



**Final Report on the
Ohio First Year Conflict Management Teacher Survey**

**Bureau of Research Training and Services
College and Graduate School of Education
Kent State University**

**Raymond C. Hart
Director**

**Thomas Horwood
Coordinator**

**Karen Given
Research Assistant**

**Presented to
Maria Mone, Executive Director
and
Jennifer Batton, Director of Education Programs
The Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management**



Tuesday, February 22, 2005

Summary of the Program Evaluation of the Ohio Entry Year Teacher Survey

Introduction

This document serves as the final report of Kent State University's Bureau of Research Training and Services (BRTS) program evaluation of the Ohio First Year Teacher Survey based on findings from a stratified random sample of first year teachers across Ohio. The goal of the research was to assess the extent to which first-year teachers were prepared with conflict management skills and knowledge. The purpose of this survey is to assess teacher beliefs relating to conflict management in their school by recalling some of their experiences. Furthermore, the survey is designed to measure school climate and teacher's understanding and use of conflict management strategies in the work environment.

The report contains four sections on research methods, data analysis, results, and conclusions. Two appendices have also been provided to assist the Commission in understanding the data. The body of the report concludes with recommendations designed to help guide decisions based on survey results.

Research Methods

The goal of the research was to assess the extent to which first-year teachers were prepared with conflict management skills and knowledge. The purpose of this survey is to assess teacher beliefs relating to conflict management in their school by recalling some of their experiences. Furthermore, the survey is designed to measure their school's climate and teacher's understanding and use of conflict management strategies in the work environment. The evaluation is designed to answer two questions, "What are the common elements school and classroom environments for Ohio's first year teachers?" and "What is the conflict management preparation and skill development for Ohio's First Year Teachers?"

Sample

These tasks are concerned with measuring the school and classroom environments of the 2682 first year teachers working in elementary, middle, and high schools across Ohio during the 2004-2005 school year. A random sample of 785 teachers was selected from the population with an expected response rate of 25%. For fiscal reasons, only one mailing was planned for the survey, and the actual response rate was 23%. Consequently, all statistics reported in this report have a 7% margin of error.

Instrument Development

A survey on conflict management was developed by the BRTS staff in 2002 to assess the climate of the schools selected to participate in the Ohio School Conflict Management Initiative (see Appendix A). The has been tested extensively for reliability and validity in previous reports to the Commission and will not be presented in this report.

Survey questions concentrated on measuring personal beliefs of teachers relating to conflict management in schools, classrooms, and pre-service institutions. Furthermore, the survey was designed to measure the use of conflict management strategies in their schools and classrooms. The survey instrument was developed specifically to measure several factors identified as essential in prior grant applications, personal interviews with teachers and administrators, training sessions, and training manuals. The survey consisted of quantitative (multiple-choice), qualitative (open-ended), and demographic questions.

The questions focused on the following six areas: 1) personal beliefs about conflict management, 2) description of the school environment, 3) classroom practices by teachers, 4) personal observations regarding frequency of behaviors, 5) personal experiences with conflict, 6)

frequency of use of conflict management strategies, and 7) pre-service preparation in using conflict management strategies.

Demographic questions focused on employee classification, prior experience with conflict management training and existing programs. Several demographic variables were obtained from the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) database for first year teachers. The instrument contained a total of fifty-two multiple-choice questions relating to conflict management, demographic questions, and open-ended questions asking respondents to describe personal methods used to manage conflict, causes for conflict in their school, and steps their school has taken to manage conflict. Details about the specific issues addressed by each of the items can be found on the instrument in Appendix A.

The fifty-two multiple choice items from the Conflict Management Survey made up seven factors, which were labeled as follows: conflict strategies employed in the classroom, student behaviors, classroom instruction, individual conflict management ability, interpersonal relationships, pre-service conflict management preparation, and classroom practices.

Data Analysis and Results

Respondents were first compared cross all factors based on gender, type of school (elementary, middle/junior high, or high), and school location (urban, suburban, or rural). Figures 1 through 4 present the statistically significant findings from the analysis. The Bonferroni adjustment to significance levels was employed due to multiple analyses of the same sample (Stephens, 1997). The findings clearly support prior research that suggests that interpersonal relationships, instructional practices and strategies relative to conflict management significantly decrease across gender (males), urbanicity (rural and urban) and school type (middle and high school). Researchers have consistently found that interpersonal relationships are a critical component of academic

success (e.g., Davis, 2001; Schlosser, 1992; Anderson et al, 2004). Similarly, teachers across the same demographic factors report increased incidents of conflict behaviors.

Figure 1: Gender Comparison

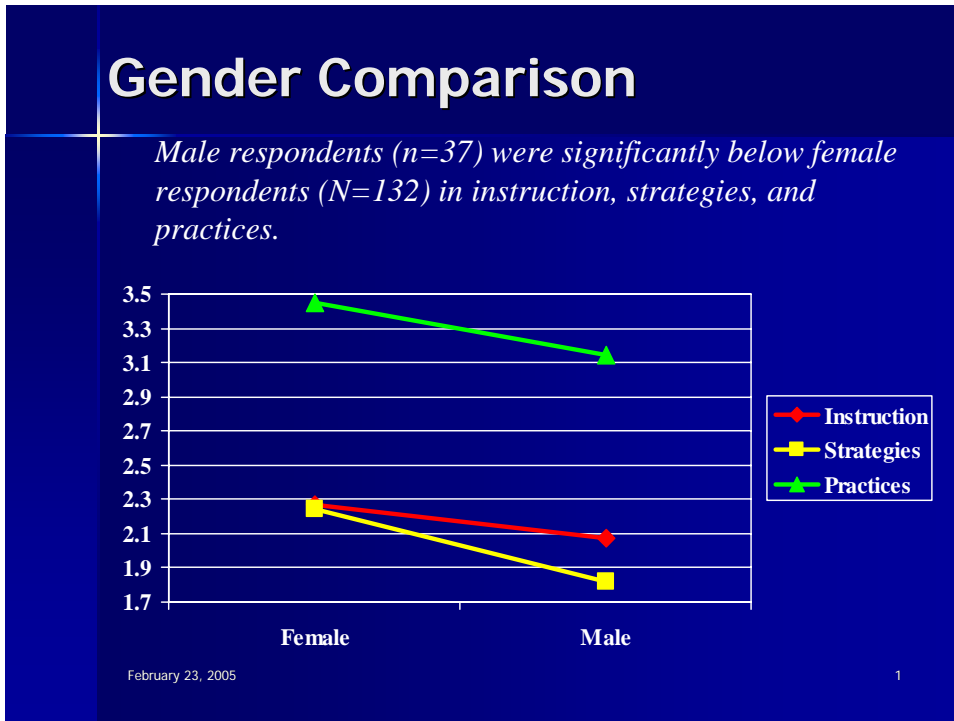


Figure 2 and 3: School Type Comparison

School Type Comparison

Respondents were compared based on the type of school: Elementary (n=69), Middle/Junior High (n=41), or High School (n=60). There were significant differences among the types of schools in instruction, strategies, behaviors, and relationships. A graph of the comparisons is provided in the following figure.

Elementary schools were significantly different from High school on instruction and strategy.

Elementary schools were significantly different from Middle and High schools on behaviors and relationships.

Middle/Junior High schools were always statistically equivalent to High schools.

March 2, 2005 2

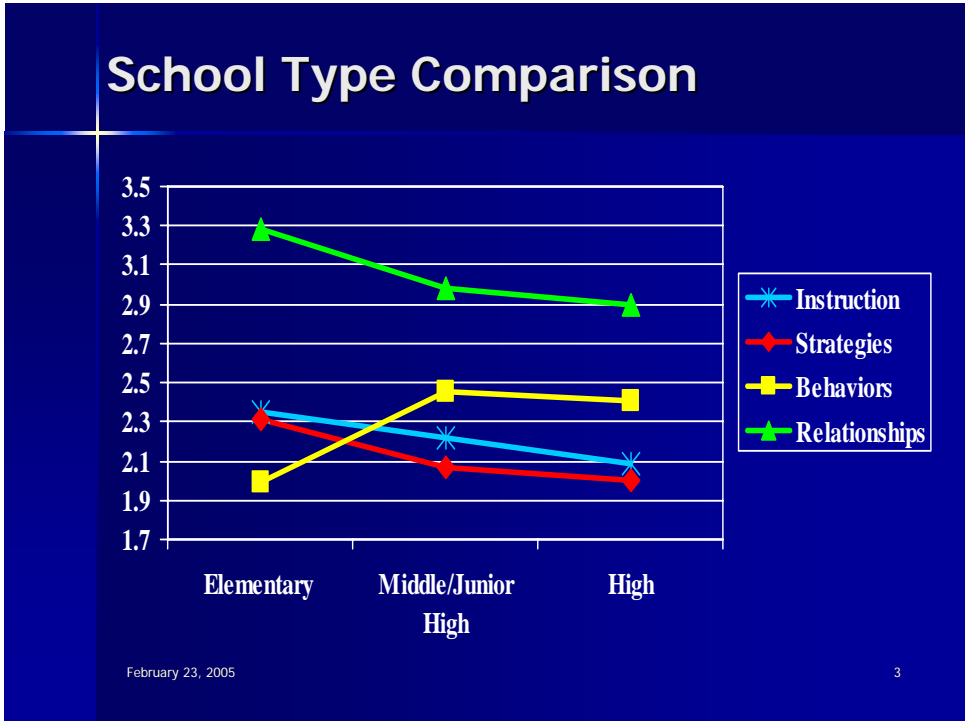
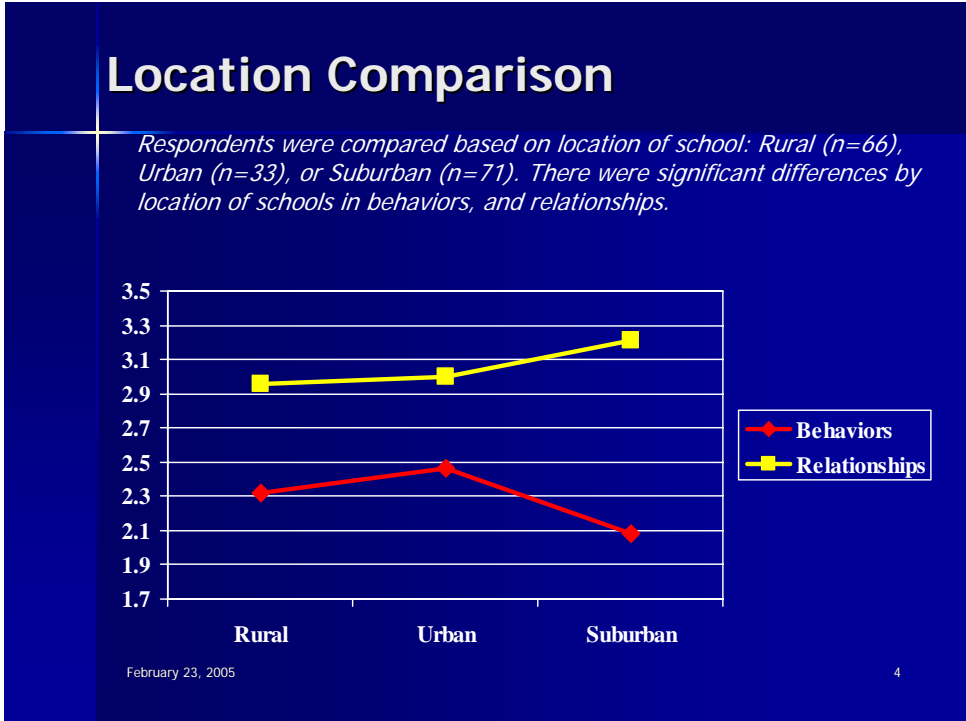


Figure 4: Location Comparison



The results from first year teachers working in schools with a comprehensive school management program or a peaceful schools program were significantly higher than those teachers not working in schools with programs in ability, strategies, relationships, and preparation. Figures 5 and 6 illustrate this finding.

Figure 5: Comprehensive School Management Program

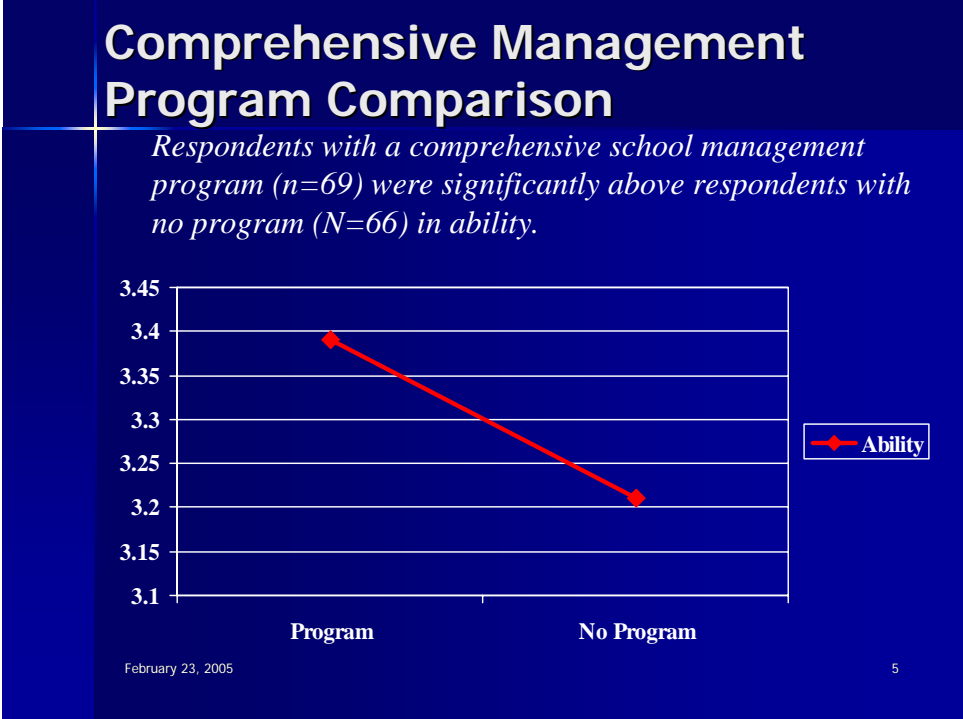
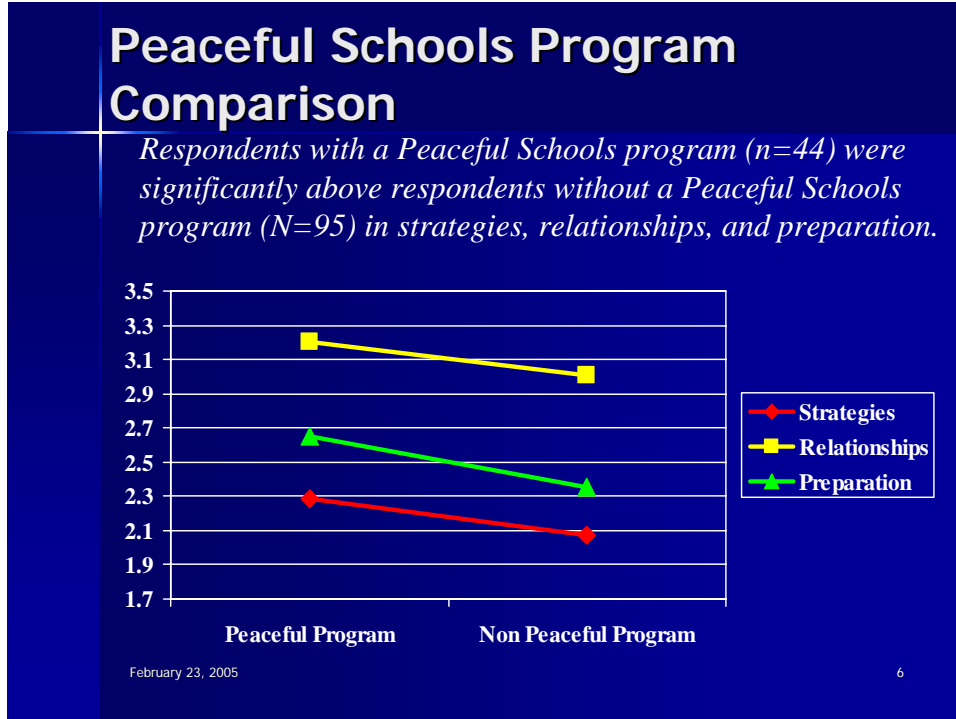


Figure 6: Peaceful Schools Program

Finally, the analysis of the individual responses to items clearly reveals the need for conflict strategies in schools as it relates to students communication skills, de-escalating skills, and their relationships with teachers and their peers. See Figures 7 and 8. However, the majority of the respondents do not teach conflict management strategies in the classroom, many feel their pre-service preparation lacked adequate discussion of conflict management strategies, and teachers believe their students would benefit from their receiving additional conflict management training.

Figure 7

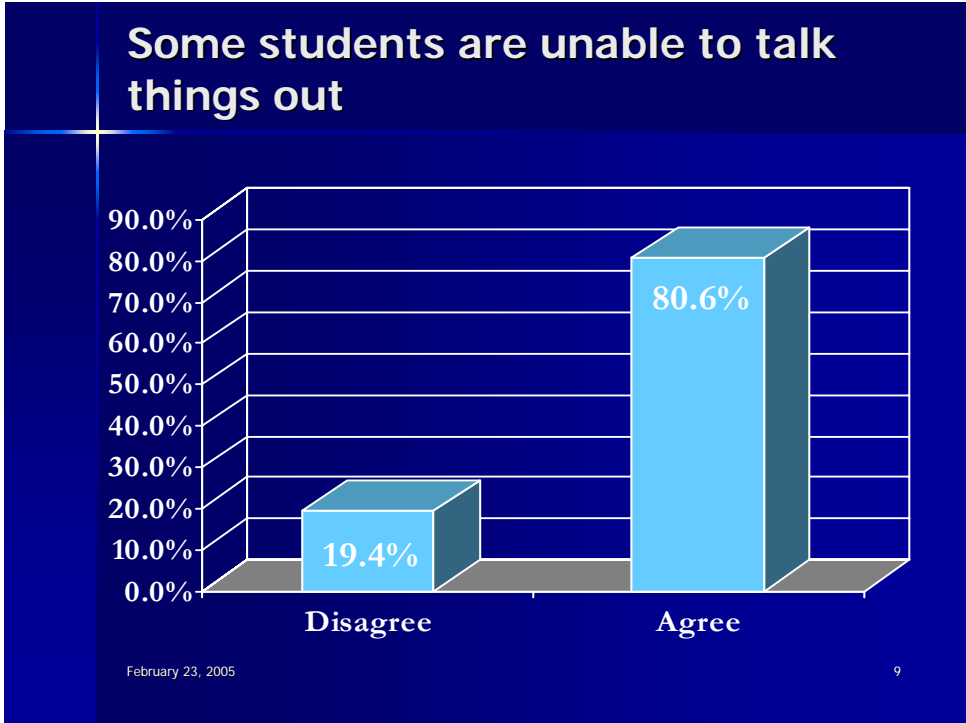


Figure 8

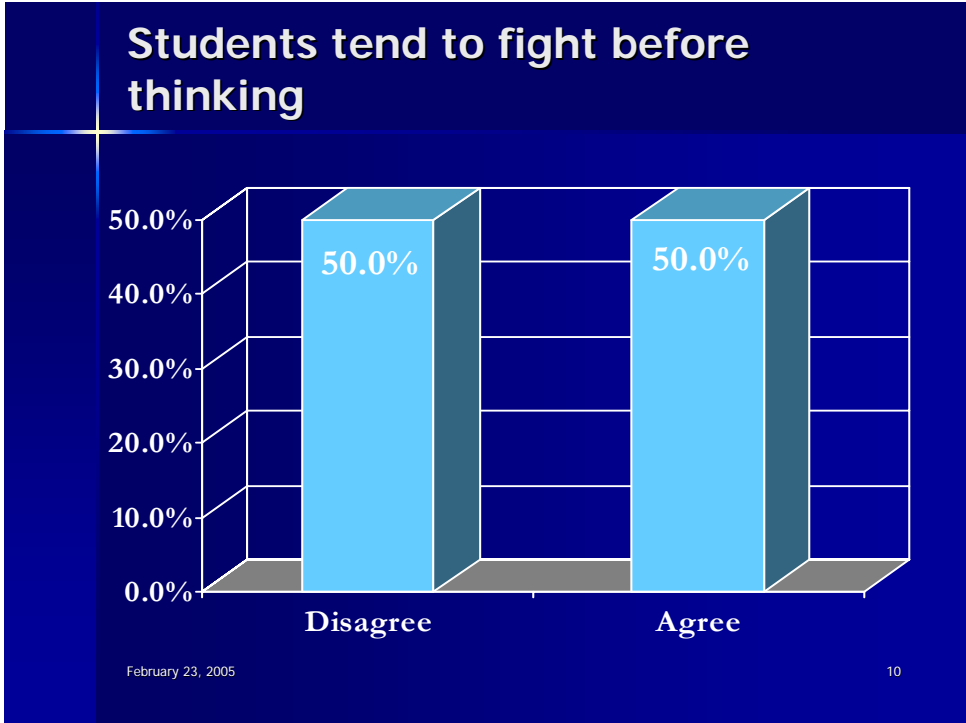


Figure 9

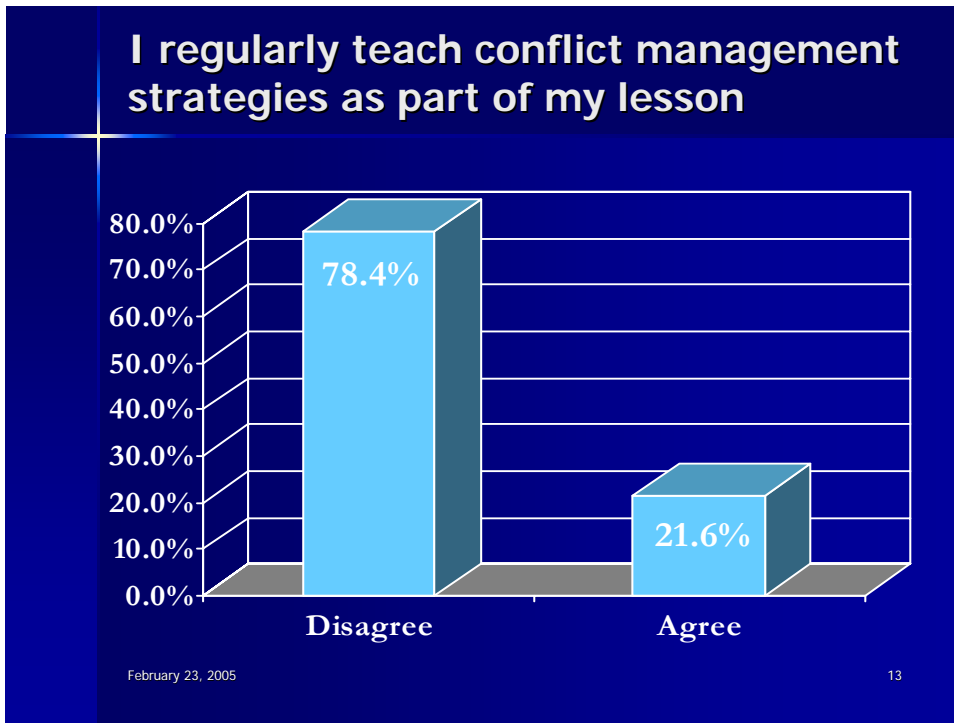


Figure 10

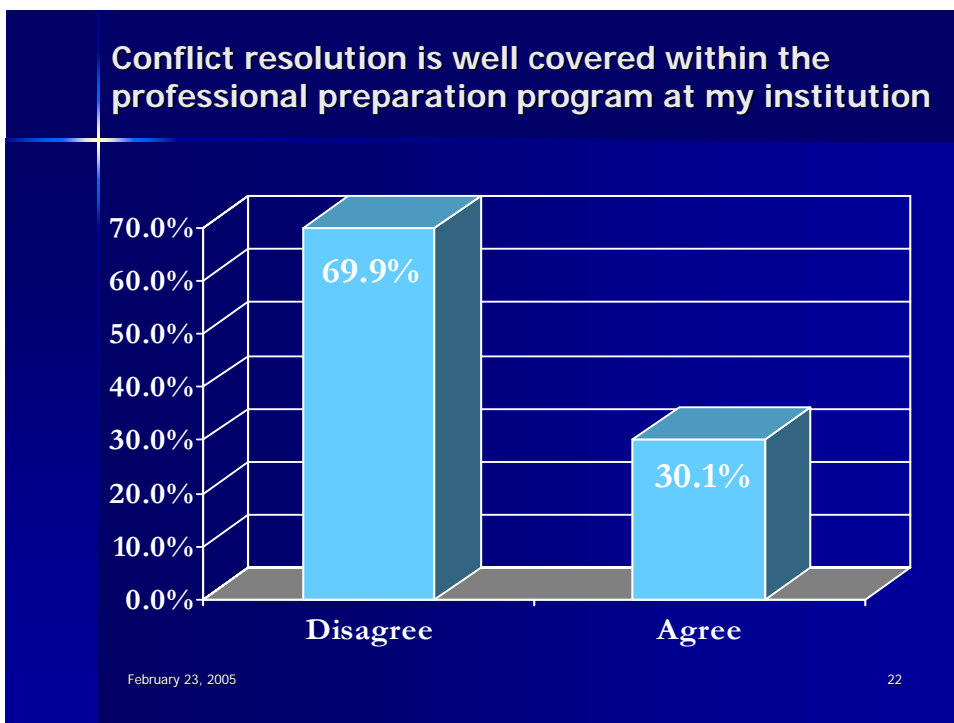
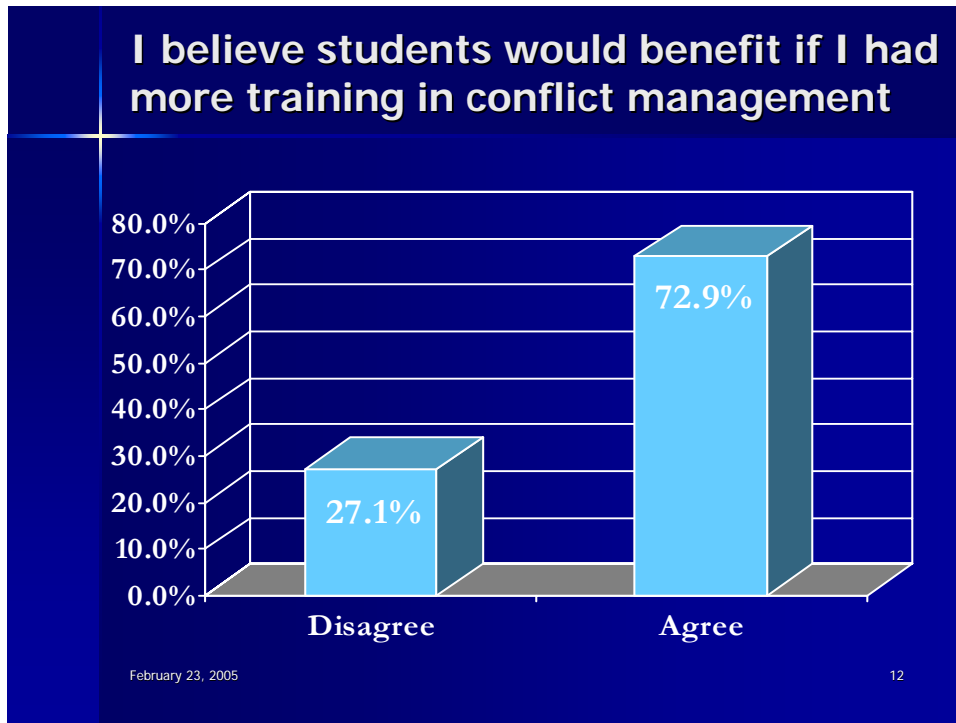


Figure 11



Conclusion and Recommendations

There is considerable evidence and research to suggest that first year teachers lack the conflict management skills for the classroom. Overall, there is not significant increase in the use of strategies by teachers, and there is a significant decrease in the reported number of conflict related strategies, relationships, and instruction in the schools. Elementary and suburban school teachers also reported an increase in their endorsement of items related to classroom practices indicating a real need for conflict management in rural and urban areas as well as middle and high school.

The results of the evaluation and prior research indicate the importance of professional development and a comprehensive conflict management program. The results of the analysis of individuals who had formal training, and who work in buildings with formal programs, indicate that both are important components for improving perceptions of managing conflict in the schools. The data provide support for the program to target teacher development so that conflict management can

be incorporated into classroom curricula. Teachers appear to spend little time teaching students to use conflict management skills as direct lessons in the classroom.

The conclusions provided are based on the data collected. We hope that the suggestions and data are used to enhance program activities. Any questions or concerns about this report should be directed to:

Raymond C. Hart, Director
Bureau of Research Training and Services
Kent State University
507 White Hall
Kent, OH 44242

References

- Anderson, A. R., Christenson, S. L., Sinclair, M. F., & Lehr, C. A. (2004). Check & Connect: The importance of relationships for promoting engagement with school. *Journal of School Psychology, 42*, 95 – 113.
- Davis, H. A. (2001). The quality and impact of relationships between elementary school students and teachers. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 26*, 431 – 453.
- Schlosser, L. K. (1992). Teacher distance and student disengagement: School lives on the margin. *Journal of Teacher Education, 43*, 128 – 140.
- Mergendeller, J. R. & Mitman, A. L. (1985). The relationship of middle school program features, instructional strategy, instructional performance, and student engagement. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 5*(2), 183 – 196.
- Wentzel, K. R. (1996). Social and academic motivation in middle school: Concurrent and long-term relations to academic effort. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 16*(4), 390 – 406.

Ohio Entry-Year Teacher Survey

{Survey_ID}

The purpose of this survey is to assess your personal beliefs relating to conflict management and dispute resolution in your school by recalling some of your experiences from your first year of teaching. Furthermore, the survey is designed to measure your school's climate and your understanding and use of conflict management and dispute resolution strategies in your work. When completing this survey, please think back over your first year of teaching and base your responses on these experiences.

Conflict management is defined as a philosophy and set of skills designed to assist people in better understanding and dealing with conflict as it arises in all aspects of our lives. Dispute resolution is defined as a broad range of processes by which parties in conflict can work toward a resolution. It most often refers to facilitation, mediation, and arbitration.

Directions: Think back to your first year of teaching. Please use a BLACK or BLUE PEN or PENCIL to shade the circles that best represent your understanding of conflict management in schools. Please fill in only one circle per question unless otherwise instructed.

Your answers will be kept strictly confidential. When you are finished, place in the postage-paid envelope and return it to Kent State University. If you have any questions, **please contact T.J. Horwood at (330) 672-6435 or thorwood@kent.edu.**

<p>1. Gender:</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Male</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Female</p> <p>Age: _____</p>	<p>2. Grade(s) you taught during your first year: (fill in all that apply)</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Pre-K</td> <td><input type="radio"/> 4th</td> <td><input type="radio"/> 9th</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Kindergarten</td> <td><input type="radio"/> 5th</td> <td><input type="radio"/> 10th</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> 1st</td> <td><input type="radio"/> 6th</td> <td><input type="radio"/> 11th</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> 2nd</td> <td><input type="radio"/> 7th</td> <td><input type="radio"/> 12th</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> 3rd</td> <td><input type="radio"/> 8th</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<input type="radio"/> Pre-K	<input type="radio"/> 4th	<input type="radio"/> 9th	<input type="radio"/> Kindergarten	<input type="radio"/> 5th	<input type="radio"/> 10th	<input type="radio"/> 1st	<input type="radio"/> 6th	<input type="radio"/> 11th	<input type="radio"/> 2nd	<input type="radio"/> 7th	<input type="radio"/> 12th	<input type="radio"/> 3rd	<input type="radio"/> 8th		<p>3. Type of School District:</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Major Urban</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Urban</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Suburban</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Small Town/City</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Rural</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Not Sure</p>
<input type="radio"/> Pre-K	<input type="radio"/> 4th	<input type="radio"/> 9th															
<input type="radio"/> Kindergarten	<input type="radio"/> 5th	<input type="radio"/> 10th															
<input type="radio"/> 1st	<input type="radio"/> 6th	<input type="radio"/> 11th															
<input type="radio"/> 2nd	<input type="radio"/> 7th	<input type="radio"/> 12th															
<input type="radio"/> 3rd	<input type="radio"/> 8th																

4. The school at which I taught this past year has the following:

	YES	NO	NOT SURE
a. A comprehensive conflict management program , in which school staff members collaborate on building-wide programming designed to improve the building climate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. A peer mediation program , in which students help each other work out their problems.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. A peaceful schools program , in which the school community members promote a peaceful climate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Other (please specify): _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Additional comments: _____

5. Please indicate the types of training you have ever had in the following areas, as well as how much of each type (if any) measured by the total number of contact hours you had during training: (fill in all that apply)

	Academic Course for Credit	Contact Hours	Professional Development Workshop	Contact Hours	Personal Exploration	Contact Hours	None
a. Conflict management (specifically)	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>
b. Conflict management (through another main topic)	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>
c. Negotiation skills	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>
d. Collaborative problem solving	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>
e. Conciliation	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>
f. Facilitation skills	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>
g. Mediation skills	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>
h. Arbitration skills	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>
i. Other (please specify): _____	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>

6. Please tell us about your school environment last year:

STRONGLY DISAGREE
DISAGREE
AGREE
STRONGLY AGREE

- a. Most teachers are respectful to students.
- b. Most school employees work as a team.
- c. Most students are respectful to teachers.
- d. Most students are respectful to administrators.
- e. Most students are nice to other students.
- f. Most teachers and students like to learn together.
- g. There is negative tension between some students in this school.
- h. Some students are unable to talk things out.
- i. Students tend to fight before thinking.
- j. Class disruptions occur frequently.
- k. It is important to teach students how to solve arguments without fighting.

7. Please answer the following questions about your personal experiences last year.

STRONGLY DISAGREE
DISAGREE
AGREE
STRONGLY AGREE

- a. I have confidence in my ability to de-escalate disputes between students.
- b. I have confidence in my ability to de-escalate disputes between students and myself.
- c. I have confidence in my ability to de-escalate disputes between another staff member and myself.
- d. I have confidence in my ability to de-escalate disputes between parents and myself.
- e. I am able to manage conflict in my personal life.
- f. I believe students would benefit if I had more training in conflict management.

8. Please tell us about your classroom practices last year:

STRONGLY DISAGREE
DISAGREE
AGREE
STRONGLY AGREE

- a. I regularly teach conflict management strategies as part of my lessons.
- b. I often integrate conflict management strategies informally in my classroom.
- c. In my classroom, we frequently talk about conflicts and how to resolve them.
- d. We often role-play conflict solutions and practice how to resolve them.
- e. I regularly consult outside sources when planning conflict management lessons.
- f. I frequently help my students learn to solve conflicts with words.
- g. In my classroom, students often do projects related to conflict management.
- h. In my classroom, students regularly learn that people with different backgrounds are equal.
- i. I regularly teach my students to speak respectfully to others.
- j. I always hold students responsible for their behavior.

9. Please tell us about your experiences as a pre-service teacher (prior to college graduation):

Name of **College/University** where you obtained your teacher training:

	STRONGLY DISAGREE				
	DISAGREE				
	AGREE				
	STRONGLY AGREE				

- a. From the training I received at my institution, I feel I have effective conflict management skills.
- b. Conflict resolution should be a major component in my institution's professional preparation program.
- c. The teacher preparation program at my institution taught conflict management skills to all pre-service teachers
- d. From the training I received at my institution, I feel I have conflict management knowledge.
- e. Conflict resolution is well-covered within the professional preparation program at my institution.
- f. The teacher preparation program at my institution taught conflict management knowledge to all pre-service teachers.
- g. From the training I received at my institution, I feel I have a positive disposition about conflict management.
- h. From the training I received at my institution, I feel comfortable using conflict management terminology with students in the classroom.

10. Please indicate your personal observations about the frequency of these student behaviors at your school.

	Once a month	Once a week	2-3 times a week	4 or more times a week
a. Name calling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Threats	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Harassment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Verbal fighting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Physical fighting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Bullying	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Extortion (threatened use of force to obtain money or personal property)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. How often do you use the following strategies at school?

Never Rarely Sometimes Frequently

- a. **Active Listening** (a set of effective communication skills that includes non-verbal body language, attentive listening, non-threatening questioning, and summarization).....
- b. **"I" Messages** (a description of how you feel and an indication of the conditions under which you feel that way).
- c. **Reframing** (the process of changing the way a thought is presented so that it maintains its fundamental meaning but is more likely to support resolution efforts).....
- d. **Recognizing / Identifying Feelings**
- e. **Problem Solving Processes**

12. How often do you encourage your students to use the following strategies?

Never Rarely Sometimes Frequently

- a. **Active Listening** (a set of effective communication skills that includes non-verbal body language, attentive listening, non-threatening questioning, and summarization).....
- b. **"I" Messages** (a description of how you feel and an indication of the conditions under which you feel that way).
- c. **Reframing** (the process of changing the way a thought is presented so that it maintains its fundamental meaning but is more likely to support resolution efforts).....
- d. **Recognizing / Identifying Feelings**
- e. **Problem Solving Processes**

Please answer the three questions below on the subject of conflict and your school. If you need additional space or have additional comments, feel free to attach another sheet to your completed survey.

13. Please describe methods you use to manage conflict in your school.

14. What do you see as some of the causes of conflict in your school?

15. What steps has your school taken to properly manage conflict?

Thank you for your time in completing this survey. If you are interested in receiving a summary of this data, please send an e-mail to Jennifer Batton at Jennifer.Batton@cdr.state.oh.us