

School Safety



School Safety in the United States

According to CDC's nation-wide [Youth Risk Behavior Survey \(YRBS\)](#) :

- About 1 in 5 high school students reported being bullied on school property in the last year.
- 8% of high school students had been in a physical fight on school property one or more times during the 12 months before the survey.
- More than 7% of high school students had been threatened or injured with a weapon (for example, a gun, knife, or club) on school property one or more times during the 12 months before the survey.

Almost 9% of high school students had not gone to school at least 1 day during the 30 days before the survey because they felt they would be unsafe at school or on their way to or from school.

Nationwide Tragedies in Recent Years

- 46 shootings at K-12 schools in 2022
- Thirty-four students and adults were killed in these shootings
- <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2023/02/14/school-shootings-parkland-5th-anniversary/>
- Uvalde School Shooting (21 killed, 17 wounded) May 24th, 2022
- Michigan State University shooting (3 killed, 5 wounded) February 13th, 2022
- As of Dec. 20, there were 300 shooting incidents on school grounds so far in 2022, compared to 250 in 2021 and 114 in 2020, according to the publicly-accessible [K-12 School Shooting Database](#)

What are SROs?

A school resource officer is a sworn law-enforcement officer with arrest powers who works, either full or part time, in a school setting.

School policing expanded notably in the 1990s due to three major factors:

- concerns about rising rates of juvenile crime in the 1990s
- the federal government's funding of community policing programs beginning with the 1994 crime bill and its establishment of the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) hiring program
- 1999 Columbine shooting in Littleton, Colo.

“As for daily duties, NASRO indicates that officers play a tripartite role of law enforcement, informal mentoring and counseling, and some in-person teaching. In this sense, the theory of school-based policing is aligned with that of community policing: using local partnerships with other public entities to bring more resources to bear on safety.”

<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/school-resource-officer-sro-duties-effectiveness#:~:text=Are%20SROs%20armed%3F,restraints%20like%20handcuffs%20as%20well>.

Instances where students have been harmed by SROs

- 285 documented instances of violence where campus police officers injured or killed students in the last 10 years
- Black students were the recipients of force in 84% of campus incidents between 2011 and 2021

<https://www.the74million.org/article/inside-285-cases-where-campus-cops-injured-or-killed-students-at-school/>

Changes to school safety policy in US school districts

“From May 2020 through June 2022, at least 50 districts serving over 1.7 million children have ended their school policing programs or cut their budgets. Eight districts that had removed police from schools have since reversed course and added them back.”

<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/which-districts-have-cut-school-policing-programs/2021/06>

School Policing Ended

Districts in which school officials decided to end their contract with local police for school police officers or to disband their own police division after May 2020:

- Minneapolis
- St. Paul
- Denver
- Portland, OR
- West Contra Coast, CA
- Oakland
- Seattle
- Charlottesville, VA
- Phoenix Union, AZ
- Boulder Valley, CO
- Madison, WI
- Rochester NY
- Milwaukee, WI
- Edmonds, WA
- Hayward Unified, CA
- San Francisco, CA
- Oak Park, IL
- Burlington, VT
- Hopkins, MINN
- Maple Grove District, NY
- Cassadaga Valley District, NY
- Frewsburg District, NY
- Columbus, OH
- Portland, ME
- Knox County Schools, TN
- Winona Area Public Schools, MI
- De Moines, IA
- Sommerville, MA
- Pine Valley, NY
- Arlington, VA
- Claremont, CA
- Baldwin Park, CA
- Maple Run, VT
- Hollister School District, CA
- Sacramento, CA
- Brookline, MA
- Worthington, OH
- Albemarle, VA
- Tempe, AZ
- Novato, CA
- Washington, DC
- Forest Grove School District, OR
- Northampton, MA

Budget Cut

Districts that significantly decreased their budget for school police, but did not remove all police from schools.

- Chicago
- Los Angeles
- Moscow, ID

Additional alternate public safety

Districts where school officials have not yet removed police, but implemented different plans to try to address community concerns about police and discipline in schools.

- Prince George's County, MD
- New Haven, CT
- La Crosse, WI
- Howard County, MD
- Worcester, MA
- Long Beach, CA
- Mountain View, CA
- San Rafael City Elementary District, CA
- San Rafael City High School District, CA
- San Jose, CA
- Cedar Rapids, IW
- Antioch CA

Removal of School Policing Reversed

Districts that ended their policing programs, but has since brought them back.

- Montgomery county, MD
- Brocton District, NY
- Alexandria city public schools, VA
- Forestville, NY
- Pomona, CA
- Palm Springs, CA
- Tecumseh MI
- Champaign, IL

More info on last three slides available at:

<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/which-districts-have-cut-school-policing-programs/2021/06>

Changes to school safety policy in US school districts contd.

On June 25, 2022, President Joe Biden signed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA) into law.

“In addition to imposing gun safety measures, the BSCA addresses some of the root causes of school violence, particularly the need to improve school climate. Importantly, the law authorizes and appropriates funding for schools and districts to use for mental health services, out-of-school programs, and community-based supports rather than for “hardening” schools by, for example, adding metal detectors, access control devices, and armed security. In fact, the BSCA explicitly prohibits using funding to arm teachers or other school staff.”

<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/how-to-make-schools-safer-without-additional-physical-security-measures/>

School Safety Incidents in Santa Monica

- Two students involved in a fight at SAMOHI on August 18th 2022, the first day of school, in which one student used a small black knife. Other student was sent to the hospital with a facial laceration
<https://smdp.com/2022/08/18/student-slashed-in-fight-on-samohi-campus/>
- Bomb threat at Samohi November 3rd, 2022
<https://deadline.com/2022/11/santa-monica-high-school-lockdown-bomb-threat-1235162866/>
- 2013 Shooting at SMC that killed 5 people and injured 3

Changes made to school safety in Santa Monica

Following Knife Assault:

- “The District has upgraded security systems on campus, including cameras, upgraded digital locks on classroom doors and they have modernized intrusion, fire and emergency alarm systems”
- “Samohi utilizes restorative justice practices for prevention and response,” said Principal Marae Cruce. “We are proud of this school-wide program led by Rob Howard, who has trained our staff and student leaders, and facilitates the process for situations of this nature. Please note that restorative practices do not replace a consequence for actions, but are methods to restore a sense of community and an opportunity to process behaviors that we hope to not see repeated.

<https://smdp.com/2022/08/26/samohi-officials-detail-security-measures-after-knife-assault/>

Following 2013 shooting:

- SMC created the Crisis Prevention Team: “Crisis Prevention Team is ultimately to help any student in need: “Of course we definitely want to prevent crises from happening, but we’re really more of a care team. Trying to identify students who are in need of additional support services and getting those students the resources and care that they need.”
- “According to SMC Police Chief Johnnie Adams, SMC currently has multiple security operations in place in case of an incident, such as an emergency notification system, over 800 cameras throughout all of SMC’s campuses, and an access control system where, “we can actually lock down most buildings with a flick of a button within our communications center,” Chief Adams said. He also said that the SMCPD regularly trains with the Santa Monica Police Department, at least 40 hours a year on varying topics including active shooters.”

<https://www.thecorsaironline.com/corsair/2018/3/27/active-shooter-protocol-at-smc>

Some Questions the Reimagining Public Safety Committee is Examining:

- What does effective school safety look like or mean?
- What are the ways in which SROs are effective in maintaining a safe environment for students?
- What are ways in which SROs are ineffective in maintaining a safe environment for students / potentially harmful?
- Are there any other consequences of relying on armed police officers to deal with school safety issues?
- Are there differences in how safe students feel in their school environments depending on their race, gender, sexuality, socio-economic background, identity?
- Are there racial disparities in who gets disciplined in a school setting?
- What do alternatives to SROs look like in maintaining school safety?

Some individuals we hope to consult on these questions:

- SMC and Samohi gun-carrying police officers
- Senior members of SMPD and SMCPD
- SMC Dean
- Santa Monica High School Principal
- Samohi and SMC Students
- Experts on alternative school safety
- Parents of Santa Monica School Students

THE END

Questions? Feedback?