

Report on Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2022

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Report on Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2022

September 2023

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Foreword

Report on Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2022 provides the most recent national indicators on school crime and safety. The information presented in this report serves as a reference for policymakers and practitioners so that they can develop effective programs and policies aimed at violence and school crime prevention. Accurate information about the nature, extent, and scope of the problem being addressed is essential for developing effective programs and policies.

This is the 25th edition of *Indicators of School Crime and Safety*, a joint effort of the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). This report provides summary statistics to inform the nation about current aspects of crime and safety in schools.

Report on Indicators of School Crime and Safety includes the most recent available data at the time of its development, compiled from a number of statistical data sources supported by the federal government. Such sources include results from the School-Associated Violent Death Surveillance System, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); the National Vital Statistics System, sponsored by CDC; the

School Shooting Safety Compendium, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Defense; the Studies of Active Shooter Incidents, sponsored by the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the National Crime Victimization Survey and School Crime Supplement to that survey, sponsored by BJS and NCES, respectively; the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, sponsored by CDC; the School Survey on Crime and Safety, Fast Response Survey System, *EDFacts*, and National Teacher and Principal Survey, all sponsored by NCES; and the Campus Safety and Security Survey, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. Some of these data are collected annually, while others are collected less frequently.

This report is available as a PDF file at <https://nces.ed.gov> or <https://bjs.ojp.gov>. BJS and NCES continue to work together in order to provide timely and complete data on the issues of school-related violence and safety.

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Introduction

It is important to establish reliable indicators of the current state of school crime and safety across the nation—and to regularly update and monitor these indicators as new data become available. These indicators can help inform policymakers and practitioners of the nature, extent, and scope of the problem being addressed as they develop programs aimed at violence and school crime prevention. This is the purpose of Indicators of School Crime and Safety, a joint effort by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS).

The 2022 edition of the *Report on Indicators of School Crime and Safety* is the 25th in a series of annual publications. Beginning with the 2020 edition, this report has been redesigned with the intention of increasing its usability for a wider audience. This report does so by highlighting selected findings from 23 indicators on various school crime and safety topics. By synthesizing findings in this way, the report allows readers to gauge the breadth of the content more efficiently and make connections across indicators. As in previous editions, the full set of 23 indicators—with each indicator presented as an independent, more detailed analysis of a crime and safety topic—can be [accessed in the online Indicator System](#). Each indicator can be found on the website, and readers can download PDFs of the individual indicators. Indicators online are hyperlinked to tables in the *Digest of Education Statistics*, where readers can obtain the underlying data. The PDF version of the report, however, has been transformed into the *Report on Indicators of School Crime and Safety*, which highlights and synthesizes key findings from the full set of 23 indicators online.

This report covers a variety of topics on school crime and safety. It first examines different types of student victimization, including violent deaths and school shootings, nonfatal criminal victimization, and bullying victimization. Then, the report presents data on teacher victimization. This report concludes the section on crime and safety issues at the elementary and secondary level by examining data on school conditions—such as discipline problems, gangs, hate-related speech, possession of weapons, and use and availability of illegal drugs—as well as data that reflect student perceptions about their personal safety at school.

To address these issues that students and teachers could experience, schools across the United States have implemented preventive and responsive measures. This report covers topics such as security practices,

disciplinary actions, and whether schools have plans for scenarios such as active shooters, natural disasters, or a pandemic disease.

In addition to practices and measures addressing specific crime and safety concerns, many schools provide mental health services to promote student well-being and improve school climate. This report examines the prevalence of mental health services in public schools, as well as the limitations to providing mental health services that schools may encounter.

Finally, at the postsecondary level, this report discusses the number of reported on-campus criminal incidents against persons and property, as well as on-campus hate crime incidents, such as those motivated by biases associated with race, sexual orientation, and religion.

In this report, where available, data on victimization that occurred away from school are offered as a point of comparison for data on victimization that occurred at school. Indicators of crime and safety are compared across different population subgroups and over time. Across indicators, the year of the most recent data collection varied by survey, generally ranging from 2019 to 2021. In 2020—and to a lesser extent in 2021¹—schools across the country suspended or modified in-person classes in accordance with federal, state, and local guidance related to the risks associated with the coronavirus pandemic. Students might have spent less time at school than in previous years due to these modified procedures. Thus, readers are encouraged to interpret data since 2020 in the context of these pandemic-related modifications.

A variety of data sources are used to present information on these topics, including national surveys of students, teachers, principals, and postsecondary institutions. Readers should be cautious when comparing data from different sources. Differences across these sources in aspects such as data collection procedures and timing, the phrasing of questions used to collect information from respondents, and interviewer training can affect the comparability of results across data sources.

Findings described with comparative language (e.g., higher, lower, increase, and decrease) are statistically significant at the .05 level. Additional information about methodology and the datasets analyzed in this report may be found online in the [Reader's Guide](#) and [Guide to Sources](#).

¹ For data on student enrollment by type of instruction (remote, hybrid, and in-person) in spring 2021, see <https://ies.ed.gov/schoolsurvey/mss-dashboard/>.

Highlights

In recent years, reported incidents related to several crime and safety issues have become less prevalent at elementary and secondary schools when compared with a decade earlier. Specifically, incidents of nonfatal student and teacher victimization, certain discipline problems, and reports of some unfavorable conditions at school have decreased over time:²

- For students ages 12-18, the rate of nonfatal criminal victimization (including theft and violent victimization) at school in 2019 was not significantly different than the rate in 2010. From 2019 to 2021, the rate at school decreased from 30 to 7 victimizations per 1,000 students.
- Lower percentages of public school teachers in 2020-21 than in 2011-12 reported being threatened with injury by a student from their school (6 vs. 10 percent) and being physically attacked by a student from their school (4 vs. 6 percent).³
- Lower percentages of public schools in 2019-20 than in 2009-10 reported that each of the following discipline problems occurred at least once a week: student bullying (15 vs. 23 percent), student sexual harassment of other students (2 vs. 3 percent), and student harassment of other students based on sexual orientation or gender identity (2 vs. 3 percent).
- Lower percentages of students ages 12-18 in 2019 than in 2009 reported the following unfavorable conditions at their school: gang presence (9 vs. 20 percent), being called hate-related words (7 vs. 9 percent), and seeing hate-related graffiti (23 vs. 29 percent).
- Lower percentages of students in grades 9-12 in 2019 than in 2009 reported the following issues: having been in a physical fight on school property in the previous 12 months (8 vs. 11 percent); carrying a weapon on school property during the previous 30 days (3 vs. 6 percent); and using alcohol on at least 1 day during the previous 30 days (29 vs. 42 percent).

² In 2020—and to a lesser extent in 2021—schools across the country suspended or modified in-person classes in accordance with federal, state, and local guidance related to the risks associated with the coronavirus pandemic. Students may have spent less time at school and had less in-person interaction with their teachers and other students than in previous years due to these modified procedures. Thus, readers are encouraged to interpret data since 2020 in the context of these pandemic-related modifications.

³ Teachers who taught only prekindergarten students are excluded. Includes teachers in both traditional public schools and public charter schools.

In contrast, cyberbullying and some student discipline problems related to teachers and classrooms have become more common over time. Specifically, higher percentages of public schools in 2019-20 than in 2009-10 reported the following problems at least once a week:

- student cyberbullying (16 vs. 8 percent);
- student verbal abuse of teachers (10 vs. 5 percent);
- student acts of disrespect for teachers other than verbal abuse (15 vs. 9 percent); and
- widespread disorder in the classroom (4 vs. 3 percent).

Active shooter incidents⁴ represent a subset of the possible violent incidents that occur at school. From 2000 to 2021, at elementary and secondary schools, there were 46 active shooter incidents, with the annual number ranging from 0 to 6 incidents. These 46 incidents resulted in 276 casualties (108 killed and 168 wounded).⁵ In 2021, there were 2 active shooter incidents documented at elementary and secondary schools.

Increasing percentages of public schools have implemented certain safety and security practices and have offered mental health services to students:

- In 2019-20, about 52 percent of public schools reported having a written plan for procedures to be performed in the event of a pandemic disease. This percentage was higher than the percentage reported in 2017-18 (46 percent).
- Between 2009-10 and 2019-20, the percentage of public schools reporting the following safety and security measures increased: controlling access to school buildings (from 92 to 97 percent), using security cameras (from 61 to 91 percent), and requiring faculty and staff to wear badges or picture IDs (from 63 to 77 percent).
- Between 2009-10 and 2019-20, the percentage of public schools that reported having one or more security staff present at school at least once a week increased (from 43 to 65 percent).
- Higher percentages of public schools in 2019-20 than in 2017-18 reported providing diagnostic mental health assessment services to evaluate students for mental health disorders (55 vs. 51 percent) and offering mental health treatment services to students for mental health disorders (42 vs. 38 percent).

⁴ An active shooter incident is an incident in which “one or more individuals actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area.” Because the situation is active, law enforcement and citizens involved in the incident have the potential to affect the outcome.

⁵ Number of casualties excludes the active shooters.

Regarding safety issues on campuses of postsecondary institutions, the rate of crime

- was 10 percent lower in 2019 than in 2010 (18.8 vs. 20.9 per 10,000 FTE students) but showed no consistent trend during this period; and
- decreased by 20 percent between 2019 and 2020, during the first year of the pandemic (from 18.8 to 15.0 per 10,000 FTE students).

Despite the overall rate of crime being lower in 2020 than in 2010, the rate of reported forcible sex offenses on campus increased from 1.9 incidents per 10,000 students in 2010 to 6.6 incidents per 10,000 students in 2020.⁶ Forcible sex offenses constituted 44 percent of all criminal incidents reported on campus in 2020.

In 2020, a total of 571 hate crimes were reported on the campuses of postsecondary institutions. This was 25 percent lower than in 2019 (759 incidents) and 38 percent lower than in 2010 (928 incidents). Race, sexual orientation, and ethnicity were the three most frequently reported categories of bias motivating on-campus hate crimes at postsecondary institutions, accounting for about 82 percent of reported hate crimes.

From 2000 to 2021, there were 18 active shooter incidents documented at postsecondary institutions, with the annual number ranging from 0 to 2. These incidents resulted in 157 casualties (75 killed and 82 wounded).⁷ There were 0 active shooter incidents documented at postsecondary institutions in 2021.

⁶ Reporting guidelines for forcible sex offenses changed in 2014. In years prior to 2014, schools reported a total number of forcible sex offenses, with no breakouts for specific types of offenses. Beginning in 2014, schools were asked to report the numbers of two different types of forcible sex offenses: rape and fondling. These two types were added together to calculate the total number of reported forcible sex offenses. For instance, 5,200 rapes and 4,200 fondling incidents were reported in 2020, for a total of 9,400 incidents of forcible sex offenses.

⁷ Number of casualties excludes the active shooters.

Violent Deaths, School Shootings, and Active Shooter Incidents

From 2000 to 2021, there were 46 active shooter incidents at elementary and secondary schools, with the number ranging from 0 to 6 per year during this period. There were 47 active shooters responsible for these 46 incidents, more than two-thirds of whom were 12 to 18 years old.

In 2021-22, the number of school shootings with casualties (188) was more than twice as high as the next highest number of documented shootings (93), which was documented the year before.

The most recent data released by the School-Associated Violent Death Surveillance System (SAVD-SS) cover the period from July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020, which includes the first spring of the coronavirus pandemic, when many students were learning remotely.⁸ During this period, a total of 25 school-associated violent deaths⁹ were documented in the United States. This included 23 homicides, 1 suicide, and 1 legal intervention death.^{10,11} Of these 25 school-associated violent deaths, 11 homicides and 1 suicide were of school-age youth (ages 5-18). (*Violent Deaths at School and Away From School, School Shootings, and Active Shooter Incidents*)

The School Shooting Safety Compendium (SSSC) aims to compile information on elementary/secondary school shootings from publicly available sources into a single comprehensive database. The SSSC defines “school shootings” as incidents in which “a gun is brandished, is fired, or a bullet hits school property for any reason, regardless of the number of victims, time of day, or day of week.” During the coronavirus pandemic, this definition includes shootings that happen on school property during remote instruction.

Between 2000-01 and 2020-21, the number of school shootings with casualties ranged from 11 to 93 per year.

⁸ Education Week. (2020, March 6). *Map: Coronavirus and School Closures in 2019-2020*. Retrieved March 13, 2023, from <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/map-coronavirus-and-school-closures-in-2019-2020/2020/03>.

⁹ The SAVD-SS defines a school-associated violent death as “a homicide, suicide, or legal intervention death (involving a law enforcement officer), in which the fatal injury occurred on the campus of a functioning elementary or secondary school in the United States.” School-associated violent deaths also include those that were documented to have occurred while the victim was on the way to or from regular sessions at school or while the victim was attending or traveling to or from an official school-sponsored event. School-associated violent deaths include not only students and staff members but also others at school, such as students’ parents and community members.

¹⁰ Data are subject to change until law enforcement reports have been obtained and interviews with school and law enforcement officials have been completed. The details learned during the interviews can occasionally change the classification of a case.

¹¹ A legal intervention death is defined as a death caused by a law enforcement agent in the course of arresting or attempting to arrest a lawbreaker, suppressing a disturbance, maintaining order, or engaging in another legal action.

On average, the number of shootings with casualties in a given year differed from the prior year by about 47 percent in either direction, with no consistent trend throughout the period. In 2021-22, the number of school shootings with casualties (188) was more than twice as high as the next highest number of documented shootings (93), which was documented the year before.¹² Because the number of school shootings in 2021-22 is an outlier compared to prior years, readers should interpret data with caution. (*Violent Deaths at School and Away From School, School Shootings, and Active Shooter Incidents*)

Active shooter incidents represent a subset of the possible gun violence or serious violent incidents that occur at schools. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defines an active shooter incident as an incident in which “one or more individuals actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area.” Because the situation is active, law enforcement and citizens involved in the incident have the potential to affect the outcome. From 2000 to 2021, at elementary and secondary schools, there were

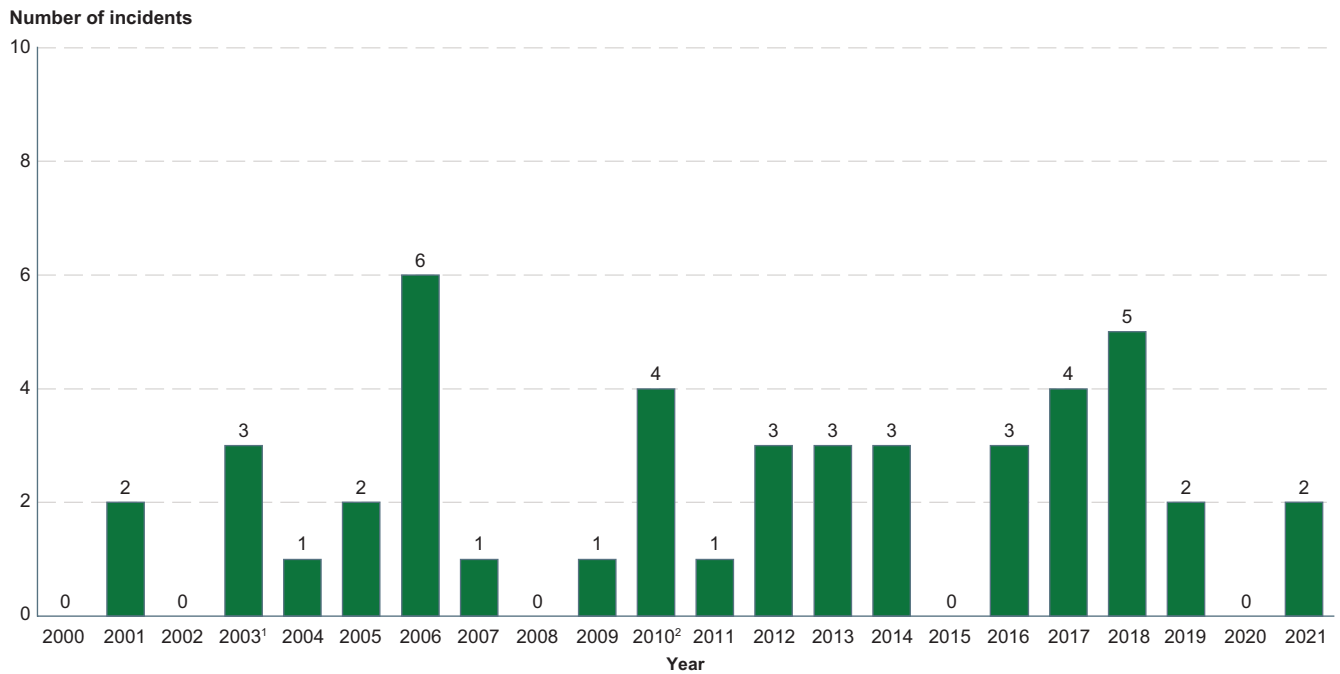
- 46 active shooter incidents (figure 1);
- 0 to 6 active shooter incidents per year;
- 276 casualties (108 killed and 168 wounded) as a result of active shooter incidents;¹³ and
- 0 to 81 casualties per year from active shooter incidents.

From 2000 to 2021, there were 47 active shooters responsible for the 46 incidents at elementary and secondary schools. Of the 47 active shooters,

- 46 were male and 1 was female;
- 34 were 12 to 18 years old;
- 5 were 19 to 24 years old; and
- 8 were 25 years old and above. (*Violent Deaths at School and Away From School, School Shootings, and Active Shooter Incidents*)

¹² Due to school closures caused by the coronavirus pandemic, caution should be used when comparing 2019-20 and 2020-21 data with data from other years.

¹³ Number of casualties excludes the active shooters.

Figure 1. Number of active shooter incidents at elementary and secondary schools: 2000 through 2021

¹ Includes one active shooter incident at a county board of education meeting.

² Includes one active shooter incident at a city school board meeting.

NOTE: The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defines an active shooter incident as an incident in which "one or more individuals actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area." Some data have been revised from previously published figures.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, *A Study of Active Shooter Incidents in the United States Between 2000 and 2013*, *Active Shooter Incidents in the United States in 2014 and 2015*, *Active Shooter Incidents in the United States in 2016 and 2017*, *Active Shooter Incidents in the United States in 2018*, *Active Shooter Incidents in the United States in 2019*, *Active Shooter Incidents: 20-Year Review 2000–2019*, *Active Shooter Incidents in the United States in 2020*, and *Active Shooter Incidents in the United States in 2021*, retrieved January 26, 2023, from <https://www.fbi.gov/about/partnerships/office-of-partner-engagement/active-shooter-resources>. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, table 228.15

Nonfatal Student and Teacher Victimization

In recent years, nonfatal student and teacher victimization was generally less prevalent than about a decade ago:

- The nonfatal criminal victimization rate for students ages 12-18 at school in 2019 was not significantly different than the rate in 2010. From 2019 to 2021, the rate at school decreased from 30 to 7 victimizations per 1,000 students.
- A lower percentage of students ages 12-18 in 2019 than in 2009 reported being bullied at school (22 vs. 28 percent).
- Lower percentages of public school teachers in 2020-21 than in 2011-12 reported being threatened with injury by a student from their school (6 vs. 10 percent) and being physically attacked by a student from their school (4 vs. 6 percent).

Criminal Victimization Experienced by Students

Data from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) provide insights on nonfatal criminal victimization experienced by students ages 12-18, according to students' own reports.¹⁴ Nonfatal criminal victimization includes theft¹⁵ and violent victimization, the latter of which includes rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault. In 2021, students ages 12-18 experienced 170,600 victimizations at school¹⁶ and 384,300 victimizations away from school. This translates to a rate of 7 victimizations per 1,000 students at school¹⁷ and a rate of 15 victimizations per 1,000 students away from school (figure 2). (*Incidence of Nonfatal Victimization at School and Away From School*)

For students ages 12-18, the total victimization rate in 2019 was not significantly different than the rate in 2010, both at school and away from school (figure 2). From 2019 to 2021, the total victimization rate at school decreased from 30 to 7 victimizations per 1,000 students. During the same period, from 2019 to 2021, the total victimization rate away from school did not change significantly (15 victimizations per 1,000 students in 2021).¹⁸ (*Incidence of Nonfatal Victimization at School and Away From School*)

¹⁴ “Students” refers to those ages 12-18 whose educational attainment did not exceed grade 12 at the time of the survey. An uncertain percentage of these persons may not have attended school during the survey reference period. These data do not take into account the number of hours that students spend at school or away from school.

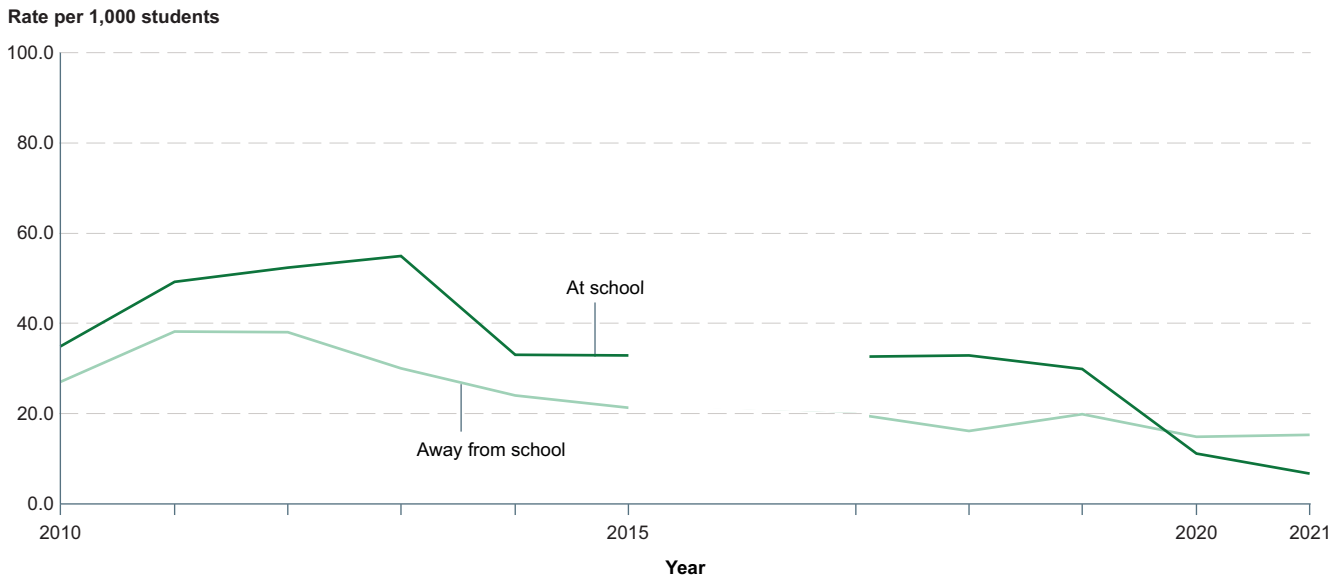
¹⁵ “Theft” includes attempted and completed purse-snatching, completed pickpocketing, and all attempted and completed thefts, with the exception of motor vehicle thefts. Theft does not include robbery, which involves the threat or use of force and is classified as a violent crime.

¹⁶ “At school” is defined to include in the school building, on school property, on a school bus, and going to and from school.

¹⁷ Data on the *percentage of students* ages 12-18 who reported being victimized at school during the previous 6 months are available from the School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the NCVS. At the time of the development of this report, the latest year for which SCS data are available is 2019. See *Prevalence of Criminal Victimization at School* for changes over time in the percentage of students reporting victimization at school, as well as how the percentage varied by selected student and school characteristics.

¹⁸ In 2020 and 2021, schools across the country suspended or modified in-person classes in accordance with federal, state, and local guidance related to the risks associated with the coronavirus pandemic. Students may have spent less time at school than in previous years due to these modified procedures.

Figure 2. Rate of nonfatal victimization against students ages 12–18 per 1,000 students, by location: 2010 through 2021



NOTE: Every 10 years, the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) sample is redesigned to reflect changes in the population. Due to a sample increase and redesign in 2016, victimization estimates among students ages 12–18 in 2016 were not comparable to estimates for other years. Nonfatal victimization includes theft, rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault. “At school” includes in the school building, on school property, on a school bus, and going to or from school. The NCVS data in this report are reported in accordance with Bureau of Justice Statistics standards. The population size for students ages 12–18 was 25,132,500 in 2021. In 2020 and 2021, schools across the country suspended or modified in-person classes to mitigate the risks associated with the coronavirus pandemic. Students may have spent less time at school than in previous years due to these modified procedures. Estimates may vary from previously published reports. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), 2010 through 2021. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, table 228.20.

Student Reports of Bullying Victimization

Another type of student victimization that is important to understand is bullying. Previous research has found that students who are bullied are more likely to experience depression and anxiety, have more health complaints, and skip or drop out of school (Swearer and Hymel 2015; Hornor 2018). The involvement of young bullying victims in recent suicides and school shootings has also heightened concerns regarding the public health implications of bullying (Hornor 2018).

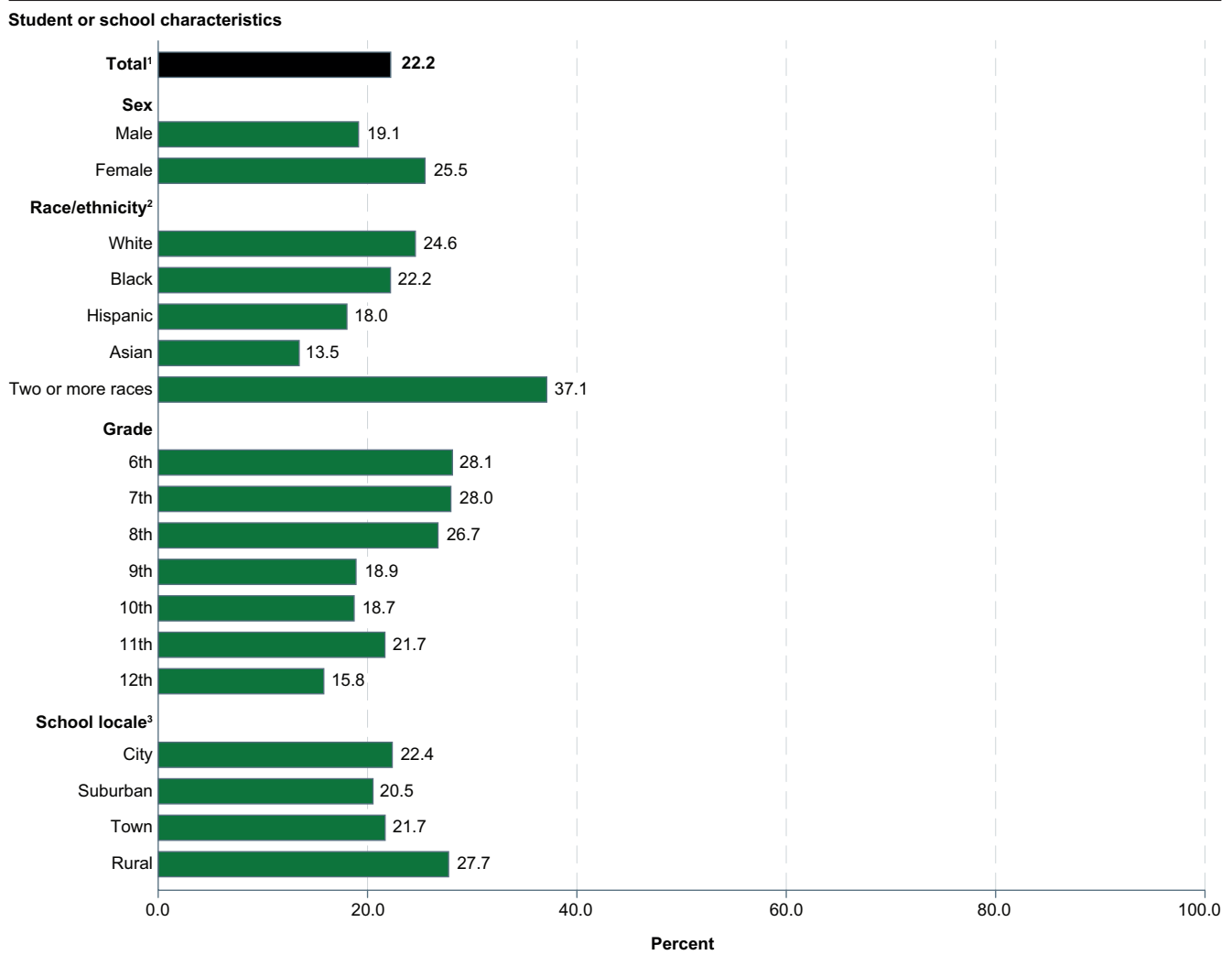
According to data from the School Crime Supplement (SCS), during the school year in 2019, about 22 percent of students ages 12-18 reported being bullied¹⁹ at school. This was lower than the percentage who reported being bullied in 2009 (28 percent). Students’ reports of being bullied varied based on student and school characteristics

in 2019 (figure 3). For instance, the percentage of students who reported being bullied at school during the school year was

- higher for female students than for male students (25 vs. 19 percent);
- higher for students of Two or more races (37 percent) than for White students (25 percent) and Black students (22 percent), all of which were higher than for Asian students (13 percent);
- higher for 6th-, 7th-, and 8th-graders (ranging from 27 to 28 percent) than for 9th-, 10th-, and 12th-graders (ranging from 16 to 19 percent); and
- higher for students enrolled in schools in rural areas (28 percent) than for those enrolled in schools in other locales (ranging from 21 to 22 percent). (*Bullying at School and Electronic Bullying*)

¹⁹ “Bullying” includes students who reported that another student had made fun of them, called them names, or insulted them; spread rumors about them; threatened them with harm; tried to make them do something they did not want to do; excluded them from activities on purpose; destroyed their property on purpose; or pushed, shoved, tripped, or spit on them. In the total for students bullied at school, students who reported more than one type of bullying were counted only once.

Figure 3. Percentage of students ages 12–18 who reported being bullied at school during the school year, by selected student and school characteristics: 2019



¹ Total includes race categories not separately shown.

² Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Data for Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaska Native students did not meet reporting standards in 2019; therefore, data for these two groups are not shown.

³ Excludes students with missing information about the school characteristic.

NOTE: “At school” includes in the school building, on school property, on a school bus, and going to and from school. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey, 2019. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, table 230.40.

According to data from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), about 16 percent of students in grades 9–12 reported being electronically²⁰ bullied during the previous 12 months in 2019. The percentage of students who reported being electronically bullied was

higher for gay, lesbian, or bisexual students (27 percent) than for students who were not sure about their sexual identity (19 percent), and both percentages were higher than the percentage for heterosexual students (14 percent).²¹ (*Bullying at School and Electronic Bullying*)

²⁰ Being electronically bullied includes “being bullied through e-mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, websites, or texting” for 2011 through 2015 and “being bullied through texting, Instagram, Facebook, or other social media” for 2017 and 2019.

²¹ Since 2015, the YRBSS has included a question on students’ sexual identity by asking students in grades 9–12 which of the following best described them—“heterosexual (straight),” “gay or lesbian,” “bisexual,” or “not sure.” In this report, students who identified as “gay or lesbian” or “bisexual” are discussed together as the “gay, lesbian, or bisexual” group. Students were not asked their gender identity on the YRBSS, for example, whether they identified as transgender.

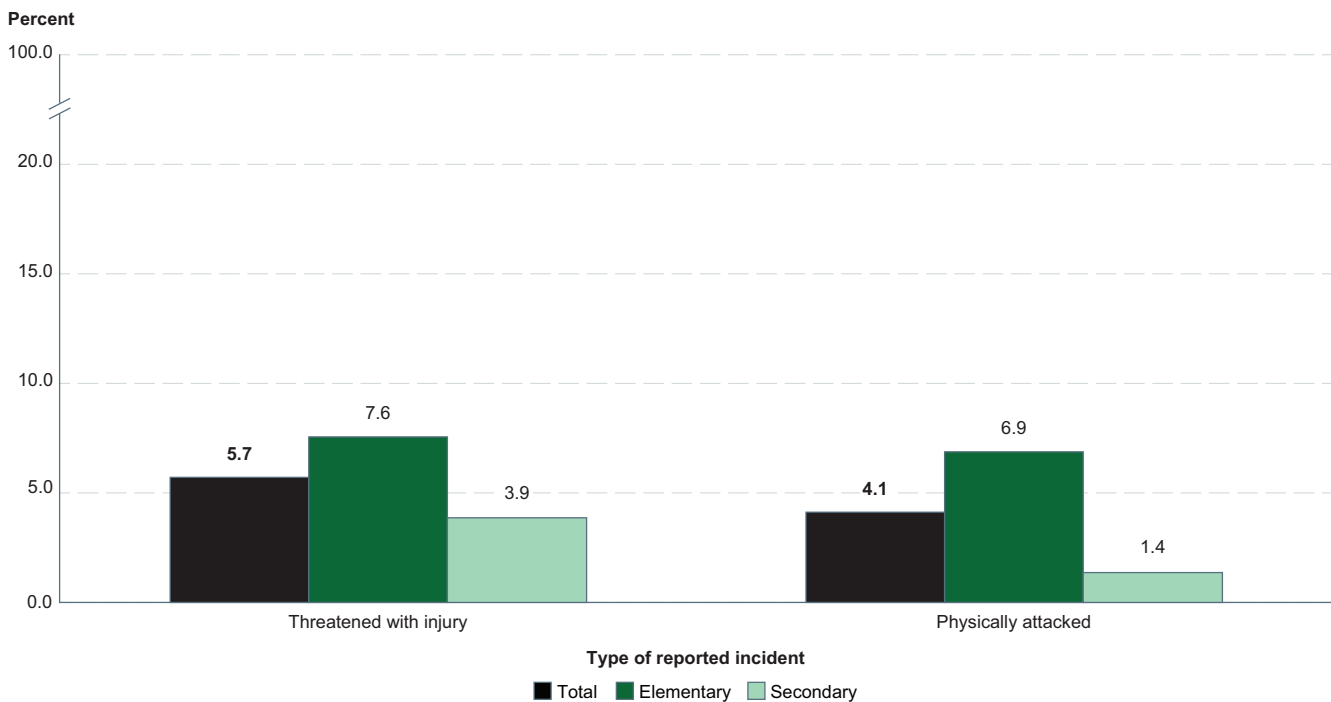
Teacher Victimization

In addition to students, teachers are also subject to intimidation and violence, and students from their schools sometimes commit these offenses. According to data on public school teachers²² from the 2020-21 National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), threats of injury were more commonly reported than actual physical attacks. Additionally, both types of teacher victimization were less prevalent in 2020-21²³ than in 2011-12:

- The percentage of public school teachers who reported being threatened with injury by a student from their school was 6 percent in 2020-21, compared with 10 percent in 2011-12.
- The percentage who reported being physically attacked by a student from their school was 4 percent in 2020-21, compared with 6 percent in 2011-12.²⁴

During the 2020-21 school year, higher percentages of elementary public school teachers than of secondary public school teachers reported being threatened with injury (8 vs. 4 percent) and being physically attacked (7 vs. 1 percent) by a student from their school (figure 4).²⁵ (*Teachers Threatened With Injury or Physically Attacked by Students*)

Figure 4. Percentage of public school teachers who reported that they were threatened with injury or physically attacked by a student from their school during the previous 12 months, by instructional level: School year 2020-21



NOTE: Includes teachers in both traditional public schools and public charter schools. Excludes teachers who taught only prekindergarten students. Teachers were classified as elementary or secondary on the basis of the grades they taught, rather than on the level of the school in which they taught. In general, elementary teachers include those teaching prekindergarten through grade 6 and those teaching multiple grades, with a preponderance of grades taught being kindergarten through grade 6. In general, secondary teachers include those teaching any of grades 7 through 12 and those teaching multiple grades, with a preponderance of grades taught being grades 7 through 12 and usually with no grade taught being lower than grade 5.

SOURCE: National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), "Public School Teacher Data File," 2020-21. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, table 228.70.

²² Includes teachers in both traditional public schools and public charter schools. Excludes teachers who taught only prekindergarten students.

²³ The 2020 calendar year was the first year of the coronavirus pandemic, so many schools shifted instruction from in-person classes to online-only or hybrid education. Thus, in-person interactions between students and teachers may have been limited.

²⁴ The 2011-12 data were collected in the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS). The NTPS was designed to allow comparisons with SASS data.

²⁵ Teachers were classified as elementary or secondary on the basis of the grades they taught, rather than on the level of the school in which they taught. In general, elementary teachers include those teaching any of grades prekindergarten through grade 6 and those teaching multiple grades, with a preponderance of grades taught being kindergarten through grade 6. In general, secondary teachers include those teaching any of grades 7 through 12 and those teaching multiple grades, with a preponderance of grades taught being grades 7 through 12 and usually with no grade taught being lower than grade 5.

School Environment

Some aspects of the school environment showed improvements over time. For instance:

- A lower percentage of public schools in 2019-20 than in 2009-10 recorded one or more incidents of crime (77 vs. 85 percent).
- Lower percentages of public schools in 2019-20 than in 2009-10 reported student behaviors at school that targeted fellow students, including student bullying at least once a week (15 vs. 23 percent) and sexual harassment of other students at least once a week (2 vs. 3 percent).
- Lower percentages of students ages 12-18 in 2019 than in 2009 reported the following unfavorable conditions at their school: gang presence (9 vs. 20 percent), being called hate-related words (7 vs. 9 percent), and seeing hate-related graffiti (23 vs. 29 percent).
- A lower percentage of public school teachers in 2020-21 than in 2011-12 agreed that student misbehavior interfered with their teaching (32 vs. 41 percent).

However, other aspects did not improve:

- A higher percentage of public schools in 2019-20 than in 2009-10 reported cyberbullying among students at least once a week (16 vs. 8 percent).
- A higher percentage of students in 2019 than in 2009 reported avoiding one or more places in school during the school year because they thought someone might attack or harm them (5 vs. 4 percent).

Criminal Incidents and Discipline Problems Reported by Public Schools

Criminal incidents and discipline problems at school are aspects of the school safety environment for which national data are available. The School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS) asked public school principals to report the numbers of various types of criminal incidents that occurred at their school²⁶ and to indicate how often certain disciplinary problems happened in their school.²⁷ Such school-reported data can complement those data covering similar issues based on students' experience and observation, such as those collected through the School Crime Supplement (SCS) and the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS).

During the 2019-20 school year,²⁸ 77 percent of public schools recorded that one or more incidents of crime²⁹ had taken place, amounting to 1.4 million incidents, or a rate of 29 incidents per 1,000 students enrolled (figure 5). During the same school year, 47 percent of schools reported one or more incidents of crime to sworn law enforcement, amounting to 482,400 incidents, or a rate of 10 incidents per 1,000 students enrolled. The percentage of public schools that recorded one or more incidents of crime was lower in 2019-20 than in 2009-10 (77 vs. 85 percent); the same pattern can be observed for the percentage of public schools that reported one or more criminal incidents to sworn law enforcement (47 vs. 60 percent). (*Criminal Incidents Recorded by Public Schools and Those Reported to Sworn Law Enforcement*)

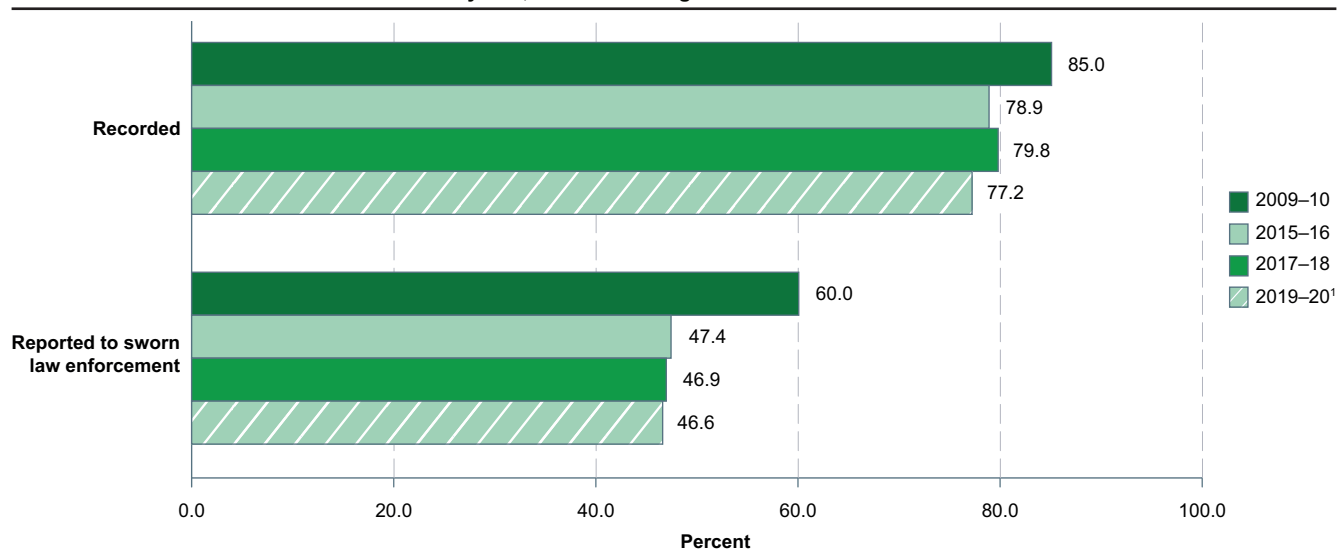
²⁶ In SSOCS, "at school" was defined for respondents as including activities that happen in school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses, and at places that hold school-sponsored events or activities. In the survey questions about criminal incidents, respondents were instructed to include incidents that occurred before, during, or after normal school hours or when school activities or events were in session.

²⁷ Respondents were instructed to include discipline problems only for those times that were during normal school hours or when school activities or events were in session.

²⁸ The coronavirus pandemic affected the 2019-20 data collection activities. The change to virtual schooling and the adjusted school year may have impacted the data collected by SSOCS. Readers should use caution when comparing 2019-20 estimates with those from earlier years. For more information, see *Crime, Violence, Discipline, and Safety in U.S. Public Schools in 2019-20: Findings From the School Survey on Crime and Safety (NCES 2022-029)*.

²⁹ In SSOCS, incidents of crime include violent incidents, thefts of items valued at \$10 or greater without personal confrontation, and other criminal incidents. "Violent incidents" include rape or attempted rape; sexual assault other than rape; physical attacks or fights with or without a weapon; threat of physical attacks with or without a weapon; and robbery with or without a weapon. "Other incidents" include possession of a firearm or explosive device; possession of a knife or sharp object; distribution, possession, or use of illegal drugs or alcohol; inappropriate distribution, possession, or use of prescription drugs; and vandalism. Note that when referring to criminal incidents, the word "recorded" refers to all incidents that were documented by the school, while "reported" is used to identify incidents that were reported to sworn law enforcement.

Figure 5. Percentage of public schools recording one or more incidents of crime at school and percentage reporting incidents to sworn law enforcement: Selected years, 2009–10 through 2019–20



¹ The coronavirus pandemic affected the 2019–20 data collection activities. The change to virtual schooling and the adjusted school year may have impacted the data collected by the School Survey on Crime and Safety. Readers should use caution when comparing 2019–20 estimates with those from earlier years. For more information, see *Crime, Violence, Discipline, and Safety in U.S. Public Schools in 2019–20: Findings From the School Survey on Crime and Safety* (NCES 2022-029). NOTE: Responses were provided by the principal or the person most knowledgeable about crime and safety issues at the school. "At school" was defined as including activities that happen in school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses, and at places that hold school-sponsored events or activities. Respondents were instructed to include incidents that occurred before, during, and after normal school hours or when school activities or events were in session. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2019–20 School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS), 2020. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2021*, table 229.10.

In 2019–20, lower percentages of elementary schools and combined/other schools recorded incidents of violent crime³⁰ (58 and 60 percent, respectively) compared with middle schools (91 percent) and secondary/high schools (90 percent).³¹ Similarly, lower percentages of elementary schools and combined/other schools than of middle schools and secondary/high schools reported incidents of violent crime to sworn law enforcement. (*Criminal Incidents Recorded by Public Schools and Those Reported to Sworn Law Enforcement*)

Within the category of noncriminal incidents, student bullying³² and cyberbullying^{33,34} were among the most prevalent discipline problems reported by public schools to have occurred at least once a week in 2019–20 (reported by 15 and 16 percent of public schools, respectively; figure 6). Student verbal abuse of teachers and acts

of disrespect for teachers other than verbal abuse were reported by 10 and 15 percent of public schools, respectively. (*Discipline Problems Reported by Public Schools*)

Higher percentages of public schools in 2019–20 than in 2009–10 reported

- cyberbullying (16 vs. 8 percent; figure 6);
- student acts of disrespect for teachers other than verbal abuse (15 vs. 9 percent);
- student verbal abuse of teachers (10 vs. 5 percent); and
- widespread disorder in the classroom (4 vs. 3 percent).

In contrast, behaviors at school that targeted fellow students were generally less prevalent. Lower percentages of public schools in 2019–20 than in 2009–10 reported

- student bullying (15 vs. 23 percent);
- student sexual harassment of other students (2 vs. 3 percent); and
- student harassment of other students based on sexual orientation or gender identity^{35,36} (2 vs. 3 percent). (*Discipline Problems Reported by Public Schools*)

³⁰ See previous footnote for the definition of "violent incidents."

³¹ Elementary schools are defined as schools that enroll students in more of grades K through 4 than in higher grades. Middle schools are defined as schools that enroll students in more of grades 5 through 8 than in higher or lower grades. Secondary/high schools are defined as schools that enroll students in more of grades 9 through 12 than in lower grades. Combined/other schools include all other combinations of grades, including K–12 schools.

³² The SSOCS questionnaire defines bullying as "any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated. Bullying occurs among youth who are not siblings or current dating partners."

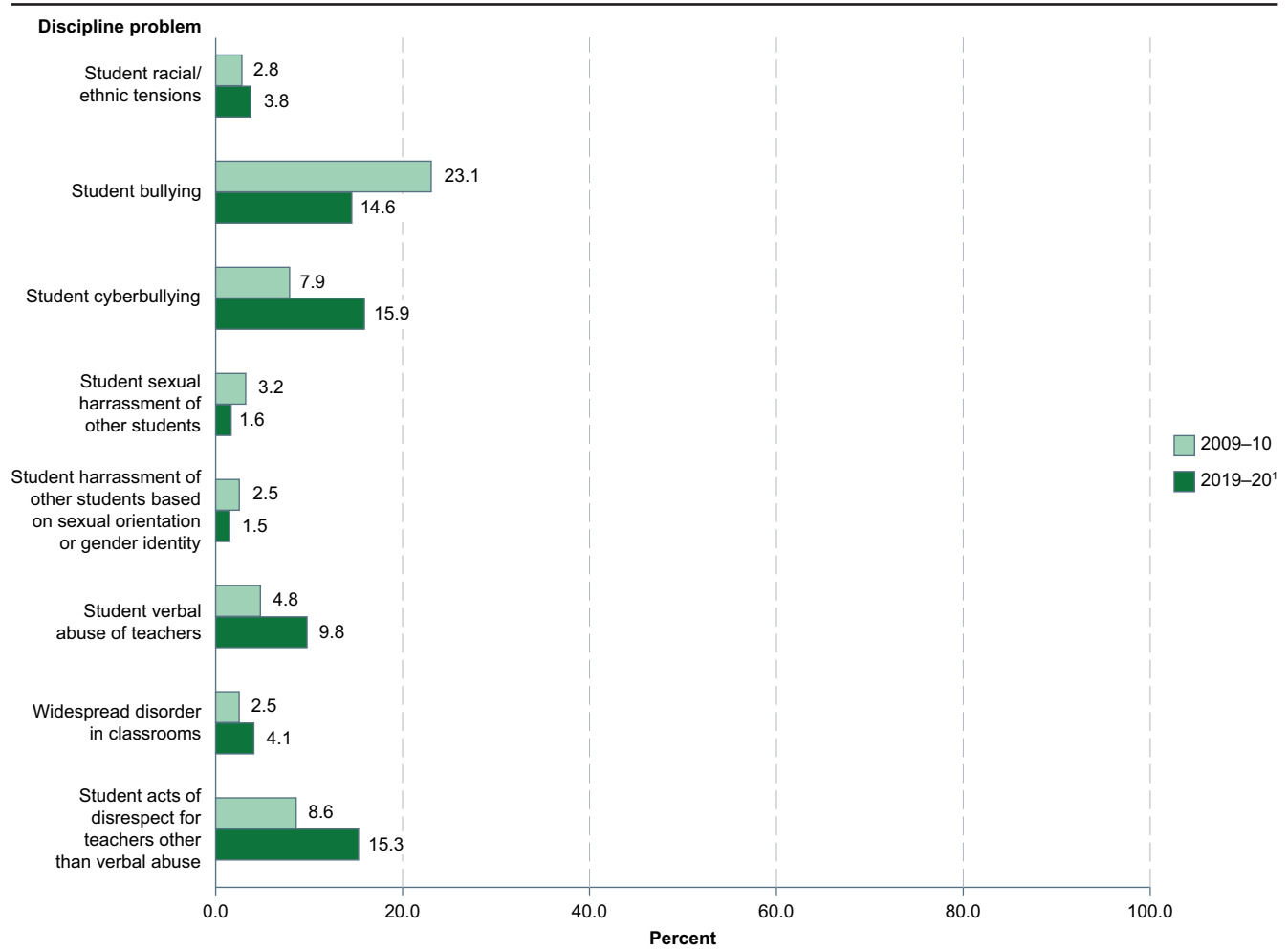
³³ "Cyberbullying" was defined for respondents as "occurring when willful and repeated harm is inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, or other electronic devices."

³⁴ For all discipline problems except "student cyberbullying," respondents were instructed to include problems that occur at school.

³⁵ Sexual orientation means one's "emotional or physical attraction to the same and/or opposite sex." Gender identity means one's "inner sense of one's own gender, which may or may not match the sex assigned at birth."

³⁶ Prior to 2015–16, the questionnaire asked about "student harassment of other students based on sexual orientation or gender identity (i.e., lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning)" in one single item. The 2015–16, 2017–18, and 2019–20 questionnaires had one item asking about "student harassment of other students based on sexual orientation," followed by a separate item asking about "student harassment of other students based on gender identity."

Figure 6. Percentage of public schools reporting selected discipline problems that occurred at least once a week: School years 2009–10 and 2019–20



¹ The coronavirus pandemic affected the 2019–20 data collection activities. The change to virtual schooling and the adjusted school year may have impacted the data collected by the School Survey on Crime and Safety. Readers should use caution when comparing 2019–20 estimates with those from earlier years. For more information, see *Crime, Violence, Discipline, and Safety in U.S. Public Schools in 2019–20: Findings From the School Survey on Crime and Safety* (NCES 2022-029).

NOTE: Responses were provided by the principal or the person most knowledgeable about crime and safety issues at the school. Respondents were instructed to include discipline problems only for those times that were during normal school hours or when school activities or events were in session, unless the survey specified otherwise. For all items except “student cyberbullying,” respondents were instructed to include problems that occur at school. “At school” was defined to include activities that happen in school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses, and at places that hold school-sponsored events or activities. For the “student cyberbullying” item, respondents were instructed to include cyberbullying “problems that can occur anywhere (both at your school and away from school).” Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2009–10 and 2019–20 School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS), 2010 and 2020. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2021*, table 230.10.

Gangs and Hate-Related Speech

Another aspect of the school environment for which national data are available is unfavorable conditions related to crime and safety, such as the presence of gangs and hate-related³⁷ words and graffiti. These data are captured in the SCS based on student reports of conditions at school during the school year. Lower

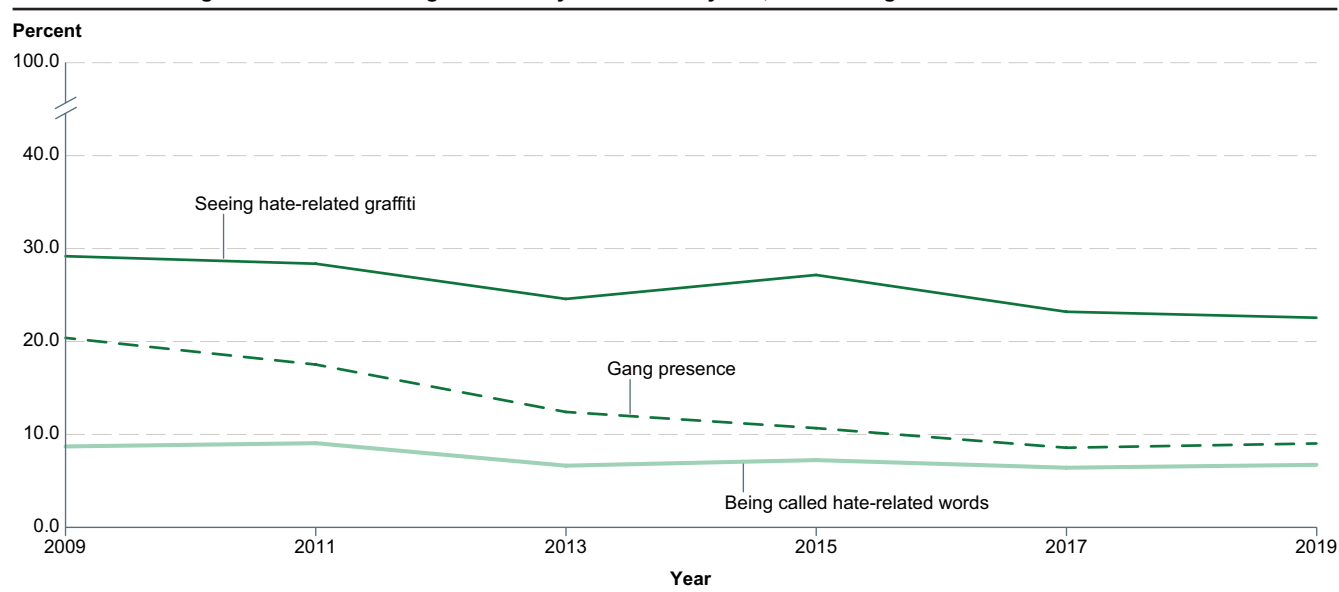
percentages of students ages 12-18 in 2019 than in 2009 reported these unfavorable conditions:

- gang presence (9 vs. 20 percent; figure 7);
- being called hate-related words (7 vs. 9 percent); and
- seeing hate-related graffiti (23 vs. 29 percent).

(Students’ Reports of Gangs at School; Students’ Reports of Hate-Related Words and Hate-Related Graffiti)

³⁷ “Hate-related” refers to derogatory terms used by others in reference to students’ personal characteristics.

Figure 7. Percentage of students ages 12–18 who reported a gang presence, being called hate-related words, and seeing hate-related graffiti at school during the school year: Selected years, 2009 through 2019



NOTE: "At school" includes in the school building, on school property, on a school bus, and going to and from school. "Hate-related" refers to derogatory terms used by others in reference to students' personal characteristics.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey, 2009 through 2019. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, tables 230.20 and 230.30.

In 2019, there were differences in the reports of these unfavorable conditions by student and school characteristics. For instance, higher percentages of 9th- through 12th-graders (ranging from 10 to 12 percent) than of 6th- through 8th-graders (ranging from 5 to 6 percent) reported observing a gang presence at their school. In contrast, the percentages of students who reported being called a hate-related word at school were lower for 10th- and 12th-graders (5 and 4 percent, respectively) than for 7th- and 8th-graders (8 and 9 percent, respectively), and there were no measurable differences by students' grade level in the percentage of students who reported seeing hate-related graffiti at school. (*Students' Reports of Gangs at School*; *Students' Reports of Hate-Related Words and Hate-Related Graffiti*)

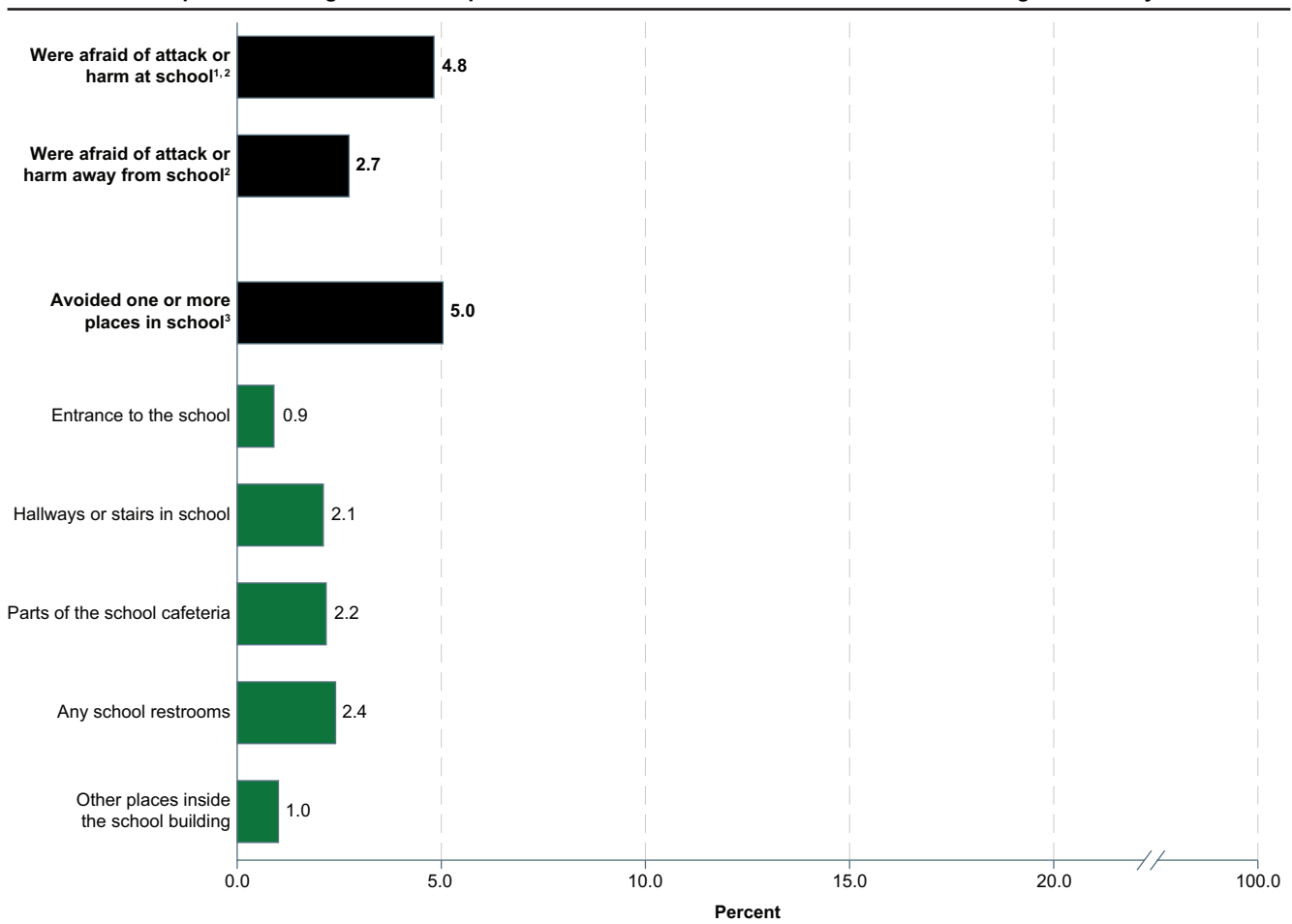
Students who reported being called hate-related words at school during the school year were asked to indicate whether the derogatory word they were called referred to their race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender, or sexual orientation. In 2019, race was the most frequently reported characteristic referred to by hate-related words. The percentage of students who reported being called a hate-related word referring to their race was lower for White students (2 percent) than for students of any other race/ethnicity for which data were available (ranging from 4 percent of Hispanic students to 9 percent of students of Two or more races). (*Students' Reports of Hate-Related Words and Hate-Related Graffiti*)

Student Fear and Avoidance

Another aspect of the school environment to consider is students’ perceptions of personal safety at school. The SCS collected such data by asking students ages 12-18 about their fear of attack or harm at and away from school. In 2019, about 5 percent of students ages 12-18 reported that they had been afraid of attack or harm³⁸ at school during the school year, which was higher than the percentage of students who reported that they had been afraid of attack or harm away from school (3 percent; figure 8). The percentages of students who reported being afraid of attack or harm at school and away from school

in 2019 were not measurably different from those in 2009. The SCS also asked students whether they avoided one or more places in school³⁹ because they were fearful that someone might attack or harm them. In 2019, the percentage of students who reported avoiding one or more places in school during the school year because they thought someone might attack or harm them was 5 percent, which was higher than the percentage who did so in 2009 (4 percent). (*Students’ Perceptions of Personal Safety at School and Away From School; Students’ Reports of Avoiding School Activities or Classes or Specific Places in School*)

Figure 8. Percentage of students ages 12–18 who reported being afraid of attack or harm during the school year and percentage who reported avoiding one or more places in school because of fear of attack or harm during the school year: 2019



¹“At school” includes in the school building, on school property, on a school bus, and going to and from school.

² Students were asked if they were “never,” “almost never,” “sometimes,” or “most of the time” afraid that someone would attack or harm them at school or away from school. Students responding “sometimes” or “most of the time” were considered afraid.

³ Students who reported avoiding multiple places in school were counted only once in the total for students avoiding one or more places.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey, 2019. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, tables 230.70 and 230.80.

³⁸ Students were asked if they were “never,” “almost never,” “sometimes,” or “most of the time” afraid that someone would attack or harm them at school or away from school. Students responding “sometimes” or “most of the time” were considered afraid.

³⁹ “Avoided one or more places in school” includes avoiding entrance to the school, hallways or stairs in school, parts of the school cafeteria, any school restrooms, and other places inside the school building. Students who reported avoiding multiple places in school were counted only once in the total for students avoiding one or more places.

In 2019, there were some measurable differences by student and school characteristics in the percentages of students ages 12-18 who reported fear and avoidance. For example, the percentage of students who reported avoiding one or more places in school because of fear of attack or harm was

- higher for students of Two or more races (11 percent) than for Hispanic (5 percent), Asian (4 percent), and White (4 percent) students;
- higher for Black students (7 percent) than for White students (4 percent);
- higher for 7th-, 8th-, and 9th-graders (5, 6, and 7 percent, respectively) than for 12th-graders (3 percent);
- higher for those enrolled in schools in cities than for those enrolled in schools in rural areas (6 vs. 4 percent); and
- higher for public school students than for private school students (5 vs. 2 percent). (*Students' Reports of Avoiding School Activities or Classes or Specific Places in School*)

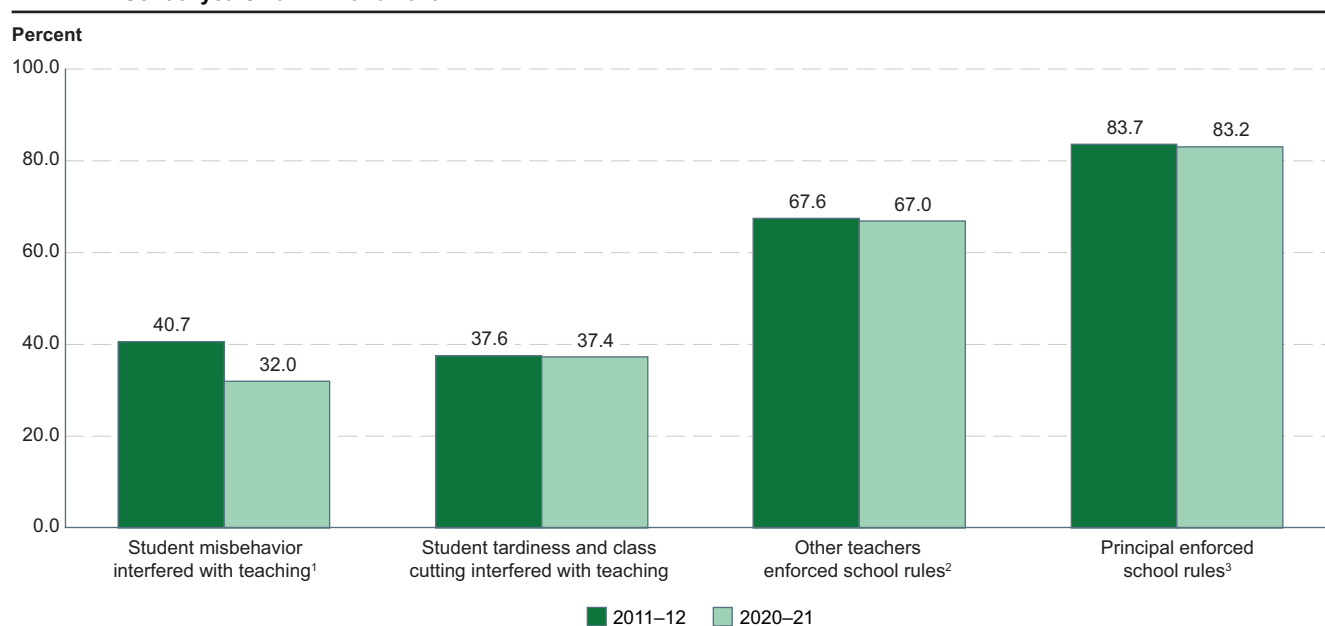
Teachers' Reports of Student Behavior and Rule Enforcement

Finally, teachers also reported on school order and conditions in the 2020-21 National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS). In 2020-21,⁴⁰ of all public school teachers,⁴¹

- 32 percent agreed that student misbehavior interfered with their teaching;
- 37 percent agreed that student tardiness and class cutting interfered with their teaching;
- 67 percent agreed that other teachers at their school enforced the school rules for student behavior; and
- 83 percent agreed that the principal enforced the school rules for student behavior (figure 9).

A lower percentage of public school teachers in 2020-21 than in 2011-12 reported that student misbehavior interfered with their teaching (32 vs. 41 percent), while the other percentages were not measurably different between the 2 years. (*Teachers' Reports of Disruptive Student Behaviors and Staff Rule Enforcement*)

Figure 9. Percentage of public school teachers who agreed that student misbehavior and student tardiness and class cutting interfered with their teaching and percentage who agreed that other teachers and the principal enforced school rules: School years 2011–12 and 2020–21



¹ The questionnaire provided the following examples of student misbehavior: noise, horseplay, or fighting in the halls, cafeteria, or student lounge.

² Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement “rules for student behavior are consistently enforced by teachers in this school, even for students who are not in their classes.”

³ Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement “my principal enforces school rules for student conduct and backs me up when I need it.”

NOTE: Teachers who taught only prekindergarten students are excluded. Includes teachers in both traditional public schools and public charter schools. Percentages represent both teachers who “strongly” agreed and those who “somewhat” agreed that student misbehavior and student tardiness and class cutting interfered with their teaching, as well as teachers who “strongly” agreed and those who “somewhat” agreed that school rules were enforced by other teachers and the principal.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), “Public School Teacher Data File,” 2011–12; and National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), “Public School Teacher Data File,” 2020–21. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, tables 230.90 and 230.92.

⁴⁰ The 2020 calendar year was the first year of the coronavirus pandemic, and many schools shifted instruction from in-person classes to online-only or hybrid education. Thus, in-person interactions between students and teachers may have been limited.

⁴¹ Percentages represent both teachers who “strongly” agreed and those who “somewhat” agreed with the statement.

Fights, Weapons, and Illegal Substances

Lower percentages of students in grades 9-12 in 2019 than in 2009 reported the following issues:

- having been in a physical fight on school property in the previous 12 months (8 vs. 11 percent);
- carrying a weapon on school property during the previous 30 days (3 vs. 6 percent); and
- using alcohol on at least 1 day during the previous 30 days (29 vs. 42 percent).

However, the percentages of students in grades 9-12 who reported the following issues in 2019 were not measurably different from 2009:

- being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property during the previous 12 months (7 percent in 2019);
- being offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property in the previous 12 months (22 percent in 2019); and
- using marijuana at least 1 time during the previous 30 days (22 percent in 2019).

Student Involvement in Physical Fights

Guns, fights, alcohol, and drugs are indicators of disorder and incivility at school. The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) asked students in grades 9-12 about their involvement in physical fights, anywhere⁴² or on school property, during the previous 12 months. Involvement in physical fights includes both as an aggressor and as an unwilling participant or victim. The percentage of students in grades 9-12 who reported having been in a physical fight anywhere during the previous 12 months was lower in 2019 than in 2009 (22 vs. 31 percent), and the percentage who reported having been in a physical fight on school property in the previous 12 months was also lower in 2019 than in 2009 (8 vs. 11 percent). The percentage of students who reported

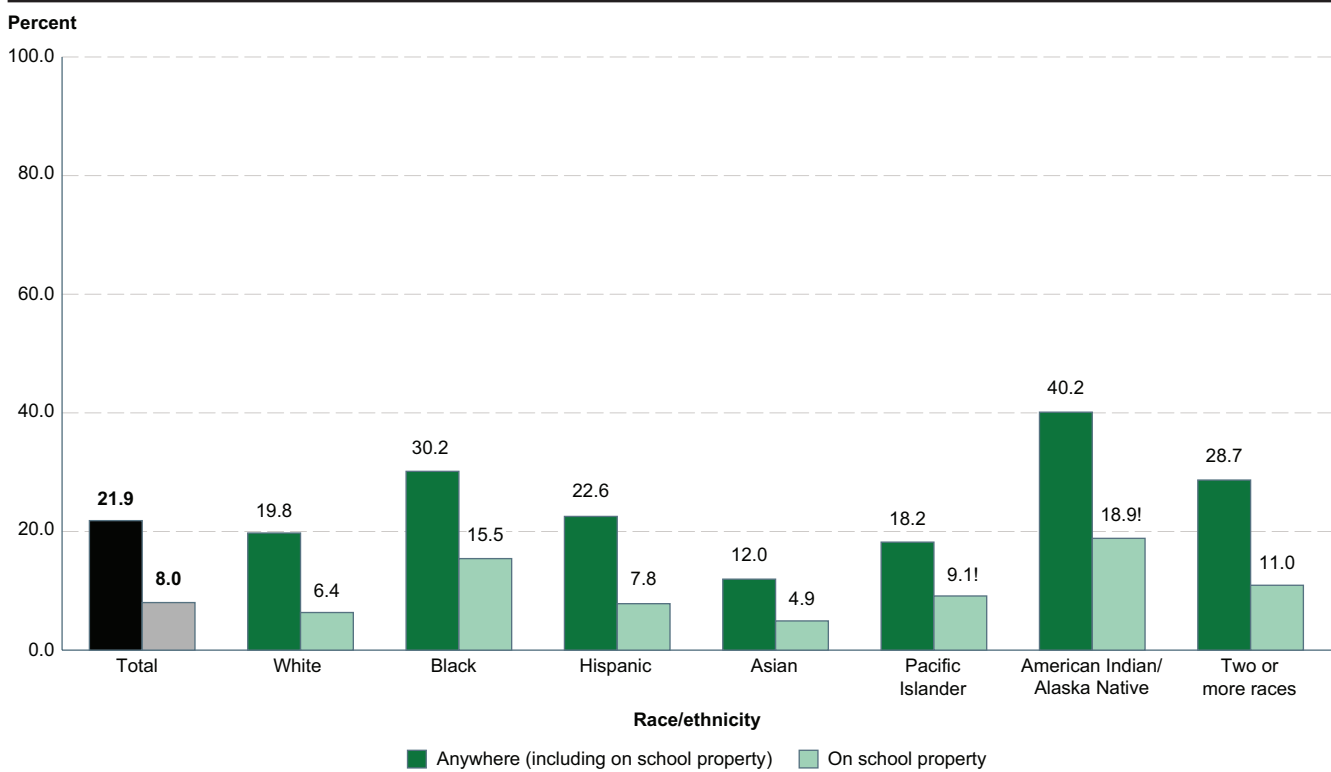
having been in a physical fight on school property during the previous 12 months in 2019 was

- higher for male students than for female students (11 vs. 4 percent);
- higher for students who were American Indian/Alaska Native (19 percent), Black (15 percent), and of Two or more races (11 percent) than for students who were White (6 percent) and Asian (5 percent; figure 10);
- higher for Black students (15 percent) than for students of Two or more races (11 percent) and Hispanic students (8 percent); and
- higher for 9th-graders (11 percent) and 10th-graders (8 percent) than for 11th-graders and 12th-graders (6 percent each).

There were no measurable differences by sexual identity in the percentages of students who reported having been involved in a physical fight on school property in 2019. (*Physical Fights on School Property and Anywhere*)

⁴² “Anywhere” includes occurrences on school property. The term “anywhere” is not used in the YRBSS, and the survey did not define “on school property” for respondents.

Figure 10. Percentage of students in grades 9–12 who reported having been in a physical fight at least one time during the previous 12 months, by race/ethnicity and location: 2019



! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.

NOTE: The term “anywhere” is not used in the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) questionnaire; students were simply asked how many times in the past 12 months they had been in a physical fight. In the question asking students about physical fights at school, “on school property” was not defined for respondents. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Adolescent and School Health, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), 2019. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, table 231.10.

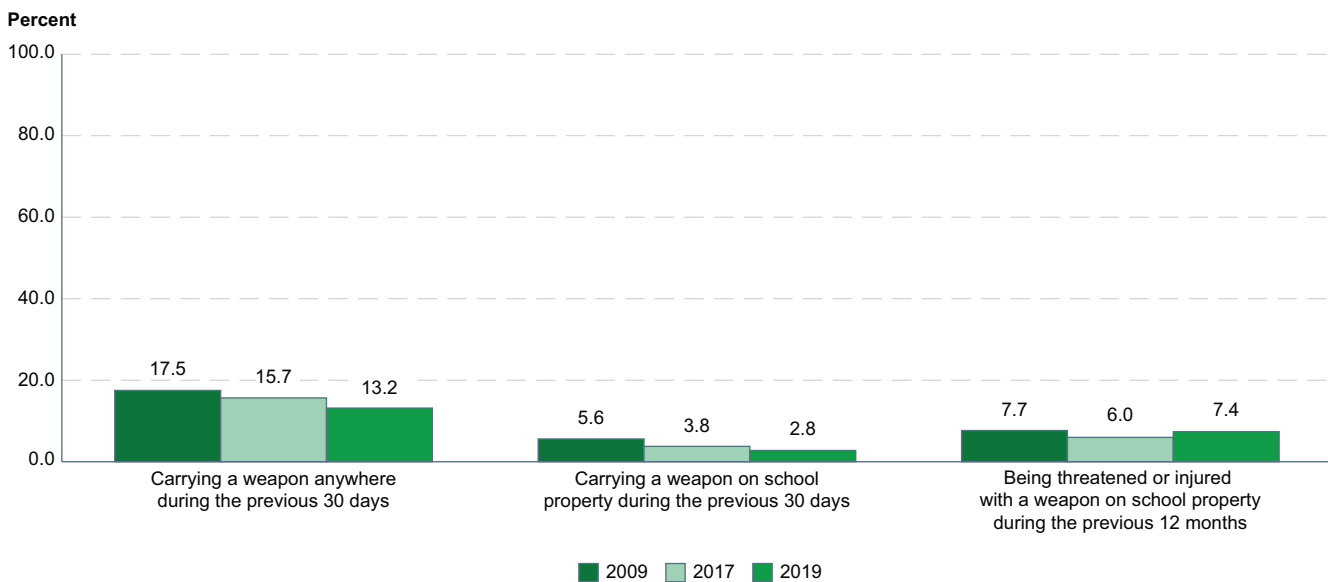
Students Carrying Weapons and Threats and Injuries With Weapons

On the topic of weapons, data are available for the percentages of students in grades 9–12 who reported carrying a weapon⁴³ anywhere or on school property during the previous 30 days and for the percentage of students who reported having been threatened or injured with a weapon on school property during the previous 12 months. An examination of these data over the past decade shows that, between 2009 and 2019, the percentage of students in grades 9–12 who reported carrying weapons during the previous 30 days decreased, including

- carrying a weapon anywhere (from 17 to 13 percent); and
- carrying a weapon on school property (from 6 to 3 percent; figure 11).

However, for threats and injuries with weapons on school property, there was not a consistent trend from 2009 to 2019. The percentage of students who reported being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property during the previous 12 months decreased from 8 percent in 2009 to 6 percent in 2017; the percentage in 2019 (7 percent) was higher than that in 2017 but not measurably different from the percentage in 2009. (*Students Carrying Weapons and Students’ Access to Firearms; Threats and Injuries With Weapons on School Property*)

Figure 11. Percentage of students in grades 9–12 who reported carrying a weapon at least 1 day anywhere or on school property during the previous 30 days and percentage who reported being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property at least one time during the previous 12 months: 2009, 2017, and 2019



NOTE: Examples of weapons provided for respondents include guns, knives, or clubs. The term “anywhere” is not used in the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) questionnaire; students were simply asked how many days they carried a weapon during the past 30 days. “On school property” was not defined for respondents. SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Adolescent and School Health, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), 2009, 2017, and 2019. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, tables 228.40 and 231.40.

⁴³ Examples of weapons provided for respondents include guns, knives, or clubs.

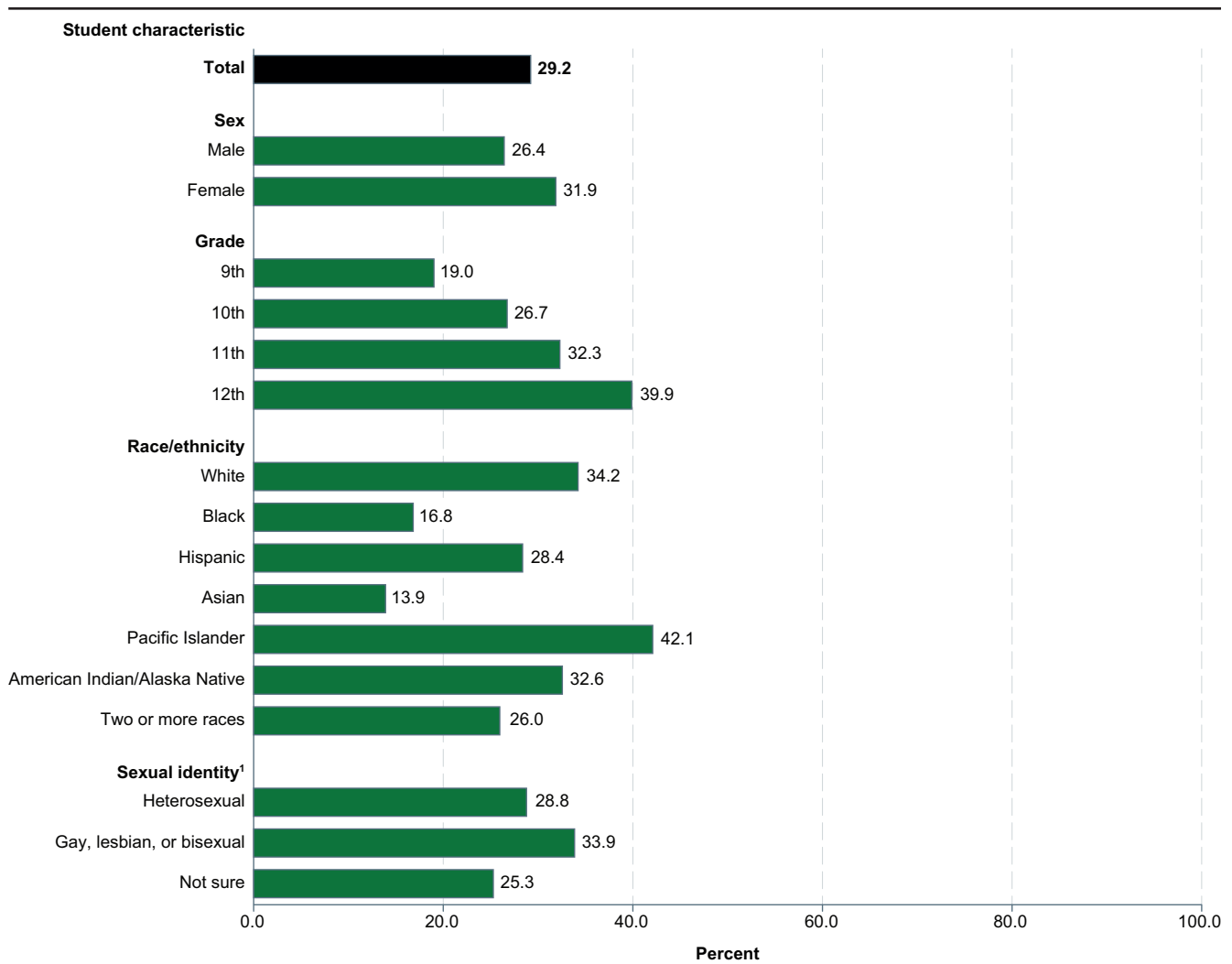
Alcohol, Marijuana, and Illegal Drugs

In the United States, the purchase or public possession of alcohol anywhere is illegal until age 21, except in the company of a parent or legal-age spouse in certain states. Adolescent alcohol use is associated with various negative educational and health outcomes (French and Maclean 2006; Mason et al. 2010; Schilling et al. 2009). The percentage of students in grades 9-12 who reported using alcohol on at least 1 day during the previous 30 days decreased from 42 to 29 percent between 2009 and 2019. In 2019, the percentage of students in grades 9-12

who reported using alcohol on at least 1 day during the previous 30 days

- was lower for male students than for female students (26 vs. 32 percent; figure 12);
- was lower for Asian students (14 percent) and Black students (17 percent) than for students of all other racial/ethnic groups;
- was lower for heterosexual students (29 percent) and students who were not sure about their sexual identity (25 percent) than for gay, lesbian, or bisexual students (34 percent); and
- increased with grade level. (*Students' Use of Alcohol*)

Figure 12. Percentage of students in grades 9–12 who reported using alcohol at least 1 day during the previous 30 days, by selected student characteristics: 2019



¹ Students were asked which of the following—"heterosexual (straight)," "gay or lesbian," "bisexual," or "not sure"—best described them.

NOTE: Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Adolescent and School Health, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), 2019. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, table 232.10.

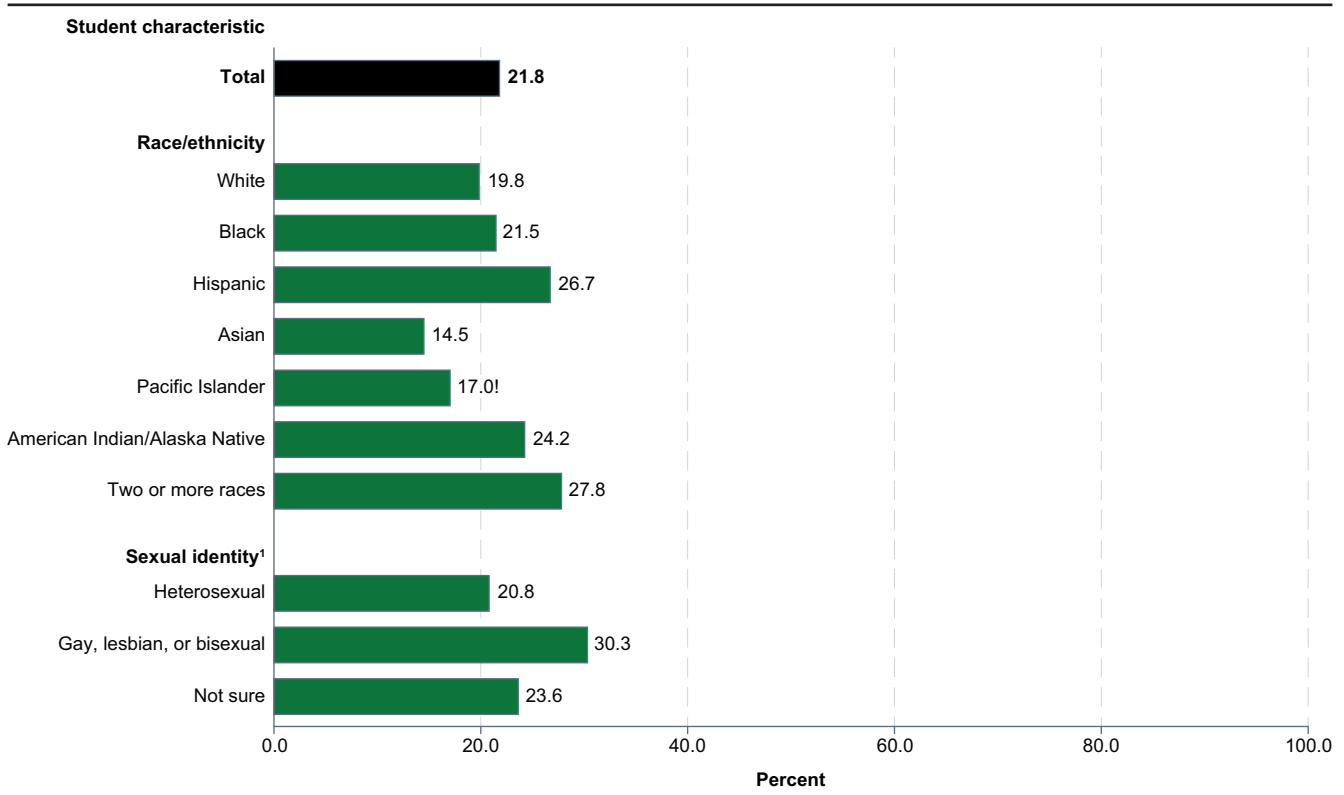
The YRBSS asked students in grades 9-12 about their current use of marijuana anywhere as well as the availability of illegal drugs on school property. In 2019, about 22 percent of students in grades 9-12 reported using marijuana at least 1 time during the previous 30 days; the percentage of students who reported that someone had offered, sold, or given them an illegal drug on school property in the previous 12 months was also 22 percent in 2019. These percentages were not measurably different from their corresponding percentages in 2009.

In 2019, student reports of marijuana use and illegal drug availability varied by student characteristics. For instance, an examination of the data on the availability of illegal drugs on school property reveals differences by

student race/ethnicity and sexual identity. Specifically, the percentage of students who reported that illegal drugs were offered, sold, or given to them on school property in 2019 was

- higher for students of Two or more races (28 percent) and Hispanic students (27 percent) than for Black students (21 percent) and White students (20 percent), all of which were higher than for Asian students (14 percent; figure 13); and
- higher for gay, lesbian, or bisexual students (30 percent) than for students who were not sure about their sexual identity (24 percent) and students who were heterosexual (21 percent). ([Marijuana Use and Illegal Drug Availability](#))

Figure 13. Percentage of students in grades 9–12 who reported that illegal drugs were made available to them on school property during the previous 12 months, by race/ethnicity and sexual identity: 2019



! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.

¹ Students were asked which of the following—"heterosexual (straight)," "gay or lesbian," "bisexual," or "not sure"—best described them.

NOTE: Students were asked if anyone offered, sold, or gave them an illegal drug on school property during the previous 12 months. "On school property" was not defined for respondents. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Adolescent and School Health, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), 2019. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, table 232.70.

Safety, Discipline, and Mental Health Practices

In recent years, higher percentages of public schools implemented certain safety and security measures and offered mental health services to students:

- The percentage of public schools that reported having one or more security staff present at school at least once a week increased from 43 percent in 2009-10 to 65 percent in 2019-20.
- A higher percentage of public schools in 2019-20 than in 2017-18 reported having a written plan for procedures to be performed in the event of a pandemic disease (52 vs. 46 percent).
- Higher percentages of public schools in 2019-20 than in 2017-18 reported providing diagnostic mental health assessment services to evaluate students for mental health disorders (55 vs. 51 percent) and offering mental health treatment services to students for mental health disorders (42 vs. 38 percent).

In contrast, a lower percentage of public schools reported taking at least one serious disciplinary action in 2019-20 than in 2009-10 (35 vs. 39 percent).

Safety and Security Measures

To maintain school discipline, order, and safety, schools across the United States have implemented preventive and responsive measures. Data on school practices have been collected through School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS) by asking public school principals about their school's use of safety and security measures⁴⁴ and whether their school had written procedures for responding to certain scenarios.

The use of certain safety and security measures in public schools has become more prevalent over time. Between 2009-10 and 2019-20, the percentage of public schools reporting the following safety and security measures increased:

- controlling access to school buildings (from 92 to 97 percent);
- using security cameras (from 61 to 91 percent); and
- requiring faculty and staff to wear badges or picture IDs (from 63 to 77 percent).

The percentage of public schools that reported requiring students to wear badges or picture IDs was also higher in 2019-20 than in 2009-10 (10 vs. 7 percent), although there was no consistent pattern of change throughout the period. (*Safety and Security Practices at Public Schools*)

Between 2009-10 and 2019-20, the percentage of public schools that reported having one or more security staff⁴⁵ present at school at least once a week increased from 43 to 65 percent. In 2019-20, greater percentages of secondary/high schools (84 percent) and middle schools (81 percent) reported having any security staff, compared with elementary schools (55 percent) and combined/other schools (53 percent). The percentage of schools reporting the presence of any security staff was higher for schools with larger enrollment sizes; for instance, 96 percent of schools with 1,000 or more students enrolled reported having one or more security staff present, compared with 48 percent of schools with less than 300 students enrolled. (*Safety and Security Practices at Public Schools*)

In 2019-20, about 52 percent of public schools reported having a written plan for procedures to be performed in the event of a pandemic disease (figure 14). This percentage was higher than the percentage reported in 2017-18 (46 percent).⁴⁶ In comparison, in 2019-20, over 90 percent of public schools had a written plan for procedures to be performed in the event of each of the following events: a natural disaster (96 percent),⁴⁷ an active shooter (96 percent), bomb threats or incidents (93 percent), and a suicide threat or incident (91 percent). (*Safety and Security Practices at Public Schools*)

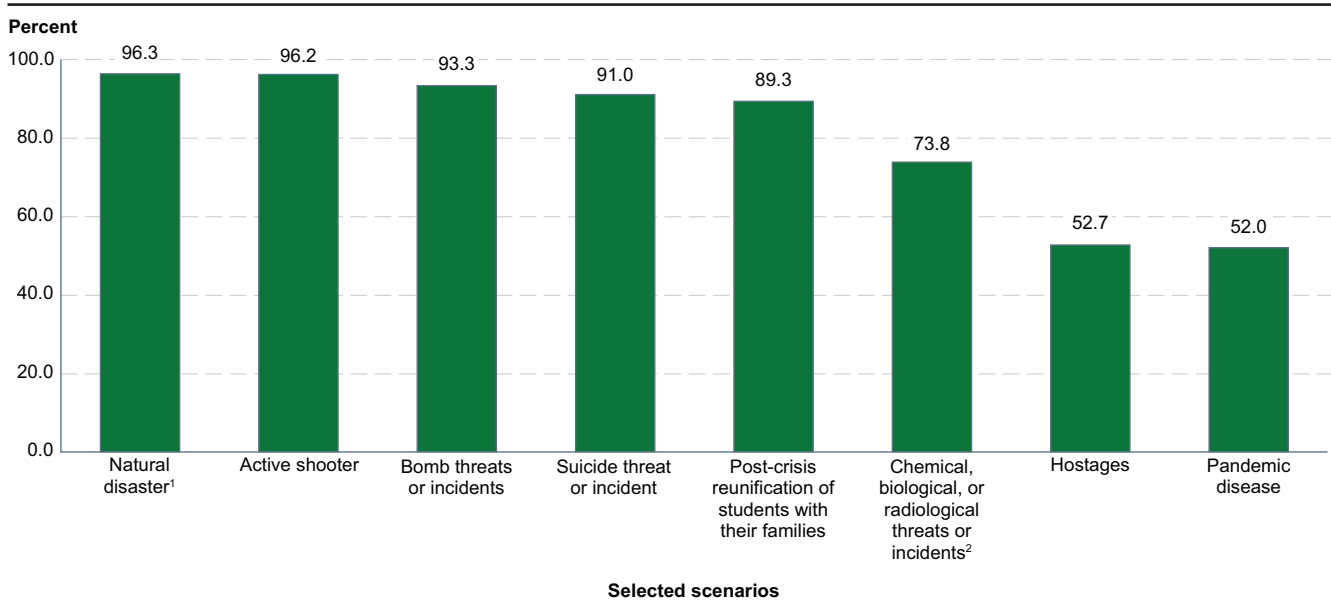
⁴⁴ In addition to data collected at the *school* level from SSOCS, data based on student reports of safety and security measures are available from the SCS. At the time of this report's development, the latest year for which SCS data are available is 2019. For information based on students' awareness of a particular measure rather than on documented practice, see *Students' Reports of Safety and Security Measures Observed at School*.

⁴⁵ Includes security officers, security personnel, School Resource Officers (SROs), and sworn law enforcement officers who are not SROs. "Security officers" and "security personnel" do not include law enforcement. SROs include all career law enforcement officers with arrest authority who have specialized training and are assigned to work in collaboration with school organizations.

⁴⁶ The first year in which this item was collected in SSOCS was 2017-18.

⁴⁷ For example, earthquakes or tornadoes.

Figure 14. Percentage of public schools with a written plan for procedures to be performed in selected scenarios: School year 2019–20



¹ For example, earthquakes or tornadoes.

² For example, release of mustard gas, anthrax, smallpox, or radioactive materials.

NOTE: Responses were provided by the principal or the person most knowledgeable about crime and safety issues at the school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2019–20 School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS), 2020. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2021*, table 233.65.

Disciplinary Actions

In 2019-20, about 35 percent of public schools overall (29,500 schools) took at least one serious disciplinary action⁴⁸ for specific student offenses (figure 15).

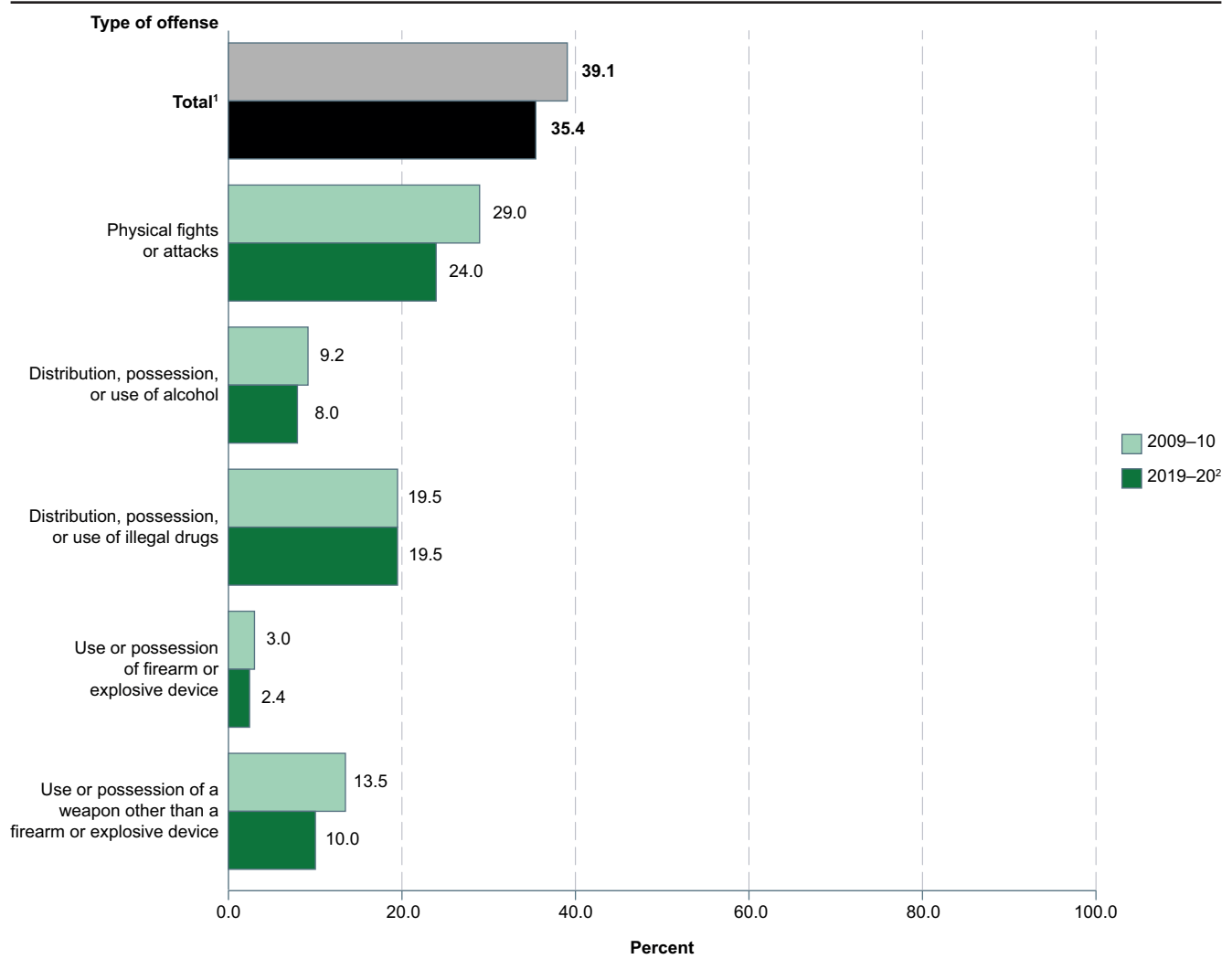
Specifically, the percentage of public schools that responded to student offenses with at least one serious disciplinary action was

- 24 percent for physical attacks or fights;
- 19 percent for the distribution, possession, or use of illegal drugs;
- 10 percent for the use or possession of a weapon other than a firearm or explosive device;
- 8 percent for the distribution, possession, or use of alcohol; and
- 2 percent for the use or possession of a firearm or explosive device.

The overall percentage of schools taking at least one serious disciplinary action was lower during the 2019-20 school year than during the 2009-10 school year (35 vs. 39 percent). (*Serious Disciplinary Actions Taken by Public Schools*)

⁴⁸ Serious disciplinary actions refer to those more exclusionary actions and are defined to include out-of-school suspensions lasting 5 or more days but less than the remainder of the school year; removals with no continuing services for at least the remainder of the school year; and transfers to alternative schools for disciplinary reasons. Schools that took serious disciplinary actions in response to more than one type of offense were counted only once in this total.

Figure 15. Percentage of public schools that took a serious disciplinary action in response to specific offenses, by type of offense: School years 2009–10 and 2019–20



¹ Schools that took serious disciplinary actions in response to more than one type of offense were counted only once in the total.

² The coronavirus pandemic affected the 2019–20 data collection activities. The change to virtual schooling and the adjusted school year may have impacted the data collected by the School Survey on Crime and Safety. Readers should use caution when comparing 2019–20 estimates with those from earlier years. For more information, see *Crime, Violence, Discipline, and Safety in U.S. Public Schools in 2019–20: Findings From the School Survey on Crime and Safety* (NCES 2022-029).

NOTE: Responses were provided by the principal or the person most knowledgeable about crime and safety issues at the school. Serious disciplinary actions include out-of-school suspensions lasting 5 or more days, but less than the remainder of the school year; removals with no continuing services for at least the remainder of the school year; and transfers to alternative schools for disciplinary reasons. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2009–10 and 2019–20. School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS), 2010 and 2020. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2021*, table 233.10.

Mental Health Services

In addition to practices and measures addressing specific crime and safety concerns, many schools provide mental health services to evaluate and treat students for mental health disorders. Previous studies show that school mental health resources may facilitate mental health service use for children with mental health disorders (Green et al. 2013).

Based on data from the 2019-20 SSOCS survey, 55 percent of public schools (or 45,600 schools) reported providing diagnostic mental health assessment⁴⁹ services to evaluate students for mental health disorders.⁵⁰ Fewer public schools (42 percent, or 35,200 schools) offered mental health treatment⁵¹ services to students for mental health disorders. The percentages of public schools providing either diagnostic services or treatment services were higher in 2019-20 than in 2017-18 (55 vs. 51 percent for diagnostic services and 42 vs. 38 percent for treatment services). (*Prevalence of Mental Health Services Provided by Public Schools and Limitations in Schools' Efforts to Provide Mental Health Services*)

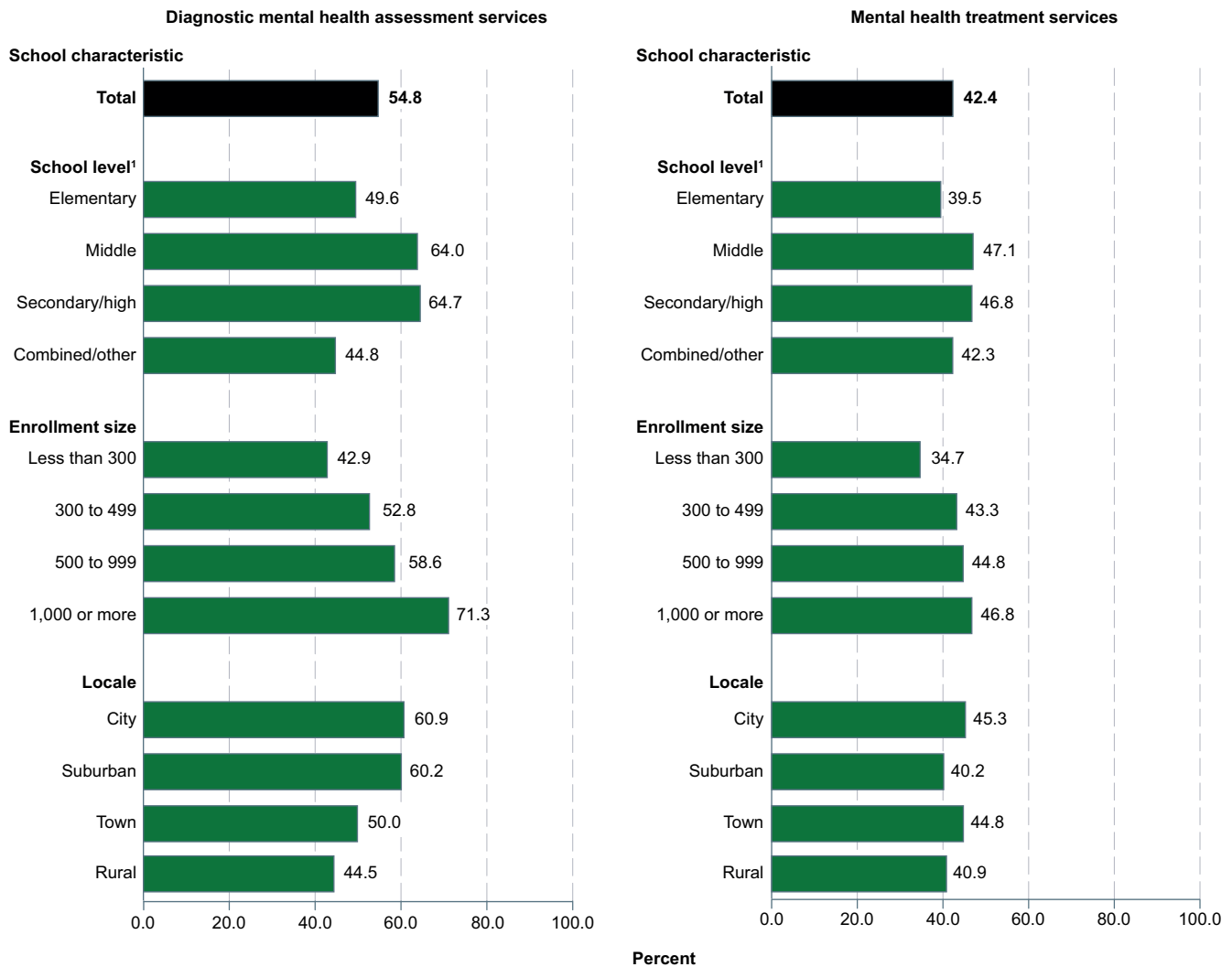
In 2019-20, both types of mental health services were more prevalent among middle schools and secondary/high schools than among elementary schools (figure 16). In addition, the percentages of public schools providing these services were often higher for schools with larger enrollment sizes. Also, diagnostic services were more prevalent in schools in cities and suburban areas than in towns and rural areas: 61 percent of schools in cities and 60 percent of schools in suburban areas reported providing diagnostic services to students, compared with 50 percent of schools in towns and 44 percent of schools in rural areas. However, there were no measurable differences by locale in the percentages of schools reporting treatment services. (*Prevalence of Mental Health Services Provided by Public Schools and Limitations in Schools' Efforts to Provide Mental Health Services*)

⁴⁹ A diagnostic mental health assessment is an evaluation conducted by a mental health professional that identifies whether an individual has one or more mental health diagnoses.

⁵⁰ Mental health disorders collectively refer to all diagnosable mental disorders or health conditions that are characterized by alterations in thinking, mood, or behavior (or some combination thereof) associated with distress and/or impaired functioning.

⁵¹ Treatment is a clinical intervention—which may include psychotherapy, medication, and/or counseling—addressed at lessening or eliminating the symptoms of a mental health disorder.

Figure 16. Percentage of public schools providing diagnostic mental health assessments and treatment to students, by selected school characteristics: 2019–20



¹ Elementary schools are defined as schools that enroll students in more of grades K through 4 than in higher grades. Middle schools are defined as schools that enroll students in more of grades 5 through 8 than in higher or lower grades. Secondary/high schools are defined as schools that enroll students in more of grades 9 through 12 than in lower grades. Combined/other schools include all other combinations of grades, including K–12 schools.

NOTE: A diagnostic mental health assessment is an evaluation conducted by a mental health professional that identifies whether an individual has one or more mental health diagnoses. This is in contrast to an educational assessment, which does not focus on clarifying a student’s mental health diagnosis. Treatment is a clinical intervention—which may include psychotherapy, medication, and/or counseling—addressed at lessening or eliminating the symptoms of a mental health disorder. Schools were instructed to include only services provided by a licensed mental health professional employed or contracted by the school. Mental health professionals were defined for respondents as including providers of mental health services within several different professions, each of which has its own training and areas of expertise. The types of licensed professionals who may provide mental health services may include psychiatrists, psychologists, psychiatric/mental health nurse practitioners, psychiatric/mental health nurses, clinical social workers, and professional counselors. Mental health disorders collectively refer to all diagnosable mental disorders or health conditions that are characterized by alterations in thinking, mood, or behavior (or some combination thereof) associated with distress and/or impaired functioning. Responses were provided by the principal or the person most knowledgeable about school crime and policies to provide a safe environment.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2019–20 School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS), 2020. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2021*, table 233.69a.

In 2019-20, more than half of public schools (54 percent) reported that their efforts to provide mental health services to students were limited in a major way by inadequate funding.⁵² Forty percent reported inadequate

access to licensed mental health professionals as a major limitation. (*Prevalence of Mental Health Services Provided by Public Schools and Limitations in Schools’ Efforts to Provide Mental Health Services*)

⁵² The survey collected data on limitations in public schools’ efforts to provide mental health services regardless of whether the school actually provided mental health services.

Postsecondary Campus Safety and Security

Similar to the trend observed for the elementary and secondary level, crimes were generally less prevalent in 2020 than a decade earlier at the postsecondary level:

- The overall rate of crimes reported on campuses of postsecondary institutions per 10,000 FTE students enrolled in 2020 (15.0) was 20 percent lower than in 2019 (18.8) and 28 percent lower than in 2010 (20.9).
- The number of reported on-campus hate crimes in 2020 (571 incidents) was 25 percent lower than in 2019 (759 incidents) and 38 percent lower than in 2010 (928 incidents). Race, sexual orientation, and ethnicity were the three most frequently reported categories of bias motivating these hate crimes.

However, the rate of forcible sex offenses generally increased:

- The rate of forcible sex offenses increased overall between 2010 and 2020 (from 1.9 to 6.6 per 10,000 students), although more recently, the rate decreased between 2019 and 2020 (from 8.1 to 6.6 per 10,000 students).

Active Shooter Incidents

From 2000 to 2021, there were 18 active shooter incidents documented at postsecondary institutions, with the annual number ranging from 0 to 2. These incidents resulted in 157 casualties (75 killed and 82 wounded).⁵³ Nineteen active shooters were responsible for these 18 incidents; 2 shooters were 12 to 18 years old, 6 were 19 to 24 years old, and 11 were 25 years old and above. Active shooter incidents represent a small subset of the possible gun violence or serious violent incidents that occur at schools. (*Violent Deaths at School and Away From School, School Shootings, and Active Shooter Incidents*)

Criminal Incidents

At the postsecondary level, 21,200 criminal incidents against persons and property on campuses of postsecondary institutions were reported in 2020—when many postsecondary institutions shifted instruction from in-person classes to online-only or hybrid education during the coronavirus pandemic (figure 17).^{54, 55} This

translates to 15.0 on-campus crimes reported per 10,000 full-time-equivalent (FTE) students.⁵⁶ Among the various types of on-campus crimes reported in 2020, some 44 percent—or 6.6 incidents per 10,000 students—were forcible sex offenses.⁵⁷ Other commonly reported crimes included burglaries⁵⁸ (32 percent of reported on-campus crimes, or 4.8 incidents per 10,000 students) and motor vehicle thefts⁵⁹ (12 percent of reported on-campus crimes, or 1.8 incidents per 10,000 students). (*Criminal Incidents at Postsecondary Institutions*)

⁵³ Number of casualties excludes the active shooters.

⁵⁴ The *Clery Act* of 1990 specifies seven types of crimes that all Title IV institutions are required to report through the Campus Safety and Security Survey: murder, sex offenses (forcible and nonforcible), robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

⁵⁵ As of October 9, 2020, the Department of Education has rescinded and archived the *Handbook for Campus Safety and Security Reporting*, which in previous years was provided to assist institutions, in a step-by-step manner, in understanding and meeting the various *Clery Act* requirements. The Department has instead provided a *Clery-related Appendix to the Federal Student Aid Handbook*. For more information about the rescission and replacement of the previous handbook, see: <https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/library/electronic-announcements/2020-10-09/rescission-and-replacement-2016-handbook-campus-safety-and-security-reporting-updated-jan-19-2021>. Due to this change, readers should exercise caution when comparing 2020 data to those from previous years.

⁵⁶ The base of 10,000 FTE students includes students who are enrolled exclusively in distance learning courses and who may not be physically present on campus. The number of students exclusively enrolled in distance education courses was higher in fall 2020 than in fall 2019 (see *Condition of Education* indicators *Undergraduate Enrollment* and *Postbaccalaureate Enrollment*).

⁵⁷ Any sexual act directed against another person forcibly and/or against that person's will.

⁵⁸ Refers to the unlawful entry of a structure to commit a felony or theft.

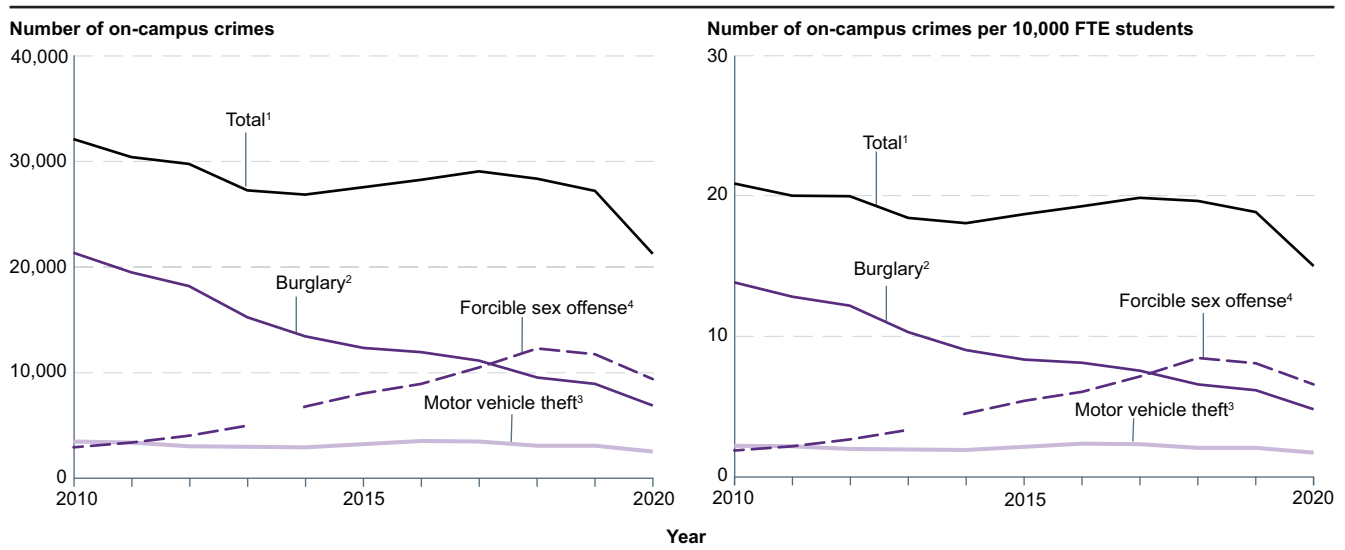
⁵⁹ Theft or attempted theft of a motor vehicle.

Between 2010 and 2020, the overall number of reported on-campus crimes decreased by 34 percent (from 32,100 to 21,200), but most of this decrease occurred between 2019 and 2020, during the first year of the pandemic (figure 17). In addition, the rate of crime, or the number of crimes per 10,000 FTE students, was lower in 2020 than in 2010 (15.0 vs. 20.9). Specifically, the overall rate of on-campus crimes

- was 10 percent lower in 2019 than in 2010 (18.8 vs. 20.9 per 10,000 FTE students) but showed no consistent trend during this period; and
- decreased by 20 percent between 2019 and 2020, during the first year of the pandemic (from 18.8 to 15.0 per 10,000 FTE students).

Despite the overall number and rate of crime being lower in 2020 than in 2010, the rate for forcible sex offenses⁶⁰ increased overall between 2010 and 2020 (from 1.9 to 6.6 per 10,000 students), surpassing burglary as the most reported offense beginning in 2018. However, more recently, during the first year of the pandemic, the rate for forcible sex offenses decreased between 2019 and 2020 (from 8.1 to 6.6 per 10,000 students). (*Criminal Incidents at Postsecondary Institutions*)

Figure 17. Number of on-campus crimes reported and number per 10,000 full-time-equivalent (FTE) students in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by selected type of crime: 2010 through 2020



¹ Includes other reported crimes not separately shown.

² Unlawful entry of a structure to commit a felony or theft.

³ Theft or attempted theft of a motor vehicle.

⁴ Any sexual act directed against another person forcibly and/or against that person's will. Reporting guidelines for forcible sex offenses changed in 2014. In years prior to 2014, schools reported a total number of forcible sex offenses, with no breakouts for specific types of offenses. Beginning in 2014, schools were asked to report the numbers of two different types of forcible sex offenses: rape and fondling. These two types were added together to calculate the total number of reported forcible sex offenses.

NOTE: Data are for degree-granting institutions, which are institutions that grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Some institutions that report *Clergy Act* data—specifically, non-degree-granting institutions and institutions outside of the 50 states and the District of Columbia—are excluded from this figure. Includes on-campus incidents involving students, staff, and on-campus guests. Excludes off-campus incidents even if they involve students or staff. Caution should be used when comparing on-campus data for 2020 with those of earlier years due to the switch to online learning in many postsecondary institutions in fall 2020 as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Some data have been revised from previously published figures.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, Campus Safety and Security Reporting System, 2010 through 2020; and National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2011 through Spring 2021, Fall Enrollment component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, tables 329.10 and 329.20.

⁶⁰ Reporting guidelines for forcible sex offenses changed in 2014. In years prior to 2014, schools reported a total number of forcible sex offenses, with no breakouts for specific types of offenses. Beginning in 2014, schools were asked to report the numbers of two different types of forcible sex offenses: rape and fondling. These two types were added together to calculate the total number of reported forcible sex offenses. For instance, 5,200 rapes and 4,200 fondling incidents were reported in 2020, for a total of 9,400 incidents of forcible sex offenses.

Hate Crime Incidents

A hate crime is a criminal offense that is motivated, in whole or in part, by the perpetrator's bias against the victim(s) based on race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability.⁶¹ In 2020, of the reported criminal incidents that occurred on the campuses of postsecondary institutions, 571 incidents were classified as hate crimes. This translates to an average of 0.4 hate crime incidents occurring per 10,000 FTE students enrolled. The three most common types of hate crimes reported by institutions were intimidation (281 incidents); destruction, damage, and vandalism (195 incidents); and simple assault (58 incidents; figure 18).

As noted above, many postsecondary institutions shifted instruction from in-person classes to online-only or hybrid education in calendar year 2020, during the coronavirus pandemic, which meant fewer students on college campuses.⁶² The number of reported on-campus hate crimes in 2020 (571 incidents) was 25 percent lower than in 2019 (759 incidents) and 38 percent lower than in 2010 (928 incidents). (*Hate Crime Incidents at Postsecondary Institutions*)

In 2020, race, sexual orientation, and ethnicity were the three most frequently reported categories of bias motivating on-campus hate crimes at postsecondary institutions, accounting for about 82 percent of reported hate crimes.⁶³ Race was the motivating bias in more than half of on-campus hate crimes. Specifically, of the total reported hate crimes at postsecondary institutions,

- 55 percent were motivated by race (314 incidents);
 - 16 percent were motivated by sexual orientation (90 incidents);
 - 11 percent were motivated by ethnicity (65 incidents);
 - 9 percent were motivated by religion (51 incidents);
 - 5 percent were motivated by gender (29 incidents);⁶⁴
 - 2 percent were motivated by gender identity (13 incidents);⁶⁵ and
 - 2 percent were motivated by disability (9 incidents).
- (*Hate Crime Incidents at Postsecondary Institutions*)

⁶¹ In addition to reporting data on hate-related incidents for the seven types of crimes already specified in the *Clery Act*, a 2008 amendment to the *Clery Act* requires campuses to report hate-related incidents for four additional types of crimes: simple assault; larceny; intimidation; and destruction, damage, and vandalism.

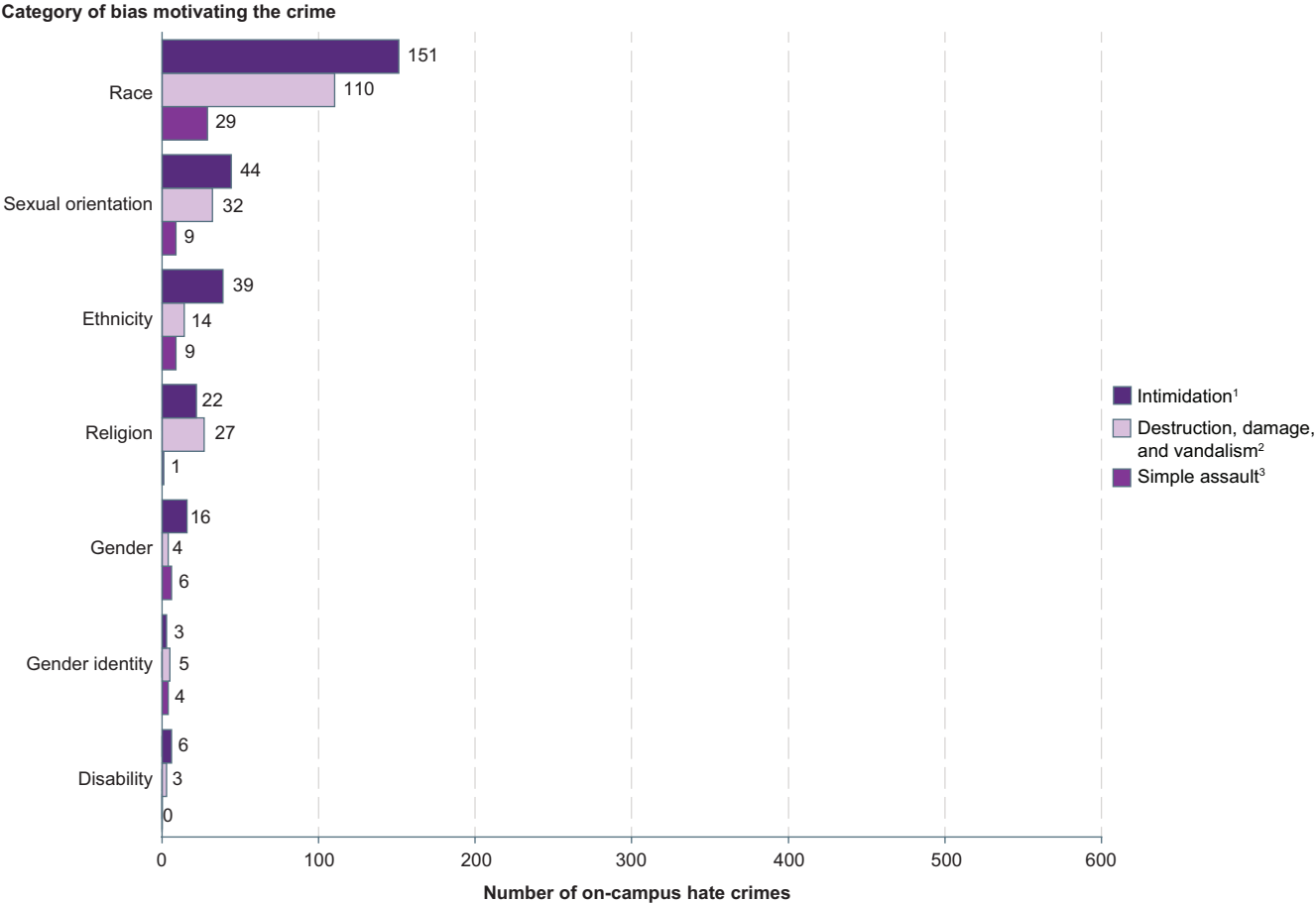
⁶² According to the 2019-20 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:20), 84 percent of undergraduate students reported having some or all classes moved to online-only instruction in spring 2020 due to the pandemic. For more information, see the *First Look at the Impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic on Undergraduate Student Enrollment, Housing, and Finances (Preliminary Data)* (NCES 2021-456).

⁶³ A single category of motivating bias was reported for each hate crime.

⁶⁴ Defined for the respondents as a "preformed negative opinion or attitude toward a person or group of persons based on their actual or perceived gender, e.g., male or female."

⁶⁵ Defined for the respondents as a "preformed negative opinion or attitude toward a person or group of persons based on their actual or perceived gender identity, e.g., bias against transgender or gender non-conforming individuals. Gender non-conforming describes a person who does not conform to the gender-based expectations of society, e.g., a woman dressed in traditionally male clothing or a man wearing makeup. A gender non-conforming person may or may not be a lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender person but may be perceived as such."

Figure 18. Number of on-campus hate crimes at degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by category of bias motivating the crime and type of crime: 2020



¹ Placing another person in reasonable fear of bodily harm through the use of threatening words and/or other conduct but without displaying a weapon or subjecting the victim to actual physical attack.

² Willfully or maliciously destroying, damaging, defacing, or otherwise injuring real or personal property without the consent of the owner or the person having custody or control of it.

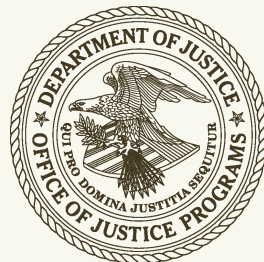
³ Physical attack by one person upon another where neither the offender displays a weapon nor the victim suffers obvious severe or aggravated bodily injury involving apparent broken bones, loss of teeth, possible internal injury, severe laceration, or loss of consciousness.

NOTE: Data are for degree-granting institutions, which are institutions that grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Some institutions that report *Clery Act* data—specifically, non-degree-granting institutions and institutions outside of the 50 states and the District of Columbia—are excluded. A hate crime is a criminal offense that is motivated, in whole or in part, by the perpetrator's bias against a group of people based on their race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability. Includes on-campus incidents involving students, staff, and guests. Excludes off-campus crimes and arrests even if they involve students or staff.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, Campus Safety and Security Reporting System, 2020. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, table 329.30.

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