



CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING

“SCHOOL SAFETY AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION”

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HISTORY SAFE SCHOOLS

- 1635 First Public School (Boston Latin)
- 1764 First attack on a school (Enoch Brown)
- 1975 *A Report Card: "A" in School Violence and Vandalism.*
- 1978 *Violent Schools – Safe Schools, The Safe School Study Report to Congress*
- 1987 Drug Free Schools and Communities Act
- 1994 Safe Schools Act
- 1994 Improving America's Schools Act



HISTORY SAFE SCHOOLS

1975 *A Report Card: "A" in School Violence and Vandalism.* [Subcommittee to Investigate J.D.]

- “student behavior and conflict within our school system is no longer limited to a fist fight between individual students or an occasional general disruption resulting from a specific incident. Instead ***our schools are experiencing serious crimes of a felonious nature*** including brutal assaults on students and teachers as well as rapes, extortions...”



HISTORY SAFE SCHOOLS

1978 Violent Schools – Safe Schools, The Safe School Study Report to Congress

- ***“crime and disruption in schools should be recognized as a significant problem, and the problem should receive the open attention and public concern it deserves.”***
- ***“there is tendency to understate or minimize the extent of the problem...and progress toward solving the problem cannot be made until the problem itself is recognized.”***



HISTORY SAFE SCHOOLS

1987 Drug Free Schools and Communities Act

- Federal funding for drug and alcohol prevention begins. \$200 million appropriated. (No violence prevention)

1994 Safe Schools Act

- First funding dedicated specifically to making schools safe. \$20m provided for competitive grants.



HISTORY SAFE SCHOOLS

1994 Improving America's Schools Act

- *Included Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA)*. SDFSCA permitted SEAs and LEAs to use their funds for drug prevention “AND” violence prevention programs. (\$487 m appropriated)
- *Included Gun Free Schools Act). GFSA* required States to pass legislation requiring students found to have brought a firearm to school to be expelled for one year.



KEY CHANGES

- **Development of robust data collection effort.**
- **Increased emphasis on research & evaluation and support of “science-based” programs/ strategies.**
- **Growing number of partners.**
- **Movement toward “comprehensive approach” to safe schools.**
- **Adoption of Emergency Management Plans.**
- **Identification of students who are on pathway to violence.**
- **Recognition of mental health services as essential part of any safe school strategy.**



SIGNS OF SUCCESS

- **Homicides in schools less than 2% of total number of youth (8-18) who are homicide victims.**
- **Violent crime decreased by more than 50% [from 1.6m in 1992 to .750 in 2012]!**
- **Serious violent crime decreased by more than 50% [from 198k in 1992 to 89k in 2012]!**
- **The percentage of students (12-18) who reported gangs present in their school decreased from 20% in 2001 to 17.5% in 2011.**
- **The number of students (12-18) reported being bullied decreased from 32% in 2007 to 28% in 2011.**



STORM CLOUDS

- **Weapon carrying remains an issue in many jurisdictions. The percentage of students (grades 9-12) who reported being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property increased (from 7.3% in 1993 to 7.4% in 2011).**
- **The number of teachers who were physically attacked increased from 121,000 in 1993/94 school year to 210,000 in the 2011/12 school year.**
- **Number of violations of Gun Free Schools Act remains at high levels. From 1996/97-2008/09 37,000 students were found to be in violation.**



MOVING FORWARD WE NEED TO:

- **Continue to engage in “relevant” research and ensure the research is used.**
- **Ensure school culture is such that every student is “connected” & every student respected.**
- **Find alternatives to policies and practices that needlessly push many students out of school.**
- **Identify practical approach to deal comprehensively with host of issues confronting schools.**
- **Design strategies that enable schools / communities to provide mental health services to those in need.**
- **Find solution to getting firearms out of schools.**



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