



# Department of Justice



## Office of Justice Programs

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### **SERIOUS VIOLENT CRIME AT SCHOOL CONTINUES TO FALL**

WASHINGTON — The rate of serious violent crime — rape, sexual assault, robbery and aggravated assault — at the nation's schools fell from six victimizations per 1,000 students in 2003 to four per 1,000 in 2004, according to a new report by the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and the Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics.

From July 1, 2004, through June 30, 2005, preliminary reports show there were 21 homicides at school. During the previous year, 19 homicides occurred at school, according to preliminary data. In the most recent school year for which overall homicide data were available (2003 to 2004), homicides of school age children were about 50 times more likely to occur away from school than at school.

Serious violent victimization rates were lower at school than away from school for each survey year from 1992 through 2004. During the same time the violent crime rate at school dropped by 54 percent and thefts at school dropped by 65 percent. The violent crime rate went from 48 victimizations per 1,000 students 12 to 18 years old to 22 per 1,000 students. The theft rate dropped from 95 per 1,000 students in the same age group to 33 per 1,000.

During 2004, younger students (those from 12 to 14 years old) were more likely than older students (15 to 18 years old) to be crime victims at school, whereas older students were more likely than younger students to be victims of crimes away from school.

In 2005, 28 percent of students 12 to 18 years old reported being bullied at school during the six months prior to the survey. Of those students who reported being bullied, 24 percent reported that they had sustained an injury as a result of the incident. Among students in grades 9 through 12, 43 percent reported they drank alcohol at school or elsewhere and 4 percent reported drinking on school property during the 30 days prior to the 2005 survey. There were no measurable differences by grade levels of drinking alcohol on school property, but students in higher grades were more likely than students in lower grades to report drinking anywhere.

(MORE)

While the rate of violent victimization continues to fall, other aspects of safety in schools have not shown short-term improvement. During 2005, 24 percent of students reported that there were gangs at their schools, a 3 percent increase from 2003 (21 percent). Other school behavior measures, such as fighting at school, carrying a weapon and drinking remain at their 2003 levels.

Some indicators show student safety has improved over the past decade. Between 1995 and 2005, the percentage of students who reported avoiding one or more places in school declined from 9 percent to 4 percent. Fourteen percent of students surveyed in 2005 reported having been involved in a physical fight on school property during the past 12 months, compared with 16 percent in 1993. Between 1993 and 2005, the percentage of students in grades 9 through 12 who reported carrying a weapon to school in the preceding 30 days declined from 12 percent to 6 percent.

During 2005, nearly all students 12 to 18 years old encountered at least one security measure at school. The percentage of students who observed the use of security cameras at their schools increased from 39 percent in 2001 to 58 percent in 2005. At the same time, 90 percent of all students reported seeing school staff members or other adult supervisors in the hallway, and 68 percent of students reported the presence of security guards or assigned police officers at their school.

The report, *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2006* (NCJ-214262) was written by BJS statistician Katrina Baum; Rachel Dinkes and Grace Kena, of the Education Statistics Services Institute in the American Institutes for Research; and Emily Forrest Cataldi, of MPR Associates, Inc. Following publication, the report can be found at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/iscs06.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/iscs06.htm)

For additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics statistical reports programs, please visit the BJS Web site at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs).

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