FBI Report: School-Related Active Shooter Incidents in the United States in 2016 and 2017

(Complete FBI report on all active shooter incidents can be found here: https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/active-shooter-incidents-us-2016-2017.pdf/view)

Madison Junior/Senior High School (Education)

On February 29, 2016, at 11:30 a.m., James Austin Hancock, 14, armed with a handgun, allegedly began shooting in the cafeteria of Madison Junior/Senior High School in Middletown, Ohio. He shot two students before fleeing the building. No one was killed; four students were wounded (two from shrapnel). The shooter was apprehended near the school by law enforcement officers.

Antigo High School (Education)

On April 23, 2016, at 11:02 p.m., Jakob Edward Wagner, 18, armed with a rifle, began shooting outside a prom being held at his former school, Antigo High School in Antigo, Wisconsin. Two law enforcement officers, who were on the premises, heard the shots and responded immediately. No one was killed; two students were wounded. The shooter was wounded in an exchange of gunfire with law enforcement officers and later died at the hospital.

Townville Elementary School (Education)

On September 28, 2016, at 1:45 p.m., Jesse Dewitt Osborne, 14, armed with a handgun, allegedly began shooting at the Townville Elementary School playground in Townville, South Carolina. Prior to the shooting, the shooter, a former student, killed his father at their home. Two people were killed, including one student; three were wounded, one teacher and two students. A volunteer firefighter, who possessed a valid firearms permit, restrained the shooter until law enforcement officers arrived and apprehended him.

West Liberty-Salem High School (Education)

On January 20, 2017, at 7:36 a.m., Ely Ray Serna, 17, armed with a shotgun, allegedly began shooting inside West Liberty-Salem High School, in West Liberty, Ohio, where he was a student. After assembling the weapon in a bathroom, the shooter shot a student who entered, then shot at a teacher who heard the commotion. The shooter shot classroom door windows before returning to the bathroom and surrendering to school administrators. No one was killed; two students were wounded. School staff members subdued the shooter until law enforcement arrived and took the shooter into custody.

Freeman High School (Education)

On September 13, 2017, at 10:00 a.m., Caleb Sharpe, 15, armed with a rifle and a pistol, allegedly began shooting at Freeman High School in Rockford, Washington, where he was a student. One student was killed; three students were wounded. A school employee confronted the shooter, ordered him to the ground, and held him there until law enforcement arrived and took him into custody.

Rancho Tehama Elementary School and Multiple Locations in Tehama County, California (Education)

On November 14, 2017, at 7:53 a.m., Kevin Janson Neal, 44, armed with a rifle and two handguns, began shooting at his neighbors, the first in a series of shootings occurring in Rancho Tehama Reserve, Tehama County, California. After killing three neighbors, he stole a car and began firing randomly at vehicles and pedestrians as he drove around the community. After deliberately bumping into another car, the shooter fired into the car and wounded the driver and three passengers. The shooter then drove into the gate of a nearby elementary school. He was prevented from entering the school due to a lockdown, so he fired at the windows and doors of the building, wounding five children. Upon fleeing the school, the shooter continued to shoot at people as he drove around Rancho Tehama Reserve. Law enforce-ment pursued the shooter; they rammed his vehicle, forced him off the road, and exchanged gunfire. The shooter's wife's body was later discovered at the shooter's home; the shooter apparently had shot and killed her the previous day. In total, five people were killed; 14 were wounded, eight from gunshot injuries (including one student) and six from shrapnel injuries (including four students). The shooter committed suicide after being shot and wounded by law enforcement during the pursuit.

Aztec High School (Education)

On December 7, 2017, at approximately 8:00 a.m., William Edward Atchison, 21, armed with a handgun, began shooting inside Aztec High School in Aztec, New Mexico. The shooter was a former student. Two students were killed; no one was wounded. The shooter committed suicide at the scene, before police arrived.

IES NCES National Center for School Statistics

Indicators of School Crime and Safety

Preliminary data show that there were 47 school-associated violent deaths[1] from July 1, 2014, through June 30, 2015. In 2016, among students ages 12–18, there were about 749,400 victimizations (theft[2] and nonfatal violent victimization[3]) at school[4] and 601,300 victimizations away from school. During the 2015–16 school year, 10 percent of public school teachers reported being threatened with injury by a student from their school and 6 percent reported being physically attacked by a student from their school. Also in 2015–16, about 37 percent of public schools (31,100 schools) took at least one serious disciplinary action for specific offenses.

The full report can be found here: https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2018/2018036.pdf

Key statistics on school crime:

Violent Deaths

- A total of 47 student, staff, and nonstudent school-associated violent deaths occurred between July 1, 2014, and June 30, 2015, which included 28 homicides, 17 suicides, and 2 legal intervention deaths[5].
- Between July 1, 2014, and June 30, 2015, a total of 20 of the 1,168 homicides of school-age youth (ages 5–18) occurred at school.[6] During the same period, there were 9 suicides of school-age youth at school, compared with 1,785 total suicides of school-age youth that occurred in calendar year 2014.

Nonfatal Student and Teacher Victimization

- In 2016, students ages 12–18 experienced 749,400 victimizations (theft and nonfatal violent victimization) at school and 601,300 victimizations away from school.[7] These figures represent total crime victimization rates of 29 victimizations per 1,000 students at school and 24 per 1,000 students away from school.
- The percentage of public school teachers reporting that they had been physically attacked by a student from their school in 2015–16 (6 percent) was higher than in all previous survey years (around 4 percent in each survey year) except in 2011–12, when the percentage was not measurably different from that in 2015–16.
- During the 2015–16 school year, 79 percent of public schools recorded that one or more incidents of violence,[9] theft, or other crimes[10] had taken place, amounting to 1.4 million crimes, or a rate of 28 crimes per 1,000 students enrolled. During the same year, 47 percent of schools reported one or more crime incidents to the police, amounting to 449,000 crimes, or 9 crimes per 1,000 students enrolled.

[1]A school-associated violent death is defined 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, 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. Victims include students, staff members, and others who are not students or staff members.
[2]"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.
[3]"Violent victimization" includes serious violent crimes and simple assault.
[4]"At school" includes inside the school building, on school property, and on the way to or from school.
[5]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.
[6]This finding is drawn from the School-Associated Violent Death Surveillance System, which defines deaths "at school" as those that occur on the property of a functioning primary or secondary school, on the way to or from regular sessions at school, or while attending or traveling to or from a school-sponsored event.
[7]"Students" refers to youth 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.
[8]"On school property" was not defined for survey respondents in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey.
[9]"Violent incidents" include rape, sexual assault other than rape, physical attack or fight with or without a weapon, threat of physical attack with or without a weapon, and robbery with or without a weapon.
[10]"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.

News@Northeastern

Media Inquiries

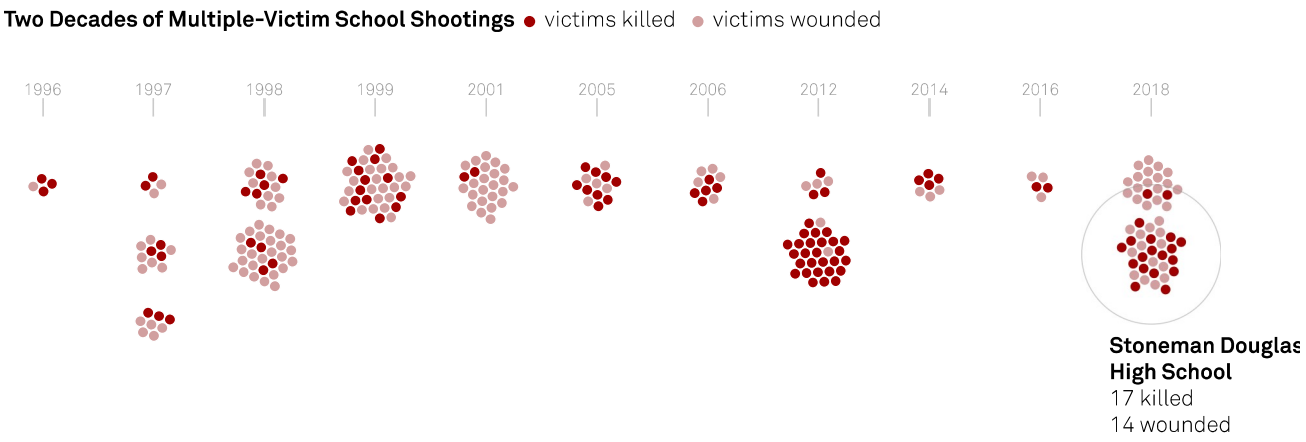
Schools are safer than they were in the 90s, and school shootings are not more common than they used to be, researchers say

By **Allie Nicodemo** and **Lia Petronio** February 26, 2018

The deadly school shooting this month in Parkland, Florida, has ignited national outrage and calls for action on gun reform. But while certain policies may help decrease gun violence in general, it's unlikely that any of them will prevent mass school shootings, according to James Alan Fox, the Lipman Family Professor of Criminology, Law, and Public Policy at Northeastern.

Since 1996, there have been **16 multiple victim shootings** in schools, or incidents involving 4 or more victims and at least 2 deaths by firearms, excluding the assailant.

Of these, **8 are mass shootings**, or incidents involving 4 or more deaths, excluding the assailant.



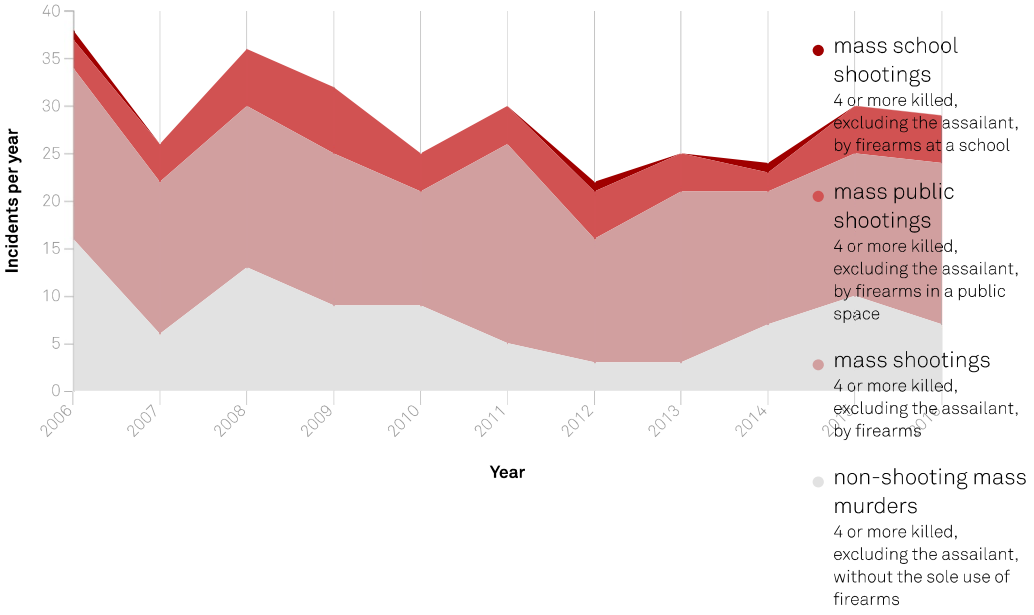
Data Source: James Alan Fox and Emma E. Fridel, "The Three R's of School Shootings: Risk, Readiness, and Response," in H. Shapiro, ed., The Wiley Handbook on Violence in Education: Forms, Factors, and Preventions, New York: Wiley/Blackwell Publishers, June 2018.

"This is not an epidemic"

Mass school shootings are incredibly rare events. In research publishing later this year, Fox and doctoral student Emma Fridel found that on average, **mass murders** occur between **20 and 30 times per year**, and about **one of those incidents on average takes place at a school.**

Mass Murders, 2006 through 2016

Four or more people killed within 24 hours, excluding the assailant

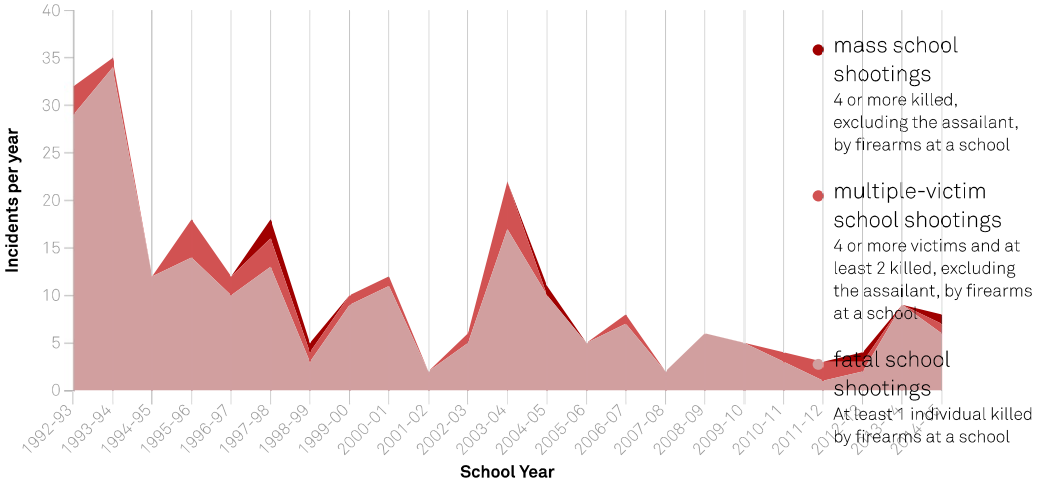


Data Source: Fridel, E. E. (2016). Mass murder in the United States: 2006-2016. Northeastern University (Original dataset: Adapted from Overberg, P., Hoyer, M., Hannan, M., Upton, J., Hansen, B., & Durkin, E. (2016). "Explore the data on U.S. mass killings since 2006. USA Today."). Retrieved from http://www.usatoday.com/ story/news/nation/2013/09 /16/mass-killings-data-map/2820423/

Fridel and Fox used data collected by USA Today, the FBI's Supplementary Homicide Report, Congressional Research Service, Gun Violence Archive, Stanford Geospatial Center and Stanford Libraries, Mother Jones, Everytown for Gun Safety, and a NYPD report on active shooters.

Their research also finds that **shooting incidents involving students have been declining since the 1990s.**

School Shootings and Mass Shootings, 1992/93 through 2014/15

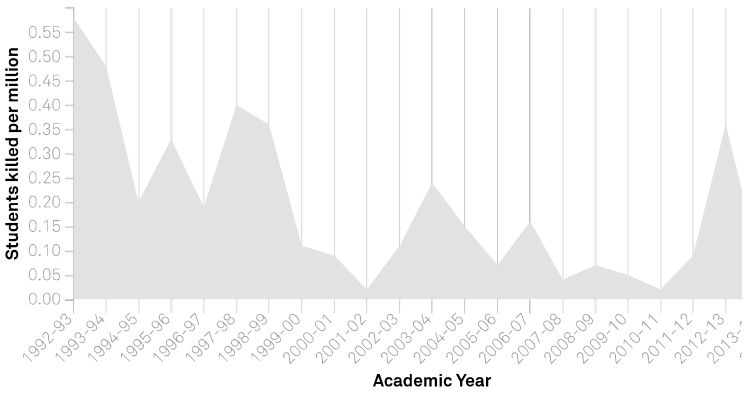


Data Source: James Alan Fox and Emma E. Fridel, "The Three R's of School Shootings: Risk, Readiness, and Response," in H. Shapiro, ed., The Wiley Handbook on Violence in Education: Forms, Factors, and Preventions, New York: Wiley/Blackwell Publishers, June 2018.

Four times the number of children were killed in schools in the early 1990s than today, Fox said.

"There is not an epidemic of school shootings," he said, adding that more kids are killed each year from pool drownings or bicycle accidents. There are around 55 million school children in the United States, and on average over the past 25 years, about 10 students per year were killed by gunfire at school, according to Fox and Fridel's research.

Students Killed Per Million in Fatal School Shootings, 1992/93 through 2014/15



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Fox said, however, some policy changes aimed at decreasing school shootings and gun violence in general certainly have merit. Banning bump stocks and raising the age of purchase for assault rifles from 18 to 21 are good ideas, and may lead to a decrease in overall gun violence, he said. But he doesn't believe these measures will prevent school shootings. "The thing to remember is that these are extremely rare events, and no matter what you can come up with to prevent it, the shooter will have a workaround," Fox said, adding that over the past 35 years, there have been only five cases in which someone ages 18 to 20 used an assault rifle in a mass shooting.

Fridel said increasing mental health resources for students is another strategy that might improve school safety, calling this a critical need that has been historically overlooked. She also said that the U.S. is facing a desperate shortage of guidance counselors. In 2014-15, the student-to-school counselor ratio was 482-to-1, according to the American School Counselor Association, nearly twice the organization's recommended ratio.

"You might have students in a very large school who are troubled but who are basically flying under the radar, because you have one guidance counselor for 400 students," Fridel said.

Should schools become fortresses?

After the Columbine High School shooting in 1999, schools across the country began holding active shooter drills in which they huddled together in a corner or hid under their desks. Such exercises—which may include someone walking around pretending to shoot students—can be very traumatic, Fridel said, and there is no evidence that they help protect students. "These measures just serve to alarm students and make them think it's something that's common," she said.

Other safety precautions, such as installing metal detectors and requiring ID cards for entry, have also proven ineffective in past school shootings.

Fridel pointed to a few examples.

In 1989, a shooter killed five and injured 32 elementary school children in Stockton, California, by targeting them on the playground.

In 2005, a 16-year-old killed seven people at his Minnesota high school by walking through the front door metal detector and fatally shooting a guard.

In a 1998 shooting in Jonesboro, Arkansas, two students pulled a fire alarm and began sniping people as they filed out to the parking lot, killing five and wounding 10 others.

In addition to being ineffective, Fox said increased security measures of these kinds can do more harm than good. He called the suggestion to arm teachers "absurd" and "over the top." "I'm not a big fan of making schools look like fortresses, because they send a message to kids that the bad guy is coming for you—if we're surrounding you with security, you must have a bull's-eye on your back," Fox said. "That can actually instill fear, not relieve it."

TOPICS Data Visualization, Research, Society & Culture, criminology, emma fridel, gun violence, james alan fox, mass public shooting, mass shooting, parkland high school, parkland shooting, school safety, school shooting, stoneman douglas high school

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