



## Fact Sheet



Public Affairs Division - Washington DC

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

The Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) Program is a gang and delinquency prevention program provided to middle and elementary school students by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and other law enforcement agency partners. G.R.E.A.T. seeks to help students avoid gang membership, violence, delinquent behavior and how to resist gang pressure and develop positive attitudes concerning law enforcement.

The G.R.E.A.T. school program is taught by local law enforcement and specially trained ATF agents during the school year. In addition to ATF, G.R.E.A.T. federal partners include the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and the Office of Justice Programs. The G.R.E.A.T program was evaluated by scholastic researchers and found to be effective in achieving its goals. The program is now listed in [CrimeSolutions.gov](#) as a promising program.

ATF and the Phoenix Police Department first collaborated to develop the G.R.E.A.T. program in 1991. The program began as an eight-lesson middle school curriculum and trained its first G.R.E.A.T. law enforcement officers in early 1992. In 1998, four law enforcement agencies joined to assist in the administration of the program: the La Crosse, Wis., Police Department; the Orange County, Fla., Sheriff's Office; the Philadelphia, Pa., Police Department; and the Portland, Ore., Police Bureau. In 2004, Congress transferred the administration of the G.R.E.A.T. Program from ATF to the Office of Justice Programs, BJA, at the Department of Justice.

Currently, the G.R.E.A.T. Program has four regions and training sites:

- Southeast - Nashville, Tenn., Police Department
- Midwest Atlantic - La Crosse, Wis., Police Department
- Western - Portland, Ore., Police Bureau
- Southwest - Phoenix, Az., Police Department

The National Policy Board (NPB) is the governing body of the G.R.E.A.T. program. Chief executive officers from ATF and the other federal partners and law enforcement agencies listed above constitute the NPB, whose chair rotates each year.

The mission of the G.R.E.A.T. program is to prevent youth crime, violence and gang involvement.

## **Program Components**

### **Elementary School G.R.E.A.T. Program**

G.R.E.A.T.'s six-week, skills-based, elementary school curriculum for fourth and fifth graders provides information that produces attitudinal and behavioral changes in youth. The program is taught in schools and focuses on positive behavior rehearsals, cooperative and interactive learning techniques, and teacher activities. Researchers believe children who display aggressive behavior during their elementary school years are more likely to display antisocial and violent behavior as adolescents and young adults. With the G.R.E.A.T. program and other prevention efforts, researchers believe there is an opportunity to stop negative behavior.

### **Middle School G.R.E.A.T. Program**

The middle school G.R.E.A.T. program is a 13-week curriculum that is designed for sixth and seventh graders. In the first evaluation of the G.R.E.A.T. program in 1995, researchers recommended teaching the core curriculum at the entry level of middle school rather than in the seventh and eighth grades. Evaluators indicated that children undergo major transitions as they move from the fifth to the sixth grade, form new peer groups and become more susceptible to the lures of gangs and peer group pressures.

Specially trained ATF and other uniformed law enforcement officers teach the G.R.E.A.T. curriculum in the classroom and train students to avoid gang pressure and youth violence. The G.R.E.A.T. curriculum also can work with other prevention programs that encourage positive relationships with parents, schools and community, and law enforcement organizations.

### **G.R.E.A.T. Summer Component**

The G.R.E.A.T. summer program builds upon the school-based curriculum, adds structure to summer months, provides an opportunity to enhance social skills, and offers alternatives to gang involvement. Students engage in positive social, cognitive, and interpersonal growth activities that range from field trips to sporting events. While the G.R.E.A.T. summer program is most beneficial when viewed as a reinforcement of the school-based initiative, students come from their communities or from other programs.

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

G.R.E.A.T. families program is a six-session designed to strengthen families and assist communities. The curriculum engages parents and young people in cooperative lessons that facilitate communication among family members and enhance family decision-making skills.

The curriculum uses group interaction, activities, and skills practice to foster positive family relations and engage parents and children between the ages of 10 to 14. A G.R.E.A.T. facilitator works closely with one or two co-facilitators to guide as many as ten families (approximately thirty family members) through a variety of activities and discussions.

The G.R.E.A.T. families program also links the curriculum to specialized family assistance resources that provide G.R.E.A.T. instructors with the tools needed to work effectively with families and family service agencies.

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

Certified G.R.E.A.T. officer–trainers provide instruction to aspiring teachers regarding how to teach the school–based program to elementary– and middle–school students. Before they enter the classroom, incoming G.R.E.A.T. instructors receive 40 or 60 hours of instruction based upon their classroom experience, skills and educational background. They also learn how to teach the G.R.E.A.T. summer component.

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

Since its inception in 1991, G.R.E.A.T. has graduated more than 6 million students. It has certified as G.R.E.A.T. instructors 13,980 law enforcement officers and professionals from 2,710 agencies as G.R.E.A.T. instructors.

Fiscal year 2015 statistics for the G.R.E.A.T. program are as follows:

- 1,250 officers and law enforcement professionals taught the G.R.E.A.T. program in elementary and middle schools
- 5,233 schools (to include elementary and middle) taught G.R.E.A.T.
- 328,799 students from elementary and middle school participated
- 27,240 classes graduated including elementary and school students.

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