



RPM Special Edition on School Violence

This special edition of *Rural Policy Matters* presents information gathered from some 700 media accounts of specific incidents of violence in schools since 1974.

Among these incidents, we found 80 accounts of mass violence, claiming a total of 155 lives. We found references to almost as many mass violence incidents that were averted through interventions by other students, parents, and school staff or because the attempt failed.

Although mass violence events tend to capture more general media attention, we found three times more deaths in incidents that were not part of mass violence events. Overall, students were the most frequent perpetrators and victims of violence in schools.

These numbers corroborate other evidence that one of the most important things schools can do to prevent violence is develop and maintain a positive environment that engages and supports everyone and helps students learn skills and attitudes to prevent, resolve, and manage conflict.

The incidents also suggest that different types of schools might best be served by policies and practices aimed toward their specific circumstances. For example, the vast majority of incidents in middle and high schools involve student perpetrators. However, adult intruders were much more common in elementary schools.

The report underscores the need for more and better information about violence in the U.S. and about the practices and policies that will reduce the likelihood that anyone will be victimized.

Information is presented in both narrative and infographic form.

We hope this report helps to bring a rural perspective to policy debates about safety, guns, and violence in the U.S. These are important conversations that need the authentic engagement of rural Americans in all their varied perspectives and experiences.

In this issue:

InfoGraphic: Death and Mass Violence in U.S. K-12 Schools, 1974-2013

This infographic presents information about mass violence and deadly one-on-one incidents in schools over the past 40 years. It can be printed on either 8.5" x 11" or 11" x 17" paper.

The Distance Between

This editorial frames the report and brings a rural perspective to the current debate on public safety, guns, and schools.

About This Special Edition on School Violence

Read this section to understand what we hope this special edition of *RPM* can contribute and why we took a narrative approach to our exploration of violent incidents in schools.

Introduction: Approaches and Definitions

Read this section to understand how we put this report together, how we defined "school violence," and



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how we sorted specific incidents into meaningful categories.

Summary of Patterns in the Incidents

Read this section to understand the major patterns inherent in the school violence events included in the report.

In-Depth Exploration of Incidents

Read this section to get more detailed information about patterns in the incidents.

InfoGraphic: Patterns in School Violence: It's Not What You Think

This infographic presents major patterns in incidents of violence in schools since 1974. It can be printed on 8.5" x 11" paper.

Violence Begets Violence: Revenge, Copycatting, Triggers, and Threads

Read this section to learn about connections between specific incidents.

Schools Inside and Out: Practices and Policies to Protect Everyone in School Settings

Read this section for descriptions of practices and policies that can lead to safer, happier, and more productive schools.

Conclusions: Putting It All In Context

Read this section for a brief summary and analysis of the context for reducing violence in American schools.

Graph: Percentage of Schools Reporting Violent Crime That Occurred at School By Locale

View this graph to see differences in violence rates among schools in rural communities, towns, suburbs, and cities.

Chart of Mass Violence Incidents

View this chart as a reference for more specific information about the 80 incidents of *Mass Violence* identified in this report, including links to newspaper accounts.

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