School Violence

Introduction

The vast majority of schools in the United States are safe places, and in recent years they have become even safer. Safe schools are essential to young people's ability to learn and develop healthy relationships. The overall rates of violence in schools have fallen, and students feel safer in schools today than they have for several years.[1] In fact, students are much less likely to come to harm at school than away from school. However, some schools do have serious crime and violence problems, and many students, teachers, and parents continue to have grave concerns about safety in schools. To address these concerns, federal agencies are working together to address the problem of violence in schools.

Overview

A great deal of media attention has been directed to school shootings in recent years. However, school-associated violent deaths remain rare events. In the 1998-99 school year, less than 2 percent of the murders of children and youth in the United States were school-related. A total of 38 school-related homicides occurred that school year, and 33 of those deaths were homicides of school-aged children and youth.[2] School-associated student homicide rates have increased since the 1994-95 school year, however, due to a rise in multiple-victim homicides.[3] School-related homicides are most likely to occur at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters.[4]

While the media has focused on school shootings, school violence includes a range of activities, including assaults with or without weapons, physical fights, threats or destructive acts other than physical fights, bullying, hostile or threatening remarks between groups of students, and gang violence. The data about these types of violence present a mixed picture of school safety.

The rate of nonfatal violent crimes at school has declined from 48 per 1,000 students in 1992 to 33 per 1000 in 1999 [5]. The rate of serious school-related violent crime, including rape, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault, has also generally declined over that time period. In 1999, 7 out of every 1000 students were victims of serious violent crimes while at school or going to and from school [6].

Similarly, the percentage of students in grades 9 through 12 who have been threatened or injured with a weapon on school property has not changed significantly in recent years. About 7 to 8 percent of students continue to report being threatened or injured with a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property each year [7]. However, fewer students are carrying weapons to school. In 1993, 12% reported carrying a weapon to school during the previous month, while in 1999, only 7% did so.[8]

Student involvement in physical fights on school property also declined in that time period, from 16% reporting a fight in the past year to 14%.[9] Bullying continues to be a serious problem, particularly in

middle-schools. In 1999, about 10 percent of students in grades 6 and 7 reported being bullied, compared with about 5 percent of students in grades 8 and 9 and about 2 percent in grades 10 through 12.[10]

School violence affects teachers as well as students. On average, in each year from 1995 to 1999, about 3 out of every 1,000 teachers were the victims of serious violent crime at school.[11] Additionally, teachers face threats of violence and intimidation. In the 1993-94 school year, 12 percent of all teachers were threatened with injury by a student from their school, and 4 percent were physically attacked by a student.[12]

As the levels of violence in our schools have declined or remained constant in recent years, many students have begun to feel safer. Between 1995 and 1999, the percentage of students 12 to 18 who avoided one or more places at school out of fear for their safety decreased from 9 to 5 percent.[13] Students were also less likely to fear being attacked or harmed at school (a decrease from 9 percent in 1995 to 5 percent in 1999) or while traveling to and from school (a decrease from 7 percent in 1995 to 4 percent in 1999). [14] Finally, the percentage of students who reported that street gangs, a major source of intimidation and violence, were present at their schools decreased from 29 percent in 1995 to 17 percent in 1999.[15]

It is important, however, to note that some schools are safer than others. In 1996-97, 43 percent of public schools reported no violent crimes, and only 10 percent of all public schools reported one or more serious violent crimes. Elementary schools are much less likely than middle schools and high schools to report violent crimes, and schools in urban areas report more violent crime than those in suburban or rural areas.[16] Additionally, larger schools are more likely than smaller schools to report criminal incidents.[17]

While progress has been made in addressing the problem of violence in our schools, school violence does remain a problem in some schools, and many students and teachers do not feel safe. We can make our schools safer if we understand what leads to violence and the types of support that research has shown are effective in preventing violence and other troubling behaviors. Because school violence reflects the violence in our communities and neighborhoods, schools are most effective in confronting school violence when the community around them provides support. Many communities have been able to reduce school violence by developing comprehensive, integrated plans embracing key sectors of the community—the schools, social services, mental health providers, and law enforcement and juvenile justice authorities.

In order to assist schools in developing and carrying out violence prevention and response plans, the Departments of Education and Justice and the American Institutes for Research developed a report, Safeguarding Our Children: An Action Guide. The report indicates that an effective school violence prevention plan must include three tiers.

1. Schools must build a school-wide foundation for all children. This involves: supporting positive discipline, academic success, and mental and emotional wellness through a caring school environment; teaching students appropriate behaviors and problem solving skills; positive behavioral support; and appropriate academic instruction with engaging curricula and effective teaching practices.

2. Schools must identify students at risk for severe academic or behavioral difficulties early on and create services and supports that address risk factors and build protective factors for them. Approximately 10 to 15% of students exhibit problem behaviors indicating a need for such early intervention. It is important that staff be trained to recognize early warning signs and make appropriate referrals. Once students are identified, they must receive coordinated services that meet their individual needs. A number of approaches have been developed for interventions at this stage, including anger management training, structured after-school programs, mentoring, group and family counseling, changing instructional practices, and tutoring.

3. Schools must identify and provide intensive interventions for the few children who are experiencing significant emotional and behavioral problems. This involves providing coordinated, comprehensive, intensive, sustained, culturally appropriate, child-and family-focused services and supports. Such interventions might include day treatment programs which provide students and families with intensive mental health and special education services; multi-systemic therapy, focusing on the individual youth and his or her family, the peer context, school/vocational performance, and neighborhood/community supports; or treatment foster care, an intensive, family-focused intervention for youth whose delinquency or emotional problems are so serious and so chronic that they are no longer permitted to live at home. To be effective, these approaches generally require the collaboration of schools, social services, mental health providers, and law enforcement and juvenile justice authorities.

As more schools in our nation develop and implement such plans with support from their communities, we should continue to see reductions in violence in our nation's schools.

Federal Responses

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
www.usda.gov
The USDA mission is to enhance the quality of life for the American people by supporting production of agriculture:

- ensuring a safe, affordable, nutritious, and accessible food supply

- caring for agricultural, forest, and range lands

- supporting sound development of rural communities

- providing economic opportunities for farm and rural residents

- expanding global markets for agricultural and forest products and services

- working to reduce hunger in America and throughout the world.

The USDA works to prevent youth violence by promoting economic development and youth training programs in rural and economically depressed communities.

- **The Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES)**
  www.reeusda.gov
  The Cooperative Extension System response to pervasive conditions in America which place children and their families at risk for not meeting their basic physical and social needs and not building the basic competencies necessary for successful participation in childhood, adolescent, and adult life is the Children, Youth, and Families At Risk (CYFAR) National Initiative (www.reeusda.gov/4h/cyfar/cyfar.htm). With the CYFAR National initiative, the USDA makes a commitment to supporting programs for at risk youth and limited resource families as a part of the educational outreach mission of the Land-Grant University system. One of the goals of CYFAR is to reduce risk factors and increase protective measures that will prevent the use of violence as a way to solve problems or as a response to difficult situations and stressful life events.

  A key project of CYFAR is the Children, Youth and Families Education and Research Network (CYFERNet) (www.cyfernet.org). CYFERNet is a national network of Land Grant university faculty and county Extension educators working to support community-based educational programs for children, youth, parents and families. Through CYFERNet, partnering institutions merge resources into a "national network of expertise" working collaboratively to assist communities. CYFERNet provides program, evaluation and technology assistance for children, youth and family community-based programs. It provides: access to the latest research, statistical, and demographic information; guidance in locating funding opportunities and grant writing information; resources and instruments for program evaluation; and information on 3000 community-based State Strengthening programs targeting at-risk audiences

  Finally, the Department of Agriculture coordinates the Partnerships Against Violence Network (PAVNET) (www.pavnet.org), a "virtual library" of information about violence and youth-at-risk, representing data from seven different federal agencies. The PAVNET Research Database is an online, searchable source of information about current federally-funded research on violence and includes research on school violence.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
www.ed.gov
The mission of the Department of Education is to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence for all Americans.

- **Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)**
  www.ed.gov/offices/OERI
  The Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) provides national leadership for educational research and statistics. OERI strives to promote excellence and equity in American education by: conducting research and demonstration projects funded through grants to help improve education; collecting statistics on the status and progress of schools and education throughout the nation; and distributing information and providing technical assistance to those working to improve education.

  OERI's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (http://nces.ed.gov), often in collaboration with a number of other federal agencies, collects surveillance data needed for

school violence prevention. For example, NCES collaborated with the Bureau of Justice Statistics to add a special supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey (www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/cvict.htm#ncvs) to collect data on aspects of school crime. They also collect data from principals about crimes, violent incidents, and policies in their schools using the School Survey on Crime and Safety (http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ssocs).

OERI also engages in a number of analyses of program evaluations and disseminates the results. For example, OERI, in cooperation with the US Department of Education's Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program (SDFS), has established the Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools (SDFS) Expert Panel (www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/ORAD/KAD/expert_panel/drug-free.html). The purpose of the Expert Panel is to oversee a process for identifying and designating as promising and exemplary school-based programs that promote safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools. Once programs are designated as exemplary or promising, the Department will disseminate information about the programs and will encourage their use in new sites. The Expert Panel initiative is a way of enhancing prevention programming by making schools aware of alternative programs that have proven their effectiveness when judged against rigorous criteria.

OERI also coordinates the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) (www.eric.ed.gov), a national information system designed to provide users with ready access to an extensive body of education-related literature. As part of this service, they have developed a number of research digests summarizing school violence issues. These short reports are targeted specifically for teachers, administrators, policymakers, and other practitioners, but are generally useful to the broad educational community.

- o ERIC Counseling and Student Services Clearinghouse - School Violence Virtual Library
  http://ericcass.uncg.edu/virtuallib/violence/violencebook.html
  Index to ERIC digests and documents about school violence prevention.

- o ERIC Counseling and Student Services Clearinghouse - Bullying in Schools Virtual Library
  http://ericcass.uncg.edu/virtuallib/bullying/bullyingbook.html
  Index to ERIC digests and documents about bullying in schools.

- **Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE)**
  www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/index.html
  The mission of the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) is to promote academic excellence, enhance educational opportunities and equity for all of America's children and families, and to improve the quality of teaching and learning by providing leadership, technical assistance and financial support.

  The OESE's Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program (www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS) is the federal government's primary vehicle for reducing drug, alcohol and tobacco use, and violence, through education and prevention activities in our nation's schools. This program supports initiatives designed to prevent violence in and around schools, and to strengthen programs that prevent the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, involve parents, and are coordinated with related federal, state and community efforts and resources. The SDFS

program coordinates their efforts with other Education programs, as well as programs conducted by other federal agencies. Together with other federal agencies, the SDFS program has developed documents such as:

- o Safeguarding our Children: An Action Guide
  www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/actguide/action_guide.pdf

- o Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools
  www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/gtss.html

- o Preventing Youth Hate Crime: A Manual for Schools and Communities
  www.ed.gov/pubs/HateCrime/start.html

This program also supports a number of program evaluation activities, including the National Study on School Violence and Violence Prevention. This study is examining the incidence of violence and disorder in schools nationally and the effectiveness of approaches to preventing violence in schools, including approaches funded by the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program. The Department of Education is working with the National Institute of Justice to coordinate this study with the National Study of Delinquency Prevention in Schools (www.gottfredson.com/national.htm), funded under an NIJ grant. The SDFS Program also funds the National Resource Center for Safe Schools (www.safetyzone.org) and the National Center for Conflict Resolution Education (NCCRE) (www.nccre.org).

In Spring 1999, the President announced the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative (www.mentalhealth.org/safeschools/default.asp), a unique grant program jointly administered by the US Departments of Education's Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program, Health and Human Services, and Justice. The Initiative promotes comprehensive, integrated community-wide strategies for school safety and healthy child development across the country. These strategies provide students, schools, and communities the benefit of enhanced educational, mental health, social service, law enforcement, and, as appropriate, juvenile justice system services that can bolster healthy childhood development and prevent violence and alcohol and other drug abuse. Through this Initiative, grants were awarded to local educational authorities and their mental health and law enforcement partners to promote healthy childhood development and prevent violent behaviors. To be considered, the plans were required to address the following six elements: a safe school environment; alcohol and other drug and violence prevention and early intervention programs; school and community mental health preventive and treatment intervention services; early childhood social and emotional development programs; school reform; and safe school policies.

The Safe Schools/Healthy Students Action Center (www.sshsac.org) is funded by this initiative. Its mission is to assist and support the Safe Schools/Healthy Students and School Action Grantees in the development and sustainability of peaceful and healthy communities. The Center's web site includes information about upcoming conferences, resources for research, and abstracts for the current Safe Schools/Healthy Students and School Action Grantees.

- **Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)**
  www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep

OSEP provides leadership and fiscal resources to assist State and local efforts to educate children with disabilities, in order to improve results for those children and to ensure equal protection of the law. OSEP has joined with the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Program to address their mutual goal of promoting safe and drug-free schools that support the learning and development of all students. Together, they sponsored the report, Safe, Drug-Free, and Effective Schools for All Students: What Works!. (http://cecp.air.org/resources/safe&drug_free/main.htm). The purpose of this report was to describe and analyze the findings of three site visits, which were conducted to learn about schools that had managed to reduce discipline problems and improve the learning and behavior of all students, including those with disabilities. OSEP also was a sponsor of other reports, such as: Safeguarding our Children: An Action Guide and Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools.

Other Department of Education school violence prevention activities include:

- providing funding for after school opportunities;

- encouraging schools to adopt school uniform policies;

- providing guidance for schools in combating truancy;

- encouraging conflict resolution programs; and

- enforcing zero tolerance for guns and other weapons in schools.

US DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

www.dhhs.gov
The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is the United States government's principal agency for protecting the health of all Americans and providing essential human services, especially for those who are least able to help themselves. DHHS supports a broad spectrum of research and evaluation projects to prevent youth violence. It also helps community groups organize coalitions to combat youth violence and gang activity.

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**
  www.cdc.gov
  The mission of the CDC is to promote the health and quality of life of the citizenry of the US by preventing and controlling disease, injury, and disability. In particular, the CDC is committed to reducing and preventing youth violence through a public health approach that focuses on understanding the prevalence of youth violence; identifying risk and protective factors that influence its occurrence; research and program evaluation; and dissemination of information and technical assistance to its constituents.

- **Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH)**
  www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/index.htm
  DASH conducts the School Health Policies and Programs Study (SHPPS) (www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/shpps/index.htm), a national survey periodically conducted to assess school health policies and programs at the state, district, school, and classroom levels.

SHPPS was first conducted in 1994 and was repeated in 2000. SHPPS provides information on health education, programs, environmental strategies, and policies that states, districts, and schools use to address violence prevention.

DASH also coordinates the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/yrbs), developed to monitor priority health risk behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of mortality, morbidity, and social problems among young people in the United States. The YRBSS consists of national, state, and local school-based surveys of representative samples of 9th through 12th grade students, a national household-based survey of 12- through 21- year olds, and a national mail survey of college students. The school-based surveys are conducted biennially and provide information on a variety of violence-related behaviors both on school property and in general.

Finally, DASH has developed a document entitled, "Federal Activities Addressing Violence in Schools" (www.safeyouth.org/scripts/school/index.asp). This inventory of federal activities addressing violence in schools was designed to facilitate the coordination of federal school violence prevention activities and enhance collaboration on future projects. By describing these activities and projects, this inventory will also help those interested to better understand federal activities addressing violence in schools. This inventory is available on the web and is periodically updated.

- **National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC)**
  www.cdc.gov/ncipc
  The National Center for Injury Prevention and Control is actively involved in efforts to prevent school violence, collaborating with other federal agencies to devise promising long-term solutions to the prevention of youth violence in schools and elsewhere. NCIPC has funded the evaluation of a number of school-based interventions that may reduce injuries and deaths related to interpersonal violence among adolescents. NCIPC has also funded the implementation and evaluation of school-based interventions that are designed to prevent violence-related injuries among high-risk youth.

  NCIPC coordinates the School Associated Violent Deaths Study in collaboration with CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH) and the Departments of Education and Justice. This study is examining homicides and suicides associated with schools and identifying common features of school-related violent deaths. The study includes events occurring to and from school, as well as on both public or private school property, or while someone was on the way to or from an official school-sponsored event. The original study was published in 1996.

    o Facts About Violence Among Youth and Violence in Schools
       www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/schoolvi.htm

    o Best Practice of Youth Violence Prevention: A Sourcebook for Community Action
       www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/bestpractices.htm

    o NCIPC-funded longitudinal evaluations of youth violence intervention projects

www.cdc.gov/ncipc/res-opps/ythviolc.htm

- o NCIPC-funded interventions to prevent violence-related injuries among high-risk youth

- **Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)**
  www.hrsa.gov
  Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) directs national health programs that improve the Nation's health by assuring equitable access to comprehensive, quality health care for all.

  The Health Resources Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) (www.mchb.hrsa.gov) is charged with the primary responsibility for promoting and improving the health of the Nation's mothers and children, including families with low income levels, those with diverse racial and ethnic heritages, and those living in rural or isolated areas without access to care.

  The Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) is funding the development of a compendium of health, mental health and safety guidelines for schools. The compendium will include policies, guidelines, procedures and standards for schools, districts, school boards and other organizations that address health, mental health and safety issues for students and school staff.

  Additionally, MCHB supports the Children's Safety Network, which works with states to assist their efforts to prevent childhood injury, including injuries from violence.

- **National Institutes of Health (NIH)**
  www.nih.gov
  The NIH mission is to uncover new knowledge that will lead to better health for everyone. NIH works toward that mission by: conducting research in its own laboratories; supporting the research of non-federal scientists in universities, medical schools, hospitals, and research institutions throughout the country and abroad; helping in the training of research investigators; and fostering communication of medical information.

- **National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)**
  www.nichd.nih.gov
  The NICHD has a broad research mission dedicated to understanding the processes governing the growth and development upon which the health of infants, children, youth, and families depends. Research conducted and supported by the NICHD provides a foundation for understanding the antecedents and consequences of violent behavior, as well as for identifying effective prevention and intervention strategies.

  NICHD also supports the development and evaluation of interventions to prevent violence, including school-based programs. These include student social-skills training projects, efforts to change the school environment by providing teachers and other staff with instruction in

behavior management techniques and social skills training, and efforts to increase parent-school collaboration and to enhance parents' knowledge and skills.

NICHD also funds the Health Behavior in School-Aged Children Study (HBSC), a unique cross-national research study conducted in collaboration with the World Health Organization. The HBSC study aims to gain new insight into, and increase understanding of health behaviors, lifestyles and their context in young people. International comparisons and research about health behavior help each country learn more about problems common to all adolescents or relatively unique to certain countries. Understanding why these problems do or do not occur in other countries may help prevent problem health behaviors in the United States.

The United States participated in the international study for the first time in 1998. Special research focus areas in the 1997/98 survey included peer relations and support, including bullying; perceptions of the school and its influence; school experiences; perceptions of parental expectations and support for school; violence; and injuries.

- **National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)**
  www.nimh.nih.gov
  NIMH conducts and supports research nationwide on mental illness and mental health, including studies of the brain, behavior, and mental health services. NIMH is the foremost mental health research organization in the world, with a mission dedicated to improving the mental health of the American people; fostering better understanding of effective diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of mental and brain disorders; and supporting research on interventions to prevent mental illness or to reduce the frequency of recurrent episodes of mental illnesses and their disabling consequences.

  To address the problem of youth violence, NIMH conducts and supports research into the risk factors, experiences, and processes that are related to the development of aggressive, antisocial, and violent behavior, including mental health problems, particularly depression and externalizing behavior, associated with childhood and adolescence.

  NIMH has also supported research to develop effective intervention programs for youth demonstrating aggressive, antisocial and violent behavior. A number of these programs are school-based, such as the Families and Schools Together (FAST) Track Program (www.ncjrs.org/html/ojjdp/9911_2/contents.html, a multi-faceted, multi-year program designed for aggressive children in kindergarten starting at age 6. The program involves working with the child, the family in their home, and school system, including teachers.

  Another example is the Linking the Interests of Families and Teachers (LIFT) Program (www.prevention.psu.edu/LIFT.htm), a 10-week intervention created for children and families who are at risk for the development of conduct problems due to residence in neighborhoods characterized by high rates of juvenile delinquency. The LIFT Program is a multi-component intervention that includes parent training, social skills training, a playground behavioral program, and regular communication between teachers and parents.

  NIMH has also funded the development and evaluation of school-based programs that seek to enhance the skills and knowledge of all children in order to decrease their risk of future

emotional and behavioral problems. For example, the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) (http://modelprograms.samhsa.gov/pdfs/FactSheets/PATHS.pdf) curriculum teaches children about self-control, understanding emotions, and problem solving.

- o Thinking About Violence in Our Schools - NIMH
  www.medhelp.org/NIHlib/GF-376.html

- o NIMH Expert Panel on Youth Violence Intervention Research
  www.nimh.nih.gov/childhp/expertpanel.cfm

- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**
  www.samhsa.gov
  SAMHSA's mission within the nation's health system is to improve the quality and availability of prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation services to reduce illness, death, disability, and cost to society from substance abuse and mental illnesses.

- **Center for Mental Health Services**
  www.mentalhealth.org/cmhs
  CMHS provides national leadership to prevent and treat mental disorders; improve access and promote high-quality services for people with, or at risk for, these disorders; and promote improvement of mental health for all Americans and rehabilitation services for individuals with mental illness.

  The CMHS initiative on school violence focuses on the collective involvement of families, communities, and schools to build resiliency to disruptive behavior disorders, because it is typically children with these disorders who are at risk of violence as perpetrators and victims. In collaboration with the Departments of Education and Justice, CMHS administers the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative, awarding grants to fund the implementation and enhancement of comprehensive community-wide strategies for creating safe and drug-free schools and promoting healthy childhood development. The portion funded by CMHS is targeted to improve mental health services for children with emotional and behavioral disorders who are at risk of violent behavior, and to focus on developing an integrated continuum of prevention, early intervention, and treatment.

  Another school violence prevention effort, launched by the Center for Mental Health Services in collaboration with the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, is designed to complement the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative. This School Action Grant Program will award a total of $5.7 million a year to encourage communities to expand upon school-based programs. It will provide grantees with funds to promote healthy childhood development and prevent youth violence and substance abuse through the use of programs and practices proven to be effective.

  Finally, CMHS has embarked on a number of communication/outreach strategies to increase public knowledge about school violence issues, conducting focus groups, and supporting the design of television shows, pamphlets for parents, and computer learning software for children, parents, and teachers.

  - o A Preview of New Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) School Violence Prevention Program: Enhancing Resilience

www.mentalhealth.org/schoolviolence/buildingresilience.asp

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
www.usdoj.gov
The Department represents the citizens of the United States in enforcing the law in the public interest and plays a key role in protection against criminals; ensuring healthy competition of business; safeguarding the consumer; enforcing drug, immigration, and naturalization laws; and protecting citizens through effective law enforcement.

- **Bureau of Justice Statistics**
  www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs
  The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) collects and analyzes statistical data on crime, criminal offenders, crime victims, and the operations of justice systems at all levels of government. It also provides financial and technical support to state statistical agencies and administers special programs that aid state and local governments in improving their criminal history records and information systems and in implementing incident-based reporting systems.

  The School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) is periodically conducted by BJS, in collaboration with the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). These data represent about 25 million students. Information is obtained on the availability of drugs at school, existence of street gangs, prevalence of gang fights, presence of guns at school, victimizations, and fear of being attacked or harmed.

  o Indicators of School Crime and Safety, 2002
    www.nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2003009
    This joint annual report on school safety by the National Center for Education Statistics and the Bureau of Justice Statistics is a companion document to the Annual Report on School Safety. This report provides detailed statistical information on the nature of crime in schools, drawn from a number of statistical series supported by the federal government.

- **Federal Bureau of Investigation**
  www.fbi.gov
  The FBI has worked to identify crucial behavioral and environmental indicators which suggest that a threat of school violence may be real. They have developed the report, "The School Shooter: A Threat Assessment Perspective," which presents a model procedure for threat assessment and intervention, including a chapter on key indicators that should be regarded as warning signs in evaluating threats.

- **National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS)**
  www.ncjrs.org
  NCJRS is one of the most extensive sources of information on criminal and juvenile justice in the world, providing services to an international community of policymakers and professionals. NCJRS is a collection of clearinghouses supporting all bureaus of the US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. The clearinghouse provides access to a number of documents about school violence and its prevention. NCJRS can also be reached by calling 1-800-851-3420.

- o In the Spotlight: School Safety
  www.ncjrs.org/school_safety/summary.html

- **National Institute of Justice**
  www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij
  The National Institute of Justice works with the Department of Education to address issues of school violence, funding the National Study of Delinquency Prevention in Schools and supporting the development of Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools. NIJ also funds efforts to develop new, more effective safety technologies for schools, such as less obtrusive weapons detection and surveillance equipment and information systems that provide communities quick access to information they need to identify potentially violent young people. NIJ has developed the guide, Appropriate and Effective Use of Security Technologies in US Schools: A Guide for Schools and Law Enforcement Agencies (www.ncjrs.org/school/home.html).

- **Office of Community Oriented Policing Services**
  www.cops.usdoj.gov
  Established under the Public Safety Partnership and Community Policing Act of 1994, COPS has four primary goals: to increase the number of community policing officers on the beat by 100,000; to promote the implementation of department-wide community policing in law enforcement agencies across the country; to help develop an infrastructure that will institutionalize and sustain community policing after federal funding has ended; and to demonstrate and evaluate the ability of agencies practicing community policing to significantly improve the quality of life by reducing the levels of violence, crime, and disorder in their communities.

  The COPS Office funds School Resource Officers to provide security at our Nation's schools and to educate students on crime prevention and delinquency. They serve as mentors and role models and provide guidance to students. The COPS Office, in collaboration with the National School Safety Center and more than thirty local and national leaders in law enforcement, education, child development, school safety and public health, has developed a community policing model for school resource officer (SRO) programs. This model delineates three primary responsibilities of an SRO: Problem Solver and Liaison to Community Resources; Educator; and Safety Specialist and Law Enforcer. The unique demands placed on SRO's require that they be provided with appropriate tools to promote school safety. The COPS Office and the National School Safety Center are pioneering the effort to provide those tools by developing a comprehensive training for SRO's and school administrators based on the COPS in Schools model.

  - o COPS in Schools Fact Sheet
    www.cops.usdoj.gov/mime/open.pdf?Item=315

- **Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention**
  http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org
  The mission of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) is to provide national leadership, coordination, and resources to prevent and respond to juvenile delinquency and victimization. OJJDP accomplishes this by supporting States and local

communities in their efforts to develop and implement effective and coordinated prevention and intervention programs and improve the juvenile justice system so that it protects the public safety, holds offenders accountable, and provides treatment and rehabilitative services tailored to those families and juveniles who need them.

OJJDP collaborates with a number of other federal agencies to address the problem of school violence. In collaboration with the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services, OJJDP administers the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative, awarding grants to fund the implementation and enhancement of comprehensive community-wide strategies for creating safe and drug-free schools and promoting healthy childhood development.

OJJDP has collaborated with the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Program, to support the development of Safeguarding our Children: An Action Guide and Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools.

OJJDP also supports school-based conflict resolution and peer mediation programs and offers grants for one-to-one mentoring projects for youth at risk of educational failure, of dropping out of school, or of involvement in delinquent activities, including gangs and substance abuse through its Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP) (http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/jump/).

In 1997, OJJDP funded the creation of the Hamilton Fish National Institute on School and Community Violence (www.hamfish.org) at George Washington University to test the effectiveness of violence prevention methods and to develop more effective school-based strategies.

- o School Safety Resources
  http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/resources/school.html

- o Combating Fear and Restoring Safety in Schools
  www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/jjbulletin/9804/contents.html

- o School and Community Interventions To Prevent Serious and Violent Offending
  www.ncjrs.org/html/ojjdp/jjbul9910-1/contents.html

- o Youth Gangs in Schools
  www.ncjrs.org/html/ojjdp/jjbul2000_8_2/contents.html

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