



Synopsis of Crime in Schools and Colleges: A Study of National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) Data (Study forthcoming)

The multitude of research examining crime in the Nation's schools has yielded conflicting conclusions concerning the actual level of violence and non-violence in these institutions, making it difficult to ascertain the effectiveness of preventative policies and their impact. According to one research study sponsored by the National Institute of Justice, "the most significant problems in schools are not necessarily issues popularly considered to be important. Although gangs and drugs may receive the most media attention, most of the conflicts discussed during the project were related to everyday school interactions."

The objective of the FBI's study is to examine the characteristics of the offenders and arrestees involved in crimes at school and college locations (hereafter referred to as *schools*) based on the data reported to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program by state and local law enforcement agencies that submitted their data via the NIBRS for 2000-2004. The NIBRS data collection contains data for 22 crime categories and 56 data elements, or variables, which include the types of offenses in the incident; reported age, sex, and race of victims, offenders, and arrestees; weapons used; and other information, e.g., location. Currently, approximately 20 percent of the Nation's law enforcement agencies voluntarily report crime data to the FBI in the NIBRS data-rich format.

For the 5-year study period, 2000-2004, there were a total of 17,065,074 incidents reported via the NIBRS. Of these incidents, 558,219, or 3.3 percent, occurred at schools. Based on the data received for the incidents at schools, there were 589,534 offenses committed by 688,612 offenders; 181,468 persons were arrested in connection with the incidents.

An analysis of *known* characteristics of offenders reported during the 5-year period revealed the following:

- Most offenders (38.0 percent) were 13 to 15 years old. Offenders comprising the second largest age group (30.7 percent) were 16 to 18 years old, followed by those offenders aged 19 years or older (18.2 percent) and those 10 to 12 years old (11.0 percent). Offenders 9 years of age and under accounted for 2.1 percent of the offenders.
- Males accounted for 76.7 percent of offenders who committed school crimes.

When examining victim-to-offender relationships, *acquaintance* was the most frequently reported relationship type for crime in schools, occurring in 52.1 percent of the instances in which the relationship was known, followed by *otherwise known* (not related) at 24.5 percent.

Where weapon type was known, the weapon type most frequently reported was personal weapons (hands, fists, and feet, etc.), which comprised 77.5 percent of weapons used in school incidents. Knives accounted for 8.6 percent of the weapon total and guns, 2.7 percent.

Violent crimes accounted for 37.6 percent of all arrests for incidents occurring in schools and colleges for 2000-2004.

Arrests, NIBRS Offenses, 2000-2004	
Violent Offenses	Total
Simple Assault	51,462
Intimidation	6,998
Aggravated Assault	6,486
Forcible Fondling	1,675
Robbery	802
Kidnapping	374
Forcible Rape	259
Sexual Assault with an Object	118
Forcible Sodomy	104
Murder & Nonnegligent Manslaughter	27
Negligent Manslaughter	3
Violent Offense Total	68,308
Non-Violent Offense Total	113,160
Total	181,468

Arrestee data revealed the following:

- Overall, the most common offense in which arrestees were involved was simple assault, followed by drug/narcotic violations, which together accounted for more than half (52.2 percent) of the total offenses for which persons were arrested.
- Among the violent offenses in schools for which persons were arrested, 95 percent were assaults, i.e., simple assault, aggravated assault, and intimidation.

As the topic of school violence gains importance in our society, the FBI's study may be useful for law or policy makers, law enforcement agencies, and school/college officials or administrators who are wrestling with crime problems in their areas or seeking to develop effective proactive policies.

More information about the UCR Program and the NIBRS is available on the FBI's Web site at: <www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm>.

