 1990, from 55,104 to 49,405. However, arrests of drivers 21 and older increased 2.3 percent, from 44,591 in 1988 to 45,632 in 1990, while arrests of drivers younger than 21 steadily declined, reaching 3,773 in 1990. Several factors may have contributed to the decline in DUI arrests among younger drivers, including stricter laws, color-

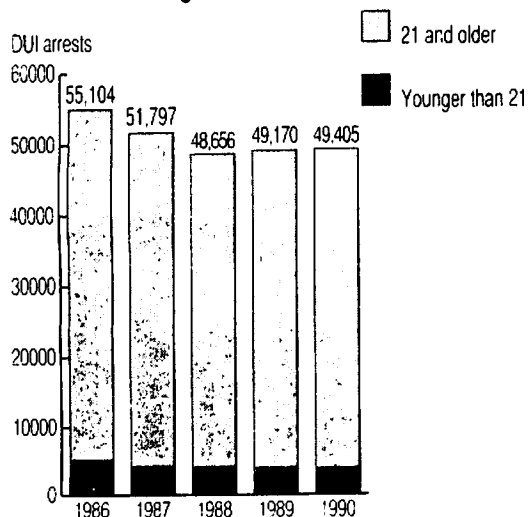
coded driver's licenses and identification cards that help prevent underage drinking, a nationwide uniform drinking age of 21, and educational programs that address drinking and related issues.

On the legislative front, five states (California, Maine, Oregon, Utah, and Vermont) have adopted .08 as the blood alcohol content threshold for DUI. During the spring of 1991, a bill lowering the BAC to .08 in Illinois failed in a House committee.

However, several other new laws affecting DUI in Illinois did take effect in January 1991. One law permits judges to order teenagers convicted of drunken driving to visit the local morgue to see victims of alcohol-related traffic accidents, or to visit a rehabilitation facility for victims of drunken driving (PA 86-1242). Another new law increases the offense of DUI-related reckless homicide from a Class 3 to a Class 2 felony, with a prison term of 3 to 14 years (PA 86-1317). Also, a new law establishes mandatory alcohol and drug testing of drivers involved in accidents in which the driver is believed to be at least partially at fault for an injury or death (Ill. Rev. Stat., ch. 95 1/2, par. 11-501.6).

1. The "presence of alcohol" at the scene of an accident can be determined not only by a positive blood alcohol content test result, but by factors such as a witness account or a police officer's report that open containers of alcohol were present at the scene.

Figure I.1  
Arrests for driving under the influence in Illinois, by age



Source: Illinois Secretary of State's Office



# Trends and Issues

## LEGISLATION

The 86th Illinois General Assembly passed, and Governor James R. Thompson signed, dozens of pieces of criminal justice legislation during the 1990 session. While these bills covered a variety of criminal justice problems and issues, two areas received special legislative attention:

- A number of bills were designed to eliminate overcrowding in the Illinois Department of Corrections by increasing the amount of good-time credit in some cases or by providing for other alternatives to incarceration.
- The General Assembly addressed the criminal justice system's demand for resources by requiring offenders to pay the costs of some criminal justice activities, such as electronic monitoring, drug testing, and the analysis of drugs seized from the offender.

Although not an exhaustive list, this section summarizes the more important criminal justice legislation of 1990. The laws are organized by topic. Each summary includes a brief description of the new legislation, the public act number, and the effective date of the law. Copies of public acts are available from the Illinois Secretary of State, Index Department, 217-782-7017.

### **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

**Suspected child abuse or neglect** Pending reports regarding suspected child abuse or neglect may be released to certain law enforcement agencies, coroners or medical examiners, physicians, courts, school superintendents, and child welfare agencies in other states. State's attorneys are authorized to receive unfounded reports for prosecution purposes related to the transmission of false reports of child abuse or neglect. PA 86-1293; effective September 6, 1990

**Childhood sexual abuse** Actions for damages for personal injury based on childhood sexual abuse must begin within two years of the date the victim realized, or should have realized, that the abuse occurred and that an injury was caused by the abuse. No such action for personal injury shall begin more than 12 years after the victim's 18th birthday. The time limitation does not begin to run before the person reaches 18 years of age or until the removal of any other legal disability. PA 86-1346; effective January 1, 1991

**Notification of child abuse** The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services must orally notify local law enforcement personnel and the office of the state's attorney of the involved county within 24 hours and must confirm the oral report in writing within 48 hours of

receiving a report of suspected child abuse or neglect. PA 86-1357; effective January 1, 1991

### **CORRECTIONS**

**Good-time credit** Increases the amount of good-time credit for meritorious service that the director of corrections may award to a prisoner from 90 to 180 days. The director may not award the additional 90 days credit to prisoners convicted of certain Class X and other serious crimes. PA 86-1090; effective July 13, 1990

**Diversion programs** Authorizes the Illinois Department of Corrections to provide a structured environment for selected parolees or mandatory supervised releasees and committed persons who have violated the rules governing their conduct while on work release, but who have not committed a new offense. PA 86-1182; effective August 20, 1990

**Impact incarceration** Authorizes the Illinois Department of Corrections to operate an impact incarceration program (or "boot camp") for certain offenders between 17 and 29 years of age who are sentenced to prison. Persons successfully completing the program will have their sentences reduced to time served. PA 86-1182 and PA 86-1183; effective August 20, 1990

**Transportation of released prisoners** When a person is brought into the state upon an extradition warrant and

is released from custody without being convicted, the person must be provided with or offered transportation to the nearest public transportation facility if the municipality or county in which he was held does not have a public transportation facility. PA 86-1263; effective January 1, 1991

**Electronic home detention**

The Electronic Home Detention Law describes who is not eligible to be placed in an electronic home detention program and provides basic operational guidelines for electronic home detention programs. PA 86-1281; effective January 1, 1991

**Prisoner education** Increases the good-time credit for inmates in full-time Illinois Department of Corrections educational programs who are improving literacy or satisfactorily completing other academic or vocational training programs. Inmates convicted of first-degree murder, second-degree murder, or a Class X felony, and those who have previously participated in the program and are subsequently convicted of a felony are not eligible. PA 86-1373; effective September 10, 1990

**Children of inmates** The Illinois Department of Corrections may establish work and day release programs for nonviolent pregnant offenders and nonviolent female offenders with children under the age of 6. PA 86-1380; effective January 1, 1991

**Private correctional facility moratorium** With some exceptions, the ownership, operation, or management of cor-

rectional facilities by for-profit private contractors is prohibited. PA 86-1412; effective September 11, 1990

## COURTS

**State appellate defender**

The state appellate defender's duty to represent indigent defendants in criminal cases is limited to felony cases and does not include misdemeanor cases involving a sentence of imprisonment. PA 86-1210; effective August 30, 1990

**Speedy trials and DNA testing**

The time limit for a speedy trial may be extended for not more than 120 days upon application of the state, if the court determines that the state has been unable to obtain results of DNA testing that are material to the case and if there is reasonable cause to believe that such results will be obtained later. PA 86-1210; effective August 30, 1990

**Post-conviction petitions**

The time limit for which a prisoner may petition the trial court for a post-conviction hearing is reduced from 10 years to three years. PA 86-1210; effective January 1, 1992

## CRIMES AND

### CRIMINAL SANCTIONS

**Riverboat Gambling Act**

The Riverboat Gambling Act allows riverboat gambling in counties other than Cook and establishes criminal penalties for engaging in prohibited activities related to gambling. PA 86-1029; effective February 7, 1990

**Motor vehicle sound** No driver of any motor vehicle shall operate or permit operation of

any sound amplification system which can be heard outside the vehicle from 75 or more feet when the vehicle is being operated upon a highway, unless such system is being operated to request assistance or warn of a hazardous situation. PA 86-1240; effective January 1, 1991

**Child restraint system**

Any driver is responsible for securing a child under 4 years old in a child restraint system in a motor vehicle, if the parent or guardian provides a child restraint system to transport the child. Every driver transporting a child between 4 and 6 years old must secure that child in either a child restraint system or seat belts. PA 86-1241; effective January 1, 1991

**Criminal damage to property**

Increases penalties for criminal damage to property, including state-supported property, from a Class A misdemeanor to a Class 2 felony, depending upon the value of the damaged property. Requires the court to impose upon the offender a fine equal to the value of the damages to the property if the damage exceeds \$10,000. PA 86-1254; effective January 1, 1991

**Vehicular invasion**

Creates the offense of vehicular invasion, a Class 1 felony, when a person knowingly, by force, and without lawful justification, enters or reaches into the interior of a motor vehicle with the intent to commit a theft or felony while the vehicle is occupied by another person or persons. PA 86-1392; effective January 1, 1991

**Hate crimes** Changes the offense of ethnic intimidation to

the offense of hate crime; recognizes additional classes of persons, who by reason of their ancestry, sexual orientation, or physical or mental disability are victims of hate crimes; and includes additional acts which may constitute hate crimes. As a condition of probation, conditional discharge, or supervision, a person convicted of a hate crime must perform public or community service. Committing an offense against a person or a person's property because of a person's race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or national origin is now an aggravating factor in sentencing. PA 86-1418; effective January 1, 1991

**Money laundering** Raises the penalty for money laundering from a Class 3 felony to a Class 2 felony for laundering criminally derived property of a value exceeding \$10,000 but not exceeding \$100,000, and to a Class 1 felony if the value of the property exceeds \$100,000. PA 86-1459; effective January 1, 1991

## **CRIMINAL HISTORY**

### **RECORD INFORMATION**

**Criminal background investigations** A school district is authorized to investigate and obtain conviction information from the Illinois State Police of all employees of persons or firms holding contracts with any school district who have a direct, daily contact with the pupils of any school in the district. Persons convicted of certain criminal and drug offenses shall not be employed to perform the contract. PA 86-1035, effective March 19, 1990

## **CRIMINAL JUSTICE FINANCING**

**Court fines** In addition to any other fines for criminal convictions, the county board may authorize the courts to impose the following fees for convictions: \$50 for a felony, \$25 for a Class A misdemeanor, \$15 for a Class B or Class C misdemeanor, and \$10 for a petty or business offense. The fee shall be placed in the county general fund and used to finance the court system in the county. PA 86-1267; effective January 1, 1991

**Costs of drug testing and electronic monitoring** An offender placed on supervision or sentenced to probation, conditional discharge, or periodic imprisonment who undergoes mandatory drug or alcohol testing or is assigned to be placed on an approved electronic monitoring device may be ordered to pay the costs incidental to the drug or alcohol testing and electronic monitoring. PA 86-1320; effective January 1, 1991

### **County Juvenile Detention Center Revolving**

**Loan Fund** The County Juvenile Detention Center Revolving Loan Fund, administered by the Illinois Department of Corrections, is established for the purpose of lending money to any county for constructing a new juvenile detention center or non-secure group home or for remodeling, reconstructing, or renovating an existing juvenile detention center or non-secure group home. PA 86-1327; effective September 6, 1990

**Crime laboratory fees** Unless determined indigent, a per-

son convicted, placed on probation or supervision, or adjudicated delinquent for a violation of the Cannabis Control Act, the Illinois Controlled Substances Act, or the Steroid Control Act is required to pay \$50 to be deposited in the State Crime Laboratory Fund or a local crime laboratory fund designated for the exclusive use of the crime laboratory that performed the analysis in the case. PA 86-1399; effective September 10, 1990

**Sheriff stipends** Beginning December 1, 1990, the state shall give each sheriff who operates a county jail an annual stipend of \$2,000 to \$5,000, depending on the size of the jail. PA 86-1442; effective November 29, 1990

**Clerk of court compensation** In addition to the compensation provided by the county board, clerks of the court in counties in which one or more state correctional institutions are located shall receive reimbursement of \$10,000 per year for one employee to perform services in connection with the correctional institution. PA 86-1447; effective November 29, 1990

## **DRUG ABUSE**

**Women's alcohol and substance abuse treatment** Establishes a Subcommittee on Women's Alcohol and Substance Abuse Treatment to advise the Illinois Advisory Council on Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependency and the director of the Illinois Department of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse in the formulation, preparation, and implementation of a

state plan targeted to women for intervention, prevention, and treatment of alcoholism and other substance abuse and dependency. PA 86-1316; effective September 6, 1990

**Substance abuse treatment** Establishes the Illinois Substance Abuse Treatment Program, a one-year pilot project to be instituted within the Illinois Department of Corrections. PA 86-1320; effective January 1, 1991

**Drug Asset Forfeiture Procedure Act** Creates uniform procedures for the forfeiture of property under the Illinois Controlled Substances Act and the Cannabis Control Act, including non-judicial forfeiture procedures and a formula for the distribution of forfeited assets. PA 86-1382; effective September 10, 1990

**Use of cellular telephones for drug trafficking** In addition to any other penalties imposed by law, knowingly using a cellular telecommunication device for controlled substances trafficking is a Class 2 felony, for which a fine of up to \$100,000 may be imposed. Students may not use or possess any cellular telecommunication device on any school property. PA 86-1391; effective January 1, 1991

**Driver's license of convicted drug offenders** The secretary of state shall not issue or renew the driver's license nor issue any permit and may cancel the driver's license or permit of any person convicted or adjudicated delinquent based upon a violation of the Cannabis Control Act or the Illinois Controlled Substances Act

while in physical control of a motor vehicle. PA 86-1450; effective July 1, 1991

**Drug-free workplace** No grantee or contractor shall receive a grant from the state or be considered for a contract for the procurement of any property or services for the state unless that grantee or contractor has certified that it will provide a drug-free workplace. The state shall not enter into a contract for more than \$5,000 or make a grant of more than \$5,000 with any individual unless the contract or grant includes a certification that the individual will not engage in the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance during the performance of the contract. PA 86-1459; effective January 1, 1992

**Drug-induced infliction of great bodily harm** A person who delivers controlled substances to another, and great bodily harm or permanent disability results from the injection, inhalation, or ingestion of any amount of that controlled substance, commits the offense of drug-induced infliction of great bodily harm, a Class 1 felony. PA 86-1459; effective January 1, 1991

**Drugs and pregnant women** Penalties are increased for persons convicted of delivering a controlled substance or item of drug paraphernalia to a pregnant woman. PA 86-1459; effective January 1, 1991

**School bus driver alcohol and drug testing** Any school bus operator, at the time of an accident involving the school

bus, is deemed to have given consent to submit to a test of the driver's breath, blood, or urine for the purpose of determining the presence of alcohol or other drugs in the person's system. PA 86-1465; effective April 1, 1992

**Drug paraphernalia penalties** The penalty for the sale or delivery of drug paraphernalia is increased from a business offense to a Class 4 felony. The penalty for the sale or delivery of drug paraphernalia to a person under 18 years of age is increased from a Class 4 felony to a Class 3 felony. PA 86-1466; effective July 1, 1991

## **DRUNKEN DRIVING**

**Youthful intoxicated drivers' visitation program** As a condition of probation or discharge of a person under age 21 convicted or adjudicated delinquent for driving under the influence, the court may order the person to visit a rehabilitation facility for victims of DUI accidents, a facility which cares for advanced alcoholics, or the county coroner's office or county morgue to observe victims killed in motor vehicle accidents involving persons under the influence of alcohol. PA 86-1242; effective January 1, 1991

**Reckless homicide** If a person has been convicted of reckless homicide and was under the influence of alcohol or other drugs at the time of the offense, the penalty is increased from a Class 3 felony to a Class 2 felony. The person, if sentenced to a term of imprisonment, shall be sentenced to a term of between three and 14 years. PA 86-1317; effective January 1, 1991

## **FIREARMS**

**Drive-by shootings** If a person discharges a firearm from a vehicle with the knowledge and consent of the owner of the vehicle, intending to cause and causing death or great bodily harm to another individual, the vehicle is subject to seizure and forfeiture. PA 86-1372; effective January 1, 1991

**Aggravated discharge of a firearm** Creates the offense of aggravated discharge of a firearm, a Class 1 felony, when a person knowingly discharges a firearm at a building that he or she knows to be occupied, at another person, or at a vehicle he or she knows to be occupied. PA 86-1393; effective September 10, 1990

## **JUVENILE JUSTICE**

**Juveniles in county jail** A court may order that a minor at least 15 years old who is prosecuted as an adult be confined in the county jail. If ordered to be confined in the county jail, the juvenile shall have no contact with adults confined in the jail. PA 86-1163; effective August 10, 1990

**DCFS grants** The Department of Children and Family Services is required to make grants for planning, establishing, operating, coordinating, and evaluating programs aimed at reducing or eliminating the involvement of youth in the child welfare or juvenile justice systems. PA 86-1204; effective August 29, 1990

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

**No interception of private oral communications** With respect to electronic criminal

surveillance activities, the use of a cordless telephone or cellular communication device is specifically defined as a private oral communication which cannot be intercepted without a court order. PA 86-1206; effective August 29, 1990

**Law Enforcement Medal of Honor** The Law Enforcement Medal of Honor shall be awarded annually to certain law enforcement officers who have been killed or seriously injured in the line of duty or who have displayed exceptional bravery or heroism while performing their duties. PA 86-1230; effective August 31, 1990

## **MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT**

**Motor vehicle—essential parts** Includes stereo radios, cassette radios, compact disc radios, cassette/compact disc players, and compact disc changers within the definition of essential parts of a vehicle. PA 86-1179 and PA 86-1209; effective August 17, 1990

**Aggravated motor vehicle theft offenses** Identifies certain offenses related to motor vehicles and other vehicles as aggravated offenses and creates the offense of organizer of an aggravated vehicle theft conspiracy, a Class X felony. PA 86-1209; effective January 1, 1991

**Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Act** Creates the Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Council within the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority to develop a statewide strategy for the distribution of grant awards to criminal justice agencies and business and civic or-

ganizations, and to combat and prevent motor vehicle theft in Illinois. PA 86-1408; effective January 1, 1991

## **PROSECUTION**

**Assistant state's attorneys' salaries** The state's attorney, rather than the county board, shall set the salaries of his or her assistants, subject to budgetary limitations established by the county board. PA 86-1303; effective January 1, 1991

## **VICTIM RIGHTS**

**Victim compensation** If a person entitled to crime victim compensation is younger than 18 years of age or under other legal disability at the time of the occurrence or becomes legally disabled as a result of the occurrence, he or she may file the application for compensation within one year of attaining the age of 18 or after the disability is removed. PA 86-1221; effective August 30, 1990