

# **National Evaluation of the Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) Program**

## **Results from Surveys and Interviews with G.R.E.A.T.-trained Officers**

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## **National Evaluation of the Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) Program: Results from Surveys and Interviews with G.R.E.A.T.-trained Officers**

### **Executive Summary**

The process and outcome evaluation of the Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) program includes several different components including surveys with G.R.E.A.T.-trained officers in each of the seven study locations (Albuquerque, NM; Portland, OR; Greeley, CO; Nashville, TN; Philadelphia, PA; Chicago, IL; and a Dallas/Fort Worth, TX location) as well as interviews with officers teaching the program in the 25 of the 31 target schools and their supervisors. A total of 205 survey packets were sent to G.R.E.A.T.-trained officers in seven cities. Overall, 137 officers returned completed surveys for a response rate of 66.8 percent. This report presents the results of these surveys as well as the interviews.

In addition to examining the results for the total sample, this report separates the results by teaching models. The seven cities represent three distinct strategies for incorporating the G.R.E.A.T. program into their agencies: overtime model, SRO model, and community services model. In the overtime model, officers teach the G.R.E.A.T. program on an overtime basis in addition to their primary assignment (Portland). School resource officers (SROs) teach the program as part of their other duties in the school in the SRO Model (Albuquerque, Nashville, Greeley, and Dallas/Fort Worth area agency). In the community services model, officers teach as part of the specialized units to which they are assigned (Philadelphia and Chicago).

The results show that, in general, officers enjoy being G.R.E.A.T. officers and are committed to teaching the program. However, being a G.R.E.A.T. officer has a downside. In the majority of the cities, officers, as well as supervisors, stated that G.R.E.A.T. officers are viewed in a negative light by other officers. Also, officers reported that teaching the G.R.E.A.T. program does have a negative effect on their career, in terms of offering fewer opportunities for overtime and not enhancing chances for promotion.

Officers also stated the G.R.E.A.T. program is appropriate in terms of content, but does not necessarily meet their community's needs. In other words, they believe that G.R.E.A.T. is beneficial to students and a valuable program, but do not believe that it is capable of reducing larger community problems. This assertion is expected because G.R.E.A.T. is intended to aid only in the reduction of gang membership in the targeted youth population using an individual-level approach. It is not meant to "fix" all of the community's delinquency problems. The officers reported that their communities do experience delinquency and gang problems, but do not believe that people feel threatened by these problems. In addition, officers believed that the G.R.E.A.T. program is capable of building partnerships between police officers, youth, schools, and the community. Officers also felt that the G.R.E.A.T. program's lessons were effective in meeting the goals of the program and had the appropriate amount of information. They frequently named Lesson 4: Goal-Setting and Lesson 5: Decision-Making among their favorites and the most effective. However, the officers consistently noted time constraints as one of the main difficulties for implementing all the G.R.E.A.T. lessons effectively.

Generally, in terms of teaching models, this report indicates that officers teaching on an overtime basis have most favorable attitudes about teaching the G.R.E.A.T. program, followed by SRO officers. Although officers teaching as part of the community services model tended to have positive attitudes about the G.R.E.A.T. program, they had less favorable attitudes when compared with the other two models.

## **The G.R.E.A.T. Program**

The Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) program was developed in 1991 by the Phoenix Police Department and other area departments in conjunction with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms with the two main goals of (1) preventing youth from becoming involved in gangs, violence, and delinquency and (2) developing positive relationships between youth and law enforcement. G.R.E.A.T. is a school-based, officer-taught program that consists of a 13 lesson curriculum (see Box 1 below) that teaches youth life-skills meant to prevent involvement in gangs, violence, and delinquency. This 13 lesson curriculum represents a revision to the original G.R.E.A.T. program based upon findings from a rigorous National Evaluation (1995-2001).

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### **Box 1: Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) Curriculum**

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|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Introduction to G.R.E.A.T.        | 8. Refusal Skills                 |
| 2. Facts & Fiction about Gangs       | 9. Peer Pressure & Refusal Skills |
| 3. Community & Responsibility        | 10. Anger Management Skills       |
| 4. Goal-Setting Skills               | 11. Calming Others                |
| 5. Decision-Making Skills            | 12. Conflict Resolution Skills    |
| 6. Communication Skills              | 13. Looking Back                  |
| 7. Active Listening Skills & Empathy |                                   |
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## **National Evaluation of the G.R.E.A.T. Program**

The process and outcome evaluation of the G.R.E.A.T. program includes several different components: student surveys, classroom observations, school personnel surveys, law enforcement interviews and surveys, and observations of G.R.E.A.T. officer training (G.O.T.) and G.R.E.A.T. Families training and sessions. This report focuses specifically on results from the law enforcement surveys of all G.R.E.A.T.-trained officers in each of the seven study locations as well as interviews with officers teaching the program in 25 of the 31 study schools and their supervisors.

Seven cities were selected for the national evaluation: Albuquerque, NM; Portland, OR; Greeley, CO; Nashville, TN; Philadelphia, PA; Chicago, IL; and a Dallas/Fort Worth, TX area location. Sites were selected based on three criteria: (1) existence of an established G.R.E.A.T. program, (2) geographic and demographic diversity, and (3) evidence of gang activity.

G.R.E.A.T. supervisors in each of the departments were asked to identify all G.R.E.A.T.-trained

officers in their department. Surveys were then sent to each of these officers in six of the seven cities. Due to the fact that more than 150 officers in Chicago were G.R.E.A.T.-trained, a random sample of 40 percent was surveyed. In the fall of 2007, a total of 205 survey packets were sent to officers across the seven locations. In addition to the nine-page survey, the survey packets included a cover letter that explained the purpose of the evaluation and that the survey was anonymous. In all cities, the survey packets were distributed to officers by their supervisor. In five cities, the packets were collected by the supervisor and returned to the researchers in one pre-paid bulk packet. In two cities, officers mailed surveys directly to the research team in a pre-posted envelope. Overall, 137 officers returned completed surveys for a response rate of 66.8 percent, ranging from 38 percent in Chicago to 90 percent in Nashville. See Table 1 (below) for the response rate for each city.

**Table 1: Survey Response Rates by City**

	Number of Surveys Distributed	Number of Surveys Returned	Response Rate (%)
Albuquerque	10	8	80.0
Chicago	56	21	37.5
Dallas/Fort Worth area	25	18	72.0
Greeley	6	5	83.3
Nashville	39	35	89.7
Philadelphia	14	6	42.9
Portland	55	44	80.0
Total	205	137	66.8

Interviews with the G.R.E.A.T. officer supervisors and the G.R.E.A.T. officers in each of the target schools were conducted in person or over the phone in the summer and fall of 2007. The interviews were conducted in order to gather in-depth information from the officers who teach the program in the target schools. Each interview took approximately 30 minutes and consisted of 14 questions. Overall, 27 officers and five supervisors were interviewed in six different cities. We were not given permission to interview the Chicago Police Department personnel; therefore, these officers took part only in the survey portion of the evaluation. Throughout this report, the officer and supervisor interviews are used to supplement the information provided in the surveys.

## Sample Characteristics

The officers answered questions related to being a G.R.E.A.T. officer, their attitudes about the G.R.E.A.T. program in general, and the G.R.E.A.T. program’s ability to help their community. Survey responses confirmed the differences in the organizational structure of the G.R.E.A.T. program; that is, the seven cities represent three distinct strategies for incorporating the G.R.E.A.T. program into their agencies: 1) the overtime model, 2) the SRO model, and 3) the community services model. In the overtime model, officers teach the G.R.E.A.T. program on an overtime basis in addition to their primary assignment (Portland). School resource officers (SROs) teach the program as part of their other duties in the school in the SRO Model (Albuquerque, a Dallas/Fort Worth area agency, Greeley, and Nashville). In the community services model, officers teach as part of the specialized units to which they are assigned (Chicago and Philadelphia). About 48 percent of the sample teaches G.R.E.A.T. as part of their assignment as a school resource officer followed by teaching it on an overtime basis (32.1%). Throughout this report, information is examined for both the total sample and for each teaching model.

**Table 2: Sample Characteristics for Full Sample and by Teaching Model**

	Full Sample	Overtime Model	SRO Model	Community Services Model
Sex (male)	75.0	75.0	86.4	51.9
Race				
White	65.2	75.0	68.2	40.0
African American	17.8	9.1	16.7	36.0
Hispanic	10.4	4.5	9.1	24.0
Other	6.6	11.4	6.0	0
Rank				
Officer	92.0	88.6	93.9	92.6
Sergeant & above	8.0	11.4	6.1	7.4
Education Level				
High School	11.7	0	22.7	3.7
Assoc./Some College	33.6	29.5	40.9	22.2
Bachelor’s or Higher	54.7	70.5	36.4	74.1
Years in Law Enforcement				
Mean (SD)	16.0 (7.5)	11.2 (6.4)	18.3 (6.9)	17.7 (7.1)

Table 2 (above) presents the demographic characteristics of the entire group of officers surveyed, as well as separately by teaching model. The sample is comprised primarily of white (65%), male (75%) officers (92%) who have had at least some college education (88%). Also, there is an average of 16 years of experience in law enforcement, with a range from 2 to 39 years. The community services agencies included more female officers (48%) and more officers who were African-American (36%) and Hispanic (24%) than was the case in the other types of agencies. This difference may well be an artifact of the larger demographic characteristics of those two cities (i.e., Chicago and Philadelphia).

### **Being a G.R.E.A.T. Officer**

The law enforcement survey and interview process inquired about different aspects of being a G.R.E.A.T. officer, including the reasons why the officer became involved in the G.R.E.A.T. program, their training to become a G.R.E.A.T. officer, likes and dislikes about being a G.R.E.A.T. officer, and how being involved in the G.R.E.A.T. program has affected their career.

#### *Reasons for Becoming a G.R.E.A.T. Officer*

Officers were asked why they decided to become a G.R.E.A.T. officer; their responses were dichotomized into community policing oriented reasons or non-community policing oriented reasons. Items considered as community policing oriented responses were the following: “I wanted to teach” or “I wanted to prevent kids from joining gangs.” Conversely, items considered not based in community policing were as follows: “I was assigned,” “I wanted to get out of other duties,” and “I saw it as an opportunity for promotion later.” Overall, the majority (85.3%) of the survey sample became involved with G.R.E.A.T. for community policing oriented reasons (see Table 3, below). This finding was consistent across all teaching models. During the interviews, however, the majority of the officers stated that they taught G.R.E.A.T. because they were assigned or required to do so as part of their regular assignment (e.g., SRO duties). Correspondingly, just six of the 27 officers interviewed indicated working with kids/students as their reason for becoming a G.R.E.A.T. officer.

**Table 3: Reasons for Becoming a G.R.E.A.T. Officer and Additional G.R.E.A.T. Training**

	Full Sample	Overtime Model	SRO Model	Community Services Model
Reason for G.R.E.A.T.				
Not COP-oriented	14.7	11.9	20.3	24.3
COP-oriented	85.3	88.1	79.7	75.7
Additional Training				
None	30.9	39.5	30.4	18.5
Recertification	19.9	7.0	22.7	33.3
Advanced Training	12.5	7.0	12.1	22.2
G.R.E.A.T. Family	22.1	25.5	21.2	18.5
Other/Didn't Specify	14.6	21.0	13.6	7.5

### *G.R.E.A.T. Officer Training*

During the interviews, officers were asked how well they thought that G.R.E.A.T. Officer Training (G.O.T.) prepared them to deliver the program. All of the officers interviewed stated they felt prepared to teach after the G.O.T. A few officers had suggestions for improving the training. These officers felt that the training was too boring and caused the officers to lose interest. Additionally, officers stated that “it would have been beneficial to see the program being taught” or indicated that providing techniques on how to manage a classroom and how to facilitate a discussion would have been helpful to them. Based on our research team’s observations of G.R.E.A.T. program delivery in the target schools, we want to underscore the desirability of enhancing classroom management teaching during training. In several instances, students were so disruptive that the officers were not able to deliver the program and were unable to manage the classroom. Unfortunately, in these instances, the teachers were also unable to manage the classroom. It should be highlighted, however, that 1) the majority of officers reported that the training prepared them to teach the G.R.E.A.T. program and 2) the majority of our classroom observations supported the officers’ opinions; that is, it was only a few officers who experienced major classroom management issues.

### *Additional Training*

As a measure of commitment to the program and being a G.R.E.A.T. officer, respondents were asked if they had completed additional G.R.E.A.T. training. If they participated in additional training, officers were asked to specify the type of training. The response categories were (1) recertification for the revised curriculum, (2) recertification because I was out of the

classroom too long, (3) advanced training, such as to become a member of the National Training Team, (4) other types of additional training. In the event that an officer indicated participating in more than one type of additional training, the highest numbered response was used. For example, if an officer circled both recertification for the new curriculum and advanced training, then his/her response was coded as advanced training. As shown in Table 3 (above), a majority of the officers in the total sample had completed at least some form of additional training (69.1%). The majority of these officers indicated that they participated in G.R.E.A.T. Families training. In addition, across the overtime (60.5%), SRO (69.6%), and community services (81.5%) models, the majority of officers indicated that they had participated in additional training. Responses from officers in the overtime model indicated that the majority had additional training in the G.R.E.A.T. Families component. However, officers teaching G.R.E.A.T. as part of the SRO model and community services model indicated recertification for the new curriculum as the most frequent type of additional training.

#### *Likes and Dislikes of Being a G.R.E.A.T. Officer*

Officers were asked what they liked most and disliked most about participation in the G.R.E.A.T. program. The results are shown in Table 4 (below). Response categories for what an officer likes about being a G.R.E.A.T. officer were: (1) working with the kids, (2) having a positive influence on kids, (3) getting out of other duties, (4) building bridges with the educational community, and (5) other likes. The officers were asked to circle all that applied to them and then write in what they liked the most out of all the reasons they circled. The majority of the officers indicated that they liked being a G.R.E.A.T. officer most because it gave them the opportunity to work with children or have a positive influence on children (96.2% of the total sample). These findings were consistent across all the teaching models with no significant differences found between them. Notably, results in Table 4 indicate that none of the officers stated that they like being a G.R.E.A.T. officer because it allows them to get out of other duties.

In addition to inquiring about the positive aspects of being a G.R.E.A.T. officer, the survey also asked officers what they dislike about being involved in G.R.E.A.T. Response categories included: (1) the politics, (2) the way G.R.E.A.T. officers are viewed by other officers, (3) loss of chances for overtime pay, (4) losing touch with duties on the street, (5) I don't believe the program works, and (6) other dislikes. Again, the officers were asked to circle

all that applied to them and then write in what they liked the least. The majority of the officers in the full sample did indicate that there were at least some negative aspects to being a G.R.E.A.T. officer (80.6%), with the politics involved being the answer most frequently circled (26.9%) followed by the way G.R.E.A.T. officers are viewed by other officers (20.4%). Although the presence of dislikes is consistent across all models, the SRO and community services models indicated the politics (27.6% and 42.9%, respectively) and the views of other officers (25.9% and 14.3%, respectively) most frequently. The category referring to “politics” was added as a catchall that was meant to include everything from lack of support for G.R.E.A.T. to other constraints involved with teaching the program. For example, during the survey process, many officers specified that there is a lack of support from the agency and/or school. However, during the interviews officers were specifically asked about these relationships, and all the responses were positive. This discrepancy is an interesting finding, but not implausible; the discrepancy could be an artifact of different methods and slightly different questions posed or it could be attributed to the fact that the majority of the officers who participated in the survey were not interviewed. It is possible that the officers in the survey sample have different opinions than those interviewed.

**Table 4: Likes and Dislikes of Being a G.R.E.A.T. Officer**

	Full Sample	Overtime Model	SRO Model	Community Services Model
Being a G.R.E.A.T. Officer: Likes				
Working with kids	46.2	40.0	41.5	36.0
Positive influence	50.0	37.5	52.3	64.0
Get out of other duties	0	0	0	0
Build bridges with ed. comm.	0.7	0	1.5	0
Other	3.1	2.5	4.6	0
Being a G.R.E.A.T. Officer: Dislikes*				
The politics	26.9	13.8	27.6	42.9
Way they are viewed by officers	20.4	13.8	25.9	14.3
No overtime pay	1.9	0	1.7	4.8
Losing touch with duties	7.4	0	13.8	0
Program doesn't work	6.5	6.9	5.2	9.5
Other	17.6	27.6	12.1	9.5
No Dislikes	19.4	37.9	13.8	19.0

\*Significant differences across teaching models (p<0.05)

Additional analysis showed that there were significant differences across the teaching models on dislikes of being a G.R.E.A.T. officer. Specifically, the overtime model had the

highest percentage of officers indicating that there were no negative aspects to being a G.R.E.A.T. officer (37.9%) compared with other teaching models. The overtime model was also unique in that it had the highest percentage of “other” responses (27.6%). These responses were mainly specific to problems surrounding teaching G.R.E.A.T. on an overtime basis (e.g., juggling both officer and teaching duties, commuting to and from schools). During the interview process, several officers indicated that time constraints, classroom management issues, and reaching the kids both in and out of the classroom were the main challenges to implementing the G.R.E.A.T. program. Three of the officers teaching as part of their duties as SROs in the Dallas/Fort Worth area agency specifically indicated that the lessons are too long to fit into a typical class period. It is expected that problems surrounding lesson length would vary by site because schools differ in the amount of time allowed per class period and in the amount of time given to the officer to teach each lesson. In addition, a small number of officers indicated in the interviews that “no reinforcement at home” and “only getting to spend a limited time with students” are challenges to program success.

### *Career Effects*

In addition to the dislikes mentioned above, officers also have opinions about how being a G.R.E.A.T. officer affects their career. To measure career effects, officers were asked to respond to the questions presented in Table 5 (below). Across the full sample and the teaching models, the majority of the officers indicated that being a G.R.E.A.T. officer does not improve their chances for promotion, allows them fewer opportunities for overtime, and that teaching G.R.E.A.T. is not perceived well by other officers. Notably, officers who teach as part of the community services model have significantly less favorable responses to the career effect questions. As discussed above, many officers dislike teaching G.R.E.A.T. because of how they are viewed by other officers. These officers tended to indicate in both the interviews and surveys that they were viewed as “lazy” or “kiddie cops.” Furthermore, one supervisor stated in the interview that G.R.E.A.T. officers are “looked down upon by other officers.” Importantly, officers teaching G.R.E.A.T. on a strictly overtime basis have more favorable opinions of the program’s effect on their career relative to officers teaching in other models. Portland officers were significantly more likely to believe that involvement in the G.R.E.A.T. program improves

their chances for promotion and overtime. This finding has important implications for officers' level of support for prevention programs and their involvement in delivery of such programs

**Table 5: Career Effect by Question**

	Full Sample	Overtime Model	SRO Model	Community Services Model
Being a G.R.E.A.T. officer improves an officer's chances for promotion in your agency. <sup>a*</sup>	14.0	39.5	3.0	0
G.R.E.A.T. officers have more than or fewer opportunities for overtime as other officers. <sup>b*</sup>	25.2	45.2	19.7	7.4
How is being a G.R.E.A.T. officer perceived by officers not involved in the G.R.E.A.T. program? <sup>c</sup>	26.5	37.2	24.2	14.8

<sup>a</sup>Percent who agree or strongly agree with the statement

<sup>b</sup>Percent who indicated more opportunity for overtime

<sup>c</sup>Percent who indicated officers were perceived favorably or very favorably

\*Significant differences across teaching models (p<0.05)

### **Opinions about the G.R.E.A.T. Program**

In addition to inquiring about being a G.R.E.A.T. officer, the law enforcement survey also asked about their opinions regarding the G.R.E.A.T. program and its delivery. Specifically, the surveys and interviews asked for officers' opinions on the G.R.E.A.T. lessons (i.e., effectiveness and amount of information provided), whether or not they had combined or skipped lessons, and whether the officers thought the program was appropriate in terms of age level, content, and community needs.

#### *Attitudes about Lessons*

Table 6 shows the distribution of responses regarding the effectiveness of each lesson, the amount of material covered, as well as officers' perceptions of the lessons. Notable findings are highlighted in bold print in Table 6. The responses are shown only for the total survey sample, but are consistent across all teaching models as well as the interviews. Notably, officers were asked to choose only one lesson for each category. In other words, officers were asked not to select more than one lesson as their favorite or the most effective. Lesson 4: Goal-Setting Skills and Lesson 5: Decision-Making Skills are favorites of the officers and are also believed to be the most effective lessons at reaching the goals of the G.R.E.A.T. program. In the interviews, officers indicated that the goal-setting lesson "helps them [the students] to think about the

future.” When indicating decision-making skills as their favorite and/or the most effective lesson, officers interviewed stated that “it teaches kids to think about their actions instead of just doing them.” Moreover, in the surveys, officers indicated that these lessons were their favorite because they are directly relevant to their community’s problems. Conversely, of the interviewed officers, three chose lessons four and five as their least favorite indicating that the material was too complicated and that students did not enjoy the lesson. Further, these officers also stated that the two lessons are repetitive and should be combined.

**Table 6: Distribution by Lesson for Total Sample**

	Perceptions of Lessons		Effectiveness of Each Lesson			Amount of Material Covered		
	Favorite	Least Favorite	Not Effective	Effective	Very Effective	Not Enough	Just Right	Too Much
1. Intro to G.R.E.A.T.	3.5	3.8	4.8	79.8	15.3	5.7	85.2	9.0
2. Gangs	13.0	11.3	8.1	64.2	27.6	<b>22.8</b>	74.0	3.3
3. Community	5.2	7.5	5.7	72.4	22.0	2.3	83.5	8.3
4. Goal-Setting	<b>27.0</b>	3.8	6.6	52.5	<b>41.0</b>	8.2	78.7	13.1
5. Decision-Making	<b>21.7</b>	2.8	4.1	59.8	<b>36.1</b>	8.1	84.6	7.3
6. Communication	2.6	2.8	11.5	61.5	27.0	8.1	73.2	<b>18.7</b>
7. Listening & Emp.	5.2	<b>33.0</b>	<b>23.0</b>	54.1	23.0	9.0	66.4	<b>24.6</b>
8. Refusal Skills	6.1	2.8	6.5	68.3	25.2	11.4	77.2	11.4
9. Peer Pressure	5.2	6.6	5.7	64.2	30.1	<b>18.0</b>	71.3	10.7
10. Anger Mngmnt	4.3	2.8	11.5	59.0	29.5	<b>19.7</b>	72.1	8.2
11. Calming Others	0.9	<b>15.1</b>	<b>22.1</b>	64.8	13.1	10.7	77.9	11.5
12. Conflict Resol.	4.3	2.8	7.4	68.0	24.6	<b>17.2</b>	75.4	7.4
13. Looking Back	0.9	4.7	12.3	73.8	13.9	5.9	84.9	9.2

With respect to the officers’ perceptions of the effectiveness of the 13 G.R.E.A.T. lessons it is important to state that a majority of all of the officers rated all of the lessons as effective or very effective. Some variation in levels of perceived effectiveness, however, was reported by the officers. Lesson 7: Active Listening Skills & Empathy was most often cited as both the least effective and least favorite lessons of the officers both in the surveys and the interviews. Officers stated that the material in the active listening lesson is “not appealing to students and it is difficult to keep their attention.” Lesson 11: Calming Others was also chosen frequently. Officers stated in the interviews that the students do not enjoy this lesson, with one officer stating that the material presented is “hokey.” Alternatively, a few other interviewed officers argued that these lessons were effective because they “illustrate walking in someone else’s shoes.” When asked about the amount of material in each lesson, officers stated in the survey

portion that the active listening and empathy lesson (#7) as well as Lesson 6: Communication Skills had too much information. One officer stated that the information presented in this lesson (#6) is “redundant.” Both the survey respondents and the interviewees indicated that Lesson 2: Facts and Fiction about Gangs, Lesson 9: Peer Pressure and Refusal Skills, and Lesson 10: Anger Management Skills do not have enough information. For example, in regard to Lesson 2, one officer said that more information should be provided that “applies to the local areas because there are different gangs in different areas.” During the interviews, some officers made general comments about the lessons including recommending that the information (gang statistics) and the language (particularly for the “Life in the Middle” role-plays present in each lesson) be updated. For example, one officer stated that the language in Life in the Middle is “geeky.” Also, when making general comments about the lessons, officers stated that time constraints are a problem during implementation, an issue that arises in the next section as well.

### *Combining or Skipping Lessons*

Officers were also asked about combining or skipping lessons while teaching the program (not shown in table). Overall, only 31.7 percent of the officers surveyed stated that they had combined or skipped a lesson. Of the officers who combine or skip lessons, they typically skip those near the end of the 13-week period (i.e., lessons 8 through 13) (76.5%). The majority of the officers stated that they typically skip or combine lessons because of time constraints (62.2%). These findings were consistent across teaching models as well as the interviews. Officers noted in the interviews that they normally did not pick which lessons to combine, stating that it depends on outside factors (e.g., time constraints due to fire drills or other duties). Additionally, officers stated that they modified the lessons by spending less time on the activities and just lecturing on the subject matter. According to our classroom observations of officers delivering the program (N = 522), combining or skipping lessons was the exception rather than the rule.

### *Program Appropriateness*

There were a total of eight questions asking about program appropriateness in terms of age level, content, and community needs. The distribution of positive responses to these questions is shown in Table 7. Overall, the majority of the officers in the total sample were

supportive of the G.R.E.A.T. program, except, however, regarding its ability to reduce the community's gang or crime problems (29.3% and 29.1%, respectively). This indicates that, although officers believe that G.R.E.A.T. is beneficial to students and is, in general, a valuable program, the majority do not believe that it is capable of addressing larger community issues. This is a reasonable assertion because G.R.E.A.T. is only expected to reduce a small portion of a community's crime problems on an individual level. In other words, it is not intended to resolve all of the community's gang and/or crime problems.

**Table 7: Program Appropriateness by Question**

Program Appropriateness <sup>a</sup>	Total Sample	Overtime Model	SRO Model	Community Services Model
The G.R.E.A.T. program addresses problems facing students in your community.	84.4	88.6	87.7	69.2
The G.R.E.A.T. program teaches students the skills they need to avoid gangs and violence.	80.0	86.4	78.5	73.1
The G.R.E.A.T. program has reduced your community's gang problem.*	29.3	20.9	42.2	11.5
The G.R.E.A.T. program has reduced your community's crime problem.	29.1	23.3	36.9	19.2
The G.R.E.A.T. program diverts resources away from legitimate law enforcement duties.*	12.7	6.8	10.9	26.9
The G.R.E.A.T. Curriculum is appropriate for the students' age and comprehension levels.	83.0	81.8	87.7	73.1
The lessons contained in the curriculum adequately address the risk factors for gangs and delinquency.	71.1	63.6	80.0	61.5
The length of the G.R.E.A.T. program provides enough time to cover the important topics.*	71.9	56.8	81.5	73.1

<sup>a</sup>Percent who agree or strongly agree with the statements

\*Significant differences across teaching models (p<0.05)

In terms of differences by teaching model, officers who teach G.R.E.A.T. as part of specialized community services units tended to have less favorable opinions of program appropriateness (with the exception of program length). Additional analyses revealed three significant differences across models. First, SROs who teach G.R.E.A.T. had the most favorable opinions relative to other officers about G.R.E.A.T.'s ability to reduce their community's gang problem (42.2%). Next, when compared with officers in the SRO and overtime models, officers who teach as part of their assigned specialized units were more likely to believe that G.R.E.A.T.

diverts resources away from more legitimate law enforcement duties (26.9%). Lastly, officers who teach G.R.E.A.T. on an overtime basis, compared to other models of teaching, were less likely to agree that there was sufficient time to cover all the important topics (56.8%). It is important to note, however, that despite the significant differences, the majority of the officers across models were supportive of the G.R.E.A.T. program.

### **Community Perceptions and the G.R.E.A.T. Program**

The law enforcement surveys and interviews also included questions about the communities in which the officers work. The distributions of the community perceptions variables are shown in Table 8. In general, the majority of the officers indicated that the communities in which they work do experience delinquency and gang problems and that the problems are also present in the schools. However, the officers indicated that the people in the community do not feel threatened by the high rate of serious crime (only 8% agreed with this statement). There are significant differences across teaching models on two of these measures. First, the majority of the officers who teach as part of the overtime model were least likely to believe that the delinquency in their community is gang-related (37.2%). Second, none of the officers who teach as part of the community services model believed that people feel threatened by the high rate of serious crime in the community.

**Table 8: Community Perceptions by Question**

Community Perceptions <sup>a</sup>	Total Sample	Overtime Model	SRO Model	Community Services Model
The police are often called to schools in your community to handle delinquency problems.	59.6	69.8	51.5	63.0
The police are often called to schools in your community to handle gang-related violence.	64.7	72.1	56.1	74.1
There is a high rate of serious juvenile delinquency in the community where you work.	63.2	61.4	61.5	70.4
Much of the serious delinquency that occurs in your community is gang-related.*	53.7	37.2	57.6	70.4
People feel threatened by the high rate of serious crime in your community.*	8.0	15.9	6.1	0
There is a serious gang problem in your community.	67.2	68.2	69.7	59.3

<sup>a</sup>Percent who agree or strongly agree with the statements

\*Significant differences across teaching models (p<0.05)

It is possible, however, that these findings could be attributed to the city where the agency is located and not the teaching model. During the interviews officers were asked to describe the youth gang problem in their city. All of the officers acknowledged that gangs are present, but the description of the activity varied. Also, these varying descriptions were independent of the city. That is, some officers described their gang problem as “big,” saying things like “pretty bad” and “very serious, at some points it seems out of control.” By contrast, a few officers within the same city felt the gang problem was improving. These officers described the problem as “manageable” and “not as bad as the media presents it to be.”

*Relationships with the Community*

The officers were also asked about the ability of the G.R.E.A.T. program to build relationships between law enforcement, schools, and the community. The distribution of responses is shown in Table 9. The majority of the officers in the total sample agreed that the G.R.E.A.T. program has improved relationships with the police. However, there are some significant differences in terms of the community services model of teaching. Officers teaching in the community services model had less favorable opinions of G.R.E.A.T.’s ability to build relationships. When asked about these relationships during the interview process, one officer, who teaches G.R.E.A.T. as part of the community services model, indicated that “a main problem for officers is not having teacher support...it’s hard for them to give [class] time to officers.” Another officer indicated that the relationship “depends on how the officer approaches the school.”

**Table 9: Police Partnerships Distributions by Question.**

Police Partnerships <sup>a</sup>	Total Sample	Overtime Model	SRO Model	Community Services Model
The G.R.E.A.T. program has improved police/youth relationships.*	91.1	100.0	90.8	76.9
The program has contributed to a better relationship between law enforcement and local schools.*	91.0	97.7	92.3	76.9
The G.R.E.A.T. program has strengthened police/community relationships.	79.9	87.4	81.5	73.1

<sup>a</sup>Percent who agree or strongly agree with the statements

\*Significant differences across teaching models (p<0.05)

G.R.E.A.T. officers were also asked about their roles in the community as well as the public’s support of these roles. The distributions for the questions are shown in Table 10 (below). Overall, the majority of the officers expressed positive opinions about police roles. However, officers who teach G.R.E.A.T. as part of the community services model had less favorable opinions about their roles relative to other models. For example, less than half of these officers believe that the presence of officers has reduced delinquency and violence problems in school (48.1%) compared to 91 percent of the SRO officers. However, only 38.6 percent of the officers who teach on an overtime basis stated that the public supports police officers in their community, much less than officers in other models. This finding may be explained by the fact that SROs are based in the school while overtime officers still work in the community; therefore, SROs’ view of the public may be limited to their school.

**Table 10: Police Positive Roles Distributions by Question**

Police Positive Role <sup>a</sup>	Total Sample	Overtime Model	SRO Model	Community Services Model
Police officers in schools have reduced delinquency and violence problems in schools in your community.*	73.7	63.6	90.9	48.1
Play an important role in preventing students from becoming involved in drugs, gangs, and delinquency*	77.4	70.5	87.9	63.0
The public supports law enforcement efforts in your community.*	65.4	38.6	84.8	61.5

<sup>a</sup>Percent who agree or strongly agree with the statements

\*Significant differences across teaching models (p<0.05)

### **How Are These Issues Related?**

This report has covered a variety of issues surrounding G.R.E.A.T. officers and their opinions including the following: their attitudes about being a G.R.E.A.T. officer, their opinions of the G.R.E.A.T. program in general, as well as their opinions of their community. This section examines how these issues and opinions are related to one another. In order to examine these relationships, scales were created from the mean responses to the items discussed above; for example, officers’ responses to all eight items in Table 7 were added together to create a scale of “program appropriateness.” Table 11 shows the results of the analyses used to determine whether there were relationships between officers’ views of the G.R.E.A.T. program (e.g.,

program appropriateness, lesson effectiveness, and amount of information in each lesson), their opinions of how teaching G.R.E.A.T. has affected their career, their opinions on the community, and the G.R.E.A.T. program’s ability to help the community (e.g., police partnerships, positive police roles, and community perceptions).

**Table 11: Correlation Matrix**

	Program Appropriateness	Lesson Effectiveness	Amount of Information	Career Effects	Police Partnerships	Positive Police Role
Program Appropriateness	1.00					
Lesson Effectiveness	0.36*	1.00				
Amount of Information	0.29*	<b>0.73*</b>	1.00			
Career Effects	-0.01	0.24*	0.20*	1.00		
Police Partnerships	<b>0.81*</b>	0.41*	0.35*	<b>0.57*</b>	1.00	
Positive Police Roles	-0.06	-0.09	-0.07	-0.11	-0.11	1.00
Community Perceptions	-0.09	-0.03	-0.07	0.04	-0.05	0.00

\*Relationship is significant (p<0.05)

These results show that there were three issues that could be considered strongly related to each other (i.e., have a correlation, or “r,” of 0.50 or higher). There was a strong significant relationship between police partnerships and program appropriateness (r = 0.81), which indicates that officers who believed that the G.R.E.A.T. program is capable of building relationships between officers and the community also tended to believe that the program is appropriate in terms of age, content, and community needs. Also, officers’ views of police partnerships were strongly related to their views of the program’s effect on their career (r = 0.57). Therefore, officers who believed the program is good for their career also believe that it can build police partnerships and vice versa. The two scales asking officers to give their opinions on the lessons were also strongly related. Officers who stated that the lessons are effective also stated that there is an appropriate amount of information in each lesson (r = 0.73). In addition to the strong relationships discussed above, several moderate (i.e., a correlation or “r” ranging from 0.2 to 0.5)

relationships were found. Opinions on lesson effectiveness are moderately correlated with views on program appropriateness ( $r = 0.36$ ), police partnerships ( $r = 0.41$ ), and career effects ( $r = 0.24$ ), indicating that officers who felt the lessons were effective also thought that program was appropriate, built partnerships, and had a positive career effect. Likewise, views of the amount of information in each lesson are also correlated with program appropriateness ( $r = 0.29$ ), police partnerships ( $r = 0.35$ ), and career effects ( $r = 0.20$ ).

## **Summary**

This report specifically focused on the law enforcement surveys and interviews collected during the national evaluation of the G.R.E.A.T. program. It provides information on the demographic characteristics of the officers as well as their opinions about teaching G.R.E.A.T., the G.R.E.A.T. program in general, and their perceptions of G.R.E.A.T.'s ability to benefit their communities. The results show that, in general, officers enjoy being G.R.E.A.T. officers and are committed to teaching the program. However, being a G.R.E.A.T. officer has a downside. In the majority of the cities, officers, as well as supervisors, stated that G.R.E.A.T. officers are viewed in a negative light by other officers and are considered "lazy" or as "kiddie cops." Portland officers (i.e., overtime model) typically had the most favorable opinions on how they are viewed by other officers. Also, officers reported that teaching the G.R.E.A.T. program does have a negative effect on their career, in terms of offering fewer opportunities for overtime and not enhancing chances for promotion.

In general, officers stated the G.R.E.A.T. program is appropriate in terms of content, but does not necessarily meet their community's needs. In other words, they believe that G.R.E.A.T. is beneficial to students and a valuable program, but do not believe that it is capable of reducing larger community problems. This assertion is expected because G.R.E.A.T. is intended to aid only in the reduction of gang membership in the youth population. Because it uses an individual-level approach, it is not meant to "fix" all of the community's delinquency problems. The officers reported that their communities do experience delinquency and gang problems, but do not believe that people feel threatened by these problems. In addition, officers believed that the G.R.E.A.T. program is capable of building partnerships between police officers, youth, schools, and the community. Officers also felt in general that the G.R.E.A.T. program's lessons

are effective in meeting the goals of the program and had the appropriate amount of information. They frequently named Lesson 4: Goal-Setting and Lesson 5: Decision-Making among their favorites and the most effective. However, the officers consistently noted time constraints as one of the main difficulties for implementing all the G.R.E.A.T. lessons effectively.

This report also demonstrated several dissimilarities across the different methods of teaching the G.R.E.A.T. program. In other words, officers' opinions tended to differ depending on their agency's method of delivering the program (e.g., overtime model, SRO model, or community services model). In general, officers teaching G.R.E.A.T. on an overtime basis tended to have more favorable opinions about the appropriateness of the program in terms of age, content, and community needs. Also, many of these officers indicated that the G.R.E.A.T. program has had a slightly positive effect on their career and that the program is able to build partnerships with the schools and communities, compared with other teaching models. In addition, officers teaching as part of this model had fewer complaints about teaching the program; for instance, several indicated that they had no dislikes. Officers who did mention negative aspects listed things that are specific to that teaching style (e.g., juggling both officer and teaching duties, commuting to and from schools). However, officers teaching on an overtime basis did have less favorable attitudes on the level of public support for officers.

Conversely, officers teaching as part of their SRO duties or their community services assignment indicated the politics surrounding the program and the way officers are viewed as negative aspects to teaching the G.R.E.A.T. program. Also, officers working in agencies utilizing these models had less favorable opinions of G.R.E.A.T.'s effect on their career when compared with the overtime model. In addition to these issues, officers teaching as part of the community services model had less favorable opinions regarding program appropriateness, the program's ability to build police partnerships, and their role in the schools and community when compared with other models. Specifically, these officers, compared to other officers, were more likely to believe that G.R.E.A.T. diverts resources away from legitimate law enforcement duties.

Generally, in terms of teaching models, this report indicates that officers teaching on an overtime basis have most favorable attitudes about teaching the G.R.E.A.T. program, followed by SRO officers. Although officers teaching as part of the community services model tended to have positive attitudes about the G.R.E.A.T. program, they had less favorable attitudes when compared with the other two models. This finding could be an artifact of the agencies and cities

(e.g., Chicago and Philadelphia) employing the community services model. These departments and cities are geographically larger and are likely to differ culturally from other law enforcement agencies across the country. This information, in combination with low response rates in Chicago and Philadelphia (38% and 43% respectively), may limit the representativeness of the community services sample included in this report. In other words, the responses of these two departments may not accurately portray the opinions of all officers teaching as part of the community services model.