Reducing School Disorder Through Mediation

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I. INTRODUCTION

Disorder in schools is nothing new. It has probably been around since the first school opened. However, school disorder—especially violent disorder—has come to the forefront of today's news. Media reports on violence in schools are now common. Some schools have installed metal detectors and taken other drastic measures. Congress has also joined in the fray, holding numerous hearings to consider the matter. In 1975, the Senate Judiciary Committee gave schools an “A” in violence. One could dismiss these reports as media hype and political maneuvering, however, few would dispute that school disorder is a problem, or that schools should do as much as they reasonably can to reduce disorder within their halls.

As people concerned with school disorder searched for a method to control it, some began adapting alternative dispute resolution (ADR) methods. ADR provides a wide range of possible responses to the problems all schools face and the flexibility to address the circumstances of an individual school. This paper will explore the possibility of using ADR to reduce school disorder. As mediation is the most common ADR method used in schools, it will be the focus of this paper. However, other ADR methods may also benefit schools.

II. THE EXTENT OF SCHOOL DISORDER

Reports of school disorder fill the media, but its nature is often misunderstood. This section will provide an overview of the amount and nature of disorder in schools, characterizing the problems that schools face before considering whether mediation may effectively combat them.

A. How Violent are the Schools?

Many schools are justifiably alarmed by the violence in their hallways. However, a typical school is not the hotbed of serious
violence implied by some popular accounts.¹ Even so, violence and other instances of disorder are significant problems in many schools.

Two percent of children in a big city school can expect to be physically attacked each month.² Slightly less than one percent can expect to be the victim of robbery in a typical month.³ A 1975 study found that seven percent of violent crimes that are committed by youths occurred in school.⁴ This statistic constitutes one percent of the rapes, three percent of the robberies (theft by force or threat of force), and three percent of the aggravated assaults committed by youths in one year.⁵ Although the number of offenses that occur in school is very small when compared with offenses that occur in open public areas such as streets and parks, this should not be considered insignificant, because more victimizations occur in schools than inside homes, near homes, or in offices or factories.⁶

B. What Kind of Disorder is Most Common in School?

Another common misunderstanding is the type of disorder that happens in schools. Though most media reports emphasize murder and other seriously violent crimes, most victimizations in schools do not involve physical violence. In fact, the more violent and serious crimes such as rape and "serious assaults occur so rarely that . . . obtaining precise estimates of their frequency [and] distribution" is often difficult.⁷ Most crimes reported in schools involve minor theft.⁸ One study reported that larceny, without contact, accounted for 81 percent of the total victimizations in schools.⁹ The next most common crime was simple assault, which accounted for only eight percent of victimizations.¹⁰

¹. GARY D. GOTTFREDSON & DENISE C. GOTTFREDSON, VICTIMIZATION IN SCHOOLS 1 (1985).
². Id. at 4.
³. Id. at 4.
⁵. Id.
⁶. Id. at 32, quoting J. MCDERMOTT, CRIMINAL VICTIMIZATION IN URBAN SCHOOLS, (U.S. Department of Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, 1979).
⁷. GOTTFREDSON, supra note 1, at 4. See also Isralowitz, supra note 4, at 32-33.
⁸. Id. at 3-5.
⁹. Isralowitz, supra note 4, at 31-32.
¹⁰. Id. at 33.
In summary, though many schools do have more serious problems, most crimes in schools are minor offenses and indignities. However, both their frequency and the opinion of the public and students show that school disorder is a major social problem.11

III. WHAT FACTORS AFFECT SCHOOL DISORDER

What causes school disorder is too complex a question to answer in this paper—if answering it is possible. However, many researchers have identified factors that may be associated with greater or lesser amounts of disorder in schools. Examining these factors will be helpful in determining if mediation can help to reduce disorder.

In 1977, a study “found that small schools, schools where grades are high, and schools where students participate in decisions about how the school is run” experience less misconduct than other schools.12 However, this study has been criticized, primarily because the number of schools it involved was small.13

In 1978, however, the National Institute of Education (NIE) found similar results when it released its congressionally mandated study on school violence.14 This study and report delineated possible factors affecting school violence. One of the study’s conclusions is that schools can control misbehavior by:

decreasing the size and impersonality of schools, . . . making school discipline more systematic, . . . decreasing arbitrariness and student frustration, . . . attention to a school’s reward structure, . . . increasing the relevance of schooling, and . . . decreasing the students’ sense of powerlessness and alienation.15

The NIE study suggests several characteristics of schools with relatively little violence:

1. Schools whose attendance areas have low crime rates and few or no fighting gangs.
2. Schools with a small percentage of male students.

11. See GOTTFREDSON, supra note 1, at 5.
12. Id. at 8 (citing a study conducted by McPartland and McDill).
13. Id.
15. GOTTFREDSON, supra note 1, at 9 (citing the NIE report).
3. Schools composed of higher grade levels.
4. Small Schools.
5. Schools where students rate classrooms as well disciplined, where rules are strictly enforced, and where the principal is considered strict.
6. Schools where students consider school discipline to be fairly administered.
7. Schools where class sizes are small and where teachers teach a few rather than many different students each week.
8. Schools where students say that classes teach them what they want to learn.
9. Schools where students consider grades important and plan to go on to college.
10. Schools where students believe they can influence what happens in their lives by their efforts, rather than feeling that things happen to them that they cannot control.\(^{16}\)

A 1985 study paralleled much of what is contained in the above list. Specifically, it found four factors that affect disorder in school.\(^{17}\) The first factor is school size and available resources. Schools that are smaller and have the resources to allow teachers to be more involved with students are more orderly. The second factor is the organization of instruction. When a teacher has greater contact with students or when students have more contact with a single teacher, disorder is lower. Thus, in schools where one teacher teaches several subjects to the same students, rather than one teacher for each subject, disorder should be lower. The third factor is the school climate and disciplinary practices. Schools with firm, clear, evenhanded disciplinary practices have lower levels of disorder. Schools that are ambiguous, in either the rules or the enforcement of the rules, have larger amounts of disorder. The study also emphasized that policies must not only be clear, firm, and equitable, but that they must also appear as such to students. Finally, the fourth factor is community influences and social policy. This includes crime in surrounding neighborhoods, poverty and

\(^{16}\) Id. at 12-13.

\(^{17}\) Id. at 171-176. The Gottfredson study also found two factors which were often cited in other studies that did not seem to have much impact on disorder. They were the size of classes and student participation in school decision making. Although these two factors did not have a measurable effect on disorder, the Gottfredsons noted these may have an impact in circumstances of very small classes or very great involvement. Id. at 176.
unemployment, proportion of single parents, race composition, and school policies such as desegregation.

IV. HOW CAN MEDIATION AND OTHER DISPUTE RESOLUTION METHODS REDUCE DISORDER?

The studies above present many factors that may affect school disorder, many of which overlap. Some of these factors are beyond the immediate control of school officials. Among these are crime rates, poverty levels, and the number of single parent households in the surrounding community. However, mediation may greatly benefit many of these factors. As mentioned by all the studies, school rules need to be clear, firm, and fair. Schools can include mediation and other ADR methods in their rules and procedures to achieve this. If schools want to do so, the mediation procedure they put in place may increase the involvement students have with the faculty. Mediation can also be a great help in forming the perception among students that the rules are fair and administered fairly.

A. School Rules and Their Enforcement

A well-planned mediation program can form an important part of a school’s disciplinary rules. One advantage of mediation and other methods of ADR is their flexibility. A school official need not stick to the program developed in another school, but can adapt ADR methods so they will work best for the individual school. One example is Marmelade School of Salt Lake City, Utah. A private corporation ran Marmelade as an alternative school for children who could not adequately function in normal schools. The school used a “due process” program to deal with students who were not progressing or who were having other problems.18 In this program, a student who misbehaves meets with school officials and parents and works out a plan that they sign. This hybrid form of mediation shows how schools can adapt and incorporate mediation into a normal disciplinary policy. When properly designed and followed, such a plan can

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18. Alternative Programs for Troubled Youth: Hearing before the committee on labor and Human Resources, United States Senate, Ninety-Ninth Congress, First Session, on Examination of Alternative Educational and Treatment Programs Aimed at Helping Troubled Youths and Adults, 99th Cong., 1st Sess., (Oct. 7, 1985) [Hereinafter Senate Hearing].
set out clear rules and reinforce the rules while working toward a solution with the student.

A school can successfully integrate mediation with a school's disciplinary program. If properly designed and enforced, it can serve as a basic part of a clear, firm and fair set of rules which will help to reduce disorder.

B. Teacher and Administrator Involvement with Students

As noted above, the studies have shown that when teachers and administrators have increased interaction with students, disorder decreases. Mediation allows for this interaction. Where educators mediate the disputes of students, they would naturally have a great deal of direct involvement with them. With peer mediation, where students are trained to mediate the disputes of other students, teachers will likely still have a great deal of involvement with many students since such a program requires the teachers or administrators to train and oversee the student mediators. The flexibility of mediation allows schools to tailor programs to optimize this contact as the individual school needs.

Some teachers fear that the increased involvement will take too much time. However, educators involved in these programs have pointed out that teachers spend less time on discipline if conflicts are resolved through mediation, leaving more time for the teachers to interact with the students in more positive activities. The flexibility of mediation also allows schools to design programs that deal with these concerns, balancing the need for greater contact with the limited time of teachers.

C. Student Perceptions

The studies emphasize that students must perceive the disciplinary policy as fair, clear and firm. It is also important that students feel they can influence their own lives, rather than believe they have no control over what happens to them. Mediation excels in this area. Peer mediation may be the most popular form used in schools, however, both peer mediation and mediation by a faculty member may have beneficial effects on

20. Id. at 23.
21. GOTTFREDSON, supra note 1, at 174.
the perceptions of students. Though apparently not yet used in schools, victim-offender mediation also promises the ability to help students, both victims and offenders, gain the perception that they can have an influence in what happens to them.\textsuperscript{22}

Little quantitative research has been conducted on the effect school mediation has on the perceptions of students, however, studies on the perceptions of participants of small claims court mediation are analogous. These studies compare how the disputants feel about mediated agreements as opposed to agreements imposed by a third party, such as a judge.\textsuperscript{23} This is similar to many school disorder situations. When a dispute is not mediated, it is likely that a third party, such as a teacher or principal, will impose a solution on the disputing students.

The studies show that compared with disputants who participated in court, more mediating parties felt the process was fair, that they had time to fully explain their position, and that they had an opportunity to deal with personal issues. Moreover, mediating parties were less angry and more satisfied with the resolution of the dispute. This was especially true when they had an ongoing relationship with the other party.\textsuperscript{24}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{23} Martin Wright, \textit{The Impact of Victim/Offender Mediation on the Victim}, 10 \textit{VICTIMOLOGY; AN INT'L J.} 631 (1985).
\end{itemize}
A program that can produce similar feelings in a school setting would go a long way toward ensuring that students would feel the rules are fair. It would help satisfy students with the result and teach them that they can have a real influence on what is happening to them. Mediation may also give students a chance to deal with the personal and emotional aspects of a dispute before it escalates to more serious disorder or violence. This is especially true since the students themselves are the ones who make a mediated agreement. In short, mediation may be an ideal tool for improving student perception of school rules and their enforcement.

D. The Effect of Mediation on the Individual Disputant

In discussing the effect of mediation programs, it is important not to lose sight of what it means to the individual. The goal of mediation is to resolve the dispute of the parties. A dispute that mediation truly resolves should not escalate to greater conflict. Mediation may reduce anger, feelings of alienation, and may help the parties to feel an ownership of the process and solution.25

Because of mediation's flexibility, students can create solutions to problems that a school administrator may not be able to impose effectively. For example, a student accused another of stealing her paper and turning it in as his own. Through mediation the students realized there had been a mistake and worked out a solution—to look for the lost paper together. This was a solution that a principal may not be able to successfully impose and enforce.26

Mediation not only reduces anger and frustration, it also results in a solution that satisfies most individual disputants and with which they will more likely comply.27 Even in cases where mediation is unsuccessful, compliance with an imposed solution is higher.28 Assuming the same patterns hold true in school

25. McEwen, supra note 23, at 40, 47.
27. Goldberg, supra note 23, at 155. 70.6% of mediated agreements were paid in full, an additional 16.5% were partially paid. Of litigated judgments, only 33.8% were paid in full, an additional 21.1% were partially paid.
28. Id. at 155. Where mediation was tried and failed in small claims court, 52.8% were fully paid and 13.9% partially paid after judgment. This compares to 33.8% and 21.1%, respectively, where mediation was not attempted.
settings, disputes between students are more likely to be settled to the satisfaction of the disputants if mediated. It is also more likely that the parties to the dispute will comply with the terms of the agreement that they have crafted. Combined with the ability of the students to create a flexible agreement to fit their own needs and desires, mediation is a very powerful way to settle the specific disputes of individual students and prevent future escalation.

E. Victim-offender Mediation

A promising mediation program that is gaining popularity in the criminal justice system is victim-offender mediation. It is a program that deserves consideration as a way to reduce disorder in schools when one student victimizes another.

Victim-offender mediation is a process "where victims have the opportunity to meet their offenders in the presence of trained mediators."29 "Victims can receive answers to questions they . . . have about the crime, . . . [confront] . . . the person who victimized them, . . . [and have a say in] . . . the penalty the offender will [get]. Offenders have an opportunity to take . . . responsibility for their actions, [show] themselves as more than just 'criminals,' and make amends" for their crime through a negotiated restitution agreement that they help create.30

An important aspect of victim-offender mediation is the assistance it gives "victims in their search for closure (i.e., receiving important information, expressing their feelings, and moving on with their lives)."31 Victims stand to gain a great deal through the process. Victims who participate in mediation are "significantly less upset about the crime and less fearful of being revictimized by the same offender."32 Studies have shown that victims who participate in victim-offender mediation feel less upset, more satisfied with the system, and that the process was more fair.33 Offenders also perceive more fairness in the system when they mediate.34 Victim-offender mediation may also help offenders realize the consequences of their actions and

29. Victims, Offenders Meet Face to Face, USA TODAY, September 9, 1991, at 11A (Published Interview of Mark Umpriet).
30. Umpreit, supra note 22, at 566.
31. Id. at 566.
32. Id. at 573.
33. Id. at 573-575.
34. Id. at 575.
to see the victim as a real person. These mediations usually end in a negotiated restitution agreement, which is more likely to be complied with than court ordered restitution. In a school setting, these agreements could be valuable in preventing future conflicts, giving promise that victim-offender mediation can help reduce school disorder.

V. ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION IN SCHOOLS TODAY

It could be said that informal dispute resolution has long been used in schools, perhaps since the first school opened. Indeed, whenever two arguing students are sent to the principal’s office, the result could be mediation. The most valuable contribution of ADR to schools may be to teach and refine the skills that many school teachers and administrators already have.

Of the formal methods of alternative dispute resolution used in schools today, the largest is mediation, primarily peer mediation. Formal mediation in schools probably started in the early 1980’s. It likely made its first appearance in public schools through school officials who either were experienced mediators or were otherwise involved in community mediation programs. These people recognized the potential of mediation and the results it could bring into the school setting.

A. Peer Mediation

Peer mediation involves a student peer, who is trained as a mediator, who works with the parties of a dispute to find a mutually agreeable solution to the dispute. Peer mediation can handle many different types of student disputes. Most cases at the middle school and high school levels deal with stolen

35. Id. at 577.
36. Id. at 574, 578.
38. Id. Davis, supra note 19, at 22, 23, 25 (Hawaii program started in 1981, San Francisco community mediation program started a school mediation program in 1982, New York School Mediators’ Alternative Resolution Team (SMART) started in 1983).
39. See Marian L. Ehlers, Student Empowerment: A Middle School Success Story, FORUM, Spring 1991, at 9; Davis, supra note 19, at 22.
property, rumors, and boyfriend/girlfriend disputes.\textsuperscript{41} Other school disputes that are commonly mediated include threats of physical force, harassments, minor assaults, property loss or property disputes.\textsuperscript{42} None of the programs reviewed allow students to mediate more serious disputes, such as serious physical fights, drug offenses, and offenses involving weapons.\textsuperscript{43} This should not be a problem since these more serious offenses do not constitute a large portion of the disputes in school.\textsuperscript{44}

Student mediators may be selected in several ways, for example, the faculty may select them or other students may elect them.\textsuperscript{45} Once selected, the programs require the students to participate in 15 to 40 hours of mediation training.\textsuperscript{46} The training consists of teaching the students such skills as impartiality, establishing and maintaining fair procedures, acting as fact-finders, teaching each party how to understand the other's point of view, and to "force [the] disputants to be realistic about possible solutions."\textsuperscript{47} Typical training sessions include the theory of mediation and role-play mediations.\textsuperscript{48}

Students and faculty may bring disputes into mediation through several different means. Some programs place the students on playgrounds at recess to intervene and resolve disputes as they happen. Others refer students to peer mediators through principals, teachers, or students.

Little hard data about what effect these programs have exists. Nevertheless, educators at schools with mediation programs have reported a decrease in disorder, fighting and disruptive behavior.\textsuperscript{49} The following is a description of how several of these programs have worked.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{41} Id. at 243.  
\textsuperscript{42} Id.  
\textsuperscript{43} See id. at 243; Davis, supra note 19, at 24.  
\textsuperscript{44} See supra part II.B.  
\textsuperscript{45} Davis, supra note 19, at 24 (San Francisco program 'conflict managers' selected by peers based on both positive and negative leadership skills); Burrell, supra note 26, at 239 (mediators selected by school based on traits of "assertive, leader types, usually from large families, because they already are skilled communicators"); Ehlers, supra note 39, at 10 ("conflict managers" selected by school).  
\textsuperscript{46} Davis, supra note 19, at 26.  
\textsuperscript{47} Id.; See also, Ehlers, supra note 39, at 11.  
\textsuperscript{48} Davis, supra note 19, at 26.  
\textsuperscript{49} Burrell, supra note 26, at 245; Davis, supra note 19, at 23; Ehlers, supra note 39, at 11.}
1. San Francisco Community Board School Initiative Program

A San Francisco program placed student "conflict managers" on the playgrounds. When the students became mediators, they agreed to:

1) Wear . . . Conflict Manager T-shirts only when on duty . . .
2) Report for duty on time. 3) Make up class work missed. 4) Fill out a report on each conflict . . . 5) Attend all meetings with the . . . Coordinator. 6) Be a Conflict Manager until the end of the school year.50

This program developed a 14-stage process for resolving disputes, summarized as follows:

If you see a conflict brewing, introduce yourself and ask both parties if they want to solve their problem. If they do, go to the area designated for solving problems. Explain and get agreement to the four basic rules: 1) Agree to solve the problem, 2) Don't call names, 3) Do not interrupt, and 4) Tell the truth. Decide who will talk first. Ask that person what happened and how he or she feels, repeating back what is said using active listening skills. Do the same with the other party. Ask the first party and then the second party for alternative solutions. Work with the students to get a solution that they both think is good. After the agreement, congratulate them both and fill out a Conflict Manager Report Form.51

The conflict managers had to follow these guidelines:

1) Conflict Managers must not thrust themselves into a dispute. Talking to the Conflict Managers is the student's choice . . . 2) Conflict Managers are helpers, not police. If there is physical fighting, [they] do not get involved. 3) The Conflict Manager's job is not to solve problems for other students, but to help other students think of ways to solve problems for themselves.52

Administrators at the schools where this program was in place noted a decrease in conflicts on the playground and in the classrooms.53

50. Id. at 24.
51. Id.
52. Id.
53. Id
2. Callanan Middle School, Des Moines, Iowa

At Callanan, twenty-four student mediators were chosen to represent the diverse population of the school. They were then sent to two days of intensive training in a secluded environment.54 While the mediators were in training, demonstrations of mediation were presented to the school. The mediators received referrals from teachers, administrators, and students. When students sat down with a mediator, they asked that they agree to do the following: “1) Solve the problem, 2) Use no name calling, 3) Make no interruptions, 4) Answer honestly, 5) Agree to no physical fighting, and 6) Speak to [the mediators] only.”55 The mediators were trained to remain neutral, but to ask probing questions such as, “How did you feel? Angry? Sad? Hurt? What could you do to prevent this from happening again?”56 They were also trained not to judge or suggest a solution.57 When feelings were expressed and understanding began to happen, the mediators were to let the disputants decide how to solve their differences.58 Once they reached a solution, the disputants were encouraged to tell their friends that they had resolved the conflict.59

Within the first week of the program, the news of successful interventions had spread throughout the school.60 In the first year of the program, 38.5% of the school’s sixth graders were referred for mediation. The next year, that number had dropped to 17.5%. Total referrals had dropped by 52% and student/student conflicts had been reduced 72%.61

3. Milwaukee School-based Mediation Program

In the Milwaukee program, either a student, teacher or administrator may refer students to mediation. The disputants are consulted about the possibility of mediation. If they agree to follow the peer mediator’s procedures, the session occurs.62

55. Id. at 11.
56. Id.
57. Id.
58. Id.
59. Id.
60. Id. at 10.
61. Id. at 11.
62. Burrell, supra note 26, at 239.
When they reach an agreement, the disputants are asked to evaluate the mediator. There is also a follow-up two weeks later to ensure the disputants are meeting the conditions of their agreements. 63

During the 1986-87 year at one school, seventy-five cases were referred for mediation. 64 Of those, sixty-nine were mediated and sixty resulted in an agreement. 65 "After a two-week follow-up, fifty-five of the agreements remained valid." 66

B. Other Types of ADR in School

As demonstrated by the examples above, mediation programs can take many forms. This flexibility allows school officials to craft a program specifically for their needs, drawing on the skills and methods of many types of ADR. An example is the "due process" program of Marmelade School, which used a hybrid mediation process to deal with students who had academic as well as behavior problems. 67

Mediation also need not be limited to student/student conflict. Educators might also adapt it to deal with disputes involving students, teachers, parents or other parties. Many problems other than playground conflict may also benefit. Mediation has been suggested as a method for dealing with truancy, 68 racially motivated disputes, and as a way to bring back students who have dropped out of school. 69 Considering the power of mediation to create a flexible solution and encourage compliance with the agreement, it is a process that should be considered for a wide variety of disputes in the schools.

C. Teaching conflict resolution methods in the classroom

All of the mediation programs reviewed for this paper also include some dispute resolution training in the classrooms. Children are taught such skills as brainstorming, problem-solving, active listening, group decision-making, negotiating, and mediating. 70 The students are encouraged to develop these

63. Id. at 244.
64. Id. at 245.
65. Id.
66. Id.
67. Senate Hearing, supra note 18.
68. Rifkin, supra note 37, at 1.
69. Id. at 3.
70. Kriedler, supra note 40, at 6.
skills and to explore concepts such as win-win resolutions, escalation and de-escalation, the difference between conflict and violence, and the idea that conflict can be constructive.\textsuperscript{71} Schools have used several methods to teach conflict resolution. Among them are, the use of puppets to create a conflict for which students suggest solutions, assigning a group of students to create a group of superheros who use nonviolent methods to deal with conflict, and children role-playing historical figures in the process of resolving disputes.\textsuperscript{72}

These skills help a student to deal more successfully with conflict and to know when to seek out mediation or other sources of outside help. These are skills students can keep when they leave the school grounds. One program reported a case where the parents called and explained that the student had mediated a fight between them.\textsuperscript{73}

Dispute resolution skills help students increase confidence and self-esteem.\textsuperscript{74} Many student mediators were "troublemakers" before becoming involved in mediation. Disputes involving those students decreased after their involvement in the programs.\textsuperscript{75}

Children must learn methods to cope with conflict at some point in their life. Teaching them these methods early in school is not just a way to decrease disorder in school, it is also a good way of preparing the children for life.

VI. MORE RESEARCH NEEDS TO BE DONE

The reports and experiences that many groups have had with mediation and other forms of dispute resolution are very encouraging. However, more research must be done to determine exactly what effect mediation and other methods have on school disorder and which methods work best. Much of the research in the area has been poorly designed and executed, and has often been biased by the values and ideologies of the researchers.\textsuperscript{76} More research must be done. Only when we have reliable data on what is effective can schools realize the full potential of mediation and ADR.

\textsuperscript{71} Id.
\textsuperscript{72} Id. at 5.
\textsuperscript{73} Davis, supra note 19, at 24.
\textsuperscript{74} Burrell, supra note 26, at 246.
\textsuperscript{75} Id. at 246; Davis, supra note 19, at 20.
\textsuperscript{76} Kriedler, supra note 40, at 7.
VII. CONCLUSION

Mediation and other methods of dispute resolution offer a great deal of promise in reducing school disorder. If properly designed, mediation can form an integral part of a discipline policy that is firm, clear, and fair. Just as importantly, mediation helps students perceive of the policies as fair. The experience of schools using mediation programs is overwhelmingly positive. The flexibility of mediation and ADR allows adaptation to the problems of individual schools and communities. Creative school teachers and administrators can and are using mediation and other ADR skills to solve problems in their schools. The potential of such methods to reduce disorder and violence in school is too great to ignore.

Todd A. Turnblom