

2003 Florida Youth Risk Behavior Survey

◀ Fact Sheet 2 ▶



Violence-Related Behaviors on School Property

December 2004

Introduction

The Florida Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is a self-administered, school-based anonymous survey which has been conducted in Florida public high school students every two years since 1991. It is part of a national survey effort led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to monitor priority health risk behaviors that contribute markedly to the leading causes of death, disability and social problems among youth in the United States. In 2003, 4080 students in 75 public high schools in Florida completed the YRBS. The overall response rate was 66 percent. The response rate was high enough for the data to be weighted to represent all Florida public high school students.

Background

As the last few years have demonstrated, school violence has spread to every geographic region in our country and has occurred at every educational level¹. School violence is a serious problem, especially in public schools. In order to improve the quality of American education, the difficult task of dealing with school violence must be addressed. A safe school environment is a necessity for good education. School violence includes activities such as gang activity, locker thefts, bullying and intimidation, gun use and assault. According to the Florida Vital Statistics Annual Report 2002, homicide was the second leading cause of all death in Florida among people 15-24 years old, following unintentional injury and followed by suicide. The purpose of this study is to address violence-related behaviors on school property among Florida high school youth.

1. <http://www.housedems.com/woodward/pubs/Rep.WoodwardEducation.pdf>

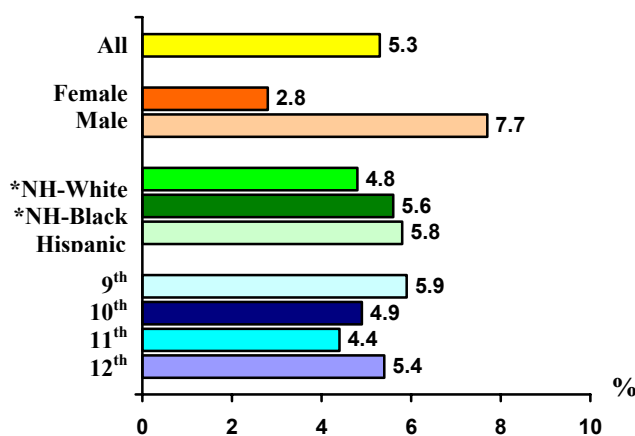


Results

During the past 30 days, on how many days did you carry a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property?

The goal of healthy people 2010 is to reduce weapon carrying by adolescents on school property to 4.9 percent. Among Florida high schools, 5.3 percent of students reported carrying a weapon (such as a gun, knife or club) on school property on one or more of the past 30 days, compared with 6.1 percent of students nationally (this difference is not statistically significant). Male students were more likely to report engaging in this behavior than female students (7.7 percent versus 2.8 percent). There was no statistical difference among racial/ethnic groups or at different grade levels.

Figure 1: Percentage of students who carried a weapon on school property on one or more of the past 30 days, 2003



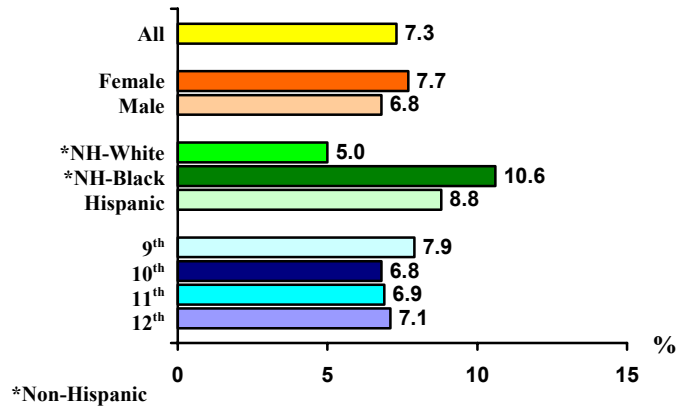
*Non-Hispanic

Violence-Related Behaviors on School Property

During the past 30 days, on how many days did you not go to school because you felt you would be unsafe at school or on your way to or from school?

7.3 percent of students reported not going to school because of feeling unsafe at school or on their way to or from school on one or more of the past 30 days, a prevalence higher than the national average of 5.4 percent. Non-Hispanic Black (10.6 percent) and Hispanic (8.8 percent) students had a higher prevalence of not going to school because of safety concerns than non-Hispanic White students (5.0 percent). There was not a significant gender or grade level difference of this prevalence. See Figure 2.

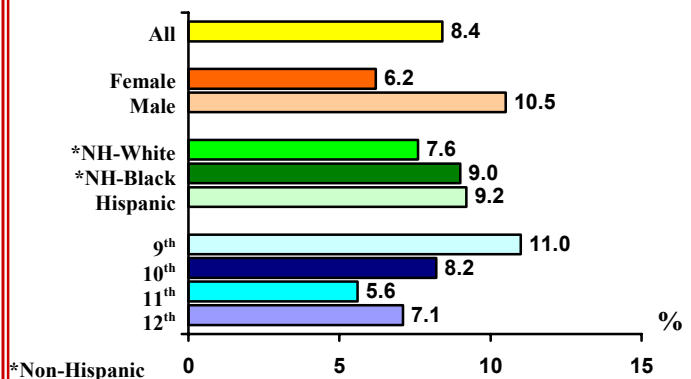
Figure 2: Percentage of students who did not go to school on one or more of the past 30 days because they felt unsafe, 2003



During the past 12 months, how many times has someone threatened or injured you with a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property?

Overall, 8.4 percent of Florida public high school students had been threatened or injured with a weapon on school property one or more times during the past 12 months compared with 9.2 percent of students nationally (this difference is not statistically significant). Male students (10.5 percent) had a higher prevalence of being threatened or injured than female (6.2 percent) students. There was no statistical difference among racial/ethnic groups or grade levels. Please see Figure 3.

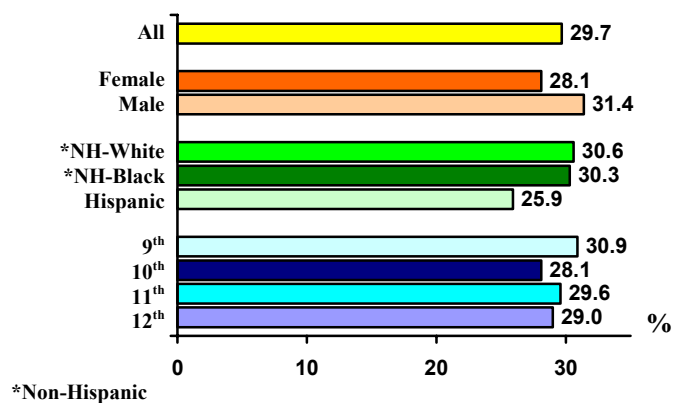
Figure 3: Percentage of students who had been threatened or injured with a weapon on school property one or more times during the past 12 months, 2003



During the past 12 months, how many times has someone stolen or deliberately damaged your property such as your car, clothing, or books on school property?

Three out of ten students (29.7 percent) in Florida and 29.8 percent of students nationally reported their property was stolen or damaged on school property one or more times during the past 12 months. There was no statistical difference between genders, race/ethnicities, or grade levels. Please see Figure 4.

Figure 4: Percentage of students whose property was stolen or damaged on school property one or more times during the past 12 months, 2003

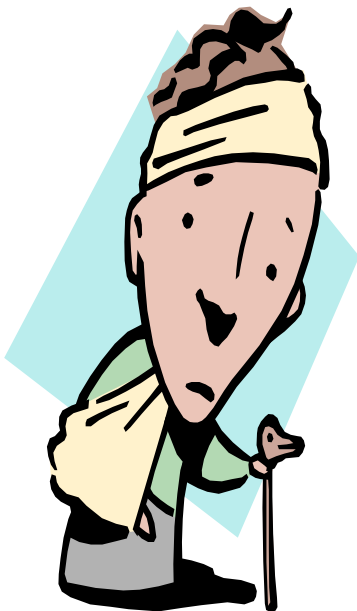
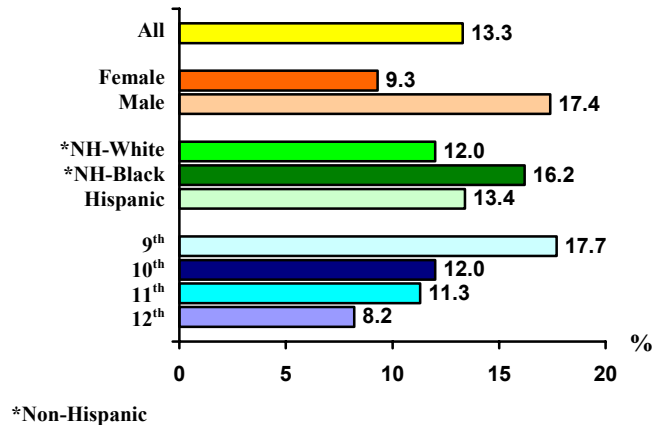


Violence-Related Behaviors on School Property

During the past 12 months, how many times were you in a physical fight on school property?

13.3 percent of students in Florida and 12.8 percent of students nationally were in a physical fight on school property one or more times during the past 12 months (this difference is not statistically significant). Male students (17.4 percent) had a higher prevalence of being involved in a physical fight than female students (9.3 percent). There was no race/ethnicity difference. Among the four grade levels surveyed, 9th grade students (17.7 percent) were more likely than 10th through 12th grade students (12.0 percent, 11.3 percent and 8.2 percent, respectively) to report being in a physical fight on school property one or more times during the past 12 months. Please see Figure 5.

Figure 5: Percentage of students who were in a fight on school property one or more times during the past 12 months, 2003



Summary

Violence-related behaviors on school property have not changed very much among Florida public high schools since 2001 (2001 data are not shown in this report). According to 2003 data, male students were more likely than female students to be involved in the following behaviors:

- Carrying a weapon on school property on one or more of the past 30 days
- Being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property one or more times in the past 12 months
- In a physical fight on school property one or more times during the past 12 months

Non-Hispanic and Hispanic students were more likely than non-Hispanic White students to be absent for class because of safety issues in the past 30 days.

9th grade students were more likely than students in other grades to be involved in a physical fight on school property one or more times during the past 12 months.

Violence-Related Behaviors on School Property

Detailed Table
Statewide Prevalence and 95% Confidence Interval

Survey Questions		Percent of students who carried a weapon on school property on one or more of the past 30 days	Percent of students who did not go to school because of feeling unsafe at school or on their way to or from school on one or more of the past 30 days	Percent of students who were threatened or injured by someone with a weapon on school property one or more times during the past 12 months	Percent of students whose property was stolen or deliberately damaged on school property one or more times during the past 12 months	Percent of students who were in a physical fight on school property one or more times during the past 12 months
Total		5.3 (4.5~6.1)	7.3 (6.1~8.4)	8.4 (7.5~9.3)	29.7 (27.8~31.7)	13.3 (12.0~14.6)
Gender	Male	7.7 (6.4~8.9)	6.8 (5.4~8.1)	10.5 (9.2~11.8)	31.4 (29.0~33.9)	17.4 (15.3~19.5)
	Female	2.8 (1.9~3.7)	7.7 (6.2~9.2)	6.2 (5.0~7.4)	28.1 (25.7~30.5)	9.3 (7.8~10.7)
Race/ Ethnicity	Non-Hispanic White	4.8 (3.8~5.9)	5.0 (4.1~5.9)	7.6 (6.3~8.8)	30.6 (28.3~32.9)	12.0 (10.3~13.7)
	Non-Hispanic Black	5.6 (3.6~7.5)	10.6 (7.8~13.4)	9.0 (7.2~10.8)	30.3 (27.3~33.3)	16.2 (12.8~19.6)
	Hispanic	5.8 (4.0~7.6)	8.8 (7.0~10.7)	9.2 (7.2~11.2)	25.9 (22.2~29.5)	13.4 (11.4~15.4)
Grade	9th	5.9 (4.4~7.4)	7.9 (5.8~9.9)	11.0 (9.0~13.0)	30.9 (28.1~33.6)	17.7 (15.0~20.5)
	10th	4.9 (3.8~6.1)	6.8 (5.4~8.2)	8.2 (6.6~9.8)	28.1 (25.5~30.6)	12.0 (9.7~14.3)
	11th	4.4 (2.8~5.9)	6.9 (5.2~8.6)	5.6 (3.9~7.4)	29.6 (26.5~32.6)	11.3 (9.0~13.7)
	12th	5.4 (3.6~7.3)	7.1 (5.0~9.2)	7.1 (4.9~9.2)	29.0 (24.6~33.4)	8.2 (5.6~10.7)

Contact information

For more information about Florida YRBS, please contact: Melissa Murray, Florida Youth Survey Coordinator, at (850) 245-4444, extension 2445 or by e-mail at Melissa_Murray@doh.state.fl.us, or contact Zhaohui Fan, Epidemiologist, at extension 2418 or by e-mail at Zhaohui_Fan@doh.state.fl.us.

