The 2010 Virginia School Safety Audit Survey Results

The 2010 Virginia School Safety Audit Survey Results
may be found on the internet at
www.dcjs.virginia.gov

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Executive Summary

Legislation enacted in 2005 designated the Virginia Center for School Safety (VCSS) of the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) to prescribe the safety audit content and reporting process for the School Safety Audit program. As part of its continuing work toward revising the audit process, the VCSS and Criminal Justice Research Center develop and conduct an on-line school safety survey which allows schools and school divisions to meet their Code mandate to annually report safety audit data to the VCSS. The first Virginia School Safety Survey was conducted in 2005. Annual reports can be found on the DCJS website at www.dcjs.virginia.gov/vcss/audit/index.cfm. The 2010 survey collected information that describes school safety policies, practices and conditions in Virginia public schools during the 2009–2010 academic school year. The survey was conducted in August through October 2010 and covered school safety-related topics such as: school demographic information; assessment, planning and communication; and school security/surveillance.

Major Findings from the 2009-2010 School Survey

❖ 2,002 public schools operating in Virginia in school year 2009–2010 completed the survey by the publication date of this report. This represents 100% compliance.

❖ Approximately one-fifth 19% (376) of schools reported that they activated some portion of their Crisis Management Plan (CMP) or Emergency Management Plan (EMP) due to an actual emergency (not including weather-related activations). Of 376 schools reporting activation of their CMP/EMP, the most common reason for activation was an incident occurring off school grounds in the community, such as a crime or accident.

❖ A large majority of schools 89% (1,777) had an automated *Electronic Notification System (ENS)* that notifies parents/guardians when there is an emergency at the school. This represents a substantial increase from 33% of schools in 2005-06.

❖ A large majority of schools 80% (1,596) reported using a formal threat assessment process to respond to student threats of violence. Of those that used such a process, 75% (1,194 schools) reported using the guidelines developed by the University of Virginia.

❖ Two-thirds of schools 66% (1,320) routinely received notification from local law enforcement of certain offenses committed by students. This constitutes a 12% decrease from last year's 78%.

❖ More than one-third of schools 37% (737) reported administering an anonymous safety survey to their students. Among these 737 schools, bullying was the top safety concern among elementary, middle and high school students. Bullying has been identified as the top safety concern among students for the past three years.

❖ Schools reported an average of 4.5 prevention programs from a list of common types of programs.

» Elementary schools were most likely to have a bullying prevention program (81%), a problem-solving or social skills training/curriculum (64%), and a conflict resolution program (61%).

» Middle schools were most likely to have a bullying prevention program (86%), a conflict resolution program (68%), a mentoring program (67%) and an anonymous method to report safety concerns (66%).

» High schools were most likely to have a mentoring program (75%), a truancy prevention program (72%) and an anonymous method to report safety concerns (72%).

❖ The number of schools using a *controlled access system* has increased over the past three years from 26% in 2006–2007 to 48% in 2009–2010.

❖ A large majority of schools 87%, (1,737) indicated that all exterior entrances to their building/campus (other than the main entrance) were locked during school hours.

❖ Fewer than half of schools 42% (840) checked visitor names (including parents/guardians) against the sex offender registry bulletins.

❖ Overall, 34% (685) of schools had some type of safety or security personnel present at all times during the school day, including 10% (113) of elementary/primary schools, 68% (225) of middle schools, and 85% (259) of high schools.

❖ Only 7% (137) of schools reported having gang-related problems or incidents during the 2009–2010 school year. This represents a decrease from 9% during the 2008–2009 school year, and 13% during the 2007–2008 school year. The rate is highest 22% (68 schools) among high schools.

Major Findings from the 2009–2010 Division Survey

❖ 133 school divisions in Virginia (including Department of Correctional Education) responded to the division-level survey as of the publication of this report. This represents 100% compliance.

❖ Approximately one-fourth of school divisions (27%, 37) adopted new or substantially amended safety and/or security-related policies into their division's policy manual in the 2009–2010 school year.

❖ Only 15% (19) of school divisions reported that they have a student drug testing policy.

❖ Two-thirds (66%, 88) of school divisions have provided emergency responders (police/fire/EMTs, etc.) with electronic or digital floor plans of all of their school buildings or campuses.

❖ Nearly all 90% (119) of school divisions used School Resource Officers (SROs).

❖ More than one-third (38%, 50) of school divisions used School Security Officers (SSOs).

INTRODUCTION

Since 1997, the Virginia General Assembly has required all public schools to conduct school safety audits (§ 22.1-279.8). The purpose of the audit is to assess the safety conditions of schools, identify and develop solutions for physical safety concerns, including building security issues, and identify and evaluate patterns of student safety concerns. Responses and solutions based on the audit include recommendations for structural adjustments, changes in school safety procedures, and revisions to the school division's student code of conduct. Although the VDOE developed the original safety audit process, legislation governing the audit was modified and responsibility for the development, standardization, and analysis of the items was transferred to the VCSS at the DCJS in 2005. The first automated Virginia School Safety Survey was conducted by the VCSS in 2005 using data gathered from the 2004–2005 school year.

In 2007, the VCSS partnered with the University of Virginia's Curry School of Education to conduct the Virginia High School Safety Study, which included additional surveys completed by students and teachers. This study, conducted as part of Virginia's School Safety Audit program, was conducted to fulfill the mandate in *Virginia Codes* § 22.1-279.8 and § 9.1-184 to identify and evaluate patterns of school safety concerns. A series of reports on overall study findings and practice implications was disseminated to all high schools by the University of Virginia's Curry School of Education. These reports can be found online at http://youthviolence.edschool.virginia.edu/prevention/vhss.html

The survey process is updated each year to maintain its effectiveness and relevance. As a result, some topics are identified as requiring further examination each year, while other questions are continued to allow for trend analyses. In 2010, the University of Virginia's (U.Va.) Curry School of Education and, Youth-Nex, the U.Va. center for positive youth development undertook primary responsibilities for authoring this report, and conducted supplemental analyses not included in reports from previous years.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

In August 2010, all Virginia school division superintendents were contacted and directed to the Virginia Safety Survey Website. They were instructed to inform each of their division's school principals about the website and survey requirements. The website provided information about the survey and support for superintendents and principals, including survey instructions, a list of terms and definitions, frequently-asked questions, a preview list of survey questions and a link to the survey. Additionally, superintendents were asked to update their contact information and to review and update a list of their division's schools. Superintendents could also view the completed surveys submitted by their division's schools and make the changes they deemed appropriate. The web-based Virginia School Safety Survey was developed and administered for the VCSS by the DCJS Research Center. School principals or their designees completed the web-based school survey and provided information that reflected conditions during the 2009–2010 school year. In addition to the survey completed by school principals, a division-level survey was completed by the division superintendent or his/her designee. The surveys were conducted from August to October of 2010.

SURVEY OF VIRGINIA SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION

The Virginia School Safety Survey asked about safety-related policies and practices in individual schools. The survey addressed topics such as: school identification and demographic information; assessment, planning, and communication; and school security and surveillance. Of the 2,002 public schools (as defined by DCJS for purposes of this survey) operating in Virginia in school year 2009–2010, 100% completed the survey by the publication date of this report. The 2,002 responding schools represent all of Virginia's 133 school divisions, as well as Virginia's Academic-Year Governor's Schools, Regional Alternative Education Programs, Regional Career and Technical Programs, Regional Special Education Programs, schools within the Department of Correctional Education and the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind.

This section of the report discusses the school survey findings. The information is organized by the following categories: school identification and demographic information; crisis management plan (CMP) / emergency management plan (EMP); safety concerns of students and staff, school security and surveillance, and gangs. The schools' responses to the survey questions are summarized in text, tables, and charts. A copy of the survey instrument can be found in Appendix A of this report. Appendix B contains definitions for pertinent terms used in this report.

SCHOOL IDENTIFICATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. **Which of the following best describes your school?**

    As shown in Chart 1, elementary schools make up 57% (1,136) of the 2,002 Virginia public schools. Middle and high schools make up 16% (330) and 15% (305), respectively. Other types of Virginia public schools reported less frequently included: Primary (Note that the 1,136 elementary schools and 30 primary schools are combined when items were examined for different school types separately later in this report.), Governor's, Magnet, Department of Correctional Education, Charter, Adult Education and Deaf and Blind, Correctional Education, Special Education and Other.

CHART 1
Types of Public Schools in Virginia (Total of 2,002 Schools)
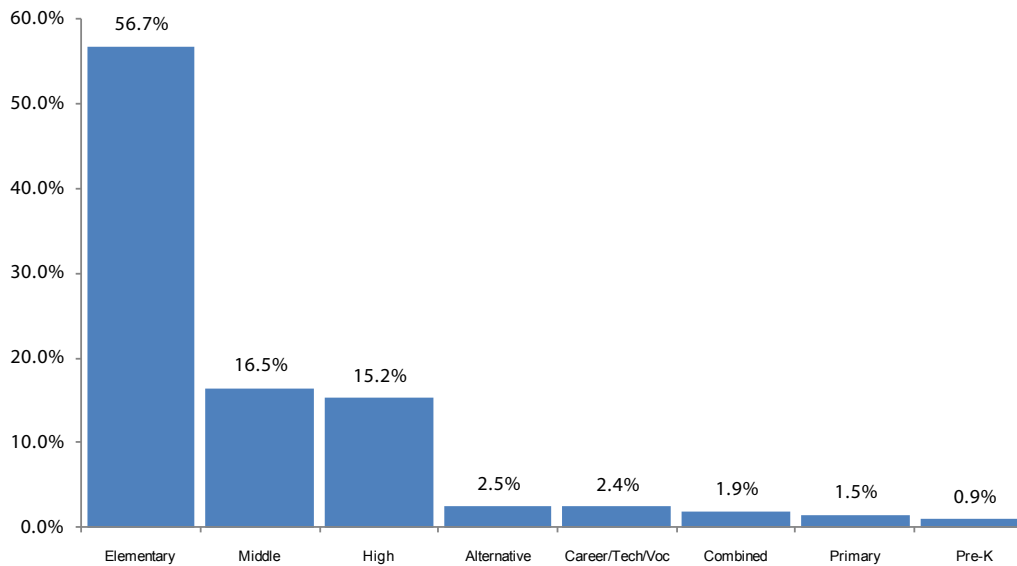
2. **What was your enrollment at the start of the 2009–2010 school year?**

Table 1 displays the range of student enrollment numbers in Virginia's public schools. Most schools (74%, 1,481) had between 251 and 1,000 students.

TABLE 1
School Enrollment (Total of 2,002 Schools)

Enrollment Range	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools	Cumulative Percent
0-50	36	1.8%	1.8%
51-250	218	10.9%	12.7%
251-500	620	31.0%	43.7%
501-1000	861	43.0%	86.7%
1001-1500	154	7.7%	94.4%
1501-2000	74	3.7%	98.1%
2001-2500	28	1.4%	99.5%
2501-3000	7	0.3%	99.8%
3001+	4	0.2%	100.0%

School enrollment size also varied by the type of school. Table 2 presents enrollment data for school types with at least 50 schools. Generally, elementary schools had smaller enrollments, and enrollment size increased with grade levels. Vocational and alternative schools typically had smaller enrollments compared to middle and high schools.

TABLE 2
Enrollment by School Type

	0-50	51-250	251-500	501-1000	1001-1500	1501-2000	2001+
Elementary	1	121	440	562	12	0	0
Middle	2	12	74	171	67	4	0
High	2	12	41	81	68	67	34
Career/Tech/Vocational	3	7	19	15	3	0	1
Alternative	22	22	4	1	0	1	0

CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN (CMP) / EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN (EMP)

Code § 22.1-279.8 describes school crisis and emergency management plans and states that "each school board shall ensure that every school that it supervises shall develop a written school crisis, emergency management, and medical response plan."

3. **How was your school's CMP/EMP practiced during the 2009–2010 school year?**

   Nearly all schools (97%, 1,932) conducted some sort of CMP/EMP practice with their administration, faculty and/or staff during the 2009–2010 school year.

   As shown in Table 3, almost all schools (93%, 1,853) practiced their CMP/EMP plan and most schools (70%, 1,401) reported that they conducted student training or awareness sessions. About one-fourth (23%, 454) said that they coordinated their practices with local first responders.

TABLE 3
Type of CMP/EMP PRACTICED (Total of 2,002 Schools)

Type of CMP/EMP Practice	Percent of schools
Administration/faculty/staff training	92.6%
Student training/awareness sessions	70.0%
Table top exercises with crisis team members	27.4%
First responder coordination (EMS, fire, police, hazmat, etc.)	22.7%
Full scale drill with crisis team and public safety partners	15.6%
Parent training/awareness sessions	11.5%
Did not practice our CMP/EMP	3.5%

Survey respondents were asked to check all responses that apply, so totals may exceed 100%.

4. **Did you have to activate any portion of your crisis management plan during the 2009–2010 school year due to an actual *emergency* or crisis? If so, how many times did you activate the plan and why did you activate your crisis plan?**

   About a fifth (19%, 376) of schools activated some portion of their school's crisis management plan during the 2009–2010 school year due to an emergency.

   Fifteen percent (179) of elementary/primary schools activated some portion of their crisis management plan, 22% (71) of middle schools activated some portion of their crisis management plan, and 32% (98) of high schools activated some portion of their crisis management plan.

   Of the 376 schools that activated some portion of their school's crisis management plan during the 2009–2010 school year, the most common reason was a community incident that affected the school (26%, 96). The two other most common reasons were a violent event or crime off school property (19%, 73), and student or staff accident or death on or off campus (19%, 73). *See Table 4.*

TABLE 4
Cause of CMP Activation (For 376 Schools that Activated CMP)

Cause of Crisis Management Plan Activation	All Schools N=376	Elementary/ Primary Schools N=179	Middle Schools N=71	High Schools N=98
Community incident that affected school	25.5%	29.6%	22.5%	15.3%
Incident of violence/crime occurring off school property	19.4%	23.5%	21.1%	12.2%
Student or staff accident or death (on/off campus)	19.4%	14.0%	19.7%	29.6%
Power outage or utility malfunction	13.0%	12.3%	15.5%	15.3%
Bomb threat	10.9%	6.1%	12.7%	19.4%
Suspicious person/intruder	7.7%	6.7%	5.6%	12.2%
Incident at another school that affected your school	6.6%	6.7%	8.5%	3.1%
Incident of violence/crime occurring on school property	5.6%	3.9%	2.8%	10.2%
Fire	5.1%	3.9%	4.2%	9.2%
Hazardous chemical incident	1.6%	0.6%	0.0%	4.1%
Other	18.9%	20.7%	19.7%	14.3%

Survey respondents were asked to check all responses that apply, so totals may exceed 100%.

5. **Does your school use a formal threat assessment process to respond to student threats of violence?**

A large majority of schools (80%, 1,596) reported using a formal threat assessment process to respond to student threats of violence. This included 78% (914) of elementary/primary schools, 84% (277) of middle schools, and 84% (255) of high schools.

Of these 1,596 schools, 75% (1,194) reported that they followed the guidelines developed by the University of Virginia (U.Va.). This included 60% (694) of elementary/primary schools, 63% (208) of middle schools and 60% (182) of high schools.

Of the 1,596 schools using a formal threat assessment procedure, 39% (626) reported conducting a threat assessment. Of the 626 schools that assessed threats, 164 (26%) reported that the threat was determined to be serious or substantive. This included 21% (53) of elementary schools, 33% (54) of middle schools, and 30% (44) of high schools that determined a student threat to be serious or substantive.

6. **Does your school have an *electronic notification system (ENS)* for notifying parents/guardians of an *emergency* at your school? If so, did your school use its electronic notification system during the 2009–2010 school year?**

A large majority of schools (89%, 1,777) have an automated electronic notification system that notifies parents/guardians when there is an emergency at the school. Only 10% of these schools (169) had to use their electronic notification system during the 2009–2010 school year.

Chart 2 shows how the percentage of schools with an ENS has increased over the years.

CHART 2
Schools with Emergency Notification System — 2004/2005 – 2009/2010
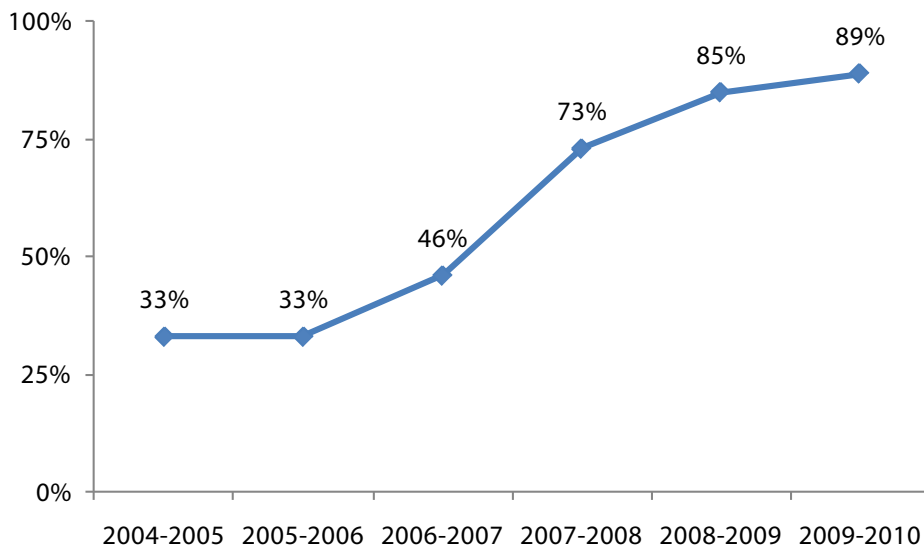
The 169 schools that said they had to use their ENS were also asked what emergency circumstances caused them to have to activate their school's system. *See Table 5.*

TABLE 5
Cause of Emergency Notification System Activation (Only Schools that Activated ENS)

Cause of Emergency Notification System Activation	Percent of Schools N=169
Community incident that affected school	21.9%
Incident of violence/crime occurring off school property	19.5%
Student or staff accident or death (on/off campus)	16.0%
Bomb threat	13.6%
Power outage or utility malfunction	11.2%
Incident of violence/crime occurring on school property	7.7%
Fire	5.9%
Incident at another school that affected your school	4.1%
Hazardous chemical incident	1.8%
Suspicious person/intruder	0.0%
Other	0.0%

Survey respondents were asked to check all responses that apply, so totals may exceed 100%.

7. **How often are lockdown drills practiced at your school during the school year?**

The majority of schools practiced lockdown drills either once every four months (19%), once every six months (15%) or annually (44%). *See Table 6.*

TABLE 6
Frequency of Lockdown Drills (Total of 2,002 Schools)

Frequency of Lockdown Practices	Percent of schools
Once per year	44.4%
Once every four months	18.6%
Once every six months	15.3%
Once every three months	7.7%
Once every two months	3.4%
Once a month	2.9%
Never	2.5%
Every two years	1.6%
Other	3.4%

Schools were also asked by which method they account for students during lockdown drills. Nearly all schools (98%, 1,959) used head counts conducted with an attendance roster.

8. **Does your school routinely receive notification from local law enforcement on offenses listed in *Virginia Code* § 22.1-279.3:1 (Paragraph B)?**

Two-thirds of schools (66%, 1,320) routinely receive notification from local law enforcement of certain offenses committed by students.

SAFETY CONCERNS OF STUDENTS AND STAFF

9. **Did your school distribute an anonymous survey/questionnaire to students in the 2009–2010 school year to assess student school safety concerns? Based on questionnaire responses, what *three* issues concerned students most?**

Approximately one-third of schools (37%, 737) administered an anonymous questionnaire about safety concerns to students during the 2009–2010 school year. When these schools were asked which three issues students are most concerned about, bullying was reported by 83% of schools (612). *See Chart 3* for a list of the most frequently mentioned concerns.

CHART 3
Student Safety Concerns (737 Schools)
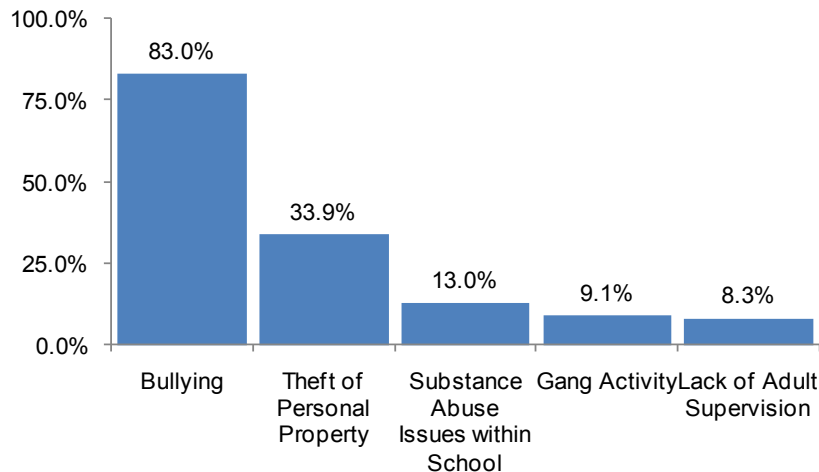
Other issues cited included 'weapons on campus' (2%) and 'other' (55%). The survey did not include a write-in item for this question, so no additional information is available.

For students at elementary, middle, and high school levels, the most common safety concern was bullying by wide margins. High school students were somewhat more concerned with theft of personal property and substance abuse issues than were middle school and elementary/primary school students.

CHART 4
Student Concerns, by School Type (737 Schools that Administered a Survey)
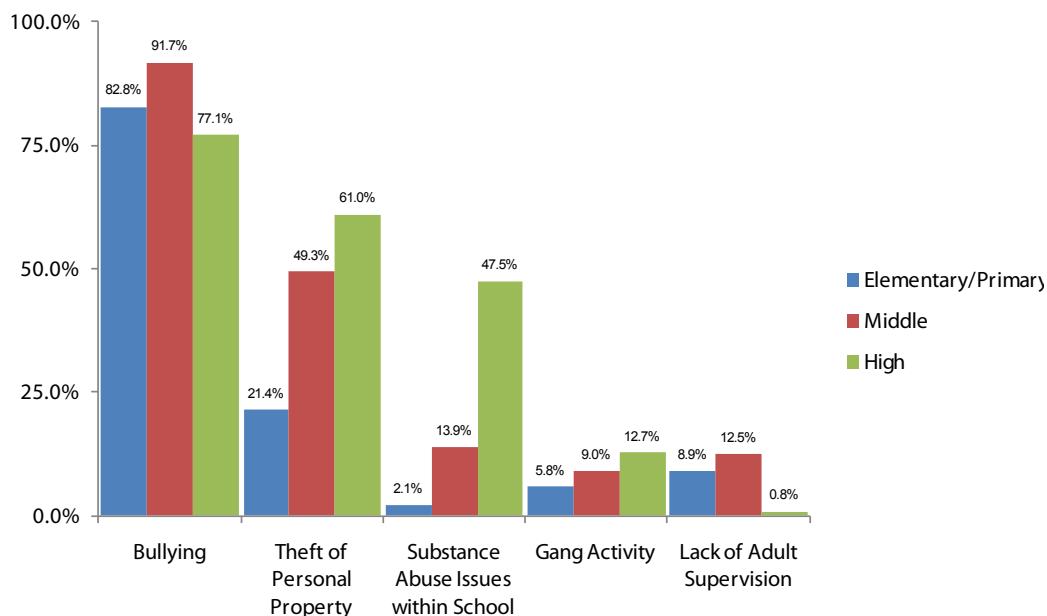
10. Please *indicate whether a formal (school safety/prevention) program is currently in place at your school:*

Respondents were asked which school safety programs were currently in place at their school. The majority of schools (76%, 1,521) reported a bullying prevention program, 62% (1,236) reported a conflict resolution program, and 61% (1,226) reported a mentoring program in place. Only 3% of schools reported no safety program in place. *See Table 7.*

Elementary schools were most likely to have a bullying prevention program (81%), a problem-solving or social skills training/curriculum (64%), and a conflict resolution program (61%). Middle schools were most likely to have a bullying prevention program (86%), a conflict resolution program (68%), a mentoring program (67%) and an anonymous method to report safety concerns (66%). High schools were most likely to have a mentoring program (75%), a truancy prevention program (72%) and an anonymous method to report safety concerns (72%).

Schools reported an average of 4.5 programs (4.3 for elementary/primary, 5.2 for middle, and 5.1 for high schools).

TABLE 7
School Safety/Prevention Programs in Schools During 2009–2010

Safety Initiative	All Schools N=2002	Elementary/ Primary Schools N=1166	Middle Schools N=330	High Schools N=305
Bullying prevention program	76.0%	81.0%	85.5%	62.0%
Conflict resolution program	61.7%	60.5%	68.2%	64.9%
Mentoring program	61.2%	59.4%	66.7%	75.1%
Problem-solving or social skills training/curriculum	58.8%	64.2%	60.3%	41.6%
Anonymous method to report a safety concern	57.3%	51.9%	66.4%	71.8%
Truancy prevention program	43.9%	33.5%	53.0%	72.1%
Substance abuse prevention program	39.6%	34.3%	48.2%	53.1%
Peer mediation program	34.7%	32.5%	41.8%	42.0%
Gang prevention program	17.4%	12.3%	25.5%	22.6%
None	2.7%	2.7%	0.9%	1.0%

Survey respondents were asked to check all responses that apply, so totals may exceed 100%.

11. Briefly describe your school's primary safety-related issue or emerging trend during the 2009–2010 school year.

Each person completing the survey was asked an open-ended question to identify the primary safety issue or trend facing his or her school. These written responses were carefully reviewed and grouped into two primary categories—Environmental Security and Student Safety—and a series of subcategories. *See Table 8.*

Responses were evenly divided among those who identified student safety concerns, environmental security needs and those who left the question blank. Notably, the most frequently identified student safety concern was bullying, mentioned by 309 schools. The most frequently identified environmental safety concern was the need for further building security measures, mentioned by 365 schools. Examples of Responses included in the 'Other' category were, "Tardies," "Custody issues that make their way into the school," and "An increase of racial tension during the school year."

TABLE 8
Primary Concerns Listed by All Schools (Total of 2,002 Schools)

Category	Number of Schools	Percentage N=2002
Student Safety	626	31.3%
Bullying	309	15.4%
Cyber-bullying, inappropriate use of technology	98	4.9%
Gangs	47	2.4%
Fighting/conduct problems	126	6.3%
Vandalism and theft	46	2.3%
Environmental Security	592	29.6%
Need for building security measures and procedures (e.g. locks, entry system, SRO, etc.)	365	18.2%
Neighborhood crime	34	1.7%
Cameras, movement through hallways, teachers checking hotspots	42	2.1%
Environmental Hazards (e.g. accidents, weather, fire alarms, construction)	103	5.2%
Traffic/buses	48	2.4%
Other (incl. substance use, exposure to domestic violence)	171	8.5%
No Problems / Nothing listed	612	30.6%

Table 9 (over) displays results for elementary/primary, middle, and high schools.

TABLE 9
Primary Concerns Listed by Elementary/Primary Schools

Category	Elementary/Primary Schools N=1166	Percentage
Student Safety	296	25.4%
Bullying	182	15.6%
Cyber-bullying, inappropriate use of technology	13	1.1%
Gangs	16	1.4%
Fighting/conduct problems	60	5.1%
Vandalism and theft	25	2.1%
Environmental Security	402	34.5%
Need for building security measures and procedures (e.g. locks, entry system, SRO, etc.)	246	21.1%
Neighborhood crime	15	1.3%
Cameras, movement through hallways, teachers checking hotspots	22	1.9%
Environmental Hazards (e.g. accidents, weather, fire alarms, construction)	35	3.0%
Traffic/buses	84	7.2%
Other (incl. substance use, exposure to domestic violence)	82	7.0%
No Problems / Nothing listed	386	33.1%

TABLE 9 (cont'd)
Primary Concerns Listed by Middle Schools

Category	Middle N=330	Percentage
Student Safety	158	47.9%
Bullying	86	26.1%
Cyber-bullying, inappropriate use of technology	35	10.6%
Gangs	10	3.0%
Fighting/conduct problems	23	7.0%
Vandalism and theft	4	1.2%
Environmental Security	71	21.5%
Need for building security measures and procedures (e.g. locks, entry system, SRO, etc.)	38	11.5%
Neighborhood crime	5	1.5%
Cameras, movement through hallways, teachers checking hotspots	7	2.1%
Environmental Hazards (e.g. accidents, weather, fire alarms, construction)	6	1.8%
Traffic/buses	14	4.2%
Other (incl. substance use, exposure to domestic violence)	16	4.8%
No Problems / Nothing listed	86	26.1%

TABLE 9 (cont'd)
Primary Concerns Listed by High Schools

Category	High N=305	Percentage
Student Safety	122	40.0%
Bullying	25	8.2%
Cyber-bullying, inappropriate use of technology	43	14.1%
Gangs	16	5.2%
Fighting/conduct problems	21	6.9%
Vandalism and theft	17	5.6%
Environmental Security	69	22.6%
Need for building security measures and procedures (e.g. locks, entry system, SRO, etc.)	44	14.4%
Neighborhood crime	13	4.3%
Cameras, movement through hallways, teachers checking hotspots	8	2.6%
Environmental Hazards (e.g. accidents, weather, fire alarms, construction)	1	0.3%
Traffic/buses	3	1.0%
Other (incl. substance use, exposure to domestic violence)	38	12.5%
No Problems / Nothing listed	76	24.9%

SCHOOL SECURITY AND SURVEILLANCE

12. **Is someone stationed at the front entrance of your school at all times during school hours to ensure that visitors report to the main office for visitor check-in? Is the main entrance to your school building/campus secured by a *controlled access system* during school hours? Other than the main entrance, are all exterior entrances to your school building/campus locked during school hours? Can all classrooms in your school be locked from both the inside and the outside of the classroom?**

Approximately half of all schools (52%, 1,031) stationed someone at the front entrance at all times during school hours. Similarly, 48% (956) of schools reported that the main entrance to the school building was secured by a <u>controlled access system</u> during school hours. Most schools (87%, 1,737) reported that all exterior entrances to the school building were locked during school hours. About half of schools (49%, 984) reported that all classrooms could be locked from both the inside and outside. *See Table 10.*

TABLE 10
School Security Measures

School Security Initiative	Percent of All Schools N=2002	Percentage of Elementary/Primary N=1166	Percentage of Middle N=330	Percentage of High N=305
All exterior entrances locked during school hours	86.8%	91.9%	87.6%	74.8%
Someone stationed at front door at all times	51.5%	49.3%	52.4%	62.6%
All classrooms can be locked from inside and outside	49.2%	47.3%	49.1%	51.8%
Main entrance secured by a controlled access system	47.8%	52.7%	43.9%	64.3%

13. Does your school monitor school buses and/or safety on school buses?

Almost all schools (96%, 1,916) reported that they had some formal procedures in place to monitor school buses and bus safety. Most schools (81%, 1,544) monitored buses using taped security cameras, while about half (49%, 929) of schools used random patrolling by school faculty or staff. Other less frequently used procedures were use of a bus aide or monitor, random patrolling by security personnel, use of a GPS tracking system, and use of a security camera monitored in real time. *See Table 11.*

TABLE 11
Bus Monitoring by Schools

Bus Monitoring Method	Percent of Schools N=1916
Security camera - taped, not monitored	80.6%
Randomly Patrolled by school faculty/staff	48.5%
Bus aide/monitor	37.1%
Randomly Patrolled by security personnel	17.0%
GPS tracking system	15.5%
Security camera - monitored in real time	12.6%
Other	9.2%

Survey respondents were asked to check all responses that apply, so totals may exceed 100%.

14. In reference to visitor check-in procedures at your school, are any visitors required to show photo ID?

Most schools (80%, 1,600) reported that visitors are required to show photo ID when checking in. A breakdown of requirements for different types of visitors is presented in Chart 5.

CHART 5
Visitors Required to Show ID (Percentage of 1,600 Schools Requiring Visitors to Show ID)
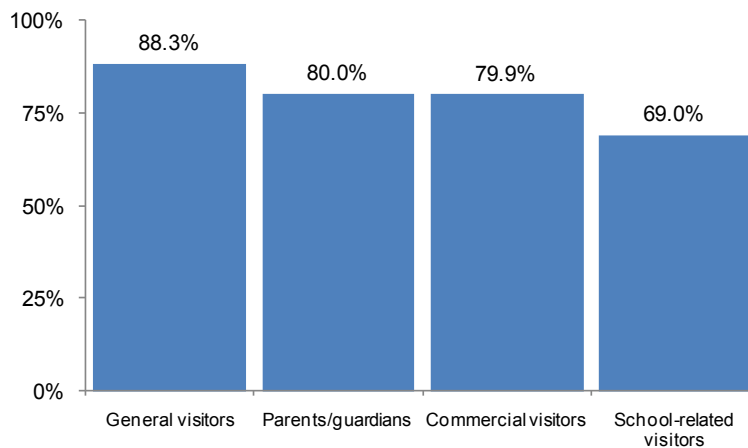
Survey respondents were asked to check all responses that apply, so totals may exceed 100%.

15. When checking in visitors (including parents/guardians), do office staff check all visitor names against the *sex offender registry* bulletins?

Fewer than half of schools (42%, 840) reported that office staff checked all visitor names against the *sex offender registry* bulletins when checking in visitors.

16. Does your school have safety/security personnel present at all times during the regular school day?

Approximately one-third of schools (34%, 685) reported that safety or security personnel were present at all times during the regular school day, including 10% (113) of elementary/primary schools, 68% (225) of middle schools, and 85% (259) of high schools.

Of these 685 schools, 75% (512) had a School Resource Officer (SRO) present at all times, 52% (356) had a School Safety Officer (SSO) present at all times, and 8% (52) had safety personnel in some other capacity present at all times.

Of the 512 schools that had an SRO present on campus, 32 (6%) had more than one SRO present at all times. Of the 356 of schools that had an SSO present on campus, 165 (46%) had more than one SSO present at all times. Notably, 40 schools (11%) had five or more SSOs on campus.

GANGS

17. Did your school have any gang-related problems or incidents during the 2009–2010 school year? Did the number of gang-related problems or incidents increase, decrease or stay about the same when compared with the previous school year?

Few schools (7%, 137) reported that they had gang-related problems or incidents during the 2009–2010 school year. Less than one percent of elementary/primary schools (11), and 11% (37) of middle schools and approximately one fifth (22%, 68) of high schools reported that they had gang-related problems or incidents.

Of all schools, 12% (246) reported that the number of gang-related problems or incidents decreased from the previous school year, 1% (16) said that gang-related incidents or problems had increased since last year and 87% (1,740) said that gang-related issues had stayed about the same from last year. Focusing on gang problems only in the 305 high schools, 1% of high schools (4) reported that gang problems were increasing, and 27% (81) of high schools reported that gang problems were decreasing.

Of those 137 schools that reported gang-related incidents or problems during the 2009–2010 school year, 40% (55) reported that gang-related incidents and problems were decreasing from last year, 11% (15) reported an increase and 49% (67) said that gang-related problems or incidents stayed about the same compared to last year. *See Chart 6.*

CHART 6
Change in Gang-Related Problems Since Last Year
(Percentage of 137 Schools Reporting Gang-Related Problems in 2009–2010)
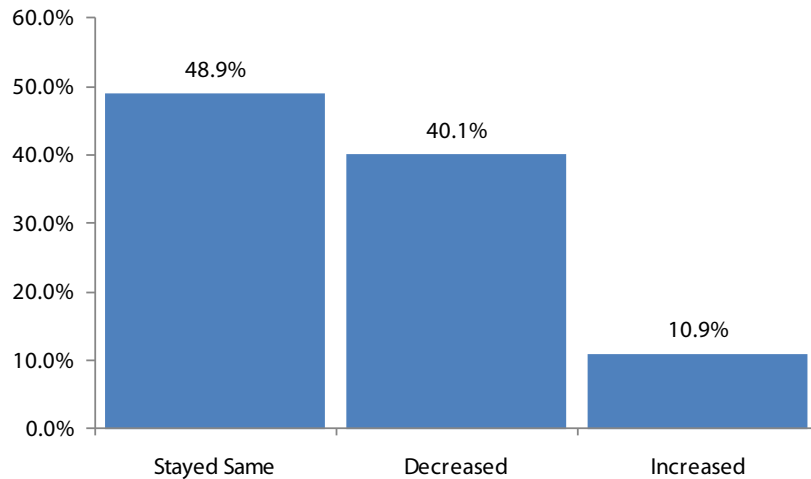
18. Did your school identify any gang-related graffiti found on school property during the 2009–2010 school year? Did gang-related graffiti increase, decrease, or stay about the same when compared with the previous year?

Generally, relatively few schools (16%, 326) reported that they identified gang-related graffiti found on school property during the 2009–2010 school year. However, when this was examined by school type, it was found that 42% (129) of high schools and 23% (75) of middle schools, and 7% (78) of elementary/primary schools found gang-related graffiti on school property.

Fourteen percent of schools (278) reported that gang-related graffiti was decreasing, 2% (37) reported an increase and 84% (1,687) reported that levels of gang-related graffiti had stayed about the same compared to last year.

Of the schools that identified gang-related graffiti, 4% (13) of schools reported that gang-related graffiti was increasing since last year, and 25% (77) of schools reported that gang-related graffiti was decreasing since last year.

19. Rate the overall threat of gang activity by street gangs in your school.

Schools were asked to rate the threat of gang activity by street gangs on a five-point scale. Nearly all schools reported that there was either no threat (55%) or only a low to medium threat (45%) of gang activity at their school. Only eight schools (0.4%) indicated that the threat from gangs at their school was higher than 'medium.' Results for all schools and for high schools only are presented in Charts 7 and 8 (over).

CHART 7
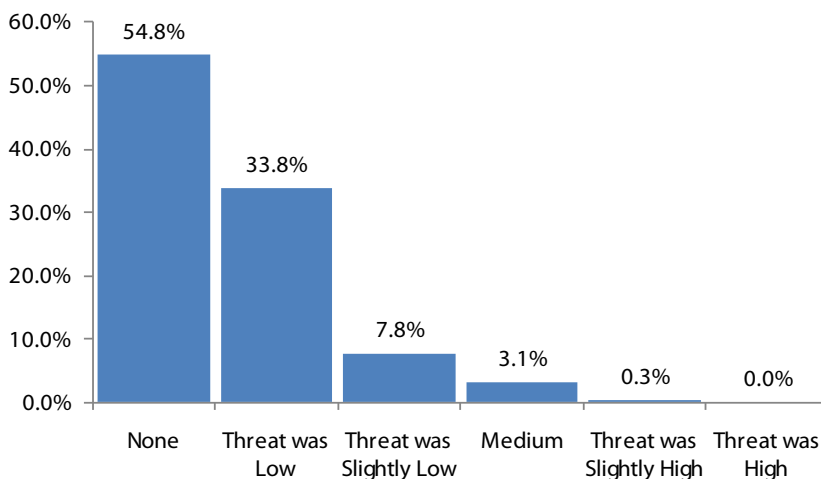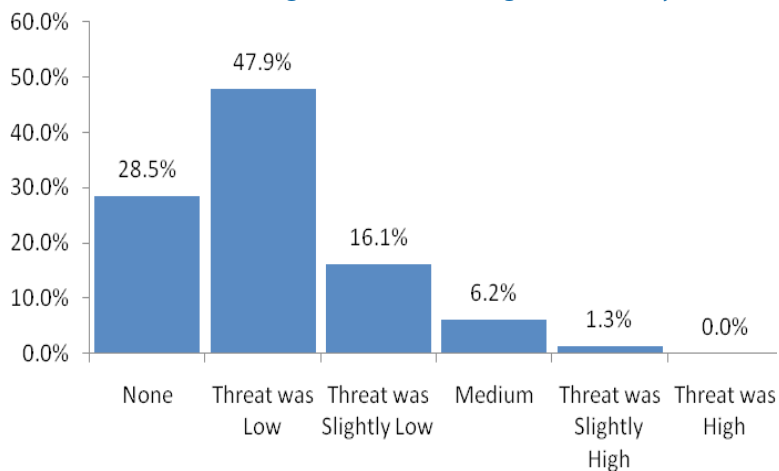**Threat of Gang Activity in 2009–2010 (Total of 2002 Schools)**

CHART 8
Threat from Gangs at School – 305 High Schools Only

SURVEY OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The division-level survey was designed to gather information about safety-related policies and practices administered at the division level and that generally apply to all schools within a division. More specifically, the survey questions covered topic areas such as: safety/security policy changes, student disciplinary policies, intervention programs, crisis management plans, collaboration with local emergency personnel and use of security personnel in the schools. All 133 school divisions in Virginia (including the Department of Correctional Education) responded to the division-level survey.

INTRODUCTION

1. **Were any new or substantially amended safety and/or security-related policies adopted into your division's policy manual in the 2009–2010 school year? What safety-related topics did the new or amended policies address?**

   There were 36 school divisions (27%) that adopted new or substantially amended safety and/or security-related policies into their division's policy manual in the 2009–2010 school year.

   The six most frequently adopted or amended policies among these 36 school divisions are shown in Chart 9.

CHART 9
Topics Addressed by New/Amended Policies
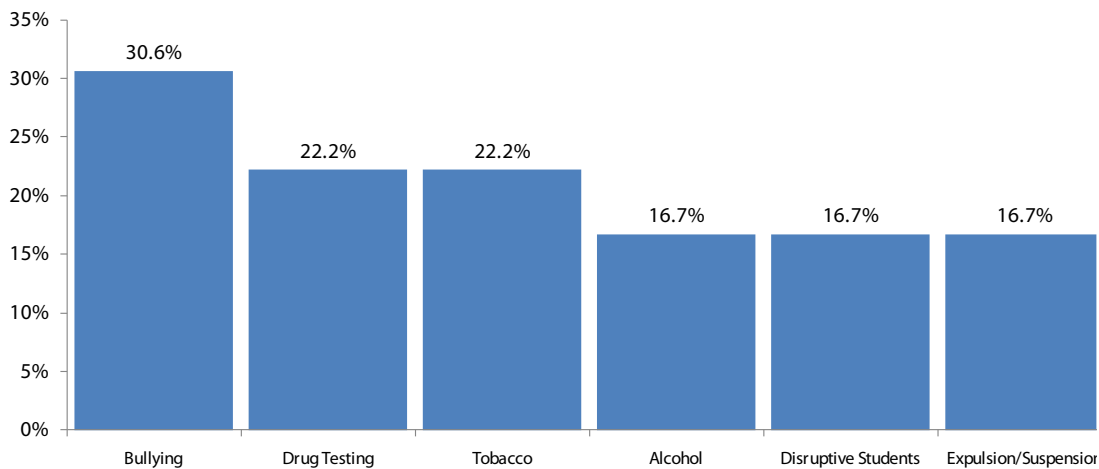
Survey respondents were asked to check all responses that apply, so totals may exceed 100%.

2. **Does your school division currently have a student drug testing policy? What segment(s) of your division's student population is subject to student drug testing?**

   Most school divisions (85%, 113) reported that they do not have a student drug testing policy. The remaining 15% (20) of school divisions said that they do have a student drug testing policy.

   Of the 20 school divisions with a student drug testing policy, nine test student athletes and four test students participating in extracurricular activities. Five school divisions said that they test students who are in violation of the division's substance abuse policy, and two divisions said they would test a student if there were probable cause. One school division has a policy of random testing of all students.

3. **Are all volunteers who work with students in your school division subjected to a screening process/background check prior to working in your school division (this includes both parent/guardian volunteers and non-parent/guardian volunteers)?**

   Three-quarters of the school divisions (67%, 89) reported that all volunteers who work with students were subjected to a screening process or background check. Table 12 presents the screening processes used by these 89 divisions.

TABLE 12
Screening Processes Used by 89 Divisions that Reported Using Background Checks

Screening Process	Frequency	Percentage N=89
Sex offender registry check	76	85.4%
Criminal background check	60	67.4%
Reference check	31	34.8%
Personal background check	26	29.2%

Survey respondents were asked to check all responses that apply, so totals may exceed the number of respondents.

4. **Does your school division have a threat assessment policy or procedure for dealing with student threats of violence?**

Nearly half of all school divisions (47%, 62) reported using the University of Virginia threat assessment model for dealing with student threats of violence. An additional 38% (50) of school divisions reported having a threat assessment policy or procedure that was not the U.Va.. threat assessment model. The remaining 16% of school divisions reported having no threat assessment policy or procedure in place.

TABLE 13
Use of Threat Assessment (133 School Divisions)

Response	Frequency	Percentage N=133
Yes, we use the UVA threat assessment model	62	46.6%
Yes, but not UVA threat assessment model	50	37.6%
We do not use a threat assessment model	21	15.8%

EMERGENCY PLANNING

5. **Has your school division provided emergency responders (police/fire/EMTs, etc.) with electronic or digital floor plans of your division's school buildings/campuses?**

Two-thirds of all school divisions (66%, 88) reported that they have provided emergency responders with electronic or digital floor plans of their school buildings/campuses.

6. **Has your school division developed a written, coordinated, division-wide Crisis Management Plan (CMP) or Emergency Management Plan (EMP)? If so, does your division's CMP/EMP address incidents involving school buses? Did your division's bus drivers receive training on the specific areas of the CMP/EMP that pertain to them?**

Almost all school divisions (96%, 127) reported that they had a written, coordinated, division-wide CMP or EMP. Of those 127 school divisions, 88% (112) reported that their CMP/EMP addressed incidents involving school buses. Of the 112 school divisions whose CMP/EMP addressed issues involving buses, almost all (93%, 105) reported that their bus drivers were trained on relevant areas of the CMP/EMP.

7. **Did your division provide any specialized counter-terrorism training for school bus drivers during the 2009–2010 school year?**

One-quarter of all school divisions (24%, 33) reported counter-terrorism training for school bus drivers during the 2009–2010 school year. Of these 33 school divisions, bus drivers were trained in reporting procedures for suspicious activity (85%, 28), bomb detection and identification, (61%, 20) and hostage situations (55%, 18).

8. **Which best describes your division's policy on the storage of school buses during the school year?**

Approximately one-third of school divisions (35%, 46) permit drivers to park school buses at their residence and one-quarter (26%, 34) park buses in a secure parking facility. A complete breakdown is reported in Table 14.

TABLE 14
Bus Storage Policy (133 School Divisions)

Response	Frequency	Percentage N=133
Drivers may park them at their residence	46	34.6%
Buses must be parked in a secure parking facility	34	25.6%
Buses must be parked on school property/division property	18	13.5%
Drivers may park school buses wherever possible	6	4.5%
Other	18	13.5%
Our school system has no storage policy for school buses during the school year	11	8.3%

9. **Which of the listed safety checks are performed on division school buses by drivers before they begin their AM and PM routes?**

Table 15 presents the safety checks that bus drivers perform before beginning their routes.

TABLE 15
Checks Performed by Bus Drivers (Total of 133 School Divisions)

Response	Frequency	Percentage N=133
Passenger area for unauthorized riders	108	81.2%
Undercarriage and passenger area for suspicious objects	92	69.2%
Certified Driver's License (CDL) check	88	66.2%
Undercarriage for suspicious objects	86	64.7%
Engine compartment for suspicious objects	85	63.9%
Other	12	9.0%
Don't know	8	6.0%

Survey respondents were asked to check all responses that apply, so totals may exceed the number of respondents.

10. **Does your school division maintain communication with school buses when they are in use?**

Almost all divisions (98%, 130) reported that they maintained communication with school buses when they were in use. Of these 130, most (85%, 110) reported using two-way radios, while others reported using a cell phone (39%, 50) and 5% maintained contact with buses some other way (6). Forty-two percent (55) reported that they communicated with buses when necessary by contacting the manager at the transportation department.

COLLABORATION WITH EMERGENCY RESPONDERS

11. **Does your division's administration have a process in place to regularly communicate/meet with local law enforcement to discuss problems in and around the schools?**

Eighty-seven percent of school divisions (115) reported that their administration had a process in place to regularly communicate/meet with local law enforcement to discuss problems in and around its schools.

12. **Does your division share or review the Discipline, Crime, and Violence (DCV) reports from its schools with law enforcement? Does your division administration regularly receive local crime data reports from your local law enforcement agency (in order to be aware of crimes occurring in areas near schools)?**

The majority of school divisions (63%, 84) reported that they share the Discipline, Crime, and Violence (DCV) reports with law enforcement. A slightly larger majority (70%, 93) reported that they received crime data reports from their local law enforcement agency.

SCHOOL SECURITY PERSONNEL

13. Does your school division use School Resource Officers (SROs) to enhance safety and security measures in your schools?

Almost all school divisions (90%, 119) reported using School Resource Officers (SROs) in their schools. As reported in Table 16, SROs are most often placed in high schools (98%, 116) or middle schools (83%, 99) rather than elementary schools (39%, 46).

TABLE 16
Schools Where School Resource Officers are Used (119 School Divisions Using SROs)

Response	Frequency	Percent Total = 119
High Schools	116	97.5%
Middle Schools	99	83.2%
Elementary Schools	46	38.7%
Alternative Schools	41	34.5%
Other	9	7.6%

Survey respondents were asked to check all responses that apply, so totals may exceed the number of respondents.

14. Does your school division use School Security Officers (SSOs) to enhance safety and security measures in your schools? Does your school division have a policy and procedures manual specifically for SSOs?

More than one-third of school divisions (38%, 50) reported using SSOs. Of these 50 divisions, 32% (16) reported that there was a manual specifically for SSOs.

15. Does your school division contract with a licensed private security business to enhance safety and security measures in division schools? When do the contracted private security officers work? Do the contracted private security officers that work in your division's schools carry a weapon?

Only 5% (6) of school divisions reported that they contracted with a licensed private security business. Of these six school divisions, five reported that private security officers worked during school-related events, and one reported that they worked after-school hours. No contracted security officers carried any form of weapon, including firearms, tasers, pepper spray/mace or other.

16. Does your division require its schools to provide security on school grounds after regular school hours?

Twenty percent of school divisions (26) reported that schools were required to provide security on school grounds after regular school hours.

17. Does your division require its schools to clearly post external numbers next to all building exits and entrances with numbers that are at least 12" high?

Nearly one-third of all school divisions (30%, 40) reported that they required its schools to post external numbers next to all building exits and entrances with numbers that are at least 12" high.

LINKING SURVEY DATA TO INFRACTIONS AND DISCIPLINARY OUTCOMES

This section presents trends in student infractions and disciplinary outcomes among Virginia schools. Disciplinary data were obtained from the Safe Schools Information Resource (SSIR) (https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/pti/), which is a public database containing student violations of the Code of Conduct submitted to the Virginia Department of Education by all school divisions. The results presented below are based on 1,104 elementary/primary schools, 306 middle schools, and 287 high schools that could be matched with corresponding Safety Audit survey data. Disciplinary and infraction data were converted to rates by dividing the total frequencies for each school by the school's enrollment. All rates refer to the total number of infractions or disciplinary outcomes that occurred in a school during the school year, not to the number of students reported for a particular infraction or subject to a particular disciplinary outcome. In other words, if the same student committed multiple infractions at different times, each of those infractions would be included in these counts. This method of counting infractions (or outcomes) is useful for measuring the total amount of disciplinary violations occurring at a school, but does not indicate the percentage of the student body that engaged in disciplinary violations.

Disciplinary Infractions

For the purposes of this report, disciplinary infractions were limited to three main categories: (1) infractions involving violent behavior against others (e.g., fights and assaults); (2) infractions involving alcohol, tobacco, or drug use (ATOD); and (3) infractions involving weapons (counted separately from the first category). The total number of violence-related infractions was calculated by summing the total number of infractions by students against other students, teachers, and staff. These three categories were deemed most important to safety conditions; other infractions involving disruptive behavior, disobedience, property offenses, technology, etc. are not included in this report. More detailed information is available in reports from the Virginia Department of Education www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics_reports/school_climate/index.shtml

Results

Chart 10 presents the mean infraction rates for the three groups of schools. For elementary/primary schools, there was an average of 20 infractions related to violence against others per 1,000 students enrolled during the 2009-2010 school year. In middle schools, there was an average of 90 infractions for violence against others per 1,000 students, and in high schools there was an average of 40 infractions for violence against others per 1,000 students. In other words, middle schools experienced 2.25 times as many disciplinary infractions involving violence against others per school year as high schools and 4.5 times as many infractions as elementary schools.

For elementary/primary schools, ATOD infractions were quite rare with an average of just 3 ATOD infractions per 10,000 students during the 2009-2010 school year. In middle schools, there was an average of 7 ATOD infractions per 1,000 students, and in high schools there was an average of 25 ATOD infractions. In other words, high schools experienced more than 4 times as many ATOD infractions as middle schools, and approximately 100 times as many infractions as elementary schools.

Infractions related to weapon carrying or use were exceedingly rare. There were an average of 4, 3, and 2 infractions related to weapons per 1,000 students for middle, high, and elementary/primary schools, respectively.

CHART 10
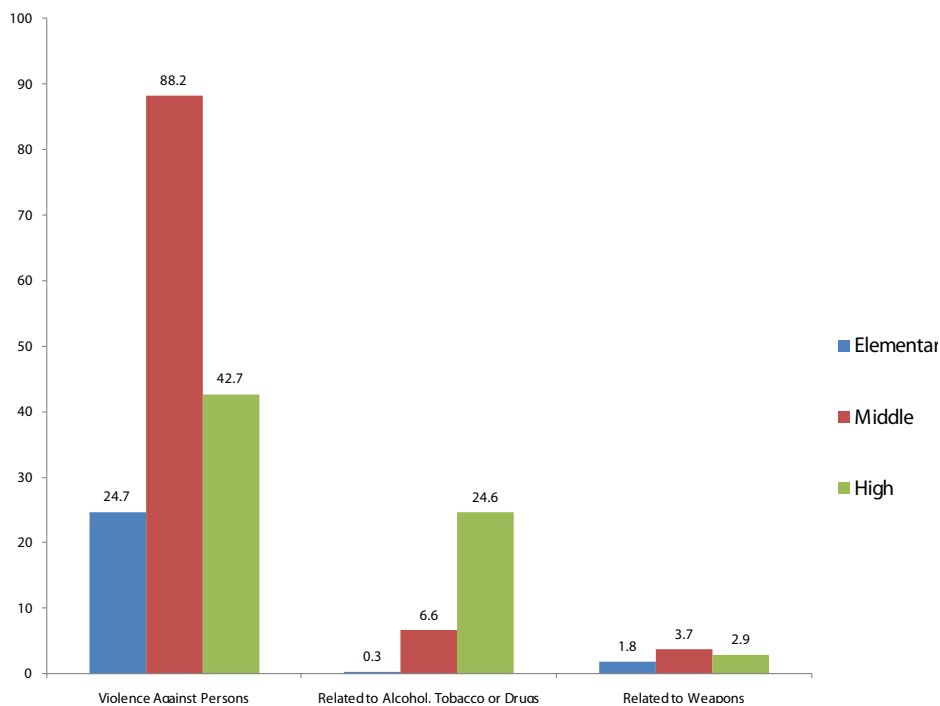**Mean Infraction Rates (Infractions per 1, 000 Students enrolled), by School Type**

Chart 11 (beginning on next page) presents information on the distribution of these rates within the three groups of schools. For example, the first figure in Chart 11 shows that, although the average rate of violent disciplinary infractions for elementary schools is 25 per 1,000 students, there are 22% of schools reporting no violence-related infractions per 1,000 students enrolled and 14% of schools with a rate of 1 to 5 violence-related infractions per 1,000 students. On the other end of the distribution, approximately 5% of elementary schools reported a rate exceeding 100 per 1,000 students.

The figures in Chart 11 permit school authorities to identify the typical rate of disciplinary violations that occur in Virginia schools as well as to see the range of rates across schools.

CHART 11
Distributions of Infractions, Rates per 1,000 Students Enrolled
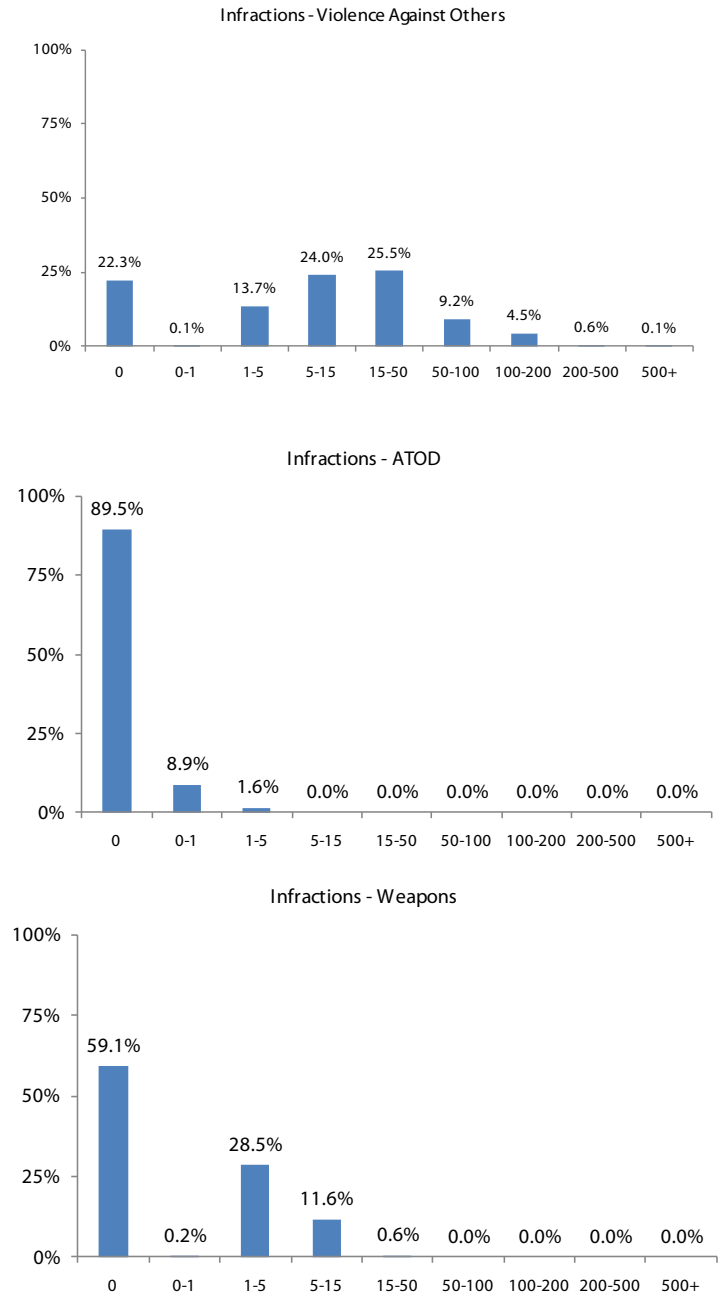
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Infractions - Violence Against Others

Infractions - ATOD

Infractions - Weapons

CHART 11 (cont'd)
Distributions of Infractions, Rates per 1,000 Students Enrolled

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Infractions - Violence Against Others
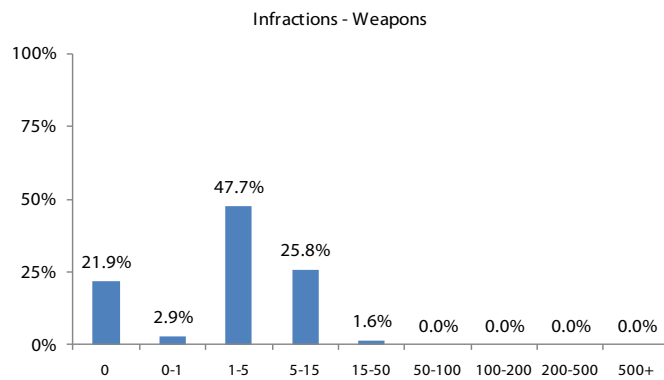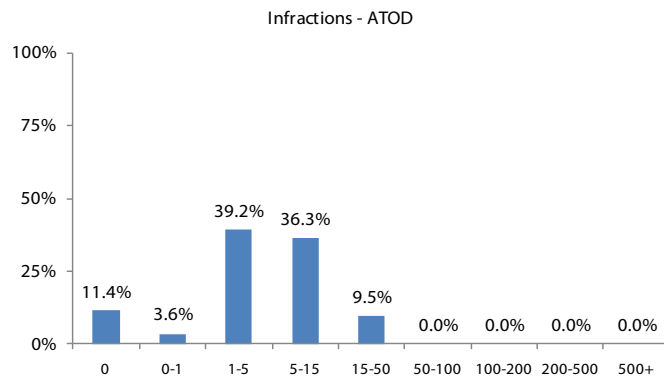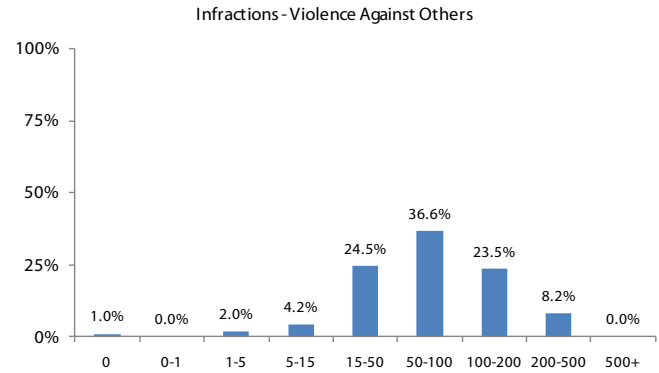

Infractions - ATOD

Infractions - Weapons

CHART 11 (cont'd)
Distributions of Infractions, Rates per 1,000 Students Enrolled

HIGH SCHOOLS

Infractions - Violence Against Others

Category	0	0-1	1-5	5-15	15-50	50-100	100-200	200-500	500+
%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	15.3%	62.7%	17.4%	2.8%	0.3%	0.3%

Infractions - ATOD

Category	0	0-1	1-5	5-15	15-50	50-100	100-200	200-500	500+
%	1.0%	0.3%	4.5%	43.6%	44.6%	4.9%	0.7%	0.0%	0.3%

Infractions - Weapons

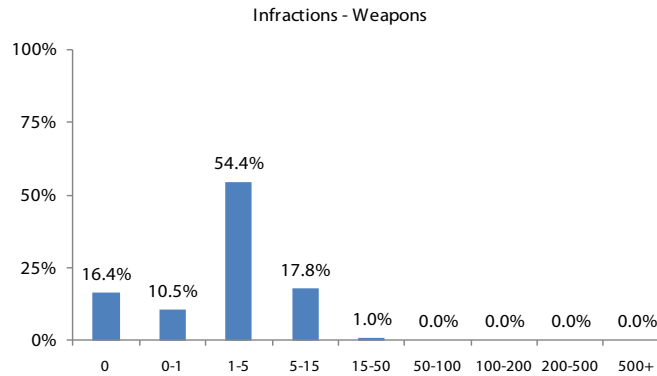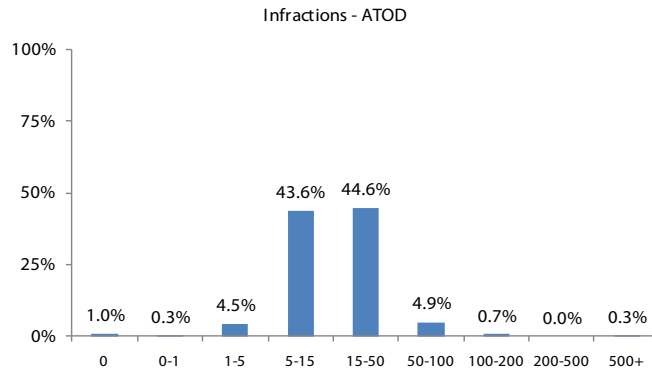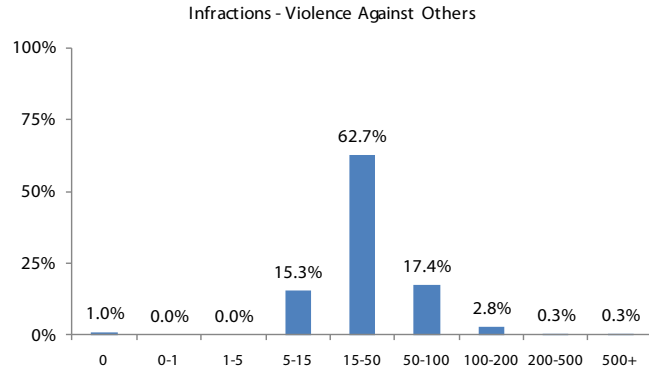| Category	0	0-1	1-5	5-15	15-50	50-100	100-200	200-500	500+
%	16.4%	10.5%	54.4%	17.8%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 17 provides details as to the degree to which rates of violence-, ATOD-, and weapons-related infractions were associated with each other in schools. This table presents correlations, which range between -1 and 1. A correlation close to -1 indicates a strong *negative* relationship (as X increases, Y decreases), while a correlation close to 1 indicates a strong *positive* relationship (as X increases, also Y increases). A correlation above 0.20 or below -0.20 indicates a moderately strong relationship, or greater.

As Table 17 shows, for each school type, schools with a high infraction rate in one category tended to have higher rates in the other two categories, but the correlations were not consistent across school types. In both elementary/primary and middle schools, a higher rate of violence-related infractions was related to a higher rate of ATOD infractions, while a higher rate of weapons-related infractions was related to both a higher rate of violence- and ATOD-related infractions. In high schools, a higher rate of infractions related to violence was associated strongly with a higher rate of ATOD infractions. However, unlike elementary/primary and middle schools, the rate of weapons-related infractions shared no association with the rate of violence- or ATOD-related infractions.

TABLE 17
Correlations Between Infraction Rate Types in Elementary Schools

	Persons	ATOD	Weapons
1) Violence Against Persons	-	0.13*	0.47*
2) Related to Alcohol, Tobacco or Drugs	-	-	0.16*
3) Related to Weapons	-	-	-

Asterisks indicate that a correlation was significant at the .05 level

TABLE 17 (cont'd)
Correlations Between Infraction Rate Types in Middle Schools

	Persons	ATOD	Weapons
1) Violence Against Persons	-	0.26*	0.47*
2) Related to Alcohol, Tobacco or Drugs	-	-	0.27*
3) Related to Weapons	-	-	-

Asterisks indicate that a correlation was significant at the .05 level

TABLE 17 (cont'd)
Correlations Between Infraction Rate Types in High Schools

	Persons	ATOD	Weapons
1) Violence Against Persons	-	0.96*	0.02
2) Related to Alcohol, Tobacco or Drugs	-	-	0.04
3) Related to Weapons	-	-	-

Asterisks indicate that a correlation was significant at the .05 level

Disciplinary Outcomes

Next, rates of short-term suspensions, long-term suspensions, and expulsion/modified expulsions in Virginia schools during the 2009-2010 school year were examined. Because the number of expulsions and modified expulsions are so low, they were summed before a rate was calculated. Additional information on disciplinary outcomes can be found in the SSIR User's Guide, which can be found at https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/pti/view_app_documents.do?resource_id=133.

As Chart 12 shows, long-term suspensions and expulsions were very rare. High, middle, and elementary/primary, schools had 8, 2, and 0.1 expulsions per 1,000 students enrolled, respectively, during the 2009-2010 school year. High, middle, and elementary/primary, schools had 5, 5, and 0.3 long-term suspensions per 1,000 students enrolled, respectively. Short-term suspensions were far more common. High schools, middle schools, and primary/elementary schools had, on average, approximately 250, 223, and 47 short-term suspensions per 1,000 students enrolled, respectively. *See Chart 12 for more details.*

CHART 12
Disciplinary Measures (Instances per 1,000 Students Enrolled), by School Type
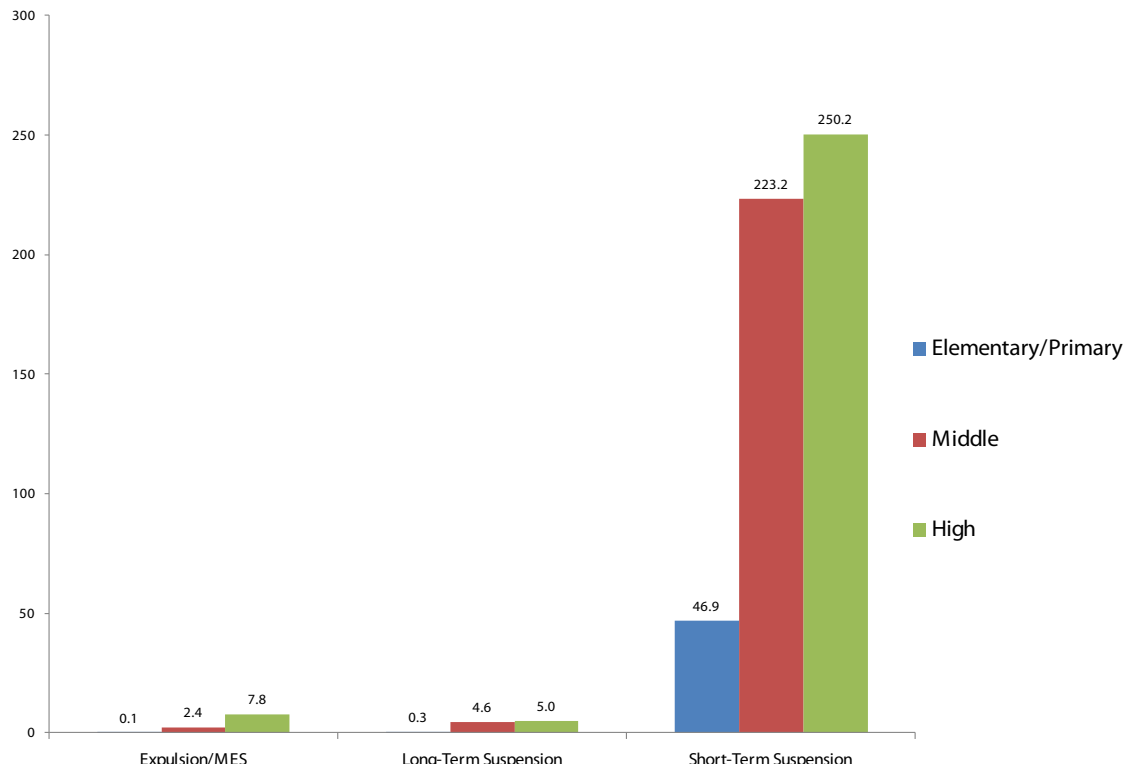

Chart 13, on the following three pages, displays distributions for the disciplinary outcome rates by school type. As before, these tables provide more details regarding the disciplinary outcomes. For example, the second figure in the middle schools section of Chart 13 (page 33, middle figure) shows that, although the average rate of long-term for middle schools was approximately 5 per 1,000 students, there are 43% of schools reporting no long-term suspensions at all, and 27% of schools with a rate of 1 to 5 long-term suspensions per 1,000 students. As this particular figure shows, the distribution of long-term suspensions in middle schools was heavily skewed towards zero, and the mean number of long-term suspensions was influenced by a small number of schools reporting a large number of suspensions.

In summary, these figures show marked differences among Virginia schools in their use of suspension and expulsion as disciplinary consequences.

CHART 13
Distributions of Disciplinary Outcomes, Rates per 1,000 Students Enrolled

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Expulsions

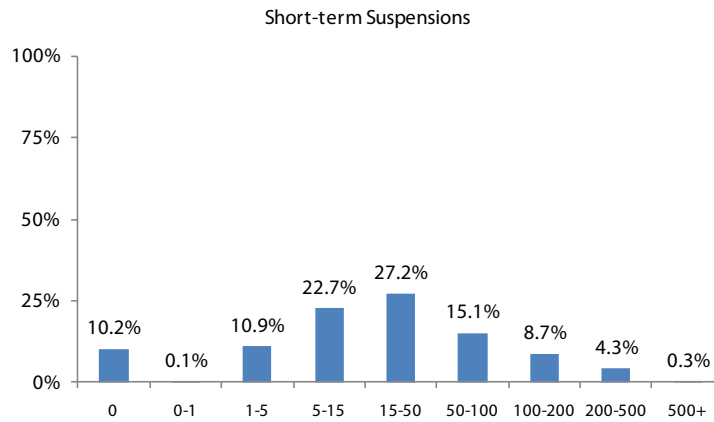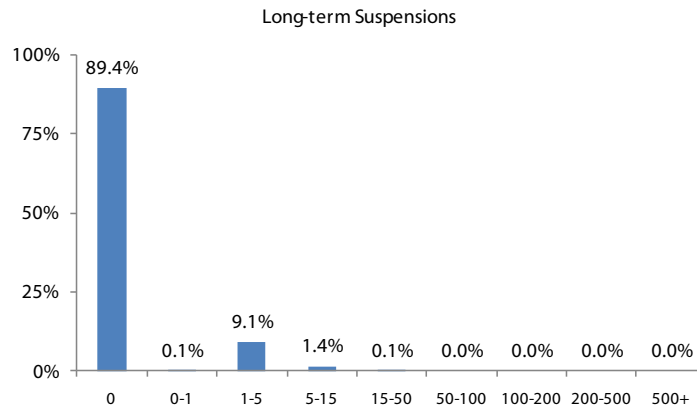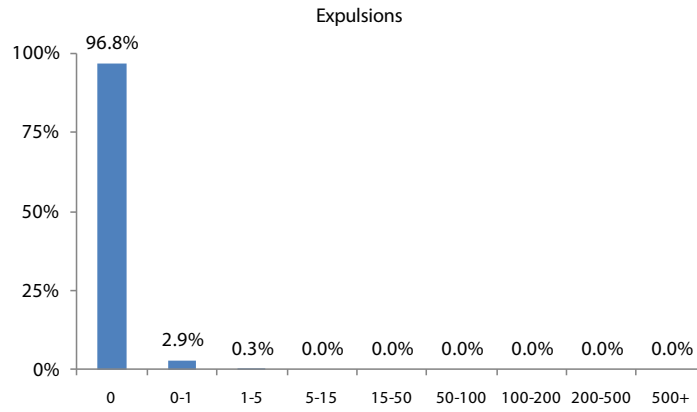Long-term Suspensions

Short-term Suspensions

CHART 13 (cont'd)
Distributions of Disciplinary Outcomes, Rates per 1,000 Students Enrolled

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Expulsions

Long-term Suspensions
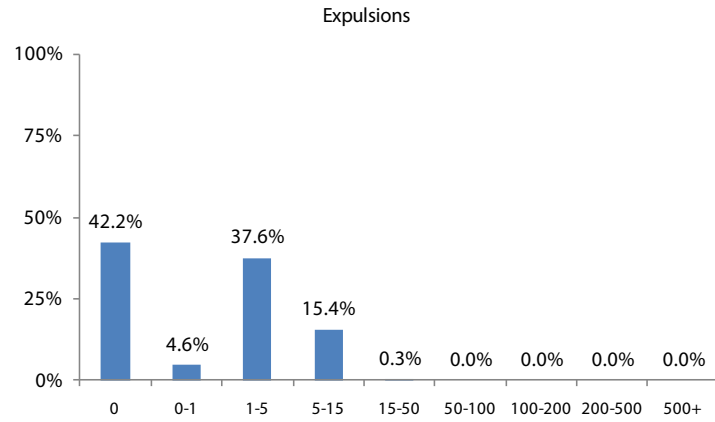

Short-term Suspensions

CHART 13 (cont'd)
Distributions of Disciplinary Outcomes, Rates per 1,000 Students Enrolled

HIGH SCHOOLS

Expulsions

14.6%	1.7%	32.8%	45.3%	4.9%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
0	0-1	1-5	5-15	15-50	50-100	100-200	200-500	500+

Long-term Suspensions

32.8%	5.9%	31.4%	19.2%	10.5%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
0	0-1	1-5	5-15	15-50	50-100	100-200	200-500	500+

Short-term Suspensions

0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	12.2%	16.4%	28.2%	35.5%	7.3%
0	0-1	1-5	5-15	15-50	50-100	100-200	200-500	500+
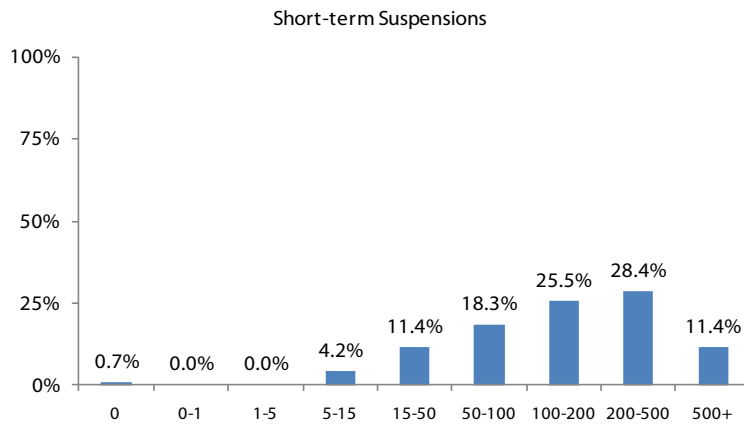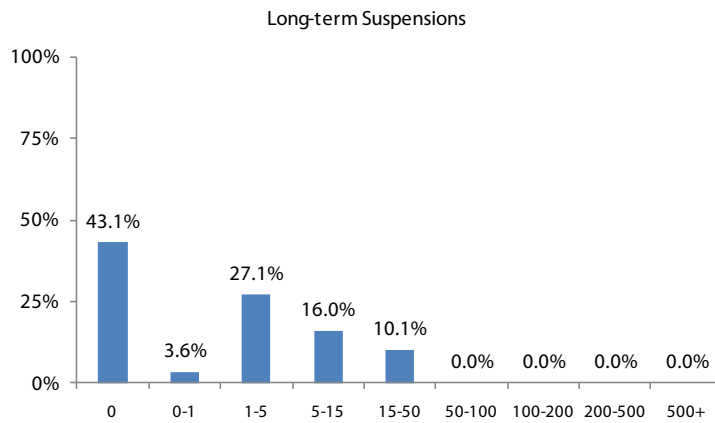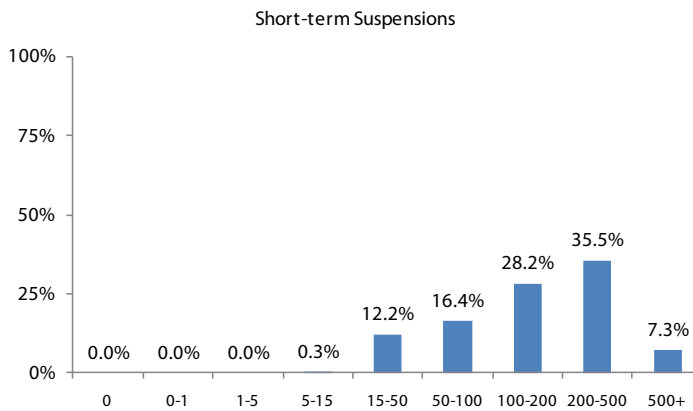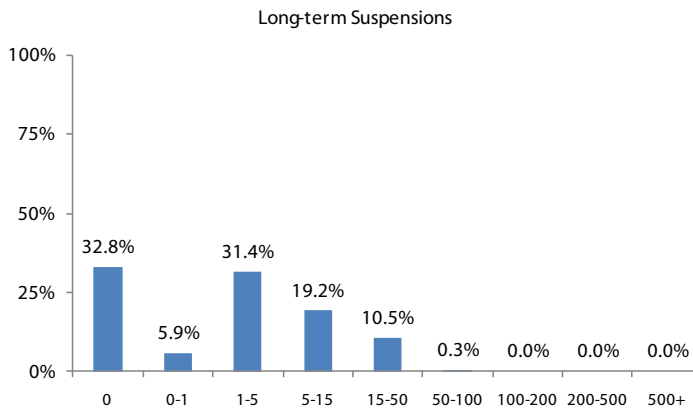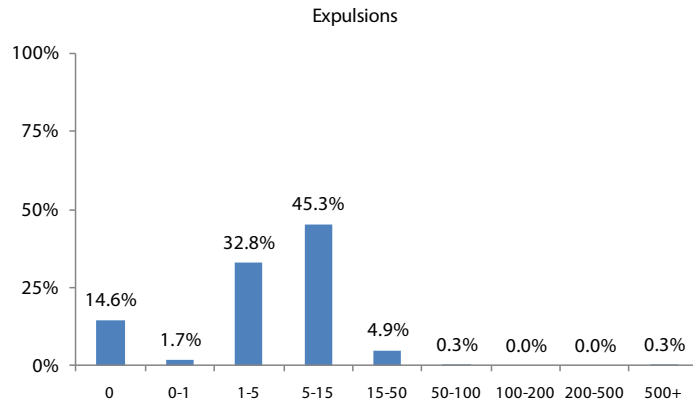
Correspondence Between Security Measures/Infractions and Disciplinary Responses

Finally, this report examined how environmental security measures and prevention measures were correlated with infractions and disciplinary outcomes.

Calculation of Security Measure Scores

The School Safety Audit Survey contains numerous questions concerning safety measures at each school. In order to summarize this information, we grouped the questions on the basis of item content and calculated two scores: (1) an Environmental Security Index and (2) a Prevention Programs Index. The Environmental Security Index was based on responses to the questions presented in Table 18 below. These questions were grouped together because they seemed to reflect the school's attention to maintaining a physically secure environment. The Prevention Programs Index is composed of items that seemed to reflect school-wide efforts to prevent student misconduct. These are indices rather than formal scales because the items are grouped conceptually and without the expectation that they measure a single underlying quantity. Nevertheless, the indices show a good distribution, as presented in Chart 14 (beginning on the next page), which details the index distributions for each school type separately.

TABLE 18
**Survey Items Used to Calculate Environmental Security and Prevention Program Indices**

Items for Environmental Security Index	
Q11. Scored 1 point for each Crisis Management Plan/Emergency Management Plan (CMP/EMP) type (to a maximum of 3 points)	
	- Administration/faculty/staff training
	- Student training/awareness sessions
	- Parent training/awareness sessions
	- First responder coordination (EMS, fire, police, hazmat, etc.)
	- Tabletop exercises with crisis team members
	- Full scale drill with crisis team and public safety partners
	- Other
Q15. Frequency of lockdown drills	
	- Scored 0 if never
	- Scored 1 if every year or two
	- Scored 2 if every six months
	- Scored 3 if more than every six months
Q20. Scored 1 if school posted someone at front entrance at all times	
Q22. Scored 1 if all exterior entrances were locked during school hours	
Q23. Scored 1 if school's classrooms can be locked inside and outside	
Q24. Scored 1 if school provided terrorism training	
Q26. Scored 1 if school required those checking in to present photo ID	
Q27. Scored 1 if school visitors were checked against the sex offender registry	
Items for Prevention Program Index	
Q18. Scored 1 if administered a student safety concerns survey	
Q13. Scored 1 if indicated that school had a threat assessment process	
Q19. Scored 1 point for each type of program checked	
	- Anonymous method to report a safety concern
	- Bullying prevention program
	- Conflict resolution program
	- Gang prevention program
	- Mentoring program
	- Peer mediation program
	- Problem-solving or social skills training/curriculum
	- Substance abuse prevention program
	- Truancy prevention program
	- Other

CHART 14
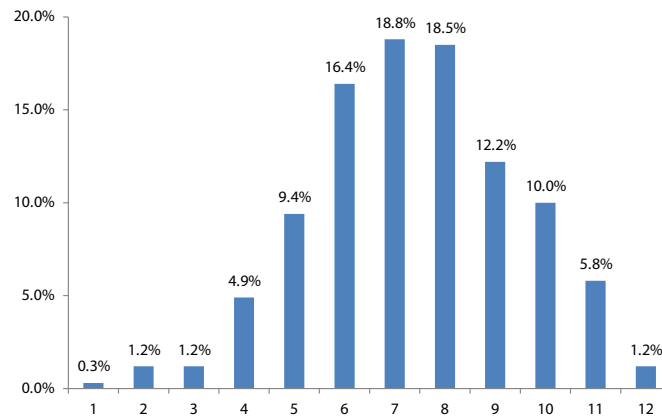**Distribution of Environmental Security and Prevention Program Indices, by School Type**

ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY INDEX

Elementary/Primary Schools
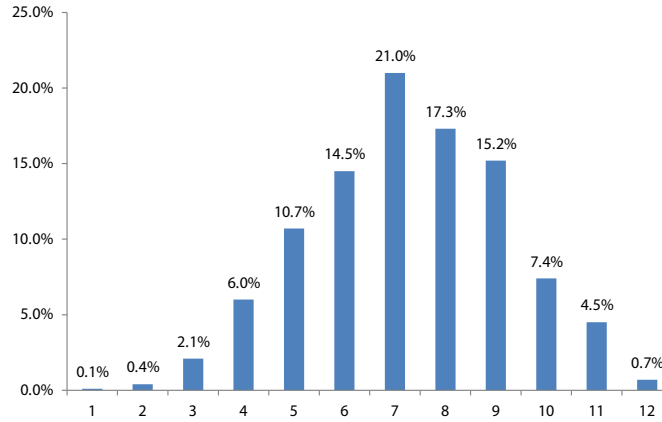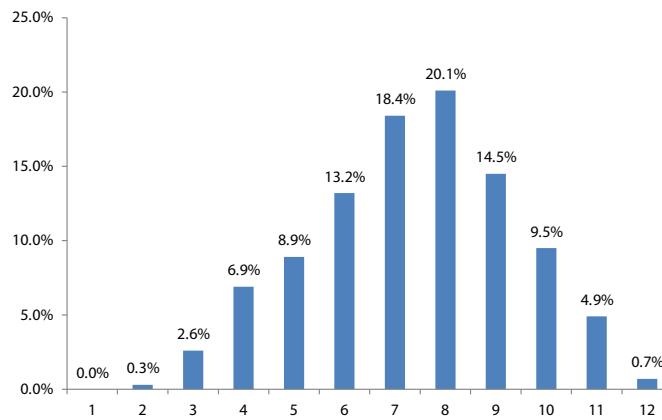

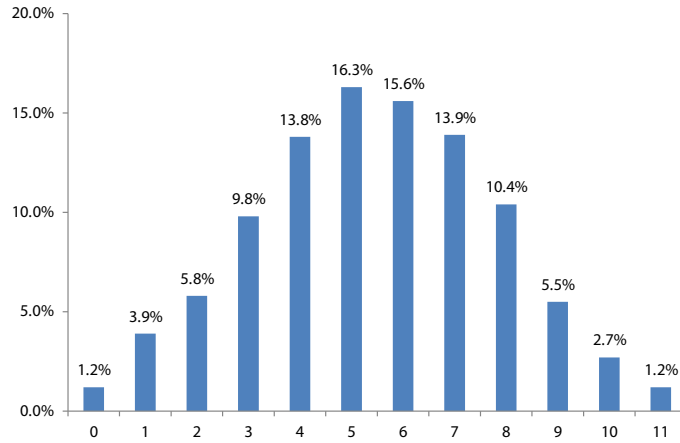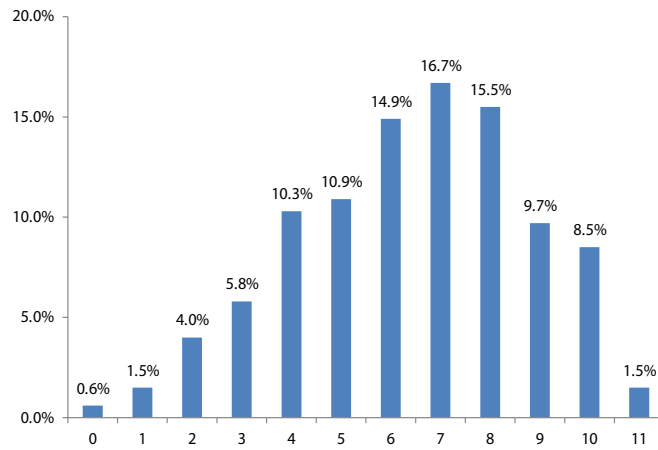### Middle Schools

High Schools

CHART 14 (cont'd)
Distribution of Environmental Security and Prevention Program Indices, by School Type

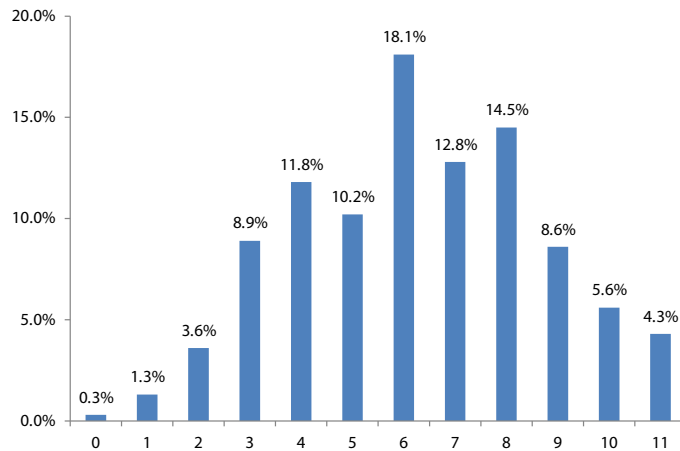**PREVENTION PROGRAMS INDEX**

Elementary/Primary Schools

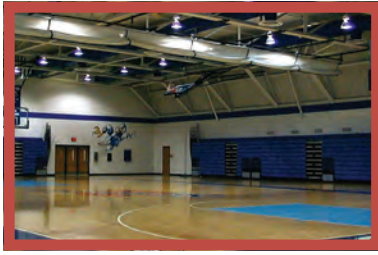
Middle Schools

High Schools

Results

Table 19 provides the results from a correlation analysis that examined the relations between the Environmental Security Index and the Prevention Program Index. These correlations show mostly weak and nonsignificant relationships between school security measures and student disciplinary measures. Separate correlation tables are presented for elementary, middle, and high schools.

TABLE 19
Correlation of Environmental Security and Prevention Programs Indices, by School Type

	Infractions			Disciplinary Responses		
	Violence	ATOD	Weapons	Expulson/ MES	LTS	STS
Elementary/Primary Schools						
Environmental Security	-0.06	-0.04	-0.01	-0.08*	-0.07*	-0.09*
Prevention Programs	0.04	-0.01	-0.01	0.01	0.04	-0.01
Middle Schools						
Environmental Security	0.06	-0.11	0.02	-0.01	0.06	-0.03
Prevention Programs	0.05	-0.03	0.06	0.03	0.11	-0.04
High Schools						
Environmental Security	-0.01	-0.01	-0.02	0.03	0.01	0.02
Prevention Programs	-0.01	0.12	-0.02	0.06	0.17*	0.07

Asterisks indicate that a correlation was significant at the .05 level

It should be stressed that these correlations are purely descriptive and cannot indicate the existence of a causal relationship. For example, there is a statistically significant negative correlation of -.09 between the index of environmental security efforts and short-term suspension rates in elementary schools. This means that schools that have relatively more environmental security measures tend to give slightly fewer short-term suspensions to their students. This relationship could be interpreted in many different ways. For instance, it may support assertions that security measures result in improved student behavior. Alternatively, it may suggest that, when students are well-behaved, the school chooses to place more emphasis on environmental security. This relationship might also suggest that some other unidentified factors are affecting both environmental security and short-term suspensions. In order to determine the impact of security measures on school conditions, it is necessary to examine trends over time, to compare schools with and without various security measures, and to account for school characteristics such as student demographics. It would also be important to assess the quality of implementation of school security measures. A future project for the School Safety Audit program could be to pursue these analyses and provide stronger evidence of the relationship between school security measures (e.g., bullying prevention programs) and student behavioral outcomes.

APPENDIX A:

SURVEYS

2010 SCHOOL SURVEY

Welcome to the 2010 Virginia School Safety Survey

This is a secure, web-based survey conducted by the Virginia Center for School Safety. Submission of this survey partially fulfills the Virginia School Safety Audit requirement. (Virginia Code §22.1-279.8).

While answering the following survey questions, please base your responses on the conditions in your school during the 2009–2010 school year.

Should you have any questions or experience technical problems with the survey, contact Donna Michaelis at the Virginia Center for School Safety, 804-371-6506 or donna.michaelis@dcjs.virginia.gov.

Please answer the following questions about your school as accurately as possible.

I. SCHOOL IDENTIFICATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. What is the name of your school division?

2. What is the *full* name of your school?
   IMPORTANT: School name must match our database for you to receive credit for the survey. Please use this link to find the formal school name, then copy and paste into this box.

3. What is your school's ID number?
   IMPORTANT: ID number must match your school name for you to receive credit for the survey. Please use this link to find the 4-digit ID number, then copy and paste into this box.

If we have any questions about your survey responses, we would like to be able to contact you. Please provide us with your contact information:

4. What is your name?

5. What is your title?

6. What is your phone number?

7. What is your email address?

8. Which of the following best describes your school? (check one)
   - ❑ Elementary
   - ❑ Combined Grades
   - ❑ Alternative
   - ❑ Magnet
   - ❑ Correctional Education
   - ❑ Other
   - ❑ Middle
   - ❑ Primary
   - ❑ Career/Technical/Vocational
   - ❑ Governor's
   - ❑ Adult Education
   - ❑ High
   - ❑ Pre-Kindergarten
   - ❑ Charter
   - ❑ Special Education
   - ❑ School for the Deaf and Blind

9. What grades are taught at your school? (check all that apply)
   - ❑ Pre-Kindergarten
   - ❑ 2nd grade
   - ❑ 5th grade
   - ❑ 8th grade
   - ❑ 11th grade
   - ❑ Kindergarten
   - ❑ 3rd grade
   - ❑ 6th grade
   - ❑ 9th grade
   - ❑ 12th grade
   - ❑ 1st grade
   - ❑ 4th grade
   - ❑ 7th grade
   - ❑ 10th grade

10. What was your fall membership enrollment number on September 30, 2009? (enter numeric response) _____

II. ASSESSMENT, PLANNING, AND COMMUNICATION

Virginia Code § 22.1-279.8 describes school crisis and emergency management plans. It also states that "each school board shall ensure that every school that it supervises shall develop a written school crisis, emergency management, and medical response plan."

11. Did your school practice its Crisis Management Plan/Emergency Management Plan (CMP/EMP) during the 2009–2010 school year?
    - ❑ Yes
    - ❑ No

    (If 11 = yes)
    11a. How was your school's CMP/EMP practiced during the school year? (check all that apply)
    - ❑ Administration/faculty/staff training
    - ❑ Parent training/awareness sessions
    - ❑ Tabletop exercises with crisis team members
    - ❑ Other
    - ❑ Student training/awareness sessions
    - ❑ First responder coordination (EMS, fire, police, hazmat, etc.)
    - ❑ Full scale drill with crisis team and public safety partners

12. Did you have to activate any portion of your school's crisis management plan during the 2009–2010 school year due to an actual emergency or crisis? (Note: Do not include weather-related incidents)
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No
    (If 12 = yes)
    12a. Why did you activate your crisis plan? (Note: Do not include weather-related incidents) (check all that apply)
    ❑ Incident of violence/crime occurring on school property   ❑ Incident of violence/crime occurring off school property
    ❑ Student or staff accident or death on or off campus   ❑ Community incident that affected school
    ❑ Incident at another school that affected your school   ❑ Hazardous chemical incident
    ❑ Bomb threat   ❑ Power outage or utility malfunction
    ❑ Fire   ❑ Suspicious person/intruder
    ❑ Other

13. Does your school use a formal threat assessment process to respond to student threats of violence?
    Yes   No, we have no *formal* process
    (If 13 = yes)
    13a. For your formal threat assessment process, do you follow the guidelines developed by the University of Virginia (UVA)?
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No
    (If 13 =yes)
    13b. Were any student threats of violence assessed during the 2009–2010 school year?
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No
    (If 13b = yes)
        13b-1. Were any of these threats determined to be serious or substantive?
        ❑ Yes   ❑ No

14. Does your school have an electronic notification system for notifying parents/guardians of an emergency at your school?
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No
    (If 14 = yes)
    14a. Did your school activate its electronic notification system this year for an actual emergency? (Note: Do not include weather or schedule changes)
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No
    (If 14a = yes)
    14a-1. Under what emergency circumstances did you activate your school's electronic notification system?
        (Note: Do not include weather or schedule changes) (check all that apply)
    ❑ Incident of violence /crime occurring on school property   ❑ Incident of violence /crime occurring off school
property
    ❑ Student or staff accident or death on or off campus   ❑ Community incident that affected school
    ❑ Incident at another school that affected your school   ❑ Hazardous material incident
    ❑ Bomb threat   ❑ Power outage or utility malfunction
    ❑ Fire   ❑ Suspicious person / intruder
    ❑ Other

15. How often are lockdown drills practiced at your school during the school year? (check one)
    ❑ Once a month   ❑ Once every two months
    ❑ Once every three months   ❑ Once every four months
    ❑ Once every six months   ❑ Once per year
    ❑ Every two years   ❑ Never
    ❑ Other

16. What is the usual method used at your school to account for students during a lockdown or evacuation drill? (check one)
    ❑ Head count conducted using attendance roster
    ❑ Automated monitoring system (i.e., scan student ID cards)
    ❑ None — our school does not have a method for accounting for students during drills
    ❑ Other

17. Does your school routinely receive notification from local law enforcement on the offenses listed in *Virginia Code § 22.1-279.3:1 (Paragraph B)*?
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No   ❑ Don't know

18. Did your school distribute a questionnaire to students during the 2009–2010 school year to assess student school safety concerns?
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No
    (If 18 = yes)
    18a. Based on questionnaire responses, what *three* issues concerned *students* most? *(Select three)*
    ❑ Bullying   ❑ Gang activity
    ❑ Lack of adult supervision   ❑ Substance abuse issues within school
    ❑ Theft of personal property   ❑ Weapons on campus
    ❑ Other

19. For each of the following school safety initiatives, indicate whether a formal program is currently in place at your school. (check all that apply)
    ❑ Anonymous method to report a safety concern   ❑ Bullying prevention program
    ❑ Conflict resolution program   ❑ Gang prevention program
    ❑ Mentoring program   ❑ Peer mediation program
    ❑ Problem-solving or social skills training/curriculum   ❑ Substance abuse prevention program
    ❑ Truancy prevention program   ❑ None
    ❑ Other (describe): _____

III. SCHOOL SECURITY/SURVEILLANCE

The questions in this section of the survey ask about security practices at your school. Because the public release of such information might compromise safety and security plans, Virginia Codes §2.2-3705.2 and §22.1-279.8 allow such information to be protected from release under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). This protection will automatically be given for answers to questions in this section.

Understand that DCJS' Virginia Center for School Safety will report the information in this section in an aggregated format for all schools, but it will not release specific information from identified schools.

20. Is someone stationed at the front entrance of your school at all times during school hours to ensure that visitors report to the main office for visitor check-in?
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No

21. Is the main entrance to your school building/campus secured by a controlled access system during school hours?
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No

22. Other than the main entrance, are all exterior entrances to your school building/campus locked during school hours?
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No

23. Can all classrooms in your school be locked from both the inside and the outside of the classroom?
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No

24. Did your school provide terrorism awareness training to administration, faculty, staff, bus drivers, students or parents during the 2009–2010 school year?
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No
    (If 24 = yes)
    24a. Who participated in the terrorism awareness training? (check all that apply)
       ❑ Administration
       ❑ Faculty
       ❑ Staff
       ❑ Bus drivers
       ❑ Student training / awareness
       ❑ Parent training / awareness

25. Does your school monitor school buses and/or safety on school buses?
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No
    (If 25 = yes)
    25a. Which method(s) does your school use to monitor schools buses and/or safety on school buses? (check all that apply)
       ❑ GPS Tracking System
       ❑ Randomly patrolled by school faculty/staff
       ❑ Randomly patrolled by security personnel (including SROs, SSOs, or private security)
       ❑ Security camera (monitored live in real time)
       ❑ Security camera (taped, not monitored in real time)
       ❑ Bus aide / monitor
       ❑ Other

26. In reference to visitor check-in procedures at your school, are any visitors required to show photo ID?
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No
    (If 26 = yes)
    26a. Which groups of visitors are required to show photo ID? (check all that apply)
       ❑ Parents/guardians
       ❑ General visitors (friends/relatives of students/staff, club speakers, military recruiters, etc.)
       ❑ Commercial visitors (delivery persons, trade workers such as plumbers, etc.)
       ❑ School-related visitors (substitute teachers, volunteers, division personnel, etc.)

27. When checking in visitors (including parents/guardians), does office staff check all visitors names against the sex offender registry bulletins?
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No

28. Does your school have safety/security personnel present at all times during the regular school day?
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No
    (If 28 = yes)
    28a. What type(s) of safety/security personnel are present at your school at all times during the regular school day?   (check all that apply)
       ❑ School Resource Officers (SROs)
       ❑ School Security Officers (SSOs)
       ❑ Other
    (if 28a = SRO)
       28a-1. How many School Resource Officers (SROs) are at your school at all times during the regular school day? *(Enter numeric response)*
    (if 28a = SSO)
       28a-2. How many School Security Officers (SSOs) are at your school at all times during the regular school day? *(Enter numeric response)*

Virginia Code definition: §18.2-46.1 Criminal street gang means "any ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal, (i) which has as one of its primary objectives or activities the commission of one or more criminal activities, (ii) which has an identifiable name or identifying sign or symbol, and (iii) whose members individually or collectively have engaged in the commission of, attempt to commit, conspiracy to commit, or solicitation of two or more predicate criminal acts, at least one of which is an act of violence, provided such acts were not part of a common act or transaction."

29. Using the definition above, did your school have any gang-related problems or incidents during the 2009–2010 school year?
   ❑ Yes   ❑ No

30. Did the number of gang-related problems or incidents increase, decrease, or stay about the same when compared with the previous school year?
   ❑ Increased   ❑ Decreased   ❑ Stayed about the same

31. Did your school identify any gang-related graffiti found on school property during the 2009–2010 school year?
   ❑ Yes   ❑ No

32. Did gang-related graffiti increase, decrease, or stay about the same when compared with the previous year? (check one)
   ❑ Increased   ❑ Decreased   ❑ Stayed about the same

33. Rate the overall threat of gang activity by street gangs in your school. (check one)
   ❑ 5 High
   ❑ 4
   ❑ 3 Medium
   ❑ 2
   ❑ 1 Low
   ❑ None

34. Briefly describe your school's primary safety-related issue or emerging trend during the 2009-2010 school year.

Thank you for completing the 2010 Virginia School Safety Survey.

2010 DIVISION SURVEY

2010 Virginia School Safety Survey – Division Level

This is a secure, web-based survey conducted by the Virginia Center for School Safety. Submission of this survey partially fulfills the Virginia School Safety Audit requirement. (Virginia Code §22.1-279.8).

While answering the following survey questions, please base your responses on the conditions in your school division during the 2009– 2010 school year.

Should you have any questions about this survey or if you are experiencing a technical problem, contact Donna Michaelis at the Virginia Center for School Safety, 804-371-6506 or donna.michaelis@dcjs.virginia.gov.

Please answer the following questions about your school division as accurately as possible.

I. Division Identification Information

1. What is the name of your school division? (drop down box)

   If we have any questions about your survey responses, we would like to be able to contact you. Please provide us with your contact information:

2. What is your name?

3. What is your title?

4. What is your phone number?

5. What is your e-mail address?

II. Policies and Programs

6. Were any new safety and/or security-related policies adopted into your division's policy manual in the 2009 - 2010 school year?
   - ❏ Yes   ❏ No
   (if 6 = yes)
   6a. Which safety-related topics did the new policy/policies address? (check all that apply)

❏ alcohol	❏ bullying	❏ disruptive students
❏ dress code	❏ drug testing	❏ drug use/abuse
❏ expulsion / suspension	❏ gangs	❏ hazing
❏ homeland security	❏ intervention programs (at-risk referral)	❏ reporting of criminal offenses
❏ school uniforms	❏ search and seizure	❏ seized weapon storage
❏ self-defense	❏ sexual harassment	❏ threats
❏ tobacco	❏ trespassing	❏ vandalism
❏ weapons	❏ zero tolerance	❏ other (describe):_____

7. Does your school division currently have a student drug testing policy?
   - ❏ Yes   ❏ No
   (if 7 = yes)
   7a. What segment(s) of your division's student population is subject to student drug testing? (check all that apply)
   - ❏ student athletes
   - ❏ extra-curricular participants
   - ❏ random testing of all students
   - ❏ other (describe):_____

8. Are all volunteers who work with students in your school division subjected to a screening process/background check prior to working in your school division? (This includes both parent/guardian volunteers and non-parent/guardian volunteers.)
   - ❏ Yes   ❏ No
   (if 8 = yes)
   8a. Which type of screening process is used for all volunteers (including both parent/guardian and non-parent guardian volunteers)? (check all that apply)
   - ❏ criminal background check
   - ❏ sex offender registry check
   - ❏ personal background check
   - ❏ reference check
   - ❏ other (describe):

9. Does your school division have a threat assessment policy or procedure for dealing with student threats of violence? (check one)
   - ❏ Yes, we use the U.Va. threat assessment model   ❏ Yes, but not the U.Va. threat assessment model   ❏ No

III. Emergency Planning

10. Has your school division provided emergency responders (police/fire/EMTs, etc.) with electronic or digital floor plans of your division's school buildings/campuses?
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No

11. Has your school division developed a written, coordinated, division-wide Crisis Management Plan /Emergency Management Plan (CMP/EMP)?
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No
    (if 11 = yes)
    11a. Does your division's CMP/EMP address incidents involving school buses?
         ❑ Yes   ❑ No
         (If 11a = yes)
             11a-1. Did your division's bus drivers receive training on the specific areas of the CMP/EMP that pertain to them?
             ❑ Yes   ❑ No

12. Did your division provide any specialized counter-terrorism training for school bus drivers during the 2009–2010 school year?
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No
    (If 12 = yes)
    12a. What type of counter-terrorism training was provided to the bus drivers? (check all that apply)
         ❑ Bomb detection/identification
         ❑ Hostage situations
         ❑ Suspicious activity reporting (SAR)
         ❑ Other

13. Which best describes your division's policy on the storage of school buses during the school year? (check one)
    ❑ Buses must be parked in a secure parking facility
    ❑ Buses must be parked on school property/division property
    ❑ Drivers may park them at their residence
    ❑ Drivers may park school buses wherever possible
    ❑ Our school system has no storage policy for school buses during the school year
    ❑ Other

14. Which of the listed safety checks are performed on division school buses by drivers before they begin their AM and PM routes? (check all that apply)
    ❑ Certified Drivers License (CDL) check
    ❑ Undercarriage for suspicious objects
    ❑ Undercarriage and passenger area for suspicious objects
    ❑ Engine compartment for suspicious objects
    ❑ Passenger area for unauthorized riders.
    ❑ Don't know
    ❑ Other

15. Does your school division maintain communication with school buses when they are in use?
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No
    (If 15 = yes)
    15a. Which methods does your school division use to maintain communication with the school buses? (check all that apply)
         ❑ Two-way radio
         ❑ Cell phone
         ❑ Maintained through division's transportation department
         ❑ Other

IV. Collaboration with Emergency Responders

16. Does your division's administration have a process in place to regularly communicate/meet with local law enforcement to discuss problems in and around the schools?
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No

17. Does your division share or review the Discipline, Crime, and Violence (DCV) reports from its schools with law enforcement?
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No

18. Does your division administration regularly receive local crime data reports from your local law enforcement agency (in order to be aware of crimes occurring in areas near schools)?
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No

V. School Security Personnel

19. Does your school division use School Resource Officers (SROs) to enhance safety and security measures in your schools?
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No
    (if 19 = yes)
    19a. In which types of schools are SROs working? (check all that apply)
         ❑ Elementary
         ❑ Middle
         ❑ High
         ❑ Alternative
         ❑ Other (describe):_____

20. Does your school division use School Security Officers (SSOs) to enhance safety and security measures in your schools?
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No

    (if 20 = yes)
    20a. Does your school division have a policy and procedures manual specifically for SSOs?
        ❑ Yes   ❑ No

21. Does your school division contract with a licensed private security business to enhance safety and security measures in division schools?
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No
    (if 21 = yes)
    21a. When do the contracted private security officers work? (check all that apply)
        ❑ during regular school hours
        ❑ after regular school hours
        ❑ at school-related events
        ❑ other (describe):_____
    (if 21 = yes)
    21b. Do the contracted private security officers that work in your division's schools carry a weapon? (check one)
        ❑ Yes   ❑ No
        In some schools they do, in others schools they do not
        (if 21b ≠ no)
        21b-1. What sort of weapon do they carry? (check all that apply)
            ❑ firearm
            ❑ taser
            ❑ pepper spray/mace
            ❑ other (describe):_____

22. Does your division require its schools to provide security on school grounds after regular school hours?
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No

23. Does your division require its schools to clearly post external numbers next to all building exits and entrances with numbers that are at least 12"
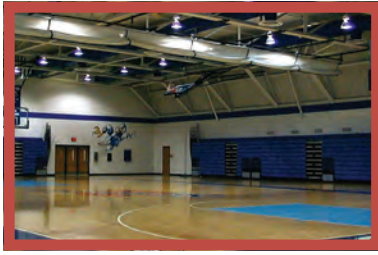   high?
    ❑ Yes   ❑ No

Thank you for completing the 2010 Virginia School Safety Survey – Division Level.

Your survey responses were successfully submitted to the Virginia Center for School Safety at the Department of Criminal Justice Services.

A copy of your survey responses are available to you through our secure website. To make a copy of your survey responses for your records, please click on the "view response" button below. A printable version of your survey responses will appear titled, "Response Details." Print this page using whatever method you typically use to print a webpage, such as: select file/print from your browser tool bar, or right click your mouse, then select "print."

If you have other questions about the Virginia School Safety Survey process, please contact Donna Michaelis at the Virginia Center for School Safety: (804) 371-6506 or donna.michaelis@dcjs.virginia.gov.

Please be sure to close this browser window when you are finished.

APPENDIX B:

DEFINITIONS

Bullying

Repeated negative behaviors intended to frighten or cause harm. This may include, but is not limited to, verbal or written threats or physical harm. Another form is cyber bullying, which is using information and communication technologies such as e-mail, cell phone and pager text messages, instant messaging, defamatory personal websites, and defamatory online personal polling websites, to support deliberate, hostile behavior intended to harm others.

Controlled Access System

Controlled access entry systems provide a barrier between potential visitors and building interiors that must be actively removed by school personnel, such as one that requires a staff member to "buzz" visitors through a locked door.

Electronic Notification System

A telephone notification system that is tied to a school's student database and automatically calls every contact number listed for every student within a specific number of minutes. Is typically activated by a telephone call from a designated school employee or by an e-mail sent from a computer using a secure passcode.

Emergency

An emergency is any event or situation that forces school closure or schedule changes, or that directly threatens the safety or well-being of any students, faculty, staff or members of the community and requires immediate action for resolution. Examples include severe weather, loss of utilities, bomb threats or terrorist acts, violent crime, release of hazardous materials, and others and need not occur on school property.

Fall Enrollment (Fall Membership Enrollment Number)

As defined by the Virginia Department of Education (DOE), this is the number of students enrolled in public school on September 30th of a given year. Each school in Virginia that officially enrolls students (i.e. student records are maintained on a Virginia Teacher's Register or automated system) submits their fall membership enrollment number to DOE on an annual basis. Excluded from the September 30th count are: special education preschool pupils, pupils in hospitals, clinics or detention homes and local programs such as vocational and alternative education centers (i.e., centers or schools which receive, but do not officially enroll students). More information about the fall membership enrollment number is available on the Virginia Department of Education's website at *www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/dbpubs/all_Membership/2008/readme.htm*.

Formal Threat Assessment Process

In a school setting, a threat assessment is conducted when a person (or persons) threatens to commit a violent act, or engages in behavior that suggests that they might act violently. This systematic assessment examines the nature of the threat and the circumstances surrounding the threat, in order to evaluate the seriousness of the threat and probability that the threat will be carried out. More information about threat assessments is available from the Virginia Youth Violence Project's website, Curry School of Education, University of Virginia at *http://youthviolence.edschool.virginia.edu/threatassessment/student-threat-assessment.html*.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is the statute that provides access to government records (or portions thereof) except to the extent that such records are protected from disclosure by any of the exemptions included in the act. Security plans and specific assessment components of school safety audits may be excluded from FOIA as referenced in § 2.2-3705.2 and as provided in § 22.1-279.8.

Virginia Code § 2.2-3700. Short title; policy.

A. *This chapter may be cited as "The Virginia Freedom of Information Act."*

B. *By enacting this chapter, the General Assembly ensures the people of the Commonwealth ready access to public records in the custody of a public body or its officers and employees, and free entry to meetings of public bodies wherein the business of the people is being conducted. The affairs of government are not intended to be conducted in an atmosphere of secrecy since at all times the public is to be the beneficiary of any action taken at any level of government. Unless a public body or its officers or*

employees specifically elect to exercise an exemption provided by this chapter or any other statute, every meeting shall be open to the public and all public records shall be available for inspection and copying upon request. All public records and meetings shall be presumed open, unless an exemption is properly invoked. The provisions of this chapter shall be liberally construed to promote an increased awareness by all persons of governmental activities and afford every opportunity to citizens to witness the operations of government. Any exemption from public access to records or meetings shall be narrowly construed and no record shall be withheld or meeting closed to the public unless specifically made exempt pursuant to this chapter or other specific provision of law. This chapter shall not be construed to discourage the free discussion by government officials or employees of public matters with the citizens of the Commonwealth. All public bodies and their officers and employees shall make reasonable efforts to reach an agreement with a requester concerning the production of the records requested. Any ordinance adopted by a local governing body that conflicts with the provisions of this chapter shall be void.

School

The Virginia Center for School Safety uses a different definition for a "school" than the Virginia Department of Education due to the nature of the school safety audit requirement. For the purposes of a "school safety audit" the VCSS uses the following definition: "A school is any separate physical structure that houses and instructs public school students on a daily basis." Therefore, regional, alternative, governor's schools, head start, preschool facilities, and others that are not physically part of another public school building, are required to complete a school safety survey, regardless of where the enrollment of its students is housed.

School Resource Officer (SRO)

A certified law-enforcement officer employed by the local law enforcement agency that provides law-enforcement and security services to a Virginia public school.

School Security Officer (SSO)

An individual who is employed by the local school board for the singular purpose of maintaining order and discipline, preventing crime, investigating violations of school board policies, and detaining students violating the law or school board policies on school property or at school-sponsored events and who is responsible solely for ensuring the safety, security, and welfare of all students, faculty, staff and visitors in the assigned school.

Sex Offender Registry

The registry, including the Public Notification Database, is based on the Virginia General Assembly's decision to facilitate access to publicly-available information about persons convicted of specified violent and sexual offenses. Adult individuals found within the registry are included solely by virtue of their conviction record and applicable state law.