

Memphis-Shelby County Schools S.H.A.P.E.

The Memphis-Shelby County Schools School House Adjustment Program Enterprise (S.H.A.P.E.) aims to reduce the number of Memphis-Shelby County School students sent to Juvenile Court for minor infractions. It also serves as an alternative to suspension for students in the district. 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 Memphis-Shelby County Schools receiving grant funding to launch this pilot program in Memphis-Shelby County Schools.

What does the School House Adjustment Program Enterprise do?

The S.H.A.P.E. program curriculum is Aggression Replacement Training (A.R.T.). The program is designed to address the various causes of aggressive behavior. The program focuses on three key components: Social Skills Training, Anger Control & Moral Reasoning. 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/care-giver, 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.

What are the offenses that will be considered for the Memphis-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 (Non-Serious Injuries)
- Disorderly Conduct
- Criminal Trespass
- Gambling
- Possession of Marijuana
- Vandalism under \$500
- Theft under \$500
- Possession of Drug Paraphernalia
- Possession of Alcohol
- Public Intoxication

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 years of research by leading psychologists, schools and other agencies. 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.

Comments:

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