

## AN INTERIM REPORT ON SCHOOL SAFETY

August 28, 2007

# Executive Summary

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## I. Introduction

On May 23, 2007, Jordan Manners, a fifteen year-old C.W. Jefferys' student, died of a gunshot wound at his school. The impact of this tragedy on Jordan's family, and the students, teachers, administration, and parents of the C.W. Jefferys C.I. ("C.W. Jefferys") community cannot be overstated. The belief that schools can deliver a safe haven for our children has been seriously shaken.

The intent of this Interim Report is to provide what the Panel has thus far heard and what the Panel has found with respect to life at C.W. Jefferys. While this Interim Report raises significant systemic issues affecting both C.W. Jefferys and the broader school environment, it is not intended to make broad-reaching systemic recommendations. That aspect of the Panel's work will await the completion of the systemic phase. Four narrow non-systemic recommendations aimed at some very specific items unique to the North-West family of schools are proposed in Section 4.2 of this Interim Report.

Based on the hundreds of hours of consultations and extensive data received to date (see our website at [www.schoolsafetypanel.com](http://www.schoolsafetypanel.com)), there is no merit to the suggestion that the general school environment at C.W. Jefferys is a "lawless war zone". Indeed the school continues to rightly be considered by many parents and students as the "jewel" of the community, due to its high academic standards and enviable arts program as described in Section 2.2(b) below.

## II. The Scope of the Interim Report

The Interim Report is not intended to be an exhaustive review of the situation at C.W. Jefferys, nor of the overall policies and procedures at the TDSB. It would be premature for the Panel to offer its final conclusions and recommendations at this stage (just ten weeks from the commencement of the Panel's work) given that consultations and research are ongoing. The Interim Report focuses primarily on the perspectives of students at C.W. Jefferys. It highlights some of the recurring themes with respect to school safety that the Panel has encountered during the initial stages of its work. It is based primarily on consultations with individual students, and the results of a comprehensive survey of C.W. Jefferys students administered on June 18 and 19, 2007. While the Interim Report incorporates some of the Panel's consultations with other stakeholders, including youth, parents, teachers, administrators, trustees and community organizations, a full analysis of these perspectives will await the completion of the Final Report.

### III. Student Perspectives on Safety and the “Recurring Themes”

While the Panel heard through consultations with students what can best be described as “mixed messages” regarding safety at C.W. Jefferys, overall a majority of the forty-one C.W. Jefferys students who were directly interviewed told the Panel that their school is one with high academic standards, a diverse student body, a safe environment and an excellent and enviable arts program. These views are largely corroborated by the Panel’s initial consultations with other stakeholders. C.W. Jefferys students are well represented among the recipients of awards and scholarships. C.W. Jefferys students consistently told the Panel that they felt that their school was being unfairly portrayed in the media as a dangerous and violent environment as a result of Jordan Manners’ death. In spite of these overall positive views of students, there were several significant concerns with respect to school safety that were brought to the Panel’s attention. These “recurring themes” have also emerged in the preliminary consultations with other stakeholders. They include:

- **Hallway Students** - Many students were concerned about the number of students who were congregating in the halls during class time, and the resulting disruption of the learning environment.
- **Safe School Transfers** - The Panel encountered near unanimity from stakeholders that the transfer of students from one school to another for reasons related to discipline or violence, without appropriate assessment and intermediary programming, was an issue of serious concern.
- **Difficulties in the Student-Teacher Relationship** - Some students have described a breakdown in the student-teacher relationship, ranging from students “talking back” to teachers, to instances of threats or assault. A preliminary review of the teachers’ consultations supports this view. There is a strong perception amongst teachers that school administrators are unwilling to impose appropriate consequences for student misbehaviour, and that administrators were under pressure from the TDSB to reduce the levels of suspensions and expulsions.

### IV. Preliminary Data from the Student Surveys

Relying on the expertise of its Chief Academic, Professor Scot Wortley, Criminologist, University of Toronto, the Panel designed and administered a comprehensive survey on school safety to 423 C.W. Jefferys students (over 50% of the student population). The survey, delivered through an anonymous questionnaire, was intended to address some of the limitations of conducting one-on-one interviews with youth.

Chapter Three of the Interim Report is meant to capture some of the survey data to date. It is by no means the entire picture of life at Jefferys as there is further survey work to be done with the students. The process with respect to teacher data collection is ongoing. The data provides cause for both optimism and concern.

It is of note that, with the exception of the period immediately following the shooting of Jordan Manners, most students feel safe at C.W. Jefferys. Half of the students feel that C.W. Jefferys is still safer than other high schools in Toronto. With respect to the students' general feelings of safety at C.W. Jefferys, students were asked the following question: "I want you to think about the way things were at your school before Jordan Manners was shot. How safe did you feel at your school before the shooting took place?" We then asked the respondents how safe they felt "right after Jordan Manners was shot?" Finally, we asked the students "How safe do you feel at your school today (approximately one month after the shooting took place)? The results indicate that (pp. 33-34):

- Before the Jordan Manners' shooting, the vast majority of students at C.W. Jefferys (81%) felt either very safe (38%) or fairly safe (43%) at their school. By contrast, only 15% of the respondents felt unsafe (11%) or very unsafe (4%).
- The findings suggest that student feelings of insecurity increased dramatically in the immediate aftermath of the shooting incident. Indeed, right after the shooting, almost half of the respondents (48%) felt either very unsafe (23%) or unsafe (25%) at the school. The impact of the shooting can be further illustrated by the fact that the proportion of students who felt safe at C.W. Jefferys dropped from 81% before the shooting to only 44% immediately following the shooting – a decline of 37 percentage points.
- However, it appears that this dramatic increase in feelings of insecurity was temporary. Indeed, by the time this survey was administered to the students -- approximately one month after the survey -- it appears that feelings of safety were returning to normal. Nonetheless, it should be stressed that the data also indicate that the shooting may have a lasting impact on feelings of safety – at least for some C.W. Jefferys' students. Indeed, although the proportion of respondents who report feeling safe at school is significantly higher a month after the shooting (65%) than immediately after the shooting (44%), feelings of safety have not yet returned to pre-shooting levels (81%).

In order to further explore how C.W. Jefferys' students feel about their school, we asked them the following question: "In general, would you say that C.W. Jefferys is a very safe school, a fairly safe school or do you think that the school is an unsafe place for students?" The results indicate that:

- Despite the shooting of Jordan Manners, three out of every four C.W. Jefferys students (74%) still feels that their school is either very safe (29%) or fairly safe (45%). By contrast, only 13% feel that the school is unsafe and only 6% feel that it is very unsafe. Nonetheless, the fact that one out of every five students at C.W. Jefferys (19%) feels that their school is "unsafe" may be a cause for at least some concern.

We also asked the respondents: “Do you think that C.W. Jefferys has less violence than other schools, more violence than other schools or do you think it is about the same as other schools?” The results suggest that:

- Despite the death of Jordan Manners, half of all C.W. Jefferys students (50%) still feel that their school has less violence than other schools. An additional 23% feel that their school is no more violent than other schools.
- Only 13% of the students surveyed feel that C.W. Jefferys is actually more violent than other schools in Toronto.
- These findings are consistent with stakeholder claims that, in general, C.W. Jefferys is a safe school and there are other schools in the area that have more serious problems with violence and crime. These findings are also consistent with student and teacher complaints that C.W. Jefferys has been unfairly labelled and stigmatised as a result of the extensive media coverage of the Jordan Manners’ death.

In contrast, other data indicates that a large proportion of the students who participated in the survey think that there are serious difficulties at C.W. Jefferys including difficulties with student-teacher relationships, disorder in the hallways, students who talk back and disrespect their teachers, discrimination by teachers against students and the presence of weapons, drug dealing and gangs within the school. The results of the survey also indicate that a significant proportion of the students who participated in the study have been the victim of threats, physical assaults, theft and other types of crime – both inside and outside of school – in the past two years. The Panel stresses, however, that the levels of victimization observed in this study are consistent with the findings of other high school victimization surveys conducted in Toronto and other North American cities over the past decade.

Notable results from this section of the survey indicate that (p. 37):

- Theft, bullying and students who bring weapons to school are the three activities that are the most likely to be identified as “serious” or “very serious” problems by the students at C.W. Jefferys. For example, over two-thirds of the respondents (67%) feel that “students who steal from other students” is a serious problem at their school. Similarly, 60% of the respondents believe that students “who bring weapons to school” is a serious problem. Sixty percent also think that “students who pick on or bully other students” is a serious problem.
- It is important to note that over 40% of the respondents believe that weapons are a “very serious” problem at C.W. Jefferys. An additional 18% feel that weapons are a “serious” problem. By contrast, only 9% think that weapons are “not a problem at all.” This finding, however, should be interpreted with caution. First of all, these figures may be somewhat inflated because of concerns in the wake of the

shooting death of Jordan Manners. Obviously, in that case, a firearm did enter the school and a student was fatally wounded. Thus, we must at least consider the possibility that this incident significantly increased the number of students who feel that weapons are a problem at Jefferys. Unfortunately, we do not know how these same respondents would have answered the weapons question prior to the Jordan Manners tragedy. It is also difficult to determine exactly what students mean when they state that weapons are “a serious problem.” Are the respondents trying to tell us that many of their fellow students carry weapons to school on a regular basis? An alternative explanation is that that only a few students actually bring weapons to school – but the respondents feel that this small minority represents a serious threat to their personal safety. The issue of weapons is explored further in a subsequent section of this chapter.

- The results of the survey further suggest that the majority of respondents are also concerned with other forms of violence and criminality at their school. For example, 55% feel that fighting is a serious problem at their school and 51% think that illegal drug use is a serious problem.
- Almost half of the C.W. Jefferys students who responded to our survey (49%) believe that drug dealing is a serious problem at their school and 46% believe that gangs are a serious problem. However, it appears that there is somewhat less concern about gangs than other types of crime and violence. For example, while 42% of respondents believe that weapons are a “very serious” problem at C.W. Jefferys, only 18% believe that gangs are a “very serious” problem.

Furthermore other data indicates (p. 38):

- Three out of every four student respondents (75%) agrees or strongly agrees that “students often hang out in the halls and make noise when classes are on.” This is consistent with teacher and student claims that there are serious problems with student noise and disorder in the hallways during class-time and that some students wander or hang out in the halls without consequences.

Regarding specific issues of student victimization, two realities are emerging: Crime and victimization are serious problems for students at C.W. Jefferys, but sadly, these problems do not appear isolated within C.W. Jefferys or even within other schools in the “Jane-Finch” community. Crime and victimization are apparently a reality faced by students at many schools throughout the Toronto region. These Panel conclusions are arrived at as a result of the comparison between the current day survey data at C.W. Jefferys and the extensive survey data for thirty Toronto schools obtained in year 2000. In the latter case, a Toronto Youth Crime and Victimization Survey<sup>1</sup> conducted in 2000,

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<sup>1</sup>Wortley, Scot and Julian Tanner. 2006. “Immigration, Social Disadvantage and Urban Youth Gangs: Results of a Toronto-Area Study.” *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 15 (2): 1-20.

involved a random sample of 3,393 high school students from 30 different high schools in the Toronto region (10 from the Catholic School Board and 20 from the Toronto District School Board). During this study, a detailed questionnaire was administered to student respondents during class time. It should be noted that C.W. Jefferys was not one of the schools included in the 2000 survey. As with the survey conducted at C.W. Jefferys, one of the primary objectives of this project was to document experiences of victimization.

Despite the seven year gap and somewhat different lines of questioning, the existence of the 2000 data provides at least some opportunity to compare the experiences of C.W. Jefferys students to the experiences of high school students from other high schools in the Toronto area (pp. 45-46):

- In 2007, 45% of the student respondents from C.W. Jefferys reported that they had been the victim of minor theft in the past two years. By contrast, in 2000, 38% of high school students claimed that they had been a victim of minor theft *in the past twelve months* and 72% claimed that they had been a victim of minor theft at sometime in their life.
- Similarly, in 2007, 39% of the survey respondents from C.W. Jefferys claimed that they had received physical threats in the past two years. By contrast, in 2000, 39% of 3,400 Toronto High School students who took part in the study claimed that they had received physical threats *in the past twelve months* and 67% claimed that they had received physical threats at some time in their life.
- In 2007, 37% of C.W. Jefferys students claimed that they had been physically assaulted at school in the past twenty-four months. In 2000, 39% of Toronto high school students (from 30 different schools) reported that they had been physically assaulted in the past year and 70% indicated that they had been assaulted at some time in their life
- Additional analysis reveals that, in 2007, 18% of C.W. Jefferys students claim that they had been threatened by someone with a weapon in the past two years. By contrast, in 2000, survey results suggest that 15% of Toronto high school students received weapons threats in the past year and 28% had been threatened with a weapon at some time in their life.
- Similarly, in 2007, 11% of the C.W. Jefferys students who took part in the study claim that they had been assaulted by someone with a weapon in the past two years. By contrast, in 2000, 8% of Toronto high school students indicated that they had been the victim of a weapons-related assault in the past twelve months and 16% had been assaulted with a weapon at some time in their life.

In sum, the victimization findings produced in 2000, using a large sample of high school students from 30 different schools across Toronto, seem to largely mirror the victimization results produced in 2007 using a relatively small sample of students from C.W. Jefferys. Put simply, crime and victimization may be a problem faced by students at many schools throughout the Toronto region and that life at C.W. Jefferys may not be particularly exceptional in this regard.

In view of the above, the Panel's systemic phase will prove all the more important in respect of proposing school safety recommendations that can enhance school safety for youth across the City of Toronto.

## **V. Conclusion and Interim Recommendations**

The Panel is continuing its consultations and research into the themes identified in the Interim Report, as well as other systemic issues that impact on the safety of students within the TDSB. The Panel's systemic recommendations will be delivered in its Final Report, once its consultations with parents, teachers, union representatives, professional organizations, trustees, administrators, police, community groups, and other stakeholders are completed. In this regard, the Panel remains open to receive presentations and submissions from interested members of the community. The Panel has identified four interim recommendations that it feels are appropriate to report on at this stage. These recommendations are sufficiently narrow that they can be considered for immediate implementation, pending the release of the Final Report:

- 1. The completion of a building safety audit at C.W. Jefferys.** The Panel was advised that the formal building safety audit process employed by the Safe Schools office at the TDSB has not yet been implemented in respect of C.W. Jefferys. The Panel recommends that this audit be conducted prior to the return of students this Fall.
- 2. Additional Human Resources North-West 2.** The Panel recommends additional human resources support to be made available to NW2 to address the complex needs of this community. Pending its systemic review, the Panel will reserve comment on what, if any, recommendations ought to be made for the reorganization of supervisory roles in high needs communities.
- 3. Mediation between the Trustee and Superintendent in North-West 2.** Through its consultations, the Panel has concluded that the working relationship between the Trustee and Superintendent responsible for the North-West 2 family of schools has become dysfunctional. This situation does not serve the students, parents, teachers, staff and administration within North-West 2. The Panel recommends that the Superintendent and Trustee participate in a mediation conducted by an independent interpersonal mediator to attempt to resolve this situation. Both parties have agreed in principle to this recommendation.

- 4. Extension of the Panel's Work to Other Schools in North-West 2.** The Panel has been advised by a broad range of stakeholders of serious safety concerns regarding other schools within North-West 2. The Panel recommends that its mandate be extended to November 15, 2007, to accommodate a more intensive review of these additional schools than was earlier contemplated.

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## Introduction

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On May 23, 2007, Jordan Manners, a fifteen year-old C.W. Jefferys' student, died of a gunshot wound at his school. The impact of this tragedy on Jordan Manners' family, and the students, teachers, administration, and parents of the C.W. Jefferys C.I. ("C.W. Jefferys") community cannot be overstated. The belief that schools can deliver a safe haven for our children has been seriously shaken.

The intent of this Interim Report is to provide what, so far, the Panel has heard and what the Panel has found with respect to life at C.W. Jefferys. While this Report alludes to themes that raise significant systemic issues affecting both C.W. Jefferys and the broader school environment, it is not intended to make broad-reaching systemic recommendations in this Report. These broader recommendations will be delivered in the Final Report, once the Panel's consultations are completed. Four narrow non-systemic recommendations aimed at some very specific items unique to the North-West family of schools are proposed in Section 4.2 of this Interim Report.

Based on the hundreds of hours of consultations and extensive data received to date (see our website at [www.schoolsafetypanel.com](http://www.schoolsafetypanel.com)), there is no merit to the suggestion that the general school environment at C.W. Jefferys is a "lawless war zone". Indeed the school continues to rightly be considered by many parents and students as the "jewel" of the community, due to its high academic standards and enviable arts program as described in Sections 2.1 and 2.2(b) below. This does not change the fact that the life of a 15-year old has been lost to violence within the walls of the school.

Jordan Manners' death is the subject of an ongoing criminal investigation, and thus, what details are known about this death have not been made public. The following is apparent to the Panel: A shooting occurred inside the C.W. Jefferys building. Jordan Manners died as a result of the discharge of a firearm. There is no evidence to suggest that the injury was self-inflicted. Two male youths, known to Jordan Manners and the staff at C.W. Jefferys, have been arrested and charged with first-degree murder.

In the days and weeks following Jordan's death, there was an outpouring of grief and concern. Parents, students, teachers and community members expressed grave fears for the safety of the students. The Toronto District School Board ("TDSB") acknowledged these concerns and, in response, the Director of the TDSB, Ms. Gerry Connelly, and the Chair of the TDSB, Ms. Sheila Ward, announced the convening of the School Community Safety Advisory Panel on June 5, 2007, with the following mandate<sup>2</sup>:

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<sup>2</sup> Attached as Appendix "A" to this Interim Report is a copy of the Terms of Reference

The independent Panel shall make findings and recommendations to the Director of the Toronto District School Board by July 16, 2007 with respect to:

- The practices and procedures at C.W. Jefferys in the two years prior to May 23 2007 with regards to student supervision, student discipline and building security;
- Factors influencing the ability of C.W. Jefferys in particular or the Toronto District School Board schools in general to maintain student order and discipline;
- Improving practices in TDSB schools with regards to prevention, school supervision, discipline and security which will create a positive, safe and welcoming school environment.
- The Panel will give current and past C.W. Jefferys students an opportunity to describe their experiences in the school.
- The Panel will give C.W. Jefferys employees (teachers, support staff and administration) an opportunity to describe their experiences in the school.
- The Panel will give C.W. Jefferys parents an opportunity to describe their experiences with the school.
- The Panel may make such other enquiries and consultations it deems necessary to achieve its objects, including but not limited to:
  - Community agencies and advocacy groups and Trustees
  - School Board administration
  - Unions and employee groups

Throughout its consultations, a clear and consistent message has been expressed to the Panel:

*“That given the number of deaths that have occurred as a result of gun violence in Toronto in recent years, it is not so much a surprise that another black youth has died from a shooting even in a school hallway, as much as it is a surprise that it happened at C.W. Jefferys.”*

The Panel infers two things from this repeated theme: First, that this tragedy is a product of the times and as such it would be artificial to describe the circumstances surrounding the shooting death as an isolated incident (i.e. “tragic-yes, surprising-no”). Second, the Panel infers that C.W. Jefferys has historically enjoyed a significant level of respect and prestige in the communities that know the school.

Schools cannot be separated from the larger community. They spring from and form part of the community surrounding them. The social issues that plague the communities outside our schools – such as racism, sexism, violence, poverty and alienation – are also reflected in our schools from one end of the GTA to the other. Our schools will only be

safe and equitable if our communities are safe and equitable. In light of this reality, addressing the root causes of violence and crime must be a high priority.

Following the shooting, many rushed to judge C.W. Jefferys as a “Jane and Finch school”, with all the negative biases and stereotypes that accompany such a label. The communities in the “Jane and Finch” area are some of the lowest income, high-density neighbourhoods in Toronto, but also among the most vibrant and inspiring. However, those associated with “Jane and Finch” are all painted with the same negative brush, and its schools have been portrayed as gangland war zones. Stephnie Payne, Trustee for Ward 4 York West, the school board Trustee responsible for C.W. Jefferys, challenges such a label for the school which, though not geographically part of the Jane and Finch area, “lives in the shadow of Jane and Finch.”

Nonetheless, the Panel has learned through its consultations and research that, as detailed in this report, C.W. Jefferys suffers from significant and emerging challenges, such as the erosion of student discipline and an increase in youth violence. While some of the statistics described in this report concerning student victimization at C.W. Jefferys are alarming, the Panel’s ongoing assessment of the data and experiences of other Toronto schools suggests that C.W. Jefferys is not exceptional in this regard.

Put another way, the death of Jordan Manners should not be seen as an isolated incident, but rather as a disturbing harbinger of things to come if we, as a society, do not put a stop to the ongoing neglect of significant numbers of our youth. It is a harbinger because the influx of guns in this city has, in the words of one of our community agency deputants created the following sad reality: *“It is easier to get a gun than get a job”*.

### **SECTION 1.1: THE JULY 6, 2007 AMENDMENT TO THE PANEL’S TERMS OF REFERENCE**

In the course of its consultations with teachers, the Panel learned of a serious incident that was alleged to have occurred at C.W. Jefferys in October 2006. The Panel provided a confidential interim report to the Director of Education for the Toronto District School Board on June 27, 2007.

That same day, the Principal and two Vice-Principals from C.W. Jefferys were placed on home assignment with pay. The Toronto Police Service was notified and has launched a criminal investigation into the October 2006 incident. This investigation is ongoing and to date, no charges have been laid.

On July 6, 2007, in response to statements of community concern, the TDSB particularized the Panel’s Terms of Reference<sup>3</sup>. The Panel was asked to ensure that it included in its review, “the particular risks to the safety of female visible minority students that may exist within our schools.”

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<sup>3</sup> Attached as Appendix “B” to this Interim Report is a copy of the letter from Jerry Connelly, dated July 6, 2007, clarifying the Panel’s Terms of Reference.

The Panel has initiated consultations and research with stakeholders in the education system, community groups, social service agencies, youth and academics in order to investigate the ways in which factors such as gender, ethnicity, religion, immigration status and race can impact on student safety in schools. This issue will be fully analyzed in the Panel's Final Report.

## **SECTION 1.2: OVERVIEW OF INTERIM REPORT**

This Interim Report will focus primarily on the perspectives of students at C.W. Jefferys. The perspectives of the students were canvassed through two methods – (1) private and individual consultations with C.W. Jefferys students; and (2) the administration of an extensive survey of all students at C.W. Jefferys. The Panel also conducted individual consultations and surveyed the teachers, administrators and staff at C.W. Jefferys. At this stage, however, the Panel feels that it would be inappropriate to provide a detailed analysis of their perspectives and issues as the Panel has not had a full opportunity to consult with some teachers and staff who have requested consultations, the involved unions and various political representative bodies (e.g. the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation). The Panel has scheduled consultations with many of these important stakeholders and will be providing a detailed analysis of those perspectives in its Final Report.

The Panel is cognizant of the fact that a comprehensive report on the state of C.W. Jefferys necessitates the input and voice of the C.W. Jefferys family: students, parents, teachers and staff. As such, where appropriate, the Interim Report will discuss some of the recurring themes that were raised by the students and have been echoed in the consultations with the C.W. Jefferys teachers, staff and administration. In addition, the Interim Report will include some discussion of the perspectives of youth, community organizations, public interest groups, trustees and concerned community members with whom the Panel has consulted.

The individuals who consulted with the Panel did so voluntarily and under the protection of confidentiality, if so requested. These individuals should be applauded for their courage and willingness to assist the Panel's process, as well as their dedication to the goal of improving school safety. In keeping with the confidentiality of the consultation process, the opinions and information provided by interviewees will not be attributed unless the individual has authorized the Panel to do so.

By way of overview, the Interim Report is divided into four distinct chapters. The second and third chapters address the interim findings of the Panel through its various consultations, the research conducted to date, and a preliminary analysis of the student survey.

Chapter 2 of the Interim Report provides an overview of the school environment at C.W. Jefferys. This Chapter will itemize and discuss the themes that have been expressed consistently over the course of the Panel's consultations with the C.W. Jefferys community. Many of these recurring themes have also been expressed in consultations

with youth and parents from the broader school community within the “Jane and Finch” area.

Chapter 3 of the Interim Report discusses some of the preliminary data that has been collected from the student surveys. The data confirms many of the concerns expressed in the previous chapter and raises some additional issues that will be addressed in the Panel’s Final Report. A detailed analysis of the student survey results and the teacher survey results will be produced in the Final Report.

Chapter 4 details the Panel’s preliminary conclusions and discusses the Panel’s ongoing research activities, meetings, public deputations, and consultations that will form the basis of the Final Report. This Chapter outlines four narrow recommendations that the Panel feels should be addressed prior to the completion of the Final Report.

The Interim Report is not meant to be an exhaustive report on the health of C.W. Jefferys or more generally on the appropriateness of the policies and procedures at the Toronto District School Board. With only ten weeks to conduct comprehensive consultations, administer surveys and research systemic issues, it would be irresponsible of the Panel to attempt to conclusively address these very important issues at this early stage. The Interim Report is intended to flag some of the recurring themes identified during the Panel’s work to date. These recurring themes will assist the Panel in further analyzing issues of school safety and recommending, in the Final Report, methods for improving the C.W. Jefferys environment and more generally the procedures and policies of the Toronto District School Board.

### **SECTION 1.3: METHODOLOGY**

When the Panel began its mandate, its first order of business was to attempt to consult directly with members of the C.W. Jefferys family prior to June 27, 2007 - the end of the academic school year. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Panel’s initial wave of consultations involved meeting with the immediate stakeholders - students, parents, teachers, administrators, and staff at C.W. Jefferys.

In meeting with these stakeholders, we asked them to identify their concerns and to describe the type of school that C.W. Jefferys was with specific regard to safety concerns in the wake of Jordan Manners’ death. During the consultations with students, a number of themes were expressed consistently. These themes were in large part corroborated by what the Panel heard from C.W. Jefferys teachers, administrators, and staff.

After meeting and consulting with members of the C.W. Jefferys family, the Panel developed a number of research methods aimed at studying, both quantitatively and qualitatively, the themes expressed by the students and echoed by other stakeholders. The first research methodology immediately engaged by the Panel was to design and administer comprehensive surveys to the students and the teachers at C.W. Jefferys. A 32-page survey was administered to students from Grades 9 to 12 over a two- day period. In addition, a 31-page survey was prepared and provided to C.W. Jefferys teachers.

In the following sections of this chapter, the Panel will itemize and discuss the recurring themes that were shared with the Panel during the initial wave of consultations. Where possible, the Panel has included data from the Toronto District School Board with respect to expulsion and suspension rates, safe school transfers, graduation rates, university attendance and other data collected about C.W. Jefferys and other schools in the North-West 2 (“NW2”) family of schools. This data provides context for the more specific findings made by the Panel. Chapter 3 of the Interim Report will examine some of the preliminary data that has been collected from the student survey. A detailed analysis of the student and teacher surveys will be presented in the Final Report.

# The School Environment at C.W. Jefferys C.I.

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# 2

## SECTION 2.1: C.W. JEFFERYS' PLACE IN THE TDSB

### A. Organization of the Toronto District School Board

The Toronto District School Board is the largest school board in Canada, and amongst the largest in North America. The TDSB serves approximately 284,000 students, including approximately 89,000 high school students.

In addition to being one of the largest boards, the TDSB is also one of the most diverse. Approximately 49% of TDSB students have a language other than English as their first language. More than 75 languages are reflected in the language background of TDSB students.

Approximately 30% of TDSB students were born outside of Canada, representing 175 different countries. Approximately 10% of TDSB students have arrived in Canada in the last three years.

The administration of such a large and diverse board is a staggeringly complex undertaking. The 1998 amalgamation, requiring the integration of seven different school boards, all with different policies and practices, has made supervision and management even more challenging.

The City of Toronto is divided into 22 wards, and school trustees are elected to represent each ward. The TDSB has divided itself into four geographical quadrants: South-West, South-East, North-West, North-East. These quadrants are further sub-divided into 24 “families of schools”, which bear no geographic relationship to the City of Toronto’s 22 wards. The families of schools are clusters of elementary and secondary schools located in a specific geographic area, with most of the elementary schools feeding into the family’s secondary schools. As City of Toronto wards and TDSB “families of schools” do not overlap, trustees can be responsible for schools in more than one family, as is the case in the family of schools of which C.W. Jefferys is a part.

### B. The North-West 2 Family of Schools

C.W. Jefferys is located in the NW2 family of schools, which encompasses the area from Keele to Islington, and Sheppard to Steeles. There are 22 schools in the family, including three high schools.

NW2 falls within a neighbourhood identified by the City of Toronto as “Glenfield-Jane Heights.” A recent United Way report on poverty in Toronto found that Glenfield-Jane

Heights is one of 23 “very high” poverty neighbourhoods, with a 50.1% poverty rate.<sup>4</sup> The population density is amongst the highest in Toronto due to the prevalence of high-rise apartment buildings. The community has been hard hit by a decade of declining median income in Toronto.<sup>5</sup>

The area is also home to a large proportion of newcomers to Canada, and is characterized by significant racial, ethnic, religious and cultural diversity.

The schools in NW2 are in the top quarter of the “Learning Opportunities Index” (LOI), a ranking based on factors such as median income, housing, level of education and immigration in particular areas of the City. The index ranks each school from the most needy to the least needy. The Schools in NW2 are identified as being amongst the “most needy” in the Toronto District School Board.

The barriers and hardships associated with low incomes and poverty are well known. It is not surprising that income has been found to be strongly correlated with student success. Recent TDSB research has demonstrated that there are significant differences in performance between low income and high income neighbourhoods. For example, of students participating in the 2004-05 mathematics assessment living in the lowest income neighbourhoods, only 38% achieved either the provincial standard or higher. In contrast, of students living in the highest income neighbourhoods, 72% achieved the provincial standard or higher, almost twice the rate of the lowest income neighbourhoods. Similar findings were made with respect to the standardized literacy tests.<sup>6</sup>

In summary, the administration of the NW2 family of schools faces numerous challenges and opportunities, given the diversity of its student population, and the high needs of some of the communities surrounding the schools.

### **C. C.W. Jefferys Collegiate Institute**

C.W. Jefferys is located at the heart of the NW2 family of schools, and serves approximately 900 students. There are two other high schools in NW2. Emery Collegiate Institute has approximately 1,000 students, while Westview Centennial Secondary School has approximately 1,300 students.

Fifty-seven percent of C.W. Jefferys’ students speak a primary language other than English. Eight percent of its students have been living in Canada for two years or less. Fourteen percent of its students have been living in Canada for three to five years.

C.W. Jefferys ranked 12<sup>th</sup> in the 2007 Learning Opportunities Index, placing it roughly in the middle of secondary schools within the Toronto District School Board. By comparison, Emery placed 16<sup>th</sup>, while Westview has one of the highest LOI scores in the TDSB.

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<sup>4</sup> United Way, “Poverty by Postal Code: The Geography of Neighbourhood Poverty (1981-2001)” (April 2004) at p. 27.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> TDSB, “TDSB Secondary Student Success Indicators, 2004-2005” (May 2006).

## SECTION 2.2: INDICATORS OF STUDENT SAFETY AND SUCCESS AT C.W. JEFFERYS

### A. Students Set the Record Straight

While the Panel did receive some degree of “mixed messages” regarding school safety, it was struck by the largely positive views of C.W. Jefferys shared by students, parents, teachers, and staff. The majority of those interviewed from the C.W. Jefferys family told the Panel with pride that C.W. Jefferys is a school with high academic standards, a diverse student body, a safe environment and an excellent and enviable arts program.

In the month following the death of Jordan Manners, the Panel met with 41 C.W. Jefferys students for individual, confidential consultations about their perceptions of their school. Of these students, 33 reported that they did not have any significant safety concerns at the school.

One 17 year-old, female Grade 12 student echoed the comments of many others when she told the Panel that in her view the shooting was an “isolated incident” that could have happened in any school:

*“I think that what happened was an isolated incident. I don’t think it has a direct reflection of this school. I still feel the same way about the school as I did when I first entered. When I first came, I knew that Jefferys was a really good school because it has the Art program, apparently it has the highest rate of graduating students and students going to university, so I always thought highly of Jefferys and thought it was a good school to come to. And I was lucky I lived down the street so that I could come here and not have to transfer.”*

A number of students commented on their positive experiences with the school and its teachers, and spoke of experiences that they will take with them long after they leave. For example, one student spoke highly of her experience in the school’s Peer Mediation Program, although she wished that more students would participate. In another very powerful example, a female Grade 10 student spoke of how her experiences in the Leadership Program helped her to overcome the negative impact of the shooting in the school:

*“At first, when I first came to the school, I came the next day after the shooting ‘cause we had a field trip planned from a long time ago. We didn’t know what was going to happen the day before. But we had a field trip. So I came that day and we still had the trip going on for the Leaders Today program that happens in our school. We were going to a conference to celebrate all the things that we have done for the school this year. We raised \$2,000 to build a school in Africa for kids who don’t go to school. We raised enough money and then we combined it with a different school and we got enough money to make a school in Africa. It was a good experience after something negative like a shooting and then going to something like that, when you just made a difference in someone else’s life. It was really good. I loved it.”*

Students were asked about their perceptions of gang activity in the school. Twenty-two of the 41 students interviewed reported that gangs were not a serious problem or presence at the school.

However, some students did express concern about a gang presence in the school and commented on feelings of fear and insecurity when they saw groups of students wearing “gang colours” and bandanas. Gangs identified as being active in the local community were “Crips” and “Bloods.” Crips were identified with the colour blue. Bloods were identified with the colour red.

Some of the differences in perceptions concerning gangs in the school can be attributed to different interpretations of the wearing of “colours.” A number of students, staff and teachers told the Panel that the wearing of so-called “gang colours” was not indicative of whether or not a student was actually a part of a gang. Colours could merely signify the neighbourhood in which a student lives. For example, the Panel was told that the colour blue is also associated with certain neighbourhoods north of Finch. The colour red is associated with certain neighbourhoods south of Finch.

Students often spoke disparagingly of “wangsters”, or “wannabee gangsters” who wore colours, but were not actually part of a gang. An 18 year-old Grade 12 student, when asked if he and his friends talked about gangs in the school, replied: “We usually call them “wangsters” – people that want to be gangsters. And we actually make fun of them....There’s no gangsters here.”

A number of students described C.W. Jefferys as a “soft school” as compared to other schools in the area with far more serious safety and gang-related issues. Several had attended other secondary schools prior to C.W. Jefferys and commented that the school was safer, or “more peaceful” than their prior experiences.

Many students, parents, teachers and staff commented that if the shooting could happen at C.W. Jefferys, it could happen at any school. They were concerned that having a reputation as a “bad school” would negatively impact students once they graduated and impair their ability to get into post-secondary education. As one student commented, “safety should not be defined by one event.”

Students, parents and staff told the Panel again and again that they were concerned that the school had been unfairly maligned as a result of the shooting. One 18 year-old, female student commented:

*“Everyone [in the school] is smart in their own way. They just need a little bit of help just bringing it out... I go to this school, I know, but not many people know that about Jefferys, they just see whatever they see on TV. I think that’s wrong. I don’t think it’s fair that they always take the bad stuff and then put that on the media....More than half the people that I know in grade 12 are going to university but no one says that. They just say, “someone got shot from this school.” That’s not fair... People that really know Jefferys, people maybe from the area, know that it’s not a bad school. People that are from far, just knowing the area, they will think*

*something wrong...This is actually a good school, there is nothing really wrong with it.”*

The feeling of frustration over being unfairly labelled was very pronounced with many students. One Grade 12, male student, who came to C.W. Jefferys for the arts program, commented that:

*“[After the shooting] I saw a lot of people annoyed. They feel like it was unfair. That’s just the feeling I got – unfair – because this school doesn’t deserve to have such a big thing. There’s other schools that people think sometimes that would happen. ... After [the shooting], this school was portrayed as a dangerous school. It’s kind of annoying because it’s not. It’s not. I mean, it happened. But it’s something that could have happened anywhere, I guess.”*

Another 17 year-old, Grade 12, female student astutely observed:

*“Jefferys has never been on the map until this incident happened. I used to go places, and people would ask me “What high school do you go to?” and I would say “Jefferys, C.W. Jefferys.” They would be like, “Where?” And now when I go “C.W. Jefferys” people say, “That name sounds so familiar” and I say “That’s where that kid got shot.” And they are like, “Oh my God!” What’s so “Oh my God” about it? It’s a school and that happened, yes. But when you think about Virginia Tech, harbouring a kid who shot 30 people...Is that a bad school? Is it a bad school? It’s not a bad school. Some of the biggest geniuses came out of that school.”*

This same student, who chose to attend C.W. Jefferys for its arts program, commented passionately that “If anyone would ask me for a school to go to, I would recommend it any day.”

The challenge, noted one Grade 11 student, is to “show the community that it is the same school as two months ago.” This is a challenge that the Panel takes seriously. The available data on student performance and school programs demonstrates that the students of C.W. Jefferys are right to be upset at how their school has been portrayed. C.W. Jefferys is not a “war zone”. The students of C.W. Jefferys, many of whom were traumatized by the shooting and subsequent school lockdown, should not be re-victimized by inaccurate stereotypes about themselves and their school. They deserve to have the record set straight.

## **B. Sources of C.W. Jefferys Pride**

### *i. The Specialized Visual Arts Program*

C.W. Jefferys is designated a “Specialized Visual Arts School”, which offers programs in Comprehensive Visual Arts, Specialized Visual Arts, Photography and Digital Photography. The Specialized Program is a four-year program, which allows each candidate to earn a total of 10 credits in Visual Arts. The program offers a wide spectrum of academic and studio classes ranging from Drawing, Technical Drawing, Anatomy and Life Drawing, Design, Painting, Printmaking, Graphic and Information Design, Computer Graphics, Art History, Pottery and Sculpture. In fact the school draws its name from a Canadian artist.

Members of the teaching staff are professional artists with commercial and industrial experience.

Enrolment for the program is limited to 25 students per year. According to literature provided to Grade 8 students by the school, 100% of C.W. Jefferys specialized visual arts students are accepted into the post secondary institution of their choice. C.W. Jefferys arts students have gone on to prominent work in the industry at studios such as Disney.

The Panel heard that the program is very highly regarded, drawing students from across the city.

### *ii. The ESTE<sup>2</sup>M Program*

C.W. Jefferys also offers the ESTE<sup>2</sup>M program, an enriched Science, Technology, and Mathematics program. Like the specialized arts program, the ESTE<sup>2</sup>M program accepts 25 students each year.

### *iii. Math and Literacy Standardized Testing Results*

In the 2006-2007 literacy tests, 81% of TDSB fully participating first-time eligible students were successful in both reading and writing. The provincial average was 84%. C.W. Jefferys students lag somewhat behind the TDSB average, and ranked in the middle of the NW2 schools. Sixty-five percent of C.W. Jefferys first-time eligible students were successful, compared to 71% of Emery students and 54% of Westview students.

In terms of the mathematics assessment, C.W. Jefferys students fared better, though like TDSB schools generally, they fell below the provincial average. Twenty-two percent of C.W. Jefferys students were at, or above the provincial standard, compared to 16% of Emery students and 18% of Westview students. The TDSB average was 25%, and the provincial average was 39%.

#### iv. Graduation Rates

The TDSB tracks graduation and drop-out rates by age, rather than by grade. 17 year-olds are considered age appropriate for Grade 12 Year 1 (or Year 4 of secondary school). 18 year-olds are considered age appropriate for Grade 12 Year 2 (or Year 5 of secondary school).

According to these statistics, 17 year-old C.W. Jefferys students are graduating at a lower rate than other high schools in NW2 and than in the TDSB more generally. In 2005-2006, 41% of C.W. Jefferys students had completed their diploma, compared to 43% in the family of schools and 56% in the TDSB. The drop out rate for 17 year-old C.W. Jefferys students was a high of 19%, compared to 17% in NW2 and 10% in the TDSB.

However, 18 year-old C.W. Jefferys students are graduating at a slightly higher rate comparatively. In 2005-2006, 57% of 18 year-old C.W. Jefferys students graduated, compared to 53% in the NW2 family of schools and 55% in the TDSB generally. The drop out rate for 18 year old students was comparable to the rate found in NW2 and the TDSB – the rate was 21% for C.W. Jefferys students, compared to 22% in the family of schools and 21% across the TDSB.

C.W. Jefferys students apply to post-secondary institutions at a higher rate than other NW2 schools. In 2004-2005, 38% of 17 year-old C.W. Jefferys students applied to university and/or college, compared to 30% of 17 year-old students in NW2 and 45% in the TDSB. In that same year, 36% of 18-21 year-old C.W. Jefferys students applied to university and/or college, compared to 29% in the family of schools and 32% in the TDSB more generally.

According to C.W. Jefferys promotional materials, its students are excelling academically once they leave the school. Of the 96 students who applied to University in 2005, 86 were accepted – a 91% success rate. This compares favourably with the TDSB-wide statistics from 2004: in that year 34% of 17-21 year old students applied to Ontario universities, 27% (a 79% acceptance rate).<sup>7</sup>

In 2005, nineteen C.W. Jefferys students were recipients of the “Queen Elizabeth II Aiming for the Top Scholarship”. One C.W. Jefferys student won 1 of only 9 Governor’s Awards of Distinction and 1 of only 6 Awards of Achievement from York University. Two students received Visions of Excellence Awards. At the spring 2005 York University Science Olympics, C.W. Jefferys was 1<sup>st</sup> in Chemistry, 5<sup>th</sup> overall (out of 67 schools). Numerous graduates received scholarships. Of the 400 schools listed on the Ryerson University Website, C.W. Jefferys was third in terms of the number of scholarships awarded students in 2005, with nine scholarships awarded (just behind Unionville – 3 and Albert Campbell – 11.).

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<sup>7</sup> TDSB, “TDSB Secondary Student Success Indicators, 2004-2005” (May 2006) at p. 97.

### C. Suspension/Expulsion Rates

One measure of whether a school is experiencing severe behavioural problems with students, including gang-related behaviours, is the number of students who have been subject to discipline such as suspension or expulsion. Caution should be taken before drawing firm conclusions from such data. The Panel has heard anecdotal evidence that administrators are under pressure from the TDSB to lower suspension and expulsion rates. If such pressure exists, the extent to which individual administrators succumb to the pressure could affect the accuracy of the statistics. Moreover, the *Education Act* allows for a certain amount of discretion in disciplinary decisions, which could also explain some of the individual differences among schools.

Nonetheless, information concerning suspension and expulsion rates can provide a small window into the health of a school. The available data suggests that C.W. Jefferys suspends or expels students at a higher rate than the TDSB average, but at a significantly lower rate than other schools in NW2.

In 2005-2006, 185 of the TDSB's 276,507 students were expelled, representing 0.07% of the student body. In that same year, there were 17,915 suspensions, representing 11,818 individual students, or 4.27% of the student body. From September 2006 to February 2007, the suspension rate dropped to 2.33%.

In 2005-2006, there were 87 suspensions at C.W. Jefferys, representing 60 individual students from amongst the total school population of 904 students (6.64%). From September 2006 to February 2007, 3.82% of students were suspended.

Emery Collegiate Institute handed out 107 suspensions to 77 of its 1032 students in 2005-2006 (7.46%). From September 2006 to February 2007, 5.52% of students were suspended.

Westview Centennial S.S. has the highest suspension rate in the family of schools and, in fact, one of the highest suspension rates in the TDSB. In 2005-2006, Westview handed out 518 suspensions to 264 of its 1277 students (20.67%). From September 2006 to February 2007, 14.63% of students were suspended. C.W. Jefferys and Emery expelled less than six students in 2005-2006, while Westview expelled nine.<sup>8</sup>

While suspension and expulsion rates appear relatively low at C.W. Jefferys, it should be noted that the perception amongst some teachers is that these measures are applied only in the most extreme cases. The implication from this perspective is that suspension and expulsion rates are artificially low.

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<sup>8</sup> TDSB statistics do not capture the precise number of expulsions where there have been more than zero and less than six.

## **SECTION 2.3: RECURRING THEMES IN SCHOOL SAFETY**

As discussed in the previous section, there are many positive measures of student success that continue to be a source of pride in the C.W. Jefferys family. These themes are important to bear in mind as they demonstrate that C.W. Jefferys is not the “war zone” that some few have labelled it. C.W. Jefferys does have serious difficulties that need to be addressed and resolved; however, it is by no means unique in this regard. To the contrary, many of the recurring themes in school safety are systemic issues that apply to most of the schools in the TDSB. It is to these themes that we now turn.

### **A. Hallway Students**

Ten out of the forty-one students with whom the Panel consulted indicated that students congregating in the hallways are a significant issue and something that they see as either a safety concern or a difficulty at C.W. Jefferys that they would like to see changed. The students identified the hallway students or “hallway wanderers” as students who are either skipping classes, have been removed from their classes by teachers as a means of disciplining students “acting out”, or youth who are trespassers at C.W. Jefferys. Anne Kojima, a former principal at C.W. Jefferys, explained that some of the “hallway wanderers” are students that have been allowed out of class by their teachers for bathroom breaks. Teachers shared the concern that students being let out of class contribute to the problem of the hallway students. One teacher described the problem as follows:

There are so many teachers who allow their kids out of class early and sometimes up to five minutes early, which is a lot for them to be roaming outside the classroom. And that is a safety issue because they are legally responsible.

The consistent message for students was that “hallway wanderers” were disrupting their education and causing students concern. The following quotes give a sense of how students feel about these hallway students:

- There are 20 students running through the hallways talking constantly and it affects my learning.
- Students in the halls kinda make me nervous. Makes me wonder why they are in the hall.
- Sometimes there are crowds of people that wandered the hallways or near the washroom.
- People just let other people in and they just stay around the hallways. They make a lot of noise and then when teachers say to be quiet because we’re working they don’t do anything, they just kind of run around and make more noise... They let kids in that don’t even go to this school.

One exchange between a Panel member and a particularly forthcoming student suggests that there were regularly outsiders at the school:

**Student:** *People bring their friends from outside of the school and you don't really know them, you kind of feel awkward if it's just you alone walking there.*

**Panel Member:** *Now, people from the community you mentioned bringing their friends in from other places. How much does that happen in the school?*

**Student:** *I do it. Everyone does it.*

**Panel Member:** *What do you do? You just say to your friend come to school with me on a certain day? How does it happen?*

**Student:** *It's like, a friend from somewhere else maybe middle school and they probably go to another school and you guys want to just hang out for a day. You just tell them to come visit. Like for multicultural [festival], I brought friends who don't come to this school because I was performing in it. It's easy. You just bring them in. It's easy to get them in.*

**Panel Member:** *On a regular instructional day when you've have your classes they wouldn't come around to your class. They wouldn't come to your classes?*

**Student:** *They could come into your class. Our school has allowed that. You probably either not go to class or they come at lunch [and] you meet them up outside. You can walk around the school with them most times.*

**Panel Member:** *So that's how the outside presence would get into the school. Are there any other outside presences? Are there people that have no link to the school, who just walk in off the street? Do you have much of that to your knowledge?*

**Student:** *I don't think people do that.*

**Panel Member:** *You've never had that experience?*

**Student:** *We haven't had random people walking in. I'm pretty sure that they would know somebody.*

The disruption caused by the hallway students was further confirmed by other stakeholder consultations. Many of the teachers consulted described the hallway students as a troubling issue. Teachers also expressed concern about the educational health of the “hallway wanderers”, noting that these were the students most likely to fail. The following comments were typical of how teachers felt about students in the hallways:

*“Not getting away with things that I think were not acceptable to get away with and creating a downward spiral over the last few years of somewhat chaos in the hallways and that sort of thing. And that would be due to lack of real and consistent consequences handed down to all students.”*

*“...other safety concerns such as students in the hallways during classes and so on and so on, they somehow are really connected to this first one because the students that you see in the hallways they’re from 50 to 80% probably those students who were sent here from other schools because of some sort of disciplinarian or safety issues. That’s a big problem, big problem. In my understanding, because I have students like this all the time in my class all the time. All the time in my classes. It’s my understanding that first they live a little bit far away so it takes for them longer to get to school. When they come to school classes are already in progress most of the time. So instead of going to classes, which are already in process, they start wandering in the hallways. And that is basically recipe number one for failure in school and for safety issues as well.”*

The concerns over hallway students were also confirmed by Ms. Kojima and Charis Newton-Thompson, the past two principals at C.W. Jefferys. In their consultations with the Panel, both confirmed that hallway students are a problem at C.W. Jefferys.

The students who identified the “hallway wanderers” as safety concerns were also critical of the effectiveness of hallway monitors. Some had concerns that at least one of the hallway monitors befriended students and did not attempt to discipline students who were wandering the halls. In addition, some students complained that the hall monitors reacted slowly when their support was required. This opinion was also shared by teachers. One teacher described the ineffectiveness of hallway monitors at C.W. Jeffery’s as follows:

*“...I just think that as a hall monitor you should not be a student’s buddy. You should not be a student’s best friend because what happens, unfortunately I would say, because many cases when I hear noise in the hallway I went there and would see [a hall monitor] standing and chatting with students in the hallway, whether male students or female students....Another thing that I would say that made me angry a little bit, is officially [the individual] is a hall monitor, right? So he has to be in the hallways. What is the busiest time for the hall monitor? It’s lunchtime where all the kids are in the hallways. What was happening at lunch time for the last seven months, [the individual] was in the single gym overseeing or supervising boys playing basketball.”*

Prior to the death of Jordan Manners, C.W. Jefferys had two-full time monitors. After Jordan Manners' death, two additional hall monitors were hired. Generally, the students welcomed the additional hallway monitors and viewed the additional hall monitors as contributing to a safer school environment.

## **B. Safe School Transfers**

Two out of the forty-one students interviewed identified safe school transferees as an issue that is negatively affecting school safety. Briefly, safe school transfers involve the transfer of students who are subject to judicial interim release conditions that prohibit them from returning to their school (although there are several other situations in which this type of transfer can be used). The TDSB policy and procedures on Safe School Transfers will be described in detail below.

When reviewing the student consultations in isolation, the issue of safe school transfers does not appear to be a high priority issue. As a result, the survey was not designed to quantify this issue; however, as the consultations with teachers continued, it became apparent that safe school transfers were a significant issue at C.W. Jefferys, which receives more safe school transfers than it sends out to other schools.

One student who identified safe school transfers as an issue described the problem as follows:

*“We need serious funding. If we had serious funding stuff like Jordan Manners and stuff like that wouldn't be taking place. Because half the kids in our school are transfer kids. I don't know if you know what those people are. Basically, what my teacher told me, if two kids fight in one school, right? What the school does is that they send one kid to one school with a whole new record and they send one kid to another school with a whole new record. We have a lot of kids from Westview, who are a pain. Because then the kids at this school are like, that's my turf. You know, that whole gang thingy?”*

Another student, in an exchange with a panel member, described the impact of safe school transfers on the school as follows:

**Panel Member:** *We heard comment about this being a transfer school. That if there is an incident on another site one student is placed somewhere and one student is placed somewhere else... Do you think that's an issue for C.W. Jefferys?*

**Student:** *Yeah, because now we're getting the name. Because kids are coming from Westview, kids are coming from wherever. And we're the one's left with the bad name. It's not the students in this community. It's the students who*

*come from other schools. Why should they be able to just come here with a clean record?*

**Panel Member:** *So tell me about this clean record. When another student mentioned this, I really wasn't clear. So if you were involved in an incident, a violent incident say at your home school, you would come here and it would be a clean slate?*

**Student:** *Right. But what does that do for the kid? It gives them another chance to go mess up again. I'm not trying to sound pessimistic. They could also use it to their advantage and carve a fresh start and become a good student but realistically they are going to be glad they're getting a second chance to just start again.*

**Panel Member:** *So in your mind it doesn't generally get turned around by being a transfer student?*

**Student:** *No.*

**Panel Member:** *What would you see doing with those students if they couldn't be transfer students? Would you see putting them all in one site?*

**Student:** *No.*

**Panel Member:** *Is that ghettoizing them? Or what would you see doing with them?*

**Student:** *Its up to them where they want to go but their record should follow them.*

**Panel Member:** *So you would still see the fact that they would have access to public education but you're more fair solution would be that the record would follow them when they come?*

**Student:** *It's a little extreme to put them all into one place because yeah, people mess up. A lot of them do learn from it. So it's just isolating them like that making feel like they don't belong somewhere.*

Melanie Tennant, the Curriculum Leader of guidance at C.W. Jefferys, described the issue of safe school transfers as follows:

*“More likely than not that student came from safe school transfers because of something abhorrent they have done at another school [and they] continue the same pattern. Because if you look at the date of when they leave and the date of when they come, unless they have been suspended for 20 days in between, whether anything has happened on behalf of remediation or help for these kids plopped from one place to the next.”*

Based on a review of internal email correspondence between C.W. Jefferys administrators, it would appear that safe school transfers were not welcome additions to the school. Upon realizing that C.W. Jefferys would be receiving two safe school transfers in the fall of the 2003-2004 school year, one administrator commented in an email, "I guess we weren't as lucky as we thought. It looks like two students will be coming our way"<sup>9</sup>. Without a doubt, there is a significant portion of people who see safe school transfers at C.W. Jefferys as an important issue. One teacher described the safe school transfer issue as one of the most significant school safety issue in the last five to seven years:

*"Probably the biggest issue that I see if you want for the last two years, but I would say for the last five, six, seven years that I have been here, is safety transfers, administrative transfers; basically students who have been expelled from their school and sent to our school. That is, I would say probably one of the biggest safety concerns that I can see."*

The TDSB policy provides for two forms of student transfers. Both systems of transfers have their own distinct procedures. Safe school transfers are the responsibility of the Safe Schools Office. Administrative Transfers are the responsibility of school administrators<sup>10</sup>. Generally speaking, a student will be a safe school transfer in the following circumstances:

1. if the student is returning from a limited or full expulsion and there are exceptional circumstances that require the student to change schools (generally students are expected to return to their home school);
2. a student has been charged with a criminal offence and has court conditions requiring him or her to stay away from the school or from another student who is a co-accused or a victim; or
3. the student is returning where for specific reasons they may have been denied access pursuant to sections 307 or 265(1)(m) of the *Education Act*.<sup>11</sup>

Safe school transfers are administered through the Safe Schools Office at the Toronto District School Board. The Safe Schools Office will organize the transfer of the student from the sending school and select a school to place the student (the receiving school). The Safe Schools Office forwards all pertinent information to the receiving school including a copy of the student index card, credit summary, history of suspensions and any disciplinary information. It should be noted that the current TDSB policy on safe school transfers does not require the receiving school to inform the Safe Schools Office if there are any serious disciplinary or attendance issues during the initial period of

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<sup>9</sup> Internal email communications from C.W. Jefferys dated July 3, 2003.

<sup>10</sup> Safe Schools Student Transfer, Operational Procedure PR.540 SCH

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, at pg. 1-2

transition or to notify a parent or guardian of a student who is not adhering to the conditions of the transfer<sup>12</sup>.

Administrative transfers are employed where a student requires a compassionate transfer, are involved in serious incidents off-school property (where there are no disciplinary consequences from the school or legal conditions not to return to school), or the student is, as a victim or perpetrator, involved in incidents in which their continued presence in the school may create a potentially unsafe situation<sup>13</sup>. Administrative transfers are done at a school to school level. This means that a principal from the sending school will make arrangements to find a receiving school and organize the transfer. Notification to the Safe Schools Office is not required<sup>14</sup>. As a result, it is difficult to compile official statistics on the number of administrative transfers in the TDSB.

The Panel has received safe school transfers data for the 2006-2007 school year across the TDSB<sup>15</sup> from the Safe Schools Office. The data indicates that in the 2006-2007 school year, C.W. Jefferys transferred six students as safe school transfers, and received 11. In the 2006-2007 school year, C.W. Jefferys was a “net receiving school” because it received more safe school transfers than it sent out. Across the TDSB there were 691 students that were deemed to require a safe school transfer. In the 2006-2007 school year, the Northwest quadrant had the highest number of school transfers (both sending and receiving). Below is a comparison of safe school transfers by quadrant:

Quadrant	Sending Secondary	Receiving Secondary	Sending Elementary	Receiving Elementary	Sending JHS	Receiving JHS	Total Sending	Total Receiving
NE	75	68	18	14	9	3	102	85
SE	105	89	8	8	NA	NA	113	97
NW	208	201	62	51	NA	NA	270	252
SW	179	151	27	22	NA	NA	206	173
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>567</b>	<b>509</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>691</b>	<b>607</b>

Of the 28 secondary schools in the Northwest quadrant, C.W. Jefferys received the eighth highest number of safe school transfers (11). Based on the limited historical data collected by the Panel it would appear that the number received by C.W. Jefferys in the past was lower than the 2006-2007 school year. For instance, on February 12, 2003, data collected by the administration at C.W. Jefferys suggested that the school received seven safe school transfers and sent out five students<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, at pg. 2

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, at pg. 3

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, at pg. 3 and 4

<sup>15</sup> The Panel made a request to the Safe Schools Office for Safe School Transfer data for each school in the TDSB for the period of 2002-2007. Due to logistical reasons the Panel was only provided with the 2006-2007 data. The remaining data is forthcoming and will be presented in the Final Report.

<sup>16</sup> This data was collected from internal email communications between administration at C.W. Jefferys. As such, at this time the data collected cannot be verified as accurate. The Panel has requested historical data on safe school transfers from the TDSB.

In the NW2 family of schools, C.W. Jefferys received the least number of safe school transfers of any secondary school. Emery Collegiate Institute received 14 and Westview Centennial Secondary School received 13. Similarly, C.W. Jefferys sent the least number of safe school transfers of the NW2 secondary schools (6). Emery Collegiate Institute sent 9 safe school transfers while Westview sent 30 safe school transfers. Below is a comparison of safe school transfers data for secondary schools in the NW2 family of schools.

<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>QUADRANT</b>	<b>SENDING</b>	<b>RECEIVING</b>
<b>SECONDARY</b>			
C.W. Jefferys CI	NW Sec.	6	11
Emery Collegiate Institute	NW Sec.	9	14
Westview Centennial SS	NW Sec.	21	13

The above noted data should not be interpreted as labelling any school as safer than its sister schools. The above data does not reflect the reasons for the safe school transfer or whether the conduct that necessitated the transfer occurred on or off school property. In addition, the Panel was advised during a consultation with Michael Hill, Safe School Administrator for the Northwest Quadrant, that some numbers may be anomalous. For instance, Mr. Hill advised the Panel that one incident that occurred outside of school property required the safe school transfer of a dozen students from one secondary school. The numbers for that school would be artificially high. As such, a trend analysis with data from several years would be more useful than viewing the data for any given school year in isolation. What the data does clearly illustrate is that the number of safe school transfers at C.W. Jefferys in the 2006-2007 school year was not abnormally high (in comparison with other secondary schools), and that the number of safe school transfers at C.W. Jefferys only make up a very small percentage of the entire student population.

What is also clear is that students who are subject to safe school transfers are youth with significant issues that need to be resolved. In reviewing the reasons for the transfers from two secondary schools in the Northwest quadrant it became apparent that the conduct alleged was serious criminal activity that in most cases involved both on and off school incidents. The concerns from many parents, teachers, administrators and community organizations was that while it may be necessary to transfer these students there appears to be no transitional programming and counselling for these troubled students. These students are essentially “programless” safe school transfers.

A review of the TDSB policy on Safe School Transfers and Administrative transfers reveals that there are no intermediary programs or counselling that students are required to receive prior to being sent to the receiving school. At a public consultation held at C.W. Jefferys on August 10, 2007, Melanie Tennant confirmed to the Panel that safe school transfers do not receive any programs or counselling prior to their transfer to a

receiving school and that these “walking wounded”<sup>17</sup> students, many of whom are safe school transfers, have a disproportionately negative impact on the health of a school.

Ms. Kojima and Ms. Newton-Thompson shared with the Panel their concerns with programless safe school transfers. Much like the concerns expressed by Melanie Tennant in her public depositions, both Ms. Kojima and Ms. Newton-Thompson confirmed that safe school transfers do not receive any form of mandatory counselling or programs prior to being transferred to the receiving school. Ms. Kojima described the safe school transferees as “fish out of water”. Ms. Newton-Thompson explained that there were students transferred to C.W. Jefferys that had anger management problems and prior to their transfer they received no counselling. Ms. Newton-Thompson further explained that these programless safe school transfers became harmful influences to the population of the receiving school.

Ms. Kojima expressed concerns that the safe school transfers became “a real strain on the receiving school”. For example, Ms. Kojima explained that matching a transferee’s schedule was a difficult task and often times the student’s schedule could not be completely matched. As a result, the transfer students would receive “spares” where they had no classes scheduled. Ms. Kojima explained that the students without a full timetable and multiple spares contributed to the ranks of hallway wanderers.

Ms. Kojima further explained that students who were transferred to schools within the same family of schools would not necessarily receive a “fresh start”. This was particularly the case in the NW2 region which covered a relatively small geographical area. Students would know who was a safe school transfer and teachers would eventually find out through the “whisper campaign”<sup>18</sup>. Ms. Kojima explained that she was a believer in giving students multiple chances at the same school or even within the family of schools, but that at some point, students would have to be moved outside of the family of schools to receive a “fresh start”. Ms. Tennant shared the concern of transferring students within the same family of schools where they continue to be exposed to the same bad influences or connections:

*“The biggest issue that I have with the safe school transfer policy is that they circulate the kids in the neighbourhood schools. For example, there is Westview, Jefferys, Emery, Northview, we are all fairly close. A lot of our kids share the same neighbourhoods. And inevitably we get safe school transfers from Westview or Emery or Downsview or somewhere like that and we send ours there. They always seem to be circulated amongst the same.... And that’s my biggest complaint about safe school transfers is that you are taking kids from the same neighbourhood and moving them from one school to the next and they have all the same kinds of connections that we are hoping that they wouldn’t have because whatever*

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<sup>17</sup> The term “walking wounded” was used by Dr. Akua Benjamin in her consultation with the Panel to describe students who have serious problems and have not received any form of counseling or support.

<sup>18</sup> Ms. Newton-Thompson explained that teachers would find out whether a student was a safe school transfer through the “whisper campaign”.

*it was at Westview they find the other half of their friends and their populations that they spend their time with at Jefferys and so on.”*

It should be noted that the *Education Act* does not provide for any statutory regime for the transfer of students. Unlike suspensions and expulsions, there are no statutory safeguards or appeal procedures (by parents or students) that govern safe school transfers. Practically speaking, schools must be able to transfer students from their home school in exceptional circumstances. If a judicial interim release requires that a student stay away from his or her school, the TDSB’s obligation to ensure that the youth is afforded his or her right to an education remains. In those circumstances, as well as many other situations, the use of safe school transfers is completely legitimate. There are, however, concerns that safe schools transfers are being utilized for ulterior purposes.

Through consultations with community organizations and community legal clinics, the Panel heard from individuals that were concerned that schools were using the safe school transfer process as a form of discipline. The implication was that administrators were using the safe school transfer process to reduce the use of expulsions and to avoid the statutory procedural rights that accompany a decision to expel a student (i.e. appeal rights). In a case currently before the Divisional Court of Ontario, two African Canadian secondary school students are judicially reviewing a Principal’s decision to transfer them from their home school (*K.B. v. Toronto District School Board*)<sup>19</sup>. The two children were originally suspended for 16 days as a result of an alleged assault on another student on school property, as well as an incident that happened off school property. The two students were charged with assault but were released with a condition to have no contact with the victim. There was no condition with respect to staying away from the school or from staying a certain distance away from the victim. The Principal, acting on the information he obtained through the course of his investigation of the incident, decided to suspend. Subsequent to his decision to suspend the students, the students were told that they were being transferred to C.W. Jefferys as safe school transfers. Three days later, the principal, through legal counsel, sent the youths a Notice Denying Access on the basis that the students were detrimental to the safety or well-being of persons at the sending school. The two students allege that the principal’s decision to remove them from school was intentionally done outside of the expulsion process to prevent them from exercising their rights to have the decision reviewed in the normal course. The case has yet to be decided by the Divisional Court.

The Panel’s Final Report will provide a detailed analysis of the issues described above. In particular, the Final Report will examine the issue of “programless” safe school transfers and their impact on school safety. The Final Report will also examine the allegations of abuse of the safe schools transfer process.

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<sup>19</sup> The Panel has included the facts of this case as articulated in the pleadings in the case.

### C. Difficulties in the Student Teacher Relationship

Six of the forty-one students interviewed by the Panel have described a break down in the relationship between teachers and students. These students described incidents where students would talk back to teachers or, in some instances, threaten or assault teachers. Teachers echoed this concern. Many of the teachers with whom the Panel consulted described serious incidents of student misbehaviour. Some of the students and teachers described the break down in the relationship as follows:

*“Last year police came like every day to school because a lot of kids that yell at the teachers and stuff and like teachers would feel like that they were being assaulted by these kids and now that [name omitted] has been here the police have never come to the school. And there’s stuff happens in the school and nothing is being done about it. There are kids that yell at teachers and I know there are a lot of teachers that do get assaulted and nothing happens and I know she finds out about it....I have never seen anyone hit a teacher but I have heard about it. I heard that a student told a teacher that ‘I’m going a kill you or something’ because she took his PSP away.”*

*“In the seven years I’ve been here, I’ve notice a gradual decline in the lack of respect that’s shown to teachers from students and administrators and a lack of respect amongst students themselves. I’ve witnessed verbal abuse both directed at me and other teachers. I’ve heard of although I have not experienced incidents of physical violence from students to other teachers but I have seen it amongst students as well. A lot of the times this is happening during class times when students are seen wandering halls. Issues of truancy and tardiness are great concerns. ... There’s been, I would say almost every one of the school’s Code of Conduct has been violated to some extent. For example, there have been dress code violations, there have been students who have refused to give names to teachers when ask in the halls even though it’s a part of the Code of Conduct.”*

Related to this issue was a growing sentiment amongst teachers that the administration at C.W. Jefferys was unresponsive to their concerns and was unwilling to impose consequences on students who misbehaved. Some of the teachers described the break down in the relationship between the administration and teachers as follows:

*“There have been a few times however, when I didn’t feel that they were dealt with in a serious enough manner. I didn’t think the consequences matched the behaviour, for example. Yes, something was done about it but... Or I was feeling like a student who would be so infamous in the school that it was less likely something would be done about him because he was always in trouble. So even though I would take action there nothing happened in that regard, even after writing a letter, after being asked to write a letter and so on. But I have been lucky in one way, because I don’t have a lot of run-ins with students except for in the hallways perhaps but in the class room I don’t have problems so when I*

*do have a problem they take it seriously.... However, for a lot of my colleagues it has not been the same and I can see that.”*

*“And, when looking at these issues, there are a number of reasons as to why I feel this has been happening. One of them is that there is a lack of consequences. If a student is caught in an act that they should not be doing and he or she is referred to the vice principal, often times the teacher would have to write out a very lengthy report, would have to come see the vice principal office to prove it, have the student there if that. The student would at most times in my experience deny it and nothing would be done. The student would be reprimanded and that’s about as far as it would go.”*

*“There have also been times in my experience when I’ve referred a student down to the vice principal and the vice principal didn’t know what to do regarding the discipline of that student. I actually had one vice principal [name omitted] say “what should I do? what do you want me to do? what can I do? I don’t know what to do? Do you have any suggestions?” When I made that suggestion, the vice principal was very reluctant to follow-up on it.”*

The concern that students are not appropriately disciplined by the administration at C.W. Jefferys is not isolated to the recent school year. In the 2005-2006 school year, teachers at the school established a Safety Committee and met with the administration team to explain, amongst other things, their concerns over the lack of consistent consequences for breaches of the Code of Conduct. Clearly teachers’ perceptions of lenient discipline policies at C.W. Jefferys are not isolated to the 2006-2007 school year.

As described in the quotes above, there were some teachers who have expressed concerns to the Panel that the administration was reluctant to suspend or expel students for serious behavioural issues or violations of the TDSB Code of Conduct and the C.W. Jefferys Code of Conduct. Some teachers explained that the teachers and administration were under pressure from the school board to lower the levels of suspension and expulsions at schools:

*“Another challenge would be, and I don’t know what they would be per se, but policies coming down from the Board level that that seem to suggest that, this is just sort of, I don’t know the facts about this, but it’s sort of general sense that the teachers have that we’ve been told not to suspend kids – limit our suspensions. Or we have to be careful of that. Which I don’t think that is the answer to our problems anyway. But if it isn’t the answer there haven’t been alternative outcomes for kids with behavioural problems.”*

In April, 2006 the Director of the TDSB, Gerry Connelly, sent an email to all TDSB principals and vice-principals declaring that the TDSB schools were safe and that suspension and expulsion rates are lower than the province's overall average rates. The email also indicated that the Board's suspension rates were decreasing overall<sup>20</sup>. The suspension rates at C.W. Jefferys also dropped significantly. From September 2006 to February 2007, 32 students were suspended at C.W. Jefferys. Some of these students were suspended multiple times such that, in total, there were 42 suspensions during this time period. The total percentage of students suspended during this period was 3.82%. By comparison, for the period between September 2005 to February 2006 a total of 51 students were suspended representing 5.64% of the student population. During the same period of time there were 66 total suspensions<sup>21</sup>.

What accounts for this decrease in suspension and expulsion rates? Why do teachers feel that they and the administrators are under pressure to lower suspension and expulsion rates? One possible explanation is the TDSB's response to the 2005 settlement with the Ontario Human Rights Commission. On July 7, 2005 the Ontario Human Rights Commission initiated a public interest complaint against the TDSB. The complaint alleged that the application of the *Safe Schools Act* amendments had a disproportionate affect on racialized students and students with disabilities. Furthermore, the complaint alleged that the TDSB had failed in their duty to accommodate racialized students and students with disabilities in their discipline procedures and for failing to provide adequate alternative education services for these students who were expelled or suspended. In settling the OHRC complaint, the TDSB acknowledged the widespread perception that school discipline procedures are applied in a discriminatory manner. The terms of the settlement included the following noteworthy sections:<sup>22</sup>

**Section 3:** The TDSB will rewrite its grid of consequences and all related documents to ensure that the use of discretion and the use of mitigating factors are emphasized. The TDSB will ensure that school principals and all other staff are fully informed of and in compliance with this directive. The parties note that nowhere in the *Safe Schools Act*, regulations or related policies do the words "zero tolerance" occur.

**Section 8 (b)** - The TDSB will ensure that principals are familiar with the current requirement in section D of the TDSB Safe Schools Procedures Manual to consider a wide variety of factors when exercising their authority under sections 306, 309 and 310 of the *Education Act* and Regulation 37/01. In addition, principals will be informed that when they interpret mitigating factors they should consider whether racial or other harassment predicated the student's behaviour, and whether the principles of progressive discipline have been followed. This discretion shall include consideration of mitigating circumstances and the

<sup>20</sup> Email from Gerry Connelly dated March 28, 2006

<sup>21</sup> Data collected from the TDSB website:

[http://www.tdsb.on.ca/wwwdocuments/parents/safe\\_schools/docs/3aSuspensionsbyFOSSept05toFeb%2006vsSept06toFeb07.pdf](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/wwwdocuments/parents/safe_schools/docs/3aSuspensionsbyFOSSept05toFeb%2006vsSept06toFeb07.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> Settlement between the OHRC and TDSB dated September 2005.

implementation of practices of progressive discipline, if discipline is appropriate, when considering whether a student can be either suspended or expelled.

8. (f) The TDSB will implement a procedure for student discipline with the goal of avoiding suspensions or expulsions. This procedure will be based on the principles of progressive discipline and will include but is not limited to:

- Detention;
- peer mediation;
- restorative justice;
- referrals for consultation; and
- transfer.

The Toronto School Administrators' Association, in a written submission dated August 2, 2007, argued that the changes in policy initiated by the TDSB as a result of the OHRC settlement had created a safety risk at schools<sup>23</sup>:

*“In the Fall of 2005, the TDSB settled a complaint brought by the Human Rights Commission about the application of the Safe Schools Act in TDSB schools. Elementary and secondary Principals attended a series of meetings during which they heard criticism of the way in which particular groups of students were perceived to have been disciplined for misbehaviours using the TDSB grid of consequences. Subsequent to those meetings, the grid of consequences was revised, safe schools procedures were revised and the practice of progressive discipline was emphasized. One of the goals of the TDSB was to reduce suspension and expulsion rates. These rates have come down; however the costs have been significant. In order to reduce the rates, students are often left in the schools who pose a significant risk to others. Many Principals felt pressure from supervisory officers, trustees and parents to forgo suspensions, expulsions and other consequences when these were in many cases the appropriate responses to specific student behaviours. In many cases, Principals were faced with opposition when they tried to deal with serious offences committed by some students. Principals felt trapped between opposing forces and interests. This uncertainty has led to an increase in negative and destructive behaviour in many schools and in many cases it is starting at an earlier age and in earlier grades than ever before.”*

In the Final Report, the Panel will examine the TDSB's response to the OHRC settlement and will query whether the current responses by the TDSB have made schools safer.

## **SECTION 2.4: CONCLUSION**

C.W. Jefferys students, parents, teachers and staff are justifiably proud of their school, and quite understandably concerned about its recent negative portrayals. The Panel

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<sup>23</sup> TSAA written submission dated August 2, 2007 presented to the Panel at a consultation with TSSA chair Ami Trefler, Former Chair Karl Sprogis and Vice Chair Don Stuart.

reviewed violent incident reports received from C.W. Jefferys and those tracked from the School by the TDSB Safe Schools Department. The Panel recognizes that violent incident reports cannot be considered determinative of the extent of violence in a school since they are filled out most often by vice-principals. The data shows a very low level of violence with no real reference to weapons violence (one incident with a knife “pulled at a soccer game” without injury) over the period 2004-2007. Through the consultations and research, it quickly became apparent to the Panel that the school has been subject to unfairly negative portrayals. We hope that we have provided a more accurate and balanced view.

However, despite their praise for the school, many staff, teachers, students and parents identified areas in which the school needs to improve its safety and security. There is a growing sentiment that there are serious safety concerns emerging at the school. Although not a single student, staff member or teacher at C.W. Jefferys reported in the consultations that they saw a gun in the school, it cannot be forgotten that there was at least one gun in the school on May 23, 2007. And one gun is one too many. It is important to note that there are obvious limitations to relying solely on the student consultations for describing the environment at C.W. Jefferys. Indeed, the student consultations are not the complete story to either the positive or negative portrayals of the school environment. For instance, only four of the forty-one students consulted with described instances of bullying or victimization at C.W. Jefferys. Only two students described being victimized while at C.W. Jefferys. This, however, is not consistent with the data collected from the anonymous student survey which suggests that victimization is more of an issue than the student consultations may have revealed.

One possible explanation for this discrepancy is the nature of consultations. Face to face consultations, especially for youth, do not always encourage an atmosphere in which students feel comfortable being completely candid with interviewers. Students who have been victimized or bullied may be embarrassed about discussing their issues with an authority figure or they may fear that their anonymity will not be protected. In addition, issues of self selection for face to face consultations as well as the limited sample size create practical limitations on the ability of the Panel to rely solely on the concerns expressed in the consultations as detailing an exhaustive list of safety concerns.

Recognizing the limitations of the consultation process, the Panel designed a survey to query whether the themes expressed in the consultations were shared by the larger student body and to obtain a more complete picture of C.W. Jefferys. Generally, the results of the survey indicated that the themes expressed in the consultations were shared by the larger student population; however, the survey did reveal that victimization, differential treatment and concerns about gang presence were also more serious than reflected in the consultations. The next Chapter will examine the results from the preliminary data and provide more insight into the C.W. Jefferys school environment.

## The Student Survey

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*“I think a great solution would be to talk to youth about this when they’re teenagers. It’s sad you wait until Jordan dies to before you start. Get youth from when they’re young. Plant peace in they’re minds and let them grow with it. Don’t make it so that anyone feels they would even have to resort to violence as a solution. Adults have failed to reach us and to teach this to youth as you can see. It’s not too late, but changes should be made earlier and we should be stricter with students and with adults.”*

**[current Jefferys student, anonymous survey response]**

### **SECTION 3.1: THE PRELIMINARY RESULTS FROM THE STUDENT SURVEY**

The purpose of this Chapter is to highlight some of the major findings from this survey with particular attention paid to findings that are directly related to issues of school safety at C.W. Jefferys. A more detailed review of Professor Wortley’s full analysis of the student survey data will be provided in the Panel’s Final Report. At that time we will be in a better position to fully compare the perspectives of the students at C.W. Jefferys with the perspectives of teachers, parents and other community members. Therefore in this chapter the Panel is presenting a selection of student survey data collected to date based on its view that the data assists in providing a snapshot of life at C.W. Jefferys. Additional survey work in respect of the students is contemplated before a full picture can be presented. Furthermore, teacher surveys have been conducted and the processing of that data continues.

As discussed in Section 1.3 of this Interim Report, the Panel came into existence on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2007. One of the first identified objectives of the Panel was to document the attitudes, opinions and experiences of the students at C.W. Jefferys with respect to issues of school safety. The Panel immediately realized that there was an extremely brief window of opportunity to accomplish this goal. Indeed, the school year was scheduled to end on June 27, 2007 – a mere three and a half weeks after the Panel was announced. After the school year ended, Panel members felt it would be much more difficult – if not impossible – to canvass the attitudes and experiences of a large number of C.W. Jefferys’ students. It was quickly decided therefore, that along with our face-to-face interviews with students (described above), the Panel should embark on a mass survey of students at C.W. Jefferys. Under the circumstances, a survey was believed to be the best strategy for reaching the largest number of students in a short period of time. Previous social research also shows that, because they are anonymous, surveys are a good method for collecting information from youth on sensitive topics.

On Friday, June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2007 members of the Panel met with Professor Scot Wortley from the Centre of Criminology, University of Toronto and discussed the possibility of

conducting a survey of students at C.W. Jefferys within the next two week period. Professor Wortley subsequently agreed to consult with the Panel on this project. Professor Wortley was selected as a consultant because he was one of the few academic researchers that we could identify who had actually conducted a large scale survey of Toronto high school students within the past decade. Coincidentally, his previous survey work also focused on issues of school safety and youth victimization.<sup>24</sup>

This survey went into the field approximately one month after the shooting death of Jordan Manners. Professor Wortley and Panel staff developed the questionnaire to be used in the survey between June 11<sup>th</sup> and June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2007. A first draft of the questionnaire was pre-tested on Panel staff on Saturday, June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2007. The final, edited version of the questionnaire was printed on Sunday, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2007. The questionnaire was administered – with the help of the staff at C.W. Jefferys -- to the students on Monday, June 18<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Following the two-day data collection period, information from student questionnaires was entered into a statistical analysis program (SPSS) for analysis. Data entry and cleaning took approximately three weeks to complete.

#### **A. Methodology and Sample Description**

As mentioned above, the students were asked to complete the questionnaire over a two day period in mid-June, 2007. Students either completed the questionnaire in their classrooms or in the school cafeteria. Both teachers and members of the research team supervised the administration of the survey. After a brief introduction that outlined the purpose of the study and the nature of the questions, students were given a copy of the questionnaire and a blank envelope. They were instructed not to put their name or other identifying information on either the questionnaire or the envelope. Before they began to answer the questionnaire, the students were informed that the survey was completely confidential and that members of the research team would never be able to identify which student filled out which questionnaire. They were also told that they did not have to answer any questions and that they could end their participation in the study, at any time, without consequences.

The students were then given an opportunity to ask any questions they had about the survey and told that if they had any questions while they were completing the survey that they should raise their hand and consult a member of the research team or an Interpreter. Finally, the students were instructed to put their completed questionnaire into the envelope, seal the envelope and turn the questionnaire into a member of the research team. This procedure was designed to increase student confidence that nobody at the

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<sup>24</sup> Wortley, Scot and Julian Tanner. 2006. "Immigration, Social Disadvantage and Urban Youth Gangs: Results of a Toronto-Area Study." *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 15 (2): 1-20.

Tanner, Julian and Scot Wortley. 2002. *The Toronto Youth Crime and Victimization Survey: Overview Report*. Toronto: Centre of Criminology, University of Toronto.

school (teachers, administrative staff or other students) would ever get the opportunity to read their answers and that nobody from the research team would examine their questionnaire until after they had left the school. It was felt that this procedure would ensure the students' privacy and subsequently increase the probability that they would answer the questions honestly. After collecting completed questionnaires, all surveys were handed over to Professor Wortley for data entry and data cleaning.

The research team was able to collect 459 completed questionnaires over the two day period. TDSB records indicate that there were 838 students enrolled at C.W. Jefferys at the beginning of the school year. However, during the data entry stage, it was determined that 36 of these 459 questionnaires (7.8%) were unusable. These unusable questionnaires were either incomplete or had not been filled out properly (e.g., a student had answered "I don't know" to every question). After eliminating the unusable questionnaires we were left with a final sample of 423 respondents. Based on this 838 student population estimate, we calculate that our survey was completed by approximately half of the students (50.5%) who attended Jefferys during the 2006-2007 academic year. We feel that this is an impressive achievement considering the incredibly short time between the project's conception and the time the project entered the field (approximately 8 days). However, we must address the issue of why we were not able to reach an even higher number of students. We know that students decided not to participate in the survey for a variety of reasons. Some could not participate because they were actually writing exams. Other students indicated that they wanted to participate but needed to study for exams that were being held later in the day or later that week. Finally, some students did not participate because they felt the survey would take too long to complete or they simply were not interested in taking part in the study. Nonetheless, an analysis of the general characteristics of the students who did participate in our opinion, increases confidence that we were able to capture a true cross-section of the student population at C.W. Jefferys.

To begin with, males and females are equally represented in the final sample (49% male, 51% female). In addition, all age groups and Grades appear to be well-represented. Approximately 29% of the respondents are in Grade 9, 28% are in Grade 10, 23% are in Grade 11 and 20% are in Grade 12. The sample is also quite racially and ethnically diverse – which is consistent with the school's demographic profile. Almost half of the sample (43%) was born outside of Canada and 40% have a first language other than English. Over a third of the survey respondents (35%) self-identified a black or African Canadian, 20% are Asian, 19% are South Asian, 17% come from other racial minority backgrounds (including a large number of multi-racial individuals) and 5% self-identified as West Asian. Only one out of every twenty students in the sample (5%) self-identified as White.

The data also indicates that a large proportion of the sample comes from a disadvantaged social background. For example, a third of the sample currently lives with only one parent (usually their mother). Only 60% reside with both parents. Furthermore, one out of every five students in the sample (22%) indicated that they currently reside in a public housing project and 20% admit that they live in a neighbourhood with a lot of crime. 50% of the respondents indicate that they live in a community with a gang problem and

18% claim that they hear gunshots in their community at least once per month. It should be noted that, despite their relatively disadvantaged status, 80% of the students in the survey plan to graduate from high school and attend either university (61%) or community college (18%). This finding is consistent with the excellent academic reputation that C.W. Jefferys has within the TDSB school system. In sum, we feel that the characteristics of our survey respondents are consistent with the characteristics of the larger student population at C.W. Jefferys and that the sample is generally consistent with the profile of other youth residing in the wider “Jane-Finch” community.

## **B. Student Perceptions of Safety at School and in the Community**

A section of the survey examined student feelings of safety at school and in the wider community. We focused on four separate issues: 1) How safe did students at C.W. Jefferys feel at their school before and after the shooting death of Jordan Manners?; 2) How safe do students feel when they engage in various activities outside of the school environment?; 3) Do students feel safer at school or out in the community?; and 4) How worried are students about specific types of criminal activity at school and in their community?

We began our inquiry into feelings of school safety by asking the students the following question: “I want you to think about the way things were at your school before Jordan Manners was shot. How safe did you feel at your school before the shooting took place?” We then asked the respondents how safe they felt “right after Jordan Manners was shot?” Finally, we asked the students “How safe do you feel at your school today (approximately one month after the shooting took place)?” The results indicate that:

- Before the Jordan Manners’ shooting, the vast majority of students at C.W. Jefferys (81%) felt either very safe (38%) or fairly safe (43%) at their school. By contrast, only 15% of the respondents felt unsafe (11%) or very unsafe (4%).
- As might be expected, the findings suggest that student feelings of insecurity increased dramatically in the immediate aftermath of the shooting incident. Indeed, right after the shooting, almost half of the respondents (48%) felt either very unsafe (23%) or unsafe (25%) at the school. The impact of the shooting can be further illustrated by the fact that the proportion of students who felt safe at C.W. Jefferys dropped from 81% before the shooting to only 44% immediately following the shooting – a decline of 37 percentage points.
- However, it appears that this dramatic increase in feelings of insecurity was temporary. Indeed, by the time this survey was administered to the students -- approximately one month after the survey -- it appears that feelings of safety were returning to normal. Nonetheless, it should be stressed that the data also indicate that the shooting may have a lasting impact on feelings of safety – at least for some C.W. Jefferys’ students. Indeed, although the proportion of respondents

who report feeling safe at school is significantly higher a month after the shooting (65%) than immediately after the shooting (44%), feelings of safety have not yet returned to pre-shooting levels (81%).

In order to further explore how C.W. Jefferys' students feel about their school, we asked them the following question: "In general, would you say that C.W. Jefferys is a very safe school, a fairly safe school or do you think that the school is an unsafe place for students?" The results indicate that:

- Despite the shooting of Jordan Manners, three out of every four C.W. Jefferys students (74%) still feels that their school is either very safe (29%) or fairly safe (45%). By contrast, only 13% feel that the school is unsafe and only 6% feel that it is very unsafe. Nonetheless, the fact that one out of every five students at C.W. Jefferys (19%) feels that their school is "unsafe" may be a cause for at least some concern.

We also asked the respondents: "Do you think that C.W. Jefferys has less violence than other schools, more violence than other schools or do you think it is about the same as other schools?" The results suggest that:

- Despite the death of Jordan Manners, half of all C.W. Jefferys students (50%) still feel that their school has less violence than other schools. An additional 23% feel that their school is no more violent than other schools.
- Only 13% of the students surveyed feel that C.W. Jefferys is actually more violent than other schools in Toronto.
- These findings are consistent with stakeholder claims that, in general, C.W. Jefferys is a safe school and there are other schools in the area that have more serious problems with violence and crime. These findings are also consistent with student and teacher complaints that C.W. Jefferys has been unfairly labelled and stigmatised as a result of the extensive media coverage of the Jordan Manners' death.

After consulting our student respondents about their feelings of safety at school, we asked them how safe they feel when they engage in a variety of different activities outside of the school environment. The results suggest that:

- Students are most likely to feel unsafe when they engage in certain activities at night. For example, 48% of the respondents report that they feel unsafe or very unsafe when they walk around their own neighbourhood at night. By contrast, only 13% feel unsafe when they walk around their neighbourhood during the day.

- Similarly, 42% of the respondents feel unsafe or very unsafe when they use the TTC at night. By comparison, only 12% feel unsafe using public transit during the day.
- The fact that a high proportion of students feel unsafe walking or using the TTC at night in their own community is concerning. It could reflect the reality that many of the students at C.W. Jefferys live in disadvantaged, high crime communities and subsequently worry about their personal safety on a regular basis.
- Almost half of all students (47%) claim that they would feel unsafe or very unsafe if they went to a nightclub or bar -- another night-time activity. However, almost 30% indicate that they don't know how they would feel at such venues – an indication that many students have never actually engaged in such activities.
- One out of every three respondents (33%) indicate that they would feel safe or very unsafe visiting another high school. This might be viewed as evidence of inter-school rivalries or it could reflect the fact that some respondents feel that C.W. Jefferys is actually safer and less violent than other schools in the area.
- Going downtown, going to house parties and visiting friends in other communities are also activities that produce feelings of insecurity for some students. At least 20% of the respondents to this survey report that they would feel safe or very unsafe engaging in such activities.
- By contrast, almost all respondents feel safe or very safe when they visit a shopping mall (81%) or go to the movies with friends (82%).

To summarize, the results suggest that, with the exception of the period immediately following the shooting death of Jordan Manners, most students perceive C.W. Jefferys to be a relatively safe environment. Indeed, before the shooting, students felt just as safe at C.W. Jefferys as they did walking in their own neighbourhood during the day, using the TTC during the day, visiting shopping malls and going to the movies with friends.

We next asked the respondents to tell us how frequently they felt afraid or unsafe when they were walking to and from school. Previous research suggests that a high proportion of youth victimization takes place during these unsupervised periods. Nonetheless, the data indicates that:

- Almost half of all the students surveyed (46%) report that they never feel unsafe travelling to and from school and an additional 23% state that they almost never feel unsafe. By contrast, only 4% report that they feel unsafe “almost every day.”

We concluded our inquiry into feelings of safety by asking the respondents how often they worry about becoming the victim of different types of crime. The results suggest that:

- The results suggest that C.W. Jefferys' students are most worried about personal theft and street gangs – both inside and outside of school. Almost half of all respondents (49%) indicate that they at least sometimes worry about gangs in their community. Similarly, 46% sometimes worry about gangs from outside of their community and 45% sometimes worry about gangs at school.
- Similarly, 48% of the students surveyed at least sometimes worry about having something stolen from them at school and 46% sometimes worry about theft outside of the school environment.
- Robbery also seems to be a common concern. Indeed, two out of every five respondents (42%) report that they at least sometimes worry about being robbed at school and an equal proportion (40%) sometimes worry about being robbed outside of school.
- Other findings suggest that 37% of students at least sometimes worry about being physically assaulted outside of school and a third (33%) sometimes worry about being assaulted at school.
- Concern about sexual assault is much more prevalent among female students than male students. Indeed, half of the female students we surveyed (49%) admitted that they at least sometimes worry about being sexually assaulted or molested outside of school, compared to only 17% of the male respondents. Similarly, a third of the female respondents (33%) at least sometimes worry about being sexually assaulted or molested at school, compared to 16% of male respondents.

### **C. Student Perceptions of Problems at School**

The survey explored the respondents' general perceptions of specific problems or issues that *may* or *may not* exist at C.W. Jefferys. We provided the students with a list of issues that sometimes take place within Canadian high schools. We then asked them to indicate whether they thought these issues were a problem at C.W. Jefferys. Response options ranged from "A very serious problem" to "Not a problem at all". The specific problems identified in the survey were informed by our initial face-to-face consultations with student and teacher stakeholders at C.W. Jefferys (discussed in the previous section of this report). However, other items were extracted from previous student surveys conducted in Canada and the United States. Notable results from this section of the survey indicate that:

- Theft, bullying and students who bring weapons to school are the three activities that are the most likely to be identified as “serious” or “very serious” problems by the students at C.W. Jefferys. For example, over two-thirds of the respondents (67%) feel that “students who steal from other students” is a serious problem at their school. Similarly, 60% of the respondents believe that students “who bring weapons to school” is a serious problem. Sixty percent also think that “students who pick on or bully other students” is a serious problem.
- It is important to note that over 40% of the respondents believe that weapons are a “very serious” problem at C.W. Jefferys. An additional 18% feel that weapons are a “serious” problem. By contrast, only 9% think that weapons are “not a problem at all.” This finding, however, should be interpreted with caution. First of all, these figures may be somewhat inflated because of concerns in the wake of the shooting death of Jordan Manners. Obviously, in that case, a firearm did enter the school and a student was fatally wounded. Thus, we must at least consider the possibility that this incident significantly increased the number of students who feel that weapons are a problem at Jefferys. Unfortunately, we do not know how these same respondents would have answered the weapons question prior to the Jordan Manners tragedy. It is also difficult to determine exactly what students mean when they state that weapons are “a serious problem.” Are the respondents trying to tell us that many of their fellow students carry weapons to school on a regular basis? An alternative explanation is that only a few students actually bring weapons to school – but the respondents feel that this small minority represents a serious threat to their personal safety. The issue of weapons is explored further in a subsequent section of this chapter.
- The results of the survey further suggest that the majority of respondents are also concerned with other forms of violence and criminality at their school. For example, 55% feel that fighting is a serious problem at their school and 51% think that illegal drug use is a serious problem.
- Almost half of the C.W. Jefferys students who responded to our survey (49%) believe that drug dealing is a serious problem at their school and 46% believe that gangs are a serious problem. However, it appears that there is somewhat less concern about gangs than other types of crime and violence. For example, while 42% of respondents believe that weapons are a “very serious” problem at C.W. Jefferys, only 18% believe that gangs are a “very serious” problem.
- It is also important to note that almost half of the respondents (48%) feel that there is a serious problem at their school with “students who gossip or spread rumours about other students.” This finding helps put the other results into context. Although our student respondents are quite concerned about “important” issues related to school safety and student-teacher relations, a significant proportion are also concerned with more “common” adolescent issues concerning peer group relationships. Nonetheless, the findings with respect to the gossip issue should not be dismissed. Previous research has suggested that gossip is a

form of verbal aggression or bullying that can have a negative impact on student self-esteem and feelings of personal safety. Furthermore, gossip sometimes leads to personal disputes that can escalate into physical violence.

The second strategy that we used to identify potential problems at C.W. Jefferys was to present our student respondents with a series of statements about their school and ask them whether they agreed or disagreed with each of these statements. Response options ranged from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” Some of the findings from this section of the survey support specific arguments made by both teachers and students during our initial consultations. Important findings include:

- Three out of every four student respondents (75%) agrees or strongly agrees that “students often hang out in the halls and make noise when classes are on.” This is consistent with teacher and student claims that there are serious problems with student noise and disorder in the hallways during class-time and that some students wander or hang out in the halls without consequences.
- The vast majority of student respondents (75%) also agree that “many students at C.W. Jefferys do not respect their teachers.” Similarly, 70% of the student respondents agree or strongly agree that “some students at my school just won’t do what their teachers tell them to do.” This is consistent with the argument that, in some cases, there has been a breakdown in the traditional student-teacher relationship at C.W. Jefferys. Indeed, according to the student respondents themselves, many students at C.W. Jefferys apparently disrespect their teachers and are apparently willing to question or challenge their authority.
- Although many respondents appear critical of the behaviours and attitudes of some of their fellow students, additional findings suggest that many respondents feel that the teachers must shoulder at least some of the blame for any breakdown in student-teacher relations. For example, approximately two-thirds of the respondents (63%) agree or strongly agree that “some teachers do not know how to talk to their students.” A third of the student respondents also agree or strongly agree that: “In general, the teachers at my school do not respect the students.”
- Fortunately, the findings with respect to teacher-student relations at C.W. Jefferys are not all negative. For example, the majority of the students surveyed (60%) agree or strongly agree that “the teachers at my school care about what happens to their students.” The majority of respondents (56%) also agree or strongly agree that “most of the students and teachers at my school get along.” Finally, over 40% of the students surveyed agree or strongly agree that “the teachers at my school treat everyone fairly.”
- Finally, we asked a series of questions about the presence of “outsiders” at C.W. Jefferys during the school year. During our initial consultations, a number of stakeholders had expressed a concern that people who are not students at C.W. Jefferys (outsiders) often visit the school and that these people sometimes

represent a serious security threat. The results suggest that while outsiders may often visit the school, only a minority of students feel that they represent a serious threat to school safety. For example, two-thirds of the students (66%) agree or strongly agree that “people from outside my school often come to visit their friends and hang out.” However, only 40% agree or strongly agree that outsiders “often come to my school to cause trouble” and only 21% agree that outsiders “often come to sell drugs at my school.”

The third strategy that we used to identify potential problems at C.W. Jefferys was to ask our student respondents how frequently they thought certain behaviours or activities occurred at their school. Response options ranged from “Almost every day” to “Never or almost never.”

- The results strongly suggest that hallway disorder and students who talk back to teachers are the most commonly occurring problems at C.W. Jefferys. For example, 57% of the respondents report that, in their opinion, students hang out in the halls and make noise during class “almost every day.” Overall, three out of every four respondents (73%) feels that such hallway disorder occurs at least once per week.
- Similarly, more than a third of the respondents (35%) feel that students at their school talk back or act rudely towards teachers almost every day. Overall, two-thirds of the respondents (62%) maintain that students talk back or act rudely toward teachers at least once per week.
- According to the student respondents, other types of problems occur much less frequently. For example, while 73% of the respondents feel that hallway disorder and student disrespect of teachers occurs at their school on a weekly basis, only 36% feel that the unfair treatment of students by teachers occurs at this rate. Similarly, only 30% of students feel that bullying occurs at their school at least once per week and only 29% feel that students are unfairly punished on a weekly basis.
- Further analysis reveals that most students think that serious criminality and violence are not regular occurrences at their school. Nonetheless, there is a significant minority who feel that such behaviours are relatively common. For example, one out of every four respondents (25%) feels that drug dealing takes place at their school on a weekly basis, 17% feel that fights between students happen at least once per week and 11% of respondents believe that students carry weapons to school every day.
- Almost half of the respondents claim that they actually “*don’t know*” how often drug dealing takes place at their school or how frequently students bring weapons to into the school environment. Thus, while the majority of students claim that both drug dealing and weapons are a problem at their school (see discussion

above), one out of every two cannot accurately estimate how frequently these behaviours take place. This finding suggests that, unlike hallway disorder and student disrespect for teachers, most C.W. Jefferys students do not encounter drug dealing or weapons at their school on a regular basis. This is not to say that these issues are not a cause for concern. However, based on the responses to the above questions, it appears that open criminality and violence at school are *not* part of the everyday experiences of the majority of students at C.W. Jefferys.

#### **D. Other Problems**

We concluded this section of the student questionnaire by asking our respondents: “*Are there any other problems at your school that you have not told us about? If there are other problems -- please tell us about them.*” A text box was then provided for the students to write in their answers.

The responses to this open-ended question often mirrored the concerns or themes identified through our initial stakeholder consultations. For example, a number of respondents expressed the opinion that poor student behaviour is often ignored or tolerated at C.W. Jefferys. Others felt that this lack of student discipline and accountability has had a negative impact on the school and contributed to problems of disorder and safety. The following statements from the student respondents illustrate this point of view:

- There is smoking outside of the school, whether it be drugs or cigarettes is gross. At the back of the building there are kids selling drugs. Before the Jordan accident there were kids right under Room 310 selling drugs. Everyday there was kids smoking and nobody did anything.
- There is disruption everywhere at this school. It is easy to simply walk in with whatever you want.
- Skippers are a problem at this school. They are the ones hanging in the halls or out front. They are the ones that are failing and causing everything bad. They get away with it.
- Every period there are students that hang in the hallway. Many students and teachers are transferring away next year.
- Hall monitors and other authority figures do not enforce the rules but mingle with students.
- There is little discipline in the school. Teachers don't know how to relate to students. Students have life too easy so they see no point in working hard or following the rules to get what they want.

- There are not enough rules at this school and there is not enough enforcement of the rules we currently have.
- Please have enforcement of rules at the school. It is heartbreaking to see students treat teachers like trash and the disrespectful way students talk to them. Everyone knows that no matter what they do they do they will be let off easily. Calls home have very low effectiveness.
- Fairness aside, bad students are never punished.
- Students at this school often engage in rudeness, intimidation and promiscuity.
- Students smoke weed in the stairwells. They smoke weed on school property. Nothin ever happens.
- Some of the students at this school have no respect for the school or the teachers. They are here to fool around, chase girls and sell drugs. The teachers are too afraid of them. They get away with everything. Schools need more rules so the good kids can get on with their lives.
- Students don't follow the rules because the school is too soft.
- Students talk back to teachers and some teachers rarely do anything.
- There is no authority. Students go around disrespecting everyone. The new vice principle can't control them. There is no discipline.
- There were a few locker break-ins and there was no police investigation!!
- Those who cause trouble and harm are rarely punished, issues are just ignored.

Other students were more concerned with the attitudes and behaviours of the teachers at C.W. Jefferys than the attitudes and behaviours of their fellow students. The qualitative data suggest that some students feel that the teachers at C.W. Jefferys do not treat them fairly and exhibit various forms of biases including racial bias. In the interests of fairness, this data as well as accompanying student comments will be published in the Final Report when the Panel releases the full survey results from teachers that include teachers' views of their relationships with students.

Other school problems mentioned by the students in response to this open-ended question include: 1) ***School cleanliness and maintenance*** ("There are cockroaches and rats and the bathrooms don't work;" "There is no air conditioning, too many broken things at this school. There are lots of insects;" "This school is not clean, it is nasty;" "The washrooms in the school are dirty and they don't work, there are bugs all over the

washrooms”; 2) *The Attitudes and Behaviour of the Grade Nine Students* (“Many of my peers have noticed that there seems to be a pattern in which the attitudes of the Grade 9 students are getting worse and worse;” “The Grade 9 students are the rudest and they cause a lot of problems”); and 3) *A Lack of Extra-curricular Programs for Students* (“There are no after-school programs at this school;” “We need more money for programs;” “There are not enough extra-curricular activities at this school for students to keep occupied;” “We need more clubs and activities like dances and other events too).” Finally, one student claimed that they were disappointed that the issue of school safety was not recognized at C.W. Jefferys until after the shooting death of Jordan Manners. She implied that there were problems at C.W. Jefferys before the shooting and that they should have been identified earlier: “The only thing that I don’t like is that it takes my best friend’s death (Jordan Manners) for all this to happen. The problems were here before. You guys never knew that Jefferys is a bad school.” This is a theme that is repeated in other sections of the survey – discussed below.

### **E. Student Victimization**

In the wake of the Jordan Manners shooting, questions arose with respect to how prevalent crime and victimization are at C.W. Jefferys. Thus, in the next section of the survey, we asked respondents whether or not they had experienced different types of victimization. Consistent with the mandate of the Panel, we asked the students about victimization experiences that had taken place over the past two years. We further asked the respondents to distinguish between incidents of victimization that occurred at school and victimization experiences that occurred outside of school. It should be noted that just because a student indicates that they were victimized at school does not necessarily mean that the victimization occurred at C.W. Jefferys. For example, a Grade 9 student who claims that they were assaulted in the past two years might be referring to an incident that occurred in Grade 8 when they were attending another school.

Nine types of victimization were examined for the purposes of the Interim Report: 1) *Minor Theft* (defined as the theft of money or items worth less than \$50.00); 2) *Major Theft* (defined as the theft of money or items worth more than \$50.00); 3) *Vandalism* (defined as the deliberate damage of property, clothes or personal items); 4) *Physical Threats* (defined as threats of physical harm that did not involve a weapon); 5) *Weapons Threats* (defined as threats of physical harm that involved a weapon); 6) *Physical Assaults* (defined as incidents of being punched, kicked or slapped); 7) *Robbery* (defined as having money or personal items taken from you by force or the threat of force); 8) *Weapons Assaults* (defined as being attacked by someone with a weapon like a knife or a bat); and 9) *Verbal Abuse* (defined as being verbally teased or insulted). Respondents could answer that they had never experienced a specific type of victimization in the past two years, that they were victimized once, that they were victimized between two and five times or that they were victimized on more than five occasions. The questions that were asked are consistent with items used previously in other North American victimization surveys. The results from this section of the survey indicate that:

- Within the school environment, minor theft is more likely to be experienced than other types of crime. Indeed, almost half of the students surveyed (45%) indicate

that they were the victim of minor theft, at school, in the past two years. One out of every five respondents (18%) report that they were the victim of school-based theft on more than one occasion.

- A high proportion of students (42%) also report that they have been insulted or teased at school. One out of every four respondents (27%) reports that they have been teased or insulted on more than one occasion in the past two years. It should be noted that such verbal bullying can hurt a student's self-esteem and sometimes leads to depression and an avoidance of school activities. Furthermore, verbal bullying sometimes leads to physical confrontations between students.
- Physical threats (without a weapon) are the next most common type of victimization. Four out of ten respondents (39%) report that they have been threatened with physical harm at school over the past two years. One out of four respondents (24%) reports that they have been physically threatened at school on multiple occasions.
- After physical threats, actual physical assault emerges as the next most common school-based victimization. Indeed, 37% of the respondents indicate that they have been physically assaulted (without a weapon) at school over the past two years. One out of every five students (19%) indicates that they have been assaulted at school on more than one occasion.
- Vandalism at school has also been experienced by over a third of the students (35%) participating in this survey. Seventeen percent experienced property damage on more than one occasion.
- Major theft is the next most prevalent school-based victimization. Almost one-third (32%) of all students have been the victim of major theft in the past year. Thirteen percent of respondents indicate that they have been a victim of major theft on more than one occasion.
- One out of five respondents (21%) indicate that they have been robbed at school in the past two years. One out of ten respondents indicates that they have been robbed at school on two or more occasions.
- Weapons threats are the next most common school-based victimization. Eighteen percent of the students surveyed indicate that they have been threatened by someone with a weapon at their school in the past two years. Nine percent have been threatened with a weapon on more than one occasion.
- The data also suggest that the respondents to this survey are also subject to victimization outside of school. However, the data also indicate that, for some types of crime, victimization rates are higher in school than outside of school.

- According to our respondents, students are more likely to experience minor theft, verbal assaults (insults and teasing), threats (not involving weapons), physical assaults and vandalism when they are at school than when they are off school property.
- On the other hand, exposure to major theft, robbery, weapons threats and sexual assault appear to be just as common out of school as within the school environment.
- Finally, it appears that students are somewhat more likely to experience serious violence -- including gun-related threats and assaults involving weapons -- outside of school than on school property.
- Additional analysis indicates that important gender differences exist with respect to criminal victimization. For example, within the school environment, male students are significantly more likely than female students to report being the victim of physical threats, threats involving weapons, physical assaults, robbery, gun assaults and assaults involving a weapon. This is completely consistent with the gender differences observed in previous victimization surveys.
- However, also consistent with previous research, female respondents are much more likely to report being the victim of a sexual assault than their male counterparts. Interestingly, within the school environment, male and female students are equally likely to report minor theft, major theft, vandalism and verbal bullying.

## **F. The Victimization Numbers in Context**

At first glance, the victimization data presented above may appear shockingly high. However, we maintain that these figures should not be used to argue that C.W. Jefferys is a particularly dangerous school or that it is more violent or crime-ridden than other high schools in the Toronto area. Such conclusions would be premature and cannot be validated without the same survey being administered to other high schools in the Toronto area. Indeed, we feel that our findings, as disturbing as they may be, are quite consistent with the results of other youth victimization surveys conducted in North America. Unfortunately, few of these surveys have actually been conducted in Canada.

One exception is the 2000 Toronto Youth Crime and Victimization Survey<sup>25</sup>. This survey, conducted in 2000, involved a random sample of 3,393 high school students from

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30 different high schools in the Toronto region (10 from the Catholic School Board and 20 from the Public School Board). During this study, a detailed questionnaire was administered to student respondents during class time. As with the survey conducted at C.W. Jefferys, one of the primary objectives of this project was to document experiences of victimization. However, some of the questions asked in 2000 were quite different than the questions posed during the C.W. Jefferys survey. For example, while the C.W. Jefferys survey focused on victimization in the past two years, the 2000 survey focused on lifetime victimization rates and victimization experiences that had taken place in the past twelve months. Furthermore, because of the Jordan Manners shooting, the C.W. Jefferys' survey focused more on gun-related victimizations and incidents that took place at school than general patterns of youth victimization. Nonetheless, we feel that, despite the seven year gap and somewhat different lines of questioning, the existence of the 2000 data provides at least some opportunity to compare the experiences of C.W. Jefferys students to the experiences of high school students from other high schools in the Toronto area. It should be noted that C.W. Jefferys was not one of the schools included in the 2000 survey. Comparing the 2007 student survey of C.W. Jefferys students with the 2000 Toronto Youth Crime and Victimization Survey yields the following results:

- In 2007, 45% of the student respondents from C.W. Jefferys reported that they had been the victim of minor theft in the past two years. By contrast, in 2000, 38% of high school students claimed that they had been a victim of minor theft *in the past twelve months* and 72% claimed that they had been a victim of minor theft at sometime in their life.
- Similarly, in 2007, 39% of the survey respondents from C.W. Jefferys claimed that they had received physical threats in the past two years. By contrast, in 2000, 39% of 3,400 Toronto High School students who took part in the study claimed that they had received physical threats *in the past twelve months* and 67% claimed that they had received physical threats at some time in their life.
- In 2007, 37% of C.W. Jefferys students claimed that they had been physically assaulted at school in the past twenty-four months. In 2000, 39% of Toronto high school students (from 30 different schools) reported that they had been physically assaulted in the past year and 70% indicated that they had been assaulted as some time in their life
- Additional analysis reveals that, in 2007, 18% of C.W. Jefferys students claim that they had been threatened by someone with a weapon in the past two years. By contrast, in 2000, survey results suggest that 15% of Toronto high school students received weapons threats in the past year and 28% had been threatened with a weapon at some time in their life.
- Similarly, in 2007, 11% of the C.W. Jefferys students who took part in the study claim that they had been assaulted by someone with a weapon in the past two years. By contrast, in 2000, 8% of Toronto high school students indicated that

they had been the victim of a weapons-related assault in the past twelve months and 16% had been assaulted with a weapon at some time in their life.

In sum, the victimization findings produced in 2000, using a large sample of high school students from 30 different schools across Toronto, seem to largely mirror the victimization results produced in 2007 using a relatively small sample of students from C.W. Jefferys. The comparison of data from the 2007 survey with the results of the 2000 survey only serves to increase our confidence in the current findings. Furthermore, this comparison serves to highlight the possibility that C.W. Jefferys is not any more dangerous than other high schools in the Toronto area. This does not mean that crime and victimization were not a problem at C.W. Jefferys over the past two years. However, the comparison of the two surveys, conducted seven years apart, underscores the possibility that problems with crime and victimization are not isolated within C.W. Jefferys or even within other schools in the “Jane-Finch” community. Crime and victimization may be a problem faced by students at many schools throughout the Toronto region.

### **G. Details of “Most Serious” Victimization**

In order to examine student victimization experiences more closely, we asked our respondents to describe “the worst thing” that had ever happened to them that “might be considered a crime or an act of violence.” A total of 177 respondents (41.8% of the sample) provided us with the details of their “worst victimization” experience. The 177 criminal victimization incidents described to us included robbery (16% of all cases), physical assault (15%), theft (11%), threats (7%), and assaults involving a firearm (5%). However, in 60 of the 177 cases (34%), the respondent indicated that they were victimized but did not want to disclose the nature of the crime. The information gathered with respect to each of these incidents indicates that:

- 79% percent of the incidents described by the respondents occurred in the past two years, 59% within the past year and 20% within the past two years. Only 15% of the incidents occurred more than 3 years ago.
- A large proportion of the “most serious” victimization incidents described by the respondents took place at school (42%) or in the area around the school (20%). An additional 14% took place in the respondents’ own neighbourhood. Nine percent of these incidents either took place at the respondents’ own home or at someone else’s home. The remainder (12%) took place in other public areas including parks, shopping malls, parties and streets outside of the respondents’ own community
- Further analysis reveals that 80% of the thefts described by the respondents took place at school, as were 46% of the threats, 46% of the physical assaults, 35% of the sexual assaults and 18% of the robberies. In addition, a high proportion of all robberies (36%), physical assaults (35%) and sexual assaults (18%) took place in the area around the school.

- One out of every four “most serious” victimization incidents (27%) was committed by another student. An additional 22% were committed by an acquaintance (defined as someone the respondent has seen but did not know well) and 11% were committed by a friend. We cannot determine whether these friends or acquaintances were also students at the same school. Almost 25% of all victimizations were committed by a stranger. By contrast, only 4% were committed by parents and 4% were committed by other relatives.
- According to the respondents, only 7% of the “most serious” victimization incidents described in the survey were reported to the police.
- All respondents who indicated that they did not report their victimization to the police were asked why they did not report the crime. On average, respondents gave 4.3 different reasons for not reporting the victimizations to the police. The most common reasons include, fear of the offenders (54%), a belief that the police can’t provide adequate protection from offenders (61%), a belief that the crime was too trivial (47%), a belief that the police can not do anything (53%), a desire not to upset parents (60%), a distrust or dislike of the police (51%) and a desire to seek one’s own revenge. Over half of the respondents (52%) did not report their personal victimization experience because they simply did not want to be a “snitch.”

## H. Witnessing Crime

We also asked the student respondents whether they had ever *witnessed* four different types of crime including: 1) A shooting or gun battle; 2) A serious physical assault or beating; 3) Drug dealing; and 4) A robbery. We also asked respondents when they last witnessed each type of crime and whether they reported the last incident they witnessed to the police. The results indicate that a large proportion of students at C.W. Jefferys have witnessed serious criminal incidents.

- Forty-two percent of all respondents indicate that they have witnessed drug dealing at some time in their life. The majority of these respondents witnessed drug dealing in the past twelve months.
- Forty two percent of all respondents indicate that they have witnessed a serious attack or beating in their life. The majority of these respondents witnessed this type of crime in the past year.
- Thirty-eight percent of respondents indicate that they have witnessed a robbery or mugging at some time in their life. The majority of these respondents indicate that they witnessed this type of crime in the past two years.
- Finally, 23% of all respondents indicate that they have witnessed a shooting or gun battle at some time in their life. Most of the observed shootings took place

within the past two years. Unfortunately, the questionnaire does not allow us to determine where these shootings took place.

- Regardless of the type of crime, most witnesses did not report to the police. For example, only 3% of the respondents who witnessed drug dealing reported the incident to the police, only 6% reported serious assaults, only 7% reported robberies and only 9% reported shootings or gun battles. These figures illustrate how difficult it is for the police to both identify and solve specific criminal events.
- Those respondents who did not report the crimes they had witnessed to the police were asked why they had not reported these incidents. As with personal victimization, respondents usually gave multiple reasons for not reporting crimes to the police. For each type of crime, the majority of witnesses simply stated that they felt the incident was none of their business. Other common reasons include fear of the offenders, a fear that the police would not be able to protect them and distrust of the police. Many respondents (over 33% for each type of crime) also indicated that they did not want to get a reputation as a “snitch.” About 20% of witnesses stated they did not report the crime because there were other witnesses and they were not needed.
- These findings further illustrate that, because student witnesses and victims are often reluctant to report the crimes that they experience, a great deal of youth crime in Toronto likely goes undetected by both the police and other adult authority figures.

## **I. Improving School Safety**

In the final section of the questionnaire, we asked the students to express their own opinions with respect to how to improve school safety and discipline at C.W. Jefferys. We first presented the respondents with nine specific strategies that have sometimes been proposed by policy-makers. The students were then asked whether they thought each strategy was a very good idea, a good idea or a bad idea with respect to improving safety at their school. The results reveal that:

- Three out of every four respondents (75%) think that increasing funding for after-school programs and extra-curricular activities is a good or very good idea with respect to reducing school safety.
- The vast majority of students (72%) also think that it would be a good or very good idea to provide more counselling or help for students who keep getting into trouble.
- Seven out of ten students (69%) also think it would be a good idea to install security cameras in the halls and in the classrooms.

- Two-thirds of the sample feel (64%) that it would be a good or very good idea to increase the number of security monitors at the school.
- Sixty percent of the respondents think that it would be a good idea or very good idea to make students wear security passes (with the student's name and photo) while they are at school.
- Student support for other safety strategies is more guarded. For example, less than half of the students surveyed (45%) think that having one way in and out of the school is a good or very good idea. Similarly, only 44% think that the school should adopt a mandatory uniform policy and only 43% think that the school should install metal detectors at school entrances. Unlike the other strategies, discussed above, more than a third of the students surveyed believe these three strategies are a bad idea.
- The least popular strategy appears to be giving police more power within the school. For example, only a third of the respondents (35%) feel that it would be a good idea or very good idea to give the police permission to search student lockers at any time in order to locate guns, other weapons and drugs. Over 60% of the students surveyed feel that this is a bad idea.

Finally, in order to examine student attitudes towards school disciplinary practices, we asked the respondents how they thought students at C.W. Jefferys should be punished for engaging in different types of disciplinary infractions. The results suggest that:

- The majority of students (64%) think that students should not be punished at all for wearing hats in school. Detention is seen as the most appropriate punishment for other students.
- A third of students (30%) also think that there should be no punishment for talking back to teachers. On the other hand, 32% of respondents think that those who talk back should be given a detention, 23% percent think the school should call their parents and 17% think that these students should see a counsellor. Twelve percent think that students who talk back should actually be suspended (9%) or expelled (3%) from school.
- A third of our respondents (33%) feel that students should not be punished at all for teasing or insulting other students. On the other hand, 34% think such students should be given a detention, 18% think that the school should call their parents and 18% think that these students should talk to a counsellor. Fifteen percent of the students we surveyed think that students who tease or insult other students should be suspended (12%) or expelled (3%).

- The respondents are much harsher with respect to more serious violations. For example, 49% of the respondents think that students should be suspended for fighting at school and 12% think they should be expelled.
- Similarly, 46% of the respondents think that students should be suspended for stealing from other students and 22% think they should be expelled.
- A third of the respondents (34%) think that students who sell drugs at school should be suspended and 36% think that these students should be expelled.
- Finally, 40% of the respondents think that students should be suspended for bringing a weapon to school. A similar proportion (38%) thinks that such students should be expelled.
- It is clear that the respondents think that the school should only call the police for very serious violations. Only one out of every ten respondents (11%) thinks that the school should call the police to deal with students who are fighting, 22% think the police should be called for theft, 29% think the police should be called for drug dealing and 40% think that the school should call the police to deal with students who bring weapons to school. It is interesting to note that even when it comes to dealing with criminal activity like fighting, drug dealing, theft and carrying weapons, the majority of students *do not* think the school should call the police.

In sum, the results of the survey suggest that the students at C.W. Jefferys are quite split with respect to their ideas about how to improve school safety and deal with students who break the rules. Although some students seem to favour a tough approach to school safety issues (more student suspensions and expulsions, more use of the police in school, mandatory school uniforms and security passes), other students seem to oppose such strategies. However, most of the students at the school seem in favour of particular measures including the installation of security cameras, more security monitors, increased funding for after-school programs and increased counselling for students with behavioural problems.

## **J. Other Student Comments**

At the conclusion of the questionnaire students were thanked for their participation in the survey and asked if they had any other comments that they would like to make. Many students took the opportunity to make additional comments. Three themes emerged. First of all, a number of students wanted to stress that C.W. Jefferys is a safe school that was getting a bad reputation because of the Jordan Manners shooting. The following quotes are typical:

- I don't feel unsafe at this school. This shooting could have happened anywhere. I don't think everyone should over-react towards the situation. You should think carefully and smart about it.
- I feel safe at Jefferys even after the shooting happened.
- I don't think that we need to upgrade our school safety considering that in the four years that I have been here this is the first time someone got shot.
- Jefferys is a good school. The teachers are caring. It is only a few bad students who ruin it for everyone.
- Jefferys really did not have a problem before Jordan Manners was shot. Please just leave our school alone.
- Our school is better than other schools. This happens every day on the streets and could have happened at any other school.
- Our school is good!! Shit just happens everywhere.
- The Jordan Manners incident is an isolated incident is not a reflection of my school.
- Our school is really safe and it's just like every other school. There is nothing bad about our school.

Other students acknowledged that, in their opinion, C.W. Jefferys has some serious safety issues and expressed hope that these issues would be dealt with. The following quotes are typical:

- Please make some serious changes in this school, especially students who do not obey the rules and do as they wish.
- Please improve the safety at the school – it is very needed.

- Act fast before things get worse. Don't act like you want to help if all you want to do is give the appearance of working hard.
- Students should not be walking around the hallways during class because I see that all the time. Even with the hall monitors I still see kids hanging out with them in the hallways.
- I don't think it should have taken Jordan Manners death for people to actually notice that there should have been changes.

Finally, some students felt that the problems at C.W. Jefferys were a reflection of the many problems facing the people in the "Jane-Finch" community and not a reflection of the school itself. As some students wrote:

- The problems at this school are caused by poverty. Need to help poor people more so they don't sell drugs or join gangs.
- The problems in the school are caused by Jane/Finch. They don't come from the school. But some teachers just give up!! We need teachers who care and will work with us kids here. Most of us are good.
- This school is located in a bad area, hence the bad kids who attend it. Fix the state of the area and the school will subsequently be fixed. It really is not rocket science.

As one student anticipates, the solutions to many of the problems faced by C.W. Jefferys and other Toronto schools are complex and require the commitment of all segments of society:

*"I think a great solution would be to talk to youth about this when they're teenagers. It's sad you wait until Jordan dies to before you start. Get youth from when they're young. Plant peace in they're minds and let them grow with it. Don't make it so that anyone feels they would even have to resort to violence as a solution. Adults have failed to reach us and to teach this to youth as you can see. It's not too late, but changes should be made earlier and we should be stricter with students and with adults."*

## SECTION 3.2: CONCLUSIONS

In the Panel's opinion, the results of our student survey provide cause for optimism and cause for concern. On the positive side, with the exception of the period immediately following the shooting of Jordan Manners, most students feel safe at C.W. Jefferys. Indeed, despite the Jordan Manners tragedy, most students feel that C.W. Jefferys is a safe school. Indeed, half of the students feel that C.W. Jefferys is still safer than other high schools in Toronto. Other positive findings include the fact that most respondents feel that the teachers and students get along and that teachers care for their students.

On the negative side, the results indicate that a large proportion of the students who participated in the survey think that there are serious problems at C.W. Jefferys including problems with student-teacher relationships, disorder in the hallways, students who talk back and disrespect their teachers, discrimination by teachers against students and the presence of weapons, drug dealing and gangs within the school. The results of the survey also indicate that a significant proportion of the students who participated in the study have been the victim of threats, physical assaults, theft and other types of crime – both inside and outside of school – in the past two years. The Panel stresses, however, that the levels of victimization observed in this study are consistent with the findings of other high school victimization surveys conducted in Toronto and other North American cities over the past decade. Thus, we feel it would be premature to state, at this time, that C.W. Jefferys is more violent or crime-ridden than other schools in the Toronto area. The Panel will further explore this issue in its Final Report.

Finally, the Panel acknowledges that there are distinct methodological strengths and weaknesses with using surveys to document youth attitudes and experiences. For example, one concern is whether the students who completed the survey have similar attitudes and experiences as the students who did not complete the survey. In other words, can the results of the survey be generalized to the entire Jefferys' student population? Dr. Wortley has informed us about these strengths and weaknesses during our consultations and these limitations will be discussed more fully in the Final Report. In the meantime, it is important to note that the Panel is attempting to address these issues using a variety of other approaches and methodologies. These activities are discussed in the final chapter of this report.

## Conclusion

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### SECTION 4.1: CONCLUSION

The Panel is continuing its research work into the themes identified in this report, as well as other systemic issues that impact on the security of students in our public school system. One significant issue is the important role that police play in school safety.

The issue of the school-police relationship is one of the systemic issues that the Panel will be considering. Detective Constable Peter Duncan of 31 Division has publicly stated that he was concerned that officers were not regularly invited to C.W. Jefferys during the recent school year<sup>26</sup>. Detective Constable Duncan has been invited to share his perspective with the Panel but was unavailable prior to the release of this Interim Report. Principal Anne Kojima described the relationship between officers at 31 Division and C.W. Jefferys having changed during her tenure at the school (2000-2006). Ms. Kojima explained that for many years non-uniformed Street Crime officers would regularly drop by the school in a non-enforcement capacity, but that in her last year as principal (2005-2006) the police presence was limited. Ms. Kojima, “mourned the loss of the relationship” C.W. Jefferys once had with the police.

Ms. Newton-Thompson, Ms Kojima’s successor, denied that she was reluctant to call the police during her tenure. Ms. Newton-Thompson advised the Panel that she would call the police when appropriate and had called the police on a number of occasions.

The role of police officers at schools is a contentious issue that requires further analysis. Chief Bill Blair participated in an extensive consultation with the Panel as did Staff Superintendent Mike Federico and Staff Superintendent Peter Sloy, current and former commanders of the Community Mobilization Unit, respectively. In each of these consultations, the Panel was educated on the various community initiatives and partnerships the Toronto Police Service has developed and is in the process of expanding. Particularly significant to the Panel is Chief Blair’s “Neighbourhood Policing Philosophy” which, since its inception in 2005, has seen an emphasis on the provision of police services by uniformed officers. The Panel looks forward to exploring the challenges inherent in implementing the “Neighbourhood Policing Philosophy” in school communities in which serious trust issues characterize the relationship between police and racialized youth. The Panel hopes to meet with Detective Duncan and others to further research this issue and provide sustainable recommendations for the Final Report. Still to be reported on are the consultations with young people, parents, teachers, union representatives, professional organizations, administrators, superintendents, trustees, social service providers, the Ontario Human Rights Commission and community groups.

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<sup>26</sup> Ian Matlow, Toronto Star, August 24, 2007, “New principal prepared to right wrongs at Jefferys”

The Panel has also requested several research reports concerning alternative schools and the physical design of safe schools. Presentations and submissions from all community members are welcome. Updates on the progress of the Panel's work can be viewed on its website at [www.schoolsafetypanel.com](http://www.schoolsafetypanel.com).

Throughout the consultations, community groups have continued to impress one message on the Panel: that we must look beyond C.W. Jefferys as there are systemic issues that impact far beyond this one school. Parents and students have spoken to us of other schools that are perceived to represent a greater threat to safety than C.W. Jefferys. The anecdotes we have heard concerning a small number of schools have caused the Panel serious concern. Accordingly, the Panel proposes to conduct review work similar to its work at Jefferys to clarify these safety concerns. As the proposed review is in its early stages, the Panel has reported to the Director on a confidential basis.

The Panel acknowledges that a great deal of research has already been done on the topic of school and student safety. The TDSB has itself released two major sets of recommendations designed to improve school safety since 2004. It is understandable then, that many community members view the Panel's work with little enthusiasm and some scepticism, as many good reports and recommendations have already been made with little resulting, sustainable changes. The Panel is working with the Ontario Human Rights Commission on a joint symposium tentatively scheduled to take place on September 14, 2007, the purpose of which is to gather the research and identify the barriers that exist in the system to the implementation of effective change. We must overcome these barriers. If we have learned nothing else from Jordan Manners' death, we have learned that change can no longer wait.

#### **SECTION 4.2: INTERIM RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Panel has identified four interim recommendations that relate specifically to C.W. Jefferys and to the NW2 family of schools which, by their nature, can be acted upon (if the TDSB is so advised) prior to the Final Report.

##### **1. The Completion of a Building Safety Audit at C.W. Jefferys**

The Panel was advised by Safe Schools Administrator, Michael Hill, of the availability of a building safety audit process for TDSB schools. This audit may be invoked on the request of a school principal, and is conducted by Safe Schools advisors with expertise on building safety. There is a formal checklist that is completed as part of this audit.

Neither of the previous two principals had invoked the building safety audit process during their respective terms, nor has such an audit been administered since Jordan Manners' death. Principal Anne Kojima was unaware that such a process existed. Principal Kojima advised that when she was first starting at C.W. Jefferys the school was visited by Michael Hill, who conducted an informal inspection of the school. In a subsequent consultation on this point, Mr. Hill advises that in the year 2000 (when Mr.

Kojima became principal) he was not the safe school administrator for the NW2 family of schools and did not conduct any inspection, formal or otherwise, for Ms. Kojima. In any event, Mr. Hill has never conducted a formal safety audit and in the ordinary course, would delegate such a task to a safe school advisor which process never occurred for C.W. Jefferys. For her part, Principal Newton-Thompson had not yet initiated the audit procedure because, having recently arrived at the school, she was in the process of setting up C.W. Jefferys safe schools committee.

The Panel recommends that a formal building safety audit be conducted prior to the return of students to C.W. Jefferys this September.

## **2. Additional Human Resources for North -West 2**

The Panel need not repeat its conclusions regarding the challenges faced by the community within North West 2. Suffice to say, this area places demands on senior management that greatly exceed those of many other areas of this City.

The Panel recommends that additional human resource support be made available to North-West 2 to address the complex needs of this community. The Panel will reserve for comment, pending its systemic review, what recommendations (if any) ought to be made for potential reorganization of supervisory roles in high-needs communities.

## **3. Mediation between the Trustee and Superintendent in North -West 2**

Through its consultations, the Panel has concluded that the working relationship between the Trustee and Superintendent responsible for the North West 2 family of schools has become dysfunctional. The Panel ascribes no individual blame or criticism for this breakdown of communication. What is clear, however, is that the present situation does not serve the students, parents, teachers, staff and administration within North West 2. It is essential that a professional and effective working relationship be maintained between the Trustee and Superintendent to ensure that appropriate governance and accountability is maintained.

To their credit, Trustee Stephnie Payne and Superintendent Verna Lister both candidly acknowledged that their relationship had broken down and that the current situation is untenable. The Panel has proposed that they participate in a mediation conducted by an independent interpersonal mediator to attempt to resolve this situation. In order to ensure that the necessary logistical arrangements attending this recommendation could be completed in a timely fashion, the Panel advised Trustee Payne and Superintendent Lister (through her employer) in mid-July of its intention to make this recommendation. The Panel is encouraged that both parties agreed in principle to participate in such a process.

The Panel recommends that this mediation be completed as soon as possible, keeping in mind that the school year is set to commence within days of the release of this Interim Report. The Panel will not be participating in the mediation.

#### **4. Extension of the Panel's Work to Other Schools in North -West 2**

As referred to above, the Panel has experienced a startling unanimity across a broad cross-section of interests that, while C.W. Jefferys is viewed as a school of choice, there are serious safety concerns regarding other schools in the NW2 family of schools. The Panel is of the view that these schools warrant a more intensive review than was earlier contemplated.

Through the operation of the TDSB's safe school transfer program, the safety of schools within the NW2 family of schools is inextricably linked. As a school which is a net receiver of safe schools transfers from its sister schools, issues of safety and security at C.W. Jefferys cannot be divorced from those of its sister schools. For this reason, it is essential that the conditions at sending schools in the NW2 area be closely evaluated. The Panel believes that this additional work cannot be completed within the timeframe presently contemplated for the release of the Final Report. It is recommended that the Panel's reporting timeline (and resources) be extended to November 15, 2007 to accommodate these additional matters.

The Panel is not prepared to identify the schools of interest, or elaborate on the concerns raised in advance of conducting a proper review. It is gainsaid that the community in the NW2 area is as entitled to safe schools as any other area within the TDSB's jurisdiction, and that when serious safety concerns are raised that they be promptly and fully addressed.

## Signatories and Appendices

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### SIGNATORIES OF THIS REPORT

This report is respectfully submitted this 28th day of August, 2007 on behalf of the  
School Community Safety Advisory Panel:



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Julian N. Falconer – B.A., L.L.B.  
Chair



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Peggy Edwards – M.S.W.  
Member



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Linda MacKinnon – M.Ed., B.Ed.  
Member

## **Appendix A: Terms of Reference for the School Community Safety Advisory Panel (June 5, 2007)**

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The independent Panel shall make findings and recommendations to the Director of the Toronto District School Board by July 16, 2007 with respect to:

The practices and procedures at C.W. Jefferys in the two years prior to May 23 2007 with regards to student supervision, student discipline and building security;

Factors influencing the ability of C.W. Jefferys in particular or the Toronto District School Board schools in general to maintain student order and discipline;

Improving practices in TDSB schools with regards to prevention, school supervision, discipline and security which will create a positive, safe and welcoming school environment.

The Panel will give current and past C.W. Jefferys students an opportunity to describe their experiences in the school.

The Panel will give C.W. Jefferys employees (teachers, support staff and administration) an opportunity to describe their experiences in the school.

The Panel will give C.W. Jefferys parents an opportunity to describe their experiences with the school.

The Panel may make such other enquiries and consultations it deems necessary to achieve its objects, including but not limited to:

Community agencies and advocacy groups and Trustees

School Board administration

Unions and employee groups

## Appendix B: Change to Terms of Reference (July 6, 2007)

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Toronto  
District  
School  
Board

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5050 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario M2N 5N8 • Tel: (416) 395-8201 • Fax: (416) 393-0889

*GERRY CONNELLY*

**Director of Education**

July 6, 2007

Julian N. Falconer, Chair  
School Community Safety Advisory Panel (SCSAP)  
3701 Chesswood Drive  
Suite 326  
Toronto, ON M3J 2P6

Dear Julian Falconer:

Concerns have been raised in the last several days about the possible vulnerability of female students who are members of racialized minorities, to acts of violence and exploitation.

As a result, I am writing to you in your capacity as the Chair of SCSAP to clarify the terms of reference of the Panel's review of school safety. It is essential that the Panel include in its review the particular risks to the safety of female visible minority students that may exist with our schools.

The circumstances of the last two weeks of operation of the review require that I provide the Panel with the following directive: the Panel, in making any finding of fact or in making recommendations, is not to make any determination of criminal or civil liability of any person.

I trust these clarifications are acceptable with the Panel. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gerry Connelly".

Gerry Connelly  
Director of Education

## **Appendix C: People and Organizations Consulted to Date<sup>27</sup>**

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### **June 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29/2007**

Consultations with Students, Teachers and Staff at C.W. Jefferys

- 41 Students
- 30 Staff and Students

### **July 4, 2007**

- Teacher, C.W. Jefferys

### **July 5, 2007**

- Staff Member, C.W. Jefferys

### **July 6, 2007**

- Youth consultation -Black Creek Community Health Centre

### **July 9, 2007**

- Staff Member from C.W. Jefferys
- Stephnie Payne (TDSB Trustee)

### **July 10, 2007**

- Zanana Akande
- Youth consultation - Black Creek Community Health Centre

### **July 12, 2007**

- Penny Mustin (TDSB)
- Grant Bowers (TDSB)

### **July 13, 2007**

Community Dialogue with representatives from the following organizations:

- Belka Enrichment Centre
- Black Creek Community Health Centre
- Chesswood Employment Resources Centre
- Community Development Officers, City of Toronto
- Conflict Mediation Services of Downsview
- Community and Legal Aid Services Program (CLASP), York University
- Delta Family Resource Centre
- Driftwood Community Centre
- Jamaican Canadian Association
- Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre

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<sup>27</sup> Where confidentiality has been requested, individual names have not been provided.

- Jane Finch Community Legal Services
- PEACH (Promoting Economic Action and Community Health)
- San Romanoway Revitalization Association
- Substance Abuse Program for African Canadian/Caribbean Youth, CAMH
- Youth Connect, Griffin Centre
- Youth Issues, JVS Toronto
- Youth Without Shelter

**July 16, 2007**

- Charles Roach (lawyer) and Black Action Defence Committee

**July 17, 2007**

- Meeting with Parents at San Romanoway Revitalization Association
- Meeting with Youth at San Romanoway Revitalization Association

**July 18, 2007**

- Retired Teacher
- Parent
- Staff Member from C.W. Jefferys

**July 19 2007**

- Barbara Hall (Chief Commissioner) & staff team - Ontario Human Rights Commission)

**July 23, 2007**

- Lisa Vincent (President, Ontario Principals' Council)
- Mike Benson (Executive Director, Ontario Principals' Council)

**July 24, 2007**

- Howard Goodman (TDSB Trustee)
- Stephnie Payne (TDSB Trustee)

**July 25, 2007**

- The Ashanti Room Supporters of Equity for Charis Newton-Thompson and Safety for all in Schools

**July 26, 2007**

- Cathy Dandy (TDSB Trustee)
- James Pasternak (TDSB Trustee)
- Verna Lister (Superintendent, TDSB)

**July 27, 2007**

- Sheila Cary-Meagher (TDSB Trustee)

**July 30, 2007**

- Scott Harrison (TDSB Trustee)
- Bruce Davis (TDSB Trustee)

**July 31, 2007**

- Toronto Police Chief William Blair
- Youth consultation – Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre -The Spot
- Chris Bolton (TDSB Trustee, Vice-Chair)
- Mari Rutka (TDSB Trustee)

**August 1, 2007**

- Khalid Mouammar (Canadian Arab Federation, President.)
- Eman Ahmed (Canadian Council of Muslim Women, Project Coordinator)
- Saira Zuberi (South Asian Legal Clinic)
- Deepa Mattoo (South Asian Legal Clinic, Coordinator of Pro Bono Legal)
- Suad Aimand (Somali Parents for Education)

**August 2, 2007**

- Parent
- Family
- Soo Wong (TDSB Trustee)
- Parents' group at PEACH

**August 3, 2007**

- Grant Bowers (TDSB)
- Nadia Bello (TDSB Trustee)

**August 7, 2007**

- Parent

**August 8, 2007**

- Barbara Hall (Ontario Human Rights Commission)

**August 9, 2007**

- Karl Sprogis, Toronto Schools Administrators Association (TSAA)
- Ami Trufler (TSAA)
- Don Stuart (TSAA)
- Susan E. Fraser, lawyer
- Canadian Training Institute – Breaking the Cycle
- Community and Legal Aid Services Programme (CLASP), York University
- Pro Bono Law Ontario
- Justice for Children and Youth
- St. Stephen's Community House

**August 10-11, 2007**

Public Consultations at C.W. Jeffreys (17 deputations on Friday, 16 on Saturday):

- 9 presenters from social service/advocacy groups (e.g. Justice for Children and Youth, PEACH, Friends in Trouble, Parents of Black Children, Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children, Sexual Assault Steering Committee, Toronto,)
- Stephnie Payne (TDSB Trustees)
- Sheila Cary-Meagher (TDSB Trustee)
- Nadia Bello (TDSB Trustee)
- Olivia Chow (MP)
- Gabriel Fowodu, Vice-President, Parent Council (C.W. Jefferys)
- Chief Commissioner of Ontario Human Rights Commission, Barbara Hall
- 4 Youth
- 5 Parents
- 2 Parents/Members of Tenants' Councils
- Parent/School Council Co-Chair
- Retired Teacher
- Guidance Counsellor
- School Settlement Worker
- NDP Candidate York West/Parent
- Elizabeth Buchanan (Friend of Jordan Manners' Mother)
- Roger Rowe (lawyer/parent)

**August 14, 2007**

- Toronto City Councillor Joe Mihevic

**August 15, 2007**

- Stan Gordon ( Vice-Principal at C.W. Jefferys, 2004-2007)
- Teacher from C.W. Jefferys
- Gerry Connelly (TDSB Director of Education)

**August 16, 2007**

- Barbara Thompson (Black Youth Helpline)
- Coalition of African Canadian Organization, with representatives from:
  - African Canadian Heritage Association
  - Canadian Organization of Black Lawyers
  - Canadian Race Relations Foundation
  - Global African Congress
  - Jamaican Canadian Association
  - Kenyan Community in Ontario
  - National African Canadian Umbrella Organizing Committee
  - Organization of Parents of Black Children
  - United Achievers

**August 18, 2007**

- Breakfast of Champions/Summer Celebration (Youth Association for Academics, Athletics and Character Education)

**August 21, 2007**

- Marcia Powers-Dunlop (Chief Social Worker, TDSB)
- Dave Johnston (Chief Social Worker, TDSB)
- Doretta Wilson (Executive Director of the Society for Quality Education)
- Retired Teacher

**August 22, 2007**

- PEACH Celebration
- Mike Hill (Safe Schools Administrator, TDSB)
- Toronto Supervisors Officers Association (TSAO)

**August 23, 2007**

- Teacher, C.W. Jefferys
- Anne Kojima (former Principal at C.W. Jefferys)
- Charis Newton-Thompson (Principal at C.W. Jefferys, 2006-2007)
- Sheila Ward (Chair of Trustees, TDSB)

**August 24, 2007**

- Staff Superintendent Sloly (Toronto Police Service)
- Staff Superintendent Federico (Toronto Police Service)

**August 27, 2007**

- Staff Member, C.W. Jefferys
- Charis Newton-Thompson (Principal at C.W. Jefferys, 2006-2007)