

# Principals and School Resource Officers: Are Their Views on School Safety in Harmony?

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## *Abstract*

*The School Resource Officer Program has been in the State of Florida for several years; in some counties for as long as 30 years and for others less. Some counties in Florida do not have school resource officers in their schools. In light of recent acts of violence on school campuses across the nation, the data on whether school safety has improved is limited. Using the data collected from principals and school resource officers from all Florida's school districts, I will examine and compare their views on school safety to determine if there is harmony.*

## Introduction

Schools have seen acts of violence occur on their campuses where students and teachers were killed by other students or adults in the community during the past twenty plus years across the nation. The two most recent incidents occurred at Virginia Tech (April 2007) and in a one room Amish school in rural Pennsylvania (October 2006). Florida's schools have been no exception. In addition to the publicity on the acts of violence, there has been much publicity on school safety issues: single-point entrances, metal detectors, fencing, surveillance cameras, visitor ID checks, and campus security to include school resource officers.

As a supervisor for the School Resource Officer Program in Okaloosa County, Florida, I am concerned about the safety of students and staff on all public school campuses. From my personal observations I found all of the middle and high schools to have multiple entrances where anyone can approach a door and gain access. Most of the campuses are open campuses – meaning many buildings or pods. Many lead directly into a classroom. I can walk into main offices and not be asked whom I am or where I am going. In several of the local schools I can walk into the main entrance and there is no one to meet anyone walking through the door. I pass adults whom I assume to be staff, look at me, smile, and give a welcoming greeting. When I walk into several elementary schools I am immediately greeted and asked why I am on campus; but there are still multiple doors not secured when school is open. When I talk with the principals about security or safety issues, the response is vague and consistent. We are working on it, but there is no money. There are too many entrances – we could not possibly hire people to man all the doors or afford to put in metal detectors. All of the middle and high schools have school resource officers on campus.

My interest in the problem is to determine if principals and school resource officers have the same views on school safety. How will their views affect the safety of students on all public school campuses in the future?

## Literature Review

In October 2002, the Commonwealth Educational Policy Institute (CEPI) in a CEPI Law Newsletter wrote that safety plans were implemented, school buildings were more secure, and school resource officers and community police had taken steps to protect students and staff. These safety issues were discussed and implemented because of the “sniper shootings” in the District of Columbia area in October 2002 (Vacca, 2002).

A local television station in Las Vegas, Nevada, KVBC News 3, reported on January 30, 2007, that there was much discussion about school safety in their community. They conducted an undercover investigation. They chose five county public schools at random. They found easy access even though one school was fenced, another the doors were locked except for one entrance – a student held the door open for them but when the producer entered he found the hallway roped off, and in one elementary school the playground was open but the doors were not. The only door found unlocked, led straight to the office where the producer was stopped immediately. The biggest problem he found was in the middle and high schools. There were multiple entrances and none of the staff checked for a visitor’s badge or questioned who the producer was and why he was on campus. KVBC News 3 did find the school district headquarters to be much more formidable. The building was not originally built for the school district. It was a former telecommunications building the school district purchased. When asked why they did not have tighter security in the schools, the producer was told there were simply too many entrances (Tenney, 2007).

There is a difference between school security and law enforcement. According to the American Society for the Industrial Security (1996) as referenced by Trump (1997), it notes: “...law enforcement focuses on reaction to crime and the enforcement of public laws and ordinances. Security professionals, on the other hand, are more proactive and focus on identifying and preventing a problem before it occurs. In addition, security personnel are more likely to be involved in protecting assets and carrying out an organization’s policies and procedures than in enforcing criminal statutes.”

Kenneth Trump (1997) writes that security is different from professional security. With regards to schools, the difference is similar to what distinguishes educating from professional education (Trump, 1997). There are many people who educate children in one form or another: parents, siblings, friends, relatives, neighbors, the media, the computer, and so on. None of them are certified teachers, and such learning is not considered professional education. Teachers would be offended by those not certified teaching in schools, so they should be offended by those not trained to evaluate and design school safety procedures but sell themselves as professional security. School security issues need to be done by school security professionals. Many believe that security is the same in all places. And an even more faulty belief is that a school administrator or law enforcement officer is a professional school security expert.

“Politricks” is a term Trump (1997) uses to describe the biggest hurdle in getting professional school security in many school districts across the nation. There is often more times than not that the school’s focus is on image, power, control, and money rather than on reporting crime and implementing security procedures to protect

students, staff, and school property. What's more alarming is the public's buy-in to the appearance of the school's administrator or other school district official who appears to be sincere and committed in their declaration to safe schools (Trump, 1997).

There are many myths in the school security, but these two are important: schools are immune from politics and personal agendas and politricks are part of doing business, to include education. Not all school boards and administrators are completely honest in reporting school crime. Nor do they share all school security concerns with law enforcement, parents, and the community. They have some form of denial. Even though many school districts have "zero tolerance" whether it is on drugs, tobacco products, or school security, many know this is not the case. School boards and administrators are still concerned about image. Unfortunately, they choose to underreport crimes or security issues. Not all school districts or school administrators are in denial. Many are very committed to having the best possible school security measures in place in their schools. But it appears that the former is more prevalent across the nation. These denials can lead to more security issues than if they had been addressed and dealt with earlier.

Trump (1997) writes that approximately two decades have passed since studies were conducted on the problems of underreporting, non-reporting, and denial of non-gang, school-based crimes. Few improvements have been made to gain consistency across the nation in the reporting of school crime and the associated level of violence. Many of these issues of underreporting or non-reporting have gained attention through media, public written documentation, and school assessments. The only crime not underreported was murder. While it is difficult to specify how much underreporting and non-reporting takes place, it is widely known that it occurs. In a written survey of law enforcement officers in a northeast state found that 61 % of the respondents stated that public school administrators do not consistently report crimes that occur on their campuses to law enforcement. 9% stated they did not know if crimes were reported consistently; while 30% stated school officials do consistently report crimes committed on campuses.

The reasons officials fail to report school based crimes to law enforcement as referenced by Trump (1997) were listed in the American Association of School Administrators (1981) include the following:

1. Avoid bad publicity, litigation, or both.
2. Fear being blamed for the problem or considered ineffective.
3. Consider some offenses as "too minor".
4. Prefer to handle the "crime" using disciplinary procedures.
5. Belief that law enforcement and courts will not cooperate.

These reasons for non-reporting remained largely the same for many years after the 1981 report. Some additional reasons for intentional non-reporting are:

1. Fear that if crimes are reported, public will perceive them as poor managers
2. Negative publicity will lead to not being reelected to positions
3. Fear that public will perceive the school as unsafe and remove their children
4. Belief that no crime data means no problem
5. Issue of control as related to image – "in control" leads to promotions.

In fairness to school administrators, some underreporting or non-reporting is not intentional. It is simply because there is a history of administrators handling all student situations as disciplinary issues. There is an issue when the student's behavior is criminal. Some administrators feel there is 'double jeopardy' when in fact double jeopardy is not an issue. Some educators and administrators have not received training or very little training on the difference between crime and disciplinary issues. Then there are some administrators who believe some crimes are too insignificant for law enforcement involvement. Some are afraid of reprisals by parents, or they are afraid of lawsuits.

Sometimes the criminal justice system contributes to the reporting issues as well. This can be where court resources are filled to capacity and school administrators are encouraged not to report certain minor offenses, such as misdemeanor marijuana possession. These actions imply that school administrators are burdening the court system. This is usually due to a lack of training or understanding, experience, or legal right to determine what crimes should be reported.

When crimes are underreported or not reported and the schools fail to deal with security issues proactively (Trump, 1997), the reality is:

1. Children learn that there are no consequences for committing criminal acts.
2. Students get the message that laws do not apply to their campuses, thus more criminal acts occur.
3. The message to the parents and the community is there is a lack of concern for the safety of their children.
4. The message to the school staff is there is a lack of concern for safety in the workplace.
5. It contributes to the atmosphere where teachers cannot teach and students cannot learn.
6. It supplies inadequate knowledge about crimes occurring on campuses thereby reducing effective prevention and intervention plans.

There needs to be a balance – all want a safe and secure school.

Law enforcement and school officials do have the same goals – safe and secure schools. They may differ on objectives for reaching the goal. However, in order to reach the goal, crimes must be reported, and the importance of reporting crimes must be instilled in the school's organizational culture (Trump, 1997). This will lead to a developing positive prevention and intervention programs, especially keeping in mind the five basic assumptions when dealing with school security:

1. Law enforcement and schools have similar, not competing goals.
2. Crimes must be handled by both administration and law enforcement.
3. Crime reporting is a positive safety tool.
4. Security is a public relations tool, not a public relations disaster.
5. School safety requires a multifaceted approach (Trump, 1997).

Time and money are a significant issue when discussing school safety assessments and implementation. The following approaches contribute significantly to more secure schools:

- Order, structure and firm, fair, consistent discipline
- A real balance between prevention, intervention, security, and crisis preparedness strategies
- Sincere relationships between students and staff, and staff and the broader community (e.g., with parents, social services, law enforcement, support personnel, etc)
- Information sharing within legal boundaries and not in violation of legitimate confidentiality boundaries
- Youth services providers, parents, and others who are consistently alert, informed, and proactive in addressing youth and violence prevention programs
- Simple, apolitical, and youth-focused action (Trump, 2000).

Most of these reasons require more time than money. It is unfair to ask why efforts preventing youth violence is not working when there is unwillingness to invest time and money (Trump, 2000).

There is a tendency that once the attention fades over a violent situation in a school; the attention to crisis preparedness also fades until another high profile incident occurs. While one would not want school violence to dominate the headlines everyday, school officials should recognize the importance of crisis prevention and management of such if one should occur, not wait until the crisis strikes. There is no magic checklist to follow or a template for a crisis plan. There are templates available to use as tools to assess and implement a crisis plan unique or individual to each school (Trump, 2000). So, the question is, are schools, in particular, Florida school administrators and law enforcement officers, recognizing that effective school safety preparedness is a process, not a single event?

The first nationwide survey (Trump, 2001) conducted by the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) in 2001 revealed interesting statistics about crimes prevented by school-based officers. More than 90% of the officers diverted between one and 25 violent acts in an average school year (Delisio, 2005). 67% of the officers surveyed reported preventing a school faculty member or staff member from being assaulted, either from a student or someone else on campus. Kenneth Trump, president of the National School Safety and Security Systems, whose consulting firm conducted the surveys, says, "The survey provides substantial data to dispel the misconception that police officers assigned to schools are reactive and primarily focus on making arrests. The description of preventative tasks performed and the number of violent incidents prevented by officers says...that SRO programs must be viewed as preventative programs, not as punitive or reactionary strategies. The data also clearly indicates that students are comfortable in reporting threats and concerns to SRO's." 84% of the officers felt crimes were underreported; 86% thought the presence of law enforcement on campus resulted in more crimes being reported. This particular survey represented approximately 10% of the 7000 members of NASRO.

Bill Bond, a resident practitioner for safe and orderly schools for the National Association of Secondary School Principals, stated that SRO's provide students with a

sense of security, but also serve as confidantes. When Heath High School in Paducah, Kentucky, experienced a student shooting, killing three in December 1997, Bond was on a two-year sabbatical from this school where he was principal. There was no SRO on campus at the time. The school has had a resource officer assigned since the incident (Delisio, 2005).

Another interesting result from the survey was that 70% of the SRO's who responded believed elected officials did not understand the role of an SRO. 71% said the same about the media, and 69% said other law enforcement officers were not clear about school resource officer assignments. Curt Lavarello, executive director of NASRO, stated it was critical to select the right person as an SRO. This officer must want to interact with students and understand that working in the school is a more restrictive environment than the streets.

Another survey was conducted in 2002 at the annual NASRO conference (Trump, 2002). This survey represented approximately 7% of the officers who were members of NASRO. The survey looked at whether schools were vulnerable to terrorism where there were school-based officers. 95% believed their schools were vulnerable. 63% said their school were "somewhat vulnerable," while 32% said their schools were "very vulnerable" (Trump & Lavarello, 2003).

Some of the issues addressed in the survey were access to school grounds – 96% reported easy or somewhat easy access, while 83% described access to inside school buildings as very easy or somewhat easy. 79 % of the officers felt that schools in their school districts were not adequately prepared to respond to a terrorism attack. Another issue was inadequate procedures for mail-handling procedures. Almost 40% of SRO's said their schools had not conducted a formal security assessment in the past five years. 55% of the officers said the crisis plans were inadequate, while 52% said their plans had not been tested or exercised. Of those who said their crisis plans had been tested, 62% indicated the testing and type of testing and amount of time spent on testing was inadequate.

The officers also reported that there was minimal training from outside agencies in preparing for a terrorist attack (Trump & Lavarello, 2003). In light of the tenuous 2007-2008 budget for the State of Florida and the announcement of several sheriffs' offices cutting or reducing the SRO programs, will schools be a target for more youth violence or worse, a terrorist attack.

A map of the United States from the School Violence Resource Center depicts the acts of violence, specifically stabbings and shootings, from February 2, 1996, through October 18, 2006 that occurred on campuses (see Appendix A). The State of Florida was not untouched by school violence. Three acts of violence occurred: In May 2000 in Lake Worth, a 13 year old boy sent home from school returned with a handgun and killed a teacher; in February 2001 in Palm Harbor a 14 year old built a bomb with a killing radius of fifteen feet; and in Orlando in October 2006, a 15 year old male was stabbed to death at a bus stop in an apparent argument over a girl that started at lunchtime (Unknown, 2007).

On a more local level, when the Virginia Tech incident happened in April 2007, I received phone calls with concerns about safety issues from various members of the school district. I also received a phone call from a local university about having a school resource officer on campus. It was a satellite campus with a small number of students.

The campus was shared with one of the programs for the local school district. The requesting party wanted to know the cost of having an officer on campus from 10 am until 10 pm at night. Having an officer on campus for those hours required either two full time officers with overlapping hours, or one full time officer and one part time officer. The benefits and drawbacks were discussed. The associated cost with having an officer on campus was discussed as well. No contract has been signed. Is this because it is too costly? Have some other unknown factors come up? Has the university lost interest in having an officer on campus? Has the memory of Virginia Tech faded to the point that action does not need to be taken until another high profile incident?

The current study will show whether principals and law enforcement are in concert on school safety assessments, school security issues, and implementing security procedures. Are SRO's making a difference? Is their presence a false sense of security on campus? In other words, are schools safe simply because an SRO is on campus?

### Method

The purpose of this research is to determine if public school principals have the same views on school safety, as do the school resource officers. I randomly chose one high school and middle school principal per school district from Florida Smart Web Guide by county and the Florida Department of Education Website. There are 67 school districts listed in the State of Florida; however, I was unable to find any schools listed for Glades County. From the schools chosen, I then looked to see if there was a school resource officer (SRO) listed at the selected schools. If I was unable to determine from the school websites whether there was a school resource officer, I searched for the Sheriff's website or local police agency website. Once the schools were identified, I then contacted each school to verify their mailing address as well as the correct email address for the principal. Likewise, I did the same for the school resource officer. In all instances, I found the selected schools had an SRO on campus, or one was available to respond to the school. In some of the smaller counties, one SRO might be responsible for several schools.

The method of collecting the data to determine if there was harmony among principals and school resource officers as it pertained to school safety was through a survey instrument. The survey sent to the principals contained 14 questions, and the survey sent to SRO's contained 11 questions. I sent the notice of survey with an online link to 131 principals (65 middle schools and 66 high schools) and 131 SRO's at these same schools. One school principal was at a combined high and middle school. Several of the verified email addresses were either not valid or did not accept the electronic survey. Those I sent through the U. S. Postal Service. The answers to these surveys are found in the Result section. Copies of these survey instruments are included at the end of this report, as Appendix C and D.

## Results

I made follow up phone calls to each principal and school resource officer who received the survey either by email or regular postal service. Sixty-six of the sixty-seven school districts were included in the survey (see Appendixes B and C for the results and the actual survey). Only Glades County did not receive the survey since I was unable to ascertain whether any public schools were actually located in this county. Approximately 28% of the high school principals and approximately 26% of the middle school principals responded to the survey. Approximately 25% of the school resource officers assigned to high schools and approximately 17% of the school resource officers assigned to middle schools responded to the survey (see Appendixes B and D for the results and the actual survey). Overall, 24% of all who were surveyed participated. One principal oversaw a campus that included both middle and high schools students. Each school had a school resource officer either assigned on campus or available to respond as needed.

Of the public schools surveyed 17% had between 100 and 500 students enrolled; 35% of the public schools had between 501 and 1000 students; 14% had between 1001 and 1500 students; 17% had between 1501 and 2000 students; 3% had between 2001 and 2500 students; and 6% had over 2501 students enrolled. Three principals skipped the question. 97% of the principals indicated they had a school resource officer assigned to their school. Only one principal skipped this question.

Only 14% of the public schools had one-point or single point entry. 80% of the public schools had multiple entries into the school. Six principals or 17% skipped the question. 71 % indicated that their schools had a safety assessment completed. 57 % of the principals indicated that security measures were put in place based on the security assessment. Two principals skipped the question.

When asked if there were security cameras in the school, 60% of the principals said yes they had camera-monitoring systems. 37% indicated that school resource officers monitored the camera systems. 42% skipped the question. 97% of the principals indicated that their schools did not have metal detectors located at each entrance. One principal skipped the question.

Of the crimes reported during the 2006-2007 school year on campus, the majority of crimes appeared to be battery with a total figure of 178. Disruption of a school function followed with 134 incidents reported. There were 109 assaults and 105 incidents of drug possession. There was one firearm incident reported and 24 incidents of weapons on campus. There were 88 threats, 14 incidents of intruders on campus, and one bomb threat. Ten principals skipped this question. 43% felt their campuses were very safe. 51% felt they had safe campuses. Only one principal said the school was not very safe. One principal skipped the question.

All of the school resource officers who responded to the survey indicated they were assigned to a school. 16% of the officers were at schools with less than 501 students, 44% were in schools with less than 1001 students, 12% were in schools with less than 1501 students, 12% were in school with less than 2001 students, and 16% of the officers were in schools with more than 2001 students.

The majority of school resource officers (84%) indicated they worked in schools with multiple-point entries into the school facilities, while 16% worked in schools with



single-point entry. When asked about whether their school had a security assessment completed, 32 % did not know if one had been completed. Most officers believed one was completed. When asked if the school resource officers participated in the security assessment process, 60% said they did not, while 40 % said they did. Only 32% of the officers knew that security cameras were added to the schools because of the security assessments. 68% of the officers skipped this question. School resource officers who monitor the camera system were 36% compared to 64% who do not monitor the camera system.

Of the crimes reported during the 2006-2007 school year on campus, the majority of crimes appeared to be battery with a total figure of 140. Drug possession followed with 91 incidents reported. There were 90 incidents of disruption of a school function, 35 incidents of threats, and 18 incidents of intruders on campus. There were three bomb threats. There were four firearm incidents reported and 19 incidents of weapons on campus. Seven school resource officers skipped the question on crimes. Overall, the school resource officers felt their campuses were very safe – 40%. 48% of the officers felt their schools were safe, 8% felt their schools were not very safe, and 4% felt their campuses were not safe at all. No school resource officer skipped this question.

Of the school resource officers who responded to the survey, only 32% attended all of administrative meetings. 56% of the officers attended only when the issues dealt with security issues at the school, and 12% of the officers never attend administration meetings at their schools. As to whether the school resource officers felt that the principals had the same view as theirs on school security issues, 68% answered in the affirmative. 28% of the officers felt the principals had somewhat of the same view. Only one officer (4%) felt that the principal did not share the same views on school security.

### Discussion

It appears from the results of the survey that principals and school resource officers overall are in harmony about school security. The sampling size was approximately one-fourth the population sent the survey. While this seems to be an adequate sampling, some of the responses to certain questions of the survey instrument were either not answered or skipped. I have a concern that supervisors reviewed some surveys. One county required that I fill out paperwork with details of my research project before they would approve any principal participating; and one school resource officer supervisor insisted he review the survey instrument before he would let any of his officers participate. I did as requested.

In light of serious budget crunches throughout the State of Florida, those who participated in the survey indicated they had officers assigned to their campuses. I have no research that indicates whether any of the counties who reduced the number of school resource officers participated. Nor do I know if any of the principals who lost school resource officers this year participated.

Student enrollment varied. Principals reported that the majority of schools had between 100 and 2000 students. Schools still had more than one entry into their facilities. But a significant number of principals did not respond to this question. So are these schools single-point entry or multiple entries? Entrance metal detectors also

seem none existent in Florida schools. Safety assessments were conducted in many schools and recommendations were followed based on the assessments. Security camera systems seem to be in most Florida schools; however, I am concerned that more than 1/3 of the school resource officers according to the principals are responsible for monitoring these camera systems. On the flip side though, 2/3 of the officers indicated they do not monitor the camera systems. This leads me to question how much time the officer actually spends looking at camera screens versus getting to know the students and staff on campus. This question may require some more research.

Another area of concern is the number of crimes actually reported in the schools. I do not know if the numbers supplied in the answers were all incidents or just arrests. Both principals and school resource officers reported batteries were the most prevalent crime in their schools. Disruption of school functions was of concern as well as threats, assaults, and weapons on campus. Actual firearms on campus were minimal. Incident reporting may need further research. I know from working with the schools resource officers in Okaloosa County that many incidents were not considered in statistics if no arrest occurred. After meeting with other supervisors at the Florida Association of School Resource Officers this past summer, I learned that this practice was common throughout the state. We concluded we were doing an injustice to the officers. This was remedied in Okaloosa County this year by requiring all school resource officers to call in all incidents. From August to October 2007, the Okaloosa County school resource officers handled over 1500 calls. Comparison of this number to the previous year cannot be done since only arrest statistics were counted. But what this indicated to me was that school resource officers are much busier in the schools than most other officers think. It will be interesting to find out if other school resource officers in the State of Florida are now reporting all incidents that occur in schools rather than just arrests. My supervisor stated it was difficult to support keeping school resource officers in schools when the only statistics were arrests.

As to whether the principals and school resource officers felt their campuses were safe. I was concerned that 28% of the principals did not answer or skipped this question. No school resource officer skipped this question. Overall, the principals felt their schools were safe; only one reported their school was not safe. I do not know if this is because of the lack of security cameras, other security issues such as multiple entries, or if this principal had been the subject of an attack. Likewise, I do not know the reasons why a school resource officer said the school was very unsafe.

### Recommendations

While overall it appears principals and school resource officers are in harmony about school security, I believe this requires further study. There are too many unanswered questions. Perhaps a better instrument would be personal interviews as well as written surveys.

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## Appendix A

## School Shootings and Stabbings, 1996-2006



☀ **February 2, 1996: Moses Lake, Washington**  
A 14 year-old shoots a teacher and two students with a rifle.

☀ **February 29, 1996: St. Louis, Missouri**  
A 30 year old man fired into a school bus where two were injured including a pregnant teenager and the bus driver.

☀ **February 19, 1997: Bethel, Alaska**  
A 16 year-old shoots and kills his principal and a student. Two other students are injured.

☀ **October 1, 1997: Pearl, Mississippi**  
A 16 year-old kills his mother, then goes to school and shoots nine others. Two die.

- ❁ **December 1, 1997: West Paducah, Kentucky**  
A 14 year-old shoots eight students as they pray in school. Three die and one student is left paralyzed.
- ❁ **December 15, 1997: Stamps, Arkansas**  
An eighth grader is arrested and charged as an adult after he confessed to shooting and wounded two of his fellow students as he hid in the woods outside of a high school.
- ❁ **March 24, 1998: Jonesboro, Arkansas**  
Two boys ages 11 and 13 shoot fourteen students and one teacher. The teacher and four of the students die.
- ❁ **April 24, 1998: Edinboro, Pennsylvania**  
A 14 year-old student shoots a teacher to death at a graduation dance.
- ❁ **April 28, 1998: Pomona, California**  
A 14 year-old shoots three boys. Two are killed.
- ❁ **May 19, 1998: Fayetteville, Tennessee**  
An 18 year-old shoots and kills a classmate just three days before graduation.
- ❁ **May 21, 1998: St. Charles, Missouri**  
Three 6th grade kids are discovered with a hit list to be conducted on the last day of school.
- ❁ **May 21, 1998: Houston, Texas**  
A 17 year-old's gun goes off accidentally in his backpack. One girl is shot and wounded.
- ❁ **May 21, 1998: Onalaska, Washington**  
A 15 year-old takes his girlfriend from a school bus at gunpoint forcing her to go to his house where he uses a gun to commit suicide.
- ❁ **May 21, 1998: Springfield, Oregon**  
A 15 year-old shoots and kills both parents before going to school and opening fire in the cafeteria. Two students are killed.
- ❁ **June 6, 1998: Columbia, South Carolina**  
A 14 year old student is arrested after a school shooting that wounded a teacher and elderly volunteer aid.
- ❁ **June 15, 1998: Richmond, Virginia**  
A 14 year old student is charged as an adult for opening fire in a crowded high school hallway wounding a 45-year-old social studies teacher and a 74-year-old volunteer.
- ❁ **April 20, 1999: Littleton, Colorado**  
Two boys, ages 16 and 17, shoot 35 students and 1 teacher before committing suicide. Twelve students and the teacher die.
- ❁ **May 13, 1999: Port Huron, Michigan**  
Two 14 year-olds plotted to kill at least 154 people at school in an attempt to outdo the shooting at Columbine high school. They were stopped after fellow students reported them.
- ❁ **May 20, 1999: Conyers, Georgia**  
A 15 year-old wounds six classmates. They all survive.

**☀ Oct. 28, 1999: Cleveland, Ohio**

A 14 year-old and three 15 year-olds planned on killing mostly black students, then dying in a shoot-out with police. A student's mother alerted officials.

**☀ November 19, 1999: Deming, New Mexico**

A 12 year-old shoots a classmate in the back of her head. She dies the next day.

**☀ December 6, 1999: Fort Gibson, Oklahoma**

A 7th grader brings a handgun to school and open fires. Four students are wounded.

**☀ January 29, 2000: Cupertino, California**

A 19 year-old planned to attack his high school with guns and explosives. He took photos of himself and his arsenal. When he had the photos developed, a drug store clerk saw them and called police.

**☀ February 29, 2000: Mount Morris Township, Michigan**

A 6 year-old boy brings a .32 semi-automatic handgun to school killing a first grader.

**☀ March 10, 2000: Savannah, Georgia**

Two students killed by a 19 year old student while leaving a Beach High School dance.

**☀ May 11, 2000: Prairie Grove, Arkansas**

A 13 year old seventh-grade student who left the Prairie Grove Junior High school in an apparent fit of rage and a police officer were injured Thursday after shooting each other in an altercation in a hay field north of the student's school.

**☀ May 18, 2000: Millbrae, California**

A 17 year-old with a history of threatening other students with guns was reported to officials by fellow students when he threatened to do a "Columbine" type shooting.

**☀ May 26, 2000: Lake Worth, Florida**

A 13 year-old sent home from school returned with a handgun and kills a teacher.

**☀ September 26, 2000: New Orleans, Louisiana**

A student fought with another student, went home, returned with a gun and killed the student he had fought with in the high school gymnasium.

**☀ October 24, 2000: Glendale, Arizona**

A teenager held a teacher and 32 students hostage for an hour before surrendering.

**☀ January 10, 2001: Oxnard, California**

A 17 year-old entered school and took a girl hostage in an attempt to persuade police to shoot him. After the SWAT team arrived he was shot dead.

**☀ January 17, 2001: Baltimore, Maryland**

One student was shot and killed in front of Lake Clifton Eastern High School.

**☀ February 5, 2001: Hoyt, Kansas**

Three students ages 16, 17, and 18 planned to do a school shooting. An anonymous caller to a tip line alerted police. When their homes were searched, police discovered guns, bombs, and white supremacist drawings.

☀ February 7, 2001: Fort Collins, Colorado

A 14 year-old and two 15 year-olds plot to "redo Columbine." Several classmates alerted the police after overhearing them talking about it.

☀ February 11, 2001: Palm Harbor, Florida

A 14 year-old built a bomb having a kill radius of fifteen feet. The parents of another student who had received an e-mail detailing the bomber's plans alerted the sheriff's deputies.

☀ February 14, 2001: Elmira, New York

A high schools student's plans for a school shooting were foiled after students brought the fact that he had weapons on him to a teacher's attention. He carried 14 pipe bombs, three smaller bombs, a propane tank, a sawed-off shotgun, a .22 caliber pistol into the school by a duffel bag and also a book bag full of ammunition. On December 17, 2001, Jeremy was sentenced to 8 1/2 years.

☀ March 5, 2001: Santee, California

A 15 year-old opens fire from inside a school bathroom shooting 15 and killing 2.

☀ March 7, 2001: Twentynine Palms, California

Two 17 year-old boys were arrested and after being tipped off by another student. A search of the boys' homes revealed a gun in one, and the plan in the other.

☀ March 7, 2001: Williamsport, Pennsylvania

A 14 year-old brings his father's handgun to school and shoots a classmate in the shoulder.

☀ March 22, 2001: El Cajon, California

Three teens and two teachers were wounded at Granite Hills High School by gunfire.

☀ March 30, 2001: Gary, Indiana

A student was shot in the head while waiting for a class to begin.

☀ January 15, 2002: New York, New York

A teenager wounded two students at Martin Luther King Jr. High.

☀ October 4, 2002: San Antonio, Texas

A 13-year-old female middle school student fatally shot herself in the left temple with a 9mm handgun in front of a group of friends in the school parking lot.

☀ November 19, 2002: Hoover, Alabama

Two 17 year old males were reportedly fighting in a hallway when one student pulled a knife and stabbed the other to death.

☀ November, 22, 2002: Dallas, Texas

A 15-year-old male high school student was shot as he and fellow students tried to wrestle a gun away from another 14-year-old student.

☀ December 12, 2002: Seattle, Washington

A 13-year-old male fired a rifle in a middle school, injuring two students with broken glass, and then used the gun to kill himself according to police reports.

**❁ December 16, 2002: Chicago, Illinois**

**An 18-year-old male high school student was fatally shot outside of Englewood High School, while trying to protect his sister from two other male students.**

**❁ January 21, 2003: Fontana, CA**

**A 50-year-old school district maintenance worker recently accused of child molestation hanged himself at an elementary school before the start of school. A teacher found him hanging from a gazebo in a quad area of the elementary school before 7am. No students were present and school was canceled.**

**❁ January 22, 2003: Providence, Rhode Island**

**A 12th-grade male student was arrested for allegedly firing a .22 caliber gun inside the school's cafeteria after an assistant principal had broken up a fight. The shot was fired toward the ceiling and no one was injured.**

**❁ January 27, 2003: Crescent, OK**

**Three eighth-grader middle school students were arrested for allegedly carrying pipe bombs into their school. The pipe bombs were reportedly 4 to 6 inches long; one was made of PVC pipe and the other from a film canister. Fireworks-style fuses were used on the devices.**

**❁ January 30, 2003: St. Paul, Minnesota**

**A 14-year-old female middle school student was stabbed in the shoulder and two teenage males were taken into custody following a confrontation at the school.**

**❁ January 30, 2003: Jenks, Oklahoma**

**A 17-year-old male student armed with a 9mm semiautomatic handgun climbed onto the roof of the school's gym and threatened suicide. He also pointed the gun at an assistant principal and later surrendered peacefully.**

**❁ February 5, 2003: Westminster, Colorado**

**A 14-year-old male freshman was taken into custody after several shots were fired in a high school courtyard.**

**❁ March 11, 2003: Gilbert, AZ**

**Six youths were identified by police in an alleged plot to carry out a Columbine-style "massacre" at their high school. Authorities reportedly found notes and information indicating discussion of bombs and other violent plans.**

**❁ March 17, 2003: Guttenberg, Iowa**

**A 17-year-old walked into his high school principal's office, thanked the principal for listening to his problems stating "talking would no longer help," pulled out a .22 caliber rifle from underneath his coat, and shot himself in the stomach.**

**❁ March 21, 2003: Lawndale, California**

**Two teenage high school males were arrested after classmates told a school security officer that the pair had made threats. Officers found a journal with names of students and teachers the two may have been targeting. An unfinished pipe bomb was also found at one of the boy's homes, along with instructions downloaded from the Internet.**

**❁ April 1, 2003: Washington, DC**

**A 16-year-old male high school student was shot in the leg during a lunchtime argument with another 15-year-old student who fled afterwards and later turned himself in to police.**

**❁ April 16, 2003: Addison, Texas**

**A 12-year-old female student committed suicide by shooting herself in a private school restroom.**



**☀ April 23, 2003: Houston, Texas**

A 16-year-old male high school student received a 6 to 7 inch slash wound in the chest during a fight with other students outside his high school during lunch period.

**☀ April 24, 2003: Red Lion, Pennsylvania**

A 14-year-old male junior high school student shot and killed his principal inside a crowded cafeteria and then killed himself with a second gun according to police

**☀ May 23, 2003: Texas City, Texas**

A bomb was found in the home of a 16-year-old high school male freshman who allegedly planned to kill the school district's police chief, according to prosecutors.

**☀ September 18, 2003: Atlanta, Georgia**

A 14-year-old Lovejoy High School student was arrested after police said he planned a Columbine-style massacre at the school.

**☀ September 24, 2003: Cold Spring, Minnesota**

One student is dead and another hospitalized after a shooting in a Minnesota high school. A physical education teacher, Mark Johnson, talked the student into surrendering.

**☀ August 14, 2003: Columbus Georgia**

A 14-year-old girl went back to her middle school to visit her old teachers. While she was there, a fight broke out between two boys, each 13, in the woods behind the school. Several students went into the woods to watch and the girl went with them. During the fight, one of the boys pulled out a gun and opened fire. As the students fled, one of the bullets struck the girl killing the high school co-ed.

**☀ August 30, 2004: Maywood, Illinois**

A 22-year-old male brother of a high school student was killed in a possible gang related shooting in a high school student parking lot while waiting to pick up his brother around 2:30 p.m.

**☀ September 2004: Memphis, Tennessee**

A 15-year-old male eighth grade student died after a fight in a high school restroom. Six teenagers were subsequently charged with homicide. Prosecutors reported that the incident allegedly involved a gang initiation in which the victim had agreed to fight, but the fight got "out of hand" according to reports. Those charged were aged thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen.

**☀ October 7, 2004: Newburyport, Massachusetts**

A 15-year-old male high school student shot and killed himself outside of his high school around 10:00 p.m. He was reportedly despondent after a falling out with a female student.

**☀ November 17, 2004: Hempstead, New York**

A 17-year-old high school student was stabbed to death two blocks from the school during a lunch hour altercation with six to eight youths. Police were investigating whether the incident was gang related.

**☀ November 22, 2004: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

An 18-year-old former student was shot and killed, and two current female students were injured, in a shooting outside of a North Philadelphia high school.

**☀ November 24, 2004: Valparaiso, Indiana**

James Lewerke, a 15-year-old student at Valparaiso High School in northern Indiana, pulled two knives and stabbed seven of his classmates. None of the injuries was life threatening.

**☀ December 10, 2004: Nine Mile Falls, Washington**

A 16-year-old male high school junior shot himself in the head and later died in an act of suicide committed at the high school's entryway around 1:20pm during a school day. The school was placed in lockdown and students were later released. A canister holding fireworks, shotgun shells, and rifle cartridges was found in a backpack belonging to the student around 3:30pm.

**☀ March 21, 2005: Red Lake, Minnesota**

Jeff Weise, 16, killed grandfather and companion, and then arrived at school where he killed a teacher, a security guard, 5 students, and finally himself, leaving a total of 10 dead.

**☀ August 25, 2006: Essex, VT**

A gunman looking for an old girlfriend bursts into a Vermont elementary school and kills a teacher.

**☀ September 13, 2006: Van Nuys, CA:** A student was shot and killed in a crosswalk in front of the school. Incident is suspected to be gang related.

**☀ September 25, 2006: Las Vega, NV:**

A bus driver pulled over to drop off students. One student got off the bus and then shot at it. Three bullets hit the back of the bus, but none of the 34 students on board were injured.

**☀ September 27, 2006: Bailey, CO:**

An adult male sexual predator enters the school, sexual assaulted 6 female students, kills a fleeing girl, and then kills himself.

**☀ September 29, 2006: Cazenovia, WI:**

An angry 15 year old student who had been discipline the day before, enter the school with multiple weapons and shot his principal. No students were injured.

**☀ October 2, 2006: Nickel Mines, PA:**

An adult male sexual predator enters a one room Amish School, kills 6 female students and himself.

**☀ October 9, 2006: Joplin, MO:**

A Columbine copy-cat, a 13 year old male student fires a round in the ceiling, his gun jammed. His teacher talks him into leaving.

**☀ October 18, 2006: Orlando, FL:**

A 15-year-old male student died after the stabbing with a 3-inch serrated pocket knife at a bus stop at a central Florida high school as classes let out. The student was stabbed multiple times in an apparent argument over a girl that began during lunchtime.

## Appendix B

## Survey Results

High School Principals	Middle School Principals	High School Resource Officers	Middle School Resource Officers	Total Number Surveyed
18	17	16	11	262
28%	26%	25%	17%	24%
All participating principals		All participating school resource officers		Total Number Surveyed
35 out of 131		27 out of 131		262
27%		21%		24%

**Number of Students enrolled at each school surveyed\***

100-500	501-1000	1001-1500	1501-2000	2001-2500	Over 2501
6	12	5	6	1	2

\*Three participants surveyed did not answer this question

**School Resource Officer assigned to their school**

Yes	No	Skipped the question
34	0	1

**One-point entry schools**

Yes	No	Skipped the question
5	28	2

**If not one-point entry, list the number of entries**

2-9 entries	10-17 entries	17-24 entries	More than 24	Skipped the question
18	8	3	0	6

**School Safety Assessment completed**

Yes	No	Skipped the question
25	8	2

**Security measures put in place based on assessment**

Yes	No	Skipped the question
20	7	8

**Security cameras throughout the school**

Yes	No	Skipped the question
21	28	2

**Camera system monitoring**

Security company	Staff member	SRO	Other person	Skipped question
2	9	13	5	15

**Metal detectors at each entrance**

Yes	No	Skipped the question
0	34	1

Crimes on campus	Number of Incidents	Principals responding	Number of Incidents	SRO's responding
Assault	109	18	69	17
Battery	178	23	140	18
Bomb threat	1	21	3	16
Disruption of school function	134	22	90	17
Drug possession	105	24	91	18
Drug sales	8	22	Not included on survey	Not included on survey
Firearms charges	1	21	4	16
Intruder on campus	14	21	18	16
Threats	88	21	35	15
Weapon on campus	24	22	19	17
Skipped question		10		7

**Safe School**

Very safe – minimal threat of incidents	Safe – some threat of incidents	Not very safe – more than some threat of incidents	Not safe- many threats of incidents	Skipped the question
15	18	1	0	1

Florida School Districts: 67 – only 66 surveys were sent to each high school principal, middle school principals, high school SRO's and middle school SRO's (unable to identify schools in Glades County)

Appendix C

Principal School Security Survey

**1. You are a principal at what school?**

High School

Middle School

**2. How many students are enrolled at your school?**

100-500

501-1000

1001-1500

1501-2000

2001-2500

more than 2501

**3. Is there a School Resource Officer assigned to your school?**

Yes

No

**4. Does your school have a one-point entry?**

Yes - If yes, go to question 6

No

**5. If your school does not have a one point entry, how many entrances does your school have?**

2 to 9

10 to 17

17 to 24

more than 24

**6. Has your school had a safety assessment completed?**

Yes

No - If no, go to question 9.

**7. When was the school safety assessment completed?**

2006-2007 school year

2005-2006 school year

2004-2005 school year

longer than three years ago

**8. Where security measures put in place based on safety assessment?**

Yes

No

**9. Do you have security cameras throughout the school?**

Yes

No - If no, go to question 12.

**10. Is your security camera system connected to a recording system?**

Yes

No

**11. Who monitors the security camera system?**

Security company

Dedicated School staff member

School Resource Officer

Other person

**12. Does your school have metal detectors installed at each entrance?**

Yes

No

**13. How many of the following incidents occurred on your campus during 2006-2007 school year?**

Assault

Battery

Bomb threat

Disruption of school function

Drug possession

Drug sales

Firearms charge

Intruder on campus

Threats

Weapon on campus

**14. In your view your school is:**

Very Safe - minimal threat of incidents

Safe - some threat of incidents

Not very safe - more than some threat of incidents

Not safe – many threats of incidents

Appendix D

School Resource Officer Survey

**1. You are an SRO at what school?**

- High School
- Middle School

**2. How many students are enrolled at your school?**

- 100-500
- 501-1000
- 1001-1500
- 1501-2000
- more than 2001

**3. Does your school have a one-point entry?**

- Yes
- No

**4. Has your school had a safety assessment completed?**

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

**5. Have you participated in a school safety assessment at your assigned school?**

- Yes
- No - If no, go to 7.

**6. Were security measures put in place based on a safety assessment?**

- Yes
- No

**7. If there is a security camera system in your school, are you responsible for monitoring the security camera system?**

Yes

No

**8. How many of the following incidents occurred on your campus during 2006-2007 school year?**

Assault

Battery

Bomb threat

Disruption of school  
function

Drug possession

Firearms charge

Intruder on campus

Threats

Weapon on campus

**9. Does your school principal include you in administrative meetings with school personnel?**

All of the meetings.

Only when meeting is related to  
security issues.

Never.

**10. Do you feel your principal has the same view of school security as you do as an SRO?**

Yes

No

Somewhat

**11. In your view your school is:**

Very safe - minimal threat of incidents

Safe - some threat of incidents

Not very safe- more than some threat of violence

Not safe - many threat of incidents