



# Shelby County Schools S.H.A.P.E.



The Shelby County Schools School House Adjustment Program Enterprise (S.H.A.P.E.) aims to reduce the number of Shelby County Schools students sent to Juvenile Court for minor infractions. It is funded through the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth. This grant is

funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Act. It requires all states to address overrepresentation of minority juveniles detained or confined in secure detention facilities, secured correctional facilities, jails and lock-ups throughout the country. The purpose is to decrease the number of minority students sent to Juvenile Court for committing minor infractions. Similar programs have shown success in Chicago and New Jersey.

## How did this program get started in Shelby County?

The Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY) is charged with implementing the OJJDP requirements and looking at the overall societal issues that contribute to the disparate number of youth who encounter the juvenile justice system in Tennessee. Here in Shelby County, a collaborative effort by Shelby County Mayor's Office, Juvenile Court, Public Defenders Office, District Attorney's Office, City of Memphis Mayor's Office, Memphis Police Department, Shelby County Sheriff's Department and Shelby County Disproportionate Minority Contact Task Force was instrumental in Shelby County Schools receiving grant funding to launch this pilot program in Shelby County Schools.



## What does the School House Adjustment Program Enterprise do?

The SHAPE curriculum consists of homework assistance, tutoring, mentoring, counseling, and social and life skills training. Students stay in the program for six weeks. This program is an alternative method that Shelby County Schools is using to work with juvenile offenders who have committed minor offenses. The curriculum used in the S.H.A.P.E. program are the Mendez Curriculum, called To Good For Drugs and Violence. The intent of the School House Adjustment Enterprise Program is to provide immediate consequences, such as community services or restitution and a prompt and convenient resolution for the victim. At the same time, it benefits the juvenile by avoiding the stigma of a juvenile record. In many instances, this early intervention will deter the youth from continuing negative behavior and divert the youth from progressing into the juvenile justice system.

## How does the program work?

When an offense occurs, the Site Coordinator typically asks the juvenile, a parent or guardian/caregiver, or other responsible adult to come to the school within 5 days to discuss the offense. This process allows the Site Coordinator to resolve minor disputes without the need to file a complaint with the court. The school staff may refer a juvenile for needed services and require the juvenile to make restitution if needed. The Site Coordinator will discuss the offense with the juvenile's parent or guardian/caregiver and request assurances that the juvenile will not commit any future offenses. Victims of minor offenses are often better served when matters can be resolved locally, providing a more efficient and expeditious resolution.

*This project is supported by Grant# 626000360 awarded by the State of Tennessee, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth. Points of view in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the State of Tennessee, or Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth.*

## What are the offenses that will be considered for the Shelby County Schools School House Adjustment Program Enterprise?

Typically, if a student commits one of the offenses listed below, the student may be eligible for S.H.A.P.E. Assault and disorderly conduct accounted for approximately 65% of the students transported to Juvenile Court in 2006:

- Assault (Non-Serious Injuries)
- Disorderly Conduct
- Criminal Trespass
- Gambling
- Possession of Marijuana
- Vandalism under \$500
- Theft under \$500
- Possession of Drug Paraphernalia
- Possession of Alcohol

## What are the benefits to the School House Adjustment Program Enterprise?

The program allows students to continue with their academic studies and to have their behavioral progress monitored by school staff, instead of being transported to Juvenile Court and obtaining a juvenile record. Students in the program will receive and participate in a violence prevention curriculum that is based on best practices by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency as effective, promising or exemplary. This will reinforce program strategies and concepts in everyday interactions with students and teach them how to model skills and behaviors in all interactions with other students and staff.