

what's up with GUNS

The presence of weapons at school can create an intimidating and threatening atmosphere, creating classrooms that compromise student performance, damage mental and physical health, and perpetuate a cycle that leads to serious fatal violence. The percentage of students who report that they carry a gun or other weapon on school property is an indicator of the breadth of the problem of weapons at school.

Do the math

**If a school has 2,000 students and 5% report carrying a gun to school,
100 students have guns!**

A safe, hate-free, violence-free school and community environment will allow students the opportunity to succeed. A comprehensive and district-wide violence prevention program is vital to maintaining safe schools and a nurturing educational environment.

Key Facts and Statistics

<p>Homicide is the second leading cause of death among young people ages 10 to 24 overall (Anderson and Smith 2003).</p> <p>In 2001, 5,486 young people ages 10 to 24 were murdered—an average of 15 each day (CDC 2004).</p> <p>California leads the nation in confining juveniles: 549 per 100,000 in 1999. Georgia is a distant second with an incarceration rate of 480 per 100,000 (Urban Institute)</p> <p>California counties book more than 10,000 youth a day into juvenile halls (California Board of Corrections 2000 Legislative Report)</p> <p>Between 1994 and 1999, 172 students ages 5 to 18 were killed on or near school grounds or at school-related activities (Anderson et al. 2001).</p>	<p>During the last five years for which statistics are available, more youth (ages 12-24) died from gun violence than from motor vehicle injuries (CDC 2004).</p> <p>Males were at least three times more likely than females to carry a weapon—both anywhere and on school property (California Healthy Kids Survey 2004)</p> <p>School Fighting. About 29% of 7th graders, 18.5% of 9th graders, and 14% of 11th graders had been in a physical fight at school (California Healthy Kids Survey 2004)</p> <p>In a nationwide survey, 17% of students reported carrying a weapon (e.g., gun, knife, or club) on one or more days in the 30 days preceding the survey (Grunbaum et al. 2004).</p>	<p>Harassment and bullying have been linked to 75% of school-shooting incidents, including the fatal shootings at Columbine High School in Colorado, and Santana High School in California (US Secret Service Report, May 2002).</p> <p>In 2001, 79% of homicide victims ages 10 to 24 were killed with firearms (CDC 2004).</p> <p>Carrying Weapons to School. Guns. 5% of 7th graders, 5% of 9th and 5% of 11th graders, reported carrying a gun to school one or more times (California Healthy Kids Survey 2004)</p> <p>Other weapons. 8% of 7th graders, 10% of 9th graders, and 12% of 11th graders, reported bringing other weapons to school one or more times. Research indicates that students carry weapons for protection not intimidation (California Healthy Kids Survey 2004)</p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

The California Safe School Survey concludes:

Reducing violence in our schools and the community needs to be a high priority.

Schools are safe for most youth but not all; a substantial minority of students does not feel safe.

Physical aggression at school is a much more common problem than weapons, but the danger posed by weapons should not be underestimated. Fighting and bullying are the most serious problems, underscoring the need for conflict resolution and problem-solving programs.

The potential lethal impact of any weapons, especially guns, at school cannot be underscored – not to mention the adverse effect of weapons on campus on the students' ability to concentrate on learning.

High rates of violence and victimization among 7th graders underscore the need for early prevention, especially of conflict-related behavior.

There are strong associations between violence and drug use, requiring integrated prevention strategies. Violence Prevention cannot be separated from drug prevention.

School and communities should collaborate in adopting a youth development approach to prevention.

Overall, more attention should be devoted to promoting a youth development approach emphasizing communication, conflict resolution and individual responsibility.

Less attention should be paid to running schools in an overly restrictive manner.

Recommendations:

- Create a school-based safety planning team to discuss the issue of weapon carrying at school consisting of key stakeholders such as administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members.
- Create a local survey and administer this to students. Make sure the survey includes why students are bringing the weapons to school and clearly defines what type of weapon.
- Planning team should examine the results and discuss the meaning and implications of what is found among themselves and with students, staff, parents, and community members.
- Research clearly shows that youth who have multiple risk factors in their lives (e.g., substance use, delinquency, poor academic performance, and weak positive social bonds) are much more likely than other students to carry weapons—this issue should be openly discussed with such students
- In raw numbers, other students without known risks may carry more weapons to school—this possibility should be considered by the school planning team
- Interventions should build on enhancing a safe school climate with the goal to re-engage rather than dis-engage at-risk students
- Recognize that although many high-risk students report carrying and/or being exposed to weapons at school, most school weapon behaviors involve students with no known risk factors (A Review of Methods to Assess Student Self-Report of Weapons on School Campuses: Michael Furlong, Jill Sharkey, University of California, Santa Barbara Center for School-Based Youth Development, 2005).

Developing a safe school climate, go to:

<http://www.nasponline.org/publications/cq306skiba.html>

Best Practices in school-based prevention programs, go to:

<http://www.hamfish.org/>

Created by The Joseph Matteucci Foundation for Youth Non-Violence 2 of 2
Go to <http://www.JMF4peace.org> for more information