

Using School COP

A Guide
for School
Administrators
and Safety Personnel

Tom Rich, *Project Director*

Peter Finn

Shawn Ward

Abt Associates Inc.

Revised 2013



COPS

Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice



BOLD
THINKERS
DRIVING
REAL-WORLD
IMPACT

Using School COP

A Guide
for School
Administrators
and Safety Personnel

Tom Rich, *Project Director*

Peter Finn

Shawn Ward

Abt Associates Inc.

Revised 2013

This project was supported by a Cooperative Agreement 2000-SH-WX-K001 awarded by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions contained herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice. References to specific agencies, companies, products, or services should not be considered an endorsement by the author(s) or the U.S. Department of Justice. Rather, the references are illustrations to supplement discussion of the issues.

The Internet references cited in this publication were valid as of the date of this publication. Given that URLs and websites are in constant flux, neither the author(s) nor the COPS Office can vouch for their current validity.

Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	1
CHAPTER 1: HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE.....	2
CHAPTER 2: OVERVIEW OF <i>SCHOOL COP</i>	4
CHAPTER 3: THE SARA PROBLEM-SOLVING MODEL FOR SCHOOLS.....	6
Scanning.....	6
Analysis.....	7
Response.....	10
Assessment.....	11
CHAPTER 4: CASE STUDY – BULLYING.....	13
Scanning.....	13
Analysis.....	14
Response.....	17
Assessment.....	18
Postscript.....	19
CHAPTER 5: CASE STUDY – TRESPASSING.....	20
Scanning.....	20
Analysis.....	21
Response.....	22
Assessment.....	23
Postscript.....	24
CHAPTER 6: CUSTOMIZING <i>SCHOOL COP</i>	25
Overview.....	25
Tips for Each Code Table.....	28
CHAPTER 7: USAGE TIPS.....	33
CHAPTER 8: DATA QUALITY TIPS.....	38
APPENDIX.....	A-1
ABOUT THE COPS OFFICE.....	40

Acknowledgments

Using School COP: A Guide for School Administrators and Safety Personnel is a collaborative effort. While the Guide was primarily completed by the Abt Associates project team, other Abt Associates staff, COPS Office staff, and anonymous peer reviewers contributed to the Guide by proposing text, recommending resources, and offering suggestions on matters of content, format, and style.

Calvin K. Hodnett and Veh Bezdikian oversaw the project for the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS office).

Chapter 1: How to Use This Guide

This Guide is designed to help *school administrators, police officers assigned to a school, and non-sworn school security staff* reduce student discipline and crime problems using a software application called the School Crime Operations Package, or *School COP*. *School COP* is designed to enable you to record and store detailed information about incidents involving student misconduct and crime so that you can:

- Identify and prioritize problems in your school(s)
- Identify strategies for helping to prevent future incidents
- Determine whether these strategies are helping to address the problem

School COP was developed in 2000 by the Law and Public Policy Area of Abt Associates Inc., a private research company with headquarters in Cambridge, Massachusetts (see the box). The National Institute of Justice, the research and evaluation arm of the U.S. Department of Justice, funded the development of *School COP*. The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), the branch of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing nationwide, funded the development of this Guide.

The Guide is a companion to the *School COP* software package and User Manual and was developed for distribution to attendees of the COPS in Schools training conferences, sponsored by the COPS Office. The attendees at these conferences were school administrators and School Resource Officers (SRO) in jurisdictions receiving COPS in Schools (CIS) grants from the COPS Office. However, even if you did not attend one of these conferences, you will still find this Guide helpful for learning how to get the maximum possible benefit from the problem-solving potential of *School COP*.

About Abt Associates Inc.

Abt Associates is a mission-driven, global leader in research and program implementation in the fields of health, social and environmental policy, and international development. Known for its rigorous approach to solving complex challenges, Abt Associates is regularly ranked as one of the top 20 global research firms and one of the top 40 international development innovators. The company has multiple offices in the United States and program offices in more than 40 countries.

This Guide is divided into three parts and one appendix:

- **Part 1** explains *the purposes and organization* of the Guide (chapter 1) and provides a *brief description of School COP* and additional information (chapter 2).
- **Part 2** discusses school-based problem solving with *School COP*. The widely used and highly effective *SARA model* for solving problems is summarized (chapter 3), and *two case studies* on using the SARA model and *School COP* are presented, one on bullying (chapter 4) and the other on trespassing (chapter 5).
- **Part 3** discusses how best to set up and use *School COP* for problem solving. Topics include *customizing School COP* (chapter 6), *tips for using School COP* (chapter 7), and *tips for enhancing data quality* (chapter 8).
- The **Appendix** shows a number of the *School COP* screens and provides an overall view of the application's 'look and feel.'

Chapter 2: Overview of *School COP*

School COP is a software application developed by Abt Associates Inc. with funding from the National Institute of Justice. *School COP* enables school administrators, police officers assigned to a school, and non-sworn school security staff to:

- Record extensive *data* about student misconduct and crime more quickly than can be done by writing it down
- Help *ensure consistency* in the information recorded because the software prompts the user to enter specific types of information from lists of choices
- Simplify the task of *reporting* information about incidents to school superintendents and school committees
- Keep easily retrieved records regarding each student's *disciplinary and criminal history* in terms of types of misconduct and crimes, and actions taken in response to each previous incident
- Identify students (and faculty) who appear to be repeatedly *victimized* by other students
- *Conduct searches* of misconduct and crime by type of incident, location, month, school, and other variables, and to display the information instantly in *tabular reports*
- Display information about incidents *graphically* (line graphs, bar charts, pie charts), including type of incident, time of day, location, school, and severity
- Identify "*hot spots*" that may benefit from increased adult presence, electronic surveillance, environmental changes, or other preventive measures
- *Map* where incidents occur

Used properly, these features of *School COP* can significantly facilitate the SARA problem solving process. In addition, *School COP* offers other benefits, including helping to:

- Investigate incidents
- Prepare effective visual aides and handouts depicting school safety for meetings with local stakeholders
- Save time preparing monthly and annual school safety reports
- Maintain a work log to help maintain school safety

In order to use *School COP*, you need to:

- Obtain a copy of *School COP* (www.SchoolCOPSoftware.com)
- Install *School COP* on your Windows personal computer (*School COP* cannot be installed on non-Windows computers)
- Learn how to use *School COP*. If you are a computer novice, plan on spending an hour or two teaching yourself to use *School COP* by using the Sample Database that comes with the software. If you have used other database packages, such as Microsoft Access, you will require much less time to learn *School COP*.
- Discuss data confidentiality and privacy issues with school administrators and legal counsel. Since your *School COP* database may contain identifying information on juvenile offenders and victims, a policy must be established on sharing both aggregate and incident-level *School COP* data.
- Customize *School COP* for your school(s). *School COP* does not force schools to adopt a particular way of categorizing and classifying incidents but instead allows you to customize the software to meet your needs. Chapter 6 contains a customization checklist and discusses strategies for customizing *School COP*.
- Establish policies and procedures to ensure that data you enter in *School COP* will be complete, accurate, and timely. Chapter 8 contains a number of data quality tips.

For a more in-depth look at *School COP*, the appendix shows a number of *School COP*'s screens.

Visit the *School COP* website—www.SchoolCOPSoftware.com—for updates, news, support tips, and other information about *School COP*. The User Manual can also be downloaded from the website. Or, contact:

Tom Rich

School COP Project Director

Abt Associates Inc.

55 Wheeler Street

Cambridge, MA 02138

tom_rich@abtassoc.com

617-349-2753 (voice)

617-349-2610 (fax)

Part 2: How To Address Problems with School COP

Chapter 3: The SARA Problem-Solving Model for Schools

Chapter 4: Case Study — Bullying

Chapter 5: Case Study — Trespassing

Chapter 3: The SARA Problem-Solving Model for Schools

As part of an effort to reduce the high number of convenience store robberies in Newport News, Virginia, police officers worked with researchers to develop a problem-solving model that could be used to address any type of crime or misconduct.¹ The result was the SARA model, which—as discussed below—has four stages: Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment. Since the mid-1980s, many other police agencies have adopted the SARA model to guide their problem-solving efforts. Although the SARA model is not the only way to approach problem solving, school personnel will find the model helpful for solving student discipline and crime problems.

The box and text that follow discuss each of the four SARA steps. Chapters 4 and 5 show how *School COP* can be used in conjunction with the SARA model to help prevent school discipline and crime problems.

The Four Steps in the SARA Model of Problem Solving

Scanning—identifying and selecting a problem

Analysis—examining what is causing or permitting the problem and identifying resources for help with solving the problem

Response—designing and implementing a solution to the problem based on analysis

Assessment—evaluating whether the response reduced the severity of the problem

Scanning

Scanning involves *identifying and selecting a problem*. In the SARA model, a problem is known informally as two or more incidents that are similar in one or more ways and that are of concern to the police and the community. In the school setting, a problem can involve certain types of behavior (e.g., bullying), occurring at specific locations (e.g., the school cafeteria), involving a single person or types of persons (e.g., suspected gang members), and occurring during specific events (e.g., football games).

1. William Spelman and John E. Eck, *Problem Solving: Problem-Oriented Policing in Newport News*, (Washington: DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice and Police Executive Research Forum, 1987).

Of course, you may already know what the serious discipline and crime problems are in your school(s). However, *School COP* will help you determine accurately and document just how widespread each problem is and what are the principal characteristics.

Once you have identified the discipline or crime problems in your school(s), you will need to prioritize them, since it is unlikely you have the time or resources to tackle all of them at once. In selecting a problem or problems to focus on first, you may want to take the following considerations into account:

- The nature and severity of the damage the problem is causing, such as whether and to what extent it:
 - Physically harms other students or teachers (e.g., assaults)
 - Creates fear among other students or teachers (e.g., bullying)
 - Costs money (e.g., vandalism)
 - Disrupts normal activities (e.g., false fire alarms)
- The extent of community and parental concern about the problem and the degree of support that is likely to exist for addressing it
- Interest among teachers, other staff, and students in addressing the problem
- The potential for reducing the severity of the problem

Analysis

This phase in the SARA process involves three steps: determining *what is causing* the problem, *enlisting help* in analyzing the problem, and identifying *individuals with a personal stake* (“stakeholders”) in seeing the problem addressed.

Determine What Is Causing the Incidents

You will not be able to develop a tailor-made response to the problem *unless you know what is causing it or permitting it to occur*. However, there is usually a temptation to skip this phase of the SARA model because the nature of the problem may seem obvious, there may be considerable pressure to address it immediately, and analyzing it may not only take time but also require hard work. If you skip the analysis step, you risk wasting valuable resources on a problem that is not serious (or, worse, does not even exist) or implementing a strategy that is ineffective, because it does not address factors that contribute to the problem or has no chance of reducing the severity of the problem. In addition to being ineffective, the implemented strategy may be considerably more expensive than a strategy that would have been implemented if the analysis step had not been skipped.

To determine what is causing the misconduct or crime in schools, it is important to find out as much as possible about three elements—known as The Crime Triangle—associated with most misconduct and criminal behavior:

- The *offender(s)* who are breaking the rules or committing the crime—in particular, why the individuals are engaging in the behavior
- The *victim(s)* (unless the problem does not involve a victim, as with graffiti, tobacco use, drug possession, or truancy)—for example, to learn whether repeat victims are involved or if the victims are doing something that places them in harm’s way
- The *location* where the misconduct or crime is taking place and its timing—for example, to determine whether certain types of incidents are clustered in a particular location or locations and identify whether and how these locations may be conducive to allowing these incidents to occur

Identify Resources that Can Help Analyze the Problem

A number of resources can assist you in getting the information about the problem that will enable you to analyze it properly, including the following:

- *School COP* can provide a wealth of data that you can obtain through searches, graphic displays, and mapping, ranging from finding out with whom a student has been misbehaving to tracking repeat victimization.
- Police officers assigned to schools, such as School Resource Officers, have often been trained in the SARA or other problem solving approaches. Consult with them. If these individuals do not have training in problem solving, it may be possible to confer with other local law enforcement officers—especially juvenile officers—who specialize in using problem solving to address specific crime problems.
- Implement one of the many published crime environment surveys to systematically assess the physical environment of the locations where the incidents are occurring.
- Interview the offending students and their victims. For example, the offending students may provide important information about how they select their victims or choose locations for their misconduct or criminal behavior.
- Interview other school staff or individuals (e.g., bus drivers, custodial staff, or local businesspeople) that may have information about the problem.

Identify Stakeholders for the Problem Selected

Stakeholders are individuals and types or groups of people that will benefit if the problem is addressed.

Stakeholders may include:

- A particular type of student
- Teachers, counselors, nurses, coaches, and other school personnel
- Parents of victims
- Parents of offending students
- Residents who live near the school(s)
- Owners and employees of businesses located near the school(s)
- School district superintendent or school committee members
- School officials at other schools and school systems
- Local police
- Juvenile court

Enlisting the support of these stakeholders can help substantially with analyzing the problem and devising, implementing, and building support for the solution. However, some communities have found that problem-solving efforts progress most efficiently if only two or three stakeholders—a core group—work on the problem throughout the attempt to address it. Other, more peripheral, stakeholders often have something to contribute at specific stages of the effort but not throughout the entire process.

Identifying “Negative” Stakeholders

It can also be important to identify people and groups that will *oppose* efforts to address the problem or oppose some of the *methods* proposed for addressing it. For example, some parents may object to increasing their efforts to help prevent their children from breaking school rules. Knowing in advance about these attitudes can help you to develop approaches that will not offend these groups. Learning about the prevalence and strength of these attitudes will also let you know whether you should try to enlist support for your effort elsewhere to counteract this anticipated opposition to your solution.

Response

After you have clearly defined and analyzed the problem, you need to develop and implement the most effective response(s). Review your findings about the offending students, victims, and incident location and time. Then *develop creative solutions that will, based on your analysis, address at least two of these three elements.*

There is a natural tendency to revert to traditional responses to address each new problem—even if these responses have not been especially effective or sustainable over the long term. However, creative responses that go beyond traditional response may have a greater effect in reducing the problem. The box suggests a number of nontraditional responses that might be effective in helping to prevent certain types of incidents.

Illustrative Nontraditional Responses to Student Misconduct

- Changing the physical environment—e.g., installing improved lighting in the parking lot
- Installing video monitors or convex mirrors
- Working with parents to help their children to discontinue their misconduct or criminal behavior, or to avoid being revictimized
- Instituting mandatory small classes (not assemblies) on specific problem areas, such as bullying, graffiti, or racial conflict
- Instituting conflict resolution or cultural diversity training
- Implementing a mediation program
- Establishing (with others in the community) a teen court

School administrators, like administrators in other organizations, are often tempted to implement programs or responses that other school systems have used. Although it can be very useful to learn how other communities have successfully addressed similar problems, you need to exercise caution in adopting “off-the-shelf” solutions unless the situations are strikingly similar. The key to developing tailored responses is *making sure the responses are very focused and directly linked to the findings from the analysis phase of the SARA problem-solving process.*

Assessment

School administrators and safety personnel may be reluctant to evaluate their efforts. They may lack the time or expertise, be concerned about confidentiality, or be apprehensive that the results may show that their efforts have failed. However, *assessing an initiative's success is essential for determining whether to continue, revamp, or jettison it.* In addition, many supervisors, including superintendents and school committees, want convincing evidence that a school's efforts to address a disciplinary or crime problem have succeeded.

To evaluate a problem-solving initiative, *it is first necessary to establish the objectives the effort is designed to achieve.* These objectives need to be specific and measurable. Often, it may appear that the objectives are obvious—eliminate bullying, for example. However, rarely are the objectives as clear-cut as they may first seem. First, it is important to realize that problem-solving efforts rarely result in the total elimination of a problem. Second, assessing the impact of a problem-solving effort may require using nontraditional measures for determining effectiveness. For example, with regard to bullying you might identify at least five different types of positive results:

- Reduce the number of incidents involving bullying
- Less serious or less harmful incidents
- Quicker discontinuation of the behavior by offending students
- Improved methods of handling of bullying incidents by school personnel
- School personnel who are better equipped to handle bullying problems in the future

Below are several illustrations of specific measures that would demonstrate whether an effort to address bullying has been effective.

- There have been four bullying incidents during the past three months compared with 10 incidents during the previous three months.
- Before the problem-solving effort was initiated, eight of 10 students victimized by bullies over the previous six months were bullied again within a two-month period. Since the effort was initiated four months ago, only one of four victimized students has reported being bullied again.
- In the past, most students caught bullying were found to have continued the behavior for an average of another two months before they stopped. Since the anti-bullying initiative began three months ago, only one of the last six students caught bullying has been found to repeat the behavior.

- During the last school year, in only two of the 15 incidents of bullying did the victim report the problem (school personnel who witnessed the bullying reported it in the other 13 incidents). During the first six months of this academic year, five of the seven students bullied reported the incident themselves.
- Two students who had been victims of bullying had missed 22 and 16 days of school, respectively, during the three months after the bullying started. During the past three months since the anti-bullying effort began, these students have missed only two and three days of school, respectively.

Recording and retrieving the data necessary for making these kinds of assessments may seem like a daunting and time-consuming task. However, as illustrated in chapters 4 and 5, *School COP* makes the process of entering and analyzing this information relatively quick and easy.

Of course, if the evaluation shows the effort is not succeeding, you will need to change your problem-solving approach. To do this, you may need to conduct additional analyses of the data you already have stored in your *School COP* database or collect and analyze additional information.

Sample Measures That *Cannot* Demonstrate That a Problem-Solving Effort Has Reduced a School Discipline Problem

Many measures commonly used to evaluate problem-solving efforts are not in fact capable of demonstrating that the problem has been reduced. Using the bullying example, the following information would *not* show whether an anti-bullying effort has been effective:

- Ninety-two percent of the entire student body attended an assembly on bullying run by a psychologist.
- Every homeroom teacher devoted 30 minutes of an extended homeroom to discussing bullying.
- Most teachers and all school security personnel were trained in how to identify bullying and the importance of reporting every case of bullying.
- The new anti-bullying policy was distributed to every faculty member.

Chapter 4: Case Study — Bullying

This chapter contains a case study involving bullying that illustrates how *School COP* can be used in conjunction with the SARA model to help address problems in schools. The case study is hypothetical and uses fictitious names.

Lincoln High School, located in a suburb of a large midwestern city, has 1,273 students and 114 faculty. The school does not have a serious crime problem but has experienced its share of discipline problems. In particular, Louise Madison, the principal of Lincoln High School, has recently heard complaints from a few teachers, students, and parents about four main problems; smoking on school grounds, bullying, insubordination, and fighting. The newly appointed School Resource Officer (SRO), Frank Jefferson, has also heard concerns about bullying, in particular. Having found it to be useful in the past, Madison originally decided in March to work with Jefferson to use *School COP* to address all four problems.

At Jefferson's recommendation, Madison decided to apply the SARA problem-solving approach in conjunction with *School COP*. Below is a description of how Madison and Jefferson went about conducting each of the four SARA phases—Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment.

Scanning

Frank Jefferson began by searching the *School COP* database for each of the four problems and documented that, during the current school year from September through February, there had been 20 cases of smoking, 26 bullying incidents, 84 instances of insubordination, and two fights.

After some consideration, Madison felt she did not have the time to tackle all four problems at the same time. She felt that smoking and insubordination, while unacceptable, were “victimless” behaviors in the sense that they did not result in harm to other students. Few teachers and other school personnel felt that the type of insubordination they experienced could not be handled through after-school detention. The two incidents involving fighting had been isolated cases that involved no serious injury.

By contrast, bullying seemed like a serious problem. At a meeting with Frank Jefferson, four guidance counselors, the assistant principal, and the school psychologist, the group concluded that *the following considerations taken together made a compelling case to tackle the problem of bullying first:*

- *The number of bullying incidents was much higher* than the number that the principals at the city's other two high schools reported experiencing even though the student body at the other schools was not very different from Lincoln High School's.
- The number of bullying incidents had been increasing steadily, from 20 the previous year and nine the year before that.
- Bullying was probably *underreported*—indeed, the *School COP* data indicated that in all but four of the 26 incidents it was school personnel who reported the incident, not the victim. Furthermore, many school personnel failed to report bullying, opting instead to handle the incidents on their own.
- Bullying *creates fear*—and not just among its victims but also among other students who are afraid *they* may become victims. Indeed, the school psychologist reported, if allowed to go unchecked, in time, bullying can set the tone for an entire school.
- School attendance records indicated that 12 of the victims *were absent from school* two or more days after the incident—and every student absence resulted in a loss of state aid.
- A year ago, a parent *had complained about bullying* to a school committee member. It would not look good for Lincoln High School administrators if another parent approached the school committee with a similar problem.

Analysis

As part of the Analysis stage of SARA, Louise Madison and Frank Jefferson:

- Identified *resources* that could help them to analyze the problem
- Determined the *underlying causes* of the bullying
- Identified *stakeholders* who could help implement solutions

Identifying resources to help analyze the problem. Madison and Jefferson decided they had the time to tap three sources of information:

- *School COP*
- A brainstorming session involving the assistant principal, the four guidance counselors, the school psychologist, and the teacher association president
- Interviews with a few students who had been bullied and a few students who did the bullying

In April, Madison reassembled the group to share and analyze what they had all learned from using *School COP*:

- **Offenders.** Jefferson found that the same dozen students were involved in almost all the bullying. In more than half the incidents, the offending students were in groups of two or three when they bullied other students. The offenders were not known to be gang members. In nearly half the cases, the bullying appeared to involve male students harassing other male students who were perceived to be “wimps.” Several of the other incidents involved a boy making suggestive comments to a girl but claiming that he was just “flirting.” The rest involved girls commenting sarcastically on other girls’ appearance.
- **Victims.** *School COP* showed that six students were victims in more than one of the bullying incidents. There was no pattern for grade level among victims (or offenders). There was no pattern in the identity of the girls who were victimized in the boy-girl bullying incidents, but the girls bullied by other girls tended to be overweight.
- **Location and Timing.** *School COP* showed that 12 of the 26 bullying incidents occurred right after school in the two parking lots. Three of the bullying incidents occurred right before school in the parking lots or near the main school entrance. The rest took place in the corridors between classes or in the school cafeteria.

Jefferson’s analysis of the *School COP* database showed that 12 of the 26 bullying incidents involved verbal abuse, while seven incidents involved threats, seven involved physical contact (e.g., shoving), and three involved inappropriate gestures.

Finally, based on personal observations and on information in *School COP* regarding actions taken against bullying offenders, members of the group discussed *what efforts the school had made previously to deal with the problem*. Members quickly concluded that in the past school personnel who observed the bullying typically told the offending student(s) simply to “knock it off.” Judging by the repeat behavior of the offenders and the large and increasing number of incidents, this approach had not worked.

Identifying “stakeholders.” Madison reassembled the group to identify individuals and types of individuals who would benefit if the problem were reduced, and to discuss *how the school could enlist the support of these stakeholders* in reducing the severity of the problem. The group decided that they could expect support from:

- Some of the students who had been bullied
- Some of the parents of the victims
- The Student Council
- Some parents in general, including members of the school’s active Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) branch
- Most teachers and other school personnel

The group divided up responsibility for contacting each of these stakeholders to find out:

- Whether they would support the initiative
- How they could lend support
- What they felt, based on the analysis conducted, would be effective and acceptable solutions to the bullying problem

The group decided that presenting a united front by all school personnel—including district level administrators—would be the best way to overcome or neutralize any potential opposition to the initiative that might develop among parents of students caught bullying or among other parents.

Finally, based on everything it had learned, the group came up with *a definition of bullying*. Defining the problem clearly—and with numerous concrete examples—was extremely important to be able to assess later whether the solutions the school implemented to address it were effective. Just as important, the group wanted students—and parents—to know exactly what kinds of behavior represented bullying so that no one, when confronted, could argue that their behavior was just “teasing,” “flirting,” or “horse play.” The SRO was particularly helpful in distinguishing between assault, sexual harassment, and bullying.

Response

A month later, in May, the group met one more time to discuss the specific steps the school could take to address the bullying problem. The group agreed that it would be best to implement strategies early in the fall after the new school year had begun, since there were less than two months remaining in the current school year.

The group came up with the following responses:

- One of the things the group learned from the offenders was that they frequently felt they could get away with bullying because most victims are afraid to report it. The group therefore recommended that the school take the following steps *to encourage reporting*:
 - The principal and SRO would make a joint presentation to the school committee at its monthly meeting in the new school year (which was carried by the local cable TV station) encouraging parents to urge their children report instances of bullying.
 - A guidance counselor and school psychologist would meet with the English department head to ask her to have her teachers devote a class during the first month of the fall semester to a discussion on bullying.
 - At a school-wide faculty meeting in the fall, Madison and Jefferson would ask all teachers to be on the lookout for bullying and to report even minor or ambiguous incidents to the SRO or assistant principal before the end of the day or first thing the following morning.
 - The assistant principal and the SRO would meet with the Student Council to ask it to become involved in reporting any bullying incidents.
 - At meetings and through its quarterly bulletin, the PTA— a highly active group at Lincoln High School—agreed to encourage parents to urge their children to report bullying.
 - All of these efforts would include the message to parents and students that, if necessary, students could report incidents confidentially—that is, the person to whom they reported the incident would agree not to reveal their names to anyone else.
- As part of the effort to encourage reporting, Madison and Jefferson would distribute a written *definition* of bullying and the school’s anti-bullying policy to every student, parent, and school staff member.
- With the approval of the teacher’s association, Madison *rearranged faculty monitoring duties* to provide more supervision of the parking lots immediately before and after school. Jefferson also decided he would spend more time in the parking lots.

- The school psychologist reported that many students who bully actually feel inadequate and use bullying as a means of covering up their feelings of insecurity. As a result, the principal decided (only with parental permission) to urge every student caught bullying a second time to *agree to counseling* with one of the school guidance counselors.
- The school psychologist agreed to talk with every *victim of bullying* to discuss effective responses to the behavior and brainstorm what the student might be able to do to help avoid—or respond to—a repeat incident.
- Madison would inform students and parents that the school would *take more stringent action* against students who repeatedly bullied other students than had been taken in the past, including suspension and, in intractable cases, referral to juvenile court.

Assessment

Madison and Jefferson's first step in evaluating whether these responses were successful was to engage the group in deciding *what it expected these strategies to accomplish*. Together, the group came up with the following *measurable* objectives:

- There will be no more than 13 incidents of bullying from October through May following implementation of the strategies—that is, at least a 50 percent reduction during this period compared with the same period the previous school year.
- No student who is bullied during the eight months following implementation will be bullied again.
- No more than four of the up to 13 bullying incidents that occur during the eight months after implementation will involve threats, physical contact, or inappropriate gestures.
- During the eight-month period, no more than two students who bully will repeat the behavior.
- An increased proportion of the bullying incidents that come to the school's attention will be the result of victims or other students reporting the problem compared with the previous school year.
- Over half the offenders and victims of bullying will agree to counseling.
- During the school year, less than 25 percent of the students who are victims of bullying will miss any school days following the incident, and no student who does miss school will miss more than one day.

Madison asked Jefferson to track these results. The assistant principal and guidance counselors then met to discuss *how they needed to further customize School COP to make sure they collected all the information they would need to conduct the evaluation and to make sure they could search for and compile the information easily*.

Postscript

In September of the following school year, Lincoln High School implemented all but one of the strategies the group had recommended be adopted. The English department head—pointing out that her department was always the one asked to take time away from its curriculum to address these types of problems—was reluctant to require her teachers to devote a class to bullying and convinced the principal to make it voluntary.

In her report to the Superintendent of Schools in June, Madison was pleased to inform her that the solutions the school had implemented had significantly reduced the frequency of bullying. Specifically:

- There were only nine incidents of bullying from October through May following implementation of the strategies—a 66 percent reduction compared with the same period the previous school year. This exceeded the school's goal of a 50 percent reduction.
- Two students who were bullied during the eight months following implementation were bullied again. While not quite meeting the goal that the school established, this still represents a substantial improvement over the previous year.
- Six of the nine bullying incidents that occurred involved threats, physical contact, or inappropriate gestures. No marked improvement was achieved in this measure.
- During the eight-month period, only two students who bullied other students repeated the behavior, which met the school's objective.
- An increasing proportion of the bullying incidents that came to the school's attention were the result of victims or other students reporting the problem compared with the previous school year (four of the nine this year versus four of 26 the year before).
- Fourteen of the 27 students involved in bullying as offenders or victims agreed to counseling, thus meeting the objective of one-half the offenders agreeing to counseling.
- During the school year, three of the students who were victims of bullying missed school following the incident. (This did not meet the school's objective, but still represented an improvement over the previous year.) No student who missed school missed more than one day. (This did meet the school's objective.)

Chapter 5: Case Study — Trespassing

Chapter 5 contains a case study involving trespassing that illustrates how *School COP* can be used in conjunction with the SARA model to help address problems in schools. As with chapter 4, the case study is also hypothetical and uses fictitious names.

Northledge High School is a big-city school with 842 students and 79 faculty. Northledge was experiencing a rash of thefts and destruction of school property during the first semester of the school year. As a result, Philip Marquand, the principal, and Rachel DuMaurier, the School Resource Officer (SRO), met late in the first semester to discuss these problems. They decided to move through the SARA problem-solving process in an attempt to understand more fully the extent of the problems and develop responses that would be effective in preventing them.

Scanning

Marquand and DuMaurier used two approaches to the scanning process:

- They examined data in *School COP* to identify the problem incidents more accurately.
- They looked at the Narrative sections of the incidents in *School COP* to see if the text offered clues regarding who might be committing the crimes.

DuMaurier used *School COP* to identify the most frequent types of incidents that had occurred at the high school over the past six months. Excluding some of the non-criminal or school rule violations, the most frequently reported criminal incidents were theft (12), destruction of school property (9), and trespassing (9).

When Marquand and DuMaurier examined the narrative comments for these incidents in *School COP*, they found that most students were missing items from lockers and most teachers were missing items from their rooms or desks. Several teachers also reported that unknown teenagers were making noise in the halls at or around the time they discovered the missing items.

With this information as a building block in the problem-solving process, they moved into the Analysis phase to analyze specific theft, property destruction, and trespassing incidents.

Analysis

Marquand and DuMaurier decided to approach the analysis phase using two strategies—incident data analysis using *School COP* and interviews with students and teachers to identify suspects.

First, the SRO blocked out two hours of time after school one day to analyze the three identified types of incidents—thefts, property destruction, and trespassing. She used *School COP* to assist in this process by querying the incidents entered into the software over the past year. The software allowed her to easily examine the details of all of these incidents.

DuMaurier found that about 70 percent of the trespassing incidents during the previous semester occurred during lunchtime or soon thereafter, or immediately after school let out. So she performed an additional search query to identify all incidents in the past year that occurred during lunchtime and after school. DuMaurier found out that five of the trespassing incidents occurred on the same day as graffiti incidents, two happened on the same day as other property destruction, and six occurred on the same day as thefts from lockers. The SRO performed additional analyses and documented her findings.

In the second part of the Analysis phase the principal, assistant principal, and SRO interviewed selected staff and students.

- Staff gave specific information about belongings that had disappeared from their rooms during lunch. Some teachers also reported seeing up to three different students about 17 years old making noise outside their rooms during the period after lunch and sporadically throughout the afternoon.
- Students who had been victimized also reported having their lockers broken into in the early afternoon. The interviewed students revealed a great deal once they were asked about whether they thought trespassers might have been responsible for some of these incidents. A few of the students personally identified four students they had seen roaming the halls during lunch who had either been suspended or transferred to another school for discipline problems.

Going back to *School COP*, DuMaurier found that two of these trespassers had already been caught trespassing at least once the previous semester, and another had been caught three times. All were caught at lunchtime by teachers and simply told to leave the school immediately because they did not belong there.

Based on these analyses, Marquand and DuMaurier agreed on the following observations:

- The thefts and property destruction were occurring primarily between 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM, and again after 3:00 PM.
- There had been no witnesses to these two types of incidents, but students and teachers alike had seen individuals in the corridors who they knew did not belong there.
- Several students who had been suspended or transferred had been roaming the halls when other students were around. Staff had advised them to leave but had never pursued the problem with the SRO or attempted to have them arrested for trespassing.

Marquand and DuMaurier speculated that the primary problem was not thefts or property destruction as originally thought but rather trespassing. They felt that the thefts and property destruction might have been committed by one or more trespassers who could (or thought they could) blend in during lunchtime and after school when many students were legitimately present in the corridors. In short, by eliminating trespassing it might be possible to reduce property destruction and theft.

Marquand and DuMaurier identified several groups that would benefit if the severity of the three problems was reduced:

- The students whose property had been stolen
- Parents of students whose property had been stolen
- Teachers and other school personnel who had property stolen—or might be victimized in the future

The principal and SRO discussed how the school could enlist the support of these stakeholders in addressing the problem. They divided up responsibility for contacting representatives of each of these stakeholders to find out:

- Whether they would support the initiative
- How they could lend support
- What they felt would be effective and acceptable solutions to the problems

Response

Marquand and DuMaurier knew that since school administrators and School Resource Officers must make decisions that may come under fire from the community, it was important to have a detailed analysis to buttress the solutions they formulated. Since *School COP* is an analytical tool for collecting and analyzing information to identify problems and investigate incidents, they used the information the software program provided to justify specific responses to the problems.

The SRO and principal made a significant effort to log all of their analyses and document their conversations with students and faculty. They then announced their specific strategies only after they felt comfortable with the results of the analysis phase of SARA. Their strategies were:

- Make each staff member and SRO in the same geographic cluster of schools aware of students who have been suspended or expelled.
- Encourage staff to notify the SRO so DuMaurier could enforce trespassing laws and threaten to arrest—or actually arrest—unauthorized individuals roaming buildings.
- Assign an additional staff member to hall duty during lunch period and immediately after school.
- Examine the *School COP* database to identify habitual offenders and related crimes among all the district’s secondary schools.
- When a trespasser is identified, perform a cursory sweep of the building to identify other crimes he or she may have committed.
- Investigate thoroughly each of the trespassers not charged during the first semester and attempt to interview them to link them to other crimes. Warn them that, if they trespass again, they will be arrested.
- Put up large signs at every entrance to the school forbidding trespassing, warning suspended and expelled students that they will be treated as trespassers if they appear on school grounds without authorization, and warning that trespassers may be arrested and prosecuted.
- Inform every student who has just been suspended or expelled of the new policy. Explain the policy to the parents of these students and to all school staff.

By the third week of the second semester, the school had implemented all of these strategies.

Assessment

Marquand and DuMaurier’s first step as part of the Assessment phase was to establish the following measurable objectives for their initiative for the new semester:

- Decrease the number of individuals found trespassing by 50 percent.
- Reduce the number of incidents involving destruction of property and theft by 50 percent.

Marquand and DuMaurier used *School COP* to assess how well their strategies achieved their two goals. Performing ongoing analyses throughout the second semester, they documented progress in their efforts. They compared the results with both the previous semester and with the same semester the previous year.

Postscript

A month into the new semester, Marquand and DuMaurier were pleased to find that they had arrested four individuals for trespassing, and there was only one reported theft that month. At the end of the semester, they found that trespassing incidents had declined by 58 percent and thefts by 57 percent compared with the previous semester, and by 62 percent and 53 percent, respectively, compared with the same semester the previous year. Interestingly, property destruction did not decline nearly as much—only 24 percent compared with the previous semester and 15 percent compared with the previous year.

Marquand and DuMaurier concluded that the thefts that had occurred the first semester and previous year were apparently related to the trespassing—both types of crime declined by about the same amount as a result of their anti-trespassing initiative. It appeared that their careful analysis of a possible relationship between trespassing and theft was accurate—by targeting trespassers, they significantly reduced the number of thefts.

By contrast, the assessment results suggested that trespassers were not the principal individuals destroying school property. As a result, the principal and SRO agreed that their next task would be to use *School COP* and the SARA problem-solving approach to see if they could achieve the same success with property destruction that they had achieved with trespassing and theft.

Chapter 6: Customizing *School COP*

Before starting to use *School COP* you need to *customize School COP* to meet your particular needs. The software allows you to enter codes for a number of attributes related to incidents (e.g., incident type and location) and to persons involved in incidents (e.g., how they were involved and what action, if any, was taken against them).

Overview

School COP allows you to enter a lot of information about new incidents occurring in your school(s). Specifically, there are 18 ‘fields’ of information related to the incident and 15 ‘fields’ of information related to each person involved in the incident. In some of these fields, you just type in the information. For example, you must type in the date and time when the incident occurred and any narrative comments about the incident. But in other fields, rather than typing in text you can select a code from a previously entered list of code values. For example, before entering any incident data, you can enter all the possible codes you want for the incident type (e.g., trespassing, or bullying). Then, when you enter a new incident, instead of typing in the name of the incident type, you just pick the incident type from the list of incident type codes.

In *School COP*, you can access any of the screens for the code tables by clicking the ‘Administrative Functions’ on the Main Menu (see the appendix). On the Administrative Menu there are a series of buttons, one for accessing each code table. Many of these code tables already have some codes in them; using the discussion in this chapter as a guide, you should add or delete codes from each code table so that *School COP* is customized to meet your needs.

Customizing *School COP*: A Check List

1. Explore the *School COP* Sample Database

- Use the *School COP* Sample Database to see how codes are used for entering data, doing searches, building graphs, and producing maps.

2. Customize the Geographic Code Tables

- If you want to use the *School COP* mapping features, determine whether your school or schools have maps showing the school building, grounds, and bus routes. Test these maps in *School COP* (see the User Manual for more details).
- Discuss and finalize with school and law enforcement officials how your school(s) will be divided into areas and which locations will be defined within each area.
- Enter your school(s) in *School COP*.
- Enter the areas assigned to each school in *School COP*.
- Enter locations assigned to each area in *School COP*.

3. Customize the Severity and Incident Type Code Tables

- Run and print the *School COP* tabular report 'Code Table Contents: Incident Type and Severity' to view the contents of these two code tables.
- Discuss and finalize with school and law enforcement officials which severity and incident codes are most appropriate for your school(s).
- Edit the severity code table in *School COP*.
- After the severity code table is finalized, edit the incident type code table in *School COP*.

4. Customize the Three Other Incident-Specific Code Tables (Weapons, Special Circumstances, and Status)

- Run and print the *School COP* tabular report 'Code Table Contents: All Code Tables' to view the contents of these three code tables.
- Discuss and finalize with school and law enforcement officials which codes are most appropriate for your school(s).
- Edit the weapon, special circumstances, and status code tables (the order doesn't matter) in *School COP*.

5. Customize the Six Person-Specific Code Tables (Person Type, Race, Special Characteristics, Grade, Involvement, and Action Taken)

- Run and print the *School COP* tabular report 'Code Table Contents: All Code Tables' to view the contents of these six code tables.
- Discuss and finalize with school and law enforcement officials which codes are most appropriate for your school(s).
- Edit the person type, race, special characteristics, grade, involvement, and action taken code tables (the order doesn't matter) in *School COP*.

Why Customizing School COP Is Essential

Why is it so important to “customize” *School COP*?

- Pre-defining your code tables before you begin entering data will enable you to *enter information about new incidents faster*. Instead of having to type in information from scratch, you can use the code tables to simply click on the desired code.
- Pre-defining the code tables *helps ensure consistency in the information you enter* about each incident. Whenever you enter data about a new incident, for each data entry field that is followed by a drop down arrow, you have the choice between entering information from scratch in the empty field or clicking the arrow and selecting one of the existing codes in the code table. However, whenever possible you should choose an entry from the options in the code table rather than enter information on your own. For example, if you do not use “Vandalism” from the incident code table, you or someone else may record the next incident as “Malicious Destruction of Property.” Then, when you conduct a search for “Vandalism,” you will miss all the incidents that have been mislabeled as “Malicious Destruction of Property.”
- Using pre-defined codes also *protects against misspelling and typographical errors*—for example, recording “graffitti” instead of “graffiti”—that will prevent you from conducting a thorough search for these incidents. Finally, different people—and even the same person—may use different terminology for the same item. For example, you may refer to the high school as “Adams High School,” while another calls it “the Adams,” and yet another person refers to “the high school.” A search for “Adams High School” will fail to capture information about “the Adams” or “the high school.”

How to Decide Which Choices to Include in the Code Tables

Should a particular code table contain five choices or 50 choices? On the one hand, it is often tempting to include every possible piece of information in a database—for example, every conceivable type of incident. On the other hand, it is important to keep the database easy to use. *School COP* requires a middle ground: *enter only—but all of—the data that you will actually find helpful later on for identifying, analyzing, implementing, and assessing strategies for addressing school discipline and crime problems*. The guiding principle for deciding what options to include in each code table should always be, “*Will this piece of information help me to identify or address a discipline or crime problem?*”

Of course, sometimes this question is difficult to answer. One tip is to consider how many categories you (and other stakeholders) would want to see along the horizontal axis in *School COP* graphs. Would you want, for example, a bar graph showing the number incidents by incident type to include one bar for ‘Drug Possession,’ or separate bars for ‘Drug Possession—Marijuana,’ ‘Drug Possession—Cocaine,’ ‘Drug Possession—Heroin,’ and ‘Drug Possession—Other’? Even if you do not break the ‘Drug Possession’ incident type code into codes that indicate the type of drug, you can still capture, and search for, information on the type of drug in the incident narrative. Another tip is to align your codes with categories on summary reports that you are required to submit to your supervisor or other agencies.

In general, the best way to customize the code tables is for the school, law enforcement, and non-sworn security staff to collaboratively review the code tables and systematically decide what information should be included in each table.

Tips for Each Code Table

The discussion below offers tips on customizing each of the code tables. The order of the discussion—the geographic code tables, the severity and incident code tables, other incident-specific code tables, and person-specific code tables—follows the checklist presented earlier in this chapter.

Geographic Code Tables

Schools. For all but the largest school districts, it is a simple matter to enter the names of all your district’s schools in the *School COP* school code table. However, the more important issue is whether you will (or are able to) collect incident data from all the schools or from just one or two of them. If you are a high school assistant principal, your only interest may be to analyze incidents that occur in your school. By contrast, if you are an assistant superintendent, you may wish to compare incidents among all the schools in the district. In particular, you may wish to compare incidents among the high schools in your district.

Areas. In *School COP*, schools are divided geographically into areas. The Area designations should be broad—for example, Adams High School grounds and Adams High School building. If you plan on using *School COP*’s mapping features, you need to remember that maps are area-specific. If your high school is a three-story building and you have a floor plan of each story, you need to define three areas to cover the inside of the building. You should also consider making the school bus routes a separate area. If students are sometimes involved in incidents while attending school-sponsored events off-campus, you may wish to define an area called “Off-Campus.”

Locations. Within each area you can define specific locations. If possible, you should define a location for each room (including offices and bathrooms) in your school building(s). It is less clear how specific you should be in defining locations in hallways and, especially, the school grounds. For example, should a particular parking lot be a single location or should it be divided into several locations? If it is important for you to know in which part of the parking lot an incident occurred, then define multiple locations within the parking lot. Alternatively, you could define the parking lot as a single location but include more specific information about the location in the incident narrative.

Severity and Incident Code Tables

Severity. In *School COP*, severity is used to indicate the relative seriousness of the incident. (Tip: because you assign a severity code to each incident type, be sure to enter your severity code table entries before entering your incident type code table entries.) Depending on whether you are a school administrator or law enforcement officer, you may want to define severity according to your administrative code (e.g., minor school rule violation vs. expellable offenses) or the criminal code (e.g., misdemeanor vs. felony). If you plan to use *School COP* to enter information that is not related to incidents (e.g., observations, or mentoring activities), you could also define a severity code called ‘non-incident.’

Incident Types. *School COP* comes installed with an incident type code table that contains 24 entries that range from serious crimes (e.g., homicide) to non-criminal school rule violations (e.g., defiance). You should read this list carefully and decide whether it meets your needs. In particular, you may wish to *add* some types of incidents because they happen frequently at your school(s) or because, while uncommon, they represent a problem that you wish to address. For example:

- Graffiti may be a particular type of vandalism that occurs with frequency at your school(s) *and* is a problem you feel you could prevent if you had a better capacity to analyze it. If so, you should add ‘Graffiti’ to the incident type code table so that you can distinguish graffiti from vandalism, which is already in the incident type code table.
- Your school(s) may have an occasional problem with thefts from school lockers that, although infrequent, are very troublesome when they do occur and might be preventable. If so, you could consider creating a new incident type, ‘Theft from Lockers,’ and changing the incident type ‘Theft’ to ‘Theft—Other.’
- If shaking down students for lunch money is a problem, you can add ‘Lunch Money Shakedowns’ to the list of incidents. Otherwise, this type of incident may go unrecorded or may be included as a type of ‘Bullying’ or ‘Theft,’ making it almost impossible for you to use *School COP* to analyze the problem.

While *School COP* was designed for entering and analyzing information about school-related disciplinary and crime incidents, it is also possible to enter non-incident-related information. School Resource Officers (SRO), in particular, may be interested in entering:

- **Observations.** Most law enforcement computer systems have modules for entering field interview (FI) cards, which typically document a conversation between a law enforcement officer and a suspected offender. In *School COP*, you could create an incident type called ‘field interview.’ You may find that this helps *School COP* become more of an ‘intelligence’ database.
- **Activities.** You can use *School COP* to track your daily activities that are unrelated to law enforcement, such as teaching, mentoring, and counseling. By doing this, *School COP* would contain a more complete record of what you do, as well as providing documentation on what services were provided to offenders or victims.

While it is tempting to include ‘the kitchen sink’ in the *School COP* database, special care must be taken to avoid producing erroneous reports. In particular, you must make certain that ‘non-incident’ records are filtered out of summary incident reports and maps. One way to do this is to create a separate severity code for all ‘non-incident’ records.

Other Codes Related To Incident Attributes

Tips for customizing the three other code tables related to the incident are summarized below:

Weapons. At a minimum, include in the weapon code table generic types of weapons such as ‘gun,’ ‘knife,’ and ‘other.’ You may wish to enter options in the code table that specify the type of gun—for example, ‘Gun—Handgun’ and ‘Gun—Long Gun.’ State or federal reporting guidelines may also dictate the specific types of weapons you need to track.

Special Circumstances. The purpose of the special circumstances code table is to enable you to create an additional method for categorizing incidents. Possible code values include ‘Drug-Related,’ ‘Gang-Related,’ and ‘Alcohol-Related.’ Incident totals based on the special circumstances might provide critical information for a problem-solving effort or simplify reporting to a state or federal agency.

Status. The status code value indicates where the case now stands. At a minimum, you should include ‘Open’ (i.e., the incident is still under investigation) and ‘Closed.’ If parents sometimes appeal disciplinary decisions, you may wish to add ‘Under Appeal’ to the code table.

Codes Related To Person Attributes

Six of the 15 fields of information about a person involved in the incident have associated code tables.

Person Types. The person type code tables allow you to group incidents according to whether a particular type of person was involved in the incident. At a minimum, person types should include ‘student,’ ‘teacher,’ ‘other school staff,’ and ‘non-school person.’ You may wish to be more specific about non-school personnel and add such categories as ‘maintenance staff,’ ‘office staff,’ ‘substitute teacher,’ and ‘athletic coach.’

Race. The options already included in the *School COP* race code table reflect those used by the United States Bureau of the Census. However, you may wish to use designations that are compatible with those used in other databases in your community.

Special Characteristics. The purpose of the special characteristics code table is to allow you to create your own method for categorizing persons involved in incidents. (Tip: be sure not to confuse special characteristics with special circumstances, which relate to the incident.) You could select special characteristics that help with a particular problem-solving effort or that simplify reporting to state or federal agencies.

Grade. The grade code table included with *School COP* contains kindergarten through Grade 12. Depending on your school, you may wish to add other grade codes.

Involvement. The involvement code table includes the possible ways in which a person could be involved in an incident. This highlights an important difference between *School COP* and school discipline reporting systems, which typically record information only about the student being disciplined. By contrast, with *School COP*, you can also record information about victims, witnesses, and suspects.

Action Taken. Depending on whether you are a school administrator or law enforcement officer, you may want to define action taken codes according to your administrative code (e.g., ‘suspended,’ or ‘expelled’), the criminal code (e.g., ‘arrested,’ or ‘on probation’), or both (e.g., ‘expelled and arrested’). Your action taken codes can also reflect multiple administrative actions—for example, ‘counseling and suspension.’ Although the action taken code table is typically used to describe what happened to the offender, it could also be used to describe services provided to the victim(s), such as counseling.

A special comment should be made regarding names entered in *School COP*, especially student names. In the January 2001 version of *School COP*, there is no code table for pre-entering names, nor is there a method for importing a list of names from another database. Instead, student names are entered one at a time, as they are involved in incidents. There is, however, a drop down list for the name field on the People Involved Screen. The drop down list will contain all the names that you have previously entered in *School COP*.

(**Tip:** enter names in “last name comma first name” format so that offender and victim lists can be alphabetized properly.) If the person you are about to enter has been previously entered in *School COP*, then it is extremely important that you select that name from the drop down list. If you do not, you risk having the same person listed in *School COP* under two different names. An added benefit of selecting names from the drop down list is that the most recently entered demographic information about this person is automatically displayed on the screen, which saves data entry time.

Chapter 7: Usage Tips

Below (and summarized in the box) are useful tips for school administrators and safety personnel to use *School COP* to help address school discipline and crime problems. Each tip is organized into a discussion of the *value* of the tip followed by the *procedure* for using *School COP* to implement the tip. Specific screens discussed in this chapter can be seen in the appendix.

1. USE CODE TABLES

Value. As discussed in chapter 6, using the *School COP* code tables makes data entry go faster and significantly improves the overall quality of the data.

Procedure. Screens for entering and editing code tables are accessible from Administrator Menu, which is displayed by clicking on ‘Administrative Functions’ on the Main Menu. Chapter 6 contains a complete checklist for setting up and using codes.

2. SEARCH NARRATIVE FIELDS

Value. You can automatically search anything you include in the narrative about an incident or any person involved in the incident. For example, you can search the database for all incidents whose narrative includes the word “necklace.” Given this search option, whenever you enter a new incident it is important that you add narrative that includes information not recorded elsewhere in the incident database if you anticipate you might want to search for the information in the future. For example, you

Tips for Using *School COP* to Help Address Discipline and Crime Problems

1. Use code tables
2. Search narrative fields
3. Track the number of incidents by type over time
4. Search locations and times of incidents
5. Examine students who are victims
6. Examine incidents in which teachers or other school personnel are victims
7. Track individual students’ disciplinary and criminal histories, and records of discipline
8. Determine the role, if any, of race, gender, and grade level in incidents
9. Make sure cases do not drag on too long
10. Compare problems—and actions taken—among schools

might want to add narrative that addresses the injuries that resulted from a fight (e.g., broken bone, laceration, bruise, or bloody nose), the involvement of the school nurse after an incident involving an injury, and the nature of a bullying incident (e.g., racial or ethnic slurs, homophobic comments, shoving, or sexual comments).

Procedure. Click the ‘Search Incidents’ button on the Main Menu, then type in the word or words you wish to search for preceded and followed by an asterisk (e.g., *broken bone*) in either the Narrative or Comments field, and then click the ‘Search’ button.

Note that proper use of the asterisk, which means any number of characters, when searching narratives is critical. In the above example, entering the search criteria “broken bone” (i.e., without the asterisks) will find only those incidents whose narrative contains only the words “broken bone.” As another example, if you want to find all incidents whose narrative includes a comment about an injury, the recommended search criteria is *injur*, rather than *injury* – using *injur* finds narratives with either the word injury or the word injuries.

3. TRACK THE NUMBER OF INCIDENTS BY TYPE OVER TIME

Value. You can use *School COP* to track changes in the number of incidents by type over time in one or more schools. You can then target for extra attention incidents that appear to be increasing over time.

Procedure. There are several methods for doing this. The easiest involves clicking the ‘Graphs and Tabular Reports’ button on the Main Menu and then selecting the report titled ‘Incident Totals: By School and Incident Type.’ Enter the date range you want to examine—e.g., from the start of the current school year to today’s date. Click ‘Show Report’ and print the results. Then, re-run and print this same report, using the same time period in the previous year—e.g., from

the start of the previous school year to one year ago today. Alternatively, you could compare the past two months to the prior two-month period. Examine the two printouts and look for increases in specific incident types at specific schools.

Once you identify an incident type that appears to be increasing at a particular school, you can create a bar graph that shows totals for this incident type by month. To do this, click ‘Search Incidents’ on the Main Menu. Specify the incident type and school on the Search Criteria Screen, and click ‘Search.’ Then, on the Incident Screen, click the ‘Graph’ button.

4. SEARCH LOCATIONS AND TIMES OF INCIDENTS

Value. Certain student behaviors may occur more frequently at certain locations or at certain times of the day or days of the week. Some behaviors may occur at certain times of the day at certain locations. For example, smoking may occur most commonly in the parking lot right after school; bullying may occur most commonly in the corridors between classes. The value of identifying the locations, days of the week, and times of day that incidents occur is of course that you can better target your problem-solving resources.

Procedure. A quick overview of these factors in the entire *School COP* database can be obtained by clicking ‘Enter/Edit Incidents’ on the Main Menu and then clicking the ‘Graph’ button. This displays a bar graph showing the number of incidents by month. Click the ‘Count By’ drop down and select ‘Location’ or ‘Time of Day’ to graph the incidents by location or time of day.

Alternatively, you can first select only a subset of the database by clicking ‘Search Incidents’ on the Main Menu, entering a search criteria (e.g., only a particular school or date range), and then clicking the ‘Graph’ button on the Incident Screen. If you include a school and area in your search criteria (and you have associated a map with the area), you can produce a map showing the location of the incidents by clicking the ‘Map’ button on the Incident Screen.

5. EXAMINE STUDENTS WHO ARE VICTIMS

Value. You can use *School COP* to identify students who have been victimized several times. You can then offer these students—and their parents—counseling or simply practical advice on how to reduce their chances of being revictimized. You can also examine whether any of these repeat victims have higher than average rates of absence from school and then discuss with them whether they are not coming to school because they are afraid to.

Procedure. Two of the canned reports (click ‘Graphs and Tabular Reports’ on the Main Menu to display the list of canned reports) provide information on victims. The report ‘Person List: Persons Involved in Multiple Incidents’ (sort the report by Type of Involvement) includes persons (students as well as non-students) who were victims in more than one incident. The report ‘Person List: Persons Involved in Incidents’ (sort the report by Type of Involvement) includes all persons (students as well as non-students)

who were victims in at least one incident. Each person’s “type” (e.g., student, teacher, other staff) is also listed in this latter report.

Alternatively, click the ‘Search Incidents’ button on the Main Menu, click the ‘Involvement’ drop down and select ‘Victim,’ click ‘Type’ drop down and select ‘Student,’ and then click the Search button. This will identify all the incidents in which a student was victimized. You can then browse these incidents to learn more about the incidents, or click ‘Graph’ to see the number of these incidents by month. You can also narrow the search by adding other search criteria on the Search Criteria screen, such as specific incident types (e.g., battery), severity (e.g., felony), and school or area.

6. EXAMINE INCIDENTS IN WHICH TEACHERS OR OTHER SCHOOL PERSONNEL ARE VICTIMS

Value. By conducting a search for all incidents involving school staff, you can determine where and when these incidents occur. As a result, you may be able reduce the problem by implementing solutions that reflect the time and place of these incidents. For example, if most teacher assaults occur in the parking lot after school, you and your SARA problem solving task force can initiate appropriate responses to address this problem.

Procedure. Use the same procedure that is outlined above in Tip #5.

7. TRACK INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS' DISCIPLINARY AND CRIMINAL HISTORIES, AND RECORDS OF DISCIPLINE

Value. With *School COP*, you can identify the disciplinary and criminal history of any student along with the discipline or legal sanction, if any, imposed for each incident. With this information, you can assess which punishments appear to have been effective in preventing each type of misbehavior and determine what will be the most appropriate action to take in response to the student's next infraction. In this manner, you can help address the problem of *a particular student's behavior* rather than trying to help prevent a type of incident that more than one student is committing.

Procedure. Click on 'Search Incidents' on the Main Menu, click on the 'Person Name' drop down list, and select the name of the person. Click the 'Search' button, and then click the 'Enter/Edit People Involved' button on the Incident Screen to display information pertaining to this person for this particular incident (if the incident contains more than one person involved record, you may need to browse to the desired person on the Person Involved Screen). Click the 'All Incidents' button to obtain a printed report of all the incidents in which this particular person has been involved.

Alternatively, select 'Graphs and Tabular Reports' on the Main Menu and select the report 'Person List: Persons Involved in Incidents,' using 'Person Name' as the sort order.

8. DETERMINE THE ROLE, IF ANY, OF RACE, GENDER, AND GRADE LEVEL IN INCIDENTS

Value. If you believe that a disproportionate number of offenders or victims may involve students of a certain racial group, gender, or grade level, you can test your hypothesis using *School COP*. If your suspicion is confirmed, you can then obtain additional information relevant to the discrepancy through, for example, interviews with the involved students, victims, witnesses, and school personnel—or through closer examination of the information already contained in *School COP*—to learn why there is a pattern of misbehavior or victimization for individual students that appears to reflect their race, ethnicity, gender, or grade level. This information may help you to develop effective steps to reduce the problem behavior. For example, if you find that certain types of incidents appear to be racially motivated, you can consider holding cultural diversity classes for the involved (or all) students.

Procedure. Click the 'Search Incidents' button on the Main Menu. On the Search Criteria Screen, click the 'race,' 'gender,' or 'grade level' drop down, and then select a value from the drop down list. You can also enter a date range or select a school to narrow the search. After you click the 'Search' button, the number of incidents matching the search criteria is displayed. On the Incident Screen, click the 'Graph' button to see a bar graph showing the number of incidents by month meeting the criteria. Repeat this procedure for different races, genders, or grade levels.

9. MAKE SURE CASES DO NOT DRAG ON TOO LONG

Value. By identifying cases that have still not been resolved—that is, discipline or a legal sanction has not yet been determined or, if determined, not yet imposed—you can launch an inquiry into why these cases are still unresolved and bring closure to any that should have been completed.

Procedure. If you included ‘Open’ as one of the possible incident status codes, you can conduct a search for all incidents that are still open—click ‘Search Incidents’ on the Main Menu, click the Status drop down, select ‘Open’ from the drop down, and then click the ‘Search’ button. On the Incident Screen, click the ‘Graph’ button to produce a bar graph showing the number of incidents with a status of ‘Open’ by month (i.e., the month in which the incident occurred). If you notice one or more incidents that occurred several months ago, you can browse to those incidents and examine the details (click ‘Exit’ on the Graph Screen and then use the << and >> buttons to browse to the desired incidents).

10. COMPARE PROBLEMS—AND ACTIONS TAKEN—AMONG SCHOOLS

Value. If you are a school superintendent, you can use *School COP* to conduct an analysis of how different schools in the same school district differ in terms of the nature and frequency of incidents and the actions the schools have taken to address these incidents. With this information, you can make more rational decisions about how to allocate school district safety personnel among schools.

For example, if you have one School Resource Officer who serves all five high schools, but one school has more incidents than the others, or more serious incidents, or more of the types of incidents that can be prevented by a School Resource Officer, you can require the officer to spend more time at this school and less time at the other schools. You can also examine whether some schools—for example, two high schools—appear to have more success in preventing incidents, or certain types of incidents, than other high schools in the district. You can then ask the respective principals to meet to see what they can learn from each other for addressing shared school discipline and crime problems.

Procedure. There are two general methods for comparing schools. First, several of the canned reports calculate totals by school (e.g., “Incident Totals: By School and Incident Type”). To run one of these reports, click ‘Graphs and Tabular Reports’ on the Main Menu, highlight the desired report, and click ‘Show Report.’

The second method involves first searching for a specific subset of incidents—e.g., all incidents occurring since the start of the current school year—by clicking the ‘Search Incidents’ button on the Main Menu and entering a search criteria. On the Incident Screen, click the ‘Graph’ button. On the Graph Screen, click the ‘Count By’ dropdown, select ‘School,’ and then click ‘Redraw Graph.’ A bar graph showing the number of incidents meeting your search criteria by school is displayed.

Chapter 8: Data Quality Tips

Before using *School COP*, you need to take steps to ensure that the data you enter in *School COP* are *complete, accurate, and timely*. A number of data quality tips are listed below:

- *Establish standards on what type of incidents should be reported.* If necessary, update your school(s) rule handbook to accurately reflect the types of incidents that must be reported to school administrators or to make sure that the definitions of each incident type are clear and unambiguous. If you are using *School COP* to track incidents at more than one school, the schools' handbooks should be consistent with reporting.
- *Establish standards on what type of incidents should be entered in School COP.* Before you begin entering incident data in *School COP*, officials at your school, including administrators and law enforcement personnel, should agree on what types of incidents should be entered in *School COP*. In particular, it may not be worth the effort to enter the most minor rule violations. For example, you may decide not to enter truancy incidents, especially if they are already entered in your attendance system. Incident types that you decide not to enter should *not* be listed in the incident type code table (see chapter 6). Whatever your decision, the standard should be consistently enforced to avoid producing misleading summary reports showing totals by incident type.
- Prior to implementing *School COP*, consider initiating a *campaign to encourage incident reporting* by students, teachers, and staff. This will help minimize the effects of varying reporting rates on incident totals and help produce a *School COP* database that more accurately depicts school safety conditions.
- Make *one person responsible for making sure all the information is collected*—that is, entered into *School COP*—in a timely and thorough fashion. While other individuals may be required to share in entering the data, this one person must be responsible for seeing to it that these other people follow through.
- If possible, *directly enter incident data* into *School COP*, rather than first filling out a paper incident form. Directly entering data saves time and improves data quality. After the data are entered, you can print the *School COP* incident report if you need a hard-copy record of the incident.
- *Enter data into School COP as soon as possible* after the incident occurred. Delays in entering the data increase the chances that reports and searches will yield inaccurate results.

- *Always use the code tables when entering new incidents.* Using the code tables when entering new incidents speeds data entry and improves data quality. As necessary, update the code tables to reflect changing conditions in your school or to assist in addressing a particular problem.
- *Conduct periodic data quality audits.* You should consider conducting annual or more frequent audits of the quality of your *School COP* incident data. One way to do this is to draw a random sample of incidents, print the incident report for each of them, and determine each incident's completeness (are all fields filled in?), timeliness (how long after the incident occurred were the data entered?), and accuracy (if data were entered into *School COP* off a hand-written incident form, do the data elements on the handwritten form match the *School COP* data?).

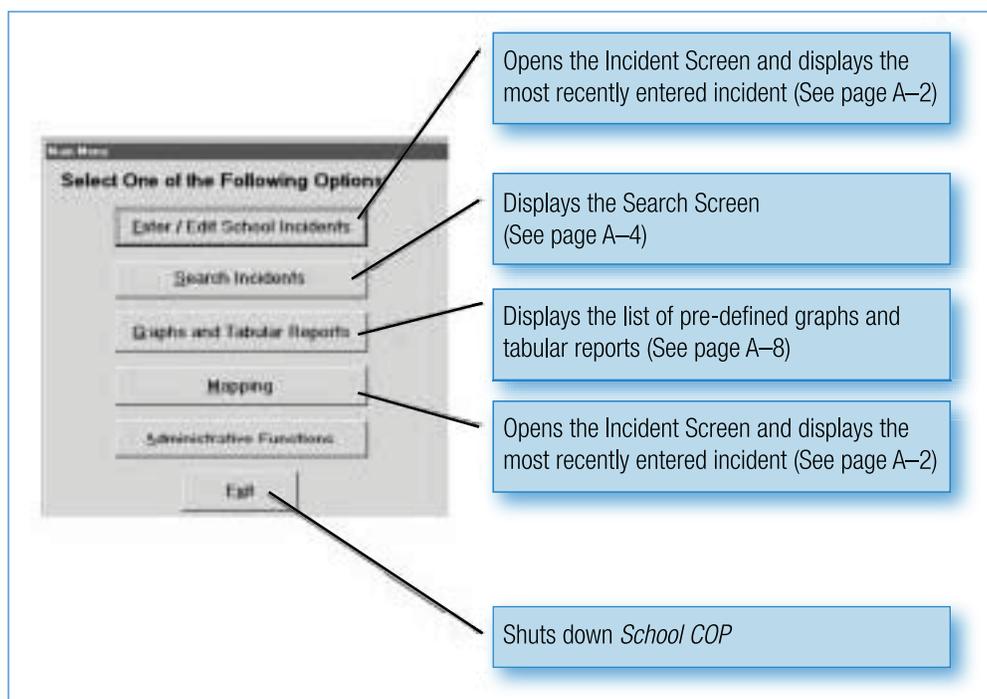
Appendix — School COP Screens

The appendix provides an overall *School COP* “road map” by showing some of the *School COP* screens, explaining how you navigate from screen to screen, and indicating what happens when you click a few of the buttons on the screen. (For complete information on all screens, see the *School COP* User Manual, which is available from the *School COP* website.) Each page in the appendix shows a single *School COP* screen (all school names, people, and incidents depicted in the screens are fictitious). References are made on each screen to other screens via callout messages that direct you to other pages in the appendix.

Main Menu

After you log in to *School COP*, the Main Menu is displayed.

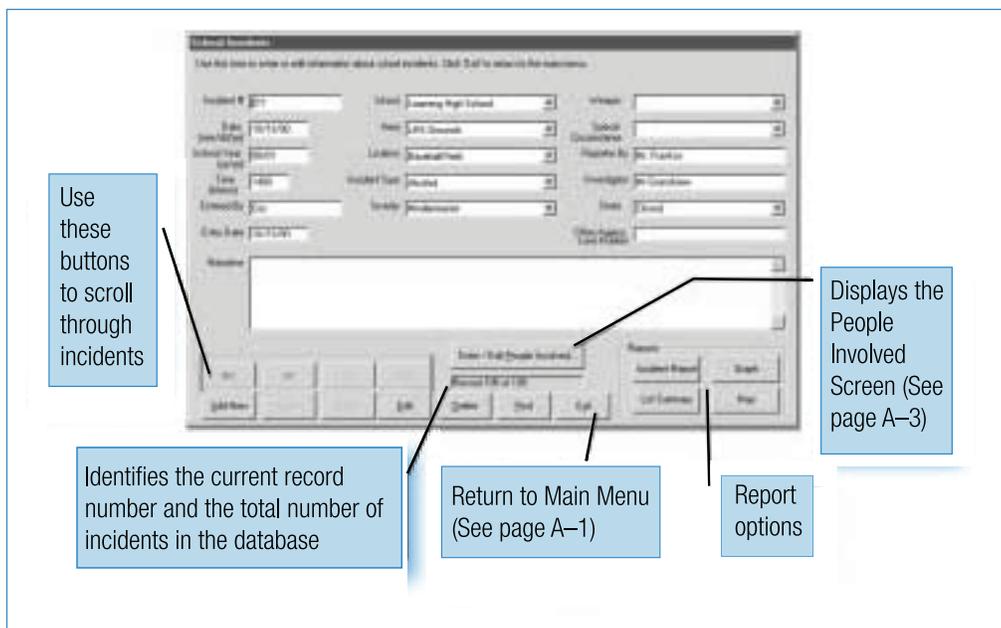
Figure 1.



Incident Screen

On the Incident screen you can enter new incidents, update information on an incident, or browse through previously-entered incidents.

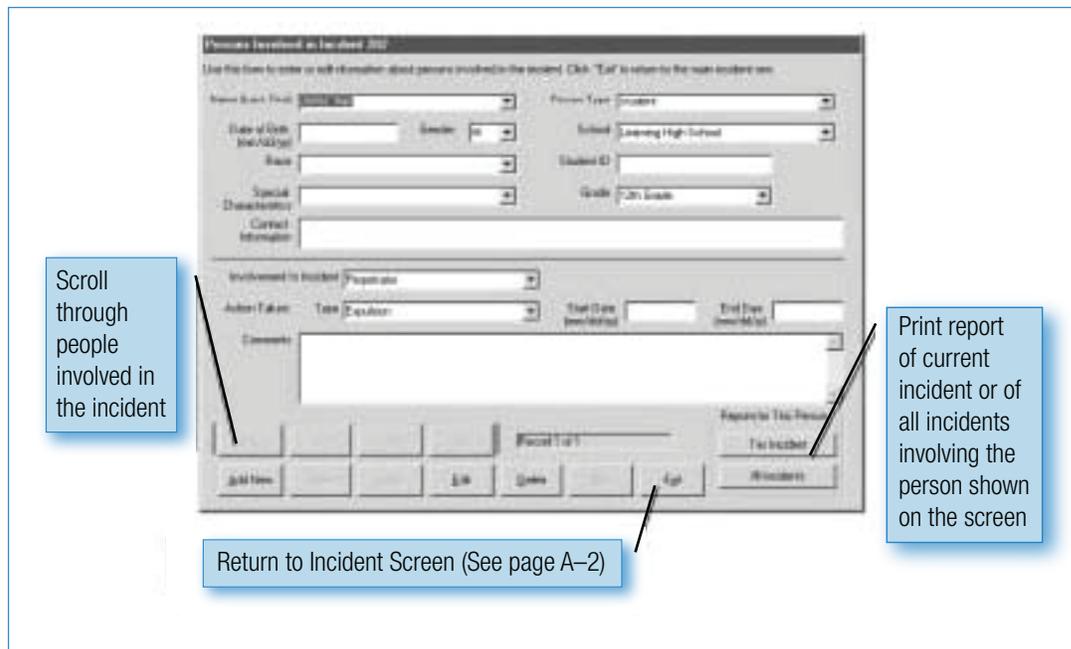
Figure 2.



People Involved Screen

On the People Involved screen you can enter information about people involved in an incident, update information on a person, browse through previously-entered people, or get a print out on all incidents involving a particular person.

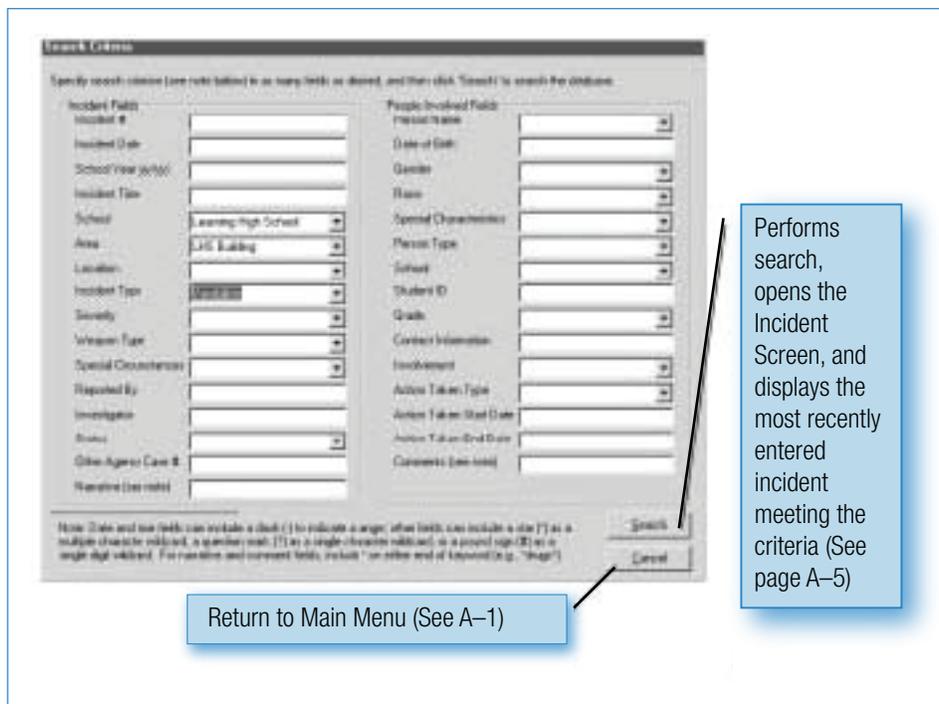
Figure 3.



Search Screen

On the Search screen you can look for incidents that meet specific criteria. In the example below, a search is made for all incidents that occurred inside the school building that involve vandalism.

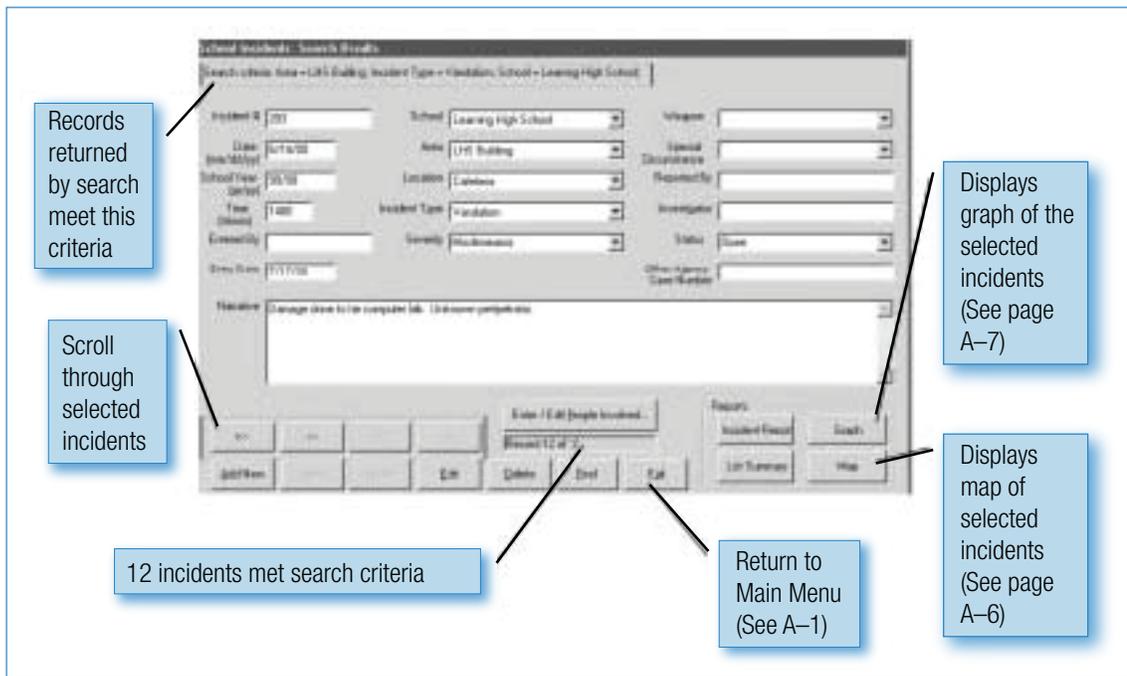
Figure 4.



Incident Screen (Showing Search Results)

After a search is performed, the results are displayed on the Incident Screen. On this screen, you can browse through the incidents meeting your criteria or generate summary reports on the incidents.

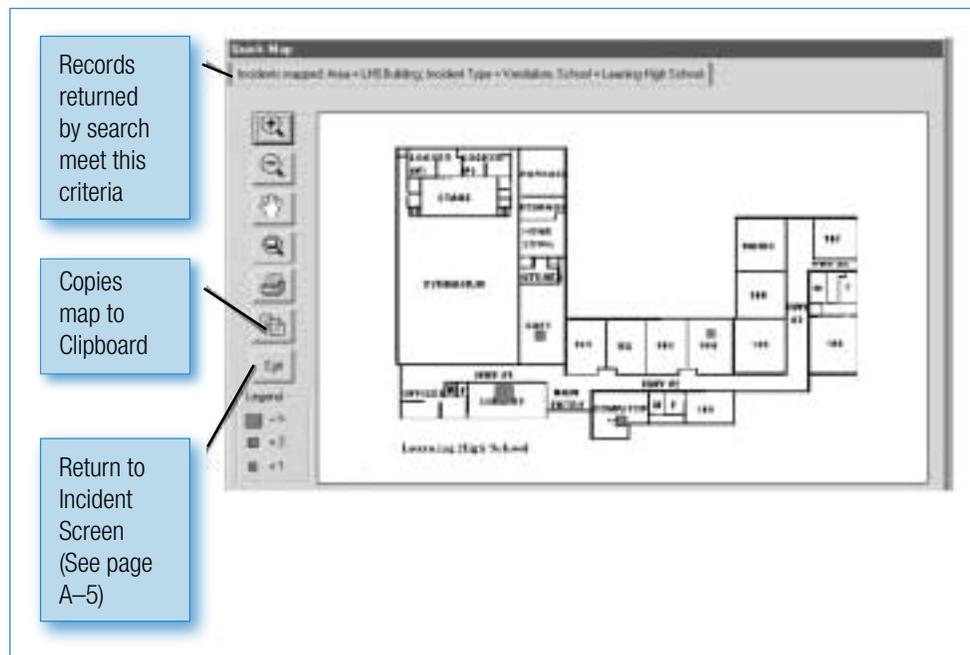
Figure 5.



Quick Map Screen

If your search criteria include a school and area, and you have assigned a map to the area in *School COP*, you can display the incidents meeting your search criteria on the map. This screen shows the location of vandalism incidents occurring inside the school building. Note that the size of the icon depends on the number of incidents occurring at the location.

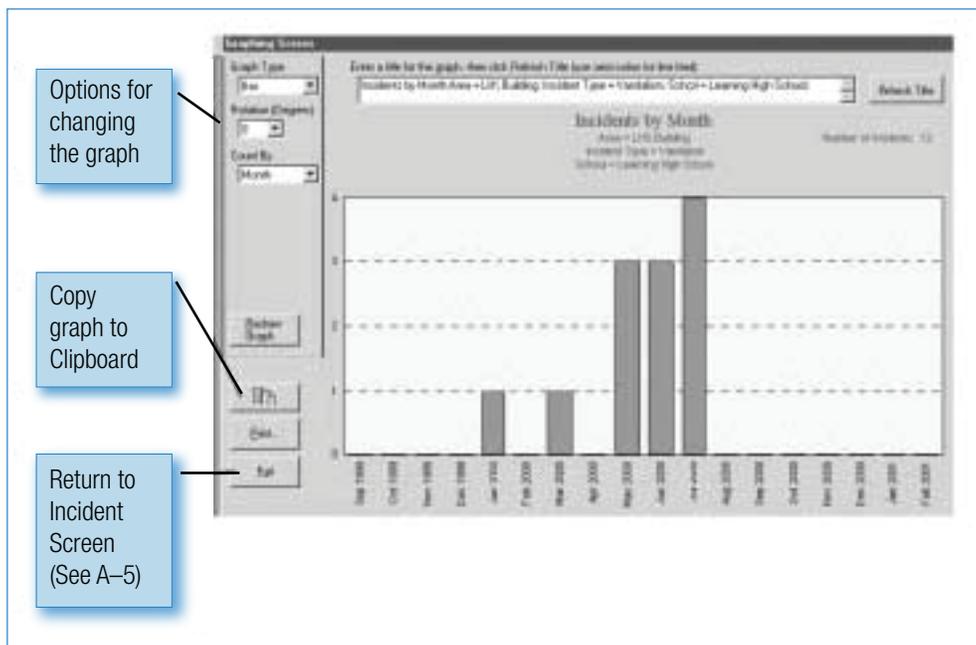
Figure 6.



Graph Screen

After a search is performed, the results can be graphed. This screen shows the number of vandalism incidents by month occurring inside the school building.

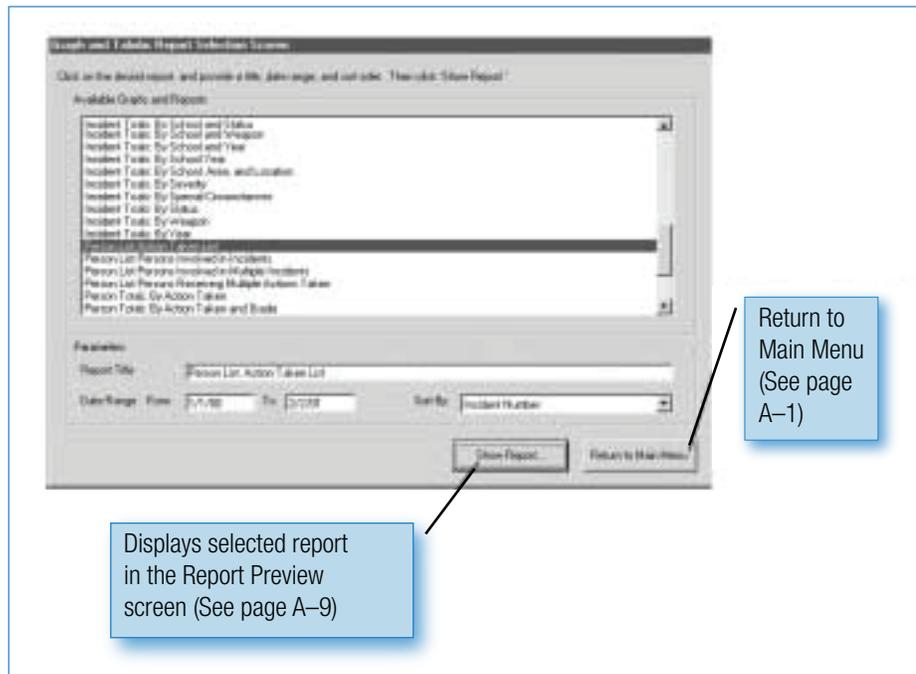
Figure 7.



List of 'Canned' Graphs and Tabular Reports

School COP comes with many pre-formatted graphs and tabular reports that produce lists, aggregate totals, and other calculations.

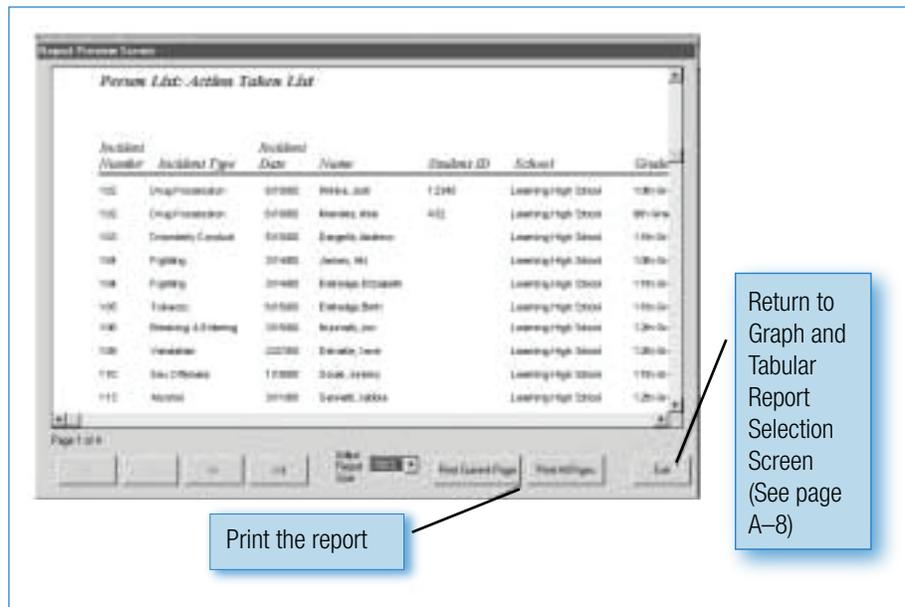
Figure 8.



Tabular Report Print Preview Screen

Tabular reports can be previewed and, if desired, printed. This screen shows a report that lists students that received a suspension or some other disciplinary action.

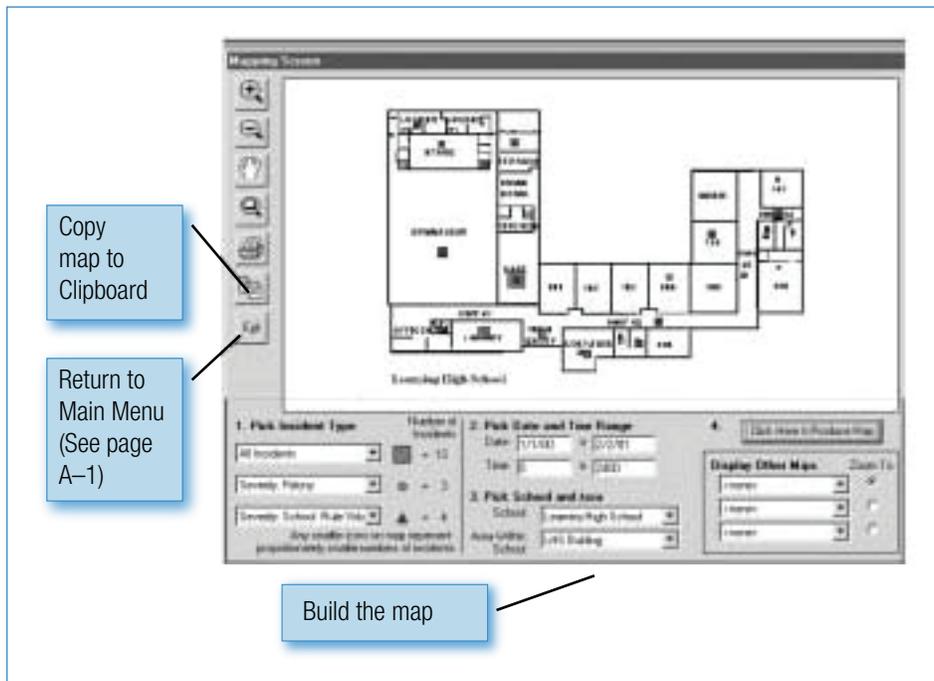
Figure 9.



Mapping Screen

School COP includes a general purpose mapping screen on which multi-layer maps can be built.

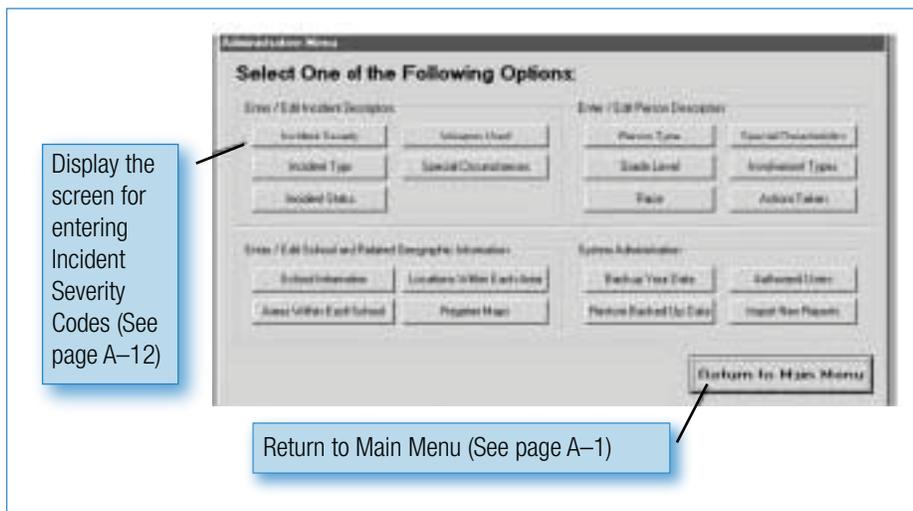
Figure 10.



Administrative Menu

The Administrative Menu is the gateway to a number of screens that allow you to define codes and perform other administrative functions.

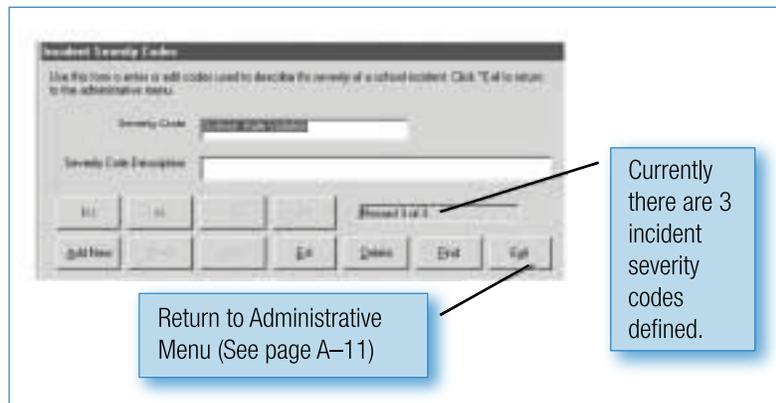
Figure 11.



Incident Severity Code Table Screen

This screen shows how you enter incident severity codes. Other code table screens are similar to this one.

Figure 12.



About the COPS Office

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territory, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources.

Community policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques, to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime.

Rather than simply responding to crimes once they have been committed, community policing concentrates on preventing crime and eliminating the atmosphere of fear it creates. Earning the trust of the community and making those individuals stakeholders in their own safety enables law enforcement to better understand and address both the needs of the community and the factors that contribute to crime.

The COPS Office awards grants to state, local, territory, and tribal law enforcement agencies to hire and train community policing professionals, acquire and deploy cutting-edge crime fighting technologies, and develop and test innovative policing strategies. COPS Office funding also provides training and technical assistance to community members and local government leaders and all levels of law enforcement. The COPS Office has produced and compiled a broad range of information resources that can help law enforcement better address specific crime and operational issues, and help community leaders better understand how to work cooperatively with their law enforcement agency to reduce crime.

- Since 1994, the COPS Office has invested nearly \$14 billion to add community policing officers to the nation's streets, enhance crime fighting technology, support crime prevention initiatives, and provide training and technical assistance to help advance community policing.
- By the end of FY2012, the COPS Office has funded approximately 124,000 additional officers to more than 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 law enforcement agencies across the country in small and large jurisdictions alike.
- Nearly 700,000 law enforcement personnel, community members, and government leaders have been trained through COPS Office-funded training organizations.
- As of 2012, the COPS Office has distributed more than 8.5 million topic-specific publications, training curricula, white papers, and resource CDs.

COPS Office resources, covering a wide breadth of community policing topics—from school and campus safety to gang violence—are available, at no cost, through its online Resource Center at www.cops.usdoj.gov. This easy-to-navigate website is also the grant application portal, providing access to online application forms.

This Guide is designed to help school administrators, police officers assigned to a school, and non-sworn school security staff reduce student discipline and crime problems using a software application called the School Crime Operations Package, or *School COP*, located at www.schoolcopsoftware.com/index.htm.



COPS

Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
145 N Street NE
Washington, DC 20530

To obtain details on COPS Office programs,
call the COPS Office Response Center at 800-421-6770.

Visit COPS Online at www.cops.usdoj.gov.

First published 2001
Revised 2013
e071318586