

Profile of the Weapon Carrying Student in Selected Public Middle & High Schools

Thomas A. Gavin

This study examines those students who were found to be in possession of a weapon on the campus of a public middle or high school over a period of four school years. Official police reports of weapon carrying were reviewed to determine the type of weapon, the sex, race, and age of the student involved, and how the weapon was discovered. The individual student's previous criminal record was checked to determine if the child had previously been charged with any delinquent acts. Information on the child's disciplinary record and whether the child had been staffed as "special ed" was also obtained from a "predisposition report" prepared for the juvenile court. It was statistically significant that weapon carriers did not have excessively delinquent backgrounds, were not those who frequently misbehaved in school, nor were children who were "special ed" more likely to carry a weapon than other students. Males were found to carry weapons twice as frequently as females, firearms were almost exclusively carried by males. Edged weapons were nearly 6 times more prevalent than firearms, and 80% of the firearms were recovered before they were used in a crime.