

## School Crime Has Declined Sharply Since the 1990s

by Jeffrey A. Butts

After any horrific act of school violence, many parents, students, and community officials fear that schools are becoming increasingly dangerous. Yet, the most severe forms of violence remain very rare in the school environment.

Federal statistics suggest that less than one percent of the homicides and suicides among children aged 5 to 18 are associated with school or school attendance.

The newest data about criminal victimization collected by the U.S. Departments of Justice and Education indicate that violent crime in schools has generally been falling since the early 1990s.

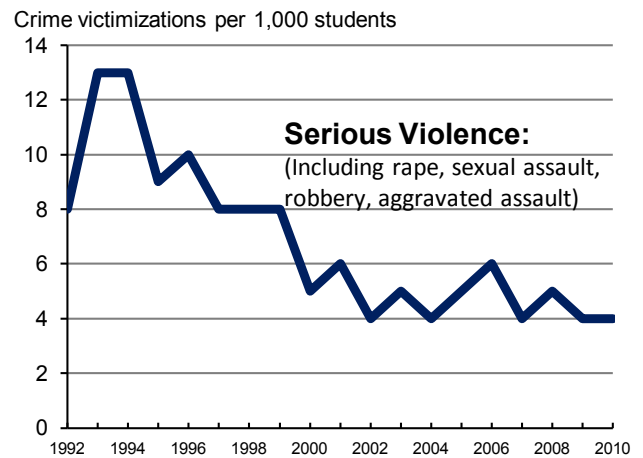
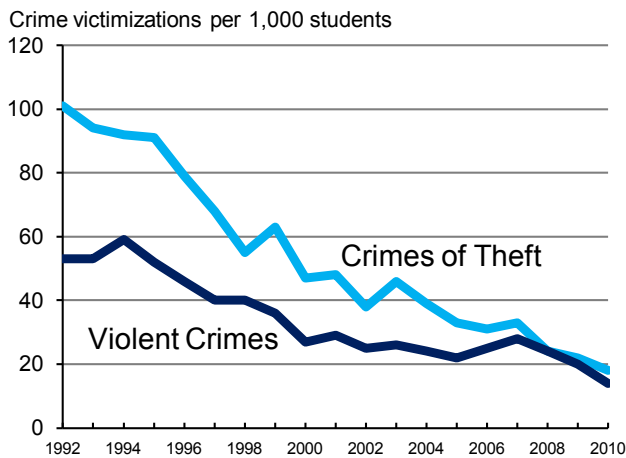
Between 1994 and 2010, the rate of violent victimizations at school dropped 76 percent, from 59 to 14 crimes per 1,000 students. This figure accounts for all forms of violence, including simple assaults with little to no injury.

Even serious and violent crimes, however, declined in recent years. Students in 2010 reported more than 91,000 serious and violent crimes either on school property or during student travels to and from school. This was down 72 percent compared with 1994, when students reported nearly 330,000 serious and violent victimizations.

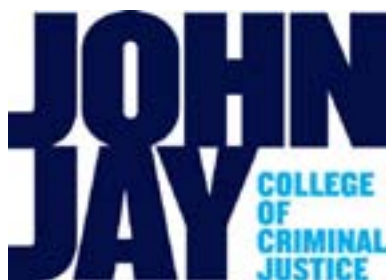
Measured as crimes per 1,000 students, serious and violent crimes fell sharply after the peak year of 1994. The rate of serious and violent victimizations at school dropped 69 percent between 1994 and 2010, from 13 crimes to 4 crimes per 1,000 students.

Property crimes at school also fell dramatically. The per capita rate of theft at school dropped from 101 to 18 crimes per 1,000 students between 1992 and 2010. In 1992, nearly 2.4 million crimes of theft were reported by students. By 2010, the number of thefts had declined to just under 470,000.

### Both Property and Violent Crimes in Schools are Lower When Compared with the 1990s



Source: Robers, Simone, Jijun Zhang, and Jennifer Truman (2012). Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2011. Table 2.1. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, and U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics [NCES 2012-002; NCJ 236021].



**RESEARCH AND EVALUATION CENTER**  
Part of the Research Consortium of John Jay College  
555 West 57th Street, Suite 605  
New York, NY 10019

[www.johnjayresearch.org](http://www.johnjayresearch.org)

