



# Center for Neighborhood Enterprise

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## Milwaukee School Violence-Reduction Program Reports Continued Positive Results for 2010-11 School Year

The Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) high schools with the Center for Neighborhood Enterprise’s Violence-Free Zone program once again have shown substantial decreases in violence and disruption at a time when school violence generally was increasing. The VFZ is implemented in nine high schools by CNE’s community partners the Latino Community Center and Running Rebels Community Organization. They are: Bay View, Bradley Tech, Custer, Hamilton, Madison, Northwest, South Division, Vincent, and Washington (includes two sub-schools). Final data for the 2010-11 school year furnished by MPS shows:

**Table 1: VFZ School Incidents – 2010/2011 Compared with Pre-VFZ Totals**

| Measures              | Pre-VFZ | 2010/2011 | Change   |
|-----------------------|---------|-----------|----------|
| Violent Incidents     | 4460    | 3995      | Down 10% |
| Fighting              | 2278    | 1692      | Down 28% |
| Non-Violent Incidents | 55442   | 30186     | Down 46% |
| Class Disruptions     | 40381   | 20873     | Down 48% |

The VFZ schools also reported major reductions in suspensions compared to the previous year.

**Table 2: Suspensions Comparisons at VFZ Schools 2010/2011 with Previous Year**

| Suspension Category                          | 2009/2010 | 2010/2011 | % Change |
|--|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Learning Environment (Non-Violent Incidents) | 19741     | 7193      | Down 64% |
| Personal/Physical Safety (Violent Incidents) | 5599      | 5411      | Down 3%  |
| Weapons (Violent Incidents)                  | 118       | 105       | Down 11% |
| TOTAL SUSPENSIONS                            | 25458     | 12709     | Down 50% |

The Violence-Free Zone program has several components, overall school support, individual mentoring of high-risk students, and wrap-around support for youth and their families in the community. There were a total of 1229 students enrolled in the VFZ mentoring program in 2010-11, amounting to slightly more than 10% of the total student population in the VFZ schools. CNE has found that if the VFZ can reach the 10% who are committing the disruptions or showing leadership, the whole school culture can be greatly impacted. More than 53% of this high-risk group exhibited improvement in grades and/or attendance last year from their previous records.

The VFZ program was first introduced in Milwaukee schools in 2005-06. Schools with the program have consistently reported decreases in violent and nonviolent incidents and suspensions. The program employs full-time “Youth Advisors,” young adults from the same neighborhoods and experiences as the students, who work closely with MPS School Safety Officers and School Resource Officers, teachers, and counselors to provide an extra layer of support to the school overall.

In 2010-11, there were 57 Youth Advisors working in the nine campuses, with from four to eight at each individual school depending upon the enrollment and environment. During any one day, a Milwaukee VFZ school team will do from 20-25 mediations; 20-35 incident preventions; 50-75 hallway redirections (clearing the hallways or escorting students to class); 60-70 supportive conversations; and five tutoring sessions.

Both Latino Community Center and Running Rebels Community Organization mount many extra activities to support the VFZ youth, including reading, job preparation, male and female support groups, Asian clubs, and sports, arts, and other recreation. The Center for Neighborhood Enterprise provides overall management, direction, and coordination of the Violence-Free Zone program, which also is active in schools in Baltimore, Chicago, Dallas, and Richmond, VA.

7/29/2011