CPS School Safety: Notes on Research and Best Practices

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Benchmarking objectives:

- Ultimate goals of effort: to reduce youth gun violence in Chicago and to improve schooling outcomes for at-risk CPS students
- Potential strategies for reducing youth gun violence include those that:
  - CPS has primary control over
  - CPS would need to pursue in collaboration with other agencies
  - Other agencies have primary control over
- Benchmarking of effective strategies should include all three, but initially we focus on strategies that CPS has primary control over
- Key questions:
  - What types of interventions are most effective at reducing youth violence and related risky behaviors?
  - Which ones are CPS now offering, or are high-risk students otherwise getting through juvenile justice system?
  - What is the quality of existing interventions/programs?
  - What isn't being offered that needs to be expanded/improved?

Sources for benchmarking activities

- People: Philip Cook (Duke), Jonathan Guryan (Chicago), Jens Ludwig (Chicago), Steve Raudenbush (Chicago)
- Papers:
  - Elizabeth Drake, Steve Aos, Marna Miller, "Evidence-based public policy options to reduce crime and criminal justice costs," *Victims & Offenders*, 2009
  - Philip Cook, Denise Gottfredson, Chongmin Na, School Crime Control and Prevention, Duke working paper, 2009
  - Mark Lipsey, Primary factors that characterize effective interventions with juvenile offenders," *Victims & offenders*, 2009
  - Mark Lipsey and Francis Cullen "The effectiveness of correctional rehabilitation," *Annual Review of Law and Society*, 2007
  - Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, USDOJ *Blueprints: A Violence Prevention Initiative* (1999)

Most promising approaches, Lipsey 2009

(reviews 548 independent study samples, focuses on juvenile offenders, should be very relevant for decision problem facing Chicago Public Schools)

- Cognitive behavioral skill building programs (26% reduction)
  - Typically 12-16 week interventions, teach youth relaxation skills and ways of avoiding thinking errors and coping more productively with the social environment
- Behavioral skill building programs (22% reduction)
  - Use of rewards for selected behaviors to "recondition" youth (e.g., use of token economies)
- Group counseling (22% reduction)
  - Therapist tries to develop personal relationship with youth, exercise influence on youth feelings, cognitions, behavior
- Mentoring (21% reduction)
  - Adult (not therapist) tries to develop relationship with youth
- Case management (20% reduction)
  - Case manager or case team develops service plan for youth, arranges for respective services, monitors progress

Other approaches considered by Lipsey 2009

- Moderately effective:
  - Mixed counseling – 16% reduction
  - Family counseling – 13% reduction
  - Social skills building programs – 13% reduction
  - Mediation restorative programs – 12% reduction
  - Challenge skill building programs – 12% reduction
  - Academic skill building – 10% reduction
  - Service broker – 10% reduction
  - Restitution restorative programs – 9% reduction
- Least effective:
  - Job-related skill building – 6% reduction
  - Surveillance – 6% reduction
  - Individual counseling – 5% reduction
  - Peer counseling – 4% reduction
  - Multimodal regimen – 3% reduction
  - Deterrence – 2% increase in recidivism
  - Discipline – 8% increase in recidivism

Additional insights from Lipsey 2009 review

- Quality and quantity of intervention matter
- Largest behavioral changes among highest-risk youth
  - With the exception of those youth who have serious history of violent behavior

Remarkable consistency across reviews

- (Ex) Phil Cook's review of school-based interventions for broader student populations echoes Lipsey on value of:
  - Cognitive behavior therapy
  - Mentoring & its variants (like "Check and Connect," which involves monitoring of school performance, mentoring, and case management for high-risk students)
  - Behavior management strategies (for classroom and school management)
  - Bullying prevention
- (Ex) Drake, Aos, Miller review of all crime-prevention strategies (adults and youth, population vs. targeted);
  - Functional family therapy for juv. probationers (works on both parenting skills and cognitive / behavior skills of youth)
  - Counseling / psychotherapy
- (Ex)OJJDP Blueprints
  - Bullying prevention
  - Functional family therapy
  - "Alternative thinking strategies" (like cognitive behavior therapy)
  - Mentoring programs (like Big Brothers / Big Sisters)

Where is there disagreement in literature?

- Drake, Aos and Miller more positive about "education programs" than is Lipsey (19% reduction in former vs. 10% reduction in later)
  - Could be slightly different set of education programs being reviewed?
  - Cook review seems positive on Accelerated Middle Schools in particular (intensive remediation), is there high school analog of that?

- OJJDP Blueprints document seems to have low evidentiary bar
  - They like multi-systemic therapy, which focuses on improving parenting skills, but evidence on that seems mixed (with lots of weak studies in the literature)
  - They like Quantum Opportunities Program (QOP), which provides education activities, life skills training, service activities, and stipends to high-risk teens
    - But results of QOP seem to be driven largely by just one of the five sites (Philadelphia; others were San Antonio, Saginaw, Oklahoma City, Milwaukee), this should make us cautious

Conceptual framework for interpreting results

- Most of the interventions reviewed in literature focus on addressing relatively stable risk / protective factors for youth and their families
- But one can also think about risk factors for individual violence incidents
  - (Ex) Honor student winds up in a beef with street gang, brings gun to school
  - Many of the relevant interventions here outside of CPS control (ex: policing against illegal gun carrying, Boston Operation Ceasefire, etc.)
  - Many violent events at school known (at least to many students) in advance (see Katherine Newman, *Rampage*, 2004, for example pp. 175)
  - Suggests potential value of system to collect information and channel to relevant adults (though this has not been subject to evaluation)

Any "best practices" that CPS can draw on?

- First note that everyone out there is working off of the same set of research reviews
- A lot of these interventions are "manualized"
- Big Brothers / Big Sisters mentoring
- "The Good Behavior Game," other school management programs
- Cognitive behavior therapy, in use at Cook Co Juv Detention Center, version adapted by Dr. Bernie Glos for schools
- Maryland has developed system for working with schools on implementation: http://www.pbismaryland.org/
- Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center & Juvenile Probation use well-developed risk and strength assessments, can we learn from / adapt those?

Implications/insights for CPS

- Key interventions seem to be:
  - Cognitive-behavioral skill building programs
  - Behavioral skill building programs (& classroom / school management practices)
  - Group counseling
  - Mentoring (and variants like Check and Connect)
  - Case management (service broker plus regular follow-up / engagement)
- Promising idea:
  - System to get information from students about impending violence, refer to adults

Challenges and next steps

- Need to figure out what kids are already getting from CPS and related systems (like juvenile probation, etc.)
- Need to figure out what CPS programs in operation in general, how these relate to “best practices” from literature, and what is quality of the programs
- Quality of program seems to be very important for success, so need to carefully balance time on program design vs. implementation