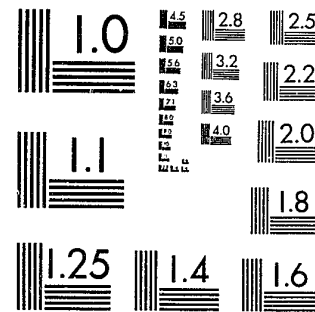


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An Exploratory Survey of School Based Delinquency Prevention Programs in British Columbia



Province of British Columbia
Ministry of Attorney General

POLICY PLANNING DIVISION
RESEARCH AND EVALUATION UNIT

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AN EXPLORATORY SURVEY
OF SCHOOL BASED
DELINQUENCY PREVENTION PROGRAMS
IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

by

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April 1981

Under the Direction of:
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PREFACE

The following study is one of a number of delinquency prevention studies undertaken by the Research and Evaluation Unit, Policy Planning Division. The intention of this study is to provide the Ministry of Attorney General and other interested parties with information about school-based delinquency prevention programs in the province. This work complements current evaluations of family and youth counselling programs for "pre-delinquents" and a comprehensive review of the general literature in the area of delinquency prevention.

The rationale for selecting school-based prevention programs as a focus of investigation was twofold: first, it was evident that prevention activities in school settings were a crucial area in any overall delinquency prevention planning and development project; secondly, it seemed wise to survey, at least on an exploratory basis, the extent and nature of current prevention efforts in B. C. schools.

Although there are limitations to the study, the following paper does provide an overview of the current types of programs endorsed by school districts. Of equal importance are the pertinent issues about evaluations of such programs, some of which the report addresses.

Completion of this project was possible only with the assistance of Lynne Clark who provided not only library services, but who also patiently compiled the survey data and commented on the results. Judith MacLeod and Cheryl-Lyn Jones prepared and typed the final draft. Suggestions about the project's design were provided by Wendy

Rowe and Gary Sagar. Direction and editorial assistance was provided by Sandra Edelman. Finally, special thanks are extended to the school district staff who took time from their busy schedules to share information about the delinquency prevention programs within their districts.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

An exploratory study was undertaken during the summer of 1980 to determine the nature and extent of school-based delinquency prevention programs in British Columbia and to establish whether such programs had been evaluated. The study involved two major tasks:

1. A comprehensive search of literature (including government documents) with a view to gathering information pertaining to Canadian and American programs. The search dealt with the period 1965-1980 and examined all relevant reports and evaluations. Most of the information was obtained from criminological or educational sources and was employed in a comparative context. A brief discussion of the programs (including nature and size of target population, research instruments utilized, and theoretical perspectives) is provided in the main body of this report.
2. A questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was designed and distributed to the superintendent of each school district in British Columbia (N=74). Fifty-two (70%) questionnaires were returned and critical analysis of the data collected is provided.¹

Prior to the circulation of the questionnaire, informal discussions were held with personnel from a number of agencies in the Vancouver area (i.e., police, school district offices, and Faculty of Education, U.B.C.). The discussions were designed to:

1. The timing of the survey may have conflicted with summer vacations. Under different circumstances the response rate may have been higher.

- a) obtain initial information relating to local programs;
- b) test the extent to which practitioners were aware of the concept of school-based delinquency prevention; and
- c) establish contacts within the criminal justice and education networks.

In addition to an analysis of the results of the two main tasks, the report includes a discussion of the methodological issues related to the evaluation of school-based delinquency prevention programs. This is provided to assist any future research in the area particularly where such a study involves assessing the impact of programs.

In the course of holding the initial informal discussions with the practitioners mentioned above, it became apparent that definitions of, and approaches to, the concept of delinquency prevention programs are diverse. In addition, the area is one that attracts considerable controversy. As a consequence, and given that this report is designed to assist policy makers, the following literature review begins with an outline of both the theoretical and practical underpinnings of delinquency prevention programs. It is hoped that this will crystallize the issues and dissolve some of the apparent confusion amongst practitioners. The discussion is followed by a review of specific programs in Canada and the United States.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

A. THE SCHOOL AND SOCIAL CONTROL

The first, and perhaps most fundamental, issue relates to the role of the school as a vehicle for social control in an area that has, traditionally, belonged to the family. Pegler suggests that:

The control that once existed seems to have been misplaced or possibly the concept control has been abdicated to other social institutions. The police...and the schools have all been given the task of doing what the family unit was supposed to do. (Pegler, 1976:10)

On one side of the debate are those who see the school as the most logical vehicle for social control. Such a view, however, does not extend to a point where schools become involved in the imposition of sanctions; a function normally performed by each provincial judicial system. Rather, the assumption which advocates of school prevention programs make is that 'appropriate' behaviour can be learned.

The most critical need is to change education policies to prepare students for constructive personal and social behaviours. Such change in educational policy and focus is the key to decisive impact on the problem of juvenile delinquency. (Wenk, 1974:237)

This position is challenged by those who point to the possibility that schools are, in fact, precipitators of juvenile delinquency.

In response to such allegations a number of writers have pointed to the possibility that schools are being used as scapegoats and that there is a popular tendency to blame such institutions for all the ills of the juvenile population. The American Federation of Teachers,

for example, have expressed annoyance at the fact that schools have been singled out and pressured into accommodating delinquency prevention programs. Then, responsibility for the failure of such programs is passed immediately to the institution in a short-sighted avoidance of broader considerations.

[Critics] tend to overlook a whole set of factors...They say nothing about the economic crisis that the schools and society in general are faced with in the 1970s...(McPartland and McDill, 1977:81)

Suggestions have also been made that involvement of agencies external to the school in the planning of prevention programs has not assisted effective implementation. In most instances, such criticisms are directed toward programs that involve the police. Concern has been expressed that:

- a) the police are not experienced as educators and, therefore, are not equipped to promote attitudes or behaviour changes without presenting value-laden ideas;
- b) instead of engaging in a formal prevention program, police officers are asked to undertake official investigative duties in instances where parents and school officials normally would be the only interveners; and
- c) the participating police officers all too often become inundated with school disciplinary problems.

No sound conclusions have been reached regarding the validity of any of these competing views.

B. CONCEPTUAL CONFUSION

A second problem concerns determining precise definitions of the terms 'delinquency' and 'prevention'. In Canadian law, 'juvenile delinquency' refers to officially sanctioned acts under the Juvenile Delinquency Act. However, a brief perusal of the literature indicates that in practice there is very little consensus on what is a juvenile delinquent. In fact, definitions of delinquency range from behaviour as broad as "adolescent misconduct" (Phillips and Kelly, 1979:198) to behaviour as precise as "the deliberate commission by a juvenile of an act he knows violates the juvenile code in such a way that if caught he is liable to judicial response..." (Gold, 1978:290). The various assumptions and perspectives underlying this range of opinion indicate that the area of juvenile delinquency is replete with conceptual ambiguity complicated by competing ideologies.

The most obvious examples of complications that result from inadequately conceptualizing 'delinquency' can be found within the context of evaluation reports. In many instances, evaluations of programs, concerned with behaviour perceived as delinquent, use delinquency recidivism rates (i.e., the official determination) as a measure of program success. But programs, particularly school-based ones, usually operate with their own carefully defined definition of delinquent behaviour which may or may not correspond to the definition applied in a Juvenile Court. (For our purposes, delinquency refers to official sanctions by the Court.)

Conceptual inadequacy can also result in a confusion of varying perspectives on delinquency prevention. This can lead, ultimately, to

a breakdown in communication between program personnel. This is particularly evident in programs with multi-agency involvement. Peter Rothe, a professor of Education at the University of British Columbia and a research associate with the Education Research Institute of British Columbia suggests that multi-agency involvement frequently culminates in ideological division.² The varying definitions of delinquency seem to carry with them 'belief-sets' that may not be easily merged. For example, it cannot always be assumed that an apparent degree of consensus denotes full acceptance on the part of relevant decision makers of decisions that do not correspond with their actual beliefs. Thus, a delinquency prevention program may be endorsed by both education and justice system officials but the goals of an evaluation of the program may differ in focus; an educational researcher might emphasize the content validity of the program and whether students' knowledge about issues has increased while a justice system oriented researcher might focus on whether delinquency rates have been reduced. These emphases are not incompatible although researchers, depending on their orientations, might not consider it appropriate or necessary to define and examine all aspects of program effectiveness.

The term 'prevention' is also fraught with definitional problems. The following categories of 'prevention' are those frequently found in research reports:

a) primary action

2. Personal Conversation, July, 1980.

b) primary prevention

c) secondary prevention.

A brief description of each category follows:

Primary action incorporates the assumption that pre-identification of delinquency is not relevant to its function. It is an action designed to enhance the quality of life of a random or general population. An example of this would be guest lectures given by police officers to classes of school children.

The term primary prevention refers to strategies that assume that certain populations are generally predisposed to delinquency (i.e., at risk populations). "Primary prevention rests on the assumption that there is a need to insulate the entire population at risk from the predisposing conditions" (Report of the Task Force on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency, 1976:4). An economically depressed area or "ghetto" might be singled out as a potential breeding ground for delinquents and therefore may receive a special police-school liaison program.

Secondary prevention focuses on children who are identified as being potentially delinquent. Although there has not been an official determination of delinquency, individuals have been identified as predisposed to later delinquency. Thus, those who have been officially sanctioned are excluded from this category. By analyzing literature and by interviewing a variety of program practitioners, the author suggests that intervention following official sanctioning (i.e., "tertiary" intervention) is all too often confused with secondary prevention.

Frequently, categorization of programs according to these levels or types of prevention is ignored by program planners. But, awareness of the inherent assumptions underlying a prevention strategy is important in determining program rationale, and program objectives. Since program staff often fail to acknowledge causal assumptions underlying the programs they advocate, confusion may develop regarding the development and implementation of a conceptual plan. This confusion is accentuated when evaluation is planned.

The above categories represent one way of identifying different prevention strategies. Lundman, McFarlane and Scarpitti (1976) suggest another method for categorizing prevention efforts. Prevention activities can be described as punitive, corrective, or mechanical.

A punitive prevention model is based on the assumption that threat of punishment will deter delinquent acts. The use of this method involves increasing awareness of the consequences of these acts (e.g., law courses, correctional facility visits).

Corrective prevention models are based on the premise that there are underlying causes of delinquency behaviour; for example that there is a causal relationship between school failure and delinquency.

School programs particularly exemplify this model...projects centered in the schools typically involved smaller classes with diversified and expanded curricula; remedial writing, reading and arithmetic are also generally emphasized (Lundman, et al, 1976:300).

To prevent further delinquency, it is assumed the underlying problems must be corrected or resolved.

The mechanical prevention model works on the 'obstacle course' principle (Lundman et al, 1976:299). The more difficult it is to commit delinquent behaviour, the less such behaviour occurs. The most obvious example of this model is found in vandalism prevention. The use of unbreakable glass, closed-circuit T.V.'s, wire fencing and other environmental design factors are all well-documented techniques (White and Fallis, 1979).

While further analysis of these issues is beyond the scope of this report, their impact on program implementation and evaluation cannot be understated. Throughout the following text, illustrations of their role in the design of programs and evaluations will be provided.

C. SPECIFIC PROGRAMS

A review of programs was undertaken for two reasons:

- a) to establish a comparative framework; and
- b) to provide guidelines for evaluation recommendations.

Initial examination of the literature revealed substantive documentation on delinquency prevention programs in general. However, on closer scrutiny, it was apparent that most reports were of limited value for this research.

Many studies dealt with programs that were not school-based or concentrated on juveniles who had been identified as delinquent (that is, they had been processed by the criminal justice system). In addition, the research methods utilized were largely inadequate, for example, consisting of nothing more than subjective descriptions. Further, the information generated by the research was often difficult

to assess, being presented as a summary report or project log. Only a few of the programs had been subjected to rigorous evaluation. Of those studies directly related to this research (i.e., dealing with evaluation of school-based programs) none provided meaningful or valid measures of delinquent behaviour.

With these problems in mind, a brief discussion of the two main program categories - Police-School Liaison and Alternative Schools/Classes - will be provided. Examples of each have been selected to highlight the basic features of the programs within each category.

a) Police-School Liaison

Police-school liaison programs are the most popular and most extensively documented category of school-based delinquency prevention programs (Bouma & Williams, 1972). From the first recorded program in Flint, Michigan, to the most recent one in Calgary, Alberta, the format and focus of these programs has remained virtually unchanged. Bouma, in Kids and Cops (1969), conducted a content analysis of a variety of these programs and identified several objectives common to such programs:

- to establish a basis for cooperation between the police and the school to prevent crime and delinquency
- to foster a positive attitude between the police and students
- to improve the police image within the community
- to provide a basis for police to work with teachers in dealing with problem youth.

These programs primarily involve a structured liaison between the local police department and the schools, aimed at facilitating positive student attitudes toward the police and the law; the implication being that positive attitudes will prevent delinquent behaviour. The 'treatment' method operates on two levels - formal and informal. The formal level consists of team teaching (police officer and teacher) on law-related matters with most classes receiving one lecture per year. Structured law classes, however, are taught throughout the year and students are therefore exposed extensively to law-related matters in these courses. The informal level consists of facilitating positive interaction between students, teachers, and police. Generally, police lecture on specific topics such as bicycle safety, and drinking and driving, or they become involved in extracurricular activities.

The underlying assumption, and one which is made often explicit, is the positive effect these programs will have on reducing delinquency. However, of those programs that have been evaluated, no connection has been found between increased positive attitudes and reductions in delinquency recidivism rates (Gibson & Jones, 1978). Many evaluations are seriously flawed methodologically: they fail to control adequately for demographic factors, and they fail to use randomized control groups.

Bouma and Williams (1972) examined evaluations of police-liaison programs in two Michigan state schools. Both evaluations used experimental designs with pre-post test measures. Awareness of the program by the entire student population was examined during the

second stage of the program, pre-post testings of attitudes toward the police and law enforcement were conducted; and interviews were carried out to ascertain the reaction to the program by students, school officials, and the community in general. Results indicated that most students were aware of the program and that attitudes toward the program and the police were favourable. Pro-police attitudes declined considerably in the control school. It was suggested by Bouma and Williams, and in a separate report by Geisler (1975), that police-school liaison programs can maintain existing, positive attitudes held by students about the role of the police and the law, but they cannot change or alter poor or negative attitudes. This type of conclusion is corroborated by findings that positive attitudes held by the control students' decline when no effort is made to support and maintain them.

In Bouma and Williams' study, the program evaluations did not relate delinquency rates or behaviour to the program's impact. The assumption is that positive attitudes foster non-involvement in delinquencies, but the validity of this assumption lacks empirical evidence.

b) Alternative Schools and Classes

Most of the alternative schools and classes, studied by researchers, consist of built-in, standardized, educational programs for delinquency prevention. As such, they involve a varied collection of strategies and methods. These include teaching law, counselling by police, the provision of special courses and classes for the

"delinquent-prone" (utilizing graduate students and public agency personnel), and the coordination of public services.

This category of delinquency prevention programs operates on the premise that school failure is somehow causally related to delinquent behaviour. "School problems, failure in school work...are often judged to be a common source of frustration and alienation which motivates delinquent conduct" (Wheeler and Cottrell, 1966:17). From this premise a whole range of "programs" have evolved, usually in the form of special classes, courses, and alternative schools for juveniles. Educators seem to be admitting to a failure to accommodate these special children and are making amends by offering special individualized programs (Moore, 1961).

Gold (1978), in his discussion of alternative schools, provides a thorough, etiological examination of delinquent behaviour culminating in a well-defined proposal for alternative schools. Yet, there is little indication that when delinquency prevention alternative school programs are designed and evaluated that success is judged in terms of the frequency of youth involvement in delinquent activities following intervention. Or, if it is, the reliability of the evaluation is questionable. As a result, the conclusions drawn are largely untenable. Rather than attempting to assess empirically the impact of alternative schools on delinquency, charges such as the following are made: "Schools are guilty of neglect" (Wenk, 1974); "The school itself may be in control of major social psychological forces that generate delinquency" (Gold, 1978:290); and "School failure has long been seen as a cause of juvenile misconduct..." (Phillips and Kelly,

1979:194). In general such conclusions should in fact be the basis for investigating the validity of these charges and could form the foundation or rationale for program implementation. In this manner, then, the effectiveness of alternative classes or schools in preventing delinquency should be assessed properly.

CHAPTER III: BRITISH COLUMBIA SURVEY

As indicated in the introduction, the second major task undertaken involved the distribution of a questionnaire to school districts throughout the province. The survey was aimed at gathering information about existing delinquency prevention programs in the schools. The following procedures were adopted:

- a) Preliminary interviews were conducted with prevention program practitioners located within the schools and various police detachments. The objective was to obtain sufficient information to facilitate questionnaire construction.
- b) A survey instrument (questionnaire) was devised to gather information in the following areas:
 - i) number of programs,
 - ii) characteristics and size of the target population,
 - iii) type of delivery strategies,
 - iv) specific intent of program, and
 - v) evaluation results (if any) (see Appendix 1).
- c) The questionnaire was mailed to 74 of the 75 school districts in British Columbia with a request that it be returned by the District Superintendent of Schools. (The outstanding school district had indicated, prior to the distribution of the questionnaire, that it did not have such programs.)
- d) Returned questionnaires were coded and basic frequencies were computed. A 70% response rate from the questionnaire was obtained (as of September 1980).

There are a number of limitations affecting the interpretation of the survey results.

- a) The districts which did not respond to the questionnaire could very well have programs, but chose not to complete the questionnaire.
- b) Those districts which did not respond and those that responded and that stated they have no programs in their district might have various explanations for why no programs exist. For example, there may be a lack of resources or of interest in delinquency prevention programs, or some respondents may not have included "alternative" types of programs because they doubted that such programs aimed sufficiently at delinquency prevention. This survey, however, did not focus on eliciting such explanations.
- c) Some districts (n=3) did indicate they have no programs per se, but consider that much of what occurs in the school setting has a bearing upon the future, law-abiding behaviour of youths. Also, these districts pointed out that having no identifiable program does not prevent districts from promoting close working relations between the schools and the police.
- d) Although no district mentioned it, the John Howard Society of British Columbia has been operating a province-wide educational program, entitled "What Breaking The Law Can Mean To You", at the grade eight to ten levels since 1977. Also, a drinking/driving CounterAttack School Program was piloted

in secondary schools during the 1979-80 school year. Again, no mention was made of this program although it may be considered part of the Police-School Liaison programs. This illustrates the fact that there are undoubtedly delinquency prevention-type programs in existence which we are still unaware of regardless of this survey's effort to arrive at a more complete picture.

- e) One district responded that they provide courses on law as a type of delinquency prevention program. Because it is likely that all high schools offer a law course, at least as an elective, this type of 'program' has been excluded from the survey results.

With the above caveats in mind, we can now turn to a discussion of the survey results.

A. SURVEY RESULTS

Of the 52 responses (70% of the schools surveyed), 24 (46%) school districts had delinquency prevention programs in operation. Of the 24 school districts with delinquency prevention programs: 12 districts each had only one type of program; 7 districts each had 2 types; 3 districts each had 3 types; and 2 districts each had 4 types of programs making a total of 43 separate delinquency prevention programs in B.C. schools.

B. TYPE OF PROGRAMS

Table 1 presents the types and numbers of principle programs in

operation throughout the province.³ The programs have been categorized according to the major objectives and activities attributed to them by the respondents. Thus, "Rehabilitation" classes or programs and "Alternative" schools and classes have been combined. Also, those programs that indicated that work experience was a major part of the activities have been combined into another general category. (A fuller description of each program type will follow.)

It will be noted that "Alternative Education and Rehabilitation" programs are the most common type of program in B.C. Schools. They are followed by "Work Incentive-Education" programs and Police-School Liaison Programs. The remaining programs focus on specific social issues such as drug awareness, they utilize special support teaching or counselling, or they aim at general, preventive delinquency/educational awareness activities at the elementary school level.

3. For purposes of confidentiality, school districts will not be identified. The districts which responded were plotted on a provincial school district's map to determine whether regions were over or under-represented. It was discovered that all regions (i.e., the North, the Interior, the Kootenays, the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island) are represented fairly evenly throughout the province.

Table I
Types of Programs

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Police-School Liaison	6	14
Alternative Education and Rehabilitation	23	53
Special Support/Liaison Teacher/Counsellor	5	12
Human Development/Achievement	2	5
Alcohol-Drug Awareness	1	2
Work Incentive-Education	<u>6</u>	<u>14</u>
Total:	43	100%

C. DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAMS

a) Police-School Liaison

Six programs of this nature are in operation in the province. Four programs are organized by the RCMP and two by municipal forces. Despite their operation by different police units, the programs follow the same basic format.

Programs are designed to reach an entire school population and vary according to the level of school children being addressed. For example, kindergarten children have structured activities including "Safety Bear's Rules", police car visits, "Block Parents", and pedestrian safety. Grade one activities include Block Parents (to enable students to recognize through visual aids when to use a block parent), "Hazardous Symbols" (so students can identify and understand the meaning of hazardous symbols), and "Officer Friendly" (so students will realize the police officer is a friend and approachable). Other elementary school activities or lessons include Bicycle Safety,

"Stranger Danger", History of the RCMP, Anti-Vandalism, "Why Do We Have Laws", and Drug Abuse. Junior secondary schools focus on mock trials, rape prevention, drug education, vandalism, shoplifting, the police role in society and the history of RCMP. Senior secondary level students are exposed to programs on impaired driving education, defensive driving, and rape prevention.

The program content is delivered through a series of lectures drawn from a standard manual, film presentations, and promotional packages of literature, posters and other materials. Lectures are conducted by police officers ranging in frequency from weekly visits to biannual visits. On a more informal basis, police officers also visit or "drop-into" the schools and some provide counselling and advisory services to interested students.

b) Alternative Education and Rehabilitation

Twenty-three programs of this nature are in operation in the province. These programs are designed to serve the needs of a selected groups of students located in a 'separate' school, a 'separate' school attached to a regular school but functioning separately, or in 'separate' classes in a regular school setting. These programs are found at both the elementary and secondary level, although the majority are for older students (ages 12-17). Certain features tend to be shared by many of the programs. These include: a more flexible, individualized curriculum to meet the specific needs of the students; vocational and life skills training; and recreational activities. Improvement of social and emotional functioning and improved self-image are also common goals.

Emphasis on different areas tend to vary according to the age levels of the target groups. For instance, vocational skills are frequently listed as goals for older students, whereas programs for younger children do not have a work-related component. All programs, however, are designed to reach youths demonstrating behavioral and emotional problems. Also, at the secondary level, the programs are often aimed at students who are potential early leavers, students who have returned to the school system, and students who are known delinquents.

c) Work Incentive-Education

Six programs of this nature are in operation. The programs are similar in philosophy to the Alternative Education and Rehabilitation programs. However, two features seem to distinguish the Work Incentive program: (1) there is an emphasis on providing work skills and work experience (and at least one program includes wages for the work), and (2) the youths involved are often juveniles on probation. (One special program included in this category operates in a camp setting for youths "who have had a conflict with the legal system".) The programs also include some form of academic upgrading and life-skills training.

d) Special Support/Liaison Teacher/Counsellor

Five programs of this nature are in operation in the province. The programs intend to provide integrated services such as counselling and liaison activities between the student (referred due to behavioral problems), the parents and the school. Counselling sessions are held with individual youths, with parents, and with the family as a group.

Other Ministries such as Human Resources and Attorney General may have involvement with the youth, and accordingly they are kept informed of the youth's progress. In-school special classes also may be held with these youths to upgrade education and to improve attitudes and self-image. Out-of-school community and home activities such as recreation and behavioral monitoring are arranged by some programs.

e) Human Development/Achievement

Two programs of this nature were identified. The programs are directed at a general population of elementary school students. The aim is to guide children to be tolerant of each other, to understand more about themselves and their interaction with others, and to improve their attitudes toward society. These programs are considered to engender indirectly positive attitudes about the law and appropriate law-abiding behavior.

f) Alcohol-Drug Awareness

This program was described as a pilot project aimed at "increasing student ability to resist involvement in alcohol and drugs". While the target group consisted of students in selected elementary school settings, the program counsellors also worked with students identified as being at-risk.

D. LEVEL AND SCOPE OF OPERATION

Fifteen (15) Alternative Education and Rehabilitation programs operate solely at the secondary level in the school districts; five (5) programs operate solely at the elementary level in their respective districts; and three (3) are in operation at both secondary and elementary levels. The Police-School Liaison programs operate at

both the elementary and secondary level. The Work Incentive-Education programs operate at the secondary level. The Special Support/Liaison Teacher/Counsellor programs operate at both the elementary and secondary levels, while the Alcohol-Drug Awareness and Human Development/Achievement programs operate solely at the elementary level.

There are approximately 1,615 public schools throughout the province of British Columbia and approximately 511,671 public school students enrolled in these schools.⁴ The twenty-four school districts that indicated they had delinquency prevention programs account for 731 public schools (45% of the total number of public schools) and have a student enrollment of 269,698 (53% of the total B.C. school population).⁵ Although, not all of the 731 schools necessarily participate in all of the programs in their respective districts (with the exception of those districts which have the Police-School Liaison program), it seems that the Alternative programs and special classes are organized in such a way that most schools within the district catchment area can refer youths to the program.

E. TARGET POPULATIONS

Table II provides details of the programs' target populations. It will be noted that the primary targets are students who are deemed

4. Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Report on Education, 1978-1979, Province of British Columbia.

5. Those districts which responded that they have no program have an approximate student enrollment of 144,556 or 28% of the provincial enrollment while those districts which did not respond have an approximate student enrollment of 97,417 or 19% of the provincial student population. (C.B.C. Public and Independent School Enrolment Information 1979/80.)

to have behavioral problems and those deemed to be potential early leavers. The category 'Other' includes students referred by a law enforcement or social service agency (Probation, Ministry of Human Resources) and students who returned to a program, but who have not necessarily been in conflict with the law.

Table II
Target Population

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
All students (at elementary or secondary level or both)	9	21
Students Demonstrating a Behavioral Problem	13	30
Potential Early Leavers	2	5
Combination of B) & C)	15	35
Other	<u>4</u>	<u>9</u>
Total:	43	100%

F. Program Goals and Objectives

Table III provides details of the major and minor objectives of each program. It will be noted that the principle goal of programs is to reduce delinquent behavior (both within the school itself and in a more general context). Approximately 60% of the programs considered another principle goal was to improve attitudes towards the law and the police. For many programs, this is only a minor objective.

The 'Other' category includes: improving self-esteem, upgrading academic skills, improving work skills, improving life skills, and increasing awareness about alcohol and drugs.

Table III
Program Objectives*

	<u>Major</u>	<u>Minor</u>
Reduce Delinquent Behavior	29	11
Reduce Delinquent Behavior Within the School	14	19
Improve Attitudes Toward the Law	14	15
Improve Attitudes Toward the Police	12	16
Increase Awareness of the Law	9	16
Other	13	2

*One respondent did not indicate aims, either major or minor.

G. Delivery Strategy

Thirty-two (74%) of the programs have a routinized schedule involving daily contact with students. Nine programs (21%) operate under some form of scheduling, such as weekly or monthly or bi-yearly, or a combination of both a scheduled and unscheduled approach. Two programs operate on an unscheduled basis.

Thirty-three (76%) of the programs have specified formats and operate within a classroom. Most of these programs also include informal classroom delivery techniques and counselling techniques. Nine programs use informal classroom delivery techniques only. Of all the programs, twenty-three (53%) involve some form of recreational activities (e.g., sports, field trips).

H. STAFF

All programs involve school teachers. In addition, thirty-five involve counsellors (child-care workers, staff from the Ministry of

Human Resources), and seven involve volunteers. Thirty-two of these programs also make use of other outside personnel on a regular basis, including Ministry of Attorney General and Human Resources staff, R.C.M.P. and municipal police, merchants, and teachers' aides.

I. PROGRAM AIDS

Materials and equipment used in the programs range from standard school aids to program manuals, films and woodworking materials. Specific mention was made in 19 programs that films and program manuals (containing structured lecture topics) are used.

J. FUNDING

Thirty (70%) of the programs receive outside funding, in particular from the Ministries of Attorney General and Human Resources.

K. EVALUATION

Twenty respondents indicated that some form of program evaluation, either had taken place or was being conducted on an on-going basis. Thirteen evaluations had been conducted by outside agency personnel (e.g., Ministry of Human Resources). But, many of these evaluations had been informal, based only on the perceived satisfaction of youths and their parents. In addition, many program staff conduct weekly progress evaluations of youths involved in the Alternative Education and Rehabilitation programs, the Work-Incentive programs, and the Special Support Teacher programs. Assessment of student progress or change in these types of programs may be measured in terms of: reduced absenteeism; increases in academic skills, vocational skills, and life skills; improved social behavior; and improved self-image.

No program has been rigorously evaluated in terms of success in reducing or preventing juvenile delinquency in contrast to a control group or comparison group. In fact most programs will not evaluate themselves or monitor their client population in terms of delinquency measures such as frequency rates of delinquent behavior. Only one program, one of the six Police-School Liaison programs, indicated that an evaluation of the program in terms of delinquency prevention had been conducted. In the study, it was reported that there had been a 4.6% decrease in juvenile delinquency rates in the community; the assumption being that this decrease was attributable to the Police-School Liaison program.

L. SUMMARY

In summary, it is apparent that most delinquency prevention school programs operate in an Alternative school or class milieu (including Rehabilitation classes and Work-incentive programs), aimed at providing selected students with an individualized curriculum. The principle target population consists of students who are seen as potential early school leavers and those deemed to have behavioral problems. These programs for the most part can be considered secondary prevention programs, according to the schema presented in the literature review, because they focus on identified youths. However, there were at least four such programs which specifically accommodated adjudicated delinquents; these programs can be regarded as "tertiary" prevention/intervention efforts.

The second largest group of programs are the Police-School Liaison programs. The target population is drawn from the entire

school population and accordingly can be considered primary action delinquency prevention efforts because of the focus on a random population of youths. No programs seem to fit within the category of primary prevention which focuses on specific populations considered at risk (such as youth in economically depressed areas).

This brief report of data indicates that most programs operate within the standards of educational philosophy. That is, the most prevalent theme is that these programs teach skills, be they social or practical (e.g., work). But, at the same time, a link or assumption is made that this learning process might have some impact on the prevention or reduction of delinquent behavior. This is indicated by the fact that a large number (67%) of respondents claimed that reduction of delinquent behavior is a major intent of their program.

CHAPTER IV - EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS

On the basis of evaluation reports returned with the questionnaires, it was apparent that most of the school-based delinquency programs had not been evaluated according to recognized methodological standards. It is hoped that the following information will provide the reader with some guidelines for the proper evaluation of school-based programs.

An initial discussion of evaluation techniques will be provided, followed by specific recommendations for Alternative Education and Rehabilitative Programs and Police-School Liaison Programs. Although, not all levels of evaluations can be considered within this report, two major levels have been selected by the author as being particularly relevant to the subject matter of this report.

Evaluations are usually carried out to determine how successful a particular strategy or activity is towards achieving its objectives. That is, was the desired outcome attained? Measuring program outcome, however, does not necessarily provide evidence that program activities are causally linked to program effects. Other extraneous variables that can affect these program outcomes (e.g. maturation) must be controlled. This can be done by comparing the program population to a non-program randomized control group or a similar comparison population. It is also important to determine that program effects have occurred as a result of planned program activities. If the program has not been implemented in the manner that it was planned, then it is impossible to determine program effectiveness.

Regardless of the nature of the evaluation, the first step of the evaluator should be to state clearly and specifically every feature of the program. This information may serve the evaluator by clarifying the program's content. Often, it can lead also to an examination of current objectives and may facilitate alternative program designs.

Types of preliminary information required for a summative evaluation (measuring the impact of a program) or information required for a formative evaluation (measuring the operation or processes of a program) includes the following:

- a) students' activities
- b) teachers' activities
- c) other personnel involved
- d) instruments/materials being used
- e) rationale
- f) intensity of delivery
- g) delivery strategy
- h) demographic, social and political characteristics
- i) outside agency involvement and
- j) budget.

While many may argue that given time and other constraints obtaining such a wealth of information is not feasible it is vital that an accurate assessment of the program's operations precede an impact assessment.

A. FORMATIVE OR PROCESS EVALUATION

The first and simplest level of program evaluation is known as formative or process evaluation. "The formative evaluator's job is not only to describe the program, but also to keep a vigilant watch over its development and to call the attention of the program staff to what is happening" (Morris and Fitz-Gibbon, 1978:25). It provides a quality control check.

A formative evaluation focuses on describing and determining the relationship between program objectives and goals, program operations and various intervention strategies, the target population, program resources and administrative structure, and program outcomes. Formative evaluation does not concern itself with establishing cause and effect relationships between program activities and program outcomes but rather only with describing and establishing a possible correlation between these events. Formative evaluation is an ongoing process intended to produce specific suggestions for improving the effectiveness of a program.

This type of analysis is of particular importance to school-based delinquency prevention programs because:

- a) most have not yet been evaluated,
- b) most are poorly conceptualized,
- c) most program objectives are vague, and
- d) most lack explicit causal hypotheses.

Formative evaluation can assist in clarifying competing ideologies that may not have been realized at the planning stage. As Dr. Peter Rothe of U.B.C. pointed out, this can be a confounding factor that will detract considerably from a program.⁶ "But, if detected, controversies over alternative ways to implement the program might lead the formative evaluator to conduct small-scale pilot studies, with newly developed program material and activities" (Morris and Fitz-Gibbon, 1978:26).

6. Personal Conversation, July, 1980.

Finally, formative evaluation should reveal the assumptions underlying causal hypotheses about program activities and program objectives. Uncovering assumptions about program effects was one of the most difficult tasks required in the analysis of programs described in school survey responses. For example, this researcher was required to infer, in many cases, that programs aimed at teaching work skills to a group of potential early leavers was also in some way having an effect on delinquency. This causal assumption may in fact be plausible, but it requires that the following types of hypotheses be made explicit, and experimentally tested.

- a) Remaining at school beyond the permissible leaving age is negatively related to delinquency;
- b) Leaving school at the permissible leaving age without appropriate work skills is positively related to delinquency;
- c) The acquisition of work skills is negatively related to delinquency.

In short, knowledge of the component parts of programs is more important than simply knowledge of the outcome. However, acquiring complete knowledge of the operation of a program is problematic. Unlike the "hard" sciences, education research is usually "time bound, place bound, child bound, and bound to the politics of local school administrators" (Abt, 1976:67).

B. SUMMATIVE OR OUTCOME EVALUATION

Summative evaluation may include or follow formative evaluation. That is, all summative evaluations should include formative evaluation

procedures even though an evaluation of the processes may have occurred at an earlier stage. Where feasible, additional quality control can only enhance the reliability of results.

Summative evaluation is intended to produce a definite statement of a program's effectiveness in terms of its stated goals and objectives, or in direct comparison with other programs having similar goals. A summative evaluation attempts to determine whether the program's effects as specified by the program objectives have been achieved as a result of program activities or the intervention strategy.

While summative evaluation is of particular importance for those in the justice system who are interested in understanding causal relationships, there are those who argue against its true value. For example, it is argued that summative evaluators tend to ignore 'why' questions. Emphasis is placed on measuring or assessing outcome to the complete exclusion of the issue of determining why a given outcome was attained (Hackler, 1978). Therefore, many argue that summative evaluations should be conducted only in conjunction with a process or formative evaluation or not at all.

Summative evaluation "should occur only after the program has had sufficient time to correct its problems and function smoothly" (Morris and Fitz-Gibbon, 1978:50). Most programs undergo a series of growing pains, i.e., processes are in a state of flux at the outset. Applying a summative evaluation too early in the program may result in false negatives. That is, negative conclusions may be drawn about the

efficacy of a program, the impact being a function of implementation confusion rather than its actual operation.

Experimental or quasi-experimental designs are employed in summative evaluations. Ideally, a purely 'scientific' experimental design produces the most reliable results. A pure experimental design requires random assignment of the target or client population to a treatment group and a non-treatment group, to control for extraneous variables, other than the treatment producing program change effects. This design allows for the manipulation of many independent variables such as age and sex as well as of different intervention or treatment strategies.

A quasi-experimental design refers to a situation where it is not possible to assign randomly clients to various treatment groups and a control group. Instead, a comparison group is selected, composed of clients matched on characteristics similar to the experimental group. By measuring the behaviour expected to change in both the treatment and non-treatment comparison group, it is possible to control for some variables other than treatment that could account for change (e.g. maturation). This design is not as powerful as a true experimental design because it may not be possible to match accurately the comparison group to the treatment group on all relevant variables.

In education research, many "variables are inherently manipulable: reinforcement, drill, teaching methods, school and class environments, and certain teaching behaviors" (Kerlinger, 1973:10). However, variables such as home environments, teacher characteristics and student characteristics, are not as readily manipulable. As a consequence, they should only be used in quasi-experimental studies.

The following examines some examples of evaluations of school-based delinquency programs.

C. POLICE-SCHOOL LIAISON PROGRAMS

While police-school liaison programs in B.C. have not been exposed to evaluations, it appears that there are a number of police-school liaison programs outside the Province that have been rigorously evaluated. The most recent examples are evaluations conducted by the Winnipeg and Edmonton Police Departments.

Both of the above police department evaluations examined attitude and knowledge variation. They adhered to the standards of pre-post quasi-experimental designs and used a comparison group.

This researcher highly recommends the design of the two evaluations, but with a number of methodological caveats.

The use of juvenile statistics should be approached with caution. If a program is measuring attitudinal or knowledge variation, then juvenile statistics are not relevant. However, if the purpose of the evaluation is to measure variations in delinquency rates, then socio-economic, demographic and political factors must also be controlled. Thus the evaluator should be wary of making causal assumptions that cannot be measured. Furthermore, to enhance generalizability, all limitations of the study should be adequately explained. For example, the Winnipeg report states that:

The juvenile statistics comparison between the experimental and control area suggest that the Program does affect the frequency with which juvenile crimes are committed. It cannot be stated unequivocally, however, that the School Liaison produced these reductions because of the time at which this evaluation was conducted (McFerran et al, 1979:25).

The report failed to explain why the particular time at which the evaluation took place was problematic such that the researcher is obliged to turn to guesswork (e.g., was it a time during which changes occurred in the educational systems, or was it a time of budgetary restraints?).

Apart from this factor, other difficulties were apparent in the study. The time allowed for the evaluation was too short (3 months). Had the researchers used a longitudinal design (that is, interval testing over a longer period), error variance could have been reduced considerably. There is reason to believe that the comparison schools selected were not a proper match to the experimental schools. The comparison schools were located in a rural setting serviced by the RCMP whereas the experimental schools were within the City of Winnipeg and were serviced by municipal police. Although this, and indeed all these limitations, were known to the researchers and attempts made to control for them, the design was not sufficient to eliminate intervening effects including the socio-economics of the subjects' environments.

Finally, evaluators should take into account the possibility that the characteristics of participating police officers (notably, their personalities) could have an impact on the success of programs. While the design of the Winnipeg research may have been appropriate, in light of these issues, the reliability of the results is questionable.

D. ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION AND REHABILITATION

This second major category is perhaps the area most in need of commentary. Among the programs described in the completed

questionnaires, not one tested or made explicit the causal link between education and delinquency. In all but one case, reducing delinquency behavior or increasing positive attitudes toward the police or the law was indicated as a major or minor objective. But, information supplements or program 'evaluation' reports failed to make reference to delinquency or delinquent behavior as a variable. One program report, however, did mention that delinquent behavior was examined in the context of a neighbourhood survey that was conducted, but it was not referred to or explained anywhere else in the report.

Obviously, these educators believe, at an intuitive level, that there is a relationship between education and delinquency/delinquent behavior. But intuition does not develop causal theories, nor does it assist policy makers interested in delinquency prevention.

E. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The author recommends that, without exception, a process evaluation should be carried out for all programs. The process evaluation, should involve data collection and analysis on program operations to determine :

- a) the guiding hypotheses;
- b) the nominal and operational definitions
(to insure conceptual clarity);
- c) the operating objectives;
- d) program delivery strategies.

However, should the evaluator wish to follow with a summative evaluation, a quasi-experimental design at least should be used. This approach assumes that effects of influences other than exposure to the

program may be reduced by using reliable statistical techniques. In most alternative school and class settings, use of a control group and random assignment of subjects is not feasible. Students enter and leave the program at different times throughout the year (non-static population), and the curriculum is individualized.

While a within-group analysis may be feasible (given that the curriculum is individualized), this researcher recommends that a longitudinal time series design in combination with such in-group analysis is preferable. Such a design would involve a series of pre and post-test measurements over time of an individual's progress and would allow for some overall group analysis.

CHAPTER V - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This exploratory survey was conducted on the premise that little was known about school-based delinquency prevention programs in British Columbia. The preceding discussion hopefully contributes toward closing this information gap. However, because the survey collected limited information about a large number of programs, more detailed investigations of each program type (i.e., Alternative Education and Rehabilitation; Police-School Liaison, Work-Incentive, etc.) are required to establish fuller descriptions of the programs and to ascertain a useful guide to specific program evaluation requirements.

While a large number of the programs purported to have delinquency prevention as a mandate, this survey indicates that there is considerable confusion surrounding this issue. The lack of conceptual clarity is rampant. Without consensus as to what is being prevented, evaluation of effort or outcome is meaningless.

Considering the degree of outside agency funding, it would seem that funders would be interested in the evaluation of program effectiveness in terms of their stated objectives. All too often, projects incorporating the goal of delinquency prevention fail to collect relevant data which measures this goal. Furthermore, for those programmers who merely suggest that their program has an impact on delinquency prevention, but are not tied to a delinquency prevention mandate, it can only be useful to measure this feature of the program and thereby perpetuate knowledge.

A. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations highlight the principle factors that should be considered by policy makers interested in implementing prevention programs or evaluating existing programs. The first set of recommendations deal specifically with program design but include suggestions for the incorporation of evaluation components. The second set deal solely with evaluation methods.

a) Programs

- 1) Prior to implementation, a consensus should be reached concerning major and minor program objectives. This should include a statement explaining the rationale for the program.
- 2) Based upon the stated objectives, a common target population for all programs should be identified. Procedures for identifying this population should be determined.
- 3) Treatment techniques and strategies should be defined.
- 4) The method of treatment delivery should be established at the outset. As far as possible, treatment methods should be standardized, or where individualized treatments are involved, the organisation of such treatments should be consistently recorded.

b) Evaluation

- 1) The rationale for carrying out the evaluation should be made explicit.
- 2) Nominal operational definitions should be adequately defined.
- 3) A process evaluation should be carried out to determine the program components (see Chapter IV, Evaluation of Programs).

- 4) A time-series design would be preferable in the case of Police-School Liaison programs because of the number of possible confounding variables (particularly history and maturation).
- 5) For alternative schools, classes and special classes, a within-group time series design is suggested. However, in instances where the population sample is static for at least six months, a pre-post test treatment would be feasible. Ideally, the pre-post test design should include follow-up testing.
- 6) Regardless of program type, a pre-post-test pilot study, including the use of a control group and follow-up testing, could be utilized.

Finally, it is arguable that if program managers and funders are not concerned with the effectiveness of a program then a summative evaluation may be unnecessary. Program managers and funders may only be concerned that reliable information about the program is available (i.e., information identified under formative evaluation) and that a system of monitoring the program's operations is in place. But, it should also be clear that the program cannot do social harm. In other words, an education program to increase the general student populations' knowledge and awareness about issues such as vandalism, shoplifting, and so on, on the face of it, would not be harmful: primary action education programs about social issues such as delinquency "can't hurt" students.

On the other hand, a program which selects students for 'special' attention (for example, students demonstrating 'acting out' behavior which in turn is an assumed predictor of delinquency) should proceed with caution. The program should incorporate an impact evaluation because the state-of-the-art of the effectiveness of this type of program still is inconclusive.

APPENDIX I

Juvenile Delinquency Prevention
Program Survey Questionnaire



Province of
British Columbia

OFFICE OF THE
DEPUTY MINISTER

-44-
Ministry of
Attorney-General

Robson Square
140, 800 Hornby Street
Vancouver
British Columbia
V6Z 2C5

Dear

The Research Unit of the Ministry of the Attorney-General is endeavoring to compile an inventory of all school programs in British Columbia that currently address the issue of delinquency prevention. We are interested in programs that have delinquency prevention as a primary objective (e.g., police-liaison programs) as well as those that have delinquency prevention as an unintended or secondary objective (e.g., counselling or special classes for students with behavioral problems).

The intention of the attached questionnaire is to uncover the variety of prevention programs being implemented and the extent to which evaluations have been done as well as the nature of the evaluations. There will not be any attempt to evaluate the individual programs. We are solely interested in determining the variety of programs and designing standards for evaluation.

In view of the two stated objectives the questionnaire will focus on the following areas:

- a) the numbers and levels of schools serviced by a program;
- b) the age groups of the students being serviced;
- c) the method of delivery (e.g., lectures, films, counselling);
- d) the intensity and nature of contact; and,
- e) the extent of evaluation.

Whilst we recognize the difficulties of defining programs of this nature, we would ask that you include any program that you perceive as having a basis in delinquency prevention. Please feel free to qualify your responses if you are dubious as to the legitimacy of including certain programs.

Your cooperation in this endeavour would be most helpful and we would appreciate your response as soon as possible.

Sincerely

Maureen Donovan
Research Officer

MD/ca
b.c.g.e.u.

-45-

MINISTRY OF THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL
RESEARCH UNIT
VANCOUVER, B.C.

SCHOOL DISTRICT _____
(Address, Phone No.)

PROGRAM COORDINATOR _____
(Name and Position)

NO. OF SCHOOLS IN
THE DISTRICT _____

1. Does your district have any delinquency prevention programs currently underway in any or all of your schools?

Yes _____

No _____

- a) If yes, do they take place in:

Secondary Schools _____

Elementary _____

Both of the Above _____

Alternative Schools _____

Other (Please
Specify) _____

2. Does your prevention program(s) differ between schools?

Yes _____

No _____

- a) If yes, please fill out a questionnaire for each one.

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY PREVENTION PROGRAM SURVEY

NAME OF PROGRAM _____

NO. OF SCHOOLS IN PROGRAM _____

1. What was the commencement date of your program? _____

2. Location and Target Population.

We would like to learn about your program's location and who it serves.

a) Is your program located in a: (Check one)

- () rural area (population less than 5,000)
() rural area (main town, 5,000 - 25,000)
() medium sized town but not a suburb (population between 25,000 and 50,000)
() suburban area near an urban centre (regardless of population size)
() large urban area (population over 50,000)

b) Please identify the principal geographical area(s) your program serves.

3. What kinds of students are involved in each of your programs?
(Please indicate grade levels)

- a) All Students _____
b) Law class(es) _____
c) Students demonstrating a behavioral problem _____
d) Potential drop-outs _____
e) Combination of c & d _____
f) Other (please specify) _____

NATURE OF PROGRAM

4. Please indicate which of the following best illustrates your major aims and which illustrates your minor aims (if applicable).

	MAJOR	MINOR
a) reduce delinquent behavior	_____	_____
b) reduce delinquent behavior within the school (e.g., vandalism)	_____	_____
c) improve attitudes toward the law	_____	_____
d) improve attitudes toward the police	_____	_____
e) increase awareness of the law	_____	_____
f) other (please specify)	_____	_____

5. Please provide a brief description of the program's activities.

6. Please indicate which of the following best indicates the intensity of contact with students:

- a) Daily contact.
(Routinized schedule for daily contact) _____
b) Scheduled weekly contact. _____
c) Scheduled bi-monthly. _____
d) Scheduled monthly _____
e) Semester (1 or 2 contacts per semester). _____
f) Yearly (once or twice per year). _____
g) A - D unscheduled - (please specify). _____

7. What form of contact does your program utilize?

- a) Classroom contact with a specified format (e.g., predetermined topic and mode of delivery). _____
b) Informal classroom contact (e.g., question and answer period). _____
c) Counselling. _____
d) Recreational activity. _____
e) Other (please specify). _____

8. STAFF

Please identify the kinds of staff involved in the program:

- a) Teachers _____
b) Counsellors _____
c) Volunteers _____
d) Outside agency personnel _____

(Please specify e.g., police, MHR)

9. We are interested in knowing:

a) The degree of preparation required for program staff (e.g., teacher-police seminars). Please describe the staff preparation which took place.

b) The kinds of instruments of materials used by your staff for the program, e.g., films, lecture manuals. Please list the kinds of aids which the staff have utilized.

FUNDING

10. Has there been any funding provided by outside agencies? (e.g., MHR, police)
- Yes _____
- No _____

EVALUATION

11. Has the program ever been evaluated:
- Yes _____
- No _____
- a) If yes, who conducted the evaluation?
- An independent outside organization (specify) _____
 - Staff _____
 - Funding Agency (specify) _____
 - Other (specify) _____
- b) Would it be possible to obtain a copy of the evaluation?
- Yes _____
- No _____
12. We would be interested in receiving any program brochures that you may have available.

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