

FULL SERVICE SCHOOLS

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FULL SERVICE SCHOOLS

**A Place for Our Children and
Families to Learn and Be Healthy**

By

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*This book is dedicated to my wife Sandra
and our children Julia and Will.*

FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A book like this is a work in progress. It is a marathon, not a dash. This is clearly a call to think and act differently. It asks that we do not allow a philosophy that says, "This is the way we have always done it," stand in the way of creating new institutions such as full service schools. Because of this, I would like to acknowledge the many people who are making full service schools a reality in Tennessee.

David Strauss and Jerry Morton are, and have been, driving forces in the statewide movement for full service schools. Wilhelmina Williams has been a generous supporter of the development of full service schools in upper East Tennessee. She has encouraged us to become involved with the Coalition of Community Schools. Sue Standifer of the upper Cumberland region of Tennessee has helped to forge collaboration between school health people and full service school personnel. Williams and Standifer have a wonderful staff who have added a great deal to the development of full service schools.

Peggy Senaker of middle Tennessee has shared a great deal with us on her success in securing twenty-first Century after-school grants.

In Knox County, the following school people have been tremendous team players; Janice Clark, Blenza Davis, Martha Jean Bratton, Judy Ellison, Elisa Luna, and Gussie Cherry. These people are principals or school leaders without whom the full service school movement would be at a standstill.

The human service people who are working diligently with these school people are; Mike Harkleroad, Kim Halbert, Kery Patterson, and Candace Allen. These people have given generously of their time and expertise to see that full service schools become a reality.

David Yoder of the Knox County Legal Aid Society has been a true champion in working with us. So have students from the University of Tennessee Law School such as Rachel Moses. These stu-

dents are under the supervision of Professor Richard Wirtz. Jervais Steele, Larry Mathis, and Ken Libby, directors of after-school programs have toiled long and hard to provide a safe haven for children during after-school hours.

There has been intellectual excitement created among university colleagues who have come together to support the full service school idea. These include Dr. Bob Cunningham from Political Science, Dr. Elaine Seat from the College of Engineering and Dr. Janet Atwell of the English Department. Dr. Cunningham has provided 100 students a year to work as tutor/mentors. His students have designs on careers in Public Administration. Their quotes throughout the book show the amount of work they have put in and what they have received in return. Dr. Seat's engineering students have helped in health care establishing clinics, and tutoring. I would like to acknowledge especially the work of Gigi Youngblood, now a medical student at the University of Alabama and Billy Dahlgren, a senior in engineering. Dr. Atwell's service learning students contributed through tutoring.

Dr. Cheryl Kershaw has brought her considerable resources in establishing Professional Development Schools to the table. Professional Development Schools and Full Service Schools are collaborating beautifully at the present time. The full service school people are learning about teacher education and the Teacher Education people are learning about Human Service Education and Human Service workers in their school's community.

I would like to recognize the work of Joshua Booher. Joshua has established a website and a Listserv for the Tennessee Consortium for the Development of Full Service Schools. Our site is <http://fss@list-serv.utk.edu>.

Along this line, without the support of Mark Rozanski, I would not have the limited computer skills I have, to receive the information many people send to me.

I would like to thank Debi Whiteaker for typing this manuscript, Tinah Utsman and Lauren Smith for doing the photography, Susan Love for the drawings, Baldwin Lee for the cover photographs, Kylie Cole and Sandra Kronick for editorial assistance, and Gregory Green for reformatting the index.

Finally I would like to thank Michael P. Thomas for his continuous and gracious support and Claire Slagle for her editorial assistance.

I apologize to those people I forgot to recognize.

Cogent Quotes

We have to teach the whole child. They do not leave the non-curriculum barriers to learning at home. They bring them to school with them. And—we are not talking about Special Education Students.

Blenza Davis
Principal, Sarah Moore Greene Elementary School

Janice Clark from Sarah Moore Greene Elementary School noted, “Full service schools have been a tremendous help in getting individualized attention to students. The returns have been well worth the time my staff and I have spent gathering information for the activities. The attitude changes, in students who have participated, have impressed me. Full service schools have helped reach more children than my staff and I could alone.”

INTRODUCTION

Full service schools, especially at the elementary level, are prevention for corrections, mental health, and welfare. Keeping students in school where they receive good teaching and where learning is ongoing will keep them from becoming victims as well as perpetrators of crime. Full service schools allow teachers to have time to teach. The extended day and week program of full service schools provide primary prevention in all three areas mentioned above. As one student teacher said on a trip to a state prison in November 2000, "The most profound part of the trip came for me when we interviewed the first group. Many of them spoke about feeling out of place in school, and feeling frustrated due to the difficulty in understanding material. They reported feeling this way as young as second grade." Another student reported that a prisoner said, "if he had had two or three teachers in a row that had believed in him, he probably would have gone down a different path." Yet another intern stated, "I initially envisioned those students that are struggling in our classroom. All have behavioral problems. These students cannot afford to become part of the statistics."

Since Mental Health Services have been found to be the number one need of the children and families we are working with, a rich amount of material may be found. Much of this is presented throughout the text yet the following quote from a human service intern is typical regarding mental health needs: "Mrs. Luna wanted me to speak to a girl that was staying in her class all day because she had been having trouble in her own class. Her mother had been brought in that morning and said she was ready to give her up. Her mother is bipolar and was yelling that she could not take it anymore and that her husband had walked out on them for the third time" (B.H. 2000). A bold and interesting statistic that I have recently become aware of is that of

those people defined as mentally ill by the DSM IV, 60 percent have children. The amount of children living with mentally ill parents is another frontier that our full service schools will cross.

Since 90 percent of all the children we work with are on free and reduced lunch, we can assume that the vast majority of these parents are on welfare. Hence, we should have a rich mother lode to mine when we move to the next stage of research regarding full service schools as prevention for mental health, corrections, and welfare.

It is hoped that as you read this book you will keep the ideas of prevention, collaboration, and systems change fully in mind.

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FULL SERVICE SCHOOLS

Chapter 1

THE WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN AND FULL SERVICE SCHOOLS

The South is the leading area for factors identifying children at risk according to the Annie E. Casey Foundation (1998). The states that are included here are Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Florida. The other two states that are not contiguous to the South that rank in the bottom 40s are Arizona and New Mexico.

The variables that are used in ranking the states include: percent low birth weight babies, infant mortality rate, child death rate, number of births to unmarried teens, juvenile violent crime arrest rate, percent of teens who are high school dropouts, percent of teens not working, teen violent death rate, percent of children in poverty, and percent of families with children headed by a single parent.

These variables are certainly not discrete and they impinge and interact on each other. Another important aspect of looking at these variables is what do we know about them. For instance, when looking at the dropout rate is the state using the event or cohort rate? Cohort rates tend to be higher than event rates. The cohort rate gives a better picture of the overall dropout situation. Premature and low birth weight babies are often defined as at risk and are likely to have problems later on in life. However, what this may indicate is a lack of prenatal care by mothers as well as other variables that are associated with her life-style. These may include alcohol and drug use, low socioeconomic status, low education, etc. The juvenile justice data is, of course, very important. Today, the juvenile justice data seems to be all over the headlines and it intertwines, of course, with mental health

issues. Often we find that mental health and corrections are not quite sure where a child appropriately belongs and may oftentimes spend way too much time hassling over this issue rather than providing service and care to the child. The question has historically been “Is the child a security risk or emotionally disturbed?” and if both, which should gain precedence. In looking at the percent of children in poverty, the data seem to reflect that the largest growing population of the homeless are children under 13. Obviously, these are people who are entrenched in poverty.

Hence, we begin this chapter with the notion of trying to predict the weather. This is not really quite difficult although depending upon who is often sponsoring the research we often get different answers.

However, it is my contention that there is a real need for human service work for children and families and that the best place to provide this is within the confines of a school, in what we are calling full service schools (Dryfoos, 1994; Kronick, 2000). This intervention will, of course, be discussed later.

Why This Topic is Worthy of Study?

At-risk youth have often been the bellwether of American society. Even though they are the targets of our intervention, they oftentimes are telling us what is working and what is not. In fact, some authors, especially Higgs and Tarsi (1997) refer to at-risk youth as at-promise youth. I think it is worth our while to say that these kids are telling us that things within our school, our families, and our society are not working and the best way to learn how and why is to listen to them. Historically, at-risk youth were defined as the physically challenged, the deaf, and the blind. Today, we look at at-risk youth as those who are at risk for leaving school early without a high school diploma. When this happens, we find out quite clearly that they are at risk for unemployment as well as underemployment. They are also at risk for early involvement in welfare, corrections, and mental health. They also do not make enough money to pay the potential amount of tax that they could pay into the system.

Keeping kids in school under control theory socializes them to middle-class values. Hence, we see that an education should make them better employees and keep them off welfare rolls. We also know that the vast majority of property crime offenders do not have a high

school education (Everett, 1990). Many who suffer from mental illness often find themselves among the ranks of the homeless who have not finished school. Hence, it would appear that keeping children in school is a hedge and/or a prevention for mental health, corrections, and welfare.

If one were to take the opposite side of the coin, however, and look at strain as opposed to control theory, we can see that the delinquency rate and the mental illness rate might actually go up by keeping children in school. This is because the source of trouble resides within the school. Research has shown that the self concept of Hispanic males actually goes up when they leave school (Velazquez, 1998). Hence, we must look at what is going on within the school, particularly as it relates to cultural difference, gender issues, learning abilities and learning styles, to see that all students are, in fact, being educated (Kronick, 2000).

Universal Free Education

A cultural value that has been part of America since its founding is the notion of universal free education. Universal free education is a requirement for democracy. At the same time, is school for everyone? Students, when asked the main reason why they leave school, say that school was not for them. This has been the response for almost 40 years. Why is school not for every student? We must see how the curriculum can become sensitive to the needs of each and every student. Hargis (1998) proposes curriculum-based assessment. His notion of curriculum-based assessment is that we should tailor the curriculum to the child rather than force the child into a curriculum or what he calls "a lock-step." The one guarantee we have from a lock-step curriculum is casualties.

If school is not for everyone and if we move away from the long cherished value of universal free education, what are the consequences?

Benefits of Staying in School

What are the benefits of staying in school? To the individual? To the society? Individuals who stay in school tend to have better lives in American society. They improve economically and socially. The

society benefits because the society and the culture are maintained and continued because these individuals have been socialized to the values of what American society and culture is all about. Today, there are many subcultures and even contra cultures that exist within American society that tear at its basic fabric. These are all well and good if they improve society and culture. Oftentimes, however, they tear away from the dominant society and culture.

Who Drops Out and Why?

We are quite capable of finding correlates of dropping out of school—I.Q., race, gender, and socioeconomic status are all positively correlated with leaving school early without a diploma. Low I.Q., low socioeconomic status, non-whites, and males drop out at a higher rate than their counterparts. Girls leave because they are pregnant; boys leave to get a job. The overall reason for leaving school is simply “school is not for me.” The curriculum does not offer these students what they need or value (Kronick & Hargis, 1998).

Curriculum-based assessment is a curricular way to meet the needs of at-risk students. Curriculum-based assessment tailors the curriculum to the child. This individualization of material allows the student to learn at his or her own pace and to avoid the lock-step curriculum where some failures are guaranteed. Curriculum casualties may be defined as “push outs.” They left school through no fault of their own (Kronick & Hargis, 1998).

Non-curricular stressors are found in the home, neighborhood, and national culture. They include: alcohol and drug problems in the family, mental health issues, crime and delinquency, poverty and others. The non-curricular stressors are now being handled by school-based services within a full service school (Dryfoos, 1994; Kronick & Hargis, 1998; Kronick, 2000).

To separate the two factors that operate in an at-risk child's life is artificial. A child who has to contend with non-curricular factors in his or her life most likely attends a school with a lock-step curriculum.

The focus of this book, however, is on non-curricular factors that play a part in a student's decision to leave school early. The central point to remember is that it is too easy to find the reasons for this solely within the child. We must look at the interaction between the child, the school, and the environment, including the family and neighbor-