

School Justice Partners: An Overview

Honorable Steven Teske, Chief Presiding Judge, Clayton County,
Georgia

Honorable J. Corpening, Chief District Court Judge, District 5



IT'S ABOUT ME
(FOR BOTH OF US)
(SORT OF)



IT'S ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

(and the big picture)

(with each other and with our students)



Taking Care of Children



Challenges of Inter-Agency Action



WHAT'S AT STAKE HERE?

(where have we been and where are we going?)



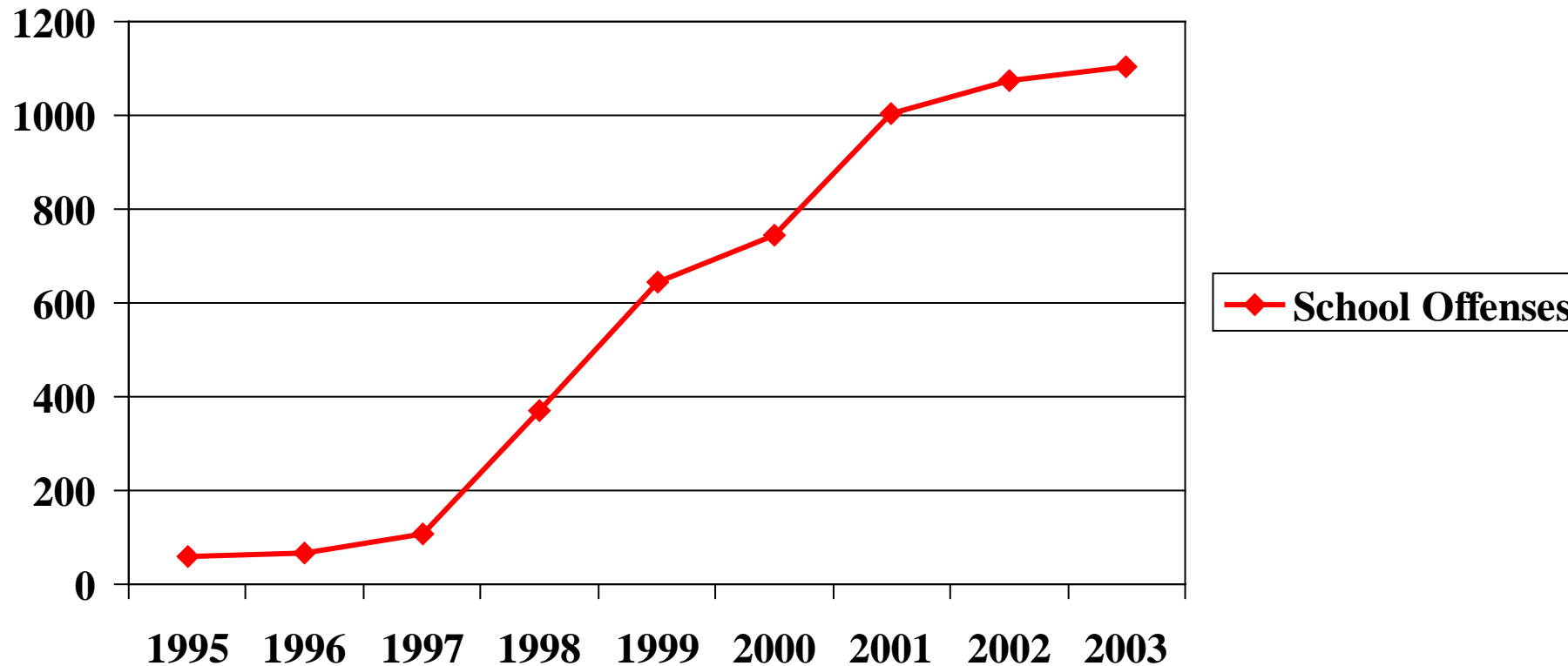
History of the Problem

- Zero tolerance
- Policy shifts: juvenile justice and education
- Law enforcement in schools
- Columbine
- Societal trend toward litigation

- Who is affected?
 - Suspensions?
 - Court involvement?



Impact of Broad Zero Tolerance Policies on School Campuses



Why Is This Important?

- We've criminalized adolescent behavior
- Research on suspensions
- Phillippi's comparison: one to court and one not
- Correlation to gang activity
- And yes, the school to prison pipeline



Adolescent Brain Research

- Frontal lobe of brain filters emotion into logical responses is not developed until age 25.
- Kids are neurologically wired to do stupid things!
- Kids are still under neurological construction.
- Kids are being hard-wired and need positive influences such as school.



School Connectedness

- School connectedness is a strong protective factor against **delinquency**. US Surgeon General. (2001). *Youth Violence: A Report of the Surgeon General*.
- School connectedness is linked to lower levels of substance abuse, violence, suicide attempts, pregnancy, & emotional distress. *Journal of School Health* 72 (4).
- OSS of elementary & middle school students contributes to drop-out **rates**. Predictors of Suspension & Negative School Outcomes: A Longitudinal Investigation (2003)



Why Is This Important ?

- Research shows a strong link between court referrals and dropout rates
- Student arrested in high school is twice as likely to drop out
- Student who appears in court during high school is four times as likely to drop out

Sweeten, Gary, Who Will Graduate? Disruption of High School Education by Arrest and Court Involvement. 24.4, Justice Quarterly, 462-480 (December 2006)



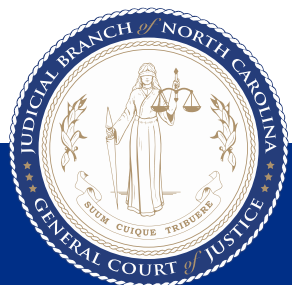
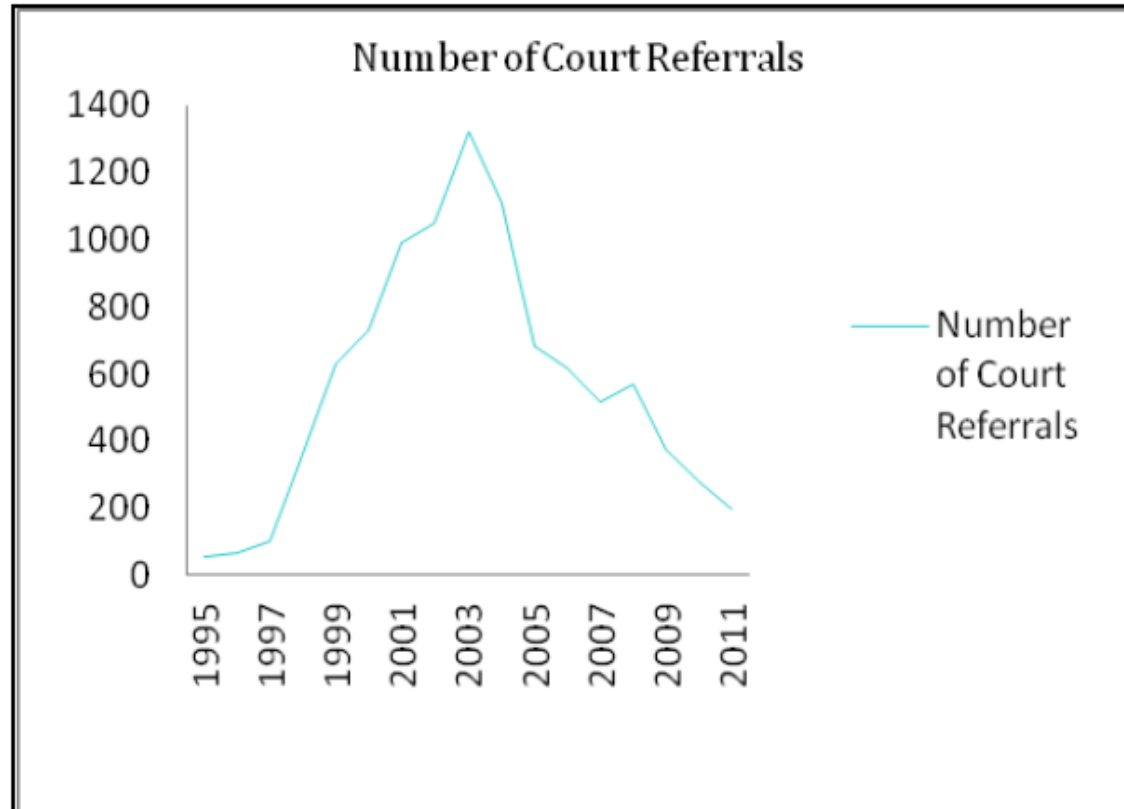
Why is this important

TRAUMATIZED PEOPLE TRAUMATIZE PEOPLE



A Solution

Figure App.1: School Referrals to Clayton County Juvenile Court⁵



NEW HANOVER COUNTY JOURNEY



KEY COMPONENTS

- CONVENER
- FACILITATOR
- THE TEAM
- FOCUS ACTS
- DISCIPLINE FACTORS
- GRADUATED RESPONSES
- AGREEMENT
- MONITORING



The Purpose

The purpose of the Interagency Agreement is to:

- Obtain agreement of all parties who respond to non-emergency school disruptions.
- Provide a consistent response to student misbehavior.
- Clarify the role of law enforcement in school disciplinary matters.
- Utilize alternative support services.
- Reduce involvement of law enforcement and court agencies for minor misconduct at school and school-related events.



The Agreement

- Utilize classroom, in-school, family and community strategies and maintain a positive climate within schools.
- Response to school disruptions should be reasonable, consistent and fair.
- Consider relevant factors such as age, nature of severity and impact on the learning environment.



The Agreement

- Hold students accountable for their actions.
- Graduate the response to minor misconduct to provide a continuum of services.
- Provide increasingly more severe sanctions for continued misbehavior.
- Use appropriate redirection and support for disruptive students.
- Use in-school and community resources prior to involvement of law enforcement.



The Agreement

- Clarify the responsibilities of school and law enforcement personnel with regard to non-emergency disruptive behavior promotes the best interests of the student, the school system, law enforcement and the community at large.
- Implement the partnership plan.



Purpose

To truly address behavior
when and where it happens

Instead of pushing the behavior
out of school and never actually addressing it



Purpose

To return to an approach of discipline (to teach)

as opposed to punishment



MINDSET SHIFT



TESKE: “WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT
KEEPING KIDS IN SCHOOL WOULD INCREASE
GRADUATION RATES.”



QUESTIONS?





Thank You

