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Interview with Kathy Kasslar

Kathy Kasslar

Kate Hitchcock

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ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

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Researcher's name: Kate Hitchcock

Event: Interview with Kathy Kasslar, Vice-Principal Mount Vernon High School

Place: Her office, Mount Vernon High School

Date: September 28, 1999

(abbreviated interview because she had an unexpected meeting)

K – This is Kate Hitchcock interviewing Kathy Kasslar on December 6th around 2:45. If we could just start with, your position here and how you got here.

KK – I'm the assistant vice principal at Mount Vernon High School. How did I get what?

K – How did you get your – background information in terms of education.

KK – I received my doctorate degree in education, um, my university, and I also received my masters from my university in educational administration.

K – Just to jump right to it, what do you see as the purpose of the Alternative School?

KK – The Alternative School is a place to provide an alternative setting to receive educational and that's a little more one on one purposeful. And help students to also receive their credit and their education, um, just in a different setting. Um, we use it in terms of sometimes a consequence that may of come up for a discipline action and that way students can be serving a consequence but yet still not be denied their education.

K – Right, if you were to compare their home school with the Alternative Center, what are they missing?

KK – Their friends, their socialization. As far as academics, all those things are supplied to them. We transport them up their so academically-wise their not really missing that much. Um, their able to keep up credit-wise and task-wise and they still get their attendance.

K – Do you see any similarities in the students that are sent their?

KK – The similarities is that it's usually the same ones often.

K – Right. In terms of your spectrum of discipline, what does it take for a student to be sent there?

KK – If a student, the parents are given the choice of three of in-school suspension for a consequence, uh, five days at the Alternative Center. With suspension, the student receives work, but they don't get the credit for it from in-school suspension. Uh, where at

the Alternative Center, they still get to serve the consequence, but still getting the credit and therefore not hurting themselves academically.

K – How often do you use this school? How many students do you think you have over there?

KK – Um, you see, there's two different things, you have those that are done on a discipline referral, then you have students that are placed there on a permanent basis and they're there the whole school year. I'd say that we have maybe approximately eight students who are there permanently for the whole school year. Um, some of that's twofold. One where, you know, the school clues in the bust and arrest and the parents agree that it's something that the parents initiated it and we've, you know, supported that route for one reason or another. Um, but for most students who are there, they are there for maybe one week or two week basis depending on what consequence came upon them for that.

K – Right, Do you have any suggestions for the Alternative School?

KK – I've seen some great improvements, there's a new administrator there now and I know that they're taking more strides in making sure that uh, homework is, what's received and what's returned and so there's documentation of, you know, the student may have received the homework, but didn't complete anything. And so we have better documentation of that. I know that they've looked to get an English teacher up there, um to help out. They also got a counselor to be up there full time. So there are lots of things that are moving in the right direction.

K – Do you think there is more that they are focusing on education rather than discipline?

KK – Yes.

K – Whereas in years past how...

KK – In years past, I think it was more focused as a place to go for discipline and a little bit of academics. But now it's being, um, it's still basically done for discipline there, but while they're there, academics are going to be addressed.

K – Right. Okay, well I guess we can end there. Actually, if there was one factor as you see as the primary reason for a students misconduct? What sets them off – whether it be environmental or....

KK – Some of its environment some of its mental, I guess now, I compare myself to the current generation and I'm sure my parents, you know, compared themselves with how things were. I see a lot of the students who are apt to spread problems are given a lack of parental support or some kind of support in their lives outside or someone to kind of show them, you know, this is kind of how you handle confrontation, uh, frustrations, you

know, and uh, what we see on t.v. and people, you know, handle those situations aren't always what's best for real life.

K – Right. Okay, Thank You.

-----END OF INTERVIEW-----