On governor's task force

Factions differ on resolving school violence

By SUZIE ROLLINS

School violence and vandalism is a

statewide problem.

That's why a statewide conference for educators and students was held for the past three days in the Sheraton-Southfield Hotel. Gov. William Milliken gave the keynote address and discussed the task force he had appointed to focus on school violence and vandalism and determine what can be done to elimi-

The goal of the conference was to disseminate the task force's reports

and recommendations and provide an opportunity for educators to exchange ideas on the problem.

The workshop topics included "Alternatives to Suspension and Expulsion," School Youth Advocacy Program," "Neighborhood Development and Organization," "Parenting Skills," "Police-School Liaison Programs," "Student Involvement-Staff Needs," "Legal Education Programs," and "Coordinated Services to School Dropouts and Potential Dropouts."

Trevor Gardner of the program for Educational Opportunity outlined al-ternatives to suspending troublemak-ers, but many of his comments were termed too vague by listeners.

ism. Many of the recommendations contained in the report have already been found to be unworkable, Green said.

GREEN BLASTED one recommendation of the report that said students could help settle disputes over another student's guilt by participating in a stu-

school." Green said

However, Gardner was criticized for not discussing how the programs would be implemented or how they would be funded.

"How will they be funded?" one principal asked.

"Don't worry about the funding," Gardner answered, "People will pay for good programs."
His response triggered disagreement. When asked direct questions regarding violence in Detroit Schools and how to handle it, Gardner refused to comment. He discussed offering auxiliary classes to students who act up in the classroom and stressed the need to get students involved curriculum changes. In addition, Gardner recommended bring in parents and grandparents to the school to talk to the students about vandalism.

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"Who is going to staff these extra programs?" another asked.

"Don't worry about that. We've had parents, teachers, grandparents staff them. That's not a problem," he an-

"Will they (students) be taken out of their regular classes to attend these programs?" another asked.
"It can go any way you want it," he answered.

THE TWO-HOUR WORKSHOP began with Marlene Crister identifying benefits and losses of suspension. She spoke for nearly one-half hour before a principal objected.
"I didn't come here to hear the positive and negative viewpoints of suspensions, I know what they are," he said. "I came here to find out some alternatives to suspension. Let's etc. maith

dent court.
"If we tried that in Detroit the 12 students who were sitting on the jury could have their throats cut after school" (Green thirroats cut after

week is all it takes!

"Suspension is a compounding prob-lem," he said. "It's very diverse and

complex."

The educators agreed and waited to hear about his alternative programs. Curriculum changes may encourage positive responses from students. Student centers could offer auxiliary programs to youths accused of vandalism. However, the only curriculum change he identified, was allowing more time between classes so students wouldn't have to rush to their rooms, causing some to be tardy.

"They (Students) may not have enough time or space for themselves which is why they are late," he expected in the contract of the

likes football, cater all his programs to football."

ATHENS HIGH School counselor fee Mether liked the suggestion made in another workshop of forming a Youth Action Team (YAT).

"It proposed ways for the students to change to influence others and act kind of like school police," he added. "In YAT, the students band together to get changes."

One suggestion was establishing a udent court which could determine

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punishments for disruptive peers, McRuer explained. Another idea called for operating a rumor control center where students would be on hand to clarify rumors circulating throughout the school.

"I learned a lot from the program. I think some of these suggestions could work in Athens," he concluded.

A proposal for School Youth Advocacy (SYA) was explained af a workshop attended by parent Jane Liebrecht of Troy and Athens High School student Wendy Weitles. SYA, Mrs. Liebrecht explained, is currently operating in 16 schools in four districts in Michigan.

It operates under the same principles as group therapy. There are 10 to 12 volunteer participants, all students, said Mrs. Leibrecht. They get together one hour a day, five days a week, like a regular class. Although they get credit, they aren't graded. The youths break up into groups to discuss school problems.
"It's important because they develop positive attitudes toward themselves and the school," Mrs. Liebrecht said.

"It's important because they develop positive attitudes toward themselves and the school," Mrs. Liebrecht said. "The department of social services has two trained personnel who operate the groups. It's for all types of kids, good kids and kids with problems. There are no negative attitudes toward the group."

Miss Weitzel, a sophomore at Athens, believed it was a good idea.
"I know a lot of students who might need the program and I think it would be very positive," she added.

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Educators admit violence, vandalism is state-wide

What happens to the "bad eggs" in schools — the students who fight, steal, break windows and "fall between the cracks" as social workers say? Parents, educators and social service workers were sharply divided on the recommendations by the Governor's Task Force on School Violence and Vandalism.

Vandalism.

Task force members presented their recommendations Tuesday morning during a statewide conference at the

during a statewide conference at the Southfield-Steraton Hotel.

At one point it looked as though conerence participants might themselves engage in violence as they expressed their wide-ranging views.

Evidence of widespread dissatisfaction was reflected in the fact that there was a run on copies of the 41-page minority opinion report to the Governor's Task Force Report recommendations.

BEGINNING Jan. 1 the Michigan Dept. of Education will open an Office of Safe Schools funded for the first nine months by a \$110,000 grant by the Law

Dept. of Education will open an Office of Safe Schools funded for the first nine months by a \$110,000 grant by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), a division of the U.S. Department of Justice.

In addition, the office has been promised 30 months funding by the LEAA to establish a state-wide system of combating school violence and vandalism, said Al Hurwitz, executive director of the task force.

Some of the duties of the Office and vandalism, said as a two compile a state-wide annual school crime survey and a state-wide annual school crime survey and a state-wide annual school crime survey and the student's best interests" when a student first gets into trouble.

student's bests intro-smirrors are student's bests into trouble.

The idea, said Hurwitz, is to follow the recommendations of the report by involving students, parents, members of the state board of education, local and intermediate school districts, so-cial service agencies, youth agencies and police departments.

The task force cited a 1977 National Institute of Education study which stated that in a month's time a typical secondary situent stands a 1-in-9 chance of having something stolen in school, a 1-in-80 chance of being attacked and a 1-in-200 chance of being robbed.

Teachers, the study said, stand a 1-in-eight chance of having something stolen in a given month, a 1-in-167 chance of being robbed and a 1-in-200 chance of being attacked.

VANDALISM AND violence can be reduced, one task force member said, by building smaller schools, providing alternatives to regular classrooms and alternatives to expulsion for the chron-ic effectors. ic offender.
One of the recommendations of the

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report states, "It is imperative that we make the student the central figure in the resolution of the problem without victimizing or scapegeating the individual, If it can be established that the student is incapable of participating in a constructive solution, temporary or permanent isolation from the traditional school process should be considered and emergency steps should be taken to refer individuals to youth crisis centers."

SOUTHIFICID HIGH! School principal Daniel Hogan said the truds allocated to the Office of Safe Schools aren't enough to carry out all the goals aren't enough to carry out all the goals

pal Daniel Hogan said the funds allo-cated to the Office of Safe Schools aren't enough to carry out all the goals of the task force in the schools through-out Michigan.

"We're going to need some financial help," Hogan said. "I don't think I would disagree with a thing in here," he sad, pointing to the report, "but al tot of these suggestions are going to cost a lot of money."

Kenneth Green, director of pupil per-sonnel services in Flint Community Schools, was spokesman for the task force members unhappy with the final recommendations for curbing school violence and vandalism. Unlike Hogan, Green disagrees with a great deal of the task force report. Ouring the delivery of the task force report, Green shocked some partici-pants by declaring it a "lousy" report.

"I hast to throw a bucket of water on all this sweetness and light but we

"I hale to throw a bucket of water on all this sweetness and light but we draw up a lonsy report," Green said. Green said the report was heavily dominated by activist parents and (so-cial service) agency people from throughout the state. "I feel the report was loaded and slanted to those two groups dominating the task force," he said during the con-ference.

ference.
Outside the meeting room Green explained his feeling that school administrators unjustly bore the brunt of the

Farmington

Observer

(USPS 187-840)

Published every Monday and Thursday by the 'Observor & Eccentric News-spaers, 3252 Schoolcraft Rd, Livoria, Michigan 48150. Second-class Postage paid at Livonia, Michigan 48151. Address all mail (subscriptions, change of address, Form 3579) to P.O. Box 2428, Livoria, Michigan 48151. Tele-phone 591-0590.

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